

~~bent-efta man of mere impressive personality, or of greater originality of ideas might have ennobled the office if the office did not ennoble him.~~

On the 18th July 1888, President Brand died in office. He had held the principal office of the Orange Free State continuously for twenty-five years, having been elected and re-elected for five consecutive terms. He was a noble son of South Africa and a Christian gentleman. During his presidency, the Free State grew from a n insignificant country into a well developed and well regulated state of multifarious activities, and international prestige. A cautious ~~statemen~~statesman, who by avoiding dangerous alliances and commitments kept his country out of war. A man of unbounded faith in the ultimate rightness of things, his motto was "Alles zal recht komen".

Johannes Brand was succeeded in the presidency of the Free State by the Chief Justice Francis W Reitz in 1889. The new president was as different from his predecessor as night is from day. He was one of the men who toyed with the empty idea and cry of "Africa for the Afrikaners, and was a powerful writer of rabid and inflammatory pamphlets, that helped to precipitate the Boer War of 1899. President Reitz retired on account of ill-health in 1896, and was succeeded by Judge Martinus T Steyn, a gentleman of the same political school and creed as the ex-president Reitz. Both had sat at the feet of Mr Carl Berckenhagen, the famous demagogue and brilliant pamphleteer and editor of the intensely anti-English "Free State Express, and both were ardent disciples of President Kruger. President Steyn entered into a military alliance with Kruger, and plunged his country into war, and the Free State fought side by side against the British Government in 1899 to 1902. They were defeated, and Bloemfontein surrendered on the 16th March, and on the 28th May 1900, the Orange Free State was proclaimed British territory.

Maratlabana spruit

A line from the source of the ~~Marico~~ <sup>Molopo</sup>, sweeping eastwards to the source of the Marico River, then south <sup>across</sup> to the source of the Makwasi River, and ~~down~~ <sup>along that river to the Vaal</sup> then south-east to the source of the Hart (Kolong) river, and south to the source of the Makwasi (Ihegole) spruit, and then along that river to the Vaal.

In this way, parts of the districts of ~~Kur~~ Marico, Potchefstroom and Bloemhof were taken from the Transvaal and awarded to the Bechuanaland. The award also gave the Griquas practically all they claimed, including the diamond fields of, Klipdrift.

hailed

The publication of the award was ~~received~~ <sup>hailed</sup> with wild joy by the Bechuanaland (Bechuanaland and Batlhaping) and the Griqua people, and received with equally loud denunciation by the Boers. The indignation of the latter was such that some one had to be sacrificed to it. This was their president ~~Mr~~ M. W. Pretorius. Never above mediocrity even at his best, poor Pretorius had handled the diamond fields dispute with egregious ineptitude. The Volksraad censured him for not having sufficiently studied the interests of the Republic. He was abused; he was accused, he was disgraced, and was practically dismissed from the presidency; he and his colleagues were compelled to resign.

The Transvaal Volksraad under the acting President Daniel J. Erasmus now published a protest against the Keate Award, which they regarded as invalid, because their ex-president Pretorius had signed the deed of submission without reference to the other two members of his commission.

An anomalous situation was now created. The new South-western boundary of the Transvaal became theoretically that defined by the Keate Award, while in practice it remained the vague old line, which kept steadily advancing into the country of the Bechuanaland (the Bechuanaland and the Batlhaping).

The Keate line could only have been enforced by the Imperial Government policing it, but as they did not wish to take on that responsibility, the Transvaal Boers continued to exercise their influence and claims far westward into the Bechuanaland countries. Britain had avariciously annexed Griqualand West and its Diamonds, much to the irritation of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, but the Earl of Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary of the time, would have no more annexations, and no new responsibilities, and so the Keate Award remained a dead letter, <sup>along which</sup> chaos and disorder reigned. <sup>along it</sup> The Transvaal Boers fomented strife among the Bechuanaland tribes

along it, and did everything possible to render the award null and void. After their disappointment in Pretorius, the Transvaal was now looking out for a clever man to be their president. He should be no ordinary simple farmer like Martinus Pretorius. After unsuccessfully trying to induce the cautious President Brand of the Orange Free State to become their chief officer, the Transvaal Republic inaugurated the Reverend Thomas Francois Burgers as its new president on the 1st of July 1872. Burgers commenced auspiciously, spectacularly, almost dramatically. He was determined, by fair or foul means to reverse the Keate decision. He was out, above all to prove to his electors, that they had chosen the right man. xxx

