From Heru to Shaka Zulu:
The Spirit Beyond the Heavens

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In previous discussions I hypothesized that the iKami (Egyptian) name for HRW survives today in South Africa in the name of Zulu which means generally heavens or sky. I also discussed that it is from the Egyptian HRW that we get the various Indo-European names for the sun. In this expansive essay I will supply more evidence to support these claims.

HRW’s name is unclear to Egyptologists and there are various speculations for the name. The most prominent definition of HRW is “he who is above” or in other words “the sky.” I will present in this brief essay that this definition is more than likely inaccurate.

When examining the isiZulu language, I noticed a convention that might help us to understand the proper pronunciation of the Egyptian name HRW. By examining this convention in the Zulu (and other African languages) I assume that the initial H in HRW is actually closer to an SH sound. When I listen to Zulu speakers talk, some words that have an H in it is pronounced with a SH sound. For instance, the Zulu word UKUHLANGANA which means “meeting” is pronounced UKU-SHLANGAN. The final A is not pronounced or is not really audible to the foreign speaker when said in conversational speed. It reminds me of French in a way. We see this happen in another Zulu word KAHE which means “well” (as in to be well or I hear well). KAHE is pronounced GASHE (with a G as in GEKO) when spoken. What seems to be at play is that when the H is preceded by a vowel, the H becomes SH. We see this convention in other Bantu languages as well. For example, in the Luhya dialect of Maragoli, the word ‘Abaluhy’a or ‘Avaluhya’ is pronounced as ABA-ROO-SHIA, which means "the people of the North," "the people of the higher place," or simply “northerners.” Their oral history states that they came from Misri (Egypt) and migrated to what is now called Kenya.

This convention isn’t always the case however. For instance, the Zulu word UKUKHULUMA is pronounced UKU-KHU-LUM: again the final A is faint. It seems that the H retains its sound when preceded by a hard consonant. We see this at play in the Zulu word UKHONA meaning “is there.” The H retains its sound value (as in the word chord). When the H is preceded by another H, the H sounds like an English H. So the Zulu transposition of the English word HOTEL is EHHOTELA (EH-HEL-TELA). When you say ZASEHOTEL (at the hotel) however, the H sound is not pronounced like SH but as a regular H.

When we examine similar words across various African languages we see that the word for sky, heaven, spirit in the sky etc., is usually preceded by a vowel and the initial consonant is either a voiced stop or fricative. In Twi, the word for sky, OSORO or SORO, we see that the initial consonant is indeed an S. OSORO is the “spirit in the sky” among the Akan. Here we see that the initial S is preceded by a vowel and thus we have OSORO instead of OHURU or OHORO. I think the word HRW had a vowel in front of it and the Zulu convention of pronouncing the H as SH when preceded by a vowel is at play. The word for ‘sky’ in the Kinyarwanda language just so happens to be a “divine king.” KIJURU, from the word IJURU meaning “the sky” or “heavens.”

If this is so, then HRW may have been pronounced something like OSURU with final R being a rolling R. If this is so, then OSURU over time as the Nguni Bantu moved south became ZULU (SH > S > Z, R > L). Zulu means “sky” or “heavens.” In former Rhodesia there is a group of people called MaZezuru which means, “the people who belonged to the heavens.” So we know we can associate the last R with L with no loss in meaning.
By listing these terms together, in various African languages, we can begin to see just how ancient this term is, and how it is pronounced across Africa.

**Heru** = Egyptian

**Hunu** = Ga-Adangbe/LaSafo (meaning the sun – Heru also means the sun or day). The common sound shift r/-l/-n- is maintained.

**Osoro** = Spirit of the heavens - Akan

**Wakamusoro** = god of the heavens or the one above – Sotho-Bantu (Mbiti pg.52)

**Zulu/Zula** = Heavens, Sky, Spirit in the Sky - Nguni-Bantu

**Zeru** = sky - from the Mazezeru people of central Africa

**Ijuru** = Sky, god/king from the heavens - Rwanda

**Tilo** = Sky - Thonga-Bantu

**Izulu, Weduzulu** = interplanetary space - Amazulu

**Izula** means to travel in Amazulu

*All generally meaning sky, the spirit in the sky, heaven or the universe

The word for interplanetary space/heavens seems to be the root ru/lu/nu. By examining the following Bantu terms we get a fuller sense as to how this root is applied which may inform us about our term under examination: HRW.¹

**Oshindonga-Bantu:**

In the Oshindonga-Bantu language the word for heaven, sky is e-GULU. The word o-HULO means top, peak, point, end, extremity, or tip.

