



Editorial Activity in the Psalter: A State-of-the-Field Survey

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The question of editorial activity in the Psalter is one that has received very little attention in the history of Psalms studies. For the most part, it has been ignored in favor of other, more pressing concerns. The general consensus has been that there is no discernible “plan” behind the order and arrangement of the present Psalter, that the psalms have fallen into their present places by accident or by the “illogic” of the liturgies in which they were used. Most commentaries or introductions have brief sections wherein the various collections within the Psalter may be noted, but no real attempt is made to account for these. The question of relationships between individual neighboring psalms or among groups of psalms has been largely ignored. Even when students of the Psalter have been concerned with connections among psalms, their attention rarely has been focused exclusively on this issue; the results usually have been meager.

In recent years, however, interest has begun to focus on these questions, reviving an interest that had been present among a few earlier scholars. There is a concern for discovering the editorial processes that may have gone into the formation of the Psalter in its present form. Many have studied the issues, both on the higher level of concern over the final form of the Psalter and the lower level of interest in relationships between psalms and among groupings of psalms.

This essay is intended to survey the state of the field in this area and to highlight some common ground held by the many scholars working on these questions. It briefly surveys the mainstream approaches and then focuses on studies dealing in some way with editorial activity. This new interest in editorial activity clearly is related to the current trend in biblical studies toward unitary, literary, and “canonical” readings of the Bible. It is

particularly a challenge in Psalms studies, however, due to the obvious independent and self-contained nature of the individual psalms. Despite this, many advances are being made and much can be said about the concerns of the Psalter’s editors.

I. MAINSTREAM APPROACHES TO PSALMS STUDY

The rabbis and early Christian commentators traditionally were more interested in questions of inter-psalm relationships than were later Christian scholars. Their works especially reflected attention to key-word links between consecutive psalms (concatenation).¹ Often, these links involved key words at the end of one psalm and the beginning of the next.²

In Christian circles prior to the rise of modern critical scholarship, the interest in the Psalms was largely dominated by allegorical or messianic concerns.³ With the rise of critical scholarship in the nineteenth century, interest shifted to the historical backgrounds of the biblical

materials, including radical reconstruction of the biblical text.⁴

Modern Psalms study was radically reshaped by the well-known work of H. Gunkel.⁵ Now the attention was focused on the forms (i.e., genres) of individual psalms, and attention was paid to the *Sitze im Leben* that gave rise to each form. But, since the canonical Psalter is not arranged according to genre, Gunkel and his followers had to gather together psalms of a particular type from throughout the Psalter for comment and discussion. At the same time, attention continued to focus, in varying degrees, on matters of authorship and historical reconstruction.

S. O. P. Mowinckel's work⁶ followed Gunkel's classifications, but cleared its own way in emphasizing the cultic background to almost all the psalms. In addition, Mowinckel's great influence has been felt in his view that the major festival in Israel was the harvest and new-year festival, the centerpiece of which was the so-called "Enthronement of YHWH" festival.

Almost all work since these two has reflected their influence. The focus has been on forms and (cultic) *Sitze im Leben*, with little interest in the question of inter-psalm links.⁷ The most that the majority of commentators has

¹J. P. Brennan, "Some Hidden Harmonies in the Fifth Book of the Psalms," in R. F. McNamara, ed., *Essays in Honor of Joseph P. Brennan* (Rochester, NY: St. Bernard's Seminary, 1976) 126.

²See U. Cassuto, "The Sequence and Arrangement of the Biblical Sections," *Biblical and Oriental Studies* I (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1973) 1-6, for a brief, but wide-ranging essay on this principle, which he termed "verbal association."

³J. M. Neale and R. F. Littledale, *A Commentary on the Psalms: From Primitive and Medieval Writers*, 3rd ed., 4 vols. (London: Joseph Masters, 1874-1879); B. K. Waltke, "A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms," in J. S. and P. D. Feinberg, eds., *Tradition and Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1981) 3-5.

