BASOTHO FAMILY ODES (DIBOKO) AND ORAL TRADITION

BY

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SUMMARY

Basotho family odes (*diboko*) form part of oral literature, and refer to names of families, clans or totems. They constitute poetic compositions conveying information about clans' historical origin, philosophy and ancestors.

The performance of this oral art form makes use of formulaic techniques such as linking, parallelism, alliteration, etc., which are commonly used in praise poetry.

As basic to the content of these oral art forms, the genealogies of the various Basotho clans are discussed to show the reflection of the progenitor names in the clan praises.

The functions of the family odes are of educational, social and religious nature. Other functions include their use in compositions of other genres, such as, praise poems, mine workers' chants, traditional doctors' falls (*mawa*) and songs.

The recitation of this oral art form is characterised by the instability of the texts, which takes the form of extensions, additions, truncations, improvisations and genre transitions.

KEY TERMS

Basotho
Family odes (*diboko*)
Progenitors
Clans
Oral tradition
Genealogies
Performance
Mmantlatilane
Recitation
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DECLARATION

I declare that BASOTHO FAMILY ODES (DIBOKO) AND ORAL TRADITION is my own work and that all the sources I have quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

MW Tšiu

Date: 20/11/2001
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This work is dedicated to my wife Mmamonaheng, for her constant support and inspiration in undertaking work of this magnitude.

This work is also dedicated to the Basotho, with the hope that their oral literature will continue to flourish and become one of the richest in the African heritage.
CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Aim of study

The objective in this study is to investigate the Basotho family odes (*Diboko* in Sesotho) with the view to understanding their origin, structure, content, functions, performance, as well as the role played by orality in their transmission. The influence of industrialisation and/or urbanisation, christianity, other religions and literacy will also form part of this investigation. The study also aims at giving advice on how the transmission, either oral or otherwise, of this Sesotho art form, can be maintained and improved as a heritage important to every Mosotho.

A family ode or *seboko* is defined by A. Mabille and H. Dieterlen (1912:393) as a,

- coat of arms, name of a clan, of a family; totem from which a clan takes its name.

As a vehicle of important information about one’s clan, ancestors, culture, history and origin, and for the facilitation of memorisation, it is accompanied by a poetic composition which is recited by all who belong to a clan. The importance underlying this oral art form is exhibited by the fact that every Mosotho child is expected to memorise, know and be able to recite a *seboko* for purposes of identification. It is against this background that I find an investigation of this oral art necessary and worthwhile.

It is ironical that the Basotho who have previously relied on the oral mode of thought, have, for more than a century, been exposed to the culture of literacy, but very little has been done by way of written compilation of their *diboko*. To my knowledge only two collections have so far been made, namely, *Lipapali le Lithothokiso tsa Basotho* (1954) by A.K. Tsu, and *‘Mantilatilane* (1993) by F.Z.A. Matšela and R.I.M. Moletsane. Many of the *diboko* which I collected during my field work do not appear in these collections. Still very little or nothing has been done, to date, by scholars of oral literature in the direction of in-depth research in this oral art form, in particular. An M.A. dissertation, entitled, *A study of Nguni clan praises in Natal and Zululand* (1979), by D.Mzolo, is confined to clan praises of the Zulus. *The traditional praise poetry of the Xhosa: Iziduko and Izibongo*, (1973), an M.A. dissertation by W.Kuse, is also confined to the non-Sotho clan praises, namely, that of the amaXhosa. Nevertheless, scholars who did attempt some noteworthy research in this field, although confined to particular Basotho clans, and all at honours level at the
National University of Lesotho, are BM Ntaote on *A general analysis of the clan praise poems (Lithothokiso tsu liboko) of the Bataung* (1977); ME Pae on *Boiqapelobalithothokiso* (Composition of praise poems; 1992); and M Rapeane on *Tlhahlobo ea Lithoko tsu Batioung* (A survey of the Batioung praise poems; 1992).

To my knowledge, no research has thus far been extensively engaged into in this field. It is my belief that an attempt in doing research in this field will be a stimulus to inspire others to do further research in this rich corpus of the Basotho which appears to have largely been neglected.

### 1.1.2 Theoretical underpinning

By virtue of their nature, the Basotho *diboko*, as oral art, form part of the oral tradition, and have therefore characteristics peculiar to oral compositions. Their discussion will best be fruitful if done against the background of oral tradition. What follows is a survey of numerous manifestations of this art form, and these will constitute the theoretical underpinning on which this study is based. However, in chapter 5 a considerable list of topics of theoretical nature is discussed in closer reference to the data provided in this study as a whole.

The use of this oral art form has been in existence from as far back as the origin of this nation. The words, *seboko* the singular form, and *diboko* the plural, are derived from the verb stem, *ho boka*, meaning “to praise”, “to give thanks” or “to salute”. Every clan or family distinguishes itself by a particular name, known as its *seboko*. Damane and Sanders (1974: 1) share the view of Dieterlen and Mabille (1912: 393) in terms of a *seboko*, by saying,

> Each of the Basotho groups had its own name, which was usually formed from that of one of its chiefs, past or present, or from that of the animal or object which it revered as its totem.

The study of this art form shows that apart from being used to distinguish a family or clan from the other, the various names have their derivation from different sources. Names such as Bahlakwana and Makgwakgwa are examples of names derived from historical incidents related to the establishment of a clan or family. The Makgwakgwa clan, according to Ellenberger (translated from French to English by Macgregor, 1912: 72), used to erect a strong fence or screen made of interlaced branches of trees round the baskets in which they kept their grain to protect it from thieves and wild beasts, and this fence was called *lekgwakgwa*. For this reason this clan came to be called *Makgwakgwa*. Further derivation of names from historical incidents will be discussed under point 1.3.4.3.
Clan names such as Bakwena (The Crocodile clan), Bataung (The Lion clan), Batlo ung (The Elephant clan), are examples of names derived from emblems, commonly called totems. Other clan names are derived from names of the founders of the clans. These are names such as Basia, from Mosia, Batlokwa (Motlokwa), Makgolokwe (MoKgolokwe), and Maphuthing (Mophuthing).

Clans are further characterised by subdivisions which are distinguished by names of their early ancestors. This is the reason for subdivisions such as Bataung ba ha Moletsane (The Lion people of Moletsane’s house), Bataung ba ha Molete (The Lion people of Molete’s), Bakoena ba ha Monaheng (The Crocodile people of Monaheng’s house), Bakoena ba ha Molibeli (The Crocodile people Molibeli’s house), and so forth. Among the Basotho clans or tribes, there were various causes for cleavages that resulted in clans separating themselves from their parent clans and forming new ones with their new leaders. Matšela and Moletsane (1993:3) aptly summarise causes for emergence of various clans, by saying,

Hangata leloko le hlahiie ka baka la phapang e hlahisoang ke ho tloloa ha molao oa moetlo, kapa tlhaho e sa tloelelehang, kapa ka qabang e malebana le lefa (leruo), kapa takatso ya ho itaola ha monyane/moena, a lahlah moholoane ke hona; kapa ka mabaka a mang, kamoo 'mole (kapa neano ea taba) o supang kateng.

Usually a tribe/clan came into being because of difference caused by violation of the law of culture, or an unusual birth, or conflict related to inheritance (wealth), or desire for independence by a younger brother, therefore abandoning his elder brother; or through other reasons, according to oral tradition.

The Basotho, especially those of old, believe that in some mysterious and inexplicable way, they derive their existence from these totems which they view as sacred. Apart from this, they also believe in the existence of the Invisible One. The sacredness of the totems emanates from the fact that they, as tangible, represent and symbolise the so-called “Modimo wa kgale” (The God of old) to whom they address their prayers and thanks for the benefits enjoyed. Some even have superstitious beliefs regarding these animals. In this respect says Ellenberger (1912 : 241),

if anyone found the animal which represented his coat of armour dead in the field, he would approach it backwards, open the cranium, take out the brain and anoint his eyes with it for fear of being struck blind should he neglect his duty.

This belief therefore helps strengthen the unity between Basotho and their
totems. As for the sacredness of these totems, their stock (Ashton 1952 : 13) bear its mark as a sign of protection. The Basotho put it on their shields, on their domestic utensils, on their skin mantles; they swear by these animals, and by them they conjure dithotsela (evil spirits).

Bourgeois history, in capturing the origin of this nation, traces it from the end of the eighteenth century, when they first came into contact with the whites, but according to oral literature (Guma 1971:4), they originated from a hillock known as Ntswanatsatsi. The Afrikaans name is Tafelkop, and it is regarded as the place where the sun rises or the place of the rising sun. It is said to have been surrounded by tall reeds, and to this day in consequence thereof, a reed or its substitute is usually erected outside a hut in which there is a newly born baby. To the vast majority of the Basotho, Ntswanatsatsi is a mythical place whose exact geographical location is unknown, except for the fact that it is said to be somewhere in the East, in the direction from which the sun rises. In view of this wide-spread belief, it is interesting to note that according to Ellenberger, this place lies mid-way between Frankfort and Vrede in the Free State, and just across the borders of Lesotho.

It was at this mythical place where different tribes, so says oral traditions, were each given a totem-name as a distinguishing mark from other tribes. The strong unity between Basotho and their diboko can be attributed to this belief, as well as the fact that the totem name is not only used as a clan name, but also as a metaphorical eulogie in which the attributes associated with the animal are believed to be bestowed upon the clan members.

The composition of the poetic recitation that accompanies the name of the clan, the family or a totem, shows that it is consciously an art; there is a conscious striving for literary effect and a conscious effort to attain a richer, more evocative, more emotive, and a more memorable use of language. It exhibits usual characteristics of poetry - an exalted figurative language, repetitions, formulaic composition, manner of delivery which is often faster than normal speech, and others.

The intention in composing this particular art form is that it be memorised and recited verbatim. To accomplish this and to facilitate memorisation, children, from a very early age, are taught that their respective diboko recitations through a game called Mmantilatilane or O tswa kae? (Where do you come from?) which, like all other games, is enjoyable to children. The game is played, in turns, by, at least, two children, with the one asking questions, and the other, responding. This is how it is played:

Question: O tswa kae? (Where do you come from?)
Answer: Ha Mmantilatilane (From Mmantilatilane's place)
Question: *Wa jang?* (What did you eat?)
Answer: *Ka ja b ohobe ba mabele* (I ate sorghum bread)
Question: *Wa futswela kang?* (What liquid did you eat it with?)
Answer: *Ka metsi a pula* (With rain water)
The one asking questions then commands: *Thella he!* (Recite now!)

The respondent will then recite the poetic composition accompanying his or her *seboko*. In this way, such regular recitations become indelibly committed to memory, and are remembered as children grow up until they reach adulthood. The reason behind the use of a game in this learning process is that the game, by virtue of its enjoyment by children, helps encourage and facilitate memorisation through its regular performance. This may be the reason why the majority of the informants I interviewed during my field work were able and prepared to recite their various *diboko* without hesitation.

Through this game, serving as a vehicle for the transmission of important information on their origin, culture and ancestors, the Basotho have been able to pass on this art form as well as its contents from one person to the other and from one generation to the next. Lack of exposure to the culture of writing and reading left them no other option except oral transmission of this nature. Memory was their only history book they had recourse to, and recitation was an attempt to preserve a stable text. It is on this foundation that the popular Basotho saying was born, namely, *Setjhaba se hlokang meetlo se a shwa!* (A nation without culture dies!).

All oral compositions which are meant for word-for-word memorisation, have characteristics peculiar to them; and the *diboko* are no exception. These oral recitations are characterised by changes such as extensions, truncations, additions, omissions and improvisations. For instance, during the field work I undertook in Lesotho I happened to meet in Makakamela village, the district of Leribe, an informant who recited his *seboko* which I recorded on tape. The following day I met his elder brother whom I asked to recite his *seboko*. My intention was to compare their recitations. Knowing that I had recorded his younger brother's recitation the previous day, he was rather reluctant. Out of curiosity he requested me to replay the recorded version of his younger brother so as to avoid possible and unnecessary duplication. After this, he disapproved of his brother's version as he felt it was incorrect and incomplete. He then recited the version that he said was authentic. My comparison of the two versions showed some peculiar features common to oral recitations, namely, extensions, additions, omissions and improvisations which make it difficult to know the original authentic versions. This exercise confirmed the statement often made, that the instability of the text constitutes a feature of oral compositions. Says Finnegan (1988: 51),
In oral literature there is no concept of an authentic or correct version.

Both the composition and the recitation of this art form serve as a vehicle for the preservation and transmission of information about one’s clan or family, ancestors, origin, history, culture or philosophy. The following recitation of the Bafokeng, by Moipone Mofokeng, from Mzimblophe, in Soweto, serves as an example:

Ke Lehowana la boTlalane,
Ke motto wa Mahase a Mpewana,
Ke hasa dikgomo,
Ke hasa le batho,
Ke hasa le dipudungwana naheng,
Ke ngwana tau ya Matsebela,
Nong ha e ntfe, mmane e mpone,
E tshaba ha e tla tshwehla molomo! (No.111 in the “Appendix”)

I am a descendant of Howana, of the family of Tlalane,
A descendant of Mahase, son of Mpewana,
I scatter the cattle,
I scatter the people too,
I scatter even the small black wildbeests in the veld,
I am a young lion of Tsebela descendants.
A vulture does not eat me, lightning having struck me,
Fearing it would ooze from the mouth!

The reciter is a descendant of the ancestors, Howana, Tlalane, and Mahase, son of Mpewana. Courage and valour as virtues of prowess are extolled by the reciter as characteristics of this clan. This is attributed to the scattering of the cattle, the people as well as the black wildbeests as they are attacked by this group. This is further confirmed by reference to himself as a young lion. If a member of this clan may happen to die as a result of being struck by lightning, his/her corpse is not devoured by a vulture, the reason being fear of oozing fat and blood from it mouth. This is the spirit of heroism manifested by members of this clan. It is against this view that the diboko may be regarded as oral carriers of part of the people’s history, culture and origin. This is confirmed by Patrick Bereng, an informant from Maseru, who knows much about Basotho culture, and explains verbally that,

Mokgwà wa Basotho wa ho boloka diboko ke mokgwà wa ho boloka setso sa bona. Ka baka la ho se tsebe ho bala le ho ngola, ba ne ba boloka nalane ya bona ka ho e kenyà kelellong.
The Basotho custom of preserving the family odes was the way of preserving their culture. Because they could not read or write, they preserved their historical background by committing it to memory.

It is interesting to note that there are cases where a clan, being ridiculed by others on account of its behaviour or its way of life, eventually ends up taking the very ridicule as a demonstration of its pride. The Bahlakwana clan, for instance, are known for their lack of generosity in easily giving food to others. As a result, they have not only accepted this ridicule, but included it in their clan recitation, where they say (Matšela and Moletsane, 1993: 27),

_Bahlakwana le ba etele mariha,
Hoba hlabula ba futswella matlunog;
_The Bahlakwana people are to be visited in winter,
As in summer they eat in their huts.

In summer, when there is an abundance of food, this clan did not eat their food publicly outside their huts, but inside, for fear that a passer-by might ask for food. But in winter, they are highly hospitable, as there is nothing to eat, and therefore nothing to hide, and this is the right time to pay them a visit.

This oral art form is used largely in social situations. Even before the introduction of “Pass laws,” this art form was used as a national communal identity “document” to identify where a person came from, his chief, his village of origin, his relatives and his ancestors. It is used for purposes of group identity. It is also used in greetings, in thanksgiving, in initiation, where initiates, during performance of certain cultural rites, are arranged according to the seniority of their diboko.

This art form is sometimes used in truncated form, such as _Mokwena e motle!_ (A handsome Mokwena!), _Sebata sa ha Motaung!_ (Wild beast of the Lion people!) for purposes of consoling, persuading and swearing an oath, where one appears either as the accused or someone with a locus standi. The recitation of this art form sometimes forms part of funeral occasions and other special occasions, such as graduation and baptism parties which are common today.

Other genres which have reached the writing stage, have included the _diboko_ as part of their compositions. These are genres, such as, praise poems, mine workers’ chants (_difela_), traditional doctors’ falls (commonly known as _mawa_) in which the position of the bones on the ground after being thrown down, determines the fate of the sick person seeking help. Other genres are the poem compositions by the boy initiates at the completion of their initiation course, as well as songs, especially choral songs.
Among the Basotho clans and families, patrilineal descent is invariably through the male line. The foundation of this principle is the common belief that it is the man who proposes love to and marries a woman, and not vice versa.

The composition of this art form among the Basotho evinces characteristics similar to those of other oral art forms, namely, that the performance takes place before an audience consisting of one or more people. However, in the case of the diboko, this may also take place in the physical absence of an audience, that is, when a reciter prayerfully appeals to his or her ancestors. More often than not, the recitation prayer takes the truncated form, such as, Bakwena ba ka! (My Crocodile ancestors!) which means “To you, my ancestors, I am appealing for your help in my present situation!”

The actual authors of these art forms, as it is the case with all other oral art forms, are not known. The composition is a matter of collective heredity. Chief Patrick Leholenyoa, of Mahloeneyeng village, in the district of Matsieng, verbally adds that the composition of this art form was originally the responsibility of the chief together with his men at the kraal (kgotla). From there, each man would have to ensure that he teaches his children the recitation of his particular seboko.

The composition of this art form as poetry, makes use of formulaic structures commonly found in other poetries, such as heroic or praise poetries. In their linear compositions, structures such as the introduction, the body and the ending are generally used. The introduction conveys information about the ancestors from whom the reciter descended as well as the clan to which he or she belongs. The body conveys some historical information, culture, philosophy or a particular incident related to the clan, which extols the virtues of the clan.

The ending part in this oral art form takes various forms. It usually consists of a concluding sentence that captures the main theme of the recitation, a re-emphasis of the names of the early ancestors on whom the recitation is based, and a rhetorical question aimed at emphasizing the group of descendants to which the reciter belongs. This ending may also be characterised by the reduction of speed in the recitation as well as the heightening or lowering of the pitch of the voice to mark the ending.

There are some who believe that oral tradition, in general, and the diboko, in particular, are on the decline. They cite urbanisation, industrialisation and modernisation as the primary causes that broke families and villages by forcing people to leave their stable places of birth, and to seek work and greener pastures in the metropolitan cities, where people of different cultures converge.

The result is the tendency among some people to look down on their cultures and to inherit the new culture which makes them feel proud to be part of
“modernisation”. Christianity and other religions, through the preaching of the “new way of living” have contributed negatively in making some Basotho see the practice of their culture as association with heathenism, hence perhaps also the apparent decline in the oral creativity, transmission and preservation of their oral art forms. However, I have found the tradition of the diboko still very lively among the informants I met during my field work.

The emergence of literacy, whilst contributing to the maintenance of written texts, however, also contributes to the partial or complete lack of dependency on oral recitations and transmissions as before. The question is: How can all Basotho oral art forms (including the diboko) be revived, maintained and improved to ensure that, despite the emergence of the culture of literacy, the practice of various religions and modern technology, this art form remains a living and perpetual Basotho heritage?

The preceding discussion which constitutes my views and understanding on the nature and characteristics of this oral art form, forms the foundation on which further discussion in this research will be based.

1.1.3 Methodology

The transcriptions of the recorded diboko (with English translations) will be found under the heading, APPENDIX, and the following designation will be used to indicate where they can be found and listened to on the various cassettes: The “C” followed by a numeral refers to the number of the cassette; the “A” or “B”, to the either side of the cassette, and the “numeral” to the number at which a particular seboko recitation stands on the cassette. For instance, C3/B/9 means that the recitation in question can be found and listened to on cassette number 3, side “B”, and is the ninth in terms of numerical order.

Each informant interviewed was requested to recite his or her seboko, which was tape-recorded. After being interviewed on the historical background of his/her seboko, the informant was asked to recite it again. The following are some of the discoveries that came to the fore: In some cases, the second recitation was the same as the first. In other cases, the second differed from the first, in that some words were either omitted or new ones included; some sentences were either displaced or their structure changed. This was the case in Makakamela village, in the district of Leribe, where I happened to record on tape a recitation as described on page 5 in the previous section.

In Clarens, a small town in the Free State, I recorded a person whose clan recitation was rather long, and my promoter was quick to draw my attention to the fact that the actual seboko consisted of the first few lines, and the rest that followed was a sefela (a mine worker’s chant) added to it.
In capturing the recitals of these oral art forms and their historical background on tape, I visited some informants who live in an industrialised city of Gauteng area, with the intention of assessing the degree to which these art forms are still a living practice among the Basotho. I realized that, to some, who largely grew up in the environment of industrial cities, and who have, therefore, lost contact with their original place of birth, Lesotho, the recital of these art forms and historical knowledge pertaining to them, appear to be no more of any serious value.

Some even admitted that their present environment is, to some extent, to blame, because the multilingual nature of the environment does not necessitate the need for either the recital of this art form or any historical knowledge related to it. Some informants even went further to say that since they have been converted to Christianity, they have decided not to recite their particular seboko in its entirety because it contains vulgar words that are in conflict with both Christianity and the values of the communities in which they live.

I also visited semi-rural places, Clarens and Phuthaditjhaba, in the Free State, and Matatiele, in the Eastern Cape, where the population consists largely of people who come from different provinces of South Africa, many of whom appear to have lost roots of their cultural life. A few were able to recite word-for-word their diboko, and could relate something about the historical background pertaining to them, while on the contrary, many had but a hazy knowledge about both.

The visit I paid to Lesotho was rewarding in that I was able to meet informants at Leribe, Morija, Matsieng and Maseru, where this art form is still orally recited verbatim and preserved as important. One contributory factor to this is that in Lesotho there are still many villages where each has its own chief, and is largely made up of groups of families which belong to a particular clan, as for instance, the village, Mahloenyeng, in the district of Mutsieng, where most families are the Bafokeng, under chief Lehloenyia.

The other factor is that the preservation of culture from the forefathers is still highly valued, and includes, among others, oral transmission of the Basotho diboko. Even at Lesotho, modern life and Christianity appear to have had an influence in that I met some of the informants who felt they had to bring about some changes in their recitations, since theirs contain vulgar words that are both in conflict with their Christian life and the socially accepted way of speaking, especially among children. But at my request they acceded and allowed me to record their recitations. Professor Matsela of NUL explains that, to the Basotho of old, who did not view their culture through the modern or the Christian eye, this was not vulgarism, but a normal way of speaking.
The other source of information is some of the tapes I received from the SABC’s Sesotho section, Lesedi Stereo. These contain recitations of the Batshweneng (The Baboon people), Bataung (The Lion people) and Makgolokwe (The Kgolokwe) as well as historical information on their origin. These are part of radio programmes broadcast in 1993. All this information on tapes was transcribed for use in this study.

1.2 Basotho nation

For better understanding the development of the Basotho *diboko*, it is necessary to investigate some of the issues which form the foundation on which this oral art form is based, namely the circumstances contributing to the origin of the name, Basotho, the historical establishment of the Basotho and their clan system.

1.2.1 The name Basotho

Since the eighteenth century (cf. Ellenberger 1912:34) the Bapeli were in touch with their neighbours, the Amaswazi (Swazis). These used to laugh at the breech-cloth of the Bapeli, and the trouble they took to make one of the three ends pass between the legs and join the other two in a knot behind, thinking their own fashion of a mocha, or sporran, made of jackals’ tails or the dressed skins of rock-rabbit, more dignified. So, they called the Bapeli *Abashuntu*, a derivative of the verb *uku shunta*, “to make a knot”. This designation, though bestowed in derision, was adopted with pride by the Bapeli, and later by other tribes similarly clothed, and was the origin of the present term, *Basotho*.

Ellenberger (1912:31) further states that Mathulare, daughter of the Bafokeng chief, who was married to chief Tabane of the Bakgatla, became the mother of the founders of five great tribes - viz. the Bapeli, Makgolokwe, Maphuthing, Batiokwa and the Basia, may be called the first Basotho because they were the first to bear that name.

The term, *Basotho* (cf. Matšela and Moletsane 1993:1) is to-day inclusively used to refer to people who are the inhabitants of Lesotho. They may be the Basotho, some Zulus, some Xhosas, etc. It is also used to refer to people of African origin, who have accepted Basotho culture and language, irrespective of where they live, in or outside the boundaries of Lesotho. These may thus be referred to as the Basotho of Qwaqwa, of Bloemfontein, Matatiele, Natal or Gauteng, etc.

1.2.2 Historical establishment

The first inhabitants of Lesotho were the people of three small clans from the banks of the Tugela, namely, the Maphetla, the Mapolane and the Baphuthi.
The Maphetla, (Ellenberger 1912:21) previously known as Amateza, of the tribe Amazizi, who were troubled by their more powerful neighbours, the Amahlubi, crossed the Drakensberg mountains during or about the year 1600 on their way to Lesotho. This clan came to be called the Maphetla or Pioneers because it was they who opened the road to the “new country”. These were later followed by the Mapolane and later, by the Baphuthi. Along with these, were other small groups that followed suit and were collectively called the Matebele.

According to Hammond-Tooke (1974:73), these groups were followed by the tribes of Basotho stock, Baphuthing, Makgolokwe, Basia, Batlokwa, Bafokeng, Bakwena, Bahlakwana, Dihoa, Bataung and others. All these tribes lived peacefully and undisturbed until 1822 when the period known as Lifaqane began, during which the Basotho were invaded and ruined by successive invasions: by the Mahlubi of Pakalitha, the Amangwane of Matiwane, the Batlokwa of Manthatisi, the Matebele of Moselekatse, Amazulu of Chaka, the Griquas and Korannas, as well as by the ravages of large numbers of cannibals. This period was characterised by chaos. Tribes were dislodged from their homes and, destitute and hungry, fell upon others, setting up a chain reaction of attack and flight. Ellenberger (1912:117) defines Lifaqane by saying,

The word Lifaqane is of Setebele origin, and denotes a state of migration. It is used here as describing the struggles of wandering tribes accompanied by their families, flocks, and herds, as distinct from the ordinary expeditions of inter-tribal warfare in which as a rule only the fighting men took part.

At the end of the Lifaqane, by 1833, Moshoeshoe, with great political wisdom, accepted all stray and diverse people who came to him for protection, built up a great tribe, and extending his rule, founded what we today know as the Basotho nation (Schapera 1946:59).

Oral tradition gives a different version of the origin of the Basotho. According to Guma (1971:4), it tells us that,

They originated from a place called Ntsoana-tsatsi, i.e., where the sun rises on the place of the rising sun. It is said to have been surrounded by tall reeds, and to this day in consequence thereof, a reed or its substitute is usually erected outside a hut in which there is a newly born baby. To the vast majority of Basotho, Ntsoana-tsatsi is a mythical place whose exact geographical location is unknown, except for the fact that it is said to be somewhere in the East, in the direction from which the sun rises. In view of this wide-spread belief, it is
rather interesting to note according to Ellenberger and Macgregor, this place lies mid-way between Frankfort and Vrede in the Orange Free State, and just across the borders of Lesotho.

The belief that the Basotho originated from Ntswanatsatsi is confirmed by erecting a reed outside a house to indicate the birth of a baby and to bury the dead facing to the East where the sun rises. According to popular tradition, Ntswanatsatsi lies on the N3, between Villiers and Harrismith in the Free State. This is North East of Lesotho.

1.2.3 The clan system

The Basotho are divided into various groups of families distinguishable by names of their common ancestors who were their leaders and from whom they believe to have descended. In distinguishing themselves by the names of their ancestors, only the names of their male ancestors are considered. In defining a clan, says Schapera (1949:80),

The clan is a kinship group. It consists of a group of people claiming descent, and taking its name from a common ancestor in the male line.

Bryant in Mzolo (1979 : 4) defines it as,

but a magnified family consisting of a single forefather who is claimed to be the founder of the clan.

These social groupings or affiliations are also distinguishable by totem (emblem) or other cultural features. For instance, Bakwena ba Kadi a Tsholo (The Crocodile people of Kadi, son of Tsholo) refers to a group whose totem is a crocodile, and whose common ancestor from whom they believe to have descended, is Kadi, the son of Tsholo. Another example is Batlounge ba ha Malunga (The Elephant people of Malunga), whose totem is the elephant, and whose leader or ancestor is Malunga.

The most common clans (Ashton 1952:12) to be found at present in Lesotho are the Bafokeng, Bahlakwana, Makgwagwa, Baphuthing (People of the duiker), Batlokwa, Basia, Bataung, Batlounge, Makgolokwe, Maphetla (The Pioneers) and Mapolane. These will be discussed in more detail under point 1.3.4.

Most of the Basotho clans have subdivisions which were usually caused by cleavages in a clan or tribe, and the section which broke away, invariably, but not always, formed a new clan with a new name. This usually resulted in the
appropriation of different names of the ancestors. The following is an example from Matšela and Moletsane (1993:9-17), of subdivisions of the Bafokeng clan which may help clarify this point:

Bafokeng:

* Ba ha Manti (Descendants of Manti),
* Ba ha Mamatlaokwane (Descendants of Matlaokwane),
* Ba Mokgadi wa Motlalane (Descendants of Mokgadi, son of Mottalane),
* Ba Moraredi wa Phohole (Descendants of Moraredi, son of Phohole),
* Ba Maotwana-finyela (The Footprints descendants),
* Ba ha Manti a Mmope (Descendants of Manti, son of Mmope),
* Ba ha Mare a Tsikwe (Descendants of Mare, son of Tsikwe),
* Ba ha Mantsukunyane (Descendants of Ntsukunyane),
* Ba Mantsukunyane a Kata a Sefiri (Descendants of Ntsukunyane, son Kata, son of Sefiri),
* Ba ha Tshele a Lekotwane (Of the house of Tshele, son of Lekotwane), etc.

The same principle of subdivision applies to other clans as well.

1.3 Family odes (Diboko) : Preamble

The division of the Basotho nation into different clans, believed to have originated from particular ancestors, has certain implications to which the Basotho strictly adhere, especially in matters pertaining to marriages. The origin of the totem names as well as the role they play in the life of the Basotho are viewed as being so important that they form the very existence and culture of the people. Apart from totem names, some of the clan names are derived from other sources, such as, names of clan founders and historical events associated with the clans. Cleavages among different clans or tribes have subsequently resulted in the emergence of various *diboko*.

These issues, being basic to the understanding of this oral art form, will therefore form the subject of discussion in the following section of this chapter.

1.3.1 Definition

Ebewo (1997 : 53) defines an ode as,

A long lyrical poem with a dignified theme. It is often composed to celebrate an event or an individual. It uses elevated tone, heightened imagination and elaborate thought.

By “family odes” is therefore meant poems of this nature as composed for and recited by members of families which together constitute a clan. Basotho family odes (diboko) are generally short, and their dignified theme is centered around
a shared surname or name of the family by which it is distinguished. They convey information pertaining to the historical establishment of the clan and/or the clan’s tribal characteristics.

Every clan among the Basotho is distinguished by a seboko, derived from the verb stem, "ho boka", meaning "to praise", "to give thanks" or "to salute". On the meaning of the term seboko, (isibongo in Zulu) says Mzolo (1979 : 36),

It simply means a surname,

He (1979 : 9) adds that,

The clan name, isibongo, was simply the personal name of the clan’s founder.

However, the concept of seboko among the Basotho, is not confined to the names of the clan founders, but includes, among others, names of various totemic animals that the clans to which they belong. For instance, Batsang (People of the Lion) venerate a lion and therefore take it as their totem. In the same manner, the Batshweneng venerate the baboon; the Bafokeng, who have more than one totem, venerate the daw, wild grapes, the rehek or the rabbit; the Baphuthi, the duiker; the Bapedi, the porcupine; the Batloung, the elephant, etc.

The seboko may sometimes be derived from the name of the clan founder. For instance, the Basia derive their name from Mosia; Batloko from Motloko; Makgolokwe from Kgolokwe; Maphuthing from Mophuthing, and Bapedi from Mopedi.

The word seboko has an extended meaning. It also refers to the poem recited by members of a clan. For instance, Ntebelle Khasi, from Makakamela village, Leribe, recites the following as her seboko (7. C1/A/7):

Ke thelle jwang,
Ke le Mofokeng,
Wa Mantsukunyane a Kata a Sefiri,
Bakgwejana ba ho titim a mabiti,
Batho ba Mamodise a Kata a Sefiri!

How can I pay homage,  
Being a Fokeng (one of the Bafokeng),  
Descendant of Ntsukunyane, son of Kata, son of Sefiri,  
The young Kgwele people who ran on top of the graves,  
Descendants of Modise, son of Kata, son of Sefiri!

The Basotho honour and venerate their totemic animals because they view them
as symbolising their protection and as endowing them with their virtues and material benefits.

Many Basotho today do not seem to be upholding these superstitious beliefs anymore, except that many still believe in the virtues and material benefits they are endowed with by their totem animals.

1.3.2 Patrilineal nature

Among the Basotho clans and families, patrilineal descent is invariably through the male line. Schapera (1949 : 80) confirms this in his definition of a clan as,

consisting of a group of people claiming descent, and taking its name from a common ancestor in the male line.

A similar view is expressed by Marivate in Murwanphida (1993 : 23) where he defines a clan as families which are,

....linked by patrilineal ties between their male heads and can be regarded as one large family.

This patrilineage has certain implications on the maiden seboko (surname) in marriage. When a Mosotho woman gets married, her maiden seboko is not viewed as important in the family of her in-laws; neither is the memorisation and its recitation thereof by her children. Lepekola Sekgwane, an informant from Clarens, in the Free State, verbally explains this situation by pointing to the fact that,

_lenyalong, mosadi ha a nyala, kgomo e reka seboko sa hae._

In marriage, when a woman is married, a cow buys her surname.

Through the customary payment of cattle by the family of the bridegroom to that of the bride, the latter enters into marriage and becomes a member of her husband’s family. In other words, her maiden seboko is “absorbed” by that of her husband. This is also the case in polygamous marriages. In some cases, and out of curiosity, children may still be able to recite the maiden seboko of their mother. This, however, does not affect the maintenance of the patrilineal system.

Interrmarriage among the Basotho clans is allowed as long as relationship between the couple is not too close; the reason being fear that children with physical or mental deformities will be born out of such marriages. In cases where such a relationship is not taken into account, there emerges a common saying, _Dikgomo di boetse sakeng!_ (The cattle have returned to the kraal!), meaning, the
cattle that would have gone to the in-laws outside the family are now retained within the family members.

In cases of polygamous marriages, the seboko of the father is invariably that of the family. In all cases mentioned above, the whole principle is based on the common Sesotho belief that it is the man who proposes love to and marries a woman, and not vice versa.

1.3.3 The unity between the Basotho and the diboko

There exists a close unity between the Basotho and their totems from which their diboko are derived. This is attributed to the belief that when they came out of the marsh at Ntswanatsatsi, each “tribe” received a different animal as an emblem which would be for it a god-protector, and which they respected and praised. As evidence of the sacredness of these totems, Ashton (1952:13) records that,

these totems were regarded as sacred. Their stock bear its mark as a sign of protection. They put it on their shields, on their domestic utensils, on their skin mantles; they swear by these animals, and by them they conjure dithotsela (evil spirits).

They believed that in some mysterious and inexplicable way they derived their existence from these totems. The Basotho, from the beginning, believed in the existence of the Invisible One, and also in the mediation of the spirits of the departed. Apart from these (Ellenberger 1912: 243), they wanted something more tangible, something they could see, whereby they could symbolise the Molimo oa khale - the God of old, to which they address their prayers for aid and succour in their undertakings and dangers, and their thanks for the benefits enjoyed. This belief strengthened the unity between the Basotho and their diboko (totems). Even today this unity still exists, although the belief is no more strictly adhered to.

This unity is also strengthened by the fact that the diboko, especially their recitation, carry part of the history of their origin, which, to the Basotho, is very important. Memorisation was the only way in which this could be preserved, the only history “book” they had recourse to. Verbally explains Patrick Bereng, an informant from Maseru, this state of affairs as follows,

*Mokgwa wa Basotho wa ho boloka diboko ke mokgwa wa ho boloka setso sa bona. Ka baka la ho se tsebe ho bala le ho ngola, ba ne ba boloka nalane ya bona ka ho e keny a kelellong.*

The Basotho custom of preserving the diboko was the way of preserving their culture. Because they could neither read nor write,
they preserved their historical background through memory.

Ralešabisa Motale, from the village Dikhelekeng, in Butha-Buthe, who has much knowledge of Basotho culture, makes the following verbal addition on the reason behind the need for recitations:

Ka ho thella ke ho ikgetholla hwa motho, ho ithalosa ka ho hlalamanala ha lelapa la motho, le o tswang ho lona.

The recitation of the seboko means an identification of a person, a self-explanation according to the order of one’s family from which one descends.

Belief in the totems and perpetuation of their historical descent through these art forms, help strengthen the unity existing between the Basotho and their diboko. It is therefore very difficult for a Mosotho to abandon his original seboko in exchange for a new one. If that should happen, it must be in very extreme cases, where good reasons should be advanced for that, and where eventually madi a tshwane tsetse ho tsholoha (blood should be spilt), that is, a cow should be slaughtered to ensure a new agreement with the ancestors.

1.3.4 Derivation of the diboko

Different names attached to clans are derived from various sources, as will be shown in the following discussion:

1.3.4.1 Names of founders

Among the Basotho clans or tribes, cleavages were usually caused by violation of the law of culture, an unusual birth, any conflict related to inheritance or wealth, or desire for independence, etc. The multiplication of various clans can be attributed to such cleavages. In breaking away from the mother clan, the subclans in some cases took the clan names from those of their clan founders, dating far back in history and including ancestral tribes which belonged to the Sotho group of nations. The following are such clans, with the names of their founders as well as their totem names:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLAN NAME</th>
<th>FOUNDER</th>
<th>TOTEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bapedi</td>
<td>Mopeli</td>
<td>Noko (porcupine), originally kgatla (monkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makgolokwe</td>
<td>MoKgolokwe</td>
<td>Kgoho (domestic fowl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maphuthing</td>
<td>Mophuthing</td>
<td>Phuthi (duiker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batlokwa</td>
<td>Motlokwa</td>
<td>Katse/Nkwe (cat/leopard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basia</td>
<td>Mosia</td>
<td>Katse (wild cat), porcupine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bakgatla       Mokgatla       Nong/lekgolokgolo (vulture)
Bangwaketsi   Ngwaketsi      Kwena (crocodile)
Dihoa         Sehoja         Kubu (hippo)
Bamangwato    Ngwato         Phuthi (duiker)

Mathulare (Ellenberger 1912:31), daughter of the Bafokeng chief, was married to the Bakgatla chief, Tabane, and thus became the mother of the founders of five great tribes - viz. Bapedi from Mopeli; Makgolokwe from MoKgolokwe; Maphuthing, Mophuthing, Batswana, Motlokwane; and Basia from Mosia. These offshoots chose each a new seboko when they left the parent tribe.

1.3.4.2 Names from totems

The following clans derive their names mostly from animals, commonly called totems (cf. Matšela and Moletsane 1993:7):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLAN NAME</th>
<th>FROM</th>
<th>TOTEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bakwena</td>
<td>Kwen (crocodile)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bafokeng</td>
<td>Phoka (dew), morara (wild vine), mmutla (rabbit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batlounge</td>
<td>Tlou (elephant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batshweneng</td>
<td>Tshwene (baboon)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakubung</td>
<td>Kubu (hippopotamus)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maphuthing</td>
<td>Phuthi (duiker), lejwe (stone)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bafula-kolobeng</td>
<td>Kolobe (wild pig)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahlaping</td>
<td>Tlhapi (fish)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banareng</td>
<td>Nare (buffalo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bataung</td>
<td>Tau (lion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When members of a clan had occupied a district and found a particular animal abounding there, they usually ended up calling themselves by its name. The first Bakwena, for instance, lived between the Mariko and Limpopo Rivers, which were full of crocodiles whilst the Bataung began their tribal existence in a district which had many lions. Ellenberger (1912:242) confirms this by saying,

> Each tribe had its own seboko or emblem, and each of them occupied a district, which, while they remained there, was known by the name of the animal of their worship.

It is worth noticing that the Basotho were highly selective in their choice of animals as their totems, in that these were to be wild animals which they viewed as symbolising Modimo wa kgale (The God of old), and also as having particular characteristics which they believed to have been endowed with.
1.3.4.3 Historical events

Some of the clan names are derived from incidents related to the establishment of the clans. (cf. Ashton 1952:13, Ellenberger 1912:241-246):

Makgwakgwa

This clan used to erect a strong fence made of interlaced branches of trees round the baskets in which they kept their grain to protect it from thieves and wild beasts. This fence was called lekgwakgwana. For this reason they called themselves Makgwakgwa (People-of-interlaced-tree-branches). Philip Mojaki, from Makakamela village, in Lesotho, and who belongs to this clan, verbally relates this information:

_Ha ba ne ba bua ditaba, ba ne ba atisa ho qabana e le bona. Ha taba e le teng e kang nyewe, ho se ho thwe ba kgwakgwanya puo, le moahlodi o se a tla timellwa hore o leba kae._

When they had a dispute, they used to quarrel among themselves. When there is an issue, such as a court case, they mixed up the case, and the judge ended up being confused and not knowing what to do next.

Just as their makgwakgwa were impregnable to thieves and wild animals, so were their disputes impregnable fences of inaccuracies and misstatements. This is how the name, Makgwakgwa came to be applied to this clan/tribe. However, Samson Motlokoa, from Motlokoa village, in the district of Peka, in Lesotho, verbally adds that the name came about as a result of the conflict between the sons of Kgerehlwa, namely, Sefako and Mahlatsi. Mahlatsi, the younger, fought his elder brother over the chieftaincy of the tribe. This was where the impregnable inaccuracies and misstatements took place, which resulted in this tribe, formerly the Bakwenza, calling themselves the Makgwakgwa.

According to Pae (1992 : 9), wife of chief Molapo of the Bakoena was at one time confined within the "lekhoakhoe" for the whole period of her pregnancy until the child was born. The child born as a result of this incident as well as those born later, were called Makhoakhooa.

Batshweneng

According to legend, the barren wife of a chief, was made to conceive (bipiswa) by physical contact with the body or skin of a baboon. It was by reason of this incident that the clan took the baboon for its name. The child born was named Motshwenene, and the clan, previously part of the Bakwena (The Crocodile people) was then called the Batshweneng (The Baboon people).
Bahlakwana

The origin of the clan name, Bahlakwana, cannot be determined with accuracy because of varying explanations in this regard. Ellenberger (1988: 74) comments under correction that the eldest son of Disema was either Fumane, Nkokoto or Mohlakwana. Though this cannot be stated with accuracy, what is known is that Disema’s eldest son was also nicknamed Mohlakwana, from whom the name, Bahlakwana, probably might have originated.

Samson Motiokoa’s verbal information, as recorded by Pae (1992: 7), says the name originated as a result of an incident that took place within the village under chief Motebang. This village was divided into two sections between which were kraals. On the upper part of the kraals, lived the chief together with his proud wives who, by birth, were the chiefs’ daughters. On the lower part of the kraals, lived Motebang’s other wives, his concubines, those who were of lower rank and who, by birth, were daughters of ordinary citizens.

Out of contempt, the proud women of the chief used to look down on those of the lower rank, and referred to them as women belonging to Tikhakaneng (The hoof), meaning those who, like the hoof of the cow or the horse, are at the lowest and the farthest end. In other words, those that are least important and least loved by the chief. This derogatory appellation, Bahlakwana, became the name by which this clan came to be known.

Verbal information by Paul Makuta of the village, Roma, as recorded also by Pae (1992: 8) says that within the Bakwena tribe there was at one time a general manifestation of a high rate of birth of deformed children on account of marriages between people closely related to each other. Chief Disema issued an order that young men of his tribe should no more marry within the Bakwena tribe. With derision all women married outside the tribe were referred to by the appellation, Bahlaha - kwana (Those that come from yonder), which, in a shortened form, became Bahlakwana.

Barolong

The Barolong (Ellenberger : xviii) were established in the neighbourhood of Mosika, where there was much iron, and one of their chiefs, an expert in the art of Vulcan, took to forging it. He was, as a result, called Morolong, i.e. blacksmith, because this name was derived from the old word, rola, “to forge”. His son, Noto - that is, the hammer - also bore the name of the iron instrument which took the place of the primitive flint. Father and son from that time were able to forge much; and were celebrated among the tribes for the agricultural instruments and weapons which they made. It is from this that the Barolong (smiths), whose emblem is the iron (tshepe) and the hammer (noto), took their name.

The above discussion confirms that clan or family names are derived from various
sources, namely, those of the clan founders, the totem names as well as historical incidents contributing to the origin of the clans. Also to be noticed is that the change in clan name from the one to the other was a possibility which shows that a totem was but a mere symbol, and just as good as another for the purpose of symbolising Him who created all clan people.

1.3.4.4 Emergence of various diboko

Reasons for cleavages and emergence of various diboko are many and diverse. They include violation of the law of culture, unusual birth of a leader which, for instance, resulted in a leader being viewed as culturally unfit and unacceptable to head a clan or tribe, conflict related to wealth or inheritance, and desire for independence by a younger brother or search for new pastures. Ellenberger (1912 : 16), for instance, relates that after the death of a Mofokeng chief, Sekete 11, who was married to a Khoisan, the tribe prevented one of his sons from inheriting the throne, the reason being Ha re bate ho buswa ke Morwa! (We do not want to be ruled by a Bushman!). In the division that resulted, each of the sons took his separate way with his followers.

Such cleavages usually resulted in proliferations, not only of subclans, subclan names, each with its own leader, but of clan recitations as well. All these show some relation to the parent clan from which they originate. Confirming this, Rapeane (1992 : 9) says,

_Batho ba ka kopanela seboko se le seng, se seholo, emp'a se ka ba le likaroloana tse ling. Dikaroloana tse na iikamahanya le tsoalo ea ea ithokang. Motho a ka ithoka ka ntata kapa baholo ba bang ba hae. Ha monna a na le bara ba leshome, likaroloana tsa seboko sa hae li ka ba leshome le moto le mong. Karolo ea pele ke ea ntata bara, ha tse leshome tse latelang, e le tsa bara ba hae. Taba ena e bonahala lithokong tsa Batloung, moo ho nang le ba ha Sekhoane, ba ha Malonka, le ba bang._

People may share the one main clan, which may have some subclans. These subclans may be related to the lineage of the reciter. One can recite about his father or some of his ancestors. If a man has ten sons, the subclans of his clan may be eleven in number. The first part is the father’s, whilst the others belong to his sons. This can be seen in the recitations of the Batloung, where there are those of the family of Sekgwane, the family of Malonka (Malunga), and others.

