

# **THE DESIGN OF THE MT PSALTER:**

## **A Macrostructural Analysis**

**PETER C. W. HO**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The seminal question at the forefront of Masoretic (MT)-150 Psalter research is a question of the literary arrangement of the 150 psalms. An overarching compositional logic of the MT-150, if any, is in the sequence design of the psalms. Unfortunately, macrostructural studies of the entire Psalter are few, with no major consensus to understanding its structuring techniques, shape and logic. From my consolidation of at least 30 different tacit and formal macrostructuring techniques that can be detected in the MT-150, important macrostructuring techniques include the use of superscriptions; the programmatic nature of Pss 1–2; placement of acrostic/alphabetical compositions; numerical devices and the five Davidic Collections. A previously unknown scribal technique that places certain lexemes sequentially and exhaustively across the Psalter to express a message is also uncovered. Based on these organizational principles, the Psalter can be read palindromically, linearly, intertextually and even numerically. The MT-150 is structured into three major Sections (Books I, II–III, IV–V), each further divided into four Groups, and characterized by four recurring Central Motifs: (a) YHWH's kingship; (b) Davidic kingship; (c) Zion-temple and (d) Supplication of a Davidic figure. The logic of the MT-150 is a reception of the Davidic covenant. Book I traces the establishments of both the Davidic kingship and Zion. Books II–III, however, depict their fall and brokenness. Books IV–V highlight the re-establishments of an *ideal* Davidic kingship and *ideal* Zion. As a whole, the MT-150 has a messianic thrust with an exhortation for its readers to persevere in prayer and hope in view of YHWH's covenantal promises. Striking correspondences between techniques, form, content and logic help to validate the proposed design of the MT-150. This thesis will contribute significantly to the understanding of the arrangement of the Hebrew Psalter.



## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed ..... Date .....



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Whether it is the Hebrew noun, “thanksgiving” (*תְּהִלָּה*), or the *hiphil* verb, “give thanks” (*תָּהַנֵּן*), it is not possible to read the Psalms without gleaning something about them because these two words occur at least two and seven times more frequently in the Psalter than any other books in the OT. In this exhilarating journey of studying the Psalms over the last three years, I will, as the psalmist says, “give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his *hesed* endures forever!” (Ps 107:1).

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To Wendy, Priscilla, Ezra and Jereann  
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# ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
ABib	Academia Biblica Series
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANE	Ancient Near East
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ASOR	American School of Oriental Research (now known as the Albright Institute)
AThR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBR	<i>Bulletin of biblical research</i>
BCOTWP	<i>Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms</i> . By John Goldingay. 3 vols. Grand Rapids, 2008.
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHQ	<i>Biblia Hebraica Quinta</i>
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca sacra</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BthSt	Biblisch-theologische Studien
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CAS (I–III)	<i>Cantos and strophes in biblical Hebrew poetry</i> . By Pieter van der Lugt. 3 vols. Leiden, 2006–2013
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
CTM	Calwer theologische Monographien
CurTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
CV	<i>Communio viatorum</i>
DOTP	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch</i> . Edited by T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker
DOTWPW	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry &amp; Writings</i> . Edited by Tremper Longman and Peter Enns
EHP	<i>The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter</i>
Enc	<i>Encounter</i>
ESV	English Standard Version
ExAud	<i>Ex auditu</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FOTL	Forms of Old Testament Literature

<i>HALOT</i>	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden, 1994–1999
<i>HAR</i>	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
<i>HAT</i>	<i>Handbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
<i>HB</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible</i>
<i>HBOT</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies</i>
<i>HBS</i>	<i>Herders biblische Studien</i>
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>HOL</i>	<i>A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> based on the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner. BibleWorks10 Electronic Version. Leiden, 2000
<i>HS</i>	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
<i>HTKAT</i>	<i>Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IBC</i>	<i>Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching</i>
<i>ICC</i>	<i>International Critical Commentary</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IOTS</i>	<i>Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JESOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplementary Series</i>
<i>KSTS</i>	<i>Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie Series</i>
<i>L</i>	<i>Codex Leningradensis</i>
<i>LD</i>	<i>Lectio divina</i>
<i>LHBOTS</i>	<i>Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament studies</i>
<i>LM</i>	<i>Liturgical Ministry</i>
<i>LQ</i>	<i>Lutheran Quarterly</i>
<i>LTP</i>	<i>Laval théologique et philosophique</i>
<i>LTQ</i>	<i>Lexington Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>LXX</i>	<i>Septuagint</i>
<i>Maarav</i>	<i>Maarav</i>
<i>MNTS</i>	<i>McMaster New Testament Studies Series</i>
<i>MPHB</i>	J. P. Fokkelman, <i>Major Poems of the Hebrew Bible</i> , 4 vols. (SSN 37, 41, 43 and 47), Assen: Van Gorcum, 1998–2004
<i>MS(s)</i>	Medieval Hebrew manuscript(s)
<i>MT</i>	<i>Masoretic Text</i>
<i>NAC</i>	<i>New American Commentary</i>
<i>NAU</i>	<i>New American Standard Bible</i> (1995)
<i>NEA</i>	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
<i>NICOT</i>	<i>New International Commentary on the Old Testament</i>
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> . Edited by W. A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, 1997
<i>NIV</i>	<i>New International Version</i>
<i>NRSV</i>	<i>New Revised Standard Version</i>
<i>ÖBS</i>	<i>Österreichische biblische Studien</i>
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
<i>OTG</i>	<i>Old Testament Guides</i>
<i>OTL</i>	<i>Old Testament Library</i>

<i>OtSt</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RCT</i>	<i>Revista catalana de teología</i>
<i>ResQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RelS</i>	<i>Religious Studies</i>
<i>RevScRel</i>	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>SBB</i>	<i>Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge</i>
<i>SBL</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>SBLDS</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</i>
<i>SBLMS</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series</i>
<i>SBS</i>	<i>Stuttgarter Bibelstudien</i>
<i>SHS</i>	<i>Scripture and Hermeneutics Series</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SSN</i>	<i>Studia Semitica Neerlandica</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
<i>STDJ</i>	<i>Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah</i>
<i>SVT</i>	<i>Supplements to Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TOTC</i>	<i>Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries</i>
<i>TTE</i>	<i>The Theological Educator</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	<i>Supplements to Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>WBC</i>	<i>Word Biblical Commentary</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>WUNT</i>	<i>Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament</i>
<i>WW</i>	<i>Word and World</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

### Mishnaic, Talmudic Tractates and Other Rabbinic Texts

<i>b.</i>	<i>Babylonian Talmud</i>
<i>Pesach</i>	<i>Pesahim</i>
<i>Qid.</i>	<i>Qiddushin</i>
<i>Ber.</i>	<i>Berakhoth</i>
<i>Bik.</i>	<i>Bikkurim</i>
<i>Pes. De-Rav Kah.</i>	<i>Pesikta de Rav Kahana</i>
<i>Mid.</i>	<i>Middot</i>
<i>Midr. Pss.</i>	<i>Midrash on Psalms (Midrash Tehillim)</i>
<i>Sifre</i>	<i>Sifre</i>
<i>Sop.</i>	<i>Sopherim</i>
<i>Sukk.</i>	<i>Sukkah</i>

### Latin/Greek Texts

<i>Enarrat. Ps.</i>	<i>Enarrationes in Psalmos</i>
<i>Hom. Ps.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Psalmos</i>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

*The question about the Psalter as a book is . . . rather a question whether each psalm, with its inherent and specific language, may have yet another dimension of meaning by its given position in the book of Psalms. It is whether the book as a whole has a program, which cannot be precisely detected with a mere glance at the individual texts.<sup>1</sup>*

—Erich Zenger

*Poetry is a series of discrete units upon the field and at the same time, it is also the total. There are factors operating in every poetic text that lend varying degrees of connectedness to the discrete units of the work. The predominant formal feature of the poem is its articulation of these distinct units into a series of organized parts that are both distinct from and related to each other that together form a unified whole.<sup>2</sup>*

—Daniel Grossberg

“Blessed,” as the first word in the Psalter, provides a significant clue to the thrust of the Psalms when the entire book is read with an overarching logic. An overarching compositional design, or logic, of the Masoretic (MT) Psalter, if any, is in the sequence of its one-hundred-and-fifty psalms. Formal, tacit and thematic literary devices incorporated within the text either conjoin or delimit a unit of adjacent psalms, according it with distinctive structural form and theme. However, the inquiry into the

<sup>1</sup> “Bei der Frage nach dem Psalter als Buch geht es . . . geht vielmehr um die Frage, ob über die jedem Psalm ureigene und spezifische Sprach- und Sinngestalt hinaus ihm noch eine weitere Bedeutungsdimension durch seine im Psalmenbuch gegebene Positionierung zukommt und ob das Buch als Ganzes eine Programmatik hat, die mit bloßer Betrachtung der Einzeltexte eben nicht erfaßt werden kann.” Erich Zenger, “Der Psalter als Buch,” in *Der Psalter in Judentum und Christentum* (eds. Erich Zenger and Norbert Lohfink; HBS 18; Freiburg: Herder, 1998), 1–58, [12].

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry* (SBLMS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 5.

design (or logic) of the Psalter lies in whether these successive units of psalms come together under the broader text horizon to unveil a coherent macrostructure and metanarrative at the level of the book. The aim of this thesis is to understand the logic and *design* of the MT Psalter and whether any overarching architectural schema can be assigned to it.

If Psalms scholarship over the last 120 years were defined by its dominant approach, we would be at an interesting overlap between two major *revolutions*.<sup>3</sup> The *Formgeschichte* (or *Gattungforschung*) defines the first revolution and remains methodologically entrenched even among the most recent major commentaries on the Psalms.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the second revolution, the canonical approach (or understanding the Psalter as a complete text), set ablaze by B. Childs, G. Wilson and E. Zenger in the 1980s is still growing in dominance after about four decades. Despite observing a clear shift in mainstream Psalms research toward the latter approach, it *has not* achieved the same kind of domination *Formgeschichte* had. There appears to be a growing impatience to reap what was promisingly sown forty years ago and is due to several reasons. Perhaps the first and clearest reason is a lack of consensus in finding a coherent structure and dominant message in the entire Psalter based on the organization of the Psalms. Is the motif of the temple in the Psalter primarily theological or

<sup>3</sup> Gordon Wenham, “Towards a Canonical Reading of the Psalms,” in *Canon and Biblical Interpretation* (eds. Craig Bartholomew and Anthony Thiselton; vol. 7 of *SHS*, eds. Craig Bartholomew et al.; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 333–51, [335].

<sup>4</sup> Nancy deClaisse-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 13–21; Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC 15–16; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 38–42.

historical?<sup>5</sup> Does the book of Psalms have an overarching shape defined by Torah (didactic) or kingship (eschatological)?<sup>6</sup> Can various motifs be unified under some overarching theme?

Second, methodological choices adopted by scholars also affect the search for the Psalter's structure and logic. For instance, following David Howard's method of exhaustive lexical analysis of a structural unit of psalms,<sup>7</sup> a host of similar studies have been undertaken and almost every psalm unit in the Psalter has been analyzed. While the positive impact of these studies is a clearer appreciation of how certain psalm units are connected by recurring lexemes or motifs, the downside is that they offer an equal number of competing conclusions on different parts of the Psalter, making coherence for the whole, difficult.

Third, macrostructural analyses of the *entire* Psalter as a coherent unit are also rare, and the few available are primarily based on more subjective thematic arguments loosely supported by formal and structural evidence.<sup>8</sup> The function of formal poetical devices (e.g., superscriptions) and higher level poetic structural analyses (beyond a

<sup>5</sup> Zenger made an interesting argument for the Psalter functioning as the sanctuary in "Der Psalter als Buch," 35–43. For a more historical, socio-political view, see Nancy deClaissé-Walford, "The Meta-Narrative of the Psalter," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (ed. William Brown; Oxford University Press, 2014), 363–75; Susan Gillingham, "The Zion Tradition and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter," in *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel* (ed. John Day; Oxford Old Testament Seminar; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 308–41.

<sup>6</sup> This polarization was surmised by Gillingham, "The Zion Tradition and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter," 307–308.

<sup>7</sup> David Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93–100* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> One of the latest macrostructural treatments of the Psalms as a coherent work is O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* (Philipsburg: P&R, 2015). See also Steven Parrish, *A Story of the Psalms: Conversation, Canon, and Congregation* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003).

single psalm) are usually not central to the overall thesis. Thematic and poetical analyses of the Psalms remain disconnected. This incompatibility is partly because poetical structural studies, in general, are constrained to the level of a single psalm<sup>9</sup> while thematic analyses traverse across individual psalms easily. Although there are works that argue for a coherent organization of entire biblical books based on poetical techniques,<sup>10</sup> such arguments for the Psalter are scant.<sup>11</sup>

Fourth, the search for the coherence of the Psalter is also complicated by an intertextual understanding between the Psalms and other books in the OT (even without considering diachronic issues of dependency), which affects how the Psalter is to be viewed.<sup>12</sup> When the Psalter is seen as being influenced by Prophetic books, the Psalter could take on a messianic thrust.<sup>13</sup> If predominant influence is by Pentateuchal/Historical books, the Psalms could be oriented towards fostering Torah-

<sup>9</sup> Van der Lugt, *CAS I–III*; J. P. Fokkelman, *MPHB I–III; Reading Biblical Poetry: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); *The Psalms in Form: The Hebrew Psalter in Its Poetic Shape* (Leiden: Deo, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> William Shea, “The Chiastic Structure of the Song of Songs,” *ZAW* 92, no. 3 (1980): 378–96.

<sup>11</sup> Consider the two works here: Casper Labuschagne, “Significant Compositional Techniques in the Psalms: Evidence for the Use of Number as an Organizing Principle,” *VT* 59, no. 4 (2009): 583–605; Hendrik J. Koorevaar, “The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story with the Aid of Subscripts and Superscripts,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 579–92.

<sup>12</sup> Beth L. Tanner, *The Book of Psalms through the Lens of Intertextuality* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Mitchell argues that the Psalter follows a messianic program as identified in Zechariah 9–14. David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter an Eschatological Programme in the Books of Psalms* (eds. David Clines and Philip Davies; JSOTSup 252; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1997); Creach sees the dependence of Ps 1:3 on Jeremiah 17:8. Jerome Creach, “Like a Tree Planted by the Temple Stream: The Portrait of the Righteous in Psalm 1:3,” *CBQ* 61, no. 1 (1999): 34–46.

piety.<sup>14</sup> Hence, how do the *bricolages* in the Psalms function? Is the Psalter simply borrowing certain motifs in an ad-hoc manner or are they used definitively under certain overarching logic in the Psalter?

Finally, various textual evidence of differing arrangements of the psalms may be reframing the canonical question altogether. The contention that “no standard MT configuration of the premodern Hebrew psalter ever existed,” based on evidence of Qumran and medieval Hebrew Psalms manuscripts, presents a dilemma to the study of the arrangement of the MT Psalter.<sup>15</sup> As such, it is not surprising that a number of important Psalms scholars (e.g., John Goldingay, Tremper Longman III, Erhard

<sup>14</sup> Jamie Grant, *The King as Exemplar the Function of Deuteronomy’s Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (Atlanta: SBL, 2004); Beat Weber, “Die Doppelte Verknotung Des Psalters: Psalm 18//2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 105; 106//1 Chronik 16,” *BZ* 60, no. 1 (2016): 14–27.

<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the most recent discussion is found in an important article by Yarchin, in which his bold summary is telling: “This survey has produced evidence showing that, while the semantic content of *sēpher təhillim* did indeed become the fixed text known as the MT, the ways in which the content was configured into discrete psalmic compositions varied widely among the medieval manuscripts. Drawing from medieval halakists, the article offers a partial explanation for the variety in psalter configurations centered on different liturgical customs. *By applying the evidence from hundreds of Hebrew medieval Psalms manuscripts, the article concludes that, since no standard MT configuration of the premodern Hebrew psalter ever existed*, framing the question about scrolls from Qumran as either true psalters or as secondary collections finds no basis in the manuscript evidence.” Emphasis mine. William Yarchin, “Were the Psalms Collections at Qumran True Psalters?” *JBL* 134, no. 4 (2015): 775–89; See also Seybold (and Howard’s response) on this issue. They have noted that despite more scholars viewing the Qumran tradition as having its own canonical nature, “the Jerusalem tradition” (that is, a Jerusalem *vorlage* that MT probably depended on) is a “forerunner” of the LXX and the Qumran tradition and hence, the normative MT tradition remains an important aspect for study. Seybold, “The Psalter as a Book,” in *Jewish and Christian Approaches to the Psalms: Conflict and Convergence* (ed. S. Gillingham; Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013), 168–81, [178–80]; David Howard, “The Proto-MT Psalter, the King, and Psalms 1 and 2: A Response to Klaus Seybold,” in *Jewish and Christian Approaches to the Psalms: Conflict and Convergence* (ed. S. Gillingham; Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013), 182–89, [184]; See also Peter Flint, “The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls: Psalms Manuscripts, Editions and the Oxford Hebrew Bible,” in *Jewish and Christian Approaches to the Psalms: Conflict and Convergence* (ed. S. Gillingham; Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013), 11–34; *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* (Leiden: Brill Academic, 1997); “The Book of Psalms in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *VT* 48, no. 4 (1998): 453–72; Dwight D. Swanson, “Qumran and the Psalms,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip Johnston and David Firth; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 247–61.

Gerstenberger)<sup>16</sup> remain cautiously reserved in adopting the canonical approach, or in positing any overarching structure and metanarrative in the Psalms. These reasons above have contributed to the impasse in answering the seminal question of the logic of the Psalms.

This thesis seeks to address the question of design and logic by adopting a macrostructural and literary approach (entire book of Psalms) based on the received Hebrew MT Psalter (TR-150).<sup>17</sup> Diachronic or canonization issues, while important, are beyond the scope of this thesis. By macrostructural and literary, I pay attention to how and where leitmotifs (esp. in the Prologue) recur and develop, and whether metanarratival developments are present. I seek to understand delimitation and structuring of major psalm groups, and provide a synchronic analysis and comparison of all the Davidic Collections in the Psalter. As poetry, the form of the Psalter is as important as its thematic content. If an overarching design of the entire Psalter is

<sup>16</sup> John Goldingay, in his magisterial three-volume commentary, registers that “Psalms study that focuses attention on the arrangement of the Psalter still seems to me to involve too much imagination in connecting too few dots. I remain of the view that the main focus of Psalms study needs to be the individual psalm” (John Goldingay, *Psalms* [ed. Tremper Longman III, 3 vols.; BCOTWP; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic ; 2008], 3:11–12); Longman also notes, “The fact that this arrangement was not noticed before 1985 should make us pause and suggest that it was imposed rather than described from what is there.” (Tremper Longman III, “The Messiah: Explorations in the Law and Writings,” in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* [ed. Stanley E. Porter; MNTS 9; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 13–34, [24]); See also Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 35; E. Gerstenberger, “Der Psalter Als Buch Und Als Sammlung,” in *Neue Wege Der Psalmenforschung* (eds. Klaus Seybold and Erich Zenger; HBS 1; Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 3–13.

<sup>17</sup> Textus Receptus-150, coined by William Yarchin, is the text on which modern edition (e.g., *BHS*) rely. This specificity is important because the configurations of psalms in the MT-150 (P. Flint’s term) remains fluid up to the printing of the rabbinic bibles. Specifically, I have used the *BHS* (which is based on the Leningradensis Codex B19<sup>A</sup>) and all word searches in this thesis are undertaken electronically through BibleWorks v.10 WTT/WTM Hebrew texts (which is also based on Leningradensis Codex B19<sup>A</sup> and tagged with the Groves-Wheeler Westminster Morphology and Lemma Database). Neither the Psalms texts from the *BHQ* nor the *Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition* (formerly known as the *Oxford Hebrew Bible*, an eclectic text) were available at the time of writing.

present, it is highly plausible that poetic techniques at work in individual poems are also expressed beyond a single psalm. I will study how superscriptions, numerical symbolism and acrostic/alphabetic compositions function macrostructurally, explicating the roles they play in the design of the Psalter.

Three research questions that guide this thesis are as follow: (1) What are the main organizing techniques of the Psalter? (2) How is the Psalter organized macrostructurally? (3) Is there a consistent, coherent and overarching logic to the design and arrangement of the Psalter?

In this chapter, I will further contextualize the study and consolidate recent proposed key organizing techniques and structures. I will also present four hermeneutical perspectives on reading the Psalter. First, I will briefly discuss the connections between the text, implied reader and author of the Psalter, and how it can be understood as a *unity*. I am interested in the extent to which we can postulate the authorial intent of the Psalter based on the text and the various rhetorical features that readers can discern from the text. Second, I will include the views of several scholars who do not consider the Psalter as a unified book and then explain my view that the Psalter can be a *unified work*. Third, I argue that the Prologue is programmatic (Pss 1–2) and functions as the exordium for the entire Psalter. Finally, I propose that the Psalter be viewed through the theme of the Davidic covenant, contemporaneously with the books of Samuel and Chronicles.

In the second chapter, I will delve into the macrostructure of the five Books of the Psalter. I propose that the Psalter can be organized into three main Sections (Books I, II–III, IV–V), each containing four Groups that parallel each other. In the third chapter, I will highlight how leitmotifs are located centrally in the twelve Groups of the Psalter. I will explain how the Psalter can be read *concentrically, linearly* and

*contemporaneously.* I posit an interesting lexical-poetical technique, termed as the Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme (POS), which shows the careful design and unity of the Psalter. In the fourth chapter, I offer a macrostructural analysis of the five Davidic Collections (Pss 3–41, 51–70 [and 86], 101–103, 108–110, 138–145), which trace a cogent Metanarrative. This cogency is also found in the design of the thirteen historical superscriptions in David psalms. I conclude that we need not preclude a Messianic shaping of the Psalter at the time of the final composition. In chapter five, I will analyze three formal poetical devices: numerical compositions, acrostic and alphabetic compositions, and superscriptions. I posit an alternative method of counting words in the Psalms and compare my findings with the works of Labuschagne and van der Lugt. I have found that these formal devices were carefully designed to mark structural units and leitmotifs of the MT Psalter. The final chapter summarizes this thesis and posits the implications and future work that could arise from this study.

My conclusion is that the design of the Psalter is an intertwine (structure) of at least three narratives (content)—a larger metanarrative of God’s purposes expressed through the prophetic (mantological exegesis<sup>18</sup>) understanding of the Davidic covenant and two smaller narratives representing the life-journeys of the Davidic king and the *chasidim* to being established in the paradisiacal garden-city of bliss, expressed through

<sup>18</sup> Perhaps we can apply Fishbane’s understanding here. By mantological, it refers to a “pattern of inner-biblical exegesis, with its own configurations and dialectics, . . . the reinterpretation of prophetic oracles.” He adds, “With respect to oracles, however, the issue is more extreme: reinterpretation is necessary precisely because the original oracle-revelation was not yet—or not conclusively—actualized.” Michael Fishbane, “Revelation and Tradition: Aspects of Inner-Biblical Exegesis,” *JBL* 99, no. 3 (1980): 343–61, [354]; see also “Inner-Biblical Exegesis,” in *Hebrew Bible. Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, vol. I/1 (ed. Magne Saebo; HBOT; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 33–48.

the garb of skilfully written poetry (legal and aggadic exegesis<sup>19</sup>). The reader's own journey is the fourth narrative and fused with the previous three.

## **1.1 HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE PSALMS AS AN ORDERED AND UNIFIED BOOK**

According to Goulder, "The oldest commentary on the meaning of the Psalter is the manner of their arrangement in the Psalter."<sup>20</sup> Jesus's words in Luke 24:44 could have been one of the earliest statements with regards to the design of the Psalter—what is written about Jesus in the Psalms "is necessary to be fulfilled" ( $\delta\tau\iota\ \delta\varepsilon\iota\ \pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\theta\tilde{\eta}\nu\alpha\iota$ ).<sup>21</sup> In other words, the Psalter is prophetic with a *telos*. The early church understood this design by casting Jesus as the descendant of David (Acts 13:22–23) through whom the sure blessings of David promised by God are fulfilled by the resurrecting of Jesus. Thus, Jesus is the Son of YHWH and the king of Psalm 2 (Acts 13:33–35).<sup>22</sup> However, the

<sup>19</sup> Fishbane writes, "Legal provisions regarded as having been revealed by God and viewed as authoritative divine utterances came to constitute Sinaitic revelation as given by God to man. In the course of time this revealed law was viewed as definitive. Yet its very authoritativeness underscores the dilemma caused by the inevitable inability of the first revelation to deal with all new situations and unforeseen contingencies. This problem was variously resolved in different biblical genres and narratives." Hence, Legal exegesis is the expression of "ongoing legal *traditio*" (transmission) of the received authoritative *traditum* (tradition). In similar ways, Aggadic exegesis is the "later homiletical transformations of authoritative texts." Fishbane, "Revelation and Tradition: Aspects of Inner-Biblical Exegesis," 343, 351; "Inner-Biblical Exegesis," 38–43.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Goulder, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah* (JSOT 20; Sheffield: JSOT, 1982), 1.

<sup>21</sup> Dale Brueggemann notes that Luke 24:44 tells us that Jesus "was not looking at select messianic predictions but referring to a message written 'in all the scriptures' (v. 27). This encourages us to see the New Testament finding a messianic maximum in the Old Testament rather than a minimum." Dale A. Brueggemann, "The Evangelists and the Psalms," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip Johnston and David Firth; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 243–78, [243].

<sup>22</sup> Acts 13:33–35 cites Isa 55:3; Pss 2:7, 16:10 (cf. Heb 1:5).

name “Jesus” does not appear in the Psalms and it remains unclear, how and if the Psalter is arranged with such a *telos*, apart from several loosely connected kingship psalms (e.g., Pss 2, 45, 110, 132, 145).

In the first few centuries, the logic of arrangement of individual psalms was already of interest. According to G. Braulik, “*Hippolytus’s Homily ‘On the psalms’* (*HomPs*) is the oldest known systematic reflection on the Psalter.”<sup>23</sup> Rabbi Abbahu, Eusebius, Basil and Jerome had discussed the ordering of the Psalms and how Ps 1 could function as an introduction to the entire Psalter.<sup>24</sup> Also noted in the Babylonian Talmud, psalms were grouped according to the approximation of the ideas they contain.<sup>25</sup> The *Midrash Tehillim*, with references dating to the first few centuries, provides one of the earliest explicit understanding of the five-book arrangement of the Psalter.<sup>26</sup> Although the significance of the order in the Psalms had been recognized in

<sup>23</sup> Braulik notes that the text was written “in Rome at the beginning of the third century,” and that Hippolytus “presumably considered the arrangement of the Psalms to be of hermeneutical relevant, because he reflects upon their position in the Psalter: ‘Two psalms were read to us and it is necessary to state why they are the first.’ (*Hom. Ps. 18*).” Georg P. Braulik, “Psalter and Messiah. Towards a Christological Understanding of The Psalms in the Old Testament and the Church Fathers,” in *Psalms and Liturgy* (eds. Dirk J. Human and C. J. A. Vos; JSOTSup 410; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 15–40, [31].

<sup>24</sup> J.-M., Auwers, *La Composition littéraire du psautier : un état de la question* (CahRB; Paris: Gabalda, 2000), 12–14. Wenham, “Towards a Canonical Reading of the Psalms,” 335.

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Luc Vesco, *Le psautier de David traduit et commenté* (2 vols.; Paris: Cerf, 2006), 1:32.

<sup>26</sup> “As Moses gave five books of laws to Israel, so David gave five Books of Psalms to Israel, the Book of Psalms entitled Blessed is the man (Ps 1:1), the Book entitled For the Leader: Maschil (Ps 42:1), the Book, A Psalm of Asaph (Ps 73:1), the Book, A Prayer of Moses (Ps 90:1), and the Book, Let the redeemed of the Lord say (Ps 107:2).” William Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms* (2 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 1:5; Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Scholars Press, 1985), 200.

the writings of early rabbinic literature,<sup>27</sup> further clarity on the Psalter's overall shape and message, remained elusive.<sup>28</sup>

According to Labuschagne, “the German scholar, Friedrich Köster was the first in modern times to explicitly address the problem of the arrangement of the psalms.”<sup>29</sup> Köster noted that “from its beginning, it is to be expected that this [the arrangement of the Psalms] will not be a work of chance, but of a certain ordering.”<sup>30</sup> Ernst Hengstenberg (1845), J. Stähelin (1859), F. Hitzig (1863, 1865), B. Jacob and F. Delitzsch are the few nineteenth-century scholars who addressed structural features, links and the order of the Psalms.<sup>31</sup> John Forbes’s *Studies on the Book of Psalms*, applying the techniques of Robert Lowth’s principles of parallelism to the entire Psalter

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<sup>27</sup> Vesco also writes, “[a]ccording to the *Midrash Tehillim*, regarding Ps 3, when Rabbi Joshua ben Levi tried to put the psalms in order, a heavenly voice replied: ‘Do not wake that which is asleep.’ And when Rabbi Ishmael, in the presence of his master, wanted to arrange the Psalms according to their own order, his teacher said, ‘it is written: All His commandments are sure. They remain forever, they are done in truth and uprightness’ (Ps 111: 7-8).” Vesco, *Le psautier de David traduit et commenté*, 1:32.

<sup>28</sup> Yair Zakovitch, “The Interpretative Significance of the Sequence of Psalms 111-112. 113-118.119,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 215-27, [215]. Barton argues that the rabbis were seldom concerned with holistic interpretation and that “[t]he rabbis treat biblical books as wholes in the sense that they do not divide them up into sources.” John Barton, *The Old Testament Canon, Literature and Theology: Collected Essays of John Barton* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007), 48.

<sup>29</sup> Casper Labuschagne, “The Compositional Structure of the Psalter,” 1–29 [cited 26 April 2016]. Online: <http://www.labuschagne.nl/psalterstructure.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> “Aus diesem Gesichtspunkte wird nun auch die Anordnung des Psalters erst recht begreiflich; den von vorn herein lässt sich erwarten, dass diese nicht ein Werk des Zufalls, sondern nach einer gewissen Planmässigkeit gemacht seyn werde.” Friedrich B. Köster, *Die Psalmen nach ihrer strophischen Anordnung übersetzt* (Königsberg: Verlag der Gebrüder Bornträger, 1837), x.

<sup>31</sup> Casper Labuschagne, “The Compositional Structure of the Psalter,” 1–29 [p. 1; cited 26 April 2016]. Online: <http://www.labuschagne.nl/psalterstructure.pdf>.

and published in 1888, is also an early English work.<sup>32</sup> However, as Wenham notes, they remained “lone voices crying in the wilderness.”<sup>33</sup>

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Gunkel’s revolutionary genre/form-critical approach (*Gattungsforschung, Formgeschichte*) took the centerstage of Psalms scholarship.<sup>34</sup> Following and expanding on Gunkel’s approach, Mowinckel, Kraus, Weiser and Gerstenberger continue to influence future generations of Psalms scholars with *Formgeschichte*.<sup>35</sup> It can be said that from its inception to the mid-twentieth century, Psalms scholarship was defined by concerns of the text’s compositional history.<sup>36</sup> However, in the decades that followed, there was a gradual shift to more text-

<sup>32</sup> John Forbes, *Studies on the Book of Psalms: The Structural Connection of the Book of Psalms, Both in Single Psalms and in the Psalter as an Organic Whole* (ed. James Forrest; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1888); Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (trans. G. Gregory; London: Thomas Tegg, 1825).

<sup>33</sup> Wenham, “Canonical Reading,” 335.

<sup>34</sup> Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen: die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933); *An Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998); *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926). The ideas present in the *Einleitung* were already found in an earlier article in the second edition of *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, edited by Hermann Gunkel and Leopold Zscharnack (1927–31). See Hermann Gunkel, “The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction” (trans. Thomas M. Horner; 7th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982).

<sup>35</sup> Various interpretations in the 1960s expanded on the postulations of enthronement cult-settings by Mowinckel. For example, Kraus (royal Zion festival); Weiser (covenant renewal ceremony); Gerstenberger (liturgical sermons). See Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien* (6 vols.; Kristiania: Dybwad, 1924); *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* (New York: Abingdon, 1962); Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Worship in Israel: a Cultic History of the Old Testament* (Richmond: John Knox, 1966); *Psalms: A Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988); Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary, Old Testament Library* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 2000); Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part I: With an Introduction to Cultic Poetry* (FOTL XIV; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> David Peterson notes that even in the late 1960s, the “Hebrew Bible scholarship could, in many circles, be described as involving a discrete set of readily identifiable methods: lower [textual] and higher [historical] criticisms.” David L. Petersen, “Hebrew Bible Form Criticism,” *RSR* 18, no. 1 (1992): 29–33 [29]; See also Susan Gillingham, “Studies of the Psalms: Retrospect and Prospect,” *ExpTim* 119, no. 5 (2008): 209–16.

centered studies.<sup>37</sup> Reviewing several volumes produced by the Forms of the Old Testament Literature project, David Petersen notes that two important articles were reformulating the prevailing methodologies of Psalm studies.<sup>38</sup> James Muilenburg sought to give more attention to rhetorical and literary features of biblical text.<sup>39</sup> Rolf Knierim raised questions on the fluidity of the genre and relationships between the genre and “its content, mood, function, intention, or concern on the other.”<sup>40</sup> Since then, there has been a growing concern of the *individuality* of the text as a unit in biblical scholarship.

John Barton reasons that this is also due to a rise in interest in reading the Bible “as literature” from the late 1940s.<sup>41</sup> The adoption of structuralism in linguistic studies, in the wake of Ferdinand de Saussure, and in literary studies from around the 1960s, coupled with various new theories in literary studies further shook the base of classical form-criticism.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi, introduction to *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 3; John M. Stensvaag, “Recent Approaches to the Psalms,” *LQ* 9, no. 3 (1957): 195–212.

<sup>38</sup> The Forms of the Old Testament Literature (FOTL) project seeks to produce a series of volumes that cover the entire Old Testament using a common format and methodology of form analysis. Each volume examines the genre, setting, structure and intention associated with the biblical literature. See “The Forms of Old Testament Literature (FOTL) Project,” n.p. [cited 21 March 2014]. Online: <http://www.cgu.edu/pages/8072.asp>; Petersen, “Hebrew Bible Form Criticism,” 30.

<sup>39</sup> James Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and beyond,” *JBL* 88, no. 1 (1969): 1–20.

<sup>40</sup> Rolf Knierim, “Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered,” *Int* 27, no. 4 (1973): 435–68, [442, 449].

<sup>41</sup> Barton provides a good overview and analysis of how this transition had occurred. See John Barton, “Classifying Biblical Criticism,” *JSOT* no. 29 (1984): 19–35, [25]; Knierim, who wrote in 1973, would already have suggested such assimilation. See Knierim, “Old Testament Form Criticism,” 440–41.

<sup>42</sup> Barton, “Classifying Biblical Criticism,” 29.

From the 1960s, the early vestiges of a burgeoning of critical methods that moved from diachronic to synchronic<sup>43</sup> concerns were seen in Psalms scholarship. It is likely that the works of G. von Rad, C. Westermann, W. Zimmerli, J. Brennan, and J. Reindl on the Psalter foreshadowed the “second” revolution of Psalms study in the twentieth century.<sup>44</sup> Von Rad saw that the Psalms were Israel’s personal theological responses to God, having experienced YHWH’s mighty saving acts and his choice of the house of David for perpetuity and blessings.<sup>45</sup> Westermann relegated the prevailing occupation with the *Sitz im Leben* and emphasized the Psalter as an entire unit.<sup>46</sup> Zimmerli

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<sup>43</sup> The term, “synchronic,” can be defined as “the approach which aims at the definition and description of the structure of a text in the final form in which it is handed down to us.” On the other hand, “diachronic” is understood as “the approach which aims at the definition and description of the compositional/redactional history of this text.” See Jacob Hoftijzer, “Holistic or Compositional Approach? Linguistic Remarks to the Problem,” in *Synchronic or Diachronic?: A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor; *OtSt* 34; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 98–114, [98]; Koog P. Hong, “Synchrony and Diachrony in Contemporary Biblical Interpretation,” *CBQ* 75, no. 3 (2013): 521–39.

<sup>44</sup> See Gerhard von Rad, “Israel Before Jahweh (Israel’s Answer),” in *Old Testament Theology* (trans. D. M. G. Stalker; vol. 1; Edinburg: Oliver and Boyd, 1962); Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (trans. Keith Crim and Richard Soulen; Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 250–58; Walther Zimmerli, “Zwillingspsalmen,” in *Wort, Lied Und Gottesspruch: Festschrift Für Joseph Ziegler* (eds. Joseph Ziegler and Josef Schreiner; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1972), 105–16; Joseph Reindl, “Weisheitliche Bearbeitung con Psalmen: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Sammlung des Psalters,” in J. A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume, Vienna, 1980* (VTSup 32; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 333–56; Joseph P. Brennan, “Some Hidden Harmonies of the Fifth Book of Psalms,” in *Essays in Honor of Joseph P. Brennan by Members of the Faculty, Saint Bernard’s Seminary Rochester, New York* (Rochester, NY: St Bernard’s Seminary, 1976), 126–58; “Psalms 1–8 : Some Hidden Harmonies,” *BTB* 10, no. 1 (1980): 25–29.

<sup>45</sup> In Carl J. Bosma, “Discerning the Voices in the Psalms: A Discussion of Two Problems in Psalmic Interpretation,” *CTJ* 43 (2008): 183–212 [185].

<sup>46</sup> For example, he concluded that praise psalms “find fulfilment in Christ.” The praise of God is fulfilled when Christ praised God the Father at the completion of his work on the cross by his death (he noted that this is a twist because in the Psalms, the “dead” do not praise God). In similar ways, the Laments find a culmination in Christ when he took on the words of lament in Ps 22 on the cross. Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 161; Separately on methodology, Westermann wrote, “[a]n individual psalm can be adequately understood only in the context of the group to which it belongs. i.e. by comparing it with psalms of the same genre.” Claus Westermann, *The Psalms: structure, content & message* (trans. Ralph D. Gehrke; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980), 28.

uncovered the pairing of psalms (twin-Psalms) connected by keywords and motifs.<sup>47</sup> He showed that the juxtaposition of two psalms can bring about a richer understanding when both psalms are seen together.<sup>48</sup> Brennan identified three important conclusions: First, there is an attempt “to impose some sort of logical order upon the various collections” which extends to the entire Psalter. Second, there is an effort “to adapt and apply much earlier material to later conditions.” Third, “Such a reading of the Psalter opens the way to an eschatological and messianic interpretation of many texts which had originally only a limited national and historic setting.”<sup>49</sup> These scholars have set the stage for what would come.

By the 1980s, the “second” revolution of Psalms research was clearly underway. According to Barton, this “real shift of perspective” (from the “author” to the “text,”)<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> For example, he briefly pointed out the “twinning” of Pss 1–2; 32–33; 38–39; 39–40; 43–44; 69–70; 74–75; 77–78; 79–80; 80–81; 105–106; 127–128. See his detailed analysis on Pss 111–112. Zimmerli, “Zwillingspsalmen,” 106–07.

<sup>48</sup> E.g., Pss 111–12 are joined by the term “the fear of the LORD.” At the end of both psalms, there is a shift in the subject of discussion (from YHWH to “מֶלֶךְ־עָשֵׂה” in 111:10; from the “righteous” to the “עִוָּר” in 112:10). These psalms, when seen individually, describe the works and fate of its subjects mentioned in the final verse. However, when both psalms are seen in juxtaposition, the enriched perspective is a contrast between the outcome of the righteous and the wicked. I quote his conclusion on Psalms 111–112 here: “Das Zwillingspaar der Psalmen 111 und 112, die je ihr Gefälle auf eine abschließende Gegenaussage haben (111, 10a; 111, 10), bewegt sich danach im Spannungsfeld dreier Größen: Jahwes bekennend zu rühmendes Tun – der Gottesfürchtige – der Gottlose. Der Aussagewille des Doppel-Akrostichons umfaßt diesen ganzen Dreiklang, der verkürzt wird, wenn jeder Psalm nur als eine in sich geschlossene Größe gelesen wird. Die Doppelaussage der zwei Psalmen ist unverkennbar auf deren gegenseitiges Gegenüber hin angelegt.” Zimmerli, “Zwillingspsalmen,” 109.

<sup>49</sup> Brennan, “Psalms 1–8: Some Hidden Harmonies,” 28–29.

<sup>50</sup> By “author”, Barton means one of the four coordinates of his critical theory schema, which is modified from the schema presented by M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953). Related to the *text* is, on one side, the *content* (the subject matter); on the other side, the *author* (his experiences, emotions and settings); and on the third side, the *audience* (the rhetoric in persuasion). John Barton, “Classifying Biblical Criticism,” 22–24.

was pioneered by B. Childs<sup>51</sup> and brought to mainstream Psalms scholarship by his student, G. Wilson.

Since Wilson, the questions of the shape and message of the Psalter have captured the imagination of Psalms scholarship on both sides of the Atlantic. The works of Childs and Wilson were quickly picked up by scholars such as J. Mays,<sup>52</sup> P. Miller,<sup>53</sup> D. Howard,<sup>54</sup> C. McCann,<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> A year before the publication of his well-known *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM, 1979), Brevard Childs published the concept of the canonical approach in “Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature,” *Int* 32, no. 1 (1978): 46–55; See also “Analysis of a Canonical Formula: It shall be recorded for a future generation,” in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte* (eds. E. Blum et al.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), 357–64.

<sup>52</sup> James Mays, “The Place of the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter,” *JBL* 106, no. 1 (1987): 3–12; “The Question of Context in Psalm Interpretation,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (ed. J. Clinton McCann; JSOTSup 159; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 14–20; *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms* (Louisville: John Knox, 1994).

<sup>53</sup> Patrick Miller, “The Beginning of the Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (ed. J. Clinton McCann; JSOTSup 159; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 83–92; “The End of the Psalter : A Response to Erich Zenger,” *JSOT*, no. 80 (1998): 103–10; “Synonymous-Sequential Parallelism in the Psalms,” *Bib* 61, no. 2 (1980): 256–60.

<sup>54</sup> Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*; “Editorial Activity in the Psalter: A State-of-the-Field Survey,” *WW* 9, no. 3 (1989): 274–85; “A Contextual Reading of Psalms 90–94,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (ed. J. Clinton McCann; JSOTSup 159; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 108–23; “Psalm 94 among the Kingship-of-YHWH Psalms,” *CBQ* 61, no. 4 (1999): 667–85.

<sup>55</sup> J. Clinton McCann, “Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (ed. J. Clinton McCann; JSOTSup 159; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 93–107; “Wisdom’s Dilemma: The Book of Job, the Final Form of the Book of Psalms, and the Entire Bible,” in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister* (ed. Michael L Barré; CBQMS 29; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997), 18–30; “The Shape of Book I of the Psalter and the Shape of Human Happiness,” in *Book of Psalms, The: Composition and Reception* (eds. P. Flint and P. Miller; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 340–48; “Reading from the Beginning (again): The Shape of Book I of the Psalter,” in *Diachronic and Synchronic* (eds. J. Burnett et al.; New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 129–42; “The Single Most Important Text in the Entire Bible: Toward a Theology of the Psalms,” in *Soundings in the Theology of Psalms* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 63–75; “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (ed. W. Brown; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 350–62.

J. Creach,<sup>56</sup> F. Hossfeld and E. Zenger,<sup>57</sup> and others<sup>58</sup> who focused on the Psalms in its final composition as a “literary unity,”<sup>59</sup> and offered nuanced propositions on the editorial shape and shaping of the Psalter. Martin Klingbeil’s survey of major commentaries on the Psalms from 1935–2003 revealed that commentators had indeed moved towards literary approaches from the 1970s.<sup>60</sup> By 2014, deClaissé-Walford

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<sup>56</sup> Jerome Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (JSOTSup 217; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996); “The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Shape of Second Isaiah,” JSOT, no. 80 (1998): 63–76; “Like a Tree Planted by the Temple Stream: The Portrait of the Righteous in Psalm 1:3,” *CBQ* 61, no. 1 (1999): 34–46; “The Destiny of the Righteous and the Theology of the Psalms,” in *Soundings in the Theology of Psalms* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 49–61.

<sup>57</sup> Frank L. Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalmen* (HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2000); *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100* (ed. Klaus Baltzer; trans. Linda M. Maloney; Hermeneia; MN: Fortress, 2005); *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101-150* (ed. Klaus Baltzer; trans. Linda M. Maloney; Hermeneia; MN: Fortress, 2011); “Neue Und Alte Wege Der Psalmenexegese: Antworten Auf Die Fragen von M. Millard Und R. Rendtorff,” *BibInt* 4, no. 3 (1996): 332–43.

<sup>58</sup> Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*; “Lord, Remember David: G. H. Wilson and the Message of the Psalter,” *VT* 56, no. 4 (2006): 526–48; Grant, *The King as Exemplar*; Nancy deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997); Barry C. Davis, “A Contextual Analysis of Psalms 107-118” (Ph.D. Diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1996).

<sup>59</sup> An example of a commentary that viewed the Psalms as a literary unit and work of art is Nicolaas H. Ridderbos, *Die Psalmen: Stilistische Verfahren und Aufbau mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Ps 1-41* (New York: de Gruyter, 1972). See also Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983); *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Luis Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics* (Roma: Editrice pontificio Istituto biblico, 1988); James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

<sup>60</sup> Martin Klingbeil, “Off the Beaten Track: An Evangelical Reading of the Psalms without Gunkel,” *BBR* 16, no. 1 (2006): 25–39, [29–33]. He adds that from the 1980s, fewer Psalms commentators adopted comparative methodologies. He calls this trend, a “going off the beaten track” (of form-critical analysis), revealing an “increasing dissatisfaction” with the method among commentators. This dissatisfaction was not merely rhetorical. He cited Hans-Joachim Kraus who changed his approach from the fourth to the fifth revised edition of his Psalms commentary, moving from form critical to “descriptive categories, based on the content and context of the various psalms.”

found that a new generation of Psalms commentators had taken canonical and editorial arrangements of the psalms into account.<sup>61</sup>

An important methodology that has taken root is the lexical/thematic links analysis. Howard's method of exhaustive examination of lexical links within a group of neighboring psalms, coupled with the growing sophistication of biblical software, have spawned an increasing number of doctoral theses adopting a similar methodology.<sup>62</sup> Almost every literary unit in the Psalter has been studied exhaustively by this approach.<sup>63</sup> However, this methodology seems to be increasingly counterproductive. For instance, the plethora of lexical links generated made it increasingly harder to find the dominant idea across the unit of concern, let alone the entire Psalter. This problem of multiplicity is usually addressed by sharpening the criteria for claiming intentional

<sup>61</sup> She cites McCann's work in Robert Doran et al., *The New Interpreter's Bible. the First Book of Maccabees, the Second Book of Maccabees, Introduction to Hebrew Poetry, the Book of Job, the Book of Psalms. Volume IV* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996); F. Hossfeld and E. Zenger., *Psalms.* (vols. 2, 3; Hermeneia Series, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005, 2011); deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*; Nancy deClaissé-Walford, "The Canonical Approach to Scripture and The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship* (ed. Nancy deClaissé-Walford; Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 1–11, [8–9]; I add to her list, Vesco's *Le psautier de David traduit et commenté*.

<sup>62</sup> Barry C. Davis, "A Contextual Analysis of Psalms 107-118" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1996); Francis X. Kimmitt, "The Shape of Psalms 42-49" (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000); Kilnam Cha, "Psalms 146-150: The Final Hallelujah Psalms as a Fivefold Doxology to the Hebrew Psalter" (Ph.D. Diss., Baylor University, 2006); Kevin G. Smith, "The Redactional Criteria and Objectives Underlying the Arrangement of Psalms 3–8" (Th.D. Diss., South African Theological Seminary, 2007); Christine Jones, "The Psalms of Asaph : A Study of the Function of a Psalm Collection." (Ph.D. Diss., Baylor University, 2009); James M. Todd, "A Poetic and Contextual Analysis of Psalms 135-137" (Ph.D. Diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010); John de Hoog, "A Canonical Reading of Psalm 119" (M.Th. Thesis, Australian College of Theology, 2011); Michael K. Snearly, "The Return of the King: An Editorial-Critical Analysis of Psalms 107-150" (Ph.D. Diss., Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, 2012); The theses above generally have similar methodology. Notably, Todd and Snearly have included poetics as part of their analyses in the theses.

<sup>63</sup> Usually, conjunctions, prepositions, particles, negative adverbs, interrogative, demonstrative, personal and relative pronouns are excluded in such analyses.

links. Such solutions, in general, provide distinctions between a strong or weak connection.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps one the most recent solutions proposed is M. Snearly's (and C. Richards's) statistical criterion based on a lexeme's frequency of occurrence and its associated location.<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, it is difficult for such studies to expand beyond the single literary unit. Moreover, the research of formal poetic devices remains to be integrated into such lexical/semantic studies.<sup>66</sup> Often, it is not clear how conclusions reached via lexical/thematic studies correspond with poetical devices or the macrostructure of the Psalms. Different conclusions reached for separate collections highlight different emphases and there is currently little effort in integrating these studies.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> This has been variously defined. E.g, Howard classifies links into three main groups: “Key-word links,” “thematic” and “structure/genre” similarities. Kimmitt divides them into “Key-lexeme links” and “Thematic-lexeme links.” It is somewhat a subjective endeavor of grouping common lexemes as strong or weak (incidental) links. See Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*, 99; Hoog applied Leonard's criteria for grading lexical connections (“quality”). His work focused on Ps 119 within Book V. Hoog, “A Canonical Reading of Psalm 119,” 60–62; Jeffery M. Leonard, “Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case,” *JBL* 127, no. 2 (2008): 241–65, [245–257].

<sup>65</sup> He notes, “key-word links, which is defined as a word or phrase for which at least half of all occurrences in Book V are in one group and/or at least 20 percent of all occurrences in the Psalter are in one group.” Michael K. Snearly, “The Return of the King: Book V as a Witness to Messianic Hope in the Psalter,” in *The Psalms : Language for All Seasons of the Soul* (ed. Andrew Schmutzter and David Howard Jr. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 209–17, [210]; *The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter* (LHBOTS 624; New York: T&T Clark, 2015), 1, 120, 187; See also Peter C. W. Ho, review of Michael Snearly, *The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter*, *JESOT* (forthcoming). Carissa Richards's dissertation is plausibly one of the latest. See Carissa Richards, “Toward the Kingdom: The Shape and Message of Psalms 15–24,” at the Institute for Biblical Research Emerging Scholar Session at the SBL meeting in November, 2016.

<sup>66</sup> Works that try to integrate formal and tacit analyses of the Psalms include Les D. Maloney, “A Word Fitly Spoken: Poetic Artistry in the First Four Acrostics of the Hebrew Psalter” (Ph.D. Thesis, Baylor University, 2005); “Intertextual Links: Part of the Poetic Artistry within the Book I Acrostic Psalms,” *ResQ* 49, no. 1 (2007): 11–21; Todd, “A Poetic and Contextual Analysis of Psalms 135-137.”

<sup>67</sup> Wilson noted that the relationships between groups of psalms within the Books of the Psalter are an area of research that requires focus. Gerald H. Wilson, “Understanding the Purposeful

Consolidation of these studies remains a much-needed endeavor.<sup>68</sup> Hence, in light of the research gains from these various dissertations on the Psalms in the last two decades, it is timely to bring them under a macro study of the whole Psalter. In the following section, we will survey several important works and consolidate their proposed approaches, structures and programs.

## **1.2 SURVEY OF KEY STUDIES ON THE PSALMS AS AN ORDERED AND UNIFIED BOOK**

### **1.2.1 BREVARD CHILDS**

Childs's works have been well studied.<sup>69</sup> He defined his canonical approach as "interpreting the biblical text in relation to a community of faith and practice for whom it served a particular theological role as possessing divine authority."<sup>70</sup> The final form

Arrangement of Psalms in the Psalter: Pitfalls and Promise," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (ed. J. Clinton McCann; JSOTSup 159; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 42–51, [43].

<sup>68</sup> Gillingham's article is a helpful piece of work in this area. Gillingham, "The Zion Tradition."

<sup>69</sup> Recent studies include Philip E. Sumpter, "The Substance of Psalm 24: An Attempt to Read Scripture after Brevard S. Childs" (Ph.D. Diss., Cheltenham: University of Gloucestershire, 2011); Daniel R. Driver, "Brevard Childs : The Logic of Scripture's Textual Authority" (Ph.D. Diss., University of St. Andrews, 2009); Dennis T. Olson, "Zigzagging through Deep Waters: A Guide to Brevard Childs's Canonical Exegesis of Scripture," *WW* 29, no. 4 (2009): 348–56; Chen Xun, *Theological Exegesis in the Canonical Context: Brevard Springs Childs' Methodology of Biblical Theology* (New York: Peter Lang International Academic, 2010); Christopher R. Seitz, *The Bible as Christian Scripture: The Work of Brevard S. Childs* (Atlanta: SBL, 2013). Perhaps the sharpest criticism of Childs work is from James Barr, especially in his *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective*, (London: SCM, 1999). Others such as Barton, McEvenue, and Brueggemann have also registered their reservations on the canonical approach. Sean E. McEvenue, "The Old Testament, Scripture or Theology," *Int* 35, no. 3 (1981): 229–42; Dale A. Brueggemann, "Brevard Childs' Canon Criticism: An Example of Post-Critical Naiveté," *JETS* 32, no. 3 (1989): 311–26; John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 77–103, 208–11; *The Old Testament Canon, Literature and Theology*, 43–51.

<sup>70</sup> Childs, *IOTS*, 74.

has an important hermeneutical function.<sup>71</sup> It establishes a “peculiar profile of a passage,”<sup>72</sup> emphasizing certain elements and reducing the importance of others, so as to bring to the forefront the theological soundings that need to be heard.<sup>73</sup> This is well illustrated in a short article of Childs where he cited Ps 102:19, remarking that the final redactors had intended “the divine word of promise, which was first given to a generation in exile, to be written down for the sake of the coming generation.”<sup>74</sup>

Childs highlighted six methodological concerns on reading the Psalms: First, the introduction of the Psalms provides the hermeneutical refocus. Psalm 1 functions as a call to Israel to meditate upon the Torah<sup>75</sup> in the written form. Second, composite psalms (e.g., Ps 108) illustrate that “psalms have been loosened from a given cultic

<sup>71</sup> Childs, *IOTS*, 73. Childs was not so much concerned with “aesthetic unity” or coherency of a work. Barton understood this holistic “theological shape” as having “an edifying meaning, a ‘confessional’ meaning, a worthy meaning, a consistent meaning. . . . Different criteria of meaning, truth and consistency apply in reading Scripture from those we regularly employ in reading other books.” Barton, *The Old Testament Canon, Literature and Theology*, 48–49.

<sup>72</sup> Childs, *IOTS*, 77; “Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature,” 47–48.

<sup>73</sup> Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2011), 71.

<sup>74</sup> Childs, “Analysis of a Canonical Formula,” 361.

<sup>75</sup> In Childs’s view, the entire Psalter, as introduced by Ps 1, is to be read as the Torah. Scholars have understood the term, “Torah” in Ps 1:2 in different ways. LeFebvre summarizes the meaning of “Torah” in Ps 1:2 as such: “(1) a certain, individual precept (*a torah*); (2) the whole Deuteronomic law collection (*the Torah*); or (3) the complete Pentateuch (also *the Torah*).” A fourth suggestion is a more general term, “instruction” rather than “law.” LeFebvre’s own definition is interesting. He notes that when Moses composed two documents, a song, and a book of the law before he died (Deut 31:22–24). The reciting of the song involves the observation of the book of the law as well. In other words, “Deut. 31–32 identifies law-contemplation with song-singing. It is the song which will be forever known by the people (Deut 31–32), while the book is not accessible to them.” Lefebvre then applies this concept on the Psalmody. He argues that the “Psalmody served as a means of torah-meditation. . . . Based on the paradigm in Deut 31–32 it can be seen that Israel used surrogate texts for torah-contemplation, particularly songs.” Michael LeFebvre, “Torah-Meditation and the Psalms: The Invitation of Psalm 1,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip Johnston and David Firth; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 213–25, [220–225].

context” and reappropriated for a different context.<sup>76</sup> Third, original settings identified for Royal psalms were given messianic significance. Childs saw that it was likely that the final redactors had provided a “new meaning” (messianic) for reading the Royal psalms.<sup>77</sup> Fourth, Childs argued that there is a phenomenon of having eschatological elements abruptly placed in complaint psalms, which signals an eschatological impetus, not “different in kind from the prophetic message.”<sup>78</sup> Fifth, many psalms (e.g., Pss 14, 25, 51) which begin as an individual prayer shift toward a communal orientation at the end. Childs argued that this is evidence of collective reception by later generations.<sup>79</sup> Finally, Childs noted that superscriptions alter the way the psalms were understood. He argued that late<sup>80</sup> psalm superscriptions are often used in association with David.<sup>81</sup> This

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<sup>76</sup> He also cited how 1 Chron 16 used parts of Pss 105, 96 and 106 in a new setting. Childs, *IOTS*, 515.

<sup>77</sup> For instance, the superscription attributed to Solomon and the concluding subscript, “the prayers of David are ended,” suggest that the redactor wanted Ps 72 to be “understood in the context of the biblical story found in Kings and Chronicles” rather than “an example of ancient Near Eastern royal ideology.” Childs, *IOTS*, 517.

<sup>78</sup> E.g., complaint elements in Ps 102: 2–12 and 24–25a are separated by an eschatological segment with little literary connection. Childs also noted that various scholars explained that the phenomenon arose because the psalms were likely “reworked” in the postexilic period. Childs, *IOTS*, 518.

<sup>79</sup> Childs, *IOTS*, 520.

<sup>80</sup> Mays pointed out that because “the Greek text has added to Psalm 95 (MT 96) ‘of David when the house was built after the captivity,’ it is apparent that these editors were not thinking historically. Such practices make it very clear that what is at work in the latter history of the ‘*le dàwîd*’ attributions is some kind of canonical ordering and defining that proceeds oblivious of any sort of historical or autobiographical concerns.” James L. Mays, “The David of the Psalms,” *Int* 40, no. 2 (1986): 143–55, [153]. For a discussion on superscriptions as a “late” phenomenon, see Gerald T. Sheppard, “Theology and the Book of Psalms,” *Int* 46, no. 2 (1992): 143–55, [147].

<sup>81</sup> For instance, the superscriptions of Pss 51 and 56 draw the reader to the historical setting in Samuel rather than the cultic setting in the psalms themselves. By reading the psalm within the context of the historical events, the reader is given access “into his [David’s] emotional life,” connecting the reader’s context with the historical context of the superscriptions. Childs, *IOTS*, 521. See also “Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis,” *JSS* 16, no. 2 (1971): 137–150.

Davidization allows the Psalms to “testify to all the common troubles and joys of ordinary human life in which all persons participate.”<sup>82</sup> The Davidic psalms become a representative psalm of the common person.

While Childs raised important concerns about reading the Psalms, he did not postulate any macrostructure or theological program for it. This work, however, was taken up by Childs’s protégé, Gerald Wilson.

### 1.2.2 GERALD WILSON

Wilson’s approach is both historical-comparative and literary. He believed that there is “an editorial movement to bind the whole [Psalter] together.”<sup>83</sup> The first two-thirds of his landmark work, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*,<sup>84</sup> consist of comparative studies of explicit editorial markers found in Mesopotamian hymnic literature and Qumran psalms manuscripts. However, after 140 pages of such study, Wilson conceded that “any organizational concern or purpose of the editor(s) must be inferred from the *tacit* arrangement of the pss.”<sup>85</sup> Several techniques of tacit editorial organization are given in Wilson’s works. One of the clearest is the use of thematic

<sup>82</sup> Childs, *IOTS*, 521.

<sup>83</sup> Gerald Wilson, “The Shape of the Book of Psalms,” *Int* 46, no. 2 (1992): 129–42, [129].

<sup>84</sup> Parts of this book are also expanded and published as separate articles. Gerald H. Wilson, “Evidence of Editorial Divisions in the Hebrew Psalter,” *VT* 34, no. 3 (1984): 337–52; “The Qumran Psalms Scroll [11QPsa] Reconsidered : Analysis of the Debate,” *CBQ* 47, no. 4 (1985): 624–42; “The Use of Royal Psalms at the ‘Seams’ of the Hebrew Psalter,” *JSOT*, no. 35 (1986): 85–94; “The Use of ‘Untitled’ Psalms in the Hebrew Psalter,” *ZAW* 97, no. 3 (1985): 404–13.

<sup>85</sup> Emphasis mine. Wilson argued that it does not mean that Psalms superscripts do not contribute in any way to the organizational purposes of the Psalms. He noted that “while there is no evidence that the final editor produced the s/ss to serve editorial ends in the organization of the psalter, there are

parallels within the Psalms.<sup>86</sup> Abrupt authorship changes in the superscriptions are also used to mark “strong disjunctions” in the Psalter, especially in Books I–III.<sup>87</sup> Certain words in the superscriptions identifying genre “designations”<sup>88</sup> can mark a disjunction.<sup>89</sup> There is a tendency to use verbal parallels,<sup>90</sup> employed as “identical first lines,” to unite psalms in Books IV–V (105:1; 106:1; 107:1).<sup>91</sup> Doxological phrases at the end of major divisions (e.g., 104–06, 111–17, 135) and the use of יְהֹוָה phrases to “introduce the next segment of psalms” are important evidence of editorial arrangements.<sup>92</sup> Even “the absence of a superscript functions as an editorial method of . . . [combining an] ‘untitled’ psalm with its immediate predecessor.”<sup>93</sup>

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indications that they actively utilized these fixed s/ss in their purposeful arrangement of the pss.” Wilson, *Editing*, 142, 144.

<sup>86</sup> Wilson cited the parallels between Pss 90 and 106, evident in the emphasis on the character Moses, and the narration of the punishment of Israel because of their sins. Wilson, *Editing*, 187.

<sup>87</sup> Authorship changes, as an organization technique, occur mainly in Books I–III and are less obvious in Books IV–V of the Psalter. Wilson, “Evidence of Editorial Divisions in the Hebrew Psalter,” 339, 349; For a list of differences in the organization techniques between Books I–III and IV–V, see Wilson, “The Use of Royal Psalms at the ‘Seams’ of the Hebrew Psalter,” 87.

<sup>88</sup> They are distinct from genre categories defined by form-criticism.

<sup>89</sup> He cited, “1. šgywn (Ps. vii); 2. mktm (6 psalms); 3. tpls (5 psalms); 4. ms̄kyl (13 psalms); 5. thlh (Ps. cxlv); 6. hllwyh (16 psalms)” and that “[t]he major distinguishing characteristic of these terms is that they never occur together in the same superscript.” Wilson, “Evidence of Editorial Divisions in the Hebrew Psalter,” 340.

<sup>90</sup> For example, both Pss 136 and 145 are concerned with YHWH’s “wondrous works,” his “steadfast love,” and praise YHWH for his provision to his creatures. Wilson, *Editing*, 189.

<sup>91</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 195.

<sup>92</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 190.

<sup>93</sup> Wilson, “The Use of ‘Untitled’ Psalms in the Hebrew Psalter,” 404.

Wilson also posited an interesting “interlocking” technique that binds the entire Psalter together.<sup>94</sup> The whole Psalter is bounded by a final Wisdom frame (1, 73, 90, 107, 145) which interlocks with a Royal Covenant frame (2, 72, 89, 144). This is shown graphically below:

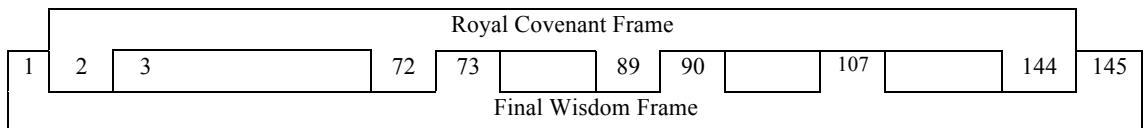


Figure 1: Wilson’s Final Frame of the MT Psalter<sup>95</sup>

Three elements, namely, the introduction (Ps 1), the five-book divisions and the final Hallel serve as the basic trajectory of the editorial agenda.<sup>96</sup> Books I–III trace the establishment of YHWH’s covenant with the Davidic king (2), celebration of YHWH’s faithfulness to his covenant (72), and apparent failure of the covenant because of Israel’s sin (89:38–39, 44). Book IV opens with a hopeful response to the pessimism at the end of Book III. It focuses on the kingship of YHWH who had been the refuge of Israel. In Book V, the two Davidic segments at the beginning and end show that David is the model exemplar who places this trust in YHWH. The massive Torah Ps 119 serves to “emphasize the primacy of the law in man’s relationship to YHWH,” and that access to God (120–134) and his blessings is “through the appropriation of and obedience to

<sup>94</sup> Gerald Wilson, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (ed. J. Clinton McCann; JSOT 159; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 72–82.

<sup>95</sup> Redrawn from Wilson, “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms,” 81.

<sup>96</sup> Wilson’s redactional theory is further elaborated and crystalized in an article published a year after his book. See Wilson, “The Use of Royal Psalms at the ‘Seams’ of the Hebrew Psalter,” 85–94.

Torah.”<sup>97</sup> The final Hallel is a response to Ps 145:21 by all the recipients of YHWH’s promises.<sup>98</sup> The final result is “a Psalter that recalls the foundational pre-monarchical faith of Israel (90, 105–106) and directs the faithful to trust in Yahweh as king rather than in fragile and failing human princes.”<sup>99</sup>

Two issues stand out in Wilson’s work.<sup>100</sup> First, Wilson has foregrounded the study of colophonic and explicit editorial markers as organization techniques. Wilson may not have successfully explained the use of such explicit data in the Psalter,<sup>101</sup> but his proposals on the use of superscriptions, doxologies, formulaic phrases as explicit and tacit evidence of organization have piqued immense interests in Psalms scholarship.

<sup>97</sup> Note that in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, Ps 119 comes after the Songs of Ascents. Wilson noted that “the placement of this psalm after the [Songs of Ascents] psalms, rather than before them as in the canonical Psalter, has a significant effect. Rather than Torah precipitating pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the temple pilgrimage, in effect, leads to the Torah.” Gerald Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs) and the Canonical Psalter,” *CBQ* 59, no. 3 (1997): 448–64, [460]; Wilson, *Editing*, 223.

<sup>98</sup> According to Wilson, the final text of the Psalter is most likely a composition developed under the “social matrix” of the “last century BC and the first century AD.” Wilson, “Use of Royal Psalms,” 93; Elsewhere, Wilson wrote, “I would like to suggest that events surrounding the first Jewish war with Rome in 66–70 CE, as well as the activities of Johanan ben Zakkai and the great Academy of Yavneh following the war, may well have influenced the distinctive characteristics of the final form of the Psalms.” Gerald Wilson, “A First Century CE Date for the Closing of the Book of Psalms,” *JBQ* 28, no. 2 (2000): 102–10, [106].

<sup>99</sup> Gerald Wilson, “King, Messiah, and the Reign of God: Revisiting the Royal Psalms and the Shape of the Psalter,” in *Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (eds. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller; VTSup 99; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 391–406, [392–93]; Gerald H. Wilson, “The Structure of the Psalter,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip Johnston and David Firth; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 229–46, [240].

<sup>100</sup> Over the last three decades, Wilson’s work has been well documented and sometimes, sharply criticised. For instance, see D. Mitchell, “Lord, Remember David: G.H. Wilson and the Message of the Psalter”; Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93–100*.

<sup>101</sup> Wilson was not too confident of how superscriptions worked, especially in Books IV and V of the Psalter. He confessed, “the absence of superscripts reflects an awareness on the part of the Psalter editor(s) of alternate traditions for the combination/division of these pss and represents a purposeful technique employed to preserve them [in Books I–III]. This inference can be extended to other examples of such pss in Books 4 and 5, with varying degrees of confidence.” Emphasis mine. Wilson, *Editing*, 181.

Second, the study of the Psalter as a coherent editorial organized work has taken form.

Wilson's postulations of the macrostructural agenda of the five Books have found widespread acceptance though they continued to receive nuanced variations.<sup>102</sup>

### 1.2.3 ERICH ZENGER

Writing from Germany, Zenger blazed the trail of reading the Psalter as a “book” in continental Europe. His voluminous works on the Psalter and his three-volume commentary (co-written with F.-L. Hossfeld)<sup>103</sup> quickly became important references.<sup>104</sup>

Even in 1987, Zenger had expressed that the Psalter is increasingly being considered as a book of prayer and contemplation (*Gebets- und Betrachtungsbuch*) as

<sup>102</sup> Wilson's reasoning of Book V as a pious portrayal of David rather than his kingship has not received rigorous affirmation because Books IV–V continue to portray a positive view of the Davidic kingship (101, 103, 108, 110, 144–145) and Zion (120–134).

<sup>103</sup> See Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Die Psalmen* (3 vols.; Würzburg: Echter, 1993–2012). Volumes two and three have been translated and printed as part of the Hermeneia Series. The Hermeneia Series include a number of excurses that analyze various collections and contextual analysis with neighboring psalms.

<sup>104</sup> A brief list of Zenger's thoughts on the canonical concepts of the Psalms and various methods he employed to formulate his thoughts in several of his works from 1991 to 2010: Erich Zenger, “Was Wird Anders Bei Kanonischer Psalmenauslegung,” in *Gott, Eine Offenbarung* (Würzburg: Echter, 1991), 397–413; “Das Buch der Psalmen,” in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (eds., E. Zenger et al.; 2006 ed.; KSTS; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1995), 348–70; “Der Psalter als Buch,” in *Der Psalter in Judentum und Christentum* (eds. E. Zenger and N. Lohfink; HBS 18; Freiburg: Herder, 1998), 1–58; “Psalmenforschung Nach Hermann Gunkel Und Sigmund Mowinckel,” in *Congress Volume* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 399–435; “Psalmenexegesis Und Psalterexegese: Eine Forschungsskizze,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. E. Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 17–65. Beyond these references, other related articles are also consulted. See Erich Zenger, “Der Jüdischer Psalter: Ein Anti-Imperiales Buch?” in *Religion Und Gesellschaft: Studien Zu Ihrer Wechselbeziehung in Den Kulturen Des Antiken Vorderen Orients* (ed. Rainer Albertz, AOAT 248; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1997), 95–105; “Der Zion als Ort der Gottesnähe. Beobachtungen Zum Weltbild des Wallfahrtspsalters Ps 120-134,” in *Gottes Nähe im Alten Testament* (eds. G. Eberhardt and K. Liess; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2004), 84–114; “Torafrömmigkeit. Beobachtungen Zum Poetischen Und Theologischen Profil von Psalm 119,” in *Freiheit Und Recht* (eds. C. Hardmeier and F. Crüsemann; Gütersloh: Kaiser, 2003), 380–96; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, “Neue Und Alte Wege Der Psalmenexegese: Antworten Auf Die Fragen von M. Millard Und R. Rendtorff,” *BibInt* 4, no. 3 (1996): 332–43; See also G. Wenham's appraisal of Zenger's article, “Towards a Canonical Reading of the Psalms,” 334–46.

opposed to a Second Temple song book.<sup>105</sup> In “Was Wird Anders Bei Kanonischer Psalmenauslegung,” Zenger listed four observations of the canonical interpretation.<sup>106</sup>

First, canonical psalm interpretation observes the relationship between neighboring psalms, in particular, the end of one psalm and the beginning of the next.<sup>107</sup> Concatenations of psalms provide additional meaning to an individual psalm that is not explicit when it is considered on its own.<sup>108</sup>

Second, canonical psalm interpretation observes the position of the psalm (as intended by the editor) within its compositional unit.<sup>109</sup> Interpretation of a psalm is enriched when it is considered within the context of a group of psalms around it.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Zenger, “Was Wird Anders,” 397.

<sup>106</sup> Zenger avoided a lengthy discussion on the term “canonical” in most of his works. It is not clear to what extent he had adopted the term entirely as conceived by Childs. However, Zenger was clearly interested in the intent and message through the arrangement of individual psalms in the Psalter and the location of the Psalter in the larger context of the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>107</sup> “Bei kanonischer Auslegung sind die Beziehungen eines Psalm: zu seinen Nachbarpsalmen zu beachten.” Zenger, “Was Wird Anders,” 399. He cited existing examples of “twin-psalms” such as Pss 1–2; 111–112; 90–92; Pss 135–136. Other examples include the “binding” (*Zusammenbindung*) of Pss 50 and 51 through Ps 51:18–21; Pss 84 and 85 through Ps 84:9–10. See also “Der Psalter als Buch,” 13–18.

<sup>108</sup> We have seen this in the works of Zimmerli. Zenger cited the example of Ps 8. This hymn-like wisdom psalm that sings of God’s power and provision in creation receives a fuller meaning when it is viewed with the laments in Ps 7 and in the context of the oppressed and afflicted in Pss 9–10. Psalm 8, thus, becomes the central pillar of hope. Keyword and thematic connections in Pss 12:2, 6 and 13:3b, likewise, link Pss 12 and 13 together, highlighting God’s imminent action to deliver the poor and the oppressed.

<sup>109</sup> “Bei kanonischer Auslegung ist die Stellung einer Psalm: in der jeweiligen (von der Redaktion intendierten) kompositionellen Einheit zu beachten.” Zenger, “Was Wird Anders,” 403.

<sup>110</sup> For instance, the Group Pss 25–34 is framed by two forms of the acrostics Pss 25 and 34. Zenger cited the correspondences of four verses in each psalm (Pss 25:13 // 34:12; 25:15 // 34:16; 25:16 // 34:17; 25:22 // 34:23). With Ps 29 at the center (highlighting YHWH as the king of the universe), the three psalms before (Ps 26–28) and after it (Pss 30–32) form a concentric pattern. Psalm 33, seemingly out of place (without superscription), is clearly connected with Ps 32. A second example is the Group Pss 3–14. This group is framed by Pss 3:9b and 14:7 where Israel, God’s people, will receive blessings from YHWH and rejoice. Psalms 3–7 are supplications of a worshiper seeking judgments against personal threats whereas Pss 9–14, as a whole, highlights the socially-poor oppressed in the midst of a hostile world. At

Third, psalm superscriptions are to be read along an interpretive horizon.<sup>111</sup>

Reading the Davidic collections in connection with the figure David and the biblical narrative (through the superscriptions) allow the reader to personalize the psalm and respond with hope in times of suffering and affliction in their own lives.<sup>112</sup> These superscriptions become an interpretive horizon from which one learns to see the collective and individual concerns of the psalms.<sup>113</sup>

Fourth, canonical interpretation pays careful attention to the intra-biblical connections and repetitions of the psalms.<sup>114</sup> Zenger saw that a single text must always be heard within the concerted voice of the canonical context. When the Psalter is read in these four ways, a fuller theological message is revealed, binding the psalms together as a “book.”

the center, Ps 8 shows that YHWH is the majestic creator God whom Israel places her hopes. Zenger, “*Psalmenforschung Nach Hermann Gunkel Und Sigmund Mowinckel*,” 422–24; “*Der Psalter als Buch*,” 12, [19]. Another example cited is Ps 149, which by itself, can be misconstrued as a military battle song. However, when this Psalm is set in context within Pss 146–150, it reflects YHWH’s invitation to his godly ones who were afflicted, in solidarity with his universal reign, to execute on the hostile powers the written judgments of YHWH. Zenger, “*Was Wird Anders*,” 403.

<sup>111</sup> “Bei kanonischer Auslegung sind die Psalmenüberschriften als Deutehorizont mitzulesen.” Zenger, “*Was Wird Anders*,” 407. We have also seen this principle in the works of Childs and Wilson.

<sup>112</sup> As a further example, Zenger noted that the Asaphite psalms (Pss 50, 73–83) have a common “historical-theological” interest. On one hand, they contain descriptions of the history of Israel (her exodus, exile and destruction of the Temple); on the other hand, all these events are gathered into YHWH’s “eschatological court” by the psalmist, seeking YHWH, the creator and judge of the new world order, to set it right. Zenger, “*Das Buch der Psalmen*,” 353.

<sup>113</sup> At the macro-level, editors used the arrangements of superscriptions and framing devices (e.g., Pss 1–2; 146–150). Zenger noted that new Books of the Psalter are marked by a significant change in the headings of the initial psalms (e.g. Pss 3, 42, 73, 90, 107). Furthermore, the first three Books close with a Royal psalm that has messianic concerns (Pss 41, 72, 89) and the last two Books end with the program of YHWH’s kingship (Pss 106, 145). Seen with Ps 144 (another messianic Royal psalm), Book V ends in the same way as Books I–III, which corresponds to Ps 2. Cf. §1.2.1.

<sup>114</sup> “Bei kanonische Auslegung sind die innerbiblischen Bezüge und Wiederaufnahmen einer Psalm mitzuhören.” Zenger, “*Was Wird Anders*,” 409.

Hossfeld and Steiner<sup>115</sup> recast Zenger's methodological formulation into seven increasing text pericopes: (1) literal continuation from the end of a psalm to the beginning of the next; (2) "literal resumption" with a development of meaning in the following psalm; (3) "twin-psalms" with meaning understood from the entirety of both psalms (Pss 111–112); (4) "cluster compositions" of perceivable "editorial concatenation" (Pss 3–7); (5) "group compositions" perceived by the group's compositional structure (Pss 15–24, with 19 at the center); (6) "psalm collections" through editorial superscriptions or formulas (e.g., Davidic psalms); (7) "collections by theme" (e.g., YHWH *Malak* psalms).

In "Das Buch der Psalmen", Zenger pointed out that the Psalms should be read through the characteristic "parallelism" of Hebrew poetry.<sup>116</sup> Unlike prose, poetry works with lines (cola) "strung together on a consistent basis."<sup>117</sup> Each line approaches the intended meaning via a slightly different perspective and together, they produce a "fuzzy and plastic" sense of meaning that can only be grasped as a whole.<sup>118</sup> Hebrew poetry requires both aesthetical and holistic appreciation of the patterns and structures of the texts in order to plumb the theological intents of editorial shaping.

<sup>115</sup> For specific examples, see Hossfeld and Steiner, "Problems and Prospects," 241.

<sup>116</sup> Zenger, "Das Buch der Psalmen," 348–70.

<sup>117</sup> "Anders als die Prosa, die ihre Texte als fortlaufenden Satzzusammenhang gestaltet, arbeitet die Poesie mit »Verszeilen«, die nach einem bestimmten Schema aneinandergereiht werden." Zenger, "Das Buch der Psalmen," 360.

<sup>118</sup> "Jede Zeile nähert sich gewissermaßen der gemeinten Sache in einer anderen Perspektive an. Das gibt der Aussage produktive Unscharfe und Plastizität zugleich." Zenger, "Das Buch der Psalmen," 360.

In this same work, he laid out the architecture of the Psalter.<sup>119</sup> With Pss 1–2 as the “programmatic overture,”<sup>120</sup> Book I is structured by four main units (3–14, 15–24, 25–34, 35–41). Book II is divided into three main units (42–49, 50, 51–72). Book III consists of two units (73–83, 84–89).<sup>121</sup> Book IV is divided into three sections (Mosaic 90–92; YHWH’s kingship 93–100; and Davidic 101–106). Book V is arranged in a chiastic A-B-X-B’-A’ structure (107, 108–110, 111–137, 138–145, 145).<sup>122</sup>

For Zenger, the editorial program of the Psalter is the theme of Torah wisdom and the praise of God, seen in the horizon of the whole creation, Israel and the universal rule of YHWH.<sup>123</sup> Reading the Psalter within this framework gives its reader the power to resist wicked powers in the world and rely on the saving power of YHWH. The entire function of the Psalter is a theological proposition: “the editorial formative sapiential theology of the Psalter is the sanctuary itself; in God, it is to be searched and lived and through which one can expect God’s blessing and salvation.”<sup>124</sup> In other words, Zenger

<sup>119</sup> Psalms 107 and 145 (A and A’) are “Lobpsalm” celebrating the “königtum YHWHs.” Psalms 108–110 and 138–145 (B and B’) are Davidic psalms. At the center, Pss 111–137 are divided into five small groups (111–112, 113–118, 119, 120–134, 135–137). Zenger, “Das Buch der Psalmen,” 356.

<sup>120</sup> Zenger, “Der Psalter als Buch,” 36–39.

<sup>121</sup> Apart from Ps 86, a Davidic psalm.

<sup>122</sup> For further details on the structure of Book V, see Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3, 1–7*; Erich Zenger, “Komposition Und Theologie Des 5. Psalmenbuchs 107–145,” *BN*, no. 82 (1996): 97–116, which has an English counterpart in 1998: “The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107–145,” *JSOT*, no. 80 (1998): 77–102. This will be further discussed in chapter 2.

<sup>123</sup> “Und vor allem: Sie stellen den Psalter unter die thematische Perspektiv der Tora-Weisheit und des Gotteslobs - beides im Horizont der die ganze Schöpfung, Israel und die Völker umfassenden Gottesherrschaft JHWHs.” Zenger, “Der Psalter als Buch,” 31.

<sup>124</sup> “Nach Meinung der den ganzen Psalter redaktionell prägenden weisheitlichen Theologie ist der Psalter selbst das Heiligtum, in dem Gott gesucht und gelebt werden soll und von dem Gottes Segen und Rettung ausgehen können.” Zenger, “Der Psalter als Buch,” 47.

argued that the Psalter is not used as a Second Temple liturgical composition, but functioned theologically as the *sanctuary*, through which one approaches God by reading, meditating and singing its words.

Zenger's work on the Psalter is extensive. On one hand, he was concerned with the diachronic formation of the Psalter as a book and on the other hand, how the book functioned for the postexilic reader. Zenger is perhaps the first to systematize the techniques of editorial shaping with a complete study of structural units of the entire Psalter.<sup>125</sup> He raised the profile of reading the Psalter as a "book." Second, Zenger highlighted important arguments for the Prologue (Pss 1–2) as the "programmatic overture" of the Psalter. His argument that the Psalter itself functions as the *sanctuary*, not just as the songbook of the Second Temple period, is helpful. Finally, he emphasized the importance of reading the Psalter through the hermeneutical lenses of poetry and aesthetics, which remains to be further integrated with canonical-literary approaches at this time.<sup>126</sup>

#### **1.2.4 JEAN-LUC VESCO**

Vesco's two-volume commentary on the Psalter is an important French collaboration in support of the structural and thematic unity of the Psalms. Like Zenger,

<sup>125</sup> The Hossfeld-Zenger Psalms commentary is likely the first of its kind that gave serious attention to the Psalms as a book. For instance, the structuring of Book I into four units has been largely adopted. See Gianni Barbiero, *Das erste Psalmenbuch als Einheit: eine synchrone Analyse von Psalm 1–41* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999).

<sup>126</sup> It is interesting that the aesthetic approach to the Psalter has almost developed into a subject of its own within Psalms scholarship. Consider the works of Alonso-Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*; Wilfred Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques*; Berlin, *The Dynamics of*

Vesco agrees that the Psalter must be interpreted as a book. He notes, “It is in this [book] form that reached us finally. Only a holistic reading allows us to connect the parts that bind together the various psalms, and to better identify the theology of their mutual relationship and ultimate meaning.”<sup>127</sup> Vesco identifies several organizational principles similar to those we have seen in Wilson and Zenger’s works. First, he sees that collections of psalms are arranged by attributed authorship. Second, psalms are grouped according to their intended use (e.g., the Songs of Ascents). Third, psalms that begin with the formulaic *hallelujah* are often grouped together (e.g., 104–106; 111–113; 115–117; 146–150). Fourth, there are indications that psalm “genres [by the designations in the superscriptions] were used as transitions between collections.”<sup>128</sup> Fifth, Vesco also sees that certain psalms are placed together because of their dominant motifs (e.g., 65–68 are centered on praise).<sup>129</sup>

Like Zenger, Vesco emphasizes Pss 1–2 as the introduction of the Psalter. He argues for the notion that the “spirituality of the Torah as divine teaching that guides man in his life [in Ps 1] structures the Psalter as a whole.”<sup>130</sup> Significantly, sapiential

*Biblical Parallelism* (Indiana University Press, 1992); Harm van Grol, “Emotions in the Psalms,” *Deuterocanonical & Cognate Literature Yearbook* 2011, no. 1 (2012): 69–102, [69].

<sup>127</sup> “Seule une lecture globale permet de renouer les fils qui unissent entre eux les différents psaumes et de mieux dégager la théologie de leurs mutuelles relations ainsi que de leur sens ultime.” Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 1:34.

<sup>128</sup> “Quelques indications de « genres » ont servi de transition entre les collections.” Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 1:47. He cites the use of *mizmor* in the superscriptions of Pss 47–51 and the use of *Miktham* in the series of Pss 56–60 as examples. This is similar to one of Wilson’s arguments.

<sup>129</sup> Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 1:48.

<sup>130</sup> “La spiritualité de la tôrâh comme enseignement divin qui guide l’homme dans la vie structure le psautier dans son ensemble.” Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 1:59.

psalms are strategically located at the centers of collections (e.g., Ps 8 in 3–14; 19 in 15–24), at the beginning of a book (1, 73, 90, 107) or at the end (89, 106).<sup>131</sup> As a result, the Psalter takes on the appearance of a book of wisdom reflecting the influence of the wisdom circles in its final form. Equally significant is the emphasis of the messianic king, to whom God promises a universal dominion (Ps 2). Messianic or Royal psalms are also strategically distributed across the Psalter, suggesting certain deliberate organization.<sup>132</sup> In sum, the function of the prologue emphasizes the judgment of Israel (Ps 1) and of the nations (Ps 2), evoking the concept of eschatological judgment following Mal 3:18. They set the tone for their readers, with the promise of being blessed on one hand and YHWH’s judgment on the other, consistently resounding throughout the Psalms. Vesco considers Pss 148–150 as the conclusion of the Psalter because Ps 148:11 harks back to 2:10–12 where the kings of the nations would take heed and render praise to YHWH.<sup>133</sup>

Vesco’s structural considerations for the Psalter is revealed by the organization of his commentary. Vesco divides Book I into four groups of Davidic Psalms (3–14; 15–24; 25–34; 35–41), concentrically structured around Pss 8; 19; 29; and 38.<sup>134</sup> Book II is divided into Pss 42–49, 50, 51–71, 72.<sup>135</sup> Book III is divided into the Asaphite (73–83)

<sup>131</sup> At the end of Pss 89 and 106 (end of Books III and IV), the sapiential motif (divine teachings) is connected with descriptions of the fall of the Davidic monarchy.

<sup>132</sup> Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 1:68.

<sup>133</sup> Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 1:72–74.

<sup>134</sup> Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 1:95.

<sup>135</sup> Vesco further divides the second Davidic collection (Pss 51–71) into Pss 51, 52–55, 56–60, 61–64, 65–68, 69–71.

and Korahite (84–89) collections. Book IV consists of three main collections: Pss 90–92, 93–100, 101–106. Book V is divided into Pss 107, 108–110, 111–117, 118–119, 120–134, 135, 136–150.<sup>136</sup> Vesco links Ps 118 to 119 rather than Ps 117, and groups the entire Pss 136–150 as a unit under the title, “The wonders of God.”<sup>137</sup> The editorial agenda of the entire Psalter “reveals the route of salvation.”<sup>138</sup> It is a divine teaching in the form of human prayers which, ultimately, are praises to God.

While Vesco’s methodology echoes much of Wilson’s and Zenger’s, Vesco writes with a clear disposition toward an integrated reading of the Psalter. He takes a key motif found in a particular psalm and analyzes it across the entire Psalter.<sup>139</sup> He tends to devote a short section in his commentary to a group of psalms before discussing the individual psalms that make up the group. Another important aspect of Vesco’s work is his distinctions between the man and the king; Israel and the messiah; blessedness and judgment in two journeys based on the Prologue. These twin motifs, expressed in the forms of Sapiential and Messianic/Royal psalms are strategically distributed across the Psalter. I think Vesco’s dual-themed emphasis is an important proposition, though an entire coherent structure based on this has not been shown.

<sup>136</sup> Pss 136–150 is subdivided into Pss 136–137, 138–145, 146–150.

<sup>137</sup> “Les merveilles de Dieu.” He further divides the final Davidic collection into Pss 138–139, 140–143, 144–145. Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 2:1417–1419.

<sup>138</sup> “Le psautier révèle l’itinéraire du salut.” Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 1:75.

<sup>139</sup> For instance, he provides a lengthy study of the figure of David across the entire Psalter (even in LXX and Qumran texts) in his comment on Ps 2. He argues that David is both the prototype of the future messianic king and his prayers become that of the people. The people prayed as their king. Whoever reads the Psalms becomes the new David. Likewise, he studies the motif of Zion across the entire Psalter in his analysis of Ps 3. Vesco, *Le psautier de David*, 1: 77–93, 102–111.

### 1.2.5 JEAN-MARIE AUWERS

By the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Auwers had already consolidated much of research relating to the composition of the Psalter. In his monograph, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier: Un état de La Question*, and two separate book sections in the BETL series,<sup>140</sup> Auwers captures important arguments on the historical<sup>141</sup> and literary dimensions in the composition of the Psalter. He argues that one should not just interpret the Psalter from a redactional point of view, but also from the intent and context of the final form. Interpreters must not only understand the individual parts, but the whole, of which the individual parts are interconnected.<sup>142</sup> In general, Auwers follows the methodology posited by Zenger and highlights techniques of juxtaposition<sup>143</sup> (a pair of psalms) and concatenation (linking one psalm to the next).<sup>144</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Jean-Marie Auwers, “Les Voices de L’exégèse Canonique Du Psautier,” in *Biblical Canons* (eds. J.-M. Auwers and H. J. de Jonge; BETL 163; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 5–26; “Le Psautier Comme Livre Biblique: Édition, Réduction, Fonction,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. E. Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010). See also “L’organisation Du Psautier Chez Les Pères Grecs,” in *Psautier Chez Les Pères* (Strasbourg: Centre d’Analyse et de Documentation Patristiques, 1994), 37–54; “Les Psaumes 70-72: Essai de Lecture Canonique,” *RB* 101, no. 2 (1994): 244–57; “Le David Des Psaumes et Les Psaumes de David,” in *Figures de David à Travers La Bible: XVIIe Congrès de l’ACFEB, Lille, 1er-5 Septembre 1997* (LD 177; Paris: Cerf, 1999), 187–224.

<sup>141</sup> His book section summarizes an updated version of the historical development of the Psalter. See also Auwers, “Le Psautier Comme Livre Biblique,” 67–90.

<sup>142</sup> “La prise en compte de la configuration canonique du livre des psaumes invite les interprètes du Psautier à une Véritable conversio morum, puisqu’elle prétend que les psaumes doivent être interprétés non seulement à partir du propos de chacun de leurs reacteurs mais aussi à partir de leur «environnement» à l’intérieur même du Psautier et à partir de l’intention déclarée dont la forme achevée du recueil est porteuse. Le fait qu’il y a un «livre» des psaumes oblige l’interprète à se tenir non seulement devant les pièces individuelles, mais aussi devant le tout dont elles sont devenues les éléments interconnectés.” Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 177.

<sup>143</sup> He cites Pss 3–4, 20–21, 32–33, 103–104, 105–105, 111–112. Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 42.

<sup>144</sup> He traces various lexemes that occur in Pss 2–9 and notes that some recurrences can hardly be accidental. Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 89–91.

He argues that such techniques of binding “successive parts of the Psalter are meaningful only if the final editors wanted to encourage reading the book *per ordinem ex integro* [from the beginning to the end in one reading].”<sup>145</sup> While there is no single consistent principle of organization, groups of psalms are arranged by techniques such as juxtaposition, concatenation, genres and chiastic structural patterns.

Auwers structures Book I in the same way as Zenger and Vesco.<sup>146</sup> Book II is divided into the Korahite (42–49), Asaphite (50) psalms and three Davidic subgroups (51–64, 65–67, 69–72).<sup>147</sup> Book III is divided into two main groups, the Asaphite (73–83) and Korahite psalms (84–89). Auwers also identifies a parallel between the two Korahite and Asaphite groups in Books II and III shown below.

<b>Korahite Psalms</b>	<b>Pss 42–49</b>	<b>Pss 84–85, 87–88</b>
Lamentation	42/43 (“I”)–44 (“We”)	84 (“I”)–85 (“We”)
Divine Response	45–48	87
Lamentation	49 (“I”)	88 (“We”)

<b>Asaphite Psalms</b>	<b>Pss 73–77</b>	<b>Pss 78–83</b>
Didactic	73	78
Lamentation	74 (“We”)	79–80 (“We”)
Divine Response	75–76	81–82
Lamentation	77 (“I”)	83 (“I”)

Figure 2: Auwers and Zenger’s Parallel Structures of the Korahite and Asaphite Psalms<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 92–93; “Les Voices de L’exégèse Canonique Du Psautier,” 7.

<sup>146</sup> Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 43–47.

<sup>147</sup> These three Davidic subgroups are understood as “individual petitions, hymns or collective thanksgiving and complaints.” Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 47.

<sup>148</sup> Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 49; Zenger, “Das Buch der Psalmen,” 354.

Auwers structures Book IV as Pss 90–92, 93–100 and 101–106 and Book V as Pss 107–117, 118–135, 136–150, based on the doxological elements at the end of a group and the *hodu* phrase at the beginning of a group.<sup>149</sup>

While the Psalms was once a songbook of the Second Temple period (1 Chron 16), its function today is found through reading it as a book and as such, “the *Sitz im Kult* has been replaced by a *Sitz in der Literatur*.<sup>150</sup> Auwers reads the program of the Psalter from its Prologue (1–2) and sees a democratization effect of the Davidic psalms. He suggests that “the Jewish community is like the voice of David and continues to apply to itself the extension of the benefits previously granted to David and to his successors. What was once given to David and his offspring is now granted to all the people.”<sup>151</sup> He submits the messianic reading of Ps 2 under the sapiential framework of Ps 1.<sup>152</sup> Psalm 1 alludes to Josh 1:7–8 (first book of the Former Prophets) and invites the readers to read the Psalter as the Torah’s way of life (Pentateuch). “The psalms that

<sup>149</sup> Note that this follows Wilson’s structuring of Book V. Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 64.

<sup>150</sup> “Toutefois, les psaumes se donnent aujourd’hui à lire dans le cadre d’un livre. Au *Sitz im Kult* s’est substitué un *Sitz in der Literatur*.” Auwers doubts if the Levites really sang hymns such as Pss 51:18; 40:7; 50:9–13). He questions if Pss 1 and 119 were part of the Levites’ song list. Furthermore, what purpose could the Royal psalms serve after the demise of the Davidic monarchy? The Psalter does not begin with a call for the liturgical participation at the Temple day and night, rather, it begins with a call for meditation on the Torah. Although liturgical usage needs not be excluded, he concludes that the canonical Psalter is not the hymnal of the Temple and that the overall emphasis is not participation in worship. Auwers, “Le Psautier Comme Livre Biblique,” 86–87.

<sup>151</sup> “[L]e poème suggère que la communauté israélite est comme la voix continuée de David et qu’elle peut demander pour elle-même la prolongation des bienfaits jadis accordés à David et à ses successeurs. Ce qui a autrefois été accordé à David et à sa descendance est maintenant accordé au peuple tout entier.” Auwers, “Le Psautier Comme Livre Biblique,” 85.

<sup>152</sup> He notes that “even if Ps 2 were the collection that prefaced a national *Kampf-Liederbuch* [battle songbook], Ps 1 makes all *Gebetbuch das der Gerechten* [Prayerbook of the righteous].” Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 127; “Les Voices de L’exégèse Canonique Du Psautier,” 14.

follow [Ps 1] are not only read as prayers to God but above all, a word addressed by YHWH to his people which they are to meditate diligently.”<sup>153</sup> The final composition of the Psalter is thus set up as a book of the Bible,<sup>154</sup> configured to foster a change of behavior (*conversio morum*) for its readers.

Auwers’s works on the Psalter is well-researched. His characterization of the historical development and collation of various references are helpful. Although he has not advanced a new methodology in the reading of the Psalter, his argument of reading the Psalter via the hermeneutical perspectives provided by its Prologue, and consequently as a biblical book, deserves further attention.

#### **1.2.6 J. CLINTON McCANN**

McCann has edited an important volume, *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, authored a commentary on the Psalms, and several important books and articles relating to the shape of the Psalter.<sup>155</sup> He considers the use of literary links, genres,

<sup>153</sup> “Le Ps 1 n’est pas une prière, mais un discours de sagesse. À ce titre, il invite à voir dans les psaumes qui suivent non seulement une prière adressée à Dieu, mais aussi et surtout une parole adressée par YHWH à son peuple pour qu’il la médite et en vive.” Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 128.

<sup>154</sup> Auwers, “Les Voices de L’exégèse Canonique Du Psautier,” 21.

<sup>155</sup> J. Clinton McCann Jr., “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (ed. William P. Brown; Oxford University Press, 2014), 350–62; “The Single Most Important Text in the Entire Bible: Toward a Theology of the Psalms,” in *Soundings in the Theology of Psalms* (Minneapolis: Fortress Pr, 2011), 63–75; “Reading from the Beginning (again): The Shape of Book I of the Psalter,” in *Diachronic and Synchronic* (eds. Joel Burnett et al.; New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 129–42; “The Shape of Book I of the Psalter and the Shape of Human Happiness,” in *Book of Psalms, The: Composition and Reception* (eds. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller; VTSup 99; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 340–48; “Wisdom’s Dilemma: The Book of Job, the Final Form of the Book of Psalms, and the Entire Bible,” in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister* (ed. Michael L Barré; CBQMS 29; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997), 18–30; Leander E. Keck et al., *New Interpreter’s Bible: 1 & 2 Maccabees, Job, Psalms* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996); “Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup

individual/communal psalms, repetitions, structure and the Prologue as key techniques for reading the Psalter.<sup>156</sup> He subordinates questions of “form and settings” to that of “content and theology.”<sup>157</sup> The Book of Psalms is to be understood by how it can “address *us* in our time and place.”<sup>158</sup>

In one of his most recent works on the shape of the Psalter, McCann follows Wilson’s thesis: “Books I–III took shape first and have a messianic orientation, and Books IV–V respond to the crisis articulated in Psalm 89.”<sup>159</sup> McCann considers the Prologue as the key to reading the Psalms as it contains motifs of happiness, justice, Torah, kingship, Zion and refuge, which are not only repeated throughout the Psalter, but are often situated at strategic locations.<sup>160</sup> As a whole, Book I of the Psalter is to be heard and interpreted in relation to David, a suffering messiah who is God’s son and depend on YHWH’s protection.<sup>161</sup> Book II, ending with a Solomonic psalm, suggests that “the promise of God to David is good for Solomon and all other Davidic descendants as

159; Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993), 93–107; *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993); “The Psalms as Instruction,” *Int* 46, no. 2 (1992): 117–28.

<sup>156</sup> McCann, “Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter,” 96, 104; McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms*, 19.

<sup>157</sup> McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms*, 19.

<sup>158</sup> McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms*, 10.

<sup>159</sup> McCann, “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” 351; “The Psalms as Instruction,” *Int* 46, no. 2 (1992): 122–23.

<sup>160</sup> For instance, he cites the use of “refuge” in Pss 16–18, which is connected to “happiness” in Pss 2:12, 40:5 and 41:2 (beginning and end of Book I). Psalm 40 is related to a Royal psalm and Pss 40–41 echo Pss 1-2. The word, “happy” (*ashre*) is also found at the concluding sections of Books II –IV and Ps 146. McCann, “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” 352–53.

<sup>161</sup> See also McCann, “Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter,” 94.

well.”<sup>162</sup> Despite that, Book III ends with a failed covenant. McCann structures Books II and III together, highlighting the phenomenon of the Elohistic Psalter (42–83).<sup>163</sup> Seen together with Ps 89, Books I–III end with the fall of the Davidic monarch and the temple at Jerusalem.<sup>164</sup> Book IV reveals a turning point in the state of affairs. By comparing the ends of Books III and IV, McCann notes that while both speak of the exile, David pleads for YHWH to “remember” in Ps 89:48, 51 whereas “Ps 106 has affirmed that ‘God “remembered his covenant’.”<sup>165</sup> Hence, Book IV is a response to the tragedy at the end of Book III.

This vision of restoration is in view in Book V. The dominant literary feature in this Book is the Torah Ps 119. Chiastically centered in Book V, McCann suggests that the use of the motifs of the Egyptian Hallel, the Davidic psalms leading to the Torah psalm and then to Zion captures the idea that “one may enter into Zion through the Torah.”<sup>166</sup> The Davidic psalms in Book V present a *different* Davidic king that is both priestly and *predicated* on the people as a whole. Instead of a Davidic ruler, “[t]he

<sup>162</sup> McCann, “Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter,” 94.

<sup>163</sup> Following Burnett’s suggestion, the use of the number “42” was probably meant “to lament the destruction of the temple in 587 B.C.E. and to express hope for renewal beyond the crisis.” He notes that the first psalm of the collections that frame the Elohistic Psalter (Pss, 42, 73) are laments concerning the “absence of the temple” and “divine favor.” McCann, “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” 355.

<sup>164</sup> Elsewhere, McCann argues that “Books I–III themselves *already* begin to answer the problem posed by the exile, dispersion and oppression of Israel by the nations in the post exilic era.” This is seen in the final form of these books with the juxtaposition of lament and hope psalms at the beginning of Books I–III, having a collective orientation that functions to address the concerns of the exilic/post-exilic community, and reorientating them against the apparent failure of the Davidic/Zion theology. McCann, “Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter,” 95, 103, 106.

<sup>165</sup> McCann, “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” 358.

<sup>166</sup> McCann, “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” 360.

whole people of God have become the new agency for the enactment of God's will in the world.”<sup>167</sup>

The last two points above deserve more attention. If the first three Books of the Psalter have a communal function of reorientating exilic/post exilic Israel against the failure of the Davidic/Zion theology, it heightens the question of how Books IV–V respond to this failure. The response identified in the last two Books is the onset of a *different* Davidic king and the democratization of God's purposes to a community which recalls the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:8–16).

### 1.2.7 JEROME CREACH

In *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, Creach's thesis is that the concepts expressed by נֶסֶחָה/<sup>מַחְסֵה</sup> (“refuge,” 2:12; 91:9) and their related word field represent an “intentional schema, not a subjective structure imposed on the collection.”<sup>168</sup> He concludes that “central to the *ḥāsâ* field is the idea that Yahweh is the only reliable source of protection and that an attitude of dependence upon Yahweh is the most basic element of piety.”<sup>169</sup>

Important for our purpose is how Creach argues for the shaping of the Psalter via the concept of refuge.<sup>170</sup> It must be noted that Creach's approach is primarily semantic.

<sup>167</sup> McCann, “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” 361.

<sup>168</sup> He makes the caveat, “To say that the Psalter is organized around the idea of ‘refuge’ does not mean that every psalm contains *ḥāsâ/mahseh* or a related word; nor does it mean that the psalms of the Psalter have been completely ordered (or reordered) with this concept in mind.” Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 17–18.

<sup>169</sup> Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 37.

<sup>170</sup> Especially chapter 4 of Creach's *Yahweh as Refuge*.

Creach analyzes frequencies of the word field use,<sup>171</sup> verbal connections and parallels within the Book(s) of the Psalter in light of its distinctive contexts,<sup>172</sup> and emphasizes the use of the refuge concept at the beginning and end of a unit of psalms.<sup>173</sup>

Structurally, Book I has an overarching editorial shape that characterizes the piety of seeking refuge in YHWH. The emphasis of the Torah in the Prologue (1–2) and Ps 19 reflect the importance of “displaying one’s dependence on Yahweh.”<sup>174</sup> Books II–III characterize “a confession of confidence in Yahweh’s refuge with a protest that Yahweh

<sup>171</sup> For instance, Creach captures the high usage of *הַסָּחַד/הַסָּחָדָה* and associated word field in Book I. Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 75; Gillmayr-Bucher takes the word field analysis a step further. She notes that words in the Psalms can be tagged to a certain semantic domain (e.g., “cries” or “tears” in the right context can be tagged under a larger domain called, “misery”). The result of this tagging is that the entire Psalter can be searched and analyzed not merely by individual lexemes, but by semantic domains. Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, “Relecture of Biblical Psalms: A Computer Aided Analysis of Textual Relations Based on Semantic Domains,” in *Bible and Computer: The Stellenbosch AIBI-6 Conference: Proceedings of the Association Internationale Bible et Informatique, “From Alpha to Byte”, University of Stellenbosch* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 259–82.

<sup>172</sup> Creach argues that “every occurrence of *hāsā* and associated terms in David 1 [Pss 3–41] is either a confession of faith in Yahweh, a record of how Yahweh protects those faithful to him, or a description of how one is pious. . . . In contrast, David 2 [Pss 51–72] contains several discussions of misguided trust with an emphasis on the resulting rejection of Yahweh.” Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 83.

<sup>173</sup> He notes, “It is interesting that book three of the Psalter begins like book two with two psalms (Pss. 73, 74) that contain a confession of trust in Yahweh’s refuge (Ps. 73.28) and a complaint of being rejected by God (Ps 74.1). This may be an indication that this section of the Psalter took shape in a community that was concerned with its being ‘cast off’ by Yahweh, that is, a community that interpreted exile as God’s rejection for their lack of faith.” In analyzing Pss 90–91, 92, 94, Creach notes that “these works share many thematic and verbal parallels. The relationship between the psalms is so close that it is hard to avoid the conclusion that they are placed together purposefully. Their position at the beginning of book four, perhaps the ‘editorial center of the Psalter, in Wilson’s words, indicates the importance of these works for the present shape of the book.” Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 90, 96.

<sup>174</sup> Creach notes that Book I contains the highest concentration of *הַסָּחַד/הַסָּחָדָה* field members. His “preliminary assertion [is] that Pss 2–41 are organized in part around the portraits of the righteous with ‘seeking refuge in Yahweh’ as a key organizing feature.” He concludes “that David 1 [3–41] was drawn together with Psalms 1–2 as a series of reflections on the nature of the righteous over against the godly. . . . Given the nature of Psalms 1–2 and these emphases in David 1, it seems plausible that book one of the Psalter should be read as an extended picture of true piety, seen in total reliance on Yahweh and exemplified by David.” Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 75, 77, 80, 103.

has rejected or ‘cast off’ Israel.”<sup>175</sup> Of Book IV, Creach argues that it answers the trauma of the exile by recognizing “the limitation of the human condition and especially human rulers, and [to] seek refuge in Yahweh.”<sup>176</sup> Although he highlights the associated concepts of dependence and Torah piety in Book V, he posits no clear program for the use of the *חסה/חסנה* word field in Book V.<sup>177</sup>

Creach’s approach and method are uncommon in the study of the Psalms. While he reads the shape of the Psalms via the study of a semantic concept, other structural or formal poetical devices are not key to his editorial arguments. Several issues are in order. First, there is a difference between arguing for editorial shaping *around* a concept versus the presence of a concept in service of the final editorial shape. In the former, the Psalter’s shape is defined by the concept but in the latter, the shape is defined by another overarching logic for which the concept serves. While Creach notes that the contexts for the refuge concept have shifted from Books I (e.g., piety) to II–III (confidence in YHWH) and to IV–V. He was unable to thread them coherently through to Book V. Creach may have successfully argued for the prominence of the refuge concept but in order to claim an editorial shaping of the Psalter around this word field,

<sup>175</sup> Creach notes that in Books II–III, there is a “shift in editorial interest, from dominant focus upon the faithful believer in David 1 to the presentation of examples of misappropriated trust and struggle over God’s rejection of those who claim him as refuge.” Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 92, 104.

<sup>176</sup> Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 100.

<sup>177</sup> He admits, “it is more difficult to show any ongoing purposeful arrangement in these psalms [Pss 90–150], especially book five. However it has been shown that this vocabulary is every present and seems to express some of the most prevalent ideas in the book.” Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 100, 104.

the relationship between the “shaping” (use of the refuge word field) and the “shape”<sup>178</sup> (macrostructure, metanarrative) needs to be integrated.

Second, it is not impossible that the Psalter is shaped around other concepts. For instance, Gillingham has identified a number of “Zion markers” across the entire Psalter and at strategic locations.<sup>179</sup> Ramon Ribera-Mariné has also argued that the Psalter is structured (retrospectively) around the theme of “praise” found in the most heightened state at the end.<sup>180</sup> Both of these concepts, *Zion* and *praise*, are likewise good candidates for studying the editorial shaping of the Psalter.

Third, Creach’s concept of refuge has become so expansive that it is hard not to find links anywhere in the Psalter. For instance, refuge is associated with the concepts of trust, protection, kingship,<sup>181</sup> Zion and Torah piety,<sup>182</sup> thus blunting his argument.

<sup>178</sup> For Creach, “‘shape’ refers to both the particular cast provided by distinct language, and to literary structure, that is, the purposeful arrangement of that language.” Creach, “The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Shape of Second Isaiah,” 64.

<sup>179</sup> Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition, 308–41.

<sup>180</sup> Ramon Ribera-Mariné, “‘El Llibre de les Lloances’. Estudi redaccional del salteri,” *RCT* 16, no. 1 (1991): 1–19; see also James Hutchinson’s ten propositions for the motif of praise in the Psalms, “The Psalms and Praise,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip Johnston and David Firth; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 85–100.

<sup>181</sup> This is especially clear in how Creach argues for Pss 90–92, 94 as editorial activity to show that Yahweh, the king, is a refuge and protection. Creach argues that “for ancient Near Eastern people, acknowledgement of someone as king is inextricably bound to the choice of that person as a means of protection.” Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 96–97.

<sup>182</sup> He notes, “The presence of psalms that emphasize the protective role of *tôrâ* suggests that mediation on *tôrâ* had become an important way of expressing devotion to Yahweh and a means of proving oneself worthy of the sheltering care of God. The fact that the Psalter begins with this idea (Ps. 1) and contains similar concepts in some of the latest psalms (19, 119) as well as in parts of the Psalter recognized for editorial activity (Ps. 94) indicates further that the idea of ‘refuge in *tôrâ*’ is important for reading and understanding the completed book.” Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 102.

This limitation, nonetheless, has been admitted in his work.<sup>183</sup> Creach's unique approach may have uncovered an important technique in the editing of the Psalter, but his methodology has not yielded many followers.

### **1.2.8 NANCY DECLAISSE-WALFORD**

deClaissé-Walford has written extensively on the shape and shaping of the Psalter.<sup>184</sup> Adopting Wilson's methodology, she analyzes various psalms at the seams of the collections and books of the Psalter and prescribes a coherent storyline across the five Books of the Psalter that traces Israel's canonical history from the Davidic monarchy to the postexilic period. This storyline is recapitulated in two of her most recent works:

It begins in Book I with the story of the reign of King David. Solomon's reign is recounted in Book II. Book III tells the story of the divided kingdoms and their eventual destructions by the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Book IV relates the struggle of the exiles in Babylon to find identity and meaning in a world of changed circumstances. Book V

<sup>183</sup> “Admittedly, the parameters of the ‘*hāsā* field’, as presented here, are not (and perhaps cannot be) neatly and definitively drawn. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the Psalter contains a ‘refuge piety’, in which dependence upon Yahweh is the supreme virtue and this virtue is communicated with a multitude of terms.” Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 48.

<sup>184</sup> Nancy deClaissé-Walford, “The Canonical Approach to Scripture and The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship* (ed. Nancy deClaissé-Walford; Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 1–11; “The Meta-Narrative of the Psalter,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (ed. William P. Brown; Oxford University Press, 2014), 363–75; deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014); “Psalm 145: All Flesh Will Bless God’s Holy Name,” *CBQ* 74, no. 1 (2012): 55–66; “Reading Backwards from the Beginning: My Life with the Psalter,” *LTQ* 41, no. 2 (2006): 119–30; “An Intertextual Reading of Psalms 22, 23, 24.,” in *Book of Psalms, The: Composition and Reception* (eds. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller; VTSup 99; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 147; “The Canonical Shape of the Psalms,” in *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms* (eds. Harold Wayne Ballard and W. Dennis Tucker; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2000), 93–110; *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997).

celebrates the return to Jerusalem and the establishment of a new Israel with God as sovereign.<sup>185</sup>

deClaissé-Walford argues that “[t]he story of the shaping of the Psalter is the story of the shaping of survival.”<sup>186</sup> This surviving community had to find an “identity and structure for existence that extended beyond traditional notions of nationhood. King and court could no longer be the focal point of national life. Temple and worship took center stage, and YHWH, rather than a Davidic king, reigned as sovereign over the new ‘religious nation’ of Israel.”<sup>187</sup>

deClaissé-Walford’s works tend toward a socio-historical interpretation. She assigns the entire shape of the Psalter to Israel’s canonical history and explains it with the existential needs of the postexilic community in making sense of life. This is plausible though some issues remain. The five-book storyline does not correspond well with the literary evidence. She claims that Books I and II contain the stories of David and Solomon but Book II has only one psalm at the end that relates to Solomon. Moreover, while she claims that these two figures characterize a “flourishing” period in Israel’s nationhood, Books I–II has the highest percentage of Lament psalms.<sup>188</sup> This percentage declines in Books III–IV, despite the fact that Books II–III encapsulate the fall of Jerusalem and the exile. In the same way, how likely does the final Hallel, the

<sup>185</sup> deClaissé-Walford, “The Meta-Narrative of the Psalter,” 368; “Reading Backwards from the Beginning: My Life with the Psalter,” 120; deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 29–38.

<sup>186</sup> deClaissé-Walford, “The Meta-Narrative of the Psalter,” 374.

<sup>187</sup> deClaissé-Walford, “The Meta-Narrative of the Psalter,” 368; deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 28–29.

<sup>188</sup> See the percentages listed in deClaissé-Walford, “The Meta-Narrative of the Psalter,” 366–67.

crescendo of praise in the Psalms, represent the historical circumstances in postexilic Israel? Her views of the Davidic kingship in Book V remain historical and she interprets the transcendental king in Ps 110 as YHWH.<sup>189</sup>

### 1.2.9 DAVID MITCHELL

Mitchell sees the entire Psalter as a purposeful well-crafted five-book design with Books I–III skilfully joined to Books IV and V of the Psalter.<sup>190</sup> For him, the Psalter was not shaped with a historical-oriented agenda (contra Wilson, Gillingham and deClaissé-Walford) but with an eschatological agenda under a context “dominated by eschatological concerns.”<sup>191</sup> Crucial to Mitchell’s thesis is the identification of an “eschatological programme” in Zech 9–14 which he believes the Psalter is based on. In this “programme,” there will first be an ingathering (**חִסּוֹן** or **צָבֵק**) of scattered Israel by an eschatological king (Zech 9:11–10:12). This is followed by a gathering of nations warring against Israel (Zech 12:3/14:1). Then the king dies and an eschatological exile ensues (Zech 12:10–14; 13:7–9). Israel is gathered again and delivered by divine help

<sup>189</sup> deClaissé-Walford is hesitant to view the Davidic king in Book V as messianic. Besides ascribing the king in Ps 110 as YHWH, her discussion of kingship in Ps 132 is also framed historically. deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 838, 936. See also Peter C. W. Ho, review of deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, *Themelios* 41.3 (2016): 496–497

<sup>190</sup> Mitchell, “Lord, Remember David: G.H. Wilson and the Message of the Psalter”; *The Message*, 69–82.

<sup>191</sup> He points out four concerns: (1) The Psalter is finalized between the end of the exile and the translation of the LXX. In this Second Temple period, biblical literature look for a “sudden dramatic divine intervention in history that will restore the nation’s fallen fortunes.” Books of Ezekiel and Zechariah, likewise, anticipate “a golden age prosperity.” (2) Figures that the Psalms are attributed to (e.g., David, Asaph, Jeduthun, Heman and Moses) are often regarded as “future-predictive prophets.” (3) Certain psalms (e.g., Ps 2, 21, 45, 72, 110) describing a person or event use language that “far exceeds the reality of any historical king or battle.” (4) The Royal psalms included in the Psalter at a time where Israel had no king are to be understood as referring to a future anointed king. Mitchell, *The Message*, 82–87.

(Zech 14:2–15). Eventually, Israel and the survivors of all the nations will gather and ascend (**הַלְׁעָה**) in festal Sukkoth worship of YHWH in Jerusalem (Zech 14:16–21).<sup>192</sup>

Mitchell illustrates the entire eschatological program of the Psalter, seen in light of Zechariah 9–14, as follows:

Ps	Asaph					Book IV	Hallel	Ascents	
	45	50	72	73–83	89				
Zech 9–14	Bride-groom king comes to Daughter Zion	Gathering of scattered Israel to Jerusalem	Temporary messianic <i>malkut</i>	Hostile nation gather against Jerusalem	The king cut off	Israel exiled in desert. Gathered and return to Zion	Rescue by king messiah	Paeans of messianic victory; the hero's welcome	Ascent of Israel and all nations to Sukkoth on Zion in messianic <i>malkut</i>

Figure 3: Mitchell’s Eschatological Program for the MT Psalter<sup>193</sup>

Mitchell’s unique contribution is linking the redaction of the Psalter with the eschatological program found in Zech 9–14. To accept his thesis, several difficulties must be resolved. We need to first assume an “established” program in Zech 9–14 and presume the Psalms had depended on Zech 9–14. We also need to understand the differences between the two programs. Mitchell admits that many strategic or even eschatological psalms are not included in his final eschatological proposal. For instance, the final Hallel (146–150) is eschatological but not included in his program. This reflects some differences between Zechariah and the Psalter’s eschatological

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<sup>192</sup> Mitchell, *The Message*, 215.

<sup>193</sup> Mitchell, *The Message*, 298.

framework. Mitchell has also excluded a large number psalms (and esp. wisdom/Torah-themed psalms), weakening his overall thesis.<sup>194</sup>

### **1.2.10 WALTER BRUEGEMANN AND JOHN KARTJE**

On the other spectrum, Brueggemann and Kartje argue for a certain “wisdom shaping” of the Psalter based on sapiential elements prominently located in the Psalms.<sup>195</sup> Interestingly, they arrive at the shaping conclusion from different approaches. Brueggemann focuses on the theological intention of psalm locations whereas Kartje analyzes the social-epistemological development of four strategic psalms.<sup>196</sup>

For Brueggemann, the Psalter is bounded and shaped by a trajectory defined by its two ends (1, 150)—from obedience to praise. Within this boundary, there is a move from “willing duty” to a “self-abandoning” delight in the praise of God. However, this move is characterized through suffering, doubt and trust before arriving at praise. Brueggemann cites Ps 25 in which the reality of life does not correspond to the confidence of Torah-piety depicted in Ps 1. However, Ps 103 voices confidence and

<sup>194</sup> Mitchell, *The Message*, 267.

<sup>195</sup> Brueggemann and Kartje’s arguments for a wisdom shaping of the Psalter are also adopted by deClaissé-Walford. See deClaissé-Walford, “Reading Backwards from the Beginning: My Life with the Psalter,” 125; Walter Brueggemann, “Bounded by Obedience and Praise : The Psalms as Canon,” JSOT, no. 50 (1991): 63–92; *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984); “Psalms and the Life of Faith : A Suggested Typology of Function,” JSOT no. 17 (1980): 3–32; Walter Brueggemann and Patrick D. Miller, “Psalm 73 as a Canonical Marker,” JSOT, no. 72 (1996): 45–56; John Kartje, *Wisdom Epistemology in the Psalter: A Study of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014).

<sup>196</sup> See also Peter C. W. Ho, review of J. Kartje, *Wisdom Epistemology in the Psalter: A Study of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107*, *Themelios* 41, no. 1 (2016), 100–101.

hope despite the realities of life, made possible because of YHWH’s *תּוֹתָם*. Within this drama of life, the pivotal role is played by Ps 73 which captures the “theological move from *hesed* doubted (as in Psalm 25) to *hesed* trusted (as in Psalm 103).”<sup>197</sup>

By comparing Pss 1, 73, 90 and 107, Kartje traces a trajectory of “epistemological progression” in how the Psalter depicts human suffering.<sup>198</sup> Psalm 1 posits the worldview of two different journeys of the righteous and the wicked as binary state of affairs. Psalm 73 complicates the knowledge proposition of Psalm 1 by showing that the wicked *can* prosper and the righteous *can* suffer. In Ps 90, the seeming impossibility of moving across the fixed categories of blessedness and cursedness (in Ps 1) becomes surprisingly possible. By Psalm 107, “suffering is not necessarily tied to moral culpability and even the wicked have access to divine salvation.”<sup>199</sup>

Brueggemann and Kartje’s analyses are similar in several ways. Their works focus on the issues of human flourishing vis-à-vis covenantal faithfulness to YHWH in the Psalter. Both of them identify strategically-located psalms that capture these issues and trace a certain trajectory across these psalms. Their propositions are, however, impressionistic as only few psalms are selected. The trajectories posited might vary if

<sup>197</sup> Brueggemann, “Bounded by Obedience and Praise,” 81.

<sup>198</sup> Kartje, *Wisdom Epistemology in the Psalter*.

<sup>199</sup> Kartje, *Wisdom Epistemology in the Psalter*, 157.

different psalms were selected.<sup>200</sup> In contrast to Mitchell, important kingship or Zion psalms are not featured.

### **1.2.11 CASPER LABUSCHAGNE, DUANE CHRISTENSEN AND HENDRIK KOOREVAAR**

Several scholars have taken a numerical approach (counting) to understanding the macrostructure of the Psalter. The use of symbolic numbers in the HB has been recognized by various scholars,<sup>201</sup> and touted as a serious challenge to source criticism.<sup>202</sup> Counting words are first associated with the Masoretic divisions of text (e.g., *setuma*, *petuchah*, *athnakh*).<sup>203</sup> But one of the most ambitious application of numerical methods on the Psalter, and beyond the level of a single poem, is

<sup>200</sup> For instance, in Kartje's case, if Psalm 112 with a similar proposition to Psalm 1, were analyzed, the epistemological "progression" that he proposes would be undermined since Psalm 112 is canonically located after Psalm 90.

<sup>201</sup> Laura Joffe, "The Answer to the Meaning of Life, the Universe and the Elohistic Psalter," JSOT 27, no. 2 (2002): 223–35; Garmt Haakma, "Die Zahlenmässige Strukturanalyse: Ein Kürze Einführung in Die Methode Und Die Problematik Der Logotechnik Oder Zahlenmässige Strukturanalyse," CV 32, no. 4 (1989): 273–83; Jacob Bazak, "Numerical Devices in Biblical Poetry," VT 38, no. 3 (1988): 333–37; Claus Schedl, "Die Alphabetisch-Arithmetische Struktur von Psalm 136," VT 36, no. 4 (1986): 489–94; *Baupläne des Wortes Einführung in die biblische Logotechnik* (Vienna: Herder, 1974); C. J. Labuschagne, "Neue Wege Und Perspektiven in Der Pentateuchforschung," VT 36, no. 2 (1986): 146–62.

<sup>202</sup> "With Schedl, says Labuschagne, the key to exegesis does not lie on the historical sources of the text but on the final form. One may move from the subjective criteria for dividing the text to a new, objective criteria. The logotechnique can provide such an objective criteria." My translation from "Mit Schedl meint Labuschagne, dass nicht länger die Entstehungs-geschichte des Textes, sondern die Endgestalt der Schlüssel zur Exegese sein soll. Man soll die subjektiven Kriterien zur Aufteilung des Textes durch neue, objektive Kriterien ersetzen. Die Logotechnik kann solche objektiven Kriterien liefern." Haakma, "Die Zahlenmässige Strukturanalyse," 274.

<sup>203</sup> "Die Aufteilung des Textes findet an Hand der Zäsuren statt, die schon mittels Typographie, petucha und setuma usw. angebracht worden sind. Ausserdem pflegt man zu diesem Zweck die zahlenmässige Strukturanalyse." Haakma, "Die Zahlenmässige Strukturanalyse," 275.

Labuschagne's Logotechnique<sup>204</sup> analysis. By counting words and seeing how the word count of a certain literary unit is a factor of recurring numbers such as "7" and "11," he argues that these numbers function as a macrostructuring device for the entire Psalter<sup>205</sup> (more discussion in §5.1).

Christensen posited a redactional process of the Psalter by the use of the number "17."<sup>206</sup> He highlighted that Books III and IV contain 17 psalms and an early stage of the Psalter (Books I, III, IV, V) plausibly contained 119 ( $17 \times 7$ ) psalms.<sup>207</sup> The two Books at the center are framed by an original Davidic Psalter (Books I and V) which consists of 51 ( $17 \times 3$ ) Davidic psalms and 34 ( $17 \times 2$ ) non-Davidic psalms. The five Books of the Psalter form a chiastic shape with Book III at the center focusing on "Israel and the nations."<sup>208</sup> Each Book of the Psalter is also arranged in a chiastic manner, with a single center psalm (19, 50, 81, 98, 119), though the numerical

<sup>204</sup> Labuschagne notes, "Claus Schedl coined the term 'logotechnique' to describe the art of numerical composition, which he derived from the Greek term logotechnia meaning 'literature,' more particularly a skilfully designed literary work of art conforming to certain laws governing its form. So 'logotechnique' denotes, in fact, 'word-art,' 'language-art,' 'compositional art'." Casper Labuschagne, *Numerical Secrets of the Bible: Rediscovering the Bible Codes* (North Richland Hills: Bibal, 2000), 94.

<sup>205</sup> Casper Labuschagne, "Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger, BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 623–34.

<sup>206</sup> Duane L. Christensen, *The Unity of the Bible: Exploring the Beauty and Structure of the Bible* (New York: Paulist, 2003); 132–33; "The Book of Psalms Within the Canonical Process in Ancient Israel," *JETS* 39, no. 3 (1996): 421–32, [423].

<sup>207</sup> He noted, "When book 2 is removed, all of the 'doublets' noted by scholars disappear (i.e., Ps 14 = Ps 53; Ps 70 = Ps 40:13-17; Ps 108 = Ps 57:7-11 and Ps 60:5-12). A reasonable working hypothesis posits the insertion of [B]ook 2 as the final addition to the Psalter, when the seventeen books of the deuteronomistic canon were expanded to make the twenty-two books of the pentateuchal canon in the time of Ezra." Christensen, *The Unity of the Bible*, 132.

<sup>208</sup> Christensen argued that Ps 81, located at the structural center of the entire Psalter, is a liturgy that reviews Israel's canonical history from Jacob to the Exodus under Moses. Christensen, *The Unity of the Bible*, 133.

technique is not a clear feature of these chiasmi. For Christensen, the Psalter's final design is closely related to the Pentateuch with the possibility of the Psalter following a triennial lectionary cycle of ancient Palestinian Judaism reading of the Pentateuch.

Counting the number of psalms, Koorevaar argues that the numbers "17" and "43" are used in the structuring of the books of the Bible.<sup>209</sup> When Pss 9–10, 42–43 and 114–115 are seen as single compositions, Books I and II consist of 70 (40+30) psalms, and Books III–V consist of 77 (17+17+43) psalms, making a total of 147 psalms.<sup>210</sup> Books I–II is Davidic in orientation as the numbers "40" and "30" signify the number of years David reigned and the age when David began to rule (2 Sam 5:4). Books III–V is Yahwistic in orientation based on the symbolic use of the number "7" and "11." Furthermore, the 13 historical psalms of David are distributed as 4, 8 and 1 respective psalm(s) in Books I, II and V. Symbolically, the numbers 4-8-1 is the reverse of ٧٨١ ("one"), representing the oneness of YHWH. (Deut 6:4).<sup>211</sup>

Koorevaar prescribes a theme to each book and assigns center psalm(s) for each book as follow:

Introduction: Pss 1–2

Book I: David flees from Absalom; center: Ps 19

Book II: Cause of the crisis, sin, Solomon becomes king; center: Ps 50

<sup>209</sup> Hendrik J. Koorevaar, "The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story with the Aid of Subscripts and Superscripts," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger, BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 579–92.

<sup>210</sup> Koorevaar cites 147 as the total number of psalms in the Jerusalem Talmud tractate Sabbath 16. Koorevaar, "The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story," 582–83.

<sup>211</sup> Moreover, the total number of words in these historical superscriptions add up to 100 (10x10), a number symbolic of "completeness, perfection and full measure." Koorevaar, "The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story," 587.

Book III: National crisis, exile, temple and messianic king lost; center: Ps 86  
 Book IV: Above the crisis in exile, YHWH is king; center: Ps 97  
 Book V: Victory over crisis, return to YHWH and land; centers: Pss 119, 127  
 Conclusion: Pss 149–150<sup>212</sup>

For Koorevaar, the message at the center (86:8–10) is the central message for Israel as they enter into exile. Although Koorevaar’s treatment in his book section is too brief for further analysis, like Labuschagne, he has shown how numerical analysis can function in the structuring of the Psalter.

### 1.2.12 O. PALMER ROBERTSON

Robertson’s *The Flow of the Psalms*<sup>213</sup> is one of the latest macrostructural treatments of the Psalter. As the title suggests, Robertson sees an “organized development of thought progression” flowing across the the Psalms.<sup>214</sup> Robertson’s methodology is similar to what we have seen above. He considers how lexemes are used, their frequency of occurrences and connections. He summarizes twelve elements that define the basic structure of the Psalter indicating purposeful arrangement.<sup>215</sup> The

<sup>212</sup> The center psalms are usually numerically weighted. For instance, Ps 86 contains 17 verses and 147 words, corresponding to the number of psalms in Book III and the entire Psalter respectively (according to Koorevaar’s count). Koorevaar, “The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story,” 589–590.

<sup>213</sup> O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* (Philipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2015); “The Strategic Placement of the ‘Hallelu-Yah’ Psalms Within the Psalter,” *JETS* 58, no. 2 (2015): 265.

<sup>214</sup> Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 4, Location 1293.

<sup>215</sup> These twelve elements are: (1) Five book structure; (2) Grouping by reference in titles to individuals; (3) Two thematic “Pillars” in Pss 1 and 2—Torah and messiah; (4) Coupling of three Torah psalms with three messianic psalms (Pss 1–2; 18–19; 118–119); (5) Eight acrostic psalms; (6) Groupings that celebrate the kingship of YHWH and his messiah (e.g., Pss 20–24; 45–48; 93, 96, 97, 99); (7) Psalms of Ascents; (8) Psalms of historical recollection (e.g., Ps 105–106); (9) Focal messianic psalms (e.g., Pss, 22, 45, 69, 72, 80, 110, 118); (10) Psalms confessing sin (e.g., Pss 38–41, 51); (11) “Poetical pyramid”

entire Psalter is to be seen under a “redemptive-historical” framework of king David, after which no further OT covenants were realized,<sup>216</sup> with the essential core of the covenant resting on two areas: the perpetual Davidic dynasty and YHWH’s permanent dwelling place at Zion.<sup>217</sup>

The editorial flow of the Psalms begins with the *confrontation* of David with his enemies (Book I). This is followed by the *communication* of the supremacy of YHWH to the nations and the reign of David’s son, Solomon (Book II). Book III encapsulates the *devastation* of YHWH’s people and the messianic crown. The sapiential psalms and the YHWH *Malak* psalms in Book IV underscore Israel’s *maturity* in their understanding of YHWH’s kingdom. Finally, Book IV describes the *consummation* of YHWH’s purposes, culminating in praise.<sup>218</sup> The entire Psalter is designed to “provide a framework for God’s people to approach the Lord properly in worship.”<sup>219</sup>

Robertson’s structural understanding is perhaps the most unusual in our survey.<sup>220</sup> Positively, he views the Psalter as thematically coherent and provides several important

(symmetrically) structure collection of psalms; (12) *Hallelujah* psalms (e.g., Pss 111–117). Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 2, Location 477–729.

<sup>216</sup> Robertson notes that “After God’s covenant with David, no further covenants were realized. The promise of a “new covenant” came through the Lord’s prophets (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 37:21–28). But it never was the intent of the Lord to institute any covenants for his Old Testament people as a national entity beyond the covenant with David. In David, the king had come and the kingdom had come.” Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 3, Location 742–746.

<sup>217</sup> Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 3, Location 1241.

<sup>218</sup> Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 1, Location 454–470.

<sup>219</sup> Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 3, Location 854.

<sup>220</sup> This follows from several insights. (1) Each of the five Books begins with one or two psalms as the introduction [Psalms 1–2, 42–44, 73–74, 90–91, 107]; (2) Three pairs of Torah-messianic psalms are structurally significant; (3) Acrostic psalms function to divide the largest books of the Psalter into

structural insights. For instance, his arguments for Pss 18–19 functioning as structural markers in Book I is important. The connection between the dramatic declaration of YHWH’s kingship over all gods (Pss 93–100) and the bringing of the ark to Zion (1 Chron 16) is also helpful.<sup>221</sup> A weakness, however, seems to be an over-dependence on thematic arguments in structuring the Psalter. Interestingly, his key structural postulations of the “poetical pyramid” is an “excursus” rather than the main body of his work.

### 1.2.13 SUMMARY AND THE *STATUS QUAESTIONIS*

The preceding survey provides a glimpse into the state-of-the-field studies on macroanalyses of the entire Psalter concerning our three research questions: *organizing technique, structure and overarching design*. Two following figures consolidate 32 organizational principles (13 formal and 19 tacit) and macrostructural divisions of the Psalter. They are representative, though not exhaustive.<sup>222</sup>

smaller sections. (4) Certain thematic motifs are more important as a structuring principle than superscriptions (e.g., Pss 49–52). (5) The “Poetic pyramid” structuring principle in a collection of psalms, arranges psalms symmetrically about a center psalm. The function of these pyramids, like the acrostics, serves to aid memorization. Robertson identifies several of these “pyramids” across the Psalter: Pss 120–134, 111–117, 92–100, 77–83, 20–24. Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 5, Location 1856, 5038–5121.

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Pss 96:1–13 // 1 Chron 16:23–33; Ps 105:1–15 // 1 Chron 16:8–22; Ps 106:1, 47–48 // 1 Chron 16:34–36). Robertson also points out that the phrase, עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים, is found only in three locations in the entire HB (1 Chr 16:25; Pss 95:3; 96:4; 97:9). Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 8, Location 3335–3368.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. Grossberg’s list of techniques. Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry*, 9–12.

The boundary between *formal*<sup>223</sup> and *tacit*<sup>224</sup> organization principles is not always clear as they can overlap at different levels of composition. For completeness, I have included my own findings and elaborations on certain organizational techniques in the lists below (marked with an asterisk). Most, if not all, of these techniques will be further explicated in the rest of the thesis.

<b>Formal Techniques</b>		<b>Observations</b>
1	Book Divisions	Major divisions of the Psalter (Pss 1–41, 42–72, 73–89, 90–106, 107–150).
2	*Prologue (Pss 1–2)	Identifies the leitmotifs in the Psalms and three major divisions. Provides the programmatic outlook for the entire Psalter (see §1.3.3, p. 95 onwards).
3	Epilogue	Provides closure to the metanarrative of the Psalter (Pss 146–150).
4	*Symmetrical/concentric structures (chiasmus/“pyramid”/“centering”) at different levels of composition	At the highest level, the Psalter is concentrically arranged in three Sections (Books I, II–III and IV–V). At the lowest level, they can occur within a poetic phrase (see esp. §3.1).
5	*Five Davidic Collections	Pss 3–41, 51–70, 101–103, 108–110, 138–145. Reveals the Metanarrative of the Psalter and how the Davidic covenant develops (see chapter 4).
6	Elohistic/YHWH Psalter	The predominant use of <i>elohim</i> over YHWH in Pss 42–83.
7	*Acrostics & Alphabetical Psalms	Their locations mark leitmotifs of the Prologue, the beginning and end of the Psalter, and the seams of literary units (see §5.2)

<sup>223</sup> With the use of the designation, “formal,” I refer to the use of literary devices in a particular and distinct format. I do not mean it as the literary *type* (as in form criticism). Formal techniques could represent existing poetic structuring conventions existing at the time of the composition. W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 186.

<sup>224</sup> As a literary form, I treat “tacit” devices as less distinctive. Rather, they are associated with motifs and themes. Wilson uses the terms, “explicit” and “tacit,” which differ from mine. For him, “explicit” techniques are those that make plain “statements of organizational intent” or purpose. “Tacit” techniques are those that require understanding of the broader horizon of the Psalter to be able to perceive the implied editorial purpose. Wilson, *Editing*, 139–140, 182.

