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Eyewitness Engagements (Highveld political discourse at the start of the 1800s)

Over the centuries, in the middle of what eventually became South Africa, hundreds of thousands of people lived and labored. They were farmers and livestock-keepers, warriors and poets. They spoke the same language, or incrementally distinguishable dialects of it; they moved about among themselves, married one another, and ranked their princely houses together.

Theirs was a history of settlement on verdant hills, of men and women building a world of ranked communities with cross-cutting loyalties and long-range connections to the Limpopo basin to the north, and the foothills of the Drakensberg range and the grasslands to the east. As the highveld's agrarian towns expanded, they brought together into their midst households, and sometimes whole communities, from the wider world. Most professional travelers could make themselves understood with little effort. Prestigious healers and specialists in rituals, rain-makers, militia-scouts, and cattle-herders covered great distances; women often married away from home, sometimes far away. As a result, authority and culture were disposed across the highveld and its enclosed river valleys in a widely comprehensible tradition, shading up even onto the Zimbabwean highlands on the northern side of the Limpopo Valley. Within this context developed multiethnic chiefships and chiefly partnerships.

Most accounts of South Africa's past summon up a different picture from this, however: a world of *tribes*. Tribes may be designated ethnic groups, or peoples, but the treatment is the same. In its purest form, the tribe constitutes the claim that popular mobilizations among African people were apolitical, customs-determined phenomena. Each tribe has its own heritage, dating back to its split with its parental branch, or to its own unique seed. "Bantu-speakers," separate from "the Khoisan," are hypothesized as having invaded the subcontinent three or six hundred years ago as proto-tribes, "the Hurutshe-Kwena" and "the Kgatla-Rolong," or another such grouping. One also finds "the Tlokwa," "the Sia," "the Phuthing," "Koni," "baThalerwa," "BaPhalane," "Phogole," more and more of them the further back one goes.[1]

[1] Beyond the variations on the inclusion of the definite article, note the preferred orthographies' variants re *ba-* / *Ba-* etc. or not – *ba* meaning "people of."

The tendency to tribalize South Africa's past runs deep. It is there, in the very earliest written records from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which constitute the source material for this chapter of this book.[2] It is still there in the ongoing effort to restore land-rights to South Africans by projecting recent ethnic belonging into the distant past.[3] Here it will be argued that agrarian South Africa before the mid-nineteenth century was built not by tribes, but by active pioneers and state-makers. A history of their activities and mobilizations must, however, also chart the development of the tribal idea and its eventual epistemological triumph. The story of the tribe must be understood in the context of the history of the actual political assertions of the people.

Whether the interpretation advanced here is entirely correct, the aim has been to push toward a necessary reorientation begun by other historians but not yet nearly completed. Who is the political actor in South Africa's history? At the beginning of the nineteenth century, European South Africans still commanded only a beachhead or two on the ancient African southern subcontinent. Who should be the South African political "we," if not the actual inhabitants of the country, the ancestors of black and brown complected people who constitute the greatest part of its citizenry today? What then can be recovered of their political praxis?

BORDERLANDS

Below we approach the highveld from the Cape's flat stretches and bands of hilltops, drifting up to it in the early 1800s, in a reconsideration of key texts generated at the interface of important early encounters. We might begin however by placing all southern Africa in its widest context. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were tumultuous times. People threw off their anciens régimes, rallied in the streets, raised up dictators, enslaved foreigners, and industrialized their cities. The Cape of Good Hope was a part of this world, standing astride global commerce east and west, hosting the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English in its harbors, changing hands thrice because of the Napoleonic Wars.

The European Cape settlement lay at the margins of the lives of most South Africans. For continental Europeans, similarly, South Africa was the

[2] For this chapter and Chapter 3, I draw on books and papers of many missionaries and some travelers, including William C. Willoughby, E. W. Smith, Roger Price, John Mackenzie, Eugene Casalis, Prosper Lemue, John Edwards, Samuel Rolland, D. F. Ellenberger, Andrew Smith, William Shaw, Thomas Arbousset, Robert Hully, W. J. Burchell, John Shrewsbury, James Stuart, William Colenso, Daniel Lindley, Henry Callaway and others, and especially on John Campbell, Samuel Broadbent, T. L. Hodgson, Anne Hodgson, Robert Moffat, James Archbell, and John Cameron. Citations to these and other primary sources have been minimized but of course not eliminated.

