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**Missionaries, Africans and the Emergence of Xhosa and Zulu
as Distinct Languages in South Africa, 1800–54**

BY

JOCHEN S. ARNDT

B.A., University of Cooperative Education, Germany, 1995

M.A., Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas, 2007

THESIS

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Defense Committee:

Kirk A. Hoppe, Chair and Advisor

Sunil Agnani, Departments of History and English

Lynette Jackson, Gender and Women's Studies and African American Studies

Stephen Volz, Kenyon College

Thomas McClendon, Southwestern University

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives
BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society
BMS	Berlin Missionary Society
BSA	Bible Society Archives
CA/KAP	Western Cape Archives and Records Service, Accessions
CL	Cory Library for Historical Research
<i>CM</i>	<i>Caffrarian Messenger</i>
CWM	Council for World Mission
<i>Diss.</i>	<i>Dissertation</i>
<i>HFMR</i>	<i>Home and Foreign Missionary Record for the Free Church of Scotland</i>
IC	Incoming Correspondence
JLJ	Journals of James Laing
<i>JSA</i>	<i>James Stuart Archive</i>
KCAL	Killie-Campbell Africana Library
LMS	London Missionary Society
LMSA	London Missionary Society Archive, South Africa
mf	Microfiche
<i>MH</i>	<i>Missionary Herald</i>
MMS	Methodist Missionary Archives
MS	Manuscript
NLS	National Library of Scotland

NLSA	National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Campus
<i>QIGMS</i>	<i>Quarterly Intelligence of the Glasgow Missionary Society</i>
<i>QPGMS</i>	<i>Quarterly Papers of the Glasgow Missionary Society</i>
PKM	Presbytery of Kaffraria Minutes
<i>RGAMS</i>	<i>Report of the Glasgow African Missionary Society</i>
<i>RGMS</i>	<i>Report of the Glasgow Missionary Society</i>
RH	Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, Rhodes House
<i>RWM</i>	<i>Report of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society</i>
SA	South Africa
SPMS	Scottish Presbyterian Missionary Society
TS	Typescript
USPG	Papers of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
<i>WMM</i>	<i>Wesleyan Missionary Magazine</i>
WMS	Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

This dissertation adopts the following terms and definitions. It assumes that a phenomenon is constructed when its validity is dependent on human social actions. The term “discourse” refers to the totality of human social actions, notably texts and practices, that wittingly or unwittingly construct certain phenomena, including standard languages and dialects, and claim for them objective validity.

The term “Caffre” has derogatory connotations in all its variations. However, it represented a key aspect of European and missionary discourse about Africa and Africans between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries and, therefore, cannot simply be substituted for other terms without altering the meaning of this discourse. For the sake of uniformity and to acknowledge its negative connotations, the term ‘Caffre’ has been placed in single quotation marks throughout the text, except when used in direct quotations. The same rationale has been applied to the terms “Hottentot” and “Negro.”

Nineteenth-century missionaries identified the indigenous people who resided in the region south of the Thukela River and north of the Mzimkhulu River as “Natal Kafirs” or “Natal Natives.” Since these offensive terms are not pertinent to the argument, they have been replaced with the term “Natal Africans.”

According to a convention observed in writing about Bantu speakers, prefixes such as *um*, *ama* and *isi* are usually omitted. Hence the term “Xhosa” can stand for *umXhosa* (Xhosa person), *amaXhosa* (Xhosa people), or *isiXhosa* (Xhosa language) depending on the context. The same convention has been observed for the terms “Zulu,” “Thembu,” “Mpondo,” etc. Excluded

from this convention have been direct quotations and cases in which terms are likely to be better known with the prefixes such as in *amantungwa* and *amalala*.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Xhosa people included a number of subgroups. In the text, these subgroups have been identified as members of the Xhosa people through the attachment of “Xhosa” to their specific group names, such as in “Rharhabe-Xhosa,” “Gcaleka-Xhosa,” “Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa,” etc.

Although indigenous people used the terms “Xhosa” and “Zulu” for themselves, we must not assume that nineteenth-century missionaries employed them in the same sense. In order to highlight this distinction in the context of language, the terms “Xhosa speaking practices” and “Zulu speaking practices” have been used when referring to indigenous people’s modes of communication, and the terms “Xhosa language” and “Zulu language” have been employed when referring to the missionaries’ ideas about these modes of communication.

SUMMARY

In 1853, the South African Auxiliary Bible Society issued a “circular” designed to take stock of “the progress which had already been made in translating, printing, and circulating the Word of God in the different Native Languages or Dialects of South Africa.” In his reply to this circular, William Shaw, the head of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society in the Eastern Cape region, argued that the various African communities residing between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay spoke dialects of a common ‘Caffre’ language. Accordingly, he proposed the idea of jointly producing a single ‘Caffre’ translation of the Bible that would lay the basis for a single, unifying standard language for all the indigenous communities residing in this region. Although the members of the American mission in the Natal-Zululand region had previously promoted similar initiatives, they categorically rejected Shaw’s proposal in 1854. Because this rejection resulted in the bifurcation of ‘Caffre’ into separate Xhosa and Zulu languages, the year 1854 marks a crucial moment in the historical development of two of South Africa’s major languages, language communities, and ethno-linguistic identities. Following constructivist interpretations of missionary linguistics, I argue that Shaw’s proposal and its rejection were not the result of differences between people’s speaking practices, but rather the result of missionaries’ conflicting discourses about these differences. However, these conflicting discourses did not depend primarily on the contemporary fascination with natural history, the demands of the colonial state, or Herderian notions of the relationship between language and *Volk* as conventional constructivist scholarship argues. Instead, in the case of the Eastern Cape missionaries, the discourse about a unified ‘Caffre’ language community that extended from the Cape Colony to Delagoa Bay was shaped by preexisting eighteenth-century naturalist ideas about the ‘Caffre’

race, people's experiences with the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Mfengu, Natal Africans, Zulu, and others during the first half of the nineteenth century and, most importantly, preexisting African ideas about the relationship between language and identity in the Eastern Cape region. In contrast, the American missionaries' discourse about the Zulu language community was shaped by their self-conception as a mission to the Zulu people, an identity which encouraged them to particularize the Zulu from the beginning of their activities in South Africa and which, after 1850, was sustained by a discourse about the relationships between language and identity that reworked preexisting Zulu ideas about language. By drawing attention to the entanglements between missionary and African ways of knowing, this dissertation shows that the development of Xhosa and Zulu as distinct languages and language communities cannot be explained by unidirectional constructivist interpretations but must involve an African-centric approach that is sensitive to the ways in which knowledge, even under asymmetric relations of power, is mutually constitutive.

Introduction

In 1853, the South African auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) issued a “circular” designed to take stock of “the progress which had already been made in translating, printing, and circulating the Word of God in the different Native Languages or Dialects of South Africa.”¹ In his reply to this circular, William Shaw, the head of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society in the Eastern Cape region, argued that the various African communities residing between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay spoke dialects of a common ‘Caffre’ language. Accordingly, he proposed the idea of jointly producing a single ‘Caffre’ translation of the Bible that would lay the basis for a single, unifying standard language for all the indigenous communities residing in this region. Although the members of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in the Natal-Zululand region had previously promoted similar initiatives, they categorically rejected Shaw’s proposal in 1854. Because this rejection resulted in the bifurcation of ‘Caffre’ into separate Xhosa and Zulu languages, the year 1854 marks a crucial moment in the historical development of two of South Africa’s major languages, language communities, and ethno-linguistic identities. This dissertation explores the genealogy of this bifurcation from the perspective of the European missionaries in the Eastern Cape region and the American missionaries in the Natal-Zululand region.² Following constructivist interpretations of missionary linguistics, it argues that this bifurcation did not result from the differences that existed between the speaking practices of these two regions but

¹ *Correspondence between the Committee of the South African Auxiliary Bible Society and various Missionaries and Others, relative to the Translation, Printing, and Circulation of the Scriptures in the Native Languages of South Africa, and more especially in the Kafir dialect; with the Resolutions of the Committee thereupon.* Cape Town: Pike’s 1857), Circular, Cape Town, 15 Jun 1853, 1. I thank Jeff Peires for drawing my attention to this document early in my research phase.

² For the purpose of this dissertation, the Eastern Cape region is defined as extending from the Alagoa Bay to the Mzimkhulu River, whereas the Natal-Zululand region is defined as extending from the Mzimkhulu River to Delagoa Bay (modern-day Maputo Bay).

from missionaries' conflicting discourses about these differences. However, it argues that these conflicting discourses did not depend primarily on the contemporary fascination with natural history, the demands of the colonial state, or Herderian notions of the relationship between language and *Volk* as existing constructivist scholarship insists. Instead, in important ways, these discourses resulted from the complex entanglements between European and African ways of knowing.

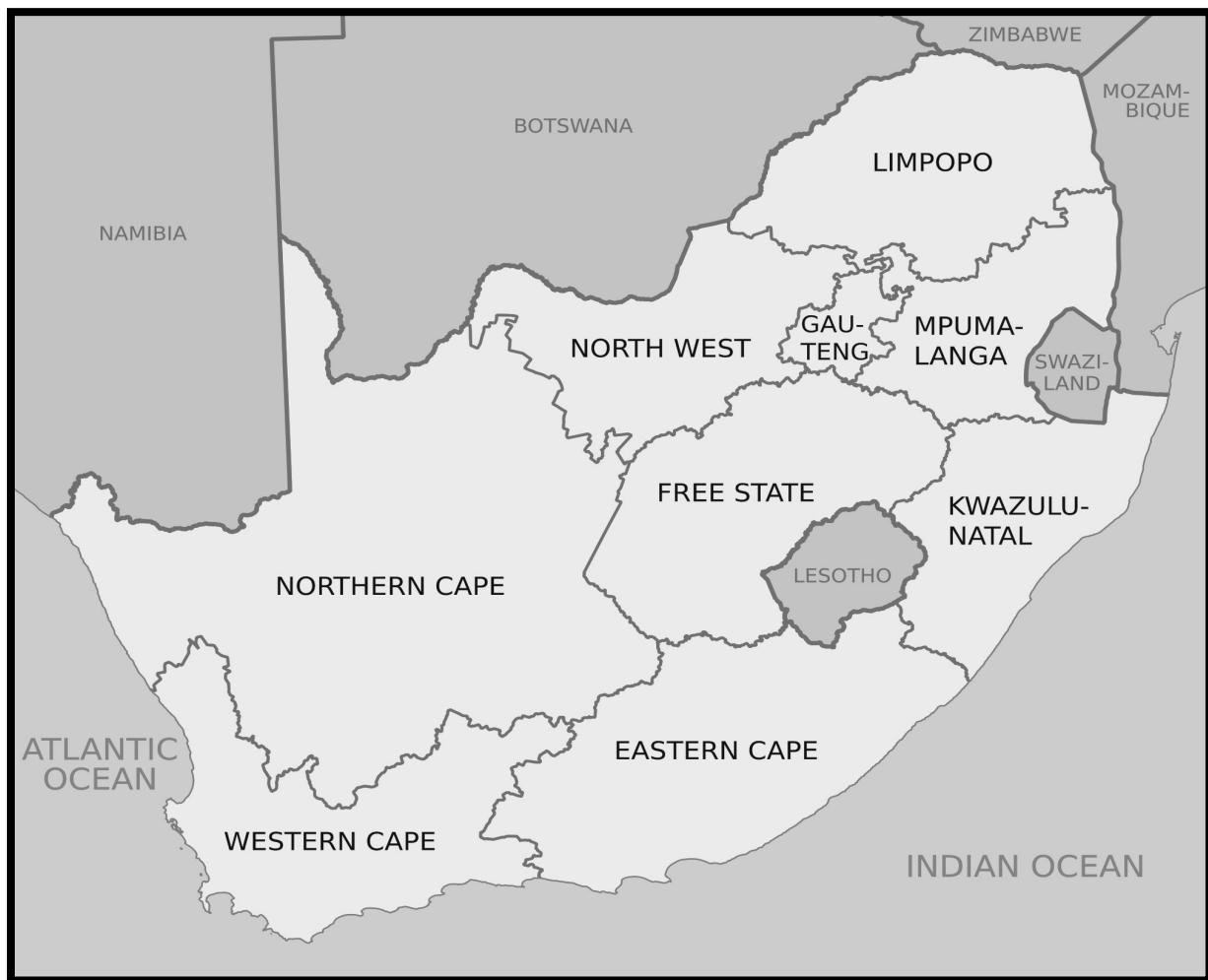


Figure 1. Modern-day map of South Africa with provincial borders. Note that the modern-day provinces of Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal correspond approximately to the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions of the nineteenth century. Source: Htoni. Reproduced under GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.2.

Positivism and Its Legacy

By drawing attention to entanglements between ways of knowing, this dissertation seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of missionary linguistics and the historical development of African languages, language communities, and ethno-linguistic identities. It is generally accepted that missionaries affected this development in important ways as a result of their attempts to translate the Bible into African vernaculars. Because most of these vernaculars were solely oral modes of communication, translation required the creation of written scripts, which, in turn, necessitated classifying these modes of communication into standard (written) languages and subordinate (oral) dialects. The missionaries claimed that, by classifying linguistic “facts,” they “discovered” standard languages and dialects that had always been there. This positivist attitude was typical of the nineteenth century, when the “Western world” was fascinated with natural history, a philosophy that espoused that there was “order” in nature that could be discovered through scientific observation and made visible through scientific systems of classification.³

For much of the twentieth century, scholars not only failed to question the language categories created by missionaries but worked through them as part of their own research agendas, even in the face of significant contradictions. For instance, in 1949, linguist Desmond Cole classified Zulu and Xhosa as distinct languages despite his admission that these languages “are so similar as to be mutually intelligible;”⁴ given that linguists regard mutual intelligibility as a sign of speaking practices being dialects of a common language rather than distinct languages in their own right, Cole’s recording of Zulu and Xhosa as distinct languages contradicted the

³ Marie Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008 [1998]), 28.

⁴ Desmond T. Cole, “Doke’s Classification of Bantu Languages,” in C. M. Doke and D. T. Cole, *Contributions to the History of Bantu Linguistics* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1969), 80-89.

basic tenets of linguistics. Similarly, in 1979, linguist Isaac Sibusiso Kubeka insisted that Zulu and Xhosa were different languages with different sets of dialects even though his research illustrated that the distinction between these languages and their respective dialects was historically contingent.⁵ Historians operated in a similar manner. Thus, in 1970, Abraham Smit “resolved” the conflicting positions regarding language between the Eastern Cape and American missionaries in the 1850s by declaring that “more thorough research” had shown that Xhosa and Zulu were indeed distinct languages.⁶

At the same time, as Nkonko Kamawangamalu noted, apartheid administrators exploited these positivist conclusions “to justify and legitimize” the creation of distinct ethnic homelands for black South Africans in general and for the Xhosa and Zulu in particular.⁷ Thus, South African Blacks, who were separated from Whites, Coloreds, and Asians on the basis of race, were further subdivided into “tribal” subgroupings according to the “mother tongue principle,” which meant that those groups (Rharhabe-Xhosa, Gcaleka-Xhosa, Mfengu, Thembu, Mpondo, and others) who were said to speak the Xhosa language were assigned to the Xhosa homelands of the Ciskei and Transkei, whereas those communities (Zulu, Ndwandwe, Mthethwa, Qwabe, Mkhize, Cele, Thuli, and others) who were said to speak the Zulu language became legal citizens of Zululand. In this context, the importance of language as a marker of black South Africans’ homeland identities was further reinforced through “mother tongue” education, in which children in the Ciskei and Transkei were instructed in the Xhosa language, while children in Zululand

⁵ Isaac Sibusiso Kubeka, “A Preliminary Survey of Zulu Dialects in Natal and Zululand,” *M.A. Thesis* (University of Natal, 1979), 14-15, 19-20, 65-84.

⁶ Abraham Petrus Smit, *God Made it Grow: History of the Bible Society Movement in Southern Africa, 1820-1870*, trans. W. P. De Vos (Cape Town: The Bible Society of South Africa, 1970), 28, 213.

⁷ Nkonko M. Kamawangamalu, “The Language Planning Situation in South Africa,” in Richard B. Baldauf, Robert B. Kaplan, eds., *Language Planning and Policy in Africa, Vol. 1, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa* (Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters, 2004), 198, 227.

were instructed in the Zulu language.⁸ In time, this language-based approach to the tribalization and education of South Africa's black population resulted in ethno-linguistic identities that gathered the older, narrower group identities into broader "tribal" or national wholes, such as the Xhosa and Zulu nations. The importance of these language-based national identities during the apartheid era can be understood from a quote by the former South African President Nelson Mandela in which even he identified the various groups of the Eastern Cape region as members of a single "Xhosa nation," a national identity which, it is important to realize, has little historical legitimacy outside the missionaries' and apartheid administrators' language-based discourse of Xhosaness. As Mandela noted in his autobiography:

The Transkei...is home to the Thembu people, who are part of the Xhosa nation, of which I am a member.... [The] amaBaca, amaBomyana, amaGcaleka, amaMfengu, amaMpondomis, amaMpondo, abeSotho, and abeThembu...together they comprise the Xhosa nation.⁹

Perhaps more importantly, the same positivist ideas continue to inform much of the linguistic scholarship and many of the language policies in post-apartheid South Africa and, in so doing, further naturalize the Xhosa and Zulu dichotomy in terms of languages and ethno-linguistic identities. As Sifree Makoni contends, in the post-apartheid era, scholars continue to portray South Africa's indigenous languages, including Zulu and Xhosa, as "self-evident, unproblematic, and an uncontested sociolinguistic fact," while the country's post-apartheid constitution ensures that these "languages...are accorded the status of uncontested judicial facts..."¹⁰ Makoni's assertions can be substantiated. Consider the fact that modern-day linguists, although they recognize the very close relationship between Zulu and Xhosa by using the term

⁸ Timothy Reagan, "The Politics of Linguistic Apartheid: Language Policies in Black Education in South Africa," *The Journal of Negro Education* 56:3, Knowing the Other: A Look at Education (Summer, 1987), 300.

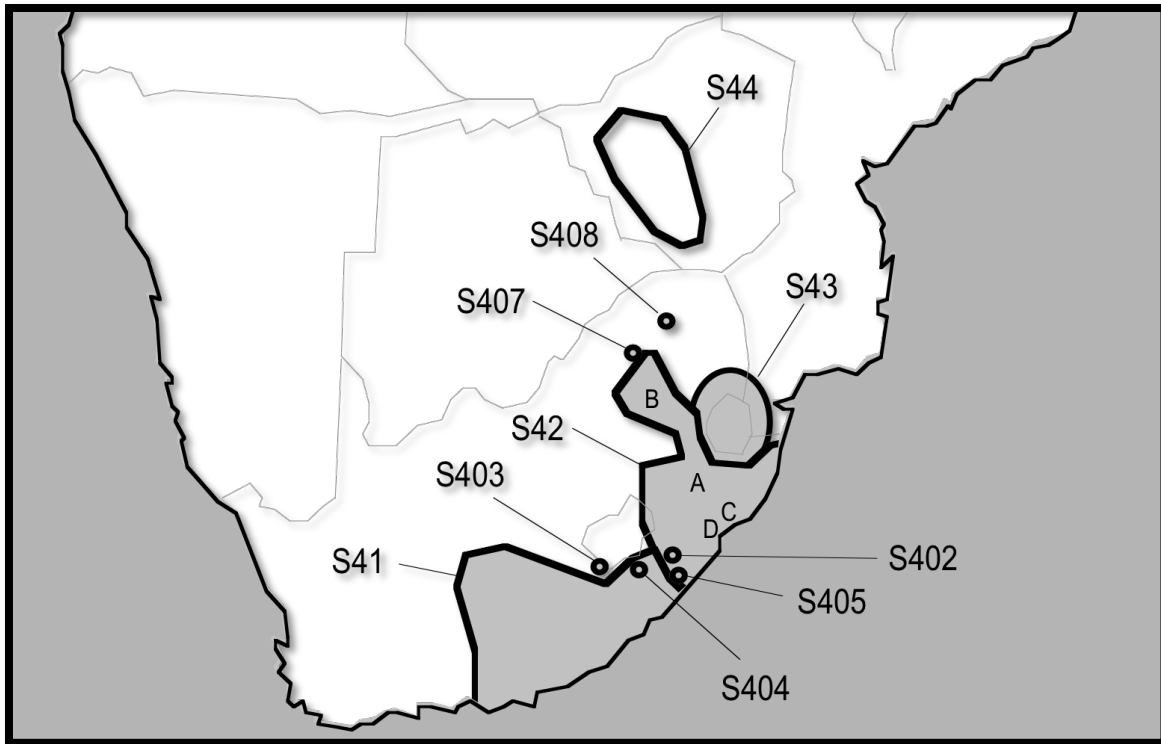
⁹ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1994), 3-4.

¹⁰ Sifree Makoni, "From Misinvention to Disinvention of Language: Multilingualism and the South African Constitution," in S. Makoni, G. Smitherman, A. Ball and A. K. Spear, eds., *Black Linguistics: Language, Society and Politics in Africa and the Americas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 134, 138.

“Nguni Group” (S 40) as an umbrella term for them, nevertheless portray them as distinct languages (S 41 and S 42) with distinct sets of dialects as part of Malcolm Guthrie’s classificatory system of Bantu languages.



Figure 2. Approximate locations of Malcolm Guthrie’s Bantu Zones. Source: Edricson (12 July 2007). Reproduced under GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.2



- | | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|---|
| S401 * .. † | Old Mfengu, Fingo | S41C * ... | – Bomwana |
| S402 | Bhaca, Baca | S41D * ... | – Gaika |
| S403 | Hlubi | S41E * ... | – Gcaleka |
| S404 | Phuthi | S41F * ... | – Thembu |
| S405 | Nhlangwini | S41G * ... | – Mpondomise |
| S406 * .. † | Lala | S41H * ... | – Ndlambe |
| S407 | South Ndebele ^{nbl} ,
Isikhethu, “Southern
Transvaal Ndebele”, incl.
Nrebele, Ndzundza | S41I * | – Hlubi (in former Ciskei) |
| S408 | Sumayela Ndebele,
“Northern Transvaal
Ndebele” | S42 | Zulu ^{zul} , Isizulu |
| S41 | Xhosa ^{xho} , Isixhosa,
“Kaffir” | S42A | – KwaZulu-Natal Zulu |
| S41A * ... | – Mpondo, Pondo | S42B | – Transvaal Zulu |
| S41B * ... | – Xesibe | S42C | – Qwabe |
| | | S42D | – Cele |
| | | S43 | Swati ^{ssw} , Swazi, Siswati,
Ngwane |
| | | S44 | Ndebele of Zimbabwe ^{nde} ,
Sindebele |
- (* = not in map)

Figure 3. S40 Nguni Group in Guthrie’s Zone S of Bantu languages. Note that Xhosa (S41) and Zulu (S42) are depicted as distinct languages with distinct dialects—S41A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I and S42A, B, C, and D respectively. Source: Jouni Filip Maho, compiler, *NUGL Online, The online version of the New Updated Guthrie List, a referential classification of the Bantu languages* (4 June 2009), 93. Courtesy of Jouni Filip Maho.

At the same time, the government of the Republic of South Africa helps entrench this dichotomy further by classifying Xhosa and Zulu as distinct languages for the purpose of indigenous language education and for collecting census data on the nation’s official language communities.

TABLE I. SOUTH AFRICA’S POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY FIRST LANGUAGE SPOKEN.

Language	No. in 1000 (%)
Afrikaans	6,855 (13.5%)
English	4,892 (9.6%)
IsiNdebele	1,090 (2.1%)
IsiXhosa	8,154 (16.0%)
IsiZulu	11,587 (22.7%)
Sepedi	4,618 (9.1%)
Sesotho	3,849 (7.6%)
Setswana	4,067 (8.0%)
Sign language	234 (0.5%)
SiSwati	1,297 (2.6%)
Tshivenda	1,209 (2.4%)
Xitsonga	2,277 (4.5%)
Other	828 (1.6%)
Total	50,961 (100%)

Source: Data adapted from Census 2011, *Census in Brief*, 26.

Not surprisingly, these languages have become the most salient markers of Zulu and Xhosa ethnic identities in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries. As early as 1928, South African linguist Doke noted:

I am certain there can be no united Zulu-Xosa tongue. Vocabulary, phonetics, and grammar present almost insuperable obstacles to this achievement, but, *more important*, the racial pride, each in his own language, and the growing literature will present an obstacle quite insuperable. We must reckon, then, with the persistence of both Zulu and Xosa in South Africa.¹¹

¹¹ Doke, “Linguistic Situation,” 480-1.

Half a century later, this was still true. As Kubeka explained in 1979, “At present, the bulk of Africans in Natal, let alone Zululand, tend to regard themselves as Zulus because they speak the Zulu language.”¹² According to Mary de Hass and Paulus Zulu, this remained the case at the end of the apartheid era. As they explained in 1994, “Many people, describe themselves as Zulu, and explain this identity primarily in terms of the language they speak.”¹³ The post-apartheid era has not liberated itself from this positivist legacy. Thus, in the context of a recent debate about the publication of a new Zulu Bible translation, Catholic Bishop Mlungisi Dlungwane and Father Alexis Madela complained that “the existing Zulu version posed language problems for Zulu speakers as it leant towards Xhosa...”¹⁴ At the same time, President Jacob Zuma, who has supported the project with R500,000 provided through the JC Zuma Foundation, has been quoted saying, “Zulu should not climb on top of other languages [that is, Xhosa], but what is written should be translated directly from that language [that is, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew] into Zulu.”¹⁵

Recently, missionaries’ positivist legacy and language-based notions of identity are beginning to be challenged by groups who seek to contest the power of those individuals whom the Nhlapo commission (Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims) has recognized as legitimate traditional rulers since 2004. In the KwaZulu-Natal province, such challenges face two major obstacles. On the one hand, these groups must reclaim their history and identity from the Zulu monarchy that subjugated and incorporated them in various ways into its conquest state in the first decades of the nineteenth century. As Jabulani Sithole, Mbongiseni Buthelezi, and Grant McNulty show, they attempt to achieve this by organizing themselves into

¹² Kubeka, “Preliminary,” 34.

¹³ Mary de Haas and Paulus Zulu, “Ethnicity and Federalism: The Case of KwaZulu/Natal,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20:3, Special Issue: Ethnicity and Identity in Southern Africa (Sep., 1994), 439. See also Catherine Campbell, Gerhard Maré and Cheryl Walker, “Evidence for an Ethnic Identity in the Life Histories of Zulu-Speaking Durban Township Residents,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21:2 (Jun., 1995), 292, 295, 298, 300-1.

¹⁴ Nokuthula Ntuli, “Bible Society disputes translation claim,” *The Cape Times*, 14 Jan. 2015.

¹⁵ “Zuma pays up for new Zulu Bible,” *The Mercury*, 6 Jan 2015.

unity associations that seek to revive pre-Zulu genealogical descent-based notions of identity. For instance, the members of *uBumbano lwamaZwide* (The Unity Association of the Zwides) and *uBumbano lwamaQwabe* (The Unity Association of the Qwabes) reclaim their identity as Ndwandwe and Qwabe by tracing their descent to their former rulers and ancestors, Zwide and Qwabe respectively (thereby denying any significant genealogical ties to the Zulu royal house).¹⁶ On the other hand, these groups must reclaim their history and identity from missionary linguistics and apartheid rule—both of which classified them as Zulu based on the notion that they are speakers of the Zulu language or any of its so-called dialects. As McNulty shows, some groups are beginning to challenge this notion by attempting to have their own speaking practices recognized not as dialects of the Zulu language but as distinct languages. This is the case of the Hlubi and Nhangwini, who argue that “their languages, *isiHlubi* and *isiNlangwini*...were languages in their own right that had long been subsumed by standardized Zulu because missionaries had mistaken them for variants of that language.”¹⁷

Constructivism and Its Limitations

These resurgent identity groups are drawing attention to what scholars have identified as the constructivist thesis of missionary linguistics. When constructivist interpretations of missionary linguistics and African languages first emerged in the early 1980s, they provided an

¹⁶ Jabulani Sithole, “Preface: Zuluness in South Africa: From ‘Struggle’ Debate to Democratic Transformation,” in B. Carton, J. Laband, and J. Sithole, eds., *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), xii – xx; Mbongiseni Buthelezi, “‘Sifuna umlando wethu’ (We are Looking for our History): Oral Literature and the Meanings of the Past in Post-Apartheid South Africa,” *Ph.D. Diss.* (Columbia University, 2012); Grant McNulty, “Custodianship on the Periphery: Archives, Power and Identity Politics in Post-Apartheid Umbumbulu, KwaZulu-Natal,” *Ph.D. Diss.* (University of Cape Town, 2013).

¹⁷ McNulty, “Custodianship,” 203.

important counterpoint to the positivism of missionaries.¹⁸ Inspired by postmodern theorists such as Michel Foucault, they showed that missionary linguistics is best conceptualized as a form of discourse. Moreover, these interpretations demonstrated that the classification systems of standard (written) languages circumscribing subordinate (oral) dialects are best viewed as discursive constructs rather than as reflections of people's speaking practices and the differences between them.¹⁹ Importantly, this does not mean that such differences did (and do) not exist; rather, what matters is how missionary linguists interpreted these differences, along with the new meanings these differences acquired by being organized and classified into standard language and subordinate dialects.²⁰

Moreover, these interpretations have shown that a variety of forces impinged on missionary linguistics as discourse. For instance, Johannes Fabian and William Samarin have demonstrated that a causal relationship existed between missionaries' rhetoric about standard languages in the Belgian Congo and the desire of Belgian officials to control the multilingualism

¹⁸ See, for instance, Johannes Fabian, "Missions and the Colonization of African Languages: Developments in the former Belgian Congo," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 17.2 (1983), 165-187; Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mabo Press, 1985); William J. Samarin, "Protestant Missions and the History of Lingala," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 16:2 (Jun., 1986), 138-163; Patrick Harries, "The Roots of Ethnicity: Discourse and the Politics of Language Construction in South-East Africa," *African Affairs* 8 (January 1988), 25-52; Patrick Harries, "Exclusion, Classification and Internal Colonialism: The Emergence of Ethnicity Among the Tsonga-Speakers of South Africa," in Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Terence Ranger, "Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika: the Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe," in Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, Volume 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Patrick Harries, "Imagery, Symbolism and Tradition in a South African Bantustan: Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Inkatha, and Zulu History," *History and Theory* 32 (1993), 105-125; Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, Volume 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Paul Landau, "Language," in Norman Etherington, ed., *Missions and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); ; Patrick Harries, *Butterflies and Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries and Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).

¹⁹ Fabian, "Missions," 176, 179, 182; Harries, "Roots," 26; Sinfrey Makoni, "In the Beginning was the Missionaries' Word: The European Invention of an African Language: The Case of Shona in Zimbabwe," in Kwesi Kwaa Prah, ed., *Between Distinction & Extinction; the Harmonisation and Standardisation of African Languages* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1998), 158; Harries, *Butterflies*, 165.

²⁰ Stuart Hall, "Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse," in Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor and Simeon J. Yates, eds., *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader* (London: Sage, 2011), 73.

of that colony's indigenous population.²¹ More recently, several studies have drawn attention to the ways in which the missionaries' own identities shaped their discourse about African languages. For example, Patrick Harries has demonstrated that Swiss missionaries constructed a unifying standard language ('Gwamba') for the communities they encountered in late nineteenth-century southeast Africa, because they themselves were experiencing an identity crisis as a result of decades of disunity within the church, as well as between the church and the state in Switzerland.²²

However, despite this recent focus on missionary identities, little has been done to assess the extent to which such identities were entangled with the very objects of the missionaries' proselytizing endeavors. This is problematic given that, when the Eastern Cape missionaries set out to construct the 'Caffre' language for the purpose of Bible translation in the first half of the nineteenth century, they attached their evangelistic ambitions to preexisting European naturalist ideas about a 'Caffre' race that was said to be unified by a common 'Caffre' language and which supposedly extended from the Cape Colony to Delagoa Bay and beyond. Similarly, American missionaries were sent to South Africa specifically in order to proselytize among what missionaries and other European contemporaries identified as the Zulu people. Consequently, what is needed is a study that explores the extent to which preexisting notions of "Caffreness" and "Zuluness" structured the ways in which Eastern Cape and American missionaries collected and classified linguistic information in order to better circumscribe their respective target groups and whether or not this "observer bias" contributed to the bifurcation of 'Caffre' into distinct Xhosa and Zulu languages over the course of the nineteenth century.

²¹ Fabian, "Missions," 175, 180; Samarin, "Protestant," 151-2.

²² Harries, *Butterflies*, 3-4, 29, 156, 160.

It has been argued that a common way by which missionaries circumscribed African groups was by assuming a primordial relationship between language and *Volk* in the romantic sense of German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (where the *Volk* is embodied by language, which is the spirit or soul of the people).²³ Thus, the missionaries believed that through the “discovery” of languages, they also “discovered” ethnic groups (or *Völker*) that had always existed. Some constructivist interpretations have upended this positivist argument, claiming that missionaries not only constructed standard languages, but also created “tribes” or ethnicities on the basis of these languages. The corollary of this argument is that African language communities and ethno-linguistic identities, such as Xhosa and Zulu, are essentially modern constructs or inventions that had no precedents in African societies of the late independent period (but that took on a life of their own as Africans subsequently internalized and mobilized them for their own purposes).²⁴

More recently, this “invention thesis” has been criticized by scholars who have identified preexisting African discourses of difference and maintain that such discourses imposed limits on Europeans’ ability to construct and impose on Africans wholly new notions of group belonging.²⁵ Embracing this limitation thesis in her work on the variegated historical discourses about the Zulu king Shaka, Carolyn Hamilton has called on scholars to pay more attention to the content and contours of preexisting African notions of difference, the moments of encounter

²³ Harries, *Butterflies*, 173.

²⁴ Ranger, *Invention*, 4. See also Leroy Vail, “Introduction,” in Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 1-19; Comaroff, *Of Revelation*, 225; Harries, *Butterflies*, 173.

²⁵ Carolyn Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty: The Powers of Shaka Zulu and the Limits of Historical Invention* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 3-4; Thomas Spear, “Neo-Traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa,” *The Journal of African History* 44:1 (2003), 8, 18; Jonathan Glassman, “Sorting out the Tribes: The Creation of Racial Identities in Colonial Zanzibar’s Newspaper Wars,” *The Journal of African History* 41:3 (2000), 397 n.11, 402-3; J. Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 7-8, 307 n.15; Bruce Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1-26.

between European and various African ways of knowing, and the long and complex processes of mutual reworking.²⁶

However, the role of language remains understudied in these processes of reworking. This neglect can be explained in part by the long-standing assumption that Africans did not use language as a marker of group identity in the late independent period. Terence Ranger spoke for many of these interpretations when he argued that, prior to the arrival of Europeans, the people of Southern Africa “defined themselves politically—as subjects of a particular chief rather than linguistically, culturally, or ethnically.”²⁷ More recently, Paul Landau has expressed the same idea, noting that “South African modes of self-rule comprised a venerable political tradition, one that deprecated skin color and language as barriers and elevated brotherhoods, rankings, and amalgamations.”²⁸ The problem with these assertions is not that they are categorically wrong. In fact, as will be argued in some of the following chapters, they offer a good description of the situation in the Eastern Cape region, where group identities such as clans and chiefdoms, and social status within chiefdoms, were established on the basis of genealogical descent and allegiance to a chief rather than language. However, even if language did not serve as a marker of group identity in this region, it is important to inquire into the ways in which the absence of a preexisting language-based discourse of identity may have shaped the Eastern Cape missionaries’ perspective on the nature and extent of the ‘Caffre’ language community.

More importantly, however, we must be careful not to overgeneralize these assertions in the context of Natal-Zululand, a region that experienced significant transformations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as smaller chiefdoms gave way to larger conquest

²⁶ Hamilton, *Terrific*, 5.

²⁷ Ranger, *Invention*, 4.

²⁸ Paul Landau, *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400-1948* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), xi.

states such as the Ndwandwe, Mthethwa, and, eventually, the Zulu.²⁹ This evolving dynamic emerges powerfully from the work of Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright.³⁰ Drawing heavily on the oral interviews collected by James Stuart in the early twentieth century,³¹ they contend that the Zulu conquest state expanded in two distinct phases and incorporated the groups conquered in these two phases differentially: whereas those groups conquered during the first phase of expansion were incorporated as privileged subjects (*amantungwa*) on the basis of their assumed and asserted geographical, cultural, and linguistic commonalities, those conquered during the second phase of expansion were incorporated as exploited tributaries (notably *amalala*) on the

²⁹ For a contrarian view that questions the idea of significant transformations, see Norman Etherington, “Were there large States in the Colonial Regions of Southeast Africa before the Rise of the Zulu Kingdom?,” *History in Africa* 31 (2004), 157-183; Adam Kuper, “The ‘House’ and Zulu Political Structure in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of African History* 34 (1993), 469-487.

³⁰ Carolyn Hamilton, “Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu Kingdom,” *M.A. Thesis* (University of the Witwatersrand, 1985); John Wright, “Politics, Ideology and the Invention of the Nguni,” in Tom Lodge, ed., *Resistance and Ideology in Settler Societies* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), 96–118; Carolyn Hamilton, “Traditions of Origin and the Ideological Appropriation of the Past in the Zulu Kingdom under Shaka,” (Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, History Workshop, 1987), 1-43; John Wright, “The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries: A Critical Reconstruction,” *Ph.D. Diss.* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1989); John Wright and Carolyn Hamilton, “Traditions and Transformations; The Phongolo-Mzimkhulu region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,” in Andrew Dumny and Bill Guest, eds., *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910; A New History* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1989), 49-82; Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, “The Making of the *AmaLala*: Ethnicity, Ideology and Relations of Subordination in a Precolonial Context,” *South African Historical Journal* 22 (1990), 3-23; John Wright, “A. T. Bryant and the ‘Lala’,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38:2 (Jun 2012), 355-368; Carolyn Hamilton, “Political Centralisation and the Making of Social Categories East of the Drakensberg in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38:2 (Jun, 2012), 291-300.

³¹ These oral interviews were conducted by James Stuart with African informants in the first two decades of the twentieth century. They have been collected, transcribed, translated, annotated and published as C. de B. Webb and J. B. Wright, eds., *The James Stuart Archive of Recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples*, 5 vols. (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1976-2001), henceforth *JSA*. Julian Cobbing criticizes this material in an article “A Tainted Well: The Objectives, Historical Fantasies, and Working Methods of James Stuart, with Counter-Argument,” *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 11 (1988): 115-154. Carolyn Hamilton has disputed Cobbing's blanket rejection. See Hamilton, “‘The Character and Objects of Chaka:’ A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as Mfecane Motor,” in ed. Hamilton, *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995), 207-10.

Note that a large number of Stuart's informants had personally witnessed the rise of the Zulu conquest state and experienced its ideological innovations. This means that many of the personal observations mentioned in these interviews fall within ‘recent time,’ a term that derives from Jan Vansina's three-tiered structure of oral traditions, which he likened to an imaginary hourglass (in the upper chamber of this imaginary hourglass is recent time, that is, the relatively brief period (typically circa 100-150 years) in which real people and events are still remembered by the oldest members of society). See Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 24, 168-69; Thomas Spear, “Oral Traditions: Whose History?,” *History in Africa* 8 (1981), 165-181, especially 170-72.

basis of their assumed and asserted geographical, cultural, and linguistic differences. Hamilton has recently described the distinction between Zulu subjects and tributaries in this manner:

The *ntungwa* claimed vague shared common origins as those who had ‘come down from the north...rolling in a grain basket,’ and spoke in the court *zunda* style, and were either of the original Zulu clan or were incorporated into the Zulu kingdom in the early years of Shaka’s reign....The lowest rung in the social scale of the new Zulu kingdom were super-exploited tributaries located on the margins of the kingdom.... They were marked out by their use of the *tekela* dialect and prohibited from speaking in the courtly *zunda* fashion....They were variously known in the rest of the Zulu kingdom by derogatory names such as *lala* (menials...), *nhlengwana* (destitutes...), and so on.”³²

As Wright and Hamilton suggest, language played an important role in the Zulu state’s discourse about social difference. Consequently, it is necessary to explore in detail the content and contours of the Zulu state’s discourse about the relationship between language and identity, the ways in which the American missionaries reworked these preexisting ideas as part of their own discursive engagement with Zuluness, and the consequences of this reworking for the development of Zulu and Xhosa as distinct languages in South Africa.

Rachel Gilmour has already pursued some of these lines of inquiry.³³ Interested in tracing the historical development of Xhosa and Zulu as standard languages, she reconstructed this history by focusing on eighteenth-century European naturalists as well as nineteenth-century European and American missionaries and their discursive engagement with the speaking practices of the people of the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions.³⁴ In her view, the two groups of missionaries came to different conclusions about these languages because “the political and social environments in which they worked were quite different.”³⁵ Specifically, she argued that, in the first half of the nineteenth century, Wesleyan-Methodist missionaries’ views of the

³² Hamilton, “Political Centralisation,” 292-6.

³³ Rachel Gilmour, *Grammars of Colonialism: Representing Languages in Colonial South Africa* (New York: Palgrave, 2006).

³⁴ Gilmour, *Grammars*, 5.

³⁵ Gilmour, *Grammars*, 117.

Xhosa language were shaped in important ways by their close association with the settler community, which increasingly viewed the Xhosa people as savages. As part of this association, they began to see the Xhosa language and culture as two different objects of knowledge: the former worthy of preservation because it supplied a vehicular language for Christianity, but the latter only fit for displacement by “Western” civilization. As Gilmour noted:

The Methodists sought to establish and validate the Xhosa language as an object of study and medium for Christianity while occluding Xhosa culture—and, largely, Xhosa-speakers—from view. Theirs was a unidirectional model of communication, aiming to act upon and alter language, thought, and belief in isolation from existing cultural practices and, perhaps perversely, removed from dialogue with the language’s speakers.³⁶

The American missionaries’ discourse about the Zulu language was very different. “Because [American] missionary linguists in Natal were working within the relatively stable environs of a British colony,” Gilmour explained, “they were confident enough to regard Zulu language and culture as suitable objects for knowledge, regulation, and control...”³⁷ Moreover, the American missionaries, unlike their European counterparts in the Eastern Cape region, immediately recognized language as a crucial marker of Zuluness and began to rework it for their own purposes. “Here was a prestige form of language, already associated with social and political status,” Gilmour argued. “Moreover, the conscious policies of linguistic conservation practices by the Zulu elite, as they were interpreted by the missionaries, imbued the language with associations of purity and stability.”³⁸ As part of this reworking, the American missionaries turned the Zulu language into the standard language for all the people of Natal and Zululand (rather than just Zululand), and all of them became Zulu as a result of this process.

³⁶ Gilmour, *Grammars*, 8

³⁷ Gilmour, *Grammars*, 166.

³⁸ Gilmour, *Grammars*, 122.

Organization and Arguments

Although Gilmour acknowledged that a preexisting Zulu discourse about language informed the American missionaries' perspective of the Zulu language, her study primarily offers a classical top-down constructivist perspective of missionary linguistics. This is largely due to the fact that she relied heavily on secondary sources in which the role of African intermediaries is downplayed, the content of preexisting African ideas about language remains obscure, and, perhaps more importantly, the debate between Eastern Cape and American missionaries about the geographical expansion of the 'Caffre' language community in 1853 and 1854 is overlooked.

In part, Gilmour is led to ignore this debate and its historical possibilities because she equated the meaning of the term 'Caffre' with Xhosa in the context of eighteenth-century European naturalist discourses about the people and speaking practices of South Africa. As chapter two of this dissertation shows, this is a problematic approach, because these eighteenth-century naturalists, including Carl Peter Thunberg, John Barrow, Heinrich Lichtenstein, and others, had a specific intent when they used the term 'Caffre' in this period, referring not to Xhosa but a race of people distinct from the 'Hottentot' and the 'Negro' races of Africa in terms of skin color, territory, and language. This is an important issue because many Eastern Cape missionaries were familiar with the works of these naturalists and, thus, arrived in South Africa with preconceived ideas about a 'Caffre' race that was unified by a common 'Caffre' language. Moreover, the Eastern Cape missionaries' belief in a 'Caffre' language community was reinforced by people's actual experiences with the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans, Zulu, and others during the first half of the nineteenth century. As chapter three shows, between 1800 and 1850, Europeans and Africans moved from the

Eastern Cape region to Natal-Zululand and vice versa, and, more significantly, used their skills in the speaking practices of one region in order to communicate successfully with the people of the other region. In so doing, these mobile individuals and their experiences with and testimonies of the ‘Caffre’ speech community provided weighty support for the idea that the speaking practices of the people residing between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay were mutually intelligible and, thus, formed part of a single ‘Caffre’ language.

Perhaps the most neglected factor that shaped the Eastern Cape missionaries’ understanding of this language community involved preexisting African ideas about language. Gilmour does not allow for this possibility because she claims that the Eastern Cape missionaries dispensed with their African interpreters quickly.³⁹ In contrast, chapter four of this dissertation argues that the Eastern Cape missionaries continued to depend on African interpreters well into the 1850s and, thus, not only communicated through them with the indigenous communities but were to some extent influenced by African interpreters’ ideas about language. Chapter five argues that, because the Eastern Cape missionaries’ African interpreters had their broader cultural roots among groups who promoted descent- and allegiance-based rather than language-based discourses of group identity, the latter consistently downplayed the differences between the speaking practice of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans, and Zulu and, in so doing, convinced the Eastern Cape missionaries that these modes of communication were mutually intelligible, forming part of a ‘Caffre’ language community that extended from the Cape Colony to Delagoa Bay.

Accepting the idea that the Eastern Cape missionaries were thinking in terms of a broad ‘Caffre’ rather than a narrow Xhosa language community also opens up a different explanation for their desire to detach language from culture. In order to construct a single unifying written

³⁹ Gilmour, *Grammars*, 72.

language for all these groups, it was necessary for this language to transcend the (narrow) cultural differences that existed between them—for instance, by avoiding terms and idiomatic expressions that were unique to individual groups, substituting them with terms and expressions common to all of them. In fact, as the coda to chapter five shows, this was precisely what the Eastern Cape missionaries were beginning to do in the early years of the 1850s, just before the American missionaries rejected their proposal to produce a single ‘Caffre’ translation of the Bible.

As Gilmour’s analysis of the American missionaries’ attitude toward language focused on primary source materials that were published after 1855, she explored neither this rejection nor the factors that occasioned it. Indeed, in her analysis, this rejection is a forgone conclusion, as she maintained that the American missionaries recognized language as a crucial marker of Zuluness from the very beginning of their activities in South Africa in 1835. Chapter six challenges this narrative. It begins by showing that there existed a fundamental difference between the American and the Eastern Cape missionaries: whereas the latter arrived in the region with preconceived notions about the ‘Caffre’ race, the former tied their identity as missionaries to the Zulu only. The self-conception as a mission to the Zulu people encouraged the American missionaries to particularize the Zulu from the inception of their activities in South Africa. Thus, whereas the Eastern Cape missionaries looked for traits that the various ‘Caffre’ communities, including the Zulu, had in common, the American missionaries searched for traits that set the Zulu apart from other ‘Caffre’ groups. The chapter continues by showing that, because the American missionaries particularized the Zulu on the basis of culture rather than language until the middle of the 1840s, they were quite supportive of developing a common written language for all the ‘Caffre’ groups during this period. However, this situation changed when the

American missionaries experienced doubts about the cultural distinctiveness of the Zulu and, as a result of this disillusionment, began to consider language as a more reliable marker of Zuluness. Moreover, it was only at this stage that they opened themselves up to the preexisting Zulu discourse about language and began to rework it for their own ends.

Although Gilmour draws attention to this reworking, her account of the process is overly mission-centric. In contrast, drawing on the work of Wright and Hamilton, chapter seven explores in detail the content of the Zulu rulers' preexisting language-based discourse of identity and shows that, in order to speed up the process of socio-political integration of some conquered groups while legitimizing the long-term socio-economic exploitation of others, between 1817 and 1828, the Zulu rulers mobilized language differences (however small) for the purpose of social status differentiation. Specifically, the chapter shows that the Zulu rulers' language-based discourse of social identity defined *ukukhuluma* as the "superior" language and, thus, as the marker of privileged subjects (*amantungwa*), while defining *ukutekeza* as an "inferior" language and a marker of exploited tributaries (notably *amalala*).

Knowledge of these details points to how the American missionaries intervened when they began to rework preexisting Zulu ideas about language for their own purposes, including the rejection of Shaw's proposal in 1854. Gilmour characterizes this intervention as a relatively straightforward process of linguistic "Zulufication" when she argues that the American missionaries identified the high-status language spoken at the Zulu court (*ukukhuluma*) as the standard language for all the people in the Natal-Zululand region. However, as the coda to chapter seven demonstrates, before the American missionaries engaged in this "Zulufication," they transformed a language-based discourse about social status difference into a language-based discourse about ethnic difference. Indeed, whereas the Zulu rulers' discourse had distinguished

between superior and inferior speaking practices (*ukukhuluma* versus *ukutekeza*) in order to differentiate between the Zulu state's privileged subjects and its exploited tributaries (*amantungwa* versus *amalala*), the American missionaries differentiated between superior and inferior languages (Zulu versus 'Caffre') in order to better single out the Zulu from the broader 'Caffre' community. In so doing, the American missionaries' reworking of preexisting Zulu ideas about language opened the path not only for their rejection of Shaw's proposal on the basis of Zulu being a superior language to 'Caffre' (later Xhosa) but also for the development of Zulu and 'Caffre' (later Xhosa) as distinct languages, language communities, and ethno-linguistic identities in South Africa.

Following constructivist interpretations of missionary linguistics, I argue that Shaw's proposal and its rejection were not the result of differences between people's speaking practices, but rather resulted from missionaries' conflicting discourses about these differences. However, these conflicting discourses did not depend primarily on the contemporary fascination with natural history, the demands of the colonial state, or Herderian notions of the relationship between language and *Volk* as conventional constructivist scholarship argues. Instead, in the case of the Eastern Cape missionaries, the discourse about a unified 'Caffre' language community that extended from the Cape Colony to Delagoa Bay was shaped by preexisting eighteenth-century naturalist ideas about the 'Caffre' race; people's experiences with the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Mfengu, Natal Africans, Zulu, and others during the first half of the nineteenth century; and, most importantly, preexisting African ideas about the relationship between language and identity in the Eastern Cape region. In contrast, the American missionaries' discourse about the Zulu language community was shaped by their self-conception as a mission to the Zulu people, an identity which encouraged them to particularize the Zulu from the beginning of their activities

in South Africa and which, after 1850, was sustained by a discourse about the relationships between language and identity that reworked preexisting Zulu ideas about language. By drawing attention to the entanglements between missionary and African ways of knowing, this dissertation shows that the development of Xhosa and Zulu as distinct languages cannot be explained by strict (unidirectional) constructivist interpretations but must involve an African-centric approach that is sensitive to the ways in which knowledge, even under asymmetric relations of power, is mutually constitutive.

CHAPTER I

The Eastern Cape Missionaries and the Making of the ‘Caffre’ Language, 1800–1853

Dr. Johannes Vanderkemp and John Edmond of the London Missionary Society (LMS) were the first European missionaries to visit the Eastern Cape region. However, their visit to the ‘Caffres’ (Xhosa) in 1799 did not result in a permanent mission station,¹ as the society decided to focus its human resources on the Khoikhoi and Tswana peoples instead. Consequently, the first permanent mission station in the Eastern Cape region was not established until LMS missionary Joseph Williams, in his capacity as a government missionary agent, settled on the banks of the Kat River in 1816 in order to serve among the Khoikhoi, Gonaqua-Khoi, and Rharhabe-Xhosa until his death in 1818. Over the course of the next four decades, European missionary activities expanded steadily in the region despite the setbacks occasioned by the Fifth (1818–9), Sixth (1834–5), Seventh (1846–7), and Eighth Cape Frontier Wars (1850–3). As part of this expansion, the missionaries grew more familiar with the speaking practices of the region. Moreover, they began to translate and publish a wide range of didactic, liturgical, and missiological materials in the language they came to identify as ‘Caffre.’ Drawing on constructivist analyses of missionary linguistics, this chapter argues that these activities and publications amounted not to the “discovery” of a ‘Caffre’ language that had always been there, but to the discursive construction of that language. The chapter argues further that these activities and publications circumscribed a ‘Caffre’ language community that was not confined to the Eastern Cape region but one that extended from the Cape Colony to the environs of Delagoa Bay and, thus, included the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans, Zulu, and others.

¹ *Transactions of the Missionary Society*, 2 vols. (London: Bye and Law, 1804), 1:366-96.

Eastern Cape Missionaries and Missionary Societies

Following the death of LMS missionary Joseph Williams in 1818, the colonial government sent John Brownlee, in the capacity of government missionary agent, to establish Chumie (Tyhume) station among the Rharhabe-Xhosa in June 1820. In response to an invitation by the Dutch Reformed Church, the Glasgow Missionary Society, a Scottish Presbyterian mission society (SPMS) founded in 1796, sent its first missionaries to South Africa in 1820.² One year later, Scottish missionaries William Thomson, John Bennie, and John Ross moved to Brownlee's Chumie station and, in 1824, established Incehra station (the future Lovedale). William Chalmers and two missionary mechanics joined the SPMS in 1828 in time to support the establishment of Burnshill and Im'Qwarkwebe (Pirie) stations (the latter among the Mbalu-Xhosa) in 1830 and 1831, respectively. Some time later, Robert Niven and John Cumming also arrived in South Africa on behalf of the SPMS, opening Igqibigha and Kirkwood stations (the latter among the Thembu) in 1837 and 1842, respectively.

A number of other European missionary societies rivaled the SPMS's expansionary efforts in the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1826, the LMS sent Brownlee, who had rejoined the society one year earlier, to establish the Buffalo River station (the site of present-day King William's Town) among the Ntinde-Xhosa.³ Two years later, the German-born Frederick Gottlob Kayser joined Brownlee on the Buffalo River before moving on to open a separate station, Knapp's Hope, among Maqoma's Rharhabe-Xhosa in 1833. Toward the end of the 1830s, Henry Calderwood and Richard Birt increased the number of LMS missionaries, founding

² The history of the Scottish Presbyterian missionary societies in South Africa is complicated by the various secessions from the Church of Scotland that, although taking place in Scotland, resulted in organizational and affiliation changes in South Africa. Because these missionaries cooperated closely with each other throughout these organizational changes, I use the acronym SPMS for all of them regardless of their specific affiliations.

³ Brownlee had resigned from the LMS in 1817.

Umxelo station among the Dange-Xhosa in 1839, and Blinkwater station and Peelton among the Mfengu in 1838 and 1848.

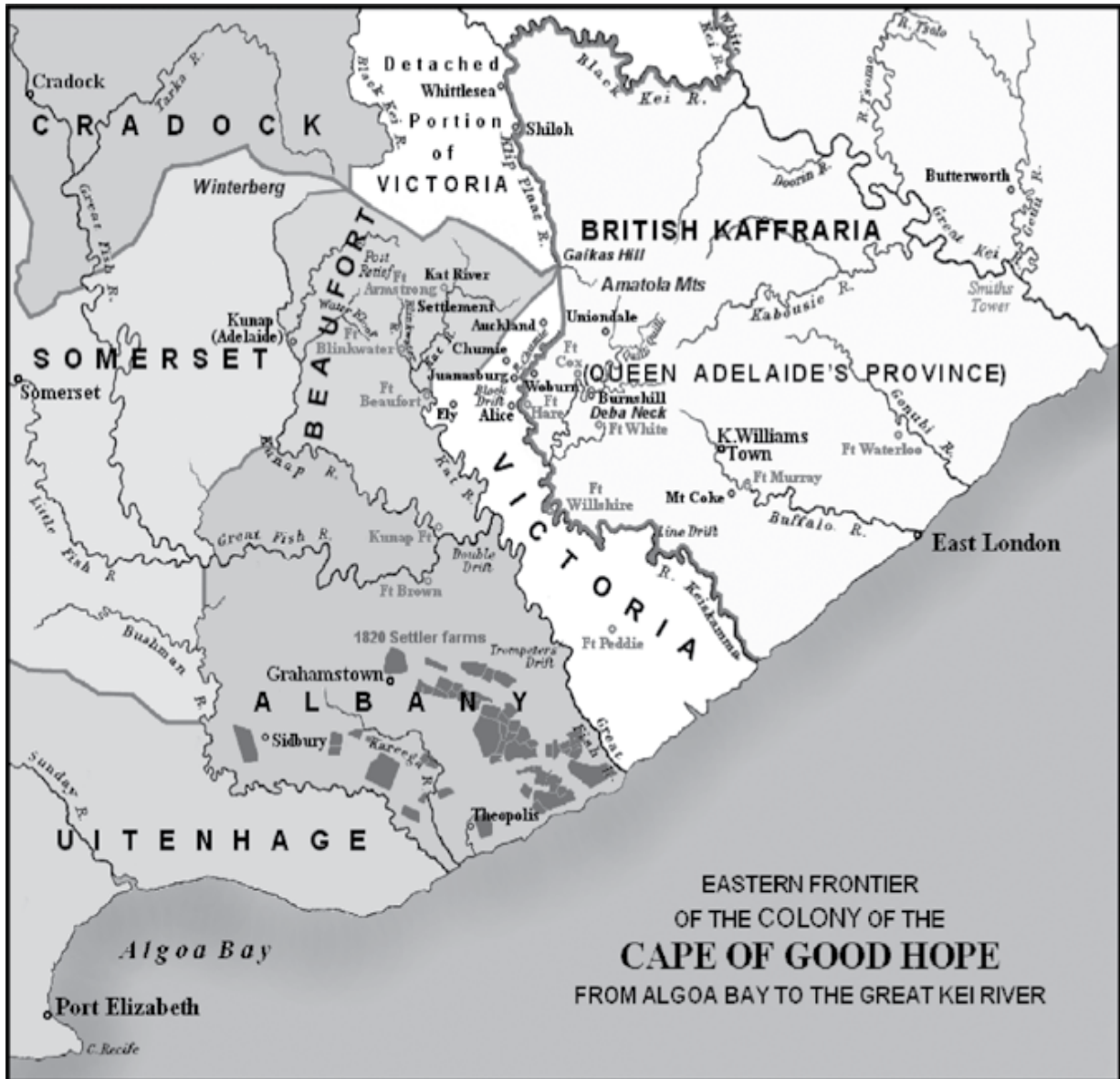


Figure 4. Eastern frontier of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope. Redrawn from a map included in *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith, Baronet of Aliwal on the Sutlej*, G. C. B. Copyright London, John Murray, 1903. Reproduced under GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.2.

Two German missionary societies became active in the Eastern Cape region during the same period. Although the United Brethren or Moravian Missionary Society had established their first mission stations in South Africa among the Khoikhoi as early as the eighteenth century, it was not until 1818 that they began to focus their attention on the Eastern Cape region, establishing Enon station in the Uitenhage district “to prepare an entrance among the tribes beyond the boundary.”⁴ The United Brethren followed up on this plan of expansion during the coming decades, establishing Shiloh and Goshen stations among the Thembu people in 1828 and 1850, respectively.⁵ Founded in 1824, the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Society (BMS) sent its first missionaries to South Africa in 1833 to work among the Korana-Khoi.⁶ As part of a second group of BMS missionaries, Jakob Ludwig Döhne arrived in South Africa three years later. After a brief sojourn at Franschoek, he joined his compatriot, the LMS missionary Kayser, at Knapp’s Hope in June 1836 to prepare for the establishment of Bethel station (present-day Stutterheim) among the Rharhabe-Xhosa the following year.⁷ Carl Posselt and other missionaries joined Döhne over the course of the next five years, providing the manpower to establish Itemba station among the Ndlambe-Xhosa in 1838 and Emmaus station (Wartburg) in 1843. However, in the aftermath of the Seventh Frontier War, Döhne and Posselt moved to Natal, leaving the rebuilding efforts to their colleague Albert Kropf, who re-established Bethel station in 1848.

While the United Brethren and BMS activities rivaled the efforts of the LMS and SPMS in this period, their efforts paled in comparison to those of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMS). Founded in England in 1813, the WMS’s entry into the Eastern Cape region

⁴ Hans Peter Hallbeck, Letter, 6 April 1827, as quoted in W. Sigurd Nilsen, *The Twin Blossom of the Pear Tree: The History of the Moravian Church in the Eastern Province in South Africa* (Port Shepstone, 1999), 28.

⁵ Nilsen, *Twin*, 36, 42, 75.

⁶ For more details, see Gunther Pakendorf, “A Brief History of the Berlin Mission Society in South Africa,” *History Compass* 9.2 (2011), 106-118.

⁷ Friedrich Gottlob Kayser, *Rev F. G. Kayser: Journal and Letters*, ed. Chris Hummel (Grahamstown: Maskew Miller Longman, 1990), 132.

began with Reverend William Shaw. Shaw arrived in South Africa as a Methodist chaplain attached to a large number of British settlers who moved to the region in 1820 as part of a government-sponsored settlement scheme. He soon developed a plan to extend the work of the WMS beyond the colonial frontier.⁸ Supported by a steadily increasing number of missionaries—Stephen Kay, Samuel Young, William Shrewsbury, William Shepstone, Richard Haddy, William Boyce, Joseph Warner, Henry Dugmore, John Appleyard, and more, Shaw turned his vision into a reality over the next two decades. In 1823, the group established Wesleyville mission station among the Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa.⁹ Several other stations followed. In addition to the short-lived stations among the Tembe at Delagoa Bay and among the Swazi at Mahamba in 1823 and 1844, respectively, these included Mount Coke among the Ndlambe-Xhosa in 1825; Butterworth among the Gcaleka-Xhosa and their Mfengu clients in 1827; (Old) Morley among the Bomvana in 1829; Clarkebury among the Thembu in 1830; Buntingville among the Mpondo in 1830; Shawbury among the Bhaca in 1839; and, finally, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Zwartkops (*Kwangubene*), and Indaleni stations in Natal among the Natal Africans and Zulu in 1841, 1842, 1846, and 1847, respectively. From the very beginning of his activities in South Africa, Shaw had been convinced that the establishment of this chain of stations occurred in accordance with God's will. As he explained in 1828:

Divine Providence seems especially to have called the Wesleyan Missionary Society to be one of the principal instruments in communicating the light of the Gospel to the heathen tribes who inhabit the coast country from the Keiskamma to Delagoa Bay...¹⁰

⁸ *Wesleyan Missionary Magazine* (henceforth *WMM*), Feb 1821, 151; William Shaw, *The Story of My Mission in South-Eastern Africa* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1860), 327.

⁹ Shaw, *Story*, 337-8.

¹⁰ School of Oriental and African Studies, London, United Kingdom, Methodist Missionary Society Archives, Correspondence South Africa, microfiche (henceforth MMS/SA/mf) 301, Shaw to the Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, Wesleyville, 14 Oct 1828.

The ‘Caffre’ Language as an Object of Knowledge and Discourse

“Communicating the light of the Gospel to the heathen tribes” required acquiring said natives’ vernacular speaking practices and, more importantly, translating the Bible, hymns, and other liturgical materials into these vernaculars. In their pursuit of these objectives, the Eastern Cape missionaries studied the speaking practices of the people who inhabited this region. As part of this engagement, they produced language study materials such as wordlists, vocabularies, phrasebooks, dictionaries, grammars, philological surveys, spelling books, and reading primers, as well as a series of liturgical and Bible translations that, over time, gave life to the ‘Caffre’ language as an object of discourse and knowledge.¹¹

Linguistic studies and publications were crucial in this regard. This process began when LMS missionary Dr. Johannes Vanderkemp published a rudimentary grammar and vocabulary entitled *Specimen of the Caffra Language and Vocabulary of the Caffra Language* in 1800.¹² The Scottish missionaries took the lead in the 1820s. One of their first actions consisted of “reducing to form and rule this language, which hitherto floated in the wind.”¹³ The “system of writing” that resulted from this effort was then used by Thomson, Bennie, and Ross as the basis for the first language primer of its kind, entitled *Incwadi yokuqala ekuteteni gokwamaxosa* (First Elementary Book for the Xhosa) in 1824.¹⁴ For the next fifteen years, Bennie was in charge of the SPMS’s language development efforts. He published didactic materials, including a spelling-

¹¹ As I will explore in chapter three, this work always depended on the support and expertise of Africans.

¹² *Transactions*, Vanderkemp, *Specimen of the Caffra Language*, 442-446, and *Vocabulary of the Caffra Language*, 447-458; Wilhelm Bleek, *The Library of His Excellency Sir George Grey, Philology*, Vol. 1 (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1858), 46.

¹³ *Report of the Glasgow Missionary Society*, henceforth *RGMS*, (1825), 12.

¹⁴ Bleek, *Library*, 50; Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa (henceforth CL), MS 9037, Presbytery of Kaffraria Minutes (henceforth PKM), Monday, 9 February 1824. Note that the original title translation in Bleek’s work says “in the Kafir Language” rather than “for the Xhosa.” However, since the original title in the ‘Caffre’ language clearly uses the word “Xhosa,” I substituted “Kafir” for “Xhosa.” I apply the same rule with regard to title translations throughout this dissertation.

book in 1829 and *Eyokuqala inncwadana yokufunda gokwamaxosa* (The First Reader for the Xhosa) and *Eyesibini inncwadana yokufunda* (The Second Reader) in 1839, as well as linguistic materials, notably *A Systematic Vocabulary of the Kaffrarian Language* in 1826, which included an *Introduction to the Kaffrarian Grammar*.¹⁵

Initially, the Moravian and Wesleyan missionaries simply used the materials offered to them by the SPMS.¹⁶ However, the Wesleyans soon began to work on the language independently, with William Shaw preparing a makeshift vocabulary between 1823 and 1826.¹⁷ The crucial breakthrough for the Wesleyans came when William Boyce published *A Grammar of the Kafir Language* in 1834,¹⁸ which for the first time explained the rules governing the prefix changes and sound patterns that rendered the language melodious sounding. As early as March 1832, Boyce referred to these rules, which he called “euphonic or alliterative concord,” in these terms:

One principal word in a sentence governs the initial letters or syllables of the other words: this is independent of any grammatical concord, or variety of inflexion. Thus, in speaking the language, the following points must be ascertained in order to insure correctness: first, the principal or governing word in a sentence; second, the principal letter in that word, to the sound of which the initial letters or syllables of the other words must be assimilated; third, the changes which must be made in the initial letters or syllables of the word which is governed by this euphonic concord.¹⁹

In the aftermath of this breakthrough, the Wesleyan mission published a number of didactic materials that facilitated reading instruction in the ‘Caffre’ language. These works included *Incwadi yezifundo ibalelwe izikolo zaba-Wesli – Emaxoseni* (Lesson Book written for Wesleyan Schools among the Xhosa) and *Inncwadi yezifundo: ibalelwe izikolo ezisema-Xoseni*

¹⁵ Bleek, *Library*, 50-1; Killie-Campbell Africana Library, Durban, South Africa (henceforth KCAL), KCM 47614, Rev. Robert Godfrey, “Rev. John Bennie, the Father of Kafir Literature,” (1934), 124; *The Caffrarian Messenger* (henceforth CM), Aug 1841, 134-5.

¹⁶ Nilsen, *Twin*, 44.

¹⁷ CL, MS15252, Diary of William J. Shrewsbury (typescript), 29 Nov 1826, 10:

¹⁸ William Boyce, *A Grammar of the Kafir Language* (Graham’s Town: Wesleyan Mission Press, 1834).

¹⁹ *WMM*, Sep 1832, W. Boyce, Letter, Buntingville, 4 Mar 1832, 664.

neziseMbo (Lesson Book for Schools among the Xhosa and in Emboland), which were published in 1838 and 1854, respectively.²⁰ At the same time, they produced linguistic materials that rendered the ‘Caffre’ language more accessible as an object of knowledge. Included among these publications were John Ayliff’s *A Vocabulary of the Kafir Language* (1846) and John Appleyard’s *The Kafir Language: Comprising a Sketch of its History; which includes a General Classification of South African Dialects, Ethnographical and Geographical, Remarks upon its Nature, and a Grammar* (1850).²¹

These efforts were complemented by the publication of the first vernacular reading materials, including tracts and periodicals. Among the former, some of the most significant were the LMS’s *Igqihra* (The Sorcerer), the SPMS’s *Iziqwenge zembali yamaxosa* (Extracts of a history of the Xhosa), and the WMS’s *Ukukuleka, gu-Jesusi Kirisitusi* (The Salvation, through Jesus Christ), which were published in 1846, 1838 and 1840, respectively.²² Periodicals were also being published: the SPMS published *Ikwezi* (The Morning Star) between 1844 and 1845, while the WMS produced *Umshumayeli wendaba* (The News Teller) between 1837 and 1841, *Isibuto samavo* (A Collection of Tales) between 1843 and 1844, and *Isitunywa sennyanga* (The Monthly Messenger) in 1850.²³

However, the missionaries’ primary focus was on translating liturgical materials into the vernacular language. Ironically, it was Ntsikana, a Rharhabe-Xhosa of the Cirha clan, who composed the first vernacular hymn with a Christian theme, *Ulo Thixo omkhulu ngosezulwini*

²⁰ Bleek, *Library*, 52-4; *Report of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society* (henceforth *RWM*), 1840, 61.

²¹ Bleek, *Library*, 52-4, 67; *RWM*, 1840, 61; John Appleyard, *The Kafir Language: Comprising a Sketch of its History; which includes a General Classification of South African Dialects, Ethnographical and Geographical: Remarks upon its Nature: and a Grammar* (King William’s Town: Wesleyan Missionary Society, 1850).

²² Bleek, *Library*, 79-80.

²³ Bleek, *Library*, 84-88; *RWM*, 1838, 65; *Ibid.*, 1845, 61; *CM*, Feb 1845, 242; *Report of the Glasgow African Missionary Society* (henceforth *RGAMS*), Mar 1846, 20.

(He, the Great God in Heaven), in about 1817.²⁴ In the early 1820s, the SPMS and the WMS adopted this hymn for their own purposes and transcribed it, thereby producing the first African-inspired writing sample in the vernacular.²⁵ The widespread success of Ntsikana's hymn encouraged the Scottish missionaries to translate a range of contemporary European hymns into the vernacular language. Officially, John Bennie shouldered much of this work, either composing or translating four hymns in 1826.²⁶ By 1832, the Scottish missionaries considered the composition and translation of hymns so important that they established a formal "Committee on Kaffer Hymns and Pslams" whose permanent members included John Bennie, John Ross, William Chalmers, and James Laing.²⁷ At least on paper, Bennie continued to be the main composer and translator, submitting thirty-two hymns (revisions of ten old hymns and twenty-two new ones) of which the committee selected thirty for publication as part of the first 'Caffre' language hymnal in 1832.²⁸ However, the Scottish mission church's African members also played an important role; participants included Vimbe (alias John Muir), Dukwana (Ntsikana's son), and Festiri Soga, who composed several hymns between 1836 and 1840.²⁹ For instance, Vimbe published two hymns in 1836, entitled *Babetunywe ababini* (They were Sent the Two) and *Vuselela inkumbulo* (Rouse the Memory).³⁰ Three hymns by Vimbe and five by Festiri were also included in the 1841 hymnal entitled *Inncwadana inamaculo gokwamaxosa* (Little

²⁴ Les Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society: The Ciskei Xhosa and the Making of South Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 120.

²⁵ For the popularity and use of this hymn, see for instance Stephen Kay, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria* (New York: Harper, 1834), Chumie, Sunday, 11 Aug 1825, 47. The lines can be found in Andrew Steedman, *Wanderings and Adventures in the Interior of Southern Africa*, 2 vols. (London: Longman & Co., 1835), 1:32-33.

²⁶ CL, MS9037, PKM, 3 August 1826.

²⁷ CL, MS9037, PKM, 5 January 1832, 194.

²⁸ Sandra Carolyn Teresa Rowoldt Shell, ed., "A Missionary Life Among the amaXhosa: the Eastern Cape Journals of James Laing, 1830-1836," *M.A. Thesis (University of Cape Town, 2006)*, 18 Jan 1832, 262; *RGMS*, 1833, 14.

²⁹ *CM*, April 1840, 83; more on these individuals in chapter four.

³⁰ Bleek, *Library*, 60.

Book of Hymns for among the Xhosa).³¹ About a decade later, the Scottish missionaries proudly reported that they had printed “500 copies of the new Hymn Book,” which included 87 hymns and sold for six to seven pence a copy.³²

The Wesleyans rivaled these efforts. By 1824, William Shaw had already tried his hand at composing a small hymn containing the lines “*Sifun ukutanda wena, Uyasitanda tina; Sifuna wen ukukunga, Uyakusina tina* [We seek to love thee, (for) thou wilt love us; We seek to pray to thee; (for) thou wilt hear us].”³³ As singing became a key aspect of their proselytizing efforts,³⁴ the Wesleyans too devoted more resources to composing and translating hymns into the ‘Caffre’ language. In 1835, these efforts resulted in the publication of the first Wesleyan hymn book, *Le yincwadi yamaculo okuvunywa gamaxosa ezikolweni zaba-Wesley* (This Book of Hymns which are to be sung by the Xhosa in the Wesleyan schools), which included forty-eight hymns composed or translated by missionaries John Ayliff, William Boyce, Henry Dugmore, and Richard Haddy, as well as government interpreters George Cyrus and Theophilus Shepstone.³⁵ They published several revised versions of this hymnal over the next decades, including *Inncwadi yamaculo, okuvunywa ezikolweni zabaKristu ezisemaxoseni nezisembo* (Book of hymns, which are to be sung in the Christian schools among the Xhosa and in Emboland) in 1851.³⁶ Several other missionary societies also composed and translated hymns, including the

³¹ Bleek, *Library*, 60-1. The description identifies F. as (u-Futini) but it was certainly Festiri given that missionary William Chalmer noted in October 1842 that “Festiri has composed five hymns in the Caffre language which have been printed and published, and which, for good divinity, will stand a comparison with the compositions of the white men.” See *CM*, Apr 1843, 194.

³² CL, MS9039, PKM, 6 Jul 1853; Bleek, *Library*, 61.

³³ *RWM*, 1824, 54.

³⁴ *RWM*, 1825, 45; *WMM*, Mar 1831, 199-200.

³⁵ Bleek, *Library*, 61; *WMM*, Sep 1832, 664. For George Cyrus and Theophilus Shepstone, see chapter three.

³⁶ Bleek, *Library*, 62.