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8	*Superscriptions (with authorship attribution)	Key to the structuring of the Psalter. Such as the psalms of David, Solomon, Moses, Asaph, Korah and the YHWH <i>Malak</i> psalms (see §2.2, 2.3, 2.4).
9	*Historical superscriptions	These are found in 13 Davidic psalms collaborating with the Metanarrative of the Davidic Collections (see §4.3, esp. Figure 56).
10	*Superscriptions without authorship attribution	Key to the structuring of the Psalter. Formulaic phrases that begin a psalm (e.g., <i>hallelujah, hodu</i> in the imperative plural) can be considered as a form of special superscription, marking a unit of psalms (see §2.2, 2.3, 2.4).
11	*Postscript (72:20)	Marks a structural point in the Metanarrative. Psalm 72:20 identifies a closure of David's kingship when seen in parallel with the Samuel narratives (see pp. 155–157, 370)
12	Doxological postscripts/motifs	Pss 41:14; 72:18–19; 89:53; 106:48 mark the conclusion of a Book.
13	*Numerical Devices and Symbolism	Associated with the number of words in a psalm or the number of superscription type. Locate certain <i>nexusword</i> which corresponds to the thematic/genre focus of the psalm and help to locate the structure of the larger collective unit in collaboration with the Metanarrative of the Psalter (see §5.1).

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Figure 4: Formal Organizational Techniques of the MT Psalter

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<b>Tacit Techniques</b>		<b>Observations</b>
1	*Leitmotifs in the Prologue	Three main motifs in the Prologue that recur throughout the Psalter: YHWH and the Davidic/Messianic kingship; Zion-temple; YHWH's Torah and Torah-fidelity (see §§1.3.3, 2.3 5.2.3).
2	*Central Motifs of a Group	The trio-motifs of Kingship, Zion and Torah usually mark the structural center of a Group for emphasis (see esp. §3.1).
3	Genre Motifs	A generalization assigned to the literary form/content of a psalm. A series of psalms can be seen as being arranged chiastically by their genre.
4	<i>Verkettung</i> ("chain-linking"), concatenation	Lexical or certain phonological, semantic, thematic, syntactical, grammatical parallels that connect <i>adjacent psalms</i> (e.g., <i>ashre</i> in Pss 1–2; "righteous" in Pss 111–112).
5	* <i>Vernetzung</i> ("networking")	Lexical or certain phonological, semantic, thematic, syntactical, grammatical parallels that connect and bind <i>a group of psalms</i> (e.g., YHWH <i>Malak</i> psalms; the motif of Zion in Pss 120–134, see §3.2.2).
6	* <i>Fernverbindung</i> ("distant-binding")	Lexical or certain phonological, semantic, thematic, syntactical, grammatical parallels that connect <i>distant psalms</i> (e.g. "to reject" in Books II–III, see pp. 156–159). The leitmotifs are the clearest use of this technique.

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7	*Composite Psalms	Psalms that are composed by reusing existing psalms texts. They indicate a development or re-reading of earlier psalms in a latter context in the Psalter (e.g., Pss 57, 60 in 108. See §5.1.3).
8	*Intertextual reading (extratextual references)	Reading the Psalms against texts outside the Psalter (e.g., reading the motifs associated with the completion of the temple with the narratives in 1–2 Chronicles. See §1.3.4).
9	*Theological development or Metanarrative progression ( <i>Steigerung</i> )	A development or progression of a motif or concept (e.g., the concept of Zion eventually as an social-reality of peace and bliss. See §3.2.2).
10	*Messianic and eschatological perspective	The Davidic Collections Pss 101–103 and 108–110 present a different Davidic king who is blameless, afflicted and victorious (see §§4.4, 4.5).
11	*Shift from individual to communal psalms	More individual psalms in the earlier Books compared to later ones (see pp. 410–415).
12	Interlocking framework	One frame “interlocks” with another via the presence of one or more psalms occurring in the other collection (esp. G. Wilson).
13	Psalms 18–19 in Book I and Pss 18–144.	These two psalms mark a decisive change in the use of certain terminologies and motifs (e.g., Torah synonyms; kingship-messianic psalms; see esp. O Palmer Robertson). The motifs of deliverance and security are heightened and bounded by these two locations (Pss 18, 144) based on similar terminologies.
14	*Narrative and prophesy-fulfilment	The place of Ps 51 and its role in the Second Davidic Collections unite a unit of text (Pss 51–66, 69; see pp. 368–370).
15	*Pan-Psalter occurrence scheme (POS)	The careful use and placement of certain word/phrases at strategic locations across the entire Psalter to make or reinforce a rhetorical point in collaboration with the Metanarrative of the Psalter (see esp. §3.2.4–3.2.6)
16	Figurative/Metaphorical devices	The use of the “rock” metaphor occurs only between Pss 18 and 144, binding the kingship psalms.
17	* <i>Maqqep</i>	Counting words linked by <i>maqqep</i> as a single word. Affects total word count in a psalm (see pp. 100, 447–448)
18	*Nexusword	Nexusword identifies the word(s) at the center of a psalm by word count. Traced across the psalms, they collaborate with the macrostructural shape of the Psalter (see §5.1).
19	Alternation	Alternating motifs and consecutive psalms binding a group of psalms. For instance, the use of “day” and “night” psalms in Pss 3–14 could be a response to Ps 1:2 (see esp. Barbiero’s work in §2.2).

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Figure 5: Tacit Organizational Techniques of the MT Psalter

From the above techniques, the structure can be understood. Figure 6 below provides a summary and comparison of several structural divisions of each Book of the Psalter. This summary provides a snapshot of representative divisions. From them, we can identify areas of consensus or disagreement in various parts of the structure of the entire Psalter.

Book I										
Zenger	1–2	3–14		15–24		25–34		35–41		
Vesco	1–2	3–14		15–24		25–34		35–41		
Auwers	1–2	3–14		15–24		25–34		35–41		
Koorevaar	1–2	3–14		15–24		25–34		35–41		
Christensen	1	2–6	7–11	12–18	19	20–26	27–31	32–36	37–41	
Labuschagne	1	2–8		9–18	19–29		30–31	32–41		
Robertson	1–2	3–17		18	19	20–24	25	26–32	33	34–41

Book II										
Zenger	42–49		50	51	52–55	56–60	61–64	65–68	69–71	72
Vesco	42–49		50	51	52–55	56–60	61–64	65–68	69–71	72
Auwers	42–49		50	51–64				65–67	69–71	
Koorevaar	42–49		50	51–72						
Christensen	42–44	45–49	50	51–70					71–72	
Labuschagne	42–49		50	51–57		58–64		65–71		72
Robertson	42–44	45–48	49–52		53	54–60	61–68		69–71	72

Book III											
Zenger	73–83						84–89				
Vesco	73–83						84–89				
Auwers	73–77		78–83			84–85	86	87–89			
Koorevaar	73–83				84–85	86	87–88		89		
Christensen	73–79		80	81	82	83–89					
Labuschagne	73–83					84–89					
Robertson	73–74	75–76	77–83			84–87		88–89			

Book IV											
Zenger	90–92		93–100					101–103	104–106		
Vesco	90–92		93–100					101–106			
Auwers	90–92		93–100					101–106			
Koorevaar	90–92		93–100					101–106			
Christensen	90–96		97	98	99	100–106					
Labuschagne	90–100					101–106					
Robertson	90–91	92–100					101–103	104–106			

	Book V										
Zenger	107	108– 110	111– 112	113– 118	119	120–134	135–136	137	138–145	146–150	
Vesco	107	108– 110	111– 117	118–119		120–134	135	136–137	138–145	146–150	
Auwers		107–117		118–119		120–134	135	136–137	138–145	146–150	
Koorevaar	107	108– 110	111– 117	118	119	120–134	135	136	137	138–145	146–150
Christensen	107	108–112		113– 118	119	120–134	135–145			146–150	
Labuschagne		107–117		118–119		120–134	135–145			146–150	
Robertson	107	108– 110	111– 117	118	119	120–134	135–137		138–145	146–150	

Figure 6: Survey of Macrostructural Divisions of the Five Books

In Book I, there is a general consensus that Pss 1–2 is the Prologue. Most scholars also identify four major groupings (3–14, 15–24, 35–34, 35–41). Christensen, Labuschagne and Robertson's groupings are significantly different because they are driven by a dominant technique (numerical or thematic). In Book II, apart from Robertson's structure, there is a common consensus of grouping along with the Korahite, Asaphite and Davidic Collections (42–49, 50, 51–72). The main structuring disagreement lies within the Davidic psalms. Christensen and Robertson have identified Pss 42–44 as a group based on thematic observations. Likewise, in Book III, the major consensus is across the Asaphite and Korahite Collections (73–83, 84–89). Main structuring differences occur within the Collections. Christensen's structure stands out again because he deemed that Pss 80, 81, 82 are framed by seven psalms on each side. In Book IV, a similar phenomenon recurs. The general agreement is found in the three main sections: Pss 90–92, 93–100 and 101–106. Christensen applies a similar technique of a 7+3+7 structure in Book IV. Labuschagne's structure is based on his Logotechnique argument for eleven psalms (90–100). Robertson groups Ps 92 with 93 based on thematic reasons and considers a collection of nine psalms (92–100) with Ps

96 functioning as the apex. In Book V, the problematic areas occur around Pss 117–118 and between 135–137. There is a unanimous agreement on a structural break after Pss 119, 134 and 145.

Macrostructural divisions underlie the overarching editorial design for which commentators theorize and posit their proposals. Wilson highlighted the role of the Davidic covenant. Arguing from the Prologue, Zenger saw that the Psalms, as a whole, functions theologically as a sanctuary. Robertson's view is similar. He argues that the Psalms provides a framework for God's people to approach him in proper worship. Also arguing from the Prologue, Vesco sees that the Psalter reveals the route to Salvation. Those who read the Psalms become the new David. deClaissé-Walford underscores the socio-historical agenda behind the Psalter.

With these, our research questions for this thesis can be summarized as follow: (1) *Organizing principles*—It is clear that a variety of techniques were used in the shaping of the Psalter. We observe that certain methodologies produce very different structural divisions. (e.g., numerical vs. thematic). They cannot all be right at the same time. A presumption we make is that the final editor(s) would have some ability and freedom to shape the Psalter based on these literary organizing techniques. If such freedom were available, and if the final form (or “original text”)<sup>225</sup> of the Psalter were organized with

<sup>225</sup> In textual criticism, the terms, *original text*, *original version*, and *final text* are differentiated. A composition, when it is first completed, is the *original version*. However, this original version can be published later with some changes or re-published with changes as a new edition. At some point, these versions culminate with a final version that may be quite different from the very first version when the composition was first written. This final version is the *original text*. The *final text* is not associated with individual biblical books but with the “completed canon that was accepted by the church(es) as authoritative and definitive for the Christian faith about 100 C.E.” (cf. Childs’ definition). My use of the phrase “final form” denotes the *original text* rather than the *final text* since this thesis is concerned

some form of intentional design, we would expect correspondence in the expressions of techniques, content and structure. Hence, an important consideration in this thesis is to observe whether *organizing techniques, form and content* cohere.

(2) *Macrostructure*—While there is some consensus in the major grouping of psalms (e.g., in Book I), structural difficulties remain in certain subcollections (esp. within Pss 51–72, 117–119 and 135–137). Since structural arguments affect the design and focus of the book, we need to identify the most coherent structural design based on literary evidence.

(3) *Overarching design and logic*—As we address the coherence of organizing principles and macrostructure, we regularly question why the entire Psalter fit together as it stands. Can we detect a consistent overall design of the Psalter? Is there a programmatic role for the Prologue (Pss 1–2)? Is there a metanarrative across the Psalter? How do structuring techniques, macrostructure, the vantage point of the Prologue (etc.) come together to reveal the design (and message) of the Psalter?

### **1.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY**

My general interpretive approach in this thesis can be situated under the titles of “Rhetorical,” “New Criticism” and “Close reading” as defined by David Clines:

Rhetorical criticism, often operating under the banner of “the final form of the text”, concerns itself with the way the language of texts is deployed to convey meaning. Its interests are in the devices of writing, in metaphor

primarily with the individual biblical book of the Psalms. For a good discussion of these nuances, see Alexander Fischer and Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: Introduction to Biblia Hebraica* (trans. Errol F. Rhodes; 3rd ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2014), 158–162.

and parallelism, in narrative and poetic structures, in stylistic figures. . . . New Criticism was especially an Anglo-American movement in general literary criticism, regarding texts as unitary works of art, paying close attention to the internal characteristics of the text itself and abjuring the use of data extrinsic to a text in its interpretation. . . . “Close reading” is a term for the method of New Criticism; it refers to a paying of special attention to theme, imagery, metaphor, paradox, irony, ambiguity, key words, motifs and the like.<sup>226</sup>

However, my approach is not strictly limited to observations in the text. I make inferences about the text in relation to its final editors and readers. As such, it is also a canonical-literary or editorial criticism approach.<sup>227</sup> My interests are primarily in the literary shape<sup>228</sup> of the hundred-and-fifty Hebrew poems and how they are designed as a single composition, if at all, in shaping a coherent theological program for its readers who may belong to a later generation (102:19). It is not far-fetched to postulate, from observing the rhetorical features of the text, possible authorial intent conveyed by such features and how they would affect its readers.<sup>229</sup>

<sup>226</sup> David J. A. Clines, “Contemporary Methods in Hebrew Bible Criticism,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament The History of Its Interpretation Volume III. From Modernism to Post-Modernism: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (ed. Magne Saebø; HBOT III/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 151–52.

<sup>227</sup> Editorial criticism emphasizes evidence of editorial shaping of a biblical text and the significance or meaning of the shape of that text. For a definition of “editorial criticism,” see J. A. Grant, “Editorial Criticism,” in *DOTWPW*, 149–56.

<sup>228</sup> The “shape” of the Psalter refers to identifiable “editorial activities” of various extents in unifying the book. “Shaping” emphasizes the “editorial purpose that governs the organization process.” deClaissé-Walford, “The Canonical Approach to Scripture and The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter,” 7.

<sup>229</sup> My methodology is quite similar to that of David A Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

My approach will also be macrostructural, that is, instead of focusing on detailed exegesis of a limited number of adjacent psalms, it will be on how certain lexemes or motifs, superscriptions, Davidic collections and other poetical features function within the entire Psalter. Structural centers and distant thematic parallels are of interest. Such a macrostructural study of the entire Psalter avoids the difficulties associated with analyses of a limited number of psalms yet at the same time, takes advantage of their gains by consolidating them under a macroanalysis. As Körting notes, “the macro study of the book of Psalms was fundamental for further research.”<sup>230</sup>

In the rest of this chapter, four higher level hermeneutical issues associated with my approach are discussed. First, I will clarify my approach and briefly discuss how this thesis is situated within the hermeneutical framework of author-text-reader. Second, I will state how the Psalter can be read as a unified whole. Third, the Prologue (Pss 1–2) will be studied. I argue that the poetical structure (form), key motifs (content) and structuring techniques observed in the Prologue cohere with one other so that the Prologue provides the hermeneutical key to reading the Psalter. Finally, we explore how fundamental motifs found in the books of Samuel and Chronicles, specifically the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7, relates intertextually to the reading of the Psalter. I propose that the Psalter is the unfurling of YHWH’s covenant with David.

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<sup>230</sup> Corinna Körting, “The Psalms—Their Cultic Setting, Forms and Traditions,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament The History of Its Interpretation Volume III. From Modernism to Post-Modernism: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (ed. Magne Saebø; HBOT III/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 531–58, [553].

### 1.3.1 AUTHOR-TEXT-READER FRAMEWORK

From my demonstration of various observations and readings of the structural design of the MT-150 text, important questions relating to *warrant* would inevitably be raised. For instance, we may ask if an *implied*<sup>231</sup> author of the Psalter had indeed intended a particular reading or a structure in the text? Could the implied reader (or informed reader) be reading something that the author has never intended, and had unwittingly imposed an “artificial order on an unwilling text”?<sup>232</sup> Where lexical connections or less obvious poetic devices are presented in this thesis, the instinctive question that is usually asked is that of validity. Was this really intended by the author? How and why would the reader recognize such connections as significant? While these questions will not always be answered with certainty, it is necessary to provide some preliminary considerations before we study the Psalter in greater detail.

One way to clarify the interrelationships between the theological message, author, text and reader is via a diagram drawn by John Barton.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>231</sup> The “implied author” is a construct, namely one who “would possess the necessary competence in the conventions assumed by the text in order to ‘decode’ the text.” The implied author is an imaginary author constructed from the text alone. In Wolfgang Iser’s terminology, the “implied reader” is one who “embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect. These predispositions are laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has its roots firmly planted in the structure of the text.” However, it is also possible that the implied reader is not completely defined by the text. “The implied author may assume on the part of the implied reader a set of values, literary competence, and background.” Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 192, 195; *Interpreting the Bible: A Handbook of Terms and Methods* (Baker Academic, 2006), 176; cf. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, New Ed edition. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1978), 38.

<sup>232</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 3.

<sup>233</sup> This model has been redrawn from John Barton’s work, “Classifying Biblical Criticism,” *JSOT* 29 (1984): 19–35, [23]; *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 201. Barton developed this model from M. H. Abrams’s *The Mirror and the*

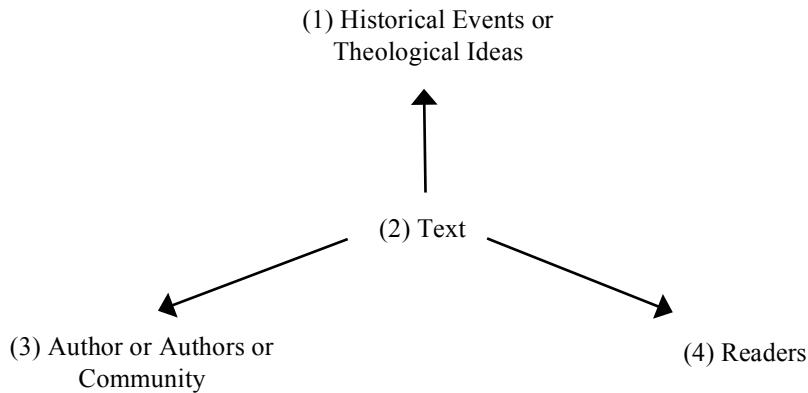


Figure 7: Barton's Message-Author-Text-Reader Map

The figure above shows four different loci where meaning can be centered.

Critical methods that place the locus of meaning on the author (3)<sup>234</sup> state that interpretation is enhanced when all can be uncovered about the minds of the author(s), redactor(s) or community, and the (socio-political and ideological) world in they are situated in. The basic assumption is that the text (2) will reflect the authorial intent, which, in turn, is shaped by the complex matrix of events and theological ideas (1) as understood by the author. Thus, the meaning of the text is primarily associated with an author. An understanding of the world that shaped the worldview of the author is crucial to ascertain the meaning of the text. Against this position, however, is whether the world of the author(s) and his intent can be reasonably reconstructed.<sup>235</sup>

*Lamp.* Cf. M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953); Tremper Longman III, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation* (Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation Series vol. 3; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 18.

<sup>234</sup> E.g., Source, Form and Redactional criticisms.

<sup>235</sup> Authorship anonymity is common in the Bible. Pseudonymity is also practiced when the real author speaks through a constructed persona. Johnson T. K. Lim, *A Strategy for Reading Biblical Texts*

Text-centered methods (2) view the text as an artefact.<sup>236</sup> Meaning is found only within the forms and content of the text while the world behind the text (e.g., author) is irrelevant. “Any interpretation of the text must treat it as a coherent and complex whole.”<sup>237</sup> Literary conventions govern how texts are to be understood. Meaning is derived not so much from the text but by the linguistic rules through which the text is constructed. The genre of poetry is not the same as that of prose and hence, meaning is derived differently. In other words, “meaning of the work is found in the convention rather than the intention of the author.”<sup>238</sup> Rhetorical criticism (or stylistic analysis), as a text-centered method, isolates a discrete literary unit for analysis, and focuses on the structure and balance of the text, giving attention to certain key words or theme.<sup>239</sup> The text is the artistic artefact to be examined without a necessity to presuppose or dismiss its history. Nonetheless, many scholars have pointed out that texts do not have absolute autonomy. Against this position, there is the issue of the extent to which the forms and structures (i.e., the convention) of the text can be universally accepted rather than reader created.<sup>240</sup>

(Studies in Biblical Literature 29; New York: P. Lang, 2002), 32–33; Nonetheless, E. D. Hirsch argues that the author’s intent remains important as it provides a “kind of anchor in the sea of interpretive relativity.” The authorial intent is to be inferred through “a careful study of the text in relationship to other closely related text.” Longman III, *Literary Approaches*, 20–21; E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

<sup>236</sup> E.g., Structuralism, New Criticism and rhetorical criticism.

<sup>237</sup> W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 205.

<sup>238</sup> Longman III, *Literary Approaches*, 32.

<sup>239</sup> Donald K. Berry, *Psalms and Their Readers: Interpretive Strategies for Psalm 18* (JSOTSup 153; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 81.

<sup>240</sup> Berry, *Psalms and Their Readers*, 139.

Reader/audience-centered methods are concerned with the effects the text produces in relation to the reader or community.<sup>241</sup> There is little concern with the intentions of the authors. Meaning is primarily the construct of the implied/informed/ideal reader. The implied reader is the “imaginary person who should completely understand a TEXT as an AUTHOR intended him or her to do and who thereby respond as the author expects.”<sup>242</sup> Reader response critics highlight the “gaps” in the texts (ambiguities) which the reader must respond in order to make sense. The text provides the “directives” (ideologies, forms or content) through which the implied reader is constructed.

There is a continuum of those who hold on to text-centered methods and those who locate meaning in the readers. Somewhere in the midpoint is Wolfgang Iser’s approach.<sup>243</sup> In his view, the implied reader is limited by the text. Although the reader interacts with the text to form meaning, the reader is still under the control of the text. In extreme forms of reader response methods, it is not the text that controls the reader but the interpretive community in which the reader is situated.<sup>244</sup>

<sup>241</sup> E.g., feminist or liberation theology. For Stanley Fish, meaning is the “direct result of the strategies [structures] applied to the text by the reader [or the interpretive community]” (Tate, *Interpreting the Bible*, 193). Fish argues that “[i]n this formulation, the reader’s response is not *to* the meaning; it *is* the meaning, or at least the medium in which what I wanted to call the meaning comes into being”. Stanley Eugene Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980), 3.

<sup>242</sup> In contrast, a real reader, conditioned socially and historically, can only understand what his or her worldview affords. Hence, no real reader can fully exhaust the meaning of the text. Tate, *Interpreting the Bible*, 173, 176.

<sup>243</sup> Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Berry, *Psalms and Their Readers*, 11–13.

<sup>244</sup> Tate, *Interpreting the Bible*, 304.

In this mediating position, meaning arises from a dialogical communication process, between the textual signals (forms, structure or content) and the reader's interpretation of these textual signs. Meaning is "a product of interaction between the enabling structures of a text and a reader's acts of comprehension, [and] meaning must be something other than what is found on the printed pages of the text."<sup>245</sup> In other words, meaning is only *apparently* present in the text. The reader cannot freely determine meaning because of various text directives, yet the text only establishes meaning through the reader's interaction. Although there are indeterminacies, not every meaning is legitimate. The more gaps or differing directives in the text, the harder it is for the reader to come to a consistent perspective of meaning.

The nature of poetry is its *lacunous* character. In a compilation of 150 poems, this characteristic is multiplied. Based on Iser's mediated position, if consistent perspective meaning in the Psalter is observed by the reader, it would be the result of interactions between the text directives and the reader. The question is whether the Psalter contains these text directives and whether they render a *consistent* perspective to the reader.

With the brief sketch of author-text-reader framework above, my response is as follows: (1) I will first explore what is known of the world of the authors and readers based on extant historical information. From this information, inferences about the author(s)'s compositional skills and readers' literary competence can be made. (2) Since my methodology does not differ in large measure from the works of Wilson, Howard, Grant, Labuschagne, Freedman, van der Lugt and others, I will explore the controls

<sup>245</sup> Tate, *Interpreting the Bible*, 305.

these scholars have adopted in their works and their arguments on authorial intent and readers' responses.

What do we know about the world of implied authors and readers of Hebrew poetry? Extrabiblical evidence provides a good source of collaborative information. Archaeologists have found, from excavating various sites in Palestine such as Lachish, Arad, Kuntillet-Ajrud, "a number of practice alphabet texts, as well as isolated letters, or letters apparently grouped by similarity of shape, and other materials indicative of elementary instructions,"<sup>246</sup> most of which, can be dated to the eighth century B.C.E. Besides such abecedary materials, inscriptions of names, formulaic headers of letters, lists of months of the year, symbols and sequences of signs, and drawings have been found.<sup>247</sup> The study of scribal education and curriculum in Kuntillet-Ajrud has been recently updated, leading Schniedewind to conclude the following,

In other words, already by the end of the ninth century B.C.E., even remote desert fortresses would have scribes who were trained in basic skills relating to trade and state bureaucracy. The Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions illustrate a main role of scribes in the ancient world, namely, they work in the service of the state and its bureaucracy.<sup>248</sup>

This epigraphic evidence not only suggests common literacy and training in the preexilic period across Palestine but indicates specific literary elements of abecedaries,

<sup>246</sup> James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretations* (Library of Early Christianity 3; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 52; James L. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 100–108.

<sup>247</sup> James Crenshaw, "Education in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 104.4 (1985): 601–15, [605].

<sup>248</sup> William Schniedewind, "Understanding Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: A View from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," *Maarav* 21.1–2.1–2 (2014): 271–93, [293].

formulas, genre collections, symbols and sequences are prevalent in ancient Hebraic literature. This collaborates well with the use of such literary features found in the Psalter. (e.g., alphabetical acrostics and formulaic expressions; cf. Pss 9, 10, 119, 106:1). Moreover, by the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E, ancient Israel's scribal training "required extensive knowledge beyond Hebrew and Aramaic" which would include knowledge of Egyptian or Akkadian.<sup>249</sup>

Biblical acrostics are clearly not the innovations of Hebrew poets. A number of extrabiblical Mesopotamian and Egyptian acrostic poems are extant. Believed to have been composed around the time of 1000 B.C.E, the Akkadian acrostic, "the Babylonian theodicy," consists of a poetic technique in which the initial syllables of horizontal lines spell out a message when they are read vertically.<sup>250</sup> The message, *a-na-ku sa-ag-gi-il ki-[i-na-am ub]-bi-ib maáš—ma-šu ka-ri-bu ša i-li ú šar-ri* ("I Saggil-kinam-ubbib, the exorcist, am a worshipper of god and king"),<sup>251</sup> when decrypted, sets up the poet character (a worshipper) against the poem content (the poet's view of human suffering in the poem).

Another Akkadian acrostic, probably composed around the same time, is the Prayer of *Nabu-ushebshi*. Recognized only in 1969, this acrostic consists of acrostic

<sup>249</sup> Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel*, 88.

<sup>250</sup> Brug notes that the poem "apparently consisted of 27 eleven-line stanzas. Each of the 11 lines of a given stanza begins with the same sign. The stanzas are separated by horizontal lines, but there is no other indication of the acrostic." John F. Brug, "Near Eastern Acrostics And Biblical Acrostics Biblical Acrostics And Their Relationship To Other Ancient Near Eastern Acrostics" (paper presented at the NEH Seminar: The Bible And Near Eastern Literature, Yale, 1987, 1997), 5.

<sup>251</sup> Brug, "Near Eastern Acrostics," 5.

signs, half of which occur at the beginning and the other half at the end.<sup>252</sup> This is the poetic technique of “telostics” or “mezostics” in which the poem uses signs or words acting as frames around the text.<sup>253</sup> In another acrostic connected with King Nebuchadnezzar and dated to 605–562 B.C.E., each line of four sets of ten/eleven stanzas begins with a sign that forms a cryptic identification of Nabu, the god invoked in the poem.<sup>254</sup> Akkadian poets have also used number patterns or line counts as symbolic features in poems. Brug notes that a hymn to the goddess Ishtar consists of 15 stanzas, and the number 15 is “the symbolic number of Ishtar.”<sup>255</sup>

Chiasmus is a technique that has been used in antiquity. Consider Dorsey’s observation on the Akkadian “Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World”<sup>256</sup>:

- a Ishtar reaches the *first* gate and takes off her *great crown*
  - b Ishtar reaches the *second* gate and takes off her *earrings*
  - c Ishtar reaches the *third* gate and takes off her *necklaces*
  - d Ishtar reaches the *fourth* gate and takes off her *breast ornaments*
  - e Ishtar reaches the *fifth* gate and takes off her *birthstone girdle*
  - f Ishtar reaches the *sixth* gate and takes off her *bracelets*
  - g Ishtar reaches the *seventh* gate and takes off her
- 

<sup>252</sup> Brug notes, “The clue to the acrostic is provided by the colophons that read, “The beginning and the ending of the writing are to be read twice,” that is, horizontally as part of the prayer and vertically as an acrostic. The text consists of two prayers, one to Marduk for offspring and one to Nabu for life.” Brug, “Near Eastern Acrostics,” 5.

<sup>253</sup> Brug has shown that Mezostics is already an established technique in the Egyptian literature of the 19th through 22nd Dynasties.” He points out that “the tomb inscription of Neb-wenenef from the time of Ramses II is written in horizontal columns. However, it is divided by two vertical lines. When the signs between these lines are read vertically, they form an acrostic, or I suppose we should say a mesostic, since the message is in the middle of lines.” Brug, “Near Eastern Acrostics,” 6–7.

<sup>254</sup> Brug, “Near Eastern Acrostics,” 5.

<sup>255</sup> Brug, “Near Eastern Acrostics,” 6.

<sup>256</sup> This abridged form of the poem is found in Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 30; Cf. James Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 77–81.

- breechcloth*
- h Ishtar enters Hades and dies
  - h' Ishtar comes alive and exits Hades
  - g' Ishtar comes to the *seventh* gate and puts on her *breechcloth*
  - f Ishtar comes to the *sixth* gate and puts on her *bracelets*
  - e' Ishtar comes to the *fifth* gate and puts on her *birthstone girdle*
  - d' Ishtar comes to the *fourth* gate and puts on her *breast ornaments*
  - c' Ishtar comes to the *third* gate and puts on her *necklaces*
  - b' Ishtar comes to the *second* gate and puts on her *earrings*
  - a' Ishtar comes to the *first* gate and puts on her *great crown*

This example also shows that the extended chiastic structure, incorporating the use of numbers such as “seven,” is already an established technique in the ancient Near East. The poem centers on the turning point of Ishtar’s dying and coming back to life.

Brug points out that quasi-acrostics are found in Ugaritic poems. It has been observed that Ugaritic poets placed the same word (anaphora/alliteration) or letter at the beginning of several consecutive lines. These poetic effects are similar to those found in Ps 119.<sup>257</sup> Certain Egyptian acrostics, by their use of numbers and word play, also provide an early attestation of such poetic methods. The hymn to Amon, from the Leiden Papyrus I 350 (dated to thirteenth-century B.C.E.),<sup>258</sup> shows that the poem is structured by numbered units. Signs at the beginning and the end of these literary units are actually puns or words that mimic the phonetic value of a number. This Egyptian acrostic is also structured by a number sequence (the first ten chapters are numbered 1 . . . 10, and subsequent chapters numbered by 10s and 100s). Brug notes that “[t] his

<sup>257</sup> Brug, “Near Eastern Acrostics,” 4.

<sup>258</sup> Brug, “Near Eastern Acrostics,” 6; Jan Zandee, “Le Roi-Dieu et Le Dieu-Roi Dans l’Égypte Ancienne,” *Numen* 3 (1956): 230–34, [230].

format seems to have the same stylistic motive suggested for the biblical acrostic, namely, depicting completeness.”<sup>259</sup>

From the brief survey above, we note how Akkadian, Ugaritic and Egyptian poets were able to encrypt messages, invoke the names of deity, apply various techniques for structuring, and embed numerical sequences within acrostics.

Many of these poems are either contemporaneous, or they predate biblical psalms. Without downplaying their differences and the direction of dependence, it is reasonable to assume that poetical techniques seen in the ANE were also practised and established in ancient Israel because they share a common historical and cultural milieu. Hence, we can assume that the Hebrew poets were conversant with most, if not all, the techniques described above and the readers of the Psalter would also have the necessary literary competency to understand these poetic features.

There is internal evidence that supports the high level of compositional skills of poets, as well as, high levels of reading competency of readers of the Psalter. Crenshaw has provided a list of OT references and argues that this “evidence clearly points to the existence of literate persons at an early period in Israel” (e.g., Isa 28:9–13; 50:4–9; Prov 22:17–21).<sup>260</sup>

<sup>259</sup> Brug, “Near Eastern Acrostics,” 6.

<sup>260</sup> Crenshaw cites at least ten further examples: “(1) the existence of a city named Qiriath-Sepher (City of the Book, or City of the Scribe); (2) the story in Judg 8:13–17 about Gideon enlisting the aid of a local youth to write down the names of the city officials; (3) Isaiah’s determination to bind up the testimony and seal the teaching among his disciples (8:16); (4) Job’s desire to have the charges against him written on a document so that he could display them and demonstrate his innocence (31:35–37); (5) Habakkuk’s reference to a vision that could be read while one ran through the streets (2:2); (6) allusions to buying knowledge, which is understood as tuition (Prov 4:5; 17:16); (7) presumed scribes and courtiers in the royal court, particularly in the time of David, Solomon, and Hezekiah; (8) references to parental instruction in Proverbs (especially 4:1–9; 8:32–36); (9) scattered references to writing (e.g., Isa 10:19;

It is likely that many poetic techniques observed in the Psalter were established early in the Hebraic community. David Freedman's analysis of several early poems of Israel confirms the use of certain poetic techniques by the time of biblical psalms. Dated to 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.,<sup>261</sup> the Song of the Sea (Exod 15); and possibly the the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), was of central importance to Israel's social fabric and "could not be lost or forgotten."<sup>262</sup> Even if we grant later editorial hands at work in the Song of the Sea, scholars consider the *terminus ad quem* of its final textual form to be in the pre-monarchic period.<sup>263</sup> From Freedman's study of the Song of the Sea, we note at least six different poetical techniques employed: (a) the use of divine name and titles as

29:11-12; Prov 3:3; 7:3 [the tablet of the heart]; Jer 8:8 [the false pen of scribes]; Deut 24:1, 3 [a bill of divorce]; Jer 32:12 [deed of purchase]; Josh 18:9; 2 Sam 18:17); (10) vocabulary for teaching and knowledge in Proverbs (cf. also the Oak of Moreh in Gen 12:6; Deut 11:30). Crenshaw, "Education in Ancient Israel," 603–604.

<sup>261</sup> David Noel Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 118, 160, 226.

<sup>262</sup> Freedman identified a number of songs dated from the twelve to tenth-century B.C.E. He noted three different phases of compositions. These compositions, he argued, were central and basic to Israel's life. He noted, "I distinguish three phases of composition, which may be assigned to the 12th, 11th, and 10th centuries respectively: (i) the period of militant Mosaic Yahwism: the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15), during the first half of the twelfth-century, and the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), during the second half of the same century; (ii) the archaic period, with the revival of patriarchal names and titles for God: the Testament of Jacob (Genesis 49), during the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup>-century, and the Testament of Moses (Deuteronomy 33), during the later part of the same century; the Oracles of Balaam (Numbers 23-24), perhaps in the middle of the century; (iii) the period of the monarchy: the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32), difficult to date, but there are tell-tale signs of later composition in the selection of divine names, which indicate that it belongs to phase iii, not earlier than the 10th-9th centuries, perhaps around 900 B.C." David Noel Freedman, "Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy : An Essay on Biblical Poetry," *JBL* 96.1 (1977): 5–26, [18].

<sup>263</sup> The absence of monarchical references and various associations to Canaanite mythic *topoi* are elements that suggest that the Song of the Sea was composed at least as early as the pre-monarchic period. For a recent discussion of the historicity of Exod 15, see Mark Leuchter, "Eisodus as Exodus: The Song of the Sea (Exod 15) Reconsidered," *Bib* 92.3 (2011): 321–46.

rhetorical devices<sup>264</sup>; (b) strophic structures<sup>265</sup>; (c) the use of inclusions<sup>266</sup>; (d) pyramid (chiastic) structures with a central focus on YHWH's kingship and his victories over his enemies<sup>267</sup>; (f) the use of "Exordium" [or introduction]<sup>268</sup>; (g) metric and symmetry in the structure of a poem.<sup>269</sup>

Specifically for (d), the heart of the Song (Exod 15:9–11) highlights the final expressions of YHWH's victory over Pharaoh before the poet moves on to a different motif of YHWH leading his people to the Promised land. Freedman argued, "These

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<sup>264</sup> For Freedman, the name "YHWH" is used "exclusively or predominantly" in the "militant Mosaic Yahwism" period (twelfth century). In the Song of the Sea, Exod 15:1 and 21 are seen as the refrain, enveloping the main section of the poem. Freedman noted that in these two framing verses, "the only divine name which occurs is Yahweh." For him, "the selection and distribution of divine names do not appear to be haphazard but follow a traceable evolutionary pattern." Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 79, 107.

<sup>265</sup> "Starting from an extremely important and completely convincing observation of Professor Muilenburg, we can proceed at once to an examination of the strophic pattern of the poem. He points out that a special poetic device (of great antiquity since it is a common feature of pre-Mosaic Canaanite poetry) is used to separate the poetic units of stanzas of the composition. These dividers [Exod 15:6, 11, 16b], or refrains (since they employ repetitive pattern), are very much alike in structure or pattern." Freedman concluded, "The existence of a strophic structure in this poem may be regarded as highly probable if not virtually certain." Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 179, 188.

<sup>266</sup> "The rhetorical device known as *inclusion* is shown by the repetition of the name 'Yahweh' in vss. 3 and 19—a continuity maintained in the refrains [vv.1, 21]". Elsewhere, Freedman added, "the second refrain stands at the center of the poem, and is an elaborate apostrophe on the incomparability of Yahweh. It serves to link not only the two major parts of the poem, but also the thematic statements at the beginning and end: vs 3, Yahweh the warrior, and vs 18, Yahweh the king who will reign over his people." Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 182, 216.

<sup>267</sup> Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 180.

<sup>268</sup> "The conclusion of the investigation into the strophic structure of the Son of the Sea is that it is a well-ordered poem, with a single inclusive design. The Song consists of an Exordium [introduction], followed by an opening stanza which is complemented by a parallel closing stanza, each one corresponding in length and pattern to the stanza-units of the body of the poem." Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 183, 217.

<sup>269</sup> "I further suggest that the poem — a gem of metrical symmetry and artistic simplicity — belongs to the same period, Phase I, as the Song of the Sea, Psalm 29, and the Song of Deborah." Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 235.

data indicate the pyramidal structure of the main part of the poem with the apex in the center of the poem. So far as the content is concerned, it coincides with the final destruction of Pharaoh's host in the turbulent waters.<sup>270</sup>

Moreover, the Song of the Sea depicts not just YHWH's deliverance of Israel but their passing over of the land of Canaan and eventual dwelling in the mountain where YHWH's sanctuary is established by his own hands (Exod 15:17–18). There is a movement in the Song, a trajectory that captures Israel's relationship with God, their struggle and eventual arrival to a place of promise and security. The language of praise in the first person (Exod 15:1 cf. Pss 13:6; 104:33)<sup>271</sup>; the arboreal language of YHWH's “planting” (**נטע**) of his people at “the mountain of [YHWH's] inheritance” (cf. Pss 1:3; 52:10; 92:13–15); the recurring rhetorical question of “who is like you, O Lord” (Exod 15:11; cf. Pss 35:10; 71:19; 89:9; Deut 33:29); and the final conclusion of YHWH's eternal kingship (**יהוה מלך לעוֹלָם ועוֹד**; Exod 15:18; cf. Ps 10:16; 29:10; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1),<sup>272</sup> are significant literary motifs that later poets of the Psalmody had adopted and used in the Psalter.

The parallel features between the Song of the Sea and the Psalms are significant. Granting the antiquity and centrality of the Song of the Sea (and other early poems) in Israel's history, it is reasonable to assume that the readers of the Psalter were not only

<sup>270</sup> Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 180.

<sup>271</sup> The exact phrase, **אשירה להוּה**, is found only in these three places.

<sup>272</sup> The juxtaposition of the two lexeme, **יהוה מלך**, is found only in these texts: Exod 15:18; 1 Chr 16:31; Pss 10:16; 29:10; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; Isa 33:22; 44:6; Jer 17:20; 19:3; 22:2; Note also that the phrase with the defective spelling, **לעוֹלָם**, is found only in Exod 15:18 and Ps 45:18 (cf. Pss 9:6; 119:44; 145:1–2, 21; Dan 12:3; Mic 4:5).

familiar with such poetic techniques and competent to understand them, but were also familiar with the theological metanarrative and motifs inherent in the Song of the Sea.

We move on to explore how Psalms scholars understand issues of authorial intent and reader response related to the Psalter. We begin with Wilson's *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*. Wilson's work is an argument for *intentional editorial design* based on various literary features observed in the MT-150.<sup>273</sup> This is clearly evident by the use of "editing" in the title of his book. Under the hermeneutical framework of author-text-reader, Wilson's interest was primarily in the first two aspects, the author and the text. The issue of whether an implied or informed reader would be able to pick up Wilson's observations of the text is not discussed. To be sure, Wilson had set up his study with an objective control to avoid imposing "non-existent structure on the text."<sup>274</sup> This is

<sup>273</sup> Jamie Grant calls this "editorial criticism." For his definition of "editorial criticism," see J. A. Grant, "Editorial Criticism," in *DOTWPW*, 149–56). Consider the following statements that Wilson frequently adopts in *Editing*: "I am convinced by the data that there are clear indications of editorial activity throughout MT 150. These are not isolated examples of limited editorial concern, but are part of a broader editorial movement to unify the 150 pss into a coherent whole" (p. 11); "evidence . . . of editorial use" (p. 167); "how the editor(s) of the Psalter used the pss-headings . . ." (p. 167); "method and purpose of the Psalter editor(s)" (p. 170); "explicit statements in the pss-headings were employed by the editor(s) to organize and structure the Psalter" (p. 182); "my study of the distribution of the technical terms, . . . is a real and purposeful division which is indicated internally by the editorial use of author designations . . . not fortuitous, but represent editorially induced methods of giving 'shape' to the pss corpus" (p. 186); "the results [Wilson's analysis] indicate that the positioning of the opening and closing pss of these segments reflects *purposeful* choice and arrangement of pss rather than chance juxtaposition" (emphasis his. P. 190); "I have been able to show (1) that the "book" divisions of the Psalter are real, editorial induced divisions and not accidentally introduced; . . . All these findings demonstrate the presence of editorial activity at work in the arrangement of the pss" (p. 199); "it is possible to show that the *final* form of the MT 150 is the result of a purposeful, editorial activity which sought to impart a meaningful arrangement which encompassed the whole" (p. 199); "the curious conjunction of such large number of "untitled" pss in Book Four, as well as its other distinctive features, lead me to suggest that this book is especially the product of purposeful editorial arrangement" (p. 215); "close correspondence between the concluding summary in Ps 106:40–46 and the continuing refrain of 107:6–8, . . . leaves little doubt of the purposeful juxtaposition of these two pss" (p. 220); "two groups of Davidic pss preserved in this final book. . . . Their placement at beginning and end implies purposeful editorial arrangement" (p. 221).

<sup>274</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 5.

achieved by a preliminary study of several comparative ANE texts which, in turn, allowed him to “set parameters for the kind of editorial techniques and concerns one might expect to find active in the organization of a group of hymnic texts such as the Psalter.”<sup>275</sup> For Wilson, this is an adequate methodological control. Although Wilson’s work has been widely discussed, this important methodological stance is not often highlighted and neither is it vehemently contended. Hence, the editorial techniques found in Mesopotamian hymnic literature<sup>276</sup> warrant the assumption that the editors of the MT-150 possessed similar poetic skills.

In his study of Sumerian Temple hymns, Wilson noted “the collection indicates that at a very early date (2334-2279 B.C., if not earlier), it was possible to enter into a complex arrangement of individual literary compositions (each maintaining its own integrity) on the basis of a larger schema (in this case the campaign of Sargon of Akkad).”<sup>277</sup> Specifically, it is suggested that techniques such as genre categories, author designations, colophons, song type, characteristic language, size of a partial collection, deity addressed in the hymn and chiastic structures<sup>278</sup> were established techniques.

Instead of focusing on the editor/author, Jamie Grant emphasizes certain assumptions about the readers’ sensitivity to the text and connects these assumptions with the editor. His work, *The King as Exemplar*, argues for intentional juxtaposition of

<sup>275</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 5–6.

<sup>276</sup> Two Mesopotamian hymnic materials (third-millennium B.C.E) used for comparison are the Sumerian Temple Hymn Collection and the Catalogues of Hymnic Incipits. Wilson, *Editing*, 7.

<sup>277</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 23.

<sup>278</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 38, 47, 53–57, 126, 196–197.

Torah and kingship psalms in the shaping of the Psalter and postulates the meaning for the ancient readers. He identifies three types of features in the text—canonical, lexical and theological—which readers would have discerned and understood.<sup>279</sup> Canonically, he notes that “whoever placed Pss 1 and 2 as the dual introduction [Torah and kingship] to the Psalms wanted the readers of the book to view its varied content from the perspective of a Deuteronomic worldview,”<sup>280</sup> that is, a perspective guided by the Deuteronomic Law of the King in Deut 17:14–20.<sup>281</sup> Readers were assumed to be aware of the “typical role of kingship in the ancient Near East.”<sup>282</sup> In this way, the juxtaposition of Torah and kingship psalms would elicit a “substantial degree of cognitive dissonance for the reader of the psalms” at the time when the Davidic kingship is no longer present.<sup>283</sup> Grant argues, “The reasons for this paradigm being placed at the head of the Psalter reflect two of the primary theological concerns of the period of the Psalter’s closure: 1. The Torah, as the proper rule for the life of Israel, and; 2. Eschatological hope for the ‘renewal’ of the Davidic king.”<sup>284</sup>

By positing these socio-theological concepts behind the text shared by the composers and readers alike, Grant links authorial intent (by the arrangement of psalms

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<sup>279</sup> Grant, “The King as Exemplar,” 146.

<sup>280</sup> Grant, “The King as Exemplar,” 43.

<sup>281</sup> Readers were expected to perceive lexical repetitions and thematic overlaps of Torah and kingship motifs between adjacent Pss 18–21. Grant, “The King as Exemplar,” 86.

<sup>282</sup> Grant, “The King as Exemplar,” 157.

<sup>283</sup> Grant, “The King as Exemplar,” 27.

<sup>284</sup> Grant, “The King as Exemplar,” 56.

and their contents) and readers' reception of the text.<sup>285</sup> The readers' ability to derive meaning from paratextual features, such as the peculiar juxtapositions of Torah and kingship psalms, is an interaction between the text's "directives" and readers' socio-theological worldview, a proposition we have seen in Iser's theory.

David Howard, in his important work, *The Structure of Psalms 93–100* where he performed a systematic and exhaustive analysis on all lexical connections between these eight psalms, makes few claims on how the implied reader could detect such connections. Noted only briefly in the methodological chapter, Howard says that "[t]he rabbis traditionally were more attuned to . . . that of connections between neighboring psalms, . . . Their [the early Jewish rabbis] works especially reflected attention to keyword links between consecutive psalms."<sup>286</sup> Like Wilson, Howard appealed to early Jewish literature in trying to understand the readers and composers of the Psalms. Howard classifies the lexical connections found within the YHWH *Malak* psalms into three categories with decreasing significance ("Key-Word Links"; "Thematic Connections"; and "Structure/Genre Similarities").<sup>287</sup> Only in the first category, *Key-word Links*, did Howard suggest that "they were undoubtedly present in the editors' thinking as they made decisions about bringing the Psalter together."<sup>288</sup> In the second

<sup>285</sup> Grant also notes, "The placement of Pss 1 and 2 at the beginning of the Psalter was designed to draw the *attention of the reader* to themes which were *important to those who had put the book of Psalms together*; the intention being that *awareness of these motifs should remain prominent in the mind of the reader* throughout their reading or hearing of the Psalter." Grant, "The King as Exemplar," 96.

<sup>286</sup> Howard, *The Structure of Psalms*, 2.

<sup>287</sup> Howard, *The Structure of Psalms*, 100–101.

<sup>288</sup> Howard, *The Structure of Psalms*, 100.

category, he sees connections arising from a “general vocabulary” existing at the time of composition. Apart from the *Key-word links* category, which Howard insists that the choice of lexemes was “undoubtedly present” in the minds of the implied authors at the time of the final composition, Howard provides little clarity on how such lexical connections can be perceived by the readers.

Howard’s method of studying lexical connections has been followed by others who continue to sharpen the distinction between what might constitute intentional lexical links and what might be accidental. For instance, Michael Snearly proposes a statistical criteria in his study of Book V of the Psalter and identifies a significant key-word (or phrase) as one having “at least half of all occurrences in Book V” located in one group “and/or at least 20 percent of all occurrences in the Psalter are in one group.”<sup>289</sup> How Snearly arrives at 20 percent and how he draws the boundary of the “group” remain sticking points.

If Snearly’s quantitative method is unhelpful, Jeffrey Leonard’s eight qualitative guidelines for judging the strengths of literary links between texts may provide an alternative.

- (1) Shared language is the single most important factor in establishing a textual connection.
- (2) Shared language is more important than nonshared language.
- (3) Shared language that is rare or distinctive suggests a stronger connection than does language that is widely used.
- (4) Shared

<sup>289</sup> Michael K. Snearly, “The Return of the King: Book V as a Witness to Messianic Hope in the Psalter,” in *The Psalms : Language for All Seasons of the Soul* (ed. Andrew Schmutzter and David Howard Jr. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 209–17, [210]; *The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter* (LHBOTS 624; New York: T&T Clark, 2015), 1, 120, 187; One of the latest work using statistical method of identifying significant links is Carissa Richards’s *The King and the Kingdom: The Message of Psalms 15-24* (Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).

phrases suggest a stronger connection than do individual shared terms. (5) The accumulation of shared language suggests a stronger connection than does a single shared term or phrase. (6) Shared language in similar contexts suggests a stronger connection than does shared language alone. (7) Shared language need not be accompanied by shared ideology to establish a connection. (8) Shared language need not be accompanied by shared form to establish a connection.<sup>290</sup>

David Willgren further refined this list and arrived at six methodological points with some overlap with Leonard's list.<sup>291</sup>

- (1) Verbatim similarities featuring rare words establish stronger connection than those including common or very common words.
- (2) Verbatim similarities occurring in similar contexts establish a stronger connection than similarities based on shared words only.
- (3) Declared citations establish a stronger connection than undeclared citations.
- (4) Shared phrases establish a stronger connection than shared words.
- (5) Shared phrases featuring formulaic or idiomatic language establish a weaker connection than shared phrases that do not.
- (6) Multiple shared phrases establish a stronger connection than single shared phrases.

Dorsey has also identified several methodological errors associated with the technique of chiastic structures.<sup>292</sup> He provided ten guidelines to alleviate subjectivity as follows<sup>293</sup>:

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<sup>290</sup> Jeffery M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case," *JBL* 127.2 (2008): 241–65, [246].

<sup>291</sup> David Willgren, *The Formation of the "Book" of Psalms: Reconsidering the Transmission and Canonization of Psalmody in Light of Material Culture and the Poetics of Anthologies* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 291; cf. Armin Lange and Matthias Weigold, eds., *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature* (Journal of Ancient Judaism; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

<sup>292</sup> (1) Creative titling: units made to match by imaginative wordings. (2) Illegitimate word-linking: use of common words in connecting units. (3) Illegitimate theme-linking: use of common motifs in connecting units. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 33–34.

- (1) *Objective links.* Connection should be based on verbatim or near verbatim words.
- (2) *Prominent links.* Connections should be based on prominent echoes rather than obscure ones.
- (3) *Multiple links.* Multiple connections should be given more weight.
- (4) *Unique links.* Rare and unique connections not found in surrounding texts should be given more weight.
- (5) *Easily perceived links.* An easily perceived link is more likely for the readers to perceive.
- (6) *Author's agenda.* Connections that correspond to the composer's agenda are more convincing
- (7) *Danger of forcing loose ends.* Exceptions should not be forced to fit as they may be suggestive of other authorial design.
- (8) *Danger of rearranging the text.* This should not be undertaken just to fit a proposed structural scheme.
- (9) *Danger of reductionism.* The tendency to identify the same structural scheme in every text should be avoided.
- (10) *Analyses of other scholars.* Consulting the structural analyses of others will help reduce subjectivity.

These qualitative criteria provide additional controls to claims of textual connections in the texts and will underlie the basis of my study of the Psalter. Nonetheless, I accept that some subjectivity will always be present. This is why scholars such as Labuschagne and van der Lugt, despite their extensive work on the Psalter, only connect loosely their observations in the text with the implied authors (or readers). After about 1700 pages in van der Lugt's three-volume magisterial work on canto and strophic structures of the Psalter, he concluded with a brief paragraph, connecting his observations of the text to the Hebrew poets themselves. He notes,

I conclude that the Hebrew poets used a limited number of basic canto patterns to shape their compositions. In the book of Psalms, these patterns can be clearly discerned. At the same time—by their poetic

<sup>293</sup> I have retained Dorsey's titles for the ten points (in italics) but shortened the descriptions. For examples of these guidelines, see Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, 34–35.

craftsmanship—the Hebrew writers handled these canto patterns in a creative way. Despite the fact that they imposed particular restrictions on themselves, they freely varied them, with the result that already on the level of the overall framework hardly any two poems of some length have exactly the same canto structure in terms of verselines.<sup>294</sup>

Labuschage's work on the Psalter focuses on numerical features functioning as structuring devices. His proposition is that poets had organized the content of texts by a selected number of words such that important features are often located at the mathematical center of the text unit.<sup>295</sup> This phenomenon occurs not just in the Psalter but throughout the OT.

Labuschage also argues that the numerical technique he observes would not have been written for the general reader, but for those within the guild—craftsmen of poetry themselves. With the passage of time, these techniques were substantially lost or forgotten.<sup>296</sup> Labuschagne's point should be noted. It is possible too that certain poetic techniques have gone into disuse. In other words, the repertoire of poetic techniques at the disposal of ancient poets could have been substantially more than what scholars today have uncovered.

In general, my methodological stance does not differ substantially from the scholars listed above. Where I have remarked certain observations of the text as evidence of authorial intent in this thesis, I see them as secondary inferences. I am aware of what Wimsatt and Beardsley call “intentional fallacy” (a confusion between

<sup>294</sup> van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 3:606.

<sup>295</sup> He reasons that poets and transmitters of the texts had incorporated these poetic devices so that the text can be checked and preserved. Labuschagne, *Numerical Secrets of the Bible*, 11.

<sup>296</sup> Labuschagne, *Numerical Secrets of the Bible*, 11–12.

what the text *is* and the intent of the author) or the “affective fallacy” (a confusion between what the text *is* and what the text *does* to its readers).<sup>297</sup> I like to think that we can “avoid the two extreme views of authorial intention being irrelevant or that authorial intention is decisive.”<sup>298</sup>

In conclusion, we summarize our discussion above with six points: From comparative ANE poetic literature and inscriptions found in Palestine, it is highly plausible that composers and readers alike would have been familiar with (1) certain poetic compositional techniques such as the use of colophons, superscriptions, numerical and symbolic devices, abecedarian acrostics, names or epithets of God, chiastic structures, inclusions, exordium and strophic structures. Since similar poetic techniques are found in the Psalter, our assumptions on the poetic skills of the final editors and literary competency of readers can be sustained. (2) If the Song of the Sea provides an early example of Hebrew poetry, we can assume ancient readers of the Psalms would be familiar with the use of metanarratival progression in a poem. Israel will eventually be “planted” by God in the mountain of God, where God’s sanctuary, built by his own hands, is established. The emphasis of YHWH’s kingship, and the phrase, מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה in the Song of the Sea, could have been one of the earliest poetic

<sup>297</sup> Wimsatt and Beardsley argued “that the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art, and it seems to us that this is a principle which goes deep into some differences in the history of critical attitudes.” For them, “intention is design or plan in the author’s mind. Intention has obvious affinities for the author’s attitude toward his work, the way he felt, what made him write.” This intention needs to be separated from the work itself. W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy,” *The Sewanee Review* 54.3 (1946): 468–88, [468–69]; cf. George Dickie and W. Kent Wilson, “The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Beardsley,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.3 (1995): 233–250, [234]; Lim, *A Strategy for Reading*, 38.

<sup>298</sup> Lim, *A Strategy for Reading*, 73.

expression the Psalms composers had drawn on. (3) Poetry, as a literary genre, is aesthetic and lacunous. Meaning is often expressed and understood via gaps in the text. Meaning is not merely found in the text, but in the paratext—everything else alongside the text (the shapes, gaps, stylistic arrangements, structure, etc.). Since the explicit text does not exhaust the meaning of the text, we need not assume that the composers had made everything consistently detectable nor assume that the readers could uncover every intended meaning. For instance, it has been shown that chiastic structures have been used by Hebrew poets in the Psalms (e.g., the entire Ps 67).<sup>299</sup> This rhetorical feature of concentricity may even harbour mathematical precision. Van der Lugt cites Ps 79:7, noting how this verse is not only the mathematical centre colon, but that the texts themselves are arranged in a chiastic manner (“predicate + object // object + predicate”).<sup>300</sup> However, his observations cannot be sustained in every psalm (or even in the majority of most psalms). This does not mean that a mathematically precise technique, as an established form, is implausible since chiastic forms are not always expressed in a rigid, consistent way.<sup>301</sup> In other words, text directives may not always present exacting (consistent) perspectives for the reader. Hence, our observations are descriptive rather than prescriptive. Moreover, it is conceivable to assume, as

<sup>299</sup> deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 538.

<sup>300</sup> Pieter van der Lugt, “The Mathematical Centre and Its Meaning in the Psalms,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven; Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 643–52, [649].

<sup>301</sup> Similarly, there has been consensus in reading Pss 42–83 as the Elohistic Psalter since the name, “YHWH,” has been replaced by “Elohim” in numerous places. The reading of these psalms as “Elohistic Psalter” is maintained by Psalms scholarship even though not every occurrence of “YHWH” in these psalms were replaced by “Elohim.”

Labuschagne has, that poets sometimes use techniques that were privy to poets themselves and that the general readers were not expected to access.<sup>302</sup>

(4) It is reasonable to conclude that not all connections carry the same weight. We can assume some form of distinctions between intentional or incidental lexical connections are possible. The choice and use of certain words or motif should not always be judged as incidental. Particularly in poetry, we can assume that the choice of words by the poets is often thoughtful. (5) We also see that ancient readers of the text would have possessed some level of literary competence in reading. They were already familiar with literary elements that are common to the biblical Psalms. By the time of the Rabbis, concerns with the sequence and arrangements of psalms were extant. Even before the advent of modern computers, the scribal techniques employed by the Masoretes, especially from their marginal notes and word counting, reflected high level of familiarity with the Hebrew Scripture. They were able to reference the locations and frequencies of certain word forms in the entire Hebrew canon and locate midpoints of entire books such as the Psalter.<sup>303</sup> Such skills suggest that the Masoretes were highly sensitive to text structure, word forms and their occurrence. (6) The socio-political environment of the readers at the time of the final composition of the Psalter fits well with the postexilic existential needs and theological hopes of Israel. Moreover, as Grant has noted, readers would have been familiar with the Deuteronomic worldview and the

<sup>302</sup> In a good piece of painting, it is reasonable to assume that a skilled audience (i.e. professionally trained artists) would find observations that an untrained audience would not. While the latter may identify the painter of a painting, the skilled audience may pick up unique brush or framing techniques.

<sup>303</sup> See the Masorah parva note of Ps 78:36 in L (*חזי הספר*).

concepts of kingship in the ANE. As such, kingship and Torah motifs prominently located in the Psalter provide the necessary fodder for theological reflection and readers' responses. It is safe to assume that the dissonance between the missing Davidic king in postexilic Israel and the Davidic covenantal promises would have been a major theological contemplation for the reader. It is logical to assume that eschatological and messianic emphases in the early Jewish and Christian works at the turn of the era would have had their roots planted in the theological fabric of the postexilic period.

Where I have made certain original observations or claims in this thesis, it will be shown that they are consistent with the above assumptions on the composers or readers. Finally, this long quote from Freedman is helpful:

It is difficult if not impossible to draw the line between the conscious intention of the poet and what the attentive reader finds in a poem. On the whole, I think we have given insufficient credit to the poet for the subtleties and intricacies in his artistic creation, and it is better to err on that side for a while. If we find some clever device or elaborate internal structure, why not assume that the poet's ingenuity, rather than our own, is responsible? It is a different matter if it is our ingenuity in restoring or reconstructing the text. In many cases, however, I believe that the process by which the poet achieves an effect is different from the process by which the scholar recognizes and describes it. What is the result of conscious effort on our part may be spontaneous in the poet, or second nature. For one who is steeped in the tradition and draws on long experience in creating poems, it is not necessary to start from scratch, and the associations and intricate arrangements, which we discover only painstaking investigation, may be byproducts of which he is not fully aware, while he centers attention on other aspects of composition. Since there is no way to finally resolve such questions about the intention of the poet, it is safer and better procedure to restrict or extend ourselves to the visible data and describe what we see there, rather than to probe to recesses of the poet's mind.<sup>304</sup>

<sup>304</sup> Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 8; cf. Berry, *Psalms and Their Readers*, 85.

### 1.3.2 UNITY OF THE PSALTER?

Careful readers of the bible have often noted the “inconsistency in historical information, moral teaching and theological understanding” of the Bible.<sup>305</sup> Where the Psalter is concerned, scholars such as Whybray, Gerstenberger and others argue against reading the Psalter as a *book*.<sup>306</sup> Whybray argues that “there is no tangible evidence of a *consistent and systematic* attempt to link the whole collection of psalms together by editorial means.”<sup>307</sup> There is a loose sense of progression in the trajectory of the Psalter rather than intentional effort to arrange every psalm. For Whybray, it is difficult to dismiss “the impression of randomness” in the Psalms.<sup>308</sup>

Gerstenberger registers his resistance by saying that “the Psalter is not a ‘book’ in our sense of the word, and certainly not a theological textbook of progressively unfolding of God’s statement.”<sup>309</sup> He also casts doubt on keyword connections, pointing

<sup>305</sup> Barton, *The Old Testament Canon, Literature and Theology*, 54.

<sup>306</sup> Day notes, “any attempt to find one grandiose scheme to account for ordering of the Psalter is bound to end in failure.” Anderson concludes, “[t]he book itself shows little evidence of deliberate internal ordered placement.” Similarly, Nogalski echoes these thoughts by noting that “no single organizational principle can adequately explain every aspect of Psalms. . . . The lack of a single organizing principle further suggests a complex development of the psalter.” See John Day, *Psalms* (OTG 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 111; R. Dean Jr. Anderson, “The Division and Order of the Psalms,” *WTJ* 56 (1994): 219–41; James Nogalski, “From Psalm to Psalms to Psalter,” in *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms* (eds. Harold Wayne Ballard and W. Dennis Tucker; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2000), 52–53; Norman Whybray, *Reading the Psalms* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 84; Erhard Gerstenberger, “Der Psalter Als Buch,” 3–13.

<sup>307</sup> Whybray, *Reading*, 84. Emphasis mine.

<sup>308</sup> Whybray, *Reading*, 85–86. Emphasis mine

<sup>309</sup> Gerstenberger points out several pitfalls of this approach. He sees that all texts have a concrete communicative environment (“ein konkretes kommunikatives Umfeld”). Taking a text out from this historical and social environment makes interpretation harder. He views the diachronic socio-historical anchor as necessary in understanding the Psalter. He notes, “The canonical final form of the Hebrew scripture is entirely connected to the specific, historically unique setting of sufferings, joys and visions of the postexilic Jewish communities in Palestine and in the Diaspora.” Translation of “Die

out that the question remains whether such connections represent “conscious connection of the texts or is merely a random result of the array of related texts in a writ.”<sup>310</sup> Gerstenberger’s view on the Psalter is driven by his socio-historical concerns that underlie the composition of individual psalms.<sup>311</sup> The distinctive message of individual psalms must be preserved and examined under its *Sitz im Leben*.<sup>312</sup> As a whole, Gerstenberger rejects a single unified theological message behind the Psalter but posits the Psalter as a compendium of experiences collected over time and used as a hymnal for the Jewish diaspora.

Whybray’s argument is one of degree and not of substantial disagreement. Gerstenberger’s argument is more of a methodological disagreement rather than a negation by literary analysis. Most Psalms scholars, nonetheless, agree that the Psalter is intentionally shaped as a book.<sup>313</sup>

kanonische Endgestalt der hebräischen Schriften ist ganz und gar mit den besonderen, geschichtlich einmaligen Leiden, Freuden und Vorstellungen der nachexilischen jüdischen Gemeinden in Palästina und in der Diaspora verbunden.” Erhard Gerstenberger, “Der Psalter Als Buch,” 3–4, 9.

<sup>310</sup> “Die Frage bleibt jedoch weit offen, ob dieser Gleichklang von Psalm zu Psalm eine bewußte Verbindung der Texte darstellt oder lediglich ein zufälliges Ergebnis der Aufreihung verwandter Texte in einer Schrift ist.” Gerstenberger, “Der Psalter Als Buch,” 5.

<sup>311</sup> Erhard Gerstenberger, “Die „Kleine Biblia“: Theologien Im Psalter,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger, BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 391–400, [391].

<sup>312</sup> For him, this concrete environment relates to the Jewish synagogal diaspora of the postexilic period.

<sup>313</sup> E.g., W. H. Bellinger, “The Psalter as Theodicy Writ Large,” in *Jewish and Christian Approaches to the Psalms: Conflict and Convergence* (ed. S. Gillingham; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 148–60, [151].

Notwithstanding the diachronic process of the Psalter's composition into its final unified form as a book,<sup>314</sup> our interests are how one argue for textual unity as we received it. What differentiates intentional design as opposed to mere anthological juxtapositions of texts? As Barr noted:

It is a literary question to what extent the editors of a biblical book, in putting together various sources of pieces of material, have created a meaning in the juxtaposition, as distinct from the meaning of the parts. ‘The case for meaning must be decided on literary criteria: one must show that a unit is not just an anthology but is an intended structure with meaning’.<sup>315</sup>

Barr’s quote echoes that of Zenger’s at the beginning of this chapter. Since the Psalter is made up of 150 self-delimited individual poems, the case for meaning as a whole, would have to emerge from meaning that is developed from its macrostructure. The argument for literary unity in the Psalms would require a display of certain thematic interdevelopment (meaning) across the entire macrostructure.

By “interdevelopment,” concepts seen in one discrete unit undergo contrast, expansion or explanation in another. This argument is of methodological importance to

<sup>314</sup> For a discussion on how the Psalter gradually grew as a “book” from the perspective of redactional process, see Klaus Seybold, “The Psalter as a Book,” 168–81.

<sup>315</sup> In this quote, Barr brought together several elements. First, he situated the context as the “editing of a biblical book.” Second, he identified the limitations and the criteria of inquiry with a literary methodology. Third, he brought together the concepts of “meaning,” “unity” and “structure.” Fourth, he posited a distinction between the meaning of the whole and its parts. The first, third and fourth occurrence of “meaning” in the quote is different from the second. The second represents meaning of individual texts. The first, third and fourth represent meaning at the level beyond that of the parts; meaning that arises from a unified structure as a whole and extends beyond meaning of the parts. Emphasis mine. Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 160.

Richard Schultz who identifies it as the “control” for arguments of unity of texts. He writes:

In seeking significant verbal parallels, one should look for verbal and syntactical correspondence that goes beyond one key or uncommon term or even a series of commonly occurring terms, also evaluating whether the expression is simply formulaic or idiomatic. Thus one should look for indications of contextual awareness, including interpretive re-use, which indicates verbal dependence which is conscious and purposeful, even though one may not be able to determine the direction of borrowing with any certainty. If such dependence can be posited, one’s knowledge of the quoted text will facilitate the proper interpretation of the quoting text.<sup>316</sup>

Schultz’s essential point is that one has to ascertain a “contextual awareness” and “interpretive re-use” between the texts to show a macro-development, which properly unify two different texts. In view of Schultz’s definition we can make an interim case for the Psalter as a unity.

### **1.3.3 PROLOGUE: STRUCTURE, MOTIFS, ALPHABETICAL THINKING & NUMERICAL TECHNIQUE**

If the Psalter is designed with an overarching program, the content and elements of its shape should ultimately cohere. This unity of design is displayed in the Prologue functioning as the programmatic prelude to the Psalter. To understand this, we will first discuss how alphabetical and numerical techniques function in the Psalms.

Alphabetical Acrostic (AA) is an abecedarian (or *alefbetic*) poem in which each line or verse(s) begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Barring missing or

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<sup>316</sup> Emphasis his. Richard L. Schultz, “The Ties That Bind: Intertextuality, the Identification of Verbal Parallels, and Reading Strategies in the Book of the Twelve,” in *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* (eds. Paul L Redditt and Aaron Schart; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 27–45, [32].

reversed letters in the sequence, there are, as commonly accepted, eight standard AAs in the Psalms (9–10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145). A second kind of alphabetic poem is non-standard and has been given various names.<sup>317</sup> For our purposes, we will define it as Alphabetic Composition (AC). They are poems that do not have a full set of alphabetic sequence but, nonetheless, display elements of *alphabetical thinking* common to the AA (e.g., 22 verselines). As noted earlier, such techniques are not novel or unique to ancient Israel. The use of poetic techniques such as acrostics and numerical features in the ancient Near East has been attested in the Babylonian theodicy, the Prayer of *Nabu-ushebshi* and the hymn to the goddess Ishtar. As such, we can assume, to some extent, familiarity with these techniques on the part of the composers and readers. A fuller treatment of AA and AC is given in §5.2. Here, we will explore such alphabetical thinking in the Prologue (and Ps 150).

The AA forms the basis for our understanding of AC. Ceresko points out that in the AA Pss 25 and 34, there is an additional 23rd letter ה. The adding of the final ה line forms a 23-line poem such that the ה becomes the “middle letter of the series.”<sup>318</sup> Thus, the first, middle and last lines of the acrostic in Ps 25 begin with א, ה and ה, forming the consonants of *aleph*, which is also the root of the verb, הַלֵּא, “to teach/learn” or “to increase.”<sup>319</sup>

<sup>317</sup> For instance, they are called “semi-acrostics” or “quasi-acrostics.”

<sup>318</sup> Anthony R. Ceresko, “The ABCs of Wisdom in Psalm 34,” *VT* 35, no. 1 (1985): 99–104, [102]. See also Patrick William Skehan, “Structure of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy (Deut 32:1–43),” *CBQ* 13, no. 2 (1951): 153–63, [100].

<sup>319</sup> As a verb, it occurs exclusively in the Wisdom Books (Job 15:5; 33:33; 35:11; Ps 144:13; Prov 22:25); On the “lateness” of this word, see Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, “Additional Elements of Alphabetical Thinking in Psalm XXXIV,” *Vetus Testamentum* 52, no. 3 (2002): 326–33, [326 note 3,

Counting of words or syllables is also associated with AA and AC. Fokkelman argues that “poets themselves counted their syllables, and often used the syllable totals to make patterns in their verses and strophes.”<sup>320</sup> Although some criteria of counting are debated,<sup>321</sup> the poetry of the Psalms testifies to careful numerical planning and arrangement.<sup>322</sup>

By counting syllables in Ps 34, Ceresko finds the middle of Ps 34:12, where ה occurs, is almost the “exact middle of the poem.”<sup>323</sup> Furthermore, if letters that function as *matres lectionis* are removed in Ps 34:12, the entire verse consists of “23 consonants, the first consonant being נ, the twelfth or middle consonant being ה, and the final one נ.”<sup>324</sup> In other words, the consonants נ, ה and נ frame not just the initial words of the

331–333]; For the concept of “teaching” in Ps 25, see Andrew Abernethy, “God as Teacher in Psalm 25,” *VT* 65, no. 3 (2015): 339–51.

<sup>320</sup> Fokkelman adds, “Poets paid meticulous attention to the numerical aspect of their work, . . . the figures [syllable counting] for the main textual levels, or rather the care taken about the correct proportions, which these figures represent and constantly exude.” Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Poetry*, 24, 49.

<sup>321</sup> “Syllables are counted following the MT without emendation,” writes Houk. However, there are differences in the criteria identifying a single syllable and different criteria yield different results. For example, counting “full” or “all” syllable yield different statistical sum square errors. Bee notes that “full” syllables take “no account of simple or augmented shewa, the definite article and the conjunctive prefix, and counting a segholate as a monosyllable.” Freedman pointed out the lack of decision on “the vocalization of certain pro-nominal suffixes of the 2nd and 3rd person singular attached to verbs” and include two sets of counts. Fokkelman deviates from Freedman on one point, counting words such as “*y<sup>e</sup>hi*” and “*k<sup>e</sup>liP*” as monosyllabic. See Cornelius B. Houk, “Syllables and Psalms: A Statistical Linguistic Analysis,” *JSOT*, no. 14 (1979): 55–62, [55]; Ronald E. Bee, “The Use of Syllable Counts in Textual Analysis,” *JSOT* 4, no. 10 (1978): 68–70; David Noel Freedman, “Acrostics and Metrics in Hebrew Poetry,” *HTR* 65, no. 3 (1972): 367–92, [369]; Fokkelman, *MPHB*, 1:16.

<sup>322</sup> Morris Halle and John McCarthy, “The Metrical Structure of Psalm 137,” *JBL* 100, no. 2 (1981): 161–67; David Noel Freedman, *Psalm 119 the Exaltation of Torah* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999).

<sup>323</sup> Ceresko, “The ABCs of Wisdom,” 100.

<sup>324</sup> Ceresko, “The ABCs of Wisdom,” 101.

first, middle and last lines of Ps 34 (thus the right column), but also the first, middle and last *letter* (without *matres lectionis*) of 34:12, giving rise to a technique known as “mezostics” or “telestics.”<sup>325</sup> Hurowitz expands this phenomenon to all four sides of Ps 34.<sup>326</sup> Together with numerical features, the array of נ, ל and פ consonants function as an editorial signature to indicate alphabetical thinking of a psalm.

Certain words in AAs also have structural significance. Barré has found that “terminative” words such as כִּי (“to come to an end”), תִּמְמָה (to be finished) and אֶבֶד (“to perish”) are used “to mark off sections of the acrostics or whole poems that have reached their end” (e.g., Pss 25, 37, 112, 119; Nah 1:2–9; Lam 1, 2, and 4).<sup>327</sup>

The above alphabetic signatures identified from AAs can be expanded to other psalms that display similar phenomena, marking them as ACs. Consider Pss 106 and 150. Ceresko shows that the poetical line in Ps 106:3 begins with the letter נ and ends with ה. In 106:7, there is an נ-ב-נ sequence that begins the words in the two separate

<sup>325</sup> Note underlined consonants: אַבְרָכָה אֲתִיהָה בְּכָל־עֵת תִּמְיד תְּהִלָּתָה בְּפִי. These techniques were also featured in Akkadian texts in biblical times. Hurowitz, “Additional Elements of Alphabetical Thinking,” 327. See also Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 191–192; John F. Brug, “Biblical Acrostics and Their Relationship to Other Ancient Near Eastern Acrostics,” in *Bible in the Light of Cuneiform Literature* (Lewiston, NY.: Edwin Mellen, 1990), 283–30; William Michael Soll, “Babylonian and Biblical Acrostics,” *Bib* 69, no. 3 (1988): 305–23.

<sup>326</sup> According to Hurowitz, the consonants נ, ל and פ are also found in reverse sequence in the last word of the נ, ל and ה poetic lines (cf. בְּפִי, v. 2; אַלְמָדְכָם יִאֲשָׁמָן v. 12 and v. 22) in Ps 34. The last line in the psalm is also framed with the letters נ, ל and פ in the reverse. Furthermore, Hurowitz sees that the second colon in Ps 34:2–4 begins with the last three letters of the alphabet ה, ו and ר respectively. נ is found also in the second colon of the last verse (v. 23). Although the sequence is only partial, he argues that it is possible to classify this as a reverse “alphabetic merismus” running down “the middle of the entire psalm.” In total, Hurowitz finds a total of “six alphabetizing sequences” in Ps 34. Hurowitz, “Additional Elements of Alphabetical Thinking,” 328–29.

<sup>327</sup> Michael L. Barré, “‘Terminative’ Terms in Hebrew Acrostics,” in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Assoc of America, 1997), 207–15; Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings,” 34.

cola of the line. In 106:12, the first colon has a cluster of letters נ and ב, and the second colon, a cluster of letters ת, ש and ר.<sup>328</sup> Psalm 150 is also designed as an AC. At the beginning of the Psalm, the divine name הָאֵל is used in the suffix rather than the usual “Yah.”<sup>329</sup> However, at the end of the psalm (150:6), the *hallelu* is prefixed with a ת, significantly as the “only jussive of הָלֹל in the Psalms.”<sup>330</sup> Apart from the opening and closing הָלֹל יְהָיָה,<sup>331</sup> the first and last words of Psalm 150 are suffixed and prefixed with the letters נ and ת respectively. Furthermore, a series of ב follows and the subsequent sequence of ג and ד appears in verse two.<sup>332</sup> In Ps 150:4, around the middle section of the psalms, a series of 5x ל and 3x מ occurs. A sequence of ל, מ, ג, and י also occurs in the second colon of v.4. The last two verses contain four of the last five letters in the alphabet ו, ר, ש and ת.<sup>333</sup> Psalm 150 has 34 words.<sup>334</sup> The two middle words (17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>) are בְּנֵבֶל וּכְנוֹר (150:3) and a ל is virtually at the center of these two words.

<sup>328</sup> Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking,” 39–42.

<sup>329</sup> Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking,” 42.

<sup>330</sup> Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking,” 44.

<sup>331</sup> Some scholars consider them as an “anacrusis” which are words that do not belong to the poem proper but are “added by the singing community or by tradition.” Fokkelman, *MPHP*, 1:16.

<sup>332</sup> Ceresko notes that this is the only time *dalet* occurs in the Psalm. Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking,” 43.

<sup>333</sup> The letter ו occurs 4x and its first occurrence is in v.4. Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking,” 43.

<sup>334</sup> Note that words linked by *maqqep* are counted as one word.

From these alphabetical and numerical techniques, parallels between Pss 1 and 150 begin to emerge.<sup>335</sup> Both Pss 1 and 150 consist of 6 verses each. Both begin with a word that starts with נ and ends with a word that starts with נ.<sup>336</sup> The entire Psalter thus starts with נ and ends with נ.

There are 57 words in Ps 1 when we count words connected by *maqqep* as a single word.<sup>337</sup> The use of *maqqep* is usually associated with scansion but issues of meter remain.<sup>338</sup> It is possible that the use of *maqqep* is more fluid than assumed and is not limited to accentuation concerns.<sup>339</sup> The 29<sup>th</sup> word of Ps 1, נִשְׁאָר (1:3), is not only at

<sup>335</sup> For a discussion on the introduction to the Psalter (Pss 1–2) and the conclusion (Pss 146–150 or 149–150), see Susan Gillingham, “Entering and Leaving the Psalter: Psalms 1 and 150 and the Two Polarities of Faith,” in *Let Us Go up to Zion* (eds. Iain Provan and Mark Boda; SVT 153; Leiden: Brill), 383–93.

<sup>336</sup> In Ps 150, this is seen by ignoring the anacrusis הַלְלוּ יְהָה in the first and last word, and noting the suffix אלָא in the second word of Ps 150:1. The choice of אלָא is significant because it is unique in the Psalms. We see the poet is working on several poetical techniques. On one level, he was illustrating the alphabetical technique and on another, he was keeping the inclusio הַלְלוּ יְהָה, binding the section of Pss 146–150 together.

<sup>337</sup> Lambdin points out that the use of *maqqep* “indicates that these words are proclitic, ie, have no stress of their own, but are pronounced as the first syllable of the whole group taken as a single word!” However, he recognized that the use of *maqqep* is not consistent without offering clear reasons. This will be discussed further in §5.1. Thomas O Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 5–6, 207, 208; Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 101–104.

<sup>338</sup> Scansion is “the rhythmic reading and/or division of a poetic line.” The use of *maqqep* thus affects the number of rhythmic counts (meter) and word count (word division) rather than syllable count. In recent studies, Fokkelman makes an important critique of “metrics” and Lowth’s “parallelismus membrorum” in classical Hebrew poetry. He argues that the stalemate on metrics makes it difficult to reach any conclusive consensus between scholars. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Poetry*, 22–23, 227.

<sup>339</sup> For instance, the presence of *maqqep* linking the מֵאֹת to the following word with the use of the conjunction כִּי is frequently found in the HB (cf. Ps 1:4, כִּי אֶסְמָךְ). Almost all uses of כִּי in the OT Prophets have a *maqqep* following the מֵאֹת to the next word. The absence of it is very rare (cf. Gen 15:4; Num 35:33; Esth 2:15). However, we find the occurrence of כִּי אֶסְמָךְ without the *maqqep* linking the מֵאֹת to the following word in Ps 1:2 and one with the *maqqep* which does, just two verses away in Ps 1:4.

<sup>340</sup> The choice of the numerical center, but also begins the 8<sup>th</sup> colon of the 16-cola psalm.<sup>341</sup> The choice of אֲשֶׁר recalls the beginning of Ps 1:1.

The discussion above can be extended to Pss 1–2. Consider Figure 8 showing Fokkelman’s poetical structure of Pss 1–2.<sup>342</sup>

<sup>340</sup> The central position of the *cola* opened by this word is also underscored by van der Lugt and Labuschagne from a numerical perspective. Van der Lugt notes, “[f]rom this point of view, the seven words of v. 3b–c (‘which brings forth its fruit in due season and whose foliage does not fade’) constitute the centre of the poem (>30+7+30 words).” Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 580.

<sup>341</sup> Note that the consonant אֲשֶׁר opens the Psalter and cola 1, and the relative particle closes cola 1. Standing at the head of a clause, Lambdin notes that אֲשֶׁר can carry the force of the phrase, “the fact that...” and further may require the translation value of ‘since, because.’” Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*, 65.

<sup>342</sup> The Roman numerals on the right indicate strophe units. The Arabic numerals indicate verse units. Spaces in the texts separate *cola*/versets. The text and the colon divisions are Fokkelman's, but all the box-markers are mine. See also Fokkelman, *The Psalms in Form*, 16.

## Psalm 1

<p><b>לא הַלְךْ בַּעֲצָת רְשָׁעִים</b>  <b>וּבְמֹשֵׁב לְאַיִם לֹא יִשְׁבֶּה:</b>  <b>וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יָהָה יוֹמָם וּלְילָה:</b></p>	<p><b>אֲשֶׁר־הָאֵישׁ אֲשֶׁר־</b>  <b>וּבְנְרֹךְ חַטָּאים לֹא עָמָד</b>  <b>כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרָת יְהָה חַפְצָוֹ</b></p>	<p>I 1</p>
<p><b>אֲשֶׁר פָּרָז וַיַּתֵּן בְּעָתָה</b>  <b>וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־יִעַשָּׂה יִצְלִיחָה</b></p>	<p><b>וְהָהָה כְּעֵץ שְׁחוּל עַל־פְּלֹן מִים</b>  <b>וּעַלְהוּ לְאִיבּוֹל</b></p>	<p>II 2</p>
<p><b>כִּי אִם־כְּמֵן אֲשֶׁר־תִּדְפְּנוּ רִוִּים</b>  <b>וְחַטָּאים בְּעֵדָת צְדִיקִים:</b>  <b>וְדָרְךָ רְשָׁעִים תָּאַבְדָּה:</b></p>	<p><b>לֹא־כָּגֵן חֶרְשָׁעִים</b>  <b>עַל־כָּגֵן וְלֹא־כָּגֵמוֹ רְשָׁעִים בְּמַשְׁפָּט</b>  <b>כִּידְוֹעַ יְהָה גַּדֵּךְ צְדִיקִים</b></p>	<p>III 3</p>
<p><b>עַל־יְהָה וְעַל־קְשִׁיחָה:</b></p>		

## Psalm 2

<p><b>עַל־יְהָה וְעַל־קְשִׁיחָה:</b></p>	<p><b>אֶלָּא פְּאַיִם יְהִגְּרִירִיק :</b>  <b>וּרוֹגִים נָסְרוּ יְחִידָה</b>  <b>וּנְשָׁלִיכָה מִמְּנוּ עַבְתִּימָה:</b></p>	<p><b>לְפָה רְגַשׁ גְּנוּם</b>  <b>יְתִיאָבוּ וּמְלָכִי־אָרֶן</b>  <b>גַּנְתְּקָה אֶת־מָסְרוֹתָיו</b></p>	<p>I 1</p>
<p><b>אָנָּי כַּיִם יַלְדוֹתִיךְ:</b>  <b>וְאַחֲתָתְךָ אָפְסִידָאָרֶץ:</b></p>	<p><b>יְהָה יָלַע־נְלָמָׂד:</b>  <b>וּבְחָרוֹנוּ יְבָהָלָמָׂד:</b>  <b>עַל־צָוֹן הַדְּקָרְשָׁי:</b></p>	<p><b>יֹשֵׁב בְּשָׁמִים יְשָׁחָק</b>  <b>אוֹ יְדַבֵּר אֶלְיָמָׂו בְּאָפָו</b>  <b>נְאָנִי נְסָכָתִי מֶלֶךְ</b></p>	<p>II 2</p>
<p><b>אָנָּי כַּיִם יַלְדוֹתִיךְ:</b>  <b>וְאַחֲתָתְךָ אָפְסִידָאָרֶץ:</b></p>	<p><b>אָמֵר אֶל־בְּנֵי אָתָה</b>  <b>וְאַתָּה גּוֹיִם נְחַלְתָּךְ</b>  <b>כְּכָלִי יָצַר פְּנַפְצָמָה:</b></p>	<p><b>אֲסָפָרָה אֶל הַק יְהָה</b>  <b>שָׁאָל מְהָנִי</b>  <b>תְּרֻלָּעַם בְּשָׁבֵט בְּרִיל</b></p>	<p>III 3</p>
<p><b>אָנָּי כַּיִם יַלְדוֹתִיךְ:</b>  <b>וְאַחֲתָתְךָ אָפְסִידָאָרֶץ:</b></p>	<p><b>הַנּוֹסֶר שְׁפֵטִי אָרֶץ:</b>  <b>וְגַיְלוּ בְּרַעֲרָה 12 נְקֻדָּמָה:</b>  <b>קִידְבָּעַר כְּמַעַט אָפָוּ</b></p>	<p><b>וְעַתָּה מֶלֶכִים הַשְּׁכִילוּ</b>  <b>שְׁבָרוּ אֶת־יְהָה בֵּיר אָה</b>  <b>פָּוּרָאָנָּח וְתָאָבְדוּ רְדָךְ</b></p>	<p>IV 4</p>

Figure 8: Colon Division, Structure and the Numerical Centers of Psalms 1–2

Fokkelman divides Ps 1 into three strophes and Ps 2 into 4 strophes (Roman numerals), with each strophe consisting of two or three verselines.<sup>343</sup> Each verseline, in turn, consists of 2 or 3 cola. The אָשָׁרִ that begins the first colon of Ps 1 also begins the last colon of Psalm 2, forming an inclusio.<sup>344</sup> The use of ה at the beginning of Ps 2:1 indicates it is at the middle point or the second-half of a single composition.<sup>345</sup> Also the phrase, פְּנֵי אָנֹנֶ (2:12), possibly begins the last verseline.<sup>346</sup> When viewed together, we have א in the first verseline (1:1), ה at the half-way mark (2:1) and נ in the final verseline (2:12). These three consonants are the alphabetical signature we have seen earlier in Ps 34 earlier. In other words, Pss 1–2, taken together, is designed as a single AC.

The words at the numerical center of these two psalms are significant. The word at the center of Ps 1 is אָשָׁר, recalling the הָאִישׁ who is “blessed” (1:1). Psalm 2 has 77 words. The word at the center (39<sup>th</sup>) is בָּנִי (2:7), referring to YHWH’s son, the anointed king. When Pss 1 and 2 are considered as a single composition (57+77=134 words), the pair of words at the center is the 67<sup>th</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> word, עַל־יְהוָה וְעַל־מֶשֶׁיחָו (“against the

<sup>343</sup> By “verse,” Fokkelman means a “full poetic line” which may or may not coincide with divisions of verses in L.

<sup>344</sup> See the last box-marker in Figure 8. There are four strophes and 28 cola in Ps 2. The last colon is the 28<sup>th</sup>, בָּנִי אָשָׁרִ קָל־חָסִי (Ps 2:12). See also Fokkelman *Reading Biblical Poetry*, 21, 37–41 for defining and delimiting a colon.

<sup>345</sup> This has been pointed out by scholars such as C. L. Seow, “An Exquisitely Poetic Introduction to the Psalter,” *JBL* 132, no. 2 (2013): 275–93, [292–93].

<sup>346</sup> Variant readings are given in *BHS* with the suggestion of deleting the phrase, גַּשְׁקָו־בָּר, as dittography. For a full discussion on the division of cola on 2:11–12, see Fokkelman, *The Psalms in Form*, 156; *MPHB*, 3:56.

LORD and against his anointed one”; 2:2). This phrase identifies the dual figures of “YHWH” and “his anointed,” which are also the dual figures identified in the father-son relationship of בָּנִי.<sup>347</sup> In other words, the words at the mathematical center of the two introductory psalms, seen combined or separate, respectively identify the “blessed man,” “YHWH” and “YHWH’s anointed son.”<sup>348</sup>

The poetical and thematic structures of Pss 1–2 are concentric in shape and correspond with each other. Fokkelman points out that the middle strophe of Ps 1 is a short strophe,<sup>349</sup> with the “long strophes flanking the center. . . . The first strophe ‘defines’ the righteous by contrasting him with the wicked and the opposite happens in the third strophe.”<sup>350</sup> The second strophe characterizes the attributes of the “blessed man.” The final strophe identifies the outcomes of the wicked and the righteous.

Psalm 2, likewise, can be seen as concentric with corresponding thematic and poetic structures. Strophes II and III (2:4–9) form the center frame, flanked by strophes I and IV. The first strophe highlights the conspiracy and actions of the nations, and the kings of the earth (i.e., the wicked) going against YHWH and his anointed. The last

<sup>347</sup> BHS suggests that the entire phrase עַל־יְהוָה וְעַל־מֶשִׁיחָה is “probably a gloss” which could suggest some form of editorial processing.

<sup>348</sup> They also refer indirectly to the wicked nations conspiring against YHWH. Cole argues that “the righteous one compared to a tree in Psalm 1 is further defined in Psalm 2 as the divinely chosen king, installed on the holy mountain of Zion.” If Cole’s understanding is right, then all the words at the center, seen separately or combined, identify YHWH and his anointed. Robert Alan Cole, “An Integrated Reading of Psalms 1 and 2,” JSOT no. 98 (2002): 75–88, [76].

<sup>349</sup> Highlighted with dotted line.

<sup>350</sup> Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Poetry*, 28; Van der Lugt likewise sees a three-part concentric structure in Psalm 1. He notes, “Psalm 1 is a highly sophisticated composition, opening the book of Psalms. Its concentric design is one of the most conspicuous features in terms of structure. Vv. 3–4 represent a pivotal 3-line strophe and stand out on the grounds of their allegorical character. This 3-line strophe is enveloped by 2-line strophes at both sides, vv. 1–2 and 5–6.” Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 583.

strophe (2:10–12) shows the outcome of the kings and judges of the earth and their destruction before YHWH’s son. The final colon also characterizes the destiny of the blessed. The two center strophes capture the attributes of YHWH’s king who has been installed on Zion and will rule victoriously. The disjunctive markers, לֹא־כִּי (1:4) and נַעֲמָנִי (2:10) mark an emphatic transition into the final frame in both psalms. The following figure illustrates the corresponding poetical and thematic structures of both psalms, listing the various parallel/contrasts in each of the frames.

Psalm 1:1–2, Strophe I	Psalm 2:1–3, Strophe I
a. The “ways” of the “blessed man” b. The essence of his “way” = <i>Torah piety</i>	a. The “ways” of the <i>kings and nations</i> b. The essence of their “way” = <i>against YHWH and his anointed</i>
Psalm 1:3, Strophe II (Center)	Psalm 2:4–9, Strophes II–III (Center)
a. Attributes of the “blessed man” b. Located at the <i>heavenly</i> “Zion” c. Center word = “ <i>that blessed man</i> ”	a. Attributes of the “ <i>anointed king</i> .” b. Located at Zion c. Center word = “ <i>my [YHWH’s] son</i> ”
Psalm 1:4–6, Strophe III	Psalm 2:10–12, Strophe IV
a. Outcome of both the <i>wicked and the righteous</i> b. <i>Judgment</i> before the <i>righteous</i> c. Ends with the <i>wicked perishing</i>	a. Outcome of both the <i>kings and judges of the earth</i> b. <i>Destruction</i> before the <i>Son</i> c. Ends with the <i>blessed under YHWH’s refuge</i>

Figure 9: Structural Divisions, Parallels and Contrasts of Psalms 1 and 2

In Fokkelman's poetic hierarchy, the "whole poem" is situated at the highest level,<sup>351</sup> but in our study, we observe poetic structuring, word-count phenomenon and alphabetical thinking beyond a single psalm.

In summary, our study of the Prologue has uncovered three points pertinent to our interim thesis. First, Pss 1–2 should be seen together as a single AC. The use of alphabetical techniques binds them as a single composition. Together with Ps 150, the entire Psalter is poetically framed by ACs. Second, a variety of techniques (thematic and numerical) are at work in coherence. By counting words, certain words at the numerical center of the psalm correspond to the central focus and macrostructure of each and both psalms combined. When the appropriation of different techniques corresponds, the plausibility of intentional shaping increases.

Finally and most crucially, the poetic and thematic structures of Pss 1–2 reveal a certain trajectory that may be programmatic for the Psalter.<sup>352</sup> Shaped concentrically, these two psalms highlight a central motif. Yet seen as a whole, their structures enable a linear reading as well. The first and last pane of each psalm characterize the *way* and *outcome* of the righteous and the wicked respectively. At the center of both psalms, the attributes of the righteous and the messianic king are highlighted respectively. In Ps 1,

<sup>351</sup> At the lowest level is "sounds," followed by "syllables"; "words"; "versets" (or colon); "verses"; "strophes"; "stanzas"; "sections" and "the poem as a whole." Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Poetry*, 30.

<sup>352</sup> In a recent study, Cole argues that Pss 1–2 and 3 provide the "gateway" to the entire Psalter. His work deals primarily with the connections found in the first three psalms. While his analysis is detailed and impressive, Cole's study remains at this "gateway" since he posits little on how this gateway affects the shape and reading for the rest of the Psalter. Robert Cole, *Psalms 1-2: Gateway to the Psalter* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013).

the motif of the blessed one being planted and flourishing at the center pane *bridges* the way and outcome of the righteous. Similarly, in Ps 2, the motif of the messianic king ruling supremely in the center *bridges* the way and outcome of the wicked (as well as for the righteous). The use of various techniques, poetical structures and thematical developments in the two psalms of the Prologue thus provide the impetus for understanding the program of the MT Psalter in such light.

#### **1.3.4 INTERTEXTUAL READING AND THE DESIGN OF THE PSALTER**

Almost half of the Psalter is Davidic psalms. The predominant Davidic profiling and structural arrangements of Davidic psalms are crucial to the understanding of the Psalms. The presence of many Royal psalms also adds to the Davidization of the Psalms.<sup>353</sup> Primarily, our understanding of the Davidic characterization of the Psalter is achieved through the historical narratives in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. Besides references to the figures of David, Solomon and various Levites in Psalm superscripts, the 13 historical titles presume knowledge of the narrative of David's life based on the Historical books.<sup>354</sup>

As such, intertextuality<sup>355</sup> between the Psalter and other OT texts has been well noted. Our concern is not with diachronic dependency, comparative analysis or

<sup>353</sup> For a recent discussion on the issues of the classification of Royal psalms, see Jamie A. Grant, "The Psalms and the King," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip Johnston and David Firth; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 101–18.

<sup>354</sup> See esp. chapter 4. The 13 historical superscriptions are Pss 3, 7, 18, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142.

<sup>355</sup> The term "intertextuality" was originally coined by J. Kristeva in her *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). I have used this term "intertextuality" as understood in the study by Tanner, *The Book of Psalms through the Lens of*

formulation of certain criteria for such reading.<sup>356</sup> Instead, we will explore how reading the Psalter in view of the Davidic Covenant in 2 Sam 7 and the Davidic Song narratives in 2 Sam 6 and 1 Chronicles 16 deepens our understanding of the thematic shape of the Psalter.

#### **1.3.4.1 2 SAMUEL 7 (DAVIDIC COVENANT) AND THE DESIGN OF THE PSALTER**

If the Prologue is the programmatic prelude to the Psalter, then it should, in some way relate to the Davidic psalms that make up almost half of the psalmody. The primary way through which the Prologue provides a Davidic profiling of the Psalter is the motif of the messianic king, located centrally in Ps 2. In turn, this motif of the anointed kingship, described in excessive language of universal rule and power (2:6–12), is most clearly depicted by the Davidic covenant found in the historical narratives.

There is a close relationship between the Davidic covenant<sup>357</sup> of 2 Sam 7 and the Psalter. In fact, the leitmotifs of the Psalter and the major motifs of the Davidic covenant are similar. The Davidic covenant, set within the larger context of the

*Intertextuality.* In it, she studies how Ps 90 and the YHWH *Malak* psalms are viewed intertextually. She also draws correspondences between Ps 112 and Prov 31; Ps 88 and Judg 19, respectively.

<sup>356</sup> Russel Meek has written a helpful article explaining the terminologies of intertextuality, inner-biblical exegesis and inner-biblical allusion. In his prescription, intertextuality is less concerned with the direction of influence and diachronic concerns. Rather, it focuses on the reader's ability to sense connection between texts. Intertextuality is differentiated from inner-biblical exegesis (which seeks to show that a receptor text had deliberately used and interpreted an earlier text) and from inner-biblical allusion (which seeks to show that an earlier text has been alluded to, but not necessarily re-interpreted). Russell Meek, "Intertextuality, Inner-Biblical Exegesis, and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Ethics of a Methodology," *Bib* 95 (2014): 280–91.

<sup>357</sup> Note that the term, "covenant," is not used in 2 Sam 7. However, it is referred to as a "covenant" elsewhere (ברית; 2 Sam 23:5; Ps 89:4, 29, 35, 40) or an "oath" (שׁבֵע; Ps 89:4, 36, 50). On the

Deuteronomic history,<sup>358</sup> provides the hermeneutical key to understanding the program of the Psalter.<sup>359</sup> Seven motifs found in both the Davidic covenant and the Psalter are highlighted below.

(1) *A secure dwelling and rest with YHWH at Zion*. After David's reign over all Israel had been established, he brought the ark of God to dwell with him in the city of Zion (2 Sam 5–6). The concept of God bringing about rest and security to his people, and dwelling with them at a place of his choice (2 Sam 7:10),<sup>360</sup> is an important motif in the Psalms. The paradisiacal garden described in Ps 1:3–4 and mount Zion in Ps 2:6 encapsulate this concept of flourishing in the presence of God, revelling in his security. Just as YHWH will plant (*yoṣi*) his people in a place of security (2 Sam 7:10), the blessed ones will be planted (*lātāṣ*) and rest peacefully by streams of water (Ps 1). This search for a place to dwell is a key concern in Book V of the Psalms (cf. Pss 107, 132, 144).

(2) *YHWH cutting off all the enemies of David*. 2 Samuel 7:1 (cf. 2 Sam 7:9, 11) begins with the description that YHWH had given David rest from all his enemies,

connection between 2 Sam 7 and Ps 89, see E. Theodore Mullen, “The Divine Witness and the Davidic Royal Grant: Ps 89:37–38,” *JBL* 102, no. 2 (1983): 207–18, [209].

<sup>358</sup> For how 2 Sam 7 contributes to the Deuteronomic history, see Dennis J. McCarthy, “2 Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomic History,” *JBL* 84, no. 2 (1965): 131–38.

<sup>359</sup> Gillingham notes, “Given that the prophets drew a good deal from other traditions, from earlier prophets, from the Deuteronomistic literature and the Priestly material, it would be surprising if the now known psalms were not also part of this postexilic practice of ‘inner-biblical exegesis’ used to reassure the people of the ultimate vindication of the earlier prophetic promises.” Susan Gillingham, “From Liturgy to Prophecy: The Use of Psalmody in Second Temple Judaism,” *CBQ* 64, no. 3 (2002): 470–89, [473–74].

<sup>360</sup> McCarthy notes that “the hiphil *תַּגִּיל* [“cause to rest”] which, of course, is practically a technical term in the Deuteronomic writings for Yahweh’s ultimate blessing on Israel: rest from the enemies in the promised land.” McCarthy, “2 Samuel 7 and the Structure of the Deuteronomic History,” 132.

specifically, Saul (2 Sam 7:15). While the enemy motif is prevalent in the Psalter, the specific description of YHWH cutting off the king's enemy can be seen in the Royal Ps 18 (cf. 110:1–2; 143:12), a structurally important psalm as noted by Robertson.

(3) *The building of the House of God.* Second Sam 7 starts with the premise of building a physical house for God's dwelling in Jerusalem. Yet it was not David, but his descendant who eventually built YHWH's house (2 Sam 7:13). The Psalms, likewise, highlights the building of YHWH's house with the same dilemma of who will build it. Even under the postexilic historical context of the Second Temple (cf. 126.1), there remains a better house and city that YHWH himself will build (127:1). Psalm 30 contains the only reference to YHWH's house in all the superscriptions of the Psalter. Like 2 Sam 7, this unique allusion to the house of God is set within the immediate context of YHWH's kingship, his establishment and destruction of the human king and his enemies respectively (cf. 29:10–30:1). Structurally, both Pss 29–30 and 127 are also significantly located (see chapter 2).

(4) *The language bestowed on the king.* In 2 Sam 7, YHWH establishes the anointed king as the ruler, servant and shepherd over the people (7:7, 26, 29). YHWH and the anointed king is intimated within a father-son relationship (2 Sam 7:14). The king's rule and kingdom will be forever (2 Sam 7:13, 16, 24–26). This covenantal language has a futuristic<sup>361</sup> orientation, similar to messianic and eschatological descriptions found in the Prophets (וַתֹּאמֶר גַּם אָל־בֵּית־עָבֶד לְמִרְחֹק) [“and you spoke also

<sup>361</sup> Besides the waw consecutive perfect tense (imperfect sense) associated with 2 Sam 7:10, Murray argues that the “place” (סְמָךְ) in 2 Sam 7:10 is the eschatological temple. D. F. Murray, “*Mqwm and the Future of Israel in 2 Samuel 7:10*,” *VT* 40, no. 3 (1990): 298–320, [299].

of the house of your servant concerning the distant future”], 2 Sam 7:19; cf. Isa 40:11; Ezek 37:23–24; Mic 5:4).<sup>362</sup> In similar ways, such language is bestowed on the king in Psalms 2,<sup>363</sup> 45, 89 and 110. The Messianic king, YHWH’s son, will reign victoriously, universally and forevermore.<sup>364</sup>

(5) *YHWH’s 707 with the king.* The perpetuity of the Davidic dynasty is ascertained through YHWH’s enduring lovingkindness despite human failings (2 Sam 7:14–15; Ps 89:20–38). The Davidic covenant, like a “royal grant,”<sup>365</sup> is secure because of YHWH’s unconditional promises to David and his offspring.<sup>366</sup> In the Psalms, the concept of YHWH’s 707 is most clear in Pss 89 and 136. In fact, these two psalms contain the

<sup>362</sup> Nicholas Piotrowski, “‘I Will Save My People from Their Sins’: The Influence of Ezekiel 36:28b-29a; 37:23b on Matthew 1:21,” *TynBul* 64, no. 1 (2013): 33–54; John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel* (TOTC; London: Tyndale, 1971), 239.

<sup>363</sup> Forbes argued that the king in Psalm 2 is unlikely to be David or Solomon. “The language of the Psalm, by whomsoever composed, could not have been meant for David, since the words, ‘Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee’ (ver. 7), are evidently borrowed from the great promise made to David (in 2 Sam. vii. 12–16) with reference, not to himself, but to a ‘seed’ to be set upon his throne when he should ‘sleep with his fathers,’ and of whom the Lord says, ‘I will be his Father, and he shall be my son’ (ver. 1–4). Neither could the Psalm be meant for Solomon (the Peaceful), since the king designed is evidently to be a man of war, against whom ‘the nations and peoples rage, and their kings and rulers take counsel together’—whom he shall ‘break with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.’” Forbes, *Studies on the book of Psalms*, 4.

<sup>364</sup> Ronald Clements, “Psalm 72 and Isaiah 40–66: A Study in Tradition,” *PRSt* 28, no. 4 (2001): 333–41, [336].

<sup>365</sup> It has been proposed that the Davidic covenant is a royal grant “which depicts the unconditional promise of the king to the vassal as a reward for faithful service to the suzerain.” Mullen, “The Divine Witness and the Davidic Royal Grant: Ps 89:37–38,” 207; See also Jon Levenson, “The Davidic Covenant and Its Modern Interpreters,” *CBQ* 41, no. 2 (1979): 205–19; M. Weinfeld, “The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East,” *JAOS* 90 no. 2 (1970): 184–203.

<sup>366</sup> Gundersen notes, “The promise of permanence deeply embedded in Psalm 89 requires the view that the covenant with David eventually will be fulfilled. The question is not *whether* but *when, how, and who.*” Emphasis his. David Gundersen, “Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90–106)” (Ph.D. Diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 89; For a comparison of the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7 and its later manifestations in the OT, see Hayyim Angel, “The Eternal Davidic Covenant in II Samuel Chapter 7 and Its Later Manifestations in the Bible,” *JBQ* 44, no. 2 (2016): 83–90.

highest frequency of the word חָסֵד in the Psalter.<sup>367</sup> Bookwise, the Psalter and 2 Sam have the highest occurrences of the lexeme חָסֵד in the HB.<sup>368</sup> In Ps 89, חָסֵד is used in the context of the Davidic covenant. In Ps 136, חָסֵד is used in the formulaic refrain בַּי לְעֹזֶל מִתְּחִזְקָה. This phrase is associated especially with the re-establishment of the temple.<sup>369</sup>

(6) *David's prayer, praise and blessings.* In the opening line of 2 Sam 7:5, the king's attitude and action before YHWH is called to question.<sup>370</sup> The second half of 2 Sam 7 describes David's responses to YHWH after receiving God's word through Nathan. David expressed gratitude for YHWH's promises concerning his house, prayed and praised YHWH (2 Sam 7:18–29) for his great deeds of salvation for his people in the past. In a similar way, the Psalter expressed the king's gratitude, prayers and praise to God. Westermann argued that psalms of lament eventually give way to psalms of praise toward the end of the Psalter.<sup>371</sup> This praise is often done in the context of recounting YHWH's salvific deeds in Israel's history (cf. Pss 78, 104–106, 146–150). 2 Sam 7 concludes with a doxology. The striking parallel is that all five Books of the Psalms also conclude with doxologies (41:14; 72:18–19; 89:53; 106:48; 145:21).

<sup>367</sup> Psalm 136 has 26 instances; Psalms 89 and 119 follow with 7 occurrences each. This is followed by Pss 107 and 118.

<sup>368</sup> In 247 instances, the word חָסֵד occurs 126 times in the Psalms (51%) followed by 13 times (5%) in 2 Samuel.

<sup>369</sup> Cf. 1 Chron 16; 2 Chron 5–7; Ezra 3:11; Pss 106:1; 107:1; 136:1–26; Jer 33:11. See chapter 3.

<sup>370</sup> Mark George, "Fluid Stability in Second Samuel 7," *CBQ* 64, no. 1 (2002): 17–36, [22].

<sup>371</sup> Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 257; *The Psalms: structure, content & message*, 10.

(7) *David and the people of God.* One of the promises of YHWH given to David was the establishment (כֹּן; 2 Sam 7:12, 13, 16) of his kingship and the planting of the people of Israel in a secure place (2 Sam 7:10). This could be due to the concerns of the community in postexilic times.<sup>372</sup> The motif of establishing (כֹּן) David's house and the people *as God's people* is repeated in David's response (2 Sam 7:23–26).<sup>373</sup> In the Psalms, YHWH's establishment (כֹּן) of the king and his people is most clearly seen in Pss 89:5, 22; 102:29. By Ps 144:12–15, the phrase, “blessed are the people, whose God is YHWH” (הָעָם שִׁיחֹוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ), solidifies this promise of establishing the people.

These seven motifs, which can be expanded from the motif of the Messianic kingship in the Prologue, add to our hermeneutical understanding of the Psalter's design. If we can reduce the Psalter into one single theme, the best would be that of the Davidic covenant. The covenant theme is wide enough to encapsulate all these seven interlocking motifs as God's word *to* both David and his people to be meditated upon (דְּבָרֵי יְהָוָה; cf. 2 Sam 7:4, 17; Ps 149:19). At the same time, it is not generic such that it can be appropriated onto any text. In this respect, the single motif of refuge (Creach), praise (Ribera-Mariné) or Zion (Gillingham) is insufficient, but to say that the Psalter is

<sup>372</sup> George argues that “precisely because it was edited during the exile in light of the exilic community's experiences, 2 Samuel 7 addressed the anxieties, needs, and concerns of that community, with particular reference to both its identity and its theology as a community.” George, “Fluid Stability in Second Samuel 7,” 19.

<sup>373</sup> With regards to the “house” (בֵּית) in 2 Sam 7:13, it is possible that the word means more than David's house *per se*. George notes, “By recognizing and using the fluidity and indeterminability of בֵּית, the exilic editor would have seen in this oracle a promise to the people. What was promised to David was not just something for him and his family alone, but a radically new and different promise for the people. They were *still* YHWH's chosen people, for they were his descendants and kin. The בֵּית being promised in 2 Sam 7:13 was the people *themselves*, independent of any particular place or family (i.e., the Davidides).” George, “Fluid Stability in Second Samuel 7,” 29, 34.

a book about the “route of salvation” (Vesco) may be too general. The Davidic covenant not only includes these motifs but gives flesh to the cause, plot and *telos* of YHWH’s purposes for his people.

#### **1.3.4.2 DAVID’S SONGS IN 2 SAMUEL 22, 1 CHRONICLES 16, 2 CHRONICLES 6 AND THE DESIGN OF THE PSALTER**

Literary connections between David’s songs in 2 Sam 22:1–51, 1 Chron 16:8–36, 2 Chron 6:41–42 and the Psalter have been noted.<sup>374</sup> Psalm 18 and 2 Sam 22:1–51 are clearly parallel poems and scholars generally accept that the former depended on the latter.<sup>375</sup> Scholars also argue that 1 Chron 16:8–36 depended on Pss 105:1–15, 96:1–13; 106:1, 47–48.<sup>376</sup> The formulaic expressions, “Give thanks to the LORD” (1 Chron 16:8) and “For he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!” (1 Chron 16:34), clearly

<sup>374</sup> Trent C. Butler, “Forgotten Passage from a Forgotten Era (1 Chr 16:8–36),” *VT* 28, no. 2 (1978): 142–50; William Doan and Terry Giles, “The Song of Asaph: A Performance-Critical Analysis of 1 Chronicles 16:8–36,” *CBQ* 70, no. 1 (2008): 29–43; Harm van Grol, “1 Chronicles 16: The Chronicler’s Psalm and Its View of History,” in *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 97–121; Ralph Klein, “Psalms in Chronicles,” *CurTM* 32, no. 4 (2005): 264–75; Robert Rezetto, *Source and Revision in the Narratives of David’s Transfer of the Ark: Text, Language and Story in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13, 15–16* (6th ed.; New York: Bloomsbury, 2007); Beat Weber, “Das Königlich-Davidische Danklied 2 Samuel 22 / Psalm 18 Im Kontext von Psalm 1–18: Eine (proto)kanonische Lesung Vom Ende Der Samuelbücher Her Zum Anfangsbereich Des Psalmers Hin,” in *Canterò in Eterno Le Misericordie Del Signore (Sal 89,2)* (eds. Stefan Attard and Marco Pavan; AnBib Studia 3; Roma: Gregorian & Biblical, 2015), 87–204; “„Gelobt Sei Der HERR, Mein Fels ...!“ (Ps 144,1). Wirkung Und Bedeutung von Psalm 18 (// 2 Samuel 22) Im Nachfeld Des Psalters,” *OTE* 29, no. 1 (2016): 195–220; “Die Doppelte Verknotung Des Psalters: Psalm 18//2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 105; 106//1 Chronik 16,” *BZ* 60, no. 1 (2016): 14–27; R. Mark Shipp, “‘Remember His Covenant Forever’: A Study of the Chronicler’s Use of the Psalms,” *ResQ* 35, no. 1 (1993): 29–39.

<sup>375</sup> The direction of dependence is argued based on Psalms superscriptions, which require knowledge of the Samuel narratives and not the other way round. Weber argues, “Der Psalter verweist auf die Samuelbücher, besonders auf dessen David-Texte „zurück“ und setzt die Kenntnis der narrativen, in Sam auf behaltenen Überlieferung voraus – nicht umgekehrt.” Weber „„Gelobt Sei Der HERR, Mein Fels ...!“ (Ps 144,1),“ 199; See also Weber, “Die Doppelte Verknotung Des Psalters,” 18.

<sup>376</sup> They are all taken from Book IV of the Psalter. Klein, “Psalms in Chronicles,” 264.

parallel Pss 105:1, 106:1.<sup>377</sup> The desire for YHWH's ark to "rise to its resting place" in Solomon's prayer in 2 Chron 6:41–42 alludes to Ps 132:8–10.<sup>378</sup> Moreover, intertextuality between Pss 18 (2 Sam 22) and 144 have been ascertained.<sup>379</sup> As noted earlier, our concern is how intertextual connections between these David songs and the Psalms help elucidate the design of the Psalter.<sup>380</sup>

*Second Sam 22* begins with a characteristic heading, "in the day the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul" (2 Sam 22:1), and ends with reiteration of YHWH's covenantal promise "to his anointed, to David" (2 Sam 22:51). This characteristic inclusio, highlighting David's victory, recalls YHWH's promises to deliver David from his enemies and Saul in 2 Sam 7:9, 15.

<sup>377</sup> Cf. Isa 12:4; Pss 118:1, 29; 136:1.

<sup>378</sup> Klein, "Psalms in Chronicles," 271; Weber, "Die Doppelte Verknotung Des Psalters," 20; Shipp, "'Remember His Covenant Forever,'" 33. For an interesting discussion on the ark in the Psalms, see Craig C. Broyles, "The Psalms and Cult Symbolism: The Case of the Cherubim-Ark," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip Johnston and David Firth; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 139–56.

<sup>379</sup> Weber, „Gelobt Sei Der HERR, Mein Fels ...!“ (Ps 144,1)," 213–214; On dependency issues, Shipp argues, "Chr [the Chronicler] is apparently invoking the traditions reflected in 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 132, where God's covenant with David is expressed in terms of an eternal dynasty, forever associated with the temple and its service. This point may help explain the commonly accepted view that Chr's theology rests on the 'two pillars' of temple and king, with the caveat that to Chr these two pillars are like *Jachin* and *Boaz* (the two pillars of Solomon's temple) and ought not to be separated, as earlier commentators have done. It is obvious, then, that for Chr kingship had not disappeared, never to return. Chr, in the appropriation of Psalmic sources, is calling upon the people to remember God's faithfulness to the covenant and is calling upon God to remember the covenant with David, the choice of king and temple." Shipp, "'Remember His Covenant Forever,'" 39.

<sup>380</sup> Following Weber, who notes, "Vielmehr wird diese als Ausdruck des protokanonischen Ensembles der beiden Bibelbücher verstanden (Synchronie) und soll in ihren Auswirkungen auf die Lesestrategie des Psalmenbuchs (oder jedenfalls einer Teil- bzw. Vorstufe desselben) bedacht werden beiden Bibelbücher verstanden (Synchronie) und soll in ihren Auswirkungen auf die Lesestrategie des Psalmenbuchs (oder jedenfalls einer Teil- bzw. Vorstufe desselben) bedacht werden." Weber, „Gelobt Sei Der HERR, Mein Fels ...!“ (Ps 144,1)," 199.

As a psalm of deliverance, 2 Sam 22 begins with lament (2 Sam 22:3–7) and ends with praise (2 Sam 22:47–51) through descriptions of YHWH’s power, Torah commitment, confidence, and victory (2 Sam 22:8–46).<sup>381</sup> The song and its inclusio fit well within the literary horizon of 2 Sam 21–23. In 2 Sam 21, David buried the bones of Saul and his sons and defeated the Philistines, dovetailing nicely with 2 Sam 22:1.

Immediately following the song, 2 Sam 23:1 records “David’s last words” (דְבָרִי דָיִד) and the military legacy he was leaving behind. The final chapter in 2 Sam 24 records David’s census, punishment and how an altar was built on the threshing floor of Araunah for the aversion of the plague. The record of David’s sin in the last chapter of 2 Sam (24:17) seems to suggest that the song’s victorious and salvific expressions are not final.

It is important to connect the headings of 2 Sam 22:1 and 7:1 (cf. 7:9, 11), where the latter notes, “YHWH gave him [David] rest from all his surrounding enemies.” Furthermore, these two headings and their immediate literary horizons can be seen together. The following figure captures the thematic sequential parallels between 2 Sam 4–9 and 19–24.

<sup>381</sup> Anderson divides it into a “Psalm of Deliverance” (vv. 2–20), “Connecting Material” (vv. 21–28), “Royal Psalm of Victory” (29–51b). A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC 11; Waco, Tex.: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 262.

2 Sam 4	Ish-bosheth murdered (Saul's son)	2 Sam 19	Absalom killed (David's son); David began to return to Jerusalem
2 Sam 5	(1) David's anointed reign over all Israel and Judah; (2) Verbal challenge against David by Jebusite who were overcome behind a fortified city; (3) David built house and God established his kingdom; (4) David took more concubines; (5) David struck down the Philistines	2 Sam 20	(1) David returned to Jerusalem as king; (2) Verbal challenge against David by Sheba who was overcome behind a fortified city; (3) David came to his house in Jerusalem; (4) David's concubines shut up (5) David destroyed rebellion within Israel.
2 Sam 6	David tried to bring the ark to Jerusalem but error at "threshing floor of Nacon" (6:6) caused YHWH's wrath to break forth; David brought the Ark to Jerusalem with sacrifice, shouting and celebration.	2 Sam 21	David's kindness to Mephibosheth; Buried Saul's bones; Victory over Philistines
2 Sam 7	Davidic Covenant. <i>When YHWH gave him rest from all surrounding enemies;</i> David wanted to build a house for the ark, but God would build a house for him instead. His offspring would build the house.	2 Sam 22	David's song of deliverance. <i>When YHWH delivered him from all his enemies and Saul.</i>
2 Sam 8	David's victories and a list of his officials	2 Sam 23	David's victories and a list of mighty men
2 Sam 9	David's kindness to Mephibosheth	2 Sam 24	David's error with the census, YHWH's wrath broke out. Plague ceased at the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite (24:16); David offered sacrifice and built an altar.

Figure 10: Structural Parallels between 2 Sam 4–9 and 2 Sam 19–24

Both 2 Sam 4 and 19 mark the death of a prince. At least five thematic parallels occur between 2 Sam 5 and 20. In both cases, David was requested by the tribes of Israel to return to Jerusalem to be their king (cf. 5:1–3; 19:12–20:3). In both cases, the tribes referred to themselves as the “bone and flesh” of David (cf. 5:1; 19:12–13). On these two returns to Jerusalem, David faced verbal challenges, one by the Jebusites (5:6)

and the other by Sheba (20:1), against whom David eventually overcame despite them hiding behind fortified walls. The allusions to building David's house (cf. 5:11; 20:3) and his concubines (cf. 5:13; 20:3) in successive sequence are uncanny.

The four successive chapters from 2 Sam 6–9 and 2 Sam 21–24 also parallel each other with an interesting inversion between the first and last chapters of both groups (2 Sam 6 // 24 and 2 Sam 9 // 21). The distinct parallel between 2 Sam 6 and 24 is explicated by the word, *נִגְנָן* (“threshing floor”),<sup>382</sup> which occurs only in these two places in 2 Sam. In both cases, YHWH's wrath was unleashed due to errors committed by David; however, punishment fell on Uzzah (6:6–7) and seventy thousand Israelites (24:15) instead. In both cases, sacrifices were made to the LORD (6:13, 17–18; 24:25) under similar contexts associated with the ark and house of God (6:2; 24:25\*; cf. 2 Chron 3:1). It is important to note that these two texts mark the establishment<sup>383</sup> and wane of David's kingship (2 Sam 6, 24).

As noted earlier, the parallel between 2 Sam 7 and 22 can be identified by their similar headings (7:1; 22:1) and their common theme of David's deliverance from his enemies. The use of the noun, *עַמְקָדָה* (“offspring”), which appears only in three instances in 2 Sam, highlights not just the affirmation of YHWH's covenantal promises to the kingship of a Davidic progeny (2 Sam 7:12; 22:51), but compares it with the progeny of Saul who would not be established (4:8). The parallel between 2 Sam 8 and 23 is clear

<sup>382</sup> 2 Sam 6:6; 24:16, 18, 21–22, 24.

<sup>383</sup> The lemma, *כַּן* (“to establish”), occurs only in 2 Sam 5:12; 7:12–13, 16, 24, 26 in the book of 2 Samuel and are all associated with the establishment of kingship and nation.

in the list of David's official and mighty men. Finally, the parallel between 2 Sam 9 and 21 can be found in David's kindness to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son.

Further observations can be made for the parallels between 2 Sam 4–9 and 2 Sam 19–24<sup>384</sup> but the point pertinent to our argument relates to the structural and thematic parallels of 2 Sam 7 and 22. They connect the Davidic covenant (victory over enemies, establishment of kingship, dynasty) and the moving of the ark (building of YHWH's house) at two definitive points in the Samuel narrative—establishment and wane of the Davidic kingship.

*The song of thanksgiving in 1 Chron 16:8–36* is recorded in the narrative after David moved the ark to Jerusalem and placed it in a tent. The Levites were assigned to minister before the ark to give thanks to God. The first part of the song follows Ps 105:1–15,<sup>385</sup> which ascribes to YHWH's wonderous deeds, judgments, his covenant with his chosen servants and his promises to bring them into Canaan. Subsequently, the song follows Ps 96:1–13, characterizing YHWH's universal kingship. Then it concludes with the invocation to give thanks based on the doxological formula in Ps 106:1, 47–48.<sup>386</sup> The key motifs in 1 Chron 16:8–36 are primarily YHWH's power, kingship and his covenantal expressions to his chosen people.

<sup>384</sup> E.g., David's sins, the outbreaking or aversion of YHWH's wrath on a "threshing floor."

<sup>385</sup> For detailed textual comparisons between the song in 1 Chronicles 16:8–36; see Ralph W. Klein, *1 Chronicles* (ed. Thomas Kruger; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 359–370.

<sup>386</sup> Klein argues that all these psalm references are taken from Book IV of the Psalter and the use of the doxology indicates that Book IV "was completed by the time of the Chronicler." Klein, "Psalms in Chronicles," 269.

A second song in 2 Chron 6:41–42, which follows Ps 132,<sup>387</sup> is also recorded in the narrative after the ark was brought to the temple that *Solomon* had built. This is followed immediately by 2 Chron 7 in which YHWH appeared to Solomon and renewed the covenant first given to David (2 Chron 7:12–22).

When we consolidate all the key motifs found in the songs of 2 Sam 22, 1 Chron 16 and 2 Chron 6, and compare their locations in the Psalter and the historical narratives, we see an interesting intertext, illustrated in the figure below.

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<sup>387</sup> For a comparison of the differences between the two texts, see Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1993), 600–601.

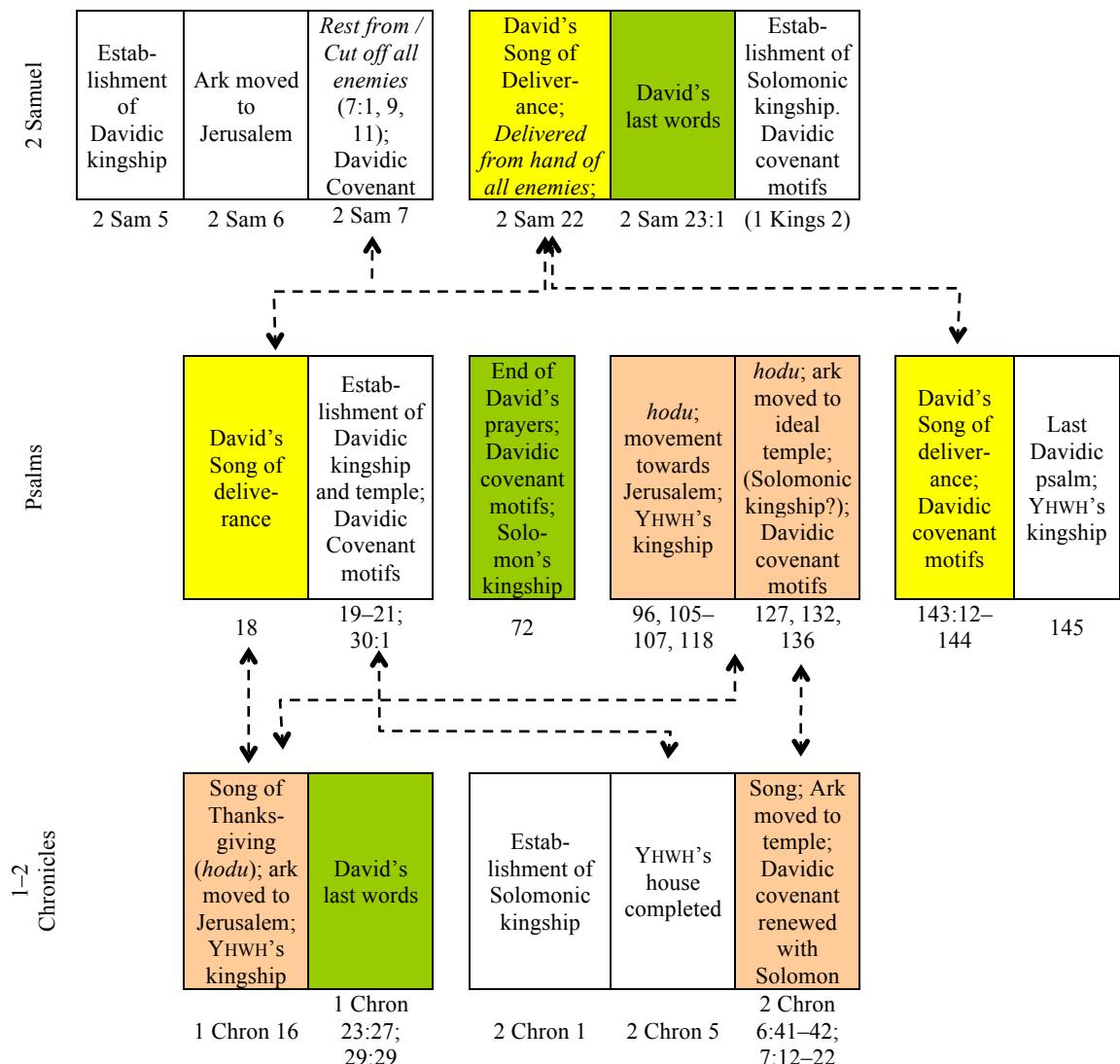


Figure 11: Comparison of Common Songs between 2 Samuel, Chronicles and the Psalms

In the figure above, the yellow boxes connect 2 Sam 22 with the Psalms. The peach boxes connect the Psalms with 1 Chron 16 and 2 Chron 6 while the green boxes locate references to David's last words (wane of his kingship). Intertextual readings result in two hermeneutical understanding: (1) *Structural frames of books*. The statements of rest/deliverance from the hands of David's enemies (2 Sam 7:1, 9, 11; 22:1) and the song in 2 Sam 22 frame two important points of David's life—the establishment (2 Sam 7) and wane of his kingship (2 Sam 22). It is plausible that the final editors of the Psalms understood the design of 2 Sam and adopted the motifs of

David's deliverance at these two definitive periods of David's life, thus arranging them in Pss 18 and 144 to form a similar inclusio for the Davidization of the Psalms (see chapter 4).

The two songs in 1–2 Chronicles are situated between the two movements of the ark, along with the narratives of David and Solomon's kingships. First Chron 16 parallels 2 Sam 6, which indirectly identifies itself with Ps 18 whereas 2 Chron 6 draws on Ps 132 which locates itself at the end of the Songs of Ascents (SOA) in the Psalter. The thematic contents of 1 Chron 16 and 2 Chron 6, and the specific use of the formula, "for he is good, for his *hesed* endures forever," are found between Pss 96 and 136 (cf. 105–107, 118, 127, 132). If Chronicles had drawn on the Psalms, then the Chronicler could have understood the designs of the Psalter and Samuel, choosing to adopt from the Psalms for its own purposes, the motifs of YHWH's kingship (choosing the YHWH *Malak* and Zion-centered, rather than the Davidic kingship psalms) and the building of YHWH's house (Ps 132; see also §§2.4.2, 3.2.2).

The references of David's last words (green boxes) also help us locate the wane of David's kingship along each of the three trajectories. The connections seen in the structural parallels, the inclusions, thematic content and their distinctiveness provide clues to understanding the design of the Psalter.

(2) It follows then that intertextual reading deepens the understanding of how parallel themes develop structurally in the Psalms. The seven key motifs identified in 2 Sam 7 are affirmed in the intertextual review of the songs common to the books of Samuel, Chronicles and the Psalms. This leads us to focus on how these prominent motifs, associated with YHWH's covenantal promises given to David, unravel across the Psalter.

For instance, the integral concept of secure dwelling (for the king and people) and deliverance from enemies is clearly characterized in Pss 18 and 144. The proliferation of the eight nouns and two verbs with first person suffix highlighting secure dwelling and deliverance in Ps 18:1 is not sustained anywhere in the Psalter.<sup>388</sup> The lexemes associated with the Davidic king's "deliverance" (נִצָּל) from the "hands" (דְּבָרָה) of "all" (כָּל) his "enemies" (אֹיְבָה) are specifically found between Pss 18 and 143:12–144,<sup>389</sup> reinforcing this frame. The actual social reality of such security and deliverance is also well envisioned in 144:9–15.

Following the references to David's last words, the moving of the ark is associated with Solomon in 2 Sam and Chronicles. However, in the Psalms, the association of the ark with Solomon is less clear. Psalm 132:8 is the only reference in the Psalms to the ark but in this context, an offspring of David rather than Solomon is mentioned. We may ask why is this so? By comparison, the Psalter seems to also have an *extended association* with the Davidic kingship beyond the establishment of the temple and the moving of the ark (after Pss 120–134).<sup>390</sup> While 2 Chronicles, a post-

<sup>388</sup> The eight nouns are סַלֵּם ("my rock"), צְוָרִי ("my stronghold"), אֱלֹהִים ("my God"), מִשְׁגָּבִי ("my shield"), קֶרֶן־יְשֻׁעָה ("horn of my salvation") and מִתְּנוּבָה ("my fortress") while the two verbs are נִפְלָטָה ("one who delivers me") and אָמַתְּסָה־בָּבוֹ ("I seek refuge in him"). Note how the two verbs bring together the concept of seeking refuge in the one who delivers. The word, "stronghold" (קָדוֹתָה) is found only 7x in the Psalter and occurs between Pss 18 and 144 (18:3; 31:3–4; 66:11; 71:3; 91:2; 144:2).

<sup>389</sup> Pss 18:1; 22:21; 31:16; 82:4; 97:10; 143:12; 144:7, 11. While this specific motif may be seen in Ps 7:1, the idea of Davidic kingship is not prominent.

<sup>390</sup> Mitchell argues that the ark represents the "the footstool of the Holy One. . . . For the footstool, like the sceptre and crown, is a perennial symbol of royal estate. The king puts his royal feet up, while others attend him, standing in the dust. No self-respecting monarch goes without one. Tut-anhk-amun had a footstool. The king of Megiddo . . . has one. The kings of Israel had footstools. . . . The idea of the ark as a footstool is confirmed by other ancient texts which show that a covenant or treaty was placed in a chest beneath the feet of the god who served as witness to it." (cf. Pss 99:5; 132:7; 1 Chron

exilic work (2 Chron 36), continues the narration of Judahite kings and concludes with an interest in the rebuilding of the house (2 Chron 36:23), the Psalter does not sustain a similar interest in temple building beyond Ps 136. Rather, it brings back Davidic psalms, concluding again with the emphases of kingship, deliverance and secure dwelling.<sup>391</sup> The final Davidic Ps 145 is a focus on YHWH's kingship. This distinctive focus of the Psalter draws our attention to its structural and theological thrust, especially in relation to the Davidic characterization in Books IV–V of the Psalms.

## 1.4 SUMMARY

- The design of the MT Psalter is best understood from a macrostructural perspective. A macrostructural study of the Psalms remains lacking in Psalms research. The main issues currently faced by Psalms scholarship are due to difficulties associated with plurality of techniques, differing structural divisions and themes.
- The three research questions guiding this thesis pertain to the organizing principles, macrostructure and overarching logic of the Psalter.

28:2; Isa 60:13; Lam 2:1). David Mitchell, *The Songs of Ascents: Psalms 120 to 134 in the Worship of Jerusalem's Temples* (Newton Mearns, Scotland: Campbell, 2015), 49–50.

<sup>391</sup> Klein argues that the Chronicler no longer felt the need to reinstitute feelings for the monarchy. This deviates from the Psalter's thrust. He notes, “By the time of the Chronicler the post-exilic community had existed for a century and a half with a fully functioning temple but without a king. If the Chronicler had felt any need for the reinstitution of the monarchy, he would have had to make a strong case for it. Instead, his additional paragraph in 2 Chronicles 7 puts the onus of responsibility exclusively on the people. Yahweh promises to forgive and to heal provided that Israel humbles itself, prays, seeks Yahweh’s face, and repents. The promise in this programmatic verse is that there will always be forgiveness and healing for those who wholeheartedly participate in Israel’s religious life and in the temple’s worship.” Klein, “Psalms in Chronicles,” 274.

- A number of organizing principles (at least 32 formal or tacit) are observed. If the final editor(s) of the Psalms had the freedom to edit the texts toward a certain design, then it is logical to assume that organizing techniques, structural form and content should cohere and correspond.
- The Prologue of the Psalms (Pss 1–2) is the programmatic prelude to the Psalter. Both psalms are concentrically structured. Their poetical and thematic structures correspond. They are a single alphabetical composition. Their poetical and numerical centers highlight the righteous man planted in the paradisiacal garden and the Messianic king reigning in Zion respectively.
- The Prologue provides a hermeneutical perspective to the Psalms through its structure and thematic development. It has both a central focus (concentric) and linear trajectory (metanarrative).
- The Davidic characterization of the Psalms can be read alongside the historical narratives in the HB (2 Sam 7, 1 Chron 16, 2 Chron 6). The Psalter shows that it has re-used concepts from 2 Sam for its own structural design. The Chronicler's selective use of the Psalter indirectly reveals the design of the Psalter.
- The Psalter can be read as a unified book when discrete units of texts show a meaningful macro-interdevelopment of motifs (program).

