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## **Biblical Psalms Outside the Psalter**

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THE BOOK OF PSALMS  
*Composition and Reception*

EDITED BY

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## BIBLICAL PSALMS OUTSIDE THE PSALTER

JAMES W. WATTS

### THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INSET HYMNS

Psalms appear irregularly in the narrative and prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible, at Exod 15:1-21, Deut 32:1-43, Jdg 5, 1 Sam 2:1-20, 2 Samuel 22, Isa 38:9-20, Jon 2:3-10, Habakkuk 3, Dan 2:20-23, 1 Chron 16:8-36; in the Apocrypha/Deuterocanon at Daniel 3, Jdg 16:1-17, Tobit 13; and in the New Testament at Lk 1:46-55, 67-79. More often, fragments of hymns and other poems are quoted as natural parts of story-lines (e.g. 2 Sam 1:17-27; 3:33-34) or are employed as elements in prophetic compositions (e.g. Am 4:13; 5:8; 9:5-6). Complete poetic compositions appear less frequently but more prominently. Many of these inset poems are, in form and content, "psalms" since they would fit perfectly well within the Book of Psalms. But instead of being placed in the Psalter,<sup>1</sup> these compositions have been inserted into narrative and prophetic books for literary and religious purposes. The comparative study of these psalms inserted whole into non-hymnic contexts is the subject of this review of research.

Most of these individual psalms have been studied extensively as to their internal structure, time of origin, and original message. Before 1990, however, very little attention had been given to comparing the roles they play in their literary contexts. That situation has now changed. As I was submitting my dissertation on the subject (1990),<sup>2</sup> Hans-Peter Mathys was completing his *Habilitationsschrift* (1989/90) covering the same range of texts and some others.<sup>3</sup> Three years later, Steven Weitzman added his dissertation (1993)<sup>4</sup> to the literature on

<sup>1</sup> Or in addition to appearing there, in the cases of 2 Samuel 22 = Psalm 18 and 1 Chron 16:8-36 = Pss 105:1-15, 96:1-13a, 106:1, 47-48.

<sup>2</sup> Published as James W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative* (JSOTSup 139; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Published as Hans-Peter Mathys, *Dichter und Beter: Theologen aus spätalttestamentlichen Zeit* (OBO 132; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Published as Steven Weitzman, *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative: The History of a Literary Convention in Ancient Israel* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana

biblical songs outside the Psalter, while in the same year Johannes C. de Moor and Wilfred G. E. Watson published a collection of essays addressing the appearance of poetry in a variety of ancient Near Eastern prose literatures.<sup>5</sup> In 1994, Susan E. Gillingham published an introductory survey of "the poems and psalms of the Hebrew Bible" that included cultic poetry outside the Psalter.<sup>6</sup> In more narrowly focused studies, John Kleinig and Kurt Noll produced monographs on the role of hymnody in Chronicles and Samuel respectively.<sup>7</sup> This wave of research confirms Lyle Eslinger's observation that a new sub-field of biblical research has developed on the topic of inset psalms in their literary contexts.<sup>8</sup>

Examination of these various studies shows considerable overlap and agreement about the functions performed by inset psalms within their literary contexts, but also strong differences over certain aspects of the phenomenon and the methods used for its study. In what follows, I will first survey the common findings of the last decade's research before describing and evaluating disagreements over how to understand the literary and religious functions of inset psalmody.

### THE ROLES OF INSET HYMNS

The three monographs by Mathys, Weitzman, and myself agreed that almost all inset hymns are either late additions to pre-existing stories or are original parts of stories composed late in the Bible's compositional history. They reshape the surrounding literary structures in order to strengthen a theological focus on the acts of God, and/or provide models of proper worship through prayer and hymnody for readers to imitate. The appearance of inset hymns thus provides insight into the efforts of Jewish scribes in the Second Temple period to shape biblical literature for its use as scripture.

University Press, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> Johannes C. de Moor and Wilfred G. E. Watson (eds.), *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose* (AOAT 42, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> S. E. Gillingham, *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 136-69.

<sup>7</sup> John W. Kleinig, *The Lord's Song: The Basis, Function and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles* (JSOTSup 156; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); K. L. Noll, *The Faces of David* (JSOTSup 242; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Lyle Eslinger, review of *Faces of David* by K. L. Noll, in the *Review of Biblical Literature* (<http://www.bookreviews.org/Reviews/1850756597.html>).

The only clear example of an inset hymn in earlier biblical literature is Judges 5, which seems to have been placed after the battle narrative in Judges 4 prior to or during the composition of the book of Judges.<sup>9</sup> The evidence for the late insertion of the other psalms ranges from thematic gaps and plot disruptions to text-critical disturbances, but also includes in one case the existence of a version of the story without the hymn (Isaiah 38; cf. 2 Kings 20). All these point to the psalms being later additions to Exodus, Deuteronomy, Samuel, Isaiah, Daniel 2 and the Septuagint version of Daniel 3.<sup>10</sup> Many commentators have also considered the psalms in Jonah and 1 Chronicles to be secondary, but here attributing the hymns to the authors of the narratives makes better sense of their literary roles.<sup>11</sup> Yet the use of hymns in both books relies on and modifies the literary conventions of inset hymnody in the books of Samuel and Isaiah, while those at the end of Samuel imitate the end of Deuteronomy. Samuel, Jonah and 1 Chronicles thus represent the earliest examples we have of the tendency in Second Temple period literature (also Judith, Tobit, Luke, etc.) to place hymns and prayers in characters' mouths in imitation of biblical examples, which were themselves inserted into earlier literature.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 92–98; Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 57. Mathys suggested that Judges 5 is, like other inset hymns, also a late addition to its context (*Dichter und Beter*, 176).

