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UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

PSALM-LIKE TEXTS IN AFRICAN CULTURE : *A PEDI PERSPECTIVE*

BY
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This thesis is submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree PhD (Biblical and Religious Studies) at the Faculty of Humanities

BIBLICAL AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES
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I greatly appreciate the permission to embark on this study, that was granted to me by the Faculty of Theology. It is my hope that this thesis will be found useful in clarifying some issues in the theological anthropology debate in Africa (Pedi tribe) today, and thus help to take that debate a step further, especially in regard to Christian anthropology.

I wish to thank the University of Pretoria, Department of Education (Limpopo Province) and SAMRO for their financial assistance. Their combined support allowed me the freedom to pursue both my graduate and post-graduate studies. Sincere thanks are also due to Dr Jacobus Wilhelm Gericke, who helped with the reading of the proofs and who, furthermore, gave the author unstintingly of his time and effort. Most of all, my wife Meriam and our children (Canzonetta,

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Lastly, my thanks go to Ms Rina van Coller for the typing, patience and able guidance in the preparation of this thesis.

DECLARATION

This is my original work and has not been presented for a degree requirement in any other University. No part of this thesis may be produced without the prior permission of the **author** and/or **University of Pretoria.**

_____

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

_____

PROF DIRK HUMAN

DATE: _____

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents, Ditswejane William Lebaka (Father) and Kgaato Maria Lebaka (Mother), who have passed away since 16 June 1986 and 13 May 1993 respectively. I am fully aware that one of the major challenges facing many families today is good parenting. I have indeed received tender loving care from my parents while they were living. I came to know Jesus Christ through their guidance. I therefore dedicate this work to them as a memorial of their service to me. Thank you Dad and Mom.

SUMMARY AND KEYWORDS

Title: Psalm-like texts in African culture: a Pedi perspective
Student: M E K Lebaka
Supervisor: Professor D J Human
Degree: Philosophiae Doctor (Biblical Studies)

Up to now there has been no attempt by Biblical scholars to compare the book of Psalms in the Old Testament with Pedi psalm-like songs. This study aims to fill that gap in the research and so contribute to the development of the African cultural heritage – especially that of the Pedi culture, by using indigenous knowledge systems.

The research commences with a descriptive analysis of the various genres within the Book of Psalms. A variety of psalms types are discussed, including: Hymns of praise; Thanksgiving songs (communal and individual); Laments (communal and individual); Royal psalms; Hymns of Zion; Psalms of Yahweh's kingship; Wisdom psalms; Liturgical psalms; Entrance liturgies; Judgement liturgies; Psalms of trust; Imprecatory psalms; Creation psalms; Torah (Law)-psalms; and Festival psalms. Each of these genres is described with reference to structural elements, characteristics and function(s).

Then follows a descriptive assessment of numerous types and specific examples of Pedi Psalm-like songs via the provisioning of text, translation and a detailed commentary pertaining to contents and function. These include: Songs of Praise (e.g. *Kgoparara*); Thanksgiving songs (e.g. *Mogale wa marumo* - thanksgiving birth poem); Lament songs (e.g. *Madi a manaba* - a funeral song); Royal

songs (e.g. *Kgoshi* - an inauguration song) Liberation songs (*Ga e boe Afrika* - a liberation song); Wisdom songs (*Mokgoronyane* - initiation song for boys and *Kgogedi* - initiation song for girls); Prayers of trust (e.g. *Salane* - a song of trust); Imprecatory songs (e.g. *Leepo* - song with irony); Law songs (e.g. *Bana ba Modimo, thaetsang melao ya Modimo ka badimo* - instruction song); Feasts (e.g. *Ngwana malome nnyale* - a lobola song and *Hela Mmatswale, tlogela dipotwana* - a wedding song).

Finally the thesis provides a critical comparision between biblical psalms and Pedi psalm-like songs. The research demonstrates that, on the one hand, there are numerous interesting similarities between the two cultures' songs with regard to a variety of aspects. On the other hand, the assessment also reveals substantial differences between the two musical traditions pertaining to an equally great number of issues.

KEYWORDS

Bible
Old Testament
Psalms
Genre
Music
Culture
Africa
Pedi
Pedi psalm-like songs
Comparison

OPSOMMING EN SLEUTELWOORDE

Titel: Psalm texts in African culture: a Pedi perspective
Student: M E K Lebaka
Promotor: Professor D J Human
Graad: Philosophiae Doctor (Bybelkunde)

Tot op hede was daar geen poging aangewend deur Bybelkundiges om die Psalmboek in die Ou Testament te vergelyk met Psalm-tipe liedere uit die Pedi kulture nie. Hierdie studie poog om die betrokke leemte in die navorsing te vul en so by te dra tot die bewaring van die kulturele erfenis van Afrika en die ontwikkeling van die Pedi kultuur deur die gebruik van inheemse kennis sisteme.

Die navorsing skop af met ’n deskriptiewe analiese van die verskillende soorte genres wat aangetref word in die Bybelse Psalms. ’n Verskeidenheid psalm-tipes word bespreek, insluitende: Loflpsalms; Dankpsalms (van die gemeenskap en die individu); Klaagpsalms (van die gemeenskap en individu); Koningspsalms; Sionhimnes; Psalms van Jahwe se koningskap; Wysheidspsalms; Liturgiese psalms; Ingangsliedere; Oordeelsliedere; Vertrouenspsalms; Wraakpsalms; Skeppingspsalms; Tora (Wets)-psalms; en Feespsalms. Elkeen van hierdie genres word bespreek met verwysing na strukturele elemente, karaktertrekke en funksie(s).

Hierna volg ’n deskriptiewe assessering van die vele tipes en spesifieke voorbeelde van Pedi Psalm-tipe liedere via die beskikbaarstelling van die teks, vertaling, en ’n gedetaileerde kommentaar met verwysing na die inhoud en funksie daarvan. Hierdie sluit in: Lofliedere (bv.

Kgoparara); Dankliedere (bv. *Mogale wa marumo* - dankseggings gedig by geboorte); Klaagliedere (bv. *Madi a manaba* - 'n begrafnislied); Royal songs (bv. *Kgoshi* – 'n inwydingslied); Bevrydingsliedere (*Ga e boe Afrika* - 'n bevrydingslied); Wysheidsliedere (bv. *Mokgoronyane* - 'n inisiasielied vir seuns en *Kgogedi* - 'n inisiasielied vir meisies); Vetrouensgebede (bv. *Salane*); Wraakliedere (bv. *Leepo* - 'n lied met ironie); Wetslierdere (bv. *Bana ba Modimo, thaetsang melao ya Modimo ka badimo* – instruksie lied); Feesliedere (bv. *Ngwana malome nnyale* - 'n lobola lied en *Hela Mmatswale, tlogela dipotwana* - 'n huwelikslied)

Laastens verskaf die tesi 'n kritiese vergelyking tussen die Bybelse psalms en Pedi psalm-tipe liedere. Die navorsing dui aan, enersyds, vele interessante ooreenkomste tussen die liedere van die twee kulture se musiek wat betref 'n veelvoud van aspekte. Andersyds toon die studie aan dat daar ook merkbare verskille is tussen die twee tradisies wat betref 'n ewe groot verskeidenheid van sake.

SLEUTELWOORDE

Bybel
Ou Testament
Psalms
Genre
Musiek
Kultuur
Afrika
Pedi
Pedi psalm-tipe liedere
Vergelyking

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