**Southern-Soto – Bantu language:**

In the Southern-Soto-Bantu language the word for cloud is given as, LE-RU which is derived from –RU. The plural form MA-RU means lightning.

**Bemba-Bantu language:**

In the Bemba-Bantu language MU-LU, means heaven, sky, atmosphere, the top, summit, and ‘a great quantity’.

**Chichewa-Bantu language:**

MU-LU represents a heap or a pile, a heap of firewood.

**Luvale-Bantu language:**

In the Luvale-Bantu language, LI-ILU or LILU means the above, sky, heaven. The word for ‘on the top’, above, overhead is given by, HA-ILU or HELU, and the word for ‘the heavens’ is MA-ILU or MELU. This could very easily be pronounced as MERU.

**Zulu-Bantu language:**

The Zulu-Bantu language also provides a similar insight into the word, ZULU which is derived from -ULU means sky, heaven, weather or lightning.

¹ This is taken from Ferg Somo's essay on MERU. Unpublished, May 29, 2008 - THE KISWAHILI-BANTU RESEARCH UNIT FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE
Thus the word MERU defines a rising ground, a mound or hill with the summit approaching the limits of the sky or heaven.

By examining the examples from above, it informs us that there is an association with the root ru/lu/nu and light. This is very instructive because when we examine other African spiritual concepts associated with the sun, they are more so speaking of the light that emits from the sun and not the sun itself. I have argued elsewhere that HRW, on one level, is a reference to LIGHT. Light is the “spirit” that traverses through the heavens. We know that the same word for LIGHT in the ancient Egyptian is the same word for ANCESTOR or SPIRIT. The word akh in Egyptian is the root of the word aakhu which means light.

\[ \text{Akh} = \text{spirit} \]

\[ \text{Akh} = \text{to become a spirit, beneficial, useful, profitable} \]

\[ \text{Akh} = \text{beneficial, useful, profitable, fame, benefit} \]

\[ \text{Ta-akhw} = \text{land of the spirits, a part of central or southern Sudan} \]
\[ \text{Budge 815b} \]

\[ \text{Ta-akhw-t} = \text{The abode of Asar in the Duat} \]
\[ \text{Budge 816a}^2 \]

Given this example, it should not be considered coincidence when we consider the amaZulu words MIDZIMU or Badimo to mean “those who are in the sky.” ABAPEZULU means “those who are above.” It is used to refer to ancestors. It is in contrast to the ABAPANSI which are “the ones who are below.” It

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^2 One should note that the word AIKA in Yoruba means - Immortality, one who has become a deified ancestor, meaning: "never die."
refers to the ancestors who are buried in the earth. Some African cultures believe you go to heaven when you die; some believe you go to an underground world in the earth after death: thus the different terms.

Credo Mutwa, a Sangoma priest from South Africa, in an interview provides us with the expanded definition of Zulu.³

**Credo Mutwa:** The Zulu people, who are famous as a warrior people, the people to whom King Shaka Zulu, of the last century, belonged. When you ask a South African White anthropologist what the name of Zulu means, he will say it means “the sky” (*laughter*), and therefore the Zulu call themselves “people of the sky”. **That, sir, is non-sense.** In the Zulu language, our name for the sky, the blue sky, is *sibakabaka*. **Our name for inter-planetary space, however, is izulu and the weduzulu, which means “inter-planetary space, the dark sky that you see with stars in it every night”, also has to do with traveling, sir.** The Zulu word for traveling at random, like a nomad or a gypsy, is *izula*.

