

**TSUNI - GOAM: THE
SUPREME BEING
OF THE KHOI-KHOI**

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BY

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TO
The Memory
OF
THE LATE
GEHEIMRATH HANS CONON VON DER GABELENTZ
OF POSCHWITZ
AND TO
PROFESSOR AUG. FRIEDR. POTT
OF HALLE ON THE SAALE

NEW YORK
1854

PREFACE.

THE following pages must speak for themselves; they will, I trust, be welcome to the student of Comparative Mythology, and to the Ethnologist and Anthropologist in general.

The reader will be sometimes disappointed on finding that my references to authorities are not always exact enough. I had often to quote from memory, and had then to confine myself to mentioning the names of the authors only. I may, however, expect that the reader will be lenient towards my failings on this point, if he puts himself in my position. I live here in a country village, and am entirely confined to my own small collection of books. The nearest and largest Colonial Library is in Cape Town, where, I am sorry to say, the standard works on Comparative Philology, Ethnology, and Anthropology, as well as the leading Journals and Periodicals of the Societies which cultivate these sciences, are still *desiderata*. With regard to Africa, and especially to South Africa, more and better selected materials are found in the Libraries of Vienna, Berlin, and London, than in the South African Public Library in Cape Town. The blame, however, does not attach to the Committee of Management, who indeed, with the limited means in their hands, have tried to please all parties. *Colonists have still to be taught to look on the South African Public Library as a National Institution, and with this view, in a true patriotic spirit, to contribute voluntarily such books, records, and documents as*

bear specially on our country. Then, and then only, the South African Public Library will thrive as a public institution, and soon become the workshop and nursery of South African science. With the spread of education, no doubt the interest in "Our Library" will increase. The name of Dr. Dale, the Superintendent General of Education in this Colony, is a guarantee that education will continue to advance with daily greater strides; and thus we may hope that, ere long, Colonial youths will aspire to distinguish themselves in historical and purely philosophical studies.

For the orthography of the Hottentot and Bantu words, I employed, with slight modifications, the excellent Standard Alphabet of Professor Lepsius, which proves, after all, the most serviceable, as far as South African languages are concerned.

The words and names quoted from travellers are given in their own orthography; in a few instances, however, I considered it necessary to substitute for their spelling that introduced by Professor Lepsius, in order to render the phonetic composition of words more transparent, and, consequently, their etymology more evident. The clicks, which are of vital importance for the etymologist, are very indiscriminately treated by most travellers, with the sole exception of Professor Dr. Gustav Fritsch.

Travellers and missionaries who wish to serve the cause of South African Philology should be well acquainted with the principles of Phonology before they venture to write down texts of illiterate languages. No missionary should be sent to the heathens without having acquired as thorough a knowledge of Phonetics as he has of the Gospel, and he should be taught to respect every vowel, every accent, every consonant; in fact, "*every jot and tittle in any, even the most barbarous, dialect he may hereafter have to analyse.*"* Comparative Philology is entirely based upon phonology, and if the laws of phonology for a group of languages are

* Max Müller, "Lect." ii. p. 42, ed. 1868.

once correctly established, the natural offshoot will be a true scientific etymology. This science is *the* telescope with which, where all other records fail, we can draw prehistoric times into our immediate view, and which allows us a look far back into "the very dawn of man's life."

It is an urgent want for us here in South Africa that a Standard Orthography for the Native Languages should be introduced in all official, educational, and public departments. The task is not as difficult as it may appear at first sight, and where there is a will, there is a way.

