Court Oracles in the Psalms

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Number 172

COURT ORACLES IN THE PSALMS

The So-called Royal Psalms in their Ancient Near Eastern Context

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Society of Biblical Literature
Atlanta, Georgia

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by
Scott R. A. Starbuck
Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1996
J. J. M. Roberts, Advisor

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Starbuck, Scott R. A.
Court Oracles in the Psalms : the so-called Royal Psalms in their ancient Near Eastern context / Scott R. A. Starbuck.
p. cm. — (Society of Biblical Literature dissertation series ; no. 172)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-88414-000-8 (alk. paper) — ISBN 1-58983-071-7 (paper : alk. paper)
1. Bible. O.T. Psalms—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Royal Psalms. I. Title. II. Series: Dissertation series (Society of Biblical Literature) ; no. 172.
BS1445.M4S73 1999
223'.206—dc21 99-34459
CIP

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

To Teague Isaiah and Ethan Macaiah—

parading hymns of joy and promise.

.... Wandlung
Hymnen im Innern, Tanz vor der Arche,
Aufruhr und Aufzug im reifenden Wein

.... Transformation
Hymns in innerness, dance before the ark,
uproar and parade in the ripening vine

—Rainer Maria Rilke, December 1923

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Acknowledgements

I am joyfully obliged to Patrick D. Miller, Jr., J.J.M. Roberts, and C.L. Seow for their guidance and critique of this project. I am especially grateful to J.J.M. Roberts for his rigor and inspiration while advising the dissertation. In addition, Richard Whitaker, Scott Morschauser, Charles Bartow, and Ulrich Mauser provided deft review of the final draft. Other dear friends patiently worked through the prose of various drafts of this work, typically offering clearer and more graceful presentations of the argument. Their selfless efforts improved the work remarkably.

I would like to thank the editor of the SBLDS, Michael V. Fox, for his careful consideration, review, encouragement, and direction. Michael T. Bradley and Leigh C. Andersen at Scholars Press provided invaluable guidance in transforming the original manuscript into camera-ready form. Steve Semple and his colleagues at Nota Bene consistently provided friendly and timely support through each phase of this project. The camera-ready copy was printed with Nota Bene™ Lingua™ software, version 4.5.

Every scholarly work ultimately betrays the particular fascinations and orientations of the individual author. Nevertheless, each investigation arises from particular contexts that proved fertile over years of tutelage, correction, and encouragement. I would be dreadfully remiss in failing to give mention to the two institutions of my own formation, Whitworth College and Princeton Theological Seminary. I am indebted to each environment of scholarly rigor and freedom set within communities of doxological faith and reverence.

Absent the indefatigable personal support of Tom and Deb Abbott, Bruce Brookens, Carter Case, Gary and Barby Hahn, Jerry and Barbara McCollum, Steve and Janet Olmstead, Eric and Lynn Peterson, Jim and Kathryn Roberts, David and Betty Shantz, Jan and Bill Shelton, and, most especially, Pamela Jacobi, together with the steadfast love of my family during the last phases of this project, this work would never have reached publication. In tangible and palpable ways, these good friends have proved through their own lives the continuing vitality of the royal office amidst us.

It is my honor to dedicate this study to my two sons, Teague Isaiah and Ethan Macaiah, who, even at their young ages are discovering what it means to live into the adventure and challenge of the royal tradition. May they, in time, grow to become men in the way of King David.

Easter, 1999

Abbreviations and Symbols

AB	Anchor Bible
ABL	R.F. Harper, Assyrian and Babylonian Letters
ABRT	J.A. Craig, ed., *Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts*
AEL	M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*
AfO	*Archiv für Oreintforschung*
AHW	W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANET	J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 3rd. ed.
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
AR	D. D. Luckenbill, ed., *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*
ARE	J. H. Breasted, ed., *Ancient Records of Egypt*
ARM	Archives royales de Mari
ArOr	*Archiv orientální*
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*

BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeologist Reader*
BARev	*Biblical Archaeologist Review*
BAS	*Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BDB	F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BE	Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, Series A: Cuneiform Texts
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHS	*Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*
Bib	*Biblica*
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
BiOr	Bibliotheca Orientalis (Leyden)
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
BM	tablets in the collections of the British Museum
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BtM	B.R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur ZAW
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CANE	J. Sasson, ed., *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly—Monograph Series
CBS	tablets in the collections of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament
CRAIBL	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum
CTA	A. Herdner, *Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques*
DDD	K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, P.W. van der Hoorst, eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*
DISO	C.–F. Jean and J. Hoftijzer, *Dictionnaire des inscriptions sémitiques de l'ouest*
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DN	Divine name
DtrH	Deuteronomistic history
DT	tablets in the collections of the British Museum
DTT	*Dansk teologisk tidsskrift*
EA	J.A. Knudtzon, O. Weber, and E. Ebeling, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*
Ebib	Études bibliques
EOAD	Egyptian oracular amuletic decrees
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GCDSS	J. Charlesworth, ed., *Graphic Concordance of the Dead Sea Scrolls*
GN	Geographical name
HALAT	W. Baumgartner, et al., *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*
HAR	Hebrew Annual Review

HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
Hist. Rec.	W.F. Edgerton and J.A. Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramses III*
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HKL	R. Borger, *Handbuch Der Keilschriftliteratur*
HPH	R. Lebrun, *Hymnes et prières hittites*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
Int	*Interpretation*
IrAnt	*Iranica antiqua*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JHNES	Johns Hopkins Near Eastern Studies
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament—Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*

K	tablets in the Kouyunjik collection of the British Museum
KAI	H. Donner and W. Rollig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*
KAR	E. Ebeling, ed., *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*
KRI	K. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions*
KTU^2	*The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hari and other places* (KTU: second enlarged edition)
KUB	Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi
LKA	E. Ebeling and F. Köcher, eds., *Literarische Keilschrift texte aus Assur*
l.p.h.	"May he/she live, be prosperous, and healthy."
LWD	The Last Words of David (2 Sam 23:1b-7)
LXX	'Septuagint' (the majority reading)
LXX^L	Lucianic manuscripts (boc_2e_2)
MIO	*Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung*
MPAIBL	*Mémoires présentés à l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*
MSS	Manuscripts
MT	Masoretic Text (*Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*)
ND	field numbers of tablets excavated at Nimrud (Kalhu)
Ni	tablets excavated at Nippur, in the collections of the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul
NedTTs	*Nederlands theologisch tijdschrift*
NorTT	*Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift*
NT	New Testament
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology

OECT	Oxford editions of cuneiform texts
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OL	Old Latin
Or	*Orientalia* (Rome)
OrNS	*Orientalia Nova Series*
OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	*Oudtestamentische Studiën*
PAE	Papyrus Amherst Egyptian 63
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PN	Personal name
PRU	F.A. Schaeffer, ed., *Le palais royal d'Ugarit*
QD	Quaestiones disputatae
RA	*Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*
RAcc	F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RN	Regnal name
RPss	Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, 144
SAA	*State Archives of Assyria*
SAHG	A. Falkenstein, and W. von Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete*
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLASP	SBL Abstracts and Seminar Papers
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLEJL	SBL Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SBLSP	SBL Seminar Papers

SBLTT	SBL Texts and Translations
SBLWAW	SBL Writings of the Ancient World
SEÅ	*Svensk exegetisk årsbok*
Sem	*Semitica*
Si	field numbers of tablets excavated at Sippar
SKI	W.H.Ph. Römer, *Sumerische 'Königshymnen' der Isin-Zeit*
SKT	H. Winckler, ed., *Sammlung von Keilschrifttexten*
STT II	The Sultantepe tablets II
STVC	E. Chiera, Sumerian Texts of Varied Contents
Syr.	Syriac translation = Peshiṭta
Targ.	Targum
TDOT	G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
TGl	*Theologie und Glaube*
TSSI	J. C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UBL	Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur
UET	Ur Excavations, Texts
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
Urk.	*Urkunden des aegyptischen Altertums*
UT	C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*
VAT	tablets in the collections of the Staatliche Museen, Berlin
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum, Supplements
Vulg.	Vulgate
Wb.	A. Erman and H. Grapow, eds., *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	*Word and World*
YBC	tablets in the Babylonian Collection, Yale University Library
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*
1QIsa[a]	M. Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery*
4Q236	J.T. Milik, "Fragment d'une source du psautier (4 Q Ps 89) et fragments des Jubilés, du Document de Damas, d'un phylachtère dans la grotte 4 de Qumrân"
4QSam[a]	E.C. Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*
11QPs[a]	J.A. Sanders, *Psalm Scroll from Qumran Cave 11 (11QPS[a])*
[ ]	Lacuna
⌜ ⌝	Partial lacuna
< >	Emendation

Introduction

STATE OF THE QUESTION

The ambition of this study is to elucidate, at least in part, the theological contribution made by the royal psalms to ancient Israel's theological-anthropology. To this end, most helpful will be our eventual focus upon the oracular endowments preserved in the royal psalms of the Hebrew Bible.

However, one cannot simply go to the handful of royal psalms that contain divine oracles without first reassessing the nature of the 'royal psalm' itself. This is, in its own right, a complex and multi-faceted task. Although the royal psalms have received substantial scholarly attention, confusion and controversy mark the study of the royal psalms throughout the last century and a half.

The Hebrew Psalter comprises 150 distinct psalms. Of the 150, a handful of psalms, perhaps six percent of the collection, are commonly thought to be the prayers by or for a king of Northern Israel or Judah. The operative word is 'perhaps'. Beginning with scholarly commentary on the psalms in the nineteenth century, controversy has raged over the exact enumeration, if any at all, of the so-called royal psalms.[1] 'Royal psalm' is a scholarly typology, a classification label

[1] Despite G. von Rad's confident assertion that "Basically there is no doubt about their number (Pss. II, XVIII, XX, XXI, XLV, LXXII, LXXXIX, CI, CX, CXXXII)," doubt, or at least competing claims, remain. See G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; New York, Harper & Row, 1962-65) 1.321. For example, M. Dahood would add to von Rad's enumeration Pss 3, 22, 27, 54, 57, 59, 61, 63, 86, 91, 92, 102, 127, 130, 138, 143, 144, and possibly 41. See M. Dahood, *Psalms III:101-150 A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 17A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1984) XXXVIII.

applied by commentators to psalms which laud historical human kingship or feature the reigning monarch as the protagonist. As a designation, 'royal psalm' differs from 'messianic psalm' in that the former betrays the historical contingencies of human kingship whereas the latter presumably evinces the final consummation of the reign of God through his earthly representative.

Recognition of a distinct class of *bona fide* royal psalms is usually credited to Hermann Gunkel.[2] Among modern scholars, Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, and 144:1-11 are customarily considered to be royal psalms. However, when enumerating beyond these eleven, scholarly controversy arises and the picture becomes progressively dense. Presently, not only at stake is the number of psalms that should be considered 'royal', but even their *raison d'être* for inclusion in the Hebrew Psalter, not to mention their function(s) in Northern Israel and/or Judah. Further, as will be shown, the typology of 'royal psalm' is, itself, problematic, since there is no universally accepted definition, although one is often assumed.

These larger issues regarding the entire corpus of royal psalms affect the present investigation of royal oracular endowment at every step. Consequently, in the process of pursuing our main objective, significant attention will be given to these related issues.

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[2] In 1911 H. Gunkel wrote: "In einer früheren Epoche der Psalmenerklärung ist auf diese Königslieder besonder Nachdruck gefallen, weil man sie 'messianisch' verstand; aber von einem großen kommenden Herrscher ist in diesen Psalmen nicht die Rede; der 'König' des Psalms ist der gegenwärtig regierende König. Auch sind diese Königspsalmen viel weniger für Israel eigentümlich, als man wohl glauben mag." See H. Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911) 37-38. But note already, W.M.L. de Wette lists Pss 2, 20, 21, 45, and 110 as royal psalms. See W.M.L. de Wette, *Commentar über die Psalmen* (5th ed.; Heidelberg: J.C.B. Mohr, 1856) 3. H. Hupfeld enumerates Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 110, and 132, and 101 as royal psalms. See H. Hupfeld, *Die Psalmen* (2nd ed., 2 vols.; Gotha: Perthes, 1867) 1.6. J. Olshausen catalogs Pss 2, 20, 21, 28, 61, and 63 as royal psalms. See J. Olshausen, *Die Psalmen* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1853) 31.

THE LONGEVITY OF ROYAL ENDOWMENT

Oracles in the ancient world were normally contextualized within a finite historical-cultural circumstance. The words of hope or judgment delivered from deity to seeker, often the king, were potent in as much as they were specific to affairs at hand. In the biblical texts, however, one encounters a reappropriation of royal oracles that completely severs the language of the oracle from its original historical-cultural circumstance.

A parade example is found in the Book of Hebrews. One thousand years, or so, after the oracles were first delivered from God to kings, the author of Hebrews reappropriated them for his Christ, Jesus of Nazareth:

> Thus, Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest,
> but was appointed by him who said to him,
> *You are my Son*
> *Today I have begotten you*;
> as he says in another place,
> *You are a priest for ever*,
> *after the order of Melchizedek*.[3]

The writer of Hebrews laid claim to two distinct royal oracles preserved in different royal psalms (according to the LXX Pss 2:7 and 109:4) in order to express the identity of his Lord. This bold hermeneutical move immediately raises formidable questions for modern students of the scriptures. What were the original characters and purposes of the oracles themselves? Does the reinterpretation of the oracles violate their original intent; that is, are they misquoted? Was the author of the Book of Hebrews the first to subject these ancient oracles to hermeneutical reappropriation? As this study will uncover, the recontextualization of oracles preserved in the royal psalms not only preceded the composition of the Book of Hebrews, but even the Hebrew Psalter itself. Such is the longevity of royal endowment in the biblical tradition.

The discernment of this cross-textual and diachronic interpretive movement of royal oracles sheds new light on the royal psalms and their pivotal literary and theological function in the scriptures. Moreover, the royal psalms evidence a transmission history that is

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[3] Heb 5:5-6

unique compared to other royal hymns and prayers of the ancient Near East. Their commonality in royal language, but singularity in terms of reappropriation, signals a brilliant and vital interpretive move within the biblical tradition that can no longer be overlooked.

Yet, at the onset, many a modern scholar will decry that royal oracles, even when preserved as 'scripture', are simply the ideological aspirations of bygone power-hungry monarchs. Certainly, there would be some truth to such a derision. Even the most staid among scholars has succumbed to characterizations such as 'bombastic', 'fulsome', 'hyperbolic', and 'prodigious' when referring to the self-adulation of kings and their courts within the ancient Near East. Thus, one must be ever mindful of the ideological environments in which the oracular endowments were conjured, encountered, and preserved. At the same time, equally important for this study is an awareness of the theological context out of which the modern scholar has endeavored to exegete and then appropriate the royal psalms of the Hebrew Psalter. The remainder of this introduction will attempt to bring to critical awareness both interpretive contexts.

HISTORICAL-IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

At the dawn of the historical period, agrarian peoples outside ancient Sumer began to move from their small open villages to the confines of city life. The impetus was danger. "With the beginning of the third millennium b.c.," writes Sumerologist Thorkild Jacobsen, "the ever present fear of famine was no longer the main reminder of the precariousness of the human condition. Sudden death by the sword in wars or raids by bandits joined famine as equally fearsome threats."[4] Not only did farming communities join together and gather in cities for protection, they developed the new institution of 'kingship' to ensure their prosperity and security. "With the new anxiety a new

[4] T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976) 77.

savior-figure had come into being, the ruler: exalted above men, fearsome as a warrior, awesome in the power at his command."[5]

One can trace the development of kingship (that is, human kingship in distinction to Yahweh's kingship) in ancient Israel[6] to the same impetus, though it occurred thousands of years later.[7] Israel's tribal confederacy, which proved effective in the conquest of Canaan, faltered under the mounting threat of the Philistines. The escalating menace of the Philistines prompted the people's demand for kingship (1 Sam 8:20). After significant debate, the elders of Israel obtained their human king.[8] One key issue was the effect human kingship would have on the regency of Israel's god, Yahweh (1 Sam 8:7-8).

The rise of kingship in Israel was not simply the lesser of two evils in the face of the Philistine threat.[9] Several recent studies emphasize burgeoning economic expansion due to agricultural

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[5] Ibid., 79.

[6] Throughout this study, 'Israel' denotes the entire Hebrew people and is sometimes inclusive of the divided kingdoms. In distinction, the designation 'Northern Israel' specifically refers to the kingdom based primarily in Samaria, ruled first by Jeroboam I (ca. 922 BCE) and eventually destroyed by Sargon II (ca. 722/1 BCE).

[7] Note the parallel development between the Israelite judges and Mesopotamian warriors: "The evidence suggests that kingship originally was a temporary office: a king was chosen as leader when war threatened and ceased to exercise authority once the emergency was over. Now, the emergency had become chronic, and the office of king had become permanent because of it, so had his army and the manning and maintenance of the city wall. Gradually, leadership in all major communal undertakings devolved on the king and became united in his person." See T. Jacobsen, *Treasures*, 78.

[8] In the MT the debate is obscured by the redaction of two distinct historical sources: 1 Sam 9:1-10:13 and 1 Sam 8; 10:17-27; 11; 12. See B. Halpern, *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 183-200. Scholarly proposals that ascribe the contents of the second source to the fictional hand of DtrH have been successfully debunked by Halpern.

[9] So F. Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum: Die antiköniglichen Texte des Alten Testaments und der Kampf um den frühen israelitischen Staat* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978) 212.

specialization over a sole military impetus.[10] "The very same socioeconomic forces that essentially gave rise to Israel itself," writes Rodney Hutton, "also eventuated in the rise of Israel's monarchy....Gone are the Philistines as the singular cause of Israel's kingship."[11] Human kingship promised not only protective service, but an organized and expansive future for all of Israel.

To maintain the institution of kingship in any society, both efficacy and ideology are required. On the one hand, kings must maintain persuasive protective power in times of war and in preventing war. Well-trained standing armies and competently executed building projects (city walls, temples, canals, etc.)[12] assure the populace that relinquishing their personal power to the royal office is proper, just, and advantageous. On the other hand, the mythology of kingship, or 'royal ideology', most commonly accessible through iconography and public ritual,[13] could exert unequalled legitimating

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[10] I. Finkelstein, "The Emergence of the Monarchy in Israel: The Environmental and Socio-Economic Aspects," *JSOT* 44 (1989) 34-74; F. S. Frick, *The Formation of the State in Ancient Israel: A Survey of Models and Theories* (Sheffield: Almond, 1985) 26, 180f., and "Social Scientific Methods and Theories of Significance for the Study of the Israelite Monarchy: A Critical Review Essay," *Semeia* 37 (1986) 9-52; R.B. Coote and K.W. Whitelam, "The Emergence of Israel: Social Transformation and State Formation following the Decline in Late Bronze Age Trade," *Semeia* 37 (1986) 125-31, and *The Emergence of Early Israel in Historical Perspective* (Sheffield: Almond, 1987) 139-43.

[11] R. Hutton, *Charisma and Authority in Israelite Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 78.

[12] See J.M. Lundquist, "The Legitimizing Role of the Temple in the Origin of the State," *SBLASP* (1982) 271-97, and "What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Essays in Honor of George E. Mendenhall* (ed. H. Huffmon et al.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 205-19; G.W. Ahlström, *Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982).

[13] See O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (New York: Seabury, 1978) 8-11.

power, especially during the crisis of an usurpation to dynastic throne succession.[14] Effective royal ideology and ritual could overcome the embarrassments of defeat in war and ineffective public administration.

And yet, royal ideology was not simply circumstantial royal propaganda. Effective royal ideology tapped into the mythic consciousness of its people and interpreted historically contingent events within time honored traditions. J.N. Postgate, for example, makes this observation in terms of Mesopotamian royal ideology:

> The ideology of power required constant manipulation as the political scene shifted from the Early Dynastic cities, through the expansion and contraction of territorial states, to the multicultural empires of the first millennium BCE. Nevertheless, the coherence of Mesopotamian civilization is reflected in the way that for two thousand years the rulers perpetuated the ideology of the past, adapting it to their circumstances and purposes, but acknowledging the legitimation conferred by observance of traditions which appeared to go back to the beginning of time.[15]

The significance royal endowment held in relation to the security of the state can hardly be overemphasized. Henri Frankfort properly asserted that "the ancient Near East considered kingship the very basis of civilization."[16] But more essentially, the bedrock of the exercise of kingship was royal ideology.

Caution must be taken, however, in making broad phenomenological observations and generalities. Scholars have become increasingly aware of the intricate differences between the

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[14] See H. Hoffner, "Propaganda and Political Justification in Hittite Historiography," *Unity & Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (JHNES; Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975) 49-62; H. Tadmor, "History and Ideology in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: New horizons in literary, ideological, and historical analysis* (Orientis Antiqui Collectio 17; Rome, Instituto per L'oriente, 1981) 13-33.

[15] J.N. Postgate, "Royal Ideology and State Administration in Sumer and Akkad," *CANE* 1.395.

[16] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Oriental Institute Essay, 2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) 3.

cognate cultures of the ancient Near East, let alone cultures separated by linguistic dissimilarity. Sweeping historical reconstructions based on ill-attested 'patternism' have been abandoned, for the most part, by scholars working within and beyond the purview of the ancient Near East. Modern anthropologists such as David Cannadine are now descriptively cautious:

> Kings who are divine, kings who rule by divine right, and kings who are dignified, are very different things, in very different societies, wielding very different kinds of power, legitimated by very different kinds of ceremonial. Perhaps that is a point which deserves more attention than it usually receives.[17]

With regard to Israel proper, historical particularity remains both the bane and blessing of the scholarly reconstruction of Northern Israelite and Judean royal ideology.

Recent studies have greatly advanced our understanding and reconstruction of Northern Israelite and Judean royal ideology in terms of the mythology and commission of human kingship. Excellent treatments have been made by Tryggve Mettinger[18] and Baruch Halpern.[19] With a more limited focus on royal ritual itself, Keith Whitelam has adeptly illustrated the call to justice as the basic commission of the Israelite monarchy.[20]

To greater and lesser degrees these studies have drawn upon royal ideological images and claims found in the Hebrew Psalter. R. E. Clements' assessment is typical:

> H. Gunkel's classification of a special category of royal psalms led to a considerable re-appraisal of the role of the king in ancient Israel...Whereas the king is scarcely mentioned in the law codes of

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[17] D. Cannadine, "Introduction: Divine Rites of Kings," *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (eds. D. Cannadine and S. Price; London: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 18.

[18] T.N.D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (ConBOT 8; Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1976).

[19] B. Halpern, *The Constitution of the Monarchy in Israel* (HSM 25; Chico: Scholars Press, 1981).

[20] K.W. Whitelam, *The Just King: Monarchical Judicial Authority in Ancient Israel* (JSOTSup 12; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1979).

> the Old Testament, and the historical books contain many very critical accounts of the monarchy as an institution, the royal psalms very consistently describe his office and status in strikingly exalted religious language.[21]

The psalms commonly referred to as the 'royal psalms', or *Königspsalmen*, have been thought by scholars to preserve actual liturgy from the royal propagandistic cult. The royal psalms, then, are a *crux interpretationis* for Israel's faith and worship. At present, and by definition, if a psalm is deemed to contain a royal oracle, it is a royal psalm.

Other alternatives exist. For example, what if the royal psalms represent adaptations of ancient royal liturgies? If so, their reappropriation with revised intent for a new community would be of paramount interest to those who seek to understand the continuing place of 'kingship' in the life of Israel, even after Israel was no longer ruled by its own kings.

A survey of the scholarly literature on the royal psalms proper, however, illustrates that there is no consensus of opinion on the royal psalms.[22] Scholars cannot agree on the date, provenance, relationship to the cult, longevity, or origin of the royal psalms. Scholars cannot even concur as to their number. Moreover, in light of recent dramatic shifts in scholarly psalm interpretation,[23] it becomes clear that a fresh assessment is indispensable.

The above, in outline, is the present state of scholarship regarding the historical-ideological context within which we seek to examine royal oracular endowment. Next, we will identify the theological issues that circumscribe the royal psalms in modern scholarship.

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[21] R.E. Clements, *One Hundred Years of Old Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) 87.

[22] See chapter 1.

[23] Namely, the resurgence of interest among scholars in the final canonical arrangement of the Psalter, as well as intervening editorial processes. In 1989 a special program group of the Society of Biblical Literature was organized for the express purpose of furthering such research. See J. Clinton McCann, Jr., ed., *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Diverse theological appraisals attend the scholarship of the royal psalms. It is often held that pagan royal propaganda was superimposed upon more democratic and theocratic traditions of Israel. For example, in 1975 George Mendenhall scorned the development of human kingship among the Hebrews in his often quoted *Interpretation* article: "...the cultic/political system of Jerusalem during the Monarchy had nothing to do with the Yahwist revolution and was actually completely incompatible with that religious movement."[24] One could hardly voice a stronger claim that kingship was tantamount to apostasy. Although Mendenhall represents the extreme, other scholars have followed his bifurcation of royal ideology from true Yahwism. More recently this view has been articulated by Rainer Albertz in his historical survey of Hebrew religion.

> The depth and consequences for Yahweh religion of the change represented by the kingship theology sketched out here can hardly be overestimated. *Here a theology invaded the official religion of Israel*, with all the backing of state support, *which not only had completely different roots but also ran quite counter to what had constituted Yahweh religion from its beginnings*....The theology propagated by the court theologians attempted to make the king a comprehensive guarantor of salvation for Israel. According to its understanding, the king of Israel mediated not only Yahweh's political and historical action in the world of nations and his action of blessing in nature and society, but also his proximity in worship; in other words, in this view all the essential aspects of the relationship between the wider group and God, creaturely, political and cultic, run through the king and find their unity in his person. But what would then become of the immediate relationship between Yahweh and Israel which had grown up in history before

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[24] G.E. Mendenhall, "The Monarchy," *Int* 29 (1975) 166. See also *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1973) 195f. and A. Alts' earlier treatment, "The Monarchy in the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah," *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989) 241-259.

> the formation of the state? *Originally the kingship theology was completely alien to this history* (italics mine).[25]

Such overly pessimistic historical appraisals continue to influence the discipline of modern biblical theology. The proponents of the 'polarities-and-tensions' biblical theology movement, at best, view royal theology and Yahwistic faith as authentic bipolar voices within the biblical tradition.[26] Others consider the royal theology of Jerusalem to be an idolatrous departure from the true biblical faith.[27]

Within the full view of scripture, such negative assessments of royal ideology are short sighted. This has been forcefully stated by J.J.M. Roberts:

> ...the implications of such a stance are profound, because many of what have been taken to be central biblical themes owe their existence or their peculiar biblical shape to the imperial theology first developed in the Davidic-Solomonic court and then transmitted and elaborated in the royal cult of the subsequent Judean court.[28]

In view of New Testament claims that Jesus was the Davidic Messiah, one wonders at what point royal theology, foundational for biblical

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[25] R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (OTL; 2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994) 1.121-22.

[26] P.D. Hanson, *Dynamic Transcendence: The Correlation of Confessional Heritage and Contemporary Experience in a Biblical Model of Divine Activity* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986) 102f. See also J.D. Levenson's lengthy critique of the polarization of the Mosaic and Davidic covenants in *Sinai & Zion: An Entry Into the Jewish Bible* (New Voices in Biblical Studies; New York: Winston, 1985) 99-101.

[27] W. Brueggemann, *Israel's Praise: Doxology Against Idolatry and Ideology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 104f, and *To Pluck Up and To Tear Down* (International Theological Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 5-7. For a more balanced assessment see "The Epistemological Crisis of Israel's Two Histories (Jer 9:22-23)," *Old Testament Theology: Essays on Structure, Theme, and Text* (ed. P.D. Miller, Jr.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 270-295, and "Duty as Delight and Desire (Preaching Obedience That Is Not Legalism)," *Journal for Preachers* 18.1 (1994) 3.

[28] J.J.M. Roberts, "In Defense of the Monarchy," *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (eds. P.D. Miller, Jr., P.D. Hanson, and S.D. McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 377-378.

messianism,[29] was delivered of its idolatrous connotations. Or, is one to conclude that biblical messianism itself is a paganization of authentic Yahwism?

Contrary to the historical/theological assessments of Mendenhall and Albertz, Hans–Joachim Kraus finds deep continuities between the Jerusalem royal house and the older Yahwistic traditions.

> The kings in Jerusalem (Ps. 144:10) are the "seed," the descendants of David, and therefore the heirs of the promise given through Nathan (2 Samuel 7), which promised David and his family an everlasting kingdom. In order to carry out this promise, Yahweh chose David and, as later expressions put it, established a "covenant" with David and his descendants. *That is how deeply the kingdom of Jerusalem is anchored in the history of Israel, and therefore in the mighty deeds of Yahweh!* Here any mythological exaggeration or generalization in phenomenological terms is excluded (italics mine).[30]

Kraus stresses that foreign concepts, such as the adoption of the king by God, have "been brought under the influence of the theology of divine choice and thus have been 'demythologized.'"[31] While fostering a different position *vis-à-vis* the role of the king in Israel's worship, Ivan Engnell iterates a similar position with regard to the relationship between human kingship and radical Yahwism:

> As a matter of fact, Israel took over the sacral kingship and all that pertains to it from Canaan. In process of time, the typical traditional Yahwistic exclusivism has only strengthened the trend which it set.[32]

Roberts, likewise, questions whether the presence of foreign borrowings *ipso facto* indicates a move away from authentic Yahwism.

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[29] See J.J.M. Roberts, "The Old Testament's Contribution to Messianic Expectations," *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (eds. J.H. Charlesworth, J. Brownson, M.T. Davis, S.J. Kraftchick, and A.F. Segal; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 2-51.

[30] H.–J. Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986) 109-110.

[31] Ibid.

[32] I. Engnell, "The Book of Psalms," *Critical Essays on the Old Testament* (ed. J.T. Willis; London: S.P.C.K., 1970) 109.

> ...despite these borrowings, it is not at all clear whether one is justified in characterizing the monarchy as alien to the essence of Yahwism. As far as one is able to judge, given the nature of the sources, Yahwism has always been characterized by the adaptation of elements from its surroundings.[33]

In the view of many scholars, authentic Yahwism continually adapted and interpreted (if not demythologized) contiguous theologies and structures of Israel's environs.[34]

In discussions of the royal psalms themselves there is support for both sides of the aforementioned theological debate. On the one hand, J. Alberto Soggin assesses the royal psalms as evidence of the syncretism of the state.

> In succession a series of Canaanite elements will have been incorporated into the religion of Israel by means of the state cult: the royal ideology, including among other things the divine promise that the dynasty would last forever (II Sam.7.15; Ps.2.7; 110.4; Isa. 9.6f. and other passages). In Israel, too, the king was thus presented as the 'adopted son' of the deity, a feature well attested in Ugarit (*CTA* 15, II.25-27; 16.10f.), but unknown in Israel on the secular level; adoption evidently brought the monarch close to the divine sphere (cf. Ps.45.7, where the cantor addresses to the king the invocation 'O God', or I Kings 21.11-14, where anyone who blasphemes 'God and the King' is said to deserve death). *This is an approach which is not mentioned in any of the collections of laws in the Hebrew Bible and there is evidence of it only in Isa.8.21 as a sign of desperation* (italics mine).[35]

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[33] Roberts, "In Defense of the Monarchy," 379.

[34] It is important to note that while these three scholars (Engnell, Kraus, and Roberts) fundamentally disagree on the particular historical manifestation and significance of human kingship in Northern Israel and Judah, all three lift up its essential role in the expression of authentic Yahwistic faith.

[35] J.A. Soggin, *A History of Ancient Israel: From the Beginnings to the Bar Kochba Revolt A.D. 135* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 67. Soggin, however, would not argue that royal ideology contaminated an originally 'pure' and 'orthodox' Yahwism with Canaanite elements. Instead, he asserts that after the advent of human kingship in Israel, "increasingly influential groups, led by the prophets, struggled down the centuries to impose on the religion of Israel absolute monotheistic forms of faith of a very high spiritual level; and these struggles were crystallized in the religious reforms first of Hezekiah and then of Josiah," Ibid., 68.

On the other hand, Mettinger, while admitting the presence of 'court style' (*Hofstil*),[36] is careful not to dismiss the royal psalms' content as mere borrowings:

> ...in the cases of borrowing there is always the possibility that formulae and expressions, the original significance of which had fallen into oblivion, were used in a new setting and *were filled with a new content that was considered to be compatible with the Yahwistic faith*....Thus, it seems commendable to distinguish here between style and contents and denote the former as court style and the latter as royal ideology (italics mine).[37]

With either approach, one's definition and distillation of the 'Yahwistic faith' largely determines the results. Of pivotal importance to the whole question is the historical development of Yahweh's own kingship, for it is here that the constructual lines which separate 'Yahwistic' from 'royal' grow unintelligibly faint.[38]

One could, and perhaps should, raise the question whether it is even possible to distinguish 'royal' ideology from Yahwistic faith, since all of the royal material is included in the Yahwistic canon. The most recent approach of several scholars has been to shift the locus of investigation from the royal psalms' initial composition and historical-cultic usage to their canonical form and function. The commentary of James Luther Mays is representative:

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[36] Mettinger correctly traces this observation to H. Greßmann, *Der Messias* (FRLANT 43; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1929) 7. However, this was already developed by Greßmann in his earlier work which held much influence upon H. Gunkel. See H. Greßmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatology* (FRLANT 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1905) 250-51.

[37] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 103-104. Note also G. von Rad's appraisal: "To begin with early Jahwism had no terms at its command adequate to express what a divinely legitimated monarchy meant—the institution was of too recent origin. This gap was filled up by the courtly style of the ancient East. We should therefore look upon that style as a vessel into which Jahwism flowed, and in which it attained a completely new expression of itself." *Old Testament Theology,* 1.319 n. 1.

[38] See especially M.Z. Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (JSOTSup 76; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

> In their transmission and shaping and collection as items in the book of Psalms, [the royal psalms], with all the other poetry of the Psalms, "ascended" into another genre. They became scripture, texts whose hermeneutical context is the literary scope of the book in which they stand and the other books of Israel's scriptures.[39]

As will be established through this investigation, the peculiar nature of the biblical royal psalms, in distinction to other royal hymns and prayers in the ancient Near East, circumscribes their *raison d'être* in the Psalter.

While recognizing the validity of canonical context, the expectation remains that there would be deep continuities and coherence between messianic expectations, historical kingship, and Yahwistic faith. That is, unless biblical messianism was primarily a literary product derived solely from a fixed canon. Rather, it would seem that the reverse was true: the biblical canon reflects the faith of the intergenerational community developed out of complicated processes eventually producing confluence between historical experience, tradition, and written text.

Finally, fundamental to the ongoing theological debate is the assessment of the cultic nature of the so-called 'royal psalms'. Since these texts are customarily considered to be cultic and liturgical, and hence, integrally tied to worship,[40] they are thought to provide a clear view of the ongoing and typical worship in preexilic Israel. This assumption is, by no means, warranted.

Where a given scholar stands within the theological debate described above is significantly influenced by his or her understanding of the royal psalms and the royal cult. Unfortunately, many theological arguments that have been made in the last century have been largely based on conjecture and misunderstandings of the royal psalms and their generative contexts.

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[39] J.L. Mays, *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994) 100.

[40] That is, after the publication of S. Mowinckel's *Psalmenstudien*. See discussion of S. Mowinckel below.

SCOPE AND AIM OF THE STUDY

This study is the first to argue that *the essential* exegetical clue for interpreting royal oracles is the intentional suppression of personal and regnal names in the biblical royal psalms. In fact, this relatively simple, and yet, startling observation calls into question the purpose of the canonical attestations of the royal psalms.

Hoping to inform the larger historical and theological debates detailed above, this study will tackle some of the acute problems of the royal psalms. What is a royal psalm? How many psalms are royal? In what ways are the royal psalms related? Why were they included in the Psalter? Do they faithfully represent what might be termed a unified royal theology?

Chapter 1 outlines the major shifts in the interpretation of the royal psalms over the last 150 years. This survey identifies changing hermeneutical assumptions, particularly with regard to the proper interpretive context for the royal psalms. It will be demonstrated that the impasse of scholarly consensus has been largely *definitional*.

Chapter 2 focuses on characteristics of the royal psalms compared with the royal hymns and prayers of contiguous peoples of the ancient Near East. In particular, this chapter underscores how the biblical royal psalms stand apart from other royal hymns and prayers from the ancient Near East in their persistent omission of personal and regnal names. This observation becomes an important clue for understanding the nature of the royal psalms, and an essential corrective to previous scholarship. Subsequently, chapter 2 revisits the assumption that the royal psalms were reused liturgically by successive kings in Israel. Ever since the work of Sigmund Mowinckel, the liturgical nature of the royal psalms has been largely taken for granted. Based on new findings, a revised definition for a 'royal psalm' is proposed.

Chapter 3 seeks to elucidate the pre-canonical relatedness of the royal psalms. The theory that the royal psalms were previously gathered as a subgrouping of the Psalter is tested and shown to be unlikely. In turn, questions of editorial rationale for a particular royal psalm's inclusion in the Psalter are scrutinized. Lastly, the non-oracular royal psalms are described briefly in terms of their possible pre-histories in royal court circles.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed examination of the royal oracles preserved in the Hebrew Psalter. Significant attention is given to reconstructing the original form of a given oracle as well as placing its language and motif(s) in the wider ideological/mythological environment of the ancient Near East. At the same time, the examination of the royal oracles seeks to discern supplemental interpretive and exegetical strategies that contributed to a particular oracle's longevity in the traditions leading to the Restoration. Beyond the oracular royal psalms, an analysis of two ancient Israelite royal oracular texts preserved outside the Psalter (Isa 8:23-9:6, and 2 Sam 23:1b-7) confirms the work's thesis. A third oracular text (Ps 91), when compared to Egyptian oracular amuletic decrees, powerfully demonstrates the democratization of royal oracular language, providing an extraordinary perspective as to how the 'court style' of the royal psalms could have been meaningfully reappropriated by common folk.

In conclusion, a brief summary provides an assessment of the oracular royal psalms in terms of their contribution to Yahwistic faith, particularly in view of Israel's theological-anthropology. This assessment makes clear that the complex transmission and tradition histories of the royal psalms disprove the previously accepted scholarly stance that the royal psalms and their oracles are mere ideological trappings of the royal court, and as such, bear meager theological freight.

Chapter 1

SELECTED REVIEW OF SCHOLARLY POSITIONS

LIMITS OF THE REVIEW

Given the variance of scholarly opinion, it is necessary to begin with a selected review of the major scholarly perspectives on the so-called 'royal psalms'.[1] For clarity of presentation, the following review has been organized for the most part along chronological lines—noting, where possible, historical development, engagement, and synthesis.[2]

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[1] Other reviews are available, including an entire doctoral dissertation. See S. Patro, "Royal Psalms in Modern Scholarship," Ph.D. diss., Universität Kiel, 1976, under the direction of W. Schmidt and K. Seybold. Additionally, the introductory surveys of K.–H. Bernhardt, *Das Problem der altorientalsichen Königsideologie im Alten Testament: unter besonderer Burücksichtigung der Geschichte der Psalmenexegese dargestellt und kritisch gewürdigt* (VTSup 8; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1961) 1-66, and J.H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (The Biblical Seminar 3, 2nd ed.; Sheffield: JSOT, 1986) 1-26, are particularly incisive.

[2] Little attention will be given to the history of scholarly commentary on particular psalms; however, Patro provides an extensive bibliography of commentaries (beginning with Reuchlin's 1512 Latin expositions), related works, and specific treatments of Pss 2, 45, 89, and 110. It goes without saying that it would be impossible and hardly desirable to survey the entire literature. The number and breadth of scholarly investigations of the Psalter is staggering. For an enumeration of bibliographical surveys, see B. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 504f.

While some scholarly investigations have focused exclusively on the royal psalms,[3] the more tenacious and persuasive perspectives on the royal psalms have risen from broader commentary or even initially distinct investigations that, by extension and/or inference, contributed to the scholarly perspectives on Israel's royal psalmody. The first comprehensive treatment of the subject was published by Hermann Gunkel in 1914. Accordingly, this review begins with the state of scholarshi directly prior to Gunkel's watershed publication.

DESCRIPTIVE AND FORMAL IDENTIFICATION OF ROYAL PSALMS

INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALMS WITHIN THEIR HISTORICAL PERIODS OF ORIGIN

Prior to the nineteenth century, psalms that would later come to be termed *Königspsalmen* were either considered to be 'royal' by virtue of an assumed Davidic authorship (based on the superscription לְדָוִד), or 'messianic' because their exalted royal metaphor was thought to refer to the eschatological messiah, or both. In fact, the majority of the Psalter was interpreted in light of one of these two categories. Messianic interpretations were particularly common for Pss 2, 45, 72, and 110.

Wilhelm de Wette challenged the messianic interpretation of many psalms in his commentary published in 1811. Well aware of the traditional messianic exegesis purveyed by church and synagogue, de Wette argued that Pss 2, 20, 21, 45, 72, and 110 were composed neither by David nor for the coming messiah, but instead for a histori-

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[3] H. Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," *Preußische Jährbucher* 158 (1914) 42-68; S. Mowinckel, *Kongesalmern i Det gamle testamente* (Kristiania: H. Aschehoug [W. Nygaard], 1916); K.R. Crim, *The Royal Psalms* (Richmond: John Knox, 1962); Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*; O. Loretz, *Die Königspsalmen: Die altorientalisch-kanaanäische Königstradition in jüdischer Sicht* (UBL 6; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1988); S. Wagner, "Das Reich des Messias: Zur Theologie der alttestamentlichen Kounigspsalmen," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 109 (1984) 867-874.

cal king of Northern Israel or Judah.[4] Simply put, messianic interpretations were no longer valid in light of historical-critical investigation.[5] Rather, Pss 2, 20, 21, 45, 72, and 110 were royal psalms composed for actual historical kings.[6] Thus, in the fifth edition (1856) of his commentary, de Wette writes with regard to Ps 2:

> Nach jenen sollte er die Völker erst besiegen und unterjochen, hier aber wollten schon unterjochte Völker sich gegen ihn empören und sich frei machen; nach diesen ist der Messias kein Völkerbezwinger, den eisernen Scepter führend, "sein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt." Man nimmt freilich für die messianische Erklärung des Psalms den Standpunkt in der Zeit, wo der Messias schon erschienen ist.[7]

At the same time, de Wette recognized a later messianic reinterpretation of the psalms in the NT. Psalms 2, 20, 21, 45, 72, and 110 were not intentionally composed for the eschatological messiah, but were secondarily reread in view of messianic expectations.[8]

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[4] W.M.L. de Wette, *Commentar über die Psalmen* (Heidelberg: J.C.B. Mohr, 1811) 4.

[5] "...können wir nach den Grundsätzen der historisch-kritischen Auslegung nicht billigen," Ibid., 8.

[6] According to de Wette, they comprised one of six general types of psalms found in the Psalter. In his introduction de Wette enumerates six classifications: 1) Hymns, 2) National Psalms, 3) Zion and Temple Psalms, 4) Royal Psalms, 5) Laments, and 6) Religious and Moral Psalms. Significantly, these classifications were based strictly on content rather than form. Ibid., 4-5.

[7] De Wette, *Commentar* (1856) 8-9.

[8] De Wette makes this clear in his commentary on Ps 2: "...überhaupt findet die messianische Idee darum in den Psalmen schwerlich eine Stelle, weil sie ihrer Natur nach den prophetischen Tröstungen und Verheissungen angehört, und, erst im Aufschwunge der Begeisterung gefasst, nicht schon (ausser bei den Späteren) als gegeben angeschaut wird. Das letztere wäre aber in den angeblich messianischen Psalmen, so auch in diesem, der Fall; der Messias und Alles, was seine Erscheinung bedingt, wäre gleichsam als vorhanden gedacht. —Freilich gilt Alles, was von einem israelitischen Könige seiner Bestimmung nach gesagt wird, auch vom Messias; und was vom jüdischen Messias gilt, das lässt sich der Idee nach auch auf Christus anwenden: mithin lässt sich der Gebrauch, den das N.T. von diesem Psalm macht, rechtfertigen, aber nicht als einige wesentliche Auslegung, wovon hier allein die Rede ist." Ibid., 9.

Having applied the label 'royal psalms' to a grouping of psalms, an entity (even if only organizational) was created. But what exactly constituted a royal psalm? Defined negatively, royal psalms were neither originally composed with messianic intent, nor were they necessarily written by King David. But how were they to be defined positively?

In comparison to other scholars, de Wette was restrictive in his classification of royal psalms. Notably, he did not consider Pss 18, 89, 101, and 144 royal psalms. De Wette thought Ps 18 to be a thanksgiving psalm of King David and dated it to his last days based upon its parallel in 2 Sam 22.[9] Likewise, he judged Ps 89 to be a thanksgiving psalm, but ascribed it to a descendant of David.[10] Regarding Pss 101 and 144, de Wette understood the protagonist to be an unspecified king (although de Wette suggested that the protagonist of Ps 144 may be a military leader).[11] None of these were considered to be royal psalms, despite the fact that in each case de Wette thought the psalm to be the *ipsissima verba* of a historical king of Northern Israel or Judah. Instead, royal psalms, according to de Wette's classification, celebrated the 'office' of kingship itself.

In contrast to de Wette, Hermann Hupfeld extended his classification of royal psalms to include Pss 18, 89, and 101.[12] For Hupfeld, a royal psalm was either addressed to the king *or* spoken by the king. In either case, the *function* of the psalm was to promote human kingship. Hence, such psalms should, in Hupfeld's view, be considered royal psalms.

The difference between de Wette's enumeration of royal psalms and Hupfeld's enumeration of royal psalms is *definitional*. The key issue is what does the 'royal psalm' label signify. Psalms written by kings? Psalms written for kings? Psalms written to promote individual kings? Psalms written to espouse the populace with the ideologies of kingship? The dilemma of what criteria constitute a royal psalm, observable through a comparison of de Wette and Hupfeld, remains a *crux interpretationis* to this present day.

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[9] De Wette, *Commentar* (1811) 205f.
[10] Ibid., 434.
[11] Ibid., 449, 527.
[12] Hupfeld, *Psalmen*, 6.

The nineteenth century scholarly dialogue attendant to the royal psalms, already lacking consensus regarding the constituent elements of a royal psalm, was inevitably fragmented even more under the relentless push for the historical placement of individual psalms. Throughout the nineteenth century scholars sought to interpret the psalms within their historical period of origin, or *Zeitgeschichte*, believing the exact historical fixation of individual psalms was fundamental and necessary to exegesis.

In 1886, Heinrich Ewald argued that Pss 18, 101, 110, and 144:12-15 could be traced to David; Pss 20, 21, 45, and 72 should be assigned to the period of the divided monarchy; and Pss 89 and 132 sprung from the postexilic restoration.[13] At the end of the nineteenth century, though working by the same principles of exegesis seeking to interpret the psalms within their historical period of origin, Bernhard Duhm construed a dating stratification in striking contrast to that of Ewald. According to Duhm, Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 132, and 144 were all composed for Hasmonean kings![14] Similarly, Pss 101 and 110 were composed for Hasmonean high priests.[15]

As one might expect, the results of concurrent studies by a range of scholars produced a set of various and contradictory conclusions regarding the enumeration of royal psalms as well as the

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[13] Ewald found the interpretation of the psalms by historical period so compelling that in his 1866 commentary he reorganized the Psalter by relative date of composition: 1) Songs from David and from his period; 2) Songs from the division of the Davidic monarchy until its end; 3) Songs from the exile and the destruction of the monarchy; 4) Songs from the Restoration of Jerusalem; and 5) Last songs. See H. Ewald, *Die Psalmen und die Klaglieder* (3rd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1866).

[14] B. Duhm, *Die Psalmen* (Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum alten Testament 14; Freiburg: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1899) xx-xxi.

[15] Other scholars representative of the "Wellhausen school" expressed equal doubt regarding preexilic compositions of the royal psalms. See F. Hitzig, *Die Psalmen* (Leipzig: C.F. Winter, 1863), J. Olshausen, *Die Psalmen* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1853), and F. Baethgen, *Die Psalmen* (HKAT 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1904).

exegesis of particular psalms.[16] Rather straightforwardly, a number of scholars dated individual royal psalms to the reigns and circumstances of historical kings of Northern Israel and Judah.[17] Others argued that the royal psalms were so incongruous from Israel's historical experience that they must refer to foreign monarchs.[18] As already noted, a Maccabean context in the late first century BCE when the high priests assumed the title of 'king' was frequently proposed.[19] Still others were persuaded that the psalms were pseudepigrapha glorifying King David.[20]

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[16] Discrepancies between the members of the total set ranged widely even in the late 1800's and early 1900's. For example, T.K. Cheyne's 1904 commentary recognizes a (by then) 'traditional' enumeration of fourteen royal psalms (Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 28, 45, 61, 63, 72, 84, 89, 101, 110, and 132), though he considers only Pss 45, 72, and 101 to be 'royal psalms'. See T.K. Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms: translated from a revised text with notes and introduction*, (2nd ed.; New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1904) xxxiv.

[17] For example, Ps 2 was traced to Solomon (Ewald, *Psalmen*, 74-75), Uzziah (E. Meier, *Geschichte der poetischen National-Literature der Hebräer* [Leipzig: Engelmann, 1856] 358f.), Hezekiah (J. Maurer, *Commentarius Grammaticus Historicus Criticus in Vetus Testamentum* [Lipsiae: Fridericus Volckmar, 1835-1847] 3.2-3), and Alexander Jannaeus (Hitzig, *Psalmen*,7; Baethgen, *Psalmen*, 3-4; Olshausen, *Psalmen*, 39); Ps 45 was traced to Solomon (Hupfeld, *Psalmen*, 2.413-415), Ahab (Hitzig, *Psalmen*, 1.247), Jehoram (F. Delitzsch, *The Psalms* [orig. *Die Psalmen* 1867; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871] 2.74), Jehu (C.A. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms* [ICC, 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906-1907] 1.383), and Jeroboam II (Ewald, *Psalmen*, 91-92).

[18] Regarding Ps 45, see J. Wellhausen, *The Psalms* (London: J. Clarke, 1898) 183. Regarding Ps 72, Hitzig suggested it was composed for Ptolemy Philadelphus. See Hitzig, *Psalmen*, 114). For a similar assessment, see Baethgen, *Psalmen*, 222, Olshausen, *Psalmen*, 305, and T.K. Cheyne, *The Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter in Light of Old Testament Criticism and the History of Religions* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1891) 144ff, 155. However, note Cheyne's later reconsideration in *The Book of Psalms* (1904), 1.310.

[19] In this respect, Hitzig's commentary was foundational. Dating all of the psalms comprising the latter three books of the Psalter to the Maccabean period, as well as many psalms in the first two books of the Psalter, Hitzig assigned Pss 101 and 110 to Maccabean priest-kings. See Hitzig, *Psalmen*, 268f, 318f. Duhm went even further attributing Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 61, 63, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, and 144 (among others) to John Hycranus, Aristobolus I (Jehuda/Judas), and Alexander Jannaeus. See Duhm, *Psalmen*.

[20] For Ps 132 see Hitzig, *Psalmen*, 389ff; for Ps 144 see Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, 3.379ff; for Ps 18 see Wellhausen, *The Psalms*, 170.

Dissatisfied in their search for historical specificity, scholars retreated from postulations of individual referents for the royal protagonist and posited mythic or collective interpretations. Turning full circle and assuming a prophetic origin, some scholars assumed an original messianic referent.[21] A slightly modified position, while also assuming a prophetic (or priestly) origin, was held by commentators who understood the royal referent to be a personification of the citizens of Israel, the true king.[22]

Anything but a consensus was emerging. To complicate matters further, the nineteenth century produced not only conflicting results among scholars, but disparate and inconsistent results within a single scholar's work. Exasperated, Gunkel complained about Julius Wellhausen's seemingly random and spurious determinations:

> Um die Verwirrung noch zu erhöhen, werden nicht selten von denselben Gelehrten die verschiedensten Deutungen bei verschiedenen Psalmen vertreten. So sei, nur um die Lage der Forschung zu kennzeichnen, hier darauf hingewiesen, daß nach Wellhausen der König in Ps. 2. 20. 21. 101 eine Personifikation Israels, in Ps. 45. 72 dagegen ein heidnischer Herrscher und in Ps. 110 ein makkabäischer Fürst sein soll, während derselbe Gelehrte Ps. 18 für ein Gedicht auf David hält.[23]

The same criticism could have been leveled at Ferdinand Hitzig's work (as well as that of many other scholars) that in large part contributed to Wellhausen's schema. Hitzig attributed Pss 2 and 144 to

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[21] T.K. Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms or Praises of Israel: A New Translation with Commentary* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co., 1888) 4, regarding Ps 2, 199 regarding Ps 72, but *Cf.* 301 (Ps 110). See also Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 1.11ff regarding Ps 2, 2.373ff regarding Ps 110, 2.467ff regarding Ps 132, and F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3.184f regarding Ps 110. Note also E. Böhl, *Zwölf Messianische Psalmen* (Basel: Bahnmaier [C. Detloff], 1862), and L. Reinke, *Die Messianischen Psalmen: Einleitung Grundtext und Übersetzung nebst einem philologisch-kritischen und historischen Commentar* (2 vols; Giessen: Ferber [Emil Roth], 1857).

