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POPULISTS AND PATRIARCHS:
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CAPTAINCY AT GRIQUA TOWN, 1804-1822.

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Between the establishment of a fixed settlement at Klaarwater (renamed Griqua Town in 1813) and the election of Andries Waterboer as the kapteyn of the village in 1820, one sector of Griqua society had experienced sufficient change to attempt to overthrow the existing political structure and to replace it with a new. Historians have offered various explanations for this political upheaval: the unwieldy independence of the 'frontier spirit'; resistance to colonial efforts to dominate the Griqua; the continued immigration of Bastard families who refused to align themselves with the old kapteyns; the impact of the mission; and trade. Although all of these factors influenced to a greater or lesser extent the political turmoil experienced by the Griqua in the 1810s and 1820s, historians have thus far ignored the most fundamental transformation occurring in Griqua Town and its environs at the time: the emergence of cultivation. Agriculture was slow to take root on the Kaap Plateau, and even by 1820 those who focused their productive activities on cultivation were still by far the minority among the Griqua. Still, they posed new problems which the established Griqua authorities could not redress. Cultivation of lands required new forms of land tenure, rigorous intervention in land disputes, orchestration of land use, and strict regulation of water resources. In short, it required that political authorities effectively intervene in the affairs of their following. This the pastorally based Griqua kapteyns could not do. They were shackled to a system of loose, patriarchal alliances, and any efforts to transform their authority to suit cultivators generated stiff resistance and even rebellion on the part of the majority of their followings, who were still largely autonomous, primarily pastoral bands. Thus, Waterboer's election as kapteyn can be seen as the attempt of cultivators to remove the old pastoral political structure, as it affected them, and to replace it with a system which could better respond to their needs.

The purpose of this essay is to trace, as far as is possible, the development of the agricultural faction at Griqua Town in the 1810s and 1820s and to illuminate its efforts to transform the settlement's administration.
To do so, I shall first examine the origins of the Griqua community and describe the nature of the political system it evolved north of the Orange River. Next, I shall attempt to outline the development of agriculture at Griqua Town and various outstations, the growth of a agriculturalist faction, and the increasing efforts of this group to secure an administration which catered to its needs. Finally, I shall study how, although the new regime under Waterboer generated staunch and even violent opposition, it was able to shift its focus to encouraging agricultural production.

I. Pastoral Griqua Society, ca. 1790-1820.

The early Griqua consisted largely of Bastard families who, together with heterogeneous associates and retainers, quit the northern reaches of the Cape Colony to settle along the Orange River from roughly 1780. The earliest nuclei for the Griqua community were the Kok and Barends families, who moved north from roughly 1780 with mixed retinues - Bastards, former Khoi labourers, fragments of independent Khoi bans, and Nama pastoralists. Their followings were considerable. By 1801, the Barends settled in the future Griqua Town district with roughly 200 adherents, and in 1816 they were joined by Cornelius Kok, the patriarch of the Kok family, who brought 500 followers. Their numbers were intermittently augmented by smaller groups migrating from the colony. Many of the newcomers were undoubtedly refugees from European aggression or colonial law. Available evidence would suggest that Bastards, who ultimately made up the bulk of the Griqua elite, had commonly suffered eviction from their lands on the outskirts of the colony by Europeans and fled north to establish or join Griqua hamlets along the Orange River. Similarly, once the Griqua had established settlements north of the colony, they became the refuge for various fugitives and outcasts from Cape society: runaway slaves, like the Arends family, political miscontents, like Conrad de Buys, and fugitive criminals, like Jacob Kruger.

Although the wealthiest of the Griqua were involved in quite lucrative trade activities, which will be discussed later, the Griqua as a whole depended on the herds they tended, as well as on hunting, for subsistence. William Anderson noted in the earliest informed description of the Griqua economy:

the only means of subsistence that the people have is their cattle, which amount to a considerable number of oxen, cows, sheep and goats ... they have been obliged to journey from spring to spring, having different places at different times of the year where they dwell with their cattle.

The Griqua brought a comparative wealth of livestock north to the Orange River. The Koks and the Barends were undoubtedly the richest of Griqua families. In 1801 it was rumoured that the Koks possessed 42,000 head of cattle, while in 1813 the Barends were said to control all the herds on the south side of the Klaarwater settlement, which were numerous. Few, if any, other Griqua families even approximated the wealth of the Koks and Barends, yet, according to Legassick, their holdings could be quite sizeable. He estimates that members of the Griqua elite could own herds ranging in size from 50 to 200 cows, although poor families owned possibly as few as two or three.

Griqua ownership of relatively large flocks and herds attracted dependents who were willing to trade their autonomy for subsistence, and possibly at times for a small remuneration. Griqua bands which settled along the Orange River and on the Kaap Plateau between 1780 and 1800 took on largely Khoi and San retainers - locals, one can argue, who saw it in their interests to attach themselves to the wealthy immigrants. Griqua families moving into the outskirts of Tswana settlement on the northern Kaap Plateau and along the Hart and Vaal
river valleys in the 1810s and 1820s incorporated southern Tswana herders as retainers as well. Although some of these new retainers were most likely poor families who had settled in what the Tswana considered the wilds, others were paupers from southern Tswana towns who searched out Griqua masters who might provide them subsistence. Although the number of retainers taken on by individual Griqua herd owners probably varied according to the size of their livestock holdings, the rate of Griqua expansion through the region was such that by 1824 roughly 700 individuals, who entered Griqua society as temporary herdsmen, moved permanently to various Griqua settlements.

While the Griqua absorbed numerous local people as dependents, prior to 1820 they failed to establish any overarching territorial control over the areas they settled. A patchwork of alliances dominated by the Barends and the Koks held the Griqua elite together. These were probably defensive in content, for as Griqua bands usurped grazing lands and watering sites from San and Korana groups, they exposed themselves to retaliatory raids undertaken by those they dispossessed. As Legassick noted, the Barends and the Koks accepted the role of commando leaders, organizing punitive expeditions against such raiders. Still, neither the Barends nor the Koks had the power or authority to intervene in the internal affairs of the bands with which they allied.

