

CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW AND RESEARCH REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The title of this thesis embodies two key aspects namely Lozi prayer traditions and prayer for protection in the Psalms. Lozi prayer traditions are analytically situated in the larger African cultural context. On the other hand, selected psalms are part of the Old Testament and are related to the Ancient Near East. Therefore this chapter broadly addresses three aspects namely overview of Lozi historical background, review of prayer in Africa and research review on approaches of studying the book of Psalms.

The purpose of the first section is to set the tone for the entire investigation by providing a historical framework and cultural context utilized in the description and analysis of Lozi prayer traditions. Further, the larger cultural context assists in the interpretation of Lozi prayer traditions. It is provided through an overview of prayer in African Traditional Religion (ATR) in the second section.

The third major section is a review of approaches employed in Psalms studies. It encompasses key representative approaches of prayer in the Old Testament and perspectives on Psalms studies. In this way, the investigation is oriented in the light of previous research.

The validity of prayers for protection in ancient Israel is evident from biblical commentaries and monographs. To the contrary this review indicates that the bulk of literature on Lozi religious traditions lacks specific attention to prayer(s). Lozi prayer texts are scanty and

littered in a few ethnographical studies and missionary historiographies¹². Equally very little to none has been written on the comparative aspects of the two traditions.

2.2 Lozi background- a historical review

2.2.1 Origins

2.2.1.1 Mythological history

Lozi people narrate legends regarding their origins (Jalla 1954:8; Giles 1997:60; Brown 1998:22). According to mythological history in the beginning God created different kinds of wives for himself. With them, He procreated different nations. One of the wives Mwambwa, the Lozi ancestress, bore Mbuywamwambwa. Mbuywamwambwa also bore children by God. She later made journeys to the north ending up in the Lunda country. However, she was not happy there and she decided to return to Buluzi flood plains. Lozi mythological history lacks historical evidence. It appears to be a fusion of oral traditions belonging to the earlier tribes and fabrications aimed at placing royalty above scrutiny (Caplan 1970:2).

2.2.1.2 Historical theories

There are divergent oral traditions regarding the origin of Lozi people. Firstly, the Lozi are said to have originated from the Rozwi of the Great Zimbabwe (Mainga 1973:13). According to this theory subsequent to the disintegration of the Rozwi kingdom in the seventeenth century a group led by a woman went north and founded the Lozi kingdom. In support of this theory, linguistic conjectures have been made. For example, similarities between Lozi and Hurutshe the root language for Rozwi, a dominant Shona language have been deduced (Coillard 1902:224). However there is little evidence for this version. Moreover, linguistic connections with the suggested group are unfounded.

Another Lozi tradition points to a Congolese origin (Gluckman 1968:1). Lozi people claim to have descended from the great Lunda king Mwata-Yamvo. This theory conforms to historical traditions of some other tribes in the North-western and north-eastern Zambia, which migrated from the Lunda kingdom in the present day Democratic Republic of Congo

¹² This point is illustrated by the Lozi prayers under discussion in this study extracted from the following: Lozi cursing prayer during the Illa war (Coillard 1902:212, sowing prayer (Di Nola 1962:38), morning prayer (Jalla 1954:3), cursing prayer during the Andonyi war (Jalla 1954:9), prayer for protection at the rapids (Coillard 1902:169-170) and prayer for deliverance from execution (Holub 1976:320).

(Fagan 1966:17; Mainga 1966:122). Hence, the Luba/Lunda source appears to be the most credible.

There is a section of Kaonde people which claims to have been forced out of the Barotse flood plains by the Luyi (proto Lozi). But the Lozi do not attest to this tradition. Instead, Lozi mythology conveys information about related people who were produced by *Nyambe* at the same time as they from different wives. Accordingly, Lozi people are descendants of Mbuyamwambwa daughter and wife of *Nyambe* (Jalla 1954:80).

2.2.2 Migration and settlement

The combination of variant oral traditions from different tribal groups impinges on any attempt at reconstructing the history of Lozi people. Thus, historical and ethnographic investigations have borne different results.

Turner (1952:9), for instance, proposes that the original people in Barotseland, (Lozi), are known as Aluyi or Aluyana. Through a process of assimilation, the group came to be known as Lozi consisting of twenty-five Bantu speaking people groups (Gluckman 1968:3). The Luyana group comprises the Kwandi, Kwangwa, Muenyi and Mbowe peoples. Kwangwa people are believed to have descended from Mbuyamwambwa through her daughter Noleya. They established their home in the surrounding area of Mongu. Subsequently, Kwangwa people were conquered by Ngalama and relocated to the highland to work iron (Jalla 1954:10-12). Muenyi people originated from the Lunda and Luyi. The Kwandi's connectedness is illustrated linguistically for they speak a Luyi dialect.

In time the following tribes were assimilated into the Lozi tribe: Nyengo, Makoma, Ndundulu, Simaa, Mashi, Mishulundu, Yei and Old Mbunda. These tribes have unknown origins but it is proposed that they are Luba speaking. The Nkoya cluster comprising Nkoya, Mashasha and Lukolwe and Lushange was also incorporated. Another group which was absorbed is made up of Ila, Tonga, We, Totela, Toka, Subiya, Shanjo, Leya, Lenje and Sala. These groups spoke Tonga related dialects. Two other Luba speaking groups arrived late in Buluzi. The first, *Mawiko* (westerners) embraces the Lubale, Mbunda, Luchazi and Chokwe. The second Luba speaking class consists of the Lunda, Ndembu and Mbwela (Turner 1952:9).

In contradistinction to Turner's proposed settlement process Mainga (1973) has suggested that a rather complex pattern occurred in Barotseland. First, and foremost, the early people in the Bulozhi flood plains must have been Stone Age in conformity with settlement patterns in the rest of Zambia. These groups of people resemble the Bushmen of the Kalahari (Fagan 1966:33). The existence of Bushmen-type people is further established by tales about small people in Bantu traditions (Mainga 1973:8). In recent times, Bushmen-type of people are found in the Mashi and Chobe areas in the southern extremities of Bulozhi.

Iron Age settlers later displaced the Stone Age people. Archaeological finds in Western Zambia point to contemporaneous patterns to those occurring elsewhere in Zambia. Early Luyana people could have settled in Bulozhi between 200 and 500 AD according to evidence adduced from pottery finds (Brown 1998:25). Founders of the Lozi dynasty seem to have incorporated at least two distinct groups, one found in the north¹³ and another in the south¹⁴. The earlier groups could have lived in small groups under local chiefs. These groups are identifiable to this day while most of them are known by the same names (Mainga 1973:9; O'Sullivan 1993:v).

The following tribes lived in the north near Kalabo either in the 16th or 17th centuries¹⁵: the Muenyi, Imilangu, Ndundulu, Mbowe, Liuwa, Simaa, Makoma and Nyengo. In the south were the Subiya, Mbukushu, Toka, Totela, Shanjo, and Fwe (Mainga 1973:11; O'Sullivan 1993:v). The two groups were not only geographically divided, but linguistically as well. The Southerners were related to the Tonga groups occurring in the Southern province of Zambia (Mainga 1973:11). However Mainga's categorization of the Southern tribes as having Tonga origins is doubtful in certain cases. The reason being, apart from Subiya, Toka and Leya the other groups demonstrate different descent (Fagan 1967:17). For instance, Mbukushu history does not trace their origins from Tonga but from further east. They later traveled down following the Kabompo River to its confluence with the Zambezi. Under pressure from Lozi people they settled on an island called Mubeta and subsequently farther, south in the Okavango (Van Tonder 1966:37). The Mbukushu in the

¹³ The northern area of Barosteland lies in the environs of present day Kalabo district (Zambia).

¹⁴ This is the area from Senanga district stretching further down to Livingstone (Zambia).

¹⁵ The actual date is unknown. Yet it is postulated to 16th or 17th centuries depending on the date for the Luba-Lunda merger. The date for the merger lies anywhere between late 15th to late 16th centuries (Mainga 1973:19). Another factor worth noting is the similarity between the earlier language groups with Luba. Thus it is postulated that the earlier people were of Luba descent. After the Luba-Lunda merger bands of people migrated from the center. The monarchical lineage is traced to these late migrations (White 1962:14; Fagan 1967:17; Mainga 1973:11; Malan 1995:56).

west of the Kwando River speak a Luyana dialect indicating influence arising from early contacts (Pretorius 1975:17). Equally, it is suggested that the Fwe originated in the west and are properly grouped with the Okavango tribes. The Yeyi are perhaps close to the Tswana in Southern Africa (Pretorius 1975:24). Today the Subiya, Mbukushu, Yeyi and Fwe live in the Okavango region of the Caprivi Zipfel predominantly speaking Silozi and their respective languages.

The Northerners, on the other hand, are linguistically linked to Siluyana, which is a Luba language. It appears that the two groups- northern and southern, have been conquered by a later group of Lunda people, thus, fitting the Luba-Lunda Diaspora (Mainga 1973:17; Brown 1998:24). If this proposal is correct then Lunda conquerors arrived in the north around the sixteenth century.

Around 1800 (Mainga 1973:16) or 1820 (White 1962:12), other people arrived from the west seeking refuge. The two groups were Mbalangwe under Mwenekandala and Mbunda under Mwenechiengele. They were both welcomed and settled east of the flood plain in the environs of Mongu¹⁶ by the Lozi chief Mulambwa (O'Sullivan 1993:v; Brown 1998:28). The area was previously inhabited by Nkoya people who had been brought from their eastern homeland. The Nkoya were moved to the west to create a buffer against immigrants from the west. Legend has it that Nkoya people belong to the Lunda group that founded the Lozi dynasty (Mainga 1973:16). This hypothesis is supported by the permanent presence of Nkoya music repertoire and instruments at the Lozi royal court. In addition, there is linguistic closeness between Nkoya and some of the earlier language groups which, has not been adequately accounted for.

After the death of the tenth ruler, Mulambwa, around 1830¹⁷ the kingdom fell into chaos due to a succession dispute between Mubukwanu and his brother Silumelume. Subsequently Silumelume was murdered however, before Mubukwanu could take over chieftainship, Kololo conquerors invaded the land (Mainga 1966:126; Yukawa 1987:73).

