

A TOUR AMONG THE MUSICIANS OF THE BIBLE

- A STUDY DEDICATED TO DR. KIRKÓSA JÚLIA -

JÁNOS MOLNÁR¹

SUMMARY. The paper presents those composers and musicians who are mentioned by name in the Old Testament. Among the composers and singers there are not only men and male groups of singers, but also women and female groups of singers. There are mentions of female composers, singers and song teachers. The paper processes the biographical data related to the above mentioned persons and groups and presents the biblical data on the genre and musical material of the presented song or songs. The author of the paper offers detailed information on the instruments presented in the Old Testament and presents the Biblical locuses where these are mentioned. Finally the author concludes that in the Old Testament times it is impossible to separate cultic singing from lay, i.e. Profane singing, for everything we would call today classical music or even popular music in those times belonged to the sphere of musica sacra. Love songs, songs of the marriage ceremony, harvest songs are all songs that praise God, besides their profane nature.

Keywords: song, instrument, tools for singing, group of singers, cultic song, solo song, choral, singing women, singing girls.

Poetry, poesy - taking into consideration also its etymological meaning - is a product of an effort. A fact proven also by the Latin word of Greek origin *poesis*: „*poiein*„ = to do, to make, the *praes. inf.* of the verb „*poieó*„, but also by the Hebrew word *MA'ASE* = deed, action, work, activity, performance. In Psalm 45,2 we read: My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. Komáromy Cs. György translates this: My heart is emanating good words and my music is all about the king and my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. “Among the linguistic expressions poetry is a performance – writes Eduard König²” which rises above the level of the everyday creations. So poetry is a writing performance created using special abilities. And that is called art.”

¹ *PhD, University Professor at Babeş-Bolyai University, Reformed Theology Faculty, Director of the Ecumenical Doctoral School. E-mail: janos_molnar@yahoo.com*

² E. König, *Die Poesis des Ats*, Leipzig, 1907, p. 2.

The Hebrew collection of psalms is also art and each psalm is an artistic song both thematically and linguistically. However this brings about one of the main issues in the study of psalms. Who is or who are the authors who have written the psalms, who have uttered the voices of lamentation, of joy or suffering?

And that is a difficult question to answer. The information of the notations about the authors in the psalms themselves are not very reliable. These have not been born with the psalm itself, but they were attached much later and they are merely an attestation of the theological thinking and psalm interpretation of the time they were written in, but not of the author himself. And not even the philological or even the detailed thematic study of the psalms helps answer this question. But can we say the psalms have particular authors? If so, if the author can be traced, it means that the psalms are pieces of artistic creation. But this is infirmed by both redaction criticism and canon history. So the psalms are nor private poetry, neither artistic creations of the world literature.

Psalms have been created anonymously and they have been preserved by oral history until collected in the manner of folk songs. Preservation through oral history excludes the author, for the author in this case can be also the community where the respective song has been preserved as it was shaped linguistically and thematically and also in its stylistic expression by its preservants. Therefore this is a kind of folk poetry to which the redaction critics were the last ones to imprint the theology and thinking of their own age.

And if this is the case, looking for an author is not only an unsuccessful attempt, but also a pointless one. Yet the fact sustained by literary history that the canonical book of psalms is the hymn book of the congregation of the second temple sheds this issue into a whole different light. In this respect Hebrew folk poetry is mainly a cultical poetry, meaning that it was born from a cult. (C. Westermann, A. Weiser, H. Seidel, in Hungary Kecskeméthy I.)³, Sitz im Leben, Sitz im Kultus, for it was written in a cultic place for cultic purposes.

One of the main representatives of the cultic psalm interpretations is Mowinckel, who follows the lead of Welhausen and Stade interpreting every psalm as a cultic song⁴. But if we are talking about cultic songs or cultic poetry, the author needs to be looked for among those who perform services at the temple and he can be either a priest or a Levite or a singer or even a prophet. H. Gunkel accepts this view only partially. It is true that most psalms have a cultic notation and that the notation LAMeNACEACH

³ A. Weiser, *Die Psalmen*, Göttingen, 1955, p. 15 and S. Mowinckel, *Religion und Kultus*, 1953, p. 13.

⁴ S. Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien*, 1921, VI. p. 27.

