

## African diviner-healers and oral performance: a perspective on Sepedi divination

First submission: November 2002

Divination is receiving ever more attention in the media. Communities, groups of people and individuals are asking questions, voicing opinions, and making judgements on the function of this important branch of African life and philosophy. This paper investigates African oracle-speech as a typical genre of oral poetry. In short, it argues that the African diviner-healer (*ngaka*) becomes an oral performer, employing some of his or her clan praises (among other dynamics of orality) during the divinatory process. The data on African divination oracles drawn from interviews with diviners is provided and analysed in terms of theories of orality.

### Die Afrika waarsêer-geneser en orale uitvoering: 'n perspektief op Sepedi-divinasie

Divinasie lok al hoe meer belangstelling uit in die media. Gemeenskappe, groepe en individue vra vrae, lug opinies en maak beoordelings van die funksie van hierdie belangrike faset van die lewe en filosofie van die Afrikaan. Hierdie artikel ondersoek Afrika orakelspraak as 'n tipiese genre van orale poësie. Die waarsêer-geneser (*ngaka*), in hierdie geval die orale uitvoerder, benut van sy of haar klan se prysliedere (tesame met ander vorme van orale dinamiek) tydens die divinasieproses. Hierdie artikel argumenteer kortliks dat die waarsêer-geneser 'n orale uitvoerder word. Die gegewens oor Afrika divinasie-orakels soos verkry uit onderhoude met waarsêers word geanaliseer in terme van teorieë oor oraliteit.

*Dr M A Masoga, National Research Foundation, P O Box 2600, Pretoria 0001; Prof P J Nel, Dept of Near Eastern Studies & Prof M A Moleleki, Dept of African Languages, University of the Free State, P O Box 339, Bloemfontein 9300; E-mail: info@nrf.ac.za; nelj.bum@mail.uovs.ac.za & molelema.bum@mail.uovs.ac.za*

Every human community “recognizes a need for the special knowledge gained through divination” (Peek 1991: 1).<sup>1</sup> Africa still prides herself on her divinatory practices. Unfortunately, divination was and still remains marginalised.<sup>2</sup> Even so, Peek (1991: 1) maintains that some of its (divination’s) intuitive findings and assertions are surprisingly “scientific”. Another aspect of divination is that most African indigenous healers are unable to express themselves through the conventional medium of literature (Peek 1991: 200). In this regard Ong (1982: 12) challenges views that reduce oral art forms to literature. In his opinion,

[w]riting, moreover [...] is a particularly pre-emptive and imperialist activity that tends to assimilate other things to itself even without the aid of etymologies.

As far as Ong is concerned, oral art forms are texts, with the proviso that they are not reduced to writing, but handed down orally. Traditional oral expressions survive without any scribal activity at all. Even so, one must also take note of the phenomenon of neo-orality as manifested by the telephone, radio, television and other electronic devices (cf the SABC TV 2 production entitled *Tholoana Tsa Sethepu*). The obvious difference between written and oral art forms is that “wri-

- 1 Paper presented at the *Colloque International: Oralité et Ecriture II: Le monde des esprits*, at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Institut de Philosophie et Institut d’étude des Religions et de la Laïcité, Brussels, 7-10 October 2002. The author notes with appreciation the financial support of the following institutions: the National Research Foundation (NRF) for a doctoral bursary (1999-2001) and the Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique de Belgique (FNRSB) which provided the opportunity to attend the congress. The author acknowledges the scholarly comments and guidance of Proff P J Nel (supervisor) and M A Moleleki (co-supervisor) in developing the author’s doctoral thesis entitled *Dimensions of oracle-speech in the near Eastern, Mediterranean, and African contexts: a contribution towards African orality*, submitted to the University of the Free State, South Africa, 2001.
- 2 In analysing “development” discourse, Crossman & Devisch (2002: 104) argue that “[t]he Western outlook has imposed a notion of time dictating linear evolution on an irreversible path to progress, an illusory utopia, but one that serves as a powerful ideology for technological development. Rather than being possessed by some developmental vision, endogenous knowledge seeks to nurture existing life forms in all their variety and complexity”.