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## 2 THE MACROSTRUCTURE

*The arrangement of the Psalms seems to hold the secret to a great mystery to me, though, has not yet been revealed to me.<sup>392</sup>*

—Augustine

*The psalms are then seen as the parts of a single book, each playing its role by providing a contribution in harmony with the whole, to which it is welded. The order of the psalms within them is not indifferent, it is wanted, consciously organized by the final editors, it is not the product of chance, but on what principles it had been established remains unknown.<sup>393</sup>*

—Jean-Luc Vesco

The main concern of this chapter is to understand the structural and thematic shape of the five Books of the Psalter based on insights gained in the last chapter regarding the programmatic nature of the Prologue, various organizing techniques and intertextual reading. For the Prologue to be programmatic of the Psalter, there should be features of the Prologue developing in the rest of the Psalms. A crucial insight gained in chapter 1 is the three-part concentric structures of Pss 1–2 (see §1.3.3). The first and last sections of Pss 1–2 identify the *ways* and *outcomes* of the righteous and the wicked. The dominant image of the center sections is the *characterization* of the righteous man and

<sup>392</sup> My translation. “*Ordo Psalmorum mihi magni sacramenti videtur continere secretum, quamvis nondum mihi fuerit revelatum.*” *Enarrat. Ps. 150.i.*

<sup>393</sup> My translation. “Les psaumes sont alors envisagés comme faisant partie d’un seul et même livre, chacun jouant son rôle en fournissant un apport en harmonie avec l’ensemble auquel il est soudé. L’ordre des psaumes entre eux n’est pas indifférent, il a été voulu, consciemment organisé par d’ultimes

the anointed king. We have also shown that the composers of the psalms would have adopted various rhetorical skills such as inclusions, anaphora, word plays, alliterations, meters, and the use of introduction (exordium). Such rhetorical features would have been picked up by readers of the Psalter who were equipped with the relevant literary competency. These informed assumptions will provide helpful controls for our analysis of the text (see §1.3.1). At the end of this chapter, we conclude that the entire Psalter is also organized in a three-part concentric structure with similar thematic development (Books I, II–III, IV–V). At the onset, I will define a nomenclature of psalms-delimitation (beyond a single psalm) to be used consistently throughout this thesis.

## **2.1 NOMENCLATURE OF PSALMS-DELIMITATION**

We define eight compositional levels from a single psalm to the entire Psalter as illustrated below. When they are capitalized in this thesis, they refer to the delimitation defined here.

- (1) Individual Psalm
  - (2) Pair or Twin-psalm (Prologue = Pss 1–2)
  - (3) Subcollection<sup>394</sup>
  - (4) Collection/Subgroup<sup>395</sup>
- 

rédacteurs, il n'est pas le produit du hasard, mais on ignore sur quels principes il a pu être établi.” Vesco, *Le psautier de David traduit et commenté*, 1:32.

<sup>394</sup> This may be several adjacent psalms linked by content genre or superscription-genre (e.g., *mikhtam*).

<sup>395</sup> A literary unit made up of Subcollections linked by a common superscription, genre or formula.

- (5) Group<sup>396</sup>
- (6) Book (Masoretic book divisions)
- (7) Section (Books I, II–III and IV–V)
- (8) Psalter

## **2.2 BARBIERO'S MACROSTRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF BOOK I**

A number of detailed studies are focused on partial groupings within Book I as well as a general view of Book I.<sup>397</sup> An important structural proposal of Book I, adopted by a number of Psalms scholars (e.g., Zenger, Vesco), views Pss 1–2 as the Prologue, followed by a four-part division (3–14, 15–24, 25–34, 35–41). One of the most important monographs on Book I, in my opinion, is Gianni Barbiero's *Das erste Psalmenbuch als Einheit: eine synchrone Analyse von Psalm 1-41*.<sup>398</sup> His understanding of how superscriptions in Book I are designed for structuring is crucial. His structural concepts on Book I will be adopted and provide the basis for our analysis of Books II–

<sup>396</sup> There are usually three Collections within a Group of psalms. The center Collection typically forms the central motif for the Group. The Group defines a major unit within a Section. Each Section is made up of four Groups.

<sup>397</sup> Smith, “The Redactional Criteria and Objectives Underlying the Arrangement of Psalms 3–8”; McCann, “The Shape of Book I of the Psalter and the Shape of Human Happiness”; “Books I–III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter”; William Bellinger Jr., “Reading from the Beginning (again): The Shape of Book I of the Psalter,” in *Diachronic and Synchronic* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 114–26.

<sup>398</sup> Barbiero, *Das erste Psalmenbuch als Einheit: eine synchrone Analyse von Psalm 1-41*. A shortened version of his original thesis, in article form, is published in French: Gianni Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41). Une Étude Synchronique,” *RevScRel* 77, no. 4 (2003): 439–80. Barbiero is not the first person to have identified the four-part structure in Book I. However, I have found Barbiero’s treatment detailed and with a good discussion on superscriptions. His shortened version is used in our discussion below.

V. In the following, we will look closely at his arguments and highlight pertinent insights.

We begin with Barbiero's view on the Prologue.<sup>399</sup> Psalms 1–2 logically continue from the book of Malachi (in the MT) sharing its major concepts.<sup>400</sup> As such, he argues that the Prologue of the Psalter is to be read as a “wisdom-prophecy,” which is “on one hand, as written wisdom [Ps 1], and on the other, as a prophetic book that speaks of the hope of Israel [Ps 2]. The history of Messiah and his people becomes the paradigm for humanity.”<sup>401</sup> There are certain distinction and democratization in the Prologue and in the entire Psalms. Every man is called to identify with the David figure but the “man” in Ps 1 remains distinct from the messianic figure in Ps 2.<sup>402</sup> The Davidic psalms are “firstly the prayer of the Messiah of Ps 2 and secondly, the prayer of the ‘man’ in Psalm 1.”<sup>403</sup> Psalms 1–2 and 40–41 also form an inclusio for Book I of the Psalter.

<sup>399</sup> Barbiero considers Pss 1–2 as a strong redactional unit functioning as the Prologue of the Psalter. “Les Ps 1 et 2 constituent donc une unité rédactionnelle forte au début du Psautier; ils servent d’introduction ou de prologue à celui-ci.” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 447.

<sup>400</sup> E.g., the nations’ rage (Mal 3:12); YHWH’s eschatological reign (Mal 4:1); the separation of the righteous and wicked (Mal 3:18–4:2); Torah-piety (Mal 4:4).

<sup>401</sup> “le Psautier doit être lu d’une part comme écrit de sagesse, et de l’autre, comme un livre prophétique, où l’on parle de l’espoir d’Israël. L’histoire du Messie et de son peuple (Ps 2) devient ainsi un paradigme pour l’humanité (Ps 1).” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 448.

<sup>402</sup> Cf. Cole’s argument that the “man” in Ps 1 is to be understood as the anointed king in Ps 2. I think Barbiero’s treatment is a fairer one as compared to Cole’s. Cole, *Psalms 1-2: Gateway to the Psalter*, 93.

<sup>403</sup> “Ainsi les Psaumes 3-41, attribués à «David», sont d’une part la prière du Messie du Ps 2, et d’autre part la prière de « l’homme » du Ps 1.” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 450.

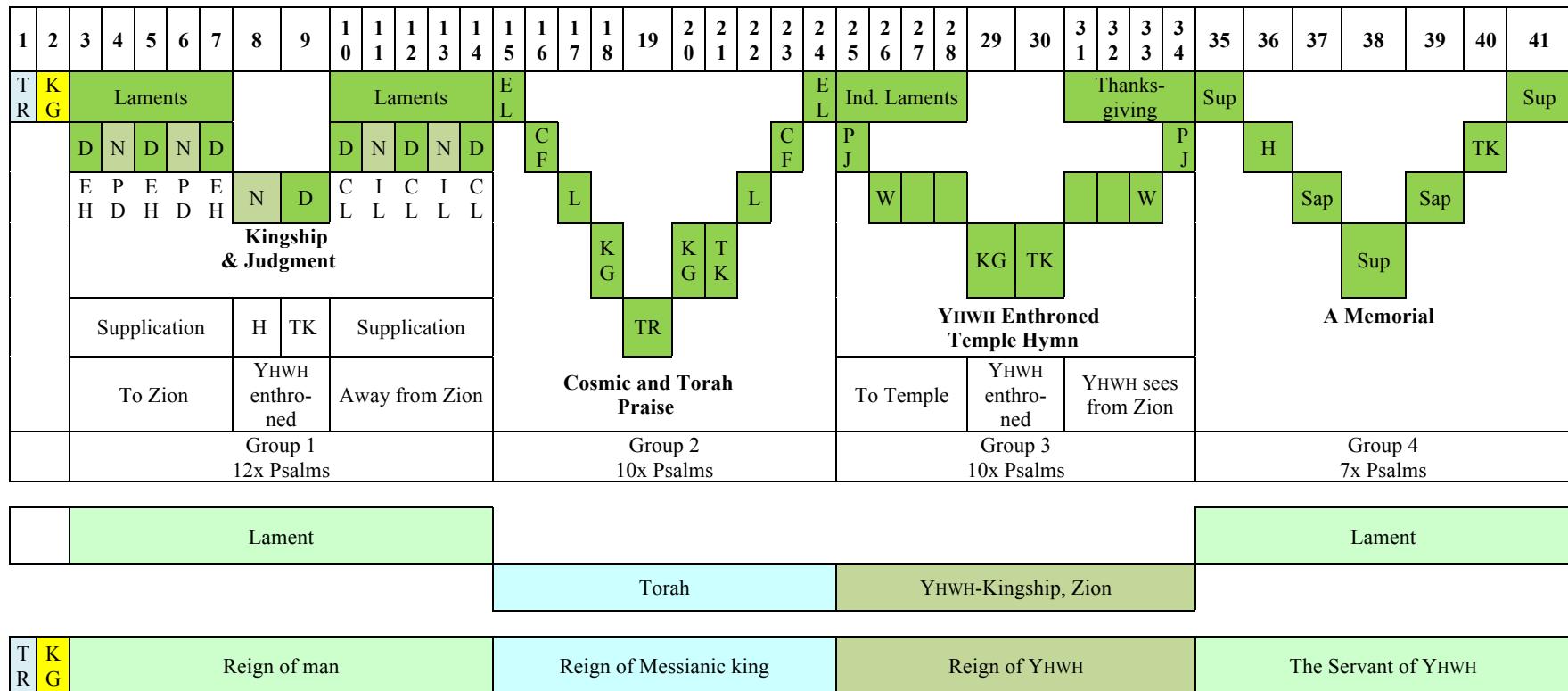


Figure 12: Gianni Barbiero's Structure of Book I (with my modifications in Pss 35–41)

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In Figure 12 above,<sup>404</sup> I have drawn up the macrostructure of Book I by following Barbiero's understanding in general, and adding my modifications for the Group Pss 35–41. In the first Group of 12 psalms (3–14), Barbiero sees two Subgroups of five Supplication psalms (3–7; 10–14) binding Pss 8 and 9 at the center which are in turn, Praise and Thanksgiving psalms respectively.<sup>405</sup> Within Group 1, there is a thematic movement from an absence of salvation (Supplication; 3–7), to the presence of salvation (8), followed by thanksgiving (9). Then the thematic genre returns to Supplications (10–14). Barbiero understands this thematic development to mean that “salvation is not something definitive (‘already but not there yet’).”<sup>406</sup>

Barbiero argues that the superscriptions of Pss 3 and 7 bind the first Subgroup (3–7). Note how the titles of Pss 3–7 form a chiastic structure.<sup>407</sup>

<sup>404</sup> Legend: D = Day Psalm; N = Night Psalm; EH = External Hostilities; PD = Personal Distress; CF = Confidence Psalms; CL = Communal Laments; IL = Individual Laments; Sup = Supplication; TK = Thanksgiving Hymn; TR = Torah Psalm; Z = Zion Psalm; KG = Kingship Psalm; EL = Entrance Liturgy; PJ = Motifs of the poor and justice; W = Motif of the wicked; Sap = Sapiential Psalms; H = Hymn of Praise; L = Lament.

<sup>405</sup> Barbiero sees the acrostics Pss 9–10 as two separate psalms according to the MT tradition.

<sup>406</sup> “La séquence supplication (3-7) + hymne (8) + action de grâces (9) exprime le mouvement de la prière, qui va de l’absence de salut (supplication), à l’expérience de ce même salut (hymne) et à l’action de grâces pour le salut obtenu. Le fait de revenir, après l’action de grâces, à la supplication, n’est pas un cas unique dans le Psautier. Ce mouvement se trouve déjà à l’intérieur du Ps 9. L’action de grâces se termine à la fin du psaume par une supplication (w. 18-21). Autrement dit: le salut n’est pas quelque chose de définitif (« déjà, mais pas encore là! »).” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 467.

<sup>407</sup> Smith, “The Redactional Criteria and Objectives Underlying the Arrangement of Psalms 3–8,” 240; Kevin G. Smith and William R. Domeris, “The Arrangement of Psalms 3–8,” *OTE* 23, no. 2 (2010): 367–77, [371].

- A: מִזְמֹר לְדָוִד; historical superscript regarding Absalom (3)
- B: לְמַנְצָחָה; with stringed instrument (נֶגֶן) (4)
- C: לְמַנְצָחָה; with the flutes (נִחְילּוֹת) (5)
- B': לְמַנְצָחָה; with stringed instrument (נֶגֶן); eight-stringed lyre (6)
- A': שְׁגַיּוֹן לְדָוִד; historical superscript regarding Cush (7)

The superscriptions of Pss 8–9 are very similar, drawing them together as the two center psalms of Group 1. Psalms 11–14 are also chiastically structured (ABB'A') based on their superscriptions.<sup>408</sup> Hence, Group 1 (3–14) is concentric with Pss 3–7 and 10–14 framing 8–9 at the center.

Moreover, the two Subgroups of five psalms (3–7, 10–14) are composed as alternating sequence of “day-night-day-night-day” psalms.<sup>409</sup> Psalms 8–9 at the center are “night-day” psalms.<sup>410</sup> At the same time, “Day” psalms correspond to the motif of “external hostility” (EH) while the “night” psalms correspond to the motif of “personal distress” (PD).<sup>411</sup> Psalms 10–14 are also structured as an *alternation* between Communal (10, 12, 14) and Individual Laments (11, 13). Barbiero argues that this alternation technique is a “composition principle.”<sup>412</sup> At the center, Pss 8–9 are both a response to the Laments (in Pss 3–7) and thanksgiving for YHWH’s deliverance. Finally, Barbiero describes a thematic “centripetal movement” that is orientated *towards Zion* in

<sup>408</sup> Note two shorter and identical superscriptions in Pss 11 and 14, bounding two longer superscriptions in Pss 12 and 13. Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 468.

<sup>409</sup> Cf. Pss 3:6, 8; 4:5, 9; 5:4, 6:7; 7:7; 10:12; 11:2; 12:6; 13:4; 14:2, 5.

<sup>410</sup> Cf. Pss 8:4; 9:20.

<sup>411</sup> Personal distress of the psalmist in Ps 4 relates to his poverty, and in Ps 6, his disease.

<sup>412</sup> “En somme, ici, l’alternance se révèle être un principe de composition.” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 468.

Pss 3–7 and a “centrifugal movement” that is orientated *away* from Zion in Pss 10–14.<sup>413</sup>

Group 2 (15–24) consists of 10 psalms. Like Group 1, it has a symmetrical structure around the center Ps 19 which is a Hymn of the Torah. Genre categories provide the structural basis for Group 2. It is bounded by two Entrance Liturgies (15, 24); followed by a second outermost ring of two Confidence psalms (16, 23); a third ring of two Supplication psalms (17, 22); and a fourth ring (immediately surrounding the center) of psalms with kingship motifs (18, 20–21). When Ps 19 is seen together with Pss 18–21, the central motifs of Group 2 recapitulate the motifs of Torah and kingship in the Prologue.

The superscriptions of Pss 15–24 are arranged symmetrically.<sup>414</sup> Longer titles are found at the center of Group 2 (cf. 18–22). They are flanked by Subgroups of psalms with shorter titles (15–17, 23–24) on both sides.<sup>415</sup> The titles of Pss 14 and 25 are of a different construction, framing Group 2.<sup>416</sup>

<sup>413</sup> There is a thematic trajectory developing across Group 1. In Pss 3–7, the psalmist looks towards the temple and enters YHWH’s house (3:5; 5:8). At the center of the entire Subgroup, YHWH is enthroned in Zion (9:12–15). In Pss 10–14, the psalmist calls upon the eternal kingship of YHWH (10:16) and declares YHWH’s rule at the temple and in heaven (11:4). By Ps 14:2, 7, YHWH’s gaze and salvation *come* out from Zion. Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 469.

<sup>414</sup> McCann, “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” 354.

<sup>415</sup> Furthermore, Barbiero sees a chiasmus in the superscriptions of Pss 23 and 24. Note that this is not visible in the English translations. Psalm 23 begins with מִזְמָרֶת לְדֹבֶד and Ps 24 with לְדֹבֶד מִזְמָרֶת.

<sup>416</sup> Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 465–66.

Group 3 in Book I is another 10 psalms arranged concentrically and bounded by two AAs (25, 34). Two pairs of four psalms (25–28; 31–34) frame a Thanksgiving and Praise hymn at the center (29, 30). Barbiero sees that Pss 25–28 express a movement *towards* the temple.<sup>417</sup> This movement culminates at Ps 29, a hymn, praising YHWH's enthronement at the temple (29:9–11). Psalm 30:1 then begins with a significant superscription: “a song at the dedication of the house.” Psalms 31–34 highlight the protection and watchful eyes of YHWH *from* Zion (31:21–22; 33:13–15; 34:16). This centripetal (25–28) and centrifugal movements (31–34) in relation to Zion on both sides of Pss 29–30, emphasizing YHWH's enthronement at the Zion-temple (Pss 29–30), are also seen in Group 1.

Barbiero argues that the second half of Groups 1 and 3 (10–14; 31–34) are characterized by a similar vocabulary associated with poverty. The difference is that in Pss 31–34, this poverty is understood in a spiritual sense and associated with personal sin.<sup>418</sup>

In Group 3, the superscriptions follow a three-part symmetric structure. The similarity in the construction of the titles in Pss 25–28 binds them as a Subgroup. This also applies to Pss 29–31.<sup>419</sup> The superscriptions of Pss 32–34, beginning with לְדוֹנָה,

<sup>417</sup> “Dans la section des Ps 25-28, le thème est plus largement développé dans le Ps 27, bien qu'il soit présent dans tous les psaumes (cf. Ps 25, 4-5.8-10.12; 26, 6-8; 28, 1-2). Les textes expriment un mouvement vers le temple: ce sont les thèmes du pèlerinage, de la voie, du désir.” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 471.

<sup>418</sup> Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 472.

<sup>419</sup> Note that the לְדוֹנָה in the superscriptions of Pss 29–31 is absent in the rest of Group 3.

likewise, form a unit.<sup>420</sup> *It is important to note that the structural shape of the Groups, accorded by the superscriptions, corresponds to the shape accorded by its theme. In other words, the poetical form corresponds with its thematic content.*

Group 4 (35–41) consists of 7 psalms arranged symmetrically. It is framed by two Supplication psalms (35, 41), followed by a second ring of Thanksgiving hymns (36, 40) and a third ring of Sapiential psalms (37, 39). For Barbiero, the center Ps 38, another Supplication psalm, is associated with the Supplication Pss 35, 41. He considers Pss 37 and 39 functioning as two centers in the Group.<sup>421</sup> In general, the first half (35–37) focuses on motifs of “external evil and oppression of enemies” while the second (39–41) highlights motifs of “inner misfortune, sickness and sin.”<sup>422</sup> This phenomenon is similar to the alternation sequence of external hostilities and personal distress seen in Pss 3–7.

The תְּנַךְ in the superscriptions of Pss 35 and 37 form an inclusio around the Subgroup (35–37) just prior to the center Ps 38. The other Subgroup (39–41) is united by the תְּנַךְ in the superscriptions.

As a whole, Barbiero sees the structure of Pss 35–41 following an A-B-C-A’-C’-B’-A’ configuration with two centers (Pss 37, 39). However, it is, likewise, possible to see Ps 38 functioning as the center of Group 4. Barbiero’s analysis of the

<sup>420</sup> Barbiero points out that although Ps 33 has no superscription, Pss 32 and 33 are a unit. Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 471.

<sup>421</sup> Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 473–75.

<sup>422</sup> For the concept of sin, see Pss 38: 4, 19; 39:2; 40:7; 41:5. “D’une façon générale, la première section se caractérise par l’évocation d’un malheur extérieur, l’oppression des ennemis (cf. Ps 35 et 37),

superscriptions above suggests a distinctive Ps 38. Hence, I have modified Barbiero's structure, viewing Ps 38 as the central psalm in this Group.

From the vantage point of Book I as a whole, Barbiero argues that the four Groups form a chiastic structure by genre categories. Groups 1 and 4 are Laments. Groups 2 and 3 at the center are Praise and Thanksgiving hymns. He notes that this structure is already evident within Pss 3–14.<sup>423</sup> Thematically, the function of Pss 8 and 9 in Group 1 is assumed by the function of Group 2–3 for Book I of the Psalter.

The following summarizes the key motifs across the Prologue and the four Groups in Book I:

Pss	1–2 Prologue		3–14 Group 1	15–24 Group 2	25–34 Group 3	35–41 Group 4
Poetic and Thematic Structure	Torah; “man”	Reign of YHWH; Messiah	Reign of man	Reign of the Messianic king	Reign of YHWH	The Servant of YHWH

Figure 13: Barbiero's Thematic and Genre Structures for Book I

In Barbiero's opinion, the Prologue centers on the motifs of the Torah and the kingdom of God.<sup>424</sup> Group 1 represents the “reign of man” (8:3–6).<sup>425</sup> Group 2 can be represented as the “reign of the Messiah.” Just as the story of Abraham is the answer to the spread of sin in the world, Pss 15–24 and 25–34 are the answers to the evil depicted

tandis que la deuxième parle d'un malheur intérieur, de la maladie et du péché (du péché du psalmistes'entend).” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 472.

<sup>423</sup> Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 476.

<sup>424</sup> Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 477.

<sup>425</sup> Barbiero argues that there is a connection between Pss 1, 3–14 and Genesis 1–11. Both identify human beings in general rather than the chosen people of God. Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 478.

in Pss 10–14. The answer to this sin is found in the “institutions of salvation for the chosen people,” that is, the institutions of kingship, law and the temple which are emphasized in the centrally located Pss 18–21.<sup>426</sup>

Group 3 represents the “reign of YHWH.” This is clearly seen from YHWH’s reign in Ps 29:9–11 located at the center of this Group. Although the reign of YHWH is the primary focus at the core, the reign of the human king is not completely absent (cf. 24:10; 33:12, 16). What is seen is a subordination of the human king to the reign of YHWH.

The final group (35–41) can be seen through the motif of the “Servant of YHWH.” David is now termed as “the servant of YHWH” (36:1, 35:27). Interestingly, Barbiero notes that the term, **מֶלֶךְ**, does not occur either as a verb or noun in this Group.<sup>427</sup> The concern of forgiveness of sin, while absent in Group 1, is remarkably dominant in Group 4 (38:4, 19; 39:2; 41:5). These emphases point to the theological motif of the

<sup>426</sup> “Comme l’histoire d’Abraham constitue une réponse à la diffusion du péché dans le monde, ainsi la deuxième et la troisième série constituent une réponse au déferlement du mal décrit dans les Ps 10-14. On parle ici des institutions du salut dans le peuple élu : la royauté, la loi, le temple. Les deux premières institutions sont thématiquées par les Ps 15-24.” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 478.

<sup>427</sup> For instance, Ps 40:7–9 speaks of an inner attitude of obedience to the law that is within the heart. Not only is kingship “absent,” the sacrificial system, as a whole, is in crisis (40:7–9). Sacrifices and offering are now substituted with the expression of obedience to YHWH, a motif already implicit in Ps 1.

New Covenant in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.<sup>428</sup> Barbiero concludes by saying that Book I of the Psalter provides the theological trajectory of the whole Psalter.<sup>429</sup>

### **2.2.1 EVALUATION OF BARBIERO'S THESIS**

In my view, Barbiero's structural and thematic views of Book I is well-placed to understand the Psalter. I highlight six insights helpful for our study:

(1) *Concentric structures working at different levels of composition.* Barbiero's arguments for a concentric structure in each of the four Groups show that the Psalter is carefully organized even at the level of the Subgroups. His thematic proposition on the entire Book I is symmetric, with Pss 3–14 and 35–41 framing Pss 15–24 and 25–34. Barbiero's understanding of Book I reinforces my proposal of a three-part concentric structure of the Prologue which is also programmatic.

(2) *Central focus.* Concentricity directs the reader to a central focus. The common focuses at the *centers* of Groups 1–3 are the recurring motifs of Torah, Kingship and the Zion-temple. These motifs are also found at the central segment of the Prologue (cf. 1:3, 2:4–9).

(3) *A trajectory in relation to Zion.* Barbiero detects a thematic movement in relation to Zion. The psalms before and after the centrally-located psalms (in Groups 1

<sup>428</sup> “Le thème du pardon des péchés renvoie, quant à lui, au motif théologique de la nouvelle alliance de Jérémie et d’Ezéchiel.” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 480.

<sup>429</sup> “En bref, le premier livret se présente comme l’itinéraire théologique de tout le Psautier, qui est à son tour la « petite bible », le concentré spirituel de tout l’Ancien Testament.” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 480.

and 3) are orientated *towards* and *away* from Zion respectively. At the center, YHWH or the Davidic kingship at Zion, is emphasized.

(4) *Symbolic number of psalms in each group.* Including the number of psalms in the Prologue, the number of psalms for the four Groups is sequenced as (2x7)-10-10-7. These numbers can be considered symbolic (completeness, totality; see chapter 5), in support of a concentric shape of Book I with two Groups of 10 psalms at the center.

(5) *Psalm superscriptions* show that their design corresponds to the genre and thematic shapes in Book I. This is an important argument. Form and content are not in opposition to each other. This raises the profile of the function of *superscriptions as macrostructuring devices*. Psalms are not only united at the level of large Groups (e.g., Asaphite/Korahite Collections) but also at the compositional level of the Subgroups.

(6) *Reading the Psalter after Malachi.* Barbiero's point on the canonical arrangement of the Psalter following Malachi in the *BHS* and characterizing a thematic flow between them is helpful.<sup>430</sup> Based on the L tradition, the Book of Psalms follows 1–2 Chronicles.

The motifs of eschatological kingship, Torah-piety, and separation between the righteous and the wicked are traced through the last two chapters of Malachi and the first two chapters of the Psalms. This arrangement accords the eschatological perspective to the Prologue of the Psalms. As such, the Torah-kingship motifs in the

<sup>430</sup> It shows the interaction of the Psalms with other biblical texts and the technique of binding two texts separated by literary divisions with a common vocabulary. However, the Psalter's location is attested to in at least eight different ways, occurring also within different categories of Writings, Prophets or Hagiographa. In L and the Aleppo Codex, the Psalms comes after Chronicles. In the works of Eusebius and Origen, the Psalms comes after Ezra-Nehemiah. Elsewhere, the Psalms are listed following Job, Ruth, 1–4 Maccabees or Judith. Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 172–73.

Psalms need not only be connected with a Deuteronomic understanding of Torah-kingship (Deut 17),<sup>431</sup> but also with eschatological interests of the postexilic period.

As we conclude our review of Book I based on Barbiero's study, these six summary points collaborate and confirm our proposition in the first chapter. The Prologue's programmatic nature, specifically its poetical and thematic macrostructures and its central focuses (of the righteous man and the messianic king), are affirmed in Book I. This structural and thematic correspondence between the Prologue and Book I provide the impetus for studying the rest of the Psalter. Now since the Prologue is programmatic for Book I, it follows that it is also plausibly programmatic for the rest of the Psalms, which we will explore next.

### **2.3 MACROSTRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF BOOKS II–III**

Books II and III of the Psalms can be seen together via the formal poetical device of the Korahite and Asaphite superscriptions that link them. They form a general chiastic Korahite-Asaphite-Davidic-Asaphite-Korathite (A-B-X-B'-A') arrangement (42–49, 50, 51–72, 73–83, 84–89).<sup>432</sup> Furthermore, the Elohistic Psalter that begins Book II (42) extends all the way to Ps 83 in Book III, binding them together.<sup>433</sup>

<sup>431</sup> So Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, 6–7.

<sup>432</sup> Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, 71; Erich Zenger, “Das Buch der Psalmen,” 354.

<sup>433</sup> Mitchell notes that there is “an old Hebrew tradition which uses *elohim* with God’s judgment and YHVH with his mercy.” He cites “*Sifre* §27; *Pes. De-Rav Kah.* 149a; *Midr. Pss.* 74.2; *Zohar, Shemot* 173b–174a” and quotes Hayman P. (“Rabbinic Judaism and the Problem of Evil,” *SJT* 29:461–476, [465]), “The doctrine of the two divine attributes, Justice and Mercy, runs like a thread through all the rabbinic writings. It is the basis of a fundamental exegetical rule, namely that the divine name *Yahweh* denotes the attribute of Mercy, the name *Elohim*, the attribute of Justice.” Mitchell, *The Songs of Ascents*, 6.

Research on these two books, whether in part or whole, includes the works of Burnett,<sup>434</sup> Kimmitt,<sup>435</sup> Goulder,<sup>436</sup> Cole,<sup>437</sup> Jones,<sup>438</sup> Gillingham<sup>439</sup> and others.<sup>440</sup> Gillingham's article provides a good starting point to understanding the macrostructure of Books II–III.

One of the ways Books II and III are seen as a single unit is the parallel genre structures between the two Korahite Subgroups.<sup>441</sup> In both Korahite Groups, there is a common sequence of Individual Lament (42–43, 84), Communal Lament (44, 85),

<sup>434</sup> Joel S. Burnett, “Forty-Two Songs for Elohim: An Ancient Near Eastern Organizing Principle in the Shaping of the Elohistic Psalter,” JSOT 31, no. 1 (2006): 81–101; “A Plea for David and Zion: The Elohistic Psalter as Psalm Collection for the Temple’s Restoration,” in *Diachronic and Synchronic* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 95–113.

<sup>435</sup> In addition to his Ph.D. diss., see also Francis Kimmitt, “Psalms 44, 45, 46: We Need A King!” (paper presented at the 55<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, Georgia, 20 November 2003), 1–33.

<sup>436</sup> M. Goulder, “The Social Setting of Book II of the Psalter,” in *Book of Psalms, The: Composition and Reception* (eds. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller; VTSup 99; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 349–67; *The Prayers of David (Psalms 51-72): Studies in the Psalter, II* (JSOTSup 102; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch: Studies in the Psalter, III* (JSOTSup 233; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996).

<sup>437</sup> Robert L. Cole, *The Shape and Message of Book III (Psalms 73-89)* (JSOTSup 307; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000).

<sup>438</sup> I am thankful to Christine who supplied a copy of her dissertation for this research. Christine Jones, “The Psalms of Asaph : A Study of the Function of a Psalm Collection.” (Ph.D. Diss., Baylor University, 2009); See also “The Message of the Asaphite Collection and Its Role in the Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship* (ed. Nancy deClaissé-Walford; SBL, 2014), 71–85.

<sup>439</sup> Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition,” 322–26.

<sup>440</sup> Stefan M. Attard, *Implications of Davidic Repentance: A Synchronic Analysis of Book 2 of the Psalter* (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical, 2016); McCann, “Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter”; Harry Nasuti, *Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1988); Martin Buss, “Psalms of Asaph and Korah,” JBL 82, no. 4 (1963): 382–92; Walter Houston, “David, Asaph and the Mighty Works of God: Theme and Genre in the Psalm Collections” (JSOT 68; 1995): 93–111.

<sup>441</sup> Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition,” 323; Zenger and Auwers have also noted this parallel. Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 49; Zenger, “Das Buch der Psalmen,” 354.

Kingship Psalm (45, 86); Divine Response (46–48, 87), and Individual Lament (49; 88).

This parallel is illustrated below.

Korahite Subgroup I	Genre	Korahite Subgroup II
42–43 <sup>442</sup>	Individual Lament	84
44	Communal Lament	85
45	Kingship	86
46–48	Divine Response (YHWH's kingship)	87
49 (Wisdom)	Individual Lament	88, 89 (Kingship)

Figure 14: Parallel Genre Structures between the Two Korahite Subgroups

This parallel goes beyond the genre categories. Gillingham argues that there is a thematic motif of longing for Zion (42–43; 84) and a prevalence of “Zion markers” (42, 43, 46, 48, 84 and 87) uniting the Korathite Subgroups. There are also many common words/phrases between these two Korahite Subgroups.<sup>443</sup>

Kimmitt’s detailed study of Pss 44–46 within the first Korahite Subgroup reinforces the above genre observations.<sup>444</sup> He concludes that Ps 44 is a Communal Lament of God’s “abandonment”; Ps 45 pictures an anointed king and Ps 46 is the Divine Response: YHWH is savior and king! There is also a thematic “interlocking”

<sup>442</sup> Strictly, Ps 43 does not have the Korahite superscript.

<sup>443</sup> For example, the phrase, *בֵּית אֱלֹהִים* (“living God”), occurs only in Pss 42:3 and 84:3 in the Psalms; as a second person noun only in Pss 43:3; 84:2; connections between *מֶשֶׁךְ* (42:5) and *בַּיִת־קָדְשׁוֹ* (42:5) and *בֵּית־קָדְשָׁן* (46:5; 48:2, 9) and *עיר־אֱלֹהִים* (87:3); *עַלְיוֹן* (46:5; 47:3; 87:5); *עיר־אֱלֹהִים* (48:2) and (84:5); *מִשְׁבָּנוֹת* *עַקְבָּב* (87:1); *בְּזֻנָּה* (48:9) and *בְּזֻנָּה* (87:5); *אֲלֹהִים* *עַלְהָב* (46:8) and *בְּזֻנָּה* (87:2). Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition,” 323.

<sup>444</sup> Kimmitt identifies 46 common lexemes within Pss 44–46, of which 28 are “incidental” while 18 are significant. Kimmitt, “Psalms 44, 45, 46: We Need A King!,” 1.

phenomenon between Pss 45, 47 and Pss 46, 48. These psalms are interlocked by motifs of kingship and Zion.<sup>445</sup>

Remarkably, this parallel phenomenon is also seen in the two Subgroups of the Asaphite Psalms (50, 73–77 and 78–83).<sup>446</sup> They contain a parallel sequence of Didactic, Communal Lament, Divine Response and Individual Lament psalms as illustrated in Figure 15.

<b>Asaphite Subgroup I</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Asaphite Subgroup II</b>
50, 73	Didactic/Sapiential	78
74	Communal Lament	79–80
75–76	Divine Response	81–82
77	Lament	83

Figure 15: Parallel Genre Structures between the Two Asaphite Subgroups

The separation of Ps 50 from the main Asaphite Group is regarded as structurally deliberate, allowing the entire Books II–III to be a chiasmus. Thematically, it bridges the Korahite Group to the Davidic Collection.<sup>447</sup> Zenger argued that the entire Asaphite

<sup>445</sup> Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 87.

<sup>446</sup> This has been concluded by Hossfeld and Zenger as well. Zenger, “Das Buch der Psalmen,” 354; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 2.

<sup>447</sup> Jones suggests that Ps 50 functions as a shift of tone to God’s role as judge for the wicked and the righteous (Jones, “The Psalms of Asaph,” 136–39, 141, 177); Consensus has not been reached on the placement of Ps 50. Gillingham finds it hard to understand why Ps 50 is set away from the rest of the Asaph collection. She suggests that this psalm provides a “commentary to the end of Ps 51” and notes various connections between Ps 50 and Pss 73–83. Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition,” 325; See also Mitchell, *Message of the Psalter*, 72.

Group develops the theme of “God’s judgment.”<sup>448</sup> The Asaphite Group could be associated with the northern kingdom (77:16; 80:2, 3; 81:6).<sup>449</sup>

Moreover, between the Korahite and Asaphite Groups, an interesting contrast can be seen. The 12 Korahite psalms<sup>450</sup> emphasize YHWH’s presence in Zion whereas the 12 Asaphite psalms lament his absence. Asaphite psalms are associated more with YHWH’s judgment against Israel, the nations, and have a warlike context. The Korathite psalms, in contrast, are associated with worship and Zion.<sup>451</sup> It is not merely fortuitous that both the Asaphite and Korahite Groups consist of exactly 12 psalms each.

While scholars generally agree on how the Korahite and Asaphite psalms are structured, this is less so with regards to the Davidic psalms in Book II. Figure 16 summarizes divisions within Pss 51–72 by various scholars.

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<sup>448</sup> Zenger, “Das Buch der Psalmen,” 353.

<sup>449</sup> Gillingham notes that the presence of an Exodus tradition (Pss 77:11–22; 78:11–53; 80:9–12; 81:5–8) and the use of נ “especially (although not exclusively) in the northern circles” are indications of northern associations. Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition,” 325; See also M. Goulder, “Asaph’s History of Israel (Elohist Press, Bethel, 725 BCE),” JSOT 65 (1995): 71–81, [72–76].

<sup>450</sup> Psalm 43 is seen as a separate psalm of Korah, though it does not have a “Korahite” superscription. However, the almost identical verses of Pss 42:6,12 and 43:5 suggest they are likely to belong together (though a separate psalm). Note the recurrence of the symbolic number 12, as seen in Book I. For a discussion of Pss 42–43 as single composition, see van der Lugt CAS II, 16–18.

<sup>451</sup> Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition,” 325.

Psalms	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72															
Zenger	51	52–55			56–60			61–64			65–68			69–71			72																				
Vesco	51	52–55			56–60			61–64			65–68			69–71			72																				
Auwers	51–64												65–67		68		69–72																				
Christensen	51–70															71–72																					
Labuschage	51–57					58–64					65–71					72																					
Robertson	49–52	53	54–60			61–68					69–71			72																							
Goulder	51	52–55			56–59			60–64			65–68			69–71			72																				

Figure 16: Different Structural Divisions within Pss 51–72

For Zenger and Vesco, the Davidic Group is bounded on both ends by two Petition psalms (51, 72). Psalms 52–55 is a unit of Laments with the common superscription, לְדוֹד משִׁבֵּיל. A symmetric group of Laments occur in Pss 69–71. These two Subcollections of Lament frame a further sequence of Petition (56–60), Confidence (61–64) and Thanksgiving (65–68) psalms. These three Subcollections at the center are characterized by שִׁיר (56–60); לְדוֹד מִקְתָּם (61–64) and לְדוֹד (65–68) in their superscriptions respectively.<sup>452</sup> Again, we see a correspondence between the genre (thematic) and formal structures of this Group.

Auwers divides the Davidic Group into three segments (51–64, 65–67, 68–72) corresponding to the genres of Individual Petitions, Thanksgiving and Complaints. However, he provides little reasons for doing so.<sup>453</sup> As noted in the last chapter,

<sup>452</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2, 2*; Vesco, *Le psautier de David traduit et commenté*, 1:480, 505, 541, 565, 602.

<sup>453</sup> It is unclear how he structures this, apart from genre designations based on the referenced work. Psalm 68 stands alone. Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 47.

Labuschagne's division is based on numerical considerations. Christensen<sup>454</sup> and Robertson's divisions are primarily thematic-based, but Christensen viewed the Davidic Group as part of a chiasmus with Ps 50 at the center, and 51–70, 71–72 forming the second half.

Goulder argued that the narrative flow of David's life, spanning from Uriah's death (2 Sam 11) to the ascension of king Solomon (1 Kg 1), forms the basis for Pss 51–72.<sup>455</sup> He prescribed a thematic structure, beginning with Ps 51 which describes David's sin and atonement, followed by 52–55, highlighting David's retreat from Zion to Olivet. Then in Pss 56–59, David retreats to Mahanaim and 60–64 reflect a period of civil war and siege at Mahanaim. In Ps 65, the fortunes of David begins to change (cf. 65:9–13). The positive turn of events culminates in Psalm 68 with David's victory over Absalom, though this upturn is not sustained. Psalms 69–71 describe David's continuing woes in his later years and the final Ps 72 is associated with the ascension of a new king. Goulder views the motivation of this composition as liturgical.<sup>456</sup>

<sup>454</sup> Christensen, *The Unity of the Bible*, 135. For Robertson's and Labuschagne's division, see §1.2.11 and §1.2.12.

<sup>455</sup> Goulder, *The Prayers of David (Psalms 51-72)*, 27.

<sup>456</sup> He notes, "The Prayers were chanted liturgically in a procession one day in the autumn festival at Jerusalem." Goulder, *The Prayers of David (Psalms 51-72)*, 28.

Goulder's structure is similar to Vesco and Zenger's with several nuances. For Goulder, Ps 60 begins a new subgroup (60–64) and Pss 69–72 are taken as one Subcollection rather than two in Zenger's proposal (69–71, 72). This is because Goulder was interested in the narrative events of David's life, hence adopting a structure based on common motifs that best correspond to the narratival structure.

I highlight four observations from the above survey. (1) *There is some consensus to see Pss 56, 61, 65, 69 as psalms that begin a new unit based on thematic, genre and poetic concerns.* Furthermore, Pss 51 and 72 are somewhat distinct from the entire Davidic Group. As a whole, the Davidic Group is best seen through the life of David in the Samuel-Kings narratives. This reinforces our proposals in chapter 1.

(2) *There is a concentric genre structure in the Davidic Group of Book II.* There is a sequence of (A) Petition, (B) Lament, (C) Petition-Confidence-Praise, (B') Lament, and (A') Petition. The use of Laments to frame a unit of centrally located psalms is a recurring structuring technique found in Book I, the Asaphite and Korahite Groups (cf. 3–14, 17–22). Again, this reinforces our analyses of the Prologue and Book I.

(3) *The most convincing basis of division, in my opinion, is supported by the correspondence of poetic (i.e., superscription, formal devices), thematic and genre structures.* It is possible that the final editors of the Psalms used specific terms in the superscriptions to differentiate groupings: לְדוֹד (51, 61–64, 69–70), משִׁפֵּל (52–55), מִכְתָּם (56–60) and שִׁיר (Pss 65–68).

(4) *A period of weakness just before the end of the trajectory.* Goulder's argument that such a period described in Pss 69–71 before the end of the entire narrative corresponds to Barbiero's “already-and-not-yet” proposal in Book I. This is an interesting and important phenomenon that will be explored subsequently.

### **2.3.1 A PROPOSAL FOR THE MACROSTRUCTURE OF BOOKS II AND III OF THE MT PSALTER**

Based on the major structuring techniques seen in Book I, including the use of (1) superscription; (2) genre theme; (3) three-part concentric structure; (4) central motifs of kingship and Torah; (5) thematic trajectory related to Zion; (6) symbolic numbers (e.g., 7, 10, 14); and (7) interconnecting lexemes, along with the survey of the above Books II–III, a proposal for the macrostructure of Books II–III is given in Figure 17.<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> Legend: UT = Untitled Psalm; IL = Individual Lament; CL = Communal Lament; DR = Divine Response; SAP: Sapiential Psalm; KG: Kingship Psalm; *Msk*: Maskil; *Sg*: Song; PoK: Psalm of Korah; PoD: Psalm of David; PT: Petition Psalm; h = Historical superscription; PoA: Asaph Psalm; Sol: Solomonic Psalm; 2x: David's name occurring twice in the superscription; Mem = "a memorial"; Pryr = Prayer; Didac = Didactic Psalm.

Elohistic Psalter (42 Psalms approx. 200x “Elohim,” 44x “YHWH”)

Figure 17: A Proposal for the Macrostructure of Books II–III

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The following arguments are in order. (1) *Carefully structured Superscriptions*. In the “Superscript” row of Figure 17, I have designated psalms according to their superscriptions. For instance, Pss 43 and 71 are often considered as part of the Korahite and Davidic Psalter respectively, but they are also psalms without superscription (hence, they are labelled “UT” or “Untitled”). It is also common to find Pss 71–72 grouped together, but by keeping them specific to their description (Ps 71 = “UT”, Ps 72 = “Sol”), the poetical structure of Book II is sharpened. The Davidic psalms in Book II (51–70, excluding 66–67) are framed by non-Davidic psalms (Pss 50, 71–72). Furthermore, the two UT psalms are skilfully arranged in the second, and second-last psalm of Book II (43, 71). From the design of the superscriptions, Book II contains three pairs of non-Davidic/Korahite psalms—two UT psalms (43, 70); two psalms with superscriptions attributed to someone other than David (50, 72); and two psalm superscriptions without name attribution within the Davidic Group (66, 67).

It is also interesting that the Davidic psalms in Book I (3–41) also contain exactly two untitled psalms (10, 33). The Davidic psalms in Books I and II are framed by two UT psalms (2, 71), or a pair of psalms where one is UT and the other, a Kingship psalm (1–2, 71–72). The “h” in this row marks eight superscriptions with historical references to David’s life (discussed further in §4.3).<sup>458</sup>

<sup>458</sup> The “2x” in Pss 52 and 54 denotes a double occurrence of David’s name in the superscription. The double occurrences in Pss 52, 54 supply two more references to “David” in the superscriptions, perhaps in replacement of Pss 66–67, making a total of 20 references to David in the superscriptions in Book II. Together with the Davidic reference in Ps 86, there is a total of 21 (7x3) references to David.

The row below the Superscription illustrates the shape of various Collections (or Subgroups) within Books II–III. The subdivisions are colour-coded and identified by its dominant motif/genre (e.g., “KG” for Ps 45 = Kingship psalm).<sup>459</sup>

(2) *Concentric arrangements and central motifs.* The last two rows in Figure 17 summarize the central motifs for each of the Groups. Like Book I, Books II–III can be divided into four major Groups (5–8). The last row captures the shape of the entire Section and its central idea. Groups 5–8 can be seen as a chiasmus from the vantage point of their central motifs. Groups 6–7 underscore the fall of the Davidic king and Zion temple. In turn, they are framed by Groups 5 and 8.<sup>460</sup>

Although the Asaphite Group, as a whole, has a parallel rather than concentric structure (73–77 // 78–83), a concentric structure can be seen within the Subgroups of Pss 73–77; 78–83. At the center of these subgroups (75–76; 81–82), two pairs of psalms associated with YHWH’s kingship and deliverance are found. In other words, the structuring principles and shape of the Korahite and Asaphite psalms in Book II–III are remarkably similar. They are generally concentric and have a central focus on either the Davidic kingship or YHWH’s kingship. This phenomenon is consistent with our macrostructural study.

<sup>459</sup> Certain words in the superscription that characterize a Subgroup is labelled above or below it (e.g., For Ps 45, the “Sho” above identifies the phrase, מִשְׁעָנָה־לָעַל, and the “love song” below identifies the phrase, שִׁיר־זִידָת, which are distinctive for this psalm. In the box, the label “KG” identifies this psalm with the genre of kingship).

<sup>460</sup> Furthermore, Kingship and Divine Response psalms are centrally located in both the Korahite psalms (45, 46–48; 86, 87).

(3) *The fall of the Davidic kingship in Book II.* Goulder's postulation that the Davidic psalms in Book II trace David's life from the death of Uriah to the ascension of Solomon deserves further attention. Specifically, within the frames of Pss 51 and 72, we see David's downfall and the wane of his kingship (cf. 2 Sam 12–1 Kgs 1). This imagery of ruin and decline associated with David's kingship is at the structural center of the Davidic Group in Book II. The superscription of Ps 59 describes David fleeing for his life. Even with the apparent victorious superscription of 60:1–2, the psalm proceeds with אֱלֹהִים זָנַחֲתָנוּ פְּרִצְתָּנוּ אֶנְפָתָה (“O God, you have rejected us, broken us and you were angry”) in 60:3. The next verse brings this brokenness further to the cosmic level. The psalmist repeatedly highlights YHWH's rejection with the rhetorical question, הַלֹּא־אָתָה אֱלֹהִים זָנַחֲתָנוּ (“have you not, O Lord, rejected us?”) in 60:12 (cf. 43:2; 74:1; 77:8). Psalms 61–64 that follow continue the bleak depiction of David's life.<sup>461</sup>

A sense of rejection and brokenness pervade in these psalms. David's life is hanging by the thread (54:5; 55:5–6; 56:3; 57:5; 59:4; 61:7). David is pictured as a suffering and broken king in need of God's help. The place of the postscript in 72:20, “[t]he prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended,” functions to underscore the message that the human king in the Davidic Psalter of Book II has come to an end and that hope no longer lies in David's kingship but in his posterity's. I argue that the presence of Davidic psalms beyond this postscript is not due to a gradual process of psalms amalgamation but by careful design (more discussions in chapter 4).

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<sup>461</sup> Cf. Pss 61:1–3; 62:1–4; 63:1–2; 64:1–3.

Crucially, this motif of brokenness of the Davidic kingship is remarkably expressed by the lexeme, “to reject” (**נִזְתַּחֲדָה**). *I define this editorial technique as the Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme (POS; cf. §1.2.13), that is, the careful use and placement of certain word/phrases at strategic locations across the entire Psalter to make or reinforce a rhetorical point.* In the case of **נִזְתַּחֲדָה**, this word is carefully chosen and located such that they speak of YHWH’s apparent rejection of the human king and earthly temple, specifically in Books II–III of the Psalter.<sup>462</sup>

All ten instances of **נִזְתַּחֲדָה** in the Psalter are found, fittingly and interestingly, only in Books II–III.<sup>463</sup> Their locations also mark the beginning and end of Books II and III respectively (43:2; 89:39).<sup>464</sup> About half of the instances of **נִזְתַּחֲדָה** are found in the Laments of the two Korahite Groups that frame Books II–III (43:2; 44:10, 24; 88:15; 89:39). They also mark the Laments in the Davidic Group of Book II and the Asaphite Group in Book III respectively (60:3, 12; 74:1; 77:8). They are precisely located where acute brokenness is portrayed. **נִזְתַּחֲדָה** occurs twice in Ps 60:3, 12 and twice in Pss 74:1 and 77:8, where Zion lies in tatters. All occurrences are found in literary contexts that highlight the brokenness of the exile (43, 44), David’s kingship (60, 88) and Zion (74, 77). The presence of **נִזְתַּחֲדָה** in Ps 89 at the close of Book III consolidates this multiple “brokenness”

<sup>462</sup> Hence, deClasse-Walford’s postulation that Book II depicts king Solomon’s reign is not accurate. It is more accurately the fall of the Davidic kingship.

<sup>463</sup> Cf. Pss 43:2; 44:10, 24; 60:3, 12; 74:1; 77:8; 88:15; 89:39; 108:12\*. Note that Ps 108:12 is a reuse of Ps 60. Hence, we can say that all of **נִזְתַּחֲדָה** are found properly in Books II and III.

<sup>464</sup> Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 91.

under the perspective of the Davidic covenant (89:39–52).<sup>465</sup> In other words, the use of נַעֲמָן in Books II–III are characterized by the painful experiences of the exile, fallen kingship and temple, and understood as a whole, YHWH’s apparent rejection of the Davidic covenant. We can trace the trajectory of this brokenness with the captivity, collapse of David’s kingship and the Zion temple, culminating with the uncertainty surrounding the Davidic covenant by the end of Book III.

From this perspective, the postscript at 72:20, marking the end of David’s prayer, and the sapiential Ps 73 that begins Book III are not properly the effective turning point of the entire Psalter as Brueggemann and others have argued.<sup>466</sup> Admittedly the psalmist’s hope is reawakened at the temple (73:17). By virtue of its location (beginning Book III and somewhat in the middle of the Psalter), it suggests some sort of renewal.<sup>467</sup> Yet two contextual issues go against this interpretation. From the literary horizon of Book III, this hope at the beginning, however, ends in ruin. The purported turning point of Ps 73 does not come to a sustained fruition by the end of the Book. Moreover, within the more immediate context, the hope awakened at the temple (73:17–28) is quickly quashed by descriptions of the destruction of the temple a few verses later (74:3–4). The destruction of the temple (79) and YHWH’s people (80) effectively negate any sustained prospects of Ps 73.

<sup>465</sup> See also Creach’s treatment of the idea of being “cast off” in Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 85–86.

<sup>466</sup> Brueggemann and Miller, “Psalm 73 as a Canonical Marker”; “The Psalms and the Life of Faith: A Suggested Typology of Function,” in *Soundings in the Theology of Psalms* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 1–25.

<sup>467</sup> J. Nathan Clayton, “An Examination of Holy Space in Psalm 73: Is Wisdom’s Path Infused with an Eschatologically Oriented Hope?,” *TJ* 27, no. 1 (2006): 117–42, [120].

How do we explain this element of turning in Ps 73? Perhaps it is a structural one.

There is a motif of a similar turning at the beginning of the Davidic and Asaphite Groups (cf. 51, 73). Psalm 51 highlights the penitent inner posture of David after his sin with Bathsheba. While Nathan's rebuke rightly marks the beginning of David's downfall from a macro-perspective, David's responses to Nathan in 2 Sam 12 and the Davidized response in Ps 51 capture an inward awakening and change of perspective. Through YHWH's cleansing, the Davidic king finds acceptance with God (51:9–15).

This motif of inner awakening in Ps 51 finds its parallel in 73:17 where the psalmist's worldview is turned as he worships at the sanctuary.<sup>468</sup>

Nonetheless, these mere glimpses of awakenings at the beginning of the second Davidic Collection and the Asaphite psalms, in the form of hope of a human king and Jerusalem sanctuary, will not materialize in Books II–III.<sup>469</sup> *Bounded by the two Korahite Groups as inclusio, the twin motifs of the brokenness of the human king David (the Davidic Psalter) and the brokenness of the Zion-temple (the Asaphite psalms) form the core message and center of Books II–III.* The lone Asaphite Ps 50, placed away

<sup>468</sup> Kartje argues that Pss 1, 73, 90, 107 develop an understanding of human suffering and flourishing vis-à-vis how one lives before God. Kartje, *Wisdom Epistemology in the Psalter: A Study of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107* (cf. Ho, review of John Kartje, *Wisdom Epistemology in the Psalter*, 100–101).

<sup>469</sup> Jones, likewise, notes, “The locus of change for the psalmist in Psalm 73 is the sanctuary of God, but what the exilic reader knows is confirmed in Psalm 74—the sanctuary has been destroyed. Psalm 74 elaborates on the confusion presented at the beginning of Psalm 73 by communicating the distress of the people in the face of the destruction of the sanctuary. The place where one went to be in the presence of God, the temple, has been destroyed, thus the psalmist must turn to another source to find comfort.” Jones, “The Psalms of Asaph: A Study of the Function of a Psalm Collection,” 178.

from the main Asaphite Group,<sup>470</sup> serves to bind Pss 50–83, highlighting the twin focuses of brokenness.

In short, the lexeme נִזְר collaborates and reinforces the proposed structural shape, highlighting the fall of the Davidic kingship and the temple at the centers of Books II and III. The POS of נִזְר corresponds and collaborates with the overall shape and Metanarrative. Since YHWH’s apparent rejection of the human monarch and the Zion-temple is due to sin, the placement of Ps 51 at the beginning of the Davidic Psalter serves to highlight sin and disobedience as the precursor to brokenness and YHWH’s rejection.

This proposal is in line with Wilson’s view that Book III ends with the apparent fall of the Davidic covenant and Books IV–V answer this problem. Nevertheless, Books I–III, as McCann also adds, have already begun to answer the problem with glimpses of hope.<sup>471</sup>

(4) *Hope at the center.* There is always an element of hope in the midst of apparent brokenness. This hope is often associated with the triumphalism of YHWH and the messianic kingship. As noted, the superscription of Ps 60 is at odds with its content. The superscription alludes to David’s victories in 2 Sam 8:1–14/1 Chron 18:1–13 but

<sup>470</sup> For links between Pss 49 and 50, see Stefan Attard, “Establishing Connections between Pss 49 and 50 within the Context of Pss 49–52: A Synchronic Analysis,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 413–42.

<sup>471</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 209–215; McCann, “Books I–III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter,” 95; “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter: Psalms in Their Literary Context,” 350–62.

the psalm is more of a Lament and Petition.<sup>472</sup> Zenger offered a solution for this incongruity by noting that the presence of the term, **נַפְלָה** (60:1), suggesting that the psalm could have been used as an instruction at a time of war.<sup>473</sup>

Similarly, even in the bleak outlook of the Korahite and Asaphite Groups, there are psalms that depict Divine Responses at the center (45, 75–76, 81–82). The presence of the lone Davidic Ps 86 is not haphazard. It is the only Davidic psalm in Book III and is carefully located at the center of the second Korahite Group to highlight the central motif of the Davidic kingship.<sup>474</sup>

This centering of the kingship motif is a repeated feature in the Psalter (cf. 1–2, 8–9, 18–21, 29–30). The triumphant superscript of 60:1–2 in the middle of the Davidic Group is likely an intended design, adopting the same phenomenon in an otherwise bleak depiction of the Davidic king. Thus, despite the portrayal of David's fall in Book II, YHWH's presence and promise of victory are not absent.<sup>475</sup>

<sup>472</sup> Zenger noted that “on the whole, the situation described in the psalm’s superscription does not appear to fit the corpus.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 98.

<sup>473</sup> He argued that the psalm could have recorded an earlier defeat (60:3–7), but 60:8–11 is a divine oracle emphasizing YHWH’s victory.

<sup>474</sup> Koorevaar argues that Ps 86 is at the center of the entire Psalter that has 147 psalms (by combining Pss 9, 10; 114, 115; and 42, 43 based on textual variants). Furthermore, Ps 86 consists of “147” words. Koorevaar notes, “Psalm 86, as the center of the Psalter, contains 17 verses and 147 words. The number of 17 verses corresponds to 17 as the number of psalms in Book III, the central book in which it stands. The number of 147 words corresponds to 147 as the number of psalms in the entire Psalter. Coincidence seems improbable. It is more likely that the final editor arranged this deliberately. On the basis of Ps 86, he builds first a dome over Book III and then a superdome over the whole Psalter.” Koorevaar, “The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story,” 591.

<sup>475</sup> The reuse of part of this psalm in Ps 108 functions to bring out a different emphasis (more discussion in chapter 4). Gundersen argues that even in Ps 89, the Davidic covenantal hope persists. This is seen in the repeated contrast between God’s persistence in keeping the covenant and man’s failure (cf. 89:29, 31, 32, 35, 36). Gundersen, “Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter,” 83–84.

(5) *Numerical symbolism.* Another important piece of evidence that unifies Books II and III structurally relates to the use of numerical devices in Psalms superscriptions. Psalms superscriptions are carefully chosen so that they add up to interesting symbolic figures.

Books II–III have a total of 48 psalms (31+17, or 12x4 psalms respectively). On its own, Book II contains strictly 7 Korahite and 18 Davidic psalms; two UT psalms; one Asaphite; one Solomon psalm and two other psalms without authorship in the superscriptions. I have also classified Ps 89 as a Korahite superscription in connection with 88:1.<sup>476</sup> Book III contains 11 Asaphite psalms, one Davidic psalm and five Korahite psalms.

Within each Book, these numbers are not exactly significant or symbolic. However, when Books II and III are combined, we have a total of 19 Davidic psalms, 12 Korahite psalms and 12 Asaphite psalms, 2 untitled psalms, 2 titled non-authorship psalms and 1 psalm of Solomon. The following figure captures these numbers.

Superscription	Psalm	Subtotal	A	B	C
Asaphite	50, 73–83	12			
Korahite	42, 44–49, 84–85, 87–89	12	24	24	44 (11x4)
David	51–65, 68–70, 86	19			
Solomon	72	1	20		
Untitled (no clear superscript)	43, 71	2		24	
Psalms without attributive named figures	66, 67	2	4		4
	Total:	48			

Figure 18: Superscription Tabulation in Books II–III

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<sup>476</sup> There is a possible association with “Ethan” of the Korahite in 1 Chr 6:17–32, 42. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 2, 402, 407; deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 675.

In Figure 18, column “A” shows the numbers for three different groups of superscription (Levites, kings, unnamed attribution). If we consider the Levites representing Zion symbolically and the rest of the psalms representing the Davidic kingship/people of Israel, then column “B” shows that there is an equal number of psalms ( $24 = 12 \times 2$ ) representing (the fall of) Zion and Davidic kingship in Books II–III. If we divide the superscriptions into psalms with and without attributed authorship (in column “C”), we have 44 (11x4) psalms with names in the superscriptions and 4 psalms without.

Scholars have identified the Elohistic Psalter (42–83) due to its prevalent use of “elohim” over “YHWH.”<sup>477</sup> The number of 42 psalms in the Elohistic Psalter is possibly associated with the “name(s) of god(s) and curses in ancient tradition.”<sup>478</sup> Joffe argues that the motivation of such a redactional phenomenon brings together a “triangular relationship” between the number 42, the name(s) of god(s), and curses.<sup>479</sup>

The number 42 (and 72) is also associated with YHWH in the Jewish and Talmudic traditions (*b. Qid. 71a*) and its use in Jewish amulets “for protective function, especially

<sup>477</sup> Goulder noted that “Book I shows an overwhelming preference for Yahweh over Elohim for God (272 times to 15), whereas the second Davidic collection prefers Elohim (122 times to 23).” Goulder, *The Prayers of David (Psalms 51-72)*, 11.

<sup>478</sup> Joffe, “The Answer to the Meaning of Life,” 221.

<sup>479</sup> Joffe notes, “42 is a number of disaster and ill-omen. 42,000 Ephraimites were slain for not being able to say ‘shibboleth’ in Judg. 12.6. In 2 Kgs 10:14, 42 relatives of Ahaziah were killed by Jehu. . . . Rev. 11.2 gives the period of rampage to be 42 months (or put differently, 1260 days in Rev. 11.3; 12.6)” (Joffe, “The Answer to the Meaning of Life,” 228–29). Burnett offers additional evidence of the use of the number 42 in Ancient Egyptian texts and how “42” is used in Mesopotamian Tradition as a way of organizing texts. Burnett, “Forty-Two Songs for Elohim,” 95–99.

in childbirth,” were attested.<sup>480</sup> Joffe argues that the symbolic importance of the number 42 in the Elohistic Psalter “was commissioned in order to ward off the curse of 42 [note that Ps 42 also begins the Elohistic Psalter], to turn it into a blessing.”<sup>481</sup> If Joffe is right, then her analysis reinforces our point regarding the emphasis of the ominous demise of the human king and the Zion-temple in Books II–III.

### 2.3.2 SUMMARY

Our analysis of Books II–III of the Psalter recalls the structuring techniques of Book I. The characteristics of the three-part structure, symmetry of collections, central motifs, symbolic number of superscriptions, lexeme occurrences scheme, and placement of seemingly odd psalms (e.g., untitled or lone psalms) are important in elucidating the macrostructural shapes of Books I–III of the Psalter. Furthermore, they follow the programmatic nature of the Prologue.

The crucial key that unravels much of the structural riddles is the surprising importance and value of superscriptions. While superscriptions are often considered secondary additions, rendered “no use as critical guides”<sup>482</sup> or omitted totally in translations,<sup>483</sup> our analysis shows the reverse! They possess the macrostructural key to

<sup>480</sup> Joffe, “The Answer to the Meaning of Life,” 229, 231.

<sup>481</sup> Joffe, “The Answer to the Meaning of Life,” 231; Burnett, “Forty-Two Songs for Elohim,” 87.

<sup>482</sup> Crawford Howell Toy, “On the Asaph-Psalms,” JSOT (June 1886): 73–85, [73].

<sup>483</sup> In the *New English Bible* (1970), superscriptions in the psalms are omitted. This was because, “as G. R. Driver, Professor of Semitic Philology at the University of Oxford, and Joint Director of the project, explained in the preface, they contain musical instructions which are no longer intelligible, as well as ‘historical notices’ which are sometimes incorrect, and because they ‘are almost certainly not original.’” Sawyer, “The Psalms in Judaism and Christianity,” 134.

unveiling the Psalter's shape. Our analysis suggests that superscriptions are *unlikely* to function *merely* for historical or cultic purposes.<sup>484</sup> The symbolic value of numbers associated with a particular group of superscriptions should not be dismissed. Superscriptions (or the lack thereof) provide structural and interpretive value to the shape of the Psalms.<sup>485</sup>

At this point, we observe that the Prologue is programmatic for Books I and II–III. We will now examine if Books IV and V follow a similar program as well.

<sup>484</sup> Weiser, *The Psalms*, 96–97.

<sup>485</sup> Hence, I disagree with Charles Briggs and Emile Briggs who view that superscriptions serve to organize groups of psalms but as a whole, do not have value in the interpretation of the texts of the Psalms. See Fraser's thesis for a good discussion on the antiquity, authenticity, issues with LXX and Syriac Peshitta on Psalms titles. James H. Fraser, "The Authenticity of the Psalms Titles" (Th.M. thesis; Grace Theological Seminary, 1984); Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 1 (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), lviii.

## 2.4 MACROSTRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF BOOKS IV–V

A number of recent studies have focused on the canonical order and function of various Collection or Subgroups in Books IV<sup>486</sup> and V.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>486</sup> David Gundersen, “Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90-106)” (Ph.D. Diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015); Jerome Creach, “The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Shape of Second Isaiah,” JSOT, no. 80 (1998): 63–76; David Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997); “A Contextual Reading of Psalms 90-94,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (ed. J. Clinton McCann; JSOTSup 159; Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993), 108–23; Jinkyu Kim, “The Strategic Arrangement of Royal Psalms in Books IV-V,” *WTJ* 70, no. 1 (2008): 143–57; Hyung Jun Kim, “The Structure and Coherence of Psalms 89-106” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Pretoria, 2009); Samuel S. Ndoga, “Revisiting the Theocratic Agenda of Book 4 of the Psalter for Interpretive Premise,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship* (ed. Nancy deClaissé-Walford; SBL Press, 2014), 147–60; Michael G McKelvey, *Moses, David, and the High Kingship of Yahweh: A Canonical Study of Book IV of the Psalter* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010).

<sup>487</sup> Virtually all major Groups of Book V have been treated at length. For **Pss 107–118**, see John Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context: An Interpretation of Psalms 107-118* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2011); Eun Mee Moon, “The Sapiential Reading of Psalms 107-18 in the Framework of Books IV and V of the Psalter” (Ph.D. Diss., Trinity International University, 2008); Barry C. Davis, “A Contextual Analysis of Psalms 107-118” (Ph.D. Diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1996); For **Pss 119**: John de Hoog, “A Canonical Reading of Psalm 119” (M.Th. Thesis, Australian College of Theology, Sydney, 2011); William M. Soll, *Psalm 119: Matrix, Form, and Setting* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1991); Kent Aaron Reynolds, *Torah as Teacher the Exemplary Torah Student in Psalm 119* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Yair Zakovitch, “The Interpretative Significance of the Sequence of Psalms 111-112. 113-118.119,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 215–27; For **Pss 120–134**: Klaus Seybold, *Die Wallfahrtspsalmen: Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte von Psalm 120-134* (BThS 3; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978); Loren D. Crow, *The Songs of Ascent (Psalms 120 -134): Their Place in Israelite History and Religion* (SBLDS 148; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); Cuthbert C. Keet, *A Study of the Psalms of Ascents* (London: Mitre, 1969); David C. Mitchell, *The Songs of Ascents: Psalms 120 to 134 in the Worship of Jerusalem's Temples* (Newton Mearns, Scotland: Campbell, 2015); Daniel Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry* (SBLMS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989); For **Pss 135–37**: James M. Todd, “A Poetic and Contextual Analysis of Psalms 135–137” (Ph.D. Diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010); Yair Zakovitch, “On the Ordering of Psalms as Demonstrated by Psalms 136-150,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (ed. William P. Brown; Oxford University Press, 2014), 214–28; For **Pss 138–145**: Christoph Buysch, *Der letzte Davidpsalter: Interpretation, Komposition und Funktion der Psalmengruppe Ps 138-145* (SBB 63; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2009); For **Pss 146–150**: Kilnam Cha, “Psalms 146-150: The Final Hallelujah Psalms as a Fivefold Doxology to the Hebrew Psalter” (Ph.D. Diss., Baylor University, 2006); **Entire Book** studies: M. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalms 107-150)*, *Studies in the Psalter, IV* (eds. David Clines and Philip R Davies; JSOTSup 258; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998); Joseph P. Brennan, “Some Hidden Harmonies of the Fifth Book of Psalms,” in *Essays in Honor of Joseph P Brennan by Members of the Faculty, Saint Bernard's Seminary Rochester, New York* (Rochester: St. Bernard's

### 2.4.1 MACROSTRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF BOOK IV

Figure 19 summarizes several major studies on Book IV (17 psalms in total).

Book IV	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106
Zenger	90–92											101–103				104–106	
Vesco	90–92														101–106		
Auwers	90–92														101–106		
Koorevaar	90–92														101–106		
Christensen				90–96				97	98	99					100–106		
Labuschagne						90–100									101–106		
Robertson	90–91						92–100					101–103			104–106		
Gundersen	90–92						93–100					101–104*			104*–106		
Kim					90–100							101		102–106			
McKelvey	90–92					93–100						101–104			105–106		
Howard	90–94*						95–100								101–106		

Figure 19: Survey of Macrostructural Divisions of Book IV

There is a general consensus concerning Pss 90–92, 93–100, 101–106 as the main divisions of Book IV. From these divisions, several nuances are seen. For instance, scholars identify Pss 101, 104 as Janus-psalms. They are related to the psalms that come before and after them. Christensen, Labuschagne and Robertson differ radically from the others because of their specific methodologies (cf. §1.2.13, Figure 6).

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Seminary, 1976), 126–58; Michael K. Snearly, “The Return of the King: An Editorial-Critical Analysis of Psalms 107–150” (Ph.D. Diss., Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, 2012); Dennis Tucker, Jr., “Empires and Enemies in Book V of the Psalter,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger, BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 723–32; *Constructing and Deconstructing Power in Psalms 107–150* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014); Erich Zenger, “The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107–145,” JSOT, no. 80 (1998): 77–102; Studies involving **Book IV and V as a unit**: Egbert Ballhorn, *Zum Telos Des Psalters: Der Textzusammenhang Des Vierten Und Fünften Psalmenbuches (Ps 90–150)* (BBB 138; Berlin: Philo, 2004); Martin Leuenberger, *Konzeptionen des Königiums Gottes im Psalter: Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Redaktion der theokratischen Bücher IV - V im Psalter* (Zürich: TVZ, 2004). I am thankful to M. Leuenberger for graciously providing me with a copy of his thesis.

The unity of Pss 90–92 has been noted by Zenger, Vesco, Auwers, Gundersen, McKelvey and others.<sup>488</sup> There is general acceptance that Pss 90–92 is grouped together by numerous lexical/thematic links with a thematic trajectory. Zenger argued that these three psalms develop a lament on “human subjection to death and the suffering of divine wrath” in Ps 90, followed by a “double assent and promise” in Ps 91, and culminate in thanksgiving in Ps 92.<sup>489</sup> Gundersen highlights verbal interconnections between Pss 90–92 and the Moses Song (Deut 32, 33),<sup>490</sup> adding a further layer of support to the binding of Pss 90–92.

Howard sees that Book IV is structured around three major groups of psalms (90–94, 95–100 and 101–106).<sup>491</sup> He argues that Ps 94 is linked to 90–92 with its common wisdom vocabulary in several places, which is unique to only this group of psalms.<sup>492</sup> Psalm 94 functions as a bridge connecting the earlier part of Book IV and the YHWH *Malak* psalms.<sup>493</sup> However, Howard also admits that Ps 94 belongs to a group of 8

<sup>488</sup> See footnote 5 in Howard, “Psalm 94 among the Kingship-of-YHWH Psalms,” 669; Zenger, “Das Weltenkönigtum des Gottes Israels,” in *Der Gott Israels und die Volker Untersuchungen zum Jesaiabuch und zu den Psalmen* (ed. N. Lohfink and E. Zenger, SBS 154, Berlin: Stuttgart Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1994), 151–78; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 420; Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter,” 326–28; Reindl, “Weisheitliche Bearbeitung von Psalmen, 350–54; Gundersen, “Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90–106),” 91–145.

<sup>489</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 424, 442.

<sup>490</sup> Gundersen, “Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90–106),” 91–145. At the time of writing, Andrew Dvoracek, a fellow research student at the University of Gloucestershire currently studying the “rock” metaphor in the Song of Moses (Deut 32), has also pointed out this connection to me in a conversation.

<sup>491</sup> See footnote 5 in Howard, “Psalm 94 among the Kingship-of-YHWH Psalms,” 669.

<sup>492</sup> Howard, “Psalm 94 among the Kingship-of-YHWH Psalms,” 671.

<sup>493</sup> Howard, “Psalm 94 among the Kingship-of-YHWH Psalms,” 668.

community psalms (93–100) that is framed by Pss 92 and 101.<sup>494</sup> His monograph, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*, confirms the unity of these eight psalms.<sup>495</sup>

As with Howard, Kim regards Pss 95–100 as a unit.<sup>496</sup> He argues that Ps 101 stands alone between Pss 90–100 and 102–106 as it is loosely connected with either Pss 100 or 102.<sup>497</sup> For him, Ps 101, placed after the YHWH *Malak* psalms, has an important message: “The anticipation of Yahweh’s coming as king can be correlated with the advent of a human king.”<sup>498</sup>

Hossfeld and Zenger noted that in the final redaction of the Psalter, the “Hallelujah acclamations” were added (to Pss 104–106) such that the entire group (101–106) is divided into two triads of Pss 101–103 and 104–106.<sup>499</sup> Hossfeld also pointed out that the first triad (101–103) begins with a “royal prayer” (101) followed by

<sup>494</sup> Howard, “Psalm 94 among the Kingship-of-YHWH Psalms,” 674–75.

<sup>495</sup> Auwers follows the grouping of Pss 93–100. However, he points out different opinions on the grouping of YHWH kingship psalms. He notes, “for L. Jacquet, it would include Pss 93, 96–100; for Cl. Westermann, it’s 93, 95–99, 100; H.-J. Kraus includes Ps 93–99; É. Beaucamp extends it to Ps 92–100, and P. Auffret, to Pss 93–101. D. M. Howard considers Pss 93–100 form a structural unit. C. A. and E. G. Briggs had previously hypothesized that Pss 93, 96–100 have originally formed a single psaume.” Jean-Marie Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 29, 31, 51.

<sup>496</sup> Kim, “The Structure and Coherence of Psalms 89–106,” 410–411.

<sup>497</sup> He further argues that “the small units in the first section (90–91; 92–93 [94]; 95–100) are respectively paralleled to the psalms in the second section (102–103; 104 and 105–106), and Psalms 94 and 101 are seen as exceptional cases.” For an illustration of his entire schematic of Book IV, see Kim, “The Structure and Coherence of Psalms 89–106,” 413.

<sup>498</sup> Kim, “The Structure and Coherence of Psalms 89–106,” 414.

<sup>499</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 2.

descriptions of the king in distress (102) and ends with “praise and thanksgiving”<sup>500</sup> (103).

#### 2.4.2 MACROSTRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF BOOK V

There is considerable literature pertaining to Book V and almost every Group or Collection within Book V has been treated at length. In the figure below, I summarize thirteen structures, methods and main arguments on Book V.

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<sup>500</sup> Both Hossfeld and Gundersen view Ps 104 as a Janus psalm, connecting Pss 103 and 105. See Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3, 28, 58, 75, 95*; Gundersen, “Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90–106),” 151.

	<b>Structure of Book V</b>	<b>Dominant Method</b>	<b>Key Thesis and Unique Contribution</b>
Egbert Balhorn <sup>501</sup>	105–107   108–10   111–118   119   120–134   135–136   137   138–45   146–150	Canonical-literary, Teleological	When one moves from Book IV to the end of the Psalter, there is several major shifts such as (1) Temple to Zion; (2) David to YHWH's rule; (3) individual to collective Israel as the fulfilment of the covenant. The Psalter ends with an eschatological focus. The <i>telos</i> of the Psalter is the kingdom of God.
Nancy deClaissé-Walford <sup>502</sup> (cf. §1.2.8)	107   108–110   111–112   113–118   119   120–134   135–136   137   138–145   146–150	Canonical-literary, Historical	Book V forms part of the larger understanding of the metanarrative of the Psalter which traces the story of the reign of David (Book I), Solomon (Book II), the divided kingdom and their fall (Book III), the exile in Babylon (Book IV) and return to Jerusalem (Book V). The Psalter, as a whole, is a rationale for existence so that Israel can continue to survive under the rule of foreign nations.
Michael Goulder <sup>503</sup>	107–119   120–134   135–150	Intertextual / Cultic-liturgical	Three major units of Book V represent the three “ascents” or return from Babylon as described in the Books of Ezra-Nehemiah. Psalms 107–118 celebrate the first return and restoration of the temple under Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel and Jeshua; Psalms 120–134 celebrate the second return and represent 15 episodes of the Nehemiah Testimonies. Psalms 135–150 celebrate the third return under Ezra.
Jamie Grant <sup>504</sup>	107   108–110   111–117   118–119   120–134   135–137   138–145   146–150	Canonical-literary / Intertextual	There are three groups of psalms where the motif of Torah and Kingship are juxtaposed (Pss 1–2; 18–21; 118–119). Influenced by the “Kingship Law” stipulated in Deuteronomy, the Psalter orients the reader to the “eschatological king” and fosters the reader’s devotion to YHWH.

<sup>501</sup> Ballhorn’s work includes both Book IV and V of the Psalter. My summary pertains primarily to his discussion on Book V of the Psalter. See *Zum Telos Des Psalmers: Der Textzusammenhang Des Vierten Und Fünften Psalmenbuches* (Ps 90–150); “Das Historische Und Das Kanonische Paradigma in Der Exegese,” in *Der Bibelkanon in Der Bibelauslegung: Methodenreflexionen Und Beispielexegesen* (eds. Egbert Ballhorn and Georg Steins; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007), 9–30.

<sup>502</sup> In addition to the references of her works in §1.2.8, see “The Structure of Psalms 93–100,” *RevExp* 95, no. 2 (1998): 290–91; “Anzu Revisited : The Scribal Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter,” *WW* 15, no. 3 (1995): 358–66.

<sup>503</sup> Michael Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return (Book V, Psalms 107–150) Studies in the Psalter, IV* (eds. David Clines and Philip Davies; JSOTSup 258; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998); “The Songs of Ascents and Nehemiah,” *JSOT*, no. 75 (1997): 43–58.

<sup>504</sup> Jamie A. Grant, *The King as Exemplar : The Function of Deuteronomy’s Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (Ph.D. Diss., Cheltenham: University of Gloucestershire, 2002). Grant’s work was published as *The King As Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy’s Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (ABib 17; Atlanta: SBL, 2004). I have used the pagination in his thesis, not his published book.

	Structure of Book V	Dominant Method	Key Thesis and Unique Contribution
Jinkyu Kim <sup>505</sup>	90–110   111–118   119   120–134   135–145   146–50	Canonical-literary	Books IV and V are structured as three parallel groups of psalms, each consisting of a sequence of Royal psalm(s) followed by doxological psalm(s). Books IV and V also have a chiastic structure with Ps 119 at the center. Together, Books IV–V serve to highlight the concept of kingship in the post-exilic period.
Martin Leuenberger <sup>506</sup>	107   108–110   111–117   118   119, 120–134   135   136   137, 138–145   146–150	Literary / Redactional, Theological	The final form of the Psalter is shaped with the concept of the kingdom of God. Through an investigation of the redactional process, there is an expanding “theocratic” concept in Books IV–V in response to human kingship in Books I–III. The YHWH <i>Malak</i> Psalms bring the praise of God’s reign to the forefront, reaching a high point in Ps 145 and climax in Ps 150.
Matthias Millard <sup>507</sup>	107–118   120–137   138–150	Redactional, Form-critical	The entire Psalter is divided into 14 compositional arches. In Book V, there are three compositional arches (107–118; 120–137; 138–150). The Psalter as a book of instruction and prayers has a text-pragmatic function. It helps the individual to seek God, recall YHWH’s past deliverances, hope in God, pray and praise him.
David Mitchell <sup>508</sup> (cf. §1.2.9)	110   111–118   120–134	Intertextual/ Redactional/ Eschatological	The Psalter is shaped eschatologically rather than historically and follows an eschatological program found in Zech 9–14. The Psalms of Asaph highlight preexilic concerns of distress and war and emphasize pending judgment. The Songs of Ascents anticipate postexilic restoration with a joyful pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the hope of Davidic expectancy.
Klaus Seybold <sup>509</sup>	107   108–110   111–118   119   120–134   135–136   137   138–145   146–150	Redactional -historical/ Non-unifying	The formation of the Psalter drives its shape. The agenda of the Psalter is constantly being redefined at various stages of the formation. There is no single editorial agenda but several key themes (messianic, wisdom, hymnic).

<sup>505</sup> Jinkyu Kim, “The Strategic Arrangement of Royal Psalms in Books IV–V,” *WTJ* 70, no. 1 (2008): 143–57.

<sup>506</sup> Martin Leuenberger, *Konzeptionen des Königtums Gottes im Psalter: Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Redaktion der theokratischen Bücher IV - V im Psalter* (Zürich: TVZ, 2004).

<sup>507</sup> Matthias Millard, *Die Komposition Des Psalters : Ein Formgeschichtlicher Ansatz* (FAT 27; Tübingen: Mohr, 1994).

<sup>508</sup> For references of his works, see §1.2.9.

<sup>509</sup> Klaus Seybold, *Die Psalmen* (HAT 15; Tübingen: Mohr, 1996); *Introducing the Psalms* (trans. R. Grame Dunphy; Edinburgh; New York: T&T Clark, 1990); “Zur Geschichte Des Vierten Davidpsalters (Pss 138–145),” in *Book of Psalms, The: Composition and Reception* (eds. Peter Flint and Patrick Miller; VTSup 99; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 368–90.

	<b>Structure of Book V</b>	<b>Dominant Method</b>	<b>Key Thesis and Unique Contribution</b>
Michael Snealy <sup>510</sup>	107–118   119   120–137   138–145   146–150	Literary, Statistical (Computer-aided)	Book V signals a “renewed hope in the Royal/Davidic promises.” Five keywords connect “dominant themes” in Book V with Pss 1–2 and 89. A variegated mix of text-linguistics, poetics literary theories; computer-assisted analysis and statistical criterion for keyword searches techniques were used. The criteria for keyword study limits roots that have “at least 50 percent of [its] usage within Book V and/or 20 percent of [its] usage within the Psalter.”
Dennis Tucker <sup>511</sup>	107   108–110   111–118   119   120–134   135–136   137   138–145   146–150	Socio-historical, Literary	The Psalter is set in the context of Persian imperial ideologies. Book V seeks to deconstruct these imperial ideologies with a negative critique of them. At the same time, Book V constructs the power ideologies of YHWH primarily through three major concepts: Zion, YHWH’s creation and YHWH’s kingship.
Gerald Wilson <sup>512</sup> (cf. §1.2.2)	107–17   118–35   136–45	Literary	The first three Books trace the establishment (Ps 2), celebration of YHWH’s faithfulness to His covenant (Ps 72), and its eventual failure because of Israel’s sin (Ps 89:38–39, 44). Book IV answers the pessimism at the end of Book III and focuses on the kingship of YHWH. Book V shows that David is the model exemplar who reflects trust in YHWH. Book V is based on the <i>hodu</i> -opening and <i>hallelujah</i> -ending structure. At the center is Psalm 119 that emphasizes the Torah and shows that access to God (Pss 120–34) is through Torah-piety.
Erich Zenger <sup>513</sup> (cf. §1.2.3)	107, 108–110   111–112, 113–118   119   120–136, 137   138–144, 145   146–150	Literary / theological-liturgical	Book V is unified in three ways: First, it consists of a liturgical shaping of the three feasts which are to be read as post-cultic, literary pilgrimages. Second, Book V is also a “meditative actualization of the canonical history” of Israel’s origins, nationhood and exodus (113–118); Sinai and the giving of the law (119) and entry into the Promised land (120–136). Third, Book V is to be read eschatologically with messianic and cosmic themes (110, 144, 146–150).

Figure 20: Structural Divisions, Methods and Arguments for Book V

<sup>510</sup> Michael K. Snealy, “The Return of the King: An Editorial-Critical Analysis of Psalms 107–150” (Ph.D. Diss., Mill Valley: Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, 2012) now published as *The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter* (LHBOTS 624; New York; London: T&T Clark, 2015). His thesis is also summarized in a book chapter: “The Return of the King: Book V as a Witness to Messianic Hope in the Psalter,” in *The Psalms : Language for All Seasons of the Soul* (eds. Andrew Schmutz and David Howard Jr.; Chicago: Moody, 2014), 209–17.

<sup>511</sup> W. Dennis Tucker Jr, “A Polysemiotic Approach to the Poor in the Psalms,” *PRSt* 31, no. 4 (2004): 425–39; “Empires and Enemies in Book V of the Psalter,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger, BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 723–32; *Constructing and Deconstructing Power in Psalms 107–150* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014); “The Role of the Foe in Book 5: Reflections on the Final Composition of the Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship* (ed. Nancy deClaissé-Walford; SBL Press, 2014), 147–60.

<sup>512</sup> For references of his works, see §1.2.2.

<sup>513</sup> For references of his works, see §1.2.3.

Book V is perhaps the most difficult to analyze not only because it is the longest Book with the most variegated superscription types, but also due to different methods adopted by scholars.<sup>514</sup> Different scholars also posit a number of different theological themes in Book V.<sup>515</sup>

Structural divisions in Book V are argued primarily through a combination of superscriptions, formulaic phrases (e.g., *hodu/hallelujah*) and thematic motifs. Basic structural recognition is first given to the Davidic psalms (108–110; 138–145), the SOA (120–34) and the final Hallel (146–150). They are generally accepted as units of composition. However, main structural disagreements are associated with Pss 107, 118, 119 and 135–37.

Barring this diversity, the structures of Book V can be summarized by two major divisional structures presented by Zenger and Wilson. The key lies in how Pss 118 and 136 are viewed (as the start of a new unit or at the end), which also affects how immediate psalms (119, 135, 137) are grouped.

<sup>514</sup> For instance, Tucker uses both socio-historical and literary methods in his analysis while Ballhorn adopts a synchronic approach. Seybold and Leuenberger understand the Psalter primarily through a redactional process.

<sup>515</sup> (1) Wisdom and Torah-piety; (2) Vindication of the poor and needy from their wicked oppressors; (3) Davidic (messianic)-YHWH kingship and judgment; (4) Collective Israel in praise of YHWH; (5) Festal pilgrimage; (6) Restoration of temple and Zion. Crutchfield surveyed eight important works written on the arrangement and editorial agenda of the Psalter (J. Brennan, B. Childs, G. Wilson, J. Walton, W. Brueggemann, T. Sheppard, J. Creach, and D. Mitchell), and concludes that “the search for a single agenda is a misguided search because there is not one dominant, driving agenda, but rather, a collection of themes.” He posits three major dominant themes running through the entire Psalter: wisdom; eschatology and a trajectory from Lament to Praise (Crutchfield, “The Redactional Agenda,” 43–44, 47). Gillingham further reduced the themes to two such that the Psalter is shaped primarily through an “eschatological” or “didactic” significance. Scholars who emphasized the former point out that despite a “failed national covenant with king David, . . . a new world order would be established where God himself would be acknowledged as king.” Scholars who emphasized the latter highlight the “personal needs of individuals within the community,” and that the Psalter was composed primarily as a reflective book with wisdom and Torah concerns. Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition,” 308–09.

In Wilson's case, the use of doxological phrases concludes major divisions (104–06, 111–17, 135) and the use of **הָזֶן** phrases starts a new unit of psalms.<sup>516</sup> His detailed structural divisions are represented by Figure 21.

107–117			118–35				136–45		
107	108–110	111–117	118	119	120–34	135	136–137	138–145	146–150
הָזֶן	David	הָלְלוּ יְהָוָה	הָזֶן	Torah	SOA	הָלְלוּ יְהָוָה	הָזֶן	David	הָלְלוּ יְהָוָה
107:42–43			Wisdom Frame				145:19–20		

Figure 21: Wilson's Structure for Book V<sup>517</sup>

Enclosed by two “wisdom frames” (107:42–43, 145:19–20), Book V consists of three major units, each opened by a **הָזֶן** and closed by a **הָלְלוּיָה**. The first and third units are centered by a Davidic frame. The second unit consists of the massive Ps 119 which emphasizes access to God at Zion (SOA) is “through the appropriation of and obedience to Torah.”<sup>518</sup> The two Davidic segments at the beginning and end of Book V show that David is the model exemplar who reflected this trust in YHWH.

However, the **הָזֶן** and the **הָלְלוּיָה** phrases are not consistently applied as openings or closings as Wilson would like them to.<sup>519</sup> Wilson's focus on the **הָלְלוּיָה-הָזֶן** method

<sup>516</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 190.

<sup>517</sup> This has been reconstructed by Zenger, “Composition,” 83.

<sup>518</sup> Note that in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, Psalm 119 comes after the Songs of Ascents. Wilson noted that “the placement of this psalm after the [Songs of Ascents] psalms, rather than before them as in the canonical psalter, has a significant effect. Rather than Torah precipitating pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the temple, pilgrimage, in effect, leads to the Torah.” Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs) and the Canonical Psalter,” 460; Wilson, *Editing*, 223.

<sup>519</sup> Psalms 105, 106, 107 all begin with **הָזֶן** phrases. Based on his arguments, Psalm 105 begins a new unit with the use of **הָזֶן** and Ps 106 ends it (with a **הָלְלוּיָה**) and therefore, Ps 107 can be said to begin a new unit. Moving backwards from Ps 105, we observe a concluding **הָלְלוּיָה** in Ps 104 but we cannot

of delimitation also led him to undervalue other lexical or thematic evidence.<sup>520</sup> His structural thesis, nonetheless, remains appealing to some (e.g., Leuenberger).<sup>521</sup>

Zenger's structural view on Book V is reproduced in Figure 22.<sup>522</sup>

R A		A		R A
107, 108–110, 111 and 112	113–118	119	120–136, 137	138–144, 145
David (eschatological/messianic)	Exodus (Pesach)	Torah (Shabuoth)	Zion (Sukkoth)	David (eschatological/messianic)

Figure 22: Zenger's Structure of Book V<sup>523</sup>

find an opening הַזְדָן. Wilson collaborated his arguments of הַזְדָן-opening and הַלְלוּיָה-הַלְלוּיָה-closing with a similar phenomenon in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, but the difficulty of fitting the הַזְדָן is also present. Wilson posited five groups of psalms separated by the *hwfdw/hllwyh* phrases. As an example, one of the segments is structured as such: Group 1: Psalms 101, 102, 103; Group 2: Psalms 109, 118 (*hd/hd*), 104 (*/hl*); Group 3: Psalms 147 (*hl/hl*), 105 (*hd/hl*), 146 (*hl/hl*); Conclusion of the segment: Psalm 148 (*hl/hl*). From this structure, Group 1 has no opening or closing *hwfdw/hllwyh* phrases. Psalms 105 and 118 (which have the *hwfdw* opening) are in the middle of the groups and not at the front. While there is a *hllwyh* that closes the entire segment (Ps 148), it is not opened by a *hwfdw* psalm (Ps 101). Hence, prescribing a consistent *hwfdw-hllwyh* structure (both in the MT and Qumran Psalter) is difficult. Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs<sup>a</sup>) and the Canonical Psalter,” 458–59.

<sup>520</sup> For example, the three-part repetitions, “Israel,” “house of Aaron” and “one who fears the LORD,” in Pss 115:9–11; 118:2–4 and 135:19–20 are to be seen in connection with one another. Wilson linked Ps 118 with 135 because these phrases and the *hwfdw* fit well as frames of the entire section from Pss 118–135. However, he ignored the connections to these phrases in Ps 115. If the connections with Ps 115 had been adduced, Pss 115 and 118 can also be seen to unite the Egyptian Hallel (most scholars break between Pss 118 and 119 instead, but this would mean that the *hwfdw* psalm 118 closes a group, which would break down Wilson’s structure).

<sup>521</sup> Leuenberger notes, “Grobgliederung des vorliegenden Psalmenbuchs 5 in die Großkompositionen 107–117 118–135 136–150. Deren Entstehung aus den älteren Großkompositionen 107–118 resp. 107–118–136.” Leuenberger, *Konzeptionen des Königtums Gottes im Psalter*, 276, 299.

<sup>522</sup> In analyzing the composition of Book Five, Zenger first reviewed the theses of Gerald Wilson, Klaus Koch and Reinhard Krantz. He disagreed with Wilson and Kratz’s separation of Psalms 117 and 118, and assessed that the sub-collections of psalms have not been sufficiently examined. Zenger also saw that these scholars were not able to explain Psalm 119’s position in their structuring of Book Five. Zenger, “Composition,” 87–88.

<sup>523</sup> “R” = Royal psalm; “A” = Acrostic psalm; Zenger, “Composition,” 98.

Contra Wilson, Zenger separated Pss 111–112 from 113<sup>524</sup> and linked Ps 118 with 117. Psalm 113 is also grouped within 113–118 based on the “Pesach-Hallel” tradition (or Egyptian Hallel). This unit develops a “theology of the Exodus with Ps 118, focusing on the sanctuary on Zion as goal of the Exodus.”<sup>525</sup> For Zenger, Ps 118 ends a literary unit.

Standing between “two liturgically inspired collections [Pss] 113–18 and 120–36,”<sup>526</sup> Ps 119 represents the Jewish festival of Shabuoth (Feast of Weeks) which commemorates the giving of the Torah at Sinai. Together, these three festive-collections trace the canonical history with the Exodus (Pesach), the giving of the Torah at Sinai (Shabuoth) and entry into Zion (Sukkot). The acrostic Psalm 119 reflects the Torah-pious attitudes that enabled one to enter the gates of righteousness into Zion.<sup>527</sup>

Zenger’s structure of Book V is symmetric. Groups and Collections within Book V are arranged as triads based on genre or thematic motifs. The Davidic Pss 108–110 are a triptych distinguished by their superscriptions and genre sequence of Plea-Lament-Divine Response.<sup>528</sup> Likewise, Pss 111–119 are also seen as a triptych. The acrostic

<sup>524</sup> This is despite being linked by the *hallelujah* superscriptions. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 178.

<sup>525</sup> Within Pss 113–118 (or the Egyptian Hallel), Hossfeld and Zenger further divided it into two smaller groupings of Pss 113–115 and 116–118, which is accented “theologically or monotheistically” and “universalistically [sic] (anthropologically)” respectively. Zenger, “Composition,” 92; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 178, 210, 220, 224.

<sup>526</sup> Zenger, “Composition,” 97.

<sup>527</sup> They provide a “meditative actualization of the canonical history of the origin of Israel.” Zenger, “Composition,” 101; See also Hossfeld et. al., *Psalms 3, 4*, 284.

<sup>528</sup> While they all have לְדִין in their superscriptions, each is distinguished by certain words or arrangement. Psalm 108 is characterized differently by the שִׁיר (“song”) in the superscription and 109, by לְמַנְצָחָה (“for the choir director”). As such, these three psalms can be seen as a triptych based on their superscriptions.

Torah wisdom Pss 111–112 and 119 frame the Egyptian Hallel (113–118) in a three-part structure.<sup>529</sup> The Egyptian Hallel at the center can be further divided into two parts with a theocentric and universal focus respectively (113–115, 116–118). The following summarises Hossfeld and Zenger’s structure of Pss 107–119.

107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119
<hr/>												
HD	Plea		DR	Torah			Egyptian Hallel		Torah			
		L Song		Dir Miz			Theocentric	Universal				

Figure 23: Hossfeld and Zenger’s Structure of Pss 107–119<sup>530</sup>

The SOA<sup>531</sup> have been well-studied and are generally accepted as a unified group with a symmetrical structure. Certain linguistic peculiarities, such as the use of words

<sup>529</sup> Hossfeld et. al., *Psalm 3*, 284.

<sup>530</sup> HD = הָזֶה Psalm; L = Lament; DR = Divine Response; Dir = לְמַעַן; Miz = מִזְמֹר.

<sup>531</sup> Grossberg lists at least seven ways through which the superscription שִׁיר הַלְּלָא has been variously interpreted: (1) It is associated with the term, הַלְּלָה, in Ezra 7:9, describing the return from the exile. The plural use of the term in Pss 120–134 is supported by multiple returns from Babylon to Jerusalem. (2) This term is also interpreted as pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but not associated with the exile. The pilgrimages to Jerusalem are made during the three festivals of the year (Exod 23:17; 34:18–23; Deut 16:16). (3) In the Mishnah, the 15 psalms were associated with a Levitical procession on the 15 steps leading from the Court of the Women to the Court of the Israelites on the first day of *Sukkot*. (Exod 20:26; 1 Kgs 10:19–20; *Mid.* 2:5; *Sukk.* 5.4). (4) As a literary poetical structure in which a word or phrase from a clause is repeated and elaborated in the following (Pss 121; 122:2–4; 123:2–4; 124:1–5; 125:2, 3; 126:2, 3; 129:1, 2). (5) An ascending of voices of praise based on 2 Chron 20:19 where the Levites praised YHWH with “greatly raised voices.” (6) A plurality of ascending up and out of distresses repeatedly by YHWH’s salvific deliverances rather than the return from exile. (7) Rising into “higher walks of faith” or growing in spirituality. (8) The 15 Songs of Ascents is linked to the 15-word Aaronic Blessing in Num 6:24–26. The use of four keywords, “may he bless you” (בָּרוּךְ), “may he protect you” (מַשְׁמִיךְ), “may he be gracious to you” (מַבְּרִיךְ), “peace” (שָׁלוֹם), in the Aaron Benediction is repeatedly seen in the Songs of Ascents. Grossberg sees that the most commonly accepted interpretation is that of pilgrimage to Jerusalem during the three yearly festivals. For the study of the Songs of Ascents as a collection, see Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry*, 15–54.

with high frequency relative to the rest of the Psalter, bind the entire Collection.<sup>532</sup> In

Figure 24, a survey of structural divisions in the SOA is represented.

	120–124		125–129		130–134			
	120–124		125–129		130–134			
Zenger	120–122	123–125	126–128	129–131	132–134			
Vesco	120–124		125–129		130–134			
Gillingham	120–122	123–125	126–128	129–131	132–133/4			
Van der Lugt	120–122	123–125	126–128	129–131	132–134			
Prinsloo	120–122	123–125	126–128	129–131	132–134			
Satterthwaite	120–122	123–125	126–128	129–131	132–134			
Beaucamp	120–122	123–128		129–134				
Auwers	120–122	123–126	127–129	130–131	132	133–134		
Viviers	120–122	123–126	127–129	130–131	132–134			
Hengstenberg	120–126		127	128–134				
Labuschagne	120–126		127	128–134				

Figure 24: Survey of Structural Divisions of the Songs of Ascents<sup>533</sup>

Most scholars identify a three/five-part (3-3-3-3/5-5-5/7-1-7) symmetric structure in the SOA. Located at the center of the symmetry is Ps 127 which focuses on the Zion city. This symmetry is extended to Subgroups within the SOA too. Zenger argued for a three-part symmetric structure in all three Subgroups of five psalms (120–124, 125–129, 130–134). The concern at the center in all three Subgroups is Zion (“Z”; 122, 127, 132). The first and last psalm in the first Subgroup are Lament and Praise

<sup>532</sup> For instance, Grossberg cites הַנָּה (Pss 121:4; 123:2; 127:3; 128:4; 132:6; 133:1; 134:1) and the preference of the abbreviated relative particle, וְ (Pss 122:3–4; 123:2; 124:1–2, 6; 129:6–7; 133:2–3), over נִשְׁאָר (Pss 127:5; 132:2). Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry*, 49.

<sup>533</sup> Hossfeld et. al., *Psalms 3*, 296; Vesco, *Le psautier de David traduit et commenté*, 2:1251–1252; Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 422–440; Viviers, “The Coherence of the Ma’alot Psalms (Pss 120–134),” 284–87; Labuschagne, “Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms,” 633; P. Satterthwaite, “Zion in the Songs of Ascents,” in *Zion City of Our God* (eds. Richard Hess and Gordon Wenham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 105–28; Évode Beaucamp, “L’unité du recueil des montées : Psaumes 120–134,” *LTP* 36, no. 1 (1980): 3–15, [13–15]; G. T. M. Prinsloo, “The Role of Space in the Shire Hama’lot (Psalms 120–134),” *Bib* 86 (2005): 457–77; Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 58; Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition,” 318; One of the latest studies on the SOA is David Mitchell’s *The Songs of Ascents: Psalms 120 to 134 in the Worship of Jerusalem’s Temples* (Newton Mearns, Scotland: Campbell, 2015).

(“L,” “P”; 120, 124). This phenomenon is repeated in the third subgroup (“L,” “P”; 130, 134). The first and last psalm in the second Subgroup have a common focus on the wicked (“W”; 125, 129). The entire SOA is a remarkable triptych-within-a-triptych, with a movement from Lament to Praise. For Zenger, it is a “search for a place of safety and protection in the midst of a hostile world. . . [and finding] its fulfilment in the cultic house and life community on Zion.”<sup>534</sup>

			<b>1 1 2 2 0 1</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>1 1 2 2 3 4</b>	<b>1 1 2 2 5 6</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>1 1 2 2 8 9</b>	<b>1 1 2 3 0 0</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>1 3 3 3</b>	<b>134</b>
		<b>Organizing Principles</b>		D	D		Sol		D	D			
Zenger	Thematic Genre		L	Z	P				L	Z	P		
Hengstenberg	Thematic Numerical				W	Z	W						
Prinsloo	Thematic Spatial		12x “YHWH”	12x “YHWH”			12x “YHWH”	12x “YHWH”					
Satterthwaite	Thematic Lexical		1x “YH”		3x “YHWH”		1x “YH”						
			To earthly Zion	Heaven, Hell, YHWH	Zion built by YHWH		Heaven, Hell, YHWH		Eschatological Zion				
			Journey to Zion	Hostility to Zion	Restoration of Zion		Waiting for YHWH		The Found Vision and the Future				

Figure 25: Symmetric Structures of the Songs of Ascents<sup>535</sup>

The symmetry of the SOA can also be seen in the four attributions to David (“D”; 122, 124, 131, 133) with two on each side of Ps 127. Labuschagne, Hengstenberg and Mitchell also arrive at a three-part structure (7-1-7) based on numerical methods.

<sup>534</sup> Zenger, “Composition,” 99; See also Millard, *Die Komposition*, 30–32, 35–41, 227–28; Hossfeld et al., *Psalm 3*, 296.

<sup>535</sup> L = Lament psalm; P = Praise psalm; Z = Zion psalm; D = “David” in superscription; Sol = “Solomon” in superscription.

Hengstenberg's structure deserves further attention.<sup>536</sup> He observed that the centrally-placed Ps 127 is bounded by two groups of seven psalms, each of which can be further separated into two groups of psalms (Figure 25). In each of these groups, there are 12x “YHWH”, each making 24x “YHWH” on each side of Ps 127. There is a total of 48x “YHWH” and 2x “YH” around Ps 127, which itself, consists of three references to “YHWH.” Mitchell's finds that there are 26x “YHWH” (10+5+6+5) between the two “YH” (10+5) in Pss 122:4 and 130:3. There are also 26x “YHWH” before the word, ‘תְּדִין’ (“his beloved,” 127:2), which is the central word in Ps 127.<sup>537</sup> These findings show that the entire SOA is a remarkable triptych shaped by numerical design.

The symmetric shape of the SOA is not limited to genre and poetical characterization. Scholars such as Prinsloo and Satterthwaite have argued for thematic spatial movement *toward* and *away* from Zion based on five triads of psalms (recall this feature in Barbiero's work. §2.2).<sup>538</sup> The imagery of Zion, as YHWH's dwelling place, is seen as the place of intersection between God and man, heaven and earth.<sup>539</sup> For

<sup>536</sup> Joffe, “The Answer to the Meaning of Life,” 227; Ernst Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms* (3 vols., trans. P. Fairbairn and J. Thomson; Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1845–48), 3: 410; Mitchell argues that the “YH,” located in Pss 122 and 130, is “the third psalm of each heptade” (hence seeing the structure as 7-1-7). Mitchell, *The Songs of Ascents*, 17.

<sup>537</sup> Omitting the superscription, Mitchell counts a total 57 words in the Ps 127 with 28 words before and after ‘תְּדִין’ (the 29<sup>th</sup> word). Mitchell's method of count is similar to Labuschagne and van der Lugt's (see chapter 5). Mitchell, *The Songs of Ascents*, 22.

<sup>538</sup> Pss 120–122, 123–125, 126–128, 129–131, 132–134. Prinsloo, “The Role of Space in the Shire Hama'lot (Psalms 120–134),” 457–77. Satterthwaite, “Zion in the Songs of Ascents,” 105–28.

<sup>539</sup> He notes, “In a very special sense temple in Jerusalem becomes the meeting point between the human (concrete) world and the divine (mythological) world. Jerusalem becomes the centre of the universe. There the cosmic planes intersect to create a three-story universe: a vertical plane intersects earth and extends down into the chaotic waters below, and the same plane extends upwards into heaven.” Prinsloo, “The Role of Space in the Shire Hama'lot (Psalms 120–134),” 461.

Prinsloo, it is a pilgrimage to the earthly temple in Jerusalem at the beginning of the Collection. The movement is further seen as a “spiritual pilgrimage” from hell to heaven, and ascending into the embrace of YHWH.<sup>540</sup> Satterthwaite suggests there is a future eschatological vision associated with Zion at the end of the Songs of Ascents.

Figure 25 shows how the SOA, as a unit, is concentric with various structuring techniques of genre characterization, thematic development, and poetic, spatial devices (numerical) corresponding to its symmetric structure.

Between the SOA and the final Davidic Collection lies three psalms that often resist clear groupings. While Wilson began a new segment with Ps 136, Zenger noted that Pss 135–36 are thematically concatenated to Ps 134.<sup>541</sup> This is followed by Ps 137, described as a “theological commentary” of 120–36.<sup>542</sup>

The Davidic psalms (138–145) are framed on both ends. The frames (138, 145) are Praise psalms containing the theme of “glory” and “greatness.” Hossfeld argued that this group of eight Davidic psalms is concentric based on genre categories. At the center are four Individual Laments (140–143). Although the two remaining Pss 139 and 144 are harder to define by genre designation, they fit well thematically between the frames and with the Laments at the center.<sup>543</sup> Hossfeld argued that the “concept of the fifth

<sup>540</sup> Prinsloo, “The Role of Space in the Shire Hama’lot (Psalms 120–134),” 473.

<sup>541</sup> Hence, it is possible that the twin Pss 135–136 (instead of just Ps 136) is referred to as the “Great Hallel” in Jewish tradition (*b. Pesach* 118a). Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 491.

<sup>542</sup> Zenger, “Composition,” 96; Psalm 137 also functions as a “transitional psalm,” bridging 135–36 and 135–145, and serving as the “*Sitz im Leben*” for the compositions of 120–34, 135–136. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 520–21.

<sup>543</sup> Hossfeld et al., et. al., *Psalms 3*, 524.

Davidic Psalter can be perceived from the concluding function of Psalm 145,” that YHWH is king.<sup>544</sup> The concluding doxology (v. 21) of this psalm also functions as the closing psalm of the five-part “Torah of David.”<sup>545</sup>

The last five psalms in the MT Psalter (146–150) are known as the “Little” or “Final Hallel,” united by the imperative plural form of הָלַל. As headings and codas, they occur 10x in total, representing the “totality and the perfection of the praise of God.”<sup>546</sup> There is also a progressive expansion of subjects in this Collection, beginning with an individual “I” (146) and ending with “all who has breath” (150) praising God.<sup>547</sup> Zenger argued that these five psalms “not only constitute a linear-progressive context, but at the same time, they are structured concentrically with Psalm 148 at the center.”<sup>548</sup> Psalm 148 highlights a “cosmic order” and evokes the “special position” of Israel within that order. Psalms 147 and 149 address issues of justice and violence of the wicked. As frames, Pss 146 and 150 celebrate YHWH’s universal kingship. Zenger concluded that the Final Hallel projects an “eschatological vision whose realization is already in

<sup>544</sup> Hossfeld et al., et. al., *Psalms 3*, 524.

<sup>545</sup> Doxology also concludes the first four Books in Pss 41:14; 72:18–19; 89:53; 106:48.

<sup>546</sup> Note also that in the final Psalm 150, “Hallelujah” is used 10x within the psalm itself. Zenger viewed Pss 146–150 as a separate editorial work. See esp. the “excursus” section on “The Function of ‘Hallelujahs’ in the redaction of the Psalter,” and “The Composition of the So-called Little Hallel or Concluding Hallel, Psalms 146–150.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 7, 39–41, 605–607.

<sup>547</sup> In Ps 147, this is expanded to a group of subjects in Jerusalem and to Israel as a whole. In Ps 148, the entire cosmos is called to praise God, and the psalm ends with a group of *chasidim*, sons of Israel, in the praise of God. In Ps 149, Israel is called to praise God but through her praise, the entire cosmos will be transformed in praise of God.

<sup>548</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 605.

progress and whose completion is proleptically celebrated in a cosmic liturgy.”<sup>549</sup>

Figure 26 captures our discussion of Pss 135–150 above:

135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
Final Davidic Collection															
Great Hallel	Trans	K								K	I	W		W	Uni
			Med		I-Laments		P				Isr		Chas	Cos + Chas	
			PoD	Dir	Dir	PoD	Msk	PoD	PoD	P					

Figure 26: Hossfeld and Zenger’s Structure for Pss 135–150<sup>550</sup>

As noted, Hossfeld and Zenger have argued for an organizational structure of Book V that deviates from Wilson’s *hodu-hallelujah* structure. Both structures have their merits. Hossfeld and Zenger’s arguments are more convincing with considerations given to thematic, genre connections and development. There is a coherent macrostructural theme to the shaping of Pss 107–136 (as celebration of Israel’s restoration) and Pss 138–145 (as the last Davidic-Psalter). On the other hand, Wilson’s emphasis on the combined הָזִינֵה and הַלְלֵי־יְהָוָה phenomena cannot be dismissed. Despite these differences, Book V is *still* seen as concentric by both. At the center of Wilson’s concentric structure is both the Torah Ps 119 and the SOA. At the center of Hossfeld-Zenger’s structure is the Torah Ps 119.

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<sup>549</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 605.

<sup>550</sup> Trans = Transitional psalm; K = Kingship psalm; Med = Meditative psalm; Isr = the people of Israel or Jerusalem; P = Praise psalm; Chas = the special role of faithful Israel within the cosmic subjects; Cos+Isr = Cosmic subjects and *Chasidim*; I = Individual psalm; W = psalm with an emphasis on the wicked and justice. Uni = Universal subjects, all that has breath; PoD = בְּדֹבֶר; Dir = בְּמַנְצָחָה; Msk = מִשְׁבֵּיל.

One of the key reasons for these differences is the delimitation principle within Pss 118–137. Another reason is the place of the **הַזְׁדִּיקָה תְּלִילָה** formula and how they function as a poetical device to mark a collection. In the following section, I offer my proposal for Books IV and V of the MT Psalter.

#### **2.4.3 A PROPOSAL FOR THE MACROSTRUCTURE OF BOOKS IV–V OF THE MT PSALTER**

Ballhorn and Leuenberger have shown that Book IV is closely related to Book V and that these should not be viewed in isolation from each other.<sup>551</sup> My thesis is that the structural mystery of Book V is revealed when it is viewed together with Book IV (like Books II and III). I further posit that Pss 104–106 at the end of Book IV serves not just as the final Collection in that Book, but also functions as a Janus unit (“two-faced”). Its thematic trajectory straddles across the end of Book IV into the beginning of Book V. Together with Pss 107–119, the entirety of Pss 104–119 functions structurally as the second Group in Books IV–V with three Groups formed by 104–119; 120–134 and 135–150 respectively. Books IV and V, in total, consist of four Groups (9–12) and can be seen as symmetric.

Figure 27 and Figure 28 set out my proposal for the structure of Books IV and V:

<sup>551</sup> Ballhorn notes that “[i]f you follow the sequence of psalms and their collections, a transformation within the Psalter is visible. The corpus of the first three books is recognized primarily as a school of prayer. From the first psalm, it is a Torah-meditation book, and the royal psalms that recur in the book (Ps 72; 89) allow us to read the book from the perspective of the Davidic kingship. The fourth and fifth book shift the focus to the dominant theme of the kingdom of God, which begins and ends Book IV and V book respectively.” Ballhorn, *Zum Telos Des Psalters*, 382; Leuenberger also sees that Books IV–V are shaped according to the theme of the kingdom of God. Leuenberger, *Konzeptionen des Königiums Gottes im Psalter*, 4.

Psalm	Book IV																Book V														
	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	
Superscript	Mo	UT	Ps	mlk	UT	mlk	Ps	mlk	Thk	Dav	Aff	Dav	brk	HD	HLL	HD	Dav		HLL		UT	HLL	HD	Ash							
Occurrences of certain words or formulaic phrases					BRK	HD		Mo	BRK				Mo	HLL	HLL	HD					HLL	HLL	HLL								
Shape of Collections	Sup	Tr- ust	Thk					P	Sup	Thk	brk	HD	HL L					HD	Plea		DR	Torah	HLL				Tor- ah				
	Sg							YHWH Malak		PoD	PoD	POD		HLL				Sg	L	PoD		Theocentric		Universal							
Shape of Groups	Group 9												Group 10																		
	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	
Mosaic. Moses sings (Deut 32). The ideal “righteous one.” Brink of entry																															
Take refuge in YHWH’s house																															
Shape of Section (Books IV–V); Central motif	YHWH’s cosmic kingship; judgment from Zion																														
	The “righteous” walking right in the Torah (90–92) > YHWH’s Kingship (93–100) > A Davidic king that walks right (100–103) > Time of Blessings begins (101)												A Victorious Messianic king; Torah glorified																		

Figure 27: A Proposal for the Macrostructure of Books IV–V (Pss 90–119)

Psalm	Book V																																									
	120	121	122	12 3	124	12 5	12 6	127	12 8	12 9	13 0	13 1	13 2	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150											
Superscript	Songs of Ascents												HD	UT	Dav			h	Dav			HLL	HLL	HLL	HLL	HLL	HLL	HLL	HLL	HLL												
Occurrences of certain words or formulaic phrases	D	D	Sol		D	D	BRK	HLL	HD																																	
Shape of Collections	L	Z	P		W	Z	W	L	Z	P	Great Hallel	Jns	KG						KG	I	W	W	Uni																			
																		Med	Ind. Lament	P			Isr		Chas		Cos + Chas															
Shape of Groups	Group 11												Group 12																													
	120	121	122	12 3	124	12 5	12 6	127	12 8	12 9	13 0	13 1	13 2	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150											
	Lament-Zion-Praise. Center: Arriving at Zion								Lament-Zion-Praise. Center: The eschatological Zion				Canonical Hist: Creation to Exile										Praise YHWH, Creation to Restored Zion. People in Zion in Ps 149. End with the Praise of YHWH. Alphabetic																			
Shape of Section (Books IV–V). Central motif									YHWH establishes Zion. Center: Not a house/city built by man				Praise in house of God			Supplication							Praise in house of God																			
													Supplication of afflicted David																													
	A Zion-City-Temple built by YHWH												Praise in God's house and back into exile (135–137) > Alphabetic (138) > Davidic (138–145) > Praise; creation to Zion; Righteous Israel in Zion (148–150) > Perfect Praise of YHWH; Alphabetic (150)																													
	Earthly Zion (120–124) > An ideal Zion built only by YHWH (125–129) > Ideal Zion built (130–134)																																									

Figure 28: A Proposal for the Macrostructure of Books IV–V (Pss 120–150)

Figure 27 and Figure 28<sup>552</sup> illustrate the macrostructure of Books IV–V at three/four compositional levels: (a) The “superscript” row identifies each psalm according to its superscription. The row below it characterizes certain words or formulaic phrases that occur in the psalm. For instance, Ps 103 is a Davidic psalm (“Dav”) and within this psalm, there is one reference of “Moses” and three references of “BRK” (**ברך** in the *piel* imperative masculine plural). I have also underlined instances when a reference occurs as a coda. Hence, in Ps 103, “BRK” denotes that the psalm ends with **ברך** of the same conjugation. These references show graphically the extent to which such formulaic phrases are used. They give us a visual sense where praise is heightened macrostructurally. This effect is clearest in Ps 150 where there are eleven occurrences of **הָלְלֹו** in addition to one in the superscription making a total of 12. I have also labelled the superscription of a psalm according to its characterization in the text. Phrases such as **יְהֹוָה מֶלֶךְ** (93:1), **הָזֵד** (105:1) and **הָלְלֹו** (106:1) that begin psalms are considered a form of editorial superscription, and not as “untitled psalms” as some scholars regard them.<sup>553</sup> Common superscriptions are marked with the same colours.

<sup>552</sup> Mo = Moses; UT = Untitled psalm; Ps = “A Psalm”; *mlk* = YHWH *Malak*; Thk = Thanksgiving psalm; BRK = *piel* imperative mp **ברך**; HD = *hiphil* impv mp **חִדָּה**; HLL = *piel* imperative mp **לְלַלְתָּה**; Aff = A psalm of affliction; Dav/PoD = Davidic psalm; Sol/D = Solomonic/Davidic superscriptions following the **שִׁיר הַמֶּלֶךְ**; *brk* = “bless the LORD” as superscription (*piel* imperative, fs); *Ash* = **אֲשֶׁר** as superscription; P = Praise psalm; Sup = Supplication psalm; Z = Zion-focused psalm; W = Wicked motif in psalm; Med = Meditative psalm; Uni = Universal in scope; KG = Kingship psalm; Jns = Janus psalm; Cos = Cosmic; *Chas* = *Chasidim*; Sg = a song.

<sup>553</sup> Wilson considered Pss 90–99, 114–119 as groups of “untitled psalms.” He noted that there is a “tendency toward combination of these untitled pss into larger compositions. . . . This wholesale combination most frequently takes place in two groups of pss (90–99 and 114–119). Such large-scale unification of several consecutive pss results in extremely awkward constructions and probably reflects a secondary development rather than original unity.” Wilson, *Editing*, 177.

(b) The row denoted by “Shape of Collections” illustrates subdivisions at the Collection level. They are marked by their dominant thematic motif/genre. For instance, I have grouped Pss 125–129 as a unit. The first and last psalm (125, 129) in the unit are psalms with the dominant motif of the wicked (“W”). The center psalm (127) is focused on Zion (“Z”).

(c) In the row denoted by “Shape of Groups,” I have further generalized Groups 9–12 by their central motifs. Hence, the central motif of Group 12 is the final Davidic Collection (138–145), which can be characterized as “Supplication” since the four psalms at the center are Supplication psalms. Each Group can be divided concentrically into three Collections. Psalms 104–107 (which cuts across Books IV–V) is the first Collection in Group 12, a viewpoint that will be subsequently discussed (§§2.4.5, 2.4.6).

(d) Finally, the row denoted by “Shape of Section” further generalize the entire shape of Groups 9–12, which has an A-B-A’-B’ symmetric structure.

#### **2.4.4 PSALMS 104–106 AS A JANUS COLLECTION**

A crucial undertaking in analyzing the shape of Books IV–V is understanding the function of Pss 104–106.<sup>554</sup> Psalms 101–103 is clearly a unit (Davidic triad) and separate from Pss 104–106 (Hallelujah triad).<sup>555</sup> Disjunctures are often marked by a

<sup>554</sup> Lindsay Wilson has argued that Ps 103 is also connected to Pss 104–106, and together, they serve as a “focus on God’s kingship” closing the entire Book IV. Lindsay Wilson, “On Psalms 103–106 as a Closure to Book IV of the Psalter,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. E. Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 755–66, [765].

<sup>555</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, 96.

shift in the superscription type.<sup>556</sup> Doxology is also a feature in the conclusion to a unit of psalms. Hence, doxological references at the end of Ps 103 bind the group 101–103 and conclude this segment with a spectacular fourfold בָּרוּךְ in the last three verses of Ps 103.<sup>557</sup> The term, בָּרוּךְ (*piel* imperative mp), is found in Pss 96, 100, 103–104,<sup>558</sup> 134–135, likely functioning to mark the end of a compositional unit. It is possible to see their occurrences in Pss 96 and 100 marking the end of a unit of UT and YHWH *Malak* psalms.

There is a remarkable parallel between the pairs of Pss 103–104 and 134–135.<sup>559</sup> Psalms 103 and 134 are located at the end of the Davidic Psalms (101–103) and the SOA (120–134) respectively. Psalms 104 and 135 each begin a new Collection of three psalms with three different superscriptions (104–106, 135–137). Hence, Pss 104–106 and 135–137 have a common feature—they function as Janus-Collections linking Groups 9 and 10, Groups 11 and 12 respectively in Books IV–V.

As previously noted, Wilson's view on הַלְלוּיָה and הָזֶה psalms concluding and introducing a segment of psalms does not work because Ps 104 (with a *hallelujah*

<sup>556</sup> While this is affirmed in Books I–III, Wilson argued that “for obvious reasons, author-change can no longer serve as an effective indicator of disjunction. In this segment [Pss 90–150], therefore, we find *hllwyh* and *hwdw* pss performing the same function.” Wilson, *Editing*, 157, 158.

<sup>557</sup> Wilson showed that “in the Mesopotamian hymns and catalogues, ‘praise’ and ‘blessing’ (Hallel and Doxology) frequently concluded documents or sections within documents. It is not surprising then to discover a similar technique in the Hebrew hymnic literature. . . . There we find four groups of *hllwyh* pss, all of which mark the conclusion of Psalter.” Wilson, *Editing*, 181.

<sup>558</sup> The opening line in Ps 104:1 is a deviation from the imperative plural. This is likely intentional, not just from the inclusio point of view (cf. 104:35). My argument is that it is shaped by a numerical design. This will be clear by the end of this chapter.

<sup>559</sup> The בָּרוּךְ in Psalm 104 is in *piel* imperative feminine singular.

conclusion) does not seem to conclude a segment and Ps 105 (as a **הוֹדָה** psalm) does not introduce any new segment (see note 519).

I propose that three verbal forms of doxologies (not just two in Wilson's view) have been used as structuring techniques to shape Books IV–V. The first form is the *piel* imperative mp of **ברך**. The second is the *hiphil* imperative mp of **יְדַעַת** and the third is the *piel* imperative mp of **הִלֵּל**. They might have cultic or liturgical origins, but when specifically used in imperative and plural forms, these three terms are carefully appropriated as a literary formula for structuring purpose in the final text of the Psalter. These doxological phrases serve to unite groups of psalms, and mark beginnings or endings in individual psalms as well as a group of psalms in the Psalter. They also mark YHWH *Malak* or enthronement psalms. Figure 29 identifies these terms, their locations and functions.

Possible Functions	Mark YHWH <i>Malak</i> /enthrone -ment	End a unit of psalms	Begin a unit of psalms	Unite a group of psalms	Occurrences in Psalter
בָּרָךְ <i>piel</i> impv masc plural	96:2	100:4; 103:20–22; 134:1–2.	135:19–20	66:8; 68:27	13
יְדַעַת <i>piel</i> impv masc plural	30:5; 97:12;	33:2; 100:4; 106:1; 118:1, 29	136:1–3, 26; 107:1	105:1; 106:1; 107:1	13
הִלֵּל <i>piel</i> impv masc plural	22:24	150:1–6; 106: 48; 113:9; 117:2;	111:1; 135:1, 3, 21; 146:1	104:35; 105:45; 106:1, 48; 111:1; 112:1; 113:1; 115:18; 116:19; 117:1; 146:1, 10; 147:1, 20; 148:1–4, 7, 14; 149:1, 9	48

Figure 29: Number of Occurrences, Locations and Functions of Imperative Masculine Plural forms of **ברך**, **יְדַעַת** and **הִלֵּל**

The numbers in the far right column are based on an exhaustive electronic search on the imperative masculine plural of the three doxological phrases in the Psalms. Neither Wilson and Zenger have accounted for all the occurrences of these forms, nor

do they differentiate their occurrences in imperative forms. While there are other occurrences of these three verbs in construct and non-imperative forms, the distinction of the imperative plural forms is based on linguistic clues in the formulaic imperative plural forms **הָלְלֵי־הָ** and **הַזֹּדוּ** which mark certain psalms in Books IV–V.

Although the phrase, **בָּרְכִו**, is never used in the superscription of the Psalms, their specific occurrences in the Psalter is important. For instance, it binds the psalm-pairs 103–104, 134–135 across the seams of two Collections. In Pss 103–104, it does so with the use of **בָּרְכִי**. The phrase, **בָּרְכִי נֶפֶשִׁי** (fem imperative), occurs only in two psalms (103:1–2, 22; 104:1, 35) in the entire HB.<sup>560</sup> The parallel between Pss 103–104 and 134–135 is distinctive in that the first psalm of the pair (103, 134) contain only the imperative plural **בָּרְכִו** but the second psalm in the pair (104, 135) contain the imperative **בָּרְכִו** as well as a concluding **הָלְלֵי־הָ**.

When we consider the imperative doxologies in the superscriptions functioning as intentional structural markers, the macrostructure of Books IV–V becomes clearer. They function both to connect and distinguish psalm groups. While Ps 104 is connected to Ps 103, the triad (104–106), marked by these doxological superscriptions, is also distinguished from the Davidic Pss 101–103. Yet, the same triad (104–106), which comes at the end of Book IV, is also connected to Ps 107 in Book V by **הַזֹּדוּ** in the superscription.

<sup>560</sup> Interestingly, the pairing of **בָּרְךָ** and **נֶפֶשִׁ** (though not in the same form) is only found elsewhere in Gen 27:4, 19, 25, 31, where they describe Isaac blessing his sons before he died.

The four Pss 104–107, beginning with the phrases **הָזֶן** and **הַלְלוִיָּה**, **הָזֶן בָּרְכֵי** respectively, highlight the three different doxological formulas in the imperative. Psalms 104–106 all end with **הַלְלוֹתָה**. Yet Pss 105–107 have the phrase (*hiphil* imperative, 105:1; 106:1; 107:1) in their first verse. In other words, with the use of the **הָזֶן**, at the beginning and end of psalms, the entire Pss 104–107 is interlocked. Furthermore, when we consider the binding of Pss 103–104 with the use of **בָּרְכֵי**<sup>561</sup> the entire Pss 103–107 is connected by the three doxological imperative forms. Psalms 104–107, when seen against the horizon of Pss 101–110, function as a Janus-Collection not just between Books IV and V, but also between the two Davidic Collections (101–103, 108–110). The following figure illustrates this graphically.

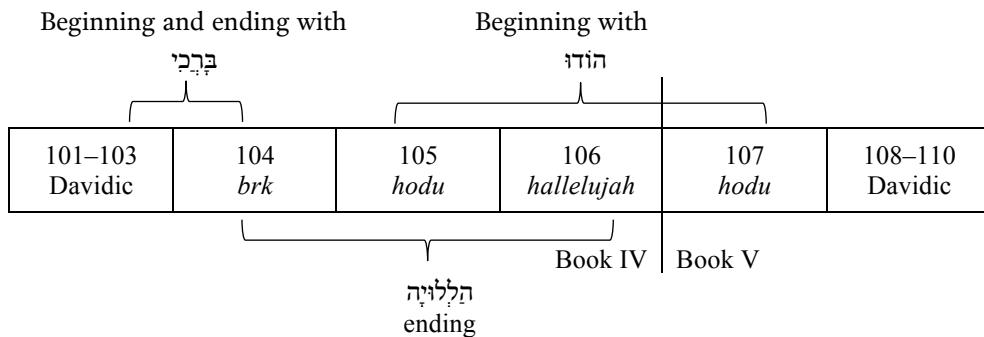


Figure 30: Interlocking Function of Doxological Vocabulary in Psalms 103–107

In the following section, Pss 104–107 are discussed in greater detail.

<sup>561</sup> For Psalm 104, the superscription is given in the LXX, 11QPs<sup>a</sup> and Aquila's translation of the Psalms. Wilson suggested that the absence of superscription "functions as an editorial method of preserving a *tradition* for the combination of the 'untitled' psalm with its immediate predecessor." However, he admitted that this does not imply that "all occurrences of such 'untitled' psalms throughout the Psalter are to be so combined." Wilson, "The Use of 'Untitled' Psalms in the Hebrew Psalter," 404.

#### 2.4.5 ROLE OF PSALMS 104–107

Psalms 104–107 are plausibly designed as a unit with these considerations:

- (1) *Superscriptions and doxological vocabulary.* In light of superscription techniques at work in Books I–III and in Pss 104–107, the generalization of the term “untitled psalm” is an unfortunate murking of its editorial function. As highlighted, such psalms are actually titled with a doxological formula.
- (2) *Length of Pss 104–107.* They are considerably longer in words than the psalms in adjacent groups. Psalms 104–107 are four psalms with a total of 171 verses (42.8 per psalm). The two adjacent Davidic triads have a total of 59 (101–103) and 52 (108–110) verses, with an average of 19.7 and 17.3 verses per psalm respectively. Clearly, the two Davidic triads are very similar in length and verse frequency. Psalm 107, however, is similar to Pss 104–106 in length and verse frequency. These numbers bind Ps 107 to Pss 104–106 as an editorial unit.<sup>562</sup> Figure 31 summarizes these numbers.

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<sup>562</sup> Labuschagne notes, “It is important to note that Book IV has an apparent open end. There is no clear break between 106 at the end of Book IV and 107 at the beginning of Book V because 107 is very closely related to 105–106, all three being ‘episodic poems’, as I have shown in my analyses. This means that the seam between Book IV and Book V is rather artificial, in contrast to the strong caesura between Psalm 89 and 90, and between Psalm 119 and the Songs of Ascents.” Casper J. Labuschagne, “The Compositional Structure of the Psalter: A New Approach,” 1–28, [19]. [cited 29 January 2016]. Online <http://www.labuschagne.nl/psalterstructure.pdf>.

	Verses	Total	Average
Davidic	101	59	19.7
	102		
	103		
Doxological Superscription	104	171	42.8
	105		
	106		
	107		
Davidic	108	52	17.3
	109		
	110		

Figure 31: Chapter Length and the Unity of Psalms 104–107

(3) *Genre of the Psalms.* Psalms 104–107 have a different tone. Dominant in these psalms are *descriptions* or *recounts* of YHWH’s works as opposed to petitions or prayers in the Davidic psalms. Psalms 104–107 emphasize the works of God in Israel’s history and his dealings with them. Statements of the psalmist’s lament *against* his enemies in Pss 104–107 are few.<sup>563</sup> In contrast, the Davidic triads are filled with personal pleas for vindication and deliverance (cf. 101, 109).

(4) *Metanarrative and thematic progression through Pss 104–107.* Psalm 104 focuses on God’s creation.<sup>564</sup> This Psalm is also used in various traditions associated with new life.<sup>565</sup> Psalm 105 describes God’s covenant with the patriarchs (Abraham,

<sup>563</sup> Perhaps only in Pss 104:34–35; 106:10; 107:2, 42.

<sup>564</sup> God stretched out (נָטוּה, v. 2) the heavens like a curtain; made (הַשְׁבִּע, v. 19) the stars; set the earth on its foundation (יָסַד־אָרֶץ עַל־מִכְנָנָה, v. 5); and established the boundary for the mountains, valleys (גָּבָן־שָׁמֶן בְּלֵעָרָיו, v. 9). Cf. Gen 1:7; 2:8; Job 38:4. Goldingay, citing P. Miller, sees this psalm as perhaps the “most extended explication of God’s work of creation outside of Genesis”. Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:196.

<sup>565</sup> In the Jewish tradition, this psalm is sung on the morning of Yom Kippur and in the evening of the new moon. It is also recited from the feast of Sukkoth to Pesach, looking forward to new life as spring draws near. In the Orthodox tradition, this psalm is recited at “vespers at the setting of the sun, with the lighting of lamps, signifying the beginning of the new day.” In the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England, this psalm is associated with the Pentecost, to link the giving of God’s spirit “when people are born and when they are born anew.” Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:199.

Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, vv. 9–23), how God turned Israel into a nation in Egypt and brought them out through Moses and Aaron (vv. 26–43).<sup>566</sup> Psalm 106 describes Israel’s rejection of God (vv. 6–39) and rejection by God (vv. 41–44).<sup>567</sup> By the end of the chapter, Israel was under her captors (v. 46), scattered, and to be gathered from the nations (v. 47). Thus, Psalm 106 ends with the story of Israel’s apostasy and exile. Psalm 107 continues the theme with descriptions of Israel’s redemption and gathering from four corners of the lands (107:2). God broke their bondage (107:14), shattered “gates of bronze and cut bars of iron asunder” (v. 16)<sup>568</sup> and led them to an “inhabited city” (107:4, 7, 36) where the people could flourish, multiply and be secure (107:38, 41). This movement binds them together as an editorial unit.

(5) *Thematic and lexical interconnections.* Psalm 104 is connected to Psalm 105 with the lexemes שיר and זמר [אָזְמַרְתָּ לְאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר לֵיהֶה בְּחִי] [104:33]; שירן-לוּ זמרנו-לוּ [105:2]). The word שמח is used consecutively in Pss 104:31, 34; 105:3, 38; 106:5; 107:30, 42)<sup>569</sup> as a concatenation technique binding Pss 104–107 (*Verkettung*; §1.2.13).

Psalm 105 is clearly concatenated to Psalm 106 with the formulaic *hallelujah* (105:45; 106:1).<sup>570</sup> Clifford points out that the words “desert/wilderness,” which occur

<sup>566</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:203.

<sup>567</sup> Note that חנָן is not used here.

<sup>568</sup> Johnston notes that “bars and gates” (e.g., Ps 107:16, 18) are “quasi-physical features” that are associated with *sheol*, or “a land of not return.” Philip Johnston, “The Psalms and Distress,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip Johnston and David Firth; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 63–84, [71].

<sup>569</sup> Prior to Pss 104–107, the word is only found in Ps 97 and in Ps 109 after.

<sup>570</sup> LXX omits the *Hallelujah* in Ps 105:45. Goldingay thinks it might be a “dittography from Ps 106.” Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:217.

thrice in Pss 106 and 107, serve to link both of them.<sup>571</sup> Kim shows exhaustively that Pss 105–106 have 55 words in common and these two adjacent psalms have the highest lexical interconnections in the whole of Book IV.<sup>572</sup> Certain words/phrases are found only in these two adjacent psalms.<sup>573</sup>

Psalm 106 is further connected to 107 via the word קבץ. This word occurs only four times in the Psalter (41:7; 102:23; 106:47; 107:3). Of these four occurrences, only 106:47 and 107:3 are associated explicitly with the motif of ingathering of scattered Israel “from among the nations” and “from the land, east and west, north and south.” Furthermore, in both psalms, there are explicit references to Israel’s enemies. Israel is given “into the hand of the nations” (בַּיָּד־גּוֹיִם, 106:41); to “all their captors” (כָּל־שׂוֹבֵיחֶם, 106:46); and to the “hand of adversary” (מִיד־אָצָר, 107:2). Their connection is further explicated by the use of three common vocabularies in the last three lines of Ps 106 and the first three of Ps 107.

וַיְתִן אֹתָם לַרְחָםִים לְפָנֵי כָּל־שׂוֹבֵיחֶם<sup>46</sup>  
 הַזּוֹשִׁיעַנוּ יְהֹוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְקַבֵּצְנוּ מִן־הָגּוֹיִם לְהִזְוֹת לְשָׁם קְדוּשָׁךְ לְהַשְׁתַּבְּחָה בְּתַהֲלַלְתָּךְ<sup>47</sup>  
 בְּרוֹנְדִּיהְוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמַן הַלְלוּיָה<sup>48</sup>

הָדוֹ לִיהְוָה בִּיטּוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִידָה<sup>1</sup>  
 יֹאמְרוּ גָּאוֹלִי יְהֹוה אֲשֶׁר גָּאַלָּם מִיד־אָצָר<sup>2</sup>  
 וּמְאַרְצֹת קַבְּצָם מִזְרָחָם וּמִמִּעָרָב מִצְפָּן וּמִזְמָן<sup>3</sup>

<sup>571</sup> Cf. Pss 106:9, 14, 26; 107:4, 33, 35. Richard Clifford, *Psalms 73-150* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 162.

<sup>572</sup> See Kim, “The Structure and Coherence of Psalms 89-106,” 305–310.

<sup>573</sup> Cf. “Land of Ham” (105:23, 27; 106:22); “Canaan” is found only in these two adjacent psalms and once elsewhere in the Psalter (105:11; 106:38; 135:11).

Psalms 106 and 107 are clearly juxtaposed with each other despite being divided across Books IV–V. At the seam between these two psalms lie the message of praise and thanks to God for he *is to gather* (*piel* imperative; 106:47) and *has gathered* (*piel* perfect; 107:3) his scattered people from the nations and the lands. In other words, the significance of this division between Pss 106–107 within the horizon of Pss 104–107 suggests that Book V is to be read, at least in its opening, with the perspective of the return and ingathering of scattered Israel.<sup>574</sup> Book III depicts Israel’s ejection from Zion, through YHWH’s kingship (93–100) and descriptions of the righteous Moses and David (90–92, 101–103) in Book IV, with Book V begins to depict Israel’s return.

