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Old Testament Background of the Magnificat

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OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND OF THE MAGNIFICAT

Mary's *Magnificat* has always been recognized to reflect the Old Testament in almost every phrase. Some have even suggested that it is simply a mosaic of Old Testament citations.¹ Any commentator will point to a number of texts scattered throughout the Old Testament which offer verbal similarity with the *Magnificat*. Upon closer examination it is obvious that these similarities are not accurate enough to support the view that the *Magnificat* was composed as a patchwork quilt from Old Testament texts.² This is true

¹M.-J. Lagrange, O.P., *Evangile selon Saint Luc* (4th ed, Paris, 1927) still offers the most complete commentary on the text. He suggests a great many OT parallels. U. Holzmeister, *Tria cantica N. T.*, in *VD* 26 (1948) 360 considers the *Magnificat* "quasi munus ex lapillis textuum biblicorum arte maxima compositorum." V. Hamp, *Der alttestamentliche Hintergrund des Magnifikat*, in *BK* 2 (1952) 17. Cf. also J. Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (3rd ed, Regensburg, 1955) 53; Th. Dehau, *Magnificat*, in *VS* 79 (1948) 5-16. Among non-Catholics, the commentary of Th. Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Lucas* (4th ed, Leipzig, 1920) is quite detailed and still valuable. F. Godet, *Commentaire sur l'Evangile de Saint Luc* 1 (2nd ed, Paris, 1872) insists on the organic unity of the canticle with the OT. A. Loisy, *L'Evangile selon Luc* (Paris, 1924) and E. Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (Tübingen, 1929) both attribute the canticle to Elizabeth. The commentaries of A. Plummer, *The Gospel According to S. Luke; International Critical Commentary* (4th ed., Edinburgh, 1901) and W. Manson, *The Gospel of Luke; The Moffatt New Testament Commentary* (London, 1930) are mediocre.

²Most commentators call attention to the similarity of the *Magnificat* with the Canticle of Anna, *1 Kings* 2, 1-10. Hamp cites other OT texts, but grants that the canticle is chiefly dependent on that of Anna, yet showing its own freedom of expression. Cf. *op cit.*, 22, Lagrange, *op cit.*, 53, and *AdC* 65 (1955) 620. This similarity is based on the personal invitation to thanksgiving in the first verse and the reversal of fortune in verses 7-8. The Canticle of Anna is less personal and more general in scope than the *Magnificat*; no mention is made of the covenant or the promise to the patriarchs, the *LXX* text closes with a prayer for the Messiah. Apart from the personal invitation in v. 1, the attention of commentators has been drawn to this canticle because of the similarity of *Lk.* 1, 48 to the prayer of Anna in *1 Kings* 1, 11; cf. below

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whether the examination is made on the basis of the Hebrew text or the Septuagint translation. The *Magnificat* is a new hymn with its own unity of inspiration, but the words do reflect a whole stream of Old Testament piety, which is not to be isolated in a few texts.³ More attention must be paid to the power of evocation which a New Testament reference may possess in the minds of Jewish Christians, nourished as they were upon the Old Testament.⁴

It will be the purpose of the present study to sketch this wider context of the *Magnificat*, then to describe more accurately the piety of the poor which this canticle evokes, and finally to suggest the influence this Old Testament background should have upon the understanding of the *Magnificat*. The method followed has consisted in a literary criticism of the Greek text of the *Magnificat* on the basis of the Septuagint.⁵ Each significant word has been traced, with the help of a concordance, through the entire Old Testament. Significant passages were then collated to furnish a biblical theology of the notion, whenever this synthesis appeared justifiable. A convergence of themes was discovered pointing to the community of the poor, centered about the temple of Yahweh on Mount Zion. This community recognized itself as the true people of God and was often personified in the literary figure of the daughter of Zion. The first part of the paper will, therefore, sketch the fruits of this study, following the text of the *Magnificat*.

³ Recent commentators are more insistent on this common OT background. Cf. K. H. Schelke, *Die Mutter des Erlösers Ihre biblische Gestalt* (Düsseldorf, 1958) 77; A. Gélin, *Les Pauvres de Yahvé* (Paris, 1953) 122; *AdC* 67 (1957) 756; Schmid, *op cit*, 53-54.

⁴ Cf. Gélin, *op cit*, 115-16, and J. A. E. Van Dodewaard, *La force évocatrice de la citation mise en lumière en prenant pour base l'Évangile de S. Matthieu*, in *Bibl* 36 (1955) 482-91.

⁵ Due to this methodology, it has been necessary to adapt the translation of OT texts to the Greek. The Confraternity edition has been followed, wherever possible. Rahlfs' edition of the Septuagint has been used.

I

LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE MAGNIFICAT

Vv. 46-47. The invitation to praise, thanksgiving, joy, and gladness contained in the first verses of the *Magnificat* evokes the Old Testament themes of the salvation of the afflicted and the restoration of Sion. The restoration of Sion, however, is the salvation of the afflicted remnant of Israel. Although the verbs "to magnify" and "to rejoice" are associated in only three texts of the Septuagint,⁶ the invitation to praise, joy, and gladness are occasioned, throughout the Old Testament, by similar motives of personal and national salvation. The individual magnified the Lord for deliverance from distress; at the same time he associated with himself all the poor and lowly who sought the same deliverance.⁷ *Ps.* 68 contains an individual's praise and thanksgiving, but con-

⁶ *Pss* 34, 27, 39, 17, 91, 5 *Megalynēin* is used frequently in the *LXX*, although the active form with men as subject and God as object is rare (cf *Sir* 43, 31). The same meaning, however, is conveyed by a passive use of the verb with God, his attributes, or his works as subject. *Agallasthai* appears for the first time in the *LXX* and is regularly associated with *eyphraīnem*. The active form of the verb appears only three times in the NT (*Lk* 1, 47, 1 *Pt* 1, 8, *Apoc* 19, 7). The verb is more common in the psalms, appearing there 51 times, as against 17 elsewhere. It frequently governs *epi* with the dative (cf. *Ps* 9, 15 *epi tō sōtērō soy*). The epithet *sōtēr* is often applied to God (cf *Mtch* 7, 7) *Hab* 3, 18 offers the closest parallel with *Lk* 1, 47 *egō de en tō theō agallasomai, charēsomai epi tō theō tō sōtēri moy*

- ⁷ Let my soul glory in the Lord,
the lowly (*praes*) will hear me and be glad
Magnify (*megalynate*) the Lord with me,
Let us together extol his name *Ps* 33, 3-4
I will give thanks to you among the peoples, O Lord,
I will chant your praise among the nations,
For your kindness (*eleos*) is magnified (*emegalnythē*)
to the heavens,
And your faithfulness to the skies *Ps* 56, 10-11.

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cludes with a prayer for the restoration of Zion.⁸ National salvation also occasions expressions of thanksgiving (2 Kings 7, 22). Joy and gladness are classical themes in those passages which announce eschatological salvation. These themes are associated with Zion in *Ps.* 9, a psalm which reflects many of the ideas of the *Magnificat*.⁹

- ⁸ But I am afflicted (*ptōchos*) and in pain,
let your saving help, O God, protect (*antelabete*) me
I will praise the name of God in song,
and I will magnify (*megalynō*) him with thanksgiving . .

For God will save Zion
and rebuild the cities of Juda
They shall dwell in the land and own it,
and the descendants of his servants shall inherit it,
and those who love his name shall inhabit it

Ps 68, 30-31, 36-37, cf. 69, 5-6

- ⁹ I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with all my heart;
I will declare all your wondrous deeds
I will be glad and exult (*agalliasomai*) in you,
I will sing praise to your name, Most High,
Because my enemies are turned back,
overthrown and destroyed before you . .
Sing praise to the Lord enthroned in Zion,
proclaim among the nations his deeds;
For the avenger of blood has remembered,
he has not forgotten the cry of the afflicted (*penētōn*).
Have pity on me, O Lord, see my affliction (*tapemōsin*)
from my foes,
you who have raised me up from the gates of death,
That I may declare all your praises
and, in the gates of the daughter of Zion, rejoice
in your salvation (*agalliasomai epi tō sōtērīō soy*)
For the needy (*ptōchos*) shall not always be forgotten,
nor shall the hope of the afflicted (*penētōn*)
forever perish

Cf *Ps* 30, 8: I will rejoice and be glad of your kindness, because you have seen my affliction (*hōis epeides tēn tapemōsin moy*) The joy and gladness of the poor in the salvation of Yabweh is also expressed in *Pss.* 34, 9-10; 39, 14-18, 50, 10; *Is* 29, 19.

Sion, of course, is Jerusalem, the capital of Juda. After the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C., the kingdom of Juda became the remnant of Israel. Therefore, in biblical literature, from the time of Isaias and Micheas, Sion and Jerusalem stand for the whole people of God. This collectivity is personified as the daughter of Sion. The literary personification appears in *Ps.* 9, 15 and is frequent in the prophets. The oracle of *Is.* 51, 2-3 not only associates joy and gladness with Sion, but also with God's promise to Abraham. The latter association is explicit in the *Magnificat*. Finally, the salvation of the afflicted is associated with the restoration of Sion.¹⁰

V. 48 evokes the Old Testament notion of the humiliation of the daughter of Sion who then became the object of God's salvific action; her glorious restoration by God would be the object of eternal admiration and blessing. The verb "to regard" very frequently refers to God's own consideration of man's distress in anticipation of salvation. The distress may be individual,¹¹ as the case of the sterility of Anna (1 *Kings* 1, 11), but it may also be national,¹² as was the case in Israel when Samuel anointed Saul (1 *Kings* 9, 16). The Greek in the latter case is as similar to the *Magnificat* as the Greek of Anna's prayer, with the substitution of "people" for "hand-maid."¹³ The restoration of Sion is presented as God's re-

¹⁰ *Is.* 49, 13-15; v 13 identifies the people of God with the poor (*toys tapeinoyis*). The final canticle of *Tobias* (13) also associates the glory of the new Jerusalem with the salvation of the weak. Other associations of eschatological joy with Sion may be found in *Pss.* 13, 7; 47, 2 12; 96, 8, 125; 149, 2, *Is.* 12, 5-6; 25, 8-10, 35, 10; 65, 18, etc.

¹¹ Cf. *Ps.* 12, 4 (the soul in sorrow), *Ps.* 24, 16 (the lonely and afflicted); *Ps.* 68, 17-18 (God's servant in distress), *Pr.* 118, 132 (those who love the name of God); *Sir.* 11, 12-13 (the weakling and the failure)

¹² Cf. *Ex.* 14, 24 (the exodus from Egypt); *Judges* 6, 14 (the Midianites); *Lev.* 26, 9 (the blessings of the Law of Holiness); 4 *Kings* 13, 23 (the Syrians, appeal is also made to the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, cf *Ps.* 73, 20).