(to the choirmaster) proves a cultic origin, but there are several psalms that cannot be interpreted as having been written or used for the purposes of the cult. For example Psalm 119 is rather an edifying reading than a hymn. There are many psalms that do not have a notation. And neither are the lamentations of Jeremiah, Job and Isaiah linked to the cult. Hezekiah sings on his sick bed (Isa.38,9), Jonah in the belly of the fish (Jon 2,2) and Daniel in his house (Dan 2). So Hebrew poetry is only partially cultic and it has a part that is outside the cult, i.e. it is lay or folk inspired. While the canonic collection is nothing but the hymn book of the Hebrew congregation and its reading of edification or as Gunkel puts it: a religious folkbook for the edification and piety of the laymen.

But the psalm research of the last two decades (see: C. Westermann, H.J. Kraus, H. Seidel etc.) almost ignores Gunkel's view and it talks almost unanimously only about artistic poetry. However if psalm poetry is a cultic poetry exclusively, then the authors must be the priests themselves or the members of the temple choir⁵. They were the ones who formulated in singing, lyrics and tune the lamentation, plea, thanksgiving and praise expressed by the members of the congregation based on the words of these laymen. According to a description from Asia Minor, a person who managed to leave behind a tribulation has the priests formulate and write down his thanksgiving and praise for the protection of his life. Probably the same can be supposed in the case of Psalm 40,8: "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me:., Komáromy Cs. György translates this: "Behold, I have come; in the folding of the book there is a writing about me,.. So the priests were the ones who wrote the psalm using their specific worship language, their cultic tropes and in the literary form the new based on the story conveyed to them, then this was sung at the worship by the individuals, the congregation or the temple choir itself. These psalms which have been written down were kept in the temple archive.

Also the fact that in the Old Testament literacy was the privilege of the priests, Levites and members of the temple choir sustains the theory that the authors of the psalms are those who served around the temple. They as a group even had a name that suggests this: They were called SOFERIM, meaning 'writer'. They were the scribes of the royal court, the guardians of the tradition by their service around the Ark and the Altar and also the transmitters of wisdom. Their job description according to Deuteronomy 31,19.22 is: 1. To write down the song, 2. To have the people learn it, 3. To place it in their mouth, meaning: "Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths... So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the people of Israel."

⁵ H.J. Kraus, Psalmen, Berlin, p. 73.

Further proof is offered by another two locuses in the Bible: Psalm 102,19, on the writing of the song that sings God's deeds: "Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord:" (cf. Isa. 8,1-4 and 30,8) and Job 19,23 where there is a debate on whether to write down Job's lamentation or not: "Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book!"

Therefore the authors of the psalms and of all the other types of biblical religious poetry, the poets and composers regardless of genre or themes were probably the priests, the Levites, the singers, the cultic prophets, the charismatic people and the scribes.

I. Names of persons and groups

In the notations to the psalms we find the names of the following authors: David (73 times), Asaph (12 times), Korah and his sons (11 times), Solomon (2- times: 72, 127), Jeduthun (2 times), Ethan (1 time), Moses (1 time, 90) and Heman (1 time), and in connection with other literary pieces we find the names of Miriam and Deborah.

1. The historic significance and greatness of Moses cannot be dimmed by any historical or critical research. His time was the 15th century BC⁶. The first time Moses is mentioned as a singer is in Exodus 15 after the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. Moses and the people of Israel sing together to the Lord. The tune is unknown, but the lyrics are written down in the above mentioned chapter. Probably Moses wrote the lyrics to an already popular tune, which made singing together possible. While in Deuteronomy 31,19. 22.30 we read that Moses writes a song following the command of the Lord and he teaches this song to the people of Israel and afterwards he presents the song to the entire congregation of Israel. This song is written down in chapter 32.

2. In the Book of Psalms the editors attribute one psalm to Moses: Psalm 90. While the above mentioned songs did not become part of the collection of cultic hymns, even though both are obviously God-praising hymns as far as genre is concerned.

David's name appears 73 times in the notations of the psalms: Noted LeDAVID. The question arises: How should preposition 'Le' be understood? (Le = for the sake of, for, to, for someone, expresses direction, belonging to something.) According to the author of the Chronicles (1Chron 22-29) David is the one who creates the cultic institutions and establishes the order of the ceremonies. The Israelite tradition regards him as a harp player and as a composer (Cf. 1Sam 16,17k; 2Sam 1,17k; 22,14; 23,1k; Amos 6,5).