(6) *Use of αλληλουια in the LXX.* It is possible that the LXX links these groups of psalms by an interconnecting phrase, *αλληλουια ἐξομολογεῖσθε*, between two psalms. The *αλληλουια* phrase is absent at the end of the LXX Ps 103:35 [MT 104:35] but this verse is concatenated to LXX 104:1 [MT 105:1], where the first two words are *αλληλουια ἐξομολογεῖσθε* (“Hallelujah, give praise”). This phenomenon recurs between the pairs of LXX Pss 104:45–105:1, 105:48–106:1, 116:2–117:1 and 134:21–135:1. This concatenation also occurs between LXX Pss 145:10 and 146:1 [MT 146:10 and 147:1] with a different second word, “*αλληλουια Αγγαιου*.”

- a) LXX 103:35 . . . εὐλόγει ἡ ψυχή μου τὸν κύριον---[LXX 104:1]  
αλληλουια ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῷ κυρίῳ . . .
- b) LXX 104:45 . . . καὶ τὸν νόμον αὐτοῦ ἐκζητήσωσιν---[LXX 105:1]  
αλληλουια ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῷ κυρίῳ ὅτι . . .

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<sup>574</sup> Other literary evidence of postexilic orientation can be seen in Pss 126, 137. This does not mean that all the psalms in Book V are composed in the postexilic period.

- c) LXX 105:48 . . . καὶ ἐρεῖ πᾶς ὁ λαός γένοιτο γένοιτο---[LXX 106:1]  
αλληλουια ἔξομολογεῖσθε τῷ κυρίῳ ὅτι . . .
- d) LXX 116:26. . . καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα---  
[LXX 117:1] αλληλουια ἔξομολογεῖσθε τῷ κυρίῳ . . .
- e) LXX 134:21 . . . ὁ κατοικῶν Ιερουσαλημ ---[LXX 135:1]  
αλληλουια ἔξομολογεῖσθε τῷ κυρίῳ ὅτι . . .
- f) LXX 145:10 . . . εἰς γενεὰν καὶ γενεάν---[LXX 146:1] αλληλουια  
Ἄγγαιου καὶ Ζαχαρίου αἰνεῖτε τὸν κύριον. . .

The five identified concatenations of two psalms with the phrase, *αλληλουια ἔξομολογεῖσθε*, do not occur elsewhere in LXX Psalter (cf. LXX 113:26–114:1; 115:10; 116:1). They are found only towards both ends of Books IV–V (104, 146).<sup>575</sup> While our concern is primarily in the MT, these concatenations in the LXX suggest that the LXX translators considered the MT Pss 104–107, 117–118, 146–147 linked by *αλληλουια ἔξομολογεῖσθε*.

(7) *Numerical and thematic connections between Pss 105–107.* Labuschagne makes an interesting observation of the use of 34 words in three separate texts of Pss 105:40–44; 106:23–27; 107:23–26, 40 (last five verses in Ps 107 marked by the inverted *nun*). The number “34” is significant as it is a factor of “17” (divine name number). These 34 words are also divided into a 19+15 sequence, separated by ‘*athnach* or verse division.<sup>576</sup>

The preceding seven reasons sustain the structural unity of Pss 104–107. This unity helps us see a striking macrostructural thematic parallel between Pss 104–119 and

<sup>575</sup> Cf. LXX Pss 113:26–114:1

<sup>576</sup> On the specific numerical technique of 34 (19+15) words, see Labuschagne, <sup>576</sup>Labuschagne “Psalm 95— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–5 [cited 26 May 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps095.pdf>.

135–150 (discussed next), which provides the key to understanding how Books IV and V are designed as a unity.

#### **2.4.6 READING BOOKS IV AND V TOGETHER**

Like Books II and III, there is structural (and thematic) support to show that Books IV and V are designed as a compositional Section. This does not suggest that the division between Books IV and V is in any way diminished in significance, yet, in spite of the division, readers are led by the rhetorical and literary features to read the last two Books of the Psalter together. Four structural arguments are given below.

(1) *Parallel trajectories between Pss 104–107 and 135–137.* As previously detailed, a trajectory is traced from Pss 104 to 107, revealing the canonical history of creation to Israel’s exile and her impending return. Psalms 135–137 contain a parallel trajectory. Like Pss 104–107, there is no authorship attribution in the superscriptions of Pss 135–137.<sup>577</sup> The creation and providence motifs are clear in Ps 135:6–7. YHWH has also chosen a people for himself (135:4).<sup>578</sup> We observe YHWH’s deliverance of his people from Egypt and leading them into Canaan in Ps 135:8–12. Their rebellion and idolatry are characterized next in Ps 135:14–18. The entire trajectory of creation, deliverance and entry into the land of Canaan is reimagined in the form of Praise in Ps

<sup>577</sup> Todd, likewise, sees Pss 135–137 as a unit. James Todd, *Remember, O Yahweh: The Poetry and Context of Psalms 135–137* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 122–123.

<sup>578</sup> For connections between Pss 135–136 on the motif of creation, see Todd, *Remember, O Yahweh*, 87–90.

136. By Ps 137, Israel's exile to Babylon is clear and there is a longing for hope at the end (137:1, 5–6, 9). These remarkable parallels are presented in Figure 32.

Pss 104–107	Common Motifs in the Trajectory	Pss 135–137
104:2–32	YHWH's creation and providence	135:4; 136:4–9
105:6–24	YHWH's choosing and forming a people	135:6–7
105:25–43	YHWH's deliverance of Israel from Egypt	135:8–9
105:44	YHWH's giving of the land to Israel	135:9–12
106:6–7, 19–22, 35–39	Israel's persistent idolatry	135:14–18
106:41–47	YHWH's giving up of Israel to Babylonian exile	137:1–4
107:1–43	Israel's hopes for restoration in Zion	137:1, 5–6, 9

Figure 32: Parallel Trajectories from Creation to Exile in Pss 104–107 and 135–137

(2) *Parallel of Pss 104–119 and 135–150.* The parallel in the trajectories between Pss 104–107 and 135–137 further allows us to see a wider parallel between two broader compositional units of Pss 104–119 and 135–150, as depicted in Figure 33.

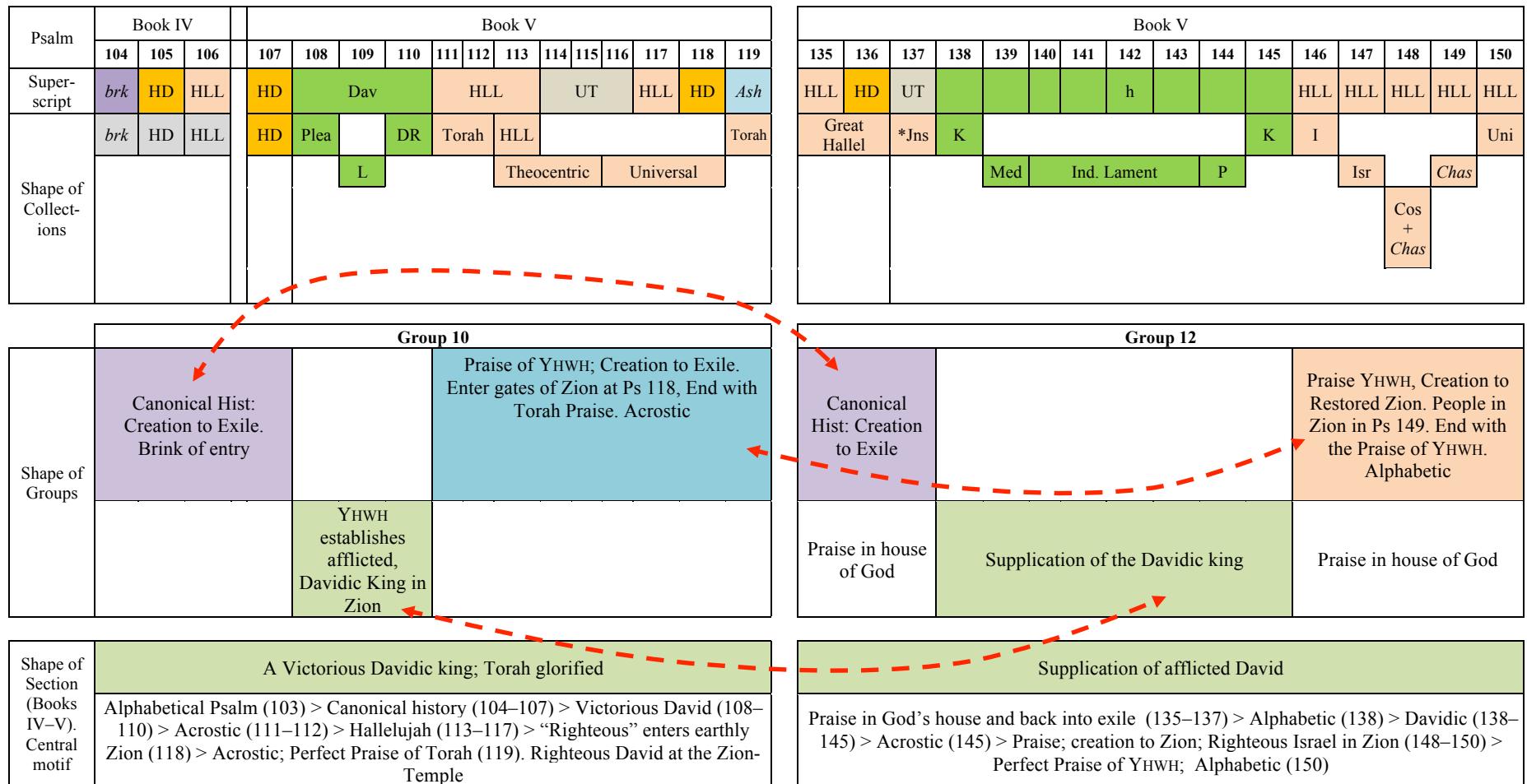


Figure 33: Parallels between Pss 104–119 and 135–150 in Books IV–V

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Both Pss 104–119 and 135–150 consist of a three-part symmetric structure. In both Groups, we observe first a collection without authorship superscriptions (104–107 // 135–137). This is followed by the Davidic Collection (108–110 // 138–145), and another Collection of psalms without authorship superscriptions but characterized by *hallelujah* (111–119 // 146–150). In other words, the entirety of 104–119 and 135–150 follow a common sequence of canonical history-Davidic-*hallelujah* psalms. *This structural shape suggests a telos that begins with the creation and formation of Israel as the people of God, through a Davidic Collection (cf. chapter 4), before arriving at the final consummative hallelujah psalms. Thus Davidic psalms stand between Israel's history and consummative praise.*

Both Groups begin with high concentration of plural imperative doxological vocabulary (cf. 104–107, 135–136), go through a series of *hallelujah*-superscription psalms (111–117, 146–149), and conclude with an AA and AC composition respectively (119, 150). Furthermore, Pss 119 and 150 at the end of the Groups culminate with the twin motifs of Torah (119) and kingship (150), recalling the Prologue. It is also striking that the seams of the Davidic Collections (108–110; 138–145) and the *hallelujah* Collections (111–117; 146–150) are marked by two AAs (111–112, 145).<sup>579</sup>

The final third Collections of both Groups (111–119, 146–150) are bounded by AA/AC which is a poetical device symbolizing “perfection” or “completeness.” This totality concept is also implicit within the content of Pss 119 and 150 (119:96; 150:1).

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<sup>579</sup> The function of AA and AC will be discussed in chapter 5.

Psalm 150 also consists of a total of 12 instances of the imperative plural הֲלֹל, further reinforcing the motif of completeness.

(3) *Symmetric shape of Books IV–V.* The entire Books IV and V can be grouped into four major Groups (9–12). All four Groups have a three-part concentric structure. The dominant motifs at the center of each Group are: (a) YHWH *Malak* psalms (93–100); (b) the ideal triumphant Davidic king (108–110); (c) the ideal Zion-temple built by YHWH (122, 127, 132); (d) a final Davidic group with the motif of supplication but ending with YHWH's kingship (138–145).

When we consider the dominant motifs at the center of each Group under the horizon of Books IV–V, they are also symmetrical with a focus on the idealized Davidic kingship and Zion at the center (Groups 10–11), framed by YHWH's kingship (Group 9) and Supplication (Group 12). The following figure illustrates this:

Shape of Groups	Books IV-V												
	Group 9			Group 10			Group 11			Group 12			
	90–92	93–100	101–103	104–106	107	108–110	111–119	120–124	125–129	130–134	135–137	138–145	146–150
	Mosaic; Moses' Song; Righteous people dwell in YHWH's house		Davidic; David's Song. The righteous, afflicted Davidide in Zion	Canonical Hist: Creation to Exile. Brink of entry			Hallelujah; Creation to Exile. King and the righteous enters gates; Completeness in Torah	Lament-Zion-Praise; Center = Jerusalem		Lament-Zion-Praise; Center = ideal Zion	Canonical Hist: Creation to Exile		Hallelujah; Creation to heavenly Zion. Chasidim in Zion. Completeness in YHWH
	Take refuge in YHWH's house	YHWH's kingship in Zion	Live righteously in YHWH's house		YHWH establishes afflicted, Davidic King in Zion			YHWH establishes Zion. Center = Not built by man		Praise in YHWH's house (135, 136)	Supplication		Praise in YHWH's house (150)

Shape of Section (Books IV–V). Central motif	YHWH's kingship	Ideal Davidite	Ideal Zion-city	Supplication

Figure 34: Structure of Four Major Groups of Books IV–V

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(4) *Symbolic numbers are seen when superscriptions are totalled.* In our discussions of Books I–III, we noted that the number of psalms based on their specific superscriptions adds up precisely to form symbolic numbers (Figure 18). The symbolism is present *only* when the numbers in Books II–III are added, reinforcing our contention that they are designed as a unit. The question, then, is whether the same phenomenon is observed in Books IV and V. However, ascertaining symbolic numbers in Books IV–V is a more complex endeavor because of the variegated superscription types, many of which have no attributed authorship.

The mystery unravels when the superscriptions are grouped into five main categories: (a) YHWH *Malak* psalms that begin with the formula, יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ; (b) Psalms with named figures in superscriptions (e.g., Moses, David); (c) Psalms containing superscriptions but without attributed names or psalms without clear superscriptions; (d) Psalms that begin with either *hodu* or *hallelujah* in the imperative plural; (e) The שִׁיר הַמֶּלֶךְ superscription.<sup>580</sup>

The tabulated figures for these five categories of superscription add up to interesting figures ( $3+14+14+15+15 = 61$ ). When we further classify these superscriptions into two main groups—those with names and those without names, we arrive at the numbers 17 and 44 ( $11 \times 4$ ) respectively. These two numbers are symbolic of YHWH's presence and totality (see chapter 5).

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<sup>580</sup> To avoid double-counting, the “David” and “Solomon” references in Pss 122, 124, 127, 131, 133 are not included in the category of “names.” I have considered all these psalms as belonging to the Collection of the Songs of Ascents.

Superscription Categories			Sub-total	
(a) YHWH <i>Malak</i> (divine name; 93, 97, 99)			3	17
(b) Psalms with named figures in superscription	Davidic (101, 103, 108–110, 138–145)	13	14	
	Moses (90)	1		
(c) Psalms containing superscriptions but without names or psalms without clear superscriptions	Without clear superscriptions (91, 94–96, 114–116, 137)	8	14	44 (11x4)
	<i>Ashre</i> (119)	1		
	A Psalm / Thanks / Afflicted / <i>brk</i> (92, 98, 100, 102, 104)	5		
(d) <i>Hodu</i> and <i>Hallelujah</i>	<i>Hodu</i> Hiph Impv mp (105, 107, 118, 136)	4	15	
	<i>Hallelujah</i> piel impv mp (106, 111–113, 117, 135, 146–150)	11		
(d) Songs of Ascents (120–134)			15	
Total Psalms in Books IV and V			61	

Figure 35: Superscription Tabulation in Books IV–V

Superscription Type	Book I	Books II–III	Books IV–V	Total
Names present in Superscription	37 (26+11)	44 (11x4)	17	98 (7x7x2)
Names absent in Superscription	4	4	44 (11x4)	52 (26x2)
Total	41	48	61	150 (10x15)

Figure 36: Named and Unnamed Superscription-Type Count

As shown in Figure 36, both Books I and II–III have four psalms that do not have names in their superscriptions. Books II–III and IV–V have the common number of “44” (11x4). The category of superscription without names in the three Sections of the Psalter (Books I, II–III, IV–V) are linked to the number “4” (or a factor of “4”). The numbers “17” and “26” are divine name numbers<sup>581</sup> while numbers “7,” “11” and “10”

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<sup>581</sup> “17” and “26” are also the gematria of the Tetragrammaton. Books III and IV each contain 17 psalms.

are associated with completeness. The numerical correspondences show that formal and thematic devices correspond.

Before we conclude this chapter, we return to the question of validity of interpretation. The most important techniques seen at work in this chapter can be reduced to parallelisms (recurrences of common words, ideas, structures or trajectories, close or distant), concentricity (leitmotifs in the Prologue), intertextuality (Davidic covenant) and perhaps, numerical symbolism. We have discussed at length in §1.3.1 how composers could plausibly have the literary ability and how readers could, to some extent, appreciate the key motifs of YHWH's kingship, messianic deliverance and establishment of a flourishing Zion. In light of our observations in this chapter, we will further reflect on the plausibility of these techniques (from the perspective of the composer) and the readers' ability to decipher their meaning.

We have proceeded on the basis of Barbiero's structural analysis of Book I and observed how concentric structures work at different levels of composition via the use of superscriptions and content to display a central motif. These central focuses, or motifs, often highlight the leitmotifs in the Prologue, which we have analysed independently. Our proposition that the Prologue is programmatic for the Psalter is partially affirmed through Barbiero's work.

In our analyses of Books II–V, we have observed surprising consistency in the use of literary techniques and development of content, in light of Barbiero's observations. Moreover, these observations fit remarkably well with our analysis of the Prologue. The three-part concentric structure: a movement from a distressful social environment to a secure and blessed city through victorious kingship at the center (or turning point), is crystallized in the Prologue and unfurled across the macrostructure, as discussed in this chapter.

This internal literary consistency is important because it suggests an authorial design for coherency. Such design, in terms of literary technique or content development, is not implausible because it was already present in Israel's oldest poetry, The Song of the Sea (Exod 15). The original readership of the Psalter would resonate with three things: a prevailing circumstance of distress, YHWH's promises to his chosen leader, and anticipation for the fulfilment of these promises. The Psalter's specific contribution is a recasting with the specificity of Davidic kingship (rather than YHWH) and Zion (rather than Canaan).

The use of the numerical technique is a bit of an enigma because it requires a lot more from the audience. The use of chiasmus, recurring motifs and macrostructural storyline can be appreciated aurally but numerical devices require not just a *reading* audience, but one who had the entire text on hand and could work through the material. For readers to recognize the symbolic numbers associated with different kinds of superscriptions, they would have to keep track of all their different counts through the entire book of Psalms. This would naturally require a meticulous and focused reading of the Psalter in its entirety (or large sections of it). It is unclear if the Psalter was used in such a way but in the postexilic period, it is likely that copies of the Psalter as a "book of praises," rather than separate loose collections, were circulated. The numerical devices may not be intended for the general audience. It could, nonetheless, be a technique of the scribal profession and understood by those in the guild. Perhaps with some instruction, more advanced readers were able to recognize them.

The use of numerical devices as symbols is theologically significant and should not be thrust aside. They may not be *essential* to the overarching design or content but they function in a complementary way, adding depth to its meaning. Numbers symbolizing completeness, such as "7," "10," and "14," recur often in the Hebrew bible.

The numbers “17” and “26” are associated with God’s name and thus symbolize YHWH’s covenantal relationship with his people through all generations (Exod 3:15).

A good piece of artistic work often consists of different levels of meaning that may not be plain to every person. Perhaps we can illustrate this with a modern analogy using Vincent Van Gogh’s famous painting, *Cafe Terrace at Night*.

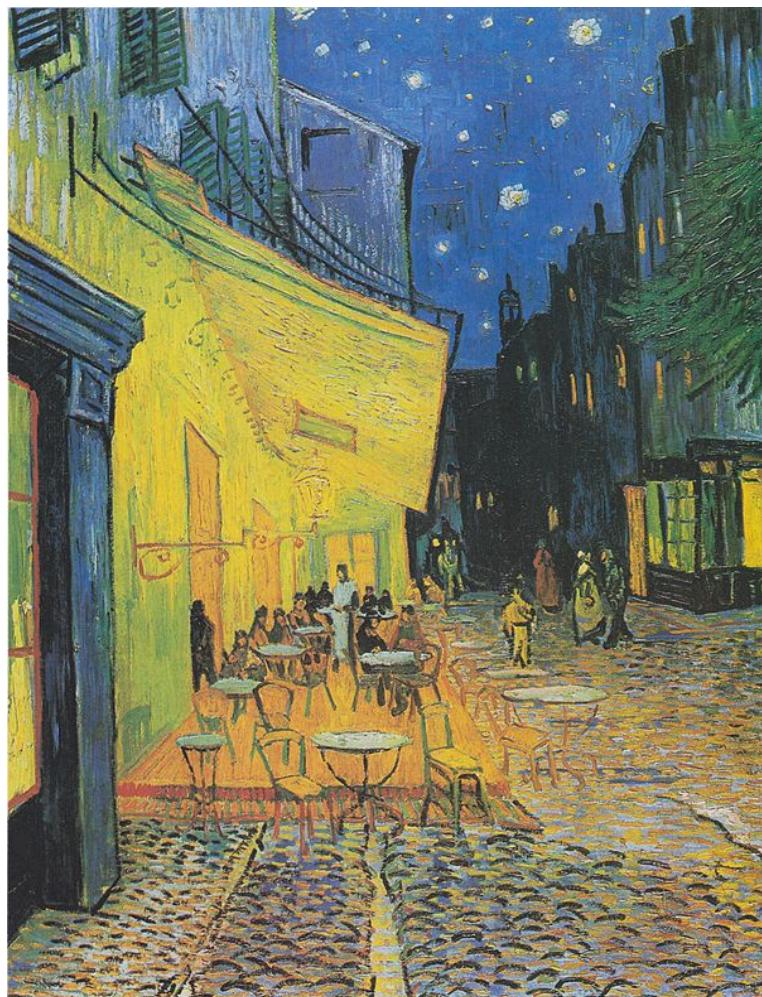


Figure 37: Vincent van Gogh's *Cafe Terrace at Night*<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>582</sup> The painting is currently housed at the Kröller-Müller Museum in Netherlands. This image is available in the public domain: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caf%C3%A9\\_Terrace\\_at\\_Night](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caf%C3%A9_Terrace_at_Night).

At first sight, the painting is an unremarkable café scene with a few diners, as its title suggests. Circumstantially, Van Gogh was a son of a minister, and it is highly plausible that he would include Christian concepts in his paintings. Critics of this painting have observed that the café scene is actually a rendition of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper. In other words, a visual "intertextuality" is at work. The twelve persons seated at the café represent the twelve disciples and the waiter (with long hair and white robe) standing at the center represents Jesus. Other critics have argued that there are a number of crosses hidden in the painting (other than the cross painted just above the shoulder of the waiter).

Once this parallel is observed, the painting takes on a different depth of meaning. The visual framing and colour composition further collaborate with such interpretation. In the painting, the edges of the terrace awning; the edges of the cafe flooring and the tracks of the cobbled stones (at the lower forefront) all extend towards a focal point (or "vanishing point")—the waiter in white and the cross behind him (that is, Jesus!). This man and the area immediately surrounding him is painted with a bright glow (under a lamp), providing a contrast against the outer darker hues. The bright spot; a standing man in white amongst twelve seated diners; the convergence of perspectival lines; their centralized location in the painting; and the idea of a meal at night, provide collaborative connections to the Last Supper interpretation.

In other words, the coherency of composition techniques, form, content, symbolism and Van Gogh's circumstances provide a good basis to argue for the painter's intent. It is not difficult to see how his original audience in nineteen century Europe would be familiar with Da Vinci's famous painting, *The Last Supper*. One may argue that such reading may be coincidental or perhaps a kind of "reader-response" understanding. However, we cannot deny that this interpretation is derived from the

features afforded by the painting itself (recall our discussion of Iser's reader response method in §1.3.1). It is hardly an uncontrolled interpretation that is dependent on the viewers' responses.

The above discussions on Van Gogh's painting provide a parallel to our endeavour in this thesis, though in literary form. In similar ways, the literary composition (concentric structures), content, intertextuality, numerical symbolism and historical circumstances provide a coherent interpretation to our understanding of the Psalter. Such coherency, and not simply an accumulation of observations, suggests editorial design.

## **2.5 SUMMARY**

- Book I can be structured into four main Groups (3–14, 15–24, 25–34, 35–41).
  - Each Group can be further divided into three concentric Collections with a central focus.
- Several important structuring techniques in Book I include: (1) concentric structures working at different levels of composition; (2) central focuses of Torah-fidelity, kingship and Zion-temple; (3) trajectories in relation to Zion; (4) symbolic number of psalms in each group; (5) psalm superscriptions designed to delimit Subgroups; (6) alternation technique (day-night); (7) an “already-but-not-yet” phenomenon.
- The most convincing principle of division occurs when the poetic form (e.g., superscription), thematic and genre (content) structures cohere.
- Books II–III can be seen as a compositional unit with four main Groups (42–49, 50–72, 73–83, 84–89).

- The *Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme* is an editorial technique based on careful use and placement of certain word/phrases at strategic locations across the entire Psalter to make or reinforce a rhetorical point. The use of נג in the Psalter is carefully appropriated and located to underscore the message of YHWH's apparent rejection of the human king and earthly temple specifically in Books II–III.
- Books IV–V can be seen as a compositional unit with four main Groups (90–103, 104–119, 120–134, 135–150). Group 10 (104–119) parallels Group 12 (135–150).
- The compositional unity of Pss 104–107 is important for understanding Books IV–V as a unit. Psalms 104–106 function as a Janus collection.
- Poetical, thematic and genre techniques of structuring in Books I are repeated in Books II–III and IV–V.
- Superscriptions (or the lack thereof) provide important structural, interpretive and symbolic value to the shape of the Psalms. The imperative plural of *Hallelujah, Hodu* and the יְהֹוָה מֶלֶךְ opening invocations are a form of superscription.
- In its entirety, the Psalter is divided into three Sections (Books I, II–III, IV–V) and each Section consists of four Groups (1–4, 5–8, 9–12). Each Section, Group or Collection has a concentric/symmetric shape, emphasizing a central motif.
- This deliberate shape confirms that the Prologue is programmatic, both in structure and theme, for the 150 psalms. Our macrostructural analyses of all

five Books have shown how formal and tacit techniques work coherently in shaping the Psalter with striking consistency.

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### 3 CONCENTRIC AND LINEAR READING

*It is not enough to receive the text only in ‘linear’ fashion, line by line (the first dimension). Simultaneously, its passages must be read ‘palindromically,’ from the outer edges to the center (the second dimension), and citations and allusions to other places in Scripture allowed to contribute to the text’s meaning (the third dimension).*<sup>583</sup>

—Martin Mark

*It is a literary question to what extent the editors of a biblical book, in putting together various sources of pieces of material, have created a meaning in the juxtaposition, as distinct from the meaning of the parts. ‘The case for meaning must be decided on literary criteria: one must show that a unit is not just an anthology but is an intended structure with meaning’.*<sup>584</sup>

—James Barr

We have seen how the entire Psalter can be divided into three major Sections (Books I, II–III, IV–V). Each of these Sections, in turn, consists of four major Groups. In this chapter, the three Sections will be studied together, revealing a remarkable macrostructural coherence based on a *concentric* and *linear* reading of the Psalter. These two dimensions of reading not only cohere and correspond to each other, but they also show that the design of the Psalter is an “intended structure with meaning”!

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<sup>583</sup> “Es genügt nicht, den Text nur ‘linear’ längs seiner Leserichtung zu rezipieren (erste Dimension). Parallel dazu müssen seine Abschnitte jeweils palindromisch von ihren Rändern her zu ihrem Zentrum gelesen (zweite Dimension) und die Zitate und Anspielungen zu an deren heiligen Schriften mit bedacht werden (dritte Dimension).” Martin Mark, *Meine Stärke und mein Schutz ist der Herr: Poetologisch-theologische Studie zu Psalm 118* (FB 92; Würzburg Echter, 1999), 500 in Beat Weber, “Toward a Theory of the Poetry of the Hebrew Bible: The Poetry of the Psalms as a Test Case,” *BBR* 22, no. 2 (2012): 157–88, [157].

<sup>584</sup> Emphasis mine. Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 160.

A concentric reading is characterized by structural symmetry,<sup>585</sup> and is often called a chiasmus.<sup>586</sup> Concentricity usually highlights a significant motif at the center of a structural unit. As such, the key motif located at the center of a *Group* will be termed as the *Group Central Motif* (GCM). Based on three Sections of four Groups in the Psalter, there is a total of 12 GCMs. Motifs occurring at *other concentric compositional units* will simply be known as central motif (CM).

A linear reading is defined by a coherent thematic trajectory or motif development across the Psalter. Linearity provides a forward thrust along the trajectory. The general Metanarrative (capital “M”) across the three main Sections—the establishment (Book I), fall (Books II–III) and re-establishment (Books IV–V) of the Davidic kingship and Zion—is derived from a *linear reading* across the three Sections of the Psalter. By the end of this chapter, we will observe how the *Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme* (POS), an editorial technique that traces the exhaustive occurrences of certain lexemes/phrases across the Psalter sequentially, provides an important coherent and linear dimension of reading. Linearity of the Psalter is also understood by studying the development of the five Davidic Collections across the Psalter, which is the focus of chapter 4.

<sup>585</sup> Alonso Schökel noted, “a *concentric* structure is one where words are repeated in inverse order on both sides of a central point. This is also called symmetrical structure. Others see it as a kind of augmented chiasm. Such structures may be indicated thus: ABC X CBA, or ABCD DBCA.” Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 192.

<sup>586</sup> A “concentric” structure/reading is also called “alternation,” “inversion,” “pyramid” or “introverted parallelism.” For a review of chiastic reading and its application to specific psalms, see Robert Alden, “Chiastic Psalms : A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 1-50,” *JETS* 17, no. 1 (1974): 11–28; “Chiastic Psalms (II) : A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 51-100,” *JETS* 19, no. 3 (1976): 191–200; “Chiastic Psalms (III) : A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 101-150,” *JETS* 21, no. 3 (1978): 199–210, [199].

Concentric and linear dimensions of reading are intertwined by the design of the Psalter. The CM and GCM (concentric reading) provide the macrostructural shape and locate key motifs pertinent to the message of the Psalter. At the same time, when these motifs are traced across the structure (linear reading), the Metanarrative and message of the Psalter are understood. In turn, this Metanarrative, once understood, assigns the hermeneutical horizon (*Sitz im Psalter*) to understand various individual psalms, Collections or even entire Books.

### **3.1 CONCENTRIC READING**

The “palindromical” reading highlighted by M. Mark at the beginning of this chapter characterizes the concentric phenomenon. Weber calls such an interpretation “centering.”

The pattern, . . . characterized by the fact that *the stressed, strongly underlined pronouncement of the poem is not located (only) at the end, but in the center, in the ‘heart.’* The sequence of corresponding parts further also forms a mirror-like symmetry. In one instance, the central element appears on its own (pattern:a-b-c-b’-a’); in another, it also forms a pair with another section (pattern:a-b-c-c’-b’-a’, and so on). *Interpreting a poem that is structured in this way requires one to identify the central pronouncement as such and to unlock its significance in a dual movement from the periphery to the center and from the center to the periphery.*<sup>587</sup>

The argument that the weight or “pronouncement” of the poem is not only at the end, but in the “center, in the ‘heart’” is important. For poetry, the “‘what’ of communication is bound up with the ‘how.’” The “form in poetic texts such as the

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<sup>587</sup> Emphasis mine. Weber, “Toward a Theory of the Poetry of the Hebrew Bible,” 183.

psalms is therefore extraordinarily important” in interpretation.<sup>588</sup> I agree with Weber and our analyses of the Psalter in the preceding chapters have confirmed this.<sup>589</sup>

The concentric structure can be formed by formal and thematic features in the text.<sup>590</sup> Christensen’s chiastic reading of the Psalter is primarily thematic (§1.2.11) but his work on the Psalter here is too brief, and the structural shape proposed is based on loose thematic arguments. Labuschage and van der Lugt have taken “centering” to the level of mathematical precision. They argue that “[o]ne of the techniques commonly used was to organize the contents of a text in such a way that the *most important element* was situated [by word count] in the *mathematical center* position.”<sup>591</sup> For Alonso Schökel, this “*semantic center*, . . . is frequently an image or symbol”<sup>592</sup> of significance.

Most Psalms scholars<sup>593</sup> whose work assume the canonical approach (overtly or not) adopt a certain linear reading. One clear proponent is Egbert Ballhorn who argues that the Psalter has come to us in the form of a book and therefore, the “book form of the Psalter is the subject of interpretation, including the layout and structures contained

<sup>588</sup> Weber, “Toward a Theory of the Poetry of the Hebrew Bible,” 164

<sup>589</sup> Weber, however, did not present a thesis for the entire Psalter in his article.

<sup>590</sup> See our discussion of Barbiero’s work in §2.2.

<sup>591</sup> Emphasis mine. The technique of numerical analyses will be discussed in chapter 5. Labuschagne, *Numerical Secrets of the Bible*, 11.

<sup>592</sup> He cited Pss 37, 102, 4, 23, 8 and 65 in the Psalms. Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 197–98.

<sup>593</sup> E.g., G. Wilson; N. deClasse-Walford; C. McCann; W. Brueggemann; D. Howard etc.

therein.”<sup>594</sup> Reading the Psalter as a book helps to see that the overall presentation is made up of not just the relationship between texts, but also the *order* of psalms. It is through these *successions* that a statement of the book is made.<sup>595</sup>

However, based on the structural shape of the Psalter uncovered, I am inclined to conclude that Ballhorn’s methodology of linear reading across the entire Psalter as a book, while correct and necessary, is insufficient. The Psalter has to be read not just linearly, but concentrically as well, such that its structural form also informs its meaning. The third dimension, intertextual reading (see Mark’s quote above), is also necessary. We have seen glimpses of this in chapter 1, but this will be clearer when we discuss (in chapter 4) how the Psalter is read alongside the Davidic narratives and covenantal promises.

Macrostructural chiasmi at the level of entire biblical books have been studied and shown to be plausible.<sup>596</sup> Nonetheless, identification of chiasmus, especially at the macrostructural level, must be done with caution, especially when it is constructed based on generalized motifs or selected lexemes rephrased by the interpreters.<sup>597</sup>

<sup>594</sup> “Daher ist auch die Buchgestalt des Psalters Gegenstand der Auslegung - samt den darin enthaltenen Gliederungen und Strukturierungen.” Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 11.

<sup>595</sup> “Aus der Grundannahme vom Psalter als gegliedertes Buch voller inhärenter Strukturmerkmale folgt auch die These, daß seine Gesamtaussage nicht nur durch die Beziehungen zwischen seinen Textelementen entsteht, sondern gerade durch die Abfolge seiner Psalmen eine Aussage erzielt wird.” Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 11.

<sup>596</sup> Symmetric structures for entire books, such as Song of Songs, have been proposed (Shea, “The Chiastic Structure of the Song of Songs”). See also Anthony Ceresko, “Function of Chiasmus in Hebrew Poetry,” *CBQ* 40, no. 1 (1978): 1–10; Watson pointed out that chiasmus occurring in long passages has “structural” and “expressive” functions. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 205–207.

<sup>597</sup> For a good discussion on over-zealousness in identifying chiasmus as a macrostructural technique and its pitfalls, see David Arthur DeSilva, “X Marks the Spot?: A Critique of the Use of Chiasmus in Macro-Structural Analyses of Revelation,” *JSNT* 30, no. 3 (2008): 343–71, [362].

Avoiding this pitfall, our arguments are primarily made via explicit/formal marking techniques such as superscriptions, formulaic phraseology and genre categories that are consistently observed.

Concentric reading highlights a central motif (CM).<sup>598</sup> This is the weight or the heart of a compositional unit of psalms. *It is important for us to understand the phenomenon of the CM at the composition units of the Collection, Group and Section.*<sup>599</sup> *This is because they function as the major poetic structural units under the literary horizon of the entire Psalter.*<sup>600</sup> The overall design of the Psalter remains obscure when exegetical focus is too limited (smaller than a Collection) or partial (not the entire Psalter).

In §1.3.1 (pp. 77–80), we have shown, from Freedman’s analyses, that chiastic arrangements with a central focus of YHWH’s triumphant kingship are a poetic technique found in the earliest of Hebrew poetry, the Song of the Sea (Exod 15). The centralizing technique is also seen in the Akkadian poem, the “Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World,” which spelt out the progression of seven gates to Hades and seven gates out of her. At the centre of this chiasmus, the focus is on Ishtar entering and rising from hades—a thematic crucial event that captured not just the focus but the turning point in

<sup>598</sup> Ronald Man notes two ways through which “chiasm help interpreters understand the meaning of biblical passages: (1) the presence of either a single central or two complementary central elements in the structure, which generally highlight the major thrust of the passage encompassed by the chiasm; and (2) the presence of complementary pairs of elements, in which each member of a pair can elucidate the other member and together form a composite meaning.” Ronald Man, “The Value of Chiasm for New Testament Interpretation,” *BSac* 141, no. 562 (1984): 146–57, [147–48].

<sup>599</sup> Entire individual psalm (e.g., Ps 67) has already been shown to be concentric and linear. See deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 538–540.

<sup>600</sup> Perhaps we can compare them to strophes and cantos poetic units within a single psalm.

the poem. The concentric structure is an important rhetorical device that draws the reader's attention to the heart of the psalm, emphasizing that victory comes through YHWH. This CM is often associated with YHWH's kingship, rule from Zion and destruction of his enemies. From our analysis of the Psalter's macrostructure in the last chapter, we have observed that this technique can be applied beyond a single psalm. Within the Song of the Sea, a trajectory of Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised land, where the people of God can dwell with YHWH, is also observed (cf. Exod 15:1–11, 12–18). Thus, concentric and linear reading of poetry were rhetorical devices familiar to ancient readers.

### **3.1.1 GROUP CENTRAL MOTIFS (1–4) OF BOOK I**

With reference to the structure of Book I in Figure 12, Barbiero has identified the main motifs in the four Groups in Book I and shown that several psalms located at the concentric center (8–9, 19, 29–30, 38) of these four Groups provide the central emphases of Book I. Group 1 (3–14) is characterized by the genre of Lament.<sup>601</sup> The GCM of Pss 3–14 is “the reign of man” (*Le règne de l'homme*)<sup>602</sup> seen in Ps 8. Barbiero picks up the important element of the בָּנְיָה אָדָם (“son of man”) whom God has set on earth to rule over creation (8:7–9). However, this motif does not capture the full thrust of both Pss 8–9 as the central psalms of Group 1. This can be seen in two ways. First, the

<sup>601</sup> “*La première série (Ps 3-14), comme la dernière (Ps 35-41), se caractérise par la lamentation.*” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 475.

<sup>602</sup> Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier (Ps 1-41),” 477.

universality of YHWH's kingship frames Ps 8 (8:2, 4, 10).<sup>603</sup> Structurally, the descriptions of human reign are subsumed under YHWH's overarching purposes and power. The psalmist characterizes YHWH's power over the enemies and his establishment of the heavenly orders (8:2–3) before describing the reign of man. YHWH is also the one who *causes* man's rulership (*הַלְּיִשְׁמָךְ*; note the use of *hiphil* impf). In other words, while there is a focus on the reign of man in Ps 8, it is set under the auspices of YHWH's overarching reign.

Second, the overall imagery in Ps 9 is, on one hand, YHWH's siting on his throne in Zion and judging triumphantly over the nations and the wicked (9:4–9, 16–18, 20–21), and on the other hand, the divine salvation for his people (9:10–15). The idea of YHWH's judgment is repeated at least eight times in this psalm (9:5, 8, 9, 17, 20). No other psalm in the entire Psalter uses the term **דָּבֵשׁ** (“to perish”; 9:4, 6–7, 19) to characterize the wicked more than Ps 9.<sup>604</sup> Clearly, the rhetorical weight of Ps 9 lies in the divine judgment over the wicked and providence for the righteous from Zion. Hence, in my view, Pss 8–9 underscore YHWH's splendor,<sup>605</sup> his universal kingship in his establishment of the human king, his purposes over the wicked and those who trust and seek him (9:11). In short, we modify Barbiero's view for the GCM of Group 1. It is

<sup>603</sup> The phrase, “YHWH, our God, how great is your name in all the earth!” (8:2, 10), stands at both ends of the psalm.

<sup>604</sup> The lemma **דָּבֵשׁ** occurs 26x in the Psalter. Psalm 9 contains 9 instances. This is followed by Ps 119 with 3 instances. These are the only two psalms with multiple instances.

<sup>605</sup> Labuschagne argues that the central message is YHWH's presence based on numerical analysis of Psalm 8. Labuschagne, *Numerical Secrets of the Bible*, 146.

more accurate to see it as “YHWH’s cosmic kingship and his judgment from Zion” rather than the “reign of man.”

The second GCM can be summarized as: “Victorious Messianic king and Torah glorified” according to the main motifs of Pss 18–21 which are at the concentric center of Group 2. Psalms 18–21, instead of Ps 19, are the structural center of Group 2 based on two reasons.

(1) *Psalms 18 and 22 are connected by common motifs of the Davidic kingship.*

This has been well-argued by Grant who has shown that motifs such as YHWH’s chosenness, the king’s dependence on YHWH, and kingship law bind them together.<sup>606</sup>

Apart from Ps 24 within Pss 15–24, the word “king” (**מלך**) is found only in Pss 18:51; 20:10; 21:2, 8. The unique form of **מלך** with the third-person suffix is found only in four places in the entire Psalter. In Group 2, it is found only in 18:51; 20:7. The similar words, **עִשְׂיוֹן** and **יְשֻׁוָּבָה** (“salvation”) recur often in Pss 18–22 linking them together.<sup>607</sup>

The use of these lexemes in Pss 18–22 bind these psalms together.

(2) *Technique of inclusio in these psalms.* The use of anaphoras and inclusions is an established poetic technique (cf. §1.3.1). Psalms 18–19, 20, 21 are framed by certain recurring words. Psalms 18–19 is framed by the phrase, “O YHWH, my rock” (**צַדְקָה**; cf. 18:3, 19:15). This phrase is found immediately after the superscription in Ps 18 and in the concluding line in Ps 19:15. A similar phenomenon of framing occurs in Pss 20 and 21. In Ps 20, the verb **ענה** (“to answer”) is found at the beginning and end (cf. 20:2, 7,

<sup>606</sup> Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, 175–178.

<sup>607</sup> Pss 18:3–4, 28, 36, 47, 51; 20:6–7, 10; 21:2; 22:2, 22.

10). In Ps 21, the word **עַזָּה** (“strength”) is, likewise, found only at the two ends of the psalm. This is a phenomenon seen *only* in these four psalms in Group 2 (15–24).

Within Pss 25–34 (Group 3), the GCM, represented by Pss 29 and 30, is the dedication of the historical Zion-temple and YHWH’s kingship. Barbiero has shown how Pss 29–30 are set apart at the center of the concentric structural unit (§2.2). Centered between Laments on the left (25–28) and Thanksgiving on the right (31–34), Pss 29–30 highlight YHWH’s enthronement at Zion. While YHWH’s kingship is clear in Ps 29, the distinguishing element in Ps 30 comes from its superscription. Apart from the superscription, Ps 30 is a typical Davidic Lament. Yet this superscription, **שיר-חנְבֵת הַבַּיִת**, is unique. It is the only superscription in the Psalter that specifically mentions YHWH’s house.<sup>608</sup> Furthermore, the editorial move to link the dedication of the House in Ps 30 with David rather than Solomon is clearly forced. This move fosters the reading of Pss 29–30 together.

There is an interesting development regarding the subjects giving praise to YHWH in the first three GCM. In Ps 8, it is the “heavens” and “all the earth” that declare the majesty of YHWH (8:1, 9). In Ps 9, those who dwell in Zion are the ones who give praise to YHWH (9:12, 15). In the second GCM, it is the anointed king (18: 3, 50) and creation that give praise to both YHWH and the Torah (19:1–11). In the third GCM, the “heavenly beings,” (**בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים**; 29:1) are to “ascribe” (**יְהִבָּס**) to YHWH. This phrase, **בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים**, is an *hapax legomenon*. At the end of Ps 29:9, all in YHWH’s temple are to give

<sup>608</sup> The phrase, “the house” (**הַבַּיִת**), occurs in Pss 30:1; 59:1; 113:9, but only in Ps 30:1, it refers to the temple. The noun, “dedication” (**חֲנִיבָת**), occurs only once (30:1) in the Psalter.

“glory.” The common factor in the subjects of praise in these three GCMs is the cosmic nature in all creation (cf. 8:1, 9; 19:1–2; 29:3–9). It is also interesting that these subjects called to praise in the first three GCMs correspond with those found in Pss 145–150.

The following figure illustrates this comparison.

First three GCMs	Subjects of Praise	Pss 145–150 (Final Hallel)
18: 3, 50	“I” or the Davidic king	145:1, 146:1–2
9:12, 15	People in Zion and Temple	147:12; 149:2; 150:1
29:1	heavenly beings	148:2
8:1, 9; 19:1–11	Cosmic expanse <sup>609</sup>	148:3–10

Figure 38: Subjects who Praise YHWH

The GCM of Group 4 (Ps 38) is a departure from the trend. It highlights the motif of David’s supplication and contains an interesting phrase (*לְהַזְכִּיר*; “for a memorial”) in the superscription that occurs once more in Ps 70:1. Barbiero has shown how Ps 38, a Supplication psalm, is set within two Sapiential psalms.

The three psalms at the center (37–39) of Group 4 highlight the motif of patience, waiting in hope and prayer, desiring to be delivered from sin (38:4, 19).<sup>610</sup> The lexeme *קָוָה* (“to wait”) occurs repeatedly in close succession over three psalms (37:9, 34; 39:8; 40:2).<sup>611</sup> Likewise, the motifs of YHWH’s *שְׁמָר* (“keeping”) and the psalmist’s *שְׁמָר* (“perseverance”) occur repeatedly (37:28, 34, 37; 39:2; 41:3). These words, repeated with such frequency in these few psalms, reinforce the motif of supplication.

<sup>609</sup> The word, *רֹקֵעַ* (“expanse”), is found only in Pss 19:2; 150:1. In both instances, they are used in the context of praising YHWH.

<sup>610</sup> Note repetitions of similar motifs such as *עֵינָיו* (“iniquity”) in Pss 38:5, 19; 39:12; 40:13 and *פָשָׁע* (“transgression”) in Pss 36:2; 37:38; 39:9.

<sup>611</sup> The word *דָּמָם* (“to be silent”) and the phrase, *וְהַתְּחַזֵּל לְתַ* (“wait patiently for him”), in Ps 37:7 add to this motif.

The GCM of supplication is further emphasized by the vocabulary of hastening YHWH's deliverance under the wicked's derision.<sup>612</sup> The Qal imperative חוֹשׁ ("to make haste") in Ps 38:23 occurs only seven times in the Psalms and only in Davidic psalms. In Book I, it occurs only in the second (22:20) and fourth (38:23; 40:14) Groups.<sup>613</sup> All seven instances are used in the contexts of the Davidic king seeking expedient deliverance of YHWH. This motif of hastening YHWH's deliverance connects three psalms (38, 40, 70) in an interesting way. As noted, the phrase, "for a memorial" (לְהִזְכֵּר), connects Pss 38:1 and 70:1 (both in superscriptions).<sup>614</sup> Furthermore, these two psalms are ACs.<sup>615</sup> The entire Ps 70, on the other hand, is an exact reuse of Ps 40:14–18, apart from changing the use of יהוה, אֱלֹהִי, אָדָן, and אֱלֹהִים (40:14, 17 and 18) to אֱלֹהִים in Ps 70.<sup>616</sup> Psalm 70 is also a Supplication psalm at the end of the Davidic Psalter in Book II. With the connections of these three psalms, the net effect is a heightening of the motif of supplication at the end of Book I (Group 4).

The GCMs of Groups 1–4 are not simply located via genre or thematic considerations, but based on certain poetic editorial moves (e.g., peculiar superscription)

<sup>612</sup> The expression אהָה ("ah ha!") occurs only in Group 4 of Book I (35:21,25; 40:16; 70:4). Psalm 70:4 is a reuse of Ps 40:14–18.

<sup>613</sup> In Book II, it occurs once as part of the superscription in the Davidic Psalter (70:2, 6; 71:12). This imperative recurs once more as a superscription at the center of the final Davidic Collection in Ps 141:1.

<sup>614</sup> Outside the Psalter, it is found only in 1 Kgs 17:18 and Amos 6:10.

<sup>615</sup> See §5.2.2.

<sup>616</sup> This deliberate change in the use of the name of God in Ps 70 adds credibility to the proposition of an Elohistic Psalter. The peculiar use of להִזְכֵּר in the superscription in Ps 38 distinguishes it from the surrounding psalms. Its connection with Ps 70 highlights the motif of petition and the hastening of YHWH's deliverance in Ps 38.

that distinguish them. In summary, the four GCMs in Book I are: (a) YHWH's cosmic kingship; judgment from Zion; (b) Victorious Messianic king and Torah glorified; (c) Dedication of the historical Zion-Temple and YHWH's kingship; (d) Supplication of the afflicted David.

### 3.1.2 GROUP CENTRAL MOTIFS (5–8) OF BOOKS II–III

Groups 5–8 in Books II–III are Pss 42–49, 50–72, 73–83 and 84–89 (§2.3).<sup>617</sup>

Group 5 is bounded by Laments and its GCM is a kingship song (45) celebrating the military reign of the messianic king.<sup>618</sup> Psalm 45 is a unique psalm. Schroeder notes, “Whereas hymns of praise in the psalter are normally addressed to YHWH, this psalm is a song of praise and promise to the *human* king who is seen in godlike features.”<sup>619</sup> Schroeder tersely points out that war and love are the “two fundamental powers on which the successful exercise of the kingship is based.”<sup>620</sup>

The central position of this psalm is again made evident by its unusual superscription. As a *maskil*, it is set apart from preceding psalms with an additional לְעֵנִים (“according to the lilies”) and שִׁיר יְדִידָת (“a song of love”) in the superscription. No other psalm has these descriptions. In fact, the form, *תְּדִידָת* (“love”), is a *hapax*

<sup>617</sup> For the structural divisions of Books II–III, see §2.3.

<sup>618</sup> The Aramaic Targums and the early Christian community have interpreted Ps 45 messianically (cf. Heb 1:8–9). deClaisse-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 416–17.

<sup>619</sup> Schroeder argues that the messianic king imagery in Psalm 45 is depicted in two parallel strophes. While the first strophe shows the king's dominion through victory over his enemies (45:3–7), the second describes the king's dominion through marriage (45:8–16). Christoph Schroeder, “‘A Love Song’: Psalm 45 in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Marriage Texts,” *The CBQ* 58, no. 3 (1996): 417–32, [417].

<sup>620</sup> Schroeder, “‘A Love Song’” 421.

*legomenon.* Psalms that follow in this Group (46–49) are *not* marked as *maskil*.<sup>621</sup>

Hence, Ps 45 stands out as the Group's structural center with its unique superscription and motif of the victorious messianic king who takes a bride. The GCM of Group 5 in Books II–III can be summarized as the “Messianic king and his bride.”

The GCM (61–64) of Group 6 (50–72) describes the threat to David's life and fall of his kingship. We have shown how Pss 61–64 is centrally located under a larger pericope (56–68) consisting of three Subgroups with superscriptions marked by “*mikhtam*” (56–60), “for the choir director, a psalm of David” (61–64), and “a song” (65–68), respectively. These three Subgroups are symmetrically bounded by Laments and Supplication psalms (51–55, 69–71) on both sides. The overall thrust of Pss 56–64 contain bitter descriptions of threats to David's life and the fall of his kingship. The mood, however, turns positive in Pss 65–68 with the foregrounding of YHWH's power over nature, enemies and deliverance for his people. Psalm 68 ends with a celebration of YHWH's victory over the kingdoms of the world at Zion.

As David's kingship and glory fade into the background in Pss 56–64, YHWH's kingship and power comes to the foreground in Pss 65–68. This dissolving image of the Davidic king can generally be supported by the use of the adjective מָשִׁיח or verb משַׁח. It is important to note that the adjectival form, מָשִׁיח, (“anointed”) does not occur in Pss 51–70, despite, its 10 instances in the Psalter.<sup>622</sup> Ironically, it is found in every Book of

<sup>621</sup> It is also possible to see Pss 45–48 as a Subgroup with a common motif of celebrating the messianic kingship and YHWH's kingship at Zion. Note that יְהִי also occurs in the superscription of Ps 48. The two locations of יְהִי frame this Subgroup.

<sup>622</sup> Cf. John Oswalt, “מָשִׁיח,” *NIDOTTE*, 2:1123–27.

the Psalter except Book II where the historical characterization of David is most heightened.<sup>623</sup> The verbal form, מִשֵּׁה, likewise, occurs only twice in the entire Psalter (45:8; 89:21). It is, surprisingly, also absent in the Davidic Pss 51–70. Perhaps this omission is deliberate in conjunction with the fall of the Davidic kingship in Book II. *It suggests that at the final editing of the Psalter, there is a conscious effort to disassociate the fallible human “David” depicted in the second Davidic Psalter from the transcendental, victorious “anointed” Davidic king.*<sup>624</sup> In short, the three Subgroups Pss 56–60, 61–64, 65–68 (particularly Pss 61–64), highlight the CM of the fall of the Davidic king in Group 6.

The GCM of Group 7 (73–83) underscores the fall of Jerusalem and the Zion-temple (Figure 17). The motif of the fall of Jerusalem is introduced in Pss 42–44, setting the tone for the rest of Books II–III. This fall motif is also revealed by a strategic use of the term זָנָח as discussed in the last chapter.<sup>625</sup> The fall of Zion is most graphically pictured in Pss 74, 79–80. The word, מִזְבֵּחַ (“ruin”), referring to Zion in 74:3, is a *hapax legomenon*. Everything in the sanctuary has been broken by the enemy (74:3). Extremely vivid descriptions are given in 74:3–9. The “engravings” (פֶּתַחְיִתָּה) of the sanctuary are smashed with “axe” (כְּשִׁיל) and “hammer” (כִּילָךְ). These words, occurring within the same verse, are *hapax legomena*. All meeting places of God in the land are

<sup>623</sup> Pss 2:2; 18:51; 20:7; 28:8; 84:10; 89:39, 52; 105:15; 132:10, 17.

<sup>624</sup> We will revisit this issue in our discussion of the five Davidic Collections in chapter 4.

<sup>625</sup> This fall of Zion motif is seen especially in the Laments Pss 74, 77, 79–80.

burnt (74:8), the temple carvings smashed and its symbols removed. Foreign nations have taken over the house and set up their banners over it.

In the same way, Ps 79 captures a similar lucid description of the destruction of Zion. It begins with the nations taking over the inheritance of Israel, defiling the temple and reducing Jerusalem to rubble. The noun, ‘וְ (“rubble/ruins”) in 79:1, is the only instance found in the Psalms. In Ps 79:2, the bodies of YHWH’s servant are given to the birds for food and the flesh of the *chasdīm* are “given to the wild animals of the earth.” The lexeme, **חָסִיד**, occurs 25x in the Psalms and is 25x more than any other books of the HB.<sup>626</sup> The reference in Ps 79:2 is the most graphic and negative in all of the Psalter. This is in vivid contrast with Ps 16:10 where YHWH would not let his *chasdī* see decay.<sup>627</sup> In short, the depiction of Zion’s downfall is most vivid in Pss 74 and 79 in the Psalms. Consider Figure 39 below.

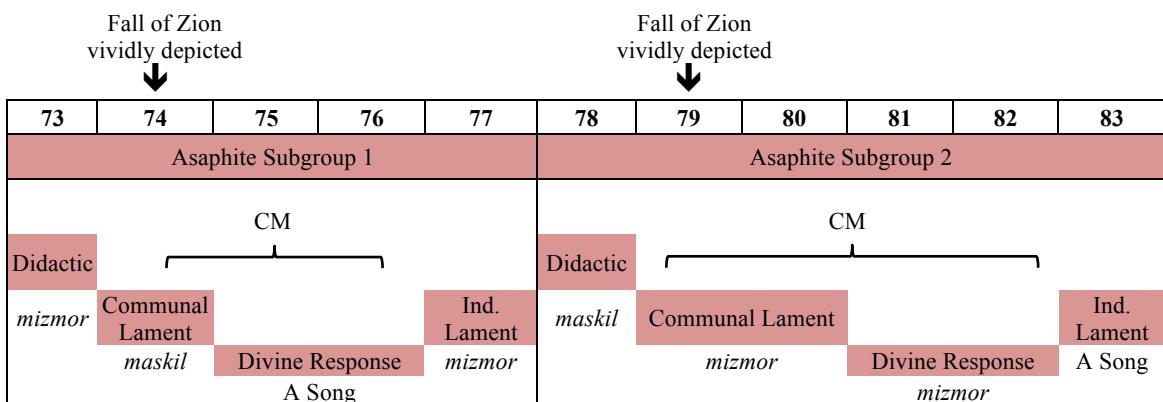


Figure 39: Central Motifs in the Asaphite Psalms

<sup>626</sup> Apart from the Psalms, this word occurs 7 more times. Deut 33:8; 1 Sam 2:9; 2 Sam 22:26; 2 Chr 6:41; Pss 4:4; 12:2; 16:10; 18:26; 30:5; 31:24; 32:6; 37:28; 43:1; 50:5; 52:11; 79:2; 85:9; 86:2; 89:20; 97:10; 116:15; 132:9, 16; 145:10, 17; 148:14; 149:1, 5, 9; Prov 2:8; Jer 3:12; Mic 7:2.

<sup>627</sup> Cf. Pss 97:10; 116:15.

Structurally, there are two parallel Subgroups within this Asaphite Group (73–77, 78–83). At the center of these Subgroups, we find two sets of psalms (74–76, 79–82), both of which are bounded by a Didactic (73, 78) and Individual Lament (77, 83). These two sets of central psalms (74–76, 79–82) are in parallel, accounting for the fall of the Zion-temple (74, 79–80) and Divine Response (YHWH’s judgment in 75–76, 82).<sup>628</sup>

These central psalms are marked differently by their superscriptions as well. Psalms 74–76 are distinguished with “*maskil*” and “a song” in their superscriptions. Psalms 73 and 77, framing 73–76 are marked with *mizmor* of Asaph. In a striking reversal, Pss 79–82 are linked by *mizmor* of Asaph,<sup>629</sup> with Pss 78 and 83 distinguished by a “*maskil*” and “song” respectively. As such, the central position of Pss 74–76, 79–82, based on their superscriptions, can be ascertained.

Group 8 in Books II–III is the second Korahite psalms (84–89).<sup>630</sup> Interestingly, the central psalm is the solitary Davidic psalm (86) surrounded by Korahite psalms. Psalm 86 is the only psalm with a Davidic superscription in Book III and is titled as תְּפִלָּה לְדַוִּיד. The idea of a Davidic prayer, occurring after the postscript at 72:20 (“the prayers of David, son of Jesse, are completed”), is somewhat unexpected.<sup>631</sup> *But there is*

<sup>628</sup> Note that the verb, טָפַשׁ (“to judge”), occurs six times in the entirety of Book III and only in the two sets of central psalms (Pss 75 and 82). The motif of “judgment” is associated with YHWH’s response to the fall of Zion (Cf. Pss 75:3, 8; 82:1–3, 8).

<sup>629</sup> Psalm 81 does not have the *mizmor*. However, Pss 81–82 have the לְמִנְצָחָה in their superscriptions which bind them (the לְמִנְצָחָה is not found in the superscriptions of 78–83 apart from these two psalms).

<sup>630</sup> Strictly speaking, Ps 86 is not a Korahite psalm. As such, I have avoided using Korahite “Collection” but have adopted the phraseology of “Group” which has structural, rather than genre connotations. See §2.1 for a nomenclature of different compositional units in the Psalms.

<sup>631</sup> deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 659.

*a crucial parallel—like the last GCM of Book I (Ps 38 in 35–41), the last GCM in Books II–III (Ps 86 in 84–89) highlights the supplication of an afflicted Davidic figure.*

The motif of supplication is clear in Ps 86:1–7, 11–13, 16–17.<sup>632</sup> The use of the absolute noun תְּפִלָּה (“A prayer”) in the superscription of 86:1<sup>633</sup> and נַזְעֵק (“plea”) in 86:6<sup>634</sup> clearly characterize the psalm as a Supplication.

The central position of Ps 86 is similarly revealed by its distinguishing superscription לְדוֹנֵד תְּפִלָּה. On its left, the common phrases that characterized the superscriptions are “for the choir director, . . . a psalm of the sons of Korah” (cf. 84:1; 85:1). On its right, the superscriptions are characterized by the phrase “a song” (רִשְׁעָם, cf. 87:1, 88:1). Hence, Ps 86 is differentiated not only by its attribution to David but also by the characteristic difference of the two pairs of Korahite superscriptions around it.<sup>635</sup>

In sum, the GCMs of Groups 5–8 in Books II–III are: (a) Messianic king and his bride; (b) fall of Davidic kingship (and YHWH’s response); (c) fall of Zion-temple (and YHWH’s judgment); (d) supplication of the Davidic figure.

<sup>632</sup> March shows how Ps 86 exudes various features of a “Complaint” psalm. Eugene March, “Psalm 86: When Love Is Not Enough,” *Austin Seminary Bulletin* 105, no. 2 (1990): 17–25.

<sup>633</sup> In the absolute state, it occurs only in Pss 17:1; 42:9; 65:3; 86:1; 90:1; 102:1; 109:4; 142:1 within the Psalter.

<sup>634</sup> As a common noun, it occurs only in Pss 28:2, 6; 31:23; 86:6; 116:1; 130:2; 140:7; 143:1.

<sup>635</sup> Labuschagne highlights נַזְעֵק, which occurs 7x in Ps 86 as the psalm with the highest frequency of the word in the Psalter. Since the Prophetic books adopt this term more frequently than other genres, Labuschagne suggests that there is a “prophetic provenance” in Ps 86. Labuschagne “Psalm 86—Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–5 [cited 3 June 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps086.pdf>.

### 3.1.3 GROUP CENTRAL MOTIFS (9–12) OF BOOKS IV–V

Referring to our macrostructural proposals for Books IV–V in §2.4.3, the YHWH *Malak* psalms (93–100), which highlight the motif of YHWH’s kingship,<sup>636</sup> is at the center of Group 9 (90–103). This centering of YHWH’s kingship is an established poetic technique (§1.3.1; pp. 73–76). The centrality of the YHWH *Malak* psalms has been treated by Howard and others.<sup>637</sup> Structurally, Pss 90–92 (to the left of the YHWH *Malak* psalms), are sapiential in tone, emphasizing the motifs of living righteously before God and dwelling in him. Mournet points out that the use of מָעוֹן (“dwelling”) in 90:1 (cf. לְשֹׁר מָעוֹן; 71:3) implies that at the beginning of Book IV, the Israelites are seeking for a *secure dwelling* in God.<sup>638</sup> This motif of dwelling in YHWH is sustained at the beginning of Ps 91:9 שֶׁב בְּסִתְרֵב עַלְיוֹן (“one who dwells in the secret place of Elyon”).<sup>639</sup> The word, מָעוֹן, recurs in Ps 91:9 but the following verse reveals that the psalmist is dwelling in a “tent” (אֹהֶל). The imagery presented in Ps 92:13–16 further heightens the imagery of dwelling securely in YHWH’s refuge. Here, the “righteous” (מִצְדָּקָה) will flourish like a palm tree and grow like a cedar in the house of God in Zion.

<sup>636</sup> Tanner argues that the enthronement Pss 93–99 form the “heart of Book Four” of the Psalter. deClissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 706.

<sup>637</sup> Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93–100*; Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, 284–291.

<sup>638</sup> She argues that the LXX term is used elsewhere in the Psalter “to describe a place of refuge” and that the “message overwhelmingly at the beginning of Book IV is one of refuge in God, the ultimate source of the Israelites’ security.” Krista Mournet, “Moses and the Psalms: The Significance of Psalms 90 and 106 within Book IV of the Masoretic Psalter,” *Conversations with the Biblical World* 31 (2011): 66–79, [70].

<sup>639</sup> See the repetitions of synonymous nouns such as סִתְרֵב (“covering,” 91:1); מִחְסֵי וּמִצְדָּקָה (“my refuge and fortress,” 91:2, 4, 9); צִבְּה וּסְחִירָה (“shield and buckler,” 91:4); מָעוֹן (“dwelling place,” 91:9).

Crucially, Zion is depicted as the ultimate destination for Israel's longing to dwell securely in YHWH. Together, Pss 90–92 recall the Moses' song and prayer in Deut 32–33.<sup>640</sup> Gundersen argues that these three psalms "activate the purpose and content of Deuteronomy 32–33."<sup>641</sup> Deuteronomy 32–33, as we know in their larger canonical context, envisage the impending entry into the Promised land by a new generation of Israelites.

To the right of the YHWH *Malak* psalms are three psalms termed as the third Davidic Collection (DC-III; 101–103). Psalms 101–103 describe a Davidic figure who gives heed "in the blameless way" (בְּרוּךְ תָּמִימָה; 101:2) and walks in his house with integrity. Psalm 102 is a prayer of affliction that looks forward to the *appointed time* for YHWH's grace to be upon Zion when her people will be established (102:13–28). Psalm 103 underscores YHWH's *hesed* to those who fear him and keep his ways (103:17–19). The word, בְּרוּךְ, (*hiphil* imperative verb) occurs 5x in Ps 103, framing the psalm and accounts for the highest number of instances in any chapter of the Psalter. Led by the Davidic songleader, Ps 103 looks forward to a time when all creation are called to "bless the LORD" for the establishment of his throne and reign over all (103:19).<sup>642</sup>

<sup>640</sup> For parallels between Deut 32–33 and Pss 90–92, see Gundersen, "Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90–106)," 116–136.

<sup>641</sup> He adds, "Psalms 90–92 invoke an ancient lyrical witness against Israel, a witness that explains their exile while anticipating their exodus." Gundersen, "Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90–106)," 135.

<sup>642</sup> Willis argues that the overall purpose is praising God for his love and mercy (103:1–2), in spite of difficulties (103:3–5) and in view of YHWH's trustworthiness and character (103:6–19). Timothy Willis, "'So Great Is His Steadfast Love': A Rhetorical Analysis of Psalm 103," *Bib* 72, no. 4 (1991): 525–37, [534, 537].

Hence, the YHWH *Malak* psalms are framed by the voices of two “song leaders”—

Moses on the left and David on the right.

Furthermore, several key terms connect the Subgroups Pss 90–92 and 101–103 with the effect of further distinguishing the YHWH *Malak* psalms at the center. The verb, צוֹחַ (“to flourish/spring up”), occurs only 5x in the Psalms.<sup>643</sup> Four out of five of its occurrences in the Psalms are arboreal analogies. The first four instances (72:16; 90:6; 92:8; 103:15) link Pss 90, 92 and 103 with the motif of mankind’s temporal well-being in contrast to the lasting weal in YHWH’s city (72:16). The fifth use of צוֹחַ in Ps 132:18 is associated with the messianic king planting humans in the paradisiacal garden (72:16).<sup>644</sup>

The strongest evidence for Pss 90–103 as a Group (rather than 90–106) is via the framing of man’s frailty and vanity before YHWH’s eternal nature at the beginning of Ps 90 and end of Ps 103. Psalm 90 begins with the superscription of “Moses.” This is followed by a description of YHWH’s “everlasting” nature. Psalm 90:3–6 describe mankind’s returning to “dust” (90:3) and passing away over the night. They are quickly “swept away like a flood,” and like “grass” (חצִיר; 90:5), they sprout anew in the morning and wither in the evening. These verses describe the temporary nature of

<sup>643</sup> Pss 72:16; 90:6; 92:8; 103:15; 132:18.

<sup>644</sup> Interestingly, Pss 72 and 92 use a different word, פָרָח (72:7; 92:8), to describe the concept of flourishing. Like צוֹחַ, פָרָח is a rare word in the Psalter, found only in four places (72:7; 92:8, 13–14). In Ps 72:7, פָרָח is used in relation to the “righteous” under the rule of a transcendental and universal king (72:8–17). Its use in Ps 92:13–14 speaks of the righteous flourishing like palm trees. In the Psalms, the word, שְׁתַל (“planted”), occurs only in Pss 1:3; 92:14. They are “planted” (שְׁתַל) in the house of God and “flourish” (פָרָח) in the courts of God. The rare but repeated uses of צוֹחַ and פָרָח at these common locations (Pss 72, 90, 92, 103, 132) seek to contrast mankind’s fleeting nature with YHWH’s (and the

human life in contrast with the everlasting nature of YHWH (90:1–2). The main reason given for the fleeting nature of the human life is human iniquity (*רִאשׁוֹן*; 90:8) before YHWH’s anger (90:7).

Psalm 90 thus begins with four associated motifs in this order: (a) the use of Moses’s name; (b) characterization of YHWH’s everlasting nature; (c) the fleeting nature of mankind (d) man’s sins and the wrath of God. Remarkably, there is a striking reversal of these motifs at the end of Ps 103. In Ps 103:7, the name “Moses” reappears. This is followed by several verses describing YHWH as being “slow to anger” (103:8) and not “angry” forever (103:9). Moreover, YHWH does not deal with his people according to their iniquities (*רִאשׁוֹן*; 103:10) and he will remove their transgressions (103:12). These descriptions of YHWH’s dealings with humans is followed by the same description of mankind’s temporal nature in Ps 103:15–16. Human beings are but “dust” (*רָפֶעַ*; 103:14) and his days are as fleeting as “grass” (*רַיְצָחָה*; 103:15). Finally, the temporal human nature is contrasted with YHWH’s everlasting and universal nature in Ps 103:17–19. This stunning parallel at the beginning of Ps 90 and end of Ps 103 is illustrated as follows:

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Messiah’s) reign and those who will flourish in YHWH’s house. This recalls the Prologue where the righteous will flourish in the paradisiacal temple (Ps 1) through the Messianic king (Ps 2).

A “Moses”

B YHWH’s everlasting and universal nature

C Fleeting nature of mankind

D YHWH consumes mankind in his anger because of their sins and iniquities

A’ “Moses”

D’ YHWH removes mankind’s transgressions and will not be angry

C’ Fleeting nature of mankind

B’ YHWH’s everlasting and universal nature

*The structural evidence above reinforces our proposition that Pss 90–103 is*

*designed as a Group made up of three Subgroups (90–92; 93–100; 101–103). The*

*GCM is YHWH’s kingship in Pss 93–100 at the center. This GCM is nicely flanked by*

*the representations of two figures (Moses and David) on its left and right. YHWH’s*

*kingship is also neatly balanced by two triads of psalms that describe, in general, (a)*

*right living before YHWH (90, 101); (b) affliction and refuge in YHWH (91, 102), and (c)*

*praise of YHWH’s *hesed* (92, 103) through which the righteous will flourish.*

Group 10 (104–119) includes the fourth Davidic Collection (DC-IV) consisting of three psalms (108–110). These three psalms highlight YHWH’s deliverance and victory (108) through the affliction (109) and vindication of the Messianic king (110).<sup>645</sup> The centrality of Pss 108–110 is revealed by the parallelism of the thematic trajectories in

<sup>645</sup> Crutchfield has made a strong case in identifying the victimized speaker in Psalm 109 and the “God-fearer” in Psalm 112 as the “Davidic messiah” of Psalm 110. As such, he views the entirety of Psalms 109–112 as messianic. Furthermore, Crutchfield argues that the “celebrant” in Psalm 118 is “likened to Moses” and when seen together with Psalms 109–112, “[the] only person who could be referred to with such language in this context is the expected messiah.” Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context*, 28–35, 54. See also Peter C. W. Ho, review of John Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context: An Interpretation of Psalms 107-118*, JESOT 4.2 (2015): 219–221.

the Subgroups 104–106 and 111–119 that frame it (see Figure 40). Both Pss 104–107 and 111–119 trace a trajectory of the canonical history of Israel. Psalms 104–107 recapitulate the canonical history from creation to the Exile, culminating in a psalm of hope of YHWH’s restoration of Zion (107).

104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119					
brk	HD	HLL	HD	Dav		HLL		UT		HLL	HD	Ash								
Canonical History: Creation to Exile. Brink of entry into Zion								Canonical History: Creation to Exile. Enter gates of Zion at Ps 118.												
				YHWH establishes afflicted, Davidic King in Zion																

Figure 40: Parallel Trajectories in Pss 104–107 and 111–119

In the same way, Pss 111–119 recall a trajectory from Egypt to Zion as well. This is seen via the Egyptian Hallel (113–117) which highlights the Exodus tradition.<sup>646</sup> Psalm 118 encapsulates various motifs in Pss 113–117,<sup>647</sup> culminating with the righteous’ entry into Zion (118:27). Prinsloo has also argued for a *spatial* movement toward Zion in the Egyptian Hallel. He notes,

Read as a single literary composition, the Egyptian Hallel tells a spatial story suggestive of a climactic movement from captivity to Jerusalem to the house of the Lord to the sanctuary to the altar. It is exactly this

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<sup>646</sup> Crutchfield writes, “clearly Psalm 114, with its focus on the proper reaction to the Exodus event, introduces Psalm 115, which also focuses the spotlight not on Israel as a nation but on the God of the nation. In other words, these psalms foreground the importance on God in Israel’s history.” Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context*, 92.

<sup>647</sup> Crutchfield cites Mays and agrees with his thesis that “[e]very one of the first five psalms in the cycle [of the Egyptian Hallel] anticipates themes and motifs of Psalm 118.” James L. Mays, *Psalms* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1994), 378. See also Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context*, 54.

emphasis on Jerusalem and the sanctuary that raises the reader's suspicion that more than the exodus from Egypt is at stake.<sup>648</sup>

As such, DC-IV (108–110) is framed by two similar presentations. The presentation to its left (104–107) has a trajectory that ends with Israel at the brink of entering an inhabited city. The presentation on its right (111–119) recalls the Exodus tradition and has a trajectory that ends with the messianic figure and the righteous entering the Zion city (118:19–20).

The former (104–107) highlights the canonical story of the nation Israel *as a community* journeying toward a secure dwelling place (105:43–45; 106:47–48; 107:4–7). The latter (111–119) not only identifies Israel as a nation, but envisions *a righteous people* (who fears the LORD) entering Zion,<sup>649</sup> led by a divine warrior. The warrior-like figure is not accentuated in Pss 104–107. *This difference is important because, despite the common trajectories toward Zion, the latter presentation has taken on the characteristic of the warrior-king in the Davidic Collection in Pss 108–110 just before it.* As such, it highlights YHWH's deliverance through messianic vindication and victory. Another noteworthy feature is that in both Subgroups (104–107, 111–119), there is no definitive description of a final and utopic bliss state at the Zion city. This ideal Zion is sustained only toward the end of the SOA.

<sup>648</sup> He further argues that "Psalms 113–118 is a reflection upon deliverance from bondage, not only from the bondage of Egypt, but also the bondage of captivity and exile. It is a reinterpretation and a re-application of the exodus narrative for the postexilic community." G. T. M. Prinsloo, "Še 'ól → *Yerûšālayim ← Šāmayim*: Spatial Orientation in the Egyptian Hallel (Psalms 113–118)," *OTE* 19, no. 2 (2006): 739–60, [755–56].

<sup>649</sup> Cf. Ps 106:3, 31 vs. Pss 111:3, 5; 112:1, 3, 4, 6, 9; 115:11, 13; 116:5; 118:4, 15, 20; 119:40, 63, 74, 79, 120, 137, 142.

This movement to Zion also allows us to perceive the design of the larger textual pericope of Groups 9–10 (90–103, 104–119). Consider three structural parallels below.

(1) The entirety of Groups 9–10 are framed on one end by a Mosiac psalm and on the other, a Torah psalm (90, 119, cf. Figure 27).<sup>650</sup> Hence, on both ends of Pss 90–119 are two psalms that highlight wise-living and the fear of YHWH (90:11–12; 119:63, 98). This framing suggests that the call for wise and reverent living is associated with movement to the Zion city.<sup>651</sup> When Groups 9–10 are seen together, the movement to Zion is traced by at least three Subgroup presentations (90–92; 104–107; 111–119). At the cores of Groups 9–10 lie YHWH’s universal kingship (93–100) and the Davidic kingship (108–110).

(2) The preceding point is reinforced by the use of the words, חכָמָה (90:12; 104:24; 107:27; 111:10) and מְנֻחָה (esp. 105:22; 107:43; 119:98). They are found exactly in the three Subgroups associated with Israel’s movement toward Zion (90–92; 104–107; 111–119). These two wisdom terms are not found elsewhere in Books IV–V.<sup>652</sup>

<sup>650</sup> Though not in the superscript, Ps 106 contains three references to “Moses,” which is the highest in the Psalter. Mournet also points out that the root, מְנֻחָה in Ps 106:45, connects with Ps 90:13. In Book IV, this word occurs only in Pss 90 and 106. These two references highlight YHWH’s relent toward Israel and faithfulness to his covenant. These repetitions also function to bookend Book IV. Mournet, “Moses and the Psalms,” 73.

<sup>651</sup> This call to wise living is also present at the beginning of Book V in Ps 107:43, highlighting a parallel between the first psalms of Books IV and V.

<sup>652</sup> Both words are rare in the Psalter. They occur six times each. מְנֻחָה is found elsewhere in Pss 19:8; 49:11; 58:6 and חַכְמָה is found elsewhere in Pss 37:30; 51:8.

(3) There is another editorial move that binds Pss 91 and 119. In Ps 119, the psalmist praises YHWH in his “house” (119:54) and finds YHWH as “my hiding place and shield” (סְתָרִי וּמַגֵּנִי, 119:114). The *nominal* form of סְתָר (indicating a “place of hiding”) occurs interestingly at Pss 91:1 and 119:114.<sup>653</sup> Their strategic presences in Pss 90–119 fit well with the developing motifs of seeking refuge in YHWH and the desire for an inhabitation of rest.

Viewed through the ironic wordplay of the *verbal* form of סְתָר (“to hide”) in Pss 88:15; 89:47, 102:2; 104:29; 119:19, there is a development of the motif of סְתָר from Lament to Confidence through Petition and sapiential reflections. At the end of Book III, the psalmist complains that YHWH has *hidden* his face from him (89:47) and questions why he has done so (88:15). Four instances that follow, arranged in alternation, express the inner struggle between reflection (91:1; 104:29) and petition (102:2; 119:19). Finally, the last instance of סְתָר expresses the psalmist’s confidence in YHWH as his *hiding place* (119:114). These references of סְתָר are a display of the POS technique. Figure 41 presents this phenomenon graphically.

<sup>653</sup> Between Pss 91:1 and 119:114, the root סְתָר occurs as adverbs or verbs in Pss 101:5; 102:3; 104:29; 119:19.

Location	Ref	Development of the Motif of סתר	Genre
End of Book III	88:15	Why do you hide your face?	Lament
	89:47	How long, will you hide yourself?	Lament
Book IV	91:1	He who dwells in the hidden place of Most High.	Reflection
	102:3	Do not hide your face!	Petition
	104:29	When you hide your face, they are dismayed.	Reflection
Ps 119 in Book V	119:19	Do not hide your commandments!	Petition
	119:114	You are my hiding place!	Confidence

Figure 41: Use of סתר in Psalms 88–119

In our earlier discussion (§2.3.1), we note that Book III highlights the fall of the Zion-temple and city. This is reflected in the lament that YHWH has hidden his face. Groups 9–10 respond to the fall of Jerusalem by reframing a trajectory towards a “different” Zion-temple. This Zion-temple will be a *hiding place* and *refuge* for the psalmist, and is effective only for the “righteous.” *The call to live a life of wisdom, to embark on a YHWH-fearing pilgrimage and to arrive at YHWH’s house, frame Groups 9–10. Between these bookends, YHWH’s universal rule (93–100) and the triumphant Davidic kingship (108–110) characterize the GCMs of Groups 9–10.* Figure 42 summarizes our discussions.

90–92	93–100	101–103	104–106	107	108–110	111–119
Mosaic; Moses the song leader; At the brink of entry into Canaan.		Davidic; David the song leader; The Davidic king rules in Zion	Canonical History: Creation to Exile. Brink of entry			Creation to Exile. The king and the righteous enter gates of Zion (Ps 118)
↑ Living righteously is to dwell in the <i>hiding place</i> of YHWH (house of God)	GCM (GROUP 9) YHWH's kingship in Zion	↑ King rules righteously in house of YHWH			GCM (Group 10) Davidic Kingship in Zion	↑ Living the Torah-pious life means <i>hiding</i> in YHWH

Figure 42: Trajectories in Groups 9–10 of Books IV–V

The motif of dwelling securely at Zion with YHWH, gleaned from Groups 9–10, develops in Group 11 (120–134). The CM of Group 11 is the establishment of an ideal Zion city. This is found at the structural and mathematical center (122, 127, 132) of the three Subgroups (120–124, 125–129, 130–134) as illustrated in Figure 43.<sup>654</sup>

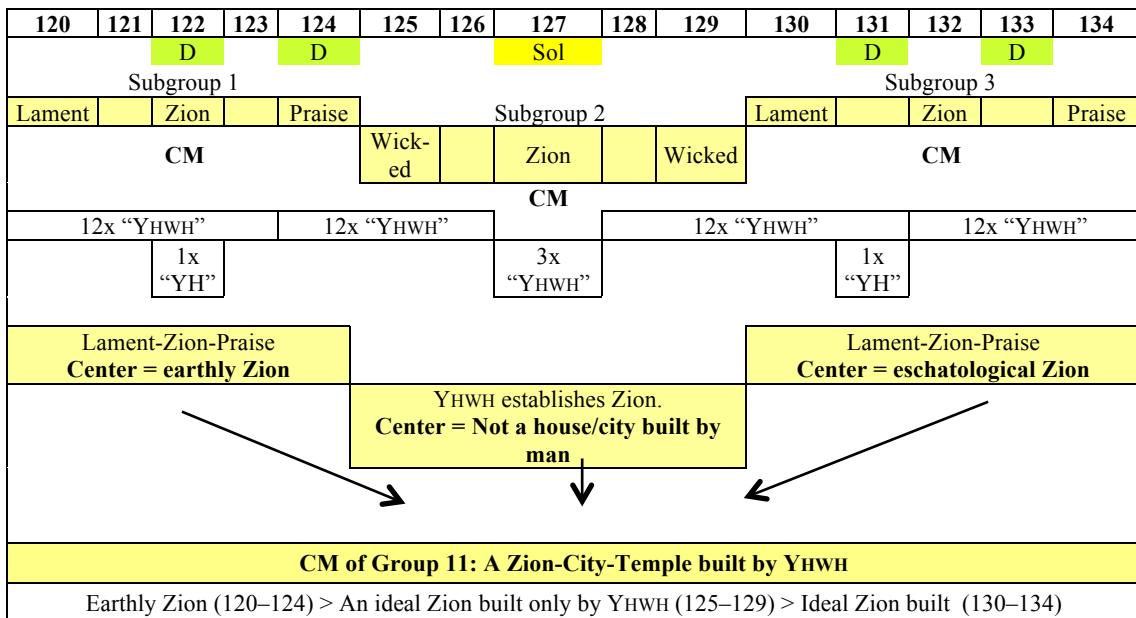


Figure 43: Central Motifs of the Songs of Ascents

<sup>654</sup> For a discussion on the structural breakdown of the Songs of Ascents, see §2.4.3.

In Pss 122:2–3 and 126:1, postexilic Zion has been restored and the community of Israel is now settled in Jerusalem.<sup>655</sup> Israel may also have resumed festive processions (or pilgrimage at the annual festivals) to the temple.<sup>656</sup> Booij suggests that the SOA, as a whole, *describes a procession to the sanctuary* for he sees that “[the] linkage of daily forms and images to words of consecration and friendly authority suits a ritual that, essentially, is a passage from common reality to the dwelling place of God.”<sup>657</sup>

Taking into account descriptions of the Zion-city at the end of the trajectories of Pss 104–07 and 111–119 are still not the utopic Zion, the imagery of Zion undergoes further development in the SOA. My proposition is that the SOA in its tripartite structure, reveals the development of an earthly Jerusalem (122) to a eschatological Zion (132) through YHWH’s work *alone* (127).<sup>658</sup>

<sup>655</sup> Booij identifies various evidence of a settled communal life with expressions of daily living in the Songs of Ascents. “First, there is a notable preference for scenes from daily life: slaves watching their master’s gesture (Ps 123); people sowing and reaping (Ps 126); men discussing at the city gate (Ps 127); children sitting around the table (Ps 128); an infant at rest with its mother (Ps 131). Secondly, some terms, relevant to the community and its well-being, are found in remarkable frequency: ‘Israel’ nine times (and that in eight psalms), ‘Zion’ seven times (seven psalms), ‘Jerusalem’ five times (three psalms), ‘bless’ / ‘blessing’ בָּרֶךְ pi., pu. / בָּרַכְתָּם nine times (five psalms), ‘peace’ מִשְׁלָמָה seven times (four psalms).” Thijs Booij, “Psalms 120-136: Songs for a Great Festival,” *Bib* 91, no. 2 (2010): 241–55.

<sup>656</sup> Cf. Ps 126:1. Goulder postulates these psalms as liturgical sequences in parallel to Nehemiah’s testimony and used at the feast of Tabernacles in 445 BCE. Goulder, “The Songs of Ascents and Nehemiah,” 57; deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 917.

<sup>657</sup> Booij, “Psalms 120-136: Songs for a Great Festival,” 246.

<sup>658</sup> I am not alone in this proposition. Rohde points out that the expression “let Israel say” in Pss 124:1 and 129:1 supports a “tripartite division of Psalms 120-134 (three groups of five) at the end of each one the summons is repeated.” He offers a good study of these three subgroups of psalms and argues that the Songs of Ascents argue for a metaphysical Temple. Zenger, likewise, argued for the same tripartite structure. See Michael Rohde, “Observations on the Songs of Ascents: A Discussion about the so-Called Zion-Theology of Psalms 120-134,” *Baptistic Theologies* 1, no. 2 (2009): 24–42, [25]; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 394.

The name, “Solomon,” in the superscription of Ps 127 at the center of the SOA is a *dislegomenon* in the Psalter (72:1; 127:1).<sup>659</sup> Psalm 127 begins the motif of building a “house” and “city” in connection with Solomon (cf. 1 Kg 5). This connection between Solomon and the building of the sanctuary is heightened by the use of a *paronomasia*.<sup>660</sup> The words בָּנָה *bânah* and בְּנִים *bennîm* are used in close proximity. The consonance of these words links the concepts of “building,” “house,” and “children.”<sup>661</sup>

While there is *prima facie* connection between Solomon and the building of the temple in Ps 127, certain literary difficulties at a deeper level hinder this connection. First, the ideal and blissful state of Zion in Ps 127 remains elusive. Implicit in Ps 122 is an imperfect Zion city. Peace and prosperity need to be sought by prayers (122:6–9). But Ps 127 highlights the futility of human endeavor in building this ideal Zion-city. Although the psalm envisions a house of strength that is fruitful and “not be ashamed” before the enemies (127:5), the verity of this ideal is only certain through YHWH’s hands, not Solomon’s.

Second, the absence of a righteous and powerful king building the Zion-city in the postexilic context is disconcerting. Psalm 72 is a prayer for the progeny of the messianic

<sup>659</sup> Zenger noted that the final redactors “placed Ps 127 at the center of the composition of the Pilgrim Psalter, as a ‘royal’ lesson for life by Solomon.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 394.

<sup>660</sup> A *paronomasia* is a kind of word play using two (or more) different words that sound alike. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 242.

<sup>661</sup> Miller discusses the meaning of “building a house” in Ps 127:1. He points out that the activity of building a “house” can refer to a “dynasty” (1 Sam 2:35; 2 Sam 7:27) or a “family line” (Deut 25:9; Ruth 4:11). Patrick Miller, “Psalm 127: The House That Yahweh Builds,” JSOT 22 (1982): 119–32, [123–24].

king of Israel.<sup>662</sup> It pictures righteous and powerful rule by a Davidic scion.<sup>663</sup> However, neither Pss 72 nor 127 can be easily applied to the historical Solomon or any king in the Davidic dynasty. In fact, Ps 127 seems to negate even the deeds of Solomon. The transcendental overtones applied on the messianic king in 2 Sam 7:12–16, 1 Chr 17:11–14<sup>664</sup> and in the Psalms add to the difficulties of identifying a specific king in the Davidic line.<sup>665</sup> Psalms 72, 122, 127 and 132 all envision a blissful state of life in Zion that is brought about by a victorious king whose identity, unfortunately, remains mysterious in the text.<sup>666</sup>

Thus, Ps 127 subverts a clear and direct connection to the historical Solomon as the king who will build YHWH house and Zion-city. Why, then, is there a strategically important psalm at the center of the SOA, possibly redacted for postexilic Israel at a time when hopes of rebuilding the nation is high, downplaying the role of a human king?

<sup>662</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 270.

<sup>663</sup> For a discussion on “Solomon” and the redaction of Ps 72, see G. Barbiero, “The Risks of a Fragmented Reading of the Psalms: Psalm 72 as a Case in Point,” *ZAW* 120, no. 1 (2008): 67–91.

<sup>664</sup> Barbiero, “The Risks of a Fragmented Reading of the Psalms,” 89.

<sup>665</sup> Barbiero concludes that it is unlikely that the psalm refers to “a concrete reigning figure of the postexilic period.” Cf. Ps 126:1. Gianni Barbiero, “Psalm 132: A Prayer of ‘Solomon,’” *CBQ* 75, no. 2 (2013): 239–58, [258].

<sup>666</sup> Barbiero argues that “‘Solomon’ thus comes to personify the messianic hope of the community of the בָּנִים, according to the prophecy of [Zech] 9:9–10. Clearly, behind ‘David’ and ‘Solomon’ are two diverse models for understanding the Messiah. The first represents the Messiah as warrior perhaps alluding to the option chosen by the Maccabees. The author of Psalm 72 consciously keeps his distance from this typology. The Messiah will not be ‘David,’ but ‘Solomon.’ Barbiero, “The Risks of a Fragmented Reading of the Psalms,” 89–90.

The answer I offer is in viewing Pss 122, 127 and 132 together. Psalms 122 and 132<sup>667</sup> are two psalms in the entire Psalter with the highest number of “Zion/temple markers.”<sup>668</sup> The presence of “Zion markers” would “indicate the Zion tradition in the minds of the editors.”<sup>669</sup> These three psalms are centrally located in the three Subgroups of the SOA (Figure 43). The centering technique and their common focus on Zion bid us to study them together.

Contextually, Ps 120 is set at a distance from Jerusalem.<sup>670</sup> However, Ps 121 pictures an approach to the hills of Jerusalem with singing and praise. Then in Ps 122, the psalmist arrives at the gates of Jerusalem with jubilant joy (v. 2). Prinsloo notes that Pss 120–122 “describe a journey (Psalm 121) from negative space (Psalm 120) towards positive space (Psalm 122), an ascending movement, from the depths of despair and exile to the joyous arrival in Jerusalem.”<sup>671</sup> This journey is marked with geographical and physical landmarks (120:5; 121:1, 122:1–3, 6–7, 9).<sup>672</sup> Although the terms, “Zion”

<sup>667</sup> Psalm 132 is also the longest psalm in the SOA.

<sup>668</sup> Gillingham identifies at least 21 words and phrases that she (or rather, John Day) termed as “Zion Markers.” These are identified by words/phrases that parallel “Zion” in the psalms. From these 21 words and phrases, she identifies 75 psalms that “bear clear marks” of the Zion tradition. In a later article, she uses the term, “temple marker,” instead. See Gillingham, “Zion Tradition,” 313–14; Susan Gillingham, “The Levitical Singers and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. E. Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 91–124, [92].

<sup>669</sup> Gillingham, “Zion Tradition,” 315.

<sup>670</sup> deClasse-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 899.

<sup>671</sup> Prinsloo, “The Role of Space in the הנֶּה תָּלַמְעָה שִׁירֵי (Psalms 120–134),” 465, 472–73.

<sup>672</sup> From “Meshech” and “Kedar” in Ps 120 to the “hills” in Ps 121, and to “House of YHWH in Jerusalem” in Ps 122. Grossberg argues that “this pair, Meshech and Kedar, is to be taken as a merism expressing the totality of the menacing diaspora, even its most far-flung regions” (cf. Gen 10:2; Ezek 27:13; 32:26; Gen 25:13; Isa 41:11). Grossberg, *Centripetal and Centrifugal Structures in Biblical Poetry*, 24.

and “Jerusalem,” can take on different connotations, Goldingay suggests that the use of “Jerusalem” in Ps 122 identifies “more to an earthly city, the capital of Israel, a city of stone and brick, inhabited by people.”<sup>673</sup> Zion, on the other hand, has a more “religious” connotation in association to the temple of YHWH.

Psalm 122 is framed by the phrase, “the house of the LORD” (122:1, 9). The verse at the center of the psalm (122:5) highlights the Davidic thrones of justice in Jerusalem.<sup>674</sup> This recalls the motifs of kingship and justice of 2 Sam 8:15—“David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people.” However, the city has not yet become the just and righteous society longed for in Ps 122. This can also be seen by the need to pray for peace (122:6–8).

The just and blissful society envisioned in Ps 127 require us to look beyond the Davidic monarchs in Israel’s pre-exilic history.<sup>675</sup> It is in Ps 132 where the imagery of this blissful Zion is depicted in greater clarity. Psalm 132 identifies a time of no kingship (132:17) in postexilic Zion. This ideal Zion only takes shape with the advent of the “horn of David.”<sup>676</sup>

<sup>673</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:462.

<sup>674</sup> The plurality of “thrones” suggests the Davidic dynasty (king and his sons). Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:466.

<sup>675</sup> German argues that the Solomonic superscription in Ps 127 provides the context of the Davidic dynasty for the entire psalm, emphasizing the Davidic lineage. He identifies the “blessed man” in 127:5 as David himself. While I agree that this superscription functions to highlight the Davidic lineage, I think German has not addressed the dilemma of the futility of building a house and watching a city in relation to that lineage. Brian T. German, “Contexts for Hearing: Reevaluating the Superscription of Psalm 127\*,” JSOT 37, no. 2 (2012): 185–99, [196].

<sup>676</sup> Zenger argued that the concept of “horn” represents “a revival of the powerful kingship of David in Jerusalem (‘horn’ as a metaphor for royal power: cf. especially Pss 18:3; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12; Isa 11:1) and thus joins with corresponding postexilic hopes.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3: a commentary on Psalms 101-150*, 466.

Barbiero argues that Ps 132 is an expression of the messianic hope envisioned on a messianic-Solomon figure based on three points: (1) Ps 132:8–9 identify a kingdom of YHWH with messianic perspectives. The “vision of ‘peace’ (v. 8) and of ‘justice’ (v. 9) echo that of Psalm 72, which is clearly “messianic.”<sup>677</sup> (2) The use of Solomon’s prayer from 2 Chr 6:41–42 in Ps 132:8–10 makes the prayer Solomonic. (3) Despite not using the name “Solomon,” the transition from מִשְׁבֵּת נָחָתָה (“his dwelling place”; 132:7) to מִנְחָתָה (“his resting place in 132:8) alludes to Solomon’s work of building the temple.<sup>678</sup>

As noted, the association to the historical Solomon in Ps 127 is problematic but seen messianically, Pss 127–132 make sense. It will be through this messianic-Solomonic figure which the ark (132:8) would find ultimate rest, and that the kingdom of peace and justice, envisioned in Ps 122, would be established. The kingdom of YHWH and the kingdom of this messiah is “one and the same kingdom.”<sup>679</sup>

In short, Pss 122, 127 and 132 become a triptych for Zion. A journey to the earthly gates of Jerusalem is first seen (122). The Jerusalem city and administration for justice pictured in Ps 122 is not ideal. The earthly Jerusalem can only become the ideal and utopic Zion-city-temple through YHWH’s deliverance (126), building (127) and

<sup>677</sup> Barbiero, “Psalm 132: A Prayer of ‘Solomon’,” 249.

<sup>678</sup> Barbiero’s argument is convincing. He notes, “In context, this term [מִנְחָתָה] suggests the temple built by Solomon. David’s provisionally dwelling [מִשְׁבֵּת נָחָתָה] [Ps 132:7] was a provisional dwelling, not a permanent one. The מִנְחָתָה [Ps 132:8] is meant to express the stability offered by a solid building, a construction in stone. But this term is a pregnant one that goes beyond the concrete reference. It occurs again with respect to the temple, in Deut 12:9; 1 Kgs 8:56; Ps 95:11 and Isa 66:1 (תְּחִזְקֵנָם כַּאֲמָם).” Barbiero, “Psalm 132: A Prayer of ‘Solomon’,” 246.

<sup>679</sup> Barbiero, “Psalm 132: A Prayer of ‘Solomon’,” 258.

blessing (128). Although the temple had been built by Solomon and rebuilt by the postexilic community, human hands cannot build the ideal Zion. Rather, the entire SOA, seen through these central motifs (122, 127, 132), show that the ideal Zion will be ruled by a righteous, divine Solomonic-Messianic figure (127:1; 132:11–12) who will usher in *shalom*, unity and blessing into Zion.

Prinsloo's spatial analysis of Pss 120–34 reinforces our proposals above. He argues that Pss 120–122 is a movement towards the earthly Jerusalem on the horizontal plane moving from strife to peace. Psalm 123, set “symbolically” in heaven (123:1), shows that the danger is still present. The spatial imagery in Ps 124 is symbolic of Sheol (124:3–4). Psalm 125 brings the spatial imagery back to earthly Zion. The following Pss 126–128 is a triad that forms the core of the SOA with Ps 127 at the center. Spatially located at Zion and around Ps 127, Pss 125–129 emphasize YHWH's deliverance and protection surround Israel so that she can flourish in peace. Psalms 129–131 mirror 123–125 symmetrically.<sup>680</sup> Psalms 132–134 form a final triad in parallel to 120–122. Psalm 132, like 122, focuses on Zion. Psalm 133, like 121, brings out the imagery of the “mountains of Zion” (133:3) while Ps 134 contrasts with Ps 120, depicting a positive house of the LORD. Prinsloo's entire spatial map of the SOA is illustrated in Figure 44.

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<sup>680</sup> Psalm 129, like 125, highlights YHWH's protection on earth. Psalm 130, like 124, is spatially located in the “depths” (130:1). Psalm 131, like 123, highlights YHWH's redemption of Israel's sin and Israel finding “calmness in YHWH's arms (131:2). The use of “lifted up” (*גָבֵה*) and “high” (*רִום*) in Ps 131:1 may suggest a “heavenly” spatial frame though the content identifies YHWH's bosom. Although Prinsloo identifies Ps 131 spatially in “heavens” in his final graphical summary, his arguments stop short of situating the “complete contentedness in the presence of YHWH” in the heavenly realm. Prinsloo, “The Role of Space,” 470, 473–74.

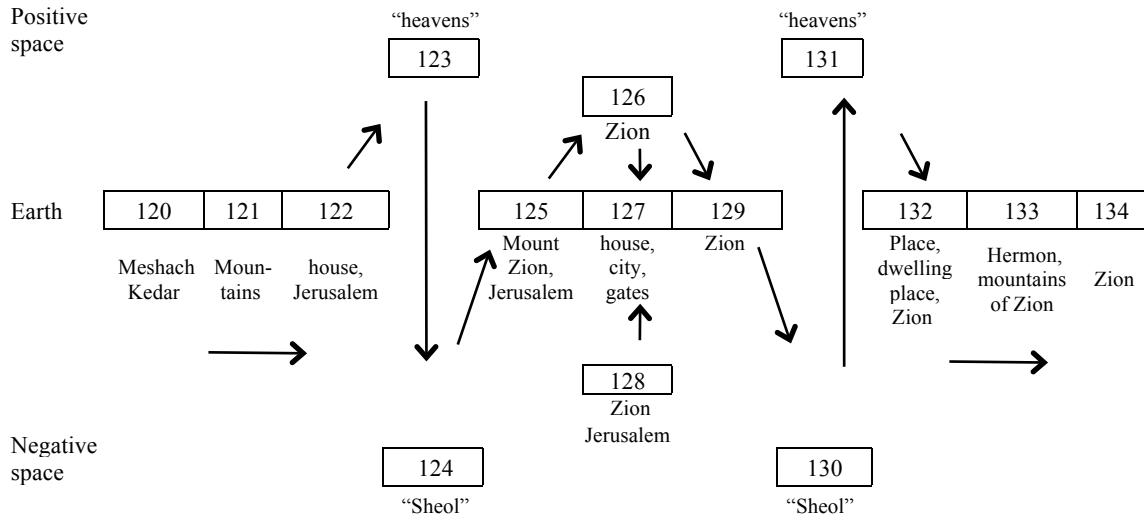


Figure 44: Prinsloo's Spatial Storyline of the Songs of Ascents<sup>681</sup>

Although Prinsloo's structural map is grouped into five triads as opposed to our triad of five psalms each, the final effect is still similar, that is, the SOA is structured concentrically with a core around Pss 125–29. If we accept the triads Pss 120–122 and 132–134 as parallels, we see that while Pss 120–122 capture a troubled situation leading to rejoicing at earthly Jerusalem, Pss 132–134 identify a blissful eschatological state in Zion. Brothers dwell in unity and YHWH's servants bless God at the temple (133:1; 134:1–3).

In short, the GCM of the SOA (Group 11) underscores a development of the Zion-temple. A three-step development of Zion is captured by the triptych Pss 122, 127 and 132 located separately at the center of three Subgroups (120–124, 125–129, 130–134). First, in Ps 122, the establishment and journey to the earthly Jerusalem city are seen. However, this earthly city is still in need of peace and righteousness. Second, Ps 127

<sup>681</sup> This is redrawn from Prinsloo, "The Role of Space," 474.

now declares that a better Zion-city can only be built by YHWH alone. Finally, Ps 132 pictures the establishment of this better Zion-city that is characterized by social justice, blessings and peace with the advent of a messianic-solomonic figure (132:9, 15–18).

Moving on to Group 12 (135–150), the GCM is the recurring concept of supplication found within the fifth Davidic Collection (138–145).<sup>682</sup> This last Davidic Collection sits between the Great Hallel (135–136) and the final Hallel (146–150). Bounded by two Kingship psalms (138, 145) four Supplication psalms (140–143), united by the words, תְּחִנּוֹן (“plea”; 140:7; 143:1) and תְּפִלָּה (“prayer”; 141:2, 5; 142:1; 143:1)<sup>683</sup> and their literary contexts of affliction, form the CM of DC-V and the entire Group 12.

With this focus of supplication in the last GCM of Group 12, we observe a striking parallel in all fourth GCMs of the three Sections of the Psalter (cf. Figure 12, Figure 17, Figure 27, Figure 28)—a common motif of supplication. Moreover, these GCMs are all Davidic (cf. 38, 86, 140–143). In other words, *there is a recurring motif*

<sup>682</sup> There is some disagreement between scholars in naming Pss 138–145 as the “fifth/last” Davidic Psalter (Zenger, Tucker, Buysch), “fourth” David Psalter (Seybold, Singer) or “third Davidic Collection” (Wenham, cf. Auwers). In this thesis, I am in agreement with Buysch’s argument, considering Pss 101–103 and 108–110 as two Davidic Collections (third and fourth). He writes, “Das einzige unbedingt zutreffende Merkmal für eine Davidsammlung ist die im Titel vorgenommene Zuweisung „David zugehörig“. Da dies in Ps 138–145 durchgehend der Fall ist, diese Gruppe zudem eine beachtliche Größe von acht Psalmen aufweist, erscheint die Zuweisung als Davidsammlung offensichtlich. Zudem fügen sich die acht Psalmen auch in die Profilvorgabe der „früheren“ Davidpsalter.” Buysch, *Der Letzte Davidpsalter*, 15; Cf. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 524; Tucker, “The Role of the Foe in Book 5,” 186; Seybold, “Zur Geschichte Des Vierten Davidpsalters,” 368–90; Dwight Charles Singer, “The Literary Context of the Fourth Davidic Grouping in the Psalter (Psalms 138–145),” *WTS* 75, no. 2 (2013): 373; Gordon J. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 48; Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 27.

<sup>683</sup> The word, תְּפִלָּה, occurs 11x in Books IV–V (Pss 90:1; 102:1–2, 18; 109:4, 7; 141:2, 5; 142:1; 143:1.), of which three times are in superscriptions (90:1; 102:1; 142:1). All the occurrences of תְּפִלָּה in Books IV–V are always followed closely by Divine Response psalms which emphasize YHWH’s kingship, deliverance and blessings (93–100, 103:19–22; 110; 144–145; cf. 74–76; 79–82).

of Davidic supplication skilfully located in the fourth GCMs of the three Sections (1–41, 42–89, 90–150). The significance of this final CM of supplication will be discussed in chapter 4.<sup>684</sup>

### **3.1.3.1 PARALLEL BETWEEN GROUPS 10 AND 12 IN BOOKS IV–V OF THE PSALTER**

The amazing structural design and significance of the GCMs' location and function can be further collaborated by distant parallels occurring between Groups 10 and 12. The following observations are in order. (1) Both Groups begin with *hallelujah* psalms (104–106 // 135) and end with psalms that characterize an all-encompassing praise of YHWH and his Torah (119 // 150). The “totality” of praise in these two ending psalms are also partly exuded by their acrostic (or alphabetical) poetical structure.<sup>685</sup> At the center of both Groups is a Davidic Collection (108–110, 138–145).

(2) Groups 10 and 12 (104–119, 135–150) also share a thematic trajectory from creation to exile (cf. Subgroups 104–107 // 135–137). From the parallel of the trajectories between 104–107 and 135–137, we can comprehend the reason for locating Ps 137, with its exilic focus, after Ps 136. Psalm 137 completes this thematic movement from creation to exile. The trajectory that ends at Ps 107 continues to envisage the establishment of a secure dwelling at Zion (107:4, 7, 36). Similarly, Pss 135–136 first

<sup>684</sup> This is supported by Gillmayr-Bucher's word field analysis of the concept of “misery” in the Psalms. See Figure 1 in her article, where there is a perceivable high frequency of occurrences of the concept of “misery” in psalms located near the end of Section 1, 3 and 5 by our structural definition. Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, “Relecture of Biblical Psalms: A Computer Aided Analysis of Textual Relations Based on Semantic Domains,” 314.

<sup>685</sup> See §1.3.3 and §5.2 for further details.

begins at the house of God (135:1–2) before recapitulating the canonical history (135–136) and ending in Babylon in Ps 137 where the psalmist longs for Zion (137:1). Hence, at the end of both Subgroups of 104–107 and 135–137, the settings in Pss 107 and 137 are depicted as exilic. The recapitulation of the exilic imagery (107:3, 7, 14, 16, 28–30, 36; 137:1) functions rhetorically as a heightened desire to return to not just to an inhabited city, but a better Zion. This can be said for Pss 107 and 137 because the trajectory to Zion is expressed as a *reflection* rather than actual movement, suggesting that an ideal, rather than earthly Zion, is in view.<sup>686</sup>

Groups 10 and 12 also end with a destination at Zion (111–119 // 146–150). A similar trajectory is also traced in the Egyptian Hallel (113–118). In the Final Hallel (146–150), it is possible to detect a trajectory that (a) begins from YHWH's creation (146:6); (b) followed by deliverance of his people (146:7–9) from exile (*נְדִחָה יִשְׂרָאֵל*); “the exiles of Israel”; 147:2); (c) and YHWH's building of Zion (146:10, 147:2, 12–14); (d) before ending with praise of YHWH in the ideal Zion (149:1–2; 150:1).

Therefore, we can trace at least six such movements toward Zion in Pss 90–150. This trajectory to Zion (whether earthly or ideal) is found in every Group of Books IV–

<sup>686</sup> An alternative way of viewing the two trajectories of Pss 104–107 and 135–137 is to consider that the latter is a development from the former. That is, Pss 104–107 could refer to the historical return from exile while Pss 135–137 pertain to an *ongoing* return because postexilic Israel remains under foreign rule. An additional point on the parallel pertains to the inverted *nun* which occurs only in nine places in the HB (Num 10:34, 36; Pss 107:20–25, 39). While I am not positing any definitive solutions, the occurrences in Numbers 10 and Ps 107 are connected by a movement toward the Promised Land. There is a common motif of YHWH leading the people from a place of misery towards a place of blessing (cf. Num 10:29; Ps 107:14, 28, 39). The setting of wilderness connects the two passages as well (Num 10:12, 32; Ps 107:4, 33, 35). This view of Ps 135–137 will fit well with either Jewish or Christian reading. For a comparison of Christians and Jewish readings on Ps 137, see Susan Gillingham, “The Reception of Psalm 137 in Jewish and Christian Traditions,” in *Jewish and Christian Approaches to the Psalms: Conflict and Convergence* (ed. Susan Gillingham; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 64–82.

V. These recapitulations reinforce the centrality of the motif of Zion from Ps 90 to the end of the Psalter. The following figure illustrates these movements towards Zion in Groups 9–12. The symbol “→Z” indicates the presence of such movement.

Parallel											
Group 9			Group 10			Group 11			Group 12		
90–92	93–100	101–103	104–107	108–110	111–119	120–124	125–129	130–134	135–137	138–145	146–150
Mosaic	YHWH <i>Malak</i>	DC-III	Canoni- cal Hist. psalms	DC- IV	Hallel- ujah psalms	Songs of Ascents			Canoni- cal Hist. psalms	DC-V Supp- li- cation	Final Hallel
→Z ideal		At earth- ly Zion?	→Z earthly		→Z earthly ?	→Z earthly	Ideal Zion estab- lished	At ideal Zion?	→Z ideal?		→Z Ideal

Figure 45: Movement toward Zion in Books IV–V

(3) There are four lexical parallels between Subgroups Pss 111–119 and the Final Hallel. (a) The phrase, “maker of heaven and earth” (*עֶשֶׂה שְׁמִים וְאָרֶץ*), occurs only in six places in the Psalter.<sup>687</sup> All six instances of this phrase, associated with God’s creation, are located in Book V of the Psalter. Apart from the SOA, this phrase occurs only in the Egyptian Hallel (115:15) and Final Hallel (146:6).<sup>688</sup> The use of this characteristic phrase and the creation motif bind the Egyptian and Final Hallels.

<sup>687</sup> Pss 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 135:6; 146:6. Inclusive of prefixed prepositions or conjunctions on any of the lexemes.

<sup>688</sup> When we expand the search to include these three lexemes occurring separately within a single verse in the HB, the result significantly recalls YHWH’s creation. Cf. Gen 1:26; 2:4; Exod 20:11; 31:17; 2 Kgs 19:15; 2 Chr 2:11; Neh 9:6; Ps 102:25; Isa 37:16; 44:24; 45:12; 45:18; Jer 32:17; 51:15–16. Another associated motif based on these lexemes is YHWH’s universal power, though occurring less frequently than the creation motif. Cf. Deut 3:24; 28:12.

(b) The Egyptian and Final Hallel are the only two literary units with the most sustained recurrences of the *piel* imperative הָלַל.<sup>689</sup> With the exception of Ps 114, Pss 111–117 are framed with הָלַל either at the beginning of the psalm (111–113), at the end (115–116), or at both ends (117). Furthermore, both Hallel contain a *symbolic* number of the *piel* imperative הָלַל (10 times in Pss 111–117 and 28 [7x4] times in the Final Hallel).<sup>690</sup>

(c) Both Hallel are bound by AAs and/or ACs. Psalms 111–112 and 119 are clearly acrostics psalms. Psalms 145 and 150, framing the Final Hallel, are AA and AC respectively.

(d) Psalms 111–119 and 146–150 are the only two Subgroups in Book V that sustain the motif of the Torah extensively. The words, פְקוּדִים (“precepts”),<sup>691</sup> מִצְוָה (“commandment”),<sup>692</sup> אֹמֶרֶת (“utterance”),<sup>693</sup> and טֻפְשָׁת (“judgment”)<sup>694</sup> are found almost exclusively in these two Subgroups in Book V.

<sup>689</sup> Cf. the occurrences in Pss 104–106 and 135.

<sup>690</sup> We have seen the recurring numbers “10,” “7” and “4” in our study of superscriptions earlier. More discussions on numerical devices are in chapter 5.

<sup>691</sup> Pss 111:7; 119:4, 15, 27, 40, 45, 56, 63, 69, 78, 87, 93–94, 100, 104, 110, 128, 134, 141, 159, 168, 173.

<sup>692</sup> Pss 112:1; 119:6, 10, 19, 21, 32, 35, 47–48, 60, 66, 73, 86, 96, 98, 115, 127, 131, 143, 151, 166, 172, 176.

<sup>693</sup> Pss 119:11, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76, 82, 103, 116, 123, 133, 140, 148, 154, 158, 162, 170, 172; 138:2; 147:15.

<sup>694</sup> Pss 111:7; 112:5; 119:7, 13, 20, 30, 39, 43, 52, 62, 75, 84, 91, 102, 106, 108, 120–121, 132, 137, 149, 156, 160, 164, 175; 122:5; 140:13; 143:2; 146:7; 147:19–20; 149:9

(4) Psalms 135–136 parallel Pss 104–106 as Janus-psalms. While Pss 135–136 can be read as the first two psalms of Group 12 (135–150), it is also possible to read them as the celebration of the completion of YHWH’s house in Ps 132. The Pentateuch records that soon after the completion of the Tabernacle, Aaron is consecrated and the Levites are set apart to serve in the sanctuary (Exod 40, Num 3–4). This sequence of events is mimicked in Pss 132–136. The completion of the house of God can be seen in Ps 132 with the ark arriving at its resting place (cf. 132:7, 14). The anointing of Aaron in Ps 133:2, following Ps 132, corresponds to the Exodus account in which Aaron is anointed after the completion of the Tabernacle (Exod 40:1–15). Psalm 134 highlights the temple servants who minister in YHWH’s house day and night. This parallels the giving of laws and instructions pertaining to the ministry of the Levites at the Tabernacle “day and night” in the entire Book of Leviticus (Num 3–4; Exod 30:7; Lev 8:35; cf. 1 Chron 23:28–30). Moreover, at the completion of the temple, Aaron and his sons have “to burn incense before the LORD and to minister to Him.” They are called “to bless in His name forever” (1 Chron 23:13). This motif of blessing is seen in Ps 135:19–20, where “Israel,” “Aaron” and “Levi”<sup>695</sup> are called to “bless the LORD.”

From the Chronicles, we understand how the formula <sup>696</sup>כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד哉 was used. It was sung when David celebrated the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem (1 Chron

<sup>695</sup> “Levi” in Ps 135:20 is the only instance found in the Psalms.

<sup>696</sup> On the origins of this phrase, Shipp suggests that “(1) the historical background and setting for the refrain was corporate temple worship; (2) it figured prominently in the temple dedications or cultic installations; (3) it was intoned in response to present crises, persecution, or recent deliverance; and (4) it called upon the community and the Lord to remember the everlasting nature of the Covenant commitment of the Lord to Israel, to remind God of his promise to deliver Israel in light of the present distress, and to remind them that they could rely on God for covenant faithfulness because he is good.” Mark Shipp,

16:34).<sup>697</sup> This formula is recited again with the move of the ark into the temple that Solomon had built (2 Chron 6:41–7:1–3). The sons of Israel, upon seeing the glory of the LORD filling the temple, “gave praise [ידָה] to the LORD,” and invoked the formula (2 Chron 7:3, 6). Thus, this formula represents the climactic celebration after the completion of YHWH’s house.

The 26 instances of this expression in Ps 136 fulfil a similar role in the Psalms.<sup>698</sup> Psalm 136 contains 26 verselines and 52 (26x2) cola.<sup>699</sup> These two figures are “symbolic representation of the Tetragrammaton (10+5+6+5).”<sup>700</sup> Significantly, the connection between the name of YHWH (the number “26”) and the completion of the temple recalls the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7:13 (*הוּא יִבְנֶה־בֵּית לְשָׁמְךָ*).<sup>701</sup> What a fitting finale to the completion of the Zion-temple!

Psalm 136 is structured in two halves. The first half of every line recapitulates the canonical trajectory from God’s creation to the deliverance of his people. This trajectory connects Ps 136 to 137. However, the second half of every verse in Ps 136 (containing the formula, *כִּי־טוֹב בַּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִינָה*) connects with Pss 132–135 by being the refrain of

“‘Remember His Covenant Forever’: A Study of the Chronicler’s Use of the Psalms,” *ResQ* 35, no. 1 (1993): 29–39, [31].

<sup>697</sup> Cf. 2 Chron 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11.

<sup>698</sup> We have discussed how Pss 135–136 function as Janus psalms, linking Pss 120–134 and 135–150 together. Seen in this way, Pss 135–136 opens the final Group, highlighting the completion of YHWH’s house and framing the entire final Group with Ps 150.

<sup>699</sup> Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 455.

<sup>700</sup> Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 455.

<sup>701</sup> Cf. 1 Kgs 5:5; 8:18–19; 1 Chron 22:10; 28:3; 2 Chron 6:8; Mal 1:11.

praise at the completion of the sanctuary. Hence, Pss 135–136, like 104–107, function as a unit of Janus-psalms (§2.4.4).

These four points show how Group 10 parallels Group 12 in Books IV–V, supporting the structural argument that the fourth and fifth Davidic Collections are the centers of both Groups. In sum, the GCMs for Books IV–V are: (a) YHWH’s universal kingship and judgment from Zion (93–100); (b) victorious Davidic king and Torah glorified (108–110); (c) the establishment of the eschatological ideal Zion-Temple (122, 127, 132) by a messianic king; and (d) the supplication of the afflicted David (140–143).

### 3.1.4 SUMMARY OF GROUP CENTRAL MOTIFS IN THE MT PSALTER

The GCMs of the three Sections of the MT Psalter are summarized in Figure 46.

Book I				
Section 1	Pss 1–2	3–14	15–24	25–34
	Prologue	YHWH's cosmic kingship; judgment from Zion	Victorious Messianic king; Torah glorified	Dedication Historical Zion-Temple; YHWH's kingship
	Group 1	2	3	4

Book II		Book III	
42–49	50–72	73–83	84–89
Messianic king and his bride	Fall of Davidic kingship (and YHWH's response)	Fall of Zion-Temple (and YHWH's Judgment)	Supplication of afflicted David
Group 5	6	7	8

Book IV		Book V	
90–103	104–119	120–134	135–150
YHWH's cosmic kingship; judgment from Zion	Victorious Messianic king; Torah glorified	Restoration; Eschatological Zion-Temple; divine-messianic kingship	Supplication of afflicted David
Group 9	10	11	12

Figure 46: Central Motifs of all 12 Groups in the 3 Sections of the MT Psalter

Based on the GCMs, the MT-150 reveals a structure of three Sections, each consisting of four Groups that parallel one another. The three Sections are also concentric. In the first chapter, it has been established that the Prologue identifies two key motifs: (1) the blessed man flourishes in the paradisiacal garden because of his Torah-pious life, and (2) YHWH's universal victorious reign from the eschatological

Zion is through his son, the vicegerent Messianic king. These two leitmotifs are recapitulated in various GCMs throughout the Psalter (e.g., 15–34; 104–134).

From Figure 46, the first GCM of each Section is a glorification of YHWH and/or Messianic king. This can be seen vertically down Groups 1, 5 and 9 with minor nuances. In the first Section, YHWH's kingship is seen in his creative powers and universal rule (Group 1). In the second Section, the highlight is the marriage celebration of the God-like Messianic king (Group 5). In the third Section, the focus is on YHWH's kingship and his universal judgment over nations and powers (Group 9).

On the other end, the fourth GCM in each Section (Groups 4, 8 and 12) highlights the supplication of an afflicted David. This motif of supplication consistently recurs vertically down Groups 4, 8 and 12. Hence, the GCM in the first and fourth Groups in all Sections are generally consistent with recurring focuses on YHWH/Messianic kingship and Davidic supplication. Horizontally, they form the bookends across each Section.

Horizontally across each Section, the second and third Groups lie at the center.

*Following the development of the two center Groups vertically down the three Sections yield the crucial Metanarrative to understanding the entire Psalter.* The second GCMs vertically down the three Sections (Groups 2, 6 and 10) emphasize the Davidic king. Specifically, they trace the establishment, fall and the (re)establishment of an ideal Davidic king. A distinction between the Messianic king and historical Davidic monarch has previously been noted. The term, *מַשְׁמִיךְ* (“anointed”), which was avoided deliberately throughout Book II, is likely one such aspect of distinction. The third GCMs vertically down the three Sections (Groups 3, 7 and 11) emphasize the Zion-temple. Likewise, they trace the establishment, fall and (re)establishment of Zion.

In short, concentricity occurs horizontally across the four Groups in each of the three Sections, as well as vertically down the three Sections. Linearity occurs primarily vertically down the two center Groups in all three Sections.

*Hence, the concentric-linear structure celebrates a YHWH-Messianic kingship despite tracing the fall of the Davidic kingship and Zion-temple at the center of the MT Psalter. The four GCMs in Section 1 are mirrored in Section 3. The difference in Section 3 is that both the Davidic kingship and Zion-temple are now characterized as the ideal Davidic king and paradisiacal Zion. We can further summarize our discussion with Figure 47 below.*

	Left frame	Center	Right frame	
Front frame	YHWH's kingship	David established ↓	Zion established ↓	Davidic Supplication
Center	YHWH's kingship	David falls ↓	Zion falls ↓	Davidic Supplication
End frame	YHWH's kingship	Ideal David established	Ideal Zion established	Davidic Supplication
	1 <sup>st</sup> Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Group

Figure 47: Concentric and Linear Structures of the Group Central Motifs

We highlight two peculiarities in the structural design. First, there are unchanging motifs of YHWH's universal kingship and supplication down the Left and Right frames (first and fourth Groups). These two "static" motifs bind dual-developing motifs of the Davidic kingship and Zion in the second and third columns. While the constancy of the Davidic supplication in the right frame suggests a persistent presence of afflictions and distresses, they are counter-balanced by the continual restatements of YHWH's kingship. This persistence of Davidic supplication in affliction recalls 1 Kings 11:39 where God raised up Jeroboam because of Solomon's rebellion, saying "I will afflict the offspring

of David because of this [turning from YHWH], but not forever.” As in the last phrase of 1 Kings 11:39, this supplication will not be “forever.” The concluding motif for the entire Psalter, found in the Final Hallel (138–145) *after* the Davidic Collection (138–145) in the third Section, is *praise*, a fitting end to the Psalms.

Second, our analyses show that the macrostructural shape of the MT Psalter is an ingenious design integrating poetical (e.g., superscription, inclusion, numerical) and thematic (e.g., genre) editorial techniques. Correspondence, collaboration and coherence of technique, form and content consistently across the entire macrostructure of the Psalter make our propositions highly plausible.

Barr’s quotation at the beginning of this chapter deserves a repetition: “The case for meaning must be decided on literary criteria: one must show that a unit is not just an anthology but is an intended structure with meaning.”<sup>702</sup> It is helpful to reflect on the extent to which our structural analysis “is an intended structure with meaning.”

Our study shows that the concentric structuring technique is a major literary tool employed by the final editors to explicate meaning. The chiasmus, expressing parallelism and symmetry in various forms, is more prevalent in the Hebrew Bible than we would normally perceive.<sup>703</sup> This technique, as noted, is one of antiquity and practised in ancient Mesopotamia.<sup>704</sup>

<sup>702</sup> Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 160.

<sup>703</sup> See especially the work of David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); J. W. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981), 9–16.

<sup>704</sup> For instance, in the Akkadian hymn, the “Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World.”

Large sections of texts can also be arranged linearly as well as concentrically. For instance, Dorsey pointed out that the Book of Judges is one that consists of both a linear and a “secondary symmetric scheme, in which the introduction (1:1–3:6) is matched by the conclusion (17:1–21:25); and the body itself presents the seven major judges in an order that has a conspicuous touch of symmetry.”<sup>705</sup> There are rhetorical advantages for such structures<sup>706</sup>: They provide (a) aesthetical beauty and compositional balance to the text; (b) coherence based on a structured text; (c) a sense of completeness; (d) a central focus which indicates a climax or turning point; (e) memory aid to the successive points in the text; (f) opportunities to develop parallels and repetitions.

These six advantages of concentric structures are reader or audience-centered, an editorial motivation to help the reader understand and remember. Since the second half of the symmetric structure is never completely synonymous to the first but develops it,<sup>707</sup> the concentric structure is actually linear! The pivot of the concentric structure, besides being a focal point, functions also to explain why the second half of the concentric structure is a development.

<sup>705</sup> The following structure has been identified by Dorsey, *The Literary Structure*, 31.

- a      Othniel and his good *wife* (3:7–11; cf. 1:11–15)
- b      Ehud and the victory *at the Jordan fords* (3:12–31)
  - c      Deborah: *enemy's skull crushed by woman* (4:1–5:31)
  - d      Gideon: turning point (6:1–8:32)
  - c'     Abimelech: *judge's skull crushed by woman* (8:33–10:5)
  - b'     Jephthah and civil war *at the Jordan fords* (10:6–12:15)
- a'     Samson and his bad *wives* (13:1–16:31)

<sup>706</sup> These six points are those of Dorsey, *The Literary Structure*, 31.

<sup>707</sup> For discussions on the idea that no parallelism is truly synonymous, see John Jebb, *Sacred Literature* (London, T. Cadell, 1828); James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

The Metanarrative afforded by our analysis is a story about how the Davidic kingship and Zion are established (Book I), broken (Books II–III), and would be re-established (Books IV–V; see Figure 47). The Central Motifs of different composition units connect the dots of the Metanarrative across the entire Psalter. If this were the Metanarrative intended for the original postexilic readers (and even so for readers today), then the story is yet to be finished since the final idyllic social reality has not taken place. If this is the story expressed by the Psalter, how should the reader respond? What is the theological message for the audience? The answer to these questions is also found in the macrostructural shape. The theological message to the reader, in view of this Metanarrative, is both a hope and exhortation. The hope, expressed between the fall at the end of Book III and final re-establishment at the end of Book V, is the powerful display of YHWH’s kingship and a ideal messianic king. The exhortation, as seen from the frames of the structure in Figure 47, is to persist in recognizing YHWH’s kingship and in patience supplication. The Davidic covenant has not failed but calls for patience and a turning of vision onto God’s triumphant kingship and his anointed king.

Returning to Barr’s quote, we have briefly shown how the Macrostructure can function as an “intended structure with meaning.” We have now posited the entire macrostructure and Metanarrative of the Psalter. Our interim thesis (in chapter 1) that the Prologue is programmatic of the entire Psalter can be ascertained with more confidence. However, discussions thus far have focused on a concentric reading of the Psalter (which I argue, is also linear). In the following, our discussion will focus on a linear reading of the Psalter to reveal how it further collaborates with the design of the Psalter.

### 3.2 LINEAR READING

While concentric reading identifies structural core focuses of the Psalter, linear reading tracks a trajectory. They complement each other to reveal a fuller interpretation of the Psalter.

We are familiar with two arguments associated with the linear dimension of reading. The trends toward Communal and Praise psalms as one moves from the beginning to the end of the Psalter are well documented.<sup>708</sup> There is also an expansion of praise at the end. Citing Reindl, Ballhorn notes that in Ps 146, the individual figure of “David” is called to praise, But in Ps 147, this call is expanded to all “Israel” and Jerusalem.<sup>709</sup> By Ps 148, “God’s angels” and all created hosts of heaven are called to praise. In Ps 149, the subjects of praise return to “Israel” and the “congregation” of the *chasidim*. In the final Ps 150, it is “everything that breathes!” This expanding body of praise, from the local to the universal, traces the accentuation of praise of YHWH as the Psalter concludes.

The increasing prosody of praise as we move to the end of the Psalter is also shown via the formulaic use of בָּרְךָ הָלֵל (*piel* imperative mp) and יִדָּה (*hiph* imperative mp). Their occurrences are weighted heavily in Books IV–V of the Psalter. In Books I–

<sup>708</sup> Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 257; Harry P. Nasuti, “The Interpretive Significance of Sequence and Selection in the Book of Psalms,” in *Book of Psalms* (eds. P. Miller; P. Flint; VTSup 99; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 311–39; 321–22; *Defining the Sacred Songs: Genre, Tradition and the Post-Critical Interpretation of the Psalms* (JSOTSup 218; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 174.

<sup>709</sup> Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 299.

III, these three terms occur only 5x (none in Book III), but in Books IV–V, they occur a total of 69x. The frequency of occurrence also increases from Book IV to V.<sup>710</sup>

Brueggemann captures another trajectory (theological) in the Psalter. He argues that the Psalter characterizes the people of God moving from “obedience” to “praise” through a sequence of “orientation,” “disorientation” and “reorientation” (cf. §1.2.10).<sup>711</sup> Bruggemann’s proposition has found general acceptance in Psalms scholarship.<sup>712</sup>

Linear/sequential readings of the Psalter that identify developing storylines have been treated by several scholars.<sup>713</sup> “A sequence may be seen as a series of connected elements whose order is significant for meaning.”<sup>714</sup> Just as there are various central motifs working at different compositional levels, linear trajectories working at various compositional levels can be found in the Psalter.

Trajectories may be detected by “shifts” in storylines and a movement toward resolution. By “shifts,” we mean the detectable *change* of an existing concept. These “shifts” can be understood historically, theologically or conceptually. For instance, the *fall* and *re-establishment* of Zion are such identifiable “shifts.” The idealized Zion is the

<sup>710</sup> There are 4x נָלַח, 5x בְּרַכָּה (piel imperative mp), and 4x הִנֵּה (hiph imperative mp) in Book IV. These numbers increase to 45, 6 and 7 respectively in Book V.

<sup>711</sup> Brueggemann, “Psalms and the Life of Faith,” 3–32; “Bounded by Obedience and Praise,” 63–92.

<sup>712</sup> See a nuanced understanding of this trajectory in Parrish, *A Story of the Psalms: Conversation, Canon, and Congregation*.

<sup>713</sup> Apart from Ballhorn’s *Zum Telos des Psalters*, see Nasuti, “The Interpretive Significance of Sequence and Selection in the Book of Psalms” and *Defining the Sacred Songs*, 173–74, for a good discussion on “linear” reading of the Psalter.

<sup>714</sup> Nasuti, “The Interpretive Significance of Sequence,” 313.

final resolution of the plot. Storylines are often observed and appropriated by its readers because they, likewise, look forward to resolutions in life.<sup>715</sup>

Nonetheless, the linearity of the Psalter is not presented in a continuous unbroken prose. The nature of poetry is lacunous. There is both “contraction” of form and “compaction” of content.<sup>716</sup> Between two texts, readers’ imagination is required to fill in the gaps in plot development. Hence, the question is not whether the Psalter is loosely connected (by its nature, it clearly is), but whether a coherent Metanarrative can be traced across the entire macrostructure.

We have discussed briefly how the Metanarrative of the Psalter is developed across the structural parallels of the three major Sections, tracing the establishment, fall and (re)establishment of the Davidic kingship and Zion. In the following, I will demonstrate a number of linear trajectories that collaborate with this Metanarrative.

### **3.2.1 CANONICAL HISTORY OF ISRAEL**

With Wilson’s pioneering work on the editing of the Hebrew Psalter, there is general acceptance that the Psalter traces a progression of the Davidic covenant.<sup>717</sup> Wilson argued that the establishment of the Davidic covenant in Book I (esp. Ps 2) is

<sup>715</sup> Nasuti argues that “readers are inclined to interpret the Psalter sequentially because of the sequential nature of their own lives, . . . and a sequential understanding of the Psalms means that one must be aware of and open to psalms beyond those that express one’s current point of standing.” Nasuti, “The Interpretive Significance of Sequence,” 334–35.

<sup>716</sup> Ernst R. Wendland, *Analyzing the Psalms: With Exercises for Bible Students and Translators* (2nd ed.; Winona Lake, Ind.: SIL International, 2002), 160–164.

<sup>717</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 209.

now “passed on to his descendants” by the end of Book II (Ps 72).<sup>718</sup> This covenant “is viewed as broken, [and] failed” in Book III.<sup>719</sup> However, Book IV begins to address the problem of the failed covenant. Book V answers the problem by presenting “an attitude of dependence and trust in YHWH alone.”<sup>720</sup> The intent was for its readers to respond with the same attitudes. Wilson’s proposal identified a trajectory that describes the canonical story of Israel through the Davidic kingship, dynasty, exile and restoration. His proposal has been nuanced in various ways<sup>721</sup> and recast as Israel’s postexilic search for identity.<sup>722</sup>

Independently, we have also observed how general trajectories tracing the canonical history of Israel are repeatedly found in various Groups in the Psalter. This canonical history traces (a) YHWH’s creation to the formation of a chosen people, (b) their historic deliverance from Egypt, (c) their settlement in Jerusalem, (d) the Davidic kingship, (e) Israel’s exile and return, and (f) her potential entry into an ideal Zion-temple. This linear movement is not simply historical or geographical, but conceptual as

<sup>718</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 211.

<sup>719</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 213.

<sup>720</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 227.

<sup>721</sup> McCann, “Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter,” 93–107; deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter*.

<sup>722</sup> For example, deClaissé-Walford summarizes, “The Psalter begins with the story of the reign of King David in Book One, moves to the reign of Solomon in Book Two, and onto the divided kingdom and destruction of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians and the southern kingdom by the Babylonians in Book Three; Book Four recounts the struggles of the exiles in Babylon to find identity and meaning, and Book Five celebrates the return to Jerusalem and the re-establishment of a new Israel with God as sovereign.” deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 29. Cf. McCann, “The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter,” 350–62; “The Meta-Narrative of the Psalter,” 363–75.

well. It is a departure from slavery and exile (negative state) towards an ideal, secure, blissful and flourishing Zion-city (positive state).<sup>723</sup>

### 3.2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ZION CITY-TEMPLE

Besides movement toward (or away from) the Zion-city, we have also noted a linear reading in the development of Zion itself. Several scholars have dealt with the motif of Zion in the Psalter. For instance, Ballhorn finds an emphasis on *theocracy* in relation to the temple motif (90–100) at the beginning of Book IV. This theocracy is said to emanate from the temple (95, 100). The physical nature of the temple is then transcended when it is being referred to as “Judah” (114:2). By Pss 120–34, the temple concept is subsumed under the greater Zion concept. This Zion-temple is understood in several ways. It can refer to topology (125:1), the temple mount (128:5), the people of Israel (126:1), a metaphor for YHWH’s dwelling (132:13) or a *social-reality* (122:8; 149:2; *soziale Wirklichkeit*).<sup>724</sup> In the final Hallel (146–150), Zion is given an idealized form. By idealized, I do not mean spiritualized. It is clearly depicted within a social-reality in Ps 149:2 where the community at Zion gathers to judge all human governments and in praise of God.<sup>725</sup> With the establishment of the idealized or

<sup>723</sup> See esp. our earlier discussions on Pss 113–118.

<sup>724</sup> “Jerusalem stellt immer auch eine soziale Wirklichkeit dar, wie in Ps 122,8 ausdrücklich gesagt wird.” Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 248.

<sup>725</sup> Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 378.

eschatological sanctuary, the final editor(s) of the Psalms paints an inviolable sanctuary, one that no human hands can destroy.<sup>726</sup>

In §3.1.4, we have shown how the Zion-temple motif develops across the CM of the third Groups in each of the three Sections. This development of Zion is observed at the highest compositional level of the Psalter. The two center-psalms in the third Group of Book I (25–34) highlight YHWH’s glorious enthronement at his temple (29:9) and “the dedication of the House [of God]” (30:1). What is interesting is that the content of Ps 30 relates little to the temple itself. It is a Praise psalm intermixed with supplication and thanksgiving.<sup>727</sup> This mismatched superscription in Ps 30:1 could have “originally read *a Davidic psalm.*”<sup>728</sup> Regardless of the historical processes that shaped the superscription, the term “dedication” (*הַנְּחָתָה*; 30:1) presumes the presence of a physical temple.