In April 1873, he visited Montshiwa at Moshaneng in Bechuanaland Protectorate to prevail upon him to forego the line of the Keate Award, and to agree to a new line of demarcation between his country and the Transvaal, and to become an ally of the Republic. Montshiwa haughtily rejected these proposals, and flatly refused Pres. Burgers request to discuss the question at a later date. Burgers left him with grim determination to attain his ends by intrigue. The President hunted out Moshwete, chief of the Matlou, the senior branch of the Barolong, and by promising to recognise him as the Paramount Chief of all the Barolong tribes, inveigled him into an agreement or treaty, whereby Moshwete became an ally, and ceded all his territorial rights to the South African Republic. By Moshwete's influence and example, Matlaba, chief of the Rapulana, the junior branch of the Barolong, also became an ally of the Transvaal.

In August 1873, Montshiwa wrote to Burgers to tell him again that he "intended to abide by, and adhere to the decision of Governor Keate", and to protest against firstly, the proposed intention of the president to plant beacons along a new line of his own determination, and secondly, the continued occupation of portions of Barolong territory by persons and officers of the South African Republic. He called upon the president to "issue instructions for the removal of all such persons to within the boundaries of the Republic as defined by the Keate Award. Finally he told Burgers that "friendly relations had been formed between himself and the Queen of England." The chief sent a copy of this letter to Richard Southey, the Lt-Governor of Griqualand West.

But the Transvaal and its President took no notice of these protests, but issued a Proclamation in the Government Gazette to the effect that "All the territorial rights of the Barolong are by cession from the Paramount Chief Moshwete, the territorial rights of the South African Republic.

and that therefore all Moshwete's people, including Matlaba's-people Machavie (i.e. Matlaba) and his people are subjects of the Transvaal. Samuel Melvill, the Republican agent for Native Affairs at Lichtenburg also told the Barolong in an official letter ~~at~~ to Molema that his Government did not recognise the Keate Award, and that Pelfontein (Bodibe) and the farms near it were in the Transvaal territory.

In February 1874 Burgers went to Taung to try and induce Mankurwane to also cede his territorial rights to the Transvaal, but the chief declined, and told the president that he was friendly with the English. Burgers, however managed to extract a treaty from Moshweu chief of the Koranas, and Bothaaitse a petty chief of the Bathaping.

In April (1874) President Burgers ordered Matlaba and his Repulana people to come and settle at Pelfontein (Bodibe), one of the best fountains ~~is~~ in ~~of~~ Montshiwa's country. They had been resident at Matlwang (Machaviestad) on the Mooi River since their leaving Thaba Nchu with ~~the~~ other Barolong tribes in 1841. The Boers, always using Moshwete and Matlaba as levers, <sup>thus</sup> displaced Israel Molema from Pelfontein and Saane from Vleyfontein (Poo-geisane). In vain, poor Montshiwa protested and appealed. Pitifully, on the 4th of May 1874, he thus wrote to Lt-Governor Richard Southey - "The time has now come that the Boers have made up their minds to destroy us, and I now do humbly place myself under your care and protection, I wish, Great Chief, that you would ask the Great Queen of England to take me and my people to be her subjects, and to take my country to be hers."

Numerous and frequent were the letters Montshiwa wrote to one official after another of the South African Republic such as President Burger C. B. ~~Schultz~~ Otto, Landrost of Zeerust; Samuel Melvill, Transvaal agent for Native Affairs at Lichtenburg; and G. B. Scholtz, Commissioner at Lichtenburg; as well as to British Government officials such as Sir Richard Southey, Lt-Governor of Griqualand West, Major W. Owen Lanyon, Administrator of Griqualand West Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Her Majesty's Special Commissioner, Sir George Colley Governor of Griqualand West; Lt-Col Charles Moysey, and Colonel Charles Warren, Administrators of Griqualand West. Always protesting, always appealing and persevering in his demand for the practical carrying out of Mr Keate's decision. Long-drawn and acrimonious was the correspondence between the chief and the private subjects of the South African Republic, who, in defiance of Keate's judgment, built their houses, and carried on their farming operations far beyond the line of demarcation, and well within Montshiwa's

