

to Gunkel the most influential and productive scholar in this field, to press the cultic situation throughout the Psalter and indeed, beyond it, to the prophetic books and other Old Testament contexts. Mowinckel based his studies upon the conclusions of Gunkel so far as the *Gattungen* were concerned, but then sought to establish the cultic contexts out of which alone they were to be explained. In the second of his influential monographs on the Psalms he maintained that annually in the Temple at Jerusalem there was celebrated an autumnal festival in which Yahweh was enthroned as King.<sup>1</sup> To Gunkel's enthronement psalms (47, 93, 96-99) Mowinckel added others (for example, 46, 48, 76). He was especially impressed by the parallels to the Babylonian New Year's festival and adduced numerous striking parallels. It is impossible to trace the course of the development of Mowinckel's views; they have been accepted with some qualification by many scholars, and he has himself re-stated them with reservations. Form-critical studies are in part responsible, too, for the large and ever-growing number of passages explained as liturgies. Gunkel himself had written two important articles on such liturgies: one on Is 33,<sup>2</sup> another on Mic 7.<sup>3</sup> A. S. Kapelrud was deeply impressed by the cultic characteristics of the Book of Joel.<sup>4</sup> Paul Humbert viewed the Book of Habakkuk as a liturgy,<sup>5</sup> and I. Engeström stressed the liturgical features of the poems of Second Isaiah.<sup>6</sup> H. J. Kraus, in particular, has called attention to an annual celebration of a festival of Zion, in which David was chosen as King and Zion as Yahweh's holy dwelling.<sup>7</sup> Johannes Pedersen has argued that Ex 1-15 is to be understood as a Passover Legend,<sup>8</sup> and von Rad and others have stressed the cultic setting and character of Ex 19-24 as well as substantial sections of the Book of Deuteronomy.<sup>9</sup> It must be repeated that in some of these works the form-critical procedures are not employed, but most of

<sup>1</sup> *Psalmstudien II. Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwe's und der Ursprung der Eschatologie* [1922].

<sup>2</sup> 'Jesaja 33, eine prophetische Liturgie', in *ZAW* [1924], 177-208.

<sup>3</sup> 'Der Micha-Schluss', in *Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete* [1924], 145-178.

<sup>4</sup> *Joel Studies* [1948].

<sup>5</sup> *Problèmes du livre d'Habacuc* [1944].

<sup>6</sup> 'The 'Ebed Yahweh Songs and the Suffering Messiah in "Deutero-Isaiah"', in *BJRL*, xxxi. [1948], 31-65.

<sup>7</sup> *Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament* [1951].

<sup>8</sup> 'Passahfest und Passahlegende', in *ZAW* [1934], 161-175.

<sup>9</sup> *Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs* [1938].

them, in one way or another, are indebted to the methodology and results adopted by the Form Critics.

Like all the major approaches to the study of the Old Testament, Form Criticism has suffered not only from neglect but also from excess and gross exaggeration. Literary units have been reduced to mere snippets, strophes have been taken for independent poems, resort has been made to precarious emendations, although Form Critics in general have been more conservative in their treatment of the text than their predecessors. The *Leben* for different literary units has been recklessly construed. Near Eastern parallels have been exaggerated. The tensions between the literary form and structure and the cultic patterns, especially in the Book of Psalms, have not been sufficiently recognized. Near Eastern cultic patterns have been permitted to determine the structure and order of historical accounts, thus undermining the uniqueness of historical events and historical revelation. There is a problem here, to be sure, one that has not yet been satisfactorily resolved. Theological issues of great importance are at stake. There has even been considerable disagreement as to the identification of the literary types, and we still need a better nomenclature for many of the *Gattungen*. Finally, some of those who seek to employ form-critical methods do so in a stereotyped manner with the result that they fail to yield the vitality and contemporaneity which they can produce in the hands of such scholars as Gunkel, Gressmann, Mowinckel, and Aubrey Johnson.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless the gains have been substantial. When the methods are properly employed, the various exegetical disciplines permitted to fructify each other, and imagination and appreciation allowed their legitimate scope, the results have been salutary. Form Criticism has breathed new life into our Biblical studies. It has liberated ancient texts from bondage to a book. It has called attention to the incomparable literary elevation of Israel's literature in the ancient world and to the superb craftsmanship revealed in the rhetoric and composition of the literary types. It has provided us with techniques of exegesis which have helped us to penetrate into the heart of the passage. Careful literary analysis and rhetorical articulation often disclose in a startling way the interior fabric of the thought. But more than that, form-critical studies have paved the way to a better understanding of the worship of Israel and the cultic types employed, such as the hymns, prophetic oracles, and liturgies of the Book of Psalms. More than any other critical approach, they have been instrumental in making the ancient

<sup>10</sup> *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* [1955].