In the present Standard Orthography we write the clicks as follows:—

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| The Lateral l, | ¹ a, | ² na, | ³ kha, | ⁴ ga, |
| The Cerebral l, | ⁵ !ā, | ⁶ !nā, | ⁷ !khā, | ⁸ !gā, |
| The Palatal †, | ⁹ †ā, | ¹⁰ †nā, | ¹¹ †khā, | ¹² †ga. |
| The Dental , | ¹³ ā, | ¹⁴ nā, | ¹⁵ khā, | ¹⁶ gā. |

The importance of the clicks will be best illustrated by giving the meanings of these words here at once, thus, ¹ to wash, ² to drop, ³ to be able, ⁴ to split, ⁵ to fall, ⁶ to light, ⁷ to bore, to perforate, ⁸ to serve, ⁹ to wash, ¹⁰ to pour, ¹¹ to refuse, ¹² to plant, ¹³ to be sharp, ¹⁴ to filter, ¹⁵ with, ¹⁶ isolated, separated, thin, &c., dotted.

Those who wish to inform themselves about the nature of these clicks and their bearing on the phonology of the Hottentot language, I refer to Henry Tindall's excellent "Grammar and Vocabulary of the Namaqua-Hottentot Language," and to my "Sprache der Nama."

In Tindall's book, however, and in my own no mention is made of a harsh faucal sound peculiar to the old Cape Hottentot dialects—of which Witsen and Leibniz have supplied some materials—to the !Kora-Hottentot and to the Bushman languages of the !Kham, !Ai, !Nuni, !Koang, Hei†guis, Matsanakhoi and !Gabe. I write this consonant, which most resembles a forcibly produced *short croaking sound*—just as if a person is endeavouring to get rid of a bone in the throat—with the Hebrew

ʏ (ajin). *The very fact that this sound is produced by expiration and not by inspiration places it among the consonants proper, and not among the clicks.**

Most of the materials contained in this treatise have steadily accumulated during the last nine years. Aware of the responsibility resting upon me, I have been careful to adduce such facts only as I can with full confidence declare to be genuine productions of the Khoikhoi mind.

The following pages were written down in their present shape in the months of August and September last year, as is known to Professors Max Müller, of Oxford, and Friedrich Müller, of Vienna, and other friends to whom I either wrote or spoke on the subject at the time.†

I mention this the more as to-day a copy of the *Ausland*, February 16, 1880, comes to my hands, in which an article, *Die Religion der sogenannten Wilden*, reviewing Gustav Roskoff's book, "*Das Religionswesen der rohesten Naturvölker*," Leipzig, 1880, contains views and opinions coinciding so strikingly with those expressed by me, that the reader could easily be led to believe that either I must have perused Professor Roskoff's work, or that he had corresponded with me. This, however, is not the case, and therefore this peculiar coincidence may serve as a striking evidence of what I say, towards the conclusion of the third chapter, about the *psychical identity of the human mind*. At the same time it is a great satisfaction and encouragement to find that one does not stand alone with his views, and that there are comrades and fellow-labourers in the battle-field, where one least expected them.

I desire to inscribe these leaves to the memory of the late Herr Geheimrath Hans Conon von der Gabelentz, and to Professor August Friedrich Pott, of Halle. These scholars will always be mentioned first in the history of

* Vide Theoph. Hahn, "*Sprache der Nama*," § 2, &c.

† The full manuscript was read over to my friends Profs. Walker and Marais of Stellenbosch.

South African Philology, as the pioneers who laid the foundation-stone of the Comparative Grammar of the Kafir-Congo or Bantu Languages.* Whatever has been written afterwards on Bantu Grammar, is based on the researches of these twin-stars in the realm of the Science of Language. In availing myself of this opportunity I simply pay a debt of gratitude. I was so fortunate as to have Professor Pott as my master and foster-father in the Science of Language for nearly four years, while I studied at the University of Halle, and my holidays were often spent at Poschwitz, the castle of Herr von der Gabelentz, where I had free access to his excellent African library.

Last, but not least, I have to tender my sincere obligations to Professor Max Müller for undertaking so kindly to see this treatise through the press.

THEOPHILUS HAHN.

STELLENBOSCH, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE,

March 24, 1880.

* Pott, Die Sprachen vom Kaffer und Kongostamme, in *Zeitschrift der D. M. Gesellschaft*, ii. 5-26, 129-158; and H. C. v. d. Gabelentz, in the "Proceedings" of the same Society, i. 241, seq.