As we move to the third Group of Section 2, we observe a vivid depiction of the fall of the earthly Zion-temple (esp. 74, 79). The earthly Zion-temple has turned from a glorious “dedication” to a humiliating destruction. However, by the third Group of

<sup>726</sup> For Ballhorn, this is “a deliberate final” conception and “a metaphor for God’s future dealings with Israel and to humanity.” He notes, “andererseits ist es ein bewußt offener Schluß, denn der ‚Tempel‘ wird zu einer Metapher für Gottes zukünftiges Handeln an Israel und an der Menschheit.” Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 379; However, Gillingham’s study on “Zion” is quite different. Although she finds that a “Zion tradition” well integrated into the entire Psalter (in at least 75 psalms dispersed through Books I–V), she does not posit a coherent trajectory of “Zion” in the Psalter. Instead of arguing for an “eschatological sanctuary” at the end of the Psalter, she argues that “the compilers’ focus is on the Zion tradition as an actual place, with a this-worldly dimension.” Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition,” 334.

<sup>727</sup> deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 289.

<sup>728</sup> From ancient sources, two possibilities were proposed for the insertion of the phrase. Historically, it could have functioned as the dedication of the temple “after the exile ca 515 B.C.E., as described in Ezra 6,” or a “rededication of the temple in 165 B.C.E. under Judas Maccabeus following its

Section 3, Ps 126:1 depicts a “restored” Zion (120–122; cf. 126:1).<sup>729</sup> This Zion-temple is further depicted as one that is not “built by human hands” (127:1). The descriptions of the postexilic Zion-temple take on an eschatological ring by Ps 132:15–18. The ark of God ultimately finds its dwelling place at this Zion. Hence, we see a development of the Zion-temple motif across the three Sections of the Psalter.

We have also discussed how Zion is transformed from an earthly Jerusalem to an ideal or eschatological one in the SOA (§3.1.3). The three Pss 122, 127, 132 form a triptych, showing this development of the motif of Zion in the MT Psalter.

An interesting development of the Zion-temple can be seen in the word “tent” (**לְהַקָּא**). David’s desire to find a permanent dwelling place for YHWH (2 Sam 2:2, 6), whose presence was originally associated with a “tent” **לְהַקָּא**, is eventually accomplished by Solomon building the temple. In the Psalms, the lexeme, **לְהַקָּא**, first occurs in Ps 15:1 with the question of who may enter into the presence of God. The last instance of the 18 occurrences of **לְהַקָּא** is in Ps 132:3.<sup>730</sup> In this psalm, YHWH’s dwelling place was finally established and he arose to this “resting” place. Interestingly, from Ps 132 onwards, **לְהַקָּא**

profanation ca. 167.” Cf. Talmud (*b. Sop.* 18:3; *Bik.* 3.4). deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 230, 289–290.

<sup>729</sup> Scholars generally agree on the unity of the Songs of Ascents as a collection. In Ps 126:1, the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile is clearly an event in the past. Even if we do not agree that the “Jerusalem” in Ps 122 is postexilic, by Ps 126, the references to the Zion-Temple is clearly so.

<sup>730</sup> Pss 15:1; 19:5; 27:5-6; 52:7; 61:5; 69:26; 78:51, 55, 60, 67; 83:7; 84:11; 91:10; 106:25; 118:15; 120:5; 132:3.

no longer appears in the Psalter. The **לְנָס** has become the Zion-city-temple that YHWH has built!<sup>731</sup>

In sum, a development of the Zion motif can be detected in the MT Psalter. It is established initially as an earthly Davidic city (29, 30; Book I). However, it fell into ruins and was destroyed by Israel's enemies (74, 79; Books II–III). Yet YHWH's steadfast love remains on Zion. Despite the apparent restoration of the postexilic Jerusalem and its temple, there remains a greater, flourishing eschatological Zion-city ruled by a messianic king, which only the righteous will enter. It will be a Zion that no human hands can build, save YHWH (127, 132–136). The final imagery of Zion depicts an idealized social reality with its righteous inhabitants praising YHWH and executing judgment on the nations (144–150).

### 3.2.3 “GATE”

Earlier in §2.3.1, we introduced the Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme (POS) with the lexeme **בַּיִת**. The POS is the careful use and sequential placement of certain word/phrases strategically and exhaustively across the entire Psalter to make or reinforce a rhetorical point that collaborates with the Metanarrative of the Psalter. In the following, we will see how linear reading and the Metanarrative across the Psalter can be traced by the lexeme **בַּעַד** (“gate”), occurring 13x in the Psalter. Consider the following figure which summarizes the occurrences.

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<sup>731</sup> Cf. 1 Chron 15:1.

Trajectory	Text	Reference
<b>Introductory</b>	Gates of death and gates of the daughter of Zion	9:14–15
<b>Begin:</b> Davidic monarchy	Celebrating victory at the “gates” of the city	24:7, 9
Ashamed	Psalmist ashamed at the city “gates”	69:13
<b>Turning point</b>	YHWH’s love for the “gates of Zion”	87:2
Call to enter	The call to enter “YHWH’s gates”	100:4
Gates restored	Recalling the “gates of death” during the exile	107:18
Righteous enter	The righteous will enter the “gates of righteousness”	118:19–20
Within the gates	The psalmist is standing at the “gates of Jerusalem”	122:2
Unashamed	The psalmist is unashamed at the city “gates”	127:5
<b>End:</b> Toward ideal Zion	YHWH strengthens the “bars of [Zion’s] gates”	147:13

Figure 48: Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme of **רַ�שָׁה**

The first two instances of this term are found in Ps 9:14–15 where they function as an introductory overview to the trajectory traced by **רַ�שָׁה**. In Ps 9:14,<sup>732</sup> the psalmist calls out to YHWH to “lift him up from the gates of death [**מִתְּנַחַת**].” This “gate” refers to YHWH’s deliverance from a “near-death experience.”<sup>733</sup> The reference, “gates of the daughter of Zion” in the following verse is the antithetical-parallel to the “gates of death.” According to Jacobson, the expression, “daughter of Zion” (**בְּתִצְׁדִיקָה**),<sup>734</sup> is a “metaphor that portrays the city [of Jerusalem] as a woman who embodies what it is for

<sup>732</sup> BHS notes that the Targum and Ms are missing the yod suffix (construct form). This textual note does not affect the POS of **רַ�שָׁה**.

<sup>733</sup> deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 137.

<sup>734</sup> Stinespring provides a detailed argument on why this phrase should be translated as an appositive genitive “daughter Zion” as opposed to “daughter of Zion.” The appositive-genitive interpretation is well countered by Dobbs-Allsopp and Floyd. See William Franklin Stinespring, “No Daughter of Zion: A Study of the Appositional Genitive in Hebrew Grammar,” *Enc* 26, no. 2 (1965): 133–41; F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “The Syntagma of Bat Followed by a Geographical Name in the Hebrew Bible: A Reconsideration of Its Meaning and Grammar,” *The CBQ* 57, no. 3 (1995): 451–70; Michael H. Floyd, “Welcome Back, Daughter of Zion!,” *CBQ* 70, no. 3 (2008): 484–504. This phrase is most extensively used in the Book of Lamentations but occurs only once in the Psalms. Cf. 2 Kgs 19:21; Ps 9:15; Isa 1:8; 10:32; 16:1; 37:22; 52:2; 62:11; Jer 4:31; 6:2, 23; Lam 1:6; 2:1, 4, 8, 10, 13, 18; 4:22; Mic 1:13; 4:8, 10, 13; Zeph 3:14; Zech 2:14; 9:9.

the people of Israel to be God’s people.”<sup>735</sup> To praise YHWH at the gates of the daughter of Zion exemplifies life as God’s people, standing in stark contrast to the “gates of death.” These two instances introduce and encapsulate the message of the rest of the occurrences of נַעֲשֵׂה.

The next two instances of נַעֲשֵׂה (24:7, 9) are set within the literary contexts of warfare. Craigie noted that the historical context “may have been the arrival of the Ark in Jerusalem in David’s time (in 2 Sam 6:12–19), which marked on the one hand, the establishment of the sanctuary in Jerusalem, and on the other hand, the crowning achievement of Israel’s war.”<sup>736</sup> If this interpretation is correct, the word נַעֲשֵׂה identifies with the early Davidic monarchy in Israel’s canonical history. We can then trace the beginning of the trajectory defined by נַעֲשֵׂה from the beginning of the Davidic monarchy.

The next instance of נַעֲשֵׂה is found in Ps 69:13. Here, the psalmist sits at the city gates in vivid public humiliation. Zenger argued that the reason for the humiliation is the psalmist’s “zeal for the house of God.”<sup>737</sup> This psalm, according to Zenger, is likely situated in the postexilic period “after the reestablishment of the temple, or rather of the sacrificial cult.”<sup>738</sup> Even if we do not accept Zenger’s view, there is good reason to see that the psalm clearly alludes to Zion in jeopardy (69:10, 36). This motif of Zion in

<sup>735</sup> deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 138;

<sup>736</sup> Peter Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC 19; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 214; See also deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 252.

<sup>737</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 178.

<sup>738</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 179.

jeopardy corresponds to the metanarrative depicted in Books II–III of the Psalter which underscores both the fall of the Davidic monarchy and the Zion temple (§2.3).

In Ps 87:2, the **רַעַשׁ** takes on a ruminative character. With the humiliation at the city gates, the psalmist now proclaims YHWH’s chief love for the “gates of Zion.” For Longman, Psalm 87 celebrates Zion where “God makes his glorious presence known in the world.”<sup>739</sup> Zion may still be in jeopardy but Ps 87 highlights YHWH’s timeless love for her (87:2) and that YHWH “will establish” her (**יִבָּנֶה**; 87:5). This instance of **שֹׁעַר** indicates a turning point along the trajectory.

Coming at the end of the YHWH *Malak* psalms (93–100), the **רַעַשׁ** in 100:4 is a call for the people of God to enter YHWH’s gates with thanksgiving and celebratory praise. The appointed time for YHWH’s restoration of the Zion city is at hand (102:14). The restoration of Zion’s gates is described in a concrete way as Israel looked to a restored inhabited city (107:18). Those who are qualified to enter into the “gates of righteousness” and the “gates of the LORD” are called the “righteous” (118:18–19).<sup>740</sup>

By the SOA, the psalmist now stands “in the gates of Jerusalem” (**בְּשַׁעֲרֵי יְרוּשָׁלָם**; 122:2).<sup>741</sup> In a starking reversal, the psalmist who was earlier humiliated before his foes at the gates in Ps 69:13 is now rendered as those who are “unashamed” (**לֹא-יִבָּשֶׂה**) before his enemies at the gate (127:5). This spectacular reversal is emphasized by one last

<sup>739</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 319.

<sup>740</sup> Zenger noted that the phrase, “gates of the righteousness,” refers to the “gates to the inner court of the Temple.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 241.

<sup>741</sup> BHS notes that Greek has ἐν ταῖς αὐλαῖς σου (“in your courtyard”), but this is not attested by any MSS.

instance of **שַׁעַר** in Ps 147:13. Here the word, “gate,” recalls the “bars” (**בָּרִich**) of Ps 107:16,<sup>742</sup> referring to YHWH’s breaking of Israel’s captivity and leading them to an inhabited city. However, the “bars” and “gates” in Ps 147:13 refer to the restored and secure Zion city (cf. 147:12). Thus, this last instance of **שַׁעַר** in the MT Psalter identifies a flourishing and life-giving Zion city (147:13). Therefore, we have moved from the “gates of death” to the “gates of the daughter of Zion” (cf. 9:14–15) by Ps 147:13. The 13 instances of **שַׁעַר** identify a general historical trajectory of Israel’s fate represented through the motif of Zion’s gates. This trajectory begins with the establishment of the Davidic kingship, followed by her captivity and restoration. The trajectory traced by **שַׁעַר** also corresponds to the Metanarrative across the five Books of the Psalter.

### 3.2.4 “JACOB”

The sequential scheme of the 34 instances of “Jacob” (**יַעֲקֹב**) described in the following is a remarkable validation to the POS technique.<sup>743</sup> The exact sequence of these 34 (17x2) occurrences as they occur can be seen in three Frames, with an Introduction, Turning point and Conclusion. As a whole, its linear trajectory traces the salvation and restoration of the people of God from their captivity, a trajectory similar to that of **שַׁעַר** seen earlier. Consider the 34 instances of “Jacob” listed below.

<sup>742</sup> This Lemma occurs only twice in the entire Psalms.

<sup>743</sup> Pss 14:7; 20:2; 22:24; 24:6; 44:5; 46:8, 12; 47:5; 53:7; 59:14; 75:10; 76:7; 77:16; 78:5, 21, 71; 79:7; 81:2, 5; 84:9; 85:2; 87:2; 94:7; 99:4; 105:6, 10, 23; 114:1, 7; 132:2, 5; 135:4; 146:5; 147:19.

Structure	Key motifs	Text (NAU)	Ref.
Introduction and Frame 1	A <b>Introduction; Frame 1 &amp; 2 Begin. Motifs: Zion; Restoration of captives; LORD answers</b>	Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores His captive people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.	14:7
		For the choir director. A Psalm of David. May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high!	20:2
	B YHWH in 3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular. Jacob to YHWH.	You who fear the LORD, praise Him; All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel.	22:24
		This is the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face-- even Jacob. Selah.	24:6
	C <b>Center: YHWH as victorious king</b>	You are my King, O God; Command victories for Jacob.	44:5
	B' Jacob as 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural. YHWH to Jacob.	The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.	46:8
		The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.	46:12
		He chooses our inheritance for us, The glory of Jacob whom He loves. Selah.	47:5
	A' <b>End of Frame 1 / Start of Frame 2</b>	Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores His captive people, Let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.	53:7

Frame 2	J <b>Frame 2a: YHWH punishes nations (victory)</b>	Destroy them in wrath, destroy them that they may be no more; That men may know that God rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth. Selah.	59:14
	K <i>Praise</i>	But as for me, I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.	75:10
	L <b>Destruction of Egypt (victory)</b>	At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, Both rider and horse were cast into a dead sleep.	76:7
	M <i>For Jacob</i>	You have by Your power redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.	77:16
		For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they should teach them to their children	78:5
	J' <b>Frame 2b: YHWH punishes Jacob (victory)</b>	Therefore the LORD heard and was full of wrath; And a fire was kindled against Jacob And anger also mounted against Israel,	78:21
	M' <i>For Jacob</i>	From the care of the ewes with suckling lambs He brought him To shepherd Jacob His people, And Israel His inheritance.	78:71
	L' <b>Destruction of Jacob (victory)</b>	For they have devoured Jacob And laid waste his habitation.	79:7
	K' <i>Praise</i>	For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of Asaph. Sing for joy to God our strength; Shout joyfully to the God of Jacob.	81:2
		For it is a statute for Israel, An ordinance of the God of Jacob.	81:5
	A,, <b>End of Frame 2. Motif: Restoration of Captives; LORD hears; Zion (cf. A, A')</b>	O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; Give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah.	84:9
		O LORD, You showed favor to Your land; You restored the captivity of Jacob.	85:2
		The LORD loves the gates of Zion More than all the other dwelling places of Jacob.	87:2

Structure	Key motifs	Text (NAU)	Ref
Turning Point	<b>LORD has seen (cf. 20:1; 78:21; 84:8); King executes justice.</b>	They have said, "The LORD does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed."	94:7
		The strength of the King loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.	99:4

Frame 3	<b>W</b>	<b>Start of Frame 3: Chosenness</b>	O seed of Abraham, His servant, O sons of Jacob, His <u>chosen</u> ones!	105:6
	X	<i>YHWH's faithfulness</i>	Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant.	105:10
	Y		Israel also came into Egypt; Thus Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.	105:23
	Z	<b>YHWH's kingship (victory)</b>	When Israel <u>went forth</u> from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language.	114:1
	X'	<i>David's faithfulness</i>	Tremble, O earth, before the Lord, Before the God of Jacob.	114:7
	Y'		How he (David) swore to the LORD And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob.	132:2
	W'	<b>End of Frame 3: Chosenness</b>	Until I find a place for the LORD, A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.	132:5
			For the LORD has <u>chosen</u> Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own possession.	135:4
Conclusion		Beatitude	How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the LORD his God.	146:5
		YHWH's word	He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel.	147:19

Figure 49: Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme of בָּנָה יְהוָה

Frame 1, which has a concentric A-B-C-B'-A' shape, is bounded by two instances of “Jacob” on one end with Pss 14:7, 20:2, and on the other end with Ps 53:7. Apart from the change of יהוה to אֱלֹהִים, the two verses, Pss 14:7 and 53:7, are almost identical.<sup>744</sup> The main motif of this inclusio is salvation from Zion as YHWH restores his captive people.

The parallel B-B' textual units describe Jacob in a right relationship before YHWH as worshipers and YHWH as their God who cares for them. The repeated use of the third person singular, referring to God in unit B (22:24; 24:6), and the repeated use of the first person plural, referring to Jacob in unit B' (46:8, 12; 47:5), highlight a distinctive syntax in these units, showing both their connections and contrasts.

<sup>744</sup> This is a phenomenon of the Elohistic Psalter. Psalm 53:7 has תְּשׁוּבָה instead of תְּשׁוּבָת in 14:7.

At the structural center of Frame 1 (C) stands a victorious declaration of YHWH's kingship (44:5). *As a whole, the message of Frame 1 is that salvation and restoration of Jacob (shown by A-A') is bound by a right inter-relationship between God and Jacob (shown by B-B') and underscored by the central place of YHWH's triumphant kingship.*

Frame 2 explicates God's wrath on the *nations* and Jacob due to rebellion.

Structurally, it is bound on the left by Ps 53:7 and on the right by three psalms (84:9; 85:2; 87:2). Within these bookends, there are two almost identical parallel sequences (JKLMN- [JMLKN']). The first half of this sequence consists of five instances of "Jacob" (2a: JKLMN) which, together, describe YHWH's punishment directed at the wicked nations (59:6, 9). It is introduced by Ps 59:14 (J) and followed by four psalms that carry the motifs of praise (K; 75:10), destruction of Egypt (L; 76:7), care for Jacob (M; 77:16) and YHWH's law (N; 78:5). At the center of these five psalms is the motif of destruction (L; 76:7) which, again, highlights YHWH's victorious reign over the nations.

The second half of the sequence also consists of five instances of "Jacob" (2b: J'M'L'K'N') but as a whole, describes YHWH's punishment of *Jacob* rather than the nations. It is introduced by Ps 78:21 (J') and followed by four psalms carrying the same four motifs of care for Jacob (M'; 78:71); destruction of Jacob (L'; 79:7), praise (K'; 81:2) and law (N'; 81:5). The difference in the second half is the reversed order of the motif of care for Jacob (M') and praise (K'). At the center of these five psalms is also

the motif of destruction, but with Jacob as the object (L'; 79:7). Again, this center verse highlights YHWH as the triumphant divine warrior.<sup>745</sup>

Frame 2 concludes with three instances of “Jacob” (A’); 84:9; 85:2; 87:2) that carry the repeated motifs of deliverance from Zion and restoration of the captive people of Jacob. As such, they form a fitting inclusio with both bookends of Frame 1 (A’’//A [14:7, 20:2] and A’ [53:7]).

*The message of Frame 2 is that salvation and restoration of Jacob (A’-A’’)*  
*involve YHWH’s punishment of the nations and even Jacob. However, God provides the*  
*redemption and a shepherd for Jacob and his people in this process (77:16; 78:71). As*  
*such, God is to be praised (75:10; 81:2), and his law and statutes are to be kept (78:5;*  
*81:5). YHWH’s triumphant kingship remains at the structural center of this Frame.*

The Turning point of the macro-trajectory comes after Frame 2. This Turning point is understood with Pss 94:7 and 99:4 which are both located in the YHWH *Malak* psalms. Psalm 94:7 highlights the taunting of the arrogant and the wicked, with Jacob accusing YHWH of being blind or unable to hear. This wilful accusation is the foil to Jacob’s plea for YHWH to answer and hear in Pss 20:2 and 84:9, which are the bookends of Frames 1–2. The second instance of “Jacob” at the Turning point (99:4) declares that YHWH has heard the taunts of the wicked and the disobedient children of Jacob (78:21), hence executing righteousness. In other words, *these two psalms at the Turning point,*

<sup>745</sup> Harold notes, “[t]he Divine Warrior motif often depicted a close association between the warrior and the earthly king. The Divine Warrior was called upon in times of national distress and disaster to provide protection and defense for the nation of the king.” Harold Wayne Ballard Jr., *The Divine Warrior Motif in the Psalms* (North Richland Hills, Tex.: D&F Scott, 1998), 28.

*which is also the thematic middle point of the entire trajectory, capture YHWH's kingship in the face of human rebellion.*

The third (and final) Frame consists of 7 instances associated with Jacob and has a concentric shape. The bookends of this Frame, Pss 105:6 and 135:4, are clearly linked by the nominal and verbal forms of בָּחִיר ("chosen one") and בָּחַר ("to choose"). The common motif in both instances is YHWH's special choice of Jacob. Frame 3 has a positive outlook and speaks of Jacob's blessed status in God. It makes no direct mention of Jacob's afflictions or rebellion. The chosenness concept is found only in this Frame.

It is important to also note that Jacob's "chosenness" is associated with YHWH's covenant with the patriarch and David elsewhere in the Psalter (cf. 89:4; 105:6–10). What is striking here is that the X-Y and (X-Y)' textual units of the third Frame exactly recall YHWH's covenants with Jacob and David (105:10; 132:2–5). The X-Y units focus on *YHWH's faithfulness* to the covenant and Jacob's sojourn to the Promised land. In contrast, the (X-Y)' units focus on the *Davidite's faithfulness* and the sojourn of the ark of God to Zion, the dwelling place of God. It is imperative to observe the balanced, parallel and well-structured thematic design of Frame 3, capturing the concepts of covenant and chosenness.

This "chosenness" motif is also associated with the tribe of Judah and the city of Zion in the Historical narratives. This motif is repeated thrice in YHWH's speech to Jeroboam (1 Kgs 11:13, 32, 36) where YHWH reiterates his covenantal faithfulness in his choice of David and Zion in spite of the punishment that YHWH has raised against Solomon because of his turning away. In other words, the endurance of the people of God through the judgment of God is based on YHWH's covenantal faithfulness and his specific choice. This motif of covenantal faithfulness and chosenness in Frame 3

corresponds exactly to the story of Jacob (as the people of God) through the fall of the Davidic dynasty and the exile.

The motif at the center of Frame 3 (114:7) is again associated with YHWH's victorious power over the land. As a whole, *the message of Frame 3 is YHWH's covenantal faithfulness to his chosen people, Jacob. Within this message is two journeys to Zion. The first journey is associated with the people of God and the second, the resting place of YHWH's ark. At the center of the message lies the motif of divine power and victory.*

The intentional sequence of all 34 instances of "Jacob" is concluded by two verses (146:5; 147:19). The first of these two verses is a blessing (**בָּשָׁרְךָ**) for those "whose help is the God of Jacob." Beatitudes are usually located at the end of major structural units (2:12; 41:14; 72:17–19; 89:16, 53; 106:48; 144:15). The appropriation of this beatitude-concluding technique shows that those responsible for the "Jacob" POS had composed it with poetical principles that are consistent with those in the rest of the Psalter. The final instance of "Jacob" in Ps 147:19 reads, "He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel." This final instance recalls the prophetic formula ("thus said the LORD") usually located at the beginning or end of a prophetic speech (Jer 33:14; Ezek 12:28; Zech 12:1).

It is interesting to note that this concluding instance of "Jacob," with a focus on YHWH's statutes and ordinances, is also found in the concluding instances of Frames 2a and 2b (cf. N, N'; 78:5; 81:5). The thrust of these two verses in the Conclusion is both a blessing and a call for YHWH's people to keep his word in covenantal faithfulness. The motifs of these two references not only corresponds to the message of Ps 1 in the Prologue but are the main motifs in the conclusion of Solomon's prayer after he brought

the ark to the Temple in 1 Kings 8:54–60. Solomon blessed the people and called on them to keep YHWH’s commandments and statutes.

In summary, the 34 sequential occurrences of “Jacob” form a skilful poetic design of a three-part concentric-linear structure with a coherent message. Careful observation of the 34 instances confirms the POS as an intended editorial compositional technique as opposed to a fortuitous arrangement.<sup>746</sup> To my knowledge, such discussions of the POS technique in Psalms scholarship have not yet been seen.

Furthermore, the thematic development across the three Frames in the Jacob scheme confirms the programmatic design of the Prologue and the Metanarrative of the entire Psalter as we have proposed. The first Frame tells us that God’s kingship is at the center and that the restoration of the people of God is associated with a proper inter-relationship between God and Jacob. This is also represented in the message of Book I of the Psalter, where the motif of YHWH’s kingship and Torah is found at the center of the Davidic struggles to live piously before God in the midst of afflictions.

The second Frame shows the consequences of this relationship damaged through disobedience. YHWH would destroy both the nations and those in Jacob who are wicked (78:17–22). This message also corresponds well with the overall message of Books II–III of the Psalter, which traces the fall of the Davidic kingship and Zion. Nonetheless, Frame 2 shows that YHWH’s care for his people remains despite his anger. Frame 2 also shows us that there are a redemption and a shepherd for Jacob.

<sup>746</sup> There is not a single textual note in *BHS* on these 34 instances of “Jacob.”

In the third Frame, the trajectory shifts positively, highlighting YHWH's covenantal faithfulness to Jacob and David. This final Frame, like Books IV–V of the Psalter, traces the journeys of Jacob and the ark of God to their dwelling place in Zion.

*The entire message of these 34 instances of “Jacob” is the Metanarrative of the Psalter. It is a message to the chosen people of God that salvation will come from Zion and that YHWH will restore them based on his covenantal faithfulness. The central motif of YHWH’s triumphant kingship is the poetic focus for the entire metanarrative. Jacob will dwell in blessedness. This is God’s word to Jacob and they are to take heed!*

In essence, (1) the POS of “Jacob” identifies a three-frame concentric structure with an Introduction, Turning point and Conclusion. (2) Each Frame is itself a concentric (or parallel) structure with a focal point at the center. (3) This poetical center always identifies YHWH’s victorious and powerful kingship. (4) The Introduction, Turning point and Conclusion all consist of two verses each and capture the motifs of YHWH’s kingship, deliverance of his people, Zion and Torah. (5) There are 34 instances of “Jacob” in the Psalter. This number is a factor of “17” which is a divine name number (see §5.1). (6) These correspondences between the POS and macrostructuring principles of the Psalter affirms the conscious design of the Psalter.

### 3.2.5 IMPORTANT “TURNING POINTS” IN YHWH’S SALVIFIC WORK

Linear developments throughout the Psalter are identified by *shifts*. In view of our understanding of the linear development of Israel’s canonical history, I have identified four words/phrases of shifts that also display the POS technique. The first is the phrase “new song” (*שִׁיר חָדֵשׁ*). The second is a pair of associated word-phrases, “appointed” time (*מָזַע*) and “from now to forever more” (*מִעוּד עַד-עוֹלָם מְגֻלָּת*). The third is associated

with YHWH’s “change of mind/heart” (**נַחַם**) and the fourth is another pair of associated phrases, “Arise O LORD!” and “Return O LORD!”” (**שׁוֹבֵה יְהָוָה** and **קִוְמָה יְהָוָה**).<sup>747</sup>

### 3.2.5.1 “NEW SONG”

(a) The phrase, **שִׁיר חֶדֶשׁ**, occurs in only six instances in the Psalter, all in connection to praising YHWH.<sup>747</sup> It occurs twice in Davidic psalms (40:4; 144:9), twice in YHWH *Malak* psalms (96:1; 98:1), once in an untitled psalm (33:4) and once in a psalm without attributed authorship in the title (33:3; 149:1). The only instance of this phrase found outside the Psalter is in Isa 42:10.

Kraus noted that the expression is an “eschatological song that breaks out of the category of space and time and embraces all things” (cf. Rev 5:9).<sup>748</sup> Craigie argued that this expression represents “ever-new freshness of the praise of God in his victorious kingship (96:1, 98:1; 149:1).”<sup>749</sup> Tate, likewise, pointed out that the expression “praises the coming new and unprecedented intervention of Yahweh in history.”<sup>750</sup> Patterson examines four of the six instances in the Psalms and argues that Pss 33, 96, 98 and 149 are considered a “subgenre” of praise psalms because of their similarities in theme, structure and vocabulary used in relation to the expression.<sup>751</sup> Our primary concern is to

<sup>747</sup> Richard Patterson, “Singing the New Song: An Examination of Psalms 33, 96, 98, and 149,” *BSac* 164, no. 656 (2007): 416–34, [416].

<sup>748</sup> Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 252; Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 272.

<sup>749</sup> Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 272.

<sup>750</sup> Marvin Tate, *Psalms. 51-100* (WBC 20; Dallas, Tex: Word Books, 1990), 507.

<sup>751</sup> Patterson, “Singing the New Song,” 431–32.

explore if the phrase, “new song,” (as opposed to simply “a song”; cf. 46:1; 48:1; 69:30) located in six places in the Psalter displays a certain development or trajectory. Consider the six arguments given below.

(1) The six instances are located as three separate pairs found in Books I, IV and V respectively. In Book I, the two instances occur as the penultimate psalms of Groups 3 and 4. The first “new song” occurs after YHWH’s enthronement and is found in the Thanksgiving hymn (33) just before the end of the Group. The following figure illustrates this trajectory.



Figure 50: Penultimate Locations of **שִׁיר חָנָן** in Book I<sup>752</sup>

Psalm 40, which contains the second instance of “new song,” is situated on the right-half of the concentric structure in Pss 35–41, coming after the center Ps 38 which is a supplication for salvation. Given the shape of these two Groups described in §2.2, we observe that the first two instances of “new song” occur just before the final psalm in both Groups. Both instances are found in Thanksgiving hymns and appear after the

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<sup>752</sup> For details on the structural design of Book I and related abbreviations, see Figure 12.

presentations of YHWH's kingship (29–30) and supplication for salvation. This sequence suggests that the singing of a “new song” is a development from YHWH’s response to the supplication for salvation.

(2) The six instances of שִׁיר חַדְשָׁה in the Psalter form a three-part AB-CC-B’A’ configuration based on their superscription type. The first and last instances are found in psalms without attributed authorship. The second and fifth instances are found in the first and last Davidic collections in Books I and IV respectively. The two center instances are found in the YHWH *Malak* psalms. The phrase, “new song,” is absent in Books II–III of the Psalter. This is probably intentional since Books II–III define the fall of the Davidic kingship and the Zion–temple.<sup>753</sup> The following figure shows this structure graphically.

<sup>753</sup> Coincidentally, all thirteen instances of the *polel* verb **רוּם** (“to exalt”) in the Psalms occur in all the Books except Books II and III as well. Cf. Pss 9:14; 18:49; 27:5; 30:2; 34:4; 37:34; 99:5, 9; 107:25, 32; 118:16, 28; 145:1. Note that the *polel* verb occurs 25x in the HB. Psalms contain the highest number of such occurrences, followed by Isaiah with 3 instances.

Superscription Type		Distinct Literary Context		Text (NAU)	Ref
No authorship	A	Waiting and trusting	X	Sing to Him a new song; Play skilfully with a shout of joy.	33:3
Davidic	B			He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear And will trust in the LORD.	40:4
YHWH Malak	C	YHWH's kingship and judgment	Y	Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth.	96:1
YHWH Malak	C			A Psalm. O sing to the LORD a new song, For He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him.	98:1
Davidic	B'	Ideal city and final justice	Z	I will sing a new song to You, O God; Upon a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You,	144:9
No authorship	A'			Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise in the congregation of the godly ones.	149:1

Figure 51: Concentric Structure of the Six Instances of the New Song *שִׁיר חֶדֶשׁ*

(3) The two instances in the superscripts of Pss 96:1 and 98:1 are situated within the YHWH *Malak* psalms (93–100). The literary contexts surrounding the “new song” (Y) highlight the praise of YHWH’s universal victorious kingship (96:1; 98:1–2)<sup>754</sup>; his nature (96:6, 13; 98:1–3), deliverance (96:2; 98:2–3), works of creation (96:5),<sup>755</sup> and his impending judgment (96:13; 98:9). Patterson argues that both Pss 96 and 98 are thematically similar.<sup>756</sup>

When we compare the literary contexts (X) of the expressions in Pss 33:3 and 40:4, we see the common motifs of praising YHWH’s universal kingship (33:8; 40:4); nature (33:4–5; 40:11–12); salvation (33:16–19; 40:3, 11, 18); and creation (33:6–7, 15;

<sup>754</sup> BHS notes that the entire phrase, *שִׁירוּ לְיהוָה שִׁיר חֶדֶשׁ*, is absent in the parallel text, 1 Chron 16:23.

<sup>755</sup> Raymond Van Leeuwen, “Why Do the Trees of the Forest Sing a New Song? (Psalms 96 and 98),” *The Covenant Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2004): 22–34, [28].

<sup>756</sup> Patterson, “Singing the New Song,” 423.

40:6). But there are also differences. The motif of YHWH's impending judgment in Pss 96 and 98 is not present in Pss 33 and 40. Conversely, the high view of YHWH's word and truth in Pss 33:4, 11 and 40:8–9, 12 is absent in Pss 96 and 98. In Pss 33 and 40, there is also the motif of waiting (33:20; 40:2) and trusting (33:21; 40:4–5), which are not apparent in Pss 96 and 98. Neither are they present in the contexts of Pss 144 and 149.

In the last two literary contexts (Z) of the expression “new song” (144:9 and 149:1), we notice, first, a strong emphasis on YHWH’s theophanic deliverance (144:5–11), and second, a paradisiac description of a people living in a city of utopic bliss (144:12–15). Booij argues that this utopic description is *the* “new song” itself.<sup>757</sup> Psalm 149:5–9 describe a situation where the *chasidim*<sup>758</sup> hold a “two-edged” sword in their hands exacting vengeance and punishment on the nations. These imageries are *not* found in the literary contexts of the first four occurrences (X, Y).

In other words, when we compare the immediate contexts surrounding the 3 pairs of “new song,” we observe the content developing an XX-YY-ZZ structure. Through characteristic emphases in each context, there is a developing motif of waiting for and trusting in YHWH’s deliverance (Book I), to a climactic vision of YHWH’s universal

<sup>757</sup> Thijs Booij, “Psalm 144: Hope of Davidic Welfare,” *VT* 59, no. 2 (2009): 173–80, [175].

<sup>758</sup> Cha notes, “In 1 Maccabees 2:42 the Hebrew term “Hasidim” appears. While derived from the Hebrew term, חסידם, the ‘Hasidim’ here refers to a Jewish military group in the 160s B.C.E. By this time the Hebrew term חסידם had become a proper noun specifically referring to those who fought along with Judas Maccabees in their war against the Seleucids. חסידם in the Psalter should not be identified with this later Jewish military group.” Cha, “Psalms 146-150,” 92.

kingship and impending judgment (Book IV), and finally to the prospect of YHWH's theophanic deliverance of his people, bringing them into a paradisiac blissful city (Book V). The last instance of "new song" (149:1) leads the reader into a conclusive time when ultimate judgment and vengeance are executed on God's enemies (Figure 51).

(4) Like the first two instances in Book I, the last two instances in Book V are found in the penultimate psalms of the Subgroups they are situated in. Psalm 144 comes just before Ps 145 which is the final Davidic psalm exalting YHWH's kingship. Likewise, the last instance in Ps 149 comes just before the final Ps 150 where the Psalter ends in a consummation of universal and perfect praise (Figure 52).

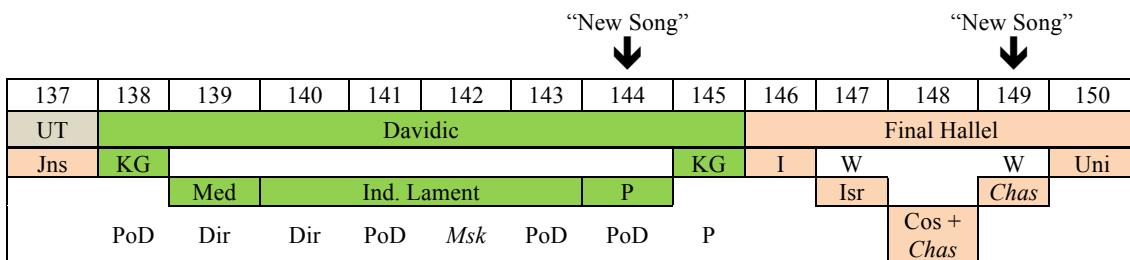


Figure 52: Penultimate Locations of שִׁיר חֲדָשָׁה in Book V<sup>759</sup>

Theologically, this characteristic penultimate location of the "new song" marks an important point in the trajectory from Lament to Praise. Their locations may be understood as follows: *the "new song" of the psalmist (and the readers) is situated after witnessing YHWH's power in history, and calls for trusting and waiting in spite of the fall of the Davidic kingship and the Zion-temple. It arrives through YHWH's victorious kingship and before living the utopic life in a paradisiac city executing just revenge on*

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<sup>759</sup> For details on the structural design of Book V and related abbreviations, see Figure 28 in §2.4.3.

*the enemies. The place of the “new song” is an anticipation and realization of a new era in the eschaton. The “new song” is the psalmist’s song for an impending new world order that is dawning.*<sup>760</sup>

(5) The one other occurrence of “new song” outside the Psalter is in Isa 42:10.

Scholars have pointed out that from Isaiah 40 onwards, the judgment of spiritual insensitivity (the motifs of “blindness and deafness,” cf. Isa 6:9–13) is now past (cf. Isa 40:2).<sup>761</sup> Isaiah 42 begins by describing the servant of YHWH upon whom his spirit rests. This servant will establish justice throughout the nations and the earth. YHWH will appoint him to “open blind eyes” and “bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness” (Isa 42:7). Then in Isa 42:9, YHWH said, “Behold, the former things have come to pass and new things [שְׁחִינוּ] I now declare. . . .” This is followed by the call to sing a שִׁיר in Isa 42:10.

The motif, YHWH will “do something new” (*עֲשֵׂה חֶדֶשׁ*), continues in Isa 43:19, beckoning praise.<sup>762</sup> Robinson argues that Isa 43:8–13 “in some ways represents a transition between judicial blindness and total restoration of sight. The former is associated primarily with preexilic times; the latter in some future eschatological

<sup>760</sup> Inagrace Dietterich, “Sing to the Lord a New Song: Theology as Doxology,” *CurTM* 41, no. 1 (2014): 23–28, [26].

<sup>761</sup> Rolf Rendtorff and Margaret Kohl, *Canon and Theology Overtures to an Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 170–89; Geoffrey D. Robinson, “The Motif of Deafness and Blindness in Isaiah 6:9–10: A Contextual, Literary, and Theological Analysis,” *BBR* 8 (1998): 167–86; Ronald E. Clements, “Beyond Tradition-History : Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah’s Themes,” *JSOT*, no. 31 (1985): 95–113.

<sup>762</sup> Dietterich, “Sing to the Lord a New Song,” 26.

time.”<sup>763</sup> Furthermore, eschatological imageries in Isaiah are also expressed by the lexeme **חֶדֶשׁ** (cf. “something new,” Isa 48:6; “a new name,” 62:2; “new heaven and new earth,” 65:17; 66:22).<sup>764</sup> In other words, the single occurrence of the phrase, “new song” outside the Psalter is used in a similar semantic context, collaborating with its meaning and use in the Psalms.

(6) Culley identified the four instances of the phrase, **שִׁירׁוּ לְיְהוָה שִׁירׁ חֶדֶשׁ**, in 96:1; 98:1; 149:1; Isa 42:10, as a formula.<sup>765</sup> Culley found that Pss 96 and 98 have at least 65% and 50% of its text containing formulaic expressions<sup>766</sup> which according to him, come “from a period very close to the time when oral formulaic composition was being practiced.”<sup>767</sup> As an “oral formulaic” expression, they are likely part of a set of “stock phrases” an oral prophet would use and reuse. It is plausible that the phrase, **שִׁירׁוּ לְיְהוָה**, is employed as a formula and carefully appropriated in 96:1; 98:1; 149:1; Isa 42:10. This idea that the phrase, “new song,” was an established oral formula

<sup>763</sup> Robinson, “The Motif of Deafness and Blindness,” 181.

<sup>764</sup> The LXX translation of **שִׁירׁ חֶדֶשׁ** takes two forms: ḥōsmā kaiνōv (in LXX Ps 32:3; 39:4; 95:1; 97:1; 149:1) and ḥōd̄n kaiν̄v (in LXX 43:9; Rev 5:9; 14:3). The latter’s use in Rev is clearly eschatological.

<sup>765</sup> With the inclusion of the variation in Ps 33:3, it becomes a “formulaic phrase.” A “formula” by his definition, is a phrase (a colon long or a verseline) and “recurs at least once.” “Formulaic phrases” contain certain variations to the formula, such as addition or omission of particles or pronominal suffixes. Culley defined another category, “free substitutions,” in which a formulaic phrase contains a different lexeme. These three categories are increasing in variation. Robert C. Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 22, 32–33, 58.

<sup>766</sup> Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language*, 103, 105.

<sup>767</sup> Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language*, 114.

strengthens our proposition that the phrase has a specific connotation and is used in specific circumstances.

In conclusion, these six points demonstrate that שִׁיר חֶדְשָׁה is a carefully chosen formula, plausibly appropriated to form a remarkable schema. The shape of the six occurrences is carefully designed in collaboration with the Metanarrative of the Psalter. Together, they tell of an impending decisive shift in YHWH's deliverance, bliss and justice at the final consummation.

### **3.2.5.2 “APPOINTED TIME/PLACE” & “FROM NOW TO FOREVER”**

The second lexeme that marks a milestone and disjuncture in the development of YHWH's purposes for his people is the motif of an “appointed time/place” (**מַעַד**). This motif is also highlighted by a similar phrase, מַעַתָּה וְעוֹלָם (“from now to forever more”).

מַעַד has multiple meanings. It can mean “appointed place” or “appointed time.”<sup>768</sup> In the Pentateuch, it is usually connected to the “appointed feasts” (e.g., Passover; Num 9:2–3) of Israel where the people gather and offer sacrifices to YHWH.<sup>769</sup> This lexeme occurs only 5x in the Psalms and carries the meaning of “appointed time” in three psalms (75:3; 102:14; 104:19). The “appointed time” in Psalm 75 is found in a Divine Response psalm immediately after the Lament in Ps 74. Likewise, מַעַד in

<sup>768</sup> “מַעַד” *HOL*, 186; “מַעַד” *BDB*, 417, BibleWorks. v.10.

<sup>769</sup> Exod 13:10; Lev 23:2; Num 9:2–3.

102:19 comes after supplication prayers in 102:1–12.<sup>770</sup> The temporal contexts expressed in Pss 75:3 and 102:19 are oriented to the “future.”<sup>771</sup> At the same time, the literary contexts in both instances of **מָעֵן** are associated with the divine response to the fall of Zion.

The third instance of **מָעֵן** in Ps 104:19 describes YHWH’s appointing of the moon to its circuitry order. In this context, it represents YHWH’s power to order, to provide and care for his creation at the right “time.”<sup>772</sup> However, we observe that Ps 104 comes just after the end of the third Davidic Collection (101–103) and is located at the beginning of another series of psalms marked with doxological terms (104–107). This series, Pss 104–107, traces a trajectory from creation (104), the formation and captivity of Israel (105–106), to her entry into an inhabited city (107). The use of **מָעֵן** in Ps 104 thus sets forth a series of psalms leading into Book V with positive expectations of Israel’s restoration to the city of Zion.<sup>773</sup>

The three instances of **מָעֵן** (“appointed time”) in the Psalms share a common concept. They underscore YHWH’s power and surety to act positively at an “appointed

<sup>770</sup> Historically, Israel blows the trumpet over their offerings and sacrifices as an act of reminder before YHWH (Num 10:10) at “appointed times.” The silver “trumpet” (**חֶצְבָּה**) in Numbers 10 is found only once in the Psalter (98:6) and is located just prior to Ps 102:19. It is interesting that **מָעֵן**, with connotations of sacrifice and trumpet call, is found near each other in the Psalter.

<sup>771</sup> Hossfeld determined this “appointed time” in Pss 75:3 and 102:14 as a time in the future. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 255.

<sup>772</sup> Perhaps as a polemic against Aton, in the Great Hymn to Aton. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 53–54.

<sup>773</sup> Psalm 104 follows a series of **בָּרָךְ** at the end of Ps 103 and is the first of the three psalms that begins with **בָּרַכִּי** (“I bless,” Ps 104:1), **בָּזֹאת** (“Give thanks” Ps 105:1) and **הֲלֹלְלָה** (“hallelujah,” Ps 106:1). Psalm 104 is also the first psalm of the collection of Hallelujah psalms (Pss 104–106, 111–113; 115–117; 135; 146–150) with the “Hallelujah” coda. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 39–41.

time” to reverse the afflictions and difficulties experienced by his people. They mark the dawning of change or a turning of tide in the misfortunes of the Davidic kingship and Zion.

Similarly, the formulaic phrase, מִעְתָּה וְעוֹד-עוֹלָם, reinforces this view.<sup>774</sup> This merism occurs 8x in the HB, five of which occur in the Psalms and interestingly, all of them in Book V of the Psalter (113:2; 115:18; 121:8; 125:2; 131:3).<sup>775</sup> The first two instances are found within the Egyptian Hallel, framing the center Ps 114.<sup>776</sup> They are located in the Hallelujah superscript of Ps 113 and the postscript of Ps 115, forming a frame around 113–115. This framing connects the motifs of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and Judah, and YHWH’s sanctuary in Ps 114 with the special mention of מִעְתָּה וְעוֹד-עוֹלָם.

The three other instances of מִעְתָּה וְעוֹד-עוֹלָם are found in the SOA. In these three instances, there is a common motif highlighting the psalmist’s dependence on YHWH’s protection, depicted by the imagery of Jerusalem’s “mountains” (121:1; 125:2) and a “weaned child resting against his mother” (131:3).<sup>777</sup> Together, these three texts reveal that a special period of YHWH’s providence that has occurred will continue. YHWH will

<sup>774</sup> Hossfeld noted that this expression is related to the formula, “forever and ever,” which he termed as “eternity formula in doxologies” (cf. Pss 45:7; 48:15). Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 182.

<sup>775</sup> This phrase is not captured in Culley’s analysis.

<sup>776</sup> The centrality of Ps 114 can also be seen in the placement of the hallelujah formula. It is located as superscripts in Pss 111, 112; as postscripts in 115, 116 and as frames in 113 and 117. Psalm 114 is set apart without any instance of hallelujah. This is not denying other coherent structural designs or formats that include Ps 118. Our earlier discussion of Prinsloo’s spatial study on Pss 113–118 is a case in point.

<sup>777</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3: 485.

protect and surround his people in Zion from this time and forevermore so that they can rest in God like a weaned child resting in his or her mother.<sup>778</sup>

Also noteworthy is that the three instances outside the Psalter (Isa 9:6; 59:21; Mic 4:7) are set within contexts that are often understood as messianic.<sup>779</sup> Isaiah 9:5–6 describes a messianic figure king who will rule on the Davidic throne, and who will be called “wonderful counselor, mighty God, eternal Father and prince of peace.”<sup>780</sup> Isaiah 59:20–21 identifies a time when a “redeemer will come to Zion,” and YHWH’s word will never depart from the mouth of “those [and their offspring] who turn from transgression.” It has been argued that Isa 59:15b–21 carries a “divine warrior motif” linked directly with Isa 63:1–6, framing the eschatological renewal of Zion.<sup>781</sup> Likewise,

<sup>778</sup> Goldingay points out that “the psalm commends a quietism that lasts forever. Israel needs to be prepared to settle down for the long haul with the circumstances such as those of the Persian period described in Ezra and Nehemiah and forgo any attempt to bring in the kingdom of God, which is the venture of a lofty heart and eyes that look high. It needs to be prepared to wait forever.” Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3: 538.

<sup>779</sup> Goswell concedes that Isa 9:6–7 (and Mic 4:6–7) is “futuristic” and “messianic” despite his qualifications of the messianic figure. Greg Goswell, “The Shape of Messianism in Isaiah 9,” *WTJ* 77, no. 1 (2015): 101–10, [106–07]; Tate, likewise, views the figure as “essentially messianic, in the sense that it expects a new Davidic king whose reign will fulfil the ideals of the Davidic kingship; and since his reign is to extend ‘from this time forth and forevermore,’ he is to be the last (note ‘the latter time’ in vs. 1) king to sit on the throne of David and not merely as Ahaz’s successor.” Marvin Tate, “King and Messiah in Isaiah of Jerusalem,” *RevExp* 65, no. 4 (1968): 409–21, [417, 421].

<sup>780</sup> For a discussion and debate on the compound five titles (“noun clauses or asyndetic phrases”) functioning as theophoric names describing God (rather than the child), see Goswell, “The Shape of Messianism in Isaiah 9,” 107; John Goldingay, “The Compound Name in Isaiah 9:5(6),” *CBQ* 61, no. 2 (1999): 239–44, [242]; Klaus Schunck, “Der Fünfte Thronname Des Messias, Jes 9:5-6,” *VT* 23, no. 1 (1973): 108–10; Paul Wegner, “A Re-Examination of Isaiah IX 1-6,” *VT* 42, no. 1 (1992): 103–12, [103].

<sup>781</sup> Matthew J. Lynch, “Zion’s Warrior and the Nations: Isaiah 59:15b-63:6 in Isaiah’s Zion Traditions,” *CBQ* 70, no. 2 (2008): 244–63.

Mic 4:1–2 begins with a futuristic<sup>782</sup> depiction of Zion as the chief of mountains where people converge to learn the word of YHWH. In Mic 4:7–8, the lame and weak will become the remnant and strong nation.

These eschatological connotations surrounding the formula מִעֵדֶתְה וַעֲדָעָזֶלֶם, as well as its strategic presences in Book V of the Psalter should not be dismissed as mere coincidence. The motifs of deliverance (114), peace and the rule of a messianic king (120:6–7; 122:6–8; 125:5; 128:6; 132:10–12), and his protection all collaborate with the Metanarrative of the Psalter.

The three phrases, שִׁיר חֶדֶשׁ מִזְעֵד and מִעֵדֶתְה וַעֲדָעָזֶלֶם, do not come at the end of the Psalter. Interestingly, all the occurrences of מִזְעֵד and מִעֵדֶתְה וַעֲדָעָזֶלֶם lie between Pss 75:3, which is the divine response to the fall of the Zion temple, and 131:3 which comes just prior to the completion of the ideal Zion-temple.<sup>783</sup> Thus, their specific locations and associated literary suggest a turning of fortunes for Zion in the larger sweep of the storyline.

### 3.2.5.3 “RELENT”

A third lexeme that illustrates a turning point in the Metanarrative is the *niphal* form of נִחְנוּ. The use of the verb in *niphal* expresses (i) some kind of comfort in the midst of sorrow (77:2; Ezek 14:22) or (ii) “to be sorry, repent or change one’s mind” (1

<sup>782</sup> Arvid Kapelrud, “Eschatology in the Book of Micah,” *VT* 11, no. 4 (1961): 392–405, [403]; Rick R. Marrs, “‘Back to the Future’: Zion in the Book of Micah,” in *David and Zion* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 77–96, [93].

<sup>783</sup> Cf. Pss 75:3; 102:14; 104:19; 113:2; 115:18; 121:8; 125:2; 131:3.

Sam 15:11).<sup>784</sup> In the Psalms, the *niphal* form occurs only 4x. The first two instances identify the psalmist seeking “comfort” (77:3) and for God to “have compassion” (90:13). Thus, מִנְחָה connects *comfort* with YHWH’s *compassion*. The third instance describes YHWH’s “turning”<sup>785</sup> (106:45) from his anger against his own people. Despite their rebellion, YHWH “relented” in response to their distress and supplications. The final instance describes YHWH swearing an “unchanging” oath (לֹא יַבְרֵחַ) to the messianic king in Ps 110:4.<sup>786</sup>

The development of the motif across these four *niphal* instances and their associated contexts tell a story. The psalmist longs for a “turning/comfort” in his distress (77:2). He beseeches God to have “compassion” on him in his distress (90:13). YHWH eventually “relents.” This “relenting” involves YHWH leading his people to dwell in an inhabited city (107) and ushers in the triumphant reign of the messianic king from Zion. This king receives YHWH’s “unchanging” oath as priest forever (110).

These four instances are also pegged carefully to the Metanarrative of the Psalter. The first instance (77) is set in Book III which underscores the fall of Zion. The second and third instances are found in Book IV, highlighting YHWH’s reign and his steadfast love. The last instance in Ps 110 occurs in the fourth Davidic Collection which highlights the triumphant rule of the messianic king.

<sup>784</sup> Mike Butterworth, “מִנְחָה,” *NIDOTTE*, 3: 82.

<sup>785</sup> Hossfeld understands this as a “turning.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 92.

<sup>786</sup> Davis argues that Ps 110 is not simply a Royal or enthronement psalm because (a) no human king sits at the right side of YHWH; (b) no human king is given the order of eternal priesthood; (c) no human king will be able to judge the nations. He argues from poetical, contextual and theological

### 3.2.5.4 “ARISE, O LORD!” & “RETURN, O LORD!”

The expressions, קומָה יְהֹוָה and שׁוֹבֵה יְהֹוָה, are special literary constructions that display the POS technique and linear dimension of reading the Psalter. Both verbs in the expressions are imperatives and suffixed with the paragogic *heh*. The consonance and assonance between them are obvious. The two expressions also have exactly the same vowels. Seven out of eight consonants of these two phrases are identical. Furthermore, they are located only in three Books of the HB. The form, קומָה יְהֹוָה, is found 8x in the HB and outside the Psalter, they are attested only in Num 10:35 and 2 Chron 6:41. The form, שׁוֹבֵה יְהֹוָה, is found only 4x in the HB and the only instance outside the Psalter is in Num 10:36.

These references outside the Psalter are all associated with the literary contexts following the completion of the Tabernacle at the time of Moses, or the Temple at the time of Solomon. Both are associated with the moving of the ark in search of a “resting place” (Num 10:33; 2 Chron 6:41).<sup>787</sup>

The significance of its occurrence in Num 10 lies in Israel moving out for the first time (Num 10:12–13) in the wilderness of Sinai after the Tabernacle was completed and regulations pertaining to the transportation of the ark were given. The destination of the journey is specified as “the place of which the LORD said, ‘I will give it to you’” (Num 10:29), recalling the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:7). The two verses, Num 10:35–36,

perspectives and concludes that Ps 110 is messianic and the identity of the יְהֹוָה in Ps 110:1 is Jesus the Messiah. See Barry C. Davis, “Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm,” *BSac* 157, no. 626 (2000): 160–73.

<sup>787</sup> Numbers 10:33 uses מִשְׁכָּן whereas 2 Chron 6:41 uses the word נֶסֶת (rest). Both can be translated as “resting place.”

are also known as “The Song of the Ark.”<sup>788</sup> As the ark began to move, Moses would say, “**קָוְמָה יְהֹוָה** and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you.” As the ark came to rest, Moses would say, “**שׁוֹבֵת יְהֹוָה** to the myriad thousands of Israel.” Cole argues that this couplet in Num 10:35–36 reflects a “holy war motif” and “bespeaks the magnitude of the forces of Israel as they prepare to launch into the victory march leading to holy war against Canaan.”<sup>789</sup>

The reference of **קָוְמָה יְהֹוָה** in 2 Chron 6:41 is the Chronicler’s account of the Solomonic transfer of the ark to its final resting place at the Temple (cf. 1 Kgs 8), which is a literary parallel to David’s transfer of the ark to Jerusalem in 1 Chron 16:7–36.<sup>790</sup> Japhet argues that the phrase, “the ark of your might,” in 2 Chron 6:41 is derived from the “original battle cry” in Num 10:35.<sup>791</sup> This association is clearly valid and connects Num 10:35–36 and 2 Chron 6:41. Hence, apart from the Psalms, the forms, **קָוְמָה יְהֹוָה** and **שׁוֹבֵת יְהֹוָה**, are associated only with the movement of the ark either with reference to Moses or Solomon. However, these formulaic phrases *outside* the Psalms seem to program all their exact sequence of occurrences *within* the Psalms (3:8; 7:7; 9:20;

<sup>788</sup> Milgrom notes “[t]hat the poem [Num 10:35–36] does not belong to its context is indicated by the inverted nuns that frame it.” Leiman discusses Num 10:35–36 as a text “borrowed from an apocryphal or pseudepigraphical book of Eldad and Medad.” Levine argues that the scribal convention of the inverted nuns around the two verses “parallels the practice of the Alexandrian scribes in their copies of Greek texts, where similar markings are evident.” Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers =: [Ba-Midbar]: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (The JPS Torah commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 81; Sid Z. Leiman, “The Inverted Nuns at Numbers 10:35-36 and the Book of Eldad and Medad,” *JBL* 93, no. 3 (1974): 348–355, [354]; Baruch A. Levine, ed., *Numbers 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (1st ed., AB 4A; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 319.

<sup>789</sup> R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers* (NAC 3B; Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000), 179.

<sup>790</sup> Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1993), 601.

<sup>791</sup> Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 603

10:12; 17:13; 132:8; 6:5; 90:13; 126:4 ). The following figure illustrates this phenomenon.

Location	Motif	Text (NAU) on קומת יהוה	Ref
Num	Ark moves. Destruction of enemies.	Then it came about when the ark set out that Moses said, “Rise up, O LORD! And let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You.”	Num 10:35
2 Chron	Ark moves to dwelling place, favor for Israel	Now, therefore, arise O LORD God, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your might; let Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation and let Your godly ones rejoice in what is good.	2 Chron 6:41
Psalms (Book I)	Petition for the destruction of enemies and deliverance for the afflicted	Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God! For You have smitten all my enemies on the cheek; You have shattered the teeth of the wicked. Arise, O LORD, in Your anger; Lift up Yourself against the rage of my adversaries, And arouse Yourself for me; You have appointed judgment. Arise, O LORD, do not let man prevail; Let the nations be judged before You. Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Your hand. Do not forget the afflicted. Arise, O LORD, confront him, bring him low; Deliver my soul from the wicked with Your sword.	3:8 7:7 9:20 10:12 17:13
Psalms (Book V)	Ark moves to dwelling place	Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength.	132:8

Figure 53: Pan-HB Occurrence Scheme of קומת יהוה (“Arise, O LORD!”)

Location	Motif	Text (NAU) on שׁובת יהוה	Ref
Num	Ark rests. Petition for YHWH's favor to the people of Israel	When it came to rest, he said, “Return, O LORD, To the myriad thousands of Israel.”	Num 10:36
Psalms (Books I, IV, V)	Petition for deliverance of the people.	Return, O LORD, rescue my soul; Save me because of Your lovingkindness. Do return, O LORD; how long will it be? And be sorry for Your servants. Restore our captivity, O LORD, As the streams in the South.	6:5 90:13 126:4

Figure 54: Pan-HB Occurrence Scheme of שׁובת יהוה (“Return, O LORD!”)

Figure 53 lists all the occurrences of קומת יהוה in the HB. The first two occurrences (Num 10:35 and 2 Chron 6:41) carry two separate motifs in association with the movement of the ark. Numbers 10:35, connected to Moses, has a specific focus on YHWH's rising against his enemies. In contrast, 2 Chron 6:41 relates to YHWH's servants and his *chasidim*. Remarkably, these two references parallel two different sets

of phrase occurrences in the Psalms as shown by the arrows. Numbers 10:35, with its combative focus, corresponds with the first five occurrences in the Psalms, all found in Book I. Interestingly, all five psalms (3:8; 7:7; 9:20; 10:12; 17:13) express YHWH's triumphant power and judgment over the nations and wicked adversaries. 2 Chronicles 6:41, with its phraseology on resting place and the priests clearly alludes to Ps 132:8–9 in Book V, carrying the tone of YHWH's care and covenantal faithfulness to David (cf. 2 Chron 6:42; 132:10).

In Figure 54, the expression, *שׁוֹבֵה יְהָוָה* in Num 10:36 also corresponds to the three instances in Psalms (6:5; 90:13; 126:4). In Num 10:36, the particle, “to,” in the phrase, “return O Lord, *to* the myriad thousands of Israel,” is supplied by most English versions (e.g., NIV, ESV, NAU) but is not found in the Hebrew text. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV, 1989) uses the genitive “of” instead. When it is translated without the particle “to,” it is an epithet for YHWH—“Return O LORD, You who are Israel’s myriads of thousands!”<sup>792</sup> Thus, for NRSV and Milgrom, the phrase “Israel’s myriads of thousands” functions as an apposition to YHWH. However, the appropriation of the particle “to” is not unwarranted. This translation, “to the myriad thousands of Israel,” describes the people of God rather than YHWH. This understanding works well in the couplet Num 10:35–36 since there is a contrasting parallel following both phrases, *קַוְמָה יְהָוָה* and *שׁוֹבֵה יְהָוָה*, identifying the enemies and servants of God respectively.

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<sup>792</sup> Milgrom’s translation. Milgrom, *Numbers*, 81.

From the above, we can see how Num 10:35–36 and 2 Chron 6:41 relate to the occurrence scheme for שׁוֹבֵת יְהוָה and קָוָמָה יְהוָה in the Psalms. The correspondences of the use of קָוָמָה יְהוָה between Book I and Num 10:35, and between Book V and 2 Chron 6:41, bookend all the occurrences of the phrases, קָוָמָה יְהוָה and שׁוֹבֵת יְהוָה, in the Psalter.<sup>793</sup> The final instance in Ps 132:8 collaborates well with our earlier proposition that the ideal Zion-temple is now completed along the horizon of Pss 132–136.

### 3.2.6 FEATURES OF THE POS TECHNIQUE

The examples that exemplify the POS technique in §3.2.3–§3.2.5 display several common features summarized as follows:

- 1) Only specific words/phrases are selected.
- 2) These words may be of a certain grammatical construction or forms (e.g., *niphal* forms; paragogic *heh*); formulaic phrases; rare occurrences or theologically-loaded words/phrases (e.g., “Arise O LORD!”). There are no significant textual issues associated with POS words identified in this thesis.
- 3) The POS technique is usually an *exhaustive* display of all occurrences of the word in the Psalms. A careful analysis of all its occurrences is necessary to see the schema.
- 4) The POS technique is always consistent and displays a spectrum of depth. Certain words, such as זִכְרָה (“remember”), סַתֶּר (“hiding place”), שַׁעַר (“gate”), מַעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם (“from this time to forevermore”) and נַחַם (“to relent”), do not

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<sup>793</sup> There are no critical notes for all the references of קָוָמָה יְהוָה and שׁוֹבֵת יְהוָה in *BHS*.

form watertight shapes. However, words like בְּרִית (covenant; see Figure 60) and יעקב Jacob are well-developed and consistent.

- 5) The number of occurrences is carefully chosen and located. They can be intentionally located (or omitted) at strategic places of the macrostructure (e.g., “new song”). The number of occurrences is usually symbolic (e.g, 34 [17x2] instances of “Jacob”).
- 6) The words/phrases within the Psalms that exemplify the POS technique collaborate with the same words/phrases found outside the Psalms (e.g., “new song”).
- 7) The POS of a certain expression is itself a skilfully-designed structure (e.g., “Jacob”). They are usually concentric in shape, with inclusions and containing a central motif highlighting YHWH’s victorious kingship.
- 8) The POS technique coheres with the organization principles, Metanarrative and macrostructural shape of the Psalter. The use of poetic features, concentric-linear structures, introductions, turning points, bookends and central motifs correspond exactly to the organizing principles of the MT Psalter.
- 9) It is not clear why certain words/expressions are chosen. However, those that we have detected relate to the major storyline of the canonical history of Israel and correspond generally to the Metanarrative. This suggests that those who were responsible for the POS were likely the same group/individual who composed the final text of the Psalter.
- 10) The POS technique suggests that the entire Psalter is edited as a unity and that a complete corpus of the Psalter was present for the editorial work. From the perspective of the reader, the POS demands a focused reading of the entire Psalter with a view on one single word. Therefore, it is less likely that an

audience who depended on partial recitation of the Psalms could appreciate the POS. However, this does not necessitate that the POS is implausible. The use of theological significant words (e.g., “Jacob,” 34x) and their symbolic recurrences work for the POS in this regard. This may be the first hint for the readers or hearers to identify an important POS lexeme.

- 11) As a whole, the POS captures both concentric and linear dimensions of reading. The linear aspect looks proleptically to an eschatological final consummation where the wicked nations are judged and the universal praise of God becomes a reality. It emphasizes the *telos* of the Psalter.

### 3.3 SUMMARY

- The Psalter is explicated via at least three dimensions of reading: Linear, Concentric and Intertextual. These three dimensions are intertwined and are in collaboration with each other. There is a remarkable harmony between the Psalter's form and content.
- A concentric reading identifies structural Central Motifs (CM) at different compositional levels of Collection, Group and Section. The macrostructure of the Psalter displays a total of twelve Group Central Motifs (GCM) with four in each of the three Section of the Psalter (Books I, II–III, IV–V). The concentric structure, with the second half pivoting and developing from the first, is also a form of linear reading.
- The four GCMs in Book I are: (a) YHWH's cosmic kingship; judgment from Zion; (b) Victorious Messianic king and Torah glorified; (c) Dedication Historical Zion-Temple and YHWH's kingship; and (d) Supplication of the afflicted David.
- The four GCMs in Books II–III are: (a) Messianic king and his bride; (b) Fall of Davidic kingship (and YHWH's response); (c) Fall of Zion-temple (and YHWH's judgment); and (d) Supplication of the Davidic figure.
- The four GCMs in Books IV–V are: (a) YHWH's universal kingship and judgment from Zion; (b) Victorious Davidic king and Torah glorified; (c) Establishment of the eschatological ideal Zion-Temple ruled by a messianic king; and (d) Supplication of the afflicted David.

- GCMs are characterized by formal (e.g., superscription) and thematic features (corresponding to leitmotifs), which correspond well with each other. Form and content cohere.
- A linear reading identifies the trajectory of the Psalter. Linear trajectories may be detected by “shifts” in storylines and a movement toward resolution. For instance, the *fall* and *re-establishment* of Zion are such identifiable “shifts.”
- The overarching trajectory (or the Metanarrative) is seen when we move across the three Sections of the Psalter. These three Sections trace the establishment, fall and re-establishment of the Davidic kingship and Zion. This movement encapsulates the fate of the people of God. As such, the Metanarrative can be understood as the unfurling and development of YHWH’s promises to David in 2 Sam 7—a *compositional reception* of the Davidic covenant found in the Historical narratives.
- The Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme (POS) is an editorial poetic technique. It is the selection, location and arrangement of certain distinct words/phrases via all their sequential occurrences in the Psalter to emphasize a rhetorical message that corresponds to the overarching Metanarrative of the Psalms. The POS itself is a skilfully-designed structure (e.g., “Jacob”). They are usually concentric in shape, with inclusions and containing a central motif highlighting YHWH’s victorious kingship.

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## 4 THE FIVE DAVIDIC COLLECTIONS

*[T]he more closely we examine the final shape of the Hebrew Bible (Tanak), the clearer it becomes that its shape and structure are not accidental. There are clear signs of intelligent life behind its formation. If that is so, we should be asking what is the theological message behind this shape. My answer to that question is that it is strongly messianic. I do not mean by that that the earlier forms of the Bible are not also messianic. What I mean is that in the later stages of the formation of the Hebrew Bible its authors were primarily concerned with making more explicit the messianic hope that was already explicit in the earliest texts.<sup>794</sup>*

—John Sailhamer

*What can have been the purpose of retaining such a relatively large number of royal psalms for a religious community that had no king and was compelled to live under the jurisdiction of foreign rulers? Surely we have here, as B. S. Childs has argued, a strong indication that these ancient compositions, which had themselves originated in a period when Israel had a reigning king, were being reinterpreted in expectation of a time when a new Davidic ruler would appear.<sup>795</sup>*

—Ronald Clements

According to Gordon McConville, “the validity of a Christian understanding of the Old Testament must depend in the last analysis on the cogency of the argument that the Old Testament is messianic.”<sup>796</sup> Yet it seems that the messianic character of the Psalter is not merely an anachronistic reading of late Jewish or Christian understanding.

<sup>794</sup> John Sailhamer, “The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible,” *JETS* 44 (2001): 5–23, [22].

<sup>795</sup> Emphasis mine. Ronald E Clements, “The Messianic Hope in the Old Testament,” *JSOT* 43 (1989): 3–19, [14].

<sup>796</sup> Gordon McConville, “Messianic Interpretation of the Old Testament in Modern Context” in *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (eds., P Satterthwaite et al.; Tyndale House Studies; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Paternoster, 1995), 1–18, [2].

Rather, it is composed as a compositional reception (or re-reading) of the Davidic covenant in the Historical books (e.g., 2 Sam 7) in the postexilic period, taking the form of poetic garb. And this will be the conclusion of this chapter after we have macroanalyzed all the Davidic psalms distributed across the five Davidic Collections in the Psalter.

As noted in §1.3.1 (p. 81), the postexilic reader of the Psalter would have experienced substantial cognitive dissonance as they engaged with the rhetorics, structure and content of the Psalms vis-à-vis their *Sitz im Leben*. The realities of life (absent Davidic king) apparently run counter to God's promises. Yet, postexilic prophetic texts, early Jewish literature and the LXX have shown that biblical and non-biblical writers, translators and readers had held on to messianic hopes. Grant's proposition that the juxtapositions of Torah and kingship psalms (Pss 1–2; 18–19, 118–119), which evoke Deuteronomic perspective of kingship (Deut 17:15–20), help to explain how postexilic Israel responded to the failures of Israel and Judah's kings with their persistent yearning for a victorious and Torah-pious king (Pss 89:50–51; 101:1–8; 110:1–7). In other words, the final form of the Psalter, as a postexilic composition, is not a nostalgic reminiscence of David who once ruled Israel. More importantly, king David functioned as a central figure in the life, thought and aspiration of the postexilic reader.

The five Davidic Collections (DC I–V) in the Psalter have been given various terms. While the first, second and last DCs (or Davidic Psalters) are generally

understood by Psalms scholars as Pss 3–41, 51–70<sup>797</sup> and 138–145, there is no clear consensus regarding Davidic Pss 101–103 and 108–110. For my analysis, I adopt Buysch’s view that these two sets of psalms are DC-III and IV respectively, making a total of five DCs in the Psalms.

From the preceding two chapters, it is evident that the arrangement and placement of the DCs are not haphazard. An important issue that has often been raised is the “return” of Davidic psalms after Ps 72:20 where it clearly states that “the prayers of David, the son of Jesse are ended.” Surely, the phrase, תְּפִלָּה לְדִוִּיד, occurring in the Davidic Ps 86:1 negates this claim. It is often assumed that the present arrangement of the Psalter is the result of a process of gradual historical amalgamation of texts.<sup>798</sup> However, this does not explain the interesting location of the lone Davidic Ps 86. Why did the final collector(s) of the Psalms not simply place Ps 86 after Ps 70 or along with Pss 101–103 since the Psalter is, within the horizon of Books I–IV, already arranged in collections? The eight Davidic psalms (138–45) near the end of the Psalter could have been grouped with Pss 108–110 but they were not. It is more probable that the final editors of the Psalms did not simply splice newer collections with existing ones but had ordered them intentionally. Armed with a macrostructural understanding of the Psalms

<sup>797</sup> Auwers considers Pss 71–72 to be part of the second Davidic collection. This is due to the coda in Ps 72:20 which suggests that the prayers of David had ended at the end of Ps 72. However, I have taken strictly those psalms with a Davidic superscript in this delineation. So I have included Ps 86 in the discussion on Davidic Collections as we will show that all Davidic-superscriptioned psalms are carefully ordered. Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 30–31.

<sup>798</sup> See especially Seybold’s work on the historical process of the formation of the Psalter. He notes, “editors found old texts in the archives and were surprised and impressed, they thought they had found the songs of David, the great poet of the past and on . . . so they selected many of these texts with the stamp of *le David*, . . . and arranged them in a meaningful order, bound them together and copied them.” Seybold, “The Psalter as a Book,” 170.

from the last three chapters, we are in a good position to explore the DCs, starting with the concept of “Messiah in the Psalms.”

#### **4.1 MESSIAH IN THE PSALMS?**

Gillingham’s article, “The Messiah in the Psalms,”<sup>799</sup> provides an excellent starting point. Her primary argument is that the eight psalms containing the term נְשָׁמָה (“the anointed one”),<sup>800</sup> the five Royal psalms,<sup>801</sup> and the fourteen psalms associated with a “royal ideology,”<sup>802</sup> whether at the time of their composition or at the later stages of assembling and arrangement, cannot be found to contain any futuristic, eschatological and “Messianic” interpretations.<sup>803</sup>

Gillingham uses the term, “Messianic” (capital “M”), to indicate a “once-for-all figure coming either at the end of time or heralding it.”<sup>804</sup> If any text appears to be future oriented, Gillingham asserts that they are at most “short-term, contemporary and

<sup>799</sup> Susan Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms: A Question of Reception History and the Psalter,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield University Press, 1998), 209–37.

<sup>800</sup> Pss 2, 18, 20, 28, 84, 89, 132, 45.

<sup>801</sup> Pss 21, 72, 101, 110, 144.

<sup>802</sup> Pss 9, 10, 22, 40, 41, 49, 56, 59, 68, 69, 86, 88, 91, 116.

<sup>803</sup> Gillingham is clearly not alone in this position. In fact, this is a major position in recent OT scholarship relating to the “messiah.” Longman notes, “it is impossible to establish that any passage in its original literary and historical context must or even should be understood as portending a future messianic figure.” For him, transcendental descriptions of the anointed king, such as in Ps 2, “may simply be the type of hyperbole generated by the beginning of a new reign.” Longman, “The Messiah: Explorations in the Law and Writings,” 13, 18.

<sup>804</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 211.

immediate.”<sup>805</sup> Instead, *all* these psalms identify a particular person in ancient Israel’s cult, assuming a particular historical role (as king, priest or prophet). Repeatedly, Gillingham emphatically states that,

It is difficult to propose that any Messianic interpretation was intended, both in the earliest stages of the composition of individual psalms and in the later stages of the assembling of the Psalter as a whole.<sup>806</sup>

[Where] *māšīah* is used in the 6 royal psalms, it concerns the living, reigning monarch and his successors. Its meaning is entirely political and immediate.

They look back to ancient days using the memory of the monarchy as a means of evoking new faith in God’s protection in the present. In none of these psalms, the term *māšīah* is used with any eschatological orientation. . . . whether these five psalms are royal psalms or later imitation of royal psalms, the figure they consistently refer to is the Davidic king, whether as a contemporary ruler, or as King David himself as the focal point of God’s covenant made in earlier days.<sup>807</sup>

For Gillingham, any expressions of futuristic eschatological elements in the Enthronement psalms found in Books IV–V of the Psalter are interpreted as expressions of YHWH’s kingship rule. Furthermore, “*none of them* suggests the idealized eschatology depicting a new era, with a Coming Deliverer who will bring about a new and different future at a time known only to God. . . . [Consequently] other fragmentary Davidic collections included in *Books Four and Five* do not serve any Messianic purpose.”<sup>808</sup>

<sup>805</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 210.

<sup>806</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 209.

<sup>807</sup> Emphasis mine. Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 220–224.

<sup>808</sup> Emphasis mine. Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 228.

In other words, Gillingham sees that the canonical composition and arrangement of the Davidic psalms and its theology are primarily historically oriented. Any Messianic references in these psalms are late<sup>809</sup> “reception” of the psalmody tradition and anachronistic re-readings of the HB texts which include: (a) the LXX translation between the second to first century B.C.E.; (b) Qumran texts (e.g., *Hôdâyôt* or 1QH); and (c) Jewish apocalyptic writings in the Second Temple period (e.g., Psalms of Solomon).<sup>810</sup> She concludes that it is possible to “talk about the Messiah in the Psalms—not as a theological agenda arising out of the psalms themselves, but as one which has been imposed upon them.”<sup>811</sup> However, it is possible that Gillingham has overstated her points. Consider the following issues:

(1) Mentioned in unequivocal terms, Gillingham has argued that the title, מֶשֶׁך, in all the Davidic psalms refer to a historical figure rather than an eschatological Messiah. This, however, was not articulated on the basis of solid evidence. Gillingham cites the works of scholars such as J. J. M. Roberts, Kraus and Craigie in support of her arguments,<sup>812</sup> but neither Roberts,<sup>813</sup> Kraus nor Craigie has amassed any unequivocal

<sup>809</sup> Many scholars have followed Mowinckel’s work in this regard. He argued that the title, “Messiah” (not “messiah”), which originated in later Judaism and the NT, is eschatological, and to apply it to mythical kingship concepts that exalt Israel’s kings and ANE kings is to “misuse” the term. Mowinckel goes further to say that the term, used in reference to the king of the final age, does not occur even once in the OT. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (trans. G. W. Anderson; New York: Abingdon, 1956), 3–4, 7.

<sup>810</sup> Gillingham notes that the Psalms of Solomon 17 “offer the first really clear example of a Messianic interpretation of the Davidic psalms.” Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 231–33, 235.

<sup>811</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 237.

<sup>812</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 210.

<sup>813</sup> Roberts makes the claim that all 39 occurrences of the term “anointed” (with the exception of Isa 45:1) refer to the “contemporary Israelite king.” However, he cites little evidence to support this claim

evidence for this notion. Interpretation by Kraus was based on parallel analogy to ANE royal ideologies.<sup>814</sup> Craigie's proposition of Ps 2 as a liturgical piece is, likewise, by his own admission, an uncertainty.<sup>815</sup>

While Gillingham uses unequivocal and indicative language to negate any presence of eschatological and Messianic concepts in the Psalms, alternative arguments she has proposed are written in the *subjunctive* mood. She repeatedly uses words such

in the article. See J. J. M. Roberts, "The Old Testament's Contribution to Messianic Expectations," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 39–51, [39].

<sup>814</sup> Kraus posited that the "singer and speaker" in Ps 2 is the "king only." Where Ps 2 is concerned, the universal reign of the Davidic king is explained as an "imitation of foreign poems of pomp and circumstance or the excessive claims of glory in ancient Near Eastern 'court style'." This argument is based on ANE parallel of "conventional" figurative speech, bringing together a royal enthronement ideology and the universal feature of "mythological cosmology." But Kraus was interpreting Ps 2 as a parallel analogy, and not citing solid evidence. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (fifth ed.; trans. Hilton Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 126–28.

<sup>815</sup> Craigie was careful to note that "the scant nature of the evidence, however, makes any such analysis [different voices identified in Ps 2 are part of a coronation liturgy] uncertain; it is equally uncertain whether the psalm may reflect the coronation liturgy of the temple or a later ceremony in the palace." Craigie noted that in Ps 2, the "world-wide authority always remained an ideal rather than a reality," and that the concept of the eschatological "Messiah" only came after the exile when "rethinking" of such ideal was needed with respect to the "earthly kings." Craigie dated the beginning of the concept of eschatology as early as after the exile. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 65, 68.

as “probably,”<sup>816</sup> “seem,”<sup>817</sup> and “likely”<sup>818</sup> in her alternate proposals that negate the Messianic argument.

(2) Gillingham’s arguments for postexilic redactions of messianic psalms (e.g., Pss 84, 144) as past-oriented reflections of pious kings aimed at legitimizing the temple traditions do not undermine the plausibility of a postexilic editing of the Psalms that was understood eschatologically or messianically. She reasons that the psalmody at that time was “orientated backwards” to the Davidic dynasty, and not forward to some future Messianic era.<sup>819</sup> Furthermore, the historical information in the thirteen Davidic superscriptions serves as pious reflection, and “as a ‘type’ for others to follow.”<sup>820</sup> Concerning the fifty-seven *l<sup>ē</sup>dāwid* psalms, its “main purpose . . . is to uphold the

<sup>816</sup> Emphasizes mine. “[M]ost probably composed for use by any Davidic king” (p. 212); “probably at the time of the coronation of the king” (p. 213); “probably by a cultic prophet, and vv. 8–10 (ET 7–9) are the praise from the congregation. The psalm may well belong to an annual festival commemorating the various victories of the king, or it could have a more specific use at a service before a critical time of battle” (p. 214); “Like Psalm 84, it is a means whereby the psalmist (probably, on account of the borrowings, after the exile) picks up older forms” (p. 221). Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms.”

<sup>817</sup> Emphasizes mine. “[The] term *māšīah* seems to have meant, quite simply, an ‘anointed one’, referring to one who held an office, whether that of a prophet, a priest or a king” (p. 210); “as in Psalm 28, the term here does seem more likely to recall the memory of the king: the parallelism of *māginnēnū* (‘our shield’) with *m<sup>ē</sup>śīh<sup>ē</sup>kā* (‘thine anointed’) seems to suggest a royal designation” (pp. 219–220); “It seems safer to assume, with Mowinckel, . . . the so-called royal psalms might also include a much larger group on the basis that the suppliant seems to have some authority over the people as well as that degree of intimacy with God which would be expected of a king” (p. 224); “Between the period of the editing and collecting of the psalms, when the royal Messianic interpretation seems to have been peripheral” (p. 229); Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms.”

<sup>818</sup> The emphases in quotations are mine. “Therefore it could still be quite likely that, on account of the intercessory language, the psalm has been composed for a Davidic monarch” (p. 223); “it is more likely that their purpose was to portray David as the ideal figure of piety” (p. 226). Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms.”

<sup>819</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 225–26.

<sup>820</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 226.

legitimacy of the temple, and with that, the worship of God there.”<sup>821</sup> This argument, while plausible, cannot explain why there were not more Davidic psalms if the intention was to highlight the legitimacy of the temple or to bolster pious reflections on David, since, the addition of Davidic superscriptions had also been practiced in the LXX. However, in the LXX, the adding of  $\tau\tilde{\omega}\Delta\alpha\nu\iota\delta$  titles to non-Davidic titled psalms in the MT has a Messianic rather than a temple focus.<sup>822</sup> How do we then reconcile the Messianic emphasis in the LXX<sup>823</sup> with the piety of David or the legitimization of the temple in the MT?

The majority of the thirteen Davidic historical superscriptions (8 out of 13)<sup>824</sup> occur in Book II, related primarily to the dire situations David was in. These historical superscriptions correspond to the *content* of these psalms which, in essence, identify the distressing experiences of the psalmist (or of David) and how he petitioned God for deliverance. They do not appear to be written for the legitimization of the Second Temple.<sup>825</sup>

<sup>821</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 228; see also “The Levitical Singers and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter,” 122.

<sup>822</sup> LXX psalms with Davidic titles not found in the MT include: LXX Pss 9:1; 32:1; 42:1; 70:1; 90:1; 92:1; 93:1; 94:1; 95:1; 96:1; 97:1; 98:1; 103:1; 136:1.

<sup>823</sup> For example, Schaper notes that Ps 45:7 (LXX 44:7) is addressed to the king by the vocative address of  $\delta\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ ; He also points out that the LXX suggests the pre-existence of the king in Ps 110:3 (LXX 109:3). Joachim Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* (WUNT II; Reihe 76; Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), 80, 140.

<sup>824</sup> Pss 3, 7, 18, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142.

<sup>825</sup> E.g., Pss 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63. Separately, Mays noted, “They all concern situations of need and the deliverance of the Lord as its resolution. They are either prayers for salvation or praise for salvation from trouble or songs of trust on the part of one who must and can live in the face of trouble in reliance on God.” Mays, “The David of the Psalms,” 151.

As we have also ascertained, the historical superscriptions and literary contexts of these psalms in Book II identify the low points of David's life. Their frequent occurrences in Book II highlight a faltering Davidic monarch rather than a pious one. They depict the sin of David (51:1); plots against his downfall (52); the exposure of David to his enemies (54); the captivity of David (56); an escape (57); a persisting threat (59); and wilderness wanderings of David (63). Since these historical titled psalms identify the low points of David's life, they are not likely used to celebrate or reminiscence the glories of historical kingships. Pious reflections of David under these literary contexts make sense when the readers identify David's dire circumstances with their own and find strength in David's future hope for YHWH's deliverance.

On this point, the historical information in Ps 60:1–2 is helpful. This superscription highlights David's victory (through Joab) and interestingly, provides a clue to its purpose. It is a מִקְתָּם לְדַוד לְלִפְנֵי ("a *miktham* of David, to teach").<sup>826</sup> Contrary to Gillingham's suggestion that such a superscription functions as a backward reflection, this superscription identifies the function "to teach." As a teaching, the psalm has a present and forward thrust. In this psalm, what is taught is not the supremacy of David's victorious pursuits. The psalm clearly downplays human deliverance (60:13). Despite the historical information of victory in the superscription, verses 3–7 identify an earlier defeat.<sup>827</sup> What is taught, rather, is petitioning YHWH despite his apparent

<sup>826</sup> On the teaching function of the Psalms, see David G. Firth, "The Teaching of the Psalms," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip Johnston and David G Firth; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 159–74; David G Firth, "More than Just Torah: God's Instruction in the Psalms," *Southeastern Theological Review* 6, no. 1 (2015): 63–82.

<sup>827</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 98–99.

“rejection” (**חָגֵג**, 60:3, 12) and “breaking” (**צִרְבָּה**, 60:3) of his people. In other words, reflections on David’s piety contrast Davidic weakness (and sin) vis-à-vis YHWH’s deliverance and restoration. They function as teachings and appropriations of faith for its readers under foreign masters in the postexilic period. As Mays argued,

The psalm titles do not grow out of or function on behalf of a historical interest of any kind. They are rather hermeneutical ways of relating the psalms to the lives of those who lived in the face of threats from enemies within and without and from their own sin, and who sought to conduct their lives according to the way of David.<sup>828</sup>

It is also difficult to make clear distinctions between what Gillingham meant by the “immediate future” or a more “distant future” from the standpoint of the composition. Under the prolonged and severe conditions of Israel’s vassalage, first through Babylon’s seventy years of exile and then under Persian rule, notwithstanding the harsh threats and danger of rebuilding the postexilic community, we can only imagine that any deliverance sought must have been made with immediate and fervent zeal. An urgent, transcendental and mighty deliverance brought about by YHWH resonate well with the expressions of strong emotions and aspirations found in the Psalmody.

Reflections on the piety of exemplar kings cannot be an end in itself. It is more plausible that in times of great distress, the community of postexilic Israel looks back at past promises of God to anchor their hope for a future deliverance (that is both

<sup>828</sup> Mays, “The David of the Psalms,” 152.

immediate and ultimate) rather than a mere celebration of the piety of past kings. Only an ultimate breaking in of YHWH's kingdom and reign can satisfy.

(3) Gillingham's argument for legitimization of the temple requires further discussion. She notes,

An appeal to David was an appeal to the founding of Zion, and from this, a justification for the reinstating of Zion theology by the building of the Second Temple. To reflect upon the promises once made through the Davidic covenant made some sense of the present conflict between faith and experience: hence to look back to David was in part a means of evoking a typical figure of piety, but more importantly, in socio-political terms, it was also a means of gaining legitimization for the Second Temple cult.<sup>829</sup>

The appeal to the Davidic covenant, however, is as much a choice of a Davidic king reigning on the throne of David (2 Sam 7:14–17)<sup>830</sup> as with the establishment of Zion.<sup>831</sup> In other words, any reflection on the Davidic covenant cannot be limited to “Zion theology” alone, unless the “Zion theology” is understood as one without the Davidic king. Even in the SOA in Book V which is focused on the restoration of Zion,<sup>832</sup> the Davidic kingship is an important and indispensable aspect. In the SOA, Davidic “thrones” are set and a Davidide “lamp” and “horn”<sup>833</sup> will spring forth (esp.

<sup>829</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 227.

<sup>830</sup> Samuel E. Balentine, “The Royal Psalms and the New Testament: From ‘messiah’ to ‘Messiah,’” *TTE*, no. 29 (1984): 56–62, [57].

<sup>831</sup> Omer Sergi, “The Composition of Nathan’s Oracle to David (2 Samuel 7:1–17) as a Reflection of Royal Judahite Ideology,” *JBL* 129, no. 2 (2010): 261–79, [261].

<sup>832</sup> By Gillingham’s own acknowledgement. Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition,” 320.

<sup>833</sup> Note that Pss 130, 131 and 132 contain Davidic references in the superscription. Waschke was quoted, “The images of ‘horn’ and the ‘lamp’ are expressions for the power, strength and mighty

122:5; 132:10–12, 17). As Ollenberger points out, “David and Zion are the central symbols of two different traditions and cannot simply be identified, or the one reduced to the other.”<sup>834</sup> Gillingham’s argument that the Davidic psalms in the postexilic period function primarily to legitimize the Second Temple begs questions of the absent Davidic king since Israel had no king during that period.

While the concern for Zion and the temple is present in the Psalter, it seems that early Jewish compositions in the Second Temple period were already thinking beyond the physical restoration of the temple. For instance, Tobit 13:9–18, which is believed to be composed in third-century B.C.E.,<sup>835</sup> is concerned with the building of the eschatological temple.

(4) A gap remains in Gillingham’s argument of how Messianic interpretations of these psalms arose between the early postexilic period (late fifth-century B.C.E.) and the first- and second-century B.C.E.<sup>836</sup> Gillingham argues that at the time of the final editing and collecting of the Psalms, “royal Messianic interpretation seems to have been peripheral.”<sup>837</sup> While messianic prophecies were important in early Judaism and in the

posternity of the Davidic line; they represent a shortened form of the dynastic promise in the form of metaphors,” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 466. Cf. Ernst-Joachim Waschke, *Der Gesalbte: Studien zur alttestamentlichen Theologie* (BZAW 306; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 70.

<sup>834</sup> Ben Ollenburger, *Zion, the City of the Great King a Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 59.

<sup>835</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit* (CEJL; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003); George Brooke, “The Psalms in Early Jewish Literature in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (eds. Steve Moyise, Maarten Menken; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 5–24, [17–18].

<sup>836</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 230.

<sup>837</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 229.

Qumran community,<sup>838</sup> Gillingham admits (following Schaper) that by the time of the LXX, eschatology and messianic thoughts were already present.<sup>839</sup> Schaper posits that the LXX originated by the “second half of the second century BC.”<sup>840</sup> He points out that “messianic hope first and foremost meant hoping for the restoration of Israel’s glories” and that it was “by nature, politically motivated.”<sup>841</sup> While Schaper identifies that Messianic hopes took centerstage in Jewish thinking at the time of the Hasmonean revolt, he makes no claims about when and how these concepts were originally conceived or understood, which would have begun earlier than the aforesaid period.

Schaper has shown that in no less than twenty instances,<sup>842</sup> the LXX translates the Hebrew texts with eschatological and messianic tendencies. He understands that these were not simply translational difficulties or textual issues but they reflect an established hermeneutic of the Hebrew Psalms and are at times, given “deliberate renderings” that

<sup>838</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 229; “Messianic Prophecy and the Psalms,” *Theology* 99, no. 788 (1996): 114–24, [119].

<sup>839</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 230–32; Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter*, 26–30, 144–64; Tyler F. Williams, “Towards a Date for the Old Greek Psalter,” in *The Old Greek Psalter: Studies in Honour of Albert Pietersma* (eds. R. J. V. Hiebert, C. E. Cox, and P. J. Gentry; JSOTSup 332; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 248–76.

<sup>840</sup> He based his dating on three main evidence: “the use of the term βαρις, the occurrence of proto-rabbinic exegetical methods and the significance of ‘Moab’ in Jewish eschatology.” For further details, see Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter*, 34–45.

<sup>841</sup> These messianic interpretations took on nationalistic expression at the “first stages of the Hasmonean revolt.” Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter*, 27, 29.

<sup>842</sup> Cf. the following with its LXX counterparts. Pss 1:5\*; 2:10–12\*; 8:5; 16:9–10; 22:30–32; 45:5, 7\*, 12; 46:9; 48:15; 49:12; 56:9; 59:14; 68:7, 13; 72:17\*; 73:4; 80:15–18; 87:5; 110:3\* See Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter*, 46–107. See especially texts marked with asterisks that show such eschatological and messianic interpretations.

depict an eschatological Messiah who is preexistent and God-like (cf. 72:17; 110:3; LXX 71:17; 109:3).<sup>843</sup>

The *terminus a quo* of any messianic or eschatological thought, even if we deny its origins in the preexilic period (following Craigie), can be taken to be exilic or the early postexilic period (fifth-century B.C.E.). It is generally accepted that the final composition and compilation of the MT Psalter is completed in the postexilic period.<sup>844</sup>

Gillingham and Schaper have merely identified the period in which Messianic thoughts flourished. Its conception is likely earlier. It is unlikely to have risen suddenly at the composition of the LXX or during the Hasmonean revolt. It is also insufficient to link Jewish messianic and eschatological thoughts found in the LXX or Qumran literature with ancient Mesopotamian mythology by ignoring altogether its exilic and postexilic development in the HB.

It is more plausible that Messianic and eschatological hermeneutics and interpretations had already been developed in the early second-century B.C.E., or earlier, before the final editing of the Psalter took place. Furthermore, the concept of the ideal

<sup>843</sup> The eschatological and messianic interpretations in the LXX are made under careful translation work. Schaper states that the LXX and MT have an “astonishing degree of similarity. . . . by and large [the LXX] constitute a faithful rendering of a Hebrew text that must have been quite close to the one produced and secured by the Masoretes.” Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter*, 13, 15; Pietersma concurs. He states three non-negotiable points: “a. That the Greek translation of Psalms typically makes sense. b. That at times the Greek translator exegetes the source text. c. That messianic interpretation can be found in the Greek Psalter.” Albert Pietersma, “Messianism and the Greek Psalter: In Search of the Messiah,” in *The Septuagint and Messianism: Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense LIII*, (ed. M. A. Knibb; BETL 195; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 49–75, [50].

<sup>844</sup> Or as late as the first-century B.C.E., argued from the fluidity of canonical arrangements found in the Qumran Psalms. Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 33. An even later date of first-century C.E. has also been proposed. See also Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll [11QPs] Reconsidered: Analysis of the Debate,” 624–42.

king who is anointed in Dan 9:25 shows that messianic expectations had already gained traction at around the same time.<sup>845</sup>

We also know that messianic expectations were reinterpreted<sup>846</sup> in the early postexilic times as evident in the prophecies of Zechariah (cf. 3:8, 6:9–15) and Haggai (2:20–23).<sup>847</sup> In view of Jer 23:5, Rose argues that the imagery provided by the term, נַתָּא (“sprout”), “is used to evoke the idea of an intervention by YHWH as the only means for guaranteeing the restoration of the monarchy”<sup>848</sup> and that its use *before* and *after* the exile shows that “the situation and prospects with regard to the Davidic dynasty at the time of the prophet Zechariah were not much different from that at the time of the prophet Jeremiah.”<sup>849</sup>

<sup>845</sup> That is, if we accept Balentine’s second-century B.C.E. dating of Dan 9:25. Balentine, “The Royal Psalms and the New Testament,” 61.

<sup>846</sup> Concerning “reinterpretation,” it is commonly held that later biblical writers understood the non-messianic biblical texts written by earlier writers as Messianic. Sailhamer understands “reinterpretation” as the “OT reads and interprets itself, as is happening in Daniel 7, it does so by drawing on the real, historical intent of the other OT authors. There is no need to speak of a re-interpretation of texts.” In other words, the Messianic reading was already present, and later writers *expanded* on such understanding. Sailhamer argues that the entire HB can be interpreted messianically. Emphasis mine. Sailhamer, “The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible,” 14.

<sup>847</sup> Wolter H. Rose, “Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period,” *TynBul* 49.2 (1998): 373–76, [373]; *Zemah and Zerubbabel: Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period* (LHBOTS 302; Sheffield, Eng.: T&T Clark, 2000); See also Balentine, “The Royal Psalms and the New Testament,” 61.

<sup>848</sup> Rose, “Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period,” 373.

<sup>849</sup> Rose, “Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period,” 374.

This reinterpretation of Davidic kingship may have even been conceptualized in the Book of the Twelve. Petterson argues that although the Book of the Twelve presents a negative view of kingship, it contains a hope for restoration through the Davidic house and in particular, a future Davidic king. This concept,

occurs at key points in the Twelve: at the beginning, middle, and towards the end with a sustained treatment in Zechariah. This strongly suggests that those who compiled the Twelve sought to preserve a robust hope for a future king from the house of David, rather than overturning or muting these earlier hopes.<sup>850</sup>

In other words, it is possible that Messianic interpretations and compositions have already begun in the early postexilic period (fifth to fourth-century B.C.E).<sup>851</sup> If such Messianic and eschatological interpretations had begun earlier than the second-century B.C.E. and with YHWH's personal intervention and deliverance envisioned in the Prophetic books composed in the early postexilic period, it is not unlikely that Messianic understanding would have been incorporated in the Davidic or Royal psalms at the final editing and arrangement of the Hebrew Psalter. Granting the possibility that individual psalms may be originally composed for a particular office holder historically or in court-style rhetoric based on ANE parallels (such as Zion theology based on

<sup>850</sup> Anthony R. Petterson, "The Shape of the Davidic Hope across the Book of the Twelve," JSOT 35, no. 2 (2010): 225–46, [246]; See also *Behold Your King: The Hope For the House of David in the Book of Zechariah* (London: T&T Clark, 2009).

<sup>851</sup> We have already seen how the Book of Tobit 13:9–18 reflect an eschatological view of the temple. On the use of the Psalter in *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *Testament of Levi*, the Wisdom of Solomon and the writings of Philo, see George Brooke, "The Psalms in Early Jewish Literature in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (eds. Steve Moyise and Maarten Menken; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 5–24, [15–23].

Ugaritic Zaphon myth),<sup>852</sup> it is not necessary to preclude any eschatological or Messianic conceptual understanding *at the time of the final compilation* of the Hebrew Psalter. As Clements said,

[it] is in any case singularly worthy of note that none of the other nations which cherished such a high doctrine of kingship, in many cases far more pretentious and ideologically exalted than that of Israel, carried this forward into the formation of a messianic expectation. This, so far as we know, was a unique achievement of the Old Testament.<sup>853</sup>

The Messianic and eschatological interpretation found in later Judaism and the New Testament, as Clements rightly pointed out, “does not stand isolated and distinct from what has preceded it. Instead, it marks the end of a long process of what we have come to describe as ‘inner-biblical’ exegesis.”<sup>854</sup>

*In other words, Messianic and eschatological arguments in the Psalms are the result of re-readings, expositions and interpretations of Historical/Prophetic texts under the exilic/postexilic circumstances. It can be seen as a form of a poetic reception of the Davidic promises.* Auwers argues, “it is possible that the editors of the Psalter have intentionally dismembered preexisting collections to redistribute the psalms according to other criteria, and that the distribution of ‘Psalms of David’ throughout the collection

<sup>852</sup> See especially, Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), 102–37; Richard Clifford, “The Temple in the Ugaritic Myth of Baal,” in *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research (1900-1975)* (Cambridge, Mass.: ASOR, 1979), 137–45; “Tent of El and the Israelite Tent of Meeting,” *CBQ* 33, no. 2 (1971): 221–27; Clements, “The Messianic Hope in the Old Testament,” 11.

<sup>853</sup> Clements, “The Messianic Hope in the Old Testament,” 13.

<sup>854</sup> Clements, “The Messianic Hope in the Old Testament,” 15–16; see also Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford Eng.: Clarendon, 1985); “Inner-Biblical Exegesis,” 33–48.

has to another purpose than to extend the patronage of musician-king to the entire Psalter.”<sup>855</sup>

To be sure, the question of the origins of messianism raised by Clements has been answered by Mowinckel in his work, *He That Cometh*,<sup>856</sup> which is deemed “one of the great books of twentieth century scholarship” by Collins.<sup>857</sup> Mowinckel made two important distinctions in this work. First, he differentiated between a Messiah that is understood as a future, eschatological coming ideal king (capital “M” as in Gillingham’s version), and that of an “idealized and empirical king in Israel.”<sup>858</sup> This “idealized kingship” was a national concept and historically oriented. This concept probably arose at the time of Assyrian and Chaldean threats.<sup>859</sup> It emphasized a historical king that can deliver the Israelite nation and bring about political and social well-being. It was not properly associated with a future, final Messianic king.

Second, Mowinckel also differentiated what he calls, “eschatology” and “future hope.”<sup>860</sup> Future hope is a concept that came before eschatology. It was a hope associated with the idealized historical king which remained elusive with each successive king. Eschatology, on the other hand, is associated with the “last things” and

<sup>855</sup> “Il est possible que les éditeurs du Psautier aient, de propos délibéré, démembré des collections préexistantes, afin de redistribuer les psaumes en fonction d’autres critères et que la répartition des «psaumes de David» tout au long du recueil n’ait d’autre but que d’étendre le patronage du roi-musicien à l’ensemble du Psautier” Jean-Marie Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 28.

<sup>856</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (trans. G. W. Anderson; New York: Abingdon, 1956).

<sup>857</sup> John J. Collins, “Mowinckel’s He That Cometh Revisited,” *ST* 61, no. 1 (2007): 3–20, [3].

<sup>858</sup> Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 123.

<sup>859</sup> Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 141.

<sup>860</sup> Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 125.

“dualistic conceptions” that originated only after the exile in the Persian period and later Judaism.<sup>861</sup>

The origins of messianism began with Israel desiring her own king, much like the kings of neighboring nations. Mowinckel assumed that Israel assimilated not just the concept of a king, but the myth, cult, formulaic phrases and practices associated with royal ideology in the ANE religion.<sup>862</sup> What Israel had as the earliest form of messianism, like her ANE counterparts, was an idealized kingship ideology which was historical and future-oriented, but not eschatological. Mowinckel postulated an annual enthronement festival of YHWH, which at times coincided with the enthronement of a new king in Israel. During these festivals, Israel revisited and renewed their hopes for the idealized Davidic king who would bring about political and national deliverance. However, with the Babylonian exile, historical reality continued to fall short of such expectation, causing the people to turn towards YHWH and his promises. They looked back at YHWH’s mighty deliverance in the Exodus event and consequently looked to the future with faith. The state of affairs had come to a point where “there appeared to be no future hope for the representatives of David’s line.”<sup>863</sup> It was under such circumstances that Messianic faith began to take shape. Mowinckel maintained that any eschatological

<sup>861</sup> Mowinckel defines “eschatology” as “a doctrine or complex of ideas about ‘the last things’ which is more or less organically coherent and developed. Every eschatology includes in some form or other, a dualistic conception of the course of history, and implies that the present state of things and the present world order will suddenly come to an end and be superseded by another of an essentially different kind.” Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 125, 264.

<sup>862</sup> Mowinckel compared and highlighted similarities between Israel’s kingship and those found in Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Hittite, Ugaritic and other Canaanite religions. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 23–55, 124.

<sup>863</sup> Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 158.

and Messianic concept only took shape during the Persian (539/500–323 B.C.E.) and early Hellenistic period. Mowinckel's understanding differs from Gillingham's argument in at least two ways. First, he allowed a *future-oriented* idealized king (not merely historical). Second, the Messianic hope arose earlier than what Gillingham suggests.

However, there are several issues associated with Mowinckel's overall thesis. First, Mowinckel's reconstruction rests on the two foundations of traditional and literary criticism.<sup>864</sup> Using “traditional” criticism, Mowinckel depended on historical data, reconstructions and comparisons between Israel and ANE religions for the interpretation of biblical texts. With “literary” criticism, Mowinckel adopted the conclusions of Documentary Hypothesis and Noth's Deuteromistic History in his dating and understanding of various messianic texts (esp. in Isaiah). These two foundations are not unshakable.<sup>865</sup> How ANE parallels are interpreted are often disputed<sup>866</sup> and could

<sup>864</sup> Mowinckel admitted, “The work of tradition criticism and of literary criticism in distinguishing between earlier and later elements in the material handed down to us, and in attempting to arrange the tradition according to the changing periods in revelation history, and to discover the line of development in that history, is an absolute necessity if the historical study of theology is to be carried on.” Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 129.

<sup>865</sup> Of various points deemed as “facts,” Mowinckel admitted that “we have little direct knowledge of the royal ideology, and of the part played by the king as god's representative in the cult and in the mind of the community.” Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 21–26, 52, 56.

<sup>866</sup> Mowinckel's understanding of the late, postexilic eschatology in the Messianic concepts is by his own admittance, contended by Gressmann, Sellin, Gunkel and others. Writing half a century after Mowinckel, Collins points out new historical evidence that links Egyptian mythological traditions to Israel's kingship ideology more closely than Mowinckel had thought. Becker, in his study of Messianic expectations in the OT, contends that “the concept of kingship, an important category for sacral history, was not integrated until late in Israel's history.” This is in opposition to Mowinckel's thesis which sees kingship ideology as early. See Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 13–15, 123, 128; Collins, “Mowinckel's He That Cometh Revisited,” 5–7; Joachim Becker and David Green, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1980), 17.

possibly fail based on new archaeological evidence.<sup>867</sup> Furthermore, some of Mowinckel's arguments can never be falsified or verified. His datings based on source-critical arguments are often taken as actual historical evidence.<sup>868</sup>

Second, it must be noted that Mowinckel's distinction of the future-idealized and eschatological Messianic king cannot be ascertained from the texts of the Psalms. This distinction is a theoretical construct rather than a literary discernment. Moreover, Mowinckel's final interpretation of how Messianism (capital "M") came about is not dissimilar to our proposition that Messianism would have been the central occupation in the minds of the people of Israel in the postexilic period. Mowinckel's dating of Messianism to the Persian and early Hellenistic period also coincides well with our contention that Messianic hope is present at the time of the final editing and composition of the Psalter.<sup>869</sup>

<sup>867</sup> The *Ketef Hinnom* inscriptions (Num 6:24–26) found in 1979 is dated to the eighth/seventh century B.C.E. undermining the dating of supposedly P text often assumed in source criticism and by Mowinckel as well. Writing against the Documentary Hypothesis, Cassuto argues that there is no factual evidence of the text sources. Source criticism is primarily a literary argument rather than empirical. See Gabriel Barkay et al., "The Challenges of Ketef Hinnom: Using Advanced Technologies to Reclaim the Earliest Biblical Texts and Their Context," *NEA* 66, no. 4 (2003): 162–71; "The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation," *BASOR* 334 (2004): 41–71; Erik Waaler, "A Revised Date for Pentateuchal Texts?: Evidence from Ketef Hinnom," *TynBul* 53, no. 1 (2002): 29–55; Umberto Cassuto and Joshua Berman, *The Documentary Hypothesis* (Jerusalem: Shalem, 2006).

<sup>868</sup> For instance, Mowinckel argued that different parts of Isaiah were written by Isaiah and that his circle of disciples have combined earlier and later prophetic sayings into one. At one point, Mowinckel noted that "[t]here is clear evidence of this from the circle of Isaiah's disciples, . . . [i]n the circle of Isaiah's disciples the poem Isa. xxxii, 1–8 was interpreted as a prophecy about the ideal future king, and in the course of transmission it was put together with earlier and later prophetic utterances by Isaiah and his successors." Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 174.

<sup>869</sup> For a good defense against Mowinckel's argument on the absence of an early Messianism and eschatology in the Psalms, see David Starling, "The Messianic Hope in the Psalms," *RTR* 58, no. 3 (1999): 121–34.

Hence, assumptions that post-OT readings have imposed Messianic concepts on the Psalms must be reviewed. The plausibility that a prevailing Messianic understanding was present at the time of the final composition of the Psalter cannot be simply waved off.<sup>870</sup>

Certainly, a number of scholars have also argued for a Messianic interpretation of the Psalms. Starling argues that the Royal psalms are not simply a “hyperbolic court-rhetoric associated with sacral kingship in its various forms, both in Egypt and Mesopotamia.”<sup>871</sup> The descriptions of the reign of the messianic king in the Psalms far surpass historical realities even in the “best of times under the monarchy.”<sup>872</sup> For instance, the descriptions of Ps 2 are presented “ahistorically” and attempts to locate this psalm within the history of Israel’s monarchy remain unfruitful.<sup>873</sup>

David Mitchell argues that the final form of the Psalter is likely completed between the end of the exile and the translation of the LXX at “a time of growing

<sup>870</sup> Mowinckel believed that the conception of “a coming ‘Anointed of Yahweh’ existed in Israel quite early [though Mowinckel was uncertain] in the monarchic period. . . . It comes from a time when the common oriental ideal of kingship had been naturalized in Israel, and when the tension between ideal and reality was making itself felt, so as to prompt the wish that in spite of the unpleasant facts the ideal of kingship would be realized.” Mowinckel, however, deemed this stage as the “preliminary stage of the true Messianic faith.” In a similar way, the postexilic period, where promises of the prophet Zechariah was made concerning Zerubbabel, “cannot be taken as expression of the Messianic hope, for they neither presuppose nor proclaim it; but they lay the foundation for it and create it.” Mowinckel argued that “the message of Haggai and Zechariah has nothing to do with eschatology.” But this has been contended by Rose. See Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 97–99, 119, 121; Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel*.

<sup>871</sup> Starling, “The Messianic Hope in the Psalms,” 123.

<sup>872</sup> Starling, “The Messianic Hope in the Psalms,” 125.

<sup>873</sup> This is conceded by Tremper Longman who notes, “[on Ps 2] [w]e are somewhat at a loss to understand exactly what kind of historical background generated such a thought. . . . this may be the type of hyperbole generated by the beginning of a new reign.” T. Longman III, “Messiah,” *DOTWPW*, 466–472, [468].

eschatological hope” in anticipation of the restoration of Israel.<sup>874</sup> He makes an interesting point regarding the “future-predictive” nature of the figures attributed in the superscriptions of the Psalms. He argues that David, Asaph, Jeduthun, Heman and Moses are “future-predictive” prophets.<sup>875</sup> Various descriptions of kings or events are also made in a language that “far exceeds the reality of any historical king or battle.”<sup>876</sup> David Howard sees that despite various evidence presented for the “failure” of the Davidic covenant, the Royal psalms are arranged to reflect a “continuing hope that is focused on both Zion and the Davidic kingdom.”<sup>877</sup> Marvin Vincent concludes that at the time of the final redaction when Israel was without king, the place of Ps 2 is significant because its concern of Zion and the messianic king, cast against descriptions of the failure of the Davidic kingdom in subsequent pages of the Psalter, “makes it almost certain that this Psalm is to be given an eschatological interpretation.”<sup>878</sup>

<sup>874</sup> Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, 82.

<sup>875</sup> Cf. 2 Sam 23:2–4; 7:11–16; 2 Chr 29:30; 35:15; 1 Chr 25:5; Deut 18:15; 31:19–22. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, 83. Scholars such as Gunkel and Begrich have also made connections of eschatological features between the Prophetic Books and the Psalms. Gunkel and Begrich listed seven motifs of eschatological joy envisioned in the Psalms in connection with the Prophetic books: (1) Restoration of the city of Jerusalem (Ps 147:2); (2) YHWH breaking the rule of the nations and his universal judgement (Pss 9:16; 76:9; 96:13); (3) The overthrowing of great natural calamities at the end time (Pss 46:3; 75:4; 93:1; cf. Isa 24:19; Hag 2:6); (4) The overthrowing of roaring waves which are the attacking nations (Ps 46); (5) The fall of the great world empires with YHWH ruling over the nations (Ps 10:18); (6) The transfiguration of Zion and the temple as the place of asylum (Ps 46:5, 6, 8; cf Isa 7:14; 31:5; Zech 12:8); (7) Greater things happening in heaven. YHWH subdues humanity as well as all the gods (Ps 97:7). Gunkel and Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms*, 252.

<sup>876</sup> Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, 85.

<sup>877</sup> Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100*, 202.

<sup>878</sup> Marvin A. Vincent, “The Shape of the Psalter: An Eschatological Dimension?” in *New Heaven and New Earth—Prophecy and the Millennium* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 61–82, [61].

This long discussion, in response to Gillingham's and Mowinckel's work, together with the observations of Schaper, Clements and others, brings us to this point:

*We need not accept the proposition that Messianic and eschatological concepts are entirely absent at the time of the final editing and collecting of the Hebrew Psalter. It is not implausible that postexilic Israel, in the midst of various political, social and existential struggles, had reflected deep and hard theologically, and had (received and) written the biblical texts with a certain coherent, Messianic and eschatological thrust, on which subsequent Jewish and Christian communities built on (despite their different interpretations of who that Messiah might be).*

*My thesis is that the five DCs unfurl the crystalized form of Messianic hopes envisioned in the Prologue (Pss 1–2) and seen together, they tell the story of the establishment (DC-I), fall (DC-II) and re-establishment (DC-III–IV) of an ideal Davidic king who will usher in a new era of bliss at the end (Pss 144–145 in DC-V). The central characterization of DC-V, however, depicts a period of prayer and waiting for the people of God, represented by the democratized Davidic figure, before YHWH's consummative kingship takes over in Ps 145.*

## 4.2 FIRST DAVIDIC COLLECTION (PSS 3–41)

Since DC-I is also Book I apart from the Prologue, our discussion for DC-I presupposes the results of our analyses of Book I. Our conclusions from chapters 2–3 are that Books I, II–III and IV–V are three Sections, forming a three-part concentric structure. These three Sections further divide into four Groups each (twelve Groups in total), characterized by their respective Group Central Motif (GCM). Recall that the four GCMs in Section I are: (a) YHWH's cosmic kingship and judgment from Zion; (b)

Victorious Messianic king and Torah glorified; (c) Dedication Historical Zion-Temple and YHWH’s kingship; and (d) Supplication of the afflicted David.

In §3.1.4, we stated that the three Sections parallel each other. The first GCMs in all three Sections are concerned with YHWH’s kingship and judgment. Likewise, the second and third GCMs are concerned with the Davidic king and Zion respectively. The fourth GCMs are consistently characterized as the Davidic supplication.

We have also seen a Metanarrative developing across the second and third GCMs of the three Sections. At the end of this Metanarrative, in Books IV–V, is the celebration of the victorious YHWH-Messianic kingship and establishment of an ideal Zion. This comes *after* tracing the fall of the Davidic kingship and Zion-temple in Books II–III. Book I, or DC-I which is the longest of all the DCs, begins this trajectory.

The first Davidic Collection, in itself, is a concentric structure (see Figure 12; p. 131). At the heart of DC-I is the establishment of these two institutions—the Davidic kingship and Zion-temple. This is understood by the GCMs in Pss 18–21 and 29–30, which are located at the center of Groups 2 and 3 (15–24 and 25–34). In Pss 18–21, human kingship is to be established through Torah-piety (18:1, 22–31; 19:8–15). The king is to take refuge in YHWH’s protection and deliverance from Zion/heaven (18:3, 7; 20:3, 7). His kingship at Zion is associated with the representative locale of YHWH’s presence and power. Hence, human kingship in DC-I is established through adherence to YHWH’s commandments and dependence on his power.

Psalm 18 begins with the superscription, “The LORD has delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul” (18:1). This historical information is

unique<sup>879</sup> as it emphasizes David's ascendancy to Israel's throne after the fall of Saul's kingship. This superscription also alludes to the Davidic Covenant (cf. 2 Sam 7:1, 9, 11). Robertson argues that the focus and location of Pss 18–19 are “pivotal” as they usher in and highlight motifs associated with teaching, messiah and sin in DC-I.<sup>880</sup> Psalm 18 depicts the steady kingship (18:37) that is victorious over foreign nations (18:38–46). This victorious rule is the result of YHWH’s delight (18:20), empowerment and deliverance (18:48–49; 20:7; 21:9–14). Psalm 19, with its focus on the Torah, stands not just at the center of the entire Group (15–24) but in the midst of four psalms that highlight the establishment of the Davidic kingship (18–21).<sup>881</sup> The motif of kingship is further expressed in Pss 15 and 24, in which the king takes his place at Zion.<sup>882</sup> In other words, Group 2 (15–24) does not only focus on the institution of the Davidic kingship, but also on the manner which the king is to administer before God. As such, this Davidic king, by virtue of his godly rule, embodies the community of

<sup>879</sup> This is the only superscription out of 13 superscriptions with historical information that speaks positively of David (apart from Ps 60 which is rather “mixed”). Historical superscriptions will be treated in §4.3.

<sup>880</sup> Robertson has argued that beyond the Prologue (Pss 1–2), these three motifs remain silent until Pss 18–19: (a) The term Torah and its synonyms, which do not occur after Ps 1, but recur frequently after Pss 18–19; (b) the term “messiah” (**מֶשֶׁךְ**); (c) psalms associated with the guilt of sin. Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 5, Location 1721–1861.

<sup>881</sup> Sumpter argues that Pss 20–21, “despite their lack of obvious eschatology and poetic vibrancy, function to clarify Psalm 18 by contextualizing it theologically within the divine economy.” Philip E. Sumpter, “The Coherence of Psalms 15–24 (Gregorian Biblical Press 2013),” *Bib* 94.2 (2013): 186–209, [203].

<sup>882</sup> Kraus argued that the setting of Ps 15 “can be reconstructed on the basis of its combination with Psalms 24. At the time of entrance into the sanctuary in Jerusalem, a liturgical act took place. . . . The participants in the worship stand at the portals of the worship area and ask the question: ‘O Yahweh, who may sojourn in your tent, who may dwell on your holy hill?’ From the inside, a priestly speaker answers them with the declaration of the conditions of entrance (cf. Ps 24:3ff.) Only then does the entry begin (Ps 24:7ff.)” Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 227.

people living under God.<sup>883</sup> Scholars such as Miller, Brown and Sumpter have reached a similar conclusion with regards to the primary place of the Davidic kingship in Pss 15–24.<sup>884</sup>

Psalm 29 in the third Group of DC-I (Pss 25–34) highlights the kingship of YHWH over creation and nature.<sup>885</sup> At the end of the psalm, everything in his temple glorifies him as YHWH sits enthroned as king forever. The predicate nominative, *מלך יהוה*, “YHWH is king,” occurs only in Pss 10:16 and 29:10.<sup>886</sup>

The superscription of Ps 30, likely a later insertion, highlights the dedication of the “house,” that is, the temple.<sup>887</sup> This superscription is also unique because it is the only superscription with reference to the house of God, or temple, despite little connection to the temple in the rest of the psalm.<sup>888</sup> Brief points in §2.2 and §3.1 identify the dual-GCM of kingship and temple in Groups 2 and 3 of DC-I.

<sup>883</sup> Sumpter, “The Coherence of Psalms 15–24,” 200.

<sup>884</sup> Sumpter, “The Coherence of Psalms 15–24,” 186–209; Patrick Miller, “Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer: The Theology of Psalms 15–24,” *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung. Festschrift für Walter Beyerlin* (eds. K Seybold; E. Zenger; HBS 1; Freiburg: Herder 1994), 127–142; William Brown, “‘Here Comes the Sun!’ The Metaphorical Theology of Psalms 15–24,” *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. E. Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven 2010), 259–277.

<sup>885</sup> It has been proposed that Ps 29 was adapted from “an older, Canaanite hymn to Baal,” but scholarship remains divided over the origins of this psalm.

<sup>886</sup> As opposed to *מלך יהוה*, “YHWH reigns,” in Pss 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1. For a discussion of this syntax, see Bill Arnold and John Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 6.

<sup>887</sup> Clearly, David is not the one who dedicated the First Temple, Jacobson suggests that this insertion is possibly for the dedication of the Second Temple in 515 B.C.E. (*Ezra* 6) or a rededication of the Second Temple in 165 B.C.E., after it had been profaned (1 *Macc* 4). It can also be a psalm used for the Festival of Hanukkah (*b. Sop.* 18.3), which is an annual festival of the 165 event. deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 289–90.

<sup>888</sup> Cf. Pss 79, 122, 127, 134, 150. These psalms have reference to the Temple in the first verse of the psalm, but not in their superscriptions, if any.

There are also good reasons to sustain the emphasis on the human king in Group 1 of DC-I (3–14). Reconsider the two central psalms (8–9) in Group 1 of DC-I, which highlight the concepts of YHWH crowning a human king and his universal judgment (§2.2). The distinctiveness of Pss 8–9 must not be overlooked.<sup>889</sup> The enigmatic phrase, “According to *gittith*” (*על-הגִתִית*),<sup>890</sup> in Ps 8:1 is found three times in the Psalter and only once in a Davidic psalm. The phrase, “on *muth-labban*” (*לְבָן*), in Ps 9:1 is the only occurrence in the entire Psalter.<sup>891</sup>

Within Pss 3–14, only Pss 3 and 7 have historical information in the superscription, forming a frame around Pss 3–7.<sup>892</sup> While the superscription of Ps 3 identifies David’s escape from Absalom, it is possible that “Cush, a Benjamite” mentioned in Ps 7:1 is identified with the Cushite who brought news to David about the death of Absalom in 2 Sam 18:31.<sup>893</sup> If we accept the superscription of Ps 7:1 as the

<sup>889</sup> See Barbiero’s arguments on the literary genre of Pss 3–14 and how they identify the centrality of Pss 8–9 in §2.2.

<sup>890</sup> The phrase might be (a): a musical instrument; (b) a tune or setting; (c) a festival of some kind. See Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 105; Mowinckel suggested that Pss 8, 81 and 84 “may have something to do with the ‘Gittite’ Obed-edom in 2 Sam. 6.10f, in whose house Yahweh’s ark stayed till it was brought to the citadel of Jerusalem.” Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 2:215.

<sup>891</sup> The phrase, “Muth-labben,” literally means “death to his son,” but it is possibly a designation for a tune (cf. *מִתְלַבֵּן* in Ps 46:1). Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 114; Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 2:216–17.

<sup>892</sup> The “Shiggaion” (*שִׁגְגֹּנִים*) in Ps 7:1 is also unique (cf. Hab 3:1). Though its meaning remains unknown, it may be related to the Akkadian *šegu* which means “psalms of lamentation.” Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 97; See also Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 2:209.

<sup>893</sup> “For the LORD has delivered you this day from the hand of all who rose up against you. . . . May the enemies of my LORD the king and all who rise up against you for evil be like that young man.” Several proposals attempt to identify “Cush, the Benjamite.” (1) The Targum of Psalms identifies “Cush” as “Saul son of Kish”; (2) As the messenger in 2 Sam 18; (3) Sheba son of Bichri, possibly based on the roots in the LXX, Ieuevi in 2 Sam 20:1; (4) “[A] Benjaminite from Saul’s contingent who leveled allegations against David at this early stage of the conflict,” recorded in 1 Chron 12; (5) Shimei be Gera

Cushite's news of Absalom's death, Ps 7 would be a fitting prelude to the superscription in Ps 18:1 where all of David's enemies are subdued. This coheres well with the intertextual reading of 2 Sam 18–22.

This proposition for the identity of "Cush" is not without merit.<sup>894</sup> With this identification, the first three of four historical Davidic superscriptions in DC-I make a coherent case. First, they record David's escape from Absalom, and expulsion from Jerusalem (cf. 2 Sam 15; Ps 3:1). This is followed by the arrival of the news of Absalom's death (cf. 2 Sam 18; Ps 7:1). Finally, David is restored to his house in Jerusalem (2 Sam 20:3) and his reign over all Israel is complete with the death of Saul (cf. 2 Sam 22:1; Ps 18:1). It is helpful to link the historical superscription in Ps 18:1 with *both* 2 Sam 7:1 and 2 Sam 22:1, where David sang about YHWH delivering him from Saul and all his enemies.

We have discussed how Pss 3–7 and 10–14 can be seen as separate units (§2.2.1), especially with its alternating "day" and "night" features, in response to the phrase, "meditates day and night," in Ps 1:2. This alternation also makes Pss 8–9 central to the

(2 Sam 16; 1 Kgs 2:44). For the fourth proposal, see Yitzhak Berger, "The David–Benjaminitic Conflict and the Intertextual Field of Psalm 7," JSOT 38, no. 3 (2014): 279–96, [283, 84]; Johnson, *David in Distress His Portrait through the Historical Psalms* (LHBOTS 505; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 133–139. For the second proposal, see also Rodney R. Hutton, "Cush the Benjaminitic and Psalm Midrash," *HAR* 10 (1986): 123–37.

<sup>894</sup> Hutton further notes, "It is suggested here, then, that the Cush of Ps 7:1, as problematic as it is, refers to the Cushi of 2 Samuel 18, who was sent by Joab as a runner to inform David of the death of his son Absalom. This tradition is at least as old as the LXX translation of Ps 7:1, and, though raising some minor problems of its own, avoids some of the major problems involved in associating the figure with Shimei or Saul." Hutton also points out that the superscriptions of "Psalms 7 and 18 [on the basis of their 'syntax and function'] do not appear to have arisen by the same hand or as a part of the same redactional or midrashic activity as did the other eleven [historical] superscriptions." Hutton, "Cush the Benjaminitic and Psalm Midrash," 126, 130.

Group Pss 3–14.<sup>895</sup> The preceding arguments for the historical superscriptions of Pss 3, 7 and 18 show that the centrality of the kingship motif in DC-I has already developed from Ps 3.

In the following, I will show how the lexeme, “head” (**שָׁנֶה**), which exemplifies the POS technique (§3.2.6), helps to reveal this Davidic kingship motif in DC-I. The use of the lexeme, “head,” contributes not only to the framing of Pss 3–7, but also reinforces our understanding of the CM of DC-I and the Metanarrative of the Psalter.

Psalms 3:4 and 7:17 are the only two instances in Pss 3–14 with **שָׁנֶה**. These two instances also contain an interesting wordplay.<sup>896</sup> They reveal two different outcomes for the Davidic king and his enemies respectively. In Ps 3:4, YHWH exalts David’s head by “lifting” (**מִרְאֵת**) his head despite the derision of his enemies (3:3). Here, David would be vindicated and victorious. In contrast, Ps 7:17 speaks of “mischief” (**לֹבַע**) returning to the wicked’s own “head” (**שָׁנֶה**). The head of the wicked will be brought low in the end.

<sup>895</sup> See further arguments of the structure of Pss 3–14 in §5.1.4. Auwers notes, “Psalm 8 is the only hymn, around which are organized two series of five individual lamentations (Ps 3–7; 9–14) [he considers Pss 9–10 as one psalm], where a ‘just’ person, threatened in its existence by its enemies, by disease and by the socio-religious chaos, calls for YHWH.” My translation from “*au centre de la composition, le Ps 8 est l’unique hymne, autour duquel s’organisent deux séries de cinq lamentations individuelles (Ps 3–7; 9–14), où un «juste», menacé dans son existence par ses ennemis, par la maladie et par le chaos socio-religieux, en appelle à YHWH.*” Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 43.

<sup>896</sup> The word, “head,” does not occur again until Ps 18 where YHWH placed his anointed as the “head” of nations.

These two instances frame Pss 3–7.<sup>897</sup> The proposal becomes more plausible as we trace the occurrences of רָאשׁ across the Psalter. רָאשׁ occurs 34x in the Psalter, of which 28 (7x4)<sup>898</sup> of them refer to the human “head.”

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<sup>897</sup> Smith argues for a framing of Pss 3–8 instead. He notes, “The selection of Psalm 8 is based on the fact that it is (a) the first praise psalm after a series of individual laments and (b) is closely tied to Psalm 7. In the context of Book I, which is dominated by laments, Psalm 8 is a unique psalm. It appears to have been inserted here to make the end of a first ‘movement.’” see Smith, “The Redactional Criteria and Objectives Underlying the Arrangement of Psalms 3–8,” 6.

<sup>898</sup> The רָאשׁ is translated as (a) “poison” (LXX χολή) in Ps 69:22; (b) “top” in Ps 72:16; (c) “chief men” in Ps 110:6; (d) “sum” in Ps 119:160; (e) “highest” in Ps 137:6; (f) “sum” in Ps 139:17.

Book I		Book II			Book III		Book V			
3:4	<b>King's head lifted up</b>	DC-I	44:15	Enemies mock	DC-II	74:13 –14	YHWH breaks heads of sea monsters	108:9	Ephriam as YHWH's head	DC-IV
7:17	<b>Mischief returns to enemy's head</b>		60:9	Ephriam as YHWH's head		83:3	Enemies raised their heads	109:25	Enemies mock	
18:44	<b>Kingship established</b>		66:12	Head overwhelmed by men				110:7	<b>Priestly-king lifts up head</b>	
21:4	<b>King crowned</b>		68:22	YHWH strikes head of enemies				118:22	Rejected king become "head-stone"	
22:8	Enemies mock		69:5	Overwhelmed by enemies				133:2	<u>Unity of brothers like anointing Aaron's head</u>	
23:5	<b>King anointed (crowning)</b>							140:8	David's head covered in battle	DC-V
24:7, 9	<b>YHWH's kingship exalted</b>							140:10	<b>Mischief returns to enemy's head</b>	
27:6	<b>David's head lifted in YHWH's house</b>							141:5 (2x)	<u>Righteous strike like the anointing of David</u>	
38:5	Head overwhelmed by sin									
40:13	Head overwhelmed by evil									

Figure 55: **לְאֹרֶךְ** across the Psalter

Figure 55 lists all the occurrences of “head,” revealing several interesting features.

Consider these six observations: (1) The cells in bold show instances of “head” used in the contexts of enthronement (or exaltation) of either the human David, the Messianic king or YHWH (3:4; 18:44; 21:4; 23:5; 24:7, 9; 27:6; 110:7).<sup>899</sup> The word “head,” when

<sup>899</sup> BHS notes that the reference to 18:44 is attested by Ms and 2 Sam 22:44 while Greek text of Lucian's recension has לְאוֹרֶךְ.

used in direct association with enthronement and exaltation of kings, is found only in Books I and V. The rest of the occurrences of **שָׂרֵךְ** do not relate directly to kingship.

(2) It is significant that the phrase, “lifting of head” (**רוֹם** with **שָׂרֵךְ**), describing a human figure, is found only in three places (3:4; 27:6 and 110:7) and nowhere else.<sup>900</sup> There is also a distinction between the two instances in Book I and the single instance in Book V. The phrase, “lifting of head,” is possibly a metaphor for “honor” and reinstatement of “status and health.”<sup>901</sup> While Pss 3:4; 27:6 refer to the human Davidic king, Ps 110:7 refers to a transcendent priestly-king.

The distinctiveness of Ps 110:7 is also seen when we consider the geographical contexts associated with the lifting of “head.” The “lifting of head” in Ps 3:4 is set within a literary context away from Jerusalem, in conjunction with David in the wilderness escaping from Absalom, (3:1, cf. 2 Sam 15–18). The immediate texts surrounding Ps 27:6 identify YHWH’s **לְבָנָה** (27:5, 6. Cf. 2 Sam 7:2), which suggest a non-permanent locale somewhere in the city of David (cf. 2 Sam 6:17).<sup>902</sup> However, in

<sup>900</sup> In Ps 24:7, 9, **שַׁנְתִּים** is used instead. While the combination of these two lexemes occurs in various places in the HB, interestingly, the “lifting of head” applied to a person is found in these three locations in the Psalter. For Ps 110:7, *BHS* notes that the Targum contains a final *yod* suffix; 2 MSS and Syriac has a 3ms suffix. These textual notes do not affect the POS of “head.”

<sup>901</sup> In Ps 24:7, 9, the “lifting of heads,” now addressed to the gates, is likely another metaphor that “connotes an acknowledgement of the Lord’s kingship.” The “Lord” in this case is the “Lord of Hosts,” the “warrior-king,” YHWH, himself. deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Psalms*, 75, 252, 269. Kraus noted that “drinking by the brook” refers to “a ‘sacramental’ act that belongs to the ritual of the crowning.” Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 352; Jordaan and Nel note the while there are efforts to emend Ps 110:7a, entire phrase is supported by the Septuagint. Gert Jordaan and Pieter Nel, “From Priest-King to King-Priest,” in *Psalms and Hebrews* (eds. Dirk Human and Gert Steyn; LHBOTS 527; New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 229–40, [236–37].

<sup>902</sup> Although the “temple” in Jerusalem is already present in v. 4, it is interesting that the psalmist had chosen to use **לְבָנָה** instead of the temple surrounding the phrase “my head is raised up.”

Ps 110:7 the literary setting is the Zion-temple.<sup>903</sup> While YHWH was the one lifting up the Davidic king's head in Pss 3:4 and 27:6,<sup>904</sup> it is the kingly figure himself who will "lift up" his own head in Ps 110. Psalm 110:7 is also the only instance after Book I to use "head" in a kingship setting.

(3) The rest of the cells in bold refer to the crowning of a king, forming more than two-thirds of all instances in DC-I and highlighting both the Davidic and YHWH's kingship. This frequent association of "head" with kingship, especially in DC-I, supports our arguments that DC-I is centered by the establishment of the Torah-pious Davidic king and the earthly temple.

(4) The motifs, king's honor and wicked's fall, are somewhat framed by two pairs of psalms (3:4; 7:17 and 110:7; 140:10). Psalms 7:17 and 140:10 (dotted-lined cells) are the only two instances in the Psalms where לְמַעַן ("mischief/evil") and שָׁאֵן are used together.<sup>905</sup> These two instances occur strategically near the beginning of DC-I and at the end of DC-V, describing the fall of the wicked as mischief returns to his own "head." Furthermore, in these two pairs of references, the first describes the "lifting of head" of a Davidic king (3:4; 7:17) and the second describes לְמַעַן returning to the "head" of the wicked (110:7; 140:10) such that they not only parallel each other but also

<sup>903</sup> The לִפְנֵי in Ps 110:7 could refer to the Gihon spring which "flows forth from the base of the old city hill." Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 352.

<sup>904</sup> While it is unclear who lifts up the head in Ps 27:6, the immediate preceding verse makes it clear that it is YHWH who is doing the "lifting." Jacobson argues that the "LXX's *hypōsen* normally [here it is aorist active] renders the *hiphil* form (*yārîm*) with the implied subject being the Lord. The meaning is not dramatically altered since *my head* as the subject implies that the Lord was the one raising up the head." deClaisse-Walford et al., *The Psalms*, 266.

<sup>905</sup> BHS notes that Ps 140:10 probably reads מִשְׁאֵן, though this does not affect the POS of "head."

bookend *all* the occurrences of the word “head” associated with kingship. This contrasting motif of honor for the Davidic king and dishonor for the wicked recalls the Prologue where the righteous and the wicked are described by two contrasting outcomes in life.

(5) The anointing of the “head” in Pss 133:2; 141:5 of Book V is used figuratively to signify “brothers in unity” and “righteous admonishment” rather than kingship.<sup>906</sup> This stands in contrast to Ps 23:5 where the king is anointed before his enemies. The shift in the use of “head” in association with anointing between Books I and V show a further development in the motif of kingship across the Psalter. Psalm 133:2 and 141:5 in Book V depict the consecration of the priesthood and crowning of a king in the metaphorical sense. In Ps 133:2, the simile underscores the concept of living in unity and righteousness. Similarly, in Ps 141:5, this “crowning” is a mutual admonishment among the community of the righteous so that they may be delivered.

(6) The word “head” is associated with the building of the temple in Book V. We have seen that the figurative description of Aaron’s anointing in Ps 133:2 “alludes to his solemn consecration in the sanctuary (cf. Exod 29:7; 30:30–32; Lev 8:12; 30).”<sup>907</sup> The occurrence of “head” in Ps 118:22, immediately before Ps 133:2, is used in the construct

<sup>906</sup> Cf. Deut 25:5 which uses a similar phrasing. Zenger noted that it “unmistakably describes the dwelling of physical brothers in the same house.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 475, 477. The first occurrence of “head” in Ps 141:5 is attested differently in Greek (and Syriac) as ἀμαρτωλοῦ (sinner, υἱόν). This affected the NRSV translation, which follows the Greek. It is possible that the Greek translators had interpreted this text. Since there is no Hebrew variant of this text, we should maintain the two occurrences of the word, שָׁרֵךְ, in Ps 141:5.

<sup>907</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 480.

form with “corner,” forming the phrase, “head-stone/cornerstone” (*לְרֹאשׁ פֶּגֶן*).<sup>908</sup> This phrase is connected to house-building.<sup>909</sup> Like Pss 133:2 and 141:5, the use of “head” in Ps 118:22 is a metaphor. What the people reject as unworthy, YHWH has chosen and placed it as the most important in the building of the house.

(6) Most of the occurrences in Books II and III depicting *רֹאשׁ* are associated with (a) the rise of the enemies’ head and their mocking (“shaking” of head)<sup>910</sup>; (b) the psalmist overwhelmed by his enemies; and (c) YHWH striking the “head” of the enemies. These characteristics of “head” in Books II and III correspond to our earlier findings that these two Books underscore the destruction of the Davidic dynasty and the Jerusalem temple.

In short, the word “head” displays the features of the POS technique. Our analysis of how it occurs across the Psalter shows that it is mostly associated with the Davidic kingship in DC-I. Furthermore, the occurrences of “head” in DC-II–IV and in Books II–III are often associated with mocking of enemies and YHWH’s judgment on them. As we move toward DC-V and Book V, there is a shift in the representation of “head.”

