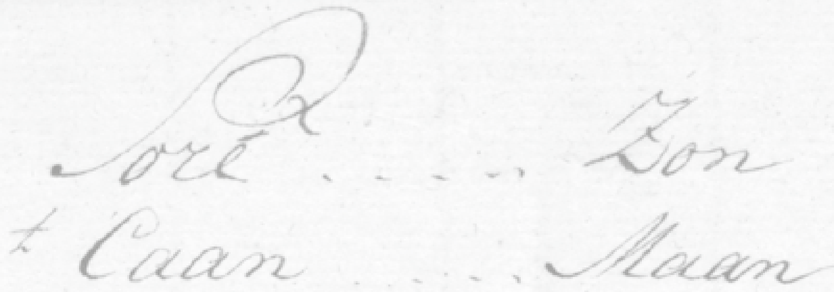

INTRODUCTION

Background to the project

This book had its origins in an extraordinary discovery in 2007 by Mike Besten,[1] that two or three elderly people in and around Bloemfontein and Bloemhof still remembered fragments of the old language of the Korana people, which was referred to by its speakers as !Ora. Until then, it had simply been assumed that the language must long ago have disappeared – and with it, the last traces of the Khoekhoe variety known to have been closest to the language spoken by the original Khoi inhabitants of Table Bay when European sailing ships began to appear around the Cape coastline towards the end of the 15th century. The historical and cultural significance of this discovery was immense.

Besten, who was an historian rather than a linguist, did not lose time in calling for the help of colleagues, and some of us were privileged to accompany him on a preliminary visit to one of these speakers, Oupa Dawid Cooper, in December 2008. Even though Oupa Dawid recollected only a little of the language, it was clear that his variety had all the well-known signature features of Kora (or !Ora),[2] in terms of its phonetics, morphology and lexis. (The use of the name Kora rather than !Ora in an English medium context is explained in a note on nomenclature elsewhere in this introduction.)

While the different dialects of Khoekhoe formerly spoken throughout much of South Africa are reported to have been more or less mutually intelligible, the differences between Kora and Nama involved far more than a mere question of ‘accent’ or minor aspects of local vocabulary, but extended to significant aspects of phonology, tonology, morphology, and syntax. Since it is also clear, as reflected in some of the heritage texts, that the Korana people held themselves to be a distinct political entity, it seems appropriate to describe Kora as a language in its own right. (As hardly needs saying, any given language is itself typically constituted by a range of varieties, and Kora was no exception.)

The language of the Korana people was by no means previously unknown. It was documented in 1879 by Lucy Lloyd, whose main consultant Piet Links not only contributed an extensive vocabulary, but also dictated five full-length narratives, as well as one or two minor fragments. (Her brother-in-law Wilhelm Bleek had already observed[3] 17 years prior to this date that the Kora language was 'nearly extinct'.) Although the fast vanishing language was paid only scant attention throughout the four or five decades that followed, several linguists – Jan Engelbrecht, Carl Meinhof, Louis Maingard, and Douglas Beach – were later drawn to work on it, and sought out the last few dozen speakers who remained by the end of the 1920s and 1930s. Between them, these four scholars compiled more word lists, worked on analyses of the phonetics, tonology and syntax of the language, and managed to acquire a number of additional narratives. While at least one of these linguists is known to have made sound recordings, the limitations of the technology then available meant that these were inevitably fragile, and they have sadly not come down to us. Prior to Besten's discovery, there were only two brief audio recordings of the language in existence, made in the 1930s by D. P. Hallowes, and featuring the speaker Mulukab.[4]

We realised immediately that we had been presented with an almost miraculous last chance to obtain recordings for posterity of the original language of the early Cape and the Gariep. This required us to put some kind of project in place and to obtain the necessary funding as soon as possible.[5] Noting that all of the earlier work on the language was now largely inaccessible to the general public, having appeared in old academic publications with the accompanying text often in German, or else in books long since out of print, we came up with the concept of a linguistic work that would not only offer a comprehensive description of the language – in other words, a reference grammar – but would also provide an edited collection of the heritage texts, as well as a compilation of the various painstakingly assembled early vocabularies into a consolidated dictionary.[6] It occurred to us that if we were able to obtain recordings from the newly found speakers, we might find a way of providing the book with an electronic supplement, where illustrative audio files could then be linked to appropriate chapters. Ultimately, we hoped to produce a book that would be accessible to all South Africans who care deeply about their history, and take a keen interest in the diverse and fascinating languages of their own country, but which at the same time would be accessible to the descendants of South Africa's original inhabitants – and so we also envisioned the eventual translation of the book into Afrikaans, as well as the production, if possible, of a partly subsidised or sponsored edition.

It is probably not accidental that the gradual crystallisation of these ideas took place against the backdrop of the Khoisan revival, which is a currently ongoing cultural, social, and academic phenomenon in South Africa, with issues of identity and historical reclamation at its heart. (It is one of the multitude of bitter facts about the country's oppressive past that the colonising community began, particularly from the 19th century onwards, to spin a version of South Africa's unfolding story that either re-wrote or else virtually erased the history of the Khoi.)[7] Most of the people in Bloemfontein who invited us into their homes and led us in keen conversations were either directly or indirectly involved in the revival movement, and a number

of them were already making the effort to learn Nama, in a conscious attempt to retrieve some part of their ancestral legacy. Because of this heightened awareness, the idea of revitalising the Kora language was raised on more than one occasion, and it seemed to us that the book we had in mind would at least provide a permanent way of accessing Kora as a heritage language, even if not the means to revive it as a spoken language. (The amount of investment, effort and social and political will that are required to revitalise a language cannot be underestimated, and the international success stories most commonly cited are remarkable exceptions.)