¹³ 1 *Kings* 1, 11. *ean epeblepōn epeblepsēs epi tēn tapeinōsim tēs doylēs soy;* 1 *Kings* 9, 16. *hoti epeblepsa epi tēn tapeinōsin toy laoy moy;* *Lk.* 1, 48.

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sponse to the prayer of the lowly in Ps. 101, 16-19. This salvific activity of God was also to be remembered and praised in future generations¹⁴ Mal. 3, 12 offers the greatest verbal similarity with the second half of Lk 1, 48, but it is directed to the restored nation. "And all nations shall call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land, says the Lord of hosts."¹⁵

hoti epeblepsen epi ten tapinōsin tēs doylēs aytoy The word *doylē* occurs in the OT simply as a term of respect of an inferior toward a superior, its use in Lk 1, 48 may be occasioned by the same word in 1, 38, in the context of Luke's Infancy Gospel it could be a transfer to Mary of the theme of the Servant of Yahweh Cf D M Stanley, *The Theme of the Servant of Yahweh in Primitive Christian Soteriology and its Transposition by St Paul*, in CBQ 16 (1954) 385-425.

- ¹⁴ And the nations shall revere your name, O Lord,
and all the kings of the earth your glory,
When the Lord has rebuilt Sion
and appeared in his glory,
When he has regarded (*epeblepsen*) the prayer of
the destitute (*tapinōn*),
and not despised their prayer
Let this be written for the generation to come,
and the people which he has created (*laos ho ktōmenos*) will praise the Lord

¹⁵ *Kai makarizōsin hymas panta ta ethnē* The declaration of blessedness is a common form in biblical literature and many classes of individuals in various situations are considered worthy of such religious admiration After the birth of Aser, Lia says, "Women will call me happy (*Gen 30, 13*)" Considering his former prosperity, Job says, "Whoever heard of me blessed me, those who saw me commended me (*29, 10-11*)."¹⁶ Cf *Sir 31, 8-9, 37, 24, Pss 1, 1, 31, 1-2, 32, 12, 33, 9, 39, 5, 93, 12, 111, 1, 118, 1-2, 127, 1; 145, 5* But God's people Israel is the special object of such blessing, for she has been the object of God's salvific action "How fortunate you are, O Israel! Where else is a nation victorious in the Lord (*Dt 33, 29*)?" This national happiness is once again associated with Sion, cf *Ps 64, 2-5, Is 31, 9-32, 1* (happiness associated with the messianic rule in Jerusalem) In the *Canticle of Canticles*, the beloved has been likened to Thersa, the earlier capital of Israel, and to Jerusalem, and is declared blessed by the daughters, queens, and concubines (*6, 4-9*) The phrase "all generations" is never the subject of the verb *makarizēn* in the OT. The more common use of this expression is "unto all generations forever" An interesting use of the latter expression occurs in *Tobias* with

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Central to an understanding of the *Magnificat* is the meaning of the word *tapeinōsis* which has tried the ingenuity of Christian translators¹⁶ There can be no doubt that the *tapeinōsis* of *Lk.* 1, 48 points primarily to the positive affliction of the poor. Such an objective and unfavorable condition is the primary meaning of this word in the Old Testament.¹⁷ In the vast majority of cases, the word is used to characterize a state of distress or humiliation, whether personal¹⁸ or national.¹⁹ The word occurs frequently in the psalter in the prayers and lamentations of the poor and afflicted.²⁰ The daughter of Sion speaks as one of these in the *Lamentations* (1, 3-9). *Deutero-Isaias*²¹ calls the period of exile the

reference to the perpetuity of the temple as the dwelling of the most High "Again the Lord will have mercy on them and will bring them back to the land, and they will rebuild his house, but not as the former one, until the times to come are fulfilled (cf *Gal* 4, 4) And after this they shall return from their captivity, and rebuild Jerusalem honorably, and the house of God shall be rebuilt in it for all generations to come, a glorious dwelling, as the prophets declared concerning it (14, 5 BA)" Cf *Tobias* 1, 4, 13, 12 If Luke has already evoked the idea of Mary as the temple of Yahweh and the ark of the covenant in his Infancy Gospel, this context would seem to be significant for an understanding of the *Magnificat*

¹⁶ Cf E A Ryan, *Historical Notes on Luke I, 48*, in *MS* 3 (1952) 228-35

¹⁷ *Tapeinōsis* occurs 39 times in the *LXX*, in 22 cases it renders a Hebrew original, four Hebrew roots are rendered by *tapeinōsis*, but in 19 instances the root is *oni*, affliction or distress, or one of its cognates The same meaning prevails in the NT; cf *Phil* 3, 21; *James* 1, 10 St Paul coined the word *tapeinophrosynē* to express the moral virtue of humility, cf *Acts* 20, 19, *Eph* 4, 2, *Phil* 2, 3, *Col.* 2, 18, 23, 3, 12 Ryan has neglected this OT background Cf Gehn, *op cit*, 127-29.

¹⁸ Eg Agar (*Gen* 16, 11), Lia (*Gen* 29, 32), Jacob (*Gen* 31, 42); Joseph (*Gen* 41, 52), Anna (1 *Kings* 1, 11), David (2 *Kings* 16, 12), Esther (*Est* 4, 8), cf *Sir* 2, 4-5, 11, 12, 20, 11

¹⁹ Eg National affliction in Egypt (*Ex* 26, 7), at the time of Saul (1 *Kings* 9, 16), at the accession of Jeroboam II in Israel (4 *Kings* 14, 26); cf *Neh* 9, 9, *Judith* 6, 19, 13, 20

²⁰ Cf *Pss* 9, 14, 21, 22, 27, 24, 18, 30, 6-8, 118, 50 92 153; 135, 23.

²¹ Commentators have given this name to the anonymous prophet of the exile who was responsible for cc 40-55 of the book of *Isaias*

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tapenōsis of Jerusalem (*Is.* 40, 1-2). This use of the word suggests a development of sense in the direction of a religious state of soul. The exile was considered punishment for sin. In the exile Israel repented and mourned for her past infidelities. God looked favorably upon this repentance, and when the time of her humiliation was ended, he delivered her from exile and restored her to Zion.

V. 49. God is the mighty warrior who brings salvation to Zion.²² Even Nabuchodonosor proclaims with Mary that the Lord has wrought great things for him.²³ But it is the glory of Israel that God has done great things in her.²⁴ After praising the great works of the Lord, the psalmist associates the salvation of the people with the holiness of his name. "He has sent deliverance to his people; he has ratified his covenant forever; holy and awesome is his name (*Ps.* 110, 1.9)."²⁵ There is no need to recall the frequency with which the Old Testament speaks of the holiness of God. It may be well, however, to point out that the word "holy" expresses the transcendence of God; he is wholly apart, wholly other. The unique character of the Old Testament revelation about God consists in the knowledge that the all holy God is present to men and saves them. The reconciliation of God's transcendence and immanence was never achieved by Greek philosophy.

²² Cf *Ps.* 23, 8, *Soph.* 3, 16-17, the importance of the latter text will be seen in the second part of this study.

²³ *Dan.* 4, 37a (*LXX*) *illoiōsen ep'ēmos megala pragmata*; the great works of God, his signs and wonders on behalf of his people, are the frequent object of praise in the OT, he is the one who does great things (*ho poiōn megala*, *Job.* 9, 10), cf *Job.* 36, 24, 37, 5; 42, 3; *Pss.* 110, 2; 105, 21; 135, 4, *Sir.* 50, 22, *Est.* 10, 3f.

²⁴ *Di.* 10, 21. *hoytos kaychēma soy kai hoytos theos soy, hostis epoiōsen en soi ta megala kai ta endoxa tayta*, "the Lord wrought a great salvation" is an expression which occurs frequently throughout the historical books; cf *Judges.* 15, 18, 1 *Kings.* 14, 45; 19, 5, 2 *Kings.* 23, 10 12; 1 *Chron.* 11, 14

²⁵ The restoration of Jerusalem and Judah is announced to Jeremias in these words "I shall announce to you great and mighty things (*megala kai ischyra*) which you know not (*Jer.* 33 [40], 3)"

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This truth is expressed frequently in the Old Testament²⁶ and in this simple verse of the *Magnificat*. The verse is meant to convey a sense of wonder at the mystery of the holy but merciful God.

V. 50. V. 49 acknowledged the divine mercy which the all holy God displayed toward his handmaid. The following verses affirm that such action on the part of God is consistent with the way in which he always acts toward men. Such a transition from the first person singular to the plural is common enough in the psalms and canticles of the Old Testament.²⁷ It is expressive of a certain spiritual solidarity on the part of the psalmist with others in the same plight as himself. But it may also indicate that the poet speaks in the name of a collectivity. In still other cases, the prayer of an individual may be transformed for community use by certain modifications and additions.

God's mercy is his *hesed*, that loving kindness whereby he is faithful to his promises. In the Old Testament the mercy of God is regularly associated with his fidelity. These two attributes of mercy and fidelity characterize the covenant relationship of Yahweh with Israel and David. Their everlasting duration is frequently extolled.²⁸ Every victory in battle is due to the mercy of God and is celebrated in song.²⁹ In virtue of this mercy Jerusalem will be restored (*Jer.* 33[40], 10-11).

However, only those who fear the Lord may benefit from

²⁶ Cf *Is* 6, 3; *Dt* 4, 7

²⁷ E.g. *Pss* 9, 30, 66, 68, 72, 117, 137. The case of the individual becomes typical of the group and of the nation, cf Géhn, *op cit*, 45

²⁸ Cf esp *Ps* 135, a litany of God's mercies with the constant response, *koti eis ton aiōna to eleos soy*. The closest verbal parallel to the *eis geneas kas geneas* of *Lk* 1, 50 is to be found in *Ps* 88, 2. *ta eleē soy, kyrie, eis ton aiōna asomat, eis genean kas genean apaggelō tēn alētheian soy*. A variant reading of *Lk* 1, 50 adopts the singular form Cf *Ps* 99, 5

²⁹ Cf 1 *Macc* 4, 24-25; returning from battle, Judas Maccabeus and his victorious army celebrate their victory in spontaneous song

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his mercy.³⁰ This religious and filial fear is the proper attitude of man toward God. Those who fear the Lord may hope in him and expect salvation from His hand.³¹ Their happiness and prosperity will come from Sion and will be associated with the prosperity of Jerusalem (*Ps.* 127)

V. 51. The next verse is the antithesis of v. 50.³² God's might is exercised primarily against those who abandon Him (1 *Esdras* 8, 22). By the same token, however, He is the strength of the poor and afflicted³³

- ³⁰ For as the heavens are high above the earth,
 so surpassing is his kindness (*eleos*) toward those
 who fear him . . .
 As a father has compassion on his children,
 so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him,
 But the kindness (*eleos*) of the Lord is from eternity
 to eternity toward those who fear him

Ps 102, 11 13 17

³¹ The Deuteronomist was at pains to inculcate this fear, cf *Dt* 4, 10, 31, 12 13, *Jos.* 24, 14 It is synonymous with worship (*Neh* 1, 11) and leads to praise (*Ps* 21, 23) The fear of God is the consolation of the poor and afflicted (*Tob* 4, 21, *Pss* 30, 8.20, 33, 7-9, 110, 5) The strength of Yahweh belongs to those who fear Him (*Ps* 24, 14) Cf *Pss* 32, 18, 146, 11, *Sir* 2, 7; *Mich* 6, 9 (*LXX*), *Mal* 3, 20.

