THE VALOROUS WIFE AND PERSONIFIED WISDOM COMPARED
(WITH AN APPENDIX ON SOME NARRATIVES ABOUT KARO BATAK WOMEN)

BY
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a comparative study of the Valorous Wife (Prov. 31:10-31) and Personified Wisdom (Prov. 1:20-33, 8:1-21, 32-36 and 9:1-6). A study of their affinity, based on stylistic analysis, especially on terminological and thematic similarities, reveals the direct literary relationship between the two. A study of the direction of influence regarding this relationship, based on the linguistic and theological analyses, shows that the VW poem precedes the PW poem (historically) and the PW poem depends on the VW poem (literarily). A demonstration of literary relationship between the VW and PW poems derives from the intra-textual cross-referencing between the two poems. Based on socio-historical analysis we conclude that the composer of the PW poems utilized the VW poem.

This dissertation also includes a comparative study of the VW poem and some narratives about Karo Batak woman. A discussion of wisdom depicted in the VW poem and in these Karo Batak narratives, which is based on the ethnological wisdom approach, indicates that both can be defined as clan wisdom which is based on divine world order (tsaddiq in ancient Israel and adat in Karo-Batak). This discussion also reveals similar principles of life. In both, wisdom is depicted as a tool for mastering life; the wise woman is portrayed as the source of welfare; the idea of "the fear of gods" is shown as the characteristic of a wise person; kingship is perceived as a political tool for a just social order and strong brotherhood. These principles of life were the response to the similar kinship and kingship systems in Israelite and Karo Batak history.