The restoring of this lost cultural heritage, while significant enough in its own right from a social and transformational point of view, is only one aspect of the project's value. From an academic point of view, the project has as much to offer. A careful study of Kora should expand our knowledge of the spectrum of Khoekhoe languages, where this more detailed knowledge will help us to fine-tune our understanding of *internal relations* between the various languages that belong to the Khoe family, and the processes over time that have been involved in its branchings, as well as the differentiation of its members. A better knowledge of Kora should also facilitate further research into *external historical relations* between this particular Khoekhoe language, and other languages of the same region. The !Ui languages, for example, reflect a high level of borrowing from a Khoekhoe source, where the donor language is most often clearly Kora, rather than Nama. At the same time, it is well-known that Kora was the direct successor of the Khoekhoe variety spoken at the Cape by clans such as the Goringhaiqua, the Goringhaikona, and the Gorachouqua of Jan van Riebeeck's journals, which makes Kora the most likely of the Khoekhoe varieties to have had an early influence on the emergence of Afrikaans from Cape Dutch. The Cape Khoekhoe dialects, lastly, are known to have been much closer than Nama to the varieties of Khoekhoe spoken in the Eastern Cape, where it would have been these varieties (if any) that had an influence on the Nguni languages spoken in that region.

On a more general note, it is worth adding that in the absence of the kind of primary evidence provided by historical records – whether oral, written or pictorial – it is often linguistic evidence that provides us with the next most direct set of clues that can help us to unravel an otherwise undocumented past. The identification of systematic relationships between various languages and the extrapolation on the basis of these of an idealised original (or 'proto') language allows us, for example, to make inferences about ancestral speaker communities, and may even tell us certain things about the probable material culture of such communities, on the basis of whether or not they had terminology that specifically referenced ceramic or metallurgical technologies, or pastoral and agricultural practices. Since linguistic models of this kind are established on the basis of phonetic regularities, they also help us to detect anomalous words, which may constitute evidence of borrowing and so suggest interactions with other communities in the past. Lastly, linguistic evidence can play a valuable role in helping to constrain speculative models, such as those that rest, for example, on the purely material and mute evidence unearthed by archaeologists.

With all of these potential benefits in mind, and given its intrinsic significance, we had good reason to believe that the Kora project would excite the imagination of

the academic institutions we were variously affiliated to at the time, and that it would be easy to find the necessary funding, not only to carry out the fieldwork (which was becoming an increasingly urgent necessity), but for all the other components of the work, including the preparation, translation and publication of the book. It was a great disappointment then, when our proposals were met locally with stony indifference.[8] Unfortunately, this was only the first of a number of heavy blows. In a scramble to find alternative sources of funding, we were in the middle of preparing our application to the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) at SOAS, University of London, when the terrible news arrived that Mike Besten had been killed.[9] Although the event led to questions about our capacity to continue with the project – and there is no doubt that we were to some extent paralysed by the loss – the ELDP finally awarded us the funding we so direly needed, at least for the initial fieldwork component of our project.[10]

The members of the field work team. (a) Edward Charles Human (left) with Chief Johannes Kraalshoek (centre) and Bradley van Sitters (right).

(b) Levi Namaseb with Oupa Dawid Cooper.

(c) Oupa Dawid Cooper with Menán du Plessis.

(d) Ouma Jacoba Maclear with Niklaas Fredericks. (Photographs by Bradley van Sitters and Edward Charles Human.)

With Edward Charles Human having kindly agreed to step in and join our team, we were at last able to carry out our emergency documentation work towards the end of 2011, re-visiting Oupa Dawid Cooper in September of that year, and travelling a few months later to Bloemhof to work with Ouma Jacoba Maclear. On the verge of her 100th birthday, she proved to be the most fluent and reliable of the surviving speakers, with a well-preserved vocabulary and syntax.[11] Ouma Jacoba's speech faithfully mirrored all the characteristic aspects of phonetics, morphology and syntax documented by the various linguists who worked on Kora during the 1920s and 1930s – in places that included Bloemhof – and her memories were quite clearly of the same language.

In addition to Human, who acted as our guide and provided indispensable community liaison as well as technical assistance, the members of our fieldwork team consisted of two Nama-speaking linguists from Namibia, Levi Namaseb[12] and Niklaas Fredericks;[13] a Khoisan activist from Cape Town, Bradley van Sitters;[14] and a general linguist and Khoisan specialist, and the author of this book, Menán du Plessis.[15]

A note on the names for people and languages used in this book

The names we choose to use for ourselves and for each other are always in a natural state of flux, as we constantly redefine ourselves and our relationships both in the past and the present. Inevitably this means that there are many words once commonly used that we try to avoid today because of the offence or hurt they now cause. Such words particularly include names used by various groups of people to identify themselves and others, as well as their languages.

The general term Khoisan is sometimes spelled 'Khoesan', on the grounds that 'khoe' [kʰwɛ] is a more accurate representation, at least in *some* spelling systems, of the way the Khoekhoe word for 'person' is pronounced. However, since it is a purely abstract term, the question of its 'correct' spelling does not really arise, and we have chosen here to retain the original version, though either spelling is acceptable, and both are widely used. The term is only occasionally used in this work, but where it is, this is always in its purely linguistic sense, which is to say as a blanket label for the diverse families that together make up the set of click languages in southern Africa that cannot be assigned to any other group. Use of the term in this broad sense does not imply the existence of any familial relationships between the member groups.