Now, you can see that the Zulu people in South Africa were aware of the fact that you can travel through space—not through the sky like a bird—but you can travel through space, and the Zulus claim that many, many thousands of years ago there arrived, out of the skies, a race of people who were like lizards, people who could change shape at will. And people who married their daughters to a *walking* (extraterrestrial), and produced a power race of Kings and tribal Chiefs, there are hundreds of fairy-tales, sir, in which a lizard female assumes the identity of a human princess and poses as her, and gets married to a Zulu Prince.

What Mutwa is talking about is the soul’s ability to traverse to different parts of the universe, or through various dimensions just like rocket ships do in modern times. A careful examination of the various words given in Bantu dealing with the sky reveals that the term is not necessarily referring to the sky itself, but anything that penetrates the sky. This is why HRW, as a hawk is a symbol for the “sky” or the spirit of the sky because hawks (birds in general) pierce and penetrate the heavens. Thus why mountains, hills, peaks, the summit, the top, lightning, the sun, etc., is all associated with our root ru/lu/nu generally referred to as “the sky.” In African ontology, open hollow spaces is regarded as feminine, while energy that propagates forward, or an object that projected (like an erect penis) is considered masculine (Doumbia and Doumbia 2004:75). This is why those items, which propagate forward into the sky is associated with our term.

Here is another example as to why one must always consult the spiritual-cultural definitions given by the priesthoods of any society for the true definition of key terms. Also, this demonstrates, once more, that African key terms are analogous and that the word used is actually referencing some other concept, and not the physical object used for the metaphor. The word used to articulate a concept is actually used to springboard the consciousness to some other concept for a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

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³ The reader may for the moment suspend belief or disbelief in the concepts expressed in the interview concerning reptiles and aliens. What is not under controversy is Zulu concept of the word Zulu and its proper application. [http://www.metatech.org/credo_mutwa.html](http://www.metatech.org/credo_mutwa.html)
The story of the migration of the Zulu and the rise of Tashaka Zulu demonstrates how the notion of travelling through space plays in the development of national solidarity and spiritual concepts. The following will be a summary taken from Jordan Ngubane’s work titled *Conflict of Minds* (1974) as part of the book discusses the history of the Zulu people.

When the Nguni-Bantu migrated from the Sudan into what is now South Africa and Natal, the populations began to increase in a pocketed area between the Indian Ocean and the Mountains of Drakensberg. As the numbers increased tensions began to fester as resources and space became more limited. These conditions caused many conflicts between the autonomous nomes that existed in South Africa. The Zulu was then one of the smaller nomes. Throughout this period very powerful princes set out to impose their own solutions to the overcrowding problem in Natal.

A nomarch during the second half of the 15th century by the name of Malandela nursed the ambition that one day he might have a son who would lead his people to the heavens (Zulu) and restore order in Natal. Sometime later one of his wives gave birth to a son. Malandela was convinced that it was going to be that son who restored order in Natal. To ensure that the boy lived and achieved as expected, Malandela gave him the name *Zulu*. It must be understood that in African societies a person is given a name that is in association with his or her destiny. A person is required to live up to their name in a literal sense. It is this philosophy and social custom that translated into experience for King Malandela in regards to the naming of his son *Zulu ka Malandela Zulu*. The son, Zulu, was supposed to take his people beyond the heavens and establish a new order. But it turned out that *Zulu ka* (son of) *Malandela Zulu* did not live up to his name. It should be noted that the naming process is the same among the Bantu as it is in ancient Egypt.

In ancient Egypt a person is born with their name of destiny (birth name) and to keep record of who he/she belonged to, they would attach the name of the father (his name of destiny) to the son’s name. So the Pharaohs would claim descent from the God Ra and is why you would see in the name “sa Ra” to denote “son of Ra.” Here the Egyptian *sa* corresponds to the Bantu *ka* (*sa* = *ka*) as they both mean son or child. In Kikongo the *ka* is rendered *kia* and can be seen in the name of our esteemed scholar from the Kongo Dr. Kimbwadende *kia* Bunseki Fu-Kiau. Here this name is very telling for Kimbwadende is his initiation name. *Kia Bunseki* lets us know he is the son of Bunseki. *Bunseki* is not his name, it is his father’s. *Fu-Kiau* is his name of destiny or birth name. For a complete discussion on this topic please read Dr. K. Bunseki Fu-Kiau’s book *Self Healing Power and Therapy*. So hopefully we can better understand the African naming convention in relation to the name *Zulu ka Malandela Zulu*.

