A Kafir-English dictionary

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A Kafir-English Dictionary

BY

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SUPERINTENDENT OF THE BERLIN MISSION.

SECOND EDITION

EDITED BY

REV. ROBERT GODFREY, M.A.

SOUTH AFRICA:
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1915.
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

WHEN I arrived in Kaffraria in 1845, the only Vocabulary of the language of the people that I could at first obtain was a small Kafir-German one, written by the Rev. L. Döhne, containing a few more words than the appendix to his Zulu Dictionary p. 393, published in 1857. I thereupon set to work to find what Missionaries of other Churches had done in this direction. A small but trustworthy vocabulary, partly printed and partly in manuscript, compiled by the Rev. John Bennie in 1830, came into my hands. This contained only words whose stems commenced with the letters c, p, d, t. Later I became acquainted with Dr. Van der Kemp’s “Woordenlijst” of 1801, which, being a first attempt, is naturally more of a curiosity than a help to the student. In 1872 appeared a “Dictionary of the Kaffir language, including Xosa and the Zulu dialects, by the Rev. W. J. Davis.” In compiling a vocabulary of the language for my own use which I had at first no intention of printing, I derived more or less help from each of these sources.

The printing of this Dictionary was first suggested many years ago by the Board of Revisers of the Kafir Bible, but I was unable and unwilling at that time to undertake the labour of preparing it for publication, as I had other work on hand. At the United Missionary Conference held in King William’s Town in 1889, it was proposed by the late Mr. Andrew Smith, that “the lexicon should be printed, if only as a memorial of the Kafir language which would soon be supplanted by English.” I still hesitated, and it was not till 1893, when the Brethren of the Free Church of Scotland Mission urged me strongly to prepare the work for the press, and the authorities at Lovedale offered to have the book printed there at their own risk, that I decided to publish the Dictionary. The printing of the work commenced in 1895 and has extended over four years, during which time I have been able to collect some additional words. These form an Appendix to the work.
I hope that my advanced age and consequent defective hearing, may be taken as an excuse for the errors and omissions in the book, and trust that younger Missionaries may be encouraged to build on this foundation a better and more enduring structure.

In conclusion I have to express my indebtedness to the late Rev. Bryce Ross, D.D., and my indebtedness and thanks to the Revs. J. Stewart, M.D., D.D., Canon Woodrooffe, M.A., J. McLaren, M.A., E. Makiwane, W. B. Rubusana, and Mr. J. Knox Bokwe, for their valuable aid towards making the work as complete and convenient as possible.

A. KROPF.

STUTTERHEIM,

SOUTH AFRICA,

December, 1899.
PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

On 10th March, 1911, Principal Henderson handed over the work of editing a new edition of Kropf's 'Kaffir-English Dictionary' to my care, leaving me with an absolutely free hand; on that same day he gave into my keeping Dr. Kropf's annotated copy of the dictionary which had been bequeathed to Lovedale by its owner, and thereafter he passed on to me the various lists of corrections and additions that reached him from time to time in response to his appeal for help. In this connection, acknowledgement is here made to Rev. J. Knox Bokwe, Rev. W. Bourquin, Mr. J. Bud-M'belle, Rev. J. Lennox, Rev. L. Marx (for a collection of proverbs made by Dr. Kropf), Rev. J. K. Mather, Father Wallis, Canon Wyche and Archdeacon Woodrooffe (who has since gone to his rest).

I have sought help from every quarter and under all circumstances and cannot therefore attempt to give a list of the persons to whom I am indebted. But I must mention some of my helpers. The Misses Ross of Pirie, daughters of the late Dr. Bryce Ross, have put their knowledge of Kafir constantly at my disposal; the girls of Lovedale and of Pirie have greatly assisted me in collecting Hlonipa words and in other ways; the scholars of St. Matthew's of the year 1910 enthusiastically gathered bird-names and bird-lore for me; Rev. J. H. Soga has sent specimens of birds and helped me in gathering the Kafir names of birds, and Rev. D. B. Davies has provided some bird-lore; Dr. Péringuey of the South African Museum, Mr. J. Hewitt of the Albany Museum and Mr. Austin Roberts of the Transvaal Museum have ungrudgingly assisted in the identifying of natural history specimens; Dr. C. Meinhof, Hamburg, sent some sheets of suggestions, of which those relating to the relationships of Kafir words were especially valuable.

Mr. McLaren, whose researches in Kafir have become through his Kafir Grammar (1906) part of the inheritance of all Kafir scholars, tore up his own well-annotated copy of the first edition of the dictionary and sent it on by instalments; in addition to this he supplied a long list of
new entries, and also granted me (on 27th April, 1911, at Nqamakwe) a lengthened interview, in which he discussed fully with me the phonetics of the language. In only one essential point does the system followed in the present edition differ from his system, viz. in the so-called r 5, which has been indicated as r h in accordance with Mr. Bennie’s appreciation of the sound.

