

PSALM RESEARCH SINCE 1955: II. THE LITERARY GENRES

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This article forms a sequel to that published two years ago in the *Tyndale Bulletin* reviewing literature between 1955 and 1966 on the relationship of the Psalms to the Israelite cult.¹ The present survey concerns the literary genres (*Gattungen*) of the Psalms, and extends the period under review down to 1968.

Reports on this aspect of Psalm study between 1930 and 1954 may be found in an article of J. J. Stamm,² while the course of research from the time of H. Gunkel down to the 1960s has been traced by A. Descamps³ and J. P. M. van der Ploeg⁴ in useful critical accounts. Gunkel's arrangement of the Psalms⁵ has been conveniently tabulated in another article

¹ D. J. A. Clines, 'Psalm Research since 1955: I. The Psalms and the Cult', *Tyndale Bulletin* 18 (1967) 103-126.

² J. J. Stamm, 'Ein Vierteljahrhundert Psalmenforschung', *Theologische Rundschau* 23 (1955) 1-68, especially 34-41. Other general surveys of literature on the Psalms are noted in *Tyndale Bulletin* 18 (1967) 103 n. 2, to which add P. Claudel, 'Les Psaumes. Courants et problèmes actuels d'exégèse', *L'Ami du Clergé* 73 (1963) 65-77; A. S. Herbert, 'Our Present Understanding of the Psalms', *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* (Jan. 1965) 25-29; A. S. Kapelrud, 'Scandinavian Research in the Psalms after Mowinckel', *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 4 (1965) 74-90 (a somewhat abbreviated version of *Die skandinavische Einleitungswissenschaft zu den Psalmen', *Verkündigung und Forschung* 11 (1966) 62-93); J. H. Kroeze, 'Some Remarks on Recent Trends in the Exegesis of the Psalms', *Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika: Studies on the Psalms*, Pro Rege-Pers Beperk, Potchefstroom (1963) 40-47; N. H. Ridderbos, '*De huidige stand van het onderzoek der Psalmen', *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift* 60 (1960) 8-14; J. Schildenberger, '*Die Psalmen. Eine Übersicht über einige Psalmenwerke der Gegenwart', *Bibel und Leben* 8 (1967) 220-231.

³ A. Descamps, 'Les genres littéraires du Psautier. Un état de la question', in R. de Langhe (ed.), *Le Psautier. Ses origines. Ses problèmes littéraires. Son influence*, Publications Universitaires/Institut Orientaliste, Louvain (1962) 73-88.

⁴ J. P. M. van der Ploeg, 'Réflexions sur les genres littéraires des Psaumes', in *Studia Biblica et Semitica Theodoro Christiano Vriezen . . . dedicata*, H. Veenman en Zonen, Wageningen (1966) 265-277.

⁵ H. Gunkel—J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen. Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels*, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen (1933). Gunkel's article on the Psalms in *RGG*^{1,2} has been translated by T. M. Horner, with an introduction by J. Muilenburg, as *The Psalms. A Form-critical Introduction*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia (1967).

by A. Descamps,⁶ who comments on the criteria by which the existence of a *Gattung* may be established, while L. Sabourin⁷ has given details of the structure of all Gunkel's *Gattungen* together with many bibliographical references to more recent studies, especially Catholic.

Gunkel's classification continues to be accepted with only minor modifications by many commentators and writers on the Psalms,⁸ among whom we may mention G. W. Anderson,⁹ D. Anders-Richards,¹⁰ P. Auvray,¹¹ C. Barth,¹² G. Castellino,¹³ J. Coppens,¹⁴ M. Dahood,¹⁵ J. H. Eaton,¹⁶ G. Fohrer,¹⁷ H. H. Guthrie,¹⁸ T. Henshaw,¹⁹ E. G. Kraeling,²⁰

⁶ A. Descamps, 'Pour un classement littéraire des Psaumes', *Mélanges Bibliques rédigés en l'honneur de André Robert*, Bloud et Gay, Paris (1959) 187-196.

⁷ L. Sabourin, *Un classement littéraire des Psaumes* Desclée de Brouwer, Bruges (1964) (= *Sciences Ecclésiastiques* 16 (1964) 23-58).

⁸ Though some do not even refer to it, e.g. A. Maillot et A. Lelièvre, *Les Psaumes*, 2 vols., Labor et Fides, Geneva (1962); E. J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Tyndale Press, London (1949, ²1964).

⁹ G. W. Anderson, *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament*, Duckworth, London (1959); 'The Psalms', *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, ed. M. Black and H. H. Rowley, Nelson, London (1962) 409-443.

¹⁰ D. Anders-Richards, *The Drama of the Psalms*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London (1968).

¹¹ P. Auvray, 'les Psaumes', *Introduction à la Bible*, ed. A. Robert et A. Feuillet, Desclée, Tournai (1957), i 585-621.

¹² C. Barth, *Introduction to the Psalms*, Scribner's/Blackwell, New York/Oxford (1966), translated by R. A. Wilson from *Einführung in die Psalmen (Biblische Studien, 32)*, Neukirchener Verlag, Neukirchen (1961).

¹³ G. Castellino, *Libro dei Salmi (La Sacra Bibbia)*, Marietti, Turin/Rome (1955). Noteworthy is his description of the category of liturgies as 'liturgies of Yahwistic loyalty' intended for some unspecified covenant festival (a suggestion independent of A. Weiser).

¹⁴ J. Coppens, 'Etudes récentes sur le psautier', *Le Psautier* 1-71, especially 50. He combines two of Gunkel's minor classes to form a genre of 'psalms of instruction', containing prophetic, priestly and wisdom psalms, the last of which he subdivides as historical, legal, philosophic, and midrashic.

¹⁵ M. Dahood, *Psalms I, II (Anchor Bible)*, 2 vols. so far published (Pss. 1-100), Doubleday, Garden City, New York (1966, 1968), generally adopts the usual classification, though he is inclined to interpret some individual laments as royal psalms (e.g. Pss. 54, 59), and regards some psalms as prayers for rain (Pss. 4, 65:10-14, 67, 85). A general introduction is promised for the third volume.

¹⁶ J. H. Eaton, *The Psalms (Torch Bible Commentary)*, SCM, London (1967).

¹⁷ G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, initiated by E. Sellin, Abingdon Press, Nashville/New York (1968), translated by D. E. Green from *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* 10, Quelle and Meyer, Heidelberg (1965). His objections to all-pervasive cultic interpretations are notable (he lists at least thirty non-cultic psalms). Since questions of content should only be taken into account when necessary in determining the psalm genres, there turn out to be only three main *Gattungen*: hymns, laments, thanksgivings (individual and communal types are subsidiary categories, as are groups like Zion songs). Royal songs may be considered a group, though they can be assigned to the three main types. Wisdom poetry must be considered forms of wisdom instruction rather than a psalm type (p. 262).