<sup>10</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 32–37, 55–60, 74–79, 92–95, 110–14, 126–29, 149–52; Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 146, 156–57, 168, 173, 176, 179–80; Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 100–123; all building on the extensive bibliographies devoted to each of these hymns separately. On the text-criticism of 1 Samuel 1–2, see especially Emanuel Tov, "Different Editions of the Song of Hannah and of Its Narrative Framework," in M. Cogan, B. L. Eichler, and J. H. Tigay (eds.), *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997) 149–70.

<sup>11</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 141–43, 162–64. Mathys and Weitzman also credited 1 Chronicles 16 to the Chronicler, but Mathys evaluated Jonah 2 as an insertion (*Dichter und Beter*, 203, 215, 225), while Weitzman remained undecided as to its originality in context (*Song and Story*, 109–113).

<sup>12</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 175–81; and especially Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 59–123. For the contrary suggestion that the Deuteronomists of the late monarchic period were already responsible for the insertion of old hymns, see Johannes C. de Moor, "Poetic Fragments in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History," in F. García Martínez et al. (eds.), *Studies in Deuteronomy in Honour of C. J. Labuschagne* (VTSup 53; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 183–96.

The psalms emphasize God's role in the events recounted by the surrounding stories. This effect appears especially prominent when the stories, such as those of 2 Samuel, do not emphasize theological concerns. The realistic plots and characterizations of the stories about David and his family in 2 Samuel have been justly celebrated as great prose writing, but they produce in readers complex moral and religious evaluations of Israel's most celebrated king. On the other hand, David's thanksgiving psalm near the conclusion of the book (2 Samuel 22) depicts his religious devotion unambiguously. Together with Hannah's psalm in 1 Samuel 2, it brackets the books of Samuel with an explicit thematic summary in theo-political terms: God's absolute support for David.<sup>13</sup> In Exodus, God plays a more prominent role in the plot, yet the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15) goes further, placing exclusive emphasis on the divine warrior's victory over Egypt.<sup>14</sup> Deuteronomy 32 and Judges 5 also shape their contexts with similar theological agendas.

Because they are placed in the mouths of characters, inset psalms always characterize their speakers, such as David and Moses in the above examples. In some texts, characterization of the speaker seems to be a hymn's primary contribution to its context. The psalms shape readers' and hearers' evaluations of that individual and also model for them proper piety both in religious practice and in composing new literature.<sup>15</sup> Thus not only King David, but also King Hezekiah is given

<sup>13</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 107–109; Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 146. Also Randall C. Bailey, "The Redemption of YHWH: A Literary Critical Function of the Songs of Hannah and David," *BiblInt* 3/2 (1995) 213–31; J. Vermeylen, *La loi du plus fort: Histoire de la rédaction des récits davidiques de 1 Samuel 8 à 1 Rois 2* (Leuven: University Press, 2000) 413–17. Walter Brueggemann analyzed the stories at the very beginning and end of Samuel to show that they, together with the psalms, create a thematic bracket around the book ("1 Samuel 1: A Sense of a Beginning," *ZAW* 102 [1990] 33–48).

<sup>14</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 51–55; Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 26–28.

<sup>15</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 189, 191–92; Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 225–27, 318, 321; Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 59, 63–70, 93–123. Noll took this point even further by arguing that the songs of 2 Sam 1:19–27, 22:1–51, and 23:1–7 contribute in crucial ways to David's characterization in the Deuteronomistic History as a whole: "There is a sense in which 2 Samuel 22 serves as the 'glue' which weds the complex portrait of David found in Samuel and early in Kings to the more simplistic image of David which is perpetuated through most of the remaining story" (*Faces of David*, 120).

a proper psalm in order to sing thanks for God's support (Isaiah 38), just as Daniel and his three friends do (Daniel 2 + Additions to Daniel 3). Jonah's psalm is particularly revealing: like Isaiah 38 and the Daniel psalms, it appears after deliverance has been promised but is not yet complete (Jonah sings thanks after being saved from drowning while he is still in the fish). These psalms thus model, not just a thankful attitude, but also trust in God's promised salvation. Yet the book of Jonah presents a stark discrepancy between the prophet's pious words in the psalm, as well as to the sailors (1:9) and even to God (4:2, quoting Exod 34:6-7), on the one hand, and his rebellious attitude that rejects God's mercy for Nineveh, on the other. The book thus seems already to expect reader recognition of the literary convention that inset hymnody characterizes the speaker's piety, setting up a false expectation that it undermines with its surprise ending.<sup>16</sup>

The use of inset hymnody reveals a sharp gender distinction in these models of piety. Men sing individualized thanksgiving psalms (e.g. David, Hezekiah, Jonah, Daniel and his three friends, and Tobit) while women sing nationalistic victory hymns (Deborah, Hannah, Judith, and Mary).<sup>17</sup> Though the precise form-critical classification of many of these hymns has been subject to considerable debate, the distinction between thanks for individual benefits and praise for national victories is clear enough. Thus David, though celebrating a career of military

<sup>16</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 135–40, 143–44; similarly Weitzman: "As I see it, however, such behavior—which really represents an attempt to parody the songs in biblical narrative—was only possible in a literary culture that expected biblical heroes to sing to God after he delivered them from danger" (*Song and Story*, 112). Mathys, on the other hand, found the tension between song and narrative too strong for both to have been written by the same author (*Dichter und Beter*, 225). For the minority view that the psalm's characterization of Jonah is completely consistent with that of the prose, see K. A. D. Smelik, "The Literary Function of Poetical Passages in Biblical Narrative," in J. Dyk (ed.), *Give Ear to My Words: Psalms and Other Poetry In and Around the Hebrew Bible* (Amsterdam: Societas Hebraica, 1996) 147–51.