⁴Representative of this period and approach are the works of G. H. A. V. Ewald, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 2 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1880); J. J. S. Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 7th ed., 2 vols. (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1890); T. K. Cheyne, *The Origins and Religious Contents of the Psalter in the Light of Old Testament Criticism and the History of Religions* (New York: Whittaker, 1891); *The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols. (London: Kegan, Paul, Touch, 1904); J. Wellhausen, *The Book of Psalms* (London: James Oark, 1898); C. A. and E. G. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906).

⁵H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht, 1926); *Einleitung in Die Psalmen*, 2nd ed., ed. J. Begrich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht, 1933).

⁶S. O. P. Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien*, 6 vols. (Kristiana [Oslo]: Jacob Dybwad, 1921-1924); *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962).

⁷Typical are the following: H. Schmidt, *Die Psalmen* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1934); J. Calès, *Le livre des Psaumes*, 5th ed., 2 vols. (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1936); W. O. E. Oesterley, *A Fresh Approach to the Psalms* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937); *The Psalms: Translated with Text-Critical and Exegetical Notes* (London: SPCK, 1939); M. Bittenwieser, *The Psalms: Chronologically Treated with a New Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1938); E. A. Leslie, *The Psalms: Translated and Interpreted in the Light of Hebrew Life and Worship* (New York: Abington, 1949); F. Notscher, *Die Psalmen* (Würzburg: Echter, 1952); M. E. J. Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols. (Dublin: Richview, 1954); A. Weiser, *The Psalms* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962); A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972); D. Kidner, *Psalms 1-150*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1973, 1975); H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, 5th ed., 2 vols. (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1978); P. C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (Waco, TX: Word, 1983). M. J. Dahood's work (*Psalms I-III* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966-1970]) represented a major departure of approach with his attention to the Ugaritic materials, but he likewise had brief sections on forms and showed no real interest in the questions of organization.

done concerning the question of the organization of the Psalter (or of portions therein) is to note the division into five “books” (Psalms 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150), marked by doxologies, and to note some of the various collections or pseudo-collections within these “books.” Examples of these are the Songs of Ascents (Psalms 120-134), the Asaphic (73-83) and Korahite (42-49, 84-85, 87-88) collections, the Elohist psalter (42-83), and the *maskil* groups (42-45, 52-55). For the most part, there has been no real interest in the internal structures of these collections, except the casual noting that they were somehow liturgical in nature. The more specific questions of organization and structure *within* these groupings have gone unaddressed in the main.

II. STUDIES DEVOTED TO INTER-PSALM RELATIONSHIPS

A. Pre-1970s

The situation has not always been this way, however, even after the rise of critical scholarship. Already in the nineteenth century, Franz Delitzsch had paid considerable attention to the connections between consecutive psalms.⁸ He saw links of thoughts or ideas between consecutive psalms, and saw these running topically throughout the Psalter. He stated that

this phenomenon, that psalms with similar prominent thoughts, or even with only markedly similar passages, especially at the beginning and the end, are thus strung together, may be observed throughout the whole collection.⁹

He saw in the arrangement of the Davidic psalms the key to the unifying motif in the book, namely, a concern with the Davidic covenant and, ultimately, a messianic concern.

J. A. Alexander’s work likewise was sensitive to links, and he devoted a major section of his introduction to the coherence within the Psalter.¹⁰ He saw the messianic motif as the overall one, with the Davidic covenant given a prominent place. He discussed several possible principles of arrangement, the most relevant one here being that juxtaposition of psalms was often due

⁸That is the major thrust of Delitzsch’s 1846 work (*Symbolae ad Psalmos illustrandos isagogicae* [Leipzig], referred to in his *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1881, repr. 1975] 1.17), and it is seen in the commentary as well (especially pp. 15-23).

⁹Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary*, 1.21.

¹⁰J. A. Alexander, *The Psalms*, 6th ed., 3 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1865) vii-xiv.

to “resemblance or identity of subject or historical occasion, or in some remarkable coincidence of general form or of particular expressions.”¹¹ He admitted that in some cases the connections are easier to see than in others, but stated that

sometimes, particularly in the latter part of the collection, we may trace not only pairs but trilogies and even more extensive systems of connected psalms, each independent of the rest, and yet together forming beautiful and striking combinations, particularly when the nucleus or basis of the series is an ancient

psalm, for instance one of David's, to which others have been added, in the way of variation or of imitation, at a later period, such as that of the Captivity.¹²

Alexander's commentary proper shows careful attention to details of possible connections between psalms, including key words, motifs, and even grammatical constructions.