H.-J. Kraus,²¹ C. Kuhl,²² W. S. McCullough,²³ R. Meyer,²⁴
A. B. Rhodes,²⁵ J. Ridderbos,²⁶ C. S. Rodd.²⁷

P. Drijvers²⁸ offers a full-scale exposition of the *Gattungen* as defined by Gunkel. His most significant departures from Gunkel are, first, his transference of all the wisdom psalms to other categories, mostly to a new subdivision of the individual laments entitled by Drijvers 'psalms about the just man and the sinner',²⁹ and, secondly, his extension of the category of pilgrim psalms by the inclusion of the songs of Zion among others.

While A. Weiser accepts in the main Gunkel's classification, the question of the genres plays a decidedly secondary role in his commentary.³⁰ His primary interest is in the traditions which

¹⁸ H. H. Guthrie, *Israel's Sacred Songs. A Study of Dominant Themes*, Seabury Press, New York (1966).

¹⁹ T. Henshaw, *The Writings. The Third Division of the Old Testament Canon*, Allen and Unwin, London (1963).

²⁰ J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, 3rd edn. completely revised by E. G. Kraeling, Columbia University Press, New York/London (1962); the divisions here are: psalms for public worship in the temple, for private worship in the temple, non-cultic psalms (e.g. Pss. 1, 15, 16, 23, 37, 42-43, 51, 58, 73, 91, 101, 103, 139).

²¹ H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, 2 vols., Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, Neukirchen (1961). Cf. J. J. Stamm, 'Zur Psalmenkommentar von H.J. Kraus', *Evangelische Theologie* 21 (1961) 576-581.

²² C. Kuhl, *The Old Testament. Its Origins and Composition*, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh/London (1961), translated by C. T. M. Herriott from *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments*, A. Francke, Berne (1953).

²³ W. S. McCullough, 'Psalms', *The Interpreter's Bible*, iv, Abingdon Press, Nashville, New York (1955).

²⁴ R. Meyer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 2 vols., M. Hueber, Munchen (1965, 1967); of special interest is his category of cult-free 'spiritual songs' in which he includes a number of psalms usually classified quite differently (Pss. 4, 16, 23, 36, 62, 63, 91, 120, 125, 127, 128, 131) (VOL ii, 321).

²⁵ A. B. Rhodes, *Psalms (Layman's Bible Commentaries)*, SCM, London (1960). While faithful in the main to the Gunkelian categories, the author arranges the hymns in a novel way.

²⁶ J. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen vertaald en verklaard (Commentaar op het Oude Testament)*, 2 vols. so far published (Pss. 1-106), J. H. Kok, Kampen (1955, 1958). A general introduction is reserved for vol. iii, but meanwhile appendix II to vol. i (pp. 382-391) contains the author's general acceptance of Gunkel's classification together with criticism of his inferences about the connection of the *Gattungen* with the cult.

²⁷ C. S. Rodd, *Psalms I-72, 73-150*, 2 vols., Epworth Press, London (1963, 1964).

²⁸ P. Drijvers, *The Psalms. Their Structure and Meaning*, Herder, Freiburg/Burns and Oates, London (1965), translated from *Over de Psalmen. Ein inleiding tot hun Betekenis en Geest*⁵, Spectrum, Utrecht/Antwerp (1956).

²⁹ To this category he assigns Pss. 1, 10, 11, 12, 14, 37, 49, 52, 53, 73, 75, 94, 112, 119, 125, 127, 128.

³⁰ A. Weiser, *The Psalms*, SCM, London (1962), translated by H. Hartwell from *Die Psalmen*⁵, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen (1959; ⁴1955).

come to expression in the Psalms, since in his view these traditions, which may be paralleled with the Pentateuchal traditions, point unmistakably to the cult and in particular to the 'covenant festival' as the source of the psalms. The literary genres are of interest to him chiefly as they severally display the same traditions of the covenant festival. In introducing the study of the *Gattugen* he writes: 'The picture that has been derived from the liturgical-cultic portions of the Psalter viewed as to the history of tradition and the cultus, is confirmed and supplemented by the picture which we obtain when, applying the method of Form-Criticism, we study the psalms according to their main types.'³¹ The outcome of his admirable emphasis on tradition-history is, however, that while Weiser professes himself a Gunkelian, he effectively diminishes the value of Gunkel's demonstration of the great variety of Israelite worship by placing all the *Gattungen* in the one cultic setting, the covenant festival.³² The psalm types which Weiser discusses are: 1. Hymns, 2. Laments, 3. Thanksgivings, 4. Blessing and curse, 5. Wisdom and didactic poems. The fourth seems curiously out of place, since it hardly forms a literary genre, as Weiser himself admits;³³ its presence among the other *Gattungen* can only be explained by its connection with the covenant and the Hells-geschichte, but it is really a *topos* rather than a *Gattung*.

The commentary of A. Deissler³⁴ is a modification of the Gunkelian schema by an adherent of the 'anthological' school.³⁵ His chief categories are: 1. Hymns, which are subdivided, following C. Westermann, into descriptive praise and narrative praise (*i.e.* thanksgiving). 2. Lamentations, which are largely the creation of post-exilic 'pious ones' (חַסִּידִים), groups who met in temple and synagogue and studied scripture, regarding themselves as the oppressed and the true heirs of God's promises to Israel. 3. Communal thanksgiving. 4. (a) Prophetic and eschatological psalms: oracles in the psalms are the literary summarization of classical prophetic texts, not the utter-

³¹ *The Psalms*, 52.

³² Cf. A. Descamps, *Le Psautier*, 83f. Weiser agrees that his picture is 'considerably more limited in scope' than Gunkel's, but by way of compensation claims that it 'exhibits much more closely defined contours' (p. go).

³³ *The Psalms*, 86.

³⁴ A. Deissler, *Die Psalmen erläutert (Die Welt der Bibel)*, 3 vols., Patmos, Düsseldorf (1963ff.).

³⁵ Cf. *Tyndale Bulletin* 108 (1967) 108.

ances of cultic prophets, whose very existence is open to question. Thus the kingship of Yahweh psalms are dependent on Deutero-Isaiah, and the songs of Zion with their orientation to the future are likewise influenced by prophetic theology, and certain royal psalms in that they have been shaped in part by messianic prophecies must be regarded as 'messianic'.³⁶ (b) Didactic psalms, arising in post-exilic wisdom circles with their increasing emphasis on the study of Scripture, which attracted psalm-writing and Torah-studying priests and Levites. To this milieu belong the alphabetic psalms,³⁷ psalms of the revelation of the divine word,³⁸ psalms of salvation-history,³⁹ psalms on human existence,⁴⁰ on the conduct of life according to the divine will,⁴¹ and on the doctrine of retribution.⁴² These are classifications by content, as Deissler acknowledges, but if psalms are regarded as purely literary compositions without any connection with the cult or with a specific *Sitz im Leben*, it is not possible to classify them otherwise.