The proliferation of the clans took place hand in hand with the compositions of clan praises (diboko) for the clans. However, it must be noted that some of the subclans have more than one recitation. In cases like these, the praises are recited differently, with emphasis placed on other aspects pertaining to the cultural
characteristics of the same clan, and the reason is attributed to mere originality and eloquence on the part of the members of a clan.

During fieldwork I conducted in Gauteng, the Free State and Lesotho, I was able to compile numerous clan recitations which show the proliferation of various clan names and clan recitations, and which also show various leaders of subclans that belong to particular parent clans. These can be arranged as follows:

**Parent clan**  
**Subclan**

**Bahlakwana:**  
- Pholo ya Disema (Ox of Disema)  
- Mantsane (Descendants of Ntsane)  
- Tele a Motawana (Tele, son of Motawana)

**Bataung:**  
- Ba ha Hlalele (Of Hlalele’s house)  
- Ba Maloisane (Of Maloisane)  
- Manthethe a Morapedi (Descendants of Nthethe, son of Morapedi)  
- Ba Sefatsa sa Tshukudu (Of Sefatsa, son of Tshukudu)  
- Makobasia (Kobasia descendants)  
- Ba ha Moletsane (Of Moletsane’s house)  
- Ba Ramokgele a Maphoto (Descendants of Ramokgele, son of Maphoto)

**Bakwena:**  
- Ba ha Maieane (Of the house of Maieane)  
- Makadi a Tsholo (Descendants of Kadi, son of Tsholo)  
- Mamphutlane a Makeka (Descendants of Mphutlane, son of Makeka)  
- Mantsane a Monaheng (Descendants of Ntsane, son of Monaheng)  
- Mankopane a Mathunya (Descendants of Nkopane, son of Mathunya)  
- Batebang ba Napo a Mosito (Descendants of Motebang, son of Napo, son of Mosito)  
- Ba ha Modibedi (Of the house of Modibedi)  
- Mantai (Descendants of Ntai)  
- Tumane a Potsela (Tumane, son of Potsela)  
- Ba ha Mahlatsi (Of the house of Mahlatsi)

**Bakwena:**  
- Manthatisi (Descendants of Mmanthatisi)  
- Ba Tshotetsi Lebaka (Descendants of Tshotetsi, son of Lebaka)
Basia:
- Batubatsi (Swearers-by-the-porcupine)

Bafokeng:
- Mantsukunyane a Kata a Sefiri (Descendants of Ntsukunyane, son of Kata, son of Sefiri)
- Maotwana (small Footprints)
- Maotwana-finyela (Contract your footprints)
- Mantho-e-kgolo (Those strange things)
- Ba ha Kgetsi a Malekele (Descendants of Kgetsi, son of Malekele)
- Mampane (Descendants of Mpane)
- Mantoto (Descendants of Ntoto)
- Ba ha Dijane (Descendants of Dijane)
- Ba Moraredi a Phohole (Descendants of Moraredi, son of Phohole)
- Ba ha Tshele (Descendants of Tshele)
- Mamare a Ntsikwe (Descendants of Mare, son of Ntsikwe)

Makgwakgwa:
- Ba ha Sedimo, nthole (Descendants of Sedimo, take-off-my-load) -
- Ba ha Mahlatsi (Descendants of Mahlatsi)

Bakubung:
- Ba Mahwete a Komane (Descendants of Hwete, son of Komane)

Bafula-kolobeng (People of the wild pig):
- Marasakane (Descendants of Rasakane)

Bakgatla:
- Mankwane (Descendants of Nkwane)
- Baananong (Swearers-by-the-eagle)

Makgolokwe:
- A ha Kgetsi (Those of Kgetsi)
- A ha Mokgolane (Those of Mokgolane)
- A ha Mathula le Mohlaodi (Those of Mathula and Mohlaodi)

Batshweneng:
- Ba ha Kgiba le Kgamadi (Those of Kgiba and Kgamadi)

The above compilation of parent clans as well as their subclans is neither complete nor exhaustive in that the subclans are too many and have not as yet been fully researched and recorded. Any attempt to compile all of them is not only difficult but impossible because most of the Basotho are scattered all over the provinces of our country, even in Lesotho where one would expect to find
villages consisting of clans whose members belong to the same family as it was largely the case in the past.

The other problem is that an attempt to collect them in their entirety cannot guarantee proof of their complete collection. Nevertheless, this compilation proves the fact that subclans did break away from their parent clans and either called themselves by the name of their new leader or by the incident related to the historical establishment of the clan.

1.4 CONCLUSION

The appellation Basotho refers to a nation founded by King Moshoeshoe who accepted stray and diverse people who came to him for protection as a result of chaos and destruction caused by the Lifaqane wars roughly between 1821 and 1833. The Amaswazi called the Bapedi Abashuntu, a derivative of the verb uku shunta, “to make a knot” because of the breech cloth they used to wear, which passed between their legs and joined the other two in a knot behind. This designation was later adopted by other tribes similarly clothed, and became the origin of the term Basotho.

The Basotho nation was divided into various clans or families who claim descent from common ancestors, and who were distinguished by names of animals known as totems. According to Bourgeois history the various clans originated at a place called Ntswanatsatsi where each tribe was given a totem. This totem is referred to as seboko, a word derived from the verb stem, “ho boka”, meaning “to praise”, “to give thanks” or “to salute”. It is a coat of arms, name of a clan, of a family or a totem from which a clan takes its name (Cf. Mabille and Dieterlen 1912:392).

The Basotho regarded their totems as sacred and believed that in some mysterious and inexplicable way they derived their existence from them. From the beginning, they believed in both the Invisible One and the spirits of the departed. Apart from these, they wanted something more tangible, something they could see, which symbolised the Modimo wa kgale - “the God of old”, to which they appealed for aid during their undertakings and dangers, and their thanks for benefits enjoyed. This belief served as a unifying force between Basotho and their totems.

These totems had particular poetic recitations attached to them which conveyed information about one’s ancestors, origin, and part of culture and philosophy. However, other clan names were derived from names of leaders of clans which broke away from their parent clans. This is the reason for the emergence of various subclans, names and the diboko (recitations) that we have today. Others were derived from historical incidents associated with the establishment of those clans.

To facilitate memorisation, especially among children, the transmission of
information about one’s descent is done in a playful manner through a play called 
*Mmantl unilateral* or *O tswa kae?* (Where do you come from?). Lack of knowledge 
of both writing and reading left the Basotho with no other alternative except that 
of oral recitation and transmission. This was their only “history book” through 
which they could preserve their heritage.

As part of oral tradition, this art form manifests characteristics common to other 
oral compositions. These are, inter alia, the instability of their texts in the form of 
extensions, truncations, additions, omissions and improvisations, which make it 
impossible to know the authentic versions. Says Finnegon (1988 : 51),

> In oral literature there is no concept of an authentic or correct 
version.

This is so because the composition of the oral art forms in general is a matter of 
collective responsibility and heredity.

The usage of this art form takes place largely in social situations. Even before the 
introduction of “Pass laws”, they were already in use as a national communal 
identity “document” to identify where a person comes from, his ancestors, his 
village of origin, his relatives, etc. It is used for purposes of group identity, and 
also in greetings, in thanking, during the performance of cultural rites where 
initiates are arranged according to the order of seniority of their *diboko*, in the 
swearing of an oath as well as in compositions of other genres some of which 
have reached the writing stage, such as praise poems, mine workers’ chants 
(*dilela*), songs, and many others.

The poetic recitation composed to go along with the name of the family or clan, 
is consciously an art whereby there is a striving after a literary effect and an 
effort to attain a richer, more evocative, more emotive, and a more memorable 
usage of language. Characteristics similar to those of poetry are used, such as 
formulaic techniques, an exalted figurative language, repetitions, linear 
composition, the rapid manner of delivery which is often faster than normal 
speech, and others.

### 1.5 Scheme of Work

Research on the *diboko*, their historical background and their oral nature, are 
based on information from books in which these *diboko* are compiled, various 
texts with information related to this oral art form, and information received orally 
from informants with inside knowledge of the Basotho culture.

The study will be divided into six chapters. Chapter 1, as introductory, outlines 
the aim and objective in undertaking a research in this field. A survey of 
numerous manifestations of these art forms and how they manifest themselves 
as part of orality, constitute my theoretical underpinning. The study will be divided
into chapters in which each aspect of the theme will be discussed. The methodology followed will entail consultation of divergent sources to gather information.

The formulaic structure and performance of this art form will be the subject of discussion in Chapter 2. The performance of this art form takes place according to particular formulaic structures, such as linear composition which entails introduction, body and conclusion. Formulaic techniques involve linguistic and literary aspects, such as, linking, possessive, parallelism, hyperbole, alliteration, assonance, ideophone, etc. The *diboko* differ in length and form; there are longer ones, shorter ones (consisting of one, two or three lines only) and truncated forms.

Chapter 3 will focus on the genealogies which constitute both the basis and the contents of the *diboko* since in every recitation thereof, mention is made of the names of the ancestors. The genealogies to be discussed will be of the clans of the Bafokeng, Bataung, Bakwena, Bahlakwana, Batloung, Makgwakgwa, Bakgatla, Makgolokwe, Batlokwa, Basia, Baphuthi and Batshweneng. Genealogies of subclans are mere extensions of these main genealogies.

The functions of the *diboko* will be the subject for discussion in Chapter 4. These include functions of educational nature, and a Basotho game called *Mmantilatiane* or *O tswa kae*? which Basotho children from an early age commit to memory. As a formula, interesting to young ones, it facilitates memorization of these art forms. These have social functions such as group identity, national, communal identity "document", etc. They are also socially used in situations such as greetings, thanking, initiation, consoling, weddings, persuasion, funerals, swearing of oath and other special occasions, such as graduation parties and *pitiki* (feast made for child and for women who helped during the period of confinement). As religious function, this art form, though largely in truncated form, is used when one appeals prayerfully to one's ancestors. Other functions include their use in compositions of other genres, for instance, praise poems, mine workers' chants, traditional doctors' falls (mawa) and songs.

The focus in Chapter 5 will be on the *diboko* and oral tradition, in which focus will be on the definition of the latter, and the oral features of the former, namely, authorship, the instability of the texts which exhibit extensions, additions, omissions, truncations, displacements as well as improvisations and genre transitions.

Chapter 6 will be a general conclusion of the preceding chapters.
CHAPTER 2

FORMULAIC COMPOSITION AND PERFORMANCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The discussion in this chapter will focus on the composition of the clan praises (diboko). The definition of structure will help clarify the linear composition which comprises the introduction, the body and the conclusion as well as the contents that characterise these parts. Attention will also be paid to some recitations that deviate from this normal course by way of displacements or omission of some parts.

The diboko I have recorded are of different length, that is, some are longer, some shorter, and some are used in truncated forms. Like praise poems, they are recited through the use of formulaic techniques, such as, parallelism, linking, compound words, possessives, alliterations, assonances, ideophones, etc. Examples cited to demonstrate these aspects will be taken from various transcriptions of recorded recitations by the informants met during field work which I conducted for this study.

The whole compilation from which quotations will be made, together with the English translation thereof, can be found at the end of this dissertation, under the heading, “Appendix”, where the numerical refers to the number according to order as found on the page; the “C” with the numerical, to the number of the cassette; the “A” or “B” to the side of the cassette; and the last numerical to the number at which the clan recitation stands on the cassette/tape. This information is supplied especially to those who intend listening directly to the original recordings of the informants rather than mere transcriptions. These will be indicated as, for instance, No. 24, C2/A/44.

2.2 Definition of structure

Unlike the ‘form’ of the poem which is seen as a term referring to the external shape of a poem, ‘structure’ refers to the internal organisation, the composition, of the poem. The structure is dictated by how the poet’s mind works. J. Korg in Lenake (1984 : 120) states:

   The reader should know whether a given idea amplifies, parallels, or contrasts with the ideas around it, he should know whether a poem as a whole constitutes a progression, a series of repetitions, an antithesis, or a combination of these.

Miller and Currie in Lenake (1984 : 120) explain the structure of a poem as follows:
By the structure of a poem we don't mean simply the stanza form, metre, and rhythm in a regular poem, or the metrical patterns and line lengths in a free verse poem. We mean the *organising principle* behind the poem, the way the thought or mood is presented - what has led one contemporary poet to assert that poems organise themselves.

This view of Miller and Currie agrees with that of Kunene (1971 : 53), namely, that the principle of the central idea, which is carried through by means of numerous horizontal-line, vertical-line and interrupted or delayed repetition patterns, is also applicable to the Basotho *dithoko*, the structures of which are likewise complicated. Now, in terms of our definition, the discovery of these patterns of repetition is an explication of structure, since these patterns co-operate to constitute the poem. An investigation of the *diboko* in terms of an analysis of their structure, shows that they have an *introduction, body and conclusion*.

2.2.1 Linear composition

The linear approach to the study of the clan praises demonstrates three parts which together constitute their structure. These are the introduction, the body and the conclusion. The examples which will be cited in the discussion of these aspects will be confined to the recitation of the Bafokeng (number 111), the Batshweneng (number 99, C11/A/1), Bakgatla (number 53, C2/A/1) and Bahlakwana (number 23,C1/A/23), as found in the Appendix.

2.2.1.1 Introduction

The introductory part of the clan recitals usually includes the names of the ancestors from whom the reciter believes to have descended. In many a case this includes the name of the clan or tribe to which the reciter belongs. The introductions of the following recitals demonstrate the following:

- **Bafokeng ba Mahowana** (Recital by Moipone Mofokeng, from Soweto).
  (no. 111)

  The introduction is recited as,

  1. Ke Lehowana la boTlalane,
  2. Ke motho wa Mahase a Mpewana....

  1. I am a Howana of the Tlalane family,
  2. I am a descendant of Mahase, son of Mpewana....

  The names of the progenitors, Howana, Tlalane, Mahase and Mpewana, are mentioned in these introductory lines to indicate the reciter's origin. A personal prefix *Le-* is attached to the name, *Howana*, to form *Lehowana* which means "a
follower of Howana, a descendant of Howana or a loyal member of Howana’s followers”. This added prefix may also take the plural form, *Ma-* in which case, the name would be *Mahowana*. The creation of such appellations is accompanied by some added pride to the clan members as usually the leaders/progenitors are people they are proud to be associated with. The use of such names in referring to clan members is a common feature in this kind of oral art.

The structure of the sentences demonstrates not only vertical relation, but also a horizontal one, in terms of the subject concord (copulative predicate) - complement - possessive concord - possessive base in the following manner:

(Subject concord)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copulative concord</th>
<th>Complement</th>
<th>Possessive concord</th>
<th>Possessive base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ke</td>
<td>Lehowana</td>
<td>la</td>
<td>boTlalane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ke</td>
<td>motho</td>
<td>wa</td>
<td>Mahase a Mpewana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structure conveys a strong sentiment of possession, attachment and belonging to the progenitors.

Both sentences comprising the introduction commence with *Ke*..... (I am...) which constitutes a vertical repetition pattern, but also an aesthetic one because the added words in the next line help advance the information stated in the first line. This *Ke*... (I am...) is incremental, in that, the general information stated in the first line, that the reciter is a member of the family of Tlalane, is expanded by the addition of more specific information, namely, that out of that family the reciter is a descendant of Mahase, son of Mpewana. The proud and emphatic manner in which this is stated is obvious and is attributed to the repetition of *Ke*...(I am). Another aspect that this description makes clear is that the clan praise recitals are, like the *dithoko*, hero-centric.

Another highly common feature in the introduction is the elision of some words as well as the semi-vowel *w-* in the possessive concord *wa* (of) which refers to the relationship between the reciter and ancestors, or rather, between the ancestors. The sentence, *Ke motho wa Mahase a Mpewana* (I am a descendant of Mahase of Mpewana) should have been *Ke motho wa Mahase, mora wa Mpewana*, but elision of both the word *mora* (son) and the semi-vowel *w-* of the possessive concord *wa* (of) has deviated from a common way of speaking, and this appears to be a poetic feature that aims at keeping to a uniform rhythmic pattern.

In this case, the clan name of the reciter, namely, the Bafokeng, is not specifically mentioned; however, mention of the various ancestor names help distinguish this clan from other Bafokeng clans. In other cases, the reciter usually introduces himself/herself by mentioning his/her clan or tribe before reciting the clan praise.
• **Batshweneng ba ha Kgiba** (No. 99. C11/A/1)

The introduction consists of the clan name and the names of the ancestors:

(Ke *tla thella jwang),
1. Ke le *Motshweneng*,
2. Wa ha *Kgiba le Kgamadi*....

(How will I pay homage),
1. Being one of the Baboon people,
2. Of the house of *Kgiba* and *Kgamadi*...

The genealogical reference, where the reciter associates himself with his progenitors, Kgiba and Kgamadi, serves to distinguish the reciter’s clan from other Batshweneng (The Baboon people) clans. The narration is from the general, Motshweneng, to the specific, Kgiba and Kgamadi, and the ancestor names are incidentally characterised by alliteration of Kg-. Note the singular form used in this recitation.

• **Bakgatla clan recitation** (Kemuel Ntšihlele, Morija, no.53, C2/A/1).

The introduction consists of the clan name, names of the ancestors, remote and near, as well as the totem name of the clan. It says:

1. Ke *Mokgatla, Moananong*,
2. *Motho wa Mankwane*,
3. *Motho wa Mamodise a Setabele*,
4. Ke *motho wa Manalane a Kgabo*,
5. Moananonyana e hodimo, lekgolokgolo......

1. I am one of the Bakgatla, a-Swearer-by-the-eagle,
2. A descendant of Nkwane,
3. A descendant of Modise, son of Setabele,
4. I am a descendant of Nalane, son of Kgabo
5. A Swearer-by-the-bird-in-the-sky, yellow billed kite.....

Line 1 introduces the reciter’s name of the clan, *Mokgatla* (one of the Bakgatla), as well as the totem name, *lenong* (an eagle), which is encapsulated in the compound word, *Moananong*, (a-Swearer-by-the-eagle). Parallelism through the repetition of syntactical forms has been used in lines 2, 3 and 4 and can be highlighted as follows:

2. Ke *motho wa Mankwane* ,
3. *motho wa Mamodise a Setabele*,
4. Ke *motho wa Manalane a Kgabo* ,
5. Moananonyana e hodimo, lekgolokgolo......
In all three lines, repetition of *motho wa* (a descendant of), except for the missing *Ke* (I am) in line 3, exemplifies a vertical-line pattern. This missing *Ke* (I am) accounts for what Kunene (1971:78) calls “discontinuous repetition”. In a sense, the three lines also constitute parallelism through the repetition of ideas by synonyms because *motho wa Mankwane* (a descendant of Nkwane), *motho wa Mamodise a Setabele* (a descendant of Modise, son of Setabele) as well as *motho wa Manalane a Kgabo* (a descendant of Naalane, son of Kgabo) all refer to the same person, the reciter. The inclusion of various names of the remote ancestors links the clan member to his/her progeny. Says Ntaote in (Rapeane 1992:28),

Perhaps the most important aspect embodied in the praise poems is that of linking the new generation to their past by the way of preserving the names of their remote ancestors.

By “praise poems”, Ntaote refers to clan praise recitals.

Line 5 is the rounding-off of the introduction by the re-emphasis of the totem with which the reciter is associated, and which he mentioned in the compound word, *Moananong* (A Swearer-by-the-eagle) as found in the first line. But this time, the same information is conveyed through usage of other words, a compound word followed by a synonymous word, *Moananonyana-e-hodimo, lekgolokgolo* (A-Swearer-by-the-bird-in-the-sky, yellow-billed kite).


The introduction consists of the names of the ancestors, and is recited as,

1. *(Ke thelleleng,)*
2. *Ke le Motebang wa Napo a Mosito*

1. *(Why should I pay homage,)*
2. Being a descendant of *Motebang*, son of *Napo*, son of *Mosito*,

The clan name, Bahlakwana, is not mentioned. Only the names of the ancestors are mentioned, namely, Motebang, whose father is Napo, and whose grandfather is Mosito.

Basically the introductory part in this oral art form carries information regarding the progenitors/ancestors of the reciter, the clan or tribe to which he or she belongs, and may include the totem name of the clan. The purpose with this information is both to introduce the reciter and to distinguish him/her from many other clans that might have originated from the common clan or tribe.
2.2.1.2 Body

The body of the clan praise recital comprises the narrative praise of the reciter in respect of the culture of the clan, its philosophy or a historical event associated with the clan, and this is expressed in a laudatory manner. The structural features in this part form the framework on which the composition is based. The features can be linearly demonstrated in the following clan praise recitals:

• **Bafokeng** (Moipone Mofokeng, Soweto. No.111):

The part constituting the body has the following phrases:

3. *Ke hasa dikgomo,*
4. *Ke hasa le batho,*
5. *Ke hasa le dipudungwana naheng,*

3. I scatter the cattle,
4. I scatter even the people,
5. I scatter even the small black wildbeest on the veld,
6. I am a cub of the Tsebela descendants,

The body of this clan recital constitutes a narration of characteristics of the clan, and refers mainly to the heroic deeds of the clan. Here the reciter extols the prowess, courage and valour of his clan members. In the first three lines, 3, 4 and 5, there is a vertical repetition pattern of *Ke hasa...* (I scatter...) at the beginning of the sentences, to mark the incremental nature of the information; the scattering of not only of the cattle, but of the people as well, and lastly, of the black wildbeest on the veld. Firstly, it is less dangerous, the cattle which are scattered; secondly, it is more dangerous, the people; thirdly, it is most dangerous, the black wildbeests on the veld.

The next line, the sixth, which still retains the repetition of the concord, *Ke.* (I..), found in all the previous sentences, is used here in reference to the valour of the reciter as *Ngwana tau ya Matsebela* (A lion-child / cub of Tsebela descendants). The metaphorical eulogy of the lion confirms his valour as well as that of his progenitor, Tsebela.

The narrative continues in the seventh and eighth lines in which it is stated that even after being struck by lightning, the vulture does not eat from his dead body for fear of oozing fat from its mouth. This conveys the characteristic of members of this clan who were not only of great physical stature, but fatty, thus making it difficult for the vultures to feast on their corpses. Therefore, unlike other people, whose corpses are feasted on, theirs are not.
• **Batshweneng** (The Baboon people)
  (No. 99 C11/A/1)

The Batshweneng clan recital as one of the shortest has the following body and conclusion:

**Body**

3. *Motshweneng, leleme le letsho keng?*
3. Motshweneng, why is the tongue black?

The part constituting the body is very short and consists of a single line, the third line. The fourth has been included solely on account of the interlocking intended to combine the two lines. The fourth line, in fact, constitutes the conclusion which, in this case, is an answer to the question in the third line.

If we use the letters of the alphabet to label the phrases comprising the body and the conclusion, we obtain the following result:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{a} & \text{b} & \text{c} \\
\text{Motshweneng} & \text{leleme le letsho ke(ng)?} & \\
\text{Leleme le letsho} & \text{ke} & \text{ho koma ditlhare!}
\end{array}
\]

The apostrophe which takes the form of a question posed in the third line, is purposely structured to draw the listener’s attention, not so much to the literal meaning of the baboon’s blackened tongue, but to the historical origin of this clan which is associated with the baboon and the herbs. The history behind this question is, namely, that Mantsimane, one of the women married to the house of Modibedi, whose infertility was treated by a traditional doctor through the use of a baboon’s skin as well as the herbs she used (blackened tongue), later gave birth to a son, who was named Motshwene. Thus, this clan which originally belonged to the Bakwena tribe, henceforth called itself the Batshweneng (The Baboon people).

The narrative is conveyed poetically and emphatically in a form of a question and an answer. The question, *Leleme le letsho keng?* (Why is the tongue black?) and the answer, *Leleme le letso ke*... forms a right-to-left oblique-line repetition pattern as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
3 & \quad \ldots \; \text{Leleme le letsho keng?} \\
4 & \quad \text{Leleme le letsho ke} \ldots \\
\end{align*}
\]

This technique commonly referred to as “linking” or “interlocking” is a common feature in praise poems.
• Bakgatla (Kemuel Ntšihlele, Morija. No. 53, C2/A/1)

The body or narrative part of the Bakgatla clan praise is recited as,

6. Ha tuka kgabo, ha tuka lelakabe,
7. Ha tuka kgabo e kgubedu,
8. Kgomo di be di ipetsa, di le mpetsana,
9. Hoja mabele a le ditswere, Al lekahlelamodula!!
10. Mautla- a - sola, lekgolokgolo!
11. La utla, la sola lekgolokgolo!
12. Tlake, se solle lekgolokgolo!
13. Nkgodikgodi ya hodimo,
14. Sekubutu, sengalatsela,
15. Wena, motho wa Makobue,
16. Tlake, se solle, re epela motho,
17. Motho wa marumo ha a epelwe hae,
18. O tshwana le moshwela-Matebeleng,

6. Blazing were the fires, blazing were the flames,
7. Blazing were the fires, the red ones,
8. The cattle came out, and were on their own,
9. When sorghum was light-yellowish, the ear-forming-ones,
10. He-who-pounces-and-soars, the yellow-billed kite,
11. He pounced, then soared, did the yellow-billed kite,
12. Oh! Vulture, cease circling, the yellow-billed kite,
13. Kite of the sky,
14. The hiding-One, deserter-of-the-road,
15. You, member of the Kobue people,
16. Vulture, cease circling for we are burying somebody,
17. The one who falls by the spear is not buried at home,
18. He is like one-dying-among-the-Matebele.

Line 6 consists of sentences forming a horizontal syntactic parallelism, both with predicates followed by objects as,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicate</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Ha tuka kgabo,</td>
<td>ha tuka lelakabe,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the addition of line 7, the syntactic parallelism relation continues as well as the formation of the vertical-line repetition pattern at the same time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicate</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Ha tuka kgabo</td>
<td>ha tuka lelakabe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. **Ha tuka kgabo e kgubedu**

Line 6 consists of a horizontal parallelism of structure, where, in both sentences, the object is preceded by a predicate, to allude to the fierceness of the Bakgalta when engaged in a battle. In lines 6 and 7 the predicate *Ha tuka* is both horizontally and vertically used, and therefore, forms a horizontal line, a vertical line as well as an oblique right-to-left-line repetition, with line 7, *Ha tuka kgabo e kgubedu* (Blazing were the fires, the red ones), conveying a loftier idea in this climactic repetition where the fierceness of the warriors engaged in a battle is emphatically stated. The name of their ancestor, Kgabo, literally meaning “fire”, is aptly used to characterise the Bakgalta’s fighting and formidable spirit. Almost similar words are recorded in the poem of Maama (Mangoaela 1984 : 98),

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{Garenate di qhoma, kgabo di tuka,} \\
& \text{Di tuka, di bonahatsa malakabe,}
\end{align*}
\]

Grenades bursting, fires blazing,
Blazing, pointing their licking flames,

“where the realistic scenes of the battlefield would gradually make way for an eloquence of a different kind. As the thunder of war faded into the distance, the objects and sounds of nature held the poet’s attention and became the vehicles of his heroic effusions.” (Swanepoel 1983 : 5). The destruction and havoc are carried out at an opportune time for the attackers against their enemies - when the cattle were scattered and the sorghum light-yellowish and ripe for harvest (line 8 and 9).

In line 10, the compound noun, *Mautla-a-solla* (the-pouncing-and soaring-One), followed by *lekgolokgolo* (the yellow-billed-kite) forms a parallelism of thought, based on synonymous ideas. In the next line (11) the compound word is broken down into the predicates to form a horizontal syntactic parallelism describing the actions of the yellow-billed-kite, and this can be exemplified as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
10. & \quad \text{Mautla - a - solla, lekgolokgolo,} \\
11. & \quad \text{La utla, la solla, lekgolokgolo}
\end{align*}
\]

The ending noun, *lekgolokgolo*, in both lines forms a vertical-line repetition pattern. Through an apostrophe, a yellow-billed kite is now addressed as *Tlake* (Vulture), the kite of the sky and as *sekubutu* (the-hiding-One), *sengalatsela* (deserter-of-the-road) in lines 12 -14. The two deverbative eulogues, in line 14, as a technique common in poetry, are effectively used to refer to the Bakgalta as warriors who are not readily seen, the hiding-Ones, and not found at the common places, the roads, but who, suddenly appearing, sow death and destruction. In the symbolism of the vulture, the listener can easily visualize the vulture as
bringer of death.

The apostrophe in line 15 refers emphatically to each member of the clan: Wena, motha wa Makobue! (You, member of the Kobue people!).

Phrases in line 16 and 17,

16. Tlale, se solle, re epela motha!
17. Motha wa marumo ha a epelwe hae;

also form part of the Basotho war song called mokorotlo which is performed by warriors marching to battle, and which while singing they showered themselves with tears (cf. Segoe 1971 : 22). The complete words of the war song, as they appeared in Leselinyana la Lesotho, dated 1 February 1891, are reproduced in Kunene 1971 : 6.

Through an apostrophe, an antithesis of meaning is conveyed in the two lines. This is exemplified by contrastive usage of the predicates, re epela motha (we bury a man) and ha a epelwe (is not buried). The idea behind these phrases is that people were often alerted to the presence of a dead animal in the veld by the carnivorous vultures hovering over the carcass. Therefore vultures would naturally swarm in large numbers over battle-fields, to descend, at the first opportunity, and feast on the corpses of the fallen warriors. Such warriors are therefore, not buried, as usual, at home, but the open battlefield is their grave. Motha wa marumo (He who falls by the spear / A fallen warrior) is like, as in line 18, moshwela-Matebeleng - one who dies in a far-away foreign land, among the foreign people, the Matebele (the Zulus, Swazis, Mahlubi, Amangwane, and many others), a term with contemptuous connotation as used by the Basotho, derived from the verb ho tebela, (to drive away), meaning “the destroyers". The compound noun consisting of the deverbative eulogue, moshwela (one who dies) and the locative adverb, Matebeleng (the Matebele people or the land of the Matebele) conveys the idea of the unity between the two.

• Bahlakwana (‘Manthofeela Mopeli, Morija. No. 23 C1/A/23)

The clan praise recital of the Bahlakwana ba Napo a Mosito (The Bahlakwana descendants of Napo, son of Mosito) has its own characteristic features. The narrative part comprising the body is recited as,

3 Maila-ho-ngwathelwa
4 Batho ba sa jeng sengwathwa,
5 Ba jang polokwe kaofela,

3 Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
4 People who do not eat a piece of bread,
5 Who eat the whole round bread,
The first line (third) in this extract commences with a compound word, Maila-ho-ngwathelwa (free translation: Those-who-abstain-from-being-given-food), which is a deverbative eulogue. Due to pride, members of this clan did not like to be given food by others as they viewed this as degradation. According to their culture, they did not even eat food prepared the previous day. The fact that they had enough to eat is conveyed by the phrase Ba jang polokwe kaofela (Who eat the whole round bread).

The fourth and the fifth lines constitute an antithesis of ideas. Whilst the fourth conveys a negative idea, that is, people who do not eat a broken piece of bread, the fifth conveys a positive one, that is, people who eat the whole round bread. (Remember, bread in those days was prepared in the form of round balls). Note that ba sa jeng in the fourth line, and Ba jang in the fifth, form a right-to-left oblique line repetition pattern. The fifth and sixth lines both commence with Ba jang, and therefore constitute a vertical-line repetition in which the third line conveys an idea of the quantity of bread (food) eaten, whilst the fourth conveys an idea of the time at which this takes place. This can be shown as follows:

6. Ba jang
7. Ba jang

The sixth and the seventh lines, which form the conclusion, are characterised by “linking” where the ending phrase, ho thea, in the sixth line, commences the next line. This takes the following form:

6. ...................................ho thea
7. Ho thea...................................

The idea expressed in the sixth line, that of the falling of the courtyard shadows, is carried further and concluded in the next line.

The clan praise recitals are various and many, and their compositions, especially their structural compositions as well as their contents also vary. This is also the case in so far as the part we call the “body” is concerned. Each appears to have its own distinctive features of poetic nature.

2.2.1.3 Ending

The ending may take the form of the concluding consequence of the preceding narration, or phrases re-emphasise the contents of the narration. It may take the form of a rhetorical question the aim of which is emphasis. It may contain an answer to a rhetorical question, the repetition of the names of the progenitors already mentioned in the introduction or other names the reciter feels deserve mentioning, etc. However, it must be taken into account that the ending is usually characterised by a decrease in the tempo of recitation and lowering of voice to indicate the ending of the recitation.
The praise recitations discussed above demonstrate the following endings:

- **The Bafokeng ba Mahowana** (The Bafokeng, descendants of Howana) (By Moipone Mofokeng, no.111):

  The ending of the recitation is an emphatic statement that alludes to the extraordinary physical nature of the clan members:

  7. *Nong ha e (le) ntjie, mmane e mpone,*
  8. *E tshaba ha e tla tshwehla molomo!*

  7. The vulture does not eat me, lightning having struck me,
  8. It fears as it would ooze from the mouth!

Members of this clan see themselves as heroes, so physically well-developed that even when dead, the carnivorous vultures do not feast on their corpses.

- **The Batshweneng clan recital** (No. 99, C11/A/1):

  The ending is an answer to a rhetorical question whereby attention is drawn to the history behind the question. The rhetorical question,

  3. *Motshweneng, leleme le letsho keng?*
  3 Motshweneng, why is the tongue black?

  concludes with an answer,

  4. *Lelome le letsho ke ho koma ditlhare!*
  4. The tongue is black through swallowing herbal medicines!

This manner of reciting is emphatic and draws the attention of the listener to the blackness of the tongue which alludes to the historical establishment of the Batshweneng clan who originally belonged to the Bakwena clan. Note the use of linking to combine lines 4 and 5.

- **Bakgatla clan recital** (Kemuel Ntšihlele, no. 53. C2/A/1):

  The ending is, for the sake of emphasis, a repetition of ancestor’s name, a clan name and a totem name, which were mentioned in the introduction:

  19. *Ke motho wa mapheeke a Kobue,*
  20. *Ke Mokgatla, moananong!*

  19. I am a warrior of Kobue’s battles,
  20. I am a Mokgatla, a-Swearer-by-the-eagle!
These ending lines extol, in Kunene’s words (1971 : 1),

the virtues of manly prowess; of courage, of valour, and of fighting skill.

• **The Bahlakwana clan recital** (‘Manthofeela Mopeli, Morija. No.23, C1/A/23)

Whilst the preceding lines state the nature of the Bahlakwana clan and the manner of their eating habit, the following concluding lines state the early time of their enjoying their meals:

7. *Ba jang ha meriti ho thea,*
8. *Ho thea e menyane ya diotlwana!*

7. Who eat when the shadows fall,
8. When they fall, the small ones of the courtyards!

Members of this group, the descendants of Motebang, by virtue of having food in abundance, enjoyed their supper, just after noon, when the small shadows of the courtyards begin to fall.

It may be observed that the two lines are linked by means of interlocking, where the ending predicate, *ho thea*, in the seventh line, commences the next line. The idea expressed in the seventh line, is carried further and is concluded in the next line.

**2.2.2 Length**

Clan praise recitals vary in length, with some being long and some, shorter. For the sake of clarity, shorter ones can be called stanzic in that they consist of a limited number of lines (usually four), and multi-stanzic, when the first four lines are extended to a variety of possibilities. The break between stanzas is usually when various extensions are made, usually not indicated in the written layout of the poem, though clearly audible to the attentive listener. The extension usually takes place in the part known as the ‘body’ where information concerning the cultural, philosophical or historical characteristics pertaining to the clan, is expanded. This part is, therefore, determined by the amount of information conveyed. Apart from long and short recitals, there are also cases where the same recitals may be truncated. The three forms in which the recitals manifest themselves can be shown as follows:

**2.2.2.1 Multi-stanzic clan praises**

By the concept ‘longer clan praise recitals’ is understood those that are fairly long and consisting of a minimum of about 13 lines. Among the longer ones
captured during field work research, the following deductions can be made:

- they are very few in number

- the chances that they can be recited in exactly the same way, even by grown-up people, are very slim. This is borne out by the fact that the two elderly brothers from Makakamela village in Leribe district, did not recite their Makgwakgwa clan praise in the same way. Their transcribed versions can be compared as found in no.5, C1/A/5 and no.14, C1/A/14 in the Appendix, where they consist of 8 and 15 lines respectively.

- enlargement takes place in the middle part, the body, where aspects of culture, philosophy or history related to the clan, are narrated.

- in some cases, the introduction, in which the names of the ancestors are mentioned, is enlarged through the inclusion of an extended praise of clan names.

The division of the longer recitals in terms of lines can be shown as follows:

- **Bakgatla** (Kemuel Ntšihlele, from Morija. No.53, C2/A/1)

This Bakgatla clan praise recital is made up of 21 lines, with the introduction consisting of 5 lines; the body, 14; and conclusion, 2. It is the longest in our collection, and is as follows:

1. *Ke Mokgatla, Moananong,*
2. *Motho wa Mankwane, *
3. *Motho wa Mamodise a Setabele,*
4. *Ke motho wa Manalane a Kgabo,*
5. *Moana nonyana e hodimo, nkgodikgodi,*
6. *Ha tuka kgabo, ha tuka lelakabe,*
7. *Ha tuka kgabo e kgubedu,*
8. *Kgomo di be di ipetsa, di le mpetsana,*
9. *Hoja mabele a le ditswere,*
10. *A! lekgahlelemodula!!
11. *A mautia, a solla lekgolokgolo!*  
12. *La utla, la solla lekgolokgolo!*  
13. *Tlake, se solle lekgolokgolo!*  
14. *Nkgodikgodi ya hodimo,*  
15. *Sekubutu, sengalatsela,*  
16. *Wena, motho wa Makobue,*  
17. *Tlake, se solle, re epela motho,*  
18. *Motho wa marumo ha a epeewe hae,*  
19. *O tshwana le moshwela-Matebeleng,*  
20. *Ke motho wa mapheeke a Kobue,*
21. *Ke Mokgatla, Moananong!*

1. I am a Kgatla, a-Swearer-by-the-eagle,
2. A descendant of Nkwane,
3. A descendant of Modise, son of Setabele,
4. I am a descendant of Nalane, son of Kgabo,
5. Swearer by the bird of the sky, Yellow-billed kite,
6. Blazing were the fires, blazing were the flames,
7. Blazing were the fires, the red ones,
8. The cattle came out, and were on their own,
9. When sorghum was light-yellowish, the ear-forming-ones,
10. Oh! the-pouncing-and-soaring-One, the yellow-billed kite,
11. He pounced, then soared, did the yellow-billed kite,
12. He pounced, then soared, the yellow-billed kite,
13. Oh! Vulture, cease circling, the yellow-billed kite,
14. Kite of the sky,
15. The hiding-One, deserter-of-the-road,
16. You, member of the Kobue people,
17. Vulture, cease circling for we are burying a man,
18. One who falls by the spear is not buried at home,
19. He is like one-dying-in-the-Ndebeleland.
20. I am a warrior of Kobue’s battles,
21. I am a Kgatla, a swearer-by-the-eagle!

• **Bafokeng** (Makai Mofokeng, from Kgubetswana. No.86, C7/A/1)

This clan recitation of the Bafokeng consists of 13 lines, with 3 lines constituting the introduction; 8 lines, the body; and 2 lines, the conclusion. Nevertheless, the 10th line in the body, namely, *Ke ngwana madi a Phohole* (He is child of the blood of Phohole) seems to have been displaced from the introduction as it contains reference to the ancestors.

• **Makgwakgwa** (Mofereferfe Letsoela, Makakamela village, Leribe. No.14, C1/A/14)

This recital consists of 15 lines in which the first two form the introduction; the next 11, the body; and the last two, the conclusion. However, displacement, that is, the shifting of a line or phrase from one place to the other, occurs in lines 3 and 4 of the body, which belong to the introduction. These are,

*Ke batho ba Mamphamo a Mahasa,*
*Batho ba Sepharumele sa Mongalo,*

They are the descendants of Mphamo, son of Mahasa,
Descendants of Sepharumele, son of Mongalo,
Displacement or shifting of lines is a common feature of oral compositions which are characterised by unstable texts.

- **Bafokeng (Malejwe-ha-le-ribolwe)** (The Bafokeng, the-flat-Stone-should-not-be-turned-up), by Pontso Kotsana, from Leribe. No.101, C12/A/1.

This clan praise recital consists of 13 lines, with the introduction consisting of 2 lines; the body, of 9 lines; and the conclusion, of 2 lines.

2.2.2.2 **Stanzaic clan praises**

The shorter recitals are those that largely consist of few lines, say 2 to 7 lines. These form a large percentage of the entire Basotho diboko. Generally, the body is, more often than not, larger than both the introduction and the conclusion. The following recital by Gabriel Mokoena, from Matatiele (No. 69. C4/A/4), is an example of the shorter forms:

*Mohlakwana wa Pholo a Disema,*  
*Maia-ho-ngwathelwa!*

A Hlakwana of an Ox of Disema,  
Abstainers-from-being-given-food!

- **Bahlakwana ba Pholo ya Disema** (Bahlakwana of an Ox of Disema)  
(MmaThabo Lubisi, Maseru. No.22. C1/A/22):

This recital consists of 5 lines, with one line forming the introduction; 3 lines, the body; and one line, the conclusion.

- **Batlong ba ha Sekgwane** (The Elephant people of Sekgwane’s house)  
(‘Malenka Matšoele, Mahloenyeng. No.36, C1/B/12):

This consists of 6 lines demarcated as: the introduction, 3 lines; the body, 2 lines; and the conclusion, 1 line. This is an exception where the introduction is longer than the body.

- **Bafokeng ba ha Ntsukunyane** (The Bafokeng of Ntsukunyane’s house)  
(Ntebile Hloenya, Mahloenyeng. No.32, C1/B/8):

Seven lines constituting this recital can be divided into: 1 line forming the introduction; 3 lines, the body; and 2 lines, the conclusion. Note here that the introduction is larger than the body.

It is important to take note that where the introduction appears to be larger than the body, the likelihood may exist that the recital has been shortened, and that lines in the introduction may have been omitted. This statement is supported by
the following examples:

- **Basia** (Thabiso Mokone, from Kgubetswana. No.65, C3/B/8):

  This recital was recorded as consisting of 3 lines, with the introduction consisting of 1 line, and the body/conclusion, 2 lines. But its comparison with no.46, C1/B/24, where the division is, introduction, 1 line; body, 2 lines; conclusion, 3 lines, confirms the omission of some lines.

- **Bahlakwana ba Pholo ya Disema** (The Bahlakwana of an Ox of Disema) (Gabriel Mokoena, Matatiele. No.69, C4/A/4):

  This recital consists of 2 lines, with 1 line forming the introduction, and the other, the body/conclusion. But on comparing it with no.22, C1/A/22, or no.1, C1/A/1, where the introduction consists of 1 line; the body, 9 lines; and the conclusion, 1 line, it appears that some of the lines have been omitted.

  From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the omission of lines may be viewed as a tendency to simplify the recitation, a tendency that leads to the following:

2.2.2.3 **Truncated forms**

By truncated forms is understood the recitations in which a large portion has been left out from the original recitation, with only the clan name remaining. The use of truncations usually presupposes knowledge of the contents of the recitation on the part of the addressee for in some cases both the addressee and the addressee are not of the same clan. Among the Basotho, truncations are usually used as a form of greeting in the following forms:

- Where reference is made to the ancestors:
  
  * **Mosia! Motubatsi!** (Mosia descendant, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine).
  * **Wa Kgiba!** (Descendant of Kgiba!).
  * **Motho wa Tshele a Lebajwa!** (Descendant of Tshele, son of Lebajwa!).

- Where reference is made to the totem name:

  * **Phoka!** (Dew!) - Referring to a Mofokeng clan member.
  * **Kwena!** (Crocodile!) - Referring to a Mokwena clan member.
  
  The same is applicable to names such as **Taul!** (Lion!), **Tlou!** (Elephant!), **Kubu!** (Hippopotamus!), etc.

- Where reference is made to culture / history:
Motho wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome! (Descendant of Those-who-take-out-the-shields-to-dry!) when referring to the war-like Batshweneng (The Baboon people) whose shields constantly used to drip blood of their victims.

Motho ya sa tswalwang ke mosadi! (One not begot by a woman!) in referring to a descendant of Baphuthing who believe that their earliest ancestors descended from heaven through a spider's web.

Lehabakgohe-ka-lemao! (Piercer-of-the-chicken-with-a-pin!) when referring to a member of the Makgolokwe clan whose totem is the hen, the small domestic fowl.

Mofula! (Archer!), Mokolobeng! (One of the Wild-pig people). According to the Southern Sotho-English Dictionary (1988 : 92) and Mantilatilane (1993 : 44), members of this clan are so called because they originally belonged to the Bataung clan of Ramokgele, but later, as a result of learning the use of an arrow and bow from the Bushmen, took a wild-pig as their totem.

- Where use is made of a general appellation:

Sebata! (Beast of prey!) may refer to a Motaung (Descendant of the Lion people) when the addressee uses a general appellation instead of a more specific, Tau (the Lion). The same may also be applied to a Motloung! (descendant of the Elephant people). cf. Mantilatilane (1993 : 23,38) where mention is made of Ahe Tlou! Ahe Sebata! (Hallo, the Elephant! Hallo, the Beast!) as well as Sebata sa metsi! Morena dikwetsa! (The Beast of the water! The King of the deep places in the water!), when referring to a member of the Bakwena clan.

- When referring to the Swearers and their totems:

Moananong! (a-Swear-by-the-eagle). A compound noun is used to unite an addressee with his/her totem. In this case the addressee is a Mokgatla (a descendant of Mokgatla).

The use of truncations, such as the above, is very common in situations where people greet one another, especially among people who know each other very well and are friends. These truncations can also be used where a person introduces himself, and can be viewed as a summary, a shortened form, a name tag, of a complete recitation.
2.2.3 Formulaic techniques

A salient feature of the composition of these oral forms is the formula. Formulas are defined by Parry in Swanepoel (1991:6) as,

a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea.

