BC151 C14.41

Tredoux ?

Mossto, Feb. 16th 1866.

Dr W. Bleek
Cape Town

Dear Sir,

I have received your two very kind letters dated 9th Dec. & 5th January, & I thank you very much for them as well as for the 1st chapter of the 2d part of your Comparative Grammar. We are sorry to hear that Mrs Bleek was so poorly. I hope the time spent by her at Kalk bay will have done her much good, & that when you receive this, she will be in the enjoyment of her usual health. She is very kind in remembering Mrs F. as she does. We should have much pleasure in seeing you both again.

As you are so kind as to ask my opinion about your work, I must say I find it very interesting, & I am very desirous to see what

I am glad that you could read the specimen I had the pleasure of sending you. I should have liked to more frequently, if time.

is to follow. Such a work will throw much light on the study of the African Languages, & will be of much importance. Of course it is not of a nature to interest all kinds of readers, & I shall not venture to predict for it a very extensive sale, but I have no doubt that all those who feel interested in the study of African & other Languages will be glad to see it published, & many will derive much profit from it.

I feel much inclined to agree with you in the opinion that the prefixes were formerly nouns, & perhaps we might observe that some are still used as nouns. Most of those nouns may, however, (when they became prefixes) have been shortened, as it seems to me. But I must wait for the explanations you promise page 18. I am very anxious to see them.

I have some doubts as to the propriety of assimilating, ~~too~~ much as you seem to do, our African classes of nouns with genders in European languages (p. 3) but prefer the assimilation with the

BC 151. C14.41

brown. 2° We seem to be still more ~~compelled~~ pressed to agree to the above explanation of the name Motshuana, when we consider that that word, when used in the first sense, denotes precisely the typical colour of the Bechuana. If you take a native (~~of the Bechuana nation~~) who is rather dark-coloured for a Mochuana & ask what is his colour, the answer will be: Montsho (black); if you take one who is ~~somewhat~~ somewhat light-coloured, the answer will be: moshuen or moshouana (pronounced also moshuaana); if you take one who is of the usual colour, the answer will be: motshuana. This may be tried by any one; the result is always the same. 3° If it be asked why that explanation of the name of the Bechuana was not thought of from the first & generally received my answer will be: By the very simple & sufficient reason that the first meaning of the word motshuana had been noticed by few, if by any Europeans. You see from Livingstone's remarks that when he wrote his letter to you, he was not aware of that sense. Hence his "cow difficulty." That sense, however, is known of all the Bechuana, & there is no possibility of denying its existence, when one has questioned the natives about it. x

x See the late Rev. Moffat's work on Phonology, page 15.

x Or Botshuana the 1° or Ba Ba Tshuana

clases resulting, for example, in the English language, from the endings ship, ness, er, &c. (p. 13)

As you have noticed in a note the various derivations given of the word Bechuana, I shall add here, on that subject, the following remarks which may be of some interest to you:—

1. Objections which may be made to what is said in favour of the common derivation (from go tshuana, to be alike).

1° Dr L. says (in his book) that the Bechuana use that name as meaning Equals. I have never observed that, & I believe no Mochuana will say that such is the meaning of the word. In fact, Dr L. himself ~~says~~ admits, nearly as much, a little farther, that the Bech. cannot explain the derivation of their name, which would be the simplest thing in the world, if they attached to it the meaning expressed by a verb which they use continually. Then they would say at once, ~~We are~~ Re Bechuana gone rea chuana x. 2° Dr L. says ~~besides~~ in support of his derivation that the Bech. call themselves by that name exactly in the same sense as Irishmen &c, would say, "We are Britons or English."

Now this (favour his derivation only if it could be) would ~~go to~~, shown that both the words Britons & Englishmen also mean Equals, since these are used exactly in the same sense as Bechuana is used[x]. 3° But again, Xo tshuana does not mean properly to be equals, but to be alike. Such being the case, the noun would mean Those who are alike, or those who are like each other, rather than the "Equals". Now it is difficult to understand how a nation could call itself by such a name, except its members distinguished themselves among other peoples by being so very much like each other in colour & forms (which is not the assumption). 4° I may add, without giving too much importance to this, that, according to that derivation, Bachuana would be properly a phrase rather than a noun, & that the sing. would be Oachuana rather than Mochuana. 5° In the letter you quote (p. 13), Sechele seems to be made to apply the name Bachuana, not only to himself & his people, but even to the Whites. According to that, that word ought not to be considered any more as a proper name & as the particular name of the Bechuana. It would be a common word of the language. But there must be some mistake (perhaps on my part) here. Sechele cannot have said, "I & the southern people are Bechuana", ~~Perhaps~~ perhaps by "southern people" he meant southern Bechuana, such as the Batlapin.

