

The Zulu Notion of God

according to the traditional Zulu God-names.

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[c sign of dental click	'Ntu' instead of 'Bantu'	H = high tone (')**
q " palatal "	'Xosa' " " 'Kafir'	M = medium tone (no sign)
x " lateral "	'Lau' " " 'Hottentot'	L = low tone (')]
hl " lateral fricative	'Twa' " " 'Bushman'	

The readers of "Anthropos" need scarcely be told that the Zulus form the extreme South East of the Ntu field. By Zulu, in this treatise, we mean not only the pure Zulu in, or out of, Zululand, but all the Zulu-speaking tribes of southern South Africa, such as the Lallas, Bacas, Swazis, &c. We might include as well the Tebeles, that is, the inhabitants of Matabeleland (recte 'Matebeleland' or rather 'Tebeleland'), as far as they are descendants of those pure Zulus or Zulu-speaking Ntus who, under the leadership of a pure Zulu of the Kumalo tribe, seceded from the Zulu king Tshaka, and became the nucleus of the former Tebele kingdom. However we shall not refer to them expressly, nor to the Ngonis (Wangoni, Angoni) W. and E. of the Nyasa, who also are descendants of pure Zulus and Zulu-speaking Ntus as shown by their very name (*w*)aNgoni, the Zulu *abaNguni* which is but another, and older name for *amaZulu*.

The question I wish to discuss is this: Have the Zulus any notion of the true God? And if they have, what kind of notion have they? The answer to this question I intend basing (as can be seen by the heading), in the main, upon their traditional God-names and the traditions clustering round them; but there is nothing to prevent us from drawing for additional proofs on any available source, within or without the Ntu circle.

It is truly remarkable what a vexed problem this question has been from the very beginning, that is, the time of the first missionaries (non-Catholic) down to our own days. And yet, it seems to me, the facts were obvious enough. Therefore, before settling down to our subject, it may be as well to point out at least some of the reasons that contributed to obscuring those facts.

One was, I believe, the great difference between Ntu paganism and the types of paganism with which the missionaries (all of them Europeans) were familiar, that is, chiefly Greek, Roman, Teutonic, and Celtic paganism.

All these were polytheistic forms of paganism, while Ntu paganism, wherever unmixed with foreign importations, is monotheistic, paradox as it may seem. The Ntus are pagans, but not because they have no knowledge whatever of the true God. They are pagans because they pay divine worship to the spirits of their dead blood-relations (this is usually, though wrongly, called

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** In order to be able to distinguish between dynamic or rhythmic accent and musical high tone, we use for the former the usual ' , and for the latter ' (for typographical reasons). ' stands for musical low tone, and therefore has nothing to do with dynamic accent.