³² The greatest verbal similarity is to be found in *Ps* 88, 10-11, in a prayer for the fulfillment of God's promises to David

You rule over the might (*kratoys*) of the sea,
 you still the swelling of its waves
 You have crushed the proud (*hyperēphanon*) with a
 mortal blow,
 with your strong arm you have scattered your enemies

(*en tō brachion tēs dynamēōs soy diēskorpsas toys echthroys soy*). Cf *Judith* 13, 11 *potēsai . kratos*

- ³³ Your might (*kratos*) does not lie in numbers,
 nor your power among the strong,
 But you are a God of the lowly (*tapeinōn*),
 you are the help of the needy,
 the guardian of the abandoned,
 the savior of the hopeless

The arm, a common symbol of strength,⁸⁴ is used anthropomorphically of God. It signifies His power in favor of His people⁸⁵ or in judgment against His enemies.⁸⁶ The most characteristic use of this figure in the Old Testament is in reference to the exodus from Egypt.⁸⁷ But already in the Old Testament the exodus from Egypt was the type of the return from exile in Babylon. Consequently, the arm of Yahweh appears again with reference to future salvation.⁸⁸ God makes this promise to Jerusalem by the strength of His arm in *Is.* 62, 8

The destruction of enemies is antecedent to the salvific action of God. The second half of the verse speaks of the scattering of the proud by abandoning them to the vain reasonings of their own heart.⁸⁹ Pride is the quality which characterizes all the great enemies of God throughout the Old

Yes, O God of my father and God of the inheritance
of Israel,
ruler of heaven and earth, creator of the waters,
and king of all your creation, hear my prayer
Judith 9, 11-12 (LXX)

Cf *Pss* 58, 10, 85, 16; 24, 14

⁸⁴ Cf *Judith* 9, 7; *Job* 38, 15; *Ps* 43, 4

⁸⁵ Cf. *Pss* 76, 15-16, 78, 11; 88, 22; 97, 1

⁸⁶ Cf *Is* 26, 11, *Jer.* 21, 5

⁸⁷ Cf *Ex* 6, 16, 15, 16; 32, 11; *Dt.* 3, 24 and *passim*; 4 *Kings* 17, 36, *Jer* 39, 21, *Ps* 135, 12; *Bar* 2, 11; *Dan.* 9, 15

⁸⁸ Cf *Ez* 20, 33, 34, *Is* 51, 5 9; 53, 1

⁸⁹ The same idea is expressed in *Ps* 58, 13, *Ser.* 23, 8, *Rom* 1, 21, 24. The word *diavoua* renders the Hebrew *leb*, heart; hence *diavoua kardias* is a tautology, cf. also *Bar* 1, 22. Used in both a good and a neutral sense, it does have a pejorative sense in *Gen* 8, 21, 17, 17, 27, 41, *Ex* 9, 21; *Num* 15, 39, *Dt* 29, 17; *Job* 1, 5, *Bar* 4, 28, the word does not appear in the Psalms, the good sense is specified in *Dt.* 28, 47, *Prov* 9, 10. It is interesting to note that the verb *diaskorpizem* is used most frequently in the LXX of the dispersed of Israel at the time of the Babylonian exile, and only eight times of the enemies of Israel. If this is significant, it may indicate a Christian origin for the *Magnificat*, since in the NT the Israelite people are frequently treated as the enemies of God's new people, the Church.

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Testament.⁴⁰ However, the proud will eventually fall under the just judgment and retribution of God.⁴¹ Both the persecuted individual and the afflicted nation pray for such deliverance.⁴² The pride of Israel's enemies is explicitly contrasted with the humiliation (*tapeinōsis*) of God's own people in *Judith* 6, 19.⁴³ The humbling of the proud will bring about the purification of Sion and will be accompanied by the exaltation of the lowly.⁴⁴

Vv. 52-53. The antithesis of vv. 50-51 is repeated in two antithetical verses. Those who fear the Lord are the lowly and the hungry; the proud are the mighty and the rich. Taken together these verses express the piety of the poor, the *anawim*, which will be discussed at greater length in the second part of the paper. Here it will be sufficient to outline briefly the Old Testament themes evoked by the words.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ *Job* 38, 15 speaks of the arm of the proud, while God challenges the pride of Job with the words, "Have you an arm like that of God (40, 9)?" By pride man seeks to make himself divine. The proud man does not know fear (*Sir* 32, 18), he is a breeder of quarrels (*Sir* 27, 15), and indulges in sarcasm and injury (*Sir* 27, 28). Pride is the source of deliberate sin, cf. *Num* 15, 30; *De* 17, 12; *Pss* 16, 10; 30, 19. Humility is an abomination to the proud man (*Sir* 13, 20); he is hostile to both God and man, cf. *Pss* 73, 23, 118, 51, 69, 122, 4, 139, 6, *Prov* 3, 34, *Sir* 10, 7, 12-13. God rebukes even the pride of His chosen people, cf. *Amos* 8, 7, *Ex* 7, 20, 16, 49. The epithet belongs more properly to the great enemies of Israel—Edom (*Abdias* 1, 3), Moab (*Is* 16, 6), Babylon (*Is* 13, 11), and especially Antiochus Epiphanes who laid claim to divinity in the temple of Jerusalem (2 *Macc* 5, 21).

⁴¹ Cf. *Pss* 93, 2, 118, 21, *Wisdom* 14, 6; *Is* 2, 12, 29, 20, etc.

⁴² Cf. *Pss* 30, 24; 58, 12, 118, 78, 122, *Sir* 51, 10, *Judith* 9, 9.

⁴³ *Katide epi tas hyperēphanias aytiōn kas eleēson tēn tapeinōsin toy genoys hēmōn*

⁴⁴ Cf. *Is* 1, 24 (LXX), *Pss* 73, 2-3; 17, 28.

⁴⁵ The Canticle of Anna is frequently cited in connection with these verses. It is to be noted, however, that while the Canticle of Anna expresses the reversal of fortune which these verses describe, it does not contain the phrasing of *Lk* 1, 52-53. Since the thought belongs to a much wider OT context than the Canticle of Anna, it is dangerous to base the interpretation of the *Magnificat* upon the circumstances of this one canticle. Note the chiasmic structure in vv. 52-53.

The destruction of the proud and the exaltation of the lowly, the impoverishing of the rich and the satisfaction of the poor, belong to God's regular way of dealing with men. The reversal of fortune is expressed frequently in the Old Testament.⁴⁶

In the kingdom of the Messiah the salvation of the afflicted and the poor goes hand in hand with the homage of the nations (*Ps.* 71). For God will destroy the pride of the foreigner and establish the reign of the meek and lowly king, to the great joy of the daughter of Sion (*Zach.* 9, 6-9).

From the very beginning of salvation-history God's intervention is an exaltation of the lowly. This is true of Abraham, the father of all Israel to whom the promise was made;⁴⁷ it is true of Isaac⁴⁸ and of Joseph in Egypt.⁴⁹ He exalted David above his adversaries (*Ps.* 17, 49) and shall do the same for the remnant of Israel and of Sion (*Is.* 4, 2-3). *Ps.* 149, 1-6 is an invitation to sing a new song of joy and thanksgiving to the Lord; in these verses the assembly of the holy,

⁴⁶ The general law is best expressed in Sirach

The thrones of the arrogant God overturns (*kathelen*)

and establishes the lowly (*praies*) in their stead, *Sir* 10, 14

The poor man's (*tapeinoy*) wisdom lifts his head high

and sets him among princes . . .

The oppressed often rise to a throne,

and some that none would consider wear a crown

The exalted (*dynastai*) often fall into utter disgrace,

the honored are given into enemy hands .

One may toil and struggle and drive,

and fall short all the more

Another goes his way a weakling and a failure,

with little strength and great misery (*ptōcheia*)—

Yet the eyes of the Lord look (*epeblepsan*) favorably upon him;

he raises him free of the vile dust (*tapeinōseōs*),

Lifts up his head and exalts him

to the amazement of the many *Sir* 11, 15-6 11-13

⁴⁷ *Gen* 24, 35 *Kyrios de eylogēsen ton kyriōn moy sphodra, kai hypsōthē*

⁴⁸ *Gen* 26, 13 *Kai hypsōthē ho anthrōpos.*

⁴⁹ *Gen.* 41, 52(A) *Hypsōsen me ho theos en gē tapeinōseōs moy.*

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the children of Sion, the meek, and Israel itself are all synonymous. They form the community of the saved and rejoice in the kindness of their God.⁵⁰

The antithesis is repeated in v. 53 in terms of the rich and the hungry. God's salvific action is a reversal of that state of affairs which human pride has established. This sentiment is expressed frequently in the psalms of the poor⁵¹ In Ps. 106, God's treatment of people in distress is patterned after His treatment of Israel⁵² He satisfied the Israelites with bread and water in the wilderness because of His promise to Abraham.⁵³ *Deuteronomy* presents the blessings of the promised land with the words, "Eat and be filled (8, 10 *passim*)." Those who pursue false means of salvation will not be filled⁵⁴ Later, in the Wisdom literature, this material view of salvation was spiritualized. Wisdom fills those who love her with good things (*Prov.* 8, 21). Those who give alms will be filled with life (*Tob* 12, 9). The wise man will be filled with blessing and all who see him will call him blessed

⁵⁰ Sing to the Lord a new song
of praise in the assembly of his holy ones (*ekklesiā hosōn*).
Let Israel be glad in their maker,
let the children of Sion rejoice (*agallasthōsan*) in their King . . .
For the Lord loves his people,
and he exalts (*hypsōset*) the lowly (*praicis*) with salvation
Let the holy ones (*hosioi*) exult in glory,
let them sing for joy (*agallasontas*) upon their couches;
let the high praises of God be in their throats

Ps 149, 1-2 4-6

⁵¹ Cf. *Pss* 33, 10-11, 145, 3-7, 21, 24-27, 144, 15-19; 103, 27-28, cf. also *Is* 40, 29-31, 49, 10, 58, 10-11

⁵² *Ps* 106, 9 offers the closest verbal parallel to *Lk* 1, 53 *hōti echortasen psychēn kenēn kai psychēn penōsan eneplēsen agathōn* The participle of *plōytein* is rarely used for "rich"; cf. *Ex* 30, 15, *Sir* 11, 18, *Lk* 12, 21, *Apoc.* 18, 15; *plōystoi* is more common

⁵³ *Ps* 104, 40-42, Abraham is styled God's servant, although the word *doxlos* is used rather than *pas*

⁵⁴ Cf. *Ez* 7, 19, *Osee* 4, 10, *Amos* 4, 8, *Mtch* 6, 14, *Is* 9, 19

(*Sir.* 37, 24). The prophets, however, preserved the material images for the restoration of the nation.⁵⁵

The rich are commonly presented in the Old Testament as the enemies of the poor and downtrodden. They are classed with the wicked and the proud.⁵⁶ When God saves the poor, the rich will be suddenly destroyed.⁵⁷

Vv 54-55. The canticle concludes by asserting that this salvific activity of God has been exercised in favor of His servant Israel. God has acted because of the promise which, in His mercy, He made to Abraham in favor of his posterity—literally, seed. This promise was renewed to all the patriarchs and by it God bound Himself forever.