Although the Koks and Barends probably supervised the affairs of Griqua families who settled immediately with them, a good number of Griqua most likely settled in autonomous bands. John Melville studied the growth of one such band on the Orange River which, he noted, expanded from perhaps three or four families to over forty between 1817 and 1823. It was not unique: autonomous settlements of Griqua families scattered over the region, with clusters of immigrants privately establishing claims to individual fountains or pans and retaining at best loose links with the Griqua leadership. Amongst the larger groups, at least, the primary form of association with the Koks and Barends seems to have been defensive alliances, with the band leaders retaining full control over the internal affairs of their followers. It was according to such conditions that Jan Bloem the younger, for example, recognized the authority of Barend Barends when moving with his following to the Boetsap neighbourhood in the 1810s; or Abraham Kruger, who controlled a hamlet composed of 22 huts, associated himself with Adam Kok's settlement at Philippolis in the 1820s. And similar alliances were maintained with non-Griqua bands who sought Griqua protection. Lichtenstein, for example, interviewed a Khoi headman named Sigeb, who had moved with at least part of his following from the Cape to the vicinity of Klaarwater, where, although he allied with Barends, he retained full control of his following.

It is important to stress that up until the 1820s, Griqua political authority was founded on these personal, potentially ephemeral alliances between the two leading families and the heads of otherwise autonomous groups in their following. Neither the Barends nor the Koks made pretensions to territorial control. Thus, on one hand, autonomous Griqua bands independently scouted out and settled grazing lands they used, although they looked to the Koks and the Barends for defense of their claims. On the other hand, neither of the leading families made any claim to authority over groups who fell outside their personal sphere of influence. Thus, Burchell noted in 1812 that the Korana and San people indigenous to the Klaarwater region remained (largely) outside the Griqua political structure, despite their close proximity to immigrant hamlets, continuing to 'remove from place to place' and remaining in Griqua eyes a 'wild and independent people'.

2. The Beginnings of a New Order, 1804-1820.

Shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century, there began to emerge
a group of new, self-made men who acquired their subsistence to a greater or lesser extent outside of pastoralism. The establishment of a fixed settlement at the mission station at Klaarwater, for example, supported the emergence of a very small number of craftsmen and later teachers. Willem Fortuin, for example, began his career as Anderson's interpreter at the Zafik River mission station. He learned to repair and build wagons in the Cape Colony and came to ply his trade at Griqua Town. Still, to understand the emergence of this new group one must examine, first, shifts in Griqua trade activities, which freed some poorer families from dependence on wealthy herd owners and second, the growth of cultivation.

From roughly 1800 Griqua trade activities underwent an important transition, allowing some poorer Griqua families to break loose of their dependence on the wealthy for acquiring livestock and implements for production. Prior to 1800, Griqua trade seems to have been by and large bound to subsistence activities. Seeking to acquire strategic goods — guns, ammunition, wagons, and horses — in the colony, the Griqua brought south 'hides and horns' and cattle for trade, hides and horns being procured probably primarily in Griqua hunts, and livestock culled largely from Griqua herds. The Griqua discovery of southern Tswana towns in the mid-1790s, however, placed them in a new position. The very discrepant values placed on goods by the Cape colonists, on one hand, and the southern Tswana, on the other, offered the Griqua quite lucrative opportunities as middlemen. Offering beads and tobacco obtained from the colony and sheep from their own herds, the Griqua bartered for cattle and ivory with the southern Tswana. The bead trade at its inception was particularly lucrative. Borcherds, for example, reported exchanging two pounds of fine glass and porcelain beads for an ox, although the exchange rate of beads quickly deflated. Or, Lichtenstein reported that a 12-16 pound elephant tusk was obtained from the southern Tswana for a roll of tobacco of the same length.

Trade, in itself, far from revolutionized Griqua society. In fact, it worked in the main as a conservative force: the wealthiest of families, like the Barends and the Koks, controlled the resources necessary for large scale investment in long distance trade; they and other aristocratic families — e.g. the Hendricks, the Joods and the Kars — dominated the trade and most probably took the lion's share of its profits. Trade, then, most likely consolidated, if not exaggerated, the existing differences in wealth. Moreover, the profitability of trade deflected early aristocratic interest in agriculture. Although Griqua aristocrats were the initiators of agricultural experimentation on the Kaap plateau, as will be discussed below, the riches to be gained in long distance trade diverted their attention. While they often left junior members of their families behind to till fields, the more powerful seniors increasingly focused their attention on extending and amplifying trade activities with the north.

Moreover, participation in trade may not have particularly effected the position of the majority of the poor. One can at best speculate about the involvement of poorer families in trade. It is likely that many continued to depend on tapping their own subsistence production to acquire tradeable goods. Although some undoubtedly scraped together sufficient surplus to invest in long distance trade, their profits were not likely to be spectacular. Moreover, while some Griqua may have squandered their earnings on luxuries like clothing, many others continued to purchase traditional commodities like guns, horses and wagons. Although in doing so, the latter maintained or even slightly bettered their position in the Griqua social order, they far from overturned it.

The profits from trade, however, became powerful instruments of change in the hands of a very small minority of poorer, progressive families, who sought
to free themselves from the web of pastoral society by accumulating sufficient capital to invest in agricultural equipment. For whether they did it consciously or not, in adopting mixed agriculture, they increasingly threw off their dependence on the pastoral aristocracy and gave birth to a new society.

Griqua experimentation with cultivation began in 1804 and 1805 with the establishment of a fixed settlement at the LHS mission station at Klaarwater (Griqua Town). According to the missionary, Anderson, he and a second evangelist, Cornelius Kramer, had migrated with the Griqua (largely the following of Earends) in the southern Kaap Plateau from 1801, but tiring of the nomadic life, persuaded a part of the community to establish a fixed abode at Klaarwater in 1804. This they did in the “Leeuwenkuil” River valley, roughly a half mile from the eye of a permanent fountain, where the missionaries assigned their following “different places where they should abide and work”. Yet, although Anderson supervised the building of canals to drain the marshy lower valley grounds to make them “fit for cultivation”, agriculture only slowly took hold at the site. Henri Lichtenstein, who visited the settlement in 1807, noted that only one “Bastard” family tilled the soil. And although John Campbell, who visited the Griqua in 1813, reported that “Many of the people have gardens... Many acres of land... especially around Griqua Town are cultivated”, overall, they were the minority of the Griqua population.