[3] Elize S. van Eeden, "The Role of History with Regard to Evidence in Land Claims as Officially Proposed: A Case Study on the Farm Deelkraal IQ 142, North West Province," *South African Historical Journal,* 57 (2007), 179–200. The "baHuruthse" [*sic*] is mistakenly given by the otherwise astute author (in text and note, p. 184).

"antipodes," the "austral" sphere, a place of wilderness. The Cape's privileged class was, especially in its subordination of laborers, what David Hume was talking about when he condemned "useless luxury." Dutch settlers bound families of indigenous people to their estates, and long after 1800, Cape Town remained an outpost from the previous century. Many of the Colony's people lived in desperate circumstances. Captive women had to suffer drunken sailors demanding satisfaction in their own quarters, the slave lodge, a building set at the very center of official colonial Cape Town – its heart. Some of the servants of this evolving racial order got away and survived as well as they could: the so-called Hanglips were the first of many such maroon communities.[4]

Approaching the nineteenth century, these castoffs, together with the Cape herders often called Khoikhoi, created a widening zone of negotiation and force. In it men hunted elephant ivory and ostrich feathers, bartered, raided for slaves, pillaged, hustled beads, gunpowder and tobacco, and defended their families. Americanist historians have introduced the word "borderlands" to signal this kind of region. A borderlands, unlike a line or a front, as in "frontier," suggests a space governed by interactive, overlapping, and incomplete authorities.[5] In the borderlands, wildlife dwindled, trade thrived, and customs were violated and renewed. Such a domain grew north and east of Cape Town, toward the Fish and Kei Rivers, over the Karoo, up toward the Orange River, and pressed at the base of highveld farmers' settlements.

[4] David Hume, "Of Luxury," retitled "Of Refinement in the Arts," *Political Discourses* (London: 1752); on the Cape's in-between-ness: Gavin Lucas, *An Archaeology of Colonial Identity: Power and Material Culture in the Dwars Valley, South Africa* (New York: Kluwer Adademic/Plenum, 2004); prostitution in the culture of Cape Town: Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750–1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 127–8; prostitution is missing from the excellent *Cape Town, the Making of a City, an Illustrated Social History* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1998), ed. by Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen, and Vivian Bickford-Smith; for the Hanglips; Robert Ross, *Cape of Torments: Slavery and Resistance in South Africa* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 54 ff.; and Gerald Groenewald, "A Mother Makes No Bastard": Family Law, Sexual Relations and Illegitimacy in Dutch Colonial Cape Town, c. 1652–1795," *African Historical Review, 39*, 2 (2007), 67.

[5] Patricia Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (New York: Norton, 2001); Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993); Jay Gitlin, "Becoming West: Toward a New Meaning for Western History," in William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, eds., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past* (New York: Norton, 1993), 3–29; and James F. Brooks, "Violence, Justice, and State Power in the New Mexican Borderlands, 1780–1880," in Richard White and John M. Findlay, *Power and Place in the North American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 23–60. An excellent use of "frontier": see Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History: South Africa and the United States* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981); the debate about the "frontier" as the key influence on Afrikaner outlook is related in Martin Legassick, "The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography," in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore, eds., *Economy and Society in Preindustrial South Africa* (London: Longman, 1980), 44–79.

The European officials who first controlled Cape Town knew barely anything about any upcountry people. Governor Jan van Riebeeck in his diary in 1661 spoke of "Brickje," a term supplied to him by Khoikhoi who traded and grazed up and down the Cape. The word remained in use through the eighteenth century. It meant "goat people" in its literal translation (*biri-qua*), but in view of the purely bovine ideal of the Cape (Penninsular and Gonaqua) Khoikhoi, goats probably only indicated the domain of arable farmers. Under the same rubric, *briqua* apparently meant not only highveld chiefdoms but also the ornamented, elaborate chiefships associated with seventeenth-century Zimbabwe-related sites.[6] Essentially *briqua* were "populous settled farmers," so far unseen.