The help of Yahweh is a frequent theme in the Wisdom literature and the psalms of the poor.⁵⁸ *Ps.* 117 is a hymn of

⁵⁵ *Jer.* 31 (38), 12-15 reflects the themes of joy, safety, the people of God, and Zion of which we have already spoken. Cf *Joel* 2, 19-26, *Pss* 125, 147. *Ps* 131 is a prayer for David and Jerusalem where the ark of the Lord was brought to rest, it speaks of Zion as the place where God dwells and where the promise to David will be fulfilled: "From the fruit of your womb (*ek karpoy tēs kolias soy*) I shall place one upon your throne (v. 11)." Elizabeth's reference to the fruit of Mary's womb (*Lk* 1, 42) may be a subtle allusion to her identity as the daughter of Zion, particularly if St. Luke has already evoked the theme of the ark of the covenant in the narrative of the Visitation.

⁵⁶ Cf *Is* 53, 9, *Micah* 6, 12, *Jer* 17, 11. Riches are the occasion of self-sufficiency and pride, cf *Jer* 5, 27, *Ps* 9, 27; *Sir.* 28, 10, *Dan* 11, 12. The OT does not universally condemn riches, but the rich should not glory in their riches (*Jer* 9, 22-23). Both rich and poor should glory in the fear of the Lord (*Sir.* 10, 22). Sirach praises the blameless rich (*Sir* 31, 8). Riches can be a gift of God (*Eccl* 5, 18) and are the fruit of wisdom and justice, cf *Prov* 8, 18, 13, 22, 24, 3-4; *Wisdom* 8, 18; *Ps.* 111, 3. "The reward of humility (Hebrew *anawak*) and fear of the Lord is riches, honor, and life (*Prov* 22, 4)." Finally salvation is presented as the enriching of God's people (*Is.* 32, 18), but also of Zion and Jerusalem (*Is.* 60, 5, 61, 6).

⁵⁷ Cf *Job* 27, 19, *Is* 5, 14, *Prov* 11, 28. The expression "to send away empty" does not occur in the OT with reference to the rich, but the verb *exapostellēm* appears six times with reference to the dispersion of Israel—*Ps* 80, 13, *Is* 27, 8; 50, 1; *Jer.* 15, 1; 24, 5, *Bar.* 4, 37.

⁵⁸ Eg *Pss* 3, 46, 17, 36, 62, 8-9, 68, 30, 117, 13, 138, 13

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thanksgiving for the eternal mercy of Yahweh to Israel, but it is written in the first person singular and uses the vocabulary of the poor. *Is.* 41 speaks of the joy of the poor and needy; they are the holy ones of Israel. But the oracle is addressed to Israel and to Jacob, the servant of Yahweh and the posterity of Abraham.⁵⁹

Although many of the great personages who dot salvation-history are styled servants of God,⁶⁰ the appellation appears especially in *Deutero-Isaias* as an epithet of the nation Israel, now in exile and awaiting restoration to Jerusalem.⁶¹ This is a special Israel, formed from the womb (*ek koilias* in *Is.* 44, 2), in whom the prophecies are to be fulfilled. In the same context of *Is.* 40-55, the four songs of the individual Servant of Yahweh are found.⁶² In these passages a prophetic and suffering figure of the Messiah appears. The Septuagint translators name this Servant Jacob in the first song (42, 1).

⁵⁹ "But you, Israel, are my servant (*pais*), Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed (*sperma*) of Abraham whom I have loved, whom I have taken (*antelabomēn*) from the ends of the earth, and from the heights thereof I have called you and I have said to you, 'You are my servant (*pais*), I have chosen you and I have not abandoned you. Do not fear, for I am with you' (*Is.* 41, 8-10)." God reveals himself whenever he helps Sion (*Ps.* 47, 4) and from Sion he helps his king (*Ps.* 19, 3). Cf *Is.* 9, 6, 2 *Kings* 22, 3, *Ps.* 88, 19-27.

⁶⁰ E.g. Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Eliacim, Issuas and the prophets, the poor

⁶¹ *Is.* 41, 8-9, 42, 19 (the Hebrew has the singular, the *LXX* the plural); 43, 10, 44, 1; 44, 21; 45, 4. In all these texts the Greek word is *pais*; outside *Deutero-Isaias* that term is used with reference to Israel or the seed of Israel only three times—*1 Chron.* 16, 13 (the Hebrew has the singular, the *LXX* the plural); *Jer.* 46 (26), 27-28 (in conjunction with *doxos*), *Bar.* 3, 37 (v. 38 speaks of God appearing on earth and conversing with men). *Pais* does not appear in the psalms with reference to the patriarchs, *doxos* is used once of Jacob (77, 71, a variant reads *laon*), once of Israel (135, 22), and once of Abraham (104, 42); *Ps.* 104, 6 speaks of the seed of Abraham as *doxoi aytoy*, the Hebrew has the singular.

⁶² The four songs are *Is.* 42, 1-4; 49, 1-6, 50, 4-9, 52, 13-53, 12. For the various theories concerning the origin of these songs, cf. C. R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah* (Oxford, 1948)

Although these passages have been the subject of much discussion, many commentators do recognize in this individual figure of the Servant a future person in whom all Israel is summed up and through whom Israel's mission to the world will be accomplished.

The promise was sealed by a covenant.⁶³ In time of national distress, the people asked God to remember His promise, His covenant, and His mercy which He had sworn to the fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.⁶⁴ The poor and

⁶³There are two accounts in *Genesis* of the covenant whereby God sealed the promise with Abraham, in *Gen 15* Yahweh passes between the separated parts of Abraham's sacrifice in the form of fire, in *Gen 17* God instructs Abraham to observe circumcision as a sign of the covenant. The covenant was the ordinary form of a contract in the ancient Near East; it was concluded before a deity who was called to witness and protect the agreement; the sealing of covenants was accompanied by various rituals—passing between the parts of a sacrifice, sprinkling of blood, eating of a common meal. OT religion is based on such a covenant between Yahweh and His people.

⁶⁴When God would have consumed His people in the desert after the incident of the golden calf, Moses prayed, "Remember your servants (*ouketōn*) Abraham, Isaac and Israel, and how you swore to them by your own self, saying, 'I will make your descendants (*sperma*) as numerous as the stars in the sky; and all this land that I promised, I will give your descendants (*spermatōi*) as their perpetual heritage.' So the Lord relented (*hulasthē*) in the punishment He had threatened to inflict on his people (*Ex 32, 13*) *Ps 104*, an epic of Israel's history, reflects many of the themes which recur in the *Magnificat*.

Recall the wondrous deeds that he has wrought,
 his portents, and the judgments he has uttered,
 You descendants (*sperma*) of Abraham, his servants (*doxoi*)
 sons of Jacob, his chosen ones! . . .
 He remembers forever (*emnēsthē eis ton aiōna*) his covenant
 his promise (*logoy LXX*) which he made binding for a thousand generations—
 Which he entered into with Abraham (*tō Abraam*)
 and by his oath to Isaac . . .
 They asked, and he brought them quail,
 and with bread from heaven he satisfied (*eneplēsen*) them
 He cleft the rock and water gushed forth,
 it flowed through the dry land like a stream,

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afflicted made a similar appeal to the covenant and the past mercies of the Lord.⁶⁵ In *Ps.* 73, 2 the assembly of Israel dwelling on Mount Zion recognizes itself as the people formed by God through the covenants with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁶⁶ The universal and eschatological salvation of Yahweh will be accomplished in remembrance of His mercy to the fathers.⁶⁷

The idea of the covenant with Abraham gave meaning and continuity to the entire history of Israel. This sense of solidarity with the fathers to whom the promises were made is attested by the frequency of the appellation "God of our fathers." The consciousness of belonging to a people of promise drove out fear in every uncertain undertaking. "I am God, the God of your father. Do not fear to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you a great people (*Gen.* 46, 3)." God's action on behalf of Abraham was considered exemplary

For he remembered his holy word
 which he made to his servant Abraham (*pros Abraam ton doylon aytoy*)
 And he led forth his people with joy (*agalliaset*)
 with shouts of joy, his chosen ones *Ps* 104, 5-6 8-9 40-43

⁶⁵ "He has given food to those who fear him, he will forever be mindful (*mnēsthēsetai eis ton aiōna*) of his covenant (*Ps* 110, 5)" Cf. *Est* 4, 17, 10, 31, *Pss* 24, 6-7, 105, 45, 1 *Macc* 4, 10

⁶⁶ Remember your flock (*synagōgēs*) which you built up of old (*ektēsō*),
 the tribe you redeemed as your inheritance,
 Mount Zion, where you took up your abode

⁶⁷ Sing to the Lord a new song,
 for he has done wondrous deeds,
 His right hand has won victory for him,
 his holy arm (*ho brachiōn ho hagios aytoy*)
 The Lord has made his salvation known
 in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice
 He has remembered his kindness (*emnesthe toy eleoys aytoy*) to Jacob,
 and his faithfulness to the house of Israel
 All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God
Ps 97, 1-3.

The theme of universal salvation is one of the principal ideas in St Luke's Gospel, cf his citation of *Is.* 40, 5 in 3, 6

for the future salvation of deserted Sion. "Look unto Abraham your father, . . . for he was alone, and I called him and I blessed him and I loved him and I multiplied him (*Is.* 51, 2) " Consequently, the appeal to the promise made to the fathers runs as a constant motif throughout the entire Old Testament, binding the whole into one salvation-history.⁶⁸

In short, the salvation of Israel is the fulfillment of the covenant and of the promise to the fathers. This initial mercy of Yahweh is the foundation of all hope and the first object of the faith of the people of God. The promise was made to Abraham and renewed with Isaac and Jacob. It concerned their posterity (*sperma*), which would be multiplied as the sands of the sea, the dust of the earth, and the stars of the sky. The promise not only assured the gift of the land, but in the posterity of Abraham all the nations of the earth would be blessed. This promise would not lapse, but was perpetual "I will establish my covenant between you and me and your descendants after you throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant, that I may be a God to you and to your descendants after you (*Gen.* 17, 7)."