[22] For example, Baethgen adopts this view regarding Pss 101 and 144. See Baethgen, *Psalmen*, 301f., and 422f. Earlier, Hitzig had suggested a similar interpretation for Ps 89. See Hitzig, *Psalmen*, 222f. Note also Wellhausen's comments on Ps 2. See Wellhausen, *The Psalms*, 64.

[23] Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 42-43.

Alexander Jannaeus,[24] Pss 101 and 110 to Maccabean priest-kings,[25] Ps 72 to Ptolemy Philadelphus,[26] Pss 20 and 21 to Uzziah,[27] Ps 45 to Ahab,[28] Ps 18 to David,[29] and he considered the protagonist in Ps 89 to be a personification of the nation itself.[30]

Whereas Wellhausen and Hitzig could have been accurate in their dating stratifications, that is, there is no *a priori* reason that the royal psalms had to exhibit historical, cultural, or compositional coherence, the method of categorization and dating was itself far from persuasive. The psalms in question eluded exegetical probes seeking historical periods of origin. The royal psalms, it seemed, were unwilling to surrender their specific histories. And yet another, even greater, question loomed. To what additional purpose might the royal psalms have been used subsequent to their historically elusive debut? In other words, why were they preserved by the community of faith?

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century it became increasingly evident that the greatest hindrance in the interpretation of the royal psalms (apart from, but related to, their identification) was one of context. Since the royal psalms comprised such a small percentage of the Psalter, a scholar was forced to make working assumptions regarding their larger interpretive context.

For example, scholars who interpreted the psalms messianically were influenced by the New Testament's use of particular royal psalms or rabbinical tradition. Commentators who decreed the protagonist of the royal psalms to be a personification of the community of Israel were influenced by a relentlessly negative view of human kingship found in the exilic prophets. Those who postulated a late first century BCE origin were influenced by the Wellhausen school of exegesis. Scholars who dated the royal psalms to the reign of a historical Israelite or Judean king worked from superscriptions

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[24] Hitzig, *Psalmen*, 1.7f., 2.439.
[25] Ibid., 2.268f, 2.318ff.
[26] Ibid., 2.114.
[27] Ibid., 1.121f.
[28] Ibid., 1.247.
[29] Ibid., 1.95f.
[30] Ibid., 2.222f.

and catchwords shared between royal psalms and one or more of the historical books of the MT.

The nineteenth century's exegesis of the so-called 'royal psalms' was far more successful at raising questions and problems than contributing solutions and building consensus. Even by mid-century, the insistence upon interpreting the psalms within their historical period of origin began to wane. In the fifth edition of de Wette's commentary (published in 1856), consistent with the aims of *Zeitgeschichte*, the question, "who is the king?" is asked in the process of exegeting each royal psalm. De Wette carefully rehearses various scholarly proposals. However, rarely does he settle on a specific historical context. Rather, de Wette seems content to leave the question of historical rootedness open. One can attribute, at least in part, de Wette's freedom to set aside a stringent pursuit of the psalms' historical origins and contexts to his interest in a broader classification of the psalms' subject matter and character. Proleptically, de Wette sensed a new exegetical pathway along formal rather than historical lines.

Although many scholars remained entrenched in exegesis of the psalms by historical origin well into the twentieth century,[31] it became increasingly clear that a new broad and compelling context in which to interpret the royal psalms was needed. The breakthrough came from epigraphic discoveries from Israel's surrounding environs and the pioneering form-critical work of Hermann Gunkel.

HERMANN GUNKEL AND GATTUNGSGESCHICHTE

Though nineteenth-century scholars delineated various corpora of royal psalms as a by-product of their commentaries on the Psalter, the first comprehensive treatment of the royal psalms was published in 1914 by Gunkel.[32] Gunkel placed the royal psalms contextually within their larger ancient Near Eastern environment. Herein lies his most significant achievement regarding the royal psalms.

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[31] For example, E. König, *Die Psalmen* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1927) 453-505.

[32] Accordingly, the opening line of his article reads: "Es gibt in der biblischen Sammlung der Psalmen eine Reihe von Liedern, gewöhnlich 'Königspsalmen' genannt." See Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 42.

While including a total of nine psalms under the designation 'royal psalms' (Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132),[33] Gunkel made three basic arguments. First, Gunkel argued for the most simple and straightforward interpretation for the royal referents in the psalms. It made little sense to suppose that the king in question was a foreign monarch, since many of the psalms contained specific Yahwistic language. Psalms 45:8 and 72:1 claim that the king's god is none other than Yahweh.[34] This could only be meaningfully said of a Hebrew sovereign. Additionally, the royal psalms assume the king's oversight of Yahweh's people and a royal residence on Mount Zion.[35] Again, these things could only apply intelligibly to an Israelite monarch. The reference to Davidic lineage in Pss 18:51 and 132:17 presents unsurmountable obstacles to an ascription of these psalms to any foreign king. Gunkel's drive for simplicity dismissed, as well, collectivist interpretations that understood מַלְכְּךָ and מָשִׁיחַ to be personifications of the community of Israel. Such interpretations had to be rejected because "Israel kann nimmermehr 'Jahves König' heißen, vielmehr ist Jahve 'Israels König'; nur der Herrscher Israels wird 'Jahves König' genannt."[36]

Second, Gunkel disputed exilic and postexilic datings of the royal psalms by demonstrating that the psalms in question were not composed for a future messianic figure nor for any Maccabean priest or king. Psalms such as 20 and 21, where intercessions on behalf of

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[33] Later, in his posthumously published comprehensive introduction to the Psalter, Gunkel judged Pss 89:47-52 and 144:1-11 to be royal. See H. Gunkel and J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen* (HKAT supplement; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926) 140f.

[34] Gunkel translates Ps 72:1a either as "'Jahve', 'dein Gericht' gib dem König" or as "'Jahve', deine Rechtssprüch verleihe dem König." See Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 43, and *Die Psalmen* (HKAT 2/2; 5th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968; orig. 1929) 304. Being part of the "elohistic psalter," the MT attests אֱלֹהִים. Gunkel, without comment, follows the convention of the retroversion of אֱלֹהִים to יהוה, observable already in Duhm, *Psalmen*, 122, F. Delitzsch, *Symbolæ ad Psalmos illustrandos isagogice* (Lipsiae: Tauchnitium, 1846), and Ewald, *Psalmen*.

[35] See Pss 2:6; 20:3; 110:2; 132:13; and 101:8 where עִיר יהוה is synonymous for Zion.

[36] Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 47.

the king dominate, would be inappropriate for an eschatological Messiah who had yet to materialize on earth.[37] In addition, psalms containing oracular pronouncements regarding a king's immediate historical predicament, such as Pss 2 and 110, could hardly refer to the future Messiah.[38] In fact, the presence of oracles in some of the royal psalms was ground enough to exclude compositional postulations for the Maccabean period. Gunkel assumed that divine communication through the medium of oracle had ceased entirely, or at least in plebeian perception, based upon 1 Macc 4:46, 9:27, 14:41. Even more, it was inconceivable to Gunkel that 'monsters' (*Scheusale*)[39] such as the Maccabean rulers would be glorified by the editors and compilers of the Psalter.

Gunkel also countered the claim, accepted by proponents of the Wellhausen school, that prophecy preceded psalmody, that is, that "ohne Jeremia wären die Psalmen nicht geschrieben."[40] Gunkel referenced the antiquity of psalmody in Egypt and Mesopotamia as well as the historical priority (and hence, assumed influence) of Hebrew psalmody over the writings of the biblical prophets.

> Da sehen wir z. B., daß das älteste uns bezeugte israelitische Gedicht, das Lied der Miriam, im Stil der Hymnen gehalten ist, daß sich auch schon bei den ältesten Propheten Einwirkung der Psalmendichtung findet, daß die in manchem nahe verwandte babylonische und ägyptische Literatur für Israel zur großen Teil vorgeschichtlich ist, ja, daß die Entstehung der Psalmendichtung als solcher, da sie mit dem Gottesdienst aufs engste zusammenhängt, in Israels älteste Vorzeit zurückgeht.[41]

Both observations dealt a striking blow to the previously confident position of the Wellhausen school.

Third, Gunkel put to rest concerns over royal hyperbole. For many scholars, divine attributes applied to the king seemed to be at odds with Israel's strident monotheism. Particularly offensive was Ps

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[37] Pss 20:2-6, 10; 21: 3-5.

[38] Pss 2:6, 7b-9; 110:1c, 4b-c.

[39] Gunkel, "Königpsalmen," 46.

[40] J. Wellhausen, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* (6th ed.; Berlin: G. Reimer, 1907) 147.

[41] Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 48.

45:7, כִּסְאֲךָ אֱלֹהִים "your throne, O god," which, barring textual emendation, straightforwardly refers to the king or prince. Gunkel argued that though this hyperbole was utilized by historic kings of Israel, its origins were non-Israelite.[42] According to Gunkel, one was to understand this attribution to be equivalent to the general ancient Near Eastern assertion that the sovereign was the son of the god. Gunkel referred to Hammurabi's divine lineage as Marduk's son,[43] and pointed out that the Egyptian Pharaoh was not only considered Re's son, but was actually called 'good god'.[44]

Equally problematic were allusions to the king's world-wide empire as well as the appellation 'priest' for the monarch. In Gunkel's estimation, the sources of both royal investitures lay outside of the traditions of Israel proper, and were to be located within the general milieu of the ancient Near East.[45] Previous to Gunkel's article, Adolf Erman had suggested an integral connection between Egyptian priesthood and the royal office, that is, that the priests were servants to the king.[46] In addition, Morris Jastrow had directed attention to a Mesopotamian inscription which referred to the Assyrian monarch as

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[42] "Wir dürfen ohne Bedenken annehmen, daß solche Königsvergötterung, die der israelitischen Religion so wenig entspricht, nicht in Israel selber entstanden, sondern aus dem Ausland eingeführt worden, ist," Ibid., 54.

[43] Gunkel references E. Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek: Sammlung von assyrischen und babylonischen Texten in Umschrift und Übersetzung* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1889-1915) 3.126f. Additional discussion may be found in R. Labat, *Le caractère religieux de la royauté assyro-babylonienne* (Paris, Librairie d'Amerique et d'Orient, 1939) 280. The claim for the divine 'sonship' of the king is, of course, frequent in Sumerian and Akkadian inscriptions. See additionally W. Hallo, *Early Mesopotamian Royal Titles: A Philologic and Historical Analysis* (AOS 43; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1957) 134ff, and M.–J. Seux, *Épithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1967) 159f., 392-395.

[44] Gunkel cites A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen: H. Laupp, 1885) 90f. See additionally N.–C. Grimal, *Les termes de la propagande royale égyptienne: de la XIX*^{E} *dynastie à la comquête d'Alexandre* (MPAIBL n.s. 6; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1986) 152ff.

[45] Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 51f.

[46] A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1909) 2.66.

'priest'.[47] Gunkel noted that even the biblical texts indicated such an interrelationship in 2 Sam 8:18c: וּבְנֵי דָוִד כֹּהֲנִים הָיוּ "and the sons of David were priests."

The same held true for the psalmist's claim that the Hebrew king was given or had already accomplished world-wide dominion. Although such a claim seemed laughable in Israel's historical memory, the identical theme could be found throughout the comparative materials.[48] Already in 1905, Hugo Greßmann had called attention to this fact:

> Es fehlt hier zwar der weltweite Horizont des Babyloniers, der die Gottheit nicht bloß ein Volk, sondern alle Völker mustern läßt, um seine Auswahl zu treffen, aber das ist durch die Situation notwendig gegeben.[49]

How was one to make sense of such silly bravado in Israel's case, even if this stylized claim was found throughout neighboring kingdoms? Gunkel attributed its inclusion in the royal psalms to the enthusiastic if not bombastic court psalmists.

> Wenn wir nun aber dasselbe Ideal der Weltherrschaft in den biblischen Königspsalmen wieder finden, so scheint uns die nächstliegende Annahme diese zu sein, daß hier ein Gedanke, der in Aegypten und Babylonien entstanden und dort verständlich gewesen ist, von den enthusiastischen Hofdichtern auf den König Israels übertragen worden ist.[50]

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[47] M. Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens* (2 vols.; Giessen: J. Ricker'sche [Alfred Töpelmann] 1905-12) 1.211. Jastrow cites the use of the title *šangû* for Shalmaneser II. Note also Erman, *Ägyptische Religion*, 1.107, and 1.346.

[48] See Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 62.

[49] Greßmann, *Israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie*, 252.

[50] See Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 62. Gunkel's sifting and weighing of ancient Near Eastern concepts found within the psalms, with particular attention to their conceptual origin, soon became a standard practice in the exegesis of the royal psalms. As more and more artifacts from the ancient Near East have been unearthed, scholars have been able to greatly advance the study of Tradition-History and New (Re-) Interpretation, attempting to parse out what is of Israel, what is of Israel's royalty, and what is not. For more recent and comprehensive attempts, see O. Loretz, *Königspsalmen*, and S. Springer, *Neuinterpretation im Alten Testament. Untersucht an den Themenkreisen des Herbstfestes und der Königspsalmen in Israel* (SBB 9; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1979).

Thus, there was nothing unusual or atypical in the biblical royal psalms when they were properly compared with other ancient Near Eastern materials. Further, given the fact that Israelite kingship developed relatively late in comparison to other peoples, and that when it was adopted by the tribal confederacy it was patterned after the institutions of other nations, it is hardly surprising that the biblical royal psalms would share a generic kinship with extrabiblical royal remains. The entire complement of royal psalms was to be viewed as genuinely Israelite, composed in the monarchical period, but borrowing freely and widely from within the general ancient Near Eastern royal milieu.[51]

As can be seen, in addition to rescuing the royal psalms from postexilic discount, Gunkel widened the interpretive context in his examination of comparative materials from Egypt and Mesopotamia. Already in 1912, his student, Emil Balla wrote: "Es sei bei dieser Gelegenheit darauf hingewiesen, daß eine Untersuchung der alttestamentlichen Königspsalmen unter Vergleichung der babylonisch-assyrischen eine dringende Aufgabe ist."[52] Two years later, Gunkel answered this *desiderium* with his *Preußische Jahrbücher* article, while sounding his own alarm for the necessity of comparative analysis as a corrective to overinterpreting the MT's "der Magerkeit ebendieser Quellen."[53] Utilizing comparative materials from Egypt and Mesopotamia,[54] he demonstrated that the idiomatic phraseology

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[51] Gunkel envisioned that through a process of democratization, common people were able to pray the royal psalms, as was the case in Babylon. Moreover, some private psalms were composed by imitating royal idioms and phrases. See *Einleitung*, 285-292.

[52] E. Balla, *Das Ich der Psalmen* (FRLANT 16; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1912), 90.

[53] Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 51.

[54] Though Gunkel utilized four primary text anthologies published prior to 1903, the overwhelming majority of Gunkel's resources were published within the decade prior to the composition and publication of his article: Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*; Greßmann, *Israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie*; *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1909); E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1903); H. Zimmern, *Babylonische Hymnen und Gebet in Auswahl* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1905); A. Jeremias, *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1913). While Gunkel was not the first to demonstrate correspondences between the wider literature of the ancient Near

of the royal psalms previously thought inappropriate for a Northern Israelite or Judean king, was attested in the surrounding cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia.[55] Importantly, throughout all of his psalm work Gunkel sought to demonstrate the inner relationship (*innere Einheit*) between psalms of the Hebrew Psalter and lyrical literature attested throughout the ancient Near East. This wider context which includes Egypt and Mesopotamia has become the *correct* context in which to interpret the biblical psalms.[56] Such sweeping critical consensus had been reached by 1940, both with regard to the psalms and the biblical narrative materials, that William Albright declared "the student of the ancient Near East finds that the methods of Norden and Gunkel are not only applicable, but are the only ones that can be applied."[57]

Not accidentally, Gunkel demonstrated little interest in identifying the authors of the royal psalms: "Bei der unbestimmten

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East and the biblical psalms, he did take the lead in applying the comparative materials systematically to the exegesis of the Psalter. Moreover, it was Gunkel's genius to observe and explicate the universal *Gattungen* in use throughout the ancient Near East. J. Muilenburg's assessment is apropos: "Gunkel possessed for his time an extraordinary knowledge of the other literatures of the ancient Near East, and availed himself of their forms and types, their modes of discourse, and their rhetorical features in his delineation and elucidation of the biblical texts." See J. Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969) 1-2. These observations and comparisons are worked out in great detail in Gunkel's *Einleitung* and applied throughout his commentary.

[55] See especially Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 160f.

[56] "Since a scholarly study is always a study of material in its context, the investigator who wishes to deal with any subject of major proportions has the task, first of all, of presenting an overview of all the material which belongs to his topic or is related to it in any way. In doing so he must first disregard the more or less fortuitous context in which the materials have come down to us, and instead see them in their original context. Therefore, it is not sufficient to deal only with the biblical book of Psalms...rather, we are convinced from the outset that our presentation must include also those songs which do not belong to the Psalter, whether these are found in the Bible, or, indeed, outside of Israel, insofar as they show any real inner relationship with the psalms." See H. Gunkel, *The Psalms: a form-critical introduction* (Biblical Series 19; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967; orig. "Psalmen," *RGG* [2nd ed; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr {Paul Siebeck}, 1930]) 1.

[57] *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940) 44.

Redeweise der Gedichte hat eine Ansetzung des einzelnen Liedes auf einen bestimmten König meistens keinen Sinn."[58] Gunkel thought most of the royal psalms were composed in the royal period (excepting Ps 89),[59] while some gave signs (according to the principles of *Formgeschichte*) of further development and hence, a later date. Notably, Pss 18 and 20 were more 'spiritually' developed and must have been composed for kings in the latter days of the monarchy.[60]

Once the antiquity of the royal psalms was proven, Gunkel addressed his greater interests of the classification of psalm 'type' (*Gattung*) and the setting in Israel's life (*Sitz im Leben*), "according to the various situations in which the songs were sung."[61] As already noted, a system of formal classification was operative in the commentaries of de Wette and Hupfeld.[62] In the latter studies, form as well as content were determinative in the scholar's classification scheme. However, both de Wette and Hupfeld stayed largely within the purview of the OT.

Gunkel, however, was fascinated by wider correspondences between the Hebrew mentality and that of the rest of the ancient Near East. Not only did the Egyptians and Mesopotamians share similar views of kingship (as attested in the manifold correspondences between the biblical royal psalms and other ancient Near Eastern remains), but the method of psalmic composition was itself heavily influenced by convention and custom. This is attested most clearly in literary *Gattungen*, where the genres or types share the same basic structure, style, terminology, and *Sitz im Leben*. Gunkel expanded on the interrelationship of *Gattung* to *Sitz im Leben* in his *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (2nd edition) article on the Psalms:

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[58] Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 167.

[59] Gunkel, *Psalms*, 24; *Psalmen*, 396.

[60] Ps 20 has "strangely spiritual tones" and Ps 18 exhibits "large expansion," "a flood of words" and "repetitions." See Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 167.

[61] Gunkel, *The Psalms*, 10.

[62] One can find *Gattungsforschung* as well, at least in nascent stages, in the studies of J. G. Herder, *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* (Gotha: F.A. Perthes, 1890) and J. Eichhorn, *Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament* (3rd ed.; London: Spottiswoode, 1888). Note in addition, E. Norden's *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig: B.G. Tübner, 1913) where the author anticipated Gunkel's method in terms of the NT.

> The principal literary types are represented by those songs which were sung on the most frequently recurring occasions. A common setting in life is thus one of the distinguishing characteristics of songs belonging to the same literary type. Another distinguishing characteristic is the great number of thoughts and moods which these songs share, while yet another—a very distinctive characteristic—is the literary forms which are prevalent in them.[63]

Gunkel identified four primary *Gattungen*: hymns, community laments, laments of the individual, and songs of thanksgiving of the individual. Later adaptations of the *Gattungen* were observable in spiritual poems (*geistliche Dichtung*).[64] Each *Gattung* exhibited distinct content, form, and settings in the life of the people of Israel, and each had its own history of development (to be studied through *Formgeschichte*). In addition to the four major *Gattungen*, minor types could be discerned: entrance liturgies, torah songs, and blessings and curses.[65]

Royal psalms, by contrast, could not be considered a type. They were akin to songs of Zion and enthronement psalms that Gunkel grouped not by type but by content. The enthronement psalms (*Lieder von Jahves Thronbesteigung*) and songs of Zion were subsets of the larger *Gattung* of 'hymn'.[66] The royal psalms could be described as hypothetically sharing an overarching *Sitz im Leben*, namely that of the various festivals and parties held by the King.[67] At least six typical (and perhaps unrelated) events could be inferred from the psalms themselves:

> 1) the king's enthronement (Pss 2, 101, 110)
> 2) royal anniversaries (Pss 21, 72)
> 3) sanctuary anniversaries (Ps 132)
> 4) a royal wedding (Ps 45)
> 5) preparations for battle (Ps 20)
> 6) returning from battle (Ps 18).[68]

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[63] Gunkel, *The Psalms*, 10.

[64] Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 27, 30.

[65] Gunkel, *The Psalms*, 22. In his *Einleitung*, 293ff, four additional minor types are enumerated, namely pilgrimage songs, victory songs, songs of thanksgiving, and legends.

[66] Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 42, 80, 94ff.

[67] See Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 64.

[68] Ibid., 64.

Although each of these events could be considered constituents of the festivals of the king, each was distinctive enough to mitigate the ascription of a single *Sitz im Leben* to all the royal psalms.

Not all the royal psalms conformed to the same *Gattungen* in their formal composition. Gunkel discussed Pss 20, 89:39-52, 132, and 144:1-11 under the typological rubric of 'Community Lament'. In contrast, he considered Ps 18 to be a thanksgiving song of the individual (a subgroup of the 'songs of the individual').[69] Complicating matters further, Gunkel maintained that while Pss 20 and 132 evidenced different *Sitze im Leben*, they shared the same formal history (*Gattung*).

Each of the royal psalms, unique in its content, defied simple categorization in Gunkel's scheme. In illustration of this, it should be noted that Gunkel often discussed a single royal psalm in complex, if not confusing, ways. For example, Ps 132:1-10 was considered a royal prayer within the communal laments,[70] Ps 132:11-18 corresponded to "a prayer and oracle with a Community Lament," and yet, to the psalm as a whole, Gunkel ascribed the *Sitz im Leben* of the commemoration of a sanctuary anniversary.[71] Still, despite having coherence only in their descriptive royal ideology, Gunkel stayed with the designation of 'royal psalm', even though they came from various settings in life and exhibited distinct psalm types. In the end, the clarity of the unique content of the royal psalms outweighed Gunkel's strident desire to group and classify the psalms by *Gattungen* and *Sitz im Leben*.

The diverse nature of the individual royal psalms limited Gunkel to the following definition:

> Die Königspsalmen sind Lieder, die bei solchen Festen gesungen worden sind. Ihre Dichter und Sänger sind die Mitglieder der königlichen Hofkapelle, von der wir auch sonst hören. Solche Lieder werden aufgeführt in Anwesenheit des Königs und seines Hofes im königlichen Heiligtum.[72]

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[69] Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 143, 265.
[70] Ibid., 117.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 65.

In his final formulation, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, Gunkel simply defined the royal psalms as follows: "Ihre innere Einheit haben die genannten Lieder dadurch, daß sie sämtlich von Königen handeln."[73] Thus, the royal psalms were a subgenre of the basic *Gattungen* distinguished by their relationship to the Hebrew king. An interpreter could only judge a psalm to be 'royal' based on its specific content. Unlike the other psalm typologies, the *Gattung* of a royal psalm may or may not suggest the proper *Sitz im Leben*.

Gunkel's assignment of quasi-*Gattung* status to the royal psalms continues to find adherents. Claus Westermann is representative:

> Eine Gattung von Königspsalmen gibt es in den Psalmen nicht, alle sind sie verschieden. *Was sie zusammenhält, ist allein, daß sie vom König handeln* (italics mine).[74]

Hans-Joachim Kraus,[75] Artur Weiser,[76] and James Mays,[77] among others, have essentially followed Gunkel concerning the basic enumeration of royal psalms that comprise a quasi-*Gattung* of mixed forms and life contexts. Most note that, inasmuch as the royal psalms demand their own typification, they are extremely problematic from a *Formgeschichte* perspective.[78] Of the scholars cited above, only Westermann has proposed an explanation that would account for the diverse forms, content, and life situations of the royal psalms.

> Kingship arose in Israel only comparatively late; hence kings never played such a dominant role in Israel's worship as they did in

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[73] Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 140.

[74] C. Westermann, *Ausgewählte Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984) 48. Supplementing the corpus of royal psalms identified by Gunkel, Westermann adds Pss 61:7-8 and 63:12. Like Gunkel, Westermann treats Ps 89 as a communal lament. Ibid., 37.

[75] H.–J. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988; orig. *Psalmen*, 1. Teilband, *Psalmen 1-59* [BKAT; 5th ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978]) 56ff.

[76] A. Weiser, *The Psalms* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962; orig. ATD 14/15; 5th ed.; *Die Psalmen* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959]) 45, 63.

[77] J.L. Mays, *Psalms* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1994) 29.

[78] This explains the common designation, "so-called" royal psalms.

> neighboring empires. Therefore the royal cult did not shape any special genre which might be called the royal psalm genre.[79]

Westermann leaves the impression that the number of royal psalms preserved in the Hebrew Psalter shares a direct correspondence to historic royal psalmody. That is, if only six percent or so of the Psalter consists of royal psalms, then royal psalmody did not develop significantly during Israel's history of kingship. This, of course, is far from certain. Contrary to Westermann, Gunkel thought that the handful of biblical royal psalms were simply chance samples of a once large and impressive Israelite royal psalmody.[80]

One cannot escape the fact that, given Gunkel's doggedness for consistency, the quasi-*Gattung* status of the royal psalms was less than satisfactory. Eduard König spoke for many in pointing out the incompatibility of *Gattungsgeschichte* with the descriptive identity of the royal psalms:

> In der Aufstellung Gunkels kann ich keine klaren Einteilungsprinzipien finden. Denn nach welchem Prinzip kann z.B. 'Siegeslied' und 'Königslied' nebeneinandergestellt werden? Bloß dem Inhalt, oder auch der Form nach? Wenn bloß dem Inhalt nach, dann ist das Reden von diesen 'literarischen Gattungen' keineswegs eine wissenschaftliche Tat."[81]

Lacking definitive classification principles, the successive history of the study of the royal psalms has been either limited to Gunkel's

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[79] Westermann, *The Psalms: Structure, Content & Message* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980; orig. *Der Psalter* [2nd. ed.; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1967]) 105. Additionally, note. Westermann's reiteration: "Wir können daraus schließen, daß es im Gottesdienst Israels zur Ausbildung und Ausprägung einer selbständigen Gattung der Königspsalmen nicht gekommen ist." See Westermann, *Ausgewählte*, 48.

[80] "Wir schließen aus diesem sehr starken Einfluß der Königslieder auf die privat Dichtung—es handelt sich in diesem Zusammenhange besonders um Dank- und Klagelieder—, daß es sehr viele und eindrucksvolle Königspsalmen in alter Zeit gegeben hat, und daß wir diejenigen, die wir zufällig besitzen, nur als Proben einer einst bei weitem reicheren Dichtungsart aufzufassen haben....Zugleich dürfen wir die Frage aufwerfen, ob die Königsdichtung nicht überhaupt die ältere Art gewesen ist, aus der sich das private Psalmensingen erst in einem fortgeschrittenen Zeitalter entwickelt hat." See Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 149.

[81] König, *Psalmen*, 37.

enumeration or expanded, as we shall see, by a particular scholar's historical imagination.

ROYAL PSALMS AS SCRIPTS OF THE CORPORATE REPRESENTATIVE

How was one to assess the elements of court style found in the royal psalms? Were they spurious borrowings from attendant cultures, essentially meaningless to the purview of Israelite religion and practice? Or were they carefully-selected ideological affirmations of what Israel believed about her king and about his relationship to Yahweh and Yahweh's people? For many scholars, the royal psalms became windows to Israel's royal cultic past; a past mostly obscured in the other writings of the Hebrew Bible. Karl-Heinz Bernhardt neatly summarized the investigative focal points of those scholars who sought to interpret the royal psalms as scripts of Israel's corporate representative, namely the Israelite king:

> 1. Die hervorragende Stellung des Königs in den Psalmen, wobei es sich nicht um einmalige, sondern um typische Situationen des Königs handelt.
> 2. Das nach dem altorientalischen 'pattern' gestaltete Jerusalemer Königsritual, bzw. Thronfestritual innerhalb des Neujahrsfestes als 'Sitz im Leben' der Psalmen.
> 3. Der König als die zentral Gestalt dieses in dramatischen Aufführungen vergegenwärtigten Rituals, in denen er nicht nur als Repräsentant des Volkes auftritt, sondern auch die Rolle Gottes spielt.[82]

Gunkel's student, Sigmund Mowinckel, pioneered this next stage of scholarship that sought to recover, through the royal psalms, the role of the king in the Israelite cult.

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[82] Bernhardt, *Problem der altorientalsichen Königsideologie*, 246.

SIGMUND MOWINCKEL AND CULT–FUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION

Just two years after Gunkel's publication of "Die Königspsalmen," Sigmund Mowinckel published a Norwegian monograph on the subject.[83] Gunkel had already referred to aspects of state-religion in his treatment of the royal psalms. However, the task of articulating a unified royal ideology or theology based on the royal psalms was taken up by Mowinckel. From the outset, Mowinckel was more inclined than his teacher to anticipate a significant theological contribution from the royal psalms. If they were utilized within the cult, then the royal psalms (however identified) would most likely express an ideology consistent with the theology of the royal cult. And since the royal cult was the national cult, this theology would be essentially Israel's corporate theology. *Kongesalmerne* was the first of several publications in which Mowinckel sought to discern and explicate Israel's royal ideology.[84]

Like Gunkel, Mowinckel found great continuities between a generic ancient oriental understanding of kingship and Israelite kingship. Throughout his publications, Mowinckel would refer to at least twenty-two ideological continuities between Israel's kingship theology and that of the general ancient Near East.[85] These endowments,

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[83] Mowinckel, *Kongesalmerne*.

[84] Mowinckel, *Kongesalmerne*, 139-151. See also *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (2 vols.; New York: Abingdon, 1954) 50ff, especially "The Ideal of Kingship in Ancient Israel," and *He That Cometh* (New York: Nashville, 1954) 21-95.

[85] These may be summarized as: 1) the king is endowed with Yahweh's spirit as Yahweh's anointed; 2) the king has supranormal faculties and powers; 3) the king is chosen by Yahweh; 4) the king is adopted and fostered by Yahweh; 5) the king stands in a closer relationship than others to Yahweh; 6) the king is Yahweh's special servant, enjoying special tasks and benefits; 7) the king is endowed with eternity; 8) the king holds 'divine' status; 9) the king is divinely protected (it is a mortal sin to harm him); 10) the king becomes a 'new man' with a 'new heart' at his anointing; 11) the king is the people's source of strength; 12) the king is the bearer of divine forces necessary for life; 13) the king is the people's protector; 14) the king is given extraordinary success, victory, and glory; 15) the king is endowed with righteousness; 16) the king is endowed with wisdom; 17) the king is endowed with piety; 18) the king is the son of the highest god, Yahweh; 19) the king is entitled to worldwide rule; 20) the king sits on Yahweh's throne at Yahweh's right; and, 21) the king is figured with horns; 22) the king is given divine

benefits, and mythological representations corresponded in greater and lesser degrees to other kingship ideologies in the ancient Near East. As we have noted above, Greßmann and Gunkel had already considered such language to be cavalier borrowings of ancient Near Eastern court style by royal scribes, and, as such, being mere stylistic borrowings. In contrast, Mowinckel argued such court style accurately expressed fervent religious and sociological beliefs that were closely connected to Israel's cult, albeit inherited and transformed from Canaanite religion.[86]

In Mowinckel's earliest publications, the human king was described as the axis between God and humanity. Not simply a human being, and not wholly divine, the king was the relational conduit through which the people of Israel communed with Yahweh.[87] God and people meet in the person of the king. Through the king the blessings of God come to the people. The desires and petitions of the people come from the king to God. The king is both the people's collective soul and the incarnation of Yahweh.

> Alle diese auf dem Denken des primitiven Israels beruhenden Vorstellungen kann man in moderner Sprache kaum anders ausdrücken, als in dem Satze, daß der König die ideale Inkorporation der Volksseele ist; das ist aber in mystisch-realem, nicht nur in begrifflichem Sinne gemeint. Das Korrelat zu diesem Gedanken vom König als Inkorporation der nationalen Gemeinde ist die Idee vom König als Inkarnation des nationalen Gottes.[88]

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symbols. See Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien II: Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs und er Ursprung der Eschatologie*, in *Psalmenstudien* (2 vols.; Amsterdam: Schippers, 1961) 1.297ff, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.53, and *He That Cometh* (New York: Abingdon, 1954) 62ff.

[86] See Mowinckel, *Kongesalmerne*, 25ff, *Psalmenstudien II*, 301, n. 1., and *He that Cometh*, 26, 56-57. Mowinckel's exposition of Israelite royal ideology was not limited to the royal psalms. He found continuities and confirmations in the wider prophetic, lyrical, and historical literatures of the Hebrew Bible. Mowinckel, under the sway of German idealism, understood the various aspects of royal ideology as typical throughout Israel's preexilic period. Hence he could describe Israel's royal ideology in terms of a unified and consistent royal perspective.

[87] "Er ist der Kanal, durch den der göttliche Segen dem Volke zufließt." See Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien II*, 301.

[88] Ibid., 301.

In his later work, *Offersang og Sangoffer*, Mowinckel backed away from the bold assertion quoted above. "Nowhere in the Old Testament do we meet with a 'metaphysical' unity of Yahweh and the king, or a really 'mythological' idea of the king's relation to Yahweh."[89] The king's office, as leader and provider of the cult, was to serve the people as their mediator.[90] Hence, "although Israel has adopted a number of ideas, functions, and style forms of oriental monarchy, the basic conceptions have been fundamentally altered under the influence of the Yahweh religion."[91] Royal concepts, such as the monarch's filial relation to the god(s), which in Mesopotamia or Egypt took on mythological force, have been taken out of the mythic-literal context and reinterpreted. In Israel, the king was 'adopted' not 'born'. Notably, in Mowinckel's explication of Ps 132, the ark represents Yahweh in the cult and not the king, even though the king may have been thought to be superhuman. Hebrew royal ideology, according to Mowinckel, never identified the human king with Yahweh, even representationally, in the cult. Rather, the king was the incorporation of the populace. Accordingly, Mowinckel considered it obvious by implication that the king was the focal point of the cult. Apart from explicating a general kingship ideology, however, Mowinckel wisely did not reconstruct the king's role in the cult. There simply was not enough secure historical data to do so.

Mowinckel also pushed beyond Gunkel's general suggestions for the *Sitze im Leben* of the royal psalms and posited an annual Autumn New Year Festival (*nytaarsfesten*) with the human king's enthronement (*tronstigningsdagen*) as a probable component.[92] In doing so, he provided the foundational impetus for expansionistic and patternistic claims for a much larger royal psalm corpus that later would be argued for by English[93] and Scandinavian[94] scholars,

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[89] Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.57-58.

[90] "*Figuratively speaking* he is the channel through which the blessings of the deity flow to the people. He is also 'the corporate representative' through whom the people approach Yahweh to partake of the blessing." Ibid., 60.

[91] Ibid., 52.

[92] Mowinckel, *Kongesalmerne*, 64f.

[93] See especially the works edited by S.H. Hooke, ed., *Myth and Ritual: Essays on the Myth and Ritual of the Hebrews in Relation to the Cultic Pattern of the Ancient East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), *The Labyrinth: Further Studies in the Relation between Myth and Ritual in the Ancient World*

though Mowinckel, himself, remained fairly reticent to accept such arguments.

The driving force behind Mowinckel's exegesis was his belief that the Psalter contained primarily cultic works as opposed to the pious prayers of individuals copied from earlier cultic texts.[95] In Mowinckel's view, his teacher had failed to come to this conclusion because he did not objectively follow the obvious contours of investigation suggested by the sciences of *Gattungsgeschichte* and *Formgeschichte*.[96]

Accordingly, in *Psalmenstudien I: Åwän und die individuellen Klagepsalmen*, Mowinckel argued relentlessly that the individual psalms of lamentation were composed for use in the temple service itself.[97] Since the individual laments were liturgical, the persona of an individual psalm could not be traced to a historical personage, but rather represented "ein Typus des Frommen, der in Not ist, mit den Zügen ausgestattet, die er nach dem Ideal der offiziellen Volks-

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(New York, Macmillan, 1935), and *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Kingship in the Ancient Near East and in Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958). Additionally, see A.R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1955).

[94] The so called "Uppsala School." See in particular I. Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967) as well as his articles "The Book of Psalms" and "New Year Festivals," *Critical Essays on the Old Testament*, 68-122, and 180-84.

[95] Mowinckel, *Kongesalmerne*, 63f. Mowinckel became increasingly convinced of a "Protestant bias" among psalms scholars: "And what are Gunkel's arguments for his departure from his own sound fundamental position? They are, in fact, the same as with the older critical school: the asserted incompatibility between the personal religious note in so many of the psalms, and the 'impersonal' character of the 'liturgical formula'. In other words: the newer Protestant lack of understanding of the importance of the cult and its real essence." See Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.14.

[96] According to Mowinckel, "...Gunkel—and after him many of his followers—went only half-way. He often stuck too much to the mere formal registration and labelling of the single elements of a psalm and did not see clearly enough that his own form-historical method demanded that it be developed into a real *cult-functional method*." See Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.31.

[97] *Psalmenstudien I*, in *Psalmenstudien*, 1.134ff.

religion tragen soll."[98] In time, Mowinckel would come to be convinced that the Israelite king played a significant role in the cultic portrayal of the typical pious worshiper in individual laments. But even earlier, Mowinckel began to explicate the ideological presence of the human king within what he thought to be Israel's great cultic event: the Enthronement Festival of Yahweh.

In his Norwegian monograph, Mowinckel began to explicate a cultic *Sitz im Leben* for the royal psalms centered around the Hebrew king's enthronement and an annual New Year's feast. Then, in 1920, Mowinckel set forth his most detailed construction of the supposed Autumn Festival.[99] Largely influenced by V. Grønbech's *Vor Folkeaet i Oldtiden* (1901-12),[100] Mowinckel sought out continuities between the Babylonian *akītu*[101] and the Hebrew Enthronement

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[98] Ibid., 138.

[99] One might be surprised in learning that Mowinckel did not utilize the royal psalms, with the exception of Ps 132, in his reconstruction of the Israelite Autumn Festival. In 1927, Hans Schmidt, recognizing this apparent lapse, argued that Pss 2, 20, 21, 89:2-19, 110, and 132 demonstrated that the enthronement of the human king was repeated each year in conjunction with the enthronement of Yahweh. See H. Schmidt, *Die Thronfahrt Jahves am Fest der Jahreswende im alten Israel* (Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vorträge 122; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1927). Subsequently, in his psalms commentary, Schmidt explicated Pss 18:32-51, 72, 84, 89:20-52, 101, and 144 in terms of an annual enthronement festival. See Schmidt, *Die Psalmen* (HAT 15; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1934). In contrast, Mowinckel only suggested the pos*sibility*, albeit strongly, that the official installation of the king was identical with the New Year festival. In Mowinckel's assessment Ps 132 was composed to be an integral component of the Autumn Festival itself. As for the other royal psalms, their relationship to the festival remained conjectural. See Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.67.

[100] See D.R. Ap–Thomas, "An Appreciation of Sigmund Mowinckel's Contribution to Biblical Studies," *JBL* 85 (1966) 321.

[101] Apparently unknown to Mowinckel, Paul Volz suggested such a connection in 1912. See, P. Volz, *Das Neujahrsfest Jahwes (Laubhüttenfest)* (Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie und Religionsgeschichte 67; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1912). However, as early as 1905, H. Greßmann had drawn the comparison: "Weil man in Babylonien oder sonstwo bei den Nachbarvölkern am Neujahrstage—und ebenso beim Anfang einer neuen Welt—die Thronbesteigung eines neuen Gottes feierte, so ward dies Beispiel in Israel nachgeahmt, weil es so zum Stil gehörte." See H. Greßmann, *Israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie*, 297.

psalms (*Thron-besteigungspsalmen*).[102] The strength of Mowinckel's theory was based on four converging observations: 1) evidence of borrowing and appropriation from Israel's cultural neighbors in the psalms (already demonstrated by Gunkel and his predecessors); 2) the biblical psalms' rootedness in the national cult; 3) correspondences between the Babylonian *akītu* (as well as other enthronement festivals) and some of the biblical psalms; and 4) calendric notations in the MT and the Mishna.[103]

Whereas Mowinckel agreed with Gunkel that the royal psalms did not conform to a literary *Gattung*, he pushed forward in hopes of identifying their cultic *Gattungen*.[104] For example, Gunkel had thought that petitions and praise for the king found in Pss 28:8, 61:7-8, 63:12, 84:10, and 1 Sam 2:10 were originally appended to privately composed psalms. By contrast, Mowinckel maintained that "Jene Psalmen sind vielmehr Gebete, die im Namen des Königs geschrieben sind; das betende 'Ich' is eben der König selber. Schon das spricht übrigens für eine ursprünglich kultische Bestimmung."[105]

The dual possibilities that 1) a particular psalm could have been part of the annual festival where the king played a decided cultic role, and 2) that the unidentified singular persona behind many of the

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[102] It is generally accepted that the "enthronement psalms" include Pss 47, 93, 96, 97, 98, and 99. See C. Westermann, *The Psalms*, 109, and K. Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990) 114. Going beyond convention, Mowinckel included Ps 100 with the enthronement psalms. Even more, Mowinckel expanded the traditional enumeration so as to include Pss 8, 15, 24, 29, 33, 46, 48, 50, 66, 67, 75, 76, 81, 82, 84, 87, 118, 132, 149, and Ex 15:1-18! See Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien II*, 3-6.

[103] The annual festival continues to hold seductive promise to exegetes of the Psalter. Kraus's 'royal-zion' festival and Weiser's 'covenant renewal' festival are close reformulations of Mowinckel's conjecture. In this regard, a recent study is worth noting. Michael Goulder has argued Pss 42-49; 84-85; 86-89 to be psalms associated at an annual Autumn Festival at Dan. According to Goulder, Ps 45 was composed for the 15th of Bul, when the King would be wed (yearly) to (yet) another wife, whereas Ps 89 was the climax of the northern festival. The fact that the above psalms have been included in the Hebrew Psalter, however, was due to their transfer from Northern Israel to Judah after the disaster of 722 BCE. See M. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah* (JSOTSup 20; Sheffield: JSOT, 1982).

[104] Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien III*, in *Psalmenstudien* 2.78f.

[105] Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien VI*, in *Psalmenstudien* 2.24, n.1.

psalms could be the Israelite King, created indeterminate confusion over how many psalms were in fact royal psalms. Though Mowinckel originally began with Gunkel's basic enumeration (plus Ps 89),[106] the supposed cultic *Sitz im Leben* invited the hypothesis of a wider distribution of royal psalms. And yet, one will look in vain for a consistent (or even an exact) enumeration of royal psalms throughout Mowinckel's works.[107]

It is unfair to criticize Mowinckel for failing to produce an exact delineation of royal psalms since that was neither his aim nor interest. It is important, however, to note that in Mowinckel's work, the requisite characteristic for the classification of a royal psalm shifted from the concerns of human kingship to the possibility that the king might be a psalm's anonymous protagonist and/or performer.[108] Although Mowinckel would be influenced by the arguments of Birkeland, he was always cautious in definitively claiming that the king's voice gave rise to the protagonist's words in the cult. Nevertheless, the definitional shift from referential content (i.e., referral to the king's throne, the mention of הַמֶּלֶךְ, etc.) to the psalm's persona represents the greatest shift in the interpretation of the royal psalms and remains, to this day, full of controversy.

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[106] Mowinckel, *Kongesalmerne*, 5.

[107] In *Kongesalmerne*, Pss 28, 44, 60, 61, 63, 66, 68, 84, 118, 1 Sam 2:1-10, and 2 Sam 23:1-7 are discussed as if they should be considered cult-functionally as royal psalms. Later, in *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132, 28, 61, 63, 89, "and quite a number of others," are listed as royal psalms. See *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.47. Mowinckel also suggests the public thanksgivings, Pss 92 and 138, should be considered royal psalms, in the same way that Pss 66 and 118 are *most probably* royal psalms based on the 'king-Ego' style. See Ibid., 2.28-29. Moreover, individual laments such as Pss 22, 28, 88, and 102 were originally composed for the king's use in the cult in view of the king's national importance. See Ibid., 2.8ff.

[108] Thus, every unknown psalmic persona was potentially the human king. Mowinckel, in commenting on the anonymous individual laments, writes that "...this representative personality in the royal Temple in Jerusalem was the king himself. Our way to full certainty in this matter lies along the path indicated by Gunkel, namely the conviction that there are in the Psalter a number of Psalms where the king clearly and definitely stands as protagonist. And this brings us to the royal psalms proper." See Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.46.

Though nascent in Mowinckel's work, the tantalizing possibility that the psalms could be opened to new meaning through the assumption that the king was their performer was aggressively pursued by other scholars in two fundamental directions. First, proponents of the "Myth-and-Ritual" school sought to demonstrate the human king's ritual function and mythic significance in terms of the annual enthronement festival. Second, scholars attempted to solve the mystery of the anonymous singular persona of the lament psalms in terms of the human king's representative status.

ROYAL PSALMS: THE LITURGICAL VOICE OF THE DIVINE KING

The inception of the Myth-and-Ritual school of biblical studies is usually traced to the editorial leadership of Samuel H. Hooke.[109] Hooke gathered scholars who attempted to study ancient Near Eastern ritual and ritualized mythology assuming, anthropologically, a general and overarching patternism existing throughout the ancient Near East.[110] The primary ritual pattern was formulated in terms of an annual New Year festival, considered ubiquitous to the ancient Near East and comprised of the following:

> (a) dramatic representation of the death and resurrection of the god.
> (b) recitation or symbolic representation of the myth of creation.
> (c) ritual combat, depicting the triumph of the god over his enemies.

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[109] In 1933, S.H. Hooke edited and published a volume of lectures which effectively launched the 'Myth-and-Ritual' school, though there had already been stirrings of this for some time among classicists at Cambridge. See J. Harrison, *Mythology* (Boston: Marshall Jones, 1924), as well as *Themis: a study of the social origins of Greek religion* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1974; orig. 1927), F. Cornford, *Before and after Socrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), and A. Cook, *Zeus: a study in ancient religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914).

[110] As Frank Cross has observed, this approach was largely phenomenological rather than historical. See F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) 82.

(d) sacred marriage.
(e) triumphal procession, in which the king played the part of the god.[111].

This schema would undergo slight modifications in subsequent years,[112] but the basic outline remained constant and was employed by many scholars. For example, Geo Widengren argued that the Hebrew king played the part of the dying and rising god in the New Year's festival.[113] Within the ceremony itself, the king symbolically combated forces of evil, and only after his ritualized humiliation that dramatized his death and resurrection, was he enabled to defeat them. After securing victory, the king celebrated *hieros gamos* and was enthroned on Mt. Zion.[114]

Despite its attractive cross-cultural symmetry, the tenets of the Myth-and-Ritual school could not withstand scholarly scrutiny. In the now famous Frazer Lecture of 1950 (published in 1951), Henri Frankfort arrested the confident sway of the Myth-and-Ritual school over the scholarly community.[115] Regarding the basic structure of the

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[111] S.H. Hooke, *Myth and Ritual*

[112] Two years later, Hooke published a companion volume titled *The Labyrinth*. In assessing the accomplishments of *Myth and Ritual*, Hooke does not retire from expressing the ubiquity of the mythic pattern. "It was shown that while the early religions of Egypt, Babylon, and Canaan differed widely in many respects, nevertheless they possessed certain fundamental characteristics in common....Each of these religions had certain rituals of central importance, and in each the central figure was the king, in whose person the fortune of the state was, so to speak, incarnate. In each religion these rituals presented the same broad pattern." See, Hooke, *The Labyrinth*, v. In the subsequent paragraph Hooke reiterates the components of the pattern in slightly different form: (a) the death and resurrection of the king, who was also the god, (b) sacred combat, (c) triumphal procession, (d) enthronement (e) determinations of the state's destinies, (f) sacred marriage, and (g) recitation of the mythic story outlined in the dramatic ritual itself.

[113] G. Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum im AT und im Judentum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1955), and "Early Hebrew Myths and their Interpretation," *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, 191ff.

[114] Similarly, Gösta Ahlström argued the liturgical text for such ritual humiliation was none other than Ps 89. See G.W. Ahlström, *Psalm 89. Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des leidenden Königs* (Lund: Ohlsson, 1959).

[115] H. Frankfort, *The Problem of Similarity in Ancient Near Eastern Religions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951).

annual festival outlined by Hooke, Frankfort bluntly stated that "our sources do not corroborate this synthesis."[116] Further, "it remains, then, to be seen whether 'essential similarities' exist at all, and this cannot be decided by discussing generalities."[117] Frankfort's investigation of the sources revealed decided variations between Egypt and Mesopotamia, both in terms of myths of creation *and* New Year rituals. The demonstrable similarities (that is, "a preoccupation with the natural events upon which society depends")[118] were so basic that they were essentially meaningless.[119]

The prospect that Ps 89 contained a ritual akin to the monarchical 'humiliation' of the Babylonian *akītu* drew adherents beyond the college of patternists. One of the essays published in Hooke's *Labyrinth* was an article by Aubrey Johnson titled "The Rôle of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus."[120] While Johnson freely made comparisons between Mesopotamian and Hebrew texts, he did not justify

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[116] Ibid., 9. Note already Frankfort's criticism (though not directly aimed at the Myth-and-Ritual School) in the revision of a 1942 paper delivered to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences found in *Kingship and the Gods*, 3-12.

[117] Frankfort, *Problem of Similarity*, 10.

[118] Ibid., 18.

[119] The phenomenological orientation of the Myth-and-Ritual School encouraged a leveling of mythic and ritual texts to a least common denominator where myth was simply considered the narrative accompaniment to ritual. As Cross and Bernhardt have indicated, no attention was given to historical developments within particular traditions themselves. Being such, the Myth-and-Ritual School, while taking full advantage of the larger interpretive context of the ancient Near East observable in the work of Greßmann and Gunkel, could not possibly hope to retain favor among scholars committed to the historical-critical method. See Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 82f; Bernhardt, *Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie*, 51-66. Note Mowinckel's similar concern: "Individual expressions and statements about the king in Egypt and in Mesopotamia may resemble each other fairly closely; but the precise content of any given conception can be discerned only when it is considered in the context of the particular system to which it belongs." See Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 27.

[120] A. Johnson, "The Rôle of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus," *The Labyrinth*, 71-111.

this method on the basis of an assumed Myth-and-Ritual patternism.[121] Instead, building upon Mowinckel's outline of Israel's enthronement festival,[122] Johnson noted that in Ps 89:39-45, Yahweh is chastised for allowing his מָשִׁיחַ to suffer humiliation. Further, in vv. 47-52, the persona of the psalm, presumably the king, makes an urgent petition on his own behalf.[123] This was sufficient to assume that the Davidic king's cultic role in the New Year festival was one of *suffering servant*—analogous to the monarch's role in the Babylonian *akītu* festival.[124]

In addition to the king's ritual humiliation, Johnson thought he had located other liturgical elements of the New Year's Festival among the royal psalms. Closely connected to Ps 89:39-46, Ps 101 was the monarch's defense liturgy by which he protested his innocence from guilt. Likewise, the thanksgivings for Yahweh's deliverance in Ps 18 were liturgically specific to the ritual hazards inflicted in the renewal cult. The oracles contained in Pss 2 and 110 signaled the final stage of the drama, where the king was restored to rightful position and granted a future of heirs. Of course, the fulcrum of the festival was the resurrection liturgy. Resisting the nomenclature of 'royal psalm', Johnson deemed the monarch to be the protagonist of Ps 118 and vv. 15f and 22f to be the liturgy of the

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[121] On the contrary, Johnson disapproves of Hooke's reconstructions because "...the traces of this hypothetical Myth-and-Ritual pattern were found to be very slight and indeed quite fragmentary so far as ancient Israel was concerned." See Ibid., 97. Johnson's insistent disclaimer that he was influenced by or conformed to the Myth-and-Ritual School can be found as well in "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, 229.

[122] According to Johnson, "The following features may thus be recognized in the New Year Festival of the Jerusalem Cultus. In the first place, we have the celebration of (a) Jahweh's triumph, as Leader of the forces of Light, over the forces of Darkness as represented by the Chaos of waters or primeval Monster; (b) His enthronement as King over the Floods and Ruler in the Assembly of the Gods; and (c) His mighty works in creation." See Johnson, "Rôle," 97.

[123] Ibid., 71-111.

