

As passed by the parents  
parents .

It is interesting to note that an almost identical custom was practised among the ancient Romans , as well as among the Hebrews and the Arabs .

Among the Ba-Tswana , , the marriage portion (bogadi) was usually represented in an even number of Cattle, ~~minim~~ or sheep , or both ; sometimes in horses or some other possessions , but never in goats . Both portions (but especially the marriage portion) were usually made in public , as many witnesses as possible being present on each side . The ~~xx~~ transaction made the contract mutually binding , and the betrothed children were henceforth regarded and spoken of as man and wife . The betrothal or marriage contracted for by this betrothal or marriage portion , as the case may be, would now take precedence of all other and subsequent betrothals or marriages that the man might contract, even if these <sup>others</sup> ~~others~~ <sup>were</sup> actually consummated first ; even if the child for whom arrangements <sup>had</sup> been thus officially made , should, as he grew , love and marry some other woman , pay her marriage portion, and procreate children with her . Such unions and such issue were regarded as secondary and inferior to the theoretical one ~~arranged~~ pre-arranged for by the parents , ~~and~~ which alone determined the great, or principal wife or house of the king (or for that matter any polygamist), and one whose issue enjoyed priority or seniority, and therefore the first right to succession .(J.T.Brown: Among the Bantu Nomads p.61)

The second wife or house, the third and subsequent wives or houses/~~were~~ were similarly acquired and named after this manner and order. All these secondary wives were collectively called "basadi ba serethe" (wives of the heel) . The essential feature in which they differed from the "greatwife" was that while the choice of the "great or fir principal wife" devolved upon the father and ~~maternal~~ maternal uncle of the young man , often in his minority, and was a family affair, subsequent and inferior wives were usually chosen by the man himself , and need not receive the sanction of his family . In this way, they ~~were~~ were from the outset labelled 'second class' , and indeed, cohabitation with them was not necessarily nor usually preceded by the passage of marriage portions . Nay, this

Thus it was that Kgamane -Ratlou's mother- though actually married many years after the other wives of Tau , was considered "the great" or principal wife" , and her house the great or principal house from which was to come the successor to Tau . Thus it was that Ratlou , though some twenty-five years younger than the eldest of his half brothers , was nevertheless senior to them all in status , and as such the principal heir and immediate successor of king Tau , their common father .

It can easily be seen from this how suggestive of plot , how productive of intrigue , and how pregnant of disintegration such a (polygamous) social system is which deliberately raises rivalries and enmities between wives , and creates a series of powerful and often jealous and ambitious substitutes and locum tenens (in grown up sons of these first married wives) for weak and blind , because juvenile principals (in youthful sons of "great wives .)(William Crisp: The Bechuana of S.A pp 20,21) (E.Casalis: The Basutos:pp186,187). Let but the reader grasp this, and he has unfolded before him the explanation for the tendency to disintegration and recurring sub-divisions of the Ba-Tswana tribes , and the reason why Africa has never produced a nation , in the true sense of that word .

Ratlou was born either at Setlagole or at "aung about the year 1745, and succeeded to the kingship of the Ba-Rolong nation on the death of his father ~~xxxxxxx~~ - Tau - about 1760 . As he would be about twenty-five years old ~~xxxxxxx~~ and the times being out of joint his uncle ~~Nth~~ Nthufa acted for (or shared authority with) him until the latter's death at Lithakong (near Kuruman) <sup>about</sup> five to eight years later . Seleka - Ratlou's eldest half-brother then filled Nthufa's place , and even after Ratlou was formally installed as king , Seleka continued to exercise the chief administrative authority , as being tutor and prime minister of the young king .

c 1776 . Ratlou died at Mosite about 1770 . He was the last king of the united Ba-Rolong nation . After his death, his people became divided on ~~the question of succession~~ <sup>Ratlou had</sup> ~~the kingship~~ <sup>had</sup> five recognized wives (a strange ignorance prevails regarding their names)

and by these several sons , of whom the chief were Seitshiro , Mariba , Modirwagale , Mokalaka and Mephorotlho in about that order of priority , but he had no sooner died than there was difficulty and disagreement as to his legitimate successor . The question was between Seitshiro and Mariba , and the nation was nearly equally divided between , some favouring the one and some the other , but Seitshiro had, perhaps , the larger number of supporters . It was claimed for Seitshiro that his mother was betrothed officially first , and the betrothal portion (mokwele) duly passed , and for Mariba that his mother's marriage portion (Bogadi) was passed first - if on the same day as Seitshiro's mother's marriage ~~part~~ portion . It was claimed against Mariba that though a natural son of Ratlou , he was by law and strict usage the youngest son of Tau , ~~who~~ as his mother had been engaged to be married to Tau shortly before his death . The half-brothers of the two claimants to the kinship were , like the rest of the nation , divided. Modirwagale supported Seitshiro's claim , and had the assistance of ~~the~~ Tshidi , Makgetla , Seleka and Rapulana and their followers, while Mokalaka supported Mariba's claim , and had most of the Ratlou's wards or families with him . The Ratlou wards or families that supported Seitshiro's claim and those that supported Mariba's claim have ever since remained separate and distinct , each section claiming to be senior to the other , and to this day, a subdued animus subsists between them , and the question is still debated between them with some feeling as to who are senior - the supporters and <sup>descendants</sup> issue of Seitshiro , or those of Mariba .

