

**The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy's
Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms**

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Abstract

This thesis suggests that Deuteronomy's Kingship Law (Deut 17:14-20) may have functioned as the paradigm for the placement of kingship psalms alongside torah psalms at key junctures in the final form of the Psalter. It argues that there is a general background in deuteronomic theology found in the torah-kingship psalm groupings (Pss 1-2; 18-21 and 118-119) and that the theological emphases of these psalms reflect, more particularly, the theology of the Law of the King. This study adopts a canonical approach to the analysis of the Psalter. That is, it suggests that the ordering of the psalms within the book reflects deliberate and systematic editorial activity, and that—by considering the positioning of psalms within the final form of the Psalter—the reader may tentatively observe the theological concerns of the book's redactors. This study draws upon recent developments in psalms studies, where there has been a move over the last fifteen years towards canonical readings of the Psalms, and suggests further developments in this approach both in terms of method and exegetical understanding of the texts in question. It is the conclusion of this thesis that the juxtaposition of kingship and torah psalms may have been the result of deliberate editorial activity in order to reflect the theology of the Kingship Law in the Psalter. It is further proposed that the reasons for this redaction were: (1) to shape the psalmic view of the eschatological king, emphasising that the expected Davidic monarch should reflect the ideal, rather than the historical examples, of kingship; and, (2) to endorse and encourage a torah-based piety, reflected in the practices expected of the king in the Kingship Law, amongst the readers and hearers of the Psalms.

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 an academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other 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 07.06.02

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Jamie Grant

Cheltenham, May 2002

¹ J. H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (SBT, Vol. 32; London: SCM Press, 1976), preface.

Abbreviations

ABC	Anchor Bible Commentary
AOTS	Augsburg Old Testament Series
BDB	Brown-Driver-Briggs, <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , Hendrickson Publishers: Peabody, MA, 1997
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJS	Biblical and Judaic Studies
BZAW	Beihefte zur <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>CJT</i>	<i>Canadian Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ColTh</i>	<i>Collectanea theologica</i>
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica, Old Testament
<i>CTM</i>	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DNEB	Die Neue Echter Bibel
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
EQ	Evangelical Quarterly
ESV	English Standard Version
EuroJTh	European Journal of Theology
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of Old Testament Literature
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
IBC	Interpretation Biblical Commentary
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
IOTS	<i>Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JPSTC	Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTOTG	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Old Testament Guides
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplementary Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>

KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
<i>MR</i>	<i>Modern Reformation</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
NASV	New American Standard Version
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NIntBC	New Interpreter's Biblical Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTR	Old Testament Readings
OUP	Oxford University Press
PIW	<i>Psalms in Israel's Worship</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Series
SBTh	Studies in Biblical Theology
SBTS	Sources for Biblical and Theological Study
SHS	Scripture and Hermeneutics Series
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>STh</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
<i>ThLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WJT</i>	<i>Westminster Journal of Theology</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

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Introduction

In the fourth century C.E., Augustine wrote that 'the arrangement of the Psalms, which seems to me to contain a secret of great mystery, has not yet been revealed to me.'¹ His observation is one which probably reflects the experience of many readers of the Psalter. On the one hand, the order of the Psalms seems to be entirely random and without recognisable design; yet, on the other, there are occasions when the reader is left with the impression that there is something more to it than that: one psalm answers a question asked in the previous poem, or the themes and language of one composition are echoed in the verses of its neighbour. Then there are the collections of psalms found throughout the Psalter: David, Asaph, Sons of Korah, Songs of Ascents and so on. What is more there are the five 'books' of psalms each ending with a doxology. So the more the reader thinks about it the more he or she empathises with the words of Augustine: there is something 'going on' in the ordering of the psalms in the Psalter, but it is hard to define precisely how that ordering may influence our understanding and interpretation of them.

This thesis seeks to plumb some of the depths of Augustine's 'great mystery'. The task in hand is not to present an over-arching explanation of the ordering of the psalms in the Psalter (as if such a task were possible!). Rather the aim of this study is to discuss one particular paradigm which may have influenced the shape of the Psalms in certain ways. That paradigm is the deuteronomic Kingship Law (Deut 17:14-20); and the tentative argument of this dissertation is that the Law of the King has been used as an intellectual construct to shape and nuance the psalmic presentation of kingship.

How is the Kingship Law applied as an interpretative paradigm by the editors of the Psalter? The suggestion made herein is that the editors wished to reflect the theology of the Law of the King through the deliberate juxtaposition of kingship psalms alongside torah psalms.² Psalms which focus upon the person of the king were placed alongside psalms which celebrate the significance of Yahweh's revelation. Psalms in which the king confesses his dependence upon Yahweh (a key idea of the Kingship Law) were set beside psalms which encourage a piety based in the reading and application of the torah (another key concept of the Kingship Law). So the central idea of this thesis is that the placement of kingship psalms alongside torah psalms was a deliberate editorial act through which the

¹ 'Ordo psalmodum, qui mihi magni sacramenti videtur continere secretum, nondum mihi fuerit revelatus,' *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 150.i (translation mine). I am grateful to David Mitchell who included this quote by way of preface to his work *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms* (JSOTSup 252; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 14.

² Namely, the placement of the royal Psalm 2 alongside (torah) Psalm 1; Pss 18, 20 and 21 are all kingship psalms which bracket Ps 19, a hymn celebrating Yahweh's torah; and Ps 118 (where the king leads the people into worship in the temple) is juxtaposed alongside the fullest of all the torah psalms, Ps 119.

Psalter's redactors intended to reflect the theology of the deuteronomic Law of the King in the Book of Psalms.

Why would they wish to do so? It is always a dangerous task to suggest why an individual (or group of individuals, for that matter) may or may not have prepared a particular text in a certain way. This task is made doubly difficult by distances of time and culture. The only means we have of answering such a question is, as far as is possible, to let the psalms speak for themselves. To let the theological content of these compositions be the basis for conclusions arrived at. It appears, from the detailed exegetical examination of the psalms which feature in this thesis, that the editors had two concerns: proper kingship and proper piety. Proper kingship in that the juxtaposition of royal and torah psalms draws attention to the Dtr *ideal* of kingship rather than the reality of the monarchy as recorded in the history books of Judah and Israel. Proper piety in that Deuteronomy calls upon the king to be an exemplar of right relationship with Yahweh for all the people, and the editors of the Psalms seek to present that exemplary commitment to God as the proper path for their readers to follow.

These concerns (proper kingship and proper piety) should be read in the light of the post-exilic era during which the editors of the Psalter carried out their final work. Therefore, it is highly likely that the editors' presentation of kingship is meant to speak to the people's eschatological image of a restored Davidic king. In the juxtaposition of these psalms, the redactors point out that this expected ruler from a renewed house of David is to reflect the ideal of kingship rather than the reality as experienced in the Deuteronomistic History. Post-exilic concerns speak to the question of proper piety as well. In the period of the return from exile, Yahweh's torah is seen as key to the renewed community in the land—it is the cornerstone by which they can avoid the fate of exile in the future.³ So, regardless of the original setting of these royal and torah psalms, they are (as we shall see) to be re-read in the light of the post-exilic final form of the Psalter which focuses attention on these dual themes: definition of the type of kingship which was to characterise the expected king and encouragement of a proper piety based in torah amongst the readers of the Psalms.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to ask a question of the text of the Psalter: is the juxtaposition of kingship and torah psalms designed to reflect the Law of the King? Obviously, there is a certain risk in such method; that is, the answer which one arrives at is inseparably linked to the question which one asks. So, in asking this question, do we risk imposing a paradigm which would not be apparent had we asked a different question? Perhaps. However, the question here asked is not—in its origin—one imposed on the text

³ As reflected, for example, in the prominence of torah in the post-exilic books of Ezra-Nehemiah and the exilic Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

from without, but one which results from initial (superficial) reading of the final form of the Book of Psalms itself. Psalms 1 and 2 are significant because they head the Psalter; they strike its opening chord, and, therefore, are somehow important to all that follows. It is in the reading of these initial psalms that one is first struck by the overtones of the Kingship Law. These two compositions (as Chapter 2 explains) are linked by several significant lexical and thematic repetitions, which associate the figure of the king in Ps 2 with the torah-lover of Ps 1. The king and the person (שׂוֹמֵר) who delights in Yahweh's torah are read together in creative juxtaposition, and so the voice of the Psalter—at its very outset—speaks in terms of the themes found in the Law of the King. This in turn challenges the reader to look further and more closely at the use of the torah psalms in the Psalter: they are few in number, yet their voice is loud in terms of the shape of the book as a whole.⁴ A cursory reading of Ps 19 and its surrounding psalms indicates a torah psalm bracketed by kingship psalms and the reader's curiosity is further awakened to a possible link with the Kingship Law. The association of king, leading the people into Temple worship, in Ps 118, and the torah-keeper who orders his life around the divine revelation, in Ps 119, again confirms these observations, and legitimates the question asked. There *appears to be* a link between king and torah in the psalms. There *is* an explicit link between king and torah in Deut 17:14-20. Are these two phenomena connected? Was the Kingship Law used by the editors of the Psalter as a paradigm for the juxtaposition of torah and kingship psalms? Thus, a question is indeed being asked of the text, but it is a question which springs from the text.

How do we proceed from there? How do we go about answering the question asked? The main aim is to let the respective texts speak for themselves as far as possible. Therefore, after dealing with certain questions of methodology in chapter one, chapters two to four will deal with the exegetical consideration of the three torah-kingship psalm groupings respectively. In examining these groups of psalms, the aim is to assess the main theological concerns apparent in each psalm and to highlight any indications of concatenation between the psalms of that group. In chapters three and four, we shall also consider the question of linkage between the three psalm groupings. In particular, as we seek to answer the question of whether or not the Kingship Law has functioned as a paradigm for the placement of torah and kingship psalms alongside one another, we should be aware of any conceptual background in deuteronomic theology which is to be found in these compositions. It seems reasonable that, if the Law of the King is the paradigm for their juxtaposition, they should reflect something of the deuteronomic worldview. Or rather, to express the same point negatively, it is unlikely that the Kingship Law has functioned as a paradigm for the placement of these psalms if they bear no other indication of a back-

⁴ As Chapter 6 explains. See also J. L. Mays, "The Place of the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter," *JBL* 106/1 (1987) 3-12.

ground in Dtr theology. Therefore, particular (but not exclusive) focus will be placed on the discussion of deuteronomic themes within the torah-kingship psalm groupings.

Chapter five, in turn, will pay more detailed attention to the Kingship Law itself, turning to the exegesis of Deut 17:14-20 in the light of the broader context of the laws concerning the offices in Israel (Deut 16:18-18:22). This passage too must be allowed to speak for itself in its own context if we are to properly understand its legitimate usage in the Psalms. Central to the idea of a canonical reading of the Psalter is the idea of the placement of individual psalms at significant junctures throughout the book. Therefore, following on from the exegetical examination of Pss 1-2, 18-21, 118-119 and Deut 17:14-20 in chapters two to five, attention will turn to consideration of the significance of the placement of the torah-kingship psalm groupings within the Psalter as a whole. Finally, chapter seven compares the main theological themes found in the torah-kingship psalm groupings with those found in the Kingship Law. Both the psalm groupings and the Law of the King speak of matters concerning the torah of Yahweh, kingship in Israel and issues of democratisation; but do the Psalms and Deuteronomy speak with the same voice on these matters? This will be the question considered in chapter seven of this thesis.

In his examination of Pss 18-21 as part of an article dealing with the theology of the psalm grouping Pss 15-24, Patrick Miller points out the echoes of the Law of the King found in these psalms and asks a rhetorical question:

It almost seems as if we are once more before the Deuteronomistic theology of kingship. It may be that all of this in fact reflects a Deuteronomistic influence on the redaction of the Psalter. I do not know. If it does, then we are made even more aware of the centrality of that particular stream in biblical theology and its influence on the theology of kingship and the royal ideal.⁵

Does the Book of Deuteronomy, in particular (as Miller suggests) the Kingship Law, influence the redaction of the Psalms? This is the very question that we will address in the coming pages of this thesis.

⁵ P. D. Miller, "Kingship, Torah Obedience and Prayer," *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung* (eds. K. Seybold and E. Zenger; Freiburg: Herder, 1995) 141.

Chapter 1

Methodological Considerations

1. Introduction

Since the publication of Gerald Wilson's *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*¹ in 1985 a quest has been continuing in the field of psalm studies: to define and highlight the theological themes emphasised in the final form of the Book of Psalms. Wilson's ground-breaking work set the tone for the development of psalm studies by arguing that the order of the psalms in the final form of the book was not accidental, but rather 'represents the end result of purposeful, editorial organization'.² Consequently, the suggestion that the ordering of the psalms is the result of deliberate editorial activity has led to the conclusion that the theological concerns of the Psalter's redactors must be apparent in the way in which the Book of Psalms has been put together. This theory has gained wide acceptance within the scholarly community over the last fifteen years, or so, and many scholars have contributed to this work in progress. Most scholars working in this field broadly accept Wilson's main thesis and his methodological approach (discussed in greater detail below), and from that starting point go on to analyse the content of the Psalms, pointing out important themes and indications of editorial activity.

The net effect of this scholarly turn towards a canonical approach to the Psalter has been the publication of various works which emphasise the themes which reflect the prominent theological concerns of those who shaped the final form of the Psalter. Wilson himself highlights the importance of the royal psalms which are placed at the 'seams' of Books I-III of the Psalter.³ Mays and McCann have emphasised the significant placement of the torah psalms in the overall collection—these compositions are few in number but their influence is substantial.⁴ Closely linked to the torah motifs is the 'wisdom' theology which many authors see as key to a proper understanding of the Book of Psalms.⁵ Other scholars, like Miller, have emphasised the Deuteronomic overtones found in prominent psalms,⁶ whilst the Exodus pericope, which seems to provide the backdrop to many psalms, has drawn the

¹ G. H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBLDS 76; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985).

² Wilson, *Editing*, 4.

³ Wilson, *Editing*, 208. See also G. H. Wilson, "The Use of Royal Psalms at the 'Seams' of the Hebrew Psalter," *JSOT* 35 (1986) 85-94.

⁴ See Mays, "Place of the Torah-Psalms." This article was also included in Mays' seminal work *The Lord Reigns* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994). See also J. C. McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Books of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

⁵ G. T. Sheppard, "Theology and the Book of Psalms," *Int* 46/2 (April 1992) 143-55. See also the chapter on the Psalms in B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1979) and A. R. Ceresko, "The Sage in the Psalms," *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (eds. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue; Winona Lake, IA: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 217-30.

⁶ P. D. Miller, "The End of the Psalter: A Response to Erich Zenger," *JSOT* 80 (1998) 103-10. See also Miller's "Kingship," and "Deuteronomy & Psalms: Evoking a Biblical Conversation," *JBL* 118/1 (1999) 3-18.

attention of other scholars.⁷ Finally, the reign of Yahweh—undoubtedly one of the central themes of the Psalter (if not *the* central theme)—has been the focus of several works.⁸ This recurrent focus on the reign of Yahweh finds emphasis in psalms celebrating the kingdom of Yahweh (e.g. Pss 93-99⁹) and in psalms celebrating the rule of his king (e.g. Pss 2, 72, 110 and other royal psalms¹⁰). The continuing prominent placement of the latter (kingship) psalms even in the face of the stark realities of post-exilic Israel when the Psalter was closed, has led many scholars to see marked eschatological overtones in the final form of the Psalms.¹¹

The discussion born out of this new approach to the study of the Psalms has been rich and diverse.¹² This thesis seeks to draw upon some of the suggestions already made and to add some further considerations to the on-going discussion—the hope being that through the continuation of this conversation our understanding of the Psalter will be further enriched. The main suggestion of this study is that one of the redactional emphases of the Book of Psalms is the juxtaposition of kingship and torah psalms alongside one another, in an attempt to reflect the theology of the Kingship Law in the Psalter's final form. The purpose of this redaction was two-fold: (1) to shape the reader's understanding of the eschatological king, expected in the period of the closure of the Psalter; and (2) to encourage the type of devotion to Yahweh amongst the readers and hearers of the psalms, which the Kingship Law expected of the king. Eschatological hope in a monarch who will be the true 'keeper' of the torah of Yahweh in accordance with the Deuteronomic Law of the King, and a piety based in the keeping of that torah.

Taking Deut 17:14-20 at face value, the pattern for kingship in Israel entailed keeping the law of the Lord (תּוֹרַת יְהוָה) and each king in the history of Judah and Israel failed in this task to a greater or lesser degree.¹³ It appears that the redactors of the Psalter, in line with

⁷ Zenger, "Composition." See also S. E. Gillingham, "The Exodus Tradition and Israelite Psalmody," *SJT* 52/1 (1999) 19-46, however, it must be said that Gillingham's concern in her thorough examination of the use of the Exodus theme in the Psalms is not to address issues of canonical placement.

⁸ For example, Mays, *The Lord Reigns*.

⁹ See D. M. Howard, *The Structure of Psalms 93-100* (BJS 5; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997).

¹⁰ J. I. Durham, "The King as 'Messiah' in the Psalms," *Review and Expositor* 81 (Summer 1984) 426-7.

¹¹ This was one of Childs' main conclusions in the psalms chapter of *IOTS*, and is the central theme of David Mitchell's *Message*. Other authors like Mays, McCann, Miller, Murphy, Howard, Vincent and Brueggemann have also picked up on the eschatological thrust of the final form of the Psalter to varying degrees and with varying emphases. This issue merits further consideration, so it shall be discussed below, as one of the methodological considerations of this chapter.

¹² Such breadth and diversity of opinion is not a weakness in the method, as Whybray has suggested (*Reading the Psalms as a Book* [JSOTSup 222; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996] 78-81). It is rather the inevitable consequence and benefit of a new approach to the study of the psalms. The canonical method has opened several new avenues of discussion in psalms studies and these various avenues should be researched to their fullest extent.

¹³ Obviously, this in itself is a complex historical question, which merits further discussion. Some of the issues connected with the role of the Kingship Law will be addressed below in the detailed examination of that passage in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

much of the post-exilic literature, are advocating a return to life in accordance with the terms of the deuteronomic law, as can be witnessed in other post-exilic books of the Hebrew Bible, e.g. Ezra-Nehemiah.¹⁴ In this particular case it appears that righteous are pointed to an eschatological messiah (מָשִׁיחַ) who will finally keep the Kingship Law of Deuteronomy 17 by living in accord with the law of the Lord. At the same time, the final form of the Psalms calls upon the צַדִּיקִים to live by the torah as their rule for life and godliness in the post-exilic period. Indeed, this eschatological figure is to be the torah-keeping exemplar for the righteous, just as the Israelite king was meant to be.¹⁵ His is the example which the righteous are to follow.

It is argued that this editorial concern is voiced in the juxtaposition of torah psalms and royal psalms at prominent junctures throughout the Book of Psalms. We see this juxtaposition in the very introduction to the Psalter—Psalms 1 and 2—the hermeneutical prism through which the reader is to understand the book as a whole.¹⁶ It is repeated in the centre of a previous collection which lies at the very heart of Book I.¹⁷ It is also found at the very heart of Book V,¹⁸ thus forming something of a bracketing function, and influencing the whole Book of Psalms.¹⁹ The combined effect of these juxtapositions, as mentioned above and discussed below, shapes the reader's worldview and her picture of the eschatological king.

Obviously, any thesis which would purport to see editorial activity in the juxtaposition and placement of psalms must be carefully argued both exegetically and theologically. Such examination shall be carried out below.²⁰ However, prior to the discussion of necessary issues regarding method in the remainder of this chapter, it would be helpful to outline the central idea of this thesis in order to signpost the direction which this study will follow.

1.1 Outline of Central Argument

As mentioned above, the first juxtaposition of kingship and torah psalms is seen in the introduction to the Psalter itself. Psalm 1 celebrates the role of the תּוֹרָה in the life of the believer. It contains imagery of stability and fruitfulness and the blessing of God upon all those who would reject evil and live by the torah. Psalm 2 celebrates the rule and reign of

¹⁴ See, for example, Freedman's association of Ps 119 with Ezra and his programme of reconstruction based in the Torah (D. N. Freedman, *Psalm 119: The Exaltation of Torah* [Biblical and Judaic Studies; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999] 29, 91-2).

¹⁵ How to define the word torah is a complex issue, and at this point I merely wish to outline some of the issues involved and to refer to the fuller discussion of this question in Chapter 7 below.

¹⁶ See Chapter 2 below.

¹⁷ See Chapter 3 below.

¹⁸ See Chapter 4 below.

¹⁹ See Chapter 6, *The Editorial Placement of the Torah-Kingship Psalm Groupings*.

²⁰ Chapters 2-4 deal with the exegetical examination of the three torah-kingship psalm groupings.

Yahweh and his anointed over all the kings and rulers of the nations of the earth. It is a kingship psalm which paints a picture of the universal rule of Yahweh's king from Zion. There are several thematic and lexical links between these two psalms which highlight their connection. In the juxtaposition of these psalms, it appears that the editors of the final form are deliberately trying to link the concepts of torah and kingship. Secondly, Pierre Auffret and Patrick Miller have argued that Psalms 15-24 make up a prior collection of psalms which was incorporated into the broader collections of Book I, the Davidic psalter and, ultimately, the Psalter. They point to a possible chiastic or envelope structure, bounded by two entry psalms (Pss 15 and 24). The focal point of this grouping is the torah psalm, Psalm 19. This psalm—as it is central to the collection's chiastic structure—is bounded by psalms of similar theme, namely Psalms 18 and 20/21.²¹ All three of these psalms are kingship psalms, celebrating the Lord's לְמֶלֶךְ towards his 'anointed one', his protection of the king and the latter's victory over his enemies. Again we shall see thematic, linguistic and theological connections between these psalms, which indicate that their juxtaposition is not accidental, rather that there has been a deliberate attempt to link these psalms and to hold these concepts of torah and kingship together in creative tension. Thirdly, it shall be argued that the representative leading the people into Temple worship in Ps 118 is, in fact, the Davidic king. What is more, there are good grounds to suggest that the pray-er of Ps 119—who so delights in Yahweh's torah—is also the king, providing an example of proper devotion to God through delight in his revealed instruction. If this was the understanding of the editors of the Psalter then, once more, we see a strong kingship-torah connection at the very heart of Book V of the Psalms. It is the tentative proposal of this thesis that these psalms were deliberately placed alongside one another in order to reflect the theology of the Kingship Law in the Book of Psalms.

2. Canonical Approach

Certain preliminary issues must be dealt with before we can address this thesis in detail. Firstly, the texts examined shall be the final form (canonical) Books of Psalms and Deuteronomy.²² No longer is OT study limited to discussion of historical-critical questions regarding sources, authorship, redaction layers and the composition history, rather the text of a given OT book in its received form is considered a worthy subject of discussion in itself. Of course, this does not mean that the discussion of diachronic questions has somehow become inappropriate, merely that a synchronic approach has come to be seen as equally valued and significant.²³ So, normally, the adoption of a canonical approach as one's methodology would be non-controversial.

²¹ There is good reason to believe that these two psalms (20 and 21) are deliberately linked and should be treated together. See the discussion in Chapter 3.

²² In other words, the MT provides the starting point for the discussion contained in this thesis. Some reference shall be made to the LXX and to certain Qumran manuscripts (which suggest alternative 'canonical' organisations), but the focus for consideration shall be the MT.

²³ This process of change has, in its origins, largely been due to the significant works of Brevard Childs,

However, the Psalter is hardly a typical case in point. First, it is a ‘hymnic’ collection rather than a book with a narrative plot and structure.²⁴ Secondly, we know almost nothing about the process by which the psalms were included into the present canonical form, other than the fact that individual compositions or groups of psalms were, probably, gradually added to the growing ‘Book of Psalms’.²⁵ Thirdly, the form-critical approach (*Gattungsforschung*) was so dominant for so long that the question of an over-arching ordering of the psalms has been subordinated to the discussion of genre.²⁶ Thus to talk of a canonical approach to the Psalms is a relatively new phenomenon, but is it a ‘legitimate’ approach to the study of the Psalms?

2.1 Canonical Method in the Study of the Psalms

The basic thesis of a canonical approach to the Psalter, as mentioned above, is that the ordering and placement of the psalms is not entirely random, but that the Book of Psalms has been shaped by the work of editors in order to emphasise the importance of certain theological themes. Mitchell, summarising Wilson’s approach, points out that his ‘twofold purpose is to demonstrate that purposeful editorial activity lies behind the Psalter, and to identify the agenda that guided the redaction’.²⁷ Indicators of the first of these tasks are to be seen in the tacit²⁸ signs of editing found in the Psalter. Wilson comments:

I have been able to show (1) that the ‘book’ divisions of the Psalter are real, editorially induced divisions and not accidentally introduced; (2) the ‘separating’ and ‘binding’ functions of author and genre groupings; (3) the lack of a s/s [superscription] as an indication of a tradition of combination; (4) the use of *hllwyh* pss to indicate the conclusion of segments; (5) the use of *hwdw* pss to introduce segments; (6) the existence of thematic correspondences between the beginning and ending pss in some books. All of these findings demonstrate the presence of editorial activity at work in the arrangement of the pss.²⁹

and his ground-breaking ‘canonical approach’ to Scripture (e.g. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* [London: SCM Press, 1979]; *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986]; *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993] etc.).

²⁴ See Wilson, *Editing*, 6-11. It should be remembered that hymnic does not necessarily equate to ‘cultic’. Whilst, most likely, the majority of the psalms did function originally in a cultic setting, this is not true of all psalms. Indeed, the canonical approach suggests that—regardless of the original setting and function of the psalms—ultimately, they came to be read as a book (J. L. Mays, *The Lord Reigns* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994] 121-3).

²⁵ J. D. Nogalski, “From Psalm to Psalms to Psalter,” *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms: Festschrift Marvin E. Tate* (eds. H. W. Ballard and W. D. Tucker; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000) 51; C. F. Barth, *Introduction to the Psalms* (trans. R. A. Wilson; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1966) 2-3.

²⁶ Until relatively recently, (non-commentary) works dealing with the psalms seldom began with Ps 1 and worked systematically through the book. Rather, the hymns or laments or some other genre of pss was chosen as a starting-point and this led on to the discussion of the remaining genres. Westermann suggests that the reason for this dominance of form-critical issues and lack of consideration for the shape of the Psalter ‘lies simply in the fact that in laying the foundation for his interpretation of the Psalms, Gunkel above all had no interest in how the collection was handed down to us,’ (*Praise and Lament in the Psalms* [trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981] 251).

²⁷ Mitchell, *Message*, 61.

²⁸ Wilson, *Editing*, 9-10, 182ff.

²⁹ Wilson, *Editing*, 199.

Wilson goes on to add such features as ‘the use of author and genre categories in the s/ss to group pss... the function of Ps One as an introduction to the whole Psalter³⁰... the place of early collections in the final form... the thematic grouping of psalms’ as further indicators of editorial activity.³¹ As can be seen from the secondary literature cited throughout this thesis, Wilson’s suggestion of ‘purposeful editorial activity’ in the Psalter has received very broad support amongst psalms scholars. ‘Identifying the agenda that guided the redaction’ has (perhaps, not surprisingly) led to a much more wide-ranging expression of opinion. How does one go about this task?

2.2 Identifying Editorial Agendas

How does one discern editorial activity in the Psalter? Obviously, with regard to the canonical study of the Psalms (as with any methodological approach to the study of the OT), some fairly rigorous ground rules are necessary in order to prevent its misuse and its decline into rampant subjectivity. Gerald Wilson, as well as being one of the originators of this method, has also been a champion of correct and clearly defined method. Having highlighted the pitfalls of approaching the Psalter with a pre-conceived notion of the editorial themes to be found in the book and then ‘finding’ psalms which fit this theory, Wilson goes on to state:

My own preference is to work without a hypothesis (other than the cautious one mentioned above) [i.e. that the present arrangement is the result of purposeful editorial activity, and that its purpose can be discerned by careful and exhaustive analysis of the linguistic and thematic relationships between individual psalms and groups of psalms] and to allow any sense of the structure that develops to derive from an intensive and thorough analysis of the psalms in question in terms of their linguistic, thematic, literary and theological links and relationships.³²

Wilson suggests that editorial themes can be discerned from ‘linguistic, thematic, literary and theological links and relationships’ between psalms. Psalms are linked in order to paint a fuller picture than is seen in their individual parts. Content in context takes on a slightly different meaning.³³ The idea is that the theological concerns of the editors of the Psalter’s final form are seen in the way in which they link psalms together and also in their

³⁰ It is, however, the suggestion of this thesis that Pss 1 and 2 together form an introduction to the Psalter. Wilson’s seeks to exclude Ps 2 from the introduction as he sees it as one of the royal ‘seam’ psalms, the first of Book I. However, as explained in Ch 2 below, it seems likely that the editors of the Psalter sought to associate Ps 2 with Ps 1 in introduction to the whole Psalter, rather than associating it with the laments of Ps 3 and the ensuing psalms.

³¹ Wilson, *Editing*, 11, 199ff.

³² G. H. Wilson, “Understanding the Purposeful Arrangement of the Psalms: Pitfalls and Promise,” *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; ed. J. C. McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 48.

³³ See the discussion of this idea in J. L. Mays, “The Question of Context in Psalm Interpretation,” *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; ed. J. C. McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) and the response articles R. E. Murphy, “Reflections on Contextual Interpretations of the Psalms,” *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; ed. J. C. McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) and W. Brueggemann, “Response to Mays, ‘The Question of Context’,” *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; ed. J. C. McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

placement of these linked psalms at key junctures throughout the Psalter (see 2.3 *The Question of Significant Placement*, below).

David Howard also provides helpful comment on canonical methodology with regard to the Book of Psalms. His approach focuses on four areas of linking which show concatenation between individual psalms or groups of psalms—lexical, thematic, structural and genre connections.³⁴ These categories are further broken down by Howard. Lexical links may include three types of linguistic overlap, i.e. ‘key-word’ (*Leitwörter*) links where the same word or phrase is repeated; ‘thematic word links’ where the same concept is expressed using different words; and ‘incidental links’ where there may be no real significance in the repetition of a word, which could be described as non-essential to both psalms.³⁵ Thematic links include lexical repetition/similarities and more general linkage of concepts and ideas between psalms.³⁶ For example, a question asked in one psalm may be answered in the following psalm (e.g. could ‘The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,’ in Ps 23:1 be a response to ‘My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?’ from Ps 22:1?) or a theme may be expanded upon throughout a chain of psalms (e.g. the *YHWH mālāk* psalms 93, 95-99). Structural links Howard sees as being particularly helpful when dealing with a group of psalms within the larger structure of the Psalter (e.g. see the discussion of the psalm grouping Pss 15-24 in Chapter 3 below). Both Wilson and Howard see genre as being of only limited importance as a tool for deriving thematic association between psalms, it can highlight certain interesting indicators (e.g. the possible transition between groups of psalms³⁷) but it seems unlikely that the redactors of the Psalter used genre classification as an organisational tool—content (including superscriptions) rather than type seems to have directed the editorial placement of the psalms.³⁸

Obviously, there is a certain degree of overlap in these three categories. Thematic links most often become apparent through the use of lexical concatenation. The use of the same word in consecutive psalms may also indicate a structural connection as well as simple lexical linkage (e.g. the repetition of the *אשרי* clause in Psalms 1 and 2 forming an inclusion or envelope structure).³⁹ However, these ground-rules provide a reasonable framework

³⁴ Howard, *Structure*, 99-100.

³⁵ Howard, *Structure*, 100. Howard’s thesis is extremely exhaustive in its analysis of the lexical overlap between the psalms of this group. In terms of lexical analysis, the present study will not examine every possible linguistic link, rather it shall focus on the links which seem most relevant to the underlying theological message of the psalms being considered.

³⁶ Howard, *Structure*, 100-1.

³⁷ G. H. Wilson, “Evidence of Editorial Divisions in the Hebrew Psalter,” *VT* XXXIV/3 (1984) 345-7.

³⁸ Howard, *Structure*, 101-2. See also Wilson, *Editing*, 167. Of course, it should be acknowledged that Gunkel’s genre classifications have a strong ‘content’ base therefore some psalm groupings may be informed by this. For example, Pss 3-14 are all laments, with the exception of Ps 8, therefore, in this case genre categories and content coincide (see Chapter 6, below, for further discussion).

³⁹ J. C. McCann, *The Book of Psalms* (NIntBC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996) 664-5; N. L. deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon, GA: Mercer

within which the canonical approach can function and they result in profitable analysis of the psalms and their themes. Therefore, in examining each of the three torah-kingship psalm groupings mentioned above, this study shall apply the following methodology: Analysis of lexical, thematic and structural/literary connections and, on the basis of these analyses, theological conclusions shall be suggested regarding possible editorial emphases in the Psalter.

2.3 The Question of Significant Placement

Having defined some principles for establishing themes by way of concatenation and association,⁴⁰ we must also define principles with regard to significant placement within the Psalter.⁴¹ Just what makes the placement of a psalm/group of psalms telling? At its most basic level the answer to that question appears to be quite simple: in essence a psalm/group of psalms placed at the beginning, middle or end of one of the books of the Psalter could be described as a significant editorial placement. Obviously, the justification of this theory is somewhat more complex than this statement would suggest.

Wilson has pointed out the importance of the so-called ‘seam’ psalms which come at the beginning and the end of the books of the Psalter.⁴² These have considerable significance for understanding thematic emphases in the Psalter, it is argued. Therefore, the *beginning* and *end* of books are to be seen as points of significant placement.⁴³ *Centrality* within a book of Psalms is also considered to be of some significance.⁴⁴ Zenger, referring to the placement of Ps 119 in Book V, states:

According to the theological perspective of the fifth book of psalms which has the Torah Psalm 119 *intentionally placed in the middle of the composition*, the psalms are a means of opening oneself to the living Torah of YHWH—in accordance with the programme at the beginning of the Psalter, Psalms 1-2, and in accordance with the closing Hallel, Psalms 146-150, which interprets the recitation/signing of psalms as the actualization of the way of life (Torah) instilled in the cosmos.⁴⁵

This shows again the significance of centrality within the respective books of the Psalter. It

University Press, 1997) 48.

⁴⁰ For the purposes of this thesis, *concatenation* refers to the lexical and thematic linking of immediately juxtaposed psalms. *Association* involves drawing comparisons between groups or pairs of psalms placed at different positions throughout the Psalter, also by way of lexical and thematic connection, and their impact on the book as a whole (see Hossfeld and Zenger’s discussion of the canonical method, *Die Psalmen I* [Die Neue Echter Bibel; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1993] 24 and the fuller discussion in Chapter 6, below).

⁴¹ For example, it is an essential element of Wilson’s overall theory that royal psalms were placed at significant junctures throughout the Psalms in order to narrate the failure of the Davidic monarchy and that the editorial centre of the Psalter is the response to that failure in Book IV—the Lord reigns (*Editing*, 215).

⁴² Wilson, *Editing*, 207-8. See also Wilson’s “Use of Royal Psalms.”

⁴³ This is the central thesis of deClaissé-Walford’s *Reading from the Beginning*.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Wilson’s discussion of the centrality of Ps 119 within a Davidic framework in Book V in “Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms,” *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalms* (JSOTSup 159; ed. J. C. McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 79.

⁴⁵ Zenger, “Composition,” 102. Emphasis added.

may be that there is a single, central psalm which clearly lies at the very heart of one of the books (as Wilson and Zenger suggest with regard to Ps 119 in Book V), or it may be a collection which is central (e.g. the Pss 15-24 collection in Book I).⁴⁶ The focal point does not, it appears, depend upon mathematical centrality, but rather is reflective of some sort of dominant or emphatic theme present in a roughly central positioning within a book.

Arguments could probably be made as to the priority of other placements within a given book depending upon the structural breakdown of that collection, but these three positions seem to be key to the understanding of significant editorial placement: introduction, centrality and conclusion. Therefore, our focus in seeking an understanding of the importance of the placement of the torah-kingship psalm groupings will be grounded in these categories.

2.4 Cautionary Notes re. Methodology

Every method has its limitations. It is helpful to be aware of these when making use of that particular approach. In what areas should we exercise caution in the practice of a canonical approach to the Psalms? The only book-length critique of this approach, is R. N. Whybray's *The Psalms as a Book*,⁴⁷ which questions the idea of purposeful editorial activity in the psalms—'there is no evidence that there was a systematic and purposeful redaction of the whole Psalter in any of the ways suggested.'⁴⁸ Whilst Whybray posited some helpful and important questions, it must be said that his critique did not substantially undermine the canonical approach of Wilson *et al.*⁴⁹ The fact remains that there are solid indicators of fairly comprehensive editorial activity within the psalms, which must be ignored or explained away if one is to accept that the ordering of the psalms is random. For example, the function of Psalms 1 & 2 as an introduction; Psalms 146-150 as a concluding voice of praise; the five-book structure of the Psalter; the incorporation and placement of previous collections in the book in its final-form; the existence of the Elohist psalter. Whybray's critique was largely based upon the fact that any editorial work which

⁴⁶ See the discussion of these placements in Chapter 6, below.

⁴⁷ *Reading the Psalms as a Book* (JSOTSup 222; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996)

⁴⁸ Whybray, *Psalms as a Book*, 118-9.

⁴⁹ See D. M. Howard's review of this book on-line at the Society of Biblical Literature's book-review web-site: www.bookreviews.org/Reviews/1850757976.html. Howard provides an accurate assessment of the weaknesses in Whybray's overall argument. The basic thrust of Whybray's argument seems to be that 'systematic and purposeful' editorial activity cannot be 'proven', and that there are only slight and occasional indications of editorial activity in the Psalms. To which one feels obliged to reply, first, that there are very few theories in the field of OT studies which can be 'proven', and, secondly, that there are signs of editorial activity which are more comprehensive than Whybray is willing to acknowledge (e.g. the five-book division of the Psalter, the Elohist Psalter, the general movement from lament to praise within the psalms etc.). It seems that if one is to accept that the Psalter did not undergo systematic and purposeful editing, then there are several fortuitous coincidences which give the impression of editorial activity (e.g. the placement of kingship psalms at the key seams of the Psalter, the function of Pss 1 and 2 as an introduction etc.).

may have been carried out was 'sporadic' rather than 'systematic and purposeful.'⁵⁰ However, even sporadic editorial activity can change markedly the way in which the entire Book of Psalms is read and understood. Such subtle activity is probably to be expected and its effects should not be minimised.⁵¹

The canonical approach towards the study of the Psalter has attained broad acceptance within the scholarly community in recent years as there are sufficient 'obvious' indicators of editorial activity to provide solid support for this methodological approach. However, questions still remain.⁵² For example, viewing the collection of psalms as a whole, whilst it can be said that certain themes and emphases are apparent in the Psalter, an element of 'randomness' cannot entirely be removed from the book.⁵³ Theories which would seek to suggest linkage between all 150 psalms testify more to the ingenuity of the author than to the structure of the Psalter.⁵⁴ Also, even the definition of themes is a process to be exercised with some caution. We must be careful not to apply thematic interpretations beyond that which can be legitimately supported by the content of the psalms and the structure of the Psalter.⁵⁵

One final expression of caution concerns the increasing popularity of the canonical approach as compared to other methods of analysis. It seems that the application of the canonical method to the study of the Psalter has given a new lease of life to psalm studies, with the exploration of the rich theological motifs and themes which run throughout this great book. This is all good and helpful to the student who seeks to immerse herself in the study of the Psalms. However, it should not lead to the neglect of form-critical analyses, close readings of individual psalms or historical discussion of the function of these poetic compositions. The consistent application of each of these methods alongside one another will lead to the fullest and best understanding of the Psalms.⁵⁶ These cautions having been

⁵⁰ Whybray, *Psalms as a Book*, 118-9.

⁵¹ See Wilson's discussion of explicit and tacit signs of editorial activity in *Editing*, 139 ff.

⁵² Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 126-7.

⁵³ At least from our temporal and cultural perspective. It is possible that a more coherent order was apparent to the Hebrew readers and hearers of the psalms living closer to the period of the book's closure. However, I suspect that, even for such readers, an element of 'randomness' would remain in their view of the collection as a whole.

⁵⁴ R. L. Smith, "The Use and Influence of the Psalms," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 27/1 (Fall 1984) 12.

⁵⁵ Wilson, "Understanding."

⁵⁶ Murphy has put this point well in his recent book, *The Gift of the Psalms* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000) 21, where he writes: 'But [the canonical method] is not the *only*, nor the only *authoritative* way, of interpreting the Psalter. The canonical approach does not escape the same kind of hypothesizing that characterizes historical-critical methodology. But neither should be seen in an adversarial position; they do not necessarily preclude one another. Both are levels of understanding with limited but reasonable credibility. One is not more authoritative than the other; the responsible editor(s) do not replace the author(s). The Bible itself does not lay down rules for authoritative interpretation. This is the work of the readers of the Bible, ecclesial or otherwise. And the success of interpretations will depend on factors other than mere authority, such as the carefulness of the reader, the plausibility of the reading, and the relevance of

aired, there does appear to be sufficient justification to proceed with a canonical analysis of the final form of the Book of Psalms.

