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CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ELEMENTS OF CULTIC PROPHECY IN PSALM 75

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE CALVIN THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF THEOLOGY

BIBLICAL DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF OLD TESTAMENT

BY

NIELSEN A. TOMAZINI

May, 2015



CALVIN  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY

## THESIS APPROVAL

This thesis entitled

“Elements of Cultic Prophecy in Psalm 75”

written by

NIELSEN TOMAZINI

was submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Theology**

and successfully defended on October 19, 2011

has been accepted by the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary

upon the recommendation of the following readers:

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July 7, 2015  
Date



To my mother, Aurenívia, who have prayed for me all my life  
and taught me to love God and respect the others.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was made possible because of God's grace which was manifested in many different ways, even at moments of turmoil. The accomplishment of this project was possible only because of many people involved. Some of them are:

- Calvin Theological Seminary faculty and staff. From the first contacts for the application to the last details until graduation everyone has shown their love for the Lord through their service towards us, the students. I could never imagine I would be so much welcome and assisted in a foreign land. Assistance, explanations, training, support, counseling, teaching, care and comprehension are just a few words of what CTS has offered me for more than two years;

- Special thanks to Rev. Richard Sytsma, Dean of International Student and Mrs. Ina De Moor, who gave all the necessary assistance with the bureaucracy of permission to study in the United States and much more. Their patience, kindness and willingness to make all international students comfortable gave me a live picture of how the love of God can be expressed in many ways.

- The Hekman Library. In special for the always kind assistance of Mr. Paul Fields and Rev. Lugene Schemper;

- The Frank and Bernice Deppe Scholarship and the International Students Subsidy Fund. It would be impossible to study at Calvin Theological Seminary without their generosity;

- My home church, the Igreja Presbiteriana de Limeira, Brazil, for all the given support whenever I needed;

- Prof. Carl J. Bosma, for his friendship and care since the day I arrived in the United States. He was not only an academic mentor, but also a counsellor and friend. His Brazilian heart made me feel not so far from home.

- Prof. Arie C. Leder who willingly stood as a friend and an advisor. An academic who taught me theology of the Old Testament outside the classroom.

- Prof. Dean Deppe, whom I had the privilege to be a student and also an assistant. His excellency in teaching together with his humble and loving heart was an example of a servant of the Lord to me.

- Thanks to my family - persons close to me who have supported me in this journey.

Thanks be to God for every one of them. Be all the glory to God.

## ABSTRACT

This work defends the thesis that Psalm 75 is the result of the participation of cult prophets in the worship of Israel. We argue that Gunkel's form critical method and Mowinckel's cult functional approach provides the necessary features to satisfactorily explain the switches in speakers and addressees in this psalm. Additionally, we conclude that cultic prophecy is a valid approach to interpret the so-called "prophetic psalms" in the Psalter and, consequently, to interpret Psalm 75.

In search for more arguments in defense of our thesis we use 2 Chronicles 20 as an example of the participation of prophets in a cultic situation in ancient Israel as well as Harry P. Nasuti's distinction between quoted and unquoted divine speech.

After that we apply different exegetical methods in order to execute a close reading of Psalm 75 and thus we substantiate that the unquoted divine speeches in its composition are better interpreted as a result of the participation of prophets in the cult in Israel.

## INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of his commentary on Psalm 75, Frank-Lothar Hossfeld rightly affirms that “[t]his text is hard to understand in many places, something that comes through in the interpretation of the individual passages and of the psalm as a whole.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in this study we intend to demonstrate that a combination of the grammatical, historical, theological methods with Mowinckel’s cultic functional approach explains the major difficulties in interpreting the message of Psalm 75. Because Psalm 75 contains at least one divine speech, we will also demonstrate that Mowinckel’s hypothesis of cult prophecy in Israel’s worship can provide a satisfactory explanation of the unique and complex features of this composition.

An analysis of the history of interpretation of Psalm 75 reveals that four major difficulties have plagued the exposition of this psalm: the switches in addressee; the translation of verbal forms; the classification of the literary genre; and the historical occasion for the composition of the psalm. Of these four problems, the switches in addressee have proved to be the most controversial issue and will be the focus of our investigation. Hossfeld also rightly asserts that “[a]pparently the delimitation of the divine speeches is a central problem of this psalm in particular.”<sup>2</sup> The problem is to define not only where each speech begins and ends but also to identify the speaker(s). The vast majority of commentators agree that in v. 3 Yahweh begins to speak, but they disagree as

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<sup>1</sup> Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 252.

<sup>2</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253.

to where his speech ends.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, v. 11 has been interpreted either as the continuation of the vow of the liturgist in v. 10 or as a new oracle of assurance from Yahweh. One of the reasons for the difficulty in defining the beginning and end of the various voices in Psalm 75 is that the speeches do not have an introduction that mark the following words as a quotation. One might expect, for example, that a divine speech would begin with the formulaic words, “thus says the Lord,” or another similar introductory formula. But there is none in Psalm 75.

Suggesting that Psalm 75 derives from the phenomenon of cultic prophecy in ancient Israel makes it necessary to explain how we understand cultic prophecy. The existence of cultic prophecy in ancient Israel and the preservation of compositions resultant from this phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible are still without consensus. Complex issues surround the debate on cultic prophecy, such as, for example: the period when it took place in ancient Israel; the identity of the cult prophets; the connection between inspiration and performance during the cult; the relationship between prophets, priests and cult. Therefore, before we can proceed to defend our thesis that Psalm 75 derives from the participation of cultic prophets in Israel’s worship we must review the debate on cultic prophecy.

Another difficulty in the interpretation of Psalm 75 concerns the translation of the verbal forms. Up to this moment, there are no clear grammatical criteria to determine the

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, our research found only J. H. Eaton as someone who does not agree that vv. 3 and 4 are the words of Yahweh. He interprets these verses as the word of a human king. Cf. J. H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (SBT 2/32; London: SCM, 1976), 55-56.

translation of the verbal forms in Hebrew poetry.<sup>4</sup> This is evident from the lack of consensus as to how to translate the verbs in Psalm 75. Particularly the translation of the *qatal* verbs of v. 2 is an important issue for the solution of other interpretive problems in the text. For instance, if v. 2 is translated in the perfect tense “we have thanked you, o God; we have thanked you...” then Psalm 75 may denote a lament instead of a psalm of thanksgiving. Consequently, this thesis will also have to establish criteria for the correct translation of the verbs.

The disagreement about the translation of the *qatal* verbs in v. 2 is also related to another key problem: the definition of the literary genre. Before the development of the Form Critical approach, Psalm 75 was generally classified as a psalm of thanksgiving. However, Gunkel and Mowinckel have satisfactorily demonstrated that the complex construction of the poem contains a mixed style.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, later scholars still highlight the difficulty in classifying the literary genre of Psalm 75. Hossfeld, for example, notes that the literary genre of Psalm 75 is “difficult to classify.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Goldingay observes that Psalm 75 does not follow the form of “any of the common genres (psalm of praise, protest, trust, and thanksgiving).”<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Tate classifies

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Alviero Niccacci, “The Biblical Hebrew Verbal System in Poetry” in *Biblical Hebrew in Its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives* (Ed. Steven E. Fassberg and Avi Hurwitz; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2006), 247.

<sup>5</sup> Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyrics of Israel*, (trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 22, 291; Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (trans. D.R. Ap-Thomas; 2 vols.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 2:64, 76. Mowinckel's book was originally published in 1923 under the title *Psalmstudien III: Kultprophetie und Prophetische Psalmen* (Oslo: Skrifter utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi I Oslo, 1923).

<sup>6</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253.

<sup>7</sup> John Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89* (vol. 2; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 439.

Psalm 75 as a “hybrid form.”<sup>8</sup> Given the disagreement about the classification of the literary genre of Psalm 75, our thesis will also have to address this issue.

As for the historical setting of Psalm 75, it is noteworthy that the scholarship of the Psalms from the last half of a century has not paid much attention to it. However, the suggestion that this song is related to the period of the Assyrian threat against Jerusalem, proposed even before the critical era, and the fact that modern scholars still associate its possible historical setting to a period before the exile, it is important to evaluate these suggestions in the interpretation of Psalm 75.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, Psalm 75 belongs to the Asaphite Psalms and there are theories concerning the origins of this collection in a pre-exilic period. Our thesis will also investigate this issue briefly.

We will begin our study with a brief history of interpretation of Psalm 75 (chapter 1) in order to corroborate the problems listed above. In this first step we will present how the different approaches have dealt with the difficulties in the text. At the end of this step we will be able to evaluate what approaches have contributed towards a better understanding of Psalm 75. As we have already stated above, we will suggest that Sigmund Mowinckel’s cult functional approach to psalmic texts, together with his theory of cultic prophecy in Israel, best accounts for the unique features of Psalm 75. In view of that we will present an evaluation of cultic prophecy in the Psalter (chapter 1). Our goal in this chapter is to engage the debate on cultic prophecy and come out with solid basis to argue that cultic prophecy is a valid approach to explain the issues in Psalm 75. As a

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<sup>8</sup> Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (WBC 20; Dallas: Word, 2002), 257.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, (Vol. 2; trans. by Francis Bolton; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871), 337; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 103-104.

consequence of the evaluation of the debate about cultic prophecy, some definitions or refinements made by those who contributed to the debate will be adopted. At this point, we are left with the task of executing a close reading of the poem. Therefore, in the next chapter (chapter 3), we will execute a close reading of Psalm 75, aiming to deal with all the difficult issues in the composition and proposing a solution to them. At the end of the close reading we will evaluate the interpretation of Psalm 75 as derived from cultic prophecy.

## CHAPTER 1

### BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION OF PSALM 75

Before we begin our close reading of Psalm 75, it is important to survey how this psalm has been interpreted throughout the centuries so that we may understand the present state of the questions raised in the introduction to the thesis. Therefore, this chapter will execute a review of the history of interpretation of Psalm 75. This survey will begin with the Church Fathers, proceeding to the Reformation, the various developments during the Modern Period up to the beginning of the twenty-first century. From each of these periods we will select up to two representative commentators or scholars who have made a distinctive contribution to the understanding of these exegetical problems encountered in the interpretation of Psalm 75. In this survey we aim to examine, first of all, the exegetical methods that commentators and O.T scholars of each period have employed. Second, by examining the exegetical methods used by these commentators, we will be able to see how they have dealt with the five exegetical difficulties in interpreting Psalm 75 that we have listed in the introduction to this thesis. At the conclusion of this chapter we will evaluate each of these approaches and point out which elements of the various methods will help us to resolve the five problems in Psalm 75 that we have outlined above.

#### **1.1 The Church Fathers**

By way of introduction to the psalmic exegesis of the Church Fathers, it should be noted, first of all, that the early church continued the tradition of Judaism and the writers of the N.T. in reading the psalms as “prophetic” texts. Moreover, the early church read the Psalter Christologically. The psalms spoke prophetically about Christ. Furthermore, according to John H. Stek, “[i]n general, the Christological interpretation of the psalms

involved the recognition that Christ (the ‘Lord—remember the LXX rendering of Yahweh) was both the petitioned one and the petitioner, both the one praised and the one praising.”<sup>1</sup> Additionally, it should be underscored that “the interpreters of the early church with the exception of Origen and Jerome possessed no knowledge of the Hebrew tongue....”<sup>2</sup> Consequently, they depended on the Septuagint (LXX), which sometimes led them astray.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Stek claims that “the early Church fathers possessed only the most elementary historical awareness, and lacked all means for developing a grammatical-historical interpretation of the Old Testament.”<sup>4</sup> Finally, it should be noted that at an early stage there emerged basically two schools of biblical interpretation during this period, namely, the School of Alexandria and the School of Antioch.

### 1.1.1 School of Alexandria

As the name of the school indicates, the School of Alexandria emerged in the very prominent city of Alexandria, Egypt. This city was the site where the LXX was translated and “had been an intellectual center, specifically of Neoplatonism....”<sup>5</sup> Moreover, in this city “the Jewish writer Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C.E.—45 C.E.) had worked out in that intellectual tradition an allegorical understanding of Judaism that indeed owed more to

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<sup>1</sup> John H. Stek, *Aspects of Old Testament Poetics and Introductions to Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes*. (Unpublished work), 54. See also Susan Gillingham, *Psalms Through the Centuries – Volume I*; Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Malden-MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, “Psalms,” 5:48.

<sup>3</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, “Psalms,” 5:48.

<sup>4</sup> Stek, *Aspects of Old Testament Poetics*, 55.

<sup>5</sup> William L. Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 169.

Plato than to the original thought world of the Old Testament.”<sup>6</sup> “As a result, Christian commentators trained in Alexandria were prone, then, to allegorize passages of Scripture....”<sup>7</sup>

According to William L. Holladay, “the greatest biblical scholar of Alexandria was Origen (ca. 185-254). His six-volume *Hexapla* that covered the whole O.T. was “an elaborate tool for textual criticism of the Hebrew Scriptures.”<sup>8</sup> Origen also wrote a commentary on the Psalms, “using the allegorical method of Philo, which he worked out in a Christian form and became its father in the church.”<sup>9</sup>

Another outstanding representative of the school of Alexandria is Augustine of Hippo (A. D. 354-430). Augustine is the only Western Church Father who wrote an exposition on the entire Psalter.<sup>10</sup> It is called *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*. This commentary made a lasting impact on commentators from the Middle Ages, including the great reformer Luther. We will review his interpretation of Psalm 75 below, after our description of the School of Antioch.

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<sup>6</sup> Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 169.

<sup>7</sup> Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 169.

<sup>8</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 42.

<sup>9</sup> Charles August Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 1:ciii. Houston questions this matter. Cf. Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 42.

<sup>10</sup> Susan Gillingham, *Psalms through the Centuries* (vol. 1; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 38, 133.

### 1.1.2 The School of Antioch

In contrast to the School of Alexandria, the School of Antioch was “noted for its literal and grammatical interpretation of the Bible.”<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the commentators of this school are considered to be the precursors to the grammatical-historical-theological method of exegesis. The flowering period of this school of exegesis “came late in the fourth century, when Diodorus of Tarsus taught his disciples, Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom of Constantinople.”<sup>12</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, we have selected to review the exegesis of Psalm 75 by Theodore of Mopsuestia because he is considered to be “the best representative of the school of Antioch....”<sup>13</sup>

#### ***1.1.2.a Theodore of Mopsuestia (A.D. 350-428)***

Theodore of Mopsuestia (A.D. 350-428), bishop of Cicilia, wrote a commentary on the Psalter. In fact, this was his first commentary.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, only his interpretation of the first eighty-one psalms survived.<sup>15</sup>

Theodore made a clear distinction between exegesis and exposition.<sup>16</sup> He wrote “I judge the exegete’s task to be to explain words that most people find difficult; it is the

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<sup>11</sup> Robert M. Grant, “History of the Interpretation of the Bible. I. The Ancient Period,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible in Twelve Volumes. Volume I. General and Old Testament Articles, Genesis, Exodus* (ed. Nolan B. Harmon; New York/Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1952), 110.

<sup>12</sup> Grant, “History of the Interpretation of the Bible. I. The Ancient Period,” 1:110.

<sup>13</sup> Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 173.

<sup>14</sup> Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 173.

<sup>15</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Psalms 1-81* (trans. with an Introduction and Notes by Robert C. Hill; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), xxvi-xxxii.

<sup>16</sup> Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 173. Cf. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, “Psalms,” *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes* (Vol. 5; trans. James Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprint, 1976), 51.

preacher's task to reflect also on words that are perfectly clear and to speak about them."<sup>17</sup> Because Theodore "placed more emphasis on the literal and historical sense" of the biblical text,<sup>18</sup> he is considered to be a precursor to what was later called the grammatical-historical-theological method of exegesis. This is evident, first of all, from the fact that a reading of his interpretation of Psalm 75 shows that, unlike the majority of interpreters of his time, he does not refer to Christ as the subject or object of the Psalms.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, he also tried to situate the individual psalms in their historical context. For example, with respect to the historical occasion of Psalm 75, in his introductory comment he situates this poem in the context of Yahweh's deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrians during the reign of Hezekiah.<sup>20</sup> In this introductory comment he also notes that in this psalm the poet speaks "from the general viewpoint of everyone in offering thanksgiving for what was achieved."<sup>21</sup> This statement suggests that for Theodore Psalm 75 is a hymn of thanksgiving.

Regarding the issue of the translation of the problematic verbs in Psalm 75, it is important to remember that Theodore adopted the LXX text and is commenting on this text. For example, in the LXX the *qatal* verbs of v. 2 are translated in the future tense: "[w]e shall confess to you O Lord, we shall confess to you...and we shall call upon your

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<sup>17</sup> We owe this citation to: Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 173.

<sup>18</sup> Cross and Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 79.

<sup>19</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Psalms 1-81* (trans. with an introduction and notes by Robert C. Hill; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 1001-1009.

<sup>20</sup> Theodore, *Commentary on Psalms 1-81*, 1001.

<sup>21</sup> Theodore, *Commentary on Psalms 1-81*, 1001.

name...and I shall narrate....”<sup>22</sup> According to Theodore, in this verse the worshipers are giving thanks for what God has done for them, which is the assurance of judgment in the next verse. Moreover, Theodore accepts the LXX’s translation of the *qatal* verb תִּכְנַתִּי in v. 4b in the past tense, “I strengthened its pillars.”<sup>23</sup> From this he infers that v. 4b refers to the creation of the world.

As for the problem of the unexpected switch in speakers and addressees, a reading of his exegesis of Psalm 75 shows that for Theodore there is only one speaker in the entire psalms.<sup>24</sup> Because he is commenting on the LXX text, which has v. 2d of MT in v. 3a and switches the subject of the verb from the first person plural to the first person singular, Theodore claims that the “I” in v. 3 is the author of the poem and that the author is only recalling what God had said.<sup>25</sup> For this reason Theodore joins the last clause of v. 2 with the beginning of v. 3 and translates vv. 2d-3 as follows: “I shall narrate your wonders when I take the opportunity because you said; I shall deliver upright judgment.”<sup>26</sup> In his opinion, the psalmist has purposely omitted the words, “because you said.” For all practical purposes, therefore, the statement in v. 3b, “I shall deliver upright judgment,” is an unmarked quotation of divine promise.

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<sup>22</sup> Theodore, *Commentary on Psalms 1-81*, 1001.

<sup>23</sup> Theodore, *Commentary on Psalm 1-81*, 1003.

<sup>24</sup> Theodore, *Commentary on Psalm 1-81*, 1001-1009. William L. Holladay notes that Theodore “denies that there can be any shifts in speaker within a psalm.” Cf. Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 174.

<sup>25</sup> Theodore, *Commentary on Psalm 1-81*, 1001.

<sup>26</sup> Theodore, *Commentary on Psalm 1-81*, 1001, 1003.

### ***1.1.2.b Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354-430)***

In contrast to Theodore's methodology, Augustine's commentary on the Psalms is more homiletical than exegetical.<sup>27</sup> In his work there is no interest in first considering the significance of each psalm for ancient Israel. Each psalm is applied directly to the Christian era. Like Theodore, Augustine did not know Hebrew. Consequently, his exegesis and exposition is based primarily on the LXX, which he considered to be divinely inspired.<sup>28</sup> In general, Augustine applied the psalms christologically and, as our review of his exposition of Psalm 75 below will show, to that end used the prosopological method of interpretation.

Augustine begins his interpretation of Psalm 75 by emphasizing that the poem speaks against the pride of any human being<sup>29</sup> and about the faithfulness of the unchangeable God.<sup>30</sup> Because Augustine uses the LXX, he also translates the verbs in vv. 2-3 in the future tense, "We will confess to Thee...we will confess to Thee...and will invoke...I will tell...I shall have received...When I shall have received."<sup>31</sup>

Augustine's exposition of Psalm 75 shows that he is attentive to rhetorical features of the poem. For example, he rightly observes that the repetition of "we will confess to Thee" is for confirmation.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 174.

<sup>28</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 48.

<sup>29</sup> Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms: Vol III, Psalms LIII–LXXV* (London: Oxford, 1849), 517.

<sup>30</sup> Augustine, *Expositions*, 518.

<sup>31</sup> Augustine, *Expositions*, 519-522.

<sup>32</sup> Augustine, *Expositions*, 520.

In his exposition of Psalm 75 Augustine emphasizes some phrases or words in order to bring instruction on a variety of matters. For instance, because he translates v. 2 as, “we will confess thee, O Lord, we will confess to thee, and will invoke thy name,” he argues that we should first confess our sins and then invoke the name of God. In his exposition he quotes from O.T. and N.T. texts.

Unlike Theodore, Augustine recognizes a change in speakers and he explains this change in speakers prosopologically. In his opinion, in v. 3a of the LXX (διηγῆσομαι πάντα τὰ θαυμάσιά σου) it is Christ who speaks. He writes: “Christ is preaching Himself, He is preaching Himself even in His members now existing, in order that He may guide unto Him others....”<sup>33</sup> He explains v. 4b of the LXX (ὅταν λάβω καιρόν) in a similar manner. He writes: “The Son of God hath not received a time: but the Son of Man hath received a time. But the self-same Person is both Son of God by Whom we were made again.”<sup>34</sup> For Augustine, therefore, the “I” who speaks in Psalm 75 is Christ.

Augustine’s exposition of Psalm 75 also uses allegory. For example, in his exposition of v. 4 he claims that the pillars are the apostles (cf. Gal 2.9).<sup>35</sup> Moreover, for Augustine the cup in Yahweh’s hand is “the Law which was given to the Jews, and all that Scripture of the Old Testament, as it is called....”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Augustine, *Expositions*, 522.

<sup>34</sup> Augustine, *Expositions*, 523.

<sup>35</sup> Augustine, *Expositions*, 524-525.

<sup>36</sup> Augustine, *Expositions*, 531.

### 1.1.3 Critical Summary

A comparison of the exposition of Psalm 75 by Theodore and Augustine shows, first of all, that neither of them understood Hebrew and, consequently, both adopted and commented on the LXX. Moreover, while Theodore is much more exegetical in his reading of Psalm 75, Augustine is much more expository. Consequently, Theodore situates Psalm 75 in the time of Hezekiah but Augustine applies the text directly to his own time. Furthermore, for Theodore Psalm 75 is a song of thanksgiving but Augustine is not clear on this matter. Additionally, while for Theodore there is only one speaker in Psalm 75, for Augustine there are two speakers: the congregation (v. 2) and Christ (vv. 3-11).

The commentaries on the Book of Psalms written during the Middle Ages were primarily homiletical, “imitative rather than original—handbooks compiled from the works of Jerome and Augustine.”<sup>37</sup> For this reason we will proceed to review commentaries written during the Reformation.

## 1.2 The Reformation

The Renaissance inspired a revival of the study of classical languages and literature. During the Reformation this resulted in a concern to interpret the Psalter only in terms of the biblical text, apart from the traditions and dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church by basing the exegesis of the Psalter on the Hebrew text and interpreting the psalms in with a concern for their historical context. The two great commentators on the Psalms of this period are Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1546).

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years*, 174.

### 1.2.1 Luther (1483-1546)

Luther's commentary on the Psalms continued in the exegetical tradition of the Middle Ages. His commentary is more Christian exposition than exegesis and his exposition is very Christological, as is evident from his opening comment on v. 3: "First, Christ does this all."<sup>38</sup> Luther does not provide a translation of Psalm 75, nor does he really exegete the text. For this reason we will proceed to examine the commentary of John Calvin, which Charles A. Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs consider to be "by far the best up to his own time."<sup>39</sup>

### 1.2.2 Calvin (1509-1564)

The influence of the Renaissance is clear in Calvin's commentary on the psalms,<sup>40</sup> which represents an important step towards the development of the grammatical-historical-theological method of exegesis. Trained as a humanist in law at Orléans (1528-1531), Calvin made his own translation of each psalm and treats syntactical issues. Calvin turned away from "baseless allegorization" and concentrated instead on the "plain sense" of each psalm and the author's intention in his own historical context.<sup>41</sup> In comparison with Luther, Calvin was more restrained in applying a christological interpretation of the

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<sup>38</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Volume 10, First Lectures on the Psalms I, Psalms 1-75 (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974), 455.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907), 1: cvi.

<sup>40</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (trans. James Anderson; volumes 1-5; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948-49).

<sup>41</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 64.

psalms because of his “David-centered reading” of the Psalter. Instead, he used typology. For him David was a type of Christ and, at the same time, “the prophet who speaks about the Christ.”<sup>42</sup> Calvin’s commentary represents a better balance between exegesis and pastoral exposition. According to James M. Houston, Calvin was “the most modern” of the commentaries of the Reformation on the Psalms.<sup>43</sup>

With respect to his exegesis of Psalm 75, Calvin begins his exegesis of this poem with a summary statement. In this statement he notes that Psalm 75 “affords matter of rejoicing and thanksgiving to the whole Church....”<sup>44</sup> This statement suggests that Calvin interprets Psalm 75 as a psalm of thanksgiving, obviously not yet in the sense that contemporary form critics use the term.

After this introductory statement, Calvin provides his own translation. A careful reading of this translation shows, first of all, that he translates the *qatal* verbs הוֹדִינוּ<sup>45</sup> and סִפְרוּ in v. 2 in the future tense. In his exposition he recognizes that the verbs הוֹדִינוּ and סִפְרוּ in v. 2 are *qatal* verbs but claims that “the subject of the psalm requires that they should be translated into the future....”<sup>46</sup> In his opinion, the Hebrew idiom allows a future tense translation.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, he allows for a translation of these verbs in the past tense. In this case the purpose of v. 2 would be “to induce God to persevere in

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<sup>42</sup> Gillingham, *Psalms through the Centuries*, 144-145.

<sup>43</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 64.

<sup>44</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:182.

<sup>45</sup> Calvin recognizes that the repetition of this verb in v. 2 express the poet’s “strong affection and his ardent zeal in singing the praises of God.” Cf. Calvin *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:183.

<sup>46</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:183.

<sup>47</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:183.

acting in the same manner....”<sup>48</sup> In connection with v. 2 he also notes that the conjunction *waw* that begins clause 2c has the same function as the conjunction **כִּי**.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, he explains that the subject of the verb **סִפְּרוּ** in v. 2d is indefinite. He paraphrases the meaning of these clauses as follows: “We will praise thee, O God, for thy name is near; and, therefore, thy wondrous works shall be declared.”<sup>50</sup> Moreover, Calvin translates the *yiqtol* verb **אָקַח** in v. 3a as a future perfect, “I shall have taken,” and the *yiqtol* verb **אֶשְׁפֹּט** in v. 3b as a simple future, “I will judge.”<sup>51</sup> Curiously, he renders the *Niphal* participle **נִמְגָּיִם** in v. 4a in the past tense, “is dissolved,” but the *qatal* verb **תִּבְנֶהְתִּי** in v. 4b in the future, “I will establish.”<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, he provides no justification for this translation in his exposition. Furthermore, Calvin translates the *qatal* verb **אֶמְרֶהְתִּי** in v. 5a in the past tense and the *Qal* active participle **שֹׁפֵט**, “is judge,” and the two *yiqtol* verbs **יִשְׁפִּיל** and **יָרִים** in v. 8 in the present progressive, “he bringeth low, and setteth up.”<sup>53</sup> Curiously, Calvin translates the *wayyiqtol* verb **וַיִּגַּר** in v. 9 in the future tense, “and he shall pour forth”<sup>54</sup> and again he fails to justify his translation. Finally, the remainder of the verbs in vv. 10-11 he translates as simple futures, as do most Bible versions and commentators.

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<sup>48</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:183.

<sup>49</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:183-184.

<sup>50</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:184.

<sup>51</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:184.

<sup>52</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:184.

<sup>53</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:183.

<sup>54</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:190.

In his exposition of Psalm 75 Calvin notes that he is not too troubled about the authorship of the poem. He writes: “Whoever he was, whether David or some other prophet, he breaks forth at the very commencement into the language of joy and thanksgiving.”<sup>55</sup> He then proceeds to refer to the poet as “the prophet” in the remainder of his exposition. In this connection it should be remembered that, like the N.T. authors and early church commentators, Calvin also considered David to be a prophet. Consequently, he uses the term “prophet” in a hermeutical sense and not yet in the more specific sense to be introduced by Sigmund Mowinckel in the twentieth century (see below).

To his credit, Calvin notes that God is the speaker in vv. 3-4.<sup>56</sup> According to Calvin, this divine speech answers the prayers of the people.<sup>57</sup> In Calvin’s opinion a prophet could have spoken these words but it is rhetorically more effective to use quoted speech.<sup>58</sup> Apparently for Calvin the rest of the poem is voiced by a prophet because in his exposition of these verses he refers repeatedly to the prophet.

Calvin’s interpretation of Psalm 75 shows great restraint in imposing a Christian eschatological or Christological meaning on the poem in his interpretation of vv. 3-4. With respect to v. 3, for example, he allows for the possibility that this verse refers to the ingathering of the Church. However, he appears to prefer to read this verse as God’s answer to the prayer of his people in which God admonished them to exercise patience.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:183.

<sup>56</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:184 and 185.

<sup>57</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:185.

<sup>58</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:185.

<sup>59</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:185.

Moreover, in the case of v. 4, Calvin notes that many commentators apply this verse directly to Christ and his return.<sup>60</sup> Calvin, however, doubts “that such a refined interpretation ever entered into the mind of the prophet, whose words I consider as simply meaning, that although the earth may be dissolved, God has the props or supports of it in his own hand.”<sup>61</sup> In fact, Calvin states that he has no doubt that in v. 4 “there is a reference to the actual state of things in the natural world.”<sup>62</sup>

### 1.2.3 Critical Summary

The above review of Calvin’s interpretation of Psalm 75 shows that, in contrast with the Church Fathers and Luther, his exegesis was based on a better understanding of the Hebrew text. Moreover, his restraint in imposing a Christological or eschatological reading on Psalm 75 suggests an awareness of the historical difference between the Old and New Testament. In view of these significant changes, it is understandable that John Eaton is of the opinion that Calvin’s commentary on the psalms represents “[a] decisive step towards the modern era of exposition...,”<sup>63</sup> which is the next period that we will survey.

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<sup>60</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:18-186.

<sup>61</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:186.

<sup>62</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:186.

<sup>63</sup> John H. Eaton, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 54.

### 1.3 A Parting of the Ways during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

After the Reformation there was a strong scholarly reaction against Protestant Orthodoxy and the Counter Reformation Movement of the Roman Catholic Church. As a result, some scholars advocated freedom from church traditions and adopted human reason as the primary guide, not faith or church dogmas and tradition or the exegetical forms used by the Reformers.<sup>64</sup> In Psalmic studies this led to a parting of the ways into two main streams: 1) commentators who accepted the historicity of the superscriptions for the reconstruction of the historical setting of each psalm, adopted the traditional *hermeneutica sacra* of the church and developed the grammatical-historical-theological method of exegesis; 2) and those who questioned the originality and veracity of the superscriptions and argued for internal evidence for reconstructing the historical setting. This last group abandoned *hermeneutica sacra* for human reason and gave rise to historical criticism.<sup>65</sup> Over the course of time historical criticism gave rise to various new exegetical methodologies, such as, literary source criticism, form criticism, cult functional criticism, traditional criticism, and rhetorical criticism.<sup>66</sup>

In the ensuing sections we will survey key commentaries of these new methodologies in their respective historical periods and compare them with representative commentaries of key representatives of the more traditional grammatical-historical-

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<sup>64</sup> For details see: Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 65-72, 81-86.

<sup>65</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 86. It should be noted that the definition of Historical Criticism and its derived methods are not easily defined. Compare, for example, Soulen and Soulen definition with David E. Aune's definition in David E. Aune, "Historical Criticism" in *The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament* (ed. David E. Aune; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 101-103.

<sup>66</sup> Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 78-79.

theological approach. We will begin this comparative survey with a comparison of a representative commentary of the historical critical approach and a representative commentary of the more traditional-grammatical historical-theological approach during 1800-1875 because each of these methods more or less reached their maturity during this period. As a representative of the historical approach, we have selected Ferdinand Hitzig (1807-1875) and as a representative of the grammatical-historical-theological approach we have chosen Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802-1869) and Franz Julius Delitzsch (1813-1890).

### 1.3.1 Historical Critical Approach of 1800-1875

Before we begin our comparison of Hitzig, Hengstenberg and Delitzsch, however, it is important to call attention to two important developments during this period. The first is the rediscovery of the nature of Hebrew poetry. In 1753 Robert Lowth (1710-1787) published his *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum*. Moreover, in 1782 Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) published his very influential *On the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* (ET 1833). The second important development was the publication of Wilhelm Gesenius's *Hebräische Grammatik* in 1813. This very influential and significant publication allowed psalmic scholars to understand the grammar and syntax of the Psalter with more precision,

### ***1.3.1.a Ferdinand Hitzig (1807-1875)***

Although Ferdinand Hitzig came from a Lutheran pietist background,<sup>67</sup> his interpretation of the Psalter is clearly influenced by the historical critical approach to Scripture. This is evident from the subtitle of his commentary on the Psalter: “Historical and Critical Commentary along with Translation.”<sup>68</sup> As noted by Waltke and Houston, “Hitzig set each psalm within a strong historical context and gave a stronger personal concreteness to its characters.”<sup>69</sup>

Based on his historical critical research, Hitzig divides the Psalter into seven so-called “books,” each of which is related to different historical characters and different periods of ancient Israel’s history. He named these books as follows: First Book: Psalms of David; Second Book: Psalms from the flowering of Hebrew poetry after David; Third Book: Psalms of Jeremiah; Fourth Book: Later Psalms of the second collection from writings of unknown names; Fifth Book: Psalms from the first period of the Maccabean freedom fights; Sixth Book: Psalms from the second period of the Maccabean freedom fights; Seventh Book: Psalms of the last time (to the end of the collection).<sup>70</sup>

Hitzig situates Psalm 75 in the Fifth Book, claiming that Psalm 75 was composed in the first period of the Maccabean revolt.<sup>71</sup> In fact, Hitzig claims that this poem is related to the victory of the minority of Jewish against the army of Apollonius (1 Macc.

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<sup>67</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 74.

<sup>68</sup> Ferdinand Hitzig, *Die Psalmen: Historischer und kritischer Commentar nebst Uebersetzung, Erster Theil* (Heidelberg; C. F. Winter’s Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1835).

<sup>69</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 74.

<sup>70</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 1:1, 24, 48, 85, 114, 149, 179.

<sup>71</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 1:128.

3:10 ff.).<sup>72</sup> Consequently, he interprets Psalm 75 in terms of the Books of the Maccabees.<sup>73</sup>

Hitzig suggests that Psalm 75 is a song of thanksgiving occasioned by God's manifestation in favor of his people. They thank him because he promises his people justice (v. 3). Moreover, on the basis of v. 11 he suggests that the composer of the poem is a leader.<sup>74</sup>

Significantly, Hitzig treats Psalm 75 as a companion of Psalm 76 because, first of all, they belong to the same period.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, he points out important lexical connections between them. For example, he relates the phrase **בְּלִי רְשָׁעֵי-אֶרֶץ** in Psalm 75:9 to the phrase **כָּל-עֲנוּי-אֶרֶץ** in Psalm 76:10.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, he notes that as God arises to judge in Psalm 75:3, 8, so he does in Psalm 76:9, 10. Furthermore, Psalm 76:9 is similar to Psalm 75:4. Additionally, the construction of Psalm 76:11 is similar to Psalm 75:2. Finally, **שְׂמְרִיָּה** in Psalm 75:9 parallels **שְׂאֲרִית הַמֶּת** in Psalm 76:11.<sup>77</sup>

As for the translation of the problematic verbs in Psalm 75, Hitzig translates the verbs in vv. 2-3 as progressive presents: “we thank you... they tell your miracles... I

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<sup>72</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 1:129.

<sup>73</sup> In this connection it is interesting to note that Hitzig interprets the noun **אֶרֶץ** in v. 9e as a reference to the land of Israel. Cf. Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 2:118.

<sup>74</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 1:128.

<sup>75</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 1:122-130.

<sup>76</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 1:129.

<sup>77</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 1:129.

judge impartially.”<sup>78</sup> Moreover, he translates the *qatal* verb תִּכְנֹתִי in v. 4b in the past tense.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, in v. 4b God is affirming that he had adjusted its pillars because they have melted away. Furthermore, he translates the *qatal* verb אָמַרְתִּי in v. 5a in the past<sup>80</sup> and the *wayyiqtol* verb וַיִּגַּר in v. 9 the present.<sup>81</sup>

Regarding the segmentation of the poem and identity of the speakers in Psalm 75, according to Hitzig, the congregation speaks in v. 2. Moreover, for Hitzig God speaks in vv. 3-7. As a result, he separates the conjunction כִּי in v. 7 from the two כִּי clauses that occurs in vv. 7-9. In his opinion, whereas God speaks to the congregation in vv. 3-4, in vv. 5-7 God speaks against the arrogant wicked, admonishing them to put an end to their arrogance. According to Hitzig, vv. 8-11 is the voice of the poet. Consequently, he does not interpret v. 11 as the voice of God.<sup>82</sup> God also speaks against the arrogant wicked, advising them to put an end to their arrogance (vv. 5-6).

### 1.3.2 The Traditional Approach

Despite the growing popularity of the literary historical critical approach in the nineteenth century, some commentators on the Psalms continued the grammatical-historical-theological approach of the Reformers. The most notable and more orthodox commentators of this period in Germany were Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802-

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<sup>78</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen: Historischer und kritischer Commentar nebst Uebersetzung; Zweiter Theil* (Heidelberg: C. F. Winter's Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1836), 117.

<sup>79</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 2:117.

<sup>80</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 2:117.

<sup>81</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 2:118.

<sup>82</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 1:128.

1869)<sup>83</sup> and Franz Julius Delitzsch (1813-1890)<sup>84</sup> and in England it was J. J. S. Perowne (1823-1904).<sup>85</sup> We will survey Hengstenberg and Delitzsch's interpretation of Psalm 75.

### ***1.3.2.a Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802-1869)***

Hengstenberg begins his introduction to Psalm 75 with his segmentation of the poem. According to him, v. 2 represents the people's praise<sup>86</sup> and vv. 3-4 contain God's promise to the people.<sup>87</sup> On the basis of this promise, the people then address their foes in vv. 5-9.<sup>88</sup> The concluding verses (vv. 10-11) are also spoken by the people.<sup>89</sup>

After a brief discussion of the strophic structure of the poem, Hengstenberg proceeds to determine the historical occasion for Psalm 75. Significantly, his arguments are not based on the superscription but internal evidence that he compares with the book of Isaiah. According to Hengstenberg, "[t]here are very decisive reasons for maintaining the Psalm was composed during the time of the distress under Hezekiah."<sup>90</sup> These

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<sup>83</sup> Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, (2 vols. 2; trans. P. Fairbairn and J. Thomson; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1846). It is noteworthy that J. A. Alexander took Hengstenberg's commentary as the basis for his own. In fact Alexander's attempt was first to translate Hengstenberg's work into English. However, Alexander soon decided to make his own translation of the Hebrew text and make some modifications over Hengstenberg's commentaries. Cf. J. A. Alexander, *The Psalms: Translated and Explained* (vol. 1; New York: Charles Scribner, 1852), iii.

<sup>84</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, (Vol. 2; trans. by Francis Bolton; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871).

<sup>85</sup> J. J. Stewart Perowne, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (2 vols.; 1864-1868; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

<sup>86</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:428.

<sup>87</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:428 and 430.

<sup>88</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:428 and 432.

<sup>89</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:428 and 434.

<sup>90</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:428.

“decisive reasons” are, first of all, “[t]he triumphant tone in the psalm.”<sup>91</sup> From this he infers that poem cannot have been composed during the exile. Second, vv. 5-9 show that poem was occasioned “by some severe distress on the part of the church of God.”<sup>92</sup> He bases this claim, first of all, on the phrase “the wicked of the earth” in v. 9. Moreover, he understands that v. 4a refers to a catastrophe of universal scope similar to Psalm 46. In his opinion, this catastrophe was the Assyrian invasion.<sup>93</sup> Third, in vv. 3-4 the people are promise divine assistance. According to Hengstenberg, “[t]his happened at the time of the Assyrian invasion, by the prophecy of Isaiah.”<sup>94</sup> Fourth, the places indicated in v. 7 designate Israel neighbors from East, West and South, and the omission of the North points out the origin of the enemy.<sup>95</sup> Fifth, Psalm 75 is “closely related to the xlvi, which undoubtedly belongs to the Assyrian period...”<sup>96</sup> Sixth, and finally, Hengstenberg observes that Psalm 75 is closely related to Psalm 76, to which it is closely related. This psalm also belongs to the Asaphite psalms and “belongs to the same era.”<sup>97</sup>

In response to the question whether Psalm 75 was composed before or after the Assyrian invasion, against Ewald, Hengstenberg chooses the former option and that for the following “decisive reasons.” Against Ewald, he argues that it is not impossible for

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<sup>91</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:428.

<sup>92</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:428.

<sup>93</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:428-429.

<sup>94</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:429.

<sup>95</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:429.

<sup>96</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:429.

<sup>97</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:429.

the song of triumph by the church to have been sung before the victory.<sup>98</sup> Second, on the basis of the peculiar prohibition, “Do not destroy,” in the superscription—which does not occur in the superscription of Psalm 76 that celebrates the victory after the fact—he argues that the declaration “Lord, God, we praise you” (v. 2) really means, “Lord, have mercy on us.”<sup>99</sup> Third, the assumption that the poem was composed after the invasion has too little internal evidence.<sup>100</sup> Fourth, the vow to praise in vv. 9-10 function as promises for future deliverance. Fifth, and finally, the next psalm, Psalm 76, which was also composed by Asaph, expresses thanks for the victory.<sup>101</sup> In fact, for Hengstenberg Psalms 75-76 belong together.<sup>102</sup>

With respect to the translation of the verbs in vv. 2-4, Hengstenberg translates the *qatal* verbs הוֹדִינוּ (2x) and סִפְרוּ in v. 2 in the present tense, “we praise thee...we praise thee...they tell....” Moreover, he translates the *yiqtol* verbs אֶקַח and אֲשַׁפֵּט in v. 3 as simple futures. Consequently, v. 3 is a promise of future judgment. Furthermore, he translates the *Niphal* participle נִמְגֵיִם in v. 4a in the present tense, “is dissolved,”<sup>103</sup> and, against those who interpret the the *qatal* verb תִּכְנֹתִי in v. 4b as a “prophetic perfect,” he

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<sup>98</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:429.

<sup>99</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:429.

<sup>100</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:429.

<sup>101</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:430.

<sup>102</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:430. Cf. John H. Stek, *NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 866.

<sup>103</sup> On the basis of Ps 46:6, 7, Hengstenberg interprets v. 4a to refer to the deliverance from the Assyrians. Cf. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:431.

translates it in the past tense: “I have weighed its pillars.”<sup>104</sup> On the basis of these translation options, Hengstenberg claims that the people of Israel praises God (v. 2) because he has promised to judge (v. 3) with the same power he had established the earth (v. 4).<sup>105</sup> Additionally, he translates the *qatal* verb אָמַרְתִּי in v. 5a in the present, “I say.”<sup>106</sup> Finally, he also translates the *wayiqtol* verb in v. 9, “he poureth.”<sup>107</sup>

Hengstenberg also pays attention to the relationship between the respective clauses of the poem. With respect to the function of the conjunction כִּי, for example, in v. 3a, he opts for the causal meaning, “for,” and not the temporal meaning, “when.”<sup>108</sup> Similarly, he opts for the causal meaning, “for,” for the conjunction כִּי in v. 7a. Nevertheless, he allows for the contrastive meaning, “but,” in view of its context.<sup>109</sup>

Although the preface of Hengstenberg’s commentary contains no explanation as to which method he will be using to exegete and expound the meaning of Psalm 75, the above survey has demonstrated that he is certainly a good representative of the grammatical-historical-theological approach. Moreover, his tone in his interpretation of

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<sup>104</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:431. In his opinion (pp. 341-342), this verb refers to creation.

<sup>105</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:430-432.

<sup>106</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:432.

<sup>107</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:432.

<sup>108</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:431.

<sup>109</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2:433.

Psalms 75 is moderate and, consequently, it is not clear why The Briggses call Hengstenberg “the father of the reactionaries.”<sup>110</sup>

### ***1.3.2.b Franz Julius Delitzsch (1813-1890)***

According to Houston, Delitzsch “is one of the last great German scholars to take a conservative orthodox position....”<sup>111</sup> Houston also notes that Delitzsch still accepts the idea of messianic psalms in the Psalter.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, it should be observed that, according to Delitzsch, even David’s poetic/prophetic gift was the result of the revival of prophetism under Samuel.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, in sharp contrast to W. M. L. de Wette’s 1811 commentary that rejects Davidic authorship,<sup>114</sup> Delitzsch affirms that of the 73 psalms that have **דָּוִד** in their superscription at least 50 of them actually were composed by David.<sup>115</sup> Finally, Delitzsch is also important for the purposes of this thesis because, as Michael D. Goulder has rightly noted,<sup>116</sup> he recognized some of the unifying characteristics of the Asaphite psalms. Of particular interest is the fact that, according to Delitzsch, the Asaphite psalms are distinguished from the Korahitic psalms “by their

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<sup>110</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *The Psalms*, 1:civiii.

<sup>111</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 74.

<sup>112</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 74.

<sup>113</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 8-9.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. L. Wray Beal, “Psalms 3: History of Interpretation,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings* (eds. Tremper Longman III & Peter Enns; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 608.

<sup>115</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 10.

<sup>116</sup> Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch: Studies in the Psalter, III* (JSOT Supplement Series 223; Sheffield: Academic Press, 1996), 15-36.

prophetically judicial character.”<sup>117</sup> In fact, Delitzsch rightly notes that in the Asaphite psalms “[a]s in the prophets, God is frequently introduced as speaking...”<sup>118</sup> He justifies his comment on the fact that Asaph is called a **חֲזִן** in 2 Chron 29:30, the fact that the verb **נָבֵא** is used in 1 Chron 25:1-3 and the fact that there is an intimate connection between the sacred lyric and prophecy as a whole.”<sup>119</sup>

A look at Delitzsch’s translation of Psalm 75 shows that he translated the *qatal* verbs in v. 2 in the present tense and the *yiqtol* verbs in the future tense. Moreover, he translates the *Niphal* participle in v. 4a in the present tense and uses the conjunction “if” to introduce this conditional clause. Curiously, he translates the *qatal* verb in v. 4b in the present tense. In his exposition he justifies this translation on the grounds that this verb is a “perfect of certainty.”<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, he translates the *qatal* verb in v. 5a in the present tense. Additionally, he translates the *Qal* participle in v. 8a and the two *yiqtol* verbs in v. 8bc in the present tense. In addition, he translates the *wayyiqtol* verb in v. 9 in the present tense. In his exposition he claims that the “historical signification of the consecutive is softened down, as is frequently the case.”<sup>121</sup> Finally, he translates the verbs in vv. 10-11 in the future tense.

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<sup>117</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 123.

<sup>118</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 123.

<sup>119</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 123.

<sup>120</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 338.

<sup>121</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 341.