Under these circumstances , as already stated, when the ~~major~~ majority of the nation recognised Seitshiro rather than Mariba, as the legitimate successor of Ratlou , and appointed Modirwagale as regent , Mokalaka was very dissatisfied , and he at once commenced a propaganda of dissension and opposition , and after a year or two , he took away the young Mariba to establish an independent dynasty . It is instructive ~~to~~ and <sup>te</sup> interesting to remark that <sup>a short</sup> sometime after this separation , ~~Seitshiro~~ <sup>by his great wife</sup> Seitshiro had a son whom Modirwagale named "Kgosi" (King) meaning thereby that Kgosi was the real king of the Ba-Rolong after Seitshiro . Mariba had also a son ~~later~~ soon after , and as if by way of retort , he ~~was~~

received (presumably from Mokalaka) the name of "Moamogwa", that is 'The <sup>Robbed One</sup> Victim', the despoiled One, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ meaning thereby that Moamogwa had been robbed of his inheritance and cheated out of his rights as the real successor to the ~~king~~ kingship .

These two divisions of the Ratlou' Ba-Rolong , namely those who supported Seitshiro and those who supported Mariba will now be studied under two separate headings as

- A. The Ratlou Ba-Rolong of Seitshiro ( or Seitshiroites ) and
- B. The Ratlou Ba-Rolong of Mariba (or Maribanites ).

A. The Ratlou Ba-Rolong of Seitshiro (The Seitshiroites).

Seitshiro, after whom this section of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong are called <sup>to</sup> distinguish <sup>them</sup> from the other large section of Mariba, died ~~and~~ very soon after the separation - about 1774 - at Mosite being one of the victims to the sporadic outbreaks of small pox .He had married Khukhwana, a daughter of his uncle-Rapulana ,and had issue with <sup>her</sup> in a son -Kgosi - mentioned above , who thus became his father's successor , and for whom Modirwagale now became regent .

Modirwagale now led this Section of the Ratlou people, together with the Tshidi, Makgetla, Seleka and Rapulana wards to Setlagole . Here they <sup>l</sup>ived in peace for about two years only ,for Mokalaka soon came down from Morokweng with a large army , and ~~skizakak~~ invaded Setlagole one early morning , but was repulsed . It was after this that the unfortunate love affair between Rapulana and ~~Ma~~-Maremela caused Modisa, devoured with jealousy, to ridicule and insult Rapulana . Insult provoked civil strife in this section of the Ratlou ward was isolated which/Modisa ~~waxxkiihwxandxthexTshidixMakgetlaxSelexand~~ Rapulana~~xwards~~ its prince was killed, and the Tshidi, Makgetla, Seleka and Rapulana wards withdrew <sup>bodily</sup> from Setlagole (vide p - ) . and then separated in various directions .

The Seitshiro section of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong ~~wax~~ under Modirwagale was now left an easy prey to the vengeance of the malcontent -Mokalaka , who was already preparing to attack Setlagole . But Before ~~tha~~ this, however, Modirwagale , burning with anger against Makgetla, followed up the ~~Ma~~ <sup>k</sup>getla and Tshidi wards of which Makgetla was chief . He came up with them at Phitshane, surprised them and defeated them , and slew Tlhutlwa, the scion

He came up with the Tshidi and Makgetla clans ~~profaxhishuMakgetla~~  
~~waxxshif;~~ at Phitshane, and defeated them, slaying Tlhatlwa the  
 scion of the Tshidi clan, for whom Makgetla was~~wa~~ regent. He then  
 followed up the Rapulana clan, surprised them a little to the east  
 of Phitshane, and defeated them in detail, and slew Molekane -  
 Rapulana's ~~eldest~~ son of highest rank who was due to succeed him as  
 chief of the Rapulana clan - and also his brother Kolobe.

c 1778. After this shocking defeat, Rapulana, crushed at the loss of  
 his two sons went on to settle at Lotlhakane, nearly fifty miles to  
 the east of Setlagole (c.1780) (This is the earliest settlement of  
 a Ba-Rolong ~~tri~~ clan at this place, which was destined to ~~make~~ his-  
 tory after a century and a half). Makgetla and the Tshidi and  
 Makgetla clans lingered for a while at ~~Sekhagoin~~ Phitshane, and  
 then followed Rapulana to Lotlhakane. As for the victorious Modirwa-  
 gale, he returned to Setlagole feeling very satisfied no doubt with  
 himself. But a big surprise was in store for him. While he was on  
 the war path, his great rival Mokalaka had ~~had~~ come down from Morok-  
 weng, and invaded Setlagole and won an easy victory. He completely  
 routed Modirwagale's home guard and dispersed them, over-ran the  
 adjoining country along the Molopo river, and occupied Setlagole,  
 establishing his head-quarters at Majane - a hillock of strategic  
 position on the Setlagole spruit, and chosen ever since by every  
 military leader - black and white - as a <sup>n</sup> point of observation and  
 vantage.

Under the circumstances, Modirwagale with his charges -  
 namely Kgosi and his half-brothers - and ~~axhamfakxef~~ <sup>the faithful</sup> followers of  
 the Seitshiro dynasty ~~waxxshikwaxxin~~ fled to Lithakong with a view to seeking military  
 assistance from the Ba-Tlhaping. But while they received a ready  
 asylum, hospitality and sympathy from Molehabangwe, the great chief  
 of the Ba-Tlhaping, they got no help. Modirwagale therefore made  
 his home at Lithakong, and finally died there in utter obscurity  
 about the year 1785.

After Modirwagale's death, Moshweu, a half-brother of  
 Kgosi now assumed <sup>and</sup> the office of trustee/protector of the latter.  
 After a few years, he and the Seitshiro sub-clan left the country  
 of the Ba-Tlhaping and joined the Seleka Barolong at Thabeng, but  
 did not ~~live~~ delay there for more than about five years.