Since Delitzsch and Alexander, however, very few commentaries have reflected these concerns. That of A. F. Kirkpatrick and two popular Jewish commentaries—those of A. Cohen and S. R. Hirsch—are the notable exceptions.¹³

C. Westermann's article on the formation of the Psalter also is a significant exception.¹⁴ Here he made seven distinctive observations, several of which anticipated the work of Childs and Wilson (see below). The most significant of these are: first, he noted that the collections of individual laments tend to group early in the Psalter, mainly in Books I and II, and that the great praise collections tend to group toward the end, mainly in Books IV and V;¹⁵ Second, he recognized the function of certain praise psalms in closing small collections of psalms (e.g., Psalms 18-19, 33-34, 40, 65-66, 100, 117, 134); he also noted the function of royal psalms as part of the Psalter's framework.

B. 1970s and 1980s

Recently there has emerged a more steady stream of works concerned with the links and overall motifs in the Psalter, though it is still a trickle in comparison with the volume of studies oriented in other directions. M. D. Goulder,¹⁶ in discussing the tendencies to classify the psalms liturgically, with the attendant random ordering of psalms for study, has stated that

the dazzled student soon suppresses as naive his instinct that it is proper to study [Psalm] 1 before [Psalm] 2, and that there is something curious in beginning a book on the Psalter with the 110th, or 89th psalm....The instinct that the order of the psalms may be important is not however

¹¹Ibid., ix.

¹²Ibid., ix-x.

¹³A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1901); A. Cohen, *The Psalms* (London: Soncino, 1945); S. R. Hirsch, *The Psalms*, 2 vols. (New York: Philip Feldheim, 1960, 1966).

¹⁴C. Westermann, "The Formation of the Psalter," in *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981) 250-258.

¹⁵In this way, the outline of the Psalter as a whole mirrors the outline of the lament itself; both end with movements toward praise.

¹⁶M. D. Goulder, "The Fourth Book of the Psalter," *Journal of Theological Studies* 26 (1975) 269-289; *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1982).

naive, and is far from irrational....[I]t is entirely proper to begin the study of the Psalter with the expectation that it will be an ordered and not an assorted collection; or, at the very least, that it will contain elements that were rationally ordered.¹⁷

In a similar way, J. P. Brennan has stated the underlying presupposition typical of such efforts:

a careful reading indicates that the Psalter has not developed in a haphazard and arbitrary way, but has been carefully woven together in such a manner that previously independent compositions, or smaller collections of such compositions, now comment upon or respond to one another. Hence, for a proper understanding of the Psalter it is not enough to study each of its 150 components in the historical context from which it originally sprang. They must all be studied in their relationship to each other, since all of them together convey more than they do if looked at separately.¹⁸

Brennan first studied Book V of the Psalter (Psalms 107-150), tracing the key-word connections, and he saw the governing principles of the final collection as literary, not liturgical. Later,¹⁹ he observed not only that there was an internal coherence in the Psalter, but that there was a unifying motif—wisdom—capable of being traced throughout the Psalter, especially in linking consecutive psalms. That is to say, while the original *Sitz im Leben* of individual psalms and even small collections in the Psalter was the cult, and the “I” of many Psalms was the Davidic king, the reader of the Psalter in its final form was to read it as a book, and not necessarily perform it or use it in a liturgy. Thus, the “I” was now each individual reader. Brennan concluded that

such a reading of the Psalter opens the way to an eschatological and messianic interpretation of many texts which had originally only a limited national and historic setting. The Psalter comes to be seen as a magnificent dramatic struggle between the two ways—that of Yahweh, his anointed king, and the company of the just, and that of the wicked, the sinners, the evil-doers.²⁰

In reaching this conclusion, Brennan put much stock in the significance of the content and placement of Psalms 1 and 2. Psalm 1, a Torah psalm, clearly lays out the two ways, thus setting the stage for a reading of the entire book as reflective of the struggle between them. Psalm 2 is a royal psalm, and its placement makes clear that the memory of the Davidic king was to be kept alive even after the fall of the monarchy.