[124] Johnson made reference to the well known texts published by F. Thureau-Dangin in 1921 where the Babylonian king not only protests his innocence, but suffers ritual humiliation at the hand of the *urigallu*-priest. According to Johnson, in both Babylon and Israel, the king was restored to high office at the conclusion of the ritual. See *RAcc* 127-154.

dying and rising king/god.[125]

> In this drama Jahweh gives His people the victory over 'Death,' and thus brings about the revival of the social unit. Such a work of 'Salvation' is realized by the means of a ritual combat in which the kings (or nations) of the Earth, representing the forces of Darkness and 'Death' (as opposed to Light and 'Life'), unite in an attempt to destroy the life of this unit as focussed in its king.[126]

Thus, though not determined by an ubiquitous pattern, Israel, nonetheless, subscribed to sacral kingship, as did the Babylonians.

But what exactly was meant by 'sacral kingship'? According to Hooke, the king played the part of the god in the final triumphal procession. As we have already noted, Johnson thought that Ps 118 was the liturgy of the dying and rising king—who represented Yahweh. But even if the king did play the part of the god ceremoniously, did this mean that the king held sacred status apart from the ritual itself?

Though there has been no consensus among scholars as to the exact meaning of 'sacral kingship', Karl–Heinz Bernhardt leveled a decisive critique against those who would proffer the term. In brief, Bernhardt was unable to locate any definitive examples of what might be termed 'sacral kingship' among the psalms and historical books of the OT. Specifically, the king was a) never identified with Yahweh, b) never worshiped, and c) never granted power over the forces of nature. Given these findings, how could one intelligibly talk about sacral kingship in Israel? Especially since "einen direkten Beleg dafür wird man freilich vergeblich suchen, und mit den Indizien sieht es dürftig aus."[127]

Scholars such as Mettinger, despite Bernhardt's critique, continue to use the nomenclature of 'sacral kingship'. However, when used, it is held in distinction to 'divine kingship' which was properly the object of Bernhardt's criticism.[128] This means, of course, that the

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[125] See "Rôle," 106-107.

[126] Ibid., 111.

[127] Bernhardt, *Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie*, 255.

[128] For example, Mettinger states, "The term 'divine kingship' should be used in a narrow sense and only when the idea of an identity between king and God is found so that the king holds the position of *deus incarnatus* on earth. The king can then be seen as having divine descent, and he can be made the object of a

king could have been considered sacred without being divine. According to this view, the king would have the same restricted and holy status as a priest. To what extent such 'sacral' status would distinguish the king from commoners (and hence, distinguish royal speech from common speech) remains to be clarified.

The Problems Of Categorization In Light Of Sacral Kingship

Not only did the Myth-and-Ritual school produce dubious ideological reconstructions of royal temple theology, the assumption of the monarch's dominant performative voice behind the psalms began to push the category of 'royal psalm' to the absurd extreme. In 1943, I. Engnell published his doctoral dissertation in which he argued that sacral kingship was ubiquitous to the ancient Near East[129] (though scant attention was paid to the biblical texts).[130] In the conclusion of the study, Engnell issued a prospectus for a future exposition of the biblical materials in which he proposes, among other tantalizing suggestions, that the psalmic superscription לְדָוִד was "an original cultic-liturgical rubric inherited from pre-Israelite Jebusite

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cult. When this requisite is not at hand, the king can nevertheless be regarded as chosen by God in some way or the other. This may be termed 'sacral kingship.'" See Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 14.

[129] The publication of this study marked the inception of what came to be known as the 'Uppsala School' of biblical studies. Properly, G. Widengren should be considered within this 'School,' especially in light of his study, *The King and The Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksells, 1951), despite the fact that he was Engnell's teacher. See A. Merrill and J. Spencer, "The 'Uppsala School' of Biblical Studies," *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G.W. Ahlström*, (eds. W. Barrick *et al.*, JSOTSup 31; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984) 13-26, esp. 15. On the influence of Engnell in terms of Tradition History and psalmic research, see A. Bjørndalen, "Selected Aspects of Nordic Traditio-Historical Psalm Research Since Engnell: Limitations and Possibilities," *The Productions of Time: Tradition History in Old Testament Scholarship* (eds. K Jeppesen *et al.*; Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1984) 107-125.

[130] I. Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967). While also assuming a single organic culture throughout the ancient Near East, Engnell sought to demonstrate the patternism of ancient near eastern 'divine kingship' through treatments of Egyptian, Sumero-Akkadian, Hittite, West Semitic, and Ugaritic texts (with special attention given to the *KRT* text).

times with the actual import of 'a psalm for the king.'"[131] Psalms bearing this superscription, then, should be considered royal psalms.[132]

Much later, in his 1962 article "Psaltaren," Engnell wrote:

> ...it is still true that the term *l^edhāwidh* in the heading of a psalm is an indication that it is a Royal Psalm—an indication, but in itself not proof....It now appears that such a careful examination yields the following results: of the 73 "Psalms of David" in the Book of Psalms, about 30 are incontrovertibly Royal Psalms; about 30 others are, with a high degree of probability, Royal Psalms, while nothing specific can be said about the rest.[133]

Interestingly enough, Engnell dismissed the method of royal psalms identification promulgated by Aage Bentzen[134] and Harris Birkeland, i.e., that of formal or referential criteria, and instead, stipulated that the "examination must begin with those psalms that are incontrovertibly royal psalms, that is, psalms that are filled with 'royal' content in situation and type, in terminology and ideology."[135] By carefully delineating unique characteristics, forms of expression, ideas, and even linguistic details, one could then proceed to compare other psalms against the extracted prototype, and make a sound (if only circumstantial) assessment for or against a royal psalm classification. Unfortunately, the reader is not given critical access to the exegetical process from which Engnell laid claim that there are 30 incontrovertible royal psalms and an additional 30 with a high degree of probability.

To complicate matters further, he goes on to suggest that the nomenclature 'royal psalm' should not be limited to psalms in which the king is the liturgical subject or the subject of liturgical acts, "but also psalms that, on the whole, had a place in the royal cult."[136] Can this mean that in the 60 psalms mentioned above the king is the

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[131] Engnell, *Divine Kingship*, 177.

[132] See Mowinckel's similar position in *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.77.

[133] Engnell, "The Book of Psalms," 85-84.

[134] A. Bentzen, *Det sakrale Kongedømme* (Copenhagen: B. Lunoa, 1945) 41.

[135] Engnell, "The Book of Psalms," 84.

[136] Ibid., 85.

liturgical subject?[137] Apparently so, for Engnell felt compelled (echoing G. Widengren's rhetorical question) to ask whether or not there was essentially any advantage in differentiating between psalms used by the king and those used by private persons.[138] Certainly, if 'royal psalm' included any text that was used in any, however loose, connection with the aims and functions of kingship, then one could place the entire Psalter under such a rubric. But to what advantage?

The First Person Persona As Characteristic Of Royal Psalms

Despite the decline of the Myth-and-Ritual school, scholars continued to find Mowinckel's suggestion of a monarch's performative voice behind the anonymous psalmic 'I' too promising to dismiss. In *Kongesalmerne,* Mowinckel claimed royal status for three psalms typed by Gunkel as 'laments of the individual' based largely on the mention of the sovereign: (מָשִׁיחַ) Ps 28:4, (מֶלֶךְ) Pss 61:7, and 63:12.[139] This, combined with Mowinckel's *tour de force* in relocating the individual lament in the cult itself,[140] would lead others to assign a

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[137] Later in the article, Engnell references Widengren's study which argues that the comparative materials were performed in their respective royal cults. See G. Widengren, *The Accadian and Hebrew psalms of Lamentation* (Stockholm: Thule, 1937) 77, 217-230. Hence, one is to conclude by inference that many of Engnell's 60 royal psalms are in fact lament psalms.

[138] See Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship*, 50. Widengren first raised this question in terms of 1) a common terminology regarding enemies used by both privates and kings and 2) the ease at which a private lamentation could become a royal lamentation by means of the simple insertion of the name of the king. See Widengren, *Accadian and Hebrew Psalms*, 265. For a similar view, see L.W. King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery* (London: Luzac, 1896), nos. 2, 6, 27.

[139] Mowinckel, *Kongesalmerne*, 90-96.

[140] Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien I*, 134-59. Despite the fact that he did not develop this connection between the performance of the lament of the individual and the king in *Psalmenstudien I*, Mowinckel would later change his position in this very direction. In his introduction to the 1961 reprint of all six psalm studies, Mowinckel confesses that "Durch H. Birkelands *Die Feinde des Individuums in der israelitischen Psalmenliteratur,* Olso 1933, habe Ich mich darüber belehren lassen, dass es viele Ich-Klagepsalmen, darunter besonders die sogenannten Vertrauens-Psalmen, in denen die Not nur noch als drohende Gefahr vor den Augen des Betenden steht, gibt, in denen das ich nicht ein beliebiger 'Jedermann', sondern der König des Volkes ist..." See Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien*, 1.v.

significant role to the king in the cultic performance of the individual laments.[141] Harris Birkeland took the lead in his 1933 publication, *Die Feinde des Individuums in der israelitischen Psalmenliteratur*.[142] As will be noted by the title, Birkeland's argument was, in fact, a by-product of his investigation of another thorny but related issue of psalm interpretation: the identity of the 'enemies' of the psalms.

Prior to Birkeland's investigation, opinions regarding the identification of the enemies in the psalms were divided into two camps. The dominant position, before Mowinckel published *Psalmenstudien I*, held that the enemies were those factions or groups hostile to the pious psalmists in postexilic Israel.[143] An intriguing modification of this approach was suggested by Hans Schmidt, who argued for a juridical *Sitz im Leben* where the persona of the lament psalms had been falsely accused.[144] In *Psalmenstudien I*, Mowinckel argued for an identification of the psalmist's enemies with purveyors of imprecatory magic (i.e., sorcerers).[145]

First, Birkeland argued that the enemies of the unnamed first person protagonist were largely identifiable as national enemies. The

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[141] Already in nineteenth-century scholarship the problem of identifying the protagonist of (what Gunkel would later type) the "laments of the individual," was the object of conjecture and scrutiny. Proponents of the Wellhausen School, most notably Olshausen and Smend, thought the persona of the lament psalm was only a literary device collectively referring to all Israel. Balla, Gunkel, and Rudolf Kittel strongly challenged this understanding by insisting that the 'Ich' or 'I' of the psalm was the authentic voice of a pious individual who was the compositional and historical referent. In favor of the latter position was its simplicity and straightforwardness. However, the strength of the former position was that it provided an intelligible explanation for the grandiose perspective (i.e., court style) of many of the individual psalms. Birkeland ended up settling on middle ground by arguing that the persona of the lament psalm was the king of Israel. See Olshausen, *Psalmen*; Smend, "Über das Ich der Psalmen," *ZAW* 8 (1988) 49-147; Balla, *Das Ich*; Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 173ff; and R. Kittel, *Die Psalmen* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1929).

[142] H. Birkeland, *Die Feinde des Individuums in der israelitischen Psalmenliteratur* (Oslo: Grøndahl & Søns, 1933).

[143] See Birkeland's historical survey in *Feinde des Individuums*, 1-19.

[144] H. Schmidt, *Das Gebet der Angeklagten im Alten Testament* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1928).

[145] Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien I*, 76-133.

focus on national enemies, coupled with the first person persona within the individual laments, gave credence to the view that the king stood behind the 'I' of the psalms as national spokesman. Second, Birkeland recognized that the identification of the psalmist's enemies as national enemies, and hence the conclusion that the psalmist, or better, the persona of the psalm, must be the human king, reconciled the positions of Emil Balla and Rudolf Smend. The human king, and only the human king, could intelligibly speak in terms of his own self ('I') with regard to national enemies and at the same time represent the community as 'We'. Just as Alfred Jeremias had argued earlier, in the cases of Pss 9, 10, 22, 44, 60, 66, 75, and 102, where the persona of the psalm shifts between 'I' and 'We', Birkeland maintained that only the actual human king could embody both liturgical manifestations.[146]

In the main, the implications of Birkeland's thesis regarding the royal psalms have been affirmed and expanded by J.H. Eaton. In fact, Eaton has made the most extensive attempt to identify the persona of the psalmist with the human king of Northern Israel or Judah. Whereas the criteria for the ascription of the king's performative voice for Birkeland were intimately tied to the psalmist's enemies, Eaton shifted the criteria to include what might be termed 'royal style'. Closely aligned with what earlier commentators considered to be court style, Eaton sought out motifs contained in the Psalter which, in his view, could only intelligibly be used in connection with the office of kingship. According to Eaton, royal motifs associated with an unnamed protagonist of the psalms of the individual may be listed in terms of the 'I' persona as follows:[147]

1. the psalmist prays in the presence of all nations.[148]
2. the psalmist's own deliverance has wide effects.[149]
3. the psalmist calls for world judgment.[150]

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[146] H. Birkeland, *The Evildoers in the Book of Psalms* (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1955) 11.

[147] Eaton, *Kingship*, 23-24, 137-38, 145-46, 151-52, 158, 160, 170-73. See also Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 147-48 and Birkeland, *Die Feinde*, 118-19.

[148] Pss 18:50; 57:10; 138:1, 4; 119:46.

[149] Ps 22:28f.

[150] Pss 7:7, 9; 56:8; 59:6, 9.

4. the psalmist is victorious over the nations.[151]
5. the psalmist confronts armies.[152]
6. the psalmist is compared to a bull flashing horns in triumph.[153]
7. the psalmist is identified as God's son.[154]
8. the psalmist's offerings are of grandiose proportion.[155]
9. the psalmist rests under Yahweh's favor.[156]
10. the psalmist's safety has implications for Yahweh's reputation.[157]
11. the psalmist is Yahweh's servant.[158]
12. the psalmist refers to God with first person possessives.[159]
13. the psalmist lives in the temple.[160]
14. the psalmist refers to Israel as 'my people'.[161]
15. the psalmist promises perpetual psalmody.[162]
16. the psalmist stands at the head of the festival.[163]
17. the psalmist's head is 'lifted on high'.[164]
18. the psalmist's radiance reflects God's glory.[165]
19. the psalmist is blessed with 'superabundant life'.[166]
20. the psalmist refers to God as his helper in relation to warfare.[167]

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[151] Pss 118:10-12; 9.

[152] Pss 3:7; 27:3; 55:22; 56:2f; 59; 62:4; 109:3, 120:7; 140:3, 8.

[153] Ps 92:11; 1 Sam 2:1.

[154] Pss 2:7; 27:10, 116:16.

[155] Pss 27:6; 61:9; 66:15f.

[156] Pss 18:20; 22:9; 41:12.

[157] Pss 23:3; 25:11; 31:4; 109:21; 143:11.

[158] Pss 19:12, 14; 27:9; 31:17; 35:27; 69:18; 86:2, 4, 16; 109:28; 143:2; 119.

[159] Pss 18:3; 40:18; 91:2; 94:22; etc.

[160] Pss 23:6; 27:4; 41:13; 61:8.

[161] Pss 59:12; 78:1; 144:2.

[162] Pss 61:9; 92:3.

[163] Pss 22:23, 26; 40:10f.

[164] Pss 3:4; 20:2; 27:6; 59:2; 69:30; 89:20; 91:14.

[165] Pss 3:4; 62:8; 132:18. Eaton also draws attention to what he terms the special mention of the king's glory in Pss 4:3; 7:6; 86:16. See *Kingship*, 145f.

[166] Pss 21:2-7; 61:7f; 91:16; 121:8.

[167] "Many of the designations acknowledge God as the king's rescuer and place of refuge or security, apparently reflecting his prevailing need for aid against militant foes: 'my stronghold', *məṣūdātī* (18.3; 71.3; 144.2); 'my rock', *ṣūrī* (28.1; 18.3, 47; 62.2, 7; 92.16; 144.1); 'my crag', *sal'ī* (18.3; 42.10; 71.3); 'my high fortress', *miśgabbī* (18.3; 59.10, 17f; 62.3, 7; 144.2; cf. 94.22); 'my refuge', *mə'ōzī* (?) (43.2; 31.5); 'my shelter', *maḥsī* (71.7; 73.28; 91.2, 9; cf. 61.4; 94.22; 142.6); 'my strength', *ḥizqī* (18 .2); 'my help', *'ezrātī* (40.18; cf. 54.6); 'my rescuer', *məpallətī* (18.3, 49; 40.18; 144.2)." See Eaton, *Kingship*, 172.

21. the psalmist reflexively refers to God's work in terms of his own.[168]
22. the psalmist is identified by the epithets צַדִּיק and חָסִיד.[169]
23. the psalmist's personal enemies are militaristic and multinational.[170]
24. the psalmist is helped by God's extended hand.[171]
25. the psalmist resides at God's right hand.[172]
26. the psalmist is the recipient of God's counsel.[173]
27. the psalmist's prayers are availing.[174]

Having compiled these royal motifs, Eaton proceeds to argue that Pss 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 17, 22, 23, 27, 28, 35, 40, 41, 57, 59, 61, 62, 63, 66, 69, 70, 71, 75, 91, 92, 94, 108, 118, 138, 140, and 143 should, unquestionably, be added to Gunkel's enumeration of eleven royal psalms. Although less clear, Eaton suggests that another twenty-three psalms could also be considered royal psalms.[175] All told, Eaton believes that at least 44% of the Hebrew Psalter is comprised of royal psalms! Although most scholars are not willing to go as far as Eaton,[176] a general sense has emerged among many that "such a construal of the texts is plausible and undergirded by the centrality of the king in ancient Israel and possibly in the official cult, as well as by the ascription of so many psalms to David."[177]

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[168] Eaton identifies this motif in terms of a shared lexicon between human king and divine king (i.e., both are referred to as 'lord', 'shepherd', 'light', 'king'). See Eaton, *Kingship*, 24, 171.

[169] Pss 89; 16:10; 4:4; 75:6; 5:13; 92:13; 11:3.

[170] Pss 18; 21:9f; 45:4-6; 72:8-11, 15; 89:23-26; 110:2; 132:18; etc.

[171] Pss 18:6; 41:13; 63:9; 73:23; 80:18.

[172] Pss 110:1, 5; 139:10.

[173] Pss 16:7; 73:24.

[174] Pss 2; 4:3f; 89:27; 91:15; 3:4f; 57:3f; 140:7; 20; 21:3, 5.

[175] Pss 5, 11, 16, 31, 36, 42-43, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 73, 77, 86, 102, 109, 116, 120, 121, 139, 141, and 142.

[176] Steven Croft, somewhat critical of Eaton's methodology, suggests a total of 48 royal psalms, of which 41 are psalms of the individual. Despite Croft's reduction of the total royal psalm corpus, he adds four psalms (Pss 26, 28, 44, 60) that were not on Eaton's list. See S.J.L. Croft, *The Identity of the Individual in the Psalms* (JSOTSup 44; Sheffield: JSOT, 1987) 80.

[177] P.D. Miller, "Current Issues in Psalms Studies," *WW* 5 (1986) 136.

One wonders, however, if these formulations, that base so much on the assumption that royal motifs indicate royal use rather than democratization, are any more secure than the 'patternism' of Hooke or Engnell. For example, in commenting on Ps 23 (which Eaton and Croft consider to be royal) William Holladay writes:

> We must understand, however, that even in ancient times the psalm was undergoing shifts in its reference points as the centuries passed. Subsequent worship leaders would sing the song in the temple in Jerusalem, whether they were kings or commoners. Individuals could make the song their own—*after all, there is nothing that is restrictively royal about the diction of the psalm* (italics mine).[178]

Holladay's assessment that there is nothing 'restrictively royal' in the psalm's language or metaphor raises significant questions that cannot be easily dismissed.

ROYAL PSALMS AS CANONICALLY PURPOSIVE

While the editorial shape (or lack thereof) of the Psalter does not fall within the purview of this investigation, the prominent role that several royal psalms play in various reconstructions of editorial intentionality is an appropriate concern. On the one hand, many scholars have followed Mowinckel's lead in assuming an original cultic context for the royal psalms and at the same time view their inclusion in the Hebrew Psalter attributable to their cultic rootedness. On the other hand, scholars such as Claus Westermann, Brevard Childs, James Mays, J. Clinton McCann, Jr., and Gerald Wilson have raised significant challenges to a simple correlation between the original context of the royal psalms (in the cult or otherwise) and their organizational role in the Hebrew Psalter.

ROYAL PSALMS AT THE PSALTER'S SEAMS

In 1962, Claus Westermann published a short article on the formation of the Hebrew Psalter suggesting that the structure of the

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[178] W.L. Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayer-book of a Cloud of Witnesses* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 15.

Psalter presupposed the existence of homogeneous subcollections of psalms, that is 'homogeneous' according to form-critical categories.[179] Referencing Gunkel's judgment over the haphazard editorial arrangement (stehen verstreut) of the various psalm *Gattungen*, and in particular that "die Königspsalmen (Ψ 2.18.20.21) bilden keine zusammengehörige Gruppe"[180] in the first book of the Psalter, Westermann postulated the following:

> The royal Psalms seem to suggest a [previous] collection of their own; they are found throughout the whole Psalter only as addenda. Psalms 2 and 89 frame the two larger collections, Pss. 3—41 and 42—83 (89). Psalms 20 and 21, 72, 101, and 110 are either added or inserted. This is an important fact for any understanding of the royal Psalms, which at a particular stage in the selection process were individually added or inserted into the various collections.[181]

Westermann surmised that this process of inserting royal psalms into the developing Psalter occurred after there was a closed collection of royal psalms and when the royal psalms no longer held any cultic function but had taken on a secondary messianic reading. One wonders then, if the biblical royal psalms (Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, and 144, according to Westermann) comprise the entire historical royal collection, or whether an additional editorial process was at work which selected certain psalms from a larger royal corpus. Westermann, unfortunately, is silent on this issue.

Brevard Childs, like Westermann, attributed the purposeful inclusion of the royal psalms in the Hebrew Psalter to a secondary theological rereading of the individual psalms:

> In sum, although the royal psalms arose originally in a peculiar historical setting of ancient Israel which had received its form from a common mythopoetic milieu, they were treasured in the Psalter for a different reason, namely as a witness to the messianic hope

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[179] Westermann, "Zur Sammlung des Psalters," *Theologia Viatorum* 8 (1962) 278-84; ET: "The Formation of the Psalter," *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981) 250-58, see especially pp. 251-52.

[180] Gunkel, *Einleitung*, 434.

[181] Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 257-58.

> which looked for the consummation of God's kingship through his Anointed One.[182]

Likewise, in his most recent publication, James L. Mays has assumed this theological-canonical context in his exegesis of the royal psalms. Here the royal psalms are studied primarily in light of a secondary messianic reinterpretation or rereading.[183] While these scholars admit an original preexilic cultic intentional composition for the royal psalms, this original meaning and usage had little to do with the decision to include the psalms in the Psalter. Hence the secondary reading, that hastened their inclusion as 'scripture', should be theologically normative.

Gerald Wilson, Child's student, through several works on the formation of the Hebrew Psalter, has formulated a hypothesis of an intentional editorial arrangement of individual psalms in the Hebrew Psalter. Most important for this study is that his theory rests on the placement of royal psalms at editorial seams between the major Psalter divisions.[184]

Wilson concludes that the traditional division of the Psalter into five books (that is, Book I = 1-41;[185] Book II = 42-72; Book III = 73-89; Book IV = 90-106; Book V = 107-150) is confirmed by the purposeful disjuncture of author attributions and genres at the seams.[186] In addition, between individual psalms within the greater divisions, Wilson observed two distinct 'genre binding' techniques operative in Books I-III, and IV-V. This suggests, among other things, that the first three books of the Psalter sustained an independent existence prior to the later editorial work that appended Books IV and V to the then unified collection of Books I-III.

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[182] Childs, *Introduction*, 517.

[183] Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 99-116.

[184] G.H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Chico: Scholars, 1985); "Evidence of Editorial Divisions in the Hebrew Psalter," *VT* 34 (1984) 335-352; and "The Use of Royal Psalms at the 'Seams' of the Hebrew Psalter," *JSOT* 35 (1986) 85-94.

[185] However, Wilson believes Ps 1 to be an introduction to the entire Psalter, and Ps 2 to be an introduction to the earlier collection of Books I-II.

[186] Both author attribution (לְאָסָף, לִבְנֵי־קֹרַח, לְדָוִד, etc.) and genre (מִנְצַח, מִזְמוֹר, etc.) are 'indicators' in the psalmic superscriptions.

The theory that Wilson develops hinges on the presence of royal psalms at the seams of Books I-III. Wilson explains that royal psalms bracket the whole collection (Pss 2 and 89) with Ps 72 occupying an intermediate position at the seam between Books II and III. Psalm 41, not commonly recognized as a royal psalm, occurs at the seam between Books I and II, where one would expect to find a royal psalm. But this does not disprove his theory. Rather, Wilson suggests that at the time the royal 'seam' psalms were added, Books I and II had already been combined and closed (at least temporarily) by the subscript: כָּלוּ שְׁפִלּוֹת דָּוִד בֶּן־יִשָׁי "the prayers of David the son of Jesse are completed."[187] Likewise, when Book III was added to Books I and II, a royal psalm, Ps 89, was appended, like Ps 72 at the close of Book II.

Wilson postulates that special care was taken by the editor(s) in choosing the appropriate royal psalm that would offer the final word for Books I-III. The editorial scheme is observable from the internal progression of the collections:

> ...Book Three departs strongly from the Davidic motif which dominates the two earlier books. While every psalm in Book One is attributed to David (either explicitly or by implication) and 21 of

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[187] Wilson, "The Use of Royal Psalms," 87. This article was published in 1986, five years after the completion of Wilson's doctoral dissertation which was published in 1985 in the Society of Biblical Literature's Dissertation Series. In his earlier dissertation work, Wilson makes the intriguing suggestion that "Thematic connections between Pss 41 and 72...raise the possibility that Ps 41, while not included in the modern category 'Royal' pss, may function here in a similar fashion to Ps 72." See Wilson, *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 208. Even more, after citing a) the superscription (לְדָוִד) of Ps 41, b) the justice concerns of vv. 1-2, and c) the plea for deliverance from enemies in vv. 3-8, Wilson concludes: "It seems quite plausible to me that here Ps 41 is viewed by the editor(s) as functioning quite on par with the 'Royal' pss 2, 72, 89. See Ibid., n. 15. In his later work, Wilson was right to back away from this earlier position. The suggestion that the editor(s) understood Ps 41 to be a royal psalm (based on the circumstantial evidence cited above) would at least raise the expectation that the other 'seam' psalms (Pss 106 and 150) were considered to be royal psalms by the editor(s) as well. Although it is practically impossible, by any stretch of the imagination, to consider Pss 106 and 150 to be royal psalms, it is equally clear that Ps 151 intends to be nothing other than a royal psalm. Suffice it to say, Wilson's later position, represented in his 1986 article, occupies stronger ground.

> 31 psalms of the second book are so designated, only one of the 17 psalms of Book Three is assigned to David (Ps 86).[188]

According to Wilson, the Davidic attribution pattern is purposeful to the editor's theological aim. As the collection proceeds, the once strong Davidic kingdom and covenant begins to falter and ultimately stands under divine judgment. The inaugural psalm, Ps 2, lifts up (though not explicitly mentioning בְּרִית) the Davidic covenant in most glowing terms with its attribution of *sonship* to the king. Psalm 72, then, serves to transfer David's covenant to his descendants, indicated through the ambiguous superscription לִשְׁלֹמֹה "to/of/for Solomon." Wilson lightly suggests that "the pleas in vv. 1-2 are intended to be read as David's prayer for his son and successor."[189] But Book III departs markedly from the first two Books both in its paucity of Davidic psalms (only one) as well as in its final royal psalm, Ps 89, which laments, not praises, human kingship.

There are two references to the בְּרִית in Ps 89 (vv. 29 and 35). While the Davidic covenant is recalled positively, the circumstances of the monarchy are anything but positive. Instead, vv. 39-46 describe the king in most desperate terms.

> ...for Ps. 89 the Davidic covenant is not only an event of the distant past, neither is it simply the source for later kingly authority, rather it is now a covenant *failed*. YHWH is depicted as rejecting his anointed king and renouncing the Davidic covenant.[190]

On the one hand, Pss 2-72 serve "as a celebration of YHWH's faithfulness to the covenant that found its fullest expression during the united monarchy."[191] On the other hand, Book III culminates in lament (Ps 89) as "the psalmist longs for the restoration of the Davidic line and even in exile prays for its return."[192] With the Davidic covenant (of Ps 2) having been abandoned by God, the only thing that remains is the "anguished cry of the Davidic descendants."[193]

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[188] Wilson, "The Use of Royal Psalms," 89-90.
[189] Ibid., 89.
[190] Ibid., 90.
[191] Wilson, *Editing*, 208.
[192] Ibid., 214.

There remain problems with Wilson's construal. Even assuming Gunkel's modest enumeration of royal psalms, he does not account for the editorial placement of Pss 18, 20, 21, 45, 101, 110, and 132—or 66% of Gunkel's royal psalms. This is magnified, of course, if one adopts a wider distribution of royal psalms. Additionally, Wilson's suggestion that Pss 3-41 and 42-72 were already joined prior to the editorial placement of Pss 2 and 89 is plausible but not compelling. While supporting Wilson's thesis, J. Clinton McCann, Jr. argues that the initial psalms at the seams (Pss 1-2, 42-44, and 73-74) "instruct the postexilic community not only to face the disorienting reality of exile but also to reach beyond the traditional grounds for hope, that is, beyond the Davidic/Zion theology."[194] But McCann's argument is at odds with Wilson's, for Wilson must assume that Pss 3-71 were already an editorial unit for his thesis to hold. At a minimum, both arguments deserve thoughtful review.

The Role Of Royal Psalms Within Psalter Collections

Not only have scholars devoted attention to editorial activity at the macro level of the Psalter's organization, significant study has been given to the micro level of particular psalm placement. Some have sought to ground a psalm's inclusion in the Psalter based upon its membership in a previous collection. Most recently arguments have been made seeking to demonstrate a theological or literary rationale on the part of an editor who intentionally juxtaposed individual psalms to achieve set aims. Both approaches touch upon significant issues regarding the royal psalms.

For example, Ps 132 is a member of the שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת. Klaus Seybold has argued that Pss 120-134 (excepting Ps 132) were first composed as "persönliche Psalmen" which were collected and redacted by editors to promulgate royal/zion theology.[195] Ps 132,

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[193] Ibid., 213.

[194] J.C. McCann, Jr., "Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Psalter," *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, 95.

[195] K. Seybold, *Die Wallfahrtspsalmen: Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte von Psalm 120-134* (Biblische–Theologische Studien 3; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 32; 42f.

unique in its composition as a royal psalm, too, was redacted to achieve editorial aims.[196] Seybold's work argues against a unified collection of royal psalms that were randomly scattered throughout the Psalter. Instead, editors deliberately adopted (and redacted) the royal psalm in view of its particular content and then juxtaposed it intentionally to play a role within a larger collection.

Sympathetic to the works of Eaton and Wilson, Patrick Miller has begun to build a theological and literary case for particular psalm placements within Book I of the Hebrew Psalter. According to Miller,

> Psalm 2...sets the stage upon which it is possible to pray the prayers and give the thanks that Psalms 18, 20, and 21 express. It is not just a matter of having a royal psalm at the beginning of the Psalter. It is this particular one that leads us into what follows and lays the ground for other psalms by and about the king.[197]

Miller notes that in Book I only Pss 10 and 33 lack the superscription לְדָוִד, but that these 'exceptions' can be accounted for by reading them with previous psalms.[198] Significantly, then, all of the psalms in Book I are, by the leading of Ps 2 *and* by the addition of the superscription לְדָוִד, editorially placed on the lips of the king.[199] However, Ps 1, which lifts up the way of the Torah, grounds the royal persona in terms of fidelity to the Torah.[200] This becomes especially clear in Mil-

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[196] Note the recent study by Loren D. Crow. Like Seybold, Crow finds Ps 132 to be compositionally distinct from the other Ascent Psalms, though exhibiting a shared Jerusalemite primacy. L.D. Crow, *The Song of Ascents (120-134): Their Place in Israelite History and Religion* (SBLDS 148; Atlanta: Scholars, 1996) 143-145.

[197] P.D. Miller, Jr., "The Beginning of the Psalter," *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993) 87-88.

[198] See Wilson, *Editing*, 173-76.

[199] Building upon Eaton, Miller states that with the exception of Ps 8, "There is nothing that excludes or prohibits reading most of the psalms in the first half of Book I of the Psalter as coming from the mouth of the king." See Miller, "Beginning," 89.

[200] "The king, indeed David, is a representative figure, and never more so than as the one who lives by the Lord's Torah." See Miller, "Beginning," 91. See also Miller, "Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer," *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung* (ed. K. Seybold; Herders Biblische Studien 1; Freiburg: Herder, 1994) 131f.

ler's exposition of the subcollection of Pss 15-24. Psalms 15, 19, and 24 stress obedience to the Torah, while Pss 18, 20, and 21 envelope Ps 19 specifying the human ruler to be the "Torah lover."[201]

These studies go further than most in proposing explanations for the inclusion of particular royal psalms in the Hebrew Psalter. Each suggests that the editor's intentional arrangements paid close attention to the contours of individual royal psalms. Perhaps, even more importantly, these studies suggest intelligible synergism between some royal psalms and other psalms of the Hebrew Psalter.

EVALUATION

Based on the above survey, it is patently clear that there remain several issues pertaining to the royal psalms to be settled. Fundamentally, what is a royal psalm? As we have seen above, there continues to be significant definitional disagreement among scholars. Second, are the royal psalms in their present form primarily reflective of the cult or of an editor's literary aims? Other possibilities exist. Third, should the royal psalms be grouped together in ways other than phenomenologically? That is, given the history of kingship in Northern Israel and Judah, is it not possible that individual royal psalms reflect different and even contradictory royal ideologies? Fourth, why are there royal psalms in the Psalter in the first place?

It is only after these questions are answered that a theological assessment of the royal psalms can be made. Accordingly, it is to these tasks that we now turn. Henceforth, the siglum 'RPss' will be used of those eleven psalms that are considered most commonly to be royal: Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, 144.[202]

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[201] Miller, "Kingship," 128ff.

[202] In the main, the psalms listed above are treated as royal by almost every modern commentator with the most significant disagreements being whether the whole or only parts of Pss 89 and 144 should be labeled 'royal'.

Chapter 2

THE ROYAL PSALMS RECONSIDERED WITHIN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

Gunkel's treatment of the royal psalms was a watershed in the history of psalms scholarship. Prior to Gunkel, scholars were content to divine the historical occasion that gave birth to a particular royal psalm. Gunkel's emphasis on *Sitz im Leben*, as well as Mowinckel's call for a cult-functional interpretation, led scholars to believe that the royal psalms must have been used over and over again in the pre-monarchical cult. Although there have been significant dissenting opinions, it is commonly assumed that the royal psalms give voice to the luster of the royal courts of Israel. However, no one has given appropriate consideration to the fact that Gunkel's inability to mesh the royal psalms' *Sitze im Leben* with their *Gattungen* might indicate a problem in theoretical approach. With this in mind we look to Israel's neighbors for clarity and analogy.

THE OMISSION OF PERSONAL AND REGNAL NAMES IN THE ROYAL PSALMS

In chapter 1 we observed that Gunkel's insistence on interpreting the RPss within the wider context of the ancient Near East was applauded

by subsequent scholars. Understandably, little encouragement was needed to hold this view as the burgeoning discovery of epigraphical remains throughout the ancient Near East provided greater clarity concerning kings and cults in and beyond the Levant. Shared terminology and imagery between the RPss and comparative materials from (especially) Egypt and Mesopotamia seemed to suggest that Israel followed similar ideological patterns. As already noted, Gunkel maintained that the scribes responsible for the RPss were entranced by their neighbors' court style and employed it uncritically in their own compositions.

And yet, given manifold thematic and ideological correspondences, a relatively simple but, essential, element typical to royal hymn and prayer texts of the ancient Near East, was missing from the RPss. The RPss never identify the protagonist, that is, the specific, historical name of the king! This is consistently the case, despite the promise of the psalmist in Ps 45:18 that he will cause the king's name to be memorialized by all generations so that they might give him praise into eternity.

The surprising omission of personal and regnal names has not yet received the critical attention it warrants. Since most scholars assume that the RPss were used for ideological and propagandistic purposes in concrete historical situations, it is disturbing that no historical personages are cited in the RPss themselves. This deviation demands critical attention. The employment of kings' names and titularies was essential for the ideological justification of royal houses throughout the ancient Near East.

REGNAL AND PERSONAL NAMES IN COMPARATIVE MATERIALS

When looking at comparative materials from the ancient Near East, it is clear that one is, in many ways, comparing apples and oranges. The biblical psalms have their own peculiar shape and structure. That is to say, where the general genres of hymns and prayers can be identified throughout the ancient Near East, the shape, structure, and context of the various hymns and prayers demonstrate remarkable variation.

Royal hymns, as a rule, can be grouped into two types suggested by the Sumerologist Jacob Klein (based on Römer): type A =

a hymn addressed to a god who is invoked for a king; type B = a hymn in which a king is addressed as the object of praise.[1] Royal prayers require no such distinction since prayers *per se* are not directed toward a human agent. What follows are citations from each of the three genres: royal hymns type A; royal hymns type B; and royal prayers. Without devoting space to their distinctions, the overwhelming tendency to "name the personal name" of the sponsoring monarch is unmistakable.

SUMERO-AKKADIAN TEXTS

Sumerian royal hymns and prayers have been identified for the following rulers: Abi-ešuḫ, AN-àm, Būr-Sîn, Damiq-ilišu, Enlil-bāni, Gudea, Gungunum, Hammurabi, Ibbi-Sîn/Suen, Iddin-Dagan, Išbi-Erra, Išme-Dagan, Lipit-Ištar, Nebukadnezer I, Rīm-Sîn, Samsu-iluna, Sargon II, Sîn-idinnam, Sîn-iqīšam, Sîn-šarru-iškun, Šu-ilīšu, Šulgi, Šu-Šîn/Suen, Tukulti-Ninurta I, Ur-Nammu, and Ur-Ninurta.[2] Similarly, royal hymns and prayers written in Akkadian have been traced to Kurigalzu, Assurnasirpal I, Assurbanibal, Nebukadnezar I, Salmanassar III, Tiglathpilesar I, Assurnasirpal II, Sargon, Abi-ešuḫ, Assur-bēl-kala, Nebukadnezar II, Ammiditana, Sumsu-iluna, Tukulti-Ninurta I, Nabopolassar, Neriglissar, and Nabonidus.[3]

In each of these Sumero-Akkadian texts, the personal or royal name of the reigning king plays the essential role of identifying the specific historical personage who is either the subject of praise or the petitioner before the gods. A sampling of lines from the Sumerian and Akkadian texts is illustrative of their general orientation with regard to royal self-reference:

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[1] J. Klein, *Three Šulgi Hymns: Sumerian Royal Hymns Glorifying King Šulgi of Ur* (Bar-Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Culture; Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1981) 23. See also W. H. Ph. Römer, *Sumerische 'Königshymnen' der Isin-Zeit* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965) 5-6.

[2] See *HKL* 3.73-75 and J. Klein, *Three Šulgi Hymns*, 38-43, 226-234.

[3] See *HKL* 3.82f, and M.–J. Seux, *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyria* (Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient 8; Paris: Cerf, 1976) 493-530.

►O, my king, the [great bu]ll with splendid limbs, the dragon with [eyes] of a lion. Shepherd **Šulgi**, the great bull with splendid limbs, the dragon with eyes of a lion.[4]

►**Išme-Dagan**, der starke Mann, mit Sehen und Fleisch eines Löwen, der starke Jüngling, der Schrecken erregt. Er allein ist erhaben, der Herr, dessen guter Name in allen Ländern gerufen worden ist.[5]

►Den König, den legitimen Versorger, mögest du am Leben erhalten, **Rīmsîn**, den legitimen Versorger, mögest du am Leben erhalten![6]

►God of prosperity born of An, gazed upon [by Uraš], **Šu-Sin**, who like Nanna, expert of judgment...before Enlil, From your birth you are a mighty man, (whose) name was called by Nanna. **Šu-Sin**, heroic son of An, beloved of Enlil.[7]

►Reine Nininsina, Herrin Gula, Nininsina, im Egalmaḫ, das geg[rü]nd[et], freue du dich mit **Išbi'erra**, dem Geliebten deines Herzens![8]

►Aššur is king—indeed Aššur is king! **Assurbanipal** is the [representative] of Aššur, the creation of his hands. May the great

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[4] CBS 11065. *Trans*. J. Klein, *Three Šulgi Hymns*, 73. Šulgi D, as reconstructed by Klein, includes at least fifteen references to the king's proper name.

[5] Ni 2432. *Trans*. M.–C. Ludwig, *Untersuchungen zu den Hymnen des Išme-Dagan von Isin* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990) 90. See also J. Klein, "Šulgi and Išmedagan: Originality and Dependence in Sumerian Royal Hymnology," *Bar-Ilan Studies in Assyriology Dedicated to Pinḥas Artizi* (eds. J. Klein and A. Skaist; Bar-Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Culture; Ramat Gan, Bar-Ilan University, 1990) 68-69.

[6] UET VI 70-72. *Trans*. H. Steible, *Rīmsîn, Mein König: Drei kultische Texte aus Ur mit der Schlußdoxologie* ^{d}*ri-im-*^{d}*sîn lugal-mu* (Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 1; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1975) 38.

[7] BM 100042 1-4. *Trans*. S.N. Kramer, "BM 100042: A Hymn to Šu-Sin and an Adab of Nergal," *DUMU-E_2-DUB-BA-A: Studies in Honor of Åke W. Sjöberg* (eds. H. Behrens, D. Loding, and M.T. Roth; Occasional Publications of the Samuel Noah Kramer Fund 11; Philadelphia: The University Museum, 1989) 307. This text contains eleven references to Šu-Sin/Suen and seven references to Šu-ilišu.

[8] STVC 61 RS. *Trans*. Römer, *Sumerische Königshymnen*, 78.

gods make firm his reign, may they protect the life [of **Assurba**]**nipal**, king of Assyria.[9]

►Calm down, daughter of Sin, settle in your abode! Bless **Sargon**, who holds fast the hem of your garment, the shepherd of Assyria, who walks behind you! Decree for him as his fate a life of long days! Make firm the foundations of his throne, prolong his reign![10]

►He girded himself with awe-inspiring weapons, He commanded his favorite to the battlefield's task, He made proud the weaponry of **Tukulti-apil-Eshara**![11] Before him Enlil leads him into battle, Ishtar, mistress of turmoil, aroused him to strife...[12]

►Look upon me, Mistress, may your heart be pained as I turn to you. I am **Assurnasirpal,** your ailing servant, humble, revering your divinity, responsible, your beloved, who ensures your divine sustenance, who unfailingly supplies your food offerings...[13]

►C'est pourquoi, Belet-Sippar, Dame très grande, dès que cette maison sera achevée et que tu y prendras place, (pour ce qui est de) moi, **Nabopolassar**, le roi ton pourvoyeur, de même que le briques de Sippar et de Babylone sont stables à jamais, fais durer ma royautè jusqu'à des jours lointains![14]

►Ô Étemenanki, bénis-moi, **Nabuchodonosor**, le roi qui t'a restauré![15]

►...de satiété de très grand âge, de stabilité du trône et de longue durée de règne; à ton ordre ferme qui est invariable, que moi, **Nériglissar**, je sois à perpétuité un roi pourvoyeur, qui recherche tes places![16]

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[9] VAT 13831 15-16. *Trans. SAA* 3, 26.
[10] K 3600 + D75 rev II 17-21. *Trans. SAA* 3 14-16.
[11] That is Tiglath-Pileser I.
[12] LKA 63 32-37. *Trans. BtM*, 237.
[13] Brünnow, *ZA* (1890) 79-80. *Trans. BtM*, 240.
[14] Abel-Winkler, *Keilschrifttexte* (1890) 32. *Trans.* Seux, *Hymnes et prières*, 506.
[15] BE I 85 verso 5. *Trans.* Seux, *Hymnes et prières*, 507.
[16] CT 36 pl. 20, 29-39. *Trans.* Seux, *Hymnes et prières,* 515.

> ►Quant à moi, **Nabonide**, roi de Babylone, qui crains votre grande divinité, que je jouisse à satiété de la vie![17]

> ►The greatness of his power he caused to appear till the end of days. **Hammurabi**, the king, the mighty warrior, the exterminator of foes, the flood of battles, the demolisher of the enemy's land, the extinguisher of battles, who brings disputes to an end, the destroyer of soldiers as (if they were) a figurine of clay, the one who loosens difficult distresses.[18]

The above sampling of key lines from Mesopotamian royal hymns and prayers lifts up the vital political, ideological, and theological importance of naming the monarch by personal or regnal name (with or without epithets) in the body of the text itself.[19] It is easy to imagine how hymns addressed to kings, even though presumably commissioned by the royal court, would lack political freight if a specific king were not mentioned, especially since many of these texts were *Prunkinschriften* (display texts).[20] Thus, in annalistic narratives

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[17] CT 34 pls. 33-34, 14-24. *Trans*. Seux, *Hymnes et prières,* 523.

[18] CT 21 40-41. *Trans*. N. Wasserman, "CT 21, 40-41: A Bilingual Report of an Oracle with a Royal Hymn of Hammurabi," *RA* 86 (1992) 6.

[19] This is true of royal oracles as well. Note, for example, Ishtar's decree to King Esarhaddon: "I am Ishtar of [Arbela]. O **Esarhaddon**, king of the land of As[syria], I give long days and eternal years to **Esarhaddon**, my king in the City, in Nine[veh], Dalah, and Arbela...O **Esarhaddon**, legitimate heir of Ninlil,..., I will finish off your enemies with my own hands. **Esarhaddon**, king of the land of Assyria, is a cupful of lye, an axe weighing (only) two shekels. In the City I give you long days and eternal years, O **Esarhaddon**, in Arbela, I am your good shield." K 4310 III 7'-IV 35. *Trans*. *BtM*, 712.

[20] However, as A. Kirk Grayson points out, "The term 'display' (*Prunkinschrift*)...is inaccurate for although some of these texts were installed for all to see, others were buried in the foundation or other parts of a building." See A.K. Grayson, "Assyrian Royal Inscriptions: Literary Characteristics," *New Horizons*, 37. Perhaps more to the point, "most Assyrians including the upper classes were illiterate which meant that the royal inscriptions were read aloud to them by scribes." Ibid., 43. Nevertheless, even in the case of a buried foundation inscription, the text would have been thought to be 'displayed' before the gods. Most importantly, the royal inscription would (eventually) be displayed to any king (and his royal counselors) who might dig up the foundation in attempts to renovate or rebuild and in that process lay his own foundation stone. On this point, see McBride, "Deuteronomic Name Theology," 88ff and Assurbanipal's Rassam Cylinder, *AR* 2.323, 2.339.

of the Rassam Cylinder B the following royal prayer is recorded:

> ...It was on account of this insolence which Teumman uttered that I approached the exalted Ishtar, took my stand in her presence and bowed down before her. I implored her divinity, my tears flowing, and said: "Lady of Arbela, I, Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, the creature of thy hands, [whom Assur king of the gods], thy father, [commanded] to restore the sanctuaries of Assyria...I have sought out thy sanctuary and have come to worship [thy deity].[21]

As was the case with monumental inscriptions where the king wanted to make it very clear who underwrote the building project,[22] so too, in the case of public or recorded prayer, the monarch desired peoples and gods alike to know who was responsible for praise and petition.

The voicing of the royal name in the context of prayer or hymn, even when prayed on behalf of the king (by a scribe or priest), effected the ruler's hypostatic presence and signified the monarch's ownership of the prayer itself.[23] Even when the king offered words of praise or petition himself, it was crucial to leave a proper record before the gods so that response and blessing would be bestowed upon the rightful king. In other words, due credit was a concern. The importance of rightful ownership (and hence credit) for religious offerings is particularly evident in Sumerian and Akkadian royal private dedicatory inscriptions where only the name of the deity and the

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[21] Rassam Cylinder B V 30-34. *Trans. AR*, 2.331.

[22] A good example of this type of credit-grabbing is recorded in Assurbanipal's inscription now known as Rassam Cylinder D, IV, 17-33. See *AR* 2.335.

[23] Similarly, Arthur Ungnad has pointed to the hypostatic presence of the king in the local cult represented by his statue or image: "Der häufige ass. Name Ṣalam-šarri-iqbi ist insofern besonders interessant, als er die Bedeutung der Königsstatue für den Kult erkennen lässt. Man kann ihn nicht anders übersetzen als 'das Königsabbild hat angeordnet.' Er ist ganz so gebildet wie etwa Adadiqbi, Aššur-iqbi und viele ähnliche. Dem Königsbild, das somit auf gleiche Stufe mit den Göttern oder Götterbildern gestellt war, schrieb die Priesterschaft demnach die Fähigkeit zu, 'Befehle' zu erteilen. Damit stimmt der in unseren Urkunden nachweisbare Brauch überein, vor dem Königsbildnis Verträge abzuschliessen." See J. Friedrich, G.R. Meyer, A. Ungnad, and E. F. Weidner, *Die Inschriften vom Tell Halaf, Keilschrifttexte und aramäische Urkunden aus einer assyrischen Provinzhauptstadt* (AfO Beiheft 6; Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1967) 58-59, n. 21. See also M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (SBLMS 19; Missoula:

royal name of the monarch were inscribed on the dedicated object.[24] Without the proper divine address, along with an accurate royal return address, the king risked offering praise and petition in vain.[25]

Explicitly naming the king served the additional purpose of demonstrating the monarch's intimate relationship with the god(s). This, of course, was not only true of kings but of all petitioners as well. Accordingly, Werner Mayer comes to the following understanding regarding the function of proper names in Babylonian prayer texts:

> Welche Funktion hat die Selbsteinführung im Ganzen des Gebetes? Sie dient vermutlich nicht nur bzw. nicht so sehr der Identifikation, der ersten Vorstellung des Beters, als vielmehr dazu, das Verhältnis des Beters zu den Göttern—dass er demütiger Diener des angerufenen Gottes ist, dass sein Leben einem Genius zugehört, dass er sich mächtigen Göttern unterstellt hat—durch das Aussprechen zu seinen Gunsten wirksam werden zu lassen.[26]

In his survey of Babylonian prayers, Mayer found that when *anāku* occurred in the *casus-obliquus* form, 80% of the time the personal name of the petitioner was recorded directly following *anāku* or *anāku aradka*.[27] In contrast, and like the biblical psalms, a number of Babylonian prayers were preserved without recording the personal name of the petitioner. Often the open-ended formula, *anāku annanna mār annanna*, that is "I, _____, son of _____," where *annanna* literally means 'so-and-so',[28] was written to indicate where a personal name might be inserted.[29]

A most creative example of the practice of citing the royal

Scholars, 1974) 59, and McBride, "Deuteronomic Name Theology," 71ff.

[24] See J.S. Cooper, *Sumerian and Akkadian Royal Inscriptions, I: Presargonic Inscriptions* (AOSTS 1; New Haven: AOS, 1986) 7-13.

[25] A modern analogy might consist of one's sending a $100,000 tax payment *in cash* to the Internal Revenue Service, but failing to place one's name or social security number on the payment slip!

[26] W. Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der Babylonischen "Gebetschwörungen"* (Studia Pohl: Series maior 5; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1976), 47.

[27] Ibid., 47.

[28] *CAD* II.1 130.

[29] Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 48, n. 5.

name in a prayer or hymn text is found in Assurbanipal's acrostic hymn to the god Marduk and his consort Zarpanitu. At first glance, one will look in vain for the monarch's name throughout the entire 67 lines of cuneiform text. Under closer examination, however, one will note that the 67 lines of text are grouped into 30 verses, each marked off by a line separator inscribed on the tablet. The initial signs of each verse are to be read in vertical succession as follows:

> a-na-ku aš-[šur]-[ba]-[ni]-ap-li ša il-su-ka [b]u-[ul]-[l]i-[ṭ]a-[ni]-ma
> ma-⌐ru¬-⌐du¬-uk da-li-li-ka lu-ud-lu[l]
>
> *anāku Aššurbaniapli ša ilsuka bulliṭannima Maruduk dalīlīki ludlul*
>
> I am Assurbanipal, who has called out to you: give me life, Marduk, and I will praise you![30]

The royal poet had composed an acrostic hymn that, once recognized as such, delightfully displayed Assurbanipal's name while at the same time laying claim to Marduk's blessings.

When the populace petitioned on the king's behalf, as in the case of the king's coronation, it only made sense to specifically name the person who was becoming king: "Aššur is king—indeed Aššur is king! Assurbanipal is the [representative] of Aššur, the creation of his hands. May the great gods make firm his reign, may they protect the life [of Assurba]nipal, king of Assyria!"[31]

Many more texts could be cited that are illustrative of the practice of explicitly naming the king. Conversely, there are a handful of published texts which appear to be royal prayers or hymns that contain no reference to a specific monarch.[32] These texts, though, are so fragmentary that one cannot be sure that they count as exceptions. Suffice it to say, in Assyria and Babylon an overwhelming pattern is clear. An essential constituent of the royal style in hymns and prayers

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[30] K 7592 + K 8717 + DT 363 + BM 99173. *Trans*. *SAA* 3, 10.