Acta Academica 2004: 36(1)

ting tyrannically locks [words] into a visual field forever” (Ong 1982: 12). Therefore, Ong is justified in concluding that

it appears quite impossible to use the term ‘literature’ to include oral tradition and performance without subtly but immediately reducing these somehow to variants of writing.

In this case, current scholarship on orality is strenuously urged to borrow from Ong’s metaphor if it is to desist from putting the cart before the horse. In most African oral cultures, the diviner does not (and for that matter cannot) “read”, but observes and listens, sees and hears (Peek 1991: 200), *touches and feels* (my emphasis).<sup>3</sup> With this in mind, the role of the diviner is to decode or, to be precise, to interpret the esoteric (*diphiri tsa taba ya bongaka*)<sup>4</sup> codes for the client (*molwetsi*) in the divination process. This esoteric knowledge of African indigenous healing systems has withstood the test of time. As one respondent, the diviner-healer Maamushi from Makgane, in the western Limpopo Province, South Africa, pertinently points out:

I did not want to become a healer, but was called into it. The gift came from both my ancestors and ancestresses [*badimo*]<sup>5</sup>. It was in

3 Arden (1999: 99) explains why diviner-healers should be skilled in divining. Her accounts include the following: “one evening [...] as I sit painting after divining I ask Sylvia and Joyce about the practice [of divination] [...] It differs from the concept of ‘telling one’s fortune’ in that it does not necessarily predict future happenings but rather addresses what is currently going on in a client’s life”. As Devisch (1991: 116) maintains, “People look to divination to uncover the hidden, to gain insight into occurrences which go counter to the even tenor of life and to the normal sense of events, so as to enable remedial measures to be taken or to restore peace”.

4 Translation: “mysteries of divination-healing”. The concept of divination acts as a linking “zone” between what is and what ought to be. In this regard the process of divination allows the “what is” context to engage the “what ought to be” context. In this way divination occupies the central position, affording open avenues of response and “voices” to enable the two contexts to engage each other. The divine (or supernatural) context communicates with the natural context. Decisions are arrived at after a series of serious engagements. It is expected that the two contexts should at least come to some kind of agreement in terms of the “space” and “time” in which the divinatory process and conceptualisation offers an ongoing conversation.

5 For Mbiti (1970: 83) “The departed of up to five generations are in a different category from that of ordinary spirits [...] They are still within the Sasa period,

## Masoga, Nel & Moleleki/African diviner-healers

the night that I saw my great-grandmother whom I did not know. She explained herself to me and accounted for her own death. She showed me a bag full of divining bones [*ditaola*],<sup>6</sup> and even informed me about their actual whereabouts. In the morning I informed my family about the dream. They [the elders] confirmed her actual existence and the fact of her healing trade [*bongaka bja gagwe*] when she was alive. This clearly shows that one does not merely decide to become a healer, but is rather called [*go ba le badimo*].

Another account of the process and protocol of *go ba le badimo* is taken from the diviner-healer Mme Dladla of QwaQwa in the eastern Free State, South Africa:

I was very sick. I went from one hospital to another. Western doctors could not account for the cause of my illness. One doctor at Manapo Hospital hinted asthma as the cause of my disease. This problem was not only located physically but socially as well. My marriage was in shambles. My husband left me. There was no verifiable cause for his departure from home. He [my husband] returned home and chased me away. I was deeply hurt by his actions. Fortunately, my maiden family was supportive. They took me to consult with a diviner-healer. He [the diviner-healer] was forthright. This is what he said to me: 'You do not have a problem. It is ancestors who are behind all these problems. They want you to be initiated into healing/divination. I guarantee you that after you have gone through the initiation your affairs will be restored to normality.' I then decided to undergo the initiation process and I am now back to my normal state. Ancestrology [*thuto ka badimo*] is a very serious affair and should be treated as such.