The Kololo, a horde with a Basuto nucleus, conquered Aluyana people in the middle of the nineteenth century. Kololo tribe belonged to the Bafokeng of Patsa who lived on the Kurutlele Mountain on the bank of Vet River (Ellenberger 1912:306; Gluckman 1968:1;

¹⁶ Headquarter of Zambia's Western Province.

¹⁷ The Kololo invasion is placed at either a late date 1840 or earlier dates 1830 and 1820 (White 1962:12; Mainga 1973:215; Isichei 1995:142).

O'Sullivan 1993:vi). During their northward travel the original group swelled through alliances and assimilation of conquered people. Sebitwane was their leader. It is around this period that the name of the Luyana people was changed to the name Rotse. When Kololo warriors entered Barotseland at Sesheke they found a tribe of Subiya who paid tribute to the Luyi. The Subiya pronounced the name of their pillagers Luizi. In turn, the Kololo corrupted the name further to Ba-rozi (Turner 1952:9). Missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society who were well conversant in Sesotho language elected to spell the name of the people Barotse.

Luyana people later liberated their country but retained Kololo language. Following their defeat in 1838 by the Kololo a group of Luyana princes fled north and lived in exile at Lukwakwa (White 1962:11, 18). Kololo's hegemony was weakened after the death of Sebitwane's son, Sekeletu, in 1863 (Smith 1956:74; Giles 1997:17). In 1864 the Lozi to the north and Toka in the south simultaneously rebelled and cast off their yoke of subjection. Led by Sipopa the princes in the north regrouped, descended on the Kololo and annihilated the men leaving only women and children (Yukawa 1987:73; O'Sullivan 1993:vii; Zorn 2004:7).

Sipopa ascended to the throne, but was ousted from power in 1878. He was succeeded by Mwanawina whose reign was short-lived for less than two years. His successor Lewanika was instrumental in expanding the kingdom conquering part of the Luvale to the north and gave protection to Ishinde's Lunda. Moreover, across the border raids were done on the Kaonde to the north and Illa and Tonga to the south. The conquered people were forced to pay tribute.

In the nineteenth Century, other people visited the Lozi kingdom. Among them are Portuguese, Ovimbundu, half-caste slave traders and Arabs from the west coast. Griqua traders were the first to reach the Kololo from the south. Missionaries from Paris Evangelical Missionary Society based in Basutoland pioneered their work among the Lozi in 1883-7 (Mainga 1973:216; O'Sullivan 1993:vii). In 1890 and 1900 under advice from Paris Evangelical missionaries, Lewanika signed treaties accepting British protection under the auspices of the British South African Company (Zorn 2004:24).

2.2.2.1 Missionary efforts

In 1878, the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society tried to establish mission work in Bulozhi through Francois Coillard. However due to political instability in the kingdom king Lewanika prohibited commencement of any work. Coillard left the Lozi kingdom in 1879 and only returned in 1885. During his absence, two other missionary attempts were made. Firstly, some Jesuits tried to found a mission in Bulozhi. Mupatu (1959:29) fixes the coming of the Jesuits in 1833. To the contrary, the date is approximated to 1883 between Coillard's first visit (1879) and his return in 1885 (Arnot's 1889:71, 81-82; Mainga 1973:235). After visiting Lewanika the Jesuits' efforts were rejected due to misunderstandings with the king (Arnot 1889:71). Differences were essentially inflared by Lozi people's propensity to begging which were exacerbated by the Catholics' miserliness, a matter construed for dishonesty (Arnot 1889:71-72; Mupatu 1959:29).

2.2.3 Kingship and expansion

Early settlement patterns followed original conquest of the small tribes in Kalabo area by Mboo Mwanasilundu Muyunda credited as the first king of Lozi people. The following tribes were conquered; Mishulundu, Namale, Imilangu, Upangoma, Liuwa, Muenyi and Mbowe (Jalla 1954:9). Mboo's kingdom at this early stage was neither large nor highly centralized. With the passage of time small bands of royalties drifted southwards from the Kalabo settlement perhaps after succession feuds.

Mwanambinyi set up his chiefdom in the Senanga area. His people are known as Akwandi (Mainga 1973:28; Brown 1998:27). Later Mange left the Kalabo settlement journeying southward and settled in the vicinity of present day Mongu. The northern remnant group led by Ngombala, the sixth king, consolidated the kingdom by conquering the dissident chiefdoms as well as the remaining southern tribes. Mange's group was known as Akwangwa after his assassination because they deserted their ruler (Jalla 1954:10-12; Turner 1952:9).

The institution of Lozi kingship therefore developed through a process of borrowing and conquest. Sources of this growth lie in the environment and ambitions of the rulers as well as the neighbouring groups. Exemplarily Lozi tradition point out that Isimwaa a leader of

the Ndundulu impressed the idea of kingship on the aboriginal tribal leaders (Mainga 1973:33). Ndundulu tradition on the other hand indicates that Lozi people made an alliance with Isimwaa but later took over his chieftainship and forced his people, Ndundulu, into subjection.

Another case of borrowing is illustrated by the acquisition of *Maoma* drums. These royal and war drums feature prominently in installation rituals. Installation rites come to a peak when the elected king sits on one of the drums. *Maoma* drums, though, were captured from Mwanambinyi who in turn had confiscated them from the Mbukushu. Similarly, the royal ensemble features *Nkoya* xylophones and music (Mainga 1973:13). It appears that the early Luyana did not have a centralized monarchical system. Luyana was ruled by chiefs who claimed to have magical powers. They prayed to Nyambe and their ancestors for healing, fertility and successful hunting trips (Brown 1998:25).

The Lozi king is not only a political figure. He is also a religious leader. A king is endowed with royalty through his ancestry from the union of Nyambe and Mbuyuwamwambwa. This matter of fact makes him divine (Coillard 1902:224; Mainga 1972:95; Brown 1998:16). This status is accentuated through the royal cult in death. During national crises, prayers are offered at royal gravesites (Coillard 1902:215; Muuka 1966:258).

2.2.4 Lozi people

The Barotse nation consists of many different tribes (O'Sullivan 1993:v; Brown 1998:19). These tribes have intermarried considerably. In fact, even seized people that were uprooted forcibly from their homelands, are today indistinguishable from their conquerors. Although Lozi people will readily point without shame to their original tribal ancestry, there is practically no Lozi who is a pure Aluyana (Gluckman 1968:8). In spite of national identity and acceptance of each other's custom each group is conscious of its uniqueness.

With such complexity therefore, the endeavor to reconstruct Lozi religious traditions is enormous and challenging. A broad investigation into different traditions is equally astronomical. Therefore, a deliberate limitation will be imposed in the areas of this examination to obvious Lozi traditions. Although in its broadest sense Malozi describes all

subjects of the king, only the Aluyi of the Zambezi flood plain with the related tribes of Kwandi, Mbowe and Kwangwa belong to the proto Lozi¹⁸.

2.2.5 Geography

Today Barotseland is smaller than its historical geographical limits and it exists within western province in the Republic of Zambia. Historically Lozi people lived on the great flood plain, which stretches along the Upper Zambezi for 120 miles (Gluckman 1968:1; Brown 1998:9). At its widest, the plain is about 25 miles wide. Thus the Zambezi flood plain - Loziland proper, is also called *Bulozi* or *Ngulu* by Lozi people (Turner 1952:9; Hudson & Prescott 1964:138).

The Lozi Empire expanded over a long period. It is estimated that the Barotse kingdom at the height of the reign of king Lewanika (1884-1916) was approximately 150, 000 square miles in area. Through conquest the Lozi extended their kingdom all the way down the Kwito River, across to the Kwando-Mashi (Linyanti-Chobe) River and as far south as Wankie (Hwange-Zimbabwe). Their dominion stretched further south below the Victoria Falls in the land inhabited by the *We* (Gluckman 1968:1). The northern boundaries extended to Balovale (Zambezi district) all the way to Lake Lukanga and Kasempa.

However, the fluidity of geographical boundaries due to various factors has led to contestation of the extent of the kingdom. For instance, the lack of permanent presence by Lozi government in some of the claimed territories demonstrates this point. Indeed, some of the regions were not necessarily under direct Lozi rule but rather formed occupied locales inhabited by oppressed people who were pillaged for resources. It is also vital to highlight the role played by the early missionaries and business people (White 1962:24-25). Motivated by the desire to establish Crown Dominion (British colony) in order to secure their interests on the eve of the scramble for Africa, the Europeans could have easily exaggerated Lozi control.

¹⁸ Gluckman 1968:19-20 proposes that the true Lozi conquerors are distinguished from other people by the following criteria: they have a Lozi descent name (mushiku), can point to an ancestral mound in the plain, file a reverse V between their upper incisors, tattoo a certain pattern on their cheeks and have certain burns and holes in their ear lobes, which guarantee passage to Nyambe for men and Nasilele for women after death.

2.2.6 Lozi literature review

2.2.6.1 Introduction

It must be noted that an investigation of Lozi religious traditions prior to the middle of the nineteenth century can only be undertaken through oral sources. There is no firsthand written work for this period available. In addition, the bulk of later written sources regarding Lozi history is modern and records similar accounts of oral history (Mainga 1973:217).

In this research, it has become apparent that no study focusing primarily on Lozi traditional prayer has been conducted. However, data related to Lozi prayer can be accessed from certain historical and bibliographical material. Early written records on Lozi people were performed by missionaries, traders and explorers. For example, Mupatu (1959:28) and others indicate that David Livingstone was the first white man to visit Barotseland. To the contrary prior to Livingstone's arrival the upper Zambezi was visited by the Portuguese Silver Porto in 1847, 1852 and 1858. In any case Livingstone's records received wider publicity and became better known (Mainga 1973:231). During the course of investigating Lozi traditional prayer, a number of contributions have been reviewed. The following literatures illustrate the research history:

2.2.6.2 Contributions on early Lozi history

In his article, *The ethno-history of the upper Zambezi* White (1962) reviews data relating to the region adjacent to Angola and western Katanga (White 1962:11). By bringing to light Kazembe-Lunda and Ishinde-Lunda traditions White reconstructs Lozi origins (White 1962:25-27). Both Lunda traditions though similar indicate variations to the Lozi account. According to Kazembe-Lunda traditions, Mutanda Yembeyembe a contemporary of the first Kazembe¹⁹ fled south from western Katanga to found the Lozi dynasty. On the other hand in Ishinde-Lunda version, Kakoma Mangandi fled south from western Katanga with his daughter. Mangandi established the Lozi royal dynasty (White 1962:11, 15). On the basis of the two traditions, White suggests that Mwimbwa in Lunda traditions may be the

¹⁹ Founder of the Lunda dynasty in Luapula province from the Luba/Lunda empire in Congo.

same as Mwambwa, the Mother of Mbuywamwambwa in Jalla's Lozi history (White 1962:11). White proceeds to analyze Jalla's history of the Lozi critically. He discounts the prevalence of mythological themes such as the birth of the first chief Mboo to Mbuywamwambwa and *Nyambe* (God). White considers parallel Ishindi and Kazembe traditions to be more dependable. In addition, He examines Luvale, Nkoya and contributions by emissaries of the British South African Company (White 1962:26). White further corroborates his study with the work of Silva Porto, who visited the northern fringes of Barotseland in the mid-nineteenth century. The article unfolds Lozi history beyond the Kololo invasion to the time of the British administration.