Although it is a topic much debated, it seems that for the moment we can safely use the name Khoi to identify the largely pastoral people of the early Cape, the Gariep, and the Eastern Cape, who spoke various closely related languages belonging to the Khoekhoe linguistic grouping, which is in turn a branch of the extensive family of the Khoe languages.[16] The name Khoi is widely used for self-identification by contemporary community-based activists, and is used officially in the names of

representative bodies such as the Khoi and San Council. It is now also increasingly used in academic circles, as for example in recent work by the historian Tim Keegan,[17] and the literary scholar Helize van Vuuren.[18] We note all the same that the historical Cape herders are still variously referred to by different scholars as Khoikhoi or Khoekhoe, on the basis of terms that occur in the early Cape records. It was briefly popular during the 1990s for academics to insist on the use of 'Khoekhoen', where this form includes the common plural ending *–n* of the Khoekhoe languages. Contemporary speakers of Khoekhoe dialects in Namibia, however, do not typically use or even recognise themselves in the term Khoekhoen (or Khoekhoe, for that matter),[19] while it is any case not the norm to include foreign morphology in the standardised English version of a name.

Things become slightly more complicated when we need to refer to different groupings among the Khoi. When speaking their own language, for example, the Korana people would refer to themselves as either !Orakua, where *–kua* reflects the masculine plural suffix *–ku* (plus *a*), or !Orana, with the common plural suffix *–n* (plus *a*). There are two aspects of these names that present problems when it comes to anglicising them. Firstly, the exclamation mark represents the (post)alveolar click, which is often expressed in Roman script by the letter 'q'. (Speakers of Namibian Khoekhoe varieties are inclined to spell the name as !Gora, but it should be noted that the use of the letter 'g' after a click symbol indicates a *plain* click in the Namibian orthography.) Since the click sound was foreign to speakers of European languages, suitably adapted versions[20] of the name began to appear in Dutch, German, French, Swedish, and English accounts from the late 18th century onwards, and we find 'Corannas', 'Koranna', 'Corans', 'Coras' or 'Koras' in various texts, so that by 1811, William Burchell[21] could already refer to 'the people usually called Koranas'. Given this precedent of more than 200 years, we have chosen here to spell the English version of the name without the click.[22]

The same principle will be adopted when referring to the river once known as the Groote Rivier, in an early Dutch translation that may have been provided by Khoekhoe speakers on the basis of their own original name for it, but which came to be known later as the Orange River, following its renaming by Robert Gordon in 1779 after the Dutch royal house. The original Khoekhoe name was !Garib (or possibly Kai!garib) meaning 'River' (or Great River').[23] After the second take-over of the Cape by the British, some writers – including the first notable South African English poet, Thomas Pringle, in his famous poem 'The Coranna'[24] – reverted to an approximation of the original name and began to refer to the river as the Gareep or Gariep. This appropriately assimilated form of the name (that is, without the click) has gained currency in recent years, and Gariep is now officially used, for example, as the name of the modern dam on the river at Bethulie. In this instance, the letter 'g' is used in the same way as it is in the spelling systems for Afrikaans and Tswana, and stands for a fricative sound similar to the one heard at the end of the Scottish word 'loch'. We hope that English speakers will find a way to adapt and accommodate this sound, much as they do when pronouncing the place name Gauteng.[25]

The variants of Khoekhoe names that feature the endings *–kua* or *–na* have incorporated plural morphology from the original language. Normally this would be frowned on as non-standard in English, since part of the process of naturalising a guest-word typically involves using it with the regular morphology of the *receiving* language.[26] In the real world, though, speakers do not always follow what might be considered 'rules' (whether of the externally imposed prescriptive kind, or of the more natural and universal kind involving unconscious processes of regularisation). The names Korana and Griqua have become entrenched in South African English over the past two centuries as the regular forms in use, and there would be little point now in insisting on a purely pedantic change. In this book, we use the long established English name Korana for the people, but refer to the language as Kora[27] or occasionally 'the Korana language', in the sense of 'the language spoken by the Korana people'.

The name for the Griqua people (Afrikaans Griekwa) was chosen as an alternative to 'Baster' in 1813 at the urging of the missionary John Campbell.[28] The community based their new name on that of an old Khoi clan to which some of their members had belonged, namely the Grigriqua (perhaps Gurigurikua or Garigurikua), who were encountered near the Olifants River on the Cape West Coast by the members of Simon van der Stel's expedition in 1685. Because of this long-established usage, the name Griqua is used throughout this book for the speakers. As for the dialect they spoke, some linguists currently spell its name as 'Xiri', using the letter 'x' as it is employed in the Namibian Khoekhoe orthography – that is, to express the fricative heard at the beginning of the place name Gauteng, the river name Gariep, or the Afrikaans word *goud*, meaning 'gold'.[29] It will be referred to here as Giri – where the letter 'g' is again used in the same way as it is in Afrikaans and Tswana – or else as 'the Griqua language', even though there is well established precedent for it to be referred to in English as Griqua. (This decision is motivated by the reality that the letter 'x' in a South African context is usually taken to indicate the lateral click of the Nguni languages.) Similarly, the language of the eastern Gonaqua will be referred to as Gona.