This attention to Psalms 1 and 2, and especially Psalm 1, as the heading for the Psalter, is not unique to Brennan. Most introductions and commentaries note this in passing, and observe that while the Masoretic Text carries superscriptions for only 116 psalms, the Septuagint carries superscriptions for all but Psalms 1 and 2, which lends credence to this idea. What *is* new with Brennan—and many others recently—is the emphasis on the confluence

¹⁷Goulder, *Psalms of the Sons of Korah*, 8.

¹⁸Brennan, “Hidden Harmonies in the Fifth Book,” 126-127.

¹⁹J. P. Brennan, “Psalms 1-8: Some Hidden Harmonies,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 10 (1980) 25-29.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 29.

of placement and content of these two psalms (or at least Psalm 1) in having a determining effect upon the reading of the rest of the Psalter.

In his Introduction, B. S. Childs likewise focused on the final form of the Psalter and saw eschatological reinterpretation as the governing motif for it.²¹ He stated that

although the royal psalms arose originally in a peculiar historical setting of ancient Israel which had received its form from a common mythopoetic milieu, they were treasured in the Psalter for a different reason, namely as a witness to the messianic hope which looked for the consummation of God's kingship through his Anointed One.²²

Childs—more clearly than Westermann—saw the royal psalms as the backbone of the Psalter, noting that they were not grouped together, but rather were strategically scattered throughout the collection; he too emphasized the placement of Psalm 2. This served to emphasize the kingship of God as a major theme throughout the entire collection.²³

For Childs, Psalm 1's placement is significant because it is a Torah psalm: it functions as a preface, signaling that everything that follows is, in effect, God's Torah, to be read, studied, and meditated upon. In this meditation, the faithful reader would reap the blessings promised in Psalm 1. The words of people to God had now become identified with God's word to his people:

Israel reflects on the psalms, not merely to find an illustration of how godly men prayed to God in the past, but to learn the way of righteousness, which comes from obeying the divine law and is now communicated through the prayers of Israel.²⁴

G. T. Sheppard, a student of Childs, agrees with him that Psalms 1 and 2 form the "Preface" to the Psalter.²⁵ After noting some of the specific lexical links between the sapiential Psalm 1 and the royal Psalm 2, he summarizes their general relationship:

The profane nations and rulers in Ps. 2 are identified with those who walk the way of sinners and the wicked in Ps. 1. Opposite these, one finds the divine king depicted in the language of Nathan's oracle as one who, by contrastive implication, walks in the way of the righteous. Consequently, David is represented in Ps. 2 both as the author of the Psalms and also as one who qualifies under the injunction of Ps. 1 to interpret the Torah as a guide to righteousness.²⁶

He goes on to say that

by his association with Ps. 2, David, who is, in canonical terms, the chief architect of the Psalter, is fully in accord with the ideals of Ps. 1. The entire

²¹B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 504-525.

²²*Ibid.*, 517.

²³*Ibid.*, 515-516. This idea has now been developed more fully by G. H. Wilson, "The Use of Royal Psalms

at the ‘Seams’ of the Hebrew Psalter,” *JSOT* 35 (1986) 85-94. The Kingdom of God as “the organizing, unifying subject of the psalter” is discussed in connection with the prominence of David—as king, the agent of God’s reign on earth—by J. L. Mays in “The David of the Psalms,” *Interpretation* 40 (1986) 143-155.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 513-514.

²⁵G. T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament* (New York: de Gruyter, 1980) 136-144.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 142.