Berlin Missionary Society, whose leading member Jakob L. Döhne published eight hymns in 1841.³⁷

The Scottish missionaries also took a leading role in translating prayers, commandments, catechisms, and other missiological materials into the ‘Caffre’ language. In 1824, John Ross translated the Catechism, publishing it as a volume called *In’cwadana yokubuza en’cinane*, which also included translations of the Ten Commandments (*Imiteto yeshumi lika-Tixo*), the Lord’s Prayer (*Isikungo senKosi*) and the Creed (*Inkolo*).³⁸ Several revised editions of this translation appeared over the next two decades, including the 1853 edition entitled *Incwadi ebuza indawo eziyinthloko ezwini lika-Tixo* (Book which asks the articles which are the head in the word of God).³⁹ Although they initially used Scottish publications, German missionaries produced their own liturgical materials in the 1840s. For instance, in 1841, BMS missionary Jakob Döhne published a translation of the Catechism as *Eyokuqala incwadi yokubuza efundwayo. Esikolweni sase-Beteli. Emaxoseni* (First Book of Questioning which is taught in the school at Bethel among the Xhosa).⁴⁰ Six years later, the Moravian missionary Adolph Bonatz completed an introductory work for children under the title *In’cwadi yabantwana exelayo indaba zabantu be-Testamente endala* (Children’s Book which tells the news of the people of the Old Testament).⁴¹

The Wesleyans also started out by using Scottish translations; however, they soon became wary of them.⁴² As William Shaw remarked at the time:

I doubt whether we should consent to leave Calvinists to be the sole umpires of our Caffre Theology. We shall of course not prepare anything controversial, nor

³⁷ Bleek, *Library*, 59.

³⁸ Bleek, *Library*, 55-6; CL, MS9037, PKM, 6 Jan 1825; CL, MS8091, John Ross to mother, Incehra, 23 March 1825, no. 5; CL, MS9037, PKM, 11 May 1826; *RGMS*, 1826, 14.

³⁹ Grey and Bleek, *Library*, 56.

⁴⁰ Bleek, *Library*, 59.

⁴¹ Bleek, *Library*, 66.

⁴² Shaw, *Story*, 447-8.

are we so likely to be so rigidly stiff as they are in the adoption of words, but I cannot consent to leave to the decision of a Meeting, in which none of ourselves can have a voice, the Caffre words by which various Theological ideas are to be expressed.⁴³

The Wesleyans possessed their own rudimentary translations of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer as early as 1826. William Shrewsbury explained in that year that the Lord's Prayer had been translated as *Ubawo wetu osezulwini* [Our Father in Heaven].⁴⁴ In the same year, Shaw noted that the short prayers which follow the Commandments in Methodist church services were translated as "*O Inkosienkulu! Senika ufefe lwako pezu 'kwetu; lika inkhliziyu zetu, ukuba secine lomtetu* [Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law]" and "*Siantandaza wena, Balainnkhlizweni zetu, yonke Iimiteto yako* [And write all these thy Laws in our hearts, we beseech thee]."⁴⁵ However, it was not until 1832 that the first Wesleyan translation of the Catechism appeared under the title *Incwadi yokubuza yezi zi-skola, zama-Khristi Ekutiwa gama-Wesli, ema-Xosene* (Book of Questioning for Wesleyan Christian Schools among the Xhosa).⁴⁶ A prayer book followed three years later under the title *Le yincwadi yenkonzo ka Yehova u-Tixo efundwa eherkeni zabawesley emaxoseni* (This is the book of service of Jehova God which is taught in the Wesleyan churches among the Xhosa).⁴⁷ They published several revised editions of these works over the next two decades, including the 1854 Catechism called *Eyokuqala inncwadi yemibuzo, ebuzwayo ezikolweni esisemaxoseni nezisembo* (First Book of Questions for Schools among the Xhosa and in Emboland).⁴⁸

These materials were undoubtedly of great importance to the missionary enterprise. However, the key desire of every missionary was to translate the Bible into the vernacular

⁴³ MMS/SA/mf 301, Shaw, Wesleyville, 31 Mar 1827.

⁴⁴ MMS/SA/mf 301, Shrewsbury, Wesleyville, 31 Dec 1826; *WMM*, Apr 1827, 270; *Ibid.*, Mar 1829, 198.

⁴⁵ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 10 Dec 1826, 13; *WMM*, Mar 1831, 200.

⁴⁶ Bleek, *Library*, 56.

⁴⁷ Bleek, *Library*, 64.

⁴⁸ Bleek, *Library*, 57-8.

language in order to provide the indigenous communities with direct access to the source of revelation. The SPMS approached this work cooperatively. As early as 1825, the Scottish missionaries “examined separately and successively” each completed translation before it went to press.⁴⁹ In 1832, they established a formal “Committee on Translation” whose permanent members initially included John Bennie, John Ross, William Chalmers, and James Laing.⁵⁰ In this manner, they hoped that “Errors, which otherwise might have escaped the eye of the most scrupulous, are thus corrected, useful discussions upon the language are promoted, and the translation...will be stamped...with the name and authority of the whole Institution.”⁵¹ But progress was slow: by 1830 they possessed little more than Ross’s translation of the first Epistle of John.⁵² Over the same time period, the LMS completed preliminary translations of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, the Epistle to the Ephesians, and a “free translation” of a compilation of the Lord’s miracles.⁵³ The progress of the Wesleyan mission was equally slow. They had accomplished little by 1830, other than William Shaw’s early attempts at translating the Book of Genesis and Shrewsbury’s preliminary translations of parts of the Gospel of Mark (1829) and the Book of Hebrews (1830).⁵⁴

In January 1830, representatives of the WMS, LMS, and SPMS met at the Buffalo River in order to agree on a common orthography for writing the ‘Caffre’ language. As part of the meeting, they also decided to coordinate their translation and revision efforts in order to speed up

⁴⁹ *RGMS*, 1825, 12; CL, MS8091, John Ross to mother, Incehra, 23 March 1825, no. 5.

⁵⁰ Shell, ed., JIJ, 17 Feb 1832, 272.

⁵¹ *RGMS*, 1825, 12.

⁵² *RGMAS*, 1829, 18.

⁵³ School of Oriental and African Studies, London, United Kingdom, Council for World Mission, London Missionary Society Archive, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (henceforth CWM/LMSA/IC), Box10/2/E/No. 33, Brownlee, 3 Aug 1827; *Ibid.*, Box12/1/A/No. 1, Kayser and Brownlee, 1 Jan 1830; *Ibid.*, Box12/1/C/No. 16, Kayser, 14 Jul 1830.

⁵⁴ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 26 Sep 1829, 42; *Ibid.*, 18 Sep 1830, 46; *Ibid.*, 15 Dec 1830, 47.

the process.⁵⁵ As part of this cooperative effort, the Scottish missionaries worked on Colossians (1832)⁵⁶ and the Book of Revelations (1833).⁵⁷ In parallel, the LMS missionaries Brownlee and Kayser worked on the Gospel of John, the Epistle to the Romans, Philippians, Thessalonians, and Galatians, as well as the Psalms, Acts, and First Timothy.⁵⁸ The Wesleyans took charge of the remaining parts, and between 1831 and 1833, William Shrewsbury translated the Book of Joel, the Epistle of James, the Gospel of Luke, the Book of Isaiah, the Gospel of Matthew, and the Epistles to the Romans.⁵⁹ William Boyce also contributed to this effort over the same time period, translating the Acts of the Apostles, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and the Gospel of Luke.⁶⁰ The remaining parts of the Bible were apportioned more evenly, and by circa 1833, John Ayliff had completed translations of the Epistles of Paul to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon and Judges;⁶¹ while John Shepstone had translated Joshua; and William Shaw and Henry Dugmore had completed Genesis.⁶² The Sixth Frontier War (1834–5) derailed these cooperative efforts. Displaced by the war, SPMS missionary Bennie found refuge at Somerset East, where he completed translations of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew in 1836.⁶³ Four years later, James Laing finalized his translation of Paul’s epistles.⁶⁴ The Wesleyans produced their own (revised)

⁵⁵ *RGMS*, 1831, 19; *WMM*, Sep 1833, 662.

⁵⁶ *Quarterly Papers of the Glasgow Missionary Society* (henceforth QPGMS), March 1833, 5.

⁵⁷ *RGMS*, 1834, 23-4; Shell, ed., *JLJ*, 31 Jan 1833, 320.

⁵⁸ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box12/4/D/No. 20, Kayser, 9 Dec 1831; *Ibid./Box13/2/A/No. 37*, Kayser, 3 Dec 1832; *Ibid./Box13/4/B/No. 4*, Brownlee, 16 Dec 1833.

⁵⁹ Shaw, *Story*, 548-9; CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 27 Feb 1831, 48; *Ibid.*, 20 Aug 1831; *Ibid.*, 17 Oct 1831, 54; *Ibid.*, 14 Jan 1833, 63; *Ibid.*, 19 Feb 1833, 63.

⁶⁰ *WMM*, Sep 1832, 664; *Ibid.*, Sep 1833, 660.

⁶¹ *WMM*, Sep 1834, 707-8.

⁶² *WMM*, Sep 1833, 662; Bible Society Archives, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom (henceforth BSA), D1/2 Records of the Secretaries, Foreign Correspondence Inwards, Henry H. Dugmore, Mount Coke, 18 Jun 1842.

⁶³ CL, MS9037, PKM, 5 April 1836; *RGMS*, 1837, 18.

⁶⁴ Bleek, *Library*, 68-9.

translations of some of these works during the same time period, notably the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, John, and Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, and Paul's Epistles to the Romans.⁶⁵

The lack of cooperation worsened over the next decade. In 1840, the SPMS planned the next phase of its translation activities without taking into consideration the simultaneously occurring efforts of the Wesleyans.⁶⁶ The Wesleyans had done the same several years earlier when they appointed Henry Dugmore as the "final reviser" of their translations and settled among themselves "the orthography of the Kaffer language."⁶⁷ Although they did occasionally cooperate with BMS missionary Döhne—who was himself in the process of preparing, together with his colleague Carl Posselt, translations of the Epistles to the Hebrews, Corinthians, Galatians, and Ephesians⁶⁸—they typically worked on their own, completing (revised) versions of the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistles to the Romans by 1842, and the Gospels of Luke and John and the Catholic Epistles by 1846.⁶⁹

These individualistic approaches ran into complications in 1844 when the Scottish and Wesleyan missionaries simultaneously appealed to the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) to fund the publication of their respective translations of the New Testament. Established four decades earlier, the BFBS financially supported the worldwide publication and distribution of Bible translations. The society had started its activities in South Africa in 1806, supplying Bibles to British soldiers serving at the Cape. Four years later, they had supplied the London missionaries at Bethelsdorp and the Moravian missionaries at Genadendal with Dutch Bibles and Testaments.⁷⁰ In 1820, the BFBS established its first South African Auxiliary organization with

⁶⁵ Bleek, *Library*, 69-70; BSA/D1/2, Henry H. Dugmore, Mount Coke, 18 Jun 1842.

⁶⁶ CL, MS9038, PKM, Jan 1 1840.

⁶⁷ BSA/D1/2, Henry Dugmore, Mount Coke, 18 Jun 1842.

⁶⁸ BSA/D1/2, Henry Dugmore, Mount Coke, 18 Jun 1842.

⁶⁹ BSA/D1/2, Henry Dugmore, Mount Coke, 18 Jun 1842.

⁷⁰ Smit, *God*, 4.

the support of Lieutenant Governor Rufane S. Donkin.⁷¹ Smaller BFBS auxiliaries emerged in the Eastern Cape region about a decade later, notably at Salem and Grahamstown in 1833 and 1834, respectively.⁷² In the latter year, the Wesleyan missionaries successfully secured funding from the BFBS for the publication of some of their existing Bible translations.⁷³ Encouraged by this experience, the Wesleyans approached the BFBS again in 1844, hoping to secure funding for the publication of the first complete translation of the New Testament.⁷⁴ However, the Scottish and London missionaries also contacted the BFBS with a similar funding request around that time.⁷⁵ Unsure about which of the two translation projects to support, the BFBS proposed that these initiatives be combined into one collaborative translation effort. As BFBS representative George Browne explained to WMS missionary Boyce in December 1844, “How is it the two versions have been going on simultaneously—they were not, I think, far distant from you—would it be possible to blend the two...”⁷⁶

In April 1845, representatives of the WMS, LMS, SPMS, and BMS met at Umxelo station in the Eastern Cape, where they agreed to pursue “a united effort to print an authorized Version of the New Testament.”⁷⁷ They also organized a “committee of revision” consisting of missionaries Henry Dugmore and William Davis (WMS), James Laing and William Chalmers (SPMS), Henry Calderwood (LMS), and Jakob Döhne (BMS). In a letter to the BFBS, William Shaw summarized the meeting:

⁷¹ Smit, *God*, 14.

⁷² Smit, *God*, 19.

⁷³ *Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 1832, lxxxviii; BSA/D1/2, William J. Shrewsbury to Mr Joseph Jowett, Grahamstown, 18 Jul 1834.

⁷⁴ BSA/D1/2, William Boyce, 25 Sep 1844.

⁷⁵ BSA/D1/2, Henry Calderwood to Mr Browne, Bible Society, Blinkwater, 16 Jul 1844; MMS/SA/mf 305, George Browne to Rev. William Boyce, Bible Society House, 2 Dec 1844.

⁷⁶ MMS/SA/mf 305, Browne to Boyce, Bible Society House, 2 Dec 1844.

⁷⁷ BSA/D1/2, H. Calderwood, Secretary, Minutes of Meeting respecting the Kaffer Scripture, Umxelo, 16 Apr 1845.

All were...anxious that the Version should be made as accurate as possible, and that it should go forth with all the authority that the joined approval of the several societies can give it, so that there may be but one Version in general use, on the various Mission Stations, and among the Native Christians of the country.⁷⁸

Working from existing translations, the Eastern Cape missionaries were able to publish the first authorized version of the “Kaffir New Testament” under the title *I-Testamante entsha yenkosi yetu ka-Yesu Kristu, gokwamaxosa* in 1846.⁷⁹

The Seventh and the Eighth Frontier Wars (1846–47, 1850–53) disrupted the missionaries’ efforts to complete the translation of the Old Testament. Although they produced several extracts from the Old Testament between 1849 and 1854, they did not publish a complete version until 1859, when John Appleyard concluded his *Itestamente endala: okukuti, inncwadi zonke zocebano oludala, engekafiki uKristu: ikunyushelwe kokwamaXosa*.⁸⁰ It took another five years before the first complete edition of the entire Bible appeared. Known as the “Appleyard’s Version,” it bore the title *Inncwadi yezibalo ezingcwele, e zetestamente endala ne zetestamente entsha, ziguqulwe kwezonteto zanikwa kuqala ngazo*.⁸¹

Linguistic Obstacles

It had taken almost three decades to translate the New Testament and another decade to complete the translation of the entire Bible into the ‘Caffre’ language. Repeated interruptions caused by the frontier wars and the lack of cooperation among the Eastern Cape missionary societies explain in part why it took such a long time to produce a vernacular translation of the Scriptures. However, it is important to recognize that translating from well-known written

⁷⁸ BSA/D1/2, William Shaw to the Reverend Secretaries of the BFBS, Graham’s Town, 4 July 1845.

⁷⁹ Bleek, *Library*, 72-3.

⁸⁰ Bleek, *Library*, 78.

⁸¹ John W. Appleyard, *An Apology for the Kafir Bible: Being a Reply to the Pamphlet entitled, ‘Rev. J. W. Appleyard’s Version Judged by Missionaries of Various Denominations and Others* (Mount Coke, 1867).

languages, such as Greek, Latin, English, and Dutch, into a poorly understood and circumscribed oral language raised a number of additional obstacles for the missionaries that delayed their progress.

One of the first problems the missionaries faced was the absence of a widely accepted standard orthography for the target ‘Caffre’ language. In order to solve this predicament, they followed “the simple and natural rule of a visible sign for every simple distinct sound...”⁸²

William Shaw explained the process of imposing a written script on the language in these terms:

We all concurred in the adoption of the Roman character, as being on the whole the most convenient and suitable form in which we could write and print it. The power or sound given to the vowels was in accordance with the practice of most of the languages of Southern Europe. The consonants represented the same powers as in English, with the exception that g was always to be pronounced hard, as in ‘give’...⁸³

However, click-sounds (explosive consonants), guttural sounds, and some compound sounds did not fit neatly into these existing sound systems. Eventually, the missionaries agreed to represent click-sounds by way of the letters ‘c,’ ‘q,’ and ‘x’ while using the letter ‘r’ for the guttural sound.⁸⁴ They also agreed that compound sounds should be reduced “as nearly as the ear can distinguish into their elementary parts” and represented “accordingly, by a combination [of signs.]”⁸⁵ The problem was that different missionaries heard these sounds differently and, more significantly, transcribed them differently. As Shaw explained:

When we began to collect words, however, we discovered the existence of...variations in the consonantal powers, which, as we did not wish to introduce new characters, required in some cases a combination of consonants; and these...occasioned differences of opinion: *ex. gr.*, the word for ‘elephant’ was spelt three different ways by the Missionaries, *in-ghlovu*, *in-thlovu*, *in-dhlovu*.⁸⁶

⁸² *Correspondence*, Rev. W.R. Thomson to Rev. George Morgan, Balfour, 30 Aug 1854, 74.

⁸³ Shaw, *Story*, 538.

⁸⁴ Shaw, *Story*, 538.

⁸⁵ *Correspondence*, Thomson to Morgan, Balfour, 30 Aug 1854, 74.

⁸⁶ Shaw, *Story*, 538-40.

In order to solve this and other orthographic problems, the Eastern Cape missionaries organized joint meetings at which representatives of all societies discussed and eventually decided on a uniform system of orthography. One of these meetings took place at the Buffalo River in January 1830.⁸⁷ As previously shown, at the request of the BFBS, representatives of various missionary societies met again at Umxelo in April 1845.⁸⁸ It was at this latter meeting that the missionaries also agreed to unite the prefixes and word-roots when writing the language. As John Appleyard later explained, at Umxelo the Eastern Cape missionaries decided to abandon the “dis-jointing system,” according to which the prefixes and roots were written separately, and adopted the “uniting one” which demanded that prefixes and roots be always written together.⁸⁹ In part, they favored this system because, in their view, prefixes and roots were not distinct ideas or words but codependent parts of a single idea or word.⁹⁰ However, they also preferred the “uniting system” because it seemingly facilitated the reading process for indigenous readers. As one of the missionaries explained in 1853:

The phrase ‘amambatise ingubo,’ spoken as two words, with proper accent, the Kaffir, I believe, will understand without the least difficulty. But when he turns to his Testament and meets with ‘a m ambatise,’ he is bewildered just from the absurd way in which the word is divided. This kind of printing is all very well to show a European tyro to distinguish a root verb from its prefix and pronoun; but in a translation of the Scriptures, designed for general and Kaffir use, it ought, I conceive, to be abandoned.⁹¹

As William Shaw noted in 1860, it was through these meetings that the “Missionaries of the various denominations then in Kaffraria...decided on the adoption of a scheme of uniform

⁸⁷ *RGMS*, 1831, 19.

⁸⁸ BSA/D1/2, H. Calderwood, Secretary, Minutes, Umxelo, 16 Apr 1845.

⁸⁹ *Correspondence*, Appleyard to Rev. G. Morgan, Mount Coke, 29 May 1854, 51.

⁹⁰ *Correspondence*, Appleyard to Morgan, Mount Coke, 25 May 1857, 105.

⁹¹ *Correspondence*, Rev. R. B. Taylor to Rev. G. Morgan, Cradock, 15 Jul 1853, 21.

orthography, which, with a few and unimportant exceptions, has continued in use from that time.”⁹²

The missionaries also had to agree on the most appropriate source language. The Scottish and German missionaries appear to have preferred translating directly from the original source texts rather than from the available English and Dutch translations. For instance, SPMS missionary James Laing prepared his revised translation of the Gospel of Matthew (1833) from the Greek, Dutch, and English versions.⁹³ Furthermore, in 1833, the “Translation Committee” of the Scottish missionaries explained that “the translation [of ten Epistles] has been made from the original Greek, while at the same time, we had before us the Latin version of Beza, the authorized English version, and that of the Reformed Dutch Church.”⁹⁴ Although the Wesleyans informed the BFBS in 1844 that “our Missionaries...can read the Scriptures in the original tongues with tolerable comfort,”⁹⁵ they usually translated directly from the authorized English version. As William Boyce explained in 1832, “I do not hesitate to affirm that the best and idiomatically correct first translations are likely to be made by men who confine themselves to the text of the English version [that is, the King James Bible], with occasional references to a plain commentary.”⁹⁶ Ten years later, the group still adhered to this principle. As Henry Dugmore, in his capacity as “final reviser” of the Wesleyan translations, explained to the BFBS in 1842, “I do not profess to translate from the ‘Original.’ I take for my basis the authorized English and Dutch Versions....”⁹⁷

⁹² Shaw, *Story*, 540.

⁹³ Shell, ed., JIJ, 31 Jan 1833, 320.

⁹⁴ *RGMS*, 1834, 24.

⁹⁵ BSA/D1/2, William Boyce, 25 Sep 1844.

⁹⁶ *WMM*, Sep 1833, 660-2.

⁹⁷ BSA/D1/2, Henry Dugmore, Mount Coke, 18 Jun 1842.

The target language posed even larger problems. As will be explored in more detail in chapter four, although the Eastern Cape missionaries often spoke very highly of their own language skills,⁹⁸ they were fully aware that they possessed only very limited knowledge of the ‘Caffre’ language. They worked hard to improve their language skills through diligent study and the preparation and consultation of vocabularies, dictionaries, and grammars of ever-increasing quality. However, the ‘Caffre’ language proved extraordinarily difficult to master and the majority of first-generation missionaries depended heavily on the language skills of their indigenous interpreters for the duration of their missionary lives in South Africa. This dependence on indigenous interpreters rendered the translation process an arduous undertaking, especially since the communication between the missionaries and their interpreters had to be conducted in a third, intermediary language, notably Cape Dutch.⁹⁹ The Wesleyan missionary William Shrewsbury described the difficulties this process entailed in 1830:

The difficulty...of translating the Scriptures...can hardly be exhibited in too strong a light.... A Missionary sits down with his interpreter, who cannot read a single line of a word of God in any language; and perhaps his knowledge of divine things is very imperfect, and some of his notions erroneous. He opens the sacred volume, and has to translate that, in the first instance, into barbarous Dutch, that his interpreter may comprehend its meaning; and then his interpreter tells him how that barbarous Dutch ought to be worded in the Caffre language. And thus every verse being a double translation....¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Boyce remarked in 1844, “We are highly favoured in possessing among our own Missionaries four eminent linguists, Henry Dugmore, Joseph Warner, Richard Haddy and W. J. Davis: these men speak Kaffer as Kaffers themselves, and no Kaffer can detect any peculiarity in their mode of speaking which would mark them as Foreigners.” See BSA/D1/2, William Boyce, 25 Sep 1844.

⁹⁹ In 1850, Appleyard explained that “The Dutch language as generally spoken by the bastard Hottentots and Emancipated Slaves in the Colony, and by the Bastards and Griquas beyond, as well as by the Dutch themselves in the country districts, is very different from the Dutch as used in Holland. The difference partly consists in corrupt forms of words, in the adoption of foreign words, and misappropriation of their own; and partly, in barbarous modes of expression, by which they bid defiance to all rules of grammar, or words.” See Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 10-11, note 8.

¹⁰⁰ MMS/SA/mf 303, Shrewsbury, Mount Coke, 30 Sep 1830.

However, this *modus operandi* was unavoidable, especially for the Wesleyans who aimed to produce translations that respected the idiomatic peculiarities of the target language. As Henry Dugmore remarked in 1842:

The principle I have endeavoured to adhere to...is that of combining as far as possible a rigid rendering of the sense of the sacred writer with an idiomatic freedom of expression in the language into which it is rendered.¹⁰¹

The target language also posed difficulties because it did not always possess easily identifiable equivalents for crucial Christian religious concepts. The problem may have occurred first to Vanderkemp. Unable to find a ‘Caffre’ term to express the Christian concept of the Deity, he, at Chief Ngqika’s suggestion, adopted the prevailing Khoe word “Tuikwa” (Cape-Khoe: *thikwa*, Nama-Khoe: *tsui \lgoab*) which later came to be transcribed as *uThixo*.¹⁰² The missionaries who arrived in the Eastern Cape region after 1820 experienced similar difficulties. As SPMS missionary John Ross remarked after returning from a meeting of the “Translation Committee” in June 1832:

The difficulties we experienced were the choosing and seeking out of proper terms. Some had been used formerly, but were not fixed; some were formed after much inquiry; and others, such as ordinary, common, free, &c., have not been found.¹⁰³

About this time, WMS missionary Shrewsbury encountered the same problem when he tried to explain to his African listeners “the great doctrine of Justification by Faith” that forms part of Romans 8:4-5 and Luke 7:36-50. “[He] found it exceedingly difficult to do so...,” Shrewsbury explained in 1831, “...the Caffre Language having no word that answers to those important terms in the Text—‘Ungodly,’ ‘Justify,’ or ‘Righteousness’...”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ BSA/D1/2, Dugmore, Mount Coke, 18 Jun 1842.

¹⁰² *Transactions*, Vanderkemp’s Journal, Ngqika’s Place, 25 Sep 1799, 1:399.

¹⁰³ *QPGMS*, March 1833, 6.

¹⁰⁴ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 27 Feb 1831, 48.

Moreover, even if a missionary believed he had identified a word whose meaning was more or less equivalent to the Christian concept, the other missionaries did not always agree with him. For instance, in 1827, the WMS missionary William Shaw accused his Scottish counterparts of being “rigidly stiff” regarding the adoption of “Caffer words by which various Theological ideas are to be expressed.”¹⁰⁵ Other missionaries were dissatisfied when too much liberty was taken. For instance, the Eastern Cape missionaries who prepared the New Testament translation of 1846 used “the Kaffir word UKUGWEBELA...for justification, or judgment for, or in favor of.”¹⁰⁶ However, not everyone was pleased with the use of this word. “The term used for ‘justification’...in the latest edition...is very objectionable,” one missionary complained, “and I would hope that the whole of the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians respectively have undergone a careful revision.”¹⁰⁷ Other missionaries criticized the same translation for having used “Fingoe words and idioms” rather than “pure Kaffir.”¹⁰⁸ Among the critics was LMS missionary Richard Birt. “It is much to be regretted,” he noted at the time, “that those who have been the translators of the present edition were almost exclusively among the Fingoe population, by which means many words not used by the Kaffirs have been introduced, and which are not suitable as their own.”¹⁰⁹ The missionaries believed that the “Fingoes,” or Mfengu, were the remnants of various other groups, including the Hlubi, Bhele, and Zizi, who were dispersed from their homes in and around Natal and Zululand during the expansion of Shaka’s Zulu conquest state between 1817 and 1828.¹¹⁰ The accusation that Mfengu terms had crept into the New Testament translation of 1846 was based on the notion that the Mfengu were not ‘Caffres’—

¹⁰⁵ MMS/SA/mf 301, Shaw, Wesleyville, 31 Mar 1827.

¹⁰⁶ MMS/SA/mf 305, Rev. Richard Haddy to Mr. Brown, Wesleyan Mission House, 13 Apr 1847.

¹⁰⁷ *Correspondence*, Rev. R. B. Taylor to Rev. G. Morgan, Cradock, 15 Jul 1853, 21.

¹⁰⁸ MMS/SA/mf 305, Rev. R. Haddy to T. J. Brown, Esq., to the Secretary of the BFBS, Beaufort, Dec 23 1846; *Ibid.*, (No. 2) Copy of Letter to the Secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Graham's Town, South Africa, 12 February 1847.

¹⁰⁹ *Correspondence*, Rev. Richard Birt to Rev. G. Morgan, Peelson, 10 Aug 1853, 23.

¹¹⁰ For more details on the ‘Fingoes,’ see chapter three.

which, in turn, meant that their speaking practices were not part of the ‘Caffre’ language. Ultimately, this issue depended on the ways in which Europeans in general and the Eastern Cape missionaries in particular defined the (target) ‘Caffre’ language.

Defining the ‘Caffre’ Language Community

Whereas Birt defined the ‘Caffre’ language narrowly as that of the Xhosa only, the majority of the Eastern Cape missionaries defined it much more broadly. Regarding its northward extension, missionary John Brownlee claimed as early as 1823 that “[the] change of dialect is such, that...the tribes to the northwest of Lattakoo [that is, the Tswana] can be understood by the Caffres...”¹¹¹ William Shaw agreed, arguing in 1823 and 1826, respectively, that the two groups are “speaking a language, which, notwithstanding very considerable differences in dialect, is doubtless substantially the same...there is no essential difference between the Kaffer and Botschuana Languages...”¹¹² The tendency to include highveld residents in the ‘Caffre’ language community continued into the early 1830s. Writing in 1832, WMS missionary Richard Haddy claimed that the language of “the Abasutu nation [Sotho]...is fundamentally the same as the Caffre; but there is a difference in dialect, which prevents easy communication at first.”¹¹³

However, by the early 1830s, some Eastern Cape missionaries began to doubt the logic of including the speaking practices of the Tswana and Sotho among the ‘Caffre’ language community.¹¹⁴ One of the doubters was the Scottish missionary James Laing, who remarked in

¹¹¹ *RGMS*, 1823, 18-19.

¹¹² *WMM*, Aug 1823, 547; *Ibid.*, Apr 1824, 277; CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 10 Dec 1826, 13. See also *Missionary Register*, 1824, 144-5; James C. Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, 2nd Ed., 2 vols. (London: Arch, 1826), 1:533.

¹¹³ *WMM*, May 1833, 374.

¹¹⁴ It is beyond the scope of this work to explain this development. However, it appears that it was driven in part by the growing number of missionary publications which helped circumscribe the Tswana language as separate

1832 that “the Bechuanas...differ in language from the Kaffers [Xhosa], whereas those along the coast to a considerable distance speak a dialect much the same as that of the Kaffers.”¹¹⁵ WMS missionary William Boyce seconded this impression five years later. As he explained at the time:

That the relationship subsisting between Kafir and Sechuana is that of descent from a common parent is evident.... Yet each dialect has peculiarities of its own, sufficient to oblige the learner to consider it, for all practical purposes of speech and composition, as a distinct language.¹¹⁶

However, regarding its eastward expansion, the Eastern Cape missionaries remained attached to a very broad definition of the ‘Caffre’ language community. WMS missionary Barnabas Shaw articulated this idea as early as 1823 when he explained that “The language of the Delagoas is the same as that of the Caffrees.... There is, no doubt, a difference of dialect, but they can converse so as to be understood.”¹¹⁷ Brownlee seconded this view, claiming in the same year that “A Caffre speaking to a native of Mozambique can, in many things, be understood...”¹¹⁸ The idea that the indigenous people in the Eastern Cape region and Delagoa Bay were able to communicate with each other suggested that the communities residing between these two locations (notably in Natal-Zululand) also formed part of the ‘Caffre’ language community. This assumption gained additional currency in 1823 when WMS missionary William Threlfall, during his (ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to establish a mission station in southern Mozambique, reported that he had encountered at Delagoa Bay “several of the Bratwah [i.e. Zulu] nation” whose “king” was named “Tsha-ka” and who “spoke a...language” that “sounded much like the

object of knowledge. See Stephen Volz, “European Missionaries and the Development of Tswana Identity,” *Le Fait Missionnaire* 15 (2004), 97-128; Robert Moffat, *Bechuana Spelling Book* (London: London Missionary Society, 1826); *Ibid.*, *A Bechuana Catechism* (London: London Missionary Society, 1826); James Archbell, *A Grammar of the Bechuana Language* (Grahamstown: Meurant & Godlonton, 1837); Eugène Casalis, *Études sur la Langue Séchuana* (Paris: L’Imprimerie Royale, 1841).

¹¹⁵ Shell, ed., JLJ, 27 Feb 1832, 276-77.

¹¹⁶ William Boyce, “Introduction,” in Archbell, *Grammar*, xi-xiii.

¹¹⁷ *WMM*, Nov 1823, 761.

¹¹⁸ *RGMS*, 1823, 18-19.

Caffree [Xhosa] tongue.”¹¹⁹ Additional support for the close linguistic ties between these communities came from the people identified as Mfengu. Referring to the Mfengu residing among Chief Hintsas’s Gcaleka-Xhosa, William Shaw explained in 1827 that “all speak the Caffre language, with various degrees of difference as to the pronunciation.”¹²⁰ He reiterated this assessment twenty years later when he explained to the BFBS that “It is to be remembered the Fingoes [Mfengu] all speak the same language as those who are called Kaffirs [Xhosa], but with slight variations of dialect....”¹²¹ Other missionaries entertained similar views, including WMS missionary John Ayliff, who explained in 1853, “The language spoken by the Fingoes is the same as that spoken by the Kaffirs with some slight unimportant variations...”¹²²

If the Mfengu from the Natal-Zululand region were able to communicate with the Xhosa, it followed that King Dingane’s Zulu and King Mzilikazi’s Ndebele (Matabele) also belonged to the ‘Caffre’ language community. WMS missionary William Boyce advanced this conclusion as early as 1832 when he argued:

The Caffer language, with slight dialectical varieties, is spoken by the Caffers, Tambookies, Amapondas, Zulus under Dingaan, and by those under Matzilikatzi, and by many tribes inland, northwest of Delagoa Bay, as yet unknown to Europeans....¹²³

Five years later, he reiterated this view, explaining, “The Kafir [language] is confined to the Amaxosa, Abatembu, Amapondo, and Amazulu tribes, extending from the Great Fish River as

¹¹⁹ *WMM*, Mar 1825, 199. A reference to a letter from Threlfall at this time reporting some additional information on these Zulu appears in George Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, Vol. 1 (London: Genry Colburn, 1827), footnote on pages 200-1.

¹²⁰ *WMM*, Dec 1827, 844.

¹²¹ MMS/SA/mf 305, (No. 2) Copy of Letter to the Secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Graham's Town, South Africa, 12 February 1847.

¹²² CL, MS15543.1, John Ayliff, “Sketch of Fingo History.” See also CL, MS15543.2, John Ayliff Papers, “Narrative of Fingo History” (typescript).

¹²³ *WMM*, Sep 1833, 661.

far as the River St. Lucie, about halfway between Port Natal and Delagoa Bay.”¹²⁴ In a letter to the BFBS, Boyce reaffirmed this view again in 1844. As he noted:

The population of Kafferland (including the Zulu Country) may be estimated at not less than a million souls. All these speak the Kaffer language with trifling dialectic differences, affecting however the pronunciation of a few words only.... As far north as Mozambique (about 5° South) the Kaffer is understood; for I can converse with natives of that part of the East Coast.¹²⁵

Boyce was not alone with this assessment of the relationship between the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions. WMS missionary William Shaw upheld Boyce’s conclusions following his return from a visit to Natal. “The natives [in Natal] are all Kaffirs, of the Zoola and other nations,” he explained in 1848, “and all speak the Kaffir language, with slight variations in their dialects from the language spoken by the Kaffirs on the border of the Cape Colony...”¹²⁶ The SPMS missionary William Govan seconded Shaw’s view, claiming in the same year that “The country occupied by tribes speaking the Caffre language extends...along the shores of the Indian Ocean, from the eastern boundary of the Cape Colony, several hundred miles at least beyond the district of Natal...”¹²⁷

As previously mentioned, WMS missionary John Appleyard published an influential philological study of the ‘Caffre’ language in 1850. In this work, he supported a broad definition of the ‘Caffre’ language community. “*The Kafir family*,” he wrote, “includes the dialects which are spoken by the several tribes who inhabit the Eastern coast, extending from the Colonial boundary to within a short distance of Delagoa Bay...”¹²⁸ Initially, he claimed that this “Kafir

¹²⁴ Boyce, “Introduction,” in Archbell, xi-xv.

¹²⁵ BSA/D1/2, Boyce, “Answers to certain Queries respecting the Kaffer Translations made by the Wesleyan Missionaries,” 25 Sep 1844.

¹²⁶ *Wesleyan Missionary Notices* (henceforth *WMN*), Mar 1849, 41.

¹²⁷ *The Home and Foreign Missionary Record for the Free Church of Scotland* (henceforth *HFMR*), 1 Feb 1848, 331.

¹²⁸ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 36.

family” included “three principal branches—the Kafir—the Zulu—and the Fingoe [*Tekeza*].”¹²⁹ He explained that whereas the “the *Kafir* branch” included “the dialects” of the Xhosa, Thembu, and Mpondo, “the *Zulu* branch” included those of the Zulu, the Natal Africans, and the Ndebele, and the “Fingoe [*Tekeza*] branch” included primarily those of the Mfengu, Bhaca, and Swazi.¹³⁰ Appleyard also provided details about the nature of the differences between these three branches and their respective dialects. “The preceding *dialects* all vary from each other...,” he explained, “but the variation is in general so slight that natives of either of the tribes find very little difficulty in conversing with each other.”¹³¹ It is important to note that, after having spent some time in the Natal colony in 1848,¹³² Appleyard concluded that the degree of mutual intelligibility between the speaking practices of the Xhosa and the Zulu was even higher than he had assumed when he had first developed this tripartite division of the ‘Caffre’ language. Thus, following his return from Natal, he added an Appendix B to this publication in which he revised the three-branch division into a two-branch division. As he explained:

Further inquiries respecting the dialects of the Kafir family, made during a few weeks’ sojourn in the Natal colony, have led the writer to doubt the propriety of the division adopted in the above section. A better acquaintance with all of them would probably show that a two-fold division was amply sufficient. The two branches may be termed the Kafir and the Fingoe [*Tekeza*].... The dialects of the Natal natives would be comprised partly in one branch, and partly in the other.¹³³

In other words, Appleyard had come to the conclusion that the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, and Zulu were so similar that all formed part of the “Kafir branch,” while the speaking practices of the Natal Africans formed the bridge between the “Kafir branch” and the “Fingoe [*Tekeza*] branch” of the ‘Caffre’ language community.

¹²⁹ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 36. Appleyard wrote ‘Fingoe’ but his word choice is confusing because he did not refer to the dialect of the ‘Fingoes’ (Mfengu) but to the speaking practices of the Natal region which others later identified as ‘Tekeza.’ In order to avoid confusion, I added *Tekeza* in brackets.

¹³⁰ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 36-40.

¹³¹ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 43.

¹³² See chapter four for details on Appleyard’s journey to Natal in 1848.

¹³³ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, Appendix B, 377-8.

Conclusion

These statements formed an important aspect of the missionary discourse that helped construct the ‘Caffre’ language community over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, given the nature of these statements about the ‘Caffre’ language in general and the relationship between the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Natal Africans, and Zulu in particular, it can be concluded that this discourse circumscribed a ‘Caffre’ language community that extended from the Cape Colony to Delagoa Bay. Consequently, it is not surprising that in 1853, WMS missionary William Shaw, supported by many Eastern Cape missionaries,¹³⁴ proposed the idea of jointly producing a single ‘Caffre’ translation of the Bible that would create the basis for a single, unifying standard language for this ‘Caffre’ language community. As he explained at the time:

It is not needful to have two versions of the Kafir Scriptures, one for this part of the country [i.e. the Eastern Cape region], and the other for Natal; although there is much difference in *dialect*, there is no essential difference in the *language*. A careful examination of the verbiage, which should be accommodated to suit both districts, would in my view meet all the wants of the case.¹³⁵

However, while this chapter has shown that the Eastern Cape missionaries in general and the Wesleyans in particular were attached to a broad definition of the ‘Caffre’ language community in the period between 1820 and 1853, it did not explain why they developed this attachment in the first place. The next four chapters will provide answers to this question by drawing attention to important ways in which the missionaries’ views of this language community were shaped by a preexisting eighteenth-century naturalist discourse about the ‘Caffre’ race; by people’s actual experiences with the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Mfengu, Natal Africans, Zulu, and others

¹³⁴ For instance, Laing and several of his Presbyterian “friends at Lovedale” agreed with Shaw that “*one* translation would suffice for Kaffraria and Natal.” See *Correspondence*, Laing to Morgan, Burnshill, 20 Jul 1855, 72. My emphasis.

¹³⁵ *Correspondence*, Shaw to Rev. G. Morgan, GHT, 5 Jul 1853, 13. My emphasis.

during the first half of the nineteenth century; and, most importantly, by preexisting African ideas about the relationship between language and identity in the Eastern Cape region.

CHAPTER II

The Eastern Cape Missionaries and the Idea of the ‘Caffre’ Language, 1500–1853

When the Eastern Cape missionaries set out to construct the ‘Caffre’ language for the purpose of Bible translation in the first half of the nineteenth century, they did not do so in an intellectual vacuum; rather, they elaborated on preexisting ideas about the ‘Caffres.’ Unfortunately, the content of these preexisting ideas is not self-evident, because the term ‘Caffre’ remains poorly historicized despite its omnipresence in nineteenth- and twentieth-century sources. This does not mean that scholars have altogether ignored the history of this term. For instance, they argue that it derived from the Arabic word for “unbeliever,” and that Muslims first applied it to people of the East African interior whom they characterized as heathens.¹ They also maintain that, over the course of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese assimilated and applied it to people of Southern African descent; then, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Dutch and British came to use the term as a synonym for the “black African inhabitant(s) of the region now covered by KwaZulu-Natal and the northeastern parts of the Eastern Cape.”² Finally, they claim that Europeans applied it to “any black inhabitant of Southern Africa” in the twentieth century and that, as part of this process, it became derogatory and offensive in character.³ However, the fact that all these themes are usually analyzed in less than one or two pages illustrates that the history of this term has been treated in a cursory

¹ *Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles*, eds. Penny Silva, Wendy Dore, Dorothea Mantzel, Colin Muller and Madeleine Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 342; Gabeba Baderoon, “Ambiguous Visibility: Islam and the Making of a South African Landscape,” *The Arab World Geographer* 8.1-2 (2005), 92.

² Robert C.-H. Shell, *Children of Bondage: A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995), 189-90; *Dictionary of South African English*, 342; Baderoon, “Ambiguous,” 91-92; Hazel Crampton, Jeff Peires and Carl Vernon, eds., *Into the Hitherto Unknown: Ensign Beutler's Expedition to the Eastern Cape, 1752*, trans. Thea Toussaint van Hove and Michael Wilson (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2013), xv, xl.

³ *Dictionary of South African English*, 342.

fashion. This treatment, in turn, explains why the existing narrative has become marred by a series of oversimplifications. For instance, it fails to realize that the Portuguese, not Muslims, first racialized the term by linking it explicitly to black skin color. Similarly, it oversimplifies the transition from the Portuguese to the Cape Colony's usage of the term and, in so doing, overlooks that this transition reinforced the term's racialization by giving rise to the 'Hottentot-Caffre' and 'Caffre-Negro' dichotomies. Finally, this narrative does not explore the tensions between the ways in which eighteenth-century European naturalists and settlers used the term.

The purpose of this chapter is to address these shortcomings. Based on a wealth of primary sources in a variety of languages, I argue that European and Arab-Persian ideas about skin color, language, and other markers of difference contributed to the emergence of the term 'Caffre' as a racialized discursive trope for a large segment of the indigenous populations of Southern Africa between 1500 and 1800.⁴ At the same time, the chapter shows that the violent encounters between European settlers and the mixed-farming communities of the Eastern Cape frontier region during the last quarter of the eighteenth century resulted in a colonialist conceptualization of the term 'Caffre' as equivalent with the Xhosa people only. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the missionaries who arrived in the Eastern Cape region during the early decades of the nineteenth century encountered both of these discourses. However, although they worked primarily among the 'Caffres' (that is to say, the Xhosa people), these missionaries assimilated the meanings that eighteenth-century European naturalists ascribed to the term, notably that the 'Caffres' were a distinct race of people who extended over much of modern-day South Africa and were unified by a common skin color and a common language.

⁴ Note that skin color and language functioned by far as the most important markers of difference by which Europeans classified other peoples both in the pre-Enlightenment, Enlightenment, and post-Enlightenment periods.

The Birth of the ‘Caffres’

Earlier scholarship argued that Europeans first began to racialize sub-Saharan Africans during the Atlantic period, when American economic conditions led to the commodification of black African labor power.⁵ However, more recent works suggest that this impulse can be traced back to the medieval Mediterranean world, where the confluence of ancient Greek and Roman as well as Judeo-Christian and Islamic ideas encouraged Europeans to racialize sub-Saharan Africans before the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade.⁶ For instance, ancient Greek and Roman scholars had argued that humanity consisted of Africans (Ethiopians), Europeans, and Asians who inhabited the earth’s three known continents, respectively.⁷ The Judeo-Christian Book of Genesis reinforced this tripartite division through its story about the peopling of Africa, Europe, and Asia by Noah’s sons Ham, Japheth, and Shem in the aftermath of the Great Flood.⁸ More importantly, because these groups were distinguished on the basis of their skin color, this threefold division was color-coded from the very beginning.⁹ Finally, virtually all these sources viewed black skin as a deviation from the norm and, thus, indicative of some type of inferiority. For instance, Judeo-Christian reinterpretations of the Book of Genesis suggested that blackness represented the visible mark of the curse that Noah had cast on the descendants of his son Ham.¹⁰ Islamic scholarship, which was very influential in the medieval Mediterranean world, reinforced these ideas. For example, the fourteenth-century scholar Ibn Khaldun argued that “The Negro

⁵ Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization*, trans. Samuel Putnam (New York, 1946).

⁶ James Sweet, “The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54:1, Third Series (Jan., 1997), 143-66.

⁷ Seymour Phillips, “The Outer World of the European Middle Ages,” in S. Schwartz, *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 23, 30-31.

⁸ Phillips, “Outer World,” 44.

⁹ Herodotus, *The Histories*, ed. D. Lateiner, trans. G. C. Macaulay (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), 86 (II:23).

¹⁰ Sweet, “Iberian Roots,” 148.

nations are, as a rule, submissive to slavery, because [Negroes] have little that is [essentially] human and possess attributes that are quite similar to those of dumb animals.”¹¹ Having made a connection between blackness and inferiority, it was only a short mental step to connect blackness and inferiority to the status of what both Aristotle and the Bible described as “natural slaves.”¹²

Equipped with these concepts, the Portuguese sailed into the Atlantic Ocean in the early decades of the fifteenth century.¹³ Moving along the coast of West Africa, they made direct contact with sub-Saharan Africans and began to take increasing numbers of them back to Europe as slaves.¹⁴ Although Portuguese ideas about Africans became more variegated as a result of these sustained encounters, they continued to classify them on the basis of their black skin color (rather than their religion) and to see their blackness as indicative of their inferiority; both were considered justifications for their enslavement. As the Portuguese chronicler Gomes Eannes Zurara remarked in the fourteenth century:

The blacks, though Muslims like the others [lighter-skinned Idzāgen Berbers], were nevertheless their slaves, in accordance with ancient custom, which I believe was due to the curse which, after the Deluge, Noah laid upon his son...by which he cursed him thus...that his generation should be subject to all the other generations of the world. And from this generation these blacks are descended...¹⁵

Over time, these ideas produced a racialized ethnography and geography of the African continent. Thus, whereas the Portuguese identified the lighter-skinned Idzāgen Berbers of

¹¹ Chouki El Hamel, *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 67, 75.

¹² Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998), 8-9; *The Bible*, Book of Proverbs 11:29.

¹³ Note that “Portuguese” refers to the national identity of the royal sponsors who directly or indirectly supported or sanctioned these ventures rather than the identities of individual participants who were from various regions of Europe, including modern-day Italy, Germany and the Netherlands.

¹⁴ The estimates range between 80,000 and 150,000 for the period 1440 and 1505. See Sweet, “Iberian,” 163.

¹⁵ Gomes Eannes de Zurara, *Chronica do Descobrimento e Conquista de Guiné, escrita por Mandado de ElRei D. Affonso V*, ed. Visconde de Santarem (Paris: J. P. Aillaud, [1453] 1841), 93-94. My translation.

Northwest Africa as “Moors” on the basis of their Muslim religion,¹⁶ they classified the Muslim and animist Wolofs, Mandinka, Tukulors, and Serers, as well as the animist and Christian Bakongo of sub-Saharan West and West Central Africa, as “blacks” on the basis of their darker skin color¹⁷ and defined the Senegal River as the dividing line between the “land of the Moors” and “land of the blacks.”¹⁸ These views still dominated the Portuguese knowledge system regarding Africa and Africans by the time Vasco da Gama’s fleet rounded the Cape of Good Hope between 1497 and 1498. Consequently, da Gama’s crew identified the people they encountered near St. Helena Bay, Mossel Bay, Inhambane, and the Quelimane River as “blacks” because of their darker skin color.¹⁹

However, a change occurred in the Portuguese discourse about the inhabitants of Southern Africa between 1498 and 1505. As the list of fleets for 1505 makes clear, the Portuguese no longer described the inhabitants of Inhambane as ‘blacks’ but as ‘Caffres.’ “João de Queirós,” the list reads, “as he sought anchorage 60 leagues to this side of Cabo das Correntes, was killed by the Kaffirs together with the master pilot and nearly all the others who were with him...”²⁰ One year later, the term ‘Caffre’ featured in several orders issued by Pero de Anhaia, the Portuguese captain-major of Sofala.²¹ The term’s use increased steadily during the

¹⁶ Zurara, *Chronica*, 26. My translation.

¹⁷ Frederique Verrier, ed., *Voyages en Afrique Noire d'Alvise Ca'da Mosto, 1455 & 1456*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Editions Chandeigne, 2003), 54-7, 84-5; Duarte Pacheco Pereira, *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*, ed. Augusto Epiphanyo da Silva Dias (Lisboa: Typographia Universal, 1905), 80-81, 133-34. My translation.

¹⁸ Zurara, *Chronica*, 153, 154, 158, 278; Verrier, ed., *Voyages*, 43, 53-54; Pereira, *Esmeraldo*, 79-81, 133-34. My translation.

¹⁹ Álvaro Velho, *O Roteiro da Viagem de Vasco da Gama em 1497*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1866), 6-7, 10-11, 18, 21. My translation.

²⁰ *Documents on the Portuguese in Mozambique and Central Africa, 1497-1840 (Documentos sobre os Portugueses em Moçambique e em África Central, 1497-1840)*, Vols. 1-8 (Lisbon: National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1962-1975), List of Fleets, 1505, 1:93.

²¹ *Documents*, An Order from Pero de Anhaia, Captain-Major of Sofala, to the King’s Treasuries, Sofala, 7 Jan 1506, 1:367; *Ibid.*, 24 Jan 1506; *Ibid.*, 31 Jan 1506, 1:385; *Ibid.*, 19 May 1506, 1:507.

next few decades,²² such that the Portuguese chronicler João de Barros remarked in 1552, “The name Kaffirs is already in general use among us...”²³ A high point of sorts was reached twenty years later when the Portuguese poet Luís Vaz Camões used the term in his epic *The Lusíads*:

Shall see the Caffres, greedy and fierce
Depriving the beautiful Lady of her clothes....
There wild Caffres shall have power to do
what never could do the power of dexterous foes...²⁴

The change in how the Portuguese identified the indigenous inhabitants of Southern Africa at this time has a several possible causes. Most likely they did so because they came into sustained contact with two preexisting Muslim discourses about the inhabitants of coastal East Africa. Muslim scholars and travelers from the Middle East and North Africa articulated the first of these discourses, which identified the Muslim and non-Muslim inhabitants of East Africa as *Zanj* (also *Zinj*; plural *Zunūj*). Although the exact historical meaning of this term is contested, it appears that these *outside* Muslims used it as a racialized ethnonym.²⁵ Regarding this meaning, it is useful to recall that outside Muslims believed that the region of Africa had been peopled by the descendants of Noah’s cursed son Ham, whose son Kush had fathered Sudan and Habasha, the latter of whom, while moving into Southeast Africa, had given rise to the people known as Nuba, Nuja, Habasha proper, eastern Barbara, and *Zanj*.²⁶ Making adjustments for the errors in their geographic conceptions of the world, it appears that outside Muslims located the “land of

²² G. M. Theal, ed. and trans., *Records of South-Eastern Africa, Collected in Various Libraries and Archive Departments in Europe*, vols. 1-6 (London: William Clowes, 1898-1900), Letter from Pedro Vaz Soares, factor of Sofala, to the king Dom Manuel, 30 Sep 1513, 1:80-81; *Documents*, Letter from João de Sepúlveda to the King, Mozambique, 10 Aug 1542, 7:139.

²³ Theal, *Records*, J. de Barros, “Década Primeira: Da Asia de João de Barros: Dos Feitos Que os Portugueses Fezerão no Descobrimto & Conquista dos Mares & Terras do Oriente (1552, 1778),” 6:230.

²⁴ L.V. Camões, *Os Lusíadas*, ed. Visconde de Juromenha (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1873), 95, 182. My translation.

²⁵ L.-Marcel Devic, *Le pays des Zendjs: ou, La côte orientale d’Afrique au moyen-âge (géographie, moeurs, productions, animaux légendaires) d’après les écrivains arabes* (Paris: Hachette, 1888); M. Tolmacheva, “Toward a Definition of the Term Zanj,” *Azania* 21 (1986), 105-113.

²⁶ Tolmacheva, “Zanj,” 106.

the *Zanj*” (*Bilād al-Zanj* in Arabic and *Zanguebar* in Persian) along East Africa’s Indian Ocean coastline between circa 12° north to 26° south latitude (without, however, offering any ideas about its westward expansion).²⁷ Furthermore, they racialized this conception by identifying blackness as an important characteristic of the *Zanj*.²⁸ As Mutahar ibn Tahir al Maqdisi and Abu Abdallah ibn Battuta remarked in the tenth and fourteenth centuries, respectively: “As for the *Zanj*, they are people of black color.... Most of [Kilwa’s] people are Zunūj, extremely black...”²⁹ Importantly, for *outside* Muslims, the *Zanj* were unified by their darker skin color in ways that superseded the religious differences among them. This explains why Ibn Battuta insisted that all *Zanj* were black, but not all of them were followers of Islam. As he explained in 1332: “[Kilwa is] a great coastal city. Most of its people are Zunūj, extremely black.... They are a people devoted to the Holy War because they are on one continuous mainland with unbelieving Zunūj.”³⁰

The Muslim inhabitants of coastal East Africa articulated the second discourse, which, focusing on religious differences, classified the non-Muslim inhabitants of the East African mainland as *Kufr* (those who are ungrateful and do not believe in Allah) or its derivatives *Kafara* or *Kafir* (those who hide or reject the truth).³¹ This focus on religious difference resulted from the long history of coastal East Africa as a contact zone between indigenous African communities and visiting Arab-Persian maritime traders, a role it had filled since the first millennium CE. After the rise of Islam in the seventh century, contact with these traders

²⁷ Tolmacheva, “Zanj,” 107; Devic, *Le pays*, 9-10, 125-26.

²⁸ Tolmacheva, “Zanj,” 111; Devic, *Le pays*, 127.

²⁹ Devic, *Le pays*, 127; Ibn Battuta, *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa*, eds. and trans. S. Hamdun and N. King (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2003), 22.

³⁰ Battuta, *Black*, 22. Similarly, Al-Dimashqi (14th century) juxtaposed the Muslim *Zanj* (*li-Zanj al-muslimin*) of Kilwa with the other *Zanj* (*Zanj al-Zanj*) of the mainland. See Tolmacheva, “Zanj,” 108.

³¹ M. Shafiq, “Teaching Interfaith Initiatives: Jews and Christians in Muslim Educational Institutions,” in M. Ma’Oz, ed., *Meeting of Civilizations: Muslim, Christian, and Jewish* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2009), 134-36.

intensified and accelerated religious and social differentiation among the people of East Africa. These differences found expression in the *uungwana–ushenzi* dichotomy, according to which the former adjective described the “island elite,” while the latter referred to the “mainland underclass.”³² Because both groups were primarily of African stock, the “island elite” did not legitimize their superior status by focusing on differences in skin color.³³ Instead, they achieved this legitimization by constructing elaborate traditions of origin that identified them as the descendants of wealthy male Arab-Persian traders who, upon first arriving in coastal East Africa, had married the daughters of local rulers and, through these connections, acquired legitimate control of land, wealth, and status.³⁴ Moreover, these traditions always identified these Arab-Persian merchants as adherents of Islam and insisted that “the superior ritual power of Islam” had helped them defend their possessions and status against their envious mainland relations. In so doing, these traditions ensured that Islam became the defining characteristic by which the Muslim “island elite” established their identity and superiority over the non-Muslim “mainland underclass,” whom they identified as *Kufir*, *Kafara*, or *Kafir*.³⁵

The Portuguese encountered these two preexisting Muslim discourses as they sent regular fleets into the Indian Ocean after 1500, visiting the lands that ocean bordered. The influence of the *outside* Muslim discourse about the *Zanj* is apparent in the writings of the aforementioned Portuguese chronicler João de Barros, who explained in 1552: “The Arabians and the Persians who have learning, and who live in its vicinity, call it [the region of East and Southeast Africa] in

³² D. Nurse and T. Spear, *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800-1500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 24-25, 85-96.

³³ While it cannot be denied that some Arab-Persian traders stayed and intermarried in the region, recent scholarship has shown that the Islamized inhabitants of coastal East Africa were of the same stock as their non-Muslim neighbors and, thus, shared their darker skin color. See Nurse and Spear, *Swahili*, 5, 29.

³⁴ Nurse and Spear, *Swahili*, 70-77.

³⁵ Nurse and Spear, *Swahili*, 77, and 71-2, 76.

their writings Zanguebar, and the inhabitants they call Zanguy [*Zanj*]...³⁶ The influence of the *inside* Muslim discourse about the *Kufr* is equally apparent. Thus, the Portuguese official Duarte Barbosa remarked in 1516 that, “On entering within this country of Sofala, there is the kingdom of Benamatapa, which is very large and peopled by Gentiles, whom the Moors call Cafres.”³⁷ Given the resemblance of the two terms, it is safe to assume that the Portuguese assimilated the term ‘Caffre’ from the *inside* Muslim discourse about the *Kufr*. It is equally safe to assume that they assimilated its religious and geographical implications from the *inside* Muslim discourse and, in so doing, classified as ‘Caffres’ the non-Muslim inhabitants of the East African mainland and as ‘Moors’ the Muslim inhabitants of the East African coastal islands.

However, the Portuguese also attached entirely new meanings to this term. For instance, whereas the two preexisting Muslim discourses tied racial difference (blackness) not to the term *Kufr* but to the term *Zanj*, the Portuguese, due to their longstanding habit of thinking about sub-Saharan Africans in racial terms, linked it immediately and explicitly to the term ‘Caffre.’ Thus, Barbosa and Barros explained in 1516 and 1552, respectively, that the ‘Caffres’ were “black men” and “black people.”³⁸ Other Portuguese commentators reinforced this color-coded discourse. In 1554, a Portuguese shipwreck survivor noted with regard to the people near the Kasuka and the Mthatha Rivers in modern-day South Africa, “They were Kaffirs, very black in color...”³⁹ By the end of the century, the term ‘Caffre’ had become quasi-synonymous with “blackness.” As Jan Huygen van Linschoten, who had served with the Portuguese at Goa,

³⁶ Theal, *Records*, J. de Barros, “Década Primeira,” 6:230-2.

³⁷ D. Barbosa, *Livro em que dá relação de que viu e ouviu no Oriente Duarte Barbosa*, ed. F. Magalhães (Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, Agência Geral das Colónias, 1946), 18. My translation.

³⁸ Barbosa, *Livro*, 18; Theal, *Records*, J. de Barros, “Década Primeira,” 6:232.

³⁹ Theal, *Records*, M. de Mesquita Perestrello, “Naufrágio da Não, S. Bento (1554),” 1:224. For the location, see *Ibid.*, 1:282; 2:xii.

remarked in 1596, “These black people or Caffres of the land of Mozambique...are in general as black as pitch.”⁴⁰

Thirst for commercial gain explains why the Portuguese added economic and geographical specificity to the term over time.⁴¹ For instance, over the course of the sixteenth century, they came to associate the ‘Caffres’ with the trade in gold, ivory, ambergris, and slaves.⁴² Regarding the slave trade, one traveler explained in 1573 that some of the Portuguese merchants in the region owned “a hundred or even two hundred captive Kaffirs.”⁴³ The Portuguese factions on the coast were responsible for the export trade and ventured frequently into the interior in order to acquire “many slaves” in exchange “for cotton linen, and other Indian wares....”⁴⁴ The majority of these enslaved people ended up in Portuguese India, where they did “the filthiest and hardest labor.”⁴⁵

In order to protect this trade from foreign interlopers and differentiate it clearly from a separate commercial project in West Central Africa, the Portuguese territorialized the term ‘Caffre’ more clearly as the sixteenth century progressed. Thus, while they had initially associated it with the region *outside* Muslim geographers had identified as the *Bilād al-Zanj* or *Zanguebar*, situated anywhere between 12° north and 26° south latitude, by 1552 the Portuguese argued that ‘Caffraria’ extended in the north only as far as the Kingdom of Melinde (circa 3°

⁴⁰ J. H. van Linschoten, *Itinerario: Voyage ofte Schipvaert van Jan Huygen van Linschoten naer Dost ofte Portugals Indien* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1596), 60. My translation.

⁴¹ A. Disney, “Portuguese Expansion, 1400-1800: Encounters, Negotiations, and Interactions,” in F. Bethencourt and D. R. Curto, eds., *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 284-85.

⁴² For trade in gold, ivory and ambergris, see *Documents*, Letter (Copy) from Father D. Gonçalo to the Brothers of the Society of Jesus in Portugal, Goa, Nov 1559, 7:425; *Ibid.*, Diogo Couto, *Década IX da Asia* (1573), 8:269; Linschoten, *Itinerario*, 8, 60-1; Mello d’Azevedo, ed., *Ethiopia Oriental por Fr. João dos Santos*, Vol.1 (Lisboa: Bibliotheca de Classicos Portuguezes, [1609] 1891), 43, 100, 103, 136, 202-4, 251, 332.

⁴³ *Documents*, Diogo Couto, “Decada IX da Asia (1573),” 8:271. See also *Ibid.*, Book Concerning the Work of the Society of Jesus in the East (Naples, 1573), 8:215. Note that these commentators did not confuse slaves with mere clients, for when they saw clients they described them as vassals (*vassalos*). See d’Azevedo, ed., *Ethiopia*, 117-8.

⁴⁴ d’Azevedo, ed., *Ethiopia*, 44, 332; Linschoten, *Itinerario*; 60-1, 68. My translations.

⁴⁵ Linschoten, *Itinerario*, 8. My translation.

south latitude) and in the south and west as far as the Cape of Good Hope (34.5° south latitude and 18° east longitude).⁴⁶ Additional changes were introduced during the next century, when the ‘Caffre’ trade centered increasingly on the region south of the Zambezi river valley.⁴⁷ Thus, at this time, the Portuguese detached ‘Caffraria’ entirely from the *Bilād al-Zanj* and situated the boundary-line near 15° south latitude.⁴⁸ At the same time, they extended the boundary northward from the Cape of Good Hope to Cabo Negro (15° south latitude) on the Atlantic coast, though they excluded modern-day Angola because it represented a separate commercial venture.⁴⁹ As a result of these adjustments, ‘Caffraria’ emerged as a region that included modern-day Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, and much of Mozambique (Figure 5).

⁴⁶ Refer to Barros above, but also to *Documents*, Letter (Copy) from Father D. Gonçalo to the Brothers of the Society of Jesus in Portugal, Goa, Nov 1559, 7:421, 425; *Ibid.*, Letter (Copy) from Father André Fernandes to Father Pedro Fonseca, Cochin 16 Jan 1563, 8:121; C. Boxer, ed. and trans., *The Tragic History of the Sea, 1589-1622: Narratives of the Shipwrecks of the Portuguese East Indiamen São Thomé (1589), Santo Alberto (1593), São João Baptista (1622), and the Journeys of the Survivors in South East Africa* (New York: Cambridge, 1959), Diogo Soares, “São João Baptista, 1622,” 196. Note that in sixteenth-century East Africa, Portugal’s northernmost captaincy was located at Melinde and, thus, it made sense for the Portuguese to reduce the northern boundary of ‘Caffraria’ from Cape Gardafui (12° north latitude) to the Kingdom of Melinde (3° south latitude) at this time.

⁴⁷ Thornton, “The Portuguese in Africa,” in Bethencourt and Curto, eds., *Portuguese*, 156.

⁴⁸ J. (Giovanni) Botero Benes, *Relaciones universales del mundo*, trans. D. de Aguiar (Valladolid: Diego Fernandez de Cordova, 1603), 121-122; N. Sanson d’Abbeville, *L’Afrique en plusieurs cartes nouvelles et exactes et en divers traicte’s de géographie, et d’histoire* (Paris, 1656), see map entitled *Pays, et Coste des Cafres* and description.

⁴⁹ Benes, *Relaciones*, 121-122; Sanson d’Abbeville, *L’Afrique*, see map entitled *Pays, et Coste des Cafres*. For the Portuguese in West Central Africa and Southeast Africa, see Thornton, “Portuguese,” 150-51. Note that the decision to exclude this region from ‘Caffraria’ may have been due to the Portuguese claim that the Bakongo of West Central Africa were already in the process of becoming Christians and, thus, were distinct from the ‘Caffres’ on religious grounds. See Linda M. Heywood and J. Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 62ff.

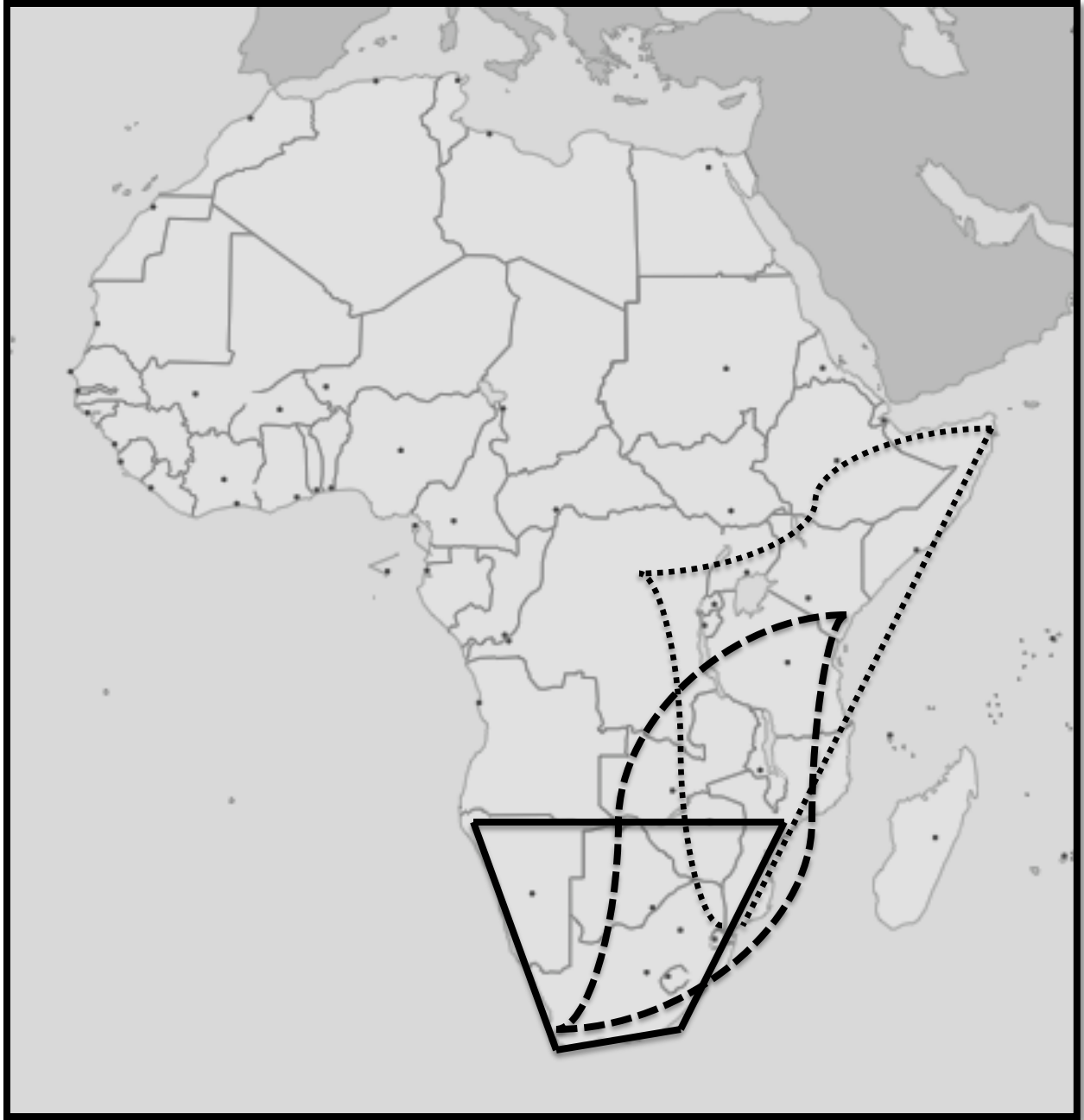


Figure 5. 'Caffraria' circa 1500 to 1650. Approximate territories associated with the term 'Caffre' by the Portuguese and other Europeans in the early 1500s (dotted line), in the 1550s (dashed line), and in the first half of the 1600s (solid line). Source: author.

As was characteristic for the pre-Enlightenment period, the Portuguese did not systematize their knowledge about the ‘Caffres’ beyond these assertions.⁵⁰ This, in turn, allowed them to use the term with considerable flexibility even after they gained more detailed information about the culture and speaking practices of the inhabitants of ‘Caffraria.’ For instance, they identified all the inhabitants of modern-day South Africa as ‘Caffres’ even if the latter’s subsistence activities varied significantly. Thus, while the Portuguese survivors of the shipwrecked *Santo Alberto* near the Mpako River (Transkei) in 1593 argued that all ‘Caffres’ were “herdsmen and husbandmen,” the survivors of the *São João Baptista* near the Keiskama River in 1622 identified as ‘Caffres’ people who lived “solely on shellfish, some roots...and the produce of the chase.”⁵¹ The same occurred in the context of language.⁵² Thus, a Portuguese shipwreck survivor discussing the indigenous inhabitants he encountered near the Kasuka and Mthatha Rivers (Transkei) in 1554 remarked that “they said many things in a language not so badly pronounced as we always heard and was customary on that coast...”⁵³ It is likely that he interpreted as bad pronunciation the more frequent use of click-sounds (explosive consonants) that other observers had noticed among the indigenous communities residing further west, notably at Saldanha Bay, Table Bay, Mossel Bay, and Plettenberg Bay.⁵⁴ However, despite the recognition of linguistic differences, the Portuguese insisted that all these groups spoke more or less the same ‘Caffre’ language. As another survivor, who had traveled through the Transkei to Sofala in the 1590s, remarked, “The language is almost the same in the whole of Kaffraria, the

⁵⁰ P.E.H. Hair, “Portuguese Contacts with the Bantu Languages of the Transkei, Natal and Southern Mozambique, 1497-1650,” *African Studies* 39:1 (1980), 14.

⁵¹ Boxer, *Tragic*, João Baptista Lavanha, “Santo Alberto, 1593,” 122; *Ibid.*, Diogo Soares, “São João Baptista, 1622,” 200.

⁵² For the points made in this paragraph see also Hair, “Portuguese,” 28-30.

⁵³ Theal, *Records*, Perestrello, “Naufrágio,” 1:224

⁵⁴ Boxer, *Tragic*, Diogo Soares, “São João Baptista, 1622,” 198; Theal, *Records*, Manuel de Faria y Sousa, “Asia Portuguese (Lisboa, 1675),” 417-18; and see footnote 71.

difference between them resembling that between the languages of Italy, or between the ordinary ones of Spain.”⁵⁵

Thus, the Portuguese associated the term ‘Caffre’ with blackness, heathenism, inferiority, slavery, and the region south of modern-day Angola in the West and modern-day Tanzania in east. Despite this specificity, however, they endowed the term with considerable flexibility, especially in the context of South Africa. This meant that they identified as ‘Caffres’ the same communities that other Europeans would come to classify as ‘Hottentots.’

‘Caffres’ and ‘Hottentots’

Unfamiliar with the *inside* Muslim discourse about the *Kufr* and ignorant of the Portuguese ideas about the ‘Caffres,’ when Dutch, English, French, and Danish mariners stopped in the Western Cape region on their voyages to and from the East Indies between 1580 and 1630, they referred to the inhabitants of that region not as ‘Caffres’ but as “savages” and “negroes.”⁵⁶ Although the Dutch East India Company inherited this nomenclature when they established a permanent settlement at the Cape of Good Hope on April 6, 1652, they soon began to refer to the region’s inhabitants as ‘Hottentots,’⁵⁷ because the latter frequently uttered a similar-sounding word in their dance songs.⁵⁸ However, lacking the Enlightenment era’s urge to develop systematic classifications, company personnel did not distinguish between ‘Hottentots’ and

⁵⁵ Boxer, *Tragic*, Lavanha, “Santo Alberto, 1593,” 123. ‘Ordinary ones of Spain’ refers to Castilian, Galician and Portuguese but excludes Basque and Catalan.

⁵⁶ See the numerous entries in R. Raven-Hart, *Before Van Riebeeck: Callers at South Africa from 1488 to 1652* (Cape Town: Struik, 1967), including Account of Thomas Stevens' Voyage, 1579, 14; *Ibid.*, Edmund Barker's account of Sir James Lancaster's Voyage, 1591, 15; *Ibid.*, Willem Lodewijckz's account of Cornelius de Houtman's Voyage, 1595, 16-8; *Ibid.*, Franck van der Does's account of Cornelius de Houtman's Voyage, 1595, 19.

⁵⁷ D. Moodie, ed., comp. and trans., *The Record; Or, A Series of Official Papers Relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Tribes of South Africa. Part I, 1649-1720* (Cape Town: A. S. Robertson, 1838), Journal of Commander Van Riebeeck, 7 April 1652, 9; *Ibid.*, 14 Dec 1660, 224-225.

⁵⁸ Raven-Hart, *Before*, Augustin de Beaulieu, Table Bay, March 1620, 101; *Ibid.*, The Life of the Icelander Jón Ólafsson, 1623 (completed 1661), 112.

‘Caffres’ at this time. For instance, the Dutch compiler Olfert Dapper used the two terms interchangeably in his 1668 book *Kaffraria, or Land of the Kafirs, Otherwise Named the Hottentots*.⁵⁹

This began to change about a decade later when Cape officials learned from their ‘Hottentot’ informants that “far off” to the east lived a different people known as the “Chobona,” who were supposed to be as black as the company’s slaves from Guinea and Angola.⁶⁰ Indeed, the differences between the ‘Hottentots’ and the ‘Chobona’ appeared to be so substantial that company officials classified the latter as a distinct “race of people” in 1662. As Commander Jan Van Riebeeck explained, “After those [Hottentots] are said to begin, though beyond the river Vigiti Magna [Orange River], and in an Easterly direction, another race of people, called by all the before mentioned Hottentots—Choboqua or Cobona...”⁶¹ Several years later, they learned from the Inquahase ‘Hottentots’ that north of the Orange River, this other “race of people” was frequently called “Briqua” (Goat People).⁶² Intrigued by this intelligence from the interior, company officials were determined to find out “where the Hottentots end and where the Caffres begin” and whether or not these ‘Briqua’ and ‘Chobona’ were “real (opregte) Kaffers.”⁶³

⁵⁹ Olfert Dapper, “Kaffraria, or Land of the Kafirs, Otherwise Named the Hottentots [Kaffrarie of Lant der Kaffers, Anders Hottentots Genaemt] (1668),” in I. Schapera and B. Farrington, eds. and trans., *The Early Cape Hottentots described in the Writings of Olfert Dapper (1668), Willem Ten Rhyne (1686) and Johannes Gulielmus de Grevenbroek (1695)* (Cape Town: The Van Riebeeck Society, 1933).