territory at Polfontein (Bodibe), Vleyfontein (Poo-seimane), and Rooigrond. The answers to Montshiwa's letters were a monotonous repetition of the same thing. The subjects and officials of the Transvaal disregarded him completely, crossed the south-western boundary at will, and encroached more and more upon Barolong territory. The British officials cautioned Montshiwa not to use force, but to wait patiently and hope. Southey and Lanyon in the meantime referred to Sir Henry Barkly the High Commissioner, the latter in turn referred to Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary, and there the matter ended. When letters did not avail, Montshiwa went personally to Griqualand West (January 1877), and then to Pretoria (December 1877) to interview the Administrators Lanyon and Shepstone respectively, but he met no better luck.

Then came the brazen, flagrant and grasping annexation of the Transvaal by Sir Theophilus Shepstone (12th April 1877) for Great Britain, plausibly excused on the grounds of Transvaal anarchy, bankruptcy and weakness, and the menace of a general native war. Then came also the discrediting of President Burgers. His idealism, his dreams and his rhetoric did not inspire the Dutch farmers; his unorthodoxy, his reforms and his collusion with the enemy Shepstone - irritated them. He had begun with eclat, he ~~ended~~ finished off in total eclipse. Kruger <sup>clever, cool and calculating,</sup> overshadowed him, Kruger the embodiment of Boer tradition and aspiration. The annexation of the Transvaal revived Montshiwa's hopes that the Keate Award would at last become a reality. To his chagrin, Boer officials <sup>x</sup> remained in their posts, and now openly flaunted him under the cloak of being British subjects and officials. But still he protested and appealed. <sup>In Dec. 1877 he went to Pretoria to protest to Sir Theophilus Shepstone - the administrator of the Transvaal but received no satisfaction</sup>

There was now a determined and concerted effort by the Transvaal to defeat and reverse the act of Annexation. Within a year, two deputations were sent to London on this issue. The whole country rang and re-echoed with the cry of "Independence", and as the deputations did not receive their demands the <sup>next</sup> logical <sup>step</sup> ~~issue~~ was armed resistance. War, desperate and determined was fervently preached from pulpit, platform and press by predikants, pundits, politicians and publishers respectively, it was urged in trembling voice by mothers and wives in a Joan of Arc spirit, and it was precipitated in December 1880.

When ~~xxxx~~ the Transvaal Boers in the disputed territory <sup>went</sup> ~~going~~ on commando, Montshiwa <sup>a</sup> t once re-occupied the lands he claimed, and so hoped

JN All the Boer officials from Vice President Paul Kruger and Attorney General Dr Joubert downwards took office under and were paid by the British. The only exception was Comm. Pet. Joubert.

79  
The Tshidi Barolong.

Only twenty-five years had now elapsed since the death of king Tau. But in that comparatively short space of time, his sons had all followed him to the grave in quick succession, This had the effect of unsettling the leader minds of the people, especially as there arose no ~~SHISE~~ of strong and binding personality, until too late in the day.

The various sections of the Barolong that had stood so faithfully together now broke up into four divisions, and parted from each other by different routes, each under the leadership of one or another of the sons of Tau, and calling themselves after him, thus boo (or boora)-Ratlou, boo (or boora)-Tshidi, boo (or boora)-Makgetla, boo (or boora)-Seleka, boo (or boora)-Rapulana, meaning those of (or the people of) Ratlou, Tshidi, Makgetla, Seleka, or Rapulana.

In time they parted from each other by different directions, and settled in different localities. After the Tshidis, Makgetlas, Selekas and the Rapulanas had left Setlagole, and lived together at Lotlhakane the Rapulanas Selekas ~~went~~ left the circle, and went off in a southerly direction, and have ever since remained distinct, and they are known as the Seleka Barolong. Their descendants are to be found at Thaba Ncho.

The family group of Rapulana next went away, they also went south in the direction of Klerksdorp. They moved about a great deal. They are called the Rapulana Barolong. Their offspring is to be found at Lotlhakane (or Heitfontein) near Mafeking, and at Polfontein (or Boëibe) near Lichtenburg.

The families of Tshidi and Makgetla remained together on the Lotlhakane, and have remained together to this day, chiefly owing to their intermarriage, and the unifying influence of Makgetla.

