

PSALM RESEARCH SINCE 1955: I. THE PSALMS AND THE CULT

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The present article surveys the literature devoted to one major aspect of Psalm study in the period 1955-1965;¹ it is hoped to publish further articles dealing with other aspects, extending the period surveyed in each successive article. The choice of 1955 as a starting date does not imply any conception of it as a turning-point in Psalm study, but is simply determined by the fact that Psalm research in the period 1930-1954 has already been reviewed in an admirable survey by J. J. Stamm.²

Although Mowinckel's introduction to the Psalms appeared before 1955,³ I have thought it right to refer to it here since it has become generally known and accessible only in its English translation.⁴ Weiser's commentary on the Psalms also does not, strictly speaking, fall within our period,⁵ but it has seemed reasonable to notice his views on certain matters, since together

¹ I have marked with * items to which I have not had physical or linguistic access, and for knowledge of which I have relied on the abstracts of *ZAW* and the *Intenationale Zeitschriftenschau für Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebiete*.

² J. J. Stamm, 'Ein Vierteljahrhundert Psalmenforschung', *Theologische Rundschau* 23 (1955) 1-68; a few works published in 1929 and 1955 were also taken into consideration by Stamm. This survey was a sequel to that of M. Haller, 'Ein Jahrzehnt Psalmenforschung', *Theologische Rundschau* 1 (1929) 377-402, which covered the years 1917-1927, with some notice of publications of 1928 and 1929. Other reviews of literature on the Psalms are O. R. Sellers, 'The Status and Prospects of Research Concerning the Psalms', in H. R. Willoughby, ed., *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago (1947) 129-143; A. R. Johnson, 'The Psalms', in H. H. Rowley, ed., *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1951) 162-209; J. Coppens, 'Les études récentes sur le Psautier', in R. De Langhe, ed., *Le Psautier. Ses origines. Ses problèmes littéraires. Son influence* (Orientalia et Biblica Lovaniensia, 4), Université de Louvain /Institut Orientaliste, Louvain (1962) 1-71.

³ S. Mowinckel, **Offersang og Sangoffer. Salmediktningen i Bibeln*, Aschehoug, Oslo 6 (1951).

⁴ *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 vols., translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas, Blackwell, Oxford (1962).

⁵ A. Weiser, *Die Psalmen* (Das Alte Testament Deutsch, 14/15), Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen (1950, ⁴1955, ⁵1959), a considerable enlargement of his earlier commentary *Die Psalmen ausgewählt, übersetzt und erklärt*, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen (1935, ²1939).

with the works of Mowinckel and Kraus his commentary is undoubtedly one of the most important recent contributions to the understanding of the Psalms, and it too has received an English translation only in 1962.⁶ The last few years have also seen the completed publication of a massive commentary on the Psalms by Kraus;⁷ his basic position, at least as it concerns the present question of the Psalms and the cult, was already known from his studies on the kingship of God in the Old Testament⁸ and on the festival of Tabernacles.⁹

The views of these three scholars, Mowinckel, Weiser, and Kraus, have tended to dominate the field of Psalm criticism in our period; it is not surprising therefore that discussion of the Psalms has largely revolved about the quite substantial differences between them, with the result that certain fundamental similarities of approach have been obscured, similarities that are most in evidence on the subjects of the role of the autumn festival in Israel's worship and of the cultic interpretation of the Psalms. Of Psalm study in general since 1955 it may fairly be said that the work of Gunkel¹⁰ and the early Mowinckel¹¹ has to a very large extent provided its framework and presuppositions.

There have been some signs, however, of a questioning of some of the usual categories in which problems about the Psalms have for a long time been considered: for example, have discussions of the 'cultic' origin of the Psalms operated with too narrow a definition of 'cult'?¹² And is the phrase 'a non-cultic psalm' perhaps meaningless?¹³ Must the festival cult be the Sitz im

⁶ *The Psalms: A Commentary*, translated by H. Haitwell, SCM, London (1962).

⁷ *Psalmen* (Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament, 15/16), 2 vols., Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, Neukirchen (1961).

⁸ *Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament. Untersuchungen zu den Liedern von Jahwes Thronbesteigung*, J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen (1951).

⁹ *Gottesdienst in Israel. Studien zur Geschichte des Laubhüttenfestes*, Kaiser, München (1954); ²*Gottesdienst in Israel. Grundriss einer Geschichte des alttestamentlichen Gottesdienst* (1962); ET *Worship in Israel*, translated by G. Buswell, Blackwell, Oxford (1966).

¹⁰ H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, II, 2), Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen (⁴1926); and H. Gunkel and J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen (1933).

¹¹ S. Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien* I—VI, Dybwad, Oslo (1922-1924).

¹² Cf. M. J. Buss, 'The Meaning of "Cult" and the Interpretation of the Old Testament', *Journal of Bible and Religion* 32 (1964) 317-325, who objects to any view of Israelite cult as a set of data which can be isolated, and calls for an approach to cult as a 'structure' pervading the whole of life.

¹³ Cf. S. Holm-Nielsen, 'The Importance of Late Jewish Psalmody for the Understanding of Old Testament Psalmic Tradition', *ST* 54 (1960) 1-53.

Leben of the Psalms?¹⁴ Should we in fact look for only one Sitz im Leben of each psalm?¹⁵ Such questions are at present being asked on a very small scale; but in so many areas of Psalm study (e.g. the role of the king in the cult) such an impasse seems to have been reached that further progress may in some cases be made only through the re-examination of presuppositions.

I. THE CULTIC ORIGIN OF THE PSALMS

It has become a commonplace of Psalm criticism that not only the Psalm Gattungen, as Gunkel maintained, but also the individual psalms themselves are of cultic origin. The large majority of scholars in our period have, following Mowinckel's *Psalmenstudien*, looked for a cultic situation to which each psalm may be assigned, but the question has remained open whether there may not be some psalms which were not composed for a cultic purpose. Stamm remarked in his survey that it would be 'a task for future research to determine more exactly the scope and peculiarity of both groups [*sc.* cultic and non-cultic psalms] and to distinguish them from one another',¹⁶ yet comparatively little fundamental research has been forthcoming on this topic.

Mowinckel himself indeed, although in 1924 he recognized only two or three psalms as non-cultic,¹⁷ now allows for the existence of a dozen non-cultic psalms, which he calls 'learned psalmography', namely Pss. 1, 34, 37, 49, 78, 105, 106, 111, 112, 127;¹⁸ and he has reconstructed the circles of the 'wise' among whom he believes such learned psalmography arose.¹⁹ Ps. 119, however, although it appears to share certain of the characteristics of learned psalmography (notably the alphabetic form), and although its Sitz im Leben is a scholarly community of the

¹⁴ Cf. Buss, *op. cit.* 319, 325; and A. Arens, *Die Psalmen im Gottesdienst des Alten Bundes. Eine Untersuchung zur Vorgeschichte des christlichen Psalmengesanges*, Paulinus-Verlag, Trier (1961) 111-140, who emphasizes the importance of the daily times of service, though more in connection with the use of the psalms than with their original purpose.

¹⁵ Cf. e.g. A. Gelin, *'La question des "relectures" bibliques à l'intérieur d'une tradition vivante', *Sacra Pagina* 1 (1959) 203-215; H. Gazelles, 'Une relecture du Psaume XXIX?', *A la rencontre de Dieu. Mémorial Albert Gelin*, Editions Xavier Mappus, Le Puy (1961) 119-128.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.* 45.

¹⁷ Ps. 1, probably Ps. 112, perhaps Ps. 127 (*Psalmenstudien* VI [1924] 8-36, esp. 36).

¹⁸ *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* II 104-125.