<sup>908</sup> Zenger argued that since the stone can be seen by onlookers, it is unlikely to be a foundational cornerstone. It is more likely “a capstone that signals the completion of the building (cf. Zech 4:7).” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 242.

<sup>909</sup> Zenger explained, “the builders test each individual stone and sort out stones that are of no use, throwing them aside.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 241.

<sup>910</sup> BHS notes that many MSS and Greek has a *yod* before the first person plural suffix in the word, *לְרֹאשׁנוּ*, in Ps 66:12. This textual note does not affect the POS of “head.”

The motif of the Davidic (and YHWH's) kingship, glorious and clear in Book I, is diminished as we move to Book V. Here, “head” is associated with the human David (without direct royal connotations), figurative descriptions of anointing, unity among brothers and the destruction of the wicked.

The study of the word, “head,” collaborates with our proposition that DC-I, as a whole, has a focus on the Davidic rule in YHWH's house (3:4; 7:17; 18:44; 21:4; 22:8; 23:5; 24:7, 9; 27:6). These findings correspond well with the Metanarrative of the Psalter. We will now proceed to analyze DC-II.

#### **4.3 SECOND DAVIDIC COLLECTION (Pss 51–70)**

The second Davidic Collection (DC-II) consists of 20 psalms.<sup>911</sup> We have discussed the CMs of Books II–III and how DC-II is structurally located as the second Group in the Section Books II–III. In chapters 2–3, we concluded that Books II–III highlight the fall of the human Davidic kingship and the Jerusalem temple. We have also discussed how the term, *נָחַת* (“to reject”), is almost exclusively found in Books II–III, highlighting YHWH's “rejection” of his people and Zion. Furthermore, we have shown that the use of *מְשִׁיחָה* (“YHWH's anointed”) is conspicuously absent in Book II (and DC-II) where most of the Davidic psalms with historical superscriptions are found.

<sup>911</sup> I have included Pss 66, 67 (without Davidic superscription) and excluded 71–72 in DC-II here. This is because Pss 66–67 are the two center psalms in the Subcollection Pss 65–68 united by the common terms, “for the choir direction” and “song” (*רִישֵׁת, מִנְחָה*) in the superscription, apart from the missing Davidic attribution. It is interesting that Pss 52 and 54 record “David” twice, perhaps as a “compensation” for the “missing” David in Pss 66 and 67. In contrast, Pss 71 and 72 have distinctively different superscriptions. It is entirely missing in Ps 71 and attributed to “Solomon” in Ps 72. If we include Ps 86 in DC-II, we will have a total of 19 (Davidic)+2 = 21 psalms in DC-II. See §2.3.1 esp. p.135 for our earlier discussion on the superscriptions in Books II–III of the Psalter.

These historical descriptions of David record the gravest threats to David's life and kingship. It is in DC-II where the third dimension of reading (intertextual) is clearest. DC-II has a remarkable correspondence with the narratives of the life of David recorded in the Books of Samuel. In the following, we will discuss some features of DC-II, which I believe, unveil the central theological significance of DC-II.

(1) Descriptions of David's enemies are most *explicit* and *specific* in DC-II, and often in contexts of betrayal. From Ps 51, after the account of David's sin with Bathsheba, a host of names are mentioned. Psalm 52 begins with Doeg the Edomite who informed Saul that David had gone to Ahimelech the priest (cf. 1 Sam 22:9). Psalm 54 records the Ziphites<sup>912</sup> who came to Saul to report David's whereabouts (1 Sam 23:19; cf. 26:1).<sup>913</sup> “Strangers” rose against David and “violent men” (*עריצים*) sought his life (54:4).<sup>914</sup> Psalm 55:14 speaks of a “man of equal” (*אנוש פָּרָבִי*), “my companion” (*אלֹעֲפִי*),<sup>915</sup> and “my friend” (*מַקְבֵּן*), with whom the speaker (presumably David) had “sweet fellowship.” Although they walked in YHWH’s house together, this “friend”

<sup>912</sup> Ziphites “lived in a hill town southeast of Hebron.” Tate, *Psalm 51-100*, 47.

<sup>913</sup> Johnson notes that “[t]he titles attached to Pss 52 and 54 refer to people who speak words that have deadly consequences. In the case of Ps 52, Doeg speaks words against David which lead to the death of the priests and people of Nob, while in Ps 54, it is the Ziphites who speak words which nearly cost David his life.” Johnson, *David in Distress*, 67.

<sup>914</sup> *עריצים* occurs only three times in the Psalter, of which the latter two are found in Books II and III. (Pss 37:35; 54:5; 86:14).

<sup>915</sup> The *pual* verb of *עַד* is found only in four places in the Psalter (31:12; 55:14; 88:9, 19) and means “close friend.”

turned against David. The repeated use of various synonyms of “friend” in the chapter “[emphasize] the enormity of treason.”<sup>916</sup>

Psalm 56 records David’s captivity by the Philistines at Gath (cf. 1 Sam 21:10–21:1; 27:1–29:11),<sup>917</sup> and Ps 57 records David fleeing Saul and hiding in the cave (cf. 1 Sam 22:1, 24:3).<sup>918</sup> Psalm 59 highlights threats to David’s life when Saul sent men to kill David at his house (cf. 1 Sam 19:11). The superscription of Ps 60 probably alludes to events in 2 Sam 8:1–15, 10:6–19.<sup>919</sup> Psalm 63:1 recalls 2 Sam 15–17 where David fled into the wilderness from his son Absalom and imagines David longing for YHWH in his sanctuary at Zion (63:2). The reference of the Davidic flight from Absalom fits well with Ps 64.<sup>920</sup> It connects the “secret counsel of evil doers” (**מִשׁׂׂדֶׂ מְרֻעָׂים**) in Ps 64:3 with the counsel of Ahithophel who betrayed David by defecting to Absalom and helping him with his “secret counsel” (**צָׂדָׂ**; 2 Sam 15:12–17:4).

This list of various individuals, identified as David’s enemies, are often close to him, had served under him or lived among him; but acted in betrayal of David. Such

<sup>916</sup> Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms* (ed. David Cotter; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2001), 137.

<sup>917</sup> Goldingay notes that neither of the two stories of David and Gath in the references “says that David was seized.” Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:183

<sup>918</sup> Johnson argues that there is a stronger case for linking Ps 57 with 1 Sam 24 due to more lexical connections. Johnson, *David in Distress*, 93.

<sup>919</sup> Johnson notes several differences between Ps 60:1–2 and 2 Sam 8: (1) David, rather than Joab, was the one who killed the Edomites in 2 Sam 8; (2) 2 Sam 8:13 records 18,000 Arameans instead of 12,000 in Ps 60 (cf. 1 Chron 18:12); (3) the Aramean states involved are different. In 2 Sam 8, it is “Zobah and Damascus.” Johnson, *David in Distress*, 123; Goldingay thinks that the difference in number of Edomites killed is probably due to “variant text forms.” Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:226.

<sup>920</sup> Cf. Ps 64: 4, 6 where the enemy of David plots “secret counsel” (**צָׂדָׂ**) and “hide snares” (**לְטַמֹּׂן מְזֻקָּׂם**).

specific and explicit accounts of David's encounters with his enemies in DC-II are not sustained with the same intensity elsewhere in the Psalter.

(2) The order and framing of historical superscriptions provide another important angle for reading DC-II. The historical superscriptions in DC-II depict David's distresses and downfall. If we identify the historical narrative behind Pss 63–64 as David's flight from Absalom, we would have come full circle from the first historical superscription in Ps 3:1 which notes David's escape from Absalom.<sup>921</sup> Thus, the common story of David's flight from Absalom, revealed by the superscriptions of Pss 3:1 and 63:1, frames the first twelve Davidic<sup>922</sup> superscriptions with historical references.

The following figure summarises the 13 Davidic superscriptions with historical references:

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<sup>921</sup> Besides the superscription, Johnson notes that the connection between 2 Sam 15–18 and Ps 3 is seen in the “allusion to sleep” in Ps 3:6. She notes that “the military counsel given to Absalom by his royal advisors at the time of his coup centered on when and where David would sleep.” Both Ahithophel and Hushai’s counsel are connected to where David will sleep. Johnson, *David in Distress*, 16–18.

<sup>922</sup> DC-I includes Pss 3, 7, 18, 34 (4x). DC-II includes 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63 (8x). The last historical reference in Ps 142 is found in DC-V.

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	DC-I								
Psalm	Ps 3:1	7:1	18:1					34:1	
Ref. (ESV)	2 Sam 15	2 Sam 18?	2 Sam 7:1; 22:1					1 Sam 21:13	
	A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.	A Shiggaion of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush, a Benjamite.	<i>For the choir director. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.</i>					A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.	
Thematic development	Davidic Kingship at stake	Absalom dies, Davidic kingship restored	Davidic kingship established (cf. Nathan's prophecy 2 Sam 7:1; 22:1)					David in distress. Supplication	
	DC-II	DC-V							
Psalm	51:1–2	52:1–2	54:1–2	56:1	57:1	59:1	60:1–2	63:1	142:1
Ref. (ESV)	2 Sam 12	1 Sam 21–22	1 Sam 23:19; 26:1	1 Sam 21, 27	1 Sam 22, 24	1 Sam 19:11	2 Sam 1/2 Sam 8–10	2 Sam 15–17	1 Sam 22, 24
	For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba.	To the choirmaster. A Maskil of David, when Doeg, the Edomite, came and told Saul, "David has come to the house of Ahimelech."	To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David, when the Ziphites went and told Saul, "Is not David hiding among us?"	To the choirmaster: according to The Dove on Far-off Terebinths. A Miktam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath.	To the choirmaster: according to Do Not Destroy. A Miktam of David, when he fled from Saul, in the cave.	To the choirmaster: according to Do Not Destroy. A Miktam of David, when Saul sent men to watch his house in order to kill him.	<i>To the choirmaster: according to Shushan Eduth. A Miktam of David; for instruction; when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and when Joab on his return struck down twelve thousand of Edom in the Valley of Salt.</i>	A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.	A Maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer.
Thematic development	Nathan's judgment – David's downfall begins	Recalls David's distress and threats to his life. Drawn from the Book of 1 Samuel.					Victorious state before David sins with Bathsheba	Bookends with Ps 3:1 for DC-I and II; Bookends DC-II with Ps 51:1–2 (David's downfall)	David in distress. Supplication

Figure 56: Parallel Thematic Development of Davidic Superscriptions with Historical References

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The figure above captures thirteen historical Davidic superscriptions and their allusions to the Davidic narratives in 1–2 Sam. The first three superscriptions in DC-I (3:1; 7:1; 18:1) identify a sequential trajectory from David’s escape from Absalom, news of Absalom’s death to David being re-established as king in Jerusalem. They trace David’s ascendancy to his kingship and are all drawn from the Book of 2 Samuel.

The prophet Nathan first enters the narrative of David in 2 Sam 7 and announced the well known Davidic Covenant.<sup>923</sup> This happened at a point in the narrative where “the LORD had given him rest from every side from all his enemies” (2 Sam 7:1; cf. 2 Sam 5:12; 22:1). The superscription of Ps 18:1, though more likely derived from 2 Sam 22:1, is also linked to 2 Sam 7.<sup>924</sup> Either way, the superscription of Ps 18:1 provides the imagery of the establishment of David’s kingship, first upon the death of Saul (2 Sam 7:1), and a second time after the death of Absalom (2 Sam 22:1).<sup>925</sup> As such, Saul and Absalom are portrayed as two of David’s most important nemeses in the Psalms.

<sup>923</sup> Note that the word, “covenant” is not used in 2 Sam 7. See §1.3.4.1.

<sup>924</sup> The dependency direction between Psalms and the books of 1 and 2 Samuel cannot be fully ascertained. Weber argues that Ps 18 depended on 2 Sam 22. He notes, “*Einfach gesagt: Sam kann man ohne Kenntnis von Ps lesen, nicht aber Ps (als Buch!) ohne Sam... 2 Sam 22 ist – wie andere Samueltexte – für die schriftkundigen Betenden und Meditierenden des Psalters als bekannt vorausgesetzt.*” For a good discussion on how 2 Sam 22 and Ps 18 are connected, see Weber, “Das königlich-davidische Danklied 2 Samuel 22 / Psalm 18 im Kontext von Psalm 1–18,” 189–90.

<sup>925</sup> While Ps 18:1 follows 2 Sam 22:1 closely, they differ in at least three places. Psalm 18:1 contains a metheg between הַצִּיל and יְהֹוָה; has two waws in the תִּזְבָּח instead of וְמִזְבָּח; and uses מִתְפָּנֶיךָ instead of מִתְפָּנֶיךָ. 2 Samuel 7:1 has a common קָלְאַבִּיו but uses מִשְׁבֵּב instead of “Saul.” The common phrase in 2 Sam 7:1; 22:1 and Ps 18:1 is קָלְאַבִּיו. The common idea between them is that the LORD had established David’s kingship (cf. 2 Sam 5–6), mentioned after Saul’s death and after David’s capture of Zion. This remark was given just before the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7). The second mention comes after Absalom’s death when David was re-established as king (2 Sam 22).

The Davidic Covenant was given after the important initial remark that YHWH had delivered David from all his enemies in 2 Sam 7:1. However, Nathan reenters the narrative to pronounce judgment on David a few chapters later in 2 Sam 12 after the Bathsheba incident. Nathan pronounced on David that the “sword shall never depart from [David’s] house,” and that the LORD would take David’s wives before his eyes and give them to his “companion,” who would sleep with them in broad daylight (2 Sam 12:10–11). Nathan then exits from the narrative.<sup>926</sup> Immediately after Nathan’s pronouncement, David’s child (with Bathsheba) fell sick and died. In the following chapters after 2 Sam 12, David’s daughter was raped, his son Ammon killed by another (Absalom), and David’s house broken. By the end of 2 Sam 15, Absalom had usurped David’s throne and David was driven away from his throne. His kingship was in crumbles. Ahithophel’s advice to Absalom to sleep with David’s concubines in 2 Sam 16:21–22 fulfilled Nathan’s prophecies.

Nathan’s words to David thus mark two important points in the Davidic narrative in the Books of Samuel. The first marks the establishment of the Davidic kingship through the Davidic Covenant when David was said to have subdued all his enemies in 2 Sam 7:1 (and 22:1). The second marks David’s fall in 2 Sam 12:7–14 because of his sin.<sup>927</sup> The fall of David’s house is situated in the narrative between the two references to his victorious kingship in 2 Sam 7:1 and 22:1.

<sup>926</sup> Nathan no longer speaks after 2 Sam 12. He returns in 1 Kgs 1.

<sup>927</sup> Nathan’s role in 1 Kgs involves “manipulation” so that the Davidic kingship is passed on to Solomon. According to Sergi, “[h]is main role is to provide divine legitimacy for the Davidic dynasty and to guarantee its existence.” Sergi, “The Composition of Nathan’s Oracle to David,” 266.

With that, consider the 12 superscriptions in DC-II. The first historical superscription in DC-II (51:1–2) records Nathan coming to David *after* he had gone in with Bathsheba. The preposition “after” is important because it locates Nathan pronouncing YHWH’s judgment on David due to his sin of murder and adultery, thereby marking the beginning of David’s downfall with the superscription in Ps 51:1–2.

The next five historical superscriptions that follow Ps 51 in DC-II<sup>928</sup> encapsulate the “sword” and life-threatening experiences of David, but are all drawn from 1 Sam (52:1–2; 54:1–2; 56:1; 57:1; 59:1).<sup>929</sup> By Ps 63 (and 64),<sup>930</sup> the last of the historical superscriptions in DC-II, we arrive at a familiar place in the narrative in 2 Sam 15–17 where David had been dethroned by Absalom and was fleeing for his life.

The historical superscriptions of David in Pss 51 and 63 in DC-II frame the story of David’s sin and his downfall. These frames of DC-II encapsulate the pronouncement of judgment on David’s sin to the temporary defunct Davidic kingship after Absalom’s successful coup. This corresponds exactly with the thematic focus we have proposed for Books II–III.

Those responsible for the historical superscriptions have skilfully placed stories that threatened David’s life under the persecution of Saul in the Book of 1 Sam within

<sup>928</sup> Pss 52, 54, 56, 57, 59.

<sup>929</sup> Except Ps 60:1–2 which we will return to subsequently.

<sup>930</sup> Johnson notes five textual connections to the “wilderness” description in the superscription of Ps 63 in 2 Sam 15:23, 28; 16:2; 17:16, 29. She also highlights the connections between David crossing river Jordan in his flight from Absalom and not sleeping (cf. Ps 63:7; 2 Sam 17:15–16) and David longing to go back to Jerusalem (cf. Ps 63:3; 2 Sam 15:25–26). Johnson, *David in Distress*, 85–86.

the frames of Pss 51 and 63. In this way, the fall of David is historically associated with miseries under the hands of Saul and Absalom.<sup>931</sup>

The two other uses of 1 Sam references are found in the last historical superscriptions at the end of the parallel trajectories (34:1 and 142:1). These two references are distinct from the rest. The fourth superscription in DC-I (34:1), describing David's distress, may seem like an anomaly since it alludes to the Book of 1 Sam (instead of 2 Sam), disrupting the flow of David's ascendancy to kingship in the first three superscriptions (3:1; 7:1; 18:1). This is suggestive of an intentional structural phenomenon. It is consistent with the design of the five DCs and the macrostructure of the MT Psalter. Structurally, this final superscription in DC-I parallels the last superscription in DC-V (142:1). Both of them highlight David's distresses and his supplications to God (34:5; 142:1).

Recall in §3.1.4 that there is always a structural phenomenon that depicts a final “frame” of Davidic distress and supplication. This “frame” is not necessarily the last psalm, rather, it is a strategic location within a larger final textual unit (e.g., Group). Specifically, this frame of Davidic distress and supplication recurs in *all the final GCMs* of each Section of the entire Psalter (38, 86, 140–143). *In other words, these 13 historical superscriptions suggest an intentional design that collaborates with the macrostructure and Metanarrative of the entire Psalter: They identify the establishment*

<sup>931</sup> Gillmayr-Bucher argues that the Davidic superscriptions function to link the readers' historical circumstances in the postexilic period with the Psalms texts. See Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, “The Psalm Headings: A Canonical Relecture of the Psalms,” in *The Biblical Canon* (eds. J.-M. Auwers and H. de Jonge; BETL 163; Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 247–54.

*of the human Davidic kingship, his fall, and a recurring Davidic distress after his victory. They also situate the story of David's broken house and temporary defunct kingship between two records of his victories over his enemies in parallel to the Samuel narratives.*<sup>932</sup>

Another “anomaly” is found in the historical superscription of Ps 60:1–2, the only superscription in DC-II that presents an awkward glimpse of David’s victory in a psalm of Lament. The use of Pss 60 and 57 in the composition of Ps 108 is an important technique which we will return to for further analysis. At this point, it is helpful to note that the single reference in Pss 18:1 in DC-I and 60:1–2 in DC-II, respectively, are the only two victorious renditions of the Davidic kingship among all the historical superscriptions.

As an additional evidence for intentional shaping, Koorevaar sees that the number of these historical Davidic superscriptions occurring four times in Book I, eight times in Book II and once in Book V, giving rise to a 4+8+1 pattern. What is significant is that the number 13 is the numerical sum of תְּנָךְ (1+8+4) occurring in the reverse. תְּנָךְ “indicates Jhwh, who is תְּנָךְ, one”<sup>933</sup> and according to Koorevaar, the final editor had deliberately infused the significance that “[t]he one God is involved in the events in David’s life”<sup>934</sup> in the historical superscriptions of the Psalms.

<sup>932</sup> Based on our analyses here, we need not accept Anderson’s conclusion that “there seems to be no real editorial purpose to either the existence or the present distribution of the historical superscripts.” Anderson, “The Division and Order of the Psalms,” 228.

<sup>933</sup> Koorevaar, “The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story with the Aid of Subscripts and Superscripts,” 587.

<sup>934</sup> Koorevaar, “The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story with the Aid of Subscripts and Superscripts,” 587.

(3) A motif associated with acceptable sacrifice to YHWH frame the fall of David's life in DC-II. It is clear that Pss 50 and 51, at the beginning of DC-II, highlight the sacrifice and atonement for sin. It is possible to see the motifs of sacrifice in Pss 66 and 69, forming bookends with Pss 50–51 and framing the suffering Davidic king.

Three primary words associated with sacrifice in the Psalms are זָבֵח ("sacrifice"), עַלְלָה ("whole burnt offering"), and פָּר ("bull"). The noun, זָבֵח, occurs 11x in the Psalms.<sup>935</sup> In DC-I, this noun occurs thrice (4:6; 27:6; 40:7). The first describes a kind of "righteous" sacrifice (4:6). The second is phrased as "sacrifices of shouts of joy" (27:6). However, the traditional understanding of animal sacrifices mentioned in the third is rendered unnecessary to YHWH (40:7).

Five further references of זָבֵח in DC-II underscore the covenantal relationship between the psalmist and YHWH, rendering the "sacrifice" (50:5; 51:18) its significance. Important in these instances is the notion of the "sacrifice" of a "broken spirit" (רוֹחַ נִשְׁבָּרָה) and a "contrite heart" (לֶב־נִשְׁבָּרָה, 51:19).<sup>936</sup> It is only when such sacrifices are offered, the "righteous" sacrifices noted in 51:21 (listed as "burnt offerings," "whole burnt offerings" and "bulls") are accepted. The phrase, "righteous sacrifice" (זָבֵחַ־צָדָקָה), appears in just two places (4:6; 51:21), framing all the occurrences between DC-I and

<sup>935</sup> Pss 4:6; 27:6; 40:7; 50:5, 8; 51:18-19, 21; 106:28; 107:22; 116:17. The Lemma in Ps 83:12 is translated as "Zebah," a Midianite king. The verb form occurs in Pss 4:6; 27:6; 50:14, 23; 54:8; 106:37-38; 107:22; 116:17. Note how they are similarly located with the noun form of זָבֵח.

<sup>936</sup> The textual note of Ps 51:19 in *BHS* suggests "read probably as זָבְחֵי."

II.<sup>937</sup> These eight instances in DC-I and DC-II are the *only* instances found in the Davidic psalms.

The noun, “sacrifice,” does not occur in Book III. In Book IV, it recurs, describing the sacrifices to a Moabite god (106:28). Two final instances found in Book V take on a different connotation and are identified with “sacrifices of thanksgiving” זִבְחֵי תָּזְדָּה (cf. 107:22; 116:17).<sup>938</sup> Thus, two important concepts are associated with the noun, זִבְחָה, in the Psalms: one highlights the sacrifice of righteousness before traditional sacrifices are accepted in DC-I and II, and the other highlights a “sacrifice of thanksgiving” in Book V. The following figure captures an interesting scheme based on all the occurrences of זִבְחָה in the Psalter.

<sup>937</sup> Cf. Deut 33:19.

<sup>938</sup> In Ps 50:14, the “sacrifice of thanksgiving” also occurs, but it is used as a verb. In 50:23, the “sacrifice” in זֶבַח תָּזְדָּה (“he who offers a sacrifice thanksgiving”) is a participle. תָּזְדָּה also occurs on its own as “offering of thanksgiving” without the noun “sacrifice” in 56:13.

Location	Structure	Distinctive Motif	Text (NAU)	Ref.
DC-I	A B C	זָבְחֵי־צְדָקָה	Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And trust in the LORD.	4:6
		Offer sacrifice with joy	And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me, And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.	27:6
		Animal sacrifice not desired	Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened; Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required.	40:7
DC-II	D D'	Chasidim offer authorized sacrifice	Gather My godly ones to Me, Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.	50:5
		I do not reprove you for your sacrifices, And your burnt offerings are continually before Me.		50:8
	C' B'	Animal sacrifice not desired	For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.	51:18
		Offer sacrifice with a broken spirit	The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.	51:19
	A'	זָבְחֵי־צְדָקָה	Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.	51:21
Book IV	D''	Rebellious offer unauthorized sacrifice	They joined themselves also to Baal-peor, And ate sacrifices offered to the dead.	106:28
Book V	Z	זָבְחֵי תֹּזְדָּה	Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, And tell of His works with joyful singing.	107:22
	Z'	זָבְחַת תֹּזְדָּה	To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And call upon the name of the LORD.	116:17

Figure 57: Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme of זָבְחַת

In the column designated as “Structure,” the eight instances in DC-I and II form a chiasmus. As noted above, the phrase, זָבְחֵי־צְדָקָה, defines the frames (A-A’). The next pair B-B’ has an interesting contrast of emotions associated with righteous sacrifice. One is associated with victorious joy and the other, broken contriteness. Both are accepted by God. The common motif in the C-C’ pair highlights the fact that YHWH does not delight in animal sacrifices *per se*, but at the center of the chiasmus, the D-D’ pair identifies the *chasidim* as those who are covenanted to offer authorized sacrifices to God. Hence, the 8 instances of sacrifice in DC-I and II are set within *the context of righteous, acceptable and authorized sacrifice made by the godly in covenantal*

*faithfulness. They express the right kind of covenantal relationship with God via the concept of sacrifice.*

The eight instances in DC-I and II and three instances in Books IV–V characterize the motif of sacrifice in the Psalter. Structurally, the pair of phrases, “sacrifice of righteousness” (A-A’) and “sacrifice of thanksgiving” (Z-Z’), bookend all the occurrences. An odd reference, Ps 106:28 (D’’), stand at the center between them. This reference describes the rebellious people of God who offer unauthorized and unrighteous sacrifice to Baal-Peor and the dead. This reference is the antithesis to the center references (D, D’) within the A-A’ frame, describing righteous and acceptable sacrifices offered by the *chasidim* and represented by the Davidic figure.

The “sacrifices of thanksgiving” in Z and Z’ are made by God’s people *after* they have been delivered from the jaws of death or captivity (107:16–21; 116:3, 8). It is now a sacrifice associated with thanksgiving rather than animal offerings. These two references are non-Davidic. They are found within a Subgroup of psalms with a movement toward Zion (104–107, 113–118; see §2.4). The last two characterizations in Z and Z’ correspond well to the structural and thematic shifts of our proposed Metanarrative of the Psalter.

The entire 11 instances of “sacrifice” can be seen as a three-part concentric structure: A-A’-D’’-Z-Z’. They trace a straightforward trajectory that first describes the establishment of a right relationship with YHWH through righteous sacrifice (A-A’). The absence of “sacrifice” in Book III corresponds to the Metanarrative of the Psalter in which Book III depicts the fall of the Zion-temple. Then people rebelled against YHWH with their unauthorized sacrifices to idols (D’’). Finally, they were delivered from their iniquities, and with the godly offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving (Z-Z’). The number

“11” is also a symbolic number (§5.1). The analysis of “sacrifice” is another exemplification of the POS technique.

The noun, **שָׂלָח** (“whole burnt offering”), occurs 7x in the Psalter and is *only* found in DC-I and II (20:4; 40:7; 50:8; 51:18, 21; 66:13, 15). Like **זָבֵח**, the occurrences of **שָׂלָח** form an interesting shape. Consider Figure 58 which lists all their sequential occurrences in the Psalter.

Location	Structure	Distinctive Motif	Text (NAU)	Ref.
DC-I-II	A+Selah	<i>He</i> will remember; <b>שָׁלָח</b>	May He remember [יִזְכֶּר] all your meal offerings And [he will] find your burnt offering acceptable! Selah.	20:4
	B	<i>You</i> have not desired; <i>You</i> have not required	Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened; Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required.	40:7
	B'	<i>Your</i> sacrifices allowed; <i>Your</i> offerings; <i>Before Me</i>	I do not reprove you for your sacrifices, And your burnt offerings are continually before Me.	50:8
	C	<i>You</i> do not delight; <i>You</i> are not pleased	For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.	51:18
	C'	<i>You</i> will delight; <i>On Your altar</i>	Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.	51:21
	D	<i>I shall</i> come; <i>I shall</i> pay	I shall come [ <b>אֵלֹאת</b> ] into Your house with burnt offerings; I shall pay [ <b>מְלַעֲנָת</b> ] You my vows,	66:13
	D'+Selah	<i>I shall</i> offer; <i>I shall</i> make; <b>שָׁלָח</b>	I shall offer [ <b>הַלְלָת</b> ] to You burnt offerings of fat beasts, With the smoke of rams; I shall make [ <b>תְּעִשָּׂת</b> ] an offering of bulls with male goats. Selah.	66:15

Figure 58: Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme of **שָׂלָח**

All 7 instances are framed by Pss 20:4 and 66:15 (A-D'). Both of these verses contain the particle interjection, **שָׁלָח** (“selah”), which is not found in the rest of the occurrences. The distinctive motif that gives these 7 occurrences their shape is the selective use of first, second and third person speech. In Ps 20:4, the subject is YHWH, expressed in the jussive form of the third person singular, who would “remember” and

accept the offerings. This is in contrast with D and D' (66:13; 66:15), where the subject is the psalmist, expressed in the first person singular.

The B-B' and C-C' instances are two pairs of alternation. In the first reference of both pairs (B, C), there is a common motif of YHWH not desiring (**לֹא-חֶפְצָת**; 40:7), requiring (**לֹא שָׁלַט**; 40:7) or delighting (**לֹא-תִּחְנַפֵּץ**; 51:18) in the sacrifices. They are all expressed with the **לֹא** adverb to negate a verb in the second person singular form. The common idea of these two verses is reversed in B' and C' where YHWH would *not* reprove the sacrifices (**לֹא עַל-זְבַחַךְ אָזְכִּיחֲךָ**; 50:8). Instead, he delights in sacrifices (**אָזְכִּיחֲךָ**; 51:21).

These two references (50:8, 51:21) are also given locative references for the sacrifice. In 50:8, the sacrifices are made continually *before* YHWH (**לִנְגָדִי תִּמְדִיד**) and in 51:21, the sacrifices are offered *on* YHWH's altar (**עַל-מִזְבֵּחַ**). Furthermore, the B-B' and C-C' references are expressed by a "Thou-I" language between YHWH and the psalmist.

From the shape of these seven instances, we can detect a development. The opening frame (20:4) suggests a time when YHWH will remember and accept sacrifices. However, in the next instance, YHWH does not seem to delight in sacrifices. There appears to be a center core of four references (40:7; 50:8; 51:16; 51:21) that depict a deliberation on the kind of sacrifices that YHWH would be pleased with. The last two instances of **עַל-** in 66:13, 15 reflect the confidence of the psalmist. Expressed in the first person, the psalmist would now make sacrifices at YHWH's house after having confidence in the kind of sacrifices that YHWH will accept.

Crucially, these two instances fulfil the description of Ps 51:21, where such cultic sacrifices are accepted by YHWH only when a "righteous sacrifice" of a broken spirit

and a contrite heart are first offered.<sup>939</sup> Hence, they provide a denouement to the short trajectory traced by the noun, **עַלְהָ**. Interestingly, the symbolic number “7” is used.

While other terms relating to sacrifices are found in isolated parts of the Psalter,<sup>940</sup> the “acceptable atoning sacrifices to YHWH” are sustained in three key locations in DC-II (Pss 50–51, 66:15–20<sup>941</sup> and 69:31–32).<sup>942</sup> The motif of acceptable and pleasing offerings to YHWH are found explicitly *only* in Pss 50:23; 51:19, 21; 66:19 and 69:32.

The POS analyses related to the concept of acceptable sacrifices provide an important interpretive framework for understanding David’s brokenness in DC-II. In Pss 50–51, a sacrifice is deemed acceptable when it is offered as a sacrifice of “a broken spirit and a contrite heart.” In a remarkable turn of events, the rejected animal sacrifices in Pss 50–51 are now accepted in Ps 66:15–20.

Following this train of thought, the word, “reproaches” (**חרפנות**) of David, identified as the distresses, dishonor and shame associated with David’s downfall,<sup>943</sup> is said to have *broken* David’s heart in Ps 69:21 (**חרפה שברה לב**). The contriteness of

<sup>939</sup> The noun, **פָר**, also referring to a sacrifice, occurs *only* in three places in the Psalter (Pss 50:9; 51:21; 69:32). **שׂוֹר**, (“male goat”) is found *only* in Pss 50 and 66.

<sup>940</sup> E.g., consider also **נִדְבָּה** (“freewill offering”) in Pss 54:8; 68:10; 110:3; 119:108; **גַּסֶּךָ** (“drink offering”) in 16:4; **חַטָּאת** (“sin offering”) in 40:7. Lone verses in DC-II that carry the idea of sacrifices include Pss 54:8 and 56:13.

<sup>941</sup> The following forms of sacrifices are unique in the Psalter: **עַלְוֹת מְחִימָה** (“fattened burnt offerings”); **עַמְקַרְתָּת אַלְיִם** (“with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams”); **בָּקָר** (“cattle”). Hossfeld noted, “The Psalms mention them [burnt offerings and slaughtered animal offerings] sparingly: the three passages in 40:7; 50:8; 51:18 speak of them in the context of critique of the cult. Of all the instances, only 20:4 (the king’s sacrifice) and 66:13, 15 remain as examples of a positive attitude toward burnt offerings.” On 66:25, Hossfeld added that “[s]uch offerings are mentioned in this detail otherwise only in Ps 50:9, 13.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalm 2*, 146–47.

<sup>942</sup> Note the following sacrifices: **שׂׂור** (“ox”); **בָּקָר** (“bull”) and **מִקְרָן מִפְרִיס** (“horns and hoofs”).

<sup>943</sup> Cf. Ps 69:8, 10, 11, 20, 21.

heart prospected in Ps 51 is procured with the contriteness of heart in Ps 69:21 by David's fall. As discussed, this fall, understood as the brokenness of the Davidic kingship, is depicted in Pss 51–64 which lie strategically between the two mentions of broken-heartedness. As a result, with the “broken-heartedness” in 69:21, sacrifices to YHWH is now accepted.<sup>944</sup> Cultic sacrifices offered is once again pleasing to YHWH (66:15–20).

In other words, *the motif of David's fall is at the heart of moving from unacceptable to acceptable sacrifices. This trajectory is bounded by the motifs of rejected sacrifices on one end (50–51) and accepted sacrifices on the other (66–69). Between these two frames, there is a clear depiction of David's downfall, his brokenness and contriteness (51–64). The surfeit of historical superscriptions depicting David's distresses in these psalms reinforce the idea of David's fall. At the end of these negative depictions, the broken-hearted David becomes the pleasing sacrifice to YHWH.*

Apart from Ps 22, Ps 69 is the most referenced “psalm of Lament” in the NT.<sup>945</sup> Zenger pointed out that parts of Ps 69 were “quoted or alluded to in order to lend theological depth to the Christ-event.”<sup>946</sup> For example, Ps 69:10 (John 2:17) is adopted

<sup>944</sup> The connection between Pss 51 and 69 can also be marked by the expression, כִּי בְּ רַחֲמֶיךָ (“according to your abundant compassion”). This expression is found only in Pss 51:3 and 69:17 in the Psalter and is connected closely to עֵינֶךָ (“iniquity”; 51:3; 69:28).

<sup>945</sup> See Ps 69:5\* (cf. John 15:25); 69:10\* (cf. John 2:17; Rom 15:3; [Heb 11:26]); 69:23–24 (cf. Rom 11:9–10); 69:25 (cf. Rev 16:1); 69:26 (Acts 1:20); 69:29 (cf. Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27); 69:22\*(cf. Matt 27:34, 48; Mark 15:23; Luke 23:36; John 19:29); 69:9\* (cf. John 7:5; 1:11); 69:27 (cf. Isa 53:4); 69:14 (cf. Isa 49:8). Those with asterisks are applied or alluded to Jesus. Two OT allusions in Isaiah are applied to the “Suffering Servant.” A similar list is found in Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 184.

<sup>946</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 184–85.

in the temple cleansing event recorded in John 2:13–22. These words, applied to Jesus at the temple cleansing event, is to be seen in light of the whole of John’s Gospel, that Jesus’s action “will lead to his future death.”<sup>947</sup> Zenger argued that the allusion of Ps 69:10 in John 2:17 requires an understanding of the whole context of Ps 69 in light of Jesus’s death and resurrection. Zenger saw a similar trajectory in the Passion account where Jesus was given vinegar on the cross (cf. Ps 69:22; Matt 27:34, 48; John 19:29) and that “in light of Ps 69:35–37 the Christ-event achieves altogether cosmic dimensions.”<sup>948</sup> Hence, the NT, as an early Christian interpretation of Ps 69, sees Jesus as the broken David, and as the acceptable atoning sacrifice for sin.

(4) The function of the postscript in Ps 72:20 marks the end of the Davidic story in DC-I and II. First, this postscript parallels 2 Sam 23:1,<sup>949</sup> marking a similar closing stage in David’s story (see also our discussion in §1.3.4.2). Psalm 72:20 has eight features in common with 2 Sam 23:1. (a) Both instances use the plural construct form in the phrase(s), “prayers/words” of David (cf. תְּפִלּוֹת דָּוִד; 72:20; 2 Sam 23:1). (b) Both instances identify David as בֶּן־יְשֻׁעָה (“son of Jesse”). (c) Both instances identify the terminative aspect of David’s prayers/words כִּלְוָה (“they are finished”; 72:20; הַאֲخֶרֶנִים

<sup>947</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 185.

<sup>948</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 185.

<sup>949</sup> Zenger likened the postscript in 72:20 to Job 31:40b (“the words of Job are ended”). He noted that “it does not simply indicate the end of a text, but marks a division *within* a larger textual complex.” Emphasis his. Following similar thoughts, Waltke notes that “the colophon in Ps 72:20 separates the earlier collections of books 1 and 2, which accent the triumphs of the kingdom, from book 3, which accents its defeat.” Tanner also points out that “v. 20 serve to place these two books [Books II and III] with the story in 1 and 2 Samuel, where we meet and hear of David and Israel’s beginning.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 209, 219; Bruce K. Waltke, “Superscripts, Postscripts, or Both,” *JBL* 110, no. 4 (1991): 583–96, [590]; deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 579–80. None of them link Ps 72:20 with 2 Sam 23:1.

¶ָנְךָ, “the last words”; 2 Sam 23:1). (d) These are the *only* two instances in the entire HB that connect the phrase, “David, the son of Jesse,” with an expression that marks the end of David’s speech/prayer. (e) In both instances, the “end” does not mean the absolute last occurrence of David’s utterance/prayer. David’s prayer clearly continues in Ps 86:1 (cf. 142:1; 143:1) following Ps 72:20. In a similar way, David continues to speak in the rest of 2 Sam 23 through 1 Kgs 2 before the record of his death in 1 Kgs 2:10. (f) Both instances appear in literary contexts where the Davidic king rules and judges YHWH’s people in righteousness (cf. 72:2; 2 Sam 23:3). (g) Both are given in contexts where YHWH has delivered his anointed king from all his enemies and the king rules over his enemies (cf. 72:8; 2 Sam 22:1). (h) Both recall the Davidic Covenant in 2 Sam 7, where David’s offspring will rule and the Davidic House will perpetuate (cf. 72:1–17; 2 Sam 23:5). These eight connections help us see that Ps 72:20 is meant to parallel 2 Sam 23:1.

Second, in view of the common features in the two texts, why did the editor(s) of the Psalter place this statement at the end of DC-II? Our consistent argument is that DC-I marks the establishment of David’s kingship and by the end of DC-II, the fall of that *same* kingship is seen. The identification of “David the son of Jesse” at Ps 72:20 suggests a poignant marking of the end of the life and kingship of this historical David as with the Samuel narratives.<sup>950</sup> Designed without a Davidic superscription, Ps 71 is a backward reflection of David’s life, from his birth and youth (71:6, 17) to his old age

<sup>950</sup> Auwers notes, “the last psalms of the series want to evoke the spiritual experience of David in the evening of his life (Pss 70–71) and his prayer for Solomon when he was going to succeed him on the throne (Ps 72).” My translation from, “les derniers psaumes de la série veulent évoquer l’expérience spirituelle de David au soir de sa vie (Pss 70–71) et sa prière pour Salomon au moment où celui-ci allait lui succéder sur le trône (Ps 72)” Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 47.

(71:9, 18). What happens in and beyond Ps 72 parallels what happens after 2 Sam 23, that is, David's kingship ends and the rule is given over to his offspring, a Solomonic figure. This Solomonic figure is, nonetheless, presented in an idealized manner.

The theological thrust, which Koorevaar rightly asserts, is that “[by] placing Solomon’s psalm after a series of psalms of David, the canonical final editor wanted to signify with this last subscript in 72:20 that the psalms about David’s conflict had reached their end objective.”<sup>951</sup> Hence, we are to read DC-I and II intertextually. Both Ps 72:20 and 2 Sam 23:1 (“now these are the last words of David”) mark the same point of the Davidic narrative.<sup>952</sup>

When we compare Ps 3 at the beginning of DC-I and Ps 72 at the end of DC-II, we can see the victories of the two sons of David. In Ps 3, Absalom triumphs over David. In Ps 72, Solomon triumphs over Absalom (and all nations!). Thus, when seen together, the depiction of the Solomonic figure in Ps 72 and the postscript of 72:20 look prophetically to the promised Messianic king of the Davidic covenant and the final paradisiacal garden.

In sum, DC-II (and Book II) highlights the fall of the Davidic kingship. (1) Book II contains the most specific and explicit accounts of David’s enemies and threats to his life; (2) The 13 historical Davidic superscriptions can be arranged in two parallel frames.

<sup>951</sup> Koorevaar, “The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story with the Aid of Subscripts and Superscripts,” 581.

<sup>952</sup> Hence we need not adopt deClaissé-Walford’s view that Book II (§1.2.8), as a whole, underscores the reign of Solomon. Rather, our analysis shows that it is centered on the fall of David.

The second frame (Books II–IV) can be viewed as the beginning of David’s fall with Nathan’s judgment (51:1–2) through to his escape into the wilderness because of Absalom (63:1). Eight historical superscriptions in Book II depict David’s distresses and the brokenness of his kingship. (3) The motif of an acceptable sacrifice to YHWH at the beginning and end of DC-II frames the characterization of the fall of David. Through the brokenness of David’s life, sacrifices to God are now accepted. (4) The postscript of Ps 72:20 at the end of Book II parallels with 2 Sam 23:1 and 1 Chron 23:27; 29:29, marking the end of David’s life (cf. Figure 11). (5) The above points are derived from both tacit and formal elements such as structural shape and superscriptions.<sup>953</sup> Form and content correspond. With the nouns, “sacrifice” and “whole burnt offerings,” the POS technique is also at work. Thus we can validate that DC-II, and Book II in general, speaks of the fall and brokenness of the Davidic kingship. Figure 59 illustrates the highlights of DC-I and DC-II:

<sup>953</sup> Robertson may have presented a plausible argument that the second Davidic Psalter is a “communication” for “the nations regarding the establishment of the Davidic kingship and the ultimate defeat of every enemy that this kingship might face.” Robertson based this on the use of “Elohim” in Books II and III in support of the theme of “communicating” the message to the nations. However, in note 99 of his book, Robertson admits that he remains unclear about the literary function of Davidic superscriptions with historical references. Robertson’s “Elohim” argument must also be tested with the bulk of Book III, as it is part of the Elohistic Psalter. Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 6, Location 2036, 2435–2464.

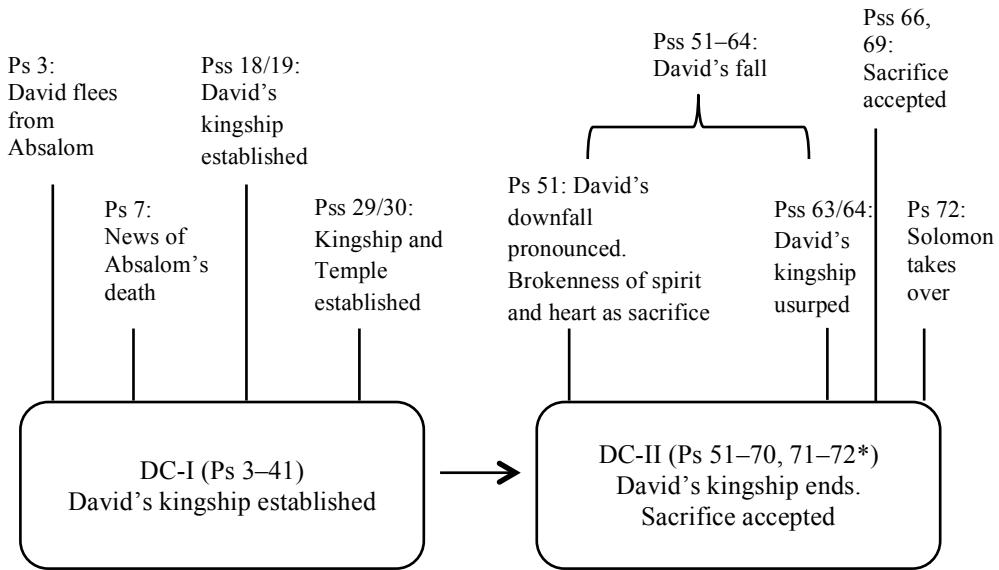


Figure 59: Highlights of Davidic Collections I and II

#### 4.4 THIRD DAVIDIC COLLECTION (Pss 101–103)

To understand the role of DC-III in the five DCs, five phenomena of DC-III are first described:

(1) As explained in chapter 2, Pss 101–103 can be seen as a Davidic triptych even though Ps 102 does *not* have a Davidic superscription. Hossfeld noted,

The framing of Ps 102:1 with two attributions to David in the neighboring psalms in itself suggests a link between the poor person in Ps 102:1 and David. Both the continuation of the Zion theme in Psalm 102 and the plausible sequence of Psalm 101 as a royal prayer, Psalm 102 as a reference to the king in distress, and Psalm 103 as praise and thanksgiving for rescue plead for an identification of the poor person with David make it possible to understand Psalms 101–103 as a David triad.<sup>954</sup>

Accepting Hossfeld’s observation, the framing of the two Davidic psalms and common motifs that link these three psalms make up a unit are meant to be read together.

(2) The DC-III triptych parallels the triad Pss 90–92. As previously discussed, Pss 90–103 can be seen as Group 9 (90–150; §3.1.3).<sup>955</sup> These two triads frame the YHWH *Malak* psalms (93–100) at the center. We have identified numerous arboreal lexemes (e.g., “grass”) and concepts associated with the frailty of human life between Pss 90–92 and 101–103. These concepts stand in contrast with the recurring motif of a righteous figure who flourishes in YHWH’s house in the same two triads of psalms.<sup>956</sup>

<sup>954</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 28.

<sup>955</sup> The connections and disjunctions between Pss 101–103 and 104–106 at the end of Book IV are covered in §2.4.4.

<sup>956</sup> See also Ribera-Mariné, “‘El Llibre de les Lloances’,” 8.

Furthermore, four successive motifs: (a) the use of Moses's name; (b) YHWH's everlasting nature; (c) the fleeting nature of mankind; (d) mankind being consumed by YHWH's wrath because of sins in Ps 90:1–7, are spectacularly reversed in Ps 103:7–19 in a ABCD-A'D'C'B' fashion.

These structural evidence support our proposition that Group 9 is made up of three Collections (90–92; 93–100; 101–103). This arrangement suggests that YHWH's preeminent kingship is framed by the twin motifs of Torah-pious life and Messianic kingship, which are also the leitmotifs in the Prologue (1–2), recurring in Pss 18–19; 118–119. Hence, it is important to read Pss 101–103 (DC-III) within the literary horizon of 90–103.

As we expand our perspective of the literary horizon, we see that Ps 90 comes immediately after the second Section (42–89) which highlights both the fall of the Davidic kingship and Zion-temple. At the end of Section 2, Psalm 89 had cast doubt on the Davidic Covenant. Subsequently, Pss 90–92 are sobering reflections, on one hand, recalling the transitoriness of life under God's judgment; on the other hand, reviewing the permanence of the righteous in the paradisiacal garden as depicted in the Prologue. In Pss 91–92, we see YHWH's protection for those who take refuge in him and will eventually flourish in YHWH's house. The following trajectory can be detected in Pss 90–92:

- A Psalmist seeks to live right before YHWH (90)
- B Psalmist expresses confidence in YHWH's judgment and deliverance (91)
- C Psalmist praises YHWH and flourishes before YHWH (92).

This progression is mirrored in DC-III (101–103):

- A' Davidic king administers right before YHWH (101)
- B' Psalmist expresses confidence in YHWH's judgment and deliverance (102)

C' Psalmist praises YHWH in a restored state (103).

Interestingly, the development of these motifs move across these two triads as well. Secret sins and iniquities of the psalmist in Ps 90:8 are now forgiven in Ps 103:3, 10.<sup>957</sup> These structural parallels and developments between DC-III and Pss 90–92 help us to locate the main thrust and message of DC-III.

(3) Coming immediately after the YHWH *Malak* psalms, DC-III plays a crucial role of presenting a righteous Davidic kingship (101) and a restored Zion (102) *after* the destruction of these two elements in Books II–III.<sup>958</sup> Although the motif of a righteous person occurs from Ps 92,<sup>959</sup> a “blameless” (**מִתְּמָנָה**)<sup>960</sup> and “wholesome” (**מַתָּה**)<sup>961</sup> Davidic king comes onto the scene only in Ps 101. Crucially, DC-III is the first presentation of a “blameless” Davidic king with an “integrity of heart” *after* YHWH’s rejection (**נִזְתָּחֵשׁ**) of his anointed in Books II–III.<sup>962</sup> This wholesome king in Ps 101 is contrasted with the “broken” David in Ps 69 at the end of DC-II. It is also the first Davidic psalm after Ps

<sup>957</sup> Note that the term, “iniquity” (**עֲוֹנָה**), occurs only in three psalms in Book IV: Pss 90:8; 103:3, 8; 106:43. Their locations bookend Pss 90–103 and Pss 90–106.

<sup>958</sup> It is also interesting that in the book of Hebrews in the NT, both figures of David (Davidic psalms) and Moses are connected in its argument for the supremacy of Jesus in Heb 3–4.

<sup>959</sup> The word, “righteous” (**קִדְשָׁה**), occurs only 6x in Book IV: Pss 92:12; 94:15, 21; 97:11–12; 103:6.

<sup>960</sup> “Blameless” is used 12x in the Psalter. Almost all the instances are applied to a human being. (\*) refers to the Davidic king or “anointed.” Cf. Pss 15:2\*; 18:24\*, 26\*, 31, 33\*; 19:8; 37:18\*; 84:12\*; 101:2\*, 6\*; 119:1\*, 80\*. Hence, it is possible to view Ps 119 as the Torah-pious expression of the king in Ps 118.

<sup>961</sup> “Wholesome/Completeness” occurs only 9x in the Psalter. All these instances are Davidic: Pss 7:9; 25:21; 26:1, 11; 37:37; 41:13; 64:5; 78:72; 101:2. Psalm 78:72, though a Asaphite psalm, identifies David as the one who shepherded Israel with **מֶה**.

<sup>962</sup> Cf. Pss 43:2; 88:15; 89:39.

86. Moreover, DC-III is the first concrete description of YHWH's impending restoration of a ruined Zion-temple *after* Book III.<sup>963</sup> Thus DC-III prefigures a “change of fortunes” for both the Davidic kingship and Zion-temple.<sup>964</sup>

The prophetic presentation of an idealized Davidic king at the end of DC-II (the Solomonic figure in Ps 72) is now heightened in DC-III.<sup>965</sup> The characterization of the Davidic king as a human, earthly king has shifted to a *democratized* and *idealized* figure. By “democratization,”<sup>966</sup> the righteous requirements and blessings traditionally associated with the Davidic king is now appropriated and received by a certain community as a whole.<sup>967</sup> By “idealization,” the David king is depicted as a once-for-all, universal and almighty king who will bring about a permanent utopic reality. This

<sup>963</sup> Especially after Ps 79:1 when YHWH’s holy temple is defiled and Jerusalem is “in ruins.” This is reiterated in Ps 89:41. There are statements related to the Zion-temple between Pss 79–89, but they express praise or a longing for Zion rather than its restoration. Psalm 100 envisions entry into a restored Zion-temple, but it is only in Ps 102 where a concrete description of Zion’s restoration is given.

<sup>964</sup> In his study of Ps 102, Witt finds a similar conclusion. He notes, “As such, Psalm 102, alongside 101, represents an important *literary* turning point in the Hebrew Psalter.” Emphasis his. Andrew Witt, “Hearing Psalm 102 within the Context of the Hebrew Psalter,” *VT* 62, no. 4 (2012): 582–606, [605].

<sup>965</sup> The petitioner in Ps 101 is identified as a “postexilic righteous sage” rather than a Davidic king. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 13.

<sup>966</sup> “Democratization” is defined as “the words written by a specific individual grounded in specific circumstances can be appropriated by all people in a wide variety of circumstances where the expression of the psalmist’s thoughts and emotions reflect their own.” See J. A. Grant, “Kingship Psalms,” *DOTWPW*, 376; Separately, Tucker points out that one of the clearest representation of the democratization of the Davidic Covenant is found in Isa 55:3–5. Dennis Tucker, “Democratization and the Language of the Poor in Psalms 2-89,” *HBT* 25, no. 2 (2003): 161–78, [164–66].

<sup>967</sup> Jean-Marie Auwers, “Le Psautier Comme Livre Biblique: Édition, Rédaction, Fonction,” 85; The concept of “democratization” of Books I–III has also been proposed by C. Rösel, Hossfeld and Zenger. Tucker notes, “Hossfeld and Zenger aver that when Books I–III were arranged, the royal psalms (2; 72; 89) created a new hermeneutical horizon—one that suggested that the entire collection be read from a collective messianic perspective.” Tucker, “Democratization and the Language of the Poor in Psalms 2-89,” 163, 169; See also Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 15; Christoph Rösel, *Die*

idealization is not simply a mimickry of the royal court-style presentation of the king in ANE conventions.<sup>968</sup> For Starling, this imagery of a “king-ideal” is one that “pointed beyond the historical kings, who spoke the words of the royal psalms, or who were addressed or prayed for in them, and awaited a far greater fulfilment.”<sup>969</sup> He adds,

Just as the descriptions of the glory and power of the anointed king, and the scope and duration of his kingdom, outshone by far the experienced realities of life at the best of times under the monarchy, so the descriptions of the righteousness and justice of his reign soared above the actual attainment of any human king.<sup>970</sup>

The Davidic Covenant, originally given to king David in 2 Sam 7, is already understood collectively with the *chasidim* by the end of Book III in Ps 89:20.<sup>971</sup> The third Davidic Collection begins with a “blameless” (**מִנְפָּת**) king walking in the “integrity of heart” (101:2) in his own house praying in the first person to YHWH.<sup>972</sup> But a few

*Messianische Redaktion Des Psalters: Studien Zu Entstehung Und Theologie Der Sammlung Psalm 2-89* (CTM 19; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1999), 95.

<sup>968</sup> It has been suggested that the prayer in Ps 101 is akin to ancient Near Eastern royal court petition for a deity’s visitation. The prayer is understood to also parallel “a model prayer for the instruction of students from the Nineteenth Egyptian dynasty.” While such historical comparison is illuminating, they do not provide adequate explanation for the presence of Psalm 101. My contention is that individual psalms are to be understood through the macrostrategic placement of key content and motifs across the Psalter. We must be able to account for not just these “embellished” royal descriptions but also, the blatantly poor and afflicted expressions of the Davidic king in the Psalms. If Ps 101 is simply a royal court-style embellishment of David following ANE conventions, why then does Ps 102, immediately after it, depict David as an afflicted and suffering king (cf. Pss 108, 109, 110)? Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 14.

<sup>969</sup> Starling, “The Messianic Hope in the Psalms,” 125.

<sup>970</sup> Starling, “The Messianic Hope in the Psalms,” 125.

<sup>971</sup> Tucker, “Democratization and the Language of the Poor in Psalms 2-89,” 171.

<sup>972</sup> Hossfeld noted that “[o]nly in the royal prayer of Ps 18:41 is the king the subject, as the petitioner is here [Ps 101].” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 15.

verses later, the same attribute of “blameless” (**מִתְּפָנִים**; 101:6) is now predicated on the community described as the “faithful of the land.” They, too, will dwell with this “blameless” Davidic king and minister unto him in his house.

The absence of Davidic superscription in Ps 102 adds to the democratization. Identification of David as the distressed petitioner in Ps 102 can only be implied.<sup>973</sup> The petitioner in Ps 102 can possibly be someone other than a Davidic king<sup>974</sup> though its position in the Davidic triptych suggests that it is to be viewed with the royal Davidic figure in mind. In Ps 103:7, the Davidic figure addressed “the sons of Israel” in the third person but he identified himself with the community by using first-person plural speech in verses 10, 12 and 14.

Psalm 103 is unique in the sense that it contains the highest instances of the *piel* imperative “to bless”,<sup>975</sup> uttered by the psalmist David. The Davidic figure is made the exemplar of a praise leader, calling not only himself (103:1–2), but all of YHWH’s angels and heavenly hosts, all who do YHWH’s will, and all of YHWH’s works, to praise. Therefore, a democratization effect is at work. By the end of Ps 103, YHWH’s benefits is applied to many.

*Hence, the presentation of a righteous, blameless, idealized “David” in DC-III is an important shift in the sweep of Davidic characterizations from DC-I to III. The*

<sup>973</sup> It is the only superscription in the Psalter that is “intended for a particular instance in a person’s life.” deClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, 748.

<sup>974</sup> Witt writes, “Scholars in the twentieth century have all but dismissed this idea, positing instead that the superscription points to the democratization of the psalm [102] for any common sufferer.” Witt, “Hearing Psalm 102 within the Context of the Hebrew Psalter,” 590.

<sup>975</sup> Pss 28:9; 66:8; 68:27; 96:2; 100:4; 103:1–2, 20–22\*; 104:1, 35; 134:1–2; 135:19–20.

*David in DC-III is in stark contrast with the David of DC-II. Placed in Book IV of the Psalter, this shift in DC-III corresponds exactly with the shift in the larger Metanarrative of the entire Psalter. This shift anticipates clearer depictions of the idealized Davidic figure and the fate of the community represented by David in the rest of the Psalter.*<sup>976</sup>

(4) Retrospectively from the vantage point of DC-III, we see a positive shift in the characterization of the Davidic figure from DC-I–II. But as we look forward from DC-III to DC-IV, a deepened characterization of this idealized Davidic figure is given. This forward perspective is accorded to us when we consider the structural parallels between DC-III and DC-IV (108–110). In fact, these two Collections provide the key to understanding all five DCs.

First, they are both triptychs of three psalms, placed between psalms without attributed authorship. *Prima facie*, the macrostructural shapes of DC-III and IV are very similar. The center psalms in each Collection (102, 109) are the longest, both identifying a broken petitioner. Second, the deliberate lexical parallels between the two center psalms (102 and 109) are noteworthy and detailed as follows:

(a) The clearest indication of their link lies in the use of the three lexemes, נָתַן + צָלֵל, in the phrase, “as the lengthening of a shadow,” to describe the fleeting human life. Apart from Pss 102:12 and 109:23, this expression is not found anywhere in the

<sup>976</sup> Recall our discussion on the “appointed time” (*תִּזְמֹנָה*) in §3.2.5.2. Only three references of מִזְמָרָה are found in the entire Psalter, two of which are translated as “appointed time” (Pss 75:3 and 102:14) and their contexts referring to the time of YHWH’s restoration of the fallen Zion-temple. This lexeme reinforces our contention that DC-III envisions a reversal of the misfortunes pertaining to the Davidic house and house of YHWH.

HB.<sup>977</sup> Their co-locations as the center psalms of DC-III and IV require the reader to read these two Collections synchronically.

(b) The term, “prayer” (*תְּפִלָּה*) occurs 10x in Books IV and V.<sup>978</sup> Its first instance is found in Ps 90:1 and subsequently, a total of five times in Pss 102 and 109 combined. It does not recur until Pss 141–143. The frequent occurrences in Pss 102 and 109, with extended absence before, after, and between these two psalms, suggest that Pss 102 and 109 should be viewed together.

The use of *תְּפִלָּה* within a superscription occurs only five times in the entire Psalter, forming a concentric shape around *תְּפִלָּה לְמֹשֶׁה* (a prayer of Moses) at the center.

- A: A prayer of David (*תְּפִלָּה לְדָוִד*; 17:1)
- A': A prayer of David (*תְּפִלָּה לְדָוִד*; 86:1)
- B: A prayer of Moses, the man of God (*תְּפִלָּה לְמֹשֶׁה אֲישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים*; 90:1)
- C: A prayer of the afflicted one (*תְּפִלָּה לְעַנִּי*; 102:1)
- C': A prayer (*תְּפִלָּה*; 142:1)

The first two instances of *תְּפִלָּה* are clearly attributed to David but the last two are not despite being in a Davidic triad (102:1) or a Davidic psalm (142:1). Johnson notes that the superscription of Ps 142 is the only one out of the thirteen historical superscriptions that does not “specify a personal or geographical name.”<sup>979</sup> The thrust

<sup>977</sup> These phrases are also the only two expressed in the first person by the psalmist. Cf. Ps 144:4, which uses *עָבֵר* instead of *גַּתָּה*. There are ten occurrence of *כָּל* (“shadow”) in the Psalter and only Pss 102:12, 109:23 and 144:4 apply it as a simile to man’s fleeting life.

<sup>978</sup> Pss 90:1; 102:1–2, 18; 109:4, 7; 141:2, 5; 142:1; 143:1. In total, *תְּפִלָּה* occurs 32x.

<sup>979</sup> Johnson argues that this vague superscription may be intended “to highlight the deity’s involvement in David’s escape from adversaries in general.” She concludes that “the general nature of the

towards a more generic description in the last two superscriptions supports the “democratization” effect of the Davidic figure in DC-III and beyond.<sup>980</sup>

(c) The formulaic phrase, *וְאַתָּה יְהֹוָה* (“But you, O LORD”), also links Pss 102 and 109. The phrase, in this exact form, is found only eleven times in the entire HB. In the Psalter, it appears seven times, all in DCs.<sup>981</sup> Psalms 102:13 and 109:21 are the only two references after Ps 59.<sup>982</sup>

(d) We have noted the specific motif of “broken/wounded heart” in Pss 51:19 and 69:21 earlier. This motif is uncommon in the Psalms and is possibly alluded to in only four other psalms (73:21; 102:5; 109:22; 143:4).<sup>983</sup> The presence of this motif in Pss 102 and 109 support their intentional pairing.

(e) The noun, *בָשָׂר* (“flesh”), used to describe the decrepit state of the physical body is found in six places in the Psalms.<sup>984</sup> It is unlikely a coincidence that they are

heading lends itself to be used for any story that affirms David’s need of his God to deliver him.” Johnson, *David in Distress*, 100–101, 108.

<sup>980</sup> These five instances have also been noted by Witt, though he does not see that the last two references are similar and distanced from a Davidic attribution. Witt, “Hearing Psalm 102 within the Context of the Hebrew Psalter,” 593.

<sup>981</sup> Pss 3:4; 22:20; 41:11; 59:6, 9; 102:13; 109:21.

<sup>982</sup> Apart from the Psalter, they are found in the Davidic Covenant in 2 Sam 7:24 and 1 Chr 17:22, and in Jer 12:3; 18:23.

<sup>983</sup> Note that different lexemes are used to describe “brokenness” of the heart. Cf. *שִׁבֵּר* (“to smash”) in Pss 51:19 and 69:21; *צַמֵּד* (“to embitter”) in 73:21; *בָשָׂר* (“to be dry”) in 102:5; *חֲלַל* (“to pierce”) in 109:22; and *סִמְשָׁה* (“to be appalled”) in 143:4. The parallel between Pss 51:19 and 69:21 is the clearest as the same verb is used.

<sup>984</sup> The noun is found in numerous places but only in the following psalms, it is used in connection with a “battered” or “broken-down” state of the human body: Pss 27:2; 38:4, 8; 63:2; 102:6; 109:24.

found only in Ps 102:6 and 109:24 in the entirety of Books III–IV.<sup>985</sup> These two references capture vivid descriptions of the afflicted petitioner in gauntness and in want of body fat.

(f) The noun, בָגֶד (“garment”), is found only in four places in the Psalter (22:19; 45:9; 102:27; 109:19). Apart from Ps 45, the others are in DCs.<sup>986</sup> Among these four references, Pss 102 and 109 are the only two psalms found in the later two-thirds of the Psalter.

In Ps 22:19, “garment” is used together with another term, “clothing” (לְבֹוּשׁ), in the same verse.<sup>987</sup> Psalm 102:27 is the only other reference in the Psalter that uses both בָגֶד and לְבֹוּשׁ in the same verse. Psalms 22 and 102 are also connected by their vivid descriptions of a decrepit, dry, broken and seemingly forsaken petitioner calling out to YHWH (cf. 22:1–23; 102:1–12). Hence, we see lexical and thematic interconnections between Pss 22, 102 and 109.

At the same time, these three psalms are lexically interconnected with Ps 69, identifying a decrepit, despised and afflicted figure crying out to YHWH. Psalms 22, 69 and 102 are linked by six lexemes (לְבֹוּשׁ [“clothing”]; לֵב [“heart”]; בִזָה [“to despise”]; קַרְאָה [“to cry out”]; פָנָה [“to turn”]; עֲנֵי [“afflicted”]). The use of these six lexemes with a

<sup>985</sup> The one reference, בָשָׂר, in Ps 119:120 describe a fear of YHWH rather than a decrepit description of the physical body.

<sup>986</sup> Note that Ps 45 is a messianic psalm. While the Davidic psalms in *toto* identify a broken psalmist, Ps 45 identifies a victorious king.

<sup>987</sup> Cf. Pss 22:19; 35:13; 45:14; 69:12; 102:27; 104:6). Some of the common lexemes between Pss 22 and 102 include בִזָה (“to despise”); עֲנֵי (“affliction”); מֵצֶב (“bone”).

common motif of an afflicted figure is not found elsewhere in the Psalter.<sup>988</sup> Thus, Ps 102 is not only connected to 109, but connects Ps 109 with Pss 22 and 69.<sup>989</sup> These connections identify a suffering Davidic king. However, in Pss 102 and 109, the suffering king is also an idealized, blameless and victorious Davidic king. This contrasts with the suffering human David presented in Pss 69–71.<sup>990</sup>

(g) Psalms 102 and 109 are also lexically connected with the common motifs of “cursing” (cf. 102:9; 109:17–18, 28) and “fasting” (cf. 102:5, 10; 109:24).

Therefore, the preceding seven lexical connections between Pss 102 and 109 prompt us to read the triptychs DC-III and IV together.<sup>991</sup>

(5) The lexeme, בָּרִית (“covenant”), exemplifies the POS phenomenon and provides yet another collaboration to the role of DC-III. By tracing the 21 (7x3) instances of this noun<sup>992</sup> across the five Books of the Psalter, we can sustain our proposition for the function of DC-III within the entire Metanarrative. Consider the following figure.

<sup>988</sup> Common particles, prepositions and conjunctions are not considered in this count.

<sup>989</sup> Mays connected Pss 3, 22, 31 and 69. Van der Lugt (and Allen) argues that Pss 102 and 69 correspond in their poetical structure. Robertson identifies a connection between the turning of an “intimate friend” to an enemy between Pss 41:9; 69:8–9 and 109:4–5, 8. James Luther Mays, “In a Vision” : The Portrayal of the Messiah in the Psalms,” *ExAud* 7 (1991): 1–8, [7]; Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 123; Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 10, Location 5374.

<sup>990</sup> These psalms are mostly associated with Jesus in the NT.

<sup>991</sup> This is not to say that Pss 102 or 109 do not have other lexical or thematic parallels with other psalms, adjacent or far. However, in our analysis, the interconnection between Pss 102 and 109 is clear. Witt, for instance, has found parallels between Ps 102 with Pss 86, 88 and 89 but curiously misses the connections with Ps 109. Witt, “Hearing Psalm 102 within the Context of the Hebrew Psalter,” 595.

<sup>992</sup> Pss 25:10, 14; 44:18; 50:5, 16; 55:21; 74:20; 78:10, 37; 83:6; 89:4, 29, 35, 40; 103:18; 105:8, 10; 106:45; 111:5, 9; 132:12.

Location	Structure	Ref	Distinctive Feature	Text (NAU)
Section I (Book I)	A (DC-I)	25:10	<b>Introduction:</b> Blessings for covenant keepers	All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth <b>To those who keep</b> [לְנֹצֶרֶת] His covenant and His testimonies.
		25:14		The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant.
Section II (Books II-III)	B (DC-II)	44:18	Godly vs wicked	"All this has come upon us, but we have not forgotten You, And we have not dealt falsely with Your covenant."
		50:5		"Gather My godly ones to Me, Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice."
	B' (DC-II)	50:16		But to the wicked God says, "What right have you to tell of My statutes And to take My covenant in your mouth?"
		55:21		He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; He has violated his covenant.
	C	74:20	Wicked nations do not keep covenant nor walk in his law	Consider the covenant; For the dark places of the land are full of the habitations of violence.
		78:10		<b>They did not keep</b> [לֹא שִׁמְרָה] the covenant of God And refused to walk in His law;
		78:37		For their heart was not steadfast toward Him, Nor were they faithful in His covenant.
		83:6		For they have conspired together with one mind; Against You they make a covenant.
Section III (Books IV-V)	D	89:4	YHWH keeps Davidic covenant	"I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant."
		89:29		"My lovingkindness <b>I will keep</b> [אֶשְׁמַר] for him forever, And My covenant shall be confirmed to him."
		89:35		"My covenant I will not violate, Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips."
		89:40	YHWH fails Davidic covenant?	"You have spurned the covenant of Your servant; You have profaned his [David] crown in the dust."
	A' (DC-III)	103:18	<b>Turning:</b> To those who keep covenant and precept	<b>To those who keep</b> [לְשִׁמְרָה] His covenant And remember His precepts to do them.
	E	105:8	Everlasting covenant	He has remembered His <b>covenant forever</b> [לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ], The word which He commanded to a thousand generations,
		105:10		Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an <b>everlasting covenant</b> [בְּרִית עֹלָם].
	A''	106:45		And He remembered His covenant for their sake, And relented according to the greatness of His lovingkindness.
	E'	111:5		He has given food to those who fear Him; He will remember His <b>covenant forever</b> [לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ].
		111:9		He has sent redemption to His people; He has ordained His <b>covenant forever</b> [לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ]; Holy and awesome is His name.
	A'	132:12	<b>Conclusion:</b> blessings for covenant keepers	<b>If your sons will keep</b> [יִשְׁמַר] My covenant And My testimony which I will teach them, Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever.

Figure 60: Pan-Psalter Occurrence Scheme of בְּרִית

The occurrences of בְּרִית are organized along the three Sections of the Psalter. The first two instances in Ps 25:10, 14 function as the introduction to the entire schema. They describe how YHWH will treat his people who “keep” (לְנֹצֶרֶת) his covenant. I have designated these two instances as poetic unit “A.” This positive description of those

who “keep” YHWH’s covenant is repeated only in Pss 103:18; 132:12 with the lexeme, שָׁמַר. These two ✓<sup>shmr</sup>, designated as “A,” form the frames for the third Section. Hence, these three units (A, A-A’) are strategically located as the Introduction, Turning point and Conclusion in the POS structure of בְּרִית.

Section II contains three sets of four references (B/B’-C-D) making a total of 12 references. The B-B’ units are two pairs of references (44.18; 50:5<sup>993</sup> and 50:16; 55:21) that distinguish those who keep YHWH’s covenant (B) from those who do not (B’). The two references at the center (50:5, 16) are from the same psalm, identifying the spoken words of YHWH for the godly and wicked and framed by Pss 44.18; 55:21.

The C unit is another four references that is entirely focused on the wicked who reject YHWH’s covenant. Like the B-B’ unit, the two center references are located within a single psalm (78:10, 37).<sup>994</sup>

The D unit consists of four references entirely focused on YHWH’s covenant with David. They are all found within a single psalm (89:4, 29, 35, 40). The first and last references (89:4, 40) frame the entire D unit with their allusion to the Davidic king. The first three references are distinct from the fourth in that they are focused on YHWH keeping the covenant to David (89:4, 29, 35). This is repeatedly shown by YHWH’s speech in the first person singular verbal forms and first person noun-suffixes. The last

<sup>993</sup> BHS notes that the Greek and Syriac has 3sg suffix. This critical note does not affect the POS of בְּרִית.

<sup>994</sup> BHS notes that the Greek and Syriac adds 2sg on בְּרִית in 74:20. This critical note does not affect the POS of בְּרִית.

instance in Ps 89:40 is a change of tone, in the form of an accusation by the psalmist that YHWH had apparently failed to keep his covenant.

As a whole, Section II, with its three distinct units (B/B'-C-D), consists of different characterizations associated with parties of the covenant. The B-B' unit highlights the godly who would keep YHWH's covenant in contrast with the wicked. The C unit highlights the wicked who do not keep the covenant and the D unit highlights YHWH as the covenant-keeper to David.

Section III contains the final 7 references of בְּרִית which are arranged concentrically. These 7 בְּרִית are framed by two A' references which are the Turning point and Conclusion of all 21 occurrences. The Turning point (103:18; A') is the final occurrence of בְּרִית in a DC. Located in DC-III, it corresponds well with the shift in the presentation of the Davidic figure in DC-III. Note that the phrase, "those who keep" אֲסַיְשָׁמְרוּ (לְשָׁמֵר; A') in 103:18, connects with the phrase "if your sons would keep" אֲסַיְשָׁמְרוּ (בְּנֵיכֶם; A') in Ps 132:12. These two phrases identify positively those who keep YHWH's covenant and relate to the phrase, "those who keep" לְנַצְרִי (אֲסַיְשָׁמְרוּ; A) in Ps 25:10.

Psalm 106:45 (A'') lies at the center of Section III. The use of the term, "relent" (נַחַם), in Ps 106:45 recalls the motif of a turning point in our discussions of the POS of נַחַם in §3.2.5.3. YHWH has relented from his wrath against his people (106:6–44). The central location of Ps 106:45 separates two pairs of references (105:8, 10 and 111:5, 9) designated by E and E'. What makes these two pairs (E, E') distinct in Section III is that

they are located separately within a single psalm (Pss 105, 111) and they are the only four references that modify “covenant” with the adjective **עֲוָלֶם**.

The final reference in Ps 132:12 identifies the sons of the Davidic king as those who would keep the covenant.<sup>995</sup> This final reference has a prophetic nature. This motif of YHWH teaching his covenant to “them” (the sons; **אֶלְמֹדָם**) as the final reference forms a fitting inclusio with Ps 25:14 where YHWH makes his covenant known to “them” (those who fear him; **לְהַזְׁדִּיעַם**).

If we consider the four references in Ps 89 as two pairs of references, there are seven pairs of references that are found within a single psalm.<sup>996</sup> Apart from Ps 89, these pairs are interspaced in all the units A, B/B’, C, D, E/E’ across the 21 references. The pair at the center (89:4, 29) marks an important first-person declaration by YHWH of establishing a covenant with his chosen, the Davidic king.

All 21 occurrences of **בְּרִית** in the three Sections correspond exactly with our proposed Metanarrative of Books I, II–III and IV–V respectively. We can easily detect the trajectory starting from Section I, with the establishment of relationship between YHWH and those who keep his covenant. Then in Section II, distinctions are made between the godly and wicked. This Section includes the emphatic description of the wicked who do not keep YHWH’s covenant, and a powerful declaration by YHWH to

<sup>995</sup> This combination of YHWH’s teaching and covenant keeping recalls the New Covenant in Jer 31:31–34. See the following references that connect the motifs of YHWH’s teaching and covenant keeping: Deut 4:10–23; 31:19–20; 1 Kgs 8:25.

<sup>996</sup> Pss 25:10, 14; 50:5, 16; 78:10, 37; 89:4, 29; 89:35, 40; 105:8, 10; 111:5, 9.

keep his covenant with David. In the final Section, there is no longer any negative portrayal of the covenant keepers. Instead, there is an emphasis on the eternal covenant.

Note the numerical precision of these 21 (7x3) occurrences of בְּרִית. The three Sections are organized in 2-12-7 configuration. The first and third Sections are framed by 2 references each (25:10, 14; 103:18; 132:12). The second Section contains 3 mains units with 4 references each (3x4=12). The third Section contains 7 references arranged in a symmetric 1-2-1-2-1 configuration. Finally, there are also 7 pairs of references within a single psalm.

The features of DC-III (101–103) can be summarized as such: (1) DC-III is a triptych. (2) As a triptych, it parallels the triptych Pss 90–92. (3) DC-III marks a shift in the characterization of David. It presents a righteous Davidic king (101) and a restored Zion (102). Placed in Book IV of the Psalter, the shift in DC-III corresponds exactly with the turning point in the Metanarrative of the entire Psalter. (4) DC-III is also a structural parallel of DC-IV (108–110). (5) The 21 occurrences of בְּרִית display an exceptional POS, and show that their occurrences in DC-III (esp. 103:18) mark the turning point in the entire POS structure. From DC-III onwards, בְּרִית is spoken as a positive and timeless covenant between YHWH and those who keep his statutes and testimony.

## 4.5 FOURTH DAVIDIC COLLECTION (PSS 108–110)

Dubbed as a “trilogy,” DC-IV comes immediately after the first psalm of Book V.<sup>997</sup> It is clearly unified by the Davidic superscription in each of the three psalms. The lexical motifs of “sceptre,”<sup>998</sup> “dawn,”<sup>999</sup> and YHWH’s “right hand”,<sup>1000</sup> link Pss 108 and 110 which frame the Collection. Both Pss 108 and 110 highlight YHWH’s victorious battles against hostile nations and are set at the temple (cf. 108:8; 110:1).<sup>1001</sup> While we have discussed the structural and lexical parallels between DC-III and DC-IV, we have not discussed how DC-IV deepened the characterization of the Davidic figure. We will proceed to explore how DC-IV deepens our understanding of David and analyze the function of DC-IV within the five DCs.

(1) Consider another structural connection between DC-III and IV. It is possible to see DC-III and DC-IV forming a chiasmus in an [A-B-C]-[C'-B'-A'] structure.

- A: Idealized Davidic king who rules from Zion (Ps 101)
  - B: Broken petitioner (Ps 102)
  - C: David praising YHWH’s steadfast love (Ps 103)
  - C': David praising YHWH’s steadfast love (Ps 108)
  - B': Broken petitioner (Ps 109)
  - A': Idealized Davidic king who rules from Zion (Ps 110)
- 

<sup>997</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 3.

<sup>998</sup> Cf. Pss 108:9 and 110:2. Cf. 45:7; 60:9\*, 125:3. Note that Ps 60:9 is “reused” in Ps 108:9.

<sup>999</sup> Cf. Pss 108:3 and 110:3.

<sup>1000</sup> Cf. Pss 108:7; 109:6, 31; 110:1, 5.

<sup>1001</sup> The word, *בָּרוּךְ*, in Ps 108:8 can be translated as “in his holiness” or “in his sanctuary.” The latter is supported by Zenger and Botha. Phil J. Botha, “Psalm 108 and the Quest for Closure to the Exile,” *OTE* 23, no. 3 (2010): 574–96, [582]; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 114.

This chiastic structure is visible through various parallels. In the A, A' units, Pss 101 and 110 sustain the motif of an idealized Davidic king.<sup>1002</sup> They characterize a king who can annihilate all enemies. This motif of kingship, clearly forefronted in these two psalms, is softened in the rest of DC-III and IV.<sup>1003</sup> Both psalms also identify a group of “blameless” people who minister before the king, an element not found in the rest (cf. 101:6; 110:3). The motif of destruction of the king’s enemies from Zion is also lacking in DC-III and IV, apart from these two psalms (cf. 101:1, 7–8; 110:2). The use of “morning/dawn” that characterizes the temporal settings in Pss 101 and 110 is not found in the rest.<sup>1004</sup>

In the B, B' units, Ps 103 parallels 108 with the expression, “my soul/being” (cf. 103:1–2; 108:2). This phraseology is not found elsewhere in the chiasmus. While the word, דָּבָר, is found in four psalms in DC-III and IV, only Pss 103:11 and 108:5 associate YHWH’s דָּבָר with the heights of the “heavens.”<sup>1005</sup> Psalms 103 and 108 are distinct because YHWH, rather than the king, is the object of emphasis and praise (cf. 103:19–22; 108:1–5).

<sup>1002</sup> It has been proposed that the original setting of Ps 101 is a “royal proclamation issued at the enthronement festival of a prince of Judah in Jerusalem.” The text, however, allows us to identify the speaker “as someone with great power and judicial authority over the whole land (vv. 5, 6, 7, and 8).” In the monarchic period, the speaker can be a royal figure, but in the postexilic period, he is likely to be a “religious functionary”. Phil J. Botha, “Psalm 101: Inaugural Address or Social Code of Conduct?,” *HTS Theological Studies* 60, no. 3 (2004): 725–741, [725, 735].

<sup>1003</sup> The battle victories in Ps 108 are attributed to YHWH rather than the king.

<sup>1004</sup> Psalm 101:8 uses בְּקָר (“morning”) while Ps 110:3 uses the *hapax legomenon* מִשְׁמָר (“dawn”).

<sup>1005</sup> In the Psalms, the description of “heavens” in relation to “steadfast love” is found only in Pss 36:6; 57:4, 11; 89:3; 103:11; 108:5.

Granted that the chiastic structure of DC-III and IV can be sustained, the bookends of these two Collections (A, A') feature an embellished Davidic king who is “blameless” and given victorious rule over all wickedness and hostile nations. At the center are two psalms (C, C') linked with description of “heavens,” focusing on YHWH’s steadfast love. The centers of the two separate Collections (B, B'; 102 and 109) highlight the broken Davidic petitioner. As such, DC-III and IV are structurally united.

(2) DC-IV develops the characterization of the Davidic figure as the Messianic priest-king. In Ps 101, the Davidic figure is one who walks in the “blameless way” (**בָּרוּךְ תִּמְמִימָה**; 101:2). He is the champion of those who walk in the “blameless way” and the destroyer of wickedness in the city of the LORD (101:6–8). Botha even suggests that the Davidic characterization of a blameless king is “a good example of a pledge” to establish a righteous society.<sup>1006</sup>

In contrast, the Davidic king in Ps 110 cannot function easily as an example. The speaker in the psalm is possibly “a court prophet” or a “temple functionary”<sup>1007</sup> who conveyed “the divine words to his ‘LORD.’”<sup>1008</sup> With YHWH’s help, this king would rule in the midst of his enemies from Zion. He is also identified as a “primeval” kingly-priest “in the order of Melchizedek” and given the prerogative to “judge” among the nations

<sup>1006</sup> Botha argues that this psalm is “a good example of a pledge to help with the establishment of an obedient and honorable society as envisaged in Psalm 1.” Botha, “Psalm 101: Inaugural Address or Social Code of Conduct?,” 735.

<sup>1007</sup> Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 381.

<sup>1008</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 147.

(110:6).<sup>1009</sup> The king's priesthood is also one that endures "forever" (cf. Isa 11:1–9; Ezek 34:23–24; Zech 6:9–15).<sup>1010</sup> Scholars have linked the kingly-priest descriptions to the El-Elyon cult,<sup>1011</sup> but this connection remains debatable. Others have adopted a messianic interpretation for this psalm. Routledge argues that the entire phrase "in the order of Melchizedek" in Ps 110:4 "might be suggesting just such a limitation: the Davidic king functions as a priest in the way we see Melchizedek functioning as a priest in Genesis 14:18–20, that is, as a means of blessing (the descendants of) Abraham."<sup>1012</sup> The integration of the offices of kingship and priesthood had never been definitively appropriated to a king in the history of Israel's nationhood. Hence, for Routledge, the dual king-priest office and the emphasis of the "order of Melchizedek" in Ps 110:4 "must point forward to the future Messiah"<sup>1013</sup> (cf. Zech 6:12–14).<sup>1014</sup>

<sup>1009</sup> For a study of the relationship between David and Melchizedek, see Robin Routledge, "Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David: Blessing (the Descendants Of) Abraham," *Baptistic Theologies* 1, no. 2 (2009): 1–16.

<sup>1010</sup> Zenger noted that the "priest" motif in Psalm 110 "is unique." Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 146. There are three positions with regards to the origins of the psalm: (a) preexilic "enthronement" psalm in the "royal ritual of Jerusalem"; (b) Maccabean-Hasmonean dating with Simon as the "priest-king" (143–135 B.C.E.); (c) postexilic expectation of a Davidic king. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 144.

<sup>1011</sup> Routledge argues against the connections between the use of "Melchizedek" in Ps 110 and the El-Elyon cult. Routledge, "Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David: Blessing (the Descendants Of) Abraham," 10.

<sup>1012</sup> Routledge, "Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David: Blessing (the Descendants Of) Abraham," 14.

<sup>1013</sup> Routledge, "Psalm 110, Melchizedek and David: Blessing (the Descendants Of) Abraham," 11.

<sup>1014</sup> On messianic passages in Zechariah, Petterson notes, "If these passages [e.g., Zech 12:10; 13:7] are treated in isolation from the wider context of Zechariah, then it is not clear that they refer to a future Davidic king or even that any identification is possible. However, if they are read as an integral part of the book of Zechariah, then the only identification of these figures that is coherent within the book is that they refer to the coming Davidic king, who is killed in the coming battle by Yahweh's intent. The result is a restored covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people (13:9; cf. 11:10). Zechariah 14

Reading Ps 110 in the context of the postexilic period prompts us to see the Davidic priest-king as Messianic, through whom the promised blessings to Abraham and his descendants are perpetuated. Zenger, likewise, noted that the king described in Ps 110 is “impregnated” with Messianic concepts and the entirety of the psalm is “similar to Psalm 2.”<sup>1015</sup> Following Routledge and Zenger, we see that Psalm 110 presents not just a “blameless” king (as in 101), but develops the Davidic figure as a Messianic priest-king.

(3) The afflicted David in Ps 109 is a *juridically* condemned figure, and not merely an afflicted figure. Both Pss 102 and 109 depict an afflicted Davidic king. Psalm 109 in DC-IV, however, develops this afflicted figure in two ways. First, the entirety of the psalm has a “judicial imprint.” Zenger argued that “since the petition as a whole asks for the rescue of the person praying it in the face of or from a condemnation to death obtained through false testimony, we can call this a ‘justice psalm’.”<sup>1016</sup> If Zenger is right, it is possible to read Ps 109:1–3 as the psalmist’s counteraction to his accusers before YHWH, the judge, who stands at the “right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death” (109:31; ESV). Thus, while Ps 102 is presented as a supplication, Ps 109 is set like a scene in the court.

Second, it is plausible to view Ps 109:6–19 as a vivid account of the accusations made by hostile accusers against the petitioner. Four different views have been

pictures the fruit of the coming king.” Petterson, “The Shape of the Davidic Hope across the Book of the Twelve,” 244.

<sup>1015</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 144.

<sup>1016</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 128.

proposed for the identity of the speaker in verses 6–19.<sup>1017</sup> The speaker can be: (a) the petitioner of the psalm, praying for punishment to befall his accusers<sup>1018</sup>; (b) the petitioner *quoting* the words of his enemies; (c) the petitioner quoting the words of his enemies in vv. 6–15 *and* his own responses in vv. 16–19; or (d) YHWH.

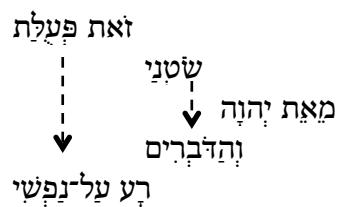
Zenger has taken the second position, and translated the decisive Ps 109:20 as, “This is what they do, those who accuse me, calling on YHWH and who speak evil against my life,” taking פָּעַלְתִּי as “work/deed” rather than “reward.”<sup>1019</sup> My argument for Ps 109:20 is fourfold. First, I agree with Zenger that מִתְּפָעֵלֶת can be translated as “work/deed” rather than “reward” since all other instances in the Psalms are understood as “work” (cf. 17:4; 28:5). Second, the phrase, מִתְּהִנָּה, occurs only in three other

<sup>1017</sup> For details on the arguments for each position, see Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 126–130.

<sup>1018</sup> David Firth, holding onto the position that vv. 6–19 are the prayers of the psalmist, argues that in the psalmist’s imprecatory prayer, he had applied the *lex talionis* principle on his accusers so that “the law required that a false witness suffer the fate that would have befallen the person accused had they been found guilty (Deut 19:16–21).” David Firth, *Surrendering Retribution in the Psalms: Responses to Violence in the Individual Complaints* (Paternoster biblical monographs; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), 40–41.

<sup>1019</sup> Zenger’s detailed argument are as follows: Much of the interpretation lies with how one understands the combination of words, מִתְּפָעֵלֶת and מִתְּהִנָּה in v. 20. The former, with the human being (or YHWH) as subject, can refer to his actions or the result (reward) of his actions. As such, the nominal phrase, שְׁמִינִית פָּעַלְתִּי תְּהִנָּה, can be interpreted in two ways: (1) descriptively, that is, “this is . . .” or (2) jussively, “let this be . . .” The phrase, מִתְּהִנָּה, can also be interpreted in two ways, either referring to the פָּעַלְתִּי or wicked accusers. When they are seen together, the entire v. 20a can be read either as (a) “this(/let this be) is the act/reward of those who accuse me from YHWH . . .” or (b) “this(/let this be) is the act/reward from YHWH, for those who . . .” Moreover, Zenger argued that the “section in vv. 6–19 is so clearly distinct from it [vv. 1b–5], both syntactical and in content, that it cannot simply be regarded as a continuation of vv. 1–5. The following features of vv. 6–19 are particularly striking: in vv. 1–5 and 21–31, the petitioner always sees himself in contrast to a group of enemies (formulated in the plural); in contrast, the desire for destruction and accusation in vv. 6–19 are directed at an individual.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 127–130. Van der Lugt’s argument is also interesting. While he agrees that from v. 6 onwards, the psalmist quotes his accusers, he also argues for a caesura between verses 13 and 14. He notes that “from v. 14 onwards we are dealing with the wish of the suppliant himself that his opponents may decline.” Then “[i]n v. 20 the suppliant once again speaks of [his] accusers in the plural.” Van de Lugt, *CAS III*, 220–222.

places in the Psalms (24:5; 27:4; 118:23) and in all three, the one who receives something **מִאֵת יְהוָה** is associated with the Davidic king. This suggests that the recipient in Ps 109:20 is the psalmist (rather than the accusers). Third, syntactically the entire verse is a chiasmus:



The two words at the center, **מִאֵת יְהוָה**, highlight the centrality of the causative factor of YHWH. Three words before and after **מִאֵת יְהוָה** mirror each other. The phrase, **זאת פעלת שׁטַנִי**, translated as “this is the work of my adversary” parallels **וּהֲדָבָרִים** and **רֹעֶעָל-נֶפֶשִׁי**, “those who speak evil against my soul.” The enemies, **שׁטַנִי** and **הֲדָבָרִים**, refer to the psalmist’s enemies. The first and last two words identifying “work/deed” of the **שׁטַנִי** and **הֲדָבָרִים** respectively. From these three arguments, Ps 109:20 reads as, “this is the work of my adversary, from YHWH, those who speak evil against my soul.” This translation may seem theologically difficult, assigning wicked accusations to God. However, this is the most uncluttered way to translate based on the syntax, which leads to my next point.

We have already connected Pss 109 and 102 with the heightened motif of the afflicted Davidic figure. We can further connect Ps 109:20 and Ps 118:23 with four

common lexemes between these two verses.<sup>1020</sup> The clause, מֵאַת יְהוָה הִתְחַזֵּה זֶה (118:23), refers to the antecedent where “the stone the builders rejected had become the chief cornerstone” (118:22). This enigmatic metaphor refers not just to the positive salvific motif in Ps 118, but also carries the element of affliction arising from YHWH’s judgmental work. This is shown in Ps 118:18, “YHWH has disciplined me [Davidic figure] severely, but unto death he has not given me over.” The connections of lexemes helps us to understand Ps 109:20 in view of Ps 118:18–23. The theological dilemma of assigning the work of the adversary to YHWH can resolved through the larger rubric of YHWH’s chastisement.

Though I do not agree with Zenger’s translation,<sup>1021</sup> I agree with Zenger’s position that the “second [view] best corresponds to the overall dramaturgy of the psalm.”<sup>1022</sup> Taking Ps 109:6–19 as a quotation of the psalmist’s accusers best fits the psalm’s context as a judicial proceeding.

From this, we see an important development of the characterization of the afflicted king from DC-III to DC-IV—the afflicted Davidic figure in Ps 109 is unjustly accused by ingrate accusers with incredulously claims of crimes that demanded the death sentence of this Davidic figure.

<sup>1020</sup>(1) Attached preposition תְּ; (2) direct object marker תְּךָ; (3) proper noun יהוה; (4) demonstrative pronoun זֶה.

<sup>1021</sup> It is grammatically difficult to translate מֵאַת יְהוָה as “calling on YHWH.”

<sup>1022</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalm 3*, 126.

(4) A third development of the Davidic characterization in DC-IV relates to the message of Ps 108 which underscores a time of triumph over specific nations.<sup>1023</sup> Psalm 108 is a composite psalm made up of Pss 57:8–12 and 60:7–14.<sup>1024</sup> Only the words, “David” and “song,” in the superscriptions of Pss 57 of 60 are used in the superscription of Ps 108. Comparing these three psalms, we observe that negative laments are jettisoned from Pss 57 and 60, but “victorious” parts of the psalms are retained in Ps 108. Thus, Ps 108, as a recomposition of Pss 57 and 60, emphasizes a triumphalism of Israel’s deliverance from her enemies. Botha’s observation that “Psalm 108:8–10 no longer resides in a bed of complaint, but is given the character of a hopeful prophecy about the future triumph of YHWH over the enemies of his people,”<sup>1025</sup> affirms our contention.

In our analysis of the thirteen Davidic historical superscriptions (§4.3), Ps 60:1–2 is the only other “triumphant” superscription apart from Ps 18:1. However, the hope embedded in the superscription of Ps 60, where “twelve-thousands Edomites were struck down,” is shrouded by the laments that follow in Ps 60:3–7. Why is this so? Our answer to this is that the *veiled* and *fettered* “triumphalism” of Ps 60 (and Ps 57) becomes a portrayal of hope under the brokenness of the Davidic kingship of DC-II within the Metanarrative of the Psalter.

<sup>1023</sup> Zenger argued that “[Ps 108] is an expression of the (‘messianic’) hopes of postexilic Israel, impregnated with royal theology.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 123.

<sup>1024</sup> Zenger argued that a “reverse dependency can be excluded.” At least ten differences are found by comparing Ps 108 with Pss 57 and 60. See Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 114–16.

<sup>1025</sup> Botha, “Psalm 108 and the Quest for Closure to the Exile,” 585–86.

However, the victories of Ps 60 and the reference to the defeat of Edom, both in Ps 60:2, 10–11, is given *unfettered* triumphal characterization in Ps 108 because DC-IV no longer presents a fallen Davidic king, but a victorious Davidic king. As Zenger argued, the Messianic interpretations of Ps 110 and its “redactional” relationship with Ps 108 suggest an expression of “messianic” hope. Therefore the kingly figure in Pss 108 and 110 are to be seen together,<sup>1026</sup> presenting an unfettered triumphalistic characterization of this Davidic king.

Moreover, by comparing Ps 108:12 with 60:12, the accusatory tone of YHWH’s “rejection” (**נִזְתָּהֵן**) has been softened by dropping the second-person pronoun, “you” (**הַנִּזְתָּהֵן**).<sup>1027</sup> The softening of this accusation fits well with the triumphant tone of the psalm. Psalm 108 is positive and confident, no longer a mere far-away glimpse of restorative hope.

(5) Psalm 108 comes immediately after a series of psalms that praise and trace YHWH’s deeds and lovingkindness, first with the formation and deliverance of the nation Israel (104–105), followed by the rebellion and exile of Israel (106), and finally the call for Israel to be gathered from the nations to an “inhabited city” (107). The flow of canonical history captured in Pss 104–107 and the portrayal of the Davidic warrior-king leading victoriously against the various nations listed in Ps 108 recall the early

<sup>1026</sup> “Edom” in Pss 60:2, 10–11 and 108:10–11 has been linked to Amos 9:11–12 which reads, “In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, And wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins And rebuild it as in the days of old; That they may possess the remnant of Edom And all the nations who are called by My name,” Declares the LORD who does this.” (ESV; See also Obad 1). See a further discussion of Ps 108 in §5.1.3.

<sup>1027</sup> Refer to the discussion of the lexeme, **נִזְתָּהֵן**, in chapter 2.

chapters of the Book of Joshua where Joshua was about to lead Israel in the conquest of Canaan with the help of the captain of YHWH’s hosts (Josh 5:13–15).

This narrative horizon of the Joshua narrative compares well with Ps 108 as the preceding Pss 103–106 contain the most sustained reference to “Moses” and what he did in the wilderness after coming out of Egypt.<sup>1028</sup> Seen under the literary horizon of Pss 104–108, the Davidic figure in Ps 108 is the “new” Joshua who is victoriously leading YHWH’s people into a new era—a better “Canaan.”

In sum, the five arguments above show how DC-IV develops several important aspects of the “new” Davidic figure and how it fits within the literary horizon from DC-III to DC-IV. These two DCs are parallel triptychs forming a chiasmus, inviting us to compare and contrast the development of the Davidic characterization. In Ps 108, he is connected with the Messianic hopes for the victories over the nations in and around Canaan. He is the “new” Joshua who assembles and leads the people of Israel from the nations to an “inhabited city.” Although this Davidic figure is afflicted and condemned to death by hostile accusations in Ps 109, he is vindicated in Ps 110, crowned as the priest-king, ruling victoriously from Zion over the nations. The figure below summarizes the Davidic characterization from DC-I to IV:

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<sup>1028</sup> Cf. Pss 77:21; 90:1; 99:6; 103:7; 105:26; 106:16, 23, 32. Note that “Moses” does not occur again after Ps 106.

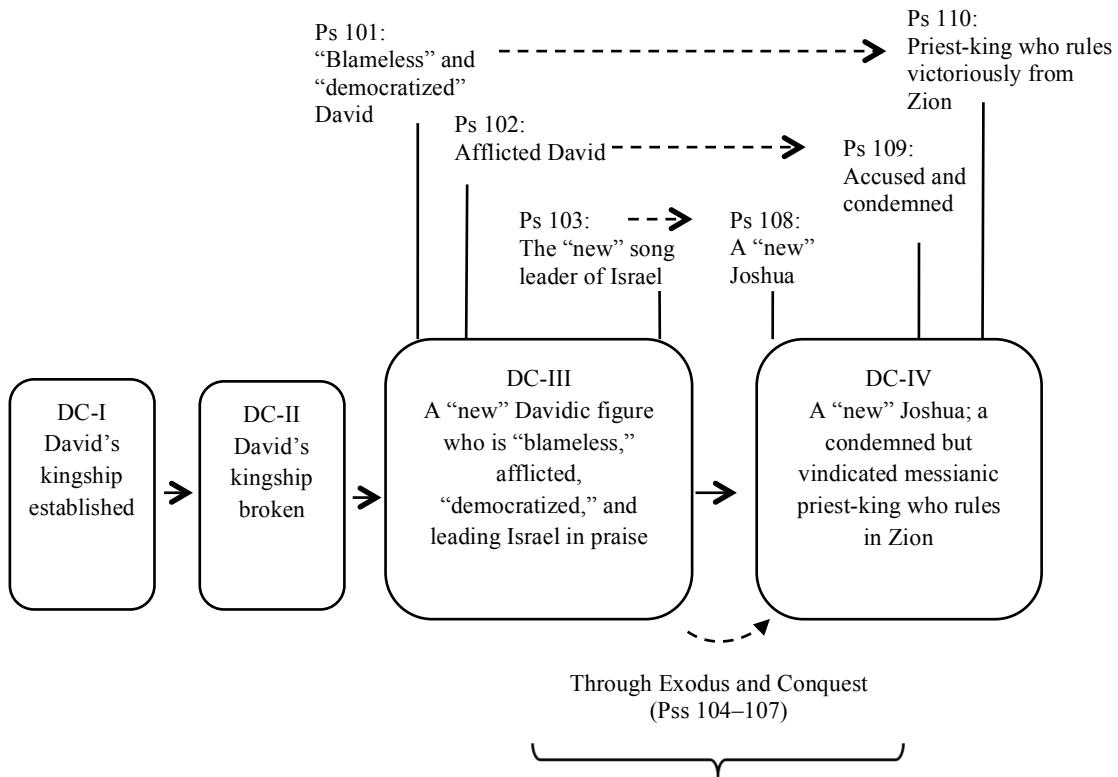


Figure 61: Summary of the Davidic Characterization from DC-I through IV

## 4.6 FIFTH DAVIDIC COLLECTION (PSS 138–145)

One way of reading DC-V is to treat them as the collective responses to the horrors of exile in Ps 137.<sup>1029</sup> Hossfeld saw a concentric structure in this collection that is also thematically progressive. The motif that frames this Collection is YHWH's kingship in Pss 138 and 145.<sup>1030</sup> Leuenberger argues that YHWH's reign in DC-V is expressed clearly through the exercise of his sovereign providence and deliverance.<sup>1031</sup> Ballhorn points out that DC-V, as the last DC in the Psalter, determines the final image of David. When this image of David is seen with the Final *Hallel* (146–150), they “administer an identify-forming program for Israel: the cast of the earthly Davidic king is gently giving way to the kingdom of YHWH.”<sup>1032</sup> This final Davidic king in Ps 145 “lays down his crown in view of the universal kingdom of YHWH.”<sup>1033</sup> Ballhorn notes that this is the appropriate conclusion as one comes to the end of the Psalter, where the “messianic hope for the future is transformed theocentrically.”<sup>1034</sup> Buysch posits an different agenda for DC-V. He concludes that “[t]he last Davidic Psalter… [is] a

<sup>1029</sup> This is argued from the contrasting use of יְשׁוּעָה in Pss 137:3–4 and 138:5. The captors had requested for one of the Zion songs in Ps 137 but all the kings of nations will sing of “ways of the LORD” in Ps 138. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 531–32.

<sup>1030</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 524–25.

<sup>1031</sup> Leuenberger, *Konzeptionen des Königtums Gottes im Psalter*, 344.

<sup>1032</sup> “Die Sammlungen Ps 138–145 und Ps 146–150 gehören zusammen und Vollziehen ein identitätsbildendes Programm an Israel: von der Gestalt des irdisch-davidischen Königs wird Israel behutsam weg zur Königsherrschaft Gottes geführt.” Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 297.

<sup>1033</sup> “Wichtigstes Geschehen in Ps 145 ist, daß David selbst hier seine Königskrone angesichts der univeralen Königsherrschaft JHWHS niederlegt.” Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 298.

<sup>1034</sup> “Damit ist für den Psalter endgültig die »messianische« Zukunftserwartung in eine theozentrische transformiert, wie sie im Schluß-hallel letztgültig zum Ausdruck kommt.” Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 298.

concise, practical teaching for approaching YHWH in prayer with the forms of worship and confession.”<sup>1035</sup> The confessions and reflections therein express the essence of YHWH, that is, his “righteousness,” “creative power” and “historical power.”<sup>1036</sup> Psalm 145, at the end of DC-V, is essentially a focus on YHWH’s kingship.<sup>1037</sup> Grol presents yet another view of DC-V. He argues that the exile in Ps 137 is used as a “*chiffre* [figure] for the crisis in the period of the redaction, the conflict with the Hellenists.”<sup>1038</sup> The aim of DC-V, following Ps 137, is “to strengthen the identify of the pious and orthodox, the *chasidim*, in their fight with the Hellenists.”<sup>1039</sup> And “David, whom the collection is attributed to, is role model for the *chasidim*.”<sup>1040</sup>

These conclusions on DC-V are helpful. The frames, Pss 138 and 145, are clearly focused on kingship and the latter has a theocratic emphasis. However, there remains a structural question as to why Pss 140–143, at the center of the Collection, sustain the motif of the Davidic distress and supplication. Why did the final editors of the Psalms

<sup>1035</sup> “Der letzte Davidpsalter steht vor dem jubelnden Ende des Psalters als kurz gefasste, praktische Lehre für die Annäherung an JHWH im Gebet Dabei werden die Formen von Lobpreis, Bekenntnis.” Buysch, *Der letzte Davidpsalter*, 326.

<sup>1036</sup> Buysch, *Der letzte Davidpsalter*, 327.

<sup>1037</sup> Van der Lugt argues that the verbal repetitions in the psalm form a concentric structure that emphasizes the kingship of YHWH. He notes, “The concentric pattern of verbal recurrences on the level of the composition in its entirety highlights its quintessential train of thought [that is, YHWH’s kingship].” Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 540.

<sup>1038</sup> Harm van Grol, “David and His *Chasidim*: Place and Function of Psalms 138–145,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 309–38, [336].

<sup>1039</sup> Grol, “David and His *Chasidim*: Place and Function of Psalms 138–145,” 336.

<sup>1040</sup> Grol, “David and His *Chasidim*: Place and Function of Psalms 138–145,” 336.

revisit these laments and petitions if the intent was to move from messianic kingship to YHWH kingship?

Before we study the features of DC-V, recall that Pss 104–119, as a Group, parallels Pss 135–150 structurally (§2.4.6). At the center of these two Groups are DC-IV and DC-V respectively, each bound by psalms that trace the canonical history of Israel up to the exile (104–107; 135–137; §3.1.3) on the left, and psalms that praise YHWH on the right, which interestingly, also trace the canonical story of creation to Israel’s entry into Zion (111–118; 146–149). Also, an acrostic/alphabetical psalm at the right end (119 and 150) concludes both Groups. Hence, the first thing we note about DC-V is that it is carefully organized in the third Section of the Psalter with important macrostructural parallels. These structural features must provide the meaning and role of DC-V. In the following, we will explore three arguments for the role and function of DC-V.

(1) The key to understanding the role of DC-V lies in its central motif that follows a recurring emphasis of *Davidic supplication and distress* found at the centers of the last Group of every Section in the Psalter (i.e., 38, 86, 140–143). We have seen this in Psalm 86, where a lone Davidic psalm characterized by distress and supplication is precisely inserted at the center of the Psalms of Korah (84–88). Psalm 86 marks the motif of distress and supplication at the end of the entire Books II–III. Moreover, we have seen how the Davidic historical superscriptions in DC-I and DC-IV (cf. 34:1; 142:1; §4.3), located as the final instances of two trajectories, share common motifs of *Davidic supplication and distress*. Motifs of distress and supplication not only fill the pages of the Psalter but also recur strategically toward the end of a unit, even after descriptions of victories. Hence, the motif of *Davidic supplication and distress* occurring as the last GCMs or last historical superscription along a trajectory is an intentional macrostructural phenomenon. This design provides the most important

structural clue for the significance of DC-V. I present two (earlier) figures below illustrating the above argument.

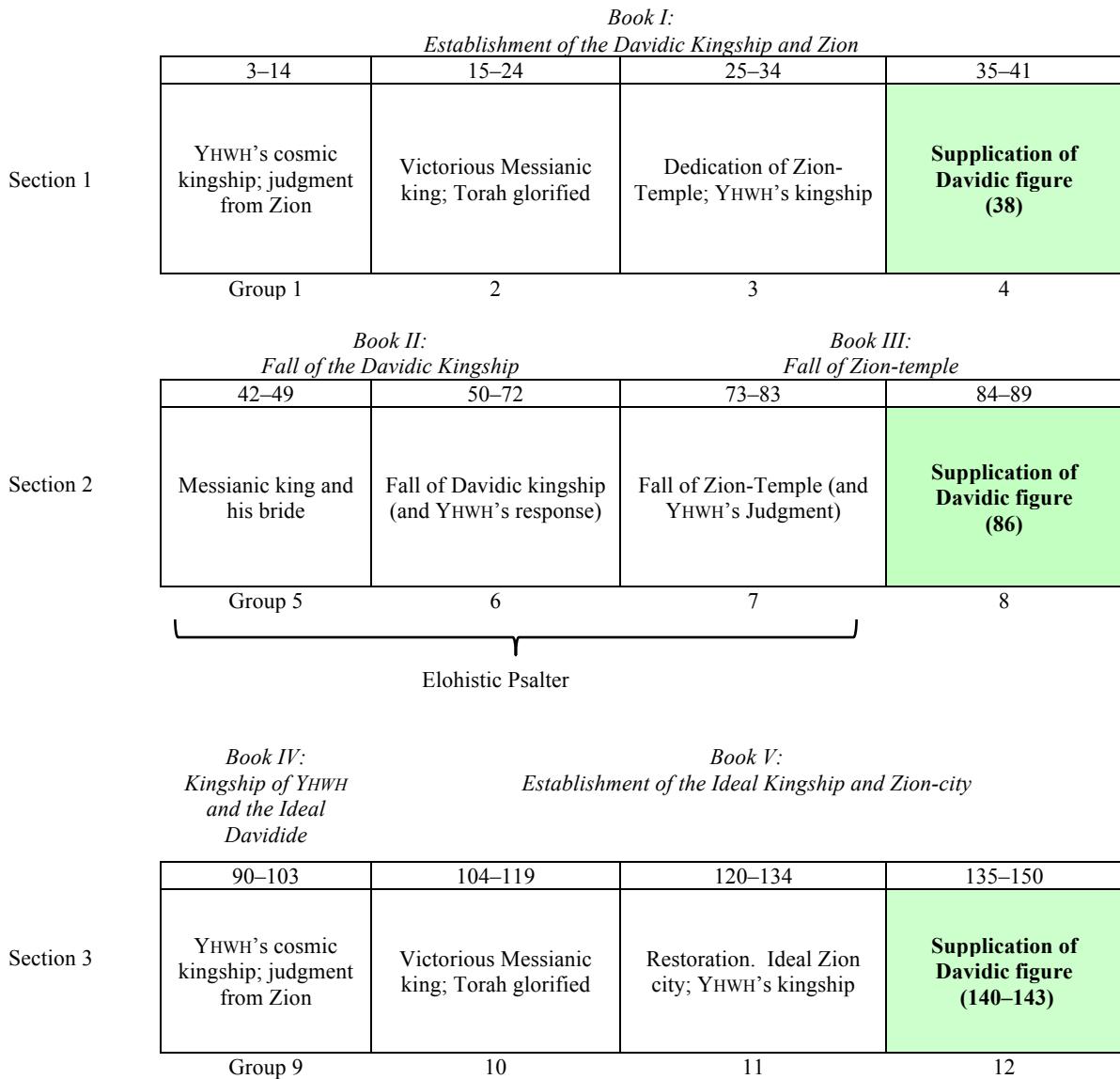


Figure 62: Common Final Group Central Motif of Davidic Supplication in Every Section

DC-I								
Ps 3:1	7:1	18:1	34:1					
Davidic Kingship at stake	Absalom dies, Davidic kingship restored	Davidic kingship established (cf. Nathan's prophecy 2 Sam 7:1; 22:1)	<b>David in distress. Supplication</b>					
↓								
DC-II								
51:1-2	52:1-2	54:1-2	56:1	57:1	59:1	60:1-2	63:1	142:1
Nathan's judgment – David's downfall begins	Recalls David's distress and threats to his life. Drawn from 1 Samuel.					Victorious state before David sins with Bathsheba	Bookends with Pss 3:1 and 51:1-2	<b>David in distress. Supplication</b>

Figure 63: Common Motifs of the Distressed David in Supplication as Last Historical Superscriptions in Two Parallel Trajectories in DC-I and DC-II–V

We proceed to explore reasons for this structural feature. To do so, we first offer a brief sweep across the Metanarrative. In Figure 62, the motifs of distress and supplication at the end of Section 1 follow the establishment of David's kingship and temple. This suggests that even with the dual establishment of David's kingship and Zion-temple, affliction and supplication persist because of sin. The human king and earthly temple could not resolve the problems of sin and affliction. In Section 2, Ps 86, at the center of Group 8, sustains the motifs of Davidic affliction and supplication. With the emphasis on the fall of the kingship and Zion-temple in Section 2, affliction and supplication are understandably the preoccupations. However, a lone Davidic supplication psalm situated precisely at the structural center of a Korahite Collection provides an uncanny Davidic characterization. Note also how the Elohistic Psalter links Groups 5–7, leaving out Group 8.

With Section 3, there is a positive shift in the Metanarrative. Even with the dawn of an idealized Davidic figure in DC-III and IV, there are still issues of distress and affliction (102, 109). Then after DC-IV, Pss 111–119 further characterize the Torah-pious king. Crutchfield argues that the righteous “man” referred to in Ps 112 is the

messianic king.<sup>1041</sup> He connects the “horn” in Ps 112:9 with 132:17 and 148:14 (cf. 89:18, 25).<sup>1042</sup> If parallels between Pss 112 and 1 can be sustained,<sup>1043</sup> then the Torah-pious and Messianic figures in Pss 1–2 are also demonstrated in Pss 110–112. Beyond Ps 119, we see an emphasis on the restoration of an idealized Zion city built by YHWH (120–134), prefiguring an idealized society (cf. 132). Yet in spite of these positive depictions in Book V, DC-V ends with the motif of Davidic distress and supplication.

The motif of distress and supplication in DC-V is also increasingly associated with the *chasidim* of Israel (not just the Davidic figure). In fact, Grol argues that “Psalm 145 presents the *chasidim* as the ones David is referring to. The David of the collection [138–145] stands for them. He is their identification figure and symbol.”<sup>1044</sup>

The presence of affliction and supplication even after the advent of the Messianic king in DC-III and IV show that the ideal and victorious king has yet to *fully* establish the utopic social-reality of justice and bliss. This only happens as we approach Pss 144–

<sup>1041</sup> Crutchfield argues, “First, the close relationship between these psalms [Pss 111–112] is explained: they are exegeting the unexplained relationship between God and messiah described in Psalm 110. Secondly, the hyperbolic language used to describe the God-fearer in Psalm 112 is fully explained, for this kind of language would find its fulfilment ultimately in the messiah in whom the pious would expect such virtues. Third, this seems to explain the messianic reference to the ‘horn’ of the righteous in Psalm 112:9.” Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context*, 35; Peter C. W. Ho, review of J. Crutchfield, *Psalms in Their Context: An Interpretation of Psalms 107-118*, *JESOT* 4.2 (2015): 219–21.

<sup>1042</sup> Chester sees the “horn” in Ps 89 as messianic or “proto-messianic.” Andrew Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation: Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2007), 247.

<sup>1043</sup> For connections between Pss 1 and 112, see Phil J. Botha, “‘Wealth and Riches Are in His House’ (Ps 112:3): Acrostic Wisdom Psalms and the Development of Antimaterialism,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship* (ed. Nancy deClaissé-Walford; SBL Press, 2014), 105–27, [118–119].

<sup>1044</sup> Grol argues that “names from divergent traditions” are integrated at the end “with the name of *chasidim*. The low and needy are found, the righteous (or justified) and the upright, the servant(s) of

145 at the end of DC-V. Here, the ideal Davidic king subdues all and hands over his kingship to YHWH, *his* king (145:1). The final unambiguous transition from distress and lament to praise and peace occurs at Ps 149:6–9, where the final judgment of the wicked is administered, leading to the praise of YHWH at his sanctuary.

Hence, Pss 144–45, at the end of DC-V, *mark the beginning* of a realized, ideal Davidic socio-community identified by ultimate justice, peace and praise.<sup>1045</sup> Regardless of how we perceive “Israel” in the Psalms, whether it refers primarily to the preexilic, exilic or postexilic community of faith or of the future generations (cf. 102:19; 145:4) of YHWH’s righteous pilgrims (e.g., Grol, identifying the setting of the Hellenistic period), the motif of affliction and supplication remain until a shift in Pss 144–145.

*Based on the structural phenomenon and development across the Metanarrative of the Psalter, the important theological message, both to the postexilic community at the final composition of the Psalter and to the reception of the MT Psalter tradition thereafter, is that distress and supplication would continue until a point when the*

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YHWH (only singular!), those who revere God, and those who love him.” Grol, “David and His *Chasidim*: Place and Function of Psalms 138–145,” 325, 327.

<sup>1045</sup> Psalms 144–145 as a transition has been studied by Vignolo and Donatella Scaiola. Scaiola notes, “the last linking between doxology and macarism can be found in Ps 144, and suggests a signal of conclusion; secondly, the usual sequence is reversed, as the blessing in anticipated (144,1) with respect to the macarism which is being doubled (144,15). In his [Vignolo’s] opinion, here is the beginning of the end of the fifth book, which develops throughout seven psalms. Psalm 145, which follows, can be considered an extended doxology, due to the inclusion within 145,1-2.21, which resumes 144,1. Pss 146–150 are doxological epilogue, well connected to Ps 145.” Donatella Scaiola, “The End of the Psalter,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. E. Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 701–10, [702]; See also Roberto Vignolo, “Circolarità tra libro e preghiera nella poetica dossologica del Salterio: Contribution alla ‘terza ricerca’ del Salterio come libro,” in *La Parola di Dio tra scrittura e rito*, Associazion Professori di Liturgia, XXVII Settimana di Studio (Rome: Centro Liturgico Vincenziano, 2002), 127–88.

*victorious Davidic figure finally ushers in an ideal social-reality. The people, whose God is YHWH, must continue to persist in confident hope through petition until that defining shift.*

The “blessed one” that begins the Psalter (**אָשֶׁר יְהִי אֵישׁ**; 1:1, 2:12) now finds fulfilment as “the blessed people” at the end of Ps 144:15 (**אָשֶׁר יְהַעֲמֹד**). The people of God, as a collective, is to wait in supplication and hope until the time when they would be led into the paradisiacal city through the Davidic king.

Three other features of DC-V collaborate our arguments above.

(2) Accentuation of the Davidic idealization and democratization in DC-V. The Davidic characterization is increasingly predicated to the community.<sup>1046</sup> We briefly rehearse this phenomenon from DC-III to V. In Ps 101:2, 6, “blamelessness” is both an attribute of the Davidic king and the people under him. The blessings sought for by the individual psalmist are given to the “children of YHWH’s servants” in 102:29.<sup>1047</sup> Psalms that begin with an individual voice end with a collective voice (103:1, 20–22). Psalms 104–107 are community psalms. The king’s personal questions are put before YHWH as communal petitions in Psalm 108:11–14. Psalms 111–112 are contextualized within the “company” and “generation” of the “upright.” Psalms 113 and 114 are identified with YHWH’s servants and the “house of Jacob.” Psalm 114:2 even attributed “Judah” as

<sup>1046</sup> Robertson notes, “In the Psalter, the focus is on David as covenantal head of the nation. If he achieves victory, his people triumph. If he is overcome, the whole nation is defeated.” Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 10, Location 5389.

<sup>1047</sup> Witt notes, “many recent commentators have also emphasized that the addition of the superscription strongly suggests that the psalm has now been democratized for an individual supplicant, who can relate to similar times of suffering.” Witt, “Hearing Psalm 102 within the Context of the Hebrew Psalter,” 586.

“YHWH’s sanctuary” and “Israel” as YHWH’s dominion. That is, YHWH’s presence and victory are to be understood *as* his chosen people.

Psalms 115–118 conclude with communal praises to YHWH. Although most of Ps 119 is expressed in the first person singular, the first four verses (119:1–4) introduce the psalm with generic characterization. The totality of the SOA emphasizes the gathering (or return) of Israel to the house of YHWH in Zion even though some of them are expressed through an individual’s voice (120–122).<sup>1048</sup> Psalms 135–136 are communal psalms. However, four psalms (138–139, 142–143) in DC-V are individual psalms. In Pss 140–141, 144–145,<sup>1049</sup> the individual is fused with the community.<sup>1050</sup> Lama argues that Ps 145 is “the only psalm which explicitly presents YHWH’s kingdom<sup>1051</sup> as

<sup>1048</sup> Van der Lugt argues that “the word *m’lh* is never used for an ordinary pilgrimage, nor for one of the three annual feasts. The headings remind us of the return to Jerusalem from the exile in Babylon; see the expression *hm ‘lh mbbl* in Ezra 7, 9, used for a group of exiles returning to Palestine.” Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 423.

<sup>1049</sup> This is not to say that distinction cannot be made between the individual Davidic king and the collective people. For example, Barbiero argues that Ps 144:1–11 identifies the individual king that is clearly set apart from the people in 144:12–15. Gianni Barbiero, “Messianismus Und Theokratie: Die Verbindung Der Psalmen 144 Und 145 Und Ihre Bedeutung Für Die Komposition Des Psalters,” *OTE* 27, no. 1 (2014): 41–52, [44].

<sup>1050</sup> Cf. “poor” (*אָבִינִים*; 140:13); “righteous” (*צַדִּיקִים*; 140:14); “upright” (*שְׁרִירִים*; 140:14); “our bones” (*צְמַנּוּ*; 141:7); Pss 144:12–14; 145:4, 6–7, 10–21. Ballhorn notes that the movement in a psalm where an individual is mentioned, who confronts the wicked and the social structures they have created, followed by the voice of righteous community is akin to how Psalm 1 is set up. This feature, to him, reflects an “eschatological” connotation. “Wenn am Ende aber doch eine positiv konnotierte Gruppe steht, dann scheint am Horizont dieser Psalmen die Integration des angefochtenen Individuums in die Heils- gemeinde auf (Ps 140,13f.; 142,8). Eine entsprechende Bewegung ist ähnlich in Ps 1 zu erkennen, worin zu Beginn vom tora-frommen einzelnen die Rede ist, der den Frevlern mit ihren Sozialstrukturen gegenübersteht. Am Ende aber kommt die Gemeinde der Gerechten in den Blick, wobei sich eine eschatologische Konnotation nahelegt.” Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 276.

<sup>1051</sup> At the center of Ps 145, the three consecutive use of “kingdom” (*מלכיות*) in immediate succession is impressive (145:12–13) with an emphasis on YHWH’s eternal kingship. The noun, *מלכות*, occurs only six times in the entire Psalter, of which four instances are found in three successive verses in Ps 145:11–13. Cf. Pss 45:7; 103:19; 145:11–13.

universal and eternal.”<sup>1052</sup> Psalms 146–150 are all communal psalms as revealed by the *Hallelujah* superscriptions. Hence, apart from four psalms in DC-V and Pss 109–110 in DC-IV, most psalms (>85%) from DC-III onwards are democratized to some extent.

Four other textual features in DC-V and the Final *Hallel* further explicate the democratizing phenomenon. First, there is a democratizing of the Davidic figure and associated Davidic blessings. In the POS analysis of the lexeme, “head,” we have noted that this word, while clearly associated with the Davidic kingship in DC-I, is no longer clearly associated with it in the last three occurrences in DC-V (cf. 140:8, 10; 141:5). Specifically, Ps 141:5 notes that the wound by a righteous man is like the “anointing” of a Davidic king. In other words, the righteous community, in its fostering of mutual righteousness, *has become* a community of “priest-kings.”

In Ps 144, YHWH subdues the enemy of the Davidic king and by Ps 144:12–15, the paradisiacal community is ushered in.<sup>1053</sup> Following this, the Davidic kingship begins to recede into the background and YHWH’s kingship comes to the foreground (145:1).<sup>1054</sup>

<sup>1052</sup> Ajoy K. Lama, *The Placement of Psalm 145 in Book V: A Compositional Analysis* (Deerfield: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2007), 5.

<sup>1053</sup> Todd highlights several important connections between Pss 137 and 144. In Ps 137, the captives could not sing a “song of YHWH” in a foreign land but in Ps 144, the psalmist is to sing a “new song.” The beatitude in Pss 137:8–9 and 144:15 further connect them. Todd argues that the enemies of Israel in Ps 137 (“Babylon” and “Edom”) parallel the enemies of David in Ps 144. Todd, *Remember, O Yahweh*, 119–122.

<sup>1054</sup> See also David M. Howard, “Divine and Human Kingship As Organizing Motifs in the Psalter,” in *The Psalms : Language for All Seasons of the Soul* (Chicago: Moody, 2014), 197–207, [206].

In Ps 145:11–12, the combination of three lexemes, “kingdom” (*מלִכּוֹת*), “power” (*גָּבְרִיהָ*), and “glory” (*כָּבָד*) used in close proximity with reference to YHWH, is found elsewhere only in 1 Chron 29:28–30, referring to David’s kingdom. The foregrounding of kingdom, rather than kingship, reinforces the concept of democratization in the Psalms.

Second, the community takes on the authoritative role of judge at the end of the Psalms. The congregation of the *חסִידִים* (149:1) in the Final *Hallel* is given the function to “execute vengeance” and judgement on the nations and kings based on “judgment written” (*מְשֻׁפֵּט בְּתוֹב*; 149:9). This role of universal judgement and execution of “vengeance” (*נַקְמָה*) is reserved solely as the prerogative of YHWH elsewhere in the Psalter (18:48; 94:1).<sup>1055</sup> Now, this prerogative is extended to the congregation of the godly. This development is clear when we compare Ps 149 with Ps 101. In Ps 149, it is the community rather than the king who would execute judgment.<sup>1056</sup>

Third, the idealized society takes centerstage as we move toward the end of the Psalter. Already in Ps 101, we see a “blameless” society ruled by a “blameless” Davidic king. This distinction between “blameless” king and “blameless” Israelites becomes increasingly vague. The Torah-pious lover of YHWH’s law<sup>1057</sup> and the pilgrim at

<sup>1055</sup> The noun, “vengeance” (*נַקְמָה*), occurs only five times in the Psalter (18:48; 79:10; 94:1; 149:7). Apart from Ps 149:7, YHWH is always the subject of executing “vengeance” on the nations (cf. 96:13; 98:9). This imagery is also found in Ps 2, where the messianic king executes judgment on the nations.

<sup>1056</sup> See also my discussion on Ps 108 in §5.1.3.

<sup>1057</sup> Howard makes the case that, “Those kings who were the closest to the ideal — David, Hezekiah, and Josiah—were ones whom the texts especially emphasize as trusting in YHWH and keeping the Law.” David M. Howard Jr, “The Case for Kingship in the Old Testament Narrative Books and the

YHWH's house<sup>1058</sup> in Ps 119 can be interpreted as the Davidic king or otherwise. By the end of the Psalter, it is the **חַסְדֵּים** (145:10; 148:14; 149:1, 5, 9), rather than the human king who are established in Zion.

The concept of justice and peace (**שָׁלוֹם**), envisioned of the communal life in Jerusalem in Pss 72 and 122, recur in Pss 127–128, where YHWH, rather than man, is to be the builder of the house and city. The peaceful and just society seen in Pss 132:13–18 and 144:12–15 are still associated with the Messianic king. However, in the Final *Hallel*, this blissful imagery of Zion is not associated with the human king (146:10; 147:2, 12–14; 149:1–2).<sup>1059</sup> This idealized socio-community, free from distress and triumphant over nations, recalls the paradisiacal life envisioned in the Prologue. Bound by Pss 1:1–2:12, the “blessed one” who walks in the Torah of YHWH, is planted by streams of river, prospering and fruitful in all seasons. This blissful dwelling envisioned in the Prologue is now realized at the end of the Psalter.

Fourth, the Psalter concludes with the praise of YHWH in the most extensive and all-embracing manner. All that has breath are called to praise YHWH in Ps 150. YHWH’s sanctuary is now understood as “mighty heavens” (150:1). This praise of YHWH, previously limited to the locale and congregation in Zion and Jerusalem (cf. 65:1; 102:22; 135:21; 146:10; 147:12), is now to be sounded universally in the “mighty

“Psalms,” *TJ* 9, no. 1 (1988): 19–35, [20]. See also Pss 119:47, 48, 97, 113, 119, 127, 132, 159, 163, 165, 167.

<sup>1058</sup> Note that **בֵּית מִגּוֹרִי** in Ps 119:54 (cf. Gen 37:1; 47:9) is also translated “house of my pilgrimage.”

<sup>1059</sup> The “king” in 149:2b refers to YHWH rather than the human king because this “king” parallels the “maker” in 149:2a.

heavens.” Furthermore, the term, “prayer” (**תְּפִלָּה**), with its last instance in Ps 143:1, no longer recurs. Lament and prayers are transformed into praise.<sup>1060</sup>

These features in DC-V and the Final *Hallel* show a development of the literary text as we move from DC-III to V.<sup>1061</sup> *The crescendo and convergence of idealization and democratization at the end of DC-V and the Final Hallel completes the Metanarrative of the Psalter. Here, the issues of injustice, ignominy, infirmity and insecurity suffered by the chasidim are finally resolved.* Grol has rightly pointed out that in Ps 145:18–20—“the text sings of the global and universal kingship of God [over all creatures], but the attention is inescapably attracted by what this kingship means to the own group of *chasidim*.<sup>1062</sup>

(3) All five DCs display a concentric structure. Each DC has a center. The first Davidic Collection centers around the establishment of the Davidic kingship and temple (18–21, 29–30), while DC-II centers around the fall of David (56–68). The superscriptions in Pss 38:1 and 70:1, near the end of DC-I and II, are the only two with the phrase, “for a memorial” (**לְהַזְכֵּר**).<sup>1063</sup> These two instances are meant to be seen

<sup>1060</sup> “Praise,” on the other hand, is found in the last verse of the Psalter.

<sup>1061</sup> Ballhorn summarizes three theological shifts that can be detected as one move through the Psalter. First, there is a heightening of praise towards the end. Second, there is a shift from an emphasis on the Davidic kingdom to Yahweh’s. Third, there is a tendency from individual speech to a collective mode, representing the entire congregation of Israel. “Eine Entwicklung von der Klage zum Lob; Eine Tendenzverschiebung von der davidischen/irdischen Königsherrschaft zur Gottesherrschaft; Eine - allerdings auch schon bei den Individualsammlungen der ersten Psalmenbücher begegnende Tendenz, kollektive Leseweisen (für »Israel« oder »Gerechte«) auch von Einzelpsalmen anzubieten.” Ballhorn, *Zum Telos des Psalters*, 37.

<sup>1062</sup> Grol, “David and His *Chasidim*: Place and Function of Psalms 138–145,” 323.

<sup>1063</sup> The *hiphil* infinite construct conjugation of זֶכֶר occurs only in these two locations in the Psalter.

together, and as a commemorative for the human David (cf. 1 Sam 4:18; 2 Sam 18:18; 1 Kgs 17:18). In contrast, the frames of DC-III–IV contrast a different royal Davidic figure that is both victorious and vindicated (101, 103, 108, 110). These two Collections contain an afflicted figure at the center. The structures of DC-III–V are similar, with the Davidic or YHWH kingship as bookends and the supplication/affliction of David at the center.<sup>1064</sup> It is also striking that the last Davidic Psalm of DC-II, III and V (Pss 86:15, 103:8, 145:8) repeats the formula “God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Exod 34:6–7).<sup>1065</sup>

In conclusion, the structural contours and profiles of all the DCs are similar. They have a concentric structure around a central focus. At the same time, a linear development can be detected. The development begins with the establishment of David’s kingship in DC-I followed by its fall in DC-II. At the end of DC-II, the Davidic kingship is turned over prophetically to a Solomonic-messianic figure. Then, the Davidic characterization shifts positively in DC-III, where a blameless and righteous Davidic king arises. Both DC-III and IV explicate and deepen the portrait of this Davidic king. At the end of DC-V, the Davidic kingship is now turned over to YHWH. Between the kingships of the historical David (DC-I and II) and YHWH (end DC-V), the

<sup>1064</sup> Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 60.

<sup>1065</sup> If we consider Ps 86 as the last Davidic psalm of DC-II. The three psalms containing this formula has been highlighted by Groenewald in his study of the YHWH’s *hesed*, though he does not see that these three psalms are structurally significant. Alphonso Groenewald, “A God Abounding in Steadfast Love: Psalms and Hebrews,” in *Psalms and Hebrews* (eds. Dirk Human and Gert Steyn; LHBOTS 527; New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 52–65.

kingship of an ideal messianic priest-king is pictured both as a condemned figure and vindicated ruler from Zion. Figure 64 concludes our entire study of the five DCs.

Davidic Collection	Concentric Structure			Linear Progression
	Front	Center	End	
DC-I (3–41)	YHWH's kingship (8–9)	Establishment of David's kingship and Temple (18–21, 29–30)	Davidic distress and supplication (38)	Begins with YHWH's kingship. King David broken (sacrifice accepted). Kingship turned over to a Solomonic king. ↓
DC-II* (51–71, 86)	David's fall begins with Nathan's judgment (51)	David's life threatened (56–64)	David at the brink of death/Davidic distress and supplication (71/86)	
DC-III (101–103)	Blameless Davidite (101)	Afflicted figure (102)	David the Song leader (103)	Ideal, condemned-vindicated king-priest. ↓
DC-IV (108–110)	Victorious Davidic king entering Zion (108)	Afflicted and condemned Davidic figure (109)	Vindicated and victorious Davidic rule from Zion (110)	
DC-V (138–145)	YHWH's kingship (138)	Davidic distress and supplication (140–143)	Davidic figure handover kingship to YHWH (145)	Ideal king turned over kingship to YHWH in the end

Figure 64: Summary of the Five Davidic Collections

#### **4.7 MESSIANIC AND ESCHATOLOGICAL PROGRAM IN THE MT PSALTER?**

We began our study of the DCs by reviewing Gillingham's contentions that any Messianic or eschatological elements found in the Psalter are late and anachronistic. We questioned these contentions by pointing out that by the time of the LXX, Messianic (or proto-Messianic) and eschatological elements were already present (before the Maccabean times) and that works of the postexilic prophets had provided the fodder for Messianic and eschatological formulations. We are now in a good position to complete our argument for this chapter.

Our study of the five DCs has demonstrated that the Davidic characterization of the Psalter is not haphazard. There are clear structural and thematic developments. Specifically, its *telos* highlights an ideal and victorious Davidic king who would usher in an era of permanent social bliss. It is possible to argue that the Psalter, by its composition, arrangement and trajectory, has a Messianic and eschatological program. The Psalter is, in other words, a reception of the Davidic Covenant.

By "Messianic," I mean an "expectation" or "hope" that refers to "a royal [Davidic] figure who will play a crucial role in the last days."<sup>1066</sup> This is differentiated from "the messiah" who is understood as a human monarch in the Davidic dynasty.<sup>1067</sup>

<sup>1066</sup> As understood in rabbinic and early Christian traditions. Donald Juel, "Messiah," *Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. D. N. Freedman; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 889–90;

<sup>1067</sup> Roland E. Murphy, "Notes on Old Testament Messianism and Apologetics," *CBQ* 19, no. 1 (1957): 5–15, [7]; See also Rose's definition and differentiation in W. H. Rose, "Messiah," *DOTP*, 565–68, [566]; Longman also differentiates "messianic expectations" from "Christological expectations." He notes that the messianic "expectation of a future royal or priestly deliverer" is not simply seen as Jesus Christ being the expected Messiah. Tremper Longman III, "Messiah," *DOTWPW*, 466–72, [467].

This “Messiah” is also deemed as “any figure expected to introduce an era of eternal bliss, regardless of the terminology used in the source.”<sup>1068</sup> Our understanding of “Messiah” in this thesis is similar to what Gillingham argues for as a “one-for-all figure coming either and the end of time or heralding it”.<sup>1069</sup>

Similarly, the term, “eschatological,” can be best understood with Hoffman<sup>1070</sup> and Ladd’s definition. Hoffman posits three *prima facie* conditions for understanding “eschatological.” It is future, universal, and miraculous, and as a whole, concerned with the elements of “doom” (judgment) and “salvation.” Ladd argues, however, that it also has a present time aspect.<sup>1071</sup>

<sup>1068</sup> Messianic hope is also understood as “expectations of a definitive change in history which is not brought about by a particular deliverer.” This concept appears “in studies by historians of religion and by social anthropologists, who use them in discussions of developments in Western history and in other cultures.” Marinus de Jong, “Messiah,” *ABD*, 4:777–788, [777–78].

<sup>1069</sup> Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms,” 211. Elsewhere, she notes, “The broadest definition (upheld in different ways by Jews and Christians alike) is that the ‘Messianism’ is a general, idealized expression of hope for a new age of peace and justice—an age inaugurated by God himself, in order to restore his own ancient people, to be mediated through his chosen deliverer. The narrower definition (associated with a more particular Zionist expectation) is that it is about the national deliverance of Israel, involving the re-establishment of the Davidic monarchy, the reunification of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the return of the Diaspora Jews, the reconstitution of Jerusalem Temple worship, and the destruction of hostile Gentile powers.” “Messianic Prophecy and the Psalms,” *Theology* 99, no. 788 (1996): 114–24, [117].

<sup>1070</sup> Yair Hoffman, “Eschatology in the Book of Jeremiah,” in *Eschatology in the Bible and in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. Henning Reventlow; Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 75–97, [77].