Mainga (1973, 1972; 1966) unfolds the history and religion of Lozi people. In *The Lozi kingdom* Mainga (1966:238-243) examines conflicting theories about the origins of the Lozi. Firstly, one theory indicates that Lozi people originated from the Rozwi/Karanga Kingdom (Mainga 1966:240-243). Secondly, the Lozi originated from the Luba/Lunda center in Congo. Mainga analyses the historical validity and weaknesses of both theories. Ultimately, evidence is weighted in favour of Congo origins (Mainga 1966:246). She criticizes Muuka (1966) for his failure to adequately account for differences and similarities between Lozi and Lunda people (Mainga 1966:243).

Mainga's works are invaluable contributions on Lozi history. But, her broad categorization of the two early groups of people in Barotseland overstretches the classification of two of the southern tribes namely Mbukushu and Fwe. It is unlikely that they originated from Tonga people.

Van Tonder's (1966) dissertation on *The Hambukushu of Okavangoland* touches on early Lozi history. Van Tonder affirms that the establishment of the Lozi dynasty occurred in eighteenth century and states its historical influence in the Caprivi (Van Tonder 1966:43). Its extent impinged on the Hambukushu and other settlers in Okavangoland by the second part of the eighteenth century (Van Tonder 1966:42; Malan 1995:36). Importantly, in relation to Lozi people, Van Tonder echoes the works of White (1962) and Jalla (1954).

Pretorius' dissertation (1975) on *The Fwe of the eastern Caprivi zipfel* has relevancy to this study in so far as the early history of the local tribes is concerned (Pretorius 1975:18-24). In a brief account, Pretorius provides information concerning the Aluyi (Lozi) and their subject tribes, namely, Subiya, Hambukushu, Yeyi and Fwe. Oral traditions from the local

area corroborate and illuminate accounts about Lozi political hegemony particularly in the nineteenth century (Pretorius 1975:10, 26; Malan 1995:55-56). However, Pretorius relates the Fwe to Tswana people against Mainga who associates them with the Tonga of southern Zambia.

2.2.6.3 Contributions on religious experience

Holub (1976) a Czech medical doctor, visited the Lozi kingdom in the period from 1875 to 1888. He subsequently wrote about Lozi people in two volumes. During the expedition, Holub never went up to the Zambezi valley. Nevertheless, he met Sipopa, Lozi king, at the time. Sipopa was residing at Sesheke in the southern fringes of the kingdom. Information collected at that time illuminates episodes at the royal capital during this tyrannical ruler. Executions were conducted with impunity (Holub 1976:319-324). Opposition to the monarch was branded treason and the guilty party executed at the king's directive. In the king's court was an executioner, Mashoku, whose job was to carry out killings. There were also wizards in the kings' employ. Mashoku performed human sacrifices in the attendance of the king's wizards (Holub 1976:331-332).

Lozi people believe in good and bad spirits. Holub indicates that Lozi people exorcise bad spirits by means of charms made from bones of men or beasts among others (Holub 1976:302). Lozi people also believe in life after death. Calamities are attributed to the operation of evil spirits. Some of the marauding spirits are associated with displeased dead royals. When a member of the royal family is sick, the king may intercede for him. Prayers of this nature are conducted at the nearest royal grave. Holub's allusion to the general use of the poison test for settling varied disputes is doubtful. It appears from the records of contemporary writers that the poison ordeal was essentially connected to witch finding among the Lozi (Arnot 1889:66, 92, 94; Gluckman 1955:97-98). Equally, accounts from some African societies confirm the employment of the poison ordeal in witch finding (Hopkins 1980:63; Grabner-Haider 2005:459; Westerlund 2006:176).

2.2.6.3.1 Witchcraft poison ordeal, human sacrifice, trust in kings

Fredrick Stanley Arnot of the Plymouth Brethren was the second missionary during this period. His intention was originally to institute a mission station among Tonga people, but his efforts were frustrated by Lewanika. As a result, Arnot remained at Lealui, Lozi royal

capital for two years. Thereafter he left due to ill health and brewing rumors of a rebellion against the king. King Lewanika was later toppled in 1884. In his work *Garengaze* (1889) Arnot describes events among the Lozi from 1882 to 1884.

Arnot's *Garengaze* (1889) is useful regarding Lozi political history during the second half of the 19th century. But religious information particularly on prayer is scanty. Nonetheless, he has provided glimpses at some practices such as the boiling pot ordeal and drinking of poison employed in witchcraft trials (Arnot 1889:66). Upon confirmation of their crime, witches were burnt at stakes. In addition, Arnot (1889:75) writes about human sacrifice. We are also supplied with accounts concerning Lozi trust in kings and their medicines. For example, during storms, dwellers at the royal capital sought refuge at the king's compound (Arnot 1889:78).

2.2.6.3.2 Ancestor worship, divinity of kings, prayer

In 1885, Coillard and his entourage arrived to establish the first permanent mission in Bulozhi. Writing about Lozi people Coillard confirms some of the information already mentioned by Arnot. For instance, trust in kings is elaborated upon when Coillard is denied an audience with king Lewanika prior to making an offering at a royal grave (Coillard 1902:217). Despite his protests Coillard was ultimately persuaded to provide items for offering to the divinities of the subterranean consisting of white calico. Lewanika then proceeded to make an offering and prayers on Coillard's behalf.

Coillard elaborated on the divine descent of the Lozi royalties (Coillard 1902:224). It is upon this belief that the royal cult is established. The deceased kings are venerated and their graves converted into sanctuaries. The graves are carefully tended and villages are set up. At the time of writing, he estimated the number of royal graves at twenty-five. Coillard (1902:170, 211-212) has confirmed customs surrounding witchcraft practices, preparation rituals for battle and invocation of the Deity when confronted by danger.

2.2.6.3.3 Myth, sacrifice, prayer

In his book *Litaba za sicaba sa Malozi* Jalla (1954) has written a history of the Lozi. The book sets out by legendary descriptions about early man with God. Jalla relied greatly on oral history to record the origins of the Lozi. The difficulty with these accounts is obvious

as most of the history is mythological. Royal lineage is traced to Mbuywamwambwa, daughter of Mwambwa and *Nyambe*. Mbuywamwambwa later procreated with *Nyambe* (Jalla 1954:1-10). Jalla also reports on the beginning of animal sacrifice. In time past a king's son ascended to heaven. While in heaven, *Nyambe* provided him with cattle. Upon his return some of the animals were sacrificed. Jalla indicates the vitality of prayer among Lozi people. He demonstrates the point by providing background information on prayer during sickness, prior to hunting trips and before planting.

His work has many echoes in that of Coillard and Arnot particularly with regard to royal descent. Jalla's Lozi legends are been criticized as a poor record of history (White 1962:11-12) but, it is valuable because the mythological history portrays the religious understanding of Lozi people. Thus, myths convey their conception of activities that occurred outside their historical time particularly with reference to origin narratives (Ricoueur 1986:273-274).

2.2.6.3.4 Tribal history, settlement

Gluckman (1968) has written on *The Lozi of Barotseland in North Western Rhodesia*. He has attempted to provide information about these people with regard to their history, tribal origins, economy, land and kingship. Information on Royal graves is given in a sketchy manner. Its ethnographical content is valuable; however, its religious input is minimal. Hence, this book is beneficial for reconstructing early history, providing a cultural context and corroborating information concerning the royal grave cult.

2.2.6.3.5 Tribal history, prayer, charms, ancestor veneration, sorcery

The Lozi people of Northern Rhodesia is an ethnographic survey written by Turner (1952). In this publication, Turner discusses different aspects of Lozi people including their history and religious beliefs. He comments on belief in *Nyambe* (God), royal and commoner ancestors, sorcery, divination, exorcism and charms (Turner 1952:50-51, 53-54). He also briefly writes on prayer (Turner 1952:51). Turner's account is reminiscent of the rites accompanying both sowing and morning prayers. Reference is made to the preparation of an altar and the elements which are placed there-upon. He further points out the role of prayer for healing. Turner's assertion that Lozi people had a priest is either a

misrepresentation of royal grave custodians or a case of misinformation since this aspect is unattested in contemporaneous literature.

2.2.6.3.6 Royal descent, diviners, Nyambe and ancestral worship

Mupatu's (1959) book *Bulozi sapili* (Barotseland in the past) focused on early life and history of Lozi people. He sets out by alluding to the divine origin of Luyana (Lozi) kingship (Mupatu 1959:1). Mupatu relays concise information concerning worship of God, *Nyambe*, and ancestors. For example, during sickness, prayers are offered to ancestors.

Mupatu elucidates the role of diviners and witchdoctor in early Lozi history citing Mbuywana a witchdoctor of repute from the highland. Mbuywana's father, Muenda, was a renowned diviner (Mupatu 1959:26). Certain historical objections arise from Mupatu's history. Firstly, he postulates that the first westerner in Barotseland was Livingstone (Mupatu 1959:28). Evidence in fact indicates that Silva Porto visited the kingdom earlier (White 1962:26; Mainga 1973:231). Secondly, he locates the origin of Luyana (Lozi) royalty from God. This argument is premised by uncritical dependence on Lozi mythological history. Lozi kingship in fact developed gradually from the ancestress Mbuywamwambwa who hails from the Lunda/Luba Empire.