⁶⁰ Moodie, ed., *Record I*, Journal of Commander Van Riebeeck, 16 Dec 1660, 225; see also *Ibid.*, 31 Oct 1657, 110-111; *Ibid.*, 29 Sep 1660, 218. Note that if Peter Kolb’s knowledge of the ‘Hottentot’ language can be trusted, the name ‘Chobona’ implied black skin, because it meant “a black or foreign nation.” See P. Kolb, *Description du Cap de Bonne-Esperance*, Tome Premier (Amsterdam: Jean Catuffe, 1743), 59.

⁶¹ Moodie, ed., *Record I*, Extracts of Memorandum left by Commander J. van Riebeeck, for the information and guidance of his successor Z. Wagenaar, 5 May 1662, 249.

⁶² Moodie, ed., *Record I*, Journal kept by the Ensign Isaq Schreyver on his journey to the Inquahase Hottentots, 19 Feb 1689, 437. The word “Briqua” is a Nama compound term derived from “biri” for “goat” and “-qua” for “people” to which Europeans erroneously added the letter “s” to signify the plural. In their own language, the “Goat People” may have called themselves “Bathlaping” which means “Fish People.” See L. F. Maingard, “The Brikwa and the Ethnic Origins of the Bathlaping,” *South African Journal of Science* 30 (1933), 597-602.

⁶³ Moodie, ed., *Record I*, Instructions to Cornelis Thomas Hobma, and officers of the Hoeker Boede, 18 Jan 1677, 347, note 2; *Ibid.*, Despatch from Commander Simon van der Stel and Council, to the Chamber XVII, 23 April 1682, 386.

However, reliable information was not immediately forthcoming. Consequently, Cape residents assumed on the basis of rumors that, north of the Cape colony, the ‘Caffres’ began somewhere beyond the Cedarberg, Roggeveld, and Nuweveld mountain chain, but readily admitted that in that direction, “the actual land of the Caffres...has never really been discovered or visited.”⁶⁴ The situation was better to the east of the Cape colony where, in 1688, the Dutch vessel *Centaurus* picked up several Europeans near the Buffalo River, most of whom had survived the wrecking of the ship *Stavenisse* near the Mzimkhulu River two years earlier. These survivors claimed that they had encountered various indigenous communities on their overland journey to the Buffalo, including a people called “Macosses” (most likely the Xhosa). Although they were confused about the exact identities of these groups,⁶⁵ all of them agreed that the “Macosses” were ‘Caffres.’⁶⁶ As survivor Guillaume Chenu de Chalezac explained at the time: “The people of this nation [are] all Caffers.... They are as black as those living in the torrid zone...”⁶⁷

The desire to obtain more accurate information about these groups suggests a period of transition from pre-Enlightenment to Enlightenment-era thinking. During this latter period (circa 1700 to 1800), Europeans came to believe that there was an order in the natural world that could be discovered through scientific observations and made visible through scientific systems of classification (taxonomies). Naturalists applied the same ideas to the study of mankind, which was thought to occupy the apex of a hierarchically ordered natural world.⁶⁸ Inevitably these ideas

⁶⁴ O.F. Mentzel, *Vollständige und zuverlässige Geographisch und Topographische Beschreibung des berühmten und in all Betrachtung merkwürdigen Afrikanischen Vorgebirges der Guten Hofnung, Erster Theil* (Glogau: Guenther, 1785), 104. My translation.

⁶⁵ Initially, all these groups were identified as “sorts of Hottentots.” See Moodie, ed., *Record I*, Log Book kept in the Hooker Centaur, 426.

⁶⁶ Moodie, ed., *Record I*, Log Book kept in the Hooker Centaur, 11 Feb 1688, 427-8.

⁶⁷ R. Vigne, ed., *Guillaume Chenu de Chalezac, The 'French Boy', the Narrative of his Experiences as a Huguenot refugee, as a castaway among the Xhosa, his rescue with the Stavenisse survivors by the Centaurus, his service at the Cape and return to Europe, 1686-9* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck, 1993), 35.

⁶⁸ P. D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850*, Vol. 1 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 37.

led to questions about Africans' position in this order.⁶⁹ Despite some differences in execution, the most influential naturalists of the eighteenth century—Carl Linnaeus (*Systema naturae*, 1735), Georges Louis Leclerc de Buffon (*Histoire naturelle, Variétés dans l'espèce humaine*, 1749), and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (*De generis humani varietate nativa*, 1781)—all classified mankind on the basis of skin color, ranking the white race of Europe at top and black race of Africa at the bottom.⁷⁰ Moreover, while these color-coded taxonomies confirmed older ideas about the alleged inferiority of sub-Saharan Africans, they also suggested that different shades of blackness were indicative of distinct racial sub-groupings.⁷¹

The idea that skin color could be used to develop a more nuanced system of racial classification was intimately connected with activities in eighteenth-century South Africa, where skin color emerged as the most significant marker of difference between 'Hottentots' and 'Caffres.' Indeed, although earlier officials and travelers had often claimed that all the inhabitants of Southern Africa were "blacks," by the turn of the century, an increasing number of them agreed with the Frenchman Étienne de Flacourt, who had reported as early as 1668 that "[The Hottentots] are not black at all, but only swarthy."⁷² Among those affected was the German naturalist Peter Kolb. Summarizing Cape opinion in the early eighteenth century, he explained that the "Hottentots are olive-colored" whereas "the Caffres are totally black."⁷³ Over the next century, European naturalists used this color-coded classification system to differentiate between 'Hottentots' and 'Caffres' and, in so doing, entrenched the idea that these groups represented two distinct racial categories.

⁶⁹ Curtin, *Image*, 38.

⁷⁰ Curtin, *Image*, 38; J. S. Haller, *Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859-1900*, 2nd Ed. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, [1971] 1995), 4-5; .

⁷¹ A. S. Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 12.

⁷² Étienne de Flacourt, *Relation de la Grande Isle Madagascar, contenant ce qui s'est passé entre les François & les Originaires de cette Isle, depuis l'an 1642 jusques en l'an 1655* (Paris: Lesselin, 1668), 237. My translation.

⁷³ Kolb, *Description*, 157. My translation.

In the Northern Cape region, this development resulted from a series of European expeditions along and across the Orange River. For instance, the Dutchman Robert Jacob Gordon traveled in this region in 1779; remarking about the “Briqua” he encountered on this journey, he stated that they were “Caffers” because they were “black,” had “Caffer-like faces,” and the physical features of “true Caffer[s].”⁷⁴ Based on this information, Cape officials concluded that the Orange River represented the approximate boundary line between these two (racial) groups in the Northern Cape region.

Europeans also elaborated the ‘Hottentot–Caffre’ dichotomy in the context of the Eastern Cape region. An important step in that direction occurred in 1737 when the survivors of Herman Hubner’s hunting party reported to have reached the “country of the Caffres” after having traversed the “land of the Gonaquas,” which extended as far as the Keiskamma River.⁷⁵ Company officials confirmed the river’s function as a boundary between ‘Hottentots’ and ‘Caffres’ in 1752 when they sent out an official expedition under Ensign August Frederick Beutler. Following the apparently well-established “trading route to the Caffres,”⁷⁶ they too found the region west of the Keiskamma River occupied by ‘Hottentots’⁷⁷ and the region east of it belonging to the ‘Caffres.’⁷⁸ Based on this experience, the expedition concluded that the

⁷⁴ Gordon, *Journal*, 5 Jan 1779, as quoted in P. Cullinan, *Robert Jacob Gordon 1743-1795: The Man and his Travels at the Cape* (Cape Town: Struik, 1992), 68; *Ibid.*, 28 Sep 1779, 98; *Ibid.*, 28 Oct 1779, 112; *Ibid.*, 5 Nov 1779, 116.

⁷⁵ Crampton, Peires and Vernon, eds., *Hitherto*, Appendix I, Deposition of Hendrik de Vries de Jonge and Hendrik Scheffer de Jonge, “An account of what took place on an expedition to the country of the Caffers...,” 10 Jul 1737, 178-181; D. Moodie, ed., comp. and trans., *The Record; Or, A Series of Official Papers Relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Tribes of South Africa. Part IV, 1808-1819* (Cape Town: A. S. Robertson, 1838), Supplement to the relations of a Journey into the Country of the Bosjesman and Caffre People, 1809, 9.

⁷⁶ E.C. Godée Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen in Zuid-Afrika in de Hollandse tid. Deel III. Tochten langs de Z.O.-kust en naar het Oosten 1670-1752* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1922), *Journal* Haupt, 6 April 1752, 273.

⁷⁷ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, *Journal* Haupt, 8, 21, 24, 29 May 1752, 282, 285-6, 287-8, 5 Jun 1752, 291-2.

⁷⁸ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, *Journal* Haupt, 6, 12, 28 Jun 1752, 294, 297-8; *Ibid.*, 2, 5, 15-16, 25 Jul 1752, 305-6, 309-10, 311, 316, 318-19.

Keiskamma River represented the dividing line “between Hottentots and Caffres” in the Eastern Cape frontier region.⁷⁹

Although classifications based on skin color suggested that the boundary line between ‘Hottentots’ and ‘Caffres’ was located near the Orange and Keiskamma Rivers, some confusion remained because the two groups apparently interacted intensely with each other in these regions, producing “mixed” populations.⁸⁰ By 1752, the Beutler expedition had already noted: “The Gonaquas Hottentots live among them [the Caffres] and mix with them.... They also intermarry without differentiation; and the children of such marriages are not as black as the Caffres but more brown or yellow.”⁸¹ In 1779, Gordon made similar observations in the Northern Cape region, where he identified one of the “Briquas” as a “half-breed” because, as he claimed, the latter had “already cross-bred” with the region’s ‘Hottentot’ groups.⁸²

Perhaps because of this complexity, European naturalists began to pay more attention to language as a marker of difference between ‘Caffres’ and ‘Hottentots.’ This focus on language made sense in the context of eighteenth-century comparative philology, which had its theoretical point of departure in “Mosaic ethnology” (the biblical idea that humanity sprang from a single progenitor). According to this monogenesisist theory, affinities and differences among nations (races) and their respective languages were viewed as the result of migratory movements away from a common origin over time. Moreover, this theory suggested that languages and nations (races) overlapped neatly, so that identification of the former automatically resulted in the

⁷⁹ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, Journaal Haupt, Letter of Beutler to Governor Tulbagh, 31 Jul 1752, 321. My translation.

⁸⁰ For more details on such interactions see chapter five, but also Maingard, “Brikwa,” 597-602; G. Harnick, “Interaction between Xhosa and Khoi; Emphasis on the Period 1620-1750,” *African Societies in Southern Africa* (1969), 145-170.

⁸¹ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, Journaal Haupt, 2 Jul 1752, 310-11; Crampton, Peires and Vernon, eds., *Hitherto*, Journal Assistant Carel Albregt Haupt, 2 Jul 1752, 121.

⁸² Gordon, *Journal*, 5 Nov 1779, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 116; *Ibid.*, 7 Nov 1779, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 119. On this issue, refer also to Maingard, “Brikwa,” 597-99.

identification of the latter and vice versa.⁸³ Taking a cue from contemporary natural science, linguists argued further that distinct languages could be discovered by collecting lexicological and phonological “facts” and organizing these “facts” into comparative lists.

The differences between the speaking practices of the ‘Hottentots’ and ‘Caffres’ first became apparent when Europeans compared ‘Caffre’ words with ‘Hottentot’ terms of the same meaning and recognized that a lexicological boundary separated these two modes of communication.

TABLE II. ‘CAFFRE’ AND ‘HOTTENTOT’ COMPARATIVE WORDLISTS.

	Grevebroeck		Barrow	
	‘Caffre’	‘Hottentot’	‘Caffre’	‘Hottentot’
One	<i>Mounje</i>	<i>Chiu</i>	<i>Eenyé</i>	<i>Qūæ</i>
Two	<i>Mabile</i>	<i>Kham</i>	<i>Zimbeenie</i>	<i>Kām</i>
Three	<i>Matato</i>	<i>Nhona</i>	<i>Zintaté</i>	<i>Gōna</i>

Source: G. Grevenbroeck, “An Elegant and Accurate Account of the African Race living round the Cape of Good Hope Commonly called Hottentots (1695),” in Schapera and Farrington, eds. and trans., *Cape Hottentots*, 281-3; John Barrow, *An Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa, in the Years 1797 and 1798*, 2 vols. (London: Cadell and Davies, 1801, 1804), 1:220.

Over time, Europeans also identified a phonological boundary between these speaking practices. Early on, they had become convinced that click-sounds (explosive consonants) represented a unique feature of the ‘Hottentot’ language. For instance, in the early eighteenth century, Kolb declared that this language “*has nothing in common with any other known language....* The pronunciation...depends on shocks, unnatural rustlings of the tongue against the palate, and

⁸³ T. R. Trautmann, *Languages and Nations: The Dravidian Proof in Colonial Madras* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 13, 15, 20.

strange vibrations and inflections that are nearly impossible to imitate.”⁸⁴ Moreover, although European observers learned that different ‘Hottentot’ groups used somewhat different speaking practices,⁸⁵ they claimed that all modes of communication that included these sounds formed part of a single ‘Hottentot’ language. Thunberg thus remarked in the 1780s that “the language of the Hottentots...includes dialects that are noticeably different from one another. However, in almost all of them one can hear a certain rattling, clapping, or clicking....”⁸⁶ Having identified click-sounds as the most important phonological marker of the ‘Hottentot’ language, Europeans tried to assess whether the ‘Caffres’ used similar sounds. At first, this possibility was categorically denied. Referring to the ‘Caffre’ communities of “Terra de Natal,” Kolb claimed that “[they] do not smack their tongue against the roof of the mouth when they speak.”⁸⁷ Similar information reached the Cape from the Orange River, where Europeans learned in 1762 and 1779, respectively, that the “[Briquas]...spoke a language that was very different from that of the Namacquas [Hottentots]” because “in this language no clicks of the tongue are heard...”⁸⁸ Encounters with ‘Caffres’ in the Eastern Cape frontier region suggested less radical differences. For instance, the Beutler expedition of 1752 explained that the difference was not that the ‘Caffres’ did not use click-sounds at all but that “they do not cluck in the same manner as the

⁸⁴ Kolb, *Description*, 50-1. My translation and emphasis.

⁸⁵ In 1655, a Company expedition traveled into the interior where they came across people who spoke not quite like the other ‘Hottentots.’ Five years later, another expedition “fell in with a certain small poor people” whose “pronunciation is somewhat different...” See Moodie, ed., *Record I*, Journal of Commander Van Riebeeck, 2-3 April 1655, 59; *Ibid.*, 14 Dec 1660, 224.

⁸⁶ Carl Peter Thunberg, *Karl Peter Thunberg's Reise durch einen Theil von Europa, Afrika und Asien, hauptseachlich in Japan, in den Jahren 1770 bis 1779*, trans. Christian Heinrich Grosfurb, Vol. I, Parts 1 and 2 (Berlin: Haude und Spener, 1792), 2:61.

⁸⁷ Kolb, *Description*, 156-7. My translation.

⁸⁸ E.C. Godée Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen in Zuid-Afrika in de Hollandse tid. Deel II. Tochten naar het Noorden 1686-1806* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1916), Aan de WelEdelen Gestr. Heere, Rijk Tulbagh..., Beneffens den Edelen Agtbaren Raad van Politie, door de burgers Etc., 18 Aug 1762, 53; E.E. Mossop, ed., *The Journal of Hendrik Jacob Wikar (1779), The Journals of Jacobus Coetsé Jansz (1760) and Willem van Reenen (1791)*, trans. E.E. Mossop and A. W. Van der Horst (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck, 1935), Wikar, 31 Dec.1779, 142-3, footnote 124.

Hottentots...”⁸⁹ Writing more than a decade later, Thunberg and Sparrman specified that the crucial issue was the frequency with which the two groups used click-sounds. “The language of the Caffres...,” they remarked, “employs clicks only in a couple of words...[and] is not clogged with that clacking of the palate, as the Hottentot language is.”⁹⁰ Although the multilingualism among the populations of the Northern and Eastern Cape frontier regions produced some confusion,⁹¹ European commentators eventually concluded on the basis of these lexicological and phonological comparisons that the two groups used distinct languages. Thus, Beutler’s men explained in 1752 that “[the Caffre language] differs completely from that of the Hottentots...”⁹² By the turn of the century, it was widely accepted that the two groups were separated by a linguistic boundary. The two languages, Lichtenstein noted at the time, “are as different as Dutch and Italian.”⁹³

Thus, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment impulse to establish clear boundaries on the basis of skin color, language, and other cultural markers had led to the identification of ‘Hottentots’ and ‘Caffre’ as two distinct races. As a result of this development, the term ‘Caffre’ was no longer associated with all the inhabitants of Southern Africa (as the Portuguese had previously used the term) but only with those inhabitants who possessed black

⁸⁹ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, Journaal Haupt, 2 Jul 1752, 310. My translation.

⁹⁰ Thunberg, *Reise*, 2:61-2; Anders Sparrman, *Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*, 2 vols. (London: Robinson, 1785), 1:228. My translation.

⁹¹ More on this in chapter five. But note here the remarks of Company deserter Wikar who claimed in 1779 that, while the “Gyzikoa” usually used a “form of speech like that of the Nomakkoa Hottentots,” many of them, and especially the older people of the community, “can also speak the Blicquoas’ [Briqua’] language...” Several years later, Lichtenstein noticed that the reverse was also true. “The Coran [Korana ‘Hottentot’] language...,” he remarked, “is understood by many of the Beetjuans [Tswana], and spoken by them with considerable fluency...” See Mossop, ed., *The Journal*, Wikar, 142-3, and footnote 124; H. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa, In the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806*, 2 vols., trans. A. Plumptre (London: H. Colburn, 1812-15), 2:294.

⁹² Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, Journaal Haupt, 2 Jul 1752, 310. See also E.C. Godée Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen in Zuid-Afrika in de Hollandse tijd. Deel IV. Tochten in het Kafferland 1776-1805* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1932), *Reiseaanteekeningen van F. von W. [Franz Carel Philip Freiherr von Winckelmann]*, 23 Sep 1788 to early 1789, 63.

⁹³ H. Lichtenstein, *About the Bechuanas* (1807), trans. And ed. Dr. O. H. Spohr (Cape Town: Balkema, 1973), 79. See also Barrow, *Account*, 1:219.

skin coloration, spoke the still poorly defined ‘Caffre’ language, and resided somewhere north of the Orange River and east of the Keiskamma Rivers.

‘Caffres’ and ‘True Negroes’

European naturalists were not satisfied with this elaboration of the ‘Hottentot–Caffre’ dichotomy. Driven by what Michel Foucault has called the “taxonomic impulse,” they tried to identify the northward extension of the ‘Caffres’ by differentiating them from so-called ‘true Negroes.’ In doing so, they reworked the ‘Caffre–Negro’ dichotomy that first emerged when the Portuguese started to distinguish between ‘Caffres’ and ‘Negros’ (blacks) in the sixteenth century.

In the context of the Northern Cape region, Gordon had already identified the “Briquas” or “Bitjoana” (Tswana) as ‘Caffres’ in 1779.⁹⁴ Drawing on information collected by the British colonial official Pieter Jan Truter, Englishman John Barrow seconded Gordon’s opinion at the turn of the century, declaring, “That the Booshuanas [Tswana] are of the same race of people as the Kaffers on the seacoast is a position that will scarcely admit of a doubt.”⁹⁵ Moreover, Barrow and German-born naturalist Heinrich Lichtenstein believed that these ‘Tswana-Caffres’ inhabited a region “extend[ing] from the river Kuruman...thirty or forty days’ journey northwards” or “between latitude 20 and 25 degrees south and between 41 and 48 degrees east.”⁹⁶ The same type of classification occurred in the Eastern Cape region. For example, the survivors of the

⁹⁴ Gordon, *Journal*, Camdeni [Kamdanie], 5 Jan 1779, as quoted Cullinan, *Gordon*, 68. At this time, Gordon also discarded the ‘Hottentot’ word “Briqua” for the term “Bitjoana” (Tswana) which, as he and others claimed, the people used to describe themselves. See Gordon, *Journal*, 28 Oct 1779, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 112-113; see also J. Barrow, “An Account of a Journey to Leetakoo, the Residence of the Chief of the Booshuana Nation, Being the Remotest Point in the Interior of Southern Africa to Which Europeans have hitherto Penetrated,” in J. Barrow, *A Voyage to Cochinchina in the Years 1792 and 1793* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1806), 387; Lichtenstein, *Bechuanas*, 63.

⁹⁵ Barrow, “An Account,” 402.

⁹⁶ Barrow, *Account*, 2:118; Lichtenstein, *Bechuanas*, 63-65; Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 2:324-5, 1:299.

Grosvenor shipwreck classified the Mpondo and Bomvana polities they encountered as “Coffrees [Caffres]” in 1782.⁹⁷ Six years later, Dutch East India Company official Franz Winckelmann argued that “the Tambucki [Thembu]...are different tribes of Caffres.”⁹⁸ Barrow and Colonel Collins seconded this statement, the latter noting in 1809 that “The Tambookees are...in every respect the same people as the Kaffers.”⁹⁹ Around the same time, Lichtenstein and the Dutch colonial administrator Ludwig Alberti advanced more ambitious theories regarding the eastward expansion of the ‘Caffres.’ While Lichtenstein argued that, in the Eastern Cape region, “the more distant tribes of Caffres” included the “Mambuckis” (Mpondo), “Abbatoanas” (Mthethwa?) and the “Maduanas” (?), Alberti claimed that the people living “in the vicinity of Rio de la Goa” were also “proper Kaffirs.”¹⁰⁰

These conclusions gave rise to new estimates of the geographical dimension of ‘Caffraria.’ In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Barrow insisted that “the belt of country...inhabited by the Kaffers” stretched “across the southern part of Africa,” its width extending in the west from 20° to 25° south latitude and in the east from 24° to 32° south latitude.¹⁰¹ About the same time, Lichtenstein described this region as a large triangle (of sorts) that covered much of southern Africa. As he explained:

I consider all the tribes...southward from Quilwa [Kilwa], and eastward from the colony of the Cape, very decidedly as a great nation...[and] would include them all under the general name of Caffres. I venture to place the western boundary of their territory at the meridian of Cape Agulhas; for in the interior of the country

⁹⁷ P. R. Kirby, ed., *Source Book on the Wreck of the Grosvenor East Indiaman* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1953), 33, 36, 38, 39, and 50 endnote 9. Note that the ship wrecked on the coast between the Mzimvubu and the Mtamvuna Rivers in August 1782.

⁹⁸ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen IV*, *Reiseaanteekeningen Winckelmann*, 1788-89 [23 Sep 1788 to early 1789], 92. My translation.

⁹⁹ Barrow, *Account*, 1:201; Moodie, ed., *Record IV*, Colonel Collins, Supplement to the relations of a Journey into the Country of the Bosjesman and Caffre People, 1809, 8; *Ibid.*, Colonel Collins, Notes made on a journey to the southern branches of the River T'Ky, and through Kaffraria, 1809, 43.

¹⁰⁰ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:298-300; Ludwig Alberti, *Ludwig Alberti's Account of the Tribal Life & Customs of the Xhosa in 1807*, trans. William Fehr (Cape Town: Balkema, 1968), 6, 9.

¹⁰¹ Barrow, *Account*, 1:283, 2:118-119.

Caffre tribes extend to this longitude. From thence the line which divides them from the Korana Hottentots, the Bosjesmans, and the colony of the Cape, must take an oblique direction to the southeast, till it comes to the sources of the Orange-river, whence it descends directly south....¹⁰²

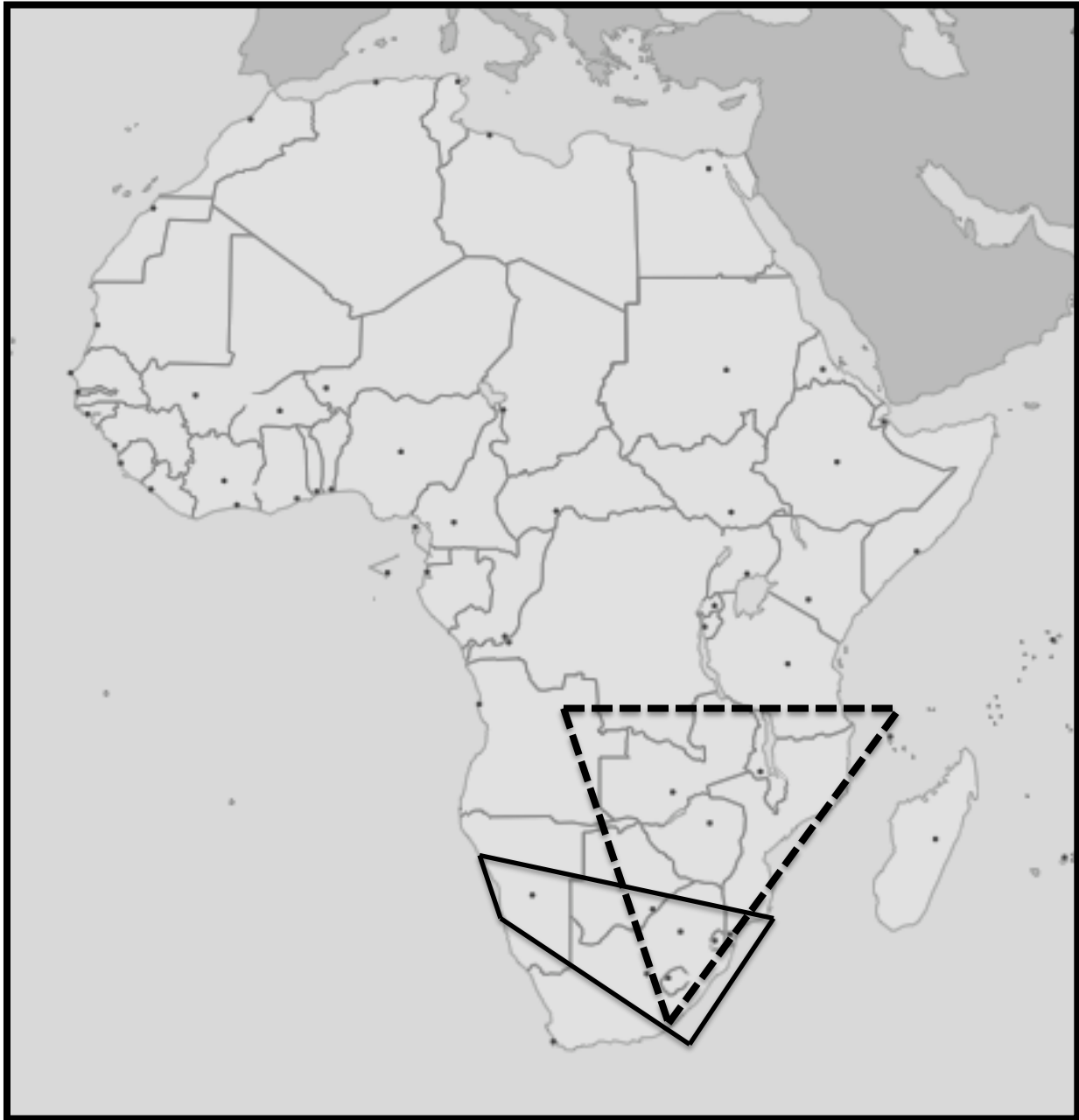


Figure 6. 'Caffraria' according to Barrow and Lichtenstein. Note that Barrow's description is represented by the solid-line irregular quadrilateral, whereas Lichtenstein's description matches the dashed-line triangle. Source: author.

¹⁰² Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:243.

Following the prevailing theories of racial classification and comparative philology, European naturalists focused on skin color and language to determine who was and was not part of the ‘Caffre’ race. Thus, Barrow identified the “Booshuanas” (Tswana) as “this happy race of Kaffers” at the turn of the century because they “are black” although “not, like the eastern Kaffers, invariably black...”¹⁰³ Those in the Eastern Cape region made similar observations. For instance, Franz von Winckelmann noted in 1788 that the “Caffres...have a black complexion that tends toward the red, although many can be found among them who are, like the Mozambicans, entirely black.”¹⁰⁴ Other commentators agreed, describing the skin color of the ‘Caffres’ as ranging from “black as jet” to “nearly black,” “jet black” to “deep bronze,” and “pale black” to “blackish brown.”¹⁰⁵

These naturalist explorers believed that the ‘Caffres’ were also unified by a common language. In the context of the Northern Cape region, Gordon explained in 1779 that the language of the Batswana “is the same as the Caffers [of the Eastern Cape region]...”¹⁰⁶ Observers of the time also advanced similar views about the various communities between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay. Thus, Lichtenstein reported in the early 1800s that the Thembu spoke “exactly the same” language as the “Koossas” (Xhosa).¹⁰⁷ Regarding the “Maduanas” (?), who lived beyond the Mzimvubu River, he added that “There was scarcely any difference between their language and that of the Koossas [Xhosa].”¹⁰⁸ Colonel Collins reinforced these claims, explaining in 1809 that the language underwent only “some changes” as one traveled

¹⁰³ Barrow, “An Account,” 384, 400, 402.

¹⁰⁴ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen IV*, *Reiseaanteekeningen Winckelmann, 1788-89* [23 Sep 1788 to early 1789], 63. My translation.

¹⁰⁵ William Paterson, *Relation de quatre yoyages dans le pays des Hottentots et dans la Caffrerie, pendant les Annees 1777, 1778 & 1779*, trans. M. de la Peyrouse (Paris: Letellier, [Engl. 1789], 1790), 142; Barrow, *Account*, 1:169, 205, 2:117; Alberti, *Account*, 20; Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:251.

¹⁰⁶ Gordon, *Journal*, Noekeis Kraal, near present-day De Beerskloof on the Orange River, 5 Nov 1779, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 116.

¹⁰⁷ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:298.

¹⁰⁸ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:298.

beyond the Thembu to the “Mambookees” (Mpondo) and the “Manduanas” (?).¹⁰⁹ About the same time, the Dutch administrator Ludwig Alberti met several emissaries from “the vicinity of Rio de la Goa” at the residence of Chief Ngqika of the Rharhabe-Xhosa.¹¹⁰ As can be gathered from his observations, this meeting convinced him that the ‘Caffre’ language extended as far as the Portuguese settlements at Delagoa Bay. “My interpreter, a Gonaqua,...,” Alberti explained, “told me that the language of these visitors was the same as that spoken by the Kaffirs, in whose company I found myself...”¹¹¹

Inspired by comparative philology, these observers established the unity of the ‘Caffre’ language on the basis of lexicological and phonological comparisons. Regarding the latter, Lichtenstein argued that “there is a certain lisp in all the Caffre dialects...[that] is produced by thrusting the point of the tongue against the gums...”¹¹² Perhaps more importantly, he believed that “all the Caffre dialects” were “full-toned, smooth, and pleasing to the ear” because they consisted primarily of words that included “simple sounds,” “two syllables,” “open vowels,” and “clear intonation of the last syllable.”¹¹³ Lexicology was also important. In 1779, Gordon suggested that, while the ‘Caffres’ of the Northern and Eastern Cape regions used different words for some things, such as *water*, they employed the same or similar words for other things.¹¹⁴ Lichtenstein’s wordlists confirmed the idea that “the principal radical words [roots]” showed “a striking conformity” between these speaking practices.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Moodie, ed., *Record IV*, Collins, Notes, 43.

¹¹⁰ Alberti, *Account*, 7. Note that Alan Smith suggests that these were traders looking for items to be sold to Europeans via Delagoa Bay. See A. Smith, “The Trade of Delagoa Bay as a Factor in Nguni Politics, 1750-1835,” in L. M. Thompson, ed., *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London: Heinmann, 1969), 178-79.

¹¹¹ Alberti, *Account*, 7.

¹¹² Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1: Appendix: Remarks upon the Language of the Koossas.

¹¹³ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1: Appendix: Remarks upon the Language of the Koossas.

¹¹⁴ Gordon, *Journal*, Near present-day Kakamas, on the Orange River, 26 Oct 1779, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 111; *Ibid.*, Kraal of the Geisiqua or Twin-Kraal people, 28 Oct 1779, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 112.

¹¹⁵ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 2:324.

TABLE III. LICHTENSTEIN'S WORDLISTS FOR 'BEEJUAN' AND 'KOOSSA.'

	'Caffre' Dialects	
	'Beejuan'	'Koossa'
A man	<i>Muhntō</i>	<i>Uhmtō</i>
Men, people	<i>Baatō</i>	<i>Gabaantō</i>
A child	<i>Unjana</i>	<i>Uhmtóána</i>
A mouth	<i>Mulumō</i>	<i>Mloomu</i>
Flesh	<i>Nama</i>	<i>Jamma</i>

Source: Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 2: Appendix No. 2: Vocabulary Of Words of the Beejuan Language; *Ibid.*, 1: Appendix: Vocabulary of Words from the Language of the Koossas.

The question remained of whether these speaking practices were mutually intelligible. Gordon provided an affirmative answer in 1779 when he claimed that, while talking to some “Briqua” (Tswana) in the language of the Xhosa, one of his interlocutors was “amazed at...my speaking Briqua...”¹¹⁶ Lichtenstein agreed. “A Koossa and a Beetjuan, meeting by chance,” he explained, “must understand each other ultimately, though perhaps slowly.”¹¹⁷ At the same time, Alberti noted that his Gonaqua interpreter, who spoke fluently the language of the ‘Caffres’ of the Eastern Cape frontier, had required less than two days of practice to be able to converse with the emissaries from “the vicinity of Rio de la Goa” in manner that was free from “possible misunderstandings.”¹¹⁸ On the basis of this evidence, these naturalists eventually concluded that, in one way or another, all ‘Caffre’ dialects were mutually intelligible. “The dialects differ in the different tribes,” Lichtenstein noted at the time, “but the most distant ones understand each other, though not always without difficulty.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Gordon, *Journal*, Kraal of the Geisiqua or Twin-Kraal people, 28 Oct 1779, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 112. See also *Ibid.*, Noekeis Kraal, 5 Nov 1779, as quoted 116.

¹¹⁷ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 2:324.

¹¹⁸ Alberti, *Account*, 7.

¹¹⁹ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:244, 297.

Importantly, these ideas convinced them that these ‘Caffre’ groups were not only distinct from the ‘Hottentots’ but also from the ‘true Negroes.’ The Portuguese had first introduced the notion that there existed a ‘Caffre–Negro’ dichotomy when they differentiated between ‘Caffres’ and ‘blacks’ (*Negros*) in the sixteenth century. The color-coded racial theories of the Enlightenment supported this notion, arguing that the differences in skin color between ‘Caffres’ and ‘true Negroes’ suggested that they belonged to distinct races.¹²⁰ Buffon, for instance, argued as early as 1749 that:

It appears that the Negroes proper are different from the Caffres, who are blacks of a different species.... The true Negroes, that is to say the blackest among the Blacks, are found in the Western region of Africa, whereas the Caffres, that is to say those less black among the Blacks, are found in the Eastern regions...¹²¹

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, European naturalists in South Africa supported this conclusion. Thus, Barrow noted in 1801 that “The Kaffers [are]...surrounded on all sides by people that differ from them in every point, in color...and in language...”¹²² Similarly, Lichtenstein claimed that skin color was “one of the strongest distinctions between the Caffre and the Negro...”¹²³ Referring to this and other markers of difference, he concluded that the ‘Caffres’ represented:

A great nation equally distinct from the Negroes and Mohammedans on one side, and from the Hottentots on the other.... This great nation var[ies] exceedingly from the other nations of Africa...[and must not be] included in any of the [other] races of mankind...¹²⁴

They explained these differences by proposing a history of migration and mixing. For instance, Barrow claimed that the history of the ‘Caffres’ and their distinctiveness from the ‘true Negroes’ in terms of skin color and language began with the arrival of “The tribes of those wandering

¹²⁰ Curran, *Anatomy*, 12.

¹²¹ Buffon, *Histoire*, 480, 519.

¹²² Barrow, *Account*, 1:211-12.

¹²³ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:243, 246.

¹²⁴ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:243, 246.

Arabs known by the name of Beduins...”¹²⁵ Agreeing in principal but differing in detail, Lichtenstein argued that “They appear to me of much more ancient descent...and nothing is adverse to the supposition that the people of the northern coasts of Africa, who were of Asiatic origin, may have been the immediate ancestors of the Caffres...”¹²⁶ By linking the ‘Caffres’ to Arab-Beduins or Asiatic peoples, both Barrow and Lichtenstein explained the perceived differences between ‘Caffres’ and ‘true Negroes’ by placing the origins of the former outside of the African continent. In so doing, they contributed to the emergence of the “Hamitic Hypothesis,” which, over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, would come to link “lighter” skin color, “better-sounding” languages and “superior” civilization among African peoples to Hamitic (non-Negro) invaders.¹²⁷ Indeed, notwithstanding the fact that Barrow’s and Lichtenstein’s ‘Caffre–Negro’ race dichotomy would later be questioned by James Prichard and Robert Knox,¹²⁸ in the first decade of the nineteenth century it helped entrench the idea that the ‘Caffres’ represented a race of people distinct from the ‘Hottentots’ and the ‘true Negroes’ in terms of their skin color and language as well as their territory and history.

‘Caffres’ as Xhosa

After 1779, the naturalist discourse about the ‘Caffre’ race received competition from a narrower, decidedly colonialist conceptualization of the ‘Caffres.’ This narrower conceptualization, which used the term ‘Caffre’ as a synonym for the Xhosa only, resulted from the increased contact between Europeans and the Xhosa due to trading and hunting journeys

¹²⁵ Barrow, *Account*, 1:211-218.

¹²⁶ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:245-6.

¹²⁷ E. R. Sanders, “The Hamitic Hypothesis; Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective,” *Journal of African History* 10:4 (1969), 521-32.

¹²⁸ James C. Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (London: Sherwood, 1836-7), 2:299; Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1850), 160.

(more than 100 made between 1735 and 1744 alone), diplomatic missions (under Beutler in 1752, Landdrosts of Stellenbosch and Swellendam in 1769–70, and Governor Plettenberg in 1778), and naturalist expeditions (by Thunberg in 1772–3 and 1773–4, Sparrman in 1775–6, Hendrik Swellengrebel Jr. in 1776, Paterson in 1777–8, and Gordon in 1777–8 and 1778–9).¹²⁹ Perhaps the most important contributing factor was the eastward expansion of the frontier farmers (Trekboers) and the simultaneous westward expansion of the Xhosa. For instance, while Beutler’s expedition of 1752 still identified “Hagelcraal” near Mossel Bay as the easternmost place inhabited by farmers, Dutch East India Company records indicate that twenty years later, some Europeans already resided east of the Camdeboo Mountains and the mouth of the Gamtoos River.¹³⁰ Wary of the frontier farmers’ uncontrolled eastward expansion and interactions with the Xhosa, the company decreed in 1770 and in 1774 that settlement beyond these places was illegal.¹³¹ However, these directives went against the interests of the land-hungry farmers who, in 1775, successfully petitioned the company for the extension of these limits to the “Visch River” and the Bushmans River respectively.¹³²

The eastward movement of the farmers was mirrored by the westward expansion of the Xhosa. Thus, in 1772, Thunberg met “Caffres [Xhosa]” as far west as the Gamtoos River,

¹²⁹ For ‘more than 100 trading and hunting journeys,’ see William Kelleher Storey, *Guns, Race, and Power in Colonial Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 36. For diplomatic missions, see Moodie, ed., *Record III*, Report Heemraden of Stellenbosch and Swellendam, 7 Feb 1770; for Beutler and Plettenberg, see above. For naturalist expeditions: see above for Thunberg, Sparrman, Paterson and Gordon; for Swellengrebel, see Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen IV*, Pieter Cloeten, Journaal van eenen landtogt die den ondergeteekende met den Weledelen heer Mr Hendk. Swellengrebel in den jare 1776 gedaan heeft.

¹³⁰ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, Journaal Haupt, 5 Apr 1752, 272; Donald Moodie, ed., *The Record; Or, A Series of Official Papers Relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Tribes of South Africa. Part III, 1769-1795* (Cape Town: A. S. Robertson, 1838), Report Heemraden of Stellenbosch and Swellendam, 7 Feb 1770, 2; *Ibid.*, Letter from Governor Tulbagh to the Landrost of Swellendam, 5 Jun 1770, 7; *Ibid.*, Letter from the Landdrost of Swellendam to the Cape Government, 28 Oct 1772, 17.

¹³¹ Moodie, ed., *Record III*, Proclamation, Ryk Tulbagh, Governor of Cape of Good Hope, 26 April 1770, 6; *Ibid.*, Resolution of Governor and Council, 5 April 1774, 24.

¹³² Moodie, ed., *Record III*, Resolution of Council 11 Jul 1775, 46-50.

making him believe that the river represented the unofficial “boundary line of Caffreland.”¹³³ Certainly toward the end of the 1770s, the Xhosa occupied areas in close proximity to the farmers, which explains why Gordon encountered the homesteads of several “Caffer [Xhosa] chiefs” near present-day Cookhouse on the Great Fish River in December 1777 and “many Caffer [Xhosa] kraals and herds of cattle” along the Bushmans River in January 1778.¹³⁴ In fact, by 1778, farmers and Xhosa lived in such close proximity to each other that Company Governor Joachim van Plettenberg felt compelled to meet with several Xhosa chiefs in order to negotiate a boundary agreement, which, if the Dutch records can be trusted, established the Great Fish River (*Rio do Infante*) as the official line of demarcation between the two groups.¹³⁵

The trend among Europeans to associate the term ‘Caffre’ narrowly with the Xhosa intensified after 1779 when the two groups began to compete with each other for land, cattle, and other resources, commencing a century of warlike conflicts (five of which took place between 1779 and 1820).¹³⁶ This context explains why the colonists began to attach decidedly negative meanings to the term ‘Caffre.’ Both the Frenchman François Le Vaillant and the Englishman John Barrow observed this tendency among Cape residents in the 1780s and 1790s, respectively. As Le Vaillant remarked: “The report of this Nation being barbarous and bloody...was industriously circulated by the Colonists.”¹³⁷ Barrow agreed, noting that “it is a common idea, industriously kept up in the colony, that the Kaffers are a savage, treacherous, and cruel

¹³³ Thunberg, *Reise*, 1:180, 186-7.

¹³⁴ Gordon, *Journal*, 5 and 12 Dec 1777, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 40-41, 43; and *Ibid.*, 6-7, 9-13 Jan 1778, in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 50-53.

¹³⁵ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen IV*, Olof Godlieb de Wet, *Dagverhaal van de landryse, door den Weledelen Gestrengen Heer Mr. Joachim Baron van Plettenberg*, 15 Oct 1778, 43-46; Gordon, *Journal*, 15 Oct 1778, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 62; Moodie, ed., *Record IV*, Statement of Abram Carel Greyling, 29 Dec 1836, 9-10, footnote 1.

¹³⁶ In the period under review, these hostilities broke out in 1779, 1789, 1799, 1811 and 1818, see Noël Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

¹³⁷ François Le Vaillant, *Travels from the Cape of Good-Hope, into the Interior Parts of Africa*, 2 vols., trans. Elizabeth Helme (London: W. Lane, 1790), 1:354.

people.”¹³⁸ The same context also explains why they began to attach a smaller territorial meaning to the term ‘Caffre’ (Figure 7). For instance, the Dutch official Ludwig Alberti explained in the first decade of the nineteenth century that the “country occupied by the Kaffirs [Xhosa]...is bounded in the East by the River Key, in the West by the Great Fish River, in the South by the sea, and in the North by a range of mountains...”¹³⁹ At this time, Barrow identified the people of Chief Ngqika (Rharhabe) and Chief Hintsa (Gcaleka) as the principal inhabitants of this narrow version of ‘Caffreland.’¹⁴⁰ All those Xhosa who resided elsewhere were referred to as “emigrant Caffres [Xhosa]” or “traveling Caffres [Xhosa].”¹⁴¹ Colonists included Xhosa communities who had migrated to the Northern Cape region among the ranks of these so-called emigrants or travelers; communities resided near Roggeveld and the Orange River in 1805.¹⁴² However, in the eyes of the colonists, the most notorious emigrants were those Xhosa communities—Gqunukwebe, Ntinde, Gwali, Mbalu, Dange, and Ndlambe—who lived west of the Great Fish River in contravention of the agreement of 1778.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Barrow, *Account*, 1:196.

¹³⁹ Alberti, *Account*, 13-14.

¹⁴⁰ Barrow, *Account*, 1:202.

¹⁴¹ Barrow, *Account*, 1:202; Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:193, 222; Moodie, ed., *Record IV*, Collins, Supplement, 1809, 8-9.

¹⁴² Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 2:175, 225-7. One of their leaders was called Danster (“Nzwane” or “Nozi”) and may have been a brother of Ndlambe. The other two leaders, one of whom may have been called “Thole,” were apparently nephews of Ndlambe. In addition to Lichtenstein, see also Elizabeth Anderson, “A History of the Xhosa of the Northern Cape 1795–1879,” *M.A. Thesis* (University of Cape Town, 1987).

¹⁴³ Lichtenstein, *Travels*, 1:292; Hermann Giliomee, “The Eastern Cape Frontier, 1770-1812,” in Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society* (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), 435-6.



Figure 7. 'Caffraria' of the Xhosa. Source: author.

Conclusion and Consequences

As a result of these developments, there existed two discourses about the 'Caffres' at the turn of the eighteenth century. Whereas the colonialist discourse used the term 'Caffre' as a shorthand for the Xhosa only, the naturalist discourse identified the 'Caffres' as racial category

that was distinct from the ‘Hottentots’ and the ‘true Negroes’ in terms of their skin color and language and which extended over much of southern Africa. The significance of this distinction becomes clear once we realize that the Eastern Cape missionaries, although they worked primarily among the ‘Caffres’ as in the Xhosa people, based their ideas about the ‘Caffre’ language community and its geographical extension on the naturalist discourse about the ‘Caffre’ race.

The evidence suggests that the many of the missionaries who arrived in South Africa in the first half of the nineteenth century were familiar with the writings of Barrow, Lichtenstein, Le Vaillant, and Paterson. For instance, in 1821, WMS missionary Barnabas Shaw indicated that he was well aware of the writings of these naturalists.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, the evidence suggests that the missionaries were not only familiar with these works, but that these works influenced their views about the ‘Caffres’ and ‘Caffre’ language in important ways. For instance, in his book *Memorials in South Africa* (1840), Shaw referenced Barrow in part of his description of the ‘Caffre’ race and language. As he explained:

The Kaffirs are a numerous race of men.... This appellation...is applied by the Dutch and English colonists to the Amakosae tribe exclusively; but by Barrow... and other travelers, it is extended to the Tambookies and neighboring hordes.... The [Kaffir] language...is radically the same as the Bechuana.¹⁴⁵

Similarly, Stephen Kay quoted Barrow’s conclusions directly as part of his own assessment of the ‘Caffre’ race and language community. As part of his work *Travels and Researches in Caffraria* (1833), he remarked that “‘Surrounded on all sides,’ says Barrow, ‘by a people that differ from them in every point, in color...and language, it would be absurd to consider them

¹⁴⁴ *WMN*, 1 May 1821, 68. See also John Philip, *Researches in South Africa; Illustrating the Civil, Moral, and Religious Condition of the Native Tribes*, 2 vols. (London: J. Duncan, 1828), 1:xvi; 53-55, 61, 82-5, 93-101, 189, 271, 338, 361; 2:34; 43; 64; 138; 203; 216; 231; 269-75; Kay, *Travels*, v, 62, 92, 107-8, 157, 187, 198, 201, 244, 250, 264, 478, 506; William Boyce, *Notes on South African Affairs from 1834 to 1838* (Grahamstown: Aldum and Harvey, 1838), iii-v; Shell, ed., *JLJ*, 18 Aug 1835, 417-8.

¹⁴⁵ Barnabas Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1840), 56-7.

indigenous to the small spot they now possess.... The Kaffer tongue...appears to be the remnant of something far beyond that of a savage nation”¹⁴⁶ It stands to reason that the naturalist discourse was most influential in the period before the missionaries had opportunities to collect their own information on the indigenous populations and their speaking practices. Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that it may have provided the basis for Wesleyan missionary William Shaw’s initial assessment of the extension of the ‘Caffre’ language. Having arrived only in late 1820, Shaw declared as early as 1823 that the “multitudes of untutored pagans” who resided between Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay “are evidently of the same origin, practicing similar customs, and speaking a language, which, notwithstanding very considerable differences in dialect, is doubtless substantially the same.”¹⁴⁷

As these examples suggest, the naturalist discourse about the ‘Caffre’ race had a significant impact on the Eastern missionaries’ initial conceptualization of the ‘Caffre’ language community and its geographical extension. However, it is important to recognize that the influence of these preexisting naturalist ideas is not sufficient to explain why the Eastern Cape missionaries became so attached to the notion of a broad ‘Caffre’ language community in the first half of the nineteenth century. This is because the American missionaries who arrived in the Natal-Zululand region in 1835, although they too were familiar with the writings of these eighteenth-century naturalists,¹⁴⁸ distanced themselves from this idea when they rejected William Shaw’s proposal in 1854. Thus, in order to gain a more complete understanding of the Eastern Cape and American missionaries’ conflicting discourses about language in South Africa, it is important to consider several other factors, including people’s experiences with the region’s

¹⁴⁶ Kay, *Travels*, 107-8; Barrow, *Account*, 1:211-12, 218.

¹⁴⁷ *WMM*, Apr 1824, 277.

¹⁴⁸ D. J. Kotzé, ed., *Letters of the American Missionaries, 1835-1838* (Cape Town: The Van Riebeeck Society, 1950), George Champion to Professor Silliman, Cape Town, 18 May 1835, 58.

indigenous speaking practices and the influence of preexisting African ideas about the relationship between language and identity in the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions. In subsequent chapters, we will explore these factors and their influence on the creation and evolution of language discourse in the region.

CHAPTER III

The Eastern Cape Missionaries and the ‘Caffre’ Language as a Speech Community, 1800–1853

Scholars have traditionally divided the history of the region between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay into convenient binaries such as the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions, Southern and Northern Nguni peoples, or Xhosa and Zulu languages. However, prior to the mid-nineteenth century, neither Europeans nor Africans thought or acted according to these binaries. As previously shown, in the eighteenth century, European hunters and naturalists traveled beyond the borders of the Cape Colony to the environs of Port Natal without organizing into binaries the regions they had traversed, the people they had met, or the speaking practices they had heard. Similarly, in the first decade of the eighteenth century, Africans from Delagoa Bay visited Chief Ngqika of the Rharhabe-Xhosa without either of the two parties thinking of the other as Northern or Southern Nguni or as speakers of wholly different languages.¹ Between 1800 and 1850, people of European and African descent continued to circulate more or less freely in this region, defying the geographic, ethnographic, and linguistic boundaries that were slowly beginning to emerge. Indeed, as this chapter will show with the help of several case studies, more often than has hitherto been realized, Europeans and Africans moved from the Eastern Cape region to Natal-Zululand and vice versa, and, more significantly, used their skills in the speaking practices of one region in order to communicate successfully with the people of the other region. In so doing, these people and their experiences, impressions, and testimonies of the ‘Caffre’ language as a single speech community provided weighty support for the Eastern Cape missionaries’ idea that the speaking practices of the people residing between the Cape

¹ For details, refer to pages 82 and 175.

Colony and Delagoa Bay were mutually intelligible and, thus, formed part of a single ‘Caffre’ language.

Jakob Msimbiti (Hlambamanzi)

Perhaps the first interpreters who made the journey from the Eastern Cape to the Natal-Zululand region were the two individuals who accompanied William Owen’s naval expedition to Southeast Africa in 1822. We know little of one interpreter, dubbed “Fire” by the Europeans who formed part of this group. More is known of the second interpreter, who was called Jacob Msimbiti and nicknamed “Hlambamanzi [the one who crossed water].”² Having grown up in the Xhosa polity of Chief Ndlambe,³ he entered the service of a trekboer on the frontier, which was not uncommon in the early decades of the nineteenth century.⁴ In about 1820, he came into conflict with British colonial law, which had become more draconian towards the Xhosa in the aftermath of the Fifth Frontier War (1818-9). Arrested for “trespassing” at the frontier and/or cattle-raiding, he found himself imprisoned at Robben Island by the middle of 1822, when Captain William Owen of the Royal Navy was preparing a surveying voyage of the southeastern African coastline.⁵ As Thomas Boteler, a member of this voyage, explained:

As we might probably have an opportunity of communicating with the natives during our survey of the Kaffer coast, Captain Owen, on application to the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, obtained from the prison on Robben Island six

² The spelling of his names varies in the sources and includes ‘Yacob’ and ‘Jackot’ as well as ‘Sumbiti’ and ‘Soembitchi.’

³ Rajend Mesthrie, “Words across Worlds: Aspects of Language Contact and Language Learning in the Eastern Cape, 1800-1850,” *African Studies* 57:1 (1998), 21.

⁴ Mesthrie, “Words,” 21.

⁵ William C. Holden, *History of the Colony of Natal, South Africa* (London: Alexander Heylin, 1855), 46; Joseph Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country* (London: Stanford, 1857), 277; William Owen, *Narrative of Voyages to Explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia, and Madagascar; Performed by H. M. Ships Leven and Barracouta, under the Direction of Captain W. F. W. Owen, R. N.*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1833); Thomas Boteler, *A Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery to Africa and Arabia, Performed by His Majesty's Ships Leven and Barracouta, from 1821 to 1826, Under the Command of Capt. F. W. Owen, R.N.*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1835).

Kaffers as interpreters.... They were mostly fine-looking men; two of them, Yacob and Fire, indeed remarkably so...Yacob had been a chief in his own country, and Fire a warrior.⁶

Owen was not impressed with his interpreters' ability to translate into English or Dutch. "Only one of these, named Jackot [Jacob], spoke a little Dutch," Owen remarked at the time, "the others nothing but their native tongue.... They entirely failed as interpreters..."⁷ While at Delagoa Bay, Owen and his men made contact with the the local Tembe and Mabhudu people, as well as the "warlike Kaffers, called Zoolos, ... [whom] the people of Delagoa call...Hollontotes..."⁸ Once again, Owen was disappointed with his interpreters' ability to translate from the languages of these people into English or Dutch, for when they had an "interview with the Hollontontes" conducted "through the medium of the interpreters..." the latter's performance had been "very bad."⁹ However, over time, Owen came to believe that, although Jacob and the other interpreters were not adept at translating, they were able to communicate with these groups in their own language. Owen may have been led to this belief when he witnessed "Jackot, when one day on shore [at Delagoa Bay], persuad[ing] a native...to try his assegay at a small tree, which he did..."¹⁰ When two other 'Caffre' interpreters later "deserted" to join the local people of Delagoa Bay, Owen became convinced that the similarities of the languages had encouraged them to do so. As he explained:

Shortly after their departure, two Kaffers, whom we had embarked at the Cape of Good Hope, deserted.... We afterwards learnt that the language of these men was nearly the same as that of the Zoolos, while that of Mapoota was a sort of mixed dialect between the language of the Kaffers and that spoken about the English River; in short, they [the languages] all appeared to have the same origin, and were easily acquired by the natives.¹¹

⁶ Boteler, *Narrative*, 1:14.

⁷ Owen, *Narrative*, 1:59-60.

⁸ Owen, *Narrative*, 1:78.

⁹ Owen, *Narrative*, 1:143.

¹⁰ Owen, *Narrative*, 1:82.

¹¹ Owen, *Narrative*, 1:218.

In fact, Owen communicated precisely this information to the Eastern Cape missionaries when he returned from Delagoa Bay to the Cape Colony in April 1823. After a conversation with Owen at Cape Town, WMS missionary Barnabas Shaw explained that, “The language of the Delagoas is the same as that of the Caffrees.... There is, no doubt, a difference of dialect, but they can converse so as to be understood.”¹²

Moreover, the idea that these languages were mutually intelligible encouraged Owen, while at Port Elizabeth in June 1823, to supply F. G. Farewell’s first commercial expedition to Delagoa Bay not only with “local descriptions” but also with “two Kaffers [Jacob and Fire] as linguists.”¹³ On this journey to Delagoa Bay, Farewell must have stopped at Port Natal, because several indigenous people later remembered that Farewell was accompanied by a Xhosa interpreter whom they knew by the name of “Nhlamba” (short for Hlambamanzi).¹⁴ However, the journey did not proceed smoothly; Fire was accidentally killed and Jacob, after having been assaulted by one of the English crew, eventually deserted Farewell’s expedition at St. Lucia.¹⁵ From there, Jacob made his way to Shaka kaSenzangakhona’s Zulu kingdom, where Farewell and others encountered him again in 1824.¹⁶ By that time, he was already “in possession of a large establishment and many wives,” with whom he fathered at least two sons, “Olili” and “Mnkunzi.”¹⁷ More importantly, Jacob’s language and that of the local communities in Natal-Zululand must have been similar enough for him to be able to gain Shaka’s confidence and serve as his interpreter in his dealings with the English merchants at Port Natal between 1824 and 1828. As Owen noted, “when Mr. Farewell formed his settlement at Port Natal, he found that

¹² *WMM*, Nov 1823, 760-1.

¹³ Owen, *Narrative*, 1:253; Boteler, *Narrative*, 1:227; Shooter, *Kafirs*, 277.

¹⁴ *JSA*, Mbovu kaMtshumayeli (1903), 3:25; *Ibid.*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:73.

¹⁵ Owen, *Narrative*, 2:222; Boteler, *Narrative*, 2:305; Shooter, *Kafirs*, 278.

¹⁶ Owen, *Narrative*, 2:222; Boteler, *Narrative*, 2:305; Shooter, *Kafirs*, 277.

¹⁷ Owen, *Narrative*, 2:222; Boteler, *Narrative*, 2:305; *JSA*, Mbovu kaMtshumayeli (1903), 3:25.

Jackot was with Chaka, with whom he had become a great favorite, serving as interpreter, with the rank of ‘Chief’ ...”¹⁸

Interestingly, the Eastern Cape missionaries may have had direct contact with Jacob, for in 1828 and 1831, the Zulu kings Shaka and Dingane sent Jacob, along with other Zulu ambassadors and the Natal trader John Cane, to the Cape Colony.¹⁹ If Jacob accompanied the first journey all the way to the Colony, he must have met the WMS missionary William Shrewsbury at Butterworth station, for the latter claimed to have encountered the party from Zululand there in 1828.²⁰ In either case, it is a matter of record that Jacob accompanied the second embassy to Grahamstown in 1831 and, thus, had another opportunity to directly influence the Eastern Cape missionaries’ ideas about the extension of the ‘Caffre’ language community.²¹

George Cyrus and Richard Hulley

Several other people, who spoke more or less fluently the “dialect” of the Eastern Cape frontier, also served as interpreters in the Natal-Zululand region in this early period. One of these individuals was George Cyrus.²² Born England in 1811, the nine-year-old Cyrus arrived in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa in 1820 as part of Sephton’s settler party (which also included the Wesleyan minister William Shaw). He attended the Wesleyan school at Salem in

¹⁸ Owen, *Narrative*, 2:222. See also Boteler, *Narrative*, 2:305 *JSA*, Melaphi ka Magaye (1905), 3:73; Nathaniel Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa, Descriptive of the Zoolus, Their Manners, Customs*, 2 vols. (London: Edward Churton, 1836), 1:46; Allen F. Gardiner, *Narrative of a Journey to the Zoolu Country, in South Africa. By Captain Allen F. Gardiner, R.N. Undertaken in 1835* (London: William Crofts, 1836), 37-8; KCAL, MS1487a, Diary of Henry Francis Fynn, 71, 74, 77, 84.

¹⁹ Isaacs, *Travels*, 1: 258-9, 263, 352; Shooter, *Kafirs*, 316-9.

²⁰ MMS/SA/mf 301, W. Shaw to the Cmte of the WMS, Wesleyville, 11 Oct 1828.

²¹ Percival R. Kirby, ed., *Andrew Smith and Natal: Documents Relating to the Early History of that Province* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1955), 70-1.

²² I have to thank the *1820 Settler* facebook community for supplying some of the information on George Cyrus. Special thanks to Beverly Young and Nolene Lossau Sproat.

the Albany District²³ before moving to William Shaw's mission station at Wesleyville among the Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa, where he and another English youth named Aaron James Aldum were trained "as Government Interpreters" between 1828 and 1830.²⁴ Cyrus's language skills must have evolved well at Wesleyville, for on April 7, 1830, he served as interpreter in a legal case between a Xhosa and a Khoikhoi in the Somerset Circuit Court.²⁵ Moreover, at about this time, he composed or translated one of the hymns that became part of the Wesleyan hymnal *Le yincwadi yamaculo okuvunywa gamaxosa ezikolweni zaba-Wesley* (1835).²⁶ Perhaps most importantly, he joined Allen F. Gardiner, formerly a captain in the Royal Navy, who traveled overland from the Eastern Cape region to Natal-Zululand in 1835. As Gardiner noted upon leaving Grahamstown on December 12, 1834, "With two waggons properly appointed, thirty oxen, and seven horses, accompanied by a young man named George Cyrus as an interpreter, we commenced this long journey..."²⁷ For the next twelve months or so, Cyrus served as Gardiner's interpreter in the latter's conversations with the indigenous communities residing in this region, including the Ntinde Chief Tshatshu,²⁸ the Mpondo Chief Faku,²⁹ the Thembu Chief Vadana,³⁰ a Natal chief called "Mambayendi,"³¹ and King Dingane of the Zulu.³² He also helped Gardiner communicate with one of King Dingane's tributary communities called "the Unguāni

²³ Note that Salem School was located 26 km south of Grahamstown. According to Boyce, it was "of great importance, affording a suitable place to which the Missionaries send their children for education..." See William Boyce, ed., *Memoir of the Rev. William Shaw, late General Superintendent of the Wesleyan missions in South-Eastern Africa* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1874), 210.

²⁴ MMS/SA/mf 301, W. Shaw to the Cmte of the WMS, Wesleyville, 13 June 1828. For 'Aaron James Aldum,' see *WMM*, Jul 1829, 492.

²⁵ John Ayliff, *The Journal of John Ayliff. Volume I (1821-30)*, ed. Peter Hinchliff (Cape Town: AA Balkema, 1971), Somerset, 7 Apr 1830, 93.

²⁶ Bleek, *Library*, 61.

²⁷ Gardiner, *Narrative*, 4.

²⁸ Gardiner, *Narrative*, 5-6.

²⁹ Gardiner, *Narrative*, 14, 268.

³⁰ Gardiner, *Narrative*, 253-4.

³¹ Gardiner, *Narrative*, 24-5, 174.

³² Gardiner, *Narrative*, 26, 38, 42-4, 163, 212-17, 398.

[Ngwane],” who lived as subjects among another tributary of Dingane, Chief Sobhuza of the Ngwane (Swazi), north of the Phongolo River.³³ As Gardiner explained:

They seem to be an insulated tribe.... All speak the Zoolu language.... Indeed, Umkolwāni [their chief] was highly amused at my communicating with him through an interpreter, and shrewdly observed, ‘You speak to him, and then he speaks to me’...³⁴

Given Gardiner’s continued reliance on George Cyrus in almost all of his communications with the communities residing between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay, it is very likely that it was Cyrus’s perspective that shaped Gardiner’s ideas about regional speaking practices.³⁵ This included Gardiner’s theory that, although there existed significant lexicological and phonological differences between them, “the Kafir and the Zoolu languages are very similar.”³⁶ Moreover, given Cyrus’s continued relationship with the Eastern Cape region in general and the Wesleyan Missionary Society in particular (following his return from Natal-Zululand, he served there as government interpreter and as Wesleyan schoolmaster and Bible translator in the Eastern Cape region), it is more than likely that his perspective on the relationship between the two regions’ speaking practices also informed the Eastern Cape missionaries’ idea that the ‘Caffre’ language community extended from the Cape Colony to Delagoa Bay.³⁷

Richard Brangan Hulley was another individual who traveled from the Eastern Cape to Natal-Zululand around this time.³⁸ In the company of his parents, siblings, and other settlers in

³³ Apparently this group were subjects of the Swazi King Sobhuza who at this time was a tributary of Dingane. See Gardiner, *Narrative*, 167, 169.

³⁴ Gardiner, *Narrative*, 168.

³⁵ One crucial exception was the conversation Gardiner had with an English-speaking African from Delagoa Bay who informed him that “The native language differs considerably from that spoken here [Zululand]; but not so much as to render them altogether unintelligible.” See Gardiner, *Narrative*, 200.

³⁶ Gardiner, *Narrative*, 101.

³⁷ For Cyrus as ‘government interpreter,’ see John Cenlivres Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay, with Statistics of the Colony*, ed. Joseph S. Christophers (London: Richardson, 1848), 280, 282. For his service as ‘teacher’ and ‘bible translator,’ see BSA/D1/2, Henry Dugmore, Mount Coke, 18 Jun 1842.

³⁸ I have to thank the *1820 Settler* facebook community for supplying some of the information on Richard B. Hulley. Special thanks to Marlene Hulley and Paul Tanner-Tremaine.

Richardson's party, the ten-year-old Hulley arrived in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa in 1820.³⁹ For the next decade or so, he attended Methodist Church services and frequented a rural school for settler children near the Kowie and George rivers in the Albany District where his parents owned a farm.⁴⁰ While it is possible that he had direct contact with some of the Xhosa people who lived and worked in the Albany area, it appears that he acquired proficiency in the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape region while conducting trading journeys into the Transkei area.⁴¹ He had additional opportunities to improve these skills when he and his family moved to Butterworth station, a WMS missionary outpost in Gcalekaland, sometime before 1837. By 1837, these skills recommended him to CMS missionary Francis Owen, who hired Hulley to serve as his interpreter on his mission journey to King Dingane's Zulu people. As Owen wrote on June 5, 1837:

He [Hulley] was recommended to me by the Wesleyan missionaries at Grahamstown, who gave him an excellent character. He was then at Butterworth, one of their stations in Caffreland.... He offered his services to me thro' Mr. Ayliffe, the missionary at Butterworth, who knew him perfectly well and spoke most highly of him.... He proposed to engage for three years at £100 per annum. This sum will not appear too large when I mention that in conjunction with the office of Interpreter he unites that of artizan. He has a wife and two children.⁴²

While Owen diligently practiced the "Kafir language" of the Eastern Cape region in order to be able to communicate better with the Zulu of Zululand,⁴³ Hulley used his existing skills in that language to communicate with Owen's indigenous interlocutors, including the Bhaca people they

³⁹ Richard B. Hulley was born in Bandon, Ireland, on 5 September 1810. He was accompanied by his father Richard William Hulley, his mother Anne Brangan, a brother and two sisters, as well as other 1820 settlers. See KCAL, Richard Kippen Hulley, "Reminiscences and Notes on African History" (transcribed November 1960), 4-5.

⁴⁰ Notes Anne Clarkson, obtained in private correspondence from Marlene Hulley, 3.27.2015.

⁴¹ KCAL, Hulley, *Reminiscences*, 2.

⁴² George Cory. ed., *The Diary of the Rev. Francis Owen, M.A., Missionary with Dingaan in 1837-38. Together with Extracts from the Writings of the Interpreters in Zulu, Messrs. Hulley and Kirkman* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1926), Owen to D. Coates, 5 Jun 1837, 11 note 1.

⁴³ Cory, ed., *Diary*, 5 May-12 Dec 1837, 10, 12, 16, 33, 83.

encountered near the junction of the Umzimhlaga and Umzimouto rivers⁴⁴ and the Zulu people among whom they resided between August 1837 and February 1838. Among the latter group, Hulley's language skills were in particularly high demand during Owen's frequent conversations with King Dingane.⁴⁵ As Hulley explained, "For several days the king would send for us early in the morning and until nine o'clock of each day would keep us to answer any questions that he might put..."⁴⁶ His conversations with the Zulu king intensified further when the latter asked Hulley to teach him how to read. Speaking to Owen, the King Dingane supposedly said, "I won't trouble you [Owen] as we cannot understand each other...I appoint your interpreter as my teacher."⁴⁷

Following several months of instruction, the relationship between Hulley and King Dingane ended abruptly when Piet Retief's trekboer party was killed in February of 1838. In response to this event, Hulley and Owen and their respective families left Zululand and, after a brief sojourn at Port Natal, returned to the Eastern Cape region, where Hulley's language skills continued to recommend him for work with the indigenous populations.⁴⁸ Hulley served as "local preacher" and "master of a school held in the chapel of the Wesleyans" at the Caffer's Drift Post (among the Ngqika-Xhosa) in 1839 and in similar functions at the WMS stations of Clarkebury (among the Thembu and Mfengu people) in the 1840s, Shawbury (among the Bhaca and Mfengu people) in circa 1849, and, finally, Osborn (among the Bhaca and Mfengu people) in the 1860s.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Cory, ed., *Diary*, "Account of the Rev. Owen's visit to Zululand in the year 1837, as related by Mr. R. B. Hulley, the interpreter for Mr. Owen," 172.

⁴⁵ Cory, ed., *Diary*, 11 Oct 1837, 44; *Ibid.*, 20 Oct 1837, 49.

⁴⁶ Cory, ed., *Diary*, "Account of Hulley," 173.

⁴⁷ Cory, ed., *Diary*, "Account of Hulley," 175.

⁴⁸ Cory, ed., *Diary*, "Account of Hulley," 179.

⁴⁹ James Backhouse, *Extracts from the Letters of James Backhouse, Whilst Engaged in a Religious Visit to Van Dieman's Land, New South Wales, and South Africa, Accompanied by George Washington Walker*, 2 vols. (London: Harvey and Darton, 1842), 3 April 1839, 2:59; J. W. Sauer and George M. Theal, eds., *Basutoland Records; Copies of Official Documents of Various Kinds, Vol. 3, 1862-68* (Cape town: Richards & Sons, 1883), Letter of Nehemiah Moshesh to the High Commissioner, Bethesda, Basutoland, 8 Jun 1863, 212-3.

While serving at these stations, Hulley had frequent opportunities to share with the Wesleyans and other missionaries his impressions of the ‘Caffre’ language community, including the idea that the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape and the Natal-Zululand regions were very similar.

Orson Magerman, Josph Kirkman, and Charles Brownlee

The interpreters who accompanied the American missionaries Newton Adams, Aldin Grout, and George Champion to Natal-Zululand in December 1835 shared similar impressions of the ‘Caffre’ language community.⁵⁰ All three were quasi-fluent in the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape region. For instance, Orson Magerman was of Khoikhoi descent and acquired fluency in the Xhosa speaking practices and the Cape Dutch language (a colonial corruption of Dutch) while growing up at Chumie.⁵¹ Another interpreter was Joseph Kirkman. The son of an 1820 settler, he appears to have acquired fluency in the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape region while residing at LMS missionary John Brownlee’s Buffalo station, where his parents worked as traders.⁵² Kirkman joined the American missionaries on the recommendation of Brownlee, who must have been personally acquainted with him and his language skills from living in close proximity with him for several years.⁵³ Charles Brownlee was perhaps the most well-known interpreter who served with the American missionaries at Natal-Zululand between 1835 and 1838. Born in 1822, the son of the LMS missionary John Brownlee, Charles acquired fluency in the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape region while growing up among the indigenous residents of his father’s mission stations at Chumie (circa 1820–6) and the Buffalo River (1826–31) before enrolling at Salem School in the environs of Grahamstown in August

⁵⁰ For details on the American mission to the Zulu people, see chapter six.

⁵¹ *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, Aug 1839, 409; Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, 92, footnote 9.

⁵² Charles P. Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kaffir Life and History, and Other Papers* (Lovedale: Lovedale Mission Press, 1896), 28, 32, 42, 43, 47.

⁵³ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, J. Monroe to A. Grout, Grahamstown, 30 Oct 1835, 81.

1831.⁵⁴ When Charles agreed to accompany the American missionaries, he was a thirteen-year-old pupil at Salem School and already possessed a reputation as a “good interpreter.”⁵⁵

Upon their arrival in Natal-Zululand in late 1835, Magerman, Kirkman, and Brownlee probably noticed some differences between the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions. As the American missionary George Champion noted only a few weeks after their arrival, “Our interpreters are under disadvantage in not understanding the peculiar dialect of the Zoolahs.”⁵⁶ However, they must have adapted quickly to the differences, as they continued to serve the American missionaries as interpreters for the next two years. For instance, Magerman assisted the American missionaries in their communications with the indigenous populations of Natal and Zululand until 1838.⁵⁷ Similarly, Kirkman worked with Champion at Umlazi station in Natal before moving with the same missionary across the Thukela River to Ginani station in September 1836.⁵⁸ One year later, he relocated to Temba station in order to assist missionaries Henry Venable and Alexander Wilson, who had been forced to abandon Mzilikazi’s people several months earlier.⁵⁹ Kirkman was again at Ginani in February 1838, helping Champion communicate with a messenger sent by King Dingane in the aftermath of the Piet Retief massacre.⁶⁰ Charles Brownlee also adapted well to the speaking practices of the Natal-Zululand region, assisting Champion in his communications with indigenous peoples at Ginani station.⁶¹ He was still at Ginani in February 1838 when King Dingane sent for him in

⁵⁴ Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 81.

⁵⁵ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Newton Adams to A. Grout and G. Champion, 20 Nov 1835, 83. See also *Ibid.*, John Brownlee to A. Grout, Somerset, 21 Sep 1835, 80.

⁵⁶ *Missionary Herald*, henceforth *MH*, Apr 1837, 141.

⁵⁷ *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, Aug 1839, 409.

⁵⁸ Edward C. Tabler, *Pioneers of Natal and Southeastern Africa, 1552-1878* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1977), 66; KCAL, KCM89/36/1/1, Diary of Joseph Kirkman, 1826-40, 1.

⁵⁹ Tabler, *Pioneers*, 66. For more details on the missionaries’ relocation, refer to chapter six.

⁶⁰ KCAL, KCM89/36/1/1, Diary of Kirkman, 2-3.

⁶¹ Cory, ed., *Diary*, “Account of Hulley,” 173.

order to serve as his interpreter in his dealings with Retief's party.⁶² He arrived too late to do anything to save the trekkers and, together with the other interpreters and the American missionaries, Brownlee withdrew to Port Natal and from there to the Eastern Cape region in 1838.