Part of the problem was undoubtedly economic. The Griqua were ignorant of the dry land tilling techniques employed by the southern Tswana and were therefore dependent on the use of the plough. The smith’s shop at Griqua Town was at best rudimentary, and the Griqua were dependent on trade with the colony for access to ploughs. The financial outlay for a plough was probably relatively heavy, making them initially beyond the means of the largely Khoi population settled at the station, allowing only the wealthiest of families, like the Barends and the younger scions of the Kok family who settled outside Griqua Town, to take up relatively large scale agriculture early on.

Part of the problem, however, was environmental. The average rainfall in the region is relatively low, making cultivation dependent on fountains. Although the river valley tapped by the settlement was watered by several fountains, they were saturated with lime, the deposit of which could inhibit harvests and render Griqua Town “somewhat unhealthy”.

Wealthier families with the means to invest in agricultural tools, then, sought out new sites for undertaking cultivation. It is difficult to determine when Barend Barends began cultivating. By 1813, however, Campbell noted that at Barends’ main settlement at Hardcastle, south west of Griqua Town, there were “several acres of land cultivated, in a beautiful vale a little to the south of the village.” The aridity of the site probably inhibited the acreage sown, however, and the more dramatic transformation was to occur at the cluster of fountains near Daniel’s Kuil in the northern Kaap Plateau, which Barends and his following settled between 1814 and 1820. A series of homesteads sprouted up in the vicinity, tapping various fountains for irrigation, with, for example, the Barends settling at Daniel’s Kuil, itself, the Kars family near Kramer’s Fountain two miles away and the Hendricks and the Joods in between. The agricultural activities undertaken in and around Daniel’s Kuil were relatively large in scale, and one European visitor reported in 1825 that at Kars’ place, alone, the predicted crop was 200 muids of grain. The Kok’s following, on the other hand, tended to focus whatever cultivation they undertook at their village at Campbell, on the western edge of the Kaap Plateau. Campbell was settled shortly after 1811 by junior members of the Kok family and their following. Probably from its inception, the settlement was used as an “agricultural place” and being watered by a series of good fountains, produced even in the 1810s over 100 muids of wheat a year on a comparatively...
small area of land.37

Many of the large undertakings of, for example, the Barendes, the Koks or the Kars, were dependent to some extent on client labour. The fields controlled by wealthy families at Campbell and Daniel’s Kuil seem to have been worked at least in part by San and Tswana retainers. John Campbell noted in 1813 that on the outskirts of the Griqua settlement at Campbell were a San and a southern Tswana village. The San, most likely the original occupants of the site, were to assist in cultivation and would receive in return a portion of the crop; similarly, the southern Tswana were kept as “temporary servants”.38 Returning to the area in 1820, Campbell visited Daniel’s Kuil to note that the irrigation ditch used by Jan Kars had been cut by local San, and probably in return for intermittent labour, these families were given supplies of grain. A similar situation seems to have existed on Barendes’ farm.39

Although the agricultural enterprises of the aristocrats were the most visible undertakings, of greater historical significance was the emergence of small-scale farmers, particularly in the environs of Griqua Town, in the 1800s and 1810s. The lack of evidence makes it difficult to trace the background of these families. One can suggest, however, that many of the early small-scale farmers were drawn from the original residents of the mission station, who included poorer Bastard families, ‘free blacks and slaves who had escaped from servitude’, former Khoi labourers, and fragments of former Khoi and Nama bands.40 Of increasing importance, however, may have been former clients of Griqua aristocrats, Andries Waterboer, the future kapteyn of Griqua Town, being the most notable case in point. As noted earlier, Robert Moffat stated in 1824 that the families of over 700 former clients of Griqua aristocrats had come to settle permanently in Griqua hamlets.41 Controlling much fewer resources than aristocrats, these poorer families seem to have approached agriculture in a much different way. On one hand, although wage labourers were available to them, they most likely undertook the bulk if not all agricultural labour themselves. On the other hand, although many may have possessed small herds and participated marginally in trade (trade, after all, was the means through which they acquired agricultural implements), cultivation was central to their subsistence. It is impossible to reconstruct the numbers of families involved in small-scale production in the 1800s and 1810s. Still, one can assert that in the course of the 1810s, they had grown sufficiently in number to become not only an audible, but an increasingly effective opposition, critical of the old kapteyns’ reign.

3. The Growth of Political Discontent.

Numerous obstacles inhibited the successful integration of these farmers into predominantly pastoral Griqua society. Theft of crops and damage to fields by stray stock, for example, perpetually troubled Griqua Town farmers. The LSS representative, John Campbell, convened a public meeting in Griqua Town in 1813 to promulgate laws against ‘crimes generally committed’ in the neighbourhood, and formulated two laws against ‘theft of crops and one against damage done to fields by stray stock.42 And in 1821 one writer reported that although stock abounded in the vicinity, only 4 or 5 kraals were maintained in the settlement itself. ‘The stray cattle wandering about nightly and unrestrained through the town,’ he continued, inhibited the working of garden grounds.43 Similarly, although agriculture at Griqua Town depended on irrigation, there was a want of sufficient manpower to service the canals and a lack of centralized authority to regulate the distribution of water supplies. Although a system of fines was instituted in 1816 for failing to assist in clearing canals, resistance to such a program was stiff.44 And still in 1821, the ‘want of regulation in the supply of water’, alongside ‘trespass of cattle’ occasioned such ‘interminable broils’ that the Government Agent and the missionary at Griqua Town gave up growing crops, ‘to seek their supplies in the Colony’.45
The inadequacies of the pastoral political structure urged Anderson and the residents of Griqua Town to strive towards an effective form of local administration which could cope with the new problems posed by agricultural expansion. The patriarchal authority of the Koks and Barends nominally extended over the mission station until December 1820. Still, the distance of their residences from the station, the frequent absence, particularly of Barends, on trade trips, and in the end their unwillingness to intervene in the station’s affairs, rendered the kapteyns’ impact on the daily life of the settlement negligible. At the inception of the mission settlement, “magistrates”, drawn from the families of the kapteyns or of closely allied aristocrats, were appointed to administer the local affairs of the mission station and its outstations. Although possibly appointed by the missionaries, the “magistrates” seem to have been for all practical purposes headmen operating under the established pastoral system. Representatives of the largest stock owning families, their control over local pasture sites may have been of paramount importance, and while they were expected to “inspect and take care of the rest”, they administered the overwhelmingly pastoral community with little else than personal influence.