2.2.6.3.7 Religious experience

Mainga's article (1972) *A history of Lozi religion* is rich in religious history. Lozi dynasty is founded on claims of mythological origins. Further Lozi traditional religion has marked distinctions. It is segregated into three streams of; *Nyambe* worship, royal grave cult and ancestral veneration (Mainga 1972:98-99). In all three religious strands, prayer is fundamental whether addressed to dead royals, ordinary ancestors or the Deity.

2.2.6.4 Witchcraft

In *Magic, divination and witchcraft among the Barotse of Northern Rhodesia* Reynolds (1963) discusses extensively aspects of Lozi religio-magico traditions. This book is based on research conducted between January 1957 and February 1958. It was written at the height of witch-hunting in Barotseland.

Reynolds details methods of witchcraft practiced by Lozi people at the time. He writes at length concerning diviners, rainmakers and witchdoctors including their activities. The period examined does not illuminate earlier periods. But, he lends support to theories about origins of some witchcraft forms. He achieves this by considering some of the neighbouring and assimilated people (Luvale and Mbunda). Reynolds provides a cursory perspective on Lozi heterogeneity. Thus, a general picture emerges concerning the process of transfer and fusion of practices. However, other works ought to be examined on specific tribal people within and on the fringes of the Lozi kingdom in order to achieve a balanced historical cultural view.

When evaluating early missionary and Western accounts it is vital to make the following observations. Firstly, missionaries, traders and explorers settled in the kingdom at the invitation of the king. They had access to the grandees at their own terms and for most of the time resided at the capital (Zorn 2004:35). This close association to the royalties was bound to affect their assessment of events. Information might have been filtered by the grandees and was ultimately concerned with activities at the royal capital and the elite. Equally, it is difficult for residents of the royal capital to criticize their monarch, particularly under unstable political conditions of the late 1800s. Secondly, missionaries' beliefs regarding Christianity and paganism coloured their conception and interpretation of events without due consideration of local forces (Mainga 1973:237). Thirdly, writing later than the actual occurrence of certain events may be another factor influencing the manner in which reporting was conducted. Jalla, for example was writing in the 1900s about events that had taken place much earlier. Fourthly, it is crucial to bear in mind that the disruption caused by the Kololo invasion could have led to loss of certain information or at least influenced people's understanding of events and belief systems in the aftermath (White 1962:12). Therefore, missionary reports should be tested since in certain cases they are subject to exaggerations and misinformation to suit their ideological and political agendas.

2.3 African traditional prayer

2.3.1 Introduction

African people are notoriously religious (Mbiti 1969:1; Uzor 2003:190). Religion pervades their entire societies. Nowhere is religiosity expressed more vividly than in prayer. Thus prayer is a key phenomenon of African Traditional Religion (Heiler 1958:xiii; Shorter 1975:1; Opefeyitimi 1988:27).

At the outset, it should be noted that Lozi religion is classified under African Traditional Religion. However, like in any tribal religion it has observable distinctions. At any rate in African Traditional Religion prayer, sacrifice, and offering feature prominently (Magesa 1997:195). Prayer is the most common rite of worship in Africa (Adeyemo 1979:35; Nyirongo 1997:39). It is considered one of the most ancient riches of African spirituality (Mbiti 1975:2).

In African religious experience rarely does a day pass without an expression or recollection of God's power. Occurrences in life motivate prayer whether it is an accident or a gift, good or bad news, morning or evening and health or sickness (Magesa 1997:135).

African people direct their prayers to the Supreme Being who is called differently in diverse societies. Simultaneously, in many societies prayers are addressed to ancestors, spirits and divinities (Mbiti 1975:58; Kalu 2000:54). For that reason some scholars argue that God is hardly addressed directly in prayer. To the contrary, approaching the Supreme Being indirectly is attended by belief that God is too great to be approached directly. Therefore, like a traditional ruler, God can only be addressed through an intermediary (Mbiti 1969:177-178; Zuese 1979:7; Theron 1996:7). Addressing ancestors in prayer is premised by their attained qualities that qualify them to act as guardians and protective spirits to their earthly families (Kalu 2000:54). In any case, even when prayers are offered to ancestors, spirits and divinities, these entities act as intermediaries (Zuesse 1991:175; Mulago 1991:123; Theron 1996:7).

2.3.2 Prayer in African context

Prayer in African Traditional Religion encompasses the core of the rite accompanied by verbal expressions. It is more than an incantatory formula. Prayer derives its efficacy from the oral formation of imprecation, request and wish (Zahan 2000:20). Thus, words and the accompanying acts and gestures directed towards the invisible are effectual. Prayer in African Traditional Religion does not always go together with sacrifices and offerings. Consequently, in African societies prayer is the universal way of devotion (Nyirongo 1997:39). Generally, African religiosity is the province of men. Nevertheless,

women, particularly those who are past menopause, are actively involved (Mbiti 1991:68-71; Zahan 2000:19-20).

2.3.3 Functions of prayer

In African societies, prayer is conducted for various kinds of situations for example, during crises, when life is weakened, prayer is abundant. The exemplar Maasai of Kenya seeks God for healing. When epidemics devastate large areas, communities are involved in prayers and several animals sacrificed to the Supreme Being (Westerlund 2000:163).

Equally in times of festivity praise and thanksgiving are offered to either the Deity or ancestors. Thus, prayer in Africa is a resource for restoring health and life, both private and public. Prayer removes the bad and anti-life from society (Magesa 1997:135). Prayer is also offered for success. Such prayers are offered when embarking on an enterprise like a hunting trip, farming, and for a neonate's future.

Prayer emphasizes the interdependence of the visible on the invisible. When life experiences overwhelm an individual or community, dependence is cast on the Deity or ancestor. Therefore, prayer exemplifies the dependence of humans on the spiritual being. In this way people try to appease the gods or solicit their assistance. Various individual and community needs are directed to the invisible: Supreme Being, divinities and ancestors in prayer. Accordingly, requests are made when people are burdened by barrenness, childbirth, rain, war and death to mention a few (Mbiti 1991:69-71). The presence of various factors that can diminish the quality of life such as sorcerers and inherent evil motivate requests for vitality (Mulago 1991:123). Hence, prayer for protection from different dangers is paramount in Africa (Magesa 1997:197).

2.3.4 Elements of prayer

2.3.4.1 Invocation

Through prayer, the African supplicant addresses God, ancestors and spirits (Niangoran-Bouah 1991:92). Among the Akan of Ghana, when a meeting is convened before the king, proceedings may not resume prior to conducting prayers. Ancestors are welcomed and God is shown the alcoholic libation, but not offered a drink, instead, it is poured to the ground. The suppliant requests the ancestors to bless, prosper and protect the community

as well as to grant success for a specific endeavor. Akan prayers are offered simultaneously with pouring out libations (Donkor 1997:46, 121).

2.3.4.2 Petition

Africans pray mostly for concrete things. Petition is one of the most important motivations for prayer in Africa (Magesa 1997:197). Africans request for things in line with their perception of life. Thus, protection from harm is a prominent item for prayer, but it is not presented as a single ultimate purpose of prayer (Shorter 1975:19).

2.3.4.3 Description of danger

African people seek protection from danger and evil through different means (Berg-Schlossler 1984:215; Abimbola 1991:56). The major causes of misfortune are spirits, witches and all ill wishers. In most African societies there is belief that evil occurrences do not occur by chance. African worldview is pregnant with malignant spirits that wreck havoc on individuals and communities at large. These spirits may be neglected ancestors executing punishment on their descendants. Royal ancestors on the other hand mete out judgment on the entire society. They may withdraw rain, cause plagues to devastate the land, property and communities (Mainga 1972:97; Ukpong 1990:68; Maboea 2002:15).

In some African societies spirits of people who died tragically and did not receive proper burial may also cause problems for people living in the vicinity (Van Breugel 2001:94). Another common cause of danger in African society is witchcraft (Schiltz 2002:34:47; Grabner-Haider & Marx 2005:459; Westerlund 2006:173). Witchcraft generally arises from jealousy. Witches may attack their victims and cause grievous harm to occur in order to get even. In certain instances, witches attack to satisfy their insatiable cannibalistic appetite.

2.3.4.4 Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving may be offered together with petitions or separately (Magesa 1997:197). At harvest-time, people in certain communities jointly bring part of their fruit for celebrations and thanksgiving but, even at such settings it is not uncommon for a prayer of thanksgiving to include petitions for protection and longevity of life.

2.3.5 Other aspects of prayer

2.3.5.1 Expression of humility

Since prayer is an acknowledgement of one's need for assistance from a superior, African prayer is characterized by humility. It is common for supplicants to refer to themselves as worms or ants (Mbiti 1975:13, 16-21). In certain societies the supplicant may remove his sandal and adjust his garment as a symbol of humility (Donkor 1997:122). This is precisely because Africans understand that in prayer they are casting themselves before a greater invisible power (Magesa 1997:196).

2.3.5.2 Expression of honesty

Another expression of African prayer is the honesty of the petitioner. It is incumbent on the one praying to approach God or ancestor with complete honesty. During prayer, a petitioner is forthright with God. The petitioner has freedom of expression without inhibitions (Mbiti 1975:18). Underlying this element of honesty is belief in the intimacy between the petitioner and ancestor or God. The answer to the request hinges on this aspect. Failure to be honest could result in serious repercussions as it indicates a breach in trust (Magesa 1997:197).

2.3.5.3 Expression of confidence

African people approach the invisible characters in humility and confidence. The reason for such confidence arises from a firm belief that ancestors and deities assume a parental role. This relationship gives legitimacy to the suppliant's request. The addressee, on the other hand, is bound to make provision for the offspring (Magesa 1997:196).

Confidence in prayer enables the petitioners to articulate themselves fully. Similarly, the suppliant's emotions are expressed freely. The context of prayer sets the petitioner's tone. Thus, emotions of frustration, anger, fear, doubt sorrow and joy are freely expressed in African prayer.

Petitioners are been known to register their anger without inhibitions, particularly in prayers addressed to ancestors. Confidence in certain cases reaches its limit, such that ancestors

are scolded for their neglect or selfishness. Insults are also levelled at ancestors in extreme circumstances. This matter of fact illustrates an important difference between prayers to God from prayers to ancestors (Eiselen & Schapera 1962:260; Theron 1996:47).