The Ratlou family broke up again into new subdivisions, and its representatives are now to be found at Morokweng, Ganyesa, Setlagole, and along the Molopo river at Phitshane, and MaTshidilamolomo.

It was about the time when this division was taking place among the Barolong nation (1780 to 1785) that Tawana ~~was~~ born to Morwanyana, the daughter of Makgetla, and the principal wife of Tlhutlwa.

The latter had been dead over two years, but his half brother - Mokgothu - had entered his (Tlhutlwa's) house (or married Morwanyana) to raise seed to him. Thus Tawana and Tawana were really the natural sons of Mokgothu, but in the strange laws of the Barolong, (and Becwana generally) their position and status is unquestioned and unquestionable as sons, heirs and successors of Tlhutlwa for whom they were raised

To Chap I p 9

There is ~~ixx~~ indeed an old legend among the Ba-Releng that their old chief Mereleng was the first to leave the Becwana (Ba-tswana) parent tribe, to establish a separate and independent tribe. Long years after, Mereleng's example was followed by Methule, ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ who was of senior rank, and became the founder of a tribe known as the Ba-Nempe, whose Totem is the owl (merubisi). Methule was followed by Pula, a man of still higher rank, and ~~ixx~~ founder of the Ba-Hurutshe tribe, whose Totem is the Babeen (chwene). It is not said that these were brothers, but their relative positions with regard to royalty and status in that prehistoric Ba-tswana nation were first Mhurutshe, second Pula, and third Mereleng.

On ceremonial occasions among the Ba-Releng, this order of precedence is strictly adhered to, the place of honour being given to the Bahurutshe, while the Ba-Nempe come next, and finally the Ba-Releng. Thus in the sampling of first fruits (go loma leretse) the <sup>Ba</sup>Ba-Hurutshe chief (or tribesman in absence of a chief) as a descendant of Mhurutshe must taste or eat first. In the distribution of charms and amulets/ (<sup>go chwara meshwang</sup>), he must be decorated first, and in the conduct of puberty rites (begwera), he must be served first, and only after him comes a nempe as a descendant of Methule, and finally comes the Mereleng.

Again in <sup>1</sup>planning a settlement or laying a town, the descendants of Mhurutshe are allocated building sites to the East, next come the Ba-Nempe, and lastly - towards the west are placed the Ba-Releng. The east is for people of superior birth. As they ~~ixx~~ <sup>light</sup> saw the sun or life first, so they must always see it first. As the sun first shone upon them, so it must always. Every new sun, as it rises must cast the shadows of people of high rank upon their juniors. If this is reversed, if the rising sun casts the shadow of juniors upon their seniors, the latter are apt to remain always in the shadows. The junior members of the tribe are apt to advance too quickly in wealth, knowledge and power, and to totally eclipse their brothers of higher rank, deminate them, and ultimately rule and oppress them.

~~Pula, Methule and Mereleng then, are by tradition the earliest offshoots from the parent Bastw~~

Pula, Methule and Mereleng and their respective followers, then, are by tradition the first offshoots from the parent Ba-tswana tribe . But there is nothing ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ to show exactly how they are related to each other . There is not a vestige of tradition to show how the Ba-Releng to other Ba-tswana tribes .



ment . After this, in rapid succession , one after another of the African tribes adjacent to the Transvaal was despoiled and enthralled . In August , 1852 , the tension that had existed for several months between the Beer Government and the Bakwena nation under Sechele came to a climax . Sechele was at ~~Kalebeng, near the Transvaal border~~ Kalebeng in Bechuanaland, and not very far from the Transvaal border . The Dutch suspected him of being in possession of a large number of guns, and a huge store of ammunition . They had repeatedly ordered ~~him~~ him to surrender to them as a vassal, and to deliver to them all the guns and ammunition in his possession , or in the possession of his tribe . These demands Sechele regarded as insolent, and had consistently refused to consider them . He claimed to be an independent king, that was given his "place of residence by God and not by the Beers " .

Now Sechele was accused of harbouring, assisting and abetting a clan of the Bakgatla under Mesielele , who the Dutch alleged, had become troublesome as cattle lifters since the success of the Basotho arms at the Battle of Viervoet ~~in~~ (Khunonyana) in the preceding year (1851) . Mesielele and his people lived in what is now the Marico District , at almost the exact spot where Marwane or Gopane's Stad now stands . His country had been annexed and included within the Transvaal . On a commando being sent against him for his alleged thefts, Mesielele escaped to Kalebeng and was found shelter under Sechele, who being asked to give him up replied "Who will have Mesielele can come and take him out of my stomach," Further more, Sechele has allowed English traders dealing in ammunition to pass through his country , the very thing which the Dutch Beers had tried to provide against in the Sand River Convention . The Beers made a great chorus of the repercussions of Viervoet , and how that the Native tribes were emboldened , how they had become insolent, and were preparing for an organised trial of strength against the Europeans . These considerations were advanced as a reason and pretext for commandos and reprisals against one or another of the African tribes . And so in August, a commando of some 300 Beer farmers under Commandant Pieter E. Scholtz were detached to attack Sechele at Kalebeng . When the commando was about to leave, Commandant Scholtz

behind them . On the other side Alfred Milner and Joseph Chamberlain backed by the pride and might of the largest Empire in the world . The conflict of these two sets of personalities and of the interests th they represented led to a War which was to cost the Republics 4,000 burghers killed and 40,000 taken prisoners, while it cost the British Empire 6,000 men killed and 23,000 men wounded, and also £150,000,000 in money .

In the meantime the dispute about the ownership of the diamondiferous ground between the Vaal and the Hart Rivers had waxed large and red . It was coming to a head . The district concerned was inhabited by Bechwana , Kerasas , Griquas , and a few Dutch farmers , and had no boundaries . Hay, the High Commissioner was inundated with correspondence from President M.W. Preterius of the Transvaal , and President Brand of the Free State , and he had, in September ~~written~~ 1870 written to Preterius , urging upon him to abstain from "encroachment upon the possession of Native tribes in friendly alliance with Her Majesty ,"

Nicholas Waterbeer, the Griqua chief at G'iquatown , who claimed the country comprising the diamondiferous districts of Boshof and Jacobsdal in the Orange Free State , and the large tract of land to the west of the Vaal and the Hart Rivers known as Campbell Lands , now claimed also the diamond fields of Klipdrift *(Barkly West)*

addressed a letter from Klein Marice to the Chief Mentshiwa at Lotlhakane, peremptorily ordering him to supply 200 men, mounted and armed and with ammunition and ~~food~~ provisions for two weeks, to assist the Beers in punishing Sechele .

To this strong and strange request, Mentshiwa replied in a stronger and stranger letter which reads thus : "As I am responsible to God and man for what I, or people under my command do, ere I can accede to your orders, please first ~~be~~ distinctly to inform me what the sin unto death of Sechele is . Has he stolen your cattle , burnt your homesteads , ripped up your wives , or what else is the crime that demands his blood ? "

Mentshiwa averred that he had no political or personal grievance against Sechele, and that in fact he was on friendly terms with him . To Mentshiwa's letter , Scheltz ~~replied~~ sent a minatory reply : "As you have thus refused to obey my orders, I shall settle with you after my return from Sechele .

After defeating Sechele , and killing about ninety of his men (30th August), the Beer commande duly returned from the Bakwena country with a booty of 3,000 cattle, several thousands of goats, 11 horses and two wagons . Between 200 and 300 women and children were taken prisoners , and were distributed among the Dutch farmers under conditions closely simulating slavery . The South African historian - Theal - has put himself to much pain and trouble in trying to justify this patently unjustifiable action .

From Kalebeng , Scheltz sent Commandant P. Schutte with a <sup>Dr</sup> patrol to Livingstone's abode about ten miles away . Livingstone was away in Cape Town , and on his return he found his house broken up, his valuable library and other effects wantonly destroyed . By Whom ? This question gave rise to a controversy involving many words , much ink , and still more heartburn

Dutch emigrants and the Bareleng . Where was Hendrik Potgieter who understood the foundations of this friendship ? Alas , he lay seriously ill far away at the Zoutpansberg , where he died in March

353 . The Bareleng were suddenly confronted with an inexorable

i.

B A R O L O N G .

Distribution:

The Ba-Rolong constitute, ~~the~~ if not the most important tribal group, certainly one of the most important tribal groups of the people known as the Becwana (*Bechwana*) or *Ba-Tswana*)

The Becwana people extend uninterruptedly over Southern Africa from the Orange River in the south, to the Zambesi River in the north, and from the eastern border of (the late German) South West Africa inhabited chiefly by the Damaras, to the ~~the~~ western boundaries of Zululand, Natal and Swaziland, corresponding to the Drakensberg Mountains .