The first move towards autonomous administration of the hamlet occurred following Governor Jansen’s edict of 1805. Prior to that time, the missionary, William Anderson, acquired some authority over the station in the form of his control over the distribution of land and water resources. This, however, probably conferred ambiguous powers to Anderson. On one hand, very few families showed any interest whatsoever in adopting cultivation in this early period. Although this situation changed somewhat by 1814, Anderson remained in a precarious position: it was in the mission’s interest that as many people as possible settle on the mission station; and, residents of the station easily used this consideration to curtail Anderson’s authority, moving off the station when seriously disagreeing with the missionary. The edict of 1805 attempted to bolster Anderson’s position by conferring privileges on his supporters: trade with the colony was to be precluded except when done through the missionary, and Anderson was granted the right to distribute gun powder to loyal followers. These measures, however, were almost designed to breed contempt rather than obedience: colonial patrols of the frontier were sparse and generally ineffective; as a result, trade between Griqua and colonial farmers was commonplace and gun powder widely available. Rather, it seems to have been the colonial assumption of Anderson’s control over the mission station which spurred him to become more active in administering the affairs of the village. From 1806, Anderson became somewhat active in punishing crimes committed in the vicinity of Klaarwater (Griqua Town). Anderson’s intermittent activism, however, did not change his circumstances: he remained dependent on the compliance of the kapteyns and the hamlet’s residents for punishing offenses.

Probably as a result of these problems, Anderson worked between 1807 and 1809 to replace the magistrate system with direct administration by the kapteyns. Yet although Anderson persuaded the Cape government to recognize their authority (accomplished in the issuing of staffs of office in 1809), the kapteyns’ interest in Griqua Town remained indifferent and their authority to intervene in the settlement’s affairs limited. By 1812, the growth of an agricultural community at Griqua Town made the kapteyns’ complacency problematic. Burchell wrote in 1812 that their power extended “little beyond a voluntary submission on the part of the people.” Given the growth of conflict between pastoralists and agriculturalists at the settlement, “their power does not seem to be so strong as the good of their society requires.”

In an effort to remedy the situation, the LMS representative, John Campbell, who visited Griqua Town in 1813, convened a meeting of male residents on the station, to draft a constitution and to codify basic laws. According to the newly
dispensation, Barends would retain overarching authority over the settlement, organizing its defense. The daily affairs of the hamlet and its hinterland, however, were to be administered by nine elected magistrates, who would enforce the agreed upon laws. Although many of the laws were of a universal nature—dealing, for example, with theft or murder—three of the more sociologically specific regulations dealt with cultivation. Stealing from a garden, for example, would be punished with whipping or hard labour, and doing so at harvest time, double punishment. The owner who allowed his cattle to graze in fields would be fined double the amount of his livestock’s damage.

Although the nine magistrates were elected shortly after Campbell’s departure, their rule remained ineffective and they failed to implement the new laws. Legassick blames this on the growth of the Hartenaars—in Anderson’s eyes, a group of Griqua rebels who, abandoning the Griqua Town area and taking refuge on the Hart River, sought to overthrow the existing order. They did so, according to Legassick, first because of the introduction of Campbell’s ‘punishments’; second, because of the missionary’s complicity with the colonial government; and third out of rejection of the authority of the kapteyns. Although some individuals, like members of the Hendricks family, were in earnest opposition to the authorities at Griqua Town, it can be argued that their import has been greatly exaggerated. Although they intermittently sent vitriolic letters to Anderson, they never attacked the mission station. Moreover, although Anderson may have earnestly believed his life was in danger, it was also in his interests to portray the abandonment of the Griqua Town area occurring and his now obvious lack of control over the populace as a form of rebellion against colonial authorities.

Stockenstrom, who visited various Griqua bands in 1820, portrayed the situation quite differently.

I by no means agree with Mr. Anderson as to the gloomy account he gives of the present state of the Gricquas [sic], their desperate intentions, their avowed independence of the Colonial Government...and their being intent on his, Mr. Anderson’s, destruction.

Koever, Stockenstrom found the kapteyns quite civil and well-disposed towards the Cape Colony.

Rather, the ‘substantial exodus’ from the Griqua Town vicinity which became visible in 1815 should be interpreted as part of a larger scale abandonment of the arid southwestern districts by Griqua pastoralists for more favourable sites to the east. Small-scale emigration was apparent as early as 1813. John Campbell, travelling along the Orange River near the Brak River in 1813, encountered one of the Barena brothers, who explained that he had moved from Griqua Town with his following and livestock for ecological reasons: ‘no more people could live at Klaarwater [Griqua Town] than were already there...and some belonging to the settlement were obliged to live as far from it as they were.’

By 1615 the pace of emigration hastened. Various families, on one hand, extended their sites north east along the Hart River. Their movement, it seems, was given even greater impetus by Barends’ abandonment of Hardcastle, where the fountain had failed, and his settlement at the better-watered sites of Boetsap and Daniel’s Kuil to the north east.

Expansion to the south east, on the other hand, was accelerated by the settlement of the Kok patriarch, Cornelius Kok, at Campbell rather than at Griqua Town in 1816. By 1822, families formerly residing near Griqua Town and Campbell had extended themselves south along the Vaal River and south east along the Orange River, reaching to within one day’s journey of what was to become Philippolis. The WMS missionary, Thomas Hodgson, noted that they had left Griqua Town ‘in consequence of the drought to seek grass for their cattle.’