¹⁹ 'Psalms and Wisdom', *VT Supplements*, III (1955) 205-224; cf. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* II 105-111.

wise, is in intention not learned poetry, but a petition or lament in which traces of the traditional schema of that Gattung may be seen.²⁰ These admissions on Mowinckel's part of the existence of non-cultic psalms in no way imply a reversal of his fundamental position; they are exceptions that prove the rule, and it remains axiomatic for him that 'it is the non-cultic character of a psalm which has to be proved, the contrary being the more likely supposition'.²¹

Mowinckel's acceptance of the existence of non-cultic psalms has been challenged by Holm-Nielsen,²² while he admits that the later psalms (by which he means principally the alphabetic psalms) are not cultic in origin in the same sense as the pre-exilic psalms, which belonged to ceremonial activities in the Temple and were perhaps used as elements in dramatic performances he asks whether the term 'cult' should not be redefined in a broader sense to include the activities of the post-exilic synagogues, where instruction in the law and divine worship cannot be strictly separated. The word 'psalm' likewise is only meaningful if it is connected with divine service, and thus cult; thus the question should not be asked whether there are any non-cultic psalms in the Psalter, but rather be put more radically, 'Are there in the canonical collection any poems which cannot be denoted as psalms?'²³ The attempt of Holm-Nielsen to relate the wisdom psalms to the cult is approved by Murphy,²⁴ who regards the sharp distinction that is frequently drawn between wisdom circles and the cult as fallacious, but he is compelled finally to admit that the precise *Sitz im Leben* of the wisdom psalms (Pss. 1, 32, 34, 37, 49, 112, 128, according to his reckoning) escapes us.

Weiser similarly has little sympathy with the notion of 'cult-free' psalms, and sees no reason why psalms in which a purely personal note is sounded, even including acrostic psalms and psalms which contain no direct reference to the cult, 'should not

²⁰ *'Loven og de 8 termini i Si 119', *Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift* 61 (1960) 95-127, 129-159; cf. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* II 77f., 139.

²¹ *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* I 22.

²² S. Holm-Nielsen, 'The Importance of Late Jewish Psalmody for the Understanding of Old Testament Psalmody Tradition', *ST* 14 (1960) 1-53.

²³ *Op. cit.* 10; cf. D. A. Hubbard, 'The Wisdom Movement and Israel's Covenant Faith', *Tyndale Bulletin* 17 (1966) 3-33, esp. 13f, who thinks that Mowinckel's relegation of wisdom psalms to the non-cultic sphere is exaggerated.

²⁴ R. E. Murphy, 'A Consideration of the Classification "Wisdom Psalms"', *VT Supplements*, IX (1962) 156-167.

right from the beginning have been intended for recitation in the festival cult'.²⁵ Even psalms composed far from the Temple (*e.g.* Pss. 42, 43) or after the destruction of the Temple (*e.g.* Pss. 74, 79) are 'inwardly so closely related to the sanctuary and its cultic traditions that not many hymns [*i.e.* psalms] are left over in the Psalter of which it can be said that they are really "dissociated from the cult" and exclusively composed for private edification'.²⁶ Even the wisdom psalms exhibit cultic concepts, so that it may be presumed that wisdom literature and the cult of Yahweh have influenced each other.²⁷

In strong opposition to such attempts to see everything in the Psalter as composed for cultic purposes is the work of the Hungarian scholar Szörényi,²⁸ who declares himself to be strongly critical of the mainstream of Psalm research from Gunkel and Mowinckel onward, and believes it is possible to discern criteria by which cultic and non-cultic psalms may be separated. External criteria which may serve to determine whether a particular psalm was composed for a liturgical purpose are : historical proof from other books of the Old Testament that the psalm was actually used in worship; a change of speaker within a single psalm, when it is explicable only as a liturgical device; and the litany form, *i.e.* sentence followed by response. Among the inner criteria are: descriptions in a psalm of the Temple, a festival, a sacrifice, or other cultic act; but it is emphasized that it must not be a matter of a simple mention of a cultic happening, for the content of the psalm must witness to such an event as being really present. The following cannot serve as criteria, though they are often so used the superscriptions and musical terms, the evidence of the Mishnah and Talmud, and similarity with cultic poetry of the ancient Near East. On the basis of his criteria Szörényi finds fifty psalms for which a liturgical origin seems certain (Pss. 9, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 33, 40, 44, 46, 48, 57:8-12 (=108.2-6), 61, 65, 66, 67, 68, 75, 76, 81, 82, 85, 87, 89, 91, 93, 94, 95, 99, 100, 102:13-23, 106, 107, 108, 115, 116,

²⁵ *The Psalms* 80f.

²⁶ *Op. cit.* 81.

²⁷ *Op. cit.* 89.

²⁸ A. Szörényi, *Psalmen und Kult im Alten Testament. Zur Formgeschichte der Psalmen*, Sankt Stefan Gesellschaft, Budapest (1961). This book, finished in essentials in 1944 but delayed in publication until 1961, expands an earlier article, 'Quibus criteriis diagnosci possit, qui psalmi ad usum liturgicum compositi sunt', *Biblica* 23 (1942) 333-368.

118, 121, 126, 132, 134, 135, 136, 144, 146, 149, 150), and nine others which probably had a liturgical origin (Pss. 7, 21, 23, 47, 80, 92, 125, 147, 148). The bulk of the Psalter is thus the creation of private individuals.

Another approach to the origin of the Psalms which is opposed to the usual cult-oriented view is taken by the followers of A. Robert, with their hypothesis of the 'anthological' character of many psalms." Robert 'attempted to bring back to life the learned circles, the schools of sages, which would have conceived the composition of the psalms as a specifically literary task. The learned poetry of the psalmists would have been based on a constant use of biblical materials, which is the touchstone of the "anthological" or "midrashic" style'.³⁰ Although the positing of such wisdom circles as the originators of the Psalms does not preclude the possibility that psalms were adapted for and used in the cult, it greatly diminishes the importance of links between the Psalms and the cult. Deissler, a pupil of Robert, in a monograph on Ps. 119 subtitled 'A contribution to the investigation of the anthological type of style in the Old Testament',³¹ outlines the principles of this approach, and attempts to show in detail the dependence of this psalm upon other parts of the Old Testament, especially the prophets and wisdom literature. Special studies have also been devoted by Deissler to Ps. 33,³² which he finds to have originated in post-exilic wisdom circles, and to Ps. 48,³³ whose author, like that of Ps. 33, had a special predilection for the book of Deutero-Isaiah. In his treatment of the 'cosmic hymns', Pss. 8, 19, 29,³⁴ he attempts to demonstrate the origin of Pss. 8 and 19 in the post-exilic milieu of 'theological wisdom', and the authorship of Ps. 29 by a theologian inspired by the faith of the prophets.

²⁹ Representative of Robert's work is 'Le Psaume CXIX et les Sapiens', *Revue Biblique* 48 (1939) 5-20.

³⁰ E. Lipiński, in *Le Psautier* (cf n.2 above) 142; cf. also J. Coppens, *ibid.* 31-43, on the work of A. Robert.

³¹ A. Deissler, *Psalm 119 (118) und seine Theologie. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der anthologischen Stilgattung im Alten Testament*, Karl Zink, München (1955).

³² 'Der anthologische Charakter des Psalmes 33 (32)', in *Mélanges Bibliques redigés en l'honneur de André Robert*, Bloud et Gay, Paris (1956) 225-233.

³³ *'Der anthologische Charakter des Ps. XLVIII (XLVII)', *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovanensium* 12-13 (1959) 495-503.

³⁴ 'Zur Datierung und Situierung der "kosmischen Hymnen"', in *Lex Tua Veritas. Festschrift für Hubert Junker*, ed. H. Gross, F. Mussner, Paulinus-Verlag, Trier (1961) 47-58. C. Schedl, 'Psalm 8 in ugaritischer Sicht', *Forschungen und Fortschritte* 38 (1964) 183-185, also sees the Sitz im Leben of Ps. 8 in wisdom and not in the cult.

