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NORTHERN SOTHO LEGENDS AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

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A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of African Languages, University of the Witwatersrand.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

M Kgopa

(M KGOPA)

31 January 1998

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Veronica, and children Makitlane, Mapula and Ditsepu, for their support, understanding and sacrifice during my involvement in this research project.

ABSTRACT

This research project examines Northern Sotho legends and historical narratives with the aim of classifying them as separate oral narrative forms. It is evident from the data that when using the structural morphological approach legends employ five structural morphological units while historical narratives adhere to a two motifeme pattern. This is due to the fact that the presentation of real historical accounts might be affected by legendary embroideries over a period of time as they are presented by various narrators and acquire more morphological components.

The investigation then explains and illustrates the similarities and differences between legends and historical narratives. The method of analysis is based on how the structural morphological approach can be used as a yardstick for classifying these oral narrative forms.

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Okpewho (1992:181-183) highlights various methods used in classifying oral narratives on the basis of the protagonist, the purpose revealed by the content, the characteristic quality of the tale and the occasion in which the story is presented. After analysing each method he then outlines their respective shortcomings and concludes that no distinction seems to be made between various genres due to the fluid nature of oral narratives.

The intricacy caused by the various methods of categorizing oral narrative genres can be captured when one takes into consideration the story of Tselane and the giant, which is possibly the best known folktale among Northern Sotho speakers. When the focus is on the protagonist it could be classified as a human tale, functionally a didactic or moralistic tale and with regard to its characteristic quality it can be identified as a trickster tale. As far as the context or occasion is concerned most tales including the one mentioned above can be categorized as moonlight tales because most oral narratives are told at night.

The problem of oral narrative categorization is also common in legends and historical narratives as the boundary line between the two oral narrative forms is tenuous. They are both oral narratives which tell of real people, places and memorable events that have a basis of history.

The similarity between legends and historical narratives is emphasized by Finnegan (1983:368) when she states that:

> "The two terms are really synonymous in their denotation, although 'legends' seems to have become the commoner term when describing oral historical narratives, or sometimes, those in whose truth the commentator himself has little faith"

Northern Sotho speakers also experience this problem of oral narrative categorization as their native categorization does not distinguish between various oral narrative genres. The Northern Sotho term *"nonwane"* is generally used to describe a variety of fantastic and non-fictional narratives of the oral tradition which occur in the form of prose. For instance Serudu (1990) and Masola (1990) classify Northern Sotho legends under *"dinonwane"* and refer to them as "*dinonwane tša phetelетšannete*". This Northern Sotho term literally means "stories or narratives responsible for the transmission of truthful events." Historical narratives on the other hand are not categorized as *"dinonwane"* and they are simply known as *"ditiragalo tša kgale"*, which means, "events of the past". This makes the identification of these narrative forms difficult because no reasons are given as to why legends are categorized under *"dinonwane"* while historical narratives are excluded.

My informants referred to the narrations based on the Mamabolo tribe as *"ditaba tša kgale"* (stories of the past) while the stories of *Marangrang* and that of *Matlebjane* were regarded as *"dinonwane tša go ba le nnete"* (fictional narratives which contain real events). The reason for ascribing the latter fictional status is that they were set in the remote past. From my investigation both legends and historical narratives are

based on history by virtue of their reference to real personages, places and incidents. A legend is regarded as a type of *"nonwane"* because the details of the events described in such narrations are questionable as in the case of folktales, myths and fables. Historical narratives are not referred to as "*dinonwane*" because there is nothing out of ordinary concerning the events in such narratives as they are of the recent past. Some of the stories recorded from the Mamabolo community were more of legends while others resembled historical narratives.

To mitigate this problem the investigation of the structural components of oral narratives would be considered as a prerequisite for their categorization. Thus, a historical narrative is regarded as a separate oral narrative form which involves the presentation of unaltered historical accounts. When such stories are told over and over through generations, their details might be subjected to distortions as a result of exaggeration and embellishment. These distortions affect the stories until they adhere to a morphological structural pattern of five motifemes which characterizes Northern Sotho legends.

1.1 AIM

The purpose of this study is to examine Northern Sotho historical stories and determine whether they can be recognized and categorized as distinctive oral narrative forms, namely, legends and historical narratives. A particular attention is paid to the structural relationship between the historical tales collected from members of the Mamabolo tribe in the Northern Province and the two possibly best known Northern Sotho legends of *Marangrang* and *Matlebjane*.

The study hopes to identify and outline similarities and differences between these oral narrative genres. The main focus of the study is based on how Propp's (1968) structural morphological theory can be used as a categorizing mode for identifying legends and historical narratives as distinctive oral narrative forms.

1.2 HYPOTHESIS

The basic assumption of this project is that, though Northern Sotho legends and historical narratives tell of real events connected with real individuals and places that are reminiscent, they can be classified as separate oral narrative genres on the basis of their structural morphological components.

Due to the presence of embroideries woven around legends, the latter's plot narrative structure is composed of five morphological units. Historical narratives adhere to the first two morphological components as they are not yet affected by the manipulation of historical facts.

1.3 RATIONALE

My interest in this topic stems from the observation that very little research has been conducted on Northern Sotho oral narrative genres. Most researchers in this field have mainly concentrated on analysing the form, content, functions and stylistic features of folklore forms such as folktales, praise poems, folksongs, riddles, proverbs and idioms. I was also prompted to conduct this investigation, specifically on legends and historical narratives, due to their scarcity in the collected body of Northern Sotho oral narratives. Hence, the characteristics of these Northern Sotho oral narrative forms have not been fully explored.

The literature available on Northern Sotho legends and historical narratives gives the impression that no clear line of demarcation can be drawn between these oral narrative forms. This study, therefore, seeks to make a morphological analysis of some Northern Sotho legends and historical narratives with purpose of identifying them as distinctive oral narrative forms.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

A field work was undertaken and oral data consisting of interviews, was collected and recorded by means of an audio cassette recorder from informants above 65 years of age among the Northern Sotho speaking communities of gaMamabolo in the Northern Province. This age group was chosen on the basis that the individuals concerned grew up during the era of storytelling and should have vested knowledge of folk history.

Speech communities of gaMamabolo were chosen for this research because it is commonly believed that people of this area have more stories to tell as far as their origin is concerned, as they are said to be the descendants of the Balobedu, who originated from *Bokgalaka*. The Mamabolo people are presently divided into two independent tribes. The domains occupied by the two tribes are known as gaMankweng and gaSekwala respectively.

The investigation took place in organized settings such as the courtyard of the royal residence, where the king's advisors formed the audience, and in some cases at the informants' homes, where members of their family comprised the audience. During the research, I applied Calame-Griaule's (1971) research questionnaire regarding data collection. Before each narration I noted each informant's identity in terms of sex,

name and age . Interviews were done in Northern Sotho and the tapes were then transcribed and translated into English.

The informants were asked to narrate stories relating to the origin, heroes, settlement, and ruling dynasties of the Mamabolo tribe. Some of the informants were requested to relate the stories of *Marangrang* and that of *Matlebjane* for comparison purposes. After each session the narrator was asked where he learnt the story and whether he told it the way he remembered it or in a modified manner. In some instances different narrators were asked to relate the same story in order to detect both consistencies and inconsistencies.

It was apparent during the interviews, that female informants were reluctant to present what the community regards as true stories, especially those which tell of political intrigues involving royal personages. Such narratives are regarded as information of great importance and may only be discussed by older males of the community. This is due to the fact that in Northern Sotho communities a correlation between gender and power exists with regard to the presentation of oral traditions.

The stories regarding the Mamabolo tribe will be compared with the two popular Northern Sotho legends of *Marangrang* and *Matlebjane* to determine whether they can be classified as legends or historical narratives. The plot structure of the two best known Northern Sotho legends mentioned above will serve as a foundation for identifying the narrations based on the Mamabolo tribe.

With regard to the historical period covered in this study, reference to the distant past encompasses all incidents which occurred in the 19th century, while the recent past refers to those of the 20th century. For instance, the events around Marangrang, Matlebjane occurred in the 1800,s.

The field research was conducted between June and December 1996. While in the field I was referred to the following individuals, who are mostly male relatives of royal family and regarded as outstanding storytellers :

Rathabeng Chueu

Rathabeng, my chief informant at gaMankweng is the eldest compared to my other informants. He is a good narrator of historical events, who is recognised for his skill by members of the Mamabolo community. He was born in 1909 at gaMankweng and presently residing at Mongwaneng village. Rathabeng is a member of the royal family and one of the descendants of the Ramohwibidu clan who assumed the surname Chueu. He is in fact the nephew of Lekau whom the narrative about *Lekau, the regent* is woven around. Chueu had a book in which he recorded traditional medicines and the praise poems of Lekau. His stories were related at his home as he could no longer spend most of his time at the royal residence due to old age.

Motlhaume Mamabolo

Motlhaume, my chief informant at gaSekwala was born on the 13th of February, 1928 at Segopje, a territory occupied by the Sekwala faction of the Mamabolo tribe. He is a retired school principal and considered with great nobility among the king's councillors. As a chief advisor of the king, Motlhaume's stories were narrated at the

royal residence where he spends most of his time.

Moalusi Seabela

Moalusi gave his date of birth as June 1917. He was born at Tshware village in the Mankweng section of the Mamabolo tribe. He attended the Presbyterian missionary school at Donhill where he passed standard six, before he went to work in Johannesburg. On retirement he came back home where he makes a living by ferrying people between various villages of gaMamabolo in his car. Moalusi is an outstanding narrator because his story is coupled with humour.

Makhudu Mamabolo

Makhudu is a member of the royal family who represents the Tshware community at the royal residence. He was born in the fourth month in 1926. He was very reluctant to act as my informant and, instead, referred me to Moalusi Seabela as he did not regard himself as an artful speaker. Makhudu only agreed to relate *the story of Marangrang,* which he had learned from his father. After this narration he was motivated and eventually related how Christianity was established at gaMankweng. The recording was done at his home while he was not involved in community matters.

Mantšhi Mamabolo

Mantšhi, who is a member of the royal family at gaSekwala, was born in 1922 at Kgokong. He is one of the people who attended the first school to be erected at gaSekwala. Mantšhi worked for many years in Johannesburg and on his retirement he returned to gaMamabolo where he is presently serving as one of the king's advisors and a member of the school committee. His account of "*king Seswai* " was recorded at

the royal residence.

Leshata Mogale

Leshata was the youngest of my informants who opted to relate "*the story of a Matlebjane*" which he learned as a young man from his uncle. He was born on the 12th of August 1929 in Duiwelskoof. His father, who worked as a farm labourer in the same area, insisted that his children should be sent to school. He later migrated to gaMamabolo where school education was already established. Leshata attended school at gaSekwala until he passed standard six before working in Pretoria, later married and settled at gaMakanye.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides background information on folklore research, as the study aims at examining legends and historical narratives in the general context of folklore scholarship. The discussion about Northern Sotho legends and historical narratives is smoothly introduced by reviewing existing literature based on classification issues in oral literature, prose narratives, legends and historical narratives and Northern Sotho genres.

2.1 CLASSIFICATION ISSUES IN ORAL LITERATURE

Many folklore scholars contributed towards the classification of folklore material into different genres by making use of various criteria. It is therefore imperative to take some of the scholars' views regarding the classification of folklore forms into different genres. As far as this classification of folklore genres is concerned, Propp (1993 : 45) says:

> " Classification is made according to the presence/absence of one particular feature, according to varieties of one feature, or according to mutually exclusive features"

He further asserts that the application of the mentioned criteria is not immune to problems, especially when the feature selected is inconsistent, not clearly formulated

or not relevant to the texts concerned. He also affirms that although in some cases a specific feature is not sufficient to identify a genre, it is advisable to stick to a specific feature throughout the classification in order to avoid the perplexity usually encountered in folklore categorization.

Folklore researchers who attempted to categorize oral narrative forms employed the criterion of selecting and applying specific features such as occasion, function, performance, purpose and delivery in their categorization. For instance, Guma (1990 :2) makes use of the feature purpose when distinguishing between a folktale and a fable. He regards a folktale as a narrative which is only told for entertainment purposes while a fable is didactic and moralistic. Chesaina (1991 : 20 - 21) refers to the feature function as a distinguishing factor between myths and legends. Myths are said to explain the origin of natural phenomena while the admirable qualities of historical figures in legends provide the youth with role models.

According to Propp (1993 : 45) the criterion which takes into consideration the presence or absence of a specific feature is usually applicable when broad categories of folklore are set up. For instance, works of folklore can be divided into those that are accompanied by songs and those without such an accompaniment. Oral narratives can also be distinguished according to those regarded as facts and those in which people do not believe. For example, Bascom (1965 : 5) describes legends as prose narratives which are regarded as true, while folktales are identified as those which are entirely based on fiction.

This criterion can also be applied when classifying legends and historical narratives

because they are also broader categories which can still be divided according to stories which focus on individual heroes and kings, migration of communities and those involving experiences of specific people in the society. For example historical narratives are characterized by the absence of a departure from normality which is evident in legends.

Classification according to varieties of a specific feature is usually desirable when categorization is made within a particular group such as prose narratives. Finnegan (1983 : 343) employs this criterion by taking into consideration varieties of the feature "main character" when distinguishing various types of prose narratives. Her classification outlines three types of stories based on animal characters, human characters, and historical and supernatural beings. This criterion is also applicable to legends and historical narratives as they are both based on some historical facts, and differ in the manner in which they are transmitted.

The criterion which focuses on mutually exclusive features can also be employed when setting up major folklore categories. Folklore items such as proverbs, riddles and tales have mutually exclusive features. For example, Pretorius and Mampuru (1994 : 32-42) refer to proverbs as short wise sayings expressing a supposed truth or moral lesson which are mainly used by adults in particular situations. Riddles are regarded as a game by the youth which specifically demands the mental ability of the participants, while tales are considered as oral traditions which are narrated in prose form.

According to Barber et. al. (1989:1-4) the intricacy involved in folklore classification is that most folklorists are concerned with the formalist analysis of oral texts, disregarding

the influence of historicity in such oral texts. She further supports her view by asserting that texts cannot be isolated from history as they are directly or indirectly based on the past. She then concludes that in order to alleviate this problem, a method which incorporates both the historicity and textuality of these texts is required.

Groenewald (1990 : 21-24) reiterates the importance of historicity in oral literature by discussing genealogies, praise lyrics and tales as oral traditions that have a direct connection with history among the Ndzudza Ndebele. He asserts that genealogies depict historical events containing valuable information about the origin and kinship relations of a specific group, while praise lyrics yield historical information in the form of stereotype phrases composed during the rule of a particular chief. He then regards tales as a form in which the pre-literate societies preserved their history.

Barber's element of historicity combined with Propp's methods of classifying folklore genres according to the presence or absence of a specific feature, or that of taking into consideration the varieties of one feature are thus necessary when one attempts to make a distinction between historical narratives and legends. More specific aspects of issues involved in classification of oral genres will be dealt with where appropriate in the subsections below.

2.2 PROSE NARRATIVES

The word prose narrative is an umbrella term embracing all oral traditions which occur in prose form. Prose narratives are items of folklore which are told in an ordinary straightforward language. This factor distinguishes them from other folklore items such

as oral poetry, which narrates in adulatory style and wisdom lore which is characterized by terseness of expression and word economy.

Bascom (1965 : 4-7) asserts that prose narratives are classified on the basis of their content and proposes a threefold division of myths, legends and folktales. He then defines a myth as a sacred story of the remote past with non-human characters, which accounts for the origin of various natural phenomena, while a legend is regarded as a secular or sacred narrative of the recent past with human characters. Folktales on the other hand are regarded as pure fictional stories whose characters include humans, animals, ogres, monsters etc.

According to Okpewho (1992:163-64) these folklore items should instead be referred to as oral narratives because the word *'prose'* is somehow misleading as it excludes the primary medium through which this art form is passed from generation to generation. Okpewho also argues that prose is not a suitable word as there are some narrative forms which are interspersed with songs or performed in the background of music, while others such as the *Mau Mau* guerrilla war song are told entirely in the form of a song.

Guma (1990) makes an analysis of a variety of genres found in the oral heritage of the Basotho literature. His oral narratives or stories *(ditshomo)* include myths, legends, fables, and folktales. He also distinguishes between riddles, proverbs and idioms, songs and praises. Furthermore he asserts that the content of these traditions is necessary to determine their identity, value and social significance in the society concerned.

Marivate (1973) collected and studied folktales from Tsonga native speakers and discovered that their form, content and delivery have specific characteristics which are different from those of other folklore genres. His analysis revealed that storytelling was exclusively an evening entertainment, and that Tsonga folktales are punctuated by the opening and closing formulae, which serve as a framework within which folktales are told. He also discovered that most Tsonga folktales are those in which humans together with animals and ogres feature as characters.

In his research among Xhosa and Zulu storytellers, Scheub (1975 : 1-16) discovered that the folktales he collected and analysed were governed by particular versatile components or core-cliches which were related to the theme and the plot. When taking the relationship between the storyteller and the audience into account, it was evident that each member of the audience was a potential storyteller because the creative rendition of each story was not isolated from the responses of the audience. These core-cliches are minute details of incidents in a folktale which may occur in the form of a song, a chant or a saying. The core - cliche can be expanded and dramatized before the audience in a specific folktale.

An analysis of the Northern Sotho folktale according to Scheub's approach by Makgamatha (1988) also revealed that the actual activity of performance plays an important role . For instance in his article he analyses the folktale of *Bokoko 'a Senokabolohadi* in which several young men try to win *Senokabolohadi's* hand in marriage. The young men's attempts are hindered by her grandmother who beats them with her abnormally large ears, to test their endurance. Each attempt by a young man is introduced by a saying which occurs in the form of a dialogue, in which

Senokabolohadi asks the young man whether he will not run away when her grandmother emerges. The several attempts by young men to win *Senokabolohadi* resemble core-cliches which can be expanded by adding the number of times the attempts by the young men are repeated.

A study determining whether Olrik's (1992) theory of *'the epic laws of folk narrative'* is applicable to Southern Sotho cyclic folktales was carried by Moephuli (1979) in his MA dissertation. After analysing the structure of Southern Sotho cyclic folktales by applying Olrik's method, he concluded that this theory can be successfully applied to Southern Sotho folktales. He also discovered that Olrik's approach complements the other two structural methods of analysing folktales, that is, the Proppian/Dundes and Scheubian approaches. This is evident in the story of *Ramakomotwane* who was reprimanded by a number of animals for taking his daughter to the cannibal's place to be killed. The girl was to be killed because she gave her brother her father's biltong, so that he can take the cattle to the pastures. The refusal of the boy to take the cattle to the pastures is equated to Olrik's Opening Law, Propp (1968) and Dundes' (1965) interdiction and Scheub's core-cliche which is used to introduce a conflict in this case.

2.3 LEGENDS AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

Dorson (1972 :159 - 200) refers to legends as true stories which are based on real places, persons and their experiences and further makes a distinction between place, personal and experience legends. He asserts that legends are characterized by exaggerations and colourful accounts of events. The author supports his view by

citing Raglan who discovered some lacunae and impossibilities in traditions based on historical heroes like Achilles, Robin Hood, Siegfried and King Arthur.

Finnegan (1967:29-40) regards historical narratives as traditional genealogies and histories which tend to exclude any improbabilities. She further asserts that historical narratives can fall into a separate category of narratives because the occasion in which they are told as well as their form, delivery and purpose of presentation are different from those of other oral narrative genres. For instance these narratives are not interposed with songs and are not concluded in closing formulae which characterise most folktales, as they are told in a more serious tone.

In another work Finnegan (1983 : 368 - 370) reiterates the view of assigning a historical narrative autonomous status by asserting that in certain areas narratives based on historical events are distinguished as separate oral narrative forms. She affirms her opinion by referring to historical truth bearing accounts of the Yuroba of Nigeria, known as the *itan*. The *itan* refer to historical narratives which amplify and explain the *oriki* (praise poetry of the Yuroba), which is based on their legendary ancestor and his descendants. The *itan* are more serious narrations because they stand for the origin of lineages, kingdoms and towns of the Yuroba.

In his classification of Xhosa oral narratives, Thynsma (1980:183) refers to historical tales *(imilando)* and legendary tales *(amabali)*, and points out the difficulty of discussing each of the mentioned genres critically due to overlapping features. He then concurs with Finnegan because he presumes that these genres can only be separated by the occasions on which they are presented.

When classifying prose narratives of the *Ngqika*, Nkonki (1968 :43) identifies historical narrations which he refers to as stories about previous generations based on famines, wars, epidemics and migrations. He then makes a distinction between legends *(amavo)* and historical narratives *(imbali)*. Nkonki regards historical narratives as those which are vividly remembered as they are of more recent origin than legends, and defines them as:

> "stories about tribal migrations, wars and certain incidents that operated to change the destiny and the future life of the tribe. For that purpose these are vividly remembered and thus narrated with a deep sense of the norms of the tribe"

Legends are said to be those which have become mixed up with fancies and imaginings as they occurred a long time ago, as in the case of the story relating to the emergence of the Ngqika tribe. The narrative pertaining to the split between *Rarabe* and *Gcaleka* is instead identified as a historical narrative because these heroes are not of a too distant generation.

Chesaina (1991:21) also supports Nkonki by recognizing time as a distinguishing factor between historical narratives and legends. After making an analysis of the oral narratives of the Kalenjin tribe of Kenya, she identified legends as historical stories based on characters who actually lived. She further asserts that over the years, the actual historical fact in such narratives is distorted because what is said about these characters may acquire new dimensions due to exaggeration and embellishment.

The assumption that the difference between legends and historical narratives is

brought about by the distortion of historical facts and fictitious additions is also suggested by Mofolo (1984 : xiv-xv) in his historical novel *Chaka*. When he was questioned by Reverend Malale about the accuracy of historical facts concerning the establishment of the Shangana nation which broke away from the Zulu of king Shaka, Mofolo responded by telling him that there are additions and omissions in his story because his aim was to write a tale and not history.

According to Olrik (1992 : 7) a legend is a short narrative with a single plot and one episode, usually focused on a particular character. He then distir guishes between the origin legend, which serves to explain the origin of a thing, and the anecdote, which portrays a person's character in a specific situation as the two main forms of legends. However, he does not regard a historical narrative as a narrative category and defines it as:

> "a term used especially about briefer narratives such as origin legend, anecdotes and remnants of narratives when they contain the name of a historical person, or when they relate to something that, from a scholarly standpoint, could have taken place"

Olrik does not classify a historical narrative as an autonomous genre because it does not adhere to what he refers to as epic laws of narrative composition. These laws of narrative composition are common practices which are generally followed by story tellers in various categories of oral narratives. Some of these laws are the Law of concentration on the leading character, the Law of three, the Law of contrast etc.

I will thus concur with Olrik as far as the deviation of the historical narrative from his epic laws is concerned. But in due course, these accounts may assume such laws as

they are retold by various narrators who may indulge their own imaginations in the stories in order to make up for existing gaps.

To solve this classification problem, Okpewho (1992 :183) suggests that oral narratives should be grouped into legends, explanatory tales and fables. He further maintains that the term legend should be retained because it deals with:

> "accounts of personalities and events that are considered so memorable that they deserve to be talked about or recounted (Latin legenda) again and again".

He further makes a distinction between the historic legend and the romantic *(mythic)* legend and comes to the following conclusions:

mythic (romantic legends)

-the events are far back in the past (distant past)

-the story is not subjected to any restrictions

-narrators may indulge their imaginations in the most fantastic details, when questioned they usually hide behind the excuse that 'things are no longer what they used to be'

historic legend

-occurs within the recent past

- the narrator sticks as closely as possible to real life event

- the narrator is careful not to engage in careless flights of imaginations, especially if he fears being contradicted by people who know the personalities concerned.

In this investigation I will concur with Okpewho as far as the mentioned features are concerned, but I will prefer to retain the terms legend and historical narrative. According to me the latter refers to basically pure historical accounts of personalities and other memorable events which are narrated without taking into consideration the relationship between successive events, to evoke a morphological sequence which is a characteristic of most folktales. Legends are oral narratives which have an affinity with historical fact as they evolve around real persons, places and events. They are regarded as partly imaginary because their details are subjected to all forms of manipulations as they are based on events that occurred in the distant past.

In her investigation of oral historical narrative, Hofmeyr (1994:3-7) incorporates both oral storytelling and literacy as they have an impact on this narrative form. For instance, Scheub's core-cliches or images which characterize Xhosa folktales in storytelling were evident in the narratives she recorded among the Ndebele -Sotho of Mokopane in the Northern Transvaal. She then concludes that the presentation of historical stories and fictional stories depends on a repertoire of core- images that the narrators combine in diverse ways. The study also addresses the issue of gender because her male informants narrated what they termed true historical stories, while female narrators presented mostly fictional stories. She further contends that one of the major characteristics of historical narratives is that they are woven around chieftaincy.

The major focus of her analysis is a series of interviews in which male narrators present a specific episode of the siege of Makapansgat (*tiragalo ya legolo la Gwaša)*. Therefore, her research has strongly suggested that gender should also

be regarded as a determining factor if one wishes to identify a historical narrative as an oral narrative genre among the Ndebele Sotho speech communities. As far as the lack of a visible performance context is concerned in oral historical narratives, Hofmeyr suggests that before the arrival of missionaries and the intervention of whites in rural societies, these stories must have had a performance life which had now terminated.

I agree with Hofmeyr's findings with regard to the role of gender. This is because in my field research I also discovered that females were reluctant to present stories or reports about historical facts they believed had really taken place. They instead referred me to their male counterparts.

With regard to the diachronic aspect of performance it seems that as time goes on, various narrators may add, omit or indulge their imaginations in historical narratives. This will eventually lead to the narration of a pure historical information moving steadily towards the direction of a legend, until it assumes morphological components similar to those characterizing longer folktales.

2.4 NORTHERN SOTHO GENRES

Grobler and Serudu (1977 :1-14) categorize Northern Sotho prose narratives *(dinonwane)* into folk stories which encompass (myths, legends , folktales and fables), stylized didactic prose which includes (proverbs, idioms and riddles) and historical narratives. According to the two authors proverbs, idioms and riddles have their Northern Sotho equivalent terms as *diema, dika* and *dithai* respectively while the

rest are not distinguished by separate terms in this language. In their classification a legend is said to be a story based on almost forgotten historical events, and deeds of heroes of earlier generations. Although such stories reminisce truthful accounts, many legendary deeds have been added. A historical narrative on the other hand, like a legend also deals with historical events based on past heroes, wars and ruling dynasties, but these events are not yet so vague for the stories to be classified as legends, as they are set in the near past.

In another work Serudu (1990 : 53 - 84) uses the Northern Sotho term *dinonwane* for a variety of prose narratives. The narratives which are classified according to their social functions include a myth *(nonwane ya kakanyotlhaloso)* which is identified as a sacred story attempting to account for the origin of the world and the mysteries of creation. A folktale *(nonwane ya kgogamašego)* is regarded as a fictional story mainly told for entertainment purposes. In a fable *(nonwane ya tsholo)* animals appear as human characters for the purpose of pointing out morals, while still maintaining their animal attributes and their specific features. Sacred historical tales which are based on wars, migrations, victories and other memorable events or deeds of earlier heroes and rulers are regarded as legends *(dinonwane tša pheteletšannete)*.

When classifying Northern Sotho prose narratives Pretorius and Mampuru (1994 : 103 -123) concur with Serudu as far as folktales, myths, fables and legends are concerned. In their classification a historical narrative is identified as a separate narrative genre. Though related to legends which are regarded as secular stories based on human characters, pure historical narratives are said to be true stories of the near past which do not contain fictitious additions as their origin can be fairly explained.

Due to the lack of relevant examples, the idea relating to the difference between the distant and the near past concerning the two narrative forms is not made clear.

Rakoma (1978) collected and made an alphabetical classification of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions. He further supplied the necessary explanations for relevant idioms and proverbs. His alphabetical method of classification is not consistent as it is difficult to decide on the key word to be used. Makopo's (1984) MA dissertation is devoted to a grammatical, linguistic and stylistic study of Northern Sotho riddles.

In his MA thesis Makgamatha (1987) examines the formal and structural characteristics of the Northern Sotho folktale, and also takes its stylistic features into consideration. His (1990) PhD dissertation which investigates the nature of the narrative in Northern Sotho exposes the presence of inherent structures in a system of signs, which reveal the communicative function of literature and the interpretation of the meaning of the narrative against the cultural background. The study also makes a synthesis on the formalist and structuralist point of view regarding the relations between story and discourse as far as oral and written narratives are concerned.

A number of Northern Sotho legendary stories have been collected and presented in the form of plays, biographies and autobiographies. Some of these stories are Makgaleng's drama *Tswala e a ja,* which relates about quarrels over kingship among Matlebjane's sons, *Marangrang*, by Maloma which is the story about the daring Bakone tribe leader, *Ba gaMphahlele,* by Phaladi and Mphahlele which traces the history of the Mphahlele tribe and *Kgašane* a Lobedu hero who was killed for his Christian belief, by Makwala (Bothma and Serudu, 1994:xiviii).

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Oral narratives are mainly studied from both the diachronic and the synchronic aspects. Before Propp's era, the study of prose narratives particularly folktales, coincided with the diachronic aspect which is preoccupied with how folktales originated. The diachronic aspect gradually gave way to the synchronic aspect which concentrates on the structure and the process of narration in folktales. This chapter therefore presents a discussion of the structural approach which is essentially synchronic as it is based on structure and process. A particular focus will be on Propp's morphological theory which is in line with this research.

3.1 THE STRUCTURAL THEORY

Analysis and interpretation of data in this study will be based on the structural approach. The structuralist theory is a synchronic approach which entails the breaking down of a tale into smaller identifiable and mutually related components. These meaningful units are then given appropriate names according to their specific roles in the tale. The approach can be used as a method of folklore material categorization which employs varieties of a specific feature because it describes how a particular oral narrative is constructed.

Canonici (1985:36-42) highlights the three directions in which the structuralist scholars of oral narratives have worked. These are summarized as follows:

The paradigmatic approach of Lévi- Strauss which examines the inner structure of the tale according to binary principles of thesis and antithesis. The oral-artistic approach of Finnegan and Scheub which concentrates on the formulas evident when a tale is transmitted and lastly the morphological approach of Propp and Dundes. In this study it is the latter approach which is adopted as explained below.

3.1.1 THE MORPHOLOGICAL APPROACH

As indicated above, Propp's (1968) morphological analysis of folktales which was adapted by Dundes (1965) provides a theoretical framework for this investigation. Before Propp's morphological theory, the analysis of oral narratives coincides with objectives of the formalist theory, which examines only the formal aspects of verbal art.

Propp's structural morphological theory begins with the premise that morphology is the search for minimal meaningful units of words. From this he deduced that similar meaningful structural units can be identified in folktales. This theory concentrates on the linear arrangement of the functions performed by main characters in a folktale. Such functions will then serve as basic structural units in that oral narrative.

Propp (1968 : 25-63) analysed Russian folktales and discovered that structural units which he referred to as functions may be identified in a narrative such as the folktale. The folktales he analysed indicated that the dramatis personae may vary while their actions and functions remained the same. He then concluded that in a folktale one should rather examine the actions instead of the characters. His analysis revealed that the plots in folktales were based on the occurrence of related component parts.

Propp then named each component and came to the conclusion that there are 31 of such units in Russian folktales. Although not all the functions will appear in every tale, those present in a specific tale occurred in a way that can be predicted. This was the birth of the morphological analysis of a folktale.

When analysing North American Indian folktales, Dundes (1965:206-215) adapted Propp's method and modified it by integrating it with Pike's linguistic pattern, and identified a maximum of only six functions. These functions were, instead, known as motifemes. The reduction in the number of motifemes is due to the presence of intervening motifemes, which occur between a pair of related functions in the Russian folktales analysed by Propp. For example, in Russian folktales, Lack, Propp's function number 8, is widely separated from Lack Liquidation, function number 19, by a number of intervening motifemes such as mediation, beginning of counteraction, departure etc. In Dundes' analysis, the lack is liquidated immediately after it is identified.

Dundes discovered that the morphological units tended to group themselves in patterns. He then referred to a group of motifemes as a motifeme pattern. He also noticed that most North American Indian folktales followed the common six motifeme combination consisting of Lack, Lack Liquidated, Interdiction, Violation, Consequence and Attempted Escape, which is optional as it seldom occurs in a number of folktales. A limited number of shorter North American Indian folktales were found to consist of just two motifemes, namely, Lack and Lack Liquidated. Marivate (1973) also applied the Proppian/Dundes methods to Tsonga folktales and established that the latter have a narrative structure which can be broken into six related morphological units as in the

case of North American Indian folktales.

As compared to Dundes' (1965) and Marivate's (1973) structural morphological components, Northern Sotho legends follow a motifeme sequence of five units consisting of lack, lack liquidation, interdiction, violation and consequence as they are usually affected by additions. Historical narratives on the other hand consist of only the first two motifemes, that is, lack and lack liquidation. In view of my aim, due to the distinctive motifeme patterns employed by the two oral narrative forms, the structural morphological approach can be used as a requirement for categorizing historical narratives and legends.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 APPLICATION OF MORPHOLOGICAL UNITS IN LEGENDS

In this chapter an attempt to apply Propp's morphological structural approach to Northern Sotho legends and historical narratives is made. Dundes' (1965) modified approach, which was successfully applied to North American Indian folktales, is adopted in this study as it suits the analysis of these oral narrative forms.

An analysis of the oral compositional nature of Northern Sotho legends reveals that such narratives can take a five motifeme pattern of lack, lack liquidation, interdiction, violation and consequence as already mentioned above. This appears to be the result of the amplification of historical events by the narrators in order to make up for existing gaps in the stories. Thus, the lack is usually unsatisfactorily liquidated in such a way that an interdiction is yielded. This interdiction is then violated, resulting in a form of retribution.

4.1.1 Lack

The first motifeme to be examined is the lack because the morphological approach asserts that a folktale usually begins with an imbalance which creates tension. In most cases, the protagonist is naturally motivated to embark on an enterprise which is responsible for a major conflict. This sort of initial situation, therefore, contains an

element of disequilibrium or lack. Dundes (1965 : 208) asserts that this state of undesirable disequilibrium is usually indicated by an abundance or shortage of something which results in the story actually relating on how the protagonist thrives to make up for the surplus or shortage.

Lack, therefore, refers to the problem to be overcome, and this can take various forms. In some of the Northern Sotho legends, this state of imbalance is implied and may be caused by illness, death, the absence of a unique recognised ruler in the ruling dynasty, or a character's desire or need to obtain what is lacking. The lack is illustrated in the sets of data below.

The *story of Marangrang* narrated by *Makhudu Mamabolo* opens with the following sentences:

Marangrang e be e le mohlabani wa Mokone yoo a phetšego lebakeng la Sekwati, kgoši ya Bopedi. Matebele a Moselekatse a rile go hlasela naga ya Bopedi Sekwati a tšhaba. (Marangrang was a Mokone warrior who lived during the days of Sekwati, king of Bopedi. When the Matebele of Moselekatse invaded Bopedi Sekwati fled).

In this case the Bapedi tribe experiences an imbalance because Sekwati flees Moselekatse and leaves the tribe without a recognized customary leader. Sekwati's absence creates a vacuum in the leadership of the Bapedi tribe and reflects a situation which calls for something to happen in order to restore normality, thus, initiating action in the story.

The *story of Matlebjane* narrated by *Leshata Mogale* reflects the same type of lack because the absence of the rightful ruler for the Batau tribe indicates the state of abnormality. Matlebjane is only acting as a regent on behalf of his nephew Mogašwa, who is still too young to rule as it appears in the following extract :

Kgale Matlebjane ba re e be e le kgoši ye kgolo ya Batau. E be e dio ba kgoši ka ge a be a swaretše morwa wa mogolo'agwe yoo a bego a bitšwa Mogašwa. (Long ago it is said there was a great king of the Batau called Matlebjane. He was not the rightful king because he was acting as a regent for his brother's son, Mogašwa).

In the story about *the origin of the Mamabolo tribe* the element of disequilibrium is brought about by the desire or need to establish an autonomous kingdom for the Mamabolo tribe, as they were still under the Balobedu. In this legend the lack is reflected in the following lines:

Ge ba le Bolobedu ba be ba le ka fase ga kgoši Manamela. Go na fao Ramohwibidu yoo e bego e le mohlabani wa kgobe o ile a ngwega le seripa se sengwe sa setšhaba a leba Letšhitele. (At Bolobedu they were under a chief named Manamela. During his rule a part of the tribe under a reputable warrior by the name of Ramohwibidu left for Letšhitele).

Motlhaume Mamabolo's version of *the split of the Mamabolo tribe* displays a lack which is brought about by the principal wife's unfortunate condition of not being able to bear a son. The following extract from Rathabeng Chueu's version of *the split of the Mamabolo tribe* indicates a state of disequilibrium which is caused by death, because

Mamabudusha's death results in the tribe being ruled by regents as the heir apparent is still too young :

Ba re ka morago ga lehu la Mamabudusha setšhaba sa gaMamabolo se ile sa buša ke borangwane ' tšona lebakanyana ka ge morwa wa gagwe Maribe e be e sa le ngwana (It is said after Mamabudusha's death, the Mamabolo tribe was ruled by the paternal uncles for a certain period of time as Maribe, her son, was still too young).

4.1.2 Lack Liquidated

Lack Liquidated is the second morphological structural element. At this stage the state of equilibrium is restored because the deficiency is displaced as the problem is overcome. In Northern Sotho legends, this motifeme appears soon after the lack is identified. According to Marivate (1973 : 84) a lack which is liquidated without a form of conflict often results in the end of the story. In most cases the lack is immediately satisfied in order to make way for the interdiction, especially when it is satisfied with a form of resistance or conflict.

In *the story of Marangrang,* the lack is satisfied with a form of conflict because after Sekwati's departure, Marangrang, who is a foreigner becomes the leader of the Bapedi tribe. This lack could have been satisfactorily liquidated if one of the members of the royal family took over the kingship position during Sekwati's absence. This motifeme is identified in the following lines:

O rile ge a boya a hwetša setšnaba sa gagwe se bušwa ke mofaladi wa Mokone yoo

a bego a tsebja ka la Marangrang. (On his return he found his tribe under the leadership of a Mokone foreigner called Marangrang).

The *story of Matlebjane,* also displays a lack which is not satisfactorily liquidated . The deficiency of lacking a king, as Mogašwa is still too young to rule, is temporarily overcome because Matlebjane, his paternal uncle, acts as a regent. This form of lack satisfaction is evident in the excerpt below.

E be e dio ba kgoši ka ge a be a swaretše morwa wa mogolo 'agwe yoo a bego a bitšwa Mogašwa. (He was not the rightful king because he acted as a regent for his brother's son, Mogaswa)

In the story about *the origin of the Mamabolo tribe*, the lack is liquidated when Ramohwibidu breaks away from the Balobedu, leading to the establishment of an autonomous kingdom by his son Seolwana. In this story, it appears the lack is satisfied without a conflict as a new kingdom is introduced for the first time. When this happens a device is usually made to create the necessary conflict. My informant *Rathabeng Chueu* amplifies the events by bringing in Seolwana's wife, Mamabudusha, into the story in order to produce a resistance, and to make up for the existing lacunae between the origin and the split of the Mamabolo tribe.

The same applies to the story about *the split of the Mamabolo tribe* which could easily end up with Maribe taking over the reigns when he comes of age. In this narrative, Chueu is free to create a conflict by indulging his imaginations in the historical fact, as the events and the characters around which the story is woven, are so far back

in time. The lack is overcome when Maribe takes over the throne, but there is a conflict because his principal wife is unable to bear a son who was to lead the people after his death.

Motlhaume Mamabolo's version of *the split of the Mamabolo tribe* presents an imbalance which is rectified when Maribe's principal wife is allowed to marry a substitute wife, who is deputed to bear the heir apparent on her behalf. This lack is liquidated in such a way that it makes up for the next stage because the problem will only be resolved when the heir apparent is born. The following extract indicates how the state of equilibrium is restored in the latter narrative :

Mmago setšhaba o ile a swanela ke go nyala hlatswa dirope ka ge a be a sa kgone go belega lesogana leo le bego le swanetše go tla go buša. (The principal wife was compelled to marry a substitute wife who could bear the heir apparent on her behalf as she could not bear a son who was supposed to be the future king)

4.1.3 Interdiction

The third motifeme in the morphological structure of Northern Sotho legends is the interdiction. It occurs after lack liquidated, and is normally a verbal and authoritative prohibition, request or advice forbidding someone from engaging into some action. In his morphological analysis of Tsonga folktales, Marivate (1973 : 85) concludes that the interdiction in the plot structure of a narrative is there so that it could be violated and create consequences.

In certain cases the interdiction may not be explicitly stated, but implied, especially if it consists of cultural norms. Thus, in Northern Sotho the observation of taboos, social and moral codes may also serve as an interdiction, which is seldom stated. For instance a moral code has it that young girls should be confined to their homes, while on the other hand, boys would spend most of their time away from home hunting or herding cattle, kings are not to be disparaged, and that the king's eldest son from his principal wife is the heir apparent, etc. A deviation from such accepted social customs constitutes a violation. In this whole collection of legends, only one instance of a categorically stated interdiction is encountered, while the rest display a form of injunction which is implied in the expected social customs.

In *the story of Marangrang* the interdiction is implied in the Northern Sotho tradition that no person outside the royal dynasty will ever be accepted as a king. The king is the central figure who has to be honoured and is not be disparaged in any form. He is also regarded as an overseer because the entire system of government is centred around him. This tradition is evident in some of the Northern Sotho proverbs such as *! goši ke kgoši ka madi* (a king is a king through the blood of kingship) and *Lentšu la kgoši le agelwa morako* (what the king says should always be respected and taken into consideration).

The *story of Matlebjane* also projects an interdiction which is based on dishonouring the legality of the claim to kingship succession. According to a Northern Sotho tradition, a regent is obliged to hand over the throne to the apparent heir as soon as the latter becomes matured enough. This was not the case with Matlebjane, as he clung to the position until he was assassinated by his sons. The prohibition in the story

based on *the origin of the Mamabolo tribe* is significant in the Mamabolo customary law which has it that a woman is not supposed to rule. This is due to the fact that among Northern Sotho people it is a tradition that the king holds his position on the strength of patrilineal primogeniture. Seolwana died at an early stage and instead of one of the king's brothers, his wife Mamabudusha takes over the throne after his death.

In Chueu's version of *the split of the Mamabolo tribe,* the interdiction is also embedded in cultural norms. In Northern Sotho tradition it is customary for a king to have more than one wife , and only one of these wives, however, is destined to bear the heir apparent. She is selected by the tribe through the councillors and regarded as the senior wife. Should this senior wife be barren or fail to bear a son, she is compelled to marry an ancillary wife who is expected to give birth to children and, hopefully, the eligible heir on her behalf. This interdiction is evident in the following lines:

Maribe o be a na le barwa ba babedi e lego Mankweng le Sekwala le basadi ba gagwe ba bannyane. Ka ge timamello e be e hloka morwa yoo a bego a swanetše go tšea bogoši.... (Maribe had two sons, namely, Mankweng and Sekwala by his junior wives. As his senior wife could not bear a son who was to be the apparent heir to the throne....)

Motlhaume Mamabolo's version of *the split of the Mamabolo tribe* is the only instance which contains a clearly expressed injunction. In this narrative the informant verbally states that :

Go ya ka setšo sa gaMamabolo kgale e be e le tshwanelo go re morwa wa kgoši wa

mathomo go basadi ba gagwe ba bannyane e be yena a belegago kgoši le hlatswa dirope. (According to the Mamabolo tradition, a long time ago, it was customary for the king's eldest son from one of his junior wives to have an heir apparent to the throne with the substitute wife).

This precept also serves as an example of the imaginary details employed by narrators as the historical details of the story are missing. When I questioned the validity of the tradition appearing in this injunction, as it is not common among Northern Sotho communities, Motlhaume defended his claim by stating that the custom applied to the Mamabolo people a long time ago. He further argued that due to the Western civilization, the world keeps on changing and, as a result of this, most generations discard the traditions of their ancestors. In Rathabeng's version, the interdiction is instead embedded in the tradition that the king's principal wife should be allowed to marry a substitute if she is unable to bear the royal successor.

4.1.4 Violation

The fourth motifeme in the morphological structure of oral narratives is violation. It usually follows the interdiction and occurs when one breaks the latter by doing exactly what he or she is not supposed to do. In certain cases an attempted escape occurs immediately after the violation, where the character who violated the interdiction, tries to extricate himself or herself from a difficult situation. This is not the case with Northern Sotho legends as they are often centred around heroes, who under all circumstances abstain from escaping. Violation is also constituted as soon as a character acts contrarily to socially accepted and approved behaviours or customs.

With regard to this motifeme, Propp (1968 : 27) says this function usually occurs when a new character enters the tale as a villain with the aim of disturbing the peace, or to encourage other characters to disobey the interdiction.

In *the story of Marangrang,* Marangrang infringes on the Northern Sotho tradition which states that a king is a king through the blood of kingship. When Sekwati, the rightful ruler of the Bapedi returns from exile, Marangrang who took over the position during his absence, refuses to step down. It is also evident in *the story of Matlebjane* that Matlebjane profanes the tradition that a regent should hand over the throne to the heir apparent as soon as he comes of age. He overstays his period of regency with the aim of bestowing the kingship status on his junior wife's son, instead of Mogašwa, who is the actual heir apparent. The following extract from the story of Matlebjane indicates how the interdiction was violated :

Matlebjane o ile a hlokomologa lapa la bogoši gomme a dula go la mosadi yo monyenyane yoo e bego e le mmamoratwa wa gagwe. Taba ye e ile ya dira go re go bonale gore o lokišetša morwa wa gagwe wa mosadi wa lapa leo le le nyenyane bogoši. (Matlebjane neglected the royal house and resided in the house of his favourite junior wife. This appeared as though he preferred his junior wife's son for the kingship position).

In the story about *the origin of the Mamabolo tribe,* the Mamabolo customary law states that a woman cannot rule, as succession to the kingship position is hereditary in the male line. Should a king die while the heir to the position is still young, the councillors should appoint one of the paternal uncles to act temporarily. The king's

advisors, instead, violated this custom by allowing Seolwana's wife , Mmamabudusha, to take over the throne after his death. For instance it is stated in the narrative that :

Seolwana ga a ka a phela nako ye telele gomme pušo e ile ya wela ka diatleng tša mohumagadi wa gagwe Mmamabudusha, ka ge bakgomana ba sa ka ba kgetha rannwane 'a tšona go swarela ngwana yoo a bego a lebane ke bogoši. (Unfortunately, Seolwana did not live for a long time and his wife Mmamabudusha took the reigns as the councillors failed to appoint one of the paternal uncles as a regent).

This violation also denotes that legends are characterized by inconsistencies based on how different narrators relate the same story. Various narrators may give divergent accounts of a specific episode, as it appears in the two versions relating to *the split of the Mamabolo tribe*. According to Rathabeng Chueu the disintegration occurred as a result of Maribe violating the Northern Sotho tradition by appointing Mankweng, a son from one of his junior wives, as the future king. The injunction was to be observed by giving the principal wife a chance to approach her family for a substitute wife. On the other hand, in his version, Motlhaume Mamabolo claims that Maribe profaned the Mamabolo tradition by denying Sekwala access to the substitute wife's hut.

4.1.5 Consequence

The last of these motifemes, which is generally the result of an unwise action on the part of the victim is the consequence. It is the inevitable result of violating the interdiction. At this stage the villain is confronted and punished, thus, concluding the story. Dundes (1965) regards the consequence as the last motifeme which rounds the

tale off, as it indicates a return to the state of equilibrium.

Northern Sotho legends often end with the consequence because they are based on heroes, who are expected to stand their ground in perplexing situations. For instance, in *the story of Marangrang,* the once powerful Marangrang is led by a woman to Sekwati's allies and defeated. He is thus punished for not honouring the king by refusing to step down when Sekwati returned to claim his position back. The same applies to Matlebjane who is assassinated by his sons for violating the Batau custom by bestowing the kingship position to his favourite junior wife's son, instead of the actual heir to the throne.

In the narrative about the Mamabolo tribe, the punishment is used as a means of implementing the violated tradition on the parties concerned. In *the origin of the Mamabolo tribe,* Seolwana dies while his son, Maribe, is still young and the councillors allow his mother, Mamabudusha, to rule instead of appointing one of Seolwana's brothers to act as a regent. As a female, instead of standing her ground, Mamabudusha feels insecure at Letšhitele and decides to move further away from Bolobedu. This migration resulted in the tribe landing at Thotlwe, where the retribution for the unwise action by the royal nobles occurs in the form of the malaria epidemic.

In the two versions of the *split of the Mamabolo tribe,* this disintegration becomes a form of punishment meted on Maribe due to his failure to adhere to the traditions of the tribe. In Rathabeng's version, Maribe appoints Mankweng as the future king, instead of allowing his principal wife to marry an ancillary wife. This results in Sekwala conspiring with his regiment and some of the councillors to form a faction of the

Mamabolo tribe. In Motlhaume's version, Maribe's refusal of Sekwala gaining access to the substitute wife's hut constitutes violation. As a result, Sekwala and a number of councillors who were on his side broke away and established their own kingdom. This consequence is evident in the following extract from Motlhaume Mamabolo's version of *the split of the Mamabolo tribe :*

Sekwala o ile a tloga le balatedi ba gagwe gammogo le bakgomana bao ba bego ba ema le yena , ba yo hloma mošate wa bona Segopje. Sekwala ke yena tatago seripa se sa setšhaba sa gaMamabolo. (Sekwala then left with his followers and a number of councillors who viewed his cause as just, and established their kingdom at Segopje. Therefore, Sekwala is the founder of this section of the Mamabolo tribe).

A summary of the morphological analysis of the The stories of *Marangrang* and *Matlebjane*.

Table 4.1 (a)

MOTIFEME	THE STORY OF MARANGRANG *(Makhudu Mamabolo)*	THE STORY OF MATLEBJANE *(Leshata Mogale)*
Lack	Sekwati flees Bopedi after Moselekatse's invasion and leaves his tribe without a unique recognized leader.	The Batau tribe lacks a king as Mogaswa, the apparent heir is still too young to rule.
Lack Liquidated	Marangrang fills the vacuum by assuming the leadership of the Bapedi tribe.	Mogaŝwa's paternal uncle, Matlebjane rules temporarily as a regent.
Interdiction	No man without seniority in the royal dynasty will ever be regarded as a king.	A regent cannot hang on the throne when the heir apparent has come of age.
Violation	Marangrang violates this tradition by refusing to step down on Sekwati's return.	Matlebjane overstays his period of regency and bestows the kingship position on his favourite junior wife's son, Photo.
Consequence	Marangrang is eventually defeated by Sekwati in a subtle manner.	Matlebjane's other sons including his nephew lure Photo in assassinating their father.

A summary of the morphological analysis of the stories based on the Mamabolo tribe

Table 4.1(b)

MOTIFEME	THE ORIGIN OF THE MAMABOLO TRIBE	THE SPLIT OF THE MAMABOLO TRIBE (RATHABENG CHUEU)	THE SPLIT OF THE MAMABOLO TRIBE (MOTLHAUME)
Lack	The Mamabolo people lack an autonomous kingdom as they are still under the Balobedu.	The absence of a recognized leader prevails as Maribe is still young.	Maribe's principal wife cannot bear a son who is supposed to be the future king.
Lack liquidated	Ramohwibidu breaks away and the Mamabolo tribe is established.	Maribe comes of age and takes over the reigns, but his principal wife cannot bear a son.	Maribe's principal wife marries a substitute wife who is deputed to bear the heir apparent on her behalf.
Interdiction	A woman cannot rule because the succession to the kingship position is hereditary in the male line.	Should the principal wife be unable to bear the heir apparent, she must marry a substitute wife for that purpose.	The king's eldest son from one of his junior wives is destined to have an heir apparent with the substitute wife.
Violation	The councillors permit Seolwana's wife, Mamabudusha to rule.	Maribe appoints Mankweng, a son from one of his junior wives as the future king.	Maribe denies Sekwala access to the substitute wife's hut.
Consequence	Mamabudusha decides to migrate further and the tribe is nearly destroyed as a result of the malaria epidemic.	This led to Sekwala and some members of the tribe to form a faction of the once powerful Mamabolo tribe	Sekwala, together with a number of councillors, breaks away and establishes his own kingdom at Segopje.

4.2 APPLICATION OF MORPHOLOGICAL UNITS IN HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

When analysed according to morphological units, historical narratives adopt a two motifeme sequence of lack and lack liquidation. In this case there is no forbidden action or departure from normality that will warrant the parties concerned to suffer the consequences when it is violated. This is due to the fact that the narrators do not indulge their imaginations as historical narratives are still quite recent in the minds of the members of the community. The attempt to liquidate the lack in these stories is not met by a conflict or any form of resistance. Therefore, historical narratives employ a two motifeme pattern as the lack in such stories is satisfactorily overcome.

4.2.1 Lack

Lack is the first motifeme in the morphological analysis of Northern Sotho historical narratives. As in the case of legends, it is usually a state where the community lacks something. It is an element which refers to the motivation or starting point of a story and represents an imbalance which must be rectified.

In the story of *Lekau, the regent*, a large part of the narrative is based on Lekau's identity and his military expertise. A situation which sets the action into motion is that the Mamabolo people did not have a recognized king as Lekau was only acting as a regent for the young Mankweng. The story of *King Seswai* also focuses on Seswai's physical appearance and his general conduct. The imbalance here is based on the death of Kgabedi, who was the apparent heir to the throne. The lack is liquidated when Kgabedi is replaced by Seswai to restore the state of equilibrium.

Examples:

The following extract from *Lekau, the regent* , exhibits how the lack is rectified:

Ge a hlokofetše, morwarr 'agwe e lego Lekau, yoo a bego a tsebja ka la Ramohwibidu o ile a swarela Mankweng yoo e bego e sa le yo monnyane. (After his death, his brother Lekau, who was also known as Ramohwibidu, acted as a regent for the young Mankweng).

In both versions of *Christianity at gaMankweng,* Mankweng deprives his people of freedom of Christian worship as he regards it as a threat to his kingdom. In Moalusi's version, this state of disequilibrium is intensified by the punishment executed on the Christian converts by Mankweng. In Motlhaume Mamabolo's narration of *Christianity at gaSekwala*, the Christian religion was also not initially accepted. Sekwala forbade this religion as he thought it would encourage his people not to respect their culture. This form of lack is indicated in the following extracts:

Christianity at gaMankweng (Makhudu Mamabolo's version)

Mathomong Mankweng o ile a se kwane le taba yeo ka ge a be a nagana go re bodumedi bo ka tla bja dira gore setšhaba sa gagwe se se sa mo hlompha. (Initially, Mankweng did not grant the Christians freedom of worship as he thought it was detrimental to the honour he received from his people).

Christianity at gaMankweng (Moalusi Seabela's version)

Kgoši o ile a thoma go se sa kwišiša taba ye ka ge banna ba ba Majeremane ba be ba fela ba kgobokanya setšhaba ka ntle le tumelelo ya gagwe. (The king later viewed

this matter as a threat to his kingdom as the German missionaries often assembled people without his concern).

4.2.2 Lack Liquidated

Lack Liquidation refers to the removal of the lack or the problem encountered in the preceding morphological stage. As in the case of legends, lack liquidation appears immediately after the lack. As it was stated above, historical narratives do not end with the punishment of the villain as the story is concluded without the characters engaging in errors which constitute a violation and subsequently the punishment thereof. In historical narratives the lack is not coupled with a form of authoritative prohibition because the figures whom the historical events are woven around are not made to depart from the norms of the society. As the events occurred in the recent past, the narrators abstain from indulging their own additions in the stories because they avoid being contradicted by members of the community who might have a knowledge of the events or the personalities concerned.

For instance, in *Lekau, the regent* there is no conflict in the removal of the lack because when Mankweng was ready for the throne, Lekau did not hesitate to pass it over to him. The same applies to *the two versions of Christianity at gaMankweng*, in which the lack is satisfied when Mankweng is finally compelled to accept Christianity. In Moalusi Seabela's version, Mankweng is said to have only granted a permission for Christians to worship in his area after realising that their religion was accompanied by civilization in the form of school education. Sekwala, on the other hand, in the narrative based on *Christianity at gaSekwala*, restored the situation by encouraging

his people to accept Christianity after he was convinced by a member of his tribe about how the Christian religion is related to the ancestoral worship.

Examples:

Christianity at gaMankweng (Moalusi Seabela)

Ka ge bojakane bo be bo tswakane le tšwelopele ya go swana le thuto, Mankweng o ile a feleletša a dumeletse kgašo ya lentšu la Modimo mo nageng ye. (As Christianity was accompanied by an element of western civilization, especially school education, Mankweng was compelled to grant his people permission for Christian worship in this area).

Christianity at gaSekwala.

Ka morago Sekwala o ile a thoma go dumela le go hlohleletša setšhaba go amogela thuto ya sedumedi ka ge a ile a kgahlwa ke thero ya o mongwe wa badumedi ba mo gaMamabolo, yeo e bego e theilwe godimo ga kamano ye e lego gona magareng a Modimo le badimo. (Later Sekwala allowed Christian worship and began to encourage his people to accept Christianity. This was after he was impressed by the preaching of one of the Christian convents from his tribe about the relationship between Christianity and the ancestoral worship).

In the narrative based on *king Seswai,* the attempt to liquidate the lack is not met with a conflict. After the death of Kgabedi, who was the heir apparent, his younger brother Seswai took over the throne. This is in line with the Northern Sotho expected social norms, as the succession to kingship lies within a royal descent group. Therefore, the manner in which the problem is solved does not warrant the story to continue.

The nature in which the lack is satisfied indicates the absence of inconsistencies in the major events of historical narratives when a particular story is narrated by different people. This is due to the fact that the details of such narratives are still fresh in the minds of the narrators and the community at large. Despite the arbitrary form in which the two versions of *Christianity at gaMankweng* were narrated by Makhudu and Moalusi respectively, the initial situation which brings about the state of disequilibrium is basically the same. In both cases it is attributed to king Mankweng depriving his people the freedom of Christian worship in his area. The problem is subsequently subdued in both versions when Mankweng grants his people permission of Christian worship after realizing its advantages as far as western civilization is concerned.

A summary of the morphological analysis of Northern Sotho historical narratives in this collection.

Table 4.2

HISTORICAL NARRATIVES	MOTIFEMES	
	LACK	LACK LIQUIDATED
Lekau, the regent	Lekau acts as a regent for the young Mankweng.	When Mankweng is ready, Lekau hands over the throne to him.
Christianity at gaMankweng (Makhudu Mamabolo)	Mankweng deprives his people the freedom of Christian worship.	Mankweng eventually accepts this religion and more churches are established.
Christianity at gaMankweng (Moalusi Seabela)	Mankweng forbids Christianity as he views it as a threat to his kingdom.	Makweng accepts Christianity after realising its importance as far as the introduction of school education is concerned.
Christianity at gaSekwala	Sekwala discourages the Christian religion in his area as he thinks it is detrimental to the maintenance of local culture.	He finally encourages Christian worship after being impressed by the preaching of one of the converts from his tribe about the relationship between Christianity and the ancestral worship.
King Seswai	The death of Kgabedi, who is the apparent heir to the throne.	His younger brother Seswai takes over the throne.

4.3 ADDITIONAL COMPARABLE FEATURES REGARDING LEGENDS AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

In addition to the structural morphological analysis, it is also interesting to note that a number of similarities and differences can be drawn from other features which characterize Northern Sotho legends and historical narratives. These oral narratives are presented as true stories which retain important historical facts, as they are based on historical events and outstanding persons who really existed. Thus, traditional place, personal and clan names appear in the two narrative forms to further their similarities. On the other hand, factors such as introductory formulae, historical time and the appearance of defiance of cultural norms are desirable for stigmatizing the oral composition of legends and historical narratives.

(a) Place names

In the stories of *Marangrang,* the name Bopedi refers to the area in the North Eastern part of the Transvaal occupied by some of the Northern Sotho speaking tribes. This area is still known as Bopedi. The places such as gaMasemola, gaSelwane, gaPhaahla and gaMogašwa which occur in *the story of Matlebjane* were named after Matlebjane's sons. When it comes to the stories based on the Mamabolo tribe, places such as Letšhitele and Thotlwe are as before, still adjacent to Bolobedu, while Bjatladi, Kgokong and Masealama are still located within the area of gaMamabolo. The villages occupied by the Mankweng and the Sekwala factions are up to the present time referred to as gaMankweng and gaSekwala respectively.

(b) Personal names

The personal name Sekwati in *the story of Marangrang* appears in the genealogy of the Sekhukhune tribe of Bopedi and is also retained among his descendants. The names of Matlebjane's sons, Masemola, Mogaswa, Selwane and Phaahla from the story based on the disintegration of the Batau are also kept by their present kings. The Mamabolo tribes still make use of the names Mankweng and Sekwala for their kings, while names such as Lekau, Maribe and Chueu are also common among the Mamabolo people.

(c) Clan names

The clan names of Northern Sotho tribes are usually derived from the names of their totems. For instance the clan name Bakgaga originates from *kgaga* (duiker). The Mphahlele people who easily captured Marangrang venerated this animal and the present generation of this tribe still has the *kgaga* as their totem. The Matlebjane tribe venerates the lion *(tau)*, hence the clan name Batau which is retained up to this day. The Mamabolo tribe also kept the *kolobe* (wild boar) which they venerated with the Balobedu as their totem.

(d) Introductory formulae

In the narration of Northern Sotho legends the narrator usually introduces his story by means of an introductory formula before giving the name of the place or that of the character concerned. This introductory formula also implies that the events occurred in the distant past. For insta the word *"kgale"* means a long time ago while "*ba re"* (it is said) gives an indication that the narrator learnt the story from someone. The following are examples of introductory frames which occur of the legends appearing

in this study:

The story of Matlebjane (Makhudu Mamabolo)

Kgale ba re Matlebjane e be e le kgoši ye kgolo ya Batau. (Long ago it is said there was a great king of the Batau called Matlebjane).

The origin of the Mamabolo tribe (Leshata Mogale)

Ba gaMamabolo ke seripa sa Balobedu bao ba tlogilego Bokgalaka kgale. (The Mamabolo people were part of the Balobedu tribe who broke away from the Bakgalaka of Bokgalaka)

When narrating the stories I categorized as historical narratives, narrators began their stories with a sudden movement, without stating the opening formula. The words "*kgale*" and *"ba re"* do not appear in such narratives as they are of the recent past. Narrators of historical narratives commence their stories by giving the name of the main character or stating the conflict as in the following cases :

Christianity at gaMankweng (Makhudu Mamabolo)

Mankweng o be a nyetše mmago setšhaba gaDikgale. (Mankweng married his senior wife from the Dikgale tribe)

Christianity at gaSekwala (Motlhaume Mamabolo)

Bojakane mathomong bo be bo sa dumelelwa mo gaSekwala ka ge mošate o be o tšea go re bo tla ruta batho go nyatša setšo. (The Christian religion was initially not accepted at gaSekwala as the king thought it would encourage his people not to

respect their culture).

(e) Historical time

As far as the historical period is concerned it is evident that the events evolving around Marangrang took place in the distant past. Besides what is deduced from the opening formulae, Monnig (1983 : 17-26) declares that Marangrang lived in the days of Sekwati who died in 1861. These events occurred in the eighteenth century when Mzilikazi invaded the Transvaal. With regard to the legends based on the Mamabolo tribe reference to the distant past is due to the fact that in most cases the migrations of the black people in South Africa, including the Mamabolo tribe was due to disputes with the white people who had invaded the Transvaal Province during the Great Trek which started in 1836 (Mamabolo 1994 : 13 - 19). The author also asserts that king Maribe and the Mamabolo tribe left Bjatladi around the 1860's.

Another important aspect about the allusion of legends to the distant past is their close connection to aphorisms, especially proverbs *(diema)*. According to Canonici (1996 : 18 -19) proverbs were established at a very remote period, hence, there is a generally accepted notion that some proverbs originate from folktales. Like most folktales some legends have also given rise to proverbs. For example, the Northern Sotho proverb *"Tswala e a ja, e lle Matlebjane"* which means (bearing children is sometimes detrimental as in the case of Matlebjane) is ascribed to *the story of Matlebjane*, which is presented in this study. The legend is based on the events woven around Matlebjane, the great king of the Batau tribe who was assassinated by his own sons.

The general character of Northern Sotho historical narratives, as far as time is concerned is that the narrators seem to have a clear mental image of the events as they take place within a memorable time. The events in these oral narrative forms are easily remembered since they occurred during the 20th century as it is vouched in Mamabolo (1994 : 28 - 40) that the Lutheran Mission station referred to in Makhudu Mamabolo's version of *Christianity at gaMankweng* was moved from Mphome to Maseatama in 1908. This was also evident when I discussed the story of *King Seswai* with my informant Mantšhi Mamabolo who attested that Seswai took over the throne in 1922.

(f) Defiance of cultural norms

As the events and the characters on which the story is built in legends are set in the remote past, their narrators may indulge in the abuse of customary practices in their accounts. For instance, in *the story of Marangrang* the latter flouts the Northern Sotho customary law which has it that *"bogoši bo a tswalelwa"* which implies that kings are born and not made, by refusing to step down on Sekwati's return. The same applies to *the story of Matlebjane* who defies the same tradition by not handing over the throne to the rightful ruler.

In the story based on *the origin of the Mamabolo tribe* the councillors of the royal house disparaged the Northern Sotho custom which states that all women are precluded from holding any political office. In the two versions of *the split of the Mamabolo tribe* Maribe rebels against social conformity by appointing Mankweng as his successor, instead of resorting to the marriage of a deputy wife in Rathabeng's version. In Motlhaume's account, Mankweng violates the cultural norms by declining

to admit that Sekwala should bear the heir to the throne with the deputy wife.

The characters in historical narratives are not made to revile cultural norms as they are seldom present in such oral narrative forms. There are two historical narratives which display cultural norms in this collection. Unlike in legends, these traditions are not maltreated. In Rathabeng's narrative of *Lekau, the regent,* Lekau who acted as a regent for the young Mankweng did not take undue advantage of the tradition that a regent should step down as soon as the royal successor is ready. The story of *king Seswai* also has a social tradition which is not disparaged because after Kgabedi's early death his younger brother, Seswai, took over the throne.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

A number of Northern Sotho legends and historical narratives have been collected, and those that were lavishly collected by some scholars were recorded as history without being properly analysed and identified as oral narrative forms. It is also important to note that there is a considerable and impressive literature by various scholars which sheds some new light on the criteria employed for classifying different oral narratives into specific genres. For example, Propp's (1993) criteria of classifying folklore genres by identifying a specific feature, or that of taking varieties of a particular feature into consideration were prosperous in the attempt to distinguish between legends and historical narratives.

The presence of contemporary literature which is particularly based on legends and historical narratives, also played an important role in the attempt to categorize these oral narrative forms. For instance, Okpewho (1992) is outstanding when it comes to making a distinction between a mythic legend and a historic legend (historical narrative) while Hofmeyr (1994) and Olrik (1992) have succeeded in identifying a historical narrative as an autonomous oral narrative genre.

As it was indicated that the plot structure of legends can be analysed according to structural morphological units similar to those evident in most folktales, the main conclusion arrived at in this project is that the structuralist theory, specifically Propp

and Dundes' morphological approach may also be applied to Northern Sotho legends and historical narratives. A morphological analysis of Northern Sotho legends proves that they follow a five motifeme sequence. Therefore, to a certain extent a similarity exists between these oral narratives and North American Indian and Tsonga folktales analysed by Dundes (1965) and Marivate (1973) respectively.

Although legends and historical narratives appear to be similar in their denotation, they can be distinguished by the application of the structural morphological theory. Historical narratives consist of only two motifemes as they are based on events of which are still recent in the memory of a specific community. Hence, they are not characterized by amplifications and distortions. Since folklore is in a constant process of change, a historical account which basically has a two motifeme sequence, may be affected by a fictionalizing process over a long period as the story is presented by a number of narrators. The narrators may add, omit or indulge their imaginations in a historical narrative until it assumes a motifeme sequence of five units.

The findings in this study imply that historical narratives are not regarded as *dinonwane* in Northern Sotho because the historical events in such accounts are not yet amplified by the creation of conflicts, and the inclusion of social moral codes which are normally violated as it appears in legends. Therefore in Northern Sotho the categorization of legends and historical narratives should be based on their morphological structure.

Besides the plot narrative structure, other qualities such as the appearance of place, personal and clan names promote the similarities which occur between legends

and historical narratives. Factors like historical time, the presence or absence of introductory formulae and the flouting of social moral codes are essential for branding these oral narratives.

The application of the structural morphological theory on Northern Sotho legends and historical narratives opens up a new and interesting field of study as it was not applied before in such oral narrative forms. Most important is that this approach can be used as a mode of categorizing these oral narrative genres.

APPENDIX

1.LEGENDS

1.1 *The story of Marangrang. Makhudu Mamabolo's* version (Tshware)

Marangrang e be e le mohlabani wa Mokone yoo a phetšego lebakeng la Sekwati, kgoši ya Bapedi. Matebele a Moselekatse a rile go hlasela naga ya Bopedi, Sekwati a tšhaba. O rile ge a boya a hwetša setšhaba sa gagwe se bušwa ke Marangrang yoo e bego e le mofaladi wa Mokone. Marangrang e be e le motho yo a bego abetšwe bogale le maatla a mohlolo, ka ge e be e le motho wa boreatseba. Ge lebaka la gore Sekwati a boele gae le fihla, o ile a swanela go lebana le Marangrang yoo a bego a sa ikemišetša go fologa setulong. Ka go tseba bogale le lenyatšo la Marangrang, Sekwati o ile a kgetha go mo fenya ka go mo jeletša. O ile a kgopela thušo go Bakgaga ba ga Mphahlele, gomme a loba Marangrang ka mosadi le dipheta tšeo di bego di berekilwe ka dihlare.. Marangrang o rile go apara dipheta tšeo a napa a phephela, mme mosadi yoo a mo gokela Bakgageng. Marangrang le madira a

Marangrang was a Mokone warrior who lived during the days of Sekwati, king of Bopedi. When the Matebele of Moselekatse invaded Bopedi, Sekwati fled. On his return he found his tribe under the leadership of a Mokone foreigner called Marangrang. Marangrang was an exceptional person who was credited with extreme brevity and supernatural powers as a result of his contact with traditional doctors. When Sekwati returned he had to challenge Marangrang who was not prepared to step down. Sekwati bargained on Marangrang's vanity and chose the subtle method to conquer him. He conspired with the Bakgaga of Mphahlele and sent Marangrang beautiful beads treated with medicinal charms and a woman as a form of appeasement. Marangrang wore the beads, became mentally weak and the woman led him to the Bakgaga tribe. Marangrang and his warriors were all

gagwe ba ile ba bolawa, gomme Sekwati a hwetša bogoši bja gagwe.

killed and Sekwati claimed his position back.

1.2 *The story of Matlebjane* as related by *Leshata Mogale* (gaMakanye).

Kgale ba :e Matlebjane e be e le kgoši ye kgolo ya Batau. E be e dio ba kgoši ka ge a be a swaretše morwa wa mogolo 'agwe yoo a bego a bitšwa Mogašwa. Matlebjane o ile a hlokomologa lapa la bogoši gomme a dula go la mosadi yo monyenyane yoo e bego e le mmamoratwa wa gagwe. Taba ye e ile ya dira go re go bonale gore o lokišetša morwa wa gagwe wa ka lapeng leo le lenyenyane bogoši. Basadi ba gagwe ba bangwe ba ile ba thoma go belaela, e fela Matlebjane a se ke ba tšeela hlogong. Ka baka la boikgogomošo o ile a hlokomologa le dikeletšo tša bakgomana. Barwa ba gagwe ba basadi ba bangwe e lego Masemola, Selwane le Phaahla le bona ga ba ka ba kgotsofatšwa ke taba ye ya gore Photo a tle a tšee setulo seo e lego sa Mogašwa ka tshwanelo. Barwa bao ba gagwe gammogo le Mogašwa ba ile ba lakana go bolaya Matlebjane. Pele ga tlhaselo barwa bao ba ile ba kokobatša marumo a bona gore molato o šale le Photo.

Long ago it is said there was a great king of the Batau called Matlebjane. He was not the rightful king because he acted as a regent for his brother's son Mogašwa. Matlebjane neglected the royal house and resided in the house of his favourite junior wife. This appeared as though he preferred his junior wife's son for the kingship position. Matlebjane's other wives started complaining about his favouritism, but he did not listen. Owing to his pride, he did not even heed his kinsmen's advice. His sons from the other wives, Masemola, Selwane and Phaahla were also not pleased about Photo being prepared for the throne, which rightfully belongs to Mogašwa. These sons, including Mogašwa planned to assassinate Matlebjane. Before the attack the other sons made their spears blunt and tricked Photo into stabbing his father to death, so that the guilt remains with him.

Se se napile sa dira gore setšhaba sa Batau se šwalalane ka ge barwa bao ba gagwe ba ile ba baka bogoši. Yo mongwe le yo mongwe o ile a ngwatha setsekana sa setšhaba a yo hloma mmušo wa gagwe. Le lehono re sa hwetša Batau ba gaMogašwa, ba gaMasemola, ba gaSelwane gammogo le ba gaPhaahla.

This eventually led t quarrels over the Batau leadership among Matlebjane's sons, and the tribe breaking into a number of separate tribes. Until this day, the kings of the Batau retain the names of their predecessors as we have the Batau of gaMasemola, gaSelwane, gaMogašwa and gaPhaahla.

1.3 *The origin of the Mamabolo tribe. Rathabeng Chueu* (Mongwaneng)

Ba ga Mamabolo ke seripa seo se tšwilego go Bakgalaka kua Bokgalaka kgale. Go tloga ga bona Bokgalaka ba ile ba tla ba dula mo lehono go bitšwago Bolobedu. Ge ba le Bolobedu ba be ba le ka fase ga kgoši Manamela. Gona fao Ramohwibidu yoo e bego e le mohlabani wa kgobe, o ile a ngwega le seripa se sengwe sa setšhaba a leba Letšhitele. Kolobe ye e binago ke ba gaMamabolo ba tšwa nayo Bolobedu. Ka morago ga Ramohwibidu go ile gwa buša morwa wa gagwe Seolwana, yoo lebakeng la gagwe setšhaba se ilego sa tsebja ka ba gaMamabolo ka ge ba be ba tumile ka go bolla.

The Mamabolo people are part of the Balobedu tribe who broke away from the Bakgalaka of Bokgalaka, a long time ago. After leaving Bokgalaka they settled at the present Bolobedu. At Bolobedu they were under a chief named Manamela. During his rule a part of the tribe under a a reputable warrior by the name of Ramohwibidu left for Letšhitele. The *kolobe* venerated by this tribe originates from Bolobedu. Ramohwibidu was succeeded by his son Seolwana. It was during Seolwana's rule that they adopted the name Mamabolo as they were identified as people who practiced circumcision.

Seolwana ga a ka a phela nako ye telele gomme pušo e ile ya wela ka diatleng tša mohumagadi wa gagwe Mamabudusha, ka ge bakgomana ba sa ka ba kgetha rangwane 'a tšona go swarela ngwana yoo a bego a lebanwe ke bogoši. Mamabudusha o ile a nagana gore Letšhitele go be go sa nkga gae gomme ba šohlašohla ba ba ba fihla moo go bitšwago Thotlwe. Ba dutše fauwe napile bolwetši bja letadi bja ba fetša thokgethokge, gomme ba hlabela pele, ba fihla Bjatladi moo ba ilego ba itulela gomme setšhaba sa kokotlela. Mo Bjatladi ke moo go thomilego go buša Maribe, e lego morwa wa Seolwana.

Unfortunately Seolwana did not live for a long time, and his wife Mmamabudusha, suceeded him because the councillors failed to appoint one of Seolwana's brothers as a regent. Mmamabudusha felt insecure at Letšhitele as it was still close to Bolobedu. They decided to move further until they settled at a place called Thotlwe. At Thotlwe the entire tribe nearly perished as a result of the malaria epidemic. This compelled them to migrate to Bjatladi where the tribe developed into a powerful kingdom under Maribe, who was Seolwana's son.

1.4 (a) *The split of the Mamabolo tribe* by *Rathabeng Chueu* (Mongwaneng)

Ba re ka morago ga lehu la Mamabudusha setšhaba sa ga Mamabolo se ile sa buša ke borangwane 'a tšona lebakanyana, ka ge Maribe, morwa wa gagwe e be e sa le ngwana. Ge Maribe a šetše a buša, makgowa ao a bego a šetše a fihlile moo Bjatladi a ile a thoma go thulana le setšhaba sa gaMamabolo. Maribe le setšhaba sa gagwe ba ile ba khudugela mo ba dulago gona lebakeng la bjale.

It is said after Mmamabudusha's death, the Mamabolo tribe was ruled by the paternal uncles for a certain period of time, as Maribe, her son, was still too young. During Maribe's reign the tribe had some disputes with white people who had invaded Bjatladi. Maribe and his tribe left Bjatladi and settled at their present location. It was during Maribe's reign that the split of the Mamabolo

Setšhaba se sa gaMamabolo se atlhologane lebakeng la ge go buša Maribe. Maribe o be a na le barwa ba babedi e lego Mankweng le Sekwala le basadi ba gagwe ba bannyane. Ka ge timamello e be e hloka morwa yoo a bego a swanetše go tšea bogoši, Maribe o ile a kgetha Mankweng go tlo ba mohlatlami wa gagwe. Taba ye ga se ya thabiša Sekwala, gomme lebakeng la ge a swanetše go aloga, ba bangwe ba bakgomana ba mošate ba ile ba radia mphato woo gore o be kgahlanong le Maribe. Sekwala le mphato wa gagwe ba ile ba hlasela Maribe, e fela ba fenywa, ba tšhabela thokong ya gaDikgale. Ba ile ba sepela go fihlela ba fihla Segopje moo ba ba ilego ba hloma mošate wa bona.

tribe occured. Maribe had two sons, namely, Mankweng and Sekwala by his junior wives. As his senior wife could not bear a son who was to be the apparent heir to the throne, Maribe appointed Mankweng as the future king. This made Sekwala bitter and when it was time for his regiment to return from the circumcision lodge, a number of influential elders within the tribe conspired with the entire regiment to turn against Maribe. Sekwala and his faction attacked Mankweng, but they were defeated and fled towards the direction of gaDikgale. They moved on until they reached Segopje, which eventually became the capital of their newly established kingdom.

1.4.(b) *The split of the Mamabolo tribe. Motlhaume Mamabolo's* version (Segopje)

Kgoši Maribe morwa wa Seolwana, o belege barwa ba babedi le basadi ba bannyane. Bona e be e le Sekwala le Mankweng. Mmago setšhaba o ile a swanela go nyala hlatswa dirope ka ge a be a sa kgone go belega lesogana leo le bego le swanetše go tla go buša. Go ya ka setšo sa ga Mamabolo, kgale e be e

King Maribe, Seolwana's son had two sons named Sekwala and Mankweng from his junior wives. His principal wife was compelled to marry a substitute who could bear the heir apparent on her behalf, as she could not bear a son who was supposed to be the future king. According to the Mamabolo tradition, a

le tshwanelo gore morwa wa kgoši wa mathomo go basadi ba gagwe ba bannyane, e be yena a belegago kgoši le hlatswa dirope. Ka ge Sekwala e be e le yena a bego a swanetše go tswala kgoši, Maribe o ile a mo ganela le legogwa la hlatswa dirope yeo. Sekwala o ile a befediŝwa ke taba ye ka ge ngwana yoo a tlogo belegwa ke Maribe le hlatswa dirope a sa swanelago go buša, ka ge mmagwe e le yo monnyane go ya ka malapa a mošate. Sekwala o ile a tloga le balatedi ba go bona'a gamn·ogo le bakgomana bao ba bego ba ema le yena, ba yo hloma mošate wa bona Segopje. Sekwala ke yena tatago seripa se sa setšhaba sa gaMamabolo.

long time ago, it was customary for the king's eldest son from one of his junior wives to have an heir apparent to the throne with the substitute wife. Sekwala as the eldest among Maribe's sons was thus the relevant person. Maribe was instead adamant because he did not give his son access to the new bride's hut. Sekwala was however aggrieved at this because a son born from his father with the deputy wife could not be the heir apparent as his mother is regarded as the most junior wife. Sekwala then left with his followers and a number of councillors who viewed his cause as just, and established his kingdom at Segopje. Therefore, Sekwala is the founder of this section of the Mamabolo tribe.

2. HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

2.1 *Lekau, the regent* as related by *Rathabeng Chueu* (Mongwaneng)

Ka morago ga go atlhologana le Sekwala, Maribe o ile a šala le seripa se segolo sa setšhaba. Ge a hlokofetše morwarr'agwe e lego Lekau, yoo a bego

After Sekwala broke away, Maribe remained with a large section of the tribe. After his death, his brother, Lekau, who was also known as Ramohwibidu, acted

a tsebja ka la Ramohwibidu, o ile a swarela Mankweng yoo e bego e sa le yo monnyane. Leina le la Ramohwibidu le tlile ka ge e be e le motho yo mošweu kudu. Ramohwibidu yo ke Chueu. Lekau e be e le monna yo bogale, gomme a rata go hlasela manaba a gagwe ka masa. Ge Mankweng a šetše a lekane ke go buša, Ramohwibidu ga a ka a ganelela setulong bjalo ka magoši a mangwe. Ditlogolwana tša gagwe di napile tša tšea leina le la Chueu sebakeng sa Mamabolo. Le momohla leina le la Chueu le tloga le sa tumile mo setšhabeng sa gaMamabolo.

as a regent for the young Mankweng. The name Ramohwibidu alludes to his light complexion. Ramohwibidu refers to the present Chueu. Lekau was a brave man who used to attack his enemies at dawn. Unlike most regents, when Mankweng became of age, Ramohwibidu did not have a problem in passing the regime over to him. Ramowhibidu's descendants then adopted the surname Chueu in the place of Mamabolo. That is why the surname Chueu is still common among the Mamabolo people.

2.2 (a) *Christianity at gaMankweng* as related by *Makhudu Mamabolo*

Mankweng o be a nyetše mmago setshaba gaDikgale. Lebakeng la pušo ya gagwe baruti ba Majeremane ba kereke ya Lutere ba ile ba tla ba kgopela Mankweng gore a ba dumelele go hloma mišine, le go ruta tša bodumedi mo nageng ye. Mathomong Mankweng o ile a se kwane le taba yeo ka ge a be a nagana gore bodumedi bo ka tla bja dira gore setšhaba sa gagwe se se sa mo hlompha.

Mankweng married his senior wife from the Dikgale tribe. During his reign, missionaries from the Lutheran church in Germany visited this place and requested Mankweng for a permission to establish a mission station, and to preach Christianity in this area. Initially, Mankweng was not of the opinion of granting the Christians freedom of worship, as he thought it would be detrimental to the honour he received from his people.

Ge matšatši a fela a eya Mankweng a thoma go sokolla pelo ya gagwe, a dumelela moruti Knothe go aga mišine wa kereke ya Lutere ka mo Mphome. Go tloga gona nako yeo ya ba e le ge bodumedi bo tsene, le dikereke tše dingwe tša napa tša thoma go hlongwa mo nageng ye. Ka lebaka la go ata ga phuthego ya kereke ya Lutere, mišine wa Mphome o ile wa khudugela Masealama.

Later Mankweng gradually accepted Christianity and eventually allowed Reverend Knothe to establish a mission station at Mphome. As from that time Christianity thrived and more churches were established. Due to an increase in the number of converts, the Lutheran mission station was then moved from Mphome to Masealama.

2.2 (b) Christianity at gaMankweng Moalusi Seabela's version

Batho ba go tšwela le bojakane mo gagabo rena ke baruti ba kereke ya Lutere, ba go tšwa Jeremane. Ge ba fihla mo ba ile ba kgopela Mankweng go ka aga lapa la kereke. Aowa, kgoši a napa a ba ngwathela setsekana sa naga kua Mphome. Batho ba bantši ba ile ba kgeregela bojakaneng gomme le bona ba thoma go gaša lentšu la Modimo. Kgoši o ile a thoma go se sa kwešiša banna ba ba Majeremane ka ge ba be ba fela ba kgobokanya setšhaba ka ntle le tumelelo ya gagwe.Mošate o ile wa oma go otla baetapele ba Majakane ba mo gaMamabolo ka ge ba be ba botša

The first missionaries to arrive in our area were those of the Lutheran church from Germany. On their arrival they requested permission from Mankweng to establish a mission station in his area. King Mankweng then offered them a piece of land at Mphome. Most people converted to Christianity and began to preach the word of God. The king later viewed this matter as a threat to his kingdom as the German missionaries often assembled people without his consent. Most Christian leaders from this tribe were also punished for discouraging people from undergoing traditional rituals such as initiations.

batho go re ba se sa iša bana ba bona dikomeng. Ba bangwe ba be ba nweŝwa dihlare ka ge go be go thwe ba a gafa. Ka ge bojakane bo be bo tswakane le tŝwelopele ya go swana le thuto, Mankweng o ile a feleletŝa a dumeletŝe kgašo ya lentŝu la Modimo mo nageng ye. Ke go napa go phatlalala ga Ebangedi. Ka morago ga go hlongwa ga setase sa mathomo kua Mphome, moruti Mphamba yoo e bego e le lethosa la go tŝwa Kapa a napa a hloma kereke ya Presbyterian mo Donhill.

Traditional medicines were also administered forcefully to some of the Christian converts as they were taken to be insane. As Christianity was accompanied b an element of western civilization, especially school education, Mankweng was compelled to let his people accept Christian ways of life. The establishment of the first mission station at Mphome was followed by the Presbyterian mission station at Donhill, which was founded by Reverend Mphamba, who was a Xhosa priest from the Cape province.

2.3 *Christianity at gaSekwala* as related by *Motlhaume Mamabolo* (Segopje)

Bojakane mathomong bo be bo sa dumelelwa mo gaSekwala, ka ge mošate o be o tšea go re bo ruta batho go nyatša setšo. Ka morago Sekwala o ile a thoma go dumelela le go hlohleletŝa setŝhaba go amogela thuto ya sedumedi ka ge a ile a kgahlwa ke thero ya yo mongwe wa badumedi ba mo gaMamabolo, yeo e bego e theilwe godimo ga kamano ye e lego gona magareng a Modimo le badimo. Sewai, morwa wa Sekwala yo a bušitšego ka morago ga gagwe o ile a

The Christian religion was initially not accepted at gaSekwala as the king thought it would encourage his people not to respect their culture. Later Sekwala allowed Christianity and also ,gan to encourage his people to accept it. This was after he was impressed by the preaching of one of the converts from his tribe who spoke about the relationship between Christianity and ancestoral worship. Seswai, Sekwala's son, who later took over the throne, was

kolobetšwa gomme a fiwa leina la Jacob. Kereke ya mathomo ya Lutere e agilwe mo Kgokong, ka ge yo mongwe wa majakane a mo ga Sekwala e lego Bopape, a ile a ba moruti wa mathomo wa mothomoso. Kamogelo ya bojakane e ile ya tliša tlhabologo ka mokgwa wa go agwa ga dikolo. Sekolo sa mathomo mo nageng ye se ile sa theelelwa ka yena kgoši Sekwala.

baptised and renamed Jacob. The first Lutheran church was established at Kgokong, after a convert by the name of Bopape became the first black priest at gaSekwala. The acceptance of Christianity at this place led to the introduction of schools. The first school to be erected by this tribe was named after king Sekwala.

2.4 *King Seswai.* Related by *Mantšhi Mamabolo* (Kgokong)

Mo Segopje Sekwala o bušitše lebaka le letelele, gomme a hlokofala ka lebaka la botšofadi, a ba a bolokwa gona mo thabeng ya Kgokong. Go fihlela le lehono magoši a gaSekwala a sa bolokwa gona lefelong leo, ka ge go na le tumelo ya go re ke moo go letšego badimo ba bona. Sekwala o latetšwe ke morwa wa gagwe Seswai ka ge mogolo'agwe Kgabedi yoo a bego a lebanwe ke bogoši a ile a hlokofala e sa le yo monnyane. Seswai o nyetše mmago setšhaba Botlokwa gaMachaka. E be e le monna yo moso wa go ema ka maoto. Gantši o be a fela a bonwa a nametše pere, a apere diaparo tša

At Segopje Sekwala reigned for a long time until he died of old age and was buried at Kgokong mountain. Up to this day the Sekwala tribe still buries its kings at this place as it believes that its ancestors are found at this mountain. Sekwala was succeeded by his son, Seswai, because his elder brother, Kgabedi, the heir apparent, died at an early age. Seswai married his principal wife from the Machaka tribe of Botlokwa. He was a well built dark man who was often seen on horseback in his military uniform . Seswai was the first Christian king of gaMamabolo as he was baptised by Reverend Knothe.

setšoni. Seswai e bile kgoši ya mathomo ya moKriste mo gaMamabolo ka ge a kolobeditšwe ke moruti Knothe. Se sengwe sa dikolo tša mathomo tša mo se theeletšwe ka kgoši Seswai.

One of the first schools to be established in this area was named after king Seswai.

GLOSSARY

Bakgomana	the second highest nobles of the royal residence after the *bakgoma*
Bakgaga	a clan name for the Mphahlele people, which is derived from their totem *kgaga* (duiker)
Balobedu	a tribe which crossed the Limpopo and settled in the present Duiwelskloof
Batau	a clan name for the tribe which entered Bopedi under the leadership of Matlebjane
Bojakane	a Northern Sotho name for Christianity
Bokgalaka	a Northern Sotho name for Zimbabwe
hlatswa dirope	a woman married as a substitute to bear the heir apparent on behalf of the principal wife, and is usually her close relative
Mošate	the royal residence
Mphato	a regiment which is established mainly for circumcision purposes
Nonwane	a Northern Sotho term for prose narrative
kakanyotlhalošo	literally means *"an attempt to explain"* hence the stories are meant for explaining the origin of natural phenomena

kgogamašego	it originates from the idiomatic expression go *"goga mašego"* which means to while away time, from this reason, the narratives are told mainly for entertainment purposes
pheteletšannete	"*feteletša"* means to transmit while *"nnete"* refers to the truth" thus, the narratives are principally told for *"the transmission of historical facts"*
tsholo	it is derived from the Northern Sotho verb *"go sola"* meaning *"to reprimand"* hence, the stories are told mainly for reprimanding purposes
Timamello	refers the principal wife and literally means *"fire extinguisher"* reference is due to the tradition that before she enters the royal residence, all fires must be extinguished.

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