⁶ David Rohl: *Fáraók és Királyok (Pharaohs and Kings)*, Gold Book, pp. 249 and following.

On this ground it is understandable that the Iraselites living after the captivity did not question the truthfulness of this authorship. The author of the psalms is David. Also the historical explanations placed next to David's name revealing the situation in which David composed the psalm support this certainty. Yet these situational descriptions do not only refer to the circumstances of the creation of the psalms, but they reveal something also about the contemporary interpretation of the psalms (Cf. 3; 7; 18; 34; 51; 52; 54; 56; 57; 59; 60; 63; 142).

3. In Solomon's respect the case is almost exactly the same. According to 1Kings 4,32 the author of the Deuteronomy presents him as the author of 1005 hymns. What became of these hymns, where have they been lost, where have they been placed? In our days it is already difficult to discover. In the Canon, more precisely in the collection of the Book of Psalms only two psalms were selected: Psalm 72 and Psalm 127.^{7, 8}

4. Asaph - he was the conductor of a group of singers and tradition attributes him 12 psalms (50 and 73 to 83). According to Ezra 2,41 the sons of Asaph (the Asaph group) returned from captivity, which concludes that they had served also in the temple built by Solomon. The chronicler relates that the Asaph group was among the leaders and categorizes them as Levites contrary to the catalogue of names in Ezra where they were still between the Levites and the slaves. But according to 1Chron 15,17 Heman (the Heman group) takes over their leading role among those who served around the temple.

It is possible that they lost their leading role as a consequence of the competition among the various groups of singers. In H. Gese's opinion what happened here was the interweaving of two different traditions: Asaph-Heman-Jeduthun (Tradition A) and Heman-Asaph-Ethan (Tradition B). Tradition A is older, so primarily Asaph was the leader and the other groups of singers competed against them⁹. But the main issue here is not this, but on the growing importance of singing and of the institution of singers and musicians within the cult and also on the liturgical order and on the organisation of the second temple. 1Chron 25,2 confirms this as well: Asaph's sons were respected and honoured much like the prophets. (NABA' = to be enthusiastic, to talk with a prophet's zeal, Nif. Part.).

⁷ But today's psalm research considers that the particle 'Le' is to be interpreted in its meaning in dativus. I. Engnell translates the expression LeDAVID thus, for example: "to the King" and in view of the Mari letters he considers that this was a usual formula of addressing of the time. (See I. Engnell: Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East, 1943, p. 176.)

⁸ According to S. Movinckel the meaning of this notation is: "to the king descending from David". In these explanations there is, no doubt, much exaggeration. In the notation LeDAVID there is no mention of the king or of a king, but of David himself and of the psalms the tradition had considered he authored and had made into a collection entitling it LeDAVID. (See S. Mowinckel: Offersang og sangoffer, 1951, p. 87.)

⁹ H. Gese: Vom Sinai zum Zion, München, 1974, p. 163.

5. Heman - we find his name in the notation related to Psalm 88. According to 1Chron 2 Heman is Judah's grandson, while 1Kings 4,31 mentions of him that he is a wise man of Ezrahite origin who lived in the time of Solomon. 1Chron 6,33 places him among the Kohathites as the primary singer (=MeSORER). Kohath (1Chron 6,16) was Levi's son, so Heman and his group of singers had a right to a cultically primary role based on their Levitic origine as related in 1Chron 15,19 where the group of Heman dates itself back to the rule of David. Their ancient and constant task is formulated in 1Chron 16,42: to praise the Lord with "trumpets and cymbals for the music and instruments for sacred song".

1Chron 25,4 mentions singer Mattaniah among the sons of Heman, but 1Chron 9,15 puts him in the Asaph group. What does this mean? It can be presumed that these two groups of singers mixed right before the captivity or even during the captivity and they could have the chance to separate again only due to the newly organized cult of the second temple. So the Heman group was formed by leaving the Asaph group. But the degradation of the Asaphites and the attempts to gain power of the Heman group exclude this possibility.

The double notation of Psalm 88 puts this issue into a different perspective. This notation mentions two groups of singers: The sons of Korah and the group of Heman, which proves that the latter was created by seceding from the first, i.e. from the Kohathites. Among such presuppositions and fumbling scientific research can accept as facts only that the destruction of the first temple brought about a disruption in the order of its servants and this order of the servants of the temple could be recreated only after the consecration of the second temple.