Moshweu, by his act was now to be considered as regent for Sekgoro, the eldest of the putative sons of Kgosi. This Sekgoro, however, died of perityphlitis during his minority. As might well be expected, all the royal diviners agreed that he was poisoned by Seitshiro(b) who would have been his father's successor but for this madness of seed-raising.

About 1800, Moshweu and his people left Khurwana, and went to form a new settlement at Ga-Tshebethwane, the place now generally known as Disaneng, twenty-four miles to the north-west of Mafeking.

About 1802, the Seitshiro clan was joined at Ga-Tshebethwane by the Tshidi Ba-Rolong, now under Leshomo, a son of Tshidi by one of the 'lower houses'. After their defeat by Modirwagale in 1778, this ~~mat~~ clan had followed the Rapulana clan to Lotlhakane, but on the removal of the latter to Didibaneng after the death of Makgetla and his succession by Leshomo as regent, the latter had left Lotlhakane with the tribe to make a new home at Go-Tawana-between Phitshane and Setlagole, but Mokalaka raided them here a few times and finally forced them from Go-Jawana, followed them up, and again defeated them at Itlho-ja-Tau, between Phitshane and Disaneng, in 1798. They now fled to the Ba-Ngwaketse country and found asylum ~~at~~ under Moleta, father of Makaba II ? WHO LOBATED them at Mokakanana. After staying here two or three years, they returned to their country in 1802, Mokalaka, whom they feared having left those parts ~~for~~ for Lithakong in the Ba-Tlhaping country. At first, they made an encampment near the Seitshiro people at Ga-Tshebethwane.

In 1809 Moshweu, the regent of the Seitshiro clan died, and immediately, there were plots and rivalries among his people for the regency or chieftainship. The claimants for the chieftainship were (1) Matlhaku, the natural son of Moshweu, and reputed eldest surviving son of Kgosi for whom Moshweu had acted, and (2) Seitshiro(b), the eldest son of Moshweu. Romance was lent to the contest by the interesting fact that the rivals also contended for the hand and favour of Tshadinnye, the daughter of Mokoto-a-Rapulana, and young and beautiful widow of the lately deceased Moshweu. (This is the "Sareni-daughter of Umkonta and the fatal cause of the Woman's War" of Stowe: Native Races of S.A p 492 etc, also adopted by Wookey: Dico tsa Becwana p. 28)

While there was, according to custom, nothing wrong or immoral in Seitshiro(b) desiring to marry his step mother, (J.T. Brown : Among the Bantu Nomads p.58.) for as the Ba-Tswana say, - "Kill him not who cohabits with his step-mother, he seeks but to procreate younger brothers for himself" (Molala le mmagwe ga bolawe, o a ba a itsalela bo monnawe.) , there is no question that according to strict Ba-Tswana customary law , Matlhaku had the better claim to chieftainship. Though he was the natural, de facto - son of Moshweu, he was the putative, legally assumed - de jure - son of Kgosi for whom Moshweu had been regent , and it would have been a gross miscarriage of justice for a regent's son to succeed his father in the presence of an effectual principal's son, as here . But not everybody shared this view , Both Matlhaku and Seitshiro(b) then each found warm supporters in the Tshidi Ba-Rolong establishment at Ga-Tshebethwane . Leshomo, the Tshidi-Ba-Rolong regent was for Matlhaku, while Tawana , the legitimate Tshidi chief for whom Leshomo was acting , supported Seitshiro (b)'s claim . In the civil war that followed , Matlhaku, who had the larger following among his people, as having the better claim , was nevertheless defeated . He even lost Tshadinnye who preferred him, but was forcibly annexed by Seitshiro .

1810 . In this civil strife, the Tshidi Ba-Rolong were mixed up with the Seitshiro clan , and Leshomo, <sup>and others</sup> who supported Matlhaku shared his fate of defeat and expulsion from Ga-Tshebethwane . They escaped to Matsekane/~~ka~~ (near Kadichwene -or Kurrichane- ) in the country of the Ba-Hurutshe . This place was so infested with lions that Matlhaku soon left it to encamp at Sekanameng further south.

From this place, Matlhaku was dislodged by Seitshiro(b), who ~~with~~ <sup>the Ba-Tshidi chiefs -</sup> ~~with the help of~~ Tumaletse and Mokake , ~~and also~~ Sethibe , chief of the Manyana clan of the Ba-Hurutshe attacked and defeated him/ <sup>(1815)</sup> (Pholofolo Mmehwane) re-

After this, Matlhaku led his following to build ~~his~~ <sup>re-</sup> ~~town~~ <sup>re-</sup> at the ruins of Ga-Khanwana - ~~his~~ <sup>re-</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>re-</sup> old town founded by his natural father-Moshweu , the burial place of his national father-Kgosi, and his own birth place.

As for Seitshiro(b) / he left Ga-Tshebethwane and went to live among the Rapulana clan at Didibaneng



1815 - 1820

As for Seitshiro(b), accompanied by his invaluable prize and enchantress - Tshadinnye, he left Ga-Tshebethwane after the civil commotion, and went to live ~~wik~~ among the Rapulana tribe at Didibaneng, but there the beauty of Tshadinnye excited too much unwelcome attention, and Seitshiro(b) had perforce to leave the place. He now went to Thabeng with his wife and followers, to live with the Seleka Ba-Rolong, but here again, the Seleka chief - Sehumelo fell a victim to the bewitching beauty ~~mf~~ of this paragon, and so far forgot himself and his duties as a host that he annexed Tshadinnye to his seraglio. The injured Seitshiro(b) now went to Lithakong in the Ba-Tlhaping country to nurse his heart and seek his fortunes there. He was well received by Mothibi, chief of the Ba-Tlhaping, who gave him protection and cattle, by way of perpetuating the friendship that had existed between his father - Molehabangwe, and Seitshiro(b)'s natural father - Moshweu, in earlier years. Many people of the Ratlou clan, hearing of Seitshiro(b)'s royal reception among the Ba-Tlhaping, followed him to Lithakong, and the Seitshiro following at Lithakong became quite an important section of the population. Seitshiro(B) grew in wealth and influence and finally died among the Ba-Tlhaping at Lithakong in 1825. (per Seleka Letsapa, grandson of Seitshiro(b), born 1841, died 1940).