Though S. Mowinckel goes far beyond Gunkel in associating the Psalms with the Israelite cult, his classification of the *Gattungen* themselves is closely related to Gunkel's. It is interesting to observe how, instead of beginning with similarities of form, as Gunkel did, and working back to a common cultic life-setting for all the members of a *Gattung*, Mowinckel begins with the cult, and derives the various literary forms from the exigencies of the cult.⁴³ Thus his first question is: 'What main types of divine service were there in ancient Israel and in Judaism?' The first distinction, which Mowinckel calls 'the point of departure in psalm interpretation', is that between the worship of the whole congregation and that of an individual as a 'private' person; while of course not all 'I'-psalms are spoken by an individual, there is a real distinction. Another distinction is that between festivals of joy and thanksgiving on the one hand and days of penitence on the other. Hence the four main *Gattungen* of psalms are determined already by the needs of the cult: congregational and individual praises and prayers

³⁶ Pss. 2, 45, 72, 89, 110, 132. ³⁷ Pss. 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145.

³⁸ Pss. 1, 19, 119.

³⁹ Pss. 78, 105, 106.

⁴⁰ Pss. 8, 90, 139.

⁴¹ Pss. 14, 15, 24, 32, 52, 62, 101, 112, 127, 133.

⁴² Pss. 34, 37, 49, 73, 91.

⁴³ See especially S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, Blackwell, Oxford (1962) i 37-39, translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas from *Offersang og Sangoffer*, Aschehoug, Oslo (1951).

(lamentations). Further distinctions, such as those between hymns and thanksgivings, and between 'common prayer psalms of the congregation'⁴⁴ and lamentations on a special occasion likewise depend upon cultic differentiae. Nevertheless, in spite of the virtual identity to Gunkel's *Gattungen* of the categories which Mowinckel derives from the cult, the real weight of his work lies elsewhere than on the psalm types themselves. Thus characteristically he says, when he comes to write of 'Psalms at the Enthronement Festival of Yahweh': 'It cannot . . . be our task solely to give a description of the forms and contents of the enthronement psalms in the narrow sense from the point of view of *Gattungsforschung* and the history of literature, but we must also seek to find the cultic situation which lies behind them, and to give a picture of this in all its ideological and liturgical complexity.' 'No single psalm type . . . can reveal the whole content of the cultic festival'^{44a} and therefore it is necessary to arrange psalms according to other criteria than formal literary ones.

One of the most notable recent attempts to grapple with the whole problem of the psalm *Gattungen* has been undertaken by C. Westermann.⁴⁵ He begins from the observations, first, that in Hebrew there is no word for 'thanks', since תוֹדָה means 'praise', and secondly that Gunkel's treatment of the hymns was defective in that he failed to define what a hymn was, in spite of his claim that the hymns were the most important *Gattung* of the Psalter, and failed to give the evidence for his assumption that the cult was the *Sitz im Leben* of the hymn. Westermann proceeds to argue that no sharp distinctions should be drawn between 'hymn' and 'thanks giving', since they belong in fact to the same *Gattung*, the 'psalm of praise', the hymn being what he calls descriptive (*beschreibend*) praise while the thanksgiving is narrative or confessional (*berichtend, bekennend*) praise; in the former the psalmist praises (הלל) God for His actions and being as a whole, in the latter he praises (הודוּה)

⁴⁴ Cf. Mowinckel, *op. cit.*, i 220-224.

^{44a} *Ibid.*, i 106.

⁴⁵ C. Westermann, *Das Loben Gottes in den Psalmen*, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen. (1953, ²1961), translated from the 2nd edn. by K. R. Crim as *The Praise of God in the Psalms*, John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia (1965), and Epworth Press, London (1966). See also his *Der Psalter*, Quell, Stuttgart (1959), a revised edition being published by Calver, Stuttgart (1967).

God for specific action. The real *Sitz im Leben* of praise is thus, especially in view of some early examples such as the songs of Miriam and Deborah, not the cult but the ordinary course of life whenever there occurs a reaction of praise to God's being and activity. 'The praise of God in Israel never became a cultic happening, separated from the rest of existence. . . . Rather, it occupied a central place in the total life of the individual and the people before God. . . . The praise of God occupied for Israel actually the place where "faith in God" stands for us.'⁴⁶ References to the impossibility of the dead praising Yahweh indicate that praise and life are correlative.

The only other *Gattung*, for all the minor categories must be subsumed under these two major ones,⁴⁷ is that of psalms of petition or lament. While it is necessary to make certain divisions within this *Gattung*, such as between national and individual petitions on the one hand, and between petitions that have been already heard and those that are still open to an answer on the other, the remarkable thing is that none of the laments fails to progress in some degree at least beyond petition and lament.⁴⁸ This fact, together with the preponderance of 'heard' petitions over 'open' petitions, completely changes the character of the so-called 'individual laments', the largest category in the Psalter. Whereas Gunkel had remarked on the existence of many laments and the few thanksgivings in the Psalms as an expression of human nature which is ready enough to ask but finds it all too easy to forget to thank, Westermann points out that most (in some senses, all) of the laments already contain 'thanks' (praise); they are 'lament that has been turned to praise'.⁴⁹ Hence the propriety of studying the 'laments' in a book called *The Praise of God in the Psalms*.

While Westermann is not concerned to deny the validity of the form-critical approach to the Psalms (for, with the exception of the category 'hymns', Gunkel's *Gattungen* are still very much in evidence) or even the cult-functional interpretation,

⁴⁶ *The Praise of God in the Psalms* 155.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 35. Westermann tends to speak, especially in *Der Psalter*, of the minor categories such as royal psalms, wisdom psalms, *etc.*, as 'groups' rather than *Gattungen*.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 60, 74.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 80f.

his interest is to look one stage further back than the cult for the life-setting of the Psalms and to discover it in 'the two basic modes of speaking to God: praise and petition'.⁵⁰

Westermann's thesis, which seems to me essentially correct (so long as the limitations of the undertaking are observed), has not yet received the attention it deserves, though it has been the subject of an appreciative article by R. E. Murphy,⁵¹ and a few writers have expressed their general approval⁵² F. Mand⁵³ has disputed Westermann's understanding of praise (תְּהִלָּה) by emphasizing that the 'thanksgiving psalms' are essentially 'songs of confession' which narrate the psalmists' past distress, but Westermann has replied that he already has agreed that there is a 'confessional' element in the 'declarative psalms of praise'.⁵⁴ E. Lipinski⁵⁵ has, without good reason, claimed that Westermann denies in practice a formal distinction between hymns of praise and hymns of thanksgiving.⁵⁶

A new system of classification, in which lineaments of Gunkel's scheme are still visible, is offered in the commentary by M. Manatti and E. de Solms,⁵⁷ who have in a very thorough-going fashion applied the theory of A. Weiser on the significance of the covenant festival to the question of the literary genres of the Psalms. To a greater or lesser degree, they maintain, all the Psalms are connected with the celebration of the covenant; all are cultic, none is an occasional poem. But their relation to the covenant festival may be direct, in which case

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 35, 154f.