The kapteyns’ abandonment of the Griqua Town area, however, left local office holders in a precarious position. For although the kapteyns rarely...
intervened in the settlement's affairs, their presence still supplied a sense of legitimacy to the admittedly haphazard administration. Lacking the means to enforce its will, the council of magistrates remonstrated with the kapteyns. Finally, in 1816, Barends and Kok were called before a council of Griqua Town magistrates, where, according to Waterboer, they were 'spoken to respecting their neglect of duty, and at the same time warned of the uproar they were causing in the Country through their neglect, and unfaithfulness in duty'. Rather than submitting to the council, the kapteyns walked out of the meeting. 'Captain A. Kok,' according to Waterboer, 'threw away his Captain's staff and immediately removed from the place, with his whole family, to the Great [Orange] River.' 57

Although Barends remained nominally in control of the settlement, Griqua Town became riven with internecine conflicts. Kok's departure to a large extent denuded the hamlet of it's population, leaving a relatively small number of families behind.58 These, it seems, were cast into bitter conflict. Waterboer explained:

...the inhabitants of Griqua Town became divided, the parties attacked each other with assegais with the intention to murder. They wilfully destroyed each others gardens, so that for some years they had no advantage from them. The parties were in such a state of enmity that they cut the back sinews of each others Cows and Oxen; and the Bushmen stole the Peoples' Cattle...out of the kraals in the village.59

when Moffat replaced Anderson as resident missionary on the station in 1820, 'the affairs of the place looked like a ship's company without a helm or compass'.60 Such was the lawlessness extant in the hamlet that many thought of disbanded the station.61

According to Jan Bloem, the crisis was brought to a head by a land dispute between widows, which Waterboer successfully arbitrated.62 Following Moffat's promptings, elders at Griqua Town determined to elect their own kapteyn, independently of the Barends or Koks, whose distance from Griqua Town made them 'beyond the opportunity of personal superintendence and immediate application.'63 The elders met in December 1820, deposed Barend, and elected Andries Waterboer as the new kapteyn of Griqua Town.


It is difficult to assess Waterboer's early regime, caught up as it was in attempting to bolster and extend its authority in the face of staunch and often violent opposition. Legassick's contention that its import lay in its establishment of elective principles is debatable. Waterboer's San origins and his relative poverty obviated his use of patronage, which seemed to operate within Griqua bands. Similarly, his single early political appointee, Willem Portuin, who became veld cornet for Griqua Town in 1825, was a self-made man of marginal wealth.64 In this sense, Waterboer derived his authority from his following rather than from his wealth, and he maintained his position by representing and acting in accordance with family heads at Griqua Town.65 Still, Waterboer never in his 22 year rule called for subsequent elections, and his son, Nicholaus, inherited the position of kapteyn after his father's death. Moreover, Waterboer did not attempt to impose the fledgling meritocracy on outstations affiliated with the hamlet. Rather, he retained 'the old native system of having head-men -'chiefs', claimed Waterboer, who took the 'charge of surveillance' of their following from him.66 The most significant change wrought by Waterboer was his willingness to intervene in the affairs of his following, particularly in protecting the interests of agriculturalists.
This is partially obscured by the resistance he encountered from the overwhelmingly pastoral majority when attempting to establish his regime. To some (perhaps many) of the Griqua pastoralists still loyal to the Barends or the Koks, Waterboer was an "upstart chief", whose election "destroyed the system of patriarchal descent" on which the pastoral order rested.\(^8\) Thus, Jan Bloem, who was to become a major opponent of Waterboer's captaincy, later recalled, "I was dissatisfied with the election of Waterboer and left for 'Gooymansberg' with several of the Koranas.'\(^9\) Yet, so long as Waterboer claimed authority over the village of Griqua Town alone, he generated no widespread, overt opposition.\(^0\)

Waterboer's efforts to bolster his regime with the direct support of the Colonial Government, however, changed matters dramatically. Anderson had returned to the Cape Colony in 1820 warning that Griqua lawlessness and violence would spill over into the colony unless they were brought back inside its borders. Stockenstrom was sent to investigate, and, as noted earlier, argued Anderson's charges were exaggerated. Still, he urged that a Government Agent be appointed to the Griqua, if for no other reason than to "keep alive the feeling of dependence" in the Griqua area.\(^1\) It is likely that Adam Kok momentarily supported the idea,\(^2\) probably in the belief that it might enhance his authority. The Cape Government, however, responded to Stockenstrom's proposals first by confirming Waterboer in office and second by appointing John Melville, the Government Agent, to Griqua Town. Waterboer's reasons for hosting the Government Agency are clear. He hoped to use the Agent to supply the power base his following could not in order to implement his new regime. It is not surprising, then, that the kapteyns regarded Waterboer's sponsorship of Melville as an attempt to "control them, the "real, hereditary chiefs." George Thompson explained, "This they considered as a sort of usurpation or infringement of their privileges, not to be tolerated, and to which they accordingly, resolved not to submit."\(^3\) At the same time, "Radicals", like the Hendricks, viewed Melville's appointment as "the precursor of more immediate acts of sovereignty on the part of the Government," Melville being regarded as nothing more than a "Landdrost in disguise."\(^4\) Kapteyns and Radicals were finding a common cause, and residents of Griqua Town were viewed increasingly as "a community separate from and opposed to the interests of the others."\(^5\)

Finally, Waterboer's efforts to extend his authority over the old kapteyns' followers still resident in the vicinity of Griqua Town provoked civil war. Waterboer offended the wealthy patriarch, Andries Hendricks, by reporting his intended participation in "illicit trade" with the colony.\(^6\) He alienated Jacob Cloete, whom he had 'fined several times for petty offenses'. When rumour spread that Cloete and four others intended to attack Waterboer, the kapteyn forcibly apprehended the group at Campbell, whipped Cloete, and set the group to public work as prisoners.\(^7\) He at least threatened to punish Hans Goeyman and a nephew of Andries Hendricks after they were accused of rape and punished Jantje Goeyman for adultery and behaving in a riotous manner.\(^8\) This group, with perhaps a small band of relatives and sympathisers, removed itself from the Griqua Town area and became the nucleus around which the disaffected, who became known as the Bergenaars, collected.\(^9\) They drew a good deal of sympathy from Griqua pastoralists and kapteyns alike. It was said, for example, that upon abandoning Campbell, Adam Kok turned over the captaincy of the settlement to Cornelius Kok on the condition that Cornelius protect Adam's followers from Waterboer's "ill-treatment."\(^0\) Yet, although the early Bergenaars sent "threatening and taunting letters" to Waterboer,\(^1\) it was Waterboer's own efforts to forcibly subdue them and finally his attack against the now distant Jan Bloem (where Waterboer stole possibly all the leader's livestock) that sparked violent opposition. The history of the civil wars has been dealt with in detail elsewhere.\(^2\) Let it suffice to note here that between 1824 and 1828 attacks on Griqua Town vitally threatened the settlement, which, without the