[...] in the state of personal immortality, and their process of dying is not yet complete. We have called them the living-dead. They are the closest links that men have with the spirit world."

- 6 Derived from the verb root *laola* which translates as "to divine" or "to seek or establish meaning". As Peek (1991: 2) rightly asserts, "A divination is often the primary institutional means of articulating the epistemology of people [...] central to the expression and enactment of [...] cultural truths as they are reviewed in the context of contemporary realities". In this case, the use of *ditaola* and going through the *laola* process guide the enquirer into the entire context of esoteric knowledge, symbolic power, and performative beauty. *Ditaola* comprise the bones of various wild animals — elephant and lion, among others. Their size is usually less than 10 cm and they are made from wood, bone or ivory. The use of the symbolic world and its images encodes the life of the living. This places a human being in connection with nature. Nature is the source from which human beings emerged and where we continue to live.

Acta Academica 2004: 36(1)

From the foregoing, it would appear that both diviner-healers were subjected to some form of physical and emotional pressure indicating that the ancestors required them to follow a certain course. Van Binsbergen (1991: 318) concedes:

[I]t turns out that the social and psycho-somatic complaints of patients in both types of therapy are very similar. However, the sangoma cult idiom seeks to establish, in the consciousness of the clients, a coherent image of a viable and meaningful social order anchored in the village, adorcism.

Once one realises the importance of a call to this vocation, the pivotal question in the context of this study becomes: at what point does one begin to associate divination with oral performance?

This question brings one closer to the purpose of this study championing the cause of oral performance within African divination healing. Briefly, this paper seeks to establish that the diviner-healer's art of healing and divination includes an aspect of oral performance. It considers the oral performance of Ngaka Maamushi from Makgane during a typical divinatory oracular situation in order to demonstrate this. The oracle was selected from surveys conducted with a number of diviners (for further details, cf Masoga 2001). The selection involved a careful sifting of about 50 divination oracles which had been collected between 1998-2000, translated and analysed. The author distinguished two categories of oracle, the first being couched in verse form. These oral performers (diviner-healers) not only told a story in their divination poetry, but transmitted their "epics" by word of mouth, changing their word patterns in the process of reciting their "epics". The second category had a divination oracle nuance with formulaary patterns combining the *siyavuma* interjections.

The research targeted 40 African diviner-healers throughout South Africa, concentrating on the Limpopo Province in particular. Both Snowball and Delphic techniques were used to acquire data. The places involved included the following: Makgane, Motetema, Moganyaka, and Majaneng (about 50 kilometers from Pretoria and Soshanguve). It was at Soshanguve that the author was introduced and subsequently initiated as a diviner-healer at the cultic lodge of *Ndabezitha Majola*.

## 1. The divination oracle and oral performance

### 1.1 The process

Having entered the yard of Ngaka Maamushi I was ushered into the healing shrine (*ka ngwakwaneng wa kalafo*). Ngaka Maamushi welcomed me and instructed me to take off my shoes. He thereupon produced his bag of divining bones (*ditaola*). He asked me to sit on a grass mat, with my legs straight out, facing the east. He explained to me that this was a position which would assist me to “look into myself” (*go iblola*) and not to “complain” (*go tlisa pelaelo*). He then asked that I breathe into the bag containing the divining bones in order to enliven them and cause them to relate their story of my life (*go di buetsa gore di tlise bophelo gape*). Having breathed into it, I took the bag and flung the contents on the floor for the bones to begin to speak (*gore di tle di bolele*).

The divination will first be given in English translation, followed by the Sepedi original with the analysis of content and oral characteristics as an annotation.

## 2. The divination

### 2.1 English translation

Ngaka Maamushi began with his divination:

1. Yes! (Indeed!)
2. I am the greatest, I take charge of mountains
3. I call upon you, local mountains
4. I am a strong lad
5. I take charge of mountains
6. Now, they take a different swing (type of bone fall)
7. These are the stones of hippopotami
8. Yes, we are alive
9. We live by you, the ancestors
10. Why are they calling for mealies and not eating?

Acta Academica 2004: 36(1)

11. Protect the poor person
12. Home protects one
13. These are stones that heap upon each other
14. We take it from the feet of a hippotamus
15. We lie to the servants and slaves
16. Troubles of the star (called Mmabosego)
17. We hear you, those on the ground
18. Those who are asleep hear or listen
19. The shoe of the lone-travelling man
20. They reveal trouble down there
21. You are still a young one who has an interest in young, good-looking women
22. Women are gossipers throughout
23. Be informed by your ancestral spirits
24. Do you hear?
25. You should say yes or agree
26. You are still a young man looking for a woman to marry
27. You will definitely find one
28. You will have a strong family.

## 2.2 Sepedi text

1. *Yaa*<sup>7</sup>
2. *Ke nna mogolo ke kakatelela ditbaba*<sup>8</sup>

7 Acts as a “constraint” to offer the performer “space” and “time” for mixing his discourse. One has to note that the performer/narrator (in this case Ngaka Maamushi), needs this space and time to collate his prefabricated discourse.

8 Ngaka Maamushi has to indulge in self-praise. The opening of this praise form of divination explains and establishes his potency in divining: *Ke nna mogolo ke kakatelela ditbaba* — “I am the greatest to take charge of the mountains”. Mountains are associated with ancestral spirits and are at times seen as a “haven” for ancestral activities. For instance, as Ngaka Maamushi points out, most of the Bapedi climb mountains (*ba ya thabeng*) to perform rituals invoking ancestors and ancestresses and pleading with them to bring rain to stop a drought. A

Masoga, Nel & Moleleki/African diviner-healers

3. *Ke bitsa thaba tsa geso*<sup>9</sup>
4. *Ke mosimane ga ke na mogolo-mogola*<sup>10</sup>
5. *Ke mogolo ke kakatlela ditbaba*<sup>11</sup>
6. *Bjale ga di je dire go mpherefere*<sup>12</sup>
7. *Ke mabjala a ditsukudu*<sup>13</sup>
8. *Eeb ... re a tsoga*<sup>14</sup>
9. *Re tsoga ka lena, gomme re re*<sup>15</sup>
10. *Hleng dibitsa mabele ga di je?*<sup>16</sup>

good example is the famous mountain of Modimo O'lle, literally "the deity has eaten or devoured", commonly known as Thaba ya Modimolle, situated along the N1 to Polokwane. It is believed that in ancient times the living were not allowed to approach the mountain. Anybody who ventured too close to it might vanish for ever. It was the abode of God and the ancestral spirits and no disturbance whatsoever was tolerated. In this case, it was proper to be sought out by the ancestral spirits rather than to disturb them. One can also argue that the expression *Ke nna mogolo ke kakatlela ditbaba* contains both mnemonic and formulaic patterns. Its epithets and other formulaic expressions provide it with an interesting oral discourse structure.

- 9 This refers to Ngaka Maamushi's ancestral cultic origin. As indicated in note (8), mountains were, and still are clothed with sanctity.
- 10 To indicate and prove his potency, Ngaka Maamushi emphasises his remarkable vitality. In this case he is like "a young lad who is able to spring and run, and is generally alert". One should note Sherzer's observation (cf Ong 1982: 64): "Sometimes formulaic elements are managed in an effort to establish *verbatim* sameness, sometimes they work to implement a certain adaptability or variation".
- 11 Formula in the oracle (see line 2).
- 12 This is a typology of a bone fall, *di wele mpherefere*. Mahlase (1996: 64) suggests that this tablet fall or bone fall indicates *go rerwa molato/monyanya/magadi*, which translates as: it discusses/communicates or converses a problem/crisis, feast or betrothal-related matter. In this context *ga di je* provides a deeper meaning: they are not peaceful or at peace.
- 13 It is not clear whether Ngaka Maamushi is indicating his tribal totem (Setiloane 2000: 17).
- 14 A typical formula which introduces a different twist of fate. Literally translated, it means "we are awake", meaning "we are fine", underpinned by sarcasm.
- 15 We are well because of the ancestral support and guidance. Note the collective "we".
- 16 This line reiterates the meaning conveyed in line 6: "*Di wele mpherefere*" and thereby negates line 8.



11. *Thakadu lota motbo, motbo o lotwa ke beng*<sup>17</sup>
12. *Motse bare o lotwa ke beng*<sup>18</sup>
13. *Ke mabjana ke mablatlamane*<sup>19</sup>
14. *Re tsea maoto a tsukudu*<sup>20</sup>
15. *Re aketsa balata*<sup>21</sup>
16. *Palabadi ya mmabosego*<sup>22</sup>
17. *Eeb ... re a lekwa mofase*<sup>23</sup>
18. *Maraga*<sup>24</sup> *dibetlele makokoma* — *bare go letse ba go lala ba kwile*<sup>25</sup>
19. *Eeb ... ga e le seblako sa mmamosepedi wa nosi*<sup>26</sup>

- 17 *Thakadu* means the species aardvark (wild pig, *Orycteropus afer*). This animal is important for diviners. The bone used to indicate a diviner is that of an animal that digs swiftly (*thakadu sefata ka dinala* — *thakadu* means “the digger with nails”). The diviner delves deeply into the hermeneutics of philosophies of life. He evokes the ancestral spirits (both his and those of the client) to provide a divining power which may assist in the interpretation of the client’s complex life situation.
- 18 The ancestral spirits are evoked once more to protect the client.
- 19 Ngaka Maamushi continues to praise the divining tablets. In this case, the bones are referred to as “small stones” and described as admirable: *mabjana*.
- 20 The diviner healer indicates the crucial importance of “animal bones” in determining human fate and success.
- 21 *Balata* are slaves or servants. It is not clear whether the diviner is using sarcasm in this case. Slaves and servants are said to be lied to.
- 22 The night star *mmabosego*, which is said to move through the night, is mentioned. This refers to an aspect of the divination process. The diviner invokes the ancestral spirits to respond to all the questions and misgivings of his client. It is believed that when night falls, it opens space and time for personal and collective reflections (cf *palabadi*) on life and its vicissitudes.
- 23 The words “we hear you on the ground” refer literally to the ancestral spirits, who are said to be on the ground.
- 24 Sepedi for dung.
- 25 This refers to the ancestral spirits who are said to be “awake” and to comprehend the affairs of the living.
- 26 The diviner indicates to the client that his affairs are far from satisfactory. *Seblako* (Sepedi for shoe) refers to the client’s well-being.

Masoga, Nel & Moleleki/African diviner-healers

20. *Di re*<sup>27</sup> *mola tlase*<sup>28</sup> *go pitlagana noko*<sup>29</sup>
21. *O sale lesogana la go kgablwakgablwa*<sup>30</sup>
22. *Mola basadi e le dintsheba diya nokeng di boye dintsheba*<sup>31</sup>
23. *Bare ntshebele motho o sebelwa ke wabo*<sup>32</sup>
24. *Wa dikwaa!!*<sup>33</sup>
25. *O re eng?*<sup>34</sup>
26. *O monna a sa nyaka ...*<sup>35</sup>
27. *Seo e lego segwana sa meetse seo o tlogo se bona ...*<sup>36</sup>
28. *Wa tia ka sona wa tla wa etsa ba bangwe.*<sup>37</sup>