[31] VAT 13831 15-16. *Trans*. *SAA* 3, 26.

[32] For example, M.–J. Seux lists three texts under "Prières du roi et prières de rois" which do not contain specific royal names. See Seux, *Hymnes et prières*, 489-493. Two of the texts were previously published in *SAHG* but listed under "Gebetsbeschwörungen." See *SAHG* 342, n. 68, and 354f., n. 71. There are also several fragmentary texts which appear to be royal hymns or prayers, but do not preserve the name of the sovereign.

is the inclusion of the royal or personal name of the praising or petitioning king, or the name of the monarch, who himself, is being praised.

HITTITE TEXTS

Similar to the Sumero-Akkadian remains, the Hittite remains contain the royal hymns and prayers of Arnuwandas, Asmunikal, Mursilis, Muwatallis, Hattusilis, and Pudehepas.[33] In 1980, Renè Lebrun made a comprehensive study of Hittite hymns and literary prayers dating from 1400-1180 BCE.[34] The great majority of the hymns and prayers are either voiced by the royal personage (king and/or queen) or voiced by a scribe on behalf of the ruler(s). In either case, the king's royal name is clearly attested and integral to the work. The following excerpts confirm the essential function that the royal name of the sovereign assumed in Hittite royal hymns and prayers.

> ►Sun-goddess of Arinna...I, **Pudu-hepas**, am a servant of thine from old...[35]

> ►Hattian Storm-god, my lord, and ye, Hattian gods, my lords! **Mursilis**, the great king, your servant, has sent me...[36]

> ►Telepinus, a mighty (and) noble deity art thou. **Mursilis**, the king, thy servant, and the queen, thy handmaid have sent me...[37]

> ►Thus speaks the Tabarnas **Muwatallis**, the Great King, the king of the Hatti country, the son of Mursilis, the Great King, the king of the Hatti country, the valiant...[38]

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[33] Ph. H.J. Houwick Ten Cate, "Hittite Royal Prayers," *Numen* 16 (1969) 84-86.

[34] R. Lebrun, *Hymnes et prières hittites* (Homo religiosus; Louvain-la-neuve: Centre D'histoire Des Religions, 1980).

[35] KUB XXI 27. *Trans*. *ANET* 393. Pudu-hepas is queen.

[36] KUB XVI 8. *Trans*. *ANET* 394.

[37] KUB XXIV 1-4. *Trans*. *ANET* 396.

[38] KUB VI 45 + KUB XXX 14. *Trans*. *ANET* 397.

> ►Grant life to [king] **Hattusili**; by the goddess of fate may long years and days be given to him. Sun-goddess of Arinna, you are a compassionate deity...request the life of **Hattusili** in the assembly of the gods.[39]

> ► [We] **Arnuwandas,** the Great King, and **AsmuNikkal**, the Great Queen, shall again give fat sheep (and) fine [oxen], fine sacrificial loaves and libations...[40]

The Hittite prayer tablets differ from building inscriptions. They were used primarily to gain access to the deities' favors, although that, in and of itself, was integrally related with the desire for ideological and political influence over the populace. Regarding the authorship and delivery of these intercessory prayers, Moshe Greenberg writes:

> It is likely that he [King Mursili] recited some of the great plague prayers before the statue of the god, or had the on-duty priest recite in his name daily prayers (e.g. to Telibinu). Learned scribes presumably were consulted, and submitted to the king drafts after having searched their archives for the most notable previous prayers for similar situations. At the least, the chief scribes advised the king on the type of argument to develop and the genre of hymn fit to precede it. How to plead was a matter for experts, especially when the welfare of the king and kingdom depended on it.[41]

It may be concluded, in accordance with the Sumero-Akkadian examples cited above, that the potential problems of 'ownership' and 'credit' were abated if the Hittite monarch was specifically named within the prayer. The Hittite texts, therefore, confirm the vital importance of including the royal or personal name of the king in royal hymns and prayers.

EGYPTIAN TEXTS

The sacral importance of the monarch's name is nowhere more patent than in the epigraphic remains of the Egyptians which contain

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[39] KUB XXI 27. *Trans. ANET*, 398.

[40] KUB XVII 21. *Trans. ANET* 399.

[41] M. Greenberg, "Hittite Royal Prayers and Biblical Petitionary Psalms," *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung*, 24. Greenberg closely follows (and cites) Lebrun's discussion in *HPH*, 420f.

the Pharaoh's titulary and/or cartouche. The Egyptian titulary (*nkhbt*) comprised five great names (*rn wr*) which were given to the Pharaoh upon his accession to the throne.[42] The first name is known as the 'Horus' name, defining "the particular incarnation of [the god] Horus involved."[43] It represented "the king as the earthly embodiment of the old falcon-god Horus, who early became the dynastic god of Egypt, and as such was identified with the sun-god Rē'."[44] The second and third titles also reflect Egyptian royal ideology and mythology. The second name is the *nbty* title and indicates the king's joint rulership over Upper and Lower Egypt. The meaning of the third name, the 'golden-Horus' name, is still disputed. The fourth name, the pronomen, is always introduced by *n-sw-bỉt*, "he who belongs to the sedge and the bee," and usually includes the theophoric component *R'*. This name, the royal name assumed at the time of accession (i.e., the regnal name), is almost always written in a cartouche. The fifth and final title is similarly introduced by *sꜣ R'*, 'Son of Re', followed by the family or personal name (or nomen) of the king. It, too, is usually written in a cartouche.

The first four names of the titulary are throne names, granted to the king at his accession to the throne. These names give expression to the king's participation in the world of the gods. In Frankfort's words, "it [the titulary] sets the monarch apart from other men entirely. The mysterious powers in nature upon which man depends are somehow influenced by the king's actions. He shares their being; he vouchsafes their beneficial support of the community."[45] The assumed titulary was propagated throughout his kingdom after the king's accession. This practice is patent in the following letter which was sent to a vassal, the ruler of Kush, after the accession of Thutmose I:

> Royal decree to the viceroy and overseer of southern lands, Turoi:

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[42] See Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 46-47, A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs* (3rd. ed. rev.; London: Oxford University Press, 1969) 71-76, and R.J. Leprohon, "Royal Ideology and State Administration in Pharaonic Egypt," *CANE* 1.276.

[43] Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 46.

[44] Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 72.

[45] Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 47.

> Now this decree of the king is brought to you to inform you that My Majesty, l.p.h., has acceded as King of Upper and Lower Egypt to the Horus-throne of the living, there never to be his like again, and that my titualry has been formulated as "Horus, Mighty Bull, beloved of Maat; the Two Ladies, crowned with the royal serpent, great in strength; Horus of Gold, well supplied with years, causing hearts to live; the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Aakheperkare, the Son of Re, Thutmose (I), may he live forever and ever."
>
> So you shall have divine offerings presented to the gods of Elephantine in the province of the Head of the South in doing what is praiseworthy on behalf of the life, prosperity, and health of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Aakheperre, given life, and you shall have the oath established in the name of My Majesty, l.p.h., born to the king's mother, Senisoneb, may she be healthy.[46]

The divine offerings to the gods of Elephantine were to be presented by invoking the titulary of the king, thus effecting the hypostatic presence of the king (by use of his name) before both gods and peoples.

It is hardly surprising, then, given the importance of royal names in Egypt, to find a similar pattern of "naming the royal name" as we have observed in Sumero-Akkadian and Hittite texts. The principal titular 'name' for referencing the king in Egyptian texts is his *pronomen*, usually followed by his *nomen*, although there are exceptions to this rule. Consider these Egyptian royal hymns and prayers:

> ►I am he who makes the singer waken music for Hathor, every day at any hour she wishes. May your heart be at peace with music, may you proceed in goodly peace, may you rejoice in life and gladness with Horus who loves you, who feasts with you on your foods, who eats with you of the offerings, may you admit me to it every day! Horus Wahankh, honored by Osiris, Son of Re, **Intef**, born of Nefru.[47]

> ►Horus: Divine of Form; the Two Ladies: Divine of Birth; Gold-Horus: Being; the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: **Khakaure**;

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[46] Cairo Stele 34006. *Trans*. E. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt* (SBLWAW 1; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 27.

[47] Metropolitan Museum 13.182.3. *Trans*. *AEL*, 1.95.

the Son of Re: **Sesostris**—he has seized the Two Lands in triumph. Hail to you, Khakaure, our Horus, Divine of Form![48]

►Adoration of *Re-Harakhti-who-rejoices-in-lightland In-his-name-Shu-who-is-Aten*, who give life forever, by the King who lives by Maat, the Lord of the Two Lands: **Neferkheprure**, *Sole-one-of-Re*; the Son of Re who lives by Maat, the Lord of the crowns: **Akhenaten**, great in his lifetime, given life forever....
...Your august son exults in joy, O Aten living daily content in the sky, your offspring, your august son, Sole one of Re; the Son of Re does not cease to extol his beauty, **Neferkheprure**, *Sole-one-of-Re*.[49]

►Words spoken by Amon-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands: Welcome to me, as thou exultest at the sight of my beauty, my son and my avenger, **Men-kheper-Re**, living forever! I shine forth for love of thee, and my heart is glad at thy good comings into my temple, while my hands endow thy body with protection and life.[50]

►Words spoken by Amon-Re, King of the Gods: My son, of my Body, my beloved, **Neb-maat-Re**, my living image, whom my body created, whom Mut, Mistress of Ishru in Thebes, the Lady of the Nine Bows, bore to me...My heart is very joyful when I see thy beauty...[51]

►Great joy has arisen in Egypt; jubilation has gone forth in the towns of Egypt. They talk about the victories which **Mer-ne-Ptah Hotep-hir-Maat** made in Tehenu: "How amiable is he, the victorious ruler! How exalted is the king among the gods! How fortunate is he, the lord of command!"[52]

►The ships, they rejoice upon the deep. They have no (need of) ropes, for they come to land with wind and oars. They are sated with joy, when it is said: "The King of Upper and Lower Egypt: **Heqa-maat-Re Setep-en-Amon**—life, prosperity, health!—wears

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[48] Sethe, *Lesetücke,* 65-67. *Trans. AEL*, 1.198.

[49] Davies, *Amarna*, IV 26-29, pl. xxxii. *Trans. AEL*, 2.91. Neferkheprure and Akehnaten are royal names for Amenhotep IV.

[50] Cairo Museum 34010. *Trans. ANET*, 374. Men-kheper-Re = Thutmose III.

[51] Cairo Museum 34025. *Trans. ANET*, 376. Neb-maat-Re = Amenhotep III.

[52] Cairo Museum 34025 verso. *Trans. ANET*, 377-378.

> the White crown again; the Son of Re: **Ramses Heqa-maat**—life, prosperity, health!—has taken over the office of his father!"[53]
>
> ►The good god, the strong one, whom men praise, the lord, in whom men make their boast; who protecteth his soldiers, who maketh his boundaries on earth as he will, like Rē when he shineth over the circle of the world,—he, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Usimarē-Chosen-of-Rē, lord of diadems, **Ramesses-Beloved of Amūn**, who is given life.[54]

The Papyrus Turin CG 54031 records seven royal hymns which Virginia Condon has dated to the Ramesside period. Five of the hymns extol Ramses VII (Usima'rē') and one hymn sings the praises of Ramses VI (Nebma'rē'). Plate 88 contains a text which Condon titles "Hymn in Honor of Ramses VI":

> 1. his (?) [...] and *t-nt-šɜ* abounds in wadj-fish; they shall behold the Lord, l.p.h., of the Black-land when he celebrates numerous Sed-festivals [...
> 2. ...] who ensnares (?) both fowl and fish. Momentous things have befallen us. Those who took from us the food of [... are (now)]
> 3. widows; those who caused to be consumed the best portion of the geese are in the hand of harlots. We abandoned the territory of our fathers and mothers; we [...
> 4. ...] desert. Behold! Amun has turned himself around (again) to the Blackland. Those who were lowly are (now) notables. Amun has been given to us that we may take counsel [...
> 5. ...] while he sits (in judgment) in our sight. His broad courts have been made as great waves [from] all the choicest things of the [entire] land.
> 6. [The] fowl of (the land) being well-fed and its harvest made ripe, he shall have the best portions taken to the city of Amun, Mut [and Khons;]
> 7. he [shall (?) bring] the oblation of the altar of Prē', the *wrd*-bird for Ptah. The country is settled down in its customary place.
> 8. We have returned to our village, to your audience-halls, to the many sweet smelling things [...

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[53] Maspéro, *Recueil de travaux,* (1880) 116-117. *Trans. ANET*, 379. Ramses IV.

[54] Lepsius, *Denkmaeler,* iii 195a. *Trans.* A. Erman, *The Ancient Egyptians: A Sourcebook of Their Writings* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1978) 258-59.

> 9. which] are made into every kind of food for your pure offerings,
> King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands,
> Nebma'rē-mer[amūn], l.p.h., the one who catches the [fish
> 10. in] (their) season, Ra'messe-Amenḥikhopshef-nūteḥeḳaōn,
> l.p.h., - he captures the birds.[55]

In this hymn third person narration is used for both god and king—Amun and Nebma'rē'—, whereas the 'hymnic' second person extols only the king.[56] Though several deities are mentioned (Amun, Mut, Rē', Ptah), only a single monarch is celebrated. Even in a polytheistic society, only one human regent would ordinarily be thought to receive the divine blessings.[57] Despite its somewhat obscure nature, the "Hymn in Honor of Ramses VI" is representative of a number of hymnic texts praising the exploits or benefits of Egyptian Pharaohs.[58] In each instance, the typology of "naming the royal name" is followed.

Having seen the propensity, or better, the necessity of naming by regnal or personal name the monarch in the Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, and Egyptian royal hymns and prayers, the complete absence of this seemingly requisite element in the royal hymns and prayers of the Hebrew Psalter is arresting.

ROYAL PSALMS VERSUS ROYAL HYMNS AND PRAYERS

The RPss of the Hebrew Bible are atypical, when correlated with other royal hymns and prayers of the ancient Near East, in that they never specify the royal personage by personal or regnal name. The RPss' omission of the royal nomen cannot be considered

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[55] CG 54031. *Trans*. V. Condon, *Seven Royal Hymns of the Ramesside Period: Papyrus Turin CG 54031* (Münchner ägyptologische Studien; Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1978) 19-20.

[56] Of course second-person address to the gods is quite common in Egyptian lyrical texts.

[57] The obvious exception to this rule would be in the case of a few coregencies. See W.J. Murnane, *Ancient Egyptian Coregencies* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations 40; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1977) 201.

[58] See Condon's bibliography of selected texts in *Seven Royal Hymns*, 55-57.

accidental. Rather, the 'openness' with regard to the royal psalm's persona is characteristic of the biblical genre.

We surmise that Gunkel's difficulty in assigning a uniform form-critical *Gattung* to the RPss was largely the result of the phenomenon of omitting regnal and personal names. Certainly, if the RPss followed the ancient Near Eastern pattern of "naming the royal name," then Gunkel could have placed each of the RPss into a proper form-critical category while simply noting that a historical royal personage was its protagonist.[59] Instead, Gunkel was compelled to retain the quasi-*Gattung* ascription of 'Königspsalmen' in order to describe accurately the royal idioms utilized by the psalms. This, however, becomes a very messy enterprise because royal idioms may be picked up and reused in other contexts. Likewise, kings prayed prayers that, apart from their royal tag-lines, are quite pedestrian.

THE REAPPROPRIATION OF ROYAL HYMNS AND PRAYERS AS STOCK LITURGY

The absence of regnal and personal king names from the RPss raises imporant questions about the purpose of the RPss in the Psalter. That is, if the RPss, as presently redacted in the Psalter, did not serve the specific ideological needs of a historical king of Northern Israel or Judah, then why were they included in the Psalter?

Gunkel associated the RPss with festivals of the king. He also thought that RPss could only be considered to be a small representation of the royal cult which had been preserved due to their popularity at the time of the Psalter's compilation.

> Ferner dürfen wir annehmen, daß der Psalter diejenigen Königs Gedichte enthält, die in der letzten Zeit des Königtums besonders beliebt gewesen sind; daher werden die überlieferten Stücke hauptsächlich aus dieser Zeit stammen.[60]

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[59] If the psalm of Hezekiah (Isa 38:10-20) was authentic, it would stand as a perfect example of a 'royal psalm' which could be typed apart from its association with the monarch as a 'Thanksgiving Song'.

[60] Gunkel, *Einleitung,* 167.

Nevertheless, the surviving RPss, according to Gunkel, accurately represent constituent elements of Israelite and Judean royal ideology. Gunkel concluded this based upon what he considered to be the manifold ideological parallels between the RPss and the royal inscriptions of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Basic to Gunkel's assessment was his understanding of *Sitz im Leben*. A psalm's *Sitz im Leben* was the typical occasion for which the psalm would have been composed and in which the psalm would have been used and reused. Such situations were common, repetitive, and widely experienced among human beings. Gunkel assigned the RPss to typical situations in any king's life: enthronement, royal anniversaries, sanctuary anniversaries, weddings, preparation for battle, return from battle. The underlying assumption concomitant with the theory of *Sitz im Leben* was that the psalms would be reused in their basic form over and over again. This was true for the RPss as well as psalms of other genres. And, as we have seen above, the assumption of a royal psalm's reuse was further promulgated by Mowinckel, the Myth-and-Ritual School, and others.

It is true that the concept of *Sitz im Leben* freed scholarship on the psalms from the principles of earlier interpretations where an exact historical fixation of the text was considered to be possible and necessary. As far as the RPss were concerned, this shift was prompted in large part by the inability to decisively assign a particular psalm to a specific historical context or personage. If the RPss had been preserved according to the ancient Near Eastern tendency to name the royal name, then *zeitgeschichtliche* interpretation would have been not only successful, but necessitated by the texts themselves.

But what evidence can one cite for the reuse or reappropriation of a royal psalm? Certainly the absence of royal names in the RPss could be interpreted as supporting their subsequent reuse. The RPss could be the 'stock liturgies' of the Jerusalem temple which were used and reused at appropriate and typical events in the life of each king of Judah. However, such a hypothesis, while reasonable, begs for supporting evidence.

Since there is no evidence from the Old Testament that points to the reuse of the RPss by the kings of Northern Israel and Judah, it is paramount to assess the extrabiblical evidence available. Our attention will now be drawn to the reuse of royal 'stock-metaphors' which

are well attested throughout the ancient Near East. At issue is the reuse of actual texts.

The Reappropriation Of Royal Hymns And Prayers In The Ancient Near East

Do the RPss represent stock liturgical texts of the Jerusalem temple? In other words, are the RPss anonymous as to the particular royal name of the protagonist because they were reused by subsequent ruling monarchs? In his 1976 treatment of Israelite kingship, Mettinger makes this possibility explicit:

> In Israel as well there was apparently a close connection between kingship and cult. That the royal psalms are found in the Psalter at all would seem to suggest that these texts were used not only on the rare occasions when a new king was placed on the throne but had a more central place in the cultic life of the nation.[61]

If one could demonstrate the reuse of the RPss by several kings of Judah then one would be on very solid ground when asserting that the RPss represent the essentials of the royal ideology of the Jerusalem cult. However, no such case can be made from the Hebrew Bible. We have no textual or archaeological evidence that points to the reuse or reappropriation of the RPss by the kings of Israel and Judah. Nor do we find evidence among the epigraphic remains of the ancient Near East for the wholesale reuse of royal hymns, prayers, or oracles. As far as hard evidence is concerned, this is the case, despite conjectures to the contrary.

For example, A. Erman made the tantalizing suggestion in his 1923 anthology, *Die Literatur der Aegypter*, that a series of hymns to the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt were appropriated among different kings by simply inserting (or pronouncing) the monarch's name in an apropos stanza. This suggestion was distributed widely, albeit uncritically, through A.M. Blackman's English translation based upon Erman's German decipherment of a hymn to the Crown of Upper Egypt which was uncovered in a collection of kindred hymns in the temple of the god Sobk.

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[61] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 305.

> Praise to thee, thou Eye of Horus, white, great, over whose beauty the Ennead of gods rejoices, when it (the eye of Horus) riseth in the eastern horizon.
>
> They are in what Shu upholdeth adore thee, and they descend in the western horizon, when thou art revealed to them that are in the nether world.
>
> Grant that (king N.) conquer the Two Lands through thee, and have power over them.
>
> Grant that (foreign countries) come to him making obeisance, even to (king N.). Thou art the mistress of brightness.[62]

Initially, this seems to be a very important parallel to the RPss. The hymn itself refers to the enduring institution of kingship, much like Pss 2 and 110. From the translation given above, it would seem that this text became standardized, with the only change being the particular name of the current reigning monarch, which was inserted after the *(r)dỉ* clause (Grant that ...). One could then postulate that the reigning monarch's name could have been vocalized analogously in the Jerusalem cult. For example, Ps 110:1 might have been adapted by the insertion of a king's name in the first colon,

נְאֻם יְהוָה לַאדֹנִי יְחִזְקָיָהוּ

> Oracle of Yahweh to my lord, Hezekiah:

or even,

נְאֻם יְהוָה לִיחִזְקָיָהוּ

> Oracle of Yahweh to Hezekiah:

by dropping the generic marker אדני. Although such an insertion would interrupt the almost uniform and constant stress patterns which can be observed among the RPss, one could find numerous places within the RPss where the insertion of a monarchical name would make good syntactic sense.

While it is possible that such insertions, whether written or simply vocalized at the time of performance, were commonplace with

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[62] Erman, *Ancient Egyptians*, 11.

the RPss, it turns out that there is little Egyptian precedent to encourage such a belief. Although the published English translation of the Egyptian hymn to the Crown of Upper Egypt clearly indicates where the written or spoken titulary of the king was recorded, the Egyptian text, the Papyrus Golenischeff, in fact, indicates nothing of the sort. Instead, the line that is translated above as "Grant that (king N.) conquer..." clearly states *dỉ.t ỉtỉ sbk* "Grant that Sobk conquer."[63] Sobk was the crocodile-god and the lord of Shedyt (Crocodilopolis). In the cycle of hymns of which the above was a part, the god is referred to as "Sobk-Horus of Shedyt" and was apparently viewed as the local manifestation of Horus, the Egyptian god usually identified with the ruling human monarch. Whereas a number of copies of these hymns are attested, none are attested with the titulary of a human king in the place of the god Sobk. Erman, imprudently, made the conjecture that had this hymn been used in other regions of Egypt, then the name of the ruling monarch of that region would have been inserted where the text presently reads *sbk*. While possible, this supposition remains, to this day, unconfirmed by epigraphic evidence.

Likewise, Jacob Klein has argued for the reuse of royal hymnody by the court of the Mesopotamian ruler, Išmedagan, who reigned for nineteen years over Isin (1953-1935 BCE). The importance of his findings for our present study is emphasized by Klein himself.

> The phenomenon may be of interest not only to students of Sumerian literature, but also to students of comparative literature in general, and of Biblical literature in particular. The complexity of the problem of literary "borrowing," in the case of two literary pieces of unknown date, is well known. In such cases it is usually impossible to determine who was influenced by whom. Conversely, however, in the case of the literary parallels between the royal hymns of Šulgi and Išmedagan there is not the slightest doubt as to who was doing the imitating and who was influenced by whom."[64]

Klein does not demonstrate, however, that Išmedagan *reused* king

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[63] In the *editio princepts*, Erman translated this verse as "Gib, daß Sobk die beiden Länder durch dich erobere..." See A. Erman, *Hymnen an das Diadem der Pharaonen* (Berlin: Verlag der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1911) 21-22.

[64] Klein, "Šulgi and Išmedagan," 67, n. 11.

Šulgi's hymns.[65] Rather, Klein illustrates how the royal court of Išmedagan modeled royal hymnody after the style, the structure, and to a lesser degree, the content of Šulgi's royal hymns.

Išmedagan commissioned at least twenty-five royal hymns, the largest being ^{d}en-líl diri-še which comprises 600 lines.[66] Klein isolates three royal hymns of Išmedagan which, in his assessment, are "direct imitations of specifically known Šulgi hymns." However, 'direct imitations' does not mean 'reappropriations'. Excepting two lines from one of Išmedagan's hymns, the dependence of Išmedagan's scribes upon the Šhulgi hymns is limited to structure, theme, and occasionally, borrowed terms. The only lines that betray direct reappropriation are the following:

> Šulgi E 51-52
>
> mu nì èn-du-ĝá en-na-ga-ba-ĝál-la lul ba-ra-na ḫé-ge-en
>
> As many lines as there may be in (any of) my songs, none of them is false, (all of them) are verily true!
>
> Išmedagan V rev. 23-24
>
> nì en-du-ĝa a-na-ab(?)-[ĝá]l-la na-rú-a-ĝá a-na-ab-sar-ra l[ul] ba-ra-na ḫé-ge-[en]
>
> Anything that is found in my songs (or) written on my monuments, none of it is false, (all of) it is verily true.[67]

And yet, even this comparison is not exact and might be better explained in terms of formulaic expressions and royal stock phraseology than in terms of direct copying, especially since such deliberate plagiarism cannot be observed between the respective hymns elsewhere.

The most certain example of the reappropriation and reuse of royal hymnic material can be illustrated with comparisons between the Egyptian victory hymns of Thutmose III (c. 1490-1436 BCE), Amen-hotep (c. 1413-1377 BCE), Seti I (1318-1301 BCE), and Ramses

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[65] King Šulgi ruled Ur a century prior, approximately 2094-2047 BCE.
[66] *SKI* 39-55.
[67] Ibid., 77.

III (c. 1195-1164 BCE). The clearest structural examples of reuse can be seen between the inscriptions of Thutmose III and Seti I. The hymn of Thutmose III was carved on a black granite tablet 180 cm high found in the Karnak temple.[68] The reappropriation of Seti I was also found in Karnak, but was carved into wall reliefs of the great temple. In many places it seems incontrovertible that Seti's scribes and artisans directly copied lines from Thutmose III as the following example indicates:

> Thutmose III
>
> I have caused them to see thy majesty as lord of radiance,
> So that thou hast shone in their faces like my image.[69]
>
> Seti I
>
> I have caused them to see thy majesty as lord of radiance,
> So that thou hast shone in their faces like my image.[70]

The 'poetical' stele of Thutmose III contains the divine pronouncement of Amon-Re in three distinct sections. M. Lichtheim describes these sections as follows:

> In the first twelve lines the god welcomes the king and recounts the victories he has given him. This part is written in orational style. Thereafter, the god's speech takes the form of a triumphal poem composed of ten quatrains. Each quatrain consists of two distichs introduced by anaphoras, the first being, "I came to let you tread," and the second, "I let them see." Owing to the anaphoric pattern, the length of each metrical line is precisely established and made visible. Moreover, the scribe has used the graphic device of stichic writing: each distich occupies one half of the line, and the anaphoric words are spaced symmetrically below one another. The hymn of triumph is followed by a conclusion of three lines in which the god's speech reverts to the orational style. Thus the triumphal poem is framed by a prologue and an epilogue.[71]

For purposes of comparison, we have cited Breasted's translations.

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[68] Cairo Museum 34010.
[69] Cairo Museum 34010. *Trans. ARE*, 2.264.
[70] RMS 60-61. *Trans. ARE*, 3.57.
[71] *AEL*, 2.35.

Nonetheless, the tight structural pattern of the second section of the stele as described by Lichtheim can be readily observed. Picking up with the third quatrain of the second section the stele reads:

> I have come, causing thee to smite the eastern land,
> Thou hast trampled those who are in the districts
> of God's-Land.
> I have caused them to see thy majesty like a circling star,
> When it scatters its flame in fire, and gives forth its dew.
>
> I have come, causing thee to smite the western land,
> Keftyew (*Kf-tyw*) and Cyprus (*Ysy*) are in terror.
> I have caused them to see thy majesty as a young bull,
> Firm of heart, ready-horned, irresistible.
>
> I have come, causing thee to smite those who are in their marshes,
> The lands of Mitanni (*My-ṯ-n*) tremble under fear of thee.
> I have caused them to see thy majesty as a crocodile,
> Lord of fear in the water, unapproachable.[72]

When the hymn was reappropriated by Seti's artisans, the poetical structure was reconstituted since only the second distich of each quatrain was copied. Covering the same section of the hymn quoted above, Seti's version reads accordingly:

> I have caused them to see thy majesty like a circling star,
> which scatters its flame in fire and gives forth its dew.
>
> I have caused them to see thy majesty as a young bull,
> firm of heart, ready-horned, irresistible.
>
> I have caused them to see thy majesty as a crocodile,
> terrible on the shore, unapproachable.[73]

Considering the function of Seti's version of the hymn within the entire structure of the Karnak reliefs, the redaction of the original hymn by Seti's scribes becomes easy to comprehend. In the Poetical Stele, the first distich of each of the ten quatrains recounted a particular nation or people that Amon-Re had given to Thutmose III in victory. However, in Seti's inscriptions, the king's victories are

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[72] Cairo Museum 34010. *Trans. ARE*, 2.264-265.
[73] RMS 60-61. *Trans. ARE*, 3.57-58.

recounted in great detail in more than nineteen reliefs adjacent to the hymn. It is less likely the case that the mention of conquered peoples in the Poetical Stele was thought to be redundant. Rather, the campaigns of Thutmose III simply did not match those of Seti I. This is the best explanation for the observed redaction.

When the hymn was further adapted by Ramses III, new verses were added and the few remaining verses were given an entirely new sequence. Although the translation quoted here differs substantially in form and style from the translations quoted above, the reader should be able to compare the respective texts with nominal hindrance. Again, the speaker of the hymn is Amon-Re:

> I give thee my sword before thee, to overthrow the Bows, and I slay for thee every land beneath thy soles.
>
> I cause them to see thy majesty as the force of Nun, when he breaks out and lays low towns and villages in a surge of water.
>
> I cause them to see thy majesty like a raging crocodile, whose paws beat corpses as he wishes.
>
> I cause them to see thy majesty like an infuriated lion, whose claw and tooth tear the breast of wild cattle.
>
> I cause them to see thy majesty like a young bull, conscious of his strength, when he is on the field of valor.[74]

It is useful to take note of the changes in sequence and content of the manifestations of the king that are granted by Amon-Re between the hymns of Thutmose III, Seti I, and Ramses III, respectively. In the Poetical Stele of Thutmose III the royal appearences follow the sequence of

1) 'lord of radiance'
2) 'adorned majesty'
3) 'circling star'
4) 'young bull'
5) 'crocodile'
6) 'avenger'
7) 'lion'

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[74] *Trans. Hist. Rec.*, pl. 102.

8) 'hawk',
9) 'jackal'
10) 'two brothers'

The Karnak reliefs of Seti I follow a slightly different sequence of royal portends:

1) 'lord of radiance'
2) 'adorned majesty'
3) 'circling star'
4) 'young bull'
5) 'crocodile'
6) 'flame like fire'
7) '[lion]'
8) [ ][75]

The Medinet Habu inscriptions follow even a different order of royal appearances granted by Amon-Re:

1) 'force of Nun'
2) 'crocodile'
3) 'lion'
4) 'young bull'

As one will note, the tendency over time is to shorten the list as well as to rearrange the sequence of items.

The use and reuse of the Poetical Stele of Thutmose III is illustrative not only in terms of its certain evolution, but, as well, in its uniqueness. This is the only clear example we are aware of from the entire remains of the ancient Near East where a royal hymn of one monarch has been reused by subsequent monarchs. Its uniqueness would seem to prove the rule: according to attested epigraphic remains, royal hymns and prayers were not reused wholesale by subsequent monarchs.[76] Rather, elements of royal ideology imagery

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[75] The full line reads: "I have caused them to see thy majesty as a [ ], great in strength, irresistible in heaven or in earth." See *ARE* 3.58. It seems evident from the context that the manifestation of the king is not "like a hawk," since the hawk typically "seizeth upon that which he seeth, as much as he desires." See *ARE* 2.265.

[76] Another exception might be Amenhotep III's virtually wholesale reappropriation of Hatshepsut's birth and coronation texts.

remain constant but are reshaped and recontextualized in their reappropriation. Even in the unique case of the Poetical Stele of Thutmose III, the hymn was not reused in its entirety, but its poetical (and ideological) integrity was breached in its selective reappropriation by Seti I and Ramses III.

Although it would appear that royalty were not prone to reuse earlier royal hymns and prayers without significant modification, that did not prevent the monarch from co-opting common prayer texts for intercession to the god(s). In the following examples it is impossible to know whether the prayer in question was originally written for the monarch or plebeian. Yet the generic (thus hardly 'royal') nature of the prayers should be evident.

Among the Hittite royal prayers occurs a hymnic-petition that is attested in three duplicates which Lebrun has titled "Hymnes et prières au Soleil."[77] Version B of the prayer is well known from its English translation in *ANET* as "Prayer of Kantuzilis for Relief from his Sufferings."[78] In version A the protagonist is not Kantuzilis, but one who describes himself as a simple mortal, "ton serviteur."[79] In version C, the protagonist is only identified as the 'king', but the text is fragmentary:

> Tu mes fais prospére, [ô Soleil, moi, ton serviteur.] [J'of]f[re toujours] au Soleil le pain et [la bière. Aussi,] moi, le roi, t[on] jus[te serviteur, Soleil, tu me prend]s [par la main.][80]

In the body of the prayer one can detect the stylistic influence of Akkadian hymns to Shamash. But, interestingly enough, one also detects many shared themes with Hezekiah's prayer (Isa 38:1-10). In fact, Moshe Greenburg categorizes this Hittite prayer as "a very personal plea to be cured of illness."[81] It is not particularly 'royal' in tone. This observation is confirmed by that fact that this Hittite prayer could be offered by the crown prince Kantuzilis, an unspecified king, and a regular 'Joe'.

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[77] *HPH*, 92-131.
[78] KUB XXX 10. *Trans*. *ANET*, 400-01.
[79] KUB XXXI 127, column I ln. 56. *Trans*. *HPH*, 101.
[80] KUB XXXI 135. *Trans*. *HPH*, 123, 128.
[81] Greenberg, "Hittite Royal Prayers," 24.

Likewise, there are a number of texts among the Babylonian *šu íl-la* prayers where the identical prayer is attested with, or without, the king's name. One such text is a prayer to the Moon god, Sin. After nineteen lines glorifying and praising Sin, two copies of the prayer insert the following identifier:

> ana-ku ^{d}GIŠ.ŠIR-MU-GI.NA ÌR-ka[82]
> *anāku šamaš-šum-ūkin aradka*
> I, Shamash-shum-ukin, your servant

Without the insertion of the royal identifier, the prayer reads:

> O Brightly Rising God, strength without rival,
> one can learn.
> I make for you a pure night offering,
> I libate for you the finest sweet beer.
> I take my place on my knees,
> as I seek you[r attention],
> Grant me favorable and just repute.[83]

With the insertion of the royal identifier the prayer reads:

> O Brightly Rising God, strength without rival,
> one can learn.
> *I*, *Shamash-shum-ukin*, *your servant*,
> I make for you a pure night offering,
> I libate for you the finest sweet beer.
> I take my place on my knees,
> as I seek you[r attention],
> Grant me favorable and just repute.

It is clear from this text, and others, that lyrical prayers could easily be appropriated by monarchs without adding much more than a royal tag-line. But doing so to a petition that could be appropriated by any individual is hardly the same as a king reusing a royal psalm. According to the remains of the ancient Near East, and according to what is attested in the Hebrew Bible, monarchs did not reuse *in toto* hymns and prayers from other monarchs.

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[82] BM 78432 ln. 19; Si. 18 ln. 19. *Trans*. Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 493.
[83] BMS I 17-21. *Trans*. *BtM*, 682.

THE REAPPROPRIATION OF PSALM 20:1-7

Fortunately, we are not completely devoid of an example of a nearly wholesale reuse of a royal psalm, or at least part of one. In one papyrus, among nineteen discovered in an earthen jar in the vicinity of Thebes, an important example of a royal psalm's reappropriation is found. Ironically, its reappropriation is not by royalty. Instead, oracular sections of Ps 20 were usurped and then modified for a syncretistic Jewish community in Elephantine during the Persian period or in Edfu during the Ptolemaic period.[84]

PAE XI:11-15a[85]		Ps 20:2-6b
y'nn Ḥr bmṣ(w)ryn	2.	y'nk yhwh bywm ṣrh
y'nn 'dny bmṣ(w)ryn		
		yśgbk šm 'lhy Y'ḳb
hy-ḳšt bšmyn Śhr		
šlḥ ṣyrk mn-'gr 'rš	3.	yšlḥ 'zrk mḳdš
wmn-Ṣpn Ḥr ys'dn		wmṢywn ys'dk
	4.	yzkr kl mnḥtyk
		w'wltk ydšnh slh
yntn-'ln Ḥr kblbn	5.	ytn lk klbbk
yntn 'ln Mr Kblbn		
kl y'ṣt<n> Ḥr yhml'		wkl 'ṣtk yml'
	6.	nrnnh byšw'tk
		wbšm 'lhynw ndgl

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[84] See C.F. Nims and R.C. Steiner, "A Paganized Version of Psalm 20:2-6 From the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script," *Studies in Literature from the Ancient Near East Dedicated to Samuel Noah Kramer* (ed. J. Sasson; AOS 65; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1984) 271-272. K.A.D. Smelik argues the opposite direction of influence. See K.A.D. Smelik, "The Origin of Psalm 20" *JSOT* 31 (1985) 75-81. However, the grounds which Smelik cites, which would preclude the dependence of PAE XI:11-14, are insubstantial. Smelik remarks that Ps 20, being more complex, more specific, and more elaborated than the Aramaic hymn, PAE XI:11-14, could not be dependent on Ps 20. Apparently, he assumes that adoptive copies and reappropriations do not truncate originals. But this is clearly not the case in light of the reuse of the Poetical Stele of Thutmose III. Most scholars have seen the dependence in accordance with Nims and Steiner.

[85] PAE = Papyrus Amherst Egyptian 63.

PAE XI:15b-19	Ps 20:6c-7	
yhml' Ḥr l'-yḥsr 'dny	6c.	yml' Yhwh
kl mš'l-lbn		kl mš'lwtyk
lbḳšt lb-bḥnt 'l		
'nḥn Mr 'lhn Ḥr YH		
'ln 'ypn		
y'nn mḫr 'l-Byt-'l		
šmyn Mr ybrk		
lḥsydyk brktk		
	7.	'th yd'ty ky hwšy'
		Yhwh mšyḥw

As can be observed from the transcriptions above, PAE XI:11-14 closely follows Ps 20:2-3. The two texts may be translated as:

PAE XI:11-14a

May Horus answer us in our troubles
May Adonay answer us in our troubles
O Bow in Heaven, Sahar.
Send your emissary from the temple of Arash,
and from Zephon may Horus sustain us.

Ps 20:2-3

May Yahweh answer you in the day of trouble,
may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.
May he send you help from the temple,
from Zion may he sustain you.

Commenting on PAE XI:11-12, Stanislav Segert notes that the creation of two parallelistic bicola, corresponding to an original cola in Ps 20:2, was caused by the syncretistic worldview of the translator or imitator which is evident in other sections of the papyrus.[86] The same phenonenon can be observed in PAE XI:14b-15a:

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[86] S. Segert, "Preliminary Notes on the Structure of the Aramaic Poems in the Papyrus Amherst 63," *UF* 8 (1976) 274f.

PAE XI:14b-15a

May Horus grant us our heart's desire.
May Mar grant us our heart's desire.
May Horus fulfill (our) every plan.

Ps 20:5

May he grant you your hearts' desire,
and may he fulfill your every plan.

The monotheistic Ps 20:5 assumes the subject, Yahweh, from the preceding verse. However, in PAE XI:14b-15a, the subjects must be expressed without ambiguity, lest one think that the petition was meant for *Śhr* mentioned in preceding lines.

Most notable in PAE XI:14b-15a is its avoidance of the cult-liturgical language of Ps 20. Lines 11-16 of PAE follow the text of Ps 20:2-6, but have been excised of all references to meal and burnt offerings appropriate to the Jerusalem temple but apparently no longer appropriate for Diaspora Jews during Persian or Ptolemaic periods. Similarly, verse 6 of Psalm 20, in which the congregation pledges the festal shout and the raising of banners, a vow presumably apropos to the Jerusalem temple, is also circumvented. Instead, PAE quotes and then expands Ps 20:6c, "May Yahweh fulfill all your requests," with

May Horus fulfill—may Adonay not withhold
(even) in part—every request of our hearts,
the requests of hearts which you, O El, have tested.

Lines 17-19 continue the petition with complaint ("We—O Mar, our god, Horus, Yah, our god—are faint"), which then flows into a final petition to El Bethel and Baal to bless their pious ones.

Another integrated substitution in PAE XI:11-19 is the replacement of each second person singular reference (excepting that to deities) with first person plural references. "May the Lord answer *you* in time of trouble," in Ps 20:2a becomes "May Horus answer *us* in our troubles, may Adonay answer *us* in our troubles." Ps 20:3b's "...and from Zion may he sustain *you*" is replaced by "and from Zephon may Horus sustain *us*," and so on. Thus, Ps 20:2-6 is converted from royal well-wishing to a singular monarch to a petition of the Diaspora community.

Finally, but importantly, PAE XI:1-14 concludes without incorporating the vow of trust in Ps 20:7a, עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי הוֹשִׁיעַ יְהוָה מְשִׁיחוֹ "Now I know that Yahweh will deliver his anointed." It is not evident whether the writer/redactor of PAE thought a vow of trust itself inappropriate for the communal petition, or the reference to the מָשִׁיחַ too hard to excise.[87] Regardless, PAE stands as an excellent example of a royal psalm that has been reworked so that its reappropriation by a new community might transpire.

EVALUATION

In sum, the comparative evidence from the ancient Near East does not corroborate the hypothesis that the RPss represent stock liturgical texts for use by the royal dynasty of Jerusalem. Instead, in each case where the reuse and reappropriation of royal materials can be observed, the reappropriation has occasioned significant alterations of the original text. Given the fact that the RPss do not name the protagonist king, it is clear that the RPss are not simply historical artifacts that have been copied into the Psalter.

These findings would seem to confirm Bernhardt's minimalist view of the RPss. Bernhardt believed the RPss to have been completely reworked through historicization and democratization to such an extent that festival and liturgy are no longer discernible.

> Die alttestamentlichen 'Königspsalmen' enthalten also nicht die ursprüngliche Ideologie des Königsrituals und tragen ebensowenig die ursprüngliche Ritualform der Königsideologie. Was bleibt

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[87] The latter possibility is especially intriguing since, in a recent correspondence to the American Oriental Society, Richard Steiner claims that large segments of the Aramaic text comprise a New Year's liturgy from Bethel. In reference to PAE III:9, Steiner reports that in this liturgy the head of the community (who is elsewhere referred to as *ʾy.n* 'judge'; PAE III:6) is addressed as king (*m.r.k.*). Surprisingly, PAE XI:11-14 played little or no role in the New Year's festival. However, until Steiner's theory is published in full, especially with regard to the specific contours of a New Year's festival at Bethel, it is difficult to assess his suggestions. See R.C. Steiner, "The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script: The Liturgy of a New Year's Festival from Bethel to Syene by Exiles from Rash," *JAOS* 113 (1993) 362-363.

> übrig?—Motive, Bilder dichterischer Sprache, bestenfalls Anspielungen des Sängers auf Festerlebnisse und ähnliches.[88]

If the RPss are of a secondary nature, that is, if they do not represent actual enacted royal ritual or propaganda, then can they be said to reflect accurately royal ideology and ritual? The present investigation underscores Bernhardt's concern.

However, Mettinger, in his comprehensive treatment of Israel's royal investitures, provides a good answer to Bernhardt's objection by citing the "intrinsic conservatism in cult and ritual."[89] He continues: "...if most of these texts [royal psalms] had their *Sitz im Leben* in the royal temple of the kings of Judah, they must be considered to form a material of first rate interest in the inquiry into the sacral position of the king."[90]

Nevertheless, it remains problematic whether the RPss provide the historian with enough data to reconstruct the royal rituals of the kings of Israel. That is to say, if Gunkel were correct in stating that many of the RPss owe their inclusion in the Psalter to their relative popularity at the time of the Psalter's compilation, then the RPss can hardly be said to represent Israel's royal ritual in general. Even Mettinger, who is inclined to interpret the RPss as representative of Judean royal ritual, admits that "the material has been sifted through the hands of traditionists of the priestly theocracy of postexilic times, and the fact that the monarchy was then long ago at an end, must have had its effects in this connection."[91] One might hypothesize that just such a sifting accounts for the absence of explicit royal referents in the RPss.

From the comparative evidence it is clear that one has little reason to assume that the RPss were standardized elements of a royal cult stretching from King David to King Zedekiah. When compared with the royal hymns and prayers of the ancient Near East, it becomes ever apparent that the RPss were adapted for purpose(s) other than promulgating the ideological aims of individual kings. Rather, it seems to be the case that the RPss focus on the institution of kingship itself. While it is highly likely that the motifs, and perhaps even the

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[88] Bernhardt, *Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie*, 298-99.
[89] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 102.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., 101.

specific idioms, in certain royal psalms may accurately reflect royal rituals of Judah, one should not assume that such language points to a singular ritual that remained constant over the life of the monarchy.

If the RPss do not necessarily point to a uniform royal liturgical ideology, is there something to be gained by attempting to interpret one or more of the RPss within the framework of the great 'festival' of Israel? As was noted in chapter 1, Mowinckel pushed beyond Gunkel's suggestions for the *Sitze im Leben* of the RPss by reconstructing the outlines of an autumn New Year Festival, during which the ruling monarch would have been ceremonially enthroned. Others built upon Mowinckel's insights and came to similar conclusions regarding the role of the RPss in the festival. Even to this day, scholars, while rejecting the patternism of the Myth-and-Ritual school, have continued to interpret the royal psalms as constituent elements of the Hebrew festival.[92]

But Mettinger's assessments of twenty years ago still accurately describe the state of investigation:

> The evidence thus remains inconclusive. A cultic suffering on the part of the king in a yearly renewal of kingship would perhaps not constitute a wholly inconceivable element in Israelite kingship.

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[92] For example and on the one hand, Artur Weiser posits a 'Festival of Covenant Renewal' in which the Salvation-History of Israel was recounted and the Sinai covenant was renewed. The origins of the festival were pre-monarchical. With the advent of the monarchy, the election of David and his dynasty, as well as the selection of Zion, became constituents of the festival. The RPss represent, then, the enlargement of Israel's Salvation-History portrayed in the covenant renewal festival, which included accession to the throne by the Hebrew king. Thus, for Weiser, the *Sitz im Leben* of the RPss (excepting Ps 45) was the festival itself. See Weiser, *The Psalms*, 34, 45, 111, 187, 208-210, 215, 591, 693-96, 779, and 825. On the other hand, H.–J. Kraus posited a 'Royal Zion Festival' which celebrated the founding of the Davidic dynasty and Yahweh's choice of Zion for his earthly dwelling. His parade text was Ps 132 which combines both elements, and which, according to Kraus, indicates a ritual procession of the ark. In addition to Ps 132, Pss 2, 72, and 89 were constituents. The remaining RPss's relation to the festival was on less certain ground, but still considered probable. See H.–J. Kraus, *Worship in Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament* (Richmond: John Knox, 1966) 179-187, 222-224, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989) 475-83, *Psalms 1-59*, 56-7, and *Theology of the Psalms*, 115-119.

> However, as far as I can see, we must admit that there is a lack of positive evidence for such a practice in ancient Israel.[93]
>
> In conclusion, it may well be that there was an annual festival in which the kingship and the dynasty were celebrated. It must be frankly admitted, however, that there is no conclusive evidence to prove this theory. Thus, in the final analysis the question must be left open.[94]

As tantalizing as kingship-renewal theories may be, there is very little evidence that would support such specific reconstructions. Any interpretation of the RPss assuming such a festival simply begs the question.

Moreover, the findings of this chapter suggest that attempts to interpret the RPss within a framework of an assumed annual festival akin to the Babylonian *akītu* cannot be sustained. Accordingly, we do not consider it appropriate to assign royal status to a psalm solely upon the hypothesis that it could have functioned within a hypothetical festival. Nor should one assume such a festival in explicating the RPss.

SUMMARY

At this point, the definitional problems identified in chapter 1 have been clarified but not solved. However, we can make the distinction between royal hymns and prayers attested throughout the ancient Near East, on the one hand, and the RPss on the other. The latter constitute a distinctive sub-category that has been seemingly shaped by the requirements of the Hebrew Psalter necessitating the reformulation of the royal hymns and prayers so as to remove their specificity to a particular historical reigning king, thus redirecting their focus upon the institution of kingship itself.

In sum, we are more satisfied with a definition of 'royal psalm' which is purely descriptive rather than bound to assumed *Sitze im Leben*, such as Gunkel's earliest formulation which drew direct connections between the RPss and the festivals of the king. We suggest the following definition:

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[93] Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 307.
[94] Ibid., 308.

> The RPss are psalms whose concern is the institution of Israelite kingship. Their protagonist is an unspecified king; hence he is a typological representative of the 'office' of the institution.

Regarding Gunkel's attribution of *Sitze im Leben*, on the basis of our study, one must raise the question whether the unnamed protagonist of the RPss can cogently be interpreted to be a historical king of Northern Israel or Judah. This question is pressed upon us by the intentional omission of regnal and personal royal names in the RPss, as well as the unlikely prospect that the RPss served as stock liturgies to be reused among the kings of Northern Israel or Judah.

Finally, considering the findings of this chapter, there is little reason to assume that psalms outside of the eleven RPss identified by Gunkel should be considered royal psalms, given the definition stated above. While it is possible that a king of Israel could have prayed or led the community in prayer using virtually any psalm in the OT, there is no evidence necessitating the conclusion that any particular psalm, excluding the RPss, would have been restricted from common use.

Chapter 3

THE SINGULARITY OF THE ROYAL PSALMS

In the last chapter we made two substantial observations regarding the RPss from our comparison with royal hymns and prayers attested in the ancient Near East. First, the RPss can be distinguished from other royal hymns and prayers in their consistent and sustained omission of personal and regnal names. Second, although we have only recovered a very small portion of what must have been a bounteous royal hymnody in the ancient Near East, we have no example of the wholesale reuse or reappropriation of a royal hymn or prayer by a subsequent monarch. Rather, the prayers that were reused were appropriated not only by monarchs but by commoners as well. Thus, the suggestion that the RPss were redacted and preserved for reuse by subsequent kings finds little support in the practice of surrounding cultures. Instead, as we shall see, the RPss were modified so that the psalms themselves would focus more clearly on the institution of kingship and the 'office' of king.

The preceding observations raise important issues that are not adequately addressed in modern definitions of the royal psalms. For example, Klaus Seybold describes the RPss in his introduction to the Book of Psalms as follows:

> [The royal psalms] only form a '*Gattung*' or 'type' insofar as they relate to the so-called 'Ritual of the King', and the royal cult at the state sanctuary. Since they stem from the heritage of the first

> temple, we must apply to them the liturgical categories of [the] preexilic period.[1]

But in what way(s) were the RPss related to the royal cult(s) at the state sanctuary? It can no longer be maintained with any confidence that the RPss represent actual liturgy from the state sanctuary, even if one agrees that, historically, kings would have been the master and provider of the cult?[2] In contrast to Seybold's definition, the definition of a 'royal psalm' offered at the close of the last chapter seeks to avoid liturgical assumptions:

> The RPss are psalms whose concern is the institution of Israelite kingship. Their protagonist is an unspecified king; hence he is a typological representative of the 'office' of the institution.

One should note that this description departs not only from Seybold's definition, but also from the accepted scholarly stance since Gunkel.

Though Gunkel compared the *Gattungen* (royal oracles and royal prayers) of Egypt and Mesopotamia with Hebrew RPss, it was the ideological *content* and not the *form* of the RPss which Gunkel most successfully linked to the comparative literature from the ancient Near East.[3] As we have noted above, Gunkel inherited the nomenclature of 'royal psalm' from earlier scholars. One wonders whether Gunkel might have adopted other terminology for this quasi-*Gattung* in another scholarly context. On the one hand, 'royal psalm' *is descriptive*, that is, the texts in question are *psalms* and their contents are concerned with issues of kingship. On the other hand, the RPss defy precise formal categorization since they conform to various *Gattungen*. Thus, in many aspects, individual RPss have more in common with other psalms of their own basic *Gattung* than with other identified RPss.

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[1] Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, 115. Seybold, however, does not consider Ps 144 to be among the RPss.

[2] Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 62.

[3] The only exception being a comparison between the *Stilform* of oracles in Ps 20 and an Akkadian liturgy where Nabu blesses Assurbanipal's kingship. See Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 54-58. In his *Einleitung,* Gunkel gave additional comparisons of oracles from the ancient Near East as well as citations of Mesopotamian and Egyptian king prayers. See Gunkel, *Einleitung,* 160-61.

THE EDITORIAL HANDLING OF ROYAL PSALMS

Even though it has been scholarly convention since the early nineteenth century to talk of a collection of royal psalms, it remains to be demonstrated, if and how they were understood to be a related, or cohesive, subgrouping, just prior to, or even shortly after the Psalter's formation. The period of the Psalter's compilation is the one certain and relatively-fixed time period (although we do not know exactly when) in which some sort of interrelation between the RPss as a group might be discerned.