The first pioneers from the Cape into the midst of these farmers were more of the European settlement's escaped servants, joined by outlaws (*drosters*), European "transfrontiersman," and last, self-proclaimed racial "bastards." Here they will be termed "métis." A man named Classe Kok was an early example of a métis pioneer, reaching inland Khoikhoi, "Giriguriqua" people. His surname, "cook," tells us what he did in Cape Town and of his subservient status there. From 1713 on, Kok's progeny grew in number, helping to constitute a major chiefly lineage on the southwestern highveld.[7]

Soon enough one found more and more métis men with Khoikhoi; they wore trousers and shirts, and they traveled armed. Many of them undoubtedly saw themselves as colonists rather than indigenes – even when they were forced by circumstance to put up Khoikhoi-style *werfs*, smoke their meat in the Khoe manner, and marry Khoikhoi wives.[8] But they also had no desire to

[6] Lichtenstein gives Beriqua and recognizes it as a Khoe term; Hinrich Lichtenstein, *The Foundation of the Cape* [and] *About the Bechuanas*, ed. and trans. Otto Spohr (Cape Town: Balkema, 1973 [originally published 1807]), 63 ff., and Christopher Saunders, "Early Knowledge of the Sotho: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Accounts of the Tswana," *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library*, 20 (1969), 60–70. In *Environment, Power, and Injustice: A South African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 246, Nancy Jacobs points out the naming *matsaroqua* but sees it as Lichtenstein's. Zimbabwe-related: see Chapter 2.

[7] Nigel Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier: Colonist and Khoisan on the Cape's Northern Frontier* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), and "The Orange River Frontier Zone, C. 1700–1805," 21–109, in *Einiqualand: Studies of the Orange River Frontier* (Cape Town: Andrew Smith, 1995), 42–5 esp., and Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996), 32–58.

[8] The notion of métis as a core status rather than a marginal attribute draws on Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), and Jean Loupe Amselle, *Metisso Logics* (New York: Routledge, 1989); and Thomas Arbousset and Francois Daumas, *Narrative of an Exploratory Tour to the Northeast of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope … In the Months of March, April and May, 1836*, trans. John Brown (Cape Town: Struik, 1968 [1846]), who compare South African "Bastaards" with South American "Métis." As an obviously imposed term, a plural noun, and occasionally an adjective, métis is also suitably vague: herein it entails products of the Cape and highveld borderlands, Khoe-, Dutch, Portuguese, and sometimes Sechuana- (the parent of Sesotho and SePedi and Setswana today) speaking people, intermixed culturally and/or biologically, and *oorlamsch*, ex-slaves, "Korana," "Half-Castes," Bastards (*bastaard*), *Binnelanders*,

go to, or return to, the Colony. They knew they would have found life difficult there, scrambling to get by as "brown people" (laborers) if they were not simply jailed.

As the Cape Colony's area of effective control crept north and east in the tracks of various métis and Khoe-speaking pioneers, and as more and more pastoralists and gatherer-hunters came under commandos' attacks, more of these people also submitted to colonial magistracies. There were, it was known, *briqua* further upcountry, large and powerful chiefdoms, at or near 1,000 meters' elevation or more. The largest agrarian chiefdoms just beyond the touch of the Cape Colony experienced violence in the eighteenth century, and for some of the turmoil, "the Korana" are held responsible.[9] The term (*koranner* in its earliest contexts) indicated métis and Khoikhoi who raided for cattle, and in other usages all pastoralist people of the Orange River, some of them Nama-speaking. There was a leadership structure on the Orange, apparently comprising a "great" (or "right-hand") side, and a "little" (or "left hand") side. The great side was made of the comparative newcomers, herders who pushed up from the south in the 1740s and 1750s. The little side were those who were already on the Orange, reduced to secondary status. Eventually, Great and Little Korana would be understood as ethnic terms.

Heading northeast after the Cape herders and Korana were more métis people, and then, finally, the Dutch and other European Christians together with their métis kin. The Europeans nullified many prior dispensations. In the era of the Dutch East India Company's uncontested control over the Cape, Classe Kok's grandson, Adam, received an engraved cane from the Colony's governor, recognizing the Kok "captaincy," and the Koks pioneered a farm in the Pieketberg district in 1751. But after only twenty years, Adam had to abandon his land to European farmers, or *Boers*, to use the term of the day, who took it over as their own. It is no wonder that even the most reputable métis families (Kok, Pienaar, Goeyman, Links, Barends) wished to fend for themselves and avoided both the Dutch East India Company and other Cape Town authorities.[10]

The first available reports from a borderlands area often come to us decades after its emergence. The Orange River, first called the Gariep or Great River, became something like the Rio Grande in the southwestern United States, a

"respectable" and non-, and all others whose persons and dispositions reflected the borderlands. It does not always imply a European (or Asian, Malagasy, or any) admixture of blood.