Psalter, therefore, is made to stand theologically in association with David as a source of guidance for the way of the righteous. In this fashion, the Psalter has gained, among its other functions, the use as a source for wisdom reflection and a model of prayers based on such a pious interpretation of the Torah.²⁷

J. Reindl, in a programmatic essay,²⁸ also argues along these lines (although he ignores the implications of the dominant royal motifs in the Psalter). He realizes that there was another principle at work in the Psalter’s organization than just the liturgical. He sees Psalm 1 as Brennan, Childs, and Sheppard do, as a sort of opening speech (*Prooemium*) for the reader and “pray-er” of the psalms, setting out the two ways. The words, “and in his Torah he meditates day and night” (Ps 1:2b), are literally meant; even the Psalter is part of God’s Torah. Reindl states that

the original *Sitz im Leben* [of individual psalms] pales into insignificance (though it does not disappear) in the face of the new *Sitz im Leben* which the Psalter has received.²⁹

Thus, Reindl does not see the final redactor(s) of the Psalter as being a part of the Temple singers, but rather as belonging to the circles of scribes—following the piety of the Torah—who followed the way of the wise in older times and who pursued the ideal picture painted in Jesus Sirach (Sir 39:1-11).

If this be the case, then one could expect the editors of the Psalter to leave traces of their work. Reindl notes several texts which appear to have been disruptive glosses: Psalms 50:16a; 146:8b, 9b; and 104:35; each is concerned with a traditional wisdom motif. He then treats Psalms 90-92 as a group, showing them to occur at a strategic location, namely, between the first half of the Psalter, where the organizing principle is fairly clear (Davidic Psalter, Elohistc Psalter, appendix), and the second half, where the rationale is not so clear. Here, too, he sees a decided wisdom flavor.

Reindl lays out four possible consequences of his study: (1) the “wisdom editing” of the Psalter that he attempts to show should be capable of easy detection throughout the rest of the Psalter, the redactor’s hand being seen in glosses or text expansions; (2) the question of the arrangement in the redactional context should not be neglected in the exegesis of individual psalms, as he shows especially in the cases of Psalms 90-92; (3) for the Psalter in its revised, final form a different *Sitz im Leben* than its earlier, liturgical one can be seen—Psalms study should not limit itself to study of only one (often hypothetical) early *Sitz*; (4) the psalms, originally the words of people to God, now become the words of God to people, suitable for study and meditation, by virtue of the “canonical” outlook, searched for and found in them by the

scribes responsible for the final editing. In the end, the idea of the Psalter as being *God's* word (and not human words) “had as much significance for the reception [as canonical] of the already existing book in the

²⁷Ibid., 142.

²⁸J. Reindl, “Weisheitliche Bearbeitung von Psalmen: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Sammlung des Psalter,” *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 32 (1981) 333-356.

²⁹Ibid., 340 (translation mine). Reindl also cites (p. 338, n. 15) his article “Psalm 1 und der Sitz im Leben des Psalters” (*Theologisches Jahrbuch* [Leipzig: St. Benno, 1979] 39-50), in which he develops this further, but I have been unable to locate a copy.

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developing canon as did its use in the cult.”³⁰

The similarities between Reindl’s thesis and those above should be clear. All emphasize: (1) that a literary rationale is responsible for the final form of the Psalter; (2) that this rationale reflects a non-liturgical *Sitz im Leben*; (3) that an individualizing tendency can be seen in the use of the psalms; and (4) that wisdom motifs play some part in the scheme.³¹

A recent—and the most comprehensive—treatment of the question of the structure of the Psalter is that of G. H. Wilson, a student of Childs.³² He lays the methodological foundations that the others do not have by tracing other examples of collections of hymnic material from the ancient Near East: the Sumerian Temple Hymn Collection and Catalogues of Hymnic Incipits, and the Qumran Psalms manuscripts (chs. 2-5). Each of these exhibits definite editorial techniques in the outlines of their final forms. He then turns to the canonical Hebrew Psalter and looks for evidence of editorial principles (chs. 6-7). He finds two types of evidence: explicit and tacit (i.e., non-explicit). For Wilson, “explicit” indicators are found in the psalm superscriptions or in the postscript to Books I-II at Psalm 72:20, while “tacit” indicators are found in editorial arrangements, such as the grouping of psalms with doxologies at the ends of Books I-IV of the Psalter, or the grouping of the *hallelu-yah* psalms (104-106, 111-117, 135, 146-150) at the ends of certain Psalter segments.³³

Like the others, Wilson gives prominence to the placement and contents of Psalms 1 and 2. The concern for the Davidic king and covenant is seen not only by the predominance of David in the superscriptions, but also in the appearance of royal psalms at the “seams” of the first three books (Pss 2, 72, 89).³⁴ Book IV stands at the editorial “center” of the Psalter.