Another pupil of Robert, Bonnard,³⁵ believes that a large number of psalms were composed under the spiritual influence of Jeremiah. On twenty-one psalms Jeremiah had a 'real spritual influence' (Pss. 6, 7, 16, 17, 22, 26, 31, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41, 51, 55, 69, 71, 73, 86, 109, 119, 139), while on twelve others there is 'a more simple literary influence' (Pss. 1, 44, 74, 75, 76, 79, 81, 83, 99, 106, 135) ; and in a further thirty-one psalms a lesser dependence on Jeremiah may be traced. The authors of these psalms must be a post-exilic group of Jeremiah's disciples. In spite of Bonnard's conclusions from a study of the history of motifs and ideas contained in these psalms that there is a real dependence on Jeremiah and not simply dependence of psalms and Jeremiah alike on common cultic traditions, Coppens has argued, on the basis of a study of two psalms adduced by Bonnard, Pss. 6 and 41, that none of the points of contact proves dependence, and may be sufficiently explained by the common use by the psalmists and Jeremiah of the features of the individual lament.³⁶

It becomes apparent that a closer definition of 'a cultic origin of the Psalms' will be indispensable for further progress in the question of the relation of the Psalms to the cult. Such questions as the following must be answered: What is meant by 'cult'? Are private piety, wisdom circles, and the cult mutually exclusive sources for the Psalms? Is the common assumption valid, that to demonstrate a cultic origin for the Psalms necessitates an understanding of the Psalms as cultic formulae,³⁷ from which the nature and details of the cult may be reconstructed?³⁸ Do

³⁵ P. Bonnard, *Le Psautier selon Jérémie*, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris (1 960).

³⁶ J. Coppens, 'Les Psaumes 6 et 41 dépendent-ils du Livre de Jérémie?', *Hebrew Union College Annual* 32 (1961) 217-226. Cf. also M. Dahood's challenge to Bonnard's post-exilic date for Ps. 16 on linguistic grounds (*Biblica* 43 [1962] 535f.).

³⁷ Cf. N. H. Ridderbos, **De Psalmen, opnieuw uit de grondtekst vertaald en verklaard* I (Pss. 1-41), J. H. Kok, Kampen (1962), who grants that most of the psalms were composed for the cult or are related to it in some way, but are not themselves 'cultic formulae' (cf. *ZAW* 74 [1962] 326f.).

³⁸ The distinction between 'of cultic origin' and 'cultic formula' may be illustrated thus: The hymn 'Christ the Lord is risen today' was, presumably, composed for the Christian cult, but no cultic happening can be inferred from its use in worship; or, 'Forth in thy name, O Lord, we go' can refer to a real cultic act (going out from church), but it need not accompany that act, and so is no 'cultic formula'. The implicit assumption that the nature of the cult can be inferred from the Psalms once they are recognized to have a cultic origin is seen, for example, in A. R. Johnson's article, 'The Psalms', in *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, where he passes directly from the sentence '[Mowinckel] would explain the psalms as being wholly, or almost wholly, cultic in both origin and intention' to a paragraph outlining Mowinckel's reconstruction of the New Year Festival (p. 90).

the Psalms only allude to cultic events, or are they themselves liturgies?³⁹

II. THE CULT ATTESTED IN THE PSALMS

(a) *An Enthronement Festival?*

At the heart of the problem of the relation of the Psalms to the cult lies the question: To what kind of cult and to what cultic activities in particular are the Psalms to be related?

Mowinckel's hypothesis that a large number of psalms are to be connected with an enthronement festival of Yahweh celebrated at the New Year and attested principally in the 'Enthronement Psalms'⁴⁰ has won wide acceptance. He has recently reiterated his position, issuing rejoinders to a number of critics;⁴¹ in particular, he points out that his hypothesis of the enthronement festival was not an attempt to establish the existence of a new Israelite festival, but merely to give content to the well-known autumn festival. Nevertheless, there have been a number of notable attempts in recent years to undermine Mowinckel's whole position.

Although Mowinckel includes the name of Weiser in a list of scholars who have supported the enthronement festival hypothesis,⁴² it is much more evident that Weiser, by his own theory of a covenant festival (even though it too is the autumn festival) as the key to the interpretation of the Psalms, has set himself in opposition to Mowinckel. Weiser makes only the slightest con-

³⁹ Confusion over this question may be seen in A. Weiser, *The Psalms*, in a section headed 'The Place of the Psalms in the Cult of the Covenant Festival (Fragments of Liturgy)' (pp. 35-52). A few psalms, indeed, are claimed by Weiser to be liturgies for the festival (Pss. 50, 81, 87), but after a brief discussion of these the term 'liturgy' drops out of use, and hundreds of references to mere allusions to cultic events are cited. Thus, for example, Weiser writes, 'The ritual of the Covenant Festival probably also included a liturgy of blessing and cursing after the manner of Deut. 27f. (cf. Pss. 24.5; 37.22; 118.26)' (p. 49). These are references to (liturgical) blessings, but they are not themselves blessings, and so give us no information on the relation of the psalms in which they occur to the cult. Yet Weiser claims, on the strength of such references, it appears, that 'individual parts of the cultic liturgy in considerable numbers' may be found in the Psalter (p. 35). A similar criticism of Weiser's method has been made by A. Szörényi, *op. cit.* 218f. Cf. also Mowinckel's reproach of G. W. Ahlström for describing Ps. 89 as a 'liturgy' when the psalm as a whole is put in the mouth of a single person (*JSS* 5 [1960] 294).

⁴⁰ Cf. *Psalmenstudien* II (1922).

⁴¹ *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* I, ch. 5 'Psalms at the Enthronement Festival of Yahweh', 106-192; and *ibid.* II 228-232.

⁴² Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* II 229, in reference to A. Weiser, 'Zur Frage nach den Beziehungen der Psalmen zum Kult: Die Darstellung der Theophanie in den Psalmen und im Festkult', in *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet*, ed. W. Baumgartner *et al.*, J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen (1950) 513-537.

cessions to the enthronement festival theory; he is prepared to allow that the enthronement of Yahweh formed a portion of the liturgy of the covenant festival: 'it was, so to speak, a single scene within the whole drama of the cult'; but he explicitly rejects Mowinckel's thesis of 'a separate Enthronement Festival', as he calls it.⁴³

Kraus has joined issue with Mowinckel over the interpretation of *Yahweh mālāk*,⁴⁴ which is fundamental to Mowinckel's position. This phrase is, in Kraus's view, not to be understood as an 'enthronement shout', for that would be, on the analogy of 2 Sam. 15:10 *etc.*, *mālāk Yahweh*; the word order *Yahweh mālāk*, with the subject before the verb, indicates that a situation, not an act, is being described, and so *Yahweh mālāk* in Pss. 93, 96, 97, 99 can only be translated 'Yahweh is king'. It may further be objected to the idea of a cultic enthronement of Yahweh: (i) It is inconceivable how an enthronement of Yahweh could have been portrayed in Israel, since there was no image of Yahweh which could be lifted up on to a throne. (ii) The concept of an enthronement of the deity belongs theologically to a myth of an annual death and resurrection of the god; and such a myth is not to be found in the Old Testament. (iii) An 'enthronement' of Yahweh would imply a preceding loss of kingship; the psalms of Yahweh's kingship, however, stress the unalterable kingship of Yahweh, not least the very psalm (Ps. 93) which has often been pressed into service on behalf of the 'nature-myth' of the renewal of creation.