A new determination was introduced into this covenant through the perpetual covenant made with David in favor of his posterity. The original promise would be fulfilled through a king of the house of David. During the devastation of Juda by Sennacherib, Isaias spoke of the remnant as a seed (*Is.* 1, 9). This remnant became the people of the poor, those who fear the Lord. During the exile, *Deutero-Isaias* de-

⁶⁸ Of special interest to the theme of the *Magnificat* is this prayer on the day of expiation "Thou, O Lord God, art he who chosest Abram, and broughtest him forth out of the fire of the Chaldeans, and gavest him the name of Abraham. And thou didst find his heart faithful before thee and thou madest a covenant with him, to give him the land of the Chanaanite, and thou hast fulfilled thy words, because thou art just. And thou sawest the affliction (*ταπεινώσειν*) of our fathers in Egypt and thou didst hear their cry by the Red Sea (*Neh* 9, 7-9) "

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scribed God's servant Israel as the seed of Abraham. The spirit was promised to the seed of Jacob (*Is.* 44, 3). The sterile daughter of Sion would give birth and her seed would inherit the nations.⁶⁹ St. Luke has already made a subtle allusion to the promise to Abraham and to his posterity in the words of Gabriel to Mary, "Nothing shall be impossible with God (*Lk.* 1, 37)." These words recall the assurance of the Lord to Abraham. "Why did Sara laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, though I am old?' Is anything too wonderful for the Lord (*Gen.* 18, 14)?"⁷⁰ With the Incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of the Virgin of Nazareth, God's promise to Abraham had finally reached its fulfillment, after a long process of refinement and purification. The true people of God had been reduced to a remnant, a poor and afflicted people who feared the Lord and looked to Him alone for their salvation. The center of fulfillment was a new temple on Mount Sion; in other words, God would be present to His people in a new way. From this spiritual elite the Messiah would spring and would receive in Sion the homage of the nations. This eschatological community is frequently personified in the Old Testament as the daughter of Sion.

The literary analysis of the *Magnificat* has shown how complex the Old Testament background of Mary's canticle really is. It is not simply a mosaic of texts chosen at random, but it fits into the whole stream of Old Testament piety and messianic expectation. The allusions are not to isolated can-

⁶⁹ Cf. *Is.* 54, 1-3, 66, 7-16. Mgr. Cerfaux considers that texts presenting Sion as the mother of the Messiah are too rare to support the identification of Mary and the old Israel in *Apoc.* 12. L. Cerfaux, *La vision de la femme et du dragon de l'Apocalypse en relation avec le Protévangile*, in *ETL* 31 (1955) 31. However, these texts of *Isaïas* taken together with the apocryphal texts cited by Cerfaux (*Test Jos.* 19, 8; 4 *Esdras* 9, 43-47, 10, 44-49) and the reference to the woman in travail in the Qumran hymns (1 *QH* iii, 7ff) seem sufficient to suggest that the idea was in the air in NT times.

⁷⁰ *Lk.* 1, 37: *oyk adynatēsei para toy theoy pan rēma*, *Gen.* 18, 14: *mē adynates para tō theō rēma*.

ticles or psalms, but to the very spirit which infuses the major portion of the psalter. But Mary's canticle goes beyond the psalter and incorporates the Servant themes of *Deutero-Isaias* and suggests the afflicted daughter of Sion, awaiting deliverance from her messianic king. Classifying the *Magnificat* according to its literary form, it may be described as a thanksgiving hymn for national salvation, spoken in the name of the daughter of Sion.

II

THE PIETY OF THE POOR

In analyzing the text of the *Magnificat*, we pointed out how the Greek words *tapeinōsis* and *tapeinos* recalled the literature of the poor in the prayers, lamentations, hymns, and canticles of the OT. We also noticed that God's salvific activity consisted in the deliverance and exaltation of the poor. In addition, the spiritual community of the poor considered itself to be the true people of God, the refined remnant of Israel waiting and longing for the salvation of Yahweh through his Messiah. This restoration centered in the city of Jerusalem, in a new temple of Yahweh on Mount Sion. It was a new and more glorious presence of God with His people. The nations would also flock to Jerusalem in universal homage to the one true God of Israel. The community of the afflicted and restored Jerusalem appeared under the literary figure of the daughter of Sion.

In order, therefore, to understand properly the Old Testament background of the *Magnificat*, we must consider this community of the poor. In the *LXX*, the word *tapeinōsis* regularly renders the Hebrew *oni*, which means affliction, misery, indigence. The corresponding adjective *tapeinos* renders more commonly the Hebrew *shajal*, low, and *ani*, oppressed, needy, afflicted. The latter adjective is more fre-

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quently rendered by *ptōchos*, but also by *penēs*. A later form of *ani* is *anaw*, which is likewise rendered by *tapeinos*, *ptōchos*, or *penēs*. It is customary, therefore, to refer to this spiritual elite as the *anawim*, the poor of Yahweh. The same Greek adjectives render other inter-related Hebrew words, especially *ebyon* and *dal*, each of which has its own proper nuance, but which refer to the same circle of the *anawim*.⁷¹

The recent work of Albert Gélín, entitled *Les Pauvres de Yahvé*, is the most accessible presentation of this spiritual movement which is at the core of the psalter and which is the characteristic expression of post-exilic piety.⁷² The *anawim* exhibit those spiritual qualities which the beatitudes consider to be the necessary conditions for receiving the kingdom of God. Consequently, the spirit of the *anawim* is the finest fruit of Old Testament revelation and the immediate preparation for the Messias and the kingdom of God.

The spirituality of the *anawim* grew out of the social condition of material poverty. The solidarity of the nomadic tribes excluded the possibility of a true distinction between rich and poor in the desert. The entire community prospered

⁷¹ The Hebrew *ebyon* signifies the poor considered as destitute and begging for help, cf. P. Humbert, *Le mot biblique "ēbyōn,"* in *RHPR* 32 (1952) 1-6. *Dal* describes the physical condition of the poor; they are weak and scrawny. *Ani*, from a root meaning to be bent over, expresses the oppressed condition of the poor. Cf. Gélín, *Les Pauvres de Yahvé*, 20-21. "Le mot 'anaw (employé une seule fois au singulier) a le même sens fondamental que 'ani. Sans doute a-t-il pris plus facilement que les vocables précédents un sens religieux (humble devant Dieu) mais le fait n'est pas général et, dans plusieurs cas, en particulier dans l'expression 'anwē ha-'ares (pauvres du pays) il reste synonyme de 'ani."

⁷² The work of Gélín has brought this aspect of OT piety to the attention of Catholics. Cf. A. Gélín, *The Key Concepts of the Old Testament* (New York, 1955) 91-94; *The Religion of Israel* (New York, 1958) 102-09, *La sainteté de l'homme selon l'Ancien Testament*, in *BVC*, no. 19 (1957) 35-48. The earliest treatment of the poor is probably that of I. Loeb, *La littérature du pauvre dans la Bible* (Paris, 1892). A. Causse, *Les "pauvres" d'Israël* (Strasbourg, 1922) is still a valuable study. An earlier Catholic study by Canon Didot, *Le pauvre dans la Bible* (Bruges, 1903) is no longer available. Cf. the article *ptōchos* by E. Bammel, in *TWNT* 6, 885-915.

or suffered together. The legislation of the Book of the Covenant⁷³ provided for the care of the poor when the desert community settled in the land of Chanaan. For with the establishment of rural and urban life, individualism began to rise and a growing distinction between the "haves" and the "have-nots" soon became apparent. Although in the ideal division of the land, all were to possess their own plot of ground and be content under their vine and their fig-tree, the reality was never so and the rich soon began to acquire the property of the poor. The self-aggrandizement of the rich soon left the poor destitute and homeless. Oppressed by the rich, they were unable to obtain redress from the venal judges; they were defenseless. From the time of Amos in the 8th century, the prophets came to their defense. The triad of widow, orphan, and poor appears frequently throughout the prophetic writings. The prophets demand redress for the weak and oppressed, not from any ambition of social reform, but in the name of the Sinai covenant. Israel was founded as one nation in which no man was to be deprived of the goods of the promised land. The Deuteronomic legislation (*Dt.* 12, 1-26, 15), compiled after the fall of Samaria in 721, undertook to eliminate poverty from the ideal Israelite community. Material poverty is never considered a normal condition of the people of God, nor is there any romanticism about the prophetic appeal to the ideal of the desert. Physical affliction may often be the result of sin; Isaias considered the entire people deserving of the punishment of Yahweh, including widows and orphans (*Is.* 9, 12-16). Jeremias recognized that the poor of Jerusalem had acted foolishly and had not known the way of the Lord (*Jer.* 5, 4). The judgments of the prophets were

⁷³ The Book of the Covenant is the name commonly given to the legislation of *Ex.* 20, 22-23, 19, preceding the narrative of the sealing of the Sinaitic covenant (24, 1-8)

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always based on the demands of Yahweh in the covenant and not upon any merely social or humanitarian considerations

The fact remains, however, that riches are the occasion for pride and self-sufficiency. The wicked are often synonymous with the rich in their oppression of the poor. An attack upon the poor is a violation of Yahweh's lordship over Israel and does violence to one of the children whom He loves. Poverty and oppression, however, can be an occasion for turning to God as one's only source of help. Deprived of human aid, the poor can only find refuge in God⁷⁴ Yet to win His friendship requires obedience to His law. Understood in this sense, as the dependents of Yahweh, the poor are synonymous with the just.

I know that the Lord renders
justice to the afflicted, judgment to the poor.
Surely the just shall give thanks to your name,
the upright shall dwell in your presence. *Ps.* 139, 13-14.

The prophets were the spokesmen of this throng of unfortunates who cried to the Lord from their indigence and waited upon His salvation. The wise men enriched the concept of spiritual poverty. Born of a sociological reality, the vocabulary of poverty gradually acquired religious overtones and became expressive of man's true relationship to God⁷⁵

⁷⁴ "Le 'pauvre' est devenu le client de Dieu. La 'pauvreté' a dit une puissance d'accueil à Dieu, une ouverture à Dieu, une disponibilité à Dieu, une humilité devant Dieu" Gélin, *op cit*, 29

⁷⁵ "Depuis Sophonie, il est arrivé que le vocabulaire de pauvreté a connu une transposition spirituelle et a servi à désigner l'homme devant Dieu dans son attitude religieuse de client . . . La pauvreté ainsi entendue, est une nuance de la foi, abandonnée, confiante et joyeuse, elle est proche de l'humilité, elle se résume en une attitude d'attente religieuse" Gélin, *op cit*, 152-53 The LXX translators understood this spiritual transformation when they frequently rendered *anaw* and *ani* by *prays*, meek "Il est permis de tenir que *pénès*,

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The poor of Israel, however, did not hope in the Lord on the basis of any rational understanding of His power, His justice, and His providence. Their hopes rested on the covenant with the patriarchs and the covenant of Sinai. God had sworn to bring them into the possession of the land. They saw in Yahweh a God who was rich in loving kindness and fidelity, a God who was true to His word. This is the biblical sense of the justice of God. In virtue of this covenant, God could not allow His people to be utterly destroyed. Although He might punish them for their sins by sword, famine, and pestilence, He would always leave a remnant—an Israel of quality—in whom His promises would be fulfilled. Mentioned in *Amos*, the theme of the remnant⁷⁶ became prominent in *Isaiah* after the fall of the northern kingdom and the devastation of Juda by the armies of Sennacherib.

Your land is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire: your country strangers devour before your face. . . . And the daughter of Sion shall be left as a covert in a vineyard, and as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, and as a city that is laid waste. Except the Lord of hosts had left us seed, we had been as Sodom, and we should have been like to Gomorrha (*Is.* 1, 7-9)

With this remnant, refined in the crucible of suffering and exile, Yahweh will make a new covenant in which both the spiritual and material blessings of *Deuteronomy* will be given to his people.⁷⁷ After the fall of the northern kingdom and the devastations of Sennacherib, the prophet Sophonias fore-

ptôchos, tapeinos, à côté de *prays*, ont acquis dans les Septante une aptitude à dire le comportement de l'homme biblique devant le Seigneur et ont préparé l'expression chrétienne de la foi" Gélin, *op cit*, 80.

⁷⁶ Cf. R. de Vaux, *Le "reste d'Israël" d'après les prophètes*, in *RB* 42 (1933) 526-39.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Jer* 31, 31-34, *Ez* 16, 60, 36, 24-30, etc.

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saw the new people of God in a purified remnant of the poor, rejoicing in the presence of the Lord of Sion.

On that day you shall not be ashamed of all your deeds whereby you have sinned against me. For then I shall take away from your midst (*miqqirbek*) your proud boasters and you shall no longer be exalted upon my holy mountain. But I shall leave in your midst (*beqirbek*) a poor and needy people (*am ani wadal*) and they shall hope in the name of Yahweh. The remnant of Israel will do no injustice and shall speak no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth. For they will feed and lie down with none to terrify them. Rejoice (*chaire*, in *LXX*), O daughter of Sion, shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord has lifted the sentence which was against you, he has turned aside your enemy. Yahweh, the king of Israel, is in your midst (*beqirbek*), you need fear evil no more. On that day, they shall say to Jerusalem, Fear not, Sion: let not your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst (*beqirbek*), a mighty warrior, a savior. He will rejoice over you with gladness, he will transform you by his love, he will dance for you with cries of joy. *Soph.* 3, 11-17.⁷⁸

These verses offer one of the most perfect descriptions of the *anawim* and their expectations in the literature of the Old Testament. Sophonias may have been the first to undertake the spiritual formation of an elite.⁷⁹ "Seek the Lord, all you

⁷⁸ The translation is adapted from the Hebrew and the Greek. Note the messianic greeting, "Rejoice," with which the angel Gabriel addressed Mary (*Lk* 1, 28). The Hebrew word *qereb* properly means "womb," but is commonly used in the sense of "midst." Literally, this text of *Sophonias* speaks of Yahweh being in the womb of the daughter of Sion; Hebrew has other expressions for "midst" which might have been used, e.g. *tawek*; cf. *Is* 12, 6. "Rejoice, and praise, O habitation of Sion, for great in your midst (*beqirbek*) is the Holy One of Israel."

⁷⁹ However, cf. *Micah* 4, 6-13, in this text which immediately precedes the prophecy of the woman who will give birth to the Messiah in Bethlehem,

poor of the land (*anawim*), you who do his will. Seek justice, seek humility (*anawah*); perhaps you will be safe on the day of the wrath of Yahweh (*Soph. 2, 3*).” Sophonias invited his contemporaries to acquire a spiritual poverty which is almost synonymous with faith, but which includes the notion of abandonment, humility, and absolute confidence. To express this religious ideal, Sophonias used the substantive *anawah*, which appears here for the first time in the Old Testament. It is derived from the earlier *oni*, but with more spiritual overtones. The corresponding adjective *anawim* appears only in the plural. Although the Hebrew text itself exhibits a lack of certitude in the use of *anaw* and *ani*, the former word carries the spiritual sense more readily.

Jeremias continued the spiritual formation of the poor in the years prior to the exile. In his own life he was a type of the *anaw*; his personal confessions probably inspired the lamentations of the *anawim*. Ezechiel and Deutero-Isaias were the spiritual guides of the exile and prepared the remnant for the return to Sion. *Is. 49, 13* identifies the people of God with the *anawim*: “Give praise, O ye heavens, and rejoice, O earth, ye mountains give praise with jubilation; because the Lord has comforted his people, and will have mercy on his poor ones.” They are the disciples of Yahweh (*Is. 54, 13*), His redeemed (*Is. 51, 11*). They have the law in their hearts (*Is. 51, 7*) and hope in Him (*Is. 40, 31*). We have already seen how Deutero-Isaias spoke of this new community as the seed of Jacob and the servant of Yahweh.⁸⁰

The circumstances of the return to Sion were not as glorious as Ezechiel and Deutero-Isaias had foreseen. New afflictions were in store for the remnant of Israel. Many commen-

there is mention of an afflicted remnant, the rule of Yahweh on Sion, the royalty of the daughter of Sion, her travail in exile, and her victory over her enemies

⁸⁰ Cf. Causse, *op cit*, 107-08; and Gélin, *op cit*, 42.

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tators now date *Is.* 56-66 to the early years of the return. The author is concerned with the spiritual formation of these discouraged Jews. His instructions, admonitions, and expectations center about the covenant, the just, and the poor—three words which characterize the literature of the *anawim* considered as the new people of God.⁸¹

This literature is found principally in the *Psalms*. Although many of the psalms may have originated as individual prayers and lamentations, commentators now recognize that in post-exilic days they were adapted to liturgical and community use. The signs of such adaptation are evident throughout the psalter.⁸² The spiritual solidarity of the pious remnant, struggling to establish a new theocracy against the opposition of the wicked who surrounded them, found expression in the plaints of individuals. They recognized themselves to be the true Israel (*Ps.* 149, 4). Their enemies were the wicked and the proud, those who have abandoned Yahweh and His law, and who persecuted His holy ones. Their descriptions vibrate with the emotions of men in deep affliction. They could not be expected to express the ideal of Christian charity, for they felt themselves abandoned by God and delivered over to the will of their enemies. The common misery of the *anawim* created a spiritual community, a spontaneous solidarity among those who shared the same distress and aspirations. There are two worlds in the psalms of the poor, the assembly of the just and the council of the wicked. There is no need nor foundation for considering the poor of the psalter as a religious sect within post-exilic Judaism, just as there is no need to consider the council of the wicked as a sect. These expressions reflect the natural tendency to friendly association among men of similar dispositions. The poor delighted both

⁸¹ Cf. Gélin, *op. cit.*, 111

⁸² Cf. Gélin, *op. cit.*, 41.

in commiserating and rejoicing together;⁸³ but their common affliction did not merely draw them closer to one another, it drew them into friendship with God (*Ps.* 24, 14; 54, 15). Through their misery and distress, the *anawim* found their way of God. In striking contrast to the exaltation of human greatness and the tragic fatality of suffering in classical literature, the Old Testament centers our attention upon the innumerable throng of the destitute and transforms these human wrecks into the clients and friends of God.⁸⁴

The *anawim* were not complacent in their misery, but ardently desired life, joy, light, blessing, peace, and security; in a word, they wanted salvation. They were, moreover, confident that God would deliver them; faithful to His covenant and His promise, He could not abandon them. Therefore they waited upon the Lord. They did not know when salvation would come, but they were sure that it would come. Consequently, they waited silently before the mystery of God and His providence. The paradox of the *anawim* lay in the tension between the trial of their faith and the certitude of their hope. Job was the literary type of the poor.

The formation of this community of the poor was perhaps the most important achievement of post-exilic Judaism in salvation-history.⁸⁵ From the time of Sophonias, the vocabulary of poverty underwent a spiritual transformation and came to signify the religious attitude of man as a client before God. This form of poverty is an aspect of biblical faith; it is a confident and joyous abandonment in expectation of deliverance; it includes a readiness to suffer⁸⁶ and is a necessary condition for obtaining the kingdom of God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"

⁸³ Cf. *Pss.* 110, 1; 132, 1-2, 68, 33-34; 21, 27. Cf. Gélin, *op. cit.*, 53

⁸⁴ Cf. Gélin, *op. cit.*, 63 and 68

⁸⁵ Cf. Gélin, *op. cit.*, 98

⁸⁶ Gunkel saw the relation between the ideal of *anawah* and the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. Cf. Gélin, *op. cit.*, 105

(Mt. 5, 3).” Spiritual poverty is the interior welcome which the soul offers to God. The poor place themselves completely at the disposal of God. This interior disposition is the biblical notion of humility which forms the prelude to the *tapcinōsis* of Mary’s *Magnificat*.⁸⁷

The constitution of this spiritual elite in Judaism involved a narrowing of the concept of the true Israel, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel was now a qualitative thing, a remnant of Israel according to the flesh. Only this refined community of the poor was the servant of Yahweh in the oracles of *Deutero-Isaiah*. They were the people of promise, but also the people of mission, who were to bring the truth of Yahweh and His law to the nations. At the same time, however, the prophet foresaw that Israel would accomplish her mission through an individual servant who would be the antitype of all the *anawim*. He would sum up in himself the entire perfection of the Old Testament community. The four songs of the Servant of Yahweh describe the work of this servant in terms which surpass the collectivity of Israel. Yet an analogy remains which the LXX translators have indicated by addressing the Servant by the name of Jacob (42, 1). Through the suffering of the innocent Servant of Yahweh the salvation of the many shall be achieved. The community of the poor has been narrowed to one and the kingly Messiah of David’s line has given place to the prophetic role of the Servant after the manner of Moses and Jeremias.⁸⁸ A link exists

⁸⁷ “L’Eglise des Pauvres, en son immense symphonie priante, préludait au *Magnificat*. ‘Toute la vie spirituelle . . . de l’ancien temps atteint en Marie son apogée, son point de parfaite maturité.’ Et chacun des *anawim*, membre de ce vrai Israël, la préparait et l’annonçait.” Géhn, *op cit*, 123. The permanence of this spirituality until NT times can be traced through the Jewish apocryphal literature, especially the *Psalms of Solomon*, the *Henoch* literature, and the sectarian writings from Qumran. They were the “little ones” who received the teaching of Christ. Cf. Géhn, *op cit*, 80-97.