As such this grouping stands as the “answer” to the problem posed in Ps. 89 as to the apparent failure of the Davidic covenant with which Books One-Three are primarily concerned. Briefly summarized, the answer given is: (1) YHWH is king; (2) He has been our “refuge” in the past, long before the monarchy existed (i.e., in the Mosaic period); (3) He will continue to be our refuge now that the monarchy is gone; (4) Blessed are they that trust in him!³⁵

Book V is heterogeneous, but an attitude of dependence and trust on YHWH alone can be seen as the model encouraged there. The section concludes with the great doxologies of Psalms 146-150, including the theme of YHWH’s kingship in Psalms 146-147 which has dominated Book IV and which stands in contrast to the fragile picture of human kingship in Psalms 2-89.

YHWH alone is the eternal king and he alone is worthy of trust in the end.³⁶

Other scholars are working along similar lines; they are not as self-con

³⁰Reindl, "Weisheitliche Bearbeitung," 356 (translation mine).

³¹See also Westermann, "The Formation of the Psalter," where he made most of the same points.

³²G. H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985).

³³Ibid., 9-10, 182-197.

³⁴Ibid., 207-214. (The end of the first Davidic collection at Psalm 41 accounts for the remaining seam.)

³⁵Ibid., 215.

³⁶Ibid., 220-228.

sciously interested in editorial processes and literary activity as the scholars noted above, but their results are similar. These include K. Seybold, P. Auffret, T. Collins, and M. D. Goulder.

Seybold's is the most sophisticated work to date on the Songs of Ascents, in terms of accounting for their origin and development.³⁷ He sees these as old rural pilgrimage psalms, which have been redacted by editors with a Zion/Temple ideology to form a collection fit for the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He notes that the repetitions of Zion/Temple motifs tend to occur at the end or beginning of the poems, or else at spots where they repeat (clumsily, in his view) catch-words or catch-lines in the original "rural" poems. Despite the dangers of subjectivity involved in detecting redactional activity, his sensitivity to the flow of ideas within and especially between poems is instructive.

P. Auffret has devoted considerable attention to structural studies, including three studies on collections in the Psalter (Psalms 15-24, 120-134, and 135-138).³⁸ His results generally show close (or at least logical) connections between adjacent psalms and significant connections between non-adjacent ones as well. Often these latter connections contribute to the understanding of the structure of the entire section.

T. Collins works from a structuralist perspective.³⁹ He considers the Psalter as an integrated system in which the final work "has something to say quite independent of the intentions of the authors of individual psalms, the collectors of groups of psalms or the editors of the psalter."⁴⁰ For him, the Psalter's unity is at the implicit, subconscious level. This scepticism concerning the Psalter's ultimate meaning, that it does not reside even in the work of the final editors, sets Collins' work apart from the work of most others, despite the surface similarities.⁴¹

M. D. Goulder also has demonstrated interests that parallel those here; but in the last analysis they are somewhat different.⁴² At first glance, his work on Book IV is very similar to many of the above studies, since he stresses that the arrangement of psalms here is purposeful, that it is an "ordered collection."⁴³ He cites three features in support: (1) the presence of marked alternations in Book IV in the form of repetitions of material, especially among odd-numbered and even-numbered psalms; (2) the plausibility that this alternation was due to a pattern of morning and evening prayer, used over a period of eight days, likely at the Festival of Tabernacles; and

³⁷K. Seybold, *Die Wallfahrtspsalmen: Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte van Psalmen 120-134* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1978). See now also D. Grossberg, *Centrifugal and Centripetal Structures in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (forthcoming), which is devoted to studies in Song of Songs, Lamentations, and the Songs of Ascents. Grossberg sees various literary forces at work in opposite directions in these corpora, forces that

emphasize both the unity and diversity in them.

³⁸These are collected in his *La sagesse a bâti sa maison: études de structures littéraires dans l'Ancien Testament et spécialement dans les psaumes* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1982).

³⁹T. Collins, "Decoding the Psalms: A Structural Approach to the Psalter," *JSOT* 37 (1987) 41-60.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 41.