⁵¹ R. E. Murphy, 'A New Classification of Literary Forms in the Psalms', *CBQ* 21 (1939) 83-87.

⁵² A. Deissler, *Le Livre des Psaumes*, i 18; J. P. M. van der Ploeg, *Studia Biblica et Semitica* 275; O. Schilling, 'Die Psalmen als Israels Lob vor Gott', in *Wort und Botschaft. Eine theologische und kritische Einführung in die Probleme des Alten Testaments*, ed. J. Schreiner, Echter-Verlag, Würzburg (1967) 272-289. J. A. H. Thoben, *De Liederen van Gods Volk. Een studie over milieu, theologie en literaire vorm van de psalmen*, Thoben Offset, Nijmegen (1961), though making no explicit reference to Westermann, comes close to his position in classifying the psalms as 1. hymns and praises, 2. laments or requests, 3. didactic poems.

⁵³ F. Mand, 'Die Eigenständigkeit der Danklieder des Psalters als Bekenntnislieder', *ZAW* 70 (1958) 185-199; cf. also G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 263.

⁵⁴ *The Praise of God in the Psalms*, 13.

⁵⁵ É. Lipinski, *RB* 75 (1968) 329 n. 35; cf. also his 'Les psaumes d'action de grâces individuelle', *Revue Ecclésiastique de Liège* 53 (1967) 384-366.

⁵⁶ Cf. Westermann's outlines of the formal characteristics of the declarative and descriptive psalms of praise, *The Praise of God in the Psalms*, 103f. and 122-132.

⁵⁷ M. Manatti et E. de Solms, *Les Psaumes*, 4 vols. (*Cahiers de la Pierre-qui-Vire*, 26-29), Desclée de Brouwer, Bruges (1966ff.).

various groups of psalms may be isolated as belonging to one or another phase of that ceremony, or indirect, in which case a 'symbolic cultic act' is presented, such as when national thanksgiving for the covenant appears in the form of a thanksgiving of an individual who has been pardoned and healed.⁵⁸ The classification of the *Gattungen* is as follows:

1. Psalms of the covenant ritual proper,⁵⁹ unintelligible in detail except in the perspective of this celebration. Some concentrate upon particular elements in the covenant renewal such as Psalm 106, concerned with sins against the covenant, and Psalms 1 and 37, corresponding to the element of cursing and blessing, but in at least six psalms almost the whole ritual proceedings may be discerned. Since all the Psalms revolve about the covenant, many parallels will of course be found between this category and others. 2. Hymns,⁶⁰ sung in praise of Yahweh at the Festival of Tabernacles, but without a fixed liturgical place in the covenant ritual; they are, so to speak, the musical accompaniment to the festival. 3. Thanksgivings⁶¹ are all national thanksgivings for the blessing of the covenant; unlike the hymns, they correspond to a precise liturgical action, the thanksgiving sacrifice at the covenant festival. The use of the 'I'-form for these collective psalms is to allow a more dramatic presentation. 4. Psalms of Yahweh's guest,⁶² where the nation collectively is represented as a levite, a king, a prophet, or a pilgrim who is reassured by the presence of Yahweh; 'with thee' is the keyword. 5. Royal psalms,⁶³ which evoke certain phases of the enthronement ceremony. Most are undoubtedly post-exilic, and the concrete details presented are actually symbolic; they are not occasional poems for a king's enthronement, but directly messianic cultic texts which belonged to a ceremony celebrating the Davidic covenant and the messianic promises within the general setting of the covenant festival. 6. Psalms of prophetic exhortation against the wicked,⁶⁴ corresponding to the prophetic instructions at the renewal of

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, i 39.

⁵⁹ Pss. 1, 37, 50, 78, 81, 95, 100, 105, 106, 111, 112, 114, 115, 135, 136, 145.

⁶⁰ Pss. 8, 19, 33, 65, 92, 104, 113, 117, 138, 146, 347, 348, 349, 150.

⁶¹ Pss. 18, 22, 30, 32, 34, 40, 41, 66, 103, 107, 116, 118.

⁶² Pss. 4, 5, 16, 23, 27, 31, 36, 49, 61, 63, 73, 139.

⁶³ Pss. 2, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110.

⁶⁴ Pss. 9-10, 11, 12, 14 (=, 53), (28), 52, 58, (59), 62, (64), 75, 82, (83), (94), (140), (141).

the covenant. 7. Supplications,⁶⁵ which are all collective supplications of the people, though there must also have existed private supplications, which have provided the form (*revêtement*) for many of these supplications. Their cultic setting is not a particular occasion of distress but fixed occasions in the liturgical year, including the Festival of Tabernacles. 8. Liturgies centred on an oracle,⁶⁶ implied or assumed, which perhaps belong to a ceremony of penitential supplication. 9. Blessings.⁶⁷ 10. Psalms of Yahweh's kingship,⁶⁸ in praise of Yahweh as King of Israel by the covenant and the law; this genre is not determined by the similarity of content, but by the cultic setting common to all, namely a ceremony at the covenant festival, of Yahweh's enthronement; this does not confer kingship on Yahweh but actualizes His kingship and hastens the coming of the eschatological kingdom. II. Songs of Zion,⁶⁹ for a 'royal Zion festival' (H.-J. Kraus) within the general framework of the festival of tabernacles. 12. Pilgrim⁷⁰ and gradual psalms, to be sung on the way to Jerusalem; such pilgrimages have a historic dimension (they recall the coming up from Egypt, David's ascent of Zion, the return from exile) and an eschatological one (they 'mime' the ascent of all nations to Zion in the messianic era). The gradual psalms,⁷¹ which in respect of their genre are *sui generis*, form a homogeneous collection describing the stages of the pilgrimage from the decision to go up to Jerusalem (Ps. 120) to the departure after the festival (Ps. 134).

In spite of the perhaps too ready acceptance of the theories of A. Weiser, which seem to the present writer at least somewhat extreme in their assignment of practically all the Psalms to one cultic occasion, there is much that is valuable in this fresh analysis of the types of the Psalms, which does not ultimately stand or fall by the accuracy with which the precise liturgical setting has been fixed.

One of Gunkel's most caustic critics, A. Szörényi,⁷² has

⁶⁵ Pss. 6, 7, 13, 17, 25, 26, 35, 38, 39, 42-43/ 44, 51, 55, 69, 70, 71, 74, 77, 79, 80, 86, 88, 90, 102, 109, 119, 130, 137, 140, 141, 142, 143.

⁶⁶ Pss. 3, 20, (28), M, 58, 57, 60, (6i), 85, 108.

⁶⁷ Pss. 67, 344. Blessings are included also in psalms of other genres.

⁶⁸ Pss. 24, 29, 47, 68, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99.

⁶⁹ Pss. 46, 48, 76, 87, 132.

⁷⁰ Pss. 15, 84, 91, (121), (122).

⁷¹ Pss 120-134.