In contemporary Namibia, the official collective name for the Khoekhoe varieties spoken in that country is now Khoekhoegowab, for which an appropriate English version is Namibian Khoekhoe. This is a more inclusive term, which acknowledges that in addition to Nama, which is spoken in the south, there are other Khoekhoe dialects spoken in the north of Namibia, by the Damara and Hai‖om people. In South Africa, on the other hand, it is *only* a variety of Nama that is spoken – in the far regions of the Northern Cape – and so it is entirely acceptable to refer to the language of this region simply as Nama (or perhaps Namagowab when speaking in the language itself).

It is inevitable that mention will be made at times throughout this book of other local communities, including speakers of other Khoisan languages such as those belonging to the !Ui sub-family,[30] as well as speakers of various languages belonging to the vast Bantu family. Here too there are difficulties surrounding various terms.

The speakers of the !Ui languages (which included |Xam and N|uu) were formerly referred to by names such as Thwa or Twa and Bosjemans or Bushmen, which were certainly contemptuous and bestowed by others. The term Sāku (with the masculine plural ending *-ku*) or Sān (with the common plural ending *-n*) was the usual name in Khoekhoe languages for these communities, but it is not clear what the word actually implied. It is possible that 'San' simply meant 'dwellers' (Nama *sâ* 'rest, repose') and was similar in meaning to the name Lala, which was used by a number of different communities in southern Africa to refer to a class or 'caste' of apparently subjugated people. Alternatively, some authors have suggested a connection with a word meaning 'collect' or 'gather' (Nama *sā*).[31] One thing that is certain, at least, is that the term is not based on any known Khoekhoe word for 'thief' or 'vagabond', as is occasionally proposed. Whatever its original meaning, the word San may have acquired disparaging connotations simply because of the circumstances under which it was typically used.

Because of these uncertainties, some contemporary historians have begun to question the use of 'San', and have even reverted to using 'Bushman' – with a strictly non-pejorative intent, and on the grounds that it is frequently used of themselves (and even sometimes insisted on) by a few modern-day members of relevant communities, particularly in marginal rural areas. It is true that the old colonial word seems to have been internalised and preserved by a small number of individuals,[32] but its reintroduction by scholars is not well understood outside narrow academic circles, and its use in public has even been known to provoke outrage. While there will be little occasion for the term to be used here, since it has no linguistic significance – there being no such thing, of course, as a San (or 'Bushman') family of languages – the word Sāku will occasionally be encountered in some of the heritage texts: we have chosen to translate it in these cases simply as San, which has the merit at least of being close to the original, even if the Khoekhoe plural ending is, strictly speaking, out of place in English – and our retention of it not a little inconsistent!

As for the term 'Bantu', it is perhaps not always sufficiently understood within South Africa that it is an abstract classificatory term used by linguists worldwide for a very large grouping of related *languages* within the Benue-Congo family, which is itself a subset of the Niger-Congo super-grouping of related language families. The term was invented by Wilhelm Bleek, who noted: 'That the derivative prefix and pronouns of this last gender (of personal nouns in the plural) are either actually **ba**, or contracted, or in some other manner changed from it, is one of the characteristics of the Ba-ntu family of languages, which have on this account been called Ba-languages by Dr H. Barth.'[33] It is unfortunate that the term was much later misappropriated and came to be used in a generally contemptuous manner as a way of referring to certain groups of *people*, particularly in South Africa. As a consequence, many local linguists find it difficult now to use the compromised term in its original sense, and a few have suggested alternative names for the family, such as Kintu or Sintu.[34] These have not taken hold internationally, perhaps because the negative connotations are specific to the historical experience of people in South Africa, which is home to

only a few languages of this immense family.[35] Where its use cannot be avoided, the term will from this point onward be written in capital letters, so as to emphasise its purely linguistic sense. This is not a standard convention, but it seems at least a fair compromise. By the same token, the names of various other language families, such as KHOE and JU, will from now on also be given in capital letters.[36]

Individual BANTU languages are referred to here by their conventional English names, using conventional English morphology – hence Zulu rather than 'isiZulu', and Sotho rather than 'Sesotho'. This is simply plain and good English, and follows the same norm whereby we generally try to avoid affectation and so speak and write about German rather than 'Deutsch', Spanish rather than 'Español', and Russian rather than 'Ру́сский язы́к'. The same principle is reciprocally followed by speakers of other languages, so that someone speaking or writing in Zulu, for example, appropriately refers to Afrikaans as IsiBhunu, to English as isiNgisi and to Sotho as IsiSuthu; while a Sotho speaker would refer, when using Sotho itself, to Afrikaans as Seburu, to English as Senyesemane, to Zulu as Sezulu, and to Xhosa as Seqhotsa or Seqhosa, where in the case of the latter, the lateral click 'x' (or ǁ) is replaced by the (post)alveolar 'q' (or !), since this is the only click that occurs in Sotho. A Tswana speaker using his or her own language refers to Xhosa as Sethosa, since Tswana does not use click phonemes at all.

A note on the ownership of intellectual artefacts

Because it was part of our plan to reproduce old and for the most part previously published material, it was inevitable that certain concerns around copyright would arise.[37] In some cases the issues were relatively straightforward to resolve, since not only was the authorship clear, but it was also fairly easy to determine whether and when the work had become part of the public domain. In current South African copyright law, a work is considered to enter the public domain 50 years from the end of the year in which the author dies. By this criterion, the work of Lucy Lloyd, who died in 1914, is plainly no longer in copyright, and the same holds for the work of Carl Meinhof, who died in 1944. Given that Benjamin Kats died either just before 1935 or else early in that year, it appears that the narratives[38] published posthumously under his own name in that year are likewise no longer in copyright.

In a few other cases, the texts first appeared in work that still falls under a copyright restriction. We are grateful to the various publishers who readily gave permission for us to use this material, and who also waived any fees they might have levied for the right to do so. These publishers instantly grasped the nature of the project, recognised that it had community involvement from the outset, and appreciated the impetus behind it, which is the desire to enact a form of cultural restitution. There were a few remaining cases, though, where the issue of intellectual ownership initially seemed more complicated, although we believe we have ultimately resolved such concerns appropriately and fairly.

Overview of the book's chapters

Since this is a book about a language, the approach is inevitably linguistic in nature. Even so, it was initially planned to include a brief background chapter on the history of the Korana people, which would have been contributed by Mike Besten. In the interim, Piet Erasmus has gone on to publish a full-length book[39] on the subject, which has eliminated the need for such a chapter. Readers may also like to consult a number of other studies that focus specifically on the Korana people, such as work by Robert Ross,[40] a work co-authored by Erasmus with Mike Besten and G. Sauls,[41] and a recent study by Sharon Gabie,[42] which provides both a biography of Chief Josiah Kats and an account of the contemporary re-making of Khoisan identity.

Studies of the Griqua people include Martin Legassick's influential doctoral dissertation,[43] works by Robert Ross[44] and Edward Cavanagh,[45] as well as Karel Schoeman's *Griqua Records*,[46] and Mike Besten's doctoral dissertation.[47]

The complex earlier history of the Cape Khoi is difficult to unravel, but both Louis Maingard[48] and Jan Engelbrecht[49] contributed carefully measured assessments of the various old oral accounts, where these are sometimes mutually conflicting and not easy to reconcile. A recent work by Michael de Jongh offers an account of the Hessequa.[50]

Readers seeking an introduction to the history of the Khoi people in general may like to refer to the accessible account of *The Cape Herders* by Emile Boonzaier and others,[51] the opening chapters of Gabriel Nienaber's *Khoekhoense Stamname*,[52] two of the chapters in Neil Mostert's *Frontiers*,[53] and the first half of Tim Keegan's work, *Dr Philip's Empire*,[54] which describes the tireless campaigns of John Philip on behalf of the Khoi during the early period of British colonisation.

The purpose of Chapter One is to explain the linguistic classification of Kora. Following a brief overview of the Khoisan languages in general, and a short account of the three main and quite distinct families that are subsumed under the all-purpose heading of the Southern African Khoisan languages, the location of Kora and various other South African varieties of Khoekhoe within the KHOE family is explained.[55] The existence of a previously unrecognised dialect of Kora is noted. The chapter closes with short accounts of various currently hypothesised relations between KHOE languages and (i) certain languages of North or East Africa, (ii) other Khoisan languages of southern Africa, and (iii) other languages of the southern region. (While we do not necessarily agree with all of these often controversial speculations, this would be a poor reason not to acquaint our readers with them.)

Chapter Two outlines both the early and later sources of our information about the Cape Khoekhoe and Kora dialects, with particular reference to the speakers who left us this legacy, where their identities are known.

Chapters Three and Four respectively describe the sounds and the structures of Kora, and together constitute the most complete reference grammar that has yet been provided for the language. Both chapters present a number of findings that are new, while at the same time they identify one or two areas of lingering uncertainty

that might be fruitfully investigated by other researchers in future. In the interest of both longevity and accessibility, the two sections forming the reference grammar use a neutral descriptive terminology, and avoid the acronyms and specialist jargon associated with any particular framework. No prior knowledge of linguistics is assumed, and the basic concepts are explained as they are introduced.

It may be necessary to mention for the benefit of the general reader that linguistic description does not involve the imposition of some arbitrary external system on a language, but rather aims to uncover the systematic contrasts that inhere on multiple levels within a language itself, as manifested in distinctions regularly and consistently made by its speakers. To the extent that there is some inevitable technicality involved in the present account of Kora, and to the extent that we have aimed for a degree of academic rigour, this is a measure of our respect for the language, culture and heritage involved, while at the same time it acknowledges the sharp sophistication of a rising generation that is unafraid of analytical approaches. Throughout the course of preparing this book we have been in correspondence with individuals who regard the Kora language as part of their own direct cultural inheritance. Some of these community members have taken on a kind of co-ownership of the project, sending in valuable corrections and suggestions in response to circulated drafts, and from time to time asking technical questions about such things as the issue of grammatical case in Kora. Readers like these have been our inspiration, and it is their needs we have tried to honour. Any more cursory or diluted kind of approach would in our view have bordered on cultural appropriation, and we are particularly grateful to an early reviewer of this book, who though not a linguist himself, willingly braved these chapters and reported them to be 'manageable' for any lay reader prepared to commit a small amount of effort.

Chapter Three covers aspects of Kora phonetics, phonology and tonology, and includes summaries of several new findings based on data obtained in the field. There will be many readers who would like to have a sense of how the Kora narratives might have sounded when they were originally delivered by speakers of the language, and it is for them that this chapter has been primarily written. The chapter should also help readers to become familiar with the main conventions used in writing Kora, particularly where these differ from those used in the official Namibian orthography for the Nama, Dama, and Hai‖om dialects. Lastly, this part of the work should provide readers with a basis for understanding the many variations in spelling that will be encountered in the heritage texts. (Since the texts are in a sense historical documents, and since there may even have been dialectal differences involved, we have made as few changes to them as possible, and as part of this policy we have preserved many of the original spellings.)[56]

Chapter Four, which focuses on morphology and syntax, describes the grammatical structures of the language. This account is intended in the first place to facilitate the study of the heritage texts in the original language. In addition, the chapter presents a number of new findings, including the existence of two previously unrecognised verb

extensions. It also offers a few new insights, for example concerning the complex predicates, the function of the *ke* particle, and the notion of 'accusative case' in Kora.