<sup>17</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 29–30, 176, 180, 181. This women's tradition of hymnody was described at length by E. B. Poethig, "The Victory Song Tradition of the Women of Israel" (Ph.D. Diss., Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1985). The difference in gendered points of view in Judges 4–5 was also explored by Mieke Bal, *Murder and Difference: Gender, Genre, and Scholarship on Sisera's Death* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), and Athalya Brenner, "A Triangle and a Rhombus in Narrative Structure: A Proposed Integrative Reading of Judges IV and V," *VT* 40 (1990) 129–38.

victories, emphasizes God's support for himself personally, whereas Hannah, when celebrating the birth of her son, nevertheless emphasizes God's aid for Israel's victories. The chief exception to this rule would seem to be Exodus 15, where Moses and the Israelite men sing a victory song praising God's victory at the sea. Yet the women also sing, perhaps an antiphonal response to the whole song, and comparison with other stories of victory songs makes clear that it is the women who are playing their conventional role here. The men, however, are displaced from their conventional warrior role by God's single-handed victory over the Egyptians, and so join the women in the praise choir.<sup>18</sup>

Short fragments of hymns and songs may serve to motivate plot developments in biblical narratives: for example, a couplet from a victory hymn prompts Saul's jealousy of David (1 Sam 18:6-9; also 21:12 [11], 29:5), and David sings a dirge for Abner (2 Sam 3:33-34) to demonstrate publicly his innocence for Abner's murder. Balaam's Oracles (Numbers 23–24) are the only longer poems to play such plot roles. The other songs and hymns quoted in full within narrative contexts do not further the plot, that is, no subsequent action occurs as a consequence of their being sung. The levitical medley in 1 Chronicles 16 does illustrate the plot of its context, which concerns the ranks and duties of levitical musicians in the Temple. For the most part, however, inset hymns serve instead to structure blocks of material with the themes of God's deliverance and the singer's piety. While Deborah's Song simply concludes and amplifies the battle account in the previous chapter (Judges 4–5), psalms appear at the end of larger sections of text in Exodus (the Song of the Sea after the plagues and exodus story of chaps. 1–14), Deuteronomy (the Song of Moses and "Blessing" of Moses climax the book), and Samuel (bracketed by Hannah's Psalm near the beginning and David's Thanksgiving and "Last Words" near the end).<sup>19</sup> Thus inset psalms often serve to make

<sup>18</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 51–54; Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 28–29. Another exception may be found in Habakkuk 3. However, the oracular context and liturgical setting gives the issue of characterization in this psalm a different impact (see below).

<sup>19</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 186–89 and *passim*; Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 156–57, 179. Weitzman's strict distinction between the roles played by Exodus 15, Judges 5 and Deuteronomy 32 and those of other inset hymns is discussed below (under "Poetry, Parallels, and Literary Conventions").

explicit the themes and boundaries of textual units. As we have already seen, other hymns highlight their speaker's piety by appearing when deliverance has been promised but has not yet been fully manifested (Isaiah 38, Jonah 2, Daniel, Additions to Daniel). These psalms provide thematic emphasis primarily by characterizing their speakers.

The use of inset hymns to emphasize theological themes, to structure books, and to model characters' piety all suggest various efforts to shape older texts for their role as scripture, a process Weitzman called "scripturalization."<sup>20</sup> Gerald Sheppard pioneered the study of how editors employed inset hymns in the "canon-conscious" shaping of Samuel, arguing that the editing and arrangement of 2 Samuel 21–24 "is integral to the final, constitutive formation of biblical books."<sup>21</sup> The comparative studies by Matthys, Weitzman and myself suggested that similar motives lie behind the appearance of most other inset hymns as well, if one includes under "canonical" the concerns not only for the structure and boundaries of biblical books, but also for their use in modeling devotional and liturgical practices. Weitzman in particular has elaborated on the use of inset songs to emphasize study and prayer as proper Jewish piety.<sup>22</sup> Not only did it elevate the text's status as scripture, such modeling marked the contents of many biblical books profoundly: "The scripturalization of biblical narrative actually propelled its compositional development."<sup>23</sup>

This consensus about the function of inset hymnody grew out of studies motivated by different methodological concerns. While Mathys emphasized theological issues, Weitzman and I were concerned first of all with literary history and conventions. These two different approaches overlap a great deal, but they also point to two constellations of issues over which there remains considerable disagreement and which go to the heart of how to interpret the phenomenon of inset hymnody in its ancient literary and cultural contexts. In what follows, I will first discuss the problems involved in the literary history of inset hymns, then turn to contested issues surrounding their thematic and religious roles in context.

<sup>20</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 60–61, 116–17, 191; Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 125, 164, 180, 317; Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 12–13, 93–123.

<sup>21</sup> Gerald T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct* (BZAW 151; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980) 155; see also pp. 145–59.

<sup>22</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 59–92, 93–123.

<sup>23</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 129.

### POETRY, PARALLELS, AND LITERARY CONVENTIONS

The works by Weitzman, Noll and myself have focused on the literary roles played by inset songs in their contexts, but have differed over how these should be analyzed. I focused on the interplay between literary analyses of the hymns' contextual roles and historical observations about their lack of originality to their contexts. So after synchronic analysis of each psalm's effects on the story's plot, themes and characterization, I factored these conclusions into long-standing arguments about its literary history.<sup>24</sup>

Others have focused primarily on one or another of these elements. Mathys emphasized thematic analysis (see SCRIPTURE, WISDOM, AND PERFORMANCE below). Noll evaluated the songs' contribution to characterizing their speakers. He used a theoretical distinction to argue that the discrepancy between 2 Samuel 22's glorification of David and the context's diminution of his accomplishments was produced by tension between the biased narrator and the implied author.<sup>25</sup> He concluded that the songs in Samuel serve to emphasize this discrepancy and therefore strengthen the literature's aesthetic cast, just the opposite of the scripturalizing tendency noted by Mathys, Weitzman, and myself. Noll argued, "The narratives were strung together to function aesthetically, not canonically ... the Former Prophets give every appearance that their authors were not interested in creating the kind of literary authority that the Bible eventually became for several religious communities."<sup>26</sup> Noll's conclusions developed out of frequently noticed tensions within the books of Samuel, but they look implausible from a comparative perspective on inset hymnody in biblical (and other) literature. The appearance of similar literary patterns in various other Second Temple period works suggest looking, not to unreliable narrators, but to scripturalizing editors and authors to account for

<sup>24</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 17–18 ("Shape of the Study") and 198–205 ("Methodological Conclusions"). This neat methodological distinction often faded in the face of textual details: "When the full complexity of the biblical text was taken into account in evaluating the compositional history of psalms in narrative contexts, the methodological dichotomy between synchronic and diachronic explanations frequently broke down. That is, the same psalm could be labeled both 'original' and 'secondary,' depending on the size of the contextual frame of reference" (p. 201).

<sup>25</sup> Noll, *Faces of David*, 28–30, 120.

<sup>26</sup> Noll, *Faces of David*, 37.

them.<sup>27</sup> Tension between narrative and hymnic characterizations of the singers seem to be typical rather than unusual, even when the same author wrote both, as in Jonah and Judith.<sup>28</sup>

I also argued that the inclusion of hymns into biblical narratives was not usually done *ad hoc* but was informed by literary conventions. I identified two different structural conventions: insertion of hymns as a concluding climax or bracketing structure (Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5, 2 Samuel 22, 1 Chronicles 16, Judith, Tobit), or insertion prior to deliverance to model faithful piety (Isaiah 38, Jonah 2, Daniel 2, Add Dan). In addition, Deuteronomy 32 and 1 Chronicles 16 seemed to me to serve distinctive thematic purposes within those books.<sup>29</sup> Weitzman made the exploration of such literary conventions the focus of his work, and also found two kinds of conventions at work in biblical literature. The first adapts several patterns from other Ancient Near Eastern literature, such as the victory hymn after a battle account and the topos of a sage's last words, to shape the use of Exodus 15, Judges 5, and Deuteronomy 32. The second enhances the piety of biblical heroes by placing appropriate songs of praise in their mouths, thereby enhancing the text's usefulness as scripture.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, Weitzman ignored my description of the two conventions, thus missing an opportunity for constructive debate over how to characterize these larger patterns of inset hymnody as well as failing to note our similar conclusions about many individual texts. His summary and critique of my work focused almost exclusively on the methodological issues surrounding the distinction between prose and poetry on the one hand, and the use of ancient Near Eastern literary parallels on the other. It is therefore to these issues that I now turn before addressing the debate over how to characterize the two traditions of inset hymnody.

<sup>27</sup> I do not rule out of hand the possibility of unreliable narrators in ancient literature, but think that the case for one in Samuel is very tenuous. For my application of the concept, see James W. Watts, "The Unreliable Narrator of Job," in S. L. Cook, C. L. Patton and J. W. Watts (eds.), *The Whirlwind: Essays on Job, Hermeneutics and Theology in Memory of Jane Morse* (JSOTSup 336; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 168–80.

<sup>28</sup> Linda Day described the ambiguous characterization of Judith, who claims more credit in her psalm than the story grants her ("Faith, Character and Perspective in Judith," *JSOT* 95 [2001] 71–93). On Jonah, see above.

<sup>29</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 191–93.

<sup>30</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 124–31.

First, the prose-poetry distinction: inset hymns are frequently described as poems quoted in a prose narrative, but this raises the contentious question of how exactly to distinguish prose from poetry. The long history of wrestling with the definition and quality of Hebrew poetry was analyzed by James Kugel, who concluded that interpreters have mostly imposed later definitions of poetry onto biblical materials: "the concepts of poetry and prose correspond to no precise distinction in the Bible."<sup>31</sup> That conclusion has been contested by many scholars who have continued to put forward varying criteria for distinguishing poetry from prose.<sup>32</sup> Weitzman, a student of Kugel, carried this debate into his evaluation of inset hymnody by accusing many interpreters, including myself, of imposing our own notions of poetry onto the biblical texts.<sup>33</sup> He therefore wrote about "songs" rather than "poems" or "psalms" in an attempt to stay closer to the Hebrew terminology used in the literature itself.

Such methodological caution is to be applauded, but in his summaries of other scholars' work, Weitzman made no effort to distinguish *a priori* bias from inductive conclusions about the differences between kinds of Hebrew texts. My observations about the distinctiveness of inset poems were made at the end of my book on the basis of detailed examinations of nine different narratives that included psalms. Thus my conclusion that "prose narrative usually eschews direct commentary .... Poetry, by contrast, does not narrate sequentially, but offers vivid descriptions of feelings and emphatic statements of ideas instead" described an inductive observation about Hebrew literature, as was made clear by contrasting it with the epic literatures of the ancient Near East.<sup>34</sup> It is precisely the contrast between biblical use of poetry and prose and the epic poetry of other ancient cultures that makes this

<sup>31</sup> James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981) 302.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 46–54; W. van der Meer and J. C. de Moor (eds.), *The Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite Poetry*, JSOTSup 74; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988; W. T. Woldemar Cloete, "Distinguishing Prose and Verse," in De Moor and Watson (eds.), *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose*, 31–40; Gillingham, *Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*, 18–43; Jichan Kim, *The Structure of the Sampson Cycle* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993) 116–34.

<sup>33</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 1–3, 143–45.

<sup>34</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 194.

an interesting conclusion. Indeed, the comparison suggests that the real mystery involves, not the appearance of poetry in prose, but rather the exclusive use of prose rather than epic to narrate biblical stories.

This whole debate is irrelevant, however, for the study of inset hymnody. Distinguishing these texts from the surrounding stories does not depend on the prose-poetry distinction at all, for the simple reason that they are clearly marked with introductory formulas or labels to differentiate them from their contexts. The most common markers are nominal or verbal forms of שיר ("sing, song," Exod 15:1; Deut 31:19, 21, 22, 30; 32:44-45; Judg 5:1; 2 Sam 22:1; cf. also Num 21:17; Greek ὑμνέω/ὑμνος in Add Dan 1; Jdt 15:13). The Levitical personnel who voice the hymn in 1 Chronicles 16 are explicitly labeled משררים ("singers," 1 Chron 15:16, 19, 27) and David's compositions are labeled קינה ("lament/dirge") in 2 Sam 1:17, 3:33. Some labels might refer to either poetry or prose: Hannah and Jonah התפלל ("pray") their psalms (1 Sam 2:1; Jon 2:2) and Hezekiah's psalm is termed a מכתב ("writing, letter," Isa 38:9). The hymns sometimes contain internal markers of song, such as אשירה ("I will sing," Exod 15:1; Judg 5:3) or שירו ("Sing!" Exod 15:21; 1 Chron 16:9).<sup>35</sup> Thus biblical texts explicitly distinguish inset hymns and some other genres of poetry from their contexts.

The psalm in Habakkuk 3 shows how far ancient authors or editors could go to mark an inset hymn explicitly. Placed after prophetic oracles that share with it the usual characteristics of Hebrew poetry, this piece exhibits more explicit markers of its hymnic status than any other text in the Hebrew Bible. The technical jargon contained in both the superscription and colophon (Hab 3:1, 19) — together with the repeated liturgical interjection *Selah* (vv. 3, 9, 15) — make its psalmic nature impossible to miss, even if readers do not recognize its similarity to other hymns of victory (Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 33, Judges 5, Ps 77:16-20), most of which appear outside the Psalter. The author or editor of Habakkuk 3 wanted his readers to recognize very clearly that this was a psalm.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> For full discussion, see James W. Watts, "This Song': Conspicuous Poetry in Hebrew Prose," in de Moor and Watson (eds.), *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose*, 345-48 (reproduced at <http://web.syr.edu/~jwwatts/ThisSong.htm>).

<sup>36</sup> For full discussion, see my "Psalmody in Prophecy: Habakkuk 3 in Context," in J. W. Watts and P. R. House (eds.), *Forming Prophetic Literature: Es-*

Now that is not to say that ancient Hebrew literature deploys consistent terminology for genre categories; it does not. The appearance of anthologies of similar compositions, such as in the Psalter and Song of Songs, when other kinds of poems (such as secular dirges and patriarchal or prophetic "blessings") appear only in narrative contexts, shows that the ancient editors worked with an awareness of a wider array of genres than this limited set of Hebrew terms suggests. Such collections warrant our application of genre labels such as "psalm" or "hymn" and even "poem" which have no equivalent in biblical Hebrew, so long as the definition of those terms arises inductively from the ancient texts rather than just from modern analogues. Then inductive observations about differences between such inset genres and their contexts, such as the absence of emotive responses in the narratives or the absence of narration in the songs, simply follow from the explicit distinctions made by the texts themselves. Comparative analysis of these texts does not depend on resolving the prose-poetry debate first.

The second issue involves the use of ancient Near Eastern parallels for understanding the phenomenon of biblical inset psalmody. In an appendix, I surveyed patterns of inset hymnody in various ancient narrative literatures.<sup>37</sup> Inset poetry and songs, a rare phenomenon in

*says on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (JSOTSup 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 209-223. (This article is reproduced at <http://web.syr.edu/~jwwatts/Hab3.htm>)

<sup>37</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 206-220. Weitzman chose to focus his strongest critique of my work, not on the body of my book whose contents most paralleled his own, but rather on this appendix because of its "rather imprecise use of comparative evidence" (*Song and Story*, 9). Weitzman confused my cataloguing of ancient literary practices, which demonstrated precisely the diversity that he ridiculed, with an argument for literary dependence, which I explicitly denied: "The similarities of these texts to Hebrew psalms in narrative contexts are in no case close enough for there to be any question of direct literary dependence." Nevertheless, the links between the Hebrew psalms and hymns embedded in other ancient Near Eastern texts, especially the Piye Stela from ca. 734 BCE, do suggest that the Hebrew usage developed out of a literary culture containing elements of both Mesopotamian and Egyptian provenance (Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 219). My point was simply that inset poetry and songs, a rare phenomenon in modern narrative, is relatively common in ancient literatures and so their appearance in biblical texts should cause no great surprise. I also pointed out that Egyptian literature provides closer parallels than do the Mesopotamian epic and historiographical traditions that have been cited more commonly in this regard. Weitzman under-



modern narratives, are relatively common in ancient stories. Their appearance in biblical texts, then, should cause no great surprise. The closest parallel to biblical usage is found in the Egyptian Piye Stela, an 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE royal inscription. The stela's restrained prose account of Piye's conquests incorporates two victory hymns sung by enthusiastic crowds, the longer one at the very end of the inscription.<sup>38</sup> The placement of the Song of Deborah in Judges 5 after the battle account in Judges 4 seems to reflect the same literary convention as the Piye Stela, and from roughly the same time period.<sup>39</sup> Weitzman deepened the analysis of this parallel considerably, noting that both the concluding song of the Piye stela and the Song of the Sea in Exodus 15 aim "not only to celebrate the victory of the divine warrior over his foes but also to acclaim him as an eternal, invincible ruler."<sup>40</sup>

He demonstrated that the stela's victory hymns are the culmination of a five-century-old trend in Egyptian battle accounts to shape readers' evaluation of the king's actions. The songs model the desired reader response. Weitzman thus explained the role of the Song of the Sea on the basis of a literary convention produced by the political concerns of Egyptian royal inscriptions. It was employed in Exodus out of a similar concern to actualize for readers Israel's jubilant response to God's salvation.<sup>41</sup>

Weitzman argued, however, that the remainder of the Bible's inset hymns have no relationship to this Egyptian convention. He tried to explain the role of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 31–32 on the

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mined his own methodological critique by accepting and elaborating on the closest parallel I discovered, the Piye Stela, to understand Exodus 14–15 and Judges 4–5. He concluded, "In my view, ... Exodus 15 and the Piye Stela preserve independent manifestations of a literary practice shared by Egyptian and Israelite scribes" (*Song and Story*, 21) — precisely my point.

<sup>38</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 213–14, 219. For the texts, see N.-C. Grimal, *La Stèle Triomphale de Pi(ankh)y au Musée du Caire* (Cairo: IFAO, 1978). For an English translation, see Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, 1976, 1980) 3.66–84.

<sup>39</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 96–97, 196; Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 31–36.

<sup>40</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 19.

<sup>41</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 17–30. On actualization in Exodus 15 and elsewhere, see J. W. Groves, *Actualization and Interpretation in the Old Testament* (SBLDS 86; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); and Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 60–62.

basis of strained parallel with the Aramaic wisdom text, *Ahiqar*.<sup>42</sup> However, *Ahiqar* is a fragmentary text known only from late sources, and it contains no hymn or song. So despite the fact that Moses and *Ahiqar* both deliver warning speeches to rebellious sons or followers, the parallel explains nothing about the choice of a hymnic genre in Deuteronomy 32. Nevertheless, Weitzman's conclusion that different songs were incorporated on the basis of different literary conventions can be accepted readily enough, even if the specific conventions are more debatable.<sup>43</sup>

Much less plausible, however, was his sharp distinction between the songs whose placement is influenced by ancient Near Eastern conventions (Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5) and those whose position reflects the emerging "canon-conscious culture" of Second Temple Judaism (e.g. 1 Samuel 2, 2 Samuel 22).<sup>44</sup> Like other investigators of the Samuel psalms, Weitzman noted that they imitate the earlier group of texts to "scripturalize" the literature of Samuel, in the process not only characterizing their speakers' piety but also providing a thematic bracket around the book.<sup>45</sup> But Weitzman's sharp distinction between the "two distinct literary cultures" led him to underestimate the large-scale structural roles also played by Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.<sup>46</sup> Writers can and do draw on multiple genre conventions simultaneously: the Song of the Sea can both conclude the battle account that immediately precedes and climaxes the exodus story of the first third of the book, and various features of Exodus 1–15 suggest that it does just that.<sup>47</sup> Mathys also distinguished these

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<sup>42</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 37–55.

<sup>43</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 55–58; similarly, Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 186–92.

<sup>44</sup> "The act of inserting songs within biblical narrative changed over the course of Israelite literary history, evolving from an assortment of disparate Near Eastern scribal practices into a fully formed literary convention unique to the Bible and the later religious literatures which sought to emulate it" (Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 58).

<sup>45</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 120, 124–31.

<sup>46</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 48–51, 55, 60–62, 71–72, 74, 79–80, 186–87.

<sup>47</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 49. Elaborating on this observation, Mark Smith and William Propp have argued that Exodus 15 serves as a pivot at the center of the whole book that "both concludes the first half of Exodus and opens the second half" (William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18* [AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1999] 38; building on Mark S. Smith, *The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus* [JSOTSup 239.

two groups of inset hymns, but only as to the degree of canon-consciousness that their positions reflect.<sup>48</sup> Some psalms serve to structure books (Deuteronomy) or large sections of books (Exodus 1–14) in a scripturalizing, if not a fully canon-conscious, way. (Only the role of Judges 5 role seems to be limited to its immediate context.) Weitzman admitted at the end of his book that several literary conventions for the use of inset hymnody can be at work at the same time — “The culture of canon-consciousness is defined in part by its need to emulate the culture which preceded it, and the earlier culture never completely gave way to its successor” — but he cited only Tobit.<sup>49</sup>

The fact is that some late Second Temple literature is, in its mix of hymnody and narrative, actually more like older Near Eastern epic and historiography than is the preponderance of earlier biblical narrative. For example, the rule that only characters voice hymns is broken by the narrators of Chronicles, Ezra and 1 Maccabees who themselves seem to join in the liturgical refrain “for his kindness is forever.”<sup>50</sup> 1 Maccabees goes even further, placing hymns and praise songs in the narrator’s voice in a way very reminiscent of epic style.<sup>51</sup> A broad survey of the use of inset songs in ancient literatures reveals the emergence of parallels at various stages in Israel’s literary culture and helps guard against jumping to conclusions about unique developments.

What is clear enough is that biblical examples of inset hymnody were increasingly emulated as the Second Temple period progressed.<sup>52</sup> The constellation of 2 Samuel 22 and 23 within a four-chapter “appendix” to Samuel was clearly designed to emulate the role of Deuteronomy 32 and 33 in the ending of Samuel. 1 Chronicles 16 in turn probably adapts the tradition of David’s hymns from Samuel to address its very different concerns for liturgical hymnody.<sup>53</sup>

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997] 30–39).

<sup>48</sup> Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 126, 180.

<sup>49</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 130.

<sup>50</sup> 1 Chron 16:41; 2 Chron 5:13; 7:3, 6; Ezra 3:11; 1 Macc 4:24; Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 157–58, 196–97.

<sup>51</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 178, 196. See G. O. Neuhaus, *Studien zu den poetischen Stücken im 1. Makkabäerbuch* (FzB 12; Würzburg: Echter, 1974).

<sup>52</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 181, 185.

<sup>53</sup> O. Plöger, “Reden und Gebete im deuteronomistischen und chronistischen

The tradition of victory hymns welding together Egyptian literary conventions with Israel’s cultural tradition of women war singers emerges not just in battle contexts such as Exodus 14–15, Judges 4–5, and Judith, but also in Hannah’s and Mary’s songs (1 Samuel 2, Luke 1), the former clearly a model for the latter. Translations and retellings of biblical stories increasingly supplied additional psalms for characters to sing, and the multiplication of historical superscriptions in various versions of the Psalter pointed out the potential for additional insertions.<sup>54</sup> The four poems and poem-fragments of Luke 1–2, one of several stylistic imitations of the Greek Septuagint in Luke’s prologue, show that, by the end of the period, inset psalmody had become an expected feature of “biblical” style. Weitzman described this development in detail, noting that “the scripturalization of biblical literature led early Jews to emulate its genres and stylistic characteristics in their own literary and liturgical compositions,” which in turn effected the shape of the biblical literature itself, as we have seen.<sup>55</sup> There remains, however, some disagreement about the nature and purpose of this activity, so it is to this issue that I now turn.

#### SCRIPTURE, WISDOM, AND PERFORMANCE

The historical development of the convention of inset hymnody has been characterized in different ways. I described it as an emerging trend in Jewish literature, especially of the Second Temple period, rooted in Egyptian conventions and perhaps reflecting the use of inset songs and poetry in a broader range of ancient Near Eastern narrative literatures.<sup>56</sup> Weitzman described the increasing use of inset songs for the purpose of scripturalization in much greater detail, but characterized the phenomenon of inset hymnody itself as “a literary constant” in Israel that reflected two distinct cultures and many different genre conventions.<sup>57</sup> Mathys, however, characterized the phenomenon as a

Geschichtswerk,” in W. Schneemelcher (ed.), *Festschrift Günther Dehn* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Kreis Moors, 1957) 39–41, 46; Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 165–67.

<sup>54</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 175–85.

<sup>55</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 128; see 59–123. See also Yair Zakovitch, “Poetry Creates Historiography,” in S. M. Olyan and R. C. Culley (eds.), “A Wise and Discerning Mind”: *Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long* (BJS 325; Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000) 311–20.

<sup>56</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 186–97, 218–20.

<sup>57</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 12 and *passim*.

uniquely "late post-exilic" development reflecting Jewish theological trends.<sup>58</sup>

Mathys looked for the theological and canonical significance of the songs from the start. He argued that the late addition of prayers, doxologies and psalms to biblical texts reflects a systematizing tendency in Second Temple Judaism. The inserted texts convert the specific stories around them into paradigms suitable for teaching.<sup>59</sup> Thus Mathys focused primarily on the inserts' thematic contributions to their contexts. (Kleinig's investigation of choral music in Chronicles also explored the thematic contribution made by inset hymns, as well as references to songs and singers, but with implications less for systematizing theology than for Second Temple liturgical practice and for the theological significance of song itself.<sup>60</sup>)

Mathys's thematic emphasis depended explicitly on understanding later Second Temple psalmody in general and inset psalmody in particular as a product of Wisdom traditions. He contrasted the scribal, editorial, and didactic nature of inset hymnody with oral cultic poetry designed to address a variety of situations in an open-ended manner. Sigmund Mowinckel first elaborated this thesis of a "learned psalmography" dedicated to the composition of prayers and psalms as acts of piety. Scribes inserted appropriate psalms into narratives to provide models of the practice.<sup>61</sup> (Traditions of didactic hymnody also developed in other ancient cultures, such as New Kingdom Egypt.<sup>62</sup>)

<sup>58</sup> Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 312.

<sup>59</sup> Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 1, 179–80, 317. He concluded: "Interpretation, Verallgemeinerung, Zusammenfassung, Kanonisierung — dafür eignen sich Gebete, Psalmen und Doxologien in besonders ausgezeichneter Weise" (p. 318).

<sup>60</sup> Kleinig, *The Lord's Song*, 14 and *passim*.

<sup>61</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel, "Psalms and Wisdom," in M. Noth and D. W. Thomas (eds.), *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Festschrift H. H. Rowley; VTSup 3; Leiden: Brill, 1955) 205–224, esp. 211, 222; *idem*, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (2 vols., Oxford: Blackwell, 1962) 2.115.

<sup>62</sup> Jan Assman observed that the earliest Egyptian hymns come from the Middle Kingdom and are found in three contexts: in the cult, in grave inscriptions, and in literature (e.g. the tale of Sinuhe). Royal hymns are at home in literature and also in the cult, but not in grave inscriptions, whereas divine hymns appear in grave inscriptions and no doubt arise from the cult, but do not appear in literature. But in the New Kingdom, divine hymns become a literary genre as well: "Das heisst: ihrer Hauptabsicht besteht darin, ein Wissen von Gott in den literarischen Diskurs einzubringen, der das fundierende Wissen und Weltbild vermittelt. Liter-

Mathys combined this thesis with Sheppard's observations about the use of psalms for canonical shaping, arguing that Jewish scribes composed and inserted didactic psalms to shape the literature theologically.<sup>63</sup> He pointed out that much of the Hebrew Bible recounts contingent history, and canonization presses the question of the significance of this history. Inset psalms answer by making the history of God's salvation of Israel less contingent and more paradigmatic, and by modeling Israel's appropriate response as thanksgiving.<sup>64</sup>

Mathys therefore emphasized that inset hymns were not composed for use in Temple liturgies, but were instead *kunst-psalmen*, products of a literary aesthetic that prized the composition of hymns and prayers as itself an act of piety.<sup>65</sup> He argued that Deuteronomy 32, 1 Samuel 2, 2 Samuel 22, Jonah 2, and 1 Chronicles 16 were all composed for insertion in these literary contexts, though incorporating traditional materials.<sup>66</sup> Their purpose is didactic, rather than cultic.<sup>67</sup> Susan Gillingham pushed the distinction even further, concluding that inset hymns reflect a scribal wisdom tradition, but that their placement in other literary contexts restricted their religious significance:

A cultic poem (used in an entirely different context), when appropriated into a particular piece of literature, actually loses something of its more repeatable and more typical performative nature .... This more specific and particular adaptation contrasts with the liturgical poetry proper in the Psalter, where there is an open-ended orientation because of the re-usable nature of the psalms for all types of cultic occasions.<sup>68</sup>

arisch heisst in Ägypten zunächst und vor allem: edukativ" ("Verkünden und Verklären — Grundformen hymnischer Rede im alten Ägypten," in W. Burkert and F. Stolz (eds.), *Hymnen der Alten Welt im Kulturvergleich* [OBO 131; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1994] 33–57 [41]).