⁷² A. Szörényi, *Psalmen Und Kult ins Alten Testament. Zur Formgeschichte der Psalmen*, Sankt Stefans Gesellschaft, Budapest (1961).

admitted the correctness of classifying the Psalms according to *Gattung*, and though he confines himself only to those psalms which he judges to have been composed for liturgical purposes, he draws up a list of genres remarkably similar to Gunkel's: hymns,⁷³ songs of victory,⁷⁴ songs of trust,⁷⁵ public⁷⁶ and private⁷⁷ thanksgiving, prophetic warnings,⁷⁸ didactic-historical poems,⁷⁹ psalms of petition,⁸⁰ public laments.⁸¹ Szörényi seems to have three main grounds for criticism of Gunkel: 1. Gunkel's 'pure *Gattungen*' without admixture of elements and motifs from other *Gattungen* are a purely theoretical reconstruction, since practically no instances of a pure *Gattung* exist. 2. The fixity of the laws of each *Gattung* as established by Gunkel allows too little scope to the individuality of the psalmists' piety. 3. In the method of *Gattungsforschung* Gunkel concentrates upon the external form of a psalm to the neglect of the content.⁸² While the first criticism has some substance, most modern followers of Gunkel acknowledging that the psalm genres can only be established in broad outline, the other two are less than just to Gunkel's own procedures. Whatever regularity there may be about the formal elements of a *Gattung* is a matter of observation which no amount of a priori notions about the psalmists' freedom can contradict. Further, it was Gunkel's principle to take into account when establishing a *Gattung* not only form but content and *Sitz im Leben*.⁸³

A powerful challenge to the Gunkelian *Gattungsforschung* has come in recent years from the school of literary criticism known as 'the new stylistics'.⁸⁴ The basic position of this school, especially in some of its German forms (*Stilforschung*), has been

⁷³ Pss 24, 33, 87, (92), 93, 99, 100, 121, 134, 136, 146, (147), (148), 149, 150.

⁷⁴ Pss. 46, (47), 48, 68, 76. ⁷⁵ Pss. (23), 91, (125).

⁷⁶ Pss. 65, 66, 67, 507, 118, 126.

⁷⁷ Pss. 9, 18, (21), 27, 40, 57:8-52 (= 108:2-6), 116.

⁷⁸ Pss. 75, 81, 82, 95. ⁷⁹ Pss. 106, 135.

⁸⁰ Pss. (7), 20, 22, 26, 55, 61, 85, 89, 102:13-23, 108, 109, 115, 132, 144.

⁸¹ Pss. 44, (80), 94. ⁸² Cf. Szörényi, *op. cit.*, 110-145, 505f.

⁸³ Cf. H. Gunkel-J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, 22f.

⁸⁴ A good introduction to the scope of the 'new stylistics' (which is not so new really) may be gained from H. A. Hatzfeld, *A Critical Bibliography of the New Stylistics applied to the Romance Languages 1900-1952*, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina (1953). It becomes apparent that the new stylistics is not so doctrinaire as it is made to appear by some of its German exponents, from which quarter its methods have entered Biblical studies. A general treatment of stylistics is offered by R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of Literature*, Jonathan Cape, London (1949) (ch. xvii on literary genres is particularly interesting in the present context), and W. Kayser, *Das sprachliche Kunstwerk*³, Francke, Berne (1954).

characterized by J. Blenkinsopp in these words: A poem is an indivisible entity which cannot be divided into matter and form and which should not be used as a document to prove anything outside itself; the critic's only approach is to study the different stylistic procedures as so many levels of articulation, all simultaneously present and dynamically interactive within the poem. His work must begin and end in the concrete, unique and non-recurring event which a poem is.⁸⁵

The very valuable studies in Hebrew poetry by L. Alonso Schökel have been the first major attempt to apply the approach of the new stylistics to Hebrew literature.⁸⁶ Alonso Schökel's studies are worked out in detail with reference to first Isaiah, and thus he is not directly concerned with questions of the Psalm *Gattungen*. But it is evident that, while he rejects an atomizing literary criticism in the interests of interpreting the prophetic poems as unities, he is obliged to rely to some extent upon form-critical results in determining what constitutes such poems. Nevertheless, to the degree to which the autonomy and unrepeatability of the individual poem is stressed, to such a degree the importance of the typical and the recurrent, which is constitutive of the *Gattung*, must be minimised; thus a threat to the primacy of the *Gattung* over the individual psalm lies inherent in the new stylistics.

L. Krinetzki has contributed a number of studies of individual psalms, in which he attempts by stylistic methods to determine with greater accuracy the interpretation of the psalm; but this may involve in some cases no more than redefining the *Gattung* to which it is attributed, or assigning it to another *Gattung*. So, for example, in Psalm 5 he maintains that the character of the psalm is determined by the triple request it contains, not by the lamentation, and that therefore the usual categorization as an individual lament is not entirely satisfactory.⁸⁷ Psalm 46, usually classified as a song of Zion, is

⁸⁵ *Biblica* 44 (1963) 353.

⁸⁶ L. Alonso Schökel, *Estudios de Poética Hebrea*, Juan Flores, Barcelona (1963). See also the excellent review article by J. Blenkinsopp, 'Stylistics of Old Testament Poetry', *Biblica* 44 (1963) 352-358, from which the above quotation is taken. Cf. also Alonso Schad, *The Inspired Word*, Herder and Herder, New York (1965), which is concerned with wider issues raised by the study of stylistics, and 'Die stilistische Analyse bei den Propheten', *VTS* 7 (1960) 154-164.

⁸⁷ L. Krinetzki, 'Psalm 5. Eine Untersuchung seiner dichterischen Struktur und seines theologischen Gehaltes', *Theologische Quartalschrift* 542 (1962) 23-46.

actually a communal psalm of confidence, which bears many of the marks of the hymn because, thought and form being one, only the hymnic form could express the thoughts of the psalmist satisfactorily.⁸⁸

Another adherent of the new stylistics, M. Weiss,⁸⁹ takes a far more radical line; he proposes to dispense altogether with *Gattung* study, which he brands a Germanic notion quite unrelated to Hebrew ways of thinking and Hebrew poetical procedures which, unlike classical poetry, paid little attention to formal precision and structure. Gunkel, he claims, in searching for an ideal original form of each *Gattung*, could not appreciate the individuality of the psalms themselves; even if it were possible to say what the significance of a motif or usage in the hypothetical *Urform* was, the interpretation of a particular psalm would not thereby be advanced, since there is no saying to what uses a poet may put traditional material in his creation of a work of art.⁹⁰

Henning Graf Reventlow in a recent article on Psalm 8⁹¹ has declared his support for the new stylistics, but only as it can operate in conjunction with methods which have previously yielded results in Old Testament criticism. Like every new method, the new stylistics stands in danger of absolutizing its claims. He criticizes M. Weiss' rejection of *Gattung* study as one-sided, and calls for co-operation between study of the *Gattung* and the style-analysis of the individual poem. Moreover, he justifiably questions the propriety of transferring modern western literary theory to the sacred literature of an ancient people, particularly to the Psalms where the notion of an individual creative author is out of place. The pre-existing forms

⁸⁸ Krinetzki, 'Jahwe ist uns Zuflucht und Wehr. Eine stilistisch-theologische Auslegung von Psalm 46 (45)', *Bibel und Leben* 3 (1962) 26-42. Cf. also his 'Zur Poetik und Exegese von Psalm 48', *Biblische Zeitschrift* 4 (1960) 70-97; 'Psalm 110 (109). Eine Untersuchung seines dichterischen Stils', *Theologie und Glaube* 51 (1961) 110-121. 'Psalm 30 (29) in stilistisch-exegetischer Betrachtung', *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 83 (1961) 345-360. Cf. also E. Pax, 'Studien zur Theologie von Psalm 29', *Biblische Zeitschrift* 6 (1962) 93-100.