Chapter Five presents all the Kora heritage texts we have been able to re-publish without risk of infringing copyright. This corpus consists of a range of texts, organised under the following headings:

i. Collective and personal histories, and private commentaries.

ii. Social and economic histories, and accounts of crafts and manufactures in earlier times.

iii. Oratory, folktales, and lyrics.

This is the first time that a comprehensive collection of this kind has been made available for the Kora language.

The texts are provided with parallel English translations, where these are often deliberately literal, since they are intended as an aid to reading the texts in the original language. (We have not provided interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses, partly because these are seldom useful to a general reader, while the grammatical structures are in any case already fully described in the body of the work; and partly because there remain a few areas of uncertainty.) In most cases the texts have also been supplied with a free and more readable translation for the benefit of readers who might simply want to access the content.

From a linguistic point of view, the interest of these narratives lies in their illustration of various syntactic strategies at the level of both the sentence and the extended discourse context, and also in differences in the registers potentially associated with different genres. Even so, the texts will undoubtedly be of interest also for their intrinsic content. In this regard, it should be noted that some of the accounts, particularly those placed in section (ii), have a certain 'ethnographic' quality that is not only old-fashioned but might even be offensive to some, unless they are read and understood as the products of a particular era. It may also help to bear in mind that, rather than being uniquely (and 'picturesquely') characteristic of the Khoi people, many of the old ways described were at one time almost universal throughout the region – and probably much of early Africa.

Literary scholars[57] who have focused over the past two decades or so on the |Xam narratives collected by Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd have been at pains to emphasise that the transcribed folktales in that corpus are at best only two-dimensional reflections of stories that would originally have been delivered orally to a responsive audience well-versed in the stories' traditional content. As far as the Kora material in section (iii) is concerned, while the stories dictated to Lucy Lloyd by Piet Links in 1879 fall into a similar category, several of the contributions dating from the early part of the 20th century appear to have been autonomously re-imagined as specifically literary texts by authors such as Benjamin Kats and Andries Bitterbos. We trust this will be kept in mind by future scholars who may wish to study the Kora narratives – in their original language of course – from a literary perspective.

Chapter Six consists of a bilingual Kora dictionary, with look-up options in both Kora and English (where the English look-up section is essentially merely an index or 'quick reference', with the more detailed entries being reserved for the Kora look-up section). The electronic version of this work includes links to audio files illustrating the pronunciation of approximately one third of the Kora entries.

For this part of the project we took Carl Meinhof's Glossary[58] as our point of departure, not only making his entries the core of the work, but adopting his spellings as the 'standard' versions. We then expanded the core by adding in any words not recorded by Meinhof, where these were obtained from a variety of sources, including the two studies by Jan Engelbrecht,[59] where the first included his Word List; the narratives collected from the Bloemhof Korana by Louis Maingard;[60] the early Vocabulary compiled by Carl Wuras;[61] the three notebooks of Lucy Lloyd,[62] and the set of texts published under Benjamin Kats's own name.[63] The main function of the dictionary is to assist the reader who is working closely through the texts in the original language, although we appreciate that it may be used as a source of cultural information in its own right. With these different functions as well as the needs of various users in mind, we have tried to keep the organisation of the entries as clear and simple as possible, and have not burdened the reader with constant redirections to other entries. We have included a few lists of specialised terms organised by semantic field – such as the names of the Korana clans; the names of animals, birds and arthropods; and the names of plants and plant products.

This introduction would be incomplete without a brief final note explaining our use of the authorial 'we'. The idea for the project emerged out of many long and animated conversations in Bloemfontein, and the initial work in the field was carried out by a team of us, so that when it came to writing everything up, it was natural to adopt the point of view of the original collective. It was initially hoped that several of the chapters would be co-authored by two or more of us, but in the end, the pressures of other work and the difficulties of sustaining regular long-distance communication conspired against successful collaboration. Even so, draft versions of the chapters were regularly circulated as they were completed, and we are confident that the final work reflects a consensus, even where circumstances may have led to a largely passive form of co-participation.

Endnotes

1 Mike Besten obtained his PhD in History from Leiden University in 2006 for a doctoral thesis on the Griqua leader, A.A.S. le Fleur I. He had previously obtained an Honours degree in Philosophy from the University of Stellenbosch, and a further Honours as well as a Master's degree in History from the University of the Western Cape. He then joined the Department of Anthropology at the University of the Free State, where he worked with Piet Erasmus. During 2007, he travelled extensively through the countryside of the Free State and the North-West Province in efforts to trace people of Korana descent. Fieldworkers who assisted him at this time included Edward Charles Human – a cultural activist with strong ties to local Griqua and Korana communities.

2 The use of the name Kora rather than !Ora in an English medium context is explained in a note on nomenclature elsewhere in this introduction.

3 Wilhelm Bleek, *A Comparative Grammar of South African Languages* (Part 1) (London: Trübner and Co., 1862), 4.

4 Anthony Traill, *Extinct: South African Khoisan Languages* (compact disc with booklet) (University of the Witwatersrand: Department of Linguistics, ca. 1997), tracks 14, 15.

5 There were a number of initial delays after our first meeting with Oupa Dawid, mainly because several of us had other ongoing academic projects at the time that could not be abandoned.