However, the canonical ordering of individual psalms within the Psalter fails to provide any formative relationship among the RPss. The only cluster of RPss exists between Pss 18, 20, and 21. Every other royal psalm is separated from another royal psalm by at least nine and at most twenty-seven other psalms. And while the Songs of Ascents (Pss 120-134) is the only subgroup of the Psalter which remained intact in its editorial deployment, one cannot judge the RPss ever to have been a subgroup of the Psalter.

The fact that the RPss do not occur in any subgroup, such as the Enthronement psalms for example, could support an assessment that the RPss have been recontexualized apart from a liturgical setting. Thus Brevard Childs writes:

> ...it is interesting to notice that no ancient groupings of royal psalms have been preserved. Whereas other psalms such as community complaint psalms, songs of pilgrimage, and collections of individual complaint psalms have been transmitted within a collection, the royal psalms have been thoroughly scattered throughout the Psalter. Could this be a first indication of a new understanding of these psalms?[4]

While it is true that the RPss are 'scattered' throughout the Psalter, it is not clear if their diffusion is, in and of itself, indicative of reinterpretation. This caution is pressed upon us by an examination of the role of royal hymns and prayers in Sumerian and Akkadian incipit catalogues.

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[4] Childs, *Introduction*, 515-16.

ROYAL HYMNS AND PRAYERS LISTED IN MESOPOTAMIAN INCIPIT CATALOGUES

One of Child's students, Gerald Wilson, has done the most comprehensive work on the editorial structure of the Psalter. In the course of his study he examines catalogues of hymnic incipits found in Sumerian and Akkadian tablets. When he brings his findings from his study of the Mesopotamian hymnic incipits to bear on the editorial 'relatedness' of the RPss, he makes the following assessment:

> [The royal psalms] are widely distributed throughout the Psalter and show no editorial concern to group or otherwise mark them out. This is quite in contrast with the Mesopotamian catalogues which regularly juxtapose "royal" hymns in a larger list or "lump" them together in a summary line. In any case, the catalogues are careful to distinguish these hymns from those of other categories, a concern that is absent from the Hebrew Psalter in regard to these "Royal" psalms.[5]

Wilson's observation is important to the present investigation for two reasons. First, the fact that the RPss are not grouped together could indicate that they were not considered to be psalms of the same category by the editors of the Psalter, especially if it was common practice to group together royal hymns and prayers in the ancient Near East. Second, the different approaches in organization could indicate different purposes for the collections themselves. In other words, does the fact that royal hymns and prayers were grouped together in two Mesopotamian incipit catalogues indicate that they were codified to be subsequently reused in the royal cult?

In two catalogues of hymnic incipits (out of twenty-two known catalogues),[6] there are special designations indicating subgroupings of what are presumably royal hymns or prayers. However, it is far from clear if they are subgroupings with any intentionality beyond the principle of shared 'catchwords', or storage space.

For example, line 32a of YBC 3654, which Wilson describes as a brief tablet of 45 lines dating to the Ur-III period, is translated by William Hallo as:

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[5] Wilson, *Editing*, 164.

[6] See table 1 in Wilson, *Editing*, 29.

šu-nigín 32 ša-du-lugal	"Sub-total: 32 royal hymns."[7]

Hallo admits that the translation of ša-du-lugal as 'royal hymn' is not without problem. Line 43 reads ša-du-igi-šè-àm, which Hallo translates as "hymns which are out of use" or "former hymns." Only a handful of the 'royal' incipits can be identified with certainty. Hallo, however, believes he can trace one to Suen (or Ibbi-Sîn), one to Šu-Šin, and three to Šulgi. Interestingly, the incipit attested on line 33, which would be considered 'former' or 'out of use', is translated by Hallo as:

lugal-en gal-di-an-na	"O Lofty king, distinguished one of heaven."

It is most likely the case that a god rather than a human king is being addressed in this incipit. Even so, it is impossible to discern why this hymn would have been considered in some way obsolete while hymns spanning the reigns of at least three kings would be considered to be in vogue.

Likewise, an Old Babylonian tablet found at Ur contains 53 lines of incipits and two lines which abbreviate subcategories, apparently for the singular convenience of the scribe:

33.	3 dumu-é-dub-ba
...	
43.	11 lugal[8]

Commenting on these two lines Samuel Noah Kramer writes:

> ...it [the tablet] reveals a hitherto unknown scribal cataloguing device for saving time and effort: in the two lines 33 and 43, the scribe lists a total of 14 compositions which begin with the same word or complex, and thus saves himself twelve lines of writing.[9]

Many of the other works (which include two hymns to king Šulgi, hymns to gods and goddesses, myths, the Sumerian King List, wisdom sayings, and temple hymns) can be identified by their incipits.

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[7] W.W. Hallo, "On the Antiquity of Sumerian Literature," *JAOS* 83 (1963) 169-70.

[8] S.N. Kramer, "New Literary Catalogue from Ur," *RA* 55 (1961) 170.

[9] Ibid.

Obviously, there is no way to identify the texts which correspond to '11 lugal' in line 43. It is notable, however, that the two hymns to Šulgi, which are referenced by the incipits

4. lugal-me šà-ta ur-sag-me-en

and

5. lugal-me-dug$_4$-ga

were not catalogued with the other eleven LUGAL compositions. In this case, as well as for the entire catalogue, no clear principle of organization is apparent.

As far as the RPss are concerned, one must conclude, given our examination of the Mesopotamian incipit catalogues, that it is not advisable to trace significant 'intentionality' to the 'scattering' of RPss within the Psalter. In fact, based solely upon the Mesopotamian catalogues, one could not attribute any particular editorial intentionality to the distance between various royal psalms or even the proximity shared by Pss 18, 20, and 21. In addition, the occasional gathering of royal hymns and prayers in the Mesopotamian incipit catalogues appears to have nothing to do with the liturgical use or reuse of those hymns and prayers. Hence nothing can be concluded in comparison with the RPss regarding liturgics.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the collections of texts that the Mesopotamian incipit catalogues identify have preserved royal hymns and prayers of a number of monarchs, without excising the monarch's personal or regnal names. This phenomenon is most dissimilar to the RPss of the Psalter.

The Royal Psalms and the Formation of the Hebrew Psalter

What might properly be surmised about the inclusion of various royal psalms in the Hebrew Psalter? This question can never be answered in full. There were most likely a constellation of reasons for the inclusion of each royal psalm in the Hebrew Psalter, many of which are beyond the reach of the modern scholar. However, by way of the *via negativa* some progress can be made.

It is most plausible that several royal psalms were included in the Hebrew Psalter as constituents of subcollections. For example, Ps

45, a royal psalm that Mowinckel typified as "the only example in the whole of Israelite psalm poetry of a true hymn to the king,"[10] is a member of the Korahite collection (Pss 42-49; 84; 86-88). One does not need to subscribe to ritual hypotheses such as Goulder's[11] to recognize that Pss 42-49 form a subcollection within the Psalter gathered according to their common ascription לִבְנֵי־קֹרַח "belonging to the sons of Korah." 2 Chr 20:19 purports that the Korahites were a Levitical guild of temple singers. It would appear that the Korahite collection comprises psalms that were associated with, preserved, or composed by this guild. Perhaps it represents their greatest 'hits', so to speak.

This being the case, then, the inclusion of Ps 45 in the Psalter might have had little to do with the unique contents of the psalm itself. Rather, it was, in all probability, already part of the Korahite collection and it was the collection itself that was included. Therefore, the editorial relationship of Ps 45 to the other royal psalms would be accidental, at best. Moreover, one might surmise, given the atypical self-reference of the psalmist in the initial verses of Ps 45,[12] that the justification for the psalm's inclusion in the Korahite collection had more to do with emphasizing the lyrical ability of the Korahites than it did in espousing royal ideology.

A similar situation holds true for Ps 132 which bears the superscription שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת "song of the ascents." As we noted in chapter 2, Klaus Seybold has argued that the corpus of ascent psalms (Pss 120-134) was compiled and then redacted in order to promulgate the platform of royal/Zion theology. Psalm 132, considered by Seybold to be different from the others being not a "Psalm of the Individual" but a royal psalm, was also redacted to better fulfill the aims of the compilers. If Seybold is correct in his assessment, then Ps 132 had to

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[10] Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.74.
[11] Goulder, *Psalms of the Sons of Korah*.
[12] Ps 45:2:

רָחַשׁ לִבִּי דָּבָר טוֹב
אֹמֵר אֲנִי מַעֲשַׂי לְמֶלֶךְ
לְשׁוֹנִי עֵט סוֹפֵר מָהִיר׃

My heart is astir with a good word,
I recite my works to the king,
my tongue is the pen of a willing scribe.

be redacted (being a royal psalm) in order to better suit its new context as an ascent psalm.

One may consider, then, that Ps 132 owes its inclusion in the Hebrew Psalter to its antecedent suitability to the editors/redactors of the 'Songs of Ascents', regardless of whether or not one is convinced by Seybold's argument. Thus an inveterate relationship to other royal psalms, as would also be the case with Ps 45, would have to be based on factors other than its inclusion in the Hebrew Psalter. And, whereas there is good reason to associate Pss 45 and 132 thematically with the other royal psalms, it is not at all clear that such an association was operative in the processes of the Psalter's compilation.

Three of the RPss occur at what has been called editorial 'seams' of the Psalter: Pss 2, 72, 89. The dominant theory in this regard has been argued by Wilson and was reviewed at length in chapter 1. While there remain significant questions to be addressed, such as exactly when Pss 2, 72, and 89 were added to Psalter collections (that is either individually or as one singular editorial move), it is difficult to deny that these three Psalms owe their inclusion in the Psalter to reasons of editorial structure. This likely being the case, it then becomes a question of not only in what ways are the remaining RPss in Books I-III (Pss 18, 20, 21) related to Pss 2, 72, and 89, but, perhaps, more importantly, in what ways are they dissimilar? In other words, did the editors of the Psalter simply require royal psalms, or were Pss 2, 72, and 89 of particular value?

Exactly when Ps 1 was added as an introduction to the Psalter remains elusive. Although most scholars assume that Ps 2 had already been associated with the Davidic collections, it is not obvious when Ps 2 would have taken the lead position. Wilson suggests the possibility of a preexilic collection of Davidic psalms inclusive of Pss 2-72.[13] However, since Ps 3 begins with the superscription מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אַבְשָׁלוֹם בְּנוֹ "A psalm of/for David: when he fled before Absalom his son," and Ps 72 concludes with the postscript כָּלּוּ תְפִלּוֹת דָּוִד בֶּן־יִשָׁי "Concluded are the prayers of David, the son of Jesse," and these superscriptions form the logical boundaries of the subcollection, it seems unlikely that the non-superscripted Ps 2 was subsequently added (alone) to the previously joined Books I and II.

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[13] Wilson, "The Use of Royal Psalms," 91.

That Ps 2 was appended to a previously combined collection of 'Davidic' psalms spanning Pss 3-72, at the time when Book III of the Psalter was appended to Books I and II, finds support in the observation that over eighty-five percent of the psalms in Books I and II are attributed to David, while only five percent are attributed to the king in Book III. Neither Ps 2 nor Ps 89 holds Davidic attribution. Given these observations, coupled with the fact that no royal psalm is found at the seam between Books I and II, we are inclined to view only Pss 2 and 89 as reflecting a unified editorial program.

Psalms 18, 20, and 21 are each given Davidic attribution. Psalm 18 begins with a lengthy and atypical historical introduction. Psalms 20 and 21 follow the overwhelming convention and include the superscription לְדָוִד. If the psalmic superscriptions can be seen as a recontextualization of all of the psalms, then it is clear that Pss 18, 20, and 21 would have simply been considered 'Davidic' at the compilation of the Davidic Psalter.[14]

Psalms 72 and 127 are the only psalms to bear the superscription of a monarch's name other than David. The latter was incorporated into the subcollection of the ascent psalms. It should be noted that the attribution of a lyrical hymn or prayer to another Israelite monarch is not without precedent. A psalmic prayer placed within the narrative of Hezekiah's illness bears the superscription מִכְתָּב לְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בַּחֳלֹתוֹ וַיְחִי מֵחָלְיוֹ "An inscription[15] of Hezekiah, King of Judah, when he became sick and recovered from his sickness" (Isa 38:9).

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[14] Note that several scholars have argued that Pss 15-24 form another subcollection of the Psalter. See Miller, "Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer," 127-142, P. Auffret, *La sagesse a bâti sa maison: études de structures littéraires dans l'Ancien Testament et spécialement dans les psaumes* (OBO 49; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982) 407-38, and F.L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, "'Wer darf hinaufziehen zum Berg JHWH's?' Zur Redaktionsgeschichte und Theologie der Psalmengruppe 15-24," *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel für Norbet Lohfink S.J.* (eds. G. Braulik, W. Gross, and S. McEvenue; Freiburg: Herder, 1993) 166-182.

[15] Or 'stele'. See H.L. Ginsberg, "Psalms and Inscriptions of Petition and Acknowledgement," *Louis Ginzberg: Jubilee Volume on the occasion of his seventieth birthday* (ed. A. Marx; New York: The American Academy for Jewish Research, 1945) 169, and especially P.D. Miller, Jr., "Psalms and Inscriptions," *Congress Volume, Vienna 1980* (VTSup 32; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982) 313ff.

Psalm 72, however, is not so much a prayer by a king, but an intercession on behalf of the king. As such, and with the ambiguous superscription לִשְׁלֹמֹה "by/for Solomon," it is likely that Ps 72 was understood in later circles to be a fitting prayer by King David for his son Solomon just prior to his ascension to the throne. Psalm 127, on the other hand, was most likely attributed to Solomon because of its wisdom motifs as well as its imagery of house/city building.[16] That is, what was remembered about King Solomon made him the obvious protagonist.

Of the remaining RPss, Pss 110 and 144 were most likely members of subsequent Davidic collections. This is clearly the case for Ps 144 which is bound by the Davidic Pss 138-145. Likewise, Book V of the Psalter begins with an unsuperscripted pilgrimage song (Ps 107) which is followed by three psalms with Davidic superscriptions (Pss 108-110), and then by three Hallelujah psalms (Pss 111-113).

Psalm 101 is exceptional.[17] It and Ps 103 are the only psalms which receive Davidic attribution in Book IV. There is the strong possibility that their Davidic attribution could be credited to the tendency, once combined with Books I-III, to expand Davidic attribution to psalms already collected. While the Qumran texts only attest one expansive attribution,[18] the LXX attributes every psalm in Book IV to David except Pss 90, 100, 102, 105 and 106!

A more likely scenario is that at least Pss 101, 103, and 104 were collected in Book IV because of their shared catch-word, שׂרת (101:6, 103:21, 104:4). These are the *only* psalms in the entire Psalter that employ this lexeme! It cannot be simple coincidence that the three psalms that were edited and redacted into the invocational mosaic in 1 Chr 16 are all psalms from Book IV (Pss 96, 105, 106), *and* 1 Chr 16 is the chapter in which King David appoints Levites to be the ministers (מְשָׁרְתִים) before the ark of the Lord to invoke, thank,

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[16] See P.D. Miller, Jr., "Psalm 127—the House that Yahweh Builds," *JSOT* 22 (1982) 119-132.

[17] Miller, however, has suggested that Ps 101 may also play a purposeful role in the shape of the Psalter being "...the first royal psalm, the first David psalm, after the 'answer,' Wilson sees to the breakdown of kingship at the end of Book III." See P.D. Miller, Jr., "Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer," 141.

[18] See Wilson, *Editing*, 232-233.

and praise Yahweh (1 Chr 16:4, 37). There would seem to be ample reason to assume that a pro-Levitical singer/servant circle can be linked to both the Chronicler and Book IV of the Psalter. Psalm 101 was of obvious interest to the compiler because of its reference in v. 6b: הֹלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ תָּמִים הוּא יְשָׁרְתֵנִי "The one who walks in the path of integrity, he has been my minister." In fact, John Kselman has demonstrated that this line occurs as the lone middle element of a chiasmus which binds vv. 6-7.[19] This being the case, Ps 101 was included in the Psalter less for its 'royal' content than for its fortuitous exultation of the Levitical singer.

In summary, there is little reason to assume that the editors and compilers of the Psalter viewed the RPss as a subgroup such as the Enthronement psalms. Except for Pss 2 and 89, and to a lesser extent, Pss 72 and 101, there is little evidence for the purposeful and strategic placement of royal psalms in the editorial arrangements of the Psalter. Most of the RPss were included in the Psalter because of their prehistory as constituents of other subcollections.

It would have been highly unlikely, given the foregoing observations, for the RPss to have been members of a royal subcollection of lyrical texts that did not make its way into the Hebrew Psalter. It is more likely that the RPss were preserved and circulated individually by a variety of means in a number of contexts and media. Any integrated relationship they might share is, in little, or no way, due to the processes by which they were included in the Psalter.

THE PRECANONICAL HISTORY OF THE NON-ORACULAR ROYAL PSALMS

The precanonical history of any biblical psalm is a matter of speculation and inference. However, the very designation 'royal psalm' implies that something should be able to be said about the text's precanonical appropriation. Since our study thus far has challenged the assumption that the RPss are essentially liturgical in nature or bound to the royal cult, what tentative judgments may be made regarding the reappropriation of non-oracular RPss?

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[19] J.S. Kselman, "Psalm 101: Royal Confession and Divine Oracle," *JSOT* 33 (1985) 50.

PSALM 45

We have already commented on the likely subsequent reuse of Ps 45 in terms of its attribution to the sons of Korah. There is also the possibility that Ps 45 was appropriated for the sake of knavish wedding hoopla.[20] There can be little doubt that Ps 45 was written for a royal wedding, but its original historical specificities have been leveled virtually without a trace.

PSALM 18

As has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, a number of RPss were included in the Psalter due to their association with King David. This was plainly the case for Ps 18. However, it is doubtful that Ps 18 goes back to David himself. Since vv. 44-46 can hardly apply to one who is not king (תְּשִׂימֵנִי לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם "You have appointed me 'Head of Nations', etc.), one can be relatively certain that Ps 18 was composed for a king of Israel. Cross and Freedman suggest a date in the 9th-8th centuries BCE based on the psalm's morphology and syntax.[21]

It is worth noting that v. 44a is problematic and many commentators suspect textual corruption.[22] We might add that this is precisely the location in the text where one would surmise that a specific historical king would be linked to the royal grant of being appointed as head of the nations. Perhaps a royal name was excised at some point from the text. Regardless, it is certain that by the time of the Psalter's compilation, Ps 18 had been reappropriated into the traditions of David at which time v. 51c was most likely added.

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[20] See T.H. Gaster, "Ps 45," *JBL* 74 (1955) 239-51.

[21] F.M. Cross, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Baltimore: N.p., 1950), 254. This study was a shared doctoral dissertation with D.N. Freedman and was subsequently reprinted as F.M. Cross and D.N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (SBLDS 21; Missoula: Scholars, 1975).

[22] Ibid., 315.

PSALM 20

In ways perhaps similar to Ps 18, Ps 20 became associated with David by the time of the Psalter's compilation. However, in its precanonical form, it held but a smattering of royal content. Verses 2-6 take the form of a blessing which could be applied to any human being. Moreover, in the psalm's final verse, it is by no means clear whether הַמֶּלֶךְ is to be taken as the object of the verb or as an epithet of Yahweh. Regardless, v. 10b defines the entire colon to be the prayer of the congregation. The crux of the psalm, then, is v. 7 which introduces the psalmist's comprehension that Yahweh will save his anointed. One should not assume that this line necessitates the psalm's derivation from the royal court. Some, in fact, suspect this to be a later interpolation.[23] All of this is to say, that it is likely the case that Ps 20 was used in communal contexts prior to its inclusion in the Psalter.

PSALM 21

There can be little doubt that Ps 21 is a *bona fide* royal psalm. However, even as such, its *form* is not that of other royal hymns and prayers of the ancient Near East. Notwithstanding the recurrent problem of the omission of royal names, it is strange to find the king's praise of his god expressed in other than first-person form.[24] From the comparative evidence, one expects the king himself to laud the deity in first-person address. We suspect, therefore, that this psalm has been substantially reworked from an original source.

Further, as the text presently stands, it is not clear who is being addressed in vv. 9-13. Dahood understood the subject to be Yahweh,[25] while Gunkel deemed this section to be well-wishes for the king.[26]

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[23] So E.S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 1, with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry* (The Forms of the Old Testament Literature 24; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 105.

[24] Note that Gerstenberger is also troubled by this, Ibid., 106.

[25] M. Dahood, *Psalms I: 1-50 A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 16; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965) 131-135.

[26] So Gunkel, *Psalmen*, 86-87.

Since the king's praise is narrated rather than being voiced in first-person, we surmise that the psalm was originally written (or so its *traditum*)[27] in first-person address from a historical king to Yahweh. Perhaps, then, vv. 9-13 were originally a royal grant of victory from Yahweh to the king. But this psalm's subsequent history apparently necessitated its revision to a second-person description of the relationship between king and god (vv. 3-8), couched in a hymn of thanksgiving which praises Yahweh for his martial prowess. If that were the case, it would tend to confirm our working definition of a royal psalm. By narrating the unnamed king's devotion in the third-person, the argument of the psalm becomes one of the ideal king rather than a specific king's 'ideality' (i.e. the *norm* for court style in the ancient Near East). In the third stage of the psalm's history it was ascribed Davidic attribution, which placed the revised psalm once again on the prayerful lips of the king.

PSALM 72

Ps 72 is a prayer on behalf of the king that any person in the kingdom could pray. As such it is the logical expansion of other occasional petitions for the king in the citizens' prayers (Pss 61:7-8; 84:1-13). Predictably, the idiom and motifs of Ps 72 are strikingly similar to the coronation Hymn of Assurbanipal:

> May Šamaš, king of heaven and earth, elevate you to shepherdship over the four [region]s!
> May Aššur, who ga[ve y]ou [the scepter], lengthen your days and years!...[28]
> May eloquence, understanding, truth, and justice be given to him as a gift!...[29]
> May concord and peace be established [in Assyri]a!...[30]

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[27] For the remainder of the study the *traditum* of a royal psalm will be its hypothetical original text. The *traditio* of a royal psalm are the processes by which the *traditum* has become the received text (MT). See Harry Nasuti for a helpful review of Tradition-History principles of investigation, H.P. Nasuti, *Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph* (SBLDS 88; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 1-24.

[28] VAT 13831 1-2. *Trans*. *SAA* 3.26-27.

[29] VAT 13831 8. *Trans*. *SAA* 3.26-27.

[30] VAT 13831 14. *Trans*. *SAA* 3.26-27.

> May the great gods make firm his reign, may they protect the life [of Assurba]nipal, king of Assyria.
> May they give him a straight scepter to extend the land and his peoples!
> May his reign be renewed, and may they consolidate his throne forever!...[31]
> In his years may there *con*[*stantly*] be rain from the heavens and flood from the (underground) source![32]

There is a good possibility that the *traditum* of Ps 72 was linked to the coronation of an Israelite king. We must, however, strongly dissent from Kraus's conjecture of the psalm's continuing use in the royal cult: "The historical dating will have to recede in importance in comparison with the assumption that the royal psalm was repeatedly cited in cultic situations."[33] Our study of the use and reuse of royal hymns and prayers in the ancient Near East show such an assumption to be unfounded.

It is quite possible that the references in vv. 10 and 15 to the country/region of Sheba is a reliable historical allusion. If so, then this psalm may have been recorded on a stele or inscription which commemorated the queen's visit (as vassal) to King Solomon.[34] However, the original royal liturgy has been obscured by its redaction to communal prayer. Thus, it is impossible to ascribe much in the way of Solomonic historical veracity with confidence.

PSALM 101

Although many scholars have attempted to place Ps 101 within a royal coronation service, there is little contained in the text itself that would justify such a conclusion. The entire psalm is spoken by the same protagonist. In vv. 1b-2a the protagonist pledges his praise

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[31] VAT 13831 16-18. *Trans. SAA* 3.26-27.

[32] VAT 13831 20. *Trans. SAA* 3.26-27.

[33] H.–J. Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 76.

[34] For a positive assessment of the veracity of these traditions see A. Malamat, "A Political Look at the Kingdom of David and Solomon and Its Relations with Egypt," *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays: Papers Read at the International Symposium for Biblical Studies, Tokyo, 5-7 December 1979* (ed. T. Ishida; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1982) 190-92, and 196-97.

and adoration of Yahweh. Verse 2b, מָתַי תָּבוֹא אֵלָי, "when will you come to me?" contains the second element: petition. The remainder of the psalm can either be interpreted as the protagonist's plea of innocence by taking the verbal forms to be preterites,[35] or as the protagonist's vows of loyalty and service by reading the verbal forms as future-tense.[36] Although most of the psalm could refer to any devotee of Yahweh, the language in v. 8, pertaining to the annihilation of the wicked and, thus, cutting them off from the city of Yahweh, best fits that of a ruling monarch.

Since the king's protestation or pledge is expressed in open and typical language, it is virtually impossible to prognosticate, even suggest, a likely historical context for the psalm. The petition for Yahweh's visitation can hardly be considered a desperate plea that reflects atypical reverence of the king or some unique historical circumstance. Fervent prayer for the deity's visitation such as that in Ps 101:2 is typical of royal court style.[37] Moreover, the petition of the king, though somewhat unique for the MT, is similar to the model prayers that were taught to Egyptian schoolboys.[38] Thus, whereas there can be little doubt that Ps 101 reflects the prayer of a king of Judah, it is impossible to say much beyond that. There is no reason to assume that Ps 101 held any relationship with the other RPss prior to its inclusion in the Psalter.

PSALM 144

Finally, Ps 144 contains little, if anything, that would have necessitated its protagonist to hold royal birthright. In fact, Ps 144 seems to be a reappropriation of the *traditum* of Ps 18 // 2 Sam 22 by a subsequent psalmist. Robert Cully has discerned numerous oral formulae in the first eleven verses of the psalm.[39] Thus, it is most

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[35] See Dahood, *Psalms III*, 2.

[36] Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 276.

[37] For example, see Assurbanipal's dialogue with Nabû (*SAA* 3.33).

[38] "Come to me, O Re-Har-akhti...." British Museum 10243 recto X 1. *Trans. ANET*, 379.

[39] R.C. Cully, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms* (Near and Middle East Series; Belgium: University of Toronto Press, 1976) 103, and 108-109.

likely the case that the psalmist did not create a midrash on Ps 18, but instead linked and expanded various psalmic phrases creating a new composition. It is almost certain that vv. 1-11 were originally distinct from vv. 12-13. If so, then Ps 144 as a whole represents the reappropriation of royal traditions (perhaps twice-removed from the actual royal cult) in a new communal/wisdom setting.

One intriguing possibility for the theological worldview of this psalm is connected to its allusion in v. 2e, תַּחְתָּי עַמִּי<ם>[40] הָרוֹדֵד "(Yahweh) who subdues peoples beneath me" to 2 Sam 22:48: וּמוֹרִיד עַמִּים תַּחְתֵּנִי. Similarly, in Isa 45:1 the same is said of Cyrus the Persian:

כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה לִמְשִׁיחוֹ
לְכוֹרֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־הֶחֱזַקְתִּי בִימִינוֹ
לְרַד־לְפָנָיו גוֹיִם

Thus says Yahweh to his anointed,
to Cyrus whose right hand I have seized,
to subdue nations before him...

Given the mixing of 'servant' metaphors in Second Isaiah, one could intelligibly surmise that just as the language of subduing the nations could be appropriated by one of Yahweh's servants (Cyrus), so too it could be appropriated by Yahweh's other servant (the community).[41]

EVALUATION

In this chapter we first explored the likelihood of a prior subcollection of royal psalms from which the RPss were adapted. We reached a uniformly negative conclusion. There is no evidence, whatsoever, that supports the existence of such a prior subcollection of the RPss.

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[40] The MT's עַמִּי, 'my people', can hardly be correct since, as H.–J . Kraus has observed, the verb רָדַד suggests violent subjugation. See Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 540. The reading עַמִּים, which is supported by many MT[MSS], 11QPs[a], Syr. and Targ., should be adopted.

[41] For the same view but with regard to other texts, see J. Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 69.

There is even significant doubt whether such collections existed for reasons other than the organizational needs of cataloguers. Secondly, we surmised that the reasons for the inclusion of a particular royal psalm in one of the Books of the Psalter were marked more by diversity than by commonality. Thirdly, in seeking to discern the precanonical histories of various RPss, we discovered that no two psalms shared the same evolution.

Thus, we are left with an indelible impression of the 'singularity' of each of the RPss in terms of form, content, prehistory, and *raison d'être* for its inclusion in the Psalter. Their single point of commonality is in their (canonical) devotion to the institution of human kingship under Yahweh's sight.

Chapter 4

THE RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF ROYAL ORACLES

If one were to ask what was lexically unique to the RPss, one would be disappointed with the results. No collection of terms, indeed, no single lexeme, automatically delimits a royal psalm. The term מָשִׁיחַ, which occurs in Pss 2:2; 18:51; 20:8; 89:39, 52; and 132:17, 10, comes closest to being a singular indicator for a royal psalm. However, מָשִׁיחַ also occurs in Pss 84:10 and 105:15. Psalm 84:10 is a brief petition for the king's well-being following the psalmist's own petition, all within a 'Song of Zion'. In Ps 105:15, the plural form is used to refer, not to historical kings of Israel and Judah, but to the Patriarchs.

More helpful than simple lexical data are motifs and scenes that are created by the language of the RPss themselves. Simone Springer has provided a helpful distillation of motifs and central themes in her treatment of the RPss, identifying twelve motifs among them:

1. Erwählung des Königs
2. Einsetzung des Königs
3. Königliche Qualifikationen
4. Einsatz für Recht und Gerechtigkeit
5. Stabilität der Königsfunktion, Lebensdauer des Königs
6. Chaoskampf, Chaosbesiegung
7. Völkerkampf, Völkerbesiegung, Völkervernichtung
8. König und Kult
9. Abschwörung

10. Bekenntnis, Gelübde
11. Bitte, Klage
12. Gebetserhörung, Dank[1]

Not surprisingly, motifs one and two are limited to the oracular RPss. Except for motif nine, which occurs only in Ps 101, each of the other motifs appears in at least one of the oracular RPss. Thus, in concentrating our efforts on the oracular RPss, we can be assured that we have touched upon the dominant motifs expressed in Israel's court style.

ORACULAR ROYAL PSALMS

Oracles can be found in at least four RPss: Pss 2, 89, 110, 132.[2] The divine pronouncement from the god(s) to the king is a standard and expected discourse throughout the ancient Near East. It is hardly remarkable that the RPss contain divine oracles to the king, given the intimate relationship between the god(s) and monarchs throughout the ancient Near East. The following three examples illustrate the essential function that divination held for the Assyrians:

> *ummu annû mār ridûtija* ^{d}*Šamaš u* ^{d}*Adad ina bīri išālma annu kēnu īpulušuma umma šû tēnūka*[3]
>
> Thus did he (Sennacherib) ask of Šamaš and Adad by divination: "Is this the heir to my throne?" and they responded to him with a strong affirmative: "He is your successor."
>
> [*anāku aradk*]*a* ^{I}*ilu*^{u}*ašur-bâni-apli ša ina bīri taqbû epēš šarrūtišu*[4]
>
> I, Assurbanipal, your servant, to whom you promised through divination the exercise of kingship...
>
> ^{d}*Šamaš u* ^{d}*Adad ina bīrišunu kēni ana šarri bēlija ana šarrūti mātāti uktinnu palû damqu*[5]

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[1] Springer, *Neuinterpretation*, 149.

[2] Less certain are Pss 21 and 101.

[3] R. Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (AfO Beifeft 9; Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1967) 40, lns. 12-14.

[4] *KAR* 105:14.

[5] ABL 2:8.

> Šamaš and Adad, by means of firm divination, have made firm a blessed reign for the king, my lord for the rulership of the lands.

One need not belabor the point by multiplying examples. It is nearly impossible to conceive of ancient kingship devoid of oracular decrees.

Gunkel argued that the presence of an oracle within a royal psalm demanded that the psalm be early and not late, since 1) oracular decrees ceased in the Maccabean period, and 2) oracles were delivered for a reigning king's immediate historical predicament, hence, they must be preexilic. Although one may contend with Gunkel's first point, our anaylsis below wholly supports his second, and more substantial, point. But whereas Gunkel was undoubtedly correct in his dating of the *traditum* of the RPss, he did not sufficiently consider the substance of permutations made to individual RPss in the *traditio* prior to their canonical form. In the examination of the oracular RPss, both aspects of their Tradition-History will be our necessary concern.

PSALM 132

Psalm 132 contains at least two divine oracles to the king. As a result of Gunkel's treatment of the psalm, it has become customary to view it consisting of two halves. Psalm 132:1-10 can be described as a petition for Yahweh to remember and to be faithful to his servant David. Verses 1b and 10 voice the petition. Verses 1c-5 cite the reason Yahweh should be compelled to intervene; namely, the faithfulness of King David, who swore to Yahweh that he would find a resting place for Yahweh's ark. However, the psalmist does not rest his case by simply citing the historical memory of King David's vow. Instead, in Ps 132:11-18, the second half of the psalm, the psalmist ups the ante by recalling Yahweh's own oracles previously delivered to King David, as well as an oracle disclosing Yahweh's choice of Zion.

The first oracle is introduced by reestablishing the oath of Yahweh to David:

Ps 132:11-12

11. נִשְׁבַּע־יְהוָה לְדָוִד
אֱמֶת לֹא־יָשׁוּב מִמֶּנָּה
מִפְּרִי בִטְנְךָ
אָשִׁית לְכִסֵּא־לָךְ׃
12. אִם־יִשְׁמְרוּ בָנֶיךָ בְּרִיתִי
וְעֵדֹתִי זוֹ אֲלַמְּדֵם
גַּם־בְּנֵיהֶם עֲדֵי־עַד
יֵשְׁבוּ לְכִסֵּא־לָךְ׃

11. Yahweh swore to David
a true (promise) from which he will not recant:
"From the fruit of your womb,
I will place (one) upon your throne.
12. If your sons will guard my covenant,
and my stipulation which I have taught them,
also their sons, forever,
will rule upon your throne."

C.L. Seow argues that the psalmist quoted ancient liturgical material: "The apologist quotes from the ancient promise in order to establish the reliability of Yahweh's word."[6] Seow points to several archaisms to corroborate his assessment. For example, אָשִׁית לְכִסֵּא־לָךְ and יֵשְׁבוּ לְכִסֵּא־לָךְ are archaic, since one would expect the preposition עַל to introduce כִּסֵּא rather than לְ (as is the case in 11QPs[a]) in standard Hebrew. Likewise, the particle זוֹ can be indicative of early Hebrew.[7] Although some have argued that v. 12 is a subsequent deuteronomistic addition,[8] the presence of archaisms raises doubts against such an assessment.

In v. 13 the voice of the psalm shifts back to the psalmist who remembers another oracle. This oracle not only reemphasizes the

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[6] C.L. Seow, *Myth, Drama, and the Politics of David's Dance* (HSM 44; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989) 179.

[7] See in addition D.A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (SBLDS 3; Missoula: Scholars, 1972) 63.

[8] See T. Veijola, *Verheissung in der Krise* (Annales Academiæ Scientiarum Fennicæ 220; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakateneia, 1982) 161-162, and Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 256-257.

promise Yahweh had made to David and his descendants, but it does so by recalling Yahweh's choice of Zion for his capital city:

Ps 132:13-18

13. כִּי־בָחַר יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן
אִוָּה לְמוֹשָׁב לוֹ׃
14. זֹאת־מְנוּחָתִי עֲדֵי־עַד
פֹּה־אֵשֵׁב כִּי אִוִּתִיהָ׃
15. צֵידָהּ בָּרֵךְ אֲבָרֵךְ
אֶבְיוֹנֶיהָ אַשְׂבִּיעַ לָחֶם׃
16. וְכֹהֲנֶיהָ אַלְבִּישׁ יֶשַׁע
וַחֲסִידֶיהָ רַנֵּן יְרַנֵּנוּ׃
17. שָׁם אַצְמִיחַ קֶרֶן לְדָוִד
עָרַכְתִּי נֵר לִמְשִׁיחִי׃
18. אוֹיְבָיו אַלְבִּישׁ בֹּשֶׁת
וְעָלָיו יָצִיץ נִזְרוֹ׃

13. For Yahweh chose Zion,
he desired her for his abode (saying):
14. "This is my resting place forever,
here I will be enthroned for I have desired her.
15. I will certainly bless her provisions,
I will satisfy her needy with bread.
16. Her priests I will clothe with salvation,
and her faithful will cry out with joy.
17. There I will cause to sprout a horn for David,
I will arrange a lamp for my anointed.
18. His enemies I will clothe in shame,
But upon him, his crown will shimmer!"

The coalescence of Zion theology and royal (Davidic) theology into a royal/Zion complex occurred early in the history of the Israelite monarchy.[9] In the ancient Near East the choice of a new capital and

[9] See Seow, *Myth*, 185-196, as well as J.J.M. Roberts, "The Davidic Origin of the Zion Tradition," *JBL* 92 (1973) 329-44, and "Zion in the Theology of the Davidic-Solomonic Empire," *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon*, 93-108.

sanctuary required oracular approval.[10] It is difficult, if not impossible, to discern whether vv. 14-18 contain the historical oracle asserting Yahweh's election of Zion, or whether the original oracle lies behind Nathan's prophecy to David (2 Sam 7) and vv. 14-18 in Ps 132 are a subsequent adaptation. What is clear, however, is that the psalmist quotes both oracles in order to rouse Yahweh to respond to the present crisis.

Seow believes the present crisis to which the psalm is addressed to be linked to the epithet of Yahweh, אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב, which occurs in vv. 2b and 5b. Noting that the same epithet occurs in Gen 49:24 and, accordingly, is commonly thought to reflect the worship of ʾĒl at Shiloh, Seow surmises:

> If my dating of this psalm is correct, the use of the bull-epithet is hardly coincidental: it is a subtle polemic against any attempt to establish a competing shrine with bull iconography in the north. It is, at the same time, an affirmation of the ark as the symbol and Jerusalem as the appropriate "place" for the "Bull of Jacob."[11]

Seow dates the composition of Ps 132 to a period shortly after the seceding of Northern Israel from Judah.[12]

We are inclined to accept Seow's 9th century BCE dating for the composition of Ps 132, although we are bothered by the reticence of Ps 132 in naming Rehoboam as protagonist. After all, the momentous issue at that time centered on who was the 'true' king of Israel, Rehoboam or Jeroboam. It vexes one to provide explanation for the omission of Rehoboam's name from the apologetic text—that is, unless Ps 132 was excerpted from a larger text. We can easily point to cases where a royal protagonist's name does not appear in a subsection of a larger work. For example, nestled within the lengthy first-person account recorded in the Kadesh Battle inscription of Ramses II, the following oracle is cited:

> Now though I prayed in the distant land,
> My voice resounded in Southern On.
> I found Amun came when I called to him,
> He gave me his hand and I rejoiced.

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[10] Roberts, "Zion in the Theology," 105.
[11] Seow, *Myth*, 163.
[12] Ibid., 149.

> He called from behind as if near by:
> "Forward, I am with you,
> I, your father, my hand is with you,
> I prevail over a hundred thousand men,
> I am lord of victory, lover of valor!"
> I found my heart stout, my breast in joy,
> All I did succeeded; I was like Mont.[13]

Although Ramses II's *pronomen*, Usermare-sotpenre, occurs throughout the text, in the section quoted above it is conspicuously absent. One could easily imagine how the above quoted text could be turned into a psalm much like Ps 132. Is it possible that a section of a larger whole is represented by Ps 132? While one cannot rule out this possibility, arguments in its favor are too hypothetical to accept.

Regardless, it is not difficult to understand why Ps 132 would have been included in the sub-collection of ascent psalms. Just as David was faithful in finding a resting place for Yahweh and his ark in Zion, the very place that Yahweh chose; so too, the pilgrims, as they made their way to that same Zion, communed in David's faithfulness, seeking to prostrate themselves at Yahweh's footstool (v. 7).

In either historical situation, the recollection of the divine oracles need not have been a dramatic representation. Although Ps 132 undoubtedly quotes older liturgical material, its final form is such that it becomes a prayer on behalf of King David and the Davidic monarchy. While such a prayer most likely had its genesis in the early period of the divided monarchy, its reappropriation by the Chronicler (2 Chr 6:41-42), who adapted the petition of vv. 8-10 placing it upon the lips of King Solomon, shows its longevity in the consciousness of Israel.

PSALM 89

Ps 132 is not the only royal psalm to quote an ancient oracle in order to secure Yahweh's covenant promises in the present. Psalm 89, a comparatively lengthy composition of 51 lines, contains two royal oracles. Although assessed by H.–J. Kraus as a "psalm that is

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[13] KRI II:121-129. *Trans. AEL*, 2.66.

extremely hard to understand by literary criticism and form criticism,"[14] Ps 89 can be descriptively summarized as:

vv. 2-3	hymnic praise
vv. 4-5	royal oracle
vv. 6-19	hymnic praise
vv. 20-38	royal oracle
vv. 39-52	royal/communal lament[15]

The psalm begins with the declaration of the psalmist that he or she will sing of Yahweh's steadfast love forever and his faithfulness to all generations. In v. 2, the psalmist commences to fulfill the vow by affirming that Yahweh's steadfast love was established forever and that his faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Then, the psalmist explicates the distinctive nature of Yahweh's חֶסֶד and אֱמוּנָה by citing an old royal oracle:

Ps 89:4-5

כָּרַתִּי בְרִית לִבְחִירִי	4.
נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְדָוִד עַבְדִּי:	
עַד־עוֹלָם אָכִין זַרְעֶךָ	5.
וּבָנִיתִי לְדֹר־וָדוֹר כִּסְאֶךָ סֶלָה:	

4. I have cut a covenant with my chosen one,
   I have made oath to David my servant.
5. "Forever, I will establish your seed,
   and I will build up, for all generations, your throne."

Following the citation of the royal oracle, the psalmist calls upon the heavens and 'holy ones' to praise the wonders (פֶּלֶא) and faithfulness (אֱמוּנָה) of Yahweh (v. 6). This call inaugurates a section of the psalm (vv. 6-19) that Westermann considers to be exemplary for the fixed and the structurally well-defined 'Descriptive Psalm of Praise'.[16] The psalmist recounts the great acts of Yahweh, using stereotypical language of the *Chaoskampf*, and extols Yahweh's secure throne as the place from which steadfast love and faithfulness proceed.

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[14] Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 201.
[15] See M.E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (WBC 20; Waco: Word, 1990) 413.
[16] Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 122.

The section of descriptive praise concludes with a deposition of blessing upon the people who know the festal shout (תְּרוּעָה),[17] who walk in the light of Yahweh's face, who extol Yahweh's name all day, and who, themselves, are lifted up in Yahweh's righteousness. Finally, two כִּי clauses follow reiterating the reason for the state of blessedness (vv. 18-19). Notably, three of the four cola emphasize the fact that the people's king belongs to Yahweh.[18] Verses 18-19 not only conclude the section of descriptive praise, but they serve as a sequential bridge to the next royal oracle.

Significantly, the lengthy royal oracle that follows is purported to have been given to Yahweh's loyal *ones* in a vision. Some Hebrew MSS attest לַחֲסִידְךָ 'loyal one', and though none of the versions supports this reading, a number of commentators have been inclined to emend the received text on the inference that the prophet Nathan is the intended referent.[19] In 2 Sam 7:17, directly after Nathan delivers his oracle to King David, the narrator attests: כְּכֹל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וּכְכֹל הַחִזָּיוֹן הַזֶּה כֵּן דִּבֶּר נָתָן אֶל־דָּוִד "According to all these words and according to all this vision, thus Nathan spoke to David." The Chronicler clones essentially the same text, only replacing חִזָּיוֹן with חָזוֹן (1 Chr 17:15). Others have viewed king David himself as the recipient.[20]

It is likely the case that the MT's לַחֲסִידֶיךָ is secondary and that the text originally read a singular form of the noun. However, there are traces of confusion among the versions which cannot be ade-

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[17] This need not imply a liturgical context. Given the *Chaoskampf* motif, the תְּרוּעָה could easily refer to the war cry (see Num 10:7, 9; Josh 6:10, 16, 20, Judg 7:21, 1 Sam 17:52, Jer 50:15, etc.). In this connection, note the words with which the inner court praises Ramses III: "Great is thy strength, O mighty King! Thy battle cry echoes among the Nine Bows." See *Hist. Rec*., pl. 23, ln. 1. At the same time, it cannot be denied that this term was used in preexilic temple worship. See Pss 41:12; 47:2; 66:1; 81:2; 95:1-2; 98:4, etc.

[18] See Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 209.

[19] See F. Nötscher, *Die Psalmen* (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1952) 180; Gunkel, *Psalmen*, 392; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 258; and Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 200 (but note his disclaimer and caution on 208).

[20] G.W. Ahlström, *Psalm 89*, 100. Dahood believed the reference to be to King David himself, and attempted to defend the consonantal text as a singular form with an archaic genitival ending or, alternatively, as a plural of majesty. See *Psalms II*, 316.

quately explained by an original חֲסִידְךָ. Some LXX[MSS] attest υἱοῖς 'sons'.[21] This is somewhat strange since, in most cases, חֲסִידִים presented no problem for the translators of the LXX who regularly used οἱ ὅσιοι. 4Q236 preserves בחרין 'chosen ones'. Further, 4Q236, although fragmentary, exhibits a much shorter line.[22] In the Qumran community חָסִיד was a self-referential epithet for the community.[23] In other words, some LXX[MSS] and 4Q236 have elected terms that convey the Davidic line, whereas the MT and the Syr. have linked the oracle to the community itself. In this regard, it is worth noting vv. 9 and 16 of Ps 132 where חֲסִידִים is the complement of כֹּהֲנִים, and, together, the terms signify the temple community.

Although it is difficult, if not impossible, to judge one of the versions superior to the others, it is noteworthy that none of the versions attest a singular form. Given this fact, coupled with the observation that חֲסִידִים is used elsewhere in the MT for the worshiping community of Israel, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the royal oracle was reappropriated and remembered as if it were placed on the lips of the community itself:

Psalm 89:20-38

20. אָז דִּבַּרְתָּ־בְחָזוֹן לַחֲסִידֶךָ
וַתֹּאמֶר שִׁוִּיתִי עֵזֶר עַל־גִּבּוֹר
הֲרִימוֹתִי בָחוּר מֵעָם׃

21. מָצָאתִי דָוִד עַבְדִּי
בְּשֶׁמֶן קָדְשִׁי מְשַׁחְתִּיו׃

22. אֲשֶׁר יָדִי תִּכּוֹן עִמּוֹ
אַף־זְרוֹעִי תְאַמְּצֶנּוּ׃

23. לֹא־יִשָּׁא אוֹיֵב בּוֹ
וּבֶן־עַוְלָה לֹא יְעַנֶּנּוּ׃

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[21] See E. Hatch and H.A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (including the apocryphal books)* (2 vols; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983) 2.1018.

[22] 4Q236.1: בחרין תאמר ל[אז דברת ל]בחרין. See J.T. Milik, "Fragment d'une source du psautier [4Q Ps 89] et fragments des Jubilés, du Document de Damas, d'un phylactère dans la grotte 4 de Qumrân," *RB* 73 [1966] 95-98, pl. I.

[23] See *GCDSS*, 257.

24. וְכַתּוֹתִי מִפָּנָיו צָרָיו
וּמְשַׂנְאָיו אֶגּוֹף׃
25. וֶאֱמוּנָתִי וְחַסְדִּי עִמּוֹ
וּבִשְׁמִי תָּרוּם קַרְנוֹ׃
26. וְשַׂמְתִּי בַיָּם יָדוֹ
וּבַנְּהָרוֹת יְמִינוֹ׃
27. הוּא יִקְרָאֵנִי אָבִי אָתָּה
אֵלִי וְצוּר יְשׁוּעָתִי׃
28. אַף־אֲנִי בְּכוֹר אֶתְּנֵהוּ
עֶלְיוֹן לְמַלְכֵי־אָרֶץ׃
29. לְעוֹלָם אֶשְׁמָר־לוֹ[24] חַסְדִּי
וּבְרִיתִי נֶאֱמָנֶת לוֹ׃

20. Then you spoke in a vision to your loyal ones,
and you said: "I have placed a boy over a warrior,
I have exalted a chosen one apart from the people.
21. I have found David my servant,
with my sacred oil I anointed him;
22. regarding him—my hand will be steadfast with him,
also, my arm will strengthen him.
23. No enemy will outwit him,
and the son-of-injustice will not humiliate him.
24. I will beat to bits his contenders before him,
his antagonists I will pummel.
25. My fidelity and my faithfulness will be with him,
and by means of my name his horn will be exalted.
26. I will set his hand upon the sea,
and his right hand upon rivers.
27. He shall proclaim to me: 'You are my father,
'my god' and 'the rock of my salvation'.
28. Furthermore, I will appoint him 'First Born',
'Elyōn over the kings of the earth'.
29. Forever, I will guard my loyalty for him,
and my covenant will be unfailing for him.

[24] Reading with the *Qĕrê*.

30. וְשַׂמְתִּי לָעַד זַרְעוֹ
וְכִסְאוֹ כִּימֵי שָׁמָיִם׃
31. אִם־יַעַזְבוּ בָנָיו תּוֹרָתִי
וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי לֹא יֵלֵכוּן׃
32. אִם־חֻקֹּתַי יְחַלֵּלוּ
וּמִצְוֹתַי לֹא יִשְׁמֹרוּ׃
33. וּפָקַדְתִּי בְשֵׁבֶט פִּשְׁעָם
וּבִנְגָעִים עֲוֹנָם׃
34. וְחַסְדִּי לֹא־אָפִיר מֵעִמּוֹ
וְלֹא־אֲשַׁקֶּר בֶּאֱמוּנָתִי׃
35. לֹא־אֲחַלֵּל בְּרִיתִי
וּמוֹצָא שְׂפָתַי לֹא אָשַׁנֶּה׃
36. אַחַת נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְקָדְשִׁי
אִם־לְדָוִד אֲכַזֵּב׃
37. זַרְעוֹ לְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה
וְכִסְאוֹ כַּשֶּׁמֶשׁ נֶגְדִּי׃
38. כְּיָרֵחַ יִכּוֹן עוֹלָם
וְעֵד שַׁחַק נֶאֱמָן סֶלָה׃[25]

30. I will establish his seed forever,
and his throne will be as the days of heaven.
31. If his sons forsake my teaching,
and in line with my commandments they do not walk,
32. if they desecrate my requirements,
and do not guard my commandments,

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[25] Verse 38b. is extremely problematic. Kraus suggests the emendation וּבְעַד שַׁחַק "as long as there are clouds." See Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 200. *HALAT* follows Veijola and renders the MT as "and the witness in the clouds is reliable." See *HALAT*, 4.1358, and T. Veijola "Davidverheissung und Staatsvertrag: Beobachtungen zum Einfluss altorientalischer Staatsverträge auf die biblische Sprache am Beispiel von Psalm 89," *ZAW* 95 (1983) 17-22. Veijola understands the 'witness' to be Yahweh who dwells upon the clouds based upon Pss 18:12 and 68:35. Regardless whether one adopts an emendation similar to that proposed by Kraus or reads with the MT as we have done below, the half-verse underscores the perpetuity of the covenant given to David.

33. I will punish their rebellion with a rod,
their infamy with plagues.
34. But my loyalty I will not breach from him,
I will not perjure my fidelity.
35. I will not desecrate my covenant,
nor the utterance of my lips will I alter.
36. Once I swore by my holiness,
"I will not deceive David.
37. His seed will survive forever,
and his throne (will be) as the sun before me."
38. As the moon (it will be) founded forever,
and the witness upon the clouds is reliable. Selah

Just as the psalmist of Ps 132 quotes an ancient oracle in order to rouse Yahweh to response, the motive for the long oracular quote in Ps 89 becomes plain in vv. 39-45 beginning with the accusation: וְאַתָּה זָנַחְתָּ וַתִּמְאָס הִתְעַבַּרְתָּ עִם־מְשִׁיחֶךָ "But you have renounced and reviled, you have become enraged with your messiah!" Inclusive of the next seven verses, fifteen accusations are leveled by the psalmist against Yahweh. The psalmist is relentless in his indictment. The only reprieve is to be found in the lead verse of the next section of the psalm (v. 47), where the psalmist cries out: עַד־מָה יְהוָה "How long, O Yahweh?"

In vv. 47-52, the psalmist voices his desperate petition and pleads with God to revisit his commitment to his steadfast love that was promised by oath to David. However, the MT is far from clear and the text as it stands is difficult to interpret. In v. 52a, a similar problem to that in v. 20a surfaces. Twenty-four Hebrew MSS and the Syr. attest the singular עַבְדֶּךָ 'your servant'. If verse 51 is intact, then the singular reading makes the most sense. The psalm's protagonist, unquestionably at this point the king, asks Adonai to remember his disgrace:

Psalm 89:50-52

50. אַיֵּה חֲסָדֶיךָ הָרִאשֹׁנִים אֲדֹנָי
נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְדָוִד בֶּאֱמוּנָתֶךָ׃
51. זְכֹר אֲדֹנָי חֶרְפַּת עַבְדֶּךָ[26]

[26] Emended according to the reasons stated above. Veijola, however, makes a very good case for not emending חסידיך or עבדיך in v. 51. See Veijola, *Verheissung in der Krise*, 115-17.