<sup>1071</sup> This can be (a) “futuristic” in orientation; (b) present reality (“realized” or “existential”) or (c) both futuristic and present. C. H. Dodd’s “realized eschatology,” according to Ladd, “has to do not with the last things, temporally conceived, but with those things which possess finality and ultimacy of meaning. The kingdom of God does not mean the eschatological order at the end of history, but the eternally present realm of God. The coming of the kingdom means the entrance of the eternal into time, the confrontation of the finite by the infinite.” (See especially the first chapter of Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*.) Those who argue from a non-eschatological perspective interpret them as an “event in which God becomes unmediated presence, and the result is ‘the end of the world’: before them stands either salvation or judgment. They sustain a new relationship with both their past and the future, in this sense, time has come to an end.” George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2000), 17, 36.

For Ladd, the eschatological kingdom of God is “present” in history as long as the activity of the power of God is manifested within history.<sup>1072</sup>

I have included the brief definitions of “Messianic” and “eschatological” only at this point so that our proposition of the Messianic nature of the Psalter is not derived from these definitions. Consider the following points:

(1) There is a trajectory moving from an initial establishment of Israel’s kingship and temple (Books I), to its brokenness (Books II–III) and finally to salvation (Books IV–V) through the Psalter. The elements of “doom” and “salvation” are visible. The broken kingship and Zion-city-temple in Books II and III (“doom”) are restored at the end of the Psalter (“salvation”; 144:12–15; 147:2). In the final *Hallel*, the doom of the wicked and salvation of the *chasdīm* are also depicted.

(2) The distinctions between an earthly and idealized Davidic king are observed as we move across the DCs. The idealized Davidic figure is a kingly figure (anointed) whose rule is universal, transcendent and victorious. This idealized figure is presented as the “blameless” king-priest in the order of Melchizedek who rules from Zion. The miraculous/transcendent nature can also be seen in how he is both afflicted and vindicated at the same time.

<sup>1072</sup> If the eschatological kingdom of God is the manifestation of God’s power operative in that realm, then any manifestation of God’s power can also be understood as the presence of the kingdom of God itself. Therefore, Ladd adds that “if however, the kingdom is the reign of God, not merely in the human heart but dynamically active in the person of Jesus and in human history, then it becomes possible to understand how the kingdom of God can be present and future, inward and outward, spiritual and apocalyptic. For the redemptive royal activity of God could act decisively more than once and manifest itself powerfully in more than one way in accomplishing the divine end.” Ladd, *The Presence of the Future*, 42.

(3) The important Messianic character is the breaking in of the paradisiacal, just and peaceful era in and after Pss 144–145 by a Davidic king. Supplications give way to exaltation and praise after Ps 143. Israel is depicted in gladness and honor, executing universal punishment on the nations (149). This new era of bliss identifies a time when the afflicted Israel is no longer in distress.

(4) A trajectory of moving from the particular to the universal is increasingly seen (esp. Book V). At the end of the Psalter, all peoples are drawn towards the centrality of YHWH kingship in the Final *Hallel*. All kings, peoples and nations, young or old, and all that have breath are to praise YHWH at his sanctuary.

(5) Miraculous events at the cosmic level are depicted in the Final *Hallel*. Angels and the created realm above fulfil YHWH's word and praise him (147:15–18; 148:1–10). The sea monsters and the deep, likewise, praise him.

(6) The dilemma between the present/future aspects of time is also especially evident from DC-III to V. On one hand, the Messianic figure is depicted as one who exerts his power over his enemies ushering in the blissful era (144–145). On the other hand, this same idealized figure is also presented in history as the suffering petitioner and victorious ruler from Zion in Pss 101–103, 108–110. This present/future, afflicted yet transcendental characterization of the messianic king represents YHWH's operative power *both* in history and the *eschaton*.

In addition, our analysis corresponds well with Starling’s identification of “five elements of messianic hope.”<sup>1073</sup> The Royal Psalms cannot be read in isolation from each other and must be read in the context of the entire Psalter.<sup>1074</sup> “It does appear that the editors of the Psalter sought to direct their readers to a particular understanding of the future Davidic king by placing some of the kingship psalms in a very specific interpretive context.”<sup>1075</sup>

Therefore, we have shown that Messianic and eschatological elements are present in the Psalter when we adopt a macrostructural perspective across the five DCs. There is no need to preclude Messianic or eschatological expectations at the time of the final composition of the Psalter as Gillingham and others have argued.

The reason why a number of Psalms scholars have deemed the Psalter to be devoid of any Messianic and eschatological references is twofold: Royal Davidic psalms are studied as individual psalms (without a macrostructural appreciation) and there is an over-dependence on historical royal court-style parallels found in the ANE.

<sup>1073</sup> (1) The Messianic hope is a Davidic hope. It rests upon YHWH’s covenant with David; (2) The Messianic-Davidic hope represents the hope of Israel. The Davidic Covenant is also a “democratized” Covenant between YHWH and Israel; (3) The Messianic hope is a hope for the nations. All the ends of earth shall be blessed through this Messianic king; (4) The Messianic hope is a vindication of the righteous suffering Messiah, who represents the suffering poor, who will become the “godly.”; (5) The Messianic hope is the expression of the rule of YHWH. The rule of the Messiah is inseparable from the rule of YHWH. Starling, “The Messianic Hope in the Psalms,” 127–130.

<sup>1074</sup> For instance, if we isolate the genre of Royal psalms, and view Pss 101, 110 without considering Pss 102–103 and 108–109, we would have missed the important structural parallel as argued in this chapter. This is the problem with Saur’s work on the Royal Psalms. Saur argues that the Psalter is “*protomessianisch*.” His thesis is similar although we arrive at the conclusions independently and differently. See especially, Markus Saur, *Die Königspsalmen: Studien Zur Entstehung Und Theologie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004); “Die Theologische Funktion Der Königpsalmen Innerhalb Der Komposition Des Psalters,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. E. Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 689–700, [693–96].

<sup>1075</sup> Grant, “Kingship Psalms,” *DOTWPW*, 377.

This is not to say that Royal Davidic psalms could not have origins associated with the ANE parallels but in the final composition, the editor(s) of the Psalter had reprogrammed the understanding of kingship within the concept of the Davidic covenant, which is Messianic in thrust.

#### **4.8 THE FIVE-DAVIDIC COLLECTIONS IN THE HORIZON OF THE PSALTER**

Finally, to argue that the Psalter functioning with Messianic program which expounds, unfurls and realizes the entailments of the Davidic covenant, we need to further describe the five Davidic Collections within the entire Psalter. The following figure captures this:

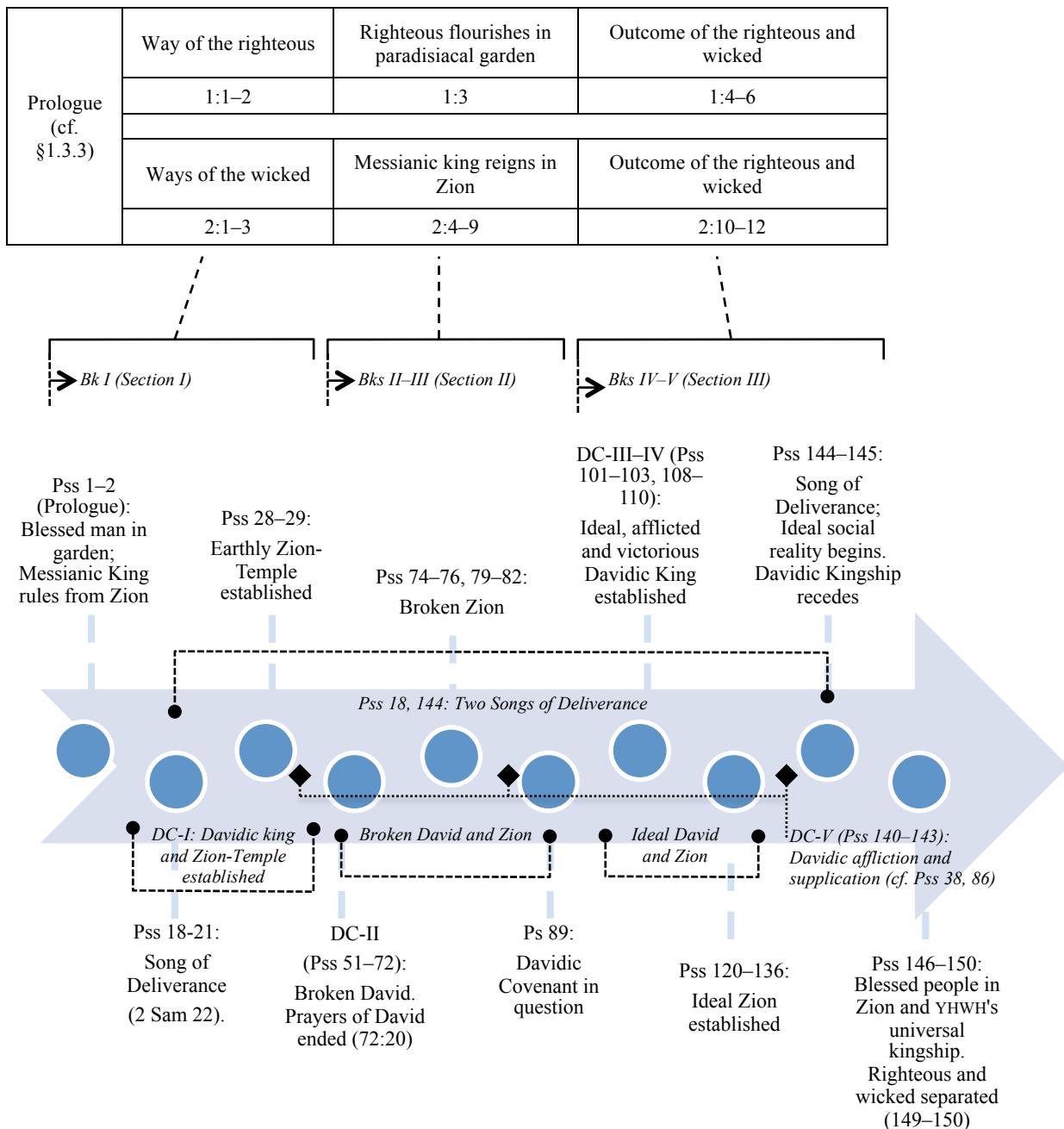


Figure 65: The Five Davidic Collections in the Horizon of the Psalter

In chapter one, the programmatic nature of the Prologue and the trajectory traced by the concentric and parallel triptychs of Pss 1 and 2 was established (§1.3.3; Figure 9). The first and last panes of Pss 1–2 characterize the *way* and *outcome* of the righteous and wicked respectively. At the center of both psalms, the *attributes* of the righteous and Messianic king are highlighted respectively. The concept of the Davidic covenant

(in particular 2 Sam 7), and how its motifs are placed at prominent locations in the Psalter have also been reviewed. Thematically, the Prologue which highlights the Torah-pious figure flourishing in the paradisiacal garden and the transcendental messianic king reigning over enemies is, in essence, a picture of the Davidic covenant. Through the rule of the Messianic king, the righteous will be blessed.

Structurally, the Prologue, as a triptych, parallels the entire Psalter, which is also a triptych in three Sections. Book I, the first pane of the Psalter (cf. first pane of Prologue), depicts the establishment of the Davidic kingship and Zion in the midst of opposition. This establishment is the central motif of DC-I. Books II–III, the center pane of the Psalter (cf. center pane of the Prologue), capture the broken Zion and Davidic king (DC-II), in vivid contrast with the Prologue which emphasizes a flourishing paradisiacal garden and transcendental king. Books IV–V, the third pane of the Psalter (cf. third pane of Prologue), depict the blessed outcome of the righteous at Zion and judgment of wicked at the end, through the establishment of an ideal king (DC-III–IV) and Zion.

The Songs of Deliverance in Pss 18 and 144 identify two strategic locations: the establishment of two Davidic kingships. The first can be viewed as the kingship of the human monarch and the second as the Messianic king who ushers in a final period of bliss. These two locations recall our discussion in §1.3.4.2 (Figure 11) that highlights two key references of David's victories over his enemies, in parallel with 2 Sam 7 and 22. Between these two locations, the storyline of kingship and Zion go through a depressing brokenness in Books II–III and a change of fortunes from Book IV onwards. The final DC-V emphasizes David's (and also the *chasidim*'s) patient supplication, an unchanging motif across the three Sections.

*Thus, the five Davidic Collections is a striking macro-design, skilfully and beautifully structured across the entire Psalter, unfurling the essence of the Davidic covenant in the Prologue. The Davidization of the Psalter provides the convergence of three (or four) identities and storylines—the monarch David, the Messianic king and the chasidim. The reader of the Psalms thus becomes the fourth story, who finds his or her own story merging into that of the chasidim and interfusing with the larger Metanarrative of YHWH's purposes.*

Before we conclude this chapter, let us reflect again on the plausibility of our interpretation from the perspective of the final editors or original readers. The structural design of the five Davidic Collections provides a clear parallel to the five-book structure of the Psalter and the Pentateuch. Such structural parallels are not difficult for readers to identify. If such macrostructural design was indeed intentional, why would the final editors choose to adopt such a shape? Scholars generally agree that the five-book structure was intended to lend canonical legitimacy to the Psalter.<sup>1076</sup> This intention would be fulfilled with the five-book structure of the Psalter but with the five Davidic Collections, there is an invitation for the reader to further connect and compare the twin Mosaic-Davidic figures. To be sure, the reader would be confronted with this comparison right at the beginning of the Psalter. Psalms 1 and 2 clearly contrast the motifs of Deuteronomic Torah piety and the messianic kingship. Our discussions on

<sup>1076</sup> Studying the formation of the Psalter, this was one of the main conclusions reached by David Willgren. David Willgren, *The Formation of the “Book” of Psalms: Reconsidering the Transmission and Canonization of Psalmody in Light of Material Culture and the Poetics of Anthologies* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016). See also my review on this book, Peter C. W. Ho, review of D. Willgren, *The Formation of the “Book” of Psalms*, *JESOT*: forthcoming.

Book IV collaborate with this parallel. The Mosaic Ps 90 and the entire Pss 90–92 form a series of three psalms associated with Moses.<sup>1077</sup> These three psalms form an inclusio with the Davidic Pss 101–103 around the YHWH *Malak* psalms at the center. The idealized kingly (and “blameless”) figure ruling with integrity in his house in Pss 101 invites comparison with Moses who is also faithful in God’s house (Heb 3:2–5). Since Ps 92 clearly alludes to the Song of Moses (cf. Deut 32), comparison between Moses and David as song leaders in Pss 92 and 103 is inevitable.

Jamie Grant’s study on Pss 1–2, 18–19 and 118–119 in *The King as Exemplar* elaborates on the Mosaic-Davidic juxtaposition. From the perspective of the readers, these parallels are stark and consistent across the Psalter. Why did the final editors of the Psalms undertake such juxtaposition? I suggest that the timely theological message that proceeds from the structural design of the Psalter is twofold: a exhortation and encouragement. The horrors of the exile, the demise of Israel’s kingship and the destruction of the temple as YHWH’s punishment of Israel’s covenantal unfaithfulness must be grasped and internalized (Amos 2). Such reflections are not uncommon in exilic and postexilic texts (cf. Mic 3; Ezek 22:6; Neh 9:34; 2 Chron 28:19). In other words, there is a theological exhortation to return to covenantal faithfulness.

At the same time, to reflect deeper on YHWH’s covenant with his people is to be encouraged with covenantal promises. Readers would recall that God would raise up a

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<sup>1077</sup> On this, see our discussions on pp. 236–239 and the work of David Gundersen, “Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90–106)” (Ph.D., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).

better prophet (Deut 18:18), priest (1 Sam 2:35) and king (2 Sam 7:12–13). God would also rebuild Jerusalem that was mired in ruins (Isa 44:26–28). Through a Righteous Branch, God will gather the scattered people of Israel and make them dwell securely (Jer 23:4–8; Jer 30:9–10). We have, at various junctures in the thesis, pointed out how messianic emphases in postexilic prophetic books (e.g., Micah and Zechariah) correspond to the messianic tendencies in the Psalter.<sup>1078</sup> Likewise, we have also discussed the messianic emphases present in the LXX Psalter. Messianic themes were also present in various Second Temple literature.<sup>1079</sup>

These texts cannot be separated from any serious reflections of Israel's future predicament in the postexilic period. Thus, the Psalter brings together two of the most important covenantal traditions of ancient Israel (Mosaic and Davidic) at a time when the experience of God's wrath for covenantal unfaithfulness (exile) was still raw and messianic hopes wanting.

In short, the message and theology arising from the juxtaposition of Moses and David, and integration of Torah piety and kingship in the Psalter is accomplished by skilful poetic structures and intertextual cognition. Our proposed overarching Metanarrative of the Psalter and democratization of the Davidic promises have a net effect consistent with the message we have proposed. Our reading of the Psalter shows

<sup>1078</sup> See esp. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*.

<sup>1079</sup> Wright identifies four different kinds of Second Temple literature with heightened messianic tones: Qumran texts [4Q174; 1QSa 2:11–21; 1QSb 5:23–29], Pseudepigrapha [*Psalm of Solomon* 17:21–32], historical texts [*Jewish War* 6.312–15], Apocryphal texts [*4 Ezra* 11–12]. N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 307–320.

that the final editors were sensitive to the theological and existential struggles of postexilic Israel readership and have crafted a coherent and significant message with poetical finesse to address these issues.

#### **4.9 SUMMARY**

- Precluding the proposition that Messianic and eschatological concepts are present at the time of the final composition of the Hebrew Psalter is unnecessary.
- DC-I focuses on the Davidic rule in YHWH's house. It is concerned with the establishment of human kingship and YHWH's house. This is supported by the POS of "head."
- DC-II marks the fall of the Davidic king. This can be shown by the specific and explicit accounts of David's enemies; design of the 13 historical Davidic superscriptions; motifs of an acceptable sacrifice to YHWH in association with the brokenness of David; and the postscript in Ps 72:20 in parallel with 2 Sam 23:1.
- The 13 historical superscriptions can be organized into two trajectories comprising of 3+1 references in DC-I and 8+1 references in DC-II and V. The first trajectory in DC-I traces the establishment of David's victorious rule. The second trajectory in DC-II traces the brokenness of David. Both trajectories end with the motif of Davidic supplications.
- DC-III marks a turning point in the characterization of David and presents a blameless king. DC-III has structural and thematic parallels with the triptychs Pss 90–92 and Pss 108–110 (DC-IV).

- DC-IV deepens the characterization of the Davidic figure. He is simultaneously condemned by wrongful accusations and vindicated to rule victoriously over the nations from Zion. He is also presented as the “new” Joshua who leads YHWH’s people into the garden of bliss.
- DC-V has a central focus on supplication and distress and is framed by motifs of YHWH’s kingship. The important theological message, based on a recurring final literary frame, is that distress and supplication characterize the Davidic community until the ideal social-reality is ushered in (Pss 144–145).
- The five Davidic Collections correspond well with the Metanarrative of the Psalter. These five DCs display the three dimensions of reading. First, they contain a central focus because of their concentric structures. Second, a linear trajectory can be traced across the five Collections. Third, these five Collections can be read alongside the Samuel narratives. As a whole, the Psalter has a Messianic and eschatological *telos*.
- The five DCs expound, unfurl and realize the entailments of the Davidic covenant crystallized in the Prologue.

## 5 NUMERICAL DEVICES, ALPHABETIC ACROSTICS OR COMPOSITIONS, AND SUPERSCRIPTIONS

*When read on their own as self-contained units, this theological context escapes the reader's attention. When read with an eye for unifying thematic arrangement, however, we can begin to see how the editors of this collection perceived its fragmentary elements to cohere within a greater theological reality that encompassed their own day and age, namely the divine economy.*<sup>1080</sup>

—Philip Sumpter

*The architecture that editors have given the Psalter is that of a book (רְבָב), adopting typically scribal techniques (such as alphabetical process).*<sup>1081</sup>

—Jean-Marie Auwers

*Once the function of the acrostic is understood, it can be seen as integral to the message of the psalm.*<sup>1082</sup>

—Reuven Kimelman

The foregoing analysis has made it clear that a number of techniques have been used to structure the entire Psalter into its major sections or collections. The Psalter can be read in a number of ways—tacit and implicit literary elements are used; thematic and formal devices are also employed. Macro or distant parallelism, concentricity and linear development of ideas can be identified and traced.

<sup>1080</sup> Philip E. Sumpter, “The Coherence of Psalms 15–24,” *Bib* 94.2 (2013): 186–209, [209].

<sup>1081</sup> “L'architecture que les éditeurs ont donnée au Psautier est bien celle d'un livre (רְבָב) et met en oeuvre des techniques typiquement scribes (comme le procédé alphabétique).” My translation. Auwers, “Le Psautier Comme Livre Biblique,” 87.

The most obvious formal devices in the macrostructure of the Psalter are book divisions and superscriptions. In the opening chapter, we have illustrated briefly how numerological devices and alphabetical thinking contribute to the literary structure of the Psalms. Specifically, we have discussed individual psalms such as Pss 1, 2, 25, 37, 119, 106 and 150. A key focus is the use of keyword(s) at the mathematical center of a psalm. This technique may work beyond (e.g., twin Pss 1–2) or within a psalm (e.g., *Aleph* and *Bet* stanzas of Ps 119). We have also seen how certain symbolic numbers (e.g., “7,” “12”) are associated with the POS technique.

We have previously noted the presence of extrabiblical Mesopotamian and Egyptian acrostics and poems that appropriate numerical sequences (pp. 72–76; e.g., the Babylonian theodicy; Prayer of *Nabu-ushebshi*; Hymn to the goddess Ishtar; Hymn to Amon), suggesting that Hebrew poets of the past were acquainted with such techniques. Moreover, the presence of epigraphic evidence of abecedary materials in ancient Israel (uncovered in Lachish, Arad, Kuntillat-Ajrud) also suggests the plausibility that ancient readers possessed such literary knowledge, though the prevalence of that knowledge cannot be easily ascertained.

Many of these acrostics embed cryptic messages within the poem, invoking deities or the identities of composers. The use of mezostics in the poem indicates that the structural form and content are often integrated to the overall meaning. Within Palestine, inscriptions unearthed have revealed that abecedaries, literary features such as anaphoras, inclusions, introductions and symbolisms in written works, were already

<sup>1082</sup> Reuven Kimelman, “Psalm 145: Theme, Structure, and Impact,” *JBL* 113, no. 1 (1994): 37–

widespread in the eight-century B.C.E. In particular, one of the earliest Hebrew poems (the Song of the Sea) contain techniques of centralizing YHWH’s kingship and a developing storyline integrated within a poem. Hence, we can assume that the final editors and readers of the Psalter would have been familiar with these techniques and rhetorical features.

In this chapter, I postulate that numerical devices, alphabetic acrostics, alphabetic compositions and superscriptions collaborate as formal macrostructuring devices in the entire MT Psalter. I argue that numerical techniques are used to structure individual psalms, denote alphabetical acrostics or compositions and codify headings in the Psalms. We will begin with numerical devices in the Psalms.

## **5.1 NUMERICAL DEVICES AND MATHEMATICAL CENTER (BAZAK, LABUSCHAGNE AND VAN DER LUGT)**

Jacob Bazak speaks of a certain poetic technique or device, termed “numerical structure,” in the biblical poetry that is “no longer in use today,” and can possibly “escape the eyes (or the ears) of a modern reader.”<sup>1083</sup> For Bazak, Labuschagne, van der

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58, [49].

<sup>1083</sup> Bazak also quotes Alastair Fowler who wrote in the foreword of *Silent Poetry: Essays in Numerological Analysis*, that “[n]umerological criticism analyses literary structures of various kinds, ordered by numerical symmetries or expressing number symbolisms. In poetry, numerological structure often forms a level of organization intermediate in scale and externality between metrical patterns on the one hand and structure as ordinarily understood on the other. As such, it constitutes a huge subject, perhaps even larger than most medieval and Renaissance scholars working today have begun to realize. It is probably no exaggeration to say that most good literary works—indeed, most craftsmanlike works—were organized at this stratum from antiquity until the eighteenth century at least. Moreover, numerological criticism is potentially a more fruitful subject than large-scale prosody, since it has more bearing on meaning, thematic content, structure and other adjacent strata.” Bazak, “Numerical Devices in Biblical Poetry,” 333; Fowler’s quote is also found in Casper Labuschagne, “Significant Compositional Techniques in the Psalms,” 585.

Lugt, David Mitchell and others,<sup>1084</sup> this technique emphasizes “a sentence which is of central importance by placing it in the numerical centre of the psalm, i.e., the beginning of that central sentence is a certain number of words from the opening of the psalm, while the end of the sentence is the same number of words from the end of the psalm.”<sup>1085</sup>

A common example cited is Psalm 23, where there are 26 words before the expression “for you are with me” (v. 4) and 26 words after. The number, 26, is also the numerical sum<sup>1086</sup> of the Tetragrammaton, thus infusing the text with a symbolic meaning.<sup>1087</sup> This numerical phenomenon is also found in Ps 92, where 52 (26x2) words flank both sides of the center expression, *וְאַתָּה מְרוֹם לְעֶלֶם יְהֹוָה* (92:9). Excluding the superscription, there are also 7 verses before and after this center expression. Furthermore, the name of God is repeated 7x and there are 7 “different epithets”

<sup>1084</sup> Casper Labuschagne, “Significant Compositional Techniques in the Psalms”; *Numerical Secrets of the Bible: Rediscovering the Bible Codes* (North Richland Hills: Bibal, 2000); See especially his “General Introduction to Logotechnical Analysis” 1–19 [cited 19 January 2016]. Online: <http://www.labuschagne.nl/aspects.pdf>; Pieter van der Lugt, “The Mathematical Centre and Its Meaning in the Psalms,” in *Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. Erich Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 643–51; Israel Knohl, “Sacred Architecture: The Numerical Dimensions of Biblical Poems,” *VT* 62, no. 2 (2012): 189–97; In one of the latest studies, David Mitchell highlights the use of the numbers “8,” “15,” “25,” “26,” “34” and “51” in the organization of the Songs of Ascents. Mitchell, *The Songs of Ascents*, 15–26.

<sup>1085</sup> Bazak, “Numerical Devices in Biblical Poetry,” 334.

<sup>1086</sup> Lubuschagne avoids the term, “*gematria*,” as it is “generally associated with kabbalistic speculations and the pseudo-science of numerology.” Labuschagne, “Significant Compositional Techniques in the Psalms,” 601.

<sup>1087</sup> Rand lists a number of examples supporting the use of the number 26 in the HB. He argues that “[t]he urge to include the name if only in veiled, arithmetical form stems from the Israelites’ need for constant reassurance of the presence of God. A central theme, repeated many times in the Pentateuch, is God’s promise, ‘and I will be with you,’ and a 7 numerical code was a deliberate art form used by the biblical writer to suggest the divine presence.” Herbert Rand, “Numerological Structure in Biblical Literature,” *JBQ* 20, no. 1 (1991): 50–56, [53].

assigned to the wicked and righteous respectively in Ps 92. Bazak argues that “[i]t is hardly possible that all these are mere coincidence; it would be more reasonable to conclude that numbers were of great significance to the poet.”<sup>1088</sup>

On many occasions, a *meaningful* or *rhetorical* center can also take the form of a central colon, verse, strophe or even canto. For instance, Labuschagne identifies the word עֶזֶר מְגֻנָם הֽוּא as the center word in Ps 115, with 66 words on each side.<sup>1089</sup> However, the *entire* colon (v. 9b), עֶזֶר מְגֻנָם הֽוּא (“he is their help and shield”), surrounded by 19 cola on both sides, functions as the meaningful center at the level of the colon. The entire strophe (vv. 9–11), likewise, functions as a middle strophe, framed by three strophes on either side.<sup>1090</sup> Hence, the “meaningful center” (by Labuschagne’s definition) of a psalm can be the arithmetical center word or the poetical central colon, verse, strophe or canto.

<sup>1088</sup> Bazak, “Numerical Devices in Biblical Poetry,” 335; see also Auwer’s comment on Bazak. Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 93–94.

<sup>1089</sup> Labuschagne “Psalm 115— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–5 [cited 1 March 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps115.pdf>; Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 265–66.

<sup>1090</sup> For instance, van der Lugt argues that the two verses in Ps 140:7–8 are the rhetorical center of the psalm. These two verses stand as the four center cola surrounded by 12 cola on each side (also the two verselines are enveloped by 6 verselines on either side). Labuschagne argues that the meaningful center of Ps 148 can be considered at the canto level (vv. 7–10). See van der Lugt, “The Mathematical Centre and Its Meaning in the Psalms,” 646; Labuschagne “Psalm 148— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–5 [cited 1 March 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps148.pdf>

Labuschagne names his technique “logotechnical quantitative structural analysis” (or “Logotechnique”<sup>1091</sup>) and argues that such analysis should be part of proper “literary analysis.”<sup>1092</sup> Besides the numbers 7 and 26, Labuschagne considers the numbers 10, 11

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<sup>1091</sup> According to Labuschagne, this term was coined by Claus Schedl who saw it as “the art of numerical composition,” “word-art,” “language-art” or “compositional art.” Labuschagne, *Numerical Secrets of the Bible*, 175; See also Schedl, *Baupläne des Wortes Einführung in die biblische Logotechnik*, 22.

<sup>1092</sup> Labuschagne argues that this kind of analysis “is in fact *numerical criticism*; [it] is not a separate discipline but a supplementary branch of *literary criticism*, of which the first and foremost task is to explore and describe the literary architecture of a given text.” Labuschagne, “Significant Compositional Techniques in the Psalms,” 587; Labuschagne, *Numerical Secrets of the Bible*, 2.

and 17 as significant text “structuring device.”<sup>1093</sup> Other numbers such as 13, 14, 15, 43, 55 and 100 are also considered important.<sup>1094</sup>

Pieter van der Lugt is another scholar who places an emphasis on the center of a text based on quantitative analysis.<sup>1095</sup> His magnum opus, the three-volume *Cantos and Strophes in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, is an extensive study of the higher poetical text structure incorporated with quantitative analysis.<sup>1096</sup> He argues that when “the focal idea of a composition is highlighted by one or more formal features—say, by a quantitative phenomenon—[it is designated as] the *rhetorical center*.<sup>1097</sup> However, he does not

<sup>1093</sup> The number “7” expresses “fullness, completeness, abundance and the maximum,” and “imitates the shape of the Menorah”; “11,” the sum of 7 and 4, and is a number of “fulfilment”. “17” and “26” are related to the divine name. The “[s]um of positional values is “Y(10) + H(5) + W(6) + H(5) = 26”; and the sum of their digit values “Y(1+0) + H(5) + W(6) + H(5) = 17.” The word, “glory” (כָּבֵד), also adds up to 17 (11+2+4) or 26 (20+2+4) as *kaph* can represent 11 or 20. The significance of this is that these two numbers “signify not only the name but the glory of God” (cf. Exod 33:17–23). Interestingly, Labuschagne considers the numbers “12” and “40,” while occurring frequently in the Bible, not “text structuring numbers.” “55” is the “triangular number of 10 or the sum of the numbers of 1 through 10.” The word, “glory,” can also be written as כָּבֵד, and in this case, is represented by the numbers 23 (11+2+6+4) and 32 (20+2+6+4) which add up to 55. Labuschagne, “Significant Compositional Techniques in the Psalms,” 586; For more information on the use of significant numbers in both the OT and NT, see Labuschagne, *Numerical Secrets of the Bible*, 22–40, 57–67, 69–73, 82–83, 89–91.

<sup>1094</sup> The number “13” is the sum of יְהֹוָה (1+8+4=13) which indicates “YHWH who is יְהֹוָה one”; “14” is the sum of דָּוִיד “David” (4+6+4); “40” is used frequently in the Bible; “15” is the sum of יְהֹ “Yah” (10+5); “43” is 17+26 (the number of YHWH’s name); “100” is also the “number of completeness, perfection and full measure.” Koorevaar, “The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story,” 583, 587; Mitchell, *The Songs of Ascents*, 17.

<sup>1095</sup> Van der Lugt, “The Mathematical Centre and Its Meaning in the Psalms,” 643–45; *CAS II*, 505–551.

<sup>1096</sup> Peter C. W. Ho, review of P. van der Lugt, *Cantos and Strophes in Biblical Hebrew Poetry III Psalms 90-150 and Psalm 1*, *JESOT* 5.1 (2016): 89–91.

<sup>1097</sup> Pieter van der Lugt calls such a center identified quantitatively, a “rhetorical center” while Labuschagne calls it “meaningful center.” Although the terms used by them are different, their method of counting is generally identical. For a comparison of “meaningful center” and “rhetorical center” of individual psalms between these two scholars, see Appendix A. While the centers identified by them are very similar, individual nuances, however, come from their delineations of poetical units (such as colon, verselines, strophes and cantos). They may differ in the pairing of certain psalms and addressing textual issues. Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 506.

limit the search for a rhetorical center based on only quantitative means. He studies verbal repetitions, which even includes conjoined prepositions, conjunction and suffixes, and undertakes an extensive review of how these repetitions occur at the strophe, canto and entire compositional levels. The manner which repetitions recur often collaborates with his strophic structures and highlights the poem's rhetorical center. In comparison, van der Lugt gives more room for thematic discussions in the analysis of each psalm than Labuschagne.

The following points summarize the methodologies adopted by Labuschagne and van der Lugt in identifying a meaningful/rhetorical center in a text. (1) Their work is based on a synchronic analysis of the Codex L, while allowing for text-critical operations when strong evidence for emendation avails.<sup>1098</sup> (2) Words, cola, verselines, strophes, cantos and divine names in each psalm are counted. Superscriptions and words such as *hallelujah* (as a header or coda), *selah* and doxologies (e.g., 106:48) are *not* counted.<sup>1099</sup> (3) Words joined by *maqqep* are counted separately. (4) Meaningful/rhetorical centers are often “enveloped by an equal number of words on either side.”<sup>1100</sup> The smallest unit of such centers is usually a colon, though they can occur as verseline, strophe or even canto. (5) The identified center is deemed

<sup>1098</sup> Labuschagne's approach is “strictly synchronic” while van der Lugt's is not. Van der Lugt is more open to text-critical operations. Cf. Labuschagne, “General Introduction to Logotechnical Analysis,” 9; van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 12.

<sup>1099</sup> For Labuschagne and van der Lugt, the smallest meaningful building block is the word. As such, syllables are not counted (contra Fokkelman and Freedman). Note that the header, *hodu* (e.g., 136:1) is counted. There is no apparently strict consensus on what constitutes headers. Van der Lugt notes that Fokkelmann counts *hallelujah* in Ps 146:1. *CAS III*, 544; “Psalm 104— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–9 [cited 21 February 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps104.pdf>.

<sup>1100</sup> Van der Lugt, “The Mathematical Centre and Its Meaning in the Psalms,” 643.

meaningful/rhetorical when it highlights a succinct theme or message, and word counts (either the number of words at the center or the enveloping words) are associated with divine name numbers (e.g., 7, 17, 26).<sup>1101</sup> When these conditions are met, the centers are deemed as indicative of intentional design. (6) When the divine name (including אָדָנִי and אֱלֹהִים) occurs with unusual frequency<sup>1102</sup> or at pivotal locations (e.g., 39:8; 13:4), they also indicate a certain rhetorical center.<sup>1103</sup> (7) Rhetorical centers can also be detected by sudden shifts from the second person speech to the third or by the personal pronoun, אַתָּה, used in addressing God. (8) The numerical compositional technique can be used as a “criterion to check the correctness of [the] delimitation of literary units”<sup>1104</sup> or to uncover the latent key message of the psalm.

While I find their work intriguing and detailed, three concerns deserve attention. First, when a meaningful/rhetorical center of a poem is considered beyond the level of a single word or pair of words, the degree of freedom in identifying it as a center increases. For instance, in Psalm 139, the single center word is בָּטָן (“in the womb”; v. 13). This word, in itself, is not exactly meaningful but by expanding the number of

<sup>1101</sup> For Labuschagne, “In order to qualify as meaningful, an apparently suitable centre has to consist of a key-word or a phrase expressing a thought or idea that can be interpreted as crucial or essential from the perspective of the author.” Labuschagne, “Significant Compositional Techniques in the Psalms,” 596; For examples on how some of these numbers function in identifying the numerical center of a psalm, see *CAS II*, 526–36.

<sup>1102</sup> See the examples of Pss 8, 23, 39, 125 and 131 in van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 514–15.

<sup>1103</sup> At other times, the center may contain the only symmetric verseline in the poem. See van der Lugt’s treatment of Pss 74, 58 and 79 in “The Mathematical Centre and Its Meaning in the Psalms,” 647–48.

<sup>1104</sup> Pieter van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism & the Poetry of the Book of Job* (OTS 32; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 536.

words to the colon level, we arrive at the entire 139:13b (“You wove me in my mother’s womb”) However, this colon is neither at the center by word-count nor by colon-count. It is possible, nonetheless, to add one colon *before* and two colas *after* to form a larger four-cola meaningful center (139:13a–14b). Yet stopping at Ps 139:14b is somewhat incomplete, so, Labuschagne argues that the entire Ps 139:13–4 (5 colas) is the meaningful center, at the strophe level!<sup>1105</sup> Labuschagne explains,

It stands to reason that every psalm has a pivot: 2 middle words in an even number and 1 in an odd number. Such a centre is not necessarily deliberately designed or meaningful. Therefore, taking this centre as starting point, one has to proceed to detect a larger centre that is meaningful and presumably intended as such, either on word level or in terms of the rhetorical structure: the pivotal colon(s), verseline(s), or strophe.<sup>1106</sup>

In other words, there is flexibility to move from the word or colon level to higher level units such as the verse, strophe and beyond. At this point, the identified meaningful center is not necessarily centralized by equal word-counts on both sides but by poetical units, which is a more fluid definition.

<sup>1105</sup> Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 482–82; Labuschagne “Psalm 139— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–6 [cited 1 March 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps139.pdf>. Another example is Ps 110. At the word level, the meaningful center, אַל (“and not”), does not work. The entire colon in 110:4a, while meaningful, is not the central colon. As the search expands, the two verselines of six colas (110:3–4) form the meaningful center of the psalm. In this analysis, Labuschagne also identifies eight poetical verselines (van der Lugt counts seven) and 18 colas from seven Masoretic verses. Furthermore, Labuschagne and van der Lugt do not always agree on how poetical units (such as verses or strophes, e.g. Ps 110) are delimited in each psalm. The possibility of changing poetical units (e.g., verselines or strophes) to expand the search for a meaningful center somewhat dilutes the mathematical precision. See also Labuschagne “Psalm 110— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–5 [cited 1 March 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps110.pdf>

<sup>1106</sup>Labuschagne, “Significant Compositional Techniques in the Psalms,” 595–96.

Second, textual emendations and various “exceptions” are often raised. In several instances, Labuschagne notes that the meaningful centers of a number of psalms<sup>1107</sup> are designed to be read *with* the superscriptions. He admits,

[i]f we include the 3-word heading [in Ps 20] and the word selah (v. 4b), the arithmetic centre of the 70 words of the entire text ( $70 = 33 + 4 + 33$ ) appears to coincide exactly with the meaningful centre. This leads to the conclusion, in my opinion, that the editor has consciously chosen a 3-word heading and one selah precisely for this purpose.<sup>1108</sup>

The phrase, בְּלֹא מִים, occurring in Pss 44:15, 57:10, 108:4 and 149:7 is also counted differently. In the first three instances, the *maqqep* plays a role and the entire phrase is counted as a single word whereas the last instance (149:7) is counted as two words.<sup>1109</sup> Hence, these inconsistencies must be considered.

A third issue relates to the integration of structural form and thematic content of the psalm. In both their works, Labuschagne and van der Lugt focus primarily on quantitative analyses and formal devices to account for poetical structures. Thematic development or semantic content in the psalm of concern is often discussed secondarily. This is unavoidable as their methodologies require a focus on the form.<sup>1110</sup>

<sup>1107</sup> E.g., Pss 15, 20, 21, 26, 35, 41, 66, 67.

<sup>1108</sup> Labuschagne “Psalm 20— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–3 [cited 1 March 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps020.pdf>

<sup>1109</sup> Observation 1 in Labuschagne “Psalm 44— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–5 [cited 1 March 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps044.pdf>; The difficulty of this phrase has been treated by Gianni Barbiero and Marco Pavan, “Pss 44,15; 57,10; 108,4; 149,7: בְּלֹא מִים or בְּלֹא מִם?,” *ZAW* 124, no. 4 (2012): 598–605.

<sup>1110</sup> Both Labuschagne and van der Lugt note that the quantitative methodology has not found widespread acceptance among biblical scholars at this time. Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 527.

### 5.1.1 NUMERICAL DEVICES BEYOND A SINGLE PSALM

Most quantitative analyses of the Psalms (including D. Freedman and Fokkelman's work on syllable counts<sup>1111</sup>) are limited to the level of a single, or rarely, a pair of psalms.<sup>1112</sup> To my knowledge, apart from Labuschagne, few have applied these numerical structuring techniques to the entire Psalter.<sup>1113</sup> Cited by Auwers, Ramon Ribera-Mariné provides an interesting collaboration.<sup>1114</sup> He counts not just words, but the individual psalms, and finds that between Pss 2 and 89 (both kingship psalms), stands Ps 45 (kingship psalm), and that Pss 18 and 72 (both kingship psalms) are located symmetrically around Ps 45.<sup>1115</sup> It is plausible that the Psalter is structured with careful numerical considerations associated with the kingship motif.

Labuschagne argues that “composers/editors used **7** and **11**<sup>1116</sup> as compositional tools to delimit the sub-groups within the five books. . . [and] they *finalized/canonized* the sub-groups and the books with minute care by means of a specific number of

<sup>1111</sup> Freedman, “Acrostics and Metrics in Hebrew Poetry,” 367–92; “Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy : An Essay on Biblical Poetry,” *JBL* 96, no. 1 (1977): 5–26; “Acrostic Poems in the Hebrew Bible : Alphabetic and Otherwise,” *CBQ* 48, no. 3 (1986): 408–31; Fokkelman, *MPHB* series (4 vols.).

<sup>1112</sup> Van der Lugt applied the technique to the Songs of Ascents in *CAS III* (pp. 422–440). However, most of his structural arguments for this collection come from verbal rather than quantitative analyses.

<sup>1113</sup> Koorevaar is another scholar who has applied Logotechnique to understand the structuring of the Psalter. His analysis, in the form of a Book section, is too brief. Koorevaar, “The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story with the Aid of Subscripts and Superscripts,” 579–92.

<sup>1114</sup> Ribera-Mariné, “‘El Llibre de les Lloances’,” 1–19.

<sup>1115</sup> Auwers, *La Composition Littéraire Du Psautier*, 95.

<sup>1116</sup> He argues that “[b]eing odd numbers, **7** and **11** have the advantage of having a *pivot* and the ability to make the *middle* a strong focus of attention. This enabled the editors/composer to give pride of place to a key-psalm at the mathematical centre of the sub-group in question.” Labuschagne, “Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms,” 624.

verselines, which are determined by the numbers **17** and **26**, the numerical values of the name YHWH.”<sup>1117</sup> Based on these numerical devices, Labuschagne structures the entire Psalter as such:

<b>Book I</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2–8</b>	<b>9–18</b>		<b>19–29</b>	<b>30–31</b>	<b>32–41</b>
# of psalms	1	7	9 (Pss 9–10 as one psalm)		11	2 (T)	11 (Ps 40 as two separate psalms)
<b>Book II</b>	<b>42–49</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>51–57</b>	<b>58–64</b>	<b>65–71</b>	<b>72</b>
# of psalms	7 (42–43 as one psalm)		1 (T)	7	7	7	1
<b>Book III</b>	<b>73–83</b>		<b>84–89</b>				
# of psalms	11		6 (“mixed” psalms)				
<b>Book IV</b>	<b>90–100</b>		<b>101–106</b>				
# of psalms	11		6				
<b>Book V</b>	<b>107–117</b>		<b>118–119</b>	<b>120–126</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>128–134</b>	<b>135–145</b>
# of psalms	11		1 (T)		15		11
							5

Figure 66: Labuschagne’s Structure of the Psalter based on Numbers “7” and “11”

The use of structuring numbers, 7 and 11, is clear.<sup>1118</sup> Labuschagne argues that Pss 9–10 must be seen as a “single composition”<sup>1119</sup> and that Pss 30–31, 50, and 72 are “transition psalms” (“T”) which do not belong to any subgroup. At the end of Book I, Pss 32–41 form a group of “ten or eleven” psalms so Ps 40 can either be seen as a single psalm or two separate psalms (i.e., 40:2–13, 14–18). In Book II, there are four groups of

<sup>1117</sup> Emphasis his. Labuschagne, “Significant Compositional Techniques in the Psalms,” 588–89; “Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms,” 624.

<sup>1118</sup> The table is drawn based on my reading of Labuschagne, “Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms,” 623–34. An expanded version, where he included a “one-time” Psalter structure and its formation, is found on Labuschagne’s website. Labuschagne, “The Compositional Structure of the Psalter: A New Approach,” 1–29 [cited 29 January 2016]. Online: <http://www.labuschagne.nl/psalterstructure.pdf>.

<sup>1119</sup> Labuschagne, “Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms,” 625; “Psalm 9–10—Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–9 [cited 1 February 2016]. Online: <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps009-10.pdf>.

7 psalms (42–49, 51–57, 58–64, 65–71) and two standalone psalms (50, 72).<sup>1120</sup> Divine name numbers (“17,” “26”) and their multiples play an important role as well.<sup>1121</sup> The 17 psalms in Book III are formed by 374 (22x17) verselines. Book IV, likewise, consists of 17 psalms with a total of 338 (13x26) verselines. Labuschagne concludes that these two Books are “sealed in terms of their verselines by a divine name number.”<sup>1122</sup> Book V is structured first with a group of 11 psalms (107–117), followed by two transition psalms (118–119), the SOA, and concluded by eleven Davidic psalms (135–145).

Labuschagne’s work on the Psalter’s structure based on the numbers 7, 11 and 26 is intriguing and deserves further attention. The strength of his argument lies in the precise recurrences of these numbers. Nonetheless, there are several concerns that weaken his method. (a) The absence of absolute consistency in the numerical devices used creates a dilemma. The numbers 7 and 11 are not the only numbers used for the structuring of the Psalter.<sup>1123</sup> Labuschagne also admits that not all “subgroups” are finalized/canonized with verselines that are factors of 17 or 26. The issue is that the

<sup>1120</sup> Labuschagne considers Pss 42 and 43 as a single composition. Labuschagne’s argument for considering Pss 42–43 as a single psalm is based on “several other manuscripts” which is not specified in the references below. His primary argument is that Pss 42–43 consist of “three refrains as a demarcating device (42:6, 12, and 43:5)” in the two psalms and a total of 187 (11x17) words. Labuschagne, “Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms,” 628; “Psalm 42-43— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–4 [cited 1 February 2016]. Online: <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps042-43.pdf>.

<sup>1121</sup> Considering only Davidic psalms in Book II, Labuschagne counts 289 (17x17) verselines in 18 Davidic psalms (51–65, 68–70). Including the non-Davidic psalms (Pss 66, 67, 71), Pss 51–71 consist of 340 (20x17) verselines. Together with Pss 42–49 (excluding Pss 50 and 72), the entire Book II consists of 459 (25x17) verselines. Labuschagne, “Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms,” 628–29.

<sup>1122</sup> Labuschagne, “Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms,” 631.

<sup>1123</sup> For instance, groups of five (146–150), six (84–89, 101–106), nine (9–18), ten (32–41) and fifteen (120–134) psalms are compositional units.

attestation of partial data<sup>1124</sup> works against a totalizing claim on the Psalter's structure with Logotechnique. In fact, Labuschagne also admits, “[a] conspicuous group of precisely 7 or 11 psalms is indeed a first (and important!) indication of a distinct grouping, but it needs to be underscored by thematic features and factors indicating coherence and unity.”<sup>1125</sup> However, it remains unclear how different compositional units relate to each other thematically, and how “transitional psalms,” as he has conveniently designated, function to transit from a certain theme in one unit to another.<sup>1126</sup> Labuschagne has not also shown in detail how thematic contents collaborate with the Logotechnique in the structuring of the Psalter.

How can we reconcile the discrepancies between a structure based on numerical devices and an alternate structure based on thematic and literary evidence in the text?<sup>1127</sup> While I agree with Labuschagne and van der Lugt that evidence of numerical devices cannot be simply dismissed, neither can thematic structure. Should not form and content cohere? Inherent in the numerical technique is the element of extreme precision. It is this precision that lends the argument legitimacy. Yet, it is the same precision that renders non-conforming data problematic. Notwithstanding the possibilities of

<sup>1124</sup> Besides exceptions that are not supported with clear qualifications.

<sup>1125</sup> Emphasis his. Labuschagne, “Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms,” 625.

<sup>1126</sup> For more critique on Labuschagne’s Logotechnical analysis, see Philip R. Davies and David M. Gunn, “Pentateuchal Patterns : An Examination of C. J. Labuschagne’s Theory,” *VT* 34, no. 4 (1984): 399–406.

<sup>1127</sup> For instance, Psalms 1 and 2, 111–117 can be seen as compositional units because of literary features such as the absence of superscriptions (Pss 1–2); lexical framing devices (e.g., יְשָׁאֵב in Ps 1:1; 2:12); the use of *hallelujah* lexemes (in Pss 111–117). It is important to consider content with its form. Cf. Zenger, “The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107–145,” 91–92;

transmission and textual errors, why do the final editor(s) go to great lengths to render such precision in the composition of the psalms and yet leave various blatant non-conforming exceptions in the numerical organization of psalms?<sup>1128</sup> These questions may never be answered with certainty, but they point out inconvenient gaps that remain in the quantitative analysis of texts. In short, how do we maintain a high view of the Codex L as the text that provides the numerical precision to certain textual unit-counts while at the same time, understand the inconsistencies?

(b) Regrettably, Labuschagne does not regard the superscriptions of the Psalms as playing a key structuring role in the Psalter.<sup>1129</sup> Labuschagne gives the numerical method priority over the superscriptions in the Psalter's structure. For instance, he structures the Psalter across different superscript categories (e.g., Ps 2–8, 107–117) based on numerical considerations. However, Labuschagne also uses the superscriptions as a structuring device at other times (e.g., the Korahite psalms; Asaphite psalms; SOA; Davidic psalms). Psalms 135–137 are not Davidic psalms but are grouped as such. The dilemma of having the numerical method and superscriptions as competing structuring devices has not been adequately resolved by Labuschagne.

Zakovitch, “The Interpretative Significance of the Sequence of Psalms 111-112. 113-118.119,” 215–27; Cole, “An Integrated Reading of Psalms 1 and 2,” 75–88.

<sup>1128</sup> For instance, the combination of Pss 9–10 as one psalm and separation of Ps 40 as two psalms may be plausible based on poetic, mathematical or thematic elements. They are also attested by extant manuscripts. However, these postulations are clearly not rendered by the editor(s) of L, on which Labuschagne based his calculations heavily on. It is also unclear if those manuscripts which Labuschagne alludes to consist of the same numerical structuring or verseline “finalizing” pattern.

<sup>1129</sup> Craigie noted, “the titles identify certain psalms in relation to particular persons or according to particular types and thus may be indicative of early collections of psalms, prior to the formation of the Psalter as a whole” (Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 28). In the Logotechnical analysis of individual psalms,

Nevertheless, Labuschagne and van der Lugt have forefronted the concepts of the numerical method and raised the concept of a meaningful/rhetorical center of a psalm. In view of the numerical analyses of Pss 1, 2 and 119 in the first chapter, we will further explore whether the numerical method collaborates with our thesis.

### 5.1.2 AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF COUNTING

To do so, I have explored a different method of word counting. First, I count words joined by *maqqep* as a single word. From the perspective of accentuation, “words joint by *maqqef* are considered as a single unit.”<sup>1130</sup> In the study of the Masorah, Yeivin summarized three main principles for the use of *maqqep*<sup>1131</sup> and determined that linguistic and musical reasons are two basic reasons for its usage. Yet he acknowledged that “[i]n some cases, however, the linguistic and musical phenomena do not correspond.”<sup>1132</sup> Barbiero concurs with this difficulty. He notes that while “the *maqqep*

Labuschagne includes word count of the texts with and without the headings of the Psalms. Unless stated otherwise, word counts or verseline-counts presented in his arguments do not include the headings.

<sup>1130</sup> Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, 232.

<sup>1131</sup> Yeivin noted that the use of the *maqqep* is: (1) to avoid “two main stress syllables one after the other”; (2) often used on short words which are treated as “enclitic”; (3) for “economy of accents.” Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah* (trans. E. J. Revell; Missoula, Mont.: SBL, 1980), 230–31.

<sup>1132</sup> For instance, Yeivin noted, “*holem* is usually replaced by *qameṣ* before *maqqef*, as in Ex 21:11 וְאַמְ-שָׁלַשׁ-אַלְהָ שִׁיר (where two stress syllables would come together but for the *maqqef*). In Jos 21:33 שִׁיר שְׁלֵשׁ-עֲשֶׂרֶת (where two stress syllables would not come together) *holem* is retained, despite the use of *maqqef*. Here it can be said that *maqqef* is used for musical reasons, but the linguistic situation does not require it.” However, on accentuation (musical reasons), Yeivin conceded that “on the one hand *maqqef* is often omitted from a word which has no accent [which it should be present], . . . but on the other, *maqqef* may be used on a word which has a conjunctive accent.” The complexity of its function is further multiplied by its proliferation (more than 50,000 occurrences of *maqqep* in the HB) with different traditions in the use of *maqqep*. Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, 23, 232–34 [see pp. 229–36 for his complete treatment on *maqqep*].

customarily signals a link between two lexemes that are *distinct* in themselves but *united* with regard to the tonic accent,”<sup>1133</sup> this is not always the case. He cites that the phrase<sup>1134</sup> בְּלֹא מִים in the MT is attested in the Aleppo Codex as (without the *maqqep*). In his phonetic analysis of this phrase, he notes not just the difficulty of the scansion argument for *maqqep*, but questions if the *maqqep* has a different function:

[T]he hypothesis that the maqqep was to be read as an »aid to the reading«, this would create some difficulties: indeed, the expression which results from this reading would have to be read as united although it was, in fact, »divided«. How else can the reader account for the different function of the maqqep?”<sup>1135</sup>

In other words, while the function of *maqqep* can be explained by scansion principles in most cases, its full function in the MT Psalter remains inconclusive.

Second, I have included all superscriptions, postscripts, doxologies (e.g., *hallelujah*) and the word, *selah*, in the word-count. Their presences have been attested from antiquity and from our study of superscriptions earlier, we conclude that they are careful compositions displaying numerical techniques and collaborating well with the Metanarrative of the Psalter.

Third, I have restrained from making any emendation to the texts. By leaving the L intact, we obtain a single snapshot of the MT in the L Codex as it is.<sup>1136</sup> This is to

<sup>1133</sup> Barbiero and Pavan, “Pss 44,15; 57,10; 108,4; 149,7: בְּלֹא מִים or בְּלֹא מִים?,” 601.

<sup>1134</sup> Pss 44:15, 57:10, 108:4; 149:7.

<sup>1135</sup> Barbiero and Pavan, “Pss 44,15; 57,10; 108,4; 149,7: בְּלֹא מִים or בְּלֹא מִים?,” 601.

<sup>1136</sup> This is not to say that I am not open to text critical issues where evidence is presented. As Maloney notes, “[i]n many cases we have seen that a more plausible explanation for a difficult reading is found to be putatively poetic and artistic. That is, the poetic contribution of the difficult reading is

prevent premature textual diagnosis when the design of the Psalter has not been understood.

Fourth, I list the result of my count in a terse form, which may consist of one or two words (the mathematical center for odd or even counts) and define it as “nexusword.”<sup>1137</sup> I may fill out the complete colon or beyond (in parenthesis) to get a fuller sense of the nexusword. I agree with Labuschagne that these words at the center could have been used to succinctly highlight an important theme or message for the entire psalm.

The method I have used to count words would theoretically alter the word count of the text in L significantly, in comparison to Labuschagne and van der Lugt’s work.<sup>1138</sup> However, by comparing my results with these two scholars’, I have found that more than 67% of the nexuswords in Books I–III correspond to either or both their identified meaningful/rhetorical centers. When Books IV and V are compared, it is surprising that more than 95% of the nexuswords that I have found are aligned with either or both their counts. Appendix A records my findings compared with theirs. In the following, I will briefly demonstrate my word count using three psalms that we have already encountered.

motivation to keep the Masoretes’ text and to reject suggested emendations—especially those emendations that have no textual support from other ancient witnesses.” Maloney, “A Word Fitly Spoken,” 183–86.

<sup>1137</sup> “Nexus” is a noun that can mean: (a) a connection; (b) a connected group; (b) center. “Nexusword,” therefore, refers to word(s) at the center of a psalm text, which are connected in some way to other nexuswords across psalms.

<sup>1138</sup> I have written a macro in MS Excel to count the words of every psalm electronically. These word counts are subsequently manually checked against the *BHS*.

In Ps 23, I count 50 words and the nexusword is the phrase, “**כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי**” (“for you are with me”), which are the exact words Bazak, Labuschagne and van der Lugt have identified. This nexusword is framed by 24 words on both sides. In Ps 92, the word count is 100 and the nexusword is **מָרוֹם לְעֵלֶם** (“on high forever”). This nexusword is at the center of the entire verse of four words, **וְאַתָּה מָרוֹם לְעֵלֶם יְהוָה**,<sup>1139</sup> which Labuschagne and van der Lugt consider as the psalm’s meaningful/rhetorical center. By extending one word on each side, I arrive at the same four words, surrounded by 48 words. They remain as the mathematical center of the psalm.

In Ps 115, the word-count is 118 and the nexusword (59<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup>) is **עֲזָרָם וּמְגַנֵּם** (“[He is] their help and shield”). These two words also correspond to their count at the colon level. In these three psalms, we arrive at the same centers with two very different counting methods.

Moreover, it is possible that the alphabetical techniques at work in Pss 1–2 are featured in Ps 119. The first *two* lines (not just the first) of Ps 119 begin with **אֲשֶׁרִי**, recalling the two **אֲשֶׁרִי** in Pss 1:1 and 2:12. **אֲשֶׁרִי** occurs nowhere else in Ps 119. The last word of Ps 119 also ends with the consonant **ת**.<sup>1140</sup>

This last word of Ps 119 (**שָׁבַח**; “forget, ignore or wither”) is a “terminative” word.<sup>1141</sup> Interestingly, the **לֹא שָׁבַחֲתִי** in Ps 119:176 is found at the last colon of the **ב**

<sup>1139</sup> Note the chiastic structure of these four words. The first and the last identify the subject (that is, YHWH), and the two center words describe him.

<sup>1140</sup> Without counting the final vowel in **שָׁבַחֲתִי**.

<sup>1141</sup> Barré, “‘Terminative’ Terms in Hebrew Acrostics,” 207–15.

stanza (119:16).<sup>1142</sup> The last colon of the *aleph* stanza is also another terminative word (*עִזָּב*; “to forsake” 119:8). Terminative words occur at the end of Ps 1:6 and in the last verse of Ps 2:12 (*אֶבְדֹּל*). Hence, the use of *אֲשֶׁר* at the opening lines, terminative words at the end of Pss 1 and 2, and at the end of the first two stanzas of Ps 119,<sup>1143</sup> help us to observe the parallels between these psalms.

The *aleph* stanza of Ps 119 has 39 words. At the center is *מֹנְדָה* (“muchness”) occurring as the last word of Ps 119:4.<sup>1144</sup> When we count the words of the *beth* stanza (38 words), and the sum of words in both the *aleph* and *beth* stanzas (77 words), we have: (a) *לְמַדֵּנִי* (“teach me”; the 19<sup>th</sup> word) as the center in *beth* stanza, beginning with *ל*, emphasizing its middle position; (b) and *עַד-מֹנְדָה* (“utterly,” the 39<sup>th</sup> word) as the center of both the *aleph* and *beth* stanzas. *מֹנְדָה* also occurs as the last word of the *aleph* stanza. *מֹנְדָה* also marks the division between the *aleph* and *beth* stanzas. The 39<sup>th</sup> word, when both *aleph* and *beth* stanzas are combined, is also the numerical figure of the total words in *aleph* (39 words). In other words, both *aleph* and *beth* are skilfully connected with the techniques of lexeme repetition, centering and word count.

The motifs, of “teach me” (*beth*) and the double “muchness” (*aleph*), provide the overarching focus of Ps 119. Furthermore, our earlier discussions on the verb *אָלַא*,

<sup>1142</sup> This is also found at the end of other colon junctures (cf. Ps 119:61, 83, 93, 109, 141, 153) with the exception of 119:93.

<sup>1143</sup> William Soll notes, “[t]he aleph and beth strophes function as a prologue; complaints and more general petitions for the psalmist’s condition do not occur until the Gimel strophe.” Soll, *Psalm 119: Matrix, Form, and Setting*, 90.

<sup>1144</sup> Note how this word disrupts rhyme at the end of Ps 119:2–3, 5–7.

which means “to teach,” “to learn” or “to increase,” depending on the stem, coincide neatly with the meaning of לִמְדָה. Thus we have at least four convergences from the above analysis: (a) the meaning of לִמְדָה, פָּלָא and אַמְּנָה; (b) their use in acrostic/alphabetical compositions; (c) their precise location in the word-count; and (d) their introductory function in the first two chapters of the Psalter and the first two stanzas of Ps 119.

Bearing in mind the recurring phenomenon that *introductions* to poetical structures often consist of two textual units, as seen in the POS of “Jacob,” “whole burnt offering” and “covenant,” the entire Psalter and the longest Ps 119 are similarly introduced by Pss 1–2 and 119:1–8, 9–16 respectively.

In relation to the word count analyses above, several implications of such precise matching must be raised. First, the high level of correspondence between my proposed nexusword and the meaningful/rhetorical centers (of Labuschagne and van der Lugt), especially in Books IV–V, is uncanny. We can safely dismiss the notion of fortuitous coincidence. Perhaps my method was a complimentary numerical technique, adopted by the final editor(s) who intended to include all the words in a psalm in the count. This would imply that the *maqqep* has an additional function of altering word count in a text.

The differences in the percentages of correspondence between Books I–III (->70%) and IV–V (>90%) support our contention that Books IV and V of the Psalter make a compositional unit although their redactional history remains elusive.<sup>1145</sup>

<sup>1145</sup> Citing Sanders, Frazer notes that the 4QPs<sup>a</sup> “arranges the Psalms and their titles as they still appear in the masora.” It is likely there is no separation between the title and the text by the time of the Qumran Psalms scrolls. Fraser, “The Authenticity of the Psalms Titles,” 17–18. For a further study, see J.

Labuschagne and van der Lugt's method of counting could have been an earlier technique.<sup>1146</sup> This process, nonetheless, must be taken as speculative.

Second, Labuschagne and van der Lugt's views that the meaningful/rhetorical centers are somewhat detached from the texts themselves need not be sustained. Van der Lugt notes, “[t]hese rhetorical centres do not necessarily have relations with the structure of a psalm in terms of cantos and strophes. In most cases they represent a rather individual aspect.”<sup>1147</sup> Neither of them considers these meaningful/rhetorical centers as functioning beyond the level of one or two psalms.<sup>1148</sup> In other words, they

Sanders, “Pre-Masoretic Psalter Texts,” *The CBQ* 27, no. 2 (1965): 114–23; *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs<sup>a</sup>)* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1965); Patrick Skehan, “Psalm Manuscript from Qumran (4QPs<sup>b</sup>),” *CBQ* 26, no. 3 (1964): 313–22.

<sup>1146</sup> When Books IV–V and other psalms are added or incorporated into existing collections, subsequently rearrangements, superscriptions and *maqqep* changes were also incorporated to maintain the meaningful centers and form the entire five-book structure at the final composition of the Psalter. This is not to say that *all* psalm superscriptions are of a later hand. Some of the superscriptions could have been composed with the poem; others could have been edited at the time of the Psalter’s final composition. The addition of superscriptions, *selah* and *maqqep* changes do not affect the numerical counts in Bazak, Labuschagne and van der Lugt’s works. Scholars such as Leuenberger and Ballhorn have also raised arguments on how Books IV and V can be seen as a unit. I deviate from Christensen’s argument that Book II is the last Book to be incorporated in the Psalter. He noted, “A reasonable working hypothesis posits the insertion of Book 2 as the final addition to the Psalter, when the seventeen books of the deuteronomistic canon were expanded to make the twenty-two books of the Pentateuchal canon in the time of Ezra. It appears that an original collection of psalms of David, preserved in Books 1 and 5 of the Psalms as we now have them, was edited into a Deuteronomistic Psalter. The Pentateuchal Psalter of mainstream Jewish tradition appeared with the formation of the twenty-two-book canon of the Tanakh in the time of Ezra (ca 400 bce) when Book 2 (Pss 42–72) was inserted into existing collection.” Christensen, *The Unity of the Bible*, 132.

<sup>1147</sup> Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 8.

<sup>1148</sup> In “Significant Sub-Groups in the Book of Psalms,” Labuschagne structures the entire Psalter based on numerical figures of word and verselines. However, the meaningful centers of individual psalms are not primarily used in the structuring. Neither did he provide a treatment on how the thematic content of the Psalter develops across the structure.

neither assume any macrostructural links between these rhetorical centers nor do they present any evidence of such links.<sup>1149</sup>

In contrast, I will explore if these nexuswords work at the macrostructural level, and how, if they do at all. Are they also aligned with the macrostructural shape and Metanarrative of the Psalter?<sup>1150</sup> I will identify the nexusword of all psalms and compare each with the macrostructural shape identified in chapters 2–3.<sup>1151</sup> These nexuswords will also be analyzed for representations of the thematic genre, main motif or certain key insight of the psalm, in view of its location within a structural unit. I will demonstrate this process with Ps 108 and briefly discuss the other nexuswords in three Figures below.

### 5.1.3 PSALM 108

The composite Ps 108 consists of a number of textual edits (Pss 57, 60) which are likely to be intentional.<sup>1152</sup> Based on my count, there are 85 words in the psalm and the

<sup>1149</sup> Van der Lugt analyzes Pss 120–134 as a Collection in *CAS III* (pp. 422–440). However, his treatment is based on verbal parallels rather than quantitative analyses or identified rhetorical centers.

<sup>1150</sup> This possibility arose from our study of Pss 1, 2 and 150.

<sup>1151</sup> I have also reviewed the designations of psalm genre adopted by three recent commentaries in view of our discussions. See John Goldingay, *Psalms*, (ed. Tremper Longman III, 3 vols.; Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Oxford: Baker Academic; 2006–2008); Frank-Lothar Hossfeld et al., *Psalms*, (Hermeneia series; vols. 2, 3; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005, 2011); Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary: 15-16 TOTC* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2014).

<sup>1152</sup> Textual issues that affect word count are listed here. Note that the phrase, נִכְזָן לְבִי in 57:8, is not found following נִכְזָן לְבִי אֱלֹהִים in 108:2. Bardtke (*BHS*) suggests that the missing phrase is to be inserted, in line with a few MSS, LXX and Syriac attestation. However, it must be noted that several intentional edits had been made in Ps 108 from Pss 57 and 60 (which may have been further redacted from an earlier Hebrew *Vorlage* on which the LXX was based on. This is the view of Craig Anderson, “The Politics of Psalmody: Psalm 60 and the Rise and Fall of Judean Independence,” *JBL* 134, no. 2 (2015): 313–32. The edits are likely to be intentional. For instance, Botha notes the replacement with

nexusword (43<sup>rd</sup>) is עַמְקָה, “the valley (of Succoth)”<sup>1153</sup> in 108:8. *Prima facie*, this word is not significant in itself. What then is its significance as a nexusword? It lies between two words, “Shechem”<sup>1154</sup> and “Succoth,” in the center of the five-word phrase, אֲחִילָה שֶׁכֶם וְעַמְקָה סְכֹות אַמְדָה and at the numerical center of the psalm.<sup>1155</sup> Psalm 108:8 is set within the context of vv. 8–10, commonly termed as the “divine oracles.”<sup>1156</sup> According to Botha, these three verses form the central strophe of the entire 5-strophe psalm, and is “an oracle telling of YHWH’s future military triumph.”<sup>1157</sup> Thus, this divine oracle, at the poetical center of the psalm, provides the best contextual clue to understanding the significance of the nexusword in this psalm.

“[t]he particle נִמְנָה [in 108:2] serves here as an expression of addition and emphasis and it more probably establishes a connection between כָבוֹדִים and between לְבִי and between כָבוֹדִים and אֱלֹהִים.” BHS suggests אֲלֹהִים instead of נִמְנָה in v. 8a, which does not affect word count. The editors of Ps 108:10 added a *maqqep* for the phrase, עַל־יְפֵלָה and modified the word, רִיעָה, as a first-person imperfect (rendering an easier reading). In 108:12, the word, נִמְנָה, in 60:12 is removed, and אַלְרִים is attached to the negative. Zenger argued that the removal of “you” in 108:12 “softens the complaining accusation in Ps 60:12.” Botha, “Psalm 108 and the quest for closure to the exile,” 575–578; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 113–116.

<sup>1153</sup> Succoth lies in a valley. It is a “town on the eastern side of the Jordan near the wadi Jabbok, where Jacob put up shelters for his livestock (Gen 33:17).” Cf. Joshua 13:27. Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 241.

<sup>1154</sup> Shechem is “an important northern city in Ephraim (Canaan) situated between Mount Ebal and Gerizim.” Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 240–41.

<sup>1155</sup> Note the chiastic syntax of the phrase and the *athnak* just before our nexusword, עַמְקָה “valley.” Labuschagne and van der Lugt consider the entire Ps 108:8 as the meaningful/rhetorical center of the psalm. In Labuschagne’s word count, he finds the word, “I will measure off” (תְּמִימָה), at the center of the psalm. While he considers v.8 as the meaningful center, he also notes that the 28-word oracle (vv. 8–10) can also be the meaningful center. Labuschagne “Psalm 108— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–6 [cited 11 April 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps108.pdf>; van der Lugt; *CAS III*, 208.

<sup>1156</sup> Psalm 108:8–10, which Tate called “divine oracle,” is “interpreted as the response of a cult prophet or priest to the complaint and prayer of the preceding verses. . . . In this sense, the oracle would be a message of assurance that Yahweh is the divine warrior who has conquered Israel’s land and controls the surrounding countries of Moab, Edom, and Philistia as well.” Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 106.

<sup>1157</sup> Botha, “Psalm 108 and the Quest for Closure to the Exile,” 578.

The oracle is a carefully composed unit. The words, אָעַלְזָה (“I will exult”) at the beginning and אָתְרֹעַע (“I will shout aloud”) at the end, not only parallel each other phonetically and semantically, they also bookend the entire oracle. They highlight the motif of victorious joy associated with the battlefield.<sup>1158</sup> I have set Ps 108:8–10 in six lines below to illustrate parallel word-pairs. The first and last lines frame the oracles.<sup>1159</sup> Between them, four pairs of words in four lines (lines 2–5) reveal YHWH’s dealings/relationship with the named places (note the highlights). In every case, YHWH is the subject.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | אֱלֹהִים דָּבֵר בְּקֹדֶשׁ אָעַלְזָה                |
| 2 | אֲתַלְקָה שְׁכָם וְעַמְקָסְבָּות אַמְדָּד          |
| 3 | אֲגַלְעָד לְמִנְשָׁה                               |
| 4 | וְאֶפְרַיִם מְעוֹז רָאשֵׁי יְהוָה מְחֻקָּי         |
| 5 | מוֹאָב סִיר רְחִצִּי עַל-אֶדוֹם אַשְׁלִיךְ נְעַלִי |
| 6 | עַל-פְּלֶשֶׁת אָתְרֹעַע                            |

In the second line, the use of the word, אַמְדָּד (“I will measure off”), carries the figurative meaning of “God’s sovereignty, omnipotence, and omnipresence” in

<sup>1158</sup> The word, עַלִי, in Pss 60:8 and 108:8 shows God as the subject of rejoicing. Grisanti notes that these “passages in the Psalms offer hope to the afflicted people of God because Yahweh rejoices that he alone ultimately controls the status of peoples and lands.” Michael Grisanti, “עלִי,” *NIDOTTE*, 3:420; The word, רְוֹעַ, “is used to indicate the shout before or after a battle (Pss 60:8[10]; 108:9[10]). It is sometimes used more generally to simply indicate joyful exclamation in response to God.” Tremper Longman III, “רוּעַ,” *NIDOTTE*, 3:1084.

<sup>1159</sup> Anderson recognizes the poetical unit of Ps 108:8–10 (=60:8–11) in the Divine oracle, but extends the oracle to v. 11. Anderson, “The Politics of Psalmody,” 317, 319.

marking out geographical space.<sup>1160</sup> Likewise, the use of אֶחָלֶקָה (“I will apportion”)<sup>1161</sup> signifies YHWH’s ownership and authority over the land.

YHWH’s ownership of Gilead and Manasseh is clear in the third line with the possessive first-person suffix on ל. In the fourth line, the words associated with Ephraim and Judah are מַעֲוזׁ רְאשֵׁי (lit. “the fortress for my head”) and מִתְחַקְקִי (“my sceptre”).<sup>1162</sup> They carry the imagery of the battlefield and the trio-connotations of *refuge, kingship and decree*, recalling the Central Motifs in chapters 2–3. In the next pair, the words, רְחַצֵּי (“my washbowl”) and נְעַלְיִ (‘“my shoe”), are more than a derogatory remark against Moab and Edom representing their defeat and shame.<sup>1163</sup> They can, according to Martens, carry the concept of the removal of uncleanness.<sup>1164</sup> In short, we identify five

<sup>1160</sup> Cf. Isa 40:12. Russel Fuller, “מַדְּכָא,” *NIDOTTE*, 2:850.

<sup>1161</sup> Cornelis Van Dam, “אֶחָלֶק,” *NIDOTTE*, 2:162.

<sup>1162</sup> Schoville notes that the phrase, מַעֲוזׁ רְאשֵׁי, “may have one of two meanings: chief fortress (=NJPSPV translation) or helmet (lit. “fortress of the head”). While the latter would be a unique usage of the term, it is more likely the correct sense.” Keith Schoville, “רְחַבָּם,” *NIDOTTE*, 2:1015; The word, מִתְחַקְקִי, is a *poel* participle masculine singular construct with first person suffix from the root, תַּחַקֵּ, and can mean (a) “a decree; (b) leader (cf. Prov 8:15, Judg 5:14); (c) sceptre (cf. Gen 49:10). Note that the LXX translates יְהוָה יְמִתְחַקְקֵי as Ιωδας βασιλεύς μου (“Judah my king”). William Holladay, “קְרֻבָּה,” *HOL*, BibleWorks. v. 10; For a textual study of יְהוָה יְמִתְחַקְקֵי in Ps 60, see Anderson, “The Politics of Psalmody,” 329–30.

<sup>1163</sup> Goldingay notes, “Moab is the basin in which the warrior washes off the grime and blood after a battle. Edom is the place the warrior throws his shoes in doing so.” Goldingay, *Psalm*s, 3:269.

<sup>1164</sup> Note that LXX has λέβης τῆς ἐλπίδος μου (“washbasin of my hope”). Anderson argues that the LXX follows a Hebrew *Vorlage* that fits well in the Hasmonean period when messianic hope was prevalent (Anderson, “The Politics of Psalmody,” 330); Martens notes that the verb רְחַזֵּ is frequently used “in priestly legislation with instructions for the ceremonial washing of priests, and sometimes the washing of parts of the sacrifice (Num 19:7, 8; Lev 1:9, 13; 9:14). . . . Before stepping to the altar or into the tent of meeting, the priests were to wash hands and feet on penalty of death (Exod 30:19–21).” Hence, the wash basin (used only twice as a noun in the Psalter) signifies a removal of uncleanness in the presence of God. Elmer Martens, “רְחַצֵּ,” *NIDOTTE*, 3:1098. The word, “sandal,” also reflects uncleanness. Hamilton notes that both Moses and Joshua were told to remove their shoes in the presence of God (Exod 3:5; Josh 5:15). He also notes that “sandals, being made of animal skins, are impure in

motifs in the oracle: (1) the apportioning of land/plunder; (2) YHWH's lordship; (3) place of refuge, kingship and decree; (4) removal of uncleanness; (5) victorious exultation in battle.

What is the significance of the named places in the oracle? They have been interpreted in several ways.<sup>1165</sup> For Tate,

Shechem and Succoth may recall the Jacob tradition of Gen 33:17–18 and 49:10; Edom and Moab allude to the Balaam oracle in Num 24:17–19. . . . Shechem, Succoth (in central Transjordan, perhaps, *Deir 'Alla* in the Jordan Valley), Gilead, Manasseh, and Ephraim represent the areas of the Northern Kingdom, while Judah, Moab, Edom and Philistia represent the South.<sup>1166</sup>

Tate linked the “star” (Num 24:17), a kingly figure from the tribe of Judah who will rise from Jacob (Gen 49:10), to the one who will “crush” (Num 24:17–19) the forehead of Moab and possess Edom. These oracles, coming together in Ps 108:8–10, underscore how YHWH, the divine warrior, will rule over the whole land<sup>1167</sup> via a king from the tribe of Judah. Tate concluded that “[t]he unidentified nature of the speaker is possibly an invitation to think of a new David, a king who would have the cooperation

regard to the sacred and thus not to be worn into a sacred precinct.” Victor Hamilton, “בָּיִת,” *NIDOTTE*, 3:120

<sup>1165</sup> From the named places, Anderson dates the psalm to the period of John Hyrcanus I in the Hasmonean period. For a historical-critical interpretation and dating of Ps 60:8–11, see Anderson, “The Politics of Psalmody,” 321.

<sup>1166</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 106–107; This is the view of Zenger as well. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 119.

<sup>1167</sup> Goldingay notes, “To allocate Shechem and measure out Succot Valley to Israel is thus to allocate the land as a whole.” Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:268.

of Yahweh in new endeavors to fulfil old promises.”<sup>1168</sup> Zenger also noted that the oracle, “which traditionally would have been given to a king before the beginning of a battle, indicates the victorious end of the war in which the principal actor is YHWH himself.”<sup>1169</sup>

I offer a further insight for our consideration. We have seen how the Samuel narratives, as intertextual reading (or re-reading), are important to the DCs in the last chapter. Likewise, it is important to consider the narratives’ role in Ps 108:8–10.

In 1 Sam 20:15–16, Jonathan made a covenant with David not to “cut off” (*כְּרָתָה*) his lovingkindness from his house when “the LORD cut off [*כְּרָתָה*] every one of the enemies of David.” This is likely the *first* prophetic oracle in the Samuel narratives to contain the motifs of David’s enemies being destroyed and David reigning victoriously as king through YHWH’s help.<sup>1170</sup> The motif of YHWH cutting off *all* of David’s enemies recurs in at least two key locations in the Samuel narratives.<sup>1171</sup> First, it can be seen at the time when YHWH made a covenant with David in 2 Sam 7:1, 9, 11, promising to establish his house and giving him rest from *all* his enemies. The motif recurs immediately in the following 2 Sam 8:1–15, where David subdued the Philistines, Moabites and the Edomites, and “reigned over *all* Israel.”

<sup>1168</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 107.

<sup>1169</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 120.

<sup>1170</sup> Klein cites 1 Sam 25:26, 29, 39a; 2 Sam 3:18. See also 1 Sam 24:5. Ralph W. Klein, : *1 Samuel* (WBC 10; Waco, Tex.: Paternoster, 1983), 208.

<sup>1171</sup> See the dynamics of the word, “cut off,” used to illustrate the relationships between David, Saul, Jonathan and their associates in 1 Sam 17:51; 18:3; 20:15–16; 22:8; 23:18; 24:5–6, 12, 22; 2 Sam 3:12–13, 21, 29; 5:3; 7:9; 20:22. See also our discussion of 2 Sam 22 in §1.3.4.

The judgment of these nations described successively in Ps 108:10 cannot be seen apart from 2 Sam 8, which it delineates the fall of David's numerous enemies in a single chapter. We come to a full circle in 2 Sam 9:1 with regards to David's oath to Jonathan. Three consecutive chapters, 2 Sam 7–9, capture YHWH's covenant with David, his victory over *all* enemies, and David fulfilling his covenantal promises to Jonathan.<sup>1172</sup>

We can now consolidate an interesting intertextual reading. David was in trouble and sought Jonathan's help. Jonathan, who loved David as himself, saw proleptically that David would reign victoriously over his enemies. He urged David to show lovingkindness to his family via an oath. Then David's enemies were cut off in 2 Sam 8 where the destruction of Moab, Edom and Philistia are mentioned. By 2 Sam 9, David's promises to Jonathan were fulfilled. This mention of these three cities brings us to both Ps 108:10 and Num 24:17, where a Davidic "star" from the tribe of Judah will triumph over these cities and reign victoriously.

The named places in Ps 108:8–9 are also linked by a common motif of conspiracy described in narratives of Joshua and Judges. Succoth recalls both Josh 13:27–28 and Judg 8, where it was apportioned to the tribe of Gad and by the conspiracy of Succoth's leaders, Israel was denied aid in her fight against the Midianites. However, when Gideon returned triumphantly from defeating Midian, he disciplined the leaders of Succoth (Judg 8:16).

<sup>1172</sup> Anderson argues that the phrase, "to show consideration" (2 Sam 9:1), "belongs to covenant terminology and refers to loyal fulfilment of one's obligation previously undertaken." Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 141.

In the same vein, Shechem was apportioned as a city of refuge in Josh 21:21. In Judges 9, we read about the conspiracy of Abimelech with the elders of Shechem in the betrayal of Jerubaal (Gideon). By the end of the chapter, the curses of Jotham came true and both Abimelech and the men of Shechem were destroyed (Judg 9:56–57). Consider also the betrayal of the elders of Gilead, Ephraim and Manasseh against Jephthah (Judg 8:1; 11:1–3; 12:1–4). Like Succoth, Edom and Moab refused to allow Israel passageway into Canaan (Judg 11:1–17). The betrayal and conspiracy of the Philistines against Samson are also clear in Judges 15:1–2; 16:5–21.

Elsewhere, the Psalter captures the same characterization of these nations. The Edomites' gloating over Israel's captivity is captured in Ps 137:7; while Edom, Moab and Philistia convening and conspiring against YHWH's people are clear in Ps 83:2–7.<sup>1173</sup>

Apart from Judah, the eight named places in Ps 108:8–10 have conspired against the people of God in their journey to Canaan to some extent in the Book of Judges. In contrast, Judah is exemplified as the first tribe designated to go up against the Canaanites (Judg 1:2) and the sons of Benjamin (Judg 20:18).

How does the common motif of conspiracy of the eight nations against Israel in her conquest and entry into Canaan relate to our discussion? The leaders of these eight cities conspired against a “charismatic” deliverer (e.g., Jephthah, Samson, Jotham and

<sup>1173</sup> “For behold, your enemies make an uproar; those who hate you have raised their heads. They lay crafty plans against your people; they consult together against your treasured ones. They say, ‘Come, let us wipe them out as a nation; let the name of Israel be remembered no more!’ For they conspire with one accord; against you, they make a covenant—the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagrites, Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre” (ESV).

David).<sup>1174</sup> They refused to help Israel. The common fate of these opposing nations is that through YHWH's help, they were eventually subdued upon the victorious return of the “ruler-deliverer.”<sup>1175</sup>

When we read this alongside the Jonathan story, we see two kinds of responses and outcomes associated with the ruler-deliverer figures in the Judges/Samuel narratives. Those who conspired against the ruler-deliverer figure would be destroyed when he returns in victory (e.g., Succoth, Shechem, Edom, Moab and Philistia). In contrast, those who loved and covenanted with the ruler-deliverer would receive the promised mercy upon his victorious return.

*This intertextual understanding is embedded in the message in Ps 108. The Divine oracle in 108:8–10 depicts YHWH's unfettered victory in the whole land through the reign of a Judahite Ruler-deliverer. The named places, in view of the Samuel/Judges narratives, highlight the two kinds of outcomes for the victor's friends or enemies when he returns triumphantly.*

Based on this interpretation of Ps 108:8–10, the nexusword of Ps 108, which does not seem significant *prima facie*, is unveiled. The nexusword identifies the divine oracle, highlighting not just YHWH's victory, but also how he will deal with those who conspired against him upon overcoming the Ruler-deliverer's adversaries in Ps 108.

<sup>1174</sup> Zeev Weisman, “Charismatic Leaders in the Era of the Judges,” *ZAW* 89, no. 3 (1977): 399–411.

<sup>1175</sup> Judg 2:16, 18; 3:9; 8:22–23; 9:2, 16.

It is also pertinent to see that this interpretation accords with the trajectory of DC-IV (108–110),<sup>1176</sup> in which the prophetic imagery of the victorious king (“new Joshua”) in Ps 108, who received a temporary setback because of the conspiracy of his accusers (109), will subsequently reign victoriously from Zion with his mighty sceptre in Ps 110, executing judgment against his enemies—a development that fits well with Ps 2.

Consider also the nexuswords of Pss 109 and 110. The nexusword כָּנָה (“to dishearten”; 109:16), corresponds not just to the content genre of Ps 109 but aligns itself with the nexus-trajectory of Pss 108–110. This word occurs only three times in the HB (109:16; Ezek 13:22; Dan 11:30). In all three instances, this word is used in the context where the righteous are made “disheartened” by their wicked oppressors. The nexusword of Ps 109 thus indicate the temporary setback of the king identified in Ps 108. The nexusword of Ps 110 is the enigmatic phrase, “the dew of your youth” (110:3), which may refer to “young warriors who comprise the army.”<sup>1177</sup> According to Zenger, the imagery presented in Ps 110 is “not about a ‘real’ enthronement in the royal palace but rather a ‘throne community’ with God.”<sup>1178</sup> The king is surrounded by his holy array, including his youth. The nexusword of Ps 110 thus characterizes the king’s mighty numbers and people who will come forth in the returning day of his power, like the dew at dawn.

<sup>1176</sup> See also our discussion in §4.5.

<sup>1177</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:295.

<sup>1178</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 3, 145.

The trajectory seen in Pss 108–110 is not unique. This development is also seen in Pss 144–145, 149, where the victorious Davidic king, who suffered under the wicked (144:7–11), will eventually reign over his enemies. With their king, the *chasidim* of YHWH will be given the honor to execute their enemies (149:7). Hence, our analysis of the nexusword in Ps 108 (and briefly, 109–110) suggests that nexusword, as a technique (brachygraphy/steganography?), can possibly function as a short-hand to highlight certain motifs or ideas associated with the larger macrostructural unit.<sup>1179</sup> Furthermore, the nexusword is usually in alignment with the psalm's content genre (or genre motif<sup>1180</sup>). The nexusword of a psalm points to a word (or a pair of words), which in turn, betokens a larger motif-designate in the immediate rhetorical context (in this case, the divine oracle in 108:8–10). This context may be a colon, a verse or more. The meaning of this nexus-context, abbreviated by the nexusword, gives the psalm its content-thrust and provides the link to a larger unit of psalms, forming a nexus-

<sup>1179</sup> This nexusword technique is not too foreign a Masoretic technique. Yeivin, a Masorah scholar, noted that “some Tiberian MSS found in the Cairo Geniza were written in a form known as ‘serugin’ (‘shorthand,’ ‘brachygraphy’). In the oldest examples, the first word of a verse is written in full, followed by a single letter from each of the other important words in the verse.” Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, 10–11; See also Fischer and Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, 244–245, for an illustration of Oxford Ms. Heb e 30, fol 48b (which is a text on Isa 7:11–9:8) that shows the Hebrew text in abbreviated form, where only the first word of a verse is written in full but subsequent words is written only with a single letter.

<sup>1180</sup> In this case, Ps 108 can be seen as both a Song and Petition, capturing the entire essence of the psalm. Although the classification of genre of a psalm cannot be precise at times, associated motifs can be grouped within a certain genre. For instance, Grol sees the motifs of supplication and complaint under the genre of “prayer,” or the motifs of blessing and praise under “hymn.” Harm van Grol, “David and His Chasidim: Place and Function of Psalms 138–145,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms* (ed. E. Zenger; BETL 238; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 309–38, [316].

trajectory. Moreover, this nexus-phenomenon collaborates well with our proposed macrostructure and Metanarrative of the Psalter.<sup>1181</sup>

With Ps 108 in view, consider the nexuswords of Book I, based on my word count method, presented in Figure 67.

#### 5.1.4 BOOK I

Ps	Nexusword	Word count	MT verse	Alpha-betic Acrostic (AA)/Alpha-betic Poem (AC)	Macro-structure and Super-script	Content/Genre Motifs
1	which (yield its fruit in its season)	57	3	AC	ashre	Torah
2	(You are) my Son	77	7	AC	Untitled	Kingship
1–2	<i>against the LORD, and against his anointed</i>	134	2:2			
3	from his (holy) hill	63	5		hist	Lament; Day Lament; Day psalm; External hostilities
4	be angry and do not sin	68	5	PAC		Lament; Night psalm; Personal distress
5	(I will enter) your house	89	8			Lament; Day psalm; External hostilities
6	(no) remembrance of you; in Sheol	74	6			Lament; Night psalm; Personal distress
7	judge me, O LORD (according to my righteousness)	124	9	PAC (7:9–18)	hist	Lament; Day psalm; External hostilities
8	for you are mindful of, and the son of man	66	5	PAC		Lament; night psalm; *Central focus—kingship
9	(the LORD) who dwells in Zion	150	12			Lament; Day psalm; *Central focus—judgment
10	(he seize the) poor when he draws	146	9		Untitled	Lament; Day psalm; Communal Lament
9–10	<i>they are but man</i>	296	9:21			
11	(the LORD's) throne is in heaven	62	4			Lament; Night psalm; Individual

<sup>1181</sup> Although the nexusword (or nexus-context) in my study correspond well to the meaningful/rhetorical centers identified by Labuschagne and van der Lugt (about 70% in Books I–III and more than 90% in Books IV–V), I have arrived at it using a very different method of count and a different understanding of its implication. Labuschagne and van der Lugt do not consider these centers to have any macrostructuring roles.

Ps	Nexusword	Word count	MT verse	Alpha-betic Acrostic (AA)/ Alpha-betic Poem (AC)	Macro-structure and Super-script	Content/Genre Motifs	
						Lament/Confidence	
12	(who is) master over us?	72	5			Lament; Day psalm; Communal Lament	
13	“answer me O LORD”	48	4			Lament; Night psalm; Individual Lament	
14	(do) all the workers of wickedness (not know?)	64	4	AC		Lament; Day psalm; Communal Lament	
15	not take up (reproach) against his neighbour	44	3			Entrance liturgy	
16	to me. I will bless	78	6, 7	PAC		Confidence	
17	you will hide me; from the face (of the wicked)	116	8, 9			Lament	
18	the LORD rewarded (me)	345	25			Kingship	
19	to make wise (the simple)	113	8			*Central focus—Cosmic and Torah Praise	
20	all your petitions. Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed	62	6, 7	AC	Davidic	*Central focus—Kingship	
21	your presence, for the king (trust)	92	7, 8			Kingship	
22	evildoers encircle me	224	17			Lament	
23	for you are with me	50	4	PAC		Confidence	
24	Jacob	81	6			Entrance liturgy	
25	his testimonies	133	10			Individual Lament; Justice for the poor	
26	and I go about (your altar)	73	6			Individual Lament; Avoiding wickedness	
27	(I will offer) in his tent, sacrifices (with shouts of joy)	126	6	AC		Individual Lament; Avoiding wickedness	
28	render them their due reward	80	4			Individual Lament; Avoiding wickedness	
29	(he makes) Lebanon (skip like a calf)	81	6	AC		Kingship; YHWH enthroned	
30	O LORD, (by your favor)	87	8	AC		Thanksgiving; Dedication of Temple	
29–30	<i>the house of David (superscription)</i>	168	30:1				
31	(I have become) a broken vessel	200	13			Thanksgiving; Avoiding wickedness	
32	(therefore let all godly pray) to you (at a time you may be found)	99	6	PAC		Thanksgiving; Avoiding wickedness	
33	(his heart) to generation (after generations)	137	11	AC		Thanksgiving; Avoiding wickedness	
34	the fear of (the LORD)	139	12			hist Justice for the poor	
35	I bowed down (in mourning)	203	14			Supplication	
36	(your judgment are great) deep	81	7			Hymn	
37	(they vanish) like smoke (they vanish)	259	20			Sapiential hymn	
38	they stand, my nearest kin (stand far off)	144	12	AC	For a memorial	Supplication	
39	(does not know) who will gather?	108	7	PAC		Sapiential hymn	

Ps	Nexusword	Word count	MT verse	Alpha-betic Acrostic (AA)/ Alpha-betic Poem (AC)	Macro-structure and Super-script	Content/Genre Motifs
40	<i>I will not restraint (my lips O LORD)</i>	168	10	PAC		Thanksgiving
41	(united) against me they whisper	104	8			Supplication

Figure 67: Nexusword, Content/Genre Motifs and Macrostructure Juxtaposition in Book I<sup>1182</sup>

Without a detailed exegesis of every psalm, it is difficult to show how every nexusword captures a core theme in the psalm and its macrostructural implications. Nonetheless, we will review the nexusword in relation to the psalm's content/genre motif,<sup>1183</sup> and explore possibilities of a nexus-trajectory across a unit of psalms.

Consider the following observations of Book I:

<sup>1182</sup> In the “nexusword” column, words in parenthesis are added to give sense to the otherwise terse expression. In many cases, I have filled out the entire colon. Words that are not in parenthesis are the identified single-word nexusword (in odd word count) or a pair of words (in even word count). There are several instances where two psalms are considered as one (e.g., Pss 9–10), or a single psalm is divided into two (e.g., Ps 40). I have italicized the rows where such analyses occurred. “AA”= Alphabetical Acrostic; “AC”= Alphabetical Composition; “PAC” = Probable Alphabetical Composition; “hist” = historical superscription.

<sup>1183</sup> This is to capture the literary character of the psalm. For Book I, I have adopted the genre classifications out forth by G. Barbiero (see §2.2). For Books II–III, I have adopted the classifications by S. Gillingham (see §2.3). For Books IV and V, I have adopted the classifications by Hossfeld, Zenger and D. Howard (see §2.4). In addition to those in preceding chapters, I have referenced further genre classifications of the psalms in this chapter from the works of T. Longman, P. Craigie, M. Tate, S. Terrien and Goldingay. Terrien makes an important point, stating that the general classification of an individual psalm into its type or genre, cannot be separated from its “contents, style, emotive accent, and existential situation” (Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003], 42); My use of the term, “content/thematic genre,” seeks less to postulate the *functional* use of the psalm in its original *Sitz im Leben* but more as a generalized literary description of an individual psalm as a whole. While I concede that genre classification is not always accurate or possible (e.g., the presence of mixed genre), the literary character of a psalm can be qualified with proper analysis of its content. Differences in genre classifications between different authors are a matter of nuance or emphasis. Regardless, genre classification provides a succinct way to capture the essence or character of a psalm’s content.

(1) I have found at least 30 psalms (73%) corresponding to Labuschagne and van der Lugt's results of meaningful/rhetorical center.<sup>1184</sup>

(2) The nexuswords of Pss 1 and 2, and the entire colon where they reside,<sup>1185</sup> coincide with the meaningful centers identified by the two scholars. Recall in §1.3.3 when we consider Pss 1–2 as a single composition, the nexusword is found at the last colon of Ps 2:2 (“against the LORD and against his holy one”). Even when I apply Labsuschagne and van der Lugt's method, the meaningful center is *also* the term, “against” (2:2), in the same colon.<sup>1186</sup> Despite two different methods of counting, we arrived at the same colon that defines the meaningful centers of the Prologue, whether it is viewed as separate psalms or a single composition.

(3) Consider the Group Pss 3–14.<sup>1187</sup> The alternation of “Day” and “Night” psalms in this Group provides an interesting comparison with their nexuswords. Notice that the Day psalms in Pss 3, 5, 7<sup>1188</sup> are associated with *external hostility* and the Night psalms

<sup>1184</sup> In Book I, only Pss 3, 4, 9–10; 12, 16, 18, 19, 25, 39, 41 are incongruous. However, in several of these psalms, there are issues in Labuschagne and van der Lugt's word count as well. For instance, neither scholar finds meaningful centers in Pss 12, 19, 25, 39, 41. Headers are included in the count in order to find a rhetorical center (e.g., Ps 12) and textual emendations are adopted (Pss 18 and 25). See Appendix A.

<sup>1185</sup> Ps 1:3a, “which yield its fruit in its season” and 2:7a, “You are my son.”

<sup>1186</sup> There is no superscription nor *selah* in Pss 1–2. Hence, the word count change of the two psalms arises only from considering the words joined by *maqqep* as a single word.

<sup>1187</sup> For details on how these structural units are delineated, see chapters 2–3.

<sup>1188</sup> We have discussed “morning” and “evening” psalms earlier (§2.2; cf. Pss 3:6, 8; 4:5, 9; 5:4, 6:7; 7:7; 8:4; 9:20; 10:12; 11:2; 12:6; 13:4; 14:2, 5). Longman classifies them as “lament” and associate them with “morning” or calling God “to arise.” Longman, *Psalm: An Introduction and Commentary*, 64, 69, 75; Craigie called this “morning” or “evening prayers.” Craigie, *Psalm 1–50*, 30.

in Pss 4, 6 are associated with *personal distress*.<sup>1189</sup> By comparing this alternation with their nexuswords, the Day/external-hostility psalms are also associated with the motifs of Zion, temple, and YHWH's judgment.<sup>1190</sup> The connection between external hostility and seeking YHWH as judge is an important motif in the Psalms. In contrast, the nexuswords associated with the Night/personal-distress psalms are more self-reflective and contemplative in nature.<sup>1191</sup> They address the psalmist's inner world struggles.

The Day Pss 10, 12, 14 are classified as Communal Lament<sup>1192</sup> whereas the Night Pss 11, 13 are classified as Individual Lament/Confidence.<sup>1193</sup> The nexuswords associated with Day/Communal-Lament psalms (10:9; 12:5; 14:4) are associated with the motifs of public denunciation of wicked doers, whereas the nexuswords associated with Night/Individual-Lament psalms focus on the psalmist's reflection of YHWH's relationship with him, recalling YHWH's dealings with the righteous and YHWH's covenantal faithfulness (11:4; 13:4). The two center psalms in this Group correspond

<sup>1189</sup> Psalms 4, 6 are “laments” and “evening prayer.” Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 67, 72.

<sup>1190</sup> The respective nexuswords are: “from his [holy] hill” (3:5); “your house” (5:8); “judge me, O LORD,” (7:9).

<sup>1191</sup> The respective nexuswords are: “be angry and do not sin” (4:6); “[no] remembrance of you in Sheol” (6:6).

<sup>1192</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 84, 92, 97.

<sup>1193</sup> Although Longman considers this a Confidence psalm, he notes that “Psalm 11 is a prayer of a righteous person in the midst of persecution.” Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 90, 92, 95.

with this theme as well. Psalm 8 (Night) highlights YHWH's dealing with his chosen man whereas Ps 9 (Day) highlights YHWH's kingship and judgment from Zion.<sup>1194</sup>

(4) The nexuswords of the Group, Pss 15–24, correspond not only to the content/genre motifs of these psalms but also to its chiastic structure. Psalms 15 and 24, at the frames of this Group, are Entrance Liturgies.<sup>1195</sup> These two psalms contain the question of who would enter through the gates into the temple. Strikingly, the nexuswords in Pss 15:3, 24:6 answer this question with those “who does not take up a reproach with his friend,” and “Jacob.”<sup>1196</sup>

Moving inwards from the frames, Pss 16 and 23 are Confidence psalms<sup>1197</sup> and their nexuswords (16:6, 7; 23:4) reflect the psalmist’s confidence in YHWH. Similarly, the nexuswords in Pss 17:8, 9 and 22:17 encapsulate the nature of Lament.<sup>1198</sup> Two Kingship psalms<sup>1199</sup> (18, 21) surround two central psalms (19, 20) having the motifs of

<sup>1194</sup> Barbiero argues that the Day-night alternation is a compositional principle. “En somme, ici, l’alternance se révèle être un principe de composition.” Barbiero, “Le Premier Livret Du Psautier,” 468;

<sup>1195</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 100, 138; Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 150, 211.

<sup>1196</sup> Auwers argues that the common theme unifying Pss 15–19 is the concept of “human conduct and standards that defined behaviors of integrity.” Auwers, “Les Voices de L’exégèse Canonique Du Psautier,” 7.

<sup>1197</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 103, 133; or “Prayer” by Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 155, 197, 204. The genre of Lament and Prayer, though distinguishable, remains slight.

<sup>1198</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 107, 128; or “Prayer” Craigie noted that Ps 22:2–22 is a “lament,” within which vv. 12, 20–22 are “prayer.” Psalm 22:23–32 are “praise and thanksgiving.” Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 161, 197.

<sup>1199</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 110, 124; Craigie noted that Ps 22 is a “royal liturgy” but “should be interpreted in the setting of thanksgiving for a military victory.” Psalm 20, according to Craigie is a royal liturgy. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 180, 185.

Torah and kingship respectively.<sup>1200</sup> The nexuswords located in Pss 18:25; 19:8; 20:6, 7 and 21:7, 8 correspond directly to the content/genre motifs of these four psalms respectively.<sup>1201</sup> This is graphically illustrated in Figure 68.

Ps	Nexusword	Distinctive Motif/Genre	Structure
15	[those who does] not take up (reproach) against his neighbor	Who?	A
16	to me. I will bless	Confidence	B
17	you will hide me; from the face (of the wicked)	Lament	C
18	the LORD rewarded (me)	Kingship	D
19	to make wise (the simple)	Torah	E
20	all your petitions. Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed	Kingship	E'
21	your presence, for the king (trusts)	Kingship	D'
22	evildoers encircles me	Lament	C'
23	for you are with me	Confidence	B'
24	Jacob	Who?	A'

Figure 68: Nexusword Structure of Pss 15–24

(5) The Group, Pss 25–34, is also a chiasmus structured according to content/genre motifs of individual psalms and arrangements of AAs or ACs.<sup>1202</sup> The frames, Pss 25 and 34, both AAs, are Laments expressing strong trust in YHWH, and characterized with a concern for justice to the poor.<sup>1203</sup> Psalms 26–28 are

<sup>1200</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 118, 121. Craigie argued that Ps 19 is “a unity (in its present form, at least), and should probably be classified as a *wisdom psalm* (though it also has some features of a prayer, vv. 13–14).” Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 180.

<sup>1201</sup> Note that Labuschagne has to emend Pss 18 and include the headings of Pss 20, 21 to find a meaningful center. Van der Lugt does not consider Pss 19 and 24 as having any rhetorical centers. This is because they have retained their perspective at the level of a single psalm and not Pss 15–24 as a Group.

<sup>1202</sup> We will discuss AA and AC in the following section.

<sup>1203</sup> Their nexuswords are “YHWH’s testimonies” (25:10) and the “fear of the LORD” (34:12). Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 145, 171; Craigie argued that Ps 25 is likely a “prayer of confidence,” or “individual lament.” On Ps 34, Craigie noted that “[t]he latter portion of the psalm (vv. 10–23) has the general characteristics of wisdom or *didactic* poetry.” Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 217, 278; Terrien classified Ps 34 as a “Sung Meditation by a sage who wishes to teach musically the fear of the Lord.” Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, 303.

Individual Laments<sup>1204</sup> with a focus on avoiding wickedness. Psalms 31–33 are Thanksgiving psalms,<sup>1205</sup> also with a focus on avoiding wickedness. The nexuswords of Pss 26, 27, 31 and 32 highlight the psalmist's brokenness. This is expressed outwardly in seeking God at the sanctuary in Pss 26 and 27, and internally in Pss 31 and 32. The nexuswords of Pss 28 and 33 are concerned with YHWH's "counsel" or "reward" to the wicked.

In short, we can detect the nexuswords of Pss 25–34 aligning in form and content in an A-B-C-B'-A' structure, as seen in Figure 69:

Ps	Nexusword-Motif	Distinctive Motif/Genre	Structure
25	Justice for the poor; YHWH's testimonies	AA; Justice/Testimonies	A
26–28	Avoiding wickedness; seeking YHWH at the sanctuary	Individual Lament	B
29–30	YHWH's kingship and the Zion-temple	Kingship-Temple	C
31–33	YHWH's purposes for the wicked	Thanksgiving	B'
34	Justice for the poor; fearers of YHWH	AA; Justice/God-fearers	A'

Figure 69: Nexusword-Motif Structure of Pss 25–34

(6) The nexuswords of Pss 35–41 are aligned with respect to its content and form in this final Group in Book I. Like the previous Group, the content/genre motifs reveal a chiastic structure. The bookends (35, 41) and the center psalm (38) are Supplication

<sup>1204</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 146, 149, 152; Craigie noted that Ps 26 had been classified as an "*individual lament*" by Gunkel, but he argued that the psalm should be an "*entrance liturgy*" instead. Psalm 27 consists of statements of confidence, a prayer addressed to God and an oracle. He noted that Ps 28 is "commonly classified as an *individual lament*." Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 224, 231, 236.

<sup>1205</sup> Longman considers Ps 31 as a Lament but "ending with an expression of thanksgiving." He calls Ps 33 a "victory hymn." Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 160, 163, 166; Similarly, Craigie argued that Ps 31 is a "prayer (vv 2–19), followed by thanksgiving and praise (vv 20–25)." On Ps 32, it is "a basic thanksgiving psalm [which] has been given literary adaptation according to the wisdom tradition." Psalm 33, according to Craigie, is a "*hymn of praise*" which contains the call to praise. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 258, 265, 270.

psalms.<sup>1206</sup> The nexuswords of Pss 35, 38 and 41 are in alignment to their content. They highlight the brokenness of the psalmist and his cries to YHWH because of the deeds of his enemies (and even of the closest kin). In a similar way, the nexuswords of Pss 36 and 40 align with their hymnic Praise and Thanksgiving genre respectively.<sup>1207</sup>

Two Sapiential Pss 37 and 39 enclose the center Ps 38. The nexusword of Ps 37 is a metaphorical comparison between the wicked and perishing nature of pastures and smoke (37:20; cf. 1:4). In Ps 39:7, the psalmist asks a rhetorical question of what he must do in light of man's passing nature. Clearly, these two nexuswords are connected in their thought-content. The following Figure summarizes the nexusword structure of Pss 35–41:

Ps	Nexusword	Distinctive Motif/Genre	Structure
35	I bowed down (in mourning)	Supplication against deeds of enemy or friend	A
36	(your judgment are great) deep	Praise	B
37	(they vanish) like smoke (they vanish)	Outcomes of the Wicked	C
38	they stand, my nearest kin (stand far off)	Supplication	D
39	(does not know) who will gather?	Outcomes of the Wicked	C'
40	I will not restraint (my lips O LORD)	Praise	B'
41	(united) against me they whisper	Supplication against deeds of enemy or friend	A'

Figure 70: Nexusword Structure of Pss 35–41

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<sup>1206</sup> Psalms 35, 38 can also be a Lament where the psalmist calls on God. A clear classification for Lament/Supplication psalm may be difficult. Longman, *Psalm: An Introduction and Commentary*, 172, 182, 190; Craigie described Ps 25 as an “individual lament or a prayer” and Ps 38 as a “prayer.” Craigie, *Psalm 1-50*, 285, 302.

<sup>1207</sup> Scholars differ in the categorizing of Ps 36 because it contains elements of lament, confidence and thanksgiving. Longman also sees a wisdom element in this psalm. Longman, *Psalm: An Introduction and Commentary*, 175, 187; Craigie noted that Ps 36 has been classified as “individual lament, national lament, and wisdom poetry.” However, it is “hymnic” in vv. 6–10, and a “prayer” in vv. 11–13. In Ps 40, Craigie also noted that Ps 40 begins with “thanksgiving,” but moves on to “lament and prayer.” Craigie, *Psalm 1-50*, 290, 314.

These six observations for Book I affirm that nexuswords correspond well both to the content/genre and poetical structures of various Groups. This is a crucial observation as it suggests that numerical devices (formal) are designed to correspond with the thematic character (tacit) of individual psalms. Furthermore, they also correspond to the structural divisions of Book I and the shapes of Groups.

### 5.1.5 BOOKS II–III

Ps	Nexusword	Word count	MT verse	Alpha-betic Acrostic (AA)/Alpha-betic Poem (AC)	Macro-structure and Super-script	Content/Genre Motifs
42	my God my (soul)	114	7		Korah ( <i>maskil</i> )	Individual Lament
43	(let them bring me) to thy holy hill	46	3		Untitled	Individual Lament (longing for Zion)
42–43	<i>and in the night, his song (is with me)</i>	160	9			
44	(you have made us) a scorn (to our neighbours)	173	14		Korah ( <i>maskil</i> )	Communal Lament
45	cassia (are your robes)	139	9		Korah	Kingship Song
46	the kingdoms (totter)	87	7	AC		Divine Response (YHWH's kingship)
47	the Lord with the sound (of a trumpet)	64	6			Divine Response
48	in the city of the LORD of host	100	9			Divine Response
49	generations (the foolish) called (their lands)	144	12			Individual Lament/Wisdom
50	(world's) fullness are mine	149	12	AC	Asaph	
51	(create in me a clean heart) O God!	137	12		hist	Petition
52	forever, he will snatch you (up)	82	7	AC	2x	Lament
53	(have the workers of wickedness no) knowledge	67	5			Lament
54	my life, not!	58	5		2x	Lament
55	but it is you, a man	174	14			Lament
56	for what crime?	107	8		hist; <i>mikhtam</i>	Petition/Trust
57	sharp. Be exalted	94	5, 6		hist; <i>al-tashheth</i>	Petition/Trust
58	(O God, break the teeth) in their mouths	85	7	PAC	<i>al-tashheth</i>	Petition/Trust
59	his strength for you!	134	10	AC	hist; <i>altashheth</i>	Petition/Trust
60	answer us, O God	102	7, 8		hist; <i>shushan</i>	Petition/Trust

Ps	Nexusword	Word count	MT verse	Alpha-betic Acrostic (AA)/Alpha-betic Poem (AC)	Macro-structure and Super-script	Content/Genre Motifs	
61	<i>selah.</i> For you	60	5, 6			Confidence	
62	(I will not ) be shaken. On God (rest my salvation)	96	7, 8		Jeduthun	Confidence	
63	and my lips	81	6		hist	Confidence	
64	snares, they say.	74	6			Confidence	
65	the roaring (of waves)	101	8			Thanksgiving	
66	you have tried us	131	10		A Psalm	Thanksgiving	
67	(let the) peoples (sing for joy)	49	5		A Song	Thanksgiving	
68	your captives	295	19			Thanksgiving	
69	(O Lord) turn (to me)	251	17			Lament	
70	“Aha! (Aha!)”	43	4	AC	for a memorial	Lament	
71	dishonor, who seek to injure me.	174	13		Untitled	Petition/Trust	
72	(he delivers) the needy’s cry for help	140	12		Solomon	Kingship	
71–72	<i>I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O holy one of Israel</i>		71:22c–d				
73	every morning	171	14			Didactic	
74	salvation in the midst (of the land)	174	12	AC		Communal Lament	
75	for (not from the east or west)	77	7	AC		Divine Response	
76	deep sleep, rider (and horse)	78	7			Divine Response	
77	it (is my grief)	141	11			Individual Lament	
78	they repented (and sought God)	473	34			Didactic	
79	do not remember against us (our former sins)	115	8	PAC		Communal Lament	
80	(and it took) deep root and fill the land	124	10			Communal Lament	
81	(I will admonish) in you	111	9			Divine Response	
82	no understanding	51	5			Divine Response	
83	as Jabin	109	10			Individual Lament	
84	early rain	101	7			Individual Lament (towards Zion)	
85	grant to us (your salvation)	83	8			Communal Lament (Petition)	
86	for you are great	128	10		Dav	Kingship Psalm (Lament)	
87	(behold) Philistia (and Tyre)	47	4			Divine Response	
88	(not) go out	131	9			Korah	Individual Lament
89	I will strike down (those who hate him), my faithfulness, (and lovingkindness will be with him)	334	24, 25	AC	Ethan	Individual Lament/Royal	

Figure 71: Nexusword, Content/Genre Motifs and Macrostructure Juxtaposition in Books II–III

Consider the following observations on Books II–III: (1) Beginning from the first Group of Korahite psalms (42–49), we note that it is bounded by Laments (42–43, 44, 49)<sup>1208</sup> with a single Kingship and three Divine Response psalms at the center (45, 46–48).<sup>1209</sup> The nexuswords of these psalms are Laments, a longing for Zion-temple from a distant land, which correspond to their content/genre motifs. The nexusword in 44:14 expresses a Communal Lament. In Ps 45, the nexusword is part of a description of the anointed king (45:8–9). The nexuswords for Pss 46–48 highlight the fall of the kingdoms upon the voice of YHWH, the “Divine Warrior” (46:7), with YHWH mounting as king (47:6) and him establishing Zion (48:9).<sup>1210</sup> These three nexuswords identify YHWH’s kingship over Israel and the foreign nations. In short, the nexuswords of the first Group of Korahite psalms correspond well with its characteristic content/genre.

(2) The second Group of Korahite psalms (84–89) is structured like the first. They are bounded by Laments (84–85, 88–89).<sup>1211</sup> Similarly, two psalms at the center of the

<sup>1208</sup> Psalms 42–43 are Individual Laments and Ps 44 is a Communal Lament. Scholars view Ps 49 as having genre elements of both Wisdom and Lament. Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 193, 198, 213; Craigie considered Pss 42–43 as “individual lament” and Ps 44 as a “national (or communal) lament.” Psalm 49, according to him, is a “wisdom psalm.” Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 325, 331, 358.

<sup>1209</sup> Longman considers Pss 46 and 48 as a “Zion Hymn” where “God makes his presence known to his people.” Psalm 47 is also a psalm that celebrates “God as King.” Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 201, 204, 209; Craigie categorized Pss 46 and 48 as “Songs of Zion,” a subcategory of hymns. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 342, 352.

<sup>1210</sup> Longman views YHWH as the Divine Warrior in Ps 46:8–10 with his ascendancy to kingship in 47:5–7, Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 205, 208; Craigie viewed Ps 47 as “enthronement psalm” or “victory hymn.” Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 348.

<sup>1211</sup> Longman identifies Ps 84 as a Zion Hymn; Ps 85 as a Communal Lament; Ps 88 as an Individual Lament and Ps 89 as both a Royal hymn and Community Lament. Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 310, 312, 319, 322; Tate noted Ps 84 as a psalm containing “mixed elements although it is usually described as a hymn which expresses devotion to the temple in Jerusalem.” He argued that Ps 85 is a “prayer for the favor and saving work of Yahweh.” For him, Ps 88 is an

Group are identified as Kingship (Davidic) and Divine Response psalms respectively.<sup>1212</sup> Psalm 84:5–7 describes the worshippers en-route to Zion, passing through the valley of “Baka” (“weeping”).<sup>1213</sup> Longman notes the worshippers “bring life-giving water to the area in the form of springs and rains.”<sup>1214</sup> Thus the nexusword, “early rain” (84:7), is a metaphor for “blessing,” found at the valley of weeping (Lament).

The nexusword in Ps 85:8 is a cry to YHWH for salvation. While Ps 86 begins as a Lament, the center of the psalm highlights YHWH’s kingship.<sup>1215</sup> All nations will come to worship him. This universality of YHWH, likewise, characterizes the nexusword of Ps 88. In Ps 89, the nexusword identifies YHWH’s steadfast love for his son whose kingship will be established. YHWH would also strike down all those who hate him.<sup>1216</sup> Like the

individual lament and Ps 89 is a mixed genre, consisting of lament and “Hymnic praise” (vv. 2–3, 6–19), “Recall of divine oracle about David” (vv. 4–5, 20–38) and Lament (vv. 39–52). Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 355, 367, 413.

<sup>1212</sup> Longman argues that Ps 87 is “about Zion” and “God makes his presence known in the world.” Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 317; Tate classified Ps 87 as “a poem which praises Zion as the city of God and the center of life.” Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 387.

<sup>1213</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 311. This also recalls the place of “weeping” (*הַבְּכִים*) in Judges 2:1, 5. Perhaps we can see a parallel between this place of “weeping” in Judges 2 and the “valley of weeping” in Ps 84. Both contexts locate Israel’s disobedience and falling into the hands of foreigners, accompanied by a longing to be established at Zion or Canaan, the land of the promised inheritance.

<sup>1214</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 311.

<sup>1215</sup> Psalm 86 may be classified as a Lament. However, its center core relates to YHWH’s kingship and supremacy. Zenger also noted that the Davidic superscription describes the king “not as the battling and victorious king, but rather as the suffering servant of YHWH.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2*, 370–71.

<sup>1216</sup> The nexusword of Ps 89 highlights YHWH’s kingship in a psalm that consists of both lament and praise.

first Korahite Group, the nexuswords of the second Korahite Group correspond to its genre content to some extent.

(3) When we compare the first and second Korahite Groups, they parallel each other not just in genre structure, but also in nexusword content. The Individual Laments at the beginning of each Korahite Group (42–43, 84) are expressed vis-à-vis the Zion-temple. The Communal Laments that follow (44, 85) identify nexuswords that are speeches directed to God. The Kingship songs (45, 86) and Divine Responses (46–48, 87) are descriptions of the king and how he is to act. The final psalm in each Group (49, 89) are mixed in genre. Psalm 49 is both a Lament and Wisdom<sup>1217</sup> psalm whereas Ps 89 is both a Lament and Kingship psalm.

Korahite Group I	Genre	Nexusword Motif	Korahite Group II
42–43	Individual Lament	Zion-centered	84
44	Communal Lament	People's cry to God	85
45	Kingship Song	Descriptions of the king	86
46–48	Divine Response (YHWH's kingship)	YHWH's response	87
49	Mixed genre. Lament, Wisdom	Psalmist's despondence and YHWH's kingship	88, 89

Figure 72: Genre-nexusword Parallels in the Korahite Groups

Together, the first and last psalms in these two Korahite Groups (42–43, 84; 49, 88–89) contain the leitmotifs of Wisdom (or Torah)-Kingship-Zion, seen throughout the Psalter (e.g., 1–2, 18–19). These two Korahite Groups bind the Davidic and Asaphite<sup>1218</sup> Groups at the center which we will discuss next.

<sup>1217</sup> Craigie called Ps 49 a “wisdom psalm” with similar didactic themes as the Book of Job. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 358

<sup>1218</sup> Psalm 50 will be treated together with Pss 73–83.

(4) Consider the nexuswords in Pss 51–71. The nexusword in Ps 51 is a petition cry, “O God,” and the nexuswords in Pss 52–55 identify the psalmist’s complaint to YHWH against his enemies.<sup>1219</sup> In Ps 56, the nexusword reflects a trust in YHWH that he will punish the wicked. The nexusword of Ps 57 straddles across two Masoretic verses. The first expresses “sharp” swords of accusations by his enemies whereas the second word is an ascription of YHWH’s “highness.” Together, they express the psalmist’s trust in YHWH. The nexuswords of Pss 58–60 express the psalmist’s trust in YHWH’s victory over his enemies,<sup>1220</sup> his strength and his response. In similar ways, the nexuswords of Pss 61–63 are all found to express trust in God,<sup>1221</sup> corresponding to their characteristic content/genre motifs. While the nexusword in Ps 64:6 speaks of the psalmist’s enemies, its complete expression underscores the confidence that they will not escape YHWH’s judgment.

<sup>1219</sup> The difficulty of assigning genre category for Ps 52 is acknowledged as it can be seen as a “prophetic judgment discourse,” “wisdom psalm,” or a “lament,” depending on which part of the psalm is in focus. Similarly, Ps 53 is hard to categorize. It can be considered as a “prophetic lament.” Hossfeld categorized Ps 54 as a “petitionary prayer with integrated lament.” He has not assigned a genre for Ps 55, but repeatedly characterized it as “a plea to God.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2, 28, 40, 46, 52*; This difficulty of classifying Ps 52 is noted by Tate. For him, Ps 53 contains a “lament by the speaker regarding personal and social conditions.” Psalm 54 is an “individual lament” with elements of “thanksgiving.” Likewise, Ps 55 is an “individual lament, though it has strong statements of assurance and exhortation.” Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 35, 41, 45, 55.

<sup>1220</sup> Hossfeld noted that “Psalm 58 can most properly be assigned to the mixed genre ‘Wisdom song.’ Psalm 59 consists of a movement ‘from petition via lament to expression of trust.’” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2, 79, 86–87*; Tate argued that Ps 58 begins with an “Arraignment of unjust leaders” and ends with an “Assurance of the righteous.” In similar ways, Ps 59 begins with a “Call for help, lament and prayer” and ends with a “Refrain about confidence in God.” Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 85, 96.

<sup>1221</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 2, 106, 113, 121*; Tate described Ps 61 as “more affirmation than it is petition.” Psalm 62 is “clearly one of trust and affirmation” and Ps 63, based on vv. 4–9, “indicate clearly that this is a psalm of confidence.” Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 112, 119, 125.

The nexuswords in Pss 65–67 describe YHWH stilling the waves (65:8),<sup>1222</sup> purifying his people (66:10) who would sing joyfully (67:5). The nexusword of Ps 68 highlights YHWH’s ascendancy to the throne, victoriously leading a train of “captives.” The nexusword in Pss 69 takes a turn in the form of a Lament,<sup>1223</sup> once again highlighting the desperate condition of the psalmist and the oppression of his enemies. The nexusword in Ps 70 captures the enemies’ mocking voice and Ps 71 expresses the psalmist’s trust in YHWH and petitions against his enemies.<sup>1224</sup> The nexusword of Ps 72 does not correspond directly to Kingship. However, when read with the preceding verse, it describes the actions of the king of kings.<sup>1225</sup>

Note that DC-II is framed by a Didactic/Prophetic (50) and Kingship psalm (72).<sup>1226</sup> Both psalms also contain the motif of Zion, but in this case, the perfect beauty of YHWH shines forth and his rule “produces” from Zion (יְהוָה; Ps 72:17; cf. 50:2; 72:8).

(5) Like the Korahite Groups, the Asaphite psalms are structurally divided into two Groups (50, 73–77 and 78–83) that parallel each other. The nexusword of Ps 50

<sup>1222</sup> Goldingay notes that the stilling of waves underscore YHWH’s power over the “tumultuous dynamic forces” of nature. Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:279. On genre classification of these psalms, see Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 250–255.

<sup>1223</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 262; Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 192.

<sup>1224</sup> Pss 50, 66, 67, 71 and 72 in Book II are not Davidic. Book II is not bounded by Davidic psalms.

<sup>1225</sup> If we include three words (words joined by *maqqep* are taken as a single word) from either side of אֶלְيִצְאֵל אֱלֹהֵינוּ (“needy’s cry for help” in 72:12), the nexusword will be כָּל-גּוֹיִם יַעֲבֹדוּהוּ כִּי-יִצְאֵל אֱלֹהֵינוּ (“For all nations will serve him, for he delivers the needy’s cry for help, the poor and those who has no helper”). This entire phrase is still the arithmetic center based on my method of count.

<sup>1226</sup> While many scholars consider it as a Prophetic psalm, didactic or wisdom element may be seen in Ps 50:7–14, recalling YHWH’s responses to Job at the end of the book.

recalls YHWH's responses to Job, explicating a didactic knowledge of God's ownership of the natural world. In Psalm 73:14–15, the psalmist struggles to know YHWH's purposes with regards to the prosperity of the wicked.

The nexusword of Psalm 74 relates to YHWH's kingship more than a Communal Lament. Longman identifies this as a Lament<sup>1227</sup> and Goldingay calls this psalm a "community prayer."<sup>1228</sup> This may be an anomaly in our analysis, though the context of the nexusword of Ps 74 is an appeal to YHWH's character and deeds in the midst of a Lament.<sup>1229</sup> The nexuswords of Pss 75 and 76 are both expressions of divine judgment and deliverance. The final psalm in the first group of Asaphite psalms has a pronoun as its nexusword (77:11), appealing to YHWH's outstretched hand in the midst of his grief.

Psalm 78, the first in the second group of Asaphite psalms (akin to its parallel, Ps 50), is a Didactic/Historical psalm.<sup>1230</sup> The nexusword captures Israel's returning to YHWH (78:34). Psalms 79 and 80 are Communal Laments.<sup>1231</sup> The nexusword in 79:8 highlights the community under the wrath of God. Like Ps 74, the nexusword of Ps 80 is an appeal to YHWH's character and deeds in the midst of a Lament. The figurative imagery of the clearing of the ground and flourishing of the vine (nexusword in Ps 80)

<sup>1227</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 278.

<sup>1228</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:423; Tate noted that the "language of vv 1–11 and vv 18–23 is clearly that of communal lament." Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 246.

<sup>1229</sup> Psalm 81 is also an Alphabetic Composition (AC). The AC usually marks strategic psalms with key motifs of Torah/wisdom and kingship.

<sup>1230</sup> Longman argues that the opening stanza "presents itself well within the tradition of wisdom literature." Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 289.

<sup>1231</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 294, 297.

refer to the conquest of Canaan and Israel's establishment,<sup>1232</sup> though subsequent descriptions show that the vine will be cut down and burnt (80:17). Like Ps 74, Ps 80 is the first of three psalms (cf. 74–76, 80–82) that emphasizes divine power and deliverance.

The nexusword of Ps 81 recalls YHWH's testing of the people in Exod 15:26, and a call for YHWH to rescue the poor and needy from the wicked respectively.<sup>1233</sup> The nexusword in Ps 82:5 may refer to the “wicked” in the previous verse. It expresses the ignorance and tottering of the wicked before YHWH who is the judge of the earth. It is unclear whether Ps 83 is an Individual or Communal Lament,<sup>1234</sup> but the psalmist's complaint against the nations plotting against YHWH is plain. The nexusword in Ps 83 recalls “Jabin,” the Canaanite king (cf. Judg 4:2–3) who had, at one time, oppressed Israel for twenty years. Discussions related to the Asaphite Groups are summarized in Figure 73.

<b>Asaphite Group I</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Nexusword Motif</b>	<b>Asaphite Group II</b>
50, 73	Didactic/Sapiential	Repentance and seeking God	78
74	Communal Lament	Appeal to character and deeds of YHWH in the midst of lamenting for Zion	79–80
75–76	Divine Response	Divine judgment and deliverance	81–82
77	Lament	Calling out to YHWH	83

Figure 73: Genre-nexusword Parallels in Asaphite Groups

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<sup>1232</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 299–300.

<sup>1233</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:552, 2:565–66.

<sup>1234</sup> Tate noted that this psalm “contains mixed elements, although it is usually described as a hymn which expresses devotion to the temple in Jerusalem.” Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 355.

In brief, we observe that the nexuswords of the psalms in Books II–III generally correspond well to their characteristic content/genre motifs and various macrostructural trajectories in which they reside. While some nexuswords may not be obvious *prima facie*, it is possible to show that they still elicit a certain characteristic motif that is important and coherent in the larger context. To complete our analysis, we will now focus on Books IV–V.

### 5.1.6 BOOKS IV–V

Ps	Nexusword	Word count	MT verse	Alpha-betic Acrostic (AA)/Alpha-betic Poem (AC)	Macro-structure and Super-script	Content/Genre Motifs
90	we bring to an end, our years like a sigh	125	9		Moses	Sapiential/Supplication
91	you will look (with your eyes)	99	8		Untitled	Trust
92	(you, O LORD) are on high forever!	100	9		A Psalm, Song	Thanksgiving/ Didactic
93	floods	41	3		YHWH Malak	YHWH Malak; Praise/Trust
94	to give him rest (both words start with lamed)	146	13	AC	Untitled	YHWH Malak; Confidence
95	for (he is our God)	77	7	AC	Untitled	YHWH Malak; Praise
94, 95	your steadfast love, O LORD, held me up. (3-word center)	223	94:18			
96	ascribe (to the LORD)	95	8	PAC	Untitled	YHWH Malak; Praise
97	all who serve idols	84	7		YHWH Malak	YHWH Malak; Praise
98	sing praises	67	4		A Psalm, Song	YHWH Malak; Praise
99	holy (is he)	77	5		YHWH Malak	YHWH Malak; Praise
100	we are his people	36	3	PAC	Thanks	Thanks/Praise
101	secretly his neighbour	70	5		David	Royal
102	for (you servants) find pleasure (in her stones)	183	15		Afflict	Individual Lament
103	(he removed) our transgression (from us)	141	12	AC	David	Thanksgiving Prayer
104	(the cliffs are) a refuge (for rock badgers)	233	18		I bless	Song on Creator and Sustainer
105	Jacob sojourned (in the land of ham)	256	23	PAC	hodu	Remembrance; Canonical history
106	they did not believe (his word)	287	24	AC	hallelujah	Remembrance; Canonical history
107	let them recount (his works)	253	22		hodu	Thanksgiving; Canonical

Ps	Nexusword	Word count	MT verse	Alpha-betic Acrostic (AA)/Alpha-betic Poem (AC)	Macro-structure and Super-script	Content/Genre Motifs
	with joy)					history/wisdom
108	(I will measure out) the valley (of succoth)	85	8		David	Petition, a song
109	despondent (in the heart)	201	16			Individual Lament/Psalm of Justice
110	your youth	55	3			Kingship; Divine Response
111	to his people, to give [note <i>lamed</i> ]	68	6			Confessional Hymn; Torah/wisdom
112	remembered forever	72	6		<i>hallelu-jah</i>	
111–112	<i>praise God, blessed is the man!</i>	140	112.1			
113	who (is like the LORD)?	51	5		<i>hallelu-jah</i>	Praise; Theocentric
114	what was it?	47	5		Untitled	Praise; Theocentric
115	(he is) their help and their shield	118	9		Untitled	Praise; Theocentric
116	I believe	109	10		Untitled	Individual Thanksgiving or Confession; Universal
117	for he is great [12-word psalm]	12	2		<i>hallelu-jah</i>	Praise; Universal
113–117	<i>trust!</i>	337	115:11			
118	the (right hand of) the LORD has done (valiantly)	178	15		<i>hodu</i>	Thanksgiving; Kingship
119	(forever) your word will stand (in the heavens [first line of the <i>lamed</i> canto])	934	89		<i>ashre</i>	Torah/Wisdom Song
120	warriors' sharpened (arrows)	42	4		Songs of Ascents	Lament
121	(no) sleep, watcher (of Israel)	46	4			Communal Trust
122	for (there the thrones are set for judgment)	57	5			Zion hymn
123	our eyes (look to the LORD God)	35	2			Lament/Petition
124	(the stream would have) swept over our soul	54	4			Thanksgiving
125	the wickedness (not rest over the righteous)	43	3			Confidence/Trust; Rule of the wicked
126	the LORD	45	3			Mixed; Thanksgiving/Prayer/Lament
127	he gives (to his beloved)	49	2			Wisdom/Zion
128	(shoots of) olive (around your table)	43	3			Wisdom
129	turned backwards (those who hate Zion)	50	5			Mixed; Thanksgiving/Petition/Lament; Rule of the wicked
130	(I wait) for the LORD	47	5			Lament
131	(surely) I have composed (calmed myself)	27	2			Confidence
132	the LORD has sworn (to David)	109	11			Royal; Confidence; Zion
133	the beard of Aaron	29	2			Wisdom
134	in the night; lift up your hands	20	1, 2,			Praise

Ps	Nexusword	Word count	MT verse	Alpha-betic Acrostic (AA)/Alpha-betic Poem (AC)	Macro-structure and Super-script	Content/Genre Motifs
133–134	( <i>for there the LORD has commanded (the blessing, life forevermore)</i> )	49	133.3c			
120–134	( <i>he gives) to his beloved, sleep.</i>	696	127.2			
135	(king) of Amorite, and Og (king of Bashan)	144	11		<i>hallelu-jah</i>	Great Hallel
136	(to him who divided the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love) endures forever	159	13		<i>hodu</i>	Great Hallel
137	let my tongue cling	68	6		Untitled	Janus psalm
138	Lord. For (great is the glory of the LORD)	62	5	AC	David	YHWH's kingship
139	in the womb of my mother	160	13			Prayer/Meditation
140	(give ear to the) voice of my pleas for mercy, O LORD!	104	7			Individual Lament
141	for continually (my prayer is against their evil deeds)	81	5			Individual Lament
142	no refuge remains (for me)	68	5		David (hist)	Individual Lament
143	answer me O LORD	102	7		David	Individual Lament
144	O God, a (new) song!	120	9	PAC		Praise
145	they tell of your power!	126	11			YHWH's kingship
138–145	a prayer ( <i>superscription of Ps 142:1</i> )	823	142:1			
146	the one who keeps faith (forever)	74	6		<i>hallelu-jah</i>	Individual
147	his delights is not in the leg (of man)	126	10		<i>hallelu-jah</i>	Israel
148	hail	87	8		<i>hallelu-jah</i>	Cosmic and Israel
149	(let the) godly (exult in glory)	57	5		<i>hallelu-jah</i>	Faithful Israel
150	harp and lyre	34	3	AC	<i>hallelu-jah</i>	Universal
146–150	his words to Jacob	378	147:19			

Figure 74: Nexusword, Content/Genre Motifs and Macrostructure Juxtaposition in Books IV–V<sup>1235</sup>

<sup>1235</sup> See chapters 1–3 and the subsequent section for details on how superscriptions play a role in the macrostructure of the Psalter based on numerical techniques.

The following observations are in order: (1) Psalm 90 is a prayer with wisdom elements.<sup>1236</sup> Its nexusword captures the motif of the transitoriness of human life, a common feature of sapiential works. Psalm 91:8 encapsulates the psalmist's trust<sup>1237</sup> in YHWH. Psalm 92 is a Praise and Thanksgiving hymn<sup>1238</sup> and its nexusword proclaims "YHWH is forever on high!" The nexuswords of these three opening psalms of Book IV trace the perspective of man's transitoriness (90), an unwavering trust that YHWH will judge the wicked (91), and the exultation of YHWH (92). They are connected with the contrasting concept of human transitoriness and permanent establishment (90:1; 91:1, 9, 10; 92:12–13). Between the two metaphoric and arboreal descriptions of transitoriness and permanence (90:5–6; 92:7, 12–13), the psalmist envisages the way to escape the transitoriness in Ps 92. He will see the deliverance (92:3–7, 10–13) and "recompense of the wicked" (92:8) when he makes YHWH his place of refuge and trust (92:1–2, 14–16). This trajectory culminates in Ps 93 with a praise of YHWH who destroys the wicked and establishes the righteous. The three nexuswords identified in Pss 90–92 correspond exactly with this trajectory.

Psalms 90–92 prepare us for the nexusword characterization of the YHWH *Malak* psalms (93–100) where YHWH's kingship and holiness (96:8; 99:5); his relationship

<sup>1236</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:22; Tate noted that the psalm is "a communal prayer composed of grateful reflection, complaint, and petitions for a gracious divine action." Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 437.

<sup>1237</sup> Goldingay notes that this is an individual declaration of YHWH's protection addressed to the king (cf. Ps 20). Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:39; Tate saw this as "a prayer with didactic/sermonic intention." Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 451.

<sup>1238</sup> Goldingay notes that it is a Thanksgiving hymn with didactic elements. Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:52–53; Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 464.

with his people (94:13<sup>1239</sup>; 95:7; 100:3); his power over the forces of nature, politics<sup>1240</sup> and other gods (93:3; 97:7), are exulted (98:4). The YHWH *Malak* psalms are primarily psalms of Trust, Confidence or Praise.<sup>1241</sup> The nexuswords in these psalms correspond well to their genre content.

Psalms 94 and 95 can be seen as a single AC.<sup>1242</sup> Interestingly, the nexusword based on my method of counting is “YHWH” in 94:18, which corresponds to the main idea in Pss 93–100. This nexusword is at the center of the three-word colon that reads, “your steadfast love, YHWH, held me up.” This colon also summarizes the focus of the entire YHWH *Malak* group that YHWH rules and acts faithfully.

(2) The nexuswords of the three Davidic psalms (101–103; DC–III) express the quintessential thoughts of each psalm and its content/genre motifs respectively. The nexusword of Ps 101 highlights the righteous administration of the king who destroys wickedness from his house.<sup>1243</sup> Psalm 102:15 expresses the lament of YHWH’s servants regarding the ruins of Zion. In Psalm 103:12, the psalmist gives thanks to YHWH for removing his transgressions.<sup>1244</sup>

<sup>1239</sup> Both words in the nexusword in 94:13 begin with *lamed* (ל טיקשׁתָּל).