Importantly, these interpreters had ample opportunities to share their impressions of the 'Caffre' language community with the Eastern Cape missionaries. Following his return to the Eastern Cape region, Magerman served at the LMS station of Phillipton "in the capacity of interpreter" for the station's "Fingoes, Gonas, Caffres, and Tambookies."⁶³ Kirkman's language skills also remained in high demand and, after a brief sojourn in the Eastern Cape region, he returned with the American missionaries to Natal and Zululand in 1839 and 1841, respectively.⁶⁴

Like Magerman, Brownlee remained in the Eastern Cape region. He served as the clerk and interpreter for the Government Agent Charles Lennox Stretch at Block Drift in 1839, government commissioner to the Ngqika-Xhosa between 1847 and 1850, Fingo administrator at Fort Peddie in 1852, and again as Ngqika commissioner at Döhne Post between 1853 and 1867.⁶⁵ During this period, he stayed in contact with the Eastern Cape missionary community, providing language education and translation assistance to them, notably to his father John Brownlee, LMS missionary Richard Birt, and WMS missionary John Appleyard.⁶⁶ For instance, in 1853, he remarked to George Morgan of the BFBS, "I have...assisted Mr. Appleyard in revising portions of the Old Testament.... The Rev. Mr. Birt has the Pilgrim's Progress in manuscript, and I have

⁶² Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, G. Champion to A. Grout, Umlazi, 8 Mar 1838, 224; *Ibid.*, General Letter to Anderson, Port Elizabeth, 2 April 1838, 237; Cory., ed., *Diary*, 6 Feb 1838, 110; Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 36, 57.

⁶³ *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, Aug 1839, 409.

⁶⁴ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, 81, note 2; for the return of the American missionaries, see chapter five.

⁶⁵ Backhouse, *Extracts*, 10 and 12 Feb 1839, 7, 10; Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 3, 7, 11.

⁶⁶ Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 11, 387; *Correspondence*, Charles Brownlee to Rev. G. Morgan, Döhne, 27 Jul 1853, 20.

engaged to assist him in its revision...”⁶⁷ Perhaps most importantly, when the BFBS asked Charles Brownlee about the feasibility of Shaw’s plan to produce a single Bible translation for all the indigenous communities residing between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay, he answered in the affirmative:

The publication of an edition of the Bible suited to Zulus as well as Kafirs—may, I think, be accomplished, though many words in the two languages are different. The languages are, however, essentially the same; and there are many words in the Kafir which are now almost obsolete, and for which other words have been substituted, which are in common use among the Zulus.⁶⁸

Theophilus Shepstone

Perhaps it was Theophilus Shepstone’s experience in Natal-Zululand that provided the strongest support for the idea that the ‘Caffre’ language community extended from the Cape Colony to Delagoa Bay.⁶⁹ Born in England in 1817, Shepstone arrived in South Africa in 1820 with his father William Shepstone, a builder, lay preacher and, later, a regular missionary in the Wesleyan Missionary Society.⁷⁰ In the company of his father, Shepstone lived at several WMS stations, including Wesleyville among the Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa (1823-7), Butterworth among the Gcaleka-Xhosa and Mfengu (1827-9), and Morley among the Bomvana and Mpondo (1829-31). As a result of this experience, he acquired fluency in the indigenous speaking practices of the Eastern Cape region, a skill which recommended him to WMS missionary William Boyce in 1831. For the next three years, Shepstone lived at Buntingville station among the Mpondo, where

⁶⁷ *Correspondence*, Brownlee to Morgan, Döhne, 27 Jul 1853, 20.

⁶⁸ *Correspondence*, Brownlee to Morgan, Döhne, 8 Oct 1855, 78-9.

⁶⁹ On Shepstone’s career as interpreter and colonial administration, refer especially to Thomas McClendon, “Interpretation and Interpolation: Shepstone as Native Interpreter,” in Benjamin N. Lawrence, Emily Lynn Osborn and Richard L. Roberts, eds., *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 77-93; Thomas McClendon, *White Chief, Black Lords: Shepstone and the Colonial State in Natal, South Africa, 1845-1878* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010).

⁷⁰ Shaw, *Story*, 338.

he, Boyce, and a Xhosa interpreter known by the baptismal name John Burton translated various portions of the Bible and several hymns into the ‘Caffre’ language and, more significantly, prepared the groundbreaking *Grammar of the Kafir Language* in 1834.⁷¹ During this period, Boyce spoke highly of Shepstone’s language skills, noting in about 1832:

Theophilus Shepstone is fully competent to translate into Caffer since that language has been familiar to him since he was five years old. His command of the language, and his judgment, displayed in the selection of suitable expressions, have been much admired by intelligent natives...⁷²

The same skills recommended Shepstone for several positions in the colonial government after 1834. Thus, he served as “Caffer Interpreter” on the staffs of Governors Benjamin D’Urban, Colonel Harry Smith, and Major-General George T. Napier between 1835 and 1838, participating in the removal of some 16,000 Mfengu from Gcalekaland into the Cape Colony, peace negotiations with Chief Hintsa of the Gcaleka-Xhosa on April 29 and May 10, 1835, and the announcement of “a treaty of reciprocal trust (*Ucebo lwobukolwana o lwenziweyo Gama-Ngisi nama-Kwane*)” with Chiefs Pato, Kama, and Kobe of the Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa on June 19, 1838.⁷³ He occupied a similar position in Major Samuel Charters’ military expedition to Port Natal between late 1838 and early 1839, during which he assisted Charters in his communications with the indigenous population of Natal, as well as the Mpondo Chief Faku and his people.⁷⁴ After his return to the Eastern Cape region, he worked as a diplomatic agent among the Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa, Ndlambe-Xhosa, and Mfengu in the Fort Peddie area between 1840 and 1846; during this time, he also continued to assist the Eastern Cape missionaries in their

⁷¹ *WMM*, Sep 1832, 664; Boyce, *Grammar*, preface; MMS/SA/mf 305, William Boyce to G. Browne, Bolton [?], 3 Dec 1844. For details on John Burton, refer to chapter four.

⁷² *WMM*, Sep 1833, 661.

⁷³ *Copy of Minutes of Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry, Held at Fort Wilshire, in the Months of August and September, 1836, to Investigate and Report upon the Circumstances attendant on the Fate of the Caffer Chief Hintsa* (Cape Town: Brand’s, 1837), 91, 99; Bleek, *Library*, 85.

⁷⁴ *Proceedings of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Past and Present State of the Kafir in the District of Natal*, 6 parts (Natal: J. Archbell and Son, 1852-3), 1:58-9; McClendon, *White Chief*, 27.

Bible translation work.⁷⁵ Finally, Shepstone's language skills recommended him for the position of Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes of Natal Colony, a post he accepted in 1846 and later held under a different title (Secretary of Native Affairs) until 1878. As the WMS missionary William Holden later recalled:

T. Shepstone, Esq., was called upon to take charge of the native department—an office of no ordinary importance and responsibility, when 100,000 Kafir barbarians had to be managed.... For such an office he was well fitted by his long residence at Fort Peddie, as diplomatic agent, and his intimate acquaintance with the Kafir language and character.⁷⁶

Apparently, Shepstone was able to communicate effectively with the indigenous people of the Natal-Zululand region, even though they always noticed that his pronunciation of the language resembled that of “the Pondos (or the amaXoza).”⁷⁷ His communication skills were confirmed by John Colenso, the Bishop of Natal, who remarked after a journey through Natal in the company of Shepstone: “It was touching to observe how [Shepstone's] perfect knowledge of their language and modes of thought...brought these poor savages to his feet at every kraal we visited....”⁷⁸ For this reason, Shepstone's opinion on the ‘Caffre’ language community was highly respected among missionaries, settlers, and colonial administrators alike. Thus, in 1852, when the Natal Commission wanted to know if the Natal Africans spoke a different language than “the surrounding...tribes” or merely a different dialectical variation of a common language, they consulted Shepstone. “The Language spoken by all the Kafir tribes between the Cape colony and Delagoa Bay,” Shepstone informed the commissioners at the time, “...is one with

⁷⁵ John W. Appleyard, *The War of the Axe and the Xhosa Bible: The Journal of the Rev. J. W. Appleyard*, ed. John Frye (Cape Town: Striuk, 1971), 17 Apr 1842, 12; BSA/D1/2, William Boyce, 25 Sep 1844; MMS/SA/mf 305, Boyce to Browne, Bolton [?], 3 Dec 1844.

⁷⁶ Holden, *History*, 160. See also *Proceedings of Natal*, 1:61, 63.

⁷⁷ *JSA*, Ngidi kaMcikaziswa (1904), 5:79.

⁷⁸ John Colenso, *Ten Weeks in Natal. Journal of a First Tour of Visitation among the Colonists and Zulu Kafirs of Natal* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1855), 147.

dialectic or local differences [only].”⁷⁹ Only two years later, the BFBS approached Shepstone with a similar question. They wanted to ask for his “individual views and opinions” about “the Kafir and Zulu dialects” and whether these dialects could be assimilated into a single written language and Bible translation on the condition that certain dialectical modifications were introduced.⁸⁰ Although Shepstone was working closely with American missionaries Lewis Grout, Jakob Döhne, and Hyman Wilder (three missionaries who rejected Shaw’s proposal in June 1854) at this time, he answered in the affirmative in May 1854:

Your Official Communication has been referred to me as Chairman of the Commission for the Compilation of the Zulu Grammar & Dictionary; but as in consequence of difficulty of meeting some time will elapse before any reply can be had from the Commission...I have determined to write to you...a short answer...embodying my own personal opinion on the important subject to which they refer.... I believe that the degree of affinity between the Zulu and Kafir is such as to render it quite possible to persons intimately acquainted with both to frame such a translation of the Scriptures as would be perfectly understood by both, without even the dialectical modification contemplated by your question....⁸¹

Wilhelm Posselt, William J. Davis, Thomas Fortuin, and Vimbe (John Muir)

Finally, we must consider briefly the impressions and testimonies of those missionaries and staff members of mission stations who moved from the Eastern Cape region to Natal in the 1840s.⁸² One of these individuals was the BMS missionary Wilhelm Posselt, who served at Bethel and Emmaus stations in the Eastern Cape region between 1840 and the onset of the Seventh Frontier War in 1846. During this conflict, he moved to Natal, where he remained until his death in 1885. Posselt apparently possessed some linguistic abilities for, while serving among

⁷⁹ *Proceedings of Natal*, 6:96.

⁸⁰ *Correspondence*, George Morgan to Theophilus Shepstone, Cape Town, 26 Apr 1854, 46-7.

⁸¹ *Correspondence*, Shepstone to Morgan, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, 13 May 1854, 53. My emphasis.

⁸² The Wesleyan mission in Natal was established by James Archbell in 1841. However, Archbell had served primarily among the Namaqua and Tswana before coming to Natal. He is therefore excluded from this list. See *Proceedings of Natal*, 2:41.

the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape region, he translated the two Epistles to the Corinthians and, while living in Natal, he helped with the translation of the Psalms (*Incwadi Yezihlabelelo*, 1850) and published a language guide for Natal colonists entitled *Zulu Companion* (1850). Importantly, when Posselt later commented on the relationship between the speaking practices of these two regions, he claimed that the Xhosa and Zulu “were one and the same people whose language is so similar that one can comprehend the other with ease. Indeed, the Kaffirs speak one and the same language.”⁸³

Another individual who traveled from the Eastern Cape to Natal-Zululand in the 1840s was the WMS missionary William J. Davis. Born in England around 1810, Davis arrived in South Africa as a Wesleyan missionary in 1832.⁸⁴ For the next fourteen years, he served at various WMS stations, including Mount Coke among the Ngqika-Xhosa (1832-33); Clarkebury among the Thembu (1833-5); Butterworth among the Gcaleka-Xhosa and Mfengu (1835-7); and D’Urban (near Fort Peddie) among the Gqunukwebe-Xhosa, Ndhlambe-Xhosa, and Mfengu (1840-5).⁸⁵ By that time, Davis had acquired some skills in the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape region, although, as I shall argue in chapter four, Boyce overestimated his skills in 1844 when he claimed that Davis “speak[s] Kaffer as [the] Kaffers themselves...”⁸⁶

In 1846, Davis moved to Natal where, after a brief sojourn at Durban, he served at Zwartkops (*Kwangubene*) station near Pietermaritzburg between 1847 and 1851.⁸⁷ Two other

⁸³ Wilhelm Posselt, *Wilhelm Posselt, der Kaffern-Missionar. Ein Lebensbild aus der Südafrikanischen Mission*, eds. E. Pfitzner and D. Wangemann, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Berliner evangelische Missionsgesellschaft, [1888] 1891), 92. My translation. For details on Posselt’s service, see also *Correspondence*, Rev. W. Rein to Rev. G. Morgan, Bethel, 18 Aug 1853, 26; *Ibid.*, Rev. Aldin Grout to Rev G Morgan, Umvoti Mission Station, 11 Jul 1853, 28; W. Posselt, *The Zulu Companion Offered to the Natal Colonists to Facilitate Intercourse with the Natives* (Pietermaritzburg: Buchanan, 1850).

⁸⁴ Western Cape Archive and Records Service, Cape Town, South Africa, Accessions (henceforth CA/KAP), A588, Journal of Rev. William J. Davis, Port Elizabeth, 3 Apr 1832.

⁸⁵ *Proceedings of Natal*, 2:58.

⁸⁶ BSA/D1/2, William Boyce, 25 Sep 1844.

⁸⁷ CA/KAP/A558 Journal Davis, 10 Apr 1846.

individuals, who possessed more significant skills in the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape region, joined Davis at Natal at this time. One was Thomas Fortuin (Hoé). Of Khoi or Gonaqua-Khoi origins but raised among the Xhosa people, the Xhosa and Cape Dutch-speaking Fortuin and his wife Anna, a woman of Khoi-Irish descent who had grown up among Chief Hintsá's Gcaleka-Xhosa, served as interpreters at Lovedale station more or less continuously between circa 1824 and 1845.⁸⁸ Laing and others described them in these terms:

Thomas the interpreter...turns the sermon into Kaffer as it is spoken in Dutch by the Missionary and, being a Christian, may be depended on as giving a faithful translation.... [He] is a Hottentot by birth but brought up in Kaffreland, possesses considerable tact and also zeal in communicating with the natives.... Anna is altogether a very superior woman: she reads the Bible in Dutch and such books as she has in Kaffre....She is by birth a Mulatto, and understands both the Dutch and Kaffre, and can also read both intelligently.... She was indeed a most useful person at this Station, particularly when acting as our interpreter in cases of conscience.⁸⁹

Fortuin's influence as a member of the Lovedale community increased when one of his daughters, Mamata, married Jan Beck Balfour, the son of another influential convert family.⁹⁰ However, his reputation began to deteriorate shortly thereafter. In April 1843, he was wrongfully accused of having sold a gun to a Xhosa.⁹¹ Some six months later, the marriage between Mamata and Jan Beck ended amid mutual accusations of adultery.⁹² The family relocated to Pirie station, where they found little peace because a local prophet of sorts demanded that Fortuin and the

⁸⁸ The information must be pieced together from various sources, including Shell, ed., JJJ, 30 Sep 1831, Letter to P. Falconer Esq., Glasgow, 227; *Ibid.*, 19 Jan 1832, 261; *Ibid.*, 14 Nov. 1831, 230; *Quarterly Intelligence of the Glasgow Missionary Society* (henceforth *QIGMS*), Autumn 1841, 15; *RGMS*, 1841, 5, 7. Note that Scottish missionary John Ross wrote that Anna had "suckled" his son Bryce who was born in circa 1824; see CL, MS3203, John Ross to Duff, Pirie, April 1864.

⁸⁹ Shell, ed., JJJ, 30 Sep 1831, Letter to P. Falconer Esq., Glasgow, 227; *QIGMS*, Autumn 1841, 15; *Ibid.*, Summer 1841, 11.

⁹⁰ *RGMS*, 1841, 5, 7; *QIGMS*, Summer 1841, 11; *RGMS*, 1843, 11; *Ibid.*, 1843, 13; CL, MS9038, PKM, 5 Jan. 1843.

⁹¹ CL, MS9038, PKM, 5 Apr 1843.

⁹² CL, MS9038, PKM, 4 Oct 1843; CL, MS9038, PKM, 3 Jan 1844; CL, MS9038, PKM, 3 Apr 1844.

other church leaders “desist from hearing the word of God.”⁹³ It was six months after these events that the SPMS asked Fortuin and another indigenous convert named Vimbe (John Muir) to travel seventy miles eastward in order to establish a new station among the Gcaleka-Xhosa on the Cefane River.⁹⁴

Born in ca. 1810 to a Khoikhoi father and Xhosa mother (Nomantu),⁹⁵ the Xhosa and Cape Dutch-speaking Vimbe grew up on a small tributary of the Kat River. In 1820, he and his parents relocated to Chumie station, attaching themselves to Charles Henry Matshaya (an early Xhosa follower of LMS missionary Joseph Williams and the Xhosa prophet Ntsikana). Vimbe spent the next decade working as a cattle herder at different mission stations, notably at Incerha (later Lovedale), Balfour, and Burnshill. At the latter station, he began to learn the fundamentals of reading, writing, and the Christian faith under the tutelage of missionary James Laing. Baptized John Muir on August 24, 1834, Vimbe, who by then had a wife and a child, continued his studies at Burnshill in the company of Matshaya and Matwa (a minor son of the former Chief Ngqika of the Rharhabe-Xhosa) and composed or translated two hymns, which were printed at Lovedale in 1836. Two years later, Vimbe, after having been “examined in reading in Caffre and Dutch, penmanship, church music, and religious knowledge,” became together with Tente (another minor son of Chief Ngqika) “native schoolmasters,” henceforth serving the Xhosa and Mfengu communities in the environs of Burnshill station for the salary of £12 per annum. By this time, Vimbe was a competent reader of the ‘Caffre’ language, possessing a variety of books including translations of the Book of Psalms, Isaiah, Mark, Luke, John, the Acts, and others, a skill which recommended him for the position of lay preacher; moreover, he was also invited to

⁹³ CL, MS9038, PKM, 2 Oct 1844; CL, MS3170, John Ross to Macfarlane, Pirie Oct 1844.

⁹⁴ *HFMR*, 1 Nov 1845, 237; CL, MS9039, PKM, 1 Oct 1845.

⁹⁵ In 1833, Laing identified Vimbe’s mother as “Nomantu the first Kaffer whom I have baptized.” In 1839, he added that Vimbe’s “father was of the Hottentot nation.” See Shell, ed., *JLJ*, 29 Jul 1833, 334; *QIGMS*, Autumn 1839, 1.

be part of the first incoming class at the Lovedale Seminary (1841). However, Vimbe's situation started to deteriorate when his longtime friend and colleague, the aforementioned Tente, died in 1843. Shortly thereafter, he left Lovedale Seminary and returned to Burnshill amid rumors of unsatisfactory academic progress. Vimbe's troubles continued when he was accused of "neglecting the station school" in 1845. It was amid this turmoil that Vimbe, on the urging of the SPMS, joined Thomas Fortuin in order to establish a new station on the Cefane River in late 1845.⁹⁶

While working on the Cefane River, both Vimbe and Fortuin were cut off from the Cape Colony by the outbreak of the Seventh Frontier War in March 1846. In order to secure their safety and that of their families, they trekked overland to Natal Colony, where they found not only temporary refuge among the Wesleyans but apparently also long-term employment as "native teachers" at the Wesleyan stations in Pietermaritzburg and Zwartkops (*Kwangubene*).⁹⁷ Importantly, this meant that by 1848, the WMS at Natal included William J. Davis (at Zwartkops), Fortuin (at Pietermaritzburg), and Vimbe (at Zwartkops)—three individuals who were well-versed in the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape region and who used their language skills to work among the indigenous communities of the Natal-Zululand region. In 1848, Eastern Cape missionaries William Shaw and John W. Appleyard (WMS) visited the Natal District, the former as part of a general journey of visitation and the latter as part of a visit to his father-in-law, the WMS missionary James Archbell.⁹⁸ Importantly, as I will explain in the next chapter, it is more than likely that during these visits, the avid linguists Shaw and Appleyard met

⁹⁶ *QIGMS*, Autumn, 1834, 1-6; Bleek, *Library*, 60; Shell, ed., JLJ, 25 Jan 1832, 266; *Ibid.*, 22 Mar 1832, 278; *Ibid.*, 8 May 1832, 285; *Ibid.*, 13 Jun 1833, 329; *Ibid.*, 29 Jul 1833, 334; *Ibid.*, 3 May 1834, 357; *Ibid.*, 4 Jul 1834, 367; *Ibid.*, 14 Jul 1834, 368; *Ibid.*, 25 Aug 1834, 372-3; *Ibid.*, 16 Mar 1835, 405; CL, MS9038, PKM, 20 Sep 1838; *QIGMS*, Winter, 1838, 5; *Ibid.*, Summer, 1839, 4; *RGMS*, 1841, 13; *QIGMS*, Autumn 1841, 3; *RGMS*, 1843, 13; *Ibid.*, 1843, 11; CL, MS9038, PKM, 1 Jan 1845; CL, MS9039, PKM, 1 Oct 1845.

⁹⁷ CL, MS9039, PKM, 7 Jul 1847; CL, MS9039, PKM, 3 April 1850; CL, MS3203, Ross to Duff, Pirie, April 1864; Bleek, *Library*, 60.

⁹⁸ Boyce, *Memoir of Shaw*, 193; Appleyard, *War*, 7 Nov 1848, 120.

Davis, Vimbe, and Fortuin and had conversations with them about the relationship between the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions, including the use of translations from the former region among the indigenous communities of the latter.⁹⁹ The evidence suggests that the information provided by Davis, Vimbe, and Fortuin on these occasions strengthened the views of Appleyard and Shaw that the people of the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions were unified by a common language (notwithstanding minor dialectical peculiarities).

The Fingoes or Mfengu

The reverse also occurred: people traveled from Natal-Zululand to the Eastern Cape region, where their experiences regarding the relationship between the speaking practices of these two regions informed the missionaries' discourse about the 'Caffre' language community. It should be recalled that, by the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Dutch administrator Ludwig Alberti had already met several emissaries at the residence of Chief Ngqika, whom the latter identified as people "from that land, from which all the Kaffirs were descended" (that is, the region between Natal and Delagoa Bay).¹⁰⁰ There existed obvious differences between the speaking practices of the Xhosa and these emissaries, for, when Alberti asked his Gonaqua interpreter to speak with the strangers, "they did not understand each other without a great deal of trouble, even though he was completely conversant with the Kaffir language."¹⁰¹ However, the Gonaqua interpreter did not deem these differences insurmountable; he informed Alberti that "the language of these visitors was the same as that spoken by the Kaffirs [Ngqika-Xhosa]...only

⁹⁹ It is a matter of record that Shaw visited the Wesleyan stations at Pietermaritzburg and Zwartkops in 1848. See Boyce, *Memoir*, 198. Note also that the Wesleyans used the Eastern Cape translations in Natal in this period, see chapter five for details.

¹⁰⁰ Alberti, *Account*, 7.

¹⁰¹ Alberti, *Account*, 7.

that...the former did not speak it well.”¹⁰² Moreover, because the interpreter required less than two days of practice to be able to converse with these emissaries in a manner that was free from “possible misunderstandings,” Alberti concluded that the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape region, Natal-Zululand, and Delagoa Bay formed part of a single ‘Caffre’ language community.¹⁰³

The observations of the LMS missionary Dr. John Philip supported a similar conclusion. When Captain Owen returned from Delagoa Bay to the Cape Colony in first half of 1823, he was accompanied by several people from that region. Philip was given permission to interview them in order to collect information about their speaking practices. As he explained, “I introduced them to one of Gaika’s Caffers from the Keiskamma...and we found that they could converse together, on common subjects, so as to be understood by each other.”¹⁰⁴ This experiment convinced Philip that “The different tribes, inhabiting the extensive regions beyond the colony of the Cape of Good Hope...are known to speak different dialects merely of the same language.”¹⁰⁵

Colonial entrepreneur Henry Francis Fynn drew similar conclusions from his experiences. The English-born Henry Francis Fynn traveled to Port Natal in 1824. Although he had previously lived in the Eastern Cape frontier region (circa 1818–22), Fynn did not speak the language of that region, which explains why he brought the interpreter Frederick with him to Natal-Zululand.¹⁰⁶ However, he became reasonably proficient in the speaking practices of the Natal-Zululand region over the course of the next decade, a period during which he not only traded with local people but also took several of their women as his wives and recruited many of

¹⁰² Alberti, *Account*, 7.

¹⁰³ Alberti, *Account*, 7, 11.

¹⁰⁴ Philip, *Researches*, 2:143.

¹⁰⁵ Philip, *Researches*, 2:143-4.

¹⁰⁶ KCAL, MS1487a, Diary of Fynn, 10, 47, 50. The exact identity of Frederick is unclear, but he was probably a ‘Hottentot’ as Shooter implied. See Shooter, *Kafirs*, 49 note.

them into his chiefdom, the *iziNkumbi* people. Importantly, when Fynn left the Natal-Zululand region in 1834, his knowledge of that region's speaking practices enabled him to carry out various government appointments among the people of the Eastern Cape region, including that of "Caffre interpreter" during the Sixth Frontier War (1834–5), diplomatic agent to the Mpondo Chief Faku (circa 1835–6), diplomatic agent to the Thembu (1837–48), and resident agent to the Mpondo (1848–1852).¹⁰⁷

Although the Eastern Cape missionaries may have known of Alberti's report and certainly knew of Philips's observations and Fynn's experiences, it was the people known as Mfengu who provided them with even stronger evidence for the idea that the 'Caffre' language community extended from the Cape Colony to Natal-Zululand and perhaps beyond. The exact identity and origin of the Mfengu remains a subject of considerable debate. Scholars initially agreed that they were the remnants of a number of chiefdoms—Hlubi, Bhele, Zizi, Ngwane, and others—from the Natal-Zululand region, who, after being scattered by a series of wars known as the *mfecane* (the Crushing), moved into the Eastern Cape region. There they became clients of the local Xhosa and Thembu chiefs, who referred to them collectively as Mfengu (meaning "those who wander about looking for work").¹⁰⁸ Inspired by Julian Cobbing's critique of an

¹⁰⁷ John B. Wright, "Henry Francis Fynn," *Natalia* (4 Dec 1974), 14-17; *Proceedings of Natal*, 4:44; *JSA*, Ngidi kaMcikaziswa (1904), 5:79.

¹⁰⁸ Note that these scholars generally agree that the first crucial impulse for the destruction and dislocation of these chiefdoms came from the movements of Dingiswayo's Mthethwa and Zwide's Ndwandwe against Matiwane's Ngwane, who then moved against Mpangazitha's and Mehlomakhulu's Hlubi. A second impulse came from the movements of Shaka's Zulu against Ngoza's Thembu, and the subsequent movements of Zihlandhlo's Mkhize and Magaye's Cele against other groups in the Natal region and south of the Mzimkhulu River. See John Ayliff and J. Whiteside, *History of the Abambo, Generally known as the Fingos* (Butterworth, 1912), 1-22; Alfred Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (New York: Longman's, 1929), 153-4; John H. Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1930), 180; J. Omer Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa* (London: Longmans, 1966), 92, 164; R. A. Moyer, "A History of the Mfengu of the Eastern Cape," *Ph.D. Diss.* (London, 1976), 72-167; Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), chapter 2, 32-42, esp. 33; Jeff Peires, *House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 86-9.

African- and Shaka-centric understanding of the *mfecane*,¹⁰⁹ several scholars have criticized this interpretation, arguing instead that many Mfengu were Nguni and Xhosa who were brought into the Cape Colony as war captives by British soldiers and settlers in the aftermath of the Battle of Mpholompo (1828) and the Sixth Frontier War (1834–5). Their assertion is that, in order to cover up these enslavement activities, colonial officials such as Governor Benjamin D’Urban, settlers such as the Grahamstown-based newspaper publisher Robert Godlonton, and Eastern Cape missionaries such as John Ayliff imposed on these war captives the Mfengu identity, including the two key ideas which this identity entailed, notably their alleged displacement from the Natal-Zululand region by the *mfecane* wars and their alleged enslavement by the Xhosa.¹¹⁰ These revisionist scholars argue further that a growing number of Xhosa opportunists willingly adopted this Mfengu identity, modifying their oral traditions and clan names (*iziduko* in Xhosa; *izibongo* in Zulu) accordingly, in order to gain access to government- and missionary-controlled resources in the wake of the Seventh and Eighth Frontier Wars (1846–7, 1850–3) and the Cattle Killing debacle (1857).¹¹¹ Finally, focusing on the wars in the Natal-Zululand region between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, John Wright has supported these arguments in part by showing that many of the people displaced by the *mfecane*

¹⁰⁹ Cobbing claims that the wars known as the *mfecane* were not triggered by Shaka’s imperialist ambitions but resulted from the turmoil that ensued due to the slave-raiding activities that Korana and Griqua carried out on behalf of Europeans at the Cape, Port Natal and Delagoa Bay. See Julian Cobbing, “Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo,” *The Journal of African History* 29:3 (1988), 487-519.

¹¹⁰ Alan Webster, “Land Expropriation and Labour Extraction under Cape Colonial Rule: The War of 1835 and the ‘Emancipation’ of the Fingo,” *M.A. Thesis* (Rhodes University, 1991); Alan Webster, “Unmasking the Fingo: The War of 1835 Revisited,” in Hamilton, ed., *Mfecane*, 242, 256, 262-4.

¹¹¹ Webster, “Unmasking,” 256; Timothy Stapleton, “Oral Evidence of a Pseudo-Ethnicity: The Fingo Debate,” *History in Africa* 22 (1995), 358-69; T. Stapleton, “The Expansion of a Pseudo-Ethnicity in the Eastern Cape: Reconsidering the Fingo ‘Exodus’ of 1865,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 29:2 (1996), 240; Poppy Ann Fry, “Allies and Liabilities: Fingo Identity and British Imperialism in South Africa’s Eastern Cape, 1800-1935,” *Ph.D. Diss.* (Harvard University, 2007).

never migrated to the Eastern Cape region but settled between the Mzimkhulu and Mzimvubu rivers.¹¹²

It cannot be denied that many contemporary reports erroneously ascribed to Shaka some of the wars, including those carried out by Matiwane's Ngwane, that scattered the Hlubi, Bhele, Zizi, and other chiefdoms in the period between 1820 and 1830. However, the frequent contemporary references to Shaka should not necessarily be seen as evidence of a massive cover-up of colonial enslavement actions, but rather as a trope describing real conflicts in the Natal-Zululand region and marking the beginning of a complex and complicated history of African and European usages of the image of Shaka.¹¹³ Similarly, while contemporary statements about Xhosa keeping Mfengu as slaves were incorrect, they represented unfortunate mischaracterizations of the very real problems Mfengu experienced among the Xhosa.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, while it cannot be denied that Europeans (and Africans) captured locals and used captive labor power in nineteenth-century South Africa, it appears more than odd that not a single European (or African) criticized the alleged enslavement of Xhosa men, women, and children during a period when abolitionist and humanitarian sentiments were particularly strong at the Cape and throughout the British empire.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, while it is very likely that, over time, some Xhosa opportunists embraced the Mfengu identity in order to gain access to government- and missionary-controlled resources, it appears less likely that this occurred on a large scale in the period between 1820 and 1850, when Xhosa society had not yet experienced the widespread destruction that came in the wake of the Eighth Frontier War (1850–3) and the Cattle Killing episode (1857). Perhaps more importantly, none of the revisionist scholars rejects

¹¹² John Wright, "Political Transformations in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," in Hamilton, ed., *Mfecane*, 179-81.

¹¹³ For this complex and complicated history, see Hamilton, *Terrific Majesty*.

¹¹⁴ On this issue, refer also to Moyer, "History," 125.

¹¹⁵ The British empire abolished slavery by way of gradual emancipation between 1834 and 1838.

the idea that some Mfengu were originally from the Natal-Zululand region. This indeed would be difficult to argue given that, as will be shown below, a large number of Mfengu self-identified as Hlubi, Zizi, and Bhele refugees before 1835, and even recognized relatives in Natal-Zululand when they returned to that region in 1847. Finally, it must be remembered that Europeans and Africans alike argued that some differences existed between the cultural and speaking practices of the Xhosa and Mfengu, which suggest strongly that they were not originally from the same region.¹¹⁶ In summary, while I accept the idea that the Mfengu identity had no precedent in late independent Africa and therefore represents an ethnic identity which colonial officials, missionaries, and Africans together constructed over the course of the nineteenth century, I find the idea that the Mfengu were mostly captive Xhosa rather than displaced people from the Natal-Zululand region unconvincing for the period between 1820 and 1853 in general and for the period between 1820 and 1835 in particular. This position informs my analysis of what Europeans and Africans said about the Mfengu and the relationship between the speaking practices of the Xhosa and the Mfengu.

The Eastern Cape missionaries first encountered people known as Mfengu when they established several mission stations—Chumie, Lovedale, Burnshill, Buffalo River, Wesleyville, and Butterworth—among the Rharhabe-, Ntinde-, Gqunukwebe-, and Gcaleka-Xhosa between 1821 and 1827.¹¹⁷ After 1828, the contact intensified when Mfengu, amid Xhosa accusations of witchcraft, removal of property, and various forms of violence,¹¹⁸ moved into the colony or onto

¹¹⁶ Jeff Peires, “‘Fellows with Big Holes in Their Ears’: The Ethnic Origins of the amaMfengu,” *Quarterly Bulletin of the national Library of South Africa* 65 (2011), 55-64.

¹¹⁷ Thompson, *Travels*, Rev. W. Thomson, Letter, 3 Jul 1824, 376-7; CL, MS9037, PKM, W. Thomson, 5 Oct 1826; CL, MS9037, PKM, 8 Aug 1827; CWM/LMSA/IC/Box10/1/B/No. 17, J. Brownlee, Chumie, 15 April 1826; National Library of South Africa, Manuscript Collection, Cape Town, South Africa, henceforth NLSA, MSB435, William Shaw, Journal (typescript), 4 Oct 1829, 108; *WMM*, Dec 1827, 844.

¹¹⁸ *WMM*, Mar 1834, 223-4; Shell, ed., JLJ, 19 Dec 1831, 251-2; *Ibid.*, 26 Dec 1831, 257; *Ibid.*, 29 Jun 1832, 292.

mission stations in increasing numbers.¹¹⁹ The relationship between missionaries and Mfengu reached a climax during the Sixth Frontier War (1834–5) when the colonial government removed some 16,000 Mfengu from among the Xhosa, an act that colonial officials and missionaries erroneously characterized as the “deliverance of the Fingoes from the state of slavery...”¹²⁰ In the aftermaths of the Seventh and Eighth Frontier Wars (1846–7 and 1850–3), the colonial government resettled additional Mfengu groups near colonial towns such as Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, and Fort Beaufort; mission stations such as Clarkson, Lovedale, and Burnshill; and a series of “Fingo settlements” near Fort Peddie between the Fish and Keiskamma Rivers. In all these locations, the Mfengu became more accessible to the missionaries while serving European settlers as both military protection against the neighboring Xhosa and a pool of cheap indigenous labor power.¹²¹

Although the exact origin and identity of the Mfengu remains a subject of historical debate, the Eastern Cape missionaries were convinced that they represented the fragments of various chiefdoms from the Natal-Zululand region destroyed by a series of wars (frequently, if erroneously) ascribed to King Shaka. This included Wesleyan missionaries William Shaw and William Shrewsbury, who explained in 1826 that:

Far north of Kaffer Land, and between it and Delagoa Bay, in about the Latitude of Port Natal...resides a powerful African Prince, named Tshaka.... He is the terror of the Northern Tribes, having subdued and slain multitudes. Many have fled at his approach, and many fragments of Tribes, called Fingoes, have been scattered and migrated in the most wretched and distressed state into Kaffer Land.¹²²

¹¹⁹ CL, MS9037, PKM, 5 Jan 1832; Shell, ed., JIJ, 25 Jun 1832, 292; *Ibid.*, 29 Jun 1832, 292; *QPGMS*, Mar 1833, 5; JIJ, 6 Sep 1834, 373; *Ibid.*, 27 Sep 1834, 375.

¹²⁰ *WMM*, Dec 1835, 960. See also Shell, ed., JIJ, 16 May 1835, 407.

¹²¹ Moyer, “History,” 110; Bundy, *Rise*, 34-5.

¹²² CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 10 Dec 1826, 13-14. See also CWM/LMSA/IC/Box10/1/B/No. 17, J. Brownlee, Chumie, 15 April 1826; NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 31 August 1827, 52; *WMN*, 1 Mar 1828, 455; MMS/SA/mf 303, S. Young, Wesleyville, 1 May 1831; *WMM*, Mar 1841, 251; *Ibid.*, Mar 1849, 41, 46; *HFMR*, 1 Nov 1848, 553-4.

The evidence suggests that these ideas frequently originated with the Xhosa and Mfengu rather than the missionaries. Thus, Tente, a minor son of Chief Ngqika of the Xhosa, remarked in 1840 that, “The Amam-Fengu...were dispersed by enemies in their own country before they came among the Kaffres. Whilst my father [Ngqika] was still living, he gave his word that they [Mfengu] should reside at the Lenye...”¹²³ The Mfengu told similar stories of their experiences and origins. As Shaw explained several decades after the event:

The first individual of these [Fingo] people whom I saw was at Wesleyville in the year 1825. He was brought to me as a man who had been ‘picked up’ while wandering about.... I held many conversations with Sigliki about his country and the surrounding tribes. He used to tell me that it would take a man ‘three or four moons’ to travel from his country to Wesleyville. He had been wandering with various dispersed hordes for several years. It became evident that his tribe had originally occupied some country westward from Delagoa Bay, and not very remote from that place.¹²⁴

The Mfengu communities near Healdtown and Fort Beaufort voiced the same ideas when they recounted their history in their own words in a letter to Queen Victoria in 1857:

We are only fragments that are left of great nations; that we came from far, from the rivers Tugela, Zinyate, and Umvolose, beyond Port-Natal; but that we were broken up and scattered in the wars of Chaka, King of the Zulus; and that in our scattering, we traveled through a country without inhabitants, many months, where many of our people died of famine, sickness, wild beasts, till at length we came into Kaffraria, a great host of strangers, and were called by the Kaffirs FINGOES.¹²⁵

The oral traditions of individual families confirmed this narrative. George Pamla, the son of Charles Pamla, the first ordained indigenous minister in the Wesleyan mission church (1871), provided a particularly detailed account in 1910:

My grandfather, Pamla, was the son of Balanda, a chief and witch doctor living at the Umzinyati on the borders of Natal. He prophesied that the natives...were to be scattered. He ordered his son (my grandfather) Pamla to go down to the Colony with his mother, children, and a few counselors.... Old Pamla came down as far

¹²³ *QIGMS*, Winter 1841, 3-4.

¹²⁴ Shaw, *Story*, 525-6.

¹²⁵ *WMN*, 1 Sep 1857, 5-7.

as Butterworth in about 1825.... Pamla belonged to the Amahlubi. While they were here, matters were brewing in Natal a[nd] Zululand. Chaka, the son of Senzangakona, began to fight with all the nations in the east. The Amahlubi were on the borders of Chaka's country, and were the only Fingo people who dared to show fight with Chaka. The Amahlubi fled...as far as the Tugela. The Amazizi...also ran.... The panic then extended to the Amabele—living at the Langa—who also joined in the flight. All these people drove on before them the smaller nations which were in front of them. All these people became scattered in different directions—some kept along the coast region, some went to Basutoland, while others arrived round about here, [the Transkei] in or about 1820. They had a song by means of which they terrified all listeners [:] ‘*Hongo malindibekendapela ecaleni kwendlela*’ God must look upon me here, I die alongside the road. Whenever they were interrupted by anyone asking who they were and where they were going, they would say, ‘*Singamafenguza*’...meaning we wish to serve.¹²⁶

Perhaps the strongest evidence for the Natal-Zululand origins of the Mfengu comes from events like the one described by the Berlin missionary Wilhelm Posselt. In 1847, Posselt set out from the Eastern Cape region to Natal in the company of several Mfengu families who, upon their arrival in Natal, encountered several of their relatives there. As he recalled five years afterwards:

Utshaka was the man who broke up all those tribes and scattered them into the four corners of the earth. A large number of them ran down to the Amaxosa and here called them Amamfengu. This has but recently occurred, because I recollect, when amongst the Amaxosa, that the Amamfengu [?] of about 33 years old, told me, that they had been driven away from here about. And when we arrived in this [Natal] Colony in 1847, we had some people with us from the Amamfengu in Kafraria, who accidentally met with their relatives here and knew each other...¹²⁷

More importantly, there existed recognizable differences between the speaking practices of the Mfengu and the Xhosa. While visiting the Gcaleka-Xhosa in 1827, William Shaw noticed that the “Amafengoo” spoke the “Caffre language...with various degrees of difference as to the pronunciation.”¹²⁸ He later added that “the difference in their pronunciation was chiefly

¹²⁶ CL, MS17038, George Cory Notebooks, George Pamla, Willovale, 29 Jan 1910, 392-3. See also NLSA, MSC39, Methodist Church Collection, Box 34.10, Charles Pamla, "The early life of the Rev. Chas. Pamla. Related by Himself," *The Methodist Churchman*, 24 Dec 1906, 13.

¹²⁷ American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A. (henceforth ABC), 76, Personal Papers of Lewis Grout, Folder 4, W. Posselt to L. Grout, New Germany, 11 Mar 1852.

¹²⁸ *WMM*, Dec 1827, 844.

occasioned by interchanging the consonants, more especially the dentals and labials...rendering it sometimes rather difficult for the Amaxosa Kaffirs to understand them...”¹²⁹ The differences in pronunciation appear to have been strongest for those Mfengu who identified themselves as Zizi. Contrasting Xhosa speaking practices with those of a self-identifying Zizi man, Scottish missionary William Thomson explained in 1824 that “the Caffers say *emanzie* for *water*, he says *ematenzi*; they say *isonka* for *bread*, he says *sinka*; they say *hamba* for *get you gone*, he says *kamba*...”¹³⁰ Differences in pronunciation apparently rendered it more difficult for some Zizi clients to understand their Xhosa patrons and vice versa. Thus, a Mfengu man of Hlubi origins claimed in about 1855 that “there are some Fingoes (the Amazizi) that did not well understand the Kafir [Xhosa].”¹³¹ However, it is important not to overgeneralize this conclusion, for Thomson stated about his Zizi informant that “excepting some words, the Caffers [Xhosa] understood him well.”¹³² Moreover, with the exception of some Zizi people, the Mfengu appear to have communicated well with the Xhosa and vice versa. As the Wesleyan missionary William Shrewsbury remarked on December 10, 1826, “We have often ourselves, when traveling,

¹²⁹ Shaw, *Story*, 525.

¹³⁰ Thompson, *Travels*, Rev. Thomson, Letter, 3 Jul 1824, 211.

¹³¹ *Correspondence*, Laing to Morgan, Burnshill, 8 May 1855, 71. John Brownlee remarked some three decades earlier that “[the language of the Zizi was] more nearly related to Sechoana than that of the Kaffirs [Xhosa].” See Rev Brownlee, quoted in Shula Marks, “The Traditions of the Natal ‘Nguni.’ A Second Look at the Work of A. T. Bryant,” in L. M. Thompson, ed., *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London: Heinmann, 1969), 139.

¹³² Thompson, *Travels*, Rev. Thomson, Letter, 3 Jul 1824, 211. The contradictions between these statements can be explained with the peculiar history of the Zizi people. Closely related to the Hlubi and Bhele peoples, they were originally Tekeza-speakers. However, some Tekeza-speaking Zizi groups moved out of the Natal-Zululand region and into the Caledon River valley in the seventeenth century and, through assimilation with the region’s Sotho-speaking people, created the Baputhi chiefdom, developing a mixed Tekeza-Sotho language in the process. In about 1825, other groups, including Matiwane’s Ngwane, attacked this Baputhi chiefdom and pushed some of that polity’s Tekeza-Sotho-speaking Zizi into the Eastern Cape region where they were initially identified as ‘Mantatees’ (because they came from the north) and their speaking practices resembled Sotho more than Xhosa. However, at the same time, some of Natal’s Tekeza-speaking Zizi were also displaced and moved into the Eastern Cape region where they were identified as ‘Fingoes’ and their speaking practices likened to that of the Xhosa. For ‘Zizi as related to Hlubi and Bhele and speaking Tekeza,’ see Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, 425-6. For ‘Zizi and the Baphuti,’ see Moyer, “History,” 93, 100-101; Scott Rosenberg and Richard F. Weisfelder, *Historical Dictionary of Lesotho*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 36-7, 46. For ‘Tekeza-Sotho-speaking Zizi,’ see Rev. Brownlee, quoted in Marks, “Traditions of the Natal ‘Nguni,’” 139; CL, MS2642, Letters of Mrs Ross, Apr 1824; *Correspondence*, Laing to Morgan, Burnshill, 8 May 1855, 71.

observed that they [Mfengu and Xhosa] conversed together with as much ease as a Lancashire man would talk with a man of Kent.”¹³³ Other missionaries held similar opinions, including Scottish missionary James Laing and Wesleyan missionary John Ayliff, whose contact with the Mfengu was both extensive and intensive in the period between 1830 and 1854.

Few Eastern Cape missionaries had more contact with the Mfengu than John Ayliff. In October 1830, Ayliff took charge of the Wesleyan Butterworth mission station among the Gcaleka-Xhosa, who had a large number of Mfengu clients residing among them at this time.¹³⁴ Moreover, at the time of Ayliff’s arrival, Butterworth station already included several Mfengu converts, including a man known by the baptismal name Richard Watson, a woman named Mina (who had formerly belonged to Matiwane’s Ngwane), and Jabez Bunting, who belonged to a chiefly lineage among the Zizi.¹³⁵ Using Jabez as his interpreter, Ayliff attracted additional Mfengu to Christianity over the next four years, including the grandparents of the aforementioned Charles Pamla, who were of Hlubi descent.¹³⁶ During the Sixth Frontier War, he facilitated the Mfengu exodus out of Gcalekaland, and, following the completion of that war, he served as missionary to various Mfengu communities in the Cape Colony and the region between the Fish and Keiskamma Rivers.¹³⁷ He also became a student of Mfengu history and, through conversations with them, recorded their Hlubi, Bhele, Zizi (etc.) group identities and origins.¹³⁸ This extensive and intensive contact gave Ayliff considerable insight into the relationship between the speaking practices of the Mfengu and Xhosa and, thus, about the nature and extent of the ‘Caffre’ language community. In 1836, he implied that the two speaking practices were

¹³³ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 10 Dec 1826, 14; *WMM*, Aug 1827, 563-4.

¹³⁴ CL, MS1109, Diary of John Ayliff (typescript), 6 Oct 1830, 179.

¹³⁵ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 14 Dec 1828, 36; *WMN*, 1 Dec 1830, 374; *WMM*, Jul 1831, 502-3.

¹³⁶ CL, MS1109, Diary of Ayliff, 19 Nov 1830, 196; *WMM*, Jan 1832, 60; *Ibid.*, Mar 1834, 224; Shell, ed., JIJ, 2 Sep 1833, 336; *Ibid.*, 4 Jun 1834, 363; *Ibid.*, 15 Dec 1834, 386; NLSA, MSC39, Methodist Church Collection, Box 34.10, Charles Pamla, "The early life."

¹³⁷ *WMM*, 1 Dec 1835, 960; *Ibid.*, Mar 1841, 251, 253; *Ibid.*, 11 May 1850, 76.

¹³⁸ *WMN*, 1 Dec 1835, 194.

mutually intelligible when he stated that, “As the Kaffer language is used by the brethren in the Colony...the spiritual concerns of the Fingoes are attended to.”¹³⁹ Ayliff reinforced this idea in 1849 when he claimed that the Mfengu populations in the neighborhood of Fort Beaufort were “speaking the Kaffir language.”¹⁴⁰ Perhaps his clearest expression of the same notion occurred in 1853 when he stated in a letter to the Colonial Governor George Cathcart that, “The language spoken by the Fingoes is the same as that spoken by the Kaffirs with some slight unimportant variations....”¹⁴¹

Ayliff’s conclusions were supported by James Laing, whose engagement with the Mfengu began in 1831 when the latter found their way to Burnshill station looking for paid work.¹⁴² Only a couple of years later, a Mfengu woman named Mahlamene joined his household as a servant and other Mfengu began to attend his church services.¹⁴³ Accompanied by a Xhosa named Charles Henry Matshaya, Laing also visited the Mfengu communities attached to the Rharhabe-Xhosa at this time.¹⁴⁴ His contact with them intensified in the aftermath of the Sixth and Seventh Frontier Wars, when the Mfengu settlements of Ely, Sheshegu, Gaga, Macfarlane, and Ncwazi emerged in the neighborhood of Lovedale and Burnshill stations. Mfengu children became a common sight at the Burnshill outstation schools, where the aforementioned Vimbe and Tente instructed them in reading, writing, math, and religion.¹⁴⁵ Following Laing’s move to Lovedale in 1843, he encountered an increasing number of Mfengu as regular church

¹³⁹ *WMN*, 1 Jan 1837, 398.

¹⁴⁰ *WMN*, 11 May 1850, 76.

¹⁴¹ CL, MS15543.1, John Ayliff, “Sketch of Fingo History,” 7 Nov 1853. See also CL, MS15543.2, John Ayliff Papers, “Narrative of Fingo History” (TS).

¹⁴² Shell, ed., JLJ, 10 Dec 1831; *Ibid.*, 15 Jun 1832, 289.

¹⁴³ For ‘Mahlamene,’ see Shell, ed., JLJ, 18 Oct 1832, 308; *HFMR*, 1 Nov 1848, 553-4. For ‘Fingoes as church attendees,’ see Shell, ed., JLJ, 15 Apr 1833, 324; *Ibid.*, 27 May 1833, 328; *Ibid.*, 25 Jul 1833, 334.

¹⁴⁴ Shell, ed., JLJ, 10 Sep 1833, 338.

¹⁴⁵ *QIGMS*, Summer, 1839, 4; *Ibid.*, Winter 1841, 4.

members.¹⁴⁶ At this time, Laing also hired a Mfengu man named Ntibane Mzimba as a teacher for the school at Sheshegu, which included many Mfengu children, including Ntibane's son, Pambani Mzimba, who became one of the Scottish mission church's first ordained African ministers in 1877.¹⁴⁷ Due to his extensive contact with the Mfengu and his access to several individuals—Tente, Vimbe, and Matshaya—who worked with Mfengu on a regular basis, Laing was in a better position than most Eastern Cape missionaries to assess the relationship between the speaking practices of the two groups and, in so doing, clarify the extent of the 'Caffre' language community. Importantly, Laing and his African informants recognized that the Mfengu "use a few words which are not in common use by the [Xhosa] people here." However, he and his informants believed that these differences did not prevent them from communicating effectively with each other. "It is scarcely necessary to say," he explained in 1848, "that the Fingoes and Kaffirs speak one and the same language."¹⁴⁸ Importantly, he reiterated these sentiments in his response to William Shaw's proposal, writing in August 1854:

I have been considering the inquiry in your note accompanying the Circular, as to the Zulu and Kafir languages, and with my present light I am of the opinion that one Bible would suffice for Natal and Kaffraria. In support of this view I may mention that the Fingoes here, who in former times lived on the Tugela, the present boundary of Natal to the N.E., I believe, understand the Kafir translations quite well, the language being, except in a few words, the very same.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ CL, MS9039, PKM, 5 Jan 1848; *HFMR*, 1 Nov 1848, 553-4; CL, MS9039, PKM, 5 Jul 1848.

¹⁴⁷ CL, MS9039, PKM, 5 Oct 1853; CL, MS9039, PKM, 6 Feb 1856; CL, MS9098, Mpambani Mzimba, Lovedale 4 November 1869.

¹⁴⁸ *HFMR*, 1 Nov 1848, 553-4.

¹⁴⁹ *Correspondence*, Rev J Laing to Rev G Morgan, Lovedale, 9 Aug 1854, 70. Note that Laing's colleagues at Lovedale agreed, stating in about 1855 that "one translation would suffice for Kaffraria and Natal..." Note, however, that Laing began to change his opinion when he heard that some Fingoes of Zizi extraction had experienced difficulties in understanding the Xhosa, and when he heard the opinions of the American missionaries in Natal. See *Correspondence*, Laing to Morgan, Burnshill, 8 May 1855, 71; *Ibid.*, Laing to Morgan, Burnshill, 20 Jul 1855, 71-2.

Conclusion

Traditionally, South Africanists have divided the history of the region between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay into convenient binaries such as the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions, Southern and Northern Nguni peoples, and Xhosa and Zulu languages. However, as this chapter has shown, during the first half of the nineteenth century, Europeans and Africans circulated more or less freely in this region, defying the geographic, ethnographic, and linguistic divisions that were only beginning to emerge at this time. Indeed, European and African interpreters, missionaries, and mission staff, as well as the people collectively known as Mfengu, moved from one region to the other and, more significantly, used their skills in the speaking practices of one region in order to communicate with the people of the other and vice versa. In so doing, these mobile people and their experiences, impressions, and testimonies of the 'Caffre' language as a unified speech community provided significant support for the Eastern Cape missionaries' idea that the speaking practices of the people residing between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay were mutually intelligible and, thus, formed part of a single 'Caffre' language.

CHAPTER IV

The Eastern Cape Missionaries and African Ideas about Language (Part One), 1800-1853

Perhaps the most neglected factor that shaped the Eastern Cape missionaries' understanding of the 'Caffre' language community were preexisting African ideas about language which entered missionary knowledge systems as a result of their dependence on African intermediaries and interpreters. During the past two decades, scholars have paid more attention to the ways in which Europeans in general and missionaries in particular depended on the expertise of African intermediaries and interpreters.¹ In the context of missionaries in southern Africa, Jeff Guy showed that John William Colenso, who served as the bishop of the Anglican Church in Natal between 1854 and 1880, worked closely with his African assistant, informant, and interpreter William Ngidi.² Similarly, Patrick Harries has argued that the Swiss-born missionary, linguist, and ethnographer Henri-Alexandre Junod, who worked for the Swiss-Romande mission among the Thonga (Ronga) communities of Southeastern Africa between 1893 and 1920, depended heavily on the cultural expertise of a number of local African informants, including Elias Libombo, Tobane, Mboza, Mankhelu, and Viguet.³ These and other studies have shown that missionaries also depended on the linguistic expertise of their informants and that, as a result of this dependence, some interpretive power shifted to the latter,

¹ An important step in this direction began with Frances Karttunen's *Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994). Recently, this phenomenon has been explored for European naturalists and anthropologists working in twentieth-century Africa, see Lyn Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central Africa* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Nancy J. Jacobs, "The Intimate Politics of Ornithology in Colonial Africa," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48 (2006), 564-603; Andrew Bank and Leslie Bank, eds., *Inside African Anthropology. Monica Wilson and Her Interpreters* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

² Jeff Guy, "Class, Imperialism and Literary Criticism: William Ngidi, John Colenso and Matthew Arbold," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23:2 (1997), 219-41.

³ Harries, *Butterflies*, 219-32.

especially in the context of Bible translation and language development.⁴ For instance, regarding missionaries' linguistic work in early twentieth-century Southern Rhodesia, Terence Ranger noted that language work by the American Methodists was "in its formative stages...profoundly shaped by the experience and contribution of a particular group of converts."⁵ Similarly, Harries stated about Paul Berthoud, Junod's predecessor in Southeast Africa, that:

He turned increasingly to Spelonken converts.... As most of these men were immigrants from the coastal plain, the speech forms of that region exerted a strong influence on the written language.... Mbizana...particularly helped Paul Berthoud with his sermons and translations. His home language, the Hlengwe spoken in the coastal areas to the north of the Limpopo, inevitably influenced Berthoud's linguistic work.⁶

Similar forms of dependence existed in the Eastern Cape region of nineteenth-century South Africa. Foundational to a study of this region's relationships was Donovan Williams's work, which provided a preliminary assessment of the socio-cultural backgrounds of African interpreters in the Eastern Cape frontier region.⁷ Building on Williams's findings, Rajend Mesthrie argued convincingly that European missionaries struggled with the local vernaculars and, consequently, depended on the language expertise of their African interpreters in important ways.⁸ In a groundbreaking study of Jan Tzatzoe, an African interpreter of Ntinde-Xhosa descent, and his relationship with his missionary patrons during the first half of the nineteenth century, Roger Levine has provided a detailed case study of how dependence worked in practice, analyzing its effect on the missionary project in general and the process of Bible translation in

⁴ Benjamin N. Lawrence, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts, "Introduction: African Intermediaries and the 'Bargain' of Collaboration," *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*, eds. Lawrence, Osborn, and Roberts (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 15; Román Álvarez and M. Carmen-África Vidal, "Translating: A Political Act," in R. Álvarez and Carmen-África Vidal, eds., *Translation, Power, Subversion* (Bristol, PA: Multilingual Matters, 1996), 1-10.

⁵ Ranger, "Missionaries," 128.

⁶ Harries, *Butterflies*, 158.

⁷ Donovan Williams, "The Missionaries on the Eastern Cape Frontier of the Cape Colony, 1799-1853," *Ph.D. Diss.* (University of Witwatersrand, 1960), 197-200; Donovan Williams, "Social and Economic Aspects of Christian Mission Stations in Caffraria 1816-1854," *Historia* 30.2 (1985), 33-48, esp. 46-8, and 31:1 (1986), 25-56.

⁸ Mesthrie, "Words," 8.

the Eastern Cape region in particular.⁹ “As an African...translator for many different European religious disseminators,” Levine concludes, “Tzatzoe exemplified African involvement in the creation of language in the...region.”¹⁰

Unfortunately, Levine’s work, like many other studies of missionary–intermediary interactions in the context of Bible translation, is narrowly concerned with the ways in which such interactions helped identify equivalent terms in the vernacular for crucial concepts of Christianity (such as God, sin, salvation) and whether the use of such terms resulted in the Christianization (colonization) of African consciousness or the Africanization (inculturation) of Christianity. The former view has been promoted by John and Jean Comaroff. Although they admit that Protestant missionaries among the Southern Tswana initially depended heavily on cultural intermediaries, they contend that the former soon learned the language and, as power relations on mission stations and in broader (colonial) society shifted in their favor, were able to “subvert indigenous terms,” colonizing the vernacular language and indigenous consciousness in the process.¹¹ Janet Hodgson has come to similar conclusions in the context of the Eastern Cape region. With regard to Bible translation, she claims that European missionaries, aided by their African interpreters, identified vernacular words approximating the meaning of the Christian concepts, purged these words of “their base contents and allusions” and then filled them “with a new and spiritual meaning.”¹² Other scholars have come to more ambiguous conclusions.

⁹ Roger Levine, “An Interpreter Will Arise: Resurrecting Jan Tzatzoe’s Diplomatic and Evangelical Contributions as a Cultural Intermediary on South Africa’s Eastern Cape Frontier, 1816-1818,” in Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn and Richard L. Roberts, eds., *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 37-55; R. Levine, *A Living Man from Africa: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa Chief and Missionary, and the Making of Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Levine, *Man*, 5.

¹¹ Comaroff, *Of Revelation*, 218.

¹² Janet Hodgson, “A Battle for Sacred Power: Christian Beginnings among the Xhosa,” in Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, eds., *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 77.

Consider William Worger's point that missionaries in nineteenth-century South Africa were unable to control the metaphorical meanings that Africans associated with vernacular words: in the case of the word *uThixo*, which Eastern Cape missionaries used to translate the concept of "God," the indigenous meanings included "creator and benefactor" and "notable warrior" as well as "death" and "devil."¹³ Missionaries' dependence on the linguistic expertise of their African intermediaries and interpreters provided additional opportunities for African meanings to influence the Christian message. For instance, Levine notes that "Tzatzoe translated [LMS missionary Joseph] Williams's description of the Devil as one of God's chief servants into one of God's chief soldiers—revealing Tzatzoe's concern that the Xhosa term for servant would reflect too servile a meaning and would not convey the distinguished and important work of an angel."¹⁴ As these points suggest, whether missionary–interpreter interactions resulted in colonization of consciousness or Africanization of Christianity depended on which of the two parties controlled meaning. This point is forcefully made by studies of Bible translation in East and Southern Africa during the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries made by Derek Peterson, Paul Landau, and Diana Jeater. Strongly resisting the view that European ideas about the "Other" reflected European epistemologies,¹⁵ they show that missionary discourses in general and translations in particular emerged from genuine dialogic interactions whose dynamics and

¹³ William H. Worger, "Parsing God: Conversations about the Meaning of Words and Metaphors in Nineteenth-Century Southern Africa," *The Journal of African History* 42:3 (2001), 430.

¹⁴ Levine, "Interpreter," 47.

¹⁵ This view emerges from the Comaroffs, but also from Homi Bhabha who has characterized African contributions as "mimicry" and, thus, as reflecting European epistemologies rather than preexisting, authentic African knowledge. Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in James Donald and Stuart Hall, eds., *Politics and Ideology: A Reader* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986), 198-204.

possibilities changed in accordance with shifting power relations, notably those between missionaries and their African interlocutors.¹⁶

Importantly, then, if we accept that missionary discourses emerged from dialogic interactions between missionaries and African interpreters and that, as part of such interactions, ideas passed from one side to the other in accordance with local and shifting power relations, we must assume that, in contexts where missionaries depended on the linguistic expertise of their African interpreters, missionary discourses about African languages and language communities reflected, at least to some extent, genuine preexisting African ideas about language, language differences, and the relationship between language and identity.

Historians and anthropologists suggest that Africans downplayed the role of language as a marker of identity in the late independent period. Terence Ranger spoke for many of these interpretations when he argued that, prior to the arrival of Europeans, the people of Southern Africa “defined themselves politically—as subjects of a particular chief rather than linguistically, culturally, or ethnically.”¹⁷ More recently, Paul Landau expressed the same idea when he noted that “South African modes of self-rule comprised a venerable political tradition, one that deprecated skin color and language as barriers and elevated brotherhoods, rankings, and amalgamations.”¹⁸ Three arguments are commonly used to support these assertions. For instance, it is suggested that the region’s key group identities—clan and chiefdom—depended on

¹⁶ Derek Peterson, “Translating the Word: Dialogism and Debate in Two Gikuyu Dictionaries,” *The Journal of Religious History* 23:1 (Feb 1999), 31-50; Diana Jeater, *Law, Language, and Science: The Invention of the ‘Native Mind’ in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1930* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007), 10-18; Landau, *Popular*, chapter three. Note, however, that even under asymmetric power relations, colonial knowledge was often conjunctural rather than unidirectional, see for instance Rama Mantena, *The Origins of Modern Historiography in India: Antiquarianism and Philology, 1780-1880* (New York: Palgrave, 2012).

¹⁷ Ranger, *Invention*, 4. See also Ranger, “Missionaries,” 120, 122; Comaroff, *Of Revelation*, 1:225; Harries, *Butterflies*, 173.

¹⁸ Landau, *Popular Politics*, xi.

genealogical descent and on allegiance to a chief rather than linguistic affiliation.¹⁹ Furthermore, it has been argued that language-based discourses of identity did not emerge in late independent Africa because these societies were more egalitarian in character, reducing the need to deploy language for the purpose of social status differentiation, domination, and exploitation.²⁰ Finally, it has been argued that there existed a “linguistic continuum” within the S-group Bantu speech area of southern Africa which rendered the differences between neighboring peoples’ speaking practices so minute that they could not be mobilized for the purpose of constructing and differentiating group identities. As Ranger has noted in the context of Zimbabwe:

A single, common language was spoken over a very wide area. A man living in any one village could move to the next and find people speaking the same language and so on across the whole area, except that by the time such a man reached the extreme boundaries of the Shona-speaking zone, many variations of vocabulary would almost insensibly have taken place. In this way one might say that the Shona spoken in the far west and that spoken in the far east were distinctly different from each other, but that at no point in the passage from west to east was any clear dialect boundary crossed.²¹

Although these arguments are sometimes overgeneralized in the context of South Africa (more on this in chapters six and seven), they apply well to the Eastern Cape region, where they help explain why the missionaries’ African interpreters downplayed the differences between the speaking practice of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans, and Zulu.

¹⁹ For ‘clans’ and ‘chiefdoms,’ see below.

²⁰ On the one hand, this egalitarian idea was propagated by earlier anthropological studies which argued that ‘tribal societies’ are ‘classless societies.’ On the other hand, it was propagated forcefully by African scholars and politicians (Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, Leopold Senghor, Kenneth Kaunda, Joseph Ki-Zerbo) who, influenced by European socialism and anti-colonial sentiments, claimed that late independent African societies had practiced African socialism, that is, they had been free of significant social (class) differences and tensions. See Max Gluckman, *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society* (New Jersey: Rutgers [1965] 2009), xv; Eugene Victor Walter, *Terror and Resistance: A Study of Political Violence, with Case Studies of Some Primitive African Communities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 57-8; V. G. Simiyu, “The Democratic Myth in African Traditional Societies,” in W. O. Oyugi and A. Gitonga, eds., *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1987), 49-70.

²¹ Ranger, *Invention*, 14. See also Ranger, “Missionaries,” 127; Landau, *Popular Politics*, 1.

These lines of argument will be explored in the next two chapters. Building on the findings of Mesthrie and Levine, the current chapter begins by assessing the language skills of those missionaries who arrived in the Eastern Cape region during the first half of the nineteenth century. It concludes that, as adult learners of a wholly different second language, these missionaries were never able to acquire native-speaker proficiency in the local speaking practices and that, as a result of these limitations, they remained dependent on the linguistic expertise of their African interpreters for the duration of their activities in the South African mission field. Furthermore, this chapter contends that, because of this dependence, the Eastern Cape missionaries' opinions about the speaking practices in the region—notably, the idea that the differences between the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans, Zulu, and others were insignificant—originated, at least in part, with their African interpreters.

Taking these conclusions as a point of departure, chapter five sets out to explain why the Eastern Cape missionaries' African interpreters consistently downplayed the differences between the speaking practices of these groups. It begins by investigating the group identities of these interpreters and shows that they had their broader cultural roots among the pastoralist Khoikhoi and the mixed-farming Xhosa, and their narrower roots among mixed, multilingual frontier groups such as the Gonaqua-Khoi and the Ntinde-Xhosa. It continues by theorizing the role of language as a marker of group identity among these groups and concludes that these communities promoted descent- and allegiance-based—rather than language-based—discourses of group identity. Michel Foucault's ideas about the relationship between “discourse” and “meaning” (objects of knowledge) inform the significance of the absence of language-based discourses of group identity in this region at this time. “The concept of discourse,” according to

Stuart Hall in his essay on Foucault, “is not about whether things exist but about where meaning comes from...”²² Importantly, because meaning is constructed by way of discourse, the absence of discourse signifies the absence of meaning (objects of knowledge). It follows that, in the absence of preexisting language-based discourses of group identity that apportioned meaning to the differences (however small) between people’s speaking practices by mobilizing them for the purpose of identity construction, the Eastern Cape missionaries’ African interpreters emerged from a cultural context that did not perceive the differences between the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans, and Zulu as significant and, thus, as markers of distinct objects of knowledge (that is, languages).

Given the missionaries’ dependence on the linguistic expertise of these interpreters, the latter’s assessment of the local speaking practices found its way into the former’s discourse about the ‘Caffre’ language community, ensuring that it reflected genuine African ideas about language, language differences, and the relationship between language and identity in important ways.

Missionaries’ Linguistic Dependence on African Intermediaries

Rajend Mesthrie has argued convincingly that the Eastern Cape missionaries’ language skills have been overrated. “A closer examination of the materials produced by the missionaries themselves, especially their reflections on their own linguistic progress,” Mesthrie writes, “show that the accounts of the later historiographer must be read as romanticized and sanitized versions of language history.”²³ Most of the missionaries, as Mesthrie suggests, were not linguistic geniuses, but normal, slow second-language learners “going through the usual stages of

²² Hall, “Foucault,” 73.

²³ Mesthrie, “Words,” 6-7.

acquiring a new language...’’²⁴ Importantly, all the missionaries who served in South Africa between 1820 and 1853 arrived in the region as adults, a fact which limited the level of proficiency they were able to acquire in the local speaking practices over the course of their lifetimes. This is because, as scientific studies have shown:

Language occupies a significant portion of the brain’s stored memory, and research indicates that it is most efficiently and effectively learned before one is twelve years old. Even good speakers who learn a language after twelve store the new language in a different way in the brain than those who learn it earlier, suggesting that language acquisition is more complex than learning many other skills. Furthermore, learning a new language later in life is difficult and rarely completely mastered. Even though most people are capable of learning new languages even when they are quite old, they are unlikely to speak the new languages with native levels of proficiency.²⁵

Thus, regardless of how hard and diligently they worked at improving their language skills, the Eastern Cape missionaries’ advanced age represented an insurmountable obstacle to acquiring native-speaker proficiency.²⁶

Missionary societies were cognizant of this harsh reality. This explains why they generally expected their members to raise their children in-country and bilingually and, in so doing, groom a new generation for the mission service—one that would not have to face this obstacle. This sentiment reverberates in a statement made by the LMS missionary Joseph Williams, who, at the age of thirty-six, established the first mission station among the Rharhabe-Xhosa in 1816 and stayed there until his death in 1818. “I am not yet able to talk in the Caffre tongue,” he noted in a letter to the mission directors in 1817, “but I do not despair [since] I am

²⁴ Mesthrie, “Words,” 7.

²⁵ John K. Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820* (New York: Cambridge, 2012), 315. The statement is based on the following studies: K.H.S. Kim, N. R. Relkin, N. R. de LaPaz, and K.-M. Lee, “Localization of Cortical Areas Activated by Native and Second Languages with Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI),” *Proceedings of the International Society for Magnetic Resonance Imaging 1* (1996), 28; D. Perrani, E. Paulesu, N. S. Galles, et al, “The Bilingual Brain. Proficiency and Age of Acquisition of the Second Language,” *Brain* 121 (1998), 1841-1852.

²⁶ ‘Native-speaker’ and ‘native-like speaker’ or ‘near-native speaker’ are used as linguistic terms and should not be read as meaning ‘African.’

blessed with a son from the Lord he is a year & half old he can talk Caffres...he may be an instrument of great good to this nation.”²⁷ The SPMS held similar views.²⁸ In order to ensure that the children of their missionaries acquired and retained these language skills, the SPMS considered it of crucial importance that such children be educated in the Eastern Cape region rather than the Cape Colony or abroad.²⁹ With these aims in mind, the society outlined a plan of education in 1839 which stipulated that the children of missionaries receive their “elementary education” at the schools of their parents’ mission stations so that they “have the foundation of their acquirements laid in the language of the country...”³⁰ The importance the SPMS ascribed to this issue is further exemplified by its attempts to actively prevent missionaries from removing their children from the mission stations before the latter had acquired native-speaker proficiency. Responding to the request of a missionary spouse to remove her children to Scotland for the purpose of education, the Mission Board replied: “The Committee will consent to her removal...but only on condition suggested by the final object, viz: that definite and systematic means be used to prevent the children from losing their familiar acquaintance with their native tongue.”³¹ The Wesleyan missionaries also believed that native speaker proficiency was acquired in the early years of childhood or not at all. As William Boyce explained in 1832, “Children brought up in the country and who learn the language as their mother tongue, will...become perfectly acquainted with it, *and they alone*.”³²

²⁷ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box 7/ 2/C/No. 49, J. Williams, Kat River, 7 Aug 1817.

²⁸ *RGMS*, 1837), 27. See also Shell, ed., *JLJ*, Lovedale, 7 Jul 1831, 210.

²⁹ *QIGMS*, Winter 1838, 4-5.

³⁰ *QIGMS*, Summer 1839, 12.

³¹ The woman was Jane Soga, the wife of the (late) Xhosa minister Tiyo Soga. See National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, United Kingdom, henceforth NLS, Dep. 298, Church of Scotland Overseas Council, No. 64, 28 Nov 1871, 688. For the same reason Board rejected three years later the request of missionary John Chalmers, the bilingually-educated son of missionary William Chalmers, to leave his mission-station among the Xhosa in order to serve as the minister of a European congregation at King William’s Town. See NLS, Dep. 298, Church of Scotland Overseas Council, No. 65, 24 Nov 1874, 480.

³² *WMM*, Sep 1832, 664. My emphasis.

A detailed reading of the primary sources confirms that the Eastern Cape missionaries struggled with the local speaking practices and, consequently, suffered from what Mesthrie has called “linguistic anguish.”³³ Consider the remarks of LMS missionary Frederick G. Kayser. Born in 1800 near Leipzig, Germany, Kayser joined his colleague, John Brownlee, at the Buffalo River station in 1827. Two years after his arrival, he admitted to the LMS directors that speaking the language “fluently in long sentences is very difficult...”³⁴ Kayser’s struggles with the language continued; during an encounter with a local woman five years after his arrival in the Eastern Cape, he was forced to communicate “in *broken* Kaffers.”³⁵ The same linguistic anguish can be perceived in the journal of Wesleyan missionary William J. Davis. Born in England circa 1810, Davis arrived in South Africa in 1832.³⁶ He served that first year at the WMS station of Mount Coke, where William Shrewsbury helped him acquire the basics of the local speaking practices.³⁷ Despite his diligent work,³⁸ Davis’s progress was slow, and after a year he was begging for divine intervention. “I find it a hard language,” he noted in his journal on April 17, 1833, “...may he who enabled the Apostles to speak with other tongues assist me.”³⁹

Given his self-admitted status in April 1833, it is rather surprising to find Davis credit himself with having begun “the translation of the books of Chronicles into Kafir” less than a year later.⁴⁰ More significantly, another six months later, he claimed to be able to “speak and preach with some degree of fluency” in “the Kafir language.”⁴¹ However, Mesthrie argues that many a

³³ Mesthrie, “Words,” 7-8. See also Rachel Gilmour, “‘A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs:’ Missionary Language-Learning in Mid-Nineteenth Century Natal,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33:3 (Sep, 2007), 524.

³⁴ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box11/3/C/No. 25, Kayser, Buffalo River, 4 June 1829.

³⁵ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box13/1/B/No. 16, Kayser, 15 Jul 1832.

³⁶ CA/KAP/A558, Journal of Davis, 3 Apr 1832.

³⁷ CA/KAP/A558, Journal of Davis, 20 Dec 1832.

³⁸ CA/KAP/A558, Journal of Davis, 24 Dec 1832; *Ibid.*, 30 Dec 1832; *Ibid.*, 11 Jan 1833.

³⁹ CA/KAP/A558, Journal of Davis, 17 Apr 1833.

⁴⁰ CA/KAP/A558, Journal of Davis, 18 Feb 1834.

