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TORDAY, Emil

Debate about Bantu Marriage / Vita a Bantu házasságról

Eredeti közlés /Original publication:

Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, 1930, Vol. 3, No. 2, Apr., pp. 233–234. (a / in: the column: Notes and News / rovatban)

Elektronikus újraközlés/Electronic republication:

AHU MAGYAR AFRIKA–TUDÁS TÁR – 000.002.625

Dátum/Date: 2018. január / January 18.

filename: torday_1930_DebateBantuMarriage

Az elektronikus újraközlést előkészítette

/The electronic republication prepared by:

B. WALLNER, Erika és/and BIERNACZKY, Szilárd

Hivatkozás erre a dokumentumra/Cite this document

TORDAY, Emil: Debate about Bantu Marriage / Vita a Bantu házasságról, 2018, **pp. 1–5.** old., No. 000.002.625, <http://afrikatudastar.hu>

Eredeti forrás megtalálható/The original source is available:

Közkönyvtárakban / In public libraries

Kulcsszavak / Key words

magyar Afrika–kutatás, Torday átfogó tanulmányát (Principle of Bantu Marriage, *Africa*, 1929) követően Theodor Seitz írt kritikai megjegyzéseket (Die Grundlagen der Ehe bei den Bantu, *Africa*, 1930), amelyekre Torday ebben az írásában reagált

African research in Hungary, after the Torday's comprehensive study (Principle of Bantu Marriage, *Africa*, 1929), Theodor Seitz wrote some critical remarks (Die Grundlagen der Ehe bei den Bantu, *Africa*, 1930), which Torday responded in this paper

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DEBATE ABOUT BANTU MARRIAGE

TORDAY, Emil

Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, 1930, Vol. 3, No. 2, Apr., pp. 233–234. (a / in: *the column: Notes and News / rovatban*)

Mr. E. Torday writes:

In expressing my thanks to Dr. Seitz for honouring my paper on the "Principles of Bantu Marriage" with his criticism, I answer him reluctantly, forced to do so by the dictates of courtesy. I am convinced that the apparent divergence between his opinion and mine is mainly based on the fact that we have in mind entirely different areas.

He says

"...my conception is based exclusively on experience acquired as judge and governor in the Cameroons..."

whereas I have attempted to draw conclusions from a general survey of Bantu speaking peoples. As for personal observations there is no comparison possible between those made by one who occupied the position of a judge and colonial governor and those of a man of minor importance who, during the ten years he spent in Africa lived for long periods among the natives as one of themselves.

There is a considerable difference between information culled through direct questions or the circulation of a questionnaire and that derived from the mere observation of the natives' daily life untrammelled by any restraining influence.

My mind was formed by these; I was, however, reluctant to publish any of my conclusions till I found support for them in the writings of men who, by their long experience in the field, their unrestrained intimacy with the natives and their familiarity with the native idioms, are entitled to be considered best qualified to express an opinion on

native institutions. 'I did not claim for the principles I laid down actual observance in our day.

I recognized that they were violated in practice, and if I have not gone into the causes of the deterioration of ancient customs, I was restrained by the limits imposed on a paper in any scientific publication. I certainly did not say that economic conditions were the primary motives influencing the natives, though I admitted that they played an important part in perpetuating abuses born of exceptional political conditions. I said that such an important question required a paper for itself, and it is still my intention to write this as soon as time permits.

Appealing for a revival of the ancient laws I naturally implied that they had been neglected or forgotten. This process would, of course, be a more rapid one in such colonies where it was the policy of the colonizing power, to substitute a new order for the traditional tribal conceptions of society as has been the case, for some time at any rate, in the Cameroons.

It would indeed be foolish to contest the exactitude of any observation made by one so well qualified as Dr. Seitz; but it would be equally unwise to forget the past history of the Cameroons.

In 1862 Burton (in the *Anthropological Review*, I. p. 52) called attention to the extent to which the natives' morals had been corrupted by the degraded white men who before and in his time infested the West Coast. He found that only among those natives who had escaped their influence did the marriage tie preserve its original significance.

But, with all diffidence, I venture to question one or two of Dr. Seitz's conclusions. The first is that matriarchate is due to the doubtfulness of paternity. I assumed that this theory had died with McLennan. It implies a slight on the African woman's chastity and, as one who has received much kindness at her hand, has been nursed by her when he was ill, fed when he was hungry, protected by her occasionally against men's aggressions, I am in duty bound to protest.

I venture to say that among many African peoples conjugal fidelity is as much the rule and adultery as much the exception as in any European community. This grave accusation that in Africa descent can be counted from women only because of their notorious frailty, was made nine hundred years ago by El Bekri and has been ever since piously repeated; it were time that it sank into oblivion.

In the same order of ideas I believe it to be quite wrong to say that, wherever inheritance is in the female line, kinship (*Zugehörigkeit zur*

Familie) depends entirely on descent through females. If that is so in the Cameroons, then indeed its people stand alone among all the tribes of Africa, where, without exception, the relationship which links the father to the child is one of the fundamental principles of marriage.