

THE DIVISION AND ORDER OF THE PSALMS

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I. *Introduction*

RESEARCH into the psalter was revolutionized early in this century by the work of H. Gunkel and his introduction of *Gattungsforschung*. This work was subsequently developed by many, notably S. Mowinckel, and the task and modern classification of *Gattungen* continues. Yet for the question at hand, this modern research has not been all that helpful. D. J. A. Clines, in his summary of research since 1955, for instance, states that "as yet a real connection between psalms bearing the same title has still to be discovered."¹ The various modern schemes of classification do not account for the present arrangement of the psalter, nor for the psalter's own indications of arrangement by its superscripts.² Therefore this essay has concentrated upon what I have considered to be basic issues. I shall consider first the basic textual evidence for the psalter together with related issues arising from this evidence. Thereupon follows a discussion of the basic division of the psalter into five books. A discussion of superscripts and postscripts and their relation to the arrangement and order of the psalms ensues. Finally I go briefly through the five books themselves attempting to show what may be said of the arrangement of the psalms in each.³

II. *Textual Evidence*

The Masoretic psalter, as is commonly known, is divided into five books. This division will be discussed below. The division of individual psalms in the Masoretic tradition is not as uniform as one might suspect. There are several individual cases in books 1-3 where mss show varying traditions of combination of psalms. In books 4-5, however, many mss combine not a few psalms in various ways. The most important of these combinations will be discussed in more detail below.

¹ D. J. A. Clines, "Psalm Research Since 1955: II. The Literary Genres," *TynBul* 20 (1969) 119.

² Cf. G. H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985) 161-62.

³ Given the sheer volume of material written on the psalms, and the number of psalms themselves involved, any conclusions reached in this essay should be regarded as tentative.

The evidence from Qumran as respects the psalter is very interesting and ought not to be overlooked in a study of our Masoretic psalter. This evidence has engendered much debate, particularly over the question of how the material is to be related to the MT. G. H. Wilson goes over this material and its discussion in quite some detail, in particular considering the debate between J. A. Sanders et al. and P. W. Skehan et al. over 11QPs^a and its function at Qumran and relation to the MT. This is the only extensive set of mss forming a reasonably sized collection of psalms at Qumran, and thus merits attention.⁴ It is the more interesting because of its use of many psalms in common with MT (from books 4 and 5), both in a different order and in conjunction with psalms not known from MT. Sanders dates 11QPs^a on palaeographical grounds to the first half of the first century AD.⁵

It is impossible in a paper of this size to go into any significant detail on this matter, yet we ought to note the parameters of the debate and how it affects our view of MT. Sanders has argued that 11QPs^a should be considered as a canonical and therefore authoritative, open ended canon of psalms. He argues further that it precedes the completion of the MT psalter as canon, forming an important step in that process. Thus, Sanders places the completion of the MT psalter as canon at the end of the first century in Jamnia.⁶

Skehan has opposed this view arguing the reverse, i.e. that 11QPs^a is merely a liturgical collection with no real authority at all and no bearing on the MT psalter as canon, which at least in its first four books was complete by the fourth century BC, and the final section not much later. He argues that 11QPs^a is textually dependent on MT. Wilson has definitively shown that Skehan's criticisms go too far and cannot be sustained.⁷ There is no real evidence that 11QPs^a was dependent on MT. Both may well have been dependent on a common tradition of psalm materials. Furthermore both the MT psalter and 11QPs^a seem to function as liturgical collections. (It is important to note at this point that the discussion essentially concerns

⁴ See J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs^a)* (DJD 4; Oxford: Clarendon, 1965); id., "Cave 11 Surprises and the Question of Canon," *McCormick Quarterly* 21 (1968) 284-98; P. W. Skehan, "The Qumran Manuscripts and Textual Criticism," in *Volume du Congrès Strasbourg 1956* (VTSup 4; Leiden: Brill, 1957) 148-58. All other Qumran psalm mss are more fragmented. Wilson is surely correct when he states, "One must be careful when making judgments based on fragmentary texts" (*Editing*, 67).

⁵ Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll*, 9.

⁶ For a critique of the notion of a late first-century council at Jamnia that determined the extent of the canon, see R. C. Newman, "The Council of Jamnia and the Old Testament Canon," *WTJ* 38 (1976) 319-49.

⁷ Wilson, *Editing*, 76-88. In this respect R. Beckwith's discussion of the same is inadequate (*The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985] 77-78).

books 4 and 5 of the psalter.⁸ The evidence at Qumran as a whole overwhelmingly supports the arrangement of MT books 1-3 as we know them. 11QPsa begins at Psalm 101, containing no earlier psalm than this except Psalm 93.)

Wilson, having rejected Skehan's idea that 11QPs^a is merely a library edition based on MT,⁹ seems unsure whether to see a parallel development of MT books 4 and 5 and 11QPs^a, or whether to suppose (with Sanders) that the Qumran psalter was one step in a linear development that ultimately led to the MT arrangement of books 4 and 5.¹⁰ I propose that a hypothesis of parallel development is more likely to be correct. There is in the first place evidence that the Masoretic psalter even in books 4 and 5 was extant at least contemporaneously with the community at Qumran. This evidence comes in the form of both Josephus and the LXX. First, Josephus' (c. AD 37-110) earliest work. *Against Apion*, mentions the following in a discussion of the (for him completed) canon: αἱ δὲ ποιπαὶ τέσσαρες [sc. τῶν βιβλίων] ὕμνους εἰς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑποθήκας τοῦ βίου περιέχουσιν.¹¹ Secondly, although the date of the LXX psalter may be obscure, it must at least have been completed well before the first century AD when it was known throughout Judea and the Diaspora (as evidenced by the NT).¹²

What then are we to say of 11QPs^a? That it was regarded as containing all canonical psalms seems highly probable in view of the Davidic prose section. This section seems to ascribe Davidic authority (if not authorship) to the entire collection. David as the inspired psalmist *par excellence* has a central place within this collection.¹³ The so-called apocryphal psalms

⁸ The only evidence against MT books 1-3 are two mss (4QPs^a, frags. c, d; 4QPs^q, col. I) containing Psalms 31 and 33 (thus excluding Psalm 32), and one ms (4QPs^a, frag. g) containing Psalms 38 and 71.

⁹ In addition to the arguments above, this view is based on two pieces of evidence: (1) more than one copy of this "psalter" has been found (cf. 11QPs^b), and (2) the prose section near the end of the MS gives David's last words (as the inspired and prophetic psalmist) and a tally of David's compositions. Both these factors, in Wilson's opinion, seem to indicate that the scroll functioned as canon (cf. *Editing*, 66). The second factor seems to me stronger than the first.

¹⁰ Wilson, *Editing*, 91-92. On p. 69 Wilson concludes, however (contra Sanders), that "it is not possible to demonstrate the existence of a single consistent Psalter tradition at Qumran." Interestingly, Sanders, in his review of Wilson (*JBL* 106 [1987] 321), does not take up this criticism of his own position.

¹¹ "The remaining four books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life" (*Ap.* 1.40; LCL translation).

¹² One would suspect that the psalter, being so crucial liturgically, would have been translated soon after the Pentateuch. H. B. Swete, in addition to the evidence of NT quotations, shows usage from early non-Christian Hellenists (*An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* [rev. R. E. Ottley; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914] part 3, chap. 1). Note that the NT speaks of the psalms as a "book" (singular) in Luke 20:42 and Acts 1:20. This seems to imply a finished canonical product.