With all of that said, a power vacuum had developed by the 18th century which caused disastrous disharmonies in the Nguni societies. Each prince began to assert themselves with vigorous hegemonic initiatives in order to fill the power gap in the societies. This caused much fighting among these tribes. These events were chronicled by the best poets of each nome.

*Senzangakhona ka Jama Zulu* was an eighteenth century successor to *Zulu ka Malandela Zulu*. He was too involved in trying to keep the peace and help his people to survive, than to deal with the issues of his destiny (uniting all the tribes). As time grew, the best educated in the culture and history of the Zulu had begun to reject the notion that that conditions would stabilize as a result of a strong prince: they saw salvation in an ideal of nationhood which wouldn’t be associated with the family of a strong prince.
In African societies, poets challenge leadership to lead their people into a new, more prosperous and satisfying destiny. The Epic of *Sundiata* of Mali is a good historical example of this process at work. This practice existed in South Africa among the Zulus and the court poet of Senzangakhona ka Jama Zulu challenged him with these words:

Raise me from the depths;
*to heights take me,*
that with grain I may return;
the grain I shall winnow;
The grain I shall cook.
(Should you do that) O Ndaba,
They will forever preach to each other about it.
The foes will;
So will those on our side.

A cord of destiny let us weave,
O Menzi, scion of Jama,
That
*To universes beyond the reach of spirit-forms*
We may ascend.
(So long must the cord be)
The spirit-forms themselves
Will break their tiny toes,
Should they dare to climb!

The people did not need an interpreter for this poem. It was an extension of their cultural thought process. They believed that they were incarnations of eternal values and that the eternal in them was real and positive to all things; that it could do whatever it imagined. **The Zulu had the power to traverse space and move from one universe to another in the endeavor to find more satisfying dimensions of being human.** The human being had it within himself to travel to the shores of eternity to bring back solutions to meet the one thousand and one challenges of life. Thus why in the poem above the poet challenged the king to “*raise me from the depths; to heights take me, that with grain I shall return...*” This is what the poem was telling Senzangakhona: that it was time to take destiny in our own hands; to **travel beyond the stars to find new solutions to our problems.**

*Shaka Zulu* was the son of Senzangakhona: his full name being TaShaka ka Senzangakhona Zulu. Shaka adopted the court poet’s ideal as the main inspiration of the revolution on which he led after his father’s death. This was the ideological blueprint on which the Zulu nation was built. The idea is to reach beyond religion and dogma (that which was preventing the previous princes from establishing a nation of peace) and to forge a new destiny using the tools and gifts that the Creator embedded in one’s own being (because one is the Creator).
With this cultural understanding, along with the linguistic evidence from above, we can better understand the role and symbolism of Heru in Egyptian mythology. What translated into experience for the Zulus of South Africa was inspired by a philosophy that existed since before pharaonic times. This is why the hawk is a symbol of Heru. A hawk is the high flying bird and it can seemingly traverse “beyond the heavens”, and see with perfect clarity (thus associated with light, mystic vision, enlightenment, etc.). The sun became a symbol of Heru because it represented the “spirit in the heavens” in which a new destiny could be forged. As Pierre Rousseau notes, “The sun’s destiny is Humanity’s destiny” (quoted by Obenga 2004: 117).

To be a Heru (Zulu) is to be able to travel beyond one’s existence, beyond the heavens to find solutions to establish order where one resides; just like Heru did against Set in the Asarian Myth. The human being has a ciliate mind which could traverse space and move from universe to universe and transform the human being into a conscious citizen of the cosmic order.

The use of the bird to represent interplanetary space travel is not a Zulu and Egyptian phenomenon exclusively. Everywhere you go in Africa, and you see bird symbolism, the first thing one should think of is the soul’s ability to travel between galaxies and spiritual realms. We find support among the Yoruba practitioners of Ifa concerning their bird symbolism. Baba Obafemi Origunwa⁴ provides us with such insight concerning bird symbolism in the Yoruba tradition.