3. Choice of Psalms

The next introductory question which must be addressed is, 'Why select these particular psalms as being editorially significant? What makes them any different from all the other psalms in the final form of the book?'

3.1 Editorial Significance of Torah Psalms

The torah psalms⁵⁷ have been problematic for form-critical scholars from the time of Gunkel onwards. They do not really fit into neat categories. They are similar to wisdom psalms, but even the wisdom psalms were problematic because they are frequently of mixed genre and are themselves difficult to categorize. Therefore, these psalms—both torah and wisdom—were traditionally classified as being late and generally of little significance.⁵⁸ This pattern continued right up to the 1980s along with the continuing stress on form-critical and cultic *Sitz im Leben* questions in the vast majority of psalm works. Some scholars gave priority to the role of the laments in the Psalter, others to the hymns, but the net effect was that Psalms 1, 19 and 119 always remained 'among the leftovers'⁵⁹ when the chief organising principle was genre.

Ignoring the torah psalms is not without its problems, however, particularly when the final form of the book is allowed to act as the main organising principle for the interpretation of the psalms. Perhaps the first and most obvious question to spring from a canonical approach to the Psalter is, 'Just why is Psalm 1 the first psalm in the book, if the torah psalms are so insignificant?' As Chapter Six of this thesis shall indicate, Pss 19 and 119 also (in different ways) dominate the heart of Books I and V respectively. Why so, if these psalms are to be passed off as late, legalistic and unimportant?⁶⁰ Psalm 1 was recognised

the interpretation. Indeed, different readings may coexist, such as the original one to which the historical-critical method aspires and the canonical one that existed in the context of the entire Psalter.'

⁵⁷ That is, Pss 1, 19 (or 19b, as it was understood by form-critical scholars) and 119.

⁵⁸ For example, Gunkel wrote, 'Those psalms which talk about the law in forms of wisdom thus belong to the latest period of the entire development [of the Psalter]...' and also commented that Psalm 119 must be late because it is 'utterly filled with legal piety' and 'the original liveliness has disappeared,' (*Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* [trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998] 305, 327). Mowinkel also wrote that 'the influence of law religion on psalmography is not very discernible,' and that 'it is significant that no very deep traces can be found in the Psalter of the religion of the law...' (*The Psalms in Israel's Worship* [Vol. II; trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962] 114). He does however acknowledge the *torah* content in Psalms 1, 19b and 119, and categorises these as part of the 'learned psalmography' i.e. non-cultic psalmic material (*PIW*, 106, 113-4). It would be fair to say that traditional form-critical approaches tended to minimise the significance of the torah psalms.

⁵⁹ Mays, "Place of the Torah-Psalms," 3.

⁶⁰ We should remember, however, that the question of dating psalms is extremely problematic in most cases and this is, perhaps, especially true of the torah psalms (J. H. Eaton, *Psalms of the Way and the Kingdom: A Conference with the Commentators* [JSOTSup 199; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995] 11). It may be the case that Psalms 1 and 119 are 'late' in terms of time of writing and inclusion into the

as an introduction to the Psalter as a whole even in the pre-critical period: both Calvin and Luther saw it as providing the hermeneutical glasses for the reading and interpretation of the whole Book of Psalms.⁶¹ However, form-critical preoccupation with genre—which, without doubt, has greatly enhanced our understanding of the psalms—became so much the focus of scholarly activity that the ordering of the psalms and the final form of the book as a whole, came to be seen as somewhat irrelevant.⁶² In accordance with this prevailing emphasis on formal categories, the torah psalms were relegated, in scholarly discussion, from the significance which their positioning in the Psalter seems to deserve.

Westermann was one of the first to examine the shaping of the Psalter and to note the prominent placing of the torah-focussed Pss 1 and 119. Having briefly considered the similarities between the two psalms, he concludes:

We may assume, then, that Ps 1 and Ps 119 form a framework around the intervening Psalms, one which denotes a definite stage in the process which produced our Psalter. We can say therefore that there was once a psalter which began with Ps 1 and ended with Ps 119. Moreover this framework bears witness to an important stage in the 'traditioning' process in which the psalter, as a collection, no longer had a cultic function primarily, but rather circulated in a tradition devoted to the law. The Psalms have now become the word of God which is read, studied and meditated upon.⁶³

Whilst there is no tradition to support Westermann's theory of a truncated Psalter bracketed by torah and royal psalms,⁶⁴ his observations are based on the ideas applied in the canonical approach: he associates these psalms because of their textual and theological

Psalter. However, it is also possible that both of these psalms were actually originally connected with the Davidic monarchy (see W. H. Brownlee, "Psalms 1 - 2 as a Coronation Liturgy," *Bib* 52/3 [1971] 321-36 and W. Soll, *Psalms 119: Matrix, Form and Setting* [CBQMS 23; Washington D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1991]). These are very difficult issues to judge from the content of the psalms alone. When adopting a canonical approach, regardless of the time of writing, the inference that late means legalistic and less important should be rejected. Inclusion into the Psalter and placement within it are of greater importance than period of composition.

⁶¹ See W. Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (AOTS; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) 17 and H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988) 117.

⁶² As mentioned above (p 9 n. 25) Westermann saw the reason for this being that 'Gunkel above all had no interest in how the collection was handed down to us.' It would be unfair to lay all the blame at Gunkel's feet, however. A form-critical approach will automatically (and quite naturally, it seems) tend to favour the largest (therefore, in its terms, most significant) genre categories.

⁶³ Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 253. At least amongst modern writers it would be true to say that Westermann was one of the first to re-examine the question of the shaping of the Psalter, there were authors from the 19th C—Delitzsch, for example—who had given consideration to the idea that there was a thematic shaping of the Psalter (see D. M. Howard, "Editorial Activity in the Psalter: A State-of-the-Field Survey," *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* [JSOTSup 159; ed. J. C. McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993] 55).

⁶⁴ As well as expressing the opinion that the torah psalms (1 and 119) defined the limits of a previous version of the Psalter, Westermann also draws attention to the significant placement of Pss 2 and 118, as kingship psalms, indicating a chiastic inclusio of torah and royal psalms (see Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 253-4 and the discussion of these ideas in D. L. Jacobson, "The Royal Psalms and Jesus Messiah: Preparing to Preach on a Royal Psalm," *Word & World* 5/2 [Spring 1985] 192-8 and J. E. Shepherd, "The Book of Psalms as the Book of Christ: A Christo-Canonical Approach to the Book of Psalms," [Ph.D. Dissertation; Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1995] 419-20).

similarities and assesses the significance of their placement within the final form of the book. The implications of Westermann's argument are significant: (1) when one reads the psalms in order, in their final form, the torah psalms are no longer to be seen as the 'poorer cousins' of the Psalter, on the contrary, they take on a prominent role within the book as a whole; and (2) there is an apparent link between torah and kingship themes in the Book of Psalms.⁶⁵

Form criticism treated Pss 1, 19 (or at least 19b) and 119 as a small generic sub-grouping due to their similarity of subject matter, and a fairly insignificant one because these psalms were late and few in number.⁶⁶ However, the transition towards a canonical approach to the Psalter, increased scholarly appreciation of the *significance* of these psalms. The canonical form of the Book of Psalms seems to stress the importance of the torah psalms, giving them a significance beyond that which their number would merit. Mays voices this very point:

Those who composed them wrote them *as psalms* and they were included *in the Psalter*. This double fact means that the latest and smallest group of Psalms may provide the central clue to the way the Psalms, individually and as a book, were read and understood at the time of their composition and inclusion. The problem children of the Psalter do not have a place in the *Gattungen* and *Sitze* of the Psalm criticism, but they do have a place in the book.⁶⁷

Mays emphasis of the placement and role of the torah compositions draws upon Childs' earlier consideration of Ps 1 as introduction to the Psalter.⁶⁸ McCann also stresses the torah psalms, 'having made the decision to take seriously the canonical shape of the Psalter, we shall begin at the beginning—Psalm 1. The effect is to elevate the concept of torah to one of central significance in understanding the Psalms.'⁶⁹ Even scholars whose focus is not particularly directed towards torah in their study of the Psalter, generally acknowledge the significance of this psalm group: David Howard, for example, whose work focuses on the Psalms 93-100 and who has a very astute awareness of the historical development of psalms studies, acknowledges the significance of the wisdom/torah redactions of the Psalter in its final form.⁷⁰ Gerald Sheppard in his study of the theology of the Psalms writes, 'the Book of Psalms can be seen to be fully a part of scripture, whose central subject matter is the Torah, the teaching and law of God.'⁷¹ M. Millard also concludes

⁶⁵ It is impossible to determine conclusively (without additional historical evidence) whether there ever was a version of the Psalms which ended at Ps 119, as Westermann suggests. However, the internal evidence—especially the fact that Pss 118-119 are preceded and succeeded by smaller, prior collections (see Chapter 4, below)—tends to indicate that this idea is at least possible. See P. D. Miller, "Current Issues in Psalms Studies," *Word & World* V/2 (Spring 1985) 141.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Mowinckel, *PIW*, 113-4.

⁶⁷ Mays, "Place of the Torah-Psalms," 3.

⁶⁸ Childs, *IOTS*, 513-4.

⁶⁹ McCann, *Theological Introduction*, 25.

⁷⁰ Howard, *Structure*, 205-7--

⁷¹ Sheppard, "Theology," 154.

the most significant theme of the Psalms is torah and Yahweh's kingship is the central motif.⁷² Jerome Creach highlights the idea of taking refuge in Yahweh as significant to the final form, and adds that the torah psalms are integral to this concept in the Book of Psalms.⁷³ Patrick Miller has written various pieces on the centrality of the deuteronomic concept of torah in the Book of Psalms.⁷⁴ Such scholarly consensus proves little in itself, except that, when a canonical approach to the Psalter is applied, the torah psalms are central to the final redaction of the Psalms.

The reasons for choosing the torah psalms are two-fold: (1) the function of Ps 1 as an introduction to the Psalter highlights a torah-wisdom paradigm to be applied to the book as a whole; and, (2) Pss 19 and 119 have been placed in locations which are editorially significant. Ps 19, as Pierre Auffret⁷⁵ and Patrick Miller⁷⁶ suggest, is central to a chiastically ordered prior collection of psalms (Pss 15-24), which lies at the heart of Book I. Ps 119 (along with Ps 118) is the pivotal composition in Book V.⁷⁷ This torah emphasis at beginning and end of the canonical Psalter goes beyond the accidental and merits further consideration. There is good exegetical support for the broad acceptance of the redactional significance of the torah psalms highlighted above, and this will be the focus of consideration in Chs 2-4 of the present thesis.⁷⁸

⁷² M. Millard, *Die Komposition des Psalters: Ein formgeschichtlicher Ansatz* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 9; Tübingen: Mohr, Siebeck, 1994), see D. M. Howard, "Recent Trends in Psalm Study," *The Face of Old Testament Study: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* (eds. D. W. Baker and B. T. Arnold; Leicester: Apollos, 1999) 338.

⁷³ J. F. D. Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (JSOTSup 217; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 71-2, 103.

⁷⁴ See, for example, P. D. Miller, "The Beginning of the Psalter," *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; ed. J. C. McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 86-7; "Kingship," 127-8 and *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 14-5, 81ff.

⁷⁵ P. Auffret, *La sagesse a bâti sa maison: Études de structures littéraires dans l'Ancien Testament et spécialement dans les psaumes* (OBO 49; Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1982) 407-38.

⁷⁶ Miller, "Kingship."

⁷⁷ See, for example, Wilson, "Shaping," and Zenger, "Composition." However, my own understanding of the centrality of Ps 119 differs slightly from the ideas presented by Wilson and Zenger, see Chapter 6 below.

⁷⁸ There are other psalms which contain a certain torah content (Pss 18, 25, 33, 78, 93, 94, 99, 103, 105, 111, 112, 147, 148 are described by Mays as being 'developed by torah interests', "Place of the Torah-Psalms," 8) and there are other psalms which could possibly be added to this list due to possible association with the deuteronomic torah (Pss 15, 34, 78, 106, 114, 115; see Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms.") However, these psalms could not really be described as torah psalms in their own right. They do contain torah overtones and add to the overall torah-wisdom flavour of the Psalter, but these psalms have different central emphases in their theological content (e.g. Temple worship (Ps 15); wisdom motifs (Ps 34); history of Israel (Ps 106) etc.). None of these psalms are dominated by the concept of torah as is the case with Pss 1, 19 and 119. Therefore, it would be speculative to argue from these additional psalms for the deliberate placement of these psalms as part of a torah redaction, because they are not really 'about' torah, *per se*. However, it is at the very least possible in relation to *some* of the psalms mentioned above that they have been influenced by this final form torah redaction. Examination of these torah interjections in other psalms would be a worthy area of study in itself, but falls beyond the remit of this study, where focus is directed towards the psalms *explicitly about* the torah of Yahweh and their editorial placement, particularly in relation to royal psalms.

3.2 Editorial Significance of Kingship Psalms

It has long been understood that a proper understanding of the royal psalms aids proper understanding of the Psalter.⁷⁹ The compositions which deal with the king dominate, or at least strongly flavour, the reader's understanding of the whole book. This is especially true when one realises the association between the psalms of individual lament and the person of the king.⁸⁰ However, this is not an argument based on weight of numbers alone, a canonical analysis also points to the significant placement of kingship psalms throughout the Psalter.

Brevard Childs and Gerald Wilson have both pointed out the importance of the kingship psalms which are placed throughout the whole of the Book of Psalms.⁸¹ Wilson has argued that the placement of royal psalms (Pss 2, 41, 72, 89) at the seams of Books I-III of the Psalter provides the reader with a type of narrative, as part of this final redaction, dealing with the Davidic monarchy—a 'narrative' of the failure of the Davidic monarchy.⁸² Book IV, therefore, he sees as the narrative centre of the Psalter, answering the question of this failure.⁸³ Book IV focuses the reader's attention, Wilson suggests, on the kingdom reign of Yahweh and not the Davidic king.⁸⁴ Whilst Wilson's analysis of editorial activity in the Psalms has been ground-breaking and innovative, his 'narrative' of the rejection of the Davidic monarchy is not the only possible interpretation to be derived from the editorial

⁷⁹ Understanding of what constitutes a royal psalm is still a somewhat difficult question. Some scholars (e.g. Gunkel, Mettinger, Starbuck) take a reductive approach to this question and view royal psalms as being only those poems which refer directly to the 'king', 'messiah', 'son' or to the trappings of kingship like 'sceptre', 'throne' etc. When the text of the individual compositions of the Psalter is read closely, however, this sort of approach seems unnecessarily reductive. There are several strong indicators that many of the individual psalms (particularly the individual laments) are related to the king and, therefore, in some sense 'royal', (see J. H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* [SBT, Vol. 32; London: SCM Press, 1976] 20-6 and S. J. Croft, *The Identity of the Individual in the Psalms* [JSOTSup 44; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987] 73ff). Eaton argues that many, if not most, of the individual psalms may, in fact, be attributed to the king. Croft takes a slightly different approach suggesting various categories of individual who may be speaking in a given psalm of the individual, such as 'Cult Prophet', 'Temple Singer' and 'Wisdom Teacher'. The difficulty with Croft's approach, however, is that we have no real idea if such figures actually existed in any sort of official representative capacity, or how (if at all) they were associated with the psalms. Miller comments, 'It would not do to characterise major approaches to the understanding of the laments without recognising the view of Birkeland, then later Mowinckel, and others and that the "I" of the laments is the king acting in behalf of or as representative of the people in crying out for help against national enemies has been taken up afresh and impressively by J. H. Eaton, who sees around fifty psalms of the individual as being in fact royal psalms. Such a construal of the texts is plausible and undergirded by the centrality of the king in ancient Israel and possibly in the official cult, as well as by the ascription of so many psalms to David. The connection of the psalms to the Messiah and the christological use of them by the early church would be even more direct should such an interpretation be on the right track,' ("Current Issues," 135-6). Partly to avoid some of these reductive connotations associated with the term 'royal psalm', and, partly, to place the royal psalms more fully into the context of the broader OT discussion concerning king and monarchy, the term 'kingship psalm' is used throughout this thesis to refer to psalms which deal with royal motifs.

⁸⁰ See Footnote 78, above.

⁸¹ Childs, *IOTS*, 517-8; Wilson, *Editing*, 207-8; Wilson, "Use of Royal Psalms."

⁸² See also Wilson's *Editing*, 208-14.

⁸³ Wilson, *Editing*, 215.

⁸⁴ Wilson, *Editing*, 215.

presentation of the king in the royal psalms of Books I-III. In fact, if the intent of the editors is to turn the reader's attention from the Davidic king to Yahweh as king, then the narrative does not 'read' particularly well. Why reintroduce the king at all in Books IV and V if one seeks to focus attention on Yahweh as king alone?⁸⁵ Yet the Davidic king is reintroduced in Books IV and V and some of the expressions of kingship are as strong as any to be found in the Psalter (e.g. Ps 110).

It is the contention of this thesis that the significance of the kingship psalms continues on into Books IV and V even although the presence of David is not as numerically obvious as in Books I-III. The image of the king does not disappear in the last two sections of the Psalter, rather he takes on more obviously eschatological overtones.⁸⁶ However, it must be stressed that, in all likelihood, the royal psalms always had at least an element of eschatological expectation about them even during the period of the historical monarchy.⁸⁷ The figure of the king may take on more subtle, eschatological overtones in Books IV-V, but he is still present at the conclusion of the Psalter.⁸⁸ So both torah and kingship psalms play a significant role in the final redaction of the Psalter, and the central argument of this thesis is that these important psalms have, at key points in the Psalter, been juxtaposed alongside one another in order to reflect the theology of the Kingship Law.⁸⁹ This idea resonates with two prominent currents apparent in the second-temple biblical literature (i.e. in the general timeframe when the Psalter probably reached its canonical form): (1) a concern for the deuteronomic law,⁹⁰ and, (2) a general sense of eschatological hope.⁹¹ It is as a

⁸⁵ Perhaps a better explanation of the 'Yahweh mālāk' psalms of Book IV is that the editors seek to assure the reader that Yahweh still reigns in heaven and over the earth even although his earthly co-regent has been removed from the picture. Rather than encouraging a focal change from human to divine kingship, Book IV tells of the continuing reign of Yahweh's kingdom and reintroduces the figure of the king, probably implying an eschatological reinterpretation of the monarchy (see Vincent's helpful analysis "The Shape of the Psalter: An Eschatological Dimension?" *New Heaven and New Earth: Prophecy and the Millennium, Essays in Honour of Anthony Gelston* [VTSup 77; P. J. Harland and C. T. R. Hayward; Leiden: Brill, 1999] 77).

⁸⁶ D. M. Howard, "The Case for Kingship in the Old Testament Narrative Books and the Psalms," *TrinJ* 9 (1988) 34.

⁸⁷ Speaking of Ps 2, Eaton comments, 'Surely royal psalms originally had reference to the monarchy of Israel and functioned in that setting. But from the outset they had a prophetic character: they included vision and oracle, and the purpose of God which they revealed far transcended the experience of the time. The destiny which they promised David seemed all the more removed as time went on; like the kingdom of God itself, it was a matter of faith, defying appearances on the strength of the divine promise. With the removal of the Davidic monarchy in 586 BC the prophetic aspect of such texts came all the more into prominence. For many centuries, incorporated in Scripture, they served to nourish the messianic hope—the belief that the divine promise to David would be fulfilled,' (*Psalms* [Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SPCK, 1967] 33).

⁸⁸ Note the Davidic frame in Book V, leaving the final words, prior to the concluding doxology of Pss 146-150, in the mouth of the Davidic king once again (see below, Chapter 6).

⁸⁹ Obviously, there are many more kingship psalms in the Psalter than are considered in this study. The present thesis represents one aspect of the theology of kingship in the psalms—the reflection of the ideal of kingship found in the Kingship Law in the Book of Psalms.

⁹⁰ J. D. Levenson, "The Sources of Torah: Psalm 119 and the Modes of Revelation in Second Temple Judaism," *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (eds. P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson and S. D. McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

result of such considerations that Pss 1-2, 18-21 and 118-119 have been chosen for consideration in this study.

4. Comparative Method

One of the difficult questions of Old Testament (and, for that matter Biblical) Theology is the issue of how to make comparison and draw parallels between different texts. Historical-critical questions of source and preoccupations with the dating of texts made this task all the more difficult, as one first had to establish, the chronological priority of any given text before even allowing for comparison with another text. The conclusive establishment of dating with regard to OT books or texts is a notoriously difficult task—except, perhaps, in the broadest of terms (e.g. pre-exilic, post-exilic, monarchic etc.). Therefore, theological comparison between books somewhat fell by the wayside in many academic circles, but has been revived in more recent years by the broad adoption of canonical and literary approaches which seek to draw out theological themes from books of the OT.⁹² These canonical-literary approaches allow for various comparative methods in analysing one OT text in the light of another—rhetorical methods, reader response theories, intertextual analysis, and so on. Each of these methods offers its own benefits and has its own difficulties.⁹³ Therefore, it is important to define the method adopted in making comparison between the torah-kingship psalm groupings and Deuteronomy's Law of the King.

4.1 Biblical Conversation

Recently, Patrick Miller, has suggested that a 'biblical conversation' may be evoked between the Book of Deuteronomy and the Psalter.⁹⁴ Drawing upon canonical and literary approaches, Miller suggests that 'the biblical books of Deuteronomy and Psalms are amenable to an interactive relationship, capable of creating or evoking a conversation between them that enlarges our perception of both and contributes to a sense of the whole that is scripture'.⁹⁵ This thesis picks up on Miller's suggestion and seeks to contribute to our understanding of the conversation between Deuteronomy and the Psalms.

How is a 'biblical conversation' to be conducted? Miller suggests that this is a method which 'happens on the intertextual level *in its most basic sense*, that is, in the echoes of one

⁹¹ Mitchell, *Message*, 15.

⁹² See the discussion in E. Van Wolde, "Trendy Intertextuality?" *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings: Essays in Honour of Bas Van Iersel* (ed. Sipke Draisma; Kampden: J. H. Kok, 1989) 43-9. It should be stressed that this methodological focus on issues of literature and canon in no way minimises the importance of asking historical questions of the text and seeking answers to these questions. Both approaches add to our understanding of the biblical material and neither should dominate to such an extent that the voice of the other is quashed.

⁹³ This is the basis of Berry's discussion of Ps 18 (*The Psalms and Their Readers: Interpretive Strategies for Psalm 18* [JSOTSup 153; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993]) where he compares the results of different analytical approaches to the same text.

⁹⁴ P. D. Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms: Evoking a Biblical Conversation," *JBL* 118/1 (1999) 3-18.

⁹⁵ Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 5.

text to be found in another text'.⁹⁶ That is, the idea of biblical conversation is not a strict linguistic intertextuality. The aim is neither to prove literary dependence or direct allusion between texts. Obviously, linguistic similarities are an important part of any comparative analysis between texts,⁹⁷ but the aim here is not to prove that the Psalms cite Deuteronomy or *vice versa*. The aim, rather, is to see this conversation conducted 'both on the very particular level of the textual interaction of particular passages in Deuteronomy and Psalms and also on a larger plane of theology and hermeneutics'.⁹⁸ The fact that passages use exactly the same (or very similar) words is only significant when it is clear that their intent is to teach the same message.⁹⁹

So the comparative method adopted throughout this thesis will follow Miller's suggestions with regard to a biblical conversation between Deuteronomy and the Psalms. The approach will be broadly intertextual, in that linguistic similarities (of which there is a significant number) between the torah-kingship psalms and Deuteronomy shall be pointed out. However, the conversation between these two books shall also focus on a 'larger plane of theology and hermeneutics'. The torah-kingship psalm groupings have a message which they seek to convey to their reader, as does the Law of the King. Is this the same message? Are these texts concerned with the same theological issues? If so, then there may well be reason to conclude that the Kingship Law did act as a paradigm for the placement of torah and kingship laws alongside one another.

4.2 Which Deuteronomy?

As part of this comparative process, one of the aims of the exegetical examination of the torah-kingship psalm groupings is to assess whether there is a general deuteronomistic background to these compositions. As anyone who has done any work in Deuteronomistic studies

⁹⁶ Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 5 (emphasis mine). Miller goes on to add that this interaction, 'also takes place through the interdependencies that are created in redactional and editing processes,' (p 5). This is significant for the current discussion as the ideas lying behind the writing of Pss 1, 2, 18, 19, 20, 21, 118 and 119 may have been very different from the emphasis which was given them in their editorial placement alongside one another. Whilst these psalms—as will be argued below in Chapters 2-4—do reflect key concepts of Dtr theology, it is in the editing process that they come particularly to reflect the theology of the Kingship Law. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that such biblical conversation occurs between the final forms of OT texts and, therefore, editorial processes may be as significant as the writing of a text in establishing this type of intertextual relationship.

⁹⁷ *Contra* J. L. Crenshaw, "The Deuteronomist and the Writings," *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (JSOTSup 268; eds. L. S. Schering and S. L. McKenzie; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 155. For an alternative view, see Lohfink's article in the same volume ("Was There a Deuteronomistic Movement?" *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* [JSOTSup 268; eds. L. S. Schering and S. L. McKenzie; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999] 41-2), where he points out that—whilst the use of individual words which are thought to be deuteronomistic may not indicate a great deal—the use of combinations or groups of words found in Deuteronomy in other texts, may well indicate a background in Dtr theology.

⁹⁸ Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 5.

⁹⁹ This seems to be the thrust of Miller's suggested interaction 'on the larger plane of... theology and hermeneutics'.

will be well aware, this theory itself begs a question: what sort of deuteronomic background? The various theories surrounding the redactions of Deuteronomy and the deuteronomic history have highlighted a number of different theological emphases which scholars often equate with particular redactions.¹⁰⁰ So the question in our case would be, ‘*What type of Dtr redaction has resulted in this reflection of the Kingship Law in the Psalms?*’

First, it should be pointed out that the aim of this thesis is not to speak to the possible redactions of Deuteronomy and the deuteronomistic history. The aim is to assess whether a particular passage of the final form of the Book of Deuteronomy could have functioned as the intellectual paradigm for the placement of certain psalms alongside one another. Therefore, the focus herein is not upon whether there was a two-fold or three-fold redaction of Deuteronomy and its associated historical books.¹⁰¹ The possible redactions of the DtrH¹⁰² are of limited relevance within the remit of this discussion. The only area in which the formation of Deut/DtrH seems relevant to the current discussion is the question of whether the Kingship Law existed as a recognised text prior to the final redaction of the Book of Psalms. There can be little doubt that this is, in fact, the case. Even the latest

¹⁰⁰ The origins of this process are to be found, of course, in Noth’s *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien: Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (2nd Edition; Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1957) [ET of pp 1-110 of this work has been published as *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991)], where he associated Deuteronomy with the Books of Joshua-2 Kings, as the work of a single author or redactor, the DtrG or DtrH (deuteronomistic historian). Other scholars, who generally accepted Noth’s association of Deuteronomy with the succeeding historical books, seeing the theological diversity found within this broad collection, were not convinced that this was the work of a single redactor, and so over a period of time a number of redactions/redactors were brought into the equation. Smend, for example, sees the influence of a nomistic redactor in some of the historical books and so suggests the addition of another redactor/redaction—DtrN (“Das Gesetz und der Völker: Ein Beitrag zur deuteronomistischen Redaktionsgeschichte,” in *Probleme biblischer Theologie: Festschrift Gerhard von Rad* (ed. H. W. Wolff; Munich: Kaiser, 1971) 494-509, ET “The Law and the Nations: A Contribution to Deuteronomistic Tradition History,” *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* [Sources for Biblical and Theological 8; eds. G. N. Knoppers and J. G. McConville; Grand Rapids: Eisenbrauns, 2000]). Dietrich later added a prophetic redactor/redaction to these suggestions—DtrP (*Prophetie und Geschichte* [FRLANT 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972]). This nomenclature has continued in Dtr studies, but there are substantial differences of opinion as to the extent of these redactions and their chronology. This, of course, is not the only approach to the redactions of Deut/DtrH. Cross has also suggested a different theory consisting of a two-fold redaction of Deut/DtrH in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), and this theory has enjoyed great popularity in academic circles. Scholars occasionally combine elements of these two main approaches to the shaping of Deut/DtrH (see Knopper’s helpful summary article as the introduction to *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* [Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 8; eds. G. N. Knoppers and J. G. McConville; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000] 1-18).

¹⁰¹ Important as this question may be in its own right. The recently published collection of essays, *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* (Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 8; eds. G. N. Knoppers and J. G. McConville; Grand Rapids: Eisenbrauns, 2000), provides a useful introduction and summary to many of the issues involved in this discussion. The collection of many important articles in one volume allows for easy comparison and analysis of the various approaches the redaction of Deut/DtrH.

¹⁰² DtrH refers to the Deuteronomistic History in this thesis (i.e. Joshua-2 Kings), as opposed to the use of DtrH as referring to a specific redactor.

scholarly estimates for the formation of Deut/DtrH, early in the post-exilic period, precede the closure (and therefore final redaction) of the Psalter.¹⁰³ It seems clear that the Kingship Law would have been part of a 'canonical' book—and therefore available to the editors of the Psalms—before the Psalter's final redaction.

Secondly, the fact that the redaction of Deut/DtrH is a moot point within this thesis, therefore, requires some clarification of terms used throughout. In his consideration of Gerbrandt's assessment of kingship in Deut/DtrH, Howard comments that:

The term 'Deuteronomistic History' refers to the books from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings. As used by Gerbrandt and most others, it also assumes some type of unified authorship for all of these books in one or more strata of the texts. I use the term here to refer to the same corpus, but I understand the term 'Deuteronomistic' in a descriptive way—i.e., to refer to those books or ideas reflective of the distinctive viewpoint found in Deuteronomy—with no conclusions concerning authorship of Deuteronomy or the other books implicit in my use of the term. Similarly, when Gerbrandt speaks of the 'Deuteronomist' to refer to the author of this unified corpus I would prefer to use a more neutral term, such as the 'author(s)' or 'editor(s)' of the final work.¹⁰⁴

Terms borrowed from Deut/DtrH studies are used in a similar way in this thesis. As explained later in this study, it appears that the use of the Kingship Law in the Psalter bears similarities to the 'DtrN redaction' of the deuteronomistic history. However, in adopting 'DtrN' for usage in this study, the intention is not to imply that the placement of kingship psalms alongside the torah psalms was necessarily the work of a post-exilic nomistic redactor. Rather, as with Howard's use of DtrH, this term is used descriptively and without comment as to the historical reality of such a redactor. In other words, there is a legal theme which runs throughout Deut/DtrH, which expresses concern for the role of Yahweh's torah in the life of Israel. Some scholars see this theme as the work of a specific (post-exilic) redactor (and they use 'DtrN' to refer to this redactor). This study simply does not speak to that point of debate. Rather, the use of 'DtrN' herein is descriptive and thematic: that is, it refers to the *legal-torah theme itself*, as found in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History, without speaking to the idea any specific redactor.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Many scholars, of course, do not accept that there was a post-exilic redaction of Deuteronomy (see, for example, F. Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law* [trans. A. W. Mahnke; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992] 211). However, even those who do suggest a final redaction in the post-exilic period (e.g. Smend *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments* (4th ed.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1989), see this final (DtrN, in Smend's case) redaction taking place in the early period following the return to Israel. By way of contrast, however, it seems (even ignoring some of the excessively late estimates for the closure of the Psalter) that the Book of Psalms took its final form later in the post-exilic period—but, probably, prior to the translation of the LXX (see Mitchell, *Message*, 82-3).

¹⁰⁴ D. M. Howard, "The Case for Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Former Prophets," *WJT* 52 (1990) 101 n. 3.

¹⁰⁵ This focus on theme rather than redactor is further motivated by the 'modern trend towards reading the books of DtrH as separate works, each with their own tendency and theology,' (J. G. McConville, "King and Messiah in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History," *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* [JSOTSup 270; ed. J. Day; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998] 294-5). Several recent books and articles question the idea of a holistic authorship/redactional association of the books of the DtrH and rather suggest that each book has its own particular

5. Eschatological Re-Reading of the Psalms

One final area of methodological discussion which should be addressed is the question of how the psalms generally (and the kingship psalms particularly) were read and understood at the time of this final redaction of the Psalter. As has been mentioned above, in the consideration of editorial significance of the kingship psalms, it appears that royal (and other) psalms were being reread in an eschatological light by the time of the closure of the Psalter.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, if there has been an area of neglect in some of the recent works which have reopened the study of the Psalter, it is in terms of the *consistent application* of an eschatological rereading throughout the whole of the five books of the Psalter.

There has been a tendency to apply an eschatological understanding of certain texts—in particular, the psalms celebrating the Davidic kingship and the glories of Zion—to psalms found in Books IV and V.¹⁰⁷ However, the royal and Zion psalms found in Books I-III are read and interpreted in their historical context and setting without any suggestion of a post-exilic (eschatological) reinterpretation of these texts.¹⁰⁸ The suggestion that these psalms remain as a kind of narrative reminder of the failure of the Davidic monarchy was perhaps partially true, at one stage in the development of the Psalter, but this is not the final editorial word concerning king and monarchy. There is a tone of eschatological hope in the coming kingdom of Yahweh in Books IV and V, and it appears that this hope should be read back into the interpretation of Books I-III also. ‘Yes, these psalms may ring somewhat hollow for now, but they shall ring truer than ever before when the Kingdom of Yahweh comes,’ the reader is encouraged to think. This eschatological hope is designed to provide a grid for the reinterpretation of *all* of the royal and Zion psalms, and other psalms as well.¹⁰⁹

Another area which needs to be called into question is the strong contrast or opposition

emphasis on any given topic and that ‘the take’ on those issues may vary from book to book (see, for example, G. N. Knoppers, “The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King: A Reexamination of a Relationship,” *ZA W* 108/3 [1996] 329-46). The implications of this trend have yet to be fully explored, but it does give reason to question the underlying presupposition that a single author-redactor (or, for that matter, a few authors/redactors) produced a unified work encompassing Deuteronomy-2 Kings.

¹⁰⁶ Mays discusses the eschatological reinterpretation of kingship and torah psalms 18-19 and 118-119, for example (*The Lord Reigns*, 133-4). See also Mitchell, *Message*, 198; D. H. Ormseth, “The Psalms and the Rule of God,” *Word & World* VI/2 (Spring 1985) 119-21; Jacobson, “Royal Psalms.”; and, B. K. Waltke, “A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms,” *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981) 3-18.

¹⁰⁷ S. E. Gillingham, “The Messiah in the Psalms: A Question of Reception History and Psalter,” *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (JSOTSup 270; ed. J. Day; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 228.

¹⁰⁸ See Wilson’s, *Editing*, 213-4 and “Shaping,” 78, 81-2. See also J. C. McCann, “Books I-III and the Editorial Purpose of the Psalter,” *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; ed. J. C. McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 98-9.

¹⁰⁹ Indeed, this eschatological reinterpretation was probably an integral part of the readers understanding of these psalms even when there was a king in Zion, as we shall see below.

between the reign of Yahweh and his kingdom, on the one hand, and the co-regent reign of Yahweh's anointed, on the other. For example:

These psalms [the *YHWH-mālāk* psalms of the 90s] emphasize a 'pre-monarchic' reliance on YHWH *alone* that exalts God's wondrous, eternal works in contrast to the weak and transitory nature of humanity. Rather than encouraging confidence in human rulers, these psalms counsel the hearer to find refuge in YHWH who alone is eternal and able to save. These themes provide an appropriate introduction to the central *YHWH-mālāk* psalms that celebrate the kingship of YHWH.¹¹⁰

Also:

Are the final editors seeking to counter the lamentation associated with the collapse of the Davidic hopes in the first three books with a call to praise the only true and eternal King—Israel's only hope? As a result of its final form, the Psalter *counters continuing concern for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty and kingdom* with the wise counsel to seek refuge in a kingdom 'not of this world'—the eternal kingdom in which YHWH *alone* is king.¹¹¹

Further:

... I propose that an analysis of the final form of Book III reveals an arrangement that serves to assist the community not only to face squarely the disorienting reality of exile, as Wilson would suggest, but also to reach a reorientation based upon the *rejection* of the Davidic/Zion theology that had formerly been Judah's primary grounds for hope. The canonical juxtaposition of the traditional Davidic/Zion theology with community psalms of lament serves to signal the *rejection* of this basis for hope.¹¹²

This strong dichotomy is unnecessary and inconsistent with the editorial thrust of the Psalter as a whole. There is no need to posit trust in competing sovereignties of Yahweh and his 'anointed', rather, according to the royal psalms, theirs is a joint reign.¹¹³ If there is a 'narrative plot' which appears in Book IV having emerged out of the crisis of Book III, it is rather that *Yahweh still rules* and his kingdom remains unchanged even if the visible evidence of that rule—the Davidic monarchy—is no longer.¹¹⁴ The image of the Davidic

¹¹⁰ Wilson, "Shaping," 76 (emphasis added).

¹¹¹ Wilson, "Shaping," 81 (emphasis added).

¹¹² McCann, "Books I-III," 98-9 (emphasis added).

¹¹³ Clearly, Yahweh's reign is ultimate and of greatest importance, but the kingship psalms do not present the reign of the chosen Davidic king as competing with Yahweh's sovereignty—on the contrary, this is presented as a public expression of Yahweh's universal reign (e.g. Ps 2). Reading some of the works which posit the idea of a narrative presenting the failure of the David monarchy, one would be inclined to forget that the kingship psalms are actually written about the *human king*, such is the emphasis on the kingdom of Yahweh (see, for example, Wilson, *Editing*, 228 or deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 98-9). Yes, they also teach the reign of Yahweh (there was no Davidic rule without the rule of Yahweh), but that is not the sole message of these psalms. They talk about *the king*, and their continued inclusion and prominence in the Psalter indicates a continued role for *the king* within the community thinking—most likely an expectation of a restored king and kingship (again as co-regent in Yahweh kingdom, but this in no way contradicts the validity of the continued existence of the Davidic king as a part of Yahweh's rule).

¹¹⁴ Vincent comments to this effect with regard to Book IV, 'The second theme central to book 4 is the יהוה מלך motif itself, the assertion that he is king despite it all (despite the individual doubts and national/historical crisis of book 3). In the face of all appearances to the contrary these psalms press the notion that God is king (even if he doesn't have an earthly ruler on his throne!), and that he is in control.

In the light of the crisis of captivity the יהוה מלך phrase can on one level be understood as an assertion that *God* is still king, even if the human Davidic king has long since disappeared. The human king may be taken away because of the repeated sinfulness of both him and his people, but God remains enthroned in

king reappears in Book IV with the return of the לְיְהוָה superscription in Psalms 101 and 103, an unlikely event if the desire of the redactors is to encourage the reader towards 'rejection of the Davidic/Zion theology.'¹¹⁵ What is more, the portrayal of the rule of the Davidic messiah goes on to find strong and explicit expression in Book V (e.g. Ps 110), and in this final section of the Psalter we see the return of Zion psalms in the Songs of Ascent (שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת , i.e. Pss 120–134).¹¹⁶ Therefore, it would appear that the intent of the editors of the final form of the Psalms was not that faithful readers should reject the Davidic king and the centrality of Zion, in favour of commitment to the rule of Yahweh and hope in his eschatological kingdom. Rather, they were pointing the reader towards the *reinterpretation* of the concepts of kingship and Zion in the light of a future realisation of Yahweh's rule and plan in the figure of a restored Davidic leader. If there is any degree of corrective going on, it is for those who despair at the loss of the Davidic monarchy, Book IV assures them that Yahweh's reign continues, and Books IV and V point towards a new Davidic reign and a restored Zion. This reinterpretation of the royal psalms is not limited to Books IV and V, however, but should be read into all of the kingship psalms.

As mentioned above, this reinterpretation of the kingship psalms is not merely a post-exilic phenomenon, but is—to a certain degree—inherent to the expression of the royal psalms (e.g. the idea of the king's universal dominion etc.). There must have been a substantial degree of cognitive dissonance for the reader of the psalms, between the reality of the reigns of the kings of Israel and their rule expressed in the kingship psalms. This variance was heightened all the more when the Davidic king disappeared from view entirely, yet the royal psalms were not only retained in the Psalter, but they retained prominent editorial positions in the Book of Psalms.¹¹⁷ Why so? It appears that the redactors of the final form of the Psalter expected the Davidic kingship to be restored as part of the eschatological kingdom of Yahweh which was yet to be revealed.

heaven. Thus he is still to be praised, as the לְיְהוָה מֶלֶךְ psalms encouraged, as the lord of all creation. However, as we noted at the outset, this is not the only way of looking at the לְיְהוָה מֶלֶךְ psalms. It is also possible to interpret them in an eschatological sense: since God is king his promises will yet be fulfilled and either he himself, or his representative (the future Messianic king) will come. This very assertion forms the climax of two of the לְיְהוָה מֶלֶךְ psalms, 96 and 98. Through the body of these psalms there is not a *pronounced* emphasis on this eschatological solution, but there is no doubt that it is discernible,' ("Shape of Psalter," 77).