¹³ We should be careful here (contra Sanders; see Wilson, *Editing*, 70) not to overstate the implications of the prose section. That it does not imply Davidic authorship for the whole

contained here apparently bear no mark of having been written by the Qumran sect, but rather evidence a considerably earlier date. Studies have shown that these psalms exhibit a fully biblical character.¹⁴ This fact tends to lend support to the apparent Qumran claim that they are in fact inspired psalms of Davidic (temple?) origin. Could we perhaps regard these extra-biblical psalms as indeed examples of more Davidic and prophetic compositions than those known to us, dating back to the times of David and the prophetic schools following him that provided compositions for the temple liturgy? Our present MT psalter seems to be no more than a collection of what must once have been a rather massive supply of temple psalms. 11QPs^a itself testifies to a much larger corpus of material when it notes that David's compositions alone totalled 4,050.¹⁵ The Qumran sect thus, when it left Jerusalem c. 150 BC to form its community, may well have taken copies of psalms from a temple depository of prophetic liturgical material.¹⁶

The LXX is basically a translation from a proto-Masoretic type copy of the five books of psalms. Our main interest in it concerns its witness to the division of psalms and to superscripts. With respect to the division of psalms, the LXX also has 150 psalms; however, they are divided somewhat

collection is clear from the inclusion of Psalm 127 with the same superscript as the MT denoting Solomon as author (cf. MT Ps 72:20). Furthermore, there is no evidence that superscripts were deliberately altered or edited at Qumran to favor any sectarian view of the authorship of any given psalm material. Thus the superscripts in 11QPs^a often fail to indicate an author. In this ms and throughout the Qumran psalms mss, the superscripts overwhelmingly agree with MT. Wilson lists the agreements as 64 times out of 76 comparable instances. The differences consist in both additional material (compared to MT) and less material. Thus it cannot be fairly stated that Qumran at this point gives a fuller text. Wilson in this respect is rather weak when he suggests, on the basis of two instances where 11 QPs^a adds דָּוִד , as over against one instance where it omits the same, that Qumran exhibits an expansive tendency (p. 130)! In fact, a study of Wilson's Appendix A, where he gives a comparative list of Qumran and MT superscripts and postscripts, shows that the number of times where Qumran superscripts or postscripts contain less material than MT far outweigh the cases where they contain more. In verifiable cases, Qumran has less material eleven times, and five times it has more. Of interest is the fact that, in total, Qumran twice attributes Davidic authorship to psalms lacking such in MT and twice contains no reference to Davidic authorship where MT has it. In my judgment, the differences on this score between MT and Qumran are so minimal as to suggest that neither text should be designated expansive, but that the witnesses of both are valuable attestations to possible original documentation.

¹⁴ See Wilson, *Editing*, 71ff.

¹⁵ It should be noted that 11 QPs^a in no way claims that such a number of psalms and songs from David were extant at the time of its compilation. Of interest, however, is also the ninth-century AD report of a find of biblical and extrabiblical Hebraic writings in a rock-cave near Jericho. Apparently, more than 200 "psalms of David" were found. For text and translation see O. Braun, "Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos," *Oriens Christianus* (1901) 299-313.

¹⁶ In this respect we ought to remember the necessity of distinguishing between a sectarian community and the biblical texts that such a community may use. Admitting that Qumran was a minor breakaway sect, possibly a group of Essenes, in no way immediately affects one's judgment on the quality of the text that they used. In this case there is no evidence to suggest that the community deliberately altered any biblical text material that they brought with them.

differently. Two pairs of psalms in MT are joined in LXX (9 and 10, 114 and 115), and two psalms in MT are split in two by the LXX (116 and 147). This evidence will be weighed below.

An analysis of LXX superscripts shows that, apart from a section of book 4 and book 5 of the psalter respectively, there is very little variation from MT. Where additional material occurs it seems to refer mostly to the liturgical occasions when such psalms were sung (e.g., Psalms 24, 29, 38, 48, 93, 94—MT numbering). Such designations are by their own nature secondary to the original psalm settings, yet that is not to say that the LXX translators merely added them.¹⁷ In terms of the historical superscripts, there seems to be only one case of secondary dependence on a historical book.¹⁸ There is no evidence that the translators actually added anything to the text before them,¹⁹ and of course, as is well known, superscripted liturgical information is also present in MT (e.g., Psalm 92 and the songs of ascents, Psalms 120-134). Occasionally the LXX has genre designations where there is only an author given in MT (e.g., Psalms 11, 14, 25), but there is no consistency in this at all, and there are far more examples where the LXX together with MT give the author alone.

It has been alleged that the LXX exhibits a trend in ascribing more psalms to Davidic authorship, and thus it is said to enhance the Davidic authority of the psalter.²⁰ This assertion is at best too generalized. A broad overview of the psalter reveals very little difference between MT and LXX, except for one clear group of psalms (Psalms 91-99). If we pass over this

¹⁷ In that regard they are similar to the MT superscripts which are often also secondary to the original psalm settings.

¹⁸ The LXX superscript of Psalm 96 reads: ὅτε ὁ οἶκος ᾠκοδομείτο μετὰ τὴν αἰχμαλωσίαν· ᾠδὴ τῷ Δαυιδ ("when the house was built after the captivity; a song of David"). This is sometimes taken to indicate that the translator knew that his ascription to David was incorrect, since he also made the psalm postexilic by referring to the building of the second temple; see F Delitzsch, *Psalms, in Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes* (repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986) 3.89-90, and C. A. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Psalms* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906) 2.299. However, this seems pretty unlikely. It may be that a Davidic psalm was used at that time and so attained the added historical superscript. However, it seems to me more probable that the reference here is to the building of the tent for the ark after David retrieved and brought it to Jerusalem. The ark was captured by the Philistines and so taken into captivity (1 Sam 4-6). This incident is referred to in Ps 78:61 where LXX also translates αἰχμαλωσίαν. Note that ἰϛ here refers to the ark (cf. Ps 132:8). The superscript probably thus derives from 1 Chr 16 where Psalm 96 is supposedly utilized as part of the song of praise recorded by the Chronicler at this event. The historical part of the superscript is therefore probably dependent on Chronicles. MT has a similar case of superscript dependence on a historical book in Psalm 18, derived from 2 Sam 22:1 (cf. B. S. Childs, "Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis," *JSS* 16 [1971] 139).

¹⁹ An exception to this may be Psalm 31 (LXX 30), where ἐκστάσεως seems to be derived from the translation itself (LXX v. 23).

²⁰ E.g., C. Th. Niemeyer, *Het problem van de rangschikking der Psalmen* (Leiden: Luctor et Emergo, 1950) 149, who includes the MT, 1 Chronicles, and NT in this trend; A. Pietersma, "David in the Greek Psalms," *VT* 30 (1980) 213, who includes the MT in this trend; Wilson, *Editing*, 130, who includes 11QPs^a in this trend.

special section of book 4 for a moment (to be discussed below), additional ascriptions to David occur only five times. Of these, Qumran mss twice attest Davidic authorship. It should also be noted that twice the LXX *lacks* designation of Davidic authorship where MT has it (Psalms 122 and 124)! Few would argue that MT is expansive here!²¹

Overall, in cases where LXX contains superscript material not found in MT, it seems clear that the translators were nevertheless reading a Hebrew Vorlage. This is shown by the fact that in these so-called additions, equally difficult Greek (relying on semitic constructions) is utilized (e.g., τῷ for ᾧ of authorship; improbable nouns in genitive constructions wrongly interpreting supposed Hebrew bound constructions, such as αἴνος ᾧδῆς). That is not to say, however, that this Hebrew *Vorlage* is always correct. Its textual value must be assessed in each case, comparing evidence from MT and Qumran, with internal indications. For example, Davidic ascription to Psalm 99 (LXX) is highly likely on internal evidence (see comments below), whilst on the other hand the LXX ascription of Davidic authorship to Psalms 43 and 137 is extremely unlikely.²²

It is interesting to note the "additions" to Psalms 91 and 93-99. Here, where the MT for the most part provides no superscripts at all, the LXX consistently has rather full designations. Similarly, the superscripts to Psalms 143-48 (including a variant division) in book 5 are noteworthy. What makes this phenomenon so interesting is that it occurs precisely in the last two books of the psalter. It is also these last two books that in Qumran were organizationally most variant from MT. LXX evidence, then, supports the theory that books 1-3 of the psalter were very early stabilized, and that mss of books 4 and 5 continued to exhibit fluctuation to a later date, probably indicating that they were put together at some later time.

²¹ In this respect Pietersma quite incorrectly alleges that "all that is in the MT is in the LXX" ("David," 214). He seems to acknowledge the two cases in point on p. 217 n. 11.

²² Pietersma ("David") argues that the extent of additional material in the LXX superscripts actually going back to a Hebrew *Vorlage* may be less than the text of A. Rahlfs indicates (ed. *Psalmi cum Odis* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931]). He shows that at least parts of the LXX text tradition show a tendency to increase Davidic titles. Nevertheless, I am not convinced that those superscripts overwhelmingly attested in the mss tradition are later additions. In general, Pietersma's argumentation is not always based on much evidence. For instance, he argues that since ὅτε is only found in superscripts omitted in MT, it is therefore probably secondary (p. 221). However, the total number of historical superscripts (where ὅτε might be expected to be found) is only 13 in the MT tradition anyway. This is far too small a witness to function effectively as a control on vocabulary! Cautions here not sufficiently noted by Pietersma are (1) the presence of variant *Hebrew* superscripts in Qumran, (2) the fact that even in Pietersma's view at least in one case the LXX omits reference to David where MT has it (Psalm 124 MT), and (3) the fact that even Pietersma admits that there are cases where a different Hebrew *Vorlage* is likely (e.g., Psalm 104 MT), and these could lead us to suspect more.