שְׁאֵתִי בְחֵיקִי כָּל־רַבֵּי-ם[27] עַמִּים

52. אֲשֶׁר חֵרְפוּ אוֹיְבֶיךָ יְהוָה

אֲשֶׁר חֵרְפוּ עִקְּבוֹת מְשִׁיחֶךָ׃

50. Where is your erstwhile steadfast-love, Adonai?
You swore to David by your faithfulness.
51. Remember, Adonai, the reproach of your servant;
I have carried upon my bosom all the barbs[28] of the peoples;
52. with which your enemies reproached, Yahweh,
with which reproached the footsteps of your anointed.

The urgencies of the petitions and accusations of vv. 39-52 reflect a martial context. Walls have been breached (v. 41). Fortifications lay in ruins (v. 41). The king has been defeated in battle (v. 44). His very ability to rule is at stake (v. 45). In short, these verses manifest Yahweh's abrogation of the royal covenant (v. 40).

The king's confrontation of Yahweh (v. 50) is reminiscent of the complaint of Ramses II to Amun in the context of his attack against the Assyrians at Kadesh. The Kadesh battle inscriptions recount how Ramses II charged forward to meet the Hittite army, but was abandoned by his troops. Ramses II, all alone in his chariot, looks about him and sees 2,500 Hittite chariot troops:

> No officer was with me, no charioteer,
> No soldier of the army, no shield-bearer;
> My infantry, my chariotry yielded before them,
> Not one of them stood firm to fight with them.[29]

This scene functions similar to the description of calamity in Ps 89:39-52. Out of such calamity Ramses II petitions the god Amun:

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[27] Waltke and O'Connor cite this as an example of an enclitic *mêm*. See B.K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 160.

[28] Whereas the general sense of the line is clear, the exact translation is problematic. As the text stands, the king takes upon his bosom all the many peoples. This can hardly be correct. Although not completely satisfactory, we have elected to read with Dahood רַבֵּי-ם < *rbb 'to shoot arrows'; hence the nominal form 'barbs'. See Dahood, *Psalms II*, 320 and *Psalms I*, 19 where he discusses the merits of this reading in light of Pss 3:7, 18:44; and Job 16:13.

[29] KRI II 89-90. *Trans. AEL*, 2.65.

> What is the matter with you, my father Amun?
> Has a father ever neglected his son?[30]

Just as in Ps 89:50 where the king implicates Yahweh's legal responsibility in the guise of a question (rather than a straight-forward accusation), so too, Ramses II places his allegation as a query. But, as Scott Morschauser has demonstrated, the language Ramses II employs holds a legal force similar to the deposition of Yahweh's oath.[31] It is important to remember, consistent with both texts, that in the ancient Near East warfare was interpreted as a juridical ordeal.[32]

But the Egyptian Pharaoh never goes as far as the psalmist to say that the covenant relationship between god and king has been renounced (v. 40). Rather, Ramses II asks the pointed rhetorical question followed with an imperative plea:

> Might one say, "Calamity happened to the one who trusts in your counsel?" Do good for the one who esteems you: Then one will act with a loving heart.

The logic of the Pharaoh's address is reminiscent to that in Ps 89:50-52; "Where is your erstwhile steadfast-love?" followed by the Israelite king's plea that Yahweh "Remember!"

Ramses II's inscriptions narrate the king's subsequent reception of an oracle from Amun (quoted above) which can be typified, from a biblical standpoint, as an 'oracle of salvation'.[33] In striking contrast, the ancient oracle of King David, which once would have functioned much like an oracle of salvation, has become in its new setting in Ps 89, the ground of the desperate lament.

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[30] KRI II 92-93. *Trans*. by S. Morschauser, "The Speeches of Ramesses II in the Literary Record of the Battle of Kadesh," *Perspectives on The Battle of Kadesh* (ed. H. Goedicke; Baltimore: Halgo, 1985) 146.

[31] KRI II 108-109. *Trans*. Morschauser, "Speeches of Ramesses II," 146.

[32] See J. Van Seters' discussion of Merneptah's appointment to execute justice over the Libyans in *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 156-157.

[33] See P.D. Miller, Jr., *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 147-53. For a description of the 'oracle of salvation' see C. Westermann, *Prophetic Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991) 14ff.

Finally, it is worth contemplating the psalm's reappropriation in the exile and, then, even beyond. Although the psalm is perfectly intelligible without assuming the destruction of Jerusalem as antecedent, subtle changes made to the text allowed the psalm to be prayed by those who now longed for the restitution of an Israelite kingship. And it was, undoubtedly, for this later reappropriation that Ps 89 was preserved by the compilers of the Psalter.

Pss 132 and 89 share significant similarities with the LWD (2 Sam 23:1b-7, treated below). Each of these three texts preserves an ancient oracle purportedly given to David. Significantly, each of the texts describes David's relationship to Yahweh in terms of a בְּרִית 'covenant' (Pss 89:4, 40; 132:12; 2 Sam 23:5)—a term conspicuously absent from 2 Sam 7. It is important to note, as well, that each oracle has been preserved through a different *traditio*.

EXCURSUS: THE PRESERVATION OF ROYAL ORACLES PRIOR TO THE CANONICAL COLLECTION

There can be little doubt that royal oracles most often had their origin in the cult(s) of Israel. The narrative of 1 Kgs 3:3-14 reports that King Solomon went to the cult-place of Gibeon, offered substantial sacrifice, and then received by dream an oracle of a royal grant from Yahweh: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים שְׁאַל מָה אֶתֶּן־לָךְ "And God said: 'Ask whatever; I will give it to you.'" At the same time, royal oracles came through a variety of agencies, only some of which were elements of the state-sponsored cult. Sometimes, royal oracles were delivered by prophets and diviners independent of royal support.[34]

Clearly, favorable oracles could be exploited and celebrated for propagandistic purposes. But that does not mean that they were only preserved and re-presented in the cult. In fact, in both Mesopotamia and Egypt, collections of oracles have been recorded and preserved

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[34] See R.R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); especially chapter 3, "Prophecy in the Ancient Near East," 89-134.

for non-cultic reasons by scribal schools.[35] In addition to the oracular collections, oracular decrees are found throughout Mesopotamian and Egyptian annalistic records. Thus, one should not assume that the *traditio* of the RPss was limited to the cult.

Likewise, it would appear that some sort of royal record(s) had been kept in Israel. The DtrH customarily refers to the סֵפֶר דִּבְרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה / יִשְׂרָאֵל "the record of the chronicles of the kings of Judah / Israel."[36] Any number of oracular decrees could have been preserved in such records. The prophet Jeremiah was commanded by Yahweh to write down his oracles on a scroll (Jer 36:2). And one should not dismiss out of hand the reliability of 1 Chr 29:29:

> וְדִבְרֵי דָוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ הָרִאשֹׁנִים וְהָאַחֲרֹנִים הִנָּם כְּתוּבִים עַל־דִּבְרֵי שְׁמוּאֵל הָרֹאֶה וְעַל־דִּבְרֵי נָתָן הַנָּבִיא וְעַל־דִּבְרֵי גָּד הַחֹזֶה
>
> As for the words of King David, the first and the last, they were recorded with the words of Samuel the Seer, the words of Nathan the Prophet, and the words of Gad the Seer.

It makes little sense to suppose that the Chronicler would refer his readers to sources that amounted only to literary device. Instead, 1 Chr 29:29 presupposes at least the commonplace recognition of various prophetic corpora preserving information about King David.

It is also evident that royal oracles could be preserved in a number of other contexts, including lyrical texts and dedicatory inscriptions. One such oracle granted to Zakur, king of Hamath, has been preserved on a stele written in Old Aramaic which was erected by the king in commemoration of Baalshamayn's divine grant.

> 1. The stele, which Zakir [*sic*], king of Hamath and Lu'ath, set up for Ilwer, [his lord].
> 2. I am Zakir [*sic*], king of Hamath and Lu'ath. A pious man was I, and Baalshamayan [delivered]

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[35] See R.A. Parker, *A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes in the Brooklyn Museum: Brooklyn Museum Mss. (Papyrus 47.218.3)* (Brown Egyptological Studies 4; Providence: Brown University Press, 1962), and I. Starr's introduction to *SAA* 4, XIII-XXXV.

[36] 1 Kgs 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:39, 45; 2 Kgs 1:18; 8:23; 10:34; 12:19; 13:8, 12; 14:15, 18, 28; 15:6, 11, 15, 21, 26, 31, 36; 20:20; 21:17, 25; 23:28; 24:5; 33:18.

3. me, and stood with me; and Baalshamayan made me king in
4. Hadrach. Then Barhadad son of Hazael, king of Aram, organized against me an alliance of
5. [six]teen kings...
....
11. But I lifted up my hands to Baalshamayn, and Baalshamayn answered me, and Baalshamayn [spoke]
12. to me through seers and messengers; and Baalshamayn [said
13. to me], Fear not, because it was I who made you king, [and I
14. shall stand] with you, and I shall deliver you from all [these kings who]
15. have forced a siege upon you...[37]

This dedicatory inscription, which dates to the eighth century BCE, provides an excellent example of how a royal oracle might be subsequently preserved. Obviously, the oracular grant is communicated in stereotypical language and one cannot be certain exactly what form the original oracle took (dream, extispicy, or other divinations), although the text claims it came in the midst of the king's prayer.

Isa 38:9-20, similarly, places a lyrical poem upon the lips of the diseased king: מִכְתָּב לְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה חָלָתוֹ וַיְחִי מֵחָלְיוֹ "An inscription of Hezekiah, King of Judah, when he became sick and recovered from his sickness." Mowinckel held little doubt that the psalm was used by King Hezekiah himself.[38] R.E. Clements, on the other hand, thinks "it is very improbable that the psalm, which does not appear in the original narrative of 2 Kgs., was actually composed by Hezekiah, since it contains no specific details that would personally relate to the king,"[39] and assigns its association with King Hezekiah to a late editor.

Curiously, its unique superscription, מִכְתָּב לְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה, may reflect an authentic historical remembrance. Some commentators emend מִכְתָּב, 'writing', or 'royal edict', to מִכְתָּם, meaning, perhaps, 'atoning psalm' or 'lament psalm'.[40] However, as H.–J. Kraus points

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[37] *KAI* 202. *Trans. TSSI* 2.9-10. See also *ANET* 655-56.

[38] Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2.8.

[39] R.E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (The New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 291.

[40] Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 291; O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 398. Both scholars were aparently influenced by Mowinckel's treatment of מִכְתָּם in *Psalmenstudien IV*, 4-5.

out, the LXX and Targ. translate מִכְתָּם respectively as στηλογραφία 'pillar inscription' and גליפא תריצא, 'a straight impress'.[41] Mowinckel retained מִכְתָּב suggesting that Hezekiah's prayer had been registered on votive columns, akin to the ninth-century Aramaic votive inscription of Barhadad, the king of Damascus:[42]

1.	nṣb'.zy.śm br[h]	Statue which Barhadad,
2.	dd.br[ ]	son of [ ]
3.	mlk 'rm lmr'h lmlqr	king of Aram, raised for his lord Melqarth
4.	t.zy nzr lh wšm' l[ql]	to whom he had made a vow when he heard
5.	h[43]	his voice.

H.L. Ginsberg has drawn significant parallels between the psalm of Hezekiah and West Semitic epigraphic remains arguing the psalm was "published by being engraved in stone."[44] Likewise, P.D. Miller, Jr. has provided analysis of the psalmic inscriptions of Khirbet el Qôm and Khirbet Beit Lei.[45] Particularly significant is the superscription of a short lyrical text found in the Khirbet el Qôm cave: *'ryhw.h'šr.ktbh* "Uriyahu the rich; his inscription."[46] One may conclude from this inscription that it is likely that some of the psalmic superscriptions were associated with their respective psalms prior to the formation of the Psalter or their inclusion in the biblical narrative.

Nevertheless, although Uriyahu's superscription compares with Hezekiah's in Isa 38:9, we are inclined to view the superscription in Isa 38:9 as indicative of typical pious practice in Israel which was secondarily applied to Hezekiah, rather than being an actual genre description (with subsequent text) copied from a votive stele. Our reluctance in tracing Isa 38:10-20 to Hezekiah or his court is *not* the

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[41] Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 25.

[42] Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2.42.

[43] *KAI* 201.

[44] Ginsberg, "Psalms and Inscriptions of Petition and Acknowledgement," 169.

[45] Miller, "Psalms and Inscriptions," 311-332.

[46] Kirbet el Qôm 3. *Trans*. Miller, "Psalms and Inscriptions," 315-317.

non-royal 'character' of prayer,[47] but the fact that Hezekiah is not specifically mentioned in the psalm itself. We expect a prayer or hymn taken from a stele to forthrightly name the royal name of the protagonist king, just as was the case with the votive stele of Zakur, and for that matter, just as Uriyahu is mentioned in the body of the psalmic text in the Khirbet el Qôm cave.[48]

An oracle's preservation within a larger whole necessarily gave rise to recontextualizations and reinterpretations. For example, CT 21, 40-42, a four columned bilingual text of Hammurabi, is a combination of two texts. Column IV contains a short royal hymn of praise to King Hammurabi. This hymn is prefaced by an oracle in columns I and II that repeats the proddings of the deities: *atta mannām tûqâ* "You, whom are you waiting for?!" Nathan Wasserman provides the following translation of the oracle:

> En[lil] has given you [lo]rdship
> You, whom are you waiting for?!
> Sîn has given you supremacy
> You, whom are you waiting for?!
> Ninurta has given you a noble weapon
> You, whom are you waiting for?!
> Šamaš and Adad are your sheriffs
> You, whom are you waiting for?!
>
> [On the enemy?], his sup[port?], and his au[xili]ary troops, which are located [at...?]
> Establish your vic[to]ry!
> Elevate yourself in the four quarters of the world, so that your name may be mentioned!
> May the numerous people pray to you! May they prostrate themselves before you!
> May they praise your great praises over and over again!
> May they glorify your noble glories over and over again![49]

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[47] So J. Begrich, *Der Psalm des Hiskia: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis von Jesaja 38:10-20* (FRLANT 25; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926) 67-68.

[48] Line 2 of the inscriptions reads: *brk.'ryhw.lyhwh* "Blessed is Uriyahu by Yahweh." Ibid., 317.

[49] CT 21 40-42. *Trans*. N. Wasserman, "*CT 21, 40-42*," 5-6.

Wasserman states that this text is "actually a report of oracular messages proclaimed by several gods to Hammurabi, calling him not to tarry any longer, but to dare and move against his adversaries."[50] However, as the text stands, the oracles can be attributed to King Hammurabi *only* by their association with the appended royal hymn. The oracles' reappropriation as the prelude to the royal hymn demonstrates a secondary interpretation that may or may not be consistent with their original intent.[51]

Returning to the oracular RPss, whence did the ancient David-oracles come? Nahum Sarna has made the case that these oracles are built upon direct citation and reuse of Nathan's prophecy to David in 2 Sam 7.[52] Michael Fishbane, concurring with Sarna, summarizes what he calls the "psalmist-exegete strategic adaptations":

> (i) the key reference to the Temple project in 2 Sam. 7:10-13 was ignored, thereby giving full emphasis to the present dynastic crisis;
> (ii) the promise in 2 Sam. 7:10 of respite from national enemies is changed in Ps 89:23-4 and restricted to King David alone, thereby, again, highlighting the contemporary threat to the royal line; and
> (iii) whereas the father-son relationship mentioned in 2 Sam 7:14 referred to the relationship between YHWH and David's son, it is presented in Ps. 89:27-8 as applying to David—the divinely graced founder of a royal line. In this same way,
> (iv) the psalmist-exegete began an inner-textual process of reinterpreting David as a dynastic symbol—a process completed in v. 31, where the threatened punishment for sin is transferred from the son of David (as in 2 Sam. 7:14) *to the entire Davidic line*.[53]

There can be little doubt that the two texts shared similar *traditum*. However, it is not clear that either text is verbally dependent upon the other.[54] In fact, the correspondences that have been pointed out

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[50] Ibid., 13-14.

[51] It is unlikely, however, that these oracles were originally delivered to a king other than Hammurabi.

[52] N.M. Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis," *Biblical and Other Studies* (ed. A. Altmann; Brandeis Texts and Studies; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963) 29-46.

[53] M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) 467.

[54] See E.T. Mullen, Jr., "The Divine Witness and the Davidic Royal Grant: Ps 89:37-38," *JBL* 102 (1983) 208-209.

involve stock phrases and motifs which could have been used over and over again in a number of situations.[55] Nevertheless, the fact that the authors of 2 Sam 7 and Ps 89 could draw upon the same oracular traditions would seem to indicate that some sort of royal oracular records were kept and preserved in Israel.

In contrast to Pss 132 and 89, the other two RPss that preserve ancient oracular traditions do not overtly mention the Davidic covenant. Rather, Pss 2 and 110 preserve oracles having to do with the monarch's filial relationship to Yahweh. We will treat Ps 110 first.

PSALM 110

Psalm 110 is fraught with interpretive difficulties. Speaking to the plethora of scholarly commentary given the psalm, H.–J. Kraus observes that "No other psalm has in research evoked so many hypotheses and discussion."[56] Unfortunately, no consensus has emerged. In addition to Ps 110's sometimes strange, if not impossible syntax, the entire structure of the psalm is far from clear. In fact, the prodigious scholarly attention that Ps 110 has received has not been able to demonstrate convincingly its structural unity. Even recent attempts by Pierre Auffret,[57] K. Kunz,[58] and Willem van der Meer[59] to argue a structural unity for the psalm, ironically become so complex and convoluted that they simply beg the question.

Given the fact that v. 1b is best interpreted as a unicolon,[60] we are inclined to view Ps 110 as a collection of seven short oracles

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[55] A helpful verbal analysis with attention given to 4Q236 has been provided by U. Gleßmer, "Das Textwachstum von Ps 89 und ein Qumranfragment," *BN* 65 (1992) 55-73.

[56] Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 345.

[57] P. Auffret, "Note sur la structure littéraire du Psaume CX," *Sem* 32 (1982) 83-88.

[58] K. Kunz "Psalm 110 im masoretischer Darbietung," *TGl* 72 (1982) 331-35.

[59] W. van der Meer, "Psalm 110: A Psalm of Rehabilitation?" *The Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite Poetry* (eds. W. van der Meer and J.C. de Moor; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988) 207-234.

[60] Ibid., 211.

which are introduced by v. 1b: נְאֻם יְהוָה לַאדֹנִי "Oracle of Yahweh to my lord." We will examine each oracle separately.

Oracle A: Ps 110:1c-2

שֵׁב לִימִינִי
עַד־אָשִׁית אֹיְבֶיךָ
הֲדֹם לְרַגְלֶיךָ׃
מַטֵּה־עֻזְּךָ
יִשְׁלַח יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן
רְדֵה בְּקֶרֶב אֹיְבֶיךָ׃

A "Be enthroned at my right
B until I place your enemies
C as a footstool for your feet."
C´ The scepter of your strength
B´ Yahweh will send out from Zion:
A´ "Rule in the midst of your enemies!"

As marked in the translation, the oracle displays a chiastic structure. The 'A' cola are introduced by an imperative, the B cola each contain a verbal promise of action by the deity, and the C cola are nominal phrases pertaining to the exercise and benefits of kingship.

It is commonly pointed out that this oracle is reflective of Egyptian royal iconography and design.[61] For example, Tut-ankh-Amon's wooden throne was accompanied by a footstool depicting nine bows symbolizing Pharaoh's subject peoples.[62] Two wall paintings found in Ebed el-Qurna portray kings, Amenophis II and Thut-

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[61] For the Egyptian influence upon the throne designs of the Meggido ivories, see H. Kyrieleis, *Throne und Klinen: Studien zur Formgeschichte altorientalischer und griechischer Sitz- und Liegemöbel vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts 24; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969) 43-44.

[62] See J.B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) 145, and M. Metzger, *Königsthron und Gottesthron: Thronformen und Throndarstellung in Ägypten und im Vorderen Orient im dritten und zweiten Jahrtausend vor Christus und deren Bedeutung für das Verstandnis von Aussagen über den Thron im Alten Testament* (2 vols.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985) 1.46.

mose IV, enthroned with their enemies (Nubians and Asiatics) portrayed as being boxed within their footstools.[63] What is particularly interesting about these paintings is that both portray the king as a child upon his nurse's lap. Thus the paintings graphically portray the divine volition that the youths will mature into kings whose enemies become their footstool. In the El-Amarna correspondence, the vassals of the king refer to themselves as his footstool (*gištappu*,[64] *EA* 84.4, 206.6). Additionally, in a large wall-relief from Pers*é*polis, the Median king Darius (ca. 522-486) is pictured seated upon his throne which is supported by three tiers of vassal nations.[65] Although not directly connected with throne furniture itself, the Egyptian phrase *di.n n.k tɜw ḫɜswt ḥr tbwty.k* "I have given to you flat lands/foreigners under your sandals,"[66] one of the divine grants given to Ramses II, connotes a divine promise akin to the one given in Ps 110:1c-e. It is the god (in Ps 110, Yahweh) who will give the king victory and submit the nations to the human king's rule. There is little need to continue to multiply examples. The placing of enemies and nations beneath the king's feet was a standard element of court style in the ancient Near East.

The divine gift of 'session' with the god is the second element expressed in the oracle. This, too, is representative of Egyptian iconography. A white limestone statuette of King Horemhab depicts the king seated not only at, but actually *on*, the right hand of Horus.[67] This motif indicates that the Israelite king has been elevated to a

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[63] Keel, *Symbolism*, 254-55.

[64] See W.L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) 155 n. 1. In *EA* 84:4, *gištappu* is written with the Sumerian ideograms GIŠ.GÌR.GUB, which in other contexts corresponds to the Akkadian *kilzappu* (See *CAD* 8.361-363). The motif of the king subduing his enemies and placing them like a footstool for his feet also occurs in the inscriptions of Assyrian kings Shalmanasar III and Šamši-Adad V (see *CAD* 8.362b).

[65] See A. Hultgård, "Trône de Dieu et trône des justes dans les traditions de l'Iran ancien," *Le Trône de Dieu* (ed. M. Philonenko; WUNT 69; T*ü*bingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993) 4-6.

[66] *KRI* II 207 ln. 16. *Trans.* Morschauser, "Speeches of Ramesses II," 129. See also *KRI* II 191 ln. 15 and 20 ln. 4.

[67] Ibid., 263. For additional Egyptian iconographic and lexical parallels, see J. de Savignac, "Essai d'interpr*é*tation du Psaume CX à l'aide de la litt*é*rature *é*gyptienne," *OTS* 9 (1951) 105-135.

place of utmost honor.[68] On the human sphere, this motif can be illustrated by the placing of the queen-mother upon a throne to the right of the king in Israel (1 Kgs 2:19), or by having the queen stand in attendance at the king's right (Ps 45:10).[69] The king is granted session upon the throne of Adonai, presumably upon Adonai's throne in Zion. Just as the queen-mother took precedence over any other woman in the royal harem, so too, the Israelite king who was granted session at the right of Yahweh's throne was preeminent over all other kings of the earth.

Beginning with c´, the imagery turns from one of honor to that of martial enforcement. The phrase מַטֵּה־עֻזְּךָ is akin to the Ugaritic phrase *ḫṭ . mṯpṭk*, "the scepter of your dominion"[70] (and also the Phoenician phrase *ḥṭr.mšpṭh*, "the scepter of his rule"),[71] which symbolized the ability for a monarch/god to exercise his rule and dominion.[72] Likewise, in Akkadian, *ḫattu* 'scepter' and *šibirru* 'staff' were given to the kings by the gods for the purposes of solidifying their rule and expanding their borders—often through martial conquest.[73] Thus, in the Nebi Yunus inscription of Sennacherib, the king recounts how the god Aššur regarded him favorably above all other rulers sitting on thrones by making his hands grasp

> *haṭṭu išartu murappišat miṣri šibirru la pādû ana šumqut zā'irī*[74]
>
> the just scepter which enlarges my border, the merciless staff for the destruction of enemies.

Sennacherib then recounts his victory over Marduk-apla-iddina, the Chaldeans, the Arameans, and the army of Elam. The 'scepter' not

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[68] See L. Dürr, *Psalm 110 im Lichte der neueren altorientalischen Forschung* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1929) 13.

[69] See also *T. Job* 33:3.

[70] *KTU*[2] 1.6 VI 29.

[71] *KAI* 1.1.

[72] See P.D. Miller, Jr., *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (HSM 5; Cambridge: Harvard Univ., 1973) 49.

[73] See *CAD* 6.154, and 17/2.377-79.

[74] D.D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (OIP 2; Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1924) 85 ln. 5. See also 117 ln. 5, where *mātu* occurs in the place of *miṣru*.

only signified the king's right to rule, but it symbolized the war-club by which he ruled subjugated peoples and conquered enemies.[75]

It is not clear, however, whether the command "rule in the midst of your foes," is given to the king or to the scepter itself. That an instrument of war or rule would be given a command directly was not unheard of in the ancient Near East. In *KTU*^{2} 1.2 IV, a war club is named 'Yagrush(u)' and then given the command *ygrš .grš ym grš ym . l ksih* "Yagrush(u), drive out Yam, drive out Yam from his throne." Since the king has been commanded to sit enthroned at Adonai's right, we are inclined to read the imperative רְדֵה בְּקֶרֶב אֹיְבֶיךָ, "rule in the midst of your enemies," as a command to the scepter itself.

The imagery of a monarch ruling in relative tranquility upon Zion and, at the same time, having his scepter of power rule over enemies abroad is another constituent of the court style of the ancient Near East. For example, Ramses III states in his inscriptions:

> When they (the Sea Peoples) mention my name in their land, may it consume them, while I sit upon the throne of Harakhte.[76]

Some scholars have proposed that the 'name' of Ramses III is some sort of hypostasis of the king which was able to subdue insurrection or stave off invasion while Ramses III remained in the security of the capital city.[77]

Concurrently, the imagery of the scepter being sent out from Zion may indicate that it was the king's army that was sent forth while the king remained enthroned in the capital city. The Egyptian phrase, *ḫpš ṯnr n pr-ʿ3*, "the mighty sword of Pharaoh," was a common epithet for the king's army, occurring in the formulaic expression *dmi ḥf(.n)/in.n ḥm.f* GN, "town which the mighty sword of Pharaoh plundered/captured, GN."[78] Morschauser, who analyzes each

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[75] See additionally Borger, *Asarhaddons*, 98 ln. 32 and *CAD* 17/2 378 (Tukulti-Ninurta).

[76] *ARE* 4.39. Likewise, it is said of Ramses III that "they (the Asiatics) are terrified at his name, while he is (yet) afar off," *ARE* 4.42.

[77] See S.R.A. Starbuck, שֵׁם יהוה *The Presence, Power, and Hypostatic Warrior of YHWH*, (M.Div. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1988) 41.

[78] See S. Morschauser, "The Mighty Sword of Pharaoh," *Varia Aegyptiaca* 4 (1988) 151.

attestation of the phrase in the 18th Dynasty, concludes that "The term should be understood as a technical expression referring either to an officer as agent of the king, or to Pharaonic troops themselves, which were *not under the direct, physical command of the monarch at the site of operations*."[79] Thus, one cannot be certain whether the scepter/staff that is sent from Zion indicates that the king's army, or a hypostatic manifestation of the king, or the king himself is the one to rule in the midst of foes.

Regardless of how one construes the imagery of the sitting monarch and the warring/ruling scepter, the two motifs (the grant of the scepter/staff, and the subduing of enemies) were closely linked in Egyptian oracular pronouncements. Ramses III is given an oracle by Amon: "I give thee my sword before thee, to overthrow the Bows, and I slay for thee every land beneath thy soles."[80] This Egyptian oracular line expresses a theology of royal grant in virtually identical language with nearly the same imagery as Ps 110:1c-e.

The royal grant quoted above was given to Ramses III upon his departure for battle, but the god(s) could have commanded the monarch to stay at home and fought the king's battles themselves. This appears to be the case in a prophecy given to Zimri-Lim at Mari:

> *...Zimri-Lim*
> *ana ḫarrānim la tallak*
> *ina Mari šibma*
> *u anākuma atanappal*[81]
>
> O Zimri-Lim,
> do not go on a military campaign.
> Stay (enthroned) in Mari,
> and I will take responsibility.

Similarly, in an oracular dream the goddess Ištar appears to the Assyrian king, Assurbanipal, obliging him with words of assurance:

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[79] Ibid., 161.

[80] *Hist. Rec.*, pl. 102, ln. 20. See A.J. Spalinger, *Aspects of the Military Documents of the Ancient Egyptians* (Yale Near Eastern Research 9; New Haven: Yale Univ., 1982) 116-117.

[81] *ARM* 10, 86 (50 lns. 23-26).

lu ašbāta ašar maškanīka [d]*Nabû*
akul akālu šiti kurunnu
ningûtu šukun nu'id ilūti
adi allaku šipru šuātu ippušu
ušakšadu ṣumerāt libbīka[82]

You shall stay (enthroned) here, where the tent of Nabu is. Eat food, drink beer, stage a festival, revere my divine nature, while I go and do the work so that you will attain the conquests[83] of your heart.

It becomes increasingly evident, as Ištar continues to speak, that Assurbanipal has been brooding over the onslaught of battle (*ina qabal tamḫāri*).[84] Exactly how the goddess will fight for the king is not clear. Nevertheless, that she will fight on behalf of the king is the source of great hope and assurance.

In sum, it is best to interpret Ps 110:1c-2 as follows: The king who was given oracle A, was told to stay put (שֵׁב) just like Zimri-Lim (*šibma*) and Assurbanipal (*lu ašbāta*). It was Yahweh who would send out the smiting scepter to enlarge the king's borders and bring submission to enemy nations.

Oracle B: Ps 110:3

עִמְּךָ נְדִבֹת
בְּיוֹם חֵילֶךָ
בְּהַדְרֵי־קֹדֶשׁ
מֵרֶחֶם מִשְׁחָר
לוֹ טַל יַלְדֻתֶיךָ׃

"Nobility is with you,
in the day of your birth.
With sacred-splendors
from the womb of the sunrise,
verily, like dew, I have borne you."

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[82] M. Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Unterganger Niniveh's* (3 vols.; Leigzig: Hinrich, 1916) 2.118 lns. 64-68.

[83] For the use of *ṣummirātu* for the conquests of the king and his army, see *CAD* 16.246.

[84] Ibid., ln. 70. See also *ANET* 451.

In v. 3a, the MT has עַמְּךָ נְדָבֹת, "your people willingly." The LXX (μετὰ σοῦ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τῆς δυνάμεώς σου), however, reflects עִמְּךָ נְדָבֹת "with you is nobility. In Egyptian royal inscriptions, the quality 'nobility' is frequently associated with the divine gestation and birth of the king.[85]

It is often assumed that the MT's חילך pertains to the day of the king's martial victory.[86] Given its immediate context, however, it is more likely that חיל is to be traced to חיל I (*ḥwl), 'to be in labor,' than חיל II (*ḥyl), 'to be strong'. If so, then the *Kĕthîb* should be repointed assuming the G passive participle חִיל, 'to be borne' (not to be confused with the noun which occurs elsewhere in the MT in the negative sense of 'anguish').[87]

As v. 3e presently stands in the MT it is nonsensical, and textual corruption is to be assumed. The MT has לְךָ טַל יַלְדֻתֶיךָ, "to you is the dew of your youth," which is hardly cogent.[88] However, at least 100 manuscripts of the MT attest יְלִדְתִּיךָ. This reading is supported by the LXX's ἐξεγέννησά σε and the Syriac's *'yldtk*. Given the manuscript and versional support, coupled with the fact that unless this emendation to the MT is made, the tricolon lacks a finite verb, we are inclined to read יְלִדְתִּיךָ.

It is frequently pointed out that the oracle's imagery is reflective of Egyptian divine birth mythology/ideology which has been preserved in historical and liturgical texts.[89] J.J.M. Roberts, for example, likens Amon's pronouncement to Horemhab, "You are my son

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[85] See Grimal, *Les termes*, 96-99.

[86] Num 29:18; 1 Sam 14:48; and Ps 60:14 // 108:14. However, the Targum has ביום אגחות קרבך "on the day you engage into combat." See Th. Booij, "Psalm CX: 'Rule in the Midst of Your Foes,' *VT* 41 (1991) 399 n. 23.

[87] Another possibility exists. Given the likelihood that the oracle of the *traditum* has been altered several times in the *traditio*, a Dp (Po'lal) form may have been the original reading. This form occurs in Job 15:7 parallel to תְּוֹלָד "you were born" as well as in Ps 51:7 where it stands opposite יְחֲמַתְנִי "(my mother) conceived me."

[88] See Booij, "Psalm CX," 397-398, for an incisive discussion of the problems.

[89] See Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 265, and Roberts, "In Defense," 391-392 nn. 12-13.

and my heir who has come out of my members," to Ps 110:3 and Ps 2:7.[90] Likewise, Simone Springer has correlated the same Hebrew idiom with an inscription of Amenhotep III which was cited in chapter 2.[91] One should note, as well, the claim of Thutmose III that "I am his (*Re*''s) son, whom he commanded that I should be upon his throne, while I was one dwelling in his nest; he begat me in uprightness of heart."[92] Divine birth was not considered to be synonymous with human birth.

The association of 'dew' with conception and birth is also present in Egyptian inscriptions. In the account of Hatshepsut's conception, Ahmose, Hatshepsut's mother, exclaims after having procreative intercourse with the incarnation of Amon-Re:

> It is splendid to see thy front; thou hast united my majesty [fem.] with thy favors, thy dew is in all my limbs. After this, the majesty of this god did all that he desired with her.[93]

In this text, 'dew' is undoubtedly a euphemism for semen.

In Ps 110:3, 'dew', however, does not necessarily carry such a connotation. Rather, just as Yahweh gives birth to the dew every morning, so too, Yahweh has given birth to the king. A parallel of sorts occurs in Job 38:28-29 (confirmed in 11QtgJob) which poetically celebrates Yahweh's hand in bearing dew and fathering rain:

הֲיֵשׁ־לַמָּטָר אָב
אוֹ מִי־הוֹלִיד אֶגְלֵי־טָל
מִבֶּטֶן מִי יָצָא הַקָּרַח
וּכְפֹר שָׁמַיִם מִי יְלָדוֹ

> Does the rain have a father,
> or who gave birth to the clouds of dew?
> From the womb of whom came forth the ice,

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[90] Roberts, "In Defense," 391 n. 13. Roberts quotes G. Roeder's translation of the text. See G. Roeder, *Der Ausklang der ägyptischen Religion mit Reformation, Zauberei und Jenseitsglauben* (Die ägyptische Religion in Text und Bild 4; Zurich: Artemis, 1961) 88.

[91] Springer, *Neuinterpretation*, 150.

[92] *ARE* 2.60.

[93] *ARE* 2.80.

and the hoar-frost, (who) bore it?

This text is most interesting because it shows that Yahweh's meteorology was described in terms of conception and birthing.

The enigmatic phrase, "from the womb of the dawn," requires comment. The MT attests the *hapax legomena* מִשְׁחָר which is analyzed by BDB to be synonymous with שַׁחַר 'dawn'. The LXX translates this term as πρὸ ἑωσφόρου 'before the morning star', thus reading the preposition מִן and taking it to hold a temporal meaning.[94] But the pointing of the MT indicates a nominal *maqṭal* form, usually indicative of place or location, hence, 'sunrise'.[95] Th. Booij suggests this may be an ellipsis for 'sun', a title given to monarchs throughout the ancient Near East, since it is the sun itself that pierces through the darkness and generates the first light of dawn.[96] If so, then this phrase, though not an epithet itself, would be akin to the epithets of Ramses III: "whose appearance is like (that of) Re' at dawn,"[97] and "beautiful when appearing on the throne of Atum; he seems like Re at dawn."[98]

At the same time, one cannot overlook the possibility that this passage contains mythological undertones. It is possible that an allusion is made to the Ugaritic *rḥmy* (Anat) and her progeny *šḥr* (*KTU*[2] 1.23 13, 54).[99] Though at Ugarit *šḥr* was a male deity, one of Ištar's epithets is *šēru*, or 'morning star'.[100] J.F. Healey tentatively suggests that the daughter of Ba'alu, Ṭallay, might be intended.[101] Although we doubt this was the original *traditum*, it is quite possible that at some point in the *traditio* such inferences were made.[102]

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[94] *HALAT* 2.565b.

[95] J.L. Sagarin, *Hebrew Noun Patterns [Mishqalim]: Morphology, Semantics, and Lexicon* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987) 70.

[96] Booij, "Psalm CX," 400. See nn. 26-27 for a listing of sources containing royal solar epithets in the ancient Near East.

[97] *Hist. Rec.*, pls. 27-28 ln. 6.

[98] *Hist. Rec.*, pl. 79 ln. 15. See also Grimal, *Les termes*, 193-96.

[99] Simon Parker thinks the evidence is inconclusive. See *DDD*, 1427.

[100] *CAD* 17 331.

[101] I.e., "like *Dew*, I have begotten you." See *DDD*, 475.

[102] The late biblical names *'ăḥîšāḥar* (1 Chr 7:10), *šĕḥarya(h)* (1 Chr 8:26), and *šaḥărayin* (1 Chr 8:8) most likely indicate a continuing interest in astral deities.

The adverbial phrase, "with sacred-splendors," inaugurates the birth motif. Outside of this passage the king is attributed הָדָר 'splendor' in Ps 45:4, 6 and Ps 21:6. Such splendor is often closely associated with the king's prowess and pulchritude. However, the linkage of הָדָר with קוֹדֶשׁ is unique. Even among the other RPss (namely, Pss 2:6; 20:3, 7; 89:21, 36), קוֹדֶשׁ is associated exclusively with Yahweh. Psalm 89:21 comes closest to this passage in stating that Yahweh has anointed David בְּשֶׁמֶן קָדְשִׁי "with the oil of my (Yahweh's) holiness." In Ps 110:3, בְּהַדְרֵי־קֹדֶשׁ, accordingly, would refer to excellence and distinction for which Yahweh is the source. This same motif is present in Hatshepsut's divine birth inscription in the form of an oracle:

> Utterance of [Amon to] his bodily daughter [Hatshepsut]: "Glorious part which has come forth from me; king, taking the Two Lands, upon the Horus-throne forever.[103]

The first oracular phrase, "Glorious part which has come forth from me," may be taken as royal epithet, and is akin to a number of Egyptian royal epithets which signify physical creation of the monarch by the god(s).[104] In Ps 110:3, בְּהַדְרֵי־קֹדֶשׁ refers to the materiality of the king's divine birth as proceeding ontologically from Yahweh himself.

This oracle may or may not stem from a coronation ceremony. Whereas the language of divine birth was used in the Pharaoh's coronation, it appears in other contexts as well. For example, in a text that was composed for a royal celebration other than enthronement, the god Ptah-Tatenen provides the following oracle for Ramses III:

> I am thy father. I begot thee, so that thy entire body is of the gods, for I assumed my form as the Ram, the Lord of <Mendes>, and I cohabited with thy august mother, in order to fashion thy form as—, for I know that thou are ⌜my champion⌝, to perform benefactions for my ka. I begot thee, appearing like Re, and I exalted thee before the gods; the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Usermare-Meriamon; Son of Re': Ramses III.[105]

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[103] *ARE* 2.84.

[104] See Grimal, *Les termes*, 95-107. Additionally, see A.H. Gardiner's discussion of *ḫi*ʾ in "The Coronation of King Haremhab," *JEA* 39 (1953) 23.

[105] *Hist. Rec.*, pls. 105-106 lns. 3-5.

In this case, the oracle (and subsequent oracles) mirrors the contours of what is known of the Egyptian coronation ceremony. This particular text, however, represents a later reinterpretation of the event.

The reapplication of divine birth language is patent in Amenhotep III's building inscription. After a lengthy recital of the monarch's unceasing patronage to the gods, Amon-Re provides an oracular decree to the king: "My son, of my body, my beloved, Neb-maat-Re, my living image, whom my body created..."[106] The nature of the oracular promises that follow in the inscription are significant for Ps 110:3. Amon-Re tells the king that as he looks around upon his circuit (to the south, to the north, to the west, and to the east), he has spied numerous peoples who, through Amon's miracle, will be made subject to the king and bear tribute upon their backs. The same themes appear in Ps 110 when oracles A and B are combined. The king himself, or the king's army, will be successful in the rule and subjugation of enemies.

On the one hand, the king's accomplishments served as verification of his divinely begotten nature. On the other hand, the filial relationship between god and king was interpreted in terms of kinship loyalty. In Israel's case, Yahweh, who gave birth to the king, should unquestionably be with him in battle, or even fight his battles for him. In the same way, the prophet Isaiah's child, עִמָּנוּאֵל, 'with us is 'Ēl', served as a memorandum to the kings of Judah that God was with them and they should not fear battle.[107] Likewise, a common refrain throughout the Ramesside military inscriptions reverberating the oracular assurance by the god(s) *sꜣ.i̯ n ḥt(.i̯) mr(y).i̯* "O my son of my body, my beloved...," simply meant, "do not fear" because the god(s) will protect and rescue their own.[108]

Oracle C: Ps 110:4

נִשָּׁבַע יְהוָה

וְלֹא יִנָּחֵם

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[106] Cairo Museum 34025. *Trans*. *ANET*, 376.

[107] J.J.M. Roberts, "Isaiah and His Children," *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* (eds. A. Kort and S. Morschauser; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985) 193-203.

[108] Morschauser, "Speeches of Ramesses II," 131.

אַתָּה־כֹהֵן לְעוֹלָם
עַל־דִּבְרָתִי מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק׃

Yahweh has sworn
and he will not disavow:
"You are a priest forever,
upon the archetype of Melchizedek"

This oracle is tantalizing in its obscurity. Syntactically, it is straightforward except for two key exegetical options. The first option, represented by the translation given above, is to take Ps 110:4b as a reference to the historical personage, Melchizedek. If מַלְכִּי־צֶדֶק is to be read as the name 'Melchizedek', it is either a construct phrase name, 'king of righteousness', or it is a nominal-sentence name, 'My King is Ṣedeq' or 'My king is righteous(ness)'.[109] Based on the Phoenician name *ṣdqmlk*,[110] one should opt for a nominal-sentence name since the elements can be reversed. Scott Layton argues for 'My King is Ṣedeq' based on the Ugaritic PN *'adnṣdq*.[111]

The obscure phrase, עַל־דִּבְרָתִי, occurs elsewhere only in Qoheleth (3:18; 7:14; 8:2) and Daniel (2:30) as עַל־דִּבְרַת (with out a final *yôd*) and usually denotes "with regard to" or "for the cause/sake of."[112] The versions (LXX, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν; Syr., *bdmwth*; Vg. *secondum ordinem* = 'order' or even 'archetype') have all tried to interpret the line assuming that *mlky-ṣdq* of the Hebrew text referred to none other than Melchizedek of Gen 14:18. If the oracle is read thus, the king is granted a priestly standing which has its rootage in the famed figure of Melchizedek, the Priest-King of Salem. The translation above follows this textual tradition.

One need not assume that the Melchizedek traditions possibly reflected here and in Gen 14 necessitate a pre-Davidic Jebusite cult in Jerusalem with Melchizedek as its patron saint.[113] However, late into

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[109] S.C. Layton, *Archaic Features of Canaanite Personal Names in the Hebrew Bible* (HSM 47; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 139.

[110] F.L. Benz, *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions* (Studia Pohl 8; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1972), 345.

[111] F. Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit* (Studia Pohl 1; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1967) 90.

[112] Booij, "Psalm CX," 402.

[113] See Roberts' criticism of such a view in "Origin of the Zion Tradition,"

the monarchical period a *traditum* around the figure of Melchizedek, the Priest-King of Salem, may have held considerable sway, perhaps even in the royal court.[114] This being the case, then one may understand Ps 110:4 as an attempt of the royal court to reach back beyond even King David to the mythic/originator of kingship in Jerusalem. In support of this view, one may cite the practice of the Assyrian king, Esarhaddon, who sought to trace his lineage (*kisittu*) all the way back to Bel-bani, an obscure king who ruled Assyria some 1000 years prior.[115]

The second exegetical option is to view the association of *mlky ṣdq* with Melchizedek as a later reinterpretation of the text. This option understands *mlky ṣdq* to be an epithet, 'King of Righteousness', the *y* afformative being the *mater lectionis* indicating a *ḥireq compaginis*.[116] In the same way, כֹּהֵן לְעוֹלָם, would be the royal epithet, 'Eternal Priest' or 'Priest of the Eternal One'.

With the second exegetical option, however, עַל־דִּבְרָתִי becomes even more problematic. In royal literature, and especially in oracular texts, it is usual to find a series of monarchical epithets in succession. Given this, it is likely that a corrupted royal epithet lies behind the MT's prepositional phrase, עַל־דִּבְרָתִי, which only occurs in the post-exilic period.[117] In Deut 33:3, an archaic poem that Cross and Freedman have dated to the 11th-10th century BCE, *dbrtk* 'your decisions' occurs.[118] In light of this, we suggest that the epithet was originally something like *ba'al dibrōtay* 'Lord of My Command'.[119] Similar ele-

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337.

[114] See N.–E. Andreasen, "Genesis 14 in its Near Eastern Context," *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method* (eds. C.D. Evans, W. Hallo, and J.B. White; PTMS 34; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1980) 59-77.

[115] See H. Tadmor, "History and Ideology," 28-29. However, the Akkadian term *kisittu* designates 'stumpage' or 'lineage', neither of which provide direct semantic parallels to any of the versions of Ps 110.

[116] See P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew, Part One: Orthography and Phonetics, Part Two: Morphology* (subsidia biblica 14/1; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993) 282.

[117] See Qoh 3:18, 7:14, 8:2, and Dan 2:30.

[118] Cross, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 185-243, note in particular 212-216.

[119] *Cf.* Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence*, 72.

ments are found in the Ugaritic name *'amrb'l* 'Command of Ba'al'.[120] Additionally, one can cite the epithets of Ramses III, 'Ba'al with His Sword'[121] and 'Lord of Truth'.[122] If this reconstruction has any merit, then this may be one more example of a non-systematic theological change by the scribal schools of Israel.[123]

The remainder of Ps 110 may be translated (with v. 3 reconstructed) as follows:

Oracle C+D&E: Ps 110:4-7

נִשָּׁבַע יְהוָה
וְלֹא יִנָּחֵם
אַתָּה־כֹהֵן לְעוֹלָם
<בַּ>עַל דִּבְרָתִי
מַלְכִּי צָדֶק׃
אֲדֹנָי עַל־יְמִינְךָ
מָחַץ בְּיוֹם־אַפּוֹ מְלָכִים׃
יָדִין גּוֹיִם מָלֵא גְוִיוֹת
מָחַץ רֹאשׁ עַל־אֶרֶץ רָבָּה׃
מִנַּחַל בָּדֶרֶךְ יִשְׁתֶּה
עַל־כֵּן יָרִים רֹאשׁ׃

Yahweh has sworn
and he will not disavow:
"You are 'Priest Eternal',
'Lord of My Command',
'King of Righteousness'."
Adonai is on your right:
He shattered kings in the day of his wrath,
He judged among the nations by amassing corpses,
He shattered heads over the vast earth.
From the wadi on the way he will drink,

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[120] *PRU* II, 58.16.
[121] *Wb*. III 269, 3.
[122] *Hist. Rec*., 118.
[123] For the scribal treatment of בַּעַל, see Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 71-2. It is certainly curious, at least given the Canaanite antecedents to the lyrical literature of the Hebrew psalms, that the root בעל does not have a single attestation in the Psalter.

> Therefore, he will lift up heads.

The above verses are translated without further emendation, although the function of the last verse within the psalm's structure is not obvious. Verses 5-7 shift from first-person address to third-person, seemingly indicating the end of oracular citation. However, prophetic oracles were uttered in both forms of address, so it is equally possible that a new oracle has been appended to v. 4.

The sense of vv. 5-6 seems clear enough. Adonai (Yahweh), the Divine Warrior, stands on the right flank of the monarch and has already won victory for the king. The obvious implication for the king would be, in a time of war, that just as Yahweh smote undauntedly in the past, even now and in the future Yahweh will fight alongside him. This motif is common in Egyptian royal inscriptions. For example, the god Amon-Re promises Ramses III:

> I (will go) with thee to the place which thou has desired, rejoicing [thy heart in the foreign lands, that I may make] the terror of thee and create the awe of thee in every distant land.[124]

Later in the same inscription, Amon-Re states "Behold, I am in front of thee, my son,"[125] and still later, "I give thee my sword before thee, to overthrow the Bows, and I slay for thee every land beneath thy soles."[126] These oracular decrees are referred to by Egyptologists as 'assurance formulae' and include statements such as "My hand is a shield to your breast in order to drive evil away from you," and "My hand is with you in order to subdue the Nine Bows."[127] In all cases, the oracle is meant to assure the king of the protective presence of the god(s) in the midst of battle.

The imagery of rendering judgment through the collection of corpses is present in Egyptian inscriptions as well. In the sections of the Medinet Habu inscriptions that celebrate the Pharaoh's victory over the Libyans, the royal officials exclaim:

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[124] *Hist. Rec.*, pl. 14 lns. 19-20.
[125] *Hist. Rec.*, pl. 17 lns. 1-2.
[126] *Hist. Rec.*, pl. 102 ln. 20.
[127] Morschauser, "Speeches of Ramesses II," 131.

> See ye the many benefactions which Amon-Re, the King of the Gods, performed for Pharaoh, his child. He has carried off the land of Temeh, Seped, and Meshwesh, who were robbers, ruining Egypt daily, but were made prostrate under my feet. Their root is cut off; they are not, in a single case. Their feet have ceased to tread Egypt forever, through the goodly counsels which his majesty made to take care of [Egyp]t, which had been wasted.[128]

This text celebrates the victory over the Libyans as an act of justice proceeding from Ramses III's good counsel and shepherdship over Egypt. In other words, the act of war was an act of rendering judgment.[129] After the laudation of king and god, a litany of the cadavered remains of battle follows:

> Total, phalli: 12,535
> Total, hands: 12,535
> Total, phalli: 12,860
> Total, hands: 12,532+
> Total, hands: 12,660[130]

This sensational motif might be compared to the claim of Tiglath-Pileser III who, by the power of the god Ašur, defeated and killed his enemies, and then filled the mountain gorges with their corpses.[131]

The final verse of Ps 110 remains enigmatic. Numerous attempts have been made to reconstruct or emend the text.[132] Verse 7 shares several affinities with the preceding oracle, such as the use of

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[128] *Hist. Rec.*, pl. 22 lns. 2-9.

[129] See S. Morschauser, "The Ideological Basis for Social Justice/Responsibility in Ancient Egypt," *Social Justice in the Ancient World* (eds. K.D. Irani and M. Silver; Contributions in Political Science 354; Wesport: Greenwood, 1993) 105, and "Speeches of Ramesses II," 149-50.

[130] *Hist. Rec.*, pl. 22 ln. 24.

[131] H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994) 51.

[132] For a review of common approaches, see J. Becker, "Zur Deutung von Ps 110:7," *Freude an der Weisung des Herrn: Beiträge zur Theologie der Psalmen: Festgabe zum 70. Geburtstag von Heinrich Gross* (eds. E. Haag and F.-L. Hossfeld; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1986) 17-31. Becker's own argument that this line refers to the Divine Warrior drinking the blood of corpses cannot be correct. If this was the intended motif, there is little reason to suppose that the psalmist would have expressed it in such oblique language. See Ibid., 25-29.

the catch-words עַל־ and רֹאשׁ. Since v. 7 is hardly intelligible as a self-contained oracle, it seems best to interpret it in relation to vv. 5-6.

It is not clear whether the king or Yahweh is the subject of the verbs in v. 7. If Yahweh is the subject, then R.J. Tournay's suggestion, that the wadi from which God drinks is the primordial stream, becomes attractive (see Ps 36:9).[133] This interpretation, however, does not adequately account for the locative force of דֶּרֶךְ, which apparently indicates a journey or campaign. We are inclined to interpret v. 7a in light of 1 Kgs 17:4 where Yahweh commands Elijah, after telling him to take cover in the wadi Cherith: וְהָיָה מֵהַנַּחַל תִּשְׁתֶּה "You shall drink from the wadi." After Elijah is sustained, in part, by the waters of the wadi, the wadi becomes dry. Yahweh's provision for Elijah allows him to continue on his way to Zarephath.[134] Similarly, v. 7a of Ps 110 could be read as Yahweh's oracular promise to the king that he will be sustained during his martial campaign.