⁴¹ CA/KAP/A558, Journal of Davis, 31 Dec 1834. See also Gardiner, *Narrative*, 378; CA/KAP/A558, Journal of Davis, 1 Nov 1835.

missionary who reported that he was making great progress in the language was actually referring to reading from previously prepared scripts.⁴² Kayser is a good example. In 1830, he admitted that while the Xhosa could understand him well when he read the language from a previously translated script, they “could not follow me so well when I spoke to them otherwise.”⁴³ The WMS missionary Stephen Kay experienced the same problem. As he explained about a year after his arrival in the region, “I commenced our morning service by reading the Ten Commandments in Caffre.... I found that all understood the greater part of what I read.”⁴⁴ However, he continued to depend on his African interpreter for all impromptu conversations with the local population.⁴⁵ Thus, in the same year, visitor Andrew Steedman observed Kay delivering “an address to the assembled Caffers, which the interpreter translated into their native tongue, sentence by sentence...”⁴⁶ Similarly, when Kay and his interpreter visited the Thembu people almost four years later, the former preached to them by reading from previously prepared scripts, while the latter conversed with them freely on a variety of religious topics.⁴⁷

Case Studies of Missionaries’ Linguistic Dependence

Kay was not unique in this regard. Some of the most respected linguists among the Eastern Cape missionaries faced the same dilemma: in spite of achieving notable improvements in their command of local speaking practices over time, they remained dependent on the linguistic expertise of African interpreters in important ways.

⁴² For the Eastern Cape region, this has been explored in a limited fashion by Mesthrie, “Words,” 8.

⁴³ Kayser, *Journal*, 1830, 71.

⁴⁴ *WMM*, Apr 1827, 270-1. See also *WMM*, Nov 1827, 775-6.

⁴⁵ *WMM*, May 1827, 348.

⁴⁶ Steedman, *Wanderings*, 1:28.

⁴⁷ *WMM*, Mar 1831, 199-200.

John Brownlee is a good example. Born in Scotland in 1791, Brownlee established the government mission station at Chumie among the Rharhabe-Xhosa in 1820 and the LMS station at the Buffalo River among the Ntinde-Xhosa in 1826.⁴⁸ If his own assertions and those of his fellow missionaries can be trusted, Brownlee's language skills improved steadily between 1820 and 1833. Thus, in 1833, he took sole credit for having translated various sections of the Bible.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, his fellow missionaries lauded him for having prayed "in the native tongue," preached "in the native language," and conducted "worship...in the Kaffer language" in 1825, 1829, and 1834, respectively.⁵⁰ However, it is a matter of record that Brownlee depended heavily on the language expertise of his African interpreter, Jan Tzatzoe, during the same time period.⁵¹ "I have John Tzatzoe with me..." Brownlee wrote from Chumie in 1820; "I could not have done well without him; he interprets for me, and assists me in the language."⁵² Despite improvements in his language skills over time, this dependence continued. "I have got nearly the whole of Mark's gospel translated into Caffre," Brownlee explained in August 1827; "Brother Jan Tzatzoe is valuable in this respect as an assistant in the work of translating...."⁵³ He still depended on Tzatzoe three year later, asserting that "Brother John Tzatzoo...continues to render assistance in the service of the Mission, particularly in his work and assistance in translating and in the study of the language."⁵⁴ Moreover, when Brownlee was catechizing in the language, he did so from materials previously translated with Tzatzoe's assistance. "After school I generally catechise from Watt's Catechism," he explained in 1827, "which we [Brownlee & Tzatzoe] have translated

⁴⁸ Levine, *Man*, 75.

⁴⁹ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box13/4/B/No. 4, J. Brownlee, 16 Dec 1833. My emphasis.

⁵⁰ Kay, *Travels*, 33; CL, MS9037, PKM, 9 Oct 1829; Shell, ed., JLJ, 6 Dec 1834, 382.

⁵¹ Levine, "Interpreter," 51; Levine, *Man*, 75.

⁵² J. Brownlee, Chumie, June 1820, as quoted in Philip, *Researches*, 2;190.

⁵³ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box10/2/E/No. 33, J. Brownlee, 3 Aug 1827.

⁵⁴ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box12/1/A/No. 1, Kayser and Brownlee, Tzatzoo's Kraal, 1 Jan 1830.

into the Caffre language.”⁵⁵ In fact, Brownlee was not secure enough in the local speaking practices to speak freely with the Xhosa, which explains why, in 1828, he and Kayser declared themselves unable to visit them without Tzatzoe’s assistance. As they wrote to the LMS directors in that year, “These visits have not been so frequent...the chief reason is that it not only is necessary to have a good interpreter but also one qualified to meet all their objections [;] Jan is the only person on the Institution qualified so to act...”⁵⁶ In 1833 (thirteen years after his arrival in the Eastern Cape), Brownlee’s dependence on Tzatzoe persisted, which explains why he and Kayser asked Tzatzoe to interpret for them during their negotiations with Chief Maqoma regarding the establishment of a new mission station among the Rharhabe-Xhosa.⁵⁷

John Bennie, the acknowledged language expert of the SPMS, experienced similar levels of dependence. Born in Scotland in 1796, Bennie arrived in the Eastern Cape in 1821 and served at Chumie (1821–4), Lovedale (1824–44), and Burnshill (1844–7) stations over the next two and half decades. His language skills improved steadily over the course of this period.⁵⁸ For instance, in 1831, Bennie conducted an entire church service without the help of an interpreter, prompting his fellow missionary James Laing to declare in admiration: “This has rarely been done by any of us. We [usually] speak by interpreters.”⁵⁹ However, Bennie’s language skills were not advanced enough to do so on a regular basis. For, as Laing remarked later in the same year, “Mr Bennie in general prays in Kaffer but he does not in general preach in it though he sometimes does...”⁶⁰ Another seven years later (seventeen years after he first arrived in the region), Bennie was able to conduct impromptu conversations with indigenous interlocutors as long as these conversations

⁵⁵ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box10/3/C/No. 57, J. Brownlee, 31 Dec 1827.

⁵⁶ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box11/2/C/No. 57, Kayser and Brownlee, Report, 26 Dec 1828.

⁵⁷ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box13/3/C/No. 24, Kayser, 12 Jul 1833.

⁵⁸ *London Christian Instructor or Congregational Magazine*, Feb 1823, 110-111.

⁵⁹ Shell, ed., JIJ, 31 Jul 1831, 215. See also *Ibid.*, 10 July 1831, 212; *Ibid.*, 15 Nov 1831.

⁶⁰ Shell, ed., JIJ, 30 Sep 1831, Letter to P. Falconer Esq., Glasgow, 227. Note however that Bennie continued to do so off and on, see also *Ibid.*, 6 Nov 1831, 242;

were concerned with “any common or doctrinal subject” rather than “something...unknown” or communicated to him “in highly figurative language.”⁶¹ Thus, although Bennie’s language skills improved between 1821 and 1838, he continued to depend on the linguistic expertise of African interpreters in situations where he did not control the content of the conversation and the nuances of the local language had to be understood. This was also the case in the context of his translation activities. As mentioned in chapter one, Bennie translated thirty-two hymns and the Gospels of Mark and Matthew between his arrival in the region and 1836. It is a matter of record that during these activities, he relied in important ways on his African interpreter, Noyi Gciniswa, who had been given the baptismal name Robert Balfour in 1823. For instance, in 1831, the SPMS missionaries reported, “Assisted by Robert Balfour, he [Bennie] is much engaged in translating the Scriptures into the language of Caffraria.”⁶² In this context, “assisting” meant that Balfour provided Bennie with the linguistic expertise that only a native speaker possessed. “Robert Balfour...,” a report stated in 1833, “has aided Mr B[ennie] in his translations, supplying him with appropriate and idiomatic Kaffre expressions...”⁶³ In fact, during his most productive phase of translation work, conducted during a brief sojourn at Somerset East in 1836, Bennie’s writings were “all corrected by his native assistant, Robert Balfour.”⁶⁴ Consequently, although Bennie achieved significant levels of proficiency in the local speaking practices, he never achieved native-speaker proficiency and, therefore, continued to depend on the skills and knowledge of African interpreters in general and those of Noyi Gciniswa, alias Robert Balfour, in particular.

⁶¹ *QIGMS*, Winter, 1838, 3.

⁶² *RGMS*, 1831, 18. It is possible that he helped Bennie before 1831 while the later still resided at Chumie. This is suggested by Balfour’s descendent Phyllis Ntantala in her *A Life’s Mosaic: The Autobiography of Phyllis Ntantala* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 10.

⁶³ *RGMS*, 1833, 17.

⁶⁴ *QIGMS*, Winter, 1838, 3.

William Shrewsbury, a missionary attached to the WMS, depended on the language expertise of African interpreters in a similar manner. Born in 1795, Shrewsbury arrived in the Eastern Cape region in October 1826.⁶⁵ He spent eight months at Wesleyville station among the Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa in order to study “Caffre words” before moving to Butterworth station among the Gcaleka-Xhosa and Mfengu, where he resided between 1827 and 1830.⁶⁶ Although his skills in the local modes of communication improved during these years,⁶⁷ Shrewsbury continued to rely heavily on the language expertise of his two African interpreters whose baptismal names were Peter (surname unknown) and John Burton respectively.⁶⁸ For instance, while visiting four captive Xhosa men at Fort Wilshire in March 1829, Shrewsbury “requested John to pray with them, as I could not pray myself in Caffre.”⁶⁹ He also depended on his interpreters in the context of his Bible translation activities. As he noted in April 1829, “The present week I have been much employed with Peter in translating Vth [chapter] of Matthew.”⁷⁰ In 1830, Shrewsbury moved to Mount Coke station in order to serve among the Ndlambe-Xhosa. Although it is not clear who served as his interpreter during this time, it is known that this station included a number of Africans who served in such a capacity; one such interpreter was a woman of whom WMS missionary Samuel Young noted, “She spoke fluently the Dutch and Kafir languages...[and] became increasingly useful, both as an interpreter, and in assisting in translating portions of the word of God.”⁷¹ Moreover, it was not until September 1831 (five years

⁶⁵ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 27 Oct 1826, 6.

⁶⁶ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 29 Nov 1826, 10.

⁶⁷ NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 19 April 1828, 70.

⁶⁸ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 23 Jun 1827, 20; *Ibid.*, 1 Jul 1827, 20; CL-MS15252, DOS, 20 Aug 1827, 23; *Ibid.*, 12 Dec 1827, 28; *Ibid.*, 21 Aug 1828, 34; *WMM*, Jan 1830, 56; *Ibid.*, Dec 1830, 840.

⁶⁹ *WMM*, Oct 1829, 706.

⁷⁰ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 10 Apr 1829, 38. See also *Ibid.*, 26 Sep 1829, 42.

⁷¹ Samuel Young, *A Missionary Narrative of the Triumphs of Grace; As Seen in the Conversion of Kafirs, Hottentots, Fingoes, and Other Natives of South Africa* (London: Roche, 1842), 36-7. Note that this female interpreter was still at Mount Coke when Wesleyan missionary Henry Dugmore arrived there in 1834 and replaced

after he had first arrived in the region) that Shrewsbury began “to speak” and “conduct the services...without an Interpreter.”⁷² However, he was by no means fluent in the language at this time, as his interlocutors did not always understand his “imperfect Caffre.”⁷³ Moreover, when Shrewsbury moved to Grahamstown in 1834 in order to oversee the translation department of the Wesleyan mission, he continued to make use of the linguistic expertise of others. “We have great facilities for pursuing a faithful & correct translation of the Word of God,” Shrewsbury announced to the BFBS in July 1834, “as we are favored with the help of two European youths, who acquired the Kafir Language in their childhood, by residing among the natives...”⁷⁴ Interestingly, Shrewsbury may have also drawn on the expertise of an African interpreter at this time, of whom Samuel Young said, “He could speak English, Dutch, and Kafir languages with fluency. Hence he became very useful as an interpreter, and took great delight in assisting in the translation of the Scriptures.”⁷⁵

Thus, Shrewsbury, like Brownlee and Bennie, became more proficient in the local modes of communication over time. However, in the same way that Brownlee and Bennie failed to master the language, Shrewsbury was unable to achieve a level of proficiency that would have enabled him to dispense with his African interpreters. All three continued to depend on African interpreters such as Jan Tzatzoe, Noyi Gciniswa (Robert Balfour), John Burton and Peter for the duration of their missionary activities in South Africa. The missionaries’ enduring dependence on the linguistic expertise of African interpreters suggests that many of the ideas about the ‘Caffre’ language community may have originated with these interpreters rather than the

her with a male interpreter shortly afterwards. See NLSA, MSC39, Methodist Church Collection, Box 28 (4), Henry Dugmore, Journal, Mount Coke, 3 Apr 1834.

⁷² CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 15 Sep 1831, 53; *Ibid.*, 19 Nov 1831, 54; *Ibid.*, 12 Aug 1832, 58.

⁷³ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 11-17 Aug 1832, 60.

⁷⁴ BSA/D1/2, William J. Shrewsbury to Mr. Joseph Jowett, BFBS, Grahamstown, 18 Jul 1834. One of these youths was George Cyrus who was mentioned in the previous chapter.

⁷⁵ Young, *Missionary*, 148. For details of this man and his identity, see *Ibid.*, 114-5; 146-8; MMS/SA/mf 303, Young, Wesleyville, 4 Apr 1832.

missionaries themselves. This hypothesis can be substantiated with the help of several additional case studies.

Case Studies of Interpreters' Influence

Born in Scotland in 1803, the Scottish missionary James Laing arrived in the Eastern Cape region in 1830; he resided there for the next twenty-five years, notably at Lovedale station (1830–1 and 1843–55) and Burnshill station (1831–43). Like other missionaries, Laing struggled with the language and was frustrated about his dependence on an African interpreter by the name of Thomas Fortuin.⁷⁶ In November 1831, he gave air to his frustrations, revealing some inconvenient truths about the missionaries' language skills in the process. As he noted at the time:

I had very inadequately conceived of its difficulties, nor can anyone from mere description fully conceive of them. The language is difficult in its structure, but the insuperable difficulties to me lie in the pronunciation.... Now these [click-sounds] are some of the sounds which I cannot utter and I am afraid shall never be able to utter. Could diligence do anything towards the facilitation of the acquisition of these sounds, I should endeavour night and day to obtain them.... I have almost no hope that at the end of the year I should be any nearer the object of my wishes.... It is, I may say, the greatest barrier which I see between me and the Kaffer people.... The Missionaries...do not in general preach in the native language ...none...have fully mastered the native language...⁷⁷

In order to rectify this situation, Laing began to take paid language instruction from Klaas Love, the African interpreter at Burnshill station, in January 1832.⁷⁸ As a result of these lessons, he experienced some improvement and was able to read prayers and religious lessons from prepared scripts over time. However, the pronunciation of the language continued to pose a major obstacle. "The Interpreter being absent," Laing confided to his journal in August 1832, "I read

⁷⁶ Shell, ed., JIJ, 30 Sep 1831, Letter to P. Falconer Esq., Glasgow, 227.

⁷⁷ Shell, ed., JIJ, 14 Nov 1831, Letter to P. Falconer Esq., Glasgow, 231-2. He had made a similar statement several months earlier, see *Ibid.*, 6 Jun 1831, 201.

⁷⁸ Shell, ed., JIJ, 24 Jan 1832, 265; *Ibid.*, 25 Jan 1832, 265.

some printed Kaffer as well as I could but I cannot pronounce several of its sounds.”⁷⁹ In December of the same year, he added that “Many Kaffers have visited the Station to whom I have endeavored to read Kaffer. [But] I have not attained and am not likely to attain the pronunciation of this extraordinary language.”⁸⁰ Given Laing’s limited language skills at this time, it appears likely that it was Klaas Love’s, rather than Laing’s, perception of the language that informed his statement that “the Kaffers...along the coast to a considerable distance speak a dialect much the same as that of the Kaffers [Xhosa].”⁸¹

Laing continued his language studies for the next two decades. However, native speaker proficiency continued to elude him. Thus, in February 1833, when Laing tried to preach to some local people in an impromptu manner, he had to acknowledge that “They did not readily understand my pronunciation. Even the words without clicks they did not understand.”⁸² Amid these problems, Laing continued to rely on the linguistic skills of his African interpreters in situations that demanded advanced language skills, notably during “public worship” and “when visiting the kraals and hamlets...”⁸³ In this latter activity, Laing was often accompanied by an African interpreter named Moset. “[Moset] is useful to me when visiting the Kaffres...as an interpreter,” Laing noted in 1841, “for though I speak in the native language, it is often necessary to cause him to repeat the words which I have used.”⁸⁴ Laing also continued to rely on African interpreters—notably Tente kaNgqika and Tshetshe Kleinveld—in the context of his translation activities. In 1840, he remarked about Tente that “He is already a good assistant in translating the Scriptures for the permanent use of the natives.”⁸⁵ When Tente died in 1842, Laing asked

⁷⁹ Shell, ed., JIJ, 6 Aug 1832, 298.

⁸⁰ Shell, ed., JIJ, 3-6 Dec 1832, 312.

⁸¹ Shell, ed., JIJ, 27 Feb 1832, 276-77.

⁸² Shell, ed., JIJ, 11 Feb 1833, 320.

⁸³ *QIGMS*, Winter, 1838, 4.

⁸⁴ *QIGMS*, Autumn 1841, 9-10.

⁸⁵ *QIGMS*, Autumn 1840, 6.

Tshetshe Kleinveld to assist him in a similar capacity.⁸⁶ Because Laing continued to rely on the expertise of his African interpreters at this time, it appears probable that Laing's statement of 1848 in which he declared that "It is scarcely necessary to say that the Fingoes and Kaffirs speak one and the same language" reflected once again not his perception of these speaking practices but that of his African interpreters.⁸⁷

African interpreters may have also shaped Wesleyan missionary William Boyce's views about the 'Caffre' language community. Born in Hull in 1803, Boyce arrived in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa in 1830 and stayed there until 1843. Shortly after his arrival, he moved to Buntingville station in order to serve among Chief Faku's Mpondo people. In this endeavor, he was assisted by Shrewsbury's former African interpreter John Burton, who helped him learn the language and communicate with the local population.⁸⁸ In June 1831, Theophilus Shepstone, then a fifteen-year-old youth who had been raised in the Eastern Cape frontier region, joined Boyce in order to assist him and Burton with translating various parts of the Bible "into Caffre."⁸⁹ By that time, Boyce had already given up hope that he, as an adult learner, would ever become sufficiently proficient in the language to do this type of work on his own. As he noted in a letter at the time:

After two years' experience, I am fully convinced that the obstacles in the way of an adult European acquiring a perfect knowledge of the Caffre language are unsurmountable...and some Europeans have been now ten years among the Caffres, which is long enough for a trial...⁹⁰

Consequently, it should come as no surprise that Boyce depended in major ways on the linguistic expertise of his two interpreters during his translation work. As he admitted, he did not translate

⁸⁶ CL, MS9039, PKM, 7 Apr 1847.

⁸⁷ *HFMR*, 1 Nov 1848, 553-4.

⁸⁸ *WMM*, Sep 1831, 645; *Ibid.*, Dec 1831, 860.

⁸⁹ *WMM*, Sep 1832, 664.

⁹⁰ *WMM*, Sep 1832, 664.

any of the texts himself, but rather supervised the translation work of Burton and Shepstone. “Last year,” he explained in March 1832, “I translated (or rather I superintended the translation of) a considerable portion of the Acts of the Apostles.... I am favoured with a good Dutch interpreter (a converted Caffre [John Burton]) as well as an English one, (in Theophilus Shepstone)...”⁹¹ Specifically, Boyce, who was, in his own words, “by no means capable of either writing or speaking Caffer correctly,” ensured the correctness of his translations by relying on Shepstone, who “is fully competent to translate into Caffer,” and by making sure that “every chapter has been revised and examined in conjunction with John Burton, my Caffre interpreter, who understands colonial Dutch.”⁹² Boyce’s dependence continued after this time: in 1837, he was still preaching through his African interpreter (possibly John Burton) to the community of Buntingville station.⁹³ In the face of Boyce’s continued reliance on the linguistic expertise of African interpreters, it is important to realize that his statement about the ‘Caffre’ language community—“The Kafir [language] is confined to the Amaxosa, Abatembu, Amapondo, and Amazulu tribes”—may reflect the interpreters’ rather than his own understanding of these speaking practices.⁹⁴

The influence of African interpreters is also perceptible in Wesleyan missionary William Shaw’s views about the ‘Caffre’ language community. Born in Scotland in 1798, Shaw arrived in the Eastern Cape as part of Sephton’s party of British settlers in 1820. Between 1820 and 1823, he worked among the region’s European settlers and Khoikhoi soldiers, which explains why he focused on acquiring Cape Dutch rather than the language of the neighboring African

⁹¹ *WMM*, Sep 1832, 664.

⁹² *WMM*, Sep 1833, 661. See also Boyce, *Grammar*, preface.

⁹³ Cory, ed., *Diary of Owen*, Buntingville, 1 Jun 1837, 16.

⁹⁴ William Boyce, “Introduction,” in Archbell, *Grammar*, xi-xv.

communities during this period.⁹⁵ Consequently, when Shaw ventured beyond the colonial boundary for the first time in August 1822, he was accompanied by the aforementioned Jan Tzatzoe who acted as his interpreter on this occasion.⁹⁶ Shaw depended on Tzatzoe's language skills again one year later when he traveled to the Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa in order to negotiate the establishment of Wesleyville station.⁹⁷ When several months later, Shaw and William Shepstone established Wesleyville station, they were accompanied by an African interpreter named Jantje Nooka on whom they henceforth depended in all their communications with the Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa and their Mfengu clients.⁹⁸ With Jantje's help, Shaw and Shepstone also began to translate simple sentences and hymns into the local language in order to use them during worship. "Anything that has already been written by the assistance of interpreters..." he explained in April 1824, "I can read so that the people fully understand me..."⁹⁹

While it is not always possible to identify the person who acted as Shaw's interpreter for the next several years (there appear to have been more than one, including Jantje Nooka, Yosef Wesley, Daniel Kotongo and David Boozak), it is clear that he continued to depend heavily on them. For instance, in early 1825, Shaw spoke by way of his interpreter to Hobo, a grandson of the famous Hoengiqua Chief Ruyter.¹⁰⁰ In February and March of the same year, Shaw gave sermons which, as one visitor noted, "the Interpreter [possibly Jantje] translated....sentence by sentence as it was delivered into Caffre..."¹⁰¹ One month later (April 1825), while Shaw visited the Ndlambe-Xhosa and Thembu, he asked Yosef Wesley and Daniel Kotongo to help him

⁹⁵ Shaw, *Story*, 271-2; *WMM*, Feb 1821, 150; *WMN*, 1 Oct 1821, 148.

⁹⁶ *WMM*, Mar 1823, 186-9.

⁹⁷ *WMM*, Jan 1824, 57; Shaw, *Story*, 339.

⁹⁸ *WMM*, Jul 1824, 487-8; Shaw, *Story*, 351-2, 358; Young, *Missionary*, 86. Note that Young spelled Jantje Nooka's name "Youtize Noqwa." More on Nooka below.

⁹⁹ *RWM*, 1824, W. Shaw, Wesleyville, 10 April 1824, 54.

¹⁰⁰ *WMM*, Jul 1825, W. Shaw, Wesleyville, 7 Feb 1825, 493.

¹⁰¹ MMS/SA/mf 301mf, Mr. Whitworth, Journal, 13 Feb 1825 and 27 March 1825.

communicate with the local people.¹⁰² By November 1826, Shaw continued to preach in Dutch “which his interpreter rendered into Caffre.”¹⁰³ During this time period, Shaw, assisted by his African interpreters, also prepared a rudimentary ‘Caffre’ language vocabulary and translated the Church Liturgy, the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten Commandments into that language.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, in December 1826 and again in May 1827, Shaw, in the company of his African interpreters and the newly-arrived William Shrewsbury, traveled to the Gcaleka-Xhosa and their Mfengu clients.¹⁰⁵ Importantly, it was during these two journeys that Shaw became convinced that the speaking practices of the Xhosa and Mfengu were mutually intelligible and formed part of single ‘Caffre’ language community. As he remarked in June 1827:

In the immediate vicinity of the spot selected [for Butterworth station], are a number of villages, formed by Africans of several distinct nations, who, in consequence of wars and commotions in the interior, have been scattered and driven from their native countries, and have sought refuge in the country of Hintsá...They are known among the Caffres under the general name of Amafengoo; they are, however, of many different nations, (some of them from the neighbourhood of the Portuguese settlements on the east coast,) *but all speak the Caffre language, with various degrees of difference as to the pronunciation.*¹⁰⁶

Given Shaw’s complete dependence on the linguistic expertise of his African interpreters at this time, we must assume that his assessment of the “Caffre’ language in general and the differences between the speaking practices of the Xhosa and Mfengu in particular, reflected the views of his interpreters rather than his own.

Although Shaw’s language skills improved over time, notably with regard to reading previously-translated texts,¹⁰⁷ he continued to depend on African interpreters in the context of his

¹⁰² *WMM*, Dec 1825, Mr. Whitworth, Journal, 2-4 April 1825, 851-2; Shaw, *Story*, 472.

¹⁰³ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 26 Nov 1826, 10.

¹⁰⁴ For ‘assisted,’ see *WMM*, Aug 1827, 536.

¹⁰⁵ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 10 Dec 1826, 13; NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 21 May 1827, 48.

¹⁰⁶ *WMM*, Dec 1827, 844. My emphasis. For the same conclusion, see also CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 10 Dec 1826, 13-14.

¹⁰⁷ MMS/SA/mf 301mf, W. Shaw to General Secretaries of the WMS, Wesleyville, 5 Aug 1827; NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 13 Apr 1828, 68.

translation work.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, he neither spoke nor understood the language well enough to be able to engage in impromptu conversations with native speakers or deliver entire sermons in the language. For these tasks, Shaw also continued to depend on the linguistic expertise of his interpreters, as he did on several documented occasions in 1828 and 1829.¹⁰⁹ It was in the latter year that Shaw, accompanied by William Shrewsbury and their African interpreters (one of them was John Burton),¹¹⁰ traveled through the Eastern Cape region, visiting the Gcaleka-Xhosa, Thembu, Bomvana and, finally, the Chief Faku's Mpondo people.¹¹¹ Importantly, the information Shaw gathered on this journey confirmed his belief that all these communities formed part of a single 'Caffre' language community. Thus, after having conducted a lengthy conversation with the Mpondo chief and counsellors by way of his African interpreters,¹¹² Shaw noted in his journal on May 16 that "[The Mpondo] language is the same as that of the Caffres [Xhosa], with only such a slight difference in the pronunciation of some words, that we found no difficulty of understanding them, or of making ourselves understood."¹¹³ Whose assessment of the differences between the speaking practices of the Xhosa and Mpondo does Shaw's conclusion represent? Given Shaw's and Shrewsbury's limited language skills at this time, I think we must conclude that this assessment of the differences between the speaking practices of the Xhosa and Mpondo reflected the views not of the two Wesleyan missionaries but of the African interpreters who accompanied them and provided them with the language expertise that they both lacked.

¹⁰⁸ NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 12 Apr 1828, 68.

¹⁰⁹ *WMM*, Mar 1829, 199; NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 12 Apr 1828, 68; *Ibid.*, 21 May 1828, 72-3; *WMM*, Sep 1829, 634; NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 17 Mar 1829, 92; *WMM*, Jan 1830, 56. Note that on this last occasion, Shaw appears to have been assisted by William Shrewsbury's interpreter Peter.

¹¹⁰ For 'one of them was John Burton,' see *WMM*, Dec 1830, 840.

¹¹¹ For details of this journey, see especially NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 3-16 May 1829, 95-101.

¹¹² Shaw, *Story*, 512-14. Note that Shaw's language skills were entirely inadequate for conducting these lengthy conversations without his African interpreters.

¹¹³ NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 16 May 1829, 100.

Following his return from Mpondoland in 1829, Shaw served for several years at Grahamstown before he relocated to England where he stayed between 1833 and 1837. In the latter year, he returned to the Eastern Cape region as the General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in Southeastern Africa.¹¹⁴ Although he continued to be interested in the local speaking practices, Shaw's energies were focused on expanding the mission field to the interior and Natal rather than improving his own language skills.¹¹⁵ However, it was not until 1848 that Shaw managed to travel to the Colony of Natal in order to visit the Wesleyan mission stations at Pietermaritzburg, Indaleni and Zwartkops (*Kwangubene*).¹¹⁶ As mentioned in the preceding chapter, Pietermaritzburg and Zwartkops stations included at this time two 'native teachers'—Thomas Fortuin and Vimbe (John Muir) respectively—who had trekked there from the Eastern Cape region one year earlier in order to escape the violence of the Seventh Frontier War. Given Shaw's limited language skills but profound interest in the relationship between the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions, it is more than likely that he consulted the opinions of Fortuin and Vimbe before concluding shortly after his return from Natal that "The natives [in Natal] are all Kaffirs, of the Zoola and other nations, and all speak the Kaffir language, with slight variations in their dialects from the language spoken by the Kaffirs on the border of the Cape Colony..."¹¹⁷

William Shaw was not the only missionary who traveled to Natal in 1848. At about the same time, Wesleyan missionary John Appleyard traveled to Pietermaritzburg in order to stay several weeks with his father-in-law, Wesleyan missionary James Archbell.¹¹⁸ Born in England in 1814, Appleyard had arrived in the Eastern Cape in 1840. He came to the region better-trained

¹¹⁴ Shaw, *Story*, 133-4.

¹¹⁵ Boyce, *Memoir*, 183, 192.

¹¹⁶ Boyce, *Memoir*, 198.

¹¹⁷ *WMN*, Mar 1849, William Shaw, Grahamstown, 8 Sep 1848, 41.

¹¹⁸ Appleyard, *War*, 7 Nov 1848, 120.

than most of his colleagues, having studied some Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Syriac and Chaldee and attended an introductory lecture on Oriental languages at King's College in London between 1834 and 1839.¹¹⁹ However, like his colleagues, Appleyard was not a linguistic genius. Thus, although he began to study Cape Dutch shortly after his arrival in South Africa (February 1840), Appleyard still struggled with that language more than four years later, stating in March 1844, "I hope soon to acquire the Dutch language."¹²⁰ In part, his difficulties with Cape Dutch can be explained with the fact that he tried "to study Kafir" at the very same time.¹²¹ Although he had at his disposal several people who spoke English and 'Caffre' (Xhosa) fluently and could have acted as his language instructors,¹²² Appleyard preferred acquiring this language with the help of books, including the grammar, dictionary and wordlists which had been previously prepared and published by Boyce, Ayliff and Dugmore.¹²³ Moreover, Appleyard's approach was noticeably mechanical and methodical. "To-night I began the Kafir Grammar a second time," he noted in November 1840, "I shall reduce all that I possibly can into tabular form, adopting the plan of the declensions of nouns, and singular and plural euphonic letters."¹²⁴ Finally, Appleyard evinced very early on a predilection for preparing his own learning-aids, including a dictionary which he first began to compile in December 1840.¹²⁵ However, this approach had produced only limited results by May 1841. As he explained at the time:

¹¹⁹ John Appleyard, *Memoir of the Rev. John Whittle Appleyard, Wesleyan Missionary in South Africa*, ed. Thornley Smith (London: Wesleyan Missionary Society, 1881), 6-7, 12-13, 18.

¹²⁰ Appleyard, *War*, 11 Mar 1844.

¹²¹ Appleyard, *Memoir*, 26 October 1840, 33-4.

¹²² Between 1840 and 1844, Appleyard served at Fort Peddie among communities of Ndlambe-Xhosa, Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa and Mfengu. Several people with these skills lived in the neighborhood of Fort Peddie at this time, including Theophilus Shepstone, a settler youth called Richard Walker who "speaks Caffer like his mother-tongue," and another settler youth named "Mary Philmore, a pious young woman, who interpreted with great facility and propriety." See Backhouse, *Extracts*, 29 Mar 1839, 1:56.

¹²³ Appleyard, *Memoir*, 7 Nov 1840, 10 Dec 1840, 50.

¹²⁴ Appleyard, *Memoir*, 9 Nov 1840, 50.

¹²⁵ Appleyard, *Memoir*, 10 Dec 1840, 50. He may have started a second version in June 1842, see Appleyard, *War*, 27 June 1842, 14.

Although I understood scarcely a word I read, yet I managed to give out the hymns, and get through the prayers so as to be understood in the general. May the Lord assist me in the acquisition of the language of this people, that I soon may have it in my power to speak and preach it!¹²⁶

Progress continued to be slow, however, and it was not until 1843 that Appleyard began to interact with the local communities without the assistance of one of his African interpreters. “This morning I met the class without an Interpreter,” he remarked on 28 April 1843, “and prayed with them at the close in their own language, for the first time.”¹²⁷ Two months later, he made his “first attempt at preaching in Kafir” (although it is unclear whether he spoke freely or read from a previously translated script).¹²⁸ Between March 1844 and March 1846, Appleyard’s progress in the language was interrupted when he served at Colesberg station on the Orange River where, as he remarked, “The Kaffer I am sorry to find will be of no use to me in this place...”¹²⁹ Following his return to the Fort Peddie region in 1846, Appleyard took charge of the Wesleyan printing press and began to work on the language in cooperation with his colleague Henry Dugmore who had been entrusted with overseeing “the revision and printing of the Kaffir version of the Scriptures.”¹³⁰

Given Appleyard’s limited skills in and exposure to the language between 1840 and 1845, it is rather surprising to find him deeply involved in the translation of the Bible and the publication of several philological studies of the language, including an article on “The Kaffir Dialects” in 1847 and the monograph on *The Kafir Language*, its history, classification and grammar in 1850.¹³¹ The solution to this riddle is that Appleyard worked in close cooperation with individuals who possessed native-speaker proficiency, including the African interpreter

¹²⁶ Appleyard, *War*, 2 May 1841, 6.

¹²⁷ Appleyard, *War*, 28 April 1843, 19.

¹²⁸ Appleyard, *War*, 19 Jul 1843, 20.

¹²⁹ Appleyard, *War*, 11 Mar 1844, 29.

¹³⁰ CL, MS15023, Minutes of the District Meeting, Grahamstown, 14 Jan 1846.

¹³¹ CL, MS15023, Minutes of the District Meeting at Grahamstown, 14 Jan 1846; John W. Appleyard. “The Kaffir Dialects,” *The South African Christian Watchman, and Missionary Magazine* (1847).

named “Old Josphe” and government official Charles Brownlee (mentioned in the preceding chapter).¹³² Several years later, Appleyard admitted that he had depended on this type of expertise while working on these and other publications. “In order to ensure as much correctness in this as possible,” he explained to the BFBS in 1859, “all my translations have been usually read over, sheet by sheet, previous to their going to the press, with an intelligent native Teacher...”¹³³

In the light of this evidence, it can be accepted as fact that when Appleyard visited Natal in 1848, he relied on the linguistic expertise of others to make sense of the relationship between the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions. Importantly, it is more than likely that, during this visit, the avid linguist Appleyard, like Shaw, met the aforementioned Vimbe and Fortuin and that their impressions of this relationship influenced, at least in part, the corrections that Appleyard introduced as part of Appendix B to his study of *The Kafir Language* (1850) shortly after his return to the Eastern Cape region.¹³⁴ It makes sense to quote in detail Appleyard’s views on this relationship before his journey to Natal:

The Kafir family includes the dialects which are spoken by the several tribes who inhabit the Eastern coast, extending from the Colonial boundary to within a short distance of Delagoa Bay....This family may be divided into three principal branches,--the Kafir,--the Zulu,--and the Fingoe [*Tekeza*]. The Kafir branch is spoken by the Amaxosa, or Kafirs proper...; by the Abatembu...; and by the Amampondo....The Zulu branch is spoken by the people commonly denominated the Amazulu....This branch is also spoken by the Natives at Natal....A dialect of this branch is likewise spoken by the people of Umzelekazi....The Fingoe [*Tekeza*] branch includes the dialects which are spoken by the Amafengu, the Amabaca, the Matabele, the Amaswazi, and a few other tribes who are only imperfectly known....The preceding dialects all vary from each other, whether belonging to the same branch or not. But the variation is in general so slight, that

¹³² Appleyard, *War*, 20 Jul 1846, 85; *Correspondence*, Brownlee to Morgan, Döhne, 27 Jul 1853, 20.

¹³³ BSA, E3/1/4 Records of the Editorial/Translation Department, Editorial Correspondence Incoming, J. Appleyard to the Secretary of BFBS, Mount Coke, 2 Jun 1859, 123-4.

¹³⁴ The information could not have come from Archbell who was not familiar with the speaking practices of the Eastern Cape region, because he had only served there for about a year in 1822. There may have been other informants, notably William Davis. For ‘Archbell,’ see *Proceedings of Natal*, 2:41. For ‘Davis,’ see chapter three.

natives of either of the tribes find very little difficulty in conversing with each other.¹³⁵

However, Appleyard's views on the relationship between the Kafir ('Caffre') and Zulu branches changed materially during his visit to Natal. Here too it makes sense to quote in detail the corrections that Appleyard introduced after his return from Natal:

Further inquiries respecting the dialects of the Kafir family, made during a few weeks' sojourn in the Natal colony, have led the writer to doubt the propriety of the division adopted in the above section. A better acquaintance with all of them, would probably show that a two-fold division was amply sufficient. The two branches may be termed, the Kafir, and the Fingoe [*Tekeza*]. Under the former there would be further included, the dialect of the Amazulu, and perhaps that of the people of Umzelekazi. The dialects of the Natal natives would be comprised, partly in one branch, and partly in the other.¹³⁶

Thus, whereas Appleyard had previously argued that this family included three branches—Kafir, Zulu and Fingo (*Tekeza*), he returned from his visit to Natal believing that Kafir and Zulu were so similar that they formed a single Kafir branch. Given his continued dependence on the linguistic expertise of others at this time, it seems appropriate to conclude that his revised assessment of the differences between the speaking practices of these groups represented at least to some extent the perspective of the people he met while at Natal, notably Vimbe and Fortuin.

Conclusion

As these case studies have shown, Laing, Boyce, Shaw and Appleyard, as adult learners, were never able to acquire native-speaker proficiency in the local speaking practices. As a result of these limitations, they remained dependent on the linguistic expertise of their African interpreters for the duration of their activities in the South African mission field. Importantly, as

¹³⁵ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 36-43. As mentioned earlier, Appleyard wrote 'Fingoe' but his word choice is confusing because he did not refer to the dialect of the 'Fingoes' (Mfengu) but to the speaking practices of the Natal region which others later identified as 'Tekeza.' In order to avoid confusion, I added to *Tekeza* in brackets.

¹³⁶ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, Appendix B, 377-8.

these case studies have demonstrated, these missionaries depended on the linguistic expertise of their African interpreters at the very moments when they made statements about the relationship between the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans and Zulu that suggested that these practices formed part of a single 'Caffre' language community. Given this context, this chapter concludes that these statements about the extension and character of the 'Caffre' language community originated at least in part with the missionaries' African interpreters. The possibility that the Eastern Cape missionaries' statements about the unity of the 'Caffre' language community represented, at least in part, reworkings of ideas held by African interpreters raises questions about the identity of these interpreters and the extent to which their views may have been shaped by preexisting, genuine African ideas about language and the relationship between language and identity. These questions will be addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

The Eastern Cape Missionaries and African Ideas about Language (Part Two), 1800–1853

Why did the Eastern Cape missionaries' African interpreters consistently downplay the differences that existed between the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans, and Zulu? Investigating the group identities of these interpreters, this chapter uses a series of case studies to demonstrate that these interpreters had their broader cultural roots among the Khoikhoi and the Xhosa and their narrower roots among mixed, multilingual frontier groups such as the Gonaqua-Khoi and the Ntinde-Xhosa. The chapter continues by arguing that these communities promoted descent- and allegiance-based, rather than language-based, discourses of group identity. It is important to realize that this does not mean that these groups did not notice differences between each other's speaking practices, but rather that they did not mobilize these differences for the purpose of constructing group identities. Michel Foucault's ideas about the relationship between "discourse" and "meaning" (objects of knowledge) inform the significance of the absence of language-based discourses of group identity in this region at this time. Because, as Foucault noted, meaning is constructed by way of discourse, the absence of discourse signifies the absence of meaning (objects of knowledge). Consequently, in the absence of preexisting language-based discourses of group identity that would have apportioned meaning to the differences (however small) between people's speaking practices by mobilizing them for the purpose of identity construction, the Eastern Cape missionaries' interpreters emerged from a cultural context that did not perceive the differences between the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans, and Zulu as significant and, thus, as markers of distinct objects of knowledge (that is, languages). On the basis of this line of

argument, it is suggested that genuine preexisting African ideas about language, language differences, and the relationship between language and identity contributed to the Eastern Cape missionaries' perspective of the nature and extent of the 'Caffre' language community.

African Interpreters' Backgrounds

Establishing the "ethnic" and "linguistic" background of the Eastern Cape missionaries' African interpreters is not an easy task. As Donovan Williams noted in 1985, "mission stations during the first half of the nineteenth century in Caffraria...were rather more complex in ethnic composition, variety of occupations, allegiances, and interconnections with the outside world than is generally assumed by most historians."¹ Moreover, although it is clear that people who were identified and who self-identified as Khoikhoi (Hottentot), Coloreds, Gonaqua-Khoi, Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa, and Ntinde-Xhosa lived on mission stations in this period, it is often difficult to identify the group identity of specific individuals mentioned in period sources.² However, allowing for some speculation on my part, a detailed reading of the available primary sources suggests that the Eastern Cape missionaries' African interpreters had their broader cultural roots among the Khoikhoi and Xhosa and their narrower roots among the mixed and multilingual Gonaqua-Khoi and Ntinde-Xhosa. In what follows, this assertion will be substantiated through case studies of the African interpreters who served some of the most prominent linguists among the Eastern Cape missionaries.³

¹ Williams, "Social," 1:33.

² Williams, "Social," 2:25-6; Williams, "Missionaries," 149-50.

³ A detailed social history of these African interpreters, many of whom became Christian evangelists in their subsequent careers, is still lacking and represents a blind spot in the historiography of the Eastern Cape region. For a fascinating study of African interpreters and evangelists in the Northern Cape region, see especially Stephen Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier: Tswana Evangelists and their Communities during the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011).

Jan Tzatzoe

Born circa 1791, Jan or Dyani Tzatzoe was the son of Chief Kote Tzatzoe (son of Mbangé, son of Ntinde, son of Togu) of the Ntinde, a Xhosa clan and chiefdom that had incorporated many Khoikhoi over the course of its existence (perhaps not surprisingly, Dyani's mother was of Khoi descent).⁴ At the age of fifteen, the Xhosa- and probably Khoi-speaking Tzatzoe⁵ became a member of the LMS mission station of Bethelsdorp, where he also acquired the Cape Dutch language.⁶ "He writes the Dutch language extremely well," one visitor to Bethelsdorp noted in 1809, "and translates from it into his own tongue."⁷ The combination of these language skills recommended Tzatzoe for the position of African interpreter in 1816. For the next three years, he served in this role under LMS missionary Joseph Williams at the Kat River station among the Rharhabe-Xhosa and Gonaqua.⁸ Upon Williams's death, Tzatzoe moved to Theopolis, where he married a Khoi or Gona woman and continued to work as interpreter and evangelist under the Reverend George Barker.⁹ One year later, Tzatzoe moved to Chumie station, where, as mentioned previously, he supported government missionary John Brownlee in a similar capacity. In 1825, Tzatzoe accompanied Brownlee to the Buffalo River, where he henceforth served the latter and Kayser as interpreter and intermediary in their dealings with the indigenous population. Regarding his language skills at this time, Wesleyan missionary William Shrewsbury noted:

⁴ For 'incorporating Khoi,' see Jeff Peires, *House*, 197, note 12; for 'Khoikhoi mother,' see Moodie, ed., *Record IV*, Collins, Notes, July 1809, 53.

⁵ I use the name that appears most frequently in the sources. Thus, "Tzatzoe" rather than "Jan." I have followed the same convention for the other African interpreters.

⁶ Note that the Khoi language in its Gona inflection was spoken at Bethelsdorp at least until 1820. See Anthony Triall, "The Khoesan Languages," in Rajend Mesthrie, ed., *Language in South Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 30-1; Triall is citing Jane Sales, *Mission Stations and the Coloured Communities of the Eastern Cape, 180-1852* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1975), 10, 29, 84.

⁷ Moodie, ed., *Record IV*, Collins, Notes, July 1809, 53.

⁸ *Missionary Register*, 1 Jan 1819, 8. For the population at the Kat River station, refer to note 14 below.

⁹ For 'Gonqua woman,' see Williams, "Social," 2:52; James Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1844), King William's Town 1839, 238.

He first read his Text, Matt. 19:1-6 with fluency from the Dutch Bible, and afterwards, with great care and exactness, gave a verbal translation thereof, sentence by sentence, before he proceeded to expound the passage.... Without doubt he ranks first in point of qualifications for translating the Scriptures into the Kafir Language.¹⁰

Noyi Gciniswa (aka Robert Balfour)

Initially, the most influential of the SPMS's African interpreters was a man named Noyi Gciniswa, also known by his baptismal name of Robert Balfour. Born in 1783, Balfour appears to have had strong family links to Xhosa clans (Tshawe and Kwayi) as well as to Chief Cwama's Gonaqua.¹¹ The latter connection may explain why Balfour resided near the Kat River, where Cape Dutch- and Xhosa-speaking Gonaqua represented a significant segment of the population in the early decades of the nineteenth century.¹² As a member of this community, Balfour came into contact with the LMS missionary Joseph Williams (and his assistant Jan Tzatzoe) and Ntsikana (a spiritual leader of Rharhabe-Xhosa descent) between 1816 and 1819. When Williams and Ntsikana died in 1818 and 1819, respectively, Balfour led a portion of this Kat

¹⁰ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 31 May 1829, 39. See also *WMM*, Mar 1823, 187.

¹¹ Balfour's connection to the Xhosa emerges from an account which Balfour dictated to John Bennie in the 1830s, and in which he traced his lineage to the Tshawe clan of the Xhosa nation through his father Gciniswa (the son of Pazima, the son of Gando, the nephew of Tshiwo, the son of Ngconde, son of Togu, . . . , son of Tshawe). Balfour's ties to the Gonaqua emerges from the same account and a second version related by John Knox Bokwe and recorded by German-born missionary Albert Kropf. While the former mentions that, in the early years of the eighteenth century, Tshiwo and Balfour's great-grandfather Gando had been involved in a dispute as part of which the latter had been forced to escape westward, the second version explains that, during this escape, Gando had found refuge among Chief Hinsati of the Inqua-Khoi. This latter version adds that Gando gave his sister in marriage to Hinsati and that Hinsati fathered with her Cwama, the subsequent chief of an important group of Gonaqua. The familial connection that Gando and his descendants, including Balfour, had with Cwama is reinforced by this version's claim that many of Gando's followers, possibly Balfour's grandfather Pazima, joined Cwama after Gando had been demoted to commoner status (Kwayi) by Tshiwo in the aftermath of their reconciliation and joint-attack on Hinsati. See *HFMR*, 1 Feb 1848, 331; Robert Balfour Noyi, "Ama-Xosa History," trans. John Bennie, in John Knox Bokwe, *Ntsikana: The Story of an African Convert*, 2nd ed. (Lovedale: Mission Press, 1914), 36-9; Albert Kropf, *Das Volk der Xosa-Kaffern im östlichen Südafrika* (Berlin: Berliner evangelische Missions-Gesellschaft, 1889), 5-11; Harinck, "Interaction," 153-8; Jeff Peires, "'He Wears Short Clothes!': Rethinking Rharhabe (c.1775-c.1782)," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38:2 (Jun 2012), 336.

¹² For 'Gonaqua' as 'a distinct majority,' see Hodgson, "Battle," 74; Philip, *Researches*, 2:167-8. For 'Cape Dutch- and Xhosa-speaking,' note that the Gonaqua were in the process of a major language shift from Khoi- to Cape Dutch and Xhosa (more on this below).

River community (notably his Ntinde wife Nobuyiswa, Ntsikana's children, and several other members) to Chumie station, where they became the Scottish missionaries' so-called "first fruits of the Caffre nation" in 1823.¹³ From circumstantial evidence, it appears that the people who joined Chumie station from the Kat River spoke both Xhosa and Cape Dutch.¹⁴ In Balfour's case, this bilingualism came to the attention of John Bennie because it placed the former in an ideal position to act as interpreter, a position that usually required translating between Cape Dutch and Xhosa.¹⁵ Not surprisingly, Balfour soon became indispensable to Bennie, correcting all his translations by providing the "appropriate and idiomatic Kaffre expressions" between circa 1831 and 1838.¹⁶

Klaas Love, Moset, Vimbe, Tente, and Tshetshe Kleinveld

When Balfour moved from the Kat River to Chumie station in 1820, he was accompanied by an indigenous couple whose baptismal names were recorded as John and Elizabeth Love in 1823. The Scottish missionaries identified the Loves as 'Caffres' but, as Balfour's case suggests, they may have had genealogical connections to the Xhosa as well as Gonaqua.¹⁷ More importantly, the Loves had a son by the name of Klaas, who, in 1831, moved from Chumie station to Burnshill in order to work as the interpreter to James Laing.¹⁸ Like Balfour and for

¹³ *RGAMS*, Mar 1846, 13-14.

¹⁴ See John Brownlee, Chumie, June 1820 as quoted in Philip, *Researches*, 2:193. Note also that Charles Henry Matshaya, Balfour's fellow resident at the Kat, claimed to have possessed a Dutch Bible in 1819 and, according to Laing, had "some understanding of Dutch" in 1831. See J. Brownlee, Chumie, June 1820 as quoted in Philip, *Researches*, 2:193; Charles Henry Matshaya, "Life of Charles Henry," trans. James Laing, in *QIGMS*, Summer 1841, 6; Shell, ed., *JLJ*, 15 Oct 1831, 234

¹⁵ *CL*, MS9037, PKM, 5 Feb 1829.

¹⁶ See above for details and a reference to this quotation.

¹⁷ *RGAMS*, Mar 1846, 13-14. In this context note that the names of their children—Klaas and Lentje—may betray closer connections to Khoi or Gonaqua.

¹⁸ For 'interpreter,' see Shell, ed., *JLJ*, 28 Oct 1831, 239. That Laing's interpreter Klaas was in fact Klaas Love emerges from the following evidence: it is known that, between 1833 and 1834, Laing's interpreter Klaas "put away" his wife (whose name is unknown but who was the daughter of heathen parents at Chumie station) and then became involved with a resident at Burnshill station by the name of Mama, the daughter of station-resident Charles

similar reasons, Klaas spoke both Xhosa and Cape Dutch, skills which enabled him to interpret for Laing and act as his language instructor between 1831 and 1834.¹⁹ When Klaas left Burnshill in about 1834 in order to become a government interpreter,²⁰ his place was partially filled by an eight-year-old “Kaffre boy” named Moset (short for Somerset) whose parents lived in the vicinity of Burnshill station.²¹ Henceforth, Moset, who spoke Xhosa and (some) Cape Dutch, as well as English, accompanied Laing as interpreter when the latter visited the neighboring Xhosa communities.²²

Vimbe and a man named Tente supported Laing in a similar capacity at this time. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, Vimbe, whose baptismal name was John Muir, had a Khoikhoi father and Xhosa mother.²³ Under Laing’s tutorship, Vimbe, who spoke fluent Xhosa and Cape Dutch, became one of Burnshill’s best scholars, composing or translating hymns in about 1836, passing the “native schoolmaster” examination in 1838, and entering Lovedale Seminary in 1841. Given his linguistic skills, Vimbe probably supported Laing’s translation work and interpreted for him in the period between the early 1830s until his departure for the Cefane River and Natal in 1845 and 1846, respectively. This supposition is particularly likely

Henry Matshaya. When this case of adultery came to light in 1834, Laing identified Mama’s paramour as John Love’s son, who must have been Klaas the interpreter because Laing explained that “we cannot say that he [Mama’s paramour] is wholly free from former matrimonial obligations. He was formerly married, and may nearly be said to have done what was equivalent of putting away his wife.” See Shell, ed., JLJ, 6 Sep 1833, 336-7; *Ibid.*, 24 Oct 1833, 345; CL, MS9037, PKM, 22 May 1834; Shell, ed., JLJ, 23 May 1834, 361; *Ibid.*, 6 Sep 1834, 373-4.

¹⁹ Shell, ed., JLJ, 28 Oct 1831, 239; *Ibid.*, 23 Jan 1832, 264; *Ibid.*, 24 Jan 1832, 265; *Ibid.*, 25 Jan 1832, 265; *Ibid.*, 4 Feb 1832, 270; *Ibid.*, 9 Feb 1832, 270; *Ibid.*, 9-12 Jul 1832, 294.

²⁰ In addition to his marriage troubles (1833-4), Klaas Love appears to have been dissatisfied with his wages at this time; see Shell, ed., JLJ, 29 Jul 1834, 370; *Ibid.*, 2 Aug 1834, 70. It is possible that he left the station in about 1835 in order to become a government interpreter, a position he definitely occupied in the 1840s when he served as the “government interpreter” attached to Charles Lennox Stretch, the Diplomatic Agent among the Ngqika-Xhosa. See *Imperial Blue Book, No. 424, Copies of Extracts of Correspondence relative to the Kafir Tribes, between the Years 1837 and 1845*, (1851), Enclosure No. 31, Statement of the Chief Tyali to Lieutenant-Governor, 14 April 1842, 116 (passim); *HFMR*, 1 Apr 1845, 62.

²¹ *RGMS*, 1840, 28; *QIGMS*, Autumn 1841, 9-10.

²² *RGMS*, 1840, 25; *QIGMS*, Autumn 1841, 9-10.

²³ For details on Vimbe, refer to chapter three.

because Vimbe's closest friend at Burnshill, Tente, was documented as supporting Laing in this manner at this time.

Born in circa 1816 as a minor son of the Rharhabe-Xhosa Chief Ngqika (son of Mlawu, son of Rharhabe, son of Phalo, son of Tshiwo, son of Ngconde, son of Togu..., son of Tshawe) and his wife Nobuto of the Mbalu-Xhosa (the people of Nqeno, son of Langa, son of Phalo), Tente grew up in the region between the upper reaches of the Kat, Chumie, and Keiskamma Rivers. Sometime after his father's death in 1829, Tente, along with his older brother Matwa, moved to Laing's Burnshill station, where he resided (with some interruptions) until 1841. During this period, Tente learned how to read and write, and added Cape Dutch and English to his preexisting Xhosa language skills. An avid and talented reader, Tente, like Vimbe, became a native schoolmaster for the Scottish mission in 1838 and joined the first incoming class at the Lovedale Institution (Seminary) in 1841. Moreover, in the period between 1838 until his untimely death in 1842, Tente served as Laing's interpreter and supported the latter's translation work.²⁴ As Laing noted in 1840: "Tente is a good interpreter, and has often gone out on visits to the natives with...myself.... He is also a good assistant in translating the Scriptures for the permanent use of the natives."²⁵

After Tente's death in 1842 and Vimbe's departure for the Cefane River in 1845, Laing began to rely on the linguistic expertise of Tshetshe Kleinveld.²⁶ Born near Lovedale in circa 1828, Tshetshe lived with his Gonaqua parents²⁷ at Pirie station until 1841, when he formed part

²⁴ The details on Tente are taken from *QIGMS*, Autumn 1840, 1-7; Shell, ed., JLJ, 21 Oct 1831, 236-7; *Ibid.*, 12 May 1834, 359; *Ibid.*, 19 May 1834, 360; *Ibid.*, 23 Jun 1834, 366; *Ibid.*, 4 Jul 1834, 367; *Ibid.*, 6 Feb 1835, 403; *RGMS*, 1837, 15; CL, MS9038, PKM, 20 Sept 1838; *QIGMS*, Winter 1838, 5; *Ibid.*, Summer 1839, 405; *Ibid.*, Autumn 1839, 6; *RGMS*, 1840, 12-3; *QIGMS*, Winter 1841, 2-4; *RGMS*, 1841, 12-3; *QIGMS*, Autumn 1841, 3; *RGMS*, 1843, 5-10.

²⁵ *QIGMS*, Autumn 1840, 6.

²⁶ For Tshetshe's name being 'Kleinveld,' see CL, MS9039, PKM, 4 April 1855 and 4 Jul 1855.

²⁷ For Kleinvelts living at Pirie station, see CL, MS8116, J. Ross to H. Ross, 20 Dec 1839. On the basis of their Dutch-sounding name, Williams suggested that the Kleinvelts were Khoikhoi or Coloureds. However, not knowing

of the first incoming class at Lovedale Institution.²⁸ At Lovedale, the Xhosa-speaking Tshetshe learned how to “read and understand English” and soon was able to “read from the English Bible” and then translate any passage “into Kaffre.”²⁹ In the aftermath of the Seventh Frontier War (1846–7), these skills enabled Tshetshe to serve as teacher at the Lovedale mission school and to assist Laing, who had moved from Burnshill to Lovedale in 1843, with his translation activities.³⁰ His role as interpreter and translator at this time is confirmed by an entry in the minutes of the Presbytery of Kaffraria for April 7, 1847 that states that “Tshetshe was helping with trans [lation work].”³¹

John Burton and Peter

Like Laing, the Wesleyan missionaries usually surrounded themselves with several African interpreters. For instance, William Shrewsbury depended on the assistance of two individuals with the baptismal names of John Burton and Peter (surname unknown). Born in circa 1790 as the son of a San woman and probably a Xhosa man, Peter became Shrewsbury’s interpreter in March 1827.³² With his wife and three children,³³ the Xhosa- and Cape Dutch-speaking Peter accompanied Shrewsbury to Butterworth station shortly afterwards and remained

that Tshetshe was the son of the Kleinvelds, he also suggested that Tshetshe, given his Xhosa-sounding name, may have been of Xhosa descent. The administrators at Lovedale station where Tshetshe lived in 1841 identified him as one of their “Kaffre pupils.” Given these contradictions and the fact that Tshetshe spoke fluent Xhosa, it appears more likely than not that the Kleinvelds were Gonaqua. See Williams, “Social,” 2:32-3; *RGMS*, 1843, 14-15. For his language skills see below.

²⁸ *QIGMS*, Autumn 1841, 2-3; *RGMS*, 1843, 3; *Ibid.*, 1843, 13-15.

²⁹ *RGMS*, 1843, 14-15.

³⁰ *HFMR*, 1 Nov 1845, 237; CL, MS9039, PKM, 21 Jul 1845; *Ibid.*, 7 Apr 1847. Note that Tshetshe resided at Lovedale with some interruption between 1847 and 1855. See CL, MS9039, PKM, 7 Jul 1847; CL, MS9039, PKM, 4 Jul 1855.

³¹ CL, MS9039, PKM, 7 Apr 1847.

³² In 1829, Shrewsbury said that Peter was “more than forty years of age,” see *WMM*, Dec 1830, 842. For ‘San woman,’ see CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 4 Dec 1827, 28. For ‘probably a Xhosa man,’ note that Peter spoke Xhosa and that it is a matter of record that the Xhosa had San (abaTwa) clients and intermarried with them. See CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 25 Mar 1827, 19; Peires, *House*, 24.

³³ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 25 Jun 1827, 20; *Ibid.*, 21 Aug 1828, 34.

there for the next three years, serving as his interpreter and helping him with his translation activities.³⁴ Peter's skills in the Xhosa language are well-attested. "He speaks in Kaffer with great readiness and considerable feeling," Shrewsbury noted in 1827, adding two years later, "I have been much employed with Peter in translating..."³⁵

Shrewsbury's second interpreter at this time was a "young man" who received the baptismal name "John Burton" on 4 January 1829.³⁶ Shortly after his baptism, Burton accompanied Shrewsbury on a visit to Grahamstown, serving as his guide and interpreter.³⁷ He served in the same capacity during Shrewsbury and Shaw's journey to Mpondoland later in the same year.³⁸ Mpondoland appealed to Burton, for one year later he moved to that region in order to serve as William Boyce's interpreter between 1830 and 1833.³⁹ Both Shrewsbury and Boyce identified Burton as a 'Caffre' and acknowledged his skills in that language on several occasions.⁴⁰ Importantly, Burton also spoke Cape Dutch, which he appears to have acquired while living in close proximity to Dutch farmers during his youth.⁴¹ This evidence suggests that John Burton may have been of Gonaqua descent or, at the very least, that he was a member of one of the Xhosa groups (Dange-, Mbalu- or Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa) who occupied the border region with the colony and its Dutch-speaking farming community.

³⁴ As indicated above, the nature of his work as an interpreter suggests that Peter also spoke Cape Dutch. Note also in this context that Peter's wife had received the Cape Dutch name 'Genade' rather than the English name 'Grace' at her baptism in 1828. See CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 23 Aug 1828, 34.

³⁵ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 25 Mar 1827, 19; *Ibid.*, 10 Apr 1829, 38..

³⁶ CL, MS15252, Diary of Shrewsbury, 4 Jan 1829, 36. For 'young man,' see *WMM*, Oct 1829, 705.

³⁷ *WMM*, Oct 1829, 705.

³⁸ *WMM*, Dec 1830, 839-40.

³⁹ *WMM*, Sep 1831, 645-6; *Ibid.*, Sep 1832, 664.

⁴⁰ *WMM*, Oct 1829, 705.

⁴¹ *WMM*, Dec 1830, 839-40; *Ibid.*, Sep 1832, 664.

Daniel Kotongo, Yosef Wesley, David Boesak, and Jantje Nooka

William Shaw also used several African interpreters during his tenure in the Eastern Cape region. Baptized “Daniel” in October 1829,⁴² Kotongo served as Shaw’s interpreter between circa 1825 and 1830.⁴³ Shaw identified him as his “faithful Caffre servant” on February 23, 1825.⁴⁴ Two years later, he described Kotongo as “our Interpreter from Wesleyville” and credited him with possessing “complete knowledge of the native feelings and customs.”⁴⁵ These statements and the fact that Kotongo apparently spoke fluent Xhosa and Cape Dutch may suggest that he was either of Gonaqua or Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa descent. Shaw’s second interpreter at Wesleyville was a man whose baptismal name was “Yosef Wesley.”⁴⁶ Before moving to Wesleyville in 1825, Yosef had spent some time in the frontier region, possibly at the Kat River or Theopolis.⁴⁷ He spoke Xhosa and Cape Dutch, which allowed him to work as an interpreter at Wesleyville, a role he occupied for the next two decades.⁴⁸ Although Yosef Wesley’s group identity is never specified in the primary sources, his former residence in the border region and his language skills suggest that he may have been of Gonaqua descent.

David Boesak was Shaw’s third interpreter at Wesleyville.⁴⁹ Boesak appears to have already lived among or near the Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa by the time Shaw first arrived there in 1823, for it was said that he had “left his Garden and all its contents as soon as he heard that a

⁴² NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 11 Oct 1829, 109.

⁴³ In 1830, he accompanied Wesleyan missionary Richard Haddy to Clarkebury station, see *WMM*, Apr 1831, 280.

⁴⁴ *WMM*, Dec 1825, 849.

⁴⁵ NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, April 1827, 46.

⁴⁶ MMS/SA/mf 301, W. Shaw, Wesleyville, 20 Sep 1825. Note that the spelling of his name included Yosep, Yosef and Joseph.

⁴⁷ MMS/SA/mf 303, S. Young, Wesleyville, 10 Dec 1830.

⁴⁸ *WMM*, Dec 1825, 851; Ayliff, *Journal*, Wesleyville, 7 Dec 1826, 65 and 8 Dec 1826, 67; MMS/SA/mf 301, W. Shrewsbury, Wesleyville, 31 Mar 1827; NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 10 Jan 1828, 57; *WMM*, Sep 1829, 634; Appleyard, *War*, 20 Jul 1846, 85. For ‘Xhosa to Cape Dutch and vice versa,’ see *WMM*, Sep 1829, 635.

⁴⁹ NLSA, MSB435, Shaw, Journal, 21 May 1827, 48. The spelling of the name includes Boesak, Boozak, Boezak, etc.

Missionary had come to Wesleyville...⁵⁰ However, his name and language skills suggest that Boesak was Gonaqua rather than of (pure) Khoikhoi or Xhosa heritage. Shaw's fourth and final interpreter at Wesleyville was Jantje Nooka.⁵¹ Jantje was descended from a family of Gonaqua who had inhabited the Eastern Cape frontier region since the last quarter of the eighteenth century. This fact emerges from the journal of the Dutch naturalist traveler Robert Jacob Gordon who, while traveling in the vicinity of modern Port Elizabeth in 1778, noted:

Found...a kraal of the Gounaqua chief, Nouka, who had ten straw huts belonging to the people with him, among which some were true Caffers.... Nouka complained that he always behaved well to the Hollanders, fetching their runaway slaves from the Caffers and that they had now driven him from the Van Stadens River where he had always lived.⁵²

Three decades later, some of the descendants of this chief lived at the Kat River, where LMS missionary Joseph Williams remarked in 1816 that "Hendriek Nucker with ten families joined us. This man is appointed by Gika [Ngqika] as the Chief of the people residing here."⁵³ In the same year, Hendrik Nooka appeared several times in the colonial records, each time identified as "the Gonaqua Hottentot...the interpreter of the Caffre Chief Ngqika."⁵⁴ In 1823, William Shaw hired the Xhosa- and Cape Dutch-speaking Jantje Nooka—who was probably the son of Hendrik and who, by then, was married to a Khoikhoi woman—to accompany him as his interpreter to the Gqunukwebe-Xhosa.⁵⁵ Jantje served in this role at Wesleyville until the Sixth Frontier War (1834–5), when he returned to the neighborhood of the Kat River, where "the Nooka family of

⁵⁰ MMS/SA/mf 303, S. Young, Wesleyville, 10 Dec 1830.

⁵¹ The spelling of the name Jantje includes Hans, Joutie, Johannes and Youtize. The spelling of "Nooka" also varies and includes Nookqa, Noeka, Nouka, Nucker, Noega, Nauka, Nquka, Noqwa, Guka and Noqa.

⁵² Gordon, *Journal*, 14–15 Jan 1778, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 53.

⁵³ CWM/LMSA/IC/Box6/3/D/32/J. Williams, 15 Jun 1816 to 7 Aug 1817.

⁵⁴ H. C. V. Leibbrandt, ed., *De Rebelle van 1815, algemeen bejan als Slachters Nek* (Cape Town: Juta, 1903), 11 Jan 1816 and 13 Jan 1816, 15, 16. My translation.

⁵⁵ Young, *Missionary*, 86; Shaw, *Story*, 351–2; MMS/SA/mf 303, S. Young, Wesleyville, 10 Dec 1830.

Gona Caffers” represented an influential family and where Jantje henceforth worked among the Ngqika- and Dange-Xhosa on behalf of the LMS.⁵⁶

African Discourses of Group Identity in the Lowveld Region

These short biographies demonstrate that the Eastern Cape missionaries’ African interpreters had their wider cultural roots among the Khoikhoi and Xhosa, and their narrower cultural roots among mixed and multilingual “frontier” communities, notably the Gonaqua and Ntinde. As I will suggest below, this means that these interpreters came from communities that appear to have achieved political mobilization and socio-political differentiation by promoting descent- and allegiance-based, rather than language-based, discourses of group identity.⁵⁷

Theoretical Context

The theoretical point of departure for these conclusions is the aforementioned assumption held by scholars such as Terence Ranger and Paul Landau that Africans did not use language as a marker of group identity in the late independent period.⁵⁸ It makes sense to reiterate here that one argument that is commonly used to support this assumption is the idea that there existed a “linguistic continuum” within the Bantu language group of southern Africa, which rendered the differences between neighboring peoples’ speaking practices so minute that they were not mobilized for the purpose of constructing and differentiating group identities.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Backhouse, *Extracts*, 28 Apr 1839, 1:76. See also *Ibid.*, 15 May 1839, 76-77; *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, Aug 1839, 409.

⁵⁷ As I shall explore in chapter seven, the emergence of the Zulu conquest state after 1817 represented a radical departure from what I am going to describe here.

⁵⁸ For details, refer to pages 132-3, and Ranger, *Invention*, 4;

⁵⁹ Ranger, *Invention*, 14. See also Ranger, “Missionaries,” 127; Landau, *Popular*, 1.

A similar linguistic continuum existed among the Nguni-speaking groups that dominated the lowveld region between the Great Fish River and Delagoa Bay. As shall be argued below, by rendering the speaking practices between these groups incrementally rather than absolutely different, this continuum, along with the absence of centralizing state structures, prevented the lowveld communities of South Africa from mobilizing language for the purpose of group identity construction and differentiation in the period before the rise of conquest states in the Natal-Zululand region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

However, one issue must be addressed directly in this context. It has been suggested that, when so-called Nguni-speaking groups first migrated into the lowveld region during the second millennium C.E., these newcomers encountered preexisting groups or firstcomers who spoke a language or languages which differed more radically from their own and that, in turn, these radical language differences may have given rise to language-based discourses of group identity. This suggestion emerged in the context of the work of archeologists Gavin Whitelaw and Simon Hall for the Natal-Zululand region. Using Igor Kopytoff's model of an "internal African frontier" as a theoretical point of departure,⁶⁰ they argue that Nguni-speaking groups migrated into this region in the eleventh century C.E. and began to politically and socially exclude the linguistically different, iron-working firstcomers, giving rise to the category *amalala* as a short-hand for othered and politically and socially excluded and marginalized people in the region.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Igor Kopytoff, "The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture," in I. Kopytoff, ed., *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 3-84.

⁶¹ Gavin Whitelaw and Simon Hall, "Archeological Contexts and the Creation of Social Categories before the Zulu Kingdom," paper distributed at the conference on "Izithunguthu: Southern African Past before the Colonial Era, Their Archives and Their Ongoing Present/Presence," Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative (University of Cape Town, 16-18, July 2015), 123-151. See also Simon Hall, "Farming Communities of the Second Millennium: Internal Frontiers, Identity, Continuity and Change," in Carolyn Hamilton, Bernard Mbenga and Robert Ross, eds., *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Volume 1, From Early Times to 1885* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 112-167. Note that Hall suggests that the firstcomers spoke an early form of Shona, see Hall, "Farming Communities," 131.

Importantly, Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright have taken up this argument in order to suggest that the radical language differences that existed between the Nguni-speaking newcomers and the non-Nguni-speaking firstcomers may have been mobilized by the former to construct this *amalala* category for the latter, with the corollary that “language having been used as a marker of ‘social identity’ in an era that began long before the rise of conquest states.”⁶²

Whitehall and Hall’s proposition that the *amalala* category emerged out of this process of firstcomer–newcomer interactions in the early centuries of the first millennium C.E. is reasonable, albeit not compelling.⁶³ However, I am more doubtful of Hamilton and Wright’s idea that the language differences between newcomers and firstcomers were mobilized for the purpose of constructing superior and inferior social identities at this point in time. I am wary of this idea because, unlike the conquest states that emerged in the Natal-Zululand region in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,⁶⁴ these newcomers appear not to have possessed the coercive means (the permanent military regiments or *amabutho*) that would have enabled them to permanently marginalize firstcomers. Given the absence of such coercive means, it seems more likely that these newcomers promoted discourses of incorporation and sameness rather than exclusion and difference and that, in this context, language differences (however real in practice) were not mobilized for the purpose of (social) identity construction and differentiation. In fact, Whitelaw and Hall show that this was precisely what happened in the Soutpansberg region during the mid-fifteenth century, when the interactions between Kalanga-speaking newcomers

⁶² Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, “Political Differentiation in the Chiefdoms of the Phongolo-Thukela Region before Shaka’s Time: The Case of the *amalala* Revisited,” paper presented at the conference on ‘Izithunguthu: Southern African Pasta before the Colonial Era, Their Archives and Their Ongoing Present/Presence,” Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative, University of Cape Town, 16-18, July 2015, page 14. I will expand on this issue in chapter seven but would like to emphasize here that I disagree with this idea for the reasons outlined in the text.

⁶³ The authors apparently admitted that the evidence is not conclusive in personal communication with John Wright on June 21, 2015. See Hamilton and Wright, “Political Differentiation,” 15.

⁶⁴ More on this issue in chapter seven.

and Sotho-speaking firstcomers resulted in linguistic assimilation (rather than differentiation) and the creation of the Venda language (which combines Kalanga and Sotho elements)—an outcome that would have been improbable had these groups mobilized language as a key marker of social status identities.⁶⁵

As I shall argue, similar processes of linguistic assimilation (rather than differentiation) occurred in the Eastern Cape frontier region where Khoi- and Cape Dutch-speakers and Nguni-speakers began to interact with each other during the same time period. In the absence of centralizing state structures, it appears that these communities followed the example of the Kalanga- and Sotho-speakers from the highveld and, rather than deploying their radical language differences for the purpose of status differentiation, they engaged in language assimilation and boundary crossing. It is important to realize that this attitude toward language matches evidence from other regions of the world which shows that, in the absence of centralized state structures that continuously and forcefully mobilize language differences for the purpose of group identity construction, the people who live in a language border region tend to be less inclined to uphold language boundaries, crossing these boundaries to become bilingual or mixing languages in the process. Consider the example of the medieval town of Flensburg. Located on the border between the Danish and German languages, the people of Flensburg, rather than mobilizing the differences between these two languages for the purpose of identity construction and differentiation, converged their Low German and South Jutish speaking practices in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntactic constructions so as to give the town “an oral bilingual character.”⁶⁶ The medieval town of Vyborg, which was located on the border between the

⁶⁵ Whitelaw and Hall, “Archeological Contexts,” 128.

⁶⁶ Elin Fredsted, “Language contact and bilingualism in Flensburg in the middle of the 19th Century,” in Kurt Braunmüller and Gisella Ferraresi, eds., *Aspects of Multilingualism in European Language History* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2003), 37.

Swedish, Russian, and Finnish languages, provides a similar example. Rather than mobilizing the radical differences that existed between these three languages for the purpose of constructing distinct language-based urban group identities, the town's population became multilingual and mixed these languages.⁶⁷ In the context of South Africa, Sifree Makoni and Pedzisai Mashiri have recently suggested that multilingualism and language mixing was also characteristic of the African social experience. "The ability to draw and mix from different languages..." the authors argue, "was characteristic of African social and linguistic behavior even in pre-colonial Africa."⁶⁸ This assessment appears to apply to the Eastern Cape frontier region where, as I shall elaborate, Khoi- and Cape Dutch speakers and Nguni-speakers built mixed and multilingual communities over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

This context leads me conclude that Landau's assertion that "South African modes of self-rule comprised a venerable political tradition, one that deprecated skin color and language..." is essentially correct for the lowveld of South Africa in the period before the rise of conquest states in the Natal-Zululand region. The point, then, which I would like to make here—and more forcefully in chapter seven—is that the emergence of language-based discourses of group identity resulted from processes of state formation that occurred during the late eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries, rather than from the encounters between newcomers and firstcomers during the first centuries of the second millennium C.E. Importantly, this matches the experience in other parts of the world where the emergence of official languages and language-based discourses of identities coincided with the rise of centralizing states.

⁶⁷ Marika Tandefelt, "Vyborg: Trade in Four Languages," in Braunmüller and Ferraresi, eds., *Aspects*, 85-104.