[9] Karel Schoeman, *The Griqua Captaincy of Philippolis, 1826–61* (Pretoria: Protea, 2002), 12–15; Nigel Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 125–35, 167–9; Robert Ross, "The Changing Legal Position of the Khoisan in the Cape Colony," *African Perspectives*, 5, 2 (1981), 67–87.

[10] Cf. Mohammad Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004); Tim Keegan traces "coloured" identity to this same era (*Colonial Origins*, 85), earlier than I would do, and see Ian Goldin, *Making Race: The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1987) [written in 1972], 4.

gateway to the borderlands. Once métis people crossed to the north side of the Orange and pledged their fealty to a chief, they might survive and even prosper. Writing things down was not common, and our view, via real texts, usually opens up in the midst of ongoing processes. Nonetheless, from fairly early on, we have a few glimpses of the social forms that developed among people in the borderlands, and close to them.

* * * * *

WIKAR AND GORDON AND THE "TWIN COURTS"

Northeast of today's town of Prieska, close to the Orange River, dwelt a town of men and women identifying themselves as "twin-court people." This name, the apparent meaning of "Gyzikoa" and "Geissiqua," was recorded in 1778, and still over forty years later, in 1823 (as "Gozakas" and "Goyakas"). After that, the twin-court people disappeared.[11]

Hendrik J. Wikar and Robert Jacob Gordon wrote down their impressions of the twin-court people in 1778 and 1779, accounts that have been published. They found them to be something of a puzzle: they were not one thing but a mixture of many things. Colonel Gordon, shouting commands in "Caffre" – in other words, in the language of African farmers living to the east – and listening for responses, judged many of them to be conversant in a similar language.[12] Others among them appeared only to speak a Korana language, the kind with clicks. Their own village was a doublet: two side-by-side kraals or public courts. All of them (they said) were a kind of farmer (*briqua*), junior to another moiety to the north. They were at war with Khoe-speakers around them, whom they generally "resemble[d]."

At the time, the Dutch-speaking settlers had been sending armed parties to kill and intimidate pastoralists and gatherer-hunter people. The "commando" system, partly responsible to the Dutch East India Company running Cape Town and partly to its factious, aspirant burghers, led to further rebellions and redoubled campaigns. Commandos (the singular, "commando," refers to a group) eventually extirpated, for instance, the entire population of Sneeuberg Bushmen or San. The commandos came to entail fewer European farmers, fewer Boers, and more of their servants, "Hottentots" – mostly former Cape herders. The Cape garrison commander, Colonel Robert Gordon, traveled in the borderlands to tell still-independent pastoralists that no more of these commandos would attack them. Naturally he wished to discover fully responsible entities to so assure. The twin-court people, however, disappointing

[11] School of Oriental and African Studies, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society archives (WMMS), Africa, In-Correspondence (here S.A. corr.), fiche 300, no. 28, Samuel Broadbent, Makwassie, June 8, 1823.

[12] Patrick Cullinan, *Robert Jacob Gordon, 1743–1795: The Man and His Travels at the Cape* (Cape Town: Struik Winchester, 1992), 96, 111.

the colonel, were not an autonomous tribe. They were a minor partner in a hierarchical alliance with another entity.[13]

Right and left, great and little: the "senior twin" north of the Orange that was partnered with the twin-court people (*gyzekoa*) has never been precisely identified. Wikar and Gordon were keenly interested in them. Whoever they were, the two travelers thought, it would be they – the "true" African people, the multitudes, the farmers they had heard about – who deserved their ultimate attention. They too might be "reassured" and treated with. As the guide, Klaas Barends, told them, upcountry land was full of such farmers (*briqua*), "strapping" brown men with blackish-brown hair, "like the Madagascan slave." The hodgepodge of slightly built people on the middle Orange contrasted with this imagined type. Then four solid men, "well-built," came visiting from the north in 1779 looking for barter, and disconcertingly identified themselves as "Bushmen." If physique and coloration were not reliable indicators of identity, one turned to material culture. The "true *briqua*" (Gordon heard it said) crafted the best household items, had the most beads and metal goods – they were the "clever" ones.[14] Most of all, Gordon felt, the *briqua* were … tobacco smokers.