⁴¹He does not accept Wilson's arguments about editorial intentionality, for example (p. 58, n.9).

⁴²Goulder, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*, and especially "The Fourth Book of the Psalter."

⁴³Goulder, "Fourth Book," 269-270.

(3) the indication in the time references throughout Book IV that the even-numbered psalms were intended for use in the evening.

Goulder proposes a detailed liturgical setting for Book IV, associated with the fall Tabernacles Festival (the same one with which Mowinckel associated the "Enthronement" Festival), complete with four motifs (the king; David and Solomon; Moses; YHWH) that tie the collection and the supposed Tabernacles liturgy together. He shows how each psalm in Book IV reflects one or more of these motifs.

There are two major differences between Goulder's essay and most of the works above. First, he sees a liturgical rationale for the final form of Book IV, whereas the others (except Seybold) emphasize a literary one in the sections they consider. There is no *necessary* conflict here, though, since most readily admit that the final form of the Psalter incorporated fixed sequences of originally liturgical material, the parade example being the Songs of Ascents. Thus, hypothetically at least, a large liturgy such as Goulder postulates could have been incorporated undisturbed into the larger canonical corpus.

A second difference, however, is more problematic. Goulder pays minimal attention to links *within* the corpus he is analyzing, but rather focuses on links between it and two other blocks of material elsewhere in the canon: "the two great Tabernacles sagas, the J/E version of the Exodus and Desert traditions [Exodus 6-34] on the one side, and the Temple's foundation from 2 Sam. xxiv-1 Kgs. ix on the other."⁴⁴ He almost completely neglects any look at internal links within Book IV. It is doubtful that the many links between psalms in Book IV are so largely due to these psalms' use within the same festival and to their specific connections with another "liturgy," and so little due to considerations of their similarities with each other.⁴⁵

Finally, we should also note that some—such as Brennan—have been

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 274.

⁴⁵There are several other problems with Goulder's hypothesis, as well. (1) His assumption about an ordered collection does not rest upon three, separate, independent supporting features, as he claims (pp. 269-270), but rather on one undisputed feature—the alternation of subject matter between several odd- and even-numbered psalms—and on two that proceed from it. His second feature is a hypothesis, however plausible, deriving from the first, and does not support in its own right the idea of an ordered collection. The third feature derives from the second, and can be similarly judged. (2) Much weight is attached to the hypothesis that these are morning and evening readings. While this is certainly plausible in theory, Goulder's support for it is meager, limited to five references, only two of them even modestly clear, as he himself admits (pp. 271-272). (3) The issue of its hypothetical nature must inevitably arise in this reconstruction. The comment of Childs with reference to the many attempts to reconstruct a lectionary cycle for the entire Psalter is appropriate here as well: "Still the hypothetical nature of the various reconstructions along with sharp disagreement among the experts continues to pose serious problems and prevents anything resembling a consensus from emerging, even on basic issues" (B. S. Childs, "Reflections on the Modern Study of the Psalms," in F. M. Cross, W. E. Lemke, P. D. Miller, eds., *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God* [Garden City,

NY: Doubleday, 1976] 381). (4) Just as he reconstructs a proposed lectionary out of the two sagas, Goulder is forced to postulate lections of widely varying lengths (cf. the data in his table on p. 286). For example, there are several rather short readings and other rather long ones in the same lection series. Although such variety is found in several of the reconstructions of supposed lectionary cycles in the Psalter and the Pentateuch, it often appears to be a forced device to fit the scheme, rather than a natural one arising out of the texts. (See, e.g., J. R. Porter, "The Pentateuch and the Triennial Lectionary Cycle: An Examination of a Recent Theory," in F. F. Bruce, ed., *Promise and Fulfillment* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963] 163-174.)

working on a lower level: that of connections between individual psalms. W. Zimmerli and C. Barth also have contributed broadly focused essays on this level, and numerous scholars have worked on individual psalm pairs as well.⁴⁶

