

which provides a magical act of Elisha's adoption as an apprentice and servant of Elijah, changes in the story of Elijah's ascent heavenwards to a mythical sign of Elisha's confirmation as Elijah's heir. The spirit that bears Elijah aloft is transformed in this story to the personal spirit that, resting on Elisha after his departure, signifies Elisha's authorization as leader of the sons of the prophets.

The fact that the aetiological purport is grounded only in the personal spirit of Moses and of Elijah as the source of investing authority is significant. It is certainly connected to the special status of both these men in the biblical traditions. What is common between them, is that, even though neither is associated with any description of the spirit of the Lord descending upon them, they are archetypes of men of God whom folk legends have raised beyond accepted norms concerning a prophet of Israel, towards mythical spheres, as is described both in stories of revelations of the Lord to them and in the stories of their deaths<sup>40</sup>.

The personal spirit appears as the source of imparting authority in only two biblical stories: in Num 11 where »the spirit that is upon Moses« is imparted to seventy elders (v. 16-17. 24-25) and in II Reg 2, where Elisha inherits »the spirit of Elijah« (v. 1-15). This characterization singles them out from all the other descriptions of the manifestation of the spirit and justifies dealing with both of them as a special phenomenon. This phenomenon is studied, here, from two different points of view: a. the phenomenological, which is mainly concerned with the distinction between the personal spirit in these two stories and the spirit in its relationship to the individual in other passages in the Bible; b. the functional, which is mainly concerned with the transference of the spirit as an act of granting authority and with the aetiological tendencies which it reflects regarding leadership in ancient Israel.

## Second Isaiah and the Priestly Oracle of Salvation

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J. Begrich's article, »Das priesterliche Heilsorakel«, which appeared in this Journal in 1934 has become a classic in Second Isaian Studies<sup>1</sup>. The thesis of that article that Second Isaiah borrowed the Priestly Oracle of Salvation from the Israelite cult as an appropriate form to announce com-

<sup>40</sup> Compare the stories of revelation in I Reg 19 with the revelations to Moses: Ex 24. 32. 34.

See B. Oppenheimer op. cit. 232ff. On the resemblance of the mythological nuance in the story of Moses' death to that about Elijah see S. E. Loewenstamm, *The Death of Moses*, in:

*Jubilee Volume in honor of G. Scholem*, 1958, 17.

<sup>1</sup> ZAW 52 (1934), 81-92 (= *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, 1964, 217-231).

fort and salvation to the community in Babylonian exile has won general acceptance by subsequent scholarship<sup>2</sup>. In my view, however, Begrich's methods for determining the *Sitz im Leben* of this oracle are questionable and need to be re-examined<sup>3</sup>.

In his article, »Das priesterliche Heilsorakel«, Begrich isolated eight texts (Isa 41 8-13. 14-16 43 1-3. 5 44 2-5 48 17-19 49 7. 14-15 51 7-8 54 4-8) which he identified as representing the Priestly Oracle of Salvation. According to Begrich the *Gattung* has the following structure. It usually begins with the words, »fear not«. These words are followed with the designation of the one who is addressed. In the third position are sentences which give »the basis« for the summons not to fear<sup>4</sup>. They may or may not be introduced by the particle ׀ and may be directly attached to the summons not to fear if the designation of the one addressed is missing. In these sentences the subject (who is Yahweh) is in the first person and the predicate is formed by nominal expressions of nearness and help. Next follow sentences which indicate that Yahweh has graciously heard (verbs in the perfect) and that specify the things Yahweh will do because of his gracious hearing (verbs in the imperfect). These expressions may or may not have Yahweh as subject<sup>4a</sup>.

While J. Begrich does not give a diagram or model of the oracle, it is possible to construct a diagram of the *Gattung* on the basis of his discussion of its various elements:

- I. Introductory formula, »fear not«
- II. Address e.g. [»O Jacob, my servant« (Isa 44 2)]
- III. Basis (»ein begründender Satz«) [This is a nominal sentence such as »because I am with you« (Isa 49 15)]
- IV. Sentences indicating that Yahweh has heard and what will result from Yahweh's having heard [These sentences may have verbs in the perfect, e.g., »I have redeemed you« (Isa 43 1) and/or imperfect, e.g., »I will not forget you« (Isa 49 15)]

<sup>2</sup> C. Westermann's comment regarding J. Begrich's article is typical: »The conclusions of this work are so clear and convincing that most of them have won general acceptance.« *The Praise of God in the Psalms*, 1965, 65.

<sup>3</sup> Two other scholars have done major works on the Oracle of Salvation. H.-E. von Waldow, *Anlaß und Hintergrund der Verkündigung des Deuterocesaja*, Diss. Bonn 1953. Von Waldow's study, ... denn ich erlöse dich: Eine Auslegung von Jesaja 43, 1960, incorporates the conclusions drawn in his dissertation. See also: *The Message of Deutero-Isaiah, Interpretation* 22 (1968), 259-287; C. Westermann, *Das Heilswort bei Deuterocesaja*, *EvTh* 24 (1964), 355-373, and: *Sprache und Struktur der Prophetie Deuterocesajas*, in: *Forschung am Alten Testament*, 1964. For briefer treatment of his position see his *Isaiah 40-66, A Commentary*, 1969, 11-14. While both of these scholars differ from J. Begrich in the number of Oracles of Salvation they find in Second Isaiah and while they differ from J. Begrich in their analysis of the structure, they simply accept his arguments for determining the *Sitz im Leben* of the *Gattung*.

<sup>4</sup> J. Begrich refers to this kind of sentence as »ein begründender Satz« (83).

<sup>4a</sup> *Ibid.*

J. Begrich understood this structure to represent the *Gattung* of the »Priestly Oracle of Salvation«<sup>5</sup> which scholars for a long time had supposed to be related to the Psalm of Lament. It had long been observed by scholars that in the »Individual Psalms of Lament« a sudden change of mood took place, from lament to praise; that is, psalms beginning in lament sometimes ended with a vow of praise. It had been conjectured that, at the turning point in these psalms, some cultic official spoke words of assurance which accounted for the change of mood<sup>6</sup>. J. Begrich summarizes the original *Sitz im Leben* of the oracle in the following way:

Wenn ein Einzelner, der im Heiligtum mit seinem Klageliede vor Jahwe getreten ist, seine Klagen und Bitten erschöpft hat, so tritt ein Priester auf, der, vielleicht auf Grund eines Opferbescheides, sich an den Beter mit einem Orakel Jahwes wendend und, auf sein Klagen und Bitten bezugnehmend, ihm die Erhörung und Hilfe seines Gottes zusichert. Getröstet durch das göttliche Orakel, spricht der Betende nunmehr die Gewißheit seiner Erhörung aus und schließt mit den Worten des Gelübdes<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> J. Begrich also refers to the *Gattung* as the »Oracle of Favorable Hearing« (Erhörungs-orakel).

<sup>6</sup> J. Begrich refers to H. Gunkel (zu Ende geführt von J. Begrich), *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, 1933, 243–247. The first scholar to speak of such a priestly oracle was F. Küchler, *Das priesterliche Orakel in Israel und Juda*, in: *Abhandlungen zur Semitischen Religionskunde und Sprachwissenschaft*, Wolf Wilhelm Graf von Baudissin, 1918, 285–301. In his article F. Küchler wants to demonstrate that in Israel the task of the priest was not only to lead in sacrificial acts but much more to impart divine speech by using oracles. He traces this phenomenon throughout the Old Testament and concludes (297) that there must have been some cultic act during which questions were addressed to the deity (where  $\text{קָרָא}$  or  $\text{שָׁאַל}$  were used as technical terms) and during which the answer of the deity was given by a priest (where  $\text{נָאָם}$  serves as a technical term). In the psalms, however, there sometimes appears a  $\text{נָאָם}$  »... wo es von Gott ausgesagt wird, nicht mehr als Korrelat zu einem vorausgehenden  $\text{קָרָא}$  oder  $\text{שָׁאַל}$  des Menschen, sondern zu allerlei Ausdrücken für das Rufen, Flehen, Bitten und Schreien des Gebets.« He lists as examples Ps 60<sup>6</sup> 118<sup>8ff.</sup> 21<sup>8-12</sup> 75<sup>2f.</sup> 12<sup>5</sup> 91<sup>14-16</sup> 81<sup>6-16</sup> 95<sup>8-11</sup> (298–299). F. Küchler goes on to observe: »Endlich sind hier noch solche Psalmen zu erwähnen, in welchen ein die vertrauensvolle Zuversicht des oder der in ihren Redenden zu Gott begründender Gottesspruch zwar nicht angeführt, aber doch vorausgesetzt wird. Das ist offenbar in solchen Psalmen der Fall, in denen sich ein ganz plötzlicher Übergang von schmerzgefüllter Klage und flehentlicher Bitte um Hilfe zu froher Gewißheit des göttlichen Beistandes bemerken läßt.« He cites Psalm 6. 13. 31. 54. 57. 115. 22. 69. 109 (299). He goes on to maintain that this »priestly oracle« continued to be used in the post-exilic cult which had lost the old methods and practices of obtaining oracles and which had introduced a more personal and spiritual practice (301). While F. Küchler's thesis – that a Priestly Oracle of Salvation accounts for the note of praise on which some of the Psalms of Lament end – has been generally accepted by subsequent scholarship, it had not gone unchallenged. See R. Kilian, Ps 22 and das priesterliche Heilsorakel, *BZ NF* 12 (1968), 172ff.

<sup>7</sup> J. Begrich, *Das priesterliche Heilsorakel*, 82.

J. Begrich maintained that the Priestly Oracle of Salvation, which was no longer to be found in the Psalter, was taken up by Second Isaiah »with a conscious intention« and »used as a suitable form of his message to his people«<sup>8</sup>.

Although J. Begrich understood Second Isaiah's use of the Priestly Oracle of Salvation to be a »true imitation« (*getreue Nachahmung*) of both the content (*Stoff*) and form of the priestly prototype (*Vorbild*)<sup>9</sup>, he was always careful to make a distinction between the situation which gave rise to the form of the Oracle of Salvation – the cult – and the new situation in Second Isaiah's prophetic proclamation. Second Isaiah was able to use this form in his prophetic proclamation because both his message and the Oracle of Salvation offer a proclamation of salvation and assurance of salvation<sup>10</sup>. Thus it was an imitation and therefore a purely literary form in Second Isaiah.

J. Begrich's method for identifying the *Gattung* he isolated in Second Isaiah as the Priestly Oracle of Salvation which has its setting in the lament liturgy is to point out the close relationship that exists between the Psalms of Lament in the Psalter and this *Gattung* as it occurs in Second Isaiah. He wants to show that both are made of the same material and have common features which extend even to the details<sup>11</sup>.

With regard to the structure of the »Oracle of Salvation«, J. Begrich notes that the »Begründung« sentences of the Oracle of Salvation correspond to the »expression of trust« of the Psalms of Lament. For example, expressions such as »I am your God« (Isa 41 10) in the Oracle of Salvation are similar to expressions such as »Thou art my God« (Ps 140 6) in the Individual Psalms of Lament<sup>12</sup>. The sentences which appeal to Yahweh's future gracious acts correspond to the petitions in the Psalms of Lament<sup>13</sup>. When the sentences with verbs in the imperfect follow sentences with verbs in the perfect in the Oracle of Salvation, this change in tense can

<sup>8</sup> (»mit bewußter Absicht« ... »als eine geeignete Form seiner Botschaft an sein Volk verwendet.«) J. Begrich 81. See also 91: »Der Prophet hat die im Kultus heimische Gattung des priesterlichen Heilsorakels übernommen und zu einer Ausdrucksform seiner prophetischen Verkündigung gemacht.«

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 91.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 87. He says, »Der enge Zusammenhang zwischen dem Klagelied des Einzelnen und dem priesterlichen Heilsorakel zeigt sich weiterhin darin, daß beiden der gleiche Stoff, und zwar bis in die Einzelheiten hinein, gemeinsam ist. Nur die Stellung zu ihm ist verschieden, dem verschiedenen Standpunkt entsprechend, den der Beter und der Priester zu ihm einnehmen.«

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 83. J. Begrich also notes that phrases such as »I have helped you« (Isa 41 13) show a close connection with expressions in the Psalms of Lament such as »Say to my soul, I am your help« (Ps 35 3).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 83–84.

only be understood on the basis of the lament liturgy. The perfect verbs point to the fact that Yahweh has heard and granted the request of the petitioner. It is on this basis, then, that the sentences which speak of how the prayer will be fulfilled are given<sup>14</sup>.

J. Begrich also notes that elements of the Psalm of Lament sometimes attach themselves to the Oracle of Salvation in Second Isaiah. For example, Isa 49<sup>14-15</sup> begins by recalling a lament; Isa 41<sup>14ff.</sup> attaches a note of praise often found at the end of a Psalm of Lament, and Isa 41<sup>8-9</sup> expands the address by attaching relative clauses recalling the past deeds of Yahweh – a phenomenon which sometimes occurs in the Psalms of Lament (Ps 63<sup>7-8</sup>)<sup>15</sup>.

As further proof of the close relationship between the Oracle of Salvation and the Individual Psalm of Lament, J. Begrich points to other similarities. He notes that the self-designation of the one making the lament finds corresponding expressions in the Oracle of Salvation. For example, Ps 143<sup>12</sup> »I am your servant« is paralleled in the Oracle of Salvation by the words, »You Israel my servant« (Isa 41<sup>8-9</sup>, etc.). The expressions of fear and anxiety of the lament (e.g., Ps 31<sup>13</sup>) find their equivalent in the formula »fear not« of the Oracle of Salvation. Questions such as that of Ps 22<sup>1</sup> find answers in the Oracle of Salvation, e.g., Isa 54<sup>7</sup><sup>16</sup>.

A final argument which J. Begrich introduces as proof that he had located the Oracle of Salvation in Second Isaiah rests on Lam 3<sup>57</sup> which reads:

Thou didst come near when I called on thee  
thou didst say »Do not fear« ( אַתָּה קָרַבְתָּ ).

Although, according to J. Begrich, we do not have an Oracle of Salvation in the Psalter as part of a Psalm of Lament, Lam 3<sup>57</sup> explicitly refers – by use of the words »fear not« – to that »significant moment« in which »... the narration of the assurance that prayer has been granted is introduced by the giving of the oracle«<sup>17</sup>.

*In summary, then, according to J. Begrich, these eight pericopes in Second Isaiah have a common structure which represents the Gattung of the Oracle of Salvation. The Sitz im Leben of this Gattung is to be properly understood as the Israelite cult and is to be associated with that*

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 84. See R.P. Merendino, *Literarkritisches, Gattungskritisches und Exegetisches zu Jes 41<sup>8-16</sup>, Bib 53* (1972), 21ff., who challenges this temporal distinction in his discussion of Isa 41<sup>8-16</sup>. He argues, with justification, that the perfect verbs in 41<sup>10b</sup> do not refer to the fact that Yahweh *has* heard but have a »Gegenwarts- und Zukunftscharakter,« i.e., the same tense as the nominal expressions in 41<sup>10a</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 86ff.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 87-91.

<sup>17</sup> »... die Erzählung der Erhöhung des Gebets eingeleitet wird durch die Mitteilung des Orakles« (83).

moment when a priest responds to the lament and petition of an individual who has come to the temple to address Yahweh. This oracle, which represents the gracious hearing of Yahweh, inspires confidence in the worshipper and turns his lament to praise. J. Begrich would not conclude from this that Second Isaiah was a priest or a cultic prophet but that Second Isaiah imitated a form indigenous to the cult (a form both he and his audience understood) and used it in his proclamation of salvation.

My disagreements with J. Begrich's analysis of the structure of the *Gattung* and with the number of pericopes which represent the *Gattung* are only minor and need not detain us here<sup>18</sup>. His identification of the *Gattung* with the Priestly Oracle of Salvation, however, rests on serious methodological oversights which call his conclusions into question. Because he worked primarily within the confines of Second Isaiah without consulting either other biblical material<sup>19</sup> or Ancient Near Eastern material, he failed to use proper controls in assessing the results of his work.

In the first place, although J. Begrich accepts the presupposition that a Priestly Oracle of Salvation must have occurred in certain Psalms of Lament, he does not consider texts in the Psalms and elsewhere in which divine oracles actually appear as answers to lament. F. K uchler was the first to suggest the existence of the Priestly Oracle of Salvation in the Israelite cult in his article, »Das priesterliche Orakel in Israel und Juda«<sup>20</sup>. He observed that priestly oracles were preserved in the Psalter which answered »general expressions for the call, entreaty, petition and cry of prayer«<sup>21</sup>. F. K uchler cites as examples of this Priestly Oracle of Salvation Ps 125 21 8-12 60 6-8 (=108 7-9) 75 2ff. 81 6-16 91 14-16 95 8-11<sup>22</sup>. While F. K uchler notes that there are some Psalms of Lament in which the oracle is no longer preserved in the Psalter<sup>23</sup>, he does not suggest that these oracles which have dropped out are significantly different from those preserved in the Psalter. Yet, if one places side by side one of these Priestly Oracles of Salvation and an example of a Priestly Oracle of Salvation which Begrich maintains he has found in Second Isaiah, it is readily apparent that there is no common structure. For example, compare Ps 125 with Isa 41 14-16:

»Because the poor are despoiled,  
because the needy groan,  
I will now arise«, says the Lord;  
»I will place him in the safety for which  
he longs.«

Ps 125, RSV

<sup>18</sup> For a full discussion of my views on this *Gattung* see my »Patriarchal Traditions in Second Isaiah«, Dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1974.

<sup>19</sup> His reference to Jer 30 10 (= 46 27) and 30 11 (= 46 28) (81) represents only two of the many more occurrences of this form outside Second Isaiah.

<sup>20</sup> See note 6.

<sup>21</sup> F. K uchler 298.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 298-299.

<sup>23</sup> See note 6.

Fear not, you worm Jacob  
 you men of Israel!  
 I will help you, says the Lord;  
 your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.  
 Behold I will make of you a threshing sledge,  
 new, sharp and having teeth;  
 you shall thresh the mountains and crush them,  
 and you shall make the hills like chaff.  
 You shall winnow them and the wind shall carry them away,  
 and the tempest shall scatter them.  
 And you shall rejoice in the Lord;  
 in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.

Isa 41 14-16, RSV

From this comparison, it is obvious that Ps 125 does not have the »usual« (*gewöhnliche*) introductory formula, »fear not«, which J. Begrich maintains represents »an essential element« (*ein wesentliches Moment*)<sup>24</sup> of the Oracle. Moreover, it has no direct personal address, nor does it contain nominal sentences assuring the nearness of Yahweh. In short, none of the examples cited by F. Küchler represents a form similar to that outlined by J. Begrich. If the typical structure of the Priestly Oracle of Salvation is found in Second Isaiah, why is that structure not readily apparent in the Priestly Oracles of Salvation preserved in the Psalter? Not only does J. Begrich fail to address himself to that question; he completely ignores the existence of these oracles. Before J. Begrich's conclusions can be taken seriously, one must deal with this conflicting evidence<sup>25</sup>. Likewise in Jeremiah's laments, which have close affinities to the laments of the individual in the Psalter, we find oracles which represent Yahweh's answer to the laments (Jer 11 21-23 12 5f. 15 19-21), but the structure of these oracles does not follow the structure given by J. Begrich<sup>26</sup>. If J. Begrich has discovered the *Gattung* of the Priestly Oracle of Salvation preserved in the

<sup>24</sup> I. Begrich, *Das priesterliche Heilsorakel*, 219.

<sup>25</sup> Both S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1962, II 58 ff. (see also I 217 ff.), and H. Graf Reventlow, *Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia*, 1963, 30, recognize the texts cited by F. Küchler as representing the »Priestly Oracle of Salvation« and at the same time accept the results of J. Begrich's work. Neither raises the question for the discrepancy in structure between the oracles found in the Psalter and those which J. Begrich maintained he found in Second Isaiah.

<sup>26</sup> See H. Gunkel, *Einleitung in die Psalmen*, 246, who points to the close relationship between the lament and divine answer in Jeremiah. H. Gunkel says, »Am wichtigsten ist wohl die Tatsache, daß in Klagegedichten des Jeremia und in Texten, die diesen Klagegedichten nahestehen, ein göttliches Orakel als Antwort folgt.« Although J. Begrich alludes to this section of H. Gunkel's book when describing the *Sitz im Leben* of the Oracle of Salvation, he does not deal with the discrepancy between the structure of the oracles in Jeremiah and the structure of the *Gattung* which he has described as a Priestly Oracle of Salvation in Second Isaiah.

prophesy of Second Isaiah – a context in which the *Gattung* was imitated and lifted from its original setting in the lament liturgy – why does this *Gattung* not occur in contexts both in Jeremiah and in the Psalter where a divine answer follows and answers lament? J. Begrich neither raises nor answers this question.

A second oversight of J. Begrich is that he does not study the occurrence of this *Gattung* in contexts outside Second Isaiah. As subsequent studies have shown, the *Gattung* which J. Begrich discovered in Second Isaiah occurs both in literature from Mesopotamia and in other biblical texts. Ph. B. Harner has noted the occurrence of this form in certain Mesopotamian oracles addressed to Esarhaddon<sup>27</sup>, Ashurbanipal<sup>28</sup> and King Zkir of Hamath<sup>29</sup> in his article »The Salvation Oracle in Second Isaiah«<sup>30</sup>. H. M. Dion in an article, »The Patriarchal Traditions and the Literary Form of the Oracle of Salvation«<sup>31</sup>, noted the occurrence of this form in five places in Genesis – Gen 15<sub>1</sub> 21<sub>17</sub> 26<sub>23-24</sub> 28<sub>13</sub> (LXX) 46<sub>1-4</sub><sup>32</sup>. Two

<sup>27</sup> See ANET 449–450 and 605. (The first page number refers to the translation of R. H. Pfeiffer, who did the original translation for ANET. The second page number refers to the translation of R. D. Biggs which is given in the third edition of ANET.) See also H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament* 1926, 281–283.

<sup>28</sup> See AOT 266; ANET 451 and 606, and A. Falkenstein und W. von Soden, *Sumerische und Akkadische Hymnen und Gebete*, 1953, 292–294.

<sup>29</sup> ANET 655.

<sup>30</sup> JBL 88 (1969), 418–435. The purpose of Ph. B. Harner's article was to show that extrabiblical parallels confirmed the conclusions of J. Begrich in his article of 1934. Ph. B. Harner's analysis of the structure of the *Gattung* is essentially that which J. Begrich offered. The only difference is that Ph. B. Harner includes the »Begründung sentences« as part of the reassurance statement »fear not« and adds a section which he calls »the divine self-predication« which comes after the reassuring words »fear not«. Ph. B. Harner outlines the *Gattung* in the following way: 1. the direct address to the recipient; 2. the reassurance, »fear not«; 3. the divine self-predication, in which the goddess identifies herself to the recipient; and 4. the message of salvation, assuring the recipient of protection, welfare, victory (149). Ph. B. Harner does not believe that these examples of the *Gattung* in extrabiblical sources convincingly demonstrate the *Sitz im Leben* which J. Begrich suggested, but he does conclude that »the fact that at least on some occasions the extrabiblical oracles were given to persons in a situation of urgent need or distress lends support to the other part of Begrich's theory, adopted from Küchler, that the salvation oracle was employed in the Jerusalem temple in response to the individual psalm of lament« (430–431). Thus Ph. B. Harner simply accepts J. Begrich's theory regarding the *Sitz im Leben* of the *Gattung* used with a Psalm of Lament in the extrabiblical parallels.

<sup>31</sup> CBQ 29 (1967), 198–206.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 198. H. M. Dion simply accepts J. Begrich's conclusions regarding the structure (198) and *Sitz im Leben* (»We will accept it without argument...«, 204) of the *Gattung* which he believes served as a »model for the last Yahwist and Elohist narrators when they attempted to give form to the intimate communications that Yahweh could not have failed to have with his chosen ones, the fathers of the race.« (204).

other scholars, H. Graf Reventlow<sup>33</sup> and J.M. Berridge<sup>34</sup>, find this *Gattung* utilized in the call of Jeremiah (Jer 15ff.). While these scholars have noted the occurrence of this *Gattung* in texts other than Second Isaiah, they have not used those new contexts to reassess J. Begrich's claim that the *Gattung* belongs primarily to the context of the lament liturgy. They have simply accepted J. Begrich's conclusion on this matter. Yet, in none of the instances cited does the *Gattung* occur in connection with a Psalm of Lament. Each of the scholars is forced to conclude that, just as the Priestly Oracle of Salvation has been adapted to a new context and given a new purpose in Second Isaiah, so it has been used in a secondary way in each of the contexts where it is found. The occurrence of the *Gattung*, then, has been found in many contexts other than Second Isaiah from the time of the Yahwist and Elohist during the Israelite monarchy through the period of the Exile and beyond the borders of Israel to include at least Mesopotamian literature. Yet each time the *Gattung* occurs, those who have followed J. Begrich have been forced to say that it is used in some setting other than its original *Sitz im Leben*<sup>35</sup>. If J. Begrich's thesis is not

<sup>33</sup> Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia, 24ff. H. Graf Reventlow generally agrees with the conclusions of J. Begrich that the origin of the priestly oracle of salvation is to be understood as the answer of a priest to an individual who utters a Psalm of Lament in the sanctuary (30). He argues that in the course of time the priestly oracle of salvation became part of a »fest geprägten gattungsmäßigen Schema«, (26) the call ritual (Berufungsritual, 68 ff.). As part of the call ritual, the Priestly Oracle of Salvation represents a special use of the *Gattung* (39) which continued to be used in its more general and original sense as an answer to individual lament. Jer 1 represents the call ritual of the cult prophet Jeremiah and answers the lament of the official, which is also a part of the ritual.

<sup>34</sup> Prophet, People, and the Word of Yahweh: An Examination of Form and Content in the Proclamation of the Prophet Jeremiah, 1970, 26 ff. J. M. Berridge is in essential agreement with J. Begrich (184) but unlike H. Graf Reventlow, who sees the Salvation Oracle as part of a call ritual, believes that its use in the formulation of the call narrative of Jeremiah represents a prophetic imitation of a *Gattung* originally native to the cult.

<sup>35</sup> Although the majority of form critics have followed J. Begrich's identification of the *Gattung*, a number of them have made observations about the use of the *Gattung* that need to be more fully explored. Ph. B. Harner notes that in Mesopotamia the oracles occur in »royal« contexts and suggests rather guardedly at one point that the form may have been used in connection with the Babylonian New Year's Festival (421). Both H. M. Dion (565–570) and H. Graf Reventlow (55 ff.) have suggested that the *Gattung* has some relation to the traditions of Holy War in Israel. In this connection see also the article by R. P. Merendino, Literarkritisches, Gattungskritisches und Exegetisches zu Jes 41<sup>a-16</sup>, Bib 53 (1972), 1–42, who argues for the setting of the *Gattung* in Holy War and not the lament liturgy. G. von Rad has argued that the formula, »fear not«, is associated with Holy War Traditions. See Studies in Deuteronomy, 1953, 57, and his The Levitical Sermon in I and II Chronicles, in: The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, 1958, 272 ff. See also H. D. Preuss, »... und ich will mit dir sein,« ZAW 80 (1968), 139–173. D. McCarthy identifies a similar *Gattung* which functions »to describe the installation in an office, the commissioning of a task«. See: An Installation Genre?, JBL 90 (1971),

reassessed, then we are in a position of maintaining that every time the *Gattung* occurs it is adapted to a new situation, having been lifted from its original setting in the lament liturgy. If the form has been used so freely over several hundred years of Israel's history, then one begins to question the usefulness of J. Begrich's thesis.

Not only has J. Begrich neglected contexts outside of Second Isaiah, either where there is a divine answer to a lament or where the *Gattung* itself occurs; he also has failed to use proper controls on the text of Second Isaiah itself. This leads to a third criticism of J. Begrich, namely that he has failed to show that the eight pericopes he identifies as representing the Oracle of Salvation show any closer relationship to the Individual Psalm of Lament than does the rest of the speech of Second Isaiah<sup>36</sup>. J. Begrich's method for identifying the *Gattung* with the Priestly Oracle of Salvation was to show that both are made of the same *Stoff*, i.e., that ideas, motifs and expressions exhibited in the oracles correspond to similar ideas, motifs and expressions in the Individual Psalm of Lament. That this method of reasoning is invalid is suggested by the fact that Second Isaiah's speech as a whole is intimately related to ideas, motifs and expressions exhibited in the Psalms of Lament. This is to be expected in the speech of a prophet who addresses a people in exile – a situation of lament – and promises them deliverance from their present need and suffering.

J. Begrich demonstrates the pervasiveness of this response to lament in Second Isaiah and thus unwittingly calls his own conclusions into question in his »Studien zu Deuterocesaja«<sup>37</sup>, published four years later in 1938. In his 1934 article J. Begrich finds only *eight* representatives of the Oracle of Salvation in Second Isaiah while in 1938 the number has grown three-fold to *twenty-four*<sup>38</sup>. With this significant increase in the number of pericopes claimed to exhibit the *Gattung* of the Priestly Oracle of Salvation, it becomes significantly more difficult for J. Begrich to find a readily identifiable structure common to all. J. Begrich himself admits that a

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31–41. In this connection see also N. Lohfink, *Die deuteronomistische Darstellung des Übergangs der Führung Israels von Moses auf Josue*, *Scholastik* 37 (1962), 32–44. Other scholars have connected a similar *Gattung* with theophany. See, for example, K. Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God*, 1967, 58 ff.

<sup>36</sup> That *Gattungen* other than the *Heilsorakel* in Second Isaiah are related to the individual Psalms of Lament is noted by R. P. Merendino 15 note 2. Merendino further points out that most of the Psalms to which J. Begrich alludes are either post exilic or late exilic and concludes: »Angesichts dieses Befundes läßt sich weniger an eine Abhängigkeit des Propheten von der Tradition dieser Psalmen als vielmehr an zwei selbständige Verdichtungen der gleichen allgemeinen geistigen Erfahrung denken.«

<sup>37</sup> *Studien zu Deuterocesaja*, 1963, 14 ff.

<sup>38</sup> He lists the following as representatives of the Oracle of Salvation in his *Studien* 14: 41 8-13. 14-16. 17-20 42 14-17 43 1-7. 16-21 44 1-5 45 1-7. 14-17 46 3-4. 12-13 48 17-19 49 7. 8-12(13). 14-21. 22-23. 24-26 51 6-8. 12-16 54 4-6. 7-10. 11-12 + 13 b. 14 a + 13 a-17 55 8-13.

»*Gattung* character« (*Gattungscharakter*)<sup>39</sup> is at first hard to recognize in these pericopes. In the additional sixteen pericopes that he now maintains exhibit the *Gattung* of the Oracle of Salvation, three elements – the personal address, the summons not to fear, and the nominal expressions of the nearness of Yahweh – all tend to disappear<sup>40</sup>. What these oracles do have in common he calls the *Aufbauglieder* (the structural elements of the oracle, which apparently correspond to that part of the 1934 structure containing verbs in the perfect followed by verbs in the imperfect and telling of Yahweh's gracious hearing and what will happen now that Yahweh has heard)<sup>41</sup>. He describes the *Aufbauglieder* as having three parts:

- a. »die an die Hilfesuchenden gerichtete Aussage Jahwes, die von seinem Eingreifen spricht«,
- b. »die Sätze, welche von der Folge des göttlichen Eingreifens reden und sich auf die Wende der Not beziehen«,
- c. »die Angabe des Zweckes, den Jahwes Erhörung verfolgt«.<sup>42</sup>

In further discussion of the *Aufbauglieder* we learn that all three parts occur together only about four to six times. Usually the pattern is a + b (eight times) or a + c (two times)<sup>43</sup>. What is of importance in identifying the *Aufbauglieder* and consequently an Oracle of Salvation is really part a, containing expressions of Yahweh directed to the supplicant and speaking of Yahweh's intervention. But this hardly constitutes a structure<sup>44</sup>. It rather

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. This is very difficult to understand. The formula »fear not«, such an essential part of the oracle as it was described in his 1934 article, served as a kind of summary statement to refer to the Oracle of Salvation (Lam 3 57). Now it suddenly recedes into the background.

<sup>41</sup> Although the eight pericopes which J. Begrich understood to represent the Oracle of Salvation always play a special role for J. Begrich, their relationship to the other sixteen pericopes remains rather vague. See C. Westermann, *Das Heilswort bei Deuterocesaja*, *EvTh* 24 (1964), 359, who makes the same observation.

<sup>42</sup> Begrich, *Studien*, 15–16.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>44</sup> See C. Westermann, *Das Heilswort bei Deuterocesaja*, 359, who agrees that it is difficult to see a common structure in these 24 texts. See also J. M. Berridge, 185. If we set side by side two examples from J. Begrich's list of 24, it becomes immediately obvious that they do not manifest a common structure.

Fear not, you worm Jacob,

you men of Israel!

I will help you, says the Lord

your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

Behold, I will make you a threshing sledge,

new, sharp, and having teeth;

you shall thresh the mountains and crush them,

and you shall make the hills like chaff;

you shall winnow them and the wind shall carry them away,

and the tempest shall scatter them.

And you shall rejoice in the Lord;

in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.

identifies a theme characteristic of the speech of Second Isaiah: that Yahweh will intervene in Israel's history in exile and help her by returning her to her homeland.

Let us now review what has happened between 1934 and 1938 in J. Begrich's thinking. In 1934 J. Begrich isolated eight pericopes which he maintained had a common structure and which, he further maintained, represented the *Gattung* that scholars had hypothesized was related to the Individual Psalm of Lament, the Priestly Oracle of Salvation. His method for determining the *Sitz im Leben* was to show that both the Individual Psalm of Lament and the *Gattung* in question were made of the same *Stoff*, i.e., that the *Gattung* contained ideas, motifs, and expressions related to the Individual Psalm of Lament. *The Gattung* was characterized by expressions indicating that Yahweh had heard the lament of one seeking help and was turning to the supplicant to say that he had heard the petition and to promise deliverance. In 1938 J. Begrich noticed that what was true of those eight pericopes originally under discussion was also true for 16 other pericopes in Second Isaiah. His conclusion was that the Priestly Oracle of Salvation must be more pervasive in Second Isaiah than he had initially expected. Yet when he tried to find a common structure in the twenty-four pericopes in 1938, it was very difficult. The characteristic »fear not« was no longer a part of these additional pericopes, and the only common element was that they spoke of the intervention of Yahweh on behalf of someone seeking help. J. Begrich drew the wrong conclusion in 1938. His conclusion should not have been that the Priestly Oracle of Salvation was represented in twenty-four texts but that his method for determining the *Sitz im Leben* of the eight pericopes originally under discussion was faulty. The relationship of those pericopes to the Psalm of Lament was not through a *Gattung* from which they derived, but rather through a pervasive theme in Second Isaiah's entire message: that Yahweh will intervene to save those lamenting their desperate plight in exile.

No one can dispute the enormous contribution of J. Begrich to the *study of the Old Testament*. All who are interested in *Formgeschichte* are indebted to his insights. Yet it is the contention of this paper that his arguments for determining the *Sitz im Leben* of the so-called Oracle of Salvation in Second Isaiah are unconvincing. He fails to deal adequately both with contexts external to Second Isaiah, in which a divine answer is given to a lament that does not manifest the structure of the *Gattung* in Second Isaiah, and with contexts in which the *Gattung* does occur outside Second

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Hearken, to me, you stubborn of heart,  
 you who are far from deliverance:  
 I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off,  
 and my salvation will not tarry;  
 I will put salvation in Zion,  
 for Israel my glory.

Isa 46 12-13, RSV

Isaiah. Furthermore, his pairing of this *Gattung* and the Psalm of Lament shows neglect of the fact that Second Isaiah's speech as a whole is characterized by reference to Yahweh's intervention to help his people lamenting their plight in exile.

It is not evident, then, that Second Isaiah used the Oracle of Salvation. I have shown elsewhere<sup>45</sup> that the phrase »fear not«, used in a *Gattung* similar to that which J. Begrich outlined in his 1934 article, occurs in the Old Testament in contexts which provide comfort and encouragement to a person or persons who are called upon to carry out a task.

Elsewhere than in Second Isaiah this *Gattung* occurs where an individual (or individuals) is comforted prior to carrying out a task: Joshua is comforted when he is commissioned to succeed Moses (Dtn 31<sup>7-8</sup>, 23 Josh 1<sup>9</sup>); Solomon is comforted by David prior to building the temple (I Chr 28<sup>20-21</sup>); Haggai comforts the governor Zerubbabel, Joshua, the High Priest, and the people and encourages them to rebuild the temple after the return from exile (Hag 2<sup>4-9</sup>); persons are comforted prior to entering into battle in Holy War (Num 21<sup>34</sup> Dtn 3<sup>2</sup> Dtn 20<sup>3-4</sup> 31<sup>6</sup> Josh 8<sup>1-2</sup> 10<sup>8</sup>, 25 11<sup>6</sup> II Chr 20<sup>15-17</sup> and 32<sup>7-8</sup>; and Jeremiah is comforted during his call to the prophetic office (Jer 1<sup>8</sup>, 17).

It is suggested in this paper that Second Isaiah, rather than using the Oracle of Salvation to respond to the lament of Israel in exile, is using an entirely different *Gattung*, the purpose of which is to comfort Jacob/Israel as Yahweh's servant performing a particular task. This alternative to Begrich's hypothesis is clearly supportable and calls for further exploration.

J. Begrich's classic thesis (ZAW 1934) that Second Isaiah employed the »Priestly Oracle of Salvation« is questioned in this article. The major problem with Begrich's essay is that he worked primarily within the confines of Second Isaiah and not the larger OT context. He does not consider two kinds of pericopes outside Second Isaiah. 1. Those answering lament, which have a different structure than the *Gattung* he outlined in Second Isaiah; and, 2. those not answering lament which have a structure similar to that outlined in the so called Oracles of Salvation in Second Isaiah. Furthermore, his argument that certain oracles in Second Isaiah should be identified as Oracles of Salvation overlooks the fact that all of Second Isaiah's speech can be construed as an answer to lament. The author of this article maintains that the setting of the *Gattung* is Second Isaiah traditionally identified as the Oracle of Salvation should be reconsidered and suggests that the *Gattung* occurs when encouragement is being given to one who has a task to perform.

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<sup>45</sup> See note 18.



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