6. The sons of Korah - redaction criticism attributes them 11 psalms (42, 44-49; 84, 85, 87, 88). 2Chron 20,19 mentions separately the Kohathites and the Korahites, but if we interpret the vavcopulative verb as vavexplicative¹⁰, these two groups turn out to be one and the same. We know from Numbers 3,17 that Kohath was the son of Levi and according to Numbers 3,30-31 his group served around the Arch, watched the table, the lampstand, the altars and the vessels of the sanctuary. And Numbers 16,1 presents Korah as the son of Kohath.

Again Numbers 16 relates that the Kohathites pushed for primacy, they wished to become priests. They wanted to become priests, but God refused their plea. This might be the explanation of the fact that Ezra 2,40-42 mentions them not among the Levites, but among the guardians of the gate (the sons of Sallum = Korahites), just as 1Chron 9,19. But in a later age they were somewhat rehabilitated and this is the explanation for Heman's attempts to leadership and the degradation of Asaph, for according to 1Chron 6,22

¹⁰ De Vette: Die Psalmen, Heidelberg, 1829, p. 20.

and 2Chron 20,19 they ascended to a higher class, that of the singers who praised the Lord “with a very loud voice”.

7. Ethan - we find his name in the notifications of one psalm (89) where the redactor calls him an Ezrahite, just as Heman. According to 1Kings 4,33 he was a wise man living in the time of Solomon. And 1Chron 2,6 places him among the descendants of Judah as the son of Zerah, while 1Chron 6,44 mentions him as a descendant of Levi as the son of Merari (1Chron 15,17). As a Levite he also belongs to the group of singers. 1Chron 15,19 mentions him near Asaph.

8. Jeduthun - tradition attributes 3 psalms to him: 39, 62 and 77. In the first two instances it is related to David’s name and in the third to Asaph’s name (=’AL – translation = as Jeduthun plays music; Le = for Jeduthun). 2Chron 35,15 calls him a KHOZEH, a seer who had the role of a prophet in David’s court where he was the leader of the singers. In 1Chron 25,3 he is mentioned between Asaph and Heman as the conductor of one of the groups of singers. Comparing several locuses an interesting identity can be revealed. 1Chron 15,17-18 mentions that Ethan is Obed-Edom’s father, while 1Chron 16,38 presents Jeduthun as the father of singer and gatekeeper Obed-Edom. Thus the conclusion can be drawn that the names Ethan and Jeduthun stand for the same singer or group of singers. H. Seidel reaches the same conclusion comparing 1Chron 15,19 and 25,1. (Gesenius: Jeduthun = JeDEJ EJTAN – Ethan’s hands).

However the matter cannot be concluded simply with this identity. According to the table presented in 1Chron 26 Obed-Edom belongs to the group of the Korahites. Which means that the Jeduthun group seceded from the Korahites, same as the Heman group. And since it was genealogically impossible for them to become part of the Asaph group, since the latter presumably came home later from captivity, they created an order of their own. H. Gese calls this new group of singers “extraordinarius”.¹¹

But the Old Testament relates not only of male composers and singers, but also of female ones. The Old Testament mentions by name two women. One of them is Miriam, Moses’s and Aron’s sister of whom we know not only that she saves baby Moses’s life (Exodus 2,4.7-8) and later she chips on Moses’s marriage (Numbers 12), but also that after the miraculos passage through the Red Sea she leads a procession of women with a tambourine in her hand and sings a song of victory of God’s great deeds (Exodus 15,21).

The other woman is Deborah, who was the judge of Israel, or rather of the contemporary union of clans and a prophetess living in the 13th century BC. When Jabin attacks Izrael, Deborah organizes the defence. After the victory over Jabin, or rather over his army general, Sisera she sings together with Barak a song of victory composed by herself (Judges 5,1).

¹¹ Fr. Baetghen: Die Psalmen, Heidelberg, 1829, p. 16.

And in the Old Testament we also find besides these two female singers mentioned by name also groups of singers composed of women and girls besides the groups of singers composed of men. However these female groups of singers are not always singers of the temple. They serve also at wailings for funerals, but also at profane events, gatherings and celebrations.

In 2Chron 35,25 the prophet Jeremiah sings a wailing at the vigil of King Josiah along with the male and female groups of singers. In Eccl 2,9 it is related that King Solomon gathered singing men and women for his own pleasure and it is highly probable that they were court singers and musicians.