6 Since this work offers a comprehensive study of a *language*, it is natural that it should be linguistic in approach. It is not a substitute for a history of the Khoi people, and nor does it offer any ventures into genetics, archaeology or anthropology. Such an approach would in our view be counter-productive, since – while linguistics can indeed make a valuable contribution to multi-disciplinary studies – its usefulness is diminished when the waters are so muddied by cross-disciplinary dabbling as to obscure swirling circularities of argument.

7 As a consequence, there are South Africans of a certain age and social class who even today have only a vague and confused notion of who the Khoi were – sometimes inexplicably equating them with the slave population, and sometimes imagining that they were somehow or other not African!

8 The author changed affiliation in the wake of this experience, and subsequently found a warmly supportive and stimulating academic home in the Department of General Linguistics at Stellenbosch University.

9 Mike was brutally murdered, having fallen random victim to a car-hijacking gang. The loss of this brilliant colleague and gifted academic leader was devastating to us, but we decided that the best way we could honour him would be to continue with the project.

10 Aspects of the original dream that remain unfulfilled at the time of publication include the translation of the book into Afrikaans. We have also yet to find an acceptable archival home in South Africa for our data, while lack of funding has in any case meant that the interviews have not been transcribed and translated in full.

11 Neither of our two consultants pretended to be entirely fluent, but we undertook the documentation with the intention of recording as much as they were able to offer us. In addition to the two speakers who consented to work with us, we know of a third speaker who reportedly has a good knowledge of the language – but who has declined to work with linguists. From time to time we hear new reports at second or third hand of other elderly individuals who may retain some knowledge of the language, but such speakers have in the past generally turned out to remember only a few words and none of the syntax.

12 Levi Namaseb, who lectures at the University of Namibia, obtained a PhD from Toronto University in 2006 for a thesis on aspects of comparative oral literature in southern Africa. He is a first-language speaker of Nama, and acted as the lead interviewer during our sessions with the speakers.

13 Niklaas Fredericks is also a first-language speaker of Nama, and was at the time completing his PhD in Linguistics at the University of the Western Cape. He was awarded one of

the prestigious Rector's Postdoctoral Research Fellowships at Stellenbosch University in 2014, and now lectures in and heads the Department of Communication at the Namibia University of Science and Technology.

14 Bradley van Sitters is a Cape Town-based cultural activist who was studying Nama at the time at the University of Namibia. While we took him on as a technical assistant, he is also a talented communicator and played a key role in various facilitations. We took pains to explain the aims of the project formally to our consultants, and they willingly signed consent forms, but it was Van Sitters who conversed patiently with the speakers during our many breaks, and who best conveyed what we were trying to achieve and what we intended to do with the recordings. He was the lead interviewer for the background interview with Oupa Dawid Cooper.

15 Menán du Plessis obtained a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Cape Town in 2009, following a late return to her original academic field. She is currently a Research Associate in the Department of General Linguistics at Stellenbosch University.

16 Note that the sound represented by the letters 'oe' in KHOE is approximately that of 'we' in 'went'.

17 Tim Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire: One Man's Struggle for Justice in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2016).

18 Helize van Vuuren, *A Necklace of Springbok Ears: |Xam Orality and South African Literature* (Stellenbosch: SUN Press, 2016).

19 Niklaas Fredericks, personal communication, September 2015.

20 There are some who argue on ideological (that is, counter-colonial) grounds for the use of non-adapted versions of African language names in South African English, but it is not clear why the local and unilateral use of a non-standard English should be considered either progressive or a useful way of addressing the very real (and worldwide) problems created by the dominance of some languages over others.

21 William Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1822), vol. 1, 345.

22 The use in South African English of the language name Xhosa with retention of the alveolar lateral click is an interesting anomaly, and seems to reflect the reality that South Africa, like most other African countries, is characterised by a vibrantly multi-lingual population, where speakers engage in constant code-switching. It is natural for a first-language speaker of Xhosa, for example, to use the expression 'isiXhosa' even when speaking in English, and it may be as a form of accommodation that many first-language speakers of South African English will not only use the same term, but will even frequently attempt the click (although others may substitute 'kl' or 'k^h').

23 Since the earliest observers did not have any established system for the representation of the clicks, the original name of the Vaal River (|Hai!garib) was often given as Ky Gariep. This makes it difficult for us to be certain that there was not also perhaps a separately named Great River (Kai!garib). The river was known to the Dutch settlers from an early period as the Groote Rivier, the Eyn or Ey, or the Gariep.

24 Thomas Pringle, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Pringle* (London: Edward Moxon, 1837), 12–13.

25 The Tswana name Gauteng, which is used for Johannesburg as well as the province in which that city is located, incorporates the loanword *goud* 'gold' from Afrikaans, plus the locative morphology *–eng* of Tswana.

26 It is considered preferable in plain English to say, for example, 'hippopotamuses' rather than 'hippopotami', and use of the foreign plural form may create an unintended impression of affectation, or else is taken to be jocular.

27 Some writers prefer to use !Ora as the language name, but this is not appropriate (in our view at least) for either spoken or written standard English. (The spelling '!Kora' occasionally seen in older texts was usually intended to indicate merely the plain form of the click, and the letter 'k' is redundant.)

28 John Campbell, *Travels in South Africa* (London: Black, Parry and Co. and T. Hamilton, 1815), 252.

29 Some linguists report hearing this sound as the uvular fricative [χ], while others describe it as velar [x]. (Before front vowels the sound is typically palatal.) There may well be minor dialectal differences in play.

