INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF AUTHORITY

AND TITLES USED FOR JESUS

YOLANDA DREYER

PhD

NEW TESTAMENT

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Prof Dr A G van Aarde

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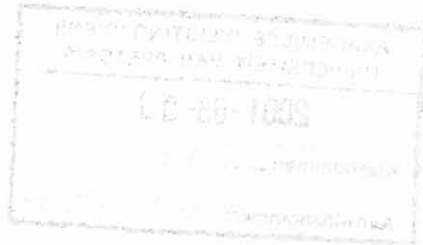

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SUMMARY

The orientation of the dissertation can be summarized as follows: in the context of an advanced agrarian society writing related to scribal activity; scribes made use of honorary titles – a writing technique that expressed polemic and conflict; names used for Jesus have a tradition history that can be studied on different levels of contextualization; the biographical genre and the narrative structure of the gospels are evidence that Christian authors applied the words and deeds of Jesus to their own post-Easter context in new ways; names used for Jesus within the narrative structure of the various gospels reveal the evangelists' points of view; the tradition history of the names used for Jesus as well as the function of these names in the plot of the narrative can be explained by means of demystification from the postmodern perspective of conflict and the social theory of the institutionalization of charismatic authority. Such an interpretation can be defined as an ideological-critical or political exegesis. This study argues that the followers of Jesus acknowledged and expressed his authority by means of naming Jesus. These "names" developed into "titles" when the post-Easter followers of Jesus allocated power to him. In this process the words and deeds of a charismatic figure were believed to be relevant and meaningful to others even after his death. The charismatic leader had a new vision to redefine the existing reality in terms of subversive wisdom. The followers verbalized his wisdom and transformed the ideals of the new order into collective goals and norms. These articulated and codified norms were seen as powerful and authoritative. The transformation, articulation and codification were related to the institutionalization of rites and ceremonies. Such a social universe was supported by a symbolic universe which legitimated the articulation and codification as a "sacred canopy". This institutionalization strengthened the identity of a group over against opposing groups. "Authors of institutionalization" remained anonymous and writings became normative. These authors often referred back to authoritative figures, such as "apostles" or "missionaries", by means of pseudonyms. In the process of legitimation, value-systems were constructed on the proverbial sayings and teachings for which the founder of the cult was known. The legitimators were the scribal experts and in their scribal activity the

"little tradition" of the peasantry merged with the "great tradition" of the élite. The antagonism among groups, opposition and incompatibility were expressed in terms of interests, goals, values and expectations. Power was acquired and maintained to the benefit or at the expense of others. Authority was used to dominate. Positively seen, conflict functioned to strengthen cohesion and to develop new rules, norms and values. The aim of the dissertation is to indicate that an ideological-critical and socio-political interpretation of the Jesus tradition illustrates the above-mentioned social theory. Studying the titles of Jesus in terms of the social theory of *the institutionalization of charismatic authority*, contributes the following to the study of the New Testament. It demonstrates: the relevance of *social history*; the relevance of the *diachronic* investigation of the *evolution* of the Jesus traditions (by focusing on the *Son of God* title); the relevance of the *synchronic* investigation in *unfolding* the Jesus tradition in the genre of biography (by focusing on the Sayings Gospel Q and the synoptic gospels); the relevance of the theory of *institutional authorization* within a socio-historical context; the relevance of the social theory of the institutionalization of charismatic authority and conflict theory for the study of the titles of Jesus (by focusing on the Easter faith as legitimation of authority and on the *Son of Man* title).

OPSOMMING

Die orientasie van hierdie proefskrif kan soos volg opgesom word: in die konteks van 'n gevorderde agrariese samelewing het skrifgeleerdes eretitels toegeken aan prominente persone soos priesters, kenners van die wet en wysheidsleraars. Eretitels is toegeken in situasies waar die prominente figure se gesag verdedig en bevestig moes word. Die tradisiegeskiedenis van die name wat aan Jesus toegeken is, kan bestudeer word op verskillende vlakke van kontekstualisering. Die evangeliste het vanuit 'n na-Pase perspektief die woorde en dade van Jesus op hulle eie konteks toegepas. Hiervoor het hulle gebruik gemaak van die genre van "biografie" en die Jesustradisie binne 'n narratiewe struktuur vorm gegee. Die tradisiegeskiedenis van Christologiese titels, soos dit funksioneer binne 'n verhaalstruktuur, kan verduidelik word deur middel van demistifikasie. Deur hierdie post-moderne benadering word die onderliggende konflik en die proses van die institusionalisering van charismatiese gesag blootgelê. So 'n interpretasie kan beskryf word as 'n ideologies-kritiese of politieke eksegese. Die studie betoog dat die na-Pase volgelinge van Jesus sy gesag erken en uitgedruk het deur middel van erename wat gebruik is as titels. Hierdie proses dui daarop dat die woorde en dade van 'n charismatiese persoon beskou is as relevant en betekenisvol vir ander selfs na sy dood. 'n Charismatiese leier se nuwe visie op die werklikheid en die samelewing word uitgedruk as subversiewe wysheid. Die volgelinge verwoord die wysheid in die vorm van gemeenskaplike doelwitte en norme om uitdrukking te gee aan die ideale van die nuwe lewensorde. Hierdie gekodifiseerde norme is as gesagvol aanvaar en verkondig. Die institusionalisering van rites en seremonies was deel van die proses. Die nuwe sosiale werklikheid word gelegitimeer deur 'n simboliese universum en andersom. Hierdie proses van institusionalisering versterk die identiteit van 'n groep teenoor opponerende groepe. Hoewel hulle geskrifte normatiewe status verkry het, het die persone wat die institusionaliseringsproses geïnisieer het, dikwels anoniem gebly of apostels pseudoniem as skrywers van hulle tekste voorgestel. In die proses van legitimering is waardesisteme geskep op grond van wysheidsuitsprake waarvoor die "stigter van die kultus" bekend was. Die nuwe waardesisteem kom tot stand wanneer

twee opponerende sisteme, die "klein tradisie" van die kleinboerderygemeenskap en die "groot tradisie" van die élite gekombineer word. Dit het nie sonder konflik plaasgevind nie. In situasies van konflik word gesagsaansprake gemaak. Gesag kan gebruik word om te domineer. Die doel van die studie is om aan te dui dat 'n ideologies-kritiese en sosio-politieke interpretasie van die Jesus-tradisie bogenoemde sosiale teorie illustreer. Die studie van Christologiese titels uit die perspektief van die sosiale teorie van die institusionalisering van charismatiese gesag maak die volgende bydrae tot die Nuwe-Testamentiese wetenskap. Dit demonstreer: die relevansie van *sosiale geskiedenis*; die relevansie van die *diachroniese* ondersoek na die *evolusie* van die Jesus-tradisie (geïllustreer met die titel *Seun van God*); die relevansie van die *sinchroniese* ondersoek wat aandui hoe die Jesus-tradisie binne die genre van biografie ontvou (geïllustreer met die Spreuke-Evangelie Q en die sinoptiese evangelies); die relevansie van die teorie van geïnstitusionaliseerde gesag binne 'n sosio-historiese konteks; die relevansie van die sosiale teorie van die institusionalisering van charismatiese gesag en konflikteorie vir die studie van Christologiese titels (geïllustreer met die opstandingsgeloof as legitimasie van gesag en die titel *Seun van die Mens*).