2.3.5.4 Places and times

Prayer is offered at all times (Magesa 1997:194). In many African societies prayers are made in the morning and evening. However, the mention of God is constantly on the lips of the African. Thus, prayer ejaculations are uttered during the course of the day. Prayers are also held prior to projects or when people are faced by a difficulty (Mbiti 1975:2; Zahan 2000:16).

Among many African people, prayers are conducted in open spaces. This means that prayer is uttered while the petitioner is walking or undertaking a task. But, specific places are also designated for prayer. Such places include the area outside the hut, graves, shrines, mountains, forests and many more (Zahan 2000:15).

Lozi people, for example, may contact the Supreme Being privately in the compound at an altar, village square or royal graves when plagued by a wide scale epidemic (Turner 1952:49; Mainga 1972:95, 99). Mbuti people who live in open grasslands hurry back to the Rain Forest during calamities to perform the *molimo* rituals. When misfortunes strike, the male San conduct a ritual dance at night on behalf of the sick in the attendance of singing females. Maasai people believe that trees are a point of communicating with the gods. They perform their rituals at groves (Westerlund 2006:47). Chewa people of Malawi construct a hut (*Kachisi*) which serves the functions of a temple at which prayers are offered (Van Breugel 2003:43). Similarly, Dogon priests of Mali have communal altars while the Ashanti of Ghana worship at temples which were previously part of the palace (Parrinder 1976:38). Other places of worship include caves, rocks hills, mountains and trees (Parrinder 1976:89; Mbiti 1975:19; Westerlund 2006:70). Thus, different societies have devised variant approaches of communicating with the invisible (Parrinder 1976:89; Zahan 2000:14-19; Westerlund 2006:70).

2.3.5.5 Prayer gestures

Prayer in Africa is accompanied by multiple gestures and postures. These prayer acts vary from one society to another. The common postures taken by different petitioners are kneeling, sitting, bowing, prostrating, standing and walking (Mbiti 1975:98; Zahan 2000:15). Exemplarily it is common for Tonga elders to approach Leza (God) while sitting. Kikuyu people of Kenya prostrate on the ground at Fir groves (Westerlund 2006:47). The Lozi elder on the other hand kneels and bows down when requesting Nyambe for a good crop (Jalla 1954:3-5).

The different postures are complimented by gestures. These gestures include lifting hands, clapping, crossing hands and spitting and facing a particular direction (Mbiti 1970:27-31). For instance, Kikuyu people face Mount Kenya when praying. The Akan petitioner stands and pours libation while opening a meeting in prayer at the royal court (Donkor 1997:46). An Igbo elder sits and breaks a Kola nut at the morning and evening prayer (Uzor 2003:356-358). During sowing prayers, the Lozi village headman kneels at an altar facing the east towards the rising sun. He stretches out his arms and claps intermittently while praying (Jalla 1954:3-5; Mainga 1972:96). As illustrated by the exemplar cultures suppliants employ different postures and gestures when praying in Africa. These serve various purposes such as conveying dependence, humility, reverence (kneeling, prostrating), praise (clapping) and confidence in the provision ability of the Deity or ancestor (outstretched arms).

2.3.5.6 Material elements of prayer (sacrifices, offerings and libations)

The rites that accompany primordial utterances are defined as materialized forms of prayer. Material prayer therefore includes libations, offerings and sacrifices (Shorter 1975:21-22). Libations provide a means of exploring the disposition and provoking the intervention of ancestors. Usually libations are constituted of water, water mixed with millet flour and millet beer. Accordingly, water is symbolic of an emollient. When water is mixed with millet, it refers to involuntary digestion whereas beer is perceived to be a stimulant. For that reason, beer intoxicates the ancestors, making them to lose control

and act in accordance to the petitioner's desires. Thus, beer is not offered to God (Zahan 2000:13). To the contrary, it appears that in some societies the opposite is true. For instance the Akan (Ghana) pour alcoholic libations while invoking Nyankopon, the Supreme Being (Opong 2002:169). During a prayer ritual the supplicant drinks some alcohol and pours part of it to the ground before proceeding with prayer. Libations are poured out simultaneously with the utterance of prayer (Donkor 1997:122).

Sacrifices accompany the major rites in the ancestral cult. Blood signifies life. Hence, it is offered as the ultimate call for intervention. The most common animals sacrificed are chickens, goats, cattle, horses and humans in certain cases (Zahan 2000:13). Although offerings and sacrifices are done before ancestors and spirits, ultimately, they are directed to God (Mulago 1991:123; Niangoran-Bouah 1991:92). This understanding is informed by the belief that ancestors and spirits are intermediaries between God and men (Mbiti 1975:58; Zuese 1991:175).

2.3.5.7 Intermediaries

Generally, there are two categories of mediators in African Traditional Religion. I will classify the first group as human and the second ancestor and spirit intermediaries. Human mediators include family heads, village heads, chiefs and religious specialists such as diviners, medicine men, and priests (Mbiti 1975:167). Religious specialists are found in some parts of Africa. In such cases these functionaries engage themselves in leading roles at community prayers (Mbiti 1970:320). Where such officiants exist, they are selected through family lineage. Commonly, the function of a religious specialist is occupied by men however, women, particularly those who are past menopause, also perform religious duties (Zahan 2000:19). Qualifications of a religious specialist include moral uprightness; not given to alcohol abuse and other vices. This leader is expected to adhere to custom and observe tribal taboos. Among the Meru of Kenya for example the religious specialist must be kind even to his enemies (Magesa 1997:200).

In the vertical relational structure between the Supreme Being and human beings, ancestors occupy an intermediate position. Ancestors are capable of communicating to both God and humans. In many African societies, God is approached by the whole community of the living and the dead but, ancestors also relay messages to and from the Supreme Being. Due to their position, ancestors constitute the largest group of

intermediaries (Mbiti 1970:230). Yet in other societies, spirits and divinities feature in the religious schema. The lesser divinities also convey messages to the Supreme Being (Mbiti 1970:232). Therefore, in Africa, prayers are offered to God either directly or indirectly, through divinities and ancestors and with the assistance of human mediums.

2.3.5.8 Medicine

Prior to the advent of scientific remedies African people relied on traditional medicine which was frowned upon by the missionaries and anthropologists (Adamo 2001:12). African traditional medicines fall into two broad classes of herbal and ritual remedies. Herbal remedies have intrinsic medicinal properties outside the conjuring of magic. Ritual medicine on the other hand draws its efficacy from magical aspects.

Adamo (2001:18) disputes magical elements in the use of such medicine. However tension is noted in his line of argument. For example Adamo alludes to the employment of cursing words to affect a divorcee. It is indisputable that certain medicines work through magic (Imasogie 1985:75-78; Gehman 1989:67; Theron 1996:12). Based on the divinatory input in diagnosis and prescription, it is improbable that magical elements are avoided in certain medicines. Equally, some remedies are only effective when specific taboos are adhered to. Thus denying magical elements in some ritual medicines is an understatement of the facts.

In addition, charms for example, require the pronouncement of certain words to make them effective (Nyirongo 1997:29). Charms are usually prepared by witchdoctors who have mastered the secrete arts. At the same time, not all prescribed traditional medicines require magic to be effectual. Medicine may accompany prayers. In this case medicine function as a channel of actualizing answers to the prayers offered to the Deity.

2.3.6 Contributions to prayer in African Traditional Religion

2.3.6.1 Introduction

Numerous studies had been done on African Traditional Religion (ATR). These studies focus on either single, ethnic groups, or broad encompassing regional cultural groups or the entire continent. However, few of these investigations are exclusively on prayer. Many of them gloss over the subject or refer to it under general discussions on God,

divinities and ancestors. At any rate, prayer is an important phenomenon of African Traditional Religion. In the following review contributions are arranged contextually, namely, single cultures, regional or continental.

2.3.6.2 Prayer in single ethnic groups

Evans-Pritchard's (1956) *Nuer Religion* is a study of the Nuer tribe of Sudan. In his chapter 1 focused on God, Evans-Pritchard assesses Nuer prayers to God. The Nuer petition God for deliverance and peace when misfortune falls on them (Evans-Pritchard 1956:21, 27). They believe suffering results from wrongdoing, neglected duties to spirits, natural causes, evil magic and unknown causes (Evans-Pritchard 1956:21-22). Nuer people pray in public and private. During formal occasions prayers are commonly made to God. These prayers are generally offered in connection with sacrifices (Evans-Pritchard 1956:22). Usually public prayers are long invocations interspaced with short petitions. Petitions are also made privately for individual problems and anxieties. When praying the Nuer household head may pace up and down brandishing a spear, squatting with eyes turned towards heaven and arms outstretched while moving hands and palms up and down (Evans-Pritchard 1956:22).

McKenzie (1997) in his book *Hail Orisha* examines African Traditional Religion among the Yoruba of Nigeria. His key chapter on prayer (*The sacred word to the deity*) is developed under genres and forms of prayer. His discussion of sacred words to the deity comprises firstly of primordial sounds, greetings and salutations. Included under primordial sounds are hissing, screaming and ululation. Secondly, McKenzie observes the presence of blessing and cursing for protection and evil intent respectively (McKenzie 1997:334-338). In addition, the blessing is used to counter a curse (McKenzie 1997:336). These words are effectual when uttered by certain people who are believed to hold power in society, such as king, priest and beggars.

Thirdly, McKenzie (1997:341-344) considers the oath, vow and compulsive prayer. He notes the similarity between blessing and cursing on one hand and oath and vow on the other. Compulsive prayer to the deity is utilized during rain-making or rain prevention. Equally, prayer is employed in divinatory protection and healing.

Fourthly, numerous forms of prayer to the deity are examined (McKenzie 1997:345-358). Invocation serves as the beginning of the traditional prayer and often goes together with an offering (McKenzie 1997:344). Although confession of sin is not a common element in the traditional prayer, it appears occasionally in a few prayers. Thanksgiving and praise are expressed in songs to divinities and sacred rulers (McKenzie 1997:347). The songs are usually accompanied by drumming. Yet other elements of traditional prayer are supplication and intercession (McKenzie 1997:353). Supplications and intercessions are made to specific divinities, generally addressed and to certain divinities requesting them to mediate with another deity (McKenzie 1997:353). Prayers are offered to deities for various needs, including, protection from evil, fertility and healing. Some intercessions are uttered before the charm. Supplications are generally accompanied by the following prayer acts: kneeling, smearing a mixture of spittle and dust on the forehead. These prayer acts are symbolic of humility before the deity (McKenzie 1997:354).