The layout of his translation shows that for Delitzsch v. 2 is the opening line of the poem. This opening tricolon is followed by two strophes (vv. 3-6 and 7-9) of 4 bicola each. The poem is closed with vv. 10-11, which consist of two bicola.<sup>122</sup>

This stichometric and strophic layout of Psalm 75 is important because Delitzsch attributes the strophes to various voices. According to Delitzsch, in v. 2 “the church in anticipation gives thanks for the judicial revelation of its God...”<sup>123</sup> Moreover, God himself speaks a word of “confirmation of the forthcoming thanksgiving and praise” in vv. 3-4.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, Delitzsch is of the opinion that “the utterance of God is also continued after the *Sela*.”<sup>125</sup> In his opinion, “[i]t is not the people of God who turn to the enemies with the language of warning...”<sup>126</sup> On the contrary, “God himself speaks, and His words are not yet peremptorily condemning, as in l. 16sq., cf. xlv.11, but admonitory and threatening...” because he has not yet appeared but only announced his coming in v. 3.<sup>127</sup> In this warning, the poet “has Rabshakeh and his colleagues before his mind, cf. Isa. xxxvii. 23.”<sup>128</sup> Additionally, according to Delitzsch, the church “takes up the words of God” in vv. 7-9, “again beginning with the conjunction וְ of ver. 3 (cf. 1

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<sup>122</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 336.

<sup>123</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 337.

<sup>124</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 338.

<sup>125</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 339.

<sup>126</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 339.

<sup>127</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 339.

<sup>128</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 339.

Sam ii.3).”<sup>129</sup> Finally, the poet himself “turns back thankfully and cheerfully from the prophetically presented future to his own actual present.”<sup>130</sup>

One of the features of Delitzsch’s commentary is that in his exegesis he concerns himself with the relationship of the individual psalm with its immediate canonical context. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that in his opening comment he suggests that Psalm 75 is the answer to the prayers of Psalm 74.<sup>131</sup>

As for the date of composition of Psalm 75, Delitzsch disagrees with Hitzig, who, as we noted above, “assigns both Ps. lxxv. and lxxvi. to Judas Maccabaeus.”<sup>132</sup> Instead, he agrees with Hengstenberg that this psalm is from the time of Assyrian threat against Jerusalem during the time of Hezekiah as depicted in Isaiah’s prophecy.<sup>133</sup> However, he notes that “if the time of Hezekiah were to be given up, then we might sooner go back to the time of Jehoshaphath....”<sup>134</sup> For Delitzsch Psalm 75 is a lyrical companion to the prophecy of Isaiah.

In keeping with his observation that the Asaphite psalms are intimately connected to prophecy Delitzsch describes Psalm 75 as a prophetic picture set in lyric frame.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 340.

<sup>130</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 341.

<sup>131</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 336.

<sup>132</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 337.

<sup>133</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 337.

<sup>134</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 337.

<sup>135</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 336 and 342.

Moreover, he also recognizes that the term מוֹעֵד in v. 3 reflects prophetic language and refers to Hab 2:3.<sup>136</sup>

Finally, Delitzsch also pays attention to the interrelationship of clauses in his exposition. For example, with respect to the conjunction *waw* that introduces v. 2c, he states categorically that it is not “synonymous with כִּי . . . .”<sup>137</sup> Moreover, he notes that the conjunction כִּי in v. 3a is confirmatory.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, he reads the conjunction כִּי in v. 7 the same way.

### ***1.3.2.c Critical Summary of Hengstenberg and Delitzsch in Comparison with Hitzig***

The above survey of Hengstenberg and Delitzsch’s interpretation of Psalm 75 has demonstrated that both commentators are faithful representatives of the more traditional, conservative grammatical-historical-theological approach to psalmic interpretation. Both disagree with Hitzig’s late dating of Psalm 75 to the Maccabean revolt. Instead, they agree that the historical background for Psalm 75 is Assyrian invasion under Hezekiah.

Aside from this important difference, however, there are some areas of agreement and disagreement. For example, Hitzig, Hengstenberg, and Delitzsch interpret v. 2 as the congregation’s thanksgiving for God’s promised intervention in v. 3. All three also translate the *qatal* verbs in v. 2 with the present tense. However, Hitzig translates the *yiqtol* verbs in the present tense, while Hengstenberg and Delitzsch translate them in the future. Moreover, Delitzsch translates the *qatal* verb in v. 4b as a present/habitual, while

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<sup>136</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 338.

<sup>137</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 337.

<sup>138</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 338.

both Hitzig and Hengstenberg translate it in the past tense. This shows that, on the one hand, commentators using different approaches can agree on grammatical and syntactical issues, while, on the other hand, commentators who share the same approach may disagree.

As for the switches in speaker and addressee in the poem, there is significant disagreement about the identity of the speakers in the poem. All three scholars agree that v. 2 is the voice of the community and that v. 3 marks the beginning of a divine speech. However, they disagree as to where the divine speech ends. According to Hengstenberg, God speaks only in vv. 3-4. Delitzsch includes vv. 5-6 in the divine speech and for Hitzig God speaks in vv. 3-7. As a result, they also do not agree on the segmentation of the final verses of the poem, nor on the identity of the speaker. For Hitzig, the poet speaks in vv. 8-11. According to Hengstenberg, the community utters vv. 5-11. Differently, Delitzsch divides vv. 7-9 as the voice of the community and vv. 10-11 as the voice of the poet. Again, it is noteworthy that Hengstenberg and Delitzsch share the same methodological approach but disagree on this issue.

### 1.3.3 Literary-Critical Approach (1875-1920)

By way of introduction to this period, it should be underscored that in 1883 Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) published his *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (*Prolegomena to the History of Israel*), in which he reconstructed the history of Israel based on his documentary hypothesis. For psalmic studies Wellhausen's reconstruction resulted in a late dating of the Psalter and a negative view of the cult.

Important commentators of this period were Thomas Kelley Cheyne (1841-1915), an English scholar, Charles Augustus Briggs (1841-1913), a controversial American Presbyterian scholar from Union Theological Seminary in New York, and Bernard Duhm (1847-1928), a famous German O.T. scholar.<sup>139</sup> Their approach to the Psalter is also called the Literary-Analytical approach.<sup>140</sup> According to Waltke, the representatives of this approach also denied that the “superscripts are original and credible” for reconstructing the historical occasion and background of the psalms.<sup>141</sup> Instead, they reconstruct “a psalm’s historical horizon by philological and theological typologies.”<sup>142</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis we will review the commentaries of Cheyne and Charles A. Briggs. They are T. K. Cheyne (1841-1915)<sup>143</sup> and Charles Augustus Briggs (1841-1913). The latter published his commentaries in the Psalms with the help of his daughter Emily Grace Briggs.<sup>144</sup> Our aim will be to demonstrate how they reconstruct Psalm 75 on the basis of their understanding of Hebrew poetry. We will survey them in the order of their publication.

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<sup>139</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 93.

<sup>140</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 93.

<sup>141</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 93.

<sup>142</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 93.

<sup>143</sup> T. K. Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms: Translated from a revised text with Notes and Introduction* (2 vols.; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1904).

<sup>144</sup> Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907).

### *1.3.3.a Thomas Kelley Cheyne (1841-1915)*

We have selected Cheyne to demonstrate the extremes to which the representatives of this approach went to solve the problem of the switch in speakers. According to Cheyne, Psalm 75 is a fragment<sup>145</sup> because “it is incomplete at the beginning.”<sup>146</sup> To resolve the exegetical problems of Psalm 75, Cheyne presents a radical reconstruction of the poem in his translation on the assumption that “the original poem was composed of quatrains.”<sup>147</sup> In this reconstruction he transposes v. 11 after vv. 4. According to Cheyne, this “transposition enables us both to avoid a faulty exegesis (as if Israel claimed to cut off the ‘horns’ of enemies), and to keep the first person in **עָגַדְתִּי**.”<sup>148</sup> Moreover, in his opinion, the poem has been provided with an incomplete liturgical preface in v. 2 and a liturgical appendix (v. 10) “which assume that the wonderful events anticipated have taken place.”<sup>149</sup>

As for the historical setting of Psalm 75, Cheyne relates it to the period of the exile. In his opinion, “[f]aithful Jews (not counting those of the wider Diaspora) are still divided into two sections—those in the Jewish land and those in captivity in the N.

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<sup>145</sup> Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 1:xxx.

<sup>146</sup> Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:1.

<sup>147</sup> Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:1.

<sup>148</sup> Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:2.

<sup>149</sup> Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:1.

Arabian border-land.”<sup>150</sup> Moreover, “[t]hose at home are harassed by the double tyranny of the ‘impious ones’ (faithless Jews) and the ‘folk of the Miṣrites.’”<sup>151</sup>

Regarding Cheyne’s translation of Psalm 75, it should be underscored that his reconstruction of the “original” poem is so radical that it is difficult to compare his translation with any other. For example, he removes the repetition of הוֹדִינֵנוּ in v. 2 because, in his opinion, is superfluous.<sup>152</sup> Moreover, he claims that there are many morphological and syntactical inadequacies in the text, all of which he proceeds to emend, even though there is no manuscript evidence for these emendations. As a result, the poem turns out almost unrecognizable. For example, he translates vv. 3-4 as follows:

For [thou hast promised], ‘I will punish Edom;  
The fork of the Miṣrites I will judge;  
‘Miṣsur and all its inhabitants tremble;  
The dwellings of the Edomites rock.’<sup>153</sup>

Cheyne does not classify the literary genre of Psalm 75. He emphasizes the admonitory tone of the poem and, because he claims that vv. 2 and 10 are later liturgical insertions, we infer that for Cheyne the original poem was not of thanksgiving.

Finally, Cheyne does not really address the difficult question concerning the switches in speaker and addressees in Psalm 75 and it is difficult to determine his solution

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<sup>150</sup> Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:1.

<sup>151</sup> Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:1. Notice that Cheyne refers to “North Arabians” to generalize the nations that oppressed Israel from the beginning from the Babylonian exile.

<sup>152</sup> Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:2.

<sup>153</sup> Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:1.

to this problem from his translation. Apparently vv. 3-6 are a quotation of divine speech. It is not clear who speaks in vv. 7-9.

### ***1.3.3.b Charles Augustus and Emily Grace Briggs (1841-1913)***

We have selected the commentary written by the Briggses because of its excellent textual work.<sup>154</sup> In their preface, they state that they had “spared no pains upon the text of the Psalter, not only in the study of the Versions, but also in the detection and elimination of the glosses in search for the original texts as they came from their authors.”<sup>155</sup> Moreover, they note that the results of textual criticism, higher criticism, Hebrew poetry, historical criticism, biblical theology and interpretation of the Psalter have been included in the commentary.<sup>156</sup>

The Briggses classify Psalm 75 as a song of thanksgiving and then proceed to segment the text into its subunits: a declaration of thanksgiving (v. 2); a citation of an divine oracle (vv. 3-4); an admonition to the boasting wicked (vv. 5-6) “help cannot come from any quarter (v. 7-8), that they must drain the dregs of the cup of judgment (v. 9); and declares once for all that the wicked will eventually be hewn off, but the righteous lifted up (v. 10-11).”<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of the Psalms*, 2:163-164. According to Marvin E. Tate, his commentary on Psalms 51-100 is indebted to “the textual notes of Charles Augustus and Emilie Grace Briggs.” With the exception of the commentary written by Hermann Gunkel, Tate claims that “[n]o commentary yet published the scope and quality of the textual work in these two, dated though they are.” Cf. Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (WBC 20; Dallas: Word, 1990), ix.

<sup>155</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of the Psalms*, 1:vii.

<sup>156</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of the Psalms*, 1:viii.

<sup>157</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of the Psalms*, 2:160.

After these introductory notes, they present their translation in strophic format on the assumption that the poem was composed in triplets.<sup>158</sup> To make the poem fit this pattern, they consider vv. 4b, 6a, 8b, 9d and 10b to be glosses.<sup>159</sup> Of interest for our thesis is the fact that by eliminating v. 10b as a gloss they are able to claim that vv. 3-11 are a quotation of a divine oracle.

Regarding the date of the Psalm 75, the Briggses claim that the poem is ancient and that, apart from אֱלֹהִים, it might be pre-exilic. According to them, the poem “is written in a calm tone of confidence in God and praise to Him for His wonders. It implies a peaceful condition of the community, probably in Babylonia prior to Nehemiah.”<sup>160</sup>

As for the translation of the troublesome verbs in Psalm 75, they translate the verbal forms in vv. 2-4a in the present progressive tense: “We give thanks...we give thanks...and tell...(v 2)...I take...I judge...melt away.”<sup>161</sup> Their translation of v. 4b cannot be verified because they have eliminated it as a gloss.<sup>162</sup> They translate the *qatal* verb אָמַרְתִּי in v. 5a in the present tense, “I say,” as well as the *wayyiqtol* verb וַיִּגַּר in v. 9, which they consider to be “good old syntax.”<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of the Psalms*, 2:160-161.

<sup>159</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of the Psalms*, 2:161.

<sup>160</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of the Psalms*, 2:161.

<sup>161</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of the Psalms*, 2:160.

<sup>162</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of the Psalms*, 2:161-162.

<sup>163</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of the Psalms*, 2:161.

### 1.3.4 Critical Evaluation

A comparison of Cheyne and the Briggses' reconstruction of the "original" poem of Psalm 75 on the basis of their understanding of Hebrew poetry shows, first of all, that the commentary of the Briggses preserves much more of the text of Psalm 75. With respect to these reconstructions of the "original" text of the poem, it should be underscored that there is no manuscript evidence for either reconstruction. Moreover, the commentaries do not agree on the translation of the verbal forms in vv. 3-11. Curiously, neither of them refers to Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar* to justify their translations. Furthermore, as a result of their reconstruction Cheyne classifies vv. 3-6 as divine speech and the Briggses extend this to include vv. 7-11 so that vv. 3-11 are a quotation of divine speech. In this way they resolve the more complex phenomenon of shifts in speakers in the MT. Finally, Cheyne's radical reconstruction of the original form of the poem does not help the reader understand the text as it is in the Hebrew Bible. In fact, he provides little exposition of the poem. The commentary of the Briggses has more exposition. Consequently, it is understandable that the next generation of critical commentators were not satisfied the results of this approach.

### **1.4 The Era of Form Critical and Cult Functional Approaches (1920-1960)**

The historical, literary and source critical approaches of the nineteenth century advanced the exegesis of the text of the Psalter and continues to have its advocates in the twentieth century and to the present day. Nevertheless, in the 1920s and 1930s two new exegetical approaches were developed that revolutionized psalmic studies.

#### 1.4.1 Form Critical Approach: Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932)

This form critical method was pioneered by Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932) in the 1920s and 1930s and is called form criticism. Although Gunkel appreciated the accomplishments of textual, historical, literary, and source criticism, he was frustrated with the apparent stalemate of this method and was of the opinion that Wellhausen and his followers were too subservient to the literary documents of the O.T. and the reconstruction of their history. Gunkel argued that behind these documents lay much older oral traditions. For this reason Gunkel developed a method that aimed to uncover the history of the oral traditions behind the texts. For this reason he called his new method *Gattungsgeschichte*, which is normally translated as “form criticism.” As the name of this new method indicates, Gunkel was particularly concerned with the classification of the literary genres employed in the O.T. Indeed, his classification of the literary genres found in the Psalter was his most brilliant contribution to the interpretation of the Psalms. Although modifications have been proposed, Gunkel’s categories continue to be used in subsequent commentaries on the Psalms. Intimately related to this important aspect of his method, however, was his use of the comparative religions method (*Religionsgeschichte*). Gunkel was convinced that in our studies of the Psalter “we cannot remain in the cabinets of Israelite convention. Rather, we must also peruse the lyric of other nations of antiquity to see whether we perceive something similar.”<sup>164</sup> On the basis of his careful comparison of the religious poems of Israel with those of its neighbors Gunkel was able to perfect his

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<sup>164</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 4-5.

classification of the Psalms into its various literary genres and reconstruct their respective *Sitz-im-Leben*. Without a doubt, using this double foci approach to the Psalter Gunkel revitalized psalmic studies.<sup>165</sup>

#### **1.4.1.a Gunkel's Methodology**

Gunkel's form critical method consists of five important exegetical steps: 1) the delimitation of the pericope; 2) the definition of its compositional structure; 3) the classification of its literary genre; 4) the reconstruction of its *Sitz-im-Leben*; and 5) the definition of its function.<sup>166</sup> Gunkel applied this method to the Psalter in his monumental commentary on the Psalms published in 1926, *Die Psalmen*.<sup>167</sup>

#### **1.4.1.b Gunkel's Interpretation of Psalm 75 in His Commentary on the Psalms**

In his commentary Gunkel begins his exposition of Psalm 75 with a translation<sup>168</sup> that is accompanied by his scansion of the poem's meter and extensive annotations about text critical issues and syntactical issues, as well as notes on Hebrew poetry.<sup>169</sup> As for his

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<sup>165</sup> For this paragraph we are indebted to John T. McNeil, "History of the Interpretation of the Bible," in *The Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes. Volume I, General Articles on the Bible, General Articles on the Old Testament, The Book of Genesis, The Book of Exodus* (New York/Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1952), 135-36.

<sup>166</sup> For this summary we are indebted to Gene M. Tucker's book entitled, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

<sup>167</sup> Hermann Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1929; repr., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1986).

<sup>168</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 326.

<sup>169</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 328-329. As we noted above, according to Marvin E. Tate, "no commentary yet published equals the scope and quality of the textual work..." in Gunkel's commentary, with the exception of the commentary of Charles August Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs. Cf. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, ix.

translation of the problematic verbal forms in Psalm 75, Gunkel translates the *qatal* verbs הוֹדִינוּ and סִפְרוּ in v. 2 in the present tense, a translation which he justifies on the basis of GKC §106.i.<sup>170</sup> Moreover, he also translates the *qatal* verb תִּכְנֶנְתִּי in v. 4b in the present tense. Although he notes that v. 4a is a circumstantial clause,<sup>171</sup> he does not explain how this affects his translation of the verb in v. 4b. He also translates the *wayyiqtol* verb וַיִּגַּר in v. 9 in the present tense, without any syntactical justification. Although he translates the *yiqtol* verb אֶשְׁפֹּט in v. 3b in the present tense,<sup>172</sup> nevertheless, against Baethgen, Gunkel claims that this verb does not denote repeated action but refers to the final judgment.<sup>173</sup>

Gunkel characterizes Psalm 75 as a “fantastic-baroque” psalm and classifies it as a “prophetic liturgy,”<sup>174</sup> for which he refers the reader to §11 of his *Introduction to Psalms*. This “prophetic liturgy” begins in v. 2 with a description of rejoicing by the congregation (“we”) that is not similar to the traditional opening calls to praise but is similar to 1 Samuel 2:1, which also uses *qatal* verbs.<sup>175</sup> Then, abruptly without any introduction (cf. 46:11), there follows a divine oracle in vv. 3-4.<sup>176</sup> For this phenomenon Gunkel refers the

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<sup>170</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 328.

<sup>171</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 328.

<sup>172</sup> In their *Introduction to Psalms*, p. 274, Gunkel and Begrich translate the *yiqtol* verbs in vv. 3b and 4b in the future: “When I perceive the time, I will hold a just court myself. When the earth totters along with its inhabitatns, I will secure its columns myself.”

<sup>173</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 328.

<sup>174</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 327. Cf. Gunkel-Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 291.

<sup>175</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 327. For other examples see: Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 27-28.

<sup>176</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 327.

reader to §9 of his *Introduction to Psalms*, the chapter on “Prophetic Elements in the Psalms,” which we will review below. Vv. 5-11 are a response to the divine oracle by an individual singer (vv. 5, 10).<sup>177</sup> It begins with an admonition addressed against God’s enemies, a form that occurs occasionally in the Psalter (*Introduction* §2.34) and is similar to 1 Sam 2:3ff. In support of his claim that the poet speaks in vv. 5-6, Gunkel refers to vv. 7-8, which refer to God in the third person.<sup>178</sup> The hymn closes with a vow to praise in vv. 10-11<sup>179</sup> in a manner similar to Hab 3:18.<sup>180</sup> According to Gunkel, the singer’s heart is so moved by vv. 8-9 that he promises to help God in the extinction of the wicked. Originally the speaker of vv. 11 may have been a king but later the words of vv.10-11 were also uttered by singers.<sup>181</sup>

In his concluding paragraph Gunkel notes that the poem is held together by the repetition of the concept “judgment” (vv. 3, 8) and the key term “horn” (vv. 5, 6, 11). Moreover, Gunkel observes that his eschatological interpretation of this “prophetic liturgy” is against all attempts to find a specific historical occasion and setting, be that the time of Sennacherib or the period of the Maccabees. Furthermore, he remarks that Mowinckel agrees with his interpretation of Psalm 75, except that he does not find the

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<sup>177</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 327. For this phenomenon Gunkel refers the reader to § 2.44 of his *Introduction to Psalms*.

<sup>178</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 328.

<sup>179</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 327.

<sup>180</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 328.

<sup>181</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 328. For this phenomenon Gunkel refers to §5.9 of his *Introduction the Psalms*. On p. 329 of *Die Psalmen* Gunkel rejects Wellhausen’s position that Israel speaks in v. 11, as well as the position of Balla and Kittel that a leader of the people uttered these words. He also rejects moving v. 11 after v. 4 (Nowack and Bickel) or v. 5 (Olshausen) on the grounds that a similar statement follows the resolve to praise of Hab 3:18 in Hab 3:19.

background of its content in prophetic eschatology but in his reconstructed enthronement festival. Finally, he notes that the poem has no regular strophic structure.<sup>182</sup>

#### ***1.4.1.c Psalm 75 in Gunkel and Begrich's Introduction to Psalms***

In 1933 Gunkel's magnum opus, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, was finally published,<sup>183</sup> in which Gunkel and Begrich included an extensive chapter entitled, "Prophetic Elements in the Psalms."<sup>184</sup> This chapter is placed just after the one in which they outlined "the influence of psalmody on the prophets." Now, in this new chapter, they deal with the influence of the prophets on the psalms. In answer to the question, "How much have prophetic elements entered the psalms?", they affirm that "[t]hose psalms or psalm parts are called 'prophetic' which relate to or depend upon prophetic form and content."<sup>185</sup>

According to Gunkel and Begrich, in the Psalter prophetic elements appear in a great variety of literary genres.<sup>186</sup> Moreover, they claim that "[t]he most extensive area of the whole is the *eschatology* of the psalms."<sup>187</sup> They lament the fact that treatments of

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<sup>182</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 328.

<sup>183</sup> Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen: Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* (Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933). Gunkel died in 1932. However, due to his illness Gunkel already placed his student and son-in-law Joachim Begrich in charge of completing the introduction in 1931. It was translated into English 1998 by James D. Nogalski under the title *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* and published in the Mercer Library of Biblical Studies by Mercer University at Macon, Georgia.

<sup>184</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 251-292.

<sup>185</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 251.

<sup>186</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 251. On this page they list the following genres: eschatological hymns, eschatological Zion songs, eschatological enthronement song, liturgies, mixed liturgies, prophetic judgment speeches, torah, rebuke, threat and warning speeches, hymn, individual complaint song, communal complaint song, and mixed poetry.

<sup>187</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 252.

O.T. eschatology frequently fail to mention the eschatology of the Psalms and then categorically claim “that the eschatology of the psalms carries no ‘messianic’ lines of thought....”<sup>188</sup>

After these introductory remarks, Gunkel and Begrich set out to prove that the eschatology of the Psalter “coincides with that portrayed in the prophetic books....”<sup>189</sup> To that end, they affirm, first of all, that “[t]he following summarizes briefly the *content of the ultimate hope of the psalmist*: A ‘time’ will come when great miracles will happen.”<sup>190</sup> The terms used to designate this “time” are מוֹעֵד and עֵת,<sup>191</sup> which occur in the Psalter<sup>192</sup> and in prophetic literature.<sup>193</sup> Moreover, they claim that to discover “the *fundamental lines of thought* for this hope” one “must first ask about the *words or short sentences* in which the entirety is summarized....”<sup>194</sup> In their opinion, the simplest and most common expression is that “it is time for YHWH to act” (Ps 119:126).<sup>195</sup> Furthermore, brief statements explain “the *content of YHWH’s action*.” For example, YHWH performs miraculous deeds (נִפְלְאוֹת).<sup>196</sup> Additionally, they affirm that *Israel’s*

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<sup>188</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 252.

<sup>189</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 252.

<sup>190</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 252.

<sup>191</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 252 and 275.

<sup>192</sup> Pss 75:3; 102:14; 119:126.

<sup>193</sup> Hab 2:3; Dan 8:19; 11:27, 29, 35. Cf. Is 10:12; 33:10; Sir 33:10.

<sup>194</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 252.

<sup>195</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 252-253.

<sup>196</sup> Pss 75:2; 86:3; 98:1; 105:3. Cf. Is 25:1; Sir 33:6.

*subjective mood* alongside of the objective sentences about YHWH's mighty deeds is one of rejoicing<sup>197</sup> and then proceed to list seven joys,<sup>198</sup> some of which, as Table 1 below shows, occur in Psalm 75:

**Table 1. The list of seven joys and Psalm 75**

Seven Joys	References to Psalm 75
The restoration of Jerusalem and the people of Israel The overthrow of "the rule of the nations" "Yahweh's Universal Judgment"	Psalm 75:3, 8 (Jer 11:20)
"The overthrow of the great natural calamities of the end time" "Fall of the great world empires" The transfiguration of the sanctuary on Zion The submission of the gods	Psalm 75:4 (Jdt 16:16)

After their description of the eschatology of the psalms, Gunkel and Begrich return to describe the syntactical and literary features of the various types of psalms in which this eschatology comes to expression. In general, we may divide these literary genres into two basic groups: 1) hymns; and 2) "prophetic liturgies."<sup>199</sup> In note 193, they list Psalm 75:3f, 7-9 as an example of a "prophetic liturgy."<sup>200</sup>

Next Gunkel and Begrich explain how "the eschatological hopes of the prophets" found "their way into the poetry of the psalms."<sup>201</sup> In view of the sequence of Psalm 74, a

<sup>197</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 253-254.

<sup>198</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 254-263.

<sup>199</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 263-265.

<sup>200</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 265, n. 193. On p. 23 Gunkel observes that hymn-like elements also were used in liturgies and lists Psalm 75:2, 5-11 as an example. Curiously, on p. 55 Gunkel classifies Psalm 75:2, 5-11 as an "eschatological hymn." On p. 60 he observes that hymnic elements frame a divine oracle and cites Psalm 75:2, 5-11 as an example.

<sup>201</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 266.

communal lament, and Psalm 75, it is interesting to note that they begin their explanation with the communal psalms of lament. In their opinion, in their distress the complaining community looks to the enthusiastic prophetic promises of the end time for comfort. These promises find their way into the communal complaint psalms in the *confidence motif* and in the *assurance of having been heard*.<sup>202</sup> In addition to the other literary genres, Gunkel and Begrich also note that these prophetic promises entered the “prophetic liturgies,” especially in unmarked quotations of divine speeches, such as, Psalm 75:3-4.<sup>203</sup>

In the next section Gunkel and Begrich describe the various literary genres employed by the prophets that found their way into the psalms. Of particular interest with respect to Psalm 75, is the prophetic admonition with its threats and promises.<sup>204</sup> Curiously, they do not list Psalm 75:5-9 as an example.

After this section Gunkel and Begrich describe the “Situation of the Prophetic Psalms.”<sup>205</sup> In this section they distance themselves from the position of one of Gunkel’s eminent students, the Norwegian scholar Sigmund Mowinckel. In an article published in the *Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift* in 1909, Mowinckel claimed that to understand the prophetic elements in the psalms it is important to recognize that from the very beginning of Israel’s history ecstatic prophetic guilds were closely connected with temples.<sup>206</sup> In his opinion, these prophets were responsible for the divine speeches quoted in liturgies like

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<sup>202</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 266-271.

<sup>203</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 274.

<sup>204</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 281-282.

<sup>205</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 282-287.

<sup>206</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:55-56. For the reference to his article on *NTT* see n. 20 on p. 56.

Psalm 75. Gunkel and Begrich disagree.<sup>207</sup> According to them, “[o]ne should thus think of a priest”<sup>208</sup> or a temple singer,<sup>209</sup> but not prophet. Because this section assumes the reader’s acquaintance with Mowinckel’s explanation of prophetic elements in the psalms, as well as his supporting arguments for the connection between ecstatic prophets and temples, we will discuss this important section of Gunkel and Begrich’s *Introduction to Psalms* in chapter 2 of our thesis.

We will conclude our survey of Gunkel and Begrich’s chapter on the prophetic elements in the psalms with their discussion of “The Time of the Prophetic Psalms.” In their opinion, the *terminus a quo* of the “prophetic psalms” was the exile when the prophetic announcement of judgment “were *believed* and given *authority*.”<sup>210</sup> As an example in the prophetic liturgies, they observe that “[t]he concept of the cup of the wrath of YHWH in 75:9 appears to be dependent upon Jer 25:15ff; 49:12; 51:39; Isa 51:17ff; and Ezek 23:31.”<sup>211</sup> This suggests that Psalm 75 is from the exilic period.

#### ***1.4.1.d Critical Summary***

The above review of Gunkel and Begrich’s form critical analysis of Psalm 75 in his commentary and the chapter on prophetic elements in the psalms has demonstrated, first of all, that Gunkel’s work is detailed and based on many examples from the Psalter.

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<sup>207</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 287.

<sup>208</sup> Gunkel and Begrich refer to Gunkel’s discussion of Ps 12:6 and Ps 15 in his commentary on the Psalms. Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 287, n. 437.

<sup>209</sup> Gunkel and Begrich refer to Gunkel’s discussion of Ps 20 in Gunkel’s commentary, in which he also refers to Pss 75:3-4 and 81:7ff. Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 287, n. 438.

<sup>210</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 292.

<sup>211</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 291.

Second, Gunkel's form critical analysis of Psalm 75 as a liturgy allows him to treat the psalm as a unified poem, unlike the practitioners of the literary critical approach. In other words, because he treated Psalm 75 as a liturgy, the change in speaker and addressees presented no problem for him. Third, Gunkel's classification of the various types of psalms has great merit and has made a lasting contribution to psalmic studies. Fourth, because of his emphasis on the oral tradition of the psalms, Gunkel is not very concerned about their authorship and, consequently, for all practical purposes, ignores the superscriptions. Fifth, in contrast with the advocates of the grammatical-historical-theological and literary-critical approach, Gunkel was not concerned about the specific historical occasion of a psalm like Psalm 75. Gunkel was more concerned about the *Sitz-im-Leben* of the psalms. Sixth, his reconstruction of the *Sitz-im-Leben* of the individual psalms is the weakest part of his method and, consequently, did not gain scholarly consensus.<sup>212</sup> In fact, as we noted above, his prominent student Sigmund Mowinckel, disagreed very much with Gunkel on this question. We will first describe Mowinckel's position and then treat their disagreement in chapter 2 of this thesis.

## 1.4.2 Mowinckel's Cult Functional Approach

### ***1.4.2.a The Method***

Although Sigmund Mowinckel (1884-1965) repeatedly expresses great appreciation for his teacher's new methodology in the second chapter, "The Method of the Cultic

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<sup>212</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 94.

Interpretation,” of his own monumental work, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*,<sup>213</sup> nevertheless, he accuses Gunkel and Begrich of going only half-way.<sup>214</sup> To be sure, Mowinckel agrees completely with Gunkel that “the first task is to classify the different forms and styles, thoughts and moods of the psalms...,”<sup>215</sup> that “[c]ontent and form belong together,”<sup>216</sup> that fixed formulae will normally occur at the beginning and end of a psalm,<sup>217</sup> that it is important to recognize which basic elements normally belong to a type of psalm,<sup>218</sup> and that Gunkel correctly inferred that the main types of psalms “have sprung from definite cultic situations.”<sup>219</sup> His principle point of disagreement, however, concerns Gunkel’s inconsistency in fourth step of his method, the identification of the *Sitz-im-Leben*. As we noted above, Mowinckel accuses Gunkel and Begrich of going only half-way. The following extensive quotation explains the reason for Mowinckel’s strong feelings on this important point:

His method led him to see that psalm poetry as such was old in Israel, and that many psalms must be dated to pre-exilic times; but in the main he kept to the opinion ruling at the beginning of this century, that the greater number of extant psalms were post-exilic and came from small, more or less private ‘conventicles’ of pious laymen—for the existence of which he has given just as little proof as his predecessors. The majority of extant psalms were in Gunkel’s opinion no real cult psalms; they were ‘spiritualized’ imitations of the old, now mostly lost, cultic psalm poetry.

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<sup>213</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:24.

<sup>214</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:29 and 31.

<sup>215</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:24.

<sup>216</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:25.

<sup>217</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:25.

<sup>218</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:25.

<sup>219</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:28.

In the many allusions to cultic rites and performances . . . he would see only metaphors, and in this supposed emancipation from the cult, in the psalmists' 'freedom from the cult religion', he saw just that religious 'progress' which gave the psalms their religious value. The psalms had, so to say, to apologize for their cultic origin. He clung, like most of the older psalm interpreters, to the curious prejudice that direct cultic destination—as 'cult formulas', as they said—was more or less incompatible with deep personal feeling and experience—and the presence of these latter traits in many psalms they of course could not deny.<sup>220</sup>

This critical area of disagreement also caused a completely different interpretation of the prophetic elements in the psalms between Gunkel and Mowinckel.

Because this disagreement is very important for our thesis, we will discuss this issue in more detail in the next chapter. In this chapter we will focus our attention on Mowinckel's interpretation of Psalm 75.

#### ***1.4.2.b Mowinckel's Approach to Psalm 75***

Unfortunately, Mowinckel did not publish a commentary on the Psalms, nor did he write an article on this poem. Nevertheless, we are able to obtain a glimpse of his interpretation of Psalm 75 from his cryptic observations from his book *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*.

A number of these cryptic observations are found in his vitally important chapter, Chapter V, entitled, "Psalms at the Enthronement Festival of Yahweh."<sup>221</sup> As one would expect, in this chapter he locates Psalm 75's specific *Sitz-im-Leben* to the much debated "enthronement festival" celebrated at the turning of the new year.<sup>222</sup> For Mowinckel this

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<sup>220</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:29.

<sup>221</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:106-192.

<sup>222</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:142. Together with Psalm 75, he also refers to Pss 46, 47 and 76.

festival is “the *festal ephiphany* of Yahweh.”<sup>223</sup> Yahweh’s epiphany is “described with all the traditional features which, according to the usual oriental conception, belong to a theophany.”<sup>224</sup> These features highlight Yahweh’s kingship and his power.

One of these features is the poison cup that is ready to be drunk by Yahweh’s enemies (Psalm 75:9).<sup>225</sup> In connection with his description of the features Mowinckel makes the following important comment:

It would be a most rationalistic exegesis to find in such pictures any recollection of particular historical events, just as in themselves they have nothing whatever to do with the eschatological appearance of Yahweh.<sup>226</sup>

For Mowinckel a fundamental feature of Yahweh’s power-charged epiphany is the fundamental “is the *myth of creation*.”<sup>227</sup> “Yahweh has become king of the world, because he has created it.”<sup>228</sup> Curiously, in this connection he observes that the “rather mythical conception of creation is not very prominent” in the enthronement psalms<sup>229</sup> and then proceeds to find supporting evidence in other psalms.<sup>230</sup> Because he classifies Psalm 75 as

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<sup>223</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:142.

<sup>224</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:143.

<sup>225</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:143. In note 114, Mowinckel claims that, in view of the fact that the imagery of Psalm 75:9 also occurs in Ps 60:5, a lament, the cup metaphor in Psalm 75:9 “in itself has nothing to do with eschatology....”

<sup>226</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:143. From notes 115 and 116 it is obvious that this remark is directed against Gunkel.

<sup>227</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:143.

<sup>228</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:143.

<sup>229</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:143.

<sup>230</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:144-145.

an enthronement psalm, he could have referred to Psalm 75:4 and, of course, Psalm 93, to which he refers later.<sup>231</sup> Intimately related to the myth of creation is the concept of (re) establishing order. Mowinckel writes:

That Yahweh (again) creates, means that out of threatening chaos (*tōhû wābbōhû*), he makes an ordered cosmos, an earth where men can live (Isa. 45.18). He (again) establishes the “right order”, without which heaven and earth cannot exist.<sup>232</sup>

According to Mowinckel, the Hebrews express “this establishment of the right order” by the verb **טַפַּח** and its noun **מִטַּפַּח**.<sup>233</sup> Significantly, the verb **טַפַּח** occurs twice in Psalm 75, namely, in vv. 3 and 8. Of special importance is its occurrence in v. 3 because of its connection with v. 4b, which refers to God’s establishment of the pillars of the earth. For Mowinckel this original comprehensive meaning of “judgment” in connection with Yahweh’s coming in the epiphany and the re-establishment of the right order had “originally nothing to do with the eschatological ‘change.’”<sup>234</sup> “In the cult it refers to ‘turning’ things back to the starting-point in connection with the ‘turning’ of the new year.”<sup>235</sup>

In its more juridical sense God’s fundamental act of judgment entails summoning his antagonists before his judgment seat to judge them, “just as this used to be the first act of government of an earthly king.”<sup>236</sup> In Psalm 75, for example, God “speaks words of

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<sup>231</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:146.

<sup>232</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:146.

<sup>233</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:146.

<sup>234</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:147.

<sup>235</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:147.

<sup>236</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:149.

severe reproof to all the inhabitants of the earth.”<sup>237</sup> According to Psalm 75:8, God is the judge who lowers one and exalts another. Moreover, in v. 9 “the poet describes how God is standing with the poison cup in his hand, which all his enemies have to empty.”<sup>238</sup> Mowinckel calls the conception described above as “the *myth of doom*.”<sup>239</sup>

Another important conception in the enthronement psalms for Mowinckel is “that Yahweh has secured his kingdom and his enthronement by coming and delivering his people and his city from a threatening attack by the united kings and nations of the world.”<sup>240</sup> He finds this conception in Psalms 46, 48, 75 and 76. Although he recognizes that the “historical” point of view is more prominent in this conception, nevertheless, for Mowinckel it “is presented as an epic tale woven around a mythically tinted happening.”<sup>241</sup> Consequently, according to Mowinckel, the “happening” to which these psalms refer are neither historical nor eschatological. He writes:

This hardly refers to any single real historical event, as earlier interpreters of the psalms used to think, nor is it meant to be a description of what is going to take place in the “latter days,” in eschatological times. It is described as something just experienced, something the congregation “itself has seen” (Ps 48.9). But at the same time it is something it “has heard of” before. Here, too, the explanation is that there is there a reference to the realities of faith being re-experienced as repeated reality in the cult.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:150. Unfortunately, Mowinckel does not indicate precisely which verses are included in God’s reproof.

<sup>238</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:150.

<sup>239</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:150.

<sup>240</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:151.

<sup>241</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:151.

<sup>242</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:151.

Mowinckel calls the conception described above “the *myth about the fight of nations*.”<sup>243</sup>

Additional comments on the function of Psalm 75 in the enthronement festival are found in chapter 12, entitled, “The Prophetic Word in the Psalms, and the Prophetic Psalms.”<sup>244</sup> Mowinckel begins this chapter with the observation that “[c]orresponding to the prayers of the congregation and the individual we have the answer of the deity.”<sup>245</sup> After this introductory remark, there follows a section in which Mowinckel defends his hypothesis that there were temple prophets in Israel.<sup>246</sup> We will outline and evaluate his arguments for this hypothesis in chapter 2 of our thesis.

In this chapter we are more concerned about his claim that “[p]romises uttered by temple prophets in the name of Yahweh occur not only in laments and protective psalms, but also at the regular festivals.”<sup>247</sup> Consequently, it should not come as a surprise that “we also find a group of ‘prophetic psalms’ with promises for the congregation or people.”<sup>248</sup> These “prophetic psalms” belong pre-eminently to “the regularly recurring communal festivals, first and foremost the *festival of harvest and new year*.”<sup>249</sup> According to Mowinckel, “in later times a new element was added, namely the idea of the *re-*

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<sup>243</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:152.

<sup>244</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:53-73.

<sup>245</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:53.

<sup>246</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:53-58.

<sup>247</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:61.

<sup>248</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:63.

<sup>249</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:63.

*establishment of Israel*, the fulfillment of the hope of the congregation for the future,” an original element of the New Year festival.<sup>250</sup>

In this connection Mowinckel observes that Psalms 75 and 82 “announce the coming of God to judge the pagan world and its unrighteous gods, under whose oppression Israel is now sighing and suffering.”<sup>251</sup> For Mowinckel these psalms “are promises in answer to the prayers of the congregation for the re-establishment of Israel: no doubt they had a permanent place in the festal cult of somewhat later times....”<sup>252</sup> With respect to this phenomenon, Mowinckel also notes that “[h]ere we are face to face with a peculiar mixing of psalm and oracle, where the oracle is the chief thing but is organically fitted into a short prayer, as in Ps. 82, or into a hymnal invocation and thanksgiving, as in Ps. 75.”<sup>253</sup>

In connection with the psalms that deal with the re-establishment of Israel Mowinckel again critiques Gunkel’s claim that the enthronement psalms are “eschatological psalms.” He protests that this is exegetically incorrect and affirms categorically that “such ‘eschatological’ psalms do not exist.”<sup>254</sup>

On the basis of the preceding review one might infer that for Mowinckel Psalm 75 is a “prophetic psalm.” Unfortunately, Mowinckel gives no specific definition of this term

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<sup>250</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:64.

<sup>251</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:64.

<sup>252</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:64.

<sup>253</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:64. Unfortunately, Mowinckel gives no verse references to these speech functions in Psalm 75. Consequently, we have no clear evidence as to Mowinckel’s segmentation of the poem.

<sup>254</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:64.

in the chapter. Judging from the title of this chapter it means that there is a prophetic word in the psalm.

Further evidence for Mowinckel's classification of Psalm 75's literary genre is found in chapter 13, entitled, "Mixed Style and Liturgical Composition."<sup>255</sup> Based on the brief reference to Psalm 75 in this chapter,<sup>256</sup> we infer that Mowinckel classifies Psalm 75 among psalms of "mixed style" that were specifically liturgical compositions. Against Gunkel and Begrich, he notes that this "mixed style" is not "in itself any evidence of a later origin and a lack of sensitiveness to the laws of art, a poetical decline, or even an absence of any conscious plan on the part of the poet...."<sup>257</sup> According to Mowinckel, "the question of 'mixed style' is bound up with a proper understanding of the relation of the psalms to the cult and the religious life to which the latter gives expression."<sup>258</sup> For example, "the psalms of lamentation with their oracles and thanksgiving correspond to a series of ritual acts."<sup>259</sup> In Mowinckel's opinion, "we must suppose the psalm to be spoken by a man or by a representative of a congregation in actual or threatened distress...."<sup>260</sup> Moreover, "the oracle is spoken by a cultic official on duty, the priest or temple prophet, and it announces that Yahweh has accepted the sacrifice."<sup>261</sup> After the

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<sup>255</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:74-78.

<sup>256</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:76.

<sup>257</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:74.

<sup>258</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:75.

<sup>259</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:75.

<sup>260</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:75.

<sup>261</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:76.

oracle, there may follow “the thanksgiving of the worshipper” as in the example of Psalm 12.<sup>262</sup> In the case of a festal hymn, it “may turn back to the oracle and build up the doxology and the expression of confidence in victory on the basis of the oracle, as in Ps. 75.”<sup>263</sup>

From these observations we infer, first of all, that for Mowinckel the switches of speakers and addressees in psalms like Psalm 75 are due to a series of ritual acts in the liturgy. Moreover, according to Mowinckel, oracles quoted in liturgical psalms such as Psalm 75 are spoken either by a priest or temple prophet.

#### ***1.4.2.c Critical Summary***

Mowinckel’s argument for a cult functional approach was very influential. It was adopted, for example, by Gerhard von Rad, over against Gunkel’s approach.<sup>264</sup> Moreover, with some modifications, it was also adopted with modifications in the commentaries by Artur Weiser (1893-1978)<sup>265</sup> and Joachim Kraus.<sup>266</sup> Furthermore, its impact is also

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<sup>262</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:75.

<sup>263</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:75.

<sup>264</sup> Gerhard von Rad, “‘Righteousness’ and ‘Life’ in the Cultic Language of the Psalms,” in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 255. For this reference we are indebted to : Carl J. Bosma, “Discerning the Voices in the Psalms: A Discussion of Two Problems in Psalmic Interpretation, Part 2,” *CTJ* 44 (2009): 127-170.

<sup>265</sup> Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (OTL; trans. Herbert Hartwell; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962). Instead of a New Year’s festival (Mowinckel), Weiser argues for a covenant renewal festival.

<sup>266</sup> Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* and *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988 and 1993).

evident in the commentaries of N. H. Ridderbos,<sup>267</sup> John Eaton,<sup>268</sup> Marvin E. Tate<sup>269</sup> and others.

In our opinion, Mowinckel's emphasis on the intimate relationship between the Psalter and the cult is a very positive feature of his method because it allows us to explain the switch in speakers and addressees in Psalm 75 in terms of a cultic liturgy. As we will demonstrate in chapter 3 of this thesis, the cult functional approach provides a deeper understanding of the dynamics of this composition. However, Mowinckel's hypothesis that Psalm 75 is an enthronement psalm celebrated at the turn of the New Year festival lacks sufficient evidence. In fact, his reconstruction of this festival is based too much on ancient Near Eastern parallels and failed to obtain scholarly support.<sup>270</sup> Consequently, although we support a cultic functional approach to Psalm 75, we will not use Mowinckel's enthronement festival hypothesis in our interpretation of this poem. Similarly, Mowinckel's theory that creation is reactivated during the celebration of the festival is also based too much on ancient Near Eastern sources.<sup>271</sup> Finally, we will evaluate Mowinckel's arguments for the existence of temple prophets in Israel and his disagreement with Gunkel on this issue and the relationship of the psalms and the cult in the next chapter because of the importance of these topics for our thesis.

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<sup>267</sup> N. H. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen: Opnieuw uit de grondtekst vertaald en verklaard* (Korte Verklaring; Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1962), 1:15-20. On p. 19 Ridderbos positions himself against Gunkel's view of the cult. We owe this reference to Carl J. Bosma.

<sup>268</sup> John Eaton, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 57.

<sup>269</sup> Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (WBC; Dallas: Word Books, 1990).

<sup>270</sup> Waltke, *The Psalms*, 100. John H. Eaton appears to be one of the scholars who defend Mowinckel's proposed setting for the Enthronement psalms. Cf. Eaton, *Kingship*, 107.

<sup>271</sup> Waltke, *The Psalms*, 100.

### 1.5 The Tradition Historical Approach

The form critical and cult functional approach continue to exert their influence on psalmic studies until today. However, as the subtitle of his *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* shows that as a follower of the comparative religion method Gunkel was more concerned about Israel's religion in the Psalms than describing the theology of the psalms. As a result of the influence of Karl Barth,<sup>272</sup> Gerhard von Rad, among others, became dissatisfied with a lack of theology and, consequently, argued for a Tradition Historical approach to Scripture in order to get at its kerygma.<sup>273</sup> Unfortunately, von Rad never wrote a commentary from this perspective. However, Harry P. Nasuti has analyzed the Psalms of Asaph from a tradition history perspective.<sup>274</sup> We will discuss his important contribution to the exegesis of Psalm 75 in chapter 2.

### 1.6 Rhetorical Critical Approach

Although James Muilenburg (1896-1974) appreciated the positive gains of form criticism, nevertheless, in his landmark SBL presidential address entitled, "Form Criticism and Beyond," he encouraged scholars to go beyond form criticism.<sup>275</sup> Muilenburg's critique of

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<sup>272</sup> Erhard Gerstenberger, "The Psalms," in *Old Testament Form Criticism*, 2d ed., ed. John H. Hayes (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1977), 184-185.

<sup>273</sup> Cf. Carl J. Bosma, "Discerning the Voices in the Psalms: A Discussion of Two Problems in Psalmic Interpretation," *Calvin Theological Journal* 43 (2008): 184-187.

<sup>274</sup> Harry P. Nasuti, *Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph* (SBL Dissertation Series 88; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1983).

<sup>275</sup> James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969), 1-18.

form criticism was that it emphasized the typical features to the neglect of the unique rhetorical features that distinguish poems of the same literary genre.<sup>276</sup> To correct this problem, he urged them to supplement the results of their use of form criticism with a new method that he called “rhetorical criticism.”<sup>277</sup> The purpose of this method was to pay more attention to the stylistic and rhetorical features of literary texts, such as, for example, inclusion, refrain, parallelism, chiasmus, etc., with an eye to their impact on the intended audience. Methodologically, this method consisted of two important steps: 1) the delimitation of the pericope by recognizing “precisely where and how it begins and where and how it ends”<sup>278</sup>; and 2) the recognition of its compositional structure by observing the various rhetorical devices, such as, for example, the repetition of key words, to discern the sequence and movement of the unit under investigation.<sup>279</sup> Two good representatives of the rhetorical critical approach to Psalm 75 are Marvin E. Tate and Konrad Schaefer.

### 1.6.1 Marvin E. Tate

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<sup>276</sup> Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” 5.

<sup>277</sup> Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” 8.

<sup>278</sup> Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” 9.

<sup>279</sup> Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” 10. For further details of rhetorical criticism and its practitioners see: P. Overland, “Rhetorical Criticism,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, & Writings*, eds. Tremper Longman III & Peter Enns (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 655-663; Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 164.

In the preface to his commentary, Tate acknowledges his indebtedness to the works of Charles Augustus and Emilie Grace Briggs and Herman Gunkel. In his opinion, “[n]o commentary yet published equals the scope and quality of the textual work in these two, dated though they are.”<sup>280</sup> He also acknowledges his debt to Kraus and Weiser.<sup>281</sup> Unfortunately, Tate does not describe his own methodology for his interpretation of the psalms. In the preface he indicates that he has “attempted to follow the pattern set by Peter Craigie . . .”<sup>282</sup> Craigie himself acknowledges that his interpretations are guided by the Form and Rhetorical Critical methods<sup>283</sup> and in his concern for stylistics he frequently depends on the work of N. H. Ridderbos.

As for his interpretation of Psalm 75, it follows the pattern of Craigie commentary. It consists of a well documented translation and sections on “Form/Setting/Structure,” “Comments,” and “Explanation.”

With respect to the translation, we would note that, unfortunately, Tate does not justify his translation of some of the peculiar uses of verbal forms. For example, he translates the three *qatal* verbs in v. 2 in the present tense without a reference to a grammar. Similarly, he also translates the *qatal* verb in v. 4b in the present tense.<sup>284</sup> Likewise, he fails to comment on the peculiar use of a *wayyiqtol* verb in v. 9.

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<sup>280</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, ix.

<sup>281</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, ix.

<sup>282</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, x.

<sup>283</sup> Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, WBC 19 (2d ed.; Nashville: Nelson Reference and Electronic, 2004), 47-48.

<sup>284</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 525. Curiously, in his note on this clause on p. 256 he writes, “the use of the pronoun with the imperfect verb stresses Yahweh as the performer of the action.”

Concerning the form of Psalm 75, Tate discusses various options but in the end agrees with Sabourin's classification, "prophetic exhortation," which "characteristically includes an oracle and prophetic speech with promises and threats."<sup>285</sup> He states that Johnson is probably correct in assigning Psalm 75 to the cultic prophets and notes that the reference to Asaph in the superscription lends credence to the prophetic characters of the poem.<sup>286</sup> On the basis of v. 2 he assigns Psalm 75 "a place in public worship."<sup>287</sup>

As regards the poem's *Sitz-im Leben*, Tate only notes that "Psalm 75 is generally given a setting in the pre-exilic cult." Moreover, he acknowledges that "Mowinckel links it with the pre-exilic Enthronement Festival of Yahweh (I, 142)."<sup>288</sup>

Regarding the historical occasion of the poem, Tate acknowledges that some commentators have "suggested that it celebrates a historical event such as the defeat of Sennacherib during Hezekiah's reign, mentioned in 2 Kgs 19:35 (Kirkpatrick)...."<sup>289</sup> Others have sought to link with to "episode of the Maccabean revolt (Duhm)."<sup>290</sup> Tate's own position is that "[t]here is nothing in the psalm itself to tie it to either of these events . . . and without a specific event as a setting there is little evidence as to the psalm's

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<sup>285</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 257-258.

<sup>286</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258.

<sup>287</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258.

<sup>288</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258.

<sup>289</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258.

<sup>290</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258.

date.”<sup>291</sup> In conclusion he suggests that Psalm 75 “is more probably an earlier psalm reworked after the exile (Anderson).”<sup>292</sup>

With reference to the compositional structure of the poem, Tate summarizes his segmentation of Psalm 75 as follows: “The psalm itself falls naturally into an introductory statement of congregational praise (v 2), an oracle of assurance and judgment (vv 3–6), a prophetic exhortation (vv 7–9), a vow of praise (v 10), and another short oracle in v 11.”<sup>293</sup> In his comments Tate seeks to assign a specific speaker to each section.<sup>294</sup>

What characterizes Tate’s rhetorical critical approach to the psalm is his thorough analysis of the many words and phrases as figures of speech being used throughout the poem. Additionally, he emphasizes the rhetorical features of Psalm 75 by suggesting that “[p]erhaps this psalm is worthy of being remembered mostly because of three striking metaphors in its content.”<sup>295</sup> Tate gives a sound explanation and interpretation of these metaphors in order to demonstrate the powerful message that Psalm 75 contains.

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<sup>291</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258.

<sup>292</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258.

<sup>293</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258.

<sup>294</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258-259.

<sup>295</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 259.

### 1.6.2 Konrad Schaefer

In his introduction to the commentary, Schaefer makes an important contribution to the discussions about the sudden changes in discourse, mood and addressee in the psalms.

With respect to this problem, he writes:

If we consider the psalms as liturgical texts, these sudden changes of discourse and mood are not so surprising. In the liturgy, shifts of address and modes of discourse are natural and necessary, as, for example, in the interchange between the various participants.<sup>296</sup>

In view of the above quotation, it is clear that for Schaefer unexpected changes in discourse, mood, and addressee do constitute a problem in the biblical text. Instead, they are a natural feature for a liturgical composition.

Schaefer begins his exposition of Psalm 75 by emphasizing its close connection with Psalm 74 in terms of motifs and vocabulary.<sup>297</sup> Because Schaefer does not provide a full translation of each psalm, it is not possible to know how he translates and interprets parts of Psalm 75. For example, he provides no justification of the translation of some of the verbs. With many English Bible versions he translates the *yiqtol* verb אֲשַׁפֵּט in v. 3b as a simple future, “I will judge.”<sup>298</sup> Moreover, he translates the *qatal* verb תִּכְנֹתֵי in v. 4b as a present progressive, “I who keep its pillars steady.”<sup>299</sup> Schaefer correctly notes

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<sup>296</sup> Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms* (Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001), xxiv.

<sup>297</sup> Schaefer, *Psalms*, 185.

<sup>298</sup> Schaefer, *Psalms*, 185.

<sup>299</sup> Schaefer, *Psalms*, 185.

that “[c]hanges of address and number signals a liturgical celebration.”<sup>300</sup> On the basis of this criterion he segments the poem into the following subunits: the congregation begins the poem in v. 2; in vv. 3-6 God speaks; in vv. 7-9 the poet talks about God; in v. 9 the poet “pledges continual praise”; and in v. 11 “God reiterates the determination to execute judgment.”<sup>301</sup> Significantly, this segmentation is identical with that of Tate (see above). As part of his rhetorical analysis, he suggests that there is a concentric pattern that links the divine oracle in vv. 3-6 to the poet’s reaffirmation of what God said (vv. 7-9). This concentric pattern looks as follows:

- A I will judge with equity (v. 2)
  - B the earth with all its inhabitants (v. 3)
    - C I say to the boastful, “Do not boast” (v. 4a)
      - D to the wicked, “Do not lift up your horn” (v. 4b)
        - D’ “do not lift up your horn on high” (v. 5a)
          - C’ “or speak with insolent neck” (v. 5b)
            - B’ not from east, the west or the wilderness (v. 6)
              - A’ God is judge (v. 6)<sup>302</sup>

In addition to his rhetorical analysis of the compositional structure of Psalm 75, Schaefer also provides an interesting exposition of the metaphors employed in Psalm 75.

Interestingly, he treats the same three metaphors as Tate. The first is the relationship between the stability of the geographical and the moral world depicted in the instability of the earth (v. 4). The second metaphor is the horn which is an image of power and

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<sup>300</sup> Schaefer, *Psalms*, 185.

<sup>301</sup> Schaefer, *Psalms*, 185.

<sup>302</sup> Schaefer, *Psalms*, 185. Notice that Schaefer utilizes the verse numbers as in the English Bible and not as in the HB.

potentially, pride (vv. 5-6). The third is the cup of foaming wine at Yahweh's hand expressing the inevitable judgment that is coming over the wicked (v. 9). Schaefer suggests that the judgment described in v. 9 has an eschatological dimension.<sup>303</sup>

### 1.6.3 Critical Summary

In evaluating the works of Tate and Schaefer, we would note, first of all, that as representatives of the Rhetorical Critical method they did not pay much attention to ascertaining a historical setting for Psalm 75. In fact, from the second half of the twentieth century on O.T. scholars' interest in indicating a historical setting for the psalms was minimized. Moreover, of the two authors, Schaefer dedicated more attention to the rhetorical features of the text. Furthermore, Tate dedicated more attention to form critical concerns. Finally, both seemed to have been influenced by Mowinckel's cult functional approach. This is especially the case with Schaefer, who has argued that the switches in addressees in Psalm 75 can be understood as a rhetorical feature of a liturgical composition. Instead of interpreting these features as glosses, as, for example, the representative of the source critical method, the advocates of the cult functional and rhetorical critical approach read them as intrinsic to the nature of the poem.

## 1.7 Canonical Critical Approach

Ten years after the publication of Muilenburg's landmark address, Brevard S. Childs issued another call to go beyond form criticism. Disappointed with the meager theological results of the various critical approaches to Scripture, Childs called for a canonical approach to Scripture in his programmatic *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*.

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<sup>303</sup> Schaefer, *Psalms*, 186.

In the chapter on the Psalms of his *Introduction* Childs urged psalmic scholars not to limit their exegetical efforts only to the historical issues behind the text of a given psalm (authorship, historical occasion, literary genre or cultic situation). Instead, Childs urged them to read individual psalms within the context of the final shape of the Psalter as a whole on the assumption that the collection of individual psalms in the Psalter have been shaped intentionally and theologically by its editors.<sup>304</sup>

Childs's call for a canonical approach to exegesis of Scripture became the seedbed of a new trend in psalmic studies called canonical criticism.<sup>305</sup> To see how this method plays out in the exegesis of Psalm 75, we will evaluate the exposition of J. Clinton McCann, Jr. and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld & Erich Zenger in their respective commentaries.

#### 1.7.1 J. Clinton McCann, Jr.

As a methodology, in the introduction to his commentary, McCann states clearly that “the approach to the psalms in this commentary is explicitly theological, and it takes seriously the canonical shape of the book of Psalms itself as well as the psalter's place in the larger canon of Scripture.”<sup>306</sup> Like Childs, McCann recognizes the positive contributions of historical critical methods, however, they fail when they do not recognize that “the psalms were appropriated, preserved, and transmitted not only as records of human response to

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<sup>304</sup> Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 504-525. Cf. Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 29-30.

<sup>305</sup> Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 29-30.

<sup>306</sup> J. Clinton McCann, Jr. “Psalms” in *1 & 2 Maccabees; Introduction to Hebrew Poetry; Job; Psalms*. (vol. 4 of *New Interpreter's Bible*; ed. Leander E. Keck et al. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 643.

God but also as God's word to humanity."<sup>307</sup> To resolve this problem, McCann informs the reader that he intends to employ "a multiplicity of methods in an attempt to interpret the psalms both historically and theologically."<sup>308</sup> In this connection he mentions specifically form criticism, rhetorical criticism, and Childs's canonical approach. To appreciate the Psalter as humanity's response to God, "it is necessary to employ form criticism and rhetorical criticism."<sup>309</sup> Moreover, "to appreciate the psalms more fully as God's words to humanity . . .," it is helpful to consider the canonical shape of the psalter itself."<sup>310</sup>

McCann's commentary is based on the on the English translations of the NIV and the NRSV. Unfortunately, therefore, he does not deal extensively with textual critical and translation issues. Only in the case of v. 10a does he note that the NRSV has adopted a textual emendation that he deems unnecessary. Consequently, we are in no position to evaluate his translation of the troublesome verbal forms in Psalm 75.

McCann begins his exposition of Psalm 75 with comments on the thematic connections between Psalms 73, 74 and 75. He first notes that in view of the lexical connections between Psalms 73 and 74, "it is interesting to note that Psalm 75:1 clearly recalls Psalm 73:28 (see 'near' and 'tell' in both verses."<sup>311</sup> Moreover, Psalm 75:5 mentions both the arrogant and wicked. Significantly, the only other psalm in which these

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<sup>307</sup> McCann, Jr. "Psalms," 642.

<sup>308</sup> McCann, Jr. "Psalms," 643.

<sup>309</sup> McCann, Jr. "Psalms," 643.

<sup>310</sup> McCann, Jr. "Psalms," 643.

<sup>311</sup> McCann, Jr. "Psalms," 976.

two terms occur together is Psalm 74. The only other occurrence of the term “arrogant” is found in Psalm 5:5.<sup>312</sup> Furthermore, observes lexical (e.g. “name” in Pss 74:10, 18 and 75:2) and thematic links between Psalms 74 and 75. In this connection, he suggests that “it is almost as if Psalm 75:2-5, 10 is a direct response to the petitions in 74:18-23.”<sup>313</sup> In his opinion, Psalm 75 also develops the theme of God’s sovereignty in Psalm 74, “portraying God as savior (vv. 2, 7, 10; see Psalm 74:12-13), and cosmic creator and ruler (v. 3; see Psalm 74:14-17). On the basis of these connections McCann concludes that “even if the sequence of Psalms 73-75 is coincidental, there are literary and conceptual links that suggest their coherence....”<sup>314</sup> Curiously, McCann does not consider the lexical and thematic connections between Psalms 75 and 76, which Hitzig<sup>315</sup> And Hengstenberg<sup>316</sup> had already point out. Methodologically this would be the next logical step for a canonical approach.

In his exposition of Psalm 75:3-5 McCann calls attention to various lexical connection between the content of these verses and Habakkuk. He notes, for example, that the Hebrew word for “set time”/“appointed time” (מוֹעֵד) occurs in Psalm 75:3 and Hab 2:3. Moreover, there is the concern for the wicked in Hab 1:4, 12-13 and Hab 2:15-16 and Psalm 75:9. These connections lead McCann to suggest that if Psalms 74-75 were read in sequence then Habakkuk would provide “an illustrative context for hearing Psalm

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<sup>312</sup> McCann, Jr. “Psalms,” 976.

<sup>313</sup> McCann, Jr. “Psalms,” 976.

<sup>314</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 976.

<sup>315</sup> Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 1:222-130.

<sup>316</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 429.

75 without limiting its application or usefulness to that particular historical setting....”<sup>317</sup>

On this reading the Babylonians would be the wicked.

In addition to the lexical connections to Habakkuk, McCann also refers to lexical and thematic connections between Psalm 75 and other psalms. In connection with vv. 3-4, he refers to Psalms 9:8; 96:10; 98:9; 99:4. In connection with vv. 5-6, he refers to Psalms 2:10-11, 10:3-4, 66:7 and 94:4-7, Jer 48:25 and 1 Sam 2:3. In connection with v. 8, he refers to 1 Sam 2:7-8, Psalms 113:5-7 and 147:6. Finally, in connection with the image of the cup in Yahweh’s in v. 9, he refers to Psalms 11:6, 23:5, and 116:13, Is 51:17, Jer 25:15, 49:12, Ezek 23:32-34, Hab 2:15-16, and Rev 14:10, 16:19 and 18:6.<sup>318</sup>

McCann does not classify Psalm 75 according to a specific literary genre. He notes that “Psalm 75 is frequently labeled as a prophetic judgment speech (see Psalm 82).”<sup>319</sup> With respect to this proposed classification, he observes that Psalm 75 begins like a song of praise in v. 2, contains a divine speech in vv. 3-6, a response to this divine speech in vv. 6-9, which in his opinion has a didactic character, and a vow to praise in v. 10.<sup>320</sup> Apparently this diversity in speech functions leads him to avoid a formal critical classification of the poem’s literary genre. Consequently, McCann also does not identify the *Sitz-im-Leben* of Psalm 75.

Despite the diversity in speech functions in Psalm 75, McCann argues for the compositional unity of Psalm 75 using rhetorical critical data from the text. In support of

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<sup>317</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 977.

<sup>318</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 977.

<sup>319</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 976.

<sup>320</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 976.

this claim, he first calls attention to the fact that the vow to praise in v. 10 recalls v. 2, “even though the vocabulary of praise and proclamation differs.” Second, he observes that the divine speech in vv. 3-6 and its response in vv. 7-9 “focus on the establishment of God’s justice (see the forms of ‘judge’ in vv. 2, 7), especially as it involves dealing with the apparent power (see ‘horn’ in vv. 4-5, 10) of the wicked (vv. 4, 8, 10). Third, he notes that “[u]nity is provided by the sixfold occurrence of a Hebrew root (רָם *rûm*) translated ‘lifting up’ (vv. 4-7), ‘high’ (v. 5), and ‘exalted’ (v. 10).”<sup>321</sup>

On the basis of form critical criteria McCann segments Psalm 75 as follows. He suggests that v. 2 is a song of praise. God speaks in vv. 3-6 and vv. 7-9 constitute “a profession of faith that has a didactic character.” In response to vv. 7-9 there follows a vow to praise in v. 10. Although he recognizes that the “I” who speaks in v. 11 could be the psalmist, he opines that “the activity described [in v. 11] is better attributed to God.”<sup>322</sup> Consequently, the concluding speech in v. 11 returns to the divine speech in vv. 3-6.<sup>323</sup>

### 1.7.2 Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger

In the preface of their innovative and ground breaking commentary on Psalms 51-100 Frank L. Hossfeld and Erich Zenger make it quite clear that they are not treating the Psalter as “a ‘storage cabinet’ for individual psalms, but rather as a successively developed, but nevertheless compositionally structure entity whose form gives an

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<sup>321</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 976.

<sup>322</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 977.

<sup>323</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 977.

additional dimension of meaning to each individual psalm....”<sup>324</sup> Moreover, they inform the reader that after “a detailed analysis and exegesis of the individual psalms,” they will analyze the place and function of each individual psalm “within the context of the smaller compositions to which they belong.”<sup>325</sup> In their judgment, individual psalms acquire their theological depth and acuity from the larger context in the Psalter.<sup>326</sup> For this reason they bemoan the fact that this additional aspect of the psalms has been given scant attention in traditional Psalms exegesis.<sup>327</sup> Furthermore, in addition to addressing questions of translation (e.g., the problematic verbal tenses) and stichometric arrangement, they also plan to present “the internal-biblical reception of individual psalms in both the Old and New Testament.”<sup>328</sup> From this it is evident that they do not want to ignore the use of other approaches to the psalms. In addition to using these approaches, they also want to consider the place and function of each psalm in the final canonical shape of the Psalter. This is quite evident from Hossfeld’s exegesis of Psalm 75.

Unlike McCann, Hossfeld begins his exegesis of Psalm 75 with his own translation that is accompanied with notes. He begins these notes with a general observation that rings true: “This text is hard to understand in many places, something that comes through in the interpretation both of individual passages and of the psalms as a

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<sup>324</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, xi. See also p. 7.

<sup>325</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, xi.

<sup>326</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 7.

<sup>327</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, xi and 7.

<sup>328</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, xi.

whole.”<sup>329</sup> In the notes proper he deals with text critical issues, syntactical questions and debatable translations of verbal forms. Of particular interest is that, unlike most Bible versions, he translates the *qatal* verbs in vv. 2, 4 and 5 and the *wayyiqtol* verb in v. 9 in the past tense.

After his translation, Hossfeld addresses the question concerning the literary genre of Psalm 75 at some length. According to Hossfeld, Psalm 75 “is difficult to classify.”<sup>330</sup> The reason for this difficulty is the switch in speaker and addressee in the poem. In v. 2 a “we” group speaks. As for content, the “I” in vv. 3-4 must be God. An “I” also speaks in vv. 5, 10-11. Disputed is the identity of the “I” in v. 5. At issue in this dispute is the fact that “vv. 8-9 speak *about* God.”<sup>331</sup> Because the speaker “speaks about God in the third person in v. 10,” the “I” must be the psalmist.<sup>332</sup> In terms of content, the “I” of v. 11 must be God.<sup>333</sup> In light of these shifts, Hossfeld rightly notes that “the delimitation of the divine speeches is a central problem of this psalm in particular.” In addition to this issue there is the question concerning the segmentation of the poem’s individual units “and their relationship to one another within the whole.”<sup>334</sup> As for the genre issue, he notes that the opening verse (v. 2) might lead one to infer that the poem is a song of praise and

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<sup>329</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 252.

<sup>330</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 252.

<sup>331</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 253.

<sup>332</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 253.

<sup>333</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 253.

<sup>334</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 253.

thanksgiving.<sup>335</sup> However, the vow to praise in v. 10 might also lead one to conclude that it is a lament in which vv. 5ff. describe the distress.

To resolve this issue, Hossfeld first addresses the question concerning the delimitation of the divine speeches. He notes that in the Asaph psalms, the group to which Psalm 75 belongs, divine speeches are “each introduced in a different way (cf. 50:4, 7, 16; 81:6; 95:7).”<sup>336</sup> Only Psalms 75 and 82 lack such indications. Consequently, the speeches of the psalmist and God must be segmented on the grounds of content and style.<sup>337</sup> In this connection Hossfeld makes the following key claim with respect to our thesis:

The speaker appears to place no value on the accentuation of his prophetic role, but that does not mean that he refuses authority over his audience. This fact relativizes the traditional cult-prophet hypothesis for the oracle psalms and underscores, in countermovement, the elevated self concept of the speaker.<sup>338</sup>

He bases his claim on the following observation:

The Asaph psalms in particular recognize speakers with more than individual concerns and a function as speaker to the nation or the nations; cf. the confessional monologue of the wise person in Psalm 73, the authoritative challenge in 76:12, the lament of the official petitioner in a position of leadership in Psalm 77, the petitioner who gives advice in Psalm 78, and the admonitory speaker in Psalm 95:7.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253.

<sup>336</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253.

<sup>337</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 254.

<sup>338</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 254.

<sup>339</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 254.

In our opinion, these remarks are not very helpful for identifying the speakers in Psalm 75. Moreover, they go against the fact that, according to 1 Chron 25:1, Asaph and his sons were set apart for the ministry of prophesying, a fact that Delitzsch underscored.<sup>340</sup>

At any rate, next Hossfeld addresses the question concerning the segmentation of the subunits of Psalm 75 and considers the following options with respect to the identification of the speaker in v. 5. The first option is that God continues as the speaker in v. 5 but now addresses the arrogant/wicked. In this case the *qatal* verb אָמַרְתִּי in v. 5a “is to be understood as a perfect of coincidence (‘I hereby declare to the proud’), as in 82:6.”<sup>341</sup> The second option is that the speaker is a human being. As Hossfeld notes correctly, self-quotations are a common phenomenon in the Psalms.<sup>342</sup> However, according to Hossfeld, in the Psalter these self-quotations are usually monologues.<sup>343</sup> But in Psalm 75:5 the self-quotation is addressed to the arrogant/wicked. Consequently, the verb אָמַרְתִּי in v. 5a introduces a public discourse. In Hossfeld’s opinion, this is certainly feasible in light of his comments about the role of speakers in the Asaph psalms. On this basis Hossfeld then posits that the speaker “recalls his (previous) warning in the introduction to the speech” and concludes that “[t]he first divine discourse ends in v. 4,

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<sup>340</sup> Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 123. Cf. Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, 19-22.

<sup>341</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 254.

<sup>342</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 254. Cf. Rolf A. Jacobson, ‘Many Are Saying’: *The Function of Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Psalter* (JSOTSup 397; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), 60-81.

<sup>343</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 254.

with the *Selah* underscoring the caesura...” and that from v. 5 through v. 10 it is the psalmist who speaks.<sup>344</sup>

Finally, Hossfeld analyzes the poetic structure of Psalm 75 in order to classify the literary genre of Psalm 75. He rightly notes that the “poetic structure of the psalm is not evenly smooth, but shifting.”<sup>345</sup> In his opinion, v. 2 has “no special poetic form.”<sup>346</sup> Moreover, “[t]he divine speech in vv. 3-4 consists of two parallel sets of conditions....”<sup>347</sup> Furthermore, the admonition in vv. 5-6 consists of four stichoi/cola that are characterized by progressive, climactic parallelism. Additionally, Hossfeld claims that the three כִּי clauses in vv. 7-9 can be subdivided into a double reason for the admonition of vv. 6-7: vv. 7-8, each of which end with the key word רוּם (cf. vv. 5-6), and v. 9. The vow to praise in v. 10 is a bicolon, as is v. 11 that is characterized by a chiasmic pattern.<sup>348</sup>

On the basis of his synthesis of the above data, he rejects the cult functional classification of Psalm 75 as a “cult-prophetic liturgy.” Instead, on the basis of the “more-than-individual function of the petitioner/speaker for the group of the righteous,” he suggests that Psalm 75 is “a literary prayer of a theologian.”<sup>349</sup>

Curiously, Hossfeld does not address the typical form critical question concerning the *Sitz-im-Leben*. Nor, for that matter, does he argue for a specific historical occasion

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<sup>344</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 254.

<sup>345</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 254.

<sup>346</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 254.

<sup>347</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 254.

<sup>348</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 254.

<sup>349</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 255.

and setting. In his exposition of v. 9 he only suggests that the unusual phrase “all the wicked of the earth” maybe “includes all foreign conquerors and nations, and thus reflects the experiences of Jerusalem and the exile.”<sup>350</sup>

As for Psalm 75’s relationship to the neighboring psalms in its immediate context, Hossfeld observes that the connection between Psalms 75 and 74 is less lexical than “in the logical sequence and the common motifs in the two psalms.”<sup>351</sup> In his opinion, the description of the distress in Psalm 74 prepares “the ground for the oracular Psalm 75, which in its own way indicates the present crisis at the very beginning, like its predecessor, and answers it.”<sup>352</sup> Additionally, the strongest links between the two psalms are the common theology of the divine name (74:21; 75:2), the image of God as judge (74:22; 75:3-4, 7-8) and as the creator and sustainer of the world (74:16-17; 75:4) stress the relationship between these two psalms.<sup>353</sup>

For Hossfeld the links between Psalms 75 and 76 are lexical and content. First of all, the connection between Psalm 75 and Psalm 76 are similar to those outlined above with respect to the thematic links between Pss 74 and 75: 1) the theology of the divine name (75:2; 76:2); 2) the image of God as judge (75:3-4, 8; 76:9-10), and 3) the dependence of the stability of the world on God’s control (75:4, 9; 76:9-10, 13).<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 257.

<sup>351</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 257. In note 15 on p. 257, Hossfeld writes: “The petition for lifting up the divine steps in 74:3 corresponds to the exaltation in 75:7; what is said about the universal earth in 74:12, 17 corresponds to 75:4, 9; the cosmic equipping of the moon and sun is related to the establishment of the earth in 75:4; finally, there is the name theology.”

<sup>352</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 257.

<sup>353</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 257-258.

<sup>354</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 258.

Moreover, Psalms 75 and 76 share the motif of thanksgiving (Psalm 75:2; 76:11) and “both psalms speak of the ‘God of Jacob’ (75:10; 76:7).”<sup>355</sup> Finally, “the two sides of divine judgment correspond: in 75:9 the judgment strikes the ‘wicked of the earth,’ while in 76:10 the same judgment will rescue the ‘poor of the earth.’”<sup>356</sup>

As for the relationship of Psalm 75 to the remainder of the O.T., Hossfeld emphasizes the relationship between Psalm 75 and 1 Sam 2:1-10. He agrees with Raymond Jacques Tournay’s<sup>357</sup> opinion that the connections between these two poems is so close that they “stem from the same literary circle of Levitical singers.”<sup>358</sup> He lists the following connections: 1) the metaphor of the horn as a symbol of power (Psalm 75:5-6, 11; 1 Sam 2:1b); 2) the insolent speech of the wicked/enemies (Psalm 75:6; 1 Sam 2:3); 3) the motif of God casting down and lifting up (Psalm 75:8; 1 Sam 2:7); 4) the establishment of the earth on pillars (Psalm 75:4; 1 Sam 2:8); 5) the conflict between the righteous and the wicked (Psalm 75:11; 1 Sam 2:9); and 6) “the motif of God the universal judge (Psalm 75:3-4, 7-8; 1 Sam 2:10).”<sup>359</sup> These multiple connections lead Hossfeld to suggest that “Hannah’s song of thanksgiving represents a theologically advanced, further developed, later stage of Asaphite tradition.”<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 258.

<sup>356</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 258.

<sup>357</sup> For Tournay’s work on this issue, see: Raymond Jacques Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing God with the Psalms: The Prophetic Liturgy of the Second Temple in Jerusalem* (J. Edward Crowley, trans; JSOTSup 118, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991);

<sup>358</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 257.

<sup>359</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 257. Curiously, Hossfeld did not consider the links between Pss 75 and 113, which, as we will note below, also shares common motifs with 1 Sam 2:1-10.

<sup>360</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 257.

In conclusion to our consideration of Hossfeld's exposition of Psalm 75, we would note that in the final section of the commentary entitled, "Significance," he states that "the significance of Psalm 75 lies in two areas."<sup>361</sup> The first area of significance is that this oracular poem gives the reader "a key to the self-understanding of those who pray the Asaph psalms."<sup>362</sup> In this connection, Hossfeld reveals his anti-Mowinckel and pro-Gunkel bias, as is evident from the following quote:

In the style of the prophets they convey direct divine discourse, have visions, and enter into the inheritance of the prophets of judgment, although one cannot describe them as cult prophets.<sup>363</sup>

The second area of significance is the emphatic announcement and dramatic description of the coming universal judgment. In this connection Hossfeld notes that it "is no accident that Rev 14:10 seized on the image of the cup of judgment from Psalm 75:9 for its depiction of the judgment of the world."<sup>364</sup>

### 1.7.3 Critical Evaluation

In evaluating the contribution of the canonical approach as practiced by McCann and Hossfeld to the interpretation of the message of Psalm 75, we would begin with several positive observations. First, *via positiva*, for neither McCann nor Hossfeld is the switch in speaker and addressee a problem. Moreover, neither of them questions the poem's unity.

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<sup>361</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 258.

<sup>362</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 258.

<sup>363</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 258.

<sup>364</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 258.

In fact, McCann defends it with rhetorical critical arguments.<sup>365</sup> Furthermore, both have argued for the lexical and thematic connections between Psalms 74 and 75. On the basis of these connections they have suggested that Psalm 75 constitutes the answer to the communal lament of Psalm 74. This suggestion has also been made by Schökel-Carniti<sup>366</sup> and Jensen.<sup>367</sup> Strikingly, McCann failed to explore the lexical and thematic links between Psalms 75 and 76 but, following the example of other scholars, Hossfeld described them extensively. Second, *via negative*, the added value of this exegetical step of the canonical approach is not very clear from their final exposition of the message of Psalm 75. Moreover, although both confess to use form criticism, neither of them provides a clear classification of Psalm 75's literary genre. McCann provides no classification and Hossfeld's "literary prayer of a theologian" is ambiguous. Unfortunately, he provides no additional examples of this proposed genre, nor does he provide a typical outline. Furthermore, neither commentator treats the question of the psalm's *Sitz-im-Leben*. In the case of Hossfeld this may be due to his rather negative view of the cult-functional approach that we have observed in our review of his exegesis of Psalm 75. In this connection we would note that the logical and thematic sequence between Psalms 74, 75 and 76 is not just of a literary, theological nature but, as we will demonstrate in chapter 3 of the thesis, may also have a liturgical function, in which case a cult-functional approach can enhance the interpretation of Psalm 75's canonical function.

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<sup>365</sup> McCann, "Psalms," 976.

<sup>366</sup> Luís Alonso Schökel and Cecília Carniti, *Salmos II (Salmos 73-150)* (Grande Comentário Bíblico; São Paulo: Paulus, 1998), 965.

<sup>367</sup> Joseph E. Jensen, "Psalm 75: Its Poetic Context and Structure," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 63 (2001): 416-429.

Finally, neither commentator explores the function of Psalm 75 in relationship to its remote context, namely, the collection of Asaphite psalms,<sup>368</sup> of which Psalm 75 is a part.

### 1.8 Conclusion

The above history of interpretation of Psalm 75 helped us evaluate what exegetical approaches have contributed to solve the exegetical difficulties that plague the interpretation of this rather complex poem. With respect to the problem of the translation of the verbs in Psalm 75, for example, the Church Fathers Theodore of Mopsuestia and Augustine contributed little toward the resolution of this problem because they were commenting on the LXX text, not the Hebrew text. Calvin worked with the Hebrew text and showed sensitivity to this issue. However, he lacked the grammatical tools to come to a solution. Even though Gesenius's *Hebrew Grammar* was available to them, Hitzig, Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, Cheyne, the Briggses, and Gunkel were also not able to arrive at a clear solution to this problem. Neither, for that matter, did McCann, Tate and Hossfeld, even though they had more recent Hebrew grammars available. Consequently, this is a continuing problem to which we will pay attention in our translation of Psalm 75 in chapter 3.

Regarding the historical occasion for Psalm 75, our survey demonstrated that there are basically two positions. Beginning with Theodore of Mopsuestia, the advocates of the grammatical-historical-theological approach locate the situation in the time of Hezekiah. However, the defenders of the Historical Critical method tend to date Psalm 75 to the exilic or post exilic period.

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<sup>368</sup> Cf. Nasuti, *Tradition History*; Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, and John H. Stek, *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002).

As for the change in speakers in Psalm 75, our survey showed that Augustine already recognized this problem and solved it with the prosopological method. Moreover, it showed that the majority of commentators who recognize the change in speakers are agreed that God speaks in vv. 3-4. However, there is no consensus as to whether God also speaks in vv. 5-6 and v. 11.

An evaluation of the various methodologies used in the exegesis of Psalm 75 suggests that Calvin's approach marked a definite step in the right direction. Moreover, even though the early representatives of Historical Criticism were negative to some of the traditional positions on authorship and dating, nevertheless, their concern for reading the text grammatically and historically resulted in a significant advance towards the appreciation of the composition of Psalm 75.

For example, with respect to the work of the two representatives of the source critical method, we would emphasize, *via positive*, that the Briggses have paid careful attention to the grammar and syntax of the poem. *Via negative*, however, both Cheyne and the Briggses deconstructed the text in their attempt to remove the difficulties. Looking at the psalm as a poetic literary piece and trying to arrange it into a strophic structure, both suggested that the sudden changes of speeches are due generally to editorial mistakes. However, there is no manuscript evidence for any of their textual modifications. Their proposed modifications are governed by their presuppositions, especially their understanding of meter and strophic structure in Hebrew poetry. As a result, neither commentary provides a positive solution to the exegetical problems of Psalm 75.

In sharp contrast to the source critical approach, the form critical approach pioneered by Gunkel produced a revolution in the interpretation of the Psalter. With respect to the interpretation of Psalm 75, for example, Gunkel correctly recognized that the switches in speaker and voice were due to the liturgical nature of the poem. Consequently, he did not have to adopt a source critical solution to this phenomenon and was able to treat Psalm 75 as a unified whole. On the basis of the switches in speaker and addressee he classified Psalm 75 as a prophetic liturgy. A negative feature of Gunkel's approach is his negative view of Israel's cult.

As Mowinckel pointed out, this negative view of the cult is not a necessary part of the form critical approach. For this reason he pointed out that his teacher and mentor went only part way. Mowinckel correctly argued that if the *Sitz-im-Leben* of the psalms is the cult, then a cult-functional approach is necessary. As we noted above, this method differs from form criticism only in its appreciation of the cult. This sharp difference led Mowinckel to assert that the so-called "prophetic" psalms were composed for the cult and performed in the cult by prophets.

Needless to say, the methods of Gunkel and Mowinckel continue to influence contemporary psalmic studies. In fact, their disagreement about the cult, the so-called "prophetic" psalms and the existence of cult prophets in Israel continues to divide contemporary scholars. For this reason we will explore this radical difference between Gunkel and Mowinckel in the next chapter.

Although the proponents of rhetorical criticism claim that they do not want to reject the gains of historical critical, form critical and cult-functional approaches, our

evaluation of Schaefer revealed that his brief treatment of Psalm 75 showed very little evidence of dealing, for example, with form critical issues. Instead, he focused his attention on the stylistic (chiasm) and semiotic (imagery) features of the text. Nevertheless, Schaeffer's appreciation of the liturgical nature of Psalm 75 should be noted, as well as the fact that he noted the connection between Psalms 74 and 75.

Like the advocates of rhetorical criticism, the defenders of the canonical approach to the Psalter want to appropriate the gains of form criticism in their exegesis of Psalm 75. In the case of McCann, it should be noted that he also employed rhetorical critical data to defend the unity of the poem. Both McCann and Hossfeld interpret the changes subject and addressee in Psalm 75 as evidence for the liturgical nature of the poem. However, both fail to explore the function of Psalm 75 in the cult. In fact, like Gunkel, Hossfeld's comments reveal an anti-cult bias, as well as a strong dislike for the cultic prophet hypothesis. Both scholars explore the lexical and thematic links between Psalm 75 and its neighboring psalms but it is not clear how all of this interesting data plays out in their interpretation of the poem's theological method.

In summary, our survey of the various exegetical approaches employed in the interpretation of Psalm 75 has shown that each of these exegetical approaches have positive features that can help the reader understand the message of Psalm 75. A careful analysis of the poem's grammar and syntax, for example, is necessary. Moreover, the recovery of the understanding Hebrew poetry was a positive gain and, consequently, the poetic structure of Psalm 75 should be analyzed. In this endeavor, rhetorical criticism can help. Furthermore, the form critical and cult function approach have helped tremendously

to solve the problem of the switch in speakers and addressees in the poem. Finally, the aims of the canonical approach are laudable. Nevertheless, each approach also has its limitations. For example, Gunkel's negative bias towards the cult prevented him from further exploring the cultic *Sitz-im-Leben* of the Psalter. For that reason we agree with McCann that a successful interpretation of Psalm 75 will have to employ a multiplicity of methods. In agreement with Bruce K. Waltke, these methods should begin with the gramatico-historical-theological method enriched by the newer disciplines of form critical, cult functional, rhetorical critical and canonical approaches.<sup>369</sup> We will address this issue in more detail in chapter 3 of this thesis.

Of these various methods, however, we believe that Gunkel's form critical method and especially Mowinckel's cult functional approach can help the reader understand, first of all, the switches in speakers and addressees in liturgical psalms like Psalm 75. As we noted above, Gunkel's form critical and Mowinckel's cult functional approaches are very similar. In fact, they are so similar that some do not distinguish the two approaches. Nevertheless, as we underscored above, there was a sharp disagreement between Gunkel and Mowinckel on the cult. This complete disagreement led to two different explanations for the presence of prophetic elements in the psalms, especially with respect to the quotation of divine speeches (also referred to as "oracle") and prophetic admonitions, threats and promises. As we noted above, according to Mowinckel, "to understand the prophetic elements in the psalms" one must recognize that from the very start of Israel's history in the promised land there was an intimate connection between ecstatic prophetic

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<sup>369</sup> Waltke and Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 112.

guilds and temples.<sup>370</sup> According to Gunkel and Begrich, however, “Mowinckel’s thesis stands and falls with the evidence for *cultic prophecy*.”<sup>371</sup> Needless to say, Gunkel and Begrich were not convinced by Mowinckel’s evidence. We will examine Mowinckel’s evidence for his cultic prophecy hypothesis in chapter 2 of this thesis because the disagreement between Mowinckel and Gunkel and Begrich shaped the ongoing scholarly discussion about this important topic right into the twenty-first century and because it has important implications for our interpretation of Psalm 75 in chapter 3.

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<sup>370</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:55-56.

<sup>371</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 284.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ONGOING DEBATE ABOUT CULTIC PROPHECY AND THE PSALMS

The disagreement between Hermann Gunkel and his student Sigmund Mowinckel in the early twentieth century concerning the existence of cultic prophecy in the O.T. established the basic frame of reference for the ensuing scholarly debate about this important issue and its implications for the explanation of the prophetic elements in the Psalter, especially the quotation of divine speeches in the psalms like Psalm 75. After Gunkel and Mowinckel many scholars have contributed to this debate right into the twenty-first century. Unfortunately, however, scholars have not reached a consensus on this issue.

For this reason in this chapter we will investigate the state of the problem about cultic prophecy and its relationship to the Psalter. First, we will present the positions of Mowinckel and Gunkel in this ongoing debate as well as their disagreements. Second, we will survey the positions of those who supported either Mowinckel or Gunkel in the ensuing debate, as well as those who took a middle position. Third, we will present our own position on these important issues on the assumption that the cultic prophecy hypothesis helps explain the quotation of divine speech in Psalm 75.

#### **2.1 The Debate about Cultic Prophecy between Mowinckel and Gunkel**

##### 2.1.1 Introduction

By way of introduction to the ongoing debate between Mowinckel and Gunkel, we recall, first of all, that for Calvin the quotation of divine speech in Psalm 75:3-4 was used for

rhetorical effect.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in the late nineteenth Delitzsch recognized that in the Asaphite psalms “God is frequently introduced as speaking....”<sup>2</sup> In addition, in his exposition of Psalm 68:23 he writes: “In ver. 23 the poet hears a divine utterance, or records one that he has heard....”<sup>3</sup> Later, at the beginning of the twentieth century, in 1900, A. F. Kirkpatrick also recognized the presence of quotations of divine speech in the Psalter. With respect to quotation of a divine speech in Psalm 68:22, for example, Kirkpatrick observes that “[t]he Psalmist either quotes some ancient promise, like that of Num. xxi. 34, or proclaims a fresh message from God with the authority and in the language of a prophet.”<sup>4</sup> In addition, he notes that Psalm 77 resembles the prayer of Habakkuk.<sup>5</sup> Neither of these scholars, however, sought to reconstruct the cultic situation for this phenomenon. Somewhat later, however, in 1909, Mowinckel published an article in the *Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift* in which he argued for the close connection between ecstatic prophetic guilds and temples as an explanation for the presence of prophetic elements in the Psalter. A few years later, in 1913, Gunkel presented his theory that the divine speeches in the psalms are only imitations of prophetic style and not authentic prophetic speeches in an article published in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 3:185.

<sup>2</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 123.

<sup>3</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 263.

<sup>4</sup> Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 390.

<sup>5</sup> Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 457.

<sup>6</sup> Gunkel's position on this issue was published in 1913 in the article, “Psalmen,” in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Friedrich Michael Schiele and Leopold Zscharnack, eds; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1913), 1927-1949. An English translation of this work was published as a little book: *The Psalms: A Form Critical Introduction*, (trans. Thomas M. Horner; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967).

For Gunkel, the prophetic words in the psalms were the result of the influence of prophetic literary types on the psalmists who served in the temple.<sup>7</sup> A year later, in 1914, Gustav Hölscher published a book in which he agreed with Gunkel that the divine oracles in the Psalms are imitations of prophetic forms of speech.<sup>8</sup> Then in 1923 Mowinckel published another volume of his multivolume study on the Psalms, *Psalmenstudien III: Kultprophetie und kultprophetische Psalmen* (Studies in the Psalms III: Cultic prophets and cultic prophetic Psalms), in which he criticized Gunkel for not acknowledging the active participation of prophets in Israel's cult. For Mowinckel the active participation of prophets in Israel's temple worship is the source for divine utterances in the Psalter.<sup>9</sup> Ten years later, in 1933, Gunkel and Begrich published their *Introduction to Psalms*, in which they, in turn, critiqued Mowinckel's position. Because Gunkel and Begrich claimed that "Mowinckel's thesis stands and fall with the evidence for *cultic prophecy*,"<sup>10</sup> we will first summarize Mowinckel's arguments in support of cultic prophecy in the O.T. and then Gunkel and Begrich's counter arguments.

### 2.1.2 Mowinckel's Arguments for Cultic Prophecy

To support his thesis that the active participation of prophets in Israel's worship at the temple is the source for divine utterances in the Psalter, Mowinckel reconstructs the

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<sup>7</sup> Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form Critical Introduction*, 26-27.

<sup>8</sup> Gustav Hölscher, *Die Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Religionsgeschichte Israels* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichssche Buchhandlung, 1914). I owe this reference to John W. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms* (BZAW; New York: De Gruyter, 2005), 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:55-58

<sup>10</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 284.

historical development of the prophetic office. In so doing, he claims, first of all, that “[i]n the earliest period in Israel the priest was not originally in the first instance sacrificer but, as with the old Arabs, custodian of the sanctuary, oracle priest, ‘seer,’ and holder of the effectual future-creating and future-interpreting word of power, the blessing and the curse.”<sup>11</sup> According to Mowinckel, Samuel was such a seer priest. Moreover, the Balaam stories in Num 22-24 are evidence for the same phenomenon.<sup>12</sup> On the basis of these examples he concludes that “in ancient Israel priest and giver of oracles—‘seer,’ ‘divine man’—to all appearance meant one and the same person.”<sup>13</sup>

Next Mowinckel claims that “when Israel settled in Canaan..., they met with two different types of people interpreting the deity: the temple priests and the ecstatic ‘prophets’, the *nēbhî’im*.”<sup>14</sup> Mowinckel describes the function of the *nēbhî’im* as follows.

The *nēbhî’im* represented a particular form of religious experience: in a state of ecstasy [sic] they experienced the divine presence, and knew themselves to be filled with divine power; whatever they would then do or say would be considered powerful divine signs and words, at once unveiling and influencing the future.<sup>15</sup>

According to Mowinckel, “[p]eople would apply to the *nēbhî’im* both as miracle workers and soothsayers.”<sup>16</sup> In support of this claim he refers to 1 Samuel 9, 1 Kings 17:7ff., 17ff,

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<sup>11</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:53.

<sup>12</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:53.

<sup>13</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:54.

<sup>14</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:54. In footnote 9, Mowinckel observes that “Canaanite priests and prophets are mentioned, for instance, in 1 Kgs. 18.19ff.; 2 Kgs. 10.19; 11.18; 23:5; Jer 23:13.

<sup>15</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:54.

<sup>16</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:54.

2 Kings 1:2f., 4-5, 6:1ff., 8ff., 13:14ff. and 20:1ff.<sup>17</sup> On the basis of these texts he then asserts that the “ecstatic form of piety was soon adopted by Israel and adapted to Yahwism....”<sup>18</sup> At the same time, according to Mowinckel, “Israel also adopted and remodeled great parts of the Canaanite cultic system...,” which resulted in “a distinction between two types of revelation: priestly and prophetic.”<sup>19</sup> The priestly office, on the one hand, was hereditary and the priests devoted to leading worship, sacrificing, giving oracles and dispensing “guidance” (*tôrôth*). On the other hand, “the *prophets* formed looser unions of more or less ecstatically inspired ‘divine men.’”<sup>20</sup> “In new forms they continued the more ‘pneumatic’ aspects of the character and work of the old ‘seers’; instead of oracle tokens and omens there were ‘visions’ and ‘voices’ of a psychological nature....”<sup>21</sup> According to Mowinckel, the “classical movement of reform prophets developed” from the prophetic guilds.<sup>22</sup> In this connection Mowinckel notes that “the boundary between priest and prophet was never an absolute one. Samuel was priest as well as prophet; and both Jeremiah and Ezekiel were members of priestly families.”<sup>23</sup>

On the basis of the above reconstruction of the history of the prophetic office, Mowinckel then claims that “to understand the prophetic elements in the psalms it is

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<sup>17</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:54, n. 11.

<sup>18</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:54.

<sup>19</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:55.

<sup>20</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:55.

<sup>21</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:55.

<sup>22</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:55.

<sup>23</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:55.

important for us to know that from the very start these prophetic guilds were closely connected with the temples, just as the ‘seers’ of Babylonia were reckoned among the temple priests.”<sup>24</sup> In support of this claim Mowinckel refers to Jer 29:26, according to which “the temple prophets were under the jurisdiction of one of the priests....”<sup>25</sup> On the basis of Neh 6:1ff. he also claims that this situation still prevailed “at the time of Nehemiah....”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, in his judgment “[t]he stories of Elijah make both Elijah and the prophets of Baal offer sacrifices (1 Kgs. 18.20ff.); so they were connected with the cult.”<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, he speculates that:

Even if the cultic festivals used to be the occasion on which the free reform prophets, partly hostile to the cult, would appear with their words of doom, as we hear of Amos and others, the promises of the “loyal”, “state prophets” would certainly also be heard there, and that probably not only by chance, but as a more or less regular element in the liturgies themselves.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, Mowinckel appeals to 1 Chronicles 25:1ff., which, in his opinion, shows that the prophetic guilds were taken up into the Levitical singers.<sup>29</sup> In this connection he also notes that in 2 Chro 20:14ff. a Levitical singer provides the answer to the congregations prayer.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:55-56.

<sup>25</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:56.

<sup>26</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:56.

<sup>27</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:56.

<sup>28</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:56.

<sup>29</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:56.

<sup>30</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:56.

Mowinckel recognizes that the “institutional organization and incorporation of the prophets in the cultic system does signify a certain distinction between the old prophetic guilds and the great individual prophets with regard to the conception of inspiration.”<sup>31</sup> However, he claims that “[t]he ancient Israelite did not feel that there was any contrast between the unconstrained oracle and the utterance of a spontaneous inspiration and the oracle that had been won by technical means....”<sup>32</sup> This leads Mowinckel to the following conclusion:

Therefore it is very possible that the ritual of a particular cultic festival would provide that at a certain point the prophet was to announce Yahweh’s answer to the prayer, and that the substance of the answer was prescribed by the ritual, whereas the wording and composition were left to the free and instantaneous inspiration of the prophet. But it is just as possible that even the wording of the promise would be prescribed by the ritual, as is the case with, for instance, the formula of absolution in present-day divine services.<sup>33</sup>

Against Gunkel and Begrich, Mowinckel is not convinced that the divine answer to an individual or congregational lament is provided by a priest.<sup>34</sup> In his opinion, style is a deciding factor. Priests speak in apodictic style. The promises (“oracles”) of Yahweh in the Psalter, however, are “clearly and distinctly kept in the usual prophetic style.”<sup>35</sup> From this Mowinckel infers that these promises “arose within the prophetic circles on the basis

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<sup>31</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:57.

<sup>32</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:57 and 65.

<sup>33</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:57. According to Mowinckel (*PIW*, 60-61), Ps 81:6 is an example of an inspired person listening “to whatever the deity shall speak through me.” Evidence for the second option is provided by the fact that the divine promise in Ps 60:6-8 is repeated in Ps 108:7-9. Cf. Mowinckel, *PIW*, 59.

<sup>34</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:58.

<sup>35</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:58. For examples see: Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:60.

of prophetic style and traditional ideas . . . [and that] “they were also announced by one of the temple prophets in the cult liturgy.”<sup>36</sup> In fact, the data from Chronicles point in the same direction.<sup>37</sup> In this connection Mowinckel recalls the fact that Jeremiah (Jer 1:1) and Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1) were priests. Even so, if a priest spoke Yahwen’s promise, the priest would speak “like a prophet and in the traditional style of the prophetic speech.”<sup>38</sup>

It should be noted that, according to Mowinckel, “[p]romises uttered by temple prophets in the name of Yahweh occur not only in laments and protective psalms, but also at the regular festivals.”<sup>39</sup> In this connection he refers to the following royal psalms: Psalms 2, 45, 89, 110 and 132.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, he also refers to a group of “prophetic psalms” that belong to the New Year festival. In this group of psalms he includes Psalms 75; 82; 85:9ff.; 89:20ff.; and 132:11ff.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, in a footnote Mowinckel observes that “the presentation of the ‘prophetic’ element in the psalms by Gunkel-Begrich...is a highly exaggerated one....” Moreover, he also notes that “they also highly exaggerate the ‘eschatological’ element in the psalms, and derive even that from ‘the prophets.’” In his opinion, Gunkel and Begrich failed to recognize that “from the beginning a ‘prophetic’ elements belong to the cultic order itself,

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<sup>36</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:58.

<sup>37</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:58.

<sup>38</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:58.

<sup>39</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:61.

<sup>40</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:61.

<sup>41</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:63-64.

and that it was out of the latter that important ideas in the classical prophetic movement sprang up and grew.”<sup>42</sup>

### 2.1.3 Gunkel’s Critique of Mowinkel’s Hypothesis

In their section on “The Situation of the Prophetic Psalms,” Gunkel and Begrich raise the question “how one should conceive the details of the ‘life setting’ of the prophetic psalms.” In answer to this question, they observe, first of all, that every type of psalm “may be influenced by prophetic speech.” Moreover, they maintain that to arrive at a satisfactory answer to this question, it is necessary to separate the question into two parts. First one must ask about how one should conceptualize the external situation of the eschatological hymn, the eschatological song of Zion, and the eschatological enthronement psalms. Then one must repeat the question “for the prophetically influenced *mixed liturgy, the judgment speech, torah, the rebuke, threat, and admonition.*” With respect to the first group they maintain that the prophetic influence affects only their content. As for the second group, they have prophetic forms and content. In fact, “[i]n the second group, the prophetic form dominates, thereby raising the question how one should conceptualize *the appearance of a prophetic speaker* in the context of a poem which has been influenced.”<sup>43</sup>

Regarding the life setting of the first group of psalms, Gunkel and Begrich raise the possibility that they were performed in the cult on the occasion of festal worship

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<sup>42</sup> Mowinkel, *PIW*, 2:69, n. 52.

<sup>43</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 282.

services that celebrated the anticipated end time.<sup>44</sup> As for the second group, in their opinion, these psalms were also performed in the cult. This is clear in the case of liturgical psalms like Psalms 75, 81, 85, and 95. According to them, this is a little more complicated in the case of Psalms 50, 53, and 82. However, because Psalm 82 belongs to the Asaphite psalms, they think that it too was performed in the cult and ultimately affirm the same for Psalms 50 and 53.<sup>45</sup>

After these introductory considerations, Gunkel and Begrich then raise the question “how one should consider the *prophetic word* in the psalms that were *recited* in the cult? In answer to this question they proceed to critique Mowinckel’s position because according to him “one cannot speak of an imitation of prophetic modes of speech by later worship services.”<sup>46</sup> In their critique of Mowinckel, they agree with him that the words of Yahweh in cultic psalms “express a ‘cultic reality.’” However, they object to Mowinckel’s claim that “*every divine communication in the worship service [is] a prophetic utterance.*”<sup>47</sup> Moreover, they object to Mowinckel’s concept of the prophetic word,<sup>48</sup> as well as his failure to distinguish clearly the priestly and prophetic office.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, they question the validity of the scriptural evidence that Mowinckel uses to support his hypothesis. To begin with, they reject 1 Kgs 18:16ff. because in this passage

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<sup>44</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 282-284.

<sup>45</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 284.

<sup>46</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 284.

<sup>47</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 284.

<sup>48</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 284.

<sup>49</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 285.

“the expression *něbhî'im* “serves as the term used for *Phoenician priests*.”<sup>50</sup> Second, they claim that “the fact that we encounter *něbhî'im* in places where there are sanctuaries does not prove the cultic character of the *něbhî'im*.”<sup>51</sup> Third, for them the reference to prophets and priests in Mic 3:11 and Jer 18:18 are not convincing, nor are they convinced that Jer 29:26 “attests to the institution of temple prophets.”<sup>52</sup> Fourth, they also reject Mowinckel’s appeal to 1 Chro 15:22, 27 and 2 Chro 20:14ff. Fifth, they claim that “one cannot deduce that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were of priestly origin.”<sup>53</sup> Sixth, the prophetic passages in the second group of psalms contain speech forms that “belong to the judgment prophets who were ‘free of the cult’ ....”<sup>54</sup> On the basis of the above objections, Gunkel and Bgrich conclude that

one would do well not to bother with the cult prophets whose existence, at the very least, seems highly debatable when considering the question of the cultic situation of the prophetic psalms. Rather, one should consider the influence of cult-free prophecy on the worship service.<sup>55</sup>

According to Gunkel and Bgrich, the content and forms of the cult-free prophets were only open to the cult “after history vindicated and confirmed them, even though the cult

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<sup>50</sup> Gunkel and Bgrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 285.

<sup>51</sup> Gunkel and Bgrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 285. Cf. 1 Sam 10:5ff.; 19:19ff.; 1 Kgs 18:16ff.; 1 Kgs 22; 2 Kgs 3:15; 4:38; Jer 26; 28; 36; Ezek 8:1-3; 11:1ff., 24f.

<sup>52</sup> Gunkel and Bgrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 286.

<sup>53</sup> Gunkel and Bgrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 286.

<sup>54</sup> Gunkel and Bgrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 286.

<sup>55</sup> Gunkel and Bgrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 286.

had not considered them correct.”<sup>56</sup> Moreover, they claim that prophetic forms were only incorporated in the liturgy.<sup>57</sup> “Here was the place where the prophetic rebuke, threat, judgment speech, and admonition would be adopted by psalmody.”<sup>58</sup> However, even in this case Gunkel and Begrich claim that the speaker is not a prophet. They write:

The adoption of these speech forms into the liturgies suggests that one accept that the prophetic words were spoken by the same person who would otherwise have proclaimed the oracle in the liturgy. One should thus think of a priest or a temple singer, but not a prophet. A prophet’s essence includes “the free inspiration of the moment” and the excited, ecstatic appearance . . . . This consideration gains weight when one realizes that these prophetic psalms were designed for *repeated performances*, requiring that their content be fixed. However, as Mowinckel himself concedes, if only the (first) *formulation of the wording* was left for the prophet, then one must say that the speaker in these liturgies scarcely has anything in common with a prophet. However, a *priest* or *singer* would very well speak the prophetic words because he would not require any special prophetic inspiration for doing so. His proclamation reveals nothing which had not already been heard. Rather, it depends upon prophetic ideas which were recognized as truth.<sup>59</sup>

#### 2.1.4 Critical Comparison of Mowinckel and Gunkel’s Positions

The above outline of the debate between Mowinckel and Gunkel on the issues concerning the prophetic elements in the Psalter demonstrates that there are five topics of disagreement between them: First, for Mowinckel the prophetic elements in the Psalms, and more specifically the divine quotations, are genuine prophecy, while for Gunkel, these texts are not original prophetic speeches but only imitation of prophetic style.

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<sup>56</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 286.

<sup>57</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 287.

<sup>58</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 287.

<sup>59</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 287.

Second, as a consequence of this first topic they also disagree on the identity or social function of who composed and spoke the oracles in the psalms. Mowinckel claims that these prophetic elements in the psalms are the result of the participation of prophets as cult functionaries in the temple of ancient Israel. As for Gunkel, these prophetic elements were composed and performed by priests or temple singers, but not a prophet. Third, Mowinckel and Gunkel distinction about the social role of those who performed the prophetic content in the cult is also related to their divergence on the relationship between priests and prophets. For Mowinckel, priests and prophets in ancient Israel came from the same guild of the seers like Samuel and Balaam. These two offices overlap and they have always being closely connected throughout ancient Israel's history. For Gunkel, the canonical prophets were not connected to the cult and, consequently, to the priests and the two offices cannot be seen as overlapping or connected. Fourth, they disagree on the period in which the prophetic elements were composed and their purpose. For Mowinckel, cult prophets were participants of the cult in Israel from pre-exilic to post exilic periods and consequently, prophetic elements in the Psalter could have been composed in any of these periods. The purpose of these prophetic elements is to respond the community on their immediate need. For Gunkel, the prophetic words were incorporated in the liturgies in the exilic and post-exilic period when their prophecies of doom were fulfilled. As a consequence, the purpose of these prophetic elements is eschatological, it was meant to bring hope for the community on the distress of the exile.<sup>60</sup> For Mowinckel, Gunkel's view of the prophetic elements as eschatological are

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<sup>60</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 266-267.

highly exaggerated. Fifth, Gunkel was not convinced by the scriptural evidence that Mowinckel used to support his hypothesis.

As we noted above, the disagreement of Mowinckel and Gunkel on these important issues shaped the ensuing scholarly discussion throughout the twentieth century and right into the twenty-first century. Some scholars supported Mowinckel's hypothesis.<sup>61</sup> Others defended Gunkel's theory.<sup>62</sup>

In the next divisions of this section we will first present the position of those who supported Mowinckel's hypothesis that the prophetic psalms in the Psalter were the product of prophetic participation in Israel's cult. Next we will present the position of those who disagreed with Mowinckel but agreed with Gunkel's theory that the so called "prophetic psalms" in the Psalter are imitations of forms of speech borrowed from the canonical prophets. A third section will mention some scholars that do not fall easily into any of the previous two groups.

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. Alfred Haldar, *Associations of Cult Prophets Among the Ancient Semites* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1945); Aubrey R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1962); Jörg Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung in der Späten Königszeit Israel* (WMANT 35; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970); James G. Harris III, "Prophetic Oracles in the Psalter" (Th.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1970); Aubrey R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1979).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing God*; Hermann Spieckermann, "Rede Gottes und Wort Gottes in den Psalmen," in *Neue Wege Der Psalmenforschung: Für Walter Beyerlin* (HBS 1; Freiburg: Herder, 1994); Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, "Das Prophetische in den Psalmen: Zur Gottesrede der Asafpsalmen im Vergleich mit der des ersten und zweiten Davidpsalters," in *Ich bewirke das Heil und erschaffe das Unheil (Jesaja 45, 7). Studien zur Botschaft der Propheten: Festschrift für Lothar Ruppert zum 65. Geburtstag* (Friedrich Diederich and Bernd Willmes, eds.; FB 88; Würzburg: Echter, 1998).

## 2.2 The Ensuing Debate

### 2.2.1 Prophetic Psalms as the Result of Prophetic Participation in Israel's Cult

In 1935-1936 Aubrey R. Johnson published an article on this issue entitled "The Prophet in Israelite Worship."<sup>63</sup> Later he published two books on the same topic.<sup>64</sup> In these publications Johnson emphatically defended the association of cultic seers and cultic shrines.<sup>65</sup> For Johnson the text of Jeremiah 26:7 proves the connection of the prophets with the cult.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, by quoting other texts from the prophets that pair priests and prophets (e.g. Hos 4:4-5; Isa 28:7; Jer 6:13, 14:18; Lam 4:13), Johnson sought to demonstrate that prophets were functionaries of the temple like the priests.<sup>67</sup> He also argued that cultic prophets became subordinated to priests as mere temple singers in the post-exilic period due to the rise to power of the priesthood and the complete failure of the "peace" that cultic prophets proclaimed before the exile.<sup>68</sup>

Johnson's extensive work on this topic brought precision to Mowinckel's theory of cultic prophecy because he identified and defined more precisely the place, period, and social role of the cultic prophets.<sup>69</sup> Johnson affirms that "during the monarchy and, in a measure, for some two centuries later there existed a professional type of נְבִיא,

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<sup>63</sup> Aubrey R. Johnson, "The Prophet in Israelite Worship," *Expository Times* 47 (1935-1936), 312-319.

<sup>64</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel*; Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody*.

<sup>65</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel*, 25-27.

<sup>66</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel*, 30-31.

<sup>67</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel*, 61.

<sup>68</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel*, 61; Cf. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 10.

<sup>69</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody*, 3-4.

“prophet,” who, as such, was an important figure in the personnel of the cultus—particularly that of the Jerusalem Temple.”<sup>70</sup>

In 1945 Alfred Haldar conducted an extensive comparative study of the cultic activities of prophetic figures in ancient Near Eastern literature in order to engage the discussion. Based on the results of his study, Halder claimed that, despite the religious differences, the participation of prophets as functionaries in cultic shrines was a common phenomenon in the ancient Near Eastern societies.<sup>71</sup>

Much later, in 1970, Jörg Jeremias published his dissertation entitled *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*,<sup>72</sup> in which he introduced important new data into the discussion of cultic prophecy in support of the arguments of Mowinckel and Johnson. Following these scholars, Jeremias also defended the idea that prophets participated in the worship of the temple at Jerusalem.<sup>73</sup> Their participation in the cult is evident in lament liturgies like Psalms 12, 14 and 75. Moreover, Jeremias argued that, since cult prophets were condemned for not announcing doom, this condemnation implies that announcing doom was their legitimate responsibility.<sup>74</sup> For this reason Jeremias

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<sup>70</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody*, 3.

<sup>71</sup> Haldar, *Associations of Cult Prophets*, 199. According to Jacobson, “Robert Wilson’s later study on prophecy is both more careful and more up to date, and it reached similar conclusions.” Jacobson, “*Many are Saying*,” 88.

<sup>72</sup> Jörg Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung in der Spätēn Königzeit Israel* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 35; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970).

<sup>73</sup> Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*, 1-10.

<sup>74</sup> It is a consensus among those who support the idea that cult prophets functioned in Israel worship that the prophets referred to in the prophetic books who announced peace instead of doom, were cultic prophets because of their connection with priests and the temple. Cf. Mic 3:5-7, 11; Jer 14:13-14; Jer 28:1-17; Ezek 13:16. According to Mic 3:11, they divine for money.

sought to demonstrate the intimate association between canonical and cultic prophets.<sup>75</sup> In this connection, he also pointed out that some canonical prophets like Nahum and Habakkuk could be counted as cultic prophets. According to Jacobson, Jeremiah's contribution to this debate is important because, like Gunkel, he was sensitive to "the different functions of God quotations within different psalm genres."<sup>76</sup>

Also in 1970, James G. Harris III proposed that third-person speeches containing divine words in the Psalter are actually imitation oracles while first-person divine speeches are genuine prophetic utterances.<sup>77</sup> He also suggested that even the canonical prophets borrowed the forms of the utterances developed in the cult.<sup>78</sup> This suggestion is a reversal of Gunkel's imitation theory.<sup>79</sup>

In 1988, Harry P. Nasuti published his dissertation, *Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph*, in which he included a section on the so-called "prophetic" psalms.<sup>80</sup> In this section Nasuti made some important methodological distinctions.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Jeremiah, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*, 110, 195.

<sup>76</sup> Jacobson, "Many are Saying," 88.

<sup>77</sup> James G. Harris III, "Prophetic Oracles in the Psalter" (Th.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1970), 39.

<sup>78</sup> Harris III, "Prophetic Oracles in the Psalter," 219-220.

<sup>79</sup> For a defense of this position see: Theodoor Christiaan Vriezen, A. S. van der Woude and Brian Doyle, *Ancient Israelite and early Jewish literature*, (trans. Brian Doyle; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 308-310. See also: Carleen Mandolfo, *God in the Dock: Dialogic Tension in the Psalms of Lament*, (JSOTSup 357, Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 20.

<sup>80</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 127-149.

<sup>81</sup> Jacobson, "Many are Saying," 89.

To begin with, Nasuti observes that, in addition to communal laments, the Asaphite corpus also contains “another block of formally distinct psalms, namely, the prophetic psalms.”<sup>82</sup> They are: Psalms 50, 75, 81 and 83. In connection with these psalms, he correctly notes that the so-called “prophetic” psalm is not a distinct literary genre and that, therefore, “it would make more sense to speak of prophetic elements which appear in a number of different psalm genres....”<sup>83</sup>

Moreover, to distinguish divine communication in the Psalter through a prophet from divine communication through a priest or singer, Nasuti states that the prophet usually speaks in the first person to indicate the deity, while priests and diviners use the third person. In the cultic ceremony, first person speech actualizes the deity. Nasuti finds this distinction helpful because the so-called “prophetic” psalms in the Asaphite psalms “contain a divine speech in the first person.”<sup>84</sup>

Although this distinction is helpful in the case of the “prophetic” psalms in the Asaphite corpus, Nasuti does not consider it sufficient for distinguishing other features of quotations of divine speeches in the psalms. Therefore, he introduced a distinction between a “quotation type” of divine speech in the psalms and a “non-quotation type.” According to Nasuti, the quotations of divine speech in Psalms 2:7-9, 60:8-10 MT, 108:8-10 MT, 110:4, and 132:11-12 represent the “quotation type” divine speech because each one of them is introduced by a quotation formula which implies that the first person

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<sup>82</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 127.

<sup>83</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 127.

<sup>84</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 128.

divine speech refers to a divine promise made in the past, not the present.<sup>85</sup> In contrast to these “quotation type” of psalms, there are the “non-quotation type” psalms in which a first person divine speech is quoted without an introductory statement. The quotations of first person divine speech in these psalms “imply a present encounter with the Deity.”<sup>86</sup> In this category Nasuti includes Psalms 46, 50, 75, 82, 85, 91, 95 and maybe 87. According to Nasuti, each one of these psalms betray liturgical features and that the majority of them belong to the Asaphite corpus. With respect to the use of the “non-quotation type” of first person divine speeches in these psalms Nasuti writes:

This is not a mere quotation used to buttress an ongoing argument. Rather, it is only by envisioning a cultic situation in which the speech of the Deity is a present reality that one can explain such a verse. Put in another way, it is the expectations of the original cultic audience which allow such a transition be meaningful. Only the setting makes sense of the text.<sup>87</sup>

On the basis of the scriptural evidence provided by Mowinckel and comparative examples from ancient Near Eastern literature Nasuti concluded that the best way to explain the presence of “non-quotation type” of first person divine speeches in these psalms is some sort of ecstatic behaviour.<sup>88</sup>

In his 1996 form-critical study of the God quotations in the Psalter, Klaus Koenen argued that quotations of divine words have different functions in the psalms and that

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<sup>85</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 128-128. Nasuti notes that possibly Pss 12 and 89 fit this classification as well.

<sup>86</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 130.

<sup>87</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 130.

<sup>88</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 143-149.

their function is determined by their context.<sup>89</sup> According to Jacobson, Koenen pointed out that some psalms contain quotations from past divine utterances (e.g. Pss 2, 60, 89), while other psalms present a genuine prophetic speech in the cult (e.g. Pss 50, 75, and 81).<sup>90</sup>

A valuable contribution in defense of Mowinckel's position is the recent thesis of John W. Hilber published in 2005.<sup>91</sup> In this thesis Hilber executed a comparative study between the psalms and Assyrian literature. In this comparative study Hilber demonstrates that Assyrian prophetic sources provide ample evidence for the existence of cultic prophecy in Ancient Near East culture. For example, a comparison between the psalms and Assyrian literature demonstrate, first of all, a very strong similarity, in form and content, between Assyrian literature and the royal psalms. Other psalms, like Psalm 75, share themes like "the deity's commitment to cosmic stability and the promise to cut off enemies." Moreover, a comparison of Assyrian literature with psalms like 50 and 81 reveal the prophetic nature of these poems.<sup>92</sup> On the basis of this evidence Hilber then argues that the close cultural connection between Assyria and Israel concludes that the similarities support the idea that cult prophets participated actively in Israel's worship from pre-exilic to post-exilic times.<sup>93</sup> In his thesis Hilber also reviews the classical debate

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<sup>89</sup> Klaus Koenen, *Gottesworte in den Psalmen: Eine formgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Biblich-theologische Studien 30, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996), 27, 69-72. For Koenen's contribution I'm indebted to Jacobson, 'Many Are Saying', 90.

<sup>90</sup> Jacobson, 'Many Are Saying,' 90.

<sup>91</sup> John W. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms* (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005).

<sup>92</sup> Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms*, 220.

<sup>93</sup> Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms*, 225.

with respect to the existence of cultic prophecy in Israel and defends the claim that the prophets participation the cult provides the best explanation “for the origin of psalms containing first-person divine speech,”<sup>94</sup> Psalm 75 being an example.

### 2.2.2 Prophetic Psalms as Imitation of Prophetic Speech

Although the previous section listed a good number of scholars who adopted Mowinckel’s cult functional approach and cult prophet hypothesis,<sup>95</sup> over the years several scholars voiced their opinion against Mowinckel’s cult prophet hypothesis. In our judgment, they sided more with Gunkel.

For example, in 1945 H. H. Rowley published an article in which he argued against the idea of prophets as cultic functionaries.<sup>96</sup> He suggests that the texts that demonstrate the presence of prophets in cultic shrines (e.g. 1 Sam 9:1ff, 10:8; 1 Kings 18:20ff) do not necessarily indicates that they were functionaries of the cult.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, Rowley welcomes “the emphasis on their association with cultic centres.”<sup>98</sup>

Later, in 1956, Gottfried Quell also published an article, in which he strongly opposed the idea of prophets as cultic functionaries.<sup>99</sup> For Quell the literature of the OT

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<sup>94</sup> Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms*, 226.

<sup>95</sup> For other scholars who supported Mowinckel’s hypothesis see the list in W. H. Bellinger Jr., *Psalmody and Prophecy* (JSOTSup 27; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 15, n. 17 (p. 96).

<sup>96</sup> H. H. Rowley, “The Nature of Prophecy in The Light of Recent Study,” *Harvard Theological Review* 38 (1945): 16.

<sup>97</sup> Rowley, “The Nature of Prophecy,” 14-15.

<sup>98</sup> Rowley, “The Nature of Prophecy,” 16.

<sup>99</sup> Gottfried Quell, “Der Kultprophet,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 81 (1956): cols. 401-404. I owe this reference to Hilber. Cf. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 13.

does not contain any evidence for assuming that prophets were cultic officials.<sup>100</sup> For him, Mowinckel's concept of a prophet was completely incompatible with the OT.<sup>101</sup>

Much later, in 1991 Raymond Jacques Tournay emphatically criticized Mowinckel's use of biblical texts to defend the existence of cultic prophecy in the pre-exilic period.<sup>102</sup> Like Thijs Booij (see below), Tournay attributes the function of cultic prophets to the Levitical temple singers in the post-exilic context.<sup>103</sup> He suggests that these post-exilic psalmists incorporated divine speeches in the psalms. These speeches consisted of ancient material in order to give hope to the believers.<sup>104</sup>

In the same direction, in 1994, Hermann Speickermann states that, besides the kingship ritual, most occurrences of divine speech are found in post-exilic psalms.<sup>105</sup> From this perspective he analyzed the psalms with prophetic speeches and argued for their relationship with post-exilic theological motifs like, for example, the guilt of the people.<sup>106</sup> Accordingly, Speickermann agrees with Gunkel that these theological motifs of the prophetic literature are imitated in the psalms.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Cf. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 13.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 13.

<sup>102</sup> Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing God*, 30.

<sup>103</sup> Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing God*, 30.

<sup>104</sup> Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing God*, 67, 68.

<sup>105</sup> Hermann Speickermann, "Rede Gottes und Wort Gottes in den Psalmen," in *In Neue Wege Der Psalmenforschung: Für Walter Beyerlin* (Edited by Klaus Seybold and Erich Zenger; Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 157-158. I owe this reference and information to Hilber. Cf. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 23-24.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 23-24.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 24-25.

### 2.2.3 Other Positions

In addition to those who support the active participation of prophets in the cult and those who emphasize the imitation of prophetic style in the prophetic psalms, there are scholars like Thijs Booij, W. H. Bellinger, Frederick Cryer, Lester L. Grabbe and Rolf A. Jacobson, who do not fit into either of the two groups surveyed above.<sup>108</sup> They argue that the identity of the cultic functionaries is unclear.

For example, in 1978 Thijs Booij, a student of N.H. Ridderbos, defended his Ph.D. thesis entitled *Godswoorden in de Psalmen en Hun Funktie en Achtergronden*. In this thesis he investigated the function of oracles in the Psalter that contain a divine “I,” particularly as it applies to psalms of lament and admonishments of Israel. A basic assumption of his investigation is that “most of the psalms were intended for use within or in connection with the cult.”<sup>109</sup> On this matter he agrees with Mowinckel. He also maintains that “[p]resuppositions concerning background and original function are only meaningful when they do justice to the character and the peculiar structure of the texts involved.”<sup>110</sup> Here he disagrees with Mowinckel. On the basis of his investigation he concludes that “[it] cannot be deduced from the texts ... that temple singers performed as

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<sup>108</sup> Thijs Booij, *Godswoorden in de Psalmen Hun Funktie en Achtergronden* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1978); W. H. Bellinger Jr., *Psalmody and Prophecy*, (JSOTSup 27; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994); Frederick Cryer, *Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment*, (JSOTSup 142, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994); Lester L Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel* (Valley Forge, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1995); Rolf A. Jacobson, ‘Many are Saying’: *The Function of Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 397; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2004).

<sup>109</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in the Psalmen*, 255.

<sup>110</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in the Psalmen*, 255.

cultic prophets, in the sense that Mowinckel meant.”<sup>111</sup> By this Booij does not mean, however, to deny that there exists a relationship between cultic songs and prophecy.<sup>112</sup> Booij bases his reconstruction on 1 Chro 25 and the example of an Asaphite who announces a divine oracle in 2 Chro 20:14ff.<sup>113</sup> Booij claims that “in the later monarchical period the escstatic appearance of prophets in the Jerusalem temple was restricted.”<sup>114</sup> This restriction “presumably led to the strengthening of the ‘prophetic’ functions of the singers: the ecstasy was channeled into the ordered song of the cultic musicians.” “Thus hymnic “prophesying” became a specific matter for Asaph and the later Levitical functionaries (1 Chron. 25).”<sup>115</sup> As examples Booij lists Psalms 68:23f.; 75:3f.; 87:4, 6b; and 89:3f.<sup>116</sup>

It is important to note that Booij classifies the psalms with quotation of divine speeches into three categories: 1) a divine pronouncement as a citation; 2) divine pronouncement as a component of a poetical-imaginative text; 3) a divine pronouncement that denotes a concrete historical situation.<sup>117</sup> According to Booij, this last group of divine words is not a poetical creation (like the first two categories) but a composition that is based on a real cultic situation in which a divine oracle took place. Instead, temple singers

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<sup>111</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in the Psalmen*, 257.

<sup>112</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in de Psalmen*, 257.

<sup>113</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in the Psalmen*, 257.

<sup>114</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in the Psalmen*, 258.

<sup>115</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in the Psalmen*, 258.

<sup>116</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in the Psalmen*, 258.

<sup>117</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in de Psalmen*, 31-33. I owe this reference to Bosma, “Discerning the Voices in the Psalms: A Discussion of Two Problems in Psalmic Interpretation, Part 2,” 132.

uttered these prophetic oracles out of their “prophetic conscience.”<sup>118</sup> According to Booij, “these oracles, which were often indicated by a changing of voices in the liturgy, had a dramatic function in the cultic act.”<sup>119</sup>

Moreover, in 1984, W. H. Bellinger published thesis entitled, *Psalmody and Prophecy*, in which he examined the rhetorical function of the certainty of hearing in the individual and communal lament psalms and the psalmic passages in the prophetic books of Habakkuk and Joel. On the basis of this study Bellinger argued for a cultic setting for the individual and communal complaint psalms.<sup>120</sup> He also concluded that “the certainty of hearing is a uniform phenomenon in the laments” and that it has a prophetic function.<sup>121</sup> Bellinger defined “‘prophetic’ as essentially predictive and seeking repentance from God’s people.”<sup>122</sup> Bellinger also recognizes that “[t]here is clearly a relationship between psalmody and prophecy.” Nevertheless, even though he recognizes that since Mowinckel’s work “cult prophecy has been the most popular way of accounting for the similarities between the Psalms and the prophetic literature,”<sup>123</sup> Bellinger concluded that “the history of prophecy in Israel is still somewhat obscure....”<sup>124</sup> For this

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<sup>118</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in de Psalmen*, 262.

<sup>119</sup> Booij, *Godswoorden in the Psalmen*, 262.

<sup>120</sup> Bellinger, *Psalmody and Prophecy*, 90.

<sup>121</sup> Bellinger, *Psalmody and Prophecy*, 91.

<sup>122</sup> Bellinger, *Psalmody and Prophecy*, 91.

<sup>123</sup> Bellinger, *Psalmody and Prophecy*, 13.

<sup>124</sup> Bellinger, *Psalmody and Prophecy*, 93.

reason he seriously questions “whether we can assuredly speak of cult prophecy in Israel.”<sup>125</sup>

Consequently, although he agrees with Mowinckel that the *Sitz im Leben* for the lament psalms is the cult, he adopted Gunkel’s form critical methodology because it has the advantage of focusing on the form, content, and rhetorical function of the certainty of hearing, “rather than a reconstructed original context.”<sup>126</sup> According to Bellinger

It is import to note that it is not the identity of the cultic functionary who delivered the expression of certainty, nor any type of assurance leading to that expression, which determines that the text has a prophetic character. It is rather primarily the function which the language of the text conveys and that function in this case can be considered prophetic . . . However, it is important to note that the function in this case is also clearly in a liturgical context rather than an explicitly historical one. So the function of the certainty of hearing in the individual lament in Israel’s cult is to anticipate deliverance for the worshipper and the downfall of the enemies.

In summary, although Bellinger agrees with Mowinckel that the cult was the proper social setting for the lament psalms, he disagrees with Mowinckel’s cult prophecy hypothesis to explain the prophetic elements in the psalms.

In 2004 Rolf A. Jacobson addressed this issue in a chapter of his thesis entitled “‘The Lord Has Sworn’: The Function of God Quotation.”<sup>127</sup> Jacobson agrees with Mowinckel and Gunkel that psalms with a quotation of a divine speech often imply some sort of liturgical setting.<sup>128</sup> However, on the one hand, he concludes that Mowinckel’s

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<sup>125</sup> Bellinger, *Psalms and Prophecy*, 93.

<sup>126</sup> Bellinger, *Psalms and Prophecy*, 93.

<sup>127</sup> Rolf A. Jacobson, ‘*Many are Saying*’: *The Function of Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 397; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 82-130.

<sup>128</sup> Jacobson, ‘*Many are Saying*,’ 85.

“understanding of the quotation with the liturgy (to give an affirmative answer to a congregational prayer), his understanding of the ‘inspired moment’ taking place during the liturgy, and his interpretation of a prophetic figure as the speaker of these passages remain problematic.”<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, Jacobson also rejects Gunkel’s reconstruction of psalmic eschatology and his postexilic dating of many of the psalms with a quotation of divine speech. But he accepts Gunkel’s view that if a divine speech in a psalm is used repeatedly in the liturgy, then the speaker is probably not a prophet.<sup>130</sup>

On the basis of his survey of the various positions with respect to these issues Jacobson draws several important methodological conclusions. First, “the function of the God quotations must be evaluated primarily based on the role that the quotations play in the final form of the psalm, rather than on any reconstructed original setting.”<sup>131</sup> Second, he accepts the distinction made by Nasuti and Koenen between quotations of divine speech with introductory formulae and without any introduction. Third, if the quotation of a divine speech occurs in a psalm whose formal features indicate repeated performance in the liturgy, this implies that it is not a direct communication from God. Another explanation must be found. Fourth, it is important to examine the manner in which a quotation of divine speech interacts with the rest of the psalm.<sup>132</sup> In other words, one must

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<sup>129</sup> Jacobson, *‘Many are Saying,’* 85.

<sup>130</sup> Jacobson, *‘Many are Saying,’* 87.

<sup>131</sup> Jacobson, *‘Many are Saying,’* 91-91.

<sup>132</sup> Jacobson, *‘Many are Saying,’* 92.

look for its rhetorical function. In the case of Psalm 75, for example, the divine quotation is used to construct society.<sup>133</sup>

In addition to these four methodological conclusions, Jacobson also critiques the scholarly use of the term “oracle.” In his judgment, “the term usually implies a *present communication from the deity*, often in response to specific questions or concerns.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, he addresses the question to what extent quotations of divine speech in the psalms have parallels in ancient Near Eastern literature. He agrees “that comparative material from ancient Near Eastern cultures is helpful in understanding many aspects of the God quotations in the Psalter.”<sup>135</sup> However, he notes, first of all, that scholars frequently fail to observe the dissimilarities. Second, after a review of five examples (Pss 2:1-3, 7; 110:1; 91:15; and 69:35-36), he observes that it is important “to ask whether the speech of any deity is attested as *functioning* in a similar manner in a similar or identical *genre*.” According to Jacobson, “[t]he answer to this is that no adequate parallel can be found for some of the uses of the God quotation in the Psalter.”

#### 2.2.4 Critical Evaluation of the Ensuing Debate

Our review of the ensuing scholarly debate concerning the relationship between psalmody and prophecy between those who defend Mowinckel’s position and those who argue for Gunkel’s position has shown, first of all, that, as Bellinger rightly notes, “[t]oday it is virtually the orthodox position to understand cult prophecy as the explanation of

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<sup>133</sup> Jacobson, *Many are Saying*, ’ 125.

<sup>134</sup> Jacobson, *Many are Saying*, ’ 92.

<sup>135</sup> Jacobson, *Many are Saying*, ’ 94.

prophetic elements in the psalms.”<sup>136</sup> Second, it is important to recall that Mowinckel and Gunkel did not define their use of the term “prophetic speech.” Our survey above showed that various scholars have introduced several important refinements for defining and identifying prophetic speech forms in the Psalter. For example, Booij distinguished between quotations of divine speeches, divine speeches that were components of poetical-imaginative texts, and divine pronouncements that were occasioned by a concrete historical situation. Moreover, Harris III claims that only first person divine speeches are genuine prophetic utterances. Furthermore, Nasuti basically follows the distinction of Harris III between first person speech and third person speech. Divine communications in third person speech were used by priests and diviners. Divine communications in first person speech were genuinely prophetic and actualize the deity. Nasuti also makes an additional distinction with respect to first person divine communications. He distinguished between “quotation type” of divine speech and “non-quotation type.” According to Nasuti, first person divine speeches in the “non-quotation type” like Psalm 75:3-4 “imply a present encounter with the Deity.”<sup>137</sup> Nasuti’s distinctions were adopted by Jacobson and will also be adopted by us in our exposition of Psalm 75 in chapter 3 of our thesis. Third, our survey has also shown that Bellinger and Jacobson emphasized the rhetorical function of quotations of divine speech in the final form of a psalm. We consider this to be a positive corrective and will use it in our exegesis of Psalm 75 in chapter 3. Finally, our survey has also shown that there are a significant number of

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<sup>136</sup> Bellinger, *Psalmody and Prophecy*, 16. Bellinger notes that “[t]he list of scholars supporting the existence of cult prophets in Israel would be too long to reproduce here.” In note 17 on p. 96 he lists the names of scholars who also support Mowinckel’s hypothesis.

<sup>137</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 130.

scholars who question the validity of Mowinckel's cult prophecy hypothesis. In their opinion, there are still several unresolved issues, such as: 1) the relationship between priests and prophets; 2) the association of prophets with cultic shrines; 3) the relationship between cult prophets and the canonical prophets, particularly their origin and connection to the cult; 4) the relationship between prophetic inspiration and the composition of the prophetic psalms and their performance in the cult; and 5) the question concerning the period in which cultic prophecy existed in Israel. Were cultic prophets active in pre-exilic, post-exilic, or in both periods?

### **2.3 Our Own Position**

Because no consensus has been reached on these issues, we will discuss them in the next sections of this chapter. The purpose of these sections will be to substantiate our hypothesis that the existence of cultic prophecy in Israel provides the best explanation for the origin and function of the so-called "prophetic" psalms, especially for the explanation of the quotation of divine speech in Psalm 75, which we will demonstrate in chapter 3.

#### **2.3.1 The Relationship between Cult prophets and Priests**

To begin with our position of the first issue, we will examine the O.T. evidence to which Mowinckel appealed for the overlap between the priestly and prophetic office. To begin with the example of Balaam, Balaam offered sacrifices in order to communicate with the deity (Num 23:1-6, 14). Offering sacrifices was a priestly function. Balaam also practiced divination (Num 22:7; cf. Josh 13:22) and uttered oracles (Num 23:18; 24:3-4, 15, 20, 21, 23). In the narrative of Numbers 22 to 24 Balaam received the word of Yahweh (Num

23:16) and delivered it to Balak, king of Moab, as God had commanded him. In Num 24:2 the Spirit of God came upon Balaam and he lifted up his oracle (Num 24:3). Clearly these functions belong to the office of the prophet.

Similarly, Samuel was recognized to be a prophet of Yahweh in Israel (1 Sam 3:19) and he served as a judge at Mizpah (1 Sam 7:6, 15), at other locations (cf. 1 Sam 7:16) and at his hometown Ramah (1 Sam 7:17). In these capacities he also exercised priestly functions. For example, in 1 Sam 7:9-10 he interceded on behalf of Israel and offered burnt offering at Mizpah. Moreover, he built an altar to the Lord at Ramah (1 Sam 7:17). Furthermore, according to 1 Sam 9:13, the people of the district of Zuph would not eat of the sacrifice at the local high place until Samuel had blessed it. In addition, in 1 Sam 10:8 (cf. 1 Sam 13:8-11) king Saul was instructed to wait seven days for Samuel at Gilgal. Samuel would then offer sacrifices and give further instructions to Saul.

The texts cited above show, first of all, that while Samuel was judge over Israel there was a close relationship between the prophetic and priestly office. Second, the fact that Samuel began his prophetic ministry at the tabernacle in Shiloh (1 Sam 3:19-21) and blessed sacrifices at a local high place (1 Sam 9:13) substantiates the assumption that the cult was not a strange place for the prophets. Additional evidence for the connection between prophets and cultic high places is 1 Sam 10:5, in which Samuel informed Saul that he would meet a band of ecstatic prophets coming down from a high place.

As we noted above, Gunkel rejected Mowinckel's use of 1 Kgs 18:16ff.,<sup>138</sup> stating that in this text "the expression *nebi'im* serves as the term used for *Phoenician priests*." In defense of his argument, Gunkel called the prophets "Ba'al priests" who are presented

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<sup>138</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 56.

only as sacrificial priests but not as “communicators of oracles.”<sup>139</sup> Gunkel’s argument is not convincing. Even if the term *nebi’im* were used as Gunkel suggests, two connections are still possible. First, even if someone excludes the prophets of Ba’al as genuine prophets, Elijah still is a genuine נְבִיאַ (1 Kgs 18:22, 36) and he offers a sacrifice (1 Kgs 18:30-39). Consequently, there is an overlap between prophetic and priestly activities. Second, if *nebi’im* was used as a reference for “Ba’al priests,” the connection between priests and prophets appears to overlap, just as Mowinckel describes it.

Gunkel is right when he states that texts like Isa 28:7; Jer 2:26; 4:9; 6:13; 18:18; Mic 3:11, etc., do not indicate more than that both priest and prophet are religious authorities. Nevertheless, Jer 23:11 does not fall into this category. In this text the priests and prophets of Jerusalem are guilty of practicing evil prophecy *in the temple*. Another supporting argument for the overlap of the office of priesthood and prophecy is the fact that the priest Pashhur, the chief officer of the temple (Jer 20:1), prophesied (Jer 20:6) suggests that he acted as a priest and a prophet in the worship. Still another supporting argument is that, according to Jer 35:4, the sons of Hanan,<sup>140</sup> the man of God, lived in a

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<sup>139</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 284.

<sup>140</sup> The NET Bible reads, “disciples of the prophet Hanan son of Igdaliah,” instead of “sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah man of God.” The translation of נָצַח as “disciple” is possible. The NET Bible justifies its translation with the following note:

**tn** *Heb* “the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, the man of God.” The reference to “sons” and to “man of God” fits the usage of these terms elsewhere to refer to prophets and their disciples (see BDB 43-44 s.v. אֱלֹהִים 3(b) and compare usage in 2 Kgs 4:40 for the former and BDB 121 s.v. נָצַח 7.a and compare the usage in 2 Kgs 4:38 for the latter).

This translation would strengthen the assumption that prophets were residents in the temple (cf. 2 Kgs 4:38). Cf. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 28.

room in the temple. Although some do not accept this text to support cultic prophecy,<sup>141</sup> the fact that prophets lived in the temple cannot be dismissed.

In our judgment, the survey of the O.T. texts above demonstrates, first of all, that there is an overlap between priestly and prophetic functions in the O.T. Moreover, there is also an active presence of prophets in the temple in Jerusalem. Furthermore, these prophets were actively involved in the temple cult. Finally, prophets had a fixed role in the temple rather than just an occasional participation.

In addition to the biblical texts cited above, the study of comparative Semitic sources has also made a significant contribution in support of Mowinckel's hypothesis.<sup>142</sup> For example, Robert R. Wilson's work on prophecy in ancient Near East demonstrates that prophetic activity in cultic shrines was a common practice in that region.<sup>143</sup> More specific is Hilber's recent work in which he argues on the basis of Assyrian parallels that prophets acted in royal and cultic services as well as in response to inquiry and lament and, more importantly, many prophets appear to function in cultic shrines. Hilber concludes:

Assyrian prophets were closely connected with temples, and cultic prophecy contributed to the display of Assyrian royal ideology and served as an important source of divine response to worshippers seeking their deity. The role of cultic

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<sup>141</sup> For instance, William McKane argues that the information about Hanan and his sons is a fabrication of the author of the book in order to "create realism for a fiction." Cf. William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah* (ICC, vol. 2; T. & T. Clark 1996), 897.

<sup>142</sup> Haldar's early attempt to compare Semitic sources in the study of cultic prophecy was criticized for disregarding the particularities of Israel religion. Cf. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 56; H. H. Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel: Its Forms and Meaning* (London: SPCK, 1967), 155-156. Although comparative studies are still criticized by some scholars, its value cannot be ignored. For this particular issue, see Hilber's statement in: Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 38.

<sup>143</sup> Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 89-134.

prophecy in Assyria and the broader ancient Near East supports the argument...that prophets functioned in similar ways in ancient Israel.<sup>144</sup>

Considering that cultic prophecy was a common practice in the broader neighborhood of Israel and that there is evidence of the same phenomenon in the O.T., the logical inference is that cultic prophecy also could take place in Israel.

### 2.3.2 Cultic Prophets and Temples

Gunkel is right in claiming that mere association with cult centers does not prove that the cult prophets participated in the cult. However, some O.T. texts suggest that the prophets were not only associated with cult centers. These texts suggest that the prophets also participated in the cult.

For example, in 1 Samuel 10:5 Samuel tells Saul that he will meet a group of prophets coming down from a cultic shrine prophesying. Hilber argues compellingly that “the fact that the prophets in 1 Sam 10:5 were still in ecstasy while descending from the high place supports the supposition that they had participated prophetically in the worship celebration.”<sup>145</sup>

Another O.T. text that shows the association of prophets with cultic shrines is 1 Sam 19. In this passage Samuel is described as the leader of the prophets in Ramah, where he certainly functioned as a priest at the altar that he built (1 Sam 7:17). According to 1 Sam 19:20, Saul’s first group of messengers saw “a company of prophets prophesying.” In fact, these messengers, as well as the second group of messengers and

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<sup>144</sup> Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 75.

<sup>145</sup> Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 27.

even Saul himself prophesied (vv. 20-24). This example also suggests that the prophets participated in the cult.

On the basis of these two O.T. texts we infer that Mowinckel's hypothesis that prophetic guilds were not only associated with cult centers but also participated in their worship is more likely than Gunkel's assumption that prophets were only looking for an audience in the cult.<sup>146</sup>

### 2.3.3 Cult Prophets and Canonical Prophets

Gunkel's claim that the canonical prophets were opposed to the temple is not convincing.<sup>147</sup> In our judgment, the critique of Israel's cultic practices in, for example, Isa 1:10-20 and Jer 7, are not against the cult or the temple by themselves, but against the people's misuse of the cult. The people were practicing the required cultic festivals and rituals but were not living a righteous life style in keeping with the Law (cf. Jer 7:9-11). Moreover, it should be noted that Isaiah received his commission to announce judgment against the people in the temple (Is 6) and that the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel were also priests. Furthermore, as we have noted above, Jeremias has demonstrated the intimate association between canonical and cultic prophets.<sup>148</sup> For instance, Jeremias suggests that the canonical prophets Nahum and Habakkuk could be counted as cultic prophets. According to Grabbe, this position has been widely accepted.<sup>149</sup> Additionally, in contrast to prophecies that apparently oppose the temple, Haggai (1:4) and Zechariah

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<sup>146</sup> Cf. Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 285.

<sup>147</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 286.

<sup>148</sup> Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*, 110, 195.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*, 113.

(1:16) prophesied in favor of the reconstruction of the temple. In view of the above data, therefore, we infer that there is no scriptural evidence to support a radical separation between cultic prophets and canonical prophets.<sup>150</sup> In other words, the canonical prophets are not as free from the cult as Gunkel claims.

#### 2.3.4 The Relationship between Prophetic Inspiration and Composition of “Prophetic Psalms” and their Performance in the Cult

A vitally important point of disagreement between Gunkel and Mowinckel is the source of poetical compositions like the psalms. For Gunkel, the psalms preserved in the Hebrew Bible were originally composed for “ceremonies of private nature.”<sup>151</sup> Later they were adapted to be part of the cult of Israel. For Mowinckel, however, the psalms were originally composed for performance in the cult.<sup>152</sup> Consequently, Gunkel’s understanding of the origins of the psalms is the background for his opposition to the composition of prophetic utterances in the cult. Another reason is Gunkel’s negative attitude towards the cult.

The relationship between the composition and performance of the psalms in the cult was one of Gunkel’s arguments against Mowinckel’s proposals on cultic prophecy. For Gunkel, the prophetic psalms “were designed for *repeated performances*, requiring that their content be fixed.”<sup>153</sup> Gunkel found the “free and instantaneous inspiration of the

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<sup>150</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel’s Psalmody*, 29-30.

<sup>151</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 7-10.

<sup>152</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:12-15.

<sup>153</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 287.

prophet”<sup>154</sup> to be incompatible with the formalities of the cult. For Gunkel, prophetic inspiration happens with an ecstatic experience which is “agitated, erratic, and dark.”<sup>155</sup>

The ecstatic behavior of prophets is evident in some biblical passages (e.g. 1 Sam 19:23-24; 1 Kgs 18:17-40). However, Robert R. Wilson rightly states that “although during some periods and in certain groups ecstasy seems to have been part of a prophet’s expected behavior, this was not always the case.”<sup>156</sup> But even if we concede that every prophetic reception of a divine oracle requires an ecstatic experience, the delivery of the oracle does not need it.<sup>157</sup> Several passages in Jeremiah demonstrate that the delivery of an oracle may happen in a distinct place and occasion in comparison to the ecstatic reception of the oracle.<sup>158</sup> These passages show that in some occasions, even if prophets had an ecstatic experience when they received a message from the deity, the delivery of the message does not necessarily require such rapturous practice. After receiving an oracle, the prophets could rationally have it recorded in their mind for an oral

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<sup>154</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:57.

<sup>155</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 285.

<sup>156</sup> Robert R. Wilson, “Prophecy and Ecstasy: A Reexamination,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1979): 337. For a concise introduction to the debate on prophecy and ecstasy see: Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 1-19.

<sup>157</sup> Wilson and John R. Levison have demonstrated compellingly that the debate on prophecy and ecstasy is still a complex issue, which, because of its very complexity will not be discussed in this thesis. Nevertheless, the warning of Levison on the evaluation of this debate is noteworthy: “Claims of prophetic inspiration cannot be homogenized; such phenomena took place at the intersection between a mysterious realm and concrete social contexts. It is, accordingly, much more likely that differently occasioned experiences of inspiration should differ substantially from one another than that they should appear unvaryingly in the same guise.” J. R. Levison, “Prophecy in Ancient Israel: The Case of the Ecstatic Elders,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65 (2003): 521; Wilson, “Prophecy and Ecstasy: A Reexamination,” 336-337.

<sup>158</sup> Jer 2:1-2; 7:1-2 (temple); 11:6 (towns of Judah and streets of Jerusalem); 17:19-21 (People’s Gate); 18:1-5; 19:1-3, 14-15 (temple); 22:1-2 (palace of the king); 26:1-2 (temple); 27:1-4; and 39:15-16.

transmission or written it down in order to address his message to the right audience in the right place and occasion. For instance, in 2 Kgs 9:1-10 Elisha, after being inspired, commissions a “son of the prophets” to deliver an oracle to Jehu in another city. The “son of the prophets” then goes to Jehu in another city and, in the proper manner instructed by Elisha, he delivers the oracle.<sup>159</sup> Additionally, instantaneous inspiration with oracular delivery in rational and formal manners is attested in two O.T. narratives. In 1 Kgs 22:15-23 Micaiah prophesied in an interactive relationship with king Ahab. Micaiah speaks of two visions that are directly addressed in response to the attitude of the king (v. 17 and vv.19-23). This interactivity between the king and Micaiah demands a conscious attitude of the prophets instead of an irrational or uncontrolled behavior.<sup>160</sup> More compelling, in 2 Chron 20, Yahweh inspires Jahaziel to prophesy in the midst of the assembly. After the prayer addressed to Yahweh by the king (vv. 6-12), Jahaziel prophesies, addresses the petitioners, and gives them instructions (vv. 14-17). After the prophecy the community bowed down before Yahweh (v. 18) and then the temple singers begin to sing praises (v. 19). In this liturgical sequence, the prophetic participation of Jahaziel completely suits the occasion and shows that inspiration and delivery of oracles is not incompatible with the formality of the cult.

According to Hilber, some scholars claim that the connection between the original performance of a prophetic word in the cult and the final written composition of the so-

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<sup>159</sup> It should be underscored, however, that the prophet’s words in vv. 6-16 are not a carbon copy of the instructions of Elisha in vv. 1-3. It should also be noted that Jehu’s officers refer to the prophet as a madman in v. 11.

<sup>160</sup> Levison correctly states: “Prophesying in 1 Kings 22 contains no sign of raving, no clues to rapturous ecstasy.” Levison, “Prophecy in Ancient Israel,” 518.

called “prophetic psalms” is incompatible. Hilber explains that basically they “point to the unified composition of psalms with diverse genre elements and argue that such composition cannot be accounted for by cult prophetic speech.”<sup>161</sup> The cohesion between oracle and the other elements of the prophetic psalms seems to deny the immediate prophetic inspiration. However, we have already demonstrated based on the texts above, that prophets could be inspired beforehand, before the actual performance in the cult. In this case, the prophets could prepare their speech to fit the occasion. Furthermore, as Hilber rightly explains, in the case of “a high degree of rhetorical skill, a prophet might be able to address a situation at hand by spontaneous oral composition, in some circumstances echoing very closely the themes and phrases of other functionaries in the setting.”<sup>162</sup> Additionally, after the performance in the cult the composition of the poem could have taken place with a gathering of all the elements of the liturgy.<sup>163</sup> For instance, recalling the event in 2 Chronicles 20, we could assume that a poet would write a psalm, after the whole event has taken place, using the main elements of the liturgy, namely, the petition of the king (vv. 6-12), Yahweh’s intervention through the voice of his prophet Jahaziel (vv. 14-17), and the conclusion with acknowledgment of Yahweh’s sovereignty and praises to him. The poet’s reconstruction could gather together the different speeches and arrange them in a coherent sequence for liturgical performance in the cult.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Cf. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 221.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 221.

<sup>163</sup> For a study on the relationship between oral performance and written composition, see: Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1996).

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Booij, *Godswoorden in the Psalmen*, 260-263.

In light of the above observations, we are of the opinion that prophetic inspiration and prophetic participation in the liturgy in a cult center are not necessarily incompatible. Gunkel's assumed incompatibility between the ecstatic behavior of the prophets and the liturgy is not based on solid evidence from the O.T. On the contrary, there are indications in the O.T. that prophets had a rational and interactive participation in ceremonial events as well. For that reason, although the process of inspiration, performance, and composition is complex, there is no necessary incompatibility of this process with the cult.

### 2.3.5 The Period in Which Cultic Prophecy Existed in Israel.

On the assumption that cultic prophecy existed in Israel, the question about when it happened naturally arises. With respect to this matter, the pre-exilic period is easier to evaluate than the post-exilic because, as we have shown above, most of the texts used in support of cultic prophecy refer to pre-exilic events.

For the pre-exilic period, the first supporting text is 1 Chro 25:1-7, which describes the institution of the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun as cultic prophets. According to 1 Chro 25:1, David and his army officers appointed "the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun to prophesy by (playing) the harps, lyres and cymbals." Significantly, in connection with the list of the sons of Asaph and Jeduthun the *Niphal* participle הַנְּבִיאִים is repeated in vv. 2 and 3. Moreover, in v. 5 Heman is called the חִזְיָהּ הַמְּלֶכֶת, "the seer of the king" (2 Chro 35:15). The reference to these Levites with prophetic terminology indicates that 1 Chro 25:1-7 reports the institution of cultic prophecy. Additional support for this inference is the fact that in 2 Chro 20:14 and 29:25

Levitical singers are referred to with prophetic terminology. In fact, according to 2 Chro 20:14-17, “Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph” (v. 14), stood up in the assembly and delivered an oracle of salvation (vv. 16-17) that was introduced with the characteristic messenger formula.<sup>165</sup> These texts from 1 and 2 Chronicles shows that, as Sara Japhet notes correctly, that prophecy is not only an isolated, unique phenomena but is also part of “the permanent singing establishment, which is part of the cultic framework.”<sup>166</sup>

Due to the post-exilic composition of 1 and 2 Chronicles, their historical accuracy has been questioned. Nevertheless, even if someone assumes the compositions to be a fabrication, it must reflect what is expected or known by the author and his audience. David L. Petersen argues for this understanding of the Chronicler’s narratives. He does not see any of the above texts as genuine historical narratives. Nevertheless, he concedes that the Chronicler was writing of what was expected in his time. Petersen claims that “[b]y writing history in this way, the Chronicler helped substantiate the Levitical singers’ claim to cultic authority as prophets in post-exilic society.”<sup>167</sup> Therefore, the Chronicler’s reports indicate either an account of pre-exilic cultic reality or a post-exilic expected practice. This argument has been articulated compellingly by Wilson in his description of

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<sup>165</sup> Jahaziel’s prophecy is not just an imitation of prophetic style because 2 Chro 20:14 clearly states that the Spirit of Yahweh came on him. Moreover, his prophecy was a response to the king’s lament (vv. 6-12).

<sup>166</sup> Sarah Japhet, *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 441.

<sup>167</sup> David L. Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy: Studies in Deutero-Prophetic Literature and in Chronicles* (SBLMS 23; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 77.

the Chronicler's writings on cultic practices:

In addition, the Chronicler's description of the activities of the Levites speaks of them as prophesying to the accompaniment of musical instruments (1 Chr 25:1). Heman, the king's visionary, was the head of one of the Levitical groups (1 Chr 25:4-8), and the Chronicler seems to have equated prophets and Levites (2 Chr 34:30). The evidence thus seems to indicate that the Chronicler considered prophecy to be legitimate part of the cult so long as prophetic activity occurred among the Levitical priests as they were fulfilling their assigned functions.<sup>168</sup>

The Chronicler consistently links prophets, Levites, and cult, which substantiates the descriptions of the prophets found in Samuel and Kings.<sup>169</sup> Therefore, since for the Chronicler prophecy was not strange to the cult, it indicates the possibility that cult prophecy also took place in the post-exilic period. In support of this theory, Hilber suggests that, because the institution of the prophets existed in the post-exilic period (e.g. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi) and because some post-exilic texts prove the presence of prophets in connection with the reestablishment of the cult in Jerusalem (Ezra 5:2; 6:14), it is also possible that “[e]ven if none of the prophets served liturgically, a prophetic message favourable to temple and community restoration would have been welcomed in the Second Temple cult.”<sup>170</sup> Therefore, based on the textual evidence cited above, we infer that cultic prophecy is likely to have taken place pre-exilic period and possibly lingered until the post-exilic era. Indeed, the fact that Zechariah, the father of John the

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<sup>168</sup> Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 293-294.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. Tamara C. Eskenazi, Kent H. Richards, eds., *Second Temple Studies: Vol. 2: Temple and Community in the Persian Period*. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994): 173-179.

<sup>170</sup> Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 34.

Baptist, is also reported to have prophesied in Lk 1:67 suggests that cultic prophecy existed into N.T. times since he was also a priest.<sup>171</sup>

## 2.4 Summary Conclusion

In this chapter we have investigated the debate about the existence of cultic prophecy in ancient Israel and its relationship to the psalms. First we presented the debate between Mowinckel and Gunkel, which established the basic frame for the ongoing debate on the theory about cultic prophecy. In the following section we surveyed the positions of those who supported either Mowinckel or Gunkel in the subsequent debate, as well as those who adopted a mixed position. In this section we noted especially that Jeremias, Nasuti, Koenen and Jacobson refined the definitions of the forms and functions of prophetic speeches in the Psalter and we have indicated our agreement with them. Then, in the next section, we presented our own position with respect to five unresolved issues in the ongoing debate about cultic prophecy: 1) the relationship between priests and prophets; 2) the association of prophets with cultic shrines; 3) the relationship between cultic prophets and canonical prophets; 4) the relationship between prophetic inspiration and the composition of the prophetic psalms and their performance in the cult; and 5) the question concerning the period in which cultic prophecy existed in Israel.

Regarding the first issue we have demonstrated that Mowinckel's claim that the priestly office overlapped with the prophetic office in ancient Israel has sufficient basis in O.T. passages. For example, in the O.T. persons like Balaam, Samuel, and Elijah exercised prophetic and priestly duties.

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<sup>171</sup> According to Lk 2:36-38, the prophetess Anna never left the temple. Moreover, John the Baptist, son of a priest, was also a prophet.

Moreover, with regard to the second issue, we verified that some passages suggest that prophets were actively involved in cultic activities at the various shrines activities, rather than being merely inactive visitors, as Gunkel claimed. As we have shown, the leadership of Samuel at Ramah, where he functioned as priest and chief of the prophets, suggests that his band of prophets participated actively in the cultic shrine of Ramah.

Also, regarding the connection between canonical prophets and cultic prophets, we have argued that there insufficient evidence in the O.T. to make a radical separation between these two groups. We noted that the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel were priests, that Isaiah received his commission in the temple, and that, according to Jeremias, the prophets Nahum and Habakkuk could be considered cultic prophets.

Furthermore, concerning the fourth issue, we have shown that prophetic inspiration and prophetic participation in the liturgy in a cultic shrine are not incompatible. The O.T. contains various examples in which the location and time of inspiration is different from the location and moment of delivery. There are also examples in which prophets are inspired and at the same time interact rationally with the audience. From this data we concluded that Gunkel's assumed incompatibility between the ecstatic behavior of the prophets and temple liturgies has no solid basis in the O.T.

Finally, regarding the fifth issue, we presented textual evidence from the O.T. to infer that cultic prophecy is likely to have taken place in pre-exilic period. Moreover, we also presented evidence to show that cultic prophecy continued into the post-exilic period.

In view of the above, we conclude that the cultic prophecy hypothesis is a valid approach to interpret the so-called "prophetic psalms" in the Psalter and for this reason

this approach will be adopted in our close reading of Psalm 75 in chapter 3. For this close reading the narrative of 2 Chro 20 is especially significant because in this passage an Asaphite prophet delivers an oracle of salvation in response to the king's lament in a cultic ceremony. In fact, vv. 21-26 indicate that the community participated in praise. 2 Chro 20 shows, therefore, that the people, the king and the prophet participate in this communal liturgical event. In chapter 3 we will use this example to explain the reason for the switch in speakers and addressees in Psalm 75 and, especially, that a prophet could deliver a divine oracle in a similar liturgical event. Moreover, in our analysis of Psalm 75 we will use Nasuti's helpful distinction between quoted and unquoted divine speech.

CHAPTER 3  
PSALM 75 - "THERE IS A CUP IN YAHWEH'S HAND"

**3.1 Introduction**

To demonstrate that cultic prophecy can satisfactorily explain the difficulties in the composition of Psalm 75, we first presented a brief history of interpretation of the poem. In this first chapter we surveyed how diverse schools of interpretation solved these difficulties. On the basis of this survey we concluded that the cult functional approach pioneered by Mowinckel, together with his theory of the existence cultic prophecy in Israel's cult, is a plausible approach to solve the exegetical problems of Psalm 75. In view of this conclusion, a thorough study of the phenomenon of cultic prophecy was necessary and that for two reasons. First, although the existence of cultic prophecy is vastly accepted in contemporary biblical scholarship, as we have demonstrated in chapter 2, cultic prophecy is still a point of disagreement by some scholars. Second, it was necessary in order to establish clearly our own understanding of this theory. Consequently, in the second chapter of this thesis we demonstrated that the cultic prophecy hypothesis, especially in the Asaphite Psalms, of which Psalm 75 is part, provides a plausible explanation for the occurrence of the divine speeches and the way these speeches are arranged in the "prophetic psalms." However, before drawing further conclusions about Psalm 75 and cultic prophecy, it is necessary to study this poem carefully.

In chapter 1 we have already pointed out five major difficulties in interpreting Psalm 75. They are: 1) the switches in addressee; 2) the change in speakers; 3) the translation of verbal forms; 4) the classification of the literary genre; and 5) the determination of the historical occasion for the composition of the psalm. Our close

reading of the Hebrew text of Psalm 75 will reveal other complicating factors in the interpretation of this poem. For instance, v. 2 lacks a clear identification of the subject of the clause, “they tell your wonders.” Another issue is the question concerning the cardinal points of the globe presented in v. 7. Why are only three cardinal points presented in this verse? Should the word **הַרִים** in this verse be read as the plural noun, “mountains,” or as a *Hiphil* infinitive construct, “exaltation” ? Still another issue is how to translate the unusual sequence of three **כִּי** clauses (vv. 7-9). These and other problems in the text that may appear will be treated here in order to arrive at a good understanding of the message of Psalm 75.

### 3.2 Methodology

Our brief survey of the history of the interpretation of Psalm 75 in chapter 1 has also demonstrated that various exegetical methods have been used in the exposition of this poem. This review also revealed that no commentator or scholar used only one exegetical method. Instead, commentators as, for example, Tate and Hossfeld, use more than one method. Moreover, we agreed with McCann that a multiplicity of methods should be used. We also agreed with Bruce K. Waltke, that these methods should begin with the gramatico-historical-theological method enriched by the newer disciplines of form critical, cult functional, rhetorical critical and canonical approaches. To that end, we will execute a close reading of Psalm 75 using the following hierarchy of seven exegetical steps: 1) the delimitation of the pericope; 2) the establishment of the Hebrew text of Psalm 75 using textual criticism; 3) a translation of the poem accompanied by notes; 4) a

grammatical and syntactical analysis; 5) the classification of the poem's literary genre; 6) the reconstruction of the poem's *Sitz-im-Leben*; the establishment of the poem's historical occasion and background; and 7) an analysis of the poem's location and function in its immediate, remote and canonical context.

For the adherents of form criticism, cult functional criticism and rhetorical criticism the first step in the exegetical process is the delimitation of the pericope under study. Although this is a relatively easy step in the majority of psalms, in some cases like Pss 9-10 and Pss 42-43 the traditional numbering has proven to be problematic. Consequently, in addition to the editorial division of the Psalter and the superscriptions provided with the majority of psalms, it is also necessary to demonstrate the compositional unity of the poem. Therefore, in this step we will evaluate if the poem can be read as a consistent unity by analyzing its themes and vocabulary as well as contrasting its literary genre in comparison with the neighboring psalms.

Once we have substantiated the limits of our pericope, it is then necessary to establish the Hebrew text with which we will work. To that end, we will first print the MT of Psalm 75 as it has been printed in the BHS. Using the text critical apparatus of BHS, comparing the MT with the Septuagint (LXX) and Vulgate, and reviewing the textual critical problems pointed out in commentaries and pertinent scholarly literature, we will verify every relevant emendation to the text, particularly the debated readings in vv. 2, 6, 7, 9, 10a and 11b.

With the Hebrew text established, it is necessary to make our own translation of the poem because of problematic issues with respect to the use of the verbs in Hebrew

poetry, the syntactical relationship of several clauses and the translation of several important lexical terms. This translation will be accompanied by notes that will explain our translation of the aspect of the verbs, the syntax of the clauses, and our understanding of several lexical terms whose meaning is ambiguous and, therefore, disputed. The necessity of this step has been demonstrated in the history of interpretation of this poem. It has shown that the translation of the verbal forms of Psalm 75 varies in the commentaries that were surveyed.

After translating the psalm, it is necessary to determine the compositional structure of the poem. This is the second major step for the practitioners of the form critical, cult functional and rhetorical critical approaches. While form critics and even rhetorical critics tend to impose pre-established outlines on texts, we agree with Eep Talstra that one should arrive at the compositional structure of a psalm by a careful grammatical and syntactical analysis of the text.<sup>1</sup> As we see it, a grammatical and syntactical analysis of a text consists of three steps. The first step is the delimitation of the clauses of the poem on grammatical grounds. According to Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., a clause “is a group of words which has a subject and a verb/predicate and which forms part of a sentence.”<sup>2</sup> In view of this definition of a clause, we will delimit the individual clauses of Psalm 75 and plot all the important parsing information, such as, the person, gender and number (PGN) of the subject, the thematic stem and the type of predicate of each verbal form in an appropriate table designed for this purpose. The second grammatical and

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<sup>1</sup> For this problem see: Eep Talstra, ‘Singers and Syntax: On the Balance of Grammar and Poetry in Psalm 8’, in Janet Dyk (ed.), *Give Ear to My Words: Psalms and other Poetry in and around the Hebrew Bible. Essays in Honour of Professor N.A. van Uchelen* (Amsterdam, 1996), 11–22.

<sup>2</sup> Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 97.

syntactical step consists of a careful analysis of the syntactical function of each individual clause in the poem. This step aims to explain the relationship between the individual clauses delimited in the previous step. In this analysis each clause will be classified as syndetic or asyndetic,<sup>3</sup> verbal or non-verbal,<sup>4</sup> conjunctive or disjunctive,<sup>5</sup> dependent or independent,<sup>6</sup> main, coordinate or subordinate clause,<sup>7</sup> along with its syntactical function. The results of this analysis will also be plotted in an appropriate table.

This table and the previous table will serve as the basis for the third step of our grammatical and syntactical analysis, which is the segmentation of the text in its basic sense units, each of which will consist of a number of clauses. The primary criteria for grouping the clauses into their respective sense units will be: 1) change in subject (PGN) of the independent clauses; 2) change in verbal form in the independent clauses; 3) change in addressee in the independent clauses of the poem and 4) change in speaker.<sup>8</sup> The results of this analysis will also be plotted in an appropriate table.

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<sup>3</sup> The term “syndetic” stands for the clause joined to the preceding through a conjunction. The term “asyndetic” stands for a clause that has no conjunction to link it to the preceding clause.

<sup>4</sup> A verbal clause usually describes an action, while the non-verbal describes a state.

<sup>5</sup> See Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Scribner, 1971), §132. Basically a conjunctive clause is temporally or logically posterior to the preceding clause, while disjunctive clause stands in a non-sequential relationship with the preceding clause. One criterion for this relationship is the presence of the conjunction ׀.

<sup>6</sup> An independent clause makes thematic sense by itself, while a dependent clause does not.

<sup>7</sup> Regarding the application of the preceding norm, if a clause is independent, it may be a main or coordinate clause. A main clause usually begins a new idea and normally introduces a new subject. A coordinate clause is also independent and continues the thought of the preceding clause. Subordinate clauses are dependent on the preceding clause since they do not make sense by themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 95-104.

This table in turn will serve as the basis for the fifth step in our hierarchy of exegetical steps, the establishment of the compositional outline of Psalm 75. In this step we will seek to establish the speech function of each sense unit, its speaker and addressee. As we see it, this is an essential step towards resolving the problem of identifying the respective speakers in Psalm 75. Our primary concern is to establish the social role of each speaker. Are the speakers singers, liturgists, priests, prophets, worshippers, or God?

Although the first five exegetical steps will help us resolve the major difficulties in the interpretation of Psalm 75, the execution of the next four steps in our outline of exegetical steps will help us arrive at a better understanding of the function and message of Psalm 75 in the Psalter. These four steps are: 1) the classification of the literary genre; 2) the definition of the poem's *Sitz-im-Leben*; 3) the identification of the poem's historical occasion and background; 4) and the poem's canonical function, contextual analysis.

The classification of the literary genre of a poem is the third important step for the form and cult functional approach. As we noted in our historical survey in chapter 1, however, the classification of the literary genre of Psalm 75 is debated. Some classify Psalm 75 as a lament, others classify it as a hymn, either a hymn of thanksgiving or a hymn of praise, and still others as a communal liturgy. We believe that the classification should be based exclusively on the results of the outline of the compositional structure of the poem and the establishment of the speech function of each sense unit.

In connection with the classification of the literary genre of Psalm 75 we must next establish the *Sitz-im-Leben* of the poem, the fourth step of the form critical and cult functional approaches. In this step form critics seek to reconstruct the specific social

setting for a literary unit. In the case of the psalms, we noted in chapter 1 that Gunkel and Mowinckel agree that the original *Sitz-im-Leben* for the psalms is the cult. Despite their disagreement on the cult, they both agree that the cult is the *Sitz-im-Leben* of Psalm 75. In our discussion of this question we will seek to determine if it is possible to be more specific. In other words, we will seek to establish whether there is a specific occasion for Psalm 75 in the cult.

Although the advocates of the form critical and cult functional approach normally do not pay too much attention to the question concerning the historical occasion of Psalm 75, we will briefly evaluate the scholarly positions on this matter. Based on this evaluation, we will define our own position with respect to this issue.

Finally, we will analyze the canonical context of Psalm 75 at five levels: 1) the immediate context of Psalm 75, i.e. Pss 74-76; 2) the remote context of this psalm, i.e. its place and function in Book III and in the collection of the Asaphite Psalms; 3) its place and function in the Psalter; 4) its place and function in the O.T.; and 5) its context within the Christian Bible. The aim of this final exegetical step is twofold. First, we will demonstrate that the vocabulary and imagery of Psalm 75 is very similar to the writings of the canonical prophets. This purpose of this demonstration will to confirm our hypothesis that Psalm 75 is a “prophetic psalm.” Second, determining the place and function of Psalm 75 in the collection of Asaphite Psalms in Book III of the Psalter will help us to interpret the message of the poem.

After the completion of the above hierarchy of exegetical steps, we will be in a better position to evaluate the validity of the cult prophet hypothesis for the interpretation

of Psalm 75. Our aim will be to argue Psalm 75 is a liturgical composition that consists of various speech functions, that it was composed for performance in the cult by cult prophets, and that cult prophets may have had a significant role in its performance in a manner similar to 2 Chronicles 20:14-16.

### 3.3 Delimitation of the Pericope

Psalm 75 does not present any difficulty as to its delimitation. To begin with, both Pss 75 and 76 have superscriptions that mark the beginning and the end of Psalm 75. Moreover, despite the various modes of speech employed in Psalm 75, according to McCann, “Psalm 75 is clearly a unit.”<sup>9</sup> In support of this claim, he notes, first of all, that the promise in v. 10 recalls the statement of praise in v. 2, “even though the vocabulary of praise and proclamation differs.”<sup>10</sup> This recollection serves as a frame around the poem and confirms its demarcation as an individual unit. Moreover, McCann notes that, in view of the repetition of the verb **שָׁפַט** in v. 3 and v. 8, the divine speech in vv. 3-6 and the response in vv. 7-9 “focus on God’s establishment of justice . . . , especially as this involves dealing with the apparent power (see ‘horn’ in vv. 4-5, 10) of the wicked (vv. 4, 8, 10).”<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, McCann also states that unity “is provided by the six fold occurrence of a Hebrew root (**רָוַם** *rûm*) translated as ‘lifting up’ (vv. 4-7), ‘high’ (v. 5), and ‘exalted’ (v. 10).”<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the change in literary genre also indicates that Psalm 75 is a literary

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<sup>9</sup> McCann, “The Psalms,” 4: 976.

<sup>10</sup> McCann, “The Psalms,” 4: 976.

<sup>11</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 4:976.

<sup>12</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 4:976.

unit. By general consensus, Psalm 74 is a communal lament,<sup>13</sup> Psalm 75 is, as we will demonstrate, a prophetic liturgy,<sup>14</sup> and Psalm 76 is a Song of Zion.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, there is no doubt that Psalm 75 is an independent, coherent literary unit.

### 3.4 Textual Criticism

Once the limits of our pericope have been demarcated, it is necessary to establish the Hebrew text of Psalm 75 because, as we have noted above, it contains several difficult readings that differ from the versions like the LXX and have occasioned various proposals for emendation. We will only deal with the textual critical issues in vv. 2, 6, 7, 9, 10a and 11a.

#### 3.4.1 Presentation of the Text Tradition

The Masoretic text in BHS reads as follows:

1 לְמִנְצַח אֶל־תִּשְׁחַת מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף שִׁיר:  
 2 הֲוֹדִינוּ לָךְ | אֱלֹהִים הוֹדִינוּ <sup>a</sup> וְקָרוֹב שָׁמַךְ סִפְרוֹ <sup>a</sup> גַּפְלֹאוֹתֶיךָ:  
 3 כִּי אֶקַּח מוֹעֵד אֲנִי מִיִּשְׁרָיִם אֶשְׁפֹּט:  
 4 נִמְגִים אֶרֶץ וְכָל־יִשְׁבֵּיהָ אֲנֹכִי תִכְנַתִּי עִמּוּדֶיהָ סֵלָה:  
 5 אֶמְרָתִי לְהוֹלִלִים אֶל־תִּהְיוּ וְלִרְשָׁעִים אֶל־תִּרְימוּ קָרוֹן:  
 6 אֶל־תִּרְימוּ לְמָרוֹם קִרְנֵיכֶם תִּדְבְּרוּ בְצוֹאֲרֵי <sup>a</sup> עֵתֶק:  
 7 כִּי לֹא מִמוֹצֵא וּמִמַּעֲרָב וְלֹא מִמִּדְבָּר <sup>c</sup> הָרִים <sup>d</sup>:  
 8 כִּי־אֱלֹהִים שִׁפְטוּ זֶה יִשְׁפִּיל וְזֶה יָרִים:

<sup>13</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 82.

<sup>14</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 251.

<sup>15</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 251.

9 כִּי כּוֹס בְּיַד־יְהוָה וַיִּזַן חֶמֶר | מִלֵּא מִסֹּד וַיִּגַּר מְזֵהָ<sup>a</sup> אֶדְ-שְׁמֶרִיָּה יִמְצֹו יִשְׁתּוּ  
כָּל רְשָׁעֵי־אָרֶץ:

10 וַאֲנִי אֲגִידָא<sup>a</sup> לְעֵלָם אֲזַמְרָה לֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:

11 וְכָל־קַרְנֵי רְשָׁעִים אֲגַדְעָא<sup>a</sup> תִּרְזַמְמָנָה קַרְנֹת צִדִּיק:

### 3.4.2 Textual Criticism Proper

The first textual critical problem concerns the peculiar non-verbal clause in v. 2c: וְקָרֹב וְשָׁמַד.<sup>16</sup> Instead of וְקָרֹב וְשָׁמַד, the LXX reads וְקָרָא בְשֵׁמֶךָ and translates v. 2c as καὶ ἐπικαλεσόμεθα τὸ ὄνομά σου, “and we will call on your name.” On this translation the subject of the first three clauses in v. 2 are identical. In a similar manner, the text critical apparatus of BHS suggests that v. 2c should be read as וְקָרָא בְשֵׁמֶךָ. Following this emendation, Briggs translates v. 2c as “and call on Thy name”<sup>17</sup> and, similarly, Luís Alonso Schökel translates this clause as “invocando teu nome” (invoking your name),<sup>18</sup> which corresponds to the Portuguese Bible ARA, “e invocamos o teu nome.” Similarly, Kraus reads “[t]hose who call on your name...”<sup>19</sup> In a completely different, Dahood emends וְשָׁמַד, “your name,” to וְשָׁמַיִךְ, “your heavens,” and, as a result, translates v. 2cd

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Jensen, “Psalm 75, 428-429.

<sup>17</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of Psalms*, 2: 160-161.

<sup>18</sup> Schökel-Carniti, *Salmos II*, 964.

<sup>19</sup> Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102-103.

as “your heavens proclaim.”<sup>20</sup> He justifies his emendation on the basis of Psalm 19:2: “the heavens tell the glory of God.”<sup>21</sup>

With respect to these proposed emendations, it is important to note that they are motivated by their interpretation of v. 2d, which constitutes the next problem. In v. 2d the Hebrew text reads **סִפְּרוּ נִפְלְאוֹתַיְךָ** (“they tell your wonders”). There is no clear indication as to the identity of the subject of this sentence. Based on his acceptance of the textual emendation proposed in the critical apparatus of BHS for clause 2c, Kraus claims that the subject is in the preceding clause (v. 2c). Thus Kraus translates clauses 2cd as follows: “those who call on your name tell of your wondrous acts.”<sup>22</sup> The LXX’s reading **δηγήσομαι πάντα τὰ θαυμάσιά σου**, “I will describe all your marvelous things,” has the first person singular as the subject of the sentence. The RSV and NAB accept these emendations for v. 2cd. The RSV, for example, translates these clauses as follows: “we call on thy name and recount thy wondrous works.”

Although these emendations aim to provide a fluent translation of the text, the more difficult reading, which is the printed text of the BHS, should be preserved because they are not accompanied with enough manuscript evidence to justify them. Moreover, the differences between the MT and the LXX can be understood on the basis of the well-

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<sup>20</sup> Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II, 51-100*, (AB 17; Garden City: Doubleday, 1968), 209-210.

<sup>21</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II, 51-100*, 209-210. John S. Kselman suggests that 2bc should be understood as an instance of “Janus parallelism,” in which **שְׁמֶךָ** has a double meaning, “your name” and “your heavens.” The value of Kselman’s proposal is that it does not require any significant emendation to the MT. However, it is not clear if we can assume the occurrence of this rare stylistic device in Psalm 75:2. Cf. John S. Kselman, “Janus Parallelism in Psalm 75:2.” *JBL* 121 (2002): 531-532.

<sup>22</sup> Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102-103. Cf. Terrien, *The Psalms*, 543.

known interpretative modifications of the LXX.<sup>23</sup> In the next section we will present our translation with a further discussion of this difficult verse.

In v. 6b the LXX reads *μη λαλειτε κατα του θεου αδικιαν*, “do not speak injustice against God.” The critical apparatus BHS suggests that the LXX reads *בְּצוֹר* “on the Rock,” or “against the Rock” (cf. Pss 18:47; 19:15; 73:26).

The interpretation of this text is challenging. The emendation is accepted by Briggs, Weiser, Dahood, Kraus, and Schökel.<sup>24</sup> The only modern Bible versions that adopted this emendation are the NAB and the Portuguese ARA version. A supporting fact of this translation is that Psalm 75 is very similar to the Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10), in which God is called “our Rock” (v. 2c) followed by an admonition to “...not talk anymore very proudly, and not let arrogance come out of your mouths...” (v. 3ab).<sup>25</sup> However, as Hossfeld rightly points out, the MT as it is, “speak with arrogant neck,” is related to the idea of “stiff-necked” in Job 15:26, which is “analogous to the common expression ‘with a stiff neck’ (e.g. Exod 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut 9:6, 13; 31:27).”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, although unusual, the text as it reads does not need to be emended to make sense. Consequently, there is no need to adopt the proposed emendation in this text.

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<sup>23</sup> Mogens Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 109-110.

<sup>24</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of Psalms*, 160; Weiser, *The Psalms*, 320-321; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102; Schökel and Carniti, *Salmos II*, 963-964.

<sup>25</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Book of Psalms*, 162.

<sup>26</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252-253; Cf. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255.

Gunkel<sup>27</sup> and Anderson<sup>28</sup> think that the text of v. 7 is corrupt. The reason for this opinion is that, as Kissane has noted correctly, the meaning of this verse is obscure because in the MT the sentence is elliptical and a subject must be supplied.<sup>29</sup>

To solve this problem a number of emendations have been proposed. Briggs, for example, considers v. 7 to be an instance of aposiopese (cf. GKC §167a) and that the words “our help comes from” (cf. Ps 121:1-2) must be supplied in thought.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, following Ewald, Wellhausen and Duhm, he emends the text to read “from the mountains” so that v. 7 embraces the four cardinal points of the globe.<sup>31</sup>

Others accept the suggestion of the editors of BHS that the construct noun מִמְדָּבָר be emended to read מְדָבָר, in which case it would be an absolute. Dahood, for example, adopts this vocalization and, on the assumption that v. 7 spans the four cardinal points of the globe, he parses הַרִים as the plural of the noun הַר and interprets its syntactical function as an accusative of place.<sup>32</sup> A majority of Bible versions<sup>33</sup> and several

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<sup>27</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 329.

<sup>28</sup> A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms* (NBC; London: Oliphants, 1972), 2:549.

<sup>29</sup> Kissane, *The Book of the Psalms*, 2:20. Cf. note 11 in the NET.

<sup>30</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:161, 162 and 164. Cf. Delitzsch, “Psalms,” 5:340; Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 452; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2: 444, note 20.

<sup>31</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:161, 162 and 164. Cf. NAB; Weiser, *Psalms*, 520; Luis Alonso Schökel, *Manual of Hebrew Poetry* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1988), 93.

<sup>32</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II*, 213.

<sup>33</sup> KJV; ASV; RSV; NRSV; NIV; NET; Tanakh; ESV; NLT; YLT; RC95 (correcta).

commentators,<sup>34</sup> however, also accept the proposed emendation but parse **הָרִים** as a *Hiphil* infinitive construct that functions as the subject of the clause.

Despite the disclaimers of Gunkel<sup>35</sup> and Briggs,<sup>36</sup> we also accept the slight emendation of the construct noun **מְמַדְבֵּר** and parse **הָרִים** as a *Hiphil* infinitive construct. In support of this emendation and parsing we call attention, first of all, to the fact that the verbal root **רום** occurs four times in Psalm 75 (vv. 5, 6, 8, 11) as a key word.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, “exaltation” is a motif that continues in v. 8 (**יָרִים**). In fact, **הָרִים** forms a nice paronomasia with **יָרִים**.<sup>38</sup>

In v. 10a, with the change of one letter, the LXX reads ἐγὼ δὲ ἀγαλλιάσομαι, “but I will rejoice.” Apparently it read **אָגִיל** (cf. **אָגִילָה** in Hab 3:18) instead of **אָגִיד**.<sup>39</sup> At issue is the fact that the *Hiphil* verb **אָגִיד** normally takes a direct object. For this reason perhaps several Bible versions,<sup>40</sup> Gunkel<sup>41</sup> and Kissane<sup>42</sup> adopt this reading. On the basis of Psalm 69:31 the critical apparatus of BHS suggests that **אָגִיל** be read instead of **אָגִיד**.

<sup>34</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255 and 257; Hossfeld, *Psalms 2*, 253.

<sup>35</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 329.

<sup>36</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:164.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 257; Hossfeld, *Psalms 2*, 253.

<sup>38</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 340

<sup>39</sup> Cf. BDB, **גִיל**, #162.1.

<sup>40</sup> RSV, NRSV, NAB; ARA; ARC.

<sup>41</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 329.

<sup>42</sup> Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:20.

Dahood accepts this emendation because he reads עֹלָם as a divine epithet.<sup>43</sup> Most Bible versions<sup>44</sup> and commentators,<sup>45</sup> however, do not adopt either emendation. Because there is no manuscript evidence for the proposed emendation,<sup>46</sup> Hossfeld correctly states that no emendation of the MT is necessary.<sup>47</sup>

In verse 11b, the BHS suggests changing the first person singular *Piel yiqtol* verb עֲגִידָהּ to the 3ms person עָגַדָּהּ. This suggestion was adopted by the RSV, Weiser,<sup>48</sup> Anderson,<sup>49</sup> Kraus<sup>50</sup> and Jeremias<sup>51</sup> so that God is clearly the subject of clause 11a. However, there is no manuscript evidence to support this proposed emendation.<sup>52</sup>

In view of the above observations, we infer that, with the exception of v. 7, in which we adopted the emendation proposed in the critical apparatus of BHS, there is no need to adopt the other proposed emendations to the MT. With the exception of v. 7, therefore, we adopt the MT of Psalm 75 as printed in the BHS for the execution of the ensuing exegetical steps.

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<sup>43</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II*, 215.

<sup>44</sup> KJV; ASV; ESV; NET; Tanakh; NLT; YLT; etc.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 161, 163, Schökel and Carniti, *Salmos II*, 964-965; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252-253; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 446; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 257.

<sup>46</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 257.

<sup>47</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253.

<sup>48</sup> Weiser, *Psalms*, 521.

<sup>49</sup> Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:550.

<sup>50</sup> Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 103.

<sup>51</sup> Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*, 117.

<sup>52</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 257. Cf. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253. Against Duhm and Buhl, Gunkel (*Die Psalmen*, 329) also rejects this emendation.

### 3.5 Translation

A survey of the various Bible versions and commentaries reveals that their translation of Psalm 75 varies considerably.<sup>53</sup> Sometimes they follow the MT, sometimes the LXX, and sometimes they emend the text. Moreover, they also vary greatly in the translation of the verbs.

This fact evidences the difficulty in translating and interpreting the text of Psalm 75. In order to provide a consistent interpretation of the composition, we will offer as literal a translation of the Hebrew as possible that still makes sense in English. To facilitate the discussion of translation issues, we will present the translation of the poem verse by verse, based on our delimitation of the clauses and accompanied with related notes on the translation of some key terms and the resolution of grammatical and syntactical issues in comparison with other English translations.

#### 3.5.1 Verse 1

לְמַנְצֵחַ אֶל־תִּשְׁחַת 1a To the leader. “Do not destroy!”  
 מְזֻמֹּר לְאַסָּף שִׁיר: b a psalm to/for or of Asaph; a song.

The translation of the prepositional phrase לְמַנְצֵחַ, which occurs in the superscriptions of 55 psalms, is debated.<sup>54</sup> According to Tate, “[n]o one really knows what this term

<sup>53</sup> Jensen, “Psalm 75,” 416.

<sup>54</sup> See Tate’s extensive note on Ps 51:1. Cf. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 4-5.

means....”<sup>55</sup> Following Tate, we have adopted the translation “to the leader.”<sup>56</sup> Of particular interest for our exposition of Psalm 75 and our thesis is the fact that this prepositional phrase also occurs in Hab 3:19. Moreover, Anderson notes that, according to I. Engnell, “לְמַנְצִיחַ” was the North Israelite equivalent of לְדָוִד, ‘to David.’”<sup>57</sup>

The enigmatic prohibition, “Do not destroy!,” occurs five times in the MT: Dt 9:26; Pss 57:1; 58:1; 59:1 and 75:1. The function of this prohibition is uncertain. According to Tate, this prohibition is usually “understood to be the opening lines of a song to whose music this psalm was to be sung.”<sup>58</sup> But Kraus rightly states that this heading “remains inexplicable.”<sup>59</sup>

The terms מְזִמּוֹר לְאַסָּף שִׁיר occur only here and in Psalm 76. Its translation varies. The majority of Bible versions translate it as, “a psalm of Asaph; a song.” There are two translation issues. The first concerns the accentuation of the MT of these three words. While the majority of Bible version read the noun מְזִמּוֹר with the prepositional phrase לְאַסָּף, the accent marks of the MT suggest that the noun מְזִמּוֹר stands alone and that the prepositional phrase לְאַסָּף should be read with the following noun (שִׁיר). In this case the translation of the phrase as a whole would be, “a psalm; of Asaph a song.” On this reading it is clear that the noun שִׁיר refers to a song of Levitical choirs sung with

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<sup>55</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 5.

<sup>56</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 5.

<sup>57</sup> I owe this reference to Tate. Cf. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 5.

<sup>58</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255; cf. BDB, “שָׁחַת,” 1007.2-1008.2.

<sup>59</sup> Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary*. (trans. Hilton C. Oswald. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 30-31.

musical accompaniment.<sup>60</sup> The second issue concerns the ambiguity of the preposition לְ translation of the prepositional phrase לְאֶסְף. As in the prepositional phrase לְדָוִד,<sup>61</sup> this preposition can denote “to,” “for,” or “to.” Following Tate, we have used these options in our translation to indicate that the preposition in question is not necessarily the *lamehd auctoris*.

### 3.5.2 Verse 2

הוֹדִינוּ לְךָ   אֱלֹהִים	2a	We gave thanks to you, o God!
הוֹדִינוּ	b	We gave thanks,
וְקִרְבֵּי שְׁמֶךָ	c	for near (is) your name;
סִפְרוּ גִפְלוֹתֶיךָ:	d	they told your wonders.

The translation of v. 2 is troubled by several syntactical issues. The first issues concerns the translation of the *qatal* verbs הוֹדִינוּ in v. 2a that is repeated for emphasis<sup>62</sup> in v. 2b and סִפְרוּ in v. 2d.

With respect to the repeated *qatal* form of יָדָה in v. 2ab, it should be noted that its occurrence is unusual. In fact, a morphological search in Logos 4 shows that it has no exact parallel in the Psalter.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> BDB, s.v. שִׁיר, #3, 1010. Cf. 1 Chro 6:31-32; 13:8; 25:6; 2 Chro 23:18; 29:28; Neh 12:27.

<sup>61</sup> For a discussion of this issue see: Peter Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1983), 33-35.

<sup>62</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 2: 161; Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, 548.

<sup>63</sup> There are only ten occurrences of this verb in the *qatal* tense: Lev. 5:5 (weqtl), 16:21 (weqtl), 26:40 (weQTL); Num. 5:7 (weqtl); 1 Kings 8:33 (weqtl), 35 (weqtl); 2 Chro. 6:24 (weqtl), 26 (weqtl), and the two occurrences in Psalm 75. With the exception of the two occurrences in Psalm 75:2, the other occurrences are all weqtl forms in a future sequence. Consequently, they are not exact parallels to the *qatal*

As for the translation of הוֹדִינֵנוּ in v. 2ab, the LXX reads each instance as a future, Ἐξομολογησόμεθά σοι, ὁ θεός, ἐξομολογησόμεθα, “we will praise you, o God, we will praise you.” This translation was adopted by John Calvin.<sup>64</sup> On this translation v. 2ab functions as a resolve to praise that normally introduces a song of thanksgiving (cf. Ps 137:1 LXX).

A majority of Bible versions<sup>65</sup> and commentators<sup>66</sup> translate the repeated verb הוֹדִינֵנוּ in v. 2ab in the present tense, “we give thanks.” In support of this translation Gunkel appeals to GKC §106i. According to GKC §106i, *qatal* verbs are used “[i]n direct narration to express action which, although really in the process of accomplishment, are nevertheless meant to be represented as already accomplished in the conception of the speakers....” One could also appeal to Lambdin §44 (4), according to which “in poetry . . . the perfect is used to denote habitual activity with no specific tense value.” Advocates of this translation assume that v. 2ab is an act of praise and functions as the beginning of a communal hymn of praise.<sup>67</sup>

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forms in Psalm 75:2.

<sup>64</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 182-183.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. KJV, CPB, ESV, NET, NIV, NLT, NRSV; NAB; Tanakh; etc.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Briggs and Briggs, *Book of Psalms*, 160-161; Aubrey R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979), 319; Kraus *Psalms*, 2:102-104; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 104.

Others, however, posit that the *qatal* verbs in v. 2ab should be translated in the past tense (cf. Lambdin §44 [1]).<sup>68</sup> In their opinion, v. 2ab refers to a past, communal act of praise.<sup>69</sup> For example, Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, writes:

Strictly speaking, the verse contains nothing but suffix conjugations that look back to the past, accomplished praise or thanksgiving offered to God and indicate the deficiency of the present, in which there is no occasion for praise and thanks.<sup>70</sup>

In support of this interpretation Goldingay observes that the *qatal* verb סָפְרוּ is also used in Pss 44:1[2] and 78:3 “to refer to actual past declarations....”<sup>71</sup> Moreover, if one reads Pss 74 and 75 in canonical sequence, then v. 2 could be a reference to Israel’s praise in Psalm 74:12-17. This could support Weiser’s claim that in v. 2 “the congregation briefly recapitulates what has taken place in the divine service immediately before....”<sup>72</sup>

Of these options, we agree with those who translate the three *qatal* verbs in v. 2 in the past tense. We agree with them because this appears to be the most difficult yet natural reading of *qatal* verbs (Lambdin §44 [1]). Moreover, we accept Goldingay’s suggestion that clause 2d refers to Israel’s praise in Psalm 74:12-17. As we noted above, this would facilitate a canonical reading of Pss 74 and 75.

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<sup>68</sup> Weiser, *The Psalms*, 520-521; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252-253; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:441. Cf. Broyles, *Psalms*, 310.

<sup>69</sup> Weiser, *The Psalms*, 210; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252-253, 255; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:441.

<sup>70</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253.

<sup>71</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:441.

<sup>72</sup> Weiser, *The Psalms*, 520-521.

The translation of v. 2c has also proved to be problematic. Two questions are at issue: 1) How should one translate the clause initial conjunction *waw*?; and 2) Does the literal translation of 2b, “for near is your name,” make sense in its context?

With respect to the first issue, Frank Delitzsch states categorically that “neither here nor anywhere else is it to be supposed that וְ is synonymous with כִּי....”<sup>73</sup> On the basis of GKC 158.a,<sup>74</sup> however, Goldingay affirms that the clause initial conjunction *waw* introduces a causal clause.<sup>75</sup> We agree with Goldingay because in this case v. 2c clearly provides the reason for the congregation’s praise.

As for the second issue, in our discussion of text critical issues we noted that the LXX has a different reading for clause 2c: καὶ ἐπικαλεσόμεθα τὸ ὄνομά σου, “and we will call upon your name.” This translation blends in well because in the LXX vv. 2-3a appear to function as a resolve to praise. Moreover, on the assumption that v. 2c doesn’t make sense in its context, many emend the text. Gerstenberger, for example, states that v. 2c “is awkward in the MT.”<sup>76</sup> For this reason he suggests that the text may have to be emended. In our earlier discussion of the various proposed emendations of v. 2c we have already noted that there is no manuscript evidence for these proposals.

Two intertextual arguments support the retention of the MT. First, as Hossfeld notes, the neighboring psalms of Psalm 75 “are distinguished by a specific theology of the

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<sup>73</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 337.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Joüon-Muraoka §170.c.

<sup>75</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2: 441. Cf. KJV, ESV, NIV and ARC (“pois o teu nome está perto”).

<sup>76</sup> Erhard Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 2, and Lamentations* (FOTL 15. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 81-82.

divine name (74:7, 10, 18, 21; 76:2).<sup>77</sup> Second, the nearness of Yahweh is also a common theme in the Psalter (Pss 34:19; 119:151; 145:18).<sup>78</sup>

The translation of clause v. 2d also varies because of the anonymous subject of the *qatal* verb סִפְּרָה. As we noted in our discussion of text critical issues, the LXX again has a different reading: διηγῆσομαι πάντα τὰ θαυμάσιά σου, “I will declare all your wonderful works” (v. 3a). According to this reading, v. 3a is a resolve to praise. To resolve the question concerning the identity of the subject of the verb סִפְּרָה, the KJV, ARA, Johnson<sup>79</sup> and Tate<sup>80</sup> assume that the substantive participle נִפְּלְאוֹתַיִךְ in v. 2d functions as the subject of the verb סִפְּרָה. The KJV and Johnson read clauses 2cd as a complex sentence. The KJV, for example, translates these clauses as “For *that* thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.” In this case clauses 2cd clearly function as a motivating clause for the praise. Similarly, Johnson translates them as “Thy wondrous deeds telling of Thy nearness through thy Name.”<sup>81</sup> However, Tate treats clause 2c as an independent clause and, consequently, translates clause 2d as, “your wondrous deeds declare it!”<sup>82</sup> Against this proposed solution, Kirkpatrick observes that such “personification of God’s wondrous deeds is without analogy, and elsewhere ‘wondrous

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<sup>77</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253 and 255.

<sup>78</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 255.

<sup>79</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel’s Psalmody*, 319.

<sup>80</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255-256.

<sup>81</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel’s Psalmody*, 319.

<sup>82</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255-256.

works' is always the object of the verb to 'declare' or similar verbs."<sup>83</sup> Moreover, Hossfeld rightly observes that the phrase "tell your wonders" is so common in the Psalter (cf. Pss 9:2; 26:7; 71:17; 73:28; 96:3; etc.) that "one should not make the wonders the subject of the telling, as Tate (256) does."<sup>84</sup>

As we noted above, the RSV and NAB emend the Hebrew text of v. 2cd. Based on these emendations, the subject of the emended verb in clause 2d is "we." The ESV also emends the verb of v. 2d to read "we recount." Because there is no manuscript evidence for these emendations, we reject these translations.

Instead, we follow those English Bible versions that accept the MT and that translate the verb סָפְרוּ with an indefinite subject.<sup>85</sup> Some of these translations supply a "dummy subject"<sup>86</sup> for the verb סָפְרוּ, either "men"<sup>87</sup> or "people."<sup>88</sup> However, in our judgment, the translations appear to be more specific than the text itself. Consequently, we prefer to use the more indefinite English pronoun "they."

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<sup>83</sup> Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 451.

<sup>84</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253.

<sup>85</sup> For this phenomenon see: Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 70-71 [hereafter cited as *IBHS*]; Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 168-169.

<sup>86</sup> For this term see: *IBHS*, 71.

<sup>87</sup> ASV; NIV; NASB; Tanakh; etc.

<sup>88</sup> NET; NRSV; NLT; TNIV; etc.

## 3.5.3 Verse 3

כִּי אֶקַח מוֹעֵד 3a “When I take an appointed time  
 אֲנִי מִישָׁרִים<sup>89</sup> אֲשַׁפֵּט: b I, myself will judge in fairness.

Some translations insert a formulaic expression in verse 3 to clarify that God is the speaker in this verse. For example, the NAB adds the words “you said” to v. 2. Similarly, the Portuguese ARA version inserts the words “pois disseste” (“for you said”). Moreover, the NIV adds the words “you say.” The NET and NLT make it even more specific by inserting the words “God says.” In our opinion, these additions should be avoided since the sudden change of speakers should be understood as part of the dramatic liturgical style of the text.

Clause 3a begins with the particle כִּי, which occurs four times in Psalm 75 (vv. 3a, 7a, 8a, 9a). Many English Bible versions do not translate the particle in v. 3a.<sup>90</sup> For all practical purposes, they interpret the particle כִּי recitatively to introduce quoted speech (Williams § 452).<sup>91</sup> The Bible versions<sup>92</sup> and commentators<sup>93</sup> who translate the particle כִּי

<sup>89</sup> The emphatic plural masculine noun מִישָׁרִים (cf. Ps 58:2) functions as an accusative of manner (cf. בְּמִישָׁרִים in Pss 9:9, 96:10, and 98:9). Cf. GKC §118.q; Davidson, *Syntax*, §71.2.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. NIV; NET; RSV; NRSV; Tanakh; ESV; NAB; NLT; etc.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Ronald J. Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax* (3rd ed.; rev. and exp. John C. Beckman; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), §452. Cited hereafter simply as Williams.

<sup>92</sup> LXX (ὁταν); KJV; ASV; YLT

<sup>93</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalm*, 182; Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 450; Briggs and Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:160, 161 and 163; Weiser, *Psalms*, 520; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 254.

render it temporally, “when” (Williams, § 445). Johnson,<sup>94</sup> Dahood,<sup>95</sup> and Goldingay,<sup>96</sup> however, prefer an asseverative translation of the particle כִּי (Williams § 449). In Goldingay’s opinion, the temporal translation makes the transition from v. 2 to v. 3 “doubly jerky, as the speaker changes, and there is also no verbal link.”<sup>97</sup> Goldingay acknowledges that even as an asseverative particle the introductory particle כִּי retains some of its logical force. For this reason he translates it as “yes, for.”<sup>98</sup> Translated in this manner, it is, according to Goldingay, “almost as if Yhwh is interrupting the declaration in v. 1 to confirm it.”<sup>99</sup> Even though Goldingay’s proposed translation seems reasonable in view of the fact that the unquoted speech of Yahweh may denote a kind of “interruption,” this option is not the best translation for the particle כִּי. According to Barry Louis Bandstra, the syntactical order כִּי clause - main clause is the “primary identifying-contrastive feature”<sup>100</sup> of a circumstantial כִּי clause, which occurs in v. 3. Because of this, Bandstra reads v. 3a as a temporal clause and translates it as, “When I take an appointed time.”<sup>101</sup> Bandstra’s suggestion not only meets grammatical principles

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<sup>94</sup> Johnson, *CPIP*, 319.

<sup>95</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II*, 210.

<sup>96</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:442.

<sup>97</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:442. Goldingay (p. 442, note 15) observes that Driver (TTH 136β) and Davidson (*Syntax*, § 121.c) translate v. 3a as a conditional clause.

<sup>98</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:442.

<sup>99</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:442.

<sup>100</sup> Barry Louis Bandstra, “The Syntax of Particle Ky in Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1982), 121.

<sup>101</sup> Bandstra, “The Syntax of Particle Ky,” 325.

but also fits well in the flow of this text. Therefore, we prefer Bandstra's translation of the particle כִּי in v. 3a (Williams §445).

In v. 3a the semantic meaning of the *yiqtol* verb אָקַח varies. In part, its translation depends on the meaning of the noun מוֹעֵד, which occurs only five times in the Psalter.<sup>102</sup> According to BDB, the noun מוֹעֵד means either “appointed time” (Pss 102:14; 104:19) or “place” or “meeting” (cf. Psalm 74:4, 8). The majority of Bible versions<sup>103</sup> and commentators<sup>104</sup> opt for the meaning “appointed/set time.” As a result, they translate the verb אָקַח as “I choose”<sup>105</sup> or “I appoint.”<sup>106</sup> The KJV, Dahood,<sup>107</sup> and Jensen<sup>108</sup> however, translate the noun מוֹעֵד as “congregation” and “assembly” respectively.<sup>109</sup> Consequently, the KJV translates the verb אָקַח as “I will receive,”

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<sup>102</sup> Pss 74:4, 8; 75:3; 102:19; and 104:19.

<sup>103</sup> NIV; NET (appointed times); RSV; NRSV; ESV; Tanakh; NAB; etc.

<sup>104</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on Psalms*, 430; J. A. Alexander, *The Psalms Translated and Expained* (vol. 2; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889), 175; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102; Hoosfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252; Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, 441; *Psalms*, 576.

<sup>105</sup> NIV; Tanakh; NAB.

<sup>106</sup> RSV; NRSV; ESV.

<sup>107</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II*, 211. Dahood refers to the occurrence of the noun מוֹעֵד in Psalm 74:4.

<sup>108</sup> Jensen, “Psalm 75,” 417.

<sup>109</sup> Jensen (“Psalm 75,” 421) calls attention to this meaning of the noun in Psalm 74:3 and 8 and suggests that the use of the noun מוֹעֵד in Psalm 75:3 is “a delightful pun,” in which “God’s response assures this ‘assembly,’ מוֹעֵד, that the time of God’s absence is past” (p. 421).

Dahood as “I will summon”<sup>110</sup> and Jensen as “I affirm.”<sup>111</sup> According to Dahood, v. 3a refers to the final judgment.<sup>112</sup>

With respect to this second option for translating the words אָקַח מוֹעֵד, it is interesting to note that Calvin also translates the noun מוֹעֵד as “congregation.”<sup>113</sup> According to Calvin, on this translation v. 3a refers to the restoration of Israel and ultimately “the gathering together of the Church.” Calvin, however, also allows for the other interpretation, in which case v. 3 means that God “will make choice of a fit time for exercising his judgment.”<sup>114</sup>

In our judgment, the more common translation “appropriate time” for מוֹעֵד makes more sense in Psalm 75:3. Our analysis of the 225 occurrence of the term מוֹעֵד in the MT show that only three of them allow for the translation “assembly” or “congregation,” namely, Num 16:2, Isa 14:13<sup>115</sup> and Lam 1:15.<sup>116</sup> Also in favor of this translation is the fact that, as Tate has noted,<sup>117</sup> the meaning “appropriate time” does not necessarily limit the reference to the final judgment.

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<sup>110</sup> For this nuance of the verb לָקַח see BDB, #6, 543.

<sup>111</sup> Jensen, “Psalm 75,” 417.

<sup>112</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II*, 211.

<sup>113</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalm*, 3:184.

<sup>114</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalm*, 184-185.

<sup>115</sup> The context of Num 16:2 and Isa 14:1 suggests that the translation “appointed time” does not fit.

<sup>116</sup> In the case of Lam 1:15 either translation seem possible. The RSV and ESV, for example, translate מוֹעֵד as “assembly” but the NRSV and Tanakh translate it as “a time.”

<sup>117</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255.

A final question in v. 3 concerns the translation of the aspect of the two *yiqtol* verbs in v. 3, namely **יִשְׁפֹּט** and **יִשְׁפֹּט**. It varies greatly. According to Lambdin § 91, *yiqtol* verbs denote four types of action: 1) simple future; 2) habitual; 3) iterative; or 4) modal. The English versions that omit the translation of the particle **כִּי** translate the verb **יִשְׁפֹּט** in v. 3a in the present tense to denote habitual or iterative action.<sup>118</sup> Apparently the English versions<sup>119</sup> and commentators<sup>120</sup> that translate the particle **כִּי** temporally understand this verb as a simple future. An exception is the YLT that translates the verb in the present tense: “I do judge.” Some of the English version that do not translate the particle **כִּי**<sup>121</sup> and commentators<sup>122</sup> also translate the second verb **יִשְׁפֹּט** in the present tense, “I judge.”<sup>123</sup> But other Bible versions<sup>124</sup> and commentators<sup>125</sup> translate this verb as a simple future, “I will judge.”

Of the options outlined above, we prefer to translate the *yiqtol* verbs in v. 3 as simple futures because we have opted to translate the particle **כִּי** temporally. On this reading v. 3 God promises emphatically to judge at the appropriate time. In our opinion,

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<sup>118</sup> NIV; NRSV; Tanakh; NAB; NET; etc.

<sup>119</sup> KJV; ASV. Cf. ARC (“*judgarei*”).

<sup>120</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalm*, 182; Weiser, *The Psalms*, 520. Dahood (*Psalms II*, 209) also translates the verbs of v. 3 as simple futures. Curiously, Hossfeld (*Psalms 2:254*) translates the verb in the past tense, “I have appointed.”

<sup>121</sup> NIV; NET. The note in the NET recognizes that the verb could be translated as a simple future.

<sup>122</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:441.

<sup>123</sup> NIV; NET; YLT. The note in the NET recognizes that the verb could be translated as a simple future.

<sup>124</sup> RSV; NRSV; Tanakh; NAB; NLT; ESV; NAB; ARA; etc.

<sup>125</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:160; Weiser, *The Psalms*, 520; Johnson, *CPIP*, 319; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2, 252*; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 256.

this interpretation fits well into the context of Psalm 75 itself because of the lexical repetition of the verb שִׁפֹּט in v. 3 and v. 8 and the theme of divine judgment in vv. 3-4, vv. 7-9 and v. 11b.

### 3.5.4 Verse 4

- נְמוּגִים<sup>126</sup> אֶרֶץ וְכָל־יְשֻׁבֵיהָ 4a [Even though] the earth and all her inhabitants tremble,  
 אֲנִי תִכְנַנְתִּי עַמּוּדֶיהָ סֵלָה: b I, I have established her pillars. Selah.

Two issues need to be addressed in the translation of the first clause (v. 4a) of v. 4. The first concerns the meaning of the *Niphal* participle נְמוּגִים. According to BDB, the verb מוּג means “to melt.”<sup>127</sup> This meaning was adopted by various English Bible Versions in Psalm 75.4<sup>128</sup> and the majority of English Bible versions in Psalm 46:6.<sup>129</sup> According to Robert G. Bratcher, this meaning “suggests a final judgment.”<sup>130</sup> However, in its notes BDB recognizes that in view of its prevailing figurative use and of the Arabic *māja*, “to be in tumult, commotion,” “to melt” may not be the original meaning.<sup>131</sup> Based on the

<sup>126</sup> For the plural participle with a compound subject see: GKC §146.

<sup>127</sup> BDB, s.v. מוּג, #1, 556.

<sup>128</sup> KJV; ASV; NET; and Tanakh. Cf. ARC (“lugar determinado”).

<sup>129</sup> KJV; ASV; RSV; NRSV; NIV; TNIV; NLT; NASB; YLT; ESV; Tanakh; etc. The NAB translates the participle as “tremble.”

<sup>130</sup> Robert G. Bratcher, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms* (New York: United Bible Society, 1991), 659.

<sup>131</sup> BDB, s.v. מוּג, #1, 556.

Arabic, HALOT suggests the meaning “to wave, sway backwards and forwards.”<sup>132</sup> On the basis of the imagery in Psalm 11:3 and Zorell’s discussion of מוּג, Dahood adopts a meaning similar to that proposed by HALOT: “to totter.”<sup>133</sup> In like manner, John Goldingay adopts the meaning “to tremble.” According to Goldingay, “the contrast with ‘order’ or ‘establish’ supports the translation ‘tremble’ rather than ‘melt.’”<sup>134</sup> In view of Goldingay’s apt comments, we have adopted the meaning “to totter” in our translation.<sup>135</sup>

The second issue concerns the syntactical relation of clause 4a to 4b. According to GKC § 116.w, clause 4a is “an example of a participle (נִמְגִים) that stand “at the beginning of a sentence as a *casus pendens*...to indicate a condition, the contingent occurrence of which involves a further consequence.”

To indicate the relationship between the first clause (v. 4a; protasis) and the second clause (v. 4b; apodosis) of v. 4, most of the Bible versions and commentators insert a conjunction at the beginning of v. 4a. For instance, the ESV, NIV, RSV, NRSV, ARC, NET, and NLT insert the temporal conjunction “when.” This is also the choice of Calvin, Briggs, Dahood, Jensen, and Hossfeld.<sup>136</sup> Other commentators, however, use a

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<sup>132</sup> HALOT, s.v. מוּג, 555.

<sup>133</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II*, 211.

<sup>134</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:70.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. NIV; NRSV; ESV; ARA; etc.

<sup>136</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 182; Briggs and Briggs, *Book of Psalms*, 160; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 209; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252.

different conjunction. Delitzsch inserts “if,”<sup>137</sup> Schökel “ainda que” (“even if”),<sup>138</sup> and Kraus “though,”<sup>139</sup> Hossfeld “even though,”<sup>140</sup> and Goldingay “whereas.”<sup>141</sup> Of these various options, we have inserted the conjunction “even though” to indicate the conditional nature of v. 4a. In our judgment, this fits better with the *qatal* verb תִּכְנֶנֶתִּי in the next clause (v. 4b).

With respect to the next clause (v. 4b), there are two issues in connection with the translation of the *qatal* verb תִּכְנֶנֶתִּי, namely, 1) the aspect of the verb and 2) the meaning of the verb. As for the aspect, various English Bible versions<sup>142</sup> and some commentators<sup>143</sup> translate the verb in the present tense. Curiously, the ARA (“eu firmarei”) and John Calvin translate the verb in the future tense.<sup>144</sup> However, in his exposition Calvin recognizes “that there is a reference to the actual state of things in the natural world.”<sup>145</sup> Various Bible versions<sup>146</sup> and commentators<sup>147</sup> have translated תִּכְנֶנֶתִּי

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<sup>137</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 336.

<sup>138</sup> Schökel, *Salmos II*, 963.

<sup>139</sup> Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102. Cf. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 450-451.

<sup>140</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252.

<sup>141</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:438.

<sup>142</sup> CPB, ESV, KJV, NET, NIV, RSV, NRSV, Tanakh; etc.

<sup>143</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 336; Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 451.

<sup>144</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 182-183. Apparently the ARA and Calvin interpreted the *qatal* verb תִּכְנֶנֶתִּי as a perfect of certitude that “expresses a vivid future” (Williams §165).

<sup>145</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 186.

<sup>146</sup> LXX, YLT, NAB, NASB; ASV, NBS and ARC.

<sup>147</sup> Weiser, *Psalms*, 520; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 443; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252-256. Cf. Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch: Studies in*

in the past tense. Goldingay, for example, translates v. 4b as follows: “I am the one who ordered its pillars.”

The above range of options for the translation of the aspect of the *qatal* verb תִּבְנֶה in v. 4a demonstrates the difficulty in translating and interpreting this verse. At issue is the syntactical relationship between clauses 4a and 4b. As we have noted above, v. 4 consists of a complex sentence: the participial clause in v. 4a functions as the protasis and the next clause in v. 4b functions as the apodisis. On the assumption that the *Niphal* participle נִמְנָגִים in v. 4a is reflexive, it denotes ongoing action (cf. Lambdin §26). This fact may give some directions for the translation of the *qatal* verb of 4b. If the verb in clause b were a *yiqtol*, as in v. 8, then it could be translated in the present tense to denote habitual action. In this case v. 4b declares that God typically does not let the forces of chaos overrun the earth. The problem is, however, that the verb in v. 4b is a *qatal*. According to GKC §116.w and Lambdin §132, a non-verbal participial clause may be continued with a *weqatal* verb. In the example of 1 Sam 2:13 cited by GKC §116.w, the participle and *weqatal* verb are translated to denote typical action in the past. However, Psalm 75:4 is a poetic text that does not use a *weqatal* verb but the emphatic 1 c.s. pronoun אֲנִי followed by the *qatal* verb תִּבְנֶה. Another option is to assume that the *qatal* verb תִּבְנֶה expresses an action that took place in the past and is assumed to continue in the present (cf. Ps 9:11).<sup>148</sup> We prefer this option.

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*the Psalter III* (JSOT Supplement Series 233; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 79; Schökel, *Salmos II*, 963.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. GKC §106.k and Joüon-Muraoka §112.e.

With respect to the second issue, the meaning of the verb **תָּכַן**, BDB suggests that in the *Piel* this verb means “to mete out,” “to regulate,” or “to adjust.”<sup>149</sup> According to HALOT, this *Piel* verb means “to make correct, meaning to keep steady the pillars of the earth....”<sup>150</sup> and for this meaning HALOT refers to Pss 93:1; 96:10 and 1 Chro 16:30. According to M. Delcor, in Psalm 75:4 the *Piel* verb **תָּכַן** may mean “to establish firmly” in contrast to the *Niphal* verb **גָּוַג**.<sup>151</sup> Because the *Piel* verb **תָּכַן** is also used in Job 28:25 and Is 40:12 in connection with creation, we suggest that for all practical purposes this verb has a similar meaning as the verb **כִּוֵּן** in Pss 24:2, 65:7 and 74:16. In this case v. 4b is a reference to creation.<sup>152</sup> In fact, as Hossfeld suggests,<sup>153</sup> the reference to creation here may be an echo of Psalm 74:16-17. According to Goldingay, the “original act (i.e., creation) means that the present trembling is not one to worry about.”<sup>154</sup>

### 3.5.5 Verse 5

אֶמְרֹתַי לְהוֹלְלִים	5a	I say to the boastful ones:
אֲל־תִּהְיוּ	b	‘Do not boast.’
וְלְרָשָׁעִים [...]	c	And to the wicked ones:
אֲל־תִּרְיֹמוּ קַרְנֵי:	d	‘Do not lift up (your) horn;

<sup>149</sup> BDB, s.v. **תָּכַן**, 1067.

<sup>150</sup> HALOT, s.v. **תָּכַן**, 1734.

<sup>151</sup> M. Delcor, s.v. **תָּכַן**, TLOT 3:1423. Cf. Russell Fuller, s.v. **תָּכַן**, NIDOTE 4:293; P. Mommer, s.v. **תָּכַן**, TDOT 15: 664.

<sup>152</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:443; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 256.

<sup>153</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 256.

<sup>154</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:443.

The *qatal* verb אָמַרְתִּי in 5a has been translated in two ways. Some Bible versions<sup>155</sup> and commentaries<sup>156</sup> translate it as a simple past, “I said.” Other Bible versions<sup>157</sup> and commentaries,<sup>158</sup> however, translate it in the present tense, “I say.” In our translation we have opted for the present tense because, according to Joüon-Muraoka §112.f (cf. GKC §106.i), the “*qatal* is used for an instantaneous action which, being performed at the very moment of the utterance, is assumed to belong to the past . . . Instances are especially common with verbs of saying. . . .”

Concerning the translation of 5d, the YLT and Goldingay<sup>159</sup> translate קֶרֶן literarily, “a horn.” Other Bible versions<sup>160</sup> and commentators<sup>161</sup> translate the indefinite noun קֶרֶן with the definite article, “the horn.” Still other Bible versions<sup>162</sup> and commentators,<sup>163</sup> and scholars<sup>164</sup> add the pronoun second masculine pronoun כֵּם,

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<sup>155</sup> KJV; ESV; YLT; ARC (“disse”).

<sup>156</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 182-183; Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 451; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:443. Goldingay recognizes that one might translate אָמַרְתִּי as “I [hereby] say.” However, he prefers the simple past translation because the divine exhortation that follows refers to an exhortation that “Yahweh issued before taking the action that vv. 2-3 presuppose.”

<sup>157</sup> KJV, RSV, NRSV, ARA (“digo”), NIV, ESV, NET; Tanakh; etc.

<sup>158</sup> Schökel-Carniti, *Salmos II*, 963; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 209; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255.

<sup>159</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:438.

<sup>160</sup> KJV; NASB; CPB; SVV; NBG; etc.

<sup>161</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 336.

<sup>162</sup> ESV, NIV, TNIV; RSV; NRSV; NAB; Tanakh; etc.

<sup>163</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II*, 209; Kraus, *Psalms*, 102; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252.

<sup>164</sup> Johnson, *CPIP*, 319.

“your,” as if the text read **קִרְנֵיכֶם**, “your horn.” The NET Bible paraphrases clause 5d as, “Do not be so confident of victory.” The accompanying note explains that the idiom “to exalt/lift up the horn” denotes a military victory.<sup>165</sup> Similarly, the NLT translates the idiomatic expression as “raise the fist.” Curiously, Tate translates **קִרְנֵי** as “your horns,” as if the text read the dual **קִרְנֵיכֶם**.<sup>166</sup>

With respect to this issue, it is important to recognize, in the first place, that v. 5d and v. 6a are synonymously parallel:

Do not lift up a horn;

**אַל־תִּרְיֵמוּ קִרְן**

Do not lift up on high your horn.

**אַל־תִּרְיֵמוּ לְמַרְוֹם קִרְנֵיכֶם**

Second, it is vitally important to be aware of the fact that this poetic line employs the stylistic device of ellipsis and double duty of a pronominal suffix.<sup>167</sup> In this case the pronominal suffix **כֶּם** from the second colon was elided in the first colon.<sup>168</sup>

Nevertheless, it should be understood in the first colon. For this reason Bible versions and commentators rightly include the possessive pronoun “your” in their translation of the first colon.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Cf. 1 Sam 2:10; Pss 89:17, 24; 92:10; Lam 2:17

<sup>166</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255-256.

<sup>167</sup> John H. Stek, *Aspects of Old Testament Poetics and Introductions to Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Private Publication, 1987), 13.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Pss 9:2; 11:2; 17:1.

<sup>169</sup> Goldingay (*Psalms*, 438), who omits the possessive pronoun “your” in v. 5d.

## 3.5.6 Verse 6

- אֲל־תִּרְיֹמוּ לְמַרְוֹם קַרְנֵיכֶם 6a Do not lift up on high your horn;  
 :תִּדְבְּרוּ בְצִוְאָר עֵתֶק: [...] b (Do not<sup>170</sup>) speak with an arrogant neck.”

Verse 6 has no major difficulties in translation. However, v. 6b has been translated with some variation in Bible versions. This variation concerns the translation of the adjective עֵתֶק that modifies the prepositional phrase בְּצִוְאָר, “with a neck.” The KJV, ASV and YLT translate the prepositional phrase בְּצִוְאָר עֵתֶק as “a stiff neck,” while the RSV and NRSV translate the adjective as “insolent” (cf. ARA; “insolência”). Curiously, the NIV translates it as “outstretched.” Moreover, in an attempt to capture the nuance of the image portrayed by the prepositional phrase, the NET paraphrases it as “with your head held so high.”

With respect to these various translations, we note, first of all, that the adjective occurs only four times in BHS: 1 Sam 2:3; Pss 31:19; 75:6; and 94:4. Moreover, in each case it occurs in connection with an act of speech and in Pss 31:31, 75:6 and 94:4 with a form of the verb דָּבַר. For this reason we have translated the adjective in question as

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<sup>170</sup> The omission of the adverbial negative אֲל in v. 6b is another instance of ellipsis and double duty. In this case the negative אֲל of v. 6a extends its force to the second colon (v. 6b). Cf. Joüon and Muraoka, §160q; M. Dahood, “Poetry, Hebrew,” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume*, ed. Keith Krim (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 671; John Stek, *Aspects of Old Testament Poetics*, 14. Cf. Pss 9:19; 35:19; 38:2; 44:19; 50:8; etc.

“arrogant.”<sup>171</sup> Moreover, as Goldingay,<sup>172</sup> VanGemmeren<sup>173</sup> and Jensen<sup>174</sup> have pointed out, vv. 5-6 have a chiastic structure:

- A. Do not boast!
- B Do not lift up (your) horn.
- B’ Do not lift up on high your horn;
- A’ (Do not) speak with an arrogant neck.

From this chiastic structure it is clear that v. 6b corresponds with v. 5b. Consequently, our translation of the adjective עֲתָק as “arrogant” fits very well with the general context of the admonition in vv. 5-6.

### 3.5.7 Verse 7

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|--------------------------------|----|--|
| כִּי לֹא מִמּוֹצֵא וּמִמְעַרְב | 7a | Indeed, not from east nor from west,   |
| :וְלֹא מִמְדְּבַר הַרִים:      | b  | and not from the desert is exaltation, |

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<sup>171</sup> Cf. BDB s.v., עֲתָק, 801. Cf. Willem A. VanGemeren. *Psalms*. ( vol. 5 of *The Expositor Bible Commentary*; ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland; rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 492.

<sup>172</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:444.

<sup>173</sup> VanGemeren, “Psalms,” 5: 492. Cf. Schaefer, *Psalms*, 185.

<sup>174</sup> Jensen, “Psalm 75,” 424.

The majority of Bible versions<sup>175</sup> and commentators<sup>176</sup> translate the conjunction כִּי causally, “for,”<sup>177</sup> so that v. 7 clearly provides the reason for the admonitions in vv. 5-6. However, the NIV fails to translate this conjunction. As a result, the relationship between vv. 5-6 and v. 7 is not clear. Judging from the fact that a blank space is inserted between v. 6 and v. 7, we infer that the NIV interpreted the conjunction as a recitative כִּי (Williams §452) to introduce a new speaker. Moreover, Goldingay assigns an asseverative function to the conjunction כִּי on the assumption that it marks a change in speaker.<sup>178</sup>

A choice between the options listed above is difficult. At issue is the question whether v. 7 provides the basis for the admonition or whether it begins a new segment. In our opinion, since both options are possible, a final decision cannot be based on grammatical or syntactical rules alone. Rhetorical and content considerations also play an important role. For reasons that we will explain in our section on the segmentation of the poem, in our translation we have opted for the asseverative translation, “indeed.”

The translation of the remainder of v. 7 varies significantly. The LXX provides a literal translation of the MT: ὅτι οὔτε ἀπὸ ἐξόδων οὔτε ἀπὸ δυσμῶν οὔτε ἀπὸ ἐρήμων ὀρέων (“for not from [the] east and from [the] west, and not from [the] desert of [the] mountains”). Stylistically, this translation treats v. 7 as an aposiopesis that expects the reader to supply the subject. As we mentioned above in our section on textual criticism,

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<sup>175</sup> LXX (ὅτι).

<sup>176</sup> Calvin, *The Book of Psalms*, 183; Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, 336; Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 161; Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 326; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Bandstra, “The Syntax of Particle Ky,” 168-169; Williams §444.

<sup>178</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:444. Cf. Dahood, *Psalms II*, 212.

several emendations of the last two words of this verse (מִמְדָּבָר הָרִים) have been proposed. We have accepted the emendation of מִמְדָּבָר to מִמְדָּבָר and parse הָרִים as a *Hiphil* infinitive construct and have translated these words as “from the desert (is) exaltation” for reasons explained above.

### 3.5.8 Verse 8

כִּי־אֱלֹהִים שֹׁפֵט	8a	But God judges,
זֶה יִשְׁפִּיל	b	this one he humbles
וְזֶה יִרְיֵם:	c	and that one <sup>179</sup> he exalts.

Translations of the particle כִּי in verse 8a vary. The KJV, NIV, ESV, NRSV, and YLT translate it adversatively, “but.”<sup>180</sup> The NET Bible, Tanakh, Calvin, Hossfeld, and Tate employ the conjunction “for.”<sup>181</sup> Goldingay uses the asseverative “yes.”<sup>182</sup> Of these options, we prefer to read the particle כִּי here adversatively (Williams §447) because this clause forms a contrast with the preceding negative clauses.<sup>183</sup> On this reading the flow of the poem clearly demonstrates that exaltation cannot be found anywhere else but in God, the one who judges by humbling some or exalting others.

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<sup>179</sup> For the repetition of the demonstrative הַזֶּה, see: A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax*, (3rd. ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), §4.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 452.

<sup>181</sup> Calvin, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 183; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 259.

<sup>182</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:445.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Bandstra, “The Syntax of Particle Ky,” 168-169.

The use of the *Qal* active participle שֹׁפֵט in clause 8a has resulted in agreement among modern Bible versions about the translation of the *yiqtol* verbs in v. 8bc. Because active participles denote continuous action (cf. Lambdin §26), we have translated the *yiqtol* verbs יִשְׁפִּיל and יָרִים in the present tense to denote habitual activity (cf. Lambdin §91[b]).

## 3.5.9 Verse 9

כִּי כֹס בַּיַּד־יְהוָה	9a	For, there is a cup in Yahweh's hand,
וַיִּזְן <sup>184</sup>	b	with wine
חֲמֹר <sup>185</sup>	c	That foams
מִלֵּא מִסֹּדֶךְ	d	(and) that is full of mixture,
וַיִּגַּר מִזָּה	e	and he pours from it.
אַדְ-שִׁמְרִיהָ יִמְצֹו	f	Surely, her dregs they will drain out;
יִשְׁתּוּ כָּל רְשָׁעֵי-אָרֶץ:	g	All the wicked of the earth will drink.

Most of the modern Bible versions translate the particle כִּי in 9a causally with the conjunction “for.”<sup>186</sup> Only the NIV omits the particle in its translation. Hossfeld, Kraus,

<sup>184</sup> According to Briggs and Briggs (*The Book of Psalms*, 2: 164), the conjunction *waw* is a *waw* of accompaniment. The phrase וַיִּזְן modifies the noun כֹּס. Gunkel (*Die Psalmen*, 329) explains it as a *waw explicativum*.

<sup>185</sup> According to Briggs and Briggs (*The Book of Psalms*, 2: 164), Gunkel (*Die Psalmen*, 329) and Hossfeld (*Psalms* 2, 253), the *Qal qatal verb* חֲמֹר constitutes an asyndetic relative clause. Cf. GKC 155f.

<sup>186</sup> KJV, ASV, ESV, NRSV, NET, ARA, YLT; etc. Cf. Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 149.

Tate and Goldingay opt for the asseverative interpretation of כִּי, “indeed”<sup>187</sup> or “yes.”<sup>188</sup> Either the causal or the asseverative interpretation fits the connection between vv. 8 and 9. We prefer the causal interpretation considering the sequence of כִּי clauses from vv. 7 to 9 as a sequence of explanations that culminates in a description as how God executes judgment. Thus, v. 7 states that nowhere someone can find exaltation, then v. 8 contrasts the previous statement saying that God judges, only him can exalt someone, and finally v. 9 demonstrates how he judges—by putting the wicked down and therefore. It is noteworthy that v. 9 differs somehow from vv. 7 and 8 on its style. The description of a cup in Yahweh’s hand, the vivid sequence of what Yahweh is doing and its consequence makes v. 9 like a prophetic vision. However this distinction between vv. 7-8 and 9 does not suffice to separate them, in fact, the whole sequence of these 3 verses can be identified with prophetic content.

Although the essential meaning of this verse is that all the wicked will receive their due punishment from Yahweh, the translation of v. 9 varies considerably. Most Bible versions and commentators agree on the translation of clauses 9ab. As for clause 9c, some parse מְלֵא of the unique expression מְלֵא מִסֶּדֶךְ as an adjective,<sup>189</sup> while others parse it as a *Qal qatal* stative verb.<sup>190</sup> We have translated it as a verb.

With respect to clause 9e, there are two disagreements. The first disagreement concerns the *wayyiqtol* verb וַיִּגֶר. At issue are the meaning of the verb נָגַר and the fact

<sup>187</sup>Cf. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 256-257; Kraus, *Psalms*, 105; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 259.

<sup>188</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:445.

<sup>189</sup> Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102.

<sup>190</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:164.

that this verb is a *wayyiqtol*. The LXX reads ἐκλινεν for וַיִּגַּר, Briggs translates it as “and he extends,”<sup>191</sup> and Gunkel and Kraus translate it as “and he passes.”<sup>192</sup> According to BDB and HALOT, however, in the *Hiphil* this verb נָגַר means “to pour” and the majority of Bible versions and commentators have adopted this meaning.

The majority of Bible versions and commentators differ, however, as to the translation of the *wayyiqtol* form of the verb. The majority of the consulted Bible versions employ the present tense “he pours.”<sup>193</sup> The RSV and NRSV are the only exception that translate the verb וַיִּגַּר as a simple future: “he will pour.” Of the commentaries consulted, Delitzsch, Weiser and Dahood opt for the present tense, “he pours.”<sup>194</sup> Goldingay translates the verb וַיִּגַּר as a present progressive, “he is pouring” because he takes the *waqqiqtol* verb as an instantaneous *qatal*.<sup>195</sup> On this reading the action is taking place right before the poet’s eye. Like the NAB, Tate translates v. 10d as a temporal clause, “when he pours it out, all the wicked of the earth will surely drink it.”<sup>196</sup> On this translation v. 9 clearly refers to a future event. Hossfeld, however, translates the *wayyiqtol* verb וַיִּגַּר as a simple past, “and he poured it out.”<sup>197</sup>

The choice of the options listed above depends on one’s understanding of the syntax of the clauses. On the assumption that clauses 9bc (וַיִּזַן הַמֶּר) and 9d (מִלֵּא

<sup>191</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:161, 163.

<sup>192</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 326; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102.

<sup>193</sup> KJV; ASV; NIV; ESV; NET; ARA; YLT; NLT; etc.

<sup>194</sup> Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, 336; Weiser, *The Psalms*, 521; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 214.

<sup>195</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:445.

<sup>196</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255.

<sup>197</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252.

מִסֵּד) modify the main non-verbal clause in v. 9a, we infer that clause 9e (וַיִּגֵּר מִזָּה) links up with the non-verbal clause 9a (כִּי כּוֹס בְּיַד־יְהוָה). This non-verbal clause clearly refers to a present situation. According to GKC §111v, a *wayyiqtol* verb represent present actions “in dependence on other equivalents of the present.” In fact, according to GKC §111l, a *wayyiqtol* verbs may also express “a logical or necessary consequence of that which precedes.” This reading of the syntactical relationship of clauses 9a and 9d would sound an encouraging note to the poet’s audience. For this reason we have translated the verb וַיִּגֵּר in 9e in the present tense. Additional support for this choice is the fact that this verb is followed by two *yiqtol* verbs in clauses 9f (יִמְצֹא) and 9g (יִשְׁתָּו) and that it is preceded by two *yiqtol* verbs in clauses 8b (יָרִים) and 8c (יִשְׁפִּיל).

The second disagreement with respect to the translation of clause 9e concerns the word מִזָּה. Some consider it to be a gloss.<sup>198</sup> However, there is no manuscript evidence for its omission. The LXX reads the unique prepositional phrase ἐκ τούτου εἰς τοῦτο, “from side to side.” As we noted above, however, the LXX also reads a different verb in clause 9e. Nevertheless, Gunkel and Kraus have adopted the LXX’s reading of the prepositional phrase.<sup>199</sup> The KJV and ASV translate the word מִזָּה as “out of the same.” Other English Bible versions adopt a similar rendering, either “from/out of it”<sup>200</sup> “from/out of this,”<sup>201</sup> or simply “it.”<sup>202</sup> These translations of the word in question parse it

<sup>198</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 2: 164.

<sup>199</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 326 and 329; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102-103.

<sup>200</sup> RSV; NRSV; ESV; YLT; etc.

<sup>201</sup> Tanakh; NASB.

<sup>202</sup> NIV; TNIV; NET; NAB.

as the preposition מִן plus the masculine demonstrative pronoun הֵן and translate this prepositional phrase מִזֶּה as “from it.” However, E. Wiesenberg and Meindert Dijkstra dispute this parsing and emend the text.<sup>203</sup> Although their proposals are interesting, we have adopted the majority position for our translation and agree with Tate that the demonstrative masculine pronoun הֵן refers to the masculine noun יַיִן, “wine,”<sup>204</sup> and not the feminine noun כּוֹס, “cup.”<sup>205</sup>

A final issue concerns the translation of the adverb אֲשֶׁר in v. 9f. Gunkel prefers to read אֲשֶׁר instead of אֲשֶׁר.<sup>206</sup> However, there is no manuscript evidence for this emendation. The majority of Bible versions and commentators translate the adverb אֲשֶׁר asseveratively, “surely,” to emphasize the expression of a truth (or supposed truth) newly perceived....<sup>207</sup> Wiesenberg<sup>208</sup> and Dijkstra,<sup>209</sup> however, prefer the restrictive sense of this adverb, “only,” in contrast with the preceding information.<sup>210</sup> Wiesenberg claims that the asseverative meaning of אֲשֶׁר is “not reliably attested elsewhere.”<sup>211</sup> However, HALOT still lists this as

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<sup>203</sup> E. Wiesenberg, “A Note on מִזֶּה in Psalm lxxv 9,” *Vetus Testamentum* 4 (1954): 434-439; Meindert Dijkstra, “He Pours the Sweet Wine Off, Only the Dregs Are for the Wicked,” *ZAW* 107 (1995): 296-300.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. NLT.

<sup>205</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*,

<sup>206</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 329.

<sup>207</sup> BDB, s.v. אֲשֶׁר, #1, 36.

<sup>208</sup> Wiesenberg, “A Note on מִזֶּה in Psalm lxxv 9,” 438.

<sup>209</sup> Meindert Dijkstra, “He Pours the Sweet Wine Off, Only the Dregs Are for the Wicked: An Epigraphic Note on mizzeh in Palms 75,9,” (*ZAW* 107, 1995), 296-300.

<sup>210</sup> BDB, s.v. אֲשֶׁר, #2, 36.

<sup>211</sup> Wiesenberg, “A Note on מִזֶּה in Psalm lxxv 9,” 438.

a possible meaning for this adverb<sup>212</sup> and for this reason we have adopted it in our translation.

### 3.5.10 Verse 10

וְאֲנִי אֶגִּיד לְעַלְמִם	10a	But I, I will declare forever,
אֲזַמְרָה לַיהוָה יַעֲקֹב:	b	I will sing praise to the God of Jacob.

The translation of the MT v. 10 does not present major difficulties. As we noted in our section on text criticism, the *Hiphil* verb אֶגִּיד normally takes a direct object. For this reason some Bible versions and commentators emend the text. Other Bible versions<sup>213</sup> and commentators<sup>214</sup> insert a direct object. We have not accept the proposed emendation and have translated v. 10a literally.

The vast majority of modern Bible versions and commentators agree that the speaker is contrasting his attitude with the fate of the wicked that was described vividly in the previous verse.<sup>215</sup> For this reason we have translated the conjunction *waw* in the disjunctive clause of v. 10a contrastively as “but” (cf. Lambdin §132[a]).

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<sup>212</sup> HALOT, s.v. אָגַד, 45.

<sup>213</sup> NIV (“this”); NET (“what you have done”); ESV (“it”); NLT (“what God has done”); YLT (“it”).

<sup>214</sup> Tate (*Psalms 51-100*, 257) suggests that one must supply the “wondrous deeds” of v. 2 as the direct object.

<sup>215</sup> E.g. KJV, ASV, NIV, ESV, NRSV, ARA, NET; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 2, 252; Kraus, *Psalms*, 102; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255.

## 3.5.11 Verse 11

- וְכָל־קַרְנֵי רְשָׁעִים אֲגַדֵּעַ 11a “And all the horns of the wicked I will cut off;  
 תְּרוֹמַמְנָה קַרְנוֹת צְדִיק: b The horns of the righteous will be exalted.”

The clause initial *waw* in v. 11a seems strange to some Bible versions and commentators. For this reason they omit it in their translation.<sup>216</sup> Perhaps this omission was motivated by the assumption that there is a change of speaker in v. 11. In fact, some translations insert a phrase to clarify the change in speaker.<sup>217</sup> On the assumption that v. 10b is a gloss, Briggs interprets v. 11 as the content of God’s decree and translates the clause initial *waw* in v. 11a as “that.”<sup>218</sup> Weiser also renders the clause initial *waw* in v. 11a as “that” because he has accepted the emendation of the verb אֲגַדֵּעַ as suggested by the critical apparatus of BHS. Following Hossfeld,<sup>219</sup> we have translated the MT of v. 11a literally.

While the clause initial *waw* in v. 11a seems peculiar, one would have expected a conjunction *waw* to begin clause 11b to enhance the chiasmic structure of v. 11 and the contrast between the fate of the horns of the wicked and the horns of the righteous. But the MT has no clause initial *waw* in v. 11b.<sup>220</sup> To clarify this obvious contrast, several

<sup>216</sup> KJV; ASV; RSV; NRSV; NIV; Tanakh; ESV; etc. Cf. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 452; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 209; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 102;

<sup>217</sup> NET (“God says”); NAB (“who has said”); NLT (“for God says”); TNIV (“who says”); etc.

<sup>218</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 2: 161.

<sup>219</sup> Hossfeld, *Psalms 2*, 11. Tate (*Psalms 51-100*, 255) translates v. 11a as, “And all the horns of the wicked? I will cut (them) off.” We consider וְכָל־קַרְנֵי רְשָׁעִים to be an emphatic direct object and so have not adopted Tate’s translation.

<sup>220</sup> The LXX has the clause initial conjunction καὶ.

modern Bible versions insert the conjunction “but” at the beginning of their translation of v. 11b.<sup>221</sup>

The insertion of the conjunction “but” opts for a contrastive relationship between the two clauses of v. 11. However, the switch from the *Piel* verb אָגִידֶּה at the end of v. 11a to the *Polal* תְּרוֹמְמֶנָה at the beginning of v. 11b suggests that the poet could also have intended the relationship between the two clauses of v. 11 to be consequential. In our opinion, this reading adds a deeper understanding of the action of God towards the wicked and the righteous. While the *Piel* denotes an active attitude of God against the wicked, the *Polal* renders a more passive action towards the exaltation of the righteous. May be the intention is to infer a consequential relationship between the two situations. In other words, when the horns of the wicked are cut off, as a consequence, the horns of the righteous will be exalted.

In any case, there is no manuscript evidence for a clause initial *waw* in v. 11b. Moreover, because the poet used conjunctions in Psalm 75, we should not insert one where he/she did not use one. For this reason we did not insert a conjunction in our translation.<sup>222</sup>

### 3.6 Grammatical and Syntactical Analysis

Now that the text of Psalm 75 has been established and its translation defended in the notes to the verse-by-verse translation, it is necessary to analyze the syntactical structure

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<sup>221</sup> KJV, ASV, NIV, ESV, NRSV, ARA. Cf. Briggs and Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:161; Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:18; Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 452; Weiser, *Psalms*, 252; Kraus, *Psalms*, 102 and Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 255.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. YLT; NET; Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 336.

of the body of text in vv. 2-11 in order to establish its compositional structure, a very important step for form criticism, cult functional criticism and rhetorical criticism. The primary aim of this analysis is to arrive at a segmentation of the text in order to better understand the flow of its thought and its compositional structure.<sup>223</sup> As Eep Talstra has emphasized,<sup>224</sup> this task should be based, first of all, on a careful syntactical analysis of the text and not on preconceived form critical<sup>225</sup> or prosodic patterns.<sup>226</sup> This syntactical analysis should include a careful analysis of verbal tenses, clause type, clause connections and the (changing) pattern of actors in the text. To that end, we will proceed to execute three essential syntactical steps: 1) the delimitation of the individual clauses of Psalm 75; 2) the analysis of the syntactical relationship of each clause with the use of a clausal flow chart; and 3) the segmentation of the text in its respective units of meaning.

### 3.6.1 Delimitation of the Individual Clauses

To begin with the delimitation of the clauses of Psalm 75, in this step we will identify and delimit the individual clauses of Psalm 75 based on the grammatical and syntactical analysis of the text. Our criteria for this exegetical step will be: 1) the presence of a predicate, especially finite verbs, participles and infinitives; 2) the presence of clause

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<sup>223</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 113.

<sup>224</sup> Eep Talstra, "Singers and Syntax: On the Balance of Grammar and Poetry in Psalm 8," 11-22.

<sup>225</sup> Kraus (*Psalms 60-150*, 103), for example, appears to work only with form critical categories.

<sup>226</sup> Briggs and Briggs (*Psalms 2:160-161*), for example, have divided the poem into six tricola. However, to achieve this pattern, they omitted v. 10b as a gloss. Similarly, Kissane (*Psalms*, 2: 18), has divided the poem into a bicolon (v. 2), three tricola (vv. 3-5, 6-8, and 9-10), and a concluding bicolon (v. 11).

initial conjunctions; and 3), if necessary, the Masoretic accent marks. As we noted in our section on methodology, we will plot these clauses in a table in which we will also plot the following important parsing information: the person, gender and number (PGN), the thematic stem, and the type of predicate of each verbal form. Once we have completed this table, we will seek to interpret the data.

### 3.6.1.a Delimitation of Clauses

**Table 2. Delimitation of the clauses of Psalm 75**

PNG	Them. stem	Predicate	Root	Text	v
1cp	Hiphil	<i>qatal</i>	יָדָה	הוֹדִינוּ לְךָ   אֱלֹהִים	2a
1cp	Hiphil	<i>qatal</i>	יָדָה	הוֹדִינוּ	b
		Non verbal		וְקָרֹב שִׁמְךָ	c
3cp	Piel	<i>qatal</i>	סָפַר	סָפְרוּ	d
fp	Niphal	Participle	פָּלַא	נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ:	e
1cs	Qal	<i>yiqtol</i>	לָקַח	כִּי אֶקַּח מוֹעֵד	3a
1cs	Qal	<i>yiqtol</i>	שָׁפַט	אֲנִי מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֲשַׁפֵּט:	b
mp	Niphal	Participle	מוּג	נִמְגָזִים אֶרֶץ וְכָל־יִשְׁבֵּיהָ	4a
1cs	Piel	<i>qatal</i>	תָּכַן	אֲנִי תִכְנַנְתִּי עֲמוּדֶיךָ	b
1cs	Qal	<i>qatal</i>	אָמַר	אֲמַרְתִּי לְהוֹלִלִים	5a
2mp	Qal	<i>yiqtol</i>	הִלֵּל	אֶל־תִּהְלֹלוּ	b
		Ellipsis		[.....] וְלִרְשָׁעִים	c
2mp	Hiphil	<i>yiqtol</i>	רוּם	אֶל־תִּרְיֹמוּ קֶרֶן:	d
2mp	Hiphil	<i>yiqtol</i>	רוּם	אֶל־תִּרְיֹמוּ לְמָרוֹם קֶרְנֵיכֶם	6a
2mp	Piel	<i>yiqtol</i>	דָּבַר	[...] תִּדְבְּרוּ בְצוֹנָר עֵתְק:	b

PNG	Them. stem	Predicate	Root	Text	v
	Hiphil	Inf. Constr.	רום	כִּי לֹא מְמוּצָא וּמִמְעַרְבֵי וְלֹא מִמְדְּבַר הָרִים:	7a
3ms	Qal	Participle	שָׁפַט	כִּי־אֱלֹהִים שָׁפַט	8a
3ms	Hiphil	<i>yiqtol</i>	שָׁפַל	זֶה יִשְׁפִּיל	b
3ms	Hiphil	<i>yiqtol</i>	רום	וְזֶה יָרִים:	c
		non verbal		כִּי כּוֹס בִּיד־יְהוָה	9a
		non verbal		וַיִּזַן	b
3ms	Qal	<i>qatal</i>	חָמַר	חָמַר	c
3ms	Qal	<i>qatal</i>	מָלַא	מָלַא מִסֶּדֶךְ	d
3ms	Hiphil	<i>wayyiqtol</i>	נָגַר	וַיִּגַּר מִזֶּה	e
3mp	Qal	<i>yiqtol</i>	מָצָה	אֲדַשְׁמְרִיהָ יִמְצֹו	f
3mp	Qal	<i>yiqtol</i>	שָׁתָה	יִשְׁתּוּ כָּל רְשָׁעֵי־אָרֶץ:	g
1cs	Hiphil	<i>yiqtol</i>	נָגַד	וְאֲנִי אֲגִיד לְעֵלָם	10a
1cs	Piel	Cohortative	זָמַר	אֲזַמְרָה לְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:	b
1cs	Piel	<i>yiqtol</i>	גָּדַע	וְכָל־קַרְנֵי רְשָׁעִים אֲגַדֵּעַ	11a
3fp	Polal	<i>yiqtol</i>	רום	תָּרוּמְמָנָה קַרְנוֹת צִדִּיק:	b

To begin the analysis of this table with the “PGN” column of vv. 2-11, it shows frequent changes in subject, which demonstrates the dynamic character of Psalm 75. This feature of the text is important for the segmentation and the identification of the speakers that will be analyzed later.

The thematic stem column shows an ample variation of thematic stems throughout the poem. An analysis of the verbal roots shows that, with the exception of the *Niphal* of

מוג, the *Hiphil* forms of שָׁפַל and רוּם, and the *Polal* of the verb רוּם, the other thematic stems are the normal ones used for those verbs. The *Niphal* form of the participle נִמְגָּיִם in v. 4a indicates that the action is caused by an undefined agent. The *Hiphil* forms of the verb רוּם in v. 6 emphasize human causation, whereas the *Hiphil* forms of the verbs שָׁפַל and רוּם in v. 8 emphasize divine causation. The *Polal* form of the verb רוּם in v. 11b also indicates that the action is caused by an undefined agent, presumably God.

A survey of the “Predicate” column shows that the majority of the verbs are *yiqtol* verbs. There are a total of 14 *yiqtol* verbs. In the notes on our translation of Psalm 75 we observed that the majority of them may be translated in the present or future tense. Three of them (vv. 5b, d and 6a) are preceded by the adverbial negative אַל and serve as prohibitions in an admonition. There is one cohortative verb in v. 10b that introduces a resolution and is important for identifying the speech function of v. 10. Moreover, there are 6 *qatal* verbs and one unique *wayyiqtol* verb. As we observed in our notes to the translation, the translation of the 3 *qatal* verbs of v. 2 has proven to be especially problematic. On the basis of Lambdin §44(1) we have opted to translate them in the past tense. There are two non-verbal clauses (vv. 2c; 9a); their translation depends on the context. There are three participles (vv. 2, 4a, and 7a). The participle *Niphal* נִפְּלְאוֹתֶיךָ functions as a noun and will be joined to the verb in the clausal flow chart below. The *Niphal* participle נִמְגָּיִם in v. 4a functions as the predicate of clause 4a. In our opinion, it expresses ongoing action (cf. Lambdin §26). For the same reason we have also interpreted the *Qal* active participle שֹׁפֵט in v. 8a to indicate ongoing action. We interpret the

predominance of *yiqtal* verbs in Psalm 75:2-11 to indicate that the core of the text points to the present and future instead of the past.

In the “Root” column the five occurrences of **רום** (vv. 5d, 6a, 7b, 8c, and 11b) are noteworthy because it communicates one of the primary motifs of Psalm 75. Of particular interest is the fact that it occurs three times in conjunction with the noun **קִרְוֹן**, which occurs four times in Psalm 75 (vv. 5d, 6a, 11a and 11b). Another important repetition is the recurrence of the verb of **שָׁפַט** in v. 3b and v. 8a. Significantly, in each instance God is the subject of this verb. Moreover, in each instance it denotes God’s action as king and judge. In connection with these significant repetitions, it should also be noted that the noun **רְשָׁעִים** (“wicked”)—which does not occur in the “root” column— is repeated three times, in vv. 5c, 9e, and 11a.

Now that we have delimited the clauses of Psalm 75, it is important to the syntactical relationship between the clauses in order to understand the flow of the text. This we will do next on the basis of the clausal flow chart presented in the next section.

### 3.6.2 Inter-Clausal Analysis

In this step we will study the relationship between the clauses that we delimited in the previous section. To that end, we will place the individual clauses in a table that will show six syntactical features of each clause which are essential for determining its type and syntactical function. Reading the data of this table from left to right, the first column will indicate if a clause is connected with the antecedent clause through a conjunction (syndetic) or not (asyndetic). The second column we show if the clause contains a verb

(verbal) or not (non-verbal). The third column will show whether the clauses that begin with the conjunction וְ are conjunctive or disjunctive (cf. Lambdin § 132). The fourth column will show whether a clause is independent—in other words, it makes sense by itself—or dependent—in other words, it depends on a preceding or subsequent clause to complete its meaning. Based on the information in the fourth column, the fifth column will classify a clause as “main” if it begins a new idea, as “coordinate” if it is an independent clause that is joined to a preceding independent clause, and as “subordinate” when it does not make sense by itself and is used to complement the idea of another clause. Finally, in the sixth column we will identify what we consider to be the syntactical function of each clause.

The following table shows the results of our syntactical analysis of the clausal structure of Psalm 75. In this table we have indented subordinate clauses and quoted speech.

### 3.6.2.a Clausal Flow Chart

**Table 3. The Clausal Flow Chart**

synd. asynd.	vb./ n. vb.	conj / disj.	dep. ind.	main/ coord./ subord.	syntactical function	clauses	v.
Superscript						לְמִנְצַח אֱלֹהֵי שְׁחַת מִזְמוֹר לְאַסֵּף שִׁיר:	1
asynd.	vb.		ind.	main	declarative	הוֹדִינוּ לְךָ   אֱלֹהִים	2a
asynd.	vb.		ind.	main	declarative	הוֹדִינוּ	b
synd.	n. vb.	disj.	ind.	coord.	declarative	וְקָרוֹב שְׁמֶךָ	c
asynd.	vb.		ind.	main	declarative	סִפְרוּ גִּפְלֹאוֹתֵיךָ:	d

synd. asynd.	vb./ n. vb.	conj / disj.	dep. ind.	main/ coord./ subord.	syntactical function	clauses	v.
synd.	vb.		dep.	sub.	temporal	ךְ כִּי אָקַח מוֹעֵד	3a
asynd.	vb.		ind.	main	declarative	אֲנִי מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֲשַׁפֵּט:	b
asynd.	vb.		dep.	sub.	concessive	ךְ נִמְגִים אֶרֶץ וְכָל־יִשְׁבֵיהָ	4a
asynd.	vb.		ind.	coord.	declarative	אֲנֹכִי תִכְנֹתִי עִמּוּדֵיהָ סֵלָה:	b
asynd.	vb.		ind.	main	declarative	אֲמַרְתִּי לְהוֹלִלִים	5a
asynd.	vb.		ind.	main	prohibition	לֹא אֶל־תִּהְיוּ	b
synd.	n. vb.	disj.	ind.	coord.	declarative	[...] וְלִרְשָׁעִים	c
asynd.	vb.		ind.	main	prohibition	לֹא אֶל־תִּרְימוּ קֶרֶן:	d
asynd.	vb.		ind.	coord.	prohibition	אֶל־תִּרְימוּ לַמָּרוֹם קֶרְנֵיכֶם	6a
asynd.	vb.		ind.	coord.	prohibition	[...] תִּדְבְּרוּ בְצִוָּאָר עֲתִיק:	b
synd.	n. vb.		ind.	coord.	asseverative	כִּי לֹא מְמוּצָא וּמִמַּעַרְב	7a
synd.	n. vb.	disj.	dep.	coord.	declarative	וְלֹא מִמִּדְבַּר הָרִים:	b
synd.	vb.		dep.	coord.	declarative; contrastive	כִּי־אֱלֹהִים שֹׁפֵט	8a
asynd.	vb.		ind.	coord.	declarative	זֶה יִשְׁפִיל	b
synd.	vb.	disj.	ind.	coord.	declarative	וְזֶה יָרִים:	c
synd.	n. vb.		ind.	coord.	declarative; causal	כִּי כּוֹס בִּידֵי־הָזֶה	9a
synd.	vb.	disj.	ind.	coord.	declarative	וַיִּזַּן	b
asynd.	vb.		dep.	sub.	relative	לְחֵמֶר	c
asynd.	n. vb.		dep.	sub.	relative	לְמֵלֵא מְסֻדָּה	d
synd.	vb.	conj.	ind.	coord.	declarative	וַיִּגַּר מִזֶּה	e
asynd.	vb.		ind.	main	declarative	אֲדַשְׁמְרִיהָ יִמְצוּ	f

synd. asynd.	vb./ n. vb.	conj / disj.	dep. ind.	main/ coord./ subord.	syntactical function	clauses	v.
asynd.	vb.		ind.	coord.	declarative	יִשְׁתּוּ כָּל רְשָׁעֵי-אָרֶץ:	g
synd.	vb.	disj.	ind.	main	resolution	וְאֲנִי אֶגִּיד לְעֵלָם	10a
asynd.	vb.		ind.	coord.	resolution	אֲזַמְרָה לֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:	b
synd.	vb.	disj.	ind.	main	declarative	וְכָל-קִרְנֵי רְשָׁעִים אֲגַדֵּעַ	11a
asynd.	vb.		ind.	coord.	declarative	תְּרוֹמַמְנָה קִרְנוֹת צְדִיק:	b

In general Hebrew poets avoid the use of clause initial conjunctions. Verse 4 is a clear example. In this case the reader must infer the relationship of the clauses from the content. Strikingly, however, the poet of Psalm 75 used a significant number of conjunctions to begin a great number of clauses of his poem. For example, the conjunction וְ begins a new clause in vv. 2c, 5c, 7b, 8c, 9b, 9e, 10a, and 11a. Moreover, there are four occurrences of the conjunction כִּי that begins clauses: vv. 3a, 7a, 8a, and 9a respectively. Because the conjunctions signal the relationship between the clauses in which they occur, it is important to interpret their respective syntactical function in each clause.

To begin this analysis with the clause initial conjunction וְ in v. 2c, we have translated it causally on the basis of GKC §158.a. In vv. 5c, 7b, 8c the conjunction וְ has a coordinate function because in each case it continues the thought of the previous clauses. Concerning v. 9b, as we explained in our translation, we agree with the Briggses that the conjunction *waw* is a *waw* of accompaniment. Therefore, we have translated it as, “with.” The conjunction *waw* in v. 9e is the only *waw* consecutive in the poem. In the defense of our translation we have linked this clause with the non-verbal clause in v. 9a. In 10a the

clause initial conjunction *waw* is connected to the personal pronoun **אֲנִי** and, consequently, breaks the flow of the previous clauses. In the defense of our translation we have interpreted it to be a thematic initial and contrastive clause. Finally, the clause initial *waw* in 11a is prefixed to the construct phrase **כָּל-קִרְיֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** and marks, therefore, a disjunctive clause. We interpret it to be a thematic initial clause that introduces a new section.

As we observed in our notes to the translation of Psalm 75, the majority of Bible versions and commentators that do translate the first occurrence of the conjunction **כִּי** in v. 3a translate it temporally (Williams §445), “when,”<sup>227</sup> and we have also adopted this translation. Moreover, the translation of the three occurrences of the conjunction **כִּי** in vv. 7a, 8a and 9a varies. The translation of the conjunction **כִּי** in the somewhat enigmatic v. 7 has proved to be especially complex and, consequently, its translation varies in the Bible versions and commentaries. As we noted above, some do not even translate it, apparently on the assumption that this is an instance of the recitative **כִּי** (Williams §452).<sup>228</sup> A majority of Bible versions and commentators, however, translate it causally (Williams §444),<sup>229</sup> “for.” On this reading vv. 7-9 serve as the basis for the admonition in vv. 5-6. Others interpret this to be an instance of the asseverative **כִּי** (Williams §449), meaning “indeed.” On this reading v. 7 begins a new segment. We have adopted this meaning in our translation and, as we will see below, it has important consequences for the segmentation

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<sup>227</sup> Bandstra, “The Syntax of Particle *Ky*,” 123

<sup>228</sup> NIV; TNIV.

<sup>229</sup> Bandstra, “The Syntax of Particle *Ky*,” 159.

of Psalm 75. As for the occurrence of the conjunction כִּי in v. 8a, some omit its translation (TNIV; NLT) but the majority of Bible versions and commentators translated the conjunction כִּי in v. 8a contrastively (Williams §447), “but.”<sup>230</sup> We have also adopted this meaning of כִּי in our translation. Finally, the translation of the conjunction כִּי in v. 9a also varies. Some omit its translation.<sup>231</sup> But the majority of Bible versions and commentators translate it causally (Williams §444),<sup>232</sup> “for.” Some commentators translate it asseveratively (Williams §449), “indeed”<sup>233</sup> or “yes.”<sup>234</sup> We have adopted the causal meaning because, as we stated in the translation, we consider the sequence of כִּי clauses from vv. 7 to 9 as a sequence of explanations that culminates in a description as how God executes judgment.

In the case of the clauses of v. 3 it is important to note that they are marked by the sequence subordinate-main clause, instead of the more common main-subordinate.

According to our translation, v. 4 is also a subordinate-main clause sequence. We have interpreted clause 4a concessively; it denotes the condition for clause 4b.

The relationship between the clauses of vv. 5 and 6 is easy to interpret because, as we have observed in our notes to the translation, together they form one speech. They are distinguished by the double occurrence of the stylistic device called ellipsis and double duty. In clause 5c the verb אֶמְרֵתִי from 5a is omitted but it must be inserted by the

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<sup>230</sup> Bandstra, “The Syntax of Particle Ky,” 149.

<sup>231</sup> NIV; TNIV; Tanakh.

<sup>232</sup> Bandstra, “The Syntax of Particle Ky,” 159.

<sup>233</sup> Hossfeld, *Psalms 2*, 252.

<sup>234</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:439.

reader. Moreover, 6b omits the adverbial negative  $\text{לֹא}$  from 6a. However, as we observed in our notes to the translation, the reader must infer its presence in v. 6b.

On the basis of the above analysis of the syntactical relationship between the individual clauses of Psalm 75, we will now proceed to the next step of our syntactical analysis of the poem, namely, the segmentation of its basic sense units. In this step we will seek to join the results of our analysis of the delimitation of the clauses with the results of our analysis of the syntactical relationship and flow of the clauses.

### 3.6.3 Segmentation

In this part of our analysis we have reached the most debated issue in the exegesis of Psalm 75, namely, the segmentation of the sense units of the poem. Three important issues complicate this important task: 1) the identification of the speakers, especially the “I” who speaks in vv. 3-4, v. 5, v. 10 and v. 11; 2) the segmentation of the quoted and unquoted speeches in the poem; and 3) the determination of the individual segments to one another and the poem as a whole.<sup>235</sup>

Some preliminary explanations were provided as the difficulties appeared. Based on these analyses we are now in a position to consider the segmentation of Psalm 75 into its respective sense units. But before we present our proposal for the segmentation, however, it is necessary to discuss first some preliminary considerations about the identity of the speaker of first person divine speech. Second, we will describe how recent scholarship has segmented Psalm 75. Our aim is to demonstrate that that Psalm 75 has

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<sup>235</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253.

been segmented in a variety of ways. One reason for this variety is the lack of clear criteria for segmentation.

To begin with the question concerning the identity of the speaker of the “I” who speaks in vv. 3-4, v. 5, v. 10 and v. 11, as we have noted in chapter 2, Nasuti rightly explains that a third person divine speech can be performed by prophets, priests, and diviners. However, the first person divine speech is what clearly distinguished the prophet from other religious groups.<sup>236</sup> Thus, the first person divine speech(es) indicates a prophetic participation in Psalm 75, and this information will guide part of our identification of the speaker of the “I” who speaks in vv. 3-4, v. 5, v. 10 and v. 11

With respect to this issue, Gerstenberger suggests that unquoted divine speech (which he names “unmarked”) argues against the possibility of a prophetic participation in Psalm 75. For Gerstenberger, a genuine prophetic speech needs “special framings and legitimations to identify a given communication as divine.”<sup>237</sup> However, Hilber correctly argues that the simple appearance of a recognized prophet in his customary location is sufficient to indicate that he was about to deliver an oracle.<sup>238</sup> Thus, in a cultic situation, supposing that a cult prophet was already recognized as such, additional markers, such as, for example, the framing of the speech, were not necessary for the community to recognize that what he or she was saying was the word of God. It is noteworthy that Gerstenberger concedes that in a liturgical situation, it is likely that switches “ becomes

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<sup>236</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 128.

<sup>237</sup> Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 2, and Lamentations*, 82.

<sup>238</sup> Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 171.

audible and visible all by itself” but he insists that divine speeches require framing anyway.<sup>239</sup>

Drawing the opposite conclusion from Gerstenberger’s argument, Nasuti demonstrates compellingly that unquoted divine speeches are more likely to indicate the participation of prophets in the cult than quoted divine speeches. Nasuti explains that the unquoted divine speech “seems to indicate the possibility of a cultic actualization of the divine reality,” while a quoted divine speech would omit this possibility “since the use of a quotation seems to set the divine presence at a distance.” He concludes that only “in the non-quotation type of psalm does one have a real possibility of a direct cultic actualization of the divine reality.”<sup>240</sup> We agree with Nasuti and will use his position in the remainder of the thesis.

Proceeding to our survey of the various ways in which recent scholarship has segmented Psalm 75, we begin with an analysis Erhard S. Gerstenberger contribution to the debate. Gerstenberger suggests that the divine speeches in Psalm 75 are limited to vv. 3-4. Moreover, he segments vv. 5-9 as an exhortation that was spoken by a liturgist. Furthermore, he asserts that in v. 11 it is not God who speaks. Rather, it is someone else.<sup>241</sup> In like manner, Kraus segments vv. 5-11 as a single unit but he assigns this speech to a cult prophet.<sup>242</sup> Hossfeld follows Gerstenberger segmentation of vv. 3-4 as a divine

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<sup>239</sup> Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 2, and Lamentations*, 82.

<sup>240</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 128.

<sup>241</sup> Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 2 and Lamentations*, 81-83.

<sup>242</sup> Kraus, *Psalms*, 102-105.

speech. However, he does not agree that v. 11 is the voice of a human being. Instead, he argues that the speaker at the conclusion of the poem is Yahweh.<sup>243</sup>

Of special interest is Jörg Jeremias's segmentation of vv. 3-11. According to him, a cult prophet spoke these verses.<sup>244</sup> Nevertheless, his segmentation is similar to that of Gerstenberger and Kraus because for Jeremias vv. 3-4 represent an unmarked quotation of divine speech spoken through a cult prophet. As for vv. 5-11, Jeremias claims that vv. 5-8 constitute prophetic ultimatum that is followed by a vision in v. 9. Moreover, he classifies vv. 10-11 as the cultic prophet's declaration and praise. Significantly, Jeremias claims that vv. 10-11 function as a certainty of hearing.<sup>245</sup>

Furthermore, Dahood and Goldingay identify the speaker of vv. 5-6 as God. Consequently, vv. 3-6 constitute two divine oracles and the rest of the psalm (vv. 7-11) represent the words of a liturgist.<sup>246</sup>

Similarly, Tate also segments vv. 3-6 as a divine oracle. However, he limits the words of the liturgist to vv. 7-9. In his opinion, the psalm closes with a vow to praise God (v. 10) and a final oracle (v.11).<sup>247</sup>

Johnson reads v. 2 as the word of a cultic prophet, as a representative of the worshipper's community. Unlike other commentators and scholars, Johnson segments vv.

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<sup>243</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 252-254.

<sup>244</sup> Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*, 118.

<sup>245</sup> Notice that Jeremias translates the subject of v. 11, in the third person singular, instead of the first person singular as printed in the BHS.

<sup>246</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II*, 210; Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, 443-444.

<sup>247</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 256-259.

3-7 as a divine oracle and reads vv. 8-10 as the word of the cultic prophet himself. Like Tate and Hossfeld, Johnson considers v. 11 to be another divine oracle.<sup>248</sup>

Like Dahood and Goldingay, Samuel Terrien segments vv. 3-6 as a divine oracle. In his opinion, vv. 7-9 constitute a response that was probably spoken by the community. According to Terrien, vv. 10-11 are the words of the psalmist or a worship leader who reaffirms the power of God in v. 11.<sup>249</sup>

To facilitate our interaction with the various positions outlined above, we have prepared the following table, which includes the segmentation of the NIV prepared by John H. Stek.

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<sup>248</sup> Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody*, 318-321. Notice that Johnson's and Jeremias's proposals for vv. 3-11 are similar in the sense that they suggest that a cultic prophet is speaking in these verses.

<sup>249</sup> Samuel L. Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (ECC; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2003).

### 3.6.3.a Table of scholars segmentation alignment.

**Table 4. Scholars segmentation alignment**

v.	Gerstenberger, Kraus, Jeremias	Dahood, Goldingay	Tate, NIV (Stek) <sup>250</sup>	Terrien	Johnson	Hossfeld
2	congreg.	congreg.	congreg.	congreg.	cultic prophet	congreg.
3	Yahweh	Yahweh	Yahweh	Yahweh	Yahweh	Yahweh
4						
5	human speaker/ cultic prophet	human speaker	human speaker	congregation response	cultic prophet	human speaker
6						
7						
8		Yahweh	psalmist	Yahweh	Yahweh	Yahweh
9						
10						
11						

A review of commentaries and other pertinent literature shows significant disagreement as to the segmentation of Psalm 75. The table above makes these differences more clear. Some scholars claim that there is only one speaker, the psalmist, who is then identified either as a prophet<sup>251</sup> or king.<sup>252</sup> In view of the change of subject and switch in addressees, however, the majority of commentators and scholars argue for multiple speakers. They generally agree that v. 2 constitutes a unit of praise by the congregation that is addressed to God. Moreover, they also agree that God speaks in vv. 3 and 4.<sup>253</sup>

<sup>250</sup> John H. Stek (*NIV Study Bible*, 870) separates vv. 10-11 from the previous segment, but he acknowledges that it is best to suppose that v. 11 is another speech of Yahweh.

<sup>251</sup> Johnson, *CPIP*, 318-322.

<sup>252</sup> Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, 20.

<sup>253</sup> E.g. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253; Kraus, *Psalms*, 103; Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 2 and Lamentations*, 81.

They do not agree, however, about the segmentation of vv. 5-11, nor about the identity of the speakers. At issue is the question whether God is the speaker of vv. 5-6 or a human being. As a result of this disagreement, Hossfeld correctly notes that “the delimitation of the divine speeches is the central problem of this psalm in particular.”<sup>254</sup>

The wide range of possible segmentations of Psalm 75 in Table 4 above calls for a new segmentation based primarily on linguistic data from the text. To segment the text of Psalm 75, therefore, we will use the following criteria: 1) change in subject of the independent clauses; 2) change of verbal form in independent clauses; 3) a change of addressee; and 4) a change of speaker. The results of our segmentation are presented in Table 5 below. It will be followed by a discussion and justification of the final results.

### 3.6.3.b Segmentation

**Table 5. Segmentation**

PNG	subj. of ind. clauses	speaker	addressee	clause	v.
1cp	we	congreg.	God	הוֹדִינוּ לְךָ   אֱלֹהִים	2ab
1cp	we			הוֹדִינוּ	
2ms	God's name			וְקָרֹב שְׁמֶךָ	c
3cp	indefinite			סִפְרוּ גִפְלוֹתֵיךָ:	d
1cs		God	congreg.	ךָ בִּי אֶקַח מוֹעֵד	3a
1cs	I			אֲנִי מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֲשַׁפֵּט:	b
mp				ךָ נִמְגִים אֶרֶץ וְכָל־יֹשְׁבֵיהָ	4a
1cs	I			אֲנִי תִפְנֵתִי עֲמוּדֵיהָ סֵלָה:	b

<sup>254</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253.

PNG	subj. of ind. clauses	speaker	addressee	clause	v.
1cs	I	God	boastful / wicked	אָמַרְתִּי לְהוֹלִלִים	5a
2mp	boastful ones			אֶל־תְּהַלּוּ	b
1cs	I			[...] וְלִרְשָׁעִים	c
2mp	wicked			אֶל־תִּרְיֻמוּ קִרְוֹ:	d
2mp				אֶל־תִּרְיֻמוּ לְמָרוֹם קִרְנֵיכֶם	6a
2mp				[...] תִּדְבְּרוּ בְצִוְאָר עֲתָק:	b
		liturgist	congreg.	כִּי לֹא מִמוֹצֵא וּמִמַּעֲרָב	7a
	exaltation			וְלֹא מִמִּדְבַּר הָרִים:	b
3ms	God			כִּי־אֱלֹהִים שֹׁפֵט	8a
3ms	God			זֶה יִשְׁפִּיל	b
3ms	God			וְזֶה יִרִים:	c
ms	cup			כִּי כּוֹס בְּיַד־יְהוָה	9a
3ms	wine			וַיִּז	b
				לְחִמְרוֹ	c
				לְמֵלֵא מִסֹּד	d
3ms	Yahweh			וַיִּגַּר מְזֵה	e
3mp	wicked			אֶדְ־שִׁמְרִיהָ יִמְצוּ	f
3mp	wicked			יִשְׁתּוּ כָּל רְשָׁעֵי־אָרֶץ:	g
1s	I			וְאֲנִי אֶגִּיד לְעֹלָם	10a
1s	I			אֲזַמְרָה לְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:	b

PNG	subj. of ind. clauses	speaker	addressee	clause	v.
1s	I	Yahweh	congreg.	וְכָל־קִרְנֵי רְשָׁעִים אֲגִידֶּה	11a
3fp	horns of the righteous			תִּרְוַחַמְנָה קִרְנוֹת צַדִּיק:	b

There is a change in subject, from 1 c.p. in v. 2ab to 2 m.s. in v. 2c, and type of clause, from *qatal* verbs in v. 2ab to a non-verbal clause in v. 2c. However, the conjunction *waw* joins this clause to the previous two clauses (v. 2ab) and in our translation we have interpreted it causally so that it provides the reason for the praise in v. 2ab. The change in subject, from 2 m.s. in v. 2c to 1 c.p. in v. 2d, and predicate, from non-verbal in v. 2c to *qatal* verb in v. 2d, suggests a break between clause 2c and the asyndetic clause 2d.<sup>255</sup> However, stylistically the end-rhyme (ך) in v. 2cd suggests that the two clauses belong together. With the majority of commentators,<sup>256</sup> therefore, we segment v. 2 as the first section of the poem that is unified by the triple repetition of the 2 ms pronominal suffix ך.

As for the addressee of this introductory unit, the vocative אֱלֹהִים in v. 2a clearly shows that the addressee of v. 2 is God. This is supported by the triple repetition of the 2 ms pronominal suffix ך.

With respect to the identification of the speaker of this unit, on the assumption that the *Sitz im Leben* is the cult, the speaker can be either the congregation itself or its

<sup>255</sup> Johnson (*CPIP*, 318-319) and Jacobson (*Many are Saying*, 109-110) appear to read v. 2c as the introduction to the quotation of the divine speech that follows.

<sup>256</sup> Notice that all scholars listed above in the *Table of scholars segmentation alignment* agree with this segmentation.

legitimate representative, either a king<sup>257</sup> a (Levitical) liturgist,<sup>258</sup> or more specifically a prophet.<sup>259</sup> In agreement with some commentators we opt for the congregation because of the 1 c.p. subject “we” in v. 2ab.<sup>260</sup>

There is a clear change in subject and verbal form in v. 3ab, from 1 c.p. *qatal* verb in v. 2d to 1 c.s. *yiqtol* verbs in v. 3ab. Delitzsch interprets the function of the conjunction **כִּי** in v. 3a to be causal. For him it provides the reason for the praise in v. 2.<sup>261</sup> As we observed in the annotations to our translation, the conjunction **כִּי** can function recitatively (Williams §452) to introduce a quotation. With the majority of Bible versions and commentators, however, we have assigned it a temporal function (Williams §445) and translated it as, “when.” The question is, “Who is the ‘I’ of v. 3b?” The answer to this pertinent question depends on one’s interpretation of v. 4.

There is also a change in verbal forms in v. 4: from the two *yiqtol* verbs in v. 3 to a *Niphal* participle (**נִמְנָגִים**) in v. 4a and a *qatal* verb (**תִּכְנֹתִי**) in v. 4b. However, there is no change in subject of the independent clauses of vv. 3-4. The subject of v. 3b is the 1 c.s. independent pronoun **אֲנִי** and the subject of v. 4b is the emphatic 1 c.s. independent

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<sup>257</sup> Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, 81. According to Goulder, the whole psalm “was spoken by the king.” Eaton (*Kingship and the Psalms*, 56) recognizes validity of this option. However, on the previous page he also appears to agree with Gunkel and Mowinckel.

<sup>258</sup> Broyles, *Psalms*, 310.

<sup>259</sup> Johnson, *CPIP*, 319.

<sup>260</sup> Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, 337; Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 327; Schaefer, *Psalms*, 185; Schökel and Carniti, *Salmos II*, 966; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 255; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 103; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258; Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, 439.

<sup>261</sup> Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, 338.

pronoun אֲנִי. For this reason we follow the majority of commentators<sup>262</sup> in reading vv. 3-4 together and segmenting these verses as a new section in the poem. For this reason we have inserted a blank row between v. 2 and vv. 3-4 in table 5 above.

With the majority of commentators we are of the opinion that, based on content, the speaker of vv. 3-4 is God.<sup>263</sup> V. 3 could have been uttered by a king.<sup>264</sup> However, this option is less likely for v. 4 because of the reference to creation in v. 4b. With the majority of commentators we also judge that vv. 3-4 represent an unmarked quotation of divine speech.<sup>265</sup> On the assumption that the *Sitz-im-Leben* of Psalm 75 is the worship center, we also assume that the addressee is the congregation of v. 2. Moreover, we assume that the speaker could be a cult prophet.

There is no change in subject, nor change of verbal form in v. 5a. Nevertheless, according to Kirkpatrick, the enigmatic סֵלָה at the end of v. 4 “marks the end of the Divine speech” and the 1 c.s. *Qal qatal* verb אָמַרְתִּי introduces a new speaker.<sup>266</sup> Not everyone agrees with Kirkpatrick. Hossfeld rightly notes that the identity of the speaker in v. 5 is disputed.<sup>267</sup> However, there is a change of addressee in vv. 5-6. As is evident from the double indirect objects in v. 5a (לְהוֹלְלִים) and 5c (לְרֹשְׁעִים), the quotation of the

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<sup>262</sup> Delitzsch, *The Psalms*, 338; Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 327; Schökel and Carniti, *Salmos II*, 966; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 255; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 103; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258; Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, 441.

<sup>263</sup> Eaton, *Kingship*, 55; Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, 20, 96.

<sup>264</sup> Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph*, 81.

<sup>265</sup> C.f. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 327; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 104; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 253-254.

<sup>266</sup> Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 451.

<sup>267</sup> Hossfeld, *Psalms 2*, 253.

admonition of vv. 5-6 introduced by the verb אָמַרְתִּי is clearly addressed to “boasters” and “the wicked.” Moreover, there is also a change in literary genre. Verse 5 begins an admonition. For these two reasons, therefore, we infer that v. 5 marks a new segment. Consequently, we have inserted a blank row between vv. 3-4 and v. 5 in table 5. Because the admonition in v. 5b continues in vv. 5d-6b, this new section clearly extends to v. 6. This inference is supported by the triple repetition of the negative adverb אֵל in vv. 5-6, the synonymous parallelism of vv. 5d-6a (see above) and the chiasmic *abb'a'* structure of vv. 5b-6 outlined above in our notes about the translation of these verses.<sup>268</sup>

Two crucial issues complicate the segmentation of Psalm 75 at this point. The first issue concerns the identity of the speaker of this new unit (vv. 5-6). Is it God? Is it a human speaker? The second issue concerns the extension of the new section introduced by v. 5. In other words, do vv. 5-6 constitute an independent unit or must one include v. 7, vv. 7-8, or even vv. 7-9?

With respect to the first issue, it should be noted that the 1 c.s. *Qal qatal* verb אָמַרְתִּי is used frequently in the Psalter to introduce quoted speech.<sup>269</sup> In fact, with the possible exception of Psalm 86.6, in all occurrences of אָמַרְתִּי in the Psalter<sup>270</sup> it is

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<sup>268</sup> Pace Kissane (*The Book of Psalms*, 2: 18), these stylistic devices argue against a split between v. 5 and v. 6. Kissane’s splitting up vv. 5-6 appears to be motivated by his strophic division of Psalm 75.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. Ps 30:7; 31:15, 23; 32:5; 38:17; 39:2; 40:8, 11; 41:5; 73:15; 75:5; 82:6; 89:3; 94:18; 116:11; 119:57; 140:7; and 142:6. See also Jonah 2:5 and Lam 3:18 (וְאָמַר). Jacobson, *Many are Saying*, 60.

<sup>270</sup> Gerstenberger’s affirmation that the occurrences of אָמַרְתִּי in the Psalter always indicate a human being speaking can only be accepted if the speaker of Ps 82:6 is a human voice, instead of the voice of God. Cf. Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 2 and Lamentations*, 82-83.

always the psalmist who addresses either God or the congregation. For this reason some commentators follow Kirkpatrick's claim that אֲמַרְתִּי introduces a new speaker.<sup>271</sup>

The question is, however, who is this new speaker? Is it a king? Is it a prophet? Is it a liturgist? Or is it God?

Two observations challenge Kirkpatrick's claim. First, as was mentioned above, there is no change in PGN and verbal aspect between v. 4b and v. 5a. Second, on the assumption that God is the speaker in Psalm 82:6, it is also possible that God is the speaker in vv. 5-6.<sup>272</sup> A supporting argument for this position is that, as in Psalm 82:2, the term סֵלָה also interrupts an unmarked divine speech. More specifically, it stands in the middle of an accusation of the "divine assembly" (v. 2) and an admonition against them (v.3). The same is true in the case of the סֵלָה at the end of Psalm 75:4. It stands in the middle of an affirming word to the congregation in vv. 3-4 and an admonition in vv. 5-6 to the boasters and the wicked. Another supporting argument is the fact that if we assume that vv. 5-6 are the voice of a human being, this would be the only instance in which a psalmist employs the verb אֲמַרְתִּי to introduce an admonition to the wicked or to an enemy.<sup>273</sup> In view of these observations, we agree with the commentators<sup>274</sup> and

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<sup>271</sup> Eaton, *The Psalms*, 273.

<sup>272</sup> Delitzsch, "Psalms," 339.

<sup>273</sup> In Ps 30:7 אֲמַרְתִּי introduces a confession, in Ps 31:15 a confession of trust, in Ps 32:5 a resolve to confess sins, in Ps 38:17 a petition, in Ps 39:2 a personal resolution, in Ps 40:8 a word addressed to God, in Ps 41:5 a petition, in Ps 82:6 a word to the gods, in Ps 89:3 praise, in Ps 119:57 a resolution, in Ps 140:7 a confession of trust and a petition, in Ps 142:6 a confession of trust, and in Jonah 2:5 a quotation of his lament.

<sup>274</sup> Dahood, *Psalms II*, 210; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258-259; Terrien, *The Psalms*, 545; Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, 441.

scholars<sup>275</sup> who identify God as the speaker of vv. 5-6. In this case the divine speech in Psalm 46:11 constitutes an interesting parallel because in this verse God admonishes the warring nations.

As for the second issue, the extension of the new unit begun in v. 5, the relationship between vv. 5-6 and the problematic v. 7 is difficult to determine. A final decision depends primarily on one's interpretation of the conjunction **כִּי** in v. 7a, v. 8a and v. 9a. However, stylistic and thematic issues also play an important role.

According to Kirkpatrick, there is no break between v. 6 and v. 7. Moreover, in his opinion, it is clear that God is no longer speaking in v. 7 and 8.<sup>276</sup> These two reasons, together with the occurrence of the enigmatic **סֵלָה** between v. 4 and v. 5 and his claim that the verb **אֶמְרָתִי** in v. 5a introduces a new speaker, lead Kirkpatrick to conclude that vv. 5-9 are spoken by the poet. Gunkel, Mowinckel, Eaton and Jensen adopt a similar position.<sup>277</sup> They differ as to the identity of the speaker but they agree that vv. 5-6 constitute an admonition followed by three motivating **כִּי** clauses that provide the reason for the warning.

As for the identity of the speaker, Kirkpatrick only identifies the speaker as the poet. Some, like Mowinckel, identify the speaker as a prophet.<sup>278</sup> In support of their position one might appeal to Isaiah 55, the formal sequence of which is similar to that of

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<sup>275</sup> E.g. Johnson, *CPIP*, 319; Jacobsen, 'Many are Saying,' 110.

<sup>276</sup> Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 451. Cf. Eaton, *The Psalms*, 273.

<sup>277</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 327 and 328; Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:150; Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 55-56; Jensen, "Psalm 75," 419.

<sup>278</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:63-64. Kraus (*Psalms 60-150*, 103) also opts for a prophetic speaker. However, he extends the unit from v. 5 until v. 11.

Psalm 75:3-9. After Yahweh's great invitation to everyone in vv. 1-5—that formally parallels Psalm 75:3-4—, there follows an admonition in vv. 6-7 that refers to Yahweh in the third person, which suggests that vv. 6-7 represent the prophet's voice. Formally these verses parallel Psalm 75:5-6. Moreover, this prophetic admonition in Is 55:6-7 is followed by three complex **וְ** clauses,<sup>279</sup> which parallels Psalm 75:7-9.

Others, however, like Eaton, identify the speaker as a king.<sup>280</sup> According to Eaton, the king is an admonisher of mankind.<sup>281</sup> In support of this claim Eaton refers, first of all, to the royal admonition in Psalm 2:10-12 that follows the divine decree in vv. 7-10. In Eaton's opinion, the royal admonition of Psalm 2:10-12 against the rebels in vv. 1-3 is similar to the royal admonition to similar rebels in Psalm 75:5-9.<sup>282</sup> Next he calls attention to the exhortation in 1 Sam 2:3f., an important parallel, as we will demonstrate in our intertextual analysis below, because of the lexical and thematic similarity between 1 Sam 2:7cd and Psalm 75:8bc.

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<sup>279</sup> See v. 8, 9 and 12.

<sup>280</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 55; idem, *The Psalms*, 273. Like Kraus, Eaton (*The Psalms*, 273) extends the unit to include vv. 9-10.

<sup>281</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 181-182.

<sup>282</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 55 and 181.

**Table 6. Comparison between 1 Samuel 2:7 and Psalm 75:8**

1 Samuel 2:7		Psalm 75:8	
Yahweh makes rich	יְהוָה מוֹרִישׁ	But God judges:	כִּי־אֱלֹהִים שֹׁפֵט
And makes poor;	וּמַעֲשִׂיר		
He humbles,	מַשְׁפִּיל	The one he humbles	זֶה יִשְׁפִּיל
He also exalts.	אֶף־מְרוֹמָם:	And the other he exalts	וְזֶה יָרִים:

Additionally, Eaton refers to Pss 4:3-6, 52:3-4, 62:4 and 94:8f.<sup>283</sup>

Although both positions are attractive and can be explained from a cult functional approach, not everyone agrees with Kirkpatrick's claim that there is no break between v. 6 and v. 7. As we have observed in our notes on the translation of v. 7, the meaning of this verse is not clear because syntactically it is an aposiopesis in the MT. As such, it expects the reader to complete the thought. Moreover, in our translation we opted for the asseverative meaning, "indeed,"<sup>284</sup> for the conjunction **כִּי**, in which case it may introduce a new section and a new speaker.<sup>285</sup> Furthermore, in our translation of v. 7 we have accepted a slight emendation of the MT so that it is a non-verbal clause with a *Hiphil* infinitive construct as its subject. As we see it, these exegetical decisions argue for introducing a break between vv. 5-6 and v. 7. An additional argument for introducing a break between vv. 5-6 and v. 7 is that v. 8 follows the negative statement of v. 7 with a positive declaration that affirms that God judges. This suggests that vv. 7-8 should be

<sup>283</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 182.

<sup>284</sup> Cf. Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:444; VanGemeren, "Psalms," 5:493.

<sup>285</sup> Cf. Dahood, *Psalms II*, 212; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:444.

read together. In fact, with the exception of Johnson,<sup>286</sup> the majority of scholars and commentators read them together.<sup>287</sup> A potential problem with this position is that v. 8 also begins with the conjunction וְ. Following several commentators, however, in our translation we have opted for an adversative translation of this conjunction because it sets up a contrast between the negative affirmation of v. 7 and the positive declaration in v. 8. More specifically, the positive declaration in v. 8 affirms that there is no exaltation apart from God, the judge. For the above reason, therefore, in agreement with large number of commentators,<sup>288</sup> we have inserted a break between vv. 5-6 and v. 7 and have indicated this in our table by inserting another blank row.

On the assumption that vv. 7-8 should be read together, there is clearly a change in speaker because v. 8 speaks *about* God. The unidentified human speaker could either be the king,<sup>289</sup> congregation,<sup>290</sup> the poet,<sup>291</sup> a liturgist<sup>292</sup> or, more specifically, a prophet.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Johnson, *CPIP*, 321.