All South Africa craved tobacco, such that "Tabee!" ("May I have some tobacco?") meant "Good morning" in Cape Town. Highveld people had been growing and smoking and chewing and curing the American leaf for several generations. Gordon thought that they showed an especial affinity for it. In particular, deeply inhaling tobacco smoke – lying face-down in the dirt, over an opening to a clay tunnel, and falling into a stupor – he felt, typified them: it was the *briqua* way. Since then, however, the very same style of smoking has become known as the San or Bushman trademark for smoking cannabis.[15]

More helpfully, Gordon discovered that the upland farmers among themselves referred to each other as "Bitjoana." This was, he intuited, the proper

[13] Penn, *Forgotten Frontier,* 108, 132, 162–4; see also Nancy Jacobs, "Environment, Production and Social Difference in the Kalahari Thornveld, ca. 1750–1830," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 25, 3 (September 1999), 347–73; Gary Okihiro, "Precolonial Economic Change among the Tlhaping, c. 1795–1817, *International Journal of African Historical Studies,* 17, 1 (1984), 64 (59–79); and L. F. Maingard, "The Brikwa and the Ethnic Origin of the BaTlhaping," *South African Journal of Science* (1933), 597. The assumption that all the medium-sized eighteenth-century chiefdoms in South Africa are "known" is unfounded.

[14] E. E. Mossop, ed., *The Journals of Hendrik Jacob Wikar* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1935), 142, and n124; 147, 149–54; Cullinan, *Gordon*, 111–112 (October 28, 1779); John Barrow, *An Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa, in the Years 1797 and 1798* (London: For T. Cadell Jun and W. Davies, 1801, 1804), 2 vols. (Vol. 2: 55–57); and Petrus B. Borcherds, *An Autobiographical Memoir* (Cape Town: A. S. Robinson, 1861). Gordon talks of "Cabeticoe who call themselves Brroeniana or Morroena" and who "live across the [Orange] River." "Cabeticoe" may be a misunderstanding of "my name is – " (*k'a biditswe* –).

[15] Brian du Toit, "Man and Cannabis in Africa: A Study of Diffusion," *African Economic History,* 1 (1976), 17–35; David Gordon, "From Rituals of Rapture to Dependence: The Political Economy of Khoikhoi Narcotic Consumption, c. 1487–1870," *South African Historical Journal,* 35 (1996), 34–49; Worden et al., eds., *The Making of a City,* Vol. 1, p. 25.

tribal name. Little more was communicated, as his interlocutors, who had been in the borderlands for many decades, naturally sought to limit the flow of information to Colonel Gordon. Neither Gordon nor Wikar understood much of what was said to them in any case. Gordon wrote "Moetjoaanas" and "Bitjoana," apparently unaware that the second was the plural of the first. As a sole example of highveld farmers' speech, he supplied, "Masepa Moetjoana Incosi," which is either a version of the saying, "The chief is a shoulder-bag of manure" – that is, he is as useful as he is made to be – or an indication of the supremacy of Masepa, an ancient highveld ancestor. Among the "tribes" the local people mentioned, Wikar and Gordon listed "Barolo, the Shounarreba Capii, the Bapouru Boucana": likely *barolong*, perhaps Shona-something, and conceivably Phalaborwa, an old highveld metals center.[16] Belying the supposed centrality of Bitjoana, Petrus Borcherds, traveling years later, when the town of Dithakong had become known, wrote "Barrowlows" (i.e., Barolo above, *barolong*) as the parent designation for highveld farmers, not Bitjoana or any of its variants.[17]