¹¹⁵ In fact, rather than Book IV drawing attention away from the monarchy, it appears that the royal psalms found in this section of the Psalter respond to the crisis of Ps 89, but still holding to the idea of kingship. See C. R. Seitz, *Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 164, where he comments that, 'David reemerges in Psalm 101 to sing of what? Of God's loyalty and justice, the two matters called into question on his behalf in Psalm 89... [T]he presence of these psalms [Davidic psalms in Books IV and V], which mention David fourteen times (and Solomon once), signals that David has not been forgotten as Israel's king and chief psalmist, the one to be remembered above all others as having sung God's praises almost without ceasing, as Book 5 has it at its close.'

¹¹⁶ Mitchell, *Message*, 85-6, 176-7.

¹¹⁷ See below for further discussion of the principles of discerning deliberate editorial placement.

Brevard Childs has pointed out the inherent eschatological emphases of the Psalter: 'However one explains it, the final form of the Psalter is *highly eschatological* in nature... The perspective of Israel's worship in the Psalter is eschatologically orientated. As a result, the Psalter in its canonical form, far from being different in kind from the prophetic message, joins with the prophets in announcing God's coming kingship.'¹¹⁸ And David Mitchell elaborates on the eschatological nature of the Psalms based on the post-exilic setting during which the canonical Psalter was closed:

Several points suggest that the final form of the Psalter may indeed have been redacted in accord with an eschatological agenda. First, it originated within an eschatologically conscious milieu. The period of its redaction was apparently sometime between the end of the Babylonian exile, as the post-exilic psalms attest, and the translation of the LXX. Biblical literature written during this period, when Israel was in subjection and *bet-David* in decline, tends to look for a sudden dramatic divine intervention in history that will restore the nation's fallen fortunes. Thus Ezekiel and Zechariah, in the early post-exilic period, both anticipate a coming golden age of prosperity and dominion for Israel, under a Davidic king... It therefore seems fair to regard the second temple period as a time of growing eschatological hope. As this was the context of the Psalter's redaction, it seems not unreasonable to suggest that its redactor shared the eschatological concerns of his contemporaries and that an eschatological agenda underlies his work, as it did theirs.¹¹⁹

David Howard summarizes the issue concisely:

Despite impressive evidence brought to bear by Wilson, McCann, and others, I maintain that the Psalter does not, in the end, speak of the 'failure' and 'rejection' of the Davidic Covenant. Rather, the Davidic kingdom and YHWH's kingdom coexist in complementary roles throughout the Psalter. Of the two, YHWH's kingdom is clearly the more important and the one from which the Davidic kingdom derives its legitimacy and authority. Yet Zion and the Davidic kingdom are the earthly expressions of YHWH's kingdom in important ways. Furthermore, in my view, the placement of the royal psalms, along with other considerations, are evidence in the Psalter of a continuing hope that is focused on both Zion and the Davidic Covenant, despite the many flaws of the kings and people who were heirs of that covenant.¹²⁰

M. A. Vincent applies these eschatological themes more specifically to the question of the retention of the kingship psalms in the post-exilic period and their prominent placement in the Psalter:

It is important to stress that this psalm [Ps 2] was chosen (or at the very least allowed to remain) as an introductory psalm for the Psalter when it was finally compiled after the Exile. Victory for God and his son/king is promised and asserted, *at a time when there was no king*, and when the nation had little political significance. To this king God promises the nations and the uttermost part of the world as his inheritance. He will subdue them and reign over them as king from God's holy hill of Zion. Reading the Psalter from the perspective of its final form and taking into account the editorial decision made in placing this psalm in this position we are forced into understanding it eschatologically, whatever its origins may have been.

Let me emphasise this point. It is remarkable that this psalm should front a collection which includes a substantial number of psalms which deal with God's *rejection* of Zion and the *failure* of the kingship and kingdom. That this psalm should assert God's rule (when we

¹¹⁸ Childs, *IOTS*, 518.

¹¹⁹ Mitchell, *Message*, 82-3.

¹²⁰ Howard, *Structure*, 201-2.

know what is coming in the rest of the Psalter) makes it almost certain that this Psalm is to be given an eschatological interpretation. All has not been lost despite the captivity and the loss of the kingdom; God will still be vindicated, and will vindicate his people; Zion will still be the centre of the world! So the Psalm asserts. The Davidic promise of 2 Samuel 7 is reasserted here, even though other parts of the Psalter recognise that it was not historically fulfilled. That fulfilment (following a clash between God and the nations, vv 1-5,8,9) is yet to come.¹²¹

Some have sounded cautionary notes with regard to eschatology in the Psalms. Gillingham, for example, creates a distinction between 'messiah (small m) and Messiah (capital M). The former denotes the figure of the king and his dynastic rule, and thus refers to many successive figures; the latter, by contrast presumes a once-for-all figure coming either at the end of time, or heralding it.'¹²² However, as discussed above, such a distinction is difficult to maintain as there were probably elements of 'Messianic' understanding of the royal psalms even in the period when there was physical messiah.

Gillingham's view that there is no real messianic content 'within canonical psalmody'¹²³ also seems a little tenuous, and is dependent upon her understanding of the development of eschatological-messianic tendencies 'between the period of the editing and collecting of the psalms... and the Christian period.'¹²⁴ There is no doubt that it is true that eschatological rereadings of the psalms are found in the LXX, the midrashic literature and the *Psalms of Solomon*, as Gillingham points out, but it can be argued that this rereading began much earlier than that. In fact, it is questionable whether, the royal psalms ever did truly fulfil a function *entirely* within the 'confines' of the historical realities of Israel, but perhaps during the early stages of the monarchy they could be called 'messianic' psalms. There does, however, seem to be a sense in which they were always—at least in part—Messianic psalms, because 'from the outset they had a prophetic character'.¹²⁵ There is good reason to argue that this type of eschatological rereading was broadly understood and applied in the period of the closure of the final form of the Psalms, because it had been (at least partially) inherent to the kingship and Zion psalms from their origin.

Therefore, an eschatological orientation shall be applied consistently throughout our study of the Psalter. The prominent role of the royal psalms was allowed to remain and the redactors, it appears, intended them to be reread in the light of the eschatological hope which was prevalent in the era in which they lived, and which flavours the book as a whole. The result of this reinterpretation of the psalms is that the Kingship Law is also applied to the figure of the eschatological king in the Psalms. This redaction speaks not

¹²¹ Vincent, "Shape of Psalter," 66.

¹²² Gillingham, "Messiah," 211.

¹²³ Gillingham, "Messiah," 237.

¹²⁴ Gillingham, "Messiah," 229.

¹²⁵ Eaton, *Psalms*, 33. See also K. R. Crim, *The Royal Psalms* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962) 60-1.

only as an indicator of proper piety for the readers and hearers of the psalms, but also influences the psalmic picture of the restored Davidic king.

Introductory questions having been dealt with, it would be appropriate at this point to turn to the exegetical analysis of the aforementioned psalms. Each torah-kingship psalm grouping shall be considered in turn (Chapters 2-4) and then, finally, comparison shall be made with the Dtr Law of the King (Chapter 5).

Chapter 2

Torah-Kingship Theme in Psalms 1-2

1. Introduction

The switch in focus which has taken place within Psalm studies over the last 15 years or so, from a form-critical and cult-functional approach to a canonical reading, has given rise to many new and interesting perspectives, not least of which is the importance of the ordering of the psalms within the Psalter. In the days when Gunkel and Mowinckel set the tone for the study of the psalms, the significance of Ps 1 was minimal. It was, after all, a psalm celebrating the torah, a wisdom psalm, and therefore neither representative of the truly significant psalm genres,¹ nor could it be described as cultic. Therefore, it was seen as representing a later, poorer brand of psalm writing, the so-called ‘learned psalmography’.² However, when one treats the final-form of the Psalms seriously, the significance of Ps 1 is greatly increased. Accepting the canonical form as the starting-point of discussion means that certain important questions must be considered. For example, ‘Why is Psalm 1 the first psalm in the Psalter?’ Order is important in the canonical study of any Old Testament book, but its importance is elevated when the book in question is a collection of individual poems: just why does this poem precede all the others?

In recent scholarship, B. S. Childs mooted a response to this question in his *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, where—amidst discussion of various indicators of editorial activity in the Psalter—he suggests that, ‘Psalm 1 serves as an introduction to the whole Psalter’.³ Childs suggests that the priority of the first psalm over the other compositions sets it apart as an introduction to the Book of Psalms as a whole. This possible introductory function of Ps 1 is further complicated by an apparent editorial connection between Pss 1 and 2, by way of lexical connection and a common lack of superscription.⁴ Could it be that Pss 1 and 2 (a torah psalm and a kingship psalm), actually form a *dual* introduction to the Psalms? If so, even more questions are raised: Why these psalms? Why together? What are they trying to communicate? If they are meant to provide ‘hermeneutical spectacles’ through which the reader is to view the book as a whole, then how is that reader meant to read the Psalter?

The repetition of this torah-kingship connection in two other key places in the final form of the Psalms (Book I: Pss 18-21 and Book V: Pss 118-119) makes the discussion all the more relevant. If these torah and kingship psalms have been deliberately juxtaposed, then why did the editors seek to make this link between the torah of Yahweh and the king of

¹ Gunkel, *Introduction*, 305, 327.

² Mowinckel, *PIW*, 113-4, 155.

³ Childs, *IOTS*, 512.

⁴ More detailed discussion of this association between Pss 1 and 2 will follow below.

Israel? This is the question to which we now turn, dealing with each of these three psalm groupings in turn (Chapters 2-4) and, ultimately, comparing them with the theology of Deut 17 (Chapter 5). My tentative suggestion is that we see at work here a Deuteronomic redaction in the final shaping of the Psalter—perhaps, more specifically, a nomistic Deuteronomic redaction (DtrN). The thrust of this redaction is the promotion of a particular view of piety for the post-exilic community and a particular perspective on the Davidic kingship as an eschatological hope in that period. This redaction is designed to be both an encouragement and a corrective for the readers and hearers of the Psalms. The encouragement being the hope of a future Davidic king. The corrective being the addition of a strong torah-focus instead of any simplistic, nominal hope in ‘David’ and ‘Zion’, so often criticised by the prophets. Granted, this is merely part of a broader picture of kingship portrayed in the Psalter, but these texts play an important role in shaping the overall psalmic presentation of the king. The emphasis on **תורה** speaks to both future hope and present reality, however. Not only is this renewed Davidic king to be the torah-keeper, but the people are to follow the idea of devotion to Yahweh through devotion to his revealed word in the here and now.

However, for this theory to hold true its basis and starting-point must be in exegesis, so now we turn to the analysis of Pss 1 and 2 as an introduction to the Book of Psalms:

2. Analysis of Psalm 1

BHS	Translation
אַשְׁרֵי-הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִלֵּךְ בַּעֲצַת רָשָׁעִים וּבְדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמַד וּבְמוֹשֵׁב לִצִּים לֹא יָשָׁב:	1 Happy is the man who... does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, and in the way of sinners does not stand, and in the seat of mockers does not sit.
כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חִפְּצוֹ וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה:	2 Rather in the torah of Yahweh is his delight, and upon his torah he meditates day and night.
וְהֵיכָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל-פְּלִיגֵי מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פִּרְיוֹ יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעָלָהּ לֹא-יִבּוֹל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ:	3 He is like a tree planted by channels of water, which gives its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither, and all that he does prospers.
לֹא-כֵן הָרָשָׁעִים כִּי אִם-כַּמֶּזֶץ אֲשֶׁר-תִּדְּכֶנּוּ רוּחַ:	4 Not so the wicked! for they are like chaff which is driven about by the wind!
עַל-כֵּן לֹא-יִקְמוּ רָשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט וְחַטָּאִים בַּעֲדַת צְדִיקִים:	5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
כִּי-יֹדֵעַ יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ צְדִיקִים וְדֶרֶךְ רָשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד:	6 For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

2.1 Deuteronomic Background to Psalm 1

There are few doubts about the text of the passage, and its meaning seems to be fairly clear.⁵ The Psalter begins with a discussion of the ‘two ways’—the way of the righteous as opposed to the way of the wicked—a theme well-known to both Deuteronomy and the Wisdom literature. Psalm 1 is interesting, however, in the yard-stick which it sets as the test of devotion to Yahweh: The righteous delight in the תּוֹרַת יְהוָה and meditate upon that torah day and night, a concept which seems to borrow from the theology of Deuteronomy.

2.1.1 Psalm 1 and the *Shema*

Deuteronomic overtones are apparent from the beginning of Psalm 1. The psalm starts with blessing or beatitude formula (אַשְׁרֵי הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר), which is not as common as the בָּרוּךְ formula throughout the OT literature, but is found quite often in the psalms. It is not

⁵ In terms of structure, Psalm 1 follows a four-fold A - B - A' - B' structure, where:
A (1-3) = Description of the צְדִיקִים;
B (4-5) = Description of the רָשָׁעִים;
A' (6a) = Way of the צְדִיקִים;
B' (6b) = Way of the רָשָׁעִים.

entirely clear how the two terms—אֲשֶׁרִי and בָּרוּךְ—differ, but the most likely suggestions come from Mays and Kraus. Mays suggests that בָּרוּךְ is used in traditional blessing formulas and אֲשֶׁרִי is used in beatitudes, commonly found in post-exilic psalms.⁶ Kraus, on the other hand, (but in a similar vein) writes: ‘The “secular” אֲשֶׁרִי is to be distinguished from the solemn liturgical בָּרוּךְ’.⁷ Whichever approach is adopted the meaning of this introductory phrase is clear, the ‘blessed’ or ‘happy’ person is about to be described to the reader. This is done first negatively and then positively, and in each case Deuteronomic terms are adopted.

The negative description, i.e. what the צַדִּיקִים are not like, comes in a parallel three by three structure:

<i>Blessed is the man who...</i>		
<i>does not walk</i>	<i>in the counsel</i>	<i>of the wicked</i>
<i>does not stand</i>	<i>in the way</i>	<i>of sinners</i>
<i>does not sit</i>	<i>in the seat</i>	<i>of mockers.</i>

This particular structure and the vocabulary used has led to Ps 1:1 being read in the light of the *Shema*. Gunnel André points out that much of the focus in the commentaries has emphasised distinctions between the nouns used (who are ‘sinners’ as opposed to ‘the wicked’),⁸ however, she readdresses this trend by focussing attention on the verbs used in Ps 1:1 and on its three-fold structure. This she compares with the text of Deut 6 highlighting both lexical and structural similarities between the two texts. Lexically, there is the command to talk about the words of Yahweh when one *sits* (יָשָׁב), *walks* (הֵלֵךְ), *lies down* (שָׁכַב) and *rises* (קָוָם) in Deut 6:7—which uses similar language to that found in Psalm 1 (does not *walk* (הֵלֵךְ), *sit* (יָשָׁב), *stand* (עָמַד) not קָוָם, but it serves a similar function to קָוָם in Deut 6:7). So we find in Deut 6 the positively phrased alternative to the description of what the צַדִּיקִים are *not* like in Ps 1:1. The idea of speaking about the words of Yahweh on all occasions found in the *Shema* also ties in with the positive description of the OT believer as found in Ps 1:2—the one whose delight is in the torah.

André goes on to consider the three-fold emphases of Deut 6 in parallel with the three-fold negative of Ps 1:1. The *Shema* speaks of loving the Lord our God ‘with all your *lēbāb*, with all your *nəpəəš*, and with all your *m^eod*,’ (Deut 6:5) and v 13 provides another triad of terms, ‘you shall *fear* YHWH your God; you shall *serve* (him), and *swear* by his name’.⁹ These, again, she sees as positive alternatives to the triad of negatives, indicating what the

⁶ J. L. Mays, *Psalms* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994) 41.

⁷ Kraus, *Psalms*, 115. The two observations seem fairly compatible if one associates the beatitudes primarily with the secular (i.e. non-cultic) Wisdom movement.

⁸ G. André, “‘Walk’, ‘Stand’, and ‘Sit’ in Psalm I 1-2,” *VT* XXXII/3 (1982) 327.

⁹ André, “Walk, Stand, Sit,” 327.

‘righteous one’ is not like, in Ps 1:1. He does not does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of mockers (Ps 1:1), but he does love his God with all his heart, soul and strength (Deut 6:4) and he will fear, serve and swear by Yahweh (Deut 6:13).

We find this Deuteronomy–Psalms link is not entirely new, but is also found in the rabbinic literature. Stefan Reif, in response to André’s article, comments:

It is clear... that Ibn Ezra relates the language and message of the two passages [Ps 1 and Deut 6] in precisely the manner suggested by André. He regards the Psalms passage as reminiscent of the Deuteronomic one, draws parallels between the vocabulary and regards the theme of each as one of total religious commitment.¹⁰

Similarly, Patrick Miller points out that: ‘The activity enjoined in Deut 6:6-9 expresses a constant and total commitment to the law of the Lord comparable to what is pronounced the blessed way of the righteous in Psalm 1.’¹¹ What is more, v 1 introduces us to the main theme of Ps 1 (the ‘two ways’), telling the reader that the blessed righteous person does not stand in ‘the way of sinners’ (וּבִדְרֵךְ חַטָּאִים), and, as we shall see in the analysis of Ps 1:6, this too is an idea which borrows from the Book of Deuteronomy.

So we can see that there are similarities in terms of language, form of expression and theme between Deut 6 (a key passage with regard to Dtr theology) and the first verse of Psalm 1. The opening verse of the Psalter serves as a signpost for the contemplative reader, introducing ideas characteristic of a Deuteronomic worldview from the outset of the book.

2.1.2 Centrality of Torah

The strong adversative כִּי אֲדָם at the start of v 2 (which Waltke and O’Connor suggest should be translated as ‘rather’¹²), informs the reader that the following is the contrasting, positive description of the ‘happy person’. Significantly, this theme is continued in Deuteronomic terms. The key attribute of the faithful believer is that ‘his delight is in the torah of Yahweh’ (בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חֲפָצוֹ). The connection with Deuteronomy would most likely have been obvious to the readers of this psalm, as תּוֹרָה is, perhaps, most associated with the Book of Deuteronomy.¹³ It seems likely that this was the editorial intent in placing Ps 1 at the head of the Psalter: to present a call to faithfulness firmly grounded in a Deuteronomic notion of piety. Kraus puts it thus: ‘The concept תּוֹרָה that is to be

¹⁰ S. C. Reif, “Ibn Ezra on Psalm I 1-2,” *VT* XXXIV/2 (1984) 234.

¹¹ Miller, “Deuteronomy & Psalms,” 12.

¹² B. K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 670-1.

¹³ תּוֹרָה appears most often in the Psalms themselves (thanks to Ps 119), but other than that the term is most commonly found in Deuteronomy, which seems to have a strong sense of self-awareness as ‘this book of the torah’ (Deut 1:5, 30:10 etc.), see J.-P. Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book: Writing in Deuteronomy* (BIS, Vol. 14; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

presupposed in Psalm 1 has its origin in Deuteronomic theology.’¹⁴

The characteristically Deuteronomic emphasis regarding the torah of Yahweh continues in the description of the effects of this ‘delight’ in the remainder of v 2. The faithful Israelite delights in the torah by ‘meditating upon it day and night’ (ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה). This concept of meditating constantly upon the torah seems, in itself, to be a reflection of ideas found in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic literature, as evidenced by Jos 1:8 and Deut 17:19.¹⁵ Interestingly, both of these exhortations are addressed to the leaders of God’s people (Joshua as Moses’ successor and to ‘the kings’ who would be called from the ranks of the Hebrew brothers), presumably as exemplars of devotion to Yahweh, whose example was to be followed by all.¹⁶ Jos 1:8 is remarkably similar in its presentation of the role of the torah of Yahweh in the life of the one who was to lead Israel into Canaan. Joshua is commanded ‘to be careful to keep all of the torah’ (לשמר לעשות ככל-התורה)

¹⁴ Kraus, *Psalms*, 116. Much scholarly debate has focussed on the proper definition of the word תורה as used in Ps 1. Most commentators point out that the OT understanding of torah goes far beyond our contemporary understanding of what ‘law’ means, to include all of the teaching of Yahweh in a holistic sense. Discussion of just what is meant by ‘torah’ in the torah psalms is an important question, and one which will be a central consideration of Chapter 7, *Torah, Kingship and Democratisation*. Suffice it to say for the moment, that the idea of a piety based in torah appears to draw upon Deuteronomy’s presentation of devotion to Yahweh.

¹⁵ The similarities between Ps 1:2 and Deut 17:19 will, of course, be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 5, below.

¹⁶ Miller points out that, ‘The fundamental task of the leader of the people, therefore, is to exemplify and demonstrate true obedience to the Lord for the sake of the well-being of both the dynasty and the kingdom. King and subject share a common goal: to learn to fear the Lord (v 19),’ (*Deuteronomy* [IBC; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990] 149). The similarities between the commissioning of Joshua and the Law of the King have led some to posit that Joshua (and also Moses, for that matter) was, in fact, a kind of *de facto* ‘king’ in the pre-monarchic period (e.g. R. D. Nelson, “Josiah in the Book of Joshua,” *JBL* 100/4 [1981] 531-40; J. R. Porter, “The Succession of Joshua,” *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History* [Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 8; eds. G. N. Knoppers and J. G. McConville; Grand Rapids: Eisenbrauns, 2000] 139-62; J. R. Porter, *Moses and Monarchy: A Study in the Biblical Tradition of Moses* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963]). This seems to be an unnecessary and somewhat problematic conclusion, however. The commonality is based in the fact that similar expectations surround the office of king and the commissioning of Joshua as leader of the people (e.g. torah-obedience etc.). This, however, is not sufficient to outweigh the indications that Joshua is not to be thought of as a king in Israel (e.g. he is Moses’ successor for the task of conquest alone, his is not monarchic succession based on sonship; also, the fact that he fulfils some of the functions later fulfilled by the kings does not, of itself, mean that Joshua is king), see McConville, “King and Messiah,” 271-2, 285-6. The description of Joshua as monarch or proto-monarch, seems to cloud the issue somewhat. Emphasis is best placed upon the analysis of the content of Yahweh’s expectations described in the Kingship Law and the commissioning of Joshua. As Miller points out above, Yahweh expects the same obedience from the people *and* their leaders, so rather than being characteristics particular to the monarchy (thus implying a kingly function for Joshua), these are characteristics expected of the whole community. It seems that the divine expectation is that appointed leaders excel in the task of devotion to Yahweh as an example for all the people; and that this expectation is not limited to kings alone, but to any who would lead the people regardless of function (see, for example, Lohfink’s comments on the supremacy of torah in N. F. Lohfink, “Distribution of the Functions of Powers,” *The Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* [SBTS, Vol. 3; ed. D. L. Christensen; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993] 350-1). It may be the case that Joshua, as a leader who sought to abide by the divine expectations, served as a model of proper leadership for the kings, but this is something very different from being king himself (see, for example, Howard, “The Case for Kingship in Deut,” 107; G. Widengren, “King and Covenant,” *JSS* 2/I [January 1957] 14-5).

and to ‘meditate upon it day and night’ (והגית בו יומם ולילה). The similarities between Jos 1 and Ps 1 are difficult to ignore and it appears that, just as there is a deliberate attempt to link Joshua (and the DrtH) with the Book of Deuteronomy,¹⁷ so in Ps 1 we see a similar attempt to link the spiritual theology of the Psalms with Deuteronomic theology. ‘The Psalter and the Deuteronomistic History both begin with an explicit focus on the desirability of a constant attention to the law, which is to be understood to be the Deuteronomic law.’¹⁸

The final statement of Ps 1:3c (וכל אשר-יעשה יצליח) also focuses attention on the torah-piety of Joshua 1:8 (כי-אז תצליח את-דרכך ואז תשכיל), as is footnoted in both the MT and the LXX. The explanatory expansion upon the metaphor of the tree (discussed immediately below) refers the reader back to the Jos 1 passage where the importance of living according to the torah is so strongly emphasized. Kraus describes the addition of this final phrase of v. 3 thus: ‘To [the tree simile] is added an insertion that soberly states a fact and makes a transition from illustration to fact: he who is rooted in God’s תורה will prosperously bring to a conclusion all that he undertakes. This added part of the verse is modeled after Josh 1:8—a text parallel to Ps 1:2.’¹⁹ The thrust of this Deuteronomic connection with Jos 1:8 is that torah-obedience makes a difference in the life and reality of the blessed person.

So we see quite clearly that the introductory verses of the Psalter have a strongly Deuteronomic flavour to them, with a particular focus on the law. The torah is central and true godliness is based upon its study. The purpose of this study is to be equipped to live by Yahweh’s torah—not to stray from it either to the right or to the left (cf. Deut 17:20; Jos 1:8)—and such a lifestyle (דרך) is the essence of true faithfulness towards him, according to the introduction to the Book of Psalms.

¹⁷ A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (New Century Bible Commentary; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1979) 273.

¹⁸ Miller, “Deuteronomy & Psalms,” 11. Sarna points out, interestingly, that each of the major sections of the Hebrew Bible begins with a similar focus on the torah: ‘If not by design, then by happy coincidence, the choice of Psalm 1 makes each major division of the standard Hebrew Bible open with a reference to Torah. The Former Prophets begin with the Book of Joshua, and chapter one contains the following: “You must be very strong and resolute to observe faithfully all the Teaching (*torah*) that My servant Moses enjoined upon you. Do not deviate from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful whenever you go. Let not this Book of the Teaching (*torah*) cease from your lips, but recite it day and night, so that you may observe faithfully all that is written in it” (vv 7, 8)

The Latter Prophets begin with the Book of Isaiah; its opening chapter calls upon Israel to: “Hear the word of the Lord... Give ear to our God’s Teaching (*torah*)” (v 10).

The final chapter of the prophetic division, the third in the Book of Malachi, likewise exhorts the people: “Be mindful of the Teaching (*torah*) of My servant Moses, whom I charged at Horeb with laws and rules for all Israel” (v 22).

Since the Book of Psalms opens the third section of the Hebrew Bible, the *Ketuvim* (*Hagiographa*, or *Writings*, in English), it is to be expected that it, too, would commence with emphasis on *torah* and so a composition with the theme of Torah was selected for the purpose,’ (*On the Book of Psalms: Exploring the Prayer of Ancient Israel* [New York: Schocken Books, 1993] 28).

¹⁹ Kraus, *Psalms*, 118-9.

2.1.3 Dependence on Yahweh

The Deuteronomic overtones continue into verse three with a simile which describes the effects of life grounded in the torah of Yahweh. The blessed man is likened to ‘a tree planted by streams of water’ (היה כעץ שתול על-פלגי מים), a phrase which is immediately reminiscent of another well-known Deuteronomic passage, Jer 17:7f. In Jeremiah it is the man who trusts in Yahweh (יבטח ביהוה) who is described as being ‘like a tree planted by water’ which is conceptually very similar to the blessing formula found in Ps 2:12 (אשרי כל-חוי בו, ‘Blessed are all who take refuge in the Lord’), which is closely linked with Ps 1 (by way of the אשרי inclusion). The similarities between these two passages are marked:

Ps 1		Jer 17
אשרי-האיש	cf.	פרוך הגבר
והיה כעץ שתול	cf.	והיה כעץ שתול
על-פלגי מים	cf.	על מים
פריו יתן בעתו	cf.	ולא ימיש מעשות פרי

Whilst the lexical links are not always exact, the metaphor is essentially the same: The person who is blessed by God (the torah-keeper of Ps 1 or the one who trusts in Jer 17)²⁰ is like a tree planted by water, denoting permanence, protection and fruitfulness. Jerome Creach has made a good argument connecting the imagery of Ps 1:3 with Ezek 47:12 and accordingly drawing a connection between torah and temple.²¹ However, this argument is dependent upon the correlation between secondary aspects of the metaphor (פלגי מים and the phrase פריו יתן בעתו) rather than the primary image of the blessed person being like a tree planted by water. In dealing with intertextual relationships it is always difficult to argue conclusively as to what the original reader would understand or how he would go about internally cross-referencing one text with others. Equally it is difficult to say which text (if any) the author had in mind when writing what he did.²² In this case, however, the Jeremiah connection seems to be the more likely because the main metaphors (rather than the secondary descriptions) correspond and also because both passages are clearly metaphors speaking of the faithful believer, whereas it is not immediately clear that the Ezekiel passage is referring to the people of God.²³

²⁰ Interestingly, in his study of the idea of refuge, Jerome Creach shows how these two concepts—torah obedience and dependence upon Yahweh—are closely associated in the Book of Psalms. He writes: ‘the association of *tôrâ* with Yahweh’s refuge provides a clue as to how Yahweh’s instruction was understood and how the Psalter was meant to be read: the content of the Psalter seemed to be intended as a guide to a life of dependence; the most concrete way of expressing such allegiance was in the study of *tôrâ*,’ (*Yahweh as Refuge*, 73).

²¹ J. F. D. Creach, “Like a Tree Planted by the Temple Stream: The Portrait of the Righteous in Psalm 1:3,” *CBQ* 61 (1999) 34-46.

²² See Van Wolde, “Intertextuality,” 46-7 for good discussion of the issues involved in suggesting textual interconnection.

²³ Mays, “Place of the Torah-Psalms,” 4.

The Psalm 1-Jeremiah 17 association is significant. Whilst the exact nature of the relationship between Jeremiah and Deut/DtrH is undoubtedly complex, this prophetic book appears to borrow Dtr concepts and language in its explanation of the exile and its presentation of the hope of restoration and renewal.²⁴ Jeremiah's explanation of the exile is based in the *rejection* of the torah of Yahweh (Jer 29:19-23; 32:23 etc.), and, equally, the promise of restoration is connected with the *keeping* of the torah (this time as a result of Yahweh's divine help, Jer 31:33). Just as the exilic/post-exilic Book of Jeremiah draws upon Dtr theological concepts both in explanation of the past and in giving hope for the future, could it be that a similar connection with Deuteronomy is being drawn in the final, post-exilic redaction of the Book of Psalms?

Summary of Ps 1:1-3

Ps 1:1-3, the first section of Ps 1, provide an introduction to the Psalter which is immersed in Deuteronomistic theology. It makes use of Deuteronomistic concepts and ideas, makes reference to 'well-known' Deuteronomistic texts and is thoroughly ensconced in a theology of torah. If indeed Ps 1 is part of an introduction to the whole of the Psalter, then the significance of these opening verses is marked. The reader will be aware that what follows are gathered texts of varied content, but in these verses he is told to take stock of all that follows and to read it from the viewpoint of a Deuteronomistic worldview.

2.1.4 Eschatological Rereading of Ps 1

The presentation of the characteristics of the wicked (Ps 1:4-5) follows on from the description of the blessed person with two strongly adversative conjunctions: כִּי וְלֹא-כֵן and כִּי וְכֵן. After the description of the righteous in terms of Deuteronomistic torah concepts, the psalmist goes on to emphatically say, "*Not so the wicked! Rather, they are like chaff!*"—there is no halfway-house between the two ways, one either lives in accordance with the torah and prospers, or one is wicked and chaff-like.²⁵ However, as well as acting as a foil for the imagery of v 3, these verses do add another element to the 'hermeneutical spectacles' which result from Ps 1's function as introduction to the Psalter. It is difficult to know precisely what was v 5's referent in its original historical context, but it seems clear that by the time of the closure of the Psalter its words of judgment had taken on an eschatological character:

Of course—and we must now emphasize this strongly—it is probably not at all conceivable that the sacral-legal and the cultic institutions [Kraus' suggestion as to the original context of these ideas] still have a real significance for our psalm. The concepts and formulations are indeed molded from that model, but they have been largely spiritualized... Thus those conceptions would finally be proved to be correct which speak—perhaps too quickly and

²⁴ J. G. McConville, *Judgment and Promise* (Leicester: Apollos, 1993) 180-1.

²⁵ This image of "chaff" (קָלָה) is only ever used figuratively and this simile is chosen as a diametric contrast to the image of the tree by water in v 3. The latter is an image of permanence, security and fruitfulness, whereas, 'chaff' is an image of all that is useless, passing and inconsequential.

too rashly—of מִשְׁפָּט as the final ‘judgment’ and of the קָהָל as the ‘messianic congregation of the new world.’²⁶

Sharing the same view, Mays comments: ‘Almost certainly verse 5 came to be understood in the light of apocalyptic eschatology like that of Daniel (see Daniel 7; 12) as a reference to a vindicating judgment beyond this life.’²⁷

Kraus is correct to point out that often interpreters have been too quick to make this jump to a ‘spiritualised’ view of many of the key concepts of the Psalms, but—as he himself insists—we cannot underestimate the transformation of understanding which took place as a result of the exile. Many institutions (e.g. king, temple, Zion) which were seen as important in the (spiritual) life of the community were removed or radically altered as a result of the fall of Babylonian captivity, and so their meaning underwent radical re-interpretation in later biblical texts.²⁸

In my opinion, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the exile for theological and religious development, but it must be expected beforehand that the traces of it to so great an extent as possible were obliterated in the literary tradition... *In that respect we can only manage to establish that changing times read different contents into the stereotyped language of the psalms.*²⁹

So we see in Ps 1:5, the concept of (probably) sacral judgment being transformed into a notion of eternal judgment after death. As mentioned in Chapter 1, we see this process of eschatological rereading at work with regard to the institution of kingship in the Psalms, however, reinterpretation of this sort is not limited to the royal.

2.1.5 Theology of the Two Ways

Verse 6 concludes Psalm 1, by continuing the DtrN theme in much the same vein as we have seen throughout. The idea of the ‘two ways’, the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked, is a common one in the Psalms and Wisdom literature generally (e.g. Prov 8-9). However, it is also an important idea in the theology of the Book of Deuteronomy. Deut 30:11-20 has Moses presenting a climactic exhortation to the Israelites, that they should choose today between ‘life and prosperity, death and destruction’ (v 15, אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־הַמָּוֶת וְאֶת־הַטּוֹב וְאֶת־הָרָע). He goes on that they should love Yahweh their God, ‘walk in his ways’ (לֵלֶכֶת בְּדַרְכָיו), keep his commands and so on. This is presented as one option (obviously, the ‘right’ one), and vv 17-18 show that there is a second option (i.e. to be drawn away to serve other gods and to worship them). In vv 19-20 we see the similar challenge to make a choice between ‘life and death, blessings and curses’ (הַחַיִּים וְהַמָּוֶת)

²⁶ Kraus, *Psalms*, 119-20.

²⁷ Mays, *Psalms*, 44.

²⁸ Waltke, “Canonical Process.”

²⁹ S. Holm-Nielsen, “The Importance of Late Jewish Psalmody for the Understanding of Old Testament Psalmic Tradition,” *STh* XIV/1 (1960) 13 (emphasis mine).

נתתי לפניך הברכה והקללה). Thus we see that the idea of the ‘two ways’ is also part of Deuteronomic theology, and given the context of the whole psalm, this is at least as likely a connection as any link with the Wisdom tradition.

Again the notion of following in the way of Yahweh is firmly grounded in torah-obedience (Deut 30). So the summary statement of v. 6 presents a very ‘simple’ worldview for the righteous—walk in God’s ways by meditating day and night on the torah and your way will be known (and, by implication, blessed) by the Lord. The second alternative is the equivalent of Moses’ ‘death option’ in Deut 30—rejection of the torah leads one on the way of the wicked, sinners and mockers, which is fleeting (chaff-like) and ultimately perishing. Kraus summarises Ps 1 thus:

But, finally, we must not forget that Psalm 1 is the preamble to the Psalter. That person is pronounced happy who, in reading and reflection upon the Psalms, lets himself be guided by the message that shows the path.³⁰

2.2 Assessment of the Theological Significance of Ps 1

In summary, it can be seen that Psalm 1—which functions as half of the dual introduction to the Psalter—presents a thoroughly Dtr perspective on life. It suggests that the blessed are those who delight to meditate upon and live by the torah, and that those who reject the torah follow the way of folly and death. The obvious question in response to this conclusion is, ‘Why? Why does the Psalter begin with this strong presentation of a Deuteronomic worldview’?

There are various levels at which this question can be answered. Historically, it could be answered on the level of pointing out the dominant school of theology at the time of the closure of the Psalter. History is written by the winners, and, it could be said, so is poetry. Canonically, the same would apply: it was, perhaps, the Deuteronomists who appear to have been most involved in the closure of the Old Testament canon.³¹ However, this question becomes most interesting when answered from a theological perspective. What were the *theological* reasons for the placement of a psalm of this nature at the head of the Psalter?

There seem to be two main reasons for the placement³² of Ps 1 as the introduction to the Psalter:

³⁰ Kraus, *Psalms*, 122.

³¹ Although many view the Deuteronomists as those most associated with the formation of the canon, this was not *necessarily* the case. Lohfink’s discussion of whether or not a Dtr movement existed provides an interesting addition to this discussion (“Deuteronomistic Movement?”).

³² It is unclear whether Psalm 1 was written specifically as an introduction to the Book of Psalms, or if it was a ‘previously known’ psalm which was placed there because of its theological content. For further discussion on this topic see Mitchell, *Message*, 73-5; Miller, *Interpreting*, 81ff; P. Auffret, *The Literary Struc-*

1. This is a clear statement that the ensuing Book of Psalms is to be treated as torah itself. The reader is to meditate on all that follows as instruction from God and to seek to live by *its* teaching as much as by the teaching of the Pentateuch.³³ All of these works—praise, lament, wisdom, thanksgiving, individual, corporate—all of these elements are present to teach something about God, or man, or creation, or righteousness, or worship, or daily life, and so on. This Deuteronomic focus on torah-piety addresses the very nature of what the Psalter is. Ps 1 tells the thoughtful reader that the Psalter is תורה. Seybold has put it thus:

With the new preface [Psalm 1] and the weight of the reflective proverbial poem [Psalm 119], which in terms of its range is effectively a small collection in itself, the existing Psalter now takes on the character of a documentation of divine revelation, to be used in a way analogous to the torah, the first part of the canon, and becomes a manual of instruction for the theological study of the divine order of salvation and meditation.³⁴

Similarly, many commentators would argue that Ps 1 also addresses the usage of the Psalter: that is, that Ps 1 not only declares the Book of Psalms to be torah in a qualitative sense, but also tells the reader the way in which the psalms are to be appropriated. The addition of Ps 1 takes the Psalter out of the remit of the cult and places it firmly into a didactic context. The psalms are no longer primarily designed to be sung in the cult, rather they are to be meditated upon as texts. As Wilson puts it:

The obvious encouragement to meditate on the psalms as Torah marks an interesting shift in the interpretation of these compositions. For the most part, these works began life as performance pieces in the worship of the temple... For this reason, the Psalter is often alluded to as the 'hymnbook of the second temple'—a collection of hymns to be sung in public worship. The placement of Psalm 1 as introduction decisively explodes this view of the Psalter. The psalms are no longer to be sung as a human response to God but are to be meditated upon day and night as the source of the divine word of life to us.³⁵

Adding an introduction with such clear didactic and wisdom overtones suggests that the Psalms are to be treated more like a book and less like a hymnbook.³⁶

ture of Psalm 2 (JSOTSup 3; trans. D. J. A. Clines; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1977) 31-4; Wilson, *Editing*, 204-7.

³³ 'First, it identifies the function of the book. The book is torah of the Lord. Torah means instruction, teaching, direction that can be given in various literary forms. The psalms provide torah that can be learned by study and meditation. It is scripture where one learns about God and God's way with the world. This identification concerns the comprehensive use of the psalms gathered into the book. It does not deny that many are written to function as prayers and hymns of praise. In the book, the hymns and prayers are to be read as torah of the LORD,' (Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 121-2).

³⁴ K. Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms* (trans. R. G. Dumphy; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990) 24. See also McCann, *Psalms*, 665-6.

³⁵ G. H. Wilson, "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," *Int* 46/2 (April 1992) 137. See also Childs, *IOTS*, 513-4; W. A. VanGemeren, *Psalms* (EBC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991) 8 and McCann, *Theological Introduction*, 20-1.

³⁶ One of the problems involved in making such statements is that we know very little about the historical usage of the Psalter in the post-exilic period, so some caution must be exercised. However, having said that, the content of Psalm 1 and its prominent placement in the Psalter tends to suggest that a Psalter for reading had overtaken a Psalter for singing in post-exilic Israel.

2. A second conclusion can reasonably be drawn from the prominent placement of the first psalm: namely, Psalm 1 instructs the reader that the Psalter's presentation of life and spirituality is to be understood from the perspective of a Deuteronomic world-and-life view. The Deuteronomic backdrop to Ps 1 is marked, and the theology of Deuteronomy is about more than just ideas; it is about an integrated philosophy of life that impacts patterns of behaviour. Over and above the issues already mentioned,³⁷ we see this Dtr worldview presented in the idea of separation from the wicked in Psalm 1.³⁸ It appears that whoever placed Pss 1 & 2 as the dual introduction to the Psalms wanted the readers of the book to view its varied content from the perspective of a Deuteronomic worldview. So the ideas of personal and communal piety found in the Psalter, or the ideas of the rule and kingship of Yahweh, or the ideas of suffering and lament, or the praise and worship of God, or the kingship of Yahweh and his 'anointed one', are all to be viewed from the type of perspective found in Deuteronomy.³⁹ The psalms, it has often been said, address the whole gamut of human experience and this Deuteronomic introduction encourages sweeping interaction with the lessons and perspectives taught in the psalms. The instruction of Yahweh applies to all things and in all circumstances; and, it is this holistic perspective that is to be applied to the reader's understanding of each of these individual poems. Murphy has phrased it in this way:

For as the Psalms became Scripture, they did so with an interpretative strategy attached: they were not to be interpreted as self-standing books of prayers and praises, any more than Proverbs was a self-standing collection of wise sayings. Both were adjuncts to the rest of Scripture to be read in the light of the other books...⁴⁰

Psalm 1 seems to indicate that the lessons held within the book as a whole should be read in the light of Deuteronomy.⁴¹ Whilst the Psalms should not—because of this derivative nature—be understood as a 'lesser' type of torah, it does appear that the Psalter was designed to be understood in the light of the Torah (i.e. Pentateuch).⁴² More specifically, given this introduction to the Psalter, and Deuteronomy's self-understanding as 'this book

³⁷ The importance of meditating upon and applying the torah of Yahweh; connections with significant deuteronomistic texts; the stress on the individual's dependence upon Yahweh etc. (see above).

³⁸ A. D. H. Mayes, "Deuteronomy 14 and the Deuteronomic Worldview," *Studies in Deuteronomy in Honour of C J Labuschagne on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (VTSup 53; ed. F. Garcia Martinez; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).

³⁹ I use the words 'type of perspective' advisedly here. Deuteronomy does not necessarily speak directly to all of these issues within its pages, but its focus is to inculcate a way of thinking and acting in the hearts of the people of God that can be applied to new and changing circumstances. This idea is inherent to the book itself which seems to be a reinterpretation and reapplication of the presentation of the law at Sinai for the new situation of the people in the land.

⁴⁰ Murphy, "Reflections," 25.

⁴¹ Not that the voice of Deuteronomy is the only one to be heard in the Psalms—many other voices can be heard in the Psalter, not least of which, as we have seen already is the voice of Wisdom. However, the prominence of Ps 1 and its close association with Deuteronomy indicate that this perspective in the psalms is probably of greater importance than has been recognised to date.

⁴² See Chapter 7, *Torah, Kingship and Democratisation*.

of the torah' it does appear that there is a particular hermeneutical link to be drawn between the Psalms and Deuteronomic theology.⁴³

Deuteronomy tells of a fundamental dialogue that moves from divine instruction to human prayer. It gives us the instruction part of the conversation but knows about the prayer; the Psalms give us the prayer part of this dialogue, and the redactional shaping of the book turns it into divine instruction.⁴⁴

Historically speaking should we expect anything less? If, as seems to be the case, the dominant school of theology at the time when the Psalter was closed is Deuteronomic, should we not expect to see this type of 'interpretative strategy' in the final form of the book?

⁴³ Obviously, this link should not be overstated. The Psalms correlate with many different types of OT literature (e.g. wisdom themes are also present in Ps 1). My suggestion is merely that Ps 1 as an introduction places an increased emphasis on DtrN theology as a hermeneutical construct in reading the Psalms.

⁴⁴ Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 8-9.

3. Analysis of Psalm 2

BHS

לָמָּה רָגְשׁוּ גוֹיִם וּלְאֻמִּים יִהְגּוּ-רִיק:
יִתְיַצְּבוּ מַלְכֵי-אֶרֶץ וְרוֹזְנִים נוֹסְדוּ-יַחַד
עַל-יְהוָה וְעַל-מְשִׁיחוֹ:
נִבְהָקָה אֶת-מוֹסְרוֹתֵימוֹ וְנִשְׁלִיכָה מִמֶּנּוּ
עֲבֹתֵימוֹ:

יּוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁחַק אֶלְנִי יִלְעַג-לָמוֹ:
אִזְ יִדְבֹּר אֱלִימוֹ בְּאַפּוֹ וּבִחְרוֹנוֹ יִבְהַלְמוֹ:

וְאֲנִי נִסְכַּתִּי מֶלֶכִּי עַל-צִיּוֹן הַר-קֹדֶשׁ:

אֶסְפָּרָה אֵל חֵק יְהוָה אֶמַר אֵלֵי בְנֵי אֲתָה
אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יִלְדָתִיךָ:

שְׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי וְאֶתֶּנָּה גוֹיִם נַחֲלָתְךָ וְאַחֲזֶתְךָ
אֶפְסֵי-אֶרֶץ:

תִּרְעֵם בַּשֵּׁבֶט בְּרֹזֶל כִּכְלִי יוֹצֵר תִּנְפֹּצֵם:

וְעַתָּה מַלְכִּים הַשְׁכִּילוּ הוֹסְרוּ שִׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ:
עֲבֹדוּ אֶת-יְהוָה בִּירְאָה וְגִילּוֹ בְּרַעְדָּה:
נִשְׁקוּ-בֵּר פֶּן-יֵאָנַף וְתִאבְדּוּ דֶּרֶךְ כִּי-יִבְעַר
כִּמְעֹט אָפוֹ

אֲשֵׁרִי כָל-חוֹסֵי בּוֹ:

Translation

1 Why do the nations gather tumultuously
and the peoples plot in vain.

2 The kings of the earth take their stand and
the rulers establish themselves together
against YHWH and against his anointed.

3 'Let us break their bonds and let us throw
off from ourselves their cords.'

4 He who dwells in the heavens laughs. The
Lord mocks them.

5 Then he will speak to them in his anger
and in his wrath he will terrify them,

6 'I have installed my king on Zion, my
holy mountain.'

7 'I will recount the decree of YHWH. He
said to me, "You are my son. Today I have
begotten you.

8 Ask of me and I shall give the nations as
your inheritance and the ends of the earth as
your possession.

9 You will break them with an iron rod, like
a fashioned vessel you will dash them to
pieces.'"

10 So now, you kings, pay attention!
Be admonished, you judges of the earth!

11 Worship YHWH with fear and rejoice
with trembling!

12 Kiss the son, lest he should become
angry and you should perish in your way!
For his anger can be ignited quickly.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

3.1 Deuteronomic Background to Psalm 2

Clearly, Psalm 2 is best described as a royal psalm.⁴⁵ This automatically raises questions as to the Deuteronomic nature of this joint introduction. The Dtr associations with a torah psalm may seem fairly obvious, but with regard to a royal psalm the association is more difficult? Is the Dtr view of kingship positive or negative? Indeed, is there a single Deuteronomic view of kingship or are the voices of Deut and its associated historical books to be held in tension, presenting the reader with different assessments of kingship?⁴⁶ Obviously, the discussion surrounding Ps 2 could become very involved were one to adopt the establishment of the Deuteronomic view of kingship as our starting point for the discussion. Those who associate the DtrN redaction with the reign of Josiah—as a means of legitimising his reforms—may see the connection between the Deuteronomic themes of Ps 1 and the royal themes of Ps 2 as wholly natural and proper. The Josianic reconstruction, however, for all of its scholarly acceptance, is not without its difficulties.⁴⁷ Whilst the royal psalms are not, perhaps, obviously associated with the theology of Deuteronomy, there is one feature of their presentation of kingship which echoes strongly with the presentation of the ideal king in Deut 17: that is, the idea of the king as one

⁴⁵ Eaton, *Kingship*, 111-3. Whilst the royal setting of Ps 2 is clear, the structure and text are more complex than was the case with Psalm 1. Structurally, it is difficult to ascertain whose voice is speaking throughout the psalm. Whilst there are other reasonable possibilities, I have opted for a structure reflecting the division of the text above. Verses 1-5 are the words of the psalmist (including a statement of the kings and rulers in v 3); verse 6 is a direct declaration of Yahweh; verses 7-9 reflect a statement of the king himself (his own direct speech in v 7a, followed by his repetition of the words of Yahweh's decree on his behalf); finally, verses 10-12 represent the concluding words of the psalmist (see P. C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* [WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1983] 64-5). It could, of course, be the case that the king speaks the whole psalm, recounting the speech of the kings/rulers and Yahweh (see Eaton, *Psalms of the Way*, 111 and *Psalms*, 31-3), however, when the various statements of direct speech are taken to indicate changes in voice/person it seems to add dramatic emphasis to the poem. Ultimately, this question does not effect in any significant way the overall interpretation of the text.

There is, however, one verse where the text is somewhat unclear. Verse 12 has occasioned much debate in the analyses of Psalm 2. Traditionally translated 'Kiss the son', the phrase נִשְׁקוּ-בֶר (son') is problematic because of the switch from the use of the Hebrew בֶּן ('son') in v 7 to the Aramaic בֶּר ('son') here in v 12. The MT suggests a textual error based in dittography regarding the final phrase of v 11 and this first phrase of v 12. The suggestion is that 'Rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son,' (וּגִילוּ בִרְעָדָה: נִשְׁקוּ-בֶר), could in fact read 'With trembling kiss his feet,' (בִּרְעָדָה נִשְׁקוּ בְּרַגְלָיו) the reference therefore being to kissing the feet of Yahweh (see Auffret, *Literary Structure*, 9). This is possible, but perhaps creates as many problems as it solves. This would be an anthropomorphism of an uncommonly radical nature in the OT, which could be interpreted metaphorically, but even this is somewhat unlikely (see Craigie, *Psalms*, 64; A. A. Macintosh, "A Consideration of the Problems Presented by Psalm II.11 and 12," *JTS* XXVII/1 [1976] 13; D. J. A. Clines, "Psalm 2 and the MLF [Moabite Liberation Front]," *The Bible in Human Society: Essays in Honour of John Rogerson* [JSOTSup 200; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995] 165). There are other possible emendations suggested by various commentators ('kiss sincerely', 'kiss the mighty one', 'you who forget the grave'), but each is problematic in its own way. As other suggestions are equally problematic, for translation purposes this thesis retains the traditional 'kiss the son'.

⁴⁶ So Knoppers, "Deuteronomist and Deuteronomic Law of the King."

⁴⁷ Not least of which is the fact that—whilst it is argued below (Chapter 5) that the Kingship Law is not anti-monarchic—Deut 17:14-20 can hardly be described as a ringing endorsement of the monarchy. It is unlikely that this presentation of kingship was the result of a royalist reform programme (see McConville, "King and Messiah," 280; B. M. Levinson, "The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah," *VT* LI/4 [2001] 527 n. 41).

entirely dependent upon Yahweh. We see this particular presentation of kingship in each of the royal psalms juxtaposed alongside the torah psalms. Besides this echo of the Kingship Law's presentation of the ideal king, Ps 2 is associated with a Dtr perspective by its close lexical and conceptual connections with Ps 1, a poem firmly grounded in the theology of Deuteronomy.

3.1.1 King's Dependence upon Yahweh

Much has been made of the fact that the kingship psalms speak of the kingship of Yahweh as much as they do about human kingship.⁴⁸ This fact is used to support the assertion that Book IV is the editorial centre of the Psalter, presenting as pivotal the message of the reign of Yahweh.⁴⁹ Without doubt the message of the reign of Yahweh is central to the Psalms, however, the importance of the role of the king as Yahweh's co-regent should not be diminished as a result of this. The kingship psalms do focus on the universal reign of Yahweh as Creator God, and on the king as one dependent upon him. This presentation of the king, however, was intended to enhance, rather than diminish, the reader's appreciation of him, because dependence upon Yahweh is a characteristic to be cultivated rather than a weakness according to the Dtr worldview.

The king's attitude of dependence upon Yahweh is seen throughout Ps 2. Rebellion is against Yahweh first and then his anointed (v 2); it is Yahweh who has the power and right to mock in response (vv 4-5); Yahweh has installed him as king, he does not rule at his own prerogative (v 6); any power the king has is derived from Yahweh's universal authority (vv 8-9). As Eaton points out, the warning to the nations is grounded in the fact that: 'the all-powerful God, to whom we all owe allegiance, has appointed him as vice-regent and at any moment may drastically vindicate him'.⁵⁰ In the words spoken by the king in vv 7-9, he freely admits that his power is entirely derivative and the concluding formula of v 12 indicates that such an attitude of dependence ('taking refuge in him', אֲשֶׁר־י בּוֹ כִלְיָחוּסִי בּוֹ) results in divine blessing. Creach comments that, 'it seems clear that the Psalter contains a "refuge piety", in which dependence upon Yahweh is the supreme virtue'⁵¹ and this piety finds clear expression in Ps 2 and the other royal psalms assessed in the course of this study. As Durham comments: '[The king's] rule is guaranteed by Yahweh, and its extent and success are under Yahweh's control. This is made clear not only by the prayers and promises of the Davidic king in the royal psalms, and by the oracles in which Yahweh's words are addressed to him, but also by the clear implication

⁴⁸ See, for example, N. L. deClaissé-Walford, "The Canonical Shape of the Psalms," *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms: Festschrift Marvin E. Tate* (eds. H. W. Ballard and W. D. Tucker; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000) 101-2, and McCann, *Psalms*, 668-9.

⁴⁹ Wilson, *Editing*, 214-5.

⁵⁰ Eaton, *Psalms*, 31.

⁵¹ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 48.

throughout these poems of the king's complete dependence on Yahweh'.⁵²

This attitude of dependence upon Yahweh is central to the Dtr worldview and is seen as a commendable attribute.⁵³ The fact that Ps 2 characterises the king in this way places the theological presentation of the monarch firmly within the terms of the Kingship Law, which limits the power of the king in order to ensure that his trust is placed entirely in Yahweh rather than in the trappings of kingship.⁵⁴ There are other indications of Dtr influence in Ps 2 (e.g. the torah motif of v 7 and the idea of the 'two ways'), however, these shall be dealt with in the following section on the association of Pss 1 and 2.

3.1.2 Psalm 2's Association with Psalm 1

As has been argued above, Ps 1 rehearses many classically Deuteronomistic themes in its presentation of the 'blessed person' and the 'two ways'. Some of these are echoed in the second psalm by way of lexical and thematic connection between these two compositions.⁵⁵ These juxtaposed psalms are deliberately linked to form a dual introduction to the Psalter. These links exist on lexical, thematic and perhaps even structural levels⁵⁶ (which are examined below), however, there are also good arguments to be drawn from older traditions which associate these psalms.

1. Older Traditions and the Association of Pss 1 and 2

Several traditional sources link Pss 1 and 2:

i. Neither of Pss 1 and 2 contains a superscription, which is unusual in the context of Book I of the Psalter where almost all of the psalms are headed by Davidic superscriptions.⁵⁷ Indeed, Barth comments that 'the ancient Greek translation... provided all the psalms—with the exception of Pss 1 and 2—with headings', which tends to indicate that there was an early tradition treating these psalms as a paired introduction to the Psalter, something slightly separate from the rest of the Psalter.⁵⁸

⁵² Durham, "King as Messiah," 428.

⁵³ G. E. Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History* (SBLDS 87; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 89; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 272; Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148.

⁵⁴ See the detailed discussion of the Kingship Law in Chapter 5.

⁵⁵ This connection between Pss 1 and 2 has been widely discussed by most scholars working on the questions of the canonical shaping of the Psalter. See, for example, Auffret, *Literary Structure*, 31-4; Miller, *Interpreting*, 81-91; Mays, *Psalms*, 44; McCann, *Psalms*, 664-5 and Howard, *Structure*, 202-5, to name but a few.

⁵⁶ This argument is made by Auffret in *Literary Structure*, 32. However, I am not convinced that his analysis of the structure of Ps 1 is correct, therefore I do not rely on this as evidence of linkage between Pss 1 and 2.

⁵⁷ Wilson argues with regard to the two other psalms in Book I which are without superscription (i.e. Pss 10 and 33) that their designation is to be derived from their association with the preceding psalms which do contain superscriptions (*Editing*, 173-6).

⁵⁸ C. F. Barth, *Introduction to the Psalms* (trans. R. A. Wilson; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966) 6. See also, Mitchell, *Message*, 73-4. For further discussion of Pss 1-2's function as an introduction to the Psalter and their association with Book I and the whole Book of Psalms, see Chapter 6 below.

- ii. The Western text of Acts 13:33 in referring to Ps 2:7-8, writes ‘as it is written in the first psalm’ (ἐν τῷ ψαλμῷ... τῷ πρώτῳ). It would be presumptuous to draw definitive conclusions from this variant reading, but it could possibly indicate that Pss 1 and 2 were read together at the time of the writing of this text.⁵⁹
- iii. The Talmud describes Pss 1 and 2 as forming ‘one lesson or division’.⁶⁰

These traditions appear to point to the association of Pss 1 and 2 from the early days of Jewish and Christian exegesis of the Psalter. However, perhaps even more convincing is the lexical association between Pss 1 and 2.

2. Lexical Association of Pss 1 and 2

- i. *The אֲשֶׁר־ Inklusio (Ps 1:1 cf. 2:12).* Psalm 1 begins with a description of the ‘happy person’ (אֲשֶׁר־הַאֲשֵׁר) and Ps 2 ends with a similar benediction upon all those who take refuge in the Lord (אֲשֶׁר־כָּל־חֹסֵי בּוֹ). The occurrence of this word in juxtaposed psalms could conceivably be coincidental,⁶¹ however, the positioning of these words at the very beginning of the first psalm and the very end of the second makes this unlikely. It seems more probable that the repetition of אֲשֶׁר־ is a deliberate literary device conjoining the two psalms.⁶²
- ii. *The Contrasting Functions of הִלָּל.* The verb הִלָּל figures prominently in both Psalms 1 and 2. In Ps 1:2 the righteous person is exhorted to ‘meditate’ (הִלָּל) upon the torah day and night, which stands in contrast to the attitude of the nations and their leaders who ‘plot’ (יִהְיוּ, Ps 2:1) against Yahweh and his anointed. The repetition of this verb serves to contrast the attitudes of the personae which represent opposing worldviews in these two psalms.⁶³ According to B-D-B the word הִלָּל can have both positive and negative overtones based around the idea of making a noise—one is either ‘murmuring’ in recitative meditation (upon the torah in the case of Ps 1:2)⁶⁴ or one could be ‘plotting’ under one’s breath (as is the case in Ps 2:1).⁶⁵ We see these two possibilities reflected in the

⁵⁹ J. W. Watts, “Psalm 2 in the Context of Biblical Theology,” *HBT* 12 (1990) 74. It could, of course, also indicate that Ps 1 had not yet been added to the beginning of the Psalter, but this seems less likely as the evidence from the LXX indicates that the ordering of the Psalms was fairly firmly established by the time of the translation of the Greek OT (see Mitchell, *Message*, 82-3).

⁶⁰ *Berakoth* 9b-10a. See also the discussion found in Watts, “Psalm 2,” 74, and Mitchell, *Message*, 74.

⁶¹ אֲשֶׁר־ does appear to function as a type of key-word which appears in juxtaposed psalms or a few times in the same psalm (e.g. 32:1, 2; 33:12; 34:9, or 40:3, 5; 41:2, or 84:5, 6, 13, or 127:5; 128:1), however (as Miller points out) nowhere else does it have this inclusio function marking the beginning of one psalm and the end of the next.

⁶² Miller, “Beginning,” 84.

⁶³ A parallel drawn between the ‘blessed person’ in Psalm 1 and the ‘king-all who take refuge in Yahweh’ in Psalm 2, as those who receive God’s blessing. Equally, there is a parallel between the אֲשֶׁר־ of Psalm 1 and the גִּוִּים (and especially their leaders) of Psalm 2, as those whose way is perishing. This parallel in itself must have been a strong challenge to its original hearers, as those among the ranks of God’s chosen people who chose not to live by the torah are placed on a par with the pagan nations.

⁶⁴ Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 37-9.

⁶⁵ Brown-Driver-Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997)

contrasting figures in these juxtaposed psalms. When viewed in the light of all the other lexical links between these poems, this connection seems to be the result of design rather than accident.⁶⁶

iii. *The 777 Motif.* Central to both psalms is the idea of ‘the way’ (דָּרֶךְ) which one takes (Ps 1:1, 6 and 2:12). The idea of the ‘two ways’ is explicit in Ps 1, but it is also, more tacitly, present throughout Ps 2 until its explicit mention in v 12. Rebellion against Yahweh is clearly representative of ‘the other way’, the rebellion of the kings and rulers of the peoples is parallel to the ‘way of the wicked’ in Psalm 1. This point is made clear in v 12 where the option of rebellion is warned against lest ‘you should perish on the way’ (וּתֵאָבֵד דָּרֶךְ). The combination of דָּרֶךְ and אֲבָד makes this parallel with Ps 1:6 all the more clear—just as the wicked are following a way of destruction, so also are the nations and their leaders who rebel against Yahweh and his ‘anointed one’.⁶⁷

iv. *The Dwelling Motif.* ‘Dwelling’ or ‘sitting’ (יָשָׁב) is another linguistic parallel between the two psalms. Psalm 1:1 tells the reader that the blessed person does not ‘sit’ (יָשָׁב) in the ‘seat’ (מוֹשָׁב, probably meaning ‘place in an assembly’⁶⁸) of mockers. The converse implication is, obviously, that the רָשָׁעִים do sit in this seat. This is contrasted with the image found in Ps 2:4 that ‘he who dwells in heaven laughs’ (יֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁחָק) at the vanity of the rebellion of the kings and rulers. These contrasting images again seem to reflect deliberate connection between Pss 1 and 2—the רָשָׁעִים may sit in their assembly and mock, but really all rebellion is in vain and it is Yahweh who has the last laugh.⁶⁹

v. *The Torah Motif.* There is also a link between the centrality of torah in Psalm 1 and the centrality of the king’s declaration that he will ‘recount the decree of Yahweh’ (אֶסְפָּרָה אֵל) (חֹק יְהוָה) in Psalm 2:7. Commonly, in the Psalms and Deuteronomy, these two words (חֹק and תּוֹרָה) are used interchangeably as synonyms or are used in conjunction.⁷⁰ Torah is clearly central to the meaning of Ps 1, and although חֹק is only found in this one phrase in Ps 2, it may be that the function of v 7a is significant in establishing the attitude of the king in this royal psalm. First, structurally, this phrase is central to the psalm. Thirteen cola precede this phrase and thirteen cola follow it.⁷¹ Secondly, if my description of the voices in Ps 2 is correct, this is the only autonomous statement of the ‘king-son-anointed one’.⁷² Verse 7a is the only phrase where the king speaks for himself not repeating the words of

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⁶⁶ See Howard, *Structure*, 202-5; Mitchell, *Message*, 74f; McCann, *Theological Introduction*, 48; and Auffret, *Literary Structure*, 33.

⁶⁷ Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 132-3; Mitchell, *Message*, 73-4; and Auffret, *Literary Structure*, 34.

⁶⁸ A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* (Cambridge: CUP, 1910) 2-3.

⁶⁹ Auffret, *Literary Structure*, 34.

⁷⁰ Ps 119 is an example where we see this interplay between תּוֹרָה and חֹק apparently as synonyms. Deuteronomy 17:19, part of the kingship law, provides a similar example where the two words appear to function as synonyms.

⁷¹ It is interesting that the central section of Ps 18 also focuses on the role of the torah in the life of the king (see Chapter 3, below).

⁷² See above, pp 45-46 n. 45.

Yahweh and his statement declares allegiance to Yahweh in keeping his decree. Thirdly, it is possible that the הַקִּיּוֹה of Ps 2:7, in fact, refers to Deuteronomy or a pre-canonical version of the book.⁷³ This idea will receive more detailed attention in the study of the Kingship Law in Chapter 5. However, Deut 17:18 tells the king to ‘write a copy of this law into a book’ (וּכְתַב לוֹ אֶת־מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת עַל־סֵפֶר) in order (by implication) to guide him in the task of kingship. The interesting factor in this instruction to the king is its temporal frame: the king is to write this out this copy of the law for himself ‘when he sits upon the throne of his kingdom’ (וְהָיָה כִשְׁבָתוֹ עַל כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ). It is possible that Psalm 2 was originally connected with a coronation ceremony⁷⁴ and that this declaration that the king will ‘declare the decree of Yahweh’ is a reference to his adoption of ‘book of the torah’ as commanded in the Kingship Law.⁷⁵ If this is the case then, once again, we see a strong association with Deuteronomy and especially the Kingship Law.⁷⁶

3. Thematic Association of Psalms 1 and 2

As well as these lexical connections, Psalms 1 and 2 share a central theme: the idea of the two ways. This theme is seen in the imagery of contrast worldviews which is common to both psalms. On the one hand, we find images of stability and fruitfulness typifying the righteous in both psalms, and, on the other hand, there are images of vanity and temporality which typify the wicked in each psalm.

<i>Imagery of the Righteous</i>	<i>Imagery of the Wicked</i>
1:3a A tree: stable, permanent (כַּעֲץ)	1:4b Chaff: Passing and temporal (כַּמֶּץ)
1:3b Fruitful (יֵתֵן פֵּרוֹי)	1:4b Useless, blown away (תִּדְפֶּנוּ רוּחַ)
1:3c Successful (יִצְלִיחַ)	2:1 Activity in vain (יִהְיוּ־רִיק)
2:6 Set, installed (נִסָּךְ)	1:5 Will not stand/be established (לֹא־יִקְמוּ)
2:7b-9 Ruling (various images)	2:1-3 Ruled over (various images, 2:10-12)
2:12 Having a refuge (חֹסֶה, 1:6)	2:12 Way is perishing (תֵּאבְדוּ דֶרֶךְ, 1:6)

This thematic link which makes use of a common imagery—concerning the success and permanence of the righteous contrasted with the fruitless and fleeting activity of the wicked—adds to the impression that these two poems are connected. Auffret puts it thus:

⁷³ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 79-80.

⁷⁴ Brownlee, “Psalms 1 - 2”; Crim, *The Royal Psalms*, 62-3; deClaissé-Walford, “Canonical Shape,” 101-2.

⁷⁵ Brownlee, “Psalms 1 - 2,” 332-3.

⁷⁶ It is also possible, however, that the content of the decree of Yahweh is merely the declaration of sonship that follows in vv 7-9 of Psalm 2 (see, for example, deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 45). There is little OT material dealing with the practice of coronation to guide us regarding this question. However, in his consideration of the document received by Joash (2 Kgs 11:12), Gerbrandt suggests that this document contains both of the these elements: ‘At a king’s coronation he was formally granted the document which both confirmed that Yahweh had chosen him to continue the Davidic dynasty, and confirmed his responsibility to obey the law, and as the leader of Israel, to lead the people in obedience,’ (*Kingship*, 185).

The relationship of the two psalms thus appears to be closer than simple recurrences of vocabulary or allusions to themes would permit one to imagine. The righteous and the anointed one experience very similar trials and opposition, but the covenant of God is promised to them, and therewith success and prosperity, as contrasted with their adversaries who, if they persist in their opposition, can only run headlong to destruction.⁷⁷

It seems that the close affinity of these psalms goes beyond the realms of reasonable coincidence, but, rather, reflects a deliberate attempt to link these poetic works. Indeed, such is the degree of overlap between Pss 1 and 2 that there have been suggestions that at some point they were in fact a single composition.⁷⁸ However, the style and genre are too diverse for this to be the case.⁷⁹ The best conclusion seems to be that these psalms were deliberately placed alongside one another because of their lexical, thematic and theological similarity as the dual introduction to the Psalter.⁸⁰ The question remains, why so? Why is the reader being encouraged to put on these particular ‘hermeneutical spectacles’? It is to this question that we now turn our attention.

4. Theological Significance of a Dtr Introduction to the Psalter

One of Whybray’s criticisms of the approach of the canonical school to the study of the Psalter is that most of the scholars are agreed that Pss 1 and 2 form a joint introduction to the Psalter but that none of them suggest what this is meant to communicate.⁸¹ Whilst this criticism is not strictly true⁸², there is scope for more discussion of the significance of this introduction to the Psalms and its implications for the reader’s understanding of the Psalms as a book.

4.1 Deuteronomic Worldview

The placement of Psalms 1 and 2 at the head of the Psalter points towards a particular agenda, which the reader is to look out for in reading the book: that is, a Deuteronomic worldview. The voice of Deuteronomy speaks clearly in Pss 1 and 2, resulting in the presentation of a holistic worldview which is reflective of certain Deuteronomic concerns:

1. The individual’s devotion to Yahweh;
2. The centrality of torah in the life of the OT believer (and the Psalms as torah);
3. The rule and reign of Yahweh over the whole of creation;
4. The king, as Yahweh’s co-regent, is completely reliant upon him;
5. The idea of choice between ‘two ways’ to follow God or to rebel.

⁷⁷ Auffret, *Literary Structure*, 31-4.

⁷⁸ Brownlee, “Psalms 1 - 2,” 321-5.

⁷⁹ J. T. Willis, “Psalm 1 — An Entity,” *ZAW* 91/3 (1979) 381-401.

⁸⁰ It is unclear whether this phenomenon arose from the placement of two similar, pre-existing psalms alongside one another or if, for example, Psalm 1 was specifically written in order to complement Psalm 2 in introduction to the Psalms (see Mitchell, *Message*, 73-4, and Nogalski, “From Psalm to Psalms,” 53-4).

⁸¹ Whybray, *Psalms as a Book*, 41.

⁸² See Miller, “Beginning,” 85, and *Interpreting*, 86. Also Mays, *Psalms*, 40-1 and McCann, *Theological Introduction*, 41.

These themes present a Deuteronomic agenda (perhaps more specifically a DtrN agenda), thus providing a context for the reader, as she approaches the variegated content of the Psalms. Not that the voice of Deuteronomy excludes all others: by no means would this be the case.⁸³ However, the introduction is a constant call to return to the fundamentals of the Hebrew faith, as presented in the Book of Deuteronomy. Therefore, the laments (individual or corporate) are real and reflect the trials of life, yet the introduction puts that cry of pain in context—Yahweh, the covenant God, still reigns. Or the confusion of the pious as they witness the prosperity of the wicked (e.g. Ps 73) is read through the paradigm of the two ways (as presented in this Dtr introduction). Thus the reader is reminded of the temporality of the way of the wicked, and the blessing of Yahweh upon those who follow his way. Quite simply, this Deuteronomic introduction to the Psalter provides a consistent backdrop to the many voices found in the Psalms—the voice of the royalist, the scribe, the cultic priest are all allowed to speak freely, yet at the same time kingship and wisdom and the cult are to be understood from a Deuteronomic perspective.⁸⁴ As such this type of introduction does not limit the reader's engagement with the text of the Psalms, but rather encourages holistic engagement with every aspect of the piety and theology of the Psalter. Therefore, the reader of the Psalms, like the reader of Deuteronomy is to live out 'the fear of the Lord' in every aspect of his life.⁸⁵

4.2 Kingship Law and the Psalms

The eschatological rereading of the royal psalms (discussed above) plays an important role in understanding the function of Pss 1 and 2 as an introduction to the Book of Psalms. This is particularly so because of the inclusion of Ps 2 as part of this introduction. If, as is broadly assumed, this introduction was added in the post-exilic period, why should a royal psalm be included? Why include a psalm which celebrates the victories and international rule of the Davidic king at a time when this king is no more? What is more, why is it placed in such a prominent position?

As suggested above, the simplest answer to this question is that Ps 2 was included as part of a Deuteronomic agenda of future hope in a restored kingdom where Yahweh's reign is represented once more by the co-regency of his kingly messiah on earth.⁸⁶ However, this eschatological rereading should be understood not so much in the terms of the history of

⁸³ As is seen in the Wisdom content also apparent in Pss 1 and 2 (see G. T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in Sapientializing of the Old Testament* [BZAW 151; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980] 139-44).

⁸⁴ It must be added that this Deuteronomic voice cannot be equated with simple legalism (as some of the scholars working in the Psalms seem to imply). Rather, this refers to a whole life engagement in the ways of Yahweh. It refers to a holistic application of the *torah* in a way that effects every area of the believers being.

⁸⁵ Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 15, *passim*.

⁸⁶ Mitchell, *Message*, 85-6; Childs, *IOTS*, 516-7; Howard, *Structure*, 302-5 and Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 96-8.

Israel, but more in terms of the ideal of the Deuteronomic Kingship Law (Deut 17:14-20). This is not a longing after Josiah or Hezekiah or even the great king David. Rather, the introduction to the Psalter presents an eschatological hope for a new leader who would be the fulfillment of the Law of the King. The introduction acknowledges the voice of royal hope which seems to play a prominent role in the editorial placement of the psalms,⁸⁷ but it puts a particular slant on the understanding of the psalmic presentation of kingship. Pss 1 and 2 do not reflect some form of reconstituted hope based in the historical kings of the past, rather this is a hope based in the Kingship Law as the ‘ideal’ of monarchic rule.

The parallels are easily spotted: Ps 1 celebrates the torah of Yahweh and Ps 2 the reign of Yahweh and the co-reign of his anointed king. The only task assigned the king in Deut 17 is that he should ‘write out for himself on a scroll a copy of this law’ (v 18). That scroll is ‘to be with him and he is to read it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to revere Yahweh his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and the decrees... and he is not to turn from it to the left or to the right’ (vv. 19-20). Deut 17 presents a picture of kingship which cannot be separated from a life of devotion to Yahweh through the study and keeping of his torah: Ps 1 presents a picture of exactly this type of torah-piety.⁸⁸ Ps 2 represents an eschatological hope for the restoration of Yahweh’s king, but he is a king who is entirely dependent upon God rather than the trappings of kingship, as is the instruction of Deut 17:16-17. Furthermore he is to be an exemplar of the piety represented by Ps 1, as is indicated by the close lexical links between the two psalms, in much the same way as Deut 17 presents Israel’s king as an example of true devotion to Yahweh. This is seen in the thematic links between Ps 1 and Deut 17:

Psalm 1	Deut 17
בתורת יהוה חפצו	וכתב לו את־מישנה התורה הזאת
בתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה	וקרא בו כל־ימי חייו

Obviously, these connections are not exact, lexically speaking, but the emphasis is essentially the same; i.e. a torah-based piety in following the ways of Yahweh.⁸⁹ The connection of Pss 1 and 2 and the Dtr Law of the King raises a number of hermeneutical points worthy of discussion. Miller raises some of these hermeneutical issues:

At this point, therefore, one recognizes a major link between Psalms 1 and 2 and that is provided by Deuteronomy in its latest editorial stages... In the Deuteronomic ideal of human rule, the ‘îš or ‘one’ whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on it continually, is the king. The ideal ruler is thus the model Israelite.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Wilson, *Editing*, 208-14; Wilson, “Use of Royal Psalms.”

⁸⁸ Mays, “Place of the Torah-Psalms,” 4.

⁸⁹ Obviously, the association between the torah-kingship psalm groupings and the Kingship Law requires more detailed discussion than can be offered at this stage. These connections are merely being mentioned here, but will be developed in more detail in Chapter 5.

⁹⁰ Miller, “Beginning,” 91.

We shall discuss the democratising principles at work in Deuteronomy and the torah-kingship psalms at a later point,⁹¹ however, the important point for now is Miller's suggestion that the Deuteronomic paradigm for kingship is the conceptual paradigm behind this introduction to the Book of Psalms. Furthermore, Howard writes:

YHWH's anointed king in Psalm 2 functions as the *ideal exemplar* of a divinely appointed king; he exemplifies in his own person the qualities of the righteous one in Psalm 1. The focus on study of the Torah links Psalm 1 back to the Charter for Kingship in Deut 17:14-20, where the ideal king is instructed to make the study of Torah his all-consuming concern, leaving military and other concerns to YHWH.⁹²

Mays has made similar observations:

An important connection between the introductory Psalm 1 and the psalms on the Davidic kingship should be noted. *The anointed king is portrayed as one who conforms to the instruction given at the book's beginning.* The law of the LORD is the norm by which Davidic kings are to be judged (89:30-33). The king loves righteousness and hates wickedness (45:7). He keeps the ways of the LORD whose ordinances are always before him (18:20-22). When other psalms attributed to David are brought into consideration, like Psalms 15 and 19, the psalmic David appears as teacher and advocate of torah. In the Psalter as a whole, the messiah is one who keeps and teaches the torah and combines in his identity and role the two emphases of the twofold introduction to the Psalter.⁹³

There is, therefore, a two-fold purpose in this dual introduction to the Psalms based in the Deuteronomic law of the king. First, to encourage the readers to adopt a Dtr worldview, especially a piety that is rooted in the torah of the Lord. Just as the king was to be commanded to keep the law, so every individual (שִׂיחַ) is to be commended for doing so, for emulating the example that the king was supposed to set. Secondly, these psalms reflect an eschatological hope in a coming messiah who will be the one who meets the Deuteronomic ideal of kingship. Mitchell has expressed the latter point in this way:

There is good ground, as was noted above, for regarding Psalm 2, together with Psalm 1, as functioning as an introduction to the Psalter. As such, it sets the tone and determines the interpretation of what is to follow... The combined effect of Psalms 1 and 2 together may be that Psalm 1 foretells the triumph of the righteous divine king who meditates on YHWH's Torah, and Psalm 2 shows him going forth to battle with its predicted outcome. Or Psalm 1 delineates the person who will share in the king's triumph, possibly as a warrior, and Psalm 2 pronounces that one's blessedness. The two psalms together announce that the ensuing collection is a handbook for the eschatological wars of the Lord, describing the coming events and the YHWH-allegiance required of those who would triumph.⁹⁴

Mitchell highlights the eschatological elements present in Pss 1 and 2, and that is an important part of the interpretative model being set up by the introduction. However, we must not forget that the practical reality of the Psalms, which were just as much a handbook of individual and corporate piety at the time of their closure into a final book form, as they are in Jewish and Christian communities today. The צדִיקִים of the Old

⁹¹ See Chapter 7, below.

⁹² Howard, *Structure*, 201.

⁹³ Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 125.

⁹⁴ Mitchell, *Message*, 87.

Testament were not simply to wait for the coming of a *truly* ideal king, but they were also to follow that example of piety which was the basis for the ideal of kingship.

5. Conclusion

The dual introduction to the Book of Psalms is steeped in concepts borrowed from Deuteronomic theology. More specifically the juxtaposition of a torah psalm with a royal psalm in this introduction seems to direct the reader towards the Deuteronomic Law of the King found in Deut 17:14-20.⁹⁵ 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.

Returning to Miller's rhetorical question, asked in the introduction to this thesis,⁹⁶ it seems that Pss 1 and 2 do, indeed, point the reader towards Deuteronomy's theology of kingship, but are they alone in doing so? Our initial, superficial reading of the Psalms suggested that Pss 18-21 reflect a similar torah-kingship focus: now we must see whether this impression bears up to closer scrutiny, as we turn to the exegetical study of these psalms.

⁹⁵ This passage also needs to be considered in its own context, which will follow the analysis of the remain torah-kingship psalm groupings.

⁹⁶ See above, p 4.

Chapter 3

Torah-Kingship Theme in Psalms 18-21

1. Introduction

Following on from the examination of the Deuteronomic themes present in Psalms 1 and 2 as an introduction to the Psalter, we now turn to the next group of psalms where the themes of kingship and torah dominate: Psalms 18-21. This psalm grouping forms the central section of a larger pre-existing collection of psalms (Pss 15-24) which has, at some later date, been incorporated into Book I of the Psalter. Psalms 18, 20 and 21 are all royal psalms and Psalm 19 is, of course, one of the Psalter's three torah psalms which celebrate Yahweh's revelation. This juxtaposition of kingship and torah psalms, at least on a superficial level, appears to echo the introductory themes of Pss 1 and 2, which (as was discussed in the previous chapter) reflect a Deuteronomic agenda in the redaction of the final form of the Psalter. This Dtr agenda apparent in Pss 1 and 2 seems, in particular, to resonate with the theology and priorities of the Kingship Law, which gives rise to a question: 'Could it be that the next group of psalms which focus on these dual themes of kingship and torah also reflect this same editorial concern?' In seeking to answer this question, the exegetical study of Pss 18-21 will follow the same approach as did the examination of Pss 1-2; namely, 1) to see if a general Deuteronomic milieu is present in the content of these psalms, and 2) if so, to analyse any possible overlap with the Kingship Law of Deut 17:14-20.¹

2. Choice of Psalms 18-21

The first question to be addressed, however, is the choice of psalms in this psalm grouping. Why should these four psalms be singled out for analysis? Commentators have pointed out a kingship-torah link between Psalms 18 and 19,² but why should Psalms 20 and 21 be included in this discussion? It is important that the current study does not import external paradigms and impose these upon the text of the Psalter. If this theory is to be established, the voice of the Psalms must be allowed to speak for itself. Therefore, we must begin our discussion with a reminder of the rationale behind the choice of this psalm grouping.

The selection of texts for examination is entirely dependent upon the goal of our study. In the Kingship Law of Deut 17:14-20 the king is presented as one who is devoted to the study and application of the torah of Yahweh—king and torah bound together. There is, at

¹ As was the case in the previous chapter, comparison with the Law of the King will be at the level of observation at this stage. Detailed examination of the actual overlap with Deut 17:14-20 will be made in Chapter 5, where this passage is examined in detail in its proper context within the book of Deuteronomy. It should also be pointed out that the discussion of the significance of the placement of these psalms groupings within the canonical Psalter will also be held over for discussion in Chapter 6.