In Yorùbá symbolic language, eìye ororo (the bird of descent) represents individual capacity for astral travel. Placed atop the king’s crown, it communicates female spiritual authority, organized around what might be termed the birds’ society. Similarly, the bird that tops the staff of the divinity of herbal wisdom, Osanyin, denotes medicinal potency. Likewise, ilé orí, the shrine dedicated to the divinity within, is completely covered in bird symbolism. Covered in cowries, and topped with a bird, ilé orí “conceals an allusion to a certain bird, whose white feathers are suggested by the overlapping cowries.” (Thompson Page 11)

In this instance, the bird symbolizes the emblem of the mind that God places in the head of every human being at the time of birth. Everywhere this mystic bird appears in Yorùbá sacred arts, it seems to signify spiritual elevation and divine consciousness.

We will examine the bird symbolism on top of the “crown” and in the head (Ori) in the upcoming work OSIRIS DECODED: Tracing an Egyptian God through the Yoruba System of Ifa. For now just understand that the bird is used all over Africa to represent astral travel and light. This is why the soul (ba) in Egyptian cosmology is represented by a bird. The word aḥk in Egyptian is the root of the word aakhu which means light. In South Africa there is a tribe of people called Ntswama-Ifatfi who say they ultimately came from a land called “the land of the Sun-Hawk.” They say they came from a land ruled by a great god. They

⁴ http://obafemio.wordpress.com/category/yoruba/
said they came from a place with mysterious mountains that was ruled by gods with a head of a human and body of the lion. The following names Ompta and Mompta are respectively variants of Mutapa (the falcon God) and Mwanamutapa (the lion God) (Motshekga, 2007). Mwana Mutapa is the founder of Great Zimbabwe and in oral tradition, these people came from the Nile Valley as well.

The story of Shaka matches almost exactly the story of the uniting of Upper and Lower Ta-Meri as a result of the Heru (Zulu) kings from the south (Sudan). Shaka Zulu united all of the nomes of the Nguni to create a large nation-state called Zulu. Here we find history repeating itself and it gives us possible clues at to why a unified Egypt was even necessary in the first place. The Nile Valley civilization is a direct result of the dispersions of nations from north Africa after the drying of the Sahara. With the influx of people migrating along the Nile, it would have caused a surge in population and by extension, a shortage in resources.

**HERU (Zulu) in the Indo-European Languages**

Wim van Binsbergen in his paper *Rupture and Fusion in the Approach to Myth*\(^5\) brings us to our next segment and that is how these terms came to be represented in the Indo-European languages to represent light and the sun. Binsbergen goes on to make the possible connection between Heru of Egypt and the name for hawk in proto-Nostratic.

The third mythical theme is particularly interesting because, like the symbolic complex centring on speckledness which features centrally in my analysis of leopard symbolism, it has a very wide distribution throughout the Old World. In the somewhat narrower but still very extensive Nostratic realm (whose precise composition is subject to disagreement, but which by many current conceptions ranges from Mauritania to the Scandinavian North Cape and the Bering Street, and then on to Greenland) very few names of animal species can be claimed to have made part of the proto-Nostratic lexicon; but the speckled hawk (proto-Nostratic “\(\text{hr} \), cf. the Ancient Egyptian hawk or falcon deity \(\text{Hr, Horus}\)) and perhaps the eagle are among them (van Binsbergen forthcoming (b), with data derived from Bomhard 1984; Bomhard & Kerns 1994).

This begs us to ask critical questions about how much of the lexicon of Indo-European languages can be traced to Africa either through contact or continuation as a result of migration and evolution? Linguist GJK Campbell-Dunn has already made an association between Niger-Congo and Indo-European.\(^6\) I have posited in this paper, based on the Zulu and other African languages, that the initial \(H\) more than likely had a vowel preceding it and was pronounced \(SH\). I do not think it is coincidental that HRW and IJURU (of Kenya) are both “kings” in African lore that both mean “the sky.” Further more, we see an association in the Greek and other Indo-European languages between the word for Sun and a deity.