⁶⁸ Sifree Makoni and Pedzisai Mashiri, "Critical Historiography: Does Language Planning in Africa Need a Construct of Language as Part of its Theoretical Apparatus?," in Sifree Makoni and Alastair Pennycook, eds., *Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages* (Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters, 2006), 82. Note that contemporary evidence shows that multilingualism and language mixing, known as code-switching, is part of the contemporary social experience in South African townships. See Rosalie Finlayson and Sarah Slabbert, "'I'll meet you halfway with language: Code-Switching within a South African Urban Context,'" in Martin Pütz, ed., *Language Choices: Conditions, Constraints and Consequences* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1997), 381-421.

Constructing Discourses of Group Identity

The evidence suggests that, before the rise of states in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth centuries, South Africa's Nguni-speakers did not use language as a marker of difference. For instance, the Xhosa did not use language to differentiate themselves from the neighboring Thembu, a point which is supported by a remark made by Stokwe, son of Chief Nqeno kaLanga of the Mbalu-Xhosa, to Scottish missionary John Cumming in 1845. After listening to Stokwe's complaint that one of Nqeno's subjects had joined the Thembu in the capacity of evangelist without having asked the chief's permission first, Cumming responded by asking if the subject's guilt was not reduced by his continuing to reside "amongst a people who spoke the same language" as the Mbalu. Although Stokwe responded in the negative, he readily admitted that it was true that the subject remained "amongst a people who spoke the same language..."⁶⁹ The differences between the speaking practices of the Mbalu-Xhosa and the Thembu were admittedly small. However, there is evidence that suggests that even more significant linguistic differences were not mobilized for the purpose of identity construction. In this context, it is useful to recall the event (first mentioned in chapter two) that occurred in the early years of the nineteenth century, when the Dutch administrator Ludwig Alberti met several emissaries from "the vicinity of Rio de la Goa" at the residence of Chief Ngqika of the Rharhabe-Xhosa.⁷⁰ According to Alberti, the Rharhabe-Xhosa recognized differences between their own speaking practices and those of these emissaries. However, because these differences were apparently not insurmountable, they were not used to construct these emissaries as "other." Instead, Chief Ngqika stressed sameness by asserting a putative genealogical connection between his own people and the newcomers, stating that the latter came "from that land, from which all

⁶⁹ *CM*, Dec 1845, 268.

⁷⁰ Alberti, *Account*, 7.

Kaffirs were descended...”⁷¹ Perhaps more significantly, Alberti’s Gona interpreter categorically rejected the notion that the newcomers spoke a different language when he informed Alberti that “the language of these visitors was the same as that spoken by the Kaffirs...only that...the former did not speak it well.”⁷²

These assertions are significant because they alert us to the fact that genealogical descent trumped language as a marker of group identity in this region at this time. In what follows, I will explore this point in more detail by arguing that, at least by the late eighteenth century, but probably for much longer, the inhabitants of the lowveld region recognized clans, chiefdoms, and social status within chiefdoms as the most important group identities.⁷³ Importantly, while membership in a chiefdom was established on the basis of allegiance to a chief, both clan and social (status) identities were established on the basis of (real or fictive) genealogical descent.⁷⁴

By the eighteenth century, the basic unit of communal organization among Nguni- and Khoi-speakers of the lowveld region of South Africa was the exogamous homestead (Xhosa: *umzi*; Zulu: *umuzi*; Khoi: ? [*kraal*]) whose members (ideally) included a polygyny-practicing male homestead-head and his wives with their unmarried children. Since the homestead-head’s wives were ranked, his sons were ranked accordingly, with the senior son of the senior (great) wife inheriting the father’s homestead and minor sons establishing separate homesteads of their own. Over time, this process of ranking and succession led to the segmentation of the original

⁷¹ Alberti, *Account*, 7.

⁷² Alberti, *Account*, 7.

⁷³ I exclude gender identities here for which the *hlonipha* custom, that is women’s customary avoidance of specific terms, suggests that language played some role in constructing gender identities.

⁷⁴ What follows below has been shaped by the following works: Monica Wilson, "Changes in Social Structure in Southern Africa: the Relevance of Kinship Studies to the Historian," in Leonard Thompson, ed., *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 71-85; Monica Wilson, "The Nguni People," in M. Wilson and L. Thompson, eds., *The Oxford History of South Africa*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1969), 75-130; Monica Wilson, "Strangers in Africa: Reflections on Nyakyusa, Nguni, and Sotho Evidence," in William A. Shack, ed., *Strangers in African Societies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 51-66; Richard Elphick, *Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa*, 2nd. Ed. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, [1977] 1985), chapter three; Jeff Peires, *House*, 3-63; Emile Boonzaier, Candy Malherbe, Penny Berens and Andy Smith, *The Cape Herders: A History of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa*, 2nd. Ed. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 36-43.

homestead into a series of related homesteads or lineages whose kinship ties and relative statuses were recognized in the next bigger social unit known as the (exogamous, patrilineal) clan. Consequently, a clan included all those senior and junior lineages who traced their descent, through the male line, to a common ancestor whose name they all used, in recognition of their common genealogical descent, as their clan name (Xhosa: *isiduko*; Zulu: *isibongo*; Khoi: ?). In the context of the Natal-Zululand region, one Ndukwana explained this phenomenon in the early twentieth century in these terms:

The *isibongo* is the name which indicates the origin (*ukudabuka*) of people.... The word is connected with *bonga*, meaning to praise, because when one is praised, one is praised by means of it. It indicates one's clan (*uhlobo*) of origin.⁷⁵

The reported history of the Tshawe, the royal clan of the Xhosa nation, can be used to illustrate the significance of clans as (patrilineal) descent-based discourses of group identity.⁷⁶ According to oral accounts, the story of this royal clan begins with a man named Xhosa (circa 1535),⁷⁷ whose senior descendant Nkosiyamntu had three sons—Cirha (senior son and heir-apparent), Jwarha (right-hand son), and Tshawe (minor son). Around 1550, Tshawe defeated his two brothers and took control of his father's heritage and, in so doing, established himself and his descendants as the ruling Tshawe clan. In the centuries that followed, Tshawe's senior descendants—Ngcwangu, Sikhomo, Togu, Ngconde, Tshiwo, Phalo, Gcaleka, Khawuta, and Hintsa—and junior descendants—Ntinde (the junior son of Togu), Gando and Mdange (the

⁷⁵ *JSA*, Ndukwana kaMbengwana (1897-1903), 4:297. Note that in the same way as the sons of homestead-heads were ranked, so the homesteads within a clan were ranked, with the chiefly homestead belonging to the clan-member with the most direct link to the original clan-founder.

⁷⁶ Note that the term discourse is used to emphasize that, as will be explored below, genealogical relations could be manipulated for political purposes. For the paragraph that follows, see especially Peires, *House*, 3-53; Peires, "Rethinking," 335-8; Soga, *South-Eastern*, 16; John H. Soga, *Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (New York: Cambridge, [1932] 2014), 17-28; S.E.K. Mqhayi, *Abantu Besizwe: Historiographical and Biographical Writings, 1902-1944*, ed. and trans. Jeff Opland (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009), 92.

⁷⁷ This Xhosa is almost certainly an invention designed to produce a genealogy of common descent, for the term "Xhosa" appears to be derived from the Khoi language and may have meant 'angry men' or 'destroyers.' See Peires, *House*, 13.

junior sons of Ngconde), Gwali (the junior son of Tshiwo), and Rharhabe (the junior son of Phalo)—emerged as the senior and junior lineages of royal Tshawe clan. Importantly, because all of these individuals established their identity as members of the Tshawe clan by tracing their descent to their common ancestor Tshawe (Figure 8), the Tshawe clan (as well as the Xhosa nation as a whole, to the extent that it was seen as coterminous with the royal clan) represented descent- rather than language-based discourses of group identity.

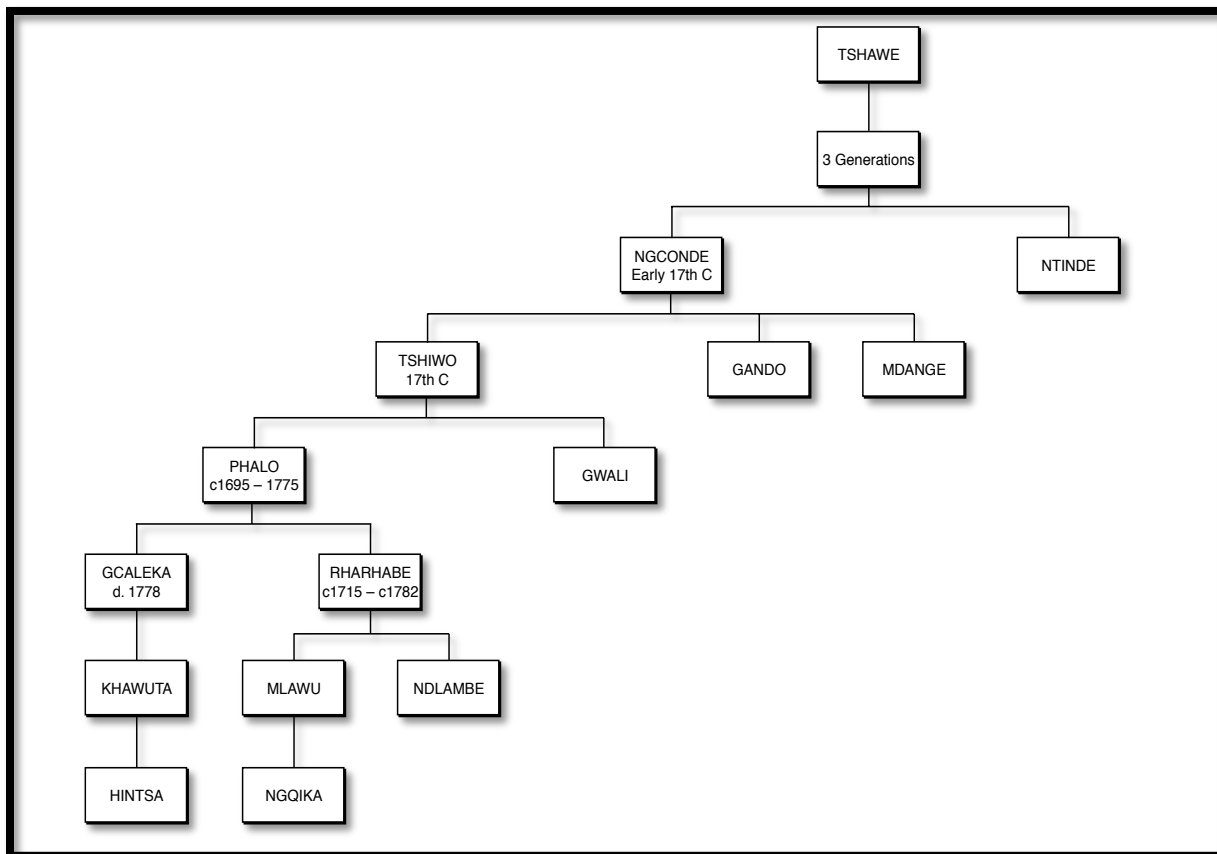


Figure 8. Genealogical table of the royal Tshawe clan. Reproduced from Jeff Peires, “‘He Wears Short Clothes!’: Rethinking Rharhabe (c. 1715–c.1782),” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38:2 (June 2012), 336. Courtesy of Taylor & Francis Group.

In contrast to clans, chiefdoms represented primarily allegiance-based discourses of group identity. Because the political power of lowveld chiefs (Xhosa: *inkosi*; Zulu: *inkosi*; Khoi: [captain]) depended on the number of their followers,⁷⁸ they were usually open to incorporating, whether peacefully or forcefully, people who were not members of their clans. Thus, in the Eastern Cape frontier region during the eighteenth century, Khoi captains such as Cwama and Nooka of the Gonaqua and Ruiter of the Hoengiqua incorporated into their respective polities members of Khoi, San, and Xhosa descent.⁷⁹ At the same time, Xhosa chiefs absorbed runaway slaves, European renegades, and shipwreck survivors,⁸⁰ as well as individuals, clan segments, and even entire clans of Thembu (Maya and Qocwa); Sotho (Ntshilibe, Mfene, and Vundle); Mpondomise (Ngwevu and Mpinga); Mpondo (Ntlane and Zangwa); and Khoi (Sukwini, Gqwashu, Nqarwane, Cete, and Ngqosini) descent.⁸¹ After 1820, Xhosa chiefdoms, notably Hintsas's Gcaleka-Xhosa and Ngqika's Rharhabe-Xhosa, also incorporated Mfengu groups who self-identified themselves as Hlubi, Bhele, and Zizi. As William Shrewsbury noted in 1826:

When the Fingoes came in such numbers into Caffreland, the several Caffre Chiefs, ever anxious to augment their power and influence by an increase of dependents, gave them a favorable reception. To some parties they made grants of land, and enriched them with cattle, permitting them to live by themselves, under

⁷⁸ As Monical Wilson noted, "In Southern Africa men were scarcer than land, and because the power of the group depended upon its fighting strength, strangers were welcome..." See Wilson, "Strangers in Africa," 55.

⁷⁹ For 'Cwama' and 'Nooka' see above. For 'Ruiter' and the incorporation of San and Xhosa, see Herman Giliomee, "Eastern," 423-4; Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, Journaal Haupt, 29 May 1752, 288; Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen IV*, Journaal van eenen landtogt die den ondergeteekende met den Weledelen heer Mr. Henk. Swellengrebel in den jare 1776 gedaan heeft, 7 Nove 1776, 18; Sparrman, *Voyage*, 2:155-60; Paterson, *Relation*, 132. For Gonaqua Chief Nooka and the incorporation of Xhosa, see Gordan, Journal, 14-15 Jan 1778, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 53; Thunberg, *Reise*, 1:180, 186-7.

⁸⁰ See for instance Vigne, ed., *Guillaume*, Evidence of the Survivors of the Stavenisse, flute, wrecked south of the Bay of Natal in 1686, 86, 90; Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, Dagregister gehouden in 't galjoot de Postlooper zeijlende van Cabo de Goede Hoop na Terra de Natal (1705), 182; *Ibid.*, Journaal gehouden int galjoot de Postlooper, zeijlende van Cado de goede Hoop naar Terra de Natal, door Roeland Roos gesaghebber (1715), 207-8; Kirby, ed., *Source Book*, 36, 43-6; *Transactions*, Vanderkemp's Journal, 18 Sep 1799, 1:394; *Ibid.*, 21 Sep 1799, 1:396.

⁸¹ Peires, *House*, 16, 22-4; Soga, *Ama-Xosa*, 17-20.

a subordinate Chief of their own country, while others were so distributed and mingled amongst the Caffres.⁸²

Due to these processes of incorporation, lowveld chiefdoms included from very early on people—clients and tributaries—whose genealogical origins and clan names differed from that of their chiefs. Monica Wilson alluded to this situation when she explained that “Every chiefdom included two categories of people: the kinsmen of the chief, more or less distant, and unrelated people.”⁸³ Referring specifically to the Natal-Zululand region, this situation was described by a man named Ndukwana:

The people belonging to any particular tribe [chiefdom] are not necessarily all of one *isibongo*. If a man of another *isibongo* konza'd [submitted to] a chief, the chief will like him, for he is an outsider.... All chiefs, without exception, have, as members of their tribe, persons of different *izibongo*.⁸⁴

As Ndukwana's statement suggests, the process of incorporation involved establishing a common political identity, which was achieved by strangers submitting (Xhosa: *ukungena*; Zulu: *ukukhonza*; Khoi: ?) to the host chief, an act as part of which political allegiance, including promises of future tribute payments and military service, were exchanged for access to resources under the chief's control, notably loans of cattle and access to pasturage and, in the case of mixed-farmers, agricultural land.⁸⁵ Importantly, this means that these chiefdoms represented allegiance-based, rather than language-based, discourses of group identity.

Although membership in a chiefdom was established on the basis of allegiance to a chief (which explains why Khoi-speakers were able to become members of chiefdoms dominated by Nguni-speakers and vice versa), this does not mean that, as anthropologist W. D. Hammond-Tooke has repeatedly claimed, genealogical descent became irrelevant as a marker of group

⁸² *WMM*, Aug 1827, 564.

⁸³ Wilson, “Strangers,” 51.

⁸⁴ *JSA*, Ndukwana kaMbengwana (1897-1903), 4:297.

⁸⁵ Wright and Hamilton, “Traditions and Transformations,” 59; Peires, *Phalo*, 103. For the term ‘ukungena,’ refer to Soga, *Ama-Xosa*, 18.

identity in the context of chiefdoms.⁸⁶ Instead, genealogical descent continued to be important because access to power, wealth, and, thus, social status within chiefdoms continued to be regulated in important ways on the basis of genealogical descent. This was certainly true at the upper echelons of society, where chiefs, counselors, rainmakers, and healers used genealogical descent to claim for themselves and their descendants positions of superior rank.⁸⁷ However, it also remained true within broader society because a chief's putative kinsfolk, when confronted with the material and non-material aspirations of clients and tributaries, demanded that a superior social value (resulting in superior claims to the community's material and non-material resources) be attached to their kinship status.⁸⁸ Consequently, as Wilson noted, "In both Nguni and Sotho chiefdoms, rank turned on closeness of relationship to the chief, and all those of the founding stock claimed higher status than strangers."⁸⁹ And it was precisely for this reason, as Ndukwana's statement above suggests, that strangers who submitted to a chief were supposed to retain their distinct clan names so as to clearly mark them as the chief's tributaries and distinguish them from his subjects.

In this context, the importance of (patrilineal) genealogical descent as a marker of social status was reinforced by the widespread belief that other markers of difference between strangers and kinsfolk disappeared quickly, rendering them poor markers of social (status) belonging. These ideas were not unfounded. Thus, when the Ngqosini and Zangwa people, who were of

⁸⁶ W.D. Hammond-Tooke, "In Search of Lineage: The Cape Nguni Case," *Man* (New Series), 19:1 (Mar., 1984), 88; W. D. Hammond-Tooke, "Descent Groups, Chiefdoms and South African Historiography," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11:2 (April, 1985), 311-12; W. D. Hammond-Tooke, "Who Worships Whom: Agnates and Ancestors among Nguni," *African Studies* 44:1 (1985), 47-65.

⁸⁷ Hammond-Tooke, "Descent Groups," 313.

⁸⁸ This attitude among kinsmen toward non-kinsmen has been explored for slave societies and explained as a reaction to what Marc Piauxt has called the "scandalous paradox," that is, the perceived injustice that a person who possesses neither legal rights nor social status has been given preference over one who possesses both. See Marc Piauxt, "Captifs du pouvoir et pouvoir des captifs," in Claude Meillassoux, ed., *L'esclavage en Afrique précoloniale* (Paris: Maspéro, 1975), 333, *passim*.

⁸⁹ Wilson, "Strangers," 52.

Khoi and Mpondo ancestry, respectively, submitted to Xhosa chiefs, they adopted the prevailing Xhosa customs of painting their bodies with red ochre and circumcising their children.⁹⁰ Likewise, when some of Matiwane's Ngwane submitted to Xhosa chiefs in the aftermath of the Battle of Mbholompo on April 27, 1828, they "proceeded to be circumcised even though advanced in years."⁹¹ Importantly, it was believed that language, much like body painting and circumcision, was an unstable marker of difference. In the context of Natal-Zululand, two African informants articulated this accepted truth:

Those who, of one *isibongo*, have konza'd those of another will gradually forget their language, dialect, and, to some extent, their customs, modifying them by those of the people they live among.... What does stick to people—more than their language can do—is their *isibongo*...⁹²

As these testimonies suggest, the lowveld chiefdoms usually regulated social status on the basis of genealogical descent rather than language, because descent was considered a more enduring marker of difference than language.

However, this does not mean that the process of incorporating strangers ended with political inclusion (on the basis of *ukukhonza* or *ukungena*) and social exclusion (on the basis of one's *isibongo* or *isiduko*). For it was often advantageous for both chiefs and strangers to move from political to social inclusion through the establishment of real or fictive kinship ties. When and where tributaries were particularly poor and saw no possibility of rival chiefs offering them better living conditions, they embraced this option because it minimized their position of social marginality and, thus, improved their protection against abuse and their claims to communal resources. Similarly, when and where chiefs lacked the coercive means to prevent tributaries from simply moving away and tendering their political allegiance to a rival chief, they also

⁹⁰ Peires, *House*, 19.

⁹¹ *JSA*, Mahaya kaNongqabana (1905), 2:126.

⁹² *JSA*, Ndukwana kaMbengwana (1897-1903), 4:299; *Ibid.*, Maziwana kaMahlabeni (1905), 2:280.

welcomed this option, because it allowed them to establish genealogical seniority and, thus, more permanent authority over newcomers.⁹³ Establishing kinship ties for the purpose of social inclusion could be achieved in two ways. First, in the lowveld region's patrilineal societies, when male subjects married female tributaries, their joint offspring inherited the father's status and, thus, intermarriage held out the promise of transforming tributaries into subjects within a generation.⁹⁴ This context explains why Chief Hintsá of the Gcaleka-Xhosa married a Mfengu woman of Bhele descent and encouraged his counselors to do the same.⁹⁵ "Listen, men," King Hintsá allegedly said to his counselors in the 1820s, "Marry the daughters of these people so that you unite with them, so that they do not leave, so that their *ubumfengu* (Mfengu-ness) may come to an end."⁹⁶

A more broadly applicable path to social inclusion consisted of "inventing" genealogical ties. As Hamilton shows, the "invention" of kinship ties worked best if the parties in question agreed on genealogical connections that referred to distant, mythical ancestors whose inclusion in one's genealogy could not be challenged in historical terms because of their location in

⁹³ Wright and Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations," 58-9; Hamilton and Wright, "Amalala," 13. Note that Peires acknowledges the weakness of the Xhosa chief and argues that they "were therefore constantly preoccupied with the problem of maintaining the loyalty of their followers." He adds that "the ideology of royal domination never replaced the homely idiom of the family in Xhosa political discourse. The political position of the chief was too weak for the dominant ideology to take the form of a naked assertion of authority." See Peires, *House*, 34, 36, 41. For contemporary examples of people switching their allegiance, see *QPGMS*, Jan 1835, 2; Shell, ed., *JLJ*, 27 Sep 1834, 375; *WMM*, Sep 1839, 779; CL, MS3572, J. Ross to Dr. Alexander Gible, Pirie, 15 Feb 1854.

⁹⁴ See for instance *JSA*, Ndukwana kaMbengwana (1897-1903), 4:297.

⁹⁵ For 'Hintsá taking a Mfengu wife of Bhele descent,' see Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 146.

⁹⁶ Tiyo Burnside Soga, *Intlalo kaXhosa* (Lovedale, [1930]1974), 10. However, for this integrative logic to work, Xhosa chiefs had to prevent Mfengu men from marrying Xhosa women since this would have nullified the entire effort by increasing the number of children inheriting the tributary status of their Mfengu fathers. One way in which this could have been achieved was by barring young Mfengu men from acquiring enough cattle to pay lobola. If this occurred, it would have been greatly resented by young Mfengu men. Of course, there were other problems. Some Xhosa patrons super-exploited their Mfengu clients. In turn, some Mfengu clients hid their wealth from Xhosa patrons. Moreover, colonial expansion rendered land scarcer which, in turn, encouraged some Xhosa chiefs to prolong the social inferiority of the Mfengu indefinitely. At the same time, the Mfengu regained their confidence and pride and began to resist all attempts to exploit or integrate them. These issues have been raised and explored in part by Peires, *House*, 41, 105; Bundy, *Rise*, 33; Moyer, "History," 74, 120.

mythical time.⁹⁷ Among the Xhosa in particular, the process was simplified by the fact that, as Peires noted, “Clans assume that every lineage which shares its name and praises must be related, but since relationship need not be demonstrated, it was easy for clans to expand through the incorporation of individuals or groups of alien origin.”⁹⁸ Hermanus Matroos, also known as Ngxukumeshe, provides a good example of this process among the Xhosa. Either a runaway slave himself or the son of a runaway slave and a Xhosa woman, Matroos moved from tributary to subject status among the Jwarha chiefdom in the first half of the nineteenth century by adopting the Jwarha clan name and, thus, claiming their genealogy as his own.⁹⁹ Another example is provided by Tshiwo’s counselor Khwane. In 1829, Cowper Rose collected the oral tradition that helped “invent” a genealogical connection between Khwane and the royal Tshawe clan.¹⁰⁰ The tradition begins by relating how Khwane, in contravention of Tshiwo’s command, saved a large number of people from execution by hiding them in the mountains. When Khwane later submitted these people and their cattle to Tshiwo’s rule, the latter, out of gratitude, established a fictive genealogical link between Khwane and the royal Tshawe clan. “I adopt you as a son,” Tshiwo supposedly said on that occasion; “you are now of the Amachoui [amaTshawe], and should a son of mine raise his assegai against you, raise yours against him, for

⁹⁷ Hamilton and Wright, “Amalala,” 13; Hamilton, “Ideology,” 254, 272-77. Note also that Hamilton shows that these ‘inventions’ can be exposed through a careful analysis of the contradictions that occur in oral traditions “where a new (and fictitious) tradition of origin is imposed, but where the imprint of a previous tradition is not fully erased.” See Hamilton, “Ideology,” 272. Hamilton draws on Jan Vansina’s insights, specifically his findings with regard to “palimpsest traditions” (a term borrowed from the analysis of medieval parchment texts in which writings of different periods are found on a single piece of parchment). See Vansina, “Comment: Traditions of Genesis,” *Journal of African History* 15:2 (1974), 320.

⁹⁸ Peires, *House*, 16.

⁹⁹ Peires, *House*, 16; Robert Ross, “Hermanus Matroos, *aka* Ngxukumeshe: A Life on the Border,” *Kronos* 30 (Nov. 2004), Special Issue: Eastern Cape,” 46-69.

¹⁰⁰ Cowper Rose, *Four Years in Southern Africa* (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1829), 148-50. See also Ross, “Ethnic,” 262-3;

you are his equal.”¹⁰¹ Once established, this fictive genealogical connection allowed Khwane to be recognized as a member of the royal Tshawe clan and, on the basis of that status, establish the Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa chiefdom. Perhaps the best example of the invention of kinship ties for the purpose of social inclusion involved the Tipha, Ngwevu, Qocwa, Ngqosini, Cete, and Nkabane groups. It appears that Tshawe had conquered these formerly independent and unrelated groups and incorporated them as tributaries into his expanding chiefdom sometime in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries.¹⁰² In order to move these groups from the status of tributaries to that of (commoner) subjects, however, Tshawe’s successors created “a false genealogical affiliation” between themselves and these groups by retroactively portraying them as the people of Tshawe’s defeated brothers Cirha and Jwarha.¹⁰³ In doing so, they allowed these groups to move from the status of unrelated tributaries to that of related subjects of the royal house of the Xhosa nation.

As these examples demonstrate, the Nguni- and Khoi-speaking communities of the lowveld region of South Africa achieved social inclusion by mobilizing genealogical rather than linguistic ties. Consequently, we can state with some confidence that these communities constructed all major group identities—clans, chiefdoms, and social status within chiefdoms—on the basis of descent and allegiance, rather than using language-based discourses of identity.

¹⁰¹ Rose, *Four*, 150. Note this does not mean that everybody accepted these fictive kinship ties. As Soga explained, some Xhosa chiefs regularly reminded Khwane’s Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa of their lower status. See Soga, *South-Eastern*, 117.

¹⁰² As one oral tradition explains, “These nations stood alone and were ruling themselves long ago. They were abolished by fighting (*bagquqiswa ngokulwa*) by Tshawe, they were overcome so that they became one nation.” As quoted in Peires, *House*, 15.

¹⁰³ Peires, *House*, 14 (note a) and 15. Note that, when and where social status belonging was regulated on the basis of descent-based discourses of identity, genealogies were also manipulated in order to exclude people from access to wealth, status and power. Thus, chiefs, who possessed the coercive means to do so, compelled some of their relations to change their genealogies in order to relegate them to the status of commoner clans and, thus, bar them from positions of power and influence. This appears to have happened among the Xhosa on at least two occasions: first, when Tshawe defeated his brothers Cirha and Jwarha and imposed on them commoner clan status. Secondly, when Tshiwo defeated his brother Gando in battle, delinked him and his relatives from the Tshawe clan and gave them a new commoner clan identity: the amaKwayi. This means that we must ask whether all the commoner clans among the Xhosa were indeed of foreign descent or if these genealogies were imposed on them retroactively in order to keep them in an inferior social status. See Peires, “Rethinking,” 336, 350.

Discourses of Group Identity in the Language Border Region of the Eastern Cape Frontier

Importantly, this pattern also held true for the the Eastern Cape frontier region, where Khoi and Xhosa communities whose speaking practices were radically different and not mutually intelligible lived side by side. This conclusion is supported by the fact that these communities crossed the language border that separated them, becoming multilingual and mixing languages over time.¹⁰⁴

It has been demonstrated that people's inclination to cross language borders is indicative of the absence of centralizing state structures and, more significantly, preexisting language-based discourses of identity. As we have seen, such language-based discourses were rare in late independent Africa, being overshadowed by socio-political ties of kinship and allegiance.

As explained in chapter two, beginning in the seventeenth century, if not earlier, Khoi- and Nguni-speakers interacted intensively in the Eastern Cape frontier region, with Khoi-speakers becoming clients and tributaries of Nguni-speaking chiefs and vice versa.¹⁰⁵ At this time, there were no strong social pressures in place—notably language-based discourses of group identity—that would have compelled either of these two groups to carefully police their language boundaries. In part, the absence of such social pressures is suggested by the fact that this intensive interaction resulted in Khoi sounds (phonemes)—notably clicks—and even entire words entering the Nguni (Xhosa) speech community at this time. As Gerrit Harinck explained:

Comparative analyses of Khoi and Xhosa linguistic interrelationships indicate that interaction between Khoi and Xhosa peoples was intimate and of long duration.

¹⁰⁴ For background on this multilingualism and mixing of languages, see Harinck, "Interaction," 145-170; O. F. Raum, "A Topological Analysis of Xhosa Society," in O. F. Haupt, ed., *Wort und Religion: Kalima na dini*, Studien zur Afrikanistik, Missionswissenschaft, Religionswissenschaft (Stuttgart: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1969), 321-32; Ross, "Ethnic Identity," 259-71; Peires, *House*, 22-25; Robert K. Herbert, "The Sociohistory of Clicks in Southern Bantu," *Anthropological Linguistics* 32:3/4 (Fall-Winter, 1990), 295-315; Susan Newton-King, *Masters and Servants on the Cape Eastern Frontier* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 25-36; Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 71-110.

¹⁰⁵ See for instance Harinck, "Interaction," 153; Peires, *House*, 22.

The contact profoundly affected the phonemic system of the Xhosa language.... The influence of the Khoi phonemic system was largely confined to Xhosa consonants. Of some fifty-five consonants...of the Xhosa phonemic stock, twenty-one are primarily traceable to the Khoi sound system. Fifteen of these twenty-one are so-called 'click consonants'.... About one-sixth of the Xhosa vocabulary is composed of words with clicks. A smaller section has non-click consonants also of Khoi origin. Many of these words are cognates of Khoi words, and they may be traced back into such Khoi languages as Kora and Nama....¹⁰⁶

The evidence for the absence of such social pressures is less readily available for Khoi-speakers.¹⁰⁷ However, this absence can be inferred from evidence that suggests that Khoi-speakers were in the process of undergoing major linguistic shifts during this period. These shifts appear to have commenced in the seventeenth century when the Khoikhoi in the Western and Eastern Cape regions, amid the pressures exerted by the expansion of Dutch-speaking farmers

¹⁰⁶ Harinck, "Interactions," 150-2. Note that some of these sounds may have entered the Xhosa speech community from interactions with the San rather than the Khoikhoi (however, this does not invalidate the idea that the Xhosa did not police their language boundary). See L.W. Lanham, "The Proliferation and Extension of Bantu Phonemic System influenced by Bushman and Hottentot," *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Linguistics* (Cambridge, Mass, 1962) 383-4. Note also that the transmission of Khoi sounds and words was affected by preexisting Xhosa social structures and customs. For instance, Harinck notes that "Khoi-derived cognates in the Xhosa 'cattle group' suggest that [many] Khoi were relegated [at least initially] to a socially inferior position in a patron-client relationship—the Xhosa being patrons, and the Khoi their clients as cattle herders, messengers, envoys and so forth.... We may infer further that the inferior status of Khoi was balanced by their function in Xhosa religious institutions.... The Khoi must therefore have participated in Xhosa society as diviners..." And Robert Herbert argues that the Xhosa *hlonipha* custom, which barred Xhosa women from using words that contained the name as well as composite syllables that occur in the name of their fathers-in-law and other senior male affines, encouraged especially Xhosa women to adopt Khoi-derived sounds into their speech repertoires. However, it is important to recognize that, while Xhosa social structures and customs influenced the transmission process, Xhosa society did not mobilize Khoi words and sounds as markers of an inferior class or female identity. If this had been the case, these words or sounds would have never penetrated the wider society as they demonstrably did. Finally, one should recognize that these sociolinguistic studies do not account for the ways in which intermarriage affected the transmission process. See Harinck, "Interactions," 152-3; Herbert, "Sociohistory," 303-6.

¹⁰⁷ Harinck, "Interaction," 153. In part this stems from the fact that the Khoi dialect of the Eastern Cape frontier region disappeared in the early decades of the nineteenth century, making it impossible to show whether or not Xhosa sounds and words found their way into this dialect. Note that Elizabeth Elbourne suggests that the "mutually comprehensibility" of the various "Khoek languages" may have contributed to the formation of a "pan-Khoekhoe identity," which could be interpreted to mean that language functioned as important marker of this identity and that it was, therefore, worth defending against outside influences. Note that I do not agree because the idea of 'pan-Khoekhoe identity' gained most currency along the Eastern Cape frontier during the first half of the nineteenth century (notably during the Kat River revolt of 1850-3) and, thus, precisely at the time when the Khoi language was giving way to Cape Dutch and Xhosa (in fact, many of the people who joined and led the revolt were Cape Dutch- and Xhosa-speaking Gonaqua rather than Khoi-speaking Khoikhoi). Because of these language shifts, the type of 'pan-Khoekhoe identity' that emerged on the Eastern Cape frontier in the first half of the nineteenth century was, in my view, decidedly non-linguistic in character. See Elbourne, *Blood*, 72, and 348, 359-60, 362, 364.

and Cape Dutch-speaking mixed-race Basters,¹⁰⁸ underwent a radical language shift from Khoi to Cape Dutch.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps more significantly, when the interactions between Khoikhoi and Xhosa intensified in the Eastern Cape region during the same time period,¹¹⁰ members of both groups began to merge into mixed communities whose members were often multilingual. Among these mixed, multilingual groups, the most important ones were the Gonaqua (combining Khoi and Xhosa people, with the Khoi portion predominating in terms of numbers and socio-culturally) and the Ntinde- and Gqunukwhebe-Xhosa (combining Xhosa and Khoi people, with the Xhosa portion predominating). European travelers recognized the mixed character of these communities as early as the middle of the eighteenth century. As the Beutler expedition observed in 1752:

The Gonaquas Hottentots live among them [Xhosa] and mix with them. The Caffres [Xhosa] use them as servants and in time of war also as soldiers. Their clothing and way of life are similar and *they also intermarry without differentiation*; and the children of such marriages are not as black as the Caffres [Xhosa] but more brown or yellow. *These two thus mixed nations*, although they do not inhabit great areas of land, could at a guess be estimated as numbering twelve thousand souls...¹¹¹

It proved difficult for Europeans to fit these “mixed nations” into the prevailing ‘Hottentot–Caffre’ (Khoikhoi–Xhosa) dichotomy, which distinguished the two groups primarily on the basis of skin color and language.¹¹² For instance, in 1772, naturalist Thunberg still confidently distinguished the two groups, noting that the “Caffres [Xhosa]...are blacker and stronger than the

¹⁰⁸ The label ‘Baster’ referred to the mixed-race offspring between Europeans (mostly men) and Khoikhoi and San (mostly women). The Griqua were a particularly well-known ‘Baster’ group on the colonial frontier.

¹⁰⁹ Triall, “Khoesan,” 31-3, 35. Note that Wesleyan missionary John Appleyard explained in 1850 that “The [Cape-] Dutch language is universally used by all classes of these people [Khoikhoi and Coloureds], though there are many to be found amongst them, who still retain the Hottentot in their ordinary conversation with each other.” See Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 10.

¹¹⁰ As mentioned above, Xhosa and Khoi chiefs had been incorporating people of Khoi and Xhosa descent respectively at least since the seventeenth century.

¹¹¹ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, *Journal Haupt*, 2 Jul 1752, 310-11; Crampton, Peires and Vernon, eds., *Into the Hitherto Unknown*, “*Journal Haupt*,” 2 Jul 1752, 121. My emphasis.

¹¹² Refer to chapter two for details on this issue.

Hottentoots [Khoikhoi]...whose natural color is neither black nor white but yellowish...”¹¹³ However, when other European naturalists encountered some Gonaqua near the Van Stadens River one year later, they realized that these “Hottentots...called Gonaquas” were not only “remarkably well-shaped, and stouter made than any other Hottentots,” but “in the natural blackness of their complexions...they bore a greater resemblance to the Caffres [Xhosa]...[than the Hottentots].”¹¹⁴ The Dutch traveler Robert Jacob Gordon summed up the problem in 1778. “These Gounacas or Gounaqua Hottentots...,” he explained, “...are almost completely fused and mixed with the Caffers [Xhosa].”¹¹⁵ Perplexed by this situation, Thunberg eventually preferred calling them “Gonaquas-Kaffern.”¹¹⁶ Other commentators created entirely new terms for these groups, including “Hottentot-Caffres,” “Bastard Caffres,” and “half-breed Caffres.”¹¹⁷

The mixed communities also represented a classificatory challenge in terms of language because they were often multilingual.¹¹⁸ European commentators recognized this phenomenon as early as the mid-eighteenth century. Thus, when Beutler’s men reached the Keiskamma River in June 1752, they hired as interpreters three Khoi men who also “understood the Caffre language.”¹¹⁹ Near the Great Fish River twenty-seven years later, the Scottish naturalist William Paterson hired as interpreter another Khoi man “who [also] knew the Caffre language

¹¹³ Thunberg, *Reise*, 1:188, 2:167. My translation.

¹¹⁴ Francis Masson, “An Account of Three Journeys from the Cape Town into the Southern Parts of Africa; undertaken for the Discovery of new Plants, towards the Improvement of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. By Mr. Francis Masson, one of his Majesty's Gardeners. Addressed to Sir John Pringle. Kew, Nov. 1775,” *Philosophical Transactions, of the Royal Society of London*, Vol. LXVI (1776), 294-6; Sparrman, 2:7-8. Others agreed with the idea that the resembled the ‘Caffres more than other ‘Hottentots.’ See Paterson, *Relation*, 132; Le Vaillant, *Travels*, 2:2, 2:334-5.

¹¹⁵ Gordon, *Journal*, 12-13 Jan 1778, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 53.

¹¹⁶ Thunberg, *Reise*, 2:162

¹¹⁷ Sparrman, *Voyage*, 2:27; Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, Cloeten, *Journal*, 7 Nov 1776, 18; Gordon, *Journal*, 9 Jan 1778, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 50.

¹¹⁸ Note that people, especially children, who live in mixed, multilingual settings tend to become multilingual (with varying degrees of proficiency) as long as there exist no strong social pressures—notably language-based discourses of group identity—that compel them to speak just one language. See Thornton, *Cultural History*, 315.

¹¹⁹ Molsbergen, ed., *Reizen III*, *Journal* Haupt, 19 Jun 1752, 302. My translation.

perfectly.”¹²⁰ Similarly, while traveling near the Little Sundays River in 1775, Sparrman encountered members of the so-called “Hottentot-Caffres” (presumably Gonaqua) who “*chiefly* [but apparently not exclusively] spoke the Caffre language...”¹²¹ At Chief Ngqika’s residence near the turn of the century, Vanderkemp “engaged an Hottentot” who acted as his interpreter, translating from Cape Dutch to Xhosa and vice versa.¹²² The reverse also occurred. For example, Gordon, while traveling along the Bushmans River in January 1778, visited a “Caffre” chief named “Tsaka [Tshaka], who [also] spoke Hottentot.”¹²³

Furthermore, the members of some of these mixed communities apparently mixed their speaking practices. Referring to the Gonaqua, Harinck explained that:

Subsequent generations spoke a mixture of Khoi and Xhosa, with Khoi predominating. This hybridization can only be accounted for by reciprocal marriage between the incoming Xhosa and...Khoi. The children of polygynous marriages between Khoi males and Xhosa females learned Xhosa from their mothers and incorporated it into the Khoi language.... Khoi prevailed because the Xhosa language was not incorporated as much by offspring of marriages between Khoi women and Xhosa men.¹²⁴

Primary source evidence supports this idea of a Nguni- or Xhosa-inflected Khoi dialect emerging at this time. For instance, while traveling in the Eastern Cape frontier region in 1775, Sparrman met some Gonaqua near the Van Stadens River whose “language had an affinity with that of both of these nations [that is, Khoi and Xhosa]...”¹²⁵ The Frenchman François Le Vaillant had a similar suspicion when he met some Gonaqua near the Great Fish River seven years later. “Though,” as he explained, “their language [that of the Gonaqua and Khoikhoi] is very similar, my [Khoi] people could not always understand them.”¹²⁶ He suggested that the difficulties of

¹²⁰ Paterson, *Relation*, 136. My translation.

¹²¹ Sparrman, *Voyage*, 2:27. My emphasis.

¹²² *Transactions*, Vanderkemp’s Journal, 10 Oct 1799, 1:402.

¹²³ Gordon, Journal, 9-10 Jan 1778, as quoted in Cullinan, *Gordon*, 51.

¹²⁴ Harinck, “Interactions,” 157-8.

¹²⁵ Sparrman, *Voyage*, 2:7.

¹²⁶ Le Vaillant, *Travels*, 2:2.

communication arose from the fact that these “Gonaquais...clucked with their tongues like the other Hottentots [Khoikhoi]...” but employed some words “used among the Caffres [Xhosa], but not among those properly called Hottentots.”¹²⁷

Conclusion and Consequences

As these examples demonstrate, the mixed communities that emerged in the Eastern Cape region during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries engaged with language and language differences in a casual manner. They were able to do so because, like most lowveld communities, they promoted descent- and allegiance-based, rather than language-based, discourses of group identity. Because the majority of the Eastern Cape missionaries’ African interpreters came from these mixed communities (notably the Gonaqua, Ntinde, and Gqunukwhebe), this casual approach to language also structured the ways in which these interpreters made sense of the differences that existed between the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans, and Zulu when and where they encountered them as part of their travels in the company of missionaries in the first half of the nineteenth century. The significance of this structural influence becomes evident if we recall Michel Foucault’s ideas about the relationship between “discourse” and “meaning” (objects of knowledge). Since, as Foucault noted, meaning is constructed by way of discourse, the absence of discourse signifies the absence of meaning (objects of knowledge). Consequently, in the absence of preexisting language-based discourses of group identity that apportioned meaning to the differences between people’s speaking practices by mobilizing them for the purpose of identity construction, the Eastern Cape missionaries’ interpreters emerged from a cultural context that did not perceive the differences between these groups as significant and, thus, as markers of distinct objects of knowledge (that

¹²⁷ Le Vaillant, *Travels*, 2:1-2. For a different interpretation of this evidence, see Newton-King, *Masters*, 33.

is, languages). As shown above, these interpreters communicated exactly this assessment to their missionary patrons on various occasions and, in so doing, strengthened the latter's conviction that the 'Caffre' language community extended from the Cape Colony to Delagoa Bay, and that it was possible to create for this community a single 'Caffre' translation of the Bible that would form the basis for a single unifying written language.

The evidence suggests that the Wesleyan missionaries began to work on such a project several years before William Shaw issued his proposal to the South African Auxiliary of the British Foreign Bible Society in 1853. Indeed, as early as 1850, they published translations of liturgical materials designed to transcend the differences that existed between the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, Natal Africans, and Zulu. They were keenly aware of the historical precedents that existed for this type of linguistic assimilationism, notably in the case of England, where the translation of the Bible had created a written language that unified a wide range of spoken dialects. "[The] plain people in the rural districts of the north and west of England..." William Shaw explained in defense of the Wesleyan mission's assimilationist strategy, "although speaking dialects that differ from the written English very materially, yet read with an understanding the English version of the Scriptures."¹²⁸ Moreover, philological studies in general and those of Wesleyan missionary John Appleyard in particular testified to the historical flexibility of the 'Caffre' language. On the broadest level, this flexibility was evinced by the language's alleged evolution from a Semitic tongue to its present condition, a process which, in Appleyard's opinion, had been accompanied by the addition of its most distinctive feature—the euphonic concord.¹²⁹ On a narrower level, proof of historical flexibility was found in the language's prefixes and click-sounds. In Appleyard's view, the singular prefix

¹²⁸ Correspondence, W. Shaw to G. Morgan, Grahamstown, 2 Jun 1854, 52.

¹²⁹ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 7-8.

umu had changed (contracted) to *um* as the people had migrated westward.¹³⁰ Click-sounds, he believed, had entered the language over time as people borrowed Khoi words that contained these sounds or introduced these sounds into their own words.¹³¹ From the perspective of the Wesleyan missionaries, this flexibility strongly suggested that the ‘Caffre’ language could be made to bend to their will and that any different speaking practices could be assimilated into a single unifying written language.

The Wesleyan missionaries gained additional confidence for this assimilationist strategy from the experience of the Mfengu, a mobile people believed to have come to the region via war, slavery, or general migration. While the missionaries had always insisted that, as shown above, the differences between the speaking practices of the Xhosa and Mfengu were insubstantial, by the late 1840s, they believed they found evidence that even these minor differences were beginning to disappear as the latter assimilated the speaking practices of the former (and vice versa). In part, this linguistic assimilation occurred because the two groups lived and interacted with each other on a daily basis. As Appleyard explained in 1849, the Mfengu “lost many of their peculiarities in consequence of that people’s close and familiar intercourse with the Kafirs [Xhosa].”¹³² The missionaries themselves contributed to this process by drawing no distinction between these two groups in the context of their proselytizing work. For instance, on the Farmersfield station in 1840, Xhosa and Mfengu were grouped together into one area, while Europeans, freed slaves, and Tswana and Sotho people each inhabited different areas of their own.¹³³ More importantly, in the mission schools, both Xhosa and Mfengu pupils learned to read

¹³⁰ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 50.

¹³¹ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 49.

¹³² Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 44.

¹³³ *WMM*, Sep 1840, 785; Shaw, *Story*, 294.

the same language with the help of the same didactic materials.¹³⁴ For instance, in 1840, Tente, the Ngqika-Xhosa schoolmaster of the SPMS's outstation school at the Lenye River, had his Xhosa and Mfengu pupils read from the same 'Caffre' translation of the Gospel of Mark.¹³⁵ Indeed, the best 'Caffre' reader at Tente's school was a Mfengu boy.¹³⁶ The other mission societies operated in the same manner. "The Amafengu...", Appleyard explained in 1849, "use...Kafir publications, thus rendering it probable that any peculiarities which their dialects still retain, will soon disappear."¹³⁷

The process of linguistic assimilation was most advanced among the younger generation. Ayliff commented on this phenomenon in 1853. "The language spoken by the Fingoes," he wrote to Governor George Cathcart, "is the same as that spoken by the Kaffirs with some slight unimportant variations, these are mostly perceivable in the old people but not at all in the young."¹³⁸ The Scottish missionary Bryce Ross, who possessed native-speaker proficiency in the language and interacted with Mfengu communities in and around Lovedale Institution, noticed the same trend. "Nearly all the young Fingoes on the frontier speak the Amaxosa dialect," he explained in 1856. "The Fingo dialect will, in all probability, die out of this part of the country, together with the generation that brought it hither."¹³⁹ Missionary Laing agreed. "It is but fair to state that these Fingoes have been many years among the Kafirs," he noted in 1854, "and have become accustomed to their mode of speaking."¹⁴⁰ Appleyard came to the same conclusion, stating in 1857:

What *is* the great difference between the Kafir and Fingoe as spoken on this frontier? Amongst some of the old Fingoe people, especially in the Amazizi tribe,

¹³⁴ *WMM*, Sep 1840, 785; Backhouse, *Narrative*, 304.

¹³⁵ *QIGMS*, Winter 1841, 3-4.

¹³⁶ *RGMS*, 1841, 12-13.

¹³⁷ Appleyard, *Kafir Language*, 47.

¹³⁸ CL, MS15543.1, J. Ayliff, "Sketch of Fingo History," 7 Nov 1853.

¹³⁹ *Correspondence*, Rev. Bryce Ross to Morgan, Lovedale, 15 Feb 1856, 73.

¹⁴⁰ *Correspondence*, Laing to Morgan, Lovedale, 9 Aug 1854, 70.

there are still heard many words and forms of words which are not Kafir. But as respects the younger people in general, and the rising generation, it is difficult to detect any essential distinction between the two dialects.¹⁴¹

The example of the Mfengu, together with historical examples from Europe and the scholarly conclusions about the historical flexibility of the ‘Caffre’ language, suggested that it was possible to assimilate the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Natal Africans, and Zulu into a single unifying written language. It was the hope of the Wesleyan missionaries that this could be achieved with the help of publications that avoided terms and idiomatic expressions that were unique to individual groups and substituted them with terms and expressions common to and understood by all of them. The Wesleyan missionary Horatio Pearse explained this *modus operandi* in 1853:

We have no portion of the Sacred Scriptures printed solely in the Zulu dialect of the Kaffir language. We have hitherto used the translations issuing from the mission press in British Kaffraria.... It is proper to observe that in those translations we have kept in view the dialectical differences of the different tribes from the frontier of the old colony to this district, so as to render them intelligible to all, instead of confining their use to the Amaxosa tribes...¹⁴²

Indeed, as Pearse added, the Wesleyan mission had already established a committee whose purpose it was to identify universally intelligible words, “with a view to assimilate, as far as practicable, the two [Xhosa and Zulu] dialects for the contemplated revised translation of the entire Word of God.”¹⁴³ Appleyard, in his capacity as translator, editor, and superintendent of the Wesleyan mission press at Mount Coke, produced some of these translations. In a letter written in 1853, Appleyard acknowledged that he was supplying them “to [all] stations, including those

¹⁴¹ *Correspondence*, Appleyard to Morgan, Mount Coke, 25 May 1857, 103. This is not to say that linguistic differences between them completely disappeared in the short run. By the late 1860s the process was apparently still ongoing. As the Anglican missionary Henry Woodrooffe explained in 1867, “the older Fingoes still use many of the old words, [but] the younger ones are becoming much like Kafirs.” See Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, Rhodes House, Oxford, United Kingdom, Papers of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (henceforth RH, USPG), E Series, Missionaries’ Reports, 23a, Henry Woodrooffe, 1867, 1253.

¹⁴² *Correspondence*, Rev. H. Pearse to Rev. G. Morgan, Pietermaritzburg, 5 Dec 1853, 34.

¹⁴³ *Correspondence*, Pearse to Rev. George Gordon, 5 Dec 1853, 35.

beyond the Kei River and at Natal.”¹⁴⁴ The titles of some of these translations reveal that they were intended not only for the communities of the Eastern Cape frontier region (notably the Xhosa as well as Thembu and Mfengu) but also for the people of “Emboland” (that is, the Mpondo, Natal Africans and even the Zulu of Natal-Zululand). Thus, in 1851, the Wesleyan mission replaced the 1835 translation *Le yincwadi yamaculo okuvunywa gamaxosa eziskolweni zaba-Wesley* (This Book of Hymns which are to be sung by the Xhosa in the Wesleyan schools) with the *Inncwadi yamaculo, okuvunywa eziskolweni zabaKristu ezisemaxoseni nezisembo* (Book of hymns, which are to be sung in the Christian schools among the Xhosa and in Emboland).¹⁴⁵ Similarly, three years later, they replaced the 1838 translation *Incwadi yezifundo ibalelwe izikolo zaba-Wesli. Emaxoseni* (Book of Lessons for Wesleyan Schools. Among the Xhosa) with the new version, entitled *Inncwadi yezifundo: ibalelwe izikolo ezisema-Xoseni neziseMbo* (Book of Lessons for Schools among the [Xhosa] and in Emboland).¹⁴⁶ In the same year, the Wesleyans also substituted *Incwadi yokubuza yezi zi-skola, zama-Khristi Ekutiwa gama-Wesli, ema-Xosene* (Book of Questioning for Wesleyan Christian Schools among the Xhosa) with a new Catechism entitled *Eyokuqala inncwadi yemibuzo, ebuzwayo eziskolweni esemaxoseni nezisembo* (First Book of Questions for Schools among the Xhosa and in Emboland).¹⁴⁷

These assimilationist activities earned the Wesleyans in general and Appleyard in particular criticism from some of their fellow missionaries. One of these critics was the LMS missionary Richard Birt. Perusing the Appleyard’s translation of the New Testament—*ITestamente enstha: okukuti incwadi zonke zocebano olutsha lwenkosi yetu uYesu Kristu:*

¹⁴⁴ *Correspondence*, Rev. J. Appleyard to Rev. George Morgan, King William’s Town, 12 Jul 1853, 14.

¹⁴⁵ Bleek, *Library*, 61-2.

¹⁴⁶ Bleek, *Library*, 52, 54.

¹⁴⁷ Bleek, *Library*, 57-8.

ikunyushelwe kokwama-xosa (1853), which the latter had prepared according to the assimilationist principles outlined above, Birt remarked that:

Many words I have met with in the present translation are singularly inappropriate. This may be accounted for by the wide range Mr. Appleyard allows himself to select from—which is not only the Kafir, but the Fingoe and Zulu language. But whether or not it be justifiable to attempt an accommodation of one translation to the Kafir and Zulu peoples, thereby throwing an obstacle in the way of both, to a right understanding of God's Word, is a question which, I think, has never received due consideration, or the idea would have been abandoned.¹⁴⁸

Appleyard defended his assimilationist activities vigorously against such criticisms. In his defense, he noted that his *modus operandi* consisted not so much of introducing Zulu and Mfengu words into “Kafir,” but avoiding words which were specific to these groups and replacing them with words intelligible to all. As he explained:

So far from using Zulu and Fingoe words, that is, those which are peculiarly so, for there are many which are common to both these dialects and the Kafir, I have been careful to avoid them.... At the same time I see no particular objection to the use of what is called a Fingoe word, provided it does not happen to express something different in the Kafir.¹⁴⁹

Importantly, the same working principles informed Shaw's 1853 proposal, so that its objective was not to impose Xhosa translations on the Zulu people or vice versa, but to avoid words and idiomatic expressions that were unique to either of these groups and replace them with verbiage understood by both. As he noted in 1853:

It is not needful to have two versions of the Kafir Scriptures, one for this part of the country [the Eastern Cape region], and the other for Natal; although there is much difference in *dialect*, there is no essential difference in the *language*. A careful examination of the verbiage, which should be accommodated to suit both districts, would in my view meet all the wants of the case.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ *Correspondence*, Rev. R. Birt to Rev. George Morgan, Cape Town, 24 Mar 1857, 97.

¹⁴⁹ *Correspondence*, Appleyard to Rev. George Morgan, Mount Coke, 25 May 1857, 102-3.

¹⁵⁰ *Correspondence*, Shaw to Rev. G. Morgan, GHT, 5 Jul 1853, 13. My emphasis.

Given this context, it is rather ironic that Appleyard, in spite of his own assimilationist activities, became one of the first detractors of Shaw's proposal. Writing from Mount Coke in 1854, he argued:

I do not think that one version of the Scriptures would be sufficient to meet the case of all the Kafir- and Zulu-speaking tribes. It is true, philologically, that the Kafir and Zulu are constituent parts of one and the same language.... Practically, however, and as media of Communication between man and man, there is too great a verbal difference to admit of any arrangements which would prove advantageous to the natives themselves, whereby one standard version for the whole could be effected. There are not only different words for expressing the same idea..., but the same word sometimes expressed very different ideas in the two dialects. There is also an occasional variation in the form of the prefixes.... The opinion which I at present hold on the subject of this query is that there should be two separate versions prepared and printed in the first instance.¹⁵¹

Appleyard's attitude poses problems. For one, he had been actively involved in the production of assimilated translations and defending them against critics such as Birt. Furthermore, his own philological scholarship acknowledged the historical flexibility of the 'Caffre' language in general and the recent linguistic assimilation of the Xhosa and Mfengu in particular. Most importantly, Appleyard now chose to ignore the forward-looking idea that informed Shaw's proposal, which centered on getting the speakers of various "dialects" to gradually become accustomed to a single unifying written language in the same way as the speakers of English dialects had come to accept a single unifying written language. Appleyard's contradictory attitude may be explained best if, in this instance, we see him as someone more interested in short-term results rather than long-term possibilities. For, at the time he spoke out against Shaw's proposal in 1854, Appleyard was already working on the translation of the first complete edition of the Old Testament, a project that would have been derailed by the adoption of Shaw's plan and the arduous committee work that this plan would have inevitably entailed.¹⁵² This pragmatic

¹⁵¹ *Correspondence*, Appleyard to Morgan, Mount Coke, 29 May 1854, 50.

¹⁵² BSA/E3/1/4, J. Appleyard to Mr. H. Knolleke, Mount Coke, 8 Sep 1859, 204-8.

attitude is also apparent in a second letter Appleyard wrote to the BFBS at the time. In this letter, he rejected Shaw's plan:

[N]ot...so much on the ground of impossibility, as on that of practical usefulness. As a philological experiment, it might be interesting; but as a mode of communicating Divine truth, it would not be found so beneficial as a separate version for each of the great families speaking the Kafir language.¹⁵³

This context, then, best explains why Appleyard, one of the Eastern Cape missionaries' leading linguists and assimilationists, rejected Shaw's proposal in 1854. Importantly, Appleyard's example alerts us to the fact that missionary linguists could be very flexible in their engagement with African languages and quick to sacrifice alleged philological "truths" to more pragmatic considerations, changing their discourses accordingly. As we shall see in the next two chapters, the American missionaries in Natal-Zululand experienced a similar *volte-de-face* between 1835 and 1854.

¹⁵³ *Correspondence*, Appleyard to Morgan, Mount Coke, 27 Jun 1854, 67.

CHAPTER VI

The American Missionaries and the Question of Zuluness, 1835–1854

As the preceding two chapters have shown, under the right circumstances, genuine preexisting (precolonial) African ideas about the relationship between language and identity were able to pass into missionary discourses about African languages and language communities. The next two chapters will explore a similar line of argument for the American missionaries in the Natal-Zululand region. The key proposition is that the American missionaries in Natal-Zululand identified closely with the Zulu. This self-conception as a mission to the Zulu encouraged them to search for characteristics that set the Zulu apart from the wider ‘Caffre’ community. Initially, the American missionaries particularized the Zulu on the basis of culture, notably their allegedly superior chastity and honesty, rather than language differences. However, when this discourse about the Zulu’s cultural superiority came under pressure during the 1840s, the American missionaries began to focus on linguistic differences between the Zulu and other ‘Caffres’ in order to reassert the distinctiveness of the Zulu. As chapter seven shows, as part of this turn toward language, the American missionaries encountered and reworked a preexisting Zulu discourse about social difference that distinguished subjects (*amantungwa*) from tributaries (*amalala*) on the basis linguistic differences.

Background

Supported by Congregationalists and Presbyterians, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (the Board) was established in 1810 and incorporated in

1812.¹ It expanded its missionary operations rapidly over the next two decades, establishing footholds in India (1813), Ceylon (1815), among Native Americans (1816), the Hawaiian Islands (1819), the Ottoman Empire (1820), and China (1829).² By the early 1830s, the Board was ready to carry its missionary zeal to the African continent in order to “send divine truth to the ignorant Ethiopians.”³ They made a beginning by establishing the “Gaboon mission” in West Africa in 1834.⁴ Encouraged by a letter from Dr. John Philip of the London Missionary Society, the Board sent a second mission to “the Zoolahs of southeastern Africa” one year later.⁵

The first members of this mission to the Zulu⁶ arrived in Cape Town in the early months of 1835.⁷ Under the impression that the Zulu were divided “in two separate independent communities,” the American missionaries split up accordingly upon their arrival in South Africa.⁸ Destined for work in the interior (or highveld), among Mzilikazi’s “inland community” of Zulu,⁹ the first group consisted of Southern Presbyterians and included Reverends Daniel Lindley, Henry I. Venable, and Alexander E. Wilson, M.D., three graduates of the Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.¹⁰ Together with their wives, this group departed Cape Town on March 19, 1835 and reached the London Missionary Society’s Station at Griquatown in the middle of April. They remained there for the next eight months in order to gather intelligence

¹ Joseph Tracy, *History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Compiled Chiefly from the Published and Unpublished Documents of the Board*, 2nd ed. (New York: M. W. Dodd, [1840] 1842), 26-7.

² Judson Smith, *A History of the American Board Missions in Africa* (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1905), 7.

³ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, J. B. Purney to Dr. J. Philip, Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey, 16 Mar 1832, 22.

⁴ Tracy, *History*, 300.

⁵ *MH*, Nov 1833, 415-420; *Ibid.*, Jan 1835, 5.

⁶ The spelling of the term “Zulu” varied significantly until 1837, when the American missionaries decided to adopt the current spelling. See *MH*, Feb 1838, 66; S. J. R. Martin, “British Images of the Zulu, c. 1820-1879,” *Ph.D. Diss.* (University of Cambridge, 1982), 80.

⁷ Tracy, *History*, 300.

⁸ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Instructions of the Prudential Committee to the Rev. Daniel Lindley, Rev. Aldin Grout, Rev. Alexander E. Wilson, M.D., Rev. George Champion, Rev. Henry I. Venable, and Newton Adams, M.D., and their Wives, Boston, 22 Nov 1834, 47; *MH*, Jan 1835, 5.

⁹ For the practice of calling Mzilikazi’s people “Zulu,” see also Martin, “British Images,” 82.

¹⁰ For the term ‘inland community,’ see Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Instructions, 22 Nov 1834, 47.

about the language and customs of Mzilikazi's people from the local LMS missionaries and their African assistants.¹¹ Lindley and Venable departed Griquatown in January 1836 and, traveling via Kuruman, where they met LMS missionary Robert Moffat, reached Mzilikazi's highveld kingdom on February 9, 1836. Shortly after their arrival there, they established a mission station near Motsenyateng, the capital of the Mosega district of Mzilikazi's domain.¹²

Destined for work among Dingane's "maritime community" of Zulu people located in the middle and lowveld regions of southeastern Africa, the second group consisted of Congregationalists and included Reverends Aldin Grout and George Champion, two graduates of Andover Theological Seminary, and Newton Adams, M.D., a trained medical professional.¹³ In order to gather more information on Dingane's people and hire interpreters, Adams and, later, Grout moved on to Grahamstown in May and September, respectively.¹⁴ With the overland route to Dingane's people blocked by the Sixth Cape Frontier War, they proceeded to Port Natal by sea, where Grout and Adams arrived in December 1835. Upon their arrival in Port Natal, the American missionaries were welcomed by a community of some thirty European traders who, given their residence in the region since 1824, were able to give them valuable advice on how to approach Dingane.¹⁵ However, they were greatly disturbed by the fact that some of these traders—for instance, Richard King and Henry Ogle—had apparently "gone native," maintaining not only considerable followings of African clients but also their own polygamous households.¹⁶

¹¹ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Venable to Anderson, Griquatown, 26 May 1835, 68; *Ibid.*, Lindley to Anderson, Griquatown, 28 Dec 1835, 85-7.

¹² Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Joint Letter to Anderson, Mosega, 18 Aug 1836, 124-6.

¹³ For the term 'maritime community,' see Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Instructions, 22 Nov 1834, 47.

¹⁴ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Adams to A. Grout and Champion, Grahamstown, 29 May 1835, 71-3; *Ibid.*, A. Grout to Champion and Adams, Grahamstown, 18 Sep 1835, 78-9.

¹⁵ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, G. Champion to James Collis, Cape Town, 2 April 1835, 54-6; *Ibid.*, A. Grout and Adams to Champion, Port Natal, 31 Jan 1836, 90-3; Bryant, *Olden Times*, 565-8.

¹⁶ Brownlee, *Reminiscences*, 82; Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, A. Grout to Anderson, Bethelsdorp, 12 Feb 1836, 96; *JSA*, Maziyana kaMahlabeni (1905), 266-67; *Ibid.*, Ndongeni kaXoki (1905), 4:239-40; *Ibid.*, Mkotana kaZulu (1905), 3:223.

Perhaps even more troubling was the fact that an Englishman by the name of Allen Gardiner, formerly a captain in the Royal Navy, had already received permission to establish a mission station in Dingane's kingdom for the Church Missionary Society (CMS).¹⁷ However, Gardiner's departure for England in early 1836 provided the American missionaries with an opportunity to approach Dingane separately and secure his tentative support for their own evangelistic work in Natal and the Zulu kingdom.¹⁸ Dingane's approval opened the way for the establishment of one mission station (Umlazi) near Port Natal and a second one (Ginani) around eight miles beyond the Thukela River in the same year.¹⁹

Having successfully established footholds among the lowveld and highveld Zulu, the American missionaries had reason to be confident about their future in South Africa by the middle of 1836. However, their position deteriorated only a few months later when the arrival of Dutch emigrant farmers upset the balance of power in the highveld. Propelled by a combination of factors—including British imperial policies regarding the abolition of slavery (1834–8) and the abandonment of Queen Adelaide Province in the aftermath of the Sixth Cape Frontier War (1834–5), as well as the onset of a severe drought in South Africa—the trekkers started moving eastward with their wives and children, servants and slaves, wagons and cattle, and horses and guns at the beginning of 1836.²⁰ By August, one group of these farmers reached the vicinity of

¹⁷ The CMS was founded in 1799 by a group of activist evangelical Christians, with ties to the Anglican Church in England, whose key objectives included the abolition of the slave trade, social reform at home and world evangelization. Captain Allen Gardiner, R.N. had arrived in Port Natal in January 1835. His request for a mission station in the Zulu kingdom was initially rejected by Dingane. Gardiner returned to Natal in March and established a mission among settlers and their African followers. He then returned to Dingane and received permission to preach the gospel on the lower Thukela at a spot he named *Kulula* (Redemption). He was back at Port Natal in December when the American missionaries arrived. He then traveled to Britain in order to obtain more support for his fledgling mission. The Englishman Reverend Francis Owen of the Church Missionary Society occupied the station between 1837 and 1838. See Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Venable to Anderson, Mhlatuzi, 5 Dec 1837, 218-9; Bryant, *Olden Times*, 675-7.

¹⁸ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, A. Grout to Anderson, Bethelsdorp, 12 Feb 1836, 97-103.

¹⁹ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Joint Letter, Champion, Grout and Adams to Anderson, Port Natal, 11 August 1836, 122-3.

²⁰ Holden, *History*, 79-80; Norman Etherington, *The Great Treks: The Transformation of Southern Africa, 1815-1854* (London: Pearson, 2001), chapter nine.

Mzilikazi, who immediately attacked them on two separate occasions.²¹ Having retreated to Thaba Nchu, the survivors of these attacks organized a punitive commando made up of Europeans, Griqua, Kora, Tlokwa, and Rolong.²² Combining horses and guns in a lethal manner, this commando attacked Mzilikazi's Mosega district on January 16, 1837, killed and dispersed his followers, and, in so doing, deprived the American missionaries of their mission field in the highveld. Disillusioned, they withdrew to join their fellow missionaries in Natal and the Zulu kingdom.²³

However, the withdrawal from the highveld did not rid the American missionaries of the problem posed by the farmers, for another party of them reached Port Natal on October 19, 1837. Under the command of Piet Retief, this party advanced against Dingane's capital, where the Zulu king attacked and killed Retief and many of his followers on February 6 and 17, 1838.²⁴ Once again, the survivors organized a punitive commando supported by a second emigrant party and the community of European traders at Natal with their African followers. This group counterattacked Dingane in April 1838 but were decisively repulsed by the Zulu king's forces.²⁵ Fearful of a Zulu attack against Port Natal itself, the American missionaries abandoned their mission field, returning either to the United States (Grout, Venable, Wilson, and Champion) or going into "exile" to Port Elizabeth (Lindley and Adams) in the Eastern Cape region.²⁶

Over the course of the next two years, the American missionaries' position once again improved, albeit only incrementally. Dingane's defeat by a second farmer commando at the Battle of Blood River (*Ncome*) in December 1838 and the establishment of the "Republic of

²¹ Etherington, *Great Treks*, 250-52.

²² Etherington, *Great Treks*, 252.

²³ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Wilson to Anderson, Grahamstown, 17 Apr 1837, 151-5; *MH*, Oct 1837, 420.

²⁴ Cory, ed., *Diary*, 6 Feb 1838, 106-8; *Ibid.*, 11 Mar 1838, 125.

²⁵ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Lindley to his wife, Port Natal, 5 May 1838, 243-5.

²⁶ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Champion to A. Grout, Umlazi, 8 Mar 1838, 223-31.

Natalia” shortly afterward opened the way for the American missionaries’ return to Natal. Moreover, the outbreak of the Zulu civil war (1839) and Mpande’s victory against his brother Dingane at the Battle of amaQongqo Hills (1840) made it possible for missionary Aldin Grout, who had by then returned from the United States, to establish a new mission station (*Inkanyezi*) in the Zulu kingdom (1841).²⁷ However, the situation in the kingdom remained volatile and the American missionaries had to retreat to Natal again when King Mpande withdrew his support for their mission station in 1842.²⁸ The American missionaries’ position in Natal began to deteriorate at the same time. First, they faced increasing competition from the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society, which established their first station in the Natal region at this time.²⁹ Moreover, one of their own, Venable, decided to leave the American mission in order to tend to the Dutch emigrant farmers who had established the town of Pietermaritzburg several years earlier. Finally, the arrival of British troops in Natal in 1842, which led to the British annexation of Natal shortly thereafter, increased hostilities in the region to such a level that the Board considered abandoning the entire Zulu mission field to the Wesleyans.³⁰

However, the American missionaries’ fortunes changed yet again two years later when the British colonial government asked for their help in creating a location system for the rapidly increasing African population of Natal.³¹ They received another boost to their morale in 1847, when they reached a détente with the Wesleyan-Methodist missionaries, who agreed to leave them “in the undisturbed possession of the coast from the Umtogela to the Umzimkulu

²⁷ The return to the Zulu kingdom occurred in early 1841, see *MH* Apr 1842, 131.

²⁸ *MH*, Jun 1841, 246-7; *MH*, Feb 1843, 77-8.

²⁹ Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 29.

³⁰ *MH*, Jun 1844, 181. Note that Natal was annexed as a District of the Settlement of the Cape of Good Hope in 1845 and became a separate colony in 1856.

³¹ *MH*, Jun 1844, 182-3.

river[s].”³² Similarly encouraging was the fact that their numbers began to increase steadily with the arrival in Natal of Reverends Lewis Grout, James C. Bryant, Silas McKinney, Samuel Marsh, David Root, William Ireland, Andrew Abraham, Josiah Tyler, Seth Stone, and John A. Butler between 1847 and 1851. Moreover, Jakob L. Döhne joined their ranks in 1850, following a decade of service in the Eastern Cape for the Berlin Missionary Society and nearly three years of work in Natal on behalf of the Dutch Reformed Church. Emboldened by these developments, the American mission to the Zulu people expanded rapidly in the Natal region between 1846 and 1854, adding first Inanda, Umsunduzi, and Ifumi and, subsequently, Itafamasi, Mapumulo, Esidumbini, Amahlongwa, Ifafa, Table Mountain, and Umtwalumi to the preexisting Umlazi and Umvoti stations. Although after 1846, the Americans faced increasing competition from other missionary societies (notably the Berlin and Norwegian Lutherans), the American mission had become the most influential missionary establishment in the Natal region.³³ Moreover, the American missionaries were optimistic about a possible return to the Zulu kingdom when Shaw’s proposal reached them in 1854.³⁴

The American missionaries discussed this proposal at their annual meeting, held at Umlazi in June 1854, and decided against it.³⁵ They provided several linguistic reasons for their decision. For instance, they claimed that the Africans among whom they worked in Natal were unable to understand or read the ‘Caffre’ of the Eastern Cape region because many words and idioms were unknown to them and vice versa. For instance, *iqinqa*, the ‘Caffre’ word for “counsel” was not known. Likewise, the ‘Caffre’ word *umkumkani* for “king” was foreign to

³² *MH*, Jun 1848, 196.

³³ Etherington, *Preachers*, 27-40

³⁴ *Correspondence*, Rev. Seth Stone to Rev. G. Morgan, Ifafa, 17 Jul 1854, 61.

³⁵ *Correspondence*, Stone to Morgan, Ifafa, 17 Jul 1854, 59.

those they preached among.³⁶ Based on these assessments, the American missionaries insisted that any reading material published in the ‘Caffre’ of the Eastern Cape region was not useful for the Africans in Natal and Zululand. As Lewis Grout remarked in a letter dated June 20, 1854:

The difference between the Zulu and the Kafir shows itself to us in the fact that neither our people, nor we, as Missionaries, have ever been able to use books, prepared in the Kafir language, to any advantage, though the attempt was not unfrequently made before our Mission had a tolerable supply of books in the Zulu. Again, some of the Missionaries of other societies, coming here from Kafirland, have made use of Kafir books, and, in speaking, have used the Kafir dialect, at least to some extent, as we suppose; and our people—the natives of this colony—who have at times been in their vicinity, being out of work, perhaps, at D'Urban and Pietermaritzburg, have sometimes attended their services; but they assure us that they do not understand so much of the reading from those books, nor of the preaching in that dialect, as to make it a matter of any interest or profit to attend that worship.³⁷

Furthermore, they pointed to differences in orthography as another key reason for rejecting Shaw’s plan.³⁸ At the time, the principal difference between written Zulu and ‘Caffre’ resided in the separation or non-separation of prefixes and other particles from verbs and nouns. The American mission to the Zulu and the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society’s mission to the Sotho people preferred the “analytical or disjointing system,” whereas the missionaries in the Eastern Cape region used the “synthetical or uniting system.”³⁹ In the disjointing system, the simple expression “I love” had to be written as *ngi thanda (ndi thanda)*, whereas the uniting system expressed it as *ngithanda (ndithanda)*.⁴⁰ According to missionary François Daumas (Paris Evangelical Missionary Society), the disjointing system separated “the different words of speech, as in the European languages, for clearness’s sake and also for facilitating the analysis of these

³⁶ *Correspondence*, Rev. Lewis Grout on behalf of the Government Commission for preparing a Dictionary and Grammar of the Zulu languages to Rev. G. Morgan, Umsunduzi, Natal, 20 Jun 1854, 55.

³⁷ *Correspondence*, Grout on behalf of the Government Commission to Morgan, Umsunduzi, Natal, 20 Jun 1854, 54-5.

³⁸ *Correspondence*, Rev. Lewis Grout to Rev. George Morgan, Umsunduzi, 15 Sep 1854, 85.