<sup>287</sup> E.g. Delitzsch, "Psalms," 5:340; Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 2 and Lamentations*, 81; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 105; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 212; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:444; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258; Stek, *NIV Study Bible*, 870; McCann, "The Book of Psalms," 4:977; Hossfeld, *Psalms 2*, 256.

<sup>288</sup> Delitzsch, "Psalms," 5:340; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 212; Weiser, *The Psalms*, 522; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:444; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258; Stek, *NIV Study Bible*, 870; Terrien, *The Psalms*, 545; Broyles, *Psalms*, 311; Schaefer, *Psalms*, 185; McCann, "The Book of Psalms," 4:977; Schökel-Carniti, *Os Salmos II*, 966; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 5:577.

<sup>289</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 55-56

<sup>290</sup> Delitzsch, "Psalms," 5:340; Schökel-Carniti, *Os Salmos II*, 966.

<sup>291</sup> Schaefer, *The Psalms*, 185.

<sup>292</sup> Broyles, *Psalms*, 311; Stek, *The NIV Study Bible*, 879; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:444.

<sup>293</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 257-258.

Before we make a choice between these options, it is necessary to identify the addressee of vv. 7-8. To whom are vv. 7-8 addressed? Before we can answer this question, however, it is necessary to resolve another important question: Does v. 9 belong to the new section opened at v. 7 or does it begin a new section?

The fact that clauses 7a, 8a, and 9a begin with the conjunction **וְ** appears to argue for the unity of vv. 7-9. Another argument for their unity is the fact that, as Gunkel has noted,<sup>294</sup> vv. 8-9 speak about God/Yahweh in the third person. Moreover, v. 9 introduces a graphic picture of a wine filled cup in Yahweh's hand that explains how God puts down (v. 8). For this reason we have translated the conjunction **וְ** in 9a causally. Thus, v. 8 states that Yahweh is the one who judges and then v. 9 demonstrates that he is already beginning to act in favor of the righteous as he pours out<sup>295</sup> wine full of mixture for "all the wicked of the earth" to drink. On the basis of these observations, we infer, therefore, that v. 9 continues the speech that began in v. 7.

We are now in a position to answer the question concerning the identity of the speaker of vv. 7-9. Because vv. 7-9 speaks of God in the third person, either a priest or a prophet could have spoken these words.<sup>296</sup> However, the content of this segment demonstrates that it comes from prophetic instead of priestly tradition. As we will demonstrate with more data in our intertextual analysis of Psalm 75 below, the powerful image of a cup in Yahweh's hand is also found in prophetic literature. Close parallels are

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<sup>294</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 328.

<sup>295</sup> For our present translation of the YIQTOL verb **וַיִּזְקֵן** in v. 10 see our discussion in the translation provided above.

<sup>296</sup> Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 128.

found in Isaiah 51:17 and Jeremiah 25:15-17. Moreover, the rather unique word **שָׁמַר** (“dregs”)<sup>297</sup> occurs in Jer 48:11. On the basis of these parallels to prophetic literature we suggest that the speaker of vv. 7-9 is a Levitical song leader, one of the sons of Asaph that David had set apart for the ministry of prophesying (1 Chro 25:1).<sup>298</sup>

The change in subject, from **כָּל רְשָׁעֵי-אֲרֶץ** (“all the wicked of the earth”) in v. 9de to **אֲנִי** (“I”) in v. 10a, and the change in verbal aspect, from *yqtl* verbs in v. 9de to *yiqtol*/cohortative in v. 10, argue for a break between vv. 7-9 and v. 10. Another supporting argument for this break is the fact that v. 10a is a disjunctive clause that functions as a thematic initial clause (cf. Lambdin §132[d]). At the same time it also functions as an adversative clause (cf. Lambdin §132[a]), as is evident from the contrast between the delayed identification of **כָּל רְשָׁעֵי-אֲרֶץ** (“all the wicked of the earth”) as the subject<sup>299</sup> of clauses 9de and the fronted 1 c.s. independent pronoun **אֲנִי** in v. 10a. For the above reasons, therefore, we have inserted a blank space between v. 9 and v. 10 in the table above.

Opinions differ as to the identity of the 1 c.s. independent pronoun **אֲנִי** in v. 10a because the speaker is not clearly identified. As options Tate lists “king, prophet, priest, or other worship leader.”<sup>300</sup> According to some, the speaker is a king.<sup>301</sup> Eaton, for

<sup>297</sup> It occurs only five times in four verses: Isa 25:6 (2x), Jer 48:11, Zeph 1:12, Psalm 75:9.

<sup>298</sup> Cf. Johnson, *CPIP*, 317-322; Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*, 119-120.

<sup>299</sup> For this stylistic device see: M. Dahood, “Poetry, Hebrew,” 5:671-672.

<sup>300</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258.

<sup>301</sup> J. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen*, 271. I owe this reference to Carl J. Bosma. As we have mentioned above, Eaton interprets Psalm 75 as a royal psalm. He reads vv. 5-11 as the words of the king. Cf. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 55-56. Obviously Goulder (*The Psalms of Asaph*, 80-81) identifies the speaker of

example, claims that the king is God's witness to the world (cf. Is 55:4).<sup>302</sup> He supports his claim with references to similar vows to praise in Pss 9:2f., 18:50, 22:23f., 57:8-11, 61:9, 63:4-6, 89:2, 118:19, 138:1, and 144:9f. Moreover, Eaton also refers to the fact that "[i]n Mesopotamia also there is stress on the king's task as proclaimer of his deity's glory to all peoples, among the gods, and forever."<sup>303</sup> Furthermore, he also refers to the justification of the Hittite king Hattusilis III "for his seizure of power in the form of a testimony to his goddess: 'I tell the divine power of Ishtar; let all men hear it . . .'"<sup>304</sup>

On the assumption that the *Sitz-im-Leben* for Psalm 75 is the cult, the participation of king Jehoshaphat in the liturgy recorded in 2 Chro 20:2-28 allows for this option. Therefore, it is possible that a king could be the speaker of v. 10 and even v. 11.

However, there are two other options which Stek points out. First, the speaker could be a Levite who represents the people.<sup>305</sup> Kraus, for example, claims that the speaker is a cultic prophet because he classifies v. 10 as a doxology of judgment.<sup>306</sup>

According to Johnson, the speaker is also a prophet.<sup>307</sup> Second, the pronoun **אֲנִי** in v. 10a

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v. 10 as the king because, as we noted above, in his judgment "the whole psalm was spoken by the king, including vv. 3-4."

<sup>302</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 183-185.

<sup>303</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 185.

<sup>304</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 185.

<sup>305</sup> Jensen ("Psalm 75," 422) identifies this representative simply as a worship leader. Johnson (*CPIP*, 321-322) argues that it is a cult prophet.

<sup>306</sup> Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 103 and 105. As we noted above, for Kraus the speaker of vv. 5-11 is the cult prophet.

<sup>307</sup> Johnson, *CPIP*, 321.

“may be a communal use of the singular as in 74:12....”<sup>308</sup> Anderson lists this as one of the options.<sup>309</sup> On this reading v. 10 forms an *inclusio* with v. 2.<sup>310</sup>

Of the various options listed above, we would argue that the speaker is a cultic prophet. In support of this claim we call attention to the similarity between the vow to praise in Psalm 75:10 and Hab 3:18.

**Table 7. Comparison between Psalm 75:10 and Habakkuk 3:18**

Psalm 75:10	Hab 3:18
וְאֲנִי אֶגִּיד לְעֵלָם	וְאֲנִי בִיהוָה אֶעֱלֹזָה
אֲזַמְרָה לְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:	אֶגִּילָה בְּאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

A crucial question at this point of the segmentation of Psalm 75 concerns the relationship between v. 10 and v. 11. Like v. 10a, v. 11 also begins with a clause initial conjunction *waw*. Like v. 10a, v. 11a is also a disjunctive clause. As such, it could be, first of all, a thematic initial clause (Lambdin §132[d]) that marks a break between v. 10 and v. 11. A supporting argument for this option is that there is a change in verbal forms, from a cohortative in v. 10b to two *yiqtol* verbs in v. 11. A problem with this option, however, is that there is no change in subject. The subject of both v. 10 and v. 11 is the 1 c.s.

<sup>308</sup> Cf. Stek, *NIV Study Bible*, 870. Cf. Ps 44:4.

<sup>309</sup> Anderson, *Psalms*, 2:550. Anderson also lists a representative of the congregation as an option.

<sup>310</sup> Cf. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258. According to Stek (*NIV Study Bible*, 870), v. 2 and vv. 10-11 form the frame.

Consequently, if a break is introduced between v. 10 and v. 11, then, as Stek notes, “it is unclear who is speaking” in v. 11.<sup>311</sup>

A second option would be to read the disjunctive clause in v. 11a as an emphatic adverbial disjunctive clause (Lambdin §132[c]), in which case the conjunction *waw* could be translated causally. A supporting argument for this option is that vows to praise in the Psalter are sometimes followed by a motivating clause that provides the reason for the pledged praise.<sup>312</sup> In this case the speaker of v.10 and v. 11 could be the same.

Commentators have proposed several solutions to the problem. The Briggses, for example, considers v. 10b to be a gloss. As a result, v. 10a and v. 11 constitute a tricolon in which God is the speaker. On this interpretation, v. 11 contains the content of God’s eternal decree.<sup>313</sup> A problem with this solution is, however, that there is no manuscript evidence for the omission of v. 10b.

Others emend the verb **וַיִּגְדֹּל** in v. 11a to a 3 m.s. verb, **וַיִּגְדֵּן**.<sup>314</sup> In this case the subject of the verb is clearly God. Moreover, in this case v. 11 functions also as the motivating clause for v. 10. The problem with this solution is also that there is no manuscript evidence for the textual emendation.

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<sup>311</sup> Stek, *NIV Study Bible*, 870.

<sup>312</sup> Cf. Ps 13:6.

<sup>313</sup> Briggs and Briggs, *Psalms*, 2:163.

<sup>314</sup> RSV; Anderson, *Psalms*, 2:550; Weiser, *Psalms*, 521; Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*, 117; Kraus, *Psalms 60-151*, 103.

Still others accept the MT of v. 11 and, in view of the fact that there is no change in subject between v. 10 and v. 11, suggest that the speaker is a king,<sup>315</sup> not a Levitical representative of the people. As Stek rightly notes, the action promised in v. 11 “appears unlikely for a Levite but appropriate for a king.”<sup>316</sup> A supporting argument for this position is that, as is evident from the following quotation of Psalm 101:8, the vocation of the king as God’s anointed representative on earth is to cut off the power of the wicked:

Morning by morning I will destroy all the wicked in the land,  
by cutting off all evildoers from the city of the LORD.<sup>317</sup>

Although this reading makes sense, a problem with this interpretation is that, according to Stek, Psalm 75 is not a royal psalm.<sup>318</sup> In view of this, Stek opines that “[i]t seems best, then, to suppose that the speaker(s) of v. 9 recall(s) another word from the Lord.” On this interpretation “[t]he connection would be: “. . . the God of Jacob (who declares,) I will . . . .”<sup>319</sup> On this option v. 11 is a short divine oracle in which Yahweh utters his last words to the congregation, giving them the assurance that he will certainly act on their behalf.<sup>320</sup> To clearly indicate this, some Bible versions have inserted a phrase to clarify the identity

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<sup>315</sup> Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 328; J. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen*, 2: 272; Eaton, *Kingship*, 55; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:446.

<sup>316</sup> Stek, *NIV Study Bible*, 870.

<sup>317</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 55. Tate (*Psalms 51-100*, 258) also allows for this position. However, his first option is to read v. 11 as a short oracle.

<sup>318</sup> Stek, *NIV Study Bible*, 870.

<sup>319</sup> Stek, *NIV Study Bible*, 870.

<sup>320</sup> Cf. Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, 2: 20; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 259; Broyle, *Psalms*, 311; Hossfeld, *Psalms 2*, 254 and 257.

of the speaker. The NAB, for example, inserts the words, “who has said.” Moreover, the NLT inserts the words “For God says.” and the TNIV the phrase, “who says.”

With respect to the four solutions to the problem, options 1 and 2 do not have manuscript evidence and can, therefore, be discounted. It is more difficult, however, to make a choice between the third and fourth options. Nevertheless, we have opted for the fourth explanation for the following reasons. First, in view of v. 8c, it is clear that the task of exalting the righteous (v. 11b) belongs to God. Second, in Hab 3:18-19 we encounter a similar sequence. In Hab 3:18 the prophet resolves to praise the Lord and in v. 19 there follows a motivating clause that provides the reason for the praise.

In view of the above, we propose the following segmentation of Psalm 75: v. 2 is the voice of the congregation which praises God; in vv. 3-6 God speaks in response to the declaration of the community; in vv. 7-9, a cultic prophet admonishes the community based upon God’s response; in v. 10 a cultic prophet resolves to praise the God of Jacob (v. 10); and, finally, in v. 11 God speaks again, reaffirming that he will execute justice.<sup>321</sup> As we see it, the segmentation of Psalm 75 in the table above aims to demonstrate the intricate interplay between speakers in the poem. The speeches are towards Yahweh (v. 2) and about Yahweh (vv. 7-9c), towards the ungodly (vv. 5-6) and about the ungodly (vv. 9de, 11a), as much as from the congregation (v. 2) and to the congregation (vv. 3-4, 7-11).

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<sup>321</sup> Cf. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody*, 321; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 257.

### 3.7 Compositional Structure Outline

On the basis of our segmentation of the basic sense unit of Psalm 75 we are now in a position to propose a structural outline of this poem. In this outline we have assigned a speech functions to each section, which, in turn, will serve as the basis for the classification of the literary genre of Psalm 75. The outline is as follows:

- A. Declaration of praise by the congregation (v. 2);
- B. First divine oracle (vv. 3-4)
- C. Divine admonition against the arrogant/wicked (vv. 5-6)
- D. Prophetic confirmation of the divine admonition (vv. 7-9)
- E. Vow to Praise (v. 10)
- F. Concluding divine oracle (v. 11).

### 3.8 Definition of the Literary Genre

The outline of the compositional structure of Psalm 75 has identified five different speech functions: declaration of praise, divine oracle, divine admonition, a vow of praise and a concluding divine oracle. Because these speech functions do not fit in the outline of the literary genres that Gunkel has proposed for the Psalter, commentators rightly find it difficult to assign Psalm 75 to one of these literary genres.<sup>322</sup> Consequently, various classifications have been proposed. Gunkel himself, for example, classified Psalm 75 a “prophetic liturgy.”<sup>323</sup> Mowinckel’s position is similar to that of Gunkel. Mowinckel

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<sup>322</sup> E.g. Hossfeld, *Psalms 2*, 253-255; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 257.

<sup>323</sup> Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 251, 291.

discusses Psalm 75 in connection with the enthronement psalms,<sup>324</sup> which, according to Mowinckel, were performed in the festival of New Year and enthronement. According to Mowinckel, the enthronement psalms in the strict sense of the term were performed for the enthronement of Yahweh as the king of the world.<sup>325</sup> Alongside of these psalms, Mowinckel claims that a group of “prophetic psalms” with promises for the people were also sung at this festival.<sup>326</sup> Psalm 75 is one of these psalms.<sup>327</sup> Moreover, like Gunkel, Mowinckel treats Psalm 75 in connection with psalms that have a mixed style and are, therefore, liturgical compositions that were connected to a series of cultic acts, namely, the lamentation, oracles, and final thanksgiving.<sup>328</sup> In Mowinckel’s opinion, Psalm 75 belongs to this sequence. Preceded by the lament in Psalm 74, this festal hymn recalls the divine oracle and on its basis builds up the doxology and the expression of confidence in victory.<sup>329</sup> Against Gunkel’s classification, Gerstenberger minimizes the prophetic and liturgical elements of Psalm 75. For Gerstenberger, the lack of introductory formula denies a “freshly received oracle,” and the liturgical classification of the poem “betray a heightened sensitivity over against changing voices and worship liturgies.”<sup>330</sup> Thus,

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<sup>324</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW* 1:142, 143, n. 114, 150-151.

<sup>325</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 1:149-152.

<sup>326</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:63.

<sup>327</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:64.

<sup>328</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:74-78, especially p. 75.

<sup>329</sup> Mowinckel, *PIW*, 2:76.

<sup>330</sup> Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 2 and Lamentations*, 84.

Gerstenberger suggests that Psalm 75 is an exhortation.<sup>331</sup> Hossfeld suggests that Psalm 75 is a “literary prayer of a theologian,” giving emphasis to the individual elements in the poem (vv. 5-6, 10).<sup>332</sup> As we have noted above, for Eaton Psalm 75 is a royal psalm because he segments vv. 5-11 as the word of a king.<sup>333</sup> Against Eaton, however, we will show below that Psalm 75 has many lexical parallels with the canonical prophets, a position that is accepted by many scholars.<sup>334</sup>

Of these options, we agree with Gunkel that Psalm 75 is a prophetic liturgy. In support of the fact that it is a liturgy we call attention to the switch in speakers throughout the poem, as well as the change in addressees. In support of classifying it as a prophetic liturgy we have already alluded to several significant parallels between Psalm 75 and prophetic literature. In our section on intertextual analysis below we will provide further parallels.

### 3.9 Sitz-im-Leben

As a consequence of the previous step in which the literary genre was defined, we defend a cult functional usage of Psalm 75 in Ancient Israel as its *Sitz-im-Leben*. The similarities with Habakkuk, which will be demonstrated in more detail later, substantiate an assumption that it was performed in the Israelite cult with the assistance of cultic

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<sup>331</sup> Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 2 and Lamentations*, 83-84.

<sup>332</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 254-255.

<sup>333</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 55-56.

<sup>334</sup> E.g. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 336, 342; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 257-258; Kraus, *Psalms*, 103-104; Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*, 118; Cf. Hilbert, *Cultic Prophecy*, 167-168.

prophets.<sup>335</sup> In addition to that, Tate correctly explains that v. 2 “clearly gives a place in public worship,” because the congregation of Israel addresses Yahweh.<sup>336</sup>

### 3.10 Historical and Cultural Analysis

As for the historical date and occasion of Psalm 75, Tate is right when he affirms that there is nothing in poem itself to connect it with a specific historical event.<sup>337</sup> Our brief history of interpretation of Psalm 75 in chapter 1 has demonstrated that that are basically two positions. The older and traditional position is to argue for a pre-exilic date.

Hengstenberg and Delitzsch, for example, assign the psalm to the period of the Assyrian threat against Jerusalem.<sup>338</sup> A more recent scholar, Michael D. Goulder, agrees with them.

In his opinion, Psalm 75 was composed during the period of the Assyrian invasion (around 720 BC), together with the other Asaphite psalms.<sup>339</sup> However, since the

beginning of Higher Criticism, others have argued for an exilic or post-exilic date.<sup>340</sup>

More recently, for example, Gerstenberger defended this position.<sup>341</sup> With respect to these two options, we agree with the first option on the basis of the compelling evidence

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<sup>335</sup> Cf. Kraus, *Psalms*, 103-104; Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 257-258.

<sup>336</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 257-258.

<sup>337</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 258.

<sup>338</sup> Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 429; Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 337.

<sup>339</sup> Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, 84-85.

<sup>340</sup> E.g. Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 1:128; Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2:1, Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 286, 290-291; Terrien, *The Psalms*, 546.

<sup>341</sup> Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part 2 and Lamentations*, 84.

presented by Stephen L. Cook. Cook calls attention to the impressive amount of similarities between the Psalms of Asaph and canonical prophets Hosea,<sup>342</sup> Habakkuk<sup>343</sup> and Jeremiah<sup>344</sup> from the pre-exilic period. Moreover, Cook notes that Kraus, Martin J. Buss, Nasuti, Graham I. Davies and Goulder “have conclusively established the provenance of the Asaphite psalms. It lies in pre-722 B.C.E., north-Israelite cultic worship of Yahweh.”<sup>345</sup> In our opinion, the reference to the “God of Jacob” in v. 10 corroborates the assumption that the poem originated in the north-Israelite cult.<sup>346</sup> In view of the above, although there is not enough data for assuring a specific period for the composition of Psalm 75, this poem fits well in a pre-exilic, or exilic period. This assumption favors the relationship of Psalm 75 with cultic prophecy because, as we have already demonstrated in chapter 2, there are compelling O.T. passages referring to pre-exilic events that denote cult prophetic activities. Consequently, we distance our position from with respect to the date of Psalm 75 from Gunkel’s post-exilic eschatological interpretation of the so called “prophetic psalms” like Psalm 75.

### 3.11 Contextual Analysis

In this step we will analyze Psalm 75 in its context in order to verify if its position in the Psalter can bring further data related to its interpretation and consequently to our

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<sup>342</sup> For the similarities between the Asaphite Psalms and Hosea, see Stephen L. Cook, *The Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism* (SBLStB1 8; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 236-238.

<sup>343</sup> For the similarities between Habakkuk and Psalm 75, see Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 129-130.

<sup>344</sup> For the similarities between Psalm 75 and the book of Jeremiah, see Terrien, *The Psalms*, 546.

<sup>345</sup> Cook, *The Social Roots*, 237.

<sup>346</sup> The divine epithet “God of Jacob” occurs 9 times in the Psalter: Pss 20:2; 46:8, 12; 75:10; 76:7; 81:2,5; 84:9 and 94:9. Of these, 7 occur in Asaphite psalms.

assumption that this poem derives from cultic prophecy. To that end, we will analyze Psalm 75 in four literary contexts. The first is the immediate context in which we will study the connection between Psalm 75 with the preceding and the following poem. The second context is the remote context, in which we will examine the connections of Psalm 75 with the psalms of two collections to which it belongs, namely, the Asaphite collection and Book III of the Psalter. The third context is the Psalter as a whole. Finally, we will examine the connections between Psalm 75 and the other books of the O.T. and the N.T.

### 3.11.1 Immediate Context

Psalm 75 shares several important lexical terms and themes with the psalms in its immediate context, i.e., Pss 74 and 76. With respect to the relationship between Pss 74-75,<sup>347</sup> Delitzsch noted the logical sequence between Pss 74 and 75 as prayer (Psalm 74) and answer (Psalm 75). He rightly affirms that “[t]hat for which Ps. lxxiv. prays: Arise, Jahve, plead Thine own cause (vers. 22 sq.), Ps. lxxv. beholds.”<sup>348</sup> McCann reaches a similar conclusion. He first calls attention to the repetition of the term “name” in Pss 74:10, 18, 21 and 75:2 and then he notes that “it is almost as if 75:2-5, 10 is a direct response to the petitions in 74:18-23.”<sup>349</sup> Like Delitzsch and McCann, Hossfeld also points out that the oracles in Psalm 75 (vv. 3-6, 11) are the answers to the questions of

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<sup>347</sup> Another excellent analysis of the relationship between Pss 74 and 75 was made by Robert L. Cole, *The Shape and Message of Book III* (JSOTSup 307; Sheffield: Sheffield, 2000), 37-45.

<sup>348</sup> Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 336.

<sup>349</sup> McCann, “Psalms,” 4:976.

Psalm 74 (vv. 9-11).<sup>350</sup> Moreover, like McCann, Hossfeld also points to the fact that the name theology forms a strong link between Pss 74 and 75.<sup>351</sup> Furthermore, according to Hossfeld, the image of Yahweh as creator who destroys the chaotic forces and establishes the earth for human habitation in Psalm 74: 12-17 finds correspondence in the image of God as the one who established the cosmic order in Psalm 75:4. On the basis of these and other links, we agree, therefore with Delitzsch, McCann and Hossfeld that Psalm 75 functions as the answer to the lament of Psalm 74.

As for the canonical connection between Pss 75 and 76, it is important to note the repetition of three important motifs in each of these psalms: 1) the name of Yahweh in 75:2 and 76:2; 2) the theme of Yahweh as judge in 75:3-4 and 76:9-10; and 3) the reference to Yahweh as the “God of Jacob” in 75:10 and 76:6.

According to Stek, Pss 75-76 stand at the center of Pss 73-78. However, the fact that Pss 74, 75 and 76 share the important theme of the divine name and other connections between these psalms pointed out by Hossfeld, Cole, and Jensen suggest that in the present location in the Psalter these psalms demonstrate a development from lament and lack of hope to praise and confidence in Yahweh. Cole, for example, states:

Psalm 75 promised that God had chosen a time to judge the wicked, and now in the following 76 we see a more detailed and vivid outworking of those words. At the same time, each point of Psalm 74 is being answered by 75 and 76.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 255, 257. Notice that for Hossfeld the first divine speech goes only from vv. 3-4.

<sup>351</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 258.

<sup>352</sup> Cole, *The Shape and Message*, 49.

Significantly, Jensen expands on the thematic sequential relationship between these three psalms by relating them to Psalm 73, which is the opening poem of Book III. Jensen summarizes his arguments as follows:

In its present position in the Psalter, Psalm 75 serves as a transition between Psalm 74 and Psalm 76. Together, in sequence, the three psalms develop the progression in the preceding Psalm 73 that begins with a reflection upon the apparent prosperity of the wicked and concludes as a meditation on their disastrous fate. The transition from doubt to faith comes in 73:17 with a revelatory experience in the sanctuary... Psalm 74 relates to Ps 73:1-16 and Psalm 76 to 73:18-28, with Psalm 75 corresponding to the described revelatory experience of 73:17.<sup>353</sup>

Later Jensen also notes that:

The sequence of the linked Psalms 74, 75, and 76 extends and develops the progression in Psalm 73 from doubt, to presence, to faith. Those praying move from absence to presence, from humiliation to pride, from defeat to victory, from lament to praise to celebration.<sup>354</sup>

Thus, not only the lexical connections but also the development of themes is noticeable in these psalms. This development highlights the coherence of a divine participation in Psalm 75 because it is placed where it addresses the inquiries of the preceding psalm and provides the motivation for the praise and confidence of the next.

### 3.11.2 Remote Context

Psalm 75 is part of the Asaphite psalms (Pss 50, 73-83) and of Book III of the Psalter (Pss 73-89). Stek suggests that Book III is divided into three groupings of psalms (73-78, 79-83, 84-89).<sup>355</sup> Stek suggests a chiasmic structure for the first group (Pss 73-78).

<sup>353</sup> Joseph E. Jensen, "Psalm 75: Its Poetic Context and Structure," *CBQ* 63: 418-419.

<sup>354</sup> Joseph E. Jensen, "Psalm 75: Its Poetic Context and Structure," *CBQ* 63: 419.

<sup>355</sup> John H. Stek, "Psalms," *The NIV Study Bible*. (ed. Kenneth Barker. Grand Rapids: Zondervan,

According to Stek, Pss 73 and 78 are psalms of instruction that frame Pss 73-78. Within this frame Psalm 74 is a communal lament that is linked with with Psalm 77, an individual lament. Finally, Pss 75 and 76 constitute the center of Pss 73-78. Together they “express joyful assurance that Israel’s God...calls the arrogant wicked to account and rescues their victims...”<sup>356</sup> An argument in favor of this central position of Psalm 75 in Pss 73-78 could be the lexical connections between Pss 73 and 75 to which McCann and Hossfeld have called our attention. McCann, for example, points to the following lexical connections between Pss 73 and 75: “near” and “tell” in 73:28 and 75:2; “arrogant” and “wicked” in 73:3, 12 and 75:4, 8, 10.<sup>357</sup> Moreover, Hossfeld points out a lexical connection in the petition for lifting up of the divine steps in 74:3 with the exaltation in 75:7.<sup>358</sup>

With respect to these Asaphite psalms, it is important to note for the purpose of this thesis that, according to Hilber, the Asaphite psalms “have frequently been characterized as containing prophetic material.”<sup>359</sup> Among the Asaphite psalms, Psalm 75 shares with Pss 50, 81, and 82 oracular speeches from Yahweh. This prophetic trend carries with it the image of Yahweh as the judge of his people (Pss 50:4; 81:8-16) and of the wicked (Pss 50:16-22; 75:5-6, 9). Even the heavenly powers are judged by him (Ps 82). The theme of judgment over Israel and over the enemies (the wicked) of his people is

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1985), 866.

<sup>356</sup> Stek, “*Psalms*,” 866.

<sup>357</sup> McCann, “*Psalms*,” 4:976.

<sup>358</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 257. Cf. Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, 440, 442.

<sup>359</sup> Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 128.

observable throughout the whole collection of the Asaphite psalms,<sup>360</sup> and, as part of this collection, Psalms 75 also reflects this theme in the whole extent of the composition (Psalm 75:2-3, 8-9, 11).

### 3.11.3 Context of the Psalter

Some of the motifs found in Psalm 75 also occur in many other parts of the Psalter. Yahweh appoints the time for justice and mercy (Pss 75:3; 102:13); He comes for judgment (Pss 75:3; 96:13; 98:9); even if the earth quakes (Pss 75:4; 18:7; 46:3), Yahweh sustains its pillars (Ps 24:1-2; 104:5); Yahweh destroys the wicked and arrogant (Pss 75:4-5, 8-11; 5:5-7; 92); He lifts up the horn of the righteous (Pss 75:8,11; 92:11; 148:14). The tension between the fate of the wicked and the fate of the righteous in Psalm 1 is echoed in Psalm 75—especially in the conclusion of both psalms (1:6; 75:11). In view of these shared themes, we can conclude that Psalm 75 brings a message that is common throughout the Psalter, namely, the contrasting fates of the wicked and the righteous. In relation to both groups, Psalm 75 presents Yahweh as the righteous judge who promises to bring justice at his appointed time.

### 3.11.4 Canonical Context

The close connection between Psalm 75 and the prophecies of Habakkuk and the Song Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10) is evident. The association with Habakkuk's prophecies is evident, first of all, from the fact that both texts relate the action of Yahweh (for doing justice) with the "appointed time" that he establishes (Psalm 75:3; Hab 2:3). Second, it is also evident from the reference to the cup of wrath in the hand of Yahweh in both texts

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<sup>360</sup> Stek, *NIV Study Bible*, 860; Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, 34.

(Psalm 75:9; Hab 2:15-16). Third, it is also obvious from the fact that Yahweh will vindicate the righteous by promoting justice on earth (Psalm 75:3-6; Hab 2:1-4).

The correlation between Psalm 75 with 1 Sam 2:1-10 is remarkable. Thematic and lexical connections are evident. Hossfeld summarizes the relationship between these two texts as follows:

[T]he horn as symbol of power (75:5–6, 11; 1 Sam 2:1b); the insolent talk of the enemies (75:6; 1 Sam 2:3); the God who casts down and lifts up (75:8; 1 Sam 2:7); the fixing of the world on pillars (75:4; 1 Sam 2:8); the opposition of the pious and the wicked (cf. 75:11; 1 Sam 2:9), although in Psalm 75 without the piety of the poor in 1 Sam 2:7–8; the motif of God the universal judge (75:3–4, 7–8; 1 Sam 2:10), but in Psalm 75 without the theophany motifs in 1 Sam 2:10; the similarity of the two concluding formulas (75:11; 1 Sam 2:10b), though in Psalm 75 without the concentration on the anointed king that is present in 1 Sam 2:10b.<sup>361</sup>

Some of these themes are also found elsewhere in the OT: 1) the sovereignty of Yahweh over the foundations of the earth (Psalm 75:4; Isa 24:18; Job 9:6; 38:4); 2) the presence of the name of Yahweh with his people (Psalm 75:2; Deut 12:5, 11); 3) the appointment of an appropriate time set by Yahweh (Psalm 75:3; Dan 8:19; 11:27, 29, 35); 4) disobedience and wickedness pictured as “stiff” or “arrogant neck” (Psalm 75:6; Exod 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut 9:6, 13; 31:27); 5) the anger of Yahweh symbolized by his cup with wine (Psalm 75:9; Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15–16; Ezek 23:31–34); 6) lifting up the horn which stands for being exalted (Psalm 75:5–8, 11; Lam 2:17; Zech 2:2–4); and 7) humiliation and loss of power (Psalm 75:5–8, 11; Lam 2:3; Jer 48:25).<sup>362</sup>

Some of these themes are also echoed in the NT. Consider, for example, the establishment of time for judgment (Psalm 75:3; Acts 1:7; 17:31), the ungodly speaking

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<sup>361</sup> Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 257.

<sup>362</sup> See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 256.

with arrogance (Psalm 75:6; Acts 7:51), Yahweh humiliating the wicked and exalting the lowly (Psalm 75:8, 11; Luke 1:52). The book of Revelation carries the same description of Yahweh's wrath in a cup (Psalm 75:9; Rev 14:10; 16:19; 18:6).

### **3.12 Psalm 75 and Cultic Prophecy**

Our analysis of the O.T. canonical context of Psalm 75 has brought to light various liturgical and prophetic elements. At this point of our analysis it is necessary to probe these elements a bit deeper in order to discover if Psalm 75 has internal evidence that argues for the thesis that it is derived from the participation of cult prophets in ancient Israel's worship. In our judgment, there are significant data in the composition of the text as well as the fact that Psalm 75 belongs to the collection of the Asaphite psalms that corroborate the thesis that Psalm 75 is the result of cult prophecy. Concerning the Asaphite collection, we have already demonstrated their close relationship with the Ephraimite prophetic tradition. Now we will focus our attention on the connection between Psalm 75 and prophetic literature in order to demonstrate the similarities between Psalm 75 and prophetic literature. In our judgment, these similarities argue for the participation of a prophet in the performance of Psalm 75 in the cult of ancient Israel.

#### **3.12.1 Similarities with Prophetic Literature**

As we observed in our close reading of Psalm 75 above, we have classified this psalm as a prophetic liturgy since liturgical and prophetic elements are evident in the text. In support of this classification, we have gathered the various cross-references between Psalm 75 and prophetic literature in Table 8 below:

**Table 8. Similarities between Psalm 75 and prophetic literature**

Psalm 75:3	the appointment of an appropriate time set by Yahweh	Dan 8:19; 11:27, 29, 35; Zeph 3:8
Psalm 75:4	the sovereignty of Yahweh over the foundations and the trembling of the earth	Isa 24:18; Amos 8:8; 9:5-6; Nah 1:5
Psalm 75:5-8, 11	lifting up the horn which stands for being exalted; humiliation and loss of power	Lam 2:17; Zech 2:2-4; Lam 2:3; Jer 48:25; Ezek 34:21.
Psalm 75:9	the anger of Yahweh symbolized by his cup with wine; The rare phrase “all the wicked of the earth.”	Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15–17, 27–29; 49:12–13; 51:6–10; 51:39; 51:57; Ezek 7:21; 23:31-34
Psalm 75:11	The cutting of the horn of the wicked	Zech 2:4 [EB 1:21]; Jer 48:25

With respect to the cross-references, it should be noted, first of all, that Tournay has pointed out the connection between Psalm 75 and the vision of Zech 2:1-4 where four horns represent the power of the enemy that will send Judah to the four cardinal points.<sup>363</sup> Although only three instead of four cardinal points of the globe are mentioned in Psalm 75:7, the relationship is evident in view of the use of the horn to illustrate the power of the enemy (Psalm 75:5-6; Zech 2:1, 4), as well as the idea behind the phrase “lift up of the head” (Psalm 75:5-6, 8; Zech 2:4).

Moreover, the parallels between Psalm 75 and Jeremiah’s oracle against Moab in chapter 48 are also noteworthy. As in Psalm 75:3, the action of Yahweh against Moab described in Jer 48:12 (also implied in v. 16) is a matter of time. The accusation against Moab is its boasting (Psalm 75:4-8; Jer 48:26, 29-30, 42). The imperative to make Moab drunk in order to punish it resembles the vision of the cup in the hand of Yahweh from which the wicked will drink (Psalm 75:9; Jer 48:26). Significantly, the uncommon noun

<sup>363</sup> Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing*, 183.

שִׁמְרָה (“dregs”), which occurs only five times in the MT, appears in both texts (Psalm 75:9; Jer 48:11). These significant parallels between Psalm 75 and Jeremiah’s oracles, together with other texts that mentions the metaphor of the cup of the wrath,<sup>364</sup> substantiate Gerald L. Keown’s affirmation that “the cup of wrath always indicates the certainty of divine judgment.”<sup>365</sup>

Another remarkable correspondence between Psalm 75 and prophetic literature is in the book of Habakkuk. As we have shown above in our analysis of the Canonical Context of Psalm 75, Jörg Jeremias has demonstrated convincingly the close connection between the two compositions by showing that: 1) the action of Yahweh in order to establish justice revolves around the “appointed time” that he has stipulated (cf. Psalm 75:3, Hab 2:3); 2) Yahweh will vindicate the righteous by promoting justice on earth (Psalm 75:3-6; Hab 2:1-4); 3) Yahweh brings together the deeds of the wicked in Israel and the breakdown of world order in redemptive context (Psalm 75:4; Hab 3:17); and 4) the cup of wrath in the hand of Yahweh is envisioned in both text (Psalm 75:9; Hab 2:15-16). Furthermore, because Jeremias understands that Psalm 75 was originally a lament, he interprets Psalm 75:11 to be a certainty of hearing and links it with Hab 3:18-19.<sup>366</sup> However, in our opinion, the assumption that Psalm 75 was originally a lament is not needed to link the conclusion of Psalm 75 with Habakkuk. As we have argued above, v. 11 is the voice of God. In this verse God reiterates that he will act soon on behalf of the

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<sup>364</sup> Ezek 23:31-35; Lam 4:21; Isa 51:17-23; Hab 2:15-17; Zech 12:2; Obad 15-16; Ps 11:6; Ps 60:5.

<sup>365</sup> Gerald L. Keown, *Jeremiah 26-52* (WBC 27; Dallas: Word, 2002), 316. See also his valuable Excursus on “The Cup of Wrath” on pages 277–278.

<sup>366</sup> Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*, 118-119.

righteous. Nevertheless, v. 10 is indeed the voice of a liturgist who makes his vows before God, just like Habakkuk does in 3:18.

Additionally, Jeremias argues, first of all, that the intervention of Yahweh as judge in his appointed hastening (see v.3, v. 8) and his declaration of an ultimate warning (75:5-8) to the guilty in Israel are conceivable only from the mouth of a prophet. Moreover, he argues that on the basis of form (portrayal of the state of affairs; action of Yahweh; consequence for the threatened ones) and of content (shaken of the earth; cup in Yahweh's hand— cf. Jer 25, Hab 2:16)—, the announcement of judgment in Psalm 75:9 is of prophetic origin.<sup>367</sup>

In view of the above connections between Psalm 75 and the writings of the canonical prophets, we infer that there is a close connection between Psalm 75 and prophetic literature. As we see it, this close connection and the fact that Psalm 75 contains an unmarked quotation of a divine speech argue for the hypothesis that Psalm 75 is a liturgical psalm in which a cult prophet participated.

### 3.13 Conclusions

Based on the above close reading of Psalm 75, we have demonstrated there is a close connection between the psalm content and form, and prophetic literature. The considerable number of parallels between Psalm 75 and the oracles from prophetic literature substantiates the prophetic nature of the composition. Some oracles from Jeremiah and Habakkuk are particularly similar. Of particular importance is the fact that the visionary description of a cup in the hand of Yahweh finds parallels only in the

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<sup>367</sup> Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung*, 118-119.

description of prophetic experiences. Other compositional features such as the issue of an ultimatum and a declaration of the coming humiliation and destruction upon the wicked are also characteristically prophetic. These data argue for the prophetic character of the content of Psalm 75. Another argument in favor of the hypothesis that Psalm 75 is a prophetic liturgy is the presence of divine speeches in this psalm: vv. 3-4, 5-6 and 11. Based on Nasuti's hypothesis, we would argue that the unmarked quotations of first person divine speech in vv. 3-4 and v. 11 support the claim that a prophet participated in the performance of Psalm 75 in the cult. The subtle change of speaker and switch in addressee(s) in Psalm 75 also indicates its liturgical nature of Psalm 75. In our opinion, all these elements substantiate the thesis that Psalm 75 is derived from cultic prophecy.

### 3.14 The Message of Psalm 75

To hear the message of Psalm 75, it is important to define the rhetorical function of God quotations in this poem.<sup>368</sup> According to Jacobson, "one of the primary uses to which the psalms put God quotations is the construction of an ordered, ethical society."<sup>369</sup> In our opinion, the God quotation in vv. 3-4 gives the community of the saints a word of assurance and comfort. Although things may not be going well (Psalm 74), Yahweh is not absent. On the contrary, he is aware of what is happening in the world and, more than that, he will bring justice to its full meaning at the right time, in the right manner. The purpose of the God quotation in vv. 5-6 is, in the words of Jacobson, "to encourage proper behaviour (behaviour beneficial to society) and to discourage improper behaviour

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<sup>368</sup> Jacobson, *Many are Saying*, ' 124-125.

<sup>369</sup> Jacobson, *Many are Saying*, ' 125.

(behaviour that would damage society).<sup>370</sup> The admonition in vv. 5-6 is enforced in vv. 7-9 by promising punishment to those who misbehave. The final God quotation in v. 11 reminds the wicked of punishment and promises rewards to the righteous.

As a result of the God quotations, the whole poem renders a striking powerful message because it pictures Yahweh himself coming to the worshipping community. He comes to assure them that he is the one who maintains the stability of the foundations of the world, he is the one who brings balance to the human society and, therefore, at the appropriate moment he will act. Such a message, coming from the mouth of a prophet, provides an existential experience with Yahweh in the cult, instead of a simple remembrance of remote promises. The prophet, in the same vein testifies to the justice of their God and describes the vision of the divine judgment. The prophet describes that Yahweh is already beginning to bring condemnation to the wicked, as he pours from his foamed wine. The wicked may have tasted just a sip, but they will drink it till its dregs, and they will be drunk, and out of control, those who have threatened the stability of the earth will be unstable, and in such a helpless state they will be destroyed.

In our opinion, the aim of the vow of the liturgist in v. 10 is to encourage the worshipping community to joyful participation in the praise of this God. Its purpose appears to be to lead them from lament of Psalm 74 via the assurance of God's words in Psalm 75 to the praise of Psalm 76.

For the modern reader of Psalm 75, the poem presents a God who is present and mindful of the situation of those who seek for him. He is not a distant God who has only

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<sup>370</sup> Jacobson, *Many are Saying*, 125.

ancient promises to his people, but a God who is alive in the history of those who walk with him.

In our discussion of Psalm 75 immediate context we have demonstrated that its position in the Psalter leads to a liturgical sequence with Pss 74 and 76. In this sequence Psalm 75 answers the laments of Psalm 74:1, 10-11a:

Why have you rejected us forever, O God?

How long, O God, will the adversary hurl insults?

Will the enemy blaspheme your name forever?

Why do you remain inactive?

To the community that did not see any sign of Yahweh's presence (Psalm 74:9), he speaks actively in Psalm 75 through a prophet. The "how long" is answered with an affirmation that at the appropriated time justice will come. Yahweh affirms that he is not inactive; his intervention has already begun and soon will become evident. In Psalm 75 he ensures that he will answer their laments; he will destroy the wicked. Psalm 76 is a response of the community to the manifestation of Yahweh in Psalm 75. In the opening words of Psalm 76:1, "In Judah God is known," the community affirms that their God is present in their lives. The community confesses that Yahweh is coming as a warrior to destroy the enemies (76:3-6). They recall that from heaven Yahweh announced judgment and that, as a result, the land feared when he rose up and delivered the oppressed (76:8-9).

Therefore, Psalm 75 emphasizes the nearness of Yahweh through a direct intervention in listening and answering the plea of his people. His manifestation will bring justice and stability to the earth.

## CONCLUSION

In defending the thesis that Psalm 75 is the result of the participation of cult prophets in the worship of Israel we started studying how this poem have been interpreted throughout history. We began by observing how the different schools of interpretation have approached Psalm 75. We briefly explained how some church fathers, protestant reformers, historical critical, grammatical-historical-theological, source critical, form critical, rhetorical critical and canonical critical scholars interpreted Psalm 75. With this overview of diverse schools of interpretation, we evaluated their contribution to solve the exegetical difficulties of Psalm 75. Recognizing that each school interpretation has features that contribute to the interpretation of this poem, we concluded that a multiplicity of methods should be adopted in your own interpretation of Psalm 75. Additionally, we argued that Gunkel's form critical method and, above all, Mowinckel's cult functional approach provides the necessary features to satisfactory explain the switches in speakers and addressees in liturgical psalms like Psalm 75. In view of that, we found it necessary to evaluate Mowinckel's evidence for his cultic prophecy hypothesis.

In chapter 2 we studied the cultic prophecy theory beginning by delineating the disagreement between Mowinckel and Gunkel and Begrich, which shaped the ongoing scholarly debate about this important topic in relationship to the Psalter. After presenting Mowinckel's and Gunkel's position on the debate, we surveyed the positions of those who supported either Mowinckel or Gunkel in the continuing debate, as well as those who took a middle position. In the third section of chapter 2 we presented our own position about five unsolved issues in the ongoing debate about cultic prophecy: 1) the relationship between priests and prophets; 2) the association of prophets with cultic shrines; 3) the

relationship between cultic prophets and canonical prophets; 4) the relationship between prophetic inspiration and the composition of the prophetic psalms and their performance in the cult; and 5) the question concerning the period in which cultic prophecy existed in Israel. We concluded our own evaluation the key issues on the interpretation of Psalm 75 and, consequently, we conclude chapter 2 by arguing that cultic prophecy is a valid approach to interpret the so-called “prophetic psalms” in the Psalter. Additionally we indicated that we were going to use: 1) 2 Chron 20 as an example of the participation of prophets in a cultic situation in ancient Israel; and 2) Nasuti’s distinction between quoted and unquoted divine speech.

In chapter 3 we applied various exegetical methods used by the different schools of interpretation that we outlined in chapter 1. Therefore we applied the gramatico-historical-theological method along with form critical, cult functional, rhetorical critical and canonical approaches to execute a close reading of Psalm 75. Through this exercise we could substantiate that the unquoted divine speeches in its composition is better interpreted as resultant from the participation of prophets in the cult in Israel. More than that, not only the divine speeches but also the vocabulary, the structure, and motifs on this psalm evidence traces of a prophetic tradition in its composition. Consequently, there are no convincing arguments to defend that the divine speeches in Psalm 75 are not genuinely prophetic. In view of the above, we concluded that there is substantial evidence to suggest that this poem is the result of the participation of cult prophets in the worship of ancient Israel.

The results of the present thesis may contribute to a deeper appreciation of Psalm 75 as witness of a divinity who is present and active in the life of his people. The experience of an immediate presence of Yahweh during the cult in response to the worship of the community portrays a sense of intimacy between Yahweh and his people. Such understanding defies the life of many traditional Christian communities which, although they may have a theology of a divine presence in the cult, its cultic practice seems to deny it, placing God as distant and, many times, a God who does not have to act or to speak today because he has done everything already, in the past. Psalm 75 should be seen as a challenge to those standing behind the pulpits so that they may present the nearness of God. Let them show God's care for those who call on his name and wait for his kingdom to come and for his will to be done. May the preachers show a God who not only worked in the past for his people, but also cares for their present struggles and sufferings. Also, Psalm 75 should stimulate preachers to speak of a God who admonishes those who are wicked, and promises judgment for those who do not repent from their wrong ways. Finally, this psalm should bring the Christian community to cry for God's justice in this world of so much injustice.

Further studies should be dedicated to psalms, in particular the Asaphite Psalms, and cultic prophecy. For instance, Psalms 50 and 81 and 82 should also be analyzed in comparison with cultic prophecy. Different from Psalm 75, Psalms 50 and 81 present divine speeches addressed primarily to the people of God, while Psalm 82 addresses the heavenly beings, the sons of Elyon. Nevertheless, in these four psalms of Asaph, God is always admonishing admonition. The assumption that when God speaks in the psalms in

the first person, he speaks with admonition should be explored. The search for a pattern on first person divine utterances on the psalms may also contribute to the debate on cultic prophecy.

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