⁸⁸ Cf. Géhn, *op cit*, 104.

between these two themes in the psalter where David is considered as the type of the poor. *Is.* 60-62 associates the exaltation of Jerusalem (60, 1-2) with the mission of the servant (61, 1-3; 62, 1) and the homage of the Gentiles (60, 3-14; 62, 2). Although the expression "daughter of Sion" occurs only once in these chapters (62, 11); the literary figure is present throughout. On her lips are placed the invitation to thanksgiving and to praise: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation: and with the robe of justice he has covered me, as a bridegroom decked with a crown, and as a bride adorned with her jewels (*Is.* 61, 10)." This association between the daughter of Sion, the Messiah, and the poor is explicit in *Zacharias* 9, 9. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold thy king will come to thee, the just and savior; he is poor (*ani*) and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

In brief it may be said that according to the internal structure of salvation-history, as it is presented in the Old Testament, the promise to Abraham and to his seed was to be fulfilled in the exaltation of a purified community of the poor, to whom the Messiah would come and whose lot He would share. This eschatological community was personified in the Old Testament under the literary figure of the daughter of Sion. There appears to be no indication that this figure designates a future individual. However, through the narrowing of the concept of the Servant from the community of the poor to the prophetic individual, it may be legitimate to infer a similar narrowing of the concept "daughter of Sion" to the Virgin of Nazareth who gave birth to Christ. We must now see what influence this Old Testament background has upon an understanding of the *Magnificat* and the mystery of Mary.

III

THE SENSE OF MARY'S MAGNIFICAT

It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the literary origin and authenticity of the *Magnificat* itself.⁸⁹ Regardless

⁸⁹ Many solutions have been offered to this purely critical problem. The custom of placing otherwise anonymous canticles upon the lips of biblical personages is readily granted for the canticle of Anna and other OT canticles; cf. Lagrange, *op cit*, 53, Hamp, *art. cit.*, in *BK* 2 (1952) 19. The absence of specifically Christian notions in the *Magnificat* have led many to seek a pre-Christian origin for the hymn, which St. Luke would merely have adapted to Mary's situation, e.g., P. Winter, *Le Magnificat et le Benedictus sont-ils des psaumes macchabéens*, in *RHPR* 36 (1956) 1-17, considers that the *Magnificat* is a thanksgiving hymn after battle and suits the situation of 1 *Macc* 4, 24, E. Klostermann, *op cit*, 18, considers it an eschatological hymn adapted to the situation of Elizabeth by the addition of v. 48. The expressions used are so common that these proposals must be considered purely gratuitous. The opinion commonly held among Catholics is that the *Magnificat* is a Greek translation of a canticle actually composed by Mary on the occasion of her visit to Elizabeth, e.g., F. X. Zorell, *Das Magnificat ein Kunstwerk hebräischer oder aramäischer Poesie*, in *Zfkt* 29 (1905) 754-58. On the other hand, certain literary allusions in the canticle do suggest an *ad hoc* composition or at least adaptation on the part of St. Luke; cf. R. Laurentin, *Traces d'allusions étymologiques en Luc 1-2*, in *Bibl* 38 (1957) 1-23. Lagrange (*op cit*, 54) is inclined to a more nuanced solution, editing on the part of Luke cannot be denied, nor is it necessary to suppose that Mary expressed these sentiments for the first time upon meeting Elizabeth; they grew in her soul from the time of the Annunciation and she expressed them in the traditional language of her people, Luke would have gathered these thoughts from Mary or found them in his source and adapted them to his narrative, following the biblical precedent of such canticles. Godet (*op. cit*, 1, 123) considers that Mary in the *Magnificat* is a NT prophet, and like her OT predecessors, she points out the continuity and progress of God's work. In the same sense, cf. also Schelke, *op cit*, 76. There is no critical reason which obliges us to seek another source than Mary for the sentiments expressed in the *Magnificat*, the possibility of adaptation by St. Luke to his Infancy narratives must, however, be admitted. It is perhaps better, with J. Guillet, to admit ignorance concerning these questions, their resolution is not necessary for the understanding of the *Magnificat*. "Présentation littéraire d'un côté, souvenirs personnels de l'autre, il y a là deux aspects différents qu'il est très délicat de doser avec exactitude, mais que rien n'oblige à juger inconciliables." J. Guillet, *Le Magnificat*, in *MsD* 38 (1954) 60-61, n. 1.

of what opinion one might hold in this regard, St. Luke intended us to understand the canticle on Mary's lips.⁹⁰ Visiting Elizabeth after the mystery of the Incarnation had been accomplished in her womb, Mary sings a canticle of thanksgiving for the great things God has done in her. She uses a classical formula to express the divine solicitude in her regard. "He has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid." There is no need, however, to ask the nature of Mary's own *tapeinōsis*.⁹¹ She uses the language of the *anawim*, the community of the poor, who appear in the second part of the *Magnificat*. She speaks as one of the *anawim*, for in her this spiritual community finds their most perfect representative. Mary in her own person is the culmination of that long process of refinement which found expression in the Old Testament literature of the poor of Yahweh.⁹² Through suffering, compunction, and repentance, an Israel of quality was gradually formed in whom humility, openness to God, silence, and expectant prayer were the expression of man's complete dependence upon God. The preparation of this remnant was the necessary prelude to the final event of salvation-history, the Incarnation of the Son of God. As St. Paul points out

⁹⁰ Textual evidence attributing the canticle to Elizabeth is very slight; cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, 44-45, 52

⁹¹ The attempt to answer this question has frequently led to fantasy. P. Gächter, *Maria im Erdenleben* (3rd ed., Innsbruck, 1953) 149, suggests the scorn Mary had received from other women of Nazareth at the village well. Plummer, *op. cit.*, 32, interprets it as her status as a carpenter's bride. Godet, *op. cit.*, 1, 126, speaks of the reduced social position of the daughter of kungs. In view of the OT semantics of this word, the opinion of Gélén is much more acceptable. "Nous proposons . . . de garder ici le vocabulaire de pauvreté et de nous rappeler quelle charge spirituelle il avait acquise durant sa longue histoire. Il dit bien *la foi abandonnée et la confiance éperdue de l'humble Vierge*." A. Gélén, *Marie et l'Ancien Testament*, in *VS* 89 (1953) 121

⁹² Cf. Gélén, *op. cit.*, 125 and 131, R. Laurentin, *Structure et théologie de Luc I-II* (Paris, 1957) 82-86, and M. Vansteenkiste, *L'Ani et l'Anaw dans l'Ancien Testament*, in *DTPI* 59 (1956) 19.

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(Gal. 3, 16), the promise to Abraham and to his seed was fulfilled in Christ, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed. Hence Mary's canticle of praise concludes by recalling the promise to Abraham which has been fulfilled in her. Salvation-history has reached its term. From Abraham who was alone when called (*Is.* 51, 2), we pass through the community of the poor to Mary, the unknown Virgin of Nazareth, who received in silence the news of her miraculous fruitfulness.⁹³ The gratuitous promise which was initiated with Abraham by the birth of Isaac reached fulfillment with the equally gratuitous, but infinitely transcendent birth of the Son of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary.⁹⁴ The accomplishment of this mystery demanded the preparation of a perfect people, for even Job recognized that what is pure cannot come from what is impure (*Job* 14, 4).⁹⁵ Only God can effect this perfect purity in fallen man, and He did so by a gradual process of refinement which gave birth to the community of the *anawim*, the true remnant of Israel, and culminated in the Immaculate Virgin of Nazareth.

The *Magnificat* does not express any specifically Christian idea nor should it be interpreted in the light of Mary's per-

⁹³ "On saisit le mouvement du *Magnificat* Il va de Marie, personnification eschatologique d'Israël, à Abraham qui en est la personnification originelle, en passant par la collectivité Israël concentré à l'origine en Abraham, se concentre au terme en Marie; le *Magnificat* reprend ce mouvement en remontant de Marie à Abraham" Laurentin, *op cit*, 85 Cf J M Bover, *Marie, l'Eglise et le Nouvel Israël*, in *Maria, Etudes sur la Sainte Vierge* (ed H du Manoir) 1 (Paris, 1949) 659-674

⁹⁴ "Toute cette lignée patriarcale qui part d'Abraham, toute la série des 'Pères,' s'arrête pour se ramasser et se concentrer dans la Vierge Mère qui a engendré celui qui est, par antonomase, la Posterité d'Abraham" J M Bover, *art cit*, 665 Cf. E D O'Connor, *The Faith of Abraham and the Faith of the Virgin Mary*, in *AER* 132 (1955) 232-38; A Feuillet, *Le plan salvifique de Dieu d'après l'Épître aux Romains*, in *RB* 57 (1950) 355 n 1

⁹⁵ The suggestion was originally made by J Coppens, *La mère du Sauveur à la lumière de la théologie vétérotestamentaire*, in *ETL* 31 (1955) 16-17

sonal history.⁹⁶ Too much historicism in this regard may easily lead to fantasy. Mary appears in the New Testament only when she has a role to play in salvation-history. The *Magnificat* illustrates the true vocation of Mary in the economy of salvation. She binds Jesus to Israel, she is the link between the old Israel and the new in that she exemplifies in herself the most perfect expression of Old Testament piety—she is the *anaw* of Israel *par excellence*.⁹⁷ The progressive narrowing and concentration of the concept of God's people through the notion of the remnant, the community of the poor, found historical, literary, and theological exemplifications in the Old Testament in the person of Jeremias, the Servant of Yahweh, and Job.⁹⁸ The process culminated in the transcendent perfection of Mary. In her alone Israel was ready to give birth to the true Servant of Yahweh who is the perfect exemplification of the new Israel, the Church, of which He is the head. If we wish to know more about the interior life of Mary, we must study the aspirations of the *anawim* and apply the fruits of our study by way of excellence to the Virgin of Nazareth. The Old Testament background of the *Magnificat* suggests this methodology in the theological study of the mystery of Mary.

We have not yet considered the *Magnificat* in the context of St. Luke's Infancy Gospel. Such a consideration will serve to confirm the conclusions already drawn. René Laurentin has drawn our attention to the literary genre of *Luke 1-2*.⁹⁹ It is not history but it is an embellishment of history, accord-

⁹⁶ Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, 54, Schmid, *op. cit.*, 55. Gelin seeks the origin of the canticle simply in the traditional Jewish meditation upon the Scriptures. Cf. *AdC* 67 (1957) 756.

⁹⁷ Cf. P. Michalon, *Le témoignage du Nouveau Testament sur la Mère de Jésus*, in *LeV* no 10 (1953) 109-26; A. Gelin, *La vocation de Marie d'après le Nouveau Testament*, in *VS* 91 (1954) 115-23; V. Hamp, *art. cit.*, 23.