² For example, Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 256-7.

least, *prima facie* evidence of deliberate juxtaposition of kingship and torah themes within the Psalter, and the goal of this study is the detailed, exegetical examination of these texts in an attempt to ascertain whether or not there is sufficient lexical and thematic evidence to indicate that deliberate concatenation of these psalms—following the Kingship Law as an intellectual construct—was likely. The theme of kingship is a broad one within the Psalter: royal psalms seem to dominate the first three books of the canonical Book of Psalms, and this possible link with the Dtr Law of the King is merely one aspect of a broader theology of kingship apparent in the Psalter. Therefore, it is the smaller category of torah psalms which dictates the choice of material for examination. Whilst there are fourteen psalms within the canonical Psalter which contain some element of torah-theology,³ there are only three psalms which are centred upon Yahweh’s torah—namely, Pss 1, 19 and 119. Thus, if we are to expect deliberate editorial juxtaposition of kingship-torah themes, we should expect it around these three psalms. Hence our discussion is drawn towards Psalm 19.

However, the question remains why these four psalms as a grouping, rather than simply the analysis of Psalms 18 and 19?⁴ To answer this question, we have to look at Psalms 18-21 within their broader context as part of Book I of the Psalter. Pierre Auffret and Patrick Miller have pointed out that Psalms 18-21 form the focal point of a collection of psalms which are arranged in a chiastic or envelope pattern.⁵ They suggest that Pss 15-24, in fact, represent an independent collection of psalms which was later included within Book I, and point out an interesting pattern of parallels in content between these psalms. Psalms 15 and 24 are both Entrance Psalms, which discuss issues of righteousness and entrance into God’s presence in worship—these two psalms demarcate the beginning and end of this psalm grouping. Psalms 16 and 23 are both psalms of comfort, which celebrate Yahweh’s protection in the face of danger. Psalms 17 and 22 are both psalms of lament, which express the depths of despair and anxiety felt by the psalmist. This brings us to the grouping of psalms which is to come under examination: Psalms 18 and 20-21 (many commentators highlight the close association which exists between Psalms 20 and 21⁶) are

³ Mays, “Place of the Torah-Psalms,” 12. Interestingly, this list includes another of the psalms in the grouping under consideration—Psalm 18—and we shall see that the torah theme is central to the proper understanding of the theology of this psalm too.

⁴ Claus Westermann was considerably ahead of his time in promoting the discussion of the placement of of the psalms within the Psalter at a time when this was not a popular endeavour. Westermann rejected the common notion that there was no significance in the placement of the psalms and included a chapter on “The Formation of the Psalter” in his work *Praise and Lament*. In this chapter Westermann suggests the deliberate juxtaposition of Pss 18 and 19 based on form-critical (*Gattungen*) considerations (*Praise and Lament*, 256 n. 18, 257). However, it appears that there may be broader organisational factors at work with regard to these psalms in the context of a pre-existent, chiastically-arranged, collection of psalms which would justify the expansion of our examination beyond that indicated by genre considerations alone (see Chapter 6 below, *The Editorial Placement of the Torah-Kingship Psalm Groupings*, for more detailed discussion concerning the formation of the Psalter).

⁵ Auffret, *La Sagesse*, 407-38; Miller, “Kingship,” 127-42.

⁶ See, for example, Mays, *Psalms*, 90; McCann, *Psalms*, 757; Kraus, *Psalms*, 281. Older commentaries mentaries have also drawn attention to the links between these two psalms, e.g. Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 106.

all royal psalms, what is more they all appear to be kingship psalms connected with Yahweh's deliverance of his 'anointed one' in the context of battle.⁷ Psalm 19 is the central psalm in this chiastic pattern, a torah psalm, and both Auffret and Miller suggest that this indicates the thematic centrality of the torah of Yahweh within this small collection.⁸ Therefore, it seems appropriate that we should examine all four of these psalms (18-21) in order to see how they interact with one another and also to see if they do reflect themes which draw upon Deuteronomy's Kingship Law. As well as consideration of the interaction between these four psalms, comparison will be made with the content and message of Pss 1-2. If the juxtaposition of kingship and torah psalms is the result of editorial activity, then similarities of emphasis should be apparent between these groups of psalms, therefore the content of each group will be compared with the others.

⁷ Exegetical examination will show that there are several lexical and thematic links between these psalms which go some way to support Auffret and Miller's suggestion of deliberate concatenation.

⁸ Auffret, *La Sagesse*, 407-38; Miller, "Kingship," 127.

3. Analysis of Psalm 18

BHS

לְמַנְצִיחַ לְעֶבֶד יְהוָה לְדָוִד אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לַיהוָה
אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בְּיוֹם הַצִּיל־יְהוָה
אוֹתוֹ מִכָּף כָּל־אֹיְבָיו וּמִיַּד שָׂאוּל:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶרְחֻמָּהּ יְהוָה חֲזָקִי:
יְהוָה סִלְעִי וּמִצְוֹדָתִי וּמִפְּלִטִי אֱלֹהֵי צוּרִי
אֲחֻסָּה־בּוֹ מִגְּנִי וּקְרֹן־יִשְׁעֵי מִשְׁגָּבִי:

מִהָלָל אֶקְרָא יְהוָה וּמִן־אֹיְבֵי אֲנִישֶׁע:
אֶפְפוּנִי חֲבָלֵי־מָוֶת וְנַחֲלִי בְלִיעַל יִבְעֲתוּנִי:
חֲבָלֵי שָׂאוּל סָבְבוּנִי קִדְמוּנִי מוֹקְשֵׁי מָוֶת:
בַּצֹּר־לִי אֶקְרָא יְהוָה וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֵי אֲשׁוּעַ
יִשְׁמַע מִהִיכָלוֹ קוֹלִי וְשׁוֹעֲתִי לְפָנָיו תָּבוֹא
בְּאָזְנוֹ:

וַתִּגַּעַשׁ וַתִּרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ וּמוֹסְדֵי הָרִים יִרְגָּזוּ
וַיִּתְגַּעְשׂוּ כִּי־תָרָה לוֹ:
עָלָה עָשָׁן בָּאָפוֹ וְאֵשׁ־מִפִּיו תֹּאכַל גִּחְלִים
בָּעֵרוֹ מִמָּנוֹ:
וַיֵּט שָׁמַיִם וַיִּירֹד וַעֲרָפֶל תַּחַת רַגְלָיו:
וַיִּרְכַּב עַל־כְּרוּב וַיַּעֲף וַיֵּדָא עַל־כְּנָפֵי־רוּחַ:
יָשַׁת חֲשָׁף סִתְרוֹ סָבִיבוֹתָיו סָכָתוֹ
חֲשֹׁכֶת־מַיִם עָבִי שְׁחָקִים:
מִנְגֵּה נִגְדּוֹ עָבְיוּ עָבְרוּ בָרָד וּגִחְלֵי־אֵשׁ:
וַיִּרְעַם בַּשָּׁמַיִם יְהוָה וַעֲלִיּוֹן יִתֵּן קֹלוֹ בָּרָד
וּגִחְלֵי־אֵשׁ:
וַיִּשְׁלַח חֲצָיו וַיְפִיצֵם וּבָרָקִים רַב וַיִּהְיֶם:
וַיֵּרְאוּ אֲפִיקֵי מַיִם וַיִּגְלוּ מוֹסְדוֹת תִּבְלִי
מִגַּעְרָתָהּ יְהוָה מִנִּשְׁמַת רוּחַ אָפָה:
יִשְׁלַח מִמָּרוֹם יִקְחֵנִי יִמְשְׁנֵנִי מִמַּיִם רַבִּים:
יִצִּילֵנִי מֵאֹיְבֵי עֲזֹ וּמִשִּׁנְאֵי כִי־אֲמָצוּ מִמֶּנִּי:

Translation

1 To the director of music. Of David, the servant of Yahweh, who spoke the words of this song to Yahweh on the day of Yahweh's deliverance of him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.
2 He said, I love you, O Yahweh, my strength.
3 Yahweh is my rock, my stronghold and my refuge;
My God is my rock, I take refuge in him;
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my refuge.

4 I called out to Yahweh, being worthy of praise; Then from my enemies, I was saved.
5 The cords of death encompassed me;
And the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.
6 The cords of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me.
7 In my straits, I called to Yahweh and to my God I cried out for help;
He heard my voice from his temple, my cry for help before him came to his ears

8 The earth shook and quaked and the foundations of the hills trembled;
They trembled because he himself was angry.
9 Smoke rose from his nostril and fire from his mouth consumed; Burning coals blazed from him.
10 He parted the skies and came down;
And a cloud was under his feet.
11 He mounted the cherubim and flew;
And he flew swiftly upon the wings of the wind.
12 He set darkness as his covering all around him; dark rain clouds.
13 From the brightness of his presence cloud, hail and burning coals of fire pass through.
14 And Yahweh thunders from the heavens and the Most High gives forth his voice;
Hail and coals of fire!
15 He sends his arrows and he causes them to scatter; and many lightening bolts confuse them.
16 And channels of water appeared and the foundations of the earth were revealed;
At your rebuke, O Yahweh, at the blast of the breath of your nostril.
17 He reached out from on high and he took [hold of] me;
He drew me out from the great waters.

יִקְדְּמוּנִי בְיוֹם-אִי־דִי וַיְהִי-יְהוָה לְמִשְׁעָן לִי:
וַיּוֹצִיאֵנִי לְמַרְחָב יַחֲלִצֵנִי כִּי חָפֵץ בִּי:

יִגְמְלֵנִי יְהוָה כְּצִדְקִי כְּבָר יְדִי יִשְׁיב לִי:
כִּי-שָׁמַרְתִּי דִרְכֵי יְהוָה וְלֹא-רָשַׁעְתִּי
מֵאֱלֹהִי:
כִּי כָל-מִשְׁפָּטָיו לִנְגִדִי וְחֻקְתָּיו לֹא-אָסִיר
מִנִּי:
וְאֵהִי תָמִים עִמּוֹ וְאֶשְׁתַּמֵּר מֵעוֹנִי:
וַיָּשֶׁב-יְהוָה לִי כְּצִדְקִי כְּבָר יְדִי לִנְגִיד
עֵינָיו:

עִם-חֲסִיד תִּתְחַסֵּד עִם-גִּבֹּר תָּמִים תִּתְמָם:
עִם-נָבָר תִּתְבָּרַר וְעִם-עֲקֹשׁ תִּתְפַּתֵּל:
כִּי-אַתָּה עִם-עָנִי תוֹשִׁיעַ וְעֵינָיִם רָמוֹת
תִּשְׁפִּיל:
כִּי-אַתָּה תֹּאִיר גִּרִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִגִּיָּה חֲשָׁכִי:
כִּי-בָהּ אֶרְץ גְּדוּד וּבֵאלֹהֵי אֲדֹלָג-נְשׁוּר:

הֵאֵל תָּמִים דְּרָכּוֹ אִמְרַת-יְהוָה צְרוּפָה מְגֹן
הוּא לְכָל הַחֲסִים בּוֹ:
כִּי מִי אֱלוֹהַּ מִבְּלַעֲדֵי יְהוָה וּמִי צוּר זִוְלָתִי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
הֵאֵל הַמְּאַזְרֵנִי חֵיל וַיִּתֵּן תָּמִים דְּרָכֵי:
מִשׁוּהָ רַגְלִי כְּאֵילֹת וְעַל בְּמַתִּי יַעֲמִידֵנִי:
מִלִּמַּד יְדִי לְמַלְחָמָה וְנִחַתָּה קִנְשֵׁת-נְחוּשָׁה
זְרוּעָתִי:
וּתְתֵן-לִי מְגֹן יִשְׁעָהּ וַיְמִינָהּ תִּסְעֲדֵנִי
וְעֲנוֹתֶיהָ תִּרְבֵּנִי:
תִּרְחִיב צִעְדִי תַחְתִּי וְלֹא מַעְדּוֹ קִרְסִלִּי:
אֶרְדּוּף אוֹיְבֵי וְאַשִּׁיגֶם וְלֹא-אָשׁוּב
עַד-כָּלּוֹתָם:
אֶמְחָצֶם וְלֹא-יִכָּלוּ קוֹם יִפְּלוּ תַחַת רַגְלִי:

18 He delivered me from my mighty enemy;
From the ones who hate me, because they are
mightier than I.
19 They confronted me on the day of my
disaster; and Yahweh was a support to me.
20 He brought me out to a broad place;
and he rescued me because he delighted in me.

21 Yahweh has dealt bountifully with me,
according to my righteousness;
According to the cleanness of my hands he has
repaid me.
22 For I have kept the ways of Yahweh;
And I have not done evil against my God.
23 For all his judgements are before me;
And I have not turned away from his decrees.
24 I have been blameless with him;
And I have kept myself from sin.
25 Yahweh has rewarded me according to my
righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands in the
presence of his eyes.

26 To the faithful, you show yourself faithful;
To the blameless, you show yourself blameless.
27 To the pure, you show yourself pure.
But to the twisted you show yourself shrewd.
28 For you save a humble people, but proud
eyes you bring low.
29 For you make my lamp shine, O Yahweh;
My God makes my darkness light.
30 Because with you I can run through a troop;
And in my God I can leap over a wall.

31 As for God, his ways are perfect;
The words of Yahweh are flawless;
He is a shield to all those who take refuge in
him.
32 For who is God apart from Yahweh?
And who is a rock apart from our God?
33 As for God, he girds me with strength;
And he makes my way perfect.
34 He places my feet like deer;
And upon high places he makes me stand.
35 He trains my hands for battle;
And my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
36 You give me the shield of your salvation,
and your right hand supports me;
And your answering makes me great
37 You broaden my stride under me;
And my ankles do not turn over.
38 I pursued my enemies and overtook them;
And I did not return until they were finished.
39 I struck them and they could not rise;
They fell under my feet.
40 And you girded me with strength for the

וּתְאַזְרֵנִי חֵיל לַמִּלְחָמָה תִּכְרִיעַ קָמִי תַחְתִּי:
וְאֵיבֵי נִתְתָּה לִי עֶרְף וּמִשְׁנָאֵי אֲצָמִיתִם:
יִשְׁוּעוּ וְאֵין-מוֹשִׁיעַ עַל-יְהוָה וְלֹא עֲנָם:
וְאֲשַׁחֲקֵם כְּעָפָר עַל-פְּנֵי-רוּחַ כְּטִיט חוּצוֹת
אֲרִיקֵם:

תִּפְלֹטֵנִי מִרִּיבֵי עָם תִּשְׁיַמְנִי לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם
עִם לֹא-יָדַעְתִּי יַעֲבֹדוּנִי:
לִשְׁמַע אֲזֹן יִשְׁמְעוּ לִי בְנֵי-נֹכַר יִכְחָשׁוּ-לִי:
בְּנֵי-נֹכַר יִבְלוּ וַיִּחַרְגּוּ מִמִּסְגְּרוֹתֵיהֶם:

חֵי-יְהוָה וּכְרוֹךְ צוּרֵי וַיָּרוּם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
הָאֵל הַנּוֹתֵן נִקְמוֹת לִי וַיִּדְבֹּר עַמִּים תַּחְתִּי:
מִפְּלִטִי מֵאֵיבֵי אֶף מִן-קָמִי תִרְוַמְנִי מֵאִישׁ
חָמָס תַּצִּילֵנִי:

עַל-כֵּן אוֹדֶךָ בַּגּוֹיִם יְהוָה וּלְשִׁמְךָ אֲזַמְרָה:
מִגְדִּיל יִשׁוּעוֹת מַלְכוֹ וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד
לְמַשִּׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד וּלְזֶרְעוֹ עַד-עוֹלָם:

battle;

You made my adversaries bow down before me.

41 My enemies turned and ran;
And those who hated me I destroyed.

42 They cried for help, but there was no deliverer—unto Yahweh, but he did not answer them.

43 So I beat till they were like dust carried on the wind—like mud outside I poured them out.

44 You have delivered me from the struggles of people—you placed me at the head of nations; People I do not know serve me.

45 They listen carefully to me—foreigners cringe before me.

46 Foreigners loose heart and come quaking from their stronghold.

47 Yahweh lives! And blessed be my Rock!
And let the God of my salvation be exalted!

48 As for God, who gives me vengeance,
Who subdues people under me.

49 Who delivers me from my enemies! Surely,
you have exalted me above my enemies;
From the man of violence you have delivered me.

50 Therefore, I will give thanks to you among the nations, O Yahweh;

And I will sing praises to your name.

51 He gives great victories to his king! He shows steadfast love to his anointed—to David and to his seed forever.

Psalm 18⁹ is undoubtedly one of the most discussed psalms in the Psalter. Kenneth Kuntz, for example, describes it as a 'Hebrew poem that continues to fascinate biblical scholars'.¹⁰ From a variety of perspectives, Psalm 18 provokes debate. First, it is one of very few psalms which is cited almost in its entirety in a narrative passage (2 Samuel 22), therefore it is of great interest from a source-critical perspective and is often discussed in this light. Secondly, it is a lengthy psalm whose themes seem to be picked up on by other Old Testament writers, so there is much scope for assessing the intertextuality of Psalm 18; for example, the link between the book of Habakkuk and Psalm 18 is much discussed. Thirdly, the mixture of genres has prompted much debate from a form-critical perspective; is this a hymn of praise or a song of thanksgiving? Are these the words of the king, and

⁹ The text of Ps 18 seems fairly straightforward, with most of the textual questions revolving around relatively minor differences when compared with the text of 2 Samuel 22. בְּנֵי-נֹכַר (vv 45-46) may be better rendered 'enemies' rather than 'foreigners' (Eaton, *Psalms*, 64) also it is unclear whether v 51 speaks of מִגְדִּיל 'a tower of victories' according to the Kethib or מְגַדֵּל 'he gives great victories' according to the Qere. The structure of Ps 18 is discussed below, but major stanzas are indicated by the breaks indicated in the translation.

¹⁰ J. K. Kuntz, "Review of 'The Psalms and Their Readers: Interpretive Strategies for Psalm 18'," *Int* 48 (1994) 426.

what is the role of the theophany in this psalm? Many of the classic questions of form-critical studies concerning *Gattungen* and *Sitz im Leben* can be richly applied to Psalm 18. Fourthly, the length of this psalm and its somewhat unusual composition make Psalm 18 a ‘classic text’ for rhetorical-critical assessment; how does this psalm break down into stanzas? Is this, in fact, two psalms which have been joined together by an editor, or a single work with a strong and deliberate breakdown into stanzas which reflect a thematic progression? It was the richness of Psalm 18 from many methodological perspectives which inspired Donald Berry to choose this psalm as his test case for the application and evaluation of various methods for the analysis of psalms.¹¹

3.1 Deuteronomic Background to Psalm 18

Our focus, however, is on the theological analysis of this psalm. As with Pss 1-2, if Psalm 18 is to be seen as part of a Dtr redaction of the Psalter, its content should be expected to reflect the concerns associated with that school of thought. So does the content of Ps 18 reflect a Dtr worldview?

3.1.1 Appellatives

Perhaps the most striking feature of Psalm 18 is the rich and varied use of appellatives in addressing Yahweh. Seldom, if anywhere, do we find such a wealth of metaphors to describe Yahweh and the psalmist’s relationship with him. Throughout the psalm Yahweh is variously described as the psalmist’s ‘rock’ (צוּרִי and סֶלֶעִי), ‘stronghold’ (מְצוּדָתִי), ‘refuge’ (מִשְׁגְּבִי and מִפְּלִטִי), ‘shield’ (מִגְנִי), ‘horn of salvation’ (קַרְנ־יִשְׁעִי), and ‘God of salvation’ (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעִי). Whilst some of the images used are fairly common, such a preponderance of appellatives is rare within the Psalter.¹² It is in this use of appellatives that many of the commentators find a strong link between Psalm 18 and the Book of Deuteronomy (more specifically with Deuteronomy 32).

The idea of viewing Yahweh as one’s ‘rock’ and ‘refuge’ reflects an attitude of dependence upon him which is viewed as commendable in the Book of Deuteronomy. Many commentators point out the link that exists between Psalm 18:3 and Deut 32:4, 18, 30-31 and 37—both passages encourage a total dependence upon Yahweh as the one who provides refuge and strength. Mays puts it thus:

Verse 2 [MT, v 3] extends ‘my strength’ [18:2] into confessional praise that recites the longest series of predicates for God found in the Psalter. Most are metaphors identifying the LORD as provider of protection. All are qualified by the possessive pronoun ‘my’ so that their repetition emphasizes the dependence of the person of the psalmist on the person

¹¹ Berry, *Psalms and Readers*.

¹² Each of these terms appears several times within the canonical Psalter, but the only other psalms where there is any degree of repetition of these appellatives are Pss 31 and 71, but even here not to the same extent as is found in Ps 18. Mays, *Psalms*, 91, describes this as ‘the longest series of predicates for God found in the Psalter’.

of God. The metaphor 'my rock' (represented by two Hebrew words) is the most frequent in Psalms and in poetry elsewhere. The metaphorical sense seems to lie in the firm and strong character of rock as support. A god is called 'rock' as the deity who provides refuge for those who belong to the deity, as the references in Deuteronomy 32:4, 30-31, and 37 show.¹³

The Song of Moses in Deut 32 presents itself as an exhortation and challenge to the people of Israel, as a covenantal sign or witness calling them to faithfulness and trust in Yahweh. The Song seems to function as a paraenetic, didactic reminder to the people of Israel prior to their entry into the Promised Land, encouraging them to place their trust entirely in Yahweh and not to wander off after other gods.¹⁴ Similarly, the king in Psalm 18 expresses just this type of ideology—in the face of his enemies, in the face of battle, he declares his trust in Yahweh alone (v 4). Whilst there are many appellatives which are used in Psalm 18, it appears that the succeeding descriptives act as extrapolations upon the theme of 'my rock'. In 18:3 we see that each colon begins with a declaration that God is the psalmist's 'rock' (either סֶלֶעִי or צוּרִי)¹⁵ and these general concepts are expanded upon by the use of the ensuing terms ('stronghold', 'refuge' etc.). The governing thought appears to be that of Yahweh as 'rock' (צוּר), and this is the concept which is prominent in Deut 32's call to faithfulness. So it can be seen that the theological backdrop to the use of these appellatives in Ps 18 appears to be drawn from a Deuteronomic idea of trust in Yahweh.¹⁶ Of course, in and of itself, this would not constitute proof of a Deuteronomic background to Psalm 18, however, the use of appellatives is merely the first of several indicators which together point to a Dtr worldview underpinning the text of this poem.

3.1.2 Theophany

As one reads Psalm 18, the next striking element of the poem is the account of the theophany in vv 8-16. As is to be expected in such descriptions, this stanza is full of remarkable and supernatural images of the appearance of Yahweh in support of his king. Obviously, there are several theophanic accounts throughout the Old Testament, and there are many similarities between each of them. The theophany which is repeated most often in the pages of the Old Testament is, clearly, the account of Yahweh's appearance before the people at Mt Horeb following their exodus from Egypt. Whilst it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish conclusively that the psalmist is drawing upon one particular theophanic description as opposed to the others, several of the commentators point out

¹³ Mays, *Psalms*, 91.

¹⁴ C. J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (NIBC; Peabody, MA/Carlisle: Hendrickson Publishers/Paternoster Press, 1996) 298, 306.

¹⁵ These two Hebrew words should be understood as poetic synonyms in this context, both reflecting the same idea—Yahweh as the psalmist's 'Rock'.

¹⁶ Most of the commentators make this connection. See, for example, C. A. Briggs, and E. G. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1906) 140-1, A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms, Volume I, Psalms 1-72* (NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972) 153, Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 87 or McCann, *Psalms*, 747.

similarities between Psalm 18:9-16 and the Deuteronomic accounts of the Horeb theophany. There are two areas of lexical and thematic overlap between the book of Deuteronomy and Psalm 18 in relation to its account of the appearance of Yahweh. Firstly, Kraus and Craigie both point out that the announcement of Yahweh's intervention by way of an earthquake (18:8) is a sign which Moses draws attention to when reminding the people about the Sinai theophany in Deut 33:2-3.¹⁷ Kraus also points out that the bright and fiery appearance (18:13) of Yahweh is reminiscent of the imagery of 'dawning' in Deut 33:2.¹⁸ The second area of theophanic overlap is pointed out by Briggs in his commentary, where he indicates similarities between the cloud imagery of Psalm 18:10 and the Deuteronomic account of the Horeb revelation in Deut 4:11 and 5:22.¹⁹ Whilst it cannot be said that these similarities exist in parallel exclusively between the Dtr accounts and Psalm 18, it does appear that similarities may deliberately have been drawn between Deuteronomy's description of the Sinai theophany and the psalmist's representation of Yahweh's appearance in response to his cry for help in Psalm 18.

3.1.3 Torah Centre and Declaration of Blamelessness

Whilst the Deuteronomic connection with the Psalm 18 theophany cannot be described as conclusive, in the succeeding verses we move into more characteristically Deuteronomic material. Ps 18:17-25 is filled with concepts which are considered to be 'classically Deuteronomic'. This stanza (vv 21-25) lies at the structural centre of Psalm 18, and is dominated by the type of torah-theology which was apparent in Pss 1 and 2.²⁰ In fact, these five verses are set out in a chiastic pattern which serves to further emphasise the significance of Yahweh's torah in the life of the king, the speaker of the psalm.

v 21	Declaration of righteousness and Yahweh's reward
v 22	Declaration of blamelessness
v 23	Declaration of the centrality of torah in the life of the king
v 24	Declaration of blamelessness
v 25	Declaration of righteousness and Yahweh's reward

Berry comments upon the significance of this stanza from a *structural* perspective:

Verses 21-25 form an envelope structure (or staircase parallelism), and again, the structure occurs on the level of complete verses rather than individual lines. An outline of the strophe shows an *a b c b' a'* pattern with the most significant statement of righteousness in the central verse (v 23). More general claims (verses 21 and 25) frame this verse, and the

¹⁷ Kraus, *Psalms*, 260; Craigie, *Psalms*, 174.

¹⁸ Kraus, *Psalms*, 260.

¹⁹ Briggs, *Psalms*, 143.

²⁰ Berry, *Psalms and Readers*, 95; J. K. Kuntz, "Psalm 18: A Rhetorical-Critical Analysis," *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism* (SBTS, Vol. 2; ed. P. R. House; Winona Lake, IA: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 79. Kuntz, to be fair, does not explicitly highlight the centrality of this stanza, but his structural breakdown of the stanzas which make up Ps 18 indicates centrality.

closest parallel relationship shows itself in the bracketing lines (verses 22 and 24). The occurrence of this structure at the midpoint of the psalm sets it off as the structural key to the understanding of its combined themes.²¹

Mays and McCann point out the *theological* significance of this 'most significant statement of righteousness in the central verse'. First, Mays:

The report of salvation is typically followed by praise of the LORD that draws implications from the experience and bears testimony to what it discloses about the LORD. That happens in this section, but in a strange way. The king begins with a recitation of his own righteousness. The explanation lies in the last line of the preceding section: 'He delivered me, because he delighted in me' (see 22:8, 47:11-12). Verses 20-24 [MT vv 21-25] are an exposition of that sentence, a section marked off by the theme, 'The LORD dealt with me according to my righteousness' (vv. 20, 24). God's deliverance was evidence of his favor, his pleasure in the king. The claim is not a crass assertion of self-righteousness by the king but a confession that he had been true to the righteousness in which the divine choice to be king had set him. He had not created the righteousness but had lived within it and according to it. *He had fulfilled the vocation given the king to embody the law of the divine king. This ideal is particularly important in the Deuteronomic tradition (see Josh. 1:7; 23:6; Deut. 17:19-20).*²²

McCann concurs and adds:

Verses 20-24 [MT vv 21-25] sound like the self-righteous boasting of the king, but the chiasmic structure of verses 20-24 focuses attention on v. 22 [MT v 23]. That is, God's 'ordinances' (more literally, 'justices') and 'statutes' are the source of the king's 'righteousness' and 'cleanness' (verses 20, 24; see Psalms 24:4; 72:1). *In short, the king is simply saying that he has been what God has intended and enabled him to be (see Deut 17:18-20; Psalm 72:1-7). In fact, v. 22 is reminiscent of Psalm 1:1-2; the king is constantly open to God's instruction.*²³

Just as the king's focus on torah is characteristically Deuteronomic, so also are the claims of blamelessness and righteousness which surround the torah-centre of the chiasmic structure found in these verses. Anderson, drawing upon von Rad, discusses this concept, "I was blameless": see Deut 18:13... cf G. v. Rad [*Deuteronomy* (1966), p 123]) comments: "it is not moral or religious 'perfection' which is demanded from Israel, but rather an undivided commitment... to the conditions of fellowship with Yahweh".²⁴ (This challenge from Deut 18:13 is drawn from the very context of the kingship law [i.e. Deut 16:18-18:22]). Anderson continues that the declaration of reward received from Yahweh is not, 'self-righteous boasting, but an indirect affirmation of faith in the covenant loyalty of Yahweh... the obedience to the covenant, and the consequent blessings, do not stress the merits of man, but rather the graciousness of God. Loyalty to him may become a legal righteousness, but its misunderstanding does not discredit its true function.'²⁵ So we see

²¹ Berry, *Psalms and Readers*, 95.

²² Mays, *Psalms*, 92-3 (emphasis added).

²³ McCann, *Psalms*, 748 (emphasis mine). Miller further points out the Dtr connection in this central stanza of Ps 18: 'At this point, it is important to note the echoes of Deuteronomy in these verses of Ps 18, and particularly the language of the laws of leadership reflected in the psalm. The pairing of *mispatim* and *huqqim* is familiar as the Deuteronomic designation of the statutes of the torah,' ("Kingship," 129).

²⁴ Anderson, *Psalms*, 161.

²⁵ Anderson, *Psalms*, 160. Unfortunately, this true function of the Dtr constitution often seems to be forgotten by commentators who end up presenting Dtr theology as simplistic and legalistic. As Anderson

that the claims of the king made in this stanza are not in fact self-centred declarations of his own righteousness—this is not the idle boasting of kings which is so prominent in the ancient Near Eastern literature—but rather this stanza reflects an understanding of life and religion which draws upon a Deuteronomic theology of covenant allegiance.²⁶

The background in the Deuteronomic theology does not end at this point in the psalm, but continues through the ensuing stanzas to the very end of the poem. The next stanza (verses 26-30) highlights the role of Yahweh in this declaration of the psalmist's 'blamelessness'. As Psalm 19 will show, 'blamelessness' is not the same as sinlessness, and this stanza highlights the important role of Yahweh's faithfulness as the ultimate source of the king's blamelessness. This stanza is a transitional section of the poem, linking the first part of the psalm to the second, and just as it provides a summary and conclusion to the preceding verses, so it provides an introduction to the concepts to be introduced in the succeeding verses. Kraus comments on these verses:

Yahweh's 'causality in all things' sees to it that in the salvation area of צדקה the effects of God's protection and rescue reach the צדיק. On the basis of these precedents we are to understand also the statements of vv. 25 and 26. There is a single great correspondence: the יסוד [sic. surely יסוד] experiences God's יסוד. And yet, the עשק experiences Yahweh's destructive activity. Here we are dealing neither with the principles of strict retribution... nor with the tenets of the *ius talionis*... Rather, he who belongs to Yahweh's congregation and lives within the regulations of God's covenant, he by that very fact lives in an area of salvific power. But he who despises Yahweh excludes himself from the area of salvation. All these are regulations of the community of Yahweh that takes salvation for granted.²⁷

These verses introduce us to another key aspect of Deuteronomic theology which echoes the theological introduction of Psalm 1—namely, the concept of the 'two ways'. Verses 26-30 make it clear that the king is the beneficiary of Yahweh's help only because he has chosen to follow faithfully in the way of the divine command.²⁸

3.1.4 Theology of the Two Ways

The theology of the two ways is explicitly discussed in the following stanza (vv 31-37) which celebrates God's help for the king as a representative of the צדיקים, the ones who chose the right way. This stanza also draws upon Deuteronomic concepts in its expression of the notion that as God's ways are perfect (תמים) and he makes the ways of the psalmist perfect (תמים). These are ideas which clearly reflect the Dtr presentation of life and religious purity found in Pss 1 and 2.

notes, Deuteronomy's 'true function' is much deeper than that.

²⁶ These ideas also overlap with the hermeneutical paradigm presented in Pss 1 and 2 as an introduction to the Psalms. Further consideration of this connection with Pss 1-2 will follow the discussion of the Dtr background of Ps 18.

²⁷ Kraus, *Psalms*, 262-3.

²⁸ The mirroring style which is used to represent the two ways in these verses ('faithful... to the faithful; blameless to the blameless' etc.) is reminiscent of Deut 6:24-25 which balances the prospect of prosperity and longevity with the responsibility to keep the law and live in righteousness.

The salvation is a vindication of the Messiah, a revelation of God's 'delight' in his king (v 19). The subject of the divine delight is a coherence between the way of the Messiah and the way of the Lord. Both are 'perfect' in their ways (vv 23-30; the Hebrew word is *tamim*, translated 'blameless' in v. 23 and 'perfect' in v 30 by NRSV). The Messiah has been perfect in the righteousness of holding to the ways of the Lord known through the Lord's ordinances and statutes. He has been obedient to the will of the divine sovereignty (vv 20-24). The Lord is *perfect* in the consistency of his rule and the correspondence between what he promises and does (vv 25-30). In the salvation of the Messiah, the 'perfection' of the faithfulness of the Messiah and the faithfulness of God is known.²⁹

Briggs and Anderson also call attention to the almost formulaic interaction between the 'perfection' of God and of the psalmist and, once again, associate this connection with the theology of Deuteronomy.³⁰ This declaration of the source of the psalmist's blamelessness appears to be drawn, again, from the Song of Moses (Deut 32:4). In Ps 18:31 the psalmist, having earlier described God as his צור, declares הָאֵל תְּמִים דְּרָכָיו ('As for God, his ways are perfect') which is strikingly similar to Deut 32:4 where the Song of Moses proclaims הַצּוּר תְּמִים פְּעָלָיו ('As for the Rock, his works are perfect'). Further connection with Deuteronomy 32 and its presentation of the two ways is, perhaps, represented in the use of אֱלֹהִים in reference to God (vv 29-30)—this uncommon form of 'God' is also used in Deut 32:15 as part of Moses' presentation of the one who rejects Yahweh's perfect way. In addition the psalmist describes those who reject God's way as עֲקִשׁ ('twisted' or 'perverse', Ps 18:27)—a rather uncommon term paralleling the 'wicked' (רָשָׁעִים) of Ps 1—and the same adjective is used in Deut 32:5 to describe the generation of Israelites who reject Yahweh. Therefore, it seems that the psalmist is drawing upon a Deuteronomic theology of the two ways in his declaration of the reasons why Yahweh heard and answered his prayer and came to his aid—Yahweh's anointed was faithful to the call to walk in God's ways and so his prayer for help was heard.³¹

²⁹ Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 104. Mays further comments in his commentary, 'The concluding exclamation (v 30) states the theme of the whole: 'This God—his way is perfect.' (The same theological sentence is the theme of the great song at the end of Deuteronomy, chap. 32, see v 4). The term 'perfect' (Heb. *tamim*) means 'whole, of a piece, integral.' *Tamim* marks the character of one whose conduct is coherent, consistent, reliable,' (*Psalms*, 93).

³⁰ Briggs, *Psalms*, 146; Anderson, *Psalms*, 162.

³¹ It should also be pointed out that the idea of the דְּרָכֵי יְהוָה is not only found in the Song of Moses, but is a common concept in Deuteronomy (see 8:6, 10:12, 11:22, 19:9, 26:17 and 30:16). What is more, consideration of the 'way of Yahweh' and the two ways is not unique to Deuteronomy, but is an idea which is often found in the Wisdom Literature. אֱלֹהִים is also used three times in the Book of Job, furthering a possible Wisdom connection in Ps 18. The issue here is not so much a question of either a Dtr or Wisdom presentation of the 'two ways', but rather how the two traditions relate to each other more generally. Weinfeld has pointed out the presence of Wisdom themes in Deuteronomy (*Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972] 244ff), and the present study has noted the presence of both schools of thought in the psalms which have come under consideration. There appears to be a link between Wisdom and Dtr traditions, but a simple connection via the royal court of Josiah is problematic from a number of perspectives. This is an area where further study would be of benefit to the academic community.

3.1.5 Appellatives Again

The final stanza (vv 47-51) returns to the psalmist's celebration of the fact that Yahweh is his 'Rock' forming a bracketing structure around the psalm. As Berry points out, there is a sense in which the whole of Ps 18 can, in fact, be considered, 'an expansion of a single, pithy sentence, notably, the one which occurs in v 3.'³² We return, therefore, to the theme with which the psalm started—Yahweh as the sole source of strength, security and ability for the psalmist. As we saw above, this notion of dependence upon Yahweh is actively promoted in Deuteronomy.³³ The idea of total dependence upon God is further developed in this final stanza where the psalmist acknowledges that it is Yahweh who has given him victory over his enemies and who subdues the nations under him. Therefore the king ends as he began—celebrating God's protection in battle and rejoicing in the covenant relationship which has given him victory. The final verse of the psalm (v 51) causes the reader to recollect Psalm 2: the king rejoices in Yahweh's דֹּם shown to his messiah, and extended to all the descendants of David, the continuation the line of the king installed by God in Zion. This reminds us of the ongoing relationship between Yahweh and his anointed one, and so the idea, or perhaps better the ideal, of kingship continues to play a significant role in the theology of this psalm and, indeed, in the theology of the Book of Psalms. The kings themselves may have disappeared in the post-exilic period when the Psalter reached its final form, but the institution and concept remain important in the theology of the Psalms.

3.2 Association of Psalm 18 and Pss 1 & 2

Psalm 18 is a psalm of praise for the steadfast love of the Lord manifest in saving help given to the Lord's Messiah, to David and his seed. *It is a substantive sequel to the introduction in Psalms 1-2... because it testifies that the Messiah who holds the torah of the Lord and is promised rule over the nations is vindicated in person and vocation when he cries out for the Lord's salvation.*³⁴

If the idea of a DtrN redaction emphasising the Kingship Law in the final form of the Psalter is to hold true, then we should expect a degree of overlap and continuance between the psalm groupings which juxtapose kingship and torah psalms. Accordingly, there should be a degree of thematic repetition from Pss 1-2 in Pss 18-21. As Mays points out in the above quote, *there is* a substantial degree of continuance between the themes and theology of Ps 18 and the themes and theology of Pss 1-2.

3.2.1 Yahweh As Refuge

The first and most obvious connection between Ps 18 and the introduction to the Psalter is seen in the bracketing device which begins and ends the poem (v 3 and v 47). As discussed

³² Berry, *Psalms and Readers*, 67.

³³ Closer attention is given to the idea of the importance of dependence upon Yahweh in the treatment of the Kingship Law in Chapter 5.

³⁴ Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 102 (emphasis mine).

above, we see the use of a group of appellatives which emphasise the theme of Yahweh as the king's refuge. This notion echoes one of the key structural devices used in the introduction, that is, the אשרי clauses which form an inclusio bracketing Pss 1 and 2. In the introduction to the Psalter the use of this device emphasises a link between the blessed man who delights in the torah of Yahweh and 'all those who take refuge in him' (אשרי כל-חוסים בו). We see that Ps 18 begins with a similar theme, the king declares that Yahweh is his Rock, Stronghold and Refuge; he then reiterates the fact that Yahweh is his Rock before going on to express the same idea again using language of Ps 2:12—'I will take refuge in him' (אחסה בו). This conceptual and lexical overlap indicates, perhaps, that the psalmist is drawing a deliberate link between the content of this poem and Ps 2.³⁵ It could be the case that Ps 2:12b and the appellatives which bracket Ps 18 were additions designed to give further theological nuance to psalms which the editors saw as already reflecting their theological concerns. Whatever mechanism was used, Ps 18 is clearly linked to the Psalter's introduction by its use of the חסה semantic field.

3.2.2 Torah and Delight

A second parallel between Pss 1 and 2 as introduction and Ps 18 is found in the central stanza of the latter psalm where the king declares his commitment to the 'judgements' and 'decrees' of Yahweh. This verse is steeped in the torah theology which is the focal point of Pss 1 and 2. The use of 'his judgements' and 'his decrees' (חקתיו and משפטי) instead of torah (תורה) introduces the reader to two of the most common synonyms for torah which are often repeated in the Psalter and in Deuteronomy. Ps 19 makes it clear that these judgements and ordinances refer to exactly the same thing as does Ps 1—the king delights in the torah of Yahweh—and these Hebrew synonyms are probably used in order to link Ps 18 with Ps 19 as a part of this psalm grouping. It is also very interesting that the reason which the psalmist gives as to why Yahweh has helped them in his time of trouble is that 'he delighted in me' (כי חפצו בי, v 20). This is the same root word (חפץ) that is used concerning the 'blessed person' of Ps 1:3. The king is saved because Yahweh delighted in him and then the king goes on to explain why Yahweh delighted in him and central to that explanation is the king's delight in torah. There seems to be a deliberate correlation here: Yahweh delights in those who delight in his Law. Once again, we see an emphasis on the centrality of torah for the faithful. If they are to please Yahweh, if they are to secure his aid, then his torah must be central to their life and practice. As was pointed out in the previous chapter concerning Pss 1 and 2, this type of torah-piety is characteristically Deuteronomic.