³⁹ BSA/D1/2, Rev. George Morgan to H. Knolleke, Cape Town, 7 Aug 1854; *Correspondence*, Appleyard to Morgan, Mount Coke, 29 May 1854, 51. The decision had been made at a joint-mission meeting at Umxelo in 1845, see chapter one.

⁴⁰ ‘*Ng*’ and ‘*nd*’ are the first person prefixes in standard isiZulu and isiXhosa respectively.

languages.”⁴¹ The underlying rationale was the claim that *ngi* represented, as in English, the independent personal pronoun “I” and *thanda* the verb “love.”⁴² The American missionaries came to the same conclusion. “A word...,” Lewis Grout explained, “is one or more syllables written together, as the sign of some idea, or of some relation of ideas.”⁴³ Moreover, he argued that “The general orthographic rule for the writing of [Zulu], as for the writing of other [European] languages, is to give each word...a distinct position of its own, separate from each other word in the sentence.”⁴⁴ It followed that, because “I” and “love” represented distinct ideas, they were different words—which, in turn, meant that “I love” had to be written as *ngi thanda* (*ndi thanda*). The missionaries in the Eastern Cape region disagreed entirely with this rationale. As the Wesleyan missionary John W. Appleyard explained, “there is not the slightest affinity in the *formal* construction” between the European and ‘Caffre’ languages.⁴⁵ He claimed that, rather than understanding *ngi* (*ndi*) and *thanda* as separate words, the former should be seen as the verbal prefix of the verb-root *thanda*. In his view, this understanding of the language was more correct, as *ngi* (*ndi*) could never be used on its own, but had to be attached to a verb-root.⁴⁶ However, as can be seen from Lewis Grout’s statement, the American missionaries were unwilling to compromise on this issue:

For myself—so fully persuaded am I of the great practical utility and philosophic propriety of writing the pronouns and auxiliaries separate from the principal verbs in Zulu—or as some would say, ‘Separating verbal prefixes from their roots,’—that I should be very sorry to see our Mission adopt any system very essentially different, on that point, from that which we now follow. And if *all* the Missionaries in Kaffirland [Eastern Cape region], and elsewhere, be *unanimous* in the opinion that the pronouns and auxiliaries must be *joined* to the principal verb,

⁴¹ *Correspondence*, Rev. F. Daumas to Rev. G. Morgan, Mowbray, 17 Oct 1854, 80.

⁴² *Correspondence*, Daumas to Morgan, Mowbray, 17 Oct 1854, 80.

⁴³ Lewis Grout, *The IsiZulu. A Grammar of the Zulu Language* (London: Trübner, 1859), 38.

⁴⁴ Grout, *IsiZulu*, 39.

⁴⁵ *Correspondence*, Appleyard to Morgan, Mount Coke, 25 May 1857, 104-5.

⁴⁶ *Correspondence*, Appleyard to Morgan, Mount Coke, 25 May 1857, 105.

I should not expect a conference on this subject would result in uniformity on that point...⁴⁷

It is crucial to treat these linguistic arguments with caution. For one, the American missionaries' focus on orthographic differences is problematic, given that this issue represented a manmade obstacle that had little to do with the differences between the speaking practices of the African populations in these two regions. Perhaps more importantly, the American missionaries appear to have purposefully ignored the forward-looking, assimilationist character of Shaw's proposal. Thus, whereas Shaw proposed assimilating the speaking practices of the African populations of the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions into a new written 'Caffre' language comprehensible to all in the future, the American missionaries rejected it with the (highly dubious) argument that the two speaking practices were not mutually intelligible in the present. This attitude is all the more questionable because, as late as 1850, the American missionaries themselves had promoted the assimilation of these speaking practices into a unifying (written) language. In fact, at that time, they claimed this goal could be achieved by creating a "uniform system of orthography" and exchanging words and idioms between these so-called "dialects." The sudden change in attitude between 1850 and 1854 suggests that the American missionaries' rejection of Shaw's proposal was tied only superficially to these linguistic arguments. In order to better identify the main reason for the Americans' rejection of this plan, it is necessary to explore the relationship between their self-conception as missionaries to the Zulu and their ideas about the nature of Zuluness.

⁴⁷ *Correspondence*, L. Grout to Morgan, Umsunduzi, 15 Sep 1854, 85. My emphasis.

The Question of Zuluness, 1835–1854

Whereas the European missionaries in the Eastern Cape region tied their identity to the broadly defined ‘Caffres,’ the American missionaries tied theirs to the Zulu only. This attitude stemmed in part from the American missionaries’ approach to missionizing. As David Kling explained, they were the product of two decades of revivals and faced the future with an “unabashed millennial optimism.”⁴⁸ This optimism, paired with an emerging sense of American nationalism, led them to believe that Americans were “providentially favored to carry the gospel overseas.”⁴⁹ In turn, this self-confident attitude encouraged them to take literally the Bible text of Matthew 28:19—“Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”—and focus on the conversion of nations *in toto* rather than individuals. As the Board announced in 1810:

The Lord is shaking the nations; his friends in different parts of Christendom are roused from their slumbers; and unprecedented exertions are making for the spread of divine knowledge, and the conversion of the nations.⁵⁰

Early successes, notably in Hawaii, seemingly confirmed the idea that whole nations could be converted *en masse*. Preaching to the Board in 1829, Archibald Alexander, a professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, reinforced this idea, claiming:

The extraordinary exaltation of the character, not of a few individuals, but of whole tribes and nations, the friends of missions have just grounds for mutual congratulation and triumph.... Contemplate the strange spectacle of whole nations casting away their idols, and princes and people, the aged and the young, sitting

⁴⁸ David W. Kling, “The New Divinity and the Origins of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,” in Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 15.

⁴⁹ King, “New Divinity,” 15.

⁵⁰ American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the ‘Christian Public,’ 1810, as quoted in Joseph Tracy, *History*, 28. For this focus on ‘nations’ or ‘peoples,’ see also Norman Etherington, “Kingdoms of this World and the Next: Christian Beginnings among Zulu and Swazi,” in Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, eds., *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 91.

down at the feet of the missionaries, to be instructed in the things which relate to their salvation....⁵¹

But which “whole nation or tribe” should be converted in South Africa?⁵² Dr. John Philip of the London Missionary Society provided the answer to this question. Writing to the Board in 1833, he recommended that American missionaries be sent to:

The people called Zoolahs.... The societies now in operation in South Africa, cannot do anything efficiently for these...people. And on this ground should the churches of America think of assisting us in South Africa, I would recommend that they should send a mission to them.⁵³

A careful reading of Philip’s letter would have raised serious questions about the “Zoolah” or Zulu as a clearly demarcated people or nation in any political, cultural, linguistic, racial, or territorial sense. For instance, Philip explained that the Zulu were controlled by two chiefs (Dingane and Mzilikazi), had the same customs and language as the “Bechuanas,” resembled the “Caffres on the eastern frontier,” and consisted of a series of conquered tribes.⁵⁴ Ignoring these issues, the Board optimistically accepted the divine commission of converting the Zulu. Writing to the the American missionaries in 1835, the Secretary of the Board expressed this sentiment:

I confess I have a strong impression that the Lord will smile upon your career, & give you an open door to the field of your preference.... The Zoolahs are given to Christ, & we are commanded to preach His gospel to them.⁵⁵

As mentioned, both Mzilikazi and Dingane allowed the American missionaries to establish mission stations in their respective territories in 1836, initial successes which reinforced

⁵¹ *The National Preacher* 4:5 (October 1829), Archibald Alexander to the American Board of Foreign Missions, Albany, NY, 7 Oct 1829, 257-8.

⁵² Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, J. B. Purney to Dr. J. Philip, Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey, 16 Mar 1832, 23.

⁵³ *MH*, Nov 1833, 415-16.

⁵⁴ *MH*, Nov 1833, 415-16.

⁵⁵ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Anderson to Grout, Champion and Adams, Boston, 18 Dec 1835, 85.

the American missionaries' self-conception as a mission to the Zulu.⁵⁶ Ironically, the reversals they experienced between 1837 and 1838 further strengthened this self-conception, because these setbacks convinced the American missionaries that no viable alternative in South Africa existed to their relationship with the Zulu. Writing from their "exile" in Port Elizabeth in 1838, they claimed that:

Of the country occupied by the Hottentots and Bechuana tribes...we need say nothing, as all the field in that direction...is already taken up by the London, Wesleyan, Paris, and Berlin societies.... The only remaining part of it...is Kafirland.... [However] In this region there are now laboring missionaries from five different societies.... All the principal chiefs, with one exception, have missionaries with them.⁵⁷

The Board's reply reinforced the idea that the American missionaries and the Zulu were an indivisible entity. "We cannot be persuaded that it is advisable to place a missionary at Cape Town..." the Board noted in 1838; "Our business is with the Zulus..."⁵⁸ The unwavering focus on the Zulu people seemed to pay off when the American missionaries were able to return to Natal in 1839 and to the Zulu kingdom in 1841.⁵⁹ Although they had to withdraw again from the latter place only one year later, the American missionaries remained confident in their identity as a mission to the Zulu. A key reason for this confidence was the continued influx of so-called Zulu refugees into Natal, a development which promised to turn that region into the ideal location for a mission to the Zulu. As the American missionaries noted at the time:

Especially since the revolt of Umpandi, there has been almost a continued stream of emigration from the Zulu country.... Several thousands have left the Zulu country and settled in this region [Natal] during the past two years.... If the emigration continues, this community will soon equal the Zulu country

⁵⁶ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, A. Grout to Anderson, Bethelsdorp, 12 Feb 1836, 100.

⁵⁷ *MH*, Feb 1839, 50-1.

⁵⁸ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Anderson to 'The Brethren of the S. African Mission,' Boston 11 April 1838, 250.

⁵⁹ *MH*, Jan 1840, 4; *Ibid.*, Jun 1841, 246-7; *Ibid.*, Apr 1842, 131. The exception was the American missionary Daniel Lindley who, about this time, began preaching among the Emigrant Farmers and eventually joined the Dutch Reformed Church. See *MH*, Apr 1842, 129-130.

population, and I believe that the facilities for prosecuting missionary operations will be greater here than there....⁶⁰

Particularizing the Zulu on the Basis of Culture, 1833–1842

Their self-conception as a mission to the Zulu encouraged the American missionaries to particularize the Zulu people from the inception of their activities in South Africa. Thus, whereas the Eastern Cape missionaries looked for traits that the various ‘Caffre’ communities—including the Zulu—had in common, the American missionaries in the Natal-Zululand region searched for traits which set the Zulu apart from other ‘Caffre’ groups. This focus on difference structured the ways in which they solicited information about the Zulu. For instance, in 1835, the American missionary George Champion asked a trader at Port Natal: “The natives. In what respects, if any, do they *differ* from the Southern Caffres?”⁶¹

However, it proved difficult to particularize the Zulu in a meaningful fashion, including in geographical terms. In part, this problem arose from the fact that, in 1833, London missionary Philip had given the Board only vague information about the territory occupied by the Zulu.⁶² As can be seen from their instructions, this vagueness persisted by the time the American missionaries left for South Africa:

The Zoolahs...extend from that port [Port Natal] onward *near* three hundred miles to Delagoa Bay; thence northward, behind that bay and the Portuguese territory of Sofala, as far, *probably*, as the tropic of Capricorn. Not many years since they became divided into two separate independent communities...Dingaan, the ruler of the maritime nation, resides *somewhat* more than a hundred miles from Port Natal; and Masalikatsi [Mzilikazi], the head of the interior nation, *may possibly* be not far distant from Latakoo...⁶³

⁶⁰ *MH*, Apr 1843, 155-6.

⁶¹ Kotzé, *Letters*, Champion to Collis, Cape Town, 2 April 1835, 55. My emphasis.

⁶² *MH*, Nov 1833, 415-6.

⁶³ Kotzé, *Letters*, Instructions, Nov. 22, 1834, 46-50. My emphases.

More importantly, this information suggested that the Zulu were territorially fragmented, a fact which the American missionaries acknowledged when they divided their operations accordingly.⁶⁴

The American missionaries' withdrawal from Mzilikazi's people in 1837 could have opened the path for a tighter territorial demarcation of Zuluness, especially since the Zulu rulers had had clear ideas about the territorial expansion of the Zulu kingdom. As Stuart's informant Ndukwana explained in circa 1900, the maximum expansion of the Zulu kingdom was "determined by the *izizwe* (tribes) defeated, i.e. the lands occupied by them."⁶⁵ During Shaka's reign, this included the territories between the Thukela and the Mkhomazi Rivers in the southwest and the Black Mfolozi and the Phongolo Rivers in the northeast. However, Dingane's defeat by the Dutch emigrant farmers in 1838 deprived the kingdom of the former territory,⁶⁶ reducing its overall expansion to the region between the Thukela and the Phongolo Rivers. Thus, Ndukwana added:

The boundaries of Zululand were the Income river on the northwest to where it enters the Mzinyati, from there along the Mzinyati to the Tugela, then along the Tugela to the sea; on the northeast the Pongolo was the boundary...hence to the uBombo along the Pongolo, and then, on the east of the uBombo, the Mkuze river to the sea was the boundary; the sea was the eastern boundary.⁶⁷

Although the American missionaries eventually recognized the Phongolo and Thukela Rivers as boundaries of the Zulu territory,⁶⁸ they ultimately refrained from defining Zuluness in these spatial terms for two reasons. First, the the civil war north of the Thukela that began in 1839 caused many so-called Zulu to cross that river, undermining its usefulness as a boundary

⁶⁴ *MH*, Jan 1835, 5.

⁶⁵ *JSA*, Ndukwana kaMbengwana (1897-1903), 4:316.

⁶⁶ Holden, *History*, 93.

⁶⁷ *JSA*, Ndukwana kaMbengwana (1897-1903), 4:315.

⁶⁸ Kotzé, *Letters*, Champion to Anderson, Ginani, 21 Apr 1837, 156; *MH*, Apr 1838, 139; *Ibid.*, Jun 1838, 208-9; *Ibid.*, Oct 1840, 387. See also KCAL, KCM 89/36/1/1, Life of Mr Joseph Kirkman in Zululand (1836-40), 9; Gardiner, *Narrative*, 24.

marker of Zuluness.⁶⁹ Perhaps more importantly, because the American missionaries were themselves forced to retreat across the Thukela into Natal in 1842, they, along with many of their contemporaries, were unwilling to particularize the Zulu people in these geographical terms. As Hamilton and Wright have argued, at that time:

The [Zulu] ‘nation’ was conceived of as an unbounded entity. The broadly defined area in which Zulu power was said to dominate was described as the ‘Zulu country,’ the ‘Zulu territory,’ or ‘Zulu land,’ rather than as ‘Zululand’ or any other designation connoting a more strictly defined territorial unit.⁷⁰

It was equally difficult to define the Zulu as a political entity. Certainly, the American missionaries were unable to make an argument in favor of a unified Zulu polity as long as they acknowledged that politically autonomous communities resided with Dingane north of the Thukela, with Mzilikazi on the highveld, and, as some of them argued, with “white men...as their chiefs” in Natal.⁷¹ However, even after they had withdrawn from the highveld in 1837, the Americans were unable to clearly demarcate the political boundaries of the Zulu state. This problem derived in part from the fact that this state “consisted of a number of heterogeneous groups” which “were incorporated into the body politic in different ways and to different degrees.”⁷² This context confused the American missionaries, and they struggled to understand how the Zulu rulers enforced their political authority over all these heterogeneous groups. “It is astonishing...,” American missionary George Champion remarked in 1836, “how many remnants of subdued nations the traveler meets with, as well as astonishing that such a man as Chakka or Dingaan should be able to keep them together under one government...”⁷³

Particularizing the Zulu people as a political entity became even more difficult after 1839 when

⁶⁹ *MH*, Feb 1843, 79. For this immigration, see also *Ibid.*, Jun 1841, 248; *Ibid.*, Apr 1843, 155; *Ibid.*, Jun 1844, 183; and Keletso Atkins, *The Moon is Dead! Give us Our Money!: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic in Natal, South Africa, 1843-1900* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993), chapter one.

⁷⁰ Hamilton and Wright, “*AmaLala*,” 5.

⁷¹ *MH*, Jan 1835, 5; *Ibid.*, Sep 1836, 339.

⁷² Hamilton and Wright, “*AmaLala*,” 2-3, 15-17.

⁷³ *MH*, Apr 1837, 144.

the civil war between King Dingane and his rival Mpande began. Soon after the outbreak of this conflict, Mpande led many of his followers into Natal, an act that became known as the “breaking of the rope” (*ukudabuk’* or *ukugqabuk’ igoda*) precisely because it split the Zulu polity, which was said to be figuratively united from generation to generation by an imaginary grass rope (*igoda*), into two opposing camps.⁷⁴ However, even after Mpande had defeated Dingane in 1840, the Zulu polity remained fragmented. For one, a large section of the Zulu who had seceded with Mpande in 1839 remained in Natal and, thus, were independent of his rule.⁷⁵ A good example of this situation were the Chunu under their Chief Phakade, who, as the American missionary Newton Adams explained, “was formerly a subject of the Zulu King; but on the revolt of Umpandi, he crossed the boundary of the Zulu country, resolving to be independent.”⁷⁶ Moreover, the ongoing tensions north of the Thukela encouraged additional numbers of so-called Zulu refugees to relocate to Natal where some of them reasserted pre-Shakan leadership structures.⁷⁷ In fact, amid this continued exodus, the American missionaries predicted the complete disintegration of the Zulu polity. Writing from Umlazi in 1843, they explained: “Emigration continues, and perhaps the time is not very distant when the nation will be resolved [again] into its original elements—the different tribes of which it is now composed, separating, and adhering [again] to their respective chiefs.”⁷⁸ Meanwhile, the British colonial government tried to render this fragmentation permanent by investing those chiefs who moved to Natal with “a title to the lands occupied by their respective tribes...”⁷⁹

⁷⁴ *JSA*, John Kumalo (1900), 1:243; *Ibid.*, Mkando kaDhlova (1902), 3:158; *Ibid.*, Ndukwana kaMbengwana (1897-1903), 4:346; Hamilton, *Terrific*, 56; Atkins, *Moon* 12.

⁷⁵ Colenso, *Ten Weeks*, 16; Atkins, *Moon*, 13.

⁷⁶ *MH*, Jun 1846, 191. Adams’s statement is confirmed by *JSA*, Madikane kaMlomowetole (1903), 2:56; *Ibid.*, Magidigidi kaNobebe (1905), 2:83, 85, 95. For the earlier history of the Chunu and how they had become Zulu subjects in the 1820s, see Wright, “Political Transformations,” 178.

⁷⁷ *MH*, Jun 1843, 241; Colenso, *Ten Weeks*, 16.

⁷⁸ *MH*, May 1846, 159.

⁷⁹ *MH*, Nov 1845, 370.

While the American missionaries struggled to define the Zulu as a tightly-bounded territorial or political entity, they believed, at least initially, that a unique cultural boundary circumscribed Zuluness. This focus on culture was encouraged by the Zulu rulers, who practiced an ideology of exclusion in which culture provided important markers of difference vis-à-vis outsiders. As Patrick Harries explained, “Food taboos and styles of cooking, dress, and personal ornamentation, together with the abolition of circumcision, all became markers defining the cultural borders of the [Zulu] kingdom.”⁸⁰ Furthermore, the Zulu rulers imposed (at least in theory) harsher punishments for theft and murder and stricter laws regarding marriage and premarital sex than their regional neighbors. For instance, the Zulu rulers’ male and female age-set regiments (*amabutho*) were not allowed to marry until they received the king’s permission to do so (a permission that was usually granted to men in their thirties and women in their twenties).⁸¹ At the same time, certain sections of society were prohibited from engaging in courtship (*ukuqomisa* or *ukuqoma*) and premarital sex in the form of external intercourse (*ukuhlobonga* or *ukusoma*).⁸²

Perhaps the most important marker of difference was the Zulu warrior culture. Although they were not the only regional power that organized permanent regiments (*amabutho*), military homesteads (*amakhandanda*), and expansionary military campaigns, the fact that the Zulu armies (*izimpi*) eventually defeated the majority of their regional rivals encouraged them to think of

⁸⁰ Harries, “Imagery,” 107.

⁸¹ Jeff Guy, *The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom: The Civil War in Zululand, 1879-1884* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, [1974], 1982), 11; Jeff Guy, “Ecological Factors in the Rise of Shaka and the Zulu Kingdom,” in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore, eds., *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (Harlow: Longman, 1980), 115-7.

⁸² The existing scholarship is not entirely clear as to who was subjected to these restrictive laws. For instance, Atkins argues that these customs prohibited members of the *Imvokwe* (*Imvoko*) regiments and all young males from engaging in these activities, while they permitted young females to court and have premarital external sex with grown men only. However, Hanretta claims that the majority of Zulu women and men experienced sexual freedom, because these restrictive laws applied only to the women (*amakosikazi* and *umNdlunkulu*) of the royal household (*iziGodlo*). See Atkins, *The Moon is Dead!*, 31-4; Sean Hanretta, “Women, Marginality and the Zulu State: Women’s Institutions and Power in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *The Journal of African History* 39:3 (1998), 402-3.

their (warrior) culture not only as different but also as superior to those of other peoples.⁸³ Thus, King Shaka explained to several European traders in 1826 that for the Zulu, “it would be no difficult matter to conquer [the English nation].”⁸⁴ On another occasion, he is remembered as having addressed his people, saying: “Zulu people, I have overcome all chiefs. I am a warrior. I have only myself to fight against. There is no other chief who makes war as I do.”⁸⁵ Feelings of military superiority among members of the Zulu kingdom also found expression in popular songs that praised the military achievements of King Shaka:

*Wa gedageda izizwe,
U ya kuhlaselapi na?
E, U ya kuhlaselapi na?
Wa hlula amakosi,
U hlaselapi na?
Wa gedageda izizwe,
U hlaselapi na?
E, E, E,
U hlaselapi na?*

(Translation)
Thou hast finished, finished the nations,
Where will you go out to battle now?
Hey! Where will you go out to battle now?
Thou hast conquered kings,
Where are you going to battle now?
Thou hast finished, finished the nations,
Where are you going to battle now?
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!
Where are you going to battle now?⁸⁶

The alleged military genius of Shaka’s successor, Dingane, was honored in a similar manner, and the praise he was given was indicative of the same feelings of military superiority:

Thou art a king who crushest the heads of the other kings.
Thou passest over mountains inaccessible to thy predecessors.

⁸³ For instance, the Ndwandwe also organized permanent regiments (*amabutho*), military homesteads (*amakhandu*) and expansionary military campaigns. See Wright and Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations," 62-67, 69-71.

⁸⁴ Isaacs, *Travels*, 1:113-4

⁸⁵ *JSA*, Lugubuka Mangaliso, 1:284.

⁸⁶ *Proceedings of Natal*, Evidence of the Rev. Lewis Grout, 28 Dec 1852, 4:27. See also also Shooter, *Kafirs*, 268.

Thou findest a defile from which there is no egress...
 Thou takest away the herds from the banks of the Tugela.
 And the herds of the Babanankos, a people skilled in the forging of iron.
 Thou are indeed a green [vigorous] adventurer!...
 To thy soldiers; to the veteran and to the more youthful.
 They will go, before the dawn of day,
 To ravage every place whithersoever thou may'st command them.
 To carry desolation...
 Of old hostile nations disturbed our repose;
 They did it as do the *mazeze* [fleas].
 Today they trouble us not,
 For thou hast caught and crushed them...
 Powerful conqueror,
 Triumph over all the powers of the east.
 Thou art violent; thou art cold
 Like the wind which comes from the sea,
 Thou causest to perish all the nations.⁸⁷

Feelings of military superiority led to a more generalized cultural hubris. Thus, in 1835, while watching a performance by some of his female *amabutho*, Dingane asked Captain Allen Gardiner rhetorically: “What black nations can vie with us? Who among them can dress as we do?”⁸⁸ Cultural hubris underpinned derogatory statements about (cultural) outsiders,⁸⁹ especially the African residents of Natal, whom the Zulu called *amakhafula* because they “were under the yoke of the white man” and, thus, as worthless as “something to be spit out (*ukukhafula*).”⁹⁰

European commentators reworked these ideas as part of their own particularizing discourse about the Zulu people. Given their fascination with war and conquest, they commented

⁸⁷ Shooter, *Kafirs*, 310-315.

⁸⁸ Gardiner, *Narrative*, 39.

⁸⁹ This idea is explored in more detail in chapter seven.

⁹⁰ Wilhelm Bleek noted in 1855-6, “In Zululand, *Kafula* means a *Natal kaffer*, and these are supposed to be under the yoke of the white man, whilst free Zulus serve nobody but their king.” He later added that his hired Zulu helper Minyaisi told him, “‘a-ngi-yi Kafula,’ I am not your kaffer.” John W. Colenso explained in the 1861 edition of his *Zulu-English Dictionary*, “Kafula, v. Throw away food out of the mouth with the hand after chewing it, which it is highly disrespectful to do before people; (hence the natives so much dislike the word *ikafula*—unbeliever, not being aware of its Arabic origin, and taking it for a term of contempt—something to be spit out)...” In a later edition he added, “Kafula, n. Kafir; a word of contempt. N. B. The Zulus call only Natal natives *amakafula*, ‘Kafirs.’” See W. Bleek, *The Natal Diaries of Dr. W.H.I. Bleek, 1855-1856*, ed. O. Spohr (Cape Town: Gothic, 1965), 69-70; John W. Colenso, *Zulu-English Dictionary* (Pietermaritzburg: P. Davis, 1861), 209; *Zulu-English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Natal: P. Davis, 1884), 234.

frequently on the allegedly superior military skills of the Zulu.⁹¹ For instance, after having observed a Zulu army in action, the Natal trader Henry Francis Fynn, who resided in the region between 1824 and 1834, noted in his diary that “The frontier Kaffir tribes, also the tribes of Delagoa, could be in no way compared to the *superior* standing of the Zulu nation.”⁹² Similarly, in 1833, Dr. Philip described Mzilikazi’s (Zulu) people as “*the most* warlike and courageous people we have heard of in Africa in modern times...the unwarlike Bechuanas fell before them like sheep under the knife of the butcher.”⁹³ The French missionaries Arbousset and Dumas agreed, adding several years later:

These Zulus are a fine race of blacks, *superior* in stature, in elegance of shape, and in muscular strength, to the Bechuanas. These, as mild and gentle as the others are ferocious, have invariably suffered much from their aggressors when they have come into collision with them.⁹⁴

Europeans in general and missionaries in particular were even more fascinated with those aspects of Zulu culture—notably the laws governing crime, marriage, and sexuality—that seemingly matched their own Protestant-bourgeois value system. Accordingly, in 1836, a Natal trader singled out the Zulu by emphasizing “the freedom from theft” that allegedly existed among them, which, given the widespread rhetoric about the thievishness of the ‘Caffres’ of the Eastern Cape region, made them appear extraordinary indeed.⁹⁵ Francis Owen of the Church Missionary Society made a similar assertion in the late 1830s. “During my stay in the Zulu

⁹¹ For background on this phenomenon throughout history, see John Laband, “‘Bloodstained Grandeur:’ Colonial and Imperial Stereotypes of Zulu Warriors and Zulu Warfare,” in Benedict Carton, John Laband and Jabulani Sithole, eds., *Zulu Identities: Being Zulu, Past and Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, [2008] 2009), 168-76.

⁹² KCAL, MS1487a, Diary of Fynn, 57, footnote 2. My emphasis. See also *Ibid.*, 228.

⁹³ *MH*, Nov 1833, 415-16. My emphasis.

⁹⁴ As quoted in William Holden, *The Past and Future of the Kafir Races* (London: Nicholas, 1866), 22. My emphasis.

⁹⁵ *MH*, Mar 1837, 117-8. For the contemporary rhetoric about the thievishness of the ‘Caffres’ of the Eastern Cape region, see Cory, ed., *Diary*, 3 May 1837, 8; Clifton Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 129.

country,” he noted, “I never had a single article stolen and might have emptied my wagon on the road without fear.”⁹⁶

Missionaries also singled out the Zulu people for their allegedly harsher laws regarding marriage and sexuality. “No one can have a wife till the king is pleased to give him one,” Dr. Philip opined in 1833; “before marriage no intercourse is allowed between the sexes; to attempt the chastity of a young woman is to incur the penalty of death, and to be accused is to be found guilty.”⁹⁷ While residing at Dingane’s capital in 1837, Owen observed with a mixture of trepidation and admiration the stern justice of the Zulu: “Two persons were put to death yesterday, a man and a woman, for the crime of Adultery.”⁹⁸ Two month later, while visiting the former Zulu capital of Nobamba, he added, “It is impossible that the inhabitants of any English village could have behaved with more modesty and decorum than the multitudes of half naked savages that surrounded us.”⁹⁹

Shortly after their arrival in South Africa, the American missionaries pursued similar lines of argument. Regarding the Zulu military culture, they remarked in 1842 that this culture, in combination with Shaka’s superior generalship, had “made the Zulu nation the largest and most powerful in all South Africa.”¹⁰⁰ They were even more outspoken about issues of crime and sexuality. Writing from Port Natal in 1836, Aldin Grout explained that, while the ‘Caffres’ of the Eastern Cape region were “often detected...in *stealing and deceiving*,...the Zoolahs have two most remarkable traits of character for a heathen community, *honesty and chastity*.”¹⁰¹ Five years later, the Americans continued to single out the Zulu for their allegedly superior sexual restraint.

⁹⁶ Cory, ed., *Diary*, circa 1839, 151.

⁹⁷ *MH*, Nov 1833, 415.

⁹⁸ Cory, ed., *Diary*, 22 Nov 1837, 71.

⁹⁹ Cory, ed., *Diary*, 24 Jan 1838, 101-102. Nobamba had been Senzangakhona’s Great place.

¹⁰⁰ *MH*, Apr 1843, 155.

¹⁰¹ *MH*, Apr 1837, 149; *Ibid.*, Sep 1836, 342. My emphasis.

“What a mother of harlots and all uncleanness is licentiousness, in every heathen nation upon the globe,” missionary A. Grout remarked in 1841, “*except the Zulus.... The Zulus have not their equal in this respect, for purity...*”¹⁰² Finally, they also reworked the Zulu rulers’ claim that there existed significant differences between themselves and the African residents of Natal (*amakafula*).¹⁰³ In 1836, the American missionaries agreed on this point, arguing that the latter were not Zulu at all, but the same people as those groups who “[are] scattered throughout Caffreland, and are designated [there] by the general name of Fingors [Mfengu].”¹⁰⁴

Doubts about the Cultural Distinctiveness of the Zulu, 1842–1852

However strongly they were earlier presented, these ideas came under pressure during the 1840s. The American missionaries had their first doubts about the cultural superiority of the Zulu people when King Mpande expelled them from the Zulu kingdom for a second time in 1842. Whereas Aldin Grout had earlier described Mpande as “a plain, honest man,” he now referred to the Zulu king as characterized by “littleness, meanness, and thirst for blood.”¹⁰⁵ In fact, A. Grout’s disillusionment with the Zulu polity went so far that he began to pray for its extinction.¹⁰⁶ The Americans were not the only people who left the Zulu kingdom at this time. Amid the ongoing political tensions north of the Thukela, large numbers of Zulu migrated to Natal, where they came under the control of the American missionaries.¹⁰⁷ As they lived and worked in close proximity with these so-called Zulu refugees, the missionaries developed more critical views about the nature of Zulu culture. For instance, Adams stated in 1845:

¹⁰² *MH*, Aug 1842, 339. My emphasis.

¹⁰³ See above.

¹⁰⁴ *MH*, Jan 1837, 39.

¹⁰⁵ *MH*, Jun 1841, 246; *Ibid.*, Feb 1843, 79.

¹⁰⁶ ABC 15.4, Volume 3, A. Grout to Anderson, 2 Oct 1845.

¹⁰⁷ *MH*, May 1844, 151, 153; *Ibid.*, Nov 1845, 370.

The mass of people among whom we have to labor are in a state of *deep degradation*, strongly attached to their *evil customs*, and almost beyond description *vile and corrupt* in their habits and practices. *Chastity is scarcely, if at all, known among them. All of them will cheat and lie, some will kill and steal.... This people are very licentious....* Perhaps it will give you a tolerable idea of their character in this respect, to state that the usages and opinions of Zulu society require chastity only in married women. *Lying and deception are very prominent vices of the Zulu.* From their infancy they are trained to these habits, which, consequently, grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength...¹⁰⁸

The American missionaries' rhetoric changed for two reasons. First, as Atkins has argued, many of the younger refugees who arrived in Natal had left the Zulu kingdom precisely because they wanted to escape the restrictive laws that governed marriage and sexual behavior north of the Thukela.¹⁰⁹ Once in Natal, these individuals engaged in activities that challenged not only these laws, but also the Protestant-bourgeois sensibilities of the American missionaries.¹¹⁰ Perhaps more importantly, the majority of these refugees resisted the American missionaries' attempts to impose their religious views and moral standards on them. In the face of these attitudes, the American missionaries did not merely become disillusioned with Zulu culture but came to regard it as the most important obstacle to conversion. As the American missionary James Bryant remarked in 1847:

Our intercourse with this people shows us more and more clearly, that they are supremely devoted to the things of time and sense. *The voluntary slaves of appetite and lust, they have no relish for those truths*, which lay a stern prohibition on their darling sins...¹¹¹

The American missionaries' changing discourse about Zulu culture raised serious doubts about the cultural distinctiveness and superiority of the Zulu and, thus, about the very nature of Zuluness. Many Africans who crossed into Natal at this time exacerbated this problem by

¹⁰⁸ *MH*, Nov 1845, 370; *Ibid.*, Jun 1846, 192-3. My emphasis.

¹⁰⁹ Atkins, *Moon*, 34-6.

¹¹⁰ Atkins, *Moon*, 34-5.

¹¹¹ *MH*, Mar 1848, 100. My emphasis. Note that the situation worsened thereafter, see especially *MH*, Aug 1852, 227; *Ibid.*, Feb 1853, 37; Etherington, *Preachers*, 58ff.

identifying themselves not as Zulu refugees but as Natal Africans returning to their original homeland. Importantly, the American missionaries embraced this argument in order to defend Africans' claims to land in Natal, claims that came under increasing pressure as colonial administrators demanded the expulsion of Zulu refugees from Natal in order to provide more land for European settlers.¹¹² As Lewis Grout explained in 1852:

These tribes were living more or less separated from each other & independent...until the...powerful invasions of Tyaka, when they were, for a time, entirely broken up & destroyed or scattered or subdued & incorporated with his own people.... [Some] made the best of their situation by uniting with & following the enemy. Many, probably most, of these also watched the signs of the times & secured the earliest opportunity for escaping from bondage & returning to their father land.... And hence the only sense in which they can be called [Zulu] 'refugees' is that they fled from a land of strangers and returned from an involuntary exile to the land of their birth and the home of their fathers.¹¹³

However, this line of argument implied that there was no essential difference—cultural or otherwise—between Zulu people and Natal Africans. Unable to particularize the Zulu on the basis of culture and facing the distinct possibility that Zulu and Natal Africans were one and the same people, the American missionaries entered an identity crisis. An indication of this crisis was that they stopped identifying their African charges in Natal as Zulu at this time, referring to them only as “natives” or “people.”¹¹⁴ As the next section will show, this identity crisis only ended when the American missionaries embraced language, rather than culture, as the crucial marker of Zuluness. This outcome was the result of a gradual, multi-year process during which the American missionaries had to reverse their long-held position on the relationship between language and Zuluness.

¹¹² Holden, *History*, 201-210; Martin, “British Images,” 86-7.

¹¹³ ABC 76, Papers of Grout, Folder 5, “The History and Statistics of the Native Population of Natal,” Port Natal, 10 April 1852, 9, 11; *Proceedings of Natal*, Evidence of L. Grout, 28 Dec 1852, 4:28-9, 56.

¹¹⁴ See, for instance, *MH*, Dec 1847, 397-8; *Ibid.*, Mar 1848, 100-3; *Ibid.*, Apr 1848, 109-111; *Ibid.*, Nov 1849, 373-6; *Ibid.*, Dec 1849, 413-16; *Ibid.*, Sep 1851, 304-5; *Ibid.*, May 1852, 129-133.

Particularizing the Zulu on the Basis of Language, 1835–1854

Until the early 1850s, the American missionaries did not believe that language and Zuluness were intimately connected. This can be inferred from situations in which they identified African communities as Zulu while labeling their respective speaking practices as non-Zulu.

A good example of this practice was the American missionaries' classification of Mzilikazi's highveld kingdom.¹¹⁵ When the American missionaries first set out on their journey to this kingdom in early 1835, they believed that Mzilikazi's followers constituted, together with Dingane's people in the Natal-Zululand region, the Zulu people. However, while sojourning at Griquatown, Kuruman, and Mosega between 1835 and 1837, they learned details about Mzilikazi's kingdom that could have easily resulted in a different classification. For instance, they learned that this kingdom was a bifurcated conquest state that consisted of a small caste of aristocrat-subjects (called *zansi* for "down-country people") drawn from Mzilikazi's original followers (that is, people who used Khumalo, Dhlamini, Dlodlo, Sithole, Sigola, Mlangeni, and Hlatjwayo as their clan names) and large numbers of commoner-subjects (called *enhla* for "upland people") drawn from subjugated highveld communities (that is, the Hurutshe, Taung, Kwena, Mangwato, Ngwaketse, Kaa, and Kalaka).¹¹⁶ Perhaps most importantly, the American missionaries realized that while the former were said to speak a language called "Sitebeli" or "Sitibela," the latter used, in addition to the language of their overlords, a mode of speaking

¹¹⁵ The history of this kingdom began when the Ndwandwe killed Mzilikazi's father Mashobana of the Khumalo in circa 1818. Fearful for their own lives, Mzilikazi and several other Khumalo chiefs submitted to the Zulu rulers shortly afterwards. However, they lived uneasily under Zulu rule until in circa 1822 Mzilikazi, at the head of some of his Khumalo followers, absconded across the Drakensberg Mountains. See Hamilton, "Ideology," 262-264.

¹¹⁶ For more details on Mzilikazi's bifurcated conquest state, see Hamilton, "Political Centralisation," 296, footnote 16; David Chanaiwa, "The Army and Politics in Pre-Industrial Africa: The Ndebele Nation, 1822-1893," *African Studies Review* 19:2 (Sep., 1976), 51-2, 59-61, 64; K. Rasmussen, *Migrant Kingdom: Mzilikazi's Ndebele in South Africa* (London: Rex Collings, 1978), 191, note 120.

called “Sichuana.”¹¹⁷ However, even though they claimed that Mzilikazi’s people spoke these languages, the American missionaries, together with other commentators,¹¹⁸ largely continued referring to them collectively as Zulu, thereby rejecting the idea that language and identity in general—and language and Zuluness in particular—were intimately connected.¹¹⁹ As they wrote in April 1837, following the Dutch emigrant farmers’ successful attacks against Mzilikazi’s people in late 1836 and early 1837:

In this last battle there was great slaughter among *the Zoolahs*. The number of the farmers that were killed was only a few. This was owing to *the Zoolahs* not using firearms. When the army of *the Zoolahs* returned, there was nothing but lamentation heard in the land for weeks on account of those slain in battle....¹²⁰

Similarly, the American missionaries referred to Dingane’s people as Zulu even though they initially treated the latter’s language as similar or identical to the ‘Caffre’ language. Thus, while on their way to Dingane’s kingdom in 1835, they studied the ‘Caffre language’ of the Eastern Cape region in order to be able to communicate better with the Zulu of Natal-Zululand.¹²¹ For the same reason, they followed the example of previous eastbound travelers¹²² and hired as their Zulu interpreters people who spoke fluently the ‘Caffre’ language of the Eastern Cape region, including Charles Brownlee, Orson Magerman, and Joseph Kirkman.¹²³

¹¹⁷ *MH*, Sep 1836, 342-3; Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Wilson to Anderson, Kuruman, 21 Mar 1836, 105; *Ibid.*, Joint Letter to Anderson, Mosega, 18 Aug 1836, 128-9; *Ibid.*, Joint Letter to Anderson, Mosega, 18 Aug 1836, 141-2; Holden, *Past*, 22, 34, 38; Shooter, *Kafirs*, 135.

¹¹⁸ For the practice of calling Mzilikazi’s people “Zulu,” see Martin, “British Images,” 82; Holden, *Past*, 22.

¹¹⁹ ‘Largely’ because they occasionally used the word ‘Matabele’ for them at this time. See Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Joint Letter to Anderson, Mosega, 18 Aug 1836, 141-2.

¹²⁰ Kotzé, ed., *Letters*, Wilson to Anderson, GHT, 17 Apr 1837, 151-4.

¹²¹ *MH*, Nov 1835, 414.

¹²² Refer to chapter three for details on these interpreters.

¹²³ Refer to chapter three for details on Brownlee, Magerman and Kirkman.

After their arrival in Natal-Zululand, the American missionaries, like other travelers before them, noticed some differences between the local speaking practices and those of the Eastern Cape region.¹²⁴ As American missionary George Champion noted in 1836:

As to our interpreters, they are under a disadvantage in not understanding the peculiar dialect of the Zoolahs. As far as we learn, the groundwork of the language, (by which I mean the principles on which it is constructed,) is the same as that of the Kaffer language, but a great many things have different names, and the same words have different significations from what they possess in the Kaffer tongue....¹²⁵

However, these interpreters adapted quickly to the speaking practices of the Zulu, which led the American missionaries to characterize these differences as minor dialectical peculiarities rather than important markers of Zuluness.¹²⁶ “So similar are *the dialects*,” James Bryant noted in 1849, “that the Zulus find but little difficulty in understanding the Kafirs, the Amasuazi, and the natives of other tribes.”¹²⁷ Perhaps more importantly, at this time, the American missionaries still promoted the creation of a unifying (written) language for all these “dialects,” a project that would have been nonsensical if they had viewed language as an important marker of Zuluness. In order to achieve this end, they recommended exchanging words between the different “dialects.” As Bryant explained in 1849:

The Kafirs, for instance, have a word to express ‘king,’ in distinction from ‘chief,’ which the Zulus have not; and another tribe has a word for ‘concubine,’ which is found neither among the Zulus nor Kafirs. Such words, having the native form and prefix, could be easily transferred from one tribe to another.... *These different dialects comprise in the aggregate a much more perfect language than that now in use by any one tribe.*¹²⁸

¹²⁴ See, for instance, KCAL, MS1487a, Diary of Fynn, 50; Gardiner, *Narrative*, 101-2.

¹²⁵ *MH*, Apr 1837, 141. In response, the American missionaries made some adjustments to the ‘Caffre’ language translations they brought with them to Natal-Zululand in order “to suit the Zoolu dialect”. See also Cory. ed., *Diary*, 3 Dec 1837, 79.

¹²⁶ ‘Adapted quickly’ because their interpreter services were not only retained but also valued by the American missionaries. See Cory. ed., *Diary*, 25 Sep 1837, 35; *Ibid.*, 6 Feb 1838, 110.

¹²⁷ James Bryant, “The Zulu Language,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 1:4 (1849), 395. My emphasis.

¹²⁸ J. Bryant, “The Zulu Language” (1849), 395. My emphasis.

With the same end in mind, they established a committee on orthography in 1849¹²⁹ which, one year later, proposed to their London, Wesleyan, Scottish, French, German, and Norwegian colleagues that they cooperate for the purpose of creating a uniform system orthography.¹³⁰ The Americans stressed that such a system would help standardize the written language and, consequently, make all books “much more valuable, by making them more extensively intelligible...”¹³¹ Most importantly, the American missionaries claimed that in this manner “a much more copious, flexible, and in every respect *complete language* might be obtained for all the tribes of Southern Africa.”¹³²

As these examples demonstrate, the American missionaries made no attempt to particularize the Zulu people on the basis of language between 1835 and 1850. In fact, contrary to Herder’s ideas, they treated language and Zuluness as independent, rather than intimately related categories. This attitude only changed in the early 1850s, when a series of events encouraged the American missionaries to increase their material and intellectual investment in the idea of the Zulu language.

Although Bible translation was an important aspect of their work, all missionary societies had difficulties funding these activities and, in particular, the printing of their translated texts. The American missionaries suffered from the same problem and, as a result, made only modest advances in translating and printing Zulu texts during the first fifteen years of their tenure in South Africa. They experienced significant frustration over this slow progress. As Lewis Grout noted in a letter to the Board in June 1849:

¹²⁹ ABC 15.4, Volume 4, General Letter from the AZM to R. Anderson, 9 Dec. 1849. I thank Norman Etherington for this reference.

¹³⁰ ABC 76, Papers of Grout, Folder 1, L. Grout, J.C. Bryant, H.A. Wilder, N. Adams, J.L. Döhne, Letter, Port Natal, 6 Mar 1850, 2.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 6 Mar 1850, 2.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 6 Mar 1850, 2. My emphasis.

A small book of sixteen printed hymns, a little spelling book of about thirty pages, and two tracts of selections of Scripture, of about sixty pages each, make up the substance of our catalogue of available books in the Zulu language. Our press has done nothing for two years and our mission is already suffering the sad consequence.¹³³

However, the situation was already beginning to change: in the same year, the American Bible Society gave the American missionaries \$500 to cover the printing costs associated with “the Scriptures for the Zulus.”¹³⁴ This turned into a long-term financial commitment, such that, only three years later, missionary Aldin Grout proclaimed proudly that “The American Bible Society stands ready to furnish us with the means to print the Scriptures as fast as we can translate them.”¹³⁵

Buoyed by this long-term financial support, the American missionaries dedicated more manpower to the operation of their mission press at Umbilo, near Port Natal. They asked a colleague, Hyman Wilder, to manage the press until the arrival of full-time missionary printer John Adams Butler.¹³⁶ At the same time, they reinforced their efforts to translate and print liturgical and other texts in what they increasingly labeled the “Zulu language” rather than the “Zulu dialect.” In 1849, they published a Catechism (*Incwadi yokubuza*), a hymnal (*Incwadi yamagama*), an elementary arithmetic text (*Incwadi yokubala*), and a tract on regeneration entitled “Is Thy Heart Right?” (*Inhliziyo yako i lungile na?*) in this Zulu language.¹³⁷ One year later, they printed the Book of Psalms (*Incwadi yezihlabelelo*).¹³⁸ In 1853, they added *The African Servant* (*Inceku yase yafika indaba e qinisileyo*) and a second edition of their spelling

¹³³ *MH*, Dec 1849, 410.

¹³⁴ *Annual Report of the American Bible Society* 34 (1850), 80; Henry Otis Dwight, *The Centennial History of the American Bible Society*, Vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 241-2.

¹³⁵ *Correspondence*, Rev. Aldin Grout to Rev. George Morgan, Umvoti Mission Station, 11 Jul 1853, 28.

¹³⁶ *MH*, Apr 1850, 139; *Ibid.*, Apr 1850, 140.

¹³⁷ *MH*, Apr 1850, 139; *Ibid.*, Jun 1851, 203; *Correspondence*, Stone to Morgan, Ifafa, 2 Aug 1853, 30.

¹³⁸ *MH*, Jun 1851, 203; *Ibid.*, Jan 1853, 2.

book (*Incwadi yezifundi*) to their publications.¹³⁹ Moreover, as of 1853, they were in the process of printing the Epistle to the Romans (*Incwadi ka Paule e balelwe Amaromani*) and translating the Gospel of John (*Ivangeli Ngokuloba ku ka Johane*), Acts of the Apostles (*Izenzo zabaPostile* [?]), Proverbs (*Izaga* [?]), Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (*Incwadi ka 'bunyane okutiwa ukuhamba kwesihambi*), and a book on geography (*Incwadi yezwe*).¹⁴⁰ Writing that year, the American missionaries reported proudly that they had printed a total of 1,241,886 pages in the Zulu language since the inception of their mission in South Africa.¹⁴¹ Finally, in 1853, the American missionaries' committee on orthography (Lewis Grout, Jakob Döhne, and Hyman Wilder), which had first been established in 1849, joined a six-person "Commission for preparing a Dictionary and Grammar of the Zulu language."¹⁴² Appointed and funded by the Natal Government and chaired by its Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes of Natal Colony Theophilus Shepstone, this committee charged American missionaries Jakob Döhne and Lewis Grout with the preparation of these works, respectively.

As a result of these developments, the American missionaries' commitment to the Zulu language as an object of discourse and knowledge distinct from 'Caffre' increased dramatically between 1850 and 1853. In turn, this commitment reshaped the American missionaries' ideas about the relationship between language and Zuluness. Whereas they had previously resisted the idea that the two were intimately connected, they now argued more and more frequently that language defined Zuluness in important ways. For instance, in 1854, the American-dominated

¹³⁹ *MH*, Dec 1854, 55; *Correspondence*, Stone to Morgan, Ifafa, 2 Aug 1853, 30.

¹⁴⁰ The first full edition of the Epistle to the Romans was published in 1854. The first full edition of the Gospel of John was published in 1860. I was unable to identify when and under which isiZulu title the Acts of the Apostles and the Proverbs were eventually published. A portion of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* appears to have been published in 1868. However, it was John Colenso, the Bishop of Natal, who published the first complete translation in 1901. The geography book was published in 1862. See *Correspondence*, A. Grout to Morgan, Umvoti, 11 Jul 1853, 28; *Ibid.*, Stone to Morgan, Ifafa, 2 Aug 1853, 30; *MH*, Dec 1854, 55.

¹⁴¹ *MH*, Dec 1854, 55.

¹⁴² ABC 15.4, Volume 5, H. Wilder to R. Anderson, 30 May 1853; Rev. Lewis Grout, "Announcement," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 4 (1854), 456.

“Commission for preparing a Dictionary and Grammar of the Zulu language” established the Zulu language as the standard language for all the black inhabitants of Natal and identified all of them as Zulu on the basis of that language. As the newly arrived John Colenso, the Bishop of Natal, explained at this time, “The Kafir population of Natal.... *To all these the name Zulu is now given*; and the language, as it will be settled by this Commission...and finally adopted as *the standard for the whole district, will be the Zulu-Kafir language.*”¹⁴³ Indeed, in the aftermath of this decision, the American missionaries began once more to identify their African charges in Natal as Zulu (now) based on the argument that the latter spoke the same Zulu language as the people to the north of the Thukela River. Importantly, with this linguistic turn to Zuluness, the American missionaries also confirmed their identity as a mission to the Zulu and, in so doing, resolved an identity crisis that had begun in the middle of the 1840s when the cultural distinctiveness of the Zulu had come under pressure.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, this identity crisis emerged because the American missionaries had tied their identity and ambitions narrowly to the Zulu. In turn, this self-conception had encouraged them to particularize the Zulu people from the beginning of their activities in South Africa. Initially, they had achieved this by reworking preexisting Zulu ideas about cultural difference. However, the discourse about the superiority of Zulu culture came under increasing pressure in the 1840s when large numbers of Africans abandoned their Zulu identities, entered Natal as returnees to “the land of their birth and the home of their fathers,” and, more importantly, resisted the American missionaries’ Christian teachings. The resulting

¹⁴³ Colenso, *Ten Weeks*, 15-16. My emphasis. Note that Colenso had arrived in January 1854 and completed this book by early 1855, see *Ibid.*, 7, 14.

disillusionment with Zulu culture provoked an identity crisis, which the American missionaries resolved by turning their attention to language. Although they had previously resisted the idea that language and Zuluness were intimately related, by 1854, the American missionaries classified as bonafide Zulu all Africans who spoke what they identified as the Zulu language regardless of whether or not these Africans lived within the borders of the Zulu kingdom and/or acknowledged the political and cultural leadership of the Zulu king. Moreover, with the particularization of the Zulu people on the basis of language commenced, the American missionaries began to make the same claims about the Zulu language they had earlier made about Zulu culture. And in the same way that the claims about Zulu culture had reworked preexisting Zulu ideas about their own cultural superiority, so did the claims about the Zulu language now rework preexisting Zulu ideas about language.

CHAPTER VII

The American Missionaries and Zulu Ideas about Language, 1835–1854

As discussed in chapter five, prior to the late eighteenth century, the lowveld chiefdoms of South Africa promoted descent-based discourses of social identity, according to which advantaged subjects were distinguished from disadvantaged tributaries on the basis of real or fictive genealogical ties to the chief. This chapter suggests that the emergence of the Zulu conquest state in the early decades of the nineteenth century gave rise to a new discourse of social identity. In order to smooth the process of socio-political inclusion for some conquered groups while legitimizing the socio-political exclusion and socio-economic exploitation of others, the rulers of the Zulu state began to mobilize language differences (however small) as the basis for social status differentiation. The resulting language-based discourse of social identity appears to have defined *ukukhuluma* as the “superior” language and, thus, as the marker of privileged subjects (*amantungwa*), while defining *ukutekeza* as an “inferior” language and, thus, as the marker of exploited tributaries (notably *amalala*). While the Zulu case confirms that processes of state formation were the key driving forces behind the emergence of language-based discourses of identity, it also shows that such discourses preceded the arrival of missionaries and colonialism and, thus, are not inherently linked to “Western” forms of knowledge and modernity. Moreover, this evidence suggests that when the American missionaries arrived in the region in 1835, they did not so much invent and impose a language-based discourse of identity on the region and its people as they reworked preexisting African ideas about the relationship between language and identity.

Background

In the 1960s, the French linguist Pierre Bourdieu rejected Ferdinand de Saussure's theoretical distinction between *langue* and *parole*, which had turned language into an autonomous object of knowledge. Keenly aware of language as an instrument of power that emerged out of and helped perpetuate relations of domination and exploitation, Bourdieu argued that languages and the social conditions that determined their formation had to be brought into a single framework of analysis. Using the transformation of the dialect of the *Ile de France* to the official language of the emerging French state between 1300 and 1800, Bourdieu showed that this inclusive approach exposed official languages not only as discursive constructs but also as the products—as well as the guarantors—of state-based power relations. As Bourdieu argued:

It is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language.... This state language becomes the...norm against which all linguistic practices are...measured.... Known and recognized...throughout the whole jurisdiction of a certain political authority, [the official language] helps...to reinforce the authority which is the source of its dominance.¹

Bourdieu explained this circular relationship by introducing the concept of “symbolic violence,” which he defined as physical violence that, through transmutation into symbolic form, is endowed with legitimacy because in its symbolic form, it is “misrecognized” and thereby “recognized” as legitimate. In the case of France, the social group that dominated the emerging state began to wield symbolic violence when they established their own mode of speaking as the official language of the state and created state institutions (government, education, civil service, military, and others) in which, through a variety of everyday practices, subordinate social groups

¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language & Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, [1991] 2003), 45.

were conditioned to internalize the new linguistic hierarchy—and hence the power relations that had created it—as valid and legitimate.²

Importantly, this form of symbolic violence also reorganized the social world of the state. Those groups who participated in these institutions and practices assimilated the official language and, in so doing, became part of an enlarged social elite, while those among them who were excluded from these institutions and practices remained linguistically distinct and, thus, saw their subordinate social status further entrenched.³ Moreover, when and where these language-based discourses of social identity were internalized, they evolved into incipient (ethno-) linguistic identities. Again, according to Bourdieu:

What is at stake here is the power of imposing a vision of the social world through principles of division which, when they are imposed on a whole group, establish meaning and a consensus of meaning, and in particular about the identity and unity of a group, which creates the reality of the unity and the identity of the group.⁴

Since the 1980s, scholars have applied these ideas to the colonial states that emerged in Africa over the course of the nineteenth century.⁵ Whether they focused on the roles of European missionaries or colonial administrators, these scholars argued that the classification of indigenous speaking practices into official languages and subordinate dialects facilitated the domination and exploitation of Africans.⁶ In doing so, the argument goes, colonial administrators and missionaries invented and imposed on Africans language-based forms of identity that had no precedent in precolonial or late independent Africa.⁷ The problem with this line of argument is

² Bourdieu, *Language*, 45, 49.

³ Bourdieu, *Language*, 53-55, 166-67.

⁴ Bourdieu, *Language*, 221.

⁵ See the authors mentioned in the introduction, footnote 19.

⁶ Fabian, "Missions," 175, 180; Samarin, "Protestant Missions," 151-2; Harries, *Butterflies*, 3-4, 29, 156, 160.

⁷ Ranger, *Invention*, 4. See also Harries, *Butterflies*, 173; Landau, *Popular Politics*, xi.

not that it is categorically wrong,⁸ but that it must not be uncritically applied to late independent Southeast Africa, a region that experienced significant transformations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as smaller chiefdoms gave way to larger conquest states such as the Ndwandwe, Mthethwa, and, eventually, the Zulu. Indeed, although scholars disagree about the underlying causes for this political expansion and centralization, the majority agree that these states were characterized by increased social stratification that appears to have resulted from the differential incorporation of subjugated peoples.⁹ Referring to the Zulu conquest state in particular, Henry Slater argued that the Zulu rulers used physical violence to differentially incorporate subjugated groups, creating a conquest state that consisted of “three broadly concentric zones...each characterized by different kinds of relationship to the apex.”¹⁰ In contrast, David Hedges and Philip Bonner maintained that the Zulu rulers achieved differential incorporation through ideological measures, notably by encouraging subjugated groups to reinvent themselves as subordinate (commoner) lineages of the dominant (aristocratic) Zulu lineage.¹¹ Since 1985, Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright have fine-tuned these ideas in a series of studies of the Zulu conquest state.¹² They contend the Zulu conquest state expanded in two distinct phases and incorporated the groups conquered in these two phases differentially: whereas those groups conquered during the first phase of expansion were incorporated as privileged subjects (*amantungwa*) on basis of their assumed and asserted geographical, cultural, and

⁸ In fact, as shown in chapter five, it appears to apply perfectly to the lowveld region before the rise of conquest states.

⁹ For this scholarship, see Bryant, *Olden Times*, 70-1; Omer-Cooper, *Zulu Aftermath*; Jeff Guy, “Ecological Factors,” 115-7; David S. Chanaiwa, “The Zulu Revolution: State formation in a Pastoralist Society,” *African Studies Review* 23 (Dec 1980), 1-20; Smith, “Trade,” 171-190; Henry Slater, “Transitions in the Political Economy of South-East Africa before 1840,” *D. Phil thesis* (University of Sussex, 1976), 250-51, 268-81 and 297-98; Cobbing, “Mfecane,” 487-519.

¹⁰ Slater, “Transitions,” 298.

¹¹ David W. Hedges, “Trade and Politics in Southern Mozambique and Zululand in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,” *Ph.D. Diss.* (University of London, 1978), 9-22, 198-200; P. Bonner, *Kings, Commoners and Concessionaries: The Evolution and Dissolution of the Nineteenth-Century Swazi State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 14-23.

¹² For these studies, refer to footnote 31 in the Introduction.

linguistic commonalities, those conquered during the second phase of expansion were incorporated as exploited tributaries (notably *amalala*) on the basis of their assumed and asserted geographical, cultural, and linguistic differences.¹³ Hamilton recently described the distinction between Zulu subjects and tributaries in this manner:

The *ntungwa* claimed vague shared common origins as those who had ‘come down from the north...rolling in a grain basket,’ and spoke in the court *zunda* style, and were either of the original Zulu clan or were incorporated into the Zulu kingdom in the early years of Shaka’s reign.... The lowest rung in the social scale of the new Zulu kingdom were super-exploited tributaries located on the margins of the kingdom.... They were marked out by their use of the *tekela* dialect and prohibited from speaking in the courtly *zunda* fashion.... They were variously known in the rest of the Zulu kingdom by derogatory names such as *lala* (menials...), *nhlengwana* (destitutes...), and so on.”¹⁴

As Wright and Hamilton suggest, language may have played an important role in the Zulu state’s discourse about social difference. This chapter will expand on this idea by exploring in detail three issues that have heretofore remained understudied. First, this chapter argues that the Zulu state’s use of language as a marker of social status represented a radical change in the way in which the region’s politics circumscribed group identities in general and social identities in particular. Second, it offers a tentative hypothesis as to why the rulers of the Zulu state may have begun to mobilize language differences for the purpose of social-status differentiation. Third, it explores in more detail the content and contours of the Zulu rulers’ language-based discourse of social identity and shows how some tributaries responded to this form of symbolic violence.

¹³ These conclusions contrast starkly with those advanced by the early twentieth-century missionary scholar Alfred T. Bryant who argued that ‘Ntungwa’ and ‘Lala’ (as well as ‘Mbo’) represented primordial ethnic groups who shared a common origin in the ‘Nguni’ from whom they diverged due to migration. See Bryant, *Olden Times*, 3-13. For earlier very tentative critiques of Bryant’s claims about the ‘Nguni,’ ‘Lala’ and ‘Mbo,’ see, for instance, Marks, “Traditions,” 126-44.

¹⁴ Hamilton, “Political Centralisation,” 292-6.

The Zulu State's Language-Based Discourse of Group Identity

As chapter five has shown, prior to the late eighteenth century, the lowveld chiefdoms recognized clans, chiefdoms, and social status within chiefdoms as the three most important group identities. Importantly, while membership in a chiefdom was established on the basis of allegiance to a chief, both clan and social identities (the difference between subjects and tributaries) were established on the basis of (real or fictive) genealogical descent. Thus, as we have explored previously, before the rise of the Zulu state, South Africa's lowveld communities did not mobilize language differences for the purpose of group identity construction and differentiation. Chapter five also showed that this meant that the process of incorporating strangers ended with political inclusion and tributary status unless both chiefs and strangers considered it advantageous to move their relationship from political to social inclusion. However, as long as social status was determined on the basis of genealogical descent, this movement required the establishment of kinship ties between the two parties, which could only be achieved through intermarriage or the invention of fictive genealogical ties. As I shall argue below, the massive political expansion that accompanied the rise of the Zulu conquest state in the early decades of the nineteenth century outpaced the ability of this descent-based discourse of social identity to rapidly consolidate power by transforming tributaries into subjects quickly and efficiently. This problem, combined with transformations in the security and economic needs as well as the military and coercive capabilities of the rulers of the Zulu state, gave rise to a language-based discourse of social identity that had no precedent in the lowveld region of South Africa.¹⁵

¹⁵ It is conceivable that other conquest states in the region, such as the Mthethwa and Ndwandwe, introduced language as a marker of social identity before the rise of the Zulu state. However, we do not have sufficient data available on these states to draw this conclusion. Note also that the idiom of kinship started to be superseded as a marker of social status in other places of Africa where conquest states formed. For the Imbangala conquest state of

Between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the region between the Phongolo and Mzimkhulu rivers witnessed significant transformations as smaller chieftaincies gave way to larger conquest states, such as the Ndwandwe, Mthethwa, and eventually the Zulu. One crucial engine of change involved the *amabutho* (singular: *ibutho*).¹⁶ Functioning originally as circumcision schools periodically convened to mark the transition of the chief's son and his agemates into manhood, these *amabutho* evolved into more permanently militarized age-set regiments in the final decades of the eighteenth century. With the help of these militarized *amabutho*, the rulers of these conquest states forced neighboring communities to submit to them. For instance, between circa 1807 and 1817, Dingiswayo kaJobe, the ruler of the coastal Mthethwa chiefdom, used these regiments to subjugate communities residing at higher elevations further inland, notably the Zulu and Langeni, as well as several sections of the Buthelezi and Mbatha.¹⁷ He treated these groups as tributaries, exacting resources from them and exercising life and death control over their chiefs.¹⁸ However, ongoing tensions with Zwide kaLanga's Ndwandwe state resulted in a massive military defeat for the Mthethwa in 1817. Dingiswayo's death and the collapse of the Mthethwa state opened up the opportunity for Shaka

Central Africa, see Joseph Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen: The Imbangala Impact on the Mbundu of Angola* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

¹⁶ Wright and Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations," 62-5; Slater, "Transitions," 277-81, 296, 301-02; John Laband, *Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1998), 14-15, 27.

¹⁷ Bryant, *Olden Times*, 55, 102-3.

¹⁸ For instance, oral traditions explain that he had the Mbatha chief Nkomo executed after the latter had failed to pay the appropriate tribute. Similarly, following the death of the Zulu chief Senzangakhona kaJama, Dingiswayo had the legitimate heir, Sigujana, assassinated in order to make room for his choice-candidate for that chieftainship—Shaka kaSenzangakhona. Furthermore, after Shaka had taken control of the Zulu chiefdom in 1816, he continued to surrender "most of the cattle he captured to Dingiswayo," his Mthethwa overlord. However, Dingiswayo did not enroll the young men of these groups into his *amabutho* system nor did he invent kinship ties with them in order to move them from the status of tributaries to that of subjects. See *JSA*, Magidi kaNgomane (1903), 2:80; *Ibid.*, Mtshayankomo kaMagolwana (1922), 4:122-3; Shooter, *Kafirs*, 252; Wright and Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations," 64.

¹⁸ Shooter, *Kafirs*, 252, 259.

¹⁸ Wright and Hamilton, "Traditions and Transformations," 64

kaSenzangakhona and his then relatively small Zulu polity to expand their power in Southeast Africa.

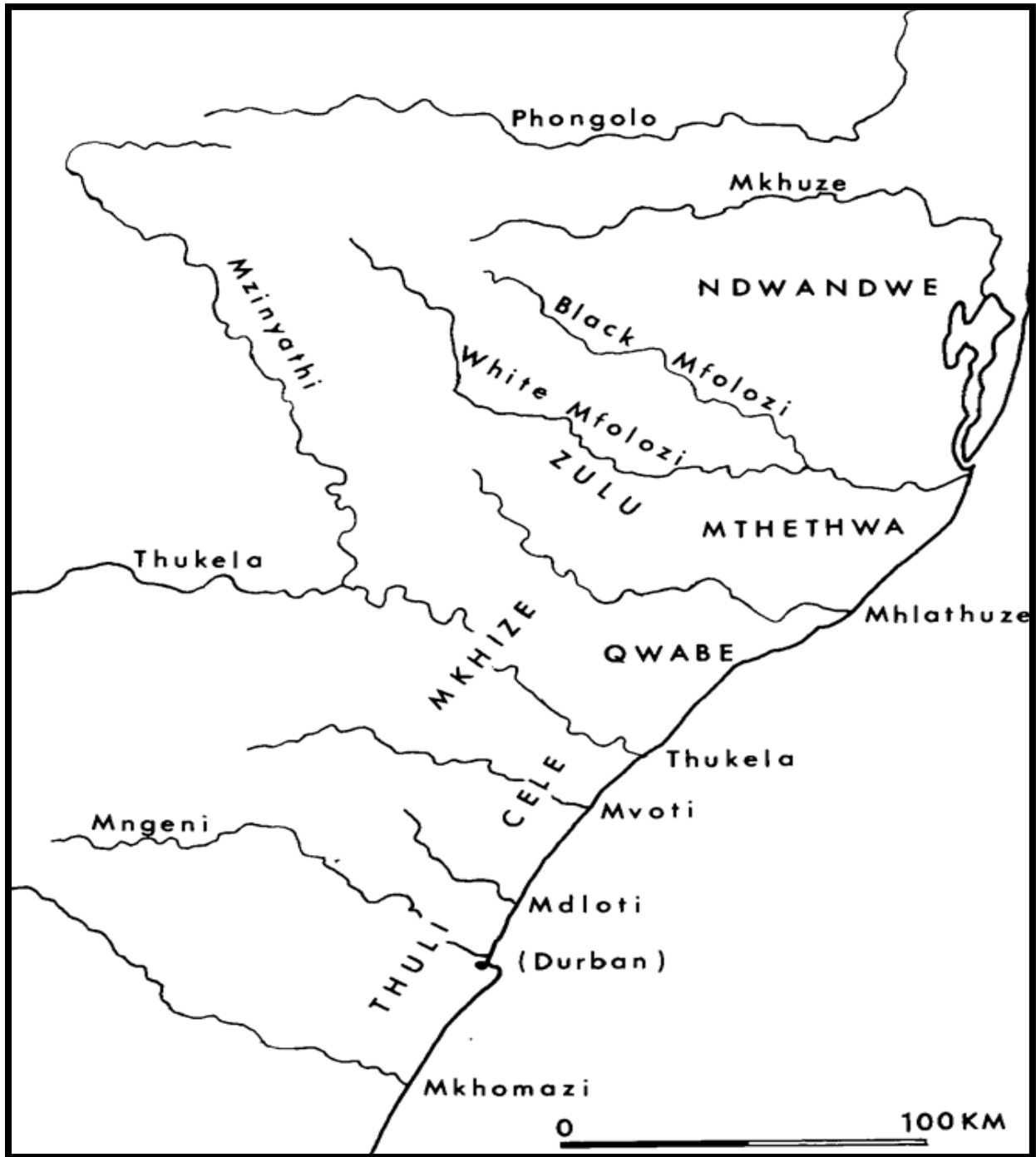


Figure 9. Chiefdoms of Natal-Zululand in circa 1800. Source: Carolyn Hamilton and John Wright, "The Making of the *AmaLala*: Ethnicity, Ideology and Relations of Subordination in a Precolonial Context," *South African Historical Journal* 22 (1990), 12. Courtesy of Taylor & Francis Group.

The expansion of the Zulu polity can be divided into two periods. In the first phase, when the Zulu state was “still small and vulnerable,” Shaka and the members of the ruling clan focused on subjugating and incorporating their immediate neighbors between the Black Mfolozi and Thukela Rivers.¹⁹ The key motivation behind this first phase of expansion was the Zulu rulers’ desire to quickly increase their subject base and military resources in the face of the Ndwandwe threat.²⁰ This desire explains why, at that time, the Zulu king and members of the royal clan reorganized the *amabutho* system into a more centrally controlled and more permanent fighting force.²¹ It also explains why the Zulu rulers implemented a series of measures that compelled or allowed the groups subjugated during this first phase of expansion to transition quickly from the status of tributaries to that of subjects. For instance, the Zulu rulers enrolled (*ukubutha*) the (young) men and women of these groups into the state’s male warrior and female labor age-set regiments and, in doing so, encouraged them to see the Zulu royal house and its members as their natural superiors and benefactors.²² They also incorporated some of the leaders of these groups into the Zulu state’s key power structures, recognizing them as *izikhulu* (great men), *izinduna* (key state officials and military commanders), *izinceku* (royal attendants), and *izilomo* (king’s

¹⁹ Hamilton, “Traditions of Origin,” 16, 247-86. See also Shooter, *Kafirs*, 112..

²⁰ Regarding the ‘Ndwandwe threat,’ note that in the aftermath of their victory against the Mthethwa in 1817, the Ndwandwe had become the most powerful polity in the region. Conscious of this power, they attacked Shaka’s followers in 1818, an attack which the latter were forced to counter with scorched earth tactics possibly due to a lack of manpower. Hamilton, “Traditions of Origin,” 16.

²¹ For instance, they gathered young men into mixed age-set regiments housed in royally-controlled military villages (singular: *ikhanda*; plural *amakhanda*) located in royally-controlled military areas, managed by royally-controlled military commanders (singular: *induna*; plural: *izinduna*) and supplied from royally-controlled cattle herds. At the same time, they gathered young unmarried women into royally-controlled female age-set regiments that were dissolved only when a male regiment was disbanded and its members were allowed to put on the heading (singular: *isiCoco*; plural: *iziCoco*), marry and become homestead-heads in their own right. See John Laband, *Historical Dictionary of the Zulu Wars* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 23-26.

²² Hamilton, “Political Centralisation,” 293.

favorites).²³ Furthermore, in order to hasten the assimilation of these groups as subjects, the Zulu rulers curtailed their ability to express independent forms of authority and culture.²⁴

More importantly, the Zulu rulers appear to have encouraged these groups, as well as members of the Zulu royal and collateral clans, to adopt the geographical trope *amantungwa* (a preexisting term derived from the *itungwa* grass characteristic of the upland region)²⁵ as a key aspect of their identity as subjects.²⁶ The success of this measure can be gathered from oral traditions that identify as *amantungwa* all those groups and sections of groups who submitted to the Zulu rulers in the first phase of expansion.²⁷ A key aspect of this fictive, kinship-transcending corporate identity was the idea that the *amantungwa* descended from a common geographical region located somewhere in the north.²⁸ This idea found expression in a metaphor that held that all *amantungwa* had “come or rolled down [from the north] using a grain basket [as a floating or rolling device]” (*ukwehla ngesilulu*).²⁹

²³ Hamilton, “Ideology,” 261-62, 293-95.

²⁴ One of Stuart’s informants described this measure in these terms: “Tshaka did not scatter the nations; he unified (*qoqa’d*) them...[The leading men of formerly powerful and independent chiefly lines, such as] Somapunga kaZwide (Ndwandwe), Myandeya (Mtetwa), Msicwa ka Pungatshe and Mtshubane ka Pungatshe (Buthelezi)—none of these sang their *ingoma* [i.e. chants that accompany coming of age ceremonial dances] nor did they hold their *umkosi* [first fruit ceremonies] according to previous custom, for it would be said they wished to make kings of themselves. They were not allowed to *buta* [enroll in their own regiments] people...Only the Zulus retained their old laws and customs. Other tribes were made to relinquish many old customs by the Zulus.....for after their defeat all people became the king's subjects.” See *JSA*, Ndukwana kaMbengwana (1897-1903), 4:326, 363. See also Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal*, 113.

²⁵ Hamilton, “Ideology,” 277.

²⁶ Hamilton, “Political Centralisation,” 293. For the ‘fictitious’ nature of *amantungwa* identity, see especially Hamilton, “Traditions of Origin,” 16-17, 21-27.

²⁷ See for instance *JSA*, Baleni kaSilwana (1914), 1:29; *Ibid.*, Dinya ka Zokozwayo (1905), 1:118; *Ibid.*, Lugubu kaMangaliso (1909), 1:28; *Ibid.*, Lunguza kaMpukane (1909), 1:297; *Ibid.*, Maziwana kaMahlabeni (1905), 2:277; *Ibid.*, Madhlebe kaNjinjana (1905), 2:45; *Ibid.*, Mangati kaGodide (1918), 2:203; *Ibid.*, Mkehlengana kaZulu (1905), 3:210-211; *Ibid.*, Mbovu kaMtshumayeli (1903), 3:42.

²⁸ Hamilton, “Political Centralisation,” 293.

²⁹ See also Hamilton, “Ideology,” 286-89; *JSA*, John Kumalo (1900), 1:264; *Ibid.*, Baleni kaSilwana (1914), 1:29; *Ibid.*, Madhlebe kaNjinjana (1905), 2:45, 46; *Ibid.*, Mahayaka Nongqabana (1905), 2:118; *Ibid.*, Stephen Mini (1899), 3:144; *Ibid.*, Madikane kaMlomowetole (1903), 2:57.