Fifthly, McKenzie deals with sacred silence and Ifa divination system. Modernization has impacted cultic life among Yoruba people. He observes that in contemporary cities, silence is difficult to be adhered to. However, there are certain guilds that enforce silence in urban places at given times (McKenzie 1997:356). Equally, the advent of literacy has brought transformation to the indigenous cult by reducing dependence on oral traditions to preference for written texts. The Ifa divination system, for example, depends on memorizing hundreds and thousands of verses. Whereas previously Yoruba tribal people relied on memory and residual memory, literacy has enabled the writing of certain words exemplarily on medicine bottles (McKenzie 1997:358).

2.3.6.3 Prayer in multi African societies

Mbiti has written several books and articles on African Traditional Religion (ATR). Relevant works to the present study are examined hereafter. “*The prayers of African religion*” (1975) is a work cataloguing various prayer texts from different societies in Africa. Mbiti (1975:1) demonstrates the importance of prayer in African religion. He further classifies prayers according to their generic functions. This book, although helpful in terms of the amount of information, is very general. Mbiti’s point of departure is the similarity of various societies of the African religion. This aspect can be a weakness as it reduces on the depth gained from a study focused on one society.

In *African religions and philosophy*, Mbiti (1975) discusses prayer in the larger context of worship. He examines concepts of: Supreme-Being, ancestors, divinities, spirits and human intermediaries. The *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (1986) recounts the history of Christianity in Africa. Mbiti considers common elements between African religion(s) and Christianity. He demonstrates this point by referring to indigenous African believers' fervency at prayer as a continuation from African Traditional Religion (Mbiti 1986:80, 84). The book is an invaluable source for ongoing research. However, the underlying theory of unity in African religion(s) ought to be examined critically when conducting ethnological research (Mbiti 1969; Shorter 1975:6). Certain ethnic variations may impact on group appreciation of given concepts.

Shorter (1975:1) in *Prayer in the religious traditions of Africa* emphasizes the centrality of prayer in religion. He discusses different aspects of prayer including definitions, functions and approaches for studying the concept in Africa. There are distinct schematic dimensions of prayer involving God, intermediaries and petitioner from different African societies (Shorter 1975:8-13). In Africa, prayer serves numerous social situations such as childbirth, rites of passage, weddings, hunting, famine and war. Shorter (1975:14-15) also classifies prayers functionally. Thus he includes petition, intercession, thanksgiving, praise confession, purification, Blessing, cursing, commemoration, vows, forgiveness, divination and lament. Shorter affirms the universality of prayer for protection but cautions against regarding it as a single ultimate explanation for every prayer.

There are different forms of prayer such as material, corporal and verbal (Shorter 1975:21-22). Prayer-texts are grouped in terms of functional issues such as protection from evil. Although Shorter set out with a view to analyze prayer multi-dimensionally, his results are predominantly social functional (Turner 1981:10).

King's (1986) *African cosmos: an Introduction to religion in Africa* covers aspects of prayer from geographically related societies. His phenomenological description focuses on West Africa's Yoruba and Akan, Dinka and Acholi (river and lake people) and Ganda and Swahili (Bantu). He investigates communication with the divine through prayer and sacrifices among aforementioned groups of people.

Prayer is communication between the divine and the human. It is therefore a basic tenet of African Traditional Religion (King 1986:59). An African family representative usually

rises in the morning to salute spirits of the cosmos and ancestors. Maternal petitioners invoke both their husbands' ancestors and their own. Communication with the Deity and ancestors is achieved verbally and materially. Material forms of prayer as sacrifices are a major component of communication with the divine (King 1986:65). Other material media of prayer are dancing, drumming and art.

Archetypal Ganda people offer prayers to dead kings. Prayers to Mukasa are offered at a shrine. Rituals surrounding prayers are presided by a chief medium and are accompanied by drums, xylophones and stringed instruments. Akan petitioners pour out libations amidst ancestral invocations (Kings 1986:63).

King's limited comparative analysis is commended for its strength in juxtaposing phenomena that is related through geographical proximity. This approach allows for ease of analyzing concepts between close cultures. Unfortunately, King schemes over prayer and only highlights a few aspects. King's notes on prayer bear no significant variations. This is either a consequence of cultural closeness between the considered societies or his failure to consider elements of prayer contextually prior to reaching a composite reformulation of prayer.

2.3.6.4 Contextual African Psalm studies

At the dawn of independent Africa in 1960, the religious landscape of sub-Saharan Africa prided only in six universities (Holter 2004:2). By the year 2000, more than one thousand theological institutions had been established. Most of them are church related. During the period from 1967 to 2000, sub-Saharan Africa produced eighty seven doctoral graduates in the Old Testament. Seventy graduated from European and American Universities.

In the same period, six dissertations were written on the Psalms. The following theses illustrate the point (Holter 2004:4-11); Boniface-Malle (2000), *Interpreting the Lament Psalms from the Tanzanian Context: Problems and Prospects*; Grantson (1991) *Death in the individual psalms of lament: An exegetical study with implications for theology and mission*; Kafang (1993) *A semantic and theological investigation of the concept of "poor" in the Psalms*; Nelumbu (1994) *Analytical study of the theme of liberation in the Psalms*; Ogunkunle (2000) *Imprecatory psalms: Their forms and uses in ancient Israel and some selected churches in Nigeria* and Zinkuratire (1987) *The kingship of Yahweh in Israel's*

history, cult and eschatology: A study of Psalm 47. None of the above theses were conducted on the present investigation of prayer for protection.

In 1974, Welshman contributed an article entitled *Psalm 91 in relation to a Malawian cultural background*. This is a result of contextual studies by Malawian students on Psalm 91 (Welshman 1974:24). Culturally relevant concepts are directly related to their counterparts in Psalm 91. For example, the names of God appearing in the psalm are compared to traditional Malawian names for God (Welshman 1974:24-25). Metaphors of protection are correlated with Malawian terms. Similarly, aspects of danger from both contexts are juxtaposed. This study bears weaknesses arising from a tendency to harmonize and find similarities between Psalm 91 and Malawian traditions. Although some elements are related to corresponding cultural context(s), differences are not forthcoming from the investigation. The approach is based on exaggerated religious closeness between African and Israelite traditions. A historico-cultural distance is lacking in the assessment. There is no demonstrable proximity evident between the two traditions. Thus, Welshman's failure to explicate the elements within their different religious and cultural contexts has led to superficial similarities.

Adamo (2001) in *Reading and interpreting the Bible in African Indigenous Churches* examines prayer and the use of the Bible for protection, healing and success in African Indigenous Churches. This contextual study is conducted in Yoruba societies of Nigeria. The reality of witches, sorcerers and evil spirits in Africa and Nigeria specifically forces people to seek protection from the enemy's terror (Adamo 2004:26). Verbal pronouncements are employed in Africa to ward off evil (Adamo 2004:68-69). Adamo proposes that African potent words resemble imprecations in the Book of Psalms. This is attended by the notion that white missionaries had hidden powers drawn from the Bible. Thus various texts, particularly in the Psalms, are explicated for protective purposes (Adamo 2001:68-69). Adamo cites texts imbedded with imprecations which are employed in African Indigenous Churches. Members of these churches (AIC) like in African Traditional Religions employ psalm imprecations as amulets and in conjunction with herbal medicines (Adamo 2001:73-84; Adamo 2004:28). Similarly, certain names of God are uttered in order to invoke God's protection.

Adamo's African cultural hermeneutics is problematic. On a positive note, it is an appraisal of both biblical and African traditions. However, Adamo fails to demonstrate the

historical and cultural distance between the Bible and African religious experience. His analysis of protection prayer can be equated to reading African cultural elements into the Biblical text. Performative words in African invocations are related to imprecations in the Psalms. In this way, Adamo fails to acknowledge the differences arising from the role of Yahweh as the subject of the psalmist's imprecations and the disavowing of magic in the Psalms.

2.4 Review of prayer in the Old Testament and approaches to the Psalms

2.4.1 Introduction

Research into Old Testament prayer has a long but insurmountable history. However the aim of this section is not to provide a detailed all-encompassing list of works but rather an overview of some important contributions to the subject of prayer in the Old Testament. Furthermore, this discussion prepares the ground for a consideration of the theme of protection in the Psalms.

2.4.2 Prayer in the Old Testament

In *Theology of the Old Testament*, Eichrodt (1961) propounds both on prayer and the acts of prayer. He observes that sacrifice and prayer go extremely together in the Old Testament. It follows that certain requests such as prebattle prayers were attended by sacrifices. The prebattle prayer of Psalm 20 is exemplar of this fact. Eichrodt further states that words typical to prayer are found in numerous Old Testament prose prayers. The common phrases for praying are "to call and cry aloud."

Similarly prayer acts such as stretching hands are common not only in the Old Testament but in ancient Near Eastern cultures (De Vaux 1978:459; Keel 1978:308, 311, 314, 322). Herein are rudiments of primitive religion. At any rate acts of lifting hands, bending knees and bowing during prayer correspond to actions performed by a vassal before a great king. Ultimately, in Israelite religion these acts symbolize submission (Eichrodt 1961:173; 1967:191).

Eichrodt reckons a relatedness of curse and blessing to magic particularly at an early stage. This is illustrated by the development of the same from a point in time when its

efficacy lay outside God's intervention. It was superseded with the understanding that the power to curse lies in God. However, this theology particularly the practice of employing God's name maliciously when uttering curses was forbidden. Consequently, the curse gave way to prayer of vengeance (Eichrodt 1961:174-175). Importantly the prayers of Israel are absent of hollow flattery. In contradistinction to Heiler's 1958:176-177 categories of mystical prayer²⁰, Israelite prayers are infused with simplicity, sincerity and confidence of being heard (Eichrodt 1961:175; 1967:164, 189). There is no marked disparity between individualistic and communal cultic prayers. Later formalization of prayer developed into duty demonstrated by set times of prayer, prescribed apparel, and forms (Eichrodt 1961:176).