<sup>63</sup> In the psalms outside the Psalter "entdeckt man zwar unterschiedliche, aber immer höchst kunstvolle, oft rabbinisch anmutende Theologie und stösst zugleich — so deutlich wie kaum noch im Alten Testament — auf Anfänge der Kanonisierung" (Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 125).

<sup>64</sup> Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 317–18.

<sup>65</sup> He also found the same tendencies at work in the Psalter, in Psalms 19, 33, 111/112, 117, 119, 130, 135, 144, 146 (*Dichter und Beter*, 231–316)

<sup>66</sup> Mathys, *Dichter und Beter*, 146, 168, 203, 219.

<sup>67</sup> Thus on Samuel, he concluded: "Die Kanonisierung beginnt hier mit Psalmen und Weisheit!" (*Dichter und Beter*, 164). And "Dtn 32 ist ein systematischer, lehrhafter Text in bunter Verkleidung" (p. 168).

<sup>68</sup> Gillingham, *Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*, 158, 169; see also pp.

Thus the insertion of the Song of the Sea into Exodus 15 “has limited its performative value to this context alone.”<sup>69</sup> This distinction between cultic and literary hymnody derives from the old form-critical observation that hymnody developed through oral composition, but that some psalms can only have originated in writing (the most obvious cases are alphabetical acrostics). It also grows from the patent observation that those who inserted psalms showed considerable aesthetic sensitivity to traditional Jewish literature and hymnody.<sup>70</sup> This judgment about the different origins of particular compositions becomes misleading, however, when it is reified into an absolute distinction between the scribal and liturgical spheres. Not only is such separation highly unlikely in Second Temple Jewish society, but there is literary evidence of increasing interaction and influence between wisdom and priestly circles as the period progressed, even in regards to inset hymnody. On the basis of liturgical compositions from Qumran, Weitzman has shown that Philo’s and Pseudo-Philo’s rewriting of the Songs of Moses and Deborah reflected the liturgical practices of their own day. For these writers, “there was no clear line between the biblical past and the liturgical present.”<sup>71</sup> Those who wrote and inserted hymns were expressing liturgical as well as aesthetic sensibilities.

Thus Mathys’s observations about how inset hymns model pious thanksgiving are in some tension with his and Gillingham’s insistence that they do not reflect liturgical practices. The root of the problem lies in an overly strict distinction between oral and literate cultures. Though particular pieces of literature can often be credited to oral or written composition, the activities of ancient people cannot be so neatly segregated. Even reading does not belong purely to the realm of literate culture, for ancient reading was almost always reading aloud and usually to an audience. Thus reading involved performance, and performance might invite audience participation. Here scribal and

159–60.

<sup>69</sup> Gillingham, *Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*, 145.

<sup>70</sup> See Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 65–70.

<sup>71</sup> Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 83; see 76–77, 80–83. On the basis of hymnic fragments in the Book of the Twelve, Erhard S. Gerstenberger has argued that liturgical influences shaped the depiction of prophets in the Second Temple biblical literature (“Psalms in the Book of the Twelve: How Misplaced are They?” *SBL 2000 Seminar Papers* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000] 254–62).

cultic activities can easily merge into *liturgy*, where oral recitation, ritual action and reading coalesce. The growing authority of Torah in Second Temple Judaism was evidenced first of all by its public reading.<sup>72</sup> The oral reading and aural reception of the authoritative text marked Torah’s status in Temple and synagogue. It was the fact that Torah was *haMiqrā* “the reading” that made it also “scripture” and “canon.”

Such liturgical use of biblical literature eventually found its logical conclusion in the liturgical *singing* of many if not all biblical readings, as evidenced in late antiquity by the liturgies of both synagogue and church. How far back in time such cantorial traditions go cannot be determined. There is, however, evidence that inset hymns were used liturgically in the late Second Temple period.<sup>73</sup> Taken together, these observations suggest that, far from losing their liturgical application when inserted into other literary contexts as Gillingham suggested, hymns preserved their liturgical orientation and carried it into their new literary contexts. That is, rather than seeing the insertion of hymnody into other literatures as reducing the hymns’ liturgical application, it was more likely an attempt, obviously successful, to appropriate the surrounding literature for use in liturgy.

Several inset psalms in the Hebrew Bible seem to serve precisely such a function. The Song of the Sea concludes not just the story of the Reed Sea but the entire exodus account (Exodus 1–14) with a celebration of God’s victory that takes the anachronistic perspective of later generations (that is, the readers and hearers), rather than the people with Moses at the sea. In the song, the exodus generation and the readers are merged into the one people of God, thereby appropriating the exodus story as the readers’ story as well. Deuteronomy 31 depicts the Song of Moses as a summary of Moses’ threats and warnings for the people to memorize, in contrast to the law which priests read aloud every seven years. The song thus emphasizes and actual-

<sup>72</sup> See James W. Watts, *Reading Law: The Rhetorical Shaping of the Pentateuch* (The Biblical Seminar 59; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 15–31.

<sup>73</sup> For rabbinic and Qumran evidence, see the discussion cited by Weitzman, *Song and Story*, 74 and 175 n. 69. One should also add the evidence of the Septuagint “Odes,” which excerpt inset hymns from their contexts and append them to the Psalter for liturgical use, though again this development cannot be securely dated.

izes the authority of the book.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps the most emphatic evidence of the use of a psalm to “liturgize” its context comes from the book of Habakkuk. Here the prophet’s questions and complaints are answered by a theophany which takes the form of, not a private revelation to the prophet, but a very clearly marked psalm, that is, a public liturgy available to all Temple worshipers.<sup>75</sup>

In these cases and, I think, the rest of the texts discussed above, an inset hymn shapes the literature for liturgical appropriation. So alongside the role of inset psalmody in scripturalization and canonization, we should emphasize even more its *liturgizing* role in shaping the Hebrew Bible.

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<sup>74</sup> Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 48–51, 60–62, 79–81, 191.

<sup>75</sup> Watts, “Psalmody in Prophecy,” 222.