The ~~main-body-of-the~~ Ba-Rolong <sup>mainly inhabit</sup> ~~inhabits~~ Southern Bechuanaland, extending on the south from the latitude of Vryburg ~~where~~ ~~the north~~ they are continuous and contiguous with the Ba-Tlhaping, to beyond ~~beyond~~ the Ramatlabama spruit on the north, where they merge into the Ba-Ngwaketse.

The chief centres of aggregation of the Ba-Rolong are along the Molopo river and its affluents , at Mafeking, Phitshane, Setlagole, Lotlhakane, *(Kunena, Ganesa)* Khunwana, *Ganesa*, and Morokweng. They are to be found also eastwards in large groups, and living under their communal system at Polfontein (Bodibe) in the Lichtenburg district, and at ThabaNcho in the O.F.S. *Orange Free State*

While the Becwana people are estimated to number about 1,000,000, comprising some ten to 15 composite tribes, (~~the~~ Barolong *(Bamangwato)* Batlhaping, Bakgalagadi, Bahurutshe, Batlharo, Bakwena, Bangwato, Bangwaketse, Bakgatla, Batawana, Batlokwa, Bamalete etc) that section of them known as the Barolong constitute about one eighth of this number or about 125,000. The Barolong are thus the largest tribal group of the Becwana being larger even than the composite compound of tribes that form the ~~the~~ <sup>ma</sup> Bangwato (100,000)

ORIGIN:

The Barolong are like the other Becwana people in that they must have originated <sup>with them</sup> from some ~~parent~~ <sup>Bantu</sup> common parent tribe in the dim past. But while we can give the dates and details of the separation of the Batawana from their Bangwato progenitors, while we can show the genealogical relationship of the Bakwena, the Bangwato and the Bangwaketse,

6

It can easily be seen how suggestive of plot and productive of intrigue such a social system is, which deliberately creates a series of powerful and often jealous and ambitious substitutes and locum tenens, for weak and blind, because juvenile principals.

Let but the reader grasp this, and he has unfolded before him the reason and explanation for the tendency to disintegration and the recurring subdivisions of the Ba-Tswana tribes.

## R. 5

This is to say that Moshweu procreated Matlhaku (and his brothers) by a woman who was deliberately called the wife of the deceased Kgosi, and her natural issue with Moshweu was reckoned to Kgosi. Moshweu also procreated Seitshiro and other children by another woman who was recognised as his own wife, and therefore her issue as his own sons and daughters.

This is the Saremi of Stowe "Sareni daughter of Umkonta, and the fatal cause of 'the woman's war', (Stowe : Native Races of S.A p.492 )

## R . 6

Matlaba in his evidence at Bloemhof (1871) says that Matlhaku was killed by Moletsane, Chief of the Ba-Taung, and that he (Matlaba) was very angry at this, and went with Leepo to Marico to ask assistance from Mziligazi against Moletsane. (Evidence at Bloemhof p.265) .

Against this there is the uniform evidence of Matlhaku's grand sons to the writer, and also the authority of the Rev John Campbell (Travels in South Africa (2nd Journey) 1820, Vol.ii p. 180) which I follow. Campbell passed through Khunwana in 1820 - about two years after Matlhaku's death, and must have got his information from participants in the battle in which Matlhaku was slain, and eye witnesses of his death.