Mr. W. G. Bennie has rendered untiring assistance; he it was who revealed to me the secret of tone in the Kafir language, a fact which has still to be reckoned with and for the expression of which some printing device has yet to be invented. Mr. Bennie read over in proof as far as the end of F, and in MSS. from the beginning of G to the end, making good many deficiencies through his possessing a knowledge of Dutch as well as of Kafir; he and Canon Wyche have taken great pains to find suitable names for the verbal forms referred to in the Introduction.

In the naming of mammals, Chubb’s ‘A Revised List of the Mammals of South Africa’ (South African Journal of Science, Feb. 1910) has been followed; and in the naming of birds, Gunning & Haagner’s ‘A Check-list of the Birds of South Africa’ (Supplement to the Annals Transvaal Museum, 1910) has been followed.

Sim’s ‘The Forests and Forest-Flora of Cape Colony’ (Taylor and Henderson, Aberdeen, Scotland, 1907) has served as the standard in the naming of trees; from a botanical point of view this work is invaluable, though in the spelling of Kafir words it is often defective. Dr. Kropf extended the scope of his dictionary to include the Zulu names of trees, and it becomes clear from Sim’s book that Kropf’s Zulu tree-names owe their origin to Fourcade (whose book I have not had the opportunity of seeing). Some of these Zulu names had been wrongly placed by Kropf (u-Mumbi instead of umu-Mbu; i-Sanyana instead of is-Anyana), but these and many others have now been excised as belonging to a Zulu, and not to a Kafir, dictionary. At the same time there are still some tree-names, as well as other words, which have been allowed to stand, not because they are genuine Kafir words, but because in the limited experience of the present editor they could not be proved to be wrong.
Bud-M'belle's 'Kafir Scholar's Companion' (Lovedale 1903) and Rubusana's 'Zemk' inkomo' have provided a number of words and proverbs, and Bryant's 'Zulu-English Dictionary' (Pinetown, Natal 1905), though it came into my hands late, has proved of great assistance and is an indispensable work for a Kafir student. Madan's 'Living Speech in Central and South Africa' (Oxford 1911) deserves to be mentioned for its suggestiveness.

The printing has taken over two years, but could not have been finished within this time but for the enthusiasm of Mr. Atkinson and his native staff. The native compositors have taken a keen interest in the progress of the work and latterly rendered great assistance in the definitions of words. On 14 July, 1915, when the dictionary had been printed off as far as page 368, our joint labours were nearly consumed in smoke by a fire breaking out in the engine-room immediately beneath the place where the printed sheets were stored. The presence of mind of one of the native boys enabled him to deal effectively with the cause of the outbreak and Mr. Atkinson at great personal risk fought the fire, being badly burned but saving the dictionary!

In conclusion, let me invite readers who detect errors or gaps in the present edition to communicate with the Principal of Lovedale or with myself.

ROBERT GODFREY.

PIRIE MISSION,
KING WILLIAM'S TOWN,
1/11/1915.
TO THE MEMORY

OF

MY FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN

WHO

BY THE GREAT SACRIFICE

HAVE MAINTAINED MY LIBERTY AND MY RIGHT TO WORK

AND TO THE MEMORY

OF

ONE IN PARTICULAR

ROBERT BARBOUR WHYTE

COMPANION AND FRIEND

CALLED TO HIGHER SERVICE

FROM THE BATTLEFIELD OF FRANCE

25TH SEPTEMBER 1915

THIS EDITION

IS AFFECTIONATELY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED
INTRODUCTION.

The nature of the structure of the prefix-using Kafir language, differing absolutely from that of the suffix-using English, renders the construction of a Kafir dictionary on English lines an impracticability. In Kafir, every noun, except a limited number in their vocative cases, is preceded by a prefix; and every verb in every one of its multitudinous inflections (save in the simple form of the imperative) is preceded by a subject or an object which may assume any one of many different forms and which may stand alone or in one of many possible combinations.

Were we to follow the alphabetical order of Kafir words, as we do in English, we should find the great bulk of the dictionary entered under the vowels i and u and we should have very little use for any other initial letter. For this reason Kafir scholars have practically agreed that a Kafir dictionary should follow the alphabetical order of stems rather than of words. Kropf's dictionary was constructed on this plan. Where a group of words had a common stem the root of the verb was placed first and it was followed by the various verbal forms with the derived nouns at the end. Kropf's method has been slightly modified in the present edition; the derived nouns have been attached to the verbal forms from which they spring and the whole series of derived words under any one stem has been indented to aid the reader's eye. If the reader examines carefully a few stems such as ụkw-Fis, ụkw-Ma and ụkw-Łang, he will understand the principles on which the dictionary has been constructed.

