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Professor T. HEWITT KEY in the Chair.

The following Papers were read :—

- I. "On certain Recent Additions to African Philology;" by
R. G. LATHAM, M.D.
- II. "On the Derivation and Meaning of the Latin Verb
USURPARE;" by T. HEWITT KEY, Esq.

I. "On certain Recent Additions to African Philology."

The chief works that supply the basis for the forthcoming observations are the following :—(1.) *Polyglotta Africana**, by the Rev. W. S. Koelle; and (2.) *Specimens of Dialects, &c. and Notes of Countries and Customs in Africa*†, by J. Clarke. Both the authors are Missionaries; the chief field for the collections of the former being Sierra Leone, for those of the latter the West Indies. Both worked in the same way; *i. e.* availing themselves of the opportunities of their respective localities, they found out from the different Africans of the district wherein they were themselves settled, the name of their several native countries, the geographical relations of the same, and the names of the languages, of which they took specimens. It was in this manner the earlier collections of Oldendorp

* London: Church Missionary House, 1854.

† Berwick-upon-Tweed, 1848.

were made. It has the advantage of generally giving us the native name, *i. e.* the name by which a given tribe calls itself, rather than the name by which it is known to its neighbours. On the other hand, it gives us particular districts rather than broad philological areas, and dialects and subdialects rather than languages. Upon the whole, however, there is so much good in this plan, that the evil with which it is accompanied, (*viz.* the tendency to exaggerate philological differences) being easily guarded against, is of comparatively slight importance. Nevertheless, it requires to be borne in mind.

We naturally expect, in vocabularies thus collected, a great number of old languages under new names, and this is what we find in each of the works before us. The distribution, however, of these and their identification are points of detail to which no great importance, in the present notice at least, is attached. The broader question is the extent to which we have either representatives of groups hitherto unknown, or *data* for an improved classification.

Koelle's is the more important work of the two, both on account of the greater length of its vocabularies, and the fact of its attempting the most in the way of arrangement. Indeed his instructions from the Church Missionary Society were "to cultivate not only one particular language, but to give information respecting the whole question of African philology." "It was usually supposed," he adds, "that there were in Sierra Leone the representatives of about forty different tribes; but the searching examination amongst the people, which the collection of this vocabulary demanded, discovered individuals from more than two hundred different tribes and countries." Mr. Clarke's list amounts to three hundred and eighty-eight. With such high numbers as these before our eyes, we may safely say that the statement so lately made, concerning the exaggeration of philological difficulties engendered by the methods under notice, has a strong *prima facie* appearance of being accurate.

Of the two primary groups of the Polyglotta Africana, those of Parts I. and II., the order may conveniently be transposed, at least for the purposes of illustration. This is

because, in order to understand the generic characteristic of the very first subdivision of the first division, a certain amount of information respecting the structure of the languages of Part II. is necessary. Thus, Part II. contains the "South African Languages distinguished by an initial inflection," whilst Order I. in Class I. gives us "North-west Atlantic Languages distinguishing themselves, like those of South Africa, by prefixal changes or an initial inflection." In this way the South African structure is taken as a sort of standard for the classification of the others. Of the South African the Kaffre tongues are the type.

Let us consider, then, that *South African* means *Kaffre*, and that, as the Kaffre peculiarities, besides being otherwise known, have formed the subject of a late contribution from Dr. Bleek, let us pass to Koelle's—

I. *North-western Atlantic Languages*.—They fall into four groups, represented by the (a) Felup, (b) Papel, (c) Biafada, and (d) Timmani languages, respectively, each falling into dialects and subdialects. Certain additions will have to be made to this group when we come to the Unclassified Languages. The value of the class itself will be considered when three other groups have been noticed, *i. e.* the Mandingo, the Woloff, and the Fulah. At present we may remember it as the *North-western Atlantic division*.

II. *The North-western High Sudan or Mandingo Languages* constitute the second group.

III. *The Upper Guinea or Middle-coast Languages* the third. This means, the forms of speech akin to (a) the Kru, (b) the Dahomey, (c) the Yoruba.

IV. *The North-eastern High Sudan Languages* are spoken inland, at the back of the Ashanti country, and along the eastern range of the Kong mountains. They are akin to the (a) Mosee, (b) Kouri, (c) Koama, and (d) Yula forms of speech.

V. *The Niger-delta* group falls into the (a) Isoama, (b) Sobo, and (c) Okuloma divisions.

VI. *The Niger-Tshadda* languages are those akin to the Nufi.

VII. *The Central African* division contains the languages allied to (a) the Bornui, and (b) the Pika.

In Part II. we have the *South African Languages distinguished by an initial inflection*, as has been already stated. It excludes the Hottentot, and includes the Old Calabar, Camerooon, and Gaboon languages. Doing this, it coincides with the so-called Kaffre class of tongues, in its latest form, *i. e.* in the form it has taken since it was shown that the Poongwe, the Isubu, the Efik, and other languages exhibit a similar series of initial changes to those of the Kafre and Bichuana. Upon the divisions and subdivisions of this class the present writer gives no opinion. He merely remarks that the value of its chief characteristic, the initial changes in question, is a point upon which he unwillingly differs with several excellent authorities; but this he will explain in the sequel—passing, for the present, to Part III., containing upwards of forty unclassified languages and dialects. This is done simply with the view of asking how far they are really unsusceptible of classification? If they be not so, it is asked how many, and what, can be transferred to Parts I. and II.?

Of these unclassified forms of speech, the exact number of which (*plus* a few subdialects) is forty-three, we may at once dispose of (the numbers not in parentheses are Koelle's) the following:—

- (1.) A. a. 1. Which is *Woloff*.
- (2. 3. 4.) B. 1. 2. 3. Asanti, Barba, and Boko, which are *Ashanti*.
- (5.) C. 1. Kandin, which is *Berber*.
- (6.) C. 2. Which is *Timbuctu*.
- (7.) C. 3. Which is *Mandara*.
- (8.) C. 4. Which is *Begharmi*.
- (9.) C. 5. Which is *Hawsa*.
- (10.) C. 6. Which is *Fulah*;—all recognized divisions.
- (11.) A. b. 5. The Landoma is the same class with the *Timmani*.
- (12.) A. b. 4. The Limba—probably is in the same category.
- (13.) A. a. 2. The Bissago is *Felúp*.

(14. 15. 16.) A. b. 1. 2. 3. The Banyun, Nalu, and Bulanda are also *Felúp*.

(17.) A. a. 3. The Gadsaga is *Serawolli*, or closely akin.

(18.) A. a. 4. The Gura.

(19.) The Yalo, which is *Tapua* or *Nufi*.

All the rest (with the exception of the Arabic of F.) are evidently either members of Part II., or transitional to it and Part I. Hence, laying out of the question the (1.) Bissago, (2.) the Banyun, and (3.) the Nalu, every one of the other forms of speech, either itself or in an allied dialect, has been considered by previous investigators and classed. Whence, then, the present group of *unclassified* languages. In some cases we must say that there has been an absolute oversight, *e. g.* in the case of the Landoma, which is transparently allied to the languages of 1. *d.* Generally, however, it seems that the reason has been different. The majority of the languages under notice, though they form classes, form classes without many divisions or subdivisions represented in the work before us. Some of them indeed are eminently simple, *e. g.* the Begharmi and Mandara. The Ashanti, on the other hand, overflows with dialects and subdialects. Of these, however, only three were represented by individuals at Sierra Leone, between such and such days of such and such a year. Had this number been trebled or doubled, the result might have been different, and the Ashanti might have taken a place in Part I. A class is constituted by what it excludes, quite as much as by what it includes.

This brings us to the most exceptionable part of an otherwise valuable work. And even here, the exceptions lie less against the laborious missionary himself than against the instructions with which he was furnished. These were (as has already been stated) to *classify* the languages of Africa as well as to collect samples of them. Now these two duties involve two different kinds of knowledge, differently applied. The collector works upon the materials within the range of his own opportunities for observation, so that (so far as he is a collector and nothing more) his information is limited by his personal experience. But this personal experience may fall far short

of the conditions necessary for a systematic classification, inasmuch as the best opportunities enjoyed by a single individual may be insufficient for a work of a given magnitude. And this is what we find in the work under notice. Great as are the opportunities at Sierra Leone for studying the African languages, they are insufficient for a systematic arrangement of the African languages and dialects. The remedy to this is, of course, the study of the remaining tongues in the works of the previous writers on the subject; works which form the complement to any special researches. Now, however wide any special researches may be, such a complement is necessary. It may, of course, be either great or small. The smaller it is, the more closely the system, based upon an individual collection, will coincide with the system based upon the consideration of all accessible materials. On the other hand, the list of omissions may be a long one. If so, the foundation of the system based upon individual researches becomes proportionably narrow, and (as such) faulty. Applying this observation to the work before us, we shall find that the great extent of the author's individual researches, although laudable in itself, has been greatly prejudicial to the value of his work as a *system*; the *data* which it supplies being numerous enough to constitute an apparent sufficiency of materials for an African philology, but not numerous enough to constitute a real one. To do this, a certain amount of extraneous matter was wanted—matter which has unfortunately been overlooked. Such at least is the conclusion to which the dictum *de non apparentibus*, &c. leads us. For all that appears on the face of Mr. Koelle's system, so standard a work as even the Mithridates has been either overlooked or ignored. Some recognition of the partial character of the system is, perhaps, shown in the choice of the term *Polyglotta Africana* instead of *Africa Polyglotta*, the former being suggestive of a more limited department of study than the latter, which would, if valid, so well match the *Asia Polyglotta* of Klaproth. At the same time, the statement that the work was to be systematic and general, is both prominent and unambiguous.

Whilst then the new materials due to the individual re-

search of Mr. Koelle are of sufficient importance to make his work a highly valuable collection of *data*, the omissions are so grave and numerous as to put it wholly out of the category of systematic classifications, and it is only doing injustice to the author to consider it as such. The fact of all the unplaced languages of Part III. being capable of distribution and fixation proves this. As to the omissions themselves, these are as follows :—

Of the Hottentot dialects (important as they are) no specimen at all is given—

Neither is there any adequate representation of the languages spoken on the water-system of the Nile :—Coptic, Bishari, Nubian, Galla, Agow, Amharic, &c.—

Neither is there any adequate representation of the languages of Darfur, Kordofan, and the parts to the east and south-east of Lake Tshad.

Why there are these important omissions is transparently clear. There was no one who spoke them at Sierra Leone. Be it so. At the same time a Sierra Leone collection should never have been made the basis of a general classification of the African languages.

In respect to the classes actually represented, we need only contrast the place taken by the languages akin to the Ashanti and Fanti in the *Polyglotta Africana*, with the place they take in the *Mithridates*, or in Bowdich's *Embassy*. In both of these works they form a large class, with dialects and subdialects inconveniently numerous. In the volume under notice they are limited to the Asanti, the Barba, and the Boko, and, thus limited, they form a class sufficiently simple to be relegated to Part III.

The same applies to the representatives of the great Berber group of tongues, which here appears as an isolated tongue named *Kandin*. Additions then of new groups, orders, or classes of languages, in the *Polyglotta Africana*, there are none; the Woloff, Ashanti, Timbuctu, Bornu, Mandara, Begharmi, Hawsa, Fulah, and Mandingo classes being already recognized under either the same names, or names slightly modified in form or spelling.

The Upper Guinea groups are, in like manner, recognized as the Kru (or Grebo), the Whidah, and the Yoruba.

The Niger-delta is the Ibu.

The Niger-Tshadda the Nufi.

Additions in the way of detail to groups already recognized there are many. Of these, the most important are those of the 1st and 4th divisions of Part I.

(1.) *The North-western Atlantic*.—It was this for which *data* were most wanted. In the first place, the Papel, Bissago, and Naloo vocabularies make good a want experienced in the loss of the *Senegal Vocabularies* of the last century—a term which we may conveniently use in a technical and specific sense. It means that, previous to the first French revolution, a series of vocabularies for the parts about the Senegal and Gambia were collected, but not published. The MS., however, which originally belonged to a convent, subsequently suppressed, having found its way to the Bibliothèque Royal, has been published in the second volume of the ‘*Mémoires de la Société Ethnologique*,’ but only so far as it is complete, which is only partially. The heading runs as follows:—*Dictionnaire des Langues Françaises et Nègres dont on se sert dans la Concession de la Compagnie Royale du Sénégal, savoir : Guiolof, Foule, Mandingue, Saracolé, Séraire, Bagnon, Floupe, Papel, Bizagots, Nalous, et Sapi*. Of these the last four got lost, so that when the MS. in question was published, the Bissago, Nalu, Papel, and Sapi had yet to be known through their vocabularies. Let us call these the lost Senegal vocabularies, and thank Mr. Koelle for having, in the case of the Bissago, Papel, and Nalu, helped to replace them. Then there were the Balaantes, whose language was also stated to be peculiar, but of which specimens (now supplied) were wanting.

Up, then, to the present time, the only languages of the first three divisions of the North-west Atlantic group have been the Felup and the Bagnon, concerning which the present writer’s statements in 1848 were, that the least that could be said of them was, that they were* “much more like each

* Report on Ethnographical Philology—(Africa)—Transactions of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1847.

other than any other pair on the tables; and that this likeness seemed extended to the inflectional portions of their words. . . . Lest this should seem an insufficient reason for placing them in the same group rather than for treating them as languages of separate classes, it should be remembered that, in the parts in question, not less than five other languages—the Papel, Nalu, Sapi, Bissago, and Balantes,—unknown to us by specimens, are spoken; and that the evidence of these may hereafter make good the inconclusive part of the present arrangement. It is, however, quite provisional.”

He concluded with a short list of Bagnon and Felup words more or less closely allied to the other languages of Western Africa. It merely served to show that the tongues in question had certain miscellaneous affinities, *i. e.* that they were not absolutely isolated. Now this class, which in 1847 was simply Felup, Bagnon, Felup-Bagnon, or Bagnon-Felup, forms in 1855, through the labours of Mr. Koelle, the first three groups of the first primary division of Part I., its arrangement being thus:—

- A. Felup, Filham and Filhol—
- B. Bola, Sarar, Pepel—
- C. Biafada, Padsade.