⁸⁹ M. Weiss, 'Wege der neuen Dichtungswissenschaft in ihrer Anwendung? auf die Psalmenforschung (Methodologische Bemerkungen, dargelegt am Beispiel von Psalm XLVI)', *Biblica* 42 (1961) 255-302. His work *The Bible and Modern Literary Theory* (in Hebrew), Bialik Institute, Jerusalem (1962), was not available to me.

⁹⁰ Cf. S. Mowinckel, 'Traditionalism and Personality in Psalms', *HUCA* 23 (1950f.) 205-231; *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, ii 126-145.

⁹¹ H. von Reventlow, 'Psalm 8', *Poetica* 1 (1967) 304-332.

of literature and the cult for which the psalm is destined set bounds to the 'autonomy' of the work of art so highly prized in modern aesthetic theory.

Without any explicit dependence on the theory of the new stylistics, J. P. M. van der Ploeg has approached its position. For him the combined effect of C. Westermann's stress on the existence of only two basic psalm genres, and of the persuasive results of the anthological school which impose caution upon a too ready acceptance of pre-exilic date for the Psalms and hence close connection with the cult, has been a weakening of attachment to the Gunkelian classification. While classification by genres is extremely useful, it ought not to dominate the study of the Psalms. One must first of all study a psalm as a complete whole, and while account must be taken of its style and the genre to which it could belong, it is the concrete reality of the individual psalm and not the abstraction of a literary genre that must predominate in exegesis.⁹²

There is without doubt a very important contribution to be made from the standpoint of the 'new stylistics' to the interpretation of the psalms, and the appearance of Alonso Schökel's book in particular is a reminder of the dearth of material on Hebrew poetry and the relevance of stylistics for interpretation.⁹³ The complaint of M. Weiss⁹⁴ that too often the Psalms have been treated simply as valuable documents for the reconstruction of ancient Israelite belief, ritual, customs, and language has some justification, and any refocussing of attention upon the Psalms as literary entities is to be welcomed. Nevertheless it is by the results of interpretations offered that the new stylistics must ultimately be judged, as Weiss himself admits,⁹⁵ and as yet it is impossible to say whether the new interpretations that have been offered will prove convincing to

⁹² J. P. M. van der Ploeg, *Studia Biblica et Semitica*, 277. In this he says he has followed C. Barth, who remarks that one's starting-point should be not the *Gattung* but the content and character of the individual psalm (*Introduction to the Psalms* 54), and N. H. Ridderbos, who while accepting Gunkel's scheme believes that distinctions between the genres are not definite and that in any case to establish a psalm's genre is not to establish its aim and tendency (*De Psalmen*, J. H. Kok, Kampen (1962) 1 20-27).

⁹³ Cf. G. Gerleman, 'The Song of Deborah in the Light of Stylistics', *VT* I (1951) 168-180: 'One can, no doubt, point to stylistics as one of the most neglected fields of Old Testament exegesis' (p. 169).

⁹⁴ *Biblica* 42 (1960) 259.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 256.

many scholars. When, for example, M. Weiss stresses the 'thoroughly universal' character of Psalm 46, on the grounds of the absence of the word 'Israel', the lack of identification of 'the city of our God' as Jerusalem, and the usage of 'God' instead of 'Yahweh',⁹⁶ we may query whether the outright rejection of *Gattung* study has proved beneficial. Weiss rightly declares that the separation between form and content is a purely intellectual one, since neither can exist by itself,⁹⁷ but it does not follow that nothing is to be gained from such distinctions; in the case of Psalm 46 the elements that belong to the form would serve to localize and specify terms which can have imposed upon them quite different senses when the psalm is read as an autonomous work of art.⁹⁸

G. Ahlström⁹⁹ thinks that the Gunkelian system is ripe for thoroughgoing revision, since it has imposed upon Hebrew poetry strict logical structures quite alien to it; the starting-point for any classification of forms, he maintains must be the headings of the psalms (e.g. לְמִנְצֵחַ, לְדָוִד). However, as yet a real connection between psalms bearing the same title has still to be discovered, and certainly Ahlström's claim that Mesopotamian songs are classified according to their titles is beside the point, since that classification is according to musical setting or content.¹⁰⁰

Reference should also be made to the bearing upon *Gattung* study of the growing interest in the 're-interpretation' to which the Psalms have been subject in the course of their transmission. In the course of changing historical circumstances the Psalms,

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 298f.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁹⁸ Cf. criticisms of 'analytic criticism' in English literature (a method that bears many affinities to the 'new stylistics') by D. Daiches, *Critical Approaches to Literature*, Longman, Green, and Co., London (1956) 301-315.

⁹⁹ G. W. Ahlström, *Psalm 89. Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des leidenden Königs*, C. W. K. Gleerup, Lund (1959).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 263. On the other hand, in an interesting paper by M. J. Buss, 'The Psalms of Asaph and Korah', *JBL* 82 (1963) 382-392, the suggestion is made that the Psalms can be divided into three main groups according to their attribution. David psalms are essentially individual laments and related types, so psalms of the laity; Asaph and Korah psalms, which include collective laments, Levitical psalms dealing with judgment, law, history, and Zion, and some personal psalms of cultic personnel, are clergy or professionalist psalms; psalms without attribution are primarily hymns, which would be appropriate both for laity and clergy. Such an arrangement would make it possible to combine several of Gunkel's minor *Gattungen* into the group of clergy psalms. This suggestion is well worth further development in reference to the psalms not specifically treated by Buss.

like many other parts of the Bible, have been altered, expanded and newly understood. An earlier age of criticism, in its quest for chimerical 'originals' of the Biblical texts, tended to dismiss such alterations of an earlier text as mere 'glosses' of secondary importance, if not entirely worthless. A new movement, however, is developing,¹⁰¹ which attributes full significance to the work of editors, glossators and redactors, to whom in fact we owe the biblical text,¹⁰² and draws them within the field of inspiration.¹⁰³ This emphasis has been applied to the Psalms in a book by J. Becker,¹⁰⁴ in which he argues that the literary form of a psalm, which is the object of form-critical investigation, can no longer provide a safe clue to the significance of the psalms. The links between the form and the life-setting are thus dissolved, so that what is in form, for example, an individual lament may really call for a quite different kind of interpretation.¹⁰⁵ Similarly C. Westermann has suggested that all the royal psalms owe their inclusion in the Psalter to their re-interpretation as messianic psalms.¹⁰⁶ All this leads to a recognition of the many-sided character of a psalm text, as G. W. Anderson writes: 'There can be little doubt that some, perhaps many, psalms have been altered and adapted in successive ages; and in such psalms it may well be a doubtful procedure to assume that there is one and only one consistent meaning in the text.'¹⁰⁷ While the re-interpretation approach by no means dispenses with form-criticism, as Becker points out, it goes beyond it, as *Redaktionsgeschichte* in Gospel criticism goes beyond form-criticism. Moreover, since the relation of literary form and life-setting may in many cases be only of an indirect

¹⁰¹ J. Coppens is a little premature in saying 'L'hypothèse de "relectures", 'chère à E. Pödechard et A. Gelin, est de nos jours largement acceptée' (*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 42 (1966) 229 n. 20).