c 1815 Most of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong, the original followers of the first Seitshiro, had, of course flocked to Matlhaku's standard, especially after he built his town at Khunwana, and he became the universally recognised chief of the Seitshiro clan. Chieftainship might have remained in Matlhaku's family but for the fact that he also did what was regarded as noble and honourable, namely to procreate children for his deceased elder brother. And so from being a chief in his own right, he became a regent for his natural son - Kgosi(II) raised to Sekgoro who had died about 1800.

Ever since his return from the Ba-Hurutshe country, Matlhaku had nursed a grudge against the Ba-Hurutshe ~~fan~~ of Manyana for the unprovoked attack of their chief against him in 1813 at Sekanameng. In 1818, therefore, he conducted a retaliatory expedition against them, but the Ba-Hurutshe, now under Kontle defeated him and slew him, as well as his brother Nketsang. (Chief Matlaba of the Rapulana Ba-Rolong: in his evidence at Bloemhof in 1871 stated that

(Footnote continued)

Matlhaku was killed by Moletsane , chief of the Ba-Taung, at Khunwana , and that he (Matlaba) went with Leepo to ask assistance from Mziligazi against Moletsane (Evidence at Bloemhof p 265)

Against this there is the uniform evidence of Matlhaku's grandsons to the writer , and also the authority of the Rev John Campbell - Travels in S.A.(2nd Journey) Vol.II.p.180) which I follow . Campbell visited Khunwana in 1820 -two years after Matlhaku's death, and must have got his information from participants in the battle in which Matlhaku lost his life, and eye witnesses of his death .)

Mongala , the eldest surviving brother of Matlhaku for a short time filled the breach created by the latter's death, and acted as regent for the young Kgosi(II) . He was a tall man of well-cut features, commanding appearance and superior intellect. (J,Campbell 2nd Travels in S.A Vol I.p 180 ) In 1821 he was visiting the Seleka Ba-Rolong at Thabeng(Buisfontein) when he and his party were attacked, over-powered and ~~murdered~~ murdered by a band of Korana robbers under Jan Tsaibosch (Per Ramosiane Mongala , grand son of Mongala, born 1845,died 1940)

In 1819, Kgosi (II) for whom Matlhaku and Mongala had been regents was still a young man ~~of~~, but his grand uncle - Mokoto - at this time about seventy-five years of age , put him through the initiation school (bogwera), and then invested him with a 'tiger skin , the insignia of chieftainship , himself acting as tutor and chief administrative officer . The young chief Kgosi was a man of small stature , mild temper and unimposing ~~exterior~~ appearance (Campbell 2nd Travels in S.A.Vol.I pp. 61,180). Behind ~~his~~ insignificant exterior, however,were hidden qualities of the highest order - bravery,patriotism and ~~determination~~ determination .

In March 1820 ,Kgosi(II)visited Mothibi , chief of the Ba-Tlhaping at Kuruman (or New Lithakong), and there met the Rev John Campbell and Robert Moffat (J,Campbell: 2nd Travels Vol.I ~~pp 67,69,& 172~~ pp 67,69,& 172) . After the latter whom he ~~much admired~~ much admired, he named his his eldest son 'Moshwete' (-Moffat) born in ~~the~~ <sup>he-named</sup> April 1820 (Ebid p 185) , the future chief of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong at Khunwana, who was destined to figure so prominently in the Bechuanaland and Transvaal border disturbances of 1881 to 1884 .

1820

While Kgosi (II) was chief ~~at~~ of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong at Khunwana, the Rev John Campbell visited that place (25th April 1820) on his way from the Ba-Tlhaping capital of Kuruman under Mothibi, to the Ba-Hurutshe capital ~~at~~ Kadichwene (Karrichane) of their chief Diutluleng. At this time, the Tshidi Ba-Rolong were ruled by Tawana and had their head-quarters at Phitshane, while the Ba-Ngwaketse ~~was~~ were under Makaba(II) at Kgwakgwe, the Ba-Kwena at Shokwane under Motswasele, and the Ba-Ngwato under Kgari at Kutswe.

1823. It was shortly after this time that the Ba-Tlokwa ~~hordes~~ (mantatisi) hordes, sweeping like a devastating pestilence from the east, south-east and north-east, ~~at~~ invaded Khunwana and soon reduced it to ashes. Kgosi III did all that was possible to stem the savage onslaught, but was overcome by superior numbers and slain ~~at~~ in ~~1823~~ June 1823. The place where he fell is still pointed out on Tlholeatau, a hillock ~~at~~ overlooking Khunwana from the west side. Kgosi's only son and heir-(Moshwete) was then only three years old, so his cousin Gontse was appointed to be regent. The ~~hordes~~ Ba-Tlokwa (Mantatisi) having sacked Khunwana passed on to the Ba-Tlhaping country, while the Ratlou Ba-Rolong fled westwards, towards the Kgalagadi Desert. In so doing they met the Tshidi Ba-Rolong under Tawana, also fleeing to the desert. The two clans now swung back to Phitshane to make their home there together, and were able in the following year to beat off the Ba-Taung invaders ~~at~~ under Mophete and Moletsane.