³⁵ Whether this linking is the work of the original psalmist or of later editors is difficult or impossible to establish. It seems most likely that Ps 2:12b is an editorial addition, placed there in order to link Ps 2 with Ps 1 as an introduction and also to connect the introduction with other psalms which have a 'refuge' content (see Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 103), but it is also possible that this is an addition to the beginning and end of Ps 18.

3.2.3 Theology of the Two Ways

As mentioned briefly above, Ps 18 highlights another theme first mentioned in the introduction to the Psalter—that of the two ways. This theme is expressed in Ps 1 in the contrast between the ‘blessed man’ and the ‘wicked’, and in Ps 2 in the contrast between the rebellious kings and rulers, on the one hand, and the king and ‘those who take refuge in Yahweh’, on the other. The introduction to the Psalms exhorts the righteous to follow in the way of Yahweh, and in Ps 18 we find the king pleading his case that he has, indeed, walked in the way of Yahweh (v 22) and it is due to this fact that Yahweh has come to his rescue. Again, this seems to be a theme which links Ps 18 with the introductory Pss 1-2.

3.2.4 Universal Dominion

One unmistakable feature of the royal psalms which provokes much discussion is the tone of dominion and rule over other nations. This is a central feature of Ps 2, and we see a similar sort of tone in Ps 18. The rebellion of the nations is mocked as futile and pointless in Ps 2 and Ps 18:38-46 celebrates David’s triumph and rule over foreign nations. Whilst one cannot make too much of this point as a sign of deliberate linking between Pss 2 and 18 because this type of language is commonly found in the royal psalms,³⁶ the continuance of this theme is at least worthy of note from a canonical perspective as it is the *first* repetition of this type of statement of the king’s rule over the nations since Ps 2. The possibility of intentional linkage with this regard is further strengthened by the next point.

3.2.5 Yahweh’s Messiah

The language of universal dominion may not be conclusive in and of itself as an indication of deliberate association, but when this language is combined with the elusive figure of the Yahweh’s messiah the likelihood that Ps 18 is repeating important themes from Ps 2 increases. The word משיח is only used in eight psalms within the canonical Psalter, and Ps 18:51 is the first time that it is used since its appearance in Ps 2:2. Again, it is quite possible that this verse is an editorial addition to a pre-existing psalm coming as it does at the end of the work, and the first repetition of this word is probably designed to set bells ringing in the mind of the reader of the Psalter, directing his or her thoughts back to Ps 2 and the introduction to the Book of Psalms. The inclusion of the figure of the messiah in this psalm also adds to the eschatological overtones of this redaction in the post-exilic period. As McCann has put it, ‘In the post-exilic era—indeed, always—the assertion of God’s sovereignty is made amidst circumstances and powers that deny it (see vv 4-5). Psalm 18, therefore, like Psalm 2, is eschatological.’³⁷

³⁶ Kraus describes this as ‘the usual theme of the royal psalms,’ (*Psalms*, 264).

³⁷ McCann, *Psalms*, 749.

3.3 Conclusion re. Ps 18

Exegetical examination of the content and theology of Ps 18 indicates: First, that the psalm draws heavily upon a Deuteronomic worldview in its presentation of the king's total dependence upon Yahweh and total commitment to his torah as his source of acceptance before God in prayer; and, secondly, there are signs that Ps 18 deliberately repeats themes which have been highlighted in Pss 1 and 2 as the introduction to the Psalter. It now remains to consider these same questions in relation to Psalms 19, 20 and 21, to see if there is further support for the suggestion of a Dtr redaction in the remaining texts of this group of psalms. Ps 18 is highly significant from another perspective, that is, the question of democratisation and the king's association with the people and representation of the people as the archetypal **קִיָּץ** and keeper of the torah—this topic is part of the overall argument of this thesis, and so shall be dealt with in Chapter 7, which follows the exegetical examination of the three psalm groupings, the Kingship Law and discussion of the editorial placement of the torah-kingship psalm groupings.

4. Analysis of Psalm 19

BHS

לְמַנְצִיחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד־אֵל וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו
מִגִּיד הֶרְקִיעַ:
יוֹם לַיּוֹם יִבְיַע אָמַר וְלַיְלָה לְלַיְלָה
יַחְוֵה־דַעַת:
אֵין־אָמַר וְאֵין דְּבָרִים בְּלִי נִשְׁמָע קוֹלָם:
בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ יֵצֵא קוֹם וּבִקְצֵה תֵּבֵל מְלִיָּהֶם
לְשִׁמְשׁ שֶׁם־אֱהֵל בָּהֶם:
וְהוּא כְּחֹתֵן יֵצֵא מִחֻפְתּוֹ יִשְׁיֵשׁ כְּגִבּוֹר
לְרוּץ אֲרָח:
מִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם מוֹצֵאוֹ וּתְקוּפָתוֹ
עַל־קִצּוֹתָם וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִחֻמָּתוֹ:

תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תְּמִימָה מְשִׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ עֵדוּת
יְהוָה נֶאֱמָנָה מַחְפִּימַת פֶּתִי:
פְּקוּדֵי יְהוָה יִשְׂרִים מְשִׁמְחֵי־לֵב מִצּוֹת
יְהוָה בָּרָה מְאִירַת עֵינָיִם:
יִרְאֵת יְהוָה טְהוֹרָה עוֹמֶדֶת לְעַד
מִשְׁפָּטֵי־יְהוָה אֱמֶת צִדְקוֹ יִחְדָּו:
הַנִּחְמָדִים מִזֶּהָב וּמִפָּז רַב וּמִתּוֹקִים מִדְּבַשׁ
וְנֹפֶת צוּפִים:
גַּם־עֲבָדָהּ נִזְהָר בָּהֶם בְּשִׁמְרָם עֶקֶב רַב:

שְׁגִיאוֹת מִי־יָבִין מִנִּסְתָּרוֹת נִקְנִי:
גַּם מִזֵּדִים חֲשׂוֹף עֲבָדָהּ אֶל־יִמְשְׁלוּ־בִי אֲזִ
אִיתָם וְנִקִּיתִי מִפֶּשַׁע רַב:
יִהְיוּ לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי־פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לִבִּי לִפְנֵיךָ
יְהוָה צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי:

Translation

1 To the director of music. A psalm of David.
2 The heavens declare the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims the work of his
hands.
3 Day to day pours forth speech;
And night to night declares knowledge.
4 There is no speech and there are no words;
their voice is not heard.
5 Their voice goes out in all the earth and their
speech to the end of the world;
He has put a tent in them for the sun.
6 And he, like a bridegroom, goes out from his
chamber;
and like a warrior he rejoices to run his path.
7 From the ends of the heavens he goes forth
and he completes his circuit; and there is
nothing hidden from his heat.

8 The law of Yahweh is perfect, causing the
soul to revive;
The statutes of Yahweh are faithful making
wise the simple.
9 The precepts of Yahweh are upright, making
the heart rejoice;
The commandments of Yahweh are pure giving
light to the eyes.
10 The fear of Yahweh is pure, standing
forever;
The judgements of Yahweh are true and
altogether righteous.
11 More desirable than gold, than much pure
gold; and sweeter than honey, than honey from
the comb.
12 Also your servant is taught by them; and in
keeping them is great reward.

13 Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of
the hidden things!
14 Also keep your servant from deliberate sins,
let them not rule over me.
Then I will be finished with them and I will be
innocent of many transgressions.
15 May the words of my mouth and the medita-
tion of my heart be pleasing before you, O
Yahweh, my Rock and my Redeemer

4.1 Structure of Ps 19

Psalm 18 has drawn much attention from scholars over the years, yet it would be fair to say that Psalm 19³⁸ has probably attracted even more discussion. C. S. Lewis has famously described Psalm 19 as ‘the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world’³⁹ and whilst many would agree with this assessment, Psalm 19 has also attracted a good deal of criticism as well. Most of the discussion concerning Psalm 19 has centred around the question of whether it is a single work or whether, in fact, an editor has conjoined two separate pre-existing psalms—one an ancient poem derived from a naturalistic, (probably) Canaanite poem worshipping the sun and the second a wisdom poem which celebrates the torah of Yahweh. Whilst this latter theory is, of course, possible, it does not take proper account of one of the central features of the psalm: namely, Psalm 19 naturally divides into three stanzas and not two stanzas as has been suggested for many years. Discussion has centred, classically, around the relationship between Ps 19A (vv 1-7) and 19B (vv 8-15), however, the psalm really consists of three strophes:⁴⁰

Strophe 1 (vv 1-7):	Discussion of revelation in nature, focusing on the Creator God (אל)
Strophe 2 (vv 8-12):	Discussion of revelation in torah, focusing on the Covenant God (יהוה)
Strophe 3 (vv 13-15):	Prayer addressed directly to God using personal appellatives (צורי וגאלי)

As Wagner, Mays and others point out, there seems to be a progression inherent within Ps 19 from ‘El’ to ‘Yahweh’ to ‘My Rock and My Redeemer’.⁴¹ The psalmist moves from the presentation of the works of the Creator God and the way in which these works speak to mankind in general, to the express revelation of the Covenant God to his people and this leads the poet to directly address the Lord in prayer. Therefore, Ps 19 shall be considered

³⁸ The text is fairly straightforward, with one notable exception, i.e. v 4 of the MT. The difficulty with this verse is in knowing how the combination of verb and negation is to be read (כלי נשמע). This can mean either that there is no place on the earth where the voice of the heavens is not heard (i.e. the voice is heard everywhere) or, alternatively, it could mean simply that the voice of the heavens is not heard on the earth (see the discussion below, p 76). The difficulty in translating this particular verse is seen in Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 70, 79, where the author makes use of the *JPS Tanakh* translation in his discussion of the biblical texts under analysis. On p 70 the JPS translation renders Ps 19:4 as, ‘There is no utterance; There are no words; Whose sound goes unheard’. However, in his analysis of the text, Sarna offers his own translation of v 4 (p 79) as, ‘There is no speech; There are no words; Their voices go unheard’. This merely serves to indicate the difficulty in translating this verse. Ultimately, this message of Ps 19 remains the same: Yahweh’s revelation in his torah is superior.

³⁹ C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: G. Bles, 1958) 63.

⁴⁰ Mays, *Psalms*, 98-100; J. R. Wagner, “From the Heavens to the Heart: The Dynamics of Psalm 19 as Prayer,” *CBQ* 61 (1999) 245-61.

⁴¹ Mays, *Psalms*, 98-100; Wagner, “Psalm 19 as Prayer,” 246. Wagner states that, ‘the unity and power of Psalm 19 lies in its progressive narrowing of focus from the heavens’ praise of El as Creator to the petition of the human heart addressed to Yahweh as rock and redeemer.’ See also M. Landon, “God and the Sciences: A Sermon on Psalm 19,” *RQ* 38/4 (1996) 239; D. G. Ashburn, “Creation and Torah in Psalm 19,” *JBQ* 22 (1994) 248 and Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 70ff.

as a united whole, and the text will be addressed as it appears in the final form of the Psalter.⁴² Our first task, therefore, will be to assess any possible Dtr background to be found within this poem; secondly, we will examine how Ps 19 relates to Ps 18 within this group of psalms; thirdly, we shall discuss any overlap between this psalm and the introductory themes of Pss 1 and 2.

4.2 Deuteronomic Background to Ps 19

4.2.1 Polemic

It must be said that, at first sight, vv 1-7 of Ps 19 do not appear to be in the least Deuteronomic in the content. These verses are concerned with nature, the sun, the heavens and their voice—these are not the concerns of Deuteronomy or the Deuteronomistic literature. In fact, many commentators point out that these are not really the concerns of Israel's religion at all and so this must be an adaptation of an older ANE religious hymn.⁴³ Yet Nahum M. Sarna has made a strong argument which stands in contrast to this view of Ps 19. The primary reason for rejecting Deuteronomic content in the first strophe is the positing of a strong separation between the two stanzas—nature poem vs. torah hymn. A more unitary view of the content of Ps 19 sees a merging of these themes, and it is from this basis that Sarna argues that Ps 19—as a whole—serves as a 'tacit polemic' against Assyrian-influenced astral worship.⁴⁴ Now, if this is the case, the reader is drawn into Deuteronomic themes throughout the whole poem, i.e. the rejection of false religion in favour of the sole worship of Yahweh through the study of his torah. Perhaps this rejection of the religions of Israel's neighbours is seen most clearly in Deut 18:9-13 where such practices are condemned as being 'detestable things' (תועבת) in the eyes of Yahweh.⁴⁵ It is interesting that this passage also challenges the reader to be blameless (תמים, Deut 18:13), one of the repeated themes throughout Psalms 18-21. Whilst we should not overemphasize the role of polemic in the Hebrew Bible,⁴⁶ it is quite possible that Ps 19 is intended to act

⁴² As Sarna comments, 'a persuasive case can be made for the unity of Psalm 19 in its present form,' (*On the Book of Psalms*, 74).

⁴³ See, for example, W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms: Translated with Text-Critical and Exegetical Notes* (London: SPCK, 1959) 167-8; N. Wyatt, "The Liturgical Context of Psalm 19 and Its Mythical and Ritual Origins," *U-F* 27 (1995) 559-96. However, it is not necessarily the case that this part of the poem is born out of the religious practices of Israel's neighbours, D. J. A. Clines points out the Genesis themes which are suggested by Ps 19 in "The Tree of Knowledge and the Law of Yahweh," *VT* 24 (1974) 8-14.

⁴⁴ Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 71-4.

⁴⁵ It should be noted that this passage is drawn from the broader context of the Kingship Law (Deut 16:18-18:22).

⁴⁶ One must be careful not to simply posit 'polemic' wherever there is any overlap between the text of the Hebrew Bible and the known religious practices of her near neighbours. We cannot assume that any 'borrowing' (if, indeed, this is borrowing) functions as polemic against the prevalent religious practices of the day. Whilst such polemic may well be found frequently in the OT—texts may well be used polemically by simply twisting them slightly—it is difficult to assess conclusively when this is happening. On the other hand, nor can we simply assume that any degree of overlap with external practices proves that other ancient Near Eastern religious practices were commonplace within Israel. Just as one cannot automatically assume a function in polemic, nor should we automatically assume influence from other ANE practices into all Hebrew texts which appear to be similar to foreign religious texts of that period and area. Each case of

as a critique of false religious practice and as a commendation of the proper worship of Yahweh based in his torah. If this is the case then Ps 19 as a whole can be described as being typical of a Deuteronomic worldview.⁴⁷

4.2.2 Torah Theology

Regardless of whether or not we accept that Ps 19 functions as a polemic, the fact that the first strophe may or may not be described as typically Deuteronomic in itself is in no way detrimental to the overall argument that the psalm as a whole has a Deuteronomic flavour to it. The function of the first strophe seems to be setting nature, and the revelation which comes from it, as a foil for the celebration of the superior revelation that comes from Yahweh's torah. Much of the discussion of Ps 19 has centred upon the differences between the general and special revelation, and whether or not revelation from nature fails and is contrasted with the efficacious revelation that is the torah.⁴⁸ Many of the commentators who take a unitary approach to Ps 19 point out that the transition from the first strophe to the second strophe, regardless of the distinctions that are clearly being drawn, is not so abrupt. McCann, for example, reflects upon the conceptual link between the sun and its function in providing heat for the whole of the earth and the torah of Yahweh and its function in addressing the whole of life.

Verse 7a [MT v8a] would be translated better as: 'The instruction of the Lord is all-encompassing, restoring life.' As vv 4b-6 describe the all-encompassing circuit of the sun, so v. 7a asserts that God's *torah* is all-encompassing. Because 'nothing is hidden from its heat' (v. 6b), the sun constantly energises the earth and makes life possible. So it is, the psalmist claims with God's *torah*; it makes life possible. In short, when vv 7-10 are heard following vv 1-6, they present *torah* on a cosmic scale. God's instruction is built into the very structure of the universe, and life depends on *torah* as much as it depends on the daily rising of the sun.⁴⁹

The Deuteronomic background of Ps 19 is really unmistakable. No reader can reasonably contemplate the contents of this psalm without being struck by its high view of the torah. Some commentators have tried to present this as an alarming (late) legalistic redaction, but surely such an approach misses out on the poetic beauty of this psalm. This is not the commendation of legalism, this is not the law that kills—clearly the psalmist *delights* in the torah of Yahweh with great sincerity and passion.⁵⁰ This type of attitude resonates with the

similarity must be treated on its own merits, knee-jerk conclusions in favour of either polemic or borrowing are equally wrongheaded. Having said all that, in this particular case, Sarna makes a good argument that Ps 19 does, in fact, function as a polemic against foreign religious influence within Israel. If this is the case, then the argument for a Deuteronomic reading of Ps 19 is further strengthened.

⁴⁷ Such is the association with the Dtr worldview that Sarna views this polemic as a product of the Josianic reforms (*On the Book of Psalms*, 74).

⁴⁸ See, for example, Wagner, "Psalm 19 as Prayer," 250, *contra* Kraus, *Psalms*, 276. Ultimately, this argument revolves around Ps 19:4, a verse which, as we have seen already, is rather difficult to translate (see p 73 n. 40, above).

⁴⁹ McCann, *Psalms*, 752.

⁵⁰ Eaton, *Psalms of the Way*, 52.

patterns for piety suggested by Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic literature.⁵¹ It is also strongly reminiscent of one of the central themes of the introduction to the Psalter—delighting in the Torah (Ps 1:2). Here the psalmist (and the superscription, placement and content of this psalm suggest that the psalmist is the king⁵²) exemplifies one who really does delight in the torah of Yahweh. Ps 19 provides *an example* of the מֶלֶךְ who follows the pattern laid out in Ps 1 and offers a public hymn which expresses a joyous appreciation of the statutes and ordinances, the instruction, of Yahweh which have set Israel apart from the other nations (Deut 4:5-8, 32-40; Psalm 147:19-20). Miller puts it well:

Delight in the torah and obedience to it stand at the beginning and end of this collection in the torah entrance liturgies, Pss 15 and 24... *But that collection also places joy in the torah at the center in the form of Ps 19. Indeed, it is that psalm that best conveys the tone of Ps 1's delight in torah as it speaks of it being sweeter than honey and offering a great reward. The sheer pleasure of the torah that is suggested in the use of הֶפֶס in Ps 1 is echoed in Ps 19's valuing of it as more than fine gold and sweeter than honey.* The awareness of the good consequences of torah obedience that is present in the simile of the transplanted tree by the water, the prosperity of the torah keepers, and the Lord's preservation of their way is carried forward in Ps 19's claim of a great reward in keeping the torah. The meditation of the heart at the end of Ps 19 echoes the meditation on the torah of Ps 1 and tells us quite clearly what this meditation is. It is not a vacuous contemplation. It is the study, reflection, and keeping of torah... So this small collection takes its cue from the introduction given in Ps 1 and it centres in torah obedience, which is also the alpha and omega of these prayers.⁵³

Even cursory exegetical examination of Ps 19 answers two of our questions—firstly, Ps 19 clearly draws upon Deuteronomic emphases in its content and, secondly, it is intimately linked with Ps 1 by way of deliberate thematic connection. Torah is central to this psalm, and the presentation of a high view of the importance and vitality of Yahweh's Law is the ultimate aim of this psalm, a theme which is obviously significant to any DtrN redaction of the Hebrew Bible. Also Ps 19 provides the reader with an example of that which Pss 1 and 2 commend—the king as an exemplar of the one who keeps the torah of Yahweh.

4.2.3 Prayer of Ps 19 and Personal Piety

Another, perhaps less obvious, link between Ps 19 and Dtr theology is found in the heartfelt plea of the prayer in the third strophe. Much of the theology of the psalms which we have examined may seem simplistic in its presentation of piety—‘There are two ways: choose the right one!’ The prayer of Ps 19 adds another dimension to this equation in acknowledging the difficulty of walking in Yahweh's paths and declaring the psalmist's dependence upon God in order to be able to do so. ‘Who can discern his sins?’ (v 13a)... ‘acquit me’ (v 13b)... ‘keep your servant from deliberate sins’ (v 14). There is an acknowledgement of the psalmist's own inability to be right before his God, even given his

⁵¹ See previous chapter.

⁵² See the discussion of the indications of a royal background to Ps 19 below, p 82.

⁵³ Miller, “Kingship,” 127-8 (emphasis mine).

delight in the torah. Therefore he offers a plea for Yahweh to work on his behalf in order to help him follow the command to walk in his paths. This dichotomy between a call to piety and a recognition of one's inability to be pious without Yahweh's help is echoed in the idealistic, yet realistic, theology of Deuteronomy. McConville comments:

In both places [Deut 10:16 cf Deut 30:6] the author uses the metaphor of circumcision of the heart to convey the idea of true inward devotion to the way of Yahweh. In 10:16 we read a simple exhortation to Israel: 'Circumcise your hearts...' In 30:6, however, a shift occurs, so that now Yahweh himself declares that *he* will take an initiative in this respect: 'The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants,' resulting in Israel's ability to obey the exhortation to love him with all their heart and soul...⁵⁴

Such an attitude is reflected in the prayer of Ps 19, another indication that this poetic work is shaped by a mindset which has been influenced by the teaching of the Deuteronomist.

4.2.4 Ps 19 and Deut 4

Another theological link between Ps 19 and the text of Deuteronomy is its close association with the ideas of Deut 4. Mays points out that:

The theological basis of this description of Torah is the identification of the Sinai covenant and its teaching as the wisdom by which Israel is to live and find life (Deut 4:1-8). The terms for Torah are an eclectic list referring to whatever the poet viewed as a medium of the LORD's instruction. Four of the six are single, two are plural, indicating that the poet thinks of Torah as a comprehensive entity that is present also in particular precepts and legal sentences. The predicates as a group are those used for the qualities of what is righteous, right in relation to the LORD; note the way verse 9 [MT v 10] concludes with the statement, 'They are altogether righteous.' Righteousness inheres in the torah, and the righteousness of persons depends on it. The first four appended phrases recite the benefits of Torah; it bestows life, wisdom, and joy.⁵⁵

The whole approach of Ps 19 towards the torah of Yahweh resonates strongly with Moses' exhortation to the people prior to the conquest of the Promised Land, according to Deuteronomy's self-presentation. The idea is one of the torah of Yahweh being תמימה—being all-sufficient, addressing every area of life and practice, setting God's people apart from all others. This is a concept which is closely associated with the DtrN school, and the whole thrust of this psalm resonates strongly with this type of worldview—the torah is all-sufficient when combined with prayer to Yahweh for the task of godliness.

There are probably other lesser connections which could be drawn between Ps 19 and the Book of Deuteronomy, however, such exhaustiveness appears to be unnecessary. An argument has been offered which indicates that Ps 19 is thoroughly grounded in a

⁵⁴ J. G. McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomistic Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1993) 136-7.

⁵⁵ Mays, *Psalms*, 98-9 (emphasis added). This idea is also supported by McCann, *Psalms*, 752 and Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 105.

Deuteronomic worldview. The poem draws heavily upon the concepts which are most important to the Deuteronomic frame of mind and it also echoes the theology of Pss 1-2. Two more questions must be addressed briefly before moving on to assess Psalms 20 and 21; i.e., first, its relationship with the previous psalm in this psalm grouping; and then, secondly, further consideration of the relationship between Ps 19 and Pss 1-2.

4.3 Link Between Psalm 18 and Psalm 19

In order to establish that a particular theological redaction of the Psalter has taken place, one has to be able to show that psalms have been placed in *deliberate* juxtaposition. This, of course, is no easy task because it is virtually impossible to establish the practices or thought processes which resulted in the association of two or more psalms in a grouping. However, following the methodology suggested by Wilson and Howard,⁵⁶ the best way to establish the likelihood of deliberate concatenation is to examine these neighbouring psalms for lexical (key-word, *Leitwörter*) links and thematic repetition. In the previous essay, such links were indicated between Pss 1 and 2, and exegetical examination of Psalms 18 and 19 also gives reason to conclude that their juxtaposition is more than coincidental. The connections are multiple, varied, and spread throughout the psalm and the overlap is central to the *theology* of each psalm.

4.3.1 Superscriptions

It may seem slightly superfluous to mention the first of these connections, given the fact that effectively all of the psalms in Book I bear a Davidic superscription,⁵⁷ but from a canonical perspective the superscriptions have a significant role to play in the establishment of editorial activity.⁵⁸ Both of the psalms begin with the 7177 superscription, not that these are identical, however. The superscription of Ps 18 is one of the few which gives an implied historical setting to the circumstances of the psalm, whereas the superscription of Ps 19 contains the more standard form of Davidic superscription. However, these superscriptions indicate the royal background to these psalms—they reflect a setting in kingship and are indicative of the importance of ‘Yahweh’s anointed’ in the religious life of Israel and in the theology of these psalms. The figures of psalmist and king merge.

4.3.2 Appellatives

There are, however, more substantial correspondences between Psalms 18 and 19. One of the aspects of Ps 18 which was characterised as reflecting a deliberate link with the book of Deuteronomy was its use of appellatives. In particular, we saw that the psalmist focused these predicates for God around the central concept of God as his ‘Rock’. In Ps 18, this

⁵⁶ See above Chapter 1, pp 10-13.

⁵⁷ See below, p 48.

⁵⁸ See Childs, *IOTS*, 521 and Wilson, *Editing*.

was reflected particularly in the words—סלעי and צורי—and the psalmist describes Yahweh as צורי again in Ps 19:15. Once more the name is used with the first person singular prefix, making clear in Ps 19 the psalmist's claim that Yahweh is *his* Rock and Refuge, just as was the case in Ps 18.

4.3.3 Characteristics of Yahweh and His Torah

Another strong connection between these two psalms is the attribution of certain characteristics to Yahweh in Ps 18 and the self same characteristics to his torah in Ps 19. In fact, Allen suggests that a chiastic structure is formed by this repetition.⁵⁹ Ps 18:27 shows Yahweh to be pure/innocent (תתברר); Ps 18:29 declares that Yahweh gives light (תאיר); and Ps 18:31 declares that Yahweh's way is perfect (תמים). Correspondingly, Ps 19 attributes exactly the same characteristics to the torah, but in (more or less) reverse order—v 8 the torah is described as perfect (תמימה); v 9 in the torah gives light (מאירת); and v 9 also describes the torah as being pure (ברה). Whether or not the chiastic structure is justifiable (the sentence structure of v 9 means that it does not work very neatly), the repetition of these attributes in succeeding psalms is quite remarkable and provides a further indication of deliberate editorial association of the psalms.

4.3.4 Servant of the Lord

Further royal overtones are found in the use of the phrase 'servant of the Lord' (עבד יהוה). At first sight, such an association may seem somewhat tenuous, as the phrase 'servant of the Lord' is found very often throughout the Hebrew Bible. Of course, this is true in narrative passages, but it should be noted that up until this point in the canonical Psalter the noun form of עבד has not been used at all. It is used for the first time in the superscription of Ps 18 which describes the psalm as being of David 'of the servant of Yahweh' (לעבד יהוה, Ps 18:1) and then in Ps 19:12, 14 the psalmist describes himself as 'your servant' (עבדך). Once more, this is indicative of a certain attitude—the king is pointing out his own subservience towards Yahweh, and this is the sign of one who is truly צדיק.⁶⁰ The noun form of 'servant' does not appear again within the Psalms 15-24 collection, so it appears that this repetition can reasonably be seen as another indication of deliberate linking.

In any case, to hear Psalm 19 as a unity is to appreciate its bold and sweeping claims about God's torah, 'instruction' and to ensure that, Psalm 19 intends to teach. Its instructional intent may be emphasised by its placement within a series of royal psalms of (Psalms 18, 20-21); *that is, Psalm 19, especially verses 7-14, describes the orientation to life that faithful kings were supposed to embody and model for the people (see Psalms 18:20-30; 21:7; note especially the repetition of 'blameless' in 18:23, 25 and 19:13).*⁶¹

⁵⁹ Allen, *David as Exemplar*, 546.

⁶⁰ Miller, "Kingship," 128. Miller argues that the significance of this phrase is increased because it is applied to two figures—king and torah-keeper—effectively merging these two concepts and portraying the king as an exemplar of piety. We shall discuss this idea further in the chapter on *Torah, Kingship and Democratisation*.

⁶¹ Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 140-2 (emphasis mine). As Sheppard and Allen ("David as Exemplar," 544-6) point out, the placement of Ps 19 amidst a group of royal psalms indicates the likelihood that this poem is

4.4 Association of Ps 19 with Pss 1 & 2

Psalm 19, in very explicit ways, echoes the theology of the Psalter's introduction by way of the repetition of the two main themes of Psalms 1 and 2: torah and kingship.

4.4.1 Expansion of Torah Theme

An important comparison between Ps 19 and Pss 1-2 is the expansion of the concept of torah. Verse 8 introduces the torah of Yahweh as being תמימה and then the succeeding verses expand upon this statement using various synonyms for torah in order to demonstrate its completeness and perfection. These synonyms provide an expansion upon the singularity of Ps 1, where, rhetorically speaking, the simple repetition of תורה (Ps 1:2) stands in contrast to the multiplicity of the ways of the wicked (Ps 1:1).⁶² Ps 19 takes the concept of torah and celebrates its *fullness* by using such terms as עדות (statutes), פקודים (precepts), מצות (commands), יראת (fear) and משפטים (judgements). These are words used of the torah of Yahweh both in the book of Deuteronomy⁶³ and are also used extensively as synonyms for תורה in the one remaining torah psalm, Ps 119.⁶⁴ These terms reflect the holistic nature of torah being referred to in the Psalter, including all the different types of legal text and much more. It is the instruction of Yahweh as it is most broadly defined which is being celebrated in Ps 19.⁶⁵

4.4.2 Ps 19 as Example of Delight in Yahweh's Torah

It is interesting to notice that Ps 19 appears to function as a practical example of the theology of Pss 1 and 2. This is a hymn written for the express purpose of delighting in the torah of Yahweh, in accordance with the exhortation of Ps 1. The image presented by Ps 19 is of the psalmist-king, clearly *delighting* in the torah of Yahweh, just as Ps 1 commends (Ps 19:11 cf Ps 1:2).⁶⁶

4.4.3 Conceptual Associations

There are further intellectual connections between Ps 19 and Pss 1-2: (1) The king's awareness that following in the way of righteousness, as reflected in Yahweh's revelation, brings great reward (Ps 19:12b cf. Ps 1:3). (2) The king's acknowledgement that wisdom is found

meant to be read as the hymn and prayer of the king. The use of the term 'your servant' (אבדך), a phrase commonly associated with the royal office, and the references to זֶהָב and כֶּסֶף in verse 11 are also possible indications of a royal background to Ps 19.

⁶² Y. Gitay, "Psalm 1 and the Rhetoric of Religious Argumentation," *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. L. J. de Regt, J. de Waard and J. P. Fokkelman; Assen: Van Gorcum and Eisenbrauns, 1996) 235-6.

⁶³ See, for example, the kingship law itself. Deut 17:18-19 appears to use the ideas of התורה and החקים in such a fashion. Other examples would be Deut 30:10 and 33:10 which use the same synonyms as are found in Pss 19 and 119 in the same sort of way.

⁶⁴ As we shall see in the next chapter, each eight-line stanza is dominated by תורה and its synonyms.

⁶⁵ Mays, *Psalms*, 98.

⁶⁶ Ashburn, "Creation and Torah," 246.

in the instruction of the Lord (Ps 19:12a cf. Ps 2:10), thus contrasting the psalmist-king of Ps 19 with the rebellious kings and rulers of Ps 2 who would reject this wisdom. (3) The final strophe's emphasis upon the importance of right meditation, an idea which is central to Ps 1 (Ps 19:15 cf. Ps 1:2, the root word *הגה* is used in both psalms). The words of the psalm and the meditation which underpins the public proclamation of delight in the torah poem are entrusted to the Lord, seeking his acceptance and commendation, in a way which is similar to the challenge of Ps 1 that the *צדיק* should meditate on the word of Yahweh day and night. There are strong links between theology of Ps 19, which lies at the heart of this collection of psalms, and the theology of the introduction to the Psalter.

4.4.4 Kingship Theme

The superscription suggests that Ps 19 is a psalm of the king—this is his poem, his delight, his prayer. This fact obviously resonates with the dual emphases of Pss 1 and 2. Ps 1 directs the people of God to the understanding that righteousness is only to be found by way of torah-obedience and Ps 2 emphasises the importance of the 'anointed one' of the Lord in his universal plans. Through the repetition of key words, the two psalms are linked intimately—the king and obedience to the torah. Once again, we see the association of these two themes in Ps 19. Perhaps in even more explicit terms, we see again the figure of the 'messiah' (Ps 18:51⁶⁷) mentioned in the same breath as this overflowing celebration of the importance of torah. Ps 19 takes up the theology of Pss 1 and 2 and presents the king in accordance with the ideal of that introduction: that is, as the torah-keeper. In the Psalms 18-21 the king is the central figure, and he is presented as the exemplar for the people, the one who keeps the torah. Gerald Sheppard picks up on this fact when he writes concerning Pss 1 & 2:

There is a high degree of correspondence in the substance of these two psalms... [and] by his associations with Ps 2, David... is identified fully in accord with the ideals of Ps 1. The entire Psalter, therefore, is made to stand theologically in association with David as a source book of guidance for the way of the righteous.⁶⁸

4.5 Conclusion re. Psalm 19

As has been mentioned, it is difficult to prove conclusively that poetic texts have been deliberately placed alongside one another. However, the overlap which exists between Psalms 18 and 19 is remarkable. Wagner states that this linking between Pss 18 and 19, 'involves an impressive number of connections of the vocabulary and thought'.⁶⁹ Also, this association occurs at points which are central to the theology of these compositions. This seems to indicate the presence of editorial activity in juxtaposing the psalms and that they have in fact been placed alongside each other in order to reflect themes which were

⁶⁷ The connection between Pss 18 and 19 is discussed more fully above.

⁶⁸ Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 140-2.

⁶⁹ Wagner, "Psalm 19 as Prayer," 257 n. 52.

important to the editors. As with the introduction to the Psalter, the themes which are being emphasised are kingship and torah. This connection is further emphasised by the bracketing function of Psalms 20 and 21, giving a kingship-law-kingship focus at the very centre of Pss 15-24. Now we shall move on to this closing bracket, by examining Pss 20 and 21 together.

5. Analysis of Psalms 20 and 21

BHS

Psalms 20

לְמַנְצִיחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
יַעֲנֶה יְהוָה בְּיוֹם צָרָה יִשְׁגָּבֶה שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵי
יַעֲקֹב:
יִשְׁלַח-עֲזָרָה מִקֹּדֶשׁ וּמִצִּיּוֹן יִסְעָדָה:
יִזְכֹּר כָּל-מִנְחֹתָהּ וְעוֹלֹתָהּ יִדְשָׁנָה סֶלָה:
יִתֵּן-לָהּ כָּל-בָּבֶהּ וְכָל-עֲצָתָהּ יִמְלֵא:
נִרְנָנָה בִּישׁוּעָתָהּ וּבְשֵׁם-אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִדְגַל
יִמְלֵא יְהוָה כָּל-מִשְׁאֲלוֹתֶיהָ:

עָתָה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי הוֹשִׁיעַ יְהוָה מִשִּׁיחוֹ יַעֲנֶהוּ
מִשְׁמֵי קֹדֶשׁוֹ בַּגְּבוּרֹת יֵשַׁע יְמִינוֹ:
אֵלֶּה בָּרֶכֶב וְאֵלֶּה בַּסּוּסִים וְאֲנַחְנוּ
בְּשֵׁם-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִזְכִּיר:
הִמָּה כָּרְעוּ וְנִפְּלוּ וְאֲנַחְנוּ קָמְנוּ וְנִתְעוֹדָד:

יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם-קָרְאֵנוּ:

Psalms 21

לְמַנְצִיחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:
יְהוָה בָּעֲזָהּ יִשְׂמַח-מֶלֶךְ וּבִישׁוּעָתָהּ
מֶה-יִגִּיל מְאֹד:
תַּאֲוֹת לִבּוֹ נָתַתָּה לוֹ וְאַרְשָׁת שְׂפָתָיו
בִּלְ-מִנְעֵת סֶלָה:
כִּי-תִקְדַּמְנוּ בִּרְכוֹת טוֹב תָּשִׁית לְרֹאשׁוֹ
עֲטֹרַת פָּז:
חַיִּים שָׁאַל מִמֶּךָ נָתַתָּה לוֹ אַרְךָ יָמִים עוֹלָם
וָעֶד:
גָּדוֹל כְּבוֹדוֹ בִּישׁוּעָתָהּ הוֹד וְהָדָר תִּשְׁוֶה
עָלָיו:
כִּי-תִשְׁתַּיֵּהוּ בִּרְכוֹת לָעֶד תַּחֲדֶהוּ בְּשִׁמְחָה
אֶת-פָּנָיֶה:
כִּי-הִמְלִךְ בְּטִיחַ בִּיהוָה וּבְחָסֶד עָלָיו
בִּלְ-יָמוּט:

Translation

1 To the director of music. A psalm of David.
2 May Yahweh answer you in the day of your distress;
May the name of the God of Jacob set you on high.
3 May he send help for you from the sanctuary and may he sustain you from Zion.
4 May he remember all your sacrifices and may he accept your whole burnt offerings. Selah.
5 May he give you according to your heart and fulfill all you counsel.
6 We will shout for joy in your salvation and we will raise up banners in the name of our God; Yahweh will fulfill all your requests.

7 Now I know that Yahweh saves his anointed, he answers him from his sanctuary, with the strength of deliverance by his right hand.
8 Some call upon chariots and some call upon horses, but as for us, we will call upon the name of Yahweh our God.
9 They bow down and they fall down, but as for us, we rise up and we are restored.

10 Save the king, O Yahweh. Answer us in the day when we call out.

1 To the director of music. A psalm of David.
2 O Yahweh, in your strength, the king rejoices;
And in your salvation, how greatly he rejoices.
3 You give him the desire of his heart;
And you have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah.
4 For you come before him with rich blessings; and you place on his head a crown of pure gold.
5 He asked for life from you and you gave it to him; Length of days forever and ever.
6 Great is his honour in your salvation; Majesty and honour are placed upon him.
7 For you have placed upon him blessing forever; You cause him to rejoice with the joy of your presence.
8 For the king trusts in Yahweh; And because of the steadfast love of the Most High, he will not be shaken.

תִּמְצָא יָדְךָ לְכָל-אֹיְבֶיךָ יְמִינְךָ תִּמְצָא
 שְׂנְאֶיךָ:
 תִּשְׁתַּמּוּ כְּתִנּוּר אֵשׁ לֶעֶת פְּנֶיךָ יְהוָה בְּאִפּוֹ
 יִבְלָעֵם וְתֹאכְלֵם אֵשׁ:
 פְּרִימּוֹ מֵאֶרֶץ תֵּאֲבֹד וְזֶרַע מִבְּנֵי אָדָם:
 כִּי-נָטוּ עָלֶיךָ רָעָה חָשְׁבוּ מְזֻמָּה בִּלְיוֹכְלוֹ:
 כִּי תִשְׁתַּמּוּ שָׂכָם בְּמִיתָרֶיךָ תִּכּוֹנֵן
 עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם:
 רוּמָה יְהוָה בְּעֹזְךָ נִשְׁיָרָה וְנִזְמָרָה גְבוּרָתְךָ:

9 Your hand will find your enemies;
 Your right hand will find those who hate you.
 10 You shall put them, as it were, in a fiery
 furnace, in the time of your appearing O
 Yahweh, in your anger you will swallow them;
 You will consume them with fire.
 11 You shall cause their fruit to perish from the
 earth; their seed from the sons of man.
 12 For they incline towards evil against you;
 They plot wickedness but they will not succeed
 13 You will make them turn their backs;
 With bowstrings you will aim upon their faces.
 14 Be exalted, O Yahweh, in your strength!
 We will sing and rejoice in your strength!

Whilst Psalms 18 and 19 have drawn much attention from the scholarly community, the same cannot be said for Psalms 20 and 21.⁷² Like a small country located between international superpowers, Psalms 20 and 21 do not command the same sort of fascination as Psalms 18 and 19, on one side, and Psalms 22 and 23, on the other. Whilst they are probably never going to be top of the ‘favourite psalms’ chart, a canonical approach to the Psalter does increase the significance of these psalms beyond that suggested by the attention which they have received thus far.⁷³ The bracketing function around Ps 19 which the psalms fulfil provides added confirmation of the themes which were important to the editors of the Psalter. As with Psalms 18 and 19, there are several questions which we need to ask of these texts in order to assess whether or not they do in fact confirm the possibility of a Dtr torah-kingship redaction. First, do these psalms reflect a background in Deuteronomic theology? Secondly, are there signs of deliberate concatenation with Psalms 18 and 19? Thirdly, can these psalms be said to confirm the theological priorities suggested by Pss 1 and 2 as the introduction to the Psalter?