30 In an ideal world, the use of non-native symbols in written English is preferably avoided. The reality, however, is that many Khoisan languages never acquired suitably anglicised versions of their names, so that the use of a click symbol (such as ! in the case of !Ui) is sometimes unavoidable.

31 See discussion of the term in Gabriel Nienaber, *Khoekhoense Stamname: 'n Voorlopige Verkenning* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1989), 830–837.

32 The same individuals who refer to themselves as 'Boesmans' also use for members of other communities a range of terms that would unquestionably be treated as instances of hate speech if they were to be used in public today by almost anyone else.

33 Wilhelm Bleek, *A Comparative Grammar of South African Languages,* part 1 (London: Trübner & Co., 1862), 3.

34 See discussion by Robert K. Herbert and Richard Bailey, "The Bantu languages: sociohistorical perspectives," in *Language in South Africa*, ed. Rajend Mesthrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 50–78, endnote 3.

35 It makes little sense to use the term 'African' as a substitute name for just one language family of the continent, even though a usage of this kind is fairly widespread in popular writing. An alternative expression sometimes used by linguists for the Bantu family is 'Niger-Congo B', where 'Niger-Congo A' then refers (awkwardly) to the remaining portion of Benue-Congo, plus the other families that make up Niger-Congo. A further option might be to change the name to 'Benue-Congo B'.

36 The reason for not writing !Ui in capital letters is that it is really a sub-branch, forming a family together with the Taa varieties. This grouping was identified by Dorothea Bleek as 'Southern Bushman', while Tom Güldemann has more recently proposed the family name TUU. (For further discussion and references see Chapter Two.)

37 The author of this chapter is particularly grateful to Colin Darch and Janetta van der Merwe for their freely given professional guidance around some of these thorny issues.

38 Benjamin Kats, "*Korana-Erzählungen*," *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen* 26 (1935/6), 161–174.

39 Piet Erasmus, *The Battle at Mamusa: The Western Transvaal Border Culture and the Ethno-dissolution of the Last Functioning Korana Polity* (Stellenbosch: Sun Media, 2015).

40 Robert Ross, "The !Kora wars on the Orange River, 1830–1880" *Journal of African History* 16, no. 4 (1975), 561–576.

41 Erasmus, Mike Besten and G. Sauls, "*The Pniel Estate: Its People and History*" (Kimberley: The Sol Plaatje Educational Trust, 2008).

42 Sharon Gabie, "Khoisan Ancestry and Coloured Identity: A Study of the Korana Royal House under Chief Josiah Kats" (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Master's thesis, 2014).

43 Martin Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier: The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana, and the Missionaries, 1780–1840* (Basle: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2010).

44 Ross, "Griqua government" *African Studies* 33 (1974), 25–42.

45 Edward Cavanagh, *The Griqua Past and the Limits of South African History, 1902–1994* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011).

46 Schoeman, Karel, comp. and ed. *Griqua Records: The Philippolis Captaincy, 1825–1861* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1996).

47 Mike Besten, "Transformation and Reconstitution of Khoe-San Identities: A.A.S. le Fleur I, Griqua Identities and Post-Apartheid Khoe-San Revivalism (1894–2004)" (Leiden: University of Leiden PhD thesis, 2006).

48 Louis F. Maingard, "Studies in Korana history, customs and language" *Bantu Studie*s 6, no. 2 (1932), 103–161.

49 Jan A. Engelbrecht, *The Korana* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1936), 1–70.

50 Michael de Jongh, *A Forgotten First People: The Southern Cape Hessequa* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2016).

51 Emile Boonzaier, Candy Malherbe, Penny Berens and Andy Smith, *The Cape Herders* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996).

52 Nienaber, *Khoekhoense Stamname*, 10–52.

53 Noël Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (London: Pimlico, 1993), 105–182.

54 Tim Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire: One Man's Struggle for Justice in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2016), 1–177.

55 The term KHOE refers to a *language family*. Classifications of this kind are based on purely linguistic criteria, and have nothing to do with history, archaeology, anthropology, economic lifestyle, or biology.

56 Kora was never provided with a standard or official set of spelling rules (that is, an orthography), and linguists in the past have tended to use a combination of generally accepted phonetic symbols and versions of the missionary conventions that were at one time used as the de facto orthography for Nama. Many linguists experimented with and modified their own systems over time.

57 As for example Michael Wessels, *Bushman Letters: Interpreting |Xam Narrative* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2010).

58 Carl Meinhof, *Koranadialekt des Hottentottischen* (Berlin: Reimer, 1930) (Supplement 12 to the *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen*), 78–119.

59 Engelbrecht, "*Studies oor Korannataal*," *The Korana*.

60 Maingard, "Studies in Korana history," and "Korana texts from Bloemhof," *African Studies* 26, no. 1 (1967), 43–46.

61 Carl F. Wuras, *Vokabular der Korana-Sprache* [1858], ed. Walther Bourquin (*Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen*: Suppl. 1) (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, Hamburg: C. Boysen, 1920).

62 Lloyd's original notebooks on '!Kora' form part of the L.F. Maingard collection housed in the Manuscripts Collection in Archival and Special Collections at the Unisa Library in Pretoria. They have been digitised by the Centre for Curating the Archive (University of Cape Town) and now form part of *The Digital Bleek and Lloyd* at (http://lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.ac.za), where the relevant notebooks are labelled MP1–4.

63 Benjamin Kats, "*Korana-Erzählungen*."