This Seitshiro clan of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong ~~lived~~ under Gontse, lived with the Tshidi Ba-Rolong at Phitshane for only one year. Toward the end of 1825, they left for Morokweng, where the Rev Moffat found them at the end of the following year (R. Moffat : Missionary Labours p.463) ., while the Tshidi Ba-Rolong went to make their home at Khunwana.

1832 When the Tshidi Ba-Rolong were driven from Khunwana by the Matebele of Mziligazi in ~~1832~~ August 1832 (P. Kirby: Diary of ~~Andrew~~ Andrew Smith Vol I p 401), they were joined by the Ratlou Ba-Rolong under Gontse, and the two clans proceeded together to Motlhana-wa-Pitse (Platberg on the Vaal) to join the Seleka Ba-Rolong of Moroka.   
*were joined by the Ra-pulane clan of Makaba in 1834*

With these they migrated to Thaba Ncho in 1833, and were there

(Moshweu's family)

A considerable number of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong that had in earlier years (1816) gone off with Seitshiro(b) to Mithakong still remained among the Ba-Tlhaping. This number was increased after 1832 by new refugees from Mziligazi's depredations. Seitshiro(b) being dead, they now recognised his eldest son Letsapa as their leader. They ~~remained with Mahura~~ When Mthibi moved to Dikgatlhong, they remained with Mahura his brother Mahura at Kuruman, and afterwards moved with him to Taung. <sup>(c 1828)</sup> Mahura gave them <sup>about 5 miles</sup> a village site at Shudintlha to the north-east of Taung. ~~Here, among the Ba-Tlhaping~~ Here, among the Ba-Tlhaping they lived continuously until 1845. At this time, Gontse and his ~~followers~~ following, composed of the senior section (Kgosi's wards), together with Tshidi division of the Ba-Rolong, had returned from their seven years sojourn at Thaba Ncho, and were moving from Matlwang (Machaviestad) ~~on the Tlokwen(Mooi)river,~~ to Motswiwapetlwana (Leapfontein and Kafferskmaal) on the Khing (Schoenspruit). These followers of Seitshiro(b) now under Letsapa were ~~induced~~ induced by Gontse and Masisi to come and join the other (Kgosi's) branch of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong, to move with them to land of their fathers.

1845. Since the death of Kgosi II in 1823, Gontse had been regent for the young chief Moshwete. The latter was now old enough (25 years) to assume the duties of his office, but showed characteristic indifference. He had gone with the Gontse party to Thaba Ncho in 1833, but had remained there with his uncle Sebetso when the ~~rest~~ rest of his tribe returned in 1841. Though Gontse was now old and feeble, he still clung tenaciously to the regency, but as Masisi, the son of Matlhaku was nearer to the ruling ~~house~~ house, and was fully grown, he was, through the instrumentality of Letsapa, made regent instead of Gontse, for the absentee Moshwete. <sup>This happened at Motswiwapetlwana in 1848.</sup> <sup>Moshwete</sup> Meanwhile, ~~the latter~~ the latter had gone into service under some Dutch farmers (J. van Schalkwyk) in the Potchefstroom district, but after ~~an~~ about eight years (1856) he rejoined his people at Modimong near Taung, whither they had gone to escape the commando of Andries Pretorius and Paul Kruger. (See page --)

But during the famine that prevailed among the Ba-Tlhaping after their war with the Transvaal and the Free State in 1858, Moshwete though a man of nearly forty years of age, made no effort to claim his undisputed right as chief, <sup>but</sup> and instead went to look for work as a sheep herd at Ottosdaal.

In 1848, the Tshidi Ba-Rolong were at Mutswana (Platberg on the Schoenspruit) where they had halted temporarily in their migration from ~~Makung~~ Thaba Ncho and Matlwang (Machaviestad) to Lotlhakane on the Molopo river. As they continued their march in the north-westerly direction, they were followed in 1849 by the Ratlou Ba-Rolong from Motwiwapetlwana (Leapfontein) through Louputsana (Lamoenfontein), Tselengwe (Paardeplaas), Logadigadi (Barberspan), Kopela, Mhuhutso, and Khurwana to Lotlhakane. Some of these Ratlou people stopped under Masisi and his brother Mogawane with the Tshidi Ba-Rolong of Tawana at Lotlhakane, while others passed on with under Gontse and Letsapa to Setlagole in 1849.

1852. In 1852 Boer farmers in the Rustenburg district were away on commando against the Ba-Kwena of Setsehele, and several men of the Ratlou and Tshidi Ba-Rolong went from Setlagole and Lotlhakane respectively ~~to~~ to raid the deserted Boer ~~farms~~ farms. First a foray was organised by Mokoto Monchosi and Segae Motlhalame of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong. They had no sooner returned with immense herds than Gwadibe Seitshiro headed another party raiding party of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong, while Tlhonedi Makgetla led another party of the Tshidi Ba-Rolong from Lotlhakane, with some Ba-Mhurutshe refugees of chief Lenewe. All these parties brought much spoil. Now, some of these cattle thieves resided at ~~Setlagole~~ Lotlhakane where Montshwa (Tawana's successor) was paramount. To this town, the Boers on their return from the commando against Sechele traced their cattle and as Montshwa either would not or could not deliver the thieves nor return the cattle, this furnished an additional reason why he, and his Tshidi people, and Masisi and his Ratlou people had suddenly to leave Lotlhakane one night in September 1852. They went to Setlagole to join the other Ratlou Ba-Rolong under Gontse, but when they got there, they found that Gontse, ~~guilty~~ conscious of guilt, had run away at the first inkling of Boer reprisal. He however came back to Setlagole after a few weeks, as the