Although the greatest care has been exercised to discover the stems and to place under them only such words as are actually derivatives, further study of the language will demand a certain amount of re-arrangement in future editions; and it is hoped that the following conclusions regarding stems and their derivatives which have been reached after a careful and minute analysis of words in the present edition will materially aid in settling questions of arrangement.

Kafir verbal stems are of two kinds (A) Primary or strong stems; (B) Secondary or weak stems.

A. PRIMARY OR STRONG STEM. Primary stems are those which retain their final vowel in the simple verbal forms which are derived from them*. The great majority of these primary stems were originally adverbial or interjectional particles and in some instances remain in use still as adverbs or interjections; they are at present, however, generally compounded with ụkw, and they are much more numerous than the present edition of the dictionary indicates, occurring commonly in Kafir intsoni and izibong and waiting to be gathered.

The auxiliary ụkw, used along with these uninflected particles, is probably the most important word in Kafir; when standing alone, it means 'to say'; but when accompanied by a gesture on the part of the speaker it means 'to do' (the thing indicated by the gesture) or 'to act' (the way indicated by the gesture). Now, though gestures may be employed to express a wide range of meaning, they have their limitations; and these adverbial and interjectional particles serve in the place of gestures or to the accompaniment of gestures to widen out still further the application of the verb ụkw [see ụkw-Ti 4 (a) and (b)]. These particles are often onomatopoeic or suggestive in their sound, e.g. ụkw-Mpompo (of water, to pump up), ụkw-Gelekege (to throw a stick along the ground to another), ụkw-Ti (to appear suddenly).

These particles may have a wide range of meaning (see e.g. ụkw-Nloth), but are always made to carry a definite idea in any particular instance of their use. Although in the dictionary these simple verb forms (ụkw) followed by a particle) are usually classified as transitive or intransitive, they are not properly circumscribed by these English grammatical terms and are in many instances capable of being either transitive or intransitive according to circumstances.

* The only exception apparently is ụkw-Gqabu; but in this case Gqabula, etc., might be from a lost stem Wkw-Gqabu.
In the case of these strong stems, modifications of meaning may be expressed either
[I] by a change in the auxiliary ukuli or
[II] by the addition of one or more syllables to the particle.

1. The changes which take place in the auxiliary are of four kinds:—

1. Reciprocal, formed by replacing the final i of ukuli by ana, as:
   ukutāna-Ngud, to meet with each other suddenly at a certain spot,
   from ukuti-Ngud, to meet with suddenly.
   N.B. ukutāna-Gaga, to attack one another, has the alternative form uku-Gagan.

2. Reflective, formed by replacing the final i of ukuti by ela, as:
   ukutēla-fi, to throw suddenly towards,
   from ukuti-fi, to throw down suddenly.

3. Stative, formed by replacing the final i of ukuti by eka, as:
   ukutēka-Nga, to be wonderful,
   from ukuti-Nga, to wonder.

4. Reflexive, formed by inserting the syllable zi before -ti, as:
   ukuziiti-Nama, to join oneself to,
   from ukuti-Nama, to cleave to.

II. The changes which take place in the particle may be grouped under two heads
(a) those which retain ukuti and an uninflected form of the particle;
(b) those which substitute uku for ukuti and adopt an inflected form (ending in a)
   of the particle.

(a) To this group belongs the Reduplicated form, which, as its name implies,
   consists of a simple reduplication of the particle, and which expresses repetition
   or intensity of the original root-idea, as:
   ukuti-Tshā-tshā, to keep on piercing or stabbing,
   from ukuti-Tshā, to pierce suddenly once.
   Sometimes the reduplication is only half effected and, in those cases where
   the second syllable of the stem is repeated, the resulting word remains an
   indeclinable particle, as:
   ukuti-Bāda-da, to fall down flat suddenly,
   from ukuti-Bāda, to fall down flat.
   ukuti-Cīlī (=ukuti-Cīlī), to come suddenly into sight.
   ukuti-Guqudu, to stumble,
   from ukuti-Guqudu, to stumble once.
   ukuti-Guququ, to turn round quickly,
   from ukuti-Guqu, to turn from one thing into another.
   Where, however, the first syllable of the stem is repeated, the final vowel usually
   becomes a and the resulting verb bears the simple prefix uku, as:
   uku-Diikālī, to give a good shaking,
   from ukuti-Diki, to shake once.
   uku-Hlokola, to keep poking,
   from ukuti-Hloko, to poke.
   uku-Nyikinya, to shake back and forward,
   from ukuti-Nyiki, to cause pain.
   uku-Vikiva, to bruise,
   from ukuti-Viki, to be broken off short.
   N.B. ukuti-Tyeketyel (=ukuti-Tyeketyeke) to be flabby, does not follow this rule.

(b) To the second group belong all the remaining verbal forms, of which the following
   are the most noteworthy:—

1. Effective, formed by adding la to the stem, denoting action and frequently
   transitive, as: