Old Testament Poems for Vow Fulfillment: A Form-Critical and Theological Study

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OLD TESTAMENT POEMS FOR VOW FULFILLMENT:
A FORM-CRITICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY

By
R. Christopher Heard

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A FORM-CRITICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY

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An abstract of a thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Graduate School

Abilene Christian University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts

by

R. Christopher Heard

March 1993

ABSTRACT

The most pervasive and enduring contribution of Hermann Gunkel's form-critical program for psalms studies is the insight that certain types of poems are particularly well suited to certain types of cultic occasions. One such occasion is the fulfillment of a vow, mentioned in eight psalms, one poem outside the book of Psalms and several other contexts. To date, however, a separate category of poems for vow fulfillment has not been widely recognized. The form-critical insight mentioned above raises the question whether there exists among Hebrew poems a genre of poems for vow fulfillment. The recurrence in the psalms of phrases in which a first person D form of the verb שלם, "fulfill," takes as its object a form of the noun נדר, "vow," further suggests the existence of a genre of poems for vow fulfillment. Such phrases appear in Psalms 22; 56; 61; 66; 116 and Jonah 2:3–10, making them candidates for inclusion in such a genre.

The recurrent phrase alone, however, is insufficient to establish the existence of the genre. The form-critical method adopted in this study requires that poems assigned to the same genre have four characteristics in common: (1) discourse structure; (2) thematic elements; (3) setting in life; and (4) intention. The method also suggests that analogous texts should be identifiable in non-Israelite ancient Near Eastern cultures.

An examination of ancient Near Eastern votive stelae, most from northwest Semitic linguistic traditions, confirms that a well-defined mode of expressing vow fulfillment existed in the ancient Near East. The structure, thematic elements and implied intention of these votive inscriptions vary little over a large geographical area and a long period of time. The setting in life of these inscriptions is difficult to determine, although their archaeological provenance does suggest a common origin in

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cultic practice. Similarly, application of form-critical criteria to Psalms 22; 56; 61; 66; 116 and Jonah 2:3–10 demonstrates that five of these poems (Psalms 22; 56; 66; 116 and Jonah 2:3–10) share a common (loose) structure, setting, intention and common thematic elements. These five poems may confidently be assigned to the genre, "poems for vow fulfillment."

The importance of vow fulfillment in ancient Israel is easily seen by examination of several passages (Numbers 30; Deuteronomy 23:21–23; Judges 11; Isaiah 19; Job 22; Psalms 50; 76; Proverbs 7 and Qoheleth 5) which reflect ancient Israelite attitudes toward vow fulfillment. The basic conviction expressed in these passages is that what is vowed must be fulfilled without delay. Another series of passages (Leviticus 22:17–25; Numbers 15:1–14; Deuteronomy 12:1–28) illuminate the sacrificial rituals associated with vow fulfillment, and the importance of testimony in vow fulfillment is reflected in Psalms 50; 65 and 76 as well as the poems for vow fulfillment themselves. Psalms 100 and 107 may have served as liturgical "frames" for vow fulfillment ceremonies.

The two major strands of opinion on vow making and fulfillment in contemporary prayer and worship differ significantly from one another, but both deprecate the conditional nature of biblical vows and fail to appropriate the biblical testimony that offers of praise motivate God to act. The biblical poems for vow fulfillment may be appropriated as examples for contemporary prayer and worship only if two attitudes are recovered: (1) it is acceptable to offer God public praise in exchange for his help in time of crisis; and (2) God acts on behalf of his people.

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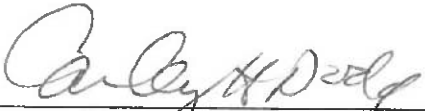This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Council of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
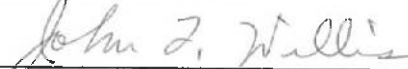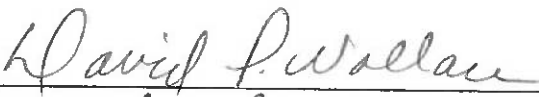
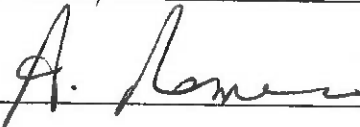MASTER OF ARTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Biblical and Related Texts and Versions

1 Kgs	1 Kings	LXX	Septuagint
2 Kgs	2 Kings	Mal	Malachi
1 Sam	1 Samuel	Matt	Matthew
2 Sam	2 Samuel	MT	Masoretic Text
Acts	Acts	Nah	Nahum
Deut	Deuteronomy	NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
Ezek	Ezekiel		
Hos	Hosea	Num	Numbers
Isa	Isaiah	*Odes Sol.*	*Odes of Solomon*
Jer	Jeremiah	Prov	Proverbs
Job	Job	Ps(s)	Psalm(s)
Jonah	Jonah	*Pss. Sol.*	*Psalms of Solomon*
Josh	Joshua	Qoh	Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes)
Judg	Judges	Sir	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
Lev	Leviticus		

Modern Sources

AB	Anchor Bible
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Pritchard, 3d ed.
BARev	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 2nd ed.
BL	Bible and Literature Series
BS	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
CBNS	Century Bible, New Series (= first printing of NCB)
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
FBBS	Facet Books Biblical Series
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GBSOT	Guides to Biblical Scholarship, Old Testament Series
GKC	Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. G. A. Buttrick et al.
ISBE	*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed, ed. G. W. Bromiley et al.
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament—Supplement Series
KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, ed. H. Donner and W. Röllig
NCB	New Century Bible (= second printing of CBNS)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OTL	Old Testament Library
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
SBB	Soncino Books of the Bible
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. J. G. Botterweck and H. Ringgren
TWOT	*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. and B. K. Waltke
TSSI	*Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, ed. John C. L. Gibson
TUMSR	Trinity University Monograph Series in Religion
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	*Vetus Testamentum* Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

CHAPTER 1
AIM, SCOPE AND METHOD

The most pervasive and enduring contribution of Hermann Gunkel's form-critical program for psalms studies is the insight that certain types of psalms are particularly well suited to certain types of cultic occasions. One such occasion is the fulfillment of a vow, mentioned in eight psalms, one poem outside the book of Psalms and several other contexts.[1] To date, poems that explicitly have as their setting an occasion for vow fulfillment have been subsumed under the category "thanksgiving songs of individuals" with little attention to vow fulfillment as a generic element,[2] or the votive element has been read into virtually all psalms classified as thanksgiving songs of individuals.[3] The form-critical insight mentioned above raises

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[1]These are, respectively, Pss 22; 50; 56; 61; 65; 66; 76; Jonah 2:3–10; 116; Lev 7:16–18; 22:18–25; 23:37–38; 27:1–13; Num 15:2–16; 29:39–30:1; Deut 12:4–28; 23:19, 22–24; 1 Sam 1:21; 2 Sam 15:7–9; Isa 19:21; Nah 2:1; Mal 1:14; Job 22:27; Prov 7:14; Qoh 5:1–6. Jer 44:24–25 refers to fulfillment of vows made to a pagan deity, the queen of heaven, by certain Judahites.

[2]H. Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, trans. T. M. Horner, FBBS 19 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 17–19, 32–33 does not develop the votive aspect of Pss 66:13–14; 116:18–19; Jonah 2:10, citing these as representative thanksgiving songs of individuals despite the fact that the majority of psalms usually so identified contain no reference to vow fulfillment. The list of thanksgiving songs of individuals given by E. S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1: With an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*, FOTL 14 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 15–16, derived from Crüsemann and Gunkel–Begrich, is representative: Pss 18; 30; 32; 34; 40:2–12; 41; 66:13–20; 92; 116; 118; 138; Isa 38:10–20; Jonah 2:3–10; Job 33:26–28; Sir 51:1–12; *Pss. Sol.* 15; 16; *Odes Sol.* 25; 29. Of these, only Pss 66; 116; Jonah 2:3–10 actually cite vow fulfillment as a motivation for thanksgiving.

[3]So C. Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, trans. K. R. Crim and R. N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 105: "In the vow of praise, the Psalm of petition and lamentation is open toward praise. The voluntative, then, in the beginning of the declarative Psalm of praise [in usual terminology, a song of thanksgiving], is simply taking up where the vow of praise left off. That which was promised there is now to take place." So also A. Weiser, *The Psalms*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 85–86. An important exception to this approach and that mentioned in n. 2 is J. M. O'Brien, "Because God Heard My Voice: The Individual Thanksgiving Psalm and Vow-Fulfillment," in *The Listening Heart: Essays in Wisdom and the Psalms in Honor of Roland E. Murphy* ed. K. G. Hoglund *et al.*, JSOTSup 58 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 281–282, which suggests that

the question whether there exists in Hebrew poetry a separate genre, "poems[4] for vow fulfillment."

Preliminary Identification of the Corpus

Contemporary psalms studies in the form-critical tradition sometimes appear to use genre taxonomies heuristically, presupposing the existence and characteristics of certain genres and then assigning particular psalms to those categories. This impression derives from the organization of the commentaries, which ordinarily include a taxonomy of psalm genres among their introductory material and open their discussions of any given psalm by locating its position in the taxonomy.[5] This format gives the impression that the existence and characteristics of certain genres are assumed *a priori* and imposed upon the psalms themselves.

It would be incorrect to assume from the customary manner of presentation that form-critical work is inherently deductive, assigning each psalm to a place in a presupposed genric taxonomy. Rather, in Gunkel's program, "the investigator should seek to feel his way into the innate, natural structure of the whole body of material: he should make some sound basic observations, in accordance with which

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"Psalms 66 and 116, which mention vow fulfillment and profess to involve a worshipping community, may indicate a genre of psalms which focus on vow fulfillment." To my knowledge, O'Brien's is the only such suggestion.

[4]"Poem" is used in preference to "psalm" to avoid the implication that all such poems occur within the psalter. It is used in preference to both "psalm" and "song" to avoid the assumption that such poems *must* have originally been composed for oral presentation, an assumption which (to anticipate elements of the discussion in subsequent chapters) comparable texts from the ancient Near East, inscribed on stelae, undermine. Cf. Ps 40:8, which is not among the corpus examined here.

[5]Commentaries following this practice include A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, NCB, 2 vols. (London: Oliphants, 1972); M. Dahood, *Psalms I*, AB 16 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966); idem, *Psalms II*, AB 17 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968); idem, *Psalms III*, AB 17A (Garden City, Doubleday, 1968); Gerstenberger, *Psalms*; H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 1–5*, trans. H. C. Oswald; (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988); idem, *Psalms 60–150*, trans. H. C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989); L. Sabourin, *The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning*, new ed. (New York: Alba House, 1974); Weiser.

the material falls into a context, as if by itself."[6] This does not suggest that contemporary form critics must "reinvent the wheel" with each commentary; indeed, the reason that one may safely assume the existence and character of certain genres is that Gunkel did his inductive and intuitive work so well that his *a posteriori* suggestions about them have continued to ring true for subsequent generations of scholars. It does suggest, however, that new or modified genre recognitions may emerge intuitively from reading the psalms.

The requirements of scholarly presentation do not permit a thorough reporting of an inductive process of genre recognition in a study of a particular genre.[7] Indeed, it is doubtful whether one could accurately reconstruct such a process after the fact. Therefore, a report of the specific elements or characteristics that originally led one to intuit the existence of a particular genre must suffice.

In the case of poems for vow fulfillment, the feature that initially suggests the existence of such a genre is the use of clauses in which the verb שלם, "fulfill," in the first person singular D imperfect, אֲשַׁלֵּם, "I will fulfill," takes a nominalized form of נדר, "vow," as its direct object:

Ps 22:26b	נְדָרַי אֲשַׁלֵּם נֶגֶד יְרֵאָיו	My vows I will fulfill before those who fear him
Ps 66:13b	אֲשַׁלֵּם לְךָ נְדָרָי	I will fulfill to you my vows
Ps 116:14a	נְדָרַי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם	My vows to Yahweh I will fulfill
Ps 116:18a	נְדָרַי לַיהוָה אֲשַׁלֵּם	My vows to Yahweh I will fulfill
Jonah 2:10b	נָדַרְתִּי אֲשַׁלֵּמָה	What I have vowed I will fulfill

Ps 56:13 belongs here as well, although it exhibits the common poetic device of the breakup of the stereotypical phrase:

| Ps 56:13 | עָלַי אֱלֹהִים נְדָרֶיךָ | I am obligated, O God, by vows made to you; |
| | אֲשַׁלֵּם תּוֹדֹת לָךְ | I will fulfill testimonial offerings to you. |

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[6]Gunkel, 5.

[7]This accounts for the illusion that Gunkel attempted to categorize the psalms according to an *a priori* genric taxonomy; his *presentation* reversed his *process*.

Psalm 61:9b substitutes an infinitive construct with a pronominal suffix for the imperfect, but it is otherwise similar:

Ps 61:9b   לְשַׁלְּמִי נְדָרַי יוֹם יוֹם   To fulfill my vows day after day

Thus, the formula אֲשַׁלֵּם נְדָרַי and its variants leads me to tentatively posit the existence of a genre of poems concerned with vow fulfillment. At this initial stage of investigation, Pss 22; 56; 61; 66; 116; Jonah 2:3–10 are candidates for inclusion in such a genre.

Verification of the Genre

The goal of the present study is to determine whether the genre tentatively identified above in fact exists, and to describe its typical characteristics if its existence can be verified.[8] Gunkel employed three criteria for genre identification:

> How are we to distinguish the various types of Cult Songs? It should go without saying that we do it always according to their "setting in life," that is, according to the various situations in which the songs were sung. . . . A common setting in life is thus one of the distinguishing characteristics of songs belonging to the same literary type. Another distinguishing characteristic is the great number of thoughts and moods which these songs share, while yet another—a very distinctive characteristic—is the literary forms [*Formensprache*] which are prevalent in them.[9]

Gunkel's criteria, though serviceable, require modification and clarification in three ways.

First, the term *Formensprache* is frequently misunderstood. It does not refer to the discourse structure of a given poem, as the rendering "literary forms" in the quotation above might imply. In seeking common *Formensprache* as a criterion of genre identification, Gunkel was looking for "definite phrases, sentences structures,

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[8]This second goal leaves me open to the charge of overlooking the particularities of the poems in its attempt to describe their common features. This is, however, a study of a poetic genre, not a commentary on a group of psalms; therefore, common generic features rather than individual variations are naturally at the fore.

[9]Gunkel, 10. The bracketed material was inserted by the translator.

images, and so forth."[10] Thus, "thematic elements" is preferable to "literary forms"[11] as a translation of *Formensprache* and clearly distinguishes this criterion from discourse structure. Poems belonging to a common genre exhibit approximately the same thematic elements, and these elements often occur in an order that may be described as customary for that genre. However, a great deal of flexibility in ordering, repeating and omitting typical elements in the discourse structure of the poem is to be allowed in the actual practice of making genre assignments.[12]

This does not imply, however, that discourse structure is unimportant. On the contrary, von Waldow has proposed that structural analysis should be the first step in form-critical study:

> Each form critical analysis of a unit should begin with a structure analysis. Such a procedure is extremely helpful in several respects.
> 1. The structure analysis focuses upon the text in its given form . . . I would like to suggest to make it a rule: We are dealing with the text as it is transmitted in our Hebrew Bible, and not with a hypothetical text cleared of all the so-called later additions or intrusions, such as literary connections, liturgical introductions, exegetical remarks, sermon-like extensions and so forth. . . .
> 2. The structure analysis can be essential in three more respects:
>   a. It protects the exegete from focusing upon key words and characteristic phrases. On the other hand, it helps to focus on the unit as a whole, to detect what the subunits are and how they are linked together and so to discover the sequence of thought.
>   b. A structure analysis gives the first clues for the definition of the genre because each genre has a particular structure characteristic of its form. . . .
>   c. The structure analysis helps to detect what the intention of a given unit is.[13]

Von Waldow's assertion that "each genre has a particular structure characteristic of its form" must be tempered in light of the fluidity of discourse structure in poetic

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[10]J. H. Hayes, *An Introduction to Old Testament Study* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 127, quoting Gunkel (in translation) from "a discussion he published in *ZAW* in 1924."

[11]Compare the usage of T. Longman III, "Form Criticism, Recent Developments in Genre Theory, and the Evangelical," *WTJ* 47 (1985), 49, 59, who designates this criterion "linguistic forms (grammar and vocabulary)," and Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 10–20 *passim*, who refers to the "elements" or "components" of various genres.

[12]Cf. the practice of Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 10–20.

[13]H. E. von Waldow, "Some Thoughts on Old Testament Form Criticism," in SBLSP (Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), 2.590–591.

genres. This reservation notwithstanding, his suggestion that a structural analysis be the first step in form-critical analysis is sound,[14] and I will adopt it here.

Third, Gunkel's criterion of "common thoughts and moods" is indistinct, difficult to evaluate and apply. Some precision may be brought to this criterion by focusing on the apparent intent of the poem being examined. Form critics frequently note that the individual poems comprising a genre share a common intention.[15] I thus find it appropriate to narrow Gunkel's criterion of "common thoughts and moods" to a criterion of a common expressed intent.

Thus, I adopt Gunkel's criteria for genre identification, modified in light of von Waldow's recommendations. I will analyze each of the poems in the preliminary corpus in four categories: discourse structure, sociological setting, prevalent thematic elements and apparent intention.[16] I will make no assumptions on the basis of the intuited genre, "poems for vow fulfillment"; rather, my comments at this stage will be restricted to analysis of each poem itself.[17]

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[14]Cf. R. Knierim, "Criticism of Literary Features, Form, Tradition and Redaction," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters*, ed. D. A. Knight and G. M. Tucker (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 138.

[15]W. G. Doty, "The Concept of Genre in Literary Analysis," SBLSP (Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), 2.425, 427. G. M. Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament*, GBSOT (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 16–17; von Waldow, 592. Of course, it is possible that a genre which is ideal for a particular intent may be used for another intent altogether; von Waldow, 591–595 discusses this and provides examples.

[16]Issues of translation and textual criticism will be discussed only when they materially affect the discussion in one of these four areas. Full translations of the psalms in the corpus will not be presented here.

[17]So Doty, 424: "It is the sociological setting of *the text itself* (the texteme) which is our immediate focus." E. S. Gerstenberger, "Psalms," in *Old Testament Form Criticism*, ed. J. H. Hayes, TUMSR 2 (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974), 197 criticizes "Scandinavian and British ceremonialists and continental covenantalists" for employing "too many general truths and hypotheses, combining them freely, instead of looking for empirical and full-blooded details."

Comparable Texts from the Ancient Near East

Scholars agree widely that examination of comparable materials from other ancient Near Eastern societies is valuable in the study of biblical texts.[18] In making such comparisons, one must be sure that the material adduced for comparison is in fact comparable.[19] In this case, inscriptions on votive (also called *ex voto*) stelae are fairly well attested in the ancient Near East.[20] Some of these texts will be reproduced and examined, as fully as possible (most of the texts are quite brief), in terms of the four categories used to examine the Hebrew poems. This analysis will precede my analysis of the primary corpus and will give some indication of what to expect from Hebrew poems for vow fulfillment.

Terminology and Quantity in Poetic Analysis

Psalms studies are inhibited by the lack of scholarly consensus on the terminology to be used in discussing the various "building blocks" or structural compo-

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[18]See e.g. P. C. Craigie, *The Old Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 55–56, 65; Knierim, 136; K. Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form-Critical Method,* trans. S. M. Cupitt (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 20; H. D. Lance, *The Old Testament and the Archaeologist,* GBSOT (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 5–9; P. D. Miller, "Psalms and Inscriptions," in *Congress Volume: Vienna 1980,* ed. J. A. Emerton, VTSup 32 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 311–312; J. J. M. Roberts, "The Ancient Near Eastern Environment," *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters,* ed. D. A. Knight and G. M. Tucker (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 75–96; Tucker, 14; J. H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels Between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 13–14; and especially E. S. Gerstenberger, "The Lyrical Literature," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters,* ed. D. A. Knight and G. M. Tucker (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 431–432.

[19]Roberts, 96; Walton, 14–15.

[20]Walton incorrectly asserts that "declarative praise [i.e., thanksgiving, under which rubric poems of vow fulfillment are normally treated] is unique to Israel. We do not find Babylonians or Egyptians praising their gods for specific, individual acts of deity done on behalf of the individual." Such poems in fact form the basis for chapter 2 of this study. On the ancient Near Eastern context of vow making, see T. W. Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East,* JSOTSup 147 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 73–136.

nents of Hebrew poetry.[21] For my purposes, it is sufficient to note that I use "verse" to denote a segment of Hebrew poetry demarcated by *sillûq* and "stanza" to denote a group of verses which together constitute a discrete portion of a biblical poem. In my usage, a verse number followed by "a" refers to the part of the verse preceding *ᵓatnāḥ* and a verse number followed by "b" refers to the part of the verse following *ᵓatnāḥ*.

In describing poetic structures, I find it useful to employ quantitative analysis or "scansion."[22] Among scholars employing scansion, however, there is little consensus regarding what should be counted. Freedman opts for syllable-counting.[23] Watson and Raabe count stresses (reconstructed, not necessarily agreeing with the MT).[24] Christensen attempts to account for both phonology and syntax by adopting two measures, morae (vowel length) and "syntactic-accentual units."[25] Others focus

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[21]The terminological confusion has been noted by R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic, 1985), 9; J. L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 2; D. L. Petersen and K. H. Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*, GBSOT (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992), 23; however, none of these does much to overcome the confusion. W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques*, JSOTSup 26, 2d ed. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 12–14 provides clear and careful definitions.

[22]Despite objections by, for example, M. O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 64–65 *et passim*; Kugel, 296–297.

[23]D. N. Freedman, "Another Look at Biblical Hebrew Poetry," in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, ed. E. R. Follis, JSOTSup 40 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 18–23, 26–27.

[24]P. R. Raabe, *Psalm Structures: A Study of Psalms with Refrains*, JSOTSup 104 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 18–21; Watson, 97–103. Watson uses a complicated notion of "silent stress," derived in part from O'Connor, to equalize the stress patterns in some strophes.

[25]D. L. Christensen, "Narrative Poetics and the Interpretation of the Book of Jonah," in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, ed. E. R. Follis, JSOTSup 40 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 31–33.

on the various components of the discourse structure of Hebrew poetry: feet (words having at least one stressed syllable), cola, verses, strophes and larger units.[26]

In adopting a quantitative measure, I find it important to select phenomena consistently demonstrable in the MT. Several of the measures mentioned above fail to meet this standard. Cola are frequently counted, but stichometry—the division of poetic lines into cola—varies widely between critics. Morae and stress counts come closer to the MT, but each is problematic. Length of vowel sounds is an important feature of Hebrew phonology, but an assignment of relative numerical values to long (= 2) and short (= 1) vowel sounds stretches the available evidence. Published stress counting schemes normally devise their own systems for assigning stress rather than following the MT accentuation. It is difficult for such systems to yield consistent results.

Two measures, however, may be adopted with some confidence: syllables and syntactic-accentual units. In counting syllables, I give vocal *šewâ* (whether simple or compound) no independent value. Thus זַמְּרוּ (Ps 66:2) has two syllables (*zam·mᵉrû*) and אֱלֹהֵינוּ three (*ᵓᵉlō·hê·nû*).[27] I count furtive *pataḥ* in a separate syllable (e.g., *lib·rō·aḥ* is counted as three syllables).

The term "syntactic-accentual units" is borrowed from Longman[28] and denotes a segment of a line of Hebrew poetry marked by a disjunctive accent.[29] For example, Ps 22:2 appears thus in BHS:

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[26]This approach is represented by the contributions to W. van der Meer and J. C. de Moor, eds., *The Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite Poetry*, JSOTSup 74 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988).

[27]Cf. GKC §10.

[28]T. Longman III, "A Critique of Two Recent Metrical Systems," *Biblica* 63 (1982), 230–254; cf. Christensen, "Narrative Poetics," 32–33.

[29]For the accents, see the insert to BHS and GKC §15.

אֵלִי אֵלִי לָמָה עֲזַבְתָּנִי
רָחוֹק מִישׁוּעָתִי דִּבְרֵי שַׁאֲגָתִי :

There are four syntactic-accentual units here. The first consists of אֵלִי אֵלִי and is demarcated by *d°ḥi* (or *tipḥā praepositivum*); the second consists of לָמָה עֲזַבְתָּנִי and is demarcated by *ɔatnāḥ*; the third consists of רָחוֹק מִישׁוּעָתִי and is demarcated by *r°bíaᶜ mugrāš*; and the fourth consists of :דִּבְרֵי שַׁאֲגָתִי and is demarcated by *sillûq*. Scansion of the syntactic-accentual units in Hebrew poetry has the advantages of consistent application and demonstrable connection with ancient traditions of oral reading of biblical poetry.[30]

A final consideration involves the level of detail at which quantitative regularity is to be sought. Following Freedman, I find it most useful to focus on larger units such as stanzas and clear subsections of stanzas.[31] Thus, I will not attempt to describe any biblical poem as having a particular "meter"; rather, I will compare the syllable and syntactic-accentual unit counts of the larger components of the poems to see whether patterns or emphases emerge at these broader levels.

Toward a Theology of Vow Fulfillment

The Old Testament documents have been transmitted as scripture by both Jews and Christians, who have therefore expected to find in them claims on their beliefs and lifestyles.[32] Thus, theological reflection is appropriate in the study of biblical texts. The beginning point for such reflection is a description of the theology

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[30]On the reliability of the Masoretic accent tradition see B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 28–30.

[31]Freedman, 27.

[32]See e.g. J. A. Sanders, *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism*, GBSOT (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 28.

expressed or implicit in the works being examined.[33] Form criticism as outlined above is valuable in highlighting the theological commonalities of the poems considered here.[34]

Theology must not stop at this descriptive level, but it must also bring the text to bear on the life of the contemporary community of faith.[35] Childs correctly insists that the use to which psalms are put today must be consonant with their theological function as scripture. He notes that "the psalms function to guide Israel, both as individuals and as a community, in the proper response to God's previous acts of grace in establishing a bond."[36] Childs' statement must be qualified with the realization that the psalms do not always appear to respond to acts of grace (e.g., Pss 39; 88). Nonetheless, his identification of the theological function of the psalms as guiding faithful response to God's actions is foundational. From this base, it is possible to be more specific about the task at hand: "A good theology of lyrical poetry would have to distinguish, therefore, among the different human situations and recreate for each one of them that freedom of communication with God that we encounter throughout the Hebrew scriptures."[37] In the final chapter of this thesis, I will attempt to do this with regard to poems for vow fulfillment.

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[33]This point is developed by K. Stendahl, "Method in the Study of Biblical Theology," in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, ed. J. P. Hyatt (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1965), 196–209.

[34]Tucker, 21.

[35]G. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Issues in the Current Debate*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 169–170.

[36]B. S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 209.

[37]Gerstenberger, "Lyrical Literature," 433.

CHAPTER 2

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN VOTIVE INSCRIPTIONS

There are several ancient Near Eastern texts comparable to the biblical poems for vow fulfillment, but few studies take up this relationship in any detail.[38] In this chapter, I will examine several such texts, all of them inscribed on stelae.[39] In examining these inscriptions I follow Gerstenberger's judgment that "data about rites and feasts, songs and liturgies, taken from Israel's neighbors . . . could give a better idea of what was feasible in the field of cultic activities."[40]

In chapter 1, I noted that the feature which initially suggests the existence of a genre of poems for vow fulfillment among the biblical Hebrew poems is the use of clauses in which the verb שלם, "fulfill," in the first person singular D imperfect, אֲשַׁלֵּם, "I will fulfill," takes a nominalized form of נדר, "vow," as its direct object. This particular phrasing is absent from the texts examined in this chapter; however, variations on the phrase אשׁ נדר followed by a personal name, "that which *PN* vowed," characterize the inscriptions examined here.[41]

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[38]To my knowledge, the only such studies are O'Brien and H. L. Ginsberg, "Psalms and Inscriptions of Petition and Acknowledgment," in *Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume*, vol. 1 (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1945), 159–171. Cartledge treats the Nebre stele, but is interested in finding evidence for vow making in ancient Egypt and is not concerned with the genre of the inscription (*Vows*, 96). K. Seybold gives the text of the same stele in translation, but merely notes that "[w]ith this monument, we might compare Pss. 30; 41; 69; 102; also 40" (*Introducing the Psalms*, trans. R. G. Dunphy [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1990], 207–211).

[39]Some studies use "stele" and "inscription" interchangeably. Precision is better served by reserving "stele" for the physical object and using "inscription" for the text inscribed thereon. I have opted for this more precise terminology here.

[40]Gerstenberger, "Psalms," 197.

[41]Cf. O'Brien, 287. This phrase is not represented in the Nebre inscription, an Egyptian inscription which lies outside the Northwest Semitic linguistic tradition. However, the Nebre inscrip-

The relevant secondary sources frequently identify as "votive" certain inscriptions which contain no specific mention of a vow but have been devoted to a deity.[42] O'Brien and Cartledge both consider variations of the phrase כ שמע קל, "because [s/he] heard [my/his/their] voice," to be characteristic of votive inscriptions.[43] This phrase accompanies אש נדר in eighteen Phoenician, Punic and Neo-Punic inscriptions[44] and appears alone in twelve others.[45] Despite the secondary sources, I am reluctant to read a votive element into texts in which it is not explicit. In the Old Testament, cries to God for help sometimes include vows (e.g., Gen 28:20–22; Judg 11:30–31; 1 Sam 1:11; 2 Sam 15:7–8) and sometimes do not (e.g., Num 12:13; Judg 16:28; 1 Kgs 17:21; 2 Kgs 19:15–19). It seems reasonable to assume that other ancient Near Eastern peoples could likewise call for help to their gods, and later thank their gods for deliverance, without making vows. Therefore, I

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tion reports the vow itself and asserts that it is being fulfilled (lines 52–56), and is included on this basis.

[42]Specifically, J. C. L. Gibson, *TSSI*, treats several Phoenician inscriptions as votive, though they lack any report of vows or mention of vow fulfillment (3.64–66, 72–77, 131–133). M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1976) includes a "votive stela of Neferabu with hymn to Mertseger" and a "votive stela of Neferabu with hymn to Ptah," neither of which reports vows or mentions vow fulfillment. Pritchard refers to a stele bearing an inscription by Yehawmilk, king of Byblos, as an *ex-voto* (*ANET*, 656), and cites two stela from Salammbo as *ex-voto*, although none of the inscriptions on these stelae report vows or mention vow fulfillment. Two of the eight inscriptions studied by O'Brien contain no mention of vows. J. H. Tigray, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in Light of Hebrew Inscriptions*, HSS 31 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 23–25 mentions inscriptions on several "votive objects," but the votive character is not explicit in any of the inscriptions, which typically consist only of the donor's name, the preposition ל and some form of the tetragrammaton or another epithet of Yahweh.

The principal sources are *ANET*; *TSSI*, vols. 2 and 3; Lichtheim; and O'Brien (who follows *KAI*). Primary sourcebooks for the inscriptions in Aramaic typescript are *KAI* and *TSSI*.

[43]Cartledge, 131–132; O'Brien, 287

[44]*KAI* 47, 63, 66, 84, 88, 98, 103–108, 110, 111, 113A, 114, 116, 164.

[45]*KAI* 10, 38, 39, 41, 61A, 61B, 77, 102, 112, 129, 146, 167.

will restrict my analysis to inscriptions which explicitly mention vows or vow fulfillment.

The Nebre Inscription

In the early nineteenth century, a votive stele bearing an inscription ascribed to Nebre, an Egyptian artisan of the New Kingdom period (ca. 1550–1080 BCE), was discovered.[46] The close sociological, political and religious contact between Israel and Egypt attested throughout the pre-exilic period[47]—not least the New Kingdom, the period of the Hebrew exodus from Egypt[48]—makes this text particularly attractive for comparison with the biblical material.

> Praisegiving to Amun.
> I will make for him adorations to his name,
> I give him praises to the height of heaven,
> And over the breadth of the earth,
> 5   I tell his might to travelers north and south:
>
> Beware ye of him!
> Declare him to son and daughter,
>   To the great and small,
> Herald him to generations,
> 10   Not yet born;
> Herald him to fishes in the deep,
>   To birds in the sky,

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[46]Lichtheim, 2.105–107; cf. 2.x for a chronology of the New Kingdom period. Pritchard (*ANET*, 380) dates the stele more specifically to the Nineteenth Dynasty (ca. 1305–1195 BCE).

[47]See, for example, Josh 24:14; 1 Kgs 3:1; 10:28–29; 11:40; 2 Kgs 7:6; 17:4; 18:21; 25:26; Isa 30:1–2; 31:1; 36:6, 9; Jer 2:18; 26:20–21; 37:7; 41:16–18; 42:13–21; 43:7; 44:7–8, 15–19; Ezek 17:12–15; 20:7–10; 23:1–4; Hos 7:11; 12:1.

[48]The two dates commonly assigned for the exodus, 1445 BCE and 1290 BCE, are both in the New Kingdom period. On the date of the exodus, see J. J. Bimson, "Redating the Exodus," *BARev* 13 (Sept–Oct 1987), 40–53; idem, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest*, JSOTSup 5 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1981); C. H. Dyer, "The Date of the Exodus Reexamined," *BS* 140 (1983), 225–243; R. K. Harrison, "Exodus, Book of," in *ISBE*, 3.227–228; idem, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 174–177, 315–325; J. P. Hyatt, *Exodus*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 38; W. H. Shea, "Exodus, Date of the," in *ISBE*, 3.230–238; for a brief comment on the bearing of New Kingdom inscriptions on biblical studies, see W. F. Albright, *The Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions and Their Decipherment*, HTS 22 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 12, 15.

Declare him to fool and wise,
Beware ye of him!

15 You are Amun, the Lord of the silent,
Who comes at the voice of the poor;
When I call to you in my distress,
You come to rescue me,
To give breath to him who is wretched,
20 To rescue me from bondage.
You are Amen-Re, Lord of Thebes,
Who rescues him who is in *dat*;
For you are he who is [merciful],
when one appeals to you,
25 You are he who comes from afar.

Made by the draftsman of Amun in the Place-of-Truth, Nebre, justified,
son of the draftsman in the Place-of-Truth, Pay, [justified],
to the name of his Lord Amun, Lord of Thebes,
who comes at the voice of the poor.

30 I made for him praises to his name,
For his might is great;
I made supplications before him,
In the presence of the whole land,
On behalf of the draftsman Nakhtamun, justified,
35 Who lay sick unto death,
<In> the power of Amun, through his [sin].
I found the Lord of Gods coming as northwind,
Gentle breezes before him;
He saved Amun's draftsman Nakhtamun, justified,
40 Son of Amun's draftsman in the Place-of-Truth, Nebre, justified,
Born of the Lady Peshed, justified.

He says:
Though the servant was disposed to do evil,
The Lord is disposed to forgive.
45 The Lord of Thebes spends not a whole day in anger,
His wrath passes in a moment, none remains.
His breath comes back to us in mercy,
Amun returns upon his breeze.
May your *ka* be kind, may you forgive,
50 It shall not happen again.
Says the draftsman in the Place-of-Truth, Nebre, justified.

He says:
"I will make this stela to your name,
And record this praise on it in writing,
55 For you saved for me the draftsman Nakhtamun,"
So I said to you and you listened to me.
Now behold, I do what I have said,
You are the Lord to him who calls to you,
Content with *maat*,

60 O Lord of Thebes!
    Made by the draftsman Nebre and his son, the scribe Khay.[49]

Structure

Nebre's inscription falls naturally into two sections, each concluding with the notation "Made by the draftsman Nebre." Each of these sections can be further subdivided into four parts:

1– 5   Declaration of intent to praise
6–14   Call to praise
15–25 Direct-address praise
26–29 Identification of vow fulfiller

30–41 Account of distress and deliverance
42–51 Praise for forgiveness
52–60 Report of vow and affirmation of vow fulfillment
61   Identification of vow fulfiller

This structure is remarkably balanced; three sections of praise are balanced with three sections identifying the reason for the praise. That each section concludes with the identification of Nebre stresses the importance of the vow fulfiller in the erection of the stele.

Setting

The stele comes from one of several small temples in the Deir el-Medina region.[50] If any kind of ceremony accompanied the erection of the stele, it cannot be reconstructed from the inscription. Even so, the provenance of the stele strongly suggests that it was intended for public display.

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[49]The translation is Lichtheim's (2.105–107).

[50]Lichtheim, 104.

Elements

Nebre's stele is characterized by praise, both in second (15–25, 55–59) and third (1–14, 30–31) person; an account of distress and deliverance (32–48); an account of vow making (53–55), a positive response from the deity (56) and vow fulfillment (57); and identification of the vow fulfiller (26–29, 61).

Intention

The explicit reason for the erection of the stele is that Nebre promised it (53–55). Theoretically, the promise of public praise would motivate the deity to act on Nakhtamun's behalf;[51] if this supposition is accurate, the intent to bring credit to the deity inheres in the intent to fulfill the vow. The public provenance of the stele and the repetition of the identification of the vow fulfiller suggest a secondary intention: announcing or publicizing Nebre's fulfillment of his vow.

The Barhadad Stele

A stele which has received much attention for its historical value dates to ca. 860 BCE and bears an inscription in old Aramaic.

1	Statue which Barhadad,
2	son of Tabrimmon, son of Hezion,
3	king of Aram, raised for his lord Melcarth,
4,5	to whom he had made a vow when he listened to his voice.[52]

Most of the attention given to this stele focuses on lines 1 and 2 and consists largely of attempts to determine the identity of Barhadad in relation to the kings of Aram

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[51]Cartledge, 135.

[52]*TSSI*, 2.3.

mentioned in the Old Testament.[53] The inscription has received much less attention as a text for vow fulfillment.[54]

Structure and Elements

Barhadad's stele is so brief that it is not particularly useful to separate the discussion of its structure and elements. In order of appearance, the elements present are:

> Identification of devoted object, in the form "[object] which"
> Identification of vow fulfiller, including personal name and patronymic(s)
> Identification of deity, in the form "[her/his] lord [deity]"
> Report of prior vow, in the form "to whom [s/he] vowed"
> Report of supplication and beneficent response, in the form "because [s/he] heard my voice"

Although the inscription is quite brief, it shares key elements with Nebre's inscription (compare Barhadad 1–2 with Nebre 26–29, 61; Barhadad 3 with Nebre 28; Barhadad 4, 5 with Nebre 53–55 and 16–17, 56).

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[53]Gibson's translation (given above) follows W. F. Albright's reconstruction of line 2; Gibson parenthetically offers F. M. Cross' alternative reconstruction, "Statue which Barhadad, / son of Ezer, the Damascene, son of / the king of Aram." For the critical problems involved in identifying Barhadad, see W. F. Albright, "A Votive Stele Erected by Ben-Hadad I of Damascus to the God Melcarth," *BASOR* 87 (1942), 23–29; F. M. Cross, "The Stele Dedicated to Melcarth by Ben-Hadad of Damascus," *BASOR* 205 (1972), 36–42; J. A. Dearman, "The Melqart Stele and the Ben Hadads of Damascus: Two Studies," *PEQ* 115 (1983), 95–101; G. Levi Della Vida, "Some Notes on the Stele of Ben-Hadad," *BASOR* 90 (1943), 30–32, with an untitled response by W. F. Albright, 32–34; W. H. Shea, "The Kings of the Melqart Stela," *Maarav* 1 (1978–1979), 159–176. The precise identity of Barhadad is not important for the present study.

[54]Only, as far as I am aware, from Cartledge, 123–127. Ginsberg, 159–171 examines the stele, but unconvincingly prefers to translate Aramaic נזר (equivalent to Hebrew נדר [*TSSI*, 2.2]) as "prayed" instead of "vowed." "Nevertheless, Ginsberg's view has won few adherents: published treatments of the text almost universally translate the word as 'vow', usually without feeling any need for explanation" (Cartledge, 127). O'Brien does not treat this stele in her study, restricting her corpus of inscriptions to Phoenician and Punic examples.

Setting

Neither the inscription nor the location of the stele give any indication of its original setting. The text completely lacks any reference to place or situation, and the stele was discovered in a cemetery, probably having been moved from its original location.[55]

Intent

The inscription does not include an explicit statement of intent, but since the stele is dedicated to Melqart, to whom Barhadad had made a vow, it is natural to infer that the erection of the stele was intended to fulfill the vow. Presumably, the promise of public praise motivated the deity to act on Barhadad's behalf; therefore, such praise inheres in the fulfillment of the vow. As with Nebre's stele, the inclusion of the vow fulfiller's name suggests that the vow fulfiller wished to publicize the fulfillment of the vow.

Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions

The first inscription reproduced below is Phoenician; the other five are Punic. The Phoenician inscription was discovered on Malta; the Punic inscriptions come from Carthage and Constantine in northern Africa.[56] They typically date from the third to first centuries BCE.[57]

> To the Lord Melqart, Lord of Tyre, that which your servant *ᶜbdᵓsr* and his brother *ᵓsršmr*, two sons of *ᵓsršmr* son of *ᶜbdᵓsr*, vowed, because he heard their voice. May he bless them.

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[55]*ANET*, 655.

[56]This information and the translations reproduced here are from O'Brien, 283–284.

[57]O'Brien does not provide information on the dating of the inscriptions she reproduces; the first one reproduced above, *KAI* no. 47, and the last one, *KAI* no. 98, date more precisely to the second century BCE (*KAI*, 2.64, 106).

To the Lord Ba‘al Ḥamon, that which ‘*bd*ᵓ*rmy*, son of ‘*zrb*‘*l*, has vowed. He heard his voice. Bless him.

To the Lord Ba‘al Addir, the vow which *Bd*‘*štrt*, son of *B*‘*lḥn*’, has vowed because he heard his voice. Bless him!

Gift to Lord Ba‘al Addir, which *Lqy*, son of *Mtn*ᵓ*ln*, son of ᵓ*r š*, vowed because he heard his voice. Bless him.

[I] *Bd*‘ *štrt*, son of *Bd*ᵓ*šmn*, have completed [my?] vow. Temple of Ba‘al Addir.[58]

To the Lord Ba‘al Ḥamon, the stele *mlk b*‘*l* ᵓ*zrm* which *B*‘*lšlk*, son of ‘*zrb*‘*l*, son of *Mtr*, vowed because he heard (his) voice. May he bless him.

Examples such as these could be multiplied many times.[59]

Caution is required in comparing these inscriptions with biblical poems, as they are geographically and temporally remote from the composition of the biblical psalms.[60] They are relevant only to the extent that they "preserve aspects of the form and function of vow-making among their Phoenician ancestors, who were known to the Hebrews."[61] The following analysis will demonstrate that these inscriptions do in fact preserve earlier customs of vow fulfillment and may thus be used profitably here.

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[58]This translation has been corrected slightly; due to a typographical error, *Bd*‘*štrt* appears as *Bd*‘*dštrt* in O'Brien's study.

[59]*KAI* nos. 45, 47, 63, 82–88, 94, 97, 99, 103, 105–111, 113, 116, 155–156, 164, 170, which date to the third to first centuries BCE, are essentially identical to the ones reproduced here. *KAI* no. 72 also follows this pattern, but is older, dating to 5th century Punic Spain.

[60]On the critical issues relating to the dating of the composition of the psalms and the compilation of the psalter, see I. Engnell, "The Book of Psalms," in *A Rigid Scrutiny: Essays of Ivan Engnell*, ed. and trans. J. T. Willis (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 69–70; Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 27–28; J. Hempel, "Psalms, Book of," in *IDB*, 4.943–944; R. Rentdorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 549–250; N. H. Ridderbos and P. C. Craigie, "Psalms," in *ISBE*, 3.1031–1033.

[61]Cartledge, *Vows*, 129. On the linguistic affinities between Hebrew and Phoenician, see Y. Avishur, "Word Pairs Common to Phoenician and Biblical Hebrew," *UF* 7 (1975), 13–47; "Studies of Stylistic Features Common to the Phoenician Inscriptions and the Bible," *UF* 8 (1976), 1–22. Avishur's studies confirm that Phoenician inscriptions and biblical texts express similar ideas in very similar ways.

Structure and Elements

The structure and elements of these inscriptions are virtually identical with those of the Barhadad inscription:

Barhadad		*Lqy*		*ᶜbdᵓrmy*	
a.	statue which	a.	gift	c.	to Baᶜal Ḥamon
b.	Barhadad, son of . . .	c.	to Baᶜal Addir	a.	that which
c.	made for Melcarth	b.	which *Lqy*, son of . . .	b.	*ᶜbdᵓrmy*, son of . . .
d.	to whom he vowed	d.	vowed	d.	vowed
e.	he heard his voice	e.	he heard his voice	e.	he heard his voice
		f.	(may he) bless him	f.	(may he) bless him

O'Brien summarizes the typical elements of these inscriptions: "A standard stele begins with a dedication to the deity; it then tells what is being offered; states that the gift is being given in fulfillment of a vow; indicates that the act derives from the deity's response to a request; and calls for a blessing."[62] To these should be added identification of the vow fulfiller, including personal name and patronymics of varying complexity,[63] which invariably appears in these inscriptions. In terms of genric elements, the only difference between these inscriptions and the Barhadad stele is the call for further blessings.

Setting

While the occasion for the erection of these stelae is clearly the fulfillment of a vow, the precise nature of that context is unclear; "the stelae cannot be linked to their original location nor to their intended audience."[64] Pictorial and symbolic engravings on the stelae suggest that the stelae were intended for public display;[65] in-

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[62]O'Brien, 286–287.

[63]Some of the inscriptions reproduced here include only one patronymic; *KAI* no. 68 traces seventeen generations.

[64]O'Brien, 287.

[65]O'Brien, 288.

deed, one inscription specifies that it is intended for the "temple of Ba^cal Addir," and another (not reproduced above) describes the stele on which it found as "a length of stone in the temple of Ba^cal Ḥamon."[66] There is thus good reason to suppose that the stelae were erected or presented in a temple dedicated to the appropriate deity. Whether and how long they were displayed before being stored away with other sacred objects is impossible to determine, as is any ceremony which may have accompanied their dedication.

Intention

Since the inscriptions identify the stelae as objects which had been vowed, it is easy to infer that the reason for erecting them was the fulfillment of vows. As I have suggested in connection with the Nebre and Barhadad inscriptions, the vow presumably included a promise of public praise, the stele being the means by which this praise is realized. Another Phoenician stele makes this explicit: "Thus may I commemorate the name and goodness under the feet of my lord, Ba^cal Shamem."[67] Also common with the Nebre and Barhadad inscriptions is the likelihood that the inclusion of the vow fulfiller's name served to announce or publicize fulfillment of the vow.

A Neo-Punic Inscription

This Neo-Punic inscription is very similar to the Phoenician and Punic inscriptions examined above. However, it offers a slightly larger glimpse of the activities attendant to the erection of votive stelae.

1   To the lord, to Ba^cal Ḥamon in Altiburus, the vow which they vowed, ^cbdmlqrt Knš son of Knš^{ɔc}n [and?]

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[66]*KAI* no. 78:4.

[67]*KAI* no. 18:6–7.

2   *Mᶜryš* son of *Tbrsn* and *Ṣṭmn* son of *Yksltn* and *Mshbᵓ* son of *Lyᵗy* and *Ggm* son of *Ṣsyᶜt* and

3   *Mᵓgmᶜ* son of *Tbrsn* and *Yᶜsmzgr* son of *Sbg* and *ᵓdnbᶜl* son of *Yll* and *Gzr* son of *Knzrmn* and *Mᶜryš*

4   son of *Lbwᵓ* and *Zᶜlgm* son of *Sṭwᶜn* and *Yᶜsṭᵓn* son of *Mshbᵓ* and their colleagues and associates, and

5   *Nsmrn* son of *ᵓT . . .* and *ᵓyspn*, over the temple in the month *Krr*, year *Bll*, the priests, sons of *. . . gᶜn*, under

6   the judges *Mshbᵓ* son of *Yzrm* and *ᶜzrbᶜl* son of *Brk* and *Sdksln* son of *Zᶜzbl* and *Mbyw* the seer who

7   is over the priest *Nyᶜtmn* and the priest of Baᶜal Ḥamon *Wrwṣn* son of *ᵓrš*, because he heard their voices and blessed them.

8   Each of them brought a burnt offering to give or a gift in the temple,

9   which *ᶜbdmlk* heard them vow.[68]

The features of this inscription are essentially the same as those of the inscriptions already examined, with two notable exceptions. First, this inscription was apparently a group project; at least twelve different individuals, and perhaps more, were involved in the vow mentioned. Second, and more significantly, this inscription firmly grounds vow fulfillment in cultic ritual, identifying a burnt offering or sacrifice as an integral component of the fulfillment of this vow and listing several cultic functionaries who were apparently involved in the ceremony.[69] The language of line 8 suggests that the vow makers vowed sacrifices, the stele being a witness to the group's fulfillment of its vow. In this case, then, it seems that the stele may publicize the vow fulfillment rather than fulfilling the vow, or both aspects may be involved.

Summary

The foregoing analysis demonstrates that the available votive inscriptions are characterized by very similar thematic elements, settings and intentions. Structurally, the inscriptions in Semitic languages (old Aramaic, Phoenician, Punic and Neo-

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[68]*KAI* 159; my translation from the transcription in vol. 1, *Texte*. "which *ᶜbdmlk* heard them vow" could also be "which *ᶜbdmlk* vowed there." This issue does not affect the discussion here.

[69]It is also possible that the functionaries mentioned were involved in the vow making and vow fulfilling; the precise significance of the prepositions in lines 5 and 7 is difficult to ascertain.

Punic) traditions are almost identical with one another. Nebre's inscription has a more complex poetic structure but is otherwise like the Semitic inscriptions.

Without exception, the inscriptions examined here feature four thematic elements: identification of the vow fulfiller, identification of the deity to whom the vow was made, report of a prior vow and report of supplication and beneficent response by the deity. In addition to these elements, Nebre's stele includes extensive praise of his deity, Amun. Several of the Semitic stelae add requests for further blessings. The recurrence of these elements is summarized in table 2.1.

Most of the stelae can be connected textually or archaeologically to cultic activities or sites. Nebre's stele and four of the Punic stelae were discovered in temple precincts. Two Punic stelae (one of which is not reproduced here) are inscribed with notices indicating their temple provenance. The Neo-Punic inscription makes reference to cultic functionaries and connects vow fulfillment with sacrificial rituals.

The language of Nebre's stele leaves no doubt that the erection of the stele was intended to fulfill Nebre's vow to Amun; the language of several of the Semitic inscriptions suggests that this intent was also operative in the erection of the stelae bearing them. Giving credit to the deity for her or his beneficence, is presumably an inextricable part of this intent; the Semitic inscriptions realize this in the brief, stereotypical phrase, ‏כ שמע קל[א]‎. Finally, the Neo-Punic inscription clearly accompanied a sacrificial ritual, and may have been intended as much to announce or record the fulfillment of the vow as to fulfill it. To some degree, this intention may be present in the erection of the other stelae.

TABLE 2.1

GENRIC ELEMENTS OF VOTIVE INSCRIPTIONS

Archaeological Data					Textual Elements		
Probable Date (BCE)	Provenance	Language	Supplicant	Deity	Supplication	Divine Response	Additional Request
1305–1195	Deir el-Medina	Egyptian	Nebre	Amen-Re	"I call to you in distress . . . 'I will make this stela'"	"[he] comes at the voice of the poor"	
860	Aleppo	Old Aramaic	Barhadad	Melqart	"he vowed to him"	"he heard his voice"	
300 or later	Malta	Phoenician	ʿbdʾsr and ʾsršmr	Melqart	"[they] vowed"	"he heart their voice"	"May he bless them."
	Constantine	Punic	ʿbdʾrmy	Baʿal Ḥamon	"[he] vowed"	"He heard his voice."	"Bless him."a
			Bdʿštrt	Baʿal Addir	"[he] vowed"	"he heard his voice"	"Bless him!"a
			Lgy	Baʿal Addir	"[he] vowed"	"he heard his voice"	"Bless him."a
			Bdʿštrt	Baʿal Addir	"[my?] vow"		
	Carthage	Punic	Bʿlštk	Baʿal Ḥamon	"[he] vowed"	"he heard (his) voice"	"May he bless him."a
	Libya	Neo-Punic	ʿbdmlqrt Kns et al.	Baʿal Ḥamon	"they vowed"	"he heard their voices and blessed them."	

a The antecedent of "him" is uncertain; "Bless [deity]" and "[May deity] bless [supplicant]" are both possible. All unambiguous cases (including the those not reproduced here) are of the latter form.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL POEMS FOR VOW FULFILLMENT

In chapter 2, I suggested that a genre of texts for vow fulfillment may be recognized among ancient Near Eastern inscriptions. Most of the inscriptions were too brief to allow profitable structural analysis, but all included four particular thematic elements: identification of the deity, identification of the supplicant, report of prior supplication and vow, and report of beneficent divine response to the supplication and vow. In each case, the inscription specified vow fulfillment (or possibly announcement of vow fulfillment) as the motivation for its composition. Many derive from archaeological sites suggesting temple settings, but the inscriptions themselves give too few details to reconstruct their precise sociological or cultic provenance.

In this chapter, I will take up six biblical poems which include clauses built on the verb שלם taking the object (נדר(ים, namely, Pss 22; 56; 61; 66; 116; and Jonah 2:3–10.[70] Each of these will be examined according to the form-critical criteria specified in chapter 1: discourse structure, including quantitative analysis; thematic elements; sociological setting as explicitly reflected in the poem; and the intention expressed or implicit in the poem.[71] These examinations will lay the foundation for a summary and evaluation of these poems as poems for vow fulfillment.

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[70]A related poem is Ps 30, which may report an implicit vow in vv. 9–11. Since vow fulfillment is not explicit in Ps 30, however, it is not considered here.

[71]As mentioned in chapter 1 (p. 6, n. 16), full translations of these poems will not be presented here. Issues of translation and textual criticism will be discussed only where they materially affect the discussion of one of the four form-critical criteria, which is rare for this corpus.

Psalm 22

Structure

Psalm 22 may be divided into three stanzas of roughly equal length.[72] The closing of the first two stanzas is signaled by the petition אַל־תִּרְחַק, "do not be far away."[73] The first stanza closes at the end of a verse which begins with אַל־תִּרְחַק; this verse ends with כִּי־אֵין עוֹזֵר, "for there is no helper," a phonological echo and conceptual parallel to עֲזַבְתָּנִי, "you have abandoned me" (v. 2). This section has a well-defined substructure of alternation between the psalmist's present situation and the past experiences of both the psalmist and the nation:

A₁   Present personal experience (vv. 2–3)
     B₁   Past national experience (vv. 4–6)
A₂   Present personal experience (vv. 7–9)
     B₂   Past personal experience and petition (vv. 10–12)

The end of the second section is likewise signaled by the petition אַל־תִּרְחַק, but is extended beyond it by the substructure of the section. The substructure is intricate, and intertwines a chiastic pattern of images of threatening animals with sequential images of sapped strength:

A₁   Threatening bulls (v. 13)
     B₁   Threatening lions (v. 14)
         X₁   Liquid images of sapped strength (v. 15)
         X₂   Arid images of sapped strength (v. 16)

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[72]Similar structures are suggested by M. H. Heinemann, "An Exposition of Psalm 22," *BS* 147 (1990), 287; E. J. Kissane, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols. (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1953), 1.94; J. J. S. Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976 repr. of 1878 ed.), 238. For other opinions on the structure, see Anderson, 1.184; C. A. Briggs and E. G. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, ICC, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 198–199; T. K. Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, 2 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Company, 1904), 86–97; P. C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, WBC 19 (Waco: Word, 1983), 198; Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 293; J. B. Rotherham, *Studies in the Psalms* (London: H. R. Allenson, 1911), 129; Weiser, 219.

[73]Briggs and Briggs note the function of forms of רחק as discourse markers but divide the stanzas differently.

C₁ Threatening dogs (v. 17a)
    X₃ Withering images of sapped strength (v. 17b–18a)[74]
D₁ Threatening humans (v. 18b–19)
    Y₁ "Do not be far away" (v. 20)
D₂ Threatening humans (v. 21a)
C₂ Threatening dogs (v. 21b)
  B₂ Threatening lions (v. 22a)
A₁ Threatening bulls (v. 22b)[75]

Verses 20–22, with their pleas for deliverance (אַל־תִּרְחָק ‖ לְעֶזְרָתִי חוּשָׁה, v. 20;

הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי ‖ הַצִּילָה, vv. 21–22) may be recognized as the protasis or "if you

[Yahweh] will" portion of a vow; verse 23, with its paired first person singular im-

perfects (אֲהַלְלֶךָ ‖ אֲסַפְּרָה), serves as the apodosis or "then I will" portion of the

vow.[76]

Several themes are intertwined in the third section:

A₁ Call to praise: Israelites (v. 24)
  B₁ Report of deliverance (v. 25)

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[74]Following J. J. M. Roberts, "A New Root for an Old Crux, Ps. xxii 17c," *VT* 23 (1973), 251–252 in emending כָּאֲרִי to כָּרוּ and deriving it from a root כרה V, "to be shriveled," which is attested in Syriac and Akkadian. Compare the more common proposals of Anderson, 190; Dahood, 140–141; Kissane, 100–101; Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 292, 297; and Perowne, 246–247.

[75]Reading consonantal עניתני as עִנִּיתָנִי, second person masculine singular D perfect of ענה II, "afflict," thus "and from the horns of the bulls [where] you have afflicted me," rather than MT עֲנִיתָנִי, second person masculine singular G perfect of ענה I, "answer," thus "and from the horns of the bulls you have answered me." Pointing עניתני as a D perfect preserves the conceptual and syntactic parallelism in verses 21–22. Verse 21a begins with a verb pleading for deliverance (הַצִּילָה); verse 22b is a verbless clause which implicitly shares the verb הַצִּילָה ("Rescue my soul from the sword ‖ [rescue] my only one from the paw of the dog"). The MT would have verse 22 contain a verb pleading for deliverance (הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי) parallel to one proclaiming a favorable response (עֲנִיתָנִי; for proponents of this reading see Anderson, 1.191; and Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 292, 298). Repointing to עִנִּיתָנִי would permit verse 22 to be read as syntactically parallel to verse 21 in that both clauses would share the initial verb הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי ("Save me from the mouth of the lion ‖ [save me] from the horns of the bulls [where] you have afflicted me"). Despite Cartledge, 155, there is no justification for reading עֲנִיתָנִי as an imperative ("answer me") or emending to עֲנֵנִי to get an imperative. Dahood, *Psalms I*, 142 parses עֲנִיתָנִי as a precative perfect of a root ענה "to conquer, to triumph," for which he refers the reader to his note on Ps 18:36 (p. 116) where he derives עֲנִתְךָ from a root ענו, "to conquer," a root Dahood claims is "notably clarified" by Phoenician ʿnw; he does not justify the treatment of Hebrew ה and Phoenician w as interchangeable. Kissane, 97–98, 101, suggests more plausibly emending to עֲנִיְתִי, "afflicted one" (a suggestion with which W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms* [London: SPCK], 178 agrees), but strangely is emending from "Thou hast afflicted me," which the MT would not give. Cheyne's (94) "correction" of עֲנִיתָנִי to תְּשִׁיבֵנִי is bizarre.

[76]Briggs and Briggs, 198; Cartledge, 154–155.

C_1 Announcement of vow fulfillment (v. 26)
C_2 Invitation to sacrificial meal: worshippers present (v. 27)
A_2 Call to praise: all nations (v. 28)
B_2 Confession of Yahweh's kingship (v. 29)
C_3 Invitation to sacrificial meal: all human beings (v. 30)
A_3 Call to praise: future generations (vv. 31–32a)
B_3 Report of deliverance (v. 32b)

The ABC pattern in the initial cycle, which differs from the CAB pattern in the other two cycles, *may* draw attention to the assertion of vow fulfillment, but this is uncertain.

Scansion reveals that the three stanzas are of roughly equal length. The substructures of each stanza are also balanced in various ways. In the first stanza, A_1 and B_1 are equivalent in syntatic-accentual unit count and almost equivalent in syllable count; the same is true for A_2 and B_2. The ascending portion of the chiasm in the second stanza is about twice the length of the descending portion, using either measure. In the third stanza, the three cycles are about the same length according to unit count, although the first cycle (vv. 24–26) has a notably higher syllable count than the other two cycles, which are almost equivalent. Thus, scansion of this poem confirms the structural analysis suggested above on conceptual and rhetorical grounds but offers no interpretive guidance.

TABLE 3.1

SUMMARY SCANSION OF PSALM 22[77]

Stanza		Syllables	Units
I	A_1 (vv. 2–3)	36	9
	B_1 (vv. 4–6)	37	9
	A_2 (vv. 7–9)	46	10
	B_2 (vv. 10–12)	48	10
	Total	167	38

[77]For detailed scansion of poems studied in this chapter, see the appendix.

II	Ascending (vv. 13–19)	119	30
	Descending (vv. 20–23)	60	13
	Total	179	43
III	$A_1B_1C_1$ (vv. 24–26)	69	14
	$C_2A_2B_2$ (vv. 27–29)	54	14
	$C_3A_3B_3$ (vv. 30–32)	53	12
	Total	176	40

Thematic Elements

When the conceptual flow described above is abstracted to the level of thematic elements, the psalm may be outlined as follows:

> Description of distress (vv. 2–3)
> Assertion of trust (vv. 4–6)
> Description of distress (vv. 7–9)
> Assertion of trust (vv. 10–11)
> Supplication (v. 12)
> Description of distress (vv. 13–19)
> Supplication and vow (vv. 20–23)
> Call to praise (v. 24)
> Report of beneficent divine response (v. 25)
> Praise (v. 26)
> Call to praise (vv. 27–32a)
> Report of beneficent divine response (v. 32b)

This psalm thus contains three of the elements found in the votive inscriptions studied in chapter 2: report of supplication and vow, report of beneficent divine response and identification of the deity (e.g., אֵלִי and יהוה, *passim*). It also contains a description of distress (comparable at the thematic level to the similar report in the Nebre inscription), praise and calls to praise.

Setting and Intention

Broyles conveniently summarizes the three possible understandings for the liturgical setting of Ps 22:

> Each of [the three] is distinguished according to one's understanding of the extended praise in vv. 23–32. (1) This praise section may be a vow of praise with actual praise given *in anticipation* (so S. B. Frost, R. Kilian, F. James, A. F. Kirkpatrick, and E. Gerstenberger). (2) If one supposes an intervening salvation oracle was given after the expression of lament and petition, vv. 23–32 may be an extended "assurance of being heard" (so P. Craigie and H.-J. Kraus). In each of these cases the lament would refer to a present distress. (3) Verses 23–32

could be read as actual narrative praise sung during the performance of a *todah* offering. If these verses were added subsequent to the deliverance, then the lament (vv. 2–22) would have originally been recited contemporary to the distress. If, however, this praise was an integral part of the original psalm, then the entire psalm must be read as narrative praise, in which case the lament would function as a "recollection of the time of need" recounting a past distress in the "historic present" (so A. Weiser and H. Gese).[78]

Broyles goes on to treat Ps 22:2–22 as a lament, leaving aside verses 23–32 even though he insists on the literary unity of the psalm.[79] If that unity is to be respected, however, it seems legitimate to allow the final section to govern the assignment of setting.[80] Thus,

> [t]he psalm is to be thought of as having been uttered in its entirety in the worship of the cult community (v. 28) after the prayer has been answered (v. 24). In that setting the psalmist uses lamentation as well as the 'narration' he includes in the thanksgiving as the background and starting-point in order to throw into relief the magnitude of the deliverance which God had wrought.[81]

On this understanding, the setting for the psalm is an occasion of corporate worship (v. 23) including vow fulfillment (v. 26).[82] The vow fulfillment apparently involved

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[78]C. C. Broyles, *The Conflict of Faith and Experience in the Psalms: A Form-Critical and Theological Study*, JSOTSup 52 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 187.

[79]Broyles, 188.

[80]*Contra* W. H. Bellinger, *Psalmody and Prophecy*, JSOTSup 27 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 78; Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 198; Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 298, who consider the salvation oracle the only way to understand the psalm as a unity. Anderson, 1.184, gives both possibilities without indicating preference for either. I have argued elsewhere that it is legitimate to treat Ps 22 as either a lament or a poem for vow fulfillment; for this see my "Genre Testing in the Psalms: The Case of Psalm 22," paper presented to the Hebrew Bible Section of the Southwest Commision on Religious Studies, Dallas, 1993.

[81]Weiser, 219.

[82]So Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 294 (but cf. p. 298, where Kraus suggests that "by means of an 'oracle of rescue' Yahweh bestowed answer and rescue on the lamenting poet"). Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1*, 112, comments, "Judged all by itself, the thanksgiving song in vv. 23–27 features all the necessary elements of a ceremony in commemoration of a salvation experience (see Psalms 30 and 40) except the narration of past affliction . . . This song is therefore not an independent thanksgiving prayer but an anticipatory psalm that belongs to the preceding complaint and apparently was recited together with it in the hour of petition." I do not find it credible to judge vv. 23–27 "all by itself"; the psalm as transmitted does not require such treatment. Instead, I construe vv. 1–22 as "the narration of past affliction" that Gerstenberger insists a thanksgiving song must have.

sacrifices, as those present are invited to "eat" what is probably a sacrificial meal (vv. 27, 30).[83]

If this understanding is followed, the intention of Ps 22 is seen to be fulfillment of the vow reported in verses 20–23.[84] In distress the psalmist promised to praise Yahweh in the congregation and announce Yahweh's name to the assembly (v. 23). Now that Yahweh has effected deliverance (vv. 25, 32b), the time for that praise has come. The psalmist announces the fulfillment of the vow (v. 26b) and invites the assembly to participate.

Psalm 56

Structure

Ps 56 is divided into three sections by the recurrence of the refrain

בֵּאלֹהִים אֲהַלֵּל דָּבָר
בֵּאלֹהִים בָּטַחְתִּי לֹא אִירָא
מַה־יַּעֲשֶׂה בָשָׂר (אָדָם) לִי

which occurs in verses 5 and 11–12.[85] The first refrain is preceded by a stanza describing the psalmist's oppression by vaguely described enemies, and it is followed by a stanza which moves from further complaint about the enemies to an imprecation against them. The second refrain then occurs, followed by an announcement of

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[83]Anderson, 1.193; Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 294, 299.

[84]Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 298–299 rejects this understanding summarily.

[85]Dahood, *Psalms II*, 41; see also Raabe, 90–111, who counts syllables with different results than (but similar proportions to) my count. Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 525 considers this "not a matter of refrain" but "conspicuous repetitions [which] disturb the flow of thought." In verse 11, the phrase אֲהַלֵּל דָּבָר בַּיהֹוה should be deleted as an accidental or ideological dittograph of אֲהַלֵּל דָּבָר בֵּאלֹהִים. Briggs and Briggs, 30, 36 oppose this emendation (although they also insert the refrain at two additional points in the psalm and substitute יהוה for אֱלֹהִים throughout); the other commentators surveyed for this study simply accept the MT without discussing the possibility of accidental or ideological dittography.

vow fulfillment predicated on (כִּי) God's deliverance of the psalmist. Scansion confirms this structural analysis:

TABLE 3.2

SUMMARY SCANSION OF PSALM 56

Stanza		Syllables	Units
I	(vv. 2–4)	43	10
Refrain	(v. 5)	22	5
II	(vv. 6–10)	88	22
Refrain	(vv. 11–12)	22	5
III	(vv. 13–14)	39	10

Thematic Elements

Thematically, Ps 56 could be outlined as follows:

I Description of distress (vv. 2–4)
   Refrain: assertion of trust (vv. 5)
II Description of distress (vv. 6–7)
   Imprecation against enemies (vv. 8–10)
   Refrain: assertion of trust (vv. 11–12)
III Description of deliverance (vv. 13–14)[86]

It includes three of the elements which characterize votive inscriptions: identification of the deity (יהוה ‖ אֱלֹהִים, v. 12), supplication (vv. 8–9) and report of beneficent divine response as grounds for vow fulfillment (vv. 13–14). It also contains descriptions of distress.

Setting and Intention

Like Ps 22, Ps 56 can be conceived as having been uttered during or after a condition of distress. The language of verses 2–3 and 6–10 suggests a present distress, but verse 14 seems to consider the deliverance for which the psalmist pleads as

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[86]For a similar analysis see Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 525–526.

having already been accomplished. The problem in discerning the intention of the psalm is parallel: is the psalmist asking God to act against the enemies of verses 2–3 (cf. vv. 8–10), or thanking God for having acted against them (v. 14)?

The amount of attention given to the enemies (vv. 2–3, 6–10) is much greater than that given to thanksgiving (vv. 13–14); this might lead to a preference for regarding oppression by enemies as present reality for the psalmist.[87] However, the language of verses 13–14 is most naturally taken as referring to deliverance that has already occurred.[88]

Psalm 61

Structure and Thematic Elements

The division between Ps 61's two stanzas is marked by סֶלָה. The two stanzas are quantitatively balanced:

TABLE 3.3

SUMMARY SCANSION OF PSALM 61

Stanza		Syllables	Units
I	(2–5)	65	14
סֶלָה			
II	(6–9)	63	14

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[87]So Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 527, who treats דבר in vv. 5a, 11a, 11b as a technical term for a "salvation oracle." However, he only posits this technical usage of דבר; he does not demonstrate it. The word certainly cannot be restricted to this usage, and A. R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel*, 2nd ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1962), *passim* does not mention this as a common signification of דבר.

[88]So Weiser, 422. Anderson 1.419–420 gives both views without choosing between them.

The quantitative balance is matched by thematic balance, with the first stanza expressing the psalmist's recurring experience of God's protection, and the second stanza, pleas for continued protection. The second stanza opens with a reference to vow making and closes with a reference to vow fulfillment.

Setting and Intention

The psalm provides no indication of its setting comparable to those found in Ps 22:23, 26; 66:13 or 116:14, 18–19. The superscription may suggest a cultic usage, but specifics are unavailable, as no details are to be found in the psalm.[89]

The overall tone of the psalm is one of request. The references to God's beneficence in vv. 3–4 seem best understood as typical of the psalmist's experience rather than as a report of a specific recent event. Furthermore, the language of vv. 6b–7 indicates that the phrase "you have heard my vows" (שָׁמַעְתָּ לִנְדָרַי) in v. 6 should not be taken here as equivalent to "you have already responded favorably to my vows."[90]

Furthermore, the phrase referring to vow fulfillment is לְשַׁלְּמִי נְדָרַי rather than אֲשַׁלֵּם נְדָרַי as elsewhere encountered. Morphologically, the difference is small, but contextually it is significant. The flow of thought in vv. 6–9 is *request for the king's longevity* → כֵּן → *announcement of singing and vow fulfillment*. The particle כֵּן is suggestive, indicating that the psalmist is not preparing to do the singing

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[89]*Contra* Weiser, 443, who asserts that "vv. 3 ff. presuppose the presence of the worshipper in the Temple." In his comments, Weiser substitutes "house" for "tent" in v. 5 and connects "your wings" in the same verse with the wings of the cherubim on the ark of the covenant. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 9 also makes the wings-cherubim connection and treats אהל as "the ancient designation for the temple." Cf. Dahood, *Psalms II*, 86, who takes אהל to refer to "God's celestial habitation."

[90]So Kissane, 1.203. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 8 disagrees, seeing in v. 5 "the note of thanksgiving belonging to the *todah* . . . from which vv. 1–4 are to be understood in retrospect," but on p. 9 he argues that v. 6 represents an anticipatory certainty that Yahweh will grant the psalmist's petition.

paired imperatives in verses 5 (לְכוּ וּרְאוּ) and 16 (לְכוּ־שִׁמְעוּ) invite the addressees to attend to the psalmist's praise of God. It is also significant that the paired imperatives have as their first component לְכוּ and as their second component a verb enjoining sensory perception (seeing and hearing). Thus an alternating parallelism may be observed between the opening words of four stanzas:

A₁   Praise (v. 1b, הָרִיעוּ)
    B₁   Attend to praise (v. 5, לְכוּ וּרְאוּ)
A₂   Praise (v.8, בָּרְכוּ)
    B₂   Attend to praise (v. 16, לְכוּ־שִׁמְעוּ)

In this parallel structure, verses 13–15 seem intrusive. Verse 13 contains the first use in the psalm of a first person singular verb, אָבוֹא. These verses contain three other first person singular imperfect verbs: אֲשַׁלֵּם (v. 13b), אַעֲלֶה (v. 15a) and אֶעֱשֶׂה (v. 15b). Only one other first person singular imperfect appears in the psalm, namely אֲסַפְּרָה in verse 16. This verse, however, lies in a stanza other than that containing verses 13–15, as the use of סלה and paired imperatives immediately before אֲסַפְּרָה makes clear. Thus, verses 13–15 apparently constitute a separate stanza which has been inserted in to the stairstep structure:

A₁   Praise (v. 1b, הָרִיעוּ)
    B₁   Attend to praise (v. 5, לְכוּ וּרְאוּ)
A₂   Praise (v.8, בָּרְכוּ)
    X   The psalmist's activities (אָבוֹא)
    B₂   Attend to praise (v. 16, לְכוּ־שִׁמְעוּ)

For this psalm, scansion is of little help in confirming the proposed structure:

TABLE 3.4

SUMMARY SCANSION OF PSALM 66

Stanza		Syllables	Units
I	A₁ (vv. 1b–4)	57	13
II	B₁ (vv. 5–7)	59	16

III	A₂ (vv. 8–12)	80	17
IV	X (vv. 13–15)	42	8
V	B₂ (vv. 16–20)	68	19

The syllable and unit counts do not seem to fall into any kind of pattern. The syllable counts of stanzas I and II are close enough to be considered balanced, as are the unit counts of stanzas II and III; however, it would be difficult to treat the syllablic counts of II and III as balanced. Scansion fails to confirm, but does not undermine, the proposed $A_1B_1A_2XB_2$ stanzaic structure.[94]

Thematic Elements

Thematically, Ps 66 may be outlined as follows:

Call to praise (vv. 2–4)
Praise/testimony (vv. 5–7)
Call to praise (v. 8)
Report of distress (vv. 10–12a)
Report of deliverance (v. 12b)
Announcement of vow fulfillment (vv. 13–15)
Praise/testimony (vv. 16–20)

Thus, the expected thematic elements of (calls to) praise, report of distress and beneficent divine response (summarily אָכֵן שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים הִקְשִׁיב בְּקוֹל תְּפִלָּתִי — note the similarity to the stereotypical כ שמע קל[א] of the inscriptions studied in chapter 2) and announcement of vow fulfillment (אֲשַׁלֵּם לְךָ נְדָרָי) are well attested in this psalm.

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[94]This analysis maintains a greater conceptual unity in the psalm than does the more usual division of the psalm into two parts (vv. 1–12, normally labeled a "communal thanksgiving"; and vv. 13–20, usually considered a "personal thanksgiving"). For the more common opinion, see Anderson, 1.472; Dahood, *Psalms II*, 119; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 35 (but cf. p. 38); Weiser, 468–469. For a structural analysis similar to the above, see Kissane, 1.280.

Setting and Intention

Ps 66 is firmly grounded in communal worship. The psalmist's addresses to "all the earth" (v. 2), "you peoples" (v. 8) and "all God-fearing people" (v. 16) presuppose that someone is listening, and v. 15 makes it clear that a sacrificial ritual at the temple is envisioned.

The intent of the psalm is explicitly to praise God in fulfillment of the psalmist's vow. This is clarified by an appreciation of the rhetorical function of the stanzaic pattern $A_1B_1A_2XB_2$. Tsumura has examined AXB patterns of smaller structural units, and concludes that, in such patterns, "X bears the same relationship to A, to B, and to (A ‖ B) as a whole."[95] In this psalm, the X stanza (vv. 13–15) sets the context for the calls to praise in the A stanzas and the praise in the B stanzas. While the intent of the psalm is obvious in any case, this rhetorical feature serves to highlight vow fulfillment.

Psalm 116

Structure

Psalm 116 may be divided into four stanzas. The first describes the psalmist's prior distress, the second reports God's beneficence, and the final two focus on the psalmist's grateful response to God's actions. The phrase נְדָרַי לַיהוה אֲשַׁלֵּם signals

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[95]D. T. Tsumura, "Literary Insertion (AXB) Pattern in Biblical Hebrew," *VT* 33 (1983), 479.

the end of the third and fourth stanzas. The structural and phonological quantities of the stanzas alternate:[96]

TABLE 3.5

SUMMARY SCANSION OF PSALM 116

Stanza		Syllables	Units
I	(vv. 1–4)	59	14
II	(vv. 5–9)	68	17
III	(vv. 10-14)	57	15
IV	(vv. 15-19)	70	20

The syllable counts of stanzas I and III may be considered balanced, as may the syllable counts of stanzas II and IV and the unit counts of stanzas I and III. It would be more difficult to regard the unit counts of stanzas II and IV as balanced. Nonetheless, scansion offers tentative confirmation of the division of the psalm into four stanzas but offers no interpretive guidance in this case.[97]

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[96]M. L. Barré, "Psalm 116: Its Structure and Its Enigmas," *JBL* 109 (1990), 61-69. Anderson, 2.791 divides the first stanza into two parts (vv. 1–2 and 3–4), but this makes too much of a division between the report of Yahweh's beneficence in vv. 1–2 and the details of the distress in vv. 3–4. For other opinions on the structure, see L. C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, WBC 21 (Waco: Word, 1983), 114.

[97]Barré, "Psalm 116," 64–65, finds slightly different results using different measures. R. L. Alden, "Chiastic Psalms (III): A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry," *JETS* 21 (1987), 199-210, finds a chiastic structure in this psalm:

1	A	The LORD hears my voice				
2		B	I call on the LORD			
3			C	Cords of death compassed me		
4-5				D	I call on the name of the LORD	
6					E	He saved me
7						F The LORD dealt bountifully
8						G You saved me from death
9-11						G You let me live
12						F All God's bounty
13a					E	The cup of salvation
13b-14				D	I call on the name of the LORD	
15-16			C	You saved me from the bonds of death		

Thematic Elements

Thematically, Psalm 116 may be outlined as follows:

Report of supplication and divine beneficence (vv. 1–2)
Report of distress (v. 3)
Report of supplication (v. 4)
Report of divine beneficence (vv. 5-9)
Assertion of trust (v. 10)
Announcement of vow fulfillment (vv. 12-14)
Report of divine beneficence (v. 15)
Self-identification and report of divine beneficence (v. 16)
Announcement of vow fulfillment (vv. 18–19)

Several parallels may be noted between Ps 116 and the votive inscriptions studied in chapter 2. Yahweh is identified throughout as the deity being thanked, and the report of his beneficent response to supplication follows the stereotypical pattern: כִּי־יִשְׁמַע יהוה אֶת־קוֹלִי (v. 1). Vow fulfillment is twice announced using the phrase נְדָרַי לַיהוה אֲשַׁלֵּם (vv. 14, 18). This psalm also contains a self-identification approaching those of the inscriptions: "I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant" (v. 16).

Setting and Intention

Ps 116 is obviously intended to be part of a vow fulfillment ritual involving sacrifices. The repetition of נְדָרַי לַיהוה אֲשַׁלֵּם (vv. 14, 18) underscores the votive character of the psalm, and vv. 13, 17 indicate that raising a "cup of deliverance" (e.g., a ritual libation)[98] and sacrificing a testimonial (תּוֹדָה) offering accompany the

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17   B   I call on the name of the LORD
18-19   A   I pay my vows to the LORD

This analysis seems forced by its complexity, and it ignores several notable features of the psalm, including the psalmist's rash speech (v. 10), the presence of God's people (vv. 14, 18—obvious parallels, but both on the "descending" leg of Alden's chiasm), the repetition of "I will pay my vows" (vv. 14, 18—Alden ignores the first, but finds the second structurally decisive), and so forth. It also rewrites v. 15 to get balance between the perceived C elements.

[98]So Allen, 113; Anderson, 2.794; O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. P. R. Ackroyd (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1965), 122; G. Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, trans. D. E. Green (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 268; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 388;

presentation of the psalm. Furthermore, that a public temple assembly is envisioned is suggested by the grounding of vow fulfillment "in the presence of all his people" (v. 14) and "in the courts of the house of Yahweh ‖ in the midst of Jerusalem" (v. 19).[99]

Jonah 2:3–10

Structure

This poem divides easily into three stanzas. The close of each of the first two stanzas is marked by the phrase אֶל־הֵיכַל קָדְשֶׁךָ, and they are of about equal length by either measure used here.[100] The third stanza is about half the length of the first two:

S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas, 2 vols. (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1967), 2.30. Weiser, 720 sees here the possibility of "an ordeal where the effect of a drink (cf. Num. 5.11 ff.) determined the guilt or innocence of the accused." This hardly seems likely in this poem. In a footnote to the foregoing comment, Weiser refers the reader to his comment on Ps 16:5 (p. 175), where he sees "the 'festival cup' of Yahweh, which was passed round at a cultic meal of those who participated in the feast"; so also Dahood, *Psalms II*, 149. This is more plausible, but still not as likely as a libation or drink offering. Cf. Perowne, 331–335, for a brief summary of several possibilities.

[99]So also Anderson, 2.794; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 396.

[100]J. A. Bewer, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jonah," in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 44, and J. T. Walsh, "Jonah 2,3–10: A Rhetorical Critical Study," *Biblica* 63 (1982), 220, also note the discourse marking function of אֶל־הֵיכַל קָדְשֶׁךָ, although they analyze the poem's structure differently. For a quite different structural analysis, see M. L. Barré, "Jonah 2,9 and the Structure of Jonah's Prayer," *Biblica* 72 (1991), 241-248. D. L. Christensen, "Andrzej Panufnik and the Structure of the Book of Jonah: Icons, Music and Literary Art," *JETS* 28 (1985), 138, perceives a chiasm in the poem:

2:1-2	A — YHWH appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah	
2:3	B — Jonah's prayer from Sheol: a lament	
2:4-5	C — Though driven from YHWH's presence, Jonah continued to look to his holy temple	
2:6-7b	D — Jonah's descent "to the foundations of the mountains"	
2:7c	D′ — Jonah's ascent "from the pit"	
2:8	C′ — Though his "soul life had expired," Jonah continued to turn to YHWH in his holy temple	

TABLE 3.6

SUMMARY SCANSION OF JONAH 2:3–10

Stanza		Syllables	Units
I	(vv. 3–5)	79	20
II	(vv. 6–8)	74	22
III	(vv. 9–10)	30	11

The three stanzas are also distinguished by the progression of their imagery.[101] In the first stanza, imagery of threatening waters dominates (v. 4), and the stanza sinks to a tragic note, with Jonah despairing of ever again seeing Yahweh's holy temple (v. 5). The second stanza moves downward from the waters (v. 6) to the sea floor (v. 7a), but suddenly rises to the joyful note that the suppliant's prayer has come before Yahweh in his holy temple (vv. 7b–8).[102] The third stanza abandons the drowning imagery completely and contrasts the vow fulfiller with idol worshippers.

2:9-10   B′ — Jonah's prayer in YHWH's "temple": a thanksgiving
2:11   A — At YHWH's word the fish vomited out Jonah

Christensen stretches the poem at times to fit this chiasm. For example, he labels vv. 9-10 "Jonah's prayer in Yahweh's 'temple'," but the entire poem functions as such. Also, v. 3 is not "Jonah's prayer from Sheol," but a report of such after the fact (note the formulaic שָׁמַעְתָּ קוֹלִי). Furthermore, Christensen himself, in "Narrative Poetics," 36 must violate his posited chiasm in order to perceive quantitative regularity in the psalm; in doing so, he also breaks up parallel lines without justification. The analysis offered in the text above reveals a degree of quantitative regularity based on recognition of a conspicuous repeated phrase without artificially forcing the text into a particular anticipated structure.

[101] *Contra* J. D. W. Watts, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*, CBC (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 86, who claims that "[t]here is no progression in the psalm" and that "[t]he same experience is depicted in four cycles."

[102] Watts, *Books*, 227, also notes the sinking → rising spatial imagery. S. Goldman, "Jonah," in *The Twelve Prophets*, ed. A. Cohen, SBB (Bournemouth: Soncino, 1948), 143–144, takes קׇרְשֶׁךָ הֵיכַל to refer to the Jerusalem temple in v. 5, but to heaven in v. 8. F. W. Golka, "Divine Repentance: A Commentary on the Book of Jonah," in *The Song of Songs and Jonah: Revelation of God*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 96, 98; and Bewer, 45, 47, take both instances to refer to the Jerusalem temple.

Thematic Elements

Thematically, the poem may be outlined as follows:

Report of supplication and beneficent response (v. 3)
Report of distress (vv. 4–7a)
Report of beneficent response to supplication (vv. 7b–8)
Assertion of intent to fulfill vows (vv. 9–10).

It has several notable affinities with the votive inscriptions studied in chapter 1. The deity is identified in the opening line and throughout (variations on יהוה אֱלֹהָי), Yahweh's beneficent response is described in verse 3b by שָׁמַעְתָּ קוֹלִי and the psalmist's activity is identified with vow fulfillment (אֲשֶׁר נָדַרְתִּי אֲשַׁלֵּמָה, v. 10a).

Setting and Intention

Assigning a setting and intention to this poem is difficult, because it is set into a narrative, giving it multiple layers of setting and intentionality. The poem will be read differently if removed from its narrative setting and read independently, or if it is read as a prayer of Jonah from within a great fish, as presented in the story. As for intention, there is the intention expressed by the voice that speaks in the poem, the intention that may be imputed to Jonah for using such a poem as a prayer from the belly of the fish, the intention of the narrator for reporting this poem as Jonah's prayer and the intention of the author for having the narrator do so.

Since the present study aims at describing the common features of a particular group of biblical poems, it is legitimate here to dislodge this poem from its present narrative setting and examine its features without reference to the storyline developing in the book of Jonah.[103] If my purpose were an interpretation of the book of

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[103]So also Walsh, 219-229. This treatment does not depend on the view of some critics that the poem is compositionally independent of the surrounding narrative. For that view, see Bewer, 21–24; A. R. Johnson, "Jonah II. 3–10: A Study in Cultic Phantasy," in *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy*, ed. H. H. Rowley (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), 83; W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, *An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1955), 379–380; G. W. Wade, *The Books of the Prophets Micah, Obadiah, Joel and Jonah* (London: Methuen, 1925),

Jonah, this would be unacceptable, but my goal is the form–critical description of a poetic genre, not a study of the unique uses to which that genre may be put.[104]

Taken in isolation from the surrounding narrative, this poem is naturally construed as praising God for a recent act of God's deliverance of the speaker from a life-threatening situation. Because of Yahweh's beneficence, the speaker now comes to fulfill the vows made in distress (vv. 10, 8).

I noted above that אֶל־הֵיכַל קָדְשֶׁךָ functions as a stanzaic marker in this poem. The longing for Yahweh's temple expressed in vv. 5, 8 implies that the testimonial (תּוֹדָה) sacrifice of v. 10 should be assigned a temple provenance as well.[105] The presence of a worshipping community, however, is nowhere stated or strongly implied except insofar as it may be presumed for a temple service.

Summary and Evaluation

Structurally, the poems examined in this chapter are diverse. The number and quantitative measure of the stanzas vary from poem to poem. Internally, all except Ps 116 exhibit some degree of balance in the phonological and structural quantity of their own stanzas, and in several cases changes in quantity serve to highlight particular stanzas or to confirm stanzaic divisions made on the basis of content or rhetorical features. However, no patterns emerge that would allow the description of a special stanzaic or quantitative structure for poems for vow fulfillment. Most of the psalms do, however, develop according to the pattern *summary praise → distress, supplica-*

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lxxxv; H. W. Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah: A Commentary*, trans. M. Kohl (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 128–130; for a critique, see Golka, 90–94.

[104]Many studies have examined the function of this poem in its narrative context. For such studies, see especially K. M. Craig, Jr., "Jonah and the Reading Process," *JSOT* 47 (1990), 103-114; Golka, 89–100; J. W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative*, JSOTSup 139 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 132–144.

[105]Cf. Johnson, "Jonah," 83; Wolff, 129.

tion and deliverance in retrospect → praise and vow fulfillment. In some cases the initial summary praise is foregone; in others the description of prior distress and supplication is minimized.

In chapter 2, four thematic elements were found to be common to inscriptions which identify themselves with vow fulfillment: identification of the vow fulfiller, using a personal name and one or more patronymics; identification of the deity to whom the vow was made; report of prior vow, often simply by the phrase אשר נדר; and report of supplication and beneficent divine response, normally represented by a variation on כ שמע קל[א].

The analysis in this chapter has shown that several biblical poems share two of these characteristics: identification of the deity, and report of supplication and beneficent response. In the biblical poems, identification of the vow fulfiller using personal names is completely lacking, and the report of prior vow (אשר נדר and variants) is replaced by an announcement of imminent vow fulfillment (usually אֲשַׁלֵּם נְדָרַי). The occurrence of these thematic elements is summarized in table 3.7. Despite varying structures and details, all six poems are remarkably consistent in their inclusion of common thematic elements in roughly the same order.

Setting and Intention

Most of the psalms studied in this chapter are clearly intended to announce and constitute in part the psalmists' vow fulfillment. Similarly, most contain explicit references to sacrificial rituals, the temple, and a worshipping community, as summarized in table 3.8. Thus, in terms of setting and intention, Pss 22; 56; 66; 116 and Jonah 2:3–10 are quite similar. Ps 61, despite its use of a שלם + נדר phrase, has a different thrust, and it lacks indications of a setting similar to the other poems.

Evaluation

Structural analysis has demonstrated a consistent movement in these poems from distress to praise; it has otherwise been fruitless in binding these poems together as a group. All six poems contain very similar thematic elements. When setting and intention are examined, all except Ps 61 may confidently be assigned to sacrificial rituals and may be described as announcing and partially constituting vow fulfillment. Taken together, these factors suggest that it is appropriate to speak of Ps 22; 56; 66; 116 and Jonah 2:3–10 as comprising a genre that may be labeled "poems for vow fulfillment."

TABLE 3.7

SUMMARY OF THEMATIC ELEMENTS IN TENTATIVE CORPUS OF BIBLICAL POEMS FOR VOW FULFILLMENT

Poem	Identification of deity		Report of distress	Report of supplication and beneficent divine response		Announcement of vow fulfillment:
	יהוה	אל(הים)		שמע (+ קל)	Other	שלם + נדר
Ps 22	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Ps 56		✓	✓		✓	✓
Ps 61		✓			✓	✓
Ps 66		✓	✓		✓	✓
Ps 116	✓				✓	✓
Jonah 2:3–10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

TABLE 3.8

SUMMARY OF SETTING AND INTENTION IN TENTATIVE CORPUS OF BIBLICAL POEMS FOR VOW FULFILLMENT

Poem	Setting			Intention	
	Sacrifices involved	Temple provenance	Worshipping community present	Announce or constitute vow fulfillment	Motivate God to grant a request
Ps 22	✓		✓		
Ps 56					✓
Ps 61	✓	✓		✓	
Ps 66	✓	✓	(√)	✓	
Ps 116	✓	✓		✓	
Jonah 2:3–10		(√)		✓	

CHAPTER 4

ANCIENT ISRAELITE CONTEXTS FOR POEMS FOR VOW FULFILLMENT

From the analysis presented in chapter 3, I concluded that five biblical poems—Pss 22; 56; 66; 116; and Jonah 2:3–10—may be described genrically as poems for vow fulfillment. In this chapter I will attempt to place those poems into two contexts: first, the context of attitudes about vow fulfillment expressed in the Hebrew Bible; second, the ancient Israelite cultic context as reflected in the Old Testament.[106]

The Attitudinal Context

Several passages in the Hebrew scriptures regulate or express attitudes toward vow fulfillment. Most of these are quite explicit, but in a few the attitude must be inferred from the explicit statements.

Numbers 30 regulates the making of vows. The instructions for males are simple: what a man vows he must do. The regulations for women are more complex, but boil down similarly: what a woman vows she must do, unless the vow is nullified by her husband or father immediately upon his learning of the vow.[107]

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[106]For similar contextual studies of vow making, see Cartledge, 11–35, 162–199.

[107]P. J. Budd, *Numbers*, WBC 5 (Waco: Word, 1984), 324 thinks the authoritative male's privilege of annulment is designed to protect him from intolerable drain on his resources, and the requirement that his annulment be immediate is intended to protect the female from being locked into a vow whose fulfillment is later blocked by a recalcitrant male, exposing the female vow maker to God's anger.

Deuteronomy 23:21–23 likewise insists that vows must be fulfilled; guilt will be incurred on one who reneges on a vow to Yahweh. Vow making, however, is not *required* of faithful Israelites.

Judges 11 contains the familiar story of Jephthah, who, having been raised up by Yahweh to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of the Ammonites, "made the following vow to Yahweh: 'If you deliver the Ammonites into my hands, then whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me on my safe return from the Ammonites will be Yahweh's and will be offered by me as a burnt offering'" (vv. 30–31). Jephthah was heartbroken when "whatever comes out of the door" turned out to be his only daughter, but both he and his daughter expressed the conviction that Jephthah's vow to Yahweh had to be fulfilled (vv. 35, 36) despite the cost.[108]

Isaiah 19 is labeled "the Egypt burden" (v. 1). The first seventeen verses announce Egypt's doom, but vv. 18–25 envision the Egyptians turning to Yahweh. As consequences of the Egyptians' coming to know Yahweh, this passage lists worship with sacrifices and burnt offerings and the making and fulfilling of vows. This suggests that the making (expressed by the verb נדר with its cognate accusative) and

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[108]R. G. Boling, *Judges*, AB 6A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 207 calls this "the hinge of the story"; P. Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, OBT (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 103 assigns it similar importance. The characters' extreme dedication to the binding nature of a vow made to Yahweh is the relevant point for this study. The specifics of Jephthah's vow making and vow fulfillment, however, are fraught with moral and religious ambiguity, for discussion of which see M. Bal, "Between Altar and Wondering Rock: Toward a Feminist Philology," in *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup 81/BL 22 (Sheffield: Almond, 1989), 211–231; idem, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges*, Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 41–68, 109–113 *et passim*; Cartledge, 175–185; E. J. Hamlin, *Judges: At Risk in the Promised Land*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 117–120; L. R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*, JSOTSup 68/BL 14 (Sheffield: Almond, 1989), 90–97; D. Marcus, *Jephthah and His Vow* (Lubbock: Texas Tech Press, 1986); A. M. Tapp, "An Ideology of Expendability: Virgin Daughter Sacrifice in Genesis 19.1–11, Judges 11.30–39 and 19.22–26," in *Anti-Covenant*, 164–167; Trible, 93–116; and B. G. Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading*, JSOTSup 46 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 60–69.

fulfilling of vows (expressed by the D form of the verb שלם) were considered by the author of this passage to be signs of authentic devotion to Yahweh.

Job 22:27 places a similar conviction in the mouth of Eliphaz. After accusing Job of wrongdoing and affirming the inscrutability of God, Eliphaz suggests that if Job will repent and return to Shaddai, "You will pray to him, and he will hear you, and you will pay your vows." Several things about Eliphaz's advice are significant for the present study. First, the vocabulary agrees at two points with the formulaic vow fulfillment language noted in chapters 2 and 3. God's favorable response to Job's theoretical prayer is described as "hearing" (שמע); the stereotypical formula for beneficent divine response in the inscriptions studied in chapter 2 and the biblical poems studied in chapter 3 was כ שמע קל[א]. The language for vow fulfillment also features the standard pair שלם + נדר. Second, Eliphaz expresses the view (not necessarily endorsed by the book of Job as a whole) that the sequence *prayer →
beneficent divine response → vow fulfillment* is a privilege of the righteous in which it is impossible for sinners to participate; Job's theoretical vow fulfillment is predicated on repentance. Finally, it is notable that Eliphaz feels no need to mention vow making as such; vow fulfillment may be assumed as a follow-up to answered prayer.

Psalms 50:14–15 and *76:12* enjoin the making and fulfilling of vows. The passage in Ps 76 is less revealing; it simply advises the making and fulfilling of vows to Yahweh without providing a fuller picture of attitudes toward vow fulfillment. Ps 56:14–15 is particularly interesting because here Yahweh is the speaker: "Sacrifice a testimonial offering (תּוֹדָה) to God, and fulfill your vows to Elyon. Call on me in the day of trouble; I will rescue you and you will glorify me." As in Job 22, vow

making and fulfillment is here considered virtuous; here also a vow is presumed, al-though not explicit, in וְקָרָאֵנִי בְּיוֹם צָרָה. [109]

Proverbs 7:14–15 makes an ambiguous reference to vow fulfillment. In her at-tempt to seduce the simpleton, the adulterous woman described here mentions vow fulfillment, apparently as a way to motivate the simpleton to give in to her solicita-tion. The ambiguity surrounds שִׁלַּמְתִּי (שׁלם in D, suffix conjugation), the only verb in v. 14. The vow fulfillment described by this verb may be in the woman's past or future,[110] though limited to "today." The most credible understanding has been advanced by van der Toorn, who argues that the woman

> is confronted with a problem: How is she going to fulfill her vows? Apparently, the term of her engagement has expired and the promised offerings are due today. What can she do? Her husband, she explains, has gone on a long journey; he took the bag of money with him, and will not be home until full moon (vv. 19–20). These words are indeed meant to make her companion accept her invitation. Yet they are not mere reassurances, designed to allay the youngster's fear of an untimely intrusion by the husband, as nearly all commentators would have it. Nor is the detail of the "bag of money" simply an indication of the duration of the business trip. No, the woman implies that she does not have access to the money she needs in order to discharge her religious obligations. The only way out that she can think of, or so she suggests, is prostitution.[111]

In keeping with the overall thrust of the passage, Garrett suggests that (as van der Toorn implies) the woman is lying, using vow fulfillment as a pretense for prostitu-tion.[112] It should also be noted that Deut 23:18 prohibited the use of prostitutes' or gigolos' fees in payment of a vow to Yahweh. Nonetheless, this reading suggests the importance of vow fulfillment in popular Israelite thought: if she is not lying, the

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[109]L. C. Allen, "Structure and Meaning in Psalm 50," *Vox Evangelica* 14 (1984) 23 considers it "characteristic of Israelite religion that in the course of a lament ('call') votive promises were made to participate in a thank offering," citing Pss 56:13 and 116:17–18.

[110]Cf. Waltke and O'Connor, 479–495.

[111]K. van der Toorn, "Female Prostitution in Payment of Vows in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 108 (1989), 198–199.

[112]D. A. Garrett, "Votive Prostitution Again: A Comparison of Proverbs 7:13–14 and 21:28–29," *JBL* 109 (1990), 681–682.

woman is so desperate to fulfill her vows that she is willing to turn to prostitution to acquire the necessary funds; if she is lying, she thinks the alleged need for money to finance vow fulfillment will overcome the simpleton's objections to prostitution. Either scenario testifies to a high degree of importance connected to vow fulfillment.

Qoheleth 5:4 reflects two of the attitudes about vow fulfillment already noted. This verse insists that one must fulfill the vows one has made, and quickly. This accords well with the attitude expressed in Judg 11. The rest of this passage, however, discourages readers from making vows at all—essentially a more intense expression of the "no vow, no guilt" clause in Deut 23:21–23.[113] This advice seems to be motivated by the profound seriousness of a vow made to God; a vow made and not fulfilled brings God's anger.

The attitudes toward vow fulfillment expressed in the passages above may be easily summarized. Vow fulfillment is virtuous, a sign of devotion to Yahweh. Failure to fulfill a vow is an offense against Yahweh with dire consequences. The most significant insight to emerge from these few passages is that vow making was apparently considered a normal component of prayer in a time of distress. Job 22:26–27 and Ps 56:14–15 express this presumption using different vocabulary (תַּעְתִּיר אֵלָיו וְיִשְׁמָעֶךָ וּנְדָרֶיךָ תְשַׁלֵּם in Job 22:27; וּקְרָאֵנִי בְּיוֹם צָרָה in Ps 50:15); the terminology suggests that there is no technical term exclusively denoting a prayer including a vow, and that vows may be a much more common feature of Israelite prayer than is customarily stressed.[114]

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[113]So also G. A. Barton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes*, ICC (New York: Scribner's, 1909), 123–124; J. L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 116–117; G. Ogden, *Qoheleth*, Readings (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 78–79; and R. N. Whybray, *Ecclesiastes*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 94–95.

[114]Cf. Mowinckel, 1.217.

The Cultic Context

Several passages in the poems studied in chapter 2 grounded vow fulfillment in the context of community worship (e.g., Pss 22:23, 26; 66:13; 116:14, 18–19). The features of the cultic context can be grouped under two convenient headings: sacrificial ritual and testimony.

Sacrificial Ritual

Vow fulfillment is explicitly associated with the offering of sacrifices in two of the poems studied in chapter 3:[115]

> I will come into your [Yahweh's] house with burnt offerings;
> I will fulfill my vows to you,
> which parted my lips
> and my mouth uttered in my distress.
> Burnt offerings—fatlings—I will send up to you with the smoke of rams;
> I will [offer] cattle with goats. (Ps 66:13–15)
>
> The cup of salvation I will raise
> and invoke the name of Yahweh;
> my vows to Yahweh I will fulfill
> in the presence of all his people.
> . . . .
> To you I will sacrifice a testimonial sacrifice
> and invoke the name of Yahweh;
> my vows to Yahweh I will fulfill
> in the presence, now, of all his people,
> in the courts of the house of Yahweh
> in the middle of Jerusalem. (Ps 116:13–14, 17–19)

The same kind of parallelism is found also in Isa 19:21; Pss 50:14; 76:12 and Prov 7:14, all discussed above.

Instructions concerning acceptable votive sacrifices and the rituals for presenting them are found in Lev 22:17–25; Num 15:1–14; Deut 12:1–28. A bull, ram or male goat, free from any defect, was the required animal sacrifice (Lev 22:19–22, 24). It is notable that an ox or sheep with an imperfect limb was acceptable as a

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[115]Perhaps three, if בְּקוֹל תּוֹדָה in Jonah 2:10 implies a testimonial sacrifice as well as vocal testimony (cf. Mowinckel, 2.27).

freewill offering but not as a votive offering (Lev 22:23). Each burnt offering was to be accompanied by an offering of choice flour mixed with oil (Num 15:4, 6, 9) and a libation of wine (Num 15:5, 7, 10; cf. the "cup of salvation" in Ps 116:13). The required amounts of flour, oil and wine varied according to the kind of animal to be sacrificed. As might be expected, the instructions in Deuteronomy insist on offering votive sacrifices only at "the place Yahweh your God will choose" (Deut 12:4–6, 11, 17–19, 26–27), firmly grounding vow fulfillment in public worship rituals. Deut 12:17–19 also provides a glimpse of a meal associated with votive sacrifices: votive offerings were to be eaten by the vow fulfiller, the vow fulfiller's family and slaves, and Levites in the vow fulfiller's settlement. Vow fulfillment was both a public affair and a family affair.

Testimony

It is also evident that vow fulfillment involved testimony about God's beneficence (e.g., recitation of the grounds for vow fulfillment). The thematic progression of the poems studied in chapter 3 testifies to this; most of them develop according to the pattern *description of distress and supplication → description of God's beneficent response → praise of God, including announcement of vow fulfillment*. Such recitation would help the other worshippers present to identify more fully with the vow fulfiller and to participate more meaningfully in the vow fulfillment.

The identification of vow fulfillment with the תּוֹדָה sacrifice strengthens this connection between vow fulfillment and testimony. תּוֹדָה, traditionally rendered "thanksgiving," is better translated "testimony." The related verb ידה does not mean simply "to thank," but rather it implies telling a third party about what God has done for oneself.[116] A תּוֹדָה sacrifice, then, was not so much a sacrifice thanking

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[116]R. H. Alexander, "ידה (yādâ)," in *TWOT*, 1.364–366; B. W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 81; Hempel, 949; G.

God for doing good to the offerer, but one proclaiming to other human beings God's beneficence toward the offerer; it was not a "thanksgiving sacrifice" but a "testimonial sacrifice."[117] Vow fulfillment and תּוֹדָה sacrifices occur in parallel in two of the poems studied in chapter 3:

> But I, with vocal testimony (בְּקוֹל תּוֹדָה), will sacrifice to you;
> what I have vowed I will fulfill. (Jonah 2:10a)

> To you I will sacrifice a testimonial (תּוֹדָה) sacrifice
> and invoke the name of Yahweh;
> my vows to Yahweh I will fulfill
> in the presence of all his people. (Ps 116:17–18)

The same connection appears in Ps 56:13, but here the stereotypical phrase אֲשַׁלֵּם נְדָרָי has been broken so that testimonial sacrifices are fulfilled:

> I am obligated, O God, by vows made to you;[118]
> I will fulfill testimonial sacrifices (תּוֹדֹת) to you.

Vow fulfillment and testimonial sacrifices are similarly connected in Pss 50:13–14 and 76:11–12.

Sometimes the testimony itself seems to be the thing that was vowed. For example, the vow reported in Ps 22:21–23 has as its apodosis

> I will recount your name to my companions;
> in the midst of an assembly I will praise you.

Also in Ps 22, and again in Ps 65, praise is set parallel to vow fulfillment:

> From you is my praise in a large assembly;
> I will pay my vows in the presence of those who fear you. (Ps 22:26)

Mayer, "ידה ydh, תּוֹדָה tôdâ," in *TDOT*, 5.427–428, 431–439; H. Ringgren, *The Faith of the Psalmists* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 77–78; Mowinckel, 2.33 (cf. 2.27–28); Westermann, 9, 25–30.

[117] *Contra* M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 212, who thinks that "an expression of gratitude to the Deity . . . constitutes [the] entire significance" of a votive sacrifice.

[118] This seems to me the best understanding of עָלַי אֱלֹהִים נְדָרֶיךָ, literally "upon me, O God, are your vows."

> To you praise is due, O God in Zion,
> and to you must vows be fulfilled, O one hearing prayer. (Ps 65:2–3a)

Thus, testimony was surely a consistent feature of vow fulfillment; on some occasions the offering of testimony alone may have constituted vow fulfillment.[119]

Liturgical Frames

Two psalms—Pss 100; 107—may have been particularly well suited for use as liturgical "frames" for vow fulfillment.

Psalm 100 bears the superscription מִזְמוֹר לְתוֹדָה, linking it to the testimonial offering discussed above.[120] The psalm itself is quite brief, consisting primarily of urgings to praise God. In connection with the discussion above and in chapter 3, it is particularly helpful to note v. 5

> For Yahweh is good; his steadfast love is eternal;
> his faithfulness is for all generations.

This common saying (cf. Ps 136 and many other passages) is a credal or stereotypical summary of the kind of testimony to be expected in connection with votive offerings.

Psalm 107 begins as Ps 100 ends:

> Praise Yahweh, for he is good;
> his steadfast love is eternal!

The psalm goes on to list a variety of typical crisis situations in which people might find themselves—lost in the wilderness, imprisoned, suffering for foolish decisions,

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[119]Mowinckel's (2.19) judgment that "the thanksgiving psalms themselves treat the thanksgiving psalm as the best offering, a point to which they also refer when speaking of the fulfillment of the vows" is overstated, at least for poems of vow fulfillment. Westermann's (77) comment better represents the attitude expressed in the poems studied in chapter 3 and the passages examined above: "Praise is not a substitute for sacrifice, but had its own original meaning alongside of sacrifice."

[120]Engnell, 91; Oesterley, *Psalms*, 430–431; Perowne, 2.211. Anderson, 2.698, thinks that "[o]riginally the reference must have been to a congregational act rather than to a private thank-offering or thanksgiving."

endangered on the sea—and ends each such description by affirming that God delivers people from such circumstances. Vows are not mentioned, but "they cried to Yahweh and he saved them" recurs regularly (vv. 6, 13, 19, 28), and vows would have been a natural, if not necessary, feature of such cries. תּוֹדָה sacrifices are also mentioned (v. 22), and the kind of testimony enjoined is the kind found in the poems for vow fulfillment. Psalm 107, then, may have served as a kind of "call to vow fulfillment," an introduction to a whole series of תּוֹדָה sacrifices and rounds of votive testimony, perhaps at one of Israel's great annual festivals.[121]

Summary and Conclusions

Vow fulfillment is sufficiently well attested in the Hebrew scriptures that the basic biblical attitude toward it may be described with confidence; that attitude is easily summarized as "fulfill your vows." The relevant passages seem to indicate that vow making was a customary part of prayer in crisis, so common that specific regulations about acceptable votive sacrifices were promulgated. Sacrifices were a regular feature of vow fulfillment, and they were almost surely accompanied by (not replaced by) testimony about God's beneficence. The poems studied in chapter 3 provide such testimony.

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[121]Anderson, 2.749; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 325–326; Oesterley, *Psalms*, 55; Perowne, 2.273; Weiser, 685 (cf. Mowinckel, 2.42). Dahood, 80, and Kissane, 2.174, think the entire psalm represents a national or collective thanksgiving.

CHAPTER 5

TOWARD A CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY OF VOW FULFILLMENT

Reflecting on the the implications for contemporary faith and practice of biblical poems for vow fulfillment necessarily requires a judgment about the appropriateness of vow making. Since the present study has been concerned with vow fulfillment, not vow making, any judgments expressed here about vow making must necessarily be tentative and proceed primarily from inferences drawn from the poems and passages studied in chapters 3 and 4.[122]

Vows in the New Testament

Vows are almost completely absent from the New Testament, being mentioned in only three passages.

Matthew 5:33–37. In the "you have heard . . . but I say" section of the sermon in Matt 5–7, Jesus commented on his contemporaries' application of Deut 23:21–23:

> Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord." But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be "Yes, Yes" or "No, No"; anything more than this comes from the evil one.[123]

Jesus' teaching would seem at first glance to prohibit the making of vows. However, closer reading of the passage suggests that Jesus is not speaking here of the same

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[122]Cartledge's volume on *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* provides a firmer grounding for such reflections.

[123]All New Testament quotations in this chapter follow the NRSV.

kind of vows as Deut 23:21–23. In the Old Testament, vows are conditional promises made to God, and the things most commonly vowed are praise and sacrifices.[124] In Matt 5:33–37, Jesus seems to be talking about formulae used by his contemporaries to establish trustworthiness in human interpersonal communication. Rather than the ancient Israelite prayer, "O Yahweh, if you will save my life, I will praise you," Jesus is here dealing with human interpersonal affirmations on the pattern, "I swear to God I'm telling you the truth." This passage, then, has no bearing on a seminal theology of vow fulfillment.

Acts 18:18 likewise has no bearing on my theological reflections here, and is included only for completeness. It simply notes that "[a]t Cenchreae [Paul] had his hair cut, for he was under a vow." The type of vow—and whether it was a conditional vow corresponding to biblical נֶדֶר or something more like an oath—is not specified, although the reference to a haircut suggests a nazirite vow; a person's term as a nazirite was completed by sacrifices and a haircut (Num 6:13–21).

Acts 21:17–26 similarly refers to a nazirite vow; Paul, having arrived in Jerusalem, participated with four men in the fulfillment of their vows, which involved purification at the temple, sacrifices and a haircut.[125]

Paul's participation in vow fulfillment is strong evidence that vow fulfillment is not unchristian; so also is the urging of the Jerusalem elders that he do so. However, the fulfillment of the vow in Jerusalem was motivated not by personal piety, but by a desire to demonstrate to the Jewish population that Paul was not urging Jews to abandon their religious heritage. So little is said about the vow Paul fulfilled

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[124]This is evident from the analysis of vow fulfillment in chapters 3 and 4 of this study; for the same conclusion in a study of vow making, see Cartledge, 11–35.

[125]So also Cartledge, 22, 26. Note importantly that nazirite vows, like other vows, were conditional, both in the Hebrew scriptures and in Jewish practice in late antiquity; for a thorough discussion, see Cartledge, 18–23, and his "Were Nazirite Vows Unconditional?" *CBQ* 51 (1989), 409–22.

in Cenchreae that comment on his motivation is impossible. Still, to be fulfilled, a vow must be made, and the inference that Paul and the Jerusalem elders found vow making and fulfillment fully compatible with Christianity is justified.

Vows in Contemporary Prayer

The more common opinions regarding contemporary vowing may be divided into two broad groups. The first group demeans vowing as "beneath" faithful prayer. C. S. Lewis and R. K. Harrison typify this approach.

> As for the element of bargaining in the Psalms (Do this and I will praise you), that silly dash of Paganism certainly existed. The flame does not ascend pure from the altar. But the impurities are not its essence. And we are not all in a position to despise even the crudest Psalmists on this score. Of course we would not blunder in our words like them. But there is, for ill as well as for good, a wordless prayer. I have often, on my knees, been shocked to find what sort of thoughts I have, for a moment, been addressing to God; what infantile placations I was really offering, what claims I have really made, even what absurd adjustments or compromises I was, half-consciously, proposing. There is a Pagan, savage heart in me somewhere. For unfortunately the folly and idiot-cunning of Paganism seem to have far more power of surviving than its innocent or even beautiful elements. It is easy, once you have power, to silence the pipes, still the dances, disfigure the statues, and forget the stories; but not easy to kill the savage, the greedy, frightened creature now cringing, now blustering in one's soul—the creature to whom God may well say, 'thou thoughtest I am even such a one as thyself' (50, *21*).[126]

> . . . such vows could involve a wide range of circumstances and might follow the pattern of promising to do certain things for God if He first achieved a specified benefit on their behalf. This kind of practice has been employed by people in desperate circumstances. The only acceptable kind of vow, however, is the unconditional variety, where the votary promises to do something for God without expectation of reciprocal action. Bargaining with God is a form of tempting him or questioning His credibility, which is forbidden in Scripture (Ex. 17:7; Deut. 6:16; Matt. 4:7; Luke 4:12; Hab. 11:6).[127]

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[126]C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958), 97–98.

[127]R. K. Harrison, *Numbers*, Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1990), 376.

For these and other such writers,[128] then, vowing is unacceptable in contemporary prayer. However, it is noteworthy that the only vows condemned in the Hebrew scriptures are those made rashly (Deut 23:21–23; Qoh 5:4), or those made to deities other than Yahweh (Jer 44). As noted in chapter 4, the Old Testament considers vow making virtuous, provided the vows are fulfilled.

A second common approach is to elevate biblical vows above the level of objectionable "bargaining." This approach may be taken in at least two ways. One way, exemplified by A. A. Anderson, is to "spiritualize" the vows: "in the Psalter the vows may be on a higher plane: not a conditional promise of a gift, but an expression of certainty that God has already accepted the prayer."[129] This view subverts the conditionality of the vow, the pattern of which becomes "since you have listened to my prayer, I will praise you," instead of "if you will answer my prayer favorably, I will praise you."

Westermann removes the conditional element from biblical vows by inverting the sense of obligation:

> The fitting place for the vow of praise was alongside the cry of need. A feeling that this is so has remained everywhere down to the present. Whoever truly cries to God out of the depths, and in this cry thinks not of his need but of God . . . knows that the moment of making a vow, a promise, is a part of this cry. I *know* then that the matter is not finished when I have pled and God has heard, but that something else must still come. I know that I owe something to God. It is totally false to belittle this as a bargain, as a *do ut des*. On the contrary, it is only through the promise that I bind to my petition that the petition gains its weight and value. I know that with the promise I add to my petition I have entered into a relationship with God.[130]

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[128]Including J. Hastings, *The Christian Doctrine of Prayer* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 104, and T. Worden, *The Psalms are Christian Prayer* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 44–45. Barton's (124) comment on Qoh 5:4 is similarly insulting: "Vows are the favorite resort of the foolish. They think to bribe Providence."

[129]A. A. Anderson, 1.449.

[130]Westermann, 78.

For Westermann, the vow of praise obligates vow makers to recognize their indebt-
edness to God rather than motivating God to act on their behalf. Westermann seems
to focus on the *hearing* of the petition, without regard to actual deliverance from
the crisis.[131]

The two approaches reviewed here differ significantly, but they stem from the
same problem, namely, the perception that "bargaining" with God in prayer is inap-
propriate. However, it is rarely explained *why* such "bargaining" is inappropriate.[132]
In most cases, it simply appears to offend the enlightened sensibilities of the objector
rather than violating some biblical principle. Indeed, as shown in chapter 4, the bib-
lical witness is that vow making and fulfillment are virtuous. God himself calls hu-
man beings to

> sacrifice to God a testimonial offering,
> and fulfill to Elyon your vows;
> call on me in the day of trouble—
> I will rescue you,
> and you will glorify me. (Ps 50:14–15)

Both of the approaches described above misrepresent the conditional nature
of vows in the Hebrew scriptures, and both undermine the basic dynamic at work in
vow making and fulfillment. That basic dynamic is easily summarized: God has
something human beings want in time of trouble—a way out—and human beings
can give something God wants—praise. Lewis is overly broad when he paraphrases
the psalmists' vows as, "Do this and I will praise you." The vows reflected in these

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[131]Westermann, 79.

[132]Harrison's assertion that such prayer "tempts" God or questions his credibility is
untenable in most cases of biblical vow making. The obvious exception is Jephthah's vow, which was
unnecessary since God had already promised him victory over the Ammonites. Trible, 97 remarks,
"The making of the vow is an act of unfaithfulness. Jephthah desires to bind God rather than
embrace the gift of the spirit. What comes to him freely, he seeks to earn and manipulate. The
meaning of his words is doubt, not faith; it is control, not courage." The case of Jephthah is,
however, exceptional. In most cases of biblical vow making, there is no such corresponding *a priori*
promise of protection or success.

poems are more specific: "If you will rescue me from the present crisis, then I will praise you." Never do the psalmists vow anything so mundane as, "If you will give me a new bicycle, then I will praise you." The biblical vows studied here are products of deep distress, and are often a last resort.[133] Furthermore, while Westermann is correct in pointing out that a vow to praise obligates the vow maker to praise God, he and Anderson divest vows of much of their force by failing to appreciate that such vows are uttered in order to motivate God to act. In short, such vows *do* reflect a "bargain" of sorts, a transaction between God and human beings in which each gets some desirable thing in exchange for giving some desirable thing to the other party.

God's desire for praise, however, must not be seen simply as a craving for "positive strokes." Something much deeper is at stake. In chapter 4, I made a brief case for translating forms of ידה (including תוֹדָה, the sacrifice which routinely accompanied vow fulfillment) with forms of "testimony." The apodosis of the vow, "If you will deliver me from the present crisis, then I will praise you," could also be stated, "then I will testify about what you have done," or, "then I will give you credit for my deliverance." Both the votive תוֹדָה sacrifice and the poem of votive praise have the same function: to testify to God's beneficence, to give him credit for the psalmist's "good fortune."

This explains God's desire for such praise: God wants people to know what kind of God he is.[134] In asking for praise in fulfillment of vows uttered in crisis, God is not looking for a boost in his self-esteem. Rather, he wants people who have experienced his beneficence to tell others that he is a beneficent God. The issue in

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[133]Cartledge, 27.

[134]This is a prevalent theme in the Old Testament; see, for example, the repeated use of the phrase, "you shall know that I am Yahweh," in the book of Ezekiel.

biblical vows is not whether God will "swap" his deliverance for the vow makers' praise. It is whether God will be the kind of God the vow makers believed him to be, namely, a God who delivers his people, corporately and individually, from the crises in which they find themselves (Pss 22:5–6; 56:4–5, 10–12; 66:6–9)—a belief based on God's own testimony about himself (Ps 50:14–15). Vows of praise uttered in time of crisis challenge God to live up to his reputation as a deliverer, and the poems of vow fulfillment examined in this study exist because, in response to such vows, God proved himself to be the kind of God he claimed to be.

In chapter 1, I noted Gerstenberger's suggestion that a "good theology of lyrical poetry would have to distinguish, therefore, among the different human situations and recreate for each one of them that freedom of communication with God that we encounter in the Hebrew scriptures."[135] There are two attitudes that must be adopted before the kind of communication between God and human beings that we find in the poems for vow fulfillment may be recreated.

(1) It is acceptable to offer God public praise in exchange for his help in time of crisis. Indeed, it is virtuous. The poems studied in chapter 3 and the passages studied in chapter 4 unanimously agree on this. Two points about this attitude must be stressed. First, such vows are appropriate for times of crisis. "If you will prevent my father from dying from his heart attack" is a plea consistent with the protases of biblical vows; "if you will give me such-and-such a thing" is not.[136] Second, the praise offered in biblical vows is not a short "thank you" uttered in one's closet. It is public testimony that describes one's distress and God's beneficence and urges those present to join in the praise of God.

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[135]Gerstenberger, "Lyrical Literature," 433.

[136]It is conceivable that the same protasis may be appropriate in one context and inappropriate in another. "If you will send rain" may be an appropriate apodosis in a time of severe drought, but it may be petty in a time of moderate weather.

(2) God acts. This may seem obvious, but contemporary speech often undermines claims to believe that God acts. To use a rather mundane example, the phrase "it rained" occurs far more in contemporary speech, even among religious people, than "God sent the rain." Similar examples could be provided with regard to recovery from illness or injury, protection or recovery from natural disasters, the rotation of the earth, the sequence of the seasons and the resolution of major international conflicts, among others. If vows are to be made and fulfilled according to the biblical model, human beings must credit God for their "good fortune." If human beings do not truly believe that it was God who saved their life from accident, attack or illness, they can hardly recite Ps 22:32—"he has acted"—with conviction.

If these two attitudes can be recovered, however, an authentic line of communication is opened. Human beings in distress may then realize that they can—indeed, should—plead with God for help and offer him the one thing he really wants in return: public recognition that he is the one who helped them. This kind of prayer can only enrich, never demean, a life of faith.

APPENDIX

SCANSION OF POEMS STUDIED IN CHAPTER 3

The tables given below provide a more detailed scansion of each of biblical poems studied in chapter 3. The method of scansion is outline in chapter 1, and the transliterations presented below presume any textual emendations endorsed in chapter 3. In the transliterations that follow, a dash (—) represents a *maqqēp*, a raised dot (·) serves as a syllable divider, a triple slash (///) represents *sillûq*, a double slash (//) represents *ᵓatnāḥ* and a single slash (/) represents one of the other disjunctive accents (see the insert to BHS and GKC §15). The tetragrammaton is not vocalized below; it is scanned as two syllables.

TABLE A.1

SCANSION OF PSALM 22

	Syll.	Units
2 ᵓē·lî ᵓē·lî / lā·mâ ᶜᵃzab·tā·nî //	9	2
rā·ḥôq mî·šû·ᶜā·tî / dib·rê ša·ᵓᵃgā·tî ///	11	2
3 ᵓĕlō·hay / ᵓeq·rāᵓ yô·mām / vᵉlōᵓ ta·ᶜᵃneh //	9	3
vᵉlay·lâ / vᵉlōᵓ—dû·mî·yâ lî ///	7	2
	36	9
4 vᵉᵓat·tâ qā·dôš //	4	1
yô·šēb / tᵉhil·lôt yiśrā·ᵓēl ///	7	2
5 bᵉkā / bā·ṭᵉḥû ᵓᵃbō·tê·nû //	6	2
bā·ṭᵉḥû / vat·tᵉpal·lᵉṭē·mô ///	6	2
6 ᵓē·ley·kā zā·ᶜᵃqû vᵉnim·lā·ṭû //	8	1
bᵉkā bā·ṭᵉḥû vᵉlōᵓ—bô·šû ///	6	1
	37	9
7 vᵉᵓā·nō·kî tô·la·ᶜat vᵉlōᵓ—ᵓîš //	8	1

	ḥer·pat ʾā·dām / û·b^ezûy ⊂ām ///	7	2
8	kol—rō·ʾay / yal·⊂i·gû lî //	7	2
	yap·ṭî·rû b^eśā·pâ / yā·nî·⊂û rōʾš ///	9	2
9	gōl ʾel—yh·vh y^epal·lᵉṭē·hû //	7	1
	yaṣ·ṣî·lē·hû / kî ḥā·pēṣ bô ///	8	2
		46	10

10	kî—ʾat·tâ gō·ḥî mib·bā·ṭen //	8	1
	mab·ṭî·ḥî / ⊂al—š^edê ʾim·mî ///	7	2
11	⊂ā·ley·kā / hā·š^ela·k^etî mē·rā·ḥem //	9	2
	mib·be·ṭen ʾim·mî / ʾē·lî ʾāt·tâ ///	9	2
12	ʾal—tir·ḥaq mim·men·nî / kî—ṣā·râ q^erô·bâ //	11	2
	kî—ên ⊂ô·zēr ///	4	1
		48	10

	167	38

13	s^ebā·bû·nî / pā·rîm rab·bîm //	7	2
	ʾab·bî·rê bā·šān kit·t^erû·nî ///	8	1
14	pā·ṣû ⊂ā·lî pî·hem //	6	1
	ʾar·yēh / ṭō·rēp v^ešō·ʾēg ///	6	2
15	kam·ma·yim niš·pak·tî / v^ehit·pā·r^edû / kol—⊂aṣ·mô·tāy / hā·yâ lib·bî / kad·dô·nāg //	20	5
	nā·mēs / b^etôk mē·⊂āy ///	5	2
16	yā·bēš ka·ḥe·reś / kō·ḥî / ûl·šô·nî / mud·bāq mal·qô·ḥî //	15	4
	v^ela·⊂ăpar—mā·vet tiš·p^etē·nî ///	7	1
17	kî s^ebā·bû·nî / k^elā·bîm / ⊂ădat m^erē·⊂îm / hiq·qî·pû·nî //	11	4
	kā·rû / yā·day v^erag·lāy ///	6	2
18	ʾăsap·pēr kol—⊂aṣ·mô·tāy //	6	1
	hēm·mâ yab·bî·ṭû / yir·ʾû—bî ///	8	2
19	y^eḥal·l^eqû b^egā·day lā·hem //	6	1
	v^e⊂al—l^ebû·šî / yap·pî·lû gô·rāl ///	8	2
		119	30

20	v^eʾat·tâ yh·vh / ʾal—tir·ḥāq //	7	2
	ʾĕyā·lû·tî / l^e⊂ez·rā·tî ḥû·šâ ///	8	2
21	haṣ·ṣî·lâ mē·ḥe·reb nap·šî //	8	1
	miy·yad—ke·leb / y^eḥî·dā·tî ///	7	2

22	hô·ší·ˁē·ní / mip·pî ⊃ar·yê̂ //	8	2
	û·miq·qar·nê̂ / rē·mîm ˁin·ní·tā·ní ///	10	2
23	⊃ăsap·rā šim·kā lᵉ·e·ḥāy //	6	1
	bᵉtôk qā·hāl ⊃ăhal·lek·kā ///	6	1
		60	13
		179	43

24	yir⊃ê̂ yh·vh / ha·lᵉlû·hû / kol—ze·raˁ ya·ˁăqōb		
	kab·bᵉdû·hû //	15	3
	vᵉgû·rû mim·men·nû / kol—ze·raˁ yiś·rā⊃ēl ///	11	2
25	kî lō⊃—bā·zā vᵉlō⊃ šiq·qaṣ / ˁĕnût ˁā·ní / vᵉlō⊃—his·tîr		
	pā·nāyv mim·men·nû //	18	3
	û·bᵉšav·vᵉˁô ⊃ē·lāyv šā·mē·aˁ ///	8	1
26	mē⊃it·tᵉkā / tᵉhil·lā·tî / bᵉqā·hāl rāb //	9	3
	nᵉdā·ray ⊃ăšal·lēm / ne·ged yᵉrē⊃āyv ///	8	2
		69	14

27	yō⊃·kᵉlû ˁănā·vîm / vᵉyiś·bā·ˁû / yᵉha·lᵉlû yh·vh /		
	dōr·šāyv //	13	4
	yᵉhî lᵉbab·kem lā·ˁad ///	5	1
28	yiz·kᵉrû / vᵉyā·šu·bû ⊃el—yh·vh / kol⊃ap·sê⊃ā·reṣ //	13	3
	vᵉyiš·ta·ḥăvû lᵉpā·ney·kā / kol—miš·pᵉḥôt gô·yim ///	11	2
29	kî layh·vh / ham·mᵉlû·kā //	6	2
	û·mō·šēl / bag·gô·yim ///	6	2
		54	14

30	⊃ā·kᵉlû vay·yiš·ta·ḥăvû / kol—yᵉšē·nê⊃e·reṣ / lᵉpā·nāyv	20	4
	yik·rᵉˁû / kol—yô·rᵉdê̂ ˁā·pār //		
	vᵉdap·šô / lō⊃ ḥiy·yâ ///	5	2
31	ze·raˁ ya·ˁab·den·nû //	6	1
	yᵉsup·par la⊃·dō·nāy lad·dôr ///	7	1
32	yā·bō⊃û / vᵉyag·gî·dû ṣid·qā·tô //	9	2
	lᵉˁam nô·lād / kî ˁā·śâ ///	6	2
		53	12
		176	40

TABLE A.2

SCANSION OF PSALM 56

		Syll.	Units
2	ḥon·nē·nî ᵓĕlō·hîm / kî—šᵉᵓā·pa·nî ᵓĕnôš //	10	2
	kol—ḥay·yôm / lō·ḥēm yil·ḥā·ṣē·nî ///	9	2
3	šāᵓpû šôr·ray / kol—ḥay·yôm //	7	2
	kî—rab·bîm lō·ḥᵃmîm lî mā·rôm ///	8	1
4	yôm ᵓî·rāᵓ //	3	1
	ᵓᵃnî / ᵓē·ley·kā ᵓeb·ṭāḥ //	6	2
		43	10
5	bēᵓ·lō·hîm / ᵓᵃhal·lēl dᵉbā·rô /	7	2
	bēᵓ·lō·hîm bā·ṭaḥ·tî / lōᵓ ᵓî·rāᵓ //	9	2
	mah—ya·ᶜᵃśeh bā·śār lî ///	6	1
		22	5
6	kol—ḥay·yôm / dᵉbā·ray yᵉᶜaṣ·ṣē·bû //	8	2
	ᶜā·lay kol—maḥ·šᵉbō·tām lā·rāᶜ ///	8	1
7	yā·gû·rû / yiṣ·pōy·nû / hēm·mâ / ᶜᵃqē·bay yišmōrû //	13	4
	ka·ᵓᵃšer / qiv·vû nap·šî ///	6	2
8	ᶜal—ᵓā·ven pal·leṭ—lā·mô //	7	1
	bᵉap / ᶜam·mîm / hô·rēd ᵓĕlō·hîm ///	7	3
9	nō·dî / sā·par·tâ ᵓā·tâ / śî·mâ dim·ᶜā·tî bᵉnōᵓ·de·kā //	15	3
	hᵃlōᵓ / bᵉsip·rā·te·kā ///	5	2
10	ᵓāz yā·šû·bû ᵓô·yᵉbay ᵓā·ḥôr / bᵉyôm ᵓeq·rāᵓ //	11	2
	zeh—yā·daᶜ·tî / kî—ᵓĕlō·hîm lî ///	8	2
		88	22
11	bēᵓ·lō·hîm / ᵓᵃhal·lēl dā·bār //	7	2
12	bēᵓ·lō·hîm bā·ṭaḥ·tî / lōᵓ ᵓî·rāᵓ //	9	2
	mah—ya·ᶜᵃśeh ᵓā·dām lî ///	6	1
		22	5
13	ᶜā·lî ᵓĕlō·hîm nᵉdā·rey·kā //	7	1
	ᵓᵃšal·lēm tô·dōt lāk ///	5	1
14	kî hiṣ·ṣal·tā nap·šî / mim·mā·vet / hᵃlōᵓ rag·lay /	13	3
	mid·de·ḥî / lᵉhit·hal·lēk / lip·nê ᵓĕlō·hîm //	10	3

	Syll.	Units
bᵊʾôr / ba·ḥay·yîm ///	4	2
	39	10

TABLE A.3

SCANSION OF PSALM 61

		Syll.	Units
2	šim·ʿâ ʾᵉlō·hîm / rin·nā·tî //	7	2
	haq·šî·bâ / tᵉpil·lā·tî ///	6	2
3	miq·ṣēh hā·ʾā·reṣ / ʾē·ley·kā ʾeq·rāʾ / ba·ʿăṭōp lib·bî //	14	3
	bᵉṣôr—yā·rûm mim·men·nî tan·ḥē·nî ///	8	1
4	kî—hā·yî·tā maḥ·seh lî //	7	1
	mig·dal—ʿōz / mip·pᵉnê ʾô·yēb ///	7	2
5	ʾā·gû·râ bᵉʾā·hā·lᵉkā / ʿô·lā·mîm //	9	2
	ʾe·ḥĕseh bᵉsē·ter kᵉnā·pey·kā [se·lâ] ///	7	1
		65	14

		Syll.	Units
6	kî—ʾat·tâ ʾᵉlō·hîm / šā·ma·ʿ·tā lin·dā·rāy //	11	2
	nā·ta·tā yᵉruš·šat / yir·ʾê šᵉme·kā ///	9	2
7	yā·mîm ʿal—yᵉmê—me·lek tô·sîp //	8	1
	šᵉnô·tāyv / kᵉmô—dōr vā·dōr ///	6	2
8	yē·šēb ʿô·lom / lip·nê ʾᵉlō·hîm //	8	2
	ḥe·sed ve·ʾĕmet / man yin·ṣᵉru·hû ///	8	2
9	kēn ʾăzam·mᵉrâ šim·kā lā·ʿad //	7	1
	lᵉšal·lᵉmî nᵉdā·ray / yôm yôm ///	6	2
		63	14

TABLE A.4

SCANSION OF PSALM 66

		Syll.	Units
1b	hā·rî·ʿû lē·ʾlō·hîm / kol—hā·ʾā·reṣ ///	10	2
2	zam·mᵉrû kᵉbôd—šᵉmô //	4	1

	zam·m^erû¹³⁷ kā·bôd / t^ehil·lā·tô ///	7	2
3	ꜣim·rû lē·lō·hîm / mah—nô·rāꜣ ma·^ăśey·kā //	11	2
	b^erōb ^cuz·z^ekā / y^eka·ḥă̆šô l^ekā ꜣō·y^ebey·kā ///	9	2
4	kol—hā·ꜣā·reṣ / yiš·ta·ḥă̆vû l^ekā / vî·zam·m^erû—lāk //	12	3
	y^ezam·m^erû šim·kā se·lâ ///	4	1
		57	13

5	l^ekû u·r^eꜣû / mip·^că̆lôt ꜣ^elō·hîm //	7	2
	nô·rāꜣ ^că̆lî·lâ / ^cal—b^enê ꜣā·dām ///	8	2
6	hā·pak yom / l^eyab·bā·šâ / ban·nā·hor / ya·^cab·rû b^erā·gel //	15	4
	šām / niś·m^eḥâ—bô ///	4	2
7	mō·šēl big·bû·rā·tô / ^cô·lām / ^cê·nāyv / bag·gô·yim tiṣ·pey·nâ //	16	4
	has·sôr·rîm / ꜣal—yā·rû·mû¹³⁸ lā·mô se·lâ ///	9	2
		59	16

8	bor·kû ^cam·mîm / ꜣ^elō·hê·nû //	7	2
	v^ehaš·mî·^cû / qôl t^ehil·lā·tô ///	7	2
9	haś·śām nap·šē·nû / ba·ḥay·yim //	8	2
	v^elōꜣ—nā·tan lam·môṭ rag·lē·nû ///	8	1
10	kî—b^eḥan·tā·nû ꜣ^elō·hîm //	6	1
	ṣ^erap·tā·nû / kiṣ·rop—kā·sep ///	7	2
11	hă̆bē·tā·nû bam·m^eṣû·dâ //	6	1
	śam·tā mû·^cā·qâ b^emā·t^enê·nû ///	8	1
12	hir·kab·tā ꜣ^enôš / l^erō·šē·nî / bā·ꜣ·nû—bā·ꜣēš û·bam·ma·yim //	15	3
	vat·tô·ṣî·ꜣē·nû / lā·r^evā·yâ ///	8	2
		80	17

13	ꜣā·bô bê·t^ekā b^e^cô·lôt //	6	1
	ꜣă̆šal·lēm l^ekā n^edā·rāy ///	5	1
14	ꜣă̆šer—pā·ṣû ś^epā·tāy //	5	1
	v^edib·ber—pî / baṣ·ṣar—lî ///	6	2
15	^cô·lôt mê·ḥîm ꜣa·^că̆leh—lāk / ^cim—q^eṭô·ret ꜣê·lîm //	12	2
	ꜣe·^cĕśeh bā·qār ^cim—^cat·tû·dîm se·lâ ///	8	1
		42	8

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¹³⁷Correcting שִׂימוּ to זַמְּרוּ on the analogy of v. 4 and the Syriac version (*zmrw*); שִׂימוּ seems to be a corrupt dittograph of שְׁמוֹ.

¹³⁸MT יְרִימוּ is impossible; *qere* יָרוּמוּ is required.

	Syll.	Units
16 leᵏû—šim⊂û va·⊃ᵃsap·pᵉrâ / kol—yir⊃ê ⊃ᵉlō·hîm //	11	2
⊃ᵃšer ⊂ā·śâ lᵉnap·šî ///	5	1
17 ⊃ē·lāyv pî—qā·rā⊃·tî //	5	1
vᵉrô·mam / ta·ḥat lᵉšô·nî ///	6	2
18 ⊃ā·ven / ⊃im—rā⊃î·tî bᵉlib·bî //	8	2
lō⊃ / yiš·ma⊂ / ⊃ᵃdō·nāy ///	5	3
19 ⊃ā·kēn / šā·ma⊂ ⊃ᵉlō·hîm //	6	2
hiq·šîb / bᵉqôl tᵉpil·lā·tî ///	6	2
20 bā·rûk ⊃ᵉlō·hîm //	4	1
⊃ᵃšer lō⊃—hē·sîr / tᵉpil·lā·tî vᵉḥas·dô / mē·⊃it·tî ///	12	3
	68	19

TABLE A.5

SCANSION OF PSALM 116

	Syll.	Units
1 ⊃ā·hab·tî / kî—yiš·ma⊂ / yh·vh //	8	3
⊃et—qô·lî / ta·ḥᵃnû·nāy ///	6	2
2 kî—hiṭ·ṭâ ⊃āz·nô lî //	6	1
û·bᵉyā·may ⊃eq·rā⊃ ///	5	1
3 ⊃ᵃpā·pû·nî / ḥeb·lê—mā·vet / û·mᵉṣā·rê šᵉ⊃ôl		
mᵉṣā·⊃û·nî //	14	3
ṣā·râ vᵉyā·gôn ⊃em·ṣā⊃ ///	6	1
4 û·bᵉšēm—yh·vh ⊃eq·rā⊃ //	6	1
⊃on·nâ yh·vh / mal·lᵉṭâ nap·šî ///	8	2
	59	14

	Syll.	Units
5 ḥan·nûn yh·vh vᵉṣad·dîq //	6	1
vē·⊃lō·hê·nû mᵉra·ḥēm ///	6	1
6 šō·mēr pᵉtā⊃·yim yh·vh //	6	1
dal·lô·tî / vᵉlî yᵉhô·šî·a⊂ ///	6	2
7 šû·bî nap·šî / lim·nû·ḥāy·kî //	8	2
kî—yh·vh / gā·mal ⊂ā·lā·yᵉkî ///	6	2
8 kî ḥil·laṣ·tā nap·šî / mim·mā·vet / ⊃et—⊂ê·nî //	12	3
⊃et—rag·lî mid·de·ḥî ///	6	1
9 ⊃e·tᵉhal·lēk / lip·nê yh·vh //	7	2
bᵉ⊃ar·ṣôt / ha·ḥay·yîm ///	5	2
	68	17

	Syll.	Units
10 hĕ·ʾĕman·tî / kî ʾădab·bēr //	6	2
ʾănî / ⊂ā·nî·tî mᵉʾôd ///	5	2
11 ʾănî / ʾā·mar·tî bᵉḥā·pᵉzî //	6	2
kol—hā·ʾā·dām kō·zēb ///	6	1
12 må—ʾā·šîb layh·vh //	5	1
kol—tag·mû·lô·hî ⊂ā·lāy ///	7	1
13 kôs—yᵉšû·⊂ôt ʾeś·śāʾ //	5	1
û·bᵉšēm yh·vh ʾeq·rāʾ ///	6	1
14 nᵉdā·ray / layh·vh ʾăšal·lēm //	6	2
neg·då—nāʾ / lᵉkol—⊂am·mô ///	5	2
	57	15
15 yā·qor / bᵉ⊂ê·nê yh·vh //	6	2
ham·mā·vᵉtå / la·ḥăsî·dāyv ///	6	2
16 ʾon—nå yh·vh / kî—ʾănî ⊂ab·de·kā / ʾănî—⊂ab·dᵉkā /		
ben—ʾămā·te·kā //	16	4
pit·taḥ·tā / lᵉmô·sē·rāy ///	6	2
17 lᵉkā—ʾez·baḥ / ze·baḥ tô·då //	7	2
û·bᵉšēm yh·vh ʾeq·rāʾ ///	6	1
18 nᵉdā·ray / layh·vh ʾăšal·lēm //	6	2
neg·då—nāʾ / lᵉkol—⊂am·mô ///	6	2
19 bᵉḥaṣ·rôt / bêt yh·vh / bᵉtô·kē·kî yᵉrû·šā·lām /		
ha·lᵉlû—yāh ///	11	3
	70	20

TABLE A.6

SCANSION OF JONAH 2:3–10

	Syll.	Units
3 qā·rāʾ·tî / miṣ·ṣā·rå lî / ʾel—yh·vh / vay·ya⊂ănē·nî //	14	4
mib·be·ṭen šᵉʾôl / šiv·va⊂·tî / šā·ma⊂·tā qô·lî ///	12	3
4 vat·taš·lî·kē·nî mᵉṣû·lå / bil·bab yam·mîm / vᵉnā·hār /		
yᵉsō·bᵉbē·nî //	16	4
kol—miš·bā·rey·kā vᵉgal·ley·kā / ⊂ā·lay ⊂ā·bā·rû ///	12	2
5 va·ʾănî ʾā·mar·tî / nig·raš·tî / min·ne·ged ⊂ê·ney·kā //	14	3
ʾak / ʾô·sîp lᵉhab·bîṭ / ʾel—hê·kal / qod·še·kā ///	11	4
	79	20

6 ꜣăpā·pû·nî ma·yim / ⊂ad—ne·peš / tᵉhôm /

     yᵉsō·bᵉbē·nî //   12   4

     sûp / ḥā·bûš lᵉrōꜣ·šî ///   5   2

7 lᵉqiṣ·bê hā·rîm / yā·rad·tî / hāꜣā·reṣ /

     bᵉri·ḥey·hā ba·⊂ădî / lᵉⲟ·lām //   17   5

     vat·ta·⊂al miš·ša·ḥat / ḥay·yay / yh·vh ꜣᵉlō·hāy ///   12   3

8 bᵉhit·⊂aṭ·ṭēp ⊂ā·lay / nap·šî / ꜣet—yh·vh / zā·kār·tî //   13   4

     vat·tā·bôꜣ ꜣē·ley·kā / tᵉpil·lā·tî / ꜣel—hê·kal /

     qod·še·kā ///   <u>15</u>   <u>4</u>

                                               74   22

9 mᵉšam·mᵉrîm / hab·lê—šāvꜣ //   5   2

     ḥas·dām / ya·⊂ăzō·bû ///   5   2

10 va·ꜣănî / bᵉqôl tô·dâ / ꜣez·bᵉḥâ—lāk / ꜣăšer nā·dar·tî /

     ꜣăšal·lē·mâ //   15   5

     yᵉšû·⊂ā·tâ / layh·vh ///   <u>5</u>   <u>2</u>

                                               30   11

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