1858

were at war with the Basutho of Moshweshwe, the Ba-Tlhaping under their chiefs Gasebonwe and Motlhabane joined the koranas of Scheel Kobus to raid Boer farms on the west of the Free State, committed murders, and looted a quantity of stock, where upon a Boer commando attacked the robbers across the Vaal (Theal : History of S.A. 1854-72 pp 64 -67). The Ratlou Ba-Rolong took up arms under Mokoto Monchosi-Gontse's nephew in defence of their homes, and in support of their Ba-Tlhaping ~~kinsmen~~ hosts and protectors. This war ended disastrously for the Ba-Tlhaping. <sup>They lost heavily, they suffered heavy casualties & lost heavily in stock</sup> Paul Kruger and Hendrik Venter routed them in a series of sharp skirmishes. On the 13th of August 1858, they killed Gasebonwe, <sup>hacked</sup> cut off his head, and sent it <sup>in a sack</sup> to the chief Mahura - a ghastly ~~and~~ deed, which Paul Kruger forgets to mention or comment upon in his Memoirs (Memoirs of Paul Kruger pp 71 & 72). <sup>Theal 1854-72 p 67</sup>

*The grisious deed reminds one of the manner in which head was similarly hacked off & sent to Mark Anthony for the same reason - as incontrovertible proof of the victims death.*

After this war, there was a great scarcity of food, amounting almost to a famine in the country, as the people had not been able to plough their garden lands. It was then that Moshwete left his people again to seek employment

*The Dutch imposed reparations in 5000 cattle 300 horses, 5000 sheep & 40000 lbs of wool upon Moshwete, as well as the loss of the country - Moshwete's compensation was actual parcel of land for George & his sons to occupy. The celebrated intrusion of the Dutch to occupy Kurrum in 1858.*

*This killing of Gontse has done 4 friends on the employment of Gontse as they took a leading part in his assassinations in Maseru area*

1867.

Ten years later, when diamonds were discovered on the Vaal and Orange rivers, hundreds of the Ratlou young men left Modimong in company with larger numbers of the Ba-Tlhaping youth to seek labour on the river diggings.

1870.

At the end of 1870, the acting chief Masisi died at Modimong. Within a few months of his death, Leepo, his chief adviser, was also gathered to his fathers. It was shortly before this that an important conference had been held at Buurmansdrift, near Mafeking, between the Ba)tswana chiefs and a Commission of the Transvaal Republic to come to some understanding on the question of boundaries. In this conference (August 1870), Masisi had sent Phoi, a son of Gontse, to represent his section of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong. Then came the <sup>famous</sup> Bloenbof Inquiry (April 1871), shortly before Masisi's death, and Phoi was again deputed to represent the Ratlou Ba-Rolong.

1871.

After Masisi's death, the people now clamoured to have their rightful chief Moshwete installed, and Motlhabani was commissioned by the tribe to find him and bring him back. In the meantime, Mosetlhi a brother of Masisi was placed at the head of affairs, an appointment which Montshiwa -the Tshidi Ba-Rolong chief, with his mordant wit made much fun of. He told the Ratlou people in a public meeting

that Mosetlhi was a ~~typical~~ hunter and soldier of ~~a~~ <sup>the</sup> type that could not even kill a chicken. Montshiwa had suggested that Rakoko, a son of Leepo, should be regent. Any one who consults the genealogical table (p -) will see how far from the ruling house Rakoko is .  
 1872 . After some seeking, Moshwete was found <sup>at Ottesdaal</sup> in the Potchefstroom district working under terms of indenture for ~~First~~ Field-cornet van der Merwe vanSchalk . Fortunately, the Rev Thomas F. Burgers, the new and clever President of the Transvaal displayed an unusual interest in Moshwete and a remarkable solicitude for his (Moshwete's) office . He released him from his indenture to his master, and sent him back to Modimong and to his people a free man , where he was duly installed as chief of the Seitshiro section of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong Matlaba's Evidence Bloemhof Inquiry p 263).

President Burgers went further . He spoke many soft and soothing words <sup>to</sup> with Moshwete, which ended in the latter entering into an agreement of amity and a military alliance with the South African Republic , and also ceding the territorial rights of the Ratlou ~~and~~ Ba-Rolong to that ~~country's~~ government . In return for these favours, Moshwete was pronounced as being under the special protection of the Transvaal , and President Burgers recognised him as "Paramount Chief" of all the Ba-Rolong tribes. That is to say, the president pronounce him ~~himself~~ 'king' or chief of all the chiefs of the Ratlou, <sup>the</sup> Tshidi, the Makgetla, the Seleka and the Rapulana tribes . In one 'fiat', ~~Moshwete~~ ~~was~~ ~~restored~~ as by the stroke of a magician's wand, Moshwete was supposed to be restored to the exalted position of Tau and his predecessors , a century and a half and more, previously . Burgers gave Moshwete a huge stick , a kind of sceptre, emblematic of his chiefly office and paramountcy. This stick (It is four feet long, has a large head covered with ~~the~~ brass, and on it is inscribed " 1st Regiment -British Italian Legation".) is still treasured as an heirloom in the Moshwete family, and is still referred to as an uncontested proof- as if it had ~~been~~ brought by an angel , or come from Mount Sinai -of Moshwete's seniority .