⁹⁸ Cf. B. LeFrois, *Semitic Totality Thinking*, in *CBQ* 17 (1955) 315-23.

⁹⁹ R. Laurentin, *op. cit.*

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ing to a midrashic procedure which has its roots deep in Jewish literature and the Old Testament itself. The genre evaluates the events of the infancy in the light of the Gospel message and of the Old Testament. The focal point of the author's interest is the fulfillment of the Old Testament hope of salvation. This hope is fulfilled in Israel, but more specifically in the holy portion of Israel, in Jerusalem where Yahweh dwells.¹⁰⁰ This eschatological community had been personified in the literary figure of the daughter of Zion. The midrashic procedure at work in *Luke* 1-2 is that of subtle allusion through the use of language which evokes specific themes of Old Testament prophecy. The author proceeds from an understanding of the Gospel message and considers the events of the infancy in the light of this knowledge.¹⁰¹

In the narrative of the Annunciation, Luke has already indicated the identification of Mary as the eschatological daughter of Zion by the address of the angel, "Rejoice" This is no ordinary greeting; it occurs in the *LXX* in the annunciation of messianic joy to the daughter of Zion.¹⁰² The pleonasm of 1, 31, "Thou shalt conceive *in thy womb (en gastri)*," may suggest the *beqirbek* of *Soph.* 3, 11-17.¹⁰³ This text promised eschatological joy to the community of the poor and the daughter of Zion. Allusion is made to the promise to Abraham and to his seed, not only by the words of Gabriel concerning Elizabeth, "Nothing shall be impossible with God (1, 36)," but also by the two-fold assurance of the angel to Mary, "The Lord is with thee (1, 28)," and "Do not be afraid (1,

¹⁰⁰ Cf Laurentin, *op. cit.*, 150

¹⁰¹ Cf J P Audet, *L'annonce à Marie*, in *RB* 63 (1956) 347.

¹⁰² Cf S. Lyonnet, *Chavē kecharitōmenē*, in *Bibl* 20 (1939) 131-41.

¹⁰³ Cf note 78 above, R. Laurentin, *Queen of Heaven. A Short Treatise on Marian Theology* (London, 1956) 24, A. G. Hebert, *La Vierge Marie, Fille de Zion*, in *YS* 85 (1951) 127-39.

30)." ¹⁰⁴ The theme of the Davidic Messiah is obvious in 1, 32-33. Lyonnet has already pointed out how the descent of the Holy Spirit and the overshadowing of the power of the Most High suggest the *shekhina*, the dwelling of Yahweh in the tabernacle and the temple.¹⁰⁵ Laurentin develops this idea of Mary as the dwelling-place of Yahweh in Israel. In the narrative of the Visitation (1, 39-45) he finds an allusion to the ascent of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem in the time of David ¹⁰⁶ A further allusion to the daughter of Sion may be present in Elizabeth's greeting, "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb."¹⁰⁷ Sion was to give birth to the messianic King.

When all these allusions have been made, Mary sings her *Magnificat*. The canticle contains no specific allusion either to the daughter of Sion or to the temple. Yet the literature of the *anawim* centered around the temple of Sion where Yahweh dwelt.¹⁰⁸ The daughter of Sion was a frequent personification of this community of the poor.¹⁰⁹ According to the Old Testament, the promise made to Abraham and to his seed would be fulfilled by a Davidic king who would one day come to an humbled and afflicted Sion; in the exaltation of Jerusalem the daughter of Sion would rejoice and all the

¹⁰⁴ Both these assurances accompanied the renewal of the promise to the patriarchs, cf *Gen* 26, 24, 28, 13-15; 46, 3-4; 15, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Cf S. Lyonnet, *Le récit de l'annonciation et la maternité divine de la Sainte Vierge*, in *AdC* 66 (1956) 33-46, Laurentin, *Queen of Heaven*, 26-27

¹⁰⁶ Cf Laurentin, *Queen of Heaven*, 27-28; also his *Structure et théologie*, c. 6, *Mari Fille de Sion et Tabernacle Eschatologique*, 148-61, J H Crehan, *The Ark of the Covenant*, in *CR* 35 (1951) 301-11 J Galot, *Marie dans l'Évangile*, (Paris, 1958) 69-70, has suggested a further parallel in the Visitation narrative to *Is* 52, 7 "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, and that preacheth peace. of him that sheweth forth good, that preacheth salvation, that saith to Sion Thy God shall reign!"

¹⁰⁷ Cf note 55 above With reference to *Ex* 40, 3-4 and *Is* 4, 2-6, cf. Coppens, *art cit*, in *ETL* 31 (1955) 15

¹⁰⁸ Cf Cause, *op cit*, 109

¹⁰⁹ Cf Hebert, *art. cit*, 130, Laurentin, *Structure et théologie*, 154

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nations would come to worship the Lord, now present in a more glorious way in a new temple. Seen in this light, the *Magnificat* orchestrates the whole of salvation-history, as it was fulfilled in Mary and her Son. There may be a theological reason for not making these allusions more explicit. The daughter of Sion is a literary figure, Mary is a real person. The daughter of Sion is a type, but the antitype transcends the type. The temple is a material symbol of the presence of Yahweh with his people; in Mary God is present in a more transcendent way, for He is incarnate in her Son. The mystery of salvation is accomplished in a mother and her child;¹¹⁰ the historical reality of the accomplishment does not permit the use of literary figures and material symbols. The literary figures and the material symbols prepare the mystery; they suggest its meaning. St Luke, therefore, preferred to use allusion rather than explicit citation to present the mystery of Mary and her Son.

In conclusion, it might be well to point out the rich benefits that Mariology and Marian piety could reap from a biblical perspective, such as that suggested by the Old Testament background of the *Magnificat*. The progressive purification of the remnant which culminated in Mary is perhaps a more sound approach to the problem of the Immaculate Conception in Sacred Scripture.¹¹¹ The association of Mary

¹¹⁰ Cf. D. M. Stanley, *The Mother of My Lord*, in *Whp* 34 (1960) 330-32; L. Bouyer, *Les thèmes bibliques de la théologie mariale*, in *BVC*, no 17 (1954) 11-18.

¹¹¹ C. Journet, writing on *Scripture and the Immaculate Conception*, in *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception* (ed. E. D. O'Connor, Notre Dame, 1958) 31, has admitted that "the Protogospel (*Gen.* 3:15) taken by itself is too implicit and obscure to provide a point of departure for Mariology." A.-M. Malo, *L'économie divine dans la révélation biblique et l'Immaculée Conception*, in *L'Immaculée Conception de la Bienheureuse Vierge Marie Journées d'Etudes—Cap-de-la-Madeleine 12-13 Août 1954* (Ottawa, 1955) 13-35, has completely neglected the theme of the *anawim* in this connection. A further examination of the OT notion of the "holy" might help resolve

with her Son in the work of salvation demands her exaltation in the Assumption. Her association with the Church and her spiritual maternity stem not only from her role as the daughter of Sion, but also her role as the Mother of Christ.¹¹² The Old Testament community of Israel is summed up in her. As Mother of Christ, who is the Servant of Yahweh and the fullness of the Church, she is the Mother of the new Israel. St. Paul considers the Church as the union of all the baptized with the personal Christ.¹¹³ Consequently, when we are baptized, we are united to Christ and acquire Mary as our Mother, since she is the Mother of Christ.

These are merely suggestions for the direction Mariology may fruitfully take in an age of biblical renewal and oecumenical dialogue. Joseph Coppens once proposed that we should astonish the non-believing world by the sobriety and sane moderation of our treatment of Mary.¹¹⁴ He was insist-

the problems connected with the perpetual virginity of Mary and Joseph, for once someone or something is taken into the service of God they are excluded by that very fact from all profane use. Consequently, once Mary recognized her divine vocation and once Joseph, a just man in the OT sense, recognized that Mary had been touched by God, all question of intercourse between them was automatically removed. Cf J Coppens, *art cit*, in *ETL* 31 (1955) 16

¹¹² "Peut-être les mariologues n'ont-ils pas suffisamment considéré ce caractère représentatif de la maternité de Marie, qui est le fondement et la raison la plus profonde de sa maternité spirituelle. Bover, *art cit*, 665. B. LeFrois, *The Theme of the Divine Maternity in the Scriptures*, in *MS* 6 (1955) 102-19, insists on the importance of viewing Scripture as a whole and of obtaining a unity of perspective (102). The study of E. May, *The Scriptural Basis for Mary's Spiritual Maternity*, in *MS* 3 (1952) 111-41, would have profited from such a consideration of Mary's role as Daughter of Sion.

¹¹³ Cf L. Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l'Eglise suivant saint Paul* (Paris, 1942).

¹¹⁴ Coppens, *art cit*, in *ETL* 31 (1955) 20. Cf Schelke, *op cit*, 24-25. A biblical perspective in Mariology might well preserve us from the twofold error spoken of by Pope Pius XII in *Ad caeli Regnam*. "Yet in these and other questions about the Blessed Virgin let theologians and preachers of the word of God take care to avoid certain deviations lest they fall into twofold error. Let them beware of teachings that lack foundation, and that,

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ing that we must never separate Mary from her divine Son nor from her role in the economy of salvation, if we wish to understand her mystery. A greater appreciation of biblical themes relating to Mary may furnish our separated brethren with an understanding of the mystery of Mary, which some at least are looking for.¹¹⁵

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by misuse of words, exceed the bounds of truth. And let them beware of too great a narrowness of mind when they are considering that unique, completely exalted, indeed almost divine dignity of the Mother of God which the Angelic Doctor teaches we must attribute to her 'by reason of the infinite good which is God' " Cf *AAS* 46 (1954) 637

¹¹⁵ In a recent article entitled *The Virgin Mary in a Reformation Theology*, in *CJT* 6 (1960) 275-83, James A. Shuel examined the place of Mary in the theology of Calvin. He concluded his article as follows: "It is evident from this brief survey that Calvin considered the role of the Virgin Mary to be of something more than peripheral interest to the theology and life of the Church, he saw her motherhood as integral to the Incarnation of the Son of God, and appealed to that motherhood to defend the integrity and to bring out the full significance of the Incarnation; in Mary he saw exemplified principles which bear directly on the whole life of the Church, and he was concerned that the Church should not fail to give proper recognition to her singular role. Calvin's treatment of Mary as a responsible human agent through whom and, in a sense, together with whom, God worked to accomplish man's salvation, has implications (not developed by Calvin himself) which bear directly on any ecumenical discussion of the sacraments and ministry. The fact that Calvin, while still reacting strongly against Marian deviations of the communion which he had renounced, did not hesitate to give such attention to Mary's role in his writing and his preaching, lends weight to the suggestion that this theme might profitably claim more serious consideration than it ordinarily receives in contemporary Protestantism."