Zimmerli, for example, has focused on what he called "twin psalms." In all, he identifies 40 "twin" psalms (20 pairs), without pretending to be exhaustive. He begins with the best-known of the paired psalms: Psalms 9-10 and 42-43. Going beyond these obvious examples, however, he notes the principle of concatenation, with and without key words (*Stichwörter*), in many places. Here he notes—very briefly—connections of one sort of another between 16 pairs of psalms.⁴⁷ He devotes most of his effort to developing in some detail the links between two other pairs: Psalms 111-112 and 105-106. While much of what Zimmerli said is noted here and there in the commentaries, he made several original observations, particularly concerning the last two pairs; furthermore, his work is unique in naming the phenomenon and in specifically concentrating on it. He also emphasized that it is important to consider the editorial processes when reading individual psalms.⁴⁸

In C. Barth's systematic study of concatenation in the first book of the Psalter, he lists the repeated roots between each adjacent pair of psalms, including those between several non-adjacent psalms. Out of the data thus collected, he lists 17 principles of concatenation, including exact recurrences of forms (including affixes), recurrences of roots, recurrences of word-pairs (and even three- and four-word sequences). Sometimes these have structural significance, as well, as when key words occur at the beginning of one psalm and at the end of the next (or vice-versa). He even notes that text-critical work yields even more examples of the phenomenon than are visible in the text alone. He concedes that not all of the examples are equally strong but, all in all, his is a valuable contribution.

III. CONCLUSION

The above survey shows that most studies on the question of editorial activity in the Psalter approach it either at the higher level of collections and large organizing principles or at the lower level of links between adjacent psalms; some work at both levels. The work at the higher level is valuable in setting the framework within which more detailed study can proceed. Here, sapiential and royal motifs emerge most clearly.

⁴⁶W. Zimmerli, "Zwillingspsalmen," in J. Schreiner, ed., *Wort, Lied, and Gottesspruch: Beiträge zu Psalmen und Propheten* (Wurzburg, Stuttgart: Echter, 1972) 105-113; C. Barth, "Concatenatio in Ersten Buch des Psalters," in B. Benzing, O. Böcher, G. Mayer, eds., *Wort und Wirklichkeit: Studien zur afrikanistik und orientalistik* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1976) 30-40. See also L. C. Allen, "David as Exemplar of Spirituality: The Redactional Function of Psalm 19," *Biblica* 67 (1986) 544-546; P. Auffret, "Essai sur la structure littéraire du Psaume 94," *Biblische Notizen* 24 (1984) 44-72 and "Complements sur la structure littéraire du Ps 2 et son rapport au Ps 1," *Biblische Notizen* 35 (1986) 7-13; J. K. Kuntz, "King Triumphant: A Rhetorical Study of Psalms 20 and

21,” *Hebrew Annual Review* 10 (1986) 157-176; J. L. Mays, “The Place of the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter,” *JBL* 106 (1987) 3-12, especially pp. 10-11.

⁴⁷Psalms 1-2, 3-4, 30-31, 31-32, 32-33, 38-39, 39-40, 40-41, 43-44, 69-70, 73-74, 74-75, 77-78, 79-80, 80-81, and 127-128.

⁴⁸Zimmerli, “Zwillingspsalmen,” 105, 111.

At the lower level, the work functions to provide more specific evidence and to confirm or modify the higher-level investigations. Here, links of various types may be seen; specific royal or wisdom contours are not as visible, but they do appear. It should be obvious that, if work at the lower level continues very long, soon every pair of adjacent psalms will be shown to be connected with significant—or logical—links; a pattern of purposeful editorial activity will emerge at the lowest levels, alongside the patterns already demonstrated at the higher levels.

Much work remains to be done at both levels. On the higher level, works such as Reindl’s, Westermann’s, and Wilson’s need to be extended, tested, and refined. Wilson’s is especially significant, and much fruitful work could be done in testing and applying his suggestions. On the lower level, each psalm pair needs to be explored in this light, in more detail than that employed by earlier commentators such as Delitzsch and Alexander.

The current focus on unitary, literary, or “canonical” readings of all portions of the Bible is bringing much new information to light about the messages and intents of the ancient authors. Studies in the Psalter are no exception. The reading of individual psalms can only be enhanced when these are considered in light of their neighboring psalms, and the reading of the Psalter as a whole is likewise enhanced when its larger themes of Davidic Covenant and wisdom are highlighted.

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