It is probable also that it is this group that Barzillai mentions when he does not want to move to Jerusalem at the age of 80, for he is old and therefore he cannot take pleasure neither in the male or the female group of singers.

Another old man who expresses his nostalgia over the female group of singers is the Ecclesiast in Eccl 12,6. He moans that at old age the girl singers' voice becomes more faint for the old man cannot hear so well anymore.

We know of the cultic activity of the female groups of singers composed of women and girls only based on the HASSeMINIT notation of some psalms.

HASSeMINIT stands in the notation of Psalm 6,1 and Psalm 12,1. The Hungarian traditional Bible translation transcribes it phonetically, the Hungarian modern version translates it with 'instrument of the low register' and with 'low voice'. This expression can be translated in two ways according to interpretation. The first interpretation is: an eighth-stringed instrument (Komáromi Cs. György: to the eighth). Which means this is a poem sung accompanied by a eighth-stringed instrument. But this translation is incorrect for redaction criticism denotes instruments in an entirely different way. Therefore the second interpretation would be a more fit translation. In 1Chron 15, 20-21 the expression stands next to 'AL'ĀLĀMOT (as maidens would sing - Hungarian traditional version), which means a octave of the low register is mentioned (Kecskeméthy: bass) so a song sung by men or even the soprano. In this case the singers are girls or women.

Based on the above mentioned it can be stated that singing either in an organized or in a spontaneous form was always an important element in the Israeli cult. The accompaniment of the songs with instruments conferred loftiness, awe and colour to the tune even if this was not quite the orchestral accompaniment of our days (Cf. 1Sam 10,5; 2Sam 6,5). By its dramatic nature music and singing together helped the congregation to express its pain, lamentation and repentance and the playfulness of music made hymns and praises stirring and joyful and called out from among the events of the everyday life to the heavenly realm, to Jahveh himself.

The music played and sung by the various singers and groups of singers is „musica sacra”, holy music both in its content and its form¹² and even when it contains profane elements like the harvest or vintage songs as referred to in Isa 9,3 or love songs or songs of the marriage ceremony as in Psalm 45 the qualitative or aesthetic nature of the song remains unchanged. In Israel these songs give thanks to Jahveh both for the harvest and the vintage and the songs of the marriage ceremony do not talk of the rather immoral mystery found in the songs of the religions of the Middle East in general, but instead they point to the Messiah who will come to be together with his bride in the joy of the wedding.

II. INSTRUMENTS

If we make a review of Israel's singing and music playing it is instantly conspicuous that they used relatively few instruments. Still another way to put it is: the biblical documents made mention of few instruments, their report is incomplete and in many cases difficult to understand for today's person. E.g. there are mentions of stringed instruments. Today, at a distance of a few thousand years it is difficult to determine whether that stringed instrument was a harp, a dulcimer, a zither, a lute or some other instrument, for the expression stringed instrument is far too general. Research is hindered also by the fact that during the excavation works in Israel archeologists did not find any artefacts, reliefs or sculptures that represent musicians or singers. Finding even a few ancient instruments would be of great help. Therefore in most cases researchers of this field determine the nature of the instruments taking into consideration the biblical text and the archeological documents referring to other people of the antiquity contemporary to the Israelites.

But this is not the only difficulty that research encounters. There are also linguistic problems. For example Hebrew has a term for song and singing, but no separate term for music or instrument. In the English translation there are mentions of music, but that is the translation of MINNIJ in biblical Hebrew. (?) = MEN, plural = MINNIM. Its translation is uncertain. This term can be found in two locuses of the Bible: Psalm 45,9, where the traditional version translates it 'music'. The modern version translates it: 'harph' and in Psalm 150,4 where the traditional version translates it 'violin' and the modern version 'zither'. Since the translation of MINNIM is uncertain (in the paralel Syrian language it means 'hair', 'string') it is a generally accepted opinion that in the context of the Ugaritian *mnm* it generally means *playing on stringed instruments*.

¹² E. Sellin: Einleitung in das AT., Leipzig, 1929, pp. 128-135.

In the traditional version among the terms of the translation we find the expression 'tools for singing' denominating instruments. The original Hebrew for that is KELEJ SIR (Amos 6,4; 1Chron 15,16 ; 2Chron 34,12; Neh 12,36). The basic meaning for KELEJ is 'pot', but it can also mean the group of objects or tools that are usually found in the house or even the temple.¹³ While the meaning of SIR is 'song', mostly song interpreted vocally or cantillation song accompanied by music¹⁴, but it can also mean a song sung accompanied by a stringed instrument. The meaning of the two words together in this semantic field is 'tool for singing', 'tool used in singing', i.e. instrument.

According to the biblical data instruments used in the Israelian cult can be divided into three groups: string, reed and percussion instruments. For this classification the basis is Psalm 150, which mentions almost every instrument used for the contemporary *musica sacra*.

1 Lute = KINNOR – (Gesenius translates it 'zither', Hungarian modern version: either 'harph' or 'zither'). The lute is a chestlike instrument made of ebony¹⁸ (1Kings 10, 12; 2Chron 9, 11) twanged manually (1Sam 16, 23): NAGAN = to touch strings, to play on strings. This was used on profane occasions (Gen 31, 27) and also cultically (2Sam 6, 5; Neh 12, 27, etc.) According to 1Sam 10, 5 this was a typical instrument of the extatic prophets. In the Book of Psalms it is mentioned in 33, 2; 43, 4; 49, 5; 57, 9; 71, 22; 92, 4; 98, 5; 108, 3; 147, 7; 149, 3 and 150, 3.

2Harp = NEBEL (Hungarian moderen version e.g. 81, 3 = 'lute'). It is presumably a lyre with diagonally placed strings also made of wood (1Kings 10,12; 2Chron 9,11) and it was used for both profane (Isa 5,12; 14,11; amos 6,5) and worship purposes (1Sam 10,5; 2Sam 6,5; Amos 5,23; Neh 12,27, etc.). In the psalms it is mentioned in the following places: 33, 2; 57, 9; 71, 22; 81, 3; 92, 4; 108, 3; 144, 9; 150, 3. Psalm 33,2 mentions a harp with ten strings.

3Dulcimer = MeCILTAJIN. It is mentioned in 1Chron 13, 8; 15, 16. 19.28; 16,5.42; 25, 1.6; Ezra 3, 10 and Neh 12, 27 as an instrument used together with the lute and the harph. If we accept the translation of MeCILTAJIN offered by the Hungarian traditional version this is no doubt a stringed instrument. But Gesenius and the modern version translates it as 'cymbal' in which case it is a percussion instrument, two pieces of metal whose clink imposed the rhythm, the beat. There is no mention of it in the Book of Psalms.

4Tambourine = a percussion instrument (TOF = tambourine). It is mainly known as a women's instrument. It is mentioned in Ex 15, 20; Judges 11, 34; 1Sam 18, 6; Jer 31, 4; Psalm 68, 26 and it was used mainly at the round dances of the women and girls at various celebrations, but sometimes men used it as well (1Sam 10, 5; Psalm 81, 3; 149, 3; 150, 4).

¹³ W. Gesenius, Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament, Springer Verlag, Berlin, 1962, p. 348.

¹⁴ H.J. Kraus, idem p. 14. and O.Kaiser: Einleitung in das AT. 1975, p. 319.

5Horn = SOFAR. A military instrument used for signaling in the Old Testament, e.g. to summon to war (Judges 3, 27; 6, 34), to begin the fight (Judges 7, 8 16, 20), in the middle of the battle (2Sam 2, 28; 18, 16) and on festive occasions (2Sam 6, 15). Its role in the worship: to signal the times of worship (e.g. the year of horning Lev 25,9), to summon the congregation, to announce the beginning of the Lent and to signal various other liturgical occasions. It is incorrect to translate SOFAR as 'trombone' (Luther), for the SOFAR was an instrument made of animal horn and gave only two types of sounds (tonic and fifth). In the psalms there are few mentions of it: 47, 6; 81, 4; 98, 6; 150, 3.

6Trumpet = KHATSOTSERAH – (Hungarian modern version: 'trombone') ('tube'). A reed instrument used similarly to the horn for signalling. Tradition traces it back to Moses, but it started to be popular only in the times of the chronicler (2Chron 13,12) as the instrument of the priests. (1Chron 13, 8 – the Hungarian traditional version translates it as 'horn', and also in Num 10, 2-ben.) It is an instrument made of metal, which slowly adumbrated the more primitive horn even if only by its construction. This is the instrument that can be seen on Titus's triumphal arch and on the coins of Bar Kochba (132-135 BC). It was used both at war (2Chron 13, 12; Num 31, 6) and at worship (Ezra 3, 10; Neh 12, 35). In the Book of Psalms there is a single mention of it in Psalm 98,6.