- 27 The divine tablets say.
- 28 Refers to the client's life.
- 29 Meaning there is a problem. *Noko* refers to the client's totem.
- 30 Divination bones are able to communicate the marital status of the client. He is still looking for a suitable spouse.
- 31 Women are said to be fickle. In this case (note line 21) the client is undecided as to whom he should marry.
- 32 Let your ancestral spirits help you in this regard.
- 33 It is important for the client to either confirm or reject the oracle.
- 34 The client is offered "space" and "time" to confirm or reject it.
- 35 You are still a courting bachelor. The diviner-healer reiterates line 21.
- 36 *Segwana sa meetsi* literally means "the traditional cup for drinking water". The metaphorical use of the term refers to a bride. The Bapedi use the expression in the context of a dowry to ask and converse about the wedding preparations.
- 37 The diviner-healer assures his client that he will definitely find a suitable woman to marry. It is clear that the source of the crisis (*mphefere*) in the life of the client was to find a suitable spouse approved by his ancestral spirits. Marriage is held in high regard, as an institution which is supported by and which supports the ancestral spirits. A man or woman is never considered complete until he or she enters into this important institution. Indeed, ancestral spirits cannot be accommodated outside a family. It is referred to as *lenaka la motheo*, meaning the horn of foundation. The belief is that when a man marries, the father or the male authority figure of the family is supposed to hand over this *lenaka la motheo* to the groom. The horn should be kept in a secluded place and can only be resorted to in times of trial and tribulation, to be used in accordance with the prescribed rules and regulations governing the ritual. It is a protective horn. When a baby is born and no diviner-healer is available, the *paterfamilias* (*bloga ya lapa*) is supposed to produce the horn and perform the appropriate ritual. The use of this horn is considered to be the grand finale in ensuring the survival of the baby (*ngwana*).

### 3. Key considerations

The oracle depicts a typical genre of oral poetry. Ngaka Maamushi (the oral performer in this case) employs some of his best-known clan praises during the divinatory process. He also manages to involve his own *Sitz im Leben* during the performance. The opening of his performance is powerfully articulated. He begins with the expression *Yaa*, demanding a powerful interlocution by the audience. The Sepedi proverb *Lentsu ga le boe go boa monwana* (words are more memorable than actual actions) is noteworthy. The opening has to be organised in a manner that powerfully introduces both the performer (the diviner-healer) and the divinatory process. *Yaa* may be translated as an exclamation of shock or amazement. It can also be used as a form of “postponement” to allow the performer to organise his oral divination discourse (Ong 1982: 60).

Secondly, there are prominent bizarre and aggregative elements. The mind of the performer functions in a complex way. This can be noticed in Ngaka Maamushi’s use of the expression: *ke mogolo ke kakatlela dithaba* (I am the greatest who takes charge of the mountains). This is germane to the aggregative technique in the context of oral performance. Ngaka Maamushi uses an expression comprising epithets to perform his clan praises comprehensively. It is easier to remember an oral praise poem when the speech contains familiar expressions.

Thirdly, the use of animal symbolism in the discourse is fortunate. Note the mention of *Tbakadu* and *Tsbukudu*. Ngaka Maamushi’s discourse relates to human life and philosophy in terms which reveal his profound knowledge and vast experience thereof.

Fourthly, the use of familiar proverbial expressions is clearly noticeable and this constitutes another important oral device assisting the performer in terms of noetic and mnemonic techniques. On the whole, the discourse runs through interesting rhythms of poetics and noetics. The *ntshebele* (inform me) is encapsulated in the following Sepedi proverb: *blokwa la tsela ntshebele motho o sebelwa ke wa gabo* (the guide informs me because one is correctly informed by his or her own people). Ngaka Maamushi employs and refines this proverb to fit his oracular discourse, just as oral narrators introduce new elements into the process of their narration, making use of old stories alongside

new ideas, themes, expressions and thoughts (Ong 1982: 42). Furthermore, Ngaka Maamushi's creativity indicates how closely he relates to the world he lives in. This reflects an African metaphysics, epistemology and ethics of life. The inherent and persuasive trait of these proverbial expressions is a deep-seated desire to give practical advice on how to review and handle the problems of life (Guma 1967: 1). Subjacent to all this, is an African sapiential character whose inner nature and reality engages and disengages the performer's context, offering answers and probabilities about the successes and failures of life.