To this seniority of Moshwete, most Ba-Rolong chiefs agreed and still agreed . In fact Montshiwa and Moroka - the two most enlightened and most vocal chiefs of the Ba-Rolong, declared it in a large

convocation (or pitso) of the Ba-Tswana tribes at Bloemhof in 1871. But this concurrence only means that they recognised Moshwete as being the senior or highest in rank in point of royal descent among the Ba-Rolong clan chiefs. The highest practical recognition of this position of seniority would ~~xxx~~ be given expression to in such a meeting of chiefs and clans, when <sup>the</sup> chief of highest rank would officiate as chairman, and be addressed as 'my chief' and 'my Senior (mogolole). In intertribal disputes he is the natural adjudicator and had the last word. And there the paramountcy ends. It ~~gave~~ <sup>did not give</sup> Moshwete, nor does it give his successors, any right of interference with any clan chief's rule.

Some time after the death of their host -the chief Mahura of 1873. the Ba-Tlhaping in 1869, the Ratlou Ba-Rolong, considered the advisability of returning to their homeland, and from 1873, in separate parties, they turned their backs on the Ba-Tlhaping country and went to their hereditary home around Khunwana. Chwele Motlhabane<sup>X</sup> ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ (the author's maternal grand-father) was the first to leave with a few retainers, and he settled at Motlhookaditse (Wodehousekraal) in 1873, then Kgosietlata Letsapa went next and settled at Khunwana in 1874. He was accompanied by his brother Seleka. This Seleka who died in 1940, nearly a hundred years old was one of the author's chief verbal authorities (portrait)

Then finally, Chief Moshwete, accompanied by Phoi, brought up the rear, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ He joined Kgosietlata and Seleka Letsapa at Khunwana in 1876, while Phoi went to settle at Motsitlane.

After a year or so Motsewakhumo (or Senwanatsana) Mokoto left ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Khunwana ~~xxx~~ by Moshwete's order, to settle at Setlagole, and similarly Senwanadi Mokoto was sent to occupy Kgwedimopitlo (Madibogo or Maribogo), and finally, in 1896 Kgosietlata left Khunwana to make his home at Mahukabung (Kraaipan), where he was soon followed by Leepo's sons.

When Kgosietlata first went to Khunwana in 1874, he found Cupaneng (Daniel) Marumo there, who had been sent by Montshiwa to occupy Khunwana for the Tshidi Ba-Rolong, and so ~~xxxxxx~~ forestall the Ratlou Ba-Rolong. The latter had, however a better claim to Khunwana as their ancestors were the first to settle there (see page



and ~~as~~ ~~Kamukhwa~~ Kgosiethata had the ~~larger~~ following, Cupaneng had to make way. He settled at Mahukubung (~~Kamukhwa~~) but had to shift again to Mareetsane when Kgosiethata came from Khunwana in 1896.

By the middle of 1873, President Burgers had made futile attempts to induce Montshiwa to forego the boundary line between the Transvaal and Bechuanaland, as determined by Governor Keate in the ~~and~~ judgment known in South African History as the Keate Award (Correspondence between Montshiwa and the Government of the S.A. Republic: 1870 to 1880) President Burgers had, after meeting a flat refusal from Montshiwa resorted to intrigue with a view to over-riding and nullifying the terms of the Award. It was for this reason that he made an alliance with Moshwete, so that if possible, he might force his shady territorial agreements with that chief, down the throats of other independent Ba-Rolong chiefs. For the same reason, Burgers entered into a treaty of amity with Matlaba, chief of the Ragulana Ba-Rolong.

About September 1873, President Burgers directed Moshwete to occupy Poosedumana (Grootfontein) 1. (Letter from Sam Melville - Transvaal agent of Native Affairs to Molema, chief at Mafeking). 2. Government Gazette of the S.A. Republic April 1874). a powerful spring just to the south of the Molopo river near its source. But ~~Montshiwa~~ Moshwete preferred Khunwana as having more extensive ploughlands and ranching country, if less favoured with water. He however, sent some of his men to live at Poosedumana in 1874. At the same time, Matlaba was directed by the President to occupy Bodibe (Polfontein) another powerful stream in line with, and to the south of Poosedumana. Both these fountains the Tshidi Ba-Rolong of Montshiwa claimed as their own, and they had had settlements and lands there for over ten years. The gift to Moshwete of the one place (Grootfontein) and the coming of Matlaba to the other (Polfontein), led to a lifelong quarrel between these chiefs on the one hand, and Montshiwa on the other. It is not unfair to say that the flames of this feud were fanned, as the original fire was kindled by the authorities of the South African Republic, who from the start proffered their patronage and protection to Moshwete and Matlaba, and sponsored their claims, ~~and~~ irrespective of their merits. In fact the two chiefs were ~~the~~ Republican catspaws in its land sharp practice

and territoriphagia, and were used as pliant and convenient tools for extending the western border of the Transvaal, and reversing the findings of the Bloemhof Inquiry, and defeating Governor Keate's judgment.

Moshwete and Matlaba came so much under the influence of the Transvaal, and yet the alliance between them and that state was so unequal that they must be regarded rather as creatures and henchmen, than as allies of the South African Republic. The hostility between them and the Tshidi Ba-Rolong of Montshiwa was so active that it expressed itself in frequent acts of spoliation and plunder, followed by endless reprisals and acts of violence. In all these differences, quarrels and bickerings, Moshwete and Matlaba were always in the same camp, and always had the overt and covert backing of the Transvaal authorities, so that the conclusion is inescapable that the two chiefs were acting under the instigation and connivance, if not the instigation of the South African Republic Government.

The History of Moshwete's political evolution falls into five sharply demarcated periods namely (1) 1826 to 1871: That is from his birth to the Bloemhof Inquiry, corresponding to the first fifty years of Moshwete's life; the years of obscurity, when Moshwete was but little known to his own people, and utterly unknown either to the Europeans, British and Boer alike.