5.1 Association of Psalms 20 and 21

However, before we begin to discuss these questions, there is a preliminary issue which needs to be addressed. Namely, why are these psalms being discussed together? They are, after all, quite clearly separate poetic compositions? The rationale behind this is largely based upon the suggestions of Auffret and Miller that the psalm grouping, Psalms 15-24, follows a chiastic or envelope structure.⁷⁴ Their suggestion is that these psalms were treated as a unit by the editors of this collection to act as a chiastic counterbalance to Ps 18.

⁷² In terms of the text of these two psalms there are no major difficulties with regard to the MT.

⁷³ Interestingly, Mitchell makes a point that these psalms—like other royal psalms—should be in significant editorial positions, but are not. I would suggest that the positioning of these oft-ignored psalms is very meaningful for establishing the theological concerns of the Psalter’s redactors because of the role with they play in indicating this torah-kingship link which appears to associate the eschatological hope in a coming Davidic king with the Deuteronomic Law of the King. See Mitchell, *Message*, 244.

⁷⁴ Miller, “Kingship”; Auffret, *La Sagesse* (see above, pp 58-59).

The thematic similarity of content between these three psalms is marked. Each of them is clearly a royal psalm, each of them involves the king being faced with enemies, each of them deals with the king's total dependence upon Yahweh's strength in the face of these (probably) military challenges. Such close thematic overlap in juxtaposed psalms is somewhat unusual, which leads the reader to consider the possibility of deliberate placement and association of these psalms. Almost all of the commentators on the Psalms comment upon the similarity in content of Psalms 20 and 21⁷⁵ (as we shall see, many of the commentators also link these psalms with Ps 18 and Ps 2)—not that this fact is in itself a conclusive argument for association—but this association has been widely recognised. It is difficult to say why the editors would include one double psalm in a chiastic pattern where single compositions apply in each of the other categories. Probably, the most likely reason for doing so is that, Ps 18 being one of the longest psalms in the Psalter, the editors, accordingly, felt that one short royal psalm of similar thematic focus would not provide a sufficiently lengthy counterbalance to this poem, so Psalms 20 and 21 were placed together to provide a more substantial response. Another possibility is, of course, simply that these psalms were known to the editors as having the same type of content and, hence, all three were associated by way of close proximity of placement within the Psalter—separated only by that which they saw as being central to true kingship, the torah of the Lord. Whilst it is impossible to say conclusively why the psalms have been linked in this way, their similarity in tone, content, genre and setting makes this association a reasonable one.

5.2 Deuteronomic Content of Pss 20 and 21

The basis in a Deuteronomic worldview shines through in Psalms 20 and 21, just as it does in Psalms 18 and 19, confirming the suggestion that the primary background to Psalms 18-21 is to be found in a Deuteronomic view of kingship and personal piety. There are a number of ideas within the content of Psalms 20 and 21 which could be described as 'classically Deuteronomic': the concept of name theology (Ps 20:2, 6, 8); the theme of total dependence upon Yahweh, particularly expressed in anti-militaristic terms which echo the limitations imposed upon the king by Deuteronomy's Kingship Law; the theology of the two ways, and several other themes. We also find recurrences of motifs which are prominent in Pss 1-2 and in Pss 18-19, indicating the likelihood of deliberate concatenation within this psalm grouping and also of the editorial association of Psalms 18-21 with Psalms 1-2.

⁷⁵ Mays, *Psalms*, 90; McCann, *Psalms*, 757; Kraus, *Psalms*, 280-1. Kirkpatrick comments, 'The 20th and 21st Psalms are closely related in structure and contents. Both are liturgical Psalms: the first is an intercession, the second a thanksgiving. In both the king, the representative of Jehovah and the representative of the people, is the prominent figure; and the salvation or victory which Jehovah bestows upon him is the leading thought,' (*Psalms*, 106).

5.2.1 Name-Theology

The idea of דש -theology is an extremely significant one in the book of Deuteronomy. Patrick Miller sums this up in his analysis of the third commandment in Deut 5:11 when he writes, ‘In Deuteronomic theology, the name of God in a very serious way represents the presence of the reality of God’.⁷⁶ The psalmist-king is the object of the prayers of the people in the first stanza of Ps 20, and the people pray for his protection in ‘the name of the God of Jacob’ (ישגברך שם אלהי יעקב). This seems to be an appeal based upon Yahweh’s real presence (in some special sense?) with his messiah (cf v 7). The same sort of concept is repeated in Ps 20:6, and finds its culmination in Ps 20:8 where the psalmist and the people⁷⁷ declare that, whilst some trust in military might, they ‘will trust in the name of Yahweh our God’ (ואנחנו בשם־יהוה אלהינו נזכיר). The fact that it is the name of Yahweh that is being called upon sets the theology of this psalm somewhat apart from the norm. Proclamations of trust in Yahweh are common in the Psalter, yet this declaration of trust in the *name* of Yahweh adds a Deuteronomic nuance to the theology of this psalm. Kraus comments:

Conspicuous is the heavily profiled דש -theology, which leaves the impression of a Deuteronomic slant... The דש of God is mentioned three times in Psalm 20: vv. 1b, 5a, 7b. The underlying thought here is the conception related to Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic writings that Yahweh himself is enthroned in heaven, while on earth only his דש is present (R. Kittel; O. Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament*, BZAW 64 [1934], 46). But the דש does not, as in the heathen world round about, operate as a magic power... It is the protective power working on earth with which Yahweh, upon the king’s request, can answer and prove his presence. This ‘name theology,’ which is closely connected with the central sanctuary and with the *praesentia Dei* there active, plays an important role in the Psalms: Pss. 44:5; 54:6; 118:10-12; 124:8.⁷⁸

Given the battle context of these psalms it is possible that the reference to the ‘name of Yahweh’ stands in contrast to the physical images of gods that other ANE nations would

⁷⁶ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 78. See, for example, Deut 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23-24 etc. Of course, there is much debate as to the essence of the concept’s meaning in Deuteronomy studies: Why is ‘the name of Yahweh’ such a prominent thought in Deuteronomy? What is its particular significance as compared simply to the presence of Yahweh himself? What is its particular connection with the central sanctuary? Analysis of these questions in any detail goes far beyond the remit of this thesis, but suffice it to say that this is an idea drawn from Deuteronomic theology.

⁷⁷ The role of the king in what seems to be a liturgical hymn of the community is very significant in this psalm (see Mays, *Psalms*, 101). How the ‘messiah’ and worshipping community relate to each another will be discussed in Chapter 7, *Torah, Kingship and Democratisation*.

⁷⁸ Kraus, *Psalms*, 279-80. In this quote Kraus draws upon an understanding of the ‘name of Yahweh’ which has often been presented in the secondary literature discussing Deuteronomy: Yahweh himself really lives in heaven but his ‘name’ (a kind of divine hypostasis) dwells on earth. I would suggest that such an understanding of ‘name’ theology does not represent the true essence of this idea in either Deuteronomy or the Psalms. The idea of ‘name’ seems to be most closely associated with God’s presence in the midst of his people and the legitimacy of his rule over them (see J. G. McConville and J. G. Millar, *Time and Place in Deuteronomy* [JSOTSup 179; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994] 111-6). Certainly, Pss 20 and 21 indicate no conflict between the idea of Yahweh’s real presence in heaven *and* in his Temple: Ps 20:3, for example, indicates that Yahweh (not his name) ‘will send help from the sanctuary and sustain [the king] from Zion’. The use of ‘name’ in these two psalms is best understood as a metaphor representing the real presence of God with his people. Hence, I make use of this quote from Kraus in support of the Dtr connection in Pss 20-21’s use of דש -theology, but reject his understanding of that Dtr concept.

carry into battle. In this way, the Dtr emphasis on the ‘essential spirituality of God’⁷⁹ (as opposed to any visible form) is the essence of the usage of אֱלֹהִים theology in Ps 20.

5.2.2 Dependence upon Yahweh

The above declarations of trust in Yahweh are significant not simply because of the appropriation of Deuteronomic אֱלֹהִים -theology, but also in their presentation of total dependence and trust in God alone, which—as we have already seen—reflects attitudes borne out of a Deuteronomic mindset. This is a strong theme in both Ps 20 and Ps 21. In Ps 21, the theological importance of dependence upon Yahweh’s strength is emphasised by an inclusio where the king celebrates in ‘your strength, O Yahweh’ (יְהוָה בְּעֹזְךָ , Ps 21:2, 14). Each time the phrase בְּעֹזְךָ (‘in your strength’) is combined with the psalmist’s use of the vocative in his praise of Yahweh. This bracketing device emphasises the importance of the dependence theme to the theology of Ps 21. As we have seen and mentioned above, this attitude of total trust in and dependence upon Yahweh as the sole source of victory over enemies and as the sole source of the ability to be צַדִּיק is one which finds its roots in the explicit commands and exhortations of the book of Deuteronomy and in the narrative encouragements of the DtrH. Creach points out that, ‘The idea [total dependence upon Yahweh as a virtue] occurs in other parts of the Old Testament, such as the holy war tradition. For example, Deut 20:1-4 declares that Israel should rely completely on Yahweh for victory... Israel’s primary role in holy war is to trust in Yahweh’s ability to win the battle.’⁸⁰ The idea of seeking refuge in Yahweh is central to a proper understanding of the meaning of Pss 20 and 21.

5.2.3 Dependence in Yahweh vs. Dependence in Military Power

Ps 20 emphasises one particular nuance of this dependence upon Yahweh which seems to be drawn directly from the kingship law of Deut 17. Ps 20:8 declares that:

אלה ברכב ואלה בסוסים ואנחנו בשם־יהוה אלהינו נזכיר

Some trust in chariots and some in horses;

But as for us, we will trust in the name of Yahweh our God.

Clearly, this declaration of the people’s dependence upon Yahweh in the face of opposition is interesting in its anti-militaristic content. The worshipping community declares that their trust shall be in Yahweh rather than military technology, and this reflects one of the three limitations which are placed upon the king in the kingship law of Deut 17:14-20. Deut 17:16-17 prohibits the Israelite king from having many wives (with the accompanying dangers of apostasy), from possessing great wealth and from ‘acquiring great numbers of horses for himself’ ($\text{רַק לֹא־יִרְבֶּה־לוֹ סוּסִים}$). Whilst this prohibition may also be connected

⁷⁹ McConville, *Grace in the End*, 126.

⁸⁰ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 57 f. 21.

with the accumulation of wealth, it seems more likely that this is a distinct prohibition against the raising of a permanent army and trusting in its strength rather than Yahweh's ability to save his people. Miller comments upon the king's restricted authority:

[T]hese restrictions and injunctions serve the main purpose of Deuteronomy, *to enjoin a full and undivided allegiance to the Lord*. The primary commandment is everywhere present in these verses. Limitation of horses and wealth had definite religious implications... where horses along with wealth (cf v 17) are seen as things that lead to pride, to loss of awareness of the need to trust in Yahweh, and so to unfaithfulness and apostasy.⁸¹

Other commentators pick up on the importance of this anti-militaristic tone with in Ps 20:

The liturgy of Psalm 20 is characterised by the faith that Yahweh's chosen king can endure only through the *יְשׁוּעָה* and through the protective power of the divine *עֲזָרָה* in the decisions of war. Because all human potential in weapons accomplishes nothing, the congregation—through the priestly singers—prays for the ruler. It receives the promise, and with it the certainty, that Yahweh is intervening (v 6) 'from heaven above' and is helping the king.⁸²

'These by chariots and by horses.' These were the chief reliance of the ancient enemies of Israel in their wars from the earliest times. Israel, living chiefly in hilly and mountainous districts, had little use for them. The law of the king (Deut 17:16) forbids them, although Solomon and other luxurious monarchs made use of them. The sentiment of the prophets was ever against their use... Yahweh is the chief, if not the sole, author of victory to His anointed king and people.⁸³

The combination of these two characteristics—total trust in Yahweh and a rejection of anything which would detract from that commitment—is, as Miller states above, typical of a Deuteronomic frame of mind. Yahweh reigns, not only in Israel, but also among the nations (i.e. the 'enemies' of Pss 20-21), accordingly his people are to trust in him implicitly and without duality of trust. Such is the theology of Psalms 20 and 21, and the similarity of this theology to the teachings of Deuteronomy and especially the Kingship Law is striking.

5.2.4 Salvation/Victory Belonging to Yahweh

This Deuteronomic attitude of dependence upon Yahweh is seen further in the use of the *יְשׁוּעָה* semantic field throughout these two psalms. *יְשׁוּעָה*, or one of its derivatives, appears in Ps 20:6, 7 (twice), 10; and also in Ps 21:2, 6. Every usage of this word is to acknowledge the salvation of Yahweh, rather than to celebrate the wondrous victories of the king as was common in the ancient Near East. Once more, this 'subset' of the idea of total dependence upon Yahweh, is one which derives its origin from the Dtr idea of the absolute sovereignty of Yahweh in all the affairs of his people, including sovereignty over other (foreign) nations, who are represented in the figure of the enemies (*אֹיְבִים*) in these psalms.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148.

⁸² Kraus, *Psalms*, 282.

⁸³ Briggs, *Psalms*, 180. See also Craigie, *Psalms*, 186-7 and Mays, *Psalms*, 102 for similar analysis suggesting that Ps 20:8 reflects the teaching of Deut 17:16.

⁸⁴ As we shall see below, this is also a significant linking feature within the psalm grouping currently under discussion.

The importance of the king in the psalm is clear. He is the LORD's anointed (see Psalm 2). He is the central person on whom the intercession of his people is concentrated and for whose prayers they seek a divine answer. It is his salvation from and victory over threatening danger that will bring them joy. They are bound into the hope of his salvation. But in the theology of the psalm, the king is not the savior but the saved. The saving victory will be God's work.⁸⁵

This approach found in Pss 20 and 21 coincides with the Deuteronomic theology of holy war. Whilst the significance of holy war as a part of Dtr theology can be over-emphasised, this idea is part of the Dtr frame of mind. Holy war in Deuteronomy and the DtrH is 'a reminder to Israel that they gain nothing in their own strength, but only as a gift of God.'⁸⁶ This is precisely the emphasis of these two psalms (see, for example, 20:7-8, 10; 21:2, 8, 9-13) which plead for and rejoice in the Lord's salvation.

5.2.5 Covenant Theme in Ps 21

The pivotal motif of kingship in the DtrH is the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7. This notion is a constantly recurring theme throughout the historical books, much like the signature refrain of a West End musical. Many of the central theological questions which arise out of the DtrH are shaped by the Davidic Covenant: Why was the kingdom allowed to divide? Why were so many of the kings adjudged godless? Why, ultimately, was the Davidic dynasty allowed to fail? So many of the 'big issues' of the DtrH are grounded in the question of Yahweh's promises made to David and his descendants. Undoubtedly, this is one of the most important themes in the Old Testament, and is central to the theology of the Deuteronomistic History.

Given the backdrop in Deuteronomic theology which we find in this psalm grouping, perhaps, it should not be surprising that we find allusion to the Davidic Covenant in Ps 21. Combined with the confession of total dependence upon Yahweh, the content of Ps 21 is strongly reminiscent of the language of covenant.⁸⁷ Add to this the presence of the king in this psalm, it seems likely that the reader was meant to make association with 2 Samuel 7. Much of the psalm revolves around the special relationship which exists between Yahweh and his messiah, and many of the commentators highlight verses 7-8 as being the focal point and structural centre of the psalm.⁸⁸

The language of the declaration is the language of covenant, especially notable in the words *נָטַב* and *יָדָה*, and these two words sum up, in a sense, the entire theology of the psalm. There are two partners to the covenant, God and Israel (represented by the king); God's fundamental character in the covenant relationship is lovingkindness (*יָדָה*), and the king's

⁸⁵ Mays, *Psalms*, 101.

⁸⁶ McConville, *Grace in the End*, 140. See also Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 158-9.

⁸⁷ This is seen particularly in the language of verse 7-8 which speak of Yahweh's eternal blessing of the king and of the king's trust in response to Yahweh's *יָדָה*, ideas which resonate with the presentation of the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7. This is later contrasted with the impermanence of the offspring of the king's enemies in verse 11.

⁸⁸ McCann, *Psalms*, 757.

response was to be one of trust (בטח). The former is unchangeable, but the latter must be constantly maintained if the covenant relationship is to prosper. Thus, in this solemn moment in the progress of liturgy, the fundamentals of the covenant are made clear and affirmed.⁸⁹

Psalms 20 and 21 seem to indicate that the Davidic king is still under the blessing of the Davidic Covenant, making its retention in the (post-exilic) final form of the Psalter all the more remarkable. There must have been a notable sense of dissonance for the post-exilic readers of this psalm. This would verge upon the ridiculous, were it not for the fact that there was a sense of expectation that the Davidic throne would one day be restored. Kirkpatrick points out that the Targum replaces 'king' (מלך) with 'king-messiah' (מלך-משיח), reflecting the sense of eschatological expectation that a new and renewed 'anointed one' would be restored to rule over Israel.⁹⁰ It does appear that the final form of the Psalter retains a sense of hope concerning the figure of the Davidic king and his covenant with Yahweh. Not that the Psalter does not express its doubts about what has happened to the Davidic line (see, for example, Ps 89), but the retention of the royal psalms in the canonical Psalter is significant, reflecting a hope that the covenant is not over for good, but that it shall be reconstituted. It is difficult to imagine the community of Israel singing the words, 'For you have placed upon him blessings forever' (כִּי־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶהוּ בְרָכּוֹת לְעֹד, Ps 21:7), merely as a historical relic of past glories. Rather, this is likely retained as a reflection of future hope based in the ideal of kingship and the king's relationship with Yahweh.⁹¹

Once more, there are perhaps other aspects of Psalms 20 and 21 which could be described as Deuteronomic,⁹² however, such exhaustive analysis is, perhaps, unnecessary. The aim was to show that there is a general and readily observable Deuteronomic milieu which shapes the presentation of reality and spirituality found in these psalms, and hopefully this has been done. Two questions remain before some conclusions should be drawn from this analysis. First, the relationship of Psalms 20 and 21 with the preceding psalms of this collection (i.e. Pss 18 and 19); and, secondly, the relationship between Psalms 20 and 21 and the introduction to the Psalter.

5.3 Association with Psalms 18 and 19

Many commentators link Pss 18, 20 and 21, either because of formal similarities (i.e. they are all royal psalms) or because of similarities in their content (i.e. each of these three psalms deals with the king's reliance upon Yahweh in the face of battle).⁹³ We have shown above that Ps 18 is closely connected with Ps 19—the extent of the lexical connec-

⁸⁹ Craigie, *Psalms*, 192.

⁹⁰ Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 110.

⁹¹ Seitz, *Word Without End*, 165.

⁹² For example, Craigie draws a link between the view of history presented in Psalm 21 and the Dtr view of history past, present and future (see his *Psalms*, 193).

⁹³ Mays, *Psalms*, 90; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 138; McCann, *Psalms*, 758-9.

tions between the two psalms is such that coincidental repetition seems more far-fetched than the idea of deliberate placement. Psalms 20 and 21 are integrally linked with Ps 18 (which is linked closely with Ps 19), therefore it seems unnecessary to analyse in great detail the similarities which exist, as this would involve much repetition of ground already covered. Perhaps it is sufficient to point out the themes which are common to all four psalms. The figure of the king—according to both the superscriptions and the content of each psalm—is common to all four psalms, as is the focus upon his (and Israel's) total dependence upon Yahweh. Beyond this, we see that a prayer motif is central to all four psalms, as is the idea of the two ways. Over and above these themes which are found in all four psalms, we see that there are several themes which are to be found in perhaps two or three of the psalms, but not necessarily in all four: for example, the context of battle and enemies in Psalms 18, 20 and 21, or the prominence of the torah theme in Psalms 18 and 19. All in all, exegetical study of these four psalms indicates the likelihood that they have been deliberately placed alongside each other to serve the theological purposes of the redactors of the Psalter. It is my suggestion that the theological purpose of these editors was to point to an ideal of kingship in their presentation of the type of eschatological king the people should expect. This figure was not going to be like the kings of the past, but a king who was grounded in love for the torah of Yahweh, commitment to him and dependence upon him, as the Dtr Law of the King directs. Furthermore, this figure of the ideal king also served as an example of the ideal Israelite, an exemplar of piety—the reader is challenged by this redaction to follow 'the king's' example and to truly love Yahweh his God.

5.4 Association with Psalms 1 and 2

In one sense, it should not be a surprise to find similarities in content between psalms of similar genre,⁹⁴ yet the links which exist between Psalms 20-21 and Pss 1-2 go beyond merely formal considerations. Undoubtedly, the liturgical setting of the covenant community's worship will, again, lead to some overlap in style and (perhaps) vocabulary, however, the important question when comparing Psalms 1 and 2 and Psalms 20 and 21 is: 'Can one observe central theological connection?' Are these psalms saying the same thing about Israel's king? Do they emphasise the same characteristics? Do they stress the same priorities? Form and liturgy are important considerations which associate individual poems, but there is also a deliberate attempt to link these psalms *theologically* in the final form of the Psalter. This theological association includes their placement in relationship to one another. It is important not only to analyse what each individual psalm says but, also, to ask oneself the question of how they relate to the juxtaposed psalms on either side?

⁹⁴ Kraus points out this fact, (*Psalms*, 285).

5.4.1 Kingship-Torah Theme

Arguably the most significant connection with the introduction to the Psalter is the placement of Psalms 20 and 21. Their association of the idea of kingship dependent upon Yahweh with the king who delights in the torah of Yahweh (Ps 19), echoes the torah-kingship association of Pss 1 and 2. Effectively Pss 18, 20 and 21 are a small group of royal psalms which has been divided by a torah psalm, and it seems that the editors of the Psalter wanted the reader to notice this close juxtaposition of ideas which echo the themes found in the introductory psalms. Allen notes that, 'In terms of genre it [Ps 19] interrupts a run of royal psalms, Psalms 18; 20; 21. This phenomenon is suggestive in the light of Wilson's research: was Ps 19 intentionally inserted into the group by way of hermeneutical comment?'⁹⁵ Miller adds to these observations of the significance of the placement of these psalms:

[T]here are two separate matters in the introduction—the delight in the torah (Ps 1) and God's activity through the king (Ps 2)—and... these separate concerns will be taken up respectively... as this particular collection in Pss 15-24 moves forward. In the midst of the explicitly royal psalms is Yahweh's torah. God's word in the torah and God's rule through the king are bound together. The witness to that single torah-shaped rule is the voice of the king here at the center.⁹⁶

The repetition of the torah-kingship paradigm from Pss 1-2 indicates that the juxtaposition of Pss 18-21 was a deliberate attempt on the part of the redactors to associate these compositions with the book's introduction.

5.4.2 Messiah Link

Another association between Psalms 20 and 21 and the introduction is the centrality of Yahweh's 'messiah'. Just as the king was described as Yahweh's messiah in Ps 2:2 and 6, we come across the same idea in Ps 20:7, a verse which is central to the theology of the whole psalm.⁹⁷ Whilst the word מָשִׁיחַ does not appear in Ps 21, the idea the Lord's anointed is self-evident in the psalm. Undoubtedly, Pss 18-21 focus upon the sovereign lordship of Yahweh—it is he who initiates covenant, he is the one who is able to save and offer great victories—however, the role of the 'anointed one' is significant in these psalms' presentation of the community before God. Psalms 20 and 21 set out a type of relationship between the king and Yahweh which resonates strongly with the theological emphasis of Ps 2: God's anointed is important for the fulfillment of his plans for his people, thus the king's representative is significant for a proper understanding of both Pss 1-2 and 18-21.

5.4.3 Prayer Theme

Connected with this idea of significant relationship between Yahweh and king, we see the repeated idea of the importance of prayer (as seen in Ps 2:8; 20:2, 3, 7; and Ps 21:3-5). In

⁹⁵ Allen, "David as Exemplar," 546.

⁹⁶ Miller, "Kingship," 128.

⁹⁷ See the above quote from Mays, p 90 n. 85.

each of these psalms is the assurance that the king—or rather, to be more specific, the torah-keeping king—can offer his prayers to Yahweh in the certain knowledge that these prayers are heard and shall be answered. As we have seen in Ps 18, and is implied by the concatenation of Pss 19, 20 and 21, this assurance is dependent upon the king's 'blamelessness' and commitment to Yahweh's torah.

The situation of the song of thanksgiving is clearly pointed out in v. 2 [of Ps 21]: the king has directed a prayer to Yahweh, and that prayer has been heard. Here we should first consider that in the OT God's chosen king had the privilege of free prayer (1 Kings 3:5ff.; Pss. 2:8; 20:4; G. von Rad, *OT Theol*, 1:320). He held an exceptional priestly position (Jer. 30:21). Concerning the contents of the king's prayer we hear details in v. 4.⁹⁸

Our thesis... is that the king/Israelite who is the central figure of this collection not only delights in and keeps torah—as we would expect in the light of the clues provided from the introduction in Pss 1 and 2—but demonstrates in the rest of the psalms the way of faithful prayer in trust.⁹⁹

According to the ideal of kingship in the psalms, the king was given the privilege and power of prayer in a pre-eminent way. As the one who was son in relation to God, he could ask and hope to be answered. But what he received from God he must request. None of his gifts and endowments were inherent in his person. He was the model of the indispensable place of prayer in the human relation to God. The Old Testament basis for 'Our Father in heaven' was laid in him (Pss 2:7-8; 18:6; 20:4-5; see Mark 11:23-34; Luke 11:5-13).¹⁰⁰

5.4.4 Theme of the Two Ways

One of the key features of the theology of Pss 1 and 2 was the clear contrast of the way of Yahweh as opposed to the way of the wicked. This contrast was established in Ps 1 with the contrasting way of the 'one who delights in the torah' leading to life and prosperity and way of 'the wicked' leading to destruction (v 3 cf v 6). The idea was continued into Ps 2 with the contrasting states of 'those who take refuge in Yahweh' (v 12) and the kings and rulers who rebel against Yahweh and his anointed one (vv 1-2)—the former finding happiness (אשרי, v 12) and the latter, again, finding themselves on the way of destruction (ותאבדו דרך, v 12). We see the continuation of this idea in Psalms 20 and 21 where there are, once more, two contrasting paths presented to the reader. For example, there are those who trust in military might in Ps 20:8 as opposed to those who trust in the Lord; and Ps 21 tells of those who trust in Yahweh as opposed to those who hate him.¹⁰¹ However, the idea of the two ways is most clearly seen in the contrast between the king and his enemies in Pss

⁹⁸ Kraus, *Psalms*, 285. By implication Kraus suggests that the king has a privileged prayer status over the rest of Israel. This is certainly not the necessary interpretation of these psalms, where the king especially is being called upon to pray, but in doing so he sets an example for all the people. The king's prayer is connected with his task as representative of the people, but the right of prayer is certainly not limited to him, as is seen by the fact that Ps 20 is an account of the people's prayer for the king. (See also Miller's comments on the democratised figure of the king in "Kingship.")

⁹⁹ Miller, "Kingship," 134.

¹⁰⁰ Mays, *Psalms*, 103-4.

¹⁰¹ It is unclear whether the reference in Ps 21:9 refers to Yahweh or the king. However, according to the Psalter, it appears that either act amounts to much the same thing, see Ps 2:2.

20-21. The former knows the daily salvation of Yahweh (20:7, 10) and his eternal blessing (21:7-8), the latter experiences his opposition and punishment (20:8-9, 21:9-13). Therefore, another prominent aspect of the didactic purpose of Pss 1-2 as a hermeneutical construct is repeated in Psalms 20-21.

So we see that the theology of Pss 1-2, which provides the reader with a hermeneutical paradigm for the reading of the Psalms, is repeated in Psalms 20-21, just as it has been repeated in Pss 18-19. It appears that there has been a deliberate attempt to link these four psalms with the theology of the Psalter's introduction.

6. Conclusion

The exegetical work having been done, some final observations should be drawn from these texts, before moving on to study Pss 118 and 119. There are several observations which can be drawn from the above exegesis which are significant to the overall argument of this thesis:

6.1 Background in Deuteronomic Theology

Whilst there may also be other themes at work in these psalms, Psalms 18-21 are firmly grounded in Deuteronomic theology. As we have seen above, themes which are prominent in the book of Deuteronomy are also to be found in these psalms. It is widely acknowledged that the influence of Deuteronomy upon the Old Testament canon is broad, and that influence is observable even in the Psalter.¹⁰² This fact is significant because such a background should be expected if there has been a deliberate attempt on the part of the editors of the book of Psalms to juxtapose kingship and torah psalms in order to reflect the Deuteronomic Kingship Law. In order to make their point, the redactors of the Psalter make use of lyrics which draw upon the theological perspective which they seek to emphasise. We can observe that these individual poems are themselves firmly grounded in the worldview of the Deuteronomist, making the allusion to the Kingship Law all the more visible to the reader.

6.2 Torah-Kingship Connection

Over and above the general Deuteronomic background to the psalms, we see a concerted effort to associate the king with the torah of Yahweh. This is seen in two ways: firstly, in the content of Ps 18 where the central strophe is a declaration of the king's devotion to Yahweh and his torah; and, secondly, in the centrality of Ps 19 within this psalm grouping. The way in which Ps 19 breaks up a run of royal psalms of similar theme makes its positioning seem all the more significant, and this setting amidst kingship compositions

¹⁰² See Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms".

further accentuates the indications within Ps 19's content that the psalmist is, in fact, the king. The close association of kingship and torah poems functions as a red flag to draw the reader's attention to that which they have seen before. 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. Therefore, when that reader comes to Psalms 18-21 and notices a kingship-torah-kingship pattern, she is reminded of the voice of the introduction to the Psalter. The Deuteronomic background which is apparent in these psalms goes beyond a general concern for the Deuteronomic worldview in the life of Israel: rather, the reader's attention is drawn particularly to the Kingship Law and the piety suggested by it.

6.3 Democratisation of the King

Psalms 20 and 21 through their setting in liturgy confuse the roles of the king and the people. The latter pray for the king, and the king, in turn, represents the people before Yahweh acting as a 'guarantor' of security for them. The king's trust in Yahweh is echoed by the same response from the people, and that blessing which the king receives is blessing for the nation. As McCann points out, there is something of a fusion of roles within these psalms—the identity of the king and the identity of the צדיקים become mixed and merged in certain ways:

As reflected in vv. 4, 5 b, it was the prerogative of the king to make requests of God (see Commentary on Ps 2:8-9; see also 1 Kgs 3:5-14; Ps 21:4). Verse 5a indicates that the welfare and future of the people are bound up with that of the king.¹⁰³

The Hebrew reads, 'O LORD, grant victory! May the king [i.e., God] answer us when we call' (so NJPS). This reading emphasizes that the LORD is the true king. It may represent a democratizing understanding that claims the right and privileges of the anointed for the people (see Psalm 2, see. 4).¹⁰⁴

Moreover, the presence of Psalm 19 in book one, especially juxtaposed to a psalm about kingship, seems to indicate further association of the concepts of meditating on *tôrâ* and seeking refuge in Yahweh. *Given the nature of Psalms 1-2 and these emphases in David 1, it seems possible 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.*¹⁰⁵

This process of democratisation emphasises the dual purpose of this kingship-torah redaction: (1) the figure of the king is important as part of the eschatological hope voiced in the Psalter, but more than that; (2) he is important as an example of piety for all of the people of Israel. These psalms seem to reflect the idea that the blessings and privileges which were available to be Lord's anointed are also available to the people of God who will walk in the ways of Yahweh, keeping his torah.

¹⁰³ McCann, *Psalms*, 755.

¹⁰⁴ Mays, *Psalms*, 102.

¹⁰⁵ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 80 (emphasis mine).

6.4 Limitation of the Power of the King

The kingship which is celebrated within these psalms is not the kingship which is found in the DtrH. As we shall see in our discussion of Deut 17:14-20, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History present an image of kingship which can—at best—be described as ambivalent, if not verging on negative. The kingship which is manifest within these poetic texts is of a very different nature from even the best examples to be found within the DtrH. The characteristics of the king which are lauded within Psalms 18-21 are not the characteristics of might, power, wealth or status, but rather the king is exalted in as much as he humbles himself to accept the rule of Yahweh. The main characteristic which runs throughout these psalms is one of total dependency upon and commitment to Yahweh, trusting in him above all else for all matters of piety and polity. Such characteristics are not often found in the DtrH's portrayal of the kings of Israel and Judah, thus the presentation of the ideal of kingship found in these psalms is not one which focuses upon the trappings of wealth and power, but one which concentrates the attention of the reader upon the king's submission to Yahweh and his rule. If anything, the ideal king is presented as one who submits himself to Yahweh—limiting his own power and status—and trusts in him alone.

6.5 Torah-Prayer Link

One further element of the theology of Pss 1 and 2 is greatly magnified in Pss 18-21, i.e. the importance of prayer to Yahweh (Ps 2:8). In Psalms 18-21 the prominence of prayer is combined with a piety based around the torah of Yahweh. Each of these four psalms contains an element of prayer which refers either to the psalmist's adversity in combating 'enemies' (with the connotations of the 'two ways', Pss 18, 20 and 21) or to the task of pursuing personal godliness (Ps 19:13-15). This increased emphasis on prayer adds to the idea that the king is being presented as an ideal of spirituality before God—the king is being portrayed as the ideal קִיָּץ whose example all the people of Israel should follow. Prayer and delight in the torah are two essential elements of that piety, as is further emphasised in the message of Pss 118-119.

These considerations are all significant in our task of establishing whether or not there has been a Deuteronomistic redaction of the Psalter which has deliberately placed torah and kingship psalms in close proximity in order to replicate the theology of the Deuteronomistic Kingship Law as part of the Psalter's presentation of the king.¹⁰⁶ It appears, from detailed exegetical analysis of the four psalms in question (Psalms 18-21), that these psalms have been deliberately placed alongside one another, and that the purpose of that juxtaposition

¹⁰⁶ Once again, this suggestion is only part of the canonical Psalter's presentation of kingship. There are other importantly placed royal psalms which reflect upon different aspects of kingship (e.g. Pss 72 and 110 which dwell more upon the eschatological dimensions of kingship).

was to bring the Kingship Law to mind as the reader of the Psalter considers questions of the rule of Yahweh and the life of piety. The same conclusion has been drawn from analysis of Pss 1 and 2, therefore our attention turns to the examination of Ps 119 in its context in order to establish if this is a holistic redaction observable throughout the book of Psalms. It is to this task that we turn next.

Chapter 4

Torah-Kingship Theme in Psalms 118-119

1. Introduction

In some ways Psalms 118 and 119 appear to provide the greatest challenge towards demonstrating a redaction of the Psalter which reflects the Deuteronomic Law of the King. In the previous two chapters, we have noted the juxtaposition of royal and torah themes at the introduction to the Book of Psalms (Pss 1 and 2) and at the heart of Book I of the Psalter (Psalms 18-21). It could be said that this was a non-controversial task—almost without exception scholars recognise the torah theology found in Psalms 1 and 19 and the royal emphases of Psalms 2, 18, 20 and 21. However, it is a somewhat different story with Psalms 118 and 119. There are, for example, no superscriptions linking either of the psalms with the Davidic king and Psalm 118 is seen as part of the Egyptian *Hallel*, thus associated with Exodus themes rather than royal themes. Whilst the torah focus of Psalm 119 is beyond question, the identity of the speaker of Psalm 119 is much debated, with many scholars placing this psalm firmly in the ranks of the wisdom psalms and associating it with the wisdom schools of post-exilic Judaism. So, it could be argued that, whilst the observations with regard to Psalms 1-2 and 18-21 may well be valid, Psalms 118 and 119 do not readily fit into this pattern of deliberately juxtaposed royal and torah psalms, thus the argument as a whole fails.

All such conclusions, however, must be based on exegesis and not merely supposition. Indeed, it is by way of detailed exegetical examination of Psalms 118 and 119 that I hope to establish that these juxtaposed psalms represent the zenith of the Deuteronomic kingship theology of the Psalter. We shall see that Psalms 118-119 likewise are deliberately placed alongside one another in order to reflect the Deuteronomic Law of the King and to highlight the representative function of the expected, eschatological king amongst his people. Moreover, this ideal of kingship is held up before the readers of the Book of Psalms as the ideal of personal piety, as an exemplar which all those who are intent upon ‘walking in the ways of Yahweh’ should follow. Psalm 118 reflects the theology of the Entrance Psalms (Psalms 15 and 24), and it is the king who leads the people in this antiphonal act of worship as their representative before Yahweh. It is this same king who offers up a prayer in Psalm 119, an intercession of lament to his God, which represents a spirituality firmly grounded in God’s revelation. The ‘typical’ indicators may be missing from Psalms 118-119, but the dual focus upon torah and royal themes is still present, reflecting the influence of a Deuteronomic redaction which puts the royal theology of the Psalter into a proper canonical context. Yes, the people are to expect a renewed kingship, but this is to be a kingship which is radically different from that recorded in the Deuteronomic History.

2. Selection of Psalms 118-119

Obviously, selection of the primary material to be studied is a vital factor in the results which any study will arrive at. Therefore, we must remind ourselves why Psalms 118 and 119 are the focus for this next stage of our study. The answer to that question is essentially the same as the answer provided with regard to the choice of Psalms 18-21:¹ namely, the selection of primary material is dictated by the positioning of the so-called ‘torah psalms’. When one adopts a canonical approach to the Psalter, questions of ordering and placement are of great importance.² Thus, one of the most significant questions that can be asked of the canonical Book of Psalms is, ‘Why is Psalm 1 the first psalm? Why start with this psalm rather than another which is more representative of the contents of the Psalter or Book I—a lament, for example?’ In asking this question, the significance of the torah psalms—whose importance was generally denigrated by form-critical scholars—is suddenly elevated.³

We have seen that Psalm 1—by way of lexical interaction, lack of superscription and common themes—was deliberately juxtaposed alongside Psalm 2 (a royal psalm), and so the reader is able to observe a linking of torah and kingship themes which provides a particular hermeneutical perspective right at the start of the Psalter. This, then, raises the question about whether or not the other torah psalms reflect this same sort of torah-kingship paradigm. So our attention is turned to the remaining torah psalms: first, to Psalm 19 and its neighbours and then to Psalm 119 and the surrounding psalms.⁴ Our analysis, and choice of material, is dictated by the torah psalms and their positioning within the canonical Psalter. It is because Psalm 119 is clearly a torah psalm, that we must ask the question about whether or not it too plays a role in a possible DtrN redaction of the Psalter designed to reflect the Kingship Law of Deuteronomy 17:14-20 in the theology of the Psalms.

The question then arises, ‘Why choose Psalm 118 and not Psalm 120? Is this a random choice? Or is there reason to do so?’ Indeed, the choice of Psalm 118 is not random, but one which is indicated by the positioning of that psalm in relation to Psalm 119 and the surrounding poems in Book V. Psalm 120 is clearly part of the ‘Songs of Ascents’ collection (שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת), as is indicated both by its superscription and its content. Therefore, Psalm 120 is to be associated with the ensuing psalms rather than Psalm 119. At first glance, it appears that the same argument could be made with regard to Psalm 118. Is it not part of the Egyptian Hallel and therefore more to be associated with Psalms 113-117?

¹ See pp 57-59 above.

² See, for example, Childs, *IOTS*, 512-4 or Wilson, *Editing*, 139ff. Wilson further expands upon these ideas in such articles as “Shape” and “Understanding”, among others.

³ Mays, “Place of the Torah-Psalms.”

⁴ Mays, “Place of the Torah-Psalms,” 3, 11.

In the Rabbinic literature Psalm 118 is seen as part of the Great or Egyptian Hallel,⁵ however, the *textual* grounds for the association of Psalm 118 with the *hallel* psalms are limited—the association is more drawn from historical praxis than canonical exegesis. Psalm 118 does not have the הללו יה introduction or conclusion shared by all of the poems in the Great Hallel (except Psalm 114⁶), nor does it readily reflect the Exodus themes which run throughout the collection. Undoubtedly, the historical evidence suggests that Psalm 118 *came to function* as part of the Great Hallel used in the liturgy of the festivals, but it is questionable whether this was the intent of the redactors in their positioning of Psalm 118. Was it meant to be associated with the Hallel? Or was the intent rather for Ps 118 to be associated with Ps 119 as a centrepiece to Book V?