The definition cannot be applied to African languages since these lack in metre. This situation, as a result, necessitated the rephrasing of the definition of the formula. For Southern Sotho, Swanepoel (1983:5) rephrased Parry's notion of the formula as "a group of words" operating under "the same metrical conditions". His definition runs:

One prefers to view it as a dynamic compositional device consisting of either a word or a group of words fairly regularly employed in performance to express an essential idea, and consequently creating recurring rhythmic conditions.

This modification consists of two points of departure. Firstly, Swanepoel speaks of rhythmic conditions instead of metrical conditions. Secondly, he extends the requirement of a phrase to cover also single words as formulas. The idea of a word needs further elucidation. Indeed Swanepoel later attends to this (1991:8) and states:

Word, in the sense of one lexical item, on the face value, doesn't seem to fit the idea of a 'formula', which is generally taken as consisting of more than one word. In this poem (Griffith, mohale wa Lerotholi), however, the 'word' we have in mind, represents a concept which does in fact refer to a 'phrase' serving as a poetic contraction or abridgement. These include eulogies, metaphors and appellations of various kinds and origin, with multiple semantic significance. In this sense one lexical item could resemble formula.

It should be noted that, unlike the praise poems which are generally long, the Basotho clan praise recitals are generally short. Therefore the use of formulas cannot be as extensive as in the praise poems. In fact it is very rare that the same formula may be used more than once in the same clan praise recital. Nevertheless, the following are some of the formulas commonly found in the clan recitals:

2.2.3.1 The naming formula

These occur usually in the introductory part of the recital where the reciter associates himself with the progenitors from whom he believes to have originated. Compare the following first three lines of the recital by Marumo Mosoeunyana,
from Rampai village, in Lesotho (No. 3. C1/A/3):

Motho wa Mamphutlane a Makeka,
Motho wa boNkoriba le Tsotelo,
Motho wa ha Mamahlosi a Nakedi,

One of the Mphutlane descendants of Makeka,
One of the family of Nkoriba and Tsotelo,
One of the house of Mahlosi, son of Nakedi,

In the 8th line the names of other progenitors are further mentioned as,

Motho wa boMothibe le Mmalane,

One of the family of Mothibe and Mmalane

The lines conveying the names of the progenitors and the clan names usually commence with the repetition of the phrases Motho wa... (One of ...) as in the above examples.

It should be noted that in some cases the clan name may be included, as in the following recital by Kemuel Ntšihlele, from Morija (No. 53. C2/A/1) where the opening line is repeated in the last line to mark both the opening and the closing of the recitation:

1. Ke Mokgatla, Moananong,
2. Motho wa Mankwane ,
3. Motho wa Mamodise a Setabele,
4. Ke motho wa Manalane a Kgabo,
21. Ke Mokgatla, Moananong!

1. I am a descendant of Mokgatla, a-Swearer-by-the-eagle,
2. A descendant of Nkwane,
3. A descendant of Modise, son of Setabele,
4. I am a descendant of Nalane, son of Kgabo,
21. I am a descendant of Mokgatla, a-Swearer-by-the-eagle!

There are cases where the clan name as well as the totem name by which the reciter swears are repeated in various lines in the process of recitation. In the following recital by Mphamo Mosia, from Molokong (No.47. C1/B/24),

Ke Mosia, Motubatsi,
Wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
Di se nna di omela mokgwabo tlung,
Ke Mosia, Motubatsi,
Wa Tshele a Letuka,
Wa Tshele a Lebajwa!

I am one of the Basia, a-Swearer-by-the -porcupine,
Of the people, Take-out-the-shields-to-dry-up,
And should not dry up in the wet places of the hut,
I am one of the Basia, a-Swearer-by-the -porcupine.
Of Tshele, son of Letuka,
Of Tshele, son of Lebajwa!

the first mention of Mosia, Motubatsi draws attention to the historical brave character of the Basia people whose constant engagement in battles left their shields dripping with blood, whilst the second refers to the ancestors from whom the reciter descended. Such repetitions are not only used for emphasis, but also for facilitation of memorisation of this oral art form.

The introduction may include the optional statement put in the form of a question, namely, Ke thelleleleng? (Why should I pay homage?) or Ke thelle jwang? (How should I pay homage?), which is then followed by the clan name and the names of the reciter’s ancestors, as in the following examples:

- **Motaung wa ha Hlalele,**
  *Wa Nthethe a Morapedi,* (Mangena Sello, Rampai village. No.2. C1/A/2)

  **Motaung** (One of the Lion people) of the Hlalele’s house,
  Of Nthethe, son of Morapedi

- **Motlokwa wa ha Mmanthatisi,**
  *Mothe wa Tshotetsi a Lebaka,*
  (’Mamokoena Matjama, Hoohlo village, no.19. C1/A/19)

  **Motlokwa** (descendant of Motlokwa) of the house of Mmanthatisi,
  A descendant of Tshotetsi, son of Lebaka

However, there are a few instances where the clan name may be omitted, as in the following as recited by Marumo Mosoeunyana, from Makakamela village,(No.3. C1/A/3):

- **Mothe wa Mamphutlane a Makeka,**
  *Mothe wa boNkoriba le Tshotelo,*

  One of the family of Mphutlane, son of Makeka,
  One of the family of Nkoriba and Tshotelo,

It can therefore be generally stated that the naming formula as an introduction expresses the clan name and the ancestor names to whom the reciter belongs.
2.2.3.2 The patronymic formula

Praises through the eulogues of one’s relatives is a feature found in this oral art form, as in,

- Mohlakwana Pholo ya Disema (No.1. C1/A/1)
  A Hlakwana descendant of an Ox of Disema

- Ngwana tau ya Masebele
  Child of the lion of Tsebela’s descendants (No.111)

- Ngwana tshehl a badimo (No.34 C1/B/10)
  Child of the great ancestors

It is important to note that the relatives mentioned in the above examples are remote ancestors from whom the reciter is proud to have descended. These examples confirm the view that the main aim of this particular art form is to convey information regarding one’s origin in metaphorical shape derived from a rich and proud tradition.

2.2.3.3 The toponymic formula

Toponymic formulas include toponyms of battle scenes which are often mentioned by cataloguing them in pairs, either polysyndetically by le- or asyndetically listed in juxtaposition. Toponymic catalogues reinforce the resoluteness of the hero’s advance and the size of his attack (cf. Swanepoel, 1991 : 22). The following from the recital by Moferefere Letsoela, from Makakamela village, is an example of a polysyndetical cataloguing:

Ho tsha dihotla, boAtanye le boKolonyama,
Diya-ha-Mahlatsi di ya ka bohlale,
Ha o ya ha Mahlatsi o ye ka bohlale,
Bona seko ti tseleng o tla wela! (No. 14. C1/A/14)

Burnt were the velds like Atanye and Kolonyama,
Goers-to-the-house-of-Mahlatsi should go there with wisdom,
If you go to the house of Mahlatsi, go there with wisdom,
Beware of the hole on the road; you will fall!

Atanye and Kolonyama refer to Hoatane and Kolojane which, according to Damane and Sanders (1974 : 173), are Ramanella’s villages close to Mathokoane. It is possible that Kolonyana mentioned here refers to the mountain between Peka and Teyateyaneng in Lesotho. In reinforcing the resoluteness of
the hero’s advance, the fierceness and the magnitude of the battle, these velds are mentioned in the praise poem of Jonathane Molapo, as,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ha etjha thaba, ya fetoha melora,} \\
\text{Ha etjha thupa tse ka mora ntlo,} \\
\text{Ha etjha Hoatane le Kolojane! (Mangoaela 1984 : 109).}
\end{align*}
\]

Burnt was the mountain,  
Burnt were the pegs at the back of the house,  
Burnt were Hoatane and Kolojane!

Hoatane and Kolojane refer to Atanye and Kolonyama.

2.2.3.4 The mythical formula

Mythical formulas are used in the following instances:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Motho wa boDijo, wa boMoselane,} \\
\text{Ha boDijo ho hlabana dithotsela! (Phillip Mojaki, Leribe. No.13. C1/A/13)}
\end{align*}
\]

One of the family of Dijo and Moselane,  
At Dijo’s place, ghosts fight one another!

The phrase sethotsela (ghost) is prominently placed at the end of the sentence for the sake of emphasis. Since ghosts are highly feared among the Basotho, any mention thereof causes fear.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Bakgwele ba titima mabitleng,} \\
\text{Thotsela sa Mokgwele ha se je moroko,} \\
\text{Se ja dipolokwe! (Makhobalo Lehloeny, Mahloenyeng. No.33. C1/B/9)}
\end{align*}
\]

The Kgwele people run on the graves,  
A Mokgwele ghost does not eat sorghum meal corn,  
It eats round bread!

Thotsela is a shortened form of Sethotsela (Ghost) where the prefix Se- has been omitted. In Thotsela sa Mokgwele (A Kgwele ghost) the metaphorical eulogue Thotsela is followed by an associative reference relating the hero (reciter) to his clan, Bakgwele. Association with the ghost makes the hero both great and fearsome. The idea that the Kgwele people walk on the graves (where people fear to tread) supports the idea of their fearsomeness.

In the following line (‘Mamokoena Matjama, Hoohlo village. No.19. C1/A/19),

\[
\text{Motho wa kubu ke nare ya tsolo le lefubedu}
\]
One who is of a hippopotamus is a buffalo of the red lightning

the reciter associates not only with the hippopotamus, but also both with the buffalo and the red lightning which is feared by all because of its deadly power.

2.2.3.5 Linking / Interlocking

The oblique-line repetition pattern, a common stylistic feature in praise poems, is a feature also applied in this oral art form. The following is an example:

*Kubu ha o e ane moo phatleng,*
*Ha o e ana moo phatleng o ka shwa.*
(*Mateleko Masoetsa, Kgolokwe, Lesotho. No.45 C1/B/22*)

Hippopotamus, you do not swear it on the forehead, If you swear it on the forehead, you can die.

The idea expressed in the first line is carried further and concluded in the next line. Such linking of ideas facilitates memorisation.

2.2.3.6 Parallelism

Parallelism according to Pretorius (1989: 19), refers to linguistic similarities observed between certain successive poetic lines and forms an integral part of traditional as well as modern poetry where it is used to create aesthetic effects. There are various kinds of parallelisms used in the clan praise recitals, as in the following examples:

2.2.3.6.1 Initial Linking

Repetition of initial phrases is used for emphasis and for the addition of other ideas, as in the following recital by Moipone Mofokeng, from Soweto.

*Ke hasa dikgomo,*
*Ke hasa le batho,*
*Ke hasa le dipudungwana naheng,* (No.111)

I scatter the cattle, I scatter the people, I scatter even the small black wildbeests in the veld,

Repetition of this nature creates suspense and makes for sustained curiosity through the expectation of a new or surprise element. This may be regarded as aesthetic repetition. Compare also:

*Kobo di pedi, ngwana Kgojane,*

51
E ngwe ke ya ho robala boroko,
E ngwe ke ya ho apesa bosudul!
(Lefu Paepae, Benteke. No. 108 C12/A/8)

Blankets are two, child of Kgojane,
One is for sleeping,
One is for covering fart!

Here different ideas are expressed parallel to each other.

2.2.3.6.2 Final Linking

This kind of repetition occurs when the same words or phrases occupy the same final position in the lines, as in:

11. A mautla, a solla lekgolokgolo!
12. La utla, la solla lekgolokgolo!
13. Tlake, se solle lekgolokgolo! (Kemuel Ntšihlele, Morija. No.53/C2/A/1)

11. He pounced, then soared, did the yellow-billed kite,
12. He pounced, then soared, the yellow-billed kite,
13. Oh! Vulture, cease circling, the yellow-billed kite,

The repetition of the phrase in the final position serves as an emphasis, and the recitation therefore sounds like a song.

2.2.3.6.3 Horizontal parallelism

Horizontal-line repetition may occur within one and the same line, as in the following example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ha tuka</th>
<th>kgabo,</th>
<th>Ha tuka</th>
<th>lelakabe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicate</td>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Predicate</td>
<td>Object</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blazing were the fires Blazing were the flames

The two sentences, Ha tuka kgabo and Ha tuka lelakabe, are both made up of the predicate followed by an object. The objects are variations of the same thing and are used as such for aesthetic effect.

In the following example,

Baphuthing, Maaparanku! ('Mamakhala Makalo,Kgolokwe.43.C1/B/20)

People of the duiker, Wearers-of-the-sheepskin!
The two nouns, forming a horizontal parallelism, complement each other. Whilst Baphuthing refers to a clan name, Maaparanku is a compound noun meaning those who wear sheepskin, a cultural idiosyncrasy of the Baphuthing of yore.

2.2.3.7 Question and answer

The poetic stylistic feature of question and answer is a device that gives a touch of beauty to a piece of oral expression. It creates a dialogue and a song characterised by a repetition of phrases occurring in both the question and the answer. The following are some examples:

**Question**  
**Ho uwe kae?**  
**Answer**  
**Ho uwe ha Mmakepile lesemeng,**

**Question**  
**Lebudi le hlahale kae?**
**Answer**  
**Le hlahale motlheng,**
**Le bebenya ditedu! ('Matšajoa Seile, Mporana.110. C12/A/10)**

**Question**  
**They have gone, where to?**
**Answer**  
**They have gone** to the house of the woman, Kepile, for a bee,
**Question**  
Where does the rat come from?
**Answer**  
It comes from a furrow,
It moves its beards!

The above example exemplifies the formation of both vertical parallelism and interlocking.

Interlocking can also be observed in the following example:

*Motshweneng, leleme le letsha keng?*  
*Leleme le letsha ke ho koma dithare!* (No.99. C11/A/1 SABC)

Baboon - person, why is the tongue black?  
The tongue is black through swallowing herbal medicines!

Repetitions of this nature facilitate both memorisation and retention to memory of this oral art form.

2.2.3.8 Ideophones

Apart from bringing beauty of oral expression, ideophones say a lot in a few words, as in,

*Tsuu, kgotonono,*  
*Kgatla! Lomo se methati e leshome,* (Pontšo Kotsana, Leribe.101.C12/A/1)
Falling from a high place, hitting the ground,  
Falling hard on the ground! The precipice with ten steps,

where tsuu, kgotionono and kgatla, respectively refer to the actions of falling from a high place, carelessly hitting the ground, and then settling with great impact on the ground.

In the following example,

_Ho itswe shwii, shwii!_  
_Ho uwe kae?_  
('Matšajoa Seile, from Mporana. No.110. C12/A/10)

People have gone away, it is dead quiet!  
Where have they gone to?

The repetition of the ideophone shwii, shwii, has an added emphasis on the idea of the going away of all the people who leave behind complete silence.

### 2.2.3.9. Alliteration

Finnegan (1970 :8) is correct in stating that,

> A poet has to rely to a great extent upon the manner in which he expresses his ideas in order to give beauty and interest to his poem.

To achieve this aim alliteration of “b” and “l” has been used in the following extracts:

1. _Re batho ba ha Mahwete Komane,_  
_re batho ba bodiba bo botala ha bo okamelwe,_  
('Mateleko Masoetsa, from Kgolokwe. No. 45.  C1/B/22)

   We are the descendants of the house of Hwete, son of Komane,  
We are the descendants of the-green-abyss-should-not-be-towered-over,

2. _Ke Motshweneng wa ha Kgiba,_  
_Leleme le letsha,_  
_Leleme le letsho ke ho koma dilhare,_  
('No.100.  C11/A/2 SABC)

   I am a Baboon-person of the house of Kgiba,  
The tongue is black,  
The tongue is black through swallowing powdered herbs,

Although this alliteration is inherent in the noun class and subsequent concordial system of Sesotho, it is likely that the poets intentionally exploited this feature for aesthetic purpose.
2.2.3.10  Assonance

Assonance, like alliteration, is also used for beauty and interest in oral recitation, as in the following seboko of the Batloung (The Elephant people) where the repetition of the vowel “o” is extensively used for aesthetic purpose:

Ke le Mtoloung wa ha Sekgwane,
Motho wa boPhori, wa boMoeletsi,
Motho ekare a ithma, a rota,
Sebono sa futha,
Ke nna motho wa ho nya ha monate!
   ('Malenka Matšoole, Mahloenyeng. No. 36.  C1/B/12)

Why should I pay homage,
Being one of the Elephant-people of Sekgwane’s house,
One of the family of Phori and Moeletsi,
One who, when excreting and passing water,
The anus became painful.
I am that person who enjoyed excreting!

The repetition of the vowel “o” is a matter of intentional exploitation, in that predicates without an “o” could still have been used, namely, ho nyela or ho nya instead of ho ithoma (to excrete) and ho ntsha metsi (to pass water) instead of ho rota.

2.2.3.11  Compound words

Compound words are commonly used in this oral art form to pack maximum meaning into minimum space as can be substantiated by the following extracts:

3. Motho wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
4. Di-se-nna-di-omela-mokgwabo-tlung,
   ('Mamothibeli Sekheo, Kolonyama, Lesotho. No. 6.  C1/A/6)

3. A descendant of the-Take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
4. And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-huts,

The compound noun commencing in line 3 and ending in the next line refers to the Basia people, a warlike people whose shields were, as a result of their regular engagements in battles, kept dripping blood of their victims. The compound name means “Those whose shields dry outside, in the battlefields, and not in the huts where they (the shields) remain wet with blood”.

The Bakwena clan, the descendants of Ntsane, son of Monaheng, refer to themselves as,
2. *Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,*  
3. *Maja-polokwe-kaofela!*  
   (*Maliau Maeko, Semonkong, Lesotho. No.18. C1/A/18*)

- Abstainers-from-being-given-food,  
- Eaters-of-the-whole-round-bread!

Compound words used as names in lines 2 and 3 respectively mean “Those who abstain from being given food by other people” and “Those who eat the whole round bread (full meal)”. Used here, they form a parallelism of contrastive ideas. Apart from minimising the use of many words, compound words also serve to facilitate memorisation of this oral art form.

### 2.2.3.12 Noun and cognate verb

The use of a noun and its cognate verb, as a common technique of the praise poems, is also applicable in the *diboko* praise recitals. The noun and its cognate verb may be found in the same line or be separated by other words. The repetition that results is not accidental, but intentional, and serves to reinforce a particular point, as in,

*Ha ke re ka Tshele ke tshella mang?*  
*Ke Tshele wa Lebajwa le Nkwanyane!*  
*(Teboho Seato, Makakamela village, C1/A/10)*

When I say(swear) by *Tshele*, who do I *pay homage* to?  
It is *Tshele* of Lebajwa and Nkwanyane!

****

*Ke Motebang, ke teba ka sekepe!*  
*(D.A. Madiehe, Thaba ‘Nchu. No. 95. C9/A/3)*

I am a descendant of *Motebang,* I *sink* with the ship!

In the first extract, the reciter, by using the noun and its cognate verb, *Tshele* and *tshella* (note the almost similar repetition) emphasises a point that he/she, as a descendant of Tshele, pays allegiance to him. To emphasise this point, the statement is put in the form of a rhetorical question.

In the second extract, the reciter reinforces the fact that he/she is a descendant of Motebang (One who sinks in the water). By using the noun, *Motebang,* and its cognate verb, *ho teba* (to sink), the reciter is metonymically referring to the crocodile, an amphibious reptile by which he/she swears, namely, the crocodile.
2.2.4 CONCLUSION

The discussion in this chapter has focussed on the composition of the clan praise recitals. The linear composition shows that this art form is made up of the introduction, the body and the conclusion, and that each particular part serves a distinctive role. The names of the ancestors, the culture, the history or philosophy of the clan as well as concluding phrases determine the introduction, body and conclusion of this art form.

The clan praise recitals are usually preceded by the optional introductory formula *Ke thelleleeng ke le...*(Why should I pay homage being....) or *Ke thelle jwang ke le...*(How should I pay homage being.....). This formula does not take the form of a statement, but that of a question, despite the intention to state a fact. This is because clan praises are meant for recital also by children where tradition and culture are inculcated, and should therefore take a poetic form most appealing to children, and easy for memorisation and retention to memory. We therefore agree with W.H.Auden in Burton and Chacksfield (1979 : 63) that poetry is "memorable speech".

The clan praises are of varying lengths which are determined by their contents. Truncated forms like *Mosia! Motubatsi!* (Mosia descendant! a-Swarer-by-the-porcupine!), *Wa Kgiba!* (Descendant of Kgiba!), *Motho wa Tshele a Lebajwa!* (Descendant of Tshele, son of Lebajwa!), *Ahe Motebang! Ngwana Napo!* (Hallo, descendant of Motebang! Child of Napo!), are used when familiar people greet each other and where knowledge of the contents of one’s origin is presupposed.

Formulaic technique, common in praise poems, plays an important role in the composition of this oral art form as it encompasses formulas such as naming, patronymic, toponymic and mythical formulas which are facilitated by the customary mention of the ancestor names, the historical experiences as well as the qualities of mythical phenomena which the reciters believe to have been bestowed upon them.

Other formulaic techniques which are used to bring beauty and to facilitate memorisation of this oral art form include poetic stylistic features such as interlocking, parallelisms of various forms, question and answer, ideophones, alliteration, assonance as well as the usage of noun and its cognate verb - all contributing to informing the formula of overriding compositional mechanism.

In this chapter emphasis has been on the composition of these oral art forms. Their contents as well as their genealogies will be the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The discussion in chapter 3 is about the content or the subject-matter of the clan praise recitals in which the genealogies of the clans form an important component. The genealogies of the ancestors from whom members of the various Basotho clans believe to have descended, the totem names, the cultures, philosophies and the historical incidents underlying the establishment of the clans, all constitute the contents of the clan praise recitals. The underlying importance of the genealogies is that of maintaining a link between the old and the new generation, and this is reflected in their clan praise recitals. This is confirmed by Ntaote in Rapeane (1992:28) where he says:

Perhaps the most important aspect embodied in the praise poems is that of linking the new generation to the past by way of preserving the names of their remote ancestors.

Genealogies form the basis of existence of the Basotho clans, for they carry part of the history of their origin as well as the most important content of their clan praise recitals. Therefore, the genealogies and the clan praises of the various clans will be discussed together since the genealogies form part of the latter. Owing to conflicting and often confusing views of the Basotho regarding the seniority of the various clans, the following discussion will subsequently not necessarily be according to the hierarchical order of seniority of the clans, but will however be based on the genealogical table by Ellenberger (1912:394) in which he gives an analysis of the names of the contemporary chiefs and tribes. The following is the order which will be followed:

- Bafokeng (The Dew people)
- Bataung (The Lion people)
- Bakwena (The Crocodile people)
- Bahlakwana (The Hlakwana people)
- Batloung (The Elephant people)
- Makgwakgwa (The Kgwakgwa people)
- Bakgatla (The Kgatla people)
- Makgologwe (The Kgologwe people)
- Batlokwa (The Tlokwana people)
- Basia (The Basia, descendants of Mosia)
- Baphuthi (People of the duiker)
- Batshweneng (People of the Baboon)

Since each clan has various subclans, only one clan or subclan of a particular main clan will be discussed, because the entire discussion of all the available
clans and subclans will be too long and beyond the scope of this chapter. The main aim is to demonstrate how, under each tribe, the subject-matter of its subclan recital is constituted. One or more examples will be cited.

In discussing the contents of the clan praise recitals, the genealogical chart (all taken from Ellenberger, 1912 :394) of each clan/subclan will be presented, with the spelling of the names changed to modern Sesotho orthography. The chart will show the names of the ancestors of a particular clan, and will be followed by an example or examples of clan praise recitals which will demonstrate that the ancestor names, the totem name, as well as the philosophical, cultural or historical aspect of each clan, form the content of the praise recital.

It should be noted that the genealogies will be quoted in their entirety, despite the fact that some of them are rather long. This will be done for the following reasons:

1. Although the clan praise recitals refer to a few names, namely, those of the ancestors who are specifically viewed as the progenitors of a clan, other ancestor names belonging to a clan are equally important, and form part of the clan’s line of descent. In fact, the whole genealogy was known to the clan members, and formed part of their everyday oral heritage.

2. In view of the contemporary generation whose memory of its genealogy is gradually fading, the comprehensive presentation of the various clan genealogies does justice to the preservation of this Basotho heritage in a stable form.

**3.2 Genealogies**

The study of the genealogies of the Basotho clans show that the establishment of the various clans or subclans took place centuries ago, and that the formation of various sizeable clans contributed to the emergence of various genealogies. It should be noted that although some of the genealogies discussed in this chapter include the names of the ancestors who lived during the 20th century, the formation of new and separate clans does not take place anymore because the situation of the contemporary Basotho does not socially or politically necessitate any new formations.

The discussion on the genealogy of the Basotho clans is as follows:

**3.2.1 Bafokeng**

Since the genealogical chart of the Bafokeng is rather long and complicated, only the following truncated part of it from Ellenberger (1912 : 394) is presented as follows:

Tlopo
The history of the existence of the Bafokeng is very ancient. When they arrived at Ntswanatsatsi, centuries ago, they found the country more or less occupied by the Bushmen. The Bafokeng today have a proliferation of various clans, each having its own particular clan praise associated with the clan’s tribal characteristic.

Matela Matobakele, from Fobane, in the district of Leribe in Lesotho, a Mosotho who knows much about the history and origin of the Bafokeng ba Maotwana (The Bafokeng of the Footprints) clan, to which he belongs, gives a verbal explanation of the incident that gave rise to their clan name. He relates that Motanyane and Makara, sons of the Bafokeng chief, Mmope, were brothers by different mothers. Makara’s mother was famous for the clay pots she used to make, and was also a traditional doctor, morokapula (a rain-maker), as a result of which she was able to amass herds of cattle. On the contrary, Motanyane’s mother was poor.

Conflict between the sons began when chief Mmope died, and was occasioned by the question of inheritance. Motanyane, though the elder, could not lay claim on the wealth, for it belonged to Makara and his mother; and Makara, though wealthy by virtue of her mother’s cattle, was the younger. Motanyane, together with a handful of followers, left the village, stealing a large number of cattle belonging to Makara. When they reached a sandy river at Mohobollo, at Leribe, they crossed it facing backwards and, though few in number, intentionally ensured that they left as many footprints as they could, to create an impression that they had gone in the opposite direction, and that they were many in numbers.

The expressions, Maoto a makaalo ka dinaleli (Footprints are as many as the stars) and A kaalo ka jwang ba tshaane, molelengwane (Are as many as the long
eragrostis (tshaane grass) point to this fact. This is how the clan known as Bafokeng ba Maotswana (The Bafokeng of the small Footprints) or Ba Maotwana-finya (Those of the contracting footprints) came to bear this name.

The above incident is reflected in their clan praise recitals, as in the following recital by Mohale Rapali, from Monontsha, in Qwaqwa:

Mofokeng wa ha Maotwana-finya,
Maoto a makaalo ka dinaledi,
A kaalo ka jwang ba tshaane, molelengwane,
Ke Mofokeng wa ha Mokgadi a Motlalane,
Mofokeng wa ha Manti a Mmope!

(No.113).

One of the Bafokeng of the small-Footprints-contract,
Feet are as many as the stars,
They are as many as eragrostis, the long one,
I am one of the Bafokeng of Mokgadi, son of Motlalane,
One of the Bafokeng of the house of Manti, son of Mmope!

It should be noted that the names, Motlalane and Motanyane, refer to the same person who later became chief of the Bafokeng of Masekwane (cf. Ellenberger 1912: 71). Mokgadi, son of Motlalane, and Manti, son of Mmope, are the ancestors with whom the clan members of the Maotswana associate themselves. Manti, son of Mmope, was Makara. (cf. Matšela and Moletsane, 1993: 9).

The names of the ancestors mentioned, and the historical origin of this clan, form the content of this clan praise.

The Bafokeng known as Majammutla o le tala (Those who eat the hare whilst raw) took the hare as their emblem, and were generally known by the nickname Maja podi (Those who eat the goat) on account of being so poor that they could not afford to eat beef. On the origin of the appellation, Ellenberger (1912: 19) relates:

When they kill a hare, they bite the ears with their teeth, and rub their foreheads with the body, in order to be blessed. But if the dogs should happen to kill a hare, they are careful not to touch it at all.

The clan praises of the Bakgwele (another branch of the Bafokeng) also reflect the historical experiences of this clan. The verbal information by Matela Matobakele, a Mosotho who knows much about the history and life of the Bakgwele, relates that the Bakgwele, named as such after one of their prominent ancestors, used to live near the mountain, later named, Kgwele or Bokgwele, in the district of Senekal, in the Free State province.

In the event of sudden attacks by their enemies, the Bakgwele, who lived on the
western side of the mountain, would not climb the mountain through the eastern pass, though it was easily accessible, but would climb through the western one, and next to which were the graves. According to their belief, the passing through the graves would be a sign of disrespect to their ancestors. However, since the need to survive was unavoidable, they had no other alternative but to run through the graves for safety. Therefore, in order that the ancestors would approve of their deed and allow them further passage through their resting place, they would regularly feed their ancestors by throwing round breads (*dipolokwe*) at the graves, and not, as customary, the sorghum meal (*moroko*), which was looked upon as inferior food.

This historical incident pertaining to the Bafokeng (Bakgwele) is reflected in their clan praise recitals, as in the following example by Makhobalo Lehloenya, from Mahloenyeng, in the district of Matsieng:

*Ke thelle jwang,*  
*Ke le Mofokeng,*  
*Wa Mantsukunyane a Kata a Sefiri,*  
*Bakgwele ba titima mabitleng,*  
*Thotsela sa Mokgwele ha se je moroko,*  
*Se ja dipolokwe!*  

Why should I pay homage,  
Being one of the Bafokeng,  
Of *Ntsukunyane*, son of *Kata*, son of *Sefiri*,  
The Kgwele people run on top of the graves,  
A Mokgwele ghost does not eat sorghum meal corn (beer dregs),  
It eats round bread!

By *Sethotsela sa Mokgwele* (A Kgwele ghost), they refer to the ghosts of their ancestors who might scare them in the night and prevent them from passing through the graves. In encouraging the further giving of bread to appease the growing number of the Bakgwele ghosts, the following phrases are added to some of their praise recitals as in the following example by Ntebile Hloenya, from Mahloenyeng:

*Fokoletsang Bakgwele dipolokwe,*  
*Ha ba ata ba tla re bolaya.*  

Share your bread with the Kgwele ancestors (at the graveside),  
For when they become numerous they will kill us.

In the above examples, it has been shown that the names of the progenitors of the clans as well as the cultural or historical idiosyncrasies of the clans, constitute the contents of the clan praise recitals, whose aim is to link the current generation to the past, in oral form.
3.2.2  Bataung

Among the four genealogies of the Bataung, the following is that of the first branch (Ellenberger 1912 : 368):

```
Thulwane
   | Morapedi (alias Kotele)
   | Nthethe

   | Tebele

   | Tebeyane

   | Tau

   | Mokole

   | Hlalele

   | Kgobane

   | Moteane

   | Yoboyane
```

The names of the Bataung ancestors, Hlalele, Morapedi and Nthethe, are mentioned in the introductory part of their clan praise recitals, as in the following recital by Mangena Sello, from Rampai village, in Lesotho:

```
Ke thelleng
Ke le Motaung wa ha Hlalele,
Wa Nthethe a Morapedi,
Ha Hlalele ha ho marena mangata,
Morena ke Hlalele a inotshi.
Hlalele petu la lekana molala,
Lebese la retha le eso kene hlofeng!  (2. C1/A/2)
```

How can I pay homage
Being one of the Lion people of Hlalele’s place,
Of Nthethe, son of Morapedi,
At Hlalele’s there are no many a chief,
The only chief is Hlalele,
Hlalele, the brass ring fitted the neck,
Milk thickened before it became sour!

where Nthethe, son of Morapedi, is the great grandfather of Hlalele. The ancestor names form part of the recitation in which the clan members prided themselves on being followers or descendants of Hlalele as their sole leader. Matela
Matobakele, from Fobane, in the Leribe district, a Mosotho who knows much about the Basotho clans, informs us that the Bataung of old reared a lot of cattle, and their main food was milk (especially thick sour milk), which used to be in abundance.

The historical incident (Ellenberger 1912: 55) associated with this senior branch, the Bataung of Hlalele, is that Hlalele’s father, Tau, son of Tebeyane, was, at one time, being circumcised when their village was raided by a troop of Maphuthing. The Bataung ran to the circumcision to rescue the initiates and put them out of danger. They then burnt the initiation hut and everything connected with it, lest perchance the enemy might defile it. From this incident, Tau got the name of Letjhela, “the brand”, and those of his company were called Matjhela.

As a result of this incident, the Bataung have a popular expression: Re Bataung ba Matjhela, ba Ntethe a Morapedi, ba Tebeyane a Matlatsa! Tlatsa Tebeyane, (We are the Lion people of Matjhela, of Ntethe, son of Morapedi, of Tebeyane, son of Matlatsa). This also gave rise to the saying “Tlatsa Tebeyane” (Help Tebeyane). Some of the quoted phrases form part of some of the Bataung clan praise recitals, as in (Matšela and Moletsane 1993: 18),

*Motaung wa ha Matjhela!  
Wa Ntethe a Morapedi!  
Wa Tebeyane a Matlatsa, tlatsa Tebeyane!...

Motaung of the house of Matjhela!  
Of Ntethe, son of Morapedi!  
Of Tebeyane, son of Matlatsa. Help Tebeyane!...

From the above, it can be observed that the names of Bataung progenitors and the historical incidents pertaining to the clan, constitute the content of their clan praise recitals.

3.2.3 Bakwena

The genealogical chart of the Bakwena, according to Ellenberger (1912: 337), commencing from Kwena, is as follows:

```
  Kwena
   |__________|__________|
  Kgabo 1 Ngwato Ngwaketsi
   |__________|
Masilo 11 (alias Mosito)
   |__________|
    |__________|
     | Napo
```

64
This genealogy of the earliest Bakwena tribe is divided into four principal branches which afterwards subdivided into various clans, such as Bamonaheng, Bamokotedi, Bahlakwana, Makgwakgw, Bapedi, Makgolokwe, Maphuthing, Basia and Batlokwa.

In the following clan praise recital of the Bakwena, by ‘Manthofoela Mopeli, from Morija, the names of the ancestors from whom members of this clan originated, are mentioned:

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Motebang wa Napo a Mosito,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Batho ba sa jeng sengwathwa,
Ba jang polokwe kaofela,
Ba jang ha meriti ho thea,
Ho thea e menyane ya diotlwana.
(‘Manthofoela Mopeli, Morija. No.23. C1/A/23)
Why should I pay homage,
Being a descendant of Motebang of Napo, son of Mosito,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
People who do not eat a piece of bread,
Who eat the whole round bread,
Who eat when the shadows fall,
When they fall, those small ones of the courtyards!

The ancestor names, Motebang, son of Napo, son of Mosito, are mentioned and agree with the genealogical chart. However, not all the names that appear in the chart are mentioned. The general tendency observed in the clan praise recitals is that reference is made to more than one ancestor name, a fact reflecting the importance the Basotho attach to their ancestors and an indication of their line of descent.

The names of the progenitors, in the above example, are followed by poetic phrases conveying the characteristic of the members of this clan, as in: Maila-ho-ngwatethwa (free translation: Those-who-abstain-from-being-given-food), which is a deverbative eulogue. Members of this clan were proud in that they had enough to eat and did not eat food prepared the previous day. As a result, they avoided eating food given by those who were not of their clan, as they could not ascertain whether or not it was prepared the previous day. The fact that they had enough to eat is conveyed by the phrase, Ba jang polokwe kaofela (Who eat the whole round bread). Unlike other clans, they were also proud of eating their evening meals early, for they say,

\[
\text{Ba jang ha meriti ho thea,}
\text{Ho thea e menyane ya diotlwana!} \quad (C1/A/23)
\]

Who eat when the shadows fall,
When they fall, those small ones of the courtyards!

As shown above, the names of the ancestors as well as the cultural idiosyncracy of these Bakwena clan members, form the content of their clan praise recital.

3.2.4 Bahlakwana

The Bahlakwana is one of the offshoots of the Bakwena tribe. The genealogical chart of their ancestors is as follows (Ellenberger 1912 : 394):

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
\text{Napo} & & & \\
\mid & & & \\
\text{Motebang} & \text{Disema} & \text{Molapo}
\end{array}
\]
The origin of the clan name, Bahlakwana, cannot be determined with accuracy because of varying explanations in this regard. Samson Motlokoa's verbal information, as recorded by Pae (1992: 7), says the name originated as a result of an incident that took place within the village under chief Motebang. This village was divided into two sections between which were kraals. On the upper part of the kraals lived the chief together with his proud wives who, by birth, were of royal families. On the lower part of the kraals lived Motebang's other wives, his concubines, those who were of lower rank and who, by birth, were daughters of ordinary citizens.

Out of contempt, the proud women of the chief used to look down on those of the lower rank, and referred to them as women belonging to Thakwaneng (The hoof), meaning those who, like the hoof of the cow or the horse, are at the lowest and the farthest end. In other words, those who are least important and least loved by the chief. This derogatory appellation, Bahlakwana, became the name by which this clan came to be known.

Verbal information by Paul Makuta of the village at Roma, as recorded also by
Pae (1992:8), says that within the Bakwena tribe there was, at one time, a general manifestation of a high rate of birth of deformed children on account of marriages between people closely related to each other. Chief Disema issued an order that young men of his tribe should no more marry within the Bakwena tribe. With derision all women married outside the tribe were referred to by the appellation, Bahlakwana (Those who come from yonder), which, in a shortened form, became Bahlakwana.

In the clan praise recitals of the Bahlakwana, some of the names of their ancestors are mentioned, as in the following (Letšoara Tephe, Molokong, Lesotho):

Mohlakwana Pholo ya Disema,  
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,  
Motho ya sa jeng ngwathwana sa maobane,  
Wa Napo le Mosito,  
Ya jang feela ha ho thea ya diotlwana,  
Ho thea e menyenyane.  
Ke letibi, ke lefiriwane,  
Tshwene ya etjha senana e beleha.  
Ke kwena, kwenanyane,  
E a hlapa, e a theosa madiboho,  
Kwena, kwena tse ding ha di e je! (No.1. C1/A/1)

A Hlakwana of an Ox of Disema,  
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,  
One who does not eat yesterday's bread,  
One of Napo and Mosito,  
Who eats only when they fall, those courtyards ones (the shadows),  
When the small ones fall,  
He is a pumpkin, a small one,  
A baboon burnt an abdomen during birth,  
It is a crocodile, a young one,  
It fords and descends along the drifts,  
A crocodile which others do not eat it!

Names of the grandfather, son and grandson, namely, Mosito, Napo and Disema, are respectively mentioned and included as names of the progenitors of the Bahlakwana clan. This clan originally belonged to the Bakwena, but later called themselves the Bahlakwana, although they continued to venerate the crocodile as their totem.

Names of other ancestors form part of the Bahlakwana clan praise recitals, as in the following example (Mokete Mokwena, Matatiele, 70. C4/A/5):

68
Mohlakwana wa ha Teele a Motawana,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Sengwathwana sa maobane,
Majapolokwe-kaofela!

A Hlakwana of the house of Teele, son of Motawana,
Abstainers-from-being-given,
Yesterday's small piece of bread,
Eaters of the whole round bread!

Father and son, Teele and Motawana, are mentioned as the ancestors from whom this section of the Bahlakwana believe to have originated. Like the Bakwena, the Bahlakwana are famous for their cultural eating habits which are reflected in their praise recitals.

3.2.5 Batloung

The powerful tribe of the Batloung were originally the Barolong, but on separating from the mother-tribe they adopted the elephant (tlo) as their emblem. The following genealogical chart is that of the Batloung, known as Baaka (Ellenberger 1912: 392), one of the numerous clans into which the tribe became subdivided:

```
               Lekgetho
                |
            Ranale
                |
   Sekgwane
           |
       Phofele
           |
        Tlane
           |
Sekgume (Sekgobe)
    |
  Montsho       Motshekwane
    |
     |
  Tiiti
     |
|  Raphule       Moshabesha
  |
|     |
  Ntsasa       Tshwaedi    Dipholo    Ramokepa    Nkgwaba
    |
|     |
|  Mmantshela    Ranyete    Nefthali
```

69
According to Ellenberger (1912: 113-114), the Batloung are an offshoot of the Barolong who venerated the hammer (iron). After breaking away from the Barolong, they later arrived at Thaba-Kgolokwe, where they were well received by the Makgolokwe whose chief gave them land to cultivate. But at the time of harvest, they, remembering their descent from the Barolong, claimed precedence over the Makgolokwe, in eating the first pumpkin. The Makgolokwe refused to recognise this right. The quarrel became a fight in which the Batloung were beaten, and their chief Lekgetho was killed. Misfortune seems to have followed them, for their chief, Ranale, was killed by a lion. The remnants of the Batloung therefore had to be on the run for dear life.

This historical experience is alluded to in their clan praise recitals, as in the following by Samuel Motloung of Bethlehem (No.112 in the Appendix):

Ke thelleleng  
Ke le Motloung wa ha Sekgwane!  
Wa "Tlo, ke o pepe,  
Ke o sihletse,  
Ke o tla me ka thari ya konyana,  
Ebe ke matha ka wena!"  
(No. 112)

Why should I pay homage,  
Being one of the Elephant people of the house of Sekgwane!  
One of those ‘Come, let me carry you on my back,  
And carry you safely,  
Let me bind you with a lamb-skin,  
And run carrying you!’  

The same sentiments of their painful and unforgettable experience at the hands of the Makgolokwe is expressed, but this time in wording that is highly metaphorical in style. Compare the following clan praise recited by ‘Malenka Matšoene, from Mahloenyeng, Lesotho:

Ke thelleng,  
Ke le Motloung wa ha Sekgwane,  
Motho wa boPhori, wa boMoeletsi,  
Motho ekare a ithoma, a rota,  
Sebono sa futha,  
Ke nna motho wa ho nya ha monate!  
(36. C1/B/12)

Why should I pay homage,  
Being one of the Elephant people of Sekgwane’s house,  
One of the family of Phori and Moeletsi,
One who, when excreting and passing water,  
The anus became painful.  
I am that person who enjoyed excreting!

In essence, the idea expressed is that the painful experience they went through marred the otherwise happy life they were supposed to enjoy.

In the above examples, it should be noted that the ancestor from whom the Batioung clan believe to have descended, is Sekgwane, who took over as leader and chief of the Batioung after the death of his father, Ranale. However, in the second example, other ancestor names, Phori and Moeletsi, are added, and their origin could not be traced.

The names of the ancestors, the totem name, alluded to in the clan name, Molioung (descendant of the Elephant people) as well as the historical incident associated with the establishment of the clan, form the content of the Batioung clan praise recitals.

3.2.6 Makgwakgwa

The following chart, according to Ellenberger (1912 : 388), represents the genealogy of the Makgwakgwa:

```
Napo
  | Molapo
  | Masheane
  | Kgerehlwa
  |___________
      | Sefako
      | Moselane
      | Dijo
      | Tumane
      | Mosito
      | Letjhesa
      | Mahlatsi (Sedimo)
      | Mphumo (Morwa)
      | Mosese
      | Nkopane
      | Letsie
      | Mohapi
```
Lethole
Matela
Letsika
Thakabanna

Puso
Leuisa
Basele

The names of the Makgwakgwá ancestors, Sedimo (Mahlatsi), Dijo and Moselane, are mentioned in the following clan praise recital by Phillip Mojaki, from Makakamela village, at Leribe:

_Ke thelleng,_
_Ke le Lekgwakgwá la Sedimo nthole,_
_Maphutse le maraka ke imetswe,_
_Motho wa boDijo, wa boMoselane,_
_Ha boDijo ho hlabana dithotsela!_ (13. C1/A/13)

How can I pay homage,
Being a Kgwakgwá of Sedimo, take-off-my-load,
The big pumpkins and their shoots, I am carrying a heavy load,
One of the family of Dijo and Moselane,
At Dijo’s place, ghosts fight one another!

Although according to the genealogical chart, Dijo was the son of Moselane, these names are mentioned without any reference to relation.

The Makgwakgwá were famous for huge crop of pumpkins which they used to produce from their lands, and this is the reason they ended venerating the white pumpkin. They hereby indicate in their clan praise recital the heavy load felt by one who comes from the field and feeling tired. This is exemplified in the above recital.

According to history, the Makgwakgwá under Dijo, were, at one stage, attacked by Mokheseng (alias Ratladi), son of Monaheng, who was chief of the Bakwena. Ratladi wanted to capture his cousin, ‘Matumane, wife of Dijo, a woman of extraordinary beauty. In the battle that ensued, the Makgwakgwá, with the help of the Basia, overpowered the warriors of Ratladi. Ratladi and Dijo were killed, and ‘Matumane rescued.

The following songs (Ellenberger 1912: 82) were sung to commemorate Ratladi’s bad deed and its consequences:
A ba a eya kae Saole a lekola a le raretsa?
   Hi  hi!  Hi  hi!
O a ya hapa a tla nyala bohlana tshwana.
   Ho  ho  ho!  Ho  ho  ho!

Whither went Saole with plumes on his head?
He went to seize cattle with which he might wed.
   Ho  ho  ho  Ho  ho  ho!

And in honour of the Basia:

_Diya ha Mahlatsi di ye ka bohlale,
Nong di tseleng, di jele Ratladi!

Let those who go against Mahlatsi choose their path with care,
For birds of prey are in the road and ate Ratlali there!

And again:

_Ratladi wa Mapapa Kotswane a Phokeng,
Nong di mo jele tsa mo siya mahlong bohobolokwana.

Ratlali of Mapapa, with the death-glaze in his eyes,
is devoured by vultures.