1760  
1720  
25 - d 1755  
1770  
1725  
40



# HISTORY OF THE BARO LONG

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTORY

### BECHUANALAND : THE BA-TSWANA

Page 6

#### THE BA-TSWANA:

The Ba-Tswana are the inhabitants of Bechuanaland. They are members of the great Bantu race. They are a well-defined group, a distinct entity, distinguished by certain outstanding characteristics from other members of the Bantu race. Of these distinguishing characteristics may be mentioned the habitat Bechuanaland or Ba-Tswana land, Tswana, the language of the Ba-Tswana or Tswana people, with its peculiar phonology, which the people all speak, albeit with several dialectical variations, also the peculiar type of their material culture, shown in their aggregation in large towns, their well-built dwellings consisting of round huts with a conical roof, their skilled pottery, their skin braying and the making of skin mantles or karosses, their wood carving, their extreme pastoralism with an excessive love of accumulating cattle, their rich vocabulary in pastoral matters, their endogamy or the tendency to marry among themselves within narrow circles, and for cousins (ntsala) to have the pre-emptive right in so doing, and last, though not least, their totemism or systems of emblems or emblematic designations. While some of these things may be observed among some other members of the Bantu race, they are conspicuous among the Ba-Tswana; the practice of them among the Ba-Tswana arrests attention. (Van Warmelo: Survey of Bantu Tribes pp 96,99 ; W. Crisp: The Bechuana of S.A Chap. E)

#### TOTEMISM:

It may be interesting and instructive to notice here the implications of the totem, a thing so deeply rooted and so prominent among the Ba-Tswana tribes, as distinguished from other members of the Bantu family as to constitute a peculiarity, a characteristic feature.

There is evidence that in the dim past, most, if not all, savage tribes had some animal or some other natural object which they assumed as an emblem by which they called themselves, or with which they identified themselves. (Dorman: Pygmies and Bushmen of the Kalahari p. 381) They honoured it (go ana) while at the same time they abhorred



## THE BA-TSWANA .

### ORIGIN:

The Ba-Tswana are the inhabitants of Bechuanaland . They are members of the great Bantu race . Just as the English , the Dutch , and the Germans , despite their strongly marked national characteristics all belong to the great Teutonic race , and just as the French , the Italians , the Spaniards and the Portuguese , in spite of their equally strongly marked national peculiarities all belong to the great Latin race , so the Ba-Tswana , the Ba-Sotho , the Ama-Zulu , the Ama-Xhosa, the Ama-Swasi , the Ama-Fengu, the Aba-Thembu, the Va-Tonga, the Vha-Venda etc. all belong to the same Bantu stock . These tribes are all branches of the same stem or root , they all come from the same source.

From this we would expect to find what actually is the case, namely that their customs, laws and usages , their social structure, their government systems of government , and their weapons of war are essentially identical ; their religions and superstitions, their philosophy and ~~many many~~ sophistries are fundamentally similar , while their languages have strong grammatical affinities .

The Ba-Tswana are part of the Bantu race much more than the Bantu race is part of the rest of humanity , even though, if we go back far enough , the Bantu have the same origin as all other races of man , whatever that origin may be - Adam as the Mosais cosmogony teaches , the amoeba and anthropoid ape as evolutionary science proclaims , or the Cave of Lowe<sup>1</sup> as the Ba-Tswana themselves believe.

~~Members of the Bantu race as the Ba-Tswana are, they are a well-defined group (page 6)~~

~~The Ba-Tswana are like other members of the Bantu race~~

Some ethnologists believe that many hundreds of years ago, successive waves of primitive emigrating Bantu came across the red sea from Southern Arabia or perhaps from further east , and passing through Abyssinia pressed towards Equatorial Africa . Certainly, several practices and customs among the Bantu, ~~and~~ such as the universal practice of circumcision , and the prevalent custom of polygamy , as well as several Bantu proverbs , savour very strongly of Asia .

Other scientists think that southward movement of the Bantu commenced from Egypt . Here again, when one hears or reads of ancient Egyptian dress, dances and decorations, one seems to see in the an exact portrayal of Ba-Tswana life .

Travelling along the west bank of the Udi (Limpopo or Crocodile River, the southern Ba-Tswana vanguard reached the Molopo River, and afterwards (it may be) the Orange River, or crossing the Udi (Limpopo) River at its bend, somewhere in the vicinity of Beit Bridge, some of them entered what is now the north and western Transvaal.