(2) 1872 to 1877: The first five years of the Rev Thomas Burger's tenure of office as president of the South African Republic, and also the first five years of Moshwete's tenure of office as chief of the Seistiro Section of the Ratlou Ba-Rolong; the years when Moshwete was discovered by Burgers, and made the special object of Transvaal solicitude, placed under tutelage, and by suggestion and propaganda fashioned into a suitable instrument for destroying the inconvenient south-western boundary of the Transvaal as laid down by the Lt-Governor Keate.

(3) 1877 to 1880: The years of the annexation of the Transvaal to British Empire, being the years of comparative quiescence in Bechuanaland, and years during which Moshwete lived in peace with his neighbours.

(4) 1881 to 1884 : Years of the Pretoria and the London Conventions, being years of war and ~~strife~~ strife on the Transvaal-Bechuanaland border : years of military activity when Moshwete, as a Transvaal puppet carried ~~out~~ the Transvaal lessons and behests, and side by side with his uncle -Matlaba, and with the assistance of Boer freebooters, fought the British enamoured Montshiwa ; years in which Moshwete's name was affixed to victorious treaties and annexations made by Gey van Pittius <sup>U</sup> and his Goshenites .

(5) 1885 to 1905 : The last <sup>U</sup> twenty years of Moshwete's life, being years of disillusionment, when he discovered at last and too late the hollowness of the Transvaal promises and the duplicity of Transvaal authorities. Years when Moshwete repudiated Transvaal friendship, and denounced the regime of Paul Kruger ; years in which he completely lost favour and became disliked in the Transvaal, when he now sought British friendship and help, and finally in the Anglo-Boer War sought refuge under the British, and actively helped them against the Boers .

Of these periods, the first and the third are unimportant, because ~~main~~ uneventful ; the second and the third periods have been dealt with above (pp R 3-R 21) and also in other parts of this work. (pp - - ) only the fifth period now demands further elaboration .

1872 During the decade 1872 to 1882, the chief Moshwete was a good Transvaaler, his faith in the authorities of The South African Republic was unbounded and unshakable, and, after his many meetings with President Burgers, he honestly believed that he was going to be made the greatest chief, and chief of chiefs ~~in~~ <sup>southern</sup> in/Bechuanaland by his help. He had been told that Montshiwa craved and was intriguing for this position. Montshiwa, who was ~~universally~~ <sup>universally</sup> admitted to be of lower rank than him : Montshiwa - the descendant of Tshidi-the ~~second~~ son of Tau by the second house, while he, Moshwete traced his origin to Ratlou, the son by the principal house of Tau: rather than be ruled by this ambitious upstart-Montshiwa, rather than play second fiddle to this ~~ambitious~~ <sup>obnoxious</sup> parvenu, he Moshwete would sooner go to war and die like a man for his rights. It was therefore with good reason, pardonable ambition, and ~~of~~ natural self-interest that Moshwete prepared for war. The English people, ~~he was~~ <sup>mounting Montshiwa in his preposterous claim</sup>

He-Moshwete, therefore accepted the help of the Boers to defeat Montshiwa, and put him in his place - that is below Moshwete. As he was Moshwete was, by Montshiwa's own public confession, the chief of highest rank among all the Ba-Rolong, so he was determined to be the biggest and most powerful chief among them.

1881. At a meeting on the 2nd of February 1881 at "otlhakane, when Montshiwa called together all the chiefs of southern Bechuanaland - ~~xxxx~~ (the act itself was a usurpation of authority, for it is the prerogative of a king to call chiefs together) - the Ratlou chiefs: Bonokwane of Morokweng, Makgobi of Phitshane and M<sub>o</sub>shwete himself from Khunwana, <sup>and</sup> the Rapulana chief Matlaba, he ~~xxxx~~ (Montshiwa) had expatiated much and long on the dangers threatening the Ba-Rolong, and had ended by proposing esprit de corps, ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ vereeniging, closer union, collective security, and such things. Now it was clear <sup>to</sup> Moshwete that Montshiwa was ambitious, and designed to be the <sup>greatest</sup> ~~greatest~~ chief of the Ba-Rolong. He must be opposed and defeated in this design; his wings must be clipped; he must be made to fly an ordinary pitch.

Moshwete therefore entered into the war that commenced on the 2nd of May 1881 in enthusiastic support of the Rapulana Ba-Rolong against the Tshidi Ba-Rolong of Montshiwa. It was perfectly natural that he should accept help in guns and ammunition from the Transvaal in 1881, and that he should avail himself of armed reinforcements from the Transvaal in 1882, especially when he was assured that Montshiwa ~~was~~ was receiving expert military advice from highly placed English men like ~~xxxx~~ Christopher Bethell, Nathan Walker <sup>+ the Rev Stewart Franklin</sup> and Edgar Rowland, who were resident among the Tshidi Ba-Rolong at Mafeking.

The European armed reinforcements from the Transvaal, supporting Moshwete, called themselves "Moshwete's Volunteers", and before long, in a few weeks in fact, they assumed the chief direction and policy of the war against Montshiwa, and Moshwete and his generals were not only given a very secondary place, but they were hardly ever consulted as to plans and operations, while Moshwete's aims and grievances were enlarged and exaggerated, and Moshwete's name was freely and ~~fully~~ fully used, mouthed, ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ quoted, ~~xxxx~~ flourished, and forged as the origin and fountain of all authority, and as the reason and excuse for all the deeds and misdeeds of Moshwete's Volunteers from the Transvaal.

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