Firstly, as Patrick Miller points out, thematically, Psalm 118 does not fit well as part of the Egyptian Hallel: ‘It is not fully accurate to set Psalm 118 under the “Exodus” theme... It is centered on Zion and the temple, of course.’⁷ Secondly, Wilson points out that the signs of editorial activity in Books IV-V of the Psalter differ from those found in Books I-III. One of the distinctive characteristics of editorial activity within Psalms 107-150 which Wilson draws attention to is the use of *hllwyh* and *hw dw* headings to differentiate between different groups of psalms.⁸ Each of Psalms 111-117 include הללו יה either as superscription or postscript; by way of contrast Psalm 118 begins with the words יהוה ליהוה. Freedman suggests that it is actually Pss 111-117 which form a cohesive grouping rather than the traditional 113-118 Hallel group: ‘Both [Pss 111 & 112] have the same distinctive heading, shared by several others in this group from no. 111 through 117—a group of seven psalms, each of which begins or ends with the expression *hallelu yah...*’.⁹

This would tend to indicate that the editors of the Psalter intended to disassociate Psalm 118 from the preceding *hallel* psalms, leaving Psalms 118 and 119 as an isolated pairing between two pre-existing collections (the Hallel Psalms, 111-117, and the Songs of Ascents, 120-134). Therefore, it appears that—by placing Psalm 118 alongside Psalm 119 and sandwiching them between two collections of psalms—the editors of the canonical Book of Psalms intended that these psalms should be associated together as the centrepiece to Book V. It is for these reasons that Psalms 118 and 119 form the next part of our study:

⁵ J. R. Wagner, “Psalm 118 in Luke-Acts: Tracing a Narrative Thread,” *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (JSNTSup 148 & SSEJC 5; eds. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 158-9; T. F. Torrance, “The Last of the Hallel Psalms,” *EQ* 28 (1956) 101-8.

⁶ Ps 114 lacks the הללו יה superscription, but, exceptionally for this group of psalms, Ps 113 contains both *hallelu yah* superscription and postscript. It is likely that the *hallelu yah* postscript from Ps 113 was originally the superscription of Ps 114 (see Freedman, *Psalm 119*, 4).

⁷ Miller, “The End of the Psalter: A Response to Erich Zenger,” 104.

⁸ Wilson, “Shaping,” 78-9.

⁹ Freedman, *Psalm 119*, 4 (emphasis added). See also Mitchell, *Message*, 87.

firstly, as dictated by our analysis of the torah psalms as a category; and, secondly, as implied by the above indications of editorial activity within Book V.

Having established the grounds for the selection of Psalms 118-119 as the object of our study, now we must turn our attention to consideration of the question in hand. Do these psalms reflect general deuteronomic concerns (indicating some sort of deuteronomic redaction); and, if so, do they echo the preoccupation with kingship and torah which we have seen in the previous torah-kingship psalm groupings? Again, if the theory of a redaction which seeks to give the Psalter's theology of kingship a Deuteronomic slant is to be proven, then the psalms must be allowed to speak for themselves. Therefore, we must turn our attention to the exegetical examination of Psalm 118.

3. Analysis of Psalm 118

הודו ליהוה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
יֹאמְרוּ־נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
יֹאמְרוּ־נָא בֵּית־אַהֲרֹן כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:
יֹאמְרוּ־נָא יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

מִן־הַמִּצָּר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה עָנְנִי בַּמִּרְחֹב יְהוָה:
יְהוָה לִי לֹא אֵירָא מִה־יַּעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם:
יְהוָה לִי בַּעֲזָרִי וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְּשֹׁנְאֵי:

טוֹב לְחַסוֹת בִּיהוָה מִבְּטָח בְּאָדָם:
טוֹב לְחַסוֹת בִּיהוָה מִבְּטָח בַּנְּדִיבִים:

כָּל־גּוֹיִם סָבְבוּנִי בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילָם:
סְבוּנִי גַם־סָבְבוּנִי בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילָם:
סְבוּנִי כְּדַבּוּרִים דַּעְכוּ כָּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים בְּשֵׁם
יְהוָה כִּי אֲמִילָם:

יָחָה דְּחִיתָנִי לִנְפֹל וַיהוָה עֲזָרָנִי:
עָזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה וַיְהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה:

קוֹל רִנָּה וִישׁוּעָה בְּאֶהְלִי צַדִּיקִים יָמִין יְהוָה
עֲשֶׂה חֵיל:
יָמִין יְהוָה רֹמְמָה יָמִין יְהוָה עֲשֶׂה חֵיל:

לֹא אָמוּת כִּי־אֶחְיֶה וְאֶסְפָּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה:
יִסֹּר יִסְרָנִי יְהוָה וְלִמּוֹת לֹא נִתְּנָנִי:
פֶּתַח־חַיִּי לִי שַׁעֲרֵי־צֶדֶק אֲבֹא־בָם אוֹדֶה יְהוָה:

זֶה־הַשַּׁעַר לִיהוָה צַדִּיקִים יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ:

אוֹדֶה כִּי עָנִיתָנִי וַתִּהְיֶה־לִי לִישׁוּעָה:
אֶבֶן מָאָסוּ הַבּוֹנִים הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פִּנָּה:
מֵאֵת יְהוָה הִיְתָה זֹאת הִיא נִפְלְאוֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ:
זֶה־הַיּוֹם עֲשֶׂה יְהוָה נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה בּוֹ:

1 Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good; for his steadfast love is for ever!

2 Let Israel say, "For his steadfast love is forever."

3 Let the house of Aaron say, "For his steadfast love is forever."

4 Let those who fear Yahweh say, "For his steadfast love is forever."

5 From my straits I called out to Yahweh; and Yahweh answered me with a broad place.

6 Yahweh is for me, I will not be afraid; What can man do to me?

7 Yahweh is for me, he is my help; and I will look with triumph over those who hate me.

8 It is better to take refuge in Yahweh; than to trust in man.

9 It is better to take refuge in Yahweh; than to trust in princes.

10 All the nations surrounded me; in the name of Yahweh I cut them off.

11 They surrounded me again; but in the name of Yahweh I cut them off.

12 They surrounded me like bees, yet they were extinguished like a burning thorn bush; in the name of Yahweh I cut them off.

13 I was pushed firmly to fall; but Yahweh helped me.

14 My strength and song is Yahweh; and he has become my salvation

15 Shouts of joy and salvation are in the tents of the righteous, "Yahweh's right hand has done a mighty deed.

16 "The right hand of Yahweh is lifted high; the right hand of Yahweh has done a mighty deed."

17 I will not die, but I will live; and I will recount Yahweh's deeds.

18 Yahweh has disciplined me strongly; yet he has not given me over to death.

19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter in and give thanks to Yahweh.

20 This is the gate of Yahweh; the righteous will enter it.

21 I will give you thanks because you listened to me; and you have become my salvation.

22 The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.

23 Yahweh has done this thing and it is wonderful in our eyes.

24 This is the day that Yahweh has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

אָנָא יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא אָנָא יְהוָה
הַצְלִיחָה נָא:
כָּרוּךְ הָבָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה בִּרְכוּנוֹכֶם מִבֵּית
יְהוָה:
אֵל יְהוָה וַיָּאֵר לָנוּ אֶסְרוּ־חַג בַּעֲבֹתָיִם
עַד־קִרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:

אֵלֵי אַתָּה וְאוֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמָמְךָ:

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ:

25 O Yahweh, save us, we pray; O Yahweh, prosper us, we pray.

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh; we bless you from the house of Yahweh.

27 Yahweh is God, and he enlightened us; Call a festival with boughs unto the horns of the altar.

28 You are my God and I will give thanks to you; My God and I will exalt you.

29 Give thanks to Yahweh because he is good; for his steadfast love lasts forever.

3.1 Deuteronomic Influences in Ps 118

Once again our initial task is to ascertain whether or not there is a Deuteronomic background to this composition. Does it readily reflect the attitudes and priorities that Dtr editors would wish to promote?

3.1.1 Ps 118 as Entrance Liturgy

Most commentators are agreed that Psalm 118¹⁰ reflects an antiphonal act of worship, with the king leading the people in a public celebration of Yahweh's faithfulness towards himself specifically (possibly in providing a military victory), and also towards the people in general.¹¹ So, it would be reasonable to expect Psalm 118 to be firmly grounded in the

¹⁰ The text of Ps 118 itself is not particularly problematic, with only minor textual issues. The most significant issue in terms of interpretation of Ps 118 is the division of the psalm, as an antiphonal act of worship, into 'voices'. The division of the text above suggests one possible rendering of this 'conversation', but it is by no means the only one possible.

¹¹ L. C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1983) 123-5; A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms, Volume II, Psalms 73-150* (NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972) 797-8; Croft, *Identity*, 85; M. Dahood, *Psalms III: 101-150: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (ABC; Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1970) 155; Eaton, *Psalms*, 271-2; A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) 123-4; Mays, *Psalms*, 379; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 729 and A. Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (Old Testament Library; trans. H. Hartwell; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962) 724-5, all see the speaker as being the Davidic king. McCann, *Psalms*, 1153, sees the king as being the most likely candidate for the role of speaker in Ps 118, but is unwilling to be more emphatic than that. Oesterley, *Psalms*, 484; Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 697 and Briggs, *Psalms*, 402-4, all speak about some unidentified representative of Israel being the speaker of Ps 118, but none of these three explain why Yahweh's סֶלָה towards this unidentified individual is so significant for the whole community. The one significant question-mark with regard to the kingship of the speaker is the lack of a Davidic superscription. However, such a superscription is not essential for a poem to be accepted as a royal psalm, e.g. Ps 2. Indeed, Wilson points out that such 'authorship' designations are largely lacking from Books IV and V and that other editorial designations are used in these books instead ("Shaping," 73). There are several textual indications that the leader of this antiphonal worship is the king: (1) The apparent setting for the deliverance received from Yahweh is one of military conflict, thus indicating that the most likely speaker is the king who would lead the people into battle. (2) The speaker refuses to trust in men or 'princes' (v 9), as we shall see in the course of our study, this is probably a reference to foreign leaders and it is likely that only the king would have the opportunity to put his trust in princes by way of international alliances. (3) Verses 10-12 speak of the opposition of the nations surrounding the speaker, again indicating a military setting, where the king would lead the people in battle against other nations. (4) The representative nature of the speaker, who leads

Priestly, cultic literature;¹² this is, after all, a psalm which focuses upon Zion and the Temple and even the altar. On the contrary, however, Psalm 118 does not find its roots in the Priestly literature, but rather is deeply rooted in the moral and legal concepts of righteousness found in the Book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic literature. Zion and the temple do, indeed, provide a backdrop to Psalm 118, but this hymn is more akin to the Entrance Psalms (15 and 24) than to the psalms of the cult, *per se*.¹³

Psalm 118 is essentially a hymn of thanksgiving to Yahweh which is both individual and corporate, as is reflected by the changes from first person singular to first person plural speech throughout the psalm. Most likely, it was because of this concentration upon thanksgiving for Yahweh's salvation that Psalm 118 became associated with the *hallel* psalms and the festivals,¹⁴ but the scene enacted in Psalm 118 reflects the theology of the Entrance Psalms rather than the cultic ideas of the sacerdotal system itself.¹⁵ Following on from a praise introduction, the king publicly recounts the trials and difficulties which he has faced, gives thanks to God for his deliverance, and then—based upon Yahweh's mercy extended to him—he seeks entrance into the Temple to offer thanks to Yahweh. This request is met with the challenge of the priests guarding the gate that only the righteous (צדיקים) may enter into the holiness of the Temple. Ultimately, Yahweh's action in delivering the king is seen as testimony to his blamelessness.¹⁶ The same sort of concepts apply in Psalms 15 and 24 where the question is asked, 'Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may dwell on your holy hill?' (Ps 15:1), or, alternatively, 'Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?' (Ps 24:3). In both of these instances, the reply to the question comes in moral terms, in concepts grounded in a Deuteronomic understanding of righteousness.¹⁷ The Dtr worldview dominates the whole collection of Psalms 15-24 (as we saw in our analysis of Psalms 18-21) and—since Ps 118

the community into Temple worship, means that the speaker must fulfill some sort of official function on the people's behalf—of all the known offices it is most likely that the king would fulfil the role indicated in Ps 118. (5) Finally, Eaton points out that the 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' formula is one which is associated with kingship in the OT (*Kingship*, 62). Therefore, it seems most likely that it is the king who leads the people in worship in Ps 118.

¹² See the discussion in Croft, *Identity*, 85-8.

¹³ H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989) 395, writes: 'Psalm 118 therefore belongs to the area of gate liturgies, which are in greater detail recognisable above all in Psalms 15 and 24... At the entry to the temple area each cultic participant is to give a declaration of loyalty. Only the צדיקים (v 20b; Isa 26:2) may pass through the "portals of Yahweh" and enter the sanctuary.' See also Anderson, *Psalms*, 797, and Weiser, *Psalms*, 728.

¹⁴ J. A. Sanders, "A New Testament Hermeneutic Fabric: Psalm 118 in the Entrance Narrative," *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee* (eds. C. A. Evans and W. F. Stinespring; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987) 180.

¹⁵ Mays writes that the theological claims of Ps 118 are 'not tied to a particular historical occasion or social setting or festival...', "Psalm 118 in the Light of Canonical Analysis," *Canon, Theology and Old Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (eds. G. M. Tucker, D. L. Petersen and R. R. Wilson; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) 310].

¹⁶ Mays, "Ps 118," 158-9.

¹⁷ Miller, "Kingship," 127-8, 135.

is theologically associated with Pss 15 and 24—the reader should expect to see the influence of this worldview providing the proper backdrop to Psalm 118. The king is giving testimony to the goodness of Yahweh in providing salvation, and he does so in terms which reflect the theology of Deuteronomy. So, we see that, at the most fundamental level, the setting of Psalm 118 as an Entrance Psalm is designed to awaken the reader's awareness of a setting in Deuteronomic theology.

3.1.2 Eternal חסד of Yahweh

Psalm 118 begins and ends with the celebration of Yahweh's חסד (Ps 118:1-4, 29). Of course, this is the concept which is found throughout the whole of the Old Testament, and, therefore, cannot in and of itself be described as Deuteronomic. However, whilst not seeking to claim the idea of חסד as being inherently Deuteronomic, it would be equally wrong to forget the intimate link between חסד and covenant—particularly since the idea of לעולם הסד, as it is found here in Ps 118, is a usage of *hesed* which is particularly associated with the covenant.¹⁸ The חסד of Yahweh is revealed to Israel primarily in his covenant with them. He has bound himself to a covenant relationship of חסד with Israel as a community (Ex 20:6) as well as with the Davidic king as his anointed (2 Sam 7:15). It is in this concept of covenant, or treaty, with Israel as his people that the reader is reminded of the link between the חסד of Yahweh and the Book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy presents itself as the written covenant between Yahweh and his people (e.g. Deut 27:1-8)—a covenant of חסד, but a covenant with binding effect nonetheless.¹⁹

The word חסד is found only three times in Deuteronomy, but what is significant concerning Deuteronomy's use of חסד is its association with law-keeping.²⁰ It is found in the repetition of the Ten Commandments (Deut 5:10), where חסד is promised to a 'thousand generations of those who *love me and keep my commandments*' (ועשה חסד לאלפים לאהבי) (ולשמרי מצותי). The people are reminded of this promise again in Deut 7:9, 12 where Moses challenges the people once more that Yahweh's covenant of חסד means that they are to 'pay attention to these laws' (תשמעון את המשפטים האלה) and that they are to be 'careful to follow them' (ושמרתם ועשיתם אתם). The association suggested in the Book of Deuteronomy being that continued enjoyment of the eternal covenant with Yahweh requires a correct attitude towards the *torah*.²¹

Given the context of Psalm 118, where its description of Yahweh's loving faithfulness (חסד) towards king and people is combined with an inherent expectation of righteousness

¹⁸ See, for example, Mitchell's discussion of the link between eternal *hesed* and covenant in Ps 89 in *Message*, 254.

¹⁹ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 12-5; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 2-3.

²⁰ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 113.

²¹ McConville, *Grace in the End*, 20-4, 132-3; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 117.

on the part of both king and people (v 20), it appears that the usage of לִפְנֵי in the introduction and conclusion of Psalm 118 is not far removed from the Deuteronomic understanding of Yahweh's covenant of לִפְנֵי .²² Yes, Yahweh does show *hesed* towards his people, but they are expected to keep the law in a response of love to the covenant promises of Yahweh. This point is particularly emphasised when one considers the deliberate juxtaposition of Psalm 118 alongside Psalm 119—Yahweh acts in salvific love for his people instituting covenant relationship with them, and the people's response should be to love him by keeping his commands. The introductory and concluding celebration of Yahweh's *hesed* cannot be divorced from the expectation of righteousness which lies at the heart of Psalm 118, and this rings true to Deuteronomy's understanding of Yahweh's covenant with his people based in לִפְנֵי .

3.1.3 Fearers of Yahweh

Verses 2-4 of Psalm 118 appear to be a deliberate echo of Ps 115:9-13, where the same three groups of people ('Israel', 'the house of Aaron' and 'the fearers of Yahweh') are addressed twice. It is difficult to know why these three groups are mentioned specifically, but it seems likely that this form of address is somehow connected with the function of the Egyptian Hallel in the festivals,²³ with the involvement of the people of Israel in general and the priesthood in particular, but who are 'those who fear Yahweh'? This is the question which appears to go unanswered in both Psalm 115 and 118, but for the careful reader of the Psalms this address would probably lead her or him to certain Dtr associations. The link between Ps 118 and the Entrance Liturgies would suggest that the reader think about the יְהוָה יִרְאֵי in terms of a righteousness based in moral propriety—a righteousness founded upon delight in the torah—echoing the answers provided to the soul-searching questions of Pss 15 and 24.²⁴ These questions and their answers evoke a piety grounded in Dtr theology. So the reader should be inclined to understand 'those who fear Yahweh' in terms that echo the Dtr conditions of access found in Pss 15 and 24.²⁵

This connection is more clearly understood by examination of the Deuteronomic presentation of the 'fear of Yahweh', which is associated with torah obedience. Deuteronomy's

²² H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary* (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989) 395-6; Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 697; S. B. Frost, "Psalm 118: An Exposition," *CJT* VII/3 (1961) 158-9.

²³ J. A. Sanders, "A New Testament Hermeneutic Fabric: Psalm 118 in the Entrance Narrative," *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis: Studies in Memory of William Hugh Brownlee* (eds. C. A. Evans and W. F. Stinespring; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987) 181-2.

²⁴ A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms, Volume II, Psalms 73-150* (NCBC; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972) 797; Miller, "Kingship," 131.

²⁵ The fear of Yahweh, like the theology of the two ways, is a concept which is found most commonly in the Deuteronomic Literature and Wisdom Literature. As Weinfeld argues, there does seem to be a substantial degree of overlap between these two schools, and this is borne out in our analysis of these psalms. However, Pss 118 bears characteristics in common with the Deuteronomic Psalms 15 and 24, whereas it does not bear any of the typical characteristics of Wisdom Psalms.

presentation of fearing Yahweh often equates to keeping the laws and commands which he has given his people. There are many examples of this in the Book of Deuteronomy—4:10ff sets the concept of ‘fearing Yahweh’ alongside the concept of ‘learning the decrees and laws’ (ללמד אתכם חקים ומשפטים לעשותכם אתם בארץ) which the people are to follow once they have crossed the Jordan (4:14). Such passages as 6:2, 24; 8:6; 10:12-13; 28:58; 32:12 etc., all make a direct correlation between keeping the torah (expressed using one synonym or another) and fearing Yahweh (e.g. 6:2, למען תירא, (את־יהוה אלהיך לשמר את־כל־חקתיו ומשפטיו). Furthermore, Deuteronomy makes it clear that *the Israelite king*—the central figure of Ps 118—is also meant to be a ‘fearer of Yahweh’ (Deut 17:19).²⁶ After the king wrote out for himself a copy of the torah, he was to read it all the days of his life ‘so that he may learn to fear Yahweh his God and to keep all of the words of this torah and to do all of these statutes’ (למען ילמד לירא את־יהוה אלהיו) (לשמר את־כל־דברי התורה הזאת ואת־החקים האלה לעשותם). Miller elaborates on the Dtr connection of ‘fearing the Lord’ in the Psalms:

The goal of the whole, as both books inform us, is *to teach the fear of the Lord*. When the Psalmist says, ‘Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord’ (Ps 34:12 [Eng. 11]), one hears as well the voice of Moses in those words. In Deuteronomy, ‘the fear of the LORD your God’ is synonymous with the demand of the First Commandment, ‘You shall have no other gods besides me.’ The positive form of that demand in Deuteronomy is ‘You shall fear the LORD your God.’ But the whole purpose of the law, of writing it down, of listening to it read, of teaching it to the children, is so that those who read and listen may learn to fear the Lord your God (e.g., Deut 4:10; 6:2, 24; 31:12-13). Even the rituals of festival and tithe are so that the people may learn to fear the Lord your God always (14:23), and the primary duty of the king is to model the aim of every citizen by reading in his copy of the law constantly (‘all the days of his life’) to learn the fear of the Lord his God (17:19).²⁷

Clearly, Psalm 118 echoes the Dtr theology of piety and kingship, placing the king (the main speaker in this psalm) within the group of those who ‘fear Yahweh’ and, by way of his representative function within the psalm, he serves as exemplar for the people. The only grounds for the king’s admission into the Temple is צדקה (v 20), and by implication the same conditions would apply to all those who sought to enter Yahweh’s ‘holy place’. Deuteronomy’s Kingship Law suggests that this is no more than should be expected of the Israelite king—he is, above all else, meant to be the example of a true Israelite for all Israel.²⁸ It is this principle that we see at work in Ps 118, and in the light of this Deuteronomic understanding of ‘those who fear of Yahweh’, we see again the significance of the editors putting Psalm 118 alongside the great torah psalm, Psalm 119.

The designation ‘those who fear the Lord’ will not be read simply as a term for public participants. The term will assume the meaning of torah-piety rehearsed endlessly in Ps 119 (see v 38), where response to and hope in Yahweh’s *hesed* depend upon one’s relationship to his torah.²⁹

²⁶ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 149; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209-10.

²⁷ Miller, “Deuteronomy & Psalms,” 15.

²⁸ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209.

²⁹ J. L. Mays, “Psalm 118 in the Light of Canonical Analysis,” *Canon, Theology and Old Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (eds. G. M. Tucker, D. L. Petersen and R. R. Wilson;

All Israel is called upon to celebrate Yahweh's *hesed*, the priesthood is called upon to celebrate Yahweh's *hesed* and, finally, those who are committed to a piety based upon the remembrance and practice of the torah of Yahweh are also called upon to celebrate his steadfast love. This idea is implied by the Dtr (Entrance Liturgy) background to Ps 118, and made explicit by its placement alongside Ps 119.

3.1.4 Trust in Yahweh

The following stanza (vv 5-7) further emphasises the Deuteronomic themes which we have seen already in our analysis of Pss 1-2 and 18-21.³⁰ The Book of Deuteronomy commends an attitude of trust in Yahweh, and this trust is to be displayed especially by the king. He is not to trust in wealth or military might or foreign alliances, but is to trust implicitly in Yahweh.³¹ This is very much the idea which is presented in vv 5-7, and this stanza both links Psalms 118-119 with Psalms 18-21 and reflects a point of view which is prominent in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History.

Like the king in the previous torah-kingship psalm groupings, the speaker in Psalm 118 describes how he cried out to Yahweh as a result of the distress which he was facing (v 5) and how Yahweh delivered him from that danger (the explicit nature of the distress which the king faced is unclear, although certain indicators suggest that a military conflict may provide the backdrop to Psalm 118).³² This awareness of divine deliverance results in an attitude of trust in Yahweh which echoes the ideal of Israelite leadership. As we shall consider further below, the Israelite king was not to trust in external factors of strength, the implication being that he should trust in Yahweh.³³ In terms reminiscent of Romans 8:31, the king as speaker in Psalm 118 declares confidently:

יהוה לי לא אירא מה־יעשה לי אדם:
יהוה לי בעזרי ואני אראה בשנאי:

Yahweh is for me, I will not be afraid; What can man do to me?

Yahweh is for me, he is my helper; and I will look with triumph over my enemies. (vv 5-6)

Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) 304.

³⁰ See pp 38-39; 46-47; 63-64; 88-90 etc.

³¹ Miller, "Kingship," 148.

³² Mays, *Psalms*, 375-6; M. Dahood, *Psalms III: 101-150: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (ABC; Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1970) 155. Others such as Eaton, *Psalms*, 270-1, and Sanders, "NT Hermeneutic Fabric," 181-2, see this as an example of the king's ritual humiliation during the autumnal enthronement celebration. Some scholars suggest that the nature of the distress is deliberately ambiguous so that the psalm would be applicable to many people in different settings and generations (see, for example, McCann, *Psalms*, 1156). Dahood comments that, 'the psalmist's references to an encounter with death... seem to be literal', and there is a sense of urgency in the verses of this lyric which seems to suggest a literal danger as the background to this psalm.

³³ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209. Miller comments: '[T]hese restrictions and injunctions serve the main purpose of Deuteronomy, to enjoin a full and undivided allegiance to the Lord.' Wright adds: 'The value of a king is assessed solely by the extent to which he will help or hinder that loyalty [i.e. the people's loyalty to Yahweh as God]. A king who will not trust in God but in his own defenses (cf. 3:21)... such a king will quickly lead the people in the same disastrous direction.'

This certitude serves as a reminder of Yahweh's commissioning of Joshua with its twofold emphases—that he should not stray from the book of the torah, but should meditate on it day and night, and, secondly, that he should not *be afraid or dismayed* (Jos 1:6-9).³⁴ Again, this is an idea which is presented in a positive light in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History, further emphasising the Dtr mindset underpinning the king's presentation of his worldview in Ps 118:5-7. The king knows that his confession of faith is one which any faithful king of Israel should make—because Yahweh is with him, he need not fear, nor seek to find his security in any other source.³⁵ Although, Weinfeld's emphasis upon the quasi-regal function of Joshua implied in his commissioning seems unnecessary and misleading, his discussion of the Israelite leader's function as example of faithfulness to Yahweh for the people is helpful.³⁶ Weinfeld suggests that the torah obedience of the king (or lack thereof) will have a profound effect on 'the fate of the people for good or ill; the righteous kings cast glory on their reigns while the wicked kings create a shadow over their period and cause their people to sin.'³⁷ Whilst Weinfeld's presentation of kingship as a 'requirement' of the book of the torah is debatable,³⁸ his analysis of the Deuteronomic ideal king as exemplar sheds some light on the Dtr worldview influencing the attitude of the king in his declaration in Ps 118:5-7. Deuteronomy and the DtrH present trust in Yahweh as an ideal which leaders in Israel should cling to, which in turn will positively affect the people: similarly here in Ps 118, the psalmist confesses that Yahweh is greater than all external circumstances, therefore he will not be afraid. This is the attitude which Moses sought to instill in the people (Deut 20:1-4) and in Joshua as the leader of the people (Jos 1:6-9) prior to the conquest of Canaan. The king's confession is that he has learnt from the experience of Yahweh's deliverance that the theology of Deuteronomy is true and applicable in reality—his public confession of the 'rightness' of this attitude is designed to positively impact the worshipping community at large.

3.1.5 Yahweh as the Psalmist's Help

In v 7 the psalmist declares his victory over his enemies (a concept which seems to bear

³⁴ We should remember that Joshua's commissioning parallels Ps 1 and 2's joint presentation of a proper world-and-life view. See pp 36-38 above.

³⁵ Jos 1:6-9, Deut 17:16-17.

³⁶ Weinfeld, *The Deuteronomic School*, 170-1. It seems that Weinfeld's association of Joshua (and, indeed, Moses) with regal function is a result of his assumption that 'kingship' is essential to the 'implementation of the moral law' (p 170). This is a question which we shall discuss in more detail as part of our study of Deut 17:14-20 in its broader context (Deut 16:18-18:22). However, it seems that adherence to the torah and the ordering of one's life in accordance with the book of the law is a factor which Deuteronomy as constitution expects (either explicitly or implicitly) of *all* leaders within Israel, including the king. Therefore, Yahweh's expectation that Joshua should meditate upon the torah and not stray from it is analogous to the kingship law inasmuch as Joshua was to lead the people in the same manner as would be expected of a king in leading the people. This does not mean that Joshua himself fulfilled a quasi-regal function, but rather that he was to bear the characteristics of all leaders in Israel, and, indeed, of all Israelites.

³⁷ Weinfeld, *The Deuteronomic School*, 171.

³⁸ McConville, *Grace in the End*, 31-2.

royal overtones³⁹) and celebrates the fact that Yahweh is his ‘help’ (בעזרי). This is a description of God which is reminiscent of the Blessings of Moses in Deut 33. Three times in this passage Yahweh is referred to as being ‘the help’ of his people (Deut 33:7, 26, 29). In context, this assurance of help seems to function in correspondence to Yahweh’s mockery of foreign gods in Deut 32:38, where he says, ‘Let them rise up to help you!’ Aligned with the central theme of Deuteronomy—complete allegiance and commitment to Yahweh—the Song of Moses derides idolatry and trust in anyone or anything other than Yahweh. The implication is clear: gods of wood and stone cannot help. Following on from this in Deuteronomy 33, three times the tribes of Israel are assured that Yahweh, himself, will be their help. The psalmist-king of Ps 118 makes the same sort of claim in these verses. He will not put his trust in anything other than Yahweh, accordingly God himself will be the psalmist’s help.⁴⁰ Once again, when this term is viewed in its proper context, we see an attitude which adopts Deuteronomistic concepts of faithfulness and commitment to the Lord.⁴¹

3.1.6 Trust in Yahweh—Not in Men/Princes

The theme of explicit trust in Yahweh is further developed in vv 8-9 where two antithetical parallelisms are developed positing the greater good of taking refuge in Yahweh as opposed to trusting in man, or princes. This is a further development of the Dtr idea (explicit trust in Yahweh above all else) that has been the subject of our consideration in the previous two sections.

טוב לחסות ביהוה מבטח באדם:
טוב לחסות ביהוה מבטח בנדיבים:

It is better to take refuge in Yahweh than to trust in man.
It is better to take trust in Yahweh than to trust in princes.

It seems that this dual parallelism is also designed to deliberately echo the Kingship Law. Firstly, we find in v 8 the statement that, ‘It is better to take refuge in Yahweh’ (טוב לחסות ביהוה). This, as we have already seen, is a concept which is editorially significant throughout the Book of Psalms and one which is reminiscent of Deuteronomy’s constant refrain that the people should find their security in relationship with Yahweh rather than in visible, external sources or the gods of the nations around them.⁴² Once again this expression of trust seems to parallel the content of Deuteronomy 32 and 33. Deut 32:37 asks: Where are the gods in which the people took refuge? The implied response is that these false gods provide no refuge, and, in rejecting Yahweh, Israel rejects their one true source of security and shelter—as is made clear in the blessings of Deut 33.⁴³

³⁹ Kraus, *Psalms II*, 397-8; Anderson, *Psalms*, 799-800.

⁴⁰ Mays, *Psalms*, 374-5.

⁴¹ This also links Pss 118-119 with the previous torah-kingship psalm groupings. For example, with the appellatives of Ps 18 (pp 63-64 above).

⁴² Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 64-5. See also pp 46-47; 70 above.

⁴³ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 64-5.

Ps 118:8-9's declaration of trust in Yahweh seems to intentionally reiterate one of the limitations placed upon the king in the Kingship Law. Verse 8 contrasts taking refuge in Yahweh with trust in man in a general sense, but verse 9 develops this thought more specifically into a declaration that the king finds refuge in Yahweh to be a better option than trusting in princes (מבטח בנדיבים). Whilst it is difficult to define exactly what the psalmist had in mind when using the word נדיבים, the context seems to suggest that he is speaking about foreign princes.⁴⁴ Accordingly, the implication of vv 8-9 is that the psalmist-king finds it better to take refuge in Yahweh than to trust in the international alliances with foreign powers. Such alliances were common practice in the ancient Near East, especially for smaller nations who saw these treaties as a means of withstanding the military opposition of neighbouring superpowers.⁴⁵ Deut 17:17 specifically prohibits the Israelite king from taking for himself many wives (ולא ירבה-לו נשים), a practice which (in parallel with many other prohibitions in Deuteronomy) could lead his heart astray from devotion to Yahweh.⁴⁶ So, the Kingship Law forbids the Israelite king from finding his source of security in international alliances—he is to trust in Yahweh instead. The psalmist-king is making a similar type of confession here in Psalm 118. He has discovered from Yahweh's gracious deliverance that it is better to take refuge in him than to trust in strategic alliances with foreign princes.⁴⁷ Mays comments:

Human strength is vulnerable to the power and threat of adversaries. It is better not to rely on it, even if it belongs to princes. The Lord's help is a power in which one can take refuge from both human weakness and human threats. 'If God is for us, who is against us?' (Rom 8:31).⁴⁸

So again the public confession of the king seems to be a declaration of a world-and-life view which follows the pattern of the Kingship Law.

3.1.7 Surrounding Nations—Circumcision—Name Theology

The next stanza (Ps 118:10-12) is an awkward one, and most of the commentators are unsure quite what to make of it. The three verses are clearly linked by the themes of the surrounding nations (סבוני כדבורים – v 11 – סבוני גם-סבבוני – v 10 – כל-גוים סבבוני) (v 12)

⁴⁴ Verse 7 speaks of the psalmist's triumph over his enemies—a concept which is traditionally reserved for foreign opposition. Verse 10 speaks of the nations (גוים) surrounding the psalmist, which obviously refers to foreign nations. Therefore it appears likely that the נדיבים are foreign princes rather than some form of post-exilic Israelite nobleman. Kraus, *Psalms II*, 397-8; McCann, *Psalms*, 1153-4. Anderson considers both options to be valid possibilities in the Psalter generally, but suggests that foreign princes is a better understanding in Ps 118:9 (*Psalms*, 782).

⁴⁵ J. H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* דברים (JPSTC; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996) 167; P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 256.

⁴⁶ As is seen in the negative presentation of Solomon in 1 Kings 11:1-13. Deuteronomy 17:17's ban on the king acquiring many wives for himself applies to the foundation of international treaty alliances (which were normally sealed by the giving of a daughter in marriage) as a source of trust which would diminish the king's trust in Yahweh. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of this point.

⁴⁷ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 67.

⁴⁸ Mays, *Psalms*, 376.

and the king's response; namely, to circumcise them or cut them off (אמילם) and to do so in the name of Yahweh (בשם יהוה). It is, indeed, difficult to find a point of reference for these ideas and the words of these verses seem to give rise to more questions than they answer.⁴⁹ In particular, what is the king doing in response to the (implied) threat from the nations? Is he causing them to be circumcised (by force), as suggested in Brown-Driver-Briggs?⁵⁰ Or is he, figuratively speaking, cutting them off (destroying them), as suggested by Gesenius?⁵¹ The commentators are no more in agreement with regard to the meaning of these verses.⁵²

It is possible that the *hifil* form of מול of Ps 118:10-12 is functioning as a parallel to the *hifil* form of כרת from Deut 12:29-13:1.⁵³ The contexts appear to be similar: (1) There is a situation of military conflict in Deut 12 and Ps 118;⁵⁴ (2) There is, perhaps, an implied backdrop of the danger of unfaithfulness from contact with these nations;⁵⁵ and (3) The corrective offered is based in torah-obedience.⁵⁶ Therefore, I would suggest that the action of the king in Ps 118 is a decisive military victory of the type suggested by the DtrH conquest accounts, which was significant in securing for the people a proper setting for continued devotion to Yahweh.

The other two elements common to these verses both represent Dtr themes. Firstly, the people of God surrounded by hostile foreign nations is a theme which is prominent in both Deuteronomy and the DtrH. Many of the paraenetic sections of Deuteronomy consist of Moses' appeals and challenges to the people to maintain their allegiance to Yahweh and not to succumb to the pressure to adopt the ways of the nations around them.⁵⁷ This theme of God's people surrounded by nations hostile to the ways of Yahweh is further developed in the DtrH.⁵⁸ In all of these cases the threat from the surrounding nations is presented as a

⁴⁹ See, for example, McCann's consideration of the translation of v 12, *Psalms*, 1154.

⁵⁰ Brown-Driver-Briggs, 558.

⁵¹ H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1979) 456.

⁵² Eaton, *Psalms*, 271, suggests that this was part of the 'symbolic ordeal' of the Autumn Festival. Whereas, Kraus, *Psalms II*, 397; Mays, *Psalms*, 374-5 and L. C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1983) 124, all focus upon either the threat from the surrounding nations or the fact that the psalmist calls upon the name of Yahweh, without making any suggestion with regard to the king's action in response to this threat.

⁵³ EVV 12:32. The same form is also used in Deut 19:1 to describe Yahweh's work in giving over the land to Israel.

⁵⁴ The description of how the conquest is to proceed in Deut 12 and conflict with 'enemies' and 'nations' in Ps 118.

⁵⁵ In inquiring after the gods of the nations in Deut 12, and in forming alliances with 'princes' in Ps 118.

⁵⁶ Deut 13:1 responds to this threat with the challenge that the people should do all that Moses has commanded them, and Ps 118 as an Entrance Liturgy grounds the king's right of access into the Temple in his righteousness based upon torah-obedience (see pp 108-109 above).

⁵⁷ Deut 12:29-32; 18:9-13; 29:16-18; 32:1-43 etc.

⁵⁸ For example, the conquest accounts in Joshua; the oppression by various neighbouring nations in the Book of Judges with its corresponding effect on the spiritual state of the people (e.g. Gideon account); the

threat to Yahweh's ordained way of life for his people.⁵⁹ Secondly, in each of these three verses the psalmist-king comes against the opposing nations 'in the name of Yahweh' (בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה). This element of his confession, once again, emphasises the king's dependence upon Yahweh. 'The motif [in the name of the Lord] identifies the real source of strength that enables the celebrant to resist the power of surrounding nations, a motif that continues the emphasis on human power in contrast to the Lord.'⁶⁰ As we have seen before, this is a classically Dtr concept.⁶¹ Kraus comments that:

יְהוָה is here the salvific presence of Yahweh guaranteed by the promise. The יְהוָה is like a weapon, like a shield, that enfolds him who is surrounded by the rage of the enemy...⁶²

Yet again this is indicative of the king's plea being firmly based not in his worth or ability, but in the work of God on his behalf. This attitude of humble trust in God alone is one which the text of Deuteronomy strives to inculcate in the hearts and minds of the people (Deut 7; 30:1-10), it appears that the king here desires to present his own adoption and application of this attitude as an example to the worshipping community.

3.1.8 Yahweh as Help and Salvation

Psalm 118:13-14 continues the theme of Yahweh's aid, succour and support for the psalmist-king. He was 'pushed hard to fall', but, Yahweh helped him—another evidence of his Yahweh's acceptance of him and, therefore, of the rightness of his admission into the Temple. Ps 118:14 is, of course, a direct quote from the Song of Moses in Exodus 15:2—providing, perhaps, another reason why Psalm 118 was included with the Egyptian Hallel. However, the theology of these verses, whilst obviously echoing the exodus theme of deliverance, is also reminiscent of Deuteronomy 32 and 33, where Moses warns the people that they should not to reject Yahweh, who is their help (עֹזֶר, Deut 32:38; 33:7, 26, 29 cf. Ps 118:13) and their salvation (יְשׁוּעָה, Deut 32:15 cf Ps 118:14).⁶³ The king's claim is clear—he has not rejected Yahweh as his help and salvation, and this is evidenced by the fact that God is still helping him and providing him with salvation. 'Vv 13-14 assert further that the celebrant's survival and strength come from the Lord, who in his deliverance became his salvation.'⁶⁴

narratives relating to David's military victories etc.

⁵⁹ J. G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (JSOTSup 33; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 59-60.

⁶⁰ Mays, *Psalms*, 374.

⁶¹ See Kraus, *Psalms*, 279-80 and the comments in Chapters 2 and 3 above. Whether or not the theology of the Psalter presents the idea of the 'name of Yahweh' in the same light as the assessment of this phrase found in the secondary literature of Deuteronomistic Studies is another question entirely. It seems that the psalmic presentation of the 'name of Yahweh' is associated with the idea of the real presence of God with his people as a present help on their behalf (see pp 87-88 above).

⁶² Kraus, *Psalms II*, 397-8.

⁶³ See above pp 63-64; 70; 88-91.

⁶⁴ Mays, *Psalms*, 374-5.

3.1.9 This Day—Prosperity—Name Theology

In the concluding verses of Ps 118 we come across some further indicators of a background in Dtr theology. First, there is a temporal sense of urgency in Ps 118:24 which reflects a theme which is commonly found in both Deuteronomy and the DtrH, especially in the Book of Joshua (e.g. Deut 26:16; 27:9-10; Jos 24:15). Secondly, the king and people pray together for salvation and *prosperity* (הצלִיחָה) in v 25. As we saw in our analysis of Pss 1 and 2 as an introduction to the Psalter, this is a concept which has become associated with keeping the torah. Thirdly, we see, once again, that the one who is blessed as he enters into the Temple is the one who comes ‘in the name of Yahweh’ (בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, v 26). This Dtr concept is infused throughout the whole psalm and provides further emphasis upon the appropriateness of the king’s dependence upon Yahweh, an important Dtr motif.

Following on from the proverbial account of Yahweh’s vindication of the king in Ps 118:22-23, we come to a verse well known from Sunday school songs:

זֶה-הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְהוָה נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׂמָחָה בּוֹ:

This is the day that Yahweh has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

One of the interesting features of this verse is the sense of immediacy presented in the fact that it is *this day* that Yahweh has made and therefore the people should rejoice now. There is a focus upon making the proper response *now*, which reflects the temporal emphases of the Books of Deuteronomy and Joshua especially. Ps 118:24 presents this in the predicative form (זֶה-הַיּוֹם, ‘this