\(^{8}\) Let it suffice to note here that between 1824 and 1828 attacks on Griqua Town vitally threatened the settlement, which, without the
support of Cornelius Kok and of sympathisers in the Cape Colony would have been forced to disperse.

Although Waterboer’s regime was viewed by many pastoralists as ‘upstart’ and ‘tyrannical’, to the agriculturalist minority at Griqua Town it introduced badly needed reforms. On one hand, Waterboer was an activist, who readily intervened in the settlement’s affairs to promote ‘order’. Waterboer, explained Melville, was the only kapteyn who had ‘constantly taken an interest in the welfare of his countrymen and exerted himself to preserve good order.’ He was ‘constantly employed in some public business’ and was vigilant ‘in apprehending and punishing offenses’. On the other hand, he began to redirect the political administration at Griqua Town to promote agriculturalist expansion. Although conflicts during Waterboer’s early reign impeded his efforts, he still attempted to address the most outstanding problems perplexing cultivators. First, he tried to enforce the better management of the settlement’s herds, paddocking them in common at night and levying fines for damage done to fields. Second, he was active in insuring and regulating the water supply at the station. Moffat noted in 1824 that each family which cultivated at Griqua Town had a share of the water, ‘regulated by law.’ Moreover, with the subsidence of the civil war in 1828, Waterboer led efforts to increase the water supply, first in attempting to clear the fountain at the old village, and second in 1828 in moving to a new site, where fountains were opened and cleared, water courses built, and irrigation ditches dug. By 1829 these efforts doubled the amount of water available to agriculturalists and the acreage cultivated. His regime supported the expansion of agriculture in other ways as well: promoting the immigration of black refugees who practiced mixed agriculture but who had fled their homelands as a result of the Difaqane or dissident Griqua raiders; the granting of land certificates to large-scale agricultural producers, and in the 1830s the securing of fountains between Tsatsabane and Boetsap for use by his following. The success of his efforts were perhaps best summed up by the LMS missionary, P. Wright, in 1829:

...our people are particularly industrious this year in their agriculturalist pursuits in which perhaps they are more fixed and which are better directed and more extended than any year preceding...it has a good influence on our outside farmers who are I believe endeavouring to copy the example of order and industry exhibited to them by people on the station.

Conclusion.

I have argued in this essay that the ascendance of Andries Waterboer to the Griqua Town captaincy and the subsequent Griqua civil war resulted from the growth of an agriculturalist faction who were seeking to carve from the predominantly pastoral order a political structure suited to their needs. Although many of the established pastoral elite took up often large-scale cultivation, overall they regarded it as peripheral to their herding and trading activities, and the pastoral regime remained largely indifferent to agriculturalists’ problems. Poorer cultivators supported efforts to reform the political system as it applied to their primary settlement, Griqua Town, in the 1810s. Still, it was only with their rejection of the old kapteyns and their promotion of one of their rank and file, Waterboer, to the position of kapteyn that their administration was redirected. Waterboer’s ascendance, however, and particularly his use of colonial support to bolster his regime generated widespread discontent amongst the pastoralist majority. Finally, his efforts to subordinate members of the old pastoral elite provoked violent opposition, which threatened the very existence of his regime. Still, particularly after the subsidence of the Griqua civil war
in 1828, Waterboer to a large extent succeeding in establishing a new order, which promoted small-scale agricultural production.

This is not to say that Waterboer placed local Griqua society on a totally new footing. The extreme aridity of the Griqua Town area limited the extent to which agriculture could be practised. Even after his acquisition of fertile fountain sites in the north of Griqua territory, Waterboer would write in 1845: "My people are partly pastoral people being compelled thereto by the circumstances of the land, for there are very few fountains in the ward which can be used to promote agriculture." And, even with the British assumption of control of Griqualand West in the 1870s, these Griqua remained to a large extent a pastoral community. Moreover, although Waterboer's early years of office refocused the political structure, they did not, as yet, reshape it. Much of the early change which occurred resulted from Waterboer's redefining the captaincy - in his abandonment of patronage and his direct involvement in resolving local disputes. His appointment of Fortuin as veld cornet at Griqua Town, however, did initiate the long, slow evolution of more centralized administrative structures which characterized Griqua political change up until the 1870s. Yet, although Waterboer worked to establish a more formal Council and to define territorial boundaries in the 1830s, the more dramatic changes were wrought by his son, Nicholas. These included the more systematic delineation of administrative districts, the appointment of veld cornets to administer these, the collection of personal taxes, the imposition of tolls at river drifts, and the issuing of trade licenses. Still, residents in the territory were to remain to a large extent composite: speaking different languages, using different subsistence strategies, residing in different village structures and relating to the emergent Griqua state as different categories of citizens. In the long term, then, although Waterboer redirected the energies of the Griqua Town authorities, he wrought only an incomplete revolution.

Notes


2. The term, Griqua, was only applied to the community in 1813, the term most frequently used prior to that time being Bastard. Still, for the sake of clarity, I have applied it to the community from its inception. The term is difficult to define - the Griqua, themselves, having great difficulty in precisely determining its meaning in the 1870s. GW 19 (Conference with H. Waterboer and others, 1874). It seems to have entailed any combination of characteristics: residence, marriage, political affiliations, ethnic background, social position and conduct. For the purposes of this essay, let me forward a simplistic definition, Griqua being applied to the affiliates of the Koks or Barends who approximated their socio-economic practices.