My opinion is that whatever may be the root of the name, it is now used merely as a name, without any other meaning being attached to it; & therefore, even if it was properly & originally a feminine, Sechele might with propriety apply it to him.

II. What may be said in favour of the derivation which was proposed by me (from ntsho, black).

1° The word motshuana means: 1. a blackish person, without reference to sex or size; 2. a Mochuana, a person of the Bechuana nation. Now it seems to be extremely natural to derive the 2d meaning from the 1st, without seeking for another etymology, when the word is taken in the second sense, — just as, when we find the surname Brown in English, we think it is quite unnecessary to hunt for another root when we have the adjective

x If Britons & Englishmen are rather against him.

use kχ as you do, but I am compelled to confess that I have some objection to it. It appears to me that the sound you represent by kχ is single as well as that which you represent by χ, & that there is the same relation between the two, as between k & g. kχ is the fortis & χ the lenis.+ Just being my opinion, you will easily understand how I object to use the two letters (where I have used χ alone) kχ. In this, I follow the principle of Lepsius himself; a single letter for a single sound. On the other hand it will be a pity to give χ a sound different from that given to it by Lepsius. If I have to do that, I shall regret it very much.

Hoping that you will not be displeased with the length & freedom of my remarks, & with our very kind regard to Mrs Bleek & yourself,

I remain,

Dear Sir,

very truly yours

J. Bedaux

My address is
care of J. Wykeham Esq. Hopetown

+ & it seems that if the former is written kχ, the latter ought to be written gχ.

BC 151 C14.41

You will perhaps be surprised, after all I have said above (to have not add) that, after all, I do not feel absolutely sure that my explanation of the name Bechuana was the right one, & that I am now somewhat inclined to confess my ignorance on that point, like the Bechuana themselves do.

The word Motshuana (a blackish person) is not pronounced exactly like motshuana a Mochuana. Had the two words had the same pronunciation, very likely the natives themselves might give to their name the above mentioned derivation, which they do not do. According to ~~they~~ orthography followed in my "Sketch of Grammar", the first word is pronounced mōchuāna, whilst the other appears to be pronounced Mōcuāna. There may be besides some difference in the pronunciation of the first a. This, however, goes about as much against the derivation from xo tshuana as against that from utsho. I confess this difference of pronunciation seems to me to be a great difficulty. To go over it, we would have to say that, in the course

of time, the proper name was slightly altered, & this is not an impossibility.

But has that name been in use for many generations? This may perhaps be doubted. It appears to be pretty certain that the ~~word~~ Bechuana originated in the south; that not very long ago (say 40 or 50 years ago ~~or more~~) it was unknown among the Batwantse, the Bañoaketsi, & the other northern tribes, & that these first heard it from the Battapis, who applied it to them (to the northern tribes), & not to themselves. This is what I am assured of by the natives, for instance by an old Mohurutse & an old Monuaketsi, who live here. At the beginning of the present century, however, travellers found the word in existence at Litakoni & Kurumaw, & it would seem, applied to the Battapis as well as to the other tribes.

I shall be glad to know what is your own opinion, after having read this perhaps too long dissertation,

I am much obliged to you for your kind advices in reference to the orthography I ought to follow in my dictionary. I did not like, for the present, to depart altogether from the common orthography & to follow an entirely new system, & I am glad you do not press me to do so. But, as the old orthography does not show a number of important distinctions of sounds, we are compelled to add to it. My little "Sketch" will show you what the additions are. These, it seems to me, are simple enough, & can easily be understood. I presume the only letter to which ~~appears~~ you will have very great objections, in the way I use it, is χ. I seem to have been labouring under a mistake in reference to the sound given to that letter in Lepsius' Alphabet. It is not perhaps altogether my fault, as χ & χ̣ are there (page 57) made to correspond to Kh & g of the old Sechuana orthography. I find myself, however, here in some difficulty. I must here deviate from the old system, because this has only Kh for two sounds; I might