7Flute = 'UGÁB – in Gen 4, 21, Job 21, 12 and 30, 31. The Hungarian traditional version translates it 'quill', the Hungarian modern version too, except in Gen 4, 21. In the Book of Psalms only Psalm 150,4 mentions it. It was probably a tubular instrument made up of one or several tubes and it was blown at the edge of the tube (Tibia).

8Cymbal = CELCeLIM. An Egyptian percussion instrument made of metal on which two pitches could be sung. The Bible mentions it only in 2Sam 6, 5 and in Psalm 150, 5 (Cymbala).

9Recorder = KHALIL, reed instrument. It was used at the coronation ceremony (1Kings 1, 40) and it was the instrument which accompanied the singing of the groups of pilgrims heading to Jerusalem (Isa 30, 29), it was also used to sing at profane celebrations and weddings (Isa 5, 12). 1Sam 10, 5 mentions it among the instruments used by the extatic groups of prophets. And according to Jer 48,36 it was used also at times of mourning to express a sense of pain. The Book of Psalms makes no mention of the KHALIL. Only the etymology of the notation of Psalm 5,1 implies that there may have been certain psalms that were accompanied expressly by recorder.

10The Bible mentions only in 2Sam 6, 5 an instrument called MeNACANEIM whose meaning is also uncertain. The expression comes from the verb NU'A which means in Pi. Part.: 'to be moved', 'to be shaken'. The Vulgata translates it with "sistra". 'Sistrum' means 'clapper', 'bell' and is an instrument used mainly in Egypt in the cult of Isis. The modern version calls it 'rattler'. The Hungarian traditional version translates it 'quill', but that is an incorrect translation. If we

accept 'rattler' as the proper translation, then the rattler can also be considered a biblical instrument.¹⁵

Conclusion

Talking about the poets, composers, musicians and singers of the Old Testament times we usually focus on the cultic aspects and appearance of music and on its artistic and aesthetic dimensions of religious content, on its transcendent aspects and last, but not least on its psychical and personal development effects. But we should not forget the fact that in the Old Testament, besides the holy music (*musica sacra*) there is also a profane, laymen's music present. In the Bible there is mention of songs of the wedding ceremony, love songs, songs of wailing and of mourning. All these could even constitute a topic for further research. And still it is to be remembered that the worldview of the Old Testament does not allow a separation of the sacred and profane part of life in the same way as it lacks a separation of the sacred and the profane in the law. The sphere of the sacred embraces, combines and includes everything that we would call immanent, immanence, profane or even lay or civil. Therefore the non-cultic music becomes part of the cult as well. It becomes an art that praises the Lord.

Translated from Hungarian by Danel Zsuzsa

REFERENCES

- Weiser, Artur, *Die Psalmen (The Psalms)*, Ed. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1955.
- De Vette, *Die Psalmen (The Psalms)*, Heidelberg, 1829.
- König, E., *Die Poesis des Ats (The Poetry of the Ot)*, Leipzig, 1907.
- Baetghen, Fr., *Die Psalmen (The Psalms)*, Heidelberg, 1829.
- Kraus, Hans J., *Psalmen (Psalms)*, Ev. Ver. Berlin, 5. edition, 1. Volume.
- Gese, Harmut, *Vom Sinai zum Zion (From Sinai to Zion)*, München, 1974.
- Engnell, Ivan, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, 1943.
- Rohl, David, *Fáraók és Királyok (Pharaohs and Kings)*, Gold Book, 1995.
- Kaiser, Otto, *Einleitung in das AT (Introduction to the OT)*. 1975.
- Mowinckel, Sigmund, *Religion und Kultus (Religion and Cult)*, 1953.
- Mowinckel, Sigmund, *Psalmenstudien (A Study of the Psalms)*, 1921.
- Mowinckel, Sigmund, *Offersang og sangoffer*, 1951.
- Gesenius, Wilhelm, *Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament (Handbook for the Old Testament)*, Springer Verlag, Berlin, 1962.

¹⁵ Note: The traditional version mentions many times the violin as an instrument. In 2Sam 6, 5 KINNOR is translated 'violin' and also in Job 30, 21. And this is the translation for MINNIM in Psalm 150,4 and for NEBEL in 1Chron, 13,8. So in antique times the violin was yet unknown or at least in Israel.