Other viable political subsystems across the southern highveld are detectable in the margins of observers' notes. A chiefdom called *tlharo* appears in the historical record as *matsaroqua,* "people of *tlaro*," where ma- is prefixed to Tlaro, probably a chief's name, in the Bantu-language-family manner; but *qua* is also used, a Khoe-language (Khoikhoi) suffix for "people."[18] Varieties of belonging did not register as on a four-color map. On the highveld north of the Marico, as far away as Nata, Bushmen (*masarwa*: cf. *morwa* above), who were Khoe- (not San-) speaking, were retained by chiefs and top counselors as cattle-post servants. On the Orange River there were numerous impoverished Bantu-speaking men and women, whose households herded cattle for Korana, and they were verbally abused as "Bushmen." There is also mention of "farm Bootschuanas," distinguished from people who depended more on cattle.[19] Were these "ethnic groups"? What would it mean to say so? Further north, Samuel Broadbent and Thomas Hodgson wrote in 1822 of "Moroas" – probably *morwa* (singular) and *barwa* (plural), *-rwa* connoting autochthones – a "people" they said were "scattered in villages all over the country." The Moroas spoke the same language as other highveld dwellers and were

[16] Cf. Matshipi, of iron, and "Masepie," re Chapter 2. For Phalaborwa, the classic intervention is Nikolas van der Merwe and Robert Scully, "The Phalaborwa Story: Archaeological and Ethnographic Investigation of a South African Iron Age Group," *World Archaeology* 3, 2 (1971), 178–96, although "BaPhalaborwa" are unnecessarily imagined as a "tribe."

[17] Borcherds, *An Autobiographical Memoir*, 123.

[18] Lichtenstein, cited by Jacobs, *Environment*, 246, n21; cf. John William Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa 1822–24* (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1967, 2 vols.), Vol. 2, 375–6, "Bamuchars and Mokarraquas."

[19] Edwin Wilmsen, *Land Filled with Flies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), in a series of sometimes acrimonious debates in the 1990s in *American Anthropologist* with Richard Lee and others, suggested a theory of the marginalization of Bushmen.

quite wealthy with their own vast herds of sheep and cattle.[20] And who were the quite separate "Bootschuana Bushmen"? Their men wielded assegais in raids; they were counted as "part of the Bootschuana nation," and they built highveld-style houses, complete with hedges and adjacent gardens. In the famine of 1823, métis men thought it wise to petition them for Indian corn, as if they were seen as particularly resourceful.[21]

By the time the borderlands closed and administrative control of the land had been secured, many of these unequal relationships and networks were gone. In the later nineteenth century there would be few high-status Bushmen farmers out on the land, or at least, it would no longer make sense to say so. The ordinary way to depict the highveld soon settled into a simple tripartite framework: there were the Natives, the Bantu-speakers; the Hottentots, wild or laboring Khoe-speakers; and the Bushmen, destitute or dangerous, most useful for dissections in European anatomy classes.

JOURNEY TO DITHAKONG: MISSIONARIES, MÉTIS, AND BECHUANA NORTH OF THE ORANGE ("GREAT") RIVER

One constant on the highveld, apparently, was the term "Bitjuana," or, as it was often written, "Bootschuana," "Becwana," "Booshuanna," before being standardized as "Bechuana." What did this word mean? It most likely began as they, or we, being "blended together," or "all mixed," or "similar." Being *tswana* or *tshwana*[22] was appropriate for territories abutting a diverse borderlands, with their constant dangers and opportunities. Highveld farming people

[20] WMMS, S.A. corr., fiche 300, no. 30/29, including Broadbent, extract from his journal in his hand, October 29, 1823; and John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa Undertaken at the Request of the London Missionary Society, Being a Second Journey into the Interior of That Country* (London: LMS/Francis Wesley, 1822), Vol. 1, 197–8. Cf. Thilo Schadenberg, "Batwa, the Bantu name for the invisible people," in Karen Biesrbouck, Stefan Elders, and Gerda Rossel, eds., *Challenging Elusiveness: Central African Hunter-Gatherers in a Multi-Disciplinary Perspective* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 1999), 21–39; Nancy Jacobs, "Environment," 367, on castes; these people perhaps spoke a language later grouped with (Se)Kgalagadi.

[21] South African Library (SAL), MSC 39/13 Bks. 7 to 12, Thomas Hodson notebook journals, "January 1823," "September 1823." And St. Paul's Church, Thaba Nchu, Baptismal Registers (1840s); farm Bootchuanas: WMMS, S.A. corr., Samuel Broadbent, postmarked August 23, 1823, refers to mid June, 1823.