¹⁰² Cf. e.g. G. von Rad, *Genesis*, SCM, London (1961) 40f., and the remark of F. Rosenzweig there quoted that the siglum R for the redactor of the Hexateuch could more fittingly stand for *rabbēnū* 'our master', since it is only from him that we receive the Hexateuch at all.

¹⁰³ Cf. N. Lohfink, 'The Inerrancy and the Unity of Scripture', *Modern Biblical Studies*, ed. D. J. McCarthy and W. B. Callen, Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee (1967) 31-42, translated from his *Das Siegeslied am Schilfmeer*, J. Knecht, Frankfurt (1965) 44-80; cf. also D. J. McCarthy, 'Personality, Society and Inspiration', *Modern Biblical Studies*, 18-30; L. Alonso Schökel, *The Inspired Word*, 217-233.

¹⁰⁴ J. Becker, *Israel deutet seine Psalmen. Urform und Neuinterpretation in den Psalmen*, Katholisches Bibelwerk, Stuttgart (1966).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 16f.

¹⁰⁶ C. Westermann, *Der Psalter*, 88.

¹⁰⁷ G. W. Anderson, *BJRL* 48 (1965) 28.

kind, inferences about the cultic usages may be derived from the psalms only with much more caution than is usually exercised.¹⁰⁸

The question of re-interpretation owes much to A. Gelin who seems to have coined the term *relecture* ('re-reading') for this method of interpretation,¹⁰⁹ and a few studies of individual psalms along these lines have been made, of Psalm 29 by H. Cazelles¹¹⁰ who finds in references to the 'God of glory', the desert of Qadesh, and the 'flood' a post-exilic *relecture* of a hymn to Yahweh originally dating from the early monarchy, Psalm 22 by R. Martin-Achard, who discusses the universal and messianic dimension given the original psalm (verses 2-27) by the addition of verses 28-32,¹¹¹ and of Psalm 72 by P. Veugelers who sees verses 12-17 as a *relecture* of an older prayer for the king offered probably at his enthronement (verses 1-11).¹¹² W. G. Williams has, without any explicit relationship to this school of thought, stressed that it is impossible to speak of only one *Sitz im Leben*, and that one must distinguish between the life setting of a psalm's origin, use, fixation, and reception into the canon.¹¹³

Although it is somewhat hazardous to attempt a statement of tendencies which have been revealed within this relatively circumscribed period of Psalm study, certain themes do seem to emerge. The principal one is that while there has been no large-scale rejection of the methods and conclusions of the classical *Gattungsforschung*, its importance in the interpretation of the Psalms has been played down. It has become a commonplace among writers of varied backgrounds to insist that the Gunkelian system cannot be applied rigorously, and that, to quote C. Barth, 'Even the best and most complete system will

¹⁰⁸ J. Becker, *Israel deutet seine Psalmen*, 20.

¹⁰⁹ A. Gelin, 'La question des "relectures" bibliques à l'intérieur d'une tradition vivante', *Sacra Pagina*, Miscellanea Biblica (*Biblioteca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovanensium* XII), Gabalda Paris (1959) i 303-315.

¹¹⁰ A. Cazelles, 'Une relecture du Psaume XXIX ?', *A la rencontre de Dieu. Mémorial Albert Gelin*, Editions Xavier Mappus, Le Puy (1961) 119-128.

¹¹¹ R. Martin-Achard, '*Remarques sur le isaume 22*', *Verbum Caro* 65 (1963) 78-87.

¹¹² P. Veugelers, 'Le Psaume LXXII, poème messianique?' *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 41 (1965) 317-343; published separately as *Analecta Lovaniensia Biblica et Orientalia*, series IV, fasc. 20, Publications Universitaires de Louvain, Louvain/Desclée de Brouwer, Bruges (1965).

¹¹³ W. G. Williams, 'Liturgical Aspects in Enthronement Psalms', *Journal of Bible and Religion* 25 (1957) 118-122.

fail to include a considerable number of psalms, which it is either impossible to fit into any category, or which can be included only by a forced interpretation.¹¹⁴ The approach of the 'new stylistics' and the method of 're-interpretation' similarly are tending to minimize the significance of the study of the *Gattungen*. Where there have been major departures from Gunkel's system, as in the case of C. Westermann's study, there has been more of an attempt to understand the Psalm *Gattungen* in relation to one another than to offer new analyses of individual *Gattungen*. The many varieties of classificatory schemes that have been proposed are not simply the expression of individual taste, but represent a search for the essential character of psalmodic literature.

There are other aspects of Gunkel's work on the Psalms beside his definition and analysis of the *Gattungen* which have not proved so durable. H. -J. Kraus¹¹⁵ points to three such aspects: 1. His reconstruction of the history of the literary genres which made 'pure' examples of a single *Gattung* early and 'mixed' psalms late is very much open to question.¹¹⁶ 2. His judgments about the religious quality of certain types of psalms¹¹⁷ belong to an older stage of Old Testament study. 3. His understanding of the relation of the Psalms and the cult has been rendered out of date especially by S. Mowinckel; even though a thoroughgoing cultic interpretation of the Psalms may not prove justified, one will have to draw the line of distinction between the cultic and the non-cultic quite differently from Gunkel.

But these matters in which scholarship has progressed beyond Gunkel's position do not affect the lasting contribution he made to the establishment of the major Psalm genres and to their analysis. If we are to continue to believe that there

¹¹⁴ C. Barth, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 14.

¹¹⁵ H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, i xxxix.

¹¹⁶ Kraus quotes (*loc. cit.*) with approval the remark of G. W. Allström: 'Die *Gattungen* sind nicht fertige Schemata, die man strikt befolgt hat, sondern die Psalmen sind jeweils aus den Gegebenheiten erwachsen, für die sie bestimmt waren, weswegen ein Psalm mit einer nach Gunkel etwas gemischten Stilform nicht *a priori* als uneinheitlich bezeichnet werden kann' (*Psalm 89* 9).