With the evidence presented by Campbell-Dunn, we can move forward and reevaluate the Indo-European term for Sun in relation to the proposed connection between HRW, the sun (light) and Zulu. The proposed proto-European reconstruction for sun is \(*\text{sóh}_2\text{wl}^*\). Notice that the \(s\) sound precedes the \(h\) in


this example. In this case it is separated by a vowel. The descendents of the alleged reconstruction above are as follows:

**Indo-European for Sun**

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<th>Baltic:</th>
<th>Celtic:</th>
<th>Slavic: <em>сънъще</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Latvian: saule</td>
<td>• Welsh: haul</td>
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<td>• Lithuanian: saulė</td>
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<td>• Old Prussian: saule</td>
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<td>• Proto-Germanic: *sunnon</td>
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<td>• Swedish: sol</td>
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<td>• Old Saxon: sunna</td>
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<td>Hellenic:</td>
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<td>• Ancient Greek: ἥλιος (hēlios)</td>
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<td>• Greek: ἥλιος (hēlios)</td>
<td>• (&gt; English: sol)</td>
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<td>• Spanish: sol</td>
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<td>• Occitan: soleil</td>
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<td>• Old Church Slavonic:</td>
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<td>• Macedonian: сонце</td>
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One should note the following Indo-European Cognates: Dutch zool, English sole, German Sohle, Icelandic sóli, Italian suolo, Spanish suelo, Swedish sula. The Swedish sula, the Spanish suelo, and Italian suolo come closest to the Akan osoro, the Nguni-Bantu zulu, and the Kinyarwanda ijulu. One should note that the Greek Helios is a masculine theonym that derives from helios meaning the “sun.” The feminine is Helia. (From Wikipedia) Helios was a personified deity of the Greeks representing the sun. Helios was imagined as a handsome Titan crowned with the shining aureole of the sun, who drove the chariot of the sun across the sky each day to earth-circling Oceanus and through the world-ocean returned to the East at night. Does this sound familiar to anyone? Homer described Helios’ chariot as drawn by solar steeds; later Pindar described it as drawn by “fire-darting steeds.” Still later, the horses were given fiery names: Pyrios, Aeos, Aethon, and Phlegon. As time passed, Helios was increasingly identified with the god of light, Apollo. The equivalent of Helios in Roman mythology was Sol, specifically Sol Invictus.

So Helios and Sol were deities in the ancient European world that represented the sun. Again, given the evidence presented thus far, the more likely pronunciation of the Egyptian H in Heru was in fact SH as can be seen in the African and the Indo-European examples. Remember that r/l/n is interchangeable between languages and is a common sound shift. It’s not a coincidence that the Egyptian word/deity for sky (hrt), day (hr) which is also associated with light, is also in the Indo-European languages the word for day, sun, light and is associated with a god.

If our hypothesis is a correct one, this would demonstrate that the god Heru is a very ancient deity and its concepts were introduced to the so-called proto-Indo-Europeans at the formation of its language. Given what has been revealed, I say that the name usually given as HERU is actually pronounced something more like OSHULU. From there it became OSORO in Akan, IJERU in Kinyarwanda, IZULU in isiZulu, HELIOS in Greek, SULA in Swedish, SAULE in Latvian, SUELO in Spanish, SUNNA in Old Saxon and SUN in modern English.

The ancient African word for the light that propagates from the sun and traverses the universes became the literal word for the sun in the Indo-European languages. The word Zulu and the culture of the amaZulu still retain the ancient essence and purpose of the term. It is with this evidence that I say the ancient “Heru” kings were the “proto” Zulus from the “south” that created Pharaonic Egypt as explained in the Edfu texts. The branch of migrants that travelled from the Nile Valley to create the Great Zimbabwe still uses the Hawk as its totem. The alleged “uniter” of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menes (Mwene?), had a Hawk symbolizing Hrw on his title. The first kings of Egypt were called the HRW kings; which we can now say the ZULU kings.
I hope this revised essay sparks some thought and inspires one to look deeper into the concepts expressed in the ancient Egyptian literature and its influence in modern times. I look forward to your critiques.

Ancestrally,

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