Greenberg (1983) made a contribution on biblical prose prayer. He commences by delineating prose prayer from psalms. Psalms are situated in formalized cultic expression. The cult leaves little room for spontaneous prayer. For this reason, institution of the sanctuary including rites and celebrations are described in the finest detail (Greenberg 1983:4). In official religion, sacrifice was central. Sacrifices were performed by the hands of priests. In this way, the laity had no practical role in worship. Moreover, not even priests prayed in accompaniment of sacrifice. Greenberg (1983:6) argues that psalms lack real life setting. Therefore, life setting is conjectured as it lacks biblical attestation. Consequently, psalms fail to depict spontaneous piety in biblical Israel. This translates to a deficiency in terms of reflecting the commoners' religion. Psalms are prescriptions of the schooled centralized in temple rituals.

Whereas psalms are mediated and refined through the priestly institution prose prayer obtaining in narrative is unmediated. Non-psalmic prayer is marked by the following elements: this prayer is addressed to God (Greenberg 1983:7). It is less often about God, rather it is an expression of dependence and subjection to God. Prose prayer includes the genres of petition, confession, benediction and curse. This form of prayer is freely composed in particular life settings, by specific authors and for given functions. However, the setting is bound by the literary context (Greenberg 1983:8). This context serves a particular narrative function. Greenberg argues for verisimilar as against veridicality of prose prayer. Although it is difficult to prove that prose prayer represents the actual utterances of a petitioner it may well be close to the person's original words.

²⁰ Heiler (1958:172-177) understood the aim mystical prayer as achieving a state of losing oneself in the divine.

Greenberg (1983:48) argues that this type of prayer is not re-used. At any rate, in Israel there was a diversity of petitioners ranging from lay people to kings represented in prose prayer. The fact that everyone could pray spontaneously marks biblical prayer from magic and incantation (Greenberg 1983:48). Prayer in narrative yields a minimum contribution to the description of biblical religion. Conversely, there is a common structure depicted by elements of address, petition and motivation. As a norm, this structure is represented with some additions in the longer prayers. The invocation of God by name YHWH establishes contact with the invisible presence (Greenberg 1983:11). Sincerity is a condition of worshiping and praying (Greenberg 1983:49). Greenberg (1983:39-40) concludes his study by discounting the dichotomy caused by proponents of spontaneity on one hand and set prayer on the other. Exemplarily Heiler (1958:xviii, 66) postulated that extemporaneous prayer is true and original prayer, while Mowinckel (1962:1,2) saw set prayer as key in religion. By arguing that spontaneous and set prayers occurred contemporaneously Greenberg (1983:46) counters the evolutionary principle concerning prayer.

The prayers of the Bible by Clements (1985) is an extended study on the subject of prose prayer. Clements sets off by distinguishing prose prayer from psalms and biblical prayer from other traditions. He suggests that the Bible does not promote a priestly monopolistic tendency regarding prayer (Clements 1985:1). Everyone can pray. Prayer is an open privilege to be enjoyed by all. It is spontaneous and free. Similarly, biblical prayer lacks semi-magical aspects; it does not require mysterious words, names and formulas privy to select professionals (Clements 1985:8-9).

Psalmic prayer, on the other hand, is a product of professionals. Although its original composers were predominantly ordinary men the original setting is difficult to explicate (Clements 1985:3). This point makes psalms applicable to new contexts. Since prayer is universal, men and women resort to calling on God when they are in need. Non-psalmic prayers are heard resonating with deep theological insight.

The question of authenticity of prose prayer is cursorily addressed. Clements (1985:5) disputes the relevance of the historical setting of prose prayer. Instead, he resolves the matter by appealing to God's personality and the nature of relationships from which the words of prayer are drawn. Auxiliary in prose prayer the disclosure of the petitioner is

indicated. Faith is a key component of biblical prayer. The centrality of prayer in the Bible and religion in its entirety, is underscored.

Prayer is a universal religious act and it contains common language (Clements 1985:6). Hence, it is easy to approach the Bible through contrasting its revealed ideas and institutions with other religions. Prayer is a typical human activity, which is influenced by the petitioner's understanding of God. In many ancient traditions, prayer contained a magical element. To the contrary, Israelite religion censured the practice of magic. Biblical prayer is therefore God-ward in character (Clements 1985:8-9). Behind the themes of biblical prayer is the creator God. Prayer, is therefore offered to God for various reasons. The different forms of prose prayer are petition, intercession and praise. These forms of prayer are underpinned by confidence in a responsive God (Clements 1985:10-13).

Balentine's (1993) *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible* concentrates exclusively on prose prayers. Prayer is dialogue with God (Balentine 1981:331; 1993:33). The petitioner sometimes has certainty and at other times uncertainty. This results in praise and lament respectively (Heiler 1958:3; Balentine 1993:33). Confidence in prayer hails from God's relatedness to humanity (Greenberg 1983:32). As distinguished from psalms the narrative context enhances theological interpretation of prayer. Balentine (1981:334) follows Westermann and Brueggemann in stating the essential witness to both God and humanity in prayers. Prophets in ancient Israel prayed for others and spoke on behalf of God. Nonetheless, prayer was not the prophet's province since ordinary people prayed directly to God (Balentine 1984:161).

Balentine demonstrates that prayer traverses beyond being a gesture of worship and a link to the transcendent. Accordingly, prayer has aspects of engagement and securing God's active involvement in religious and social realms. In this way Balentine departs from earlier studies that concentrated on form-critical orientations of prayer, such as lament, praise, petition and thanksgiving. In its place, he delves in literary functional approaches. Therefore, he addresses the study to characterization of God and petitioner elucidating themes of divine justice, penitence and contrition.

In *They cried to the Lord* Miller (1994:1) asserts that no other practice adds more clarity to a religion than the exploit of praying. He postulates that prayer is contacting a higher

power who is in touch with human life. Prayer encompasses both painful reluctant stuttering and careful formal disciplined utterance to God. It embodies an element of trust in God. Miller contrasts Old Testament prayer from both Egyptian and Mesopotamian prayer on account of intermediaries. Israel's neighbours at certain occasions relied on the assistance of divinities who mediated between people and the deity. There are cases where High Gods were enlisted to carry out mediatory functions (Miller 1994:31). The center of Miller's book hinges on Chapters 3-5 where he meticulously discusses the movement from human cry for help to divine response. Subsequently, divine response evokes praise and thanksgiving from the petitioner. Miller (1994:3) isolates the following elements as common to prayer: address, lament, petition, motivation, confidence and trust.

2.4.3 Approaches in Psalm studies

In his seminal work on the Psalms *An introduction to the Psalms* (a translation of *Einleitung in die Psalmen: die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* [1933] by Nogalski) Gunkel (1998) has made an enormous contribution to Psalm studies. He affirms that biblical psalms are mostly, though not all, prayers. Gunkel traces the development of lament to situations of threat, famines and pestilence at which the community gathered at holy places to fast and call on God. He proposed genre classification as foundational and nonnegotiable upon which everything stands. Gunkel's categories are hymns, communal complaint, individual complaint, Yahweh's enthronement, royal psalms, individual thanksgiving, and minor forms.

Gunkel (1998:1ff) employed a **form-critical approach** to conducting Psalm studies. His form-critical hermeneutic comprises genre analysis, form analysis and setting. Gunkel observes that delineation of genre is a paramount starting point. Accordingly, chief genres grew out of recurring events in history. As a result, the collections of elements of various psalms which contain the same motif form genres. The analysis of form demands careful attention to linguistic form, elements and motifs. These motifs include introductory and conclusive devices.

From Gunkel Psalm study has predominantly utilized *form criticism*. Different scholars have emphasized certain aspects of the method. Cultic setting, which is a part of Gunkel's form-critical approach, has been applied differently by successive scholars (Mays *et al* 1995:149).

Gunkel's student Mowinkel's **cultic approach** tended to place the Psalms at the annual festival similar to the Babylonian New Year celebrations. Besides the major shift in cultic analysis, he followed Gunkel in similar *genre* classification but added individual praise for instance. Mowinkel (1962:219) also promoted the *Gattung* of the Protective Psalm. Mowinkel qualified the group by identifying the presence of imminent danger in the psalms (Miller 1994:105). In this way these psalms reflect danger threats prior to the actual occurrence. Since these psalms contain a tone of confidence they are therefore brighter than other laments. His opinion on the communal aspect of the prayers was influenced in part by his student Birkeland. Birkeland (1955) argued that the enemies in the psalms of protection are always foreign. Accordingly these lament psalms are seen as national. In which case the "I" is seen as representing the nation through the person of the king. This hypothesis is not without critique. Different scholars argue that the psalmists' enemies must be considered on a case by case basis as they are not always national (Anderson 1983:82-86; Croft 1987:33-34, 48; Brueggemann 1995:12, 13; Gunkel 1998:1; Bullock 2001:147). Equally, other scholars have found different cultic settings to Mowinkel.

While Mowinkel locates the *Sitz im Leben* of the Psalms in the New Year festival Weiser proposed a **covenant festival** (Weiser 1962:35). Weiser builds his theory based on the understanding from the Targum and a similar festival in the Qumran community. Although conceding the lack of documented evidence of the festival in the Old Testament Weiser conjectured support from various passages. He argued that Psalm 50 is an extant part from the order of the covenant festival. Similarly, Psalm 81 is a recollection of a call to sons of Joseph to the festival.

Kraus (1988) explicates a cultic setting of the Yahweh is King-Psalms at the **enthronement festival** (Kraus 1988:86). His syntactical analysis of the Yahweh is King ($\hat{u}lm\ hwhy$) Psalms led him to the conclusion that the phrase contrary to Mowinkel's assertion does not translate to Yahweh has become king. As a consequence, the phrase is not an enthronement cry, but a statement concerning the kingship of Yahweh. This interpretation led Kraus to the conclusion that the phrase is related to the enactment of Yahweh's kingship patterned after the election of Zion and Davidic kingship (Kraus 1988:88). In post-exilic interpretation, the monarchy was no more. Hence, Yahweh was

the reigning king. Kraus (1988:86-89) suggested that the enthronement festival occurred on the first day of feast of Tabernacles.

Westermann, shifted Psalm study from concentrating on the setting in life to genre. Among his works are *The Psalms, structure, content and message* (1980), *Praise and lament in the Psalms* (1981) and *The living Psalms* (1989). Psalms are poems and lyrics that are extant from ancient civilizations, religions and languages. In spite of their long history they are still vital. Psalms are addressed to God. They are truly prayers and appeals to God (Westermann 1989:1).