The Zulu rulers no doubt experienced some difficulties in convincing the core members³⁰ of the Qwabe state to adopt this *amantungwa* identity, as the latter had traditionally emphasized their “down-country origins” (*ezansi*).³¹ This predicament explains why Shaka employed a personal touch to convince some of members of the Qwabe to embrace this identity.³² It also explains why the Zulu rulers tried to accommodate the *ezansi* aspect of the Qwabe identity by inventing a story of common origin, which held that the original ancestors of the Qwabe and Zulu peoples were two brothers, Qwabe and Zulu, the sons of a man from the north by the name of Malandela.³³ Importantly, this origin story suggested that Qwabe had migrated southward before Zulu and, in so doing, had gradually (and perhaps erroneously) embraced the idea of “down-country” origins. With this story, the Zulu rulers created a way for large portions of the Qwabe, despite their alleged “down-country” origins, to think of themselves as *amantungwa*.³⁴

Perhaps the most powerful, yet understudied, aspect of this identity was the idea that the *amantungwa* were unified by linguistic ties. This idea seems to have first emerged when the Zulu rulers established their own mode of speaking as the “official” language of the Zulu state in general and the *amantungwa* in particular. Although some people would later refer to this speaking practice as the “King’s Zulu,” “ordinary Zulu,” “Ntungwa Nguni,” or even “Zunda,” the Zulu rulers themselves referred to it simply by way of the verb *ukukhuluma*, which can be

³⁰ That is, those who traced their descent back to the mythical ancestor Qwabe.

³¹ *JSA*, Luzipo kaNomageje (1904), 1:354; *Ibid.*, Mkehlengana kaZulu, 3:212; *Ibid.*, Dinya ka Zokozwayo (1905), 1:118; *Ibid.*, Jantshi kaNongila (1903), 1:175; *Ibid.*, Kambi kaMatshobana (1903), 1:210;

³² A particular powerful description of this process of assimilation comes from the testimony of Stuart’s informant Mkehlengana. Born into the Ncwana section of the Qwabe, Mkehlengana argued confidently in 1905, “Like the Zulu tribe we are *amaNtungwa*.” However, from the rest of his account it is clear that this identity resulted from his father’s submission (*ukukhonza*) to Shaka and the latter’s acceptance of the former as a fellow member of the *amantungwa*. As he noted, “Tshaka said to Komfiya [Mkehlengana’s father also known as Zulu kaNogandaya] when he came to *konza*... ‘Komfiya, approach.’ In fear my father approached him. Shaka tapped him on the head and said, ‘Do not show fear here among us... You will be a close friend, for you are of our people; we originated together with you. We are *amaNtungwa* together with you.’” See *JSA*, Mkehlengana kaZulu (1905), 3:210, 214.

³³ Hamilton, “Ideology,” 158-83; Hamilton, “Political Centralisation,” 293-4; *JSA*, Mtshwayiza kaMamfongonyana (1903), 4:164; *Ibid.*, Ndhlovu kaSikakana (1909), 4:217; *Ibid.*, Mkebeni kaDabulamanzi (1921), 3:195-6; *Ibid.*, Mbovu kaMtshumayeli (1903), 3:25; *Ibid.*, Mruyi kaTimuni (1903), 4:37.

³⁴ *JSA*, Mahaya kaNongqabana (1905), 2:119. See also *Ibid.*, Lugubu kaMangaliso (1909), 1:28.

translated as “to speak” but had the meaning of “to speak properly” or “to speak like the *amantungwa*.”³⁵ Evidence for the use of this term comes from the statements of academic linguist Wilhelm Bleek, who toured the Natal-Zululand region for eighteen months between 1855 and 1856, and missionary linguistic Jakob Döhne, who worked for the American Zulu mission in Natal from 1847. The two linguists remarked in 1856 and 1857, respectively, that “the Zulu language...was...called the *Ukukuluma*” and that “*Uku-Kuluma-nje* [means] to speak the Zulu language.”³⁶ According to Döhne, *ukukhuluma* distinguished itself from other speaking practices in the region in “that it is comparatively free from many harsh and flat sounds, and always compounds the nasal or liquid sounds before d, g, b, p, &c., as *tanda, tenga, hamba, mpompa, &c....*”³⁷ Stuart’s informants added that the Zulu said *Inkonyane* instead of *Inkonane* for “calf,” *loku* instead of *yoku* for “of to,” *ligwayi* instead of *ugwayi* for “snuff,” and *Wenzani?* instead of *Wentani?* for “What are you doing?”³⁸

Ironically, the very reason why language may have traditionally been ignored as a marker of social status (as shown in chapter five, language differences between tributaries and subjects were believed to disappear quickly and, thus, were considered poor markers of social status) may have provided the Zulu rulers with the key impulse to emphasize *ukukhuluma* as an important marker of subjecthood and *amantungwa-ness*. In other words, as long as the Zulu rulers felt vulnerable in the face of the Ndwandwe threat, they may have exploited the faster speed at which

³⁵ For ‘King’s Zulu,’ ‘ordinary Zulu,’ ‘Ntungwa Nguni’ and ‘Zunda,’ see respectively *Correspondence*, Stone to Morgan, Ifafa, 17 Jul 1854, 61; *JSA*, Lunguza kaMpukane (1909), 1:329; Marks, “Traditions,” 143; Hamilton, “Political Centralisation,” 295. Regarding ‘Zunda,’ Louw suggested that it was used because the people who spoke in the ‘Zunda’ fashion used the ‘Z’ rather than the ‘T’ sound. The problem with these assertions about ‘Zunda’ is that they are not contemporary to the nineteenth century and, thus, should be treated with caution. See J. A. Louw, “The Development of Xhosa and Zulu as Languages,” *Language Reform; History and Future 2* (1983), 373.

³⁶ NLSA, MSC57/Box 9/File 1, Wilhelm Bleek, “Preliminaries to a Grammar of the Zulu language,” MSS bound (1856); Jakob L. Döhne, *A Zulu-Kafir Dictionary* (Cape Town: Pike, 1857), xv.

³⁷ Döhne, *Zulu-Kafir*, xv.

³⁸ *JSA*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:75, 87; *Ibid.*, Magidigidi kaNobebe (1905), 2:97; *Ibid.*, Mayinga kaMbekuzana (1905), 2:257; *Ibid.*, Mkondo kaDhlova (1902), 3:166-7; *Ibid.*, Mqayikana kaYenge (1916), 4:9.

language assimilation was believed to occur in order to quickly transition subjugated groups from the status of tributaries to that of subjects (*amantungwa*). This conclusion is supported by the fact that the Zulu rulers expended considerable energy on bringing about this linguistic assimilation. For instance, they implemented a custom known as *ukukhuluma nje*, “to speak just, only, or properly,” which compelled all *amantungwa* to use *ukukhuluma* in specific institutional and social settings, notably in the royal court and councils, military villages (*amakhandla*), and regiments (*amabutho*).³⁹ As Bleek explained in an unpublished manuscript from 1856: “The Zulu custom...requires every man, if speaking in public, either in their courts of law, or at court, to speak properly and correctly, viz. *uku-Kuluma-nje*...”⁴⁰ One year later, Döhne expressed a similar idea when he noted:

[Shaka’s] ambition seemed not so much to destroy the neighboring tribes, as to subdue and incorporate them with his own.... Those of them who spoke another dialect than the Zulu were prohibited from doing so in his presence, and addressed him by means of an interpreter. This was continued until they were able to express themselves properly in the Zulu language,...*Ukukuluma*.⁴¹

The success of this measure can be gauged from the fact that some subjugated groups experienced language shifts as a result of their adherence to the custom of *ukukhuluma nje*. For

³⁹ For ‘royal court’ and ‘court councils,’ see Bleek’s quote below. For ‘military villages’ and ‘regiments,’ see Alfred T. Bryant, *A Zulu-English Dictionary* (Pietermaritzburg: Davis, 1905), 27; Bryant, *Olden Times*, 233.

⁴⁰ NLSA, MSC57/Box 9/File 1, W. Bleek, “Preliminaries” (1856). Note that some scholars (Harries and Wright and Hamilton) argue that the term *ukukhuluma nje* derives from the verb *ukukhukhula*, ‘to sweep away,’ and the adverb *manje*, ‘now,’ and, therefore, should be translated as “sweeping away.” They derive this idea from a statement made by Bleek in his diary where he stated that “*nKukulumanje* mean[s] the slaughter of a language” (see below). However, it is important to consider that, since Bleek’s MSS was written after his diary, it can be assumed that its version reflects the spelling and the meaning that he ascribed to the term after more thorough reflection. Finally, as I suggest below, it is quite possible that Bleek made the association between the term and the idea of “slaughter of a language” in his diary, because he was speaking to “aMatonga” who, as *ukutekeza*-speakers, may have experienced *ukukhuluma nje* as akin to *ukukhukhula manje*, a ‘sweeping away’ of their own language; in other words, it is possible that his interlocutors engaged in a play of words. See Harries, “Imagery,” 107; Wright, “A. T. Bryant and the ‘Lala’,” 356: footnote 9; Hamilton, “Traditions of Origins,” 33; Bleek, *Natal Diaries*, 76.

⁴¹ Döhne, *Zulu-Kafir*, xv. Note that the African historian and novelist Thomas Mofolo alluded to this requirement in his semi-historical account *Chaka* (written in c.1909) where he has the Zulu king proclaim to his vanquished adversaries: “Today you have no king of your own any more, nor are you any longer a nation;...I place before you two alternatives so that you may chose for yourselves: if you give up your national name as well as *your language*, and join my regiments, and become Zulus [that is, *amantungwa*], then you shall live...” See Thomas Mofolo, *Chaka*, trans. Daniel P. Kunene (Oxford: Heinemann, 1981), 106.

instance, several of Stuart's informants stated that it caused some of the people from the up-country region, notably the Khumalo and Mabaso, to lose their own mode of speaking, colloquially referred to as *Hofe*.⁴² Thus, Jantshi, a member of the Mabaso people, explained in 1903:

‘*Ofe mkozi*’ is an expression used at the beginning of a conversation by the ancient [Mabaso] people. The old dialect at first spoken by the [Mabaso] tribe is still to be heard near Nhlazatshe among the Mapiseni, an offshoot of the Mabaso tribe to which I belong.⁴³

Descendants of the Khumalo also reported the loss of this mode of speaking. Thus, an informant called Madhlebe stated in 1905 that “We Kumalo spoke the ‘*Hofe*’ language.... Our language used to be called the ‘*Hofe*’ language.”⁴⁴ Another informant by the name of Magidigidi added: “‘*Ho! Ofe?*’ ... They had a separate dialect of their own, these Kumalo people. It was altered by Tshaka.”⁴⁵ Finally, there is the case of the Ntuli section of the *ukutekeza*-speaking Bhele.⁴⁶ Although the Ntuli had first submitted to Shaka's father Senzangakhona, they became *amantungwa* during the subsequent reign of Shaka.⁴⁷ As part of their assimilation into the Zulu state's *amantungwa* elite, they adopted the fictitious history of migration from the north by way of the grain basket required by this identity.⁴⁸ More importantly, the evidence suggests that, at this time, the Ntuli stopped using their own mode of speaking (*ukutekeza*) and began to use *ukukhuluma*. This explains why Stuart's informant Lunguza recalled having witnessed Ndlela

⁴² Because it frequently included the expression *Hofe?*, *Ofe?* or *Ho! Ofe?*.

⁴³ *JSA*, Jantshi kaNongila (1903), 1:176. Note that I substituted “Zulu” for “Mabaso” in brackets in this quotation because Jantshi obviously referred to his people, the Mabaso, who by that time had been incorporated into the Zulu state and thus thought of themselves as Zulu.

⁴⁴ *JSA*, Madhlebe kaNjinjana (1905), 2:45-46.

⁴⁵ *JSA*, Magidigidi kaNobebe (1905), 2:97.

⁴⁶ Bryant, *Olden Times*, 58, 147.

⁴⁷ *JSA*, Mabonza kaSidhlayi ((1909), 2:24; *Ibid.*, Mangati kaGodide (1918), 2:202, 204.

⁴⁸ Thus, Mangati kaGodide, a descendant of the chiefly line of the Ntuli, explained to Stuart in 1918: “[The Ntuli] came down into the Zulu country by means of a grain basket [*'behla nge silulu'*]. The grain basket rolled from eLenge (Job's Kop) with them inside it.... They arrived in the Zulu country and came out of the basket. They then *konza'd* in the Zulu country.... We amaBele are amaNtungwa.” See *JSA*, Mangati kaGodide (1918), 2:203.

kaSompisi, the Ntuli chief and Dingane's chief *induna* between 1828 and 1840, speaking "in the ordinary Zulu way [that is, *ukukhuluma*]." ⁴⁹

However, it appears that not all subjugated people embraced this custom with the same enthusiasm and success as the Ntuli, Khumalo, and Mabaso. This is suggested by Bleek, who, while traveling through Natal and the Zulu kingdom in 1855 and 1856, wrote in his diary:

I interrogated several aMatonga. I discovered that their language... is the language which the Zulus call uKutugeza... It was spoken far more frequently, until under the rule of the Zulus the *nKukulumanje*, meaning the slaughter of a language, was effected. ⁵⁰

Although Bleek misspelled and mistranslated the term in his diary (see footnote 40 above), his association of the term *ukukhuluma nje* with the "slaughter of a language" may have made sense from the perspective of his interlocutors. As speakers of *ukutekeza*, a mode of communication viewed as particularly offensive by the Zulu rulers (more on this issue below), these 'aMatonga' probably experienced the many adjustments they had to make in order to abide by the custom of *ukukhuluma nje* as akin to *ukukhukhula manje*, the "slaughtering" or rather "sweeping away" of their own language. ⁵¹

It is noteworthy that the Zulu rulers took the metaphorical sting out of this process of linguistic assimilation for the group that was most important to the success of their conquest state, the numerous and powerful Qwabe. They did so by identifying the speaking practices of the Qwabe and other coastal communities between the Thukela and Phongolo Rivers (for example, the Mthethwa) as *ukuthefula* and classifying it as a legitimate, if decidedly inferior, mode of communication among the *amantungwa*.

⁴⁹ *JSA*, Lunguza kaMpukane (1909), 1:329. The original reads "[Ndhlela] *tefula'd* slightly in the ordinary Zulu way." As I will explain below, many members of the *amantungwa* used *ukuthefula* on unofficial occasions, but used *ukukhuluma* on official ones. Over time, this arrangement led to *ukukhuluma* assimilating some *ukuthefula*-specific terms and pronunciations. The point here is that Ndlela spoke like all the other Zulu, that is *amantungwa*.

⁵⁰ Bleek, *Natal Diaries*, 76.

⁵¹ In fact, it is possible that his interlocutors engaged in a play of words, as in "for us the custom of *ukukhuluma-nje* means *ukukhukhula manje*."

Evidence for the contemporary use of the term *ukuthefula* comes from a variety of sources. For instance, Bleek explained in the 1850s that “*Tefula* [is] the dialect of the aM-tetwa [Mthethwa] and other tribes.... Besides the Umtetwa...there are chiefly the aMagwabi [Qwabe] to be mentioned as a *Tefula*-tribe.”⁵² Similarly, an Anglican missionary by the name of Joseph Shooter noted in 1857 that “The Quabies, Tetwas, Dwandwes...are distinguished as Amatefula...[because they] spoke a dialect somewhat different from that of the Zulus.”⁵³ Stuart’s African informants provided similar evidence, stating in about 1900: “People from down-country (*aba se zansi*) *tefula*.... The Qwabes...as they lived down-country near the Mtetwa they *tefula*’d....”⁵⁴ According to Bleek (1856), this mode of speaking represented first and foremost “a softened modulation of the pronunciation” of *ukukhuluma*.⁵⁵ Colenso explained more thoroughly in 1859 that its “chief peculiarity consists in putting *y*...in the place of *l*, and changing *ny* into *n*,” thereby rendering *umlilo*, “fire,” into *umyiyo*, and *innyama*, “meat,” into *innama*.⁵⁶ Stuart’s informants provided similar evidence. Thus, Mkando noted in 1902 that in “*tefula*,...*inkonyane* becomes *inkonana*, and they say *yoku*, not *loku*.”⁵⁷

More importantly, the Zulu rulers classified *ukuthefula* as a legitimate dialect of the *amantungwa*. Evidence for this inclusive approach comes from the very top of Zulu society. For instance, Stuart’s informant Ngidi remarked: “[Shaka] mounted his words, maybe due to his

⁵² NLSA, MSC57/Box 7/File 2, Wilhelm Bleek, “Kafir Grammatik” (?); *Ibid.*, MSC57/Box 9/File 1, W. Bleek, “Preliminaries” (1856).

⁵³ Shooter, *Kafirs*, 376.

⁵⁴ *JSA*, Mkando kaDhlova (1902), 3:166-7; *Ibid.*, Magidigidi kaNobebe (1905), 2:84. Other informants explained, “The Qwabe and Mtetwa would use the *tefula* form....The Ndwandwe people speak like the Mtetwa for they live across the Black Mfolozi. They may be said to *tefula*....A characteristic of the Qwabe is that they *tefula*.” See *JSA*, Mayinga kaMbekuzana (1905), 2:257; *Ibid.*, Ngidi kaMcikaziswa (1904), 5:68; *Ibid.*, Kambi kaMatshobana (1903), 1:210.

⁵⁵ NLSA, MSC57/Box 9/File 1, W. Bleek, “Preliminaries” (1856).

⁵⁶ John W Colenso, *First Steps in Zulu: Being an Elementary Grammar of the Zulu Language*, 4th edition (Maritzburg: P. Davis, 1890 [1859]), 3. In fact, Colenso characterized *ukuthefula* as “a sort of lisping” when compared to *ukukhuluma*. See *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁷ *JSA*, Mkando kaDhlova (1902), 3:166-7.

having learnt the mtetwa dialect [that is, *ukuthefula*].”⁵⁸ Shaka was not alone. According to Lunguza, “Dingana *tefula'd* in his speech to some extent. He, for instance, said 'yoku' for 'loku.’”⁵⁹ Similarly, Bleek and Baleni noted in 1856 that “king [Mpande] is not unfrequently heard to make use of it [*ukuthefula*].”⁶⁰ However, despite this inclusive approach, the Zulu rulers classified *ukuthefula* as an inferior mode of speaking among the *amantungwa*. In part, this inferior status can be gathered from the very meaning of the term, which can be translated as “to be oily, slippery.”⁶¹ It is also apparent from the Zulu rulers’ insistence that this mode of speaking be avoided on official, public occasions. As Bleek explained in 1856:

The *uku-Tefula* is indeed so very general that one nearly may say that half the Zulu nation is speaking it...although most who speak so in common will, on public occasions, have recourse to the proper Zulu enunciation; for the *uku-Tefula* is considered as incorrect, and its popularity of pronunciation pointed out and sneered at....⁶²

Even though the Zulu rulers’ inclusive yet deprecating attitude toward *ukuthefula* may be explained by Shaka having lived for many years among the *ukuthefula*-speaking Mthethwa, this flexible approach should probably be seen as the Zulu rulers’ attempt to accommodate the linguistic peculiarities of the numerous and powerful Qwabe and, in so doing, encourage them to adopt the *amantungwa* identity. Indeed, in the same way as the Zulu rulers’ geography-based discourse of *amantungwa-ness* accommodated the Qwabe’s “down-country” origins through a

⁵⁸ *JSA*, Ngidi kaMcikaziswa (1904), 5:36. Note Stuart’s informant Jantshi explained in 1903 that Shaka, when he assumed the kingship of the Zulu state, “*tefula'd*.” Another informant by the name of Sivivi argued that, “when Tshaka came from the Mtetwa,” he brought with him *tefula* words such as “umpakati [councilor].” See also *JSA*, Jantshi kaNongila (1903), 1:195; *Ibid.*, Sivivi kaMaqungo (1905), 5:378.

⁵⁹ *JSA*, Lunguza kaMpukane (1909), 1:320.

⁶⁰ NLSA, MSC57/Box 9/File 1, W. Bleek, “Preliminaries” (1856); *JSA*, Baleni kaSilwana (1914), 1:46. See also Colenso, *First Steps*, 4. Note also that over time, this inclusive approach may have resulted in *ukukhuluma* assimilating some forms of pronunciation and idiomatic expressions originally associated with *ukuthefula* only. This may explain why Döhne argued in 1857 that “the Zulu [*ukukhuluma*] itself bears the stamp of the...Tefula, in many practical points,” and why one of Stuart’s informants alleged in 1909 that Dingane’s principal induna Ndhlela kaSompisi “*tefula'd* slightly in the ordinary Zulu way.” See Döhne, *Zulu-Kafir* y, xv; *JSA*, Lunguza kaMpukane (1909), 1:329.

⁶¹ Kubeka, “Preliminary Survey,” 11.

⁶² NLSA, MSC57/Box 9/File 1, W. Bleek, “Preliminaries” (1856). Shooter stated in 1857 that “Amatefula [is] an opprobrious term.” See Shooter, *Kafirs*, 376.

carefully crafted story of origin about Malandela and his sons, the Zulu rulers' language-based discourse of *amantungwa-ness* accommodated the Qwabe's linguistic differences by classifying *ukuthefula* as a legitimate, albeit inferior, speaking practice among the Zulu state's social elite.

In doing so, the Zulu rulers created a powerful kinship-transcending discourse of social-status identity according to which the Zulu state's social elite (*amantungwa*) were unified by geographical as well as linguistic ties. Importantly, with the help of this discourse, the communities subjugated during the first phase of Zulu expansion were quickly moved from tributary to subject status, allowing the Zulu state to massively expand and consolidate its military resources in the face of the Ndwandwe threat.

It appears that this threat began to wane following two Zulu victories against the Ndwandwe in 1821 and 1826.⁶³ What remained, however, was the Zulu rulers' need to continuously acquire and redistribute surplus resources in order to support and reward their now substantially increased subject base (*amantungwa*). It was this need that most likely encouraged the Zulu rulers to embark on a second phase of expansion. Thus, they advanced northeast across the Phongolo River, an expansionary movement that yielded the submission of groups residing in the region formerly controlled by the Thembe and Mabhudu polities.⁶⁴ Although they had previously subjugated the Mbo (Mkhize), Ngcolosi, and Ngcobo lineages (Nyuswa, Qadi, Langeni, Ngongoma, Fuze, and Woziyana) south of the Thukela River, the Zulu rulers expanded more forcefully across that river in the early 1820s, subjugating the loosely organized Cele and Thuli paramountcies in the process.⁶⁵

⁶³ For 1821, see Elizabeth Eldredge, *The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power* (New York: Cambridge, 2014), 120. But they were not fully destroyed until 1826, see Laband, *Rise and Fall*, 34.

⁶⁴ Owen, *Narrative*, 1:79; Boteler, *Narrative*, 1:47-8; Isaacs, *Travels*, 1:335.

⁶⁵ Isaacs, *Travels*, 1:335, 340.

As the Zulu rulers became incrementally less apprehensive of the Ndwandwe but required additional resources to keep the state machinery operating smoothly, they appear to have lost the desire to transition these groups from the status of tributaries to the status of subjects (*amantungwa*). On the contrary, in order to maximize and prolong the exploitation of these groups indefinitely, the Zulu rulers seem to have desired to “trap” these groups permanently in the status of tributaries. In part, they achieved this by excluding the leaders of these groups from the Zulu state’s key offices of power and recognizing them instead as (regional) proxy rulers. North of the Phongolo River, the Zulu state’s proxy rulers were responsible for extracting blue monkey skins, elephant tusks, and plumes as well as Portuguese trade items such as beads, calico, and metals from their respective “followers” on behalf of the Zulu state. South of the Thukela, proxy rulers such as the Cele ruler Magaye were responsible for extracting cattle. Furthermore, the Zulu rulers did not enroll the young men and women of these groups into the *amabutho* but organized them as irregular support units whose key task consisted of collecting, guarding, and transporting resources destined to benefit Zulu subjects.⁶⁶ There is some circumstantial evidence that suggests that, at least south of the Thukela, this indirect, extractive regime resulted in the “super-exploitation” of the Zulu state’s tributaries over time, compelling the latter to live on fish, shellfish, roots, and insects rather than milk and grains.⁶⁷

At the same time, the Zulu rulers appear to have deployed a discourse of social exclusion to entrench the separate and inferior status of these tributaries and legitimize their long-term exploitation. The Zulu rulers’ use of (potentially preexisting) derogatory names was an important

⁶⁶ Hamilton, “Political Centralisation,” 295. For incorporating as tributaries, see also Shooter, *Kafirs*, iv, 113, 115, 159, 260. For ‘proxies north of the Phongolo River providing monkey-skins and elephant tusks,’ see Shooter, *Kafirs*, 115; *JSA*, Bikwayo kaNoziwawa (1903), 1:63-68; *Ibid.*, John Kumalo (1900), 1:216, 238. For ‘proxies south of the Thukela extracting and guarding cattle,’ see *JSA*, Mcotoyi kaMnini (1905), 3:65-66. For ‘organizing men as irregular support units,’ see also Isaacs, *Travels*, 1:169; Holden, *Past*, 14.

⁶⁷ Hamilton, “Ideology,” 465, 473; *JSA*, Mkando kaDhlova (1902), 3:150; Holden, *History*, 49.

component of this discourse of social exclusion.⁶⁸ For instance, they classified those tributaries living to the north and northwest of the Zulu kingdom as *amarubu* or *amahubhu* (deceitful persons),⁶⁹ *amankengana* (inferior outsiders),⁷⁰ or *amanhlwenga* (destitutes, beggars, or worthless foreigners).⁷¹ Evidence suggests that the Zulu rulers also employed the term *amatonga* in a derogatory sense for tributaries from the northeastern peripheries at this time. It was in this context that James Stuart's informant Maputwana claimed that, when he and his fellow Vundhla submitted (*ukukhonza*) to Shaka, the Zulu referred to them as "Tonga," treated them "with contempt" and gave the order "that we should simply be beaten and our girls taken away."⁷² Similarly, the Zulu identified those tributaries residing to the south of the Thukela River by a variety of derogatory names, notably *amazo(t)sha* (face-slitters),⁷³ *izindiki* (stump-fingered ones),⁷⁴ *inyakeni* (dirty people),⁷⁵ and *amalala* (menial know-nothings). The last term was used with particular contempt for tributaries from the region south of the Thukela River. As several of Stuart's informants explained:

The *amaLala* were so called by the Zulus and Qwabes...because they sleep (*lala*) with their fingers up their anuses [*ngoba belala benomunwe egolo*].... [Tshaka]

⁶⁸ Hamilton, "Political Centralisation," 295. Note 'potentially preexisting' because evidence suggests that the Zulu rulers used preexisting terms such as *amalala* and then imbued these terms with new meanings in terms of geography, language and other negative characteristics. See, for instance, Hamilton, "Ideology," 479-81.

⁶⁹ *JSA*, Bikwayo kaNoziwawa (1903), 1:63.

⁷⁰ *JSA*, Baleni kaSilwana (1914), 1:17-8; *Ibid.*, Bikwayo kaNoziwawa (1903), 1:68.

⁷¹ *JSA*, Baleni kaSilwana (1914), 1:24; *Ibid.*, Bikwayo kaNoziwawa (1903), 1:63; *Ibid.*, Luzipo kaNomageje (1904), 1:354; *Ibid.*, Mayinga kaMbekuzana (1905), 2:254; Hamilton, "Ideology," 482.

⁷² *JSA*, Maputwana kaDidiza (1921), 2:230; Shooter, *Kafirs*, 115.

⁷³ *JSA*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905), 1:118; *Ibid.*, Mahaya kaNongqabana (1905), 2:113; *Ibid.*, Mqayikana kaYenge (1916), 4:10. The term was used for the Mpondo, Bhaca, Nhlanguwini, Zizi, Ngutshana, Langwe, Cibise because they cut their faces.

⁷⁴ Stuart's informant Singcofela explained in 1910, "The Zulus, in consequence of our [Bomvu] custom [of cutting the small joint off the left finger], used to ridicule us thus: 'Here are the stump-fingered ones from the place of Detsulwayo; there is no stump-fingered one who will eat sorghum while we eat nothing [*Naz' izindiki zakwa Detsulwayo, ahundiki e ya udhl' ibele tina si ngadhli luto*].' They said this when they crossed over into Natal in a body from Zululand." See *JSA*, Singcofela kaMtshungu (1910), 5:341.

⁷⁵ Several informants explained in 1905 and 1910: "'*iNyakeni*' people [are] those who do not wash for meals etc...*Inyakeni*...i.e. those who know nothing...[Shaka] spoke of [people] as *inyakeni* because they had dirty habits and did not distinguish what was good and what was bad...[and] did not pay respect to chiefs, nor...wash or keep himself clean." See *JSA*, Norman Nembula (1905), 5:13; *Ibid.*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905, 1908), 1:118; *Ibid.*, Madikane kaMlomowetole (1903), 2:55.

used to insult us and frighten us by saying that we did not have the cunning to invent things out of nothing.... He said that we *Lala* could not do it.... By so speaking they insulted us.... The name *amaLala* came from the Zulu, for they conquered the land. They then called us *amaLala*...for people that defeat others insult them.⁷⁶

Perhaps most importantly, the Zulu rulers mobilized language differences (however small) as means of entrenching the separate and inferior status of these groups and legitimizing their long-term exploitation. This mobilization of language differences for the purpose of social exclusion and exploitation may have been triggered by their preexisting use of language as a marker of *amantungwa-ness*. In other words, having used language (*ukukhuluma* and *ukuthefula*) as a means to assimilate subjugated peoples as subjects (*amantungwa*) during the first phase of expansion, the Zulu rulers were compelled to also use language as a means to exclude people as tributaries (*amalala*) during the second phase of expansion. This context, then, gave rise to a second aspect of the Zulu rulers' language-based discourse of social identity, which defined as tributaries all those people who spoke *ukutekeza*.

According to Döhne (1857), *ukutekeza* (also called *ukutekela*, *radula*, or *isilala*) omitted “the nasal sounds, and transmutes some consonants” and, in some of its variations, used only “low, broad, and flat sounds.”⁷⁷ Two years later, Colenso explained that people who “tekeza in their speech” pronounce *inkomo*, “bullock,” as *iyomo*; *umlomo*, “mouth,” as *unomo*; and *abafazi*, “women,” as *abafati*.⁷⁸ Stuart’s informants provided additional details, including stating that “[Tekeza] dialects all differ from one another slightly according to the tribe. Tulis say, ‘U tside,’

⁷⁶ *JSA*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905, 1908), 1:118 (for isiZulu original, see Wright, “Amalala,” 363); *JSA*, Madikane kaMlomowetole (1903), 2:55; *Ibid.*, Mqaikana kaYenge (1916), 4:3, 14. See also *JSA*, Mageza kaKwefunga, 1905, 2:69, 70; *Ibid.* Mkando kaDhlova (1902), 3:150, 158; Cory. ed., *Diary*, Kirkman’s Story, 167; Shooter, *Kafirs*, 159.

⁷⁷ Döhne, *Zulu-Kafir*, xv.

⁷⁸ Colenso, *First Steps*, 4. Another two years later, he added, “tekeza [means to] speak roughly, as the amaLala...radula [means to] Tekeza very much in speech.” See Colenso, *Zulu-English*, 470, 432.

the Cele say, ‘*Ku tide*,’...the Ngcolosi say, ‘*Ku tside*.’”⁷⁹ However, what united these *ukutekeza* dialects was the fact that the Zulu rulers classified these differences as markers of people’s status as tributaries, especially as *amalala*. This assumed relationship between language and identity is even more strongly evidenced in several other statements by Stuart’s informants:

The amaLala were so called...because they speak the *tekela* dialect and thereby speak with their tongues lying low (*lala*).... The Cele...are said to be amaLala.... The Nyuswa, Ngcobo, amaQadi, Embo..., iNhlangwini, Swazis...are amaLala according to us Zulus.... They are probably so called for the way in which they speak....⁸⁰

More importantly, in the same way that the Zulu rulers used derogatory terms for tributaries, they slandered the latter’s speaking practices in order to exclude and exploit them. This intention is apparent in the Zulu rulers’ use of the term *ukutekeza*, which can be translated as “to speak with a quivering voice.”⁸¹ Additional testimonies confirm this assessment. Thus, Stuart’s informant Mageza remarked in 1905, “We [Cele] were laughed at by the Zulus because of our [*ukutekeza*] dialect. ‘You can hear he’s a Lala’ [the Zulu used to say]...”⁸²

Triumph of the Zulu Discourse: The Case of the Cele

The effectiveness of this form of “symbolic violence” can be perceived in the extent to which the Zulu state’s tributaries internalized the idea that *ukutekeza* and *amalaleness* were

⁷⁹ *JSA*, Mcotoyi kaMnini (1905), 3:57. Other informants added, “We [Cele] are called amaLala;...we say ‘*Kutite*’ and not ‘*Kutile*’....Amalala *tekeza*, e.g. [they say] ‘*Wendani?*’ [instead of ‘*Wenzani?*’]....The Aba are amaLala....They say, not ‘*Wenzani?*’ but ‘*Wentani?*’” See *JSA*, Mageza kaKwefunga (1905), 2:69; *Ibid.*, Mkando kaDhlova (1902), 3:166-7; *Ibid.*, Mkando kaDhlova (1902), 3:150, 166-7; *Ibid.*, Maziwana kaMahlabeni (1905), 2:279.

⁸⁰ *JSA*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905, 1908), 1:118; *Ibid.*, Mmemi kaNguluzane (1904), 3:264. Other statements reinforced this connection between language and identity: “[The] Amalala *tekeza*....The amaLala were said to *ratula* or *tekeza*....AmaNqondo, alias amaNxondo....They spoke the Lala dialect [*tekeza*]....They were amaLala....These Lala dialects all differ from one another slightly...Tulis say, ‘Utside’....The Cele are also amaLala on account of their dialect [*tekeza*]....We [Cele] are called amaLala; we are so called because we say ‘*Kutite*’ and not ‘*Kutile*.’” See *JSA*, Mkando kaDhlova (1902), 3:150, 166-7; *Ibid.*, Magidigidi kaNobebe (1905), 2:97; *Ibid.*, Maziwana kaMahlabeni (1905), 2:276; *Ibid.*, Mcotoyi kaMnini (1905), 3:57; *Ibid.*, Madikane kaMlomowetole (1903), 2: 54-55; *Ibid.*, Mageza kaKwefunga (1905), 2:69-70.

⁸¹ Kubeka, “Preliminary Survey,” 11.

⁸² *JSA*, Mageza kaKwefunga (1905), 2:69-70.

intrinsically connected and, in so doing, came to think of themselves as *ukutekeza*-speaking *amalala*. The case of the Cele people in particular testifies to the (eventual) triumph of the Zulu rulers' language-based discourse of social identity.⁸³

Under pressure from the expanding Qwabe state, the Cele chiefdom had split off from the Mthethwa and followed the example of their neighbors, the Thuli, migrating southward across the Thukela River sometime in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁸⁴ Under the leadership of their Chief Mkhokheleli, the Cele settled in the region between the Nonoti and Mdhloti rivers in the northeastern part of what would become Natal Colony.⁸⁵ The Cele rulers interacted closely with the people they encountered in this region, especially the Thuli, who, by that time, had established a loose paramountcy consisting of the ruling Thuli lineage, several related junior lineages (Zuba, Khoma, and Shaba), a number of unrelated lineages (Khwela; Mbili; and Ndhlelu, a Cele section) and a series of indigenous Natal groups (Jali, Vangane, Kanyawo, and Nqondo).⁸⁶ For instance, the Cele Chief Mkhokheleli married as his principal wife (*inkosikazi*) Masivuba, the daughter of Chief Sivuba of the Zuba section of the Thuli, with whom he fathered his successor Dibandhlela.⁸⁷ Moreover, Dibandhlela grew up among his mother's Zuba people before he took over control of the Cele chiefdom.⁸⁸ The Cele also maintained good relations with the Qwabe north of the Thukela River. Thus, Dibandhlela (or his son Vico) married as his

⁸³ For the argument that this process was complex and long, see Heather Hughes, "Politics and Society in Inanda, Natal: The Qadi under Chief Mqhawe, c1840-1906," *Ph.D. Diss.* (University of London, 1995), esp. chapter 2.

⁸⁴ This origin and migration experience is visible in both Thuli and Cele oral traditions: see *JSA*, Maziyana kaMahlabeni (1905), 2:300, 302; *Ibid.*, Mco toyi kaMnini (1905), 3:53-4; *Ibid.*, Mbovu kaMtshumayeli (1903), 3:30; *Ibid.*, Mageza kaKwefunga (1905), 2:68-9.

⁸⁵ Hamilton, "Ideology," 466, 469; *JSA*, Maquza kaGawushane (1905), 236.

⁸⁶ Hamilton, "Ideology," 468.

⁸⁷ *JSA*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:75-6; *Ibid.*, Mbovu kaMtshumayeli (1903), 3:30; *Ibid.*, Mageza kaKwefunga (1905), 2:69; *Ibid.*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905, 1908), 1:107.

⁸⁸ *JSA*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905, 1908), 1:107.

principal wife Siwetu, daughter of the Qwabe chief Kondhlo.⁸⁹ This marriage gave issue to Magaye, who was raised by his mother's brother Phakathwayo.⁹⁰ The Cele were also on good terms with those Qwabe sections—for instance, the Makhanya and Nsomi—that had followed them across the Thukela River.⁹¹ Thus, they intermarried frequently with the Makhanya, including Magaye, who married as his principal wife Mambanga, daughter of Chief Mbanga of the Makhanya.⁹²

The interactions intensified further as the Cele gained political ascendancy in the Natal region and established “a loose Cele paramountcy” over some of the indigenous Natal groups (the Ndhlovu, Nghathi, Ngangeni, Ntshangase, Nxamalala, Nhloko, and Hlongwa), some of the Thuli polity's unrelated lineages (Mbili and Ndhlelu), and some of the Qwabe groups that had followed them across the Thukela (Makhanya and Nsomi).⁹³ Importantly, because the Cele rulers constructed Celeness on the basis of genealogical descent (tracing their descent to a mythical ancestor named Nyambose who also appears in the genealogy of the Mthethwa chiefs),⁹⁴ they incorporated these subjugated groups according to the old descent-based discourse of social identity. In other words, they incorporated as subjects only those groups who, in addition to pledging allegiance, asserted genealogical ties to the Cele rulers, while recognizing as tributaries all those groups who did not.

⁸⁹ Bryant, *Olden Times*, 538 and *JSA*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905, 1908), 1:115-6; *Ibid.*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:74, 77; *Ibid.*, Mtshebwe kaMagaye (1910), 4:159.

⁹⁰ *JSA*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:74, 77; *Ibid.*, Mtshebwe kaMagaye (1910), 4:159; *Ibid.*, Mageza kaKwefunga (1905), 2:71; *Ibid.*, Mbovu kaMtshumayeli (1903), 3:41.

⁹¹ *JSA*, Madikane kaMlomowetole (1903), 2:55; *Ibid.*, Mmemi kaNguluzane (1904), 3:262.

⁹² *JSA*, Maquza kaGawushane (1905), 2:236; *Ibid.*, Mbovu kaMtshumayeli (1903), 3:39; *Ibid.*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905, 1908), 1:119.

⁹³ Hamilton, “Ideology,” 469; *JSA*, Mageza kaKwefunga (1905), 2:69. For the Makhanya submitting to the Cele, see *JSA*, Maquza kaGawushane (1905), 2:237. For the Nsomi submitting to the Cele, see *JSA*, Mageza kaKwefunga (1905), 2:69.

⁹⁴ *JSA*, Mahaya kaNongqabana (1905), 2:116; *Ibid.*, Maquza kaGawushane (1905), 2:236; *Ibid.*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:72; *Ibid.*, Mtshebwe kaMagaye (1910), 4:158.

As a result of this process of incorporation, the Cele paramountcy came to include a considerable number of tributaries, a situation which exacerbated the succession dispute that ensued between the Cele contenders Mande and Magaye in the early 1820s.⁹⁵ This internal conflict certainly facilitated the Zulu state's expansion south of the Thukela River by allowing the Zulu rulers to intervene as "king makers" in the Cele polity's internal affairs. Having banished Mande and installed Magaye as the legitimate ruler of the Cele paramountcy, the Zulu rulers followed up their success by subjugating the Thuli polity and organizing the entire Natal region under their new proxy ruler, the Cele Chief Magaye.⁹⁶ However, this Zulu assistance came at a price. Although Cele traditions portray the subsequent relationship between the Zulu king Shaka and Magaye as extraordinarily good,⁹⁷ they cannot hide the fact that the latter henceforth served the former as a tributary rather than as a subject.⁹⁸ For instance, Magaye's (young) men were not enrolled in the Zulu state's military regiments, but used to extract and guard surplus cattle destined for the Zulu state's *amantungwa*.⁹⁹ Moreover, the Zulu rulers classified Magaye and all the people under his rule by the derogatory name *amalala* on the basis that many of them spoke *ukutekeza*. This can be gleaned from the testimonies of several of Stuart's informants, who explained in 1903 and 1904:

The Cele...are said to be amaLala.... They are...so called because of the way in which they speak.... [Tshaka] said that we [Cele] were Lala because our tongues lay (*lala*) flat in our mouths [that is, they spoke *ukutekeza*], and we did not speak in the Ntungwa fashion [*ukukhuluma* or *ukuthefula*]....¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Hamilton, "Ideology," 471.

⁹⁶ *JSA*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:78-9; *Ibid.*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905), 1:115-7; Hamilton, "Ideology," 471-72.

⁹⁷ Hamilton, "Ideology," 471; *JSA*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:72-3, 80, 89; *Ibid.*, Maquza kaGawushane (1905), 2:236-7; *Ibid.*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905, 1908), 1:117.

⁹⁸ *JSA*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905, 1908), 1:117; *Ibid.*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:78-9; Hamilton, "Ideology," 477.

⁹⁹ Wright, "Political Transformations," 178; Hamilton, "Ideology," 471-3. For Cele 'young men,' see *JSA*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:92; *Ibid.*, Ngidi kaMcikaziswa (1904), 5:63, 72. For Thuli 'young men,' see *JSA*, Mcotoyi kaMnini (1905), 3:65-66.

¹⁰⁰ *JSA*, Mmemi kaNguluzane (1904), 3:264; *JSA*, Madikane kaMlomowetole (1903), 2: 54-55.

As *ukuthefula*-speakers themselves,¹⁰¹ Magaye and his Nsomi and Makhanya “followers” probably resented being classified as *ukutekeza*-speaking *amalala* in this context. This may explain why Magaye tried to have *ukuthefula* recognized as the official language of the Cele people at about this time. Oral testimonies characterize these efforts as an act of resistance directed against the attempts of his Thuli grandmother Masivuba to impose *ukutekeza* on the *ukuthefula*-speaking Cele. As Stuart’s informant Dinya explained:

Magaye strongly objected to the Cele dialect being changed to that of the Tulis [*ukutekeza*]. He directed the young generation to follow him and desist from following that of Masivuba.... Magaye wanted to keep to the Mtetwa tongue [*ukuthefula*].¹⁰²

However, characterizing these events as an internal conflict only is highly problematic given that, as explained above, language would have been irrelevant under the Cele rulers’ descent-based discourse of social identity. In other words, neither Magaye or Masivuba would have had a reason to insist on any particular “dialect” being spoken, because social status within the Cele paramountcy was defined on the basis of descent rather than language. Consequently, Magaye’s efforts to have *ukuthefula* rather than *ukutekeza* recognized as the official language of the Cele appears to have been an act of resistance against the Zulu rulers’ language-based discourse of social identity (which defined the Cele as *ukutekeza*-speaking *amalala*) and the symbolic violence this identity entailed (the condemnation to a permanent and onerous tributary status).¹⁰³

Unfortunately for the Cele paramountcy, Magaye’s attempt at waging a symbolic struggle against Zulu domination and exploitation ended abruptly when, following Shaka’s assassination in 1828, the new Zulu ruler Dingane had Magaye executed and the Cele paramountcy dispersed. As a result of this violent intervention, the Zulu rulers’ language-based discourse gained

¹⁰¹ As mentioned above, Magaye’s mother was an *ukuthefula*-speaking Qwabe and he had grown up among the Qwabe. The Nsomi and Makhanya were Qwabe sections and thus most likely spoke *ukuthefula*.

¹⁰² *JSA*, Dinya kaZokozwayo (1905, 1908), 1:107. See also *Ibid.*, Melaphi KaMagaye (1905), 3:75-6.

¹⁰³ Compare with Hamilton, “Ideology,” 484-5.

ascendancy and coexisted, albeit uneasily, with the (older) descent-based discourse of Celeness according to which the Cele were related to the (*ukuthefula*-speaking) Mthethwa through a mythical ancestor called Nyambose.¹⁰⁴ This tension is visible in the testimonies of Stuart's informants, who explained in about 1900:

The Cele are said to have come from the Mtetwa and are said to be amaLala, but the Mtetwa are not said to be amaLala....[The Cele] are probably so called from the way in which they speak....The Cele came from the Mtetwa.... We are called amaLala...[But] We do not *tefula* like the Mtetwa people.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion and Consequences

The tension between language and descent-based discourses of identity emerged because of the rise of Zulu conquest state in the early nineteenth century. Prior to the rise of this state, a descent-based discourse of social identity had prevailed in South Africa, according to which advantaged subjects were distinguished from disadvantaged tributaries on the basis of (real or fictive) genealogical ties. The rise of the Zulu conquest state, whose ability to subjugate neighboring peoples resulted from the militarization of circumcision schools (*amabutho*), appears to have given rise to a new language-based discourse of social identity. In order to quickly transition groups subjugated during the state's first expansion phase from the status of tributaries to the status of subjects (*amantungwa*), and to permanently impose on groups subjugated during a second expansionary phase the status of tributaries (notably *amalala*), the rulers of the Zulu conquest state introduced a language-based discourse of social identity. This discourse defined *ukukhuluma* as the "official," "proper," or "best" language and, thus, as a marker of privileged subjects (*amantungwa*), while classifying *ukutekeza* as an inferior language

¹⁰⁴ *JSA*, Mageza KaKwefunga (1905), 2:68; *Ibid.* Mahaya kaNongqabana (1905), 2:116; *Ibid.*, Maquza kaGawushane (1905), 2:236; *Ibid.*, Mvakwendhlu Sivetshe (1905), 2:309; *Ibid.*, Melaphi kaMagaye (1905), 3:72, 75; *Ibid.*, Mthshebwe kaMagaye (1910), 4:158.

¹⁰⁵ *JSA*, Mmemi kaNguluzane (1904), 3:264; *Ibid.*, Mageza kaKwefunga (1905), 2:68, 70.

and, therefore, as a marker of exploited tributaries. Importantly, by propagating these ideas at state institutions (notably the Zulu courts, councils, military villages, and regiments) with the help of everyday practices, such as the custom of *ukukhuluma nje* and the customary slandering of non-standard modes of communication such as *ukutekeza*, the rulers of the Zulu conquest state appear to have not only successfully assimilated subjugated groups as subjects and tributaries but also moved some of the violence necessary to maintain unequal relations of power and status from the physical to the symbolic. It is important to recognize that, while the Zulu example confirms the idea that processes of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century state formation are the key driving forces behind the emergence of language-centered discourses of group identity in the lowveld region of South Africa, it also suggests that these discourses preceded the arrival of “Western” missionaries and colonial rule in the Natal-Zululand region and, thus, are not inherently or exclusively linked to “Western” forms of knowledge.

Although the American missionaries had taken note of the Zulu rulers’ preexisting language-based discourse of social status difference as early as 1836,¹⁰⁶ they began to rework it for their own ends only in the early 1850s, after they had committed to defining Zuluness on the basis of language rather than culture.¹⁰⁷ Having established an intimate relationship between language and Zuluness, the American missionaries fell into the old habit of setting the Zulu apart from the other ‘Caffre’ groups by reworking preexisting Zulu ideas about Zulu exceptionalism. In this case, they achieved this end by reworking the central idea of the Zulu discourse about language—the superiority of *ukukhuluma* versus *ukutekeza*. In 1854, Jakob Döhne employed a mother–child metaphor to make this claim. Being the mother, he explained, the Zulu language

¹⁰⁶ In 1836, the American missionaries asked one of their own, George Champion, to establish a station north of the Thukela River so “that the language most generally in use may be *correctly* acquired, and the Bible translated...” See *MH*, Mar 1837, 121. My emphasis.

¹⁰⁷ This explains why the American missionaries advocated assimilating Zulu and ‘Caffre’ into a more perfect, written language as late as 1850.

showed “pure roots of her words...significant expressions in their full forms...without contractions, or...derived nouns.” At the same time, it preserved its original simplicity by “joining...verb to verb, without interference of conjunctions, or...independent particles.” In contrast, “Kafir being the child” employed “derivated words,” “Kafferi[zed] many of a foreign nature,” and was “fond of new expressions” and “contractions.”¹⁰⁸ Although published later in the decade (1859), Lewis Grout promoted the same view, declaring Zulu to be the purest of all the African languages, including ‘Caffre,’ because it had been shielded for a longer period of time from the adulterating influences that usually accompanied “connection and collision with other nations and languages.” Indeed, as Grout argued, “there is no part of South Africa where foreign influence has come later, or been felt less, than in case of the language and tribes of which we speak, particularly the Zulu.”¹⁰⁹

As earlier in the case of Zulu culture, the missionaries tended to express these claims in terms of their own value system. Thus, as Döhne’s and L. Grout’s comments demonstrate, philological terminology—roots, forms, contractions, nouns, verbs, conjunctions, particles—and philological theories of linguistic change were used to explain the superiority of Zulu versus ‘Caffre.’ However, these ideas had their origin in the preexisting Zulu discourse about language. This can be inferred from statements in which the missionaries’ claims about the superiority of Zulu versus ‘Caffre’ are linked to claims about the superiority of *ukukhuluma* versus *ukutekeza*. A good example occurs in Döhne’s *Zulu-Kafir Dictionary* (1857). In this work, Döhne makes the following assertions:

¹⁰⁸ *Correspondence*, Rev. J. Döhne to Rev. G. Morgan, Table Mountain, 1 Jul 1854, 57. In his “Zulu Grammar,” Döhne later made the same claim when he argued that “Zulu” was the foundation and “Kafir” the superstructure of the language. See Döhne, *Zulu-Kafir*, xxxix.

¹⁰⁹ Grout, *IsiZulu*, xx. This did not mean that Lewis Grout considered the language particularly worthy. Apparently, he told Bishop Colenso in 1854 that “He would not have his little girl learn one word of that filthy people’s language on any account, if he could help it.” See Colenso, *Ten Weeks*, 236.

The present work is written in the Zulu dialect.... The work if written, for instance, in the Xosa [Caffre] dialect, would not possess equal value, and would be imperfect, as it would be a perverse arrangement to make the foundation the superstructure, and the superstructure the foundation, of the language.... It is evident that the Zulu dialect, by Chaka's law regarding the *Ukukuluma*, has retained its originality with a precision and gravity of expression far beyond the other dialects, and this result has followed from that measure alone.¹¹⁰

Döhne uses the first part of the statement to argue that Zulu is superior to 'Caffre' based on the idea that the former is the foundation, whereas the latter is merely the superstructure of the language. That is, 'Caffre' represents an adulteration of the pure Zulu language. However, when he explains in the second statement why this is the case, he does so on the basis of the custom of *ukukhuluma nje*—that is, "Shaka's law regarding the *Ukukuluma*"—whose key idea was that *ukukhuluma* is superior to *ukutekeza*. In other words, Döhne reworked a preexisting Zulu idea about language as part of his own discourse about the Zulu language and its relationship with the 'Caffre' language.

It is in American missionary Stone's response to the translation proposal of 1854 where this influence of preexisting Zulu ideas can be perceived most clearly. Stone desired to demonstrate the superiority of Zulu versus 'Caffre,' supporting this claim by referring repeatedly to the central idea of the Zulu discourse about language: that is, the superiority of *ukukhuluma* versus *ukutekeza* and *ukuthefula*. As he explained:

The [American] Missionaries...when they had gained some knowledge of this [Zulu language], as they had previously of the other [Caffre], thought they saw a smoothness and a beauty in the (King's) Zulu [*ukukhuluma*] which they had not discovered in the other [Caffre], and subsequent observations on other dialects [*ukutekeza* and *ukuthefula*] have confirmed them in the belief that the Zulu [*ukukhuluma*] is superior to all the kindred dialects in the vicinity [*ukutekeza* and *ukuthefula*]. This and the fact that this is, and was from the first considered as a *Mission to the Zulus*, gave them [the American missionaries] the impulse in acquiring, and has confirmed them in the use of the Zulu rather than any other dialect.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Döhne, *Zulu-Kafir*, xxxix, xv. Note the author says "Amalala" rather than *ukutekeza* dialects.

¹¹¹ *Correspondence*, Stone to Morgan, Ifafa, 17 Jul 1854, 61. My emphasis.

As Stone's final sentence reveals, the the key motive for adopting this rhetoric was the American missionaries' identity as "a Mission to the Zulus." From the beginning of their activities in South Africa, this self-conception had encouraged them to particularize the Zulu, envisioning them as apart from, and often superior to, other groups. Thus, whereas the missionaries in the Eastern Cape region looked for traits that the various 'Caffre' communities, including the Zulu, had in common, the American missionaries searched for traits that set the Zulu apart from the other 'Caffre' groups. Initially, they particularized the Zulu by reworking preexisting Zulu ideas about Zulu culture. However, this discourse came under increasing pressure in the 1840s when large numbers of Africans abandoned their Zulu identities, entered Natal as returnees to their ancestral homes, and, more importantly, resisted the American missionaries' Christian teachings. The resulting disillusionment with Zulu culture provoked an identity crisis that was only resolved when the American missionaries shifted their attention to language. Portrayed as superior by the Zulu themselves, the Zulu language offered a way by which the missionaries were able to again particularize the Zulu and single them out from other 'Caffres'—and, in so doing, revitalize their own identity and purpose as a Zulu-centered mission.

However, the more the American missionaries tied their own identity to a particularization of the Zulu on the basis of language, the more resistant they became toward Shaw's translation plan. In the end, then, it was their long-held self-conception as a Zulu mission—a self-conception significantly enabled by the Zulu people's own ideas about the relationship between language and identity—that encouraged the American missionaries to reject this plan in 1854. As a result of this rejection, the opportunity to create a single Bible translation and, in doing so, form the basis for a single unifying written language for all the African communities residing between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay slipped away. Henceforth, the

missionaries in 'Natal-Zululand' and 'Caffreland [Xhosaland]' promoted separate standardizing projects, the former trying to impose a standardized written Zulu language on speakers of so-called Zulu dialects, and the latter imposing a standardized written 'Caffre [Xhosa]' language on the speakers of so-called 'Caffre [Xhosa]' dialects.

Conclusion

Although the American missionaries categorically rejected Shaw's plan to assimilate Zulu and 'Caffre' into a unifying written language, they readily supported narrower assimilation schemes for Zulu and 'Caffre [Xhosa]' respectively.¹ This support resulted from the recognition that their vision of a standard Zulu language conflicted with the reality of people using a variety of speaking practices in the Natal-Zululand region. Thus, Lewis Grout readily admitted in 1854 that the inhabitants of this region used many "heterogenous and diversified dialects."² The difference in speaking practices was most apparent between Zululand and Natal since, as Grout's colleague Stone acknowledged in 1854, "Isilala" (*ukutekeza*) in particular was still widely spoken in Natal.³ Other individuals commented on the same phenomenon. For instance, in 1859, John W. Colenso, the Anglican Bishop of Natal, explained that in Natal "there are...large bodies of the natives who speak other dialects, differing distinctly from the Zulu..."⁴ He went so far as to claim that "[*ukutekeza*] is quite a distinct dialect, and is understood with difficulty even by a Zulu, if unpracticed in it."⁵ These regional differences persisted well beyond this period (indeed, the fact that, as shown in the preceding chapter, Stuart's informants referred to *tekeza*-speaking *amalala* in the early decades of the twentieth century could indicate that these speaking practices were still noticeable at that time),⁶ provoking familiar debates among missionaries about the "correctness" of Zulu language translations. For instance, the translations of Anglican missionary

¹ *Correspondence*, L. Grout to Morgan, Umsunduzi, Natal, 20 Jun 1854, 56; *Correspondence*, Stone to Morgan, Ifafa, 17 Jul 1854, 60.

² *Correspondence*, L. Grout to Morgan, Umsunduzi, Natal, 20 Jun 1854, 56.

³ *Correspondence*, Stone to Morgan, Ifafa, 17 Jul 1854, 59-60.

⁴ Colenso, *First Steps*, 3.

⁵ Colenso, *First Steps*, 4.

⁶ In 1870, Canon Callaway argued that "to this day the Zulu and other dialects exist together." Almost thirty years later, Charles Roberts still noticed the distinct dialects of the "ama-Tefula" (*ukuthefula*) and "ama-Lala" (*ukutekeza*). See Henry Callaway, *Some Remarks on the Zulu Language* (Pietermaritzburg: Davis, 1870), 17; C. Roberts, *An English-Zulu Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1899), p. vii.

Henry Callaway, who worked at Springvale station in southern Natal, were frequently criticized because, it was said, they mirrored too closely the “dialectical” peculiarities of that region. As one Anglican missionary assistant noted in 1867:

I think Mr. R[obertson] does not expect [much] from the Translations into Zulu that are being issued from the press there [at Callaway’s station, Springvale]. It is difficult to see their real use if any. I have seen our people here have the greatest difficulty to understand some of them...⁷

Obvious reasons existed for the persistence of this “dialectical” variety, particularly between Natal and Zululand. First, the Zulu state never conquered all of the communities in the Natal region and, thus, never had the opportunity to impose on all of them the custom of *ukukhuluma nje*. Secondly, as shown above, the Zulu state, using language as a marker of difference between subjects (*amantungwa*) and tributaries (*amalala*), had deliberately discouraged some conquered groups from becoming *ukukhuluma*-speakers in order to render their tributary status permanent. Finally, as Michael Mahoney suggests, some of the groups that had fled to Natal in the 1840s considered reviving their original speaking practices—*ukuthefula* and *ukutekeza*—as an important act of resistance against Zulu domination.⁸

In this complex situation, the immediate impulse of the Americans missionaries, and newcomers such as the Anglicans, was to engage in what Johannes Fabian has called “prescriptive imposition and control.”⁹ Much of this linguistic imperialism, which benefited from the expansion of colonial power in the region (notably after the conquest of the Zulu kingdom in 1879), occurred once again in the realm of discourse. For instance, American and other missionaries began to classify differences in people’s speaking practices as mere dialectical

⁷ RH, USPG, D25 Original Letters Received, J. Jackson to Miss Mackenzie, 15 Oct 1867. I have to thank Norman Etherington for this argument and reference.

⁸ Michael Mahoney, *The Other Zulus: The Spread of Zulu Ethnicity in Colonial South Africa* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 51.

⁹ Fabian, “Missions,” 173.

variations from standard Zulu and, in so doing, legitimized the very concept of a standard Zulu language. Some commentators achieved this by drawing comparisons between European and African languages. Thus, Colenso claimed in 1855 that “the vernacular of different tribes [in Natal] may be expected to differ considerably from this [standard Zulu], just as the dialect of Yorkshire or Somersetshire differs from pure English.”¹⁰ Linguist Bleek deployed the same analogy, explaining in 1856 that “Tegeza [*ukutekeza*]...comprises a dialect...not less different from the proper Zulu language, as the proudest Scotch is from English.”¹¹

Some missionaries tried to legitimize the concept of a standard Zulu language by projecting it back into the past. Lewis Grout achieved this by linking standard Zulu to the Shakan custom of *ukukhuluma nje*. “There has been a steady refining elevating process,” he explained in 1859, “the language of the conquered being gradually fashioned to the higher standard and more fixed character of their superiors.”¹² However, unlike the Zulu rulers, these commentators now claimed that this custom had extended strongly to Natal, where they maintained that a standard Zulu language had been imposed well before the region had come under European control. As Bleek explained in 1856:

In the whole of the Colony of Natal and in the Zulu Empire, one and the same language is now considered as the standard for all the different native tribes. This fact is of comparatively recent date, and finds its explanation in the former extension of the Zulu Empire over these parts, and in the peculiarity of the Zulu custom...*uku-Kuluma-nje*...¹³

However, it was difficult to square these arguments with the fact that many of the African residents of Natal had never been linguistically assimilated into the Zulu state. As Bleek himself explained in the same paragraph:

¹⁰ Colenso, *Ten Weeks*, 17.

¹¹ NLSA, MSC57/Box 9/File 1, W. Bleek, “Preliminaries” (1856).

¹² Grout, *IsiZulu*, xix-xx.

¹³ NLSA, MSC57/Box 9/File 1, W. Bleek, “Preliminaries (1856).”

Uku-Tegeza...comprises a dialect or rather a number of dialects.... More generally this is known as the language of the Malala, i.e. those remnants of the subjugated tribes, *who escaped an amalgamation with the Zulu nation*, and lived hidden in the bushes or recesses of the mountains....¹⁴

In the face of such contradictions, some commentators chose to legitimize standard Zulu with a different historical argument. For instance, Colenso argued that the Zulu language was recognized as the “standard dialect of this part of Africa” not because the Zulu state had actually controlled the entire region and displaced other speaking practices, but because the Zulu state had been the dominant power in the region “for some sixty years.”¹⁵ The arbitrary nature of this argument obviously occurred to Colenso himself, for he added that the adoption of standard Zulu also made sense because “many of the tribes...in Natal, which formerly used to tekeza,” had recently been “Zuluized.”¹⁶ Lewis Grout avoided all these intricacies by adopting a longer historical timeframe. Thus, although he admitted that a variety of dialects still coexisted in Natal and Zululand, he insisted, without providing any proof whatsoever, that the imposition of standard Zulu remained sound because “It is evident...that the language of all these tribes, or clans, was substantially one, even before the days of Chaka.”¹⁷ In the face of these questionable arguments, Canon Callaway mocked the entire discourse about an “imagined standard of purity” in 1868.¹⁸ However, by then, the idea of standard Zulu language had become so widespread and influential that even he could not escape reproducing it by characterizing the differences between people’s speaking practices as “dialectic peculiarities” from that standard language or, as he called it, “pure Zulu.”¹⁹

¹⁴ NLSA, MSC57/Box 9/File 1, W. Bleek, “Preliminaries (1856).” My emphasis.

¹⁵ Colenso, *First Steps*, 1-2.

¹⁶ Colenso, *First Steps*, 4.

¹⁷ Grout, *IsiZulu*, xix.

¹⁸ Canon Callaway, *Nursery Tales, Traditions, and Histories of the Zulus, in their own words, with A Translation into English and Notes*, Vol. 1 (Pietermaritzburg: Davis, 1868), i.

¹⁹ Callaway, *Nursery*, i.

Finally, the numerous publications—schoolbooks, grammars, dictionaries, newspapers, and books—printed in what the missionaries defined as the standard Zulu language were themselves important aspects of this process of assimilation and legitimization. For the more the people read and wrote in this purported standard language, the more they recognized it as the only correct form of reading, writing, and speaking. Crucial in this regard were the publications of the Scriptures, notably the first complete translation of the New Testament and the entire Bible that were published by the American missionaries in 1865 and 1883, respectively.²⁰ By the end of 1912, the British and Foreign Bible Society alone had printed or purchased for distribution a cumulative 147,807 Bibles or portions of Bibles in the standard Zulu language.²¹ By the end of 1929, this number had more than doubled to 304,571.²² Mission-trained Africans began to knowingly or unknowingly participate in this discourse with their own publications in the standard Zulu language. Thus, the American-trained John Dube began to publish the newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal* (*The Natal Sun*) in 1903; the Anglican-trained Magera Fuze published *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (*The Black People and Whence They Came*) in 1922; and two native teachers published a schoolbook of folk tales entitled *uCakijana Bogcololo* in 1927.²³ In fact, by 1928, the discourse about the standard Zulu language had become so successful that linguists stopped recognizing *ukutekeza* and *ukuthefula* as dialects of this standard language.²⁴

The successful imposition of standard (written) Zulu enabled additional external differentiation vis-à-vis standard ‘Caffre [Xhosa],’ which had undergone a similar process of

²⁰ Doke and Cole, *Contributions*, 115.

²¹ *Reports of the British Foreign Bible Society*, 1913, Appendix.

²² *Reports of the British Foreign Bible Society*, 1930, Appendix A.

²³ Heather Hughes, *First President: A Life of John Dube, Founding President of the ANC* (Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2011), 27, 30; Hlonipha Mokoena, *Magera Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011), 17, 24, 30-2; C. M. Doke, “The Linguistic Situation in South Africa,” *Journal of the International African Institute* 1:4 (Oct 1928), 480.

²⁴ Doke, “Linguistic,” 479.

discursive consolidation and legitimation over the same time period. Crucial in this regard were studies of comparative philology, which drew on missionary publications for evidence, assimilated the perspective of these publications into their own classification systems, and then reproduced it accordingly. Thus, in his *Comparative Grammar of South African Languages* (1862), Bleek argued that “Zulu” and “Kafir proper” represented distinct dialects of one of the three species which formed the “South-eastern Branch of the Bâ-ntu family of Languages.”²⁵ Thirty years later, missionary J. Torrend, drawing on the publications of Döhne, Callaway, and Lewis Grout, among others,²⁶ classified “Zulu, in Natal and Zululand” and “Xosa or Kafir proper, spoken in Kafrraria and the Transkei” as separate languages that belonged to one of the clusters of the “Eastern Half” of the “Main Group” of the “South-African Bantu Languages.”²⁷ Despite the many differences between these large-scale comparative studies, they always accepted and propagated the Zulu–‘Caffre’ (Xhosa) dichotomy as linguistic fact. Thus, Carl Meinhof, who differed in some of his conclusions from Torrend, affirmed this dichotomy when he explained in 1908 that “Kafir” was the language of the “Xosa-Kaffern” while “Zulu” was the language of the “Zulu in Natal.”²⁸ Comparative studies that focused more narrowly on South Africa upheld the same classificatory system. Thus, in 1928, Clement M. Doke argued that “Zulu...as the accepted language of Natal and Zululand” and “Xosa...as the literary language of Kafrraria and the Transkei” represented “the two major languages” of South Africa’s Bantu languages.²⁹ These studies of comparative philology contributed to consolidation and legitimation of the ‘Zulu–Caffre (Xhosa)’ dichotomy by frequently reproducing it without engaging with the historical contingencies that contributed to its emergence.

²⁵ Wilhelm Bleek, *A Comparative Grammar of South African Languages* (London: Trübner 1862), 5.

²⁶ J. Torrend, *A Comparative Grammar of the South-African Bantu Languages* (London: Trübner, 1891), xxvi.

²⁷ Torrend, *Comparative*, xix.

²⁸ Carl Meinhof, *Grundzüge einer vergleichenden Grammatik der Bantusprachen* (Berlin: Reimer, 1906), 12-13.

²⁹ Doke, “Linguistic,” 479.

As a result of this process and discursive legitimization, this dichotomy appeared increasingly irrevocable. As the South African linguist Doke noted in 1928:

I am certain there can be no united Zulu–Xosa tongue. Vocabulary, phonetics, and grammar present almost insuperable obstacles to this achievement, but, *more important*, the racial pride, each in his own language, and the growing literature, will present an obstacle quite insuperable. We must reckon, then, with the persistence of both Zulu and Xosa in South Africa.³⁰

As Doke’s statement suggests, Africans increasingly viewed standard Zulu and standard Xhosa (formerly ‘Caffre’) as important markers of their ethnic identities. In the Natal-Zululand region, ethnic nationalist movements, including ethnic, cultural, and nationalist organizations such as *Inkhata kaZulu-Zulu National Congress* (1924) and the Zulu Society (1937), furthered this development by reworking the missionary discourse about the standard Zulu language for their own ends—the creation of trans-Thukela Zulu ethnic nationalism.³¹

Some historians have suggested that the use of language as a marker of group identity represented a significant break in the way Africans defined group belonging. As Patrick Harries argued, this new “sense of tribalism was founded less on a narrow political loyalty to kinsmen and a chief, than on the Western model of a broad community defined by culture and, especially, language.”³² However, as this dissertation has shown, at least in the case of the Zulu, there existed a historical precedent for this development in the preexisting Zulu ideas about the relationship between language and group identity. Therefore, the crucial novelty was not so much the use of language as a marker of group identity, but the type of language that was now used and the community it now circumscribed. For whereas the Zulu rulers of the early nineteenth century had focused on *ukukhuluma* in order to circumscribe the subjects (*amantungwa*) of the heartland and differentiate them from the tributaries (such as the *amalala*)

³⁰ Doke, “Linguistic,” 480-1. My emphasis.

³¹ This Inkatha is to be distinguished from the latter day *Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesizwe*.

³² Harries, “Imagery,” 112.

of the periphery, the Zulu of the early twentieth century adopted the missionaries' concept of a standard Zulu language in order to circumscribe a trans-Thukela Zulu ethnic community. Harries' statement is much more appropriate for the case of the Xhosa nation. The precolonial communities of the Eastern Cape region—Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mfengu, and others—had never deployed language as a marker of group identity. Insofar as these groups began to conceptualize themselves as a broader Xhosa nation unified by a common standard Xhosa language in the twentieth century, this development represented a very radical departure from previous conceptions of group identities based on descent and allegiance. In either case, however, the emergence of language-based notions of trans-Thukelan Zuluness and trans-Keian Xhosaness were made possible in the first place by the events of 1853 and 1854, which divided what had previously been conceptualized as a single 'Caffre' language into distinct 'Caffre' (Xhosa) and Zulu languages.

Following constructivist interpretations of missionary linguistics, this dissertation has argued that this division did not result from the differences between people's speaking practices in the Eastern Cape and Natal-Zululand regions but rather from missionaries' conflicting discourses about these differences. However, it has argued further that these conflicting discourses did not depend primarily on the contemporary European fascination with natural history, the demands of the colonial state, or Herderian notions of the relationship between language and *Volk*. Instead, in the case of the Eastern Cape missionaries, the discourse about a unified 'Caffre' language community that extended from the Cape Colony to Delagoa Bay was shaped by a preexisting eighteenth-century naturalist discourse about the 'Caffre' race; people's actual experiences with the speaking practices of the Xhosa, Mfengu, Natal Africans, Zulu, and others during the first half of the nineteenth century; and, most importantly, preexisting African

ideas about the relationship between language and identity in the Eastern Cape region. In contrast, the American missionaries' discourse about the Zulu language community was shaped by their self-conception as a mission to the Zulu people, an identity which encouraged them to particularize the Zulu from the beginning of their activities in South Africa and which, after 1850, was sustained by a discourse about the relationships between language and identity that reworked preexisting Zulu ideas about language. By drawing attention to the entanglements between European and African ways of knowing, this dissertation has shown that the development of Xhosa and Zulu as distinct languages, language communities, and ethno-linguistic identities cannot be explained by strict (unidirectional) constructivist interpretations, but must involve an African-centric approach that is sensitive to the ways in which knowledge, even under asymmetric relations of power, is mutually constitutive.

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Wright, John. "The Dynamics of Power and Conflict in the Thukela-Mzimkhulu Region in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries: A Critical Reconstruction." *Ph.D. Diss.* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1989).

VITA

NAME: Jochen S. Arndt

EDUCATION: Ph.D., History, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2015

M.A., History, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX,
2007

B.A., International Marketing, University of Cooperative Education, VS-
Schwenningen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, 1995

TEACHING: Visiting Faculty, Department of History, Florida Atlantic University, Boca
Raton, FL, 2015–present

History of Africa
World History to 1500
African-American History to 1877

Teaching Assistant, Department of History, University of Illinois at
Chicago, Chicago, IL, 2008-2012

History of Africa since 1850
History of Africa to 1850
World History since 1400
History of War since Napoleon

PUBLICATIONS: “Treacherous Savages & Merciless Barbarians: Knowledge, Discourse and
Violence during the Cape Frontier Wars, 1834 -1853,” *The Journal of
Military History* 74 (3) (July 2010): 709-735.

PRESENTATIONS: “From UkuKhuluma to IsiZulu: The Emergence of ‘Zulu’ as a Distinct
Language Community in Southeast Africa, 1800-1900,” *IziThunguthu
Southern African Pasts Before the Colonial Era, Their Archives and Their
Ongoing Present/Presence Conference*, University of Cape Town, 16-18
July 2015.

“The Zulu Conquest-State and the Emergence of Language-based
Discourses of Identity in Precolonial Southeast Africa, 1780-1850,” *South*

African Historical Society Conference, Stellenbosch, South Africa, 1-3 July 2015.

“The Great Bifurcation: Missionary Linguistics and the Emergence of ‘Xhosa’ and ‘Zulu’ as Ethno-Linguistic Identities, 1820-1870,” *African Studies Association’s Annual Meeting*, Indianapolis, Indiana, 20-3 November 2014.

“The Great Bifurcation: Missionary Linguistics and the Emergence of ‘Xhosa’ and ‘Zulu’ as Ethno-Linguistic Identities, 1820-1870,” *The North Eastern Workshop on Southern Africa (NEWSA)*, Burlington, Vermont, 17-19 October 2014.

“The Making of ‘Xhosa:’ Missionaries, Africans and the Emergence of Ethno-Linguistic Identities in Southern Africa, 1820-1927,” *SSRC Fellows Spring Workshop*, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 7-9, 2014.

“Becoming Xhosa: German Missionary Linguists, Borderland Communities, and the Emergence of the Xhosa Ethnolinguistic Group,” *Jenseits von Afrika: Kulturhistorischer Workshop*, Leipzig, Germany, December 5, 2011.

“Treacherous Savages & Merciless Barbarians: An Inquiry into the Forms of Knowledge, Discourse, and Violence that emerged out of the Military Encounters between British Soldiers and the Xhosa Polities over the Course of three Frontier Wars, 1834-1853.” *Missouri Valley History Conference*, Omaha, Nebraska, March 5, 2010.

HONORS:

Honorary Research Scholar, Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative, University of Cape Town, since August 2015.

Dean’s Scholar Award, University of Illinois-Chicago, 2014.

2012 Army Historical Foundation Distinguished Writing Award, 2013.

Marion S. Miller Dissertation Fellowship, University of Illinois-Chicago, 2013.

International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Social Sciences Research Council, 2012.

Bernadotte E. Schmitt Research Grant, American Historical Association, 2012.

Bentley Brinkerhoff Gilbert Research Grant, University of Illinois-Chicago, 2012.

Provost Graduate Research Award, University of Illinois-Chicago, 2011.

FLAS Fellowship for isiXhosa language, Michigan State University, 2011.

Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society), since 2006.

**PROFESSIONAL
EXPERIENCE:**

Visiting Faculty, Department of History, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL, 2015–present.

**PROFESSIONAL
AFFILIATIONS:**

American Historical Association
African Studies Association
World History Association
Society for Military History
Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society)

September 21, 2015

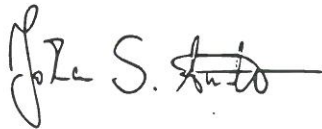
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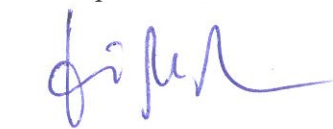
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Jochen S. Arndt
Ph.D. Candidate in African History
University of Illinois at Chicago
Email: jarndt4@uic.edu

I approve the above request.

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2015/9/23



Title: 'He Wears Short Clothes!':
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Author: Jeff Peires

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