To which add, from the Unclassed Languages of Part III., the Banyun and Nalu.

Of the Sapi tongue, *eo nomine*, a specimen is still wanting. I say *eo nomine*, because it is probable that we may already possess one under some other denomination. From I. of Part I. we now pass to—

IV. *The North-eastern High Sudan*.—Here the additions are important. The form this class takes in Koelle is as follows:—

A, or the first division (one out of four) contains specimens of the Mosee, Delana, Guresa, Gurma, and Legba—

B containing the Legba, Kauri, and Kiamba—

C containing the Koama and Bagbalan; and

D containing the Kasm and Yula.

All these are new names but three, viz. the Mosee, the Kauri, and the Kiamba, which are, word for word, the Mosee of

Bowdich, the Kouri of Mrs. Kilham, and the Tembu (not Tambu) of the Mithridates. For these three forms, the works just named give samples—all, however, short, that of Bowdich consisting only of the numerals. The Hio, Yngwe, and Dagwhumba numerals of Bowdich belong to this division, being in the same category with the Mosee. The back of the Ashanti country is the area for this division, and as we find from the preface that some of its dialects are conterminous with the Ashanti, some with the Fot, some with the Fulah, and others with the Hawsa tongues, we may reasonably suppose that it is fairly represented, and that the philology for the parts in question is now made out sufficiently fully. At any rate the vocabularies before us carry us as far inland as the Hawsa country.

Of these languages—according to the geographical accounts procured along with them—the *Gurma* is most inland, the most northern, and the most eastern; lying on the Kwarrá, by which it is divided from Hawsa, only six days' journey from Sokatu.

The *Mosee* country lies west of the *Gurma*, and, apparently, conterminal with it, inasmuch as there is a special Gurma name for the Mosee people, viz. Bemba. Again, the Silmira (*i. e.* the Fulas under their Mosee designation) call the Mosee Gurmake (the same word as Gurma). On the other hand, they approach, or touch, the Asanti frontier.

Guren is in contact with the Yoruba area.

The *Yula* and *Koama* groups lie north-west, and in a direction where the philology is pre-eminently obscure. They are, probably, conterminous with the Mandingo dialects of the Kong range, a class of which we find no specimens in the Polyglotta, but which are represented by the Kong and other numerals of Bowdich, and by the Asokko of the Mithridates.

The Legba, Kauri, and Kiamba are spoken at the back of the Ashanti country as far east as the Yoruba frontier.

The nomenclature now requires notice. I have little doubt about not only *Gurma*, *Gurmake*, *Guren*, being the same words, but also about their all being the same as *Kaure* (*Kouri*). And this I hold to be the same as *Goburi* in Hawsa, also the

same as *Cumbri* in Yoruba. None of these names seem to be native, but on the contrary foreign to the populations who bear them, and indigenous only to the languages with which they are in contact. Now at all, or nearly all the points where we get a name of this kind, there is the contact of a Mahometan and a non-Mahometan population. Hence the suggested interpretation is, that the word is *Kaffre*, a *Giaour*, under certain West-African—Fula, Hawsa, or Yoruba—forms. That it has, however, in some cases been adopted by the natives themselves, I by no means deny. Even words as much altered as *Yoruba* and *Yaouri* may be in the same category—the conditions under which this view is reasonable being that they be *originally* other than native, and that they appear where Mahometanism and Paganism either now come in contact, or have once done so.

Again, the Mosee and Guren agree in calling the Ashanti Kambonse, or Kambenga, *i. e.* gun-men, a fact which places both on the Ashanti frontier, and suggests some points in connexion with the ascendancy of the latter.

The Kouri are subject to the *Tem* (are the Tem Mahometans?), *Tem* being a Kouri form of the name Kiamba, or Dzhamba. The Hawsas also called them Tem, the Hawsas themselves being called (by the Kouri) Asindse. This places the Kouri on the Hawsa frontier—Tem being to the west of it. This also accounts for the Tembu vocabulary of the Mithridates being so like the Kouri.

In the notice of the Bagbalan, the plural of the proper name *Manunia* is *Bassunnina*. This is an initial change, after the fashion of the Kaffre, Woloff, &c.

A great part of the valley of the Niger between Yaouri and the district visited by Park seems to be what we may call *Kouri*—such being the generic name suggested for this class, not only on the strength of the Kouri vocabulary of Mrs. Kilham, but on account of the diffusion over its different divisions of the root *g-r*. It is certainly a class wherein the Mahometan influence is at a *minimum*.

[To be continued.]