Psalms arose out of Israel's worship and were sung and prayed prior to writing (Westermann 1980:13). Unlike Gunkel's main genres, Westermann categorizes psalm types broadly into lament and praise. Great national crises such as drought, threat of attack, defeat and plague led to the development of community lament. On the other hand, victory at war and bumper harvest led to community praise. Similarly, individual difficulties and blessings grew into individual lament and praise respectively. According to Westermann, the lament developed through three distinct phases. The early prayer, lament, is actually a complaint against God (Westermann 1981:17). Thereafter petition developed bringing balance between complaint and calling on God. Later the emancipation of the lament from prayer occurred. Ultimately, the complaint against God was mellowed by the development of judgment and sin theology. Yet the lament could not be silenced as evidenced by the questions to God in later prayers (Westermann 1981:172). Praise is divided into declarative and descriptive praise. Descriptive praise is not focused on a particular situation rather, it is a historical reckoning of God's deeds in the past. Declarative praise however is in response to present situations (Westermann 1989:2).

Westermann (1980:14) indicates that the great festivals were not the exclusive times of worship. Rather they represent special times. Sick people prayed on their beds and in their tents. Later at a specific time and place they were integrated and focused into a centralized cultic setting for the fullness of worship. Historical collections were later brought together. This is noticeable in the five books of the Hebrew Bible. Other identifiable collections are Davidic, Elohist and smaller Asaphite and Korahite collections (Westermann 1980:17). Similarly different genres are distinguishable while lament and praise are the dominant genres (Westermann 1980:24). Even though their cultic setting is

worship, they are still genuinely lament and praise. There is no clarity in assigning the psalms to one great festival (Westermann 1980:28).

Scholars from the American school have utilized **text immanent approaches**, which focus on the analysis of the final form and literary structure of the text. Proponents of text immanent approaches include Craigie (1983), Allen (1989), Tate (1990) and Limburg (1992), Prinsloo (2003) and Terrien (2003). Craigie (1983:47) indicates that his approach is informed by broad principles of form criticism. Although reconstructing the historical context is vital, dealing with the present form of the poetic text is preferred (Limburg 1992:527; Prinsloo 2003:365; Terrien 2003:37). Text immanent approaches do not predicate reading texts ahistorically or disavowing of cultic contexts. Rather, focus is shifted to content, function, poetic strategies and meaning of a psalm. Thus, the final form of the text becomes the point of departure.

Although form-analysis is invaluable, occasionally it has limitations when delineating *Gattungen* (Terrien 2003:14). Accordingly, *Gattungen* are not considered to be ready made schemes into which every psalm is fitted (Limburg 1992:525). Failure to note this matter may inadvertently result in forcing individual psalms into particular cultic context (Prinsloo 2003:365). Hence, varying ways are utilized in psalm classification such as considering functional aspects (Craigie 1983:47) and structural analysis (Limburg 1992:525; Terrien 2003:14). In the absence of functional terms literary evaluation does not illuminate classical genres (Allen 1989:xxii). To the contrary Terrien (2003:14, 37) argues that structural analysis is a key factor in clarifying classification.

Life setting is a departure from Mowinckel's invaluable New Year Festival and Weiser's Covenant Festival. The two settings are regarded as elusive and exaggerated respectively (Craigie 1983:48). To this end a broader social or cultic setting is considered and illustrated existentially (Tate 1990:xxiv-xxv). Consequently form critical heterogeneity is realized through human experience in the form of crisis or calm and excitement or ordinariness (Allen 1989:xxiv). To this end community laments functioned in cultic services of prayer and fasting. They were motivated by situations of national emergency and disasters. Similarly, individual laments were utilized at family and individual levels (Limburg 1992:525).

Literary setting is elaborated through the observation of macro and micro literary settings. The large literary context is delineated through identifying terminal points such as doxologies, royal and Torah psalms placed by editors at the beginning of the five books (Allen 1989:xxii). Literary units are linked internally by thematic and social historical motifs (Tate1990:xxiv). Furthermore coherence of the Psalter is underpinned by theological and ethical trajectories (Allen 1989:xxii). However, the psalmists' faith is not expressed in discursive language (Terrien 2003:37).

Another approach in the study of Psalms is **colometry**. Important proponents of this approach include Loretz and Kottsieper (1987). Freedman (1980) has proposed a similar approach, however, he emphasizes on metrical analysis unlike the foregoing colon analytical approach. Prosaic and poetic texts are distinguished by their artistic and literary form (Loretz & Kottsieper 1987:16). Hence, there is need for specialized approaches for analyzing the texts. Form and style, words and their arrangements are critical to elucidating content, meaning and feeling (Freedman 1980:2-3). The following compositional features are imbedded in poetry: parallelism, rhythm, sound and length of line. Hebrew parallelism must be conducted within its large context due to transfer of ideas that occurred in the ancient Near East (Loretz & Kottsieper 1987:14). Colometry involves delineating colon and verse. It depends on structural analysis of a text (Fokkelman 2000:12).

There is no universal method for metrical analysis and poetic structure in biblical psalms (Freedman 1980:2-3). Hebrew poetry is divided into two basic identifiable structural types. The first consists of poems with regular metrical and symmetrical stanza structure. The second category is constituted from complex strophic structure with unequal length (Freedman 1980:9). To the contrary, metrical analysis of Hebrew psalms is unconvincing due to its tendency to structure lines superficially into equal length (Loretz & Kottsieper 1987:18).

Following Ugaritic poetry, which is decoded through cola, bicola and tricola a similar analytical method for biblical texts, is proposed (Loretz & Kottsieper 1987:18; Loretz 2002:1-2, 4). Loretz's colometric analysis employs a consonant counting technique. This technique is particularly criticized because it is not adaptable (Connor 1980:150). Freedman on the other hand, employs syllable counting (Freedman 1980:7). Syllable counting is used to determine the length of cola and not to support metrical analysis

(Fokkelman 2000:12). Ugaritic cola structure does not fit entirely due to stages in textual development. Biblical texts had been reformulated by latter communities. For this reason, the end text may yield textual disturbances and expansions (Loretz & Kottsieper 1987:18). In addition, the nature of the Hebrew language has an effect (Freedman 1980:10). The object of colometric analysis is to isolate and study the smallest poetic units and their interrelationships (Freedman 1980:2; Loretz & Kottsieper 1987:22, 24, 52). Thus, a colon is identified and related to large units of strophes and stanzas. The connectedness of units is examined with reference to parallelism. Parallelism is imbedded in a greater literary structure which includes rhythm, basic units (cola, bicola and tricola) and whole text (Watson 1986:66; Loretz 2002:3). Unlike Gunkel's meter and *Sitz im Leben* analysis which reduced texts to specific life settings colometric analysis is appropriate considering the fact that texts were re-used (Loretz & Kottsieper 1987:53; Loretz 2002:7).

Brueggemann's works are influential in the use and interpretation of the Psalms. In his 1995 monograph, *The Psalms the life of faith* Brueggemann's **functional classification** and **hermeneutical approach** cannot go unnoticed. His decisive article *Psalms and the life of faith: A suggested typology of function* also the lead essay in the book provides a significant alternative to Gunkel's kind of psalms. Building on Gunkel's pioneering work Brueggemann suggests functional categories realized as songs of *orientation, disorientation and reorientation*. Brueggemann also draws from Ricoeur's hermeneutic of suspicion and retrieval to highlight life's dialectic movement from lament to praise.

Brueggemann's chapter on *The Psalms as prayer* is an elaboration on the topic. Psalms are identified as both acts of prayer and invitations to other prayers outside the Psalter (Brueggemann 1995:33). Prayer goes beyond thoughts to utterances of those who live close to deep hurts. Brueggemann offers seven elements of psalmic prayer namely: address to an identifiable "You", this "You" performs wonders, Yahweh's character self disclosure is marked by covenantal loyalty and companionship, as well as praise, lament, absence of embarrassment and honesty and justice (Brueggemann 1995:35-41). Brueggemann (1984:1) also suggests that the psalms are not only addressed to God, but they are sometimes directed at the believing community. As speeches, psalms exhibit emotions of praise, anger and doubt. Therefore, Brueggemann classified psalms in a threefold manner as **disorientation, orientation and reorientation** (Brueggemann 1984:24).

Gerstenberger (1998; 2001) also wrote commentaries on the Psalms. The two volumes utilize form-critical analysis of the Psalms. Gerstenberger conducts an exegetical study working with genres and formulas. While undertaking to probe further the matter of *Sitz im Leben* Gerstenberger focuses on **sociological settings**. He affirms a multilayered spirituality of generations of psalmists and psalm users reflected in the Psalms. He also argues that the views of the psalmists and users finally converge at the point of collection and redactional activities in the worship ceremonies of early Jewish communities of 6th and 7th Centuries BCE. Through the process of use and re-use, both oral and scribal traditions have shaped individual texts, intermediate collections and the *Psalter* as a whole. Gerstenberger confirms that form critical and socio-historical analysis is beneficial in identifying the background of psalmody in different types of human organization and ritual practice.

Hossfeld and Zenger (2005) in a *Critical and historical commentary on the Bible Psalms 2, 51-100* present their **redaction historical criticism**. This approach is an integration of historical-critical, philological-tools, textual-critique, history of tradition, *genre* and prosodic analysis, history of religion, ancient Semitic and classical languages (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:ix). Equally origins, structure and theology of smaller genres are explicated. Links between psalms derive from linguistic connections, common motifs and thematic unity (Zenger 2000:162, 167). Thereafter detailed analysis and exegesis are performed in consideration of both the Old and New Testament contexts (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:xi).

This approach is informed by a close examination of historical developments of cluster of psalms. Exemplarily Psalms 51-64 are cited as individual prayers of lament and petition (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:2). Superscriptions are examined redactionally. Equally, psalmic frames are investigated synchronically and diachronically. Such analyses point to intentional construction in certain cases (Zenger 2000:163). Simultaneously, individual and contextual aspects related to historical development are explicated. The larger context provides depth and acuity to the analysis.

From the above studies this investigation has drawn various principles. An integrated approach focusing on literary, cultic, historical contexts and theological aspects of individual texts is employed.