[22] Moetjoana and Bitjoana (and Bechuana, soon the common spelling) suggest the conjoining of some lost initial vowel; there are many instances in aspirated form (Bechuana, Bootschuana, Beetshuanna), but never Batshwana. All have the reciprocal *-ana*. "Similar" is simply most likely and "from one another," "made to copy each other," etc., are also plausible. See Steven Volz, "European Missionaries and Tswana Identity in the 19th Century," *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies,* 17, 1 (2003), 6, citing Lichtenstein; and John Barrow, *Voyage to Cochinchina, including an Account of a Journey to the Booshuanas* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1807), based on Truter's manuscript which I have not seen, gives "Booshuanas" and differentiates them from Barroloos (*barolong*), p. 404; Somerville offers Bootshooanas or Mootshooanas, Frank and Edna Bradlow, eds., *William Somerville's Narrative of His Journeys to the Eastern Cape Frontier and the Lattakoe, 1799 to 1802* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1979), 122.

were similar; it was most likely the mundane phrase, "yes, we are similar" or "the same" (*tshwana*) said to African travelers and Europeans, about themselves and nearby others, that produced what Broadbent called "the Sichuaan" and John William Burchell "the Sichuana language." That language, wrote Burchell, "being common to all these different tribes, seems to unite them into one great nation; and a change of rulers therefore is, to them, little more than a change of persons." For Broadbent this "same language," which he took as an unknown species of Arabic, was spoken in mountain and valley alike.[23] He and John Campbell similarly felt "that language" was used up to the equator and across to "the Indian Ocean." In defining "Beetjuanas," the botanist Lichtenstein said, "All these tribes [who] speak the *same* language, and their modes of life, customs, and manners, vary little from each other, as to the most essential points."[24] Burchell said, "These nations or tribes, as far as we are yet acquainted with them, pursue generally the *same* mode of life." These phrases would be *se se tshwana le* if there were a grammatical object and *se se tshwaneng* if there were not. The suffix "ana" (in *ts*[*h*]*wana*) conveys reciprocal action. John Philip, the leading South African representative of the humanitarian Christian lobby, agreed that the sameness (*sets*[*h*]*wana*) covered a huge area, perhaps "a vast portion of the continent."[25]

The Bechuana as a whole were rarely termed a tribe, yet foreign observers increasingly spoke of tribes among them. What did they mean by tribes? Within the larger mixture or similarity, *tshwana*, on the highveld, there were chiefdoms and village associations, some that persisted for more than a lifetime, and these were ordinarily called tribes. Especially those who circumcised their youths together, imprinted a recognizable culture among their elites and created a pattern of belonging for their citizens to emulate. Cultural or regional

[23] Differing with Lye and Murray's view that Sotho meant "south" or "black people," a small part of their pioneering and excellent *Transformations on the Highveld: The Tswana and Southern Sotho* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980).

[24] Campbell: Council for World Mission, London Missionary Society (LMS), South Africa, incoming correspondence (S.A. corr.), 8/3A Campbell, September 5, 1821, "Cities of Mashowe and Kurreaechane," and see John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa. Undertaken at the request of the Missionary Society* (London: Flagg and Gould, 1816), Vol. 1, 181; Burchell (*Travels in the Interior,* Vol. 2), knew *ba* was the prefix for "people," but nonetheless submitted Bichuana, e.g., pp. 249–50. The Philip, Burchell, and part of the Lichtenstein quotes, Hinrich Lichtenstein, *Travels in South Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806,* trans. Anne Plumptre (2 vols.) (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1928–1930 [originally published 1812–15], Vol. 2 (London: Henry Colburn, 1815), 409, appear in Steven Volz, "European Missionaries and Tswana Identity," but not this argument. Similarly, see Jean and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution,* Vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 387.

[25] Lichtenstein says, in *Foundation of the Cape* [and] *About the Bechuanas*, 63 ff., that Hendrik Hop (1716–71) in his diary of 1761 referred to "Butshuanas," perhaps the earliest use on record but unconfirmed. Hop is apparently reprinted by the van Riebeeck society as publication number 28 of 1947: "Journal eines Landzuges church das Land der Kleinen und grossen Namaquas … Unter Anführung du Hauptmanns Heinrich Hop …" in C. T. Brink, ed., *Neue Kurzgefasste Beschreibung des Vorgebirges der Guten Hoffnung* (Leipzig: Weynance, 1777 [reprint: 1947]), which I have not seen.