The fact that רֹאשׁ is not modified by a pronominal suffix introduces an additional problem that is not easily resolved. Whose head will be lifted? Considering Ps 3:4, one might be tempted to interpret v. 7b as a promise that the victorious king will be exalted. In Ps 3:4 the psalmist appeals to Yahweh using three epithets:

וְאַתָּה יְהוָה
מָגֵן בַּעֲדִי
כְּבוֹדִי
וּמֵרִים רֹאשִׁי

You, Yahweh are
'Shield Around Me'
'My Glory'
'He Who Lifts My Head'[135]

In view of the third Yahwistic epithet, it is possible that v. 7b relates Yahweh's exaltation of the king's head. A similar sentiment is

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[133] R.J. Tournay, "Le Psaume CX," *RB* 67 (1960) 34-6.

[134] See also Ps 78:20.

[135] Note the similar introduction and threefold pairing of epithets as in our reconstruction of Ps 110:4 above.

expressed in Ps 27:6a: וְעַתָּה יָרִים[136] רֹאשִׁי עַל אֹיְבַי סְבִיבוֹתָי "And now he exalts my head over my enemies round about." Whereas in Pss 3 and 27 it is clear that Yahweh lifts the psalmist's head (in each case 'my head'), in Ps 110:7 there is no such clarity.

Moreover, a common motif in Mesopotamian martial texts was the cutting off of the enemy's head(s) for (capital) punishment and display.[137] In Israel's traditions, Gideon was given the heads of the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb (Judg 7:25-8:3). A letter from Mari is important in this regard. Here, Yarim-Lim of Aleppo writes to Zimri-Lim regarding oracles which she has sought pertaining to an ensuing military campaign against Ishme-Dagan. Yarim-Lim reports one of the oracles as follows:

> No battle will be fought. Right after arriving his (Ishme-Dagan's) auxiliary troops will be scattered, and they will cut off the he[ad of Ishme]-Dagan and then put it under the foot of my lord.[138]

This oracle combines the motifs of enemies being placed under the feet of the king and the seizing of the enemy's head in victory. If one consistently reads the king as the subject of the verbs in v. 7, then a similar coupling of motifs may be present in Ps 110. The king will lift up (or off from the body) the head of the enemy.

In sum, if our reasoning is correct, then Ps 110 is the end product of the association of several royal oracles. This alone should caution against attempts to connect historically 'Zion ideology' with the mysterious figure Melchizedek. But even more, in its earliest stages, the psalm probably had nothing to do with the priest-king of Salem. Only subsequently was the epithet 'King of Righteousness' reinterpreted as the specific PN.

It is likely that Ps 110 was preserved in scribal circles of postexilic restitutionists. It was probably at this stage that Ps 110 was given Davidic ascription. It is not clear exactly when מלכי־צדק began

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[136] The MT's יָרוּם is awkward at best. For example, Kraus offers the translation, "And now my head lifts itself up." See Kraus, *Psalms 1-60*, 331. The LXX's ὕψωσεν presupposes יָרִים. Since there is little reason to break with the subject of the preceding verbs, the LXX is to be preferred.

[137] See *CAD* 11/1 175, and *CAD* 13 102.

[138] ARM 10 IV 20-27. *Trans*. *ANET*, 630.

to be taken as the *crux* of the psalm. It is instructive to note that even though a pešer on Melchizedek has been located among the Dead Sea Scrolls, it does not include any portions of Ps 110 for interpretation. Even more, 11QPs[a] does not include Ps 110 at all, but, instead, betrays a collection with the following order: Pss 102, 103, 109, 118, and then Ps 104![139] It is likely that the association of Ps 110 with the priest-king of Salem was a post-Qumran development, or perhaps appropriated in some way by the Hasmoneans (note the strange juxtaposition of the epithet "ἀρχιερέα εἰ᾽ ̓ὸν αἰῶνα" with ἕω᾽ in 1 Macc 14:41).[140]

PSALM 2

In marked contrast to Ps 110, the unity and structure of Ps 2 is manifest.[141] The psalm is easily divided in four sections by theme:

A.	the rebellion of the nations	(vv. 1-3)
B.	the disdain of Yahweh	(vv. 4-6)
C.	citation of the royal oracle	(vv. 7-9)
D.	warnings to other monarchs	(vv. 10-12)

Section A is dominated by the initial word לָמָּה 'why?': Why do the nations conspire and the peoples machinate; why do the rulers withstand and the kings take counsel against Yahweh and his anointed? Thus, the psalm opens with the recognition of chaos and rebellion. Traditional language of the *Chaoskampf* is employed.[142] However, in

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[139] Wilson, *Editing*, 109.

[140] Exactly when Book V of the Psalter took final form continues to be hotly debated. On the one hand, Patrick Skehan argues that 11QPs[a] is subsequent to the final MT Psalter. See P.W. Skehan, "Qumran and Old Testament Criticism," *Qumrân: sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (BETL 46; ed. M. Delcor; Gembloux: Duculot, 1978) 163-72. On the other hand, G.H. Wilson takes a completely opposite position arguing that 11QPs[a] is exemplary of the MT Psalter in process. See Wilson, *Editing*, 121. For a helpful summary of the wider debate see G.H. Wilson, "The Qumran Psalms Scroll Reconsidered: Analysis of the Debate," *CBQ* 47 (1985) 624-42.

[141] See P. Auffret, *The Literary Structure of Psalm 2* (JSOTSup 3; Sheffield: JSOT, 1977).

[142] See V. Sasson, "The Language of Rebellion in Psalm 2 and in the

Ps 2 the motif is *Völkerkampf*; the peoples rebel against Yahweh and his king. The same theme of the rebellion of the vassals against Yahweh and Zion is found in Ps 48:3-7. In Ps 48 the king's conflict is quashed before the very walls of Zion. In Ps 2, the royal conflict is only divinely threatened.

It is not clear who asks לָמָּה. An intriguing possibility is that the vassals of the Israelite king voice the plea. J.J.M. Roberts argues, regarding Ps 47, that its occasion presupposes the presence of vassals or their representatives at the Jerusalem temple.[143] In the same article he suggests that a similar situation lies behind Ps 2:10-12a. Whether or not the *traditum* of Ps 2 was ever performed in the presence of actual vassals is a mute point. What is important to note is that the form of address used in Ps 2:1-3 is similar to vassal accusations found in the Amarna letters:

> Why on their own authority have they come to your country?[144]
>
> Why, my brother, have you held back the presents that your father made to me when he was al[iv]e?[145]
>
> Wh[y have you been *neg*]*ligent?*[146]
>
> Why do you not send back word to me that I may know what to d[o]?[147]
>
> Wh<y> are you negligent so that your land is being taken.[148]
>
> Why did you *lead me astray*?[149]
>
> *W*]*hy* have you sat idly by [and] done nothing, so that the 'Apiru dog tak[es *you*]*r cities?*[150]

Plaster Texts from Deir 'Alla," *AUSS* 24 (1986) 147-154.

[143] Roberts, "The Religio-political Setting of Psalm 47," *BASOR* 220 (1975), 132.

[144] *EA* 9 32-33. *Trans*. Moran, *Amarna*, 18.

[145] *EA* 41 14-15. *Trans*. Moran, *Amarna*, 114.

[146] *EA* 77 18. *Trans*. Moran, *Amarna*, 147.

[147] *EA* 83 7. *Trans*. Moran, *Amarna*, 153.

[148] *EA* 83 18. *Trans*. Moran *Amarna*, 153.

[149] *EA* 87 8. *Trans*. Moran, *Amarna*, 159.

[150] *EA* 91 3-5. *Trans*. Moran, *Amarna*, 165.

Numerous other examples could be cited as well. In the Amarna letters, the conferring of rivals was tantamount to war. Thus, Rib-Hadda reports insurrection by stating "They have a[ll] *agr*[*eed*] among themselves against [me].[151] In another letter the same vassal lord echoes his fears:

> Accordingly, they have made an alliance among themselves and, accordingly, I am very, very afraid, since [in] fact there is no one who will save me from them.[152]

Section A of Ps 2 ends with a quotation from the rebellious lords, another literary device used in the petitionary correspondence of Amarna.[153] At the same time, the monarch could be the speaker of the entire psalm (even quoting Yahweh's oracle) utilizing and modifying the language of vassal *rîb* cited above.

Section B describes Yahweh's fiery response to such insolence and ends by restating a previous royal oracle:

Ps 2:4-6

4. יוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׂחָק
אֲדֹנָי יִלְעַג־לָמוֹ׃
5. אָז יְדַבֵּר אֵלֵימוֹ בְאַפּוֹ
וּבַחֲרוֹנוֹ יְבַהֲלֵמוֹ׃
6. וַאֲנִי נָסַכְתִּי מַלְכִּי
עַל־צִיּוֹן הַר־קָדְשִׁי׃

4. He who is enthroned in heaven laughs,
Adonai derides them.
5. Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
in his burning anger he will terrify them.
6. "But I have installed my king
upon Zion, the mountain of my holiness."

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[151] *EA* 69 10-11. *Trans*. Moran, *Amarna*, 138.

[152] *EA* 74 42-44. *Trans*. Moran, *Amarna*, 143. Rib-Hadda's plea continues and ends with an accusation: "Like a bird in a trap, so am I in Gubla. Why have you neglected your country?"

[153] See *EA* 101; Moran, *Amarna*, 174.

Seow has identified Yahweh's laughter as one of the constituent elements of the Israelite *Völkerkampf* which can be traced to the divine combat myths of ancient Ugarit.[154] Laughter is also a royal posture of disdain which is clarified in Ps 2:4 by the pairing of שׂחק // לעג. Thus, in *EA* 1, Nimbuarea, King of Egypt, reproaches the Babylonian court:

> As for your writing me *in order to aggrandize yourself* (and) to put oil on the *h*[*ea*]*d* of a girl, you for your part sent me one *pr*[*es*]*ent*. *Are we to laugh?*[155]

Such laughter is meant to warn and humiliate.

The form נָסַכְתִּי, in the first half of the royal oracle, is somewhat problematic in its analysis. Dahood revocalizes it as נְסֵכְתִּי, in order to derive the verb from סוּךְ 'to anoint'.[156] *HALAT* suggests either repointing the verb as an N Perfect, נִסַּכְתִּי, with the sense of 'to become a ruler', or tracing the verb's derivation to the N Perfect of *skk II, 'to be formed', which would require the form נָסַכְתִּי.[157] Both readings could explain the LXX's κα᾽εσ᾽άθην, "I have been appointed." However, translations and derivations which ill-advisedly follow the LXX force the text into the mouth of the human king instead of Yahweh. It is important to note that the term נסיכי 'my prince' is found in the Words of Aḥiqar.[158] This same form is attested in the MT, albeit always as a plural (Josh 13:21; Ezek 32:30; Mic 5:4; Ps 83:12). In Standard and Neo-Babylonian, as well as Neo-Assyrian, *nasīku* occurs as a loanword meaning 'chieftain' or 'sheikh'.[159] Since נָסִיךְ fits the nominal *qatīl* pattern used of titles, such as מָשִׁיחַ 'anointed', נָדִיב 'noble', נָשִׂיא 'chief', נָגִיד 'prince-designate', בָּחִיר 'chosen-one', etc., we are inclined to assume with *BDB* the existence

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[154] Seow, *Myth*, 95-96.

[155] *EA* 1 95-98. *Tans*. Moran, *Amarna*, 3.

[156] Dahood, *Psalms I*, 10.

[157] *HALAT*, 664a; 712a.

[158] A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C*. (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1967) 216 ln. 119. See also G.H. Dalman, *Aramäisch-Neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud, und Midrasch mit Lexikon der Abbreviaturen von G.H. Händler und einem Verzeichnis der Mischna-Abschnitte* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1987) 272a.

[159] See *CAD* 11.2 27.

of a verbal root *nsk III ‘to install’, upon which the nominal form נָסִיךְ is based, and which is attested in the MT in Ps 2:6.[160]

Psalm 2:6 is the only place in the MT where מַלְכִּי refers to a human monarch.[161] Apparently, its unique standing befuddled the LXX translator who rendered Ἐγὼ δὲ κᾶὲσ͂άθην βασιλεὺ͂ ὑπ᾽ αὖοῦ “I have established a king upon it (Zion).” Whereas the use of ‘my king’ by the deity in reference to the human monarch is unusual in the ancient Near East, ‘my son’ of v. 7 is not. In Ps 2, the uncommon epithet is used, however, to contrast the Israelite king who reigns from Zion with the other kings and rulers of the world. They should tremble and fear because Yahweh, the Great Elyōn over all the earth, has chosen one king to be his king and has set him on Zion. Since monarchical rule was always and only through divine grant in the ancient Near East (even if *post factum*), the quotation of Yahweh’s oracle *ipso facto* challenges all other rule and subordinates it to the Israelite king.

Ps 2:7-9

7. אֲסַפְּרָה אֶל חֹק יְהוָה
אָמַר אֵלַי בְּנִי אַתָּה
אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יְלִדְתִּיךְ׃
8. שְׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי
וְאֶתְּנָה גוֹיִם נַחֲלָתֶךָ
וַאֲחֻזָּתְךָ אַפְסֵי־אָרֶץ׃
9. תְּרֹעֵם בְּשֵׁבֶט בַּרְזֶל
כִּכְלִי יוֹצֵר תְּנַפְּצֵם׃

7. Let me bear witness to the statute of Yahweh.
He said to me: “You are my son,
I have borne you today.
8. Ask from me,
and I will give nations for your inheritance;
your possession—the ends of the earth.
9. You will break them with an iron rod,

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[160] In addition, see Prov 8:23.

[161] It is an epithet of Yahweh in Pss 5:3, 44:5; 68:24; 74:12; 84:4.

like a potter's vessel, you will shatter them."[162]

Section C can only be voiced by the king himself. This, of course, is nothing unusual from the vantage of the royal self-laudatory style of the ancient Near East. The king cites the oracular decree of Yahweh indicating that 1) he is Yahweh's son, 2) he was begotten by Yahweh and hence participates in Yahweh's form, 3) Yahweh has granted him rulership over all of the nations of the earth, and 4) Yahweh has granted the king both the right and the prowess to enforce that rule through military engagement and victory.[163] These oracular promises are analogous to the divine grant of 1) sonship, 2) material/ontological relationship, 3) rulership over the foreign nations, and 4) the *ḫpš* sword and victory in battle, which were rendered to the Pharaohs by the god(s) of Egypt.[164]

Section D serves as a warning to the kings and judges of the earth to serve Yahweh in fear, and to kiss the king's feet in obeisance,[165] lest Yahweh become angry and they perish upon the

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[162] For an incisive discussion of the Assyrian royal inscriptional parallels to this phrase (namely that of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II), see B. Becking, "'Wie Töpfe Sollst Du Sie Zerschmeißen' Mesopotamische Parallelen zu Psalm 2,9b," *ZAW* 102 (1990) 59-79.

[163] J.A. Emerton suggests the verbal forms in v. 9 hold modal force connoting 'permission' and offers the translation: "Thou mayest break them with a rod of iron; Thou mayest dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." See J.A. Emerton, "The Translation of the Verbs in the Imperfect in Psalm II.9," *JTS* 29 (1978) 502-503. Whereas the translation adopted above stresses Yahweh's gift of 'prowess', Emerton's translation emphasizes Yahweh's grant of 'permission'. Certainly, both aspects were intended in v. 9.

[164] For numerous citations in the Ramesside texts see Morschauser, "Speeches of Ramesses II," 127-131.

[165] Vassals do not simply kiss the suzerain. Instead, the frequent motif throughout the ancient Near East is for vassals to kiss the suzerain's feet. For example, in one of Tiglath-Pileser III's inscriptions he recounts how, upon his return from war, Iransu of Mannaea came before him and kissed his feet. See Tadmor, *Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III*, 99. Likewise, peoples and vassals alike are charged in the presence of Ramses IV to be "attached to his sandals, kiss the earth in his presence, bow down to him..." See *ARE* 4.206. There is little need to multiply examples. The MT, וְגִילוּ בִּרְעָדָה נַשְּׁקוּ־בַר should probably be emended to בִּרְעָדָה נַשְּׁקוּ בְרַגְלָיו "kiss his feet with trembling." See Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 125, and Auffret, *Literary Structure*, 8.

'way'. The order given is the command to be loyal and subservient. This may be compared to Egyptian 'loyalist' literature which was often appropriated into royal inscriptions. For example, an inscription of Ahmose I instructs his subjects to

> ...follow this king in his duties. Promote the awe of him among others. Be purified on behalf of his name, and respect his oath. Behold, he is god in the land. Give adoration to him like the sun, adore him like the moon.[166]

Similarly, vassals are commanded to 'love' the crown prince in Assyrian royal treaties.[167]

There can be little doubt that Ps 2 stems from a royal court of Judah. It may even be the case that the *traditum* of this psalm dates from the Solomonic period. In favor of this supposition is the psalm's silence regarding the Davidic covenant. The Solomonic period was perhaps the only period in Judah's history where the monarch's filial relationship to Yahweh was so conspicuous by the nation's prosperity and domination, that appeals to Davidic lineage with the aim of securing covenant blessings would have seemed superfluous.

The psalm's survival down to the late postexilic period (when it was placed at the head of the Davidic Psalter) is a matter only for speculation. It is often noted that Pss 1 and 2 were read together as a single psalm in several textual MSS.[168] In fact, Ps 1 opens with אַשְׁרֵי הָאִישׁ and Ps 2 closes with אַשְׁרֵי כָּל־חוֹסֵי בוֹ, thus forming an *inclusio*. Further, they share in common the following verbal roots: דרך (1:1b, 6b; 2:12a), ישׁב (1:1b; 2:4a), הגה (1:2b; 2:1b), שׁפט (1:5a; 2:10b).[169] Was Ps 1 composed as a 'wisdom' introduction to Ps 2 and the Davidic psalter? Or was Ps 2 adapted from another context by drop-

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[166] Urk. IV 651 16-17. *Trans*. S. Morschauser, "Threat-Formulae in Ancient Egypt," (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1987) 415.

[167] "You shall love Assurbanipal, the great crown prince designate, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, your lord, like yourselves." ND 4336 266. *Trans*. *SAA* 2.39.

[168] So Acts 13:33; uncial D. For a similar assessment in the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, see B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971) 412-14. See also Holladay's disscussion of Origen, *The Psalms*, 169.

[169] Auffret, *Literary Structure*, 34.

ping Davidic or Solomonic superscription? Without more evidence it is impossible to proceed confidently in either direction.

ISAIAH 8:23-9:6

The aberrant omission of personal and regnal names from royal materials becomes an acute problem in terms of the royal oracle. Oracular royal grants, by nature, were usually delivered in full specificity. The practice of naming the royal name was the expected and established rule in royal oracular citations throughout the remains of the ancient Near East. That established rule is violated not only by the RPss, but (most likely) by the disciples of the prophet Isaiah. Indeed, Isaiah 9:5 is of special interest because it is thought by many scholars to contain the throne names bequeathed to a Judean king at his coronation by means of an oracle:[170]

Isaiah 9:5e-i

וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ
אֵל גִּבּוֹר
אֲבִיעַד
שַׂר־שָׁלוֹם

And one will call his name:
'He Who Proffers Wonders',[171]

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[170] See, for example, G. von Rad, "The Royal Ritual in Judah," *The Problem of the Hexateuch and other essays* (London: SCM, 1966), 222-231; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 257; Roberts, "In Defense," 379; and K.E. Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism: Its History and Significance for Messianism* (SBLEJL 7; Atlanta: Scholars, 1995) 19. Additionally, note P.D. Wenger's helpful review in *An Examination of Kingship and Messianic Expectation in Isaiah 1-35* (New York: Mellen, 1992) 169ff.

[171] The translation of this name continues to occasion scholarly controversy. See Wenger, *Kingship and Messianic Expectation*, 184-85. We have followed Wildberger who rightly views this name in connection with Isa 28:29, גַּם־זֹאת מֵעִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יָצָאָה הִפְלִיא עֵצָה הִגְדִּיל תּוּשִׁיָּה: "Also, this comes from Yahweh Sabaoth, who makes wonderful counsel and makes great wisdom." Even more helpful is his citation of two epithets of Horemhab, 'Ready in Plans' and 'Great in Marvels'. See Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 403. The latter epithet and related synonymous epithets were widely applied

'Divine Warrior',[172]

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to the Pharaohs, namely *wr-bỉɜỉwt* 'Great in Wonders', for Amenmès; *nb-bỉɜỉwt* 'Lord of Wonders', for Ramses II; and '*šɜ-bỉɜỉwt* '[working] many wonders', for Sethi, Ramses II, and Sethi II. See Grimal, *Les termes*, 352-354. Moreover, the root *pl' occurs in several West Semitic names: *Ya-ap-lu-*^{d}*Da-gan* and *pillīyaw*. See H.B. Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts: A Structural and Lexical Study* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965) 254, and M.D. Coogan, *West Semitic Personal Names in the Murašû Documents* (HSM 7; Missoula: Scholars, 1976) 81. The epithet פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ signifies that the monarch will plan and execute the wonders of Yahweh. In this connection note the promise bestowed upon Ramses II by the god Ptah: "I cause to befall thy great wonders, and every good thing to happen to thee. The Two Lands under thee are in acclamation, Egypt flourishes, rejoicing, O Ramses II, given life." See *ARE* 3.180.

[172] It is difficult to know how to translate this epithet. Although "mighty/warrior god" could have been the intended reading since we find the human sovereign addressed as אֱלֹהִים in Ps 45:7, in view of suspected Egyptian influence upon this titulary we are inclined to view אֵל גִּבּוֹר as an Egyptianism which should be translated as something like "Divine Warrior." An identical royal epithet was claimed by Ramses III in his account of the First Libyan war in the Medinet Habu inscriptions, namely *nṯr nḫt*. See *KRI* 13.5, and Grimal, 567, n. 42. There is also the possibility, though it would have been subsequently obscured by the assumption of Hebrew syntax, that the Egyptian convention known as honorific transposition was originally observed. According to this convention, the name of the God (in this case 'Ēl) would be written before a closely connected word (in this case 'warrior') but would have been pronounced as 'גִּבּוֹר אֵל', sounding very much like the Hebrew PN גַּבְרִיאֵל. See Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 55. However, this possibility seems shaky since the names *ilu*(DINGER)*-gab-ri* and *ilu*(DINGER ^{MEŠ})*-gab-ri* are attested in Neo-Assyrian and Neo/Late-Babylonian cuneiform texts. See Layton, *Archaic Features*, 131-134. As Layton points out, one would not expect a genitival relationship to exist between the name elements if the name elements could be reversed. In this regard, mention should also be made of the Old Aramaic epithet *hdd gbr*, "Hadad the Warrior." See A. Abou-Assaf, P. Bordreuil, and A.R. Millard, *La statue de Tell Fekherye et son inscription bilingue assyro-araméenne* (Éstudes Assyriologiques 7; Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1982) page 23 line 12. The occurrence of the epithet אֵל גִּבּוֹר in Isa 10:21, which, undoubtedly, predates Isa 9:6 if the former hails from the Syro-Ephraimitic war and the latter was applied to Hezekiah, is itself ambiguous as to whether it refers to Yahweh or the reigning monarch.

'Father of the Testament',[173]
'Prince of Peace'.[174]

Although the titular names in Is 9:5 do not exactly follow the Egyptian pattern, they are, at the least, suggestive, since adding one other name (such as the personal name of a monarch) would bring the Isaiah passage into conformity with the standard number of RNs used in the Egyptian titulary.[175] As noted above, the *nomen*, or family name, occurs last in the fivefold sequence. Could it be that there was an Israelite king who at his ascension was named "He Who Proffers Wonders, Divine Warrior, Father of the Testament, Prince of Peace, _____,"?

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[173] See E. Lipiński, "Études sur des textes 'messianiques' de l'Ancien Testament," *Semitica* 20 (1970) 52. A very similar name, *'b'd*, is attested in a Phoenician inscription. See Benz, *Personal Names*, 257, 373. It seems more likely for this name, and other similar names such as *'d'šmn, 'db'l, 'dmlk, 'd'štrt*, as well as *'dršp* in Ugaritic, that the element *'d* is to be derived from *'w/hd > 'ēd 'testimony' rather than *'dy > 'ad, 'perpetuity'. This reading is strengthened by the fact that Joash was given a crown (נֵזֶר) and a testimony (עֵדוּת) at his enthronement (2 Kgs 11:12). See further, Halpern, *The Constitution*, 49. For a similar Egyptian concept see the discussion of *îmyt-pr* in Grimal, *Les termes*, 640 note 439. At the same time, it must be admitted that the traditional rendering 'Eternal Father' can be supported with Egyptian counterparts.

[174] The Egyptian equivalent for שָׁלוֹם, *ḥtp* 'rest', occurs in many proper names of the Middle Kingdom. See Gardiner, *Grammar*, 501. An interesting parallel to this epithet is found in Ramses II's response to the blessings of the god Ptah. At the conclusion of the inscription the monarchical signature line reads as follows: "...by command of this thy son, who is upon thy throne, lord of gods and men, sovereign celebrating the jubilees like when thou bearest the two sistrums, son of the white crown, heir of the red crown, possessing the Two Lands in peace, Ramses II, given life forever and ever." See *ARE* 3.182.

[175] S. Morenz, "Ägyptische und davidische Königstitular," *Religion und Geschichte des alten Ägypten* (Koln: Bohlau, 1975) 401-3; M. Rehm, *Der königliche Messias im Licht der Immanuel-Weissagungen des Buches Jesaja* (Eichstätter Studien 1; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1968) 130ff; H. Wildberger, "Die Thronnamen des Messias, Jes. 9,5b." *TZ* 16 (1960) 314-332; and M. Crook, "A Suggested Occasion for Isaiah 9:2-7 and 11:1-9," *JBL* 68 (1949) 213-24. For a discussion of the significance of the Egyptian throne names, see H. Brunner, *Die Geburt des Gottkönigs: Studien zur Überlieferung eines altägyptischen Mythos* (Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 10; Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986), especially 79-82.

It is often noted out that something has fallen out of the MT after v. 5. Verse 6 begins with לְמַרְבֵּה הַמִּשְׂרָה וּלְשָׁלוֹם אֵין־קֵץ. Hans Wildberger and others follow Albrecht Alt's suggestion that למרבה, with a final *mêm* occurring in medial position, betrays the fragmentation of a fifth name.[176] It is possible that a scribal corruption such as *homoioteleuton* could explain the fragmentation of the text resulting in the following: למרבה ◃— לם רבה. At the same time, a five-name titulary trimmed for theological reasons to a four-name messianic prophecy could also explain the MT. One can imagine the final לם originally being part of שלם (defective for שָׁלוֹם) or עלם (defective for עוֹלָם). If, as many students of Isaiah of Jerusalem think, Isa 8:23b-9:7 was intended for King Hezekiah's coronation, then one could reasonably postulate that the fifth titular name might have been something like יְחִזְקָיָהוּ יֹשֵׁב עֹלָם, 'Hezekiah reigns forever',[177] or even יְחִזְקָיָהוּ לְעֹלָם, 'Hezekiah forever!' This particular blessing following Hezekiah's name would be consistent with the Egyptian practice of adding a blessing after the *nomen*. For example, Harmhab's titulary is:

> 1. Horus: Mighty Bull, Ready in Plans; 2. Favorite of the Two Goddesses; Great in Marvels in Karnak; 3. Golden Horus: Satisfied with Truth, Creator of the Two Lands; 4. King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Zeserkheprure, Setepnere; 5. Son of Re: Mernamon, Harmhab, *given life* (emphasis mine).[178]

The bequest of a secure throne is a frequent blessing in the Egyptian titular.[179] But this is not only true for Egyptian royal ideologies. The concern for a stable and enduring throne is represented in Akkadian texts as well. Note, for example, line 18 of Assurbanipal's coronation hymn: BALA-šú li-te-diš GIŠ.GU.ZA LUGAL-ti-šú a-na da-ra-a-ti lu-kí-nu, "Let his rule be renewed, let them establish the throne of his kingship forever."[180]

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[176] A. Alt, "Jesaja 8, 23—9, 6. Befreiungsnacht und Krönugstag," *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1953) 2.206-25, and H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 383-410.

[177] See Ps 61:8.

[178] *ARE*, 3.17.

[179] See Grimal, *Les termes*, 189-194.

[180] VAT 13831 18. *Trans. SAA* 3.27. In addition, see *CAD* 8, 'kussû', 592

While the structural parallels between Isa 9:5 and the Egyptian titular are striking, if not compelling, it is possible to proffer explanations of the four names by evidence internal to the MT[181] as well as evidence from Mesopotamian royal epithets.[182] So too, Hittite monarchs were given many different titles that were apparently patterned after some sort of titulary.[183]

In particular, a suggestive but fragmentary Ugaritic text, *KTU*[2] 7.63 1-7, should not be overlooked:[184]

[n]*qmp*‘ [N]iqmepa‘[185]

(2’). See also Seux, *Épithètes royales*, 87.

[181] See K.D. Schunck, “Der fünfte Thronname des Messias (Jes. ix 5-6),” *VT* 23 (1973) 108-10.

[182] See R.A. Carlson, “The Anti-Assyrian Character of the Oracle in Is. IX 1-6,” *VT* 14 (1974) 130-135. However, Carlson’s dismissal of the fragmentation of verse 6 is hasty. Even more, his argument that the imagery of the four throne names intentionally contradicted Assyrian claims to world rulership, particularly those claims made by Tiglath-Pileser III, is not compelling.

[183] See G. Beckman, “Royal Ideology and State Administration in Hittite Anatolia,” *CANE* 1.532, and H. Gonnet, “La Titulature royale hittite au II^{e} millénaire avant J.–C.,” *Hethitica* 3 (1979), 1-128. Beckman cautions against assuming too much Egyptian influence in terms of the Hittite titulary: “Perhaps the most important title of the Hittite monarch...was ‘My Sun-god,’...While it has often been maintained that this term was borrowed from Egypt, the appearance of the designation already in the Hittite Old Kingdom, before significant contacts with Egypt had been established, as well as the total absence of other Egyptian elements among Hittite conceptions of kingship, make it unlikely. Rather, it seems that the expression—really a respectful salutation—was taken over from northern Syria, where already in the Mari period a ruler could be so addressed. In this regard it is surely significant that the term invariably appears in Hittite texts in Akkadian writing.” See Beckman, “Royal Ideology,” 1.532.

[184] *PRU* II XVI-XVII. See also J. Gray, “Sacral Kingship in Ugarit,” *Ugaritica VI* (1969), 289f.

[185] Syllabic renderings appear as *níq-me-pa* (*PRU* IV 24, v.8; 27, 2, 19; 28,2; *PRU* III 16.143,2), *níq-ma-pa-a* (*PRU* IV 17.372 A,4), *níq-mu-pa* (*PRU* IV 17.130,3), and *ni-iq-me-pa*, and should be analyzed as ‘Vengeance shines forth’. See D. Sivan, *Grammatical Analysis and Glossary of the Northwest Semitic Vocables in Akkadian Texts of the 15th-13th C.B.C. from Canaan and Syria* (AOAT 214; Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1984) 254. Very interesting is the attestation of this name (*Nqmwp‘i*) in hieratic script. See G. Posener, *Princes et pays d’Asie et de Nubie: Textes hiératiques sur des figurines d’envoûtement du moyen empire* (Bruxelles: Fondation äegyptogique reine Elisabeth, 1940) E 3. Also, note the similar sentiment expressed in the Amorite

[bn . nq]*md*	[the son of Niq]-ma-addu[186]
[mlk.] *ugrt*	[King] of Ugarit
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b*'l ṣdq*	Legitimate Lord,
skn . bt	Governor of the House
mlk . ṯġr	King of the Gate[187]
m*lk . bny*	King who Builds

Although the fragmentary nature of this text makes it difficult to translate and interpret accurately, it does appear that some sort of Ugaritic titular is reported. If so, then one might postulate an Ugaritic antecedent for the Israelite practice observed in Isa 9:5. At the same time, ideologies, iconographies, and mythologies were not transferred

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PN *Ya-pí-iḫ*-^{d}IM. See Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names*, 212. Niqmepa''s son, 'Amiṯtamru II, is known from two legal documents involving the royal grant of property (*KTU*^{2} 3.2 and *KTU*^{2} 3.5). In each case the king is identified as *'mṯtmr . bn . nqmp' . mlk . ugrt.*

[186] This name can be analyzed as *Níq-ma-haddu*, that is "vengeance of Haddu." J. Huehnergard has pointed out that in personal names where the second element is the DN Haddu, "aphaeresis of the /h/ and crasis are usually in evidence. See Huehnergard, *Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription* (HSS 32; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987) 248 n. 154. This West Semitic name is also found in the Amarna correspondence as ^{I}*níq-ma*-^{d}IM (*EA* 49:2)—N.B. that J.A. Knudtzon's earlier reading of ^{I}šá-ma(?)-addu is to be corrected. See R.S. Hess, *Amarna Personal Names* (ASORDS 9; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993) 119 who follows W. Albright, "An Unrecognized Amarna Letter from Ugarit," *BASOR* 99 (1944) 31-32). This name is also found at Alalakh as *ni-iq-ma-a-du* and *ni-iq-mi-ad-du*. See D.J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets* (Occasional Publications of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara 2; London: British Institute of Archaeology) 33, 6; 98d, 5; 455, 48. It also occurs a Mari as *ni-iq-mi-ia-ad-du*. See ARM 3 54:9.

[187] "King of the Gate" connotes the king's responsibility for rendering just judgments. Thus, the significance of Daniel's location in the Aqhat epic, *KTU*^{2} 1.17 V 6-8:

> *ytšu . yṯb . b ap . ṯġr . tḥṭ*
> adr*m . d b grn . ydn*
> *dn . almnt . yṯpṭ . ṯpṭ . y*tm
>
> (Daniel) raises himself and sits at the entrance of the gate, under
> the nobles which were by the threshing floor, he tries
> the case of the widow and renders judgment for the orphan.

Likewise, in MT justice is dispensed at the city gate (Deut 21:19; Amos 5).

from one culture to another along exact lines. Hence, it is best to recognize the larger phenomenological practice of assigning titular and epithetic titles to kings throughout the ancient Near East.

Even so, incontrovertible administrative and cultural connections can be documented between Israel and Egypt during the Davidic-Solomonic period. King David looked to Egypt for administrative models for his inner court.[188] His son, King Solomon, wedded a daughter of Pharaoh, an acquirement that Abraham Malamat has typified as an event of unparalleled "extraordinary political significance."[189] And although of circumstantial evidential value, it is conspicuous from iconography represented on numerous Hebrew seals dating to the monarchical period that Egyptian ideologies and mythologies held considerable fascination, if not sway, over the Israelites throughout the preexilic period.[190] Accordingly, we find good reason, even outside of titular correspondence, to consider the Egyptian parallels most appropriate to the interpretation of Isa 9:6.

In this connection it should not go without comment that the declaration of the four regnal names is preceded by mythological 'birth' language similar to that found in Pss 2 and 110:[191]

Isaiah 9:5a-b

כִּי יֶלֶד יֻלַּד־לָנוּ
בֵּן נִתַּן־לָנוּ

For a child has been born to us,

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[188] Roberts, "In Defense," 379; T.N.D. Mettinger, *Solomonic State Officials: A Study of the Civil Government Officials of the Israelite Monarchy* (ConBot 5; Lund: Gleerup, 1971); and Malamat, "Kingdom of David and Solomon and Its Relations," 189-204.

[189] A. Malamat, "The Kingdom of David & Solomon in its Contact with Egypt and Aram Naharaim," *BA* 21 (1958) 98.

[190] See B. Sass, "The Pre-exilic Hebrew Seals: Iconism vs. Aniconism," *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals* (OBO 125; eds. B. Sass and C. Uehlinger; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993) 194-256, and O. Keel and C. Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole: Neue Erkenntnisse zur Religionsgeschichte Kanaans und Israels aufgrund bislang unerschlossener ikonographischer Quellen* (QD 134; Freiburg: Herder, 1992) 298-321.

[191] See also Ps 89:27-28 and 2 Sam 7:14a.

a son granted to us.

Ps 2:7b-c

אָמַר אֵלַי בְּנִי אַתָּה
אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יְלִדְתִּיךָ

He said to me, "You are my son,
I, this day, have borne you."

Ps 110:3c-e

בְּהַדְרֵי־קֹדֶשׁ
מֵרֶחֶם מִשְׁחָר
לוֹ טַל יַלְדָתֶיךָ׃

"With sacred-splendors
from the womb of the sunrise
verily, like dew, I have borne you."

There continues to be significant debate as to whether this divine 'birth' imagery is indicative of a mythological or ontological reality, or whether it simply connotes the king's adoption by Yahweh.[192] Regardless of where one stands on the debate, it is sufficient to note that the biblical divine birth texts are atypical in comparison to other texts from the ancient Near East; their birth motif is not supplemented by the revelation of the monarch's regnal name.

For example, in the opening lines of a royal hymn of the god Amon to Pharaoh Amenhotep III (Cairo 34025) one can observe the coupling of divine birth and regnal name:

> Words spoken by Amon-Re, King of the Gods:
> My son, of my body, my beloved, **Neb-maat-Re**,
> My living image, whom my body created,
> Whom Mut, Mistress of Ishru in Thebes, ..., bore to me.[193]

From recovered reliefs and steles, the tradition-history of this hymnic expression can be postulated as follows. Amenhotep III's (1413-1377

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[192] See Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 259-275, and J.J.M. Roberts, "Whose Child is this? Reflections on the Speaking Voice in Isaiah 9:5," *HTR* 90 (1997) 115-29.

[193] *ANET* 376; *ARE* 2.361.

BCE) artisans expanded the earlier singular reference to Thutmose III's (1490-1436 BCE) sonship which read:

> Words spoken by Amon-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands: Welcome to me, as thou exultest at the sight of my beauty my son and my avenger, **Men-kheper-Re**, living forever![194]

Later, the scribes of Seti I (1318-1301 BCE) repeated the 'sonship' language of Amenhotep III but excised the explicit divine birth imagery:

> Utterance of Amon-Re, lord of Thebes:
> "O my son, of my body, my beloved, Lord of the Two Lands: **Menmare**, lord of might in every country! I am thy Father;[195]

Finally, by the reign of Ramses III (1195-1164 BCE) the formula of Seti I appears to be fixed:

> Words spoken by Amon-Re-Harakhte:
> "My son of my body, my beloved, Lord of the Two Lands: **Usermare-Meriamon**, possessor of a strong arm in every country.[196]

Obviously, there are significant gaps in this traditio-historical reconstruction. In fact, Edgerton and Wilson comment that "It is possible that this chain was even more complete, that such scenes employed this text regularly, and that some links in the chain have been lost to us."[197] The developmental reconstruction itself is of minor importance for our study. However, the coupling of the monarch's regnal name with divine sonship and divine birth imagery throughout the *traditio* is significant. The integral relationship between the king's name and his status as divine son is confirmed, as well, in Grimal's study of the royal titular.[198] Finally, one should note the progression from the divine birth scenes to the presentation of the

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[194] *ANET* 373-74; *ARE* 263.
[195] *ARE*, 3.56.
[196] *Hist. Rec.*, pl. 102 lns. 1-2.
[197] *Hist. Rec.*, 111 n. †.
[198] Grimal, *Les termes*, 152-156.

titular in the coronation reliefs of Thutmose III,[199] Hatshepsut,[200] Harmhab,[201] and Amenhotep III.[202]

The comparative evidence from the ancient Near East heightens the disparity between Isa 9:6 and other divine birth texts—espeially with regard to the pronouncement of the king's name. Given the likelihood that at some point in the textual transmission of the MT a personal name of a king might very well have been dropped, what might be a plausible explanation?

If Isa 8:23b-9:6 was originally part of Hezekiah's coronation, then the text's triumphal hyperbolic language would reflect a renewed hope midst Judah that the threat posed by Assyria would soon be curbed. Even though Sargon II invaded Syro-Palestine several times during the reign of Hezekiah, the first invasion was not until after the Judean king's coronation in 715 BCE.[203] In all likelihood, as Hezekiah was being crowned king, Sargon II was in conflict with Merodach-baladan of Babylon. With Assyria preoccupied with Babylon, little Judah could hold renewed aspirations for secure life under its new king.[204] And yet, later in Hezekiah's reign, these hopes were dashed

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[199] *ARE*, 2.59-63.

[200] *ARE*, 2.78-93.

[201] *ARE*, 3.24-17.

[202] *ARE*, 2.334.

[203] Proposed dates for Hezekiah's coronation range from 729 BCE to 715 BCE. The imprecision in historical fixation among scholars is due to the fact that Hezekiah's regnal-year citations do not harmonize. On the one hand, according to 2 Kgs 18:10 the fall of Samaria coincided with Hezekiah's sixth regnal year, or 722/21 BCE. On the other hand, 2 Kgs 18:13 correlates Hezekiah's fourteenth year with Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 BCE. However, Jeff Rogers has demonstrated, based on an examination of the use of synchronisms in the Babylonian Chronicles as well as in the MT, LXX (OG, Kaige, and Lucian), that 2 Kgs 18:13 is more secure than 2 Kgs 18:10, since 1) the formulaic expression of the latter were provided by the hand of a redactor rather than being dependent upon an external source, and 2) 2 Kgs 18:13 is integral to the narrative and not a synchronism. See J.S. Rogers, "Synchronism and structure in 1-2 Kings and Mesopotamian chronographic literature," Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1992, 250-253. Hence, it turns out that J. Bright's chronology of 715 BCE for Hezekiah's ascension is to be preferred. See J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (3rd. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981) 278.

[204] It is likely that the Assyrians did not attack Ashdod until 712 BCE. See H. Tadmor, "Philistia under Assyrian Rule," *BA* 29 (1966) 86-102.

to pieces when he attempted a revolt against Assyria (encouraged, in part, by the claims of court style?) and was nearly crushed by Sennacherib in 701 BCE. Hezekiah reached out to Egypt and Ethiopia, but to no avail. Hezekiah was forced to pay a heavy tribute to the Assyrian king (2 Kgs 18:14). Despite intense preparations for battle, Hezekiah turned out to be no 'Divine Warrior'.[205]

If Isa 1-32 underwent some sort of Josianic redaction,[206] then one might plausibly surmise that Josiah's name was reappropriated in the *traditio* of Isa 9:6. However, whether or not the text was reused for Josiah, at some point a redactor or editor saw fit to keep the royal promise, but to free the text from historical specificity. In the end, Josiah was no more successful in restoring the glories of the Davidic-Solmonic monarchy and the *Pax Israël* than was Hezekiah. And yet the hope that such restoration was possible was tenaciously held by those who came out of the exile.

In sum, the importance of Isa 9:6 for the present investigation is its purposeful silence (if not suppression) of the *nomen*, or the personal name of the historical king at whose service of coronation or ascension these words were originally voiced.

2 SAMUEL 23:1b-7

The only biblical poem that incorporates a king's personal name is 2 Sam 23:1b-7, the "Last Words of David" (referred to henceforth as 'LWD'). Its exclusion from the Hebrew Psalter, and yet, its inclusion in the Qumran Psalter (11 QPs[a] col. xxvii) make it a pivotal text for an investigation into the oracular RPss.

Gunkel associated the LWD with the Königspsalmen in his inaugural address on the subject. In doing so he traced the LWD

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[205] See Antti Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus: The Historical Josiah and the Messianic Expectations of Exilic and Postexilic Times* (ConBOT 33; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992) esp. 69-80.

[206] For example, see H. Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte in der Josiazeit: Israel und Assur als Thema einer produktiven Neuinterpretation der Jesajaüberlieferung* (WAMNT 48; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1977) and Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 6-8.

directly to King David himself..."und auch 'die letzten Worte' Davids (II. Sam. 23, 1-7), ein schwungvolles Orakel aus Davids eigenem Munde, an dessen Echtheit nicht zu zweifeln ist."[207] Mowinckel was not as certain. The association of oracular prophecy with King David appeared anachronistic to him:

> Mit dem hier Gesagten habe ich schon zu erkennen gegeben, daß ich nicht das Gedicht als 'echt', d.h. von David verfaßt betrachten kann. Ebensowenig, wie es eine wirkliche Prophetie im psychologischem Sinne des Wortes ist, ist es ein davidisches Gedicht, sondern muß einer späteren Zeit entstammen.[208]

Although more recent scholars have also doubted the Davidic authorship of the LWD,[209] it is notable that most modern scholars have stressed the antiquity of the poem.[210] Though the superscription 2 Sam 1a—

> וְאֵלֶּה דִּבְרֵי דָוִד הָאַחֲרֹנִים
>
> And these are David's last words:

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[207] Gunkel, "Königspsalmen," 66; *The Psalms*, 24. See also O. Procksch, "Die letzten Worte Davids: 2. Sam. 23:1-7," *BWANT* 13 (1913) 112-125, and K.R. Crim, who treats the LWD among the RPss (minus Ps 132), in *The Royal Psalms*, 121-23.

[208] S. Mowinckel, "'Die letzten Worte Davids' II Sam 23 1-7," *ZAW* 45 (1927) 54.

[209] See R.J. Tournay, "Les 'dernières paroles de David': II Samuel, XXIII, 1-7," *RB* 88 (1981) 481-504; Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 257-59.

[210] Cross attributes the LWD to the tenth century based on archaic elements. See Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 234. Likewise, Freedman assigns the LWD to the tenth century. See Freedman, "Divine Names and Titles in Early Hebrew Poetry," *Pottery, Poetry, & Prophecy: Collected Essays on Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980) 95. P.K. McCarter favors an early date, though considers v. 2 to be a gloss. See McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 9; Garden City: Doubleday, 1984) 483ff. Additionally, G.A. Rendsburg associates the poem with David during his stay at Mahanaim. See, Rendsburg, "The Northern Origin of "The Last Words of David," *Biblica* 69 (1988) 121. Two scholars, however, associate the poem with Solomon. See A. Caquot, "La prophétie de Nathan et ses échos lyriques," *Congress Volume, Bonn 1962* (VTSup 9; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963) 218, and T. Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology* (BZAW 142; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977) 107f.

—was secondarily added by a later editor,[211] the reference to דָּוִד בֶּן יִשַׁי is probably not a later gloss to the text.[212] It is important to note, given the poem's literary placement and the fact that the story of David extends into the book of Kings, that its superscription most likely became associated with the poem prior to its inclusion in the history of David. It is unlikely, however, that the superscription itself dates to King David, since these were undoubtedly *not* his 'last' words. Nonetheless, they may have been the last recorded lyrical words of David's included in a special royal collection. As will become manifest below, we believe the LWD to come from the royal house of King David himself.

The received texts of the LWD are problematic.[213] Numerous studies have sought to emend and/or reconstruct the text.[214] Given the tenuous nature of the MT, emendations are necessary. However, no attempt has been made here to provide an exhaustive critical text. Instead, only where emendations have been deemed essential have they been made. In each case, we have tried to avoid corrections that would further the argument by circularity.

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[211] See P.A.H. de Boer, "Texte et traduction des paroles attribu*é*es a David en 2 Samuel xxiii 1-7," *Congress volume: Strassbourg* (VTSup 4; Leiden: Brill, 1956) 49.

[212] McCarter states that "'The utterance of David,' etc., is an organic part of this poem." See McCarter, *II Samuel*, 485.

[213] *contra* Rendsburg, who states "...the texts presents few if any problems." See Rendsburg, "Northern Origin," 115.

[214] In addition to the works already cited, see G. del Olmo Lete, "David's Farewell Oracle (2 Samuel XXIII 1-7): A Literary Analysis," *VT* 34 (1984) 414-437, and Mettinger, "'The Last Words of David': A Study of Structure and Meaning in II Samuel 23:1-7," *SEÅ* 41-2 (1976-77) 147-56.

TEXT

LWD: 2 Sam 23:1b-7

נְאֻם דָּוִד בֶּן־יִשָׁי	1b.
וּנְאֻם הַגֶּבֶר הֻקַם[215] אֵל[216]	1c.
מְשִׁיחַ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב	1d.
וּנְעִים זְמִרוֹת[217] יִשְׂרָאֵל׃	1e.
רוּחַ יְהוָה דִּבָּר־בִּי	2a.
מִלָּתוֹ עַל־לְשׁוֹנִי׃	2b.
אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקוֹב[218]	3a.
לִי דִבֶּר צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל	3b.
מוֹשֵׁל אָדָם צַדִּיק	3c.

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[215] The MT attests the awkward הֻקַם עָל "who is raised up on high." We have corrected this based on 4QSam[a] which appears to have read הֻקִים אֵל. In viewing PAM 41.200 (photographed by Bruce and Kenneth Zuckerman of West Semitic Research), one can clearly see אל משיח [ ]הגבר הקו. The lacuna is 3 cm wide just above the base of the line and 3.5 cm at the hanging rule. To the upper left, as well as on the lower left, the traces of a final *mêm* are clearly visible (approximately 2 cm wide with the characteristic 30° right to left slant consistent with the scribe). Between the final *mêm* and the medial *qôp* above the hanging line is the top of a letter that cannot occupy more than 1 cm. Since a tail of a *wāw* is not visible, one can be almost certain that a *yōd* was written by the scribe. הֻקִים אֵל could be presumed to be the original of LXX[L], ἀνήρ ὃν ἀνέσ῾ησεν ὁ θεός. See E.C. Ulrich, Jr., *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (HSM 19; Chico: Scholars, 1978) 113f. Either the original text was written defectively (i.e. הקם) and subsequently misunderstood in the *Qĕrē*, or the Massoretes corrected the text based on their inability to make sense of a previously corrupted אל which had become על.

[216] In accordance with the previous emendation, we read אֵל with 4QSam[a] and LXX[L]. See also Cross, *Canaanite Myth,* 234 n. 66, and McCarter, *II Samuel,* 477.

[217] This is the plural construct form of זִמְרַת < *ðmr. This same semitic root is attested in biblical Hebrew in the phrase *'ozzî wĕzimrātî*, "my power and my strength." See Exod 15:2, Isa 12:2, and Ps 118:14.

[218] The MT has יִשְׂרָאֵל. It is unusual to find יִשְׂרָאֵל repeated in parallel lines in Hebrew poetry. We suspect that the line has been corrupted. Based on Ιακωβ in LXX[L] and OL, we have emended the text to יַעֲקוֹב.

3d.	מוֹשֵׁל בְּיִרְאַת[219] אֱלֹהִים׃
4a.	וּכְאוֹר בֹּקֶר יִזְרַח־שָׁמֶשׁ
4b.	בֹּקֶר לֹא עֲבוֹת מִנֹּגַהּ
4c.	מִמָּטָר דֶּשֶׁא מֵאָרֶץ׃
5a.	לוּ[220]־כֵן בֵּיתִי עִם־אֵל
5b.	כִּי בְרִית עוֹלָם שָׂם לִי
5c.	עֲרוּכָה בַכֹּל וּשְׁמֻרָה
5d.	כִּי־כָל־יִשְׁעִי וְכָל־חֵפֶץ
5e.	כִּי־לֹא יַצְמִיחַ׃
6a.	וּבְלִיַּעַל כְּקוֹץ מֻנָּד כֻּלָּהֶם
6b.	כִּי־לֹא בְיָד יִקָּחוּ׃
7a.	וְאִישׁ יִגַּע בָּהֶם
7b.	יְמָלֵא בַרְזֶל וְעֵץ חֲנִית
7c.	וּבָאֵשׁ שָׂרוֹף יִשָּׂרְפוּ בַּשָּׁבֶת׃[221]

TRANSLATION

1b. The oracle of David, son of Jesse,

1c. the oracle of the man whom ’Ēl raised up—

1d. the Anointed of the God of Jacob,

1e. the Favorite[222] of the Strength of Israel:

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[219] The MT does not attest the preposition. However, the syntactically correct *běyir’at* is supported by LXX^{L} (φόβῳ) and MT[mss], OL, Syr., Targ., and Vulg.

[220] Reading *lū* for MT’s *lō’* “not so,” which can hardly be correct.

[221] Literally, “in the seat.” Most commentators follow Driver in his judgment that this word has been miscopied into this text under the influence of the same word in verse 8. See S.R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel* (London: Oxford, 1913) 361. However, we are inclined to take this as a reference to opposing rulers who will be destroyed even upon their thrones. See the use of שֶׁבֶת for ‘throne’ in 1 Kgs 10:19 // 2 Chr 9:18 and Amos 6:3.

[222] This epithet is very similar to which occurs in the fragmentary Ugaritic text *KTU*^{2} 1.5 II 15, *n‘m.ilm.*[, ‘Favorite one of the gods’. See also *KTU*^{2} 1.14 III 40 and *KTU*^{2} 1.10 II 16. Note as well King Keret’s epithet: *n‘mn.ġlm il*, ‘The Darling, the Lad of ’Ēl (*KTU*^{2} 1.14 I 40, II 7-9, VI 41). Many of the Hittite kings claimed in their titularies the title NA-RA-AM ^{d}x “favorite of god x.” See Gonnet,

2a. The Spirit of Yahweh spoke through me,

2b. his word was upon my tongue;

3a. the God of Jacob spoke,

3b. to me the Rock of Israel said:

3c. "He who rules over people as legitimate,[223]

"La titulature royale hittite," 23f. The Akkadian equivalent to this phrase is *migru*, "favorite" of the god(s), and was an epithet for many kings including Assurnasir-pal II, Esarhaddon, Kurigalzu I, Tukulti-Ninurta I, Assurbanipal, Nabonidus, Hammurabi, Marduk-apla-iddina I, Nabukadnezer I, Šu-Sîn, Shamash-shum-ukin, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Sîn-shar-ishkun, Shalmanasar I, etc. See Seux, *Épithètes*, 162-168.