The incident captured by the phrases of the above songs is alluded to in the following clan praise recital of the Makgwakgwa, as recited by Moferefere Letsoela, from Makakamela village, at Leribe (No. 14. C1/A/14):

_Ke thelleng,
Ke le Lekgwakgwa la ha Mahlatsi,
Batho ba ha Mahlatsi ba kaalo ka dinaledi,
Ba kaalo ka jwang ba tshaane, molelengwane,
Ke batho ba ha Mamphamo a Mahasa,
Batho ba Sepharumele sa Mongalo,
Ke batho ba ha Mamothotlo o a batiwa,
Mothotlo bosiu o ba mokgubedu,
Motsheare o ba mosootho,
Batho ba ha Mahlatsi ha se ba ho ya le batho ntweng,
Ha ba ya le batho mahlare a a lala,
Ho tjha dithota, boAtanye le boKolonyama,
_Diya-ha-Mahlatsi di ya ka bohlale,
Ha o ya ha Mahlatsi o ye ka bohlale,
Bona sekoti tseleng o tla weia!
How can I pay homage,  
Being a Kg wagwa of Mahlati's place,  
Mahlati people are as many as the stars,  
They are as many as eragrostis, the long one,  
They are of the descendants of Mphamo, son of Mahasa,  
Descendants of Sepharumele, son of Mongalo,  
They are of The-sieve-is-being-sought-clan,  
A sieve at night becomes red,  
During the day it becomes brown.  
Mahlati people do not really make good company at war,  
If they accompany others, vegetables will not grow,  
Burnt were the fields like Atanye and Kolonyama,  
Goers-to-the-house-of-Mahlati should go there with wisdom,  
If you go to the house of Mahlati, go there with wisdom,  
Beware of the hole on the road; it will trip you!

The whole clan praise recital conveys the heroic nature of the Makgwagwa, especially lines 10, 11 and 12, which allude to the company of their neighbours, the Basia, which left the villages in havoc and destruction. Hyperbolic comparison with the stars and the long eragrostis grass, in lines 3 and 4, demonstrates the large numbers which constituted the Makgwagwa clan as well as a threat to their enemies.

The plains, Atanye and Kolonyama, refer to Ramanella's villages close to Mathokwane, and are used to reinforce the resoluteness of the advance of the Makgwagwa heroes, their fierceness and the magnitude of the battle.

The names of the ancestors, Mahlati, Mphamo (Mphumo in the chart) and Mahasa (probably another name for Mahlati) as well as reference to the heroic nature of the Makgwagwa and their battle with Ratladi, constitute the content of this clan praise recital.

3.2.7 Bakgatla

The Bakgatla are an old tribe that originated from the Bahurutse. After their separation from the mother tribe, they divided into two sections - the one, that of Kgafela, remaining in old Bechuanaland, while the other, that of Tabane, spread themselves over the country which was called the Transvaal. It is from the marriage of the Bakgatla chief, Tabane, with Mathulare, a daughter of the Bafokeng chief, that five great tribes were born, namely, the Bapedi, the Makgolokwe, the Maphuthing, the Batlokwa and the Basia.(cf. point 3.2.8).

The animal the Bakgatla originally took as their emblem was the monkey (kgatla), but later replaced it with an eagle (lenong), perhaps by virtue of better and more
impressive qualities of an eagle.

The following genealogy of the Bakgatla (Ellenberger 1912 : 347) is that of the family of chief Tabane:

Tabane

Diale  Kgetsi  Matsiboho  Kgwadi  Mosia  Matlaisane
(Bapedi) (Makgolokwe) (Maphuthing) (Batlokwa) (Basia)

Kgao

Nalane

Leoka

Lethaha

Mohlongwane  Mokgatla

Maphike  Motime

Taole  Molefi

E. Maphike  Kobue

According to Macgregor (1957 : 53), the Bakgatla were with Mokheseng, alias Ratladi, son of the Bakwena chief, Monaheng, in his raid against the Makgwagwga, where he was killed in an abortive attempt to forcefully take away ‘Matumane, wife of Dijo, chief of the Makgwagwga. While the Bakwena were engaged in the battle with the Makgwagwga, the Bakgatla devoted their energies to looting, and managed to get away with a lot of cattle belonging to the Makgwagwga before the advent of the Basia turned the Bakwena victory into a defeat. The Bakwena, returning after their defeat, ordered the Bakgatla to produce the cattle in order to “dry the tears” of Ratladi’s widows, but they resisted.

The looting of the cattle is alluded to in the following lines of their clan praise recital by Kemuel Ntšihlele, from Morija (53. C2/A/1):

8. Kgomo di be di ipetsa, di le mpetsana,
9. Hoja mabele a le ditswere,
10. A! lekgahlelamodula!!
8. The cattle came out, and were on their own,
9. When sorghum was light-yellowish,
10. The ear-forming-ones,

The looting of the cattle took place metaphorically at an opportune and ripe time for them, when the sorghum (mabele) had begun forming ears, and were ready to be reaped. This incident took place when the battle between the Bakwena and the Makgwakgwa was at its highest point because the recital conveys the following:

6. Ha tuka kgabo, ha tuka lelakabe,
7. Ha tuka kgabo e kgubedu,

6. Blazing were the fires, blazing were the flames,
7. Blazing were the fires, the red ones,

The Bakagatla were like the hiding eagle, sekubutu (the-hiding-One) and also sengalatsela (deserter-of-the-road) because while the battle was on, they remained uninvolved, and suddenly struck by looting the Makgwakgwa’s cattle. As opportunists, they acted like an eagle that pounced and soared at its victim. This sentiment is expressed as,

13. Tlake, se solle lekgolokgolo,
14. Nkgodikgodi ya hodimo,

13. Oh! Vulture, cease circling, the yellow-billed kite,
14. Kite of the sky,

Apart from reference to the historical incident in the clan praise recital of the Bakagatla, the names of the clan’s progenitors are mentioned as Nkwane; Modise, son of Setabele; Nalane, son of Kgao (Kgabo), as well as Kobue. Also included is reference to the totem name as in Moananong (Swearer-by-the-eagle) in both the first and the last line.

The above information which forms the content of the Bakagatla clan praise recital, can be found in the following clan praise by Kemuel Ntšihlele, from Morija:

1. Ke Mokgatla, Moananong,
2. Motho wa Mankwane,
3. Motho wa Mamodise a Setabele,
4. Ke motho wa Manalane a Kgabo,
5. Moana nonyana e hodimo, nkgodikgodi,
6. Ha tuka kgabo, ha tuka lelakabe,
7. Ha tuka kgabo e kgubedu,
8. Kgomo di be di ipetsa, di le mpetsana,
9. Hoja mabele a le ditswere,
10. A! lekgahlelamodula!
11. A mautia, a sella lekgolokgolo!
12. La utla, la sella lekgolokgolo!
13. Tlaxe, se sella lekgolokgolo!
14. Ngodikgodi ya hodimo,
15. Sekubutu, sengalatsela,
16. Wena, motho wa Makobue,
17. Tlaxe, se sella, re epele motho,
18. Motho wa marumo ha a epelwe hae,
19. O tshwana le moshwela-Matebeleng,
20. Ke motho wa mapheeko a Kobue,

1. I am a Mokgatla, a-Swearer-by-the-eagle,
2. A descendant of Nkwane,
3. A descendant of Modise, son of Setabele,
4. I am a descendant of Nalane, son of Kgabo,
5. Swearer by the bird of the sky, Yellow-billed kite,
6. Blazing were the fires, blazing were the flames,
7. Blazing were the fires, the red ones,
8. The cattle came out, and were on their own,
9. When sorghum was light-yellowish, the ear-forming-ones,
10. Oh! the-pouncing-and-soaring-One, the yellow-billed kite,
11. He pounced, then soared, did the yellow-billed kite,
12. He pounced, then soared, the yellow-billed kite,
13. Oh! Vulture, cease circling, the yellow-billed kite,
14. Kite of the sky,
15. The hiding-One, deserter-of-the-road,
16. You, member of the Kobue people,
17. Vulture, cease circling for we are burying a man,
18. One who falls by the spear is not buried at home,
19. He is like one-dying-in-the-Ndebeleland.
20. I am a warrior of Kobue's battles,
21. I am a Mokgatla, a swearer-by-the-eagle!

The above recital and explanations confirm that the names of the clan's progenitors, its totem name as well as the historical incident pertaining to its establishment, all constitute the subject-matter and content of its praise recital.
3.2.8 Makgolokwe

The Makgolokwe are the descendants of Kgetsi, the second son of Mathulare. According to Ellenberger (1912 : 37), they migrated up the Vaal and established themselves at Thaba Kgolokwe, in the district of Standerton (Seratwe), in the old Transvaal, where they remained for eight or nine generations. In the course of time many of them came to believe that this mountain was the birthplace of their tribe.

The Makgolokwe were an amiable and good-natured people, but poor warriors who nevertheless could defend themselves. Unlike their Bakgatla ancestors, whose emblem was the kgabo (monkey), they, together with their relations, the Bapedi and the Maphuthing, adopted the porcupine (tubatsi) as their emblem (Ellenberger 1912 : 37). On the contrary, the Makgolokwe of today are known to be venerating kgoho (the domestic fowl), a fact which either points to the incorrect statement by Ellenberger, or the adoption of the kgoho as a later incident.

The genealogy of the Makgolokwe is according to Ellenberger (1912 : 349):

```
Kgetsi
  | Motjheko
  | Mokete
  | Maduke
  | Phoka
  | Sefanyobatho
  | Molope

(1st wife)

| Motshwane

(2nd wife)

| Mokgolwane
  | Marobele
  | Lehasa
  | Polane
```

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Tlaka  Mokgele  Mohlaki  Tsuisi  Seeka
|        |       |        |       |
|        |        |        |       |
| Letlatsa  Wetsi |
|        |       |
| Tutubolo  Lephasane |
|        |       |
| Mokidibiti |

Tradition (Ellenberger 1912: 114) relates that the Makgolokwe, by virtue of their connection with the Barolong through the Bakgatla, were particular in the matter of eating the first-fruits, the custom of the senior to taste them first. It was the prerogative of the Makgolokwe to be the first to eat the first-fruits of the new year, and any action contrary to this, by any tribe, other than the Makgolokwe, would be a serious breach of national etiquette.

This precedence, also applicable through the chief, is reflected in their clan praise recitals, as in the following examples:

1. *Re le Makgolokwe, Mahlabakotswana,*
   *Mahlabakogo-ka-lemao-ka-sebonong,*
   *A e hlab, a e isa kgorong ha Mokgolane,*
   *Mokgolane a e ja, a ba a e halala,*
   *A re “Kgutla hape, o yo eketsa,*
   *Mothe wa Wetsi!”*  (‘Mapapiso Mekete, from Kgolokwe, No.51. C1/B/28)

   Being Kgolokwe people, Slaughterers-of-the-white-sprinkled-one,
   Piercers-of-a-hen-with-a-pin-in-the-anus,
   They pierced it, took it to Mokgolane at the gate,
   **Mokgolane** ate it and even despised it,
   And said “Go back and add more,
   Descendant of Wetsi!”

2. *Makgolokwe, Makotswana,*
   *Mahlabakogo-ka-lemao,*
   *A e ise ho Mokgolane kgorong,*
   *A re: Bona, morena, ke hlabile!*
   *Ke hlabile manoni a maholo,*
   *Batho ba Rapeso,*
   *Batho ba Seya-pele-kotsong.*
   *Ho sa busa Letlatsa le Lephatshwana,*
   *Batho ba ha Wetsi,*
   *Batho ba ha Marowa le Molotsana,*
   *Batho ba Rapeso!*  (No.91. SABC C8/A/1)
Kgolokwe people, People-of-the-small-roan,  
Piercers-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin,  
And take it to Mokgolane at the gate,  
And say “Look, chief, I have slaughtered!  
I have slaughtered the big fat ones,  
Descendants of Rapeso,  
Descendants of the Frontrunner-to-peace,  
During the reign of Letlatsa and Lephatschwana,  
Descendants of the family of Wetsi,  
Descendants of the family of Marowa and Molotsana,  
People of Rapeso!

In the first example, reference is further made to the clan name, Makgolokwe (the Kgolokwe); the emblem, Mahlabakotswana (Those who slaughter the domestic bird sprinkled with white colours); the ancestors, Mokgolane and Wetsi, from whom they originated.

In the second example, further names of the ancestors are added, namely, Letlatsa, Lephatschwana, Marowa, Molotsana and Rapeso.

In the above examples, it is clear that the names of the Makgolokwe ancestors, their clan name, their emblem, their tribal and cultural characteristic, are all information that constitutes their clan praise recitals. Compare the following in the Appendix: 40/C1/B/17, 44/C1/B/21, 64/C3/B/7, and 66/C4/A/1.

3.2.9 Batlokwa

The Batlokwa originated from Kgwadi, the fourth son of Tabane and ‘Mathulare. According to Makoro (page 5, year of publication not given), the name, Batlokwa was originally Batlhokwe, which meant those who looked down on other people and not associate with them. Originally they swore by their chief, Molefe, because they did not have a totem by which to swear. Later, they took the qwaabi (wild cat) for their totem. The qualities of their totem qwabi (wild cat) were reflected in their unsociability, bravery, stubbornness and frequent engagements in battles. It was only during the rule of the famous Mmanthatisi, widow to Mokotjo, that the Batlokwa enjoyed a period of tranquility from battles. Their history is characterised by various clans which broke away from the mother clan.

Part of the genealogical chart of the Batlokwa, according to Ellenberger (1912: 353) is as follows:

```
Molefe
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Molatodi  Sebidi  Sebidinyane

Lepotswe  Mokoro

Tshotetsi  Motonosi

Lebasa  Montwedzi

Nkgahle  Mokotjo (married to Mmanthatisi)

Tumisi  Sekonyela

Leteka  Leboto

Ledingwana

The names of their progenitors as well as the experiences that the Batlokwa went through, as warlike people, are alluded to in their clan praise recitals, as in the following recitation by ‘Mamokoena Matjama, from Hoohlo village in Lesotho:

1. Motlokwa wa ha Mmanthatisi,
2. Motho wa Tshotetsi a Lebaka,
3. Motho ya neng a nyele mokopu,
4. Wa Mmamohato wa Butha-Buthe,
5. Motho wa kubu, ke nare ya tsolo le lefubedu,
6. Le neng le otle habedi ka hora kereke,
7. Le ipatlela ngwana lona, Ntlenyana,
8. Selepe, Mokgesi o hana kereke,
9. O eteliwa pele ke baruti ka tseleng,
10. Le wena ka moso ba tla o etella! (19. C1/A/19)

1. A Motlokwa of the descendants of Mmanthatisi,
2. One of Tshotetsi, son of Lebaka,
3. One who once excreted on the pumpkin,
4. That belonged to mother Mohato of Butha-Buthe,
5. One who is of a hippopotamus is a buffalo of the red lightning,
6. Which stroke twice inside the church,
7. Aimed at its own child, Ntlenyana,
8. Selepe, Mokgesi defies the church,
9. He is led forward by the ministers on the road,
10. And you too, tomorrow they will lead you forward!

The ancestors from whom the Batlokwa originated are Mmanthatisi, who was married to Mokotjo, Lebaka and his son, Tshotetsi. The name, Lebasa, in the
chart is wrongly spelt, and should be Lebaka.

Lines 3 and 4,

*Motho ya neng a nyele mokopu,
Wa Mmamohato wa Butha-Buthe,*

One who once excreted on the pumpkin,
Who belongs to mother Mohato of Butha-Buthe,

allude to an unsuccessful raiding by the Batlokwa against Moshoeshoe at Thaba-Buthe. According to Ellenberger (1912 : 143-144), the Batlokwa, under the leadership of Sekonyela, tried to attack Moshoeshoe and his people at Butha-Buthe, but without success. After several abortive attempts, they eventually destroyed the crops belonging to the Basotho. Moshoeshoe sent two oxen to Sekonyela, requesting him to spare at least one field, which he indicated, for seed grain for the coming year; but Sekonyela and his men took the oxen and destroyed all the grain and even the pumpkins. Reference to the *mokopu* (pumkins) alludes to this incident.

Line 5,

*Motho wa kubu, ke nare ya tsolo le lefubedu*

One who is of a hippopotamus is a buffalo of the red lightning

is an expression describing the heroic character of the Batlokwa when engaged in a battle, namely, that they fought like a hippopotamus and a buffalo, and like red lightning, they instilled fear and struck at their enemies with speed, to gain victory.

The following lines,

8. *Selepe, Mokgesi o hana kereke,*
9. *O etellwa pele ke baruti ka tseleng,*
10. *Le wena ka moso ba tla o etella!*

8. Selepe, Mokgesi defies the church,
9. He is led forward by the priests on the road,
10. And you too, tomorrow they will lead you forward!

allude to the incident associated with the arrival of the Wesleyan missionaries among the Batlokwa in 1834. Despite their warm welcome, the majority of the Batlokwa were not converted, and defied the establishment of a church which would preside during their funeral ceremonies (Makoro, page 29).
The incident associated with the two oxen that Moshoeshoe sent to the Batlokwa at Butha-Buthe, is specifically alluded to in the following clan recital by Mosa Matia, from Morija, in Lesotho:

*Motlokwa wa ha Tshotetsi, Lebaka,*
*Batlo ba eja pholo e le tjhitja!* (No.28. C1/B/4)

One of the Batlokwa of the house of Tshotetsi, son of Lebaka,
People ate an ox, a round-horned-one!

The above discussion shows that the names of the progenitors as well as the historical experiences of the Batlokwa are reflected in their praise recitals.

3.2.10 Basia

The Basia clan originates from chief Tabane of the Bakgatla, from whose marriage with Mathulare, daughter of the chief of the Bafokeng of Sebolela a Kwen, emerged the founders of five great tribes, namely, the Bapedi, the Makgolokwe, the Maphuthing, the Batlokwa, and the Basia. According to Ellenberger (1912 : 31), these tribes may be called the first Basotho because they were the first to bear that name.

Mosia, founder of the Basia clan, was the youngest son of Tabane, and so was his tribe the smallest of those that sprang from Tabane. Nevertheless, on leaving the parent tribe, he and his followers took the *tubatsi* (porcupine) to be their emblem.

The genealogy of the Basia can be presented as follows (Ellenberger 1912 : 355):

```
Mosia
  |
(Missing generation)
  |
Mohale
  |
Pampane
  |
Tlabeledi
  |
Tsoloale
  |
Mothala
  |
Mothaha (alias Phena)
```

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The Basia were warlike people. During the first half of the eighteenth century, they were joined by the Batlokwa of Motonosi. Shortly after this, they were engaged in a fierce battle with Tshotetsi, elder brother of chief Motonosi, a battle in which shields and battle-axes were used. And again, the Basia, helping their neighbours, the Makgwakgwa of Makalane, were, at one time, involved in a fierce battle against the Bakwena of Monaheng. Ratladi, leader of Bakwena warriors, wanted to forcefully capture Matumane for himself. In that battle, Ratladi was killed, as well as his cousin, Dijo, chief of the Makgwagwa, and many warriors of the Makgwagwa.

As a result of their regular engagements in battles, their shields kept dripping blood of their victims. Their shields used to dry outside, in the battlefields, and not in the huts where they (the shields) remained wet with blood.

This tribal characteristic and the names of the Basia ancestors are reflected in their clan praise recitals, as in the following example by Abinere Seisa, from Morija in Lesotho:

Ke Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
Di se nna di omela mokgwabo tlung! (27. C1/B/3)

I am a descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
Descendant of Those-who-take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut!

where the ancestor name is Mosia. The name, Mosia, as used here, is a double entendre; it means both the actual name of the ancestor and the descendant of Mosia. Motubatsi refers to the descendant who swears by the porcupine. These are followed by the Basia tribal characteristic which is expressed in the form of a compound word, Mantsha-thebe-di-ome-di-se-nna-di-omela-mokgwabo- tlung (Those-who-take-out-the-shields-to-dry-and-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut).

In the following example by Mphamo Mosia, from Molokong, other ancestor names are added:

Ke Mosia, Motubatsi,
Wa Mantsha-thebe -di-ome,
Di se nna di omela mokgwabo tlung,
Ke Mosia, Motubatsi,
Wa Tshele a Letuka,
Wa Tshele a Lebaiwa! (47. C1/B/24)

I am one of the Basia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
Of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut,
I am one of the Basia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine.
Of Tshele, son of Letuka,
Of Tshele, son of Lebaiwa!

Apart from the name, Mosia, other ancestor names, Tshele, Letuka and Lebaiwa have been added. Added to these, is the tribal characteristic of the Basia clan. It should be noted that according to the recorded and transcribed clan recital, Tshele was the son of Letuka, and also son of Lebaiwa, but according to the genealogical chart, Tshele, Letuka and Lebaiwa appear as brothers whose father was Lethaha. The name Letlala, which appears in the chart should be replaced with Lebaiwa, since the Basia clan members pronounce it and accept it as such from the traditional point of view.

The same argument can be advanced in the case of another transcribed recital of the Basia, no. 10, C1/A/10, where the ancestor name, Nkwanyane, incorrectly appears in the genealogy as Matlanyane.

Despite typical errors, such as these, the main aim in this section is to demonstrate that the names of the ancestors from whom the clan members believe to have descended, the totem name, as well as the tribal characteristic peculiar to a clan, are reflected in the clan’s praise recital and constitute its content.

3.2.11 Baphuthi

The tribe which to-day is called the Baphuthi (People of the duiker) includes the Mazizi tribe of Dlamini which came from the Tugela in the East, and which also forms part of a group called the Matebele (The destroyers). The Mazizi, according to Ellenberger (1912 : 25), settled among the Baphuthi, and lived together on friendly terms. Kobo, whose father, Titi, was named Thokothoko, married a daughter of Lerane, chief of the Baphuthi. The sojourn of these people with the more enlightened Baphuthi was useful. They learned, among other things, to cover themselves with more decency than it had been their habit. They adopted the language, the customs and even the totem, phuthi (the duiker) of the Baphuthi.
Part of the genealogical chart of the Baphuthi according to Ellenberger (1912: 345) is the following:

Tlameni (Dlamini)
  Laake
  Thokothoko (alias Titi)
  Kobo
  Tsele

Kganyane (or Kganyane)
  Thibela

Mokheseng  Monyane  Maswabi  Mokgwebi
  Temeki

The ancestor names as well as the historical experiences of the Mazizi tribe are reflected in their clan recitals, as in the following example by Lefu Paepae, from Benteke, the village of chief Mpooa:

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Letebele la ha Miya,
La ha Sekelemane,
Kobo di pedi, ngwana Kgojane,
Tsa bola hloho,
Tsa bola bokalakata,
E ngwe ke ya ho apesa boroko,
E ngwe ke ya ho apesa bosudu! (No.108. C12/A/8)

Why should I pay homage,
Being a Ndebele of the house of Miya,
Of the house of Sekelemane,
Blankets are two, child of Kgojane,
They were rotten on the head,
They were rotten on the separated head from the neck,
One is meant for sleeping,
One is meant for covering air from the bowels!
The names of the ancestors who belonged to the Ndebele tribe are mentioned as Miya, Sekelemane and Kgojane, son of Tsele. Kganyane or Kgwanyane in the chart should be Kgojane.

Johannes Miya, from Qwaqwa, who knows much about the history of the Baphuthi, gives an explanation about the information in lines 4 to 8. According to him, the group belonging to the house of Miya, experienced difficulties, and had to move from place to place, looking for shelter among other clans. This group had to hide its identity because of fear of being identified with the Ndebeles of Pakaditha who were causing chaos and destruction during the Difaqane wars. Reference to Kobo di pedi (Blankets are two) alludes to the dual identity of these people; on the one hand, they had to masquerade as people different from the Matebele. The other, to cover the farthing (bosudu).

Where these people could find shelter, they used to cover their bodies and heads with blankets to prevent farthing. Since they usually ate samp, their breaking of the wind was accompanied by a loud sound which they feared would reveal their real identity.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the names of the progenitors of the Baphuthi or the Ndebeles of Miya as well as their historical experiences are reflected in their clan praise recitals.

3.2.12 Batshweneng

The Batshweneng, like the Bahlakwana, originally belonged to the Bakwena tribe. According to a legend, the barren wife of a chief, was made to conceive by physical contact with the body or skin of a baboon. It was by reason of this incident that the clan took the baboon for its name. The child born was named Motshwene, and the clan, previously the Bakwena, was then called the Batshweneng.

Their genealogy according to Ellenberger (1912 : 394) is as follows:

```
Tsholo 11
     |
  |
Mozeńe
     |
Ntsime
     |
    Ntsimana
    |
     Morure
     |
      Lekokoto
      |
        Kgamadi
```

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In the following praise recital of the Batshweneng of Kgiba,

Ke tla thella jwang,  
Ke le Motshweneng,  
Wa ha Kgiba le Kgamadi,  
Motshweneng, leleme le letho keng?  
Leleme le letho ke ho koma ditlhare!  
(99. C11/A/1 SABC)

How will I pay homage,  
Being one of the Baboon people,  
Of the house of Kgiba and Kgamadi,  
You member of the Baboon people, why is the tongue black?  
The tongue is black through swallowing herbal medicines!

the reciter owes his origin to his ancestors, Kgiba and Kgamadi, the latter being the grandson of Kgiba’s uncle, Tsulo 11 (Tsholo11). Leleme le letho ke ho koma ditlhare (The tongue is black through swallowing herbal medicines) are phrases alluding to the historical incident from which the Batshweneng clan originated.

In the following version of the Batshweneng recital, the names of the ancestors mentioned, are Kgiba and Ntsimana, son and great grandfather, respectively. The same historical incident related to the origin of this clan, is alluded to. Compare the following recital (100. C11/A/2 SABC):

Ke Motshweneng wa ha Kgiba,  
Leleme le letho,  
Leleme le letho ke ho koma ditlhare,  
Ahlama, mantswe a Mantsimane,  
Ahlama ka hanong, re bone,
Re bone moo o jelang ding tsa batho!

I am one of the Baboon people of the house of Kgiba,
The tongue is black,
The tongue is black through swallowing herbal medicines,
Open the mouth, words of the Ntsimane descendants,
Open the mouth for us to see,
For us to see where people’s possessions disappear!

From the discussion above it can be observed that the names of the Batshweneng ancestors as well as an incident associated with the establishment of the clan are reflected in their clan praise recitations.

3.3 CONCLUSION

In this preceding chapter, the focus of the discussion has been on the genealogies, the totem names (where applicable), the historical incidents, the cultural and the philosophical tribal characteristics which all form the contents of various clan praise recitals of the Basotho. Therefore, selected clans for discussion have been the following: The Bakwena, Bahlakwana, Batshweneng, Bataung, Makgwakgwaa, Batloung, Bafokeng, Basia, Makgolokwe, Bakgatla, Batlokwa and the Baphuthi.

The genealogical charts of all the clans discussed in this chapter, have been drawn from Ellenberger (1912:334 - 394) in their entirety, and in a few cases they have been purposely presented in truncated forms because of their exceptional length. The reason for the entire presentation of each genealogy is twofold; firstly, although a few names of the progenitors of each clan are mentioned in each clan praise recital, the entire genealogy forms a blood relation which the Basotho knew and strived to preserve; secondly, it helps maintain, in a stable form, the whole heritage of the historical origin of the clans, which, in the past, has been transmitted only in an unstable oral form. It should be noted that the genealogies discussed, as well as the clan praise recitals quoted, are not necessarily those of the original tribes, but some are of the subclans. The main aim was to exemplify aspects that, together, constitute the contents of the recitals.

In discussing each clan, the quoted genealogical chart was followed by an explanation of a historical incident, a cultural or philosophical idiosyncrasy associated with the establishment of a particular clan, and by an example or examples of clan praise recitals of that clan, it was shown how these are reflected in their clan praises.

In the clan praise recitals, reference to totem names takes various forms. In some cases, reference is direct, and takes the form of, for instance, Motubatsi (a-
Swearer-by-the-porcupine) and Moananong (a-Swearer-by-the-eagle). In other cases, the totem name forms part of the clan name, as in, Batshweneng (the Baboon people), Bakwena (the Crocodile people), etc. But there are also cases where the totem name is not directly referred to as such, but can be deduced from the content of the praise recital, as, for instance, those of Bahlakwana (the Hlakwana people) and Makgwakgwa (the Kgwakgwa people).

The names of the ancestors, the totem names, the historical incidents associated with the establishment of the clans, as well as the cultural and philosophical idiosyncrasies of the clans, constitute the contents of the various clan praise recitals. These were, so to say, the oral “identity documents” which the clan members carried along, and by which they identified themselves. These “documents” are produced through beautiful poetic language, easy to both commit to long term memory and to transmit from generation to generation. The Basotho have a common expression, Setjhaba se hlokang meetlo se a shwa (A nation without culture dies), where meetlo (culture), are partly reflected in their clan recitals.

These oral documents of the Basotho are used in various situations for a variety of purposes, such as, educational, social and religious purposes. These will therefore be the subject for discussion in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4
EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate and illustrate the functions of the diboko. An important starting point for introducing this part of the chapter is the children’s game called Mmantailatlane or O tswa kae? In addition we shall deal with the origin and purpose of the widely used introductory formula “Thella he...” (Recite now...) or “Ke thelelelen”’ (Why should I pay homage?)

The reason for the composition of the game was to help children master the recitation and contents of their various clan praises. The origin of the statement, Thella he! which forms a component of the game, and which literally means “to glide then!” or “to slip then!” (on the slippery mud), but which has come to mean “to recite the clan praise”, has various interpretations which are intended to form part of this discussion.

The intention with the game was educational in nature, in that the oral manner in which it was played was a vehicle through which was conveyed the culture, philosophy, history and origin of their clans. The praise recitals, either recited in full or in shortened forms, are largely used for social purposes, such as the following: for group identity, as national communal identity “document”, as lullabies for children, for greeting, for thanking, for ensuring the correct order in which the boy initiates undergo the physical circumcision operation, for weddings and funerals, for persuasion, for expression of shock, and for swearing an oath. They are also used on special occasions, such as graduation parties. These recitals are further used in religious instances when an appeal is made to the ancestors, who are believed to be in control of our destiny in life.

These recitals, though largely used in truncated forms, function as part of oral and written Sesotho compositions, and are often included in praise poems, mine workers’ chants, traditional doctors’ falls (mawa), boy initiates’ poems (dithoko tsa makolwane), as well as songs, especially choral music ones.

The educational, social and religious functions of the clan recitals, as well as their functions in various genres, will be supported with relevant examples.

4.2 The Educational function

The aim of the Basotho in exposing their children to the art of clan praise recitation was to teach them the language (Moletsane and Matšela, 1993 : 6) and how to use it in poetic compositions, and also to educate them on the history
behind the origin of their clans. This oral teaching and learning through recitation of the clan praises, was the means of transmission of their historical origin from the one generation to the next. This educational oral transmission of the Basotho’s clan recitals was encouraged and perpetuated owing to their lack of exposure to the culture of reading in the days of yore and writing which characterises the modern times. In order to facilitate this teaching and learning process and make it interesting to children, the game called Mmantililane became an important tool for this purpose.

4.2.1 Mmantililane / O tswa kae?

The intention in composing this particular art form was that the clan praises be memorised and recited verbatim. To accomplish this and to facilitate memorisation, children, from a very early age, were taught their respective clan recitals through Mmantililane or O tswa kae? (Where do you come from?) which, like all other games, is enjoyable to children. The game is played, in turns, by, at least, two children. The one asks memorised questions, and the other, responds. It is played as follows:

Question: O tswa kae? (Where do you come from?)
Answer: Ha Mmantililane (From Mmantililane’s place)
Question: Wa jaing? (What did you eat?)
Answer: Ka ja bohobe ba mabele (I ate sorghum bread)
Question: Wa futswela kange? (What did you mix your bread with?)
Answer: Ka metsi a pula (With rain water)

The one asking questions will then give a command: Thella he! (Recite or pay homage!). The one responding will then recite his/her clan praise as follows:

Ke tla thella jwang,
Ke le ...................

How will I pay homage,
Being...................... (followed by the recitation).

In this way, regular recitations become indelibly committed to memory, and are remembered throughout the children’s growing period until adulthood. The reason for the use of a game in this learning process is that the game, by virtue of its enjoyment by children, encourages and facilitates memorisation through regular performance.

Through this play which serves as a vehicle for the transmission of important information on one’s origin, culture and ancestors, the Basotho have been able to pass on this art form as well as its contents from one person to the other and
from one generation to the next. Lack of exposure to the culture of writing and reading left them no other option except oral transmission of this nature. Memory was the only history book they had recourse to, and recitation was an attempt to preserve a reasonably stable text. It is on this foundation that the popular Basotho saying was born, namely, that *Setjhaba se hlokang meetlo se a shwa!* (A nation without culture dies!).

But it should be noted that the introductory formula, namely, questions and answers, are optional in that the recital can still be performed without it.

### 4.2.2 Interpreting “Ho thella”

The origin of the expression, *ho thella* (to pay homage), which forms part of the introductory formula to the recitation of the clan praise, is explained from the following divergent viewpoints:

- Tephe Letšoara, a Mosotho from Phatshwe, in Lesotho, explains that the expression is taken from the popular children’s play, *Thelledisane* (Gliding on the mud), where children take turns to glide smoothly on the mud, and when each reaches the end of his or her turn, he/she is extolled through the recitation of his/her clan praise.

- Chief Patric Lehloenya, of Mahloenyeng, in Matsieng, Lesotho explains that the expression is associated with the situation that exists on a rainy day, when people are in danger, probably by slipping uncomfortably on the mud, and therefore need help. By analogy, the current meaning of the expression, *ho thella* (to pay homage) means that one is prayerfully appealing to one’s ancestors for help and support.

- Philip Mojaki, from Makakameila village in Lesotho, a Mosotho who knows much about the history and culture of the Basotho, avoids an explanation associated with the literal meaning of the expression, but prefers to base his explanation on the history associated with the origin of the expression *ho thella* (to pay homage) as follows:

  *Ditjhaba ka moo di neng di le ka teng, di ne di tswa ka ho fapana dibakeng tse ka thoko. Ke ho bolela hore motho a hlahe, a hlahele ho ba bang, a ithahise, a itotobatse hore ke mang.*

  The tribes as they were came from various surrounding places. It means that one should appear and distinguish oneself from others. One should show oneself and reveal who one is.

*Ho thella* thus means “to show”, “to reveal oneself”.

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Many of the Basotho I met during my field work research are agreed that the learning process of the clan praise recitals could only be effective if done through a game, since children find enjoyment in the plays. One such play is the one referred to above, which was called Thelledisane (Gliding on the mud), where children enjoy gliding smoothly on the mud or clay ground. This smooth gliding has now figuratively given rise to the smooth recitation of the praise recitals, which is the meaning popularly accepted.

The last explanation seems to be the most acceptable since the expression ho thella (to pay homage), like gliding on the mud, has to do with the smooth recitation of the clan praises in which homage is paid to the ancestors. Nevertheless, the idea expressed by Mojaki cannot be avoided since the recitation itself is an act by which a Mosotho distinguishes himself as a member of a particular clan.

4.3 Social functions

The praise recitals are applied in social interactions for various purposes, as in the following:

4.3.1 Group identity

The clan praise recitals are used for the identification of the clans. In many areas of Lesotho and the Free State, particularly in Qwaqwa, there are areas largely inhabited by particular clans, and are known by the names of such clans. Such areas are referred to as in the following examples:

In Qwaqwa:

- Kweneng (Area of the Bakwena), Namahadi district.
- Makgolokweng (Area of the Kgolokwe people), Monontsha district.
- Maphiring (Area of the Wolf people), Namahadi district.
- Tlokweng (Area of the Tlokwa people), Ttheseng district.

In Lesotho:

- Kweneng (Area of the Bakwena), Berea district.
- Makhoakhoeng (Area of the Kgwakgwa people), Butha-Buthe and Maseru districts.
- Taung (Area of the Bataung) Mohale’s Hoek.
- Taung ha Rampai (Area of the Bataung, the descendants of Rampai), Leribe district.
- Tlokweng (The Tlokwa people), Mokgotlong district.
In the North West Province:

- *Phokeng* (Area of the Bafokeng people), Rustenburg district.
- *Tlokweng* (Area of the Tlokwa people).

Groups of people who belong to the same clan, who originate from the common progenitors, and who share common clan recitals, identify themselves by living together as a group. Even if some of these people may find themselves among foreign people, the qualities of their clan determine who they are and where they belong. These qualities serve another purpose; they help people belonging to the same clan, find one another as relations. The very sense of common belonging engenders the spirit of nationalism and patriotism.

4.3.2 National, communal, identity “document”

The main reason behind the composition of the clan praise recitals was to serve as national, communal, identity “documents” whereby any member among the Basotho could be identified in terms of a clan or tribe to which he belonged. Lack of exposure of the Basotho to the culture of reading and writing necessitated the need to have various clan recitals as oral identity “documents”. This is a national heritage of all the clans or tribes that constitute the entire Basotho nation.

In the past, it was a common practice that people, on their journey, would arrive at a village, with the intention of spending the night there. The first thing they would do before the village chief, would be to identify themselves by the recital of their respective clans. Many a time this would help them find their blood relatives among members of the village people. Even during times of war, many would scatter, would find themselves among the foreign clans, and would lose contact with members of their own families. The clan praise recitals were therefore effective means through which they happened to find their own families or relatives.

This oral identity “document” also served to help the Basotho guard against the possibility of unwanted intermariage between people whose blood relation was too close, as this was believed to be the cause of adverse physical or mental deformities in children born out of such marriages.

The disintegration of the stable clan communities in Lesotho, which was caused by the Basotho men going to the mining industries in the Republic of South Africa, did not minimise the importance of the clan praise recitals, but rather encouraged it. The spirit of nationalism was maintained through the singing of their national anthem. Their unity was preserved despite their belonging to different clans and families.
The tendency of the Basotho to associate themselves with their ancestors, as confirmed by the contents of their praise recitals, has influenced the way they talk when they refer to their villages of residence. They usually identify themselves by associating themselves with their residential places as well as their village chiefs, to whom they pledge allegiance, as in the following examples:

Ke ahlile Kolo, ha Mohlalefi!
I reside at Kolo, at Mohlalefi’s place!

Ke theoha Hleoheng, ke buswa ke Motsarapane!
I come down from Hleoheng, and I am under chief Motsarapane!

Ke ahlile Diqobong, ha morena Toka!
I reside at Diqobong, at chief Toka’s place!

Ke ahlile Masikadisiu, ha morena Thaabe Matela!
I reside at Masikadisiu, at chief Thaabe Matela’s place!

Ke ahlile Teyateyaneng, ha MmaMathe! (Morena ke mosadi)  
I reside at Teyateyaneng, at MmaMathe’s! (Chiefliness)

The above discussion confirms the view that the clan praise recitals, as carriers of the clans’ common ancestors, are orally used for identification purposes as national, communal, identity “documents”.

4.3.3 Children

The importance the Basotho attach to the learning and memorising the clan praise recitals by their children is attributed to the need to inculcate the values of the community. The following Bakwena recital by ‘Manthofoela Mopeli, from Morija, substantiates this fact:

Ke thelleng,  
Ke le Motebang wa Napo a Mosito,  
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,  
Batho ba sa jeng sengwathwa,  
Ba jang polokwe kaofela,  
Ba jang ha meriti ho thea,  
Ho thea e menyane ya diotlwana!  
(Manthofoela Mopeli, Morija. No.23. C1/A/23)

Why should I pay homage,  
Being a descendant of Motebang, son of Napo, son of Mosito,  
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,  
People who do not eat a piece of bread,
Who eat the whole round bread,  
Who eat when the shadows fall,  
When they fall, the small shadows of the courtyards!

Members of this clan refer to themselves as *Maila-ho-ngwathelwa* (Those who abstain from being given food). They were famous for their pride in not eating food prepared the previous day. For this reason, they avoided eating food given by those who were not of their clan, as they could not ascertain whether or not it was prepared the previous day. The fact that they had food in abundance, and were not dependent on sharing their food with others, is conveyed by the extract,

*Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,*  
*Batho ba sa jeng sengwathwa,*  
*Ba jang polokwe kaofela*

Abstainers-from-being-given-food,  
People who do not eat a piece of bread,  
Who eat the whole round bread.

It was also their culture to have their evening meals at or just after midday, for they say,

*Ba jang ha meriti ho thea,*  
*Ho thea e menyenyane ya diotiwna,*

Who eat when the shadows fall,  
When they fall, the small shadows of the courtyards!

After midday, the shadows of the courtyards are short, and become longer as the sun approaches sunset. The early meals convey not only the idea of abundance of food among the Bakwena, but also, by extension, an important lesson of doing things early enough. This tribal characteristic conveys the same message as the proverb, "The early bird catches the worm". In this way, the clan praise recitals served to inculcate upon the minds of the children the values of the clan community.

The following extract from the clan recital of the Makgwakgwa is another example of the inculcation of the clan community's values upon the children:

*Mahlabo-kgoho-ka-lemao,*  
*A e ise ha Mokgolwane kgotla,*  
*Ngwana beng a e je a e halala,*  
*A re "Boela hape o yo hlabo, motho wa Wetsi",*  
*Baphuthing, Maaparanku!*

('Mamakhala Makalo, Kholokoe. No.43. C1/B/20)
Piercers-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin,
And take it to Mokgolane at the gate,
The master’s child would eat it despisingly,
And would say "Go back and slaughter, you descendant of Wetsi",
People of the duiker, Wearers-of-the-sheepskin!

Tradition (Ellenberger 1912 : 114) relates that the Makgolokwe, by virtue of their connection with the Barolong through the Bakhutla, were particular in the matter of eating the first-fruits, the custom of the senior to taste them first. It was the prerogative of the Makgolokwe to be the first to eat the first-fruits of the new year, and any action contrary to this, by any tribe, other than the Makgolokwe, would be a serious breach of national etiquette. This precedence, also applicable through the chief, is reflected in their clan praise recitals, and by implication, conveys a lesson that juniors should respect their seniors. This value of respect, which characterised the Makgolokwe, was passed on to their children through the praise recitals of their clan.

Another and almost similar purpose for which the children were expected to know their clan praise recitals, was the belief that the attributes of the totems were bestowed upon them, and the expectation that the children will strive to live up to such attributes. In the following lines of the Bataung clan praise recital, the characteristics of the lion are believed to have been bestowed upon members of this clan, namely, that of bravery and of not perishing easily in the face of death:

\begin{quote}
\textit{E tla re mohla a tla shwa,}
\textit{A kgaolwe hloho,}
\textit{A sale a nyeketha ka mahetlana,}
\textit{Ka pakana tsa melala,}
\textit{Wa mmakatisailo,}
\textit{Tau ha e qalwe seforong,}
\textit{E bolaya motho!} (Raletšabisa Motale, Butha-Buthe.No.104. C12/A4)
\end{quote}

The day when he will be about to die,
He will be beheaded,
And remain hanging by the small shoulders,
Through the middle parts of the neck,
Of mother-increase-the-family,
A lion is not attacked at a stronghold,
It kills a person!

Members of this clan believe they are like a lion which should not be attacked at its stronghold because they will fight a heroic battle and kill their enemies. They believe they are tough people who do not die easily, and the only way in which one can ensure that they are dead, is by beheading them. Perhaps the same
sentiment is echoed by Shakespeare in his *Julius Caesar* (1986: 43), where the proud Julius Caesar retorts:

Caesar shall forth: the things that threaten’d me ne’er look’d but on my back; when they shall see the face of Caesar, they are vanished.

Bravery, invincibility and toughness are but some of the qualities the Bataung children are expected to have. Regular recitations of their clan praise help revive and rekindle these qualities. Compare the recitation of the Bakgatla, by Kemuel Ntšihlele, from Morija, in which members of the clan associate themselves with the attributes of an eagle, their totem (No.53. C2/A/1).

The above explanations and examples show that the clan praise recitals serve the purpose of inculcating the values of the communities as well as the qualities of the totem animals associated with the particular clans.

### 4.3.4 Greetings

Among the Basotho, greetings as an expression of appreciation are commonly conveyed through the use of various truncated forms associated with the clan praise recitals, as in the following examples:

- Where reference is made to the totem name:

  *Dumela, Kebu!*

  I greet you, *Hippopotamus!*

  In this greeting, the addressee is addressed as such because he belongs to the clan whose members venerate the hippopotamus.

- Where reference is made to the ancestors and the totem names:

  *Ke a o dumedis, Mosia! Motubatsi!*

  I greet you, a descendant of *Mosia! Swearer-by-the-porcupine!*

  In this type of greeting, *Mosia* and *porcupine* refer respectively to the clan ancestor and the totem.

- Where reference is made to tribal characteristic:

  *Motho wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,*
Di-se-nya-di-omela-mokgwabo-tlunng!

One of those Take-out-the-shield-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut!

In this type of greeting, allusion is to the bravery and the warlike character of the Basia clan members who day-in and day-out used to engage in battles and whose shields used to drip blood of their enemies.

• Where reference is made by means of a metaphor:

Ahe, Sebata!

I greet you, the wild Beast!

The metaphor, Sebata (the wild Beast), is used when the addressee avoids using the totem name, Tau (the Lion). This carnivorous beast suggests a lion, a totem animal venerated and associated with the Bataung (the Lion people).

• With reference to a compound name which includes the totem name of the clan members:

Dumela, Moananong!

I greet you, Swearer-by-the-eagle!

The truncated form, as used above, is usually applied in instances where both the addressee is close friends or closely related, or where knowledge of the addressee's clan praise recital is presupposed.

• The entire recital as an introduction:

In addressing an audience, the speaker may use the entire clan praise recital as an introductory technique whereby he greets an audience and introduces himself before he continues with his speech. This technique is similar to the one commonly used as an introduction in the poetry of the mine workers' chants (Ditsamayanaha), as in Mokitimi (1998 : 55),

\[
\text{Banna, tholang lerata ke le jwetse nnete,}
\text{Ke Tshweu-Sootho ya boBojwalo le Seenene,}
\text{Seenene e motsho Mpesela....}
\]

Gentlemen, stop the noise for me to tell you the truth,
I'm White-Brown of the family of Bojwalo and Seenene,
The black Seenene, Mpesela...

where self-introduction by the poet (reciter) is followed by more elaborate information in poetical form. In like manner, a speaker may address an audience by first introducing himself/herself by way of reciting the clan praise. This is an uncommon technique whereby the speaker captures the attention of his audience. This can be exemplified as,

Ke a le dumedisa setjhaba sa Moshoeshoe! Ya buang le lona mona ke,

Mohlakwana wa ha Mantsane,
Lebewana la boKadi
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,
Ya jang ha ho thea meriti,
Ho thea e menyane ya diotlwana!.
(Lebohang Leseli, Kolo. No.26 C1/B/26).

I greet you, members of Moshoeshoe’s nation! He who addresses you here is,

A Hlakwana descendant of the house of Ntsane people,
The true one of the family of Kadi,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
One who does not eat a small piece of yesterday’s bread,
Who eats when the shadows fall,
The shadows fall, the small ones of the courtyard!...

In some cases, especially where knowledge of the whole praise recital is presupposed, the self-introduction may be done by quoting one or more lines from the clan praise recital, as in,

Ke a le dumedisa mabewana a Moshoeshoe. Ya buang le lona ke,

Ke le Lekgwagwagwa la Sedimo nthole..(Phillip Mojaki, Makakamela. C1/A/13)

I greet you, the true ones of Moshoeshoe. One addressing you is,

I am a Kgwa kgwa of Sedimo, take-off-my-load...

From the above discussion, it can be observed that greeting, as used in social interaction, employs various forms of truncations derived from clan praise recitals, and sometimes the entire clan praise or parts thereof as a technique of capturing the attention of the audience.
Thanksgiving

Thanking, as social expression of appreciation also takes place through the usage of various forms associated with the Basotho clan praise recitals, as in the following examples:

- Where reference is to the clan name:

  Ke a o leboa, Mokwena!

  I thank you, Mokwena (member of the Crocodile people!)

In this case, the recital as a whole is not used, but replaced by the clan name which can also be in the plural form, as in,

  Re a leboa, Bakwena!

  We thank you, the Bakwena! (You of the Crocodile people!)

- Where reference is to the clan member in association with the totem name, as in,

  Re a o leboa, Motubatsi!

  We thank you, Swearer-by-the-porcupine!

- Where the clan name has reference to the ancestors, as in,

  Re kopane moketeng ona ho tla leboa Bataung!

  At this feast we have come to pay homage to the Bataung!

In this context, the name, Bataung, refers to the ancestors of the Bataung (The Lion people). The feast, mokete wa badimo (the feast in honour of the ancestors), is celebrated by the Basotho to thank their ancestors for the blessings received, since they believe that the ancestors keep a constant eye over their lives, and are a source of their blessings.

Among the Basotho, the clan names and the totem names may be used in the social act of thanksgiving.
4.3.6 Initiation

Initiation is one of the most ancient and most important cultural rites among the Basotho. Its significance lies primarily in its function as a *rite de passage*, marking and effecting the transition from adolescence to adulthood. This is applicable, not only to young males, but to young females as well.

Since male initiates belong to various clans, these clans, and by extension, their clan recitals, are important during the performance of the tribal circumcision, which is done strictly according to the order of seniority of the clans. Says Ashton (1952: 48):

The boys follow one another in regular order, according to their genealogical and clan seniority.

On how the order is determined, Chadwick (1978: 16) explains,

This order is determined not according to social importance which distinguishes the chief and advisers from the common people, but according to the correct primogeniture, which assigns to each his rank among the people and also among the various clans. It is thus that the people of the dew, or BAFOKENG, come before members of other tribes, including those of chiefs, because the BAFOKENG are reputed to be the oldest tribe of all those in Basutoland.

Matela Matobakele, from Fobane, in the district of Leribe, a Mosotho who knows much about the culture and history of the Basotho, adds that the initiates are expected to perform their clan praise recitals before the performance of circumcision takes place, because it is through these recitals that the order of seniority of the clans can be determined with exactitude. Failure to do this, it is believed, may result in physical deformities which should be avoided at all costs.

It is further interesting to note that this kind of clan precedence does not only apply to initiation ceremonies, but also to the throwing of the soil into the grave during funeral ceremonies and other family rites, such as, *ho phatsa* (incision).

From the above discussion, it can be observed that the circumcision operation among the Basotho, is performed according to the seniority of the clans as well as their clan praise recitals.
4.3.7 Consoling

An act of consoling is more often than not accompanied by the use of a clan name, as in,

*MoKgolokwe, tshediseha hle!*

*Kgolokwe, please take heart!*

where *MoKgolokwe* (A Kgolokwe) is a clan name referring to a single member. The clan name can also be used in the plural form, as in,

*Makgolokwe, tshedisehang hle!*

*The Kgolokwe people, please take heart!*

The name of the ancestor from whom the clan members originated, may form part of the appellation and replace the clan name, as in,

*Batho ba ha Wetsi, tshedisehang hle!*

*The descendants of Wetsi, please take heart!*

where *Batho ba ha Wetsi* (The descendants of Wetsi) replaces *Makgolokwe* (The Kgolokwe people).

To avoid monotony, the totem name may also replace the clan name, as in,

*Dikubu, ithakoleng meokgo hle!*

*Hippopotamuses, wipe off your tears please!*

where *Dikubu* (Hippopotamuses) is used as a metaphor owing to its association with *Bakubung* (The Hippopotamus people).

Clan members may also be referred to in terms of the totem by which they swear, as in,

*Baananong, ithakoleng meokgo hle!*

*Swearers-by-the-eagle, wipe off your tears please!*

where *Baananong* (Swearers-by-the-eagle) means “Those who swear by the eagle” or “Those whose totem is the eagle”.

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Since the Basotho attach great honour to their origin, their ancestors, their totem names as well as their clan names, the use of such appellations as address names during an act of consoling, have great significance and are highly appreciated.

4.3.8 Wedding

During wedding ceremonies, the performance of clan praise recitals is sometimes used to introduce the couple to the audience, as in the following example:

_Ho baeti bohle ba bokaneng mona, re rata ho le tsebisa monyadi/monyaduwa, e leng,

_Motebang wa Napo a Mosito,  
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,  
Batho ba sa jeng sengwathwa,  
Ba jang polokwe kaofela,  
Ba jang ha meriti ho thea,  
Ho thea e menyane ya diotlwana!

(Manthofoela Mopeli, Morija. No. 23 C1/A/23).

To all the guests gathered here, we want to introduce to you the groom/bride who is,

A descendant of Motebang, son of Napo, son of Mosito,  
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,  
People who do not eat a piece of bread,  
Who eat the whole round bread,  
Who eat when the shadows fall,  
When they fall, those small ones of the courtyards!

The poetic introduction of this nature is usually welcomed with ululations from the audience. This technique may have a further three-fold significance, namely, to maintain a link with the ancestors, to inform them about the ceremony, and to call upon their blessings on the marrying couple.

The recitation of the clan praise recitals among the Basotho of old was an important tribal tool whereby marriage between people who are too closely related through blood, could be prevented. Such marriages were avoided, since it was feared and believed that children born out of such marriages would have mental and physical deformities.
4.3.9 Persuasion

Among the Basotho, an act of persuasion whereby one is made to change his/her attitude towards something, entails the use of various forms of address names pertaining to the clans or clan praise recitals, as in,

_Thusa hle, Motaung, re a o kopa!

Please, help us, Member of the Lion people, we beseech you!

where _Motaung_ (Member of the Lion people) as a clan name is used as an address name. The choice of a clan name in this case expresses the sentiment of common belonging to the same clan, and therefore an expectation that the addressee will do as requested.

Persuasion can also include reference to the ancestor name, as in,

_Motho wa Hlalele, re thuse hle!

Descendant of Hlalele, please help us!

where _Hlalele_ is the _Bataung_ ancestor (The ancestor of the Lion people) from whom the addressee believes to have originated. Since it is expected that the addressee will respect his progenitor, it is therefore expected that the request which is made through the ancestor, will be honoured. This is, inter alia, one of the most effective ways of persuasion.

An act of persuasion may include the use of a totem name, as in,

_Kwena, tlohela ho lwantsha mosadi wa hao, hle!

Crocodile, please stop fighting your wife!

where _Kwena_ (Crocodile) is a totem name substituted for the clan name, _Mokwena_ (Member of the Crocodile people). This metaphorical use of the totem name is an effective means of persuasion, as it is based on the addressee’s high respect for the totem he/she swears by.

The totem name can also form part of a compound noun, such as,

_Moanakwena_

a-Swearer-by-the-crocodile!
which means “One who swears by the totem, crocodile”.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that persuasion and the intensification of the appeal among the Basotho, is done through the use of various address names associated with the clan names, the totem names and the clan praise recitals.

4.3.10 Funerals

The clan praise recitals also form part of funeral ceremonies among the Basotho. Letšoara Tšephe, a resident of Molokong, the district of Phatšoe, in Lesotho, gives verbal information that during the funeral ceremony, the clan praise of the deceased is recited as an indication that the deceased is returning to the ancestors from whom he originated, and that the deceased is also requested to go and build the village (ho aha motse) in the world beyond the grave, on behalf of those remaining behind. This is performed as in the following example:

Enwa ya tsamayang, ya yang lefatsheng le letjha, mose ho lebitla, ke,

  Motaung,
   Wa Nthethe a Morapedi,
   Ngwana tshesanankope,
   E tla re mohla a tla shwa,
   A kgaolwe hloho,
   A sale a nyeketha ka mahetlana,
   Ka pakana tsa melala,
   Wa mmakatisa leloko,
   Tau ha e qalwe seforong,
   E bolaya motho!
   (Raletšabisa Motale, Butha-Buthe, No.104. C12/A/4)

Tsamaya, Sebata! O re ahele motse!

He who now departs to the new world beyond the grave, is,

One of the Lion people,
Of Nthethe, son of Morapedi,
Child of small-grain-basket-embrace-me,
Who, when he will be about to die,
He will be beheaded,
And remain moving small shoulders,
Through the middle parts of the neck,
Of mother-increase-the-family,
A lion is not attacked at a stronghold,
It kills a person!

Depart, you the Beast! Build a village for us!

Reference to the building of the village is based on the Basotho’s belief that the deceased is still going to plough the fields, build houses, and engage in the battles in the world beyond the grave. This is why, especially in the past, the body was buried together with the battle armour (spear and shield), snuff to smoke, and seeds to sow, etc.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the clan praise recitals form part of the funeral ceremonies of the Basotho.

### 4.3.11 Expression of shock

Expressions conveying shock usually entail the use of clan names which may refer to members of the clan or the ancestors as the progenitors of the clan, the totem names and the names of the ancestors as part of the expressions referring to the clan members. These can be exemplified as in the following:

When sudden death strikes, the message may be received through the following expression containing the clan name:

\[ \text{Jo nna! Bakwena!} \]

Alas! The \textbf{Bakwena!} (The Crocodile people!)

\textit{Bakwena} is the clan name used as part of the expression conveying shock. The expression conveys a sentiment of total devastation and helplessness sustained by all who belong to the clan. In similar situations, the ancestors of the clan may be addressed through the clan name, as in,

\[ \text{Bafokeng, hobaneng le re furalla tjena?} \]

\textbf{The Bafokeng ancestors}, why do you turn your backs against us in this way?

In this case, the \textit{Bafokeng} refers to the ancestors from whom the clan believes to have descended, and from whom the welfare of the clan depends. The sudden striking of death despite the existence of the ancestors as guardians over their lives, leaves them no other option than to turn to them for answers.

In situations of great shock, family members may be addressed through their totem name, as in,
Batubatsi, ha ho le tje, le tla etsa jwang?

People of the porcupine, when the situation is like this, what are you going to do?

Batubatsi (People of the porcupine) is the address name, meaning “Those who swear by the porcupine” or “Those whose totem is the porcupine”.

An expression entailing the clan ancestor name may replace the clan name, as in,

Batho ba Hlalele, hobaneng le tshohi le hakana?

Descendants of Hlalele, why are you so afraid?

Hlalele, in the expression, Batho ba Hlalele (The descendants of Hlalele), is the name of the progenitor of the Bataung (The Lion people), who are called Batho ba Hlalele.

The clan members may be addressed through the totem animal, which may replace the clan name, as in,

Dikwena, se tshoheng hle!

Crocodiles, be not afraid!

The Bakwena (The Crocodile people) are addressed as Dikwena (The Crocodiles), on account of their totem animal.

From the above, it may be concluded that the expressions of shock include the use of clan names, totem animals, and ancestor names.

4.3.12 Swearing an oath

As a social act, swearing an oath, is a declaration confirming the truth of the statement made. Among the Basotho, this act may take place either in ordinary social encounter or at the kgotla (the traditional court), where the chief and his advisors conduct cases. At such hearings, people usually swear the oaths by appealing to their ancestors, as in,

Ka Bakwena ba ntswetseng, ha ke a utswa kgomo ya monna enwa!

Through the Crocodile people who begot me, I have not stolen this man’s cow!
In this context, the Bakwena (the Crocodile people) refers to one’s parents, who are no more alive, and who are therefore one’s ancestors, the progenitors of one’s clan. The expression *Ka Bakwena ba tswetseng* (Through the Bakwena who begot me) conveys an idea of close association with the ancestors and of appealing to them to bear witness to the truth of the statement made. The statement accompanied by this expression is likely to be accepted as true because the ancestors are highly honoured, and any untruthful statement made on their behalf is believed to incur their displeasure and misfortune.

The expression can take the truncated form, and the clan name changed, as in,

*Ka Bataung, ha ke a utswa kgomo ya monna enwa!*

I swear by the Lion people that I have not stolen this man’s cow!

where *Bataung* (the Lion people) may refer either to the clan or the ancestors of the clan to whom an appeal is made to bear witness in what is being said.

One of the differences between the modern court of law and the Basotho traditional court is that whilst in the former, swearing of an oath is made through an appeal to God, in the latter, it is through an appeal to the ancestors.

Swearing an oath may also take place in ordinary social encounters where the truth of the statement is confirmed, as in,

*Ka Batlokwa, ke a falla motseng ona o tletseng dithokolosi!*

Swearing by the Tlokwa people, I am leaving this village full of the ghosts!

where the phrase *Ka Batlokwa* (Swearing by the Tlokwa people) expresses an act of swearing through the Batlokwa progenitors through whom the decision to leave the ghostly village is irreversible. Reference to the ancestors is intended to strengthen the decision, to make the ancestors part of it, and to call upon their support and blessing.

### 4.3.13 Special occasions

Among the Basotho, the clan names, the clan praise recitals, either in full or in truncated forms, may be used during some of their special occasions, such as graduation parties, farewell parties, *mokete wa ngwana ha a tswa lehlakeng* (the party held when a baby gets out of the reed, that is, when it has reached a stage where people are allowed to see it), *mokete wa badimo* (the party held in honour of the ancestors), etc. The clan names and the clan praise recitals are used during the course of these occasions as follows:
Graduation parties

The completion of a university degree, among the Basotho, is usually followed by a celebration in the form of a party at which the celebrant is honoured by the recitation of his/her clan praise, as in the following example:

Mohale enwa wa kajeno, ke mang?
Ke motho wa ha Tshele,
Motho wa Malekotwana,
Motho wa Mammulane a Motlatla,
Ya sa nameleeng fatshe,
Ya namelang mohaswaneng wa kobo,
Ya hlabang phiyo ka lemao,
A e ise moreneng,
A re: Morena, bona, ke hlabile! (Seabata Matla, Bohlokong.No.77. C5/A/8)

This present hero, who is s/he?

S/he is a descendant of the family of Tshele,
A descendant of the Lekotwana,
A descendant of Mmulane, son of Motlatla,
Who does not spread out legs on the ground,
Who spreads out legs on an old piece of blanket,
Who pierces a kidney with a pin,
And takes it to the chief,
Saying "Look, chief, I have slaughtered!"

This praise recitation may be followed by the exhortation,

Mofokeng, o lwanne ntwa ya sebele. O nne o e lwane ho ya pele!

You of the Bafokeng, you have fought a real battle. Keep it up!

The recitation is not only aimed at distinguishing the celebrant, may also be a way of paying homage to the celebrant's ancestors to whom the success achieved is attributed.

In honouring the celebrant, the truncated form of the clan praise recital may also be used, as in,

Ke motho wa ha Tshele,
Motho wa Malekotwana,
Motho wa Mammulane a Motlatla...
(Seabata Matla, Bohlokon. No.77. C5/A/8)

He/She is a descendant of the family of Tshele,
A descendant of the Lekotswana,
A descendant of Mmulane, son of Motlatla...

in which case are quoted only the first few lines which refer to the names of the ancestors.

- the Pitiki party

The *pitiki* party is held a few weeks after the birth of a baby, to thank the women who helped the mother during the period of confinement. This period is called *nako ya ngwana ka lehlakeng* (the time of the baby in the reed) because during this time, the reed placed in the upright position on the roof of the house indicates the birth of a baby in that house, and that people are not allowed to enter it.

During the *pitiki* party, the baby is introduced through the recitation of its clan praise, as in the following example:

*Lesea lena ke,*

*Motho wa ha Mahwete Komane,*
*Ke motho wa bodiba bo botala ha bo okamelwe,*
*Ekare ha o bo okamela,*
*O ka wela ka mahlwana le ditsejana,*
*Kubu hohomosa marete re bone,*
*Kubu ha o e aoe mo phatleng,*
*Ha o e aoe mo phatleng, o ka shwa,*
*Kubu e dula metsing,*
*Kubu ha e bonwe!* (*Mateleko Masoetsa, Kgolokwe. No.45. C1/B/22*)

This baby is,

A descendant of the house of Hwete, son of Komane,
A descendant of the-green-abyss-should-not-be-towered-over,
If you can tower over it,
You can fall in with small eyes and small ears,
Hippopotamus, enlarge your testicles for us to see,
Hippopotamus, you do not swear it on the forehead,
If you swear it on the forehead, you can die,
The hippopotamus lives in the water,
The hippopotamus cannot be seen!

The recitation is intended to pay homage to the ancestors of the clan to which the
baby belongs. If the baby is a boy, the recitation may be followed by the heroic expression commonly applied to the Basotho warriors, as in,

Ngwana enwa ke,
*Pholo ya letlaka,*
*Kabelwa manong!*

This child is,
*An ox abandoned to the vultures,*
*One apportioned to the eagles!*

The intention here is a wish and an expectation that the baby will grow up to be a warrior in the battle-fields.

If the baby is a girl, the recitation is followed by the expression such as,

*O hole, o be mosadi, o tle o kgelle bonkgono metsi!*

Grow up, be a woman, and fetch water for your grandmothers!

- **Farewell parties**

The modern farewell parties held in honour of people who are retiring, are characterised by farewell statements in which reference to the clan name is made, as in,

*Phomola ka kgotso, wena mothe wa Matebeleng!*

Go on retirement in peace, you from the Ndebele people!

This farewell statement may be followed by the clan praise recital, as in,

*(Wena) Letebele la ha Miya,*
*La ha Sekelemane,*
*Kobo di pedi, ngwana Kgojane,*
*Tsa bola hloho,*
*Tsa bola bokalakata,*
*E ngwe ke ya ho apesa boroko,*
*E ngwe ke ya ho apesa bosudu!*
*(Teboho Makwineng, Mashaeng.No.108. C12/A/8)*

You, Ndebele of the house of Miya,
Of the house of Sekelemane,
Blankets are two, child of Kgojane,
They were rotten on the head,
They were rotten on the separated head from the neck,
One is meant for sleeping,
The other for covering farting!
The aim with the recitation is to pay tribute and homage to the ancestors for their role in preserving the celebrant. This recitation may be performed amid ululations from those attending.

Therefore among the Basotho, the clan praise recitals usually accompany special occasions, such as graduation, *pitiki* (party after mother’s confinement period) and farewell parties.

### 4.4 The religious usage of clan praises

The Basotho view the ancestors as responsible for guiding their everyday lives, so that every success or misfortune is attributed to them. For this reason, the *mokete wa badimo* (the feast in honour of the ancestors) is celebrated to thank them for a particular advancement achieved or to make requests for their interposition in the misfortunes that happen within the family. During the feast, a clay pot containing the Basotho home brew beer is placed in the open place, outside the house, and people attending the feast drink from it or smoke the snuff or tobacco also placed next to the beer pot. This is followed by the eating of meat prepared for the ancestors of the household. A special prayer is then addressed to the ancestors, to thank them for the blessings received. These may include the increase in the number of their cattle, the growth of the crops on the fields, etc. A special prayer may also be intended to appease them over the many misfortunes that they have experienced, such as, many losses sustained through deaths of the family members, the incurable illness or disease a family member has long been suffering from, or a misfortune of any kind. The following by Guma (1966: 18) is an example of a prayer addressed to the ancestors:

*Modimo a ko utlwe re a rapela:*
*Medimo e metjha, rapelang wa kgale,*
*Rapelang Tlatlamatjholo rammoloki,*
*Rammoloki diatla di maroba,*
*D atla di marothodi a pula,*
*Diatla di madi, di madi ke dipula,*
*Atla tsa hao di kgathetse ke ho re bopa.*

*Se rapeleng rona,*
*Le rapele Modimo*
*Rammoloki diatla di maroba.*

God please listen to our prayer for we beseech you:
Young gods, pray the God of old,
Pray Tlatlamatjholo, the preserver,
The preserver whose arms have holes,
The arms are full of rain drops,
The arms are dripping blood, they are dripping blood through rains,
Your arms are tired through creating us.

Do not pray us,
Pray God
The preserver, the arms have holes.

Medimo e met'ha (The young gods) refers to the ancestors, (especially those who are less remote) through whom the prayer is addressed to the invisible God of old, referred to as Tlatlamatjholo, the Preserver of life, the Giver of rains, and the everlasting Creator of mankind. In the next short stanza, it is emphasized that the prayer should be directed to God, the Preserver, and not to the ancestors.

4.5 Functions in other oral compositions

Among the Basotho, the clan praises function as part of oral compositions, such as, praise poems, mine workers' chants, diviners' falls (mawa), boy initiates' poems (dithoko tsə makolwane) and songs, especially choral music. These functions may be as in the following:

4.5.1 Praise poems

An example of a clan praise that functions as part of a praise poem is the following:

A iphafa a itolokisa mohlang oo,
A re: “Ke nna Moshoeshoe Moshwashwaila,
Wa ha Rakadi Lebeola,
Le beotseng Ramonaheng ditedu.”
Hola lebewana o thuthuhe Mokwena
Letlama la pelo ya Peete le Mokgatjhane, (Moiloa 1992 : 11)

He praised himself and clarified who he was on that day,
And said: “I am Moshoeshoe, Barber,
Of Rakadi, Shaver,
Who has skinned off Ramonaheng's beard.”
Long live, the great one! Keep growing, you Crocodile!
Binder of the heart of Peete and Mokgatjhane,

Although the above clan praise (in bold) appears in the quoted form, it is a
truncated form because it is not quoted in full as in the following clan praise by Matšela and Moletsane (1993: 23):

    Motho oa Kali,
    Lebeola le beotseng Ramonaheng litelu,
    La mo re shoee, shoee, shoee, ka lehare!

Descendant of Kali,
Shaver who has skinned off Ramonaheng's beard,
And smoothly cut it off with a razor blade!

The last line of the clan praise has been omitted in the above quoted clan praise in which Ke nna Moshoeshoe Moshwashwaila (I am Moshoeshoe, Barber) is a mere interpolation by the composer, and the name, Kadi, has been changed to Rakadi perhaps because the praise names of warriors are usually preceded by the prefix Ra-, as in Ramahatsi (Overrunner) and Ramahlakise (Dancer-of-the-war-dance) in Kunene (1971: 26).

The quoted clan praise alludes to the skilful manner in which Moshoeshoe successfully executed the cattle-raid on Ramonaheng, his neighbouring chief. It is from this incident that he acquired the name Moshoeshoe (the Barber). The easy sliding of a razor blade that shaved off Ramonaheng’s beard suggests the ease with which Moshoeshoe captured his cattle.

In a praise poem composed in honour of the kwena (the crocodile) and entitled Kwena (Crocodile), the first stanza is largely composed of phrases taken from the introductory formula usually preceding the recitation of the diboko (the recitations). The stanza also makes reference to a particular clan name, namely, Kwena ya ba ha Modibedi (Crocodile of the descendants of Modibedi). These are used as in the following example by Masiea (1981:22):

    Ha Mmantilatilane ke se ke tswa teng,
    Ke se ke futswetse ka metsi a pula,
    Emph kwena bodibeng ha e thelle,
    E thelleleng kwena ya ba ha Modibedi,
    E le maro ho ngaparela mafika bolele?

    I already come from Mmantilatilane’s place,
    I have mixed my bread with rain water,
    But the crocodile in the abyss does not slip,
    Why should it pay homage, the crocodile of the house of Modibedi,