III. *Division into Books*

As is well known, the Masoretic psalter is divided into five books. This basic arrangement is also attested by the LXX. As noted above, however, books 1-3 seem to have been well established much earlier than books 4 and 5.

The division into five books is clearly supported by various indications in the psalter itself. In the first place each book seems to end with an appropriate doxology (cf. Ps 41:14; 72:18-19; 89:53; 106:48). It has often been suggested that Psalm 150, or alternatively 146-50, should be seen as the doxology for book 5. This will be discussed below. Niemeyer and Wilson are probably correct when they argue that these doxologies should be seen as integral parts of the psalms they are attached to, and not as editorial additions.²³ Their appearance at the ends of the respective books, however, is highly suggestive of deliberate placement.

Another way that these books are distinguished is by the use of the divine name. Book 1 clearly prefers the name *Yahweh*, utilizing it 273 times (as opposed to *Elohim*, 15 times). Book 2, on the other hand, prefers *Elohim* (164 times, as opposed to *Yahweh*, 30 times). Book 3 is mixed. The Asaph psalms (73-83) clearly prefer *Elohim*; however, the rest of the book prefers *Yahweh*. Books 4 and 5 both prefer *Yahweh* (book 4 contains no use of *Elohim*, and book 5 employs it only 7 times, as compared to 236 uses of *Yahweh*).

One final indication of the division into books has been argued by Wilson.²⁴ He notes that the superscripts play an important role in this division. Whilst no part of the superscripts may be seen as the primary editing principle, there are certain important factors to note. First, each book is clearly marked off from the preceding by a change of authorship. The only exception here is the transition between books 4 and 5, which is more fluid. He also notes that the transition between author groupings *within* any given book is softened by overlapping genre titles. For example, the psalms of Korah end at Psalm 49. Psalm 50 is Asaphite, and Psalms 51-65 are Davidic. The fact that Psalms 47 through 51 are all marked *mizmor* softens the transition. Compare also Psalms 65 through 68. Equally important is that such overlapping genres do *not* occur between books.

In conclusion, then, we may justly infer that the division into five books has not been imposed upon the psalter, but is inherent to its formation.

²³ This is due both to the way they fit each particular psalm in question and to the non-formal agreement between the doxologies themselves. See Niemeyer, *Het probleem*, 72-78. Niemeyer goes on to reject the view that the doxologies function to close the individual books. He notes that "geen enkele bundel of verzameling in het O.T. met een doxologie werd afgesloten" (p. 76). While this may be, it ought to be noted that there is no other collection of songs or psalms in the OT at all! See also Wilson, *Editing*, 81-82.

²⁴ Wilson, *Editing*, 163-67.

IV. *Superscripts and Postscripts*

The superscripts and postscripts to the psalms can lay claim to a fair degree of antiquity. Not only are they evidenced in MT, Qumran, LXX, and Targums, but it ought also to be noted that even by the time of the LXX translation (second or third century BC?) the technical terms contained there were so antiquated and obscure that the translators had a fair degree of trouble interpreting them. This is true also for the Targums. Furthermore, we find similar super/postscripts in other parts of Scripture (cf. Hab 3:1, 19b; Isa 38:9). There thus seems to be no reason not to take the super/postscripts seriously.

Given that attribution of authorship seems to play an important role in the division of the psalter, it behooves us to investigate briefly the significance of ל before personal names in the superscripts.²⁵ The most obvious denotation of *lamed* before a personal name seems to be that of authorship (commonly called *lamed auctoris*; cf. Ges-K 129c). A fairly clear example of this in a superscript outside the psalter is Hab 3:1. Within the psalter itself, it seems highly probable that in those cases where ל ד ו ד is followed up by a historical superscript placing the psalm in a part of David's life setting, authorship is meant. Certainly in Ps 18:1 this is the case (cf. 2 Sam 22:1). Furthermore, the NT seems to have taken the *lamed* in this way; note Matt 22:41-45; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44 (Psalm 110); Acts 1:16-17 (Psalm 41); 2:25-34 (Psalms 16 and 110); Rom 4:6-8 (Psalm 32); Rom 11:9f (Psalm 69); Heb 4:7 (Psalm 95 following LXX).²⁶

Despite all this, it is equally clear that *lamed* plus personal name does not always indicate authorship. The phrase ל י ד י ת ון in Ps 39:1, for instance, must indicate something other than authorship, which seems to be indicated by the ensuing ל ד ו ד. J. Ridderbos argues with some plausibility that the phrase here specifies the choir director more closely.²⁷ The phrase ל ב נ י ק ר ח is also not so clear. The fact that no other author indication is given in these superscripts would seem to suggest authorship. However, Ridderbos, following Weiser, on the strength that here no personal name is given, suggests "belonging to."²⁸ This meaning seems to me at least possible. With respect to the Asaph psalms, Ridderbos rejects *lamed auctoris*, but only because he finds it difficult to consider some of these psalms as dating from the time of the Davidic Asaph.²⁹ This argument is weak. If the authorship of the Davidic Asaph is to be rejected, and the possibility of a later Asaph seems improbable, then the respective titles are probably spurious. The dating of several Asaph psalms will be discussed below. In conclusion, apart from such cases

²⁵ My discussion here is deeply indebted to J. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen* (Commentaar op het Oude Testament; 2 vols.; Kampen: Kok, 1955-58) 1.367-381.

²⁶ For these examples see *ibid.*, 374.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 376.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 376-77.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 377-78.

as לִידִיתוֹן or לְבִנֵי־קֶרַח, I take *lamed* plus personal name in the superscripts to refer to authorship.

The last problem discussed here, as far as the superscripts are concerned, relates to the so-called historical superscripts. Many of the psalms bearing these seem to lack any concrete detailed historical reference confirming the superscripts themselves. This problem is, however, more acute in some instances than in others. Psalm 51, for example, is widely acknowledged as portraying the penitent spirit of one in a position such as David found himself.³⁰ Psalm 34, on the other hand, has been judged more problematic. N. H. Ridderbos has suggested that in such a case the psalmist may well have written or used the psalm in question on the occasion indicated, but modeled it according to a well known and generalized form.³¹ This view, of course, also makes the psalms themselves particularly suitable for preservation and continued use by the covenant people throughout their generations and different circumstances of need and praise.

B. S. Childs, however, argues that the historical titles in no way depend on tradition or historical memory. In his view they are the result of mid-rashic exegesis that was taking place in the few centuries before Christ. Childs bases his working hypothesis here upon evidence related to Psalm 151. Relying upon Sanders' comparison of LXX Psalm 151 and Qumran Psalm 151, he suggests that the LXX superscript to Psalm 151 must be a later addition that fits only the expansive amalgam of two earlier psalms that form LXX Psalm 151.³² He continues: "This evidence is significant not only in showing the lack of an independent historical tradition behind the expansion of the LXX titles, but also in fixing an approximate date at which time Psalm titles were being formed on the basis of internal development alone."³³ Thus, Childs clearly moves from an argument based on the superscript of LXX Psalm 151 to an extrapolation about all the LXX superscripts, finally bringing forward a hypothesis on historical psalm superscripts in general. This argumentation is, however, rather weak. In the first place, Sanders cogently argues that LXX Psalm 151 is a translation of a Hebrew amalgam of Qumran Psalms 151A and 151B.³⁴ Thus, the LXX translators probably should not be considered guilty of supplying their own titles based on midrashic exegesis. Secondly, we may ask whether the activity behind a clearly apocryphal psalm composition can be said to reflect similar activity behind the canonical psalms. This question receives especial significance in view of the fact that the LXX itself places Psalm 151 outside

³⁰ See for example B. S. Childs, "Psalm Titles," 145.

³¹ N. H. Ridderbos, *Psalmen en cultus* (Kampen: Kok, 1950) 20-22. It is also interesting to note that E. J. Young (*An Introduction to the Old Testament* [2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949] 301) uses this phenomenon to argue that the psalm titles themselves must be authentic. How else can their connection to otherwise unrelated psalms be adequately explained?

³² Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll*, 56ff.

³³ Childs, "Psalm Titles," 143.

³⁴ Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll*, 56ff.

the canon.³⁵ Finally, can the supposed literary activity of the LXX be automatically predicated of the MT? Childs' view is thus found severely wanting in its premises. Nevertheless, Wilson accepts Childs' work and his conclusion that this midrashic work probably "stemmed from a pietistic circle of Jews whose interest was particularly focused on the nurture of the spiritual life."³⁶ Wilson adds that the resulting function of the historical superscripts within the psalter is to loosen those psalms from their original cultic context and give them an individual spiritual character that makes them appropriate for exemplaric meditation. To me this seems no more than speculation based on a wrong view of the nature of the superscripts themselves. If the MT psalter really was intended to provide such a "hermeneutical key" for individual meditation in this way, why is the phenomenon of historical superscripts not more common and more organized? As it is, these superscripts are spread out over a good portion of the psalter. In conclusion, there seems to be no real editorial purpose to either the existence or the present distribution of the historical superscripts.

V. Books 1-3

1. Division of Individual Psalms

Before proceeding to a discussion of the final arrangement of the five books of the psalter itself, we must first briefly examine the main cases put forward for combination and separation of psalms contrary to their present state in codex Leningradensis. Wilson in this respect is correct in noting that we need to treat the cases in books 1-3 separately from those in books 4 and 5. His own examination of the candidates for combination here falls under a discussion of untitled psalms.³⁷ Having examined these and the grounds for their combination with those psalms preceding them, he concludes that the MT placement of untitled psalms in these books is so as to deliberately connect them with the preceding psalm. He argues that in each case valid reasons for their combination can be given. It remains for us to test this for ourselves case by case.

Psalms 9 and 10 are frequently taken together as forming one acrostic. Psalm 10 has no superscript and is joined with Psalm 9 in LXX, Vg, and a few Hebrew Mss. Scholars are not unanimous on this union, however.³⁸

³⁵ LXX states: οὗτος ὁ ψαλμὸς ἰδιόγραφος εἰς Δαυιδ διὰ ἕξωθεν τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ ("This psalm is a personal writing of David and outside the number").

³⁶ See Wilson, *Editing*, 170-73; cf. p. 143. Citation from Childs, "Psalm Titles," 149; cf. id., "Reflections on the Modern Study of the Psalms," in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (ed. F M. Cross et al.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976) 384.

³⁷ *Editing*, 173ff.

³⁸ See e.g., N. H. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen* (Korte verklaring der Heilige Schrift; Kampen: Kok, 1962) 1.126-27, who follows F Delitzsch, *Psalms 1*.175-76.

This is mainly because the acrostic no longer seems to be completely preserved. Whilst Psalm 9 probably gives us א to כ (missing ט), and Psalm 10 begins appropriately with ל the following verses show no evidence of continuing the sequence until v. 6b (פ), or possibly not till v. 8b (ע) or even v. 12, where it continues from ק to ת. It should be noted, however, that the number of missing letters equals the numbers of verses lacking acrostic beginnings. In my opinion the remaining evidence of an acrostic cannot be discounted, and the original unity of the composition thus seems fairly evident. Furthermore, there are several internal indications of unity between Psalms 9 and 10. Note the use of similar phrases, e.g., בצרה לעתות (9:10; 10:1), and the use of לַיְלָה with similar imagery (9:16; 10:2), and compare 9:18-20 with 10:11-12.³⁹ A distinction between Psalms 9 and 10 has been observed in the content. Psalm 9 is characterized as a psalm of thanksgiving, whilst Psalm 10 as a supplicatory psalm. Further, Psalm 9 is said to be concerned with enemies from the outside, whereas Psalm 10 with enemies from the inside.⁴⁰ The first distinction does not seem to carry too much weight in view of the inner verbal connections. The entreaty of Psalm 10 is clearly based on the confession of Psalm 9 (which is itself not devoid of entreaty; cf. vv. 20-21).⁴¹ The nations are mentioned in both psalms as enemies (cf. 9:18--21 and 10:16). It is understandable that it is in the supplication proper that a more detailed and expanded view of oppression is given (i.e. allusion to enemies within).

Wilson, who accepts an originally unified composition, argues that the break in the acrostic pattern at the beginning of Psalm 10 can only be explained by assuming that the psalm was early broken into two distinct compositions/readings.⁴² He may well be correct in this assumption, though to infer a division in readings does not in my opinion necessarily have to entail an early division into separate compositions. A tradition of readings separating these psalms may well account for the separation of them in many Masoretic Mss.

Psalms 32 and 33 are sometimes said to be a unity.⁴³ Here there is indeed some external evidence. A few Masoretic mss apparently join the two psalms together. Furthermore, F. Delitzsch cites an old midrash that reckons them together.⁴⁴ Against this evidence, however, is that of both the LXX and Qumran. The LXX not only separates Psalm 32 from Psalm 33

³⁹ See further Delitzsch, *Psalms* 1.175.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid*; N. H. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen* 1.126-27; and J. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen* 1.77f.

⁴¹ Note that De Wette classified Psalm 9 as supplicatory (see J. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen* 1.78).

⁴² Wilson, *Editing*, 173-74.

⁴³ See for example Wilson, *Editing*, 131. From p. 155 on, Wilson consistently treats Psalms 9/10; 32/33; 42/43; and 70/71 as single psalms. On pp. 174-76 he argues not for an original unity but for a secondary unity based on "an early liturgical function." Although this helps to give a clearer authorship pattern, the evidence for this early conjunction seems to me very weak.

⁴⁴ It also joins Psalm 42 with 43, and 9 with 10. See Delitzsch, *Psalms* 2.54. Whilst this evidence may be significant, Wilson overstates the case when he calls it "strong" (p. 131).

but also attributes the latter to David (i.e. it gives it a separate superscript).⁴⁵ Two Qumran fragments contain the order of Psalm 31 followed by Psalm 33.⁴⁶ Psalm 32 is thus not connected. 4QPs^q also gives Psalm 33 a superscript attributing authorship to David.⁴⁷ Finally, there is the fact that there seems to be no internal connection between the two psalms. The evidence of the LXX and Qumran is more difficult to explain away than are the few Masoretic Mss. It is fairly easy to see how, in copying a collection of psalms predominantly separated by superscripts, two psalms not so separated could accidentally (or even perhaps intentionally) be joined. This is especially likely in view of the fact that the last verse of Psalm 32 and the first verse of Psalm 33 are so similar.⁴⁸ Thus, contra Wilson, I would maintain the separation of Psalms 32 and 33.

Psalms 42 and 43 are frequently classed as one psalm. In support of this union are many Hebrew MSS and the fact of striking internal unity. Furthermore Psalm 43, being without any title, is rather out of place by itself in the midst of a group of Korahite psalms.

Psalm 42/43 is clearly set in 3 strophes, each ending with the same refrain, "How you are in despair, O my soul." Psalm 42 contains the first two refrains, and Psalm 43 the third and final. This is, however, not the only connection between Psalms 42 and 43, for even within the strophes themselves there are many inner verbal connections. This occurs both between the first two strophes in our Psalm 42 and between those strophes and the third one in what is our Psalm 43. Furthermore the setting is quite clearly the same in both. Finally, it is clear that each strophe builds on the preceding, up to the third which forms the climax and conclusion of the psalm, without which Psalm 42 is sadly stunted.⁴⁹ The first two present the position of the psalmist far away from the temple urging himself to place his trust in God and asking him for deliverance. This plea for deliverance finally comes in the third strophe (Psalm 43). Perhaps this distinction between the first two and the final strophe (similar to Psalms 9 and 10) led to its division in certain Masoretic Mss.

⁴⁵ Wilson argues that this feature is secondary in that it is the way the LXX solves the "problem" psalms without superscripts. This seems unlikely in view of (1) the fact that the LXX is not consistent in this respect, as it joins Psalms 9 and 10 and thus shows no deliberate methodology; (2) my argument above on LXX superscripts in general, i.e., that they were based on Hebrew originals, and not fabricated by the translators; and (3) the support of Qumran and the general argumentation following that these psalms are not a unity.

⁴⁶ That is, 4QPs^a frgs c and d, and 4QPs^q.

⁴⁷ It reads (column 1): לְדוֹד שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר.

⁴⁸ This could well have been an ordering factor in the placing of Psalm 33 after 32 in the MT psalter.

⁴⁹ Thus I do not concur with N. H. Ridderbos' suggestion that Psalm 43 may have been added later to complete Psalm 42 (*De Psalmen* 2.13-14). The presence of a superscript for Psalm 43 in the LXX, however, does suggest that a separation between these two psalms occurred early.

Psalm 71 also stands out in book 2 as being without a superscript. Here too, many Masoretic mss join Psalm 71 with the preceding psalm. At first sight this seems at least possible. As Wilson has pointed out, there are some connections between the two psalms (cf. 70:2b and 71:12b; 70:3 and 71:1, 13, 24).⁵⁰ These internal connections, however, should not be overemphasized. They are not at all on the same level as those between Psalms 42 and 43. The LXX separates Psalm 71, preserving a superscript for it which reads: Τῶ Δαυιδ· υἱῶν Ιωναδαβ καὶ τῶν πρώτων αἰχμαλωτισθέντων.⁵¹ The intriguing reference to the sons of Jonadab (cf. Jeremiah 35) suggests that the (Davidic) psalm was used by them and the first exiles sometime after disaster struck in 587 BC. There seems to be no literary connection to Jeremiah 35, and so this historical superscript probably relies on ancient tradition. One Qumran ms also records Psalm 71 apart from Psalm 70. Here in 4QPs^a (frg g) Psalm 71 follows on from Psalm 38. On balance, then, the evidence strongly suggests that Psalm 71 ought to be treated as a psalm independent of Psalm 70. Those Masoretic mss joining them probably did so either by accident or to avoid an unseemly exception to the use of superscripts (see the argument above for Psalms 32 and 33).⁵² The internal connection between the two psalms may explain why they were placed next to each other in the psalter.

Having examined those psalms sometimes combined, it is my conclusion that although in certain cases good arguments can be made for such combination, there is no evidence that this should automatically be predicated of all psalms in books 1-3 lacking a superscript. Rather, I have argued that in certain cases the only reason some MT Mss combine untitled psalms with the former is because of that very lack of a title. Such combinations are therefore quite secondary. Furthermore, those psalms which ought to be combined may well have been so unified before the compilation of our psalter (cf. the evidence of LXX). In these cases MT separation may well have occurred at some stage in the transmission of the text for a variety of reasons (see suggestions above). I therefore reject Wilson's conclusion that the placement of untitled psalms in books 1-3 shows obvious editorial concern.⁵³

2. Arrangement of Books 1-3

Given that Psalms 9 and 10 are a unity, and that Psalm 33 probably ought to have a Davidic superscript (see above), we may quite appropriately characterize book 1 as a Davidic book. That David was an important

⁵⁰ Cf. Wilson, *Editing*, 131f.

⁵¹ "Of David; of the sons of Jonadab and the first men taken in captivity."

⁵² Wilson, believing that these two psalms are a unity, seems to argue (rather tenuously) that perhaps Qumran confused Psalms 38 and 70 (*Editing*, 131-32). As noted above, Wilson wrongly dismisses LXX evidence as expansive.

⁵⁵ *Editing*, 181.

and prolific psalmist is well known (cf. 2 Sam 23:1-2; Amos 6:5). The only psalms lacking direct Davidic ascription are Psalms 1 and 2. Given the overall Davidic character of this book, these psalms probably also date from his period, if not from his hand (cf. Acts 4:25-26). Psalm 1 has often been seen as introducing the psalter. It at least forms an appropriate introduction to book 1.

The book itself shows little evidence of deliberate internal ordered placement. Just over half the psalms could be characterized as pleas to God for deliverance, but these are not set apart as a special group.⁵⁴ Superscript phrases do not indicate any separate groups of psalms either. Occasionally, elements in common between adjoining psalms can be noted which may have been a factor in their placement together, but this phenomenon is by no means great or consistent.⁵⁵

Book 2 begins with a group of seven psalms belonging to the sons of Korah. It seems best with J. Ridderbos and F Delitzsch to understand by "the sons of Korah" the well-known group appointed over the service of worship by David.⁵⁶ The sons of Korah survived the judgment of Numbers 16 (see Num 26:11). They were gatekeepers from Moses to David (1 Chr 9:19; 26:1-19). This seems to fit Ps 84:11. They had become renowned in helping David (1 Chr 12:6), and were appointed over the service of worship (1 Chr 6:31-32; 25). 2 Chr 20:19, in the time of Jehoshaphat, seems to be the last time they are heard of. However, Psalm 87, with the mention of Babylon (and possibly Psalm 85?), appears to be at least exilic, N. H. Ridderbos assumes that the sons of Korah did return after the exile since "the sons of the gatekeepers" are mentioned as such (Ezek 2:42 et al.).⁵⁷ This seems likely. Note that Heman the singer in the time of David stemmed from Korah (through Abiasaph, 1 Chronicles 6). So it seems some of the sons of Korah were gatekeepers, and some (through Heman?) were singers (*ergo* 2 Chr 20:19). Asaph the singer stemmed from Gershon (through Libni). The sons of Heman and Asaph together are identified as singers (1 Chr 6:33-48; 2 Chr 5:12). The sons of Asaph are sometimes identified as the singers (Ezra 2:41; 3:10-11; Neh 7:44; 11:17, 22; and perhaps 12:46). But this designation does not necessarily seem to exclude the Korahite line of Heman (2 Chr 35:15). Given that the sons of Korah are never referred to by name in Ezra/Nehemia, but only as "the gatekeepers," it may not be out of place to understand singers from their line being subsumed under "the sons of Asaph." Is this because the name of Korah still had bad connotations? Or perhaps the sons of Asaph gradually became

⁵⁴ By my count (without going into detailed exegesis), there are 21 such pleas out of a total of 40 psalms.

⁵⁵ Niemeyer has criticized Delitzsch in this respect for going much too far (*Het probleem*, 126-28). Possible examples of common elements include Ps 3:6-7 and Ps 4:9; Ps 34:8 and Ps 35:5ff. (מלאך יהוה).

⁵⁶ J. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen* 2.9; Delitzsch, *Psalms* 2.52.

⁵⁷ *De Psalmen* 2.5.

dominant in this respect, their name therefore becoming the title under which the others were also assumed.

None of the seven psalms of Korah gathered here in book 2 seems to demand a late date. In this respect Psalm 44 should be placed in the time of the war with Edom (2 Sam 8:13ff.). We learn both from 1 Kgs 11:15 and Psalm 60 that this was a bloody war.⁵⁸ Psalm 44 is closely related to Psalm 60, the superscript of which also places it at this time (cf. Ps 44:10 with Ps 60:12). Evidently, several captives were taken and sold into slavery. The mention of such sale (v. 13), and the fact that the psalmist claims innocence for the people of God (vv. 18ff.), both argue against an exilic date for this psalm.

The remaining psalms in this book also date from Davidic or Solomonic times. Changes of authorship within the book are smoothed over by genre groupings.⁵⁹ Once again there are occasional indications of similarity between adjoining psalms suggesting a rationale for their placement, but the phenomenon is not widespread.⁶⁰ Wilson has suggested that there is a thematic unity among Psalms 65-68 which helps bridge the gap in authorship contained in Psalms 66 and 67.⁶¹ He suggests that whilst many psalms on either side of this group are prayers for deliverance, these psalms are all songs of praise. This point seems sustainable. We might also note that in contrast to the psalms on either side, all four in question contain the title **שִׁיר**. In addition to this connection, however, it does not seem to me out of place to suggest a further link between these psalms. Psalm 65 closes with the pastures and valleys shouting for joy and singing. This is immediately taken up in Psalm 66 where all the earth is urged to shout joyfully to God and sing the glory of his name. Both psalms are also connected by the mention of the paying (**שָׁלַם**) of the vow (**נָדַר**). In the final section of this psalm (vv. 16-20), the psalmist implores the godly to come and hear him tell of what God has done for his life. Thus, Psalm 67 gives the priestly benediction and summons the peoples to praise God that his way may be known. Psalm 68 follows this up with a recounting of what God has done.

The final psalm of the book ends with a suitable doxology, as noted above. One very interesting item, however, is the line underneath this, "the prayers of David, son of Jesse are ended" (Ps 72:20). Possibly **תַּפְּלוֹת** here should be read with LXX (**ὑμνοι**) as **תְּהִלּוֹת**. Striking is the fact that this occurs at the end of a psalm of Solomon! Evidently the line is to be taken

⁵⁸ J. Ridderbos (*De Psalmen* 2.22-23) rejects the relevancy of 1 Kgs 11:15 by stating that it is "zeer dubieus." This seems to me a very questionable argument, for the text can very well be maintained (cf. NASB), not to mention the evidence of the superscript to Psalm 60 together with the contents of that psalm.

⁵⁹ That is, where adjacent psalms have different authors, they invariably belong to the same designated genre.

⁶⁰ Psalms 56 and 57, for instance, both begin **חַנּוּנֵי אֱלֹהִים**, whilst Psalms 57-59 all contain **אֵל־תְּשַׁחַח** in their superscripts.

⁶¹ *Editing*, 190-91.

in a general sense.⁶² It may just refer to book 2, but likely refers to both books 1 and 2. Given that Davidic psalms occur in all the remaining books, it suggests that books 1 and 2 were completed at an earlier point in history than books 3-5. There seems to be no reason to date their compilation any later than the beginning of Solomon's reign. This would fit with the general organizational activity around the building and equipping of the temple at that time. However, it is also possible that they were compiled by the men of Hezekiah together with the Asaph psalms (see below).

Books 1 and 2 as two collections, probably compiled around the same time, supplement each other quite nicely. Book 1 is a collection of psalms favoring the divine name *Yahweh*, whilst book 2 favors *Elohim*.⁶³ Of interest is the fact that there are several instances of textual relation between psalms in book 1 and book 2. First, Psalm 14 of book 1 is textually related to Psalm 53 of book 2. Here we see an example of how similar psalm material could be reworked at a different time for a different situation. In accordance with the preference of the respective books, each psalm addresses God with the different titles. Further, Niemeyer has shown that other textual differences between the two psalms should not be attributed to textual corruption, but may well indicate a reworking for a different occasion.⁶⁴ Secondly, Psalm 70 is clearly related to Ps 40:14-18. Again there is no need to harmonize the slight differences here. A portion of psalm material has been used on a different occasion in a different setting. Finally, it is interesting to note the relation between Ps 31:2-4a and Ps 71:1-3.⁶⁵ It is noteworthy that all these cases occur with psalms of Davidic authorship (note that Psalm 71 has Davidic ascription from LXX). The only other case of intertextual relation in the psalter is also Davidic. Psalm 108 is related to Ps 57:8-12 and Ps 60:7-14. It is not surprising that a prolific author such as David should rework his materials from time to time. It is significant that no two examples of such reworking of the same textual material can be found in any one book of the psalter.

Thus we turn to book 3. The first section of book 3 is made up of a collection of psalms of Asaph. This collection is set off from the other psalms

⁶² In view of my comments above on *lamed auctoris*, however, and the relation of this phrase to the superscripts, the 5 here ought still to be taken as marking authorship (contra Niemeyer, *Het probleem*, 94).

⁶³ N. H. Ridderbos (*De Psalmen* 2.13) argues that in many cases *Yahweh* has been supplanted by *Elohim* in book 2. The reason is no longer known, but he suggests that maybe at a certain time, in "een bepaalde kring van Israel," *Elohim* was used more than *Yahweh*. This seems to me a little speculative. The distinction may be no more than stylistic; see also Niemeyer, *Het probleem*, 90-93.

⁶⁴ *Het probleem*, 82-85.

⁶⁵ Psalm 86 is also sometimes said to be heavily dependent on other sources (see for example Childs, "Reflections," 382). Most of the psalm, however, is readily explained merely by allusion to common poetic phrases. The allusion to such a common, important, and well known phrase as Exod 34:6 in v. 15 is not unexpected. Apart from that the only other probable allusions seem to be from Ps 54:5 (v. 14), 25:1 (v. 4b), and Exod 15:11 (v. 8a).

in this book in a number of ways. First, the rest of the psalms of book 3 show no evidence of deliberate arrangement, by author or otherwise. Second, the psalms of Asaph are all characterized by their preference for *Elohim*. The ensuing psalms show a preference for *Yahweh*. Third, the psalms of Asaph appear to bear a number of other characteristics in common. These are enumerated by Niemeyer as follows: (1) the preference for **אל** and **על יון**; (2) God called or summoned as judge; (3) interjections of God speaking; (4) the use of the image of shepherd and sheep to signify God's relation to his people; (5) mention of Joseph and the tribes stemming from him (Ephraim and Manasseh); (6) allusions to ancient history; (7) a common base of vocabulary.⁶⁶

All this strongly suggests not only that these eleven psalms originally formed a separate unit together, but also that they come from the hand of the same psalmist. It is my contention that we should see here the hand of the Davidic Asaph (see above under discussion of *lamed auctoris*). Asaph was a chief among the singers appointed under David (1 Chr 15:16ff.; 16:4-7, 37; 25:1ff.). Asaph as such functioned as **נְגִיָא**, (cf. 1 Chr 25:1-2) and in that capacity appears to have been an important author of psalms (cf. 2 Chr 29:30). That **נְגִיָא** in 1 Chr 25:1-2 must be seen in the technical prophetic sense is clear from 2 Chr 20:14ff.

In objection to the Davidic Asaph's authorship of these eleven psalms, many have turned to internal considerations manifested in Psalms 74, 79 and 83 in particular. Among the Asaphite psalms, 74 and 79 are often said to be exilic, if not Maccabean.⁶⁷ A careful examination of these psalms, however, reveals that this may not necessarily be the case. Nowhere in these psalms is there any mention of an exile. I submit that it is possible that these psalms date around 926/925 BC when Shoshenq invaded Judah and Israel. We learn from the biblical account (1 Kgs 14:25-28; 2 Chr 12:1-12) that, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, he attacked Judah with many chariots and horsemen, capturing the fortified cities Rehoboam had built (2 Chr 11:5-12). He finally came as far as Jerusalem, which, because the princes humbled themselves, was spared a little (**כמעט** 2 Chr 12:7). Yet Shoshenq did enter Jerusalem and loot the temple.⁶⁸ According to Shoshenq's own record of events he then went on to attack and ravage Israel.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ See *Het probleem*, 65-66, for details.

⁶⁷ See J. Ridderbos (*De Psalmen* 2.252-54, 303-4), who rejects a Maccabean date. J. A. Goldstein's theory that Alcimus was the author of Psalm 79 places the psalm far too late (*I Maccabees* [AB 41; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976] 332ff.). Aside from the objections of Ridderbos to a Maccabean date (2.252-54), it should be noted that if the psalm is this late, it is impossible to explain the wrong authorship title known from LXX and MT Mss. Delitzsch also places these psalms in Maccabean times (Psalms 2.325-28).

⁶⁸ The concentration on the taking away of the golden shields in the historical accounts seems designed to indicate the loss of Davidic glory (cf. 2 Sam 8:7).

⁶⁹ Hence the reference to Jacob in Ps 79:7. See E. H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 323-24.

Psalm 74 seems to have been written shortly after the looting of the temple and possibly while Shoshenq was still attacking Israel. Thus Asaph asks how long the Lord will continue to reject his people. We learn that in looting the temple Shoshenq did much damage, even burning some of it.⁷⁰ Asaph, as we would expect, takes a cultic view of Shoshenq's destruction of Judah, mentioning the destruction of the meeting places (synagogues? cf. Lev 23:2) in the land.

In Psalm 79 Asaph again bemoans the defilement of the temple. It is noteworthy that he here speaks of nations (pl.). That Shoshenq employed soldiers from other nations is confirmed by the biblical account (cf. 2 Chr 12:3). Similar themes to Psalm 74 sound forth here. In v. 8 Asaph asks that Yahweh not remember the iniquities of the chiefs (so רֵאשִׁימִים, not "forefathers" here) which brought about this invasion (cf. 2 Chr 12:1-2).⁷¹ There is also an echo of Ps 44:14 in v. 4. Psalm 44 would have been well remembered by Asaph if, as argued, it dates to his lifetime (see above and below).

If this interpretation is correct, then the author of these two psalms may well be the Asaph of Davidic times. Assuming he was around twenty years of age at his appointment to temple service (cf. 1 Chr 16:4-5), and that this took place in about 977 BC,⁷² then Asaph would have been about 71 at the time of Shoshenq's invasion.

Psalm 83 is at once more and less of a problem. According to J. Ridderbos it has been dated all the way back as far as Saul, and as late as Maccabean times, with many suggestions in between.⁷³ The difficulty in dating the psalm results from the mention in it of places or peoples both ancient and more recent (e.g., Amalek and Assyria). A date consonant with the Davidic Asaph does not seem impossible.

Given, then, that the eleven Asaph psalms of book 3 date no later than Rehoboam's reign, it would seem possible that this collection was produced by the men of Hezekiah. Hezekiah's reign was one of great religious reform. Within that reform was an evident concern to gather and preserve important material (revelation) from the Davidic and Solomonic period (cf.

⁷⁰ Note that in v. 3 לְמִשְׁאוֹת should be read in conjunction with לְמִשְׁאוֹת of Ps 73:18 as "deception" and not "ruin"; cf. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 218, and LXX, which translates ἐπὶ τὰς ὑπερηφανίας. Perhaps Shoshenq deceived the priests, gaining entry for spoil, and then proceeded to wreck the sanctuary.

⁷¹ In v. 1 the word יָעַר occurs. This word only appears four times in the OT and is usually taken to mean "ruin" (Jer 26:18; Mic 1:6; 3:12; Ps 79:1). However, it is notable that the LXX in every case translates with ὄπωροφυλάκιον, that is, the "hut of a garden watcher" (see LSJ, s.v.). Thus at least three (presumably) different translators at (presumably) different times interpreted יָעַר as a synonym of מִלִּנְוָה. Such consistency is striking and suggests that this could possibly be a meaning closer to ancient Hebrew usage. Psalm 79 therefore may not imply a destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

⁷² See Merrill, *Kingdom*, 244.

⁷³ *De Psalmen* 2.330f.

Prov 25:1).⁷⁴ Hezekiah's concern for purity of worship even extended to the words to be used in the temple service, for in 2 Chr 29:30 he and the officials (השירים) ordered the Levites to praise Yahweh specifically with the words of David and Asaph the Seer (בדברי דוד ואסף החזן). This seems to imply that some sort of gathering work had gone on to provide the suitable texts. Possibly the collections of books 1 and 2 also came about at this time. Ps 137:3 could well imply the existence in pre-exilic times of such a collection of songs. Here in exile, captors demand that some of the temple musicians sing מן ציון. משיר. שיר here appears to be collective with partitive מן. Could this have been a technical term for a canonical collection?

The rest of book 3 exhibits no evidence of any earlier collection. Psalm 89 clearly shows that a date sometime in the exile or thereafter is demanded for the book as a whole.

VI. Books 4-5

1. Division of Individual Psalms

When we turn to books 4 and 5 the situation is at once more confused and more clear. There is here a much lower number of superscripts in general. At the same time several Hebrew manuscripts combine quite a number of psalms, especially between 90 and 99, and 114 and 119. These combinations are often awkward and in nearly every case almost certainly secondary.⁷⁵ I shall discuss only two cases of alternate division where the evidence seems highly significant.

In the first place there is much evidence that Psalms 114 and 115 were originally combined. Many Masoretic (Hebrew) Mss combine them (including codex Leningradensis),⁷⁶ as well as 4QPs^o, LXX, Theodotion, Syriac, and Jerome. Although internal evidence is not decisive, the praise of God and ridicule of idols in Psalm 115 does flow well from the confession of deliverance of Israel out of Egypt in Psalm 114.

In the second place, as noted above, Psalm 147 is divided into two psalms in the LXX. This psalm does easily fall into two sections that may have been two independent psalms (vv. 1-11 and 12-20); however, there are no Hebrew mss extant supporting this division. Thus the separation in two must remain no more than a possibility.

2. Arrangement of Books 4-5

Book 4 begins again, as I have noted, with a change of authorship to help mark the boundary line. Psalm 90 is thus a psalm of Moses. There appears

⁷⁴ Of interest is *t. B. Bat.* 15a: "Hezekiah and his company wrote [כתב] Isaiah, Proverbs, the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes." The verb כתב here obviously signifies some kind of copying or editorial work. The passage is cited in Young, *Introduction*, 202.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of some of these cases see Wilson, *Editing*, 177ff.

⁷⁶ Wilson mentions the surprising numbers of 19 Mss in Kennicott and 52 in de Rossi (*Editing*, 179).

to be quite some significance to placing the psalm of Moses at the beginning of this book, as his name appears no less than six times in book 4 (Ps 90:1; 99:6; 103:7; 105:26; 106:16, 23, 32). Outside of these instances the name of Moses appears only once in the psalter (Ps 77:21).

The ensuing nine psalms seem to form a deliberate block introduced by Psalm 91. This block is interesting for several reasons. First, only Psalm 92 has a superscript in MT, but the LXX shows that there were also superscripts for each one of these psalms. Second, many of these psalms have been reckoned among a modern genre called *Yahweh malak* psalms. Although the classification of this genre has been shown to be complex, modern study has drawn attention to the similarity in content within this set of psalms.⁷⁷

Psalms 92-99 all contain the theme of God's kingship and enthronement. Besides this they have many other thematic elements in common (e.g., holiness of God, singing Yahweh's praise, etc.). An examination of them reveals that together they celebrate Yahweh's victory in conquest over enemies and thus his continuing rule.⁷⁸ Several of them are given historical superscripts by the LXX. These reinforce the idea that they are victory psalms.

Psalm 93, for instance, has the LXX superscript: εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ προσαββάτου, ὅτε κατώκισται ἡ γῆ· αἶνος ᾠδῆς τῷ Δαυιδ.⁷⁹ Delitzsch interprets this in line with a Talmudic tradition indicating the sixth day of creation.⁸⁰ The Talmud refers the second phrase to the populating of the earth on the fifth day. This seems unlikely in view of the similar superscript to Psalm 97, which is a clear reference to monarchical land in the kingdom of Israel (see below). It thus seems more likely to refer to a celebration of victory in the conquering and settling of land under David. The theme of victory in conquest is a common factor in all the so-called *Yahweh malak* psalms. Yahweh is celebrated again as king after the victory. There are several military associations in the psalm. A study of the expression "to gird oneself with strength" shows clearly that this is battle terminology (cf. 1 Sam 2:4; 2 Sam 22:40; Ps 18:33, 40; 65:7; Isa 8:9). Delitzsch argues further that the rivers that are lifted up represent the mighty rivers of the surrounding nations." However, Yahweh is more mighty than they (v. 4).

Psalm 96 is also considered a *Yahweh malak* psalm (cf. v. 10). Here too a military victory seems to be celebrated. The reference to singing a new song usually indicates the desire to celebrate a new victory attained through the

⁷⁷ For complexity, see J. D. W. Watts, "Yahweh Malak Psalms," *TZ* 21 (1965) 341-48. The results of Watts' study here are less important than the fact that he shows the complex and subjective nature of attributing psalms to this so-called genre. For similarity, see Wilson, *Editing*, 177ff.

⁷⁸ It is interesting to note that a further example of this genre (?) appears in Isa 42:10-13. Again here all the common themes are present.

⁷⁹ "For the day before the sabbath, when the earth/land was settled; a song of praise of David."

⁸⁰ Delitzsch, *Psalms* 3.74. The reference is to *Ros Has.* 31a. See also Briggs, *Psalms* 2.299.

⁸¹ Delitzsch, *Psalms* 3.75-76.

help of Yahweh. Deliverance from enemies is indicated (v. 2) and again victory over their gods is celebrated.⁸²

Of interest is the fact that Psalm 97, being like Psalm 93 a so-called *Yahweh malak* psalm, also has a LXX superscript relating to the land. It reads: τῶ Δαυιδ, ὅτε ἡ γῆ αὐτοῦ καθίσταται.⁸³ A similar occasion to Psalm 93 seems to be the background here. Yahweh's enemies have been routed and have seen his glorious victory (v. 3, 6). The defeated are taunted for their worship of idols (false gods) in the wake of the victory of the now exalted Yahweh (vv. 7-9). Vv. 10-12 form a parenthetic conclusion that bases itself on the demonstrated faithfulness of Yahweh in preserving and delivering his people.