References to the ascent of the Ark or its entry into the Temple do not imply an enthronement of Yahweh, for Yahweh does not ascend the Ark, but remains seated thereon. There was indeed a festival of the entry of the Ark into the Temple, on the first day of the Festival of Tabernacles, but its character was that of a 'royal Zion festival' celebrating the election of the house of David and Jerusalem. Ps. 47 is the only psalm which shows clearly an act of Yahweh's enthronement, and here Kraus is inclined to accept the explanation of Eissfeldt, that the author of the psalm 'means that Yahweh is king, but he describes how he *becomes* king, since he can best portray the meaning of the present state of affairs by the splendour of an act'.⁴⁵ Alternatively, it is possible that

⁴³ *The Psalms* 62.

⁴⁴ *Psalmen* I 201-205.

⁴⁵ O. Eissfeldt, 'Jahwe als König', *ZAW* 46 (1928) 81-105, esp. 102.

Ps. 47 refers to the cultic situation in Jerusalem as it has been altered by the exile: the era in which the Davidic dynasty stood at the centre of the people of God has come to an end, and Yahweh alone has now become king of Israel (*cf.* Is. 52:7, 'thy God reigneth'). In no case can one make the whole weight of an 'enthronement festival of Yahweh' with all its cultic and theological consequences depend upon this one psalm.⁴⁶

Mowinckel has offered some replies to Kraus's criticisms,⁴⁷ which, it must be said, seem at times to be beside the point, especially when he fails to recognize that Mowinckel's view of the 'enthronement' of Yahweh does not imply any, previous 'dethronement'.⁴⁸ In turning to Kraus's own hypothesis, Mowinckel claims that the 'royal Zion festival' is an invention, the result of singling out one aspect of the autumn festival and of interpreting an arbitrary number of texts according to this construction. The festival of tabernacles and new year was indeed a 'Zion festival' and a festival of the royal house, but it was 'first of all something much more'.⁴⁹

Kraus's interpretation of the so-called 'enthronement cry' *Yahweh mālāk* is largely dependent on the study of Michel,⁵⁰ who concludes from an examination of the enthronement cry in Babylonia and Egypt that the enthronement cry proper was couched in the second person: 'Thou art king'; the third person form, 'X is king', is rather a cry of acclamation and praise addressed to one who has already become king. The verb *mālāk* usually means 'to act, rule, as king', and the psalms of Yahweh's kingship accordingly show how He rules as king, not how He has become king. Since a direct second-person enthronement cry is not attested in the Old Testament, and since also it is impossible to conceive how Yahweh could have ascended a throne, Michel pronounces the theory of an enthronement festival of Yahweh very doubtful, if not impossible. De Vaux.⁵¹

⁴⁶ It may be noted that in allowing Pss. 93 and 99 to be pre-exilic and in translating *Yahweh mālāk* 'Yahweh is king' Kraus has altered his view expressed in *Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament* (1951), in which he maintained that all the psalms of Yahweh's kingship were dependent on Deutero-Isaiah and so post-exilic.

⁴⁷ *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* II 230f., 237ff.

⁴⁸ *Cf.* Mowinckel, *op. cit.* I 113ff. ⁴⁹ *Op. cit.* II 239.

⁵⁰ D. Michel, 'Studien zu den sogennanten Thronbesteigungspsalmen', *VT* 6 (1956). 40-68.

⁵¹ R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel. Its Life and Institutions*, translated by J. McHugh, Darton, Longman and Todd, London (1961) 504ff. (= *Les Institutions de l' Ancien Testament*, 2 vols., Les Editions du Cerf, Paris [1958, 1960]).

also finds *Yahweh mālāk* to be an acclamation, not an enthronement cry, for who could have enthroned Yahweh? The 'enthronement psalms' describe Yahweh's kingship, not his accession to kingship.

Further support for the understanding of *Yahweh mālāk* as a 'formula of acclamation' is given by Lipiński,⁵² who adduces Akkadian, Egyptian, and Ugaritic parallels; but he translates it as 'Yahweh has become king'. The exact nuance of the phrase is: 'Yahweh and no other has become king,' as may be seen from the parallel in 1 Ki. 1:11 (Adonijah, and not Solomon as promised, has become king).⁵³ While Lipiński would prefer his own designation of the kingship of Yahweh psalms as 'kerygmatic' or 'proclamation' psalms, he gives his assent to the fixing of the *Sitz im Leben* both of these psalms and of the 'cry of acclamation' in an enthronement liturgy, very probably the liturgy of Tabernacles.⁵⁴

Yet even if one understands *Yahweh mālāk* as an acclamation merely and translates it 'Yahweh is king', it does not follow that no enthronement of Yahweh can have taken place. This is shown by Kapelrud,⁵⁵ who argues further that a celebration of Yahweh's enthronement by no means implies that at some time he has temporarily ceased to be king; but rather, 'Yahweh has already reigned in the past year, without the occurrence of great events. But now the new year begins, the ceremonies and rites of the new year are performed and Yahweh (who has never left the throne) is newly enthroned, in the firm hope that *now* is coming the year of fortune and grace'.⁵⁶ While the stress in

⁵² E. Lipiński, 'Yahweh mālāk', *Biblica* 44 (1963) 405-460.

⁵³ So also L. Koehler, *VT* 3 (1953) 188f., who translates: 'It is Yahweh who has become king'.

⁵⁴ Cf. his remarks in *Le Psautier* (1962) 271ff. On the whole subject of *Yahweh mālāk* and the kingship of Yahweh see now also Lipiński's lengthy work, which brings together his previously published articles and adds a detailed exegesis of Pss. 93, 97 and 99: *La royauté de Yahvé dans la poésie et le culte de l'ancien Israël* (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Akademie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en schone Kunsten van België. Masse der Letteren. Jaargang XXVII, Nr. 55), Paleis der Academiën, Brussels (1965). This work came to my attention too late to be used in the present study, but one remark which is relevant at this point may be quoted: 'Detailed exegesis of the three psalms 93, 97, and 99, which begin with the Proclamation *Yahweh mālāk*, shows that this formula cannot be taken as the starting-point for the total interpretation of these psalms. They have re-used a pre-existing stereotyped formula' (p. 458).

⁵⁵ A. S. Kapelrud, 'Nochmals Jahwä mālāk', *VT* 13 (1963) 229ff.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 231.

mālāk is on the 'living activity', the verb has an ingressive as well as a durative meaning.⁵⁷

Many opponents of Mowinckel's enthronement festival hypothesis⁵⁸ have been content to offer only negative criticism. It is of interest therefore that there have been several attempts to provide positive alternatives to Mowinckel's view. The 'covenant festival' theory of Weiser,⁵⁹ according to which the essential character of the autumn festival was that of a renewal of the Sinai covenant, and the 'royal Zion festival' of Kraus, who lays his emphasis on the themes of God's election of Zion as a dwelling-place and of the Davidic dynasty as his kings, are too well known to require treatment in this paper,⁶⁰ but attention may be drawn to one or two different approaches to the same problems.

The approach of MacRae lies in an analysis of the character

⁵⁷ Cf. Mowinckel, *op. cit.* II 222ff.; and J. Hempel, 'Königtum Gottes im AT' *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*³ III, Tübingen (1959) col. 1708: 'What Yahweh is, the creator and lord of Israel, the king of the gods and judge of the world, he *becomes* when he is acclaimed as such on his festival day.'

