

Letter to Wilhelm H.I. Bleek, 22 February 1859

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[0001]

Tette. 22^d Feb^y 1859

My Dear D^r Bleek

Presuming that His
Excellency the Governor has gone to
England, I enclose a copy of the Lord's
prayer and Creed to you - they are
as nearly as we can ascertain
what the jesuits taught here more
than a hundred years ago. Some old
blind women were the depositories
and [words] were taken down at their
dictation by S^r Candido & Pascoal
who know the dialect of Tette
thoroughly. Major Secard
with
his usual kindness did all he
could to secure correctness. So
I think that remembering the
[0002]
difficulty of getting ladies who had
always sung them to speak slowly,
you must reward us by placing
the documents in some little nook
of the "Library" till you get better.

As I never answered your kind
note when about to leave the Cape
I may now do it so far by giving
you a few remarks on the term.
Batswana, for that if I mistake
not is the way you (mis)spell it.
M^r Moffats idea is probably the
right one, but as a philologist you
may like to hear why some minds
prefer the meaning of "likeness" or
equality"

When sex is spoken of in connection
with colour the diminutive form
is invariably applied - thus khoma
[0003]

e tseu = a white ox - i.e. altogether white
 khomu e tsana = a white cow - not
 a little but entirely white. Khomu e
 entsu = a black ox - Khomu e
 tsuána a black cow = quite black.
 K. e khueba = a speckled ox. K. e
 khuebana a speckled cow - the
 idea of littleness seems to go to denote
 sex by the lesser size of the females -
 the males being sometimes denoted
 by tóna big - in the same way.

This point is not adverted to
 in the analysis but it is so distinctly
 adhered to in the language that an
 additional syllable is introduced
 to express a little of any colour, thus
 Mosheu = a white man - Mosheu-
 enyana = a little white man -
 Montsu = a black one = Montsun-
 enyana = a little white man -
 Montsu = a black one = Montsun-
 yana = a little white[black] one = one of
 the diminutive being referred to the colour
 not size

[0004]

Sebituane's daughters is called Montsuyane
 from her colour being as light as an
 Arab woman's - i.e. only a little black.

Were it not for the cow difficulty the
 term Batsuáa would be better translated
 as a "little black" instead of a little white -
 they were a little blacker than the bushmen
 & Hottentots, they had intercourse with them
 but having had none with the people
 beyond the Desert, to say they are a little
 whiter than these people, is to reason
 from our own knowledge of what is
 only partially the case, the Batka for
 instance, [and Blanyai], and other tribes being as a light
 as they are. The above is against, hear
 pro - in one sentence - A man was checked by Sechele for telling him some heathen story
 He did not wish to hear it. "you are under
 the Southern people" said the man in a pet
 "Re Batauana" replied Sechele, I follow
 what I find in the book. I am not inferior
 or under them." If he had been applying
 a feminine term to himself his assertions
 of equality would have been meaningless D. Livingstone