Many of the psalms from this group (i.e. 91-99) are ascribed to David by the LXX (Psalms 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99).⁸⁴ These psalms themselves bear no indication that Davidic authorship is unlikely. In fact, Psalm 99 seems to offer positive internal evidence of this period by its constant allusion to the ark of the covenant.⁸⁵ The ark is seldom heard of after the division of the kingdom (but cf. Jer 3:16; 2 Chr 35:3). The fact that this is a victory psalm after battle argues for David's and not Solomon's reign (cf. 1 Chr 28:3). That the ark was used by David to symbolize Yahweh's presence in battle seems clear from 2 Sam 11:11 (cf. Num 10:35-36).⁸⁶ In conclusion, it seems likely (given both internal similarities and LXX authorship ascriptions) that all the victory psalms given here date from the time of David.

It is tempting to see this series of victory psalms as an answer to the questioning contained in the last psalm of book 3. There in the wake of the destruction of the kingdom and capitulation of the Davidic king, the psalmist cries to Yahweh to remember his covenant with David. Whilst this connection is possible, and has indeed been argued,⁸⁷ it seems to me rather doubtful. As already argued, book 4 is considerably later than book 3, and, in addition, Psalm 90 does not immediately answer the question anyway, but contains a plea for the Lord's return itself (though not based on the covenant specifically).

⁸² For an interpretation of the LXX superscript see n. 18 above.

⁸³ "Of David., when his land is established."

⁸⁴ With regard to Psalm 95, cf. Heb 4:7. With regard to Psalm 96, the parallel in 1 Chr 16:23ff. indicates that this psalm probably also dates from this period.

⁸⁵ E.g., v. יֵשׁב כְּרוּבִים (cf. 1 Sam 4:4; 1 Chr 13:6); v. 4 עָז מַלְךְ (cf. Ps 132:8; 78:61; 2 Chr 6:41); v. 5 רַגְלֵי יוֹ (cf. 1 Chr 28:2); v. 7 עֲדַת יוֹ (cf. Exod 25:22); note also the fact that the ark contained the לַחַת הָעֵדֻת (cf. Exod 31:18; Deut 10:5).

⁸⁶ M. H. Woudstra has attempted to circumvent the prima facie interpretation of 2 Sam 11:11 (*The Ark of the Covenant from Conquest to Kingship* [International Library of Philosophy and Theology: Biblical and Theological Studies; Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1965] 119-21). However, I am not yet convinced that the passage does not imply that the ark was out with the military. See C. J. Goslinga, *Het Tweede Boek Samuel* (Commentaar op het Oude Testament; Kampen: Kok, 1962) 206.

⁸⁷ Cf. Wilson, *Editing*, 215.

The last section of book 4 contains a number of psalms of praise often called *Halleluyah* psalms after their characteristic first and last lines. Strictly speaking, Psalms 105 and 106 fall into this category. However, Psalms 103 and 104 also seem to be related. In the first place, the latter two are connected by their common beginnings and endings (ברכו נפשי את־יהוה). Psalm 104 also connects to Psalms 105 and 106 by its concluding יהללו־יה. It may be that Psalms 103 through 106 are intended to be the answer to Ps 102:19ff., especially 19b: וּעַם נִבְרָא יִהְלֵל־יְהוָה.

The boundary between book 4 and book 5 is much more fluid than any other. There is no authorship change here; in fact, both the last psalm of book 4 and the first psalm of book 5 lack any superscript. Furthermore, Psalm 107 seems to be closely related to the preceding by its opening verse. Wilson has argued that such a *Todah* psalm is used to mark the beginning of a new section after a group of *Halleluyah* psalms.⁸⁸ Whilst it is noteworthy that such a *Todah* psalm does frequently close a group of *Halleluyah* psalms, the suggestion that it begins a new section seems to me a little far fetched. The only real ground for it is the placement of Psalm 107 at the beginning of book 5. Is not Psalm 105 a *Todah* psalm? Do Psalms 118 and 136 really begin a new (sub)section?

A related grouping to Psalms 103-107 is 111-118, however, this does not seem to follow on from any specific suggestion in the previous psalm. The final *Halleluyah* group (Psalms 146-150) does, however, seem to follow from Ps 145:21, the last of a series of Davidic psalms (138-145).⁸⁹ The only definite grouping of psalms that may have had a previous history as a collection would appear to be the psalms of ascents, usually taken as a group of pilgrimage psalms.⁹⁰ For the rest, apart from sporadic indications of relation here and there, book 5 does not bear any signs of deliberate organization.

The fact of the fluidity between books 4 and 5, and the common use of a group of *Halleluyah* psalms to answer to a previous psalm, would seem to indicate that the two books were compiled together. Psalm 137 provides a *terminus a quo* in the exile; however, the distinction between books 1-3 and 4-5 in the mss tradition noted above in the section on "evidence" would seem to indicate a later date.⁹¹ Possibly these books were compiled during

⁸⁸ Ibid., 187-90.

⁸⁹ See Wilson, who aptly remarks: "In this context, Psalm 146 . . . represents the response of David himself to the first half of 145:21. In 147 Israel and Jerusalem join the chorus (cf. vv. 2, 12, 19-20). The infectious praise spreads ever further in Psalm 148 where the angelic hosts and the creation break forth into song (vv. 2-3, 11-12). In 149, focus returns to the people of YHWH as Israel praises their God for the accomplishment of his purposes. In the final Psalm 150, we hear the great hymnic answer to the second half of 145:21, toward which the whole hallel has been building" (Editing, 194). Cf. Niemeyer, *Het probleem*, 154.

⁹⁰ Niemeyer has shown that these also exhibit an inner connection (*Het probleem*, 59ff.).

⁹¹ Of interest is that Wilson (*Editing*, 73) notes the work of Avi Hurvitz (*The Identification of Post-exilic Psalms by Means of Linguistic Criteria* [in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1966]), whose

the time of the literary work done by Nehemia, who also appears to have amassed a considerable library (2 Macc 2:13).⁹² The number of Davidic psalms in books 4 and 5 shows that there was still a considerable number of psalms preserved from pre-exilic times.⁹³

VII. Conclusion

In summation we have seen that the division of the psalter into five books is indeed not only warranted, but gives evidence of a historical development of compilation over the ages since the times of Hezekiah or earlier. This work of compilation into known and well used canonical collections was probably completed only after the exile, perhaps in the time of Nehemia. Whilst there are indications of internal ordering here and there, there appears to be no systematic attempt to structure the psalter internally. Given the historical development of compilation, the old interpretation of *midrash tehillim* (on Ps 1:5) that the five books reflect the five books of Moses is probably no more than a late reflection.⁹⁴ The *Sitz im Leben* of this long process of compilation appears to have been the need to furnish recognized collections for use in the temple liturgy (cf. the connection to the liturgical reforms of Hezekiah, 2 Chr 29:30, and the implications of Ps 137:3).⁹⁵ The psalter thus remains for us today as the church's prophetic songbook, teaching her in inspired words of the greatness of her God, his wonderful deeds of salvation, and his faithfulness to his covenant promises. It enables the church to give back to God her prophetic response of praise that is his due.

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studies have concluded that "the ten post-exilic Masoretic pss [by his standards] are all in the last third of the psalter."

⁹² The song of praise in 1 Chr 16 has often been used as proof that books 1-4 of the psalter were already in existence when Chronicles was written (see, for example, P. Skehan, "Qumran and Old Testament Criticism," in *Qumran sa piete, sa theologie et son milieu* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium 46; Louvain: Duculot University Press, 1978) 167-68, cited in Wilson, *Editing*, 77). It is thus suggested that the Chronicler merely took over portions of Psalms 96, 105, and 106. In light of my comments above on duplication in the psalms, such an argument does not hold any weight. The composition in 1 Chronicles 16 could easily be very ancient, even Davidic (recall that all examples of duplication in the psalter occur in Davidic psalms).

⁹³ Compare 11QPs^a "David's Compositions," which lists a total of 4,050 songs of David itemized according to genre. These may no longer have existed in the time of Qumran but the list does show that there was probably once a considerable library of them.

⁹⁴ The midrash itself is dated from the ninth century or later; cf. Hippolytus (d. 235), *On the Psalms*, preface, for a similar view.

⁹⁵ Thus I reject Wilson's ideas on thematic development in the psalter. Such ideas run counter both to its historical development and to its purpose. Wilson (*Editing*, 207) summarizes his notion of the purpose of the psalter by saying, "this is a collection to be read rather than performed." If anything, I would conclude the opposite, though of course the reading of the psalms is also highly profitable!

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