⁵⁸ Within our period we may note Weiser, Kraus, Michel, de Vaux, as mentioned above; MacRae, Rendtorff, Gross, as mentioned below; and also W. S. McCullough; *IB*, IV (1955) 7; *id.*, 'The "Enthronement of Yahweh" Psalms', in *A Stubborn Faith*, ed. E. C. Hobbs, Southern Methodist University Press, Dallas (1956) 53-61; J. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen vertaald en verklaard* I, J. H. Kok, Kampen (1955) 388f.; A. Szörényi, *Psalmen und Kult* (1961) 156-212. The very existence of a new year festival is denied by J. Ridderbos, '*Vierde oud-Israël een herfst-nieuwjaarsfeest?', *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift* 57 (1957) 79-82; so also E. Auerbach, 'Die Feste im alten Israel', *VT* 8 (1958) 1-18, and 'Neujahrs- und Versöhnungsfest in den biblischen Quellen', *ibid.* 337-343. A moderating position on the new year festival is taken by H. Cazelles, 'Le Nouvel An en Israël', *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément*, ed. L. Pirot, A. Robert, H. Cazelles, VI, Letouzey et Ané, Paris (1960) cols. 620-645, who finds, in spite of the lack of official recognition for the festival the Old Testament, pointers towards its existence during the monarchy; it would have been 'an autumn royal festival, celebrating God as creator and the king as his vizier', but this does not mean that there was an enthronement of Yahweh according to the Babylonian model.

⁵⁹ For criticism of Weiser's theory, cf. E. Kutsch, **Das Herbstfest in Israel*, Mainz Dissertation (1955); *id.*, *Th. L.* 81 (1956) cols. 493-495, who claims that the festival of Tabernacles was not a 'covenant-renewal festival' either before the exile, when the renewal of the covenant occurred only every seven years, or after the exile, when the theme of covenant was associated with the festival of Weeks, not Tabernacles. Szörényi also rejects the hypothesis of a 'covenant festival', and finds Weiser's theory to suffer from the same lack of evidence as Mowinckel's (*op. cit.* 212-222). H. Ringgren believes that Weiser's theory gives only a partial account of the nature of the new year festival, since the themes of that festival were a combination of a Canaanite complex of ideas (kingship of God, creation), which belonged to Jerusalem, and an Israelite covenant complex (covenant, battle with the nations judgment), which belonged originally to Shechem ('Enthronement Festival or Covenant Renewal?', *Biblical Research* 7 [1962] 45-48).

⁶⁰ A summary may be found in Lipiński, 'Les Psaumes de la royauté de Yahwé dans l'exégèse moderne', in *Le Psautier* 262-268, 270f.

of the autumn festival,⁶¹ which he finds to have been in Israel a fusion of a nomadic, pilgrim festival and an agricultural, harvest festival. Following the settlement it remained a mainly agricultural festival. The psalms of Yahweh's kingship cannot be shown to have been connected with it, and the psalms most likely to have had associations with this festival are Pss. 29, 42, 43, 76, 81, 118, 132. Rendtorff⁶² also finds no necessary connection between the psalms of Yahweh's kingship and an enthronement festival whose existence is in any case not clearly established. By comparison of these psalms with Ex. 15 Rendtorff concludes that they are variations on various themes connected with Yahweh's kingship, and do not form the accompaniment to any definite ritual action. They could therefore have provided a framework into which any favourite narrative of Yahweh's deeds, whether in Israel's history or in the creation, could have been fitted, and thus could have been employed at other festivals besides Tabernacles. Gross⁶³ goes further than Rendtorff in assigning these psalms to one particular festival other than Tabernacles, namely Passover. The origin of the phrase *Yahweh mālāk*, according to Gross, is the expression *Yahweh yimlōk* at the end of the 'Passover cantata' or festival hymn for Passover, Ex. 15:1-18. Thus the question whether there was an enthronement festival of Yahweh may be answered in the affirmative, not in the sense usually intended (that there was a ritual of Yahweh's enthronement), but 'insofar as the fundamental sentence for Old Testament faith, that Yahweh is king, was a culturally celebrated part of the Israelite Passover festival'.

It has at least become clear in recent years that a cavalier rejection of Mowinckel's theory is not sufficient, especially in the light of the modifications introduced by Mowinckel himself and others to the meaning of 'an enthronement festival'. There are, indeed, certain a priori objections to postulating a full-scale 'patternist new year festival in Israel, but none at all, it seems to me, to a festival of Yahweh's enthronement, if all that is

⁶¹ G. W. MacRae, 'The Meaning and Evolution of the Feast of Tabernacles', *CBQ* 22 (1960) 251-276.

⁶² K. G. Rendtorff, *'Sejrshymnen i Exodus 15 og dens forhold til tronbestigels-salmerne', *Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift* 22 (1959) 65-81, 156-171.

⁶³ H. Gross, *'Lässt sich in den Psalmen ein "Thronbesteigungsfest Gottes" nachweisen?', *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 65 (1956) 24-40.

meant by that is a festival (the well-attested autumn festival) at which the accession of Yahweh to kingship at some point in the past is re-actualized in the cult, perhaps with ritual accompaniment. The psalms of Yahweh's kingship and the phrase *Yahweh mālāk* do not demand such a setting, but are plainly susceptible of it if on other grounds an enthronement festival can be shown to be likely.⁶⁴ What remains to be proved is, firstly, whether the references to Yahweh's kingship point conclusively to an association with one festival (new year/Tabernacles) rather than to other festivals or indeed to no festivals at all, but the daily or weekly cult;⁶⁵ and secondly whether any interpretation consonant with Old Testament theology can be given to the phrase 'the accession of Yahweh to the kingship'.

In what sense could Yahweh be said to have become or to become king? According to Mowinckel, Yahweh was believed to have first gained his kingship by victory over the powers of chaos at the creation; this kingship, however, is renewed by successive acts of kingly power on behalf of Israel; thus his kingship means his activity as 'conqueror [of chaos], creator, king of the whole earth, reformer of the people and its fortunes, as the king of Israel who repeats the acts of deliverance from Egypt and the Reed Lake, and who, by his mere coming [at the enthronement festival], has set the world aright again and crushed every onslaught that the enemies might make on his city and people'.⁶⁶ Weiser also regards the kingship of Yahweh as 'based on the idea of creation',⁶⁷ but he also links with this a series of historical expressions of Yahweh's kingship, especially

⁶⁴ Further literature on the 'enthronement psalms': W. G. Williams, *'Liturgical Aspects in Enthronement Psalms', *Journal of Bible and Religion* 25 (1957) 118-122; J. Licht, *'The Collection of Psalms in praise of the reign of God' [Hebrew], *Pirsūmê hahehrâ l' heqer hammiqrā b'yiśrā'el* I (1955); M. Didier, *'Une lecture des psaumes règne de Yahvé', *Revue Diocésaine de Namur* 11 (1957) 120-130.

⁶⁵ Cf. the objection of Buss to the widespread 'monolithic conception [of Israelite-cult] focused on festivals' (*op. cit.* 325); and the view of Arens that the singing of psalms was from an early time connected as much with the daily times of sacrifice at morning and evening as with the festivals (*op. cit.* 111-152, esp. 134-138). The central significance given to the festival cult is a major point of agreement among Mowinckel, Weiser, Kraus and almost all writers on the Psalms (even including Szörényi, *op. cit.* 407ff.); but it is by no means self-evident that it is the festival to which the Psalms are to be related, and a critical examination of this assumption is required.

⁶⁶ Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* I 113f.

⁶⁷ Weiser, *op. cit.* 619.

the proclamation of his will, and his judgment. Gray⁶⁸ finds the prototype of Yahweh's accession to kingship in Baal's assumption of kingship following his victory over the unruly waters; this, according to Gray, is a victory at creation. In the Israelite view of the kingship of Yahweh there was a combination of the theme of kingship through creation with specifically Israelite concepts of the Heilsgeschichte, which originally had nothing to do with the kingship of Yahweh.⁶⁹ Yet it is more than doubtful, as has been recently pointed out,⁷⁰ whether the battle and victory of Baal over sea and rivers has any connection with creation.⁷¹

Another approach to the problem of Yahweh's becoming king when he is already king is suggested by Schmidt's thesis of the indebtedness of the Israelite view of Yahweh's kingship to Canaanite ideas both of El and Baal. "El's kingship is static, Baal's dynamic; Yahweh's kingship is a blend of the two, and thus contains two aspects: it is a timeless and unalterable kingship, but also one that has to be won and defended against loss.

For most scholars, the kingship of Yahweh is primarily connected with the events of *primaeval* time, even though it is re-actualized in history. Caquot,⁷³ however, has suggested a concrete historical setting for the Israelite concept of the kingship of Yahweh: the removal of the Ark to Zion, an event which climaxes and epitomizes Yahweh's conquest of Canaan. In the ascent the Ark to Zion in the time of David, Yahweh became king of Zion and so of Canaan. Two factors contributed toward the understanding of this event as an 'enthronement' of Yahweh: the general Semitic concept of the god as king, and the specific-

⁶⁸ J. Gray, 'The Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God', *VT* 6 (1956) 268-285.

⁶⁹ Gray, 'The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms', *VT* 11 (1961) 1-29.

⁷⁰ Cf. W. Schmidt, *Königtum Gottes in Ugarit and Israel* (BZAW, 80), Töpelmann, Berlin (1961) 41; N. C. Habel, *Yahweh versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Cultures*, Bookman Associates, New York (1964) 51-71. The idea of creation is found at Ugarit, however, by L. R. Fisher, 'Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament', *VT* 15 (1965) 313-324.

⁷¹ Theme of conflict at creation in fact appears to be largely a modern invention on the basis of its occurrence in the Babylonian Epic of Creation, which in this respect at least seems to be an exception rather than the rule in the Ancient Near East (cf. W. G. Lambert, 'The Babylonian Background of Genesis', *JTS* 16 [1965] 287-300 especially 291).

⁷² Schmidt, *op. cit.*

⁷³ A. Caquot, 'Le psaume 47 et la royauté de Yahwè', *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 39 (1959) 311-337.

ally Jebusite traditions of El Elyon as king of the gods.⁷⁴ Schmidt also relates the origin of the name 'king' for Yahweh to the time of the conquest of Jerusalem, but unlike Caquot sees it entirely as a borrowing from the traditional language of the cult of El Elyon, the god of the city.^{74a} The exodus has been suggested as an alternative point of origin for the idea of Yahweh's kingship.⁷⁵ Certain occasions in history on which Yahweh could have been enthroned or become king are therefore conceivable, and it is by no means unlikely that such occasions would have been commemorated in worship. The course of recent research has shown that in spite of some serious weaknesses in Mowinckel's theory summary rejections of it have not penetrated to the heart of the matter, and the time is ripe for thoroughgoing re-examination of the fundamental presuppositions, especially as concerns the nature of the Israelite cult.

(b) *The Role of the King*

The relation of the king to the cult remains a vexed question; two foci of attention in recent research may be discerned, one the problem whether the Israelite king exercised cultic functions at all, the other whether the Scandinavian 'king-ideology' which sees the king as the central figure in the performance of the cult can be substantiated.

Most scholars accept that the king played some significant part in the cult. To take three representative examples: Widengren⁷⁶ sees the king as the builder of the Temple and its lord, and as high-priest he is the owner of the breast-plate with the 'tables of destiny' (Urim and Thumrnim), and of the tables of law given him at his coronation; another sacral function of the

⁷⁴ In view of Schmidt's distinction between the static and dynamic aspects of Yahweh's kingship, to fix such an historical moment for the 'enthronement' of Yahweh (dynamic kingship) would not prejudice the question whether Yahweh was worshipped as king (static kingship) before the period of the monarchy. Weiser (*op. cit.* 34f.), Schmidt (*op. cit.* 64-79), J. A. Soggin ('Regalità divina in Ugarit e in Israele', *Protestantesimo* 17 [1962] 85-89), V. Maag ('Malkût Jhwh', *VT Supplements* 7 (1960) 129-153), and F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman ('The Song of Miriam', *JNES* 14 [1955] 237-250, esp. 250) think the idea as old as the amphictyonic period, while Mowinckel (*op. cit.* I 125), and L. Rost ('Königsherrschaft Jahwes in vor-königlicher Zeit?', *Th.L.* 85 [1960] cols. 721-724) date it to the monarchical period.

^{74a} H. Schmid, 'Jahwe und die Kulttradition von Jerusalem', *ZAW* 67 (1955) 168-197; followed by Kraus, *op. cit.* I 197-201.

⁷⁵ Cf. Gross, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶ G. Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum im AT und im Judentum*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart (1955).

king is his role as mediator of the covenant.⁷⁷ Johnson has his own distinctive position on sacral kingship which he maintains over against the Scandinavian view, yet he also assigns to the king a vital part in the cult,⁷⁸ especially as the chief performer in the ritual of the autumn festival. Kraus, to name a scholar who stands in most respects at the other end of the spectrum from all that smacks of 'patternism', is in his own way concerned to emphasize the strong connection between the king and the shrine, since for him the 'royal Zion festival' has precisely these two centres of interest, the Davidic house and the Jerusalem Temple.⁷⁹

But others have minimized the extent of the king's cultic functions. While admitting that the king exercised some control over the cultus, de Fraine denies that the king ever had a priestly quality; allusions to kings bringing sacrifices personally are few, and in any case such sacrifices were probably schismatic, the reference to the king as a priest in Ps. 110:4 is not to the Israelite king but to the Messianic king, and the reference to the priesthood of the sons of David in 2 Sam. 8:18 is not confirmed by 1 Chr. 18:17.⁸⁰ De Vaux also argues that while the king occasionally performs religious functions and is undoubtedly a sacred person, he is not a priest, and has only the religious privileges which a head of state may be expected to possess over the state religion.⁸¹ It is significant that 'the instances where the king's personal action [in cultic matters] is beyond question are all very special or exceptional: the transference of the Ark, the dedication of an altar or sanctuary, the great annual festivals'.⁸²

Even the term 'sacral' as applied to the king has come under attack by McCullough,⁸³ who claims that the actual character of the Israelite kings empties the term 'sacral' of its content; the king is only seldom described in a religious role, and references

⁷⁷ Widengren, 'King and Covenant' *JSS* 2 (1957) 1-32.

⁷⁸ A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff (1955); 'Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship' in *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, ed. S. H. Hooke, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1958) 204-235.

⁷⁹ Cf. Kraus, *op. cit.* II 879-883.

⁸⁰ J. de Fraine, *'Peut-on parler d'un véritable sacerdoce du roi en Israël ?', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 32 (1956) 537-547; so also his *L'aspect religieux de la royauté israélite*, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome (1954) 309-341.

⁸¹ R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (1961) 111-114.

⁸² *Op. cit.* 114.

⁸³ W. S. McCullough, 'Israel's kings, sacral and otherwise', *ExpT* 68 (1956—1957) 144-148.

to the cultic activity of the king are conspicuous by their absence from the Pentateuchal law codes.⁸⁴ McCullough also objects to the fact that data about the king's functions are usually collected indiscriminately from various parts of the Old Testament, without recognition of the possibility that the king's religious functions may have changed from generation to generation. Whybray also has claimed that the historical books of the Old Testament do not support the emphasis commonly placed on the sacral nature of the king. Since the monarchy in Israel was of comparatively short duration, left little impression on the Torah, and was vigorously criticized by the prophets, it is unlikely that it played so central a part in the religious life of Israel as is often suggested. David's kingship was predominantly secular, rather than 'sacral', and the cult that did grow up around the monarchy should not be overestimated, for while some aspects had real meaning, much was idealistic, ephemeral, or hyperbolic.⁸⁵

Turning now to the king-ideology' school and the literature to which it has given rise, whether in agreement with it or reaction against it, we may note that although the basic treatments of the subject appeared before our period,⁸⁶ a large volume of work continues to be devoted to this subject, evidence of which is the appearance since 1955 of four important books (those of Widengren, Ahlström, Johnson, and Bernhardt, to be mentioned below), as well as many articles.

In his study of sacral kingship, Widengren attempts to demonstrate that the king played the role of the dying and rising God on new year's day. In the ritual drama of the new year

⁸⁴ In a reply, A. R. Johnson maintains that the absence of reference in the Torah to the cultic role of the king can be accounted for by the post-exilic origin of its contents ('Old Testament Exegesis, imaginative and unimaginative', *ExpT* 68 [1956-1957] 178-179).

⁸⁵ R. N. Whybray, 'Some Historical Limitations of Hebrew Kingship', *Church Quarterly Review* 163 (1962) 136-150; similarly M. Noth, 'Gott, König, Volk im AT', *ZTK* 47 (1950) 157-191, now translated in *Journal for Theology and the Church* 1(1965) 20-48, and in M. Noth, *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays*, translated by D. R. Ap-Thomas, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh (1966) 145-178.

⁸⁶ G. Widengren, **Psalm 110 och det sakrala kungadömet i Israel*, A.-B, Lundequistska Bokhandeln, Uppsala (1941); I. Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri, Uppsala (1943); to which may be added the somewhat different approach of A. R. Johnson, 'The Role of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus', in *The Labyrinth*, ed. S. H. Hooke, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1935) 71-111; and the full-scale critique of the king-ideology school by J. de Frain; *L'aspect religieux de la royauté israélite* (1954).

festival, the king combats the forces of chaos and after ritual humiliation involving his death and resurrection finally defeats them; he then celebrates a *hieros gamos*, and is enthroned on the divine mountain.⁸⁷ Ahlström has applied the patternist view of the cultic function of the king to the exegesis of Ps. 89,⁸⁸ which he interprets as a liturgy from the ritual for the king suffering ritual humiliation; he envisages the king at the festival of the renewal of the year (such is the meaning of *maškil* in the superscription) in the role of the suffering servant in the cult drama of the Canaanite vegetation god Dwd, son of Yahweh. Morgenstern, in keeping with his theory of the significance of sun-worship in Israel, offers his own distinctive reconstruction of royal ritual: the king, in the role of the sun-god Yahweh, ascends to the top of the Mount of Olives on the first day of the new year festival, whence he returns to the Temple at the end of eight-day ritual, there to ascend the throne.⁸⁹

The reconstruction by Johnson of the autumn festival,⁹⁰ though not devoid of 'imagination',⁹¹ is far removed from the extreme Scandinavian position. He identifies four major moments in the ritual: 1. The celebration of Yahweh's original triumph, as leader of the forces of light, over darkness (represented by the chaos waters) ; the subjection of the cosmic sea, and his enthronement as king in the assembly of the gods; the demonstration of his power in creation and history. 2. The dramatic representation of the eschatological Day of Yahweh, when he will triumph over rebellious gods and nations, and so affirm his kingship over the moral realm as well as over that of nature. 3. The dramatic representation of the descent of the true Messiah to the underworld and his ultimate deliverance from the forces of darkness and death. 4. The triumphal procession in which the Ark, as the symbol of Yahweh's presence,

⁸⁷ Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum* (1955); cf. also his 'Early Hebrew Myths and their Interpretation' in *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, ed. S. H. Hooke, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1958) 149-203, esp. 191-199.

⁸⁸ G. W. Ahlström, *Psalm 89. Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des leidenden Königs*, Ohlsson, Lund (1959). Cf. the review by S. Mowinckel, *JSS* 5 (1960) 291-298.

⁸⁹ J. Morgenstern, 'The Cultic Setting of the "Enthronement Psalms"', *Hebrew Union College Annual* 35 (1964) 1-42; cf. his *The Fire upon the Altar*, Quadrangle Books, Chicago (1963).

⁹⁰ A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (1955); 'Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship' (1958) (see n.78 above). He is followed by A. G. Hebert, 'The Idea of Kingship in the Old Testament', *Reformed Theological Review* 18 (1959) 34-45.

⁹¹ Cf. the article cited in n.84 above.

and the king, who in the drama has proved to be true Messiah and 'Son' of Yahweh, move to the Temple for the final act of enthronement which is to mark the beginning of this new era. Elements of this ritual drama are found by Johnson throughout the Psalter: Ps. 89:39-46 is the ritual humiliation of the king; Ps. 101 is his 'negative confession' or protestation of innocence; Ps. 18 is his thanksgiving for deliverance from the ritual hazards; Pss. 2 and 110 depict the final stage of the drama, the fulfilment in reassuring oracles of Yahweh's promise to the dynasty.⁹²

A similar approach by Bič⁹³ finds the first book of the Psalms (Pss. 1-41) to be a liturgy for a king's enthronement festival. The king, who is in the foreground of these psalms, is the chief figure in the festival; he is Son of God, substitute for the people's sins, God's warrior upon whose faithfulness salvation depends, opponent of God's enemies. He is delivered from great distress by God and given the task of judging the enemies. Through his steadfastness in suffering he bears witness to God's saving acts as the new year, the time of salvation, opens.

Mowinckel has indicated his approval of the increasing emphasis being given to the figure of the king;⁹⁴ there are more royal psalms than is usually recognized, he suggests, and he claims that the superscription *l' dāwīd* indicates that the psalm was composed for the king.⁹⁵ But he will not agree that the king was ever regarded as identical with Yahweh or played Yahweh's part in the cult,⁹⁶ and in so saying aligns himself rather with Johnson than with the Uppsala school. He finds in the Israelite conception of kingship both general oriental elements and specifically Israelite elements.⁹⁷ Among the

⁹² In these more recent works Johnson has modified the views of his 1935 article in two particulars: he now rejects the view that the new year festival was concerned with 'the cyclic revival of the social unit', and recognizes that 'its orientation was not merely toward the following cycle of twelve months, but towards a completely new era'; there was thus from the beginning an eschatological orientation to the new year festival.

⁹³ M. Bič, 'Das erste Buch des Psalters. Eine Thronbesteigungsfestliturgie', in *The Sacral Kingship/La Regalità Sacra* (Supplements to *Numen*, IV), Brill, Leiden (1959) 316-332.

⁹⁴ Mowinckel, "'Psalm Criticism between 1900 and 1935'", *VT* 5 (1955) 13-33, esp. 17f.

⁹⁵ Cf. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* I 77.

⁹⁶ *Op. cit.* I 59. So also H. Ringgren, *Israelitische Religion*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart (1963) 216.

⁹⁷ 'General, Oriental, and Specific Israelite Elements in the Israelite Conception of the Sacral Kingdom', in *The Sacral Kingship* (1959) 283-293; cf. also his *He That Cometh*, Blackwell, Oxford (1956) 21-95 (= *Han som kommer*, G. E. C. Gad, Copenhagen [1951]).

former are the conceptions of the king as a superhuman being, as representative of God to man and man to God, and among the latter, the idea of the source of the king's authority residing in his 'corporate identity with the tribe' and not his special relationship to God, the absence of any 'metaphysical' unity of Yahweh and the king or of a really 'mythological' understanding of the king's relation to Yahweh, and the concept of the activity of God in history through the covenant with David and his heirs.

There is thus no generally accepted meaning attached to the phrase 'sacral kingship'; failure to give due recognition to this fact is a flaw in the work of Bernhardt, the most substantial critique of the king-ideology to have appeared since 1955.⁹⁸ In opposing the pervasive influence of patternism, he emphasizes that there was in Israel a deep-rooted objection to kingship, which continued throughout the period of the monarchy. In the Psalms, as in the historical books, three of the basic elements of king-ideology are lacking: the identification of the king with God; the offering of worship to the king; and the idea of the king's power over the forces of nature. What is to be found in the Old Testament is not just a few historical traditions attached to a thorough-going royal ritual, but rather a number of motifs borrowed from Near Eastern king-ideology and attached to the Israelite history of election and covenant.⁹⁹ McCullough finds no clear vestige of a cultic drama such as that described by Johnson, and argues that, in view of the importance such a drama must have had in Israelite life, it is strange that so few psalms depicting it have been preserved; it is difficult also to believe that there could have been portrayed an annual victory over death which seemed to have no real effect in staying the power of death.¹⁰⁰

Others take a more moderate position, accepting the term

⁹⁸ K.-H. Bernhardt, *Das Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie im Alten Testament. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Geschichte der Psalmenexegese dargestellt und kritisch gewürdigt*, *VT Supplements* VIII (1960).