In these regions, the first Ba-Tswana arrivals seem to have fraternised and intermarried with the earlier and older settlers, namely the Bushmen, whom they called "Ba-rwa", meaning 'those (or people) of the South'. This intermarriage has produced the present day Ma-Sarwa of Northern Bechuanaland, and is responsible for several Bushman features to be noticed among the Ba-Tswana, the Ba-Rolong, and especially the Ba-Tlhaping and the Ba-Egalagadi. (N. J. van Warmelo: Survey of Bantu Tribes. p. 103)

Ethnologists and philologists cannot, of course, penetrate the dense mists that shroud over these ancient times, but they are almost able to assure us that the Ba-Tswana remained in these regions for centuries, isolated and untouched by all foreign influences, except for Bushmen; that in this period and in this way they developed their own peculiar type of culture and speech, so different from those of other members of the Bantu race both in the east and the west of the sub-continent. (Warmelo: Bantu Tribes p. 103)

it (go bina), as if contact with it would (to use a familiar colloquialism) give them the creeps; they venerated or even deified it (seboko) while at the same time they regarded it with holy fear (go ila). They looked upon it as exercising a subtle inscrutable influence, which could either be protective or destructive, beneficent or malicious. The totem had a spiritual or immaterial significance, and thus became a quasi religious symbol or idol, a tutelary deity of the tribe. At the same time it was regarded as one - a senior member of the tribe, and the tribesmen invoked it, appealed to it and swore by it. There were certain sanctions and taboos connected with

#### DISTRIBUTION:

The Ba-Tswana live in Bechuanaland (Ba-Tswanaland) the high interior plateau of South Africa. They extend uninterruptedly from the Orange River in the South to the Zambesi River in the north, and from the eastern border of (the late German) South West Africa, inhabited chiefly by the Ova-Herero or Damaras, to the western boundaries of Natal, Zululand and Swaziland, corresponding to the Drakensberg range of mountains. In other words, the Ba-Tswana extend northwards and eastwards beyond the limits of the geographical Bechuanaland.

Geography and History are inseparable, and a general idea

ous and fearful of all men possessing a white skin. In this way the sight of a white man came to be regarded as a n ill omen, and his presence the precursor of some calamity or misfortune. And so drought, defeat, disease, death and all manner of disaster were laid to the charge of the white man (J.S. Moffat: Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat p.101, R. Moffat: Missionary Labours; pp 319, 320, 323).

This suspicion and fear complex persists even today in the mind of the southern Ba-Tswana so that drought, famine and frost failure of crops due to early frost are still attributed to a deliberate act of the white man and his aeroplanes, just as slavery expropriation, repression and slavery are said to be purposeful instruments of European penetration.

deceit and murder, and the Ba-Tswana who first received them with the utmost friendship and confidence, became, through the infamous conduct of these men, embittered against them, and at the same time suspicious and fearful of all men possessing ~~whitexaki~~ a white skin. This suspicion and fear complex persists even today in the mind of the ~~xxx~~ southern Ba-Tswana.

The first official and recorded visit of Europeans to the country of the Ba-Tswana took place in 1801. In that year, General Francis Dundas being Governor of the Cape Colony, Commissioned Judge Pieter J. Truter and Dr William Somerville to lead an expedition to buy cattle from the country beyond the Orange River. They travelled as far north as Lithakong (Lattakoo, Takeon), which was then the principal town of the Ba-Tlhaping under their great chief Molehabangwe, and contained about 15,000 inhabitants, the greater part of whom were, however, a section of the Ratlou Ba)rolong under their hereditary chief Mokalaka. This is the Mokraki and Mokrakka of Lichtenstein and Campbell respectively, adopted by Stowe and Theal.

Foot Notes: Lichtenstein : Travels Vol ii p.408  
 Campbell: Travel (1813) p. 189  
 Stowe : Native Races of S.A. p.501  
 Theal : History of S.A (1795-1828)p.88.

Truter and Somerville were the first to give some clear and definite information about the Ba)tswana and their country.

In the same year, William Edwards and Jan Kock, who came out as volunteer and unattached missionaries, settled at Lithakong among the Ba-Tlhaping, but they soon after opened a lucrative trade in cattle and ivory (Campbell: Travels in S.A(1813) p.175). Later on, Edwards in pursuit of business even went as far north as the Ba-Ngwaketse country, and eventually became a successful farmer, a slave owner, and a "heavy headed infidel" (Moffat: Missionary Labours p.216)

In 1805, during the brief interlude of the Dutch Government at the Cape following upon the Treaty of Amiens, Lieut. Governor Jan Janssens sent an expedition under Landrost Van der Graaff and Dr Henry Lichtenstein among other things "to examine the situation of great nation hitherto imperfectly known under the name of the Briqu, but since the English Expedition which was undertaken in 1801 to trade with them in cattle, called Butshuanas." (Lichtenstein: Travels in S.A. Vol II p.190)

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