3. Legassick, 'Northern Frontier'.

12
4. Ibid., p. 265.

5. Lichtenstein noted the presence of numerous Bastards at Klaarwater in 1604 who had been driven from the colony by Europeans who usurped their lands. Henry Lichtenstein, Travels in Southern Africa, vol. 2, (Cape Town, 1928), pp. 305-06. Available evidence would suggest that although the Bastards were not persistently evicted, the encroachment in fits and starts of white settlement continued to push Bastard bands north of the Orange River. See, for example, J. Fischer, "Daily Journal of the Occurrences Connected with the Journey to and beyond the Boundary of the Colony," in CO 2627. This deals with the ousting of the Bastards from the Roggeveld, one of the last good pasture areas available to the Bastards south of the Orange River. Personal communication, Nigel Penn, Cape Town, 1.9.1983. Fischer noted, "In the colony they had been sensibly oppressed wherever they went, and by consequence they had no secure place within the limits to resort to for the preservation of their cattle. . .but were driven from one place to another without protection or security." For evidence regarding fugitives, see Lichtenstein, vol. 2, pp. 305-06; Petrus Borcherds, An Autobiographical Memoir, (Cape Town: 1861), p. 118; John Campbell, Travels in South Africa, (London, 1815), p. 157; GR 12/6, Anderson, 9.2.1816, C) 2612, Anderson, 9.2.1816; and GH 10/2, Melville, 6.8.1822.


10. "Evidence of Hobert Moffat in 1835, GPP XXXIX 1835, Ibid. It should be noted, the nature of clientship is difficult to reconstruct. Borcherds wrote that Khoi servants of the Griqua were paid a fat salary, ranging from 6s to 7s 6d a month, while the San were given a portion of the new lambs. Borcherds, p. 117. Other writers, like Campbell, wrote that Griqua herders were given only the milk of the livestock they tended. Campbell, p. 157. Moffat wrote that herders functioned according to something akin to a contract, performing labour for a set period and paid an agreed upon wage. EFP XXXIX 1835, Ibid. Only future research could begin to sort this out.

11. That is to say, they became active following a raid on a Griqua band. The inability of the Barends or Koks to control, for example, the movement of groups they allied with rendered the bonds particularly superficial: Griqua settlement of pasture sites north of the Orange River more often than not amounted to usurpation of fountains or pans from their original San, Korana or even Tswana owners. A wonderfully vivid description of this is contained in the aside recorded by Hodgson. He visited a Griqua encampment 2 days north of Philippolis, whose residents had just established
20 "temporary huts". While there, he was visited by the 'Captain of a Party of Bushmen (to whom the place properly belongs)', who came to beg tobacco. University of London, Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society [hereafter WHMS] 300/2/1, Hodgson, Journal 1.21.22. The Griqua sorely felt their vulnerability. Andrew Smith learned from a Griqua near Philippolis in 1834, for example, that had not the majority of Griqua experienced oppression in the Cape Colony, they would certainly return to it, for 'when in it they have a protection in the laws which they do not enjoy' north of the colonial boundary. GH 19/4, Smith, 9.17.1834. The solution for many was to ally with the Barends or the Koks, who in organising punitive raids, provided some security of tenure. Thus, Sigeb, a leader of a Khoi band near Klaarwater, explained his alliance with Barends:

...it was impossible for him to remain longer where he was, on account of his being so grievously molested by Boejesmans: if the Bastard-Hottentots were not so near, and had not sometimes taken him into protection, he should have lost all his cattle, perhaps not even escaped with his life.


12. Legassick, 'Northern Frontier', p. 266.

13. GH 10/2, Melville, 9.9.1824 and CO 2649 Melville 2.2.1822.


15. Kok later recalled that he made no claim to authority over the Korana, for example, who lived side by side with his following on the Vaal River. LG 540, G. Kolbe, 2.9.1844.


18. The earliest recorded economic activity of the Griqua was, indeed, hunting, and the reference placed hunting squarely within the frame of subsistence production. Thus, Anderson, referring probably to the 1780s, wrote of early Griqua exploration of the Orange River: 'These pools being before unfrequented, had an abundance of small and large game; and these Hottentots [early Griqua] having learned the use of guns, were enabled to live, and increase considerably'. William Anderson, 'Corana Mission', Transactions of the London Missionary Society, vol. 3, p. 12. Hunting activities supplemented pastoral, and quite regularly parties of Griqua hunters followed game and, using guns, horses and wagons, slaughtered relatively large numbers of animals, salting the meat to bring back to their settlement for consumption. The quote is taken from Abraham Kok, son of Cornelius Kok, who testified in 1871 at the estimated age of 88. GWLG 2, p. 5.

19. Borcherds, p. 83. As early as 1808 it was reported that the Tlhaping, having obtained so many beads through trade with the Griqua, in fact, 'would receive no more'. University of Witwatersrand, William Burchell Papers, Memoranda, 7.27.1812. The informant was Jan Hendricks.


21. These families were repeatedly mentioned as active in the trade. See University of Witwatersrand, William Burchell Paper, Memoranda, 7.24.1812;

23. Jan Pienaar’s testimony provides a particularly clear example of this. He claimed his father was granted a relatively large farm by Barends, where the father planted trees, made irrigation furrows, and sowed lands. Between 1621 and 1829, Jan’s brother Martinus was left on the farm while Jan, himself, traded. GWLC 9, p. 114. For contemporary evidence of Pienaar’s trading, see LG 3, Van Ryneveld, 5.6.1829.

24. Evidence of the composition of hunting/trade parties led, often, by aristocrats, is unfortunately lacking. It is likely that many poorer families accompanied the expeditions, if for no other reason than to hunt. Some may have acted in the relatively lucrative role of trade agent—combining whatever wares or livestock they could assemble with those of other families who stayed behind. Anderson reported paying his agents two-thirds of the goods actually obtained by them in their journeys north. William Anderson, ‘Journals of the Missionaries,’ *Transactions of the London Missionary Society*, vol. 3, p. 215.