¹¹⁷ E.g. of the post-prophetic 'spiritual songs' he says: 'Here a kind of piety which has freed itself of all ceremonies expresses itself, a religion of the heart. Here something wonderful has happened. Religion has cast off the shell of sacred usage, in which, until now, it has been protected and nurtured: it has come of age' (*The Psalms: A Form-critical Introduction*, 26).

were in fact different literary genres in Israelite psalm poetry (no matter how great a freedom the psalmists allowed themselves in their use of forms), Gunkel's criteria for establishing the existence of a *Gattung* cannot be replaced. He insisted on the conjunction of three factors: a common setting in life, a common mood and style of thought, and a common stock of literary forms, motifs, and expressions.

Grouping of psalms according to one or other of these criteria does not lead to the same certainty or utility of result. Thus it is not difficult to compile a long list of psalms according to their apparent cultic setting, for instance, for use at an 'enthronement festival'; S. Mowinckel and A. Weiser have both shown how a group of psalms gathered on a cultic principle may be almost indefinitely extended, but without any certainty being provided that all the members of the group actually did belong together in Israelite worship. Alternatively, it is possible to group psalms on the basis of common language and contents, as is done, for example, almost universally with royal psalms,¹¹⁸ and often with 'history psalms'. Such an approach has its own interest, but it is not to be confused with the study of *Gattungen*, a primary aim of which is to establish the specific purpose which the individual psalms served.¹¹⁹ In the case of the royal psalms, for instance, there is in grouping them together the danger that a false understanding of the role of the king in the cult will arise on the one hand from bringing together psalms which have neither a common literary form or common life setting and on the other hand from restricting attention to those psalms which can most clearly be named 'royal psalms'. It is the distinction of Gunkel's method that it provides a system of checks against one-sided interpretations.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Gunkel himself was not, perhaps, entirely consistent on this point, since he tended to set the royal psalms beside hymns, laments, *etc.* as an independent category, but to speak of them as a group rather than a *Gattung*. Their unity was based on a common content; cf. L. Sabourin, *Un classement littéraire des Psaumes* 46. G. Fohrer forms a notable exception to the prevailing tendency (*Introduction to the Old Testament* 262).

¹¹⁹ Cf. M. Manatti et É. Solms, *Les Psaumes*, i 38 n. 3: 'La thème est souvent la donnée la moins caractéristique, car un même thème peut être chanté dans des psaumes de genres littéraires différents, chaque fois transposé. Il ne faut donc jamais définir un genre littéraire par son contenu.'; similarly G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 262; P. Drijvers, *The Psalms. Their Structure and Meaning*, 46.

¹²⁰ It is one of the great merits of H.J. Kraus's commentary that it takes account of all the criteria enunciated by Gunkel for *Gattungsforschung*.

It is, however, not always easy to apply Gunkel's method in a thorough fashion. Two examples of studies of individual *Gattungen* will illustrate the difficulty. R. E. Murphy¹²¹ has attempted to define more closely which psalms should be included in the *Gattung* of wisdom psalms.¹²² The problem arises: what can the setting in life be of a wisdom poem? It is one thing to reconstruct a post-exilic sapiential milieu in which they may be thought to have originated, but another thing to say what their precise life-setting in such a milieu may have been. And the possibility still remains, as has been pointed out by S. Holm-Nielsen,¹²³ that wisdom poetry is not to be sharply differentiated from cultic poetry. Murphy's study fortunately does not proceed to speculate on the role wisdom poetry could have had in the cult, though he notes that their relationship to the 'testimony' element in the thanksgiving psalms may be a pointer to their cultic use; rather he suggests that since the precise life-setting of these poems is elusive we are confined to a classification according to criteria of style, structure and content.¹²⁴

Another study of the limits of a *Gattung*,¹²⁵ the songs of Yahweh's kingship, by J. D. W. Watts,¹²⁶ restricts itself to purely literary and linguistic criteria, and does not attempt to justify its neglect of the possible life-setting of these psalms. Starting from the 'core-group' generally acknowledged to belong to this category (Pss. 47, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99) he argues on the grounds of the presence of common motifs and terminology that nine other psalms should be added to the category,¹²⁷ and that the whole *Gattung* should be divided into two groups: those celebrating Yahweh's kingship in nature and creation,¹²⁸ and those celebrating His kingship over Israel and victory over the

¹²¹ R. E. Murphy, 'A consideration of the classification "Wisdom Psalms" *VTS* 9 (1962) 156-167.

¹²² Observe that Gunkel did not refer to them as a *Gattung* but entitled section To of his *Einleitung in die Psalmen* 'Weisheitsdichtung in den Psalmen'.

¹²³ S. Holm-Nielsen, 'The Importance of Late Jewish Psalmody for the Understanding of Old Testament Psalmody Tradition', *ST* 14 (1960) 1-53.

¹²⁴ Murphy's conclusion is that only Pss. 1, 32, 34, 37, 49, 112, 128 belong to this category.

¹²⁵ Gunkel regarded this as a mixed type.

¹²⁶ J. D. W. Watts, 'Yahweh Mālak Psalms', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 21 (1965) 341-348.

¹²⁷ Pss. 22:28-32; 24:1-2, 7-9; 29:1-10; 44:1-12; 46; 48:1-12; 89:5-14; 95:1-5; 148:1-13.

¹²⁸ Pss. 24, 29, 48, 93, 95, 96, 97, 148.

nations.¹²⁹ He is correct in refusing to include in this category another thirty-odd psalms which Mowinckel brought within the group of the 'enthronement psalms';¹³⁰ since they do not display a sufficient number of affinities with the core-group, they fail the test of *Formensprache* and cannot belong to the same *Gattung*. But the criterion of life-setting has been neglected, and unless a common life-setting is at least proposed, one of the fundamental bases for establishing a *Gattung* is lacking. Thus all that this study by Watts has shown is that among the *Gattung* of hymns there is a group concerned with the kingship of Yahewh, and that the boundaries of this group may be defined fairly clearly. But it fails to raise the more important question about the psalms of Yahweh's kingship, namely whether they form a *Gattung* on their own, for on the answer to that question depends their whole interpretation (at least in terms of the debate in recent decades).¹³¹

It may turn out that we find that we know less about the Israelite' cult than we thought we did, and that the life-settings of the psalm types cannot in fact be pin-pointed with the degree of certainty most scholars today believe they have attained. If that happens we shall be reduced to classifying the Psalms by their content alone; but unless and until that happens the study of the *Gattungen* will remain an indispensable factor in the interpretation of the Psalms.¹³²

¹²⁹ Pss. 22:28-32, 46, 47, 98, 99.

¹³⁰ It should be observed that Mowinckel does not call the 'enthronement psalms' a *Gattung*, since they include psalms from several *Gattungen*.

¹³¹ Cf. É. Lipinski, 'Les psaumes de la royauté de Yahwé dans l'exéèsè moderne', *Le Psautier*, 133-272, especially 135.

¹³² Consideration of literature on the classification of individual psalms must be deferred to a later occasion.