    Having long nails to seize the rocks in the fresh water algae?

The first two lines constitute the answers to the questions usually asked in the introductory formula preceding the recitations (See the formula fully explained
under point 4.2.1 of this chapter). *E thelleleng kwena ya ba ha Modibedi* (Why should it pay homage, the crocodile of the house of Modibedi) in the fourth line, conveys the importance of the crocodile among members of the house of Modibedi, namely, the fact that it is the their totem by which they swear. This line also constitutes the actual introductory line of the clan praise recital of the Bakwena, that of the house of Modibedi, in particular. Compare the following clan recital:

*Mokwena wa ha Modibedi*
*Motho wa Mamphutlane a Makeka,*
*Motho wa bonkoriba le Tsotelo,*
*Motho wa ha Mamahlosi a Nakedi,*
*Ere a eja, a kgore,*
*Ke re ke lekgukgunsthatshwana,*
*A yo le ja le mosadi wa hae,*
*A yo le ja le Mmamodiehi,*
*Motho wa boMothibe le Mmalane!*
(Marumo Mosoeunyana, Leribe. No. 3 C1/A/3)

One of the Crocodile people of Modibedi
One of the family of Mphutlane, son of Makeka,
One of the family of Nkoriba and Tsotelo,
One of the house of Mahlosi, son of Nakedi,
Who, whilst eating, becomes satisfied,
I say I am the-hider-away-of-the-black-one,
Who goes to eat it with his wife,
Who goes to eat it with mother Modiehi,
One of the family of Mothibe and Mmalane!

4.5.2 Mine workers’ chants (Ditsamayanaha poetry)

In the poetry of the mine workers (*Ditsamayanaha*), the clan praises may be used as part of their compositions. This may be exemplified as in the following example:

*Basotho matsoha ka meso,*
*Majara marapo,*
*Manka teu le ditoropo,*
*Manka sephadi le poana*
*Ba thro ba habo kwete Mohlomi;*
*Ba habo kwete Monaheng*
*Ba habo Nkopane..........*  (Moletsane, 1983: 43)

The Basotho, the early birds,
The strap carriers,
Carriers of the riem and the ox straps,
Carriers of the whips and the screw - hammers
Descendants of the family of the great Mohlomi;
Those of the family of the great Monaheng
Those of the family of Nkopane...........

In this extract, the Basotho are described as hardworking people who wake up early, and who are, therefore, distinguished by their carrying the riems (ropes) used for leading the front oxen, the straps for inspanning the oxen to the yoke, the whips and the screw - hammers. They are further described, not in terms of the clans to which they belong, but in terms of their great ancestors from whom the Bakwena (the Crocodile people), are believed to have originated. These ancestors are mentioned as Mohlomi, Monaheng and Nkopane who are mentioned in order to draw attention to the fact that the Basotho nation originates from various ancestors.

There are various Bakwena clan praises in which the three names are mentioned, such as in the following by Selloane Nkhabu, from Qwaqwa.(No.79 C5/A/10):

*Mokwena wa ha Monaheng,*
*Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,*
*Motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,*
*Ha e tla re ha a eja ho thehe meriti,*
*E menyane ya diotlwana,*
*Ke motho wa Nkopane le Mohlomi,*
*Ke motho wa ha Monaheng,*
*Ke motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,*
*Ke Mokwena wa ha Monaheng!*

One of the Crocodile people of Monaheng,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
One who does not eat yesterday’s bread,
One who eats when the shadows fall,
Those small ones of the courtyards,
I am a descendant of Nkopane and Mohlomi.
I am a descendant of the house of Monaheng.
I am one who does not eat a piece of yesterday’s bread,
I am one of the Crocodile people of the house of Monaheng!

In the next example of thoko ya setsamayanaha (a mine worker’s chant), the composer introduces the chart by first reciting his clan praise. This is done in a unique way, peculiar to his style, because the whole chant is here and there interspersed with expressions alluding to his clan praise recital as well as the
incidents associated with the historical origin of his clan, the Batloung.

The chant by Lepekola Motloung, from Kgubetswana (No.57 C3/A/4), is introduced by the recitation of the clan praise recital phrased as,

*Ke thella jwang ke le Motloung,*  
*Wa ha Makgekge, wa Sekgwane, Motloung,*

How will I pay homage, being Motloung (one of the Elephant people),  
Of the house of Makgekge, of Sekgwane, one of the Elephant people

The truncated form has been used here because the entire recitation should have been,

*Ke thelleleng*  
*Ko le Motloung wa ha Sekgwane!*  
*Wa “Tlo, ke o pepe,*  
*Ke o sihletse,*  
*Ke o tlamie ka thari ya konyana,*  
*Ebe ke matha ka wena!”* (Samuel Motloung, Monontsha, No.112)

Why should I pay homage,  
Being one of the Elephant people of Sekgwane!  
One of those “Come, let me carry you on my back,  
And carry you safely,  
And bind you with a lamb-skin,  
And run carrying you!”

According to Ellenberger (1912 : 113-114), the Batloung are an offshoot of the Barolong who venerated the hammer (iron). After breaking away from the Barolong, they later arrived at Thaba-Kgolokwe, where they were well received by the Makgolokwe whose chief gave them land to cultivate. But at the time of harvest, they, remembering their descent from the Barolong, claimed precedence over the Makgolokwe, in eating the first pumpkin. The Makgolokwe refused to recognise this right. The quarrel became a fight in which the Batloung were beaten, and their chief Lekgetho was killed. Misfortune seems to have followed them, for their chief, Ranale, was killed by a lion. The remnants of the Batloung therefore had to be constantly on the run for dear life, and this is alluded to in their clan praise recital.

The following lines of the chant allude to the above mentioned experiences of the Batloung:

16. *Mokgosi o teng, wa motsheare phallang!*

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17. *Wa bosiu o ntsha batho matlung*,
18. *Tshepe towe, mokgosi ona o o tlohele.*
   (Lepekola Motloung, Kgubetswana. No.57 C3/A/4)

16. Shout of alarm is there, during daytime all should run!
17. During nighttime all run helter skelter out of the houses,
18. You Iron, stop this shout of alarm.

The apostrophe in line 18 is used to address the Batloung as *Tshepe towe* (You Iron) on account of the fact that they originally venerated the hammer / iron. This line conveys an appeal that a continuation of harassment, killing and fleeing of the Batloung, as inflicted by the Makgolokwe, may cease.

The line,

20. *Motho a tipa wa habo, a re ke moditjhaba* (Lepekola Motloung)

20. One hit his brother, mistaking him for a foreigner.

also alludes to the punishment of the Batloung at the hands of the Kgolokwe whereby the former suffered as if they were foreigners.

From the above, it can be concluded that the mine workers’ chants may include the clan praises or parts thereof in their compositions.

This recitation exhibits characteristics common in mine workers’ chants, namely, the narration of day to day experiences of the mine workers, either back home in Lesotho or the industrial cities where they are employed. The following are some of the incidents reflected in Lepekola’s recitation:

**Feast in honour of the ancestors (Mokete wa badimo)**

He says:

9. *Ka ntsha kgomo, ka romela lehodimong,*
10. *Ho ntate Motloung, Sekgwane,*

9. I sacrificed a bovine and sent a message to heaven,
10. To my father, Sekgwane, member of the Elephant people,

The feast was intended to appease his ancestor, his father whom he believed to be in heaven, and whom he believed was able to bring an end to his day to day sufferings.
Proposal of love to the city girls

35. Batho ke bana ba feta,
36. Ke kopane le banana ba le bararo
37. E ile ya re ke re ho bona, dumelang!
38. Ha re sa le banana, re basadi.
39. Banna ba rona ba shwetse Jubere!

35. Here are the people passing by.
36. I met the girls, they were three in number,
37. When I said to them “Hallo there!”
38. They said, “We are no more girls, but women.
39. Our husbands died in Jouberton!”

To propose love to the local city girls or women is a common incident among the mine workers in the cities. This is common because men spend a few months working in the mines and being away from their loved ones in Lesotho. In this case the women responded to his proposal by mentioning that their husbands died in Jubere (Jouberton), the black residential mining town near Klerksdorp.

Meeting with people speaking various languages

40. Hae ke tloha ke tswa Betjhwalente, Batswaneng,
41. Basotho bana ba fetotse dipuo,
42. Matsoho ba ne ba a bitsa ‘mabokgo’,
43. Hloho ena ba ne ba e bitsa ‘sekopo’
44. Ditsebe tsena ba ne ba di bitsa ‘dikgetla’,

40. Leaving home I was from Bechuanaland, from the Batswana,
41. These Basotho have changed the languages,
42. The hands, matsoho, they used to call them mabokgo,
43. This head, hloho, they used to call it sekopo,
44. These ears, ditsebe, they used to call them dikgetla.

The reciter worked for some time in Bechuanaland where he was surprised by meeting black people like himself, Basotho bana (These Basotho), the Batswana, who spoke Sesotho in a strange manner; they referred to matsoho (the hands) as mabokgo, hloho (the head) as sekopo, and ditsebe (the ears) as dikgetla.

Stylistic features

Some of the stylistic features employed in this poetic composition are the following:
use of direct speech:

49. Lekgwaba ke lena le fihla,
50. La re: “Helele, Mosotho wa Motloung!
51. Sekgwane, ntshehele nama, ke lapile!”

49. Here came the raven,
50. Saying, “Hallo, a Sotho, son of Motloung!
51. Sekgwane, please give me a piece of meat, I am hungry!”

The use of direct speech in the narration of events is a common feature in the poetry of the mine workers’ chants. It serves to create an atmosphere of reality to the narration. By mentioning the raven in the narration he is alluding to one of the Basotho folktales, a feature common in type of an oral art form.

Repetition of phrases

3. Ke tla thella, ke thelle ho mang?
4. Ke tla thella, ho hotsho ha maphiri a phirima,

3. I will pay homage, but to whom?
4. I will pay homage, I, the black One of the black darkness,

The phrase, thella (to pay homage) is used thrice in the two lines. It forms both a horizontal and vertical repetition, and the phrase, Ke tla thella (I will pay homage) constitutes vertical initial linking. It serves to emphasise a point, namely, the paying of homage. The poet finds it difficult to pay homage because he finds himself in a difficult situation where there is nobody who has sympathy for him. He finds himself surrounded by the black darkness of suffering and helplessness.

Praise poetry ending

The conclusion of the chant is similar to the one usually used in heroic praise poetry, namely:

38. Ke Motloung wa ha Sekgwane.
39. Ya kgaola, ya ya!

38. I am Motloung of the house of Sekgwane,
39. There it cuts off and disappears!

The concluding line 38 is a repetition of the opening line of the composition. It reminds the listener of who the reciter is, and serves to mark the ending of the chant in a poetic manner.
4.5.3 The traditional doctor’s falls (Mawa)

The Basotho traditional doctors use the divining bones (ditaola) taken from various animals. One seeking help from a traditional doctor is given the bones to throw on the ground. The importance attached to the divining bones lies in the position taken by the bones on the ground (sing. lewa or plu. mawa). It is from this position that the problem of the one seeking help can be addressed. The various positions taken by the bones (mawa) are always accompanied by applicable poetic recitations. In some cases these recitations may include parts of the clan praises, such as in the following example:

*Rarollang ba boMare dithapong,*  
*Na le ba raretseng?*  
*Re ba raretsse molato oa hloho ea motho,*  
*Wa hloho ya khomo re ka be re o bolela.*  
(Mapetla, 1942 :26.)

Disentangle from the ropes those of the Mare family,  
Why are you entangling them,  
We are entangling them for the debt over one’s life,  
Of the one over the cattle, we would mention it.

This recitation is, according to Mapetla (1942 :26), applicable in cases where calumny is involved. It is also not quoted verbatim from the Bafokeng clan praise which is recited as,

*Ke Mofokeng, ke Dijana,*  
*Ke ngwana Mamare,*  
*Mare a Ntsikwe,*  
*Le ba raretseng bana ba Mare,*  
*Ba se na molato?*  
*Molato wa kgomo o ka be o bolela,*  
*Re mpe re o lefe,*  
*Le se ke la mo otla,*  
*Ha a otluwe,*  
*Ke ngwana madi a Phohole,*  
*Ke ngwana ya kgarametswang,*  
*Ha a kgarametswe ka bokgopo,*  
*O kgarametswa ka tumelo!* (Makai Mofokeng, Kgubetswana. No.86 C7/A/1)

I am one of the Bafokeng, I am Dijana,  
I am a child of the descendants of Mare,  
Mare, son of Ntsikwe,  
Why have you entangled the children of Mare,
Who are not guilty?
A fine of a cow could be mentioned,
So that we rather pay it.
Do not beat him,
He is not to be beaten,
He is a blood child of Phohole,
He is a child pushed around,
He is not pushed around with evil,
He is pushed around with faith!

The incident that gave rise to the clan name, Bafokeng ba Maotwana (the Bafokeng, those of the small footprints), in which the theft of a large herd of cattle was involved, as fully explained in chapter 3, under point 3.2.7., is the foundation for the recitation accompanying the throwing of the bones (lewa) because, in both cases, accusation and calumnia are involved.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that parts of the clan praise recitals may be included in the recitations accompanying the traditional doctors’ falls (mawa).

4.5.4 Boy initiates’ poems (Dikoma / Makolwane)

Some of the poems recited by the boy initiates (makolwane) may contain clan praises or parts thereof or expressions that refer to particular clan praises. In the poem entitled XXIV, expressions which belong to the clan praise recital of the Bahlakwana are used in various stanzas. In the eighth stanza, the initiate relates how the girl who was standing on the pass invitedly called him to come closer. In response to the call, he goes on to say,

Eitse ha ke fihla wa ha Disema! (Mojaki, s.a.: 42.)

When I arrived, a descendant of Disema!

The name, Disema, in the expression, wa ha Disema (a descendant of Disema), refers to the ancestor from whom the Bahlakwana clan believe to have originated. The expression conveys the initiate’s pride as members of this clan were known for their pride, namely, they abstained from being given food from members of other clans rather than their own.

In the ninth stanza, the initiate relates his arduous journey on foot until he reached the place called Diqobong, where he reflected about his parents as follows:

Pelo ya hlora ya ngwana Bahlakwana, (Mojaki, s.a. : 42)

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The heart got worried, that of the Bahlakwana child,

By the expression, *ngwana Bahlakwana* (child of the Bahlakwana), the initiate conveys the idea of himself as a child or young lad begot by his parents who are of the Bahlakwana clan.

In the thirteenth stanza, where he immediately takes a decision to go back to his home village, where he is going to meet his grand mother, he says:

*Ka thinya kapele ngwana Disema,* (Mojaki, s.a.: 42)

I turned around quickly, child of Disema,

By *ngwana Disema* (child of Disema), the initiate refers to himself as a child originating from the ancestor, Disema, who is the progenitor of the Bahlakwana clan. Whereas in the former example he associates himself with his biological parents, *ngwana Bahlakwana* (child of the Bahlakwana), in the latter, he associates himself with his remote ancestor, Disema.

The references discussed, *Bahlakwana* and *Disema*, form part of the Bahlakwana clan praise which is recited as,

*Mohlakwana wa Pholo a Disema,*
*Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,*
*Ya sa jeng ha ho thea e menyane ya diotiwanu,*
*Ya jang meriti ha e thea,*
*Ya jang polokwe kaofela!* (*Mathabo Lubisi, Maseru. No.22 C1/A/22)

*A Hlakwana* descendant of an Ox of *Disema*,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
One not eating when they fall, those small shadows of the courtyards,
One eating when the shadows fall,
One eating the whole round bread!

The next example under discussion is about the poems recited by the boy initiates, and these are called *dikoma* (singular, koma), which are special poetic songs sung during the night when boys are being circumcised. The Basotho regard these songs as secrets known only to those who have gone through the process of circumcision. Nevertheless, like other oral compositions we have discussed so far, some of these poetic songs also contain clan praises either in full or in truncated forms, as in the following example where the clan praise of the *Bakwena ba Napo a Mosito* (the Crocodile people of Napo, son of Mosito) is included in its entirety:
The lion roared,  
It was heared far away,  
Far there at Tebang,  
Tebang belonging to Napo,  
Napo, son of Mosito.
The lion roared,  
It was heared far away,  
Far there at Tebang,  
Tebang belonging to Napo,  
Napo, son of Mosito.  

Who sinned?  
I was the one who sinned  
Tlake Ranaptjwane  
Mopeli the grandparent  
the Carrier - of - the - wound.  
I am carrying the wound  
For which I am not responsible.  
People have purposely made me carry it:  
It is Mohokong;  
Mohokong, son of Pilo,  
Pilo, son of Sekgele.

The section in bold is the clan praise of the Bakwena ba Napo a Mosito (The Crocodile people of Napo, son of Mosito). Compare it with the one in Moletsane and Matšela, 1993 : 23). This section quoted above, is a third stanza of a poetic song of seven stanzas. The reason for the inclusion of the clan praise can be attributed to the fact that the whole song is about the origin of this particular Bakwena clan.

That the language used is very old, is, for instance, proven by the following in the above extract:
\begin{tabular}{lll}
\textit{Tau ko puruma} & instead of & \textit{Tau ya puruma} \\
\textit{Ko utlwahala hole} & instead of & \textit{Ya utlwahala hole} \\
\textit{Hole ko Tebang} & instead of & \textit{Hole kwana Tebang} \\
\textit{Tebang jwa Napo} & instead of & \textit{Tebang ya Napo} \\
\textit{Napo jwa Mosito} & instead of & \textit{Napo wa Mosito} \\
\end{tabular}

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the clan praises or parts thereof may form part of poems recited by boy initiates.

\subsection*{4.5.5 Choral songs}

Choral music songs, like other Basotho compositions, are also characterised by the inclusion of expressions pertaining to the clan praise recitals. This inclusion is largely determined by the nature of the contents, such as in the following example (Mohapeloa, 1996: 46 - 47):

\begin{quote}
Ke Moshoeshoe \textit{Moshoashoaialane}.  
Ke eena Thesele oa Mokhachane,  
Ke eena ntata Basotho  
Re mo hopolang kajeno.  
Ha ho tle setjhaba;  
Ha ho boee borolo,  
Bo etse sehou, pina banna;  
Hoba rona re re re thotsoe ke morena eo,  
Eena a eo thola mose oane.  
Moshoeshoe \textit{Moshoashoaialane}.
\end{quote}

It's Moshoeshoe, the Barber.  
It's he, Thesele, son of Mokhachane,  
It's he, father of the Basotho  
Whom we remember today.  
May the nation come closer;  
May the black and white spotted Ones return,  
To make a great noise, a men's song;  
For we say we have been adopted by that king,  
He should be adopted on the other side.  
Moshoeshoe, the Barber.

In this song, Moshoeshoe, the great king of the Basotho, is honoured for his distinctive virtue and political wisdom of founding the great Basotho nation out of stray and diverse tribes coming to him for protection during the period known as Difaqane. He is referred to as Moshoashoaialane (the Barber), the name and a deverbative eulogy he acquired in about 1810 when he skilfully executed the raid on Ramonaheng, a neighbouring chief's cattle.
Moshoashoailane suggests the easy sliding of a razor blade which alludes to the successful raid by which all the cattle belonging to Ramonaheng were captured. This historical incident is alluded to in the following clan praise recital of the Bakwena ba Mosito (the Crocodile people of Mosito):

Motho oa ha Kali,
Lebeola le beotseng Ramonaheng litelu,
La mo re shoee, shoee, shoee, ka lehare!

(Moletsane and Matšela, 1993 : 23)

Descendant of Kali,
Shaver who has skinned Ramonaheng’s beard,
And smoothly cut it off with a razor blade!

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the Basotho clan praises, though in truncated forms, may form part of the choral music songs.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Depending on their uses, the clan praise recitals of the Basotho can be divided into four distinct functions, namely, educational, social and religious functions as well as their function in other oral compositions.

The intention by parents, in teaching their children their clan praise recitals, was basically educational, and was done through a game called Mmantilatilane or Otswa kae which served as a formula whereby the recitals could be learned. Through this enjoyable game, children were educated on the historical establishment, the culture and idiosyncrasies of their various clans.

The game includes, inter alia, the expression ho thella (to glide or to slip on the slippery mud), the historical origin of which has various interpretations. Firstly, the expression originates from the children’s game, Thelledisane (Gliding on the mud), where children take turns to glide smoothly on the mud, and when each reaches the end of his/her turn, the recitation of his/her clan praise takes place. Secondly, the expression originates from the situation that takes place on a rainy day, when people are in danger, probably by slipping uncomfortably on the mud, and therefore need help.

The current meaning of the expression ho thella (to pay homage) is that of prayerfully appealing to the ancestors for help. Thirdly, the meaning originates from the game most enjoyed by the children, namely, Thelledisane (Gliding on the mud). This smooth gliding has now figuratively given rise to the smooth recitation of the praise recitals. This is the meaning popularly accepted.
The social functions of the clan praise recitals, in full or in part, are those applied in social interactions and for various purposes, such as, for group identity, as national, communal, identity “document”, for the inculcation of values in children, as a social form of greeting, especially where the addressee are close friends or are closely related, in thanking, during the ceremony of initiation, especially the “circumcision operation”, during the act of consoling, during the wedding ceremonies, when persuading, when expressing shock, when swearing of an oath, during special occasions, such as, parties related to graduations, farewells and pitiki’s (parties held to thank the women who helped the baby’s mother during her time of confinement).

The religious function of clan praise recitals is applicable during the celebration of the mokete wa badimo (the feast held in honour of the ancestors) during which a special prayer is addressed to the ancestors, to thank them for the blessings received. These may include the increase in the number of their cattle, the growth of the crops on the fields, etc. A special prayer may also be intended to appease them over many misfortunes that they have experienced, such as, many losses sustained through the deaths of the family members, the incurable illness or disease a family member has long been suffering from, or a misfortune of any kind. The Basotho view the ancestors as being responsible for guiding their everyday lives, so that every success or misfortune is attributed to them.

Among the Basotho, the clan praises also function as part of oral compositions such as, dithoko (praise poems); dithoko tsa ditsamayanaha (mine workers’ chants); mawa (diviners’ falls); dithoko tsa makolwane (the boy initiates’ poems) which are usually publicly recited after circumcision, and the so-called dikoma (the secret poetic songs sung at night during the circumcision ceremony), and songs, especially those which are meant for choral music.

It should be noted that, to a large extent, the clan praises forming part of these oral compositions, have not been used verbatim and in their entirety. In some cases, only the names of the ancestors pertaining to a particular clan, have been used. In other cases, some expressions alluding to particular clan praise recitals have been used.

The oral characteristics of the diboko as part of oral tradition will form the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5

DIBOKO AND ORAL TRADITION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focusses on the oral characteristics of the Basotho diboko as part of oral literature. As in other oral art forms, the most basic characteristic of this genre is the significance of its actual performance.

The Basotho clan praise recitals evince oral characteristics, such as, oral delivery from memory, i.e. reciting on the spur of the moment, lack of knowledge of the name of an author or composer, as the composition is a matter of collective responsibility on the part of the society, as well as the instability of the text, which is caused by extensions, truncations, additions, omissions and improvisations. In discussing these features, examples of the clan praise recitals will be cited to support these realities.

Since the establishment of the Basotho nation, the clan praise recitals have been an important vehicle for the preservation and transmission of part of their history of origin, philosophy, culture, lineage, etc. These recitals were part of a few “historical records” through which the heritage could be preserved. From my observation during the field work I conducted among the Basotho, the recital of the clan praises and part of the history behind their composition are still maintained as a living tradition. The knowledge and willingness of the informants made it possible and easy for me to record their clan praises as transcribed in the Appendix. With the emergence of the age of modernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation, there seems to have been a decline in the maintenance and importance of this art form among a few of the Basotho. Has this state of affairs been aggravated by the Basotho’s exposure to christianity and other religions, as well as the culture of literacy? Answers to these questions will be sought in this chapter.

In reciting their clan praises, the Basotho associate themselves with the various totems, especially the animals whose qualities they believe to have been bestowed upon them and with which they identify. The Bakwena (People of the Crocodile), the Bataung (People of the Lion) and Bakatla (the Kgatla people), for instance, respectively associate themselves with the qualities of the crocodile, the lion and the eagle. This association serves as a stimulus that encourages them to try to live up to expectation of such qualities. In a similar fashion, names of objects and animals are used in our modern times as nicknames for people taking part in various fields of sports. Nicknames such as Dinare (The buffaloes) for the Basotho breast dancers, Dikwena (The crocodiles for the football team, etc. The discussion will be followed by a conclusion.
5.2 Oral tradition / Literature: Definition

Different definitions of oral literature are determined by different perspectives from which this subject is viewed. Simiyu (1994: 97) views the various genres constituting oral literature, and defines the latter as follows:

By oral literature, we shall mean the standard forms like poetry, especially panegyric, proverbs and riddles, songs and narratives.

Ngugi wa Thiong’o in Swanepoel (1994: 144) views oral literature as verbal art composed under circumstances associated with orality, and defines it as that which is,

Passed on from mouth to ear, generation to generation, it consists of songs, poems, drama, proverbs, riddles and sayings and it is the most ancient and richest in the African heritage.

Finnegan’s (1982:2) attaches great significance to the performance of the oral art forms. She says:

Oral literature is by definition dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion - there is no other way in which it can be realized as a literary product.

The wrong perception held by some people, namely, that oral literature is something that belongs to the past, is corrected by Russell H. Kaschula (1993: vii) where he states that,

Oral literature is essentially about the past, the present, and the future. It represents a window into the world view of a particular society, its values and beliefs.

It is true that the values and beliefs of the Basotho are reflected in their clan praise recitals as well.

In defining oral literature, Okpewho (1992: 3) says,

It simply means “literature delivered by word of mouth”.

The above characteristics apply to the Basotho clan praises in terms of the following:

• they are a subgenre of poetry;
• they are transmitted from generation to generation;
they are delivered by word of mouth;
they are recited by performers on various occasions;
they are about the past, the present and the future life of the Basotho;
they are the vehicle that conveys the Basotho’s history, values and beliefs.

5.3 Authorship

The concept of individual authorship, common in written literature, is not applicable in oral compositions, such as the clan praise recitals. This concept is replaced by what Finnegan (1982: 2) calls ‘the group mind’, ‘the folk’, ‘social structure’ because the composition of this art form is a collective responsibility shared by the whole nation. Vansima (1985: 55) corroborates this view in saying:

Authorship of a tradition does not exist for most genres....We only know those whose performances were recorded.

This state of affairs is also applicable to the composition of the clan praise recitals. The importance underlying the composition of the clan praise recitals was the tracing of the origin of the clan’s establishment as well as the identification of its members with their common ancestors. The name of the composer was not regarded as of significant importance. In alluding to the composers of oral art forms, the Basotho use expressions such as Mosotho wa kgale o re... (A Mosotho of old says....) or Baholoholo ba re.... (The forefathers say...) or Sesotho se re.... (Basotho culture says...), etc. In answering the question on the authorship of the clan praises, professor Matšela of NUL gives the following verbal explanation:

Ha ho bonolo ho fana ka karabo hobane di ne di sa qapuwe ka tsela tse tshwanang. Tse ding e ne e le thothoko ya lelapa hore lapa lena le qalehile jwang.

It is not easy to give an answer because they were not composed in the same manner. Some were a mere family poetic recital on how the family originated.

Ralešabisa Motale from Butha-Buthe, and chief Lehloeny Lehloeny from Matsieng, who know much about the history and culture of the Basotho, agree that the composers of the clan praises were men who usually sat with the chief at the kraal (kgotla).

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the names of the composers of the Basotho oral art forms, including the clan praise recitals, were not known, as the composition was a collective responsibility that belonged to the nation. During my research no single one of the more than 100 reciters I have
recorded could identify the composers of their clan praises. They all said they inherited it from either their parents, fathers, grandfathers, grandmothers, and so on. The situation is attributed to the fact that the compositions of the clan praises are old and have been characterised by mere oral transmission from generation to generation without any importance attached to the name of the first reciter.

5.4 Oral features

The clan praise recitals are characterised by a feature peculiar to all other oral art forms, for instance, the instability of the text. This feature is attributable to the fact that each performance is unique to both the performer and an audience. As a result, an instable text thus produced, differs from the previous one in terms of a number of deviations from a norm, such as, extensions, additions, omissions, displacements and improvisations of some parts. The Southern Sotho study guide for SSE306-A (1991 : 7-8) (No names of authors given), explains the instability of the oral text as follows:

In oral literature there is not a fixed text, since each performance constitutes a unique experience both to the performer and an audience. This implies that the performance of the same story, poem or song constitutes a variant of the first or original: some parts may be extended, others may be abridged or left out; new parts may be included, and some may change their position.

The oral characteristics mentioned above, as applicable to the recitals, are exemplified in the discussions which follow. The examples cited will be from the recitals recorded during the field work I conducted and which have been transcribed under “Appendix”.

5.4.1 Instability of the text

Verbal variability of oral art forms is a feature also applicable to the Basotho clan praise recitals despite the intention that they be recited verbatim. The following three clan praises exemplify the fact that the same text, by virtue of its oral nature, is recited differently, and subsequently constitutes an instable text:

Recitation 1: (Abele Tšoinyane, Matsieng. No. 40. C1/B/17)

1. Ke thelle jwang ke le LeKgolokwe,
2. Lehlaba-kgo ho-ka-lemao,
3. Le e ise ho Mokgolwane kgorong,
4. Mokgolwane a e je, a e halala,
5. Nna ha ke na taba, ke phethile!
1. Why should I pay homage being a Kgolokwe,  
2. Piercer-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin,  
3. And take it to Mokgolwane at the gate,  
4. Mokgolwane would eat it despisingly,  
5. I, myself, am not to blame; I have fulfilled!

Recitation 2: (‘Mamakhala Makalo, Matsieng. No. 43. C1/B/20)

1. Re theleleleng  
2. Re le Makgolokwe, Makotswana,  
3. Mahlab-a-kgo-ha-ka-lemao,  
4. A e ise ha Mokgolwane kgotla,  
5. Ngwana beng a e je a e halala,  
6. A re “Boela hape o yo hlabab, motho wa Wetsi”,  
7. Baphuthing, Maaparanku!

1. Why should we pay homage,  
2. Being the Kgolokwe, People of the mixed colours,  
3. Piercers-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin,  
4. And take it to Mokgolwane at the gate,  
5. The master’s child would then eat it despisingly,  
6. And would say “Go back and slaughter, you descendant of Wetsi”,  
7. People of the duiker, Wearers-of-the-sheepskin!

Recitation 3: (Lebohang Mosikili, Morija. No. 66. C4/A/1)

1. LeKgolokwe, Lekotswana,  
2. Lehlab-a-kgo-ha-ka-lemao-ka-sebonong,  
3. O isa mokgorong ha Kgwadi,  
4. O re: Bona, morena, ke hlabile!  
5. Ke monate wa nku, o fella mono!

1. A Kgolokwe, a-white-sprinkled-One,  
2. Piercer-of-a-chicken-a-pin-in-the-anus,  
3. And takes it to the gate at Kgwadi’s house,  
4. And says “Look, chief, I have slaughtered!  
5. It is the deliciousness of the sheep (mutton) and ends there!

From the comparison of the three recitations of the same clan praise, namely of the Kgolokwe, the following can be observed:

In line 1 of both recitation 1 and 2, mention is made of both the clan name Kgolokwe (A Kgolokwe) and the appellation lekotswana (one with mixed colours) although the recitation 2 employs the plural form, Makgolokwe (The
Kgolokwe people) and *makotswana* (those with mixed colours). The appellation *lekotswana* is missing in the recitation 1.

Line 2 is the same in all the recitations, except for the addition of the phrase *ka sebonong* (in the anus) in *Lehabakgoho-ka-lemao-ka-sebonong* (Piercer-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin-in-the-anus) in recitation 3.

Lines 3 in the three recitations differ in terms of the place where the pierced fowl was taken to, as well as the name of the chief who was the recipient of it. According to recitation 1, it was *ho Mokgolwane kgorong* (to Mokgolwane at the gate), but according to recitation 2, it was *ho Mokgolwane kgotla* (to Mokgolwane at the kraal). Recitation 3 differs in saying *mokgorong ha Kgwadi* (to the hut, at Kgwadi’s place).

Line 4 of recitation 1 mentions the ancestor’s name, *Mokgolwane a e je a e halala* (Mokgolane would eat it despisingly) whilst recitation 2 uses the expression *Ngwana beng* (The masters’ child) in *Ngwana beng a e je a e halala* (The masters’ child would eat it despisingly). In recitation 3, this line says *O re: “Bona, morena, ke hlabile!”* (And says, “Look, chief, I have slaughtered!!”)

It appears that line 5 in recitation 3, namely, *A re, “Boela hape motho wa Wetsi”* (And says “Go back, a descendant of Wetsi!!”), is missing in the other recitations.

The concluding lines in all the three recitations are different. In recitation 1 it is *Nna ha ke na taba, ke phethile!* (I, myself, am not to blame, I have fulfilled!), in 2 it is *Baphuthing! Maaparanku!* (People of the duiker! Wearers of the sheepskin!). In 3 it is *Ke monate wa nku, o fella mono!* (It is the deliciousness of the sheep (mutton) which ends there!).

From the above, we can learn that the Basotho clan praises, like all other oral compositions, constitute unstable texts, as each recitation becomes a variant of the previous one. This situation is an example of some of the difficulties encountered when one has to decide on the authentic version between praise recitations belonging to the same clan. Says Finnegan (1988: 51),

In oral literature there is no concept of an authentic or correct version.

The clan praise recitals, like all other oral art forms, are subject to change, and therefore constitute unstable texts. From my research observation, the variations of the same clan praise recital is attributed to the way the reciter has learned and remembers his/her *seboko*; or the way the reciter remembers it at the moment of delivery, that is, on the spur of the moment. In some cases it was caused by memory failure, some disturbance that may occur during the process of
recitation, or a deliberate addition of another genre during the process of recitation (see the recitation by Lepekola Motloung from Kgubetswana under 5.4.7).

The textual instability, as exemplified above, takes various forms of change, which may include the following:

5.4.2 Extensions

By extension is understood the addition of words, phrases or lines which do not add any new information but which, however, make the recital longer and adds meaning in many different aspects. The following is a clan praise of the Bakwena ba ha Tsholo (the Crocodile people of Tsholo) recited by Selloane Nkhabu, from Qwaqwa:

1. Motho wa Makadi a Tsholo,
2. Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
3. Ha a tla ja ho thehe meriti,
4. E menyane ya diotlwana,
5. Ke motto wa Nkopane le Mohlomi! (No.79. C5/A/10)

1. A descendant of Kadi, son of Tsholo,
2. Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
3. When he is about to eat, the shadows fall,
4. The small ones of the courtyards,
5. I am a descendant of Nkopane and Mohlomi!

After a few minutes of conversation, the informant was requested to repeat the recitation. It was then recited as:

2. Mokwena wa ha Monaheng,
3. Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
4. Motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,
5. Ha e tla re ha a eja ho thehe meriti,
6. E menyane ya diotlwana,
7. Ke motto wa Nkopane le Mohlomi,
8. Ke motto wa ha Monaheng,
9. Ke motto ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,
9. Ke Mokwena wa ha Monaheng!

1. A Mokwena of the house of Monaheng family,
2. Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
3. One who does not eat yesterday's bread,
4. One who eats when the shadows fall,
5. The small ones of the courtyards,
6. I am a descendant of Nkopane and Mohlomi.
7. I am a descendant of the house of Monaheng.
8. I am one who does not eat a piece of yesterday's bread,
9. I am one of the Crocodile people of the house of Monaheng!

A comparison of the two recitations reveals that the first lines in both recitations are structured differently although they convey the same information. This is because the hero and ancestor, Monaheng, in the second recitation was also known as Kadi, and was the son of Tsholo. Other lines, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the first recitation are repeated in the second. Line 3 in the second, namely, Motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane (One who does not eat yesterday's piece of bread), though missing in the first recitation, is, however, always recited along with Maila-ho-ngwathelwa (Abstainers-from-being-given-food) in the Bakwena clan praises. Its inclusion in the second recitation can be viewed as not necessarily constituting an addition of new information. In addition, lines 6, 7, 8 and 9 in the second recitation constitute a mere repetition of lines found in the first recitation, which can thus be viewed as an extension of the first recitation. The extension of this nature is caused by the fact that the reciter does not want to stop and think of what to say on the spur of the moment and during the process of recitation, but has to maintain the free flow of the performance, hence the repetition.

The extension of the parts constituting the clan praise recitals results not only in the lengthening of the recitations, but in the continued occurrence of instable texts.

5.4.3 Additions

The feature of additions occurs when phrases, parts of sentences or lines which are carrying more or new information, are added to the recitation. Such additions are therefore partly responsible for the emergence of various forms of the same clan praise recitals. Additions as applied to the clan praise recitals can be exemplified in the following as recited by ‘Mapapiso Mekete, from Matsieng, in Lesotho:

1. Re le Makgolokwe, Mahlabakotswana,
2. Mahlabakgo-ka-lemao-ka-tebonong,
3. A e hla, a e isa kgorong ha Mokgolwane,
4. Mokgolane a e ja, a ba a e halala,
5. A re ‘Kgutla hape, o yo eketsa,
6. Motho wa Wetsi!’ (No.51 C1/B/28)

1. Being Kgolokwe people, the-Slaughterers-of-the-white-sprinkled-one,
2. Piercers-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin-in-the-anus,
3. They pierced it, took it to Mokgolwane at the gate,
4. Mokgolane ate it and even despised it,
5. And said "Go back and add more,
6. Descendant of Wetsi!"

In the above clan praise, the phrase, *ka sebonong* (in the anus), in line two, has been added to the line with the intention of specifying the exact spot where the fowl is pierced. The inclusion of this phrase is also found in the recital no. 66. C4/A/1 but omitted in other recitals of the *Makgolokwe*, such as, 40. C1/B/17, 43. C1/B/20, and 64. C3/B/7.

Additions to the recitals may also be in terms of a line or a few lines, as can be exemplified in the following as recited by Lebohang Lesedi, from Masemouse, Mohaleshoek, Lesotho:

*Ke Mohlakwana wa ha Mantsane,*  
*Lebewana la boKadi,*  
*Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,*  
*Motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,*  
*Ya jang ha ho thea meriti,*  
*Ho thea e menyane ya diotlwana!*  
(No. 26. C1/B/2)

I am one of the Bahlakwana descendants of Ntsane,  
**The true one of Kadi's family,**  
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,  
One who does not eat a small piece of yesterday's bread,  
Who eats only when the shadows fall,  
When they fall, those small ones of the courtyards!

The above clan praise includes the second line, *Lebewana la boKadi* (The true one of Kadi's family), which is missing in the earlier recitation. The addition of this information-carrying line draws attention to the ancestor, Kadi, alias Monaheng, who begot Ntsane from whom Ntsane's descendants originated.

From the discussion above, it can be observed that the recitation of the clan praises may be accompanied by the addition of phrases or lines, a feature common to oral art forms.

### 5.4.4  Abridgement / Omissions

In the recitation of the clan praises, some parts may randomly be left out, and these may be phrases or lines. Omission of lines is one of the most common occurrences during recitations. During my field work in the village Makakamela, near Leribe, I happened to meet an informant, Mputi Letsoela, who recited the
following clan praise which I recorded on tape (No.5 C1/A/5):

Ke thelleng,
Ke le motho wa ha Mahlatsi a Lebeko,
Motho wa Sepharumele sa Mongalana,
Motho wa ha Mamothhotio o a batlwa,
Batho ba ha Mahlatsi ba kaa ka dinaledi,
Ba bakaalo ka jwang ba tshaane, molelengwane,
Batho ba ha Mahlatsi ha se ba ho ya le batho,
E reng ba ya le batho, mahlare a iale!

Why should I pay homage,
Being one of the family of Mahlatsi, son of Lebeko,
Descendant of Sepharumele, son of Mongalana,
Descendant of the-Sieve-is-being-sought-ones,
Mahlatsi people are as many as the stars,
They are as many as eragrostis (tshaane grass), the long one,
The Mahlatsi’s are not really the right people to accompany others,
For accompanying others, vegetables will not grow!

The following day I met his elder brother, Moferefare, whom I requested to recite his clan praise. When I mentioned that I met his younger brother the previous day and that I recorded his recitation, he requested me to replay it. After listening to it, he said it was not correctly recited since some parts have been left out. He then recited the following version (No.14 C1/A/14) which he said was the correct one:

1. Ke thelleng,
2. Ke le Lekgwakgwla ha Mahlatsi,
3. Batho ba ha Mahlatsi ba kaalo ka dinaledi,
4. Ba kaalo ka jwang ba tshaane, molelengwane,
5. Ke batho ba ha Mamphamo a Mahasa,
6. Batho ba Sepharumele sa Mongalo,
7. Ke batho ba ha Mamothhotlo o a batlwa,
8. Motlhotlho bosiu o ba mokgubedu,
9. Motsheare o ba mosootho,
10. Batho ba ha Mahlatsi ha se ba ho ya le batho ntweng,
11. Ha ba ya le batho mahlare a a lala,
12. Ho tjha dithota, boAtanye le boKolonyama,
13. Diya-ha-Mahlatsi di ya ka bohlale,
14. Ha o ya ha Mahlatsi o ye ka bohlale,
15. Bona sekoti tseleng o tla we-la!

1. How can I pay homage,
2. Being a Kgwakgwla of Mahlatsi’s place,
3. Mahlatsi people are as many as the stars,
4. They are as many as eragrostis (tshaane grass), the long one,
5. They are of the descendants of Mphamo, son of Mahasa,
6. Descendants of Sepharumele, son of Mongalo,
7. They are of The-sieve-is-being-sought-clan,
8. A sieve at night becomes red,
9. During the day it becomes brown.
10. Mahlatsi people do not really make good company at war,
11. If they accompany others, vegetables will not grow,
12. Burnt were the fields like Atanye and Kolonyama,
13. Goers-to-the-house-of-Mahlatsi should go there with wisdom,
14. If you go to the house of Mahlatsi, go there with wisdom,
15. Beware of the hole on the road; it will trip you!

On comparing the recitals by the two brothers, the following discrepancies emerge:

1. Line 2, Ke le motho wa ha Mahlatsi a Lebeko (Being a descendant of Mahlatsi, son of Lebeko) in the younger brother’s version, does not appear in the elder brother’s version.
2. Lines 5,8,9,12-15 which appear in the elder brother’s version are omitted in the younger brother’s version.
3. The order of lines in the younger brother’s version, 1,6,7,3,4,10 and 11 when compared with that of the elder brother’s, shows a displacement of lines 3-4, and 6-7.

The length of the clan praise, the recitation without preparation, memory failure, caused by infrequent recitation, as well as the venue where the recitation took place (we were near a shop where people were passing and distracting the reciter’s concentration), were the causes that contributed to the discrepancies.

It can however be observed that any change in the recitation is likely to bring about other changes, as in the above example, where the inclusion of a line as well as omission of a few lines, brought about displacement of some lines.

5.4.5 Truncations

By truncation here is meant the omission of part of the recital with the result that the recited part remains unchanged and unaffected by such omission. This can be observed when a truncated recital of a Mohlakwana is compared to the one which is recited in its entirety, as in the following example (Gabriel Mokwena, Matatiele, 69. C4/A/4):

Mohlakwana wa Pholo a Disema,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa

A Hlakwana of an Ox of Disema,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food!

In this case, only the first two lines are recited. Compare this recital with the following (1. C1/A/1) by Letšoara Tephe, from the village, Phatwe, in Lesotho:

Mohlakwana Pholo ya Disema,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Motho ya sa jeng ngwathwana sa maobane,
Wa Napo le Mosito,
Ya jang feela ha ho thea ya diothwana,
Ho thea e menyenyane.
Ke letibi, ke lefirwane,
Tshwene ya etjha senana e beleha.
Ke kwena, kwenanyane,
E a hlapa, e a theosa madiboho,
Kwenya, kwena tse ding ha di e je!

A Hlakwana of an Ox of Disema,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
One who does not eat yesterday’s bread,
One of Napo and Mosito,
Who eats only when they fall, those courtyards ones (the shadows),
When the small ones fall,
He is a pumpkin, a small one,
A baboon burnt an abdomen during birth,
It is a crocodile, a young one,
It fords and descends along the drifts,
A crocodile which others do not eat!

Another example of a truncated recital is the following by Abinere Seisa, from Morija, in Lesotho:

Ke Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
Di se nna di omela mokgwabo tlung!...... (No. 27. C1/B/3)

I am a descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
Descendant of Those-who-take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut!

The following entire recital (cf. 102. C12/A/2) by Lengau Motšoane, Butha-Buthe,
Makhoakhoeng, is that of the Basia clan:

Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa Mantshang-thebe-di-ome,
Di se nna di omela mokgwabo tlung,
Ha o re ka Tshele, ke tshella mang?
Ke tshella Tshele le Letuka,
Bana ba Lebajwa la Nkwanyane!

A descendant of Mosia, a-Swarer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut,
If you say through Tshele, who do I pour out for?
I pour out for Tshele and Letuka,
Children of Lebajwa, son of Nkwanyane!

Truncations may be caused by the following: either memory slip on the part of the reciter, or the reciter may purposely leave out part of the recitation and assume that the addressee(s) know the truncated part, or there may be circumstances that influence the performance, such as, shyness and being in a hurry to recite, or the belief that the longer form is taking the seboko into the domain of another genre such as praise in general.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the truncated forms constitute part of the features of the oral clan praise recitals. The use of truncated forms can be intentional or can be caused by memory failure, distraction of any nature, recitation on the spur of the moment, etc.

5.4.6 Displacement

Displacement of a phrase or a line from one position to the other is a feature common in the recitation of the clan praises. This feature can be exemplified as in the following recital by Marumo Mosoeunyana, from Rampai village, in Lesotho:

1. Motho wa Mamphutlane a Makeka,
2. Motho wa boNkoriba le Tsotelo,
3. Motho wa ha Mamahlosi a Nkedi,
4. Ere a eja, a kgore,
5. Ke re ke lekgukguntshatshwana,
6. A yo le ja le mosadi wa hae,
7. A yo le ja le Mmamodiehi,
8. Motho wa boMothibe le Mmalane! (No.3. C1/A/3)
1. One of the family of Mphutlane, son of Makeka,
2. One of the family of Nkoriba and Tsotelo,
3. One of the house of Mahlosi, son of Nakedi,
4. Who, whilst eating, becomes satisfied,
5. I say I am the-hider-away-of-the-black-one,
6. Who goes to eat it with his wife,
7. Who goes to eat it with mother Modiehi,
8. One of the family of Mothibe and Mmalane!

After a few minutes, the informant was requested to repeat the recital, and he recited as follows:

Mothe wa ha Mphutlane a Makeka,
Mothe wa boNkoriba le Tsotelo,
Mothe wa ha Mamahlosi a Nakedi,
Mothe wa boMothibe le Mmalane,
Ke lekgugupitshatshwana,
A yo le ja le mosadi wa hae,
A eo le ja le Mmamodiehi!

One of the family of Mphutlane, son of Makeka,
One of the family of Nkoriba and Tshotelo,
One of the house of Mahlosi, son of Nakedi,
**One of the family of Mothibe and Mmalane,**
I am the hider-away-of-the-black-one,
Who goes to eat it with his wife,
Who goes to eat it with mother Modiehi!

From the comparison of the two versions, the following emerge:

1. The fourth line is omitted.
2. The eight line is displaced and replaced by the fourth.

The recording of the recitations by Marumo Mosoeunyana was done under circumstances that influenced his performance, namely, the fact that he was old, sick, bedridden and performed with difficulty. Memory failure was another factor, hence the omission and displacement in his second recitation.

It can be observed here that a change in terms of omission has necessitated another, that is, displacement.

The feature of displacement can also be exemplified in the following recitations by Selloane Nkhabu, from Qwaqwa (No.79. C5/A/10):
First recitation:

1. Motha wa Makadi a Tsholo,
2. Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
3. Ha a tla ja ho thehe meriti,
4. E menyane ya diotlwana,
5. Ke motho wa Nkopane le Mohlom!

1. A descendant of the clan of Kadi, son of Tsholo,
2. Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
3. When he/she is about to eat, the shadows fall,
4. Those small ones of the courtyards,
5. I am a descendant of Nkopane and Mohlom!

Second recitation:

1. Mokwena wa ha Monaheng,
2. Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
3. Motha ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,
4. Ha e tla re ha a eja ho thehe meriti,
5. E menyane ya diotlwana,
6. Ke motho wa Nkopane le Mohlom,
7. Ke motho wa ha Monaheng,
8. Ke motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,
9. Ke Mokwena wa ha Monaheng!

1. One of the Crocodile people of Monaheng,
2. Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
3. One who does not eat yesterday’s bread,
4. One who eats when the shadows fall,
5. Those small ones of the courtyards,
6. I am a descendant of Nkopane and Mohlom.
7. I am a descendant of the house of Monaheng.
8. I am one who does not eat a piece of yesterday’s bread,
9. I am one of the Crocodile people of the house of Monaheng!

On comparing the two recitations, the following emerge:

1. Line 3 in the first recitation has been displaced to line 4 in the second recitation.
2. Line 1 in the first recitation has been omitted in the second recitation.
3. Lines 7,8 and 9 in the second recitation are missing in the first recitation.

Shyness affected the reciter’s performance during the recording of the first
recitation. After half an hour of conversation, when she was more relaxed, she performed the second recitation which she said was the correct version.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that during the process of recitation the performer of the oral clan praise may be influenced by various circumstances, such as shyness, memory failure, sickness, old age, etc. The recitations performed under such conditions may be characterised by changes such as displacements which may effect other changes.

5.4.7 Improvisation and genre transition

Improvisation is generally a common feature of oral art forms, and of the Basotho clan praise recitals, in particular. One of the informants, ‘Mateleko Masoetsa, from the village, Kgolokwe, near Matsieng, in Lesotho, whom I met during my field work, recited her clan praise which I recorded on tape. When I was about to leave the village, she came running to me, saying that her recorded recital was not correct, and therefore, needed to be corrected. The reason she gave was that the sudden appearance of a little girl during the process of recitation and recording forced her to introduce some changes on the spur of the moment because she had to avoid some offensive expressions which she did not want the girl to hear. The recorded recital that needed to be corrected, was,

Re batho ba ha Mahwete Komane,
Re batho ba bodiba bo botala ha bo okamelwe,
Ekare ha o bo okamela,
O ka wela ka mahlwanana le ditsejana,
Kubu hohomosa malota re bone,
Kubu ha o e ane mo phatleng,
Ha o e ana mo phatleng, o ka shwa,
Kubu e hlapa metsing,
Kubu o ke ke wa e bona! (No.45. C1/B/22)

We are the descendants of the house of Hwete, son of Komane,  
We are the descendants of the green-abyss-should-not-be-towered-over,  
If you can tower over it,  
You can fall in with your small eyes and small ears,  
Hippopotamus, enlarge your rearguards for us to see,  
Hippopotamus, you do not swear it on the forehead,  
If you swear it on the forehead, you can die,  
The hippopotamus swims in water,  
The hippopotamus, you cannot see it!

I therefore had to record her second and “correct” version which was,
1. Re batho ba ha Mahwete Komane,
2. Re batho ba bodiba bo botala ha bo okamelwe,
3. Ekare ha o bo okamela,
4. O ka wela ka mahlwana le ditsejana,
5. Kubu hohomosa marete re bone,
6. Kubu ha o e ane mo phatieng,
7. Ha o e ane mo phatieng, o ka shwa,
8. Kubu e dula metsing,
9. Kubu ha e bonwe! (No.46. C1/B/23)

1. We are the descendants of the house of Hwete, son of Komane,
2. We are the descendants of the green-abyss should-not-be-tower-over,
3. If you can tower over it,
4. You can fall in with small eyes and small ears,
5. Hippopotamus, enlarge your testicles for us to see,
6. Hippopotamus, you do not swear it on the forehead,
7. If you swear it on the forehead, you can die,
8. A hippopotamus lives in the water,
9. A hippopotamus cannot be seen!

The comparison of the two versions revealed the following:

1. The phrase marete (testicles) in line 5 of the latter, was replaced by the non-offensive malota (the rearguards) in the former;
2. The verb stem, e dula (lives) in the penultimate line of the latter, was replaced by the verb stem, e hlapa (forges); and
3. The structure of the sentence, Kubu ha e bonwe (A hippopotamus cannot be seen) in the last line of the latter, was changed to Kubu o ke ke wa e bona! (A hippopotamus, you cannot see it!).

It should be observed that any change brought about in the recital, either intentionally or otherwise, is likely to cause other changes, as in the above example.

The next example of improvisation is found in the clan praise recited by Lepekola Sekgwane (Motloung), from the village, Kgubetswana, at Clarens, in the Free State. His recitation, no. 57. C3/A/4, as transcribed in the Appendix, is not only the longest in my compilation, but perhaps also among all the Basotho clan praises known, for it consists of 68 lines. The reason for this length is attributed to the inclusion of his own composition of a sefela (mine workers’ chant) during the process of recitation.

During my first meeting with him, I recorded his recital which consisted of 58 lines of which the last was Feela lekgwaba towe o kgala nameng (Except that,
you raven, you like too much of meat!). After a couple of weeks, I requested him to recite again. This time, his recitation was the same as the previous one up to line 30, *E le ntho tsena tsophile* (Everything was mixed up!). From there he omitted lines 31-58 of his previous recitation and substituted new lines altogether. These can be clarified as follows:

The first clan praise recitation:

1. *Ke thella jwang ke le Motloung,*
2. *Wa ha Makgekge, wa Sekgwane, Motloung,*
3. *Ke tla thella, ke thelle ho mang?*
4. *Ke tla thella, ho hotsho ha maphiri a phirima,*
5. *Bata se phoofolo, ngwana Mothetho.*
6. *Ka mehla ena ka o hasa,*
7. *Wa hlaba batho ka marumo,*
8. *Wa re ke diphoofolo,*
9. *Ka ntsha kgomo, ka romela lehodimong,*
10. *Ho ntate Motloung, Sekgwane,*
11. *Ke mohodi, wa di harella dithaba,*
12. *Thatolla re sa di bona,*
13. *Ba re thentha tsebe, tlou maakhola,*
14. *O nke mahlokwa, o a menahanye,*
15. *O fate ditsebe, o utlwe ñantle,*
16. *Mokgosi o teng, wa motsheare phallang!*
17. *Wa bosiu o ntsha batho matlung,*
18. *Tshepe towel, mokgosi ona o o tlohele,*
19. *Se maribana se ba le tshwene, Molapo,*
20. *Motho a tipa wa habo, a re ke moditjhoba,*
21. *Kgomo towel, ho tswa dipereq moelo a tuka,*
22. *Wa ntekatekane, wa leshano, a be se a fihla,*
23. *A re: Lepekola, monna wa ha Makgekge,*
24. *Lehodimong kwana o a bitswa, o a laetswa,*
25. *O bitswa ke morena wa tedi tsa mofuta mohudi,*
26. *Ke mmatla kapele, ka be se ke fihla,*
27. *Ke fumana a bile a ntsa ipapalla morabaraba,*
28. *Kgomo ha e kgutla, e ntse e le sha! e le lekgutla,*
29. *E le makgutla, e le mmofu,*
30. *E le ntho tsena tsophile,*
31. *Ba mohla ba neng ba bitwa mofuta, Mpai,*
32. *Ke re yena le bona,*
33. *A re kgethand wa lona,*
34. *Ke tla kgetha wa rona re le kae?*
35. *Batho ke bana ba feta,*
36. *Ke kopane le banana ba le bararo,*
37. *E ile ya re ke re ho bona, dumelang!*
38. *Ba re ha re sa le banana, re basadi,*
39. *Banna ba rona ba shwets e Jubere!*
40. *Hae ke tloha ke tswa Betjwanalente, Batswaneng,*
41. *Basotho bana ba fetotse dipuo,*
42. *Matsoho ba ne ba a bitsa 'mabogo',*
43. *Hloho ena ba ne ba e bitsa 'sekopo'*
44. *Ditsebe tsena ba ne ba di bitsa 'dikgetla',*
45. *Mahlo ka wona ke sheba dinaha,*
46. *Dinko ka tsona ke sa tla thimola,*
47. *Molomo ka wona ke tla bua,*
48. *Tedu tsa ntshenya tshobotsi,*
49. *Lekgwaba ke lena le fihla,*
50. *La re: "Helele, Mosotho wa Motloung!*
51. *Sekgwane, ntshehele nama, ke lapile!"*
52. *Tshwene ke ena. Ya re tshwene:*
53. *"O ke ke wa ja nama, o makgisa!*
54. *Tshwene towe! o busetsang makopo difahleho?"*
55. *Tshwene ya bua ka lentswe le bohloko ho lekgwaba lena,*
56. *Ya re: "Lekgwaba towe, o ka be o le moruti hante,*
57. *Ke bona kholloro ya hao, e a o tshwanela,*
58. *Feela lekgwaba towe, o kgala nameng.*

1. How will I pay homage being a member of the Elephant people,
2. Of the house of Makgekge, Sekgwane, member of the Elephant people,
3. I will pay homage, but to whom?
4. I will pay homage, I, the black One of the black darkness,
5. The wild Beast which is an animal, poor child of Mothetho!
6. At all times you dispersed,
7. And stabbed people with the spears,
8. Thinking that they were like animals,
9. I sacrificed a bovine and sent a message to heaven,
10. To my father, Sekgwane, member of the Elephant people,
11. It is the thick mist which covered the mountains.
12. Unroll whilst we are ready to see,
13. Shake your ears, you elephant among the weeds,
14. Take the pieces of dry grass, put them together and
15. Clean them so that you may hear well,
16. There is a loud daytime shout of alarm forcing people to flee,
17. And the one at nighttime forcing people out of their houses,
18. You, the iron rod, bring a stop to this cry!
19. The small One is always with the baboon, you Molapo,
20. One hit one's fellow being taking him for an enemy,
21. You Bovine, from the horses a sorcerer was in flames,
22. An unknown one, a liar, then arrived,
23. And said: "Lepekola, man from Makgekge's,
24. There in heaven you are being called.
25. You are being called by a chief with grey beard like mist”.
26. I immediately prepared myself and arrived.
27. I found him playing the mill (Basotho game, *morabaraba*)
28. The movement of the stones (“the bovines”) caused a point scoring,
29. A point scoring, a mixture of confusion.
30. It was all of these things.
31. That day they invited Mpai.
32. I say he was present with them,
33. He said they must choose one among themselves,
34. Where and how shall I choose one for myself?
35. Here are the people passing by.
36. I met the girls, they were three in number,
37. When I said to them “Hallo there!”
38. They said, “We are no more girls, but women.
39. Our husbands died in Jubere!”
40. Leaving home I was from Bechuanaland, from the Batswana,
41. These Basotho have changed the languages,
42. The hands, *matsoho*, they used to call them *mabogo*,
43. This head, *hloho*, they used to call it *sekopo*,
44. These ears, *ditsebe*, they used to call them *dikgetla*.
45. With the eyes I look at the countrysides,
46. With the nostrils I will sneeze,
47. With the mouth I will speak.
48. The beard spoiled my facial appearance.
49. Here came the raven,
50. Saying, “Hallo, a Sotho, son of Motloung!
51. Sekgwane, please give me a piece of meat, I am hungry!”
52. Here is a baboon which responded
53. , “You will not eat meat, you have long hair!”
54. “You baboon! You with a protruding forehead?”, said the raven.
55. With a feeling of resentment the baboon said to the raven,
56. “You raven, you would have been a real Priest,
57. I can see your collar, it makes you look beautiful,
58. Except that, you raven, you like too much of meat!”

The second clan praise recitation:

In this recitation, lines 1-30 remained unchanged, and lines 31-58 were replaced by the following lines 31-39:

31. *Loting kwana ha nyatsi ya Ntwetsi*,
32. *Lokolla thethana e sale*,
33. *Thoto e kgolo, mafito a yona*,

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34. *A imela dipelesa.*
35. *Bahlankana le ntjhebe lebitso thekeng mona.*
36. *Mahanong mona le tla fumana,*
37. *Bitso la ka le fane.*
38. *Ke Motloung wa ha Sekgwane.*
39. *Ya kgaola, ya ya!*

31. There on the mountains, at Ntwetsi’s concubine,
32. Unfasten your fringe skirt and leave it behind,
33. The luggage is too big; its knots
34. Are too heavy for the animals to carry.
35. Young men, look for my name here at my hips.
36. In my mouth here you will find,
37. My name and surname.
38. I am one of the Elephant people of the house of Sekgwane.
39. There it cut off and ended!

The lines that constitute the clan praise are mainly the following lines 1 and 2 of the first recitation as well as line 38 of the second:

1. *Ke tla thella jwanq le Motloung,*
2. *Wa ha Makgekge, wa Sekgwane, Motloung,*
38. *Ke Motloung wa ha Sekgwane.*

1. How will I pay homage being one of the Elephant people,
2. Of the house of Makgekge, of Sekgwane, one of the Elephant people,
38. I am one of the Elephant people of the house of Sekgwane.

Lepekola’s recitations are mine worker’s chants because they reflect characteristics peculiar to mine workers’ chants, namely, the narration of day to day experiences of the mine workers, either back home in Lesotho or the industrial cities where they are employed. The following are some of the examples as reflected in Lepekola’s recitation:

**The feast in honour of the ancestors (Mokete wa badimo)**

He says:

9. *Ka ntsha kgomo, ka romela lehodimong,*
10. *Ho ntate Motloung, Sekgwane,*

9. I sacrificed a bovine and sent a message to heaven,
10. To my father, Sekgwane, member of the Elephant people,
The feast was intended to appease his ancestor, his father whom he believed to be in heaven, and whom he believed was able to bring an end to his day to day sufferings.

**The proposal of love to the city girls**

35. *Batho ke bana ba feta,*
36. *Ke kopane le banana ba le bararo*
37. *E ile ya re ke re ho bona, dumelang!*
38. *Ba re ha re sa le banana, re basadi.*
39. *Banna ba rona ba shwetse Jubere!*

35. Here are the people passing by.
36. I met the girls, they were three in number,
37. When I said to them “Hallo there!”
38. They said, “We are no more girls, but women.
39. Our husbands died in Jouberton!”

The proposing of love to the local city girls or women is a common incident among the mine workers in the cities. This is common because mine workers spend a few months working in the mines before they are allowed to return home to their loved ones in Lesotho. In this case the women responded to his proposal by mentioning that their husbands died in Jubere (Jouberton), the black residential mining area near Klerksdorp.

**The meeting with people speaking various languages**

40. *Hae ke tloha ke tswa Betsjwanalente, Batswanaeng,*
41. *Basotho bana ba fetotse dipuo, *
42. *Matsoho ba ne ba a bitsa ‘mabogo’, *
43. *Hloho ena ba ne ba e bitsa ‘sekopo’*
44. *Ditsebe tsena ba ne ba di bitsa ‘dikgetla’, *

40. Leaving home I was from Bechuanaland, from the Batswana,
41. These Basotho have changed the languages,
42. The hands, *matsoho*, they used to call them *mabogo*,
43. This head, *hloho*, they used to call it *sekopo*,
44. These ears, *ditsebe*, they used to call them *dikgetla*.

The reciter worked for some time in Bechuanaland where he met people like himself, *Basotho bana* (These Basotho), the Batswana, who spoke Sesotho in a strange manner; they referred to *matsoho* (the hands) as *mabogo*, *hloho* (the head) as *sekopo*, and *ditsebe* (the ears) as *dikgetla*. Meeting people of various tribes and nationalities who speak various languages is common in the mining
industries.

**The stylistic features**

Some of the stylistic features in this poetic composition are the following:

**direct speech:**

49. *Lekgwaba ke lena le fihla,*
50. *La re: “Helele, Mosotho wa Motloung!*
51. *Sekgwane, ntshehele nama, ke lapile!”

49. Here came the raven,
50. Saying, “Hallo, a Sotho, son of Motloung!
51. Sekgwane, please give me a piece of meat, I am hungry!”

The use of direct speech in the narration of events is a feature common in the poetry of the mine workers' chants. It serves to create an atmosphere of reality to the narration. By mentioning the vulture in the narration he is alluding to one of the Basotho folktales, a feature also common in this type of an oral art form.

**Repetition of phrases:**

3. *Ke tla thella, ke thelle ho mang?*
4. *Ke tla thella, ho hotsho ha maphiri a phirima,*

3. I will pay homage, but to whom?
4. I will pay homage, I, the black One of the black darkness,

The phrase, *thella* (to pay homage) is used thrice in the two lines. It forms both a horizontal and vertical repetition, and the phrase, *Ke tla thella* (I will pay homage) constitutes vertical initial linking. It serves to emphasise a point, namely, the paying of homage. The poet finds it difficult to pay homage because he finds himself in a difficult situation where nobody sympathises with him. He finds himself surrounded by the black darkness of suffering and helplessness.

**Praise poetry ending:**

The conclusion of the chant is similar to the one usually used in the heroic praise poetry, namely,

38. *Ke Motloung wa ha Sekgwane.*
39. *Ya kgaola, ya ya!*
38. I am Motloung of the house of Sekgwane,
39. There it cut off and disappeared!

to mark the ending of the recitation.

In lines 31-39 of the second recitation, the reciter refers to a lady, a concubine, who fascinates him by her fringe skirt (thethana) and her beautiful big buttocks which apparently look as if they are a burden too heavy for her. Furthermore, he mentions with pride that he is popular and well known, since, as he says, his name and surname are on everybody’s lips (mahanong). These are examples of common issues usually mentioned in the difela (the mine workers’ chants). The last line, however, is an expression commonly used in the performance of praise poetry, namely, Ya kgaola, ya ya! (There it cut off and ended!) which is usually accompanied with ululations, as an indication that the performance has come to an end.

The two improvisational recitations of the same clan praise were done eloquently on each occasion. This unique manner of a clan praise recital revealed the high level of ability and talent, on the part of this reciter. His earlier statement that he was gifted in both the composition and recitation of the difela, accompanied by a concertina, made us truly understand and appreciate his unique approach to his clan praise recitation.

From the above, it can be observed that the recitation of the clan praises may form part of the mine workers’ chants by way of improvisation.

5.4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the characteristics of the clan praise recitals as an oral art form. Various definitions of oral tradition were given. From these definitions, the following aspects as applicable to the Basotho clan praises came to the fore: that clan praises constitute a subgenre of poetry, that this oral art form is transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation, that the clan praises are about the past, the present and the future, and that they convey the history, values and beliefs of the people concerned.

One of the characteristics peculiar to the clan praises concerns the aspect of authorship, namely, that the authors/composers of the clan praise recitals, like all other art forms, are not known since their composition was a matter of collective responsibility on the part of the whole clan. Lack of knowledge of the authors does not, however, play down the importance attached to this oral art form.

Some of the recorded and transcribed versions of the clan praises were
investigated and compared, and these revealed the instability of the texts in the form of extensions, additions, omissions, truncations, displacements and improvisations. These were discussed with relevant examples.

The general conclusion will be the subject of the last chapter.
CHAPTER 6

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 focussed mainly on the historical origin of the name Basotho, the historical establishment of the Basotho nation, their clan system, the definition of the family odes, origin of the clan names (diboko), their patrilineal nature, the unity between the Basotho and their diboko as well as the derivation and emergence of various diboko as we have them today.

Since the eighteenth century (cf. Ellenberger 1912 : 34), the name Basotho originated from the contact between the Bapedi and the Swazis who used to laugh at the breech-cloth of the Bapeli, and the trouble they took to make one of the three ends pass between the legs and join the other two in a knot behind, thinking their own fashion of a mocha, or sporran, made of jackals' tails or the dressed skins of rock-rabbit, more dignified. So, they called the Bapeli Abashuntu, a derivative of the verb uku shunta, "to make a knot". This designation, though bestowed in derision, was adopted with pride by the Bapeli, and later by other tribes similarly clothed, and was the origin of the present term, Basotho.

The Basotho nation was established as a result of incidents associated with period known as Difaqane, which began in 1822 and was characterised by chaos and successive invasions. During this period tribes were dislodged from their homes and, destitute and hungry, fell upon others, setting up a chain reaction of attack and flight. At the end of this period, Moshoeshoe, with great political wisdom, accepted all stray and diverse people who came to him for protection, built up a great tribe, and extending his rule, founded the Basotho nation.

According to oral tradition (Guma, 1971:4), the Basotho originated from a place called Ntswanatsatsi, the place from which the sun rises. It is said to have been surrounded by tall reeds, and to this day in consequence thereof, a reed or its substitute is usually erected outside a hut in which there is a newly born baby. To the vast majority of the Basotho, this is a mythical place whose exact geographical location is unknown. This place is believed to be somewhere between Frankfort and Vrede in the Free State.

Among the Basotho clans and families, patrilineal descent is invariably through the male line. This has certain implications on the maiden seboko (surname). Through the customary payment of cattle by the family of the bridegroom to that of the bride, the latter enters into marriage and becomes a member of her husband's family. In other words, her maiden seboko (surname) is "absorbed" by that of her husband. This is also the case in polygamous marriages.
Interruption among the Basotho clans is allowed as long as relationship between the couple is not too close; the reason being fear that children with physical or mental deformities will be born out of such marriages. In cases where a close intermarriage takes place, a common saying emerges, Dikgomo di boetse sakeng! (The cattle have returned to the kraal!), meaning, the cattle that would have gone to the in-laws are now retained within the family members.

The whole principle of surname “absorption” is based on the belief that it is the man who proposes love to and marries a woman, and not vice versa.

The family ode or seboko refers to the name of the progenitor, the totem or some cultural features by which a particular group of the Basotho is known. The Basia people, for instance, are so named after Mosia, their progenitor; the Bakwena (The Crocodile people) are so called on account of their totem, kwena (crocodile); and the Makgwakwga (People-of-the-interlaced-tree-branches) were so called on account of their disputes which were impregnable fences (makgwakwga) of inaccuracies and misstatements.

The importance underlying the diboko among the Basotho is that they partly constitute an oral history chronicle on the origin, the names of the progenitors, the philosophy and the characteristics of their various clans.

Cleavages among the tribes was the main reason for the prolifictions, not only of subclans, subclan names, each with its own leader, but of clan praise recitations as well.

Chapter 2 focussed on the formulaic structure and performance of the clan praise recitals. Their linear composition shows that they consist of the introduction, the body and the conclusion, and this is a reflection of artistic ability on the part of the composers.

The clan praise recitals differ in length; some are longer; some are shorter. Sometimes, and for reasons of brevity, people prefer to use the truncated forms of these recitals, such as, Tauf Sebata! (the Lion! The Beast!) instead of the whole recitation. A closer look at the recitals reveals the use of various techniques common in praise poetry. Some of these are the naming formulas, the patronymic and the tyonymic formulas.

Some of the common poetic techniques used, include parallelisms, linkings (initial, horizontal and final), question and answer techniques, ideophones, alliterations, assonances, compound words, noun and cognate verbs. The use of these techniques shows that this oral art form is consciously an art; there is
a conscious striving after literary effect and a conscious effort to attain a richer, a more evocative, a more emotive, and a more memorable use of language and its contents.

The discussion in Chapter 3 focussed on the content or the subject matter of the clan praise recitals in which the genealogies of the clans form an important component. The genealogies of the ancestors from whom members of the various Basotho clans believe to have descended, the totem names, the cultures, philosophies and the historical incidents underlying the establishment of the clans, all constitute the contents of the clan praise recitals. The underlying importance of the genealogies is the maintenance of a link between the old and the new generation, and this is reflected in their clan praise recitals where, inter alia, mention is made of the ancestor names.

The contents of the praise recitals of the clans discussed in this chapter, are those of the following clans: Bafokeng, Bataung, Bakwena, Bahlakwana, Batloung, Makgwakgwa, Bakgatla, Makgolokwe, Batlokw, Basia, Baphuthi and Batshweneng. The discussion of these was accompanied by genealogical charts taken from Ellenberger (1912: 394).

Chapter 4 focussed on the functions of the praise recitals. The educational function was originally intended to teach the Basotho children from childhood the importance of knowing their historical origin, and this was done through a game called Mmantilatilane or O tswa kae?

The social functions are diverse, and include the following: for group identity; as national, communal, identity "document"; to address children; for greeting; thanking; during initiation ceremony, weddings and funerals; for consoling; for persuasion; for expressing shock; and when swearing an oath. Communication with the ancestors constitutes the religious function of the clan praise recitals.

Clan names or/and the clan praise recitals, either in full or in part, form part of the composition of other genres, such as, praise poetry, mine workers' chants (difele a diparolathota), the traditional doctors' falls (mawa), the boy initiates' poems (dikoma and mangae) as well as choral music.

In Chapter 5 the discussion was on the definition of oral tradition and the characteristics of the clan praise recitals as an oral art form. The latter included the feature of authorship, namely, that the authors/composers of the clan praise recitals, like all other art forms, are usually not known since such compositions were a matter of collective responsibility on the part of the whole clan.

Oral recitation of the clan praises revealed characteristics such as the instability
of the texts, extensions, additions, omissions, truncations, displacements and improvisations. Despite these characteristics, the basic message conveyed by the recitals was preserved.

Oral tradition in general, and the clan praise recitals, in particular, which, for centuries, characterised the Basotho nation, are still maintained as a living heritage among the Basotho today. This state of affairs has been made possible by the Basotho's general belief that Setjhaba se lahlang meetlo se a shwa (A nation without culture dies). There are, admittedly, an insignificant number of the Basotho among whom maintenance of oral tradition demonstrates a gradual decline. Some of the informants I met during my fieldwork, also confirmed the veracity of this statement. Maphatšoe Mangwane, from Matsieng, Lesotho, even went further to say,

*Basotho ba kajeno ha ba sa tshwana le ba pele. Ba kajeno ba lahlile sehahabo bona. Ba se ba kgikitha ka mora meetlo esele.*

The modern Basotho are no more like those of the past. The modern ones have turned against their culture and are hankering after foreign cultures.

My visit to the various places in Gauteng; Kgubetswana and Qwaqwa, in the Free State; and Leribe, Maseru, Morena, Kglobokwe, Matsieng, in Lesotho, revealed that most of the Basotho living in the rural areas, the semi-rural areas, and the metropolitan cities, still regard oral tradition as important, for instance, history of their origin, the customs peculiar to the Basotho, and the oral recitation of their clan praises. This is the reason why it was fairly easy for me to interview the informants and to make recordings of more than 100 clan praises within a short space of time. Some of the recorded and transcribed clan praises were recited by children (cf. recitation by Lefu Paepae, from Benteke. No. 108. C12/A/8).

With the establishment of the mining industry during the latter part of the nineteenth century, many Basotho men and women migrated to South Africa where they sold their labours. This system attracted migrants from African states neighbouring South Africa. The migrants spent most of their productive life in the mines and were therefore exposed to a long experience of urban and industrial life where they met various people with various backgrounds, cultures and languages, such as, *fanakalo, tsotsitaal, Zulu, Afrikaans,* English, etc. Exposure of the migrant workers to this environment did not, however, change their attitude towards their country, culture and beliefs.

As from 1833 when the early missionaries brought Christianity to Africa, and to the Basotho, in particular, they sometimes viewed the latter as illiterate and
barbaric, and as people who were devoid of civilisation. Their mission was therefore to evangelize them by replacing the ancestor religion and culture of the Basotho, not only with christianity, but also with the colonizers' culture. To achieve this, the missionaries established schools which were primarily an instrument of Christianization through which the converts could be able to read the Bible. Says James Stewards, in Kunene (1971 : xii),

If missionary education communicated no other power than ability to read the Bible, it would still justify itself.

Furthermore, the missionaries left no doubt as to the prejudice with which they looked at the culture of the Basotho and even tried by all means in their power to abolish it. Ashton (1952 : 8) aptly describes this situation as follows:

The early missionaries, unfortunately, were strict Calvinists who tried to abolish, as un-Christian, many Basotho customs, not only among their converts by example and precept, but also among the people generally by proclaimed law.

This situation precipitated the revolt of 1880 between Basotho custom and Christianity, which, according to Ashton (1952 : 8], caused much damage to much of the old Basotho culture.

This prejudice was also inculcated into the minds of the Basotho who eventually looked at their own culture with contempt. A typical example of this attitude was apparent among some of the informants I met during my field work when I compiled and recorded the Basotho clan praise recitals. Some of them did not want to recite their clan praises in their entirety. The reason they advanced was that since they accepted christianity they have decided to avoid some vulgar sections of their recitals which, according to their religion, are not acceptable.

It is ironic to realize that the prejudice with which the oral tradition and culture of the Basotho were looked at, appears to have been implanted in the minds of some of the Basotho authors. For instance, Azariel Sekese, in his book, Mekgoa ea Basotho (1953 : iii), begins his discussion well on the importance of oral tradition for the next generations. He continues to explain how the Gospel helped to awaken the Basotho from the culture of heathenism and darkness of sleep in which they used to be. He says the following about the missionaries,

*Ba re bontšitse tebetebeya bohetene, moo Morena, Modimo o mohau, o ba tsikileng teng ho morena wa lefifi ka Evangeli. Basotho kaofela, ba baholo le ka bana, re na be re hlobotse, re*
They have shown us the depth of heathenism, where the Lord, the graceful God, has rescued us from the king of darkness through the Gospel. All of us, old and young, were naked, and without shame; daylight to us was like night-time. When we realized our nakedness, we began to be ashamed of ourselves, and now we have gradually begun to dress properly whilst undressing our bestiality.

The influence of the Gospel and all religion in general, left no doubt as to the prejudice with which even the Basotho looked at their own culture and the oral art forms. Those who accepted Christianity turned their backs against their culture, customs and oral art forms, and began to view the practice thereof as a reflection of heathenism and bestiality. The irony is that a majority of those who claim to be Christians still cling tenaciously to the maintenance and perpetuation of their culture and customs.

Apart from Christianity, Chadwick (1978: 7) enumerates other reasons that played a role in distancing the Basotho from their culture. He comments,

Because of longstanding contact with civilisation through evangelisation and the presence of missionaries or through the influence of magistrates and English traders, or because of constant information to which the young Basotho are subjected during their stay in the mining centres, the customs of the natives of South Africa have been profoundly modified.

That Chadwick regards the Basotho culture and all aspects of oral tradition as heathenism, is confirmed by the following statement he makes about the initiation rite:

One of the customs which heathenism has preserved with greater tenacity is that of the initiation of the young, which in Basutoland is called lebollo.
(Emphasis is mine)

The general view of associating civilisation with Christianity, and culture with heathenism, greatly contributed to the Basotho’s rejection of their own culture and oral tradition. Christianity and other religions which systematically spreaded and enforced such beliefs, did not only become a stumbling block to
the practice of culture and the maintenance of oral tradition among the Basotho, but also to the oral recitation of the clan praises.

The introduction of Christianity exposed the Basotho to a new way of life where the roles of traditional figures such as kings, chiefs and tribal religious leaders, among others, had either to change, be forsaken or replaced. This led to the disintegration of the Basotho society. In this way, Christianity and other religions contributed to the decline in the maintenance of the culture and the oral tradition among some of the Basotho.

It is common knowledge in African literary study that the exposure of the Basotho to the culture of writing and reading is attributed to the arrival of the missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS). These missionaries arrived in Lesotho and settled at Morija in 1833 (cf. Swanepeol, 1987: 95;). Their advent is also associated with the introduction of literacy among the Basotho.

The development of literacy among the Basotho gave rise to a need to adapt psychologically and socially to this mode of literary communication. In fact, this means that writing restructures human consciousness (cf. Ong, 1982: 78). The shifting took place whereby the Basotho began to concentrate more on the emerging education coupled with civilization. To some of the Basotho, the culture of literacy helped to serve the Basotho's oral heritage better than before its introduction because their compositions could be preserved for future generations. A number of books already written on Basotho songs, customs and culture, clan praise recitals, games, birds, etc., confirms this.

The totems venerated by the Basotho clans serve to distinguish one clan from the other, and the totem name is not only used as a clan name, but also as a metaphorical eulogy in which the attributes or qualities associated with the totem are believed to be bestowed upon the clan members. To some clan members, this belief is so strong that they take this to be literally true. The belief of associating themselves with the qualities of their clan totems serves as a stimulus to live up to such qualities.

The clan members of the Bataung (The Lion People), for instance, by venerating the lion, believed that they were endowed with bravery and strength which were the qualities of their totem animal. The Maphuthing (People of the Duiker), on the other hand, were known for their qualities of solidarity and of finishing their duties in time, owing to their association with the duikers which are generally seen in pairs, as well as their tendency of waking up early in the morning to feed their young ones. It is from this incident that the Basotho proverb Phuthi e tsoha ka meso e anyese (literally, a duiker wakes up early in the morning to feed its young ones) originated. The English version of this
proverb is “The early bird catches the worm”.

The totems associated with the Basotho clans are of various kinds. They may be wild animals, birds, amphibians, stones, irons, spiders, etc. (cf point 1.3.4 in Chapter 1 where various clan names and totem names are fully discussed). The practice of associating oneself with the qualities of a totem as an emblem was not confined to the Basotho, but has become a common phenomenon of the modern times, as in the following names and nicknames:

**Dinare** (Buffaloes)

*Dinare* is the name of a group of the Basotho breast dancers (*mokgibo*) in Qwaqwa. This group associates itself with the shaggy head and the humped neck of a buffalo, a big ox-like animal, owing to the manner in which the head and breast are moved during the performance of the dance.

**Dikwena** (Crocodiles)

Members of the *Dikwena* football team from Lesotho associate themselves with the crocodiles which swim deep in the waters where they mercilessly can kill and devour any living animal or person that enters the water. Being the *Dikwena* (The Crocodiles), they firmly believe that they can “devour” (defeat) other teams against which they play.

**Marematlou** (Elephant collaborators)

*Marematlou* is one of the political parties in Lesotho. Members of this party associate themselves with the strength of an elephant. Their spirit of unity makes them associate themselves with the strength of an elephant. The name is also associated with the expression *Marematlou a ntswe leng* (People who work together must agree).

**Amabhokobhoko** (The Springboks)

*Amabhokobhoko* is a South African rugby team which associates itself with the fast leaping of the springbok, and owes its success to a belief in such a quality.

**Tobaka** (The galloping sound)

The name *Tobaka* is given to a horse on account of association with the galloping sound of a fast running horse.

Other examples of nicknames similarly used are “The Springboks” (S.A. rugby

The above examples confirm that the practice of associating oneself with the qualities of a totem as an emblem was not confined to the Basotho, but has become a common phenomenon of the modern times. The choice of contemporary nicknames is not done arbitrarily, but with an aim to enhance both the expectation and the high standard of performance.

On the issue of oral tradition, it is true that christianity and other religions, modernisation and industrialisation as well as the culture of literacy, may have impacted negatively on the maintenance of oral tradition, but those Basotho who have allowed themselves to be the victims of these influences are in the minority. Among the majority of the Basotho, especially in Lesotho and many of the rural areas of the Free State, oral tradition is still maintained as an important heritage of the Basotho. The yearly festivals such as the Morija Arts & Cultural Festival serve to prove the high degree to which the Basotho still maintain their culture and their oral tradition which demonstrate their collective oral heritage.

In the new millenium, all the traditional aspects of the Basotho’s oral tradition should be exploited as fully as possible. The very culture of literacy should be positively used to ensure the permanence of the Basotho’s creative art and compositions. This should be done through the printing of clan praise anthologies and the possible inclusion of this oral art form in the school syllabi, especially in schools where tuition of Sesotho as a subject is offered. All these are possible in view of the government’s current campaign of African renaissance.

Ntwa e sa tswela pele!
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Mahlati Mokotutse, Kgubetswana, Clarens
Makafane 'Mamphomane, Roma, Lesotho
Makatu Moarlo, Makakamela, Leribe
Makado 'Mamakhola, Kholokoe, Lesotho
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Metsing Pulane, Butha-Butha
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Mokone Thabiso, Kgubetswana, Clarens
Mokwena Jwale, Kgubetswana, Clarens
Mokwena Piet, Bohlokon, Bethlehem
Mokwena Sekwakwe, Kgubetswana
Mokwena Tselane, Qwaqwa
Mopeli ‘Manthofoela, Morija
Mopeli Rantsubise, Diepkloof, Soweto
Mosia Malefetsane, Fouriesburg
Mosia ‘Maxaba, Kgubetswana, Clarens
Mosia Mphamo, Molokong
Mosikili Lebohang, Morija
Mosoeunyana ‘Mamosabala, Rampai, Leribe
Mosoeunyana Marumo, Rampai, Leribe
Motale Raletšabisa, Butha - Buthe
Motaung Daniel, Kgubetswana, Clarens
Motaung Mohau, Kgubetswana, Clarens
Motloung ‘Mathohloane, Bohlokon, Bethlehem
Motloung Lepekola, Kgubetswana, Clarens
Motloung Samuel, Bohlokon, Bethlehem
Motšoane Lengau, Butha - Buthe
Motšoenyane Teboho, Makhoakhoeng
Mphana Tšilsetso, Kgubetswana, Clarens
Mpiko Tankiso, Makakamela, Leribe
Nkhabu Selloane, Qwaqwa
Ntšeteke Mabose, Makhoakhoeng
Ntšihlele Kemuel, Morija
Paepae Lefu, Benteko, Lesotho
Pateng Mokiehi, Kgubetswana, Clarens
Phakisi Edward, Mahloenyeng
Phali Morapeli, Kgubetswana, Clarens

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Ramataboe Peter, Teyateyaneng
Ramokone Fisane, Mahloenyeng, Matsueng
Rapali Mohale, Monontsha, Qwaqwa
Seato Teboho, Makakamela, Leribe
Sekeane 'Mamothobi, Qwaqwa
Seile 'Matšajoa, Mporana, Lesotho
Seisa Abinere, Morija
Sekheo 'Mamothibeli, Kolonyama
Sekoabetlane 'Mateboho, Mahloenyeng
Selila Paseka, Kholokoe, Matsueng
Sello Mangena, Rampai, Leribe
Semithe Ralebatha, Mahloenyeng, Matsueng
Senekale 'Matsietsi, Mahloenyeng, Matsueng
Taape 'Matumisang, Maseru
Thejane Disema, Vanderbijlpark
Tšeleli 'Masetefane, Kholokoe, Matsueng
Tšibela Morie, Qwaqwa
Tšoinyane Abele, Kholokoe, Matsueng

D. Cassettes from SABC (Lesedi Stereo)

The following cassettes were received with kind compliments from Mosololi Mohapi, Lesedi Stereo announcer:

1. Bataung
2. Batshweneng
3. Makgolokwe
4. Bahlakwana

E. List of cassettes with recitations and names of informants

Cassette 1, side A

1. Letšoara Tephe
2. Mangena Sello
3. Mosoeunyana Marumo
4. Mosoeunyana 'Mamosabala
5. Letsoela Mputi
6. Sekheo 'Mamothibeli
7. Khasi Ntebelle
8. Mohapi Malimatle
9. Mphiko Tankiso
10. Seato Teboho
11. Rampai Sello

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12. Makafu Morallo
13. Mojaki Phillip
14. Letsoela Moferefere
15. Mokheseng 'Mamosa
16. Mokheseng 'Mamosa
17. Makafane 'Mamphomane
18. Maeko 'Maliau
19. Matjama 'Mamokoena
20. Metsing Pulane
21. Taape 'Matumisang
22. Lubisi 'Mathabo
23. Mopeli 'Manthofoela
24. Ramataboe Peter
25. Mahlatsi Makututsa
26. Lesedi Lebohang

**Cassette 1, Side B**

1. Seisa Abinere
2. Matia Mosa
3. Borotho Motlatsi
4. Lehloenya Patrick
5. Mofokeng 'Maponto
6. Hloenya Ntebile
7. Lehloenya Makhobalo
8. Semithe Ralebatha
9. Ramokone Fisane
10. Matšoele 'Malenka
14. Senekale 'Matsietsi
15. Phakisi Edward
16. Sekwabetiane 'Mateboho
17. Tšoinyane Abele
18. Mangoane Maphatšoe
19. Sedila Paseka
20. Makalo 'Mamakhala
21. Masoetsa 'Mateleko
22. Masoetsa 'Mateleko
23. Masoetsa 'Mateleko
24. Mosia Mphamo
25. Mosia Mphamo
26. Tšeleli 'Masetefane
27. Mekete 'Mapapiso
28. Mekete 'Mapapiso
29. Makututsa Lesitsi

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Cassette 2, Side A
1. Ntšihlele Kemuel

Cassette 3, Side A
1. Mphana Tiisetso
2. Mokwena Motsei
3. Mokwena Motsei
4. Motloung Lepekola
5. Phali Morapeli

Cassette 3, Side B
1. Mokwena Daniel
3. Mokwena Sekwekwe
4. Mokwena Piet
5. Motaung Mohau
6. Mosia 'Maxaba
7. Moeleso Samuele
8. Mokone Thabiso

Cassette 4, Side A
1. Mosikili Lebohang
2. Khoaisane Tota
3. Bokhatsi Letletsa
4. Mokwena Gabriel
5. Mokwena Mokete

Cassette 5, Side A
1. Mofokeng Pontšo
2. Matela Shoai
4. Mateu Palo
5. Pateng Moliehi
6. Mofokeng Malefetsane
7. Tsibela More
8. Matla Seabata
9. Lieta Kokobela
10. Nkhabu Selloane
Cassette 5, Side B
1. Lesetla Pulane
2. Mapena Matlokotsi

Cassette 6, Side A
1. Motaung Daniel
2. Motloung Lepekola
3. Mokwena Lebohang
4. Khaketla N.M.

Cassette 7, Side A
1. Mofokeng Makai
2. Mofokeng Makai
3. Mofokeng Makai
4. Mokwena Jwalane
5. Ntereke Maboea

Cassette 8, Side A (Lesedi stereo)
1. Makgolokwe clan recital (no reciter's name)
2. Makgolokwe clan recital (no reciter's name)

Cassette 9, Side A
1. Seekane 'Mamothobi
2. Motloung 'Matoholoane
3. Madiehe D.A.

Cassette 10, Side A (Lesedi stereo)
1. Bataung clan recital (no reciter's name)
2. Bataung clan recital (no reciter's name)
3. Bataung clan recital (no reciter's name)

Cassette 11, Side A (Lesedi stereo)
1. Batshweneng clan recital (no reciter's name)
2. Batshweneng clan recital (no reciter's name)
Cassette 12, Side A

1. Kotsana Pontšo
2. Motšoane Lengau
3. Motšoane Lengau
4. Motale Ralešabisa
5. Motale Ralešabisa
6. Mosia Malefetsane
7. Makwineng Teboho
8. Paepae Lefu
9. Motšoenyane Teboho
10. Seile 'Matšajoa

E. Verbal Transcriptions

1. Mofokeng Moipone
2. Motloung Samuel
3. Rapali Mohale
APPENDIX

In order to facilitate reference to information on the cassette, the following will be written on the cassette:
C = cassette, that is, C1 stands for cassette no.1, C2 for no. 2, etc.
A or B = either side A or B on the cassette.
Numeral = the number at which a recorded recitation can be found and listened to according to numerical order. The first numeral refers to the numerical order of the transcriptions of such recitations in the “Appendix”.

24 C4/A/3, for instance, means that the transcribed recitation is no. 24 in the “Appendix”, and be listened to on cassette no.4, side A, and is the third according to numerical order. The names of the informants as well as the villages of their origin are also provided in the “Appendix”. Please note that the recitations numbered 111 to 113 were not recorded on tape, but are mere transcriptions.

The following is a list of the recitations (diboko) with their English translations.

1. C1/A/1 Letšoara Tephe, from Molokong, Phatwe.

1. Mohlakwana Pholo ya Disema,
2. Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
3. Motho ya sa jeng ngwathwana sa maobane,
4. Wa Napo le Mosito,
5. Ya jang feela ha ho thea ya diotlwana,
6. Ho thea e menyenyane.
7. Ke letib, ke lefirwane,
8. Tshwene ya etjhisa senana e beleha.
9. Ke kwena, kwenanyane,
10. E a hiapa, e a theosa madiboho,
11. Kwena, kwena tse ding ka i e je!

1. A Hlakwana of an Ox of Disema,
2. Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
3. One who does not eat yesterday’s bread,
4. One of Napo and Mosito,
5. Who eats only when they fall, those courtyards ones (the shadows),
6. When the small ones fall,
7. He is a pumpkin, a small one,
8. A baboon burnt an abdomen during birth,
9. It is a crocodile, a young one,
10. It fords and descends along the drifts,
11. A crocodile which others do not eat!
Second recitation (after a few minutes):

1. Mohlakwana Pholo ya Disema,
2. Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
3. Motho ya sa jeng ngwathwana sa maobane,
4. ............................................................
5. Ya jang feela meriti ha e thea ya diotiwa,
6. ............................................................
8. ............................................................
9. ............................................................
10. ...........................................................
11. ...........................................................

1. A Hlakwana of an Ox of Disema,
2. Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
3. One who does not eat yesterday's food,

Who eats only when they fall, those (shadows) of the courtyards,
He/She is a pumpkin, a small one!

2. C1/A/2 Mangena Sello, from Rampai village in Lesotho.

Ke thelleng
Ke le Motaung wa ha Hlalele,
Wa Nthethe a Morapedi,
Ha Hlalele ha ho marenamangata,
Morena ke Hlalele a inotshi,
Hlalele petu la lekana molala,
Lebese la retha le eso kene hlofeng!

How can I pay homage
Being one of the Lion people of Hlalele's house,
Of Nthethe, son of Morapedi,
At Hlalele's there are no many a chief,
The only chief is Hlalele,
Hlalele, the brass ring fitted the neck,
Milk thickened before it became sour!

3. C1/A/3 Marumo Mosoeunyana, from Rampai village, Lesotho
(Mokwena of the house of Modibedi)

Motho wa Mamputlane a Makeka,
Motho wa boNkoriba le Tsotelo,
Motho wa ha Mamahlosi a Nakedi,
Ere a eja, a kgore,
Ke re ke lekgugkuguntshatshwana,
A yo le ja le mosadi wa hae,
A yo le ja le Mmamodiehi,
Motho wa boMothibe le Mmalane!

One of the family of Mphutlane, son of Makeka,
One of the family of Nkoriba and Tsotelo,
One of the house of Mahlosi, son of Nakedi,
Who, whilst eating, becomes satisfied,
I say I am the-hider-away-of-the-black-one,
Who goes to eat it with his wife,
Who goes to eat it with mother Modiehi,
One of the family of Mothibe and Mmalane!

Second recitation:

*Motho wa ha Mphutlane a Makeka,*
*Motho wa boNkoriba le Tslotel,*
*Motho wa ha Mamahlosi a Nakedi,*
*Motho wa boMothibe le Mmalane,*
*Ke lekgukguntshationwa,*
*A yo le ja le mosadi wa hae,*
*A yo le ja le Mmadiehi!*

One of the family of Mphutlane, son of Makeka,
One of the family of Nkoriba and Tshotelo,
One of the house of Mahlosi, son of Nakedi,
**One of the family of Mothibe and Mmalane,**
I am the hider-away-of-the-black-one,
Who goes to eat it with his wife,
Who goes to eat it with mother Modiehi!


*Ke Mothimokhelo wa Pokane a Sele,*
*Solo le ya sa, le ya sibakela,*
*Amahlubi a mahle, a mangelengele,*
*Abantu ba zipho zimnyama ngokuqhwayana!*

I am Mthimkhulu of Pokane, son of Sele,
The sky clears, it darkens,
The beautiful Hlubis,
People with various attractive black gifts.

5. C1/A/5  Mputi Letsoela, Makakamela village

*Ke thelleng,*
*Ke le motho wa ha Mahlatsi a Lebeko,*
*Motho wa Sepharumele sa Mongalana,*
*Motho wa ha Mamothotlo o a batiwa,*
*Batho ba ha Mahlatsi ba kaa ka dinaledi,*
*Ba bakaalo ka jwang ba tshaane, molelengwane,*
*Batho ba ha Mahlatsi ha se ba ho ya le batho,*
*E reng ba ya le batho, mahlare a lale!*

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Why should I pay homage,
Being one of the family of Mahlatsi, son of Lebeko,
Descendant of Sepharumele, son of Mongalana,
Descendant of the-Sieve-is-being-sought-ones,
Mahlatsi people are as many as the stars,
They are as many as eragrostis, the long one,
The Mahlatsi’s are not really the right people to accompany others,
For accompanying others, vegetables will not grow!

6. C1/A/6  Mamothibeli Sekho, Kolonyama, Lesotho

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
Di-se-nna-di-omela-mokgwabo-tlung,
Motho wa boLebajwa le Letuka,
Ka Tshele nka tshella mang?

Why should I pay homage,
Being a descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-huts,
One of the family of Lebajwa le Letuka,
Swearing by Tshele, who can I pay homage to?

7. C1/A/7  Ntebelle Khasi, Makakamela village, Leribe.

Ke thelle jwang,
Ke le Mofokeng,
Wa Mantsukunyane a Kata a Sefiri,
Bakgwejana ba ho titima mabileng,
Batho ba Mamodise a Kata a Sefiri!

How can I pay homage,
Being a Mofokeng,
Of the Ntsukunyane people of Kata, son of Sefiri,
The young Kgwele people who ran on top of the graves,
Descendants of Modise, son of Kata, son of Sefiri!

8. C1/A/8  Malimatle Mohapi, Makakamela village

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Motaung,
Ha ho Motaung e mong e ntle ho nna,
Seboko ke Motaung feela,
E leng wa ha Hlalele!

How can I pay homage,
Being one of the Lion people,
There is no other member of the Lion people besides me,
The only clan name is that of the Lion people,
Being of the family of Hlalele!

9. C1/A/9 Tankiso Mpiko, Makakamela, Leribe

Ke nna Mofokeng wa ha Maotswana,
Maotswana a makaalo ka dinaledi,
A finyella dikgopong!

I am s/he of the Bafokeng, the Maotswana (Footprints-clan),
The Maotswana are as many as the stars,
They disappear into the ribs!

10. C1/A/10 Teboho Seato, Makakamela

Mosia wa Mantshang-thebe-di-ome,
Di-se-nne-di-omela-mokgwabo-tlung,
Ha ke re ka Tshele ke tshele mang?
Ke Tshele wa Lebajwa le Nkwanyane!

Descendant of Mosia of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut.
When I say (swear) by Tshele, who do I pay homage to?
It is Tshele of Lebajwa and Nkwanyane!

11. C1/A/11 Sello Rampai, Rampai village, Leribe

Ha boHlalele ha ho marenamangata,
Morena ke Hlalele a inotshi,
Ngwana Nthethe a Morapedi,
Motho wa petu la lekana molala,
Morena ke Hlalele a inotshi!

At Hlalele’s there are no many a chief,
The only chief is Hlalele,
Child of Nthethe, son of Morapedi,
One whose a brass-ring fitted the neck,
The only chief is Hlalele!

12. C1/A/12 Morallo Makafu, Makakamela village, Leribe

Mofokeng wa ha Maotwanafinyela,
Maotswana a ka ka dinaledi,
A kaalo ka jwag ba tshaane,
Bona ba tshaane, molelengwana,
Ke motho wa Mamoraredi a Phohole!

One of the Bafokeng, the Maotwanafinyela (Footprints-contract!),
The Maotwana are many as the stars,
They are many as eragrostis (tshaane grass),
This eragrostis, the long one,
I am a descendant of Moraredi, son of Phohole!

13. C1/A/13  Phillip Mojaki, Makakamela

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Lekgwagwa la Sedimo nthole,
Maphutse le maraka ke imetswe,
Motho wa boDijo, wa boMoselane,
Ha boDijo ho hlabana dithotsetla!

How can I pay homage,
Being a Kgwagwa of Sedimo, take-off-my-load,
The big pumpkins and their shoots, I am carrying a heavy load,
One of the family of Dijo and Moselane,
At Dijo's place, ghosts fight one another!


Ke thelleng,
Ke le Lekgwagwa la ha Mahlatsi,
Batho ba ha Mahlatsi ba kaalo ka dinaledi,
Ba kaalo ka jwang ba tshaane, molelengwane,
Ke batho ba ha Mamphamo a Mahasa,
Batho ba Sepharumele sa Mongalo,
Ke batho ba ha Mamothotlo o a batwa,
Mothotlo bosiu o ba mokgubedu,
Motsheare o ba mosootho,
Batho ba ha Mahlatsi ha se ba ho ya le batho ntweng,
Ha ba ya le batho mahlare a a lala,
Ho tjha dithota, boAtanye le boKolonyama,
Diya-ha-Mahlatsi di ya ka bohlale,
Ha o ya ha Mahlatsi o ye ka bohlale,
Bona sekotl tseleng o tla wela!

How can I pay homage,
Being a Kgwagwa of Mahlatsi's place,
Mahlatsi people are as many as the stars,
They are as many as eragrostis, the long one,
They are of the descendants of Mphamo, son of Mahasa,
Descendants of Sepharumele, son of Mongalo,
They are of The-sieve-is-being-sought-clan,
The sieve at night becomes red,
During the day it becomes brown.
Mahlatsi people do not really make good company at war,
If they accompany others, vegetables will not grow,
Burnt were the fields like Atanye and Kolonyama,
Goers-to-the-house-of-Mahlatsi should go there with wisdom,
If you go to the house of Mahlatsi, go there with wisdom,
Beware of the hole on the road; it will trip you!

15. C1/A/15  ‘Mamosa Mokheseng, Makakamela village, Leribe

Letebele la Mothimokholo,
La Pokane a Seele,
La tsolo la esa, la sibathela!

A Ndebele of Mthimkhulu,
Of Pokane, son of Seele,
The sky became clear; it became dark!

17. C1/A/17  ‘Mamphomane Makafane, Roma, Lesotho

Letebele la Mothimokholo, Pokane,
Ke a hola, ke sebothwane!

A Ndebele of Mthimkulu, son of Pokane,
I keep growing and becoming well-shaped!

18. C1/A/18  ‘Maliau Maeko, Semonkong, Lesotho

Mokwena wa ha Mantsane a Monaheng,
Malia-ho-ngwathelwa,
Majapolokwe-kaofela!

One of the Crocodile people of Ntsane, son of Monaheng,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
Eaters-of-the-whole-round-bread!

19. C1/A/19  ‘Mamokoena Matjama, Hoohlo village, Lesotho

Motlokwa wa ha Mmanthatisi,
Mothe wa Tshotetsi a Lebaka,
Mothe ya neng a nyele mokopu,
Wa Mmamohato wa Butha-Buthe,
Mothe wa kubu, ke nare ya tsolo le lefubedu,
Le neng le otle habedi ka hara kereke,
Le ipatiela ngwana lona, Ntlenyana,

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Selepe, Mokgesi o hana kereke,
O etellwa pele ke baruti ka tseleng,
Le wena ka moso ba tla o etella!

Descendant of Motlokwa of Mmanthatisi's house,
One of Tshotetsi, son of Lebaka,
One who once excreted on the pumpkin,
That belonged to mother Mohato of Butha-Buthe,
One who is of a hippopotamus is a buffalo of the red lightning,
Which stroke twice inside the church,
Aimed at its own child, Ntlenyana,
Selepe, Mokgesi defies the church,
He is led forward by the priests on the road,
And you too, tomorrow they will lead you forward!

20. **C1/A/20** Pulane Metsing, Butha-Buthe, Lesotho

*Ke thelleng,*
*Ke le Motaung wa Maloisane,*
*A kgomo ya lebese!*

Why do I pay homage,
Being one of the Lion people of Maloisane,
Those of the milk bovine!

21. **C1/A/21** 'Matumisang Taape, Maseru

*Mokwena wa Mankopane a Mathunya,*
*Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,*
*Majapolokwe-kaofela!*

One of the Crocodile people of Nkopane, son of Mathunya,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
Eaters-of-the-whole-round-bread!

22. **C1/A/22** 'Mathabo Lubisi, Maseru, Lesotho

*Mohlakwana wa Pholo a Disema,*
*Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,*
*Ya sa jeng ha ho thea e menyane ya diotlwana,*
*Ya jang merti ha e thea,*
*Ya jang polokwe kaofela!*

A Hlakwana of an Ox of Disema,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
One not eating when they fall, those small shadows of the courtyards,
One eating when the shadows fall,
One eating the whole round bread!

23. C1/A/23  ‘Manthofeela Mopeli, Morija, Lesotho

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Motebang wa Napo a Mosito,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Batho ba sa jeng sengwathwa,
Ba jang polokwe kaofela,
Ba jang ha merili ho thea,
Ho thea e menyane ya diotiwana!

Why should I pay homage,
Being a descendant of Motebang, son of Napo, son of Mosito,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
People who do not eat a piece of bread,
Who eat the whole round bread,
Who eat when the shadows fall,
When they fall, those small ones of the courtyards!

24. C1/A/24  Peter Ramataboe, Teyateyaneng

Diya-ha-Mahlatsi di ya ka bohlale,
Ba ha Mahlatsi ha ba lwana,
Pula e ka na!

Those-going-to-the-house-of-Mahlatsi go there with wisdom,
When those of Mahlatsi’s are engaged in a battle,
Rain can fail!

25. C1/A/25  Makututsa Mahlatsi, Kgubetswana, Clarens

Mofokeng wa Mantho e kgolo,
E a kgopa, Ramotshedisi,
E kgopa basadi ba batho,
Ke motho wa Maletlapa-ha-le-ribolwe,
Ha o ka le ribolla, o ka bona ntho tse kgolo!

One of the Bafokeng, those “Strange-things”,
It tempts, beware Ramotshedisi,
It tempts other people’s wives,
I am of the clan, the-Stone (flat one)-should-not-be-turned-up,
If you can turn it up, you can see strange things!

26. C1/A/26  Lebohang Leseli, Kolo, Lesotho

Ke Mohlakwana wa ha Mantsane,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,
Ya jang ha ho thea meriti,
Ho thea e menyane ya diotiwna!

I am a Hlakwana of the house of Ntsane,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
One who does not eat a small piece of yesterday’s bread,
Who eats only when the shadows fall,
When they fall, those small ones of the courtyards!

Second recitation:

Ke Mohlakwana wa ha Mantsane,
Lbewana la boKadi,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,
Ya jang ha ho thea meriti,
Ho thea e menyane ya diotiwna!

I am a Hlakwana of the house of Ntsane,
The great one of Kadi’s family,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
One who does not eat a small piece of yesterday’s bread,
Who eats only when the shadows fall,
When they fall, those small ones of the courtyards!

27. C1/B/3 Abinere Seisa, Morija

Ke Mosia, Motubatsu,
Motho wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
Di se nna di omela mokgwabo tlung!

I am a descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of Those-who-take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut!

28. C1/B/4 Mosa Matia, Morija

Motlokwa wa ha Tshotetsi Lebaka,
Batho ba eja pholo e le tjhilja!

Descendant of Motlokwa of the house of Tshotetsi, son of Lebaka,
People ate an ox, a round-horned-one!

29. C1/B/5 Motlatso Borotho, Morija

Motaung wa MaNthethe a Morapedi,
Wa kgomo ya lebese la ha Hlalele!
One of the Lion people Nthethe, son of Morapedi,  
Of the milk bovine of Hlalele's!

30. C1/B/6                  Patric Lehloenywa, Mahloenyeng, Matsieng

Mofokeng wa Mantsukunyane ,  
A Kata a Sefiri,  
Bakgwejana ba titima mabitieng!

One of the Bafokeng, the descendants of Ntsukunyane,  
Son of Kata, son of Sefiri,  
The young Kgwele people run on top of the graves!

31. C1/B/7                  'Maponto Mofokeng, Mahloenyeng, Matsieng

Ke thelleng,  
Ke le Mofokeng wa ha Kgetsi a Malekele,  
Batho ba neng ba leke letlalo la kgomo,  
Le eso ho fafw,  
La ba hlola, la kwala batho ba Dijana,  
Batho ba mohlano o mofubedu,  
O reng tleretere!

Why should I pay homage,  
Being one of the Bafokeng of Kgetsi, son of Malekele,  
People who once tried a bovine-hide,  
Before it was scrubbed,  
It beat them and dumbfounded the people of Dijana,  
People of the red afterbirth!  
The very red one!

32. C1/B/8                  Ntebile Hlowana, Mahloenyeng

Ke thelleng,  
Ke le Mofokeng wa ha Ntsukunyane,  
Bakgwele ba titima mabitieng,  
Ba tenne mese ya ditshedhe,  
Thotsela se Kgwele ha se je moroko,  
Fokoletsang Bakgwele dipolokwe,  
Etlare ha ba ata, ba le bolaye!

Why should I pay homage,  
Being one of the Bafoken of the house of Ntsukunyane,  
The Kgwele people run on top of the graves,  
Wearing skirts made of springbuck hides,  
A Kgwele ghost does not eat sorghum meal (beer dregs),  
Share your bread with the Kgwele ancestors,  
When they become numerous they will kill you!

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33. C1/B/9  Makhobalo Lehloeny, Mahloenyeng

Ke thelle jwang,
Ke le Mofokeng,
Wa Mantsukunyane a Kata a Sefiri,
Bakgwele ba titima mabitleng,
Thotsela sa Mokgwele ha se je moroko,
Se ja dipolokwe!

Why should I pay homage,
Being one of the Bafokeng,
Of Ntsukunyane, son of Kata, son of Sefiri,
The Bakgwele people run on top of the graves,
A Mokgwele ghost does not eat sorghum meal corn (beer dregs),
It eats round bread!

34. C1/B/10  Ralebatha Semithe, Mahloenyeng

Ke thelleleng,
Ke le Motlokwa wa ha Mmanthatisi,
Wa ho nyela mokopu wa Mmamohato,
Ngwana tshehla a badimo!

Why should I pay homage,
Being a descendant of Motlokwa of the house of Mmanthatisi,
One who excreted on the pumpkin belonging to mother Mohato,
Child of the great ancestors!

35. C1/B/11  Fisane Ramokone, Mahloenyeng

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Motaung,
Wa Sefatsa sa Tshukudu,
E reng motho ha a eshwa,
A kgaelewe hloho!

Why should I pay homage,
Being one of the Lion people,
Of Sefatsa, son of Tshukudu,
Who when dying,
Must be beheaded!

36. C1/B/12  'Malenka Matšoele, Mahloenyeng

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Motloung wa ha Sekgwane,
Motho wa boPhori, wa boMoeletsi,
Motho ekare a ithoma, a rota,
Sebono sa futha,
Ke nna motho wa ho nya ha monate!

Why should I pay homage,
Being one of the Elephant people of Sekgwane’s house,
One of the family of Phori and Moeletsi,
One who, when excreting and passing water,
The anus became painful.
I am that person who enjoyed excreting!

37. C1/B/14  ‘Matsietsi Senekale, Mahloenyeng

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Motaung wa Makobasia,
Batho ba neng ba rute makgowa tinare!

Why should I pay homage,
Being one of the Lion people, the Kobasia clan,
People who taught white people how to prepare dinner!

38. C1/B/15  Edward Phakisi, Mahloenyeng

Ke mofulakolobeng,
Motho wa Marasakane,
Moanaphofofo- a-e-ja!

I am one of the Wild-pig-people,
One of Rasakane descendants,
A-Swearer-by-the-animal-one-eats!

39. C1/B/16  ‘Mateboho Sekwabetlane, Mahloenyeng

La ga matshitapula tsheoia,
La motshabatshaba Monare,
Lekgalaka le Lesese,
Ngwana Mamotena-mohodu-o-le-tala!

One of those who can withstand the partly frozen rain,
A descendant of the fearful Monare,
Lekgalaka and Lesese,
Child of Those-who-eat-the-stomach-raw!

40. C1/B/17  Abele Tšoinyane, Kgolokwe, Matsieng

Ke thelle jwang ke le LeKgolokwe,
Lehabakgoho-ka-lemao,
Le e ise ho Mokgolwane kgorong,
Mokgolwane a e je, a e halala,
Nna ha ke na taba, ke phethile!
Why should I pay homage, being a Kgolokwe,
Piercer-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin,
And take it to Mokgolane at the gate,
Mokgolane would eat it despisingly,
I myself am not to blame; I have fulfilled!

41. C1/B/18 Maphatšoe Mangoane, Kgolokwe

Ke Mofokeng,
Ngwana kgomo e tshwana,
Kgomo ya seema-ka-lelebe-thoteng,
Ya nna ya hlaba mangope ho heleha,
Ke Lemphane,
Ke ngwana Kgomo e tshwana,
Ke motho wa Mannywana!

I am one of the Bafokeng,
Child of the black bovine,
A bovine that stood-with-its-female-organs-exposed-on-the-veld,
It kept on cutting as the dongas fell,
I am one of the Mphane clan,
I am a child of the black bovine,
I am one of the Nnywana people!

42. C1/B/19 Paseka Selila, Kgolokwe

Ke thelleleleng,
Ke le Lemphane,
Motho wa kgomo e tshwana,
Ya ho ema thoteng,
Motho wa Maletlapa-ha-le-ribollwe,
Ekare o le ribolla, motho a hlaha,
Motho wa Mamosonotsokotsa,
Motho wa Mannywana,
Motho wa Mamalebe!

Why should I pay homage,
Being member of the Mphane clan,
One belonging to the black bovine,
Which stood on the veld,
One of the-Stone-should-not-be-turned-up,
If you may turn it up, a person would appear,
One of Those-who-shake-the-private-parts,
One of People-of-the-female-sex-organ,
One of People-of-the-small-tongues!

43. C1/B/20 ‘Mamakhala Makalo, Kgolokwe

Re thelleleleng,
Re le Makgolokwe, Makotswana,
Mahlabakgoho-ka-lemao,
A e ise ha Mokgolwane kgotla,
Ngwana beng a e je a e halala,
A re “Boela hape o eo hlaba, motho wa Wetsi”,
Baphuthing, Maaparanku!

Why should we pay homage,
Being the descendants of MoKgolokwe, People of the mixed colours,
Piercers-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin,
And take it to Mokgolwane at the kraal,
The master’s child would then eat it despisingly,
And would say “ Go back and slaughter, you descendant of Wetsi”,
People of the duiker, Wearers-of-the-sheepskin!

44. C1/B/21  ‘Mateleko Masoetsa, Kgolokwe
(Motaung wa Ramokgele-Her maiden seboko)

Ke le lekolokotwane la Makobasia,
Le tla re ha le ja merit e thee,
Ho thee e menyane ya diotlwana,
Ke motho wa Malehahanyanakopela,
Motho wa Ramokgele,
Motho ya neng a rute makgowa tinare!

Being the-tattooed-One of the Kobasia people,
Who, when eating, the shadows fall,
Those small ones of the courtyards,
I am one of Those-small-cave-surround-me,
A descendant of Ramokgele,
One who taught the white people how to prepare dinner!

45. C1/B/22  ‘Mateleko Masoetsa,(the clan recital of her in-laws):

Re batho ba ha Mahwete Komane,
Re batho ba bodiba bo botala ha bo okamelwe,
Ekare ha o bo okamela,
O ka wela ka mahlwana le ditsejana,
Kubu hohomosa malota re bone,
Kubu ha o e ane mo phatieng,
Ha o e ana mo phatleng, o ka shwa,
Kubu e hlapa metsing,
Kubu o ke ke wa e bona!

We are the descendants of Hwete, son of Komane,
We are the descendants of the-green-abyss-should-not-be-towered-over,
If you can tower over it,
You can fall in with your small eyes and small ears,
Hippopotamus, enlarge your hump for us to see,
Hippopotamus, you do not swear it on the forehead,
If you swear it on the forehead, you can die,
The hippopotamus swims in the water,
The hippopotamus, you cannot see it!

46. C1/B/23  Second recitation:

Re batho ba ha Mahwete Komane,
Re batho ba bodiba bo botala ha bo okamelwe,
Ekare ha o bo okamela,
O ka wela ka mahlwana le ditsejana,
Kubu hohomosa marete re bone,
Kubu ha o e ane mo phatleng,
Ha o e ana mo phatleng, o ka shwa,
Kubu e dula metsing,
Kubu ha e bonwe!

Second recitation: Same except: 5th line “marota” instead of “malota”
penultimate line: A hippopotamus lives (dula
and not swim) in water.
last line: A hippopotamus cannot be seen
(Kubu ha e bonwe)

47. C1/B/24  Mphamo Mosia, Molokong, Lesotho

Ke Mosia, Motubatsi,
Wa Mantsha-thebe -di-ome,
Di se nna di omela mokgwabo tlung,
Ke Mosia, Motubatsi,
Wa Tshele a Letuka,
Wa Tshele a Lebajwa!

I am a descendant of Mosia, a -Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut,
I am a descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
Of Tshele, son of Letuka,
Of Tshele, son of Lebajwa!

48. C1/B/25  Second recitation:

Ke Mosia, Motubatsi,
Wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
Di se nna di omela mokgwabo tlung,
Mosia, Motubatsi,
Wa Tshele a Letuka,
Wa Tshele a Lebajwa!

I am a descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut.
Descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
Of Tshele, son of Letuka,
Of Tshele, son of Lebajwa!

N.B. Secod recitation: “Ke” (I am) omitted in line 4.

49. C1/B/26  ‘Masetefane Tšeleli, Kgotokwe

Mofokeng wa Mantsukunyane,
Wa MaKata a Sefiri,
Wa Bakgwejana ba matha mabithleng!

One of the Bafokeng of Ntsukunyane,
Of the descendants of Kata, son of Sefiri,
Of the young Bakgwele who run on top of the graves!

50. C1/B/27  ‘Mapapiso Mekete, Kgotokwe (Her maiden clan recital):

Mokwena wa ha Modibedi,
Kwenanyana kwena di e hloile,
Di e sirile ka seriti metsing,
Kwena e hiapa madiboho e a nyolosa!

One of the Crocodile people of the house of Modibedi,
A young crocodile, other crocodiles hate it,
They have overshadowed it in the water,
A crocodile fords ascending the drifts!

51. C1/B/28  (‘Mapapiso: clan recital of her in-laws)

Re le Makgolokwe, Mahlabakotswana,
Mahlabakgoho-ka-lemao-ka-sebonong,
A e hlaba, a e isa kgorong ha Mokgolwane,
Mokgolwane a e ja, a ba a e halala,
A re “Kgotla hape, o yo eketsa,
Motho wa Wetsi!”

Being the Kgolokwe people, Slaughterers-of-the-white-sprinkled-one,
Piercers-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin-in-the-anus,
They pierced it and took it to Mokgolane at the gate,
Mokgolane ate it and even despised it,
And said “Go back and add more,
Descendant of Wetsi!”

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Ke thella jwang ke le motho wa Mantoto,
Motho wa Maletlapa-ha-le-ribbonwe,
Wa Mamalejanasehlotshwana,
E a kgopa, Ramotschedisi,
E seng e kgopa basadi ba batho!

How can I pay homage being one of the Ntoto people,
One of those Stone-should-not-be-turned-up,
One of those small-Tongues-bundled-together,
It tempts, beware Ramotschedisi,
Not when it tempts other people’s wives!

Second recitation:

Ke motho wa Mantoto,
E a kgopa, Ramotschedisi,
E seng e kgopa basadi ba batho,
Motho wa Malejanasehlotshwana,
Motho wa Mahlonohlono,
Motho wa Maphakamisa molense,
Motho wa Mahlono e a phoma!

I am one of the Ntoto people,
It tempts, beware Ramotschedisi,
Not when it tempts other people’s wives,
One of those small-Tongues-bundled-together,
A descendant of the Hlonohlono people,
A descendant of those Lift-up-your-legs,
A descendant of the Hlono-display-yourselves!

53. C2/A/1 Kemuel Ntšihlele, Morija

1. Ke Mokgatla, Moananong,
2. Motho wa Mankwane,
3. Motho wa Mamodise a Setabele,
4. Ke motho wa Manalane a Kgabo,
5. Moana nonyana e hodimo, nkgo dikgodi,
6. Ha tuka kgabo, ha tuka le lakabe,
7. Ha tuka kgabo e kgubedu,
8. Kgomo di be di ipetsa, di le mpetsana,
9. Hoja mabele a le di tswere,
10. A! lekgahlelamodula!
11. A maula, a solle lekgolokgolo!
12. La utla, la solle lekgolokgolo!
13. Tlale, se solle lekgolokgolo!
14. Nkgodi kgodi ya hodimo,

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15. *Sekubutu, sengalatsela,*
16. *Wena, motho wa Makobue,*
17. *Tlae, se solle, re epela motho,*
18. *Motho wa marumo ha a epelwe hae,*
19. *O tshwana le moshwela-Matebeleng,*
20. *Ke motho wa mapheeke a Kobue,*
21. *Ke Mokgatlha, Moanang!*

1. I am a Kgatia, a-Swarer-by-the-eagle,
2. A descendant of Nkwane,
3. A descendant of Modise, son of Setabele,
4. I am a descendant of Nalane, son of Kgabo,
5. Swearer by the bird of the sky, Yellow-billed kite,
6. Blazing were the fires, blazing were the flames,
7. Blazing were the fires, the red ones,
8. The cattle came out, and were on their own,
9. When sorghum was light-yellowish, the ear-forming-ones,
10. Oh! the-pouncing-and-soaring-One, the yellow-billed kite,
11. He pounced, then soared, did the yellow-billed kite,
12. He pounced, then soared, the yellow-billed kite,
13. Oh! Vulture, cease circling, the yellow-billed kite,
14. Kite of the sky,
15. The hiding-One, deserter-of-the-road,
16. You, member of the Kobue people,
17. Vulture, cease circling for we are burying a man,
18. One who falls by the spear is not buried at home,
19. He is like one-dying-in-the-Ndebeleland.
20. I am a warrior of Kobue’s battles,
21. I am a Kgatia, a-Swarer-by-the-eagle!

54. C3/A/1 Tiisetso Mphana, Kgubetswana

*Nna ke Mofokeng wa ha Dijana,*
*Ha ke matha lebatsha le a ngkopa,*
*Feela batho ha ba mpona, ba a nlelekisa,*
*Le moo ba mponang teng,*
*Mme ke sa je letho la motho!*

I am one of the Bafokeng of the house of Dijana
On running , my arced legs cause me to fall,
But when people see me, they start chasing me,
Even where they see me,
Not appropriating what belongs to somebody else.

55. C3/A/2 Motsei Mokoena, Qwaqwa

*Ke thelle jwang,*
*Ke le ngwana Mantai,*
*Wa Mokheseng, wa Kgwabanamangata,*

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Mphutlane le Makeka, Modibedi,
Kwena ha e hlapa, e hlapa ka metsi,
A matsha a maholo,
E hlapa e a nyolosa madiboho,
A diqanthane ha e hlape ka wona,
A diqanthane a e tshwarisa mokgohlane,
Hobane a dukehile!

How do I pay homage,
Being a child begot by Ntai descendants,
Of Mokheseng, of Kgwabana, the many ones,
Mphutlane, Makeka and Modibedi.
When a crocodile swims, it does so in the water
Of the great lakes,
It swims ascending the drifts,
It does not swim in the pools,
Pool water causes influenza,
Because it is muddy.

56. C3/A/3  Second recitation:

Ke thelle jwang,
Ke le ngwana Mantai,
Wa Mokheseng, wa Kgwabanamangata,
Mphutlane le Makeka, Modibedi,
Kwena ha e hlapa, e hlapa ka metsi,
A matsha a maholo,
E hlapa e a nyolosa madiboho!

-----------------------------? (Memory failure?)

How do I pay homage,
Being a child begot by Ntai descendants,
Of Mokheseng, of Kgwabana who are many,
Mphutlane, Makeka and Modibedi.
When a crocodile swims, it does so in the water
Of the great lakes,
It swims ascending the drifts,

-----------------------------? (Memory failure?)

57. C3/A/4  Lepekola Motloung, Kgubetswana

1. Ke thella jwang ke le Motloung,
2. Wa ha Makgekgoe, wa Sekgwane, Motloung,
3. Ke tla thella, ke thelle ho mang?
4. Ke tla thella, ho hotsho ha maphiri a phirima,
5. Bata se pofofolo, ngwana Mothetho.
6. Ka mehla ena ka o hasa,
7. Wa hlaba batho ka marumo,
Wa re ke diphoofolo,
9    Ka ntsha kgomo, ka romela lehodimong,
10   Ho ntate Motloung, Sekgwane,
11   Ke mohodi, wa di harella dithaba,
12   Thatolla re sa di bona,
13   Ba re thentha tsebe, tlou maokhola,
14   O nke mahlokwa, o a menahanye,
15   O fate ditsebe, o utwe hantle,
16   Mokgosi o teng, wa motsheare phallang!
17   Wa bositu o ntsha batho matlung,
18   Tshepe towe, mokgosi ona o o tlohele,
19   Se maribana se ba le tshwene, Molapo,
20   Motho a tipa wa habo, a re ke moditjhaba,
21   Kgomo towe, ho tswa dipereng moloi a tuka,
22   Wa ntekatekane, wa leshano, a be se a fihla,
23   A re: Lepekola, monna wa ha Makgekgie,
24   Lehodimong kwana o a bitswa, o a laetswa,
25   O bitswa ke morena wa tedi tsu mofuta mohodi,
26   Ke mmatla ka bale, ka be se ke fihla,
27   Ke fumana a bile a ntsa iyapalla morabaraba,
28   Kgomo ha e kgutla, e ntse e le sha! e le lekgutla,
29   E le makgutla, e le mmofu,
30   E le ntho tsena tsohle.
31   Ba mohla ba neng ba bitswa mofuta, Mpai,
32   Ke re yena le bona,
33   A re kgetheng wa lona,
34   Ke tla kgatha wa rona re le kae?
35   Batho ke bana ba feta,
36   Ke kopane le banana ba le bararoro,
37   E ile ya re ke re ho bona, dumelaang!
38   Ba re ha re sa le banana, re basadi,
39   Banna ba rona ba shwetse Jubere!
40   Hae ke tloha ke tsu Betjwanalente, Batswanang,
41   Basotho bana ba fetotse dipuo,
42   Matsoho ba ne ba a bitswa 'mabogo',
43   Hloho ena ba ne ba e bitswa 'sekopo'
44   Ditsebe tselela ba ne ba di bitswa 'dikgetla',
45   Mahlo ka wona ke sheba dinaha,
46   Dinko ka tsona ka sa tla thimola,
47   Molomo ka wona ka tla bua,
48   Tedu tsu ntshenya tshobotsi,
49   Lekgwaba ke lena le fihla,
50   La re: "Helele, Mosotho wa Motloung!
51   Sekgwane, ntshehele nama, ke lapile!"
52   Tshwene ke ena. Ya re tshwene:
53   "O ke ke wa ja nama, o makgisa!
54   Tshwene towe! o busetsang makopo difahleho?"
55   Tshwene ya bua ka lentswe le bohloko ho lekgwaba lena,
56. Ya re: “Lekgwaba towe, o ka be o le moruti hantle,
57. Ke bona kholloro ya hao, e a o tshwanela,
58. Feela lekgwaba towe, o kgala nameng.

1. How will I pay homage being a member of the Elephant people,
2. Of the house of Makgekge, Sekgwane, member of the Elephant people,
3. I will pay homage, but to whom?
4. I will pay homage, I, the black One of the black darkness,
5. The wild Beast which is an animal, poor child of Mothetho!
6. At all times you dispersed,
7. And stabbed people with the spears,
8. Thinking that they were like animals,
9. I sacrificed a Bovine and sent a message to heaven,
10. To my father, Sekgwane, member of the Elephant people,
11. It is the thick mist which covered the mountains.
12. Unroll whilst we are ready to see,
13. Shake your ears, you elephant among the weeds,
14. Take the pieces of dry grass, put them together and
15. Clean them so that you may hear well,
16. There is a loud daytime shout of alarm forcing people to flee,
17. And the one at nighttime forcing people out of their houses,
18. You, the iron rod, bring a stop to this cry!
19. The small One is always with the baboon, you Molapo,
20. One hit one’s fellow being taking him for an enemy,
21. You bovine, from the horses a witch was in flames,
22. An unknown one, a liar, then arrived,
23. And said: “Lepekola, man from Makgekge’s,
24. There in heaven you are being called.
25. You are being called by a chief with grey beard like mist”.
26. I immediately prepared myself and arrived.
27. I found him playing the mill (Basotho game, morabaraba)
28. The movement of the stones (“the bovines”) caused a point scoring,
29. A point scoring, a mixture of confusion.
30. It was all of these things.
31. That day they invited Mpai.
32. I say he was present with them,
33. He said they must choose one among themselves,
34. Where and how shall I choose one for myself?
35. Here are the people passing by.
36. I met the girls, they were three in number,
37. When I said to them “Hallo there!”
38. They said, “We are no more girls, but women.
39. Our husbands died in Jouberton!”
40. Leaving home I was from Bechuanaland, from the Batswana,
41. These Basotho have changed the languages,
42. The hands, matsho, they used to call them mabogo,
43. This head, hloho, they used to call it sekopo,
44. These ears, ditsebe, they used to call them dikgetla.
45. With the eyes I look at the countrysides,
46. With the nostrils I will sneeze,
47. With the mouth I will speak.
48. The beard spoiled my facial appearance.
49. Here came the raven,
50. Saying, "Hallo, a Sotha, son of Motloung!
51. Sekgwane, please give me a piece of meat, I am hungry!"
52. Here is a baboon which responded,
53. "You will not eat meat, you have long hair!"
54. "You baboon! You with a protruding forehead?", said the raven.
55. With a feeling of resentment the baboon said to the raven,
56. "You raven, you would have been a real Priest,
57. I can see your collar, it makes you look beautiful,
58. Except that, you raven, you like too much of meat!"

Second recitation from line 31 continues as,

30. E le ntho tsena tsohle.
31. Loting kwana ha nyatsi ya Ntwetsi,
32. Lokolla thethana e sale,
33.. Thoto e kgolo, mafto a yona,
34. A imela dipelesa.
35. Bahlankana le ntjhebe lebitso thekeng mona.
36. Mahanong mona le tla fumana,
37. Bitso la ka le fane.
38. Ke Motloung wa ha Sekgwane.
39. Ya kgaola, ya ya!

30. It was all these things.
31. There on the mountains, at Ntwetsi’s concubine,
32. Unfasten your skirt and leave it behind,
33. The luggage is too big; its knots
34. Are too heavy for the animals to carry.
35. Young men, look for my name here at my hips.
36. In my mouth here you will find,
37. My name and surname.
38. I am one of the Elephant-people of the house of Sekgwane.
39. There it cut off and ended!

58. C3/A/5 Morapeli Phali, Kgbetswana, Clarens

Motaung wa ha Hlalele,
Hlalele, petu la lekana molala,
Motho wa ha Komekome,
Tau ha e je mahlatsa, e a hletsitse,
Nama e ile, ka ithabela!

One of the Lion people of the house of Hlalele,
Hlalele, the brass band fitted the neck,
A descendant of Komekome,
A lion does not eat its vomited matter,
When meat was gone, I provided it for myself.

59. C3/B/1 Daniel Mokwena, Kgubetswana

Ke le Mokwena wa ha Mahlatsi,
Ya mokaalo ka dinaledi,
Jwang ba tshaane, molelengwana,
Ba ha Mahlatsi ha ba je le batho,
Ha ba eja le batho, mahlare a a lala!

Being one of the Crocodile people of the house of Mahlatsi,
Who are as many as the stars,
As many as eragrostis, the long one,
The Mahlatsi people do not share meals with others,
If they share meals, there will be no harvest!

60. C3/B/3 Sekwekwe Mokwena, Kgubetswana

Mohlakwana wa Pholo a Disema,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Ha moriti o thea,
Ha ke je borotho ba maqane!

A Hlakwana of an Ox of Disema,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
When the shadow falls,
I do not eat yesterday’s bread!

Second recitation: Same!

61. C3/B/4 Piet Mokwena, Bethlehem

Lekgwakgwa la Sedimo, nthole,
La boDijo, la boMoselane,
Ha boDijo ho hlabana dithotseta,
Ha ho jewe sengwathwana sa maobane!

A Kgwakgwa of Sedimo, take off my load,
Of the family of Dijo and Moselane,
At Dijo’s place, the ghost fight one another,
Yesterday’s piece of bread is not eaten!

62. C3/B/5 Mohau Motaung, Kgubetswana

Motaung wa Nthethe a Morapedi,
Eo e tla re ha a tla bolawa,
A ponngwe hloho,
Topo se sale se reneketsa ka mahetla.

One of the Lion people of Nthethe, son of Morapedi,
Who, when he is to be killed,
Should have his head cut off,
The body remains hanging by the shoulders!

63. C3/B/6 ‘Maxaba Mosia, Kgubetswana

Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
Di-se-nne-di-omela-mokgwabo-flung,
Ba ha Tshele, ba ha Lebajwa le Nkonyana!

Descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut.
Descendants of Tshele, Lebajwa and Nkonyana!

64. C3/B/7 Samuele Moeleso, Kgubetswana

LeKgolokwe, Lekotswana,
Lehlaba-kgoho-ka-lemao,
Le e ise ho morena, kgorong,
Le re: Morena, bona, ke hlabile!

A Kgolokwe, a-white-sprinkled-One,
Piercer-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin,
And take it to the chief, at the gate,
And say “Chief, look, I have slaughtered!”

65. C3/B/8 Thabiso Mokone, Kgubetswana

Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa Tshwara-thebe-di-ome,
Di-se-nne-di-omela-mokgwabo-flung!

Descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut!

66. C4/A/1 Lebohang Mosikili, Morija, Lesotho

LeKgolokwe, Lekotswana,
Lehlaba-kgoho-ka-lemao-ka-sebonong,
O isa mokgorong ha Kgwadi,
O re: Bona, morena, ke hlabile!
Ke monate wa nku, o felli mono!
A Kgolokwe, a-white-sprinkled-One,
Piercer-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin-in-the-anus,
And takes it to the gate at Kgwadi's house,
And says "Look, chief, I have slaughtered!
It is the deliciousness of the sheep (mutton) and ends there!

67. C4/A/2       Tota Khoaisanyane, Matatiele

Mofokeng wa ha Maotwanafinyela,
Maotwana a kaale ka dinaledi,
Motho wa Moutlwanyana shwaa! shwaa!
Motho wa Moraredi a Phohole!
.................................? (Memory failure?)

One of the Bafokeng, the Maotwanafinyela (the-Footprints-clan)
The Maotwana are as many as the stars,
One of the Small-rabbit-shave!
One of the family of Moraredi, son of Phohole!
.................................? (Memory failure?)

68. C4/A/3       Letlatsa Bokhatsi, Matatiele

Letebele la Mothimokholo,
Pokane a Sele,
Tebele le a hola, le ya hodimo,
Le ya hodimo feela, ha le ye tiase!

A Ndebele of Mthimkhulu,
Pokane, son of Sele,
A Ndebele grows and goes up,
It keeps going up only, it does not go down!

69. C4/A/4       Gabriel Mokwena, Matatiele

Mohlkwana wa Pholo a Disema,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa!

A Hlakwana of an Ox of Disema,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food!

70. C4/A/5       Mokete Mokwena, Matatiele

Mohlkwana wa ha Teele a Motawana,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Sengwathwana sa maobane,
Majapolwe-kaofela!

A Hlakwana of the house of Teele, son of Motawana,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,

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Yesterday's small piece of bread,
Eaters of the whole round bread!

71. C5/A/1 Pontšo Mofokeng, Kgubetswana

*Motho wa Mamare a Ntsikwe,
Rarollang ba raruweng dithapong!*

One of the descendants of Mare, son of Ntsikwe,
Disentangle those entangled in the ropes!

72. C5/A/2 Shoai Matela, Kgubetswana

*Mofokeng wa ha Tshele,
Lekotwana la ha Mankatana!*

One of the Bafokeng of the house of Tshele,
A-small-knobkerrie-One of Nkatana descendants!

73. C5/A/4 Palo Mateu, Kgubetswana

*Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
Di-se-nne-di-omela-mokgwabo-tlungs,
Wa tshea tse pedi,
Wa Tshele le Lebajwa,
Ke bua ka Tshele wa Nkonyane!*

Descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut,
Of the two loin garments,
Of Tshele and Lebajwa,
I speak of Tshele, son of Nkonyane!

74. C5/A/5 Moliehi Pateng, Kgubetswana

*Lepele la ha Sonwane, o sa sone letho,
O sona mohlape, dinyamatsane,
Wa ka Lankalibalele,
Wa ka phakamisa mofense!*

A Mbhele of Sonwane’s house, not referring to anything,
Referring to a flock, the wild animals,
Of the family of Langalibalele,
Of those Lift-up-the-leg-people!
75. C5/A/6 Malefetsane Mofokeng, Kgubetswana

Mofokeng e motona,
Wa ha Mamaotwanafinyela,
Mmutla o tla jewa o le tala,
O tla tlameha o o hlothe ditsebe,
Pele o jewa!

A male one of the Bafokeng,
Of the Maotwana (the Footprints clan)
The rabbit is eaten raw,
You will be forced to pluck off its ears,
Before it is eaten!

76. C5/A/7 Morie Tsibela, Qwaqwa

Mofokeng, Lemphane,
Ke mora Patsa,
Ke motho wa Matlapa-ha-le-ribolle!

One of the Bafokeng, one of the Mphane people,
I am the son of Patsa,
I am one of those Stone-should-not-be-turned-up!

77. C5/A/8 Seabata Paulus Matla, Bethlehem

Motho wa ha Tshele,
Motho wa Malekotswana,
Motho wa Mammulane a Motlatla,
Ya sa nameleng fatshe,
Ya namelanu mohaswaneng wa kobo,
Ya hlabang phlho ka lemoa,
A e ise moreneng,
A re: Morena, bona, ke hlabile!

A descendant of  the house of Tshele,
A descendant of  Lekotswana,
A descendant of  Mmulane, son of Motlatla,
Who does not spread out  legs on the ground,
Who spreads out legs on an old piece of blanket,
Who pierces a kidney with a pin,
And takes it to the chief,
And says "Look, chief, I have slaughtered!"

78. C5/A/9 Kokobela Lieta, Maseru

Ke thelle jwang,
Mofokeng wa Mantsukunyane,
A Kata a Sefiri,
Re Bakgwele, rona,
Re titima mabitleng!

How should I pay homage
One of the Bafokeng of Ntsukunyane,
Of Kata, son of Sefiri,
We are the Kgwele people, ourselves,
We run on top of the graves!

79. C5/A/10 Selloane Nkhabu, Qwaqwa.

1. Motho wa Makadi a Tsholo,
2. Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
3. Ha a tla ja ho thehe meriti,
4. E menyane ya diotiwna,
5. Ke motho wa Nkopane le Mohlomi!

1. Descendant of the clan of Kadi, son of Tsholo,
2. Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
3. When she/he is about to eat, the shadows fall,
4. Those small ones of the courtyards,
5. I am a descendant of Nkopane and Mohlomi!

Second recitation:

1. Mokwena wa ha Monaheng,
2. Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
3. Motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,
4. Ha e tla re ha a eja ho thehe meriti,
5. E menyane ya diotiwna,
6. Ke motho wa Nkopane le Mohlomi,
7. Ke motho wa ha Monaheng,
8. Ke motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane,
9. Ke Mokwena wa ha Monaheng!

1. One of the Crocodile people of Monaheng,
2. Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
3. One who does not eat yesterday's bread,
4. One who eats when the shadows fall,
5. Those small ones of the courtyards,
6. I am a descendant of Nkopane and Mohlomi.
7. I am a descendant of the house of Monaheng.
8. I am one who does not eat a piece of yesterday's bread,
9. I am one of the Crocodile people of the house of Monaheng!
80. C5/B/1 Pulane Lesetla, Qwaqwa

Ke Mofokeng, Mokomane wa ha Modise,
Motho wa Matika a Lesawana,
Motho wa ha Nyomenyome,
Motho wa Matlapa-ha-le-riboliwe,
Motho wa Mahlono-ha-e-phome,
Wa ha Kgomo-e-matha-ka-lelebe-thoteng!

I am one of the Bafokeng, a descendant of Komane, son of Modise,
Descendant of Tika, son of Lesawana,
One of the house of Nyomenyome,
One of The-stone-should-not-be-turned-up,
One of the Hlono-who-do-not-expose-themselves,
Of those bovine-runs-with-female-organs-exposed-on-the-veild!

81. C5/B/2 Matlokotsi Mapena, Qwaqwa

Mohlakwana wa ha Tele a Motawana,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Majapolokwe-kaofela!

A Hlakwana of the house of Tele, son of Motawana,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
Eaters-of-the-whole-round-bread!

82. C6/A/1 Daniel Motaung, Kgubetswana

Motaung wa Manthethe a Morapedi,
Ha a tla shwa a ponngwe hloho,
A sale a nyeketha ka mahetlana,
Ke ngwana lebese la kgomo!

One of the Lion people of Nthethe, son of Morapedi,
When one is about to die, one should be beheaded,
And remain hanging by the small shoulders,
I am a child of a bovine milk!

Second recitation:

Motaung wa Manthethe a Morapedi,
Ha ke tla shwa o ponngwe hloho,
O sale o nyeketha ka mahetlana,
Re bana ba lebese la kgomo!

One of the Lion people of Nthethe, son of Morapedi,
When I am about to die, you should be beheaded,
And (you) remain hanging by the small shoulders,
We are the children of the bovine milk!

83. C6/A/2 Lepekola Motloung. See no. 57, C3/A/4

84. C6/A/3 Lebohang Mokwena, Qwaqwa

Mokwena wa ha Nkopane a Mathunya,
Motho wa Mahlab a Lebereko,
Motho ya sa jeng sengwathwana sa maobane!

One of the Crocodile people of Nkopane, son of Mathunya,
Descendant of Mahlab, son of Lebereko,
One who does not eat a small piece of yesterday’s bread!

85. C6/A/4 Mrs Khaketla, Maseru

Ke le Mofokeng,
Ke le motho wa Moraredi a Phohole!

Being one of the Bafokeng,
Being a descendant of Moraredi, son of Phohole!

86. C7/A/1 Makai Mofokeng, Kgubetswana, Clarens

Ke Mofokeng, ke Dijana,
Ke ngwana Mamare,
Mare a Ntsikwe,
Le ba raretseng bana ba Mare,
Ba se na molato
Molato wa kgomo o ka be o bolelwa,
Re mpe re o lefe.
Le se ke la mo otla,
Ha a otluwe,
Ke ngwana madi a Phohole,
Ke ngwana ya kgarametswang,
Ha a kgarametswe ka bokgopo,
O kgarametswa ka tumelo!

I am one of the Bafokeng, I am Dijana (descendant),
I am a child of the descendants of Mare,
Mare, son of Ntsikwe,
Why have you entangled the children of Mare,
Who are not guilty?
A fine of a cow could be mentioned,
So that we rather pay it.
Do not beat him,
He is not to be beaten,
He is a blood child of Phohole,
He is a child pushed around,
He is not pushed around with evil,
He is pushed around with faith!

87. C7/A/2  
(Clan recital of Makai's mother)

Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa ha Tshele, wa ha Lebajwa,
Lebajwa la ha Nkonyana,
Le ba tshellang bana bana ba ha Lebajwa?

A descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of the house of Tshele, son of Lebajwa,
Lebajwa, son of Nkonyana,
What do give them to drink, these children of Lebajwa?

88. C7/A/3  
Second recitation of 86. C7/A/1 by Makai:

Ke Mofokeng, ke Dijana,
Ke ngwana Mare,
Mare a Ntsikwe,
Le ba raretseng bana ba Mare,
Ba se na molato?
Molato wa kgomo o ka be o bolelwa,
Re mpe re o lefe,
Le ba tlatiapelang bana bana?
Le ba otlelang?
Hobane ha ba otluwe,
Molato wa bona re ka mpa ra o lefa,
Ke bana ba Pudumo,
Ba Pudumo ya Lephahla!

I am one of the Bafokeng, I am Dijana (descendant),
I am a child of Mare,
Mare, son of Ntsikwe,
Why have you entangled the children of Mare,
Who are not guilty?
A fine of a cow could be mentioned,
So that we rather pay it.
Why do you abuse these children?
Why do you beat them?
Because they are not to be beaten.
We better pay for their crime.
They are the children of Pudumo,
Pudumo, son of Lephahla!
Mokwena wa ha Pholo a Disema,
Maila-ho-ngwathelwa,
Bana ba jang ha meriti e theha,
Ho theha e menyane ya diotlwana!

One of the Crocodile people of an Ox of Disema,
Abstainers-from-being-given-food,
These who eat when the shadows fall,
Those small shadows of the threshing floors!

(Her maiden seboko)

Lekgwakgwa la Masedimo, nthole,
Wa boDijo ho hlabana dithotsela,
Wa boMaphutsi le maraka ka imelwa!

A Kgawkwga of Sedimo, take-off-the-load-from-me,
Of the family of Dijo, where the ghosts fight one another,
Of the Pumpkin family and their-shoots-I-was-burdened!

Ke thelle jwang,
Ke le Mokwena wa Tumane a Potsela,
Wa boDijo, wa boMoselane,
Ho hlabana dithotsela ka mahaheng,
Di tsekisana maphutsi le marakaila,
Se hloho e kgolo ke Tumane,
Makgwakgwga, o a le bitsa!

How do I pay homage
Being one of the Crocodile people of Tumane, son of Potsela,
Of the family of Dijo and Moselane,
The ghosts are fighting one another in the caves,
They are quarreling over the pumpkins and their small shoots,
The one with a big head is Tumane,
The Kgawkwga people, he is calling you!

Second recitation:

6th line changes to **Se hloho e kgolo e le Tumane**

*The one with a big head being Tumane*
91. SABC C8/A/1 (Reciter's name unknown)

Makgolokwe, Makotswana,
Mahlabakgoho-ka-lemao,
A e ise ho Mokgolane kgorong,
A re: Bona, morena, ke hlabile!
Ke hlabile manoni a maholo,
Batho ba Rapeso,
Batho ba Seya-pele-kgotsong.
Ho sa busa Letlatsa le Lephatshwana,
Batho ba ha Wetsi,
Batho ba ha Marowa le Molotsana,
Batho ba Rapeso!

Descendants of MoKgolokwe, People-of-the-small-roan,
Piercers-of-a-chicken-with-a-pin,
And take it to Mokgolane at the gate,
And say “Look, chief, I have slaughtered!
I have slaughtered the big fat ones,
Descendants of Rapeso,
Descendants of the Frontrunner-to-peace,
During the reign of Letlatsa and Lephatshwana,
Descendants of the family of Wetsi,
Descendants of the family of Marowa and Molotsana,
People of Rapeso!

92. SABC C8/A/2 (Reciter's name is unknown)

Ke Padi wa ha Mathula le Mohlaodi,
Wa Mamotho-a-kgahlwa-ke-seretse,
A ya Boraladi,
A kgahlwa ke seretse, a qopha,
Ke motintinyane, thaka Falatsi,
Thuhle, marumo, mokgwenyana, ka a roba,
Ke a roba jwalo, ngwana, ke ikela dikonwaneng,
Ha Modimo, ntokolle, ke be monna!

It is Padi of the house of Mathula and Mohlaodi,
One of Those-who-enjoyed-the-mud,
Who went to Boraladi,
Who was pleased with the mud, which he chose.
He is a grass warbler, a companion of Falatsi,
The spears were broken by me, as son-in-law,
I broke them thus as I went to the places of plenty,
To the house of God-set-me-free to be a real man!

Second recitation: The same!
93. C9/A/1 'Mamothobi Seekane, Qwaqwa

Nka thella jwang ke le Mokwena,
Mokwena wa ha Maiyane,
Ngwana leruo la kgomo,
Wa ha Motlohelwa,
Ya bapallang kgatamping,
Moo ho bapallang ba baholo
Le ba bannyane!

How can I pay homage being one of the Crocodile people,
One of the Crocodile people of the house of Maiyane.
A child of the cattle wealth,
Of the house of Motlohelwa,
Who plays in the big ground holes,
Where the older ones play,
As well as the young ones!

Second recitation:

Ke nna Mokwena wa ha Maiyane,
Wa leruo la kgomo,
Wa Motlohelwa,
Ya bapallang kgatamping,
Moo ho bapallang ba baholo
Le ba bannyane!

I am one of the crocodile people of the house of Maiyane,
One of the cattle wealth,
Of Motlohelwa,
Who plays in the big ground hole,
Where the older ones play,
As well as the young ones!

94. C9/A/2 'Mathohloane Motloung, Bethlehem

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Motloung wa Makwala a Phakela,
Leruonyana, tlou di e siretse,
Di e siretse ka seriti metsing,
Leruonyana, tlou di e hloile,
Ha di batle ho e bona,
Ha di e bona feela, di a okaoka,
Ke motho wa Fabana, wa Kwaebana!

Why do I pay homage,
Being one of the Elephant people of Makwala, son of Phakela,
A small wealth, the elephants have overshadowed it,
They have overshadowed it by a shadow in the water,
A small wealth, the elephants hate it,
They do not want to see it,
When they start seeing it, they wait close by,
I am a descendant of Fabana, son of Kwaebana!

95. C9/A/3 D.A. Madiehe, Thaba 'Nchu

Ke Mokwena wa Ntsane a Monaheng,
Wa Napo a Mosito,
Kwenanyane, kwena di e sira ka seriti metsing,
Ho hlapa tse dipotiane,
Kwena di hlapa di a nyolosa madiboho,
Ke Motebang, ke teba ka sekepe!

I am one of the Crocodile people of Ntsane, son of Monaheng,
Of Napo, son of Mosito,
A young crocodile, the crocodiles overshadow it in the water,
The young ones are swimming,
The crocodiles ford ascending the drifts,
I am a descendant of Motebang, I sink with the ship!

Second recitation: The same!
Third recitation: Lines 4 and 5 omitted!

96. C10/A/1 SABC (Reciter's name unknown)

Re Bataung ba Hlalele,
Ba Manthethe a Morapedi,
Re batho ba lebese la kgomo,
Le retha le eso kene hlofeng,
Re batho ba Hlalele,
Petu la lekana molala,
Ha Hlalele ha ho marena mangata,
Morena ke Hlalele a inotshi!

We are the Lion people of Hlalele,
The descendants of Nthethe, son of Morapedi,
We are the descendants of the Bovine milk,
It thickens becomes before it becomes sour,
We are the descendants of Hlalele,
The brass ring fitted the neck,
At Hlalele's house there are no many a chief,
The only chief is Hlalele.

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97. C10/A/2 SABC (Reciter’s name unknown)

Motaung wa ha Hlalele,
Motho wa Nthethe a Morapedi,
Motho wa lebese la kgomo,
La retha le eso kene hlofeng,
Ha Hlalele ha ho marena mangata,
Morena ke Hlalele a inotshi.
Motho wa Matabohang a Rapulana,
Kgalapa, morena,
Eo e seng wa ha Tau ke mang?

One of the Lion people of the house of Hlalele,
A descendant of Nthethe, son of Morapedi,
A descendant of the bovine milk,
It thickened before it became sour,
At Hlalele’s house there are no many a chief,
The only chief is Hlalele.
A descendant of Tabohang, son of Rapulana,
Kgalapa, the chief,
Who is he who does not belong to the Lion house?

98. C10/A/3 SABC (Reciter’s name unknown)

Motho wa Ramokgele a Maphoto,
Makolokotwane a Makobasia,
Ere a tla ja, meriti e thehe,
Ho thehe e menyane ya diotlwana,
Batho ba Makguto, motho o a tela,
Mafokolodi a kgahlane tseleng,
Le letsho le phomme le lefuбеду!

A descendant of Ramokgele, son of Maphoto,
The tattooed-ones, the Kobasia people,
Before he will eat, the shadows fail,
Those small ones of the courtyards,
The descendants of Kguto, one sometimes renounces,
The butterflies met on the road,
The black one deceived the red one!

99. C11/A/1 SABC (Reciter’s name unknown)

Ke tla thella jwang,
Ke le Motshweneng,
Wa ha Kgiba le Kgamadi,
Motshweneng, leleme le letsho keng?

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Leleme le letsho ke ho koma ditlhare!

How will I pay homage,
Being one of the Baboon people,
Of the house of Kgiba and Kgamadi,
You member of the Baboon people, why is the tongue black?
The tongue is black through swallowing herbal medicines!

100. C11/A/2 SABC (Reciter’s name unknown)

Ke Motshweneng wa ha Kgiba,
Leleme le letsho,
Leleme le letsho ke ho koma ditlhare,
Ahlama, mantswe a Mantsimane,
Ahlama ka hanong, re bone,
Re bone moo o jelang ding tsa batho!

I am one of the Baboon people of the house of Kgiba,
The tongue is black,
The tongue is black through swallowing herbal herbs,
Open the mouth, words of Ntsimane descendants,
Open the mouth for us to see,
For us to see where people’s possessions disappear!

101. C12/A/1 Pontšo Kotsana, Leribe

Ke Mofokeng,
Wa ha Malejwe-ha-le-ribollwe,
Ha o ka le ribolla o tla bona kidibitla,
Mofokeng e motelele,
Thella, o wele!
Tsuu, kgotlonono,
Kgatla! Lomo se methati e leshome,
Mola thoteng ha bale ba kgiba,
Ngope le ka tloiswa ke ngwale e telele,
E kgutshwane e ka robeka menotwana,
Mofokeng, qhanolla dipere di fuile,
Ntwa boholoholo ke ya hosasa,
Rona ha re sa bona tse fulang ka disale!

I am one of the Bafokeng,
Of those flat-Stone-should-not-be-turned-up,
If you can turn it up, you will see the big wonders,
A tall Mofokeng,
Pay homage, and fall,
Falling from a high place! Hitting the ground!
Falling hard on the ground! The precipice with ten steps,
There in the veld, when a girl-initiate dances,
The ditch can be jumped over by a tall girl-initiate,
A short one can break her small legs,
A Foka, unsaddle the horses to graze,
The great battle is that of tomorrow,
We, ourselves, are not used to seeing those that graze with saddles on!

102. C12/A/2      Lengau Motšoane, Makhoakhoeng, Butha-Buthe.

Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa Mantshang-thebe-di-ome,
Di-se-nya-di-omela-mokgwabo-tlung,
Ha o re ka Tshele, ke tshella mang?
Ke tshella Tshele le Letuka,
Bana ba Lebajwa la Nkwanyane!

Descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry
And should not dry in the wet places of the hut,
If you say through Tshele, who do I pour out for?
I pour out for Tshele and Letuka,
Children of Lebajwa, son of Nkwanyane!

103. C12/A/3      Lengau Motšoane : Makhoakhoeng.

Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa Mantshang-thebe-di-ome,
Di se nya di omela nnyo mokgwabo tlung,
Ha o re ka Tshele, ke tshella mang?
Ke tshella Tshele le Letuka,
Bana ba tshea tse pedi!

Descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And should dry in the wet places of the hut,
If you say through Tshele, who do I pour out for?
I pour out for Tshele and Letuka,
Children of the two short drawers!

104. C12/A/4      Raletšabisa Motale, Butha-Buthe, Dikgelekeng.

Ke thelleng ke le Motaung,
Wa Nthethe a Morapedi,
Ngwana tshesanankope,
E tla re mohlha a tla shwa,
A kgaelebe hloho,
A sale a nyeketha ka mahetlana,
Ka pakana tsa melala,
Wa mmakatisa leloko,
Tau ha e qalwe seforong,
E bolaya motho!

Why should I pay homage being one of the Lion people,
Of Nthethe, son of Morapedi,
Child of small-grain-basket-embrace-me,
The day when he will be about to die,
He will be beheaded,
And remain hanging by the small shoulders,
Through the middle parts of the neck,
Of mother-increase-the-family,
A lion is not attacked at a stronghold,
It kills a person!

Second recitation: The same!

105. C12/A/5 Raletšabisa Motale. Recitation of his wife’s clan praise:

Mosia, Motubatsi,
Wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
Di se nna di omela mokgwabo tlung,
Ngwana wa Tshele le Letuka,
Ha ba ntse ba botsana,
Hore ka Tshele ho tshellwa mang,
Ho tshellwa Lebajwa wa Nkonyane!

Descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut.
Child of Tshele and Letuka,
When they keep asking one another,
Whether through Tshele who is being poured forth for,
It is being poured forth for Lebajwa, son of Nkonyane!

106. C12/A/6 Malefetsane Mosia, Mashayeng, Fouriesburg

Mosia, Motubatsi,
Motho wa Mantsha-thebe-di-ome,
Di se nna di omela mokgwabo tlung!
.....................(memory failure)

Descendant of Mosia, a-Swearer-by-the-porcupine,
One of those Take-out-the-shields-to-dry,
And-should-not-dry-in-the-wet-places-of-the-hut.
.....................?
107. C12/A/7 Teboho Makwineng, Dihlabeng, Lesotho

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Letebele la ha Miya,
Se bodile, potlaki,
Sa bola hloho,
Sa bola bokalakata.
Kobo di pedi, ngwana Kgojane,
E ngwe ke ya ho robala boroko,
E ngwe ke ya ho apesa bosudu!

Why should I pay homage,
Being a Ndebele of the house of Miya,
It is rotten, the hastening-One,
It was rotten on the head,
It was rotten on the separated head from the neck,
Blankets are two, child of Kgojane,
One is for sleeping,
The other is for covering farting!

Second recitation: replaces Miya with Sekelemane

108. C12/A/8 Lefu Paepae, Benteke, ha morena Mpooa

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Letebele la ha Miya,
La ha Sekelemane,
Kobo di pedi, ngwana Kgojane,
Tsa bola hloho,
Tsa bola bokalakata,
E ngwe ke ya ho apesa boroko,
E ngwe ke ya ho apesa bosudu!

Why should I pay homage,
Being a Ndebele of the house of Miya,
Of the house of Sekelemane,
Blankets are two, child of Kgojane,
They were rotten on the head,
They were rotten on the separated head from the neck,
One is meant for sleeping,
The other for coverin’ farting!

109. C12/A/9 Teboho Motšoenyane, Makhoakhoeng

Ke thelleng,
Ke le Mofokeng wa ha Dijana,
Pudumo e a hlabo,
Rarollang ba Mare,
Ba tswe dithapong!

Why should I pay homage,
Being one of the Bafokeng of the house of Dijana,
A black wildbeest wounds,
Untangle people of Mare,
And release them from the ropes!

110. C12/A/10  ‘Matšajoa Seile, Mporana, ha Thaabe

Ke thelieng,
Ke le Mofokeng wa ha Tshele,
Wa Mammulane a Motlatla,
Ho itswe shwii! shwii!
Ho uwe kae?
Ho uwe ha Mmakepile letsemeng,
Lebudi le hlaha kae?
Le hlaha motlheng,
Le bebenya ditedi!

Why should I pay homage,
Being one of the Bafokeng of the house of Tshele,
One of the people of Mmulane, son of Motlatla,
All people have gone away!
They have gone, where to?
They have gone to the house of the woman, Kepile, for a bee,
Where does the rat come from?
It comes from the furrow,
It moves its beards!

Second recitation: The same!

111. Moipone Mofokeng, Mzimhlophe, Soweto. (Recitation not on tape)

Ke Lehowana la boTlalane,
Ke motho wa Mahase a Mpewana,
Ke hasa digomo,
Ke hasa le batho,
Ke hasa le dipudungwana naheng,
Ke ngwana tau ya Matsebela,
Nong ha e ntje, mmame e mpone,
E tshaba ha e tla tshwehla molomo!

I am a Howana of the T alane family,
I am a descendant of Mahase, son of Mpewana,
I scatter the cattle,
I scatter even the people,
I scatter even the small black wildbeests in the veld,
I am a lion-child of the Tsebela-people,
A vulture does not eat me, the lightning having seen me,
Fearing it would ooze from the mouth!

112. Samuel Motloung, Bohlokong, Bethlehem (Recitation not on tape)

Ke theleleng
Ke le Motloung wa ha Sekgwane!
Wa "Tlo, ke o pepe,
Ke o shiletse,
Ke o tlae ka thari ya konyana,
Ebe ke matha ka wena!"

Why should I pay homage,
Being one of the Elephant people of the house of Sekgwane!
One of those “Come, let me carry you on my back,
And carry you safely,
Let me bind you with a lamb-skin,
And run carrying you!”

113. Mohale Rapali, Monontsha, Qwaqwa (Recitation not on tape)

Mofokeng wa ha Maotwanafinyela,
Mooto a makaalo ka dinaledi,
A kaalo ka jwang ba tshaane, molelengwane,
Ke Mofokeng wa ha Mokgadi a Motlalane,
Mofokeng wa ha Manti a Mmope!

One of the Bafokeng, the-Footprints-clan,
Footprints are as many as the stars,
They are as many as eragrostis, the long one,
I am one of the Bafokeng of Mokgadi, son of Motlalane,
One of the Bafokeng of the house of Manti, son of Mmope!

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