27. Campbell, pp. 257 and 163.

28. University of Witwatersrand, Burchell Papers, Memoranda, 5.27.1812. Apparently both the wheel plough and the common plough were utilized. See also, ‘Notice’, *South African Commercial Advertiser*, 10.26.1825.

29. Campbell, p. 163.


31. Campbell, p. 263.

32. Legassick, ‘Northern Frontier’, p. 269. It was most likely settled in the mid-1810s, for it is clear that by 1817 Barends had left the Griqua Town area. Ibid., p. 272.

33. SAL, John Campbell, Journal, 7.31.1820; Mary Moffat and Robert Moffat, pp. 37, 38 and 221; GWLC 9, Claim 1745, Evidence of Klaas Hendricks; GWLC 18, Exhibit 32, p. 109.

34. See the excerpts from Warren’s father’s diary of his visit to the area in 1825: Charles Warren, *On the Veldt in the Seventies*, (London, 1902), p. 353. It is hard to say what was done with the wheat, although it is possible that already a trade in wheat to frontier Boers existed. Wheat was one of the commodities traded by the Griqua at the frontier fairs of 1819 and 1820. ‘The Griqua and Their Exodus,’ *Cape Monthly Magazine*, 5 (1872), pp. 323-24; CO 2625, Stockenstrom, 5.5.1820.

36. GHLC 18, pp. 11-12 (Evidence of N. Kruger).


38. Campbell, p. 245.


41. BPP XXXIX 1835, p. 127.

42. Campbell, pp. 253-54. The quote is from p. 253.


44. In 1817 one leader told Anderson, 'You may compel me to stay, but you can't compel me to work'. Legassick, 'Northern Frontier', p. 272.

45. 'Notice', *South African Commercial Advertiser*.


47. For a fuller discussion of this period, see Legassick, 'Northern Frontier', p. 267.


49. Campbell, pp. 252-54.


51. Colonial authorities had pressed hard on Anderson to force him to gain Griqua compliance with their desires and even went so far as threatening to withdraw protection over him and his family. See, for example, CO 4539, Zird, 1.17/1817.

52. BPP XXXIX 1835, p. 130.


56. The quote was taken from SAL/MMS, Box 13, Thomas Hodgson, Journal 5, 11.21.1822. See also that journal, entries 12.191822 - 12.21.1822 and 11.27.1822.

57. University of London, Council of World Missions [hereafter LWMS], Correspondence, South Africa X/3/d, Andries Waterboer, 'A Short Account', 1827.

58. Smith, p. 286.
59. LMS Corresp. Sa, X/3/d, Waterboer.
60. Robert Moffat, p. 200.
61. LMS Corresp. Sa, X/3/d, Waterboer.
62. A 11, Jan Bloem, Statement before Thompson, Klipdrift, 2.25.1873.
The description may have been disdainfully allegorical, however.
For Moffat’s comments, see Robert Moffat, p. 200.
64. SUCL 62, Willem Fortuin; GWLC 4, p. 8.
65. EPP XXXIX 1835, p. 128.
66. GWLC 4, p. 8.
67. GH 21/1, Waterboer, 7.29.1845. Witbby and Klaas oversaw the Korana, Sebe
the Son, Samecheoe the Thlharo, Katlane the Basutos. See also SUCL 62,
Willem Witbooi.
68. *On the trade*, South African Commercial Advertiser, 11.2.1825, pp. 228
and 235. George Thompson noted that because of Waterboer’s *mean lineage*,
a great part of the tribe had refused to acknowledge his authority, and
retired from their chief village, Griqua Town, in disgust." George Thomp-
69. A 11, Jan Bloem. He took roughly 200 followers with him. It is clear
from the account that he considered himself a subject of Parends at the
time.
70. Melville claimed that when he visited Griqua Town in 1821 he attended a
meeting between Waterboer and the old kapteyns, where it was agreed that
Waterboer would rule at Griqua Town, Parends at Boetsap and Kok at Camp-
bell. CO 209, Melville, 12.17.1824,
71. A particularly good account of this is given in Andries Stockenstrom, The
Autobiography of the Late Sir Andries Stockenstrom, C.:. Hutton (ed.),
(Cape Town, 1837), vol. 1, pp. 79-187. See also EPP XXXIX 1835, pp. 130-31.
72. Stockenstrom reported of his interviews with the old kapteyns, ‘I also
found a wish for more particular interference of Government most generally
prevailed; the chiefs even declared that without that support they would
not resume their positions.’ EPP XXXIX 1835, p. 130. Moreover, the mis-
sionary at Campbell, Sass, wrote Melville saying Kok approved of the idea
of an Agent and had discussed it with positive results with his following.
CO 209, Melville, 12.17.1824.
73. Thompson, pp. 72-73. Also see *On the trade*, South African Commercial
Advertiser, XXIX, 11.9.1825.
74. *On the trade*, Ibid.
75. Smith, p. 207.
76. CO 209, Melville, 12.27.1824.
77. CO 164, Melville, 6.27.1824. Shortly after, he brought another critic who
‘used the most threatening language’ to Griqua Town and put him in irons.
GH 10/2, Melville, 9.9.1822.
78. CO 209, Melville.

79. GH 10/2, Melville, 3.24.1823. The political aspect of this assemblage and its subsequent growth cannot be denied. Sources sympathetic to the Bergenaars noted that many were followers of the Koks and Barends who were afraid of the 'preponderance of Waterboer, supported as he is [by Melville].'

80. 'On the Trade', South African Commercial Advertiser.

81. GH 10/2, Melville, 9.9.1822.

82a. CO 209, Melville.

83. GH 10/2, Melville, 9.9.1822.

84. EPP XXXIX 1835, p. 128.

85. GH Corresp. SA, XI/3/d, Wright, 8.6.1829. See also GH Corresp. SA, XI/2/b, Wright, 10.10.1828; GH Corresp. SA, XI/3/d, Wright, 8.6.1829.

86. GH Corresp. SA XI/3/d, Wright, 8.6.1829.

87. GH 21/1, Waterboer, 7.29.1845.

88. G. LC 1, p. 33; G. LC 4, p. 65; G. LC 1C, pp. 42-44, 48, 64, 78-79 and 126-27.