<sup>1240</sup> On Ps 93:3, Goldingay referenced Isa 17:12–13, where the “roar of waters is a figure for the roar of the nations. The river might thus be political powers such as the great empires.” Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:69; Tate noted that Ps 93 is a “hymn or praise psalm.” Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 474.

<sup>1241</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:64, 3:75, 3:88, 3:101; 3:110; 3:119; 3:126; 3:134.

<sup>1242</sup> Alphabetic Compositions (AC) will be discussed in the following section.

<sup>1243</sup> Longman sees Ps 101 as a Royal song, Ps 102 as an Individual Lament and Ps 103 as a Thanksgiving Prayer. Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 350, 352, 355.

<sup>1244</sup> See our discussion in §4.4. A parallel thought progress between the triad Pss 90–92 and 101–103 can be seen: they underscore the righteous administration of the king (cf. 90:12, 17; 101:5–8); two

(3) The nexuswords of Pss 104–106 also accord with their content/genre motifs.

Psalm 104 “celebrates God as the Creator and Sustainer of all life on earth.”<sup>1245</sup> Its nexusword captures this content/genre motif. Psalms 105 and 106 are both “remembrance psalms”<sup>1246</sup> that trace the canonical history of ancient Israel. The nexusword of Ps 105 identifies Jacob’s journey and that of Ps 106 identifies the crux of the issue, that is, Israel’s inability to enter the land due to disbelief. This nexusword locates the final psalm at the juncture between Books IV and V, as Israel yearned to be gathered from all places to an inhabited city.

(4) Book V begins with Ps 107, a wisdom psalm that is closely related to Pss 104–106.<sup>1247</sup> The nexusword of Ps 107 encapsulates the entirety of the psalm and corresponds to the genre of Thanksgiving, recalling with joy the works of YHWH in Israel’s canonical history. The three Davidic psalms that follow are a Petition,<sup>1248</sup> Individual Lament,<sup>1249</sup> and Kingship hymn.<sup>1250</sup>

(5) Psalms 111–112 are a pair of Confessional AAs with clear Torah and sapiential elements. Like Ps 1, they address YHWH’s blessings to the righteous man who

different outcomes befalling the wicked and YHWH’s servants (cf. 91:8; 102:14, 28), and finally the psalmist’s restored state before YHWH (cf. 92:12–13; 103:12–13).

<sup>1245</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 358,

<sup>1246</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 364, 268.

<sup>1247</sup> Zenger argued that “Psalm 107, *as a whole*, is so strongly linked, both semantically and conceptually, with the preceding Psalm 106 that it must be regarded as a deliberate continuation, though with an altered perspective.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 101.

<sup>1248</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 117.

<sup>1249</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 128; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:276.

<sup>1250</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 144–45.

delights in his law. The nexusword of Ps 111 is a confession that YHWH will לְעַמּוֹ לְתִתְהַנֵּן (“give to his people”) the inheritance of the nations. The nexusword of Ps 112 confesses that the righteous will be לִזְכָּר עוֹלָם (“remembered forever”). Both nexuswords begin with a *lamed*. When these two AAs are counted as a single composition, their combined nexusword is found in the first verse of Ps 112, “Praise God, blessed is the man,” which corresponds to both ideas found in the separate nexuswords.

Framed by *hallelujah* in the superscriptions, Pss 113–115, 117 are deemed as psalms of Praise or Confidence.<sup>1251</sup> Psalm 116 has been classified as an Individual Thanksgiving or Confession psalm.<sup>1252</sup> The nexuswords of Pss 113, 115 and 117, and the rhetorical question in Ps 114:5 are all theocentric in nature, clearly capturing the content/genre motif of Praise. Likewise, the nexusword of Ps 116 expresses a confession of trust in YHWH for the present and future because of his grace (חֶסֶד; 116:5) and mighty deeds in the past. The nexusword in Ps 116:10, “I believe,” clearly expresses confidence and trust in YHWH. When I count the words in Pss 113–117 as a single composition, the nexusword is “trust” at the center colon of Ps 115:11, corresponding exactly with the nexusword of Ps 116!

Longman considers Ps 118 as a “corporate thanksgiving that celebrates a military victory” brought about by God, and Ps 119 is an acrostic “wisdom song” exulting the qualities of YHWH’s law.<sup>1253</sup> The nexusword of Ps 118, based on my count, falls exactly

<sup>1251</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:316, 3:321, 3:327, 3:349; Longman sees Pss 113, 114 as celebratory songs. Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 389, 391.

<sup>1252</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:338.

<sup>1253</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 399, 402–403, 408.

on the two words at the center of the phrase, **יְהָוָה עֲשָׂה חִיל** (“YHWH does”; 118:15).

These two words, with its entire colon of four words (still the arithmetic center), coincide exactly with the meaningful/rhetorical centers identified by Labuschagne and van der Lugt.<sup>1254</sup> Such accuracy is uncanny. The nexusword, “your [YHWH] word will stand” in Ps 119:89, falls exactly on the first line of the *lamed* canto and captures the quintessential thought of Ps 119.

(6) Psalm 120 is a Lament.<sup>1255</sup> Its nexusword is a complaint against the enemies’ vicious attacks. Psalm 121 is a Communal psalm of Confidence/Trust.<sup>1256</sup> Its nexusword is a profession of trust in the unceasing keeping of Israel by YHWH. Psalm 122 is a Hymn of celebration and Prayer for Zion.<sup>1257</sup> The verse which the nexusword resides in identifies two crucial features in Zion—judgment thrones and the house of David. In §3.1.3, we have seen how Pss 122, 127–128 and 132 trace a development of the motif of the Zion city.<sup>1258</sup> The nexuswords in Pss 122:5, 127:2 and 132:11 capture this trajectory,

<sup>1254</sup> Labuschagne “Psalm 118— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–6 [cited 10 March 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps118.pdf>; van der Lugt; *CAS III*, 288.

<sup>1255</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 410; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:448.

<sup>1256</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 413; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:455; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 320.

<sup>1257</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 416; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:462; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 343.

<sup>1258</sup> First, in Ps 122:5, the pilgrims desire a city of justice that is administered through a Davidic king. Second, this seems to be envisioned in Pss 127–128, enabled by YHWH’s providence for his beloved people. Third, this motif of a righteous rule through the Davidic house envisioned as an ideal, well-provisioned and just society, becomes clearer in Ps 132:15–18.

highlighting the locale of Zion where justice is sought; blessings through YHWH's provision alone, and YHWH's promises to David.<sup>1259</sup>

The nexusword of Ps 123 is a lament/petition to YHWH while the nexusword of Ps 124 is a collective thanksgiving in recognition of what YHWH has done.<sup>1260</sup> The proclamation that the “wicked will not rest over the allotment of the righteous” in Ps 125:3 expresses the confidence of the psalm.<sup>1261</sup> Psalm 126 is a Mixed psalm. Zenger deemed this as a “petition for daily demonstration of YHWH’s power to bless.”<sup>1262</sup> The colon that carries the nexusword in Ps 126:3 (“YHWH has done great things for us”) corresponds well to the core thought of the psalm.

The nexusword, “olives” (**נֶזֶת**) in Ps 128:3, is a simile for many children around the table, identifying a flourishing scene in the house of those who fear the LORD. This recalls Ps 52:10 (cf. 92:12), the only other occurrence of **נֶזֶת** in the Psalms. Furthermore, both instances of this word are used in connection with the “house.” They describe the flourishing outcome of one under the protection and providence of the father’s house. In other words, the lexeme “olive” in the Psalter has a very clear and distinct usage. Together with Ps 1:3, where the righteous is planted in “Zion,” they encapsulate the

<sup>1259</sup> Psalms 127 and 132 are deemed as wisdom poem and royal/confidence hymn. Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 425, 440; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:498, 3:542; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 3, 381, 384, 457.

<sup>1260</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 418, 420; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:470, 3:477; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 3, 346, 353.

<sup>1261</sup> Zenger considered this psalm a petition and psalm of Zion. Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 3, 362, 363; Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 421; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:484, 3:542;

<sup>1262</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 3, 375; Cf. Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 423; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:490.

flourishing growth of the righteous under the care and house of God.<sup>1263</sup> This is a good example of the technique of *Fernverbindung*.<sup>1264</sup> YHWH’s providence from Zion (his house) in Pss 127:1 and 128:5 frame the entire imagery of blessings in the house of those who fear the LORD. Hence, the nexuswords of Pss 127 (“beloved”) and 128 capture the quintessential focus of these two psalms.

Psalm 129 is a Mixed psalm.<sup>1265</sup> It has a focus on the rule of the wicked, referring to those who hate Zion. The nexusword in Ps 129:5 captures this thematic focus, that the enemies will eventually be “turned backwards.” Psalm 130 is a Lament/Petition.<sup>1266</sup> The colon where the nexusword resides expresses the psalmist’s lament. In contrast, the nexusword of Ps 131 expresses the psalmist’s trust.<sup>1267</sup>

The nexusword of Ps 133 falls on an interesting expression (“the beard of Aaron”) that has been well discussed.<sup>1268</sup> The focus on the anointing is emphasized by the

<sup>1263</sup> See our earlier discussion on Pss 1–2 where we argue that the locale of the streams of water in Ps 1 parallels Zion in Ps 2. On the genre of Ps 128, see Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 427; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:507.

<sup>1264</sup> Lexical or certain phonological, semantic, syntactical, and grammatical parallels that bind distant psalms.

<sup>1265</sup> Zenger noted that it “oscillates between thanksgiving song, psalm of confidence, popular psalm of Lament and of vengeance.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 3, 409.

<sup>1266</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 430; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:522; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 3, 426.

<sup>1267</sup> Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 432; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:534; Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 3, 448.

<sup>1268</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 3, 470–471, 474–477; Armstrong compares Pss 133 and 134 in the MT with various extant Qumran manuscripts. He links the priestly anointing of Aaron in Pss 133 with 132. Ryan M. Armstrong, “Psalms Dwelling Together in Unity: The Placement of Psalms 133 and 134 in Two Different Psalms Collections,” *JBL* 131, no. 3 (2012): 487–506, [499].

repetitions of “beard” (רָקִים). If the entire colon, “Aaron’s beard,” is missing,<sup>1269</sup> the anointing in Ps 133:2 can be associated only with the anointed king in 132:10 in the immediate context. Following Dobbs-Allsopp, Armstrong notes that “the only other biblical instance of רֶרֶי being used in connection with a beard is when spit ran down David’s beard in 1 Sam 21:14,” further reinforcing the association between anointing and the king in Ps 132:10.<sup>1270</sup> The mention of “Aaron’s beard,” however, limits this association. As already stated, the role of Aaron highlights the “completion” of YHWH’s house which he will build (127:1). The role of Psalms 133–36 captures what follows after the completion of the Zion temple—the anointing of Aaron, the installation of the Levitical priests to minister day and night, and the call to bless YHWH.<sup>1271</sup> The nexuswords in Pss 133:2 and 134:1, 2 capture the motifs of the anointing of Aaron and the installation of the Levitical priests.

We have also discussed how Pss 135–136 function as Janus psalms, in relation to Pss 133–34<sup>1272</sup> and 137. The framing of the ministers in the house of the LORD, and of the house of Aaron and Levi in Ps 135:1–2, 19–21, relate to the completion of the YHWH’s house. The 26 lines of פֵי לְעֹזֶל מִחְסָדָה in Ps 136 recall 2 Chron 7, where the Levites and the priests gave praise to YHWH using this formula at the consecration of

<sup>1269</sup> Note Bardtke’s suggestion (in *BHS*) that the entire phrase, “the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes” may be deleted.

<sup>1270</sup> Armstrong, “Psalms Dwelling Together in Unity,” 499.

<sup>1271</sup> Zenger notes that Ps 134 is like “a ‘farewell’ to the pilgrims as they return to their daily world, especially if Ps 134:3a is understood as an introductory quotation of the whole of the Aaronic blessing in Num 6:24–26.” Hossfeld et al., *Psalms* 3, 487.

<sup>1272</sup> Note that Ps 133 has been classified as a poem with wisdom elements and Ps 134 a praise psalm. Longman, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, 438, 440; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:564, 3:571.

YHWH's house. At the same time, the impressionistic trace of the canonical history in Ps 135:4–18 and the first half of every verse in Ps 136:4–24<sup>1273</sup> is a trajectory toward Ps 137. The nexuswords of Pss 135, 136 identify with this latter trajectory. Once again, we observe that the nexuswords of Pss 133–136 correspond well to its macrostructural thematic-trajectory.

Van der Lugt considers Pss 133 and 134 as a single composition.<sup>1274</sup> By his method, he arrives at Ps 133:3c–d as the rhetorical center of the composition. I have also arrived at Ps 133:3c by my method. The meaningful phrase, “for there [Zion], YHWH has commanded blessings,” is a fitting expression of the entire SOA. When I count the entire SOA as a single composition, the colon carrying the nexusword for the entire Pss 120–134 is at Ps 127:2c—“he gives to his beloved sleep.” This colon is the exact colon for the nexusword of Ps 127. It is striking that the entire SOA and the individual Ps 127 (at the center) share the same colon as their arithmetic centers!

(7) Psalm 137 is a Community Lament. Its nexusword expresses a sense of dryness when one is far from Zion, corresponding well to the content/genre motif of the psalm. The following eight Davidic psalms are framed by two YHWH's kingship psalms (138, 145) with four Laments at the center (140–143). Psalms 139 and 144 are psalms of Meditation and Praise respectively.<sup>1275</sup> All their nexuswords correspond to their respective genre content accurately. When I counted all the words in Pss 138–145 as a

<sup>1273</sup> Jacob Bazak, “The Geometric-Figurative Structure of Psalm 136,” *VT* 35, no. 2 (1985): 129–38, [130].

<sup>1274</sup> Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 416.

<sup>1275</sup> Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3*, 524–525.

single composition, the nexusword falls on the last word of Ps 142:1, נַדְבָּת ("a prayer").

Its location, the mathematical center of the entire final DC, is also the only historical superscription after Book II. This nexusword of the entire Collection—"a prayer"—reinforces our argument that there is always a recurring motif of Davidic supplication in the final Group of each Section of the Psalter. Here, we have another example of our quantitative technique corresponding to our macrostructural and metanarratival arguments.

(8) The final five psalms in the Psalter are *hallelujah* psalms, expressing a totality of praise to YHWH. The nexuswords of these five psalms identify YHWH as the "one who keeps faith" (146:6) and who "does not delight in the legs [strength]" of men (147:10). Nature obeys him (148:8). As such, the "godly" can exult in glory (149:5) and praise YHWH with the "harp and lyre" (150:3).<sup>1276</sup>

The life of praise in Ps 150 is also the "blessed" life in Psalm 1.<sup>1277</sup> The glory of the godly in Ps 149 and their execution of the wicked (149:6–9) reflect the Son's vengeance over the nations in Ps 2:8–12.<sup>1278</sup> In a striking reversal, the rage of the rulers of the earth in Ps 2:3, will eventually be bounded by the *chasidim* in Ps 149:8. The

<sup>1276</sup> Apart from Pss 57, 108 and 150, the combination of "harp" and "lyre" is not found in a single verse elsewhere in the HB.

<sup>1277</sup> Cha notes, "Psalms 1 and 2 as the twofold introduction to the Hebrew Psalter invite us to make a decision to live a life of blessedness, which takes full account of the realities of life with valleys and peaks. Psalms 146–150 as the fivefold grand doxology to the entire Hebrew Psalter, one for each book, call us to lead a life of praise in spite of the valleys in our lives. Such a life is what the Hebrew Psalter calls 'blessed.'" Cha, "Psalms 146–150: The Final Hallelujah Psalms as a Fivefold Doxology to the Hebrew Psalter," 208–209.

<sup>1278</sup> Note that Pss 2:3, 9, 105:18; 107:14–16 and 149:8 are the only few psalms that use the terms, "iron" and "fetters" in close proximity and in the same context.

motifs associated with the nexuswords of Pss 149 and 150 are the theological climax expressed vis-à-vis the combined nexusword of Pss 1–2 (“against the LORD, and against his anointed one”).

Fittingly, the nexusword of Pss 146–150 as a single composition is “his word to Jacob” (147:19), recalling the call to Torah-piety in Ps 1. This expression is also the last reference in the POS for “Jacob” (§3.2.4). In sum, we see the twin motifs of YHWH’s kingship and the Torah in the nexusword of the final Hallel.

Hence, we conclude our discussion on the numerical techniques:

(1) The numerical technique of meaningful/rhetorical centers highlighted by Bazak, Labuschagne, van der Lugt and others provide the platform on which we built our analysis. Their analyses are limited primarily to a single or a pair of psalms and do not view the meaningful centers as linked to the macrostructure of the Psalter. Taking a departure from their work, I included all words in a psalm for word count (including superscriptions, postscripts and *selah*). Words joined by the *maqqep* are counted as a single word.

(2) Our results show that most, if not all, the nexuswords correspond to the thematic and genre focus of the individual psalms.<sup>1279</sup> They are plausibly not a separate aspect of the psalm as van der Lugt supposes. Furthermore, the nexusword of a

<sup>1279</sup> I recognize that genre categories are not always easy to assign, with scholars differing in their opinions. This is usually the case when a psalm consists of various elements of lament, confidence or praise. A detailed treatment of each psalm is not possible here. What I have tried to do was to determine if the nexusword corresponds with the content/genre motif of the psalm and macrostructural thematic trajectory. I have shown that most, if not all, nexuswords are illuminating of the macrostructural and metanarratival perspectives of the Psalter.

particular psalm is not detached from the contextual shape of that Collection/Group (e.g., the alternating Day-Night compositions of Pss 3–14).

(3) The quantitative technique is employed beyond the level of a single psalm. For instance, pairs of psalms such as Pss 1–2, 9–10, 29–30, 42–43, 94–95, 111–112, 133–134, and entire Collections such as 113–117, 138–145 and 146–150 show the nexusword method at work.

(4) The correspondence and alignment of the nexusword to the macrostructure and Metanarrative of the Psalter suggest that the quantitative technique is a formal technique in the design of the Psalter. They function to capture or condense, in terse form, an important motif in a psalm, explicating the macrostructure.

(5) By comparing the nexusword via my technique with the meaningful/rhetorical centers of Labuschagne and van der Lugt's work, we observe a striking correspondence (see Appendix A). In Books I–III, our findings converge in at least 70% of the psalms. In Books IV–V, this correspondence is more than 90%.<sup>1280</sup>

In the next section, we will explore how AAs and ACs plausibly function as macrostructuring devices.

<sup>1280</sup> Perhaps the final editor(s) had adopted multiple modes of word count in the Psalter. This, clearly, is speculative. A possible future work would be to study and compare the presence of *maqqep* in various Hebrew manuscripts of the Psalter.

## **5.2 ALPHABETICAL ACROSTIC (AA) AND ALPHABETIC COMPOSITION (AC) AS MACROSTRUCTURING DEVICES**

It was mentioned in the first chapter that acrostic poems in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt likely predate biblical acrostics (pp. 73–76). These ancient acrostics display interesting structuring techniques, as well as embed cryptic messages. We have also noted that epigraphic evidence of abecedaries has been found in Palestine in the preexilic period. Recall also that in Israel’s earliest poetry, the Song of the Sea, important poetic techniques such as a central emphasis of YHWH’s kingship was already in use. These points allow us to appreciate how postexilic final editors and readers would have the skills and competency to compose and understand carefully crafted acrostic poems.

We begin our analysis of biblical acrostics poems with some definitions. The Alphabetical Acrostic (AA) is defined as an abecedarian (or *alefbetic*) poem in which each poetic line or verse(s) begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. There are eight commonly accepted AAs in the Psalms (9–10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145). The Alphabetic Composition (AC) is a poem that do not have a full set of the alphabetic sequence but nonetheless displays features of alphabetical thinking similar to the AA (e.g., 22 verselines).

Besides the eight (or nine) clear AAs in the Psalter, there are a number of established ACs in the Psalter. As discussed earlier, both Pss 1 and 150<sup>1281</sup> begin with a

<sup>1281</sup> For Ps 150, this is seen by ignoring the anacrusis הַלְלוּ יְהָה in the first and last word, and noting the suffix לָךְ in the second word of Ps 150:1. The choice of לָךְ here is significant because it is unique in the Psalms.

word starting with נ and end with a word starting with נ. Thus, Pss 1 and 150, with their display of alphabetizing features, are considered ACs, framing the entire Psalter. Furthermore, it is interesting that Books I and V are the only two Books that contain AAs,<sup>1282</sup> symmetrically mirroring each other in the first and last Books of the Psalter.

When the eight AAs are lined up, they exhibit a linear trajectory beginning with three Lament/Petition AAs (9/10, 25, 34), followed by four Wisdom AAs (37, 111, 112, 119) and are concluded by a Kingship-Praise AA (145). In other words, there is a movement from Lament/Petition to Torah-centeredness and finally to Praise in these eight AAs.

Choi has also noted that the four Wisdom AAs (37, 111, 112, 119) are more or less “perfect” acrostics with 22 clear lines. In contrast, the rest of the AAs are “transformed or imperfect.”<sup>1283</sup> *Prima facie*, the presence of these structuring phenomena associated with AAs or ACs suggest that these compositions plausibly play an important role in the macrostructure of the Psalter.

### **5.2.1 IDENTIFICATION FEATURES OF AA AND AC**

Three recent theses on AAs focused on the lexical connections, textual problems, poetic structure and comparative origins.<sup>1284</sup> Although AAs and ACs are

<sup>1282</sup> Considering Pss 9–10 as a single AA.

<sup>1283</sup> Junho Choi, “Understanding the Literary Structures of Acrostics Psalm: An Analysis of Selected Poems” (Ph.D. Diss., Stellenbosch University, 2013), 20–21.

<sup>1284</sup> Choi has provided a helpful table comparing the eight AAs in the Psalter, highlighting the lines/texts that have been inserted, omitted or reversed. Choi has also compared the Hebrew acrostics with Egyptian, Ugaritic and Akkadian. He argues that “[t]he acrostic form had already become a universal form in Ancient Near Eastern Literature before 1000 B.C.E .,” and could have influenced Hebrew poetry;

compositionally related, the research on AA and AC is disproportionate.<sup>1285</sup> To my knowledge, there is currently no consistent list of all the ACs in the Psalter. The study of AAs and several well-discussed ACs reveal that they share several alphabetizing features. I have consolidated these features generally accepted by scholars. From these features, I have identified a list of plausible list of ACs in the entire Psalter.

(1) *Alphabetic in full or part.* Clearly, AAs are recognized by the Hebrew alphabets that order the cola or verselines in the poem. Most, if not all, letters of the alphabet are attested in the poem. In contrast, ACs usually contain only several representative letters, such as *aleph*, *lamed* or *tav*, at the beginning, middle and end of

Jeffrey Schuliger has been very kind to share a copy of his thesis for my research. He has focused on language, keywords and structure in the acrostics; Maloney considered the lexical and structural interconnectedness between the four AAs in Book I and argues against quick emendations of textual problems. See Choi, “Understanding the Literary Structures of Acrostics Psalm, 12; Jeffrey Schuliger, “The Theological Significance of Alphabetic Acrostics in the Psalter,” (Th.M. thesis, Regent College, 2009); See also Maloney, “A Word Fitly Spoken: Poetic Artistry in the First Four Acrostics of the Hebrew Psalter”; Brug, “Biblical Acrostics and Their Relationship to Other Ancient Near Eastern Acrostics,” 283–304.

<sup>1285</sup> For a survey of the works below, we note that many monographs have focused on AA. On the other hand, AC often receives secondary emphasis. Hanson has been very kind to share a copy of his thesis for my research. K. C. Hanson, “Alphabetic Acrostics: A Form Critical Study” (Ph.D. Diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1984); See also M. J. van Eijzeren, “Halbnachts Steh’ Ich Auf”. An Exploration into the Translation of Biblical Acrostics” (Masters, Utrecht University, 2012); Maloney, “Intertextual Links: Part of the Poetic Artistry within the Book I Acrostic Psalms,” *ResQ* 49, no. 1 (2007): 11–21; Patrick Skehan, “Broken Acrostic and Psalm 9,” *CBQ* 27, no. 1 (1965): 1–5; John Strugnell and Hanan Eshel, “It’s Elementary: Psalms 9 and 10 and the Order of the Alphabet,” *BRev* 17, no. 3 (2001): 41–44; David Noel Freedman, “Patterns in Psalms 25 and 34,” in Priests, Prophets and Scribes (Sheffield, Eng: JSOT, 1992), 125–38; “Acrostics and Metrics in Hebrew Poetry”; Siegfried Bergler, “Threni v - Nur Ein Alphabetisierendes Lied : Versuch Einer Deutung,” *VT* 27, no. 3 (1977): 304–20; “Der Längste Psalm - Anthologie Oder Liturgie,” *VT* 29, no. 3 (1979): 257–88; Pierre Auffret, “Essai Sur La Structure Littéraire Des Psaumes 111 et 112,” *VT* 30, no. 3 (1980): 257–79; Scott N. Callaham, “An Evaluation of Psalm 119 as Constrained Writing,” *HS* 50 (2009): 121–35; Dennis Pardee, “Acrostics and Parallelism: The Parallelistic Structure of Psalm 111,” *Maarav* 8 (1992): 117–38; Hurowitz, “Additional Elements of Alphabetical Thinking in Psalm XXXIV”; William Soll, “The Question of Psalm 119:9,” *JBL* 106, no. 4 (1987): 687–88; “Babylonian and Biblical Acrostics,” *Bib* 69, no. 3 (1988): 305–23.

the poem. Sometimes, the halfway mark of the poem is indicated by the consonants, *kaf*, *lamed* and *mem*.<sup>1286</sup>

(2) *In AAs (e.g., 25, 34), there may be an aleph, lamed and peh combination to indicate the first, middle and last line.*<sup>1287</sup> There is also a tendency for AAs or ACs to start the poem (cf. Pss 1; 112) with a “blessing” word that begins with *aleph* (אֵשֶׁר) and end with a “perishing” word that begins with *tav* (תָּבִדֵּל). The use of *aleph* beginning and *tav* can also occur within a verse (106:3).<sup>1288</sup> The lexeme, אֶבְדֵּל (“to perish”), is often found in the last, or penultimate, line in the poem (1:6; 2:12; 9:19; 73:27; 83:18; 119:176; 143:12).<sup>1289</sup>

(3) *Numerical devices are important in AAs and ACs.* Recurring numbers such as 11, 22, 23, or multiples of 11 usually function as alphabetizing devices.<sup>1290</sup> For instance, van der Lugt identifies 11 strophes in Ps 25. Its center verse (11<sup>th</sup>) is “embraced” by 11

<sup>1286</sup> For instance, In Ps 1, van der Lugt notes that the pivotal cola is v. 3c-d which consists of 26 letters. At the center of these letters (12+2+12) are the alphabets *kaph* and *lamed* (from וְלֵל ), which are the eleventh and twelve letters (middle-two) of the Hebrew alphabet. Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 584.

<sup>1287</sup> We have discussed this in chapter 1. See also Skehan, “Structure of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy (Deut 32:1-43),” 160–61.

<sup>1288</sup> Anthony R. Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking and the Shaping of Psalms 106 and 150,” *CBQ* 68, no. 1 (2006): 32–46, [39]; See also Barré, “‘Terminative’ Terms in Hebrew Acrostics,” 207–15.

<sup>1289</sup> Botha sees that the “perishing” word is also found in the middle of a psalm (cf. Pss 5:7; 31:13; 49:11). Botha, “‘Wealth and Riches Are in His House’ (Ps 112:3): Acrostic Wisdom Psalms and the Development of Antimaterialism,” 119–120.

<sup>1290</sup> The use of these numbers are seen in the counts of consonants, words, cola, verselines, strophes, etc. Soll notes that the longest Babylonian acrostic, “The Babylonian Theodicy,” consists of 27 strophes of eleven lines each.” He argues that the “eleven-line stanza is unique in Babylonian poetry.” Soll, *Psalm 119: Matrix, Form, and Setting*, 10–11; See also David Noel Freedman and David Miano, “Non-Acrostic Alphabetic Psalms,” in *Book of Psalms, The: Composition and Reception* (eds. P. Flint and P. Miller; VTSup 99; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 87–96, [88–89]; Ceresko, “The ABCs of Wisdom,” 101; Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings,” 34; Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 191.

verselines on both sides and the colon in verse 11a consists of 11 letters.<sup>1291</sup> In another example, the AC Ps 103 consists of 22 verses and exactly 11 occurrences of the Tetragrammaton.<sup>1292</sup>

(4) *The beginning and end of AAs and ACs are usually emphasized or marked (cf. Pss 1, 150).* Giffone has shown that in Ps 9:2–3 (beginning of AA), there is “a striking number of first-person imperfect verb” (words beginning with *aleph*). Furthermore, in Ps 10:17 (end of AA), there is a series of words beginning with *tav*, “contributing to the overall feel of the verse as oriented to YHWH.”<sup>1293</sup>

(5) *Words at the center of AAs or ACs are often marked by the alphabet lamed.* For instance, Ps 150 has 34 words<sup>1294</sup> and in the nexusword, בְּנֵבֶל וּבְנוֹר (150:3), the alphabet *lamed* is virtually at the center of these two words. The two-word nexusword in Ps 111:6, לְעַמּוֹת לְתִתְהָ, is both at the center of the eight-word verse and the center of the psalm. Both words begin with *lamed*. The emphasis of the poetic center of the poem is also an emphasis of symmetry.

(6) *The alphabettizing device can traverse beyond a single psalm.* This is clearly displayed by the AA Pss 9–10. As discussed, Pss 1–2 function in the same way as a single AC.

(7) *Freedman and Miano argue that the alphabetic poem has an average syllable*

<sup>1291</sup> Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 266–67.

<sup>1292</sup> Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 130–31.

<sup>1293</sup> Benjamin D. Giffone, “A ‘Perfect’ Poem: The Use of the Qatal Verbal Form in the Biblical Acrostics,” *HS* 51 (2010): 49–72, [57].

<sup>1294</sup> The count is taken from MT L Ps 150. Words linked by *maqqep* are counted as one word.

*count of 8.* He notes, “The basic pattern is a poem of 22 lines or bicolons with an average syllable count of 8 in each colon [8+8 = 16 syllable per bi-colon] and 3-4 stresses per colon.”<sup>1295</sup> The technique of syllable count is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, I have included it for completeness.

(8) *Bracketing phenomenon.* With the choice of certain words or letters, Hurowitz and Ceresko have also found additional reversed alphabetic sequences or the נלע patterns bracketing all four sides of the AA Ps 34.<sup>1296</sup>

(9) *Limited repertoire of words.* Watson argued that the limited repertoire of words and phrases is a characteristic of the acrostics.<sup>1297</sup> He also saw alliteration and *hendiadys* as features of acrostics.

(10) *No single AA or AC display all the above features.* However, the alphabetical order, the use of the numbers “11” or “22,” and the emphases of the beginning, center and end of a poem are the three most distinguishing and frequent marks of ACs.

<sup>1295</sup> Freedman and Miano, “Non-Acrostic Alphabetic Psalms,” 87–88; Elsewhere, Freedman notes, “There seem to be at least two different structures for acrostic poems in the Bible, with the major group having lines, or bcola, averaging around 16 and 1/2 syllables. A special group represented by Lam. 1-4 has a shorter line of 13-14 syllables. In the poems there is a wide range of variation in the length of lines and stanzas. These deviations form their own patterns, as we have observed, and the end product was strictly controlled by factors of overall length, and a strong sense of balance.” Freedman, “Acrostics and Metrics in Hebrew Poetry,” 392.

<sup>1296</sup> Hurowitz, “Additional Elements of Alphabetical Thinking in Psalm XXXIV,” 326–33; Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings,” 34–37.

<sup>1297</sup> Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 196.

### 5.2.2 A LIST OF ALPHABETIC COMPOSITIONS IN THE PSALTER

Based on the above characterizations of AAs and ACs, I have compiled a list of psalms that qualify as ACs. Further research, though, is required to ascertain this list. There are a number of psalms I have designated as “Probable Alphabetic Compositions” (or PAC). They show only faint features of AC which could be incidental.<sup>1298</sup> Subsequently, all the AAs, ACs and PACs will be arranged against the 150 psalms in order to explore the logic to their arrangements.

Book I (9 ACs and 8 PACs): Pss 1–2, 4?,<sup>1299</sup> 7:9b–18?,<sup>1300</sup> 8?,<sup>1301</sup> 14,<sup>1302</sup> 16?,<sup>1303</sup>

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<sup>1298</sup> Details of the identification of these features are contained in the references listed in the footnotes.

<sup>1299</sup> Using his method, van der Lugt counts 77 (7x11) words including the header and *selah*. Note the use of the numeral “11.” Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 114.

<sup>1300</sup> While there is no clear consensus, Pss 7 and 40 have been considered as composite psalms made up of two separate units. For instance, van der Lugt divides Ps 7 into two compositions. He detects 11 verselines and 22 cola in Ps 7:9b–18. Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 139.

<sup>1301</sup> Like Ps 4, van der Lugt counts 77 (11x7) words, including the header and *selah*. Note the use of the numeral “11.” Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 144.

<sup>1302</sup> Van der Lugt points out that the number “11” plays an important structuring role in this psalm. The number “11” in this psalm may plausibly indicate an AC. Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 180.

<sup>1303</sup> Giffone calls this psalm a “pseudo-acrostic” although he has not shown clearly how it is so. Giffone, “A ‘Perfect’ Poem,” 72.

20,<sup>1304</sup> 23?,<sup>1305</sup> 27,<sup>1306</sup> 29,<sup>1307</sup> 30,<sup>1308</sup> 32?,<sup>1309</sup> 33,<sup>1310</sup> 38,<sup>1311</sup> 39?,<sup>1312</sup> 40:2–13?<sup>1313</sup>

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<sup>1304</sup> Van der Lugt counts a total of 66 (6x11) words in the poem with 33 (3x11) words in each half. He considers the number “11” playing an important structuring role in this psalm. If van der Lugt is right, the numeral “11” in this psalm may plausibly indicate an AC; Freedman and Miano, “Non Acrostic Alphabetic psalms,” 88–89.

<sup>1305</sup> Van der Lugt counts 55 words (5x11) in this psalm. If van der Lugt is right, the numerals “11” and “23” in this psalm may plausibly indicate an AC. Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 252.

<sup>1306</sup> Van der Lugt sees 10 strophes and 22 verselines in this psalm. Based on the 22 verselines, he considers this an “alphabetizing” poem. Van der Lugt *CAS I*, 283–84.

<sup>1307</sup> Van der Lugt sees 10 verselines and 23 cola. The center colon 29:6a is framed by 11 cola. If van der Lugt is right, the numbers “11” and “23” plausibly indicate the psalm as an AC. Van der Lugt *CAS I*, 297.

<sup>1308</sup> By his count, van der Lugt notes that four words at the rhetorical center are framed by 44 (4x11) words on each side. If van der Lugt is right, the number “11” may plausibly indicate the psalm as an AC. Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 304.

<sup>1309</sup> Based on my method of count, there are 99 (9x11) words including the heading. There are 11 verses. The first word after the superscription begins with *aleph* and the last word ends with *bet*. The center consonant of the nexusword, קִלְעָת (32:6), is a *lamed*.

<sup>1310</sup> Robertson sees Pss 33, 38 and 103 as “quasi-acrostics,” but admits their locational intent remain unclear. Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 5, Location 1885; Van der Lugt counts 22 verselines and 44 cola. He considers this an “alphabetizing poem.” Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 330–331; Botha cites Pss 33, 38, 94 and 103 as ACs. Phil J. Botha, “Wealth and Riches Are in His House,” 107.

<sup>1311</sup> Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 5, Location 1892; Van der Lugt counts 11 strophes and 23 verselines. The center verse (v.12) is framed by 11 verselines. The number “11” plays an important role and van der Lugt considers this psalm an “alphabetizing poem.” Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 385–86; Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 199; Botha, “Wealth and Riches Are in His House,” 107.

<sup>1312</sup> Van der Lugt notes that the pivotal verse (v.8) “has exactly 7 words and 26 (15+11) letters. Further, it is the only line of the poem where God is designated ‘dny. Moreover, the invocation ‘dny is the exact pivot of this line: 3+1+3 words and 11+4+11 consonants!” Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 393.

<sup>1313</sup> Van der Lugt sees 20 verselines and 44 (4x11) cola. The central cola, v.7b–c, has 26 (11+15) letters. He notes that “[t]he noun ‘wlh (‘burnt offering’) is the exact pivot of the cola in question (>3+1+3 words and 11+4+11 consonants!).” Van der Lugt, *CAS I*, 403.

Book II (5 ACs and 1 PAC): Pss 46,<sup>1314</sup> 50,<sup>1315</sup> 52,<sup>1316</sup> 58?,<sup>1317</sup> 59,<sup>1318</sup> 70.<sup>1319</sup>

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<sup>1314</sup> Van der Lugt counts 11 verselines and 23 cola. Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 47.

<sup>1315</sup> Van der Lugt counts 23 verselines and considers this an “alphabetizing poem.” He argues that v. 12 is the middle verseline framed by 11 verselines on both sides. Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 87.

<sup>1316</sup> Van der Lugt counts 11 verselines and 24 cola. The two cola, in verse 8, are the central cola of the poem, framed by 11 cola on each side. He argues that vv. 7b–8 is the meaningful center consisting of 11 words based on his method of word count. Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 108.

<sup>1317</sup> Freedman and Miano, “Non Acrostic Alphabetic psalms,” 88–89; Van der Lugt counts 11 verselines and 22 cola. Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 152.

<sup>1318</sup> According to van der Lugt, there are 44 cola in the poem and a total of 143 (13x11) words. He calls this a “quasi-alphabetic” poem. Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 161.

<sup>1319</sup> Van der Lugt counts 44 (4x11) words in this psalm and considers the number “11” to “have a structuring function.” Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 269.

Book III (3 ACs and 1 PAC): Pss 74,<sup>1320</sup> 75,<sup>1321</sup> 79?,<sup>1322</sup> 89.<sup>1323</sup>

Book IV (4 ACs and 3 PACs): Pss 94,<sup>1324</sup> 95,<sup>1325</sup> 96?,<sup>1326</sup> 100?,<sup>1327</sup> 103,<sup>1328</sup>

105?,<sup>1329</sup> 106.<sup>1330</sup>

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<sup>1320</sup> This has been identified by Skehan and Ceresko. Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings,” 33. Van der Lugt notes that the 23 verselines in this poem can be considered an “alphabetizing feature of the poem.” Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 313.

<sup>1321</sup> Van der Lugt counts 11 verselines and 23 cola in this poem. The pivotal colon, v.7a, is framed by 11 cola on each side. Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 322.

<sup>1322</sup> Van der Lugt notes that the two middle cola in v.7 are made up of “11+11 letters.” Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 373.

<sup>1323</sup> Van der Lugt notes that vv. 25–26 are the central strophe of the psalm. He argues that this strophe is “made up of 11 words, symbolically representing the idea of fulfilment.” Van der Lugt, *CAS II*, 471.

<sup>1324</sup> Van der Lugt notes, “The 23 poetic verselines (which coincide with the Masoretic verses) probably indicate that we are dealing with an alphabetizing composition. The alphabetizing character is reinforced by the 11 strophes, the 11 verselines framing v. 12, the letter *'aleph* at the beginning of the first colon of Canto I (v. 1a+b) and the letter *beth* at the beginning of the three words of the first colon of Canto II (v. 8a)” Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 57; Freedman, “Acrostic Poems in the Hebrew Bible,” 416, 423; Botha, “‘Wealth and Riches Are in His House’,” 107.

<sup>1325</sup> Van der Lugt counts 11 verselines in this poem. He identifies the pivotal colon as v.7a which consists of “3 words and 11 letters.” The number “11” in this psalm may plausibly indicate that it is an AC. Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 65.

<sup>1326</sup> Eijzeren notes that the first consonant in the first four words of Ps 96:11, יְהָוָה הַמֶּלֶךְ וְתִגְלֵל, form the Tetragrammaton. Eijzeren argues, “[t]his ‘coincidence’ might be less likely when you observe that almost all lines in this Psalm contain either this Name of God or a reference to Him with the word ‘him’ or ‘his’. Only verses 11 and 12 contain no Name or reference whatsoever. It is therefore not implausible that these acrostics are intended to bring in His name in another way.” Eijzeren, “‘Halbnachts Steh’ Ich Auf,” 26; Van der Lugt counts 11 occurrences of the divine name. Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 74.

<sup>1327</sup> Freedman and Miano, “Non Acrostic Alphabetic psalms,” 88–89.

<sup>1328</sup> Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 132; Robertson, The Flow of the Psalms, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 5, Location 1892; Freedman and Miano, “Non Acrostic Alphabetic psalms,” 88–89; Botha, “‘Wealth and Riches Are in His House’,” 107.

<sup>1329</sup> Freedman and Miano, “Non Acrostic Alphabetic psalms,” 88–89.

<sup>1330</sup> Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking,” 37–41.

Book V (2 ACs, 1 PAC): Pss 138,<sup>1331</sup> 144?,<sup>1332</sup> 150.<sup>1333</sup>

If this list is sustainable, there is a total of 46 AAs, ACs and PACs. Book I consists of 22 (2x11) such compositions (5 AAs + 9 ACs + 8 PACs = 22). Books II–III consist of 10 (8 ACs + 2 PACs = 10) and Books IV–V consist of 14 (4 AAs + 6 ACs + 4 PACs = 2x7).

### 5.2.3 THE ARRANGEMENT OF AAS AND ACs AS MACROSTRUCTURING DEVICE

How do AAs and ACs contribute to the overall composition and development of motifs in the MT-150?. Is there a strategic intent to their locations and if so, how do they inform us of the design of the Psalter? Do they reflect a final Wisdom-shaping of the Psalter?<sup>1334</sup> A striking feature emerges when the AAs, ACs and PACs are viewed against the entire macrostructure.

<sup>1331</sup> Based on my count, the first four words after the superscription, אָזֶךְ בְּכַל־לְבִי נָגֵד אֶלְהִים, contain the alphabets, א, ב, ג, ד, in successive sequence. Note that the last two words joined by the *maqqep* begin with an ה and ת. Van der Lugt also notes, “[t]he poem as a whole displays all kinds of quasi-alphabetic acrostic devices. It opens with a verb beginning with an ‘aleph (‘wdk) and closes with a verb beginning with a *taw* (trp). The concluding strophe (vv. 7–8) has exactly 22 words (§ 31.5), matching the number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and (in my opinion) there are exactly 22\* *cola*.” Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 475.

<sup>1332</sup> אֲשֶׁר בְּנִינוֹ כָּנְטוּם מִגְּלִים בְּנוּוּרִים בְּנוֹתִינוֹ כְּזִוִּית מִחְטָבֹת תְּבִנִּית הַיּוֹלֵד, The entire verse 12, consists of an impressive sequence of the alphabet from *aleph* to *lamed*. Verse 12 also marks a shift in the psalm. This sequence breaks after the first word in v. 13.

<sup>1333</sup> This has been discussed in chapter 1. See also Ceresko, “Endings and Beginnings: Alphabetic Thinking,” 32–44.

<sup>1334</sup> Our interest pertains to the MT Psalter. Hence, we will not pursue, in this thesis, analyses of various AAs and ACs outside the MT Psalter (e.g., Apostrophe of Zion, Lamentations, Nahum).



Figure 75: Distribution of Alphabetic Acrostics and Alphabetic Compositions Across the Three Main Sections of the Psalter

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### 5.2.3.1 BOOK I

Figure 75 shows the distribution of AAs, ACs and PACs across the three main Sections of the Psalter (Books I, II–III and IV–V).<sup>1335</sup>

(1) Consider the Prologue and Group 1 (3–14) of Section 1. The pair of ACs in the Prologue (1–2) mark the beginning of the Psalter and Book I. These two psalms contain the twin motifs of Torah and YHWH’s kingship, and mark the seam between the Prologue and Group 1. Psalm 14 is another AC, marking the right frame of Group 1. The four Pss 7–10 at the center of Group 1 are marked by two pairs of PACs (7–8) and AAs (9–10). They are located with the two central Pss 8–9 that contain the leitmotifs of kingship and judgment. Thus, Group 1 is framed by ACs and its Group Central Motif (GCM) marked by AAs and PACs.

(2) Group 2 (15–24) is framed by Entrance Liturgies (15, 24). The second psalm and penultimate psalm (16, 23), both Confidence psalms, are PACs. These two PACs form a second frame just inside the Entrance Liturgies. A single AC (20) marks a Kingship psalm at the center.

(3) Group 3 (25–34) is framed by two AAs (25, 34) and consists of four ACs. Two of them mark precisely the GCM of kingship and Zion-temple (29–30). Psalms 27

<sup>1335</sup> Legend: a = *ashre*; U = Untitled psalm; h = Historical superscription; Dav = Davidic Psalm; KOR = Korahite psalm; ASP = Asaphite psalm; Ps = A psalm; Sg = A song; So = Solomonic psalm; Eth = Ethan; M = Moses; *mlk* = YHWH *Malak* psalm; Tk = Thanksgiving; Aff = Psalm of affliction; *brk* = Bless; *hd* = *Hodu* psalm; *hll* = *Hallelujah* psalm; T = Torah motif; K = Kingship psalm; D = Day psalm; N = Night psalm; En = Entrance Liturgy; CF = Confidence psalm; L = Lament; P/J = Motifs of justice and the poor; W = Motif of the wicked; Z = Motif of Zion; S = Supplication psalm; SA = Sapiential psalm; Hy = Hymn; Mem = A Memorial; IL = Individual Lament; CL = Communal Lament; DR = Divine Response psalm; DD = Didactic psalm; Theo = Theocentric in focus; Uni = Universal in focus; PR = Praise psalm; G-Hallel = Great Hallel; Jns = Janus psalm; YK = YHWH kingship psalm; Med = Meditation psalm; Dir = For the Director of Music; Isr = Israel; Cos + Isr = Cosmic and Israel.

(AC), 32 (PAC) and 33 (AC) act like a secondary frame around the CM. Once again, the GCM is marked by either an AA or/and AC.

The alphabetizing features of Pss 29–30 may not be clear *prima facie*.

Labuschagne and van der Lugt argue that Ps 29 contains 10 verselines and 23 cola. This allows the center colon, v.6a, to be framed by exactly 11 cola on each side. The use of the number “11” recalls the alphabetizing technique. Psalm 30 contains 12 verselines and by their count, the four words at the center are framed by 44 (4x11) words on both sides,<sup>1336</sup> making a well-balanced structure. From their analyses, these two psalms contain 22 verselines together.

I agree that each of these two psalms is structured in balanced halves. I offer the following additional evidence. In Ps 29, the letters that begin the verselines are symmetric about the center verse (29:6) in a striking ה-ה-ק-ק-ק-1-ק-ק-ק-י sequence. The nexusword, “Lebanon,” also begins with *lamed*.<sup>1337</sup> Likewise, Ps 30 can be seen in two halves. There are 9x references to “YHWH.” By my count, the fifth and middle instance (30:8) coincides with the nexusword, separating the two halves of the composition. In the first half of Ps 30, immediately after the superscription, the poem begins with an

<sup>1336</sup> They argue that Ps 29:7–8 is one tricolic poetic verseline and the header in Ps 30:1 is not included in the verseline-count. Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 304; Labuschagne “Psalm 29— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–4 [cited 3 March 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps029.pdf>; “Psalm 30— Logotechnical Analysis,” 1–3 [cited 3 March 2016]. <http://www.labuschagne.nl/ps030.pdf>.

<sup>1337</sup> Labuschagne and van der Lugt argue for 5 strophes (with the center at vv. 5–6). The first (vv. 1–2; excluding the header in their count) and the last strophe (vv. 10–11) contain 16 words each. Together, the 32 words correspond to the numerical value of *kbwd* ( $20 + 2 + 6 + 4 = 32$ ; “glory”). In other words, the composition is enveloped by the two strophes that underscore the “glory of God.”

*aleph* (אֲרֹםְמָךְ; “I will extol you”; 30:2)<sup>1338</sup> and ends with a word that begins with *lamed* (לְעֹלֶם; 30:7; just before the nexusword, “YHWH”). Then the composition continues immediately in the second half with a word that begins, again, with an *aleph* (אֲלֹהִים; 30:9) and ends with two words לְעֹלֶם אֲזֶדֶךְ (30:13) which also start with a *lamed* and *aleph*. The two לְעֹלֶם in 30:7, 13 thus locate the ends of the two halves. The entire poem is bounded by two words of praise that begin with *aleph*. These features are symptomatic of ACs.

When these two compositions (29–30) are considered together, I counted 168 words and the two-word nexusword is הַבִּתָּה לְדוֹד (“the temple, of David”; 30:1), identifying both the Davidic king and YHWH’s temple. These words capture the CM of Group 3 (25–34).<sup>1339</sup> The expression, “a song of dedication” (שיר-תְּנִכָּת) in the superscription of Ps 30 is an *hapax legomenon*. The noun, “dedication” (תְּנִכָּת) occurs only 7x in the HB and are all associated with either the sanctuary altar or temple.<sup>1340</sup> Hence, these two ACs (29–30) mark the CMs of kingship and Zion-temple.

(4) Group 4 (35–41) is not framed on both ends but its three center psalms (37–39) are marked by an AA, AC and PAC respectively. The GCM—the supplication of David (38)—is marked by an AC.

<sup>1338</sup> In the Psalter, the exact form of אֲרֹםְמָךְ (“I will extol you”) is found only in three places (30:2; 118:28; 145:1) which are significant as they locate the concept of kingship.

<sup>1339</sup> This superscription is also often considered as a late redaction or used because of the association with David and the temple. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 252.

<sup>1340</sup> Num 7:10-11, 84, 88; 2 Chron 7:9; Neh 12:27; Ps 30:1.

(5) It is possible to consider the lone PAC in Ps 4 (the second Davidic psalm in DC-I) and the PAC in Ps 40 (the second-last Davidic psalm in DC-I) as the frames for DC-I.

Book I consists of the highest number of AAs, ACs and PACs. What is striking about their distribution is that they *locate transitions between Groups, act as frames (e.g., Groups 2, 3) and mark Group Central Motifs.*

### 5.2.3.2 BOOKS II–III

There is an absence of AA in Books II–IV. Nonetheless, the ACs and PACs distributed in Books II–III reveal a similar phenomenon as in Book I. Consider the following observations.

(1) Psalm 46, as an AC in the first Korahite Group, marks the start of a series of three Divine Response psalms. The rage of nations tottering before YHWH's voice and the stream in the city of God in Ps 46, evidently recall Pss 1–2. With the use of ACs, the leitmotifs of the Prologue recur.

(2) The transition between the first Korahite psalm and DC-II is marked by the AC, Asaphite Ps 50.

(3) The second (52), and the penultimate psalm (70) of DC-II are ACs.<sup>1341</sup> DC-II is framed by Supplication/Petition psalms (51, 71). At the center of DC-II, a PAC (58) and AC (59) mark David's trust in YHWH. The motifs of YHWH as judge (58:10–12), his “laughing” (**קָרְשָׁו**) and “scoffing” (**גַּעֲלָה**) at the nations (59:9) in these two psalms,

<sup>1341</sup> That is if we consider the Untitled Ps 71 as the last psalm in DC-II.

unmistakably recall Ps 2 again. The combination of these two words are found only in Pss 2:4 and 59:9 in the entire Psalter.<sup>1342</sup> In other words, these two psalms mark YHWH's kingship and the faltering human Davidide as the CM in DC-II, supporting our proposals in §3.1.2.

The uncanny parallels in the framing of the Collections and marking of YHWH's kingship in DC-I and II at the center of a literary unit show that the arrangement of these ACs are intentional.

(4) In the Asaphite Group, two ACs mark the Communal Lament and Divine Response Pss 74–75 respectively. Psalm 74 highlights the fallen Zion-temple and Ps 75 highlights YHWH as “Judge” who will cut off the prideful “horn”<sup>1343</sup> of the wicked. Once again, these motifs of the wicked’s arrogance and YHWH’s impending judgment bring us back to Ps 2. Like Ps 74, the PAC Ps 79 marks the fallen Zion-temple.

Hence, these two ACs and a single PAC mark descriptions of YHWH’s kingship and the broken Zion. This aligns well with our thesis that Groups 7–8 in Books II–III highlight the broken Davidic king and Zion-temple.

(5) At the end of the second Korahite Group in Book III, we find a single AC, Ps 89, which is both a Lament and Kingship psalm. It highlights the Davidic Covenant and YHWH’s establishment of his anointed king (89:4–38). The motifs of the anointed king (89:21), his sonship to YHWH (89:27) and his triumph over his enemies (89:23–24), repeatedly recall the motifs of Ps 2.

<sup>1342</sup> Apart from the Psalms, they are found only in Prov 1:26, occurring in close proximity.

<sup>1343</sup> Psalm 75 contains four instances of the noun, *רָקֶם* (Ps 75:5-6, 11), the highest frequency within a single psalm of the Psalter.

(6) Each of the Korahite Groups has a single AC (46, 89). The motifs of these two Korahite ACs highlight YHWH's kingship in relation to Zion (46) and YHWH's kingship in relation to the Messianic king (89), again identifying the leitmotifs of the Prologue.

(7) In sum, the locations of ACs and PACs in Books II and III correspond remarkably to our macrostructural and thematic proposals of Books II–III. On the one hand, they mark the GCMs of the broken Davidic kingship and Zion-temple (58–59, 74–75, 79); on the other hand, they frame the entire Books II–III with triumphant presentations of Zion and the Messianic king (46, 89). Consistently, we see psalms marked by ACs and PACs carrying the leitmotifs of the Prologue.

### **5.2.3.3 BOOKS IV–V**

(1) There are two ACs (94, 95) and two PACs (96, 100) marking the YHWH *Malak* Collection (93–100). Apart from Ps 98, all the psalms in this Collection that do not begin with יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ are either an AC or PAC. We note that ACs/PACs typically mark YHWH's kingship, thus it is appropriate that Pss 94–96 and 100, which do not begin with יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ also mark YHWH's kingship as well. Together with the psalms that begin with יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ, the entirety of Collection (93–100) carry the mark of YHWH's kingship.

(2) The ACs in Pss 103 and 106 mark the ends of DC-III and Book IV. Together with the PAC Ps 105, there is a total of seven ACs and PACs combined in Book IV of the Psalter.

(3) AAs return in Book V of the Psalter. The twin Pss 111–112 mark the beginning of Pss 111–118. Psalm 111 focuses on the upright deeds of YHWH and Ps 112

corresponds with the representative upright figure. Seen in the context of Pss 108–110, the figure in Ps 112 is the righteous Messiah whose horn will be exalted (112:9).<sup>1344</sup> From this perspective, Ps 119, which carries the same motif of a Torah-pious figure who “delights” in YHWH’s commandments (*חפץ*; cf. 112:1; 119:35), marks the end of the literary unit. Like Pss 103 and 106, the AA Ps 119 also marks the transition into a new literary unit (SOA).

(4) Psalm 145 marks the end of DC-V, and like Pss 103, 106 and 119, it marks the transition into the Final Hallel. It is important to note that DC-V begins with an AC (138). Psalms 138 and 145, together with the PAC, Ps 144, are three key psalms in DC-V that highlight YHWH’s kingship. Hence, we observe a striking consistency in the use of the AAs, ACs and PACs to mark YHWH’s kingship.

(5) Furthermore, it is possible that Pss 111 and 145 are designed as additional bookends, marking the end of Ps 110 and beginning of the final Hallel. Consider two texts of three verses each in Pss 111:2–4 and 145:3–5 below:

<sup>2</sup> גָּדְלִים מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה דָּרוֹשִׁים לְכָל-חֶפְצֵיהֶם:  
<sup>3</sup> הָזֵד-וְהָדָר פָּעֵלוֹ וְאַדְקָתוֹ עַמְּדָת לְעֵד:  
<sup>4</sup> זָכָר עֲשָׂה לְנַפְלָאָתָיו תָּנוּן וְרָחוֹם יְהוָה

<sup>3</sup> גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמַהְלָל מָאֵד וּלְגָדְלָתוֹ אֵין חִקָּר:  
<sup>4</sup> דָּזֵר לְדָזֵר יִשְׁבַּח מַעֲשֵׂיך וּנְבוֹלָתְך יִגְדֵּן:  
<sup>5</sup> הָדָר כְּבָזֶד הָזֵד וּדְבָרִי נַפְלָאָתְך אֲשִׁיחָה:

It is interesting that in the two isolated pairs of three verses, six lexemes (*גדול*, <sup>2</sup>*הָזֵד*, <sup>3</sup>*דָּזֵר*, <sup>4</sup>*נַפְלָאָתָיו*, <sup>5</sup>*הָדָר*, *פָּעֵלוֹ*) are shared. Two sets of associated lexemes that relate to

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<sup>1344</sup> See our discussion in §4.1 and §4.5.

YHWH's "works/acts" are used in Ps 111 (**עֲשָׂה**, "work," v. 4; **לִעְפָּר**, "deed," v. 3) and Ps 145 (**דְּבָר**, "work," v. 5; **גַּבּוֹרָה**, "mighty acts," v. 4). The common lexemes appearing in three consecutive verses as these do not occur elsewhere in the entire HB. Moreover, when we consider their literary contexts, the focus common to both is the motif of YHWH's creation, power over nature and his providence.<sup>1345</sup> Psalm 111:5 uses the word, **תְּרֵא** ("prey/food"), which is often associated with nature's foodchain order of YHWH's creation.<sup>1346</sup>

If the AAs Pss 111, 112 and 145, with their common lexemes, are indeed intentionally located, what could be the significance of their location? I suggest that the eight AAs are specifically located to contrast a reversal of the Davidic characterization between Books I and V. It is important to note that the first four AAs (9/10, 25, 34, 37) characterize a non-ideal human kingship. The locations of the eight AAs between Pss 9–37 and 110–145 avoid the fall of the human king (entire DC-II) and the appearing of an ideal Davidic king (in DC-III and IV). The last four AAs (111, 112, 119, 145) characterize the representative ideal Davidic community. These last four AAs are associated with a blameless, righteous, Torah-pious Davidic community who would dwell in that paradisiacal city by Ps 145. They come onto the scene *only* after Ps 110, in which the Davidic priest-king triumph emphatically over the nations. Hence, Ps 110 marks an important milestone in the Metanarrative of the Psalter. It defines a new

<sup>1345</sup> The concept of YHWH providing food for his creation so that they may be satisfied and flourish in life is also shared by Pss 111:5 and 145:15–16. Cf. Pss 8:1–9; 104:1, 24, 30–31; Job 37.

<sup>1346</sup> The "food" (**תְּרֵא**) in Ps 145:15–16 is, likewise, applied to all living thing in YHWH's creation. Cf. Pss 7:3; 17:12; 22:14; 50:22; 76:5; 104:21; 111:5; 124:6.

reality brought about by the triumphant Davidic king of Ps 110. There is an intensified characterization of the righteous *community* (112:4, 6; 118:15, 20; 125:3; 140:14; 142:8) and building of the ideal Zion (120–134). Similarly, all the traditional Hallels are found only after Ps 110 (Egyptian [113–118], Great [135–136] and Final [146–150] Hallels). *Hence, the last four AAs function as an “acrostic foil” to the first four AAs. These two sets of AAs in Book I and V present two contrasting Davidization of the Psalter. By their locations, they frame the fall of the human king and the rise of an ideal Davidic king.*

(6) Finally, the final Hallel is marked by one AC at the end (Ps 150). The entire Psalter is thus framed by ACs (1–2 and 150).

Insofar as the above observations are insightful, the astute reader will also detect certain “inconsistencies,” or data that does not fit as well as we would like. Two such inconsistencies observed are: (1) AA, AC or PAC do not always mark the arithmetic center of a structural unit; (2) Not all seams or transitions are marked. In the former, a single Ps 20 marked Pss 18–21 (at the center of Pss 15–24), which arguably would correspond to our model better if Ps 19 were marked instead. Similarly, the AC, Ps 46, does not line up with Ps 45 at the center of the first Korahite Group (Ps 42–49). The AC Ps 59 is not exactly at the center of the second Davidic Collection. There is also no such marking at the center of the SOA, the last Davidic Collection (Pss 138–145) or the Final Hallel. For the latter, the transitions between Pss 83 and 84, and between the SOA and Ps 135 are not marked. These apparent inconsistencies, nonetheless, do not necessarily undermine our suggestions. We have noted that various techniques collaborate with each other. An inconsistency viewed from the perspective of one technique could be due to a combination of a number of techniques. For instance, the AC Ps 46, while not aligned with the kingship Ps 45, serves to mark the motif of Zion, recapitulating the

leitmotifs of kingship, Zion and Torah-piety in the Prologue. While Ps 59 may not be at the center of the second Davidic unit, it marks a Psalm with a unique connection to Psalm 2 in the Prologue. (the use of “laughing,” **רַחֲשָׁנָה**, and “scoffing,” **גַּלְעֵל** within a single sentence is found only in Pss 2:4 and 59:9 in the entire Psalter).

#### **5.2.4 THE FUNCTION OF ALPHABETIC ACROSTICS AND ALPHABETIC COMPOSITIONS**

Based on our study above, we posit six suggestions regarding the function of AAs and ACs. First, they mark the theological high points of YHWH’s kingship, the Messianic king, the fall and restoration of both the Davidic kingship and Zion-temple. The marking of YHWH’s kingship is especially clear in Pss 93–100 and Pss 138–145. These theological high points correspond remarkably well with various GCMs (e.g., 29–30, 58–59).

Second, there is a tendency to find AAs and/or ACs in pairs, especially when they mark the motif of YHWH’s kingship.<sup>1347</sup> For instance, Pss 1–2, 9–10 and 94–95, though separate psalms in the MT, can be seen as a single AC.

Third, the motifs marked by AAs, ACs or PACs are always the leitmotifs found in the Prologue. The programmatic nature of the Prologue, the parallel three-part structure of Pss 1–2, and the intertwined motifs of YHWH’s kingship, Zion and Torah-piety repeatedly recurs at strategic locations marked by AAs, ACs and PACs across the 150 psalms.

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<sup>1347</sup> Pss 1–2, 7–8, 9–10, 29–30, 37–40, 58–59, 74–75, 94–95, 105–106, 111–112, 144–145.

Fourth, AAs and ACs/PACs reveal the macrostructural design of the entire Psalter at the level of Collection (e.g., DC-V), Group (e.g., DC-II), Book (e.g., Pss 3–41), Section (e.g., Books II–III) and the entire Psalter (e.g., 1–2, 150). The AAs and ACs are strategically located at seams/transitions between Collections, marking the beginning and end of a unit. They are structurally sensitive to the macrostructure and Metanarrative presented in the Psalter. Their locations in the Psalter are clearly deliberate.

Fifth, the eight AAs capture a remarkable message. The last four AAs function as an “acrostic foil” to the first four AAs. The two sets of AAs in Book I and V present two contrasting Davidization of the Psalter. Within the horizon of the entire Psalter, they frame the fall of the human king and the rise of an ideal Davidic king.

Sixth, we need to reconsider the plausibility of the 14 PACs (4, 7, 8, 16, 23, 32, 39, 40, 58, 79, 96, 100, 105, 144) functioning as intentional ACs. Even if we remove all the PACs in our list, our conclusions based on just AAs and ACs remain intact. Further research is needed to validate PACs.

Finally, it is plausible that the design of AAs, ACs/PACs carries numerical symbolism. By counting the number of individual psalms<sup>1348</sup> identified as AAs, ACs and PACs in the three Sections, we observe they add up to symbolic numbers.

Section	Books	ACs+PACs	AAs	Total
1	I	17	5	22 (2x11)
2	II–III	10	0	10

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<sup>1348</sup> We count Pss 1–2 or 9–10 as two separate psalms according to the MT-150 even though they can be seen as a single AC/AA.

3	IV–V	10	4	14 (2x7)
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Figure 76: Count of Alphabetic Acrostics, and (Probable) Alphabetic Compositions

In our analysis of the macrostructural arrangements of acrostic poems, several locations are certainly not as well explained by our proposals (e.g., absence of any acrostics in the SOA; not every Group has an acrostic at the center or as frames; or the use of PAC). This lack of consistency may be attributed to several reasons. The final editors could have applied a combination of techniques and the prominence of one technique over another may be at work. For instance, the final editors may sacrifice marking a psalm as the arithmetic center of a literary unit. In its place is the intentional marking of an off-centered psalm with significant connections to the leitmotifs of the Prologue. In this case, the connection with the Prologue as a rhetorical feature is the overriding technique at work. Separately, the possibility that texts had undergone multiple editorial layers cannot be dismissed. It is also possible that the final editors were unable to freely redact earlier layers or that they had redacted a poetic design that was lost on them. Or simply, certain technique or logic intended by the poets are still not understood.<sup>1349</sup>

The nature of numerical devices lies in their precision in correspondence. Hence, when numerical devices do not correspond consistently, they lose their credibility as a technique. To be sure, we must also recognize that plausibility of any technique or observation is not argued with impeccable consistency. As we have also seen, many poetical techniques are expressed along a spectrum of variations. For instance, scholars

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<sup>1349</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 207–208.

have long recognized that acrostic structures may be full or quasi (e.g., Ps 119, Ps 9–10). The presence of quasi- or semi-acrostics does imply that the acrostic technique is not always expressed in full. Even in Labuschagne’s Logotechnical analyses, he recognizes the plausibility of different counting method in certain psalms (whether the inclusion of words in the superscription in the count is adopted or not). Hence, we should allow flexibility in our assessment of the numerical techniques and not “throw out the baby with the bathwater”. Controls of validity of interpretation, especially from the perspective of the final editors and readership have been discussed and noted throughout the thesis. Externally, we have also shown that such techniques were not uncommon in the ancient Near East (see §1.3.1). What we have found compelling is not merely the accumulation of various observations identified in this thesis but how they independently collaborate with each other and present a consistent message across the Psalter.

The study of AAs and ACs correspond impressively well with our entire thesis. The AAs and ACs, as formal devices, work together with its thematic content to capture and unveil the central theological thrust and trajectory of the MT Psalter.

This study of AAs and ACs could have broken new ground in Psalms scholarship. In 2012, Eijzeren compiled at least thirteen possible functions of alphabetic or acrostic compositions identified by various scholars. They may function as<sup>1350</sup> (a) symbolism of completeness;<sup>1351</sup> (b) mnemonic or memory aid devices<sup>1352</sup>; (c) aesthetic or artistic

<sup>1350</sup> For arguments and references to these functions, see Eijzeren, “‘Halbnachts Steh’ Ich Auf,” 30–37.

<sup>1351</sup> Labuschagne, *Numerical Secrets of the Bible*, 13; Van der Lugt, *CAS III*, 584.

compositions<sup>1353</sup>; (d) displays of poetical skills<sup>1354</sup>; (e) symbolism of order; (f) enhancement to the message of the poem; (g) magic or cultic purposes; (h) didactical aids; (i) signposts to an embedded message; (j) clues to reading the texts; (k) responsive (or liturgical) structures; (l) dedications or references to people or gods; or (m) identifications of authorship.

Schuliger adds to this list by arguing that the alphabetic acrostic “serves as a covenant reminder, a metaphor for hope, a message-sign of the covenant reality of God.”<sup>1355</sup> According to Seybold, acrostics are crucial to “the systematic doctrine”<sup>1356</sup> of the Psalter as the alphabetical structure is symbolic of completeness.<sup>1357</sup>

Nonetheless, there is no clear consensus on the function of alphabetic compositions. In our discussions, I have demonstrated how the statements of Schuliger and Seybold can stand. I propose that AAs and ACs serve the crucial macrostructural function of marking transitions and leitmotifs of the Prologue of the Psalter. They also illustrate the Metanarrative with two sets of contrasting AAs in Books I and V,

<sup>1352</sup> See also Vesco, *Le psautier de David traduit et commenté*, 1:29; Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Chapter 5, location 1873; Chapter 10, location 5294.

<sup>1353</sup> Barnabas Lindars, “Is Psalm 2 an Acrostic Poem,” *VT* 17, no. 1 (1967): 60–67, [63].

<sup>1354</sup> Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 198.

<sup>1355</sup> Schuliger, “The Theological Significance of Alphabetic Acrostics in the Psalter,” iii, 126, 137.

<sup>1356</sup> Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, 152; Maloney, “A Word Fitly Spoken: Poetic Artistry in the First Four Acrostics of the Hebrew Psalter,” 31.

<sup>1357</sup> Soll calls the alphabet “a metaphor for totality.” He adds that “[t]he acrostic is a kind of ‘concealed art’ that is not apparent when the poem is read out loud . . . it is hidden in order to be revealed, so there has to be some way of indicating to the reader that an acrostic pattern is at work.” Soll, *Psalm 119: Matrix, Form, and Setting*, 27, 31.

depicting two Davidizations of the texts and framing the fall of the Davidic kingship in DC-II and rise of an ideal Davidic king in DC-III and IV. I conclude that the trio—form, content and intent—are carefully integrated into the message of the entire Psalter and collaborated by the design of AAs and ACs.

In light of our analysis, these AAs or ACs (which may or may not have arisen from “wisdom-inspired editors”)<sup>1358</sup> should not be merely associated with sapiential or Deuteronomic concerns but more so with the Davidic program.<sup>1359</sup> Scholars consider that the acrostic style reflects the concerns of “Israel’s wisdom movement” because “writing” and “composition” were closely linked to the “wisdom circles.”<sup>1360</sup> While we cannot prove or disprove such a suggestion,<sup>1361</sup> we can be certain that the design of AAs and ACs embeds macrostructural and thematic roles in the overall program of the MT-150.

<sup>1358</sup> Botha argues that “the alphabetic acrostic psalms were composed and inserted by the wisdom-inspired editors of the Psalter to influence the way we have to understand the Psalms.” He further argues that the message they wanted to convey is “to draw a clear distinction between the righteous and the wicked so that the reader or hearer would experience these psalms as exhortations to a certain style of living.” Botha, “‘Wealth and Riches Are in His House’,” 108–109, 126.

<sup>1359</sup> The Midrash states that Torah would have started with the Hebrew alphabet נ “had a נ not been preferred for theological reasons.” Raymond Apple points out that the “Decalogue (Ex. 20:2; Deut 5:6) does open with the aleph of *anokhi*, ‘I.’ Retelling the history of mankind from the beginning, Chronicles starts with a large *aleph*. Even if it was considered significant that the Psalter begins with the letter *aleph*, it does not yet explain why the specific word chosen was *ashrei*. According to *Yalkut Shimoni* on the first verse of this psalm, David, the traditional author of Psalms, wanted to begin his book where Moses had left off in the Torah. Moses said, *ashrekha Yisra’el* (*Fortunate are you, O Israel*; Deut. 33:29); here David begins with the words *ashrei ha-ish*.” Raymond Apple, “The Happy Man of Psalm 1,” *JBQ* 40, no. 3 (2012): 179–82, [179–80].

<sup>1360</sup> Ceresko, “The ABCs of Wisdom in Psalm 34,” 99.

<sup>1361</sup> Ho, review of John Kartje, *Wisdom Epistemology in the Psalter: A Study of Psalms 1, 73, 90, and 107*, 100–101.

### 5.3 SUPERSCRIPTIONS

We have considered the macrostructuring roles of superscriptions and the historical superscriptions of the Davidic psalms in earlier chapters. In light of our study on the numerical technique, we now consolidate them to show that formal poetic devices such as numerical techniques, acrostics or alphabetical compositions and superscriptions all work together coherently to explicate the macrostructure of the MT Psalter. The following figure highlights how numerical symbolism function when all the superscriptions of the Psalter are categorized accordingly.

As Superscriptions	Psalm	Number of Pss (Subtotal)	Superscription Category	Number of Pss (Subtotal)	Numerical Symbolism	
Davidic	3–9; 11–32; 34–41; 51–65; 68–70, 86, 101, 103, 108–110, 138–145 (“David” in Songs of Ascents is not included)	69	Psalms with named figures in superscription	98	98 (14x7)	
Solomon	72 (“Solomon” in the Songs of Ascents is not included)	1				
Moses	90	1				
Korah	42, 44–49, 84–85, 87–89	12				
Asaph	50, 73–83	12				
YHWH Malak	93, 97, 99	3				
A Psalm / Thanks / Afflicted / brk	66–67; 92; 98; 100; 102; 104 ( <i>piel impv fs</i> )*	7	Psalms without named figures in superscription	7	52 (2x26)	
<i>Hodu (hiphil Impv mp)</i>	105, 107, 118, 136	4	Praise/Doxology as superscription	15		
<i>Hallelujah (piel impv mp)</i>	106, 111–113, 117, 135, 146–150	11				
Songs of Ascents	120–134	15	As a Collection	15		
No Clear Superscription	2; 10; 33; 43; 71; 91; 94–96; 114–116; 137	13	Psalms without clear superscription	15		
No Clear Superscription (ashre)	1, 119	2				
Total Psalms				150		

Figure 77: Numerical Techniques in the Superscriptions of the MT Psalter

We have discussed how certain psalms (e.g., *hodu*, *hallelujah* and YHWH *Malak* psalms) traditionally understood as “untitled” psalms, can be considered as a form of *intended* superscription. I have noted fifteen psalms that do not have clear superscriptions (in the last two rows of the table) as a category by itself. These psalms are often found in twin-psalms (e.g., 2, 10, 33, 94–95).

I have also divided all superscriptions into two main categories. The first category consists of superscriptions with named attributions that identify their structural groupings. However, several superscriptions of the SOA include names, with the main identification in these superscriptions belonging to the שיר הפלות Collection. As such, I have excluded the additional “David” or “Solomon” in Pss 122:1, 124:1, 127:1, 131:1, 133:1 in the count (to avoid double counting). These five psalms are listed in the category of SOA.

I have also excluded additional mentions of “David” in the superscriptions of Pss 52:2, 54:2 as they belong to the historical part of the superscriptions. I have, on the other hand, included the three YHWH *Malak* psalms in the category of named-superscriptions as these psalms (93, 97, 99) carry the divine name. If the identification is valid, the total number of psalms with names add up to 98 (14x7). The number, “7,” and its multiples symbolize completeness.

The second category contains superscriptions defined by a formulaic expression but without name-attribution as their primary designation. This category consists of the SOA, the *Hodu* and *Hallelujah* psalms. The *Hodu-Hallelujah* psalms should be considered a special group of superscriptions when they occur in the *hiphil/piel* imperative masculine plural conjugation. Psalm 104, occurring as *piel* imperative feminine singular, is a similar superscription. However, this form occurs only once and being in the feminine singular, it is somewhat different from the *Hodu-Hallelujah*

category. As such, I have included it in psalms with clear superscriptions but without names, giving a total of 7 psalms in this category.

The three categories, *Hodu-Hallelujah* praise psalms, SOA, and psalms *without* clear superscriptions, consist of 15 psalms each. Together with the 7 psalms having identifiable superscriptions but without names, there is a total of 52 psalms in the larger category of superscriptions without names. The number, “52” (2x26), is a multiple of the divine name.<sup>1362</sup>

Superscriptions are clearly from antiquity (e.g., 82:1 in MasPs<sup>a</sup>).<sup>1363</sup> Our study reinforces the importance and integrity of Psalms superscription. They should not simply be relegated to secondary relevance. Rather, they are carefully designed and cannot be separated from the psalm texts.

## 5.4 SUMMARY

- Labuschagne, van der Lugt and others have shown that the Psalter is designed with numerical devices. They identify important numbers such as “17” and “26,” which

<sup>1362</sup> Koorevaar makes an interesting case for a “recount” total of 147 psalms in the Psalter. He considers the pairs of Pss 9–10, 42–43 and 114–115 as three single compositions. His discussion on superscriptions as possible structuring principle reinforces our contention of the structuring function of superscriptions. However, his conclusion remains tentative in view of our analysis. Koorevaar, “The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story with the Aid of Subscripts and Superscripts,” 586–92.

<sup>1363</sup> Anderson notes, “Not only are they evidenced in MT, Qumran, LXX, and Targums, but it ought also to be noted that even by the time of the LXX translation (second or third century BC?) the technical terms contained there were so antiquated and obscure that the translators had a fair degree of trouble interpreting them. This is true also for the Targums. Furthermore, we find similar super/postscripts in other parts of Scripture (cf. Hab 3:1, 19b; Isa 38:9). There thus seems to be no reason not to take the super/postscripts seriously.” Anderson, “The Division and Order of the Psalms,” 226.

express the divine name within the Psalter's texts. They also find the numbers "7" and "11" taking structuring functions in the texts. They see a phenomenon of meaningful/rhetorical centers occurring in individual psalms but do not consider these centers playing any role at the macrostructural level.

- I have adopted a different method of word-count. All words in the psalm, including headers and doxological formula, *hallelujah*, are counted. I term these words at the center as "nexusword." Based on my method, more than 70% of the nexusword in Books I–III and more than 90% in Books IV–V correspond to Labuschagne and/or van der Lugt's meaningful/rhetorical centers.
- The nexusword generally corresponds to the content/genre motif of the psalm and the macrostructural shape in their respective Collections. The nexusword is not a separate aspect of the psalm.
- The nexusword functions like a pointer using a word (or a pair of words) that betokens a larger motif-designate within the immediate context. This context may be a colon, verse or more. The meaning of this nexus-context, abbreviated by the nexusword, gives the psalm its content-thrust and provides the link to interrelated units of psalms, forming a nexus-trajectory.
- Book I consists of a total of 22 AAs and ACs/PACs. Books II–III consists of a total of 10 AAs and ACs/PACs and Books IV–V has a total of 14 AAs and ACs/PACs.
- Eight AAs, divided into two sets of four in Books I and V, contrast two Davidizations of the Psalms and frame the fall of the Davidic king and rise of an ideal Davidic king. Psalm 110 marks an important milestone in the Metanarrative of the Psalter.

- Alphabetical acrostics, ACs and PACs function to mark leitmotifs found in the Prologue and are strategically located as CM of Collections and Groups. They also mark seams/transition points between Collections, Groups and Books.
- Numerical symbolism is at work in the superscriptions of the Psalter. They can be classified into two main groups: those that include names (98 Pss = 14x7) and those that do not (52 Pss =26x2). Superscriptions are ancient and integral to the psalms they head. They contribute to the macrostructural understanding of the Psalter and should not be considered as secondary compositions.
- Numerical devices are likely to be a secondary feature used in conjunction with other techniques. It is more of a “signature” for added depth rather than a primary communicator of meaning. It expresses meaning symbolically and collaborates with other literary features.

## 6 CONCLUSION

*I believe the messianic thrust of the OT was the whole reason the books of the Hebrew Bible were written.*<sup>1364</sup>

—John Sailhamer

*Context, however, changes the way in which we read everything.*<sup>1365</sup>

— Jamie Grant

*For me, a primary indicator for larger groupings within the Hebrew Bible is symmetry—symmetry defined by structures and numbers, usually of a simple binary or bilateral kind. When symmetry is established or confirmed by examination, it must be the result of conscious planning of deliberate decisions. Therefore I contend that the selection, arrangement, and organization of the books of the Hebrew Bible follow from the deliberate and purposeful decisions and actions of an individual or a small group of people at a particular time and in a particular place, thus producing a unified whole.*<sup>1366</sup>

—David Freedman

We began with the aim of understanding the logic and *design* of the MT-150 Psalter to ascertain if an overarching architectural logic can be assigned to it. In this conclusion, we will review highlights of our analysis, briefly posit the implications of this thesis and identify areas for future work.

<sup>1364</sup> John Sailhamer, “The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible,” *JETS* 44, no. 1 (2001): 5–23, [23].

<sup>1365</sup> Grant, “The Psalms and the King,” 107.

<sup>1366</sup> David Noel Freedman, *The Unity of the Hebrew Bible* (The Distinguished Senior Faculty Lecture Series; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), vi.

## **6.1 OVERALL SUMMARY AND KEY PROPOSITIONS**

The main points of each chapter have been summarized at the end of each chapter (pp. 124, 213, 310, 429, 528). I will conclude by revisiting the three research questions that guided this thesis: (1) What are the main organizing principles of the Psalter? (2) How is the Psalter organized macrostructurally? (3) Is there a coherent overarching theme and logical design to the Psalter?

### **6.1.1 KEY MACRO-ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES OF THE MT-150**

Despite various groundbreaking discoveries of poetic structuring techniques of the MT-150 and the rise of the canonical approaches to the Psalms in the last few decades, there remain little consolidation/consensus regarding the plurality of techniques or structural shape. The need to consolidate various techniques and approaches to understanding the organization of the Psalter is thus a pertinent task, which I have sought to do. The following six points summarize the macrostructuring principles of the MT-150.

First, the MT-150 employs a variety of organizing techniques at different levels of composition. I have consolidated at least 32 formal and tacit techniques (pp.58–60). Formal techniques may include conventions existing at the time of the composition. The distinction between *formal* and *tacit* is not always clear and often overlap at different levels of composition.

Second, despite the multiplicity of these techniques, they collaborate with each other coherently in the structuring of the entire Psalter, that is, they do not operate in conflicting ways when viewed under the overall scheme—a necessary feature for the MT-150 to have an overarching unified design and logic. The coherence of these organizing principles suggests intentionality and unity of the MT-150. This does not

imply that every observation presented in this thesis fits into a perfect structural model. The effect of multiple editorial layers is such that the final editing did not always eliminate every non-conforming data.<sup>1367</sup> There may be a lack of understanding of certain structural logic (e.g., the arrangements of AAs, ACs and PACs or the POS). Nonetheless, the cumulative observations presented in this thesis have displayed exceptional consistency and coherence.

Third, the principles of the organization of the MT-150 should be viewed from a macro-perspective. Certain principles of organization cannot be easily detected without a macrostructural perspective (e.g., the thematic parallel between Pss 104–119 and 135–150; see §3.1.3.1). Semi-macrostructural studies (limited to a Collection or several psalms), while helpful, cannot speak for the entire Psalter.

Fourth, the MT-150 is organized to afford at least three dimensions of reading. It can be read linearly, concentrically (palindromically) and intertextually. I propose that the MT-150 has a fourth dimension that is numerical. The linear dimension detects shifts, develops concepts and traces a thematic trajectory. The concentric dimension highlights recurring leitmotifs located centrally at various compositional units. Intertextually, the Psalter re-reads the Davidic covenant and its various expressions in the Historical books such as 1–2 Sam. The Psalter frames two high points of Davidic triumphs (deliverance and triumph in 2 Sam 7 and 22; cf. Pss 18, 144) around his brokenness, especially from Ps 51 where David's sin with Bathsheba is recorded. Numerical symbolism is also built into various techniques. Certain numbers associated

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<sup>1367</sup> Wilson, *Editing*, 207–208, 214–215.

with the Tetragrammaton (e.g., “17,” “26”) and acrostic/alphabetical compositions (e.g., “11,” “22”) recur strategically, uniting content and form.

Fifth, the Prologue (Pss 1–2) is programmatic of the shape and theme of the Psalter. The Prologue is a triptych that has both concentric and linear dimensions. Linearly, it develops the *ways* and *outcomes* of the righteous and wicked. Their concentric focal points characterize the blessed state of the righteous man in the paradisiacal garden (Ps 1) which is enabled by the triumphant messianic king at Zion (Ps 2). In a similar way, the MT-150 is structured as a larger triptych (Books I, II–III, IV–V), capturing the righteous’ journey to an ideal Zion via an ideal Messianic king.

Sixth, the macrostructural shape of the MT-150 is unveiled at the composition levels of *Groups*, *Collections* and *Subcollections*. Many studies are positioned at the semi-macrostructural level analyzing a Collection or several psalms in detail. But it is the “in-between” category, between Collections, Books and the entire Psalter, that lacks treatment. Eight of the most important macrostructuring techniques pertaining to this “in-between” category are as follows: (i) Concentric structure highlighting a Central Motif at the compositional levels of the Collections and beyond (see §2.1 for a nomenclature of psalms unit-delimitation); (ii) Placement and logic of Davidic psalms/Collections; (iii) Placement and logic of alphabetical acrostics/compositions; (iv) Formulation of superscription; their numerical design; the 13 historical superscripts and the coda at Ps 72:20; (v) Recurring thematic trajectory towards Zion. This is also an expression of the techniques of *Steigerung* (“development”) and *Fernverbindung* (“distant-binding”); (vi) The use of individual psalm *genre* in structuring a compositional unit; (vii) Pan-Psalter lexeme Occurrences Scheme—an exhaustive sequence of certain word/phrases at strategic locations across the entire Psalter to make or reinforce a rhetorical point in collaboration with the macrostructural shape of the

Psalter (§3.2.6); (viii) Numerical devices and symbolism associated with the Tetragrammaton or motif of completeness.

### **6.1.2 MACROSTRUCTURE OF THE MT-150**

The second research question on the macrostructure of the MT-150 is fundamental to understanding the design of the entire Psalter. In its entirety, the Psalter is structured concentrically into three Sections (Books I, II–III, IV–V) and each Section consists of four Groups (1–4, 5–8, 9–12). The 12 Groups are delineated as follows: Pss 3–14, 15–24, 25–34, 35–41 (Book I); Pss 42–49, 50–72, 73–83, 84–89 (Books II–III); Pss 90–103, 104–119, 120–134, 135–150 (Books IV–V). My structural proposals are laid out graphically in four important figures (see pp. 131, 151, 185, 186).

The structural divisions of Books I–III are easier to detect because of their well-delimited superscriptions. An important key to understanding the structure of Books IV–V is to see Pss 104–107 and Pss 135–137 as literary units functioning as Janus Collections. The macrostructural distant-parallel between Pss 104–119 and 135–150 reinforces our overall structural proposition. Remarkably, the four respective Group Central Motifs (GCMs) in every Section parallel each other, giving the Psalter a concentric and linear reading dimensions. The following figures summarize the 12 GCMs and macrostructural design of the MT-150.

Book I				
Section 1	Pss 1–2	3–14	15–24	25–34
	Prologue	YHWH's cosmic kingship; judgment from Zion (8–9)	Victorious Messianic king; Torah glorified (18–21)	Dedication Historical Zion-Temple; YHWH's kingship (29–30)
Section 2	Group 1	2	3	4
	42–49	50–72	73–83	84–89
Section 3	Messianic king and his bride (45)	Fall of Davidic kingship and YHWH's response (56–67)	Fall of Zion-Temple and YHWH's judgment (74–76, 79–82)	Supplication of afflicted David (86)
	Group 5	6	7	8
Book II		Book III		
Book IV		Book V		
90–103	104–119	120–134	135–150	
YHWH's cosmic kingship; judgment from Zion (93–100)	Victorious Messianic king; Torah glorified (108–110)	Restoration; Eschatological Zion-Temple; divine-messianic kingship (122, 127, 132)	Supplication of afflicted David (140–143)	
Group 9	10	11	12	

Figure 78: Central Motifs of all 12 Groups in the 3 Sections of the MT Psalter

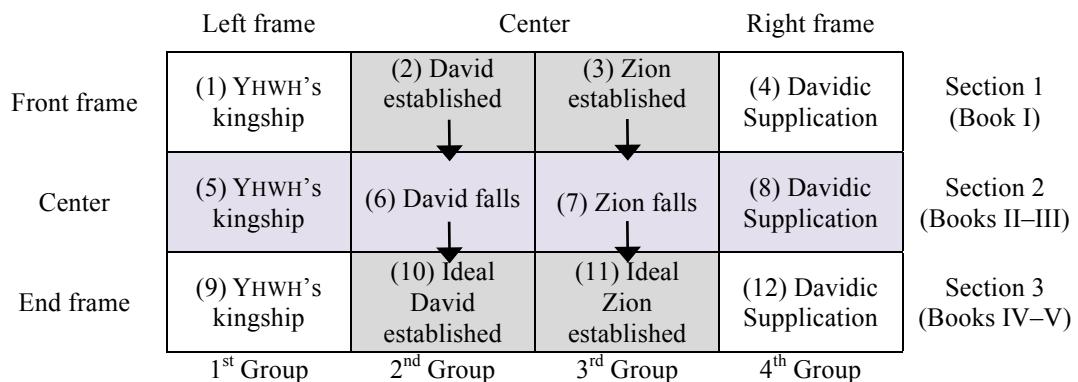


Figure 79: Concentric and Linear Structures of Group Central Motifs

Figure 78 shows how the 12 Groups across 3 Sections are characterized by a distinctive Central Motif. Figure 79 shows how they are remarkably interlinked, and providing both linear and concentric dimensions to reading the MT-150. The two middle GCMs vertically down the three Sections provide the linear Metanarrative. The second GCMs (Groups 2, 6 and 10) develop the establishment, fall and the (re)establishment of an ideal Davidic king whereas the third GCMs (Groups 3, 7 and 11) develop a similar trajectory for Zion. As a whole, the concentric-linear structure envisions the establishment of the ideal kingship and ideal Zion, framed by two persistent motifs of YHWH's universal kingship (1, 5, 9) and Davidic supplication (4, 8, 12).

At another compositional level, the five Davidic Collections (DC-I–V) are skilfully interwoven into the five-Book structure. Each DC can be viewed as a triptych. Together, they trace a linear development and characterize, more clearly, the ideal Davidic king.

Davidic Collection	Concentric Structure			Linear Progression
	Front	Center	End	
DC-I (3–41)	YHWH's kingship (8–9)	Establishment of David's kingship and Temple (18–21, 29–30)	Davidic distress and supplication (38)	Begins with YHWH's kingship. King David broken (sacrifice accepted). Kingship turned over to a Solomonic king. ↓
DC-II* (51–71, 86)	David's fall begins with Nathan's judgment (51)	David's life threatened (56–64)	David at the brink of death (71/86)	
DC-III (101–103)	Blameless Davidite (101)	Afflicted figure (102)	David the Song leader (103)	Ideal, condemned-vindicated king-priest. ↓
DC-IV (108–110)	Victorious Davidic king entering Zion (108)	Afflicted and condemned Davidic figure (109)	Vindicated and victorious Davidic rule from Zion (110)	
DC-V (138–145)	YHWH's kingship (138)	Davidic distress and supplication (140–143)	Davidic figure handover kingship to YHWH (145)	Ideal king turn over kingship to YHWH in the end

Figure 80: Summary of the Five Davidic Collections

The first Davidic Collection captures the establishment of the Davidic kingship but the storyline takes a negative turn in DC-II where the kingship is depicted as

broken. A positive shift occurs in DC-III with the appearing of an ideal, victorious but afflicted king. This characterization of the ideal king deepens in the parallel DC-IV. The final DC-V democratizes a supplicational Davidic figure and concludes with the Davidic king submitting to YHWH's kingship.

The 150 poems may appear to be a series of independent units chronologically linked to each other, but they are a nexus of overlapping motifs skilfully structured into a single composition through a range of formal and tacit devices for emphasis, artistry and rhetoric.

### **6.1.3 OVERARCHING LOGIC AND THE DESIGN OF THE MT-150**

The logic of the MT-150 is a reception of the Davidic covenant wrapped in the clothing of Hebrew poetry. The primary leitmotifs of the Psalter, found in the Prologue (Pss 1–2), is an intertwined ternion of Kingship, Zion and Torah-piousness. These motifs are often sustained at the seams of the five Books of the Psalter and at the palindromical centre of a literary unit. The GCMs of Book I trace the establishment of the Davidic kingship and Zion-temple. This is followed by a sustained focus on the historic fall of David's kingship and Zion in Books II–III respectively. A turning point in the Metanarrative occurs in Book IV with foregrounding of YHWH's kingship (93–100), and the appearance of a blameless, suffering Davidite ruler (DC-III–IV; 101–103; 108–110). Book V of the Psalter begins with a call for YHWH to lead his people to an inhabited city. It highlights the establishment of an ideal Zion city that YHWH builds (120–136), to which the psalmist and the *chasidim*, through persistence in supplication and the triumphs of the Davidic king (138–144), will eventually arrive (145–150). The Davidic promises prevail because of YHWH's covenantal faithfulness.

The macrostructural logic of the Psalter is thus an unfurling and relecture of the Davidic covenant (in 2 Sam 7 and other texts). It is a search for blessedness, made possible under a larger trans-temporal reality that traces the establishment, fall and “re-establishment” of the Davidic promises via an ideal anointed king. The posture hitherto of the *chasidim* is that of trusting prayer and patience because of YHWH’s unfailing יְהֹוָה.

From extrabiblical and internal literary evidence, many of the structuring and rhetoric techniques (e.g., symmetry and the use of kingship motif at the center of a compositional unit) in the Psalter were already in use by the time of the final editing in the postexilic period. Moreover, important developing motifs across the Psalter, such as the sojourn to God’s dwelling at Zion, have been central in the Song of the Sea, one of Israel’s earliest poetry. Sharing a common socio-political and theological setting, the final editors of the Psalter and implied readers alike would have been more familiar with these poetic, theological and structural devices than modern readers today.

The marvel of the Psalter’s design lies in the synergizing of at least four narratives—first, a larger Metanarrative of God’s purposes expressed through a prophetic re-reading of the Davidic covenant. Then it develops two smaller narratives representing the life-journeys of the individual Davidic king and the community of *chasidim* respectively. Finally, the story of the reader of the Psalter is fused into these three narratives. The Davidization of the psalms and the democratization of the Davidic blessings integrate all four narratives. Our reading of the Psalter shows that the final editors were sensitive to the theological and existential struggles of postexilic Israel readership and had crafted a coherent and significant message with poetical finesse to address these issues.

## 6.2 IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER WORK

Significant implications and opportunities for further research are briefly captured in the following:

### 6.2.1 *SITZ IM PSALTER*

The design of the Psalter implies a synchronic-theological reading rather than historical-critical one. While the Psalter may have been composed under different layers of historical reality, the generic nature of the final MT-150 form is designed for trans-temporal reception. Reading individual psalms via their *Sitz im Leben*, though useful, speculates on one historical slice of the Psalms and fails to grasp its role in the larger programmatic message as shown. The interpretation of an individual psalm is best elucidated via its *Sitz im Psalter*. Perhaps we can use the analogies of a photo mosaic,<sup>1368</sup> a television serial, or a horological masterpiece to describe it. The parts, assembled in sequential, parallel and overlapping instalments, bring about an overall architectonic movement and purpose.

The meaning of individual psalms is radically enriched when read within the immediate literary unit and under the whole, through which the theological thrust of the Psalms, especially its connection with the Davidic covenant, can be understood. This thesis may articulate the plausibility of a macrostructural design but detailed exegetical study of individual psalms within the *Sitz im Psalter* based on this design is still necessary. It will result in important ramifications for literary and theological

<sup>1368</sup> A photo mosaic is a coherent picture made with many small pixelated images carefully arranged.

understanding of the Psalter. The design the MT-150 not only *describes* a certain reality for humankind and the world before YHWH, it *prescribes* the way through which humans find bliss at a paradisiacal city, and *ascribes* the role and significance of each psalm under its *Sitz im Psalter*.

### **6.2.2 SITZ IN DER LITERATUR**

It is important to situate the poetical principles and the Psalter's theological re-reading of the Davidic covenant within the larger Hebrew canon and literature of the Second Temple period. Where biblical texts are concerned, there is a need to further clarify the relationship between the MT-150 and the Torah, Historical books, post-exilic Prophets, and the New Testament (e.g., Epistle to the Hebrews). It must be acknowledged that the Psalter's re-reading of the Davidic covenant, especially in the brokenness of the Davidic king becoming an acceptable sacrifice, and the appearing of a blameless, afflicted and victorious messianic king, coheres strikingly with the Christological interpretation of the Psalms.<sup>1369</sup>

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<sup>1369</sup> The Christological interpretation is a formidable and reasonable re-reading of the MT-150. Consider Jesus's statement about the Psalms in Luke 24:44 and the following Christological re-readings of Psalms by the NT: (1) The characterization of the ideal Davidic figure as ideal, blameless (John 8:46; cf. Pss 101–103), shepherd (Matt 2:6; 26:30; John 10:11–14; cf. Pss 78:70–72; 80:1), victorious (1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16; cf. Ps 108), messianic priest-king (Matt 16:16; Heb 3:1; 7:14–24; cf. Ps 110), Torah-pious (Matt 4; Mark 10:17–18; cf. Pss 112; 119), and Son of God (Matt 16:16; Lik3 1:32; cf. Ps 2:7, 12; 8:5; 72:1); (2) The king is both afflicted and victorious (Acts 4:27; Rom 15:16; cf. Pss 101–102; 109–110); (3) Two triumphant depictions of victory over death and one depiction of his death (1 Cor 15:23–28; Rev 20:5–6; cf. Pss 18, 144–145); (4) The raging of the nations against Jesus and false accusations that led to his condemnation (Matt 26:59–62; Acts 4:25–26; cf. Ps 2:2; 109:6–20); (5) Jesus ushers in the sure blessings of the Davidic promises and submits his kingship to God the father at the end (Acts 13:33–41; 1 Cor 15:28; cf. Pss 144–145); (6) Through the brokenness of Jesus, sacrifice is accepted to God (Rom 3:24; Heb 10:19; cf. Pss 51–69); (7) Jesus as the better Moses and David (Heb 3:2–6; Acts 2:29–36; cf. Pss 90–92, 101–103); (8) The rejection of Jesus and building of God's house (Matt 16:16; 1 Pet 4:4–8; Ps 109:20; 118:22); (9) The concept of “new song” in the Book of Revelation as the dawn of a new era (Rev 5:9; 14:3; cf. Pss 33:4; 40:4; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1); (10) Persistent supplication of the

Since the sequence of arrangement is intentional, we need to understand why the Book of Psalms is located differently in different traditions of the HB.<sup>1370</sup> It is also unclear if the various poetical techniques identified in this thesis were already attested in pre-Masoretic non-Qumran psalms texts (e.g., MasPs<sup>a</sup>). Another area of importance is the logic of the arrangement of the Qumran Psalms Scrolls (e.g., 11QPs<sup>a</sup>) which deviate in the repertoire of psalms, sequence and orthography.

Strawn, after tracing the textual history of the Psalms in the pioneering project, *The Textual History of the Bible*, concludes that “future studies of shape and shaping should be conducted in comparative modes, such that a study of, say, TR-150 would not be conducted without some awareness of at least one (ideally more) alternative ‘shape’ known from the manuscript tradition.”<sup>1371</sup> This thesis provides a good platform for such comparative work.

people of God until the coming of a new era (Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17; James 5:13–20; cf. Pss 38, 86, 140–143). (11) The appearing of a paradisiacal Zion city with the river of life and fruit-bearing trees, where the people of God dwells in security and bliss (Rev 21:1–3; 22:1–3; cf. Pss 1:3; 46:4); (12) The people of God will reign with Jesus at Zion (Rev 20:4; cf. Pss 149:1–9); (13) A concluding call for the people of God to heed the word of God (Rev 22:7; cf. Ps 147:19; Nexusword of Pss 146–150); (14) The expression, Hallelujah and eschatological consummative praise (Rev 19:1–6; cf. Pss 145–150). For discussions on the use of Psalms in the NT, see Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken eds., *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2004); On reception of the Psalms in the Epistle of Hebrews in the New Testament, see Dirk Human and Gert Jacobus Steyn, eds., *Psalms and Hebrews* (LHBOTS 527; New York: T&T Clark, 2010);

<sup>1370</sup> Even within the MT tradition, differences in book order are attested. For instance, in the Aleppo Codex, the Psalms comes after Chronicles.

<sup>1371</sup> Brent A. Strawn, “10.2.2 Masoretic Texts and Ancient Texts Close to MT,” in *Textual History of the Bible Online* (eds. Armin Lange et al., 2016). Cited 14 September 2016. <http://www.brill.com/products/online-resources/textual-history-bible-online>.

### 6.2.3 *SITZ IM LEBEN*

There is a prescriptive call to hope in prayer in the MT-150 but how does this prescriptive thrust inform, cohere or respond to the historical setting of its original readership? Who are the people most capable and equipped to compose the MT-150 and under what circumstances did they compose? Are they the Levites associated with the Second Temple or are they scribes associated with the Wisdom circle?<sup>1372</sup> While these issues will unlikely be addressed with certainty, this thesis will contribute to the understanding of these circumstantial settings. Since the LXX follows the MT-150 well, it is plausible that a proto-Masoretic 150 *Vorlage* was already extant before the mid-second-century B.C.E. Deemed as proto-Masoretic Psalms manuscripts, MasPs<sup>a</sup> (30–1 B.C.E.), MasPs<sup>b</sup> (50–25 B.C.E.) and 5/6HевPs (50–68 C.E.) collaborate that a forerunner of the MT-150 was already extant in the last century B.C.E.<sup>1373</sup>

From the logic and design of the MT-150, I suggest that a single editor or a small group of editors may be responsible for the Psalter's final shape. These editors were highly skilled and familiar with a range of formal and tacit poetical techniques. The use of techniques such as the POS and numerical devices presumed a literary whole and required focused reading rather than a partial recitation. It suggests a reading audience with access to a copy of the entire Psalter and having the sophistication to work through

<sup>1372</sup> For authorship associated with the Levitical priests in the post-exilic period, see Louis Jonker, “Revisiting the Psalms Headings: Second Temple Levitical Propaganda,” in *Psalms and Liturgy* (eds. D. J. Human and C. J. A. Vos; JSOTSup 410; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 102–122; Susan Gillingham, “The Levites and The Editorial Composition of the Psalms,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (ed. William P. Brown; Oxford University Press, 2014), 201–213.

<sup>1373</sup> These three texts are very close to the MT-150 and are deemed as “proto-MT” Psalms texts. Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint: Collected Essays*, vol. 3 (VTSup 167; Leiden: Brill, 2015), 328.

the text in detail. In this way, the Psalter is not merely used as a occasional liturgical work (e.g., as a hymnal) but also a book to be read from cover to cover, and to be meditated on continually (Ps 1:2). Many of these techniques were already seen in various Mesopotamian and Egyptian acrostics poems, as well as, the Song of the Sea, one of Israel's earliest poems. Extended chiastic or acrostic structures across large portions of texts also find parallels elsewhere across the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Lamentations, Judges 3:7–16:31). It is plausible that the Psalms editors, together with the readers, would have been familiar with these literary rhetorics.

The final editors of the Psalter were clearly concerned with the fulfilment of YHWH's promises through the Davidic covenant and were well-versed in biblical Historical narratives (e.g., 1–2 Samuel).<sup>1374</sup> While it is unclear if the editors of the Psalms were also those behind 1–2 Chronicles, the Chronicler seemed to understand the design of the Psalter by his selective use of the Zion-Temple motifs and the formulaic *hodu* from Books IV–V of the Psalter. The MT-150 is likely composed through a period of social strain.<sup>1375</sup> The Second temple was still standing but worshippers were looking forward to a better Zion-city-temple. The combination of motifs of messianic hope and ideal Zion, vis-à-vis a less than ideal depiction of social life in Book V of the Psalter, suggest a state of challenging circumstances that required a re-reading of Davidic

<sup>1374</sup> Dated to 50–25 B.C.E., 4QSam<sup>a</sup> (4Q51) is found to be closer to the LXX translation rather than the MT. This suggests that a pre-Masoretic *Vorlage* of the book of Samuel, on which the LXX was dependent was already extant at around the time the LXX was translated. Fischer and Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, 66.

<sup>1375</sup> On Persian influence, see Tucker's work, *Constructing and Deconstructing Power in Psalms 107-150* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014).

promises and an admonishment to persist in prayer and Torah-piousness. This is so that the original readers would continue in hope until that transition (Pss 144–145) into the blissful eschatological social-reality. At the same time, the Psalter has a trans-temporal character such that readers today can also hold on to that same Davidic hope regardless of their circumstances, and persist in prayer until that final *hallelujah!*



## Appendix: Ho-Labuschagne-van der Lugt Comparison of the Rhetorical Center in An Individual Psalm

Note:

- (1) \*Asterisk denotes that the analysis of that psalm required some textual emendations, expansions beyond the word level, or that the meaningful center can be found with a different methodology (e.g., adding the header counts).
- (2) In the “nexusword” column, words in parenthesis are added by me to make a complete clause. In most cases, I have filled out the entire colon. Words that are outside the parenthesis are identified as a single word (in odd word-count) or pair of words (in even word-count).
- (3) When the nexusword corresponds to either the meaningful center of Labuschagne’s analysis or rhetorical center of van der Lugt’s analysis, I indicate it as “Y” in the last column. I have totalled up the number of psalms with “Y” for each Section and expressed it as percentages at the right bottom.
- (4) There are several instances where two psalms are considered as one (e.g., Pss 9–10) or a single psalm is divided into two (e.g., Ps 40). I have italicized the rows where such instances occurred.
- (5) For references, see <http://www.labuschagne.nl/psalms.htm>; *CAS I–III*.

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Cor- res- pond ?
	Nexusword	Word- count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
1	which (yield its fruit in its season)	57	3	Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither	3a; word	which brings forth its fruit in due season and whose foliage does not fade	3c-d; word, colon, verse	Y
2	(you are) my Son	77	7	I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son”	7a-b; colon	I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son”	7a-b; colon	Y
1–2	<i>against the LORD, and against his anointed</i>	134	2:2	<i>without considering maqqep, centerword = “against” (2:2), entire colon = against the LORD, against his anointed</i>				Y
3	from his (holy) hill	63	5	I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the LORD sustained me	6; word	I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the LORD sustained me	6; word	N
4	be angry and do not sin	68	5	meditate in your hearts, on your beds, and be silent	5b; word	ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent	5b; word	N
5	(I will enter) your house	89	8	I will worship at your holy temple in awe of you	8b; word, colon	because of your steadfast love I will appear in your presence	8; colon, verse	Y
6	(no) remembrance	74	6	I am wearied with my moaning	7a; colon	For in death there is no	*6–7a; word	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Cor- res- pond ?
	Nexusword	Word- count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
	of you; in Sheol					remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise? I am weary with my moaning	(with words in headings)	
7	judge me, O LORD (according to my righteousness)	124	9	new	9b–10a–b; words (entire poem)	my enemy without cause,	7:1–9a = 5b; word	Y
						he has bent and readied his bow	*7:9b–18 = No meaningful center	
8	For you are mindful of, and the son of man	66	5	What is a human being that you think of him, a child of Adam that you care for him? You have made him little less than a god and with glory and honour crowned him	5–6; word, colon	a human being seems insignificant, but you have delegated to him divine mastery in your creation	5–6; word, colon, verse	Y
9	(the LORD) who dwells in Zion	150	12	Treated as a single psalm.				
10	(he seize the) poor when he draws	146	9					
9–10	they are but man	296	9:21	Why, YHWH, do you stand far off? Why hide away in times of trouble?	10:1; word	Why, O Lord, do you stand far off	10:1; word, colon	N
11	(the LORD's) throne is in heaven	62	4	YHWH, in heaven is his throne	4b; word	the Lord's throne is in heaven	4b; word, colon	Y
12	(who is) master over us?	72	5	“because of the plundering of the poor and the groaning of the needy, shall I now arise,” says YHWH, “I shall place him in the safety for which he longs”	6; verse	God will rescue the afflicted	*6a–b; colon (with headings, 5-word center)	N
13	answer me O LORD	48	4	Look now and answer me, YHWH my God	4a; word	look answer me, O Lord my God	4a; word	Y
14	(Do) all the workers of wickedness (not know?)	64	4	Have they no knowledge, all those evildoers?	4a; word	Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers	4a; word, verse, strophe	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
15	not take up (reproach) against his neighbour	44	3	And (he) tells no tales against his neighbour	3c; word	nor takes up a reproach against his friend	3c; word, colon, verse	Y
16	to me. I will bless	78	6, 7	Yes, I am well content with my inheritance	6b; colon.	indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance	6b; word, colon	N
17	you will hide me; from the face (of the wicked)	116	8, 9	Guard me like the apple of your eye in the shadow of your wings hide me	8; word	Keep me as the apple of your eye	8; colon, verse	Y
18	the LORD rewarded (me)	345	25	with the blameless you show yourself blameless	*26b; word (emendation)	with the blameless man you show yourself blameless	26b; word, colon	N
19	to make wise (the simple)	113	8	The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes	*9; verse	The precepts of the LORD are right	*9a; word (no meaningful center)	N
20	all your petitions. Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed	62	6, 7	May YHWH fulfil your every request	*6c; colon (with header and <i>selah</i> = 6c, word and colon)	May God fulfil all the request of the king	*6c; colon (with header and <i>selah</i> = 6c, word and colon)	Y
21	your presence, for the king (trust)	92	7, 8	For the king trusts in YHWH	*8a; word (with header = 6c, word and colon)	For the king trusts in the LORD	8a; word	Y
22	evildoers encircles me	224	17	A band of evildoers encircle me piercing my hands and my feet	17b-c; colon level	a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me	17b-18; word	Y
23	for you are with me	50	4	For you are with me	4d; word	For you are with me	4d; word	Y
24	Jacob	81	6	Those who seek your presence are the people of Jacob!	6b; colon	Such is the generation of those who seek him	*6a; word (not rhetorical center)	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Cor- res- pond ?
	Nexusword	Word- count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
25	his testimonies	133	10	For your name's sake, YHWH	*11; word (add one word "YHWH")	For your name's sake, O LORD	*11a; word (no rhetorical center)	N
26	and I go about (your altar)	73	6	I wash my hands in innocence and go in procession round your altar, YHWH, singing aloud a song of thanksgiving and recounting all your wondrous deeds	*6, 7; verseline (if include header, 7 words in verse 6 = meaningful center)	and I will go about	6b; word	Y
27	(I will offer) in his tent, sacrifices (with shouts of joy)	126	6	Yes, I shall acclaim him in his tent with sacrifice. I shall sing and make music for YHWH	*6c; colon; 6d; word (add one word, "YHWH")	and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy	6c; colon; (6d, word)	Y
28	render them their due reward	80	4	Render them their due reward	4d; word el.	Render them their due reward.	4d; word	Y
29	(he makes) Lebanon (skip like a calf)	81	6	He makes them skip like a calf	6a; word level	He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf	6a; colon	Y
30	O LORD, (by your favor)	87	8	O LORD, by your favour you have established me as a strong mountain	8a; colon (or vv. 7–8)	By your favor, (O LORD), you made my mountain stand strong	8a; word	Y
29–30	<i>the house of David (superscription)</i>	168	30:1					
31	(I have become) a broken vessel	200	13	I have become like a broken vessel for I hear the whispering of many	*13b–14a (word) or 13 (colon); no meaningful center	I have become like a broken vessel. For I hear the whispering of many	*13b–14a; word (not rhetorical center)	Y
32	(therefore let all godly pray) to you (at a time you may be found)	99	6	Therefore, let every faithful one pray to you at a time of distress: the thundering flood of great waters will not reach him	6; colon	Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him	6; verse	Y
33	(his heart) to generation (after generations)	137	11	The counsel of YHWH stands forever the designs of his heart are for	11–12; word (center = <i>ashre</i> )	The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all	11–12; colon, verseline s	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
				all generations. Happy is the nation whose God is YHWH the people he has chosen as his heritage		generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage		
34	the fear of (the LORD)	139	12	I will teach you the fear of YHWH	12b; word	I will teach you the fear of the LORD	12b; word	Y
35	I bowed down (in mourning)	203	14	I walked, bowed in grief as if for a brother as one who laments his mother, bowed down in mourning. But when I stumbled, they crowded round rejoicing, unknown assailants crowded against me	*v. 14– 15b; colon	I went about as though I grieved for my friend or my brother; as one who laments his mother, I bowed down in mourning	*14; verseline (no rhetorical center)	Y
36	(your judgments are great) deep	81	7	YHWH, your righteousness extends to heaven your faithfulness to the clouds. Your steadfast love is like the godly mountains, your justice like the great deep man and beast you save, YHWH	6, 7; verselines (no meaningful center at word level)	Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O LORD	7b–c; colon, 6, 7; strophe	Y
37	(they vanish) like smoke (they vanish)	259	20	Like the glory of the pastures, they vanish—like smoke they vanish	20; word	the godless borrow and do not pay	21a; colon (no rhetorical center)	Y
38	they stand, my nearest kin (stand far off)	144	12	and my kinsfolk keep far off	12b; word	and my nearest kin stand far off	12b; word, colon	Y
39	(does not know) who will gather?	108	7	And now, YHWH, what do I wait for? My hope is in you	8; verse (no meaningful center at word level)	And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you	8; verse (no rhetorical center)	N

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
40	I will not restraint (my lips O LORD)	168	10	I do not restrain my lips as you know, YHWH. Your justice I have not kept hidden in my heart your faithfulness and saving power I announced	10b–11b; colon	but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required	*40:2–13=7b–c; colon	Y
						Aha, Aha!	*40:14–18 = 16b; word	
41	(united) against me they whisper	104	8	he goes out and tells it abroad	*7c; word	when he goes out, he tells it abroad	*7c; word (not rhetorical center)	N

Correspondence (Book I) = 30/41 (73%)

42	my God my (soul)	114	7					N
43	(let them bring me) to thy holy hill	46	3					N
42–43	and in the night, his song (is with me)	160	9	By day YHWH grants his love, at night a song for him is with me a prayer to the God of my life	42:9; verse (no meaningful at word level)	By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life	42:9; verse	Y
44	(you have made us) a scorn (to our neighbours)	173	14	You have sold your people for a trifle demanding no price for them. You made us the taunt of our neighbours the derision and scorn of those about us	*13, 14; verseline (emendation)	You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them. 13 You have made us the taunt of our neighbors, the derision and scorn of those around us	13–14; colon	Y
45	cassia (are your robes)	139	9	Your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad. Daughters of kings are among your ladies of honour At your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir	*9, 10; strophe (emendation, add one word)	daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir	10; verse	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
46	the kingdoms (totter)	87	7	Nations rage, kingdoms totter, he utters his voice, the earth melts: YHWH of Hosts is with us	7–8a; word, verse	The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts	7b; colon or 7, verse	Y
47	the Lord with the sound (of the trumpet)	64	6	God has gone up to the shout of triumph YHWH with the sound of the horn! Praise God, sing praises, praise our king, sing praises	6, 7; colon	God has gone up to the shout of triumph YHWH with the sound of the horn! Praise God, sing praises praise our king, sing praises	6–7; colon, verse	Y
48	in the city of the LORD of host	100	9	As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of YHWH of Hosts: In the city of our God, God establishes it forever	9; colon, verse	As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God, which God will establish forever. <i>Selah</i>	*9; word (not rhetorical center)	Y
49	generations (the foolish) called (their lands)	144	12	Their graves are their homes forever, their dwelling places for all generations they call their names over their lands	12; verse (no meaningful center at word level)	Their graves are their homes forever, their dwelling places to all generations	12a–b; colon	Y
50	(world's) fullness are mine	149	12	If I were hungry, I would not tell you for the world and all that is in it are mine	12; verse or entire vv. 7–13 (no meaningful center at terse word level)	If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?	12–13; strophe	Y
51	(create in me a clean heart) O God!	137	12	Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew within me a steadfast spirit	12; colon	a clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me	12; colon	Y
52	forever, he will snatch you (up)	82	7	The righteous will look on, will be awestruck and will laugh at him	8; verse	The righteous will look on, will be awestruck and will laugh at him	8; colon, verse	N
53	(have the workers of wickedness no) knowledge	67	5	All are unfaithful, altogether corrupt; no one does good, nobody, not even one. Have they no understanding, those evildoers, who devour my	4–5; verse	They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. Have those	4–5; verse	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Cor- res- pond ?
	Nexusword	Word- count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
				people, as if eating bread, and never call upon God?		who work evil no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon God?		
54	my life, not!	58	5	Behold, God is my helper, the Lord the sustainer of my life	6; verse	Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life	6; verse	N
55	but it is you, a man	174	14	a man of my own sort, my comrade, my familiar friend	14; word ( <i>selah</i> in the wrong place)	within God's house we walked in the throng	15b; colon (not rhetorical center)	Y
56	for what crime?	107	8	You yourself record my wailing (v.9a); Meaningful Center 1—In God whose word I praise, in God I trust, I fear not; what can flesh do to me? (v.5); Meaningful Center 2—In God whose word I praise, in YHWH whose word I praise, In God I trust, I fear not; what can man do to me?	(1) 9a; colon; (2) 5, 11, 12. Multiple meaningful centers	you keep a record of misery	9a; colon	N
57	sharp. Be exalted	94	5, 6	Let your glory be all over the earth	6b; word	Let your glory be over all the earth	6b; word	N
58	(O God, break the teeth) in their mouths	85	7	God, smash their teeth in their mouths; rip out the fangs of the young lions, YHWH! Let them vanish like water that runs away	7–8a; word	O God, break the teeth in their mouths; tear out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD	7; colon, verse	Y
59	his strength for you	134	10	Yes, God is my bulwark, a God of steadfast love for me	10b–11a; word			N
60	answer us, O God	102	7, 8	Gilead is mine and Manasseh is mine.	9a; colon	mine is Gilead, and mine is Manasseh.	9a; colon	N
61	<i>selah</i> . For you	60	5, 6	for you, God, have heard my vows	6a; word	For you, O God, have heard my vows	6a; word	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
62	(I will not ) be shaken. On God (rest my salvation)	96	7, 8	my safety and my honour, my rock of refuge, my shelter is in God	8b; word	the rock of my strength, my refuge, is in God	8b; colon	N
63	and my lips	81	6	When I think of you on my bed	7a; word	when I remember you upon my bed	7a; word	N
64	snares, they say	74	6	They confirm their wicked resolves; they talk of hiding snares	7a-b; colon (no meaningful center)	They confirm their wicked resolves; they talk of hiding snares	7a-b, colon (no rhetorical center)	N
65	the roaring (of waves)	101	8	You calm the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the tumult of the nations	8; off-center words	who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples	8; colon	Y
66	you have tried us	131	10	For you tested us, God you refined us as silver is refined	10; word (include headers and <i>selah</i> )	you put a trammel on our loins	11b; colon	Y
67	(let the) peoples (sing for joy)	49	5	you judge the peoples with equity	5b; word	surely, you rule the peoples in equity	5b; colon noun "peoples"	Y
68	your captives	295	19	You went up the high mount, you took captives, you received gifts from men	19a-b; word	You went up the high mount, you took captives, you received gifts from men	19a-b; word	Y
69	(O Lord) turn (to me)	251	17	In your great compassion turn towards me! Do not hide your face from your servant! Truly, I am in dire straits! Make haste, answer me	17b-18; word	For I am in distress; answer me quickly	18b; colon	Y
70	Aha (Aha!)	43	4	Let them withdraw in their shame, those who cry "Aha! Aha!" Let them be jubilant and rejoice in you, all who seek you	4-5b; word	Let them withdraw in their shame, those who cry "Aha! Aha!" Let them be jubilant and rejoice in you, all who seek you	4-5b; colon, verse	Y
71	dishonor, who seek to injure me	174	13	God, be not far from me my God, make haste to help me! Let my accusers be put to shame and perish; With scorn and dishonour may they be covered who seek my hurt	12, 13; word, strophe	May my accusers be put to shame and consumed; with scorn and disgrace may they be covered who seek my hurt	*13; verse (no rhetorical center)	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
72	needy when they call	140	12	May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute. May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts	10; strophe	May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts	10; colon, verse and strophe	N
71-72	I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O holy one of Israel		71:22c -d					

Correspondence (Book II) = 21/ 31 (68%)

73	every morning	171	14	For all day long I suffer affliction and every morning I am chastened. If I had said, "I will speak thus" I would have betrayed your people	14, 15; verse	If I had said, "I will speak thus"	*15a; colon (not rhetorical center)	Y
74	(yet God is my king from of old, who works deeds of) salvation in the midst (of the land)	174	12	Yes, God is my king from of old working salvation in the midst of the earth	12; verse	Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth	12; verse	Y
75	for (not from the east or west)	77	7	Not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up	*7; verse (no meaningful center at word level)	For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up	7; verse	Y
76	deep sleep, rider (and horse cast into deep sleep)	78	7	you, awesome are you	8a; word	you, awesome are you	8a; word	N
77	it (is my grief)	141	11	I will call to mind the deeds of YH, I will remember your wonders of old	*12; colon (no meaningful center at word level)	Then I said, "I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High." I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder all your work, and	11-13; strophe	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
						meditate on your mighty deeds (ESV)		
78	they repented (and sought God)	473	34	They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God their redeemer	v. 35; verse	They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God their redeemer	35; verse	N
79	do not remember against us (our former sins)	115	8	For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his homeland	*7; colon (no meaningful center at word level)	For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation	7; colon	N
80	(and it took) deep root and fill the land	124	10	A vine from Egypt you dug out you drove out nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it so that it struck root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade and its branches were divine cedars. It put out its boughs all the way to the Sea and to the River its shoots	*9–12; canticle (two emendations, no meaningful center at word level)	A vine from Egypt you dug out you drove out nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it so that it struck root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade and its branches were divine cedars. It put out its boughs all the way to the Sea and to the River its shoots	9–12; canticle	Y
81	(I will admonish) in you (add four words each side, or a colon each)	111	9	O that you would listen to me, Israel	9b; word, colon	O Israel, if you would but listen to me	9b; word, colon	Y
82	no understanding	51	5	They know nothing and understand nothing; in darkness they walk about.	5a–b, word	They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness	5a; word, colon	Y
83	as Jabin	109	10	Deal with them as with Midian, as with Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, who were destroyed at Endor, who became dung for the ground	10–11; verse (no meaningful center at word level)	Deal with them as with Midian, as with Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, who were destroyed at Endor, who became dung for the ground	10–11; verse	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Cor- res- pond ?
	Nexusword	Word- count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
84	early rain	101	7	Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion. O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah (ESV)	6–9; canto	Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion (ESV)	6; verse	Y
85	grant to us (your salvation)	83	8	Let me hear what God YHWH will speak for he proclaims peace to his people and to his loyal servants and let them not turn back to folly	9; strophe	Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us! (v. 5); Steadfast love and faithfulness meet (11a; ESV)	*Two centers, 5, 11a.	N
86	for you are great	128	10	There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made will come to bow before you, Lord, and honour your name, for you are great and do wondrous things you alone are God	8–10; strophe	all nations will honor God	9; verse	Y
87	(behold) Philistia (and Tyre)	47	4	I shall mention Rahab and Babylon among those who acknowledge me. Behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Kush: Such a one was born there. And of Zion it shall be said: This one and that one were born in her	*4–5a; colon (no meaning center at word level)	I shall mention Rahab and Babylon among those who acknowledge me. Behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Kush: Such a one was born there. And of Zion it shall be said: This one and that one were born in her	*4–5a; colon (no meaning center at word level)	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
88	(not) go out	131	9	My eyes grow dim through anguish I invoke you, YHWH, every day	10a–b; colon	my eye grows dim through sorrow	10a; word	N
89	I will strike down (those who hate him), my faithfulness, (and lovingkindness will be with him)	334	24, 25	My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. He shall cry to me, “You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation” (ESV) with coda = “I shall set his hand on the sea” (v. 26a)	25–27; strophe (excluding coda. Center words = “his horn shall be exalted”)	My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers	25–26; strophe	Y

Correspondence (Book III) = 12/17 (71%)

90	we bring to an end, our years like a sigh	125	9	we bring our years to an end like a sigh	9b; word	we spend our years like a sigh	9b; word	Y
91	you will look (with your eyes)	99	8	you will see the retribution on evildoers	8b; colon (no meaningful center at word level)	and you will see the downfall of the godless	8b; word, colon	Y
92	(you, O LORD) are on high forever	100	9	but you are on high forever, O LORD	9; word	but you, O LORD, are on high forever	9; word	Y
93	floods	41	3	the floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring	3; word (center word = <i>naharot</i> –the floods)	the floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring	3; word	Y
94	to give him rest (both words start with <i>lamed</i> )	146	13	happy the one whom you instruct, YH and whom you teach from your law	v.12; verse	blessed is the man whom you discipline, O LORD, and whom you teach out of your law	12; verse, strophe	N
95	for (he is our God)	77	7	For he is our God	7a; word	yes, he is our God	7a; word, colon	Y
94–95	<i>your steadfast love, O LORD, held me up. (3-word center)</i>	223	9:18					N

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Cor- res- pond ?
	Nexusword	Word- count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
96	ascribe (to the LORD)	95	8	ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name	8a; word	ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name	8a	Y
97	all who serve idols	84	7	all worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; all you gods, bow down before him	7; word	all worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship him, all you gods	7; colon	Y
98	sing praises	67	4	break forth and exult and sing praises	4b; colon	break forth and shout joyfully and sing praise	4b; colon	Y
99	holy (is he)	77	5	holy is he	5c; colon	holy is he	5c; word	Y
100	we are his people	36	3	and we are his, his people and the flock of his pasture (or enter his gates with thanksgiving)	3b; word or 4a, colon	none	none	Y
101	secretly his neighbour	70	5	whoever secretly slanders his neighbour him I will destroy; Whoever has haughty looks and a proud heart him I will not tolerate	5; strophe	none	none	Y
102	for they are pleased	183	15	for your servants hold her stones dear and have pity on her dust	15; verse (no meaningful center at word level)	for your servants hold her stones dear and have pity on her dust	15; verse	Y
103	our transgression (from us)	141	12	For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us	12b; word	so far does he remove our transgressions from us	12b; colon	Y
104	a refuge	233	18	In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers (ESV)	17–18; word. ("hallelu- jah" left out of count)	In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers	17–18; word. ("hallelu- jah" left out of count)	Y
105	Jacob sojourned (in the land of ham)	256	23	Then Israel came to Egypt; Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham	23; verse	Then Israel came to Egypt; Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham	23; colon, verse	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
106	they did not believe (his word)	287	24	So he purposed to destroy them, had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to prevent his wrath from destroying them. But they despised the pleasant land having no faith in his promise	23, 24; verse	Therefore he said he would destroy them—had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them	*23 center words. (emendation required)	Y

Correspondence (Book IV) = 16/17 (94%)

107	let them recount (his works with joy)	253	22	and let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of his deeds in songs of joy	22; verse	and let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of his deeds in songs of joy	22; colon, verse	Y
108	valley (of Succoth)	85	8	God has spoken in his sanctuary: “Exult I will! I will divide Shechem and the valley of Succoth I will measure off!”	8 verseline. Center verseline meaningful	God has promised in his holiness: “With exultation I will divide up Shechem and portion out the Valley of Succoth”	8; verse	Y
109	despondent (in the heart)	201	16	afflicted and poor	16b; word	he loved to curse; let curses come upon him	17a center words of canto II.1 (not center of poem)	Y
110	your youth	55	3	your people will participate when you take up arms; in holy splendour, born of the dawn; to you will be the dew of your youth. YHWH has sworn an oath and will not change his mind: you are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek	3, 4; verse (no meaningful center at word level)	holiness, priests	3, 4; word, colon	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Cor- res- pond ?
	Nexusword	Word- count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
111	to his people, to give	68	6	his powerful works he demonstrated to his people giving them the land of the nations	6; colon (no meaningful center at word level)	he has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the inheritance of the nations	6; colon	Y
112	remembered forever	72	6	for never shall he be moved in eternal memory shall be the just person	6; word, verse ("for memory")	to remember	6; colon	Y
111 – 112	Praise God, blessed is the man!	140	112.1			blessed is the man who fears the LORD	112.1	Y
113	who (is like the LORD)?	51	5	who is like YHWH our God who is seated on high?	5; verse	who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high	5; colon, verse	Y
114	what was it?	47	5	the sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs. What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back? O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs? (ESV)	3–6; 26 words (off- center)	none	none	Y
115	(he is) their help and their shield	118	9	O Israel, trust in YHWH! Their help and their shield is he! O House of Aaron, trust in YHWH! Their help and their shield is he! O You who fear YHWH, trust in YHWH! Their help and their shield is he! (strophe level)	9b; word ("their help"), colon and strophe (9– 11)	he is their help and their shield.	9b; colon; 9– 11, strophe	Y
116	I believe	109	10	I shall walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I believed when I said, "I am greatly afflicted." I said in my alarm, "All men are liars"	9–11; verse (no meaningful center at word level)	I believed, even when I spoke: "I am greatly afflicted"	10; word	Y
117	for he is great (12-word psalm)	12	2	peoples	1b; word	None	None	N
113– 117	trust!	337	115:11 (trust!)					

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
118	the (right hand of) the LORD has done (valiantly)	178	15	the right hand of YHWH acts with power	15c; word, or 15–16, strophe	the right hand of the LORD does valiantly	15c = center word	Y
119	(forever) your word will stand (in the heavens)	934	89	that I may follow the instruction of your mouth	88b; word (1063 words, but 1064 words in MT) or Pss 73–104. Emendation required (128a removed)	that I may keep the testimonies of your mouth	88b; word	N
118-119	<i>I will learn your commandments</i>		119:7 3					
120	warrior's sharpened (arrows)	42	4	sharpened arrows of a warrior! Moreover, red-hot coals of broom	4; verse	a warrior's sharp arrows, with glowing coals of the broom tree	4; verse (not a rhetorical center)	Y
121	(no) sleep, watcher (of Israel)	46	4	behold, he never slumbers, never sleeps the Guardian of Israel YHWH is your Guardian YHWH is your shade on your right hand	4, 5; verse	None	no rhetorical center (divides into two equal halves)	Y
122	for (there the thrones are set for judgment)	57	5	it is a decree for Israel to give thanks to the name of YHWH, for there they sat on thrones of judgement on thrones of the house of David	4c–5; strophe (no meaningful center)	there thrones for judgment were set	5a; word	Y
123	our eyes (look to the LORD God)	35	2	So our eyes are turned to YHWH our God	2c; word	so our eyes look to the LORD our God, (till he has mercy upon us)	2c-d; word, verse	Y
124	(the stream would have) swept over our soul	54	4	Then over us would have swept the raging waters	5; verse	then the waters would have engulfed us, the stream would have swept over our soul; then the raging waters would have swept over our soul. Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us	4–6; strophe	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Cor- res- pond ?
	Nexusword	Word- count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
						to be torn by their teeth		
125	the wickedness (not rest over the righteous)	43	3	Surely, the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest upon the allotment of the righteous; So that the righteous will not extend their hands to wrongdoing	3; strophe	For the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong	3; strophe	Y
126	the LORD	45	3	great things indeed YHWH did for us we were glad	3; word	the LORD has done great things for us; we are glad	3; word	Y
127	he gives (to his beloved)	49	2	he provides his beloved with sleep	2d; word (including header, center word “to his beloved” (Solomon))	none	none	Y
128	(shoots of) olive (around your table)	43	3	around your table	3c-d+4a-b; word	Your children like olive plants Around your table. Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD	v.3c–4; word	Y
129	turned backwards (those who hate Zion)	50	5	may they be put to shame and turned back	5a; colon	may they be put to shame and fall back	5a; colon	Y
130	(I wait) for the LORD	47	5	I wait for YHWH, my soul waits and in his word I put my hope	5; word, colon	I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and I hope for his word	5; word	Y
131	(surely) I have composed (calmed myself)	27	2	on the contrary, I have remained calm and quieted my soul	2ab; verse	surely I have composed and quieted my soul; like a weaned child rests against his mother	2a–b; colon, verse	Y
132	the LORD has sworn (to David)	109	11	YHWH has sworn an oath to David	11a; word	the LORD has sworn to David	11a; word	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
133	the beard of Aaron	29	2	It is like the fragrant oil on the head, flowing down on the beard. The beard of Aaron, which flows down on the collar of his vestments. It is like the dew of Hermon, flowing down on the mountains of Zion	2–3b, strophe	None	None	Y
134	In the night; lift up your hands	20	1, 2,	lift up your hands towards the sanctuary and bless YHWH	2; verse			Y
133-134	( <i>For there the LORD has commanded (the blessing, life forevermore)</i> )		133.3c			<i>For there the LORD commanded —the life forever</i>	<i>133:3c-d; colon (Pss 133/34 combined as one)</i>	
120-134	( <i>he gives</i> ) to his beloved, sleep	696	127.2					
135	(king) of Amorite, and Og (king of Bashan)	144	11	the defeat of Sihon and Og demonstrating YHWH's power (21 words)	10–12; strophe	who struck down many nations and killed mighty kings, Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan, and gave their land as a heritage, a heritage to his people Israel	10–12; verse, strophe	Y
136	(to him who divided the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love) endures forever	159	13	to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, for his steadfast love endures forever; and brought Israel out from among them, for his steadfast love endures forever; with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who divided	10–15; 40-word center	to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, for his steadfast love endures forever; and brought Israel out from among them, for his steadfast love endures forever; with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for his steadfast love endures	10–15; 40-word center	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Cor- res- pond ?
	Nexusword	Word- count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
				the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love endures forever; and made Israel pass through the midst of it, for his steadfast love endures forever; but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures forever		forever; to him who divided the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love endures forever; and made Israel pass through the midst of it, for his steadfast love endures forever; but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures forever		
137	Let my tongue cling	68	6	if I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand wither away! May my tongue cling to my palate, if I do not remember you	5–6a; colon	woe is me, O Jerusalem, if I should forget your ruins (v. 5) and your (former) beauty (v. 6a–b)	5–6b; colon, verse	Y
138	Lord. For (great is the glory of the LORD)	62	5	all the kings of the earth will praise you, YHWH, when they hear the words of your mouth	4; verse	all kings of the earth praising the words spoken by God	4; colon	N
139	in the womb of my mother	160	13	for you yourself fashioned my inward parts you sheltered me in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am awesomely distinct; wonderful are your works and you know me through and through	vv.13–14b MC a colon level.	you knit me in the womb of my mother	13–14a- b; word, colon (center word = “womb”)	Y
140	(give ear to the) voice of my pleas for mercy, O LORD	104	7	I say to YHWH: “You are my God! Hear, YHWH, my plea for mercy. YHWH, my Lord, my strong deliverer, you shield my head on the day of battle”	7–8; colon	I said to the LORD, “You are my God; Give ear, O LORD, to the voice of my supplications. O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, You have covered my head in the day of battle”	7–8; colon, verse	Y
141	for continually	81	5	may a just person strike me: a favour	5; strophe	let a righteous man strike me—	5; colon, verse,	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Correspond?
	Nexusword	Word-count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
	(my prayer is against their evil deeds)			and may he chastise me: oil for the head; may my head not disallow it as long as I live, but my prayer is against their evil deeds		it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it. Yet my prayer is continually against their evil deeds	strophe	
142	no refuge remains (for me)	68	5	flight has fled from me; no one cares for me	5c-d; word	no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul	5c-d; word, colon, verse	Y
143	answer me O LORD	102	7	hasten to answer me, YHWH my spirit fails	7a-b; verse	I am longing for you; O Lord, hasten to answer me	6-7b; colon, verse, strophe	Y
144	O God, a (new) song	120	9	O God, I shall sing a new song to you	9a; word, colon	O God, I will sing a new song to you	9a; word, colon	Y
145	they tell of your power	126	11	a kingship for all times	13a; word	to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds	12a; colon	Y
138-145	<i>a prayer (superscription of Ps 142:1)</i>	823	142:1					
146	the one who keeps faith (forever)	74	6	happy is he whose helper is the God of Jacob whose hope is in YHWH his God. Who made heaven and earth the sea and all that is in them who keeps faith forever. Who deals out justice for the oppressed who gives food to the hungry	5-7b; strophe	who keeps faith forever	6c; colon, verse	Y
147	his delights is not in the leg (of man)	126	10	he does not delight in the strength of a horse nor does he take pleasure in men's legs	10; word, verse (emendation)	He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man	10b; word	Y
148	hail	87	8	praise YHWH from the earth you sea monsters and all you ocean depths. Fire and hail, snow and ice gales of wind obeying his word. You mountains and all	7-10; canto (off center)	praise the LORD from the earth, sea monsters and all deeps; fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word	7-8; word (off-center) verse, strophe	Y

Ps	Ho			Labuschagne		van der Lugt		Cor- res- pond ?
	Nexusword	Word- count	MT verse	Meaningful center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	Rhetorical center	MT verse; level of poetic unit	
				you hills your fruit trees and all your cedars. You wild beasts and all you cattle you creeping creatures and winged birds				
149	(let the) godly (exult in glory)	57	5	let the faithful exult in glory	5a; word, verse (emenda- tion)	let the godly exult in glory	5a; word	Y
150	harp and lyre	34	3	None	None	praise Him with harp and lyre.	3b; colon	Y
146- 150	his words to Jacob	378	147:1 9					

Correspondence (Book V) = 41/44 (93%)

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