⁹⁹ For a critical review of Bernhardt's work, see G. W. Ahlström, 'Die Königs-ideologie in Israel', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 18 (1962) 205-210. Cf. also R. de Vaux, *Revue Biblique* 70 (1963) 633f.

¹⁰⁰ W. S. McCullough, *op. cit.* Cf. also J. M. Ward, 'The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX', *VT* 11 (1961) 321-339, esp. 336, who argues that the crisis depicted in Ps. 89 is a wholly unexpected one, and that there is no reason to suppose that the crisis is 'a mere sham, a dramatic device'. Likewise the other royal psalms which concern the king's conflict with his enemies are 'either prayers or thanksgivings for victory, and there is nothing in them to indicate that they were used ritually in an annual coronation festival'.

'sacral kingship' but not all the implications it is sometimes made to carry. Coppens, for example, finds that Ps. 110 clearly indicates the sacral character of the Israelite king and his participation in the exercise of divine power; yet his sacrosanctity is not viewed on the mythological plane, for he is not only 'son of God', but also 'priest', therefore a servant of Yahweh and on no account his equal.¹⁰¹ For de Vaux also the essential function of the king is that of God's servant, or more specifically God's vassal, as defined by the covenant with the king.¹⁰² Rosenthal puts his emphasis on the idea of the king as the 'vicegerent' of God, and regards Widengren's extension of the sacral functions of the king to include that of owner and teacher of the book of the Torah as unjustified.¹⁰³ A great importance is attributed by Hallevy¹⁰⁴ to the monarchy in the sphere of religious institutions: it created a new cultic centre, a new sanctuary with a national priesthood which encouraged by propaganda the idea of the monarchy and loyalty to it, and a new religious functionary, the king, in his roles of judge, cultic official, and commander-in-chief. But this is not to be thought of as kingship ideology on the Ancient Near Eastern pattern, for a special relationship between God and the king existed only in the case of Saul and David, charismatic figures like the judges; with Solomon there was a transition from individual election to dynastic succession, and the king became an organizer and administrator.¹⁰⁵ Certainly, whatever light is shed on the Israelite monarchy by the king-ideology of Babylonia, Egypt, Hatti, and Ugarit, regard must be had for the unique character of the Israelite kingship, and indeed for the differences between the ideologies of these various states.¹⁰⁶

Some colour is lent, at first sight, to the extreme exponents of sacral kingship by the language used of the king in the Psalms, especially the title 'Son of God'. Yet in spite of the insistence of

¹⁰¹ J. Coppens, 'Les apports du Psaume CX (Vulg. CIX) à l'idéologie royale israélite', in *The Sacral Kingship* (1959) 333-348.

¹⁰² R. de Vaux, 'Le roi d'Israël, vassal de Yahvé', in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant I*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Città del Vaticano (1964) 119-133.

¹⁰³ E. I. J. Rosenthal, 'Some Aspects of the Hebrew Monarchy', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 9 (1958) 1-18.

¹⁰⁴ R. Hallevy, 'The Place of the Monarchy in Israelite Religion', *Tarbiz* 32 (1962-1963) 215-224 (English summary, pp. i-ii).

¹⁰⁵ Hallevy, 'Charismatic Kingship in Israel', *Tarbiz* 30 (1960-1961) 231-241 (English summary, pp. v-vii).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. H. Cazelles, "'Mito, rituale e regalità'" *Bibbia e Oriente* 2 (1960) 121-135.

Ahlsöm¹⁰⁷ that such expressions as Ps. 2:7 must be understood literally, that is, as depicting a cultic actuality, most scholars now agree that 'Son of God' as applied to the king means only 'adopted by God'. From an examination of the term in Pss. 2, 19, 110, Cooke¹⁰⁸ concludes that in none of these contexts is anything more than 'a metaphorical or adoptional interpretation' required. This is confirmed by the nature of the Yahwistic faith which would not have allowed a man to be raised to any higher status, and also by the fact that no prophet attacked Israelite kings or the monarchy in general because of any claims for the divinity of the king. De Fraine¹⁰⁹ also rejects any suggestion that the title implies a divinization of the king, even if all that meant were that the king played the role of the god in the cult; he argues that the Yahwistic circles to which we owe, if not the original composition of Ps. 2, at least the 'relecture' of the psalm, were utterly opposed to such divinization.

The title 'Son of God' has been recognized by a number of scholars as 'oriental court-style',¹¹⁰ which ought not to be taken too seriously as an expression of Hebrew belief about the nature of the king.¹¹¹ Mowinckel, while agreeing that the phrase 'oriental court-style' will account for some of the language used of the king, nevertheless remarks that such aspects of the kingship as 'the king's close relation to Yahweh, his endowment with divine strength, the experience and assurance of this in the festival cult, the king's appearance there as the visible pledge of the existence and permanence of the covenant' were more than mere formal court-style, and 'expressed a reality in Israel's belief and cult'.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ G. W. Ahlström, 'Die Königsideologie in Israel', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 18 (1962) 205-210.

¹⁰⁸ G. A. Cooke, 'The Israelite King as Son of God', *ZAW* 73 (1961) 202-225.

¹⁰⁹ J. de Frairie, *'Quel est le sens exact de la filiation dans Ps. 2, ??', *Bijdragen* 16 (1955) 349-356; *L'aspect religieux de la royauté israélite* (1954) 271-276.

¹¹⁰ So e.g. Kraus, *op. cit.* I lxix; A. Alt, 'Königtum', in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*³, III (1959) cols. 1709-1712; J. de Savignac, 'Théologie Pharaonique et Messianisme d'Israël', *VT* 7 (1957) 82-90.

¹¹¹ Cf. Whybray, *op. cit.* 148, who reminds us that until a short time ago the Good Friday Liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church still contained a prayer for the Holy Roman Emperor; yet a future historian would be unwise to deduce the continued existence of the Holy Roman Empire in our time. 'Similarly it would be unwise to draw historical conclusions about Judah's attitude to its kings from the Psalms (regarded as liturgical texts) unless they were supported by good evidence from the historical books and the prophets.'

¹¹² Mowinckel, 'General, Oriental and Specific Israelite Elements in the Israelite Conception of the Sacral Kingdom', in *The Sacral Kingship* (1959) 283-293.

We must finally register our disappointment that once again a key phrase, 'sacral kingship', has not been used with any generally accepted connotation, with the result that much discussion of the subject has missed the mark. Yet no one who has followed the literature on the Israelite kingship over the past decade can have failed to profit greatly from it; but one may be pardoned for remarking that concentration on the sacral or religious functions of the king can easily lead to an exaggeration of their importance, and one may be justified in thinking that the growth point for future study of Israelite kingship may be the more secular aspects of the monarchy¹¹³ rather than the religious aspects. Increasing understanding of the nature and duties of the Israelite kingship in the secular sphere, in the light of Ancient Near Eastern studies generally, will, one hopes, help to control the necessarily 'imaginative' reconstructions of Israelite cult by setting historical limits to the speculative possibilities.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ *Cf. e.g.* the stimulating article of A. Malamat, 'Organs of Statecraft in the Israelite Monarchy', *BA* 28 (1965) 34-65.

¹¹⁴ It is hoped to deal with other aspects of the relation of the Psalms to the cult in a subsequent survey of literature on the Psalm Gattungen.