[223] ." See H.N. Richardson, "The Last Words: Some Notes on II Samuel 23:1-7," *JBL* 90 (1971) 259; del Olmo Lete, "David's Farewell Oracle," 425; Mowinckel, "Die letzen Worte Davids," 40ff; and Karl A. Leimbach, *Die Bücher Samuel* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1936) 216. Alternatively, some suggest "He rules righteous over men." See Mettinger, "The Last Words of David," 155; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 236; McCarter, *II Samuel*, 476; Tournay, "Les 'dernières Paroles," 482ff; and Procksch, "Die letzten Worte Davids," 112ff. The first option understands צַדִּיק to stand in an attributive relationship to מוֹשֵׁל. Those who choose the second option surmise that צַדִּיק is intended to express an adverbial relationship to מוֹשֵׁל. The latter are influenced by the LXX^{L}'s δικαίω, with some commentators reconstructing the preposition בְּ as a preformative to צַדִּיק. It would seem, however, that the MT in this case preserves the more ancient tradition and that the first option is required. We are inclined to take צַדִּיק to be a substantivized adjectival epithet; that is the 'legitimate' ruler. A similar Ugaritic usage of this root may be found in *KTU*^{2} 1.14 I 12-13:

aṯt . ṣdqh . l ypq
mtrḫt . yšrh
His legitimate wife he found,
his rightful bride.

Importantly, the 10th century BCE Phoencian inscription of Yeḥimilk utilizes the same parallelism between the semitic roots *ṣdq* and *yšr*. Note *KAI* 4.6-7:

...kmlk . ṣdq .
wmlk yšr
lpn 'l gbl ...
...For (Yeḥimilk) is the legitimate king
and the rightful king
before the god(s) of Byblos...

Likewise, in the Amarna Letters, 'Abdi-Ḫeba complains that Milkilu and the sons

3d. is he who rules in the fear of God,

4a. is like the light of morning as the sun rises

4b. a morning without a cloud, out of the brightness,[224]

4c. —grass from the earth after rain."[225]

5a. Surely my house is secure with God!

5b. because an eternal[226] covenant he has given to me—

5c. prepared in every regard and preserved—

5d. So that all my help and all my desire,

5e. will surely spring forth.

6a. But the Beliya'al are like discarded thorns, all of them.

6b. Surely, in the (bare) hand they will not be grasped.

7a. But the man who strikes them,

7b. arms[227] himself with an iron and wood spear.[228]

7c. By fire they will be utterly burned

upon the throne.

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of Lab'ayu have given Jerusalem over to the 'Apiru. 'Abdi-Ḫeba protests: a-mur šarru bêli-ia ṣa-du-uk a-na ia-a-ši "See, O King, My Lord, legitimacy is to me!" *EA* 287:32. Note also the 5th-century usage in the Words of Aḥiqar (173). See Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, 218 ln 173.

[224] We understand the preposition מִן to express a genitive of source, which is accurately reflected in the LXX translation ἐκ φέγγουϛ "out of lights." See Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar: Syntax*, 489.

[225] This stanza is very problematical. Nevertheless, as Mettinger has suggested, the preposition מִן almost certainly carries a temporal meaning. See Mettinger, "'The Last Words of David'," 154, and *HALAT* 2.565b. Apparently the poet wanted to express both solar and fecundity metaphors, the latter of which is no longer obvious. A similar idea is expressed in an equally difficult passage (Psalm 110:3) where the king is promised 'dew' from the "womb of the dawn." See as well Ps 72:5-6 and Hos 6:3.

[226] The other possibility for translation is "because the Eternal has given me a covenant" taking עוֹלָם to be a divine epithet of the god 'Ēl (see Gen 49:26; Deut 33:15, 27). See also the Phoenician incantation from Arslan Tash, *KAI* 27.8-10, and Richardson, "The Last Words of David," 263.

[227] For a similar usage of מלא, see 2 Kings 9:24.

[228] Hendiadys is intended with בַּרְזֶל וְעֵץ, but is difficult to render into English. See Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands In the Light of Archaeological Study* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) 1.10, for a concise discussion of the design of the javelin and spear which included a wooden shaft and a metal head.

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

In what 'formal' ways can the LWD be compared to the RPss? 2 Samuel 23:1b-7 is commonly recognized to be an ancient lyrical poem, though poorly preserved in the MT. As far as its content is concerned, most commentators have little problem associating it with the RPss.[229] By way of illustration, it has been characterized by del Olmo Lete as a "...cultic oracle of saving and promissory contents and of sapiential development, that interprets Yahwistically, in the frame of a compromise religion of election and ethics, the basic components of royal ideology."[230] This is a lot for a short poem of seven verses. Nevertheless, Lete's summary correctly isolates the convergence of several ideological traditions in the LWD.

The structure of the LWD consists of two quatrains (vv. 1b-e, 2a-3b) and three quintets (vv. 3c-4c, 5a-5e, 6a-7c).[231] The first quintet contains an oracle pronouncement from Yahweh to the king (vv. 3-4). It is akin to the oracular pronouncements found in four of the RPss (Ps 110:1c-e, 4c-d; Ps 2:6, 7c-9; Ps 89:4-5, 20c-38; and Ps 132:11b-12, 14-18). Even more, both Ps 110 and the LWD begin with נְאֻם:[232]

2 Sam 23:bc

נְאֻם דָּוִד בֶּן־יִשָׁי

וּנְאֻם הַגֶּבֶר הֻקַם אֵל

The oracle of David, son of Jesse,
the oracle of the man whom 'Ēl raised up.

Ps 110:1b

נְאֻם יְהוָה לַאדֹנִי

The oracle of Yahweh to my lord:

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[229] For example, see Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 257-58; Crim, *Royal Psalms*, 121-23; and Eaton, *Kingship*, 141-142.

[230] del Olmo Lete, "David's Farewell Oracle," 433.

[231] On the usage of this terminology to signify groups of five cola see W.G.E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (JSOTS 26; Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1984) 13.

[232] Note also the similar use of נְאֻם in Psalm 36:1.

Despite the difference in the nominal absolute modifying נְאֻם in each instance,[233] both texts begin identically, raising the expectation among the congregation or royal audience that they will hear a word from the Lord.[234]

Thus, given its similar lyrical structure, stress, and compositional technique, it is not surprising that the Qumran community included the LWD in their Psalter. In practically every way, when compared to Pss 2, 110, 132 and even Ps 89, the LWD is a royal psalm. Why, then, was it not included in the Hebrew Psalter?

Some have thought that the prophetic character of the LWD could explain its exclusion.[235] Clearly, in the LWD the offices of 'king' and 'prophet' are overtly combined in one person. The introductory formula of the LWD recalls the Balaam Oracles; in particular Num 24.3b-9; 15b-19. Compare the following lines:

2 Sam 23:bc

נְאֻם דָּוִד בֶּן־יִשָׁי

וּנְאֻם הַגֶּבֶר הֻקַם עַל

The oracle of David, son of Jesse,
the oracle of the man whom 'Ēl raised up.

Num 24:3bc; 15bc

נְאֻם בִּלְעָם בְּנוֹ בְעֹר

וּנְאֻם הַגֶּבֶר שְׁתֻם[236] הָעָיִן

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[233] That is, in 2 Sam 23:bc the nominal absolute indicates the one *through whom* the oracle was given, and in Ps 110:1b the nominal absolute indicates the *source* of the oracle.

[234] On the interrelatedness of the words of the prophets and the word of God, see C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991) 94f.

[235] Beginning with Mowinckel, "Die letzten Worte Davids," 43ff.

[236] The semitic root *štm 'open' occurs only here in the MT. Hence, the translation above is not completely secure. Various emendations have been suggested. None of which, however, is more compelling than the traditional rendering, especially given the apparent explication of this line (נֹפֵל וּגְלוּי עֵינָיִם "He who falls having been revealed of eyes") in v. 4. See *HALAT* 4.1540 for a detailed discussion of the problems and proposed solutions.

The oracle of Balaam, son of Beor,
the oracle of the man who is 'opened of eye'.

All three texts begin with an identical formulaic prophetic announcement which can be schematized as:

נְאֻם PN בֶּן PN // נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶר + EPITHET

('oracle of PN son of PN' // 'oracle of the man + EPITHET')[237]

The variables in this introductory formula are 1) the person through whom the oracle is given, 2) the speaker's patronym, and 3) the epithet which qualifies הַגֶּבֶר.

Directly following the formulaic introductory bicolon in each text is a multi-line poetic expansion of the B´ epithet; the briefest expansion being the LWD (Num 24:4 = tricolon, Num 24:16 = two bicolons, but 2 Sam 23:1d-e = bicolon).

Num 24:4

נְאֻם שֹׁמֵעַ אִמְרֵי־אֵל
אֲשֶׁר מַחֲזֵה שַׁדַּי יֶחֱזֶה
נֹפֵל וּגְלוּי עֵינָיִם׃

Oracle of the Hearer of the words of 'Ēl,
who sees the vision of Shadday,
He who falls uncovered of eyes.

Num 24:16

נְאֻם שֹׁמֵעַ אִמְרֵי־אֵל
וְיֹדֵעַ דַּעַת עֶלְיוֹן
מַחֲזֵה שַׁדַּי יֶחֱזֶה
נֹפֵל וּגְלוּי עֵינָיִם׃

Oracle of the Hearer of the words of 'Ēl,
He who discerns the knowledge of 'Elyōn;

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[237] *Cf.* a later corruption of the oral formula in Prov 30:1:

דִּבְרֵי אָגוּר בֶּן־יָקֶה הַמַּשָּׂא
נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶר לְאִיתִיאֵל לְאִיתִיאֵל וְאָכָל׃

He (who) sees the vision of Shadday,
He who falls uncovered of eyes.

2 Sam 23:1de

מְשִׁיחַ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
וּנְעִים זְמִרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

The Anointed of the God of Jacob,
the Favorite of the Strength of Israel.

Whereas in the Balaam oracles this introduction is sufficient to initiate the content of the prophetic oracle, the LWD continues to identify the 'prophetic' credentials of the speaker with two additional bicolons (vv. 2-3):

The Spirit of Yahweh spoke through me,
his word was upon my tongue;
the God of Jacob spoke,
to me the Rock of Israel said:

Beginning with v. 2, the poet no longer speaks in the third-person. The text shifts from a description of the prophetic speaker to the voice of the prophetic speaker himself. It is apparent that this section represents an expansion from the accepted introductory formula already noted in v. 1. Importantly, it is an expansion intended to underscore the personal and unequivocal relationship between the prophetic speaker and the deity. The two line expansion celebrates and reinforces the speaker's prophetic capabilities.[238]

We postulate that the expansion most probably answered an ideological need to reinforce the speaker's prophetic credentials. In the case of the famed prophet Balaam, these verses would have been redundant and extraneous. However, in the case of a king attempting

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[238] One should note correspondences with the so-called Šulgi Prophecy:

I (am) Šulgi, beloved of Enlil and Ninlil: the noble one,
Shamash has told me, Ishtar my lady has revealed (this) to [me]...

Borger, BiOr 28 (1971) 14 lns. 1-4. *Trans*. *BtM*, 270. The Šulgi Prophecy, though notoriously difficult to date, may have been written in the initial days of the first millennium BCE.

to demonstrate his 'charisma', the additional four lines would provide the needed emphasis.

But, at the same time, the 'prophetic' character of the LWD could not be sufficient reason in and of itself to exclude its reception into the Hebrew Psalter. The Psalter is replete with oracular texts.[239]

IDEOLOGICAL HORIZON

The LWD clearly expresses royal ideology with the familiar exalted language of court style. For example, the unique clustering of epithets and similes present in the LWD are akin to those found in the prologue to the law code of Hammurabi. The description of the king exercising Enlil function over all humanity (*kiššat niši*) is very similar to "the one who rules באדם (over people)." In both texts, divine determinations are indicated by the same verbal root: *šâmu* B = שׂים. Hammurabi's enduring kingship (*šarrūtam dârītam*), which is firmly established (*kânu*), is reminiscent of the house that is 'secure' (כֵּן) with 'Ēl. Hammurabi is called the *pāliḫ ilī*, 'god fearing' ruler, while David is the one who rules by the fear of God. Finally, and most obviously, are the clear parallels between the establishment of just rule, the punishment of the wicked, and the metaphoric shining as the sun over the land.

Royal solar imagery indicating divine blessing and power is ubiquitous in the ancient Near East. An Egyptian hymn to the Aten and King Akhenaten is illustrative:

> Praises to you when you dawn in lightland,
> O living Aten, lord of eternity!
> Kissing the ground when you dawn in heaven,
> To light all lands with your beauty.
> Your rays are on your son, your beloved,
> Your hands hold millions of jubilees
> For the King, *Neferkheprure, Sole-one-of Re,*
> Your child who came from your rays.
> You grant him your lifetime, your years,

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[239] See R.J. Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing God with the Psalms: The Prophetic Liturgy of the Second Temple in Jerusalem* (JSOTSup 118; Sheffield:

> You hearken to the wish of his heart...[240]

Although the LWD casts solar imagery in terms of simile, the connection of solar imagery, divine birthing imagery, and the deity's attention to the wishes and desires of the king's heart provide strong ideological parallels between the two texts. It goes without saying that, if one wanted to cast a wider net among the ancient Near Eastern remains, manifold comparisons of similar nature could be made.[241]

The correlation of prophecy with the royal office is not unique to King David. The opening of the LWD is remarkably similar to so-called 'Šulgi Prophecy' dating from the end of the third millennium. In this text, the Sumerian king, Šulgi, plays the part of the prophet who receives messages directly from the gods:

> I (am) Šulgi,
> beloved of Enlil and Ninlil:
> the noble one, Shamash has told me,
> Ishtar my lady has revealed (this) to [me].[242]

Likewise, the legendary King Keret of Ugarit received a guarantee for his dynasty through the medium of a dream in which the god 'Ēl communicates directly with the king.[243]

However, most important to the present investigation are the verbal parallels between the LWD and several RPss. The following chart demonstrates that the composer of the LWD drew upon the same ideological language pool as did the royal psalmists.

JSOT, 1991).

[240] Davies, *Amarna*, IV 17. *Trans. AEL*, 2.93.

[241] See, with regard to Israel, H.–P. Stähli, *Solare Elemente im Jahweglauben des Alten Testaments* (OBO 66; Göttingen: Vendenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985). See also M.S. Smith, "'Seeing God' in the Psalms: The Background to the Beatific Vision in the Hebrew Bible," *CBQ* 50 (1988) 176-83; B. Janowski, *Rettungsgewissheit und Epiphanie des Heils: Das Motiv der Hilfe Gottes 'am Morgen' im Alten Orient und im Atlen Testament* (WMANT 59; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989); and G.J. Taylor, "Was Yahweh Worshipped as the Sun? Israel's God was Abstract, But He May Also Have Had a Consort," *BAR* 20 (1994) 52-61.

[242] Borger, BiOr 28 (1971) 20 1-3. *Trans. BtM*, 270.

[243] *KTU*[2] 1.14 I 33ff; 1.14 VI 31-35.

מָשִׁיחַ/מָשַׁח	'anoint'/'anointed'	2 Sam 23:1; Pss 2:2; 18:51; 20:7; 45:8; 89:21, 39, 49, 52; 132:10, 17
דָּוִד[244]	'David'	2 Sam 23:1; Pss 18:51; 72:20; 89:4, 21, 36, 50; 132:10, 11, 17; 144:10
בֵּיתִי	'my house/dynasty'	2 Sam 23:5; Pss 101:2, 7; 132:3
בְּלִיַּעַל[245]	'beliya'al'	2 Sam 23:6; Pss 18:5; 101:3
נֹגַהּ/נָגַהּ	'shine/brightness'	2 Sam 23:4; Pss 18:13; 29

The terms cited above occur overwhelmingly in royal contexts. The shared lexicon evident between the LWD and several of the RPss underscores the ideological context of the LWD. In addition to the lexical items cited above, the LWD shares the following terms with the other RPss: גָּבַר, מוֹשֵׁל, עָרַךְ, בְּרִית, יֵשַׁע, and צָמַח. Whereas none of these lexemes are sufficient in and of themselves to indicate a royal 'ascription' to the LWD (or to any text for that matter), the combination and confluence of these terms toward similar ideological aims strongly supports royal ascription.

In fact, standard verbal lexemes and ideological motifs employed in distinct compositions often betray, what Jonas Greenfield has termed, 'cluster' composition which participates in the common *traditio* of the texts.

> In the "cluster" the Biblical writer draws from the poetical resources available to him a number of word pairs and standard epithets and uses them to construct a complex poetic structure, or to set the background framework of the material that he is presenting.[246]

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[244] Apart from its occurrence in psalmic superscriptions.

[245] The only other occurrence in the Psalter is found in Ps 41:9 where בְּלִיַּעַל modifies the construct of דְּבַר.

[246] J.C. Greenfield, "The 'Cluster' in Biblical Poetry," *Sopher Mahir: Northwest Semitic Studies Presented to Stanislav Segert* (ed. E.M. Cook; MAARAV 5-6 [1990]; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 159-160.

Such compositional clustering becomes evident in a comparison of Ps 132 with the LWD. First, both texts recall a בְּרִית given by the deity. Second, the verbal root ערך (to prepare) also occurs in both texts. Third, in the LWD, all of the king's help and desire will sprout (צמח). In Ps 132:17, a horn is said to sprout (צמח) for David in Jerusalem. Seow has argued that here קֶרֶן (horn) refers primarily to the power and security of the Davidides—a concept synonymous with 'help and desire' in the LWD. Although נֵר (lamp) can have the connotation of progeny, its use in Ps 132 has more to do with continuity of power. In both poems, the promise of God's preservation and arrangement of the promises of the covenant are worked out through the punishment of those adversarial to the royal house (בְּלִיַּעַל and אוֹיְבִים respectively). Thus the 'cluster' terminology utilized by both lyrical texts expresses kindred ideological aims—that is, that the blessings of the covenant are dispensed to and preserved for the king.

Historical Occasion

Since there are no compelling reasons to date the poem later than the Davidic period, it is appropriate to search for possible historical usages of the lyrical poem within what is known of King David's life and governance. In other words, whereas we do not hope to revive the overconfidence of an earlier age when the indeterminate psalms were placed in specific historical contexts, it does seem reasonable, regarding the determinate LWD, to search for an appropriate historical setting(s) within the years of David's reign.

There are only two possible historical referents, albeit poetical, in the poem if one identifies King David with the מוֹשֵׁל צַדִּיק. The contrasting historical referent(s) are called בְּלִיַּעַל. Thus, the identification of the בְּלִיַּעַל becomes a *crux interpretatio* for the LWD.

In the LWD, the enemies of the king are compared to thorns and called בְּלִיַּעַל. In fact, the central point of comparison in the poem is between the מוֹשֵׁל צַדִּיק and the בְּלִיַּעַל. Whereas the מוֹשֵׁל צַדִּיק will be like the light of morning, will bring prosperity as the rain, and is given a secure house (dynasty) and an everlasting covenant, the בְּלִיַּעַל is characterized as useless, rebellious, and headed for certain destruction. Despite the textual uncertainties of this poem, it is clear that the מוֹשֵׁל צַדִּיק will flourish and the בְּלִיַּעַל will perish.

In prose, בְּלִיַּעַל is most frequent within the pre-deuteronomistic sources of DtrH. The derivation of בְּלִיַּעַל has been treated in many places. The term itself appears to be a compound phrase consisting of the negative particle *balī* and a second element, presumably יָעַל, "to be of gain or worth." This use of *balī* is akin to the Ugaritic *baldinu*[247] for 'injustice', and *balmōtu*[248] for 'immortality'. The verb יָעַל occurs in 1 Sam 12:21 with the negative particle לֹא indicating things of no worth or no gain, or even things of no assistance. In Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian royal texts this semitic root is attested as *ajalu* II with the connotation of 'support' or 'help'. In a letter to Sargon II, an unidentified commander sends word to the king that the commander of the Urarṭians has gone to help his troops.[249] Note, in particular, the negative formulation: "Merodach-baladan will indeed not come to their help (*ana ajalīšunu la illak*)."[250] Noting that in 1 Sam 12:21 יָעַל is parallel to נָצַל, and in view of the Mesopotamian evidence, it is best to understand the בְּלִיַּעַל to be people of no help to the king, or adversaries. If the epithet 'בְּלִיַּעַל' provides a clue for the occasion of this poem, then one would look to the traditions which connect this epithet to David. In this regard, two accounts are especially pertinent—the revolts of Absalom and Sheba.

In the midst of Absalom's coup, Shimei, a man from the house of Saul, curses David with the epithet בְּלִיַּעַל and proclaims that the blood of the house of Saul is upon David's head. After Saul was proclaimed king, those who doubted his ability were termed בְּלִיַּעַל. Shimei's curse, then, links David, through this epithet, to those who opposed Saul. Scholars have debated whether or not this was a *coup d'état* predicated on sectional loyalties. Some have sided with Alt thinking that only the North revolted.[251] McCarter, however, has amassed convincing data to support the view that the insurrection was across territorial lines.[252]

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[247] *KTU*[2] 1.91 6.

[248] *KTU*[2] 1.17 VI 27.

[249] CT 53 454.

[250] ABL 22 r. 19. See also *CAD* 1/1 226b.

[251] A. Alt, "The Formation of the Israelite State in Palestine," *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, 293-301.

[252] Most notable is (1) the participation of the southern leaders Ahithophel and Amasa, and (2) that David flees Judah for protection. See McCarter, *II Samuel,* 358.

Regardless, sectional loyalties and grievances were expressed by Sheba, the Benjamenite-Bichrite referred to as בְּלִיַּעַל in 2 Sam 20:1. Sheba blows the trumpet and says:

> We have no portion in David,
> and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse;
> every man to his tents, O Israel.

The importance of Sheba's rebellion lies both in its sectionalism as well as with the cry of protest. The alliance of North with South was tenuous at best, and its preservation required all the political savvy and persuasiveness that David had.

It is significant that the מוֹשֵׁל צַדִּיק is given a בְּרִית. It is not Saul, not Solomon, not the other kings of the North or South, but David alone, that the extant traditions record as making a covenant. Note 2 Sam 5:3:

> So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant (בְּרִית) at Hebron before Yahweh, and they anointed David king over Israel.

We suggest that the language of the LWD echoes the language of the covenanting ceremony between David and leaders of Israel at Hebron. At the same time, the occasion for the LWD could plausibly be the revolt of Sheba, or some similar incident. Sheba, after all, is termed בְּלִיַּעַל in the tradition. Moreover, his was the only revolt clearly along sectional lines. At any rate, the LWD seems to be best placed in the historical setting of covenant renewal in the face of pretenders to the throne.

If this was the case, then the psalm's initial formulaic language, akin to the Balaam oracles, becomes intelligible. It would have been crucial to affirm, in no uncertain terms, that David held the status of a 'man of God'—a prophet who was endowed with the very spirit of God. One cannot underestimate the ideological leverage of precedent that Saul had set. It is reported in the Saulide traditions that he exhibited various prophetic activities. Considerable intrigue among the populace is indicated by the ancient מָשָׁל: "Is Saul, too, among the prophets?" (1 Sam 10:11; 19:24). If Saul's charisma was connected to prophetism in the minds of the populace, then it would have been essential for his successor to emulate similar intimacy with the deity. It is apropos to mention that among the kings, only Saul and David

are said to have had the רוּחַ יְהוָה. Like King Šulgi of the Third Dynasty of Ur, King David stands in the role of the prophet to whom his god speaks unmediated.

EVALUATION

We have been able to risk a hypothesis for the possible historical, ideological, and liturgical (covenant renewal) contexts for the LWD because the LWD provides a very significant starting point. The LWD names the 'royal name' of the protagonist king: דָּוִד בֶּן־יִשַׁי. As important as this 'tag' is to the historian, one can easily imagine its ideological and propagandistic value to King David himself. Consonant with the general practice throughout the ancient Near East, the royal poet, perhaps even David himself, included the king's personal name, the *nomen*, to make it absolutely clear before God and people that King David was 1) the מוֹשֵׁל צַדִּיק, 2) that the רוּחַ יְהוָה rested upon him, and that 3) the בְּרִית עוֹלָם was given to King David, and no other. By naming the royal name, the psalmist dispenses of any ambiguity as to whom this prophecy and blessing pertains. In fact, without naming the royal name, the lyrical poem could be misconstrued by its hearers and thus its ideological and propagandistic purposes would have been undercut.

PSALM 91

Not only were the RPss retooled to the 'office' of Israel's kingship, but oracles utilizing court-styled language were democratized for the wider populace. For example, a comparison of Ps 91 with a series of Egyptian oracular texts suggests that Ps 91 should be considered fully democratized for common use. This comparison and conclusion is important to the present study since Ps 91 is an oracular psalm that some have deemed to be a royal psalm.[253] In fact, John Eaton believes such a conclusion is unmistakable:

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[253] Croft, *Identity of the Individual*, 100-102; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 329; and A. Caquot, "Le Psaume XCI," *Sem* 8 (1958) 21-37.

> Elaborate oracular promises here bestow invulnerability, triumph, glory, and surpassing life. The individual on whom such promises are lavished could hardly be anyone but the king.[254]

Eaton's argumentation for a 'royal' attribution is based on the coalescence of motifs which he believes are most (and, perhaps, only) appropriate for a ruling monarch who was thought to be endowed with super-human status. However, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that just the opposite was the case. The court style language of Ps 91 was completely proper for public usage.

A comparison of Ps 91 with a series of twenty-one Egyptian oracular amuletic decrees written on papyrus (EOAD) demonstrates that the appropriation of royal-sounding oracles was practiced amongst the wider populace. Dating from 1000 to 725 BCE, these texts were produced commercially for patrons of the Theban temples. Their structure and verse is formulaic. In his treatment of Egyptian threat-formulae, Scott Morschauser describes the EOAD:

> A common feature of the decrees are divine promises to "save, preserve" (šd) the party from almost every conceivable type of harm arising during its lifetime. These include protection from diseases; animal and serpent bites; stings; natural catastrophes; accidents; magic; demonic influences; malign intervention by gods; evil thoughts; speech; and dreams."[255]

Most interesting is the fact that the EOAD were written down for the well-being of newborn children and that only seven of these papyri belonged to males, while fourteen had female owners. In the *editio princeps*, I.E.S. Edwards emphasizes that in all but one case, "they belonged to common people and to members of the nobility or the professional classes."[256]

Stemming from the same historical period, the EOAD, all much more loquacious in comparison to Ps 91, provide an analogous perspective from which to assess the applicability of Ps 91 to the masses.

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[254] Eaton, *Kingship*, 57.

[255] S. Morschauser, *Threat-Formulae in Ancient Egypt: A Study of the History, Structure, and Use of Threats and Curses in Ancient Egypt* (Baltimore: Halgo, 1991) 212.

[256] I.E.S. Edwards, *Oracular Amuletic Decrees of the Late New Kingdom* (Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum; 2 vols; London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1960) 1.xv.

THE PROTECTION OF THE PSALMIST

Psalm 91 contains an elaborate litany of dangers from which the psalmist will be protected:

Ps 91:3-13

כִּי הוּא יַצִּילְךָ מִפַּח	3.
יָקִים[257] מִדֶּבֶר הַוּוֹת:	
בְּאֶבְרָתוֹ יָסֶךְ לָךְ	4.
וְתַחַת־כְּנָפָיו תֶּחְסֶה	
צִנָּה וְסֹחֵרָה אֲמָתוֹ:[258]	
לֹא־תִירָא מִפַּחַד לָיְלָה	5.
מֵחֵץ יָעוּף יוֹמָם:	
מִדֶּבֶר אֹפֶל יַהֲלֹךְ	6.
מִקֶּטֶב יָשׁוּד צָהֳרָיִם:	

3. He alone will deliver you from the trap,
   He will raise you from the plague of destruction.
4. With his pinions he will screen you,
   and beneath his wings you will seek refuge.
   Shield and protection is his arm.
5. You will neither fear the dread of night,
   nor the arrow that flies by day,
6. nor the plague which in thick darkness stalks,
   nor destruction which lays waste at high noon.

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[257] The metrics and syllable count of the bicolon are at considerable discord with the rest of the psalm. One would expect a verb with מִדֶּבֶר הַוּוֹת which parallels יַצִּילְךָ. The emendation adopted here is that the MT's יָקוּשׁ in v. 3a was originally יָקִים in v. 3b. In the early orthography the phonemes *m* and *š* could easily be confused, the former being distinguished by the latter only by its slant and tail.

[258] The *Qĕrê* reads אֶמְתּוֹ 'his truth'. However, the progression from 'pinions' to 'wings' to 'truth' is, even considering poetic license, a little strange. Most likely the *Kĕthîb* represents an original אַמָּתוֹ "his forearm."

7. יִפֹּל מִצִּדְּךָ אֶלֶף
וּרְבָבָה מִימִינֶךָ
אֵלֶיךָ לֹא יִגָּשׁ׃
8. רַק בְּעֵינֶיךָ תַבִּיט
וְשִׁלֻּמַת רְשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה׃
9. כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה מַחְסִי
עֶלְיוֹן שַׂמְתָּ מְעוֹנֶךָ׃
10. לֹא־תְאֻנֶּה אֵלֶיךָ רָעָה
וְנֶגַע לֹא־יִקְרַב בְּאָהֳלֶךָ׃
11. כִּי מַלְאָכָיו יְצַוֶּה־לָּךְ
לִשְׁמָרְךָ בְּכָל־דְּרָכֶיךָ׃
12. עַל־כַּפַּיִם יִשָּׂאוּנְךָ
פֶּן־תִּגֹּף אַבָּן רַגְלֶךָ׃
13. עַל־שַׁחַל וָפֶתֶן תִּדְרֹךְ
תִּרְמֹס כְּפִיר וְתַנִּין׃

7. Though a thousand fall at your side,
and ten thousand on your right,
to you it will not draw near.
8. Surely, with your eyes you will look,
and the pacification of the hostile you will see.
9. "For you, Yahweh are my fortress."
'Elyōn you have determined to be your refuge.
10. Injury will not be allowed to meet you,
and wounds will not approach your tent.
11. For he will command his angels concerning you,
to guard you on all your paths.
12. On palms they will bear you,
lest your foot strike against stone.
13. Over the lion and the snake you will go,
you will trample the wild cat and the dragon.

The EOAD, like Ps 91:3-13, promise complete and utter protection. Below are listed oracular parallels between the protection-motifs of Ps 91 and those in the EOAD:

From the Hunter's Trap

We shall keep her safe from the gods who seize someone in <the> country and kill him in the town. We shall keep him [*sic*] safe from

the gods who seize someone in the town and kill him in <the> country.....We shall keep her safe from the gods <who seize someone> by capture.[259]

I shall keep him safe on the roads of the eastern desert-edge, the roads of the western desert-edge...[260]

From the Plague of Destruction

We shall keep her safe from leprosy (sbḫ)[261]

We shall keep her safe ... from herpes (mšpn.t)...[262]

We shall keep her safe from any condition of an incurable (sickness), from any experience of an incurable (sickness) and from every sickness which is not to be treated.[263]

From Dread of Night

We shall guard her at midday, we shall keep watch over her at night, and we shall take care of her by night, by day, and at all times.[264]

From Arrow of Day

I shall keep her safe from the chariot and the desert-edge.[265]

I shall keep her safe from (a male) confederate and I shall keep her safer from <a female> confederate.[266]

I shall keep him safe from any enemy and any army <in> every place and every town.[267]

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[259] Edwards, *Oracular Decrees*, 1.53.
[260] Ibid., 1.41.
[261] Ibid., 9, 16.
[262] Ibid., 10.
[263] Ibid., 57.
[264] Ibid., 12.
[265] Ibid., 16.
[266] Ibid., 16-17.
[267] Ibid., 41.

We shall keep him safe from a stroke of a sword and from a stroke of a javelin.[268]

From Destruction at High Noon

I shall keep her safe <from any> malevolent deity at midday and <any> malevolent deity at night or at any hour whatsoever.[269]

We shall guard her at midday and we shall watch over her at night; we shall take care of her at all times.[270]

We shall keep him safe from murder and from destruction.[271]

From Injury

We shall keep her safe from every (kind of) death, from every kind of illness...[272]

We shall keep her safe from every malady (dḫr.t)[273]

I shall guard him; I shall not relax at midday, at night, or at any time.[274]

We shall keep her safe from the collapse of a wall and from the fall of a thunderbolt.[275]

From Wounds

<I> shall keep her secure from [any] wrong. <I> shall keep <her> safe from any people of the [land] so as not to allow <them> to come against her.[276]

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[268] Ibid., 75.
[269] Ibid., 19.
[270] Ibid., 88, 93-94.
[271] Ibid., 49.
[272] Ibid., 9.
[273] Ibid., 11.
[274] Ibid., 48.
[275] Ibid., 54.
[276] Ibid., 16.

From Animals/Ophidians

> I shall keep [her] safe from serpents, from scorpions, and from every mouth which bites.[277]
>
> I shall keep him safe from a crocodile, from every serpent...[278]
>
> I shall keep him safe from the bite of a serpent, from the bite of scorpions, and from the bite of every snake, every reptile, every ophidian which bites; I shall not allow them to come anywhere near him throughout his whole lifetime.[279]

Just as Yahweh, in Ps 91, promises to keep the psalmist from every type of harm, occurring at any time of day, whether human, animal, insect, or spirit; so too, the patron gods of the EOAD avow equivalent safeguards. The EOAD even demonstrate a certain paranoia of the spiritual realm for they promise impunity from the demons of the sky, from the gods of the southern and northern regions, from the gods of the sky, from the stars, and even from Isis, Amun, and Mut![280]

THE DIVINE GRANT

Although much of Ps 91 speaks of Yahweh in the third-person, vv. 14-16 can be interpreted as nothing other than direct oracular speech—akin to the mode of speech employed in the EOAD.

Ps 91:14-16

14. כִּי בִי חָשַׁק וַאֲפַלְּטֵהוּ
אֲשַׂגְּבֵהוּ כִּי־יָדַע שְׁמִי׃
15. יִקְרָאֵנִי וְאֶעֱנֵהוּ
עִמּוֹ־אָנֹכִי בְצָרָה
אֲחַלְּצֵהוּ וַאֲכַבְּדֵהוּ׃
16. אֹרֶךְ יָמִים אַשְׂבִּיעֵהוּ
וְאַרְאֵהוּ בִּישׁוּעָתִי׃

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[277] Ibid., 19.
[278] Ibid., 41.
[279] Ibid., 32.

> 14. Because to me he cleaves, I will rescue him,
> I will exalt him because he knows my name.
> 15. He will call me and I will answer him,
> I will be with him in times of trouble,
> I will rescue him and honor him.
> 16. With length of days I will satiate him,
> and I will show him my salvation.

Eaton suggests that Yahweh's promise of אֹרֶךְ יָמִים "length of days" is equivalent to eternal life and thus, translates the line as "With years unnumbered I will satisfy him."[281] Eaton intends to imply that such hyperbolic divine-grants could not be given to just anybody. If the shoe is one of court style, then it fits the king.

But Eaton is mistaken. Kindred divine-grants are also given to common children in the EOAD:

> I shall grant him life, preservation, and health, a long lifetime and a great and good old age.[282]

> We shall grant her life, health, a long lifetime, and a great and good old age.[283]

The objects of the divine-grants quoted above, *ʿnḫ*, *wḏ*ꜣ, and *snb*, are constituents of a formulaic royal grant that can be traced to the great Pharaohs of Egypt. For example, the complete formula in the Ramesside period was *di.n n.k ʿnḫ ḏd wꜣs nb snb nb* "I have given to you life, stability, all luck, and all health."[284] Thus, even if the parallel Hebrew idiom could be traced to royal formulae, that would not preclude its reuse by common folk.

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[280] Ibid., 14-15.

[281] Eaton, *Kingship*, 161.

[282] Edwards, *Oracular*, 48.

[283] Ibid., 58.

[284] Morschauser, "Speeches of Ramesses II," 128 n. 41. See also Grimal, *Les termes*, 490-93.

THE PSALMIST'S LOCATION AND PATRONAGE

The final argument Eaton makes is that vv. 1-2 must refer to the king since the king dwells (or is enthroned) in the presence of God in the royal court and is sheltered by the cherubim wings.

Ps 91:1-2

1. יֹשֵׁב בְּסֵתֶר עֶלְיוֹן
   בְּצֵל שַׁדַּי יִתְלוֹנָן׃
2. אֹמַר לַיהוָה
   מַחְסִי וּמְצוּדָתִי
   אֱלֹהַי אֶבְטַח־בּוֹ׃

1. The one who dwells under the shelter of 'Elyōn,
   who in the shadow of Shaddai lodges;
2. Let him proclaim about Yahweh:
   "My fortress and my stronghold,
   My God, I will trust in Him."

Eaton also maintains that the first-person vow of trust is characteristic of royal discourse. Such argumentation fails on two accounts.

The idiom, יֹשֵׁב בְּסֵתֶר עֶלְיוֹן // בְּצֵל שַׁדַּי יִתְלוֹנָן may very well hold the undertones of the royal temple and monarchical prerogative, but there is no reason to assume that its use was limited to the king. In fact, in Ruth 2:12, Boaz asks for a divine blessing for the Moabitess from Yahweh, the God of Israel, אֲשֶׁר־בָּאת לַחֲסוֹת תַּחַת־כְּנָפָיו "...of whom you come seeking shelter beneath his wings." The *traditum* of Ps 91:1-2, in this instance, is applied to a non-Israelite far from the temple and yet still under Yahweh's domain.

Some scholars are inclined to interpret the use of divine epithets with the first-person singular suffix as an indication of royal style.[285] But this supposition finds little support. Certainly little can be adduced from the affirmation 'my God' which occurs throughout the MT upon the lips of many in Israel. 'My fortress' and 'my stronghold', though occurring in royal contexts, are appropriated by the prophet Jeremiah in his prayerful address to Yahweh (Jer 16:31). There is no reason to assume, even if these epithets hold undertones

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[285] Croft, *Identity of the Individual*, 79.

of royal style, that they could not have been appropriated for wider use.

EVALUATION

In this chapter we examined each of the oracular RPss in terms of its probable historical *traditum* and signs of subsequent adaptations. We also looked to Isa 9:6 as another example of a royal oracular-grant which has been truncated so as to remove the regnal name of its original beneficiary.

We have noted throughout this study that the removal of specific historical king names shifted the sphere of the *traditio* from the specific propagandistic aims of a particular royal house, to the general concern for the 'office' of the king. This further supports the re-definition of a 'royal psalm' as was suggested in chapter 2:

> The RPss are psalms whose concern is the institution of Israelite kingship. Their protagonist is an unspecified king; hence he is a typological representative of the 'office' of the institution.

At the same time, the court style of the RPss has been demonstrated to be consistent with the court style of the wider ancient Near East; although the most significant parallels can be drawn with Egyptian inscriptions and papyri.

The one royal oracular-grant preserved in the MT that has not been subsequently redacted so as to remove the specific royal referent is the LWD. Although the LWD shares similar lexemes, motifs, and ideology with the other oracular RPss, it stands alone in its focus upon one historical king, the originator of the dynasty.

Finally, the oracles of Ps 91 were examined in view of their possible democratization in comparison with known contemporaneous oracular amuletic decrees. Psalm 91 was shown to be appropriate for common worship and prayer, thus demonstrating the transfer of court style to greater humanity.

Summary

REVIEW OF FINDINGS

Throughout chapter 1 we reviewed the dominant scholarly perspectives on the royal psalms. The historical review of one hundred and fifty years of scholarship showed no consensus as to the number and function of the royal psalms. In large part, the confusion was shown to be *definitional*; that is, one's perspective on the royal psalms is largely determined by the assumptions from which one demarcates a royal psalm corpus. At the close of chapter 1, substantial questions regarding the individual 'royal psalm' as well as possible enumerations of royal psalm collections were pressed upon the investigation. Setting out to address the questions raised, we adopted the abbreviation RPss to denote the most commonly held enumeration of royal psalms, namely Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 101, 110, 132, and 144.

We deemed it necessary to begin to find answers for the questions of the previous chapter in light of a fresh assessment of the pertinent material remains of the ancient Near East. In chapter 2 we sought ancient Near Eastern corollaries to the RPss. Even though numerous comparisons had been made between the court style of the RPss and the court style of royal hymns and prayers from the ancient Near East, an important dissimilarity had gone practically unnoticed. That is, the RPss never mention the name of a historical king of Northern Israel or Judah. We developed the strong suspicion, there-

fore, that the RPss of the Hebrew Bible were at least one step removed in the *traditio* from a king-specific *traditum*.

Perhaps the RPss had been made anonymous so that they could be reused by succeeding kings of Israel. We surveyed known royal hymns and prayers, hoping to find examples of such a practice in the ancient Near East, but our investigation demonstrated just the opposite. There are few solid examples, if any, of the wholesale reuse or reappropriation of royal hymns and prayers in the ancient Near East. The one extant exception is Amenhotep III's reappropriation of Hatshepsut's birth and coronation texts, although these are neither royal hymns nor prayers. While the latter case opens up the possibility that a text like Ps 2 *might* have been reused among certain Israelite kings, its reuse by no means can be taken for granted.

We deemed it necessary, in light of our findings, to suspend the assumption, commonly held since Gunkel, that the RPss had their *Sitz im Leben* in the royal cult during the monarchies of Northern Israel and Judah. Accordingly, at the close of chapter 2 a reformulated definition of a 'royal psalm' was posited:

> The RPss are psalms whose concern is the institution of Israelite Kingship. Their protagonist is an unspecified king; hence he is a typological representative of the 'office' of the institution.

This definition takes into account the likely non-cultic preservation of the RPss as well as the anonymity of their royal protagonist.

Next, we extended the investigation to the question of the generative relationship between individual RPss. Attempting to detect stages of the Psalter's composition that involved particular RPss, we came to the conclusion that 'royal psalms' were not part of a previous sub-collection of royal hymns and prayers (i.e., the RPss) that were subsequently scattered throughout the Psalter. That is, prior to their inclusion in the Hebrew Psalter, distinct royal psalms bore no integral relationship to each other and were likely preserved by autonomous *traditio*.

Therefore, the logical way to proceed was to elucidate, where possible, the *traditio* of individual RPss. Admitting that such an exposition had to be based on the (often hypothetical) reconstruction of an ancillary *traditum*, we proceeded with caution. The results of our review of Pss 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, and 144 suggested that no

two psalms shared the same *traditio*-evolution. In the end, we were left with an overwhelming impression of the 'singularity' of each royal psalm.

In chapter 4 we reexamined each oracular royal psalm in light of the study's aggregate findings. Not only did we confirm previous assessments of the generic relationship between the court style of the RPss and court style diffused throughout the ancient Near East, we frequently found the most elucidating parallels to be with royal courts in the Egyptian sphere of influence. In several cases, we detected strategies of the *traditio* which aided the adaptation and reappropriation of a royal psalm for new contexts.

It became manifest throughout the investigation that, in each case, an oracular royal psalm, even prior to its recontextualization in the Psalter, necessarily presupposed a secondary rereading, although not in the royal cult. Absent regnal names in the body of the psalm, there was little reason to suppose that any oracular RPss was used in the cult to re-present the divine-grant. Because they were anonymous, their royal oracles served the new mission of espousing the 'perspective of God' upon the exercise of the royal office itself.

Whereas no two RPss made it into the Psalter by the same *traditio*, each of the RPss, and especially the oracular RPss, within their canonical context, serve the same theological end. Namely, that purpose is to outline the nature of the 'office' of king for ancient Israel, in terms both of its responsibilities and of its prerogatives. At stake was not only the human side of responsible kingship (Pss 2, 101), but perhaps more importantly, Yahweh's relationship to kingship itself (Pss 2, 21, 89, 110, 132). It is significant that some of the RPss lift up the king as the 'first citizen' who should be emulated (Pss 18, 20, 144).

Next, we extended the investigation beyond the Psalter to Isa 8:23-9:6 and 2 Sam 23:1b-7. The former provided an additional example of the tendency among the oracular RPss to drop the historical personage of the *traditum*. The latter provided another confirmation of our previous conclusions by way of counter example. 2 Sam 23:1b-7 (LWD) contains the only royal-grant in the lyrical literature of the OT where the original regnal name has been left intact. Ironically, the fact that the LWD "named the royal name" opened up more possibilities for the continuing liturgical reuse of LWD during King David's reign.

Finally, we compared the oracular Ps 91 to a series of Egyptian papyri written for newborn children engendered by the general population. Although some have claimed that the court style of Ps 91 is so 'royal' that the psalm must be considered among the RPss, our comparison with the EOAD demonstrated that the same heightened royal style observable in Ps 91 was thoroughly democratized in ancient Egypt.

The results of the investigation have implications for further research and interpretation of the RPss. No longer can one assume that the RPss necessarily reflect the rituals of the king. Their *Sitze im Leben* remain elusive. And yet, neither can one affirm the corollary that the RPss do not reflect royal rituals. Rather, in each case a particular psalm must be interpreted upon its own merits.

Hypothetical placements of the RPss within presumed annual celebrations of Israel must come to terms with the overwhelming practice among kings of the ancient Near East to refrain from reusing or reappropriating wholesale another monarch's hymns or prayers. It is not altogether clear whether such reuse and reappropriation would have reflected languid piety on the monarch's behalf, or whether such dittography was simply outside of the best interests of the king's scribes and artisans. What is clear, however, is that one can no longer assume that the RPss were used continuously in the royal court or in temple worship.

That is not to say the RPss do not accurately reflect the royal cult of the United Monarchy, as well as the cults of Northern Israel and Judah. The language of the RPss is stylized and formulaic. Thus, whereas the specific hymns and prayers represented by the RPss were most likely not reused as stock liturgy throughout the monarchical period, the royal thesaurus which may be inferred behind their composition undoubtedly produced many similar hymns and prayers.

There is little reason to think that the canonial processes which account for the inclusion of Ps 89, Ps 132, and 2 Sam 23:1b-7 in the Hebrew Bible have any historically interrelated connection. However, each of these texts espouses the בְּרִית 'covenant' which Yahweh made with David. Although it is possible that all three texts stem from the same general schools of *traditio*, the employment of the texts within the larger canon was complex and it cut across centuries. Given the fact that it would be impossible to outline a constant ideology of the

royal court of Northern Israel and Judah,[1] the similar theological stance taken in each of these texts is remarkable.

In other words, since the investigation has underscored the radical singularity of individual RPss in terms of composition, transmission, reappropriation, and canonization, the fact that the royal psalms share so many motifs in common is all the more theologically significant. For example, that David's בְּרִית 'covenant' is a central theme to at least three oracular royal-grant texts, which have made their way into the OT through distinct processes and traditions, argues strongly for the centrality and import of that concept in Israel's theological development. If the royal texts could be shown to stem from one source or circle of influence, then it might be justifiable to set their content over and against radical Yahwism.[2] But since each oracular royal-grant tradition followed distinct *traditio*, its inclusion in the Hebrew Bible attests to its ongoing integration into the theological traditions of Israel. There is no necessary disjuncture evident between the theology of the RPss and the theology of radical Yahwism.

Any interpretation of the RPss as a whole must take into consideration the full complexity of the canonization processes. It may simply have been an accident of history that Pss 2 and 110, which share similar divine-birth oracular language, have been preserved in the same Psalter. And yet the fact that two distinct texts, with separate *traditio* and *traditum*, have been canonized together, must have a bearing on the theological appropriation of the canonical tradition.

In what ways do the RPss inform Israel's theological-anthropology? What do they have to say regarding what it means to be a human being before God? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to ask a prior question.

When and why might the specific regnal names have been excised from the RPss? The extraction of regnal names from the

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[1] For example, in delineating the ideology of the royal court, would such an ideology include both cult centralization (Josiah) and child sacrifice (Ahaz)? Certainly, both practices were fundamental to ideologies of their respective royal courts.

[2] As noted in the introduction, the specific contours attendant to the phrase 'radical Yahwism' differ from scholar to scholar. See below pages 10ff., and especially pages 14-15.

traditum behind the RPss, or even a revisional composition which skillfully avoided lines denoting a specific historical personage in the *traditum*, indicates a shift from the use of the RPss in the cult(s)[3] to their suitability for prayer and study. James Kugel suggests two watersheds in Israel's history when this type of shift would have gained momentum.[4] The first was the unyielding perpetuity of prayer in the vicinity of cultic sites that had been overrun or dismantled prior to the exile. The second was during the exile itself.

Regarding the first period apropos for a major orientational permutation from the prevalent usage of psalms by the cult(s) to their new appointment as guides to prayer and study, one would be on good ground in associating those hymns and prayers that include the generic mention of the king or the messiah (Pss 28, 63, 84). The prayer of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10) recited at Shiloh, for example, may indicate the pre-history of this practice when prayer and sacrifice were combined.[5] Thus, already at an early period while the monarchy was still a viable reality, people may have begun, as part of their devotion, to append to their petition or praise a prayer for the king.

As 'First Citizen' of the land, the king encapsulated what it meant to be a faithful human being before Yahweh. Patrick D. Miller, Jr. calls attention to the relationship between the office of the king and the ideal Israelite in the Deuteronomic law code:

> In the Deuteronomic law of the king, the ruler is given only one responsibility, one assignment. It is to have 'a copy of his law' (*mišnēh hattôrâ hazzō't*, Deut. 17.18) with him always, to read in it all the days of his life, and to learn to fear the Lord by keeping all its words. In the Deuteronomic ideal of human rule, the *'îš*, or

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[3] See N.M. Sarna for the discussion of outlying cultic centers in the preexilic period, "The Psalm Superscriptions and the Guilds," *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History* (Mobile: University of Alabama, 1979) 289.

[4] J.L. Kugel, "Topics in the History of the Spirituality of the Psalms," *Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible Through the Middle Ages* (2 vols; ed. E. Cousins; World Spirituality 13; New York: Crossroad, 1986) 129-31.

[5] See Sarna, "The Psalm Superscriptions," 281-295 for an incisive discussion of the relation of psalmody to sacrifice and the evidence for two distinct traditions in Israel.

> 'one' whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on it continually, is the king. The ideal ruler is thus the model Israelite.[6]

Consequently, one can discern the movement toward the democratization of royal ideology even prior to the exilic period.

But even more, the evidence suggests that it was during the exile that the most comprehensive shift occurred. Not only was the Davidic monarchy null and void, at least for the foreseeable future, but the temple was destroyed and the people of Yahweh were scattered. This was the context in which these oracular words of assurance were encountered:

> Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant (בְּרִית עוֹלָם), my steadfast sure love for David (חַסְדֵי דָוִד הַנֶּאֱמָנִים). Behold, I made him a witness (עֵד) to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you shall call nations that you know not, and nations that knew you not shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. (Isa 55:3-5)

This passage stands in a wider ongoing *traditio* associated with Ps 89, 2 Sam 7, and the 2 Sam 23:1b-7. Note the shared language clusters: בְּרִית עוֹלָם (2 Sam 23:5); חַסְדֵי דָוִד הַנֶּאֱמָנִים (Ps 89:25, where עִמּוֹ occurs instead of דָּוִד). In Isa 55:3-5, however, the oracular divine-grants once associated with David and his heirs are reapplied to the whole people of Israel. The one time *representative* for all of Israel is now *represented* through all Israel. It is not so much that the people collectively become 'king',[7] but rather, that the oracular promises pledged of old are now reinterpreted as promises to the entire community. This reappropriation and reinterpretation[8] is a most significant development in Israel's theological-anthropology. It is also inexplicable from the standpoint of court-sponsored royal ideology. At the same time, the understanding that any Israelite could become a

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[6] Miller, "The Beginning of the Psalter," 91. Miller suggests that the association of Torah devotion with the (typological) king in Deuteronomy explicates the association of Ps 1 with Ps 2.

[7] *contra* Becker, *Messianic Expectation*, 68-78.

[8] That is, *Neuinterpretation*.

faithful office bearer was already implicit in the traditions which combined an unconditional royal-grant of 'office' and 'dynasty' with a conditional approval of the individual filling the office. In passing, we consider it unlikely that the extension of royal oracular language to the wider populace evidenced in Second Isaiah would have been possible had not the *traditum* been wedded in terms of an unconditional 'office' and a conditional confirmation of individual kings in the preexilic period.

We would speculate, then, that it was in the exilic period, perhaps even by the disciples of Isaiah who authored and compiled Second Isaiah, that the royal oracular grants were removed of their historical specificity so they could be reused in terms of the 'office' of kingship itself. Here we are including both the RPss as well as Isa 8:32-9:6. If we are correct, then the reworking of most of the RPss would have taken place prior to the period of the Restoration when David was revived as the founder-king, not only of the kingdom, but of all psalmody. It was most likely in this period that the Davidic Psalter was compiled and that Davidic ascription became a matter of expansive speculation.

Given the complex and elaborate transmission and tradition histories of the RPss, it is virtually impossible to dismiss them as merely ideological trappings of the royal court. Rather, they point to Israel's continued faith upon, wrestling with, and reinterpretation of promises made by Yahweh that Israel would be a secure royal nation and a light to the peoples, with or without a king.

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