#### 4. Conclusion

Diviner-healers are performers and artists. Let them perform as we listen to their words and watch their actions as they open the doors to the world of the spirits. Let them drum while the quick and the living dead dance to the roll of their drums and sweetly sing the *musos* of the spirits. Let their drums beat and mother earth align herself to the spiritual world. The dancing spirits will perform and dance for us for all time!

They are performers and artists. Different, unique and special performers, as their art is not rehearsed nor their poetic nature learnt from books (as most cannot read or write in the conventional manner). The ancestral spirits move through their palms and onto the drum, through their bodies, and so they articulate dance, and they express the words and actions of the living dead.

Theirs is an ancestral gift, one acquired by only a select few. Accord them their space to dance, to drum, to sing and shout, to walk with mother nature and above all to embrace the ancestral spirits within and outside the ancestral world. As Naudé (1996: 30) concludes, "The voice of the hitherto marginalized must be heard".

## Bibliography

ANI M

1994. *Yrugu: an African-centered critique of European cultural thought and behaviour*. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press.

ARDEN N

1996. *African spirits speak: a white woman's journey into the healing tradition of the sangoma*. Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books.

ASANTE M K

1980. *Afrocentricity: the theory of social change*. Washington, DC: FAS Printing.

AYISI E P

1990. *Afrocentricity and knowledge*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.

CROSSMAN P & R DEVISCH

2002. Endogenous knowledge in anthropological perspective. Odora-Hoppers (ed) 2002: 96-125.

DEVISCH R

1991. Mediumistic divination among the Northern Yaka of Zaire: etiology and ways of knowing. Peek (ed) 1991: 112-35.

FINNEGAN R

1977. *Oral poetry: its nature, significance and social context*. London: Cambridge University Press.

GENETTE G

1972. *Narrative discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.

GUMA S M

1967. *The form, content and technique of traditional literature in Southern Sotho*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

JANZEN J M

1992. *Ngoma: discourses of healing in central and southern Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

JENSEN M S

1980. *The Homeric question and the oral-formulaic theory*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanium Press.

MAHLASE H A

1996. *Mokubega*. Florida, South Africa: Vivlia Publishers and Book-sellers.

MASOGA M A

2001. Dimensions of oracle-speech in the near Eastern, Mediterranean, and African contexts: a contribution towards African orality. Unpubl Ph D thesis. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State.

MBITI J S

1970. *African religions and philosophy*. London: Heinemann.

NAUDE P

1996. Theology with a new voice? The case for an oral theology in the South African context. *Journal of Theology in Southern Africa* 1(94): 99-111.

Masoga, Nel & Moleleki/African diviner-healers

ODORA-HOPPERS C A (ed)

2002. *Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems: towards a philosophy of articulation*. Claremont, South Africa: New Africa Books.

ONG W

1982. *Orality and literacy: the technologizing of the word*. London: Methuen.

OPLAND J

1983. *Xhosa oral poetry: aspects of a black South African tradition*. Johannesburg: Ravan.

PEEK P M

1991. African divination systems: non-normal modes of cognition. Peek (ed) 1991: 193-212.

PEEK P M (ed)

1991. *African divination systems: ways of knowing*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

SETILOANE G M

1986. *African theology: an introduction*. Johannesburg: Skotaville.

VAN BINSBERGEN W

1991. On becoming a sangoma. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 21(4): 309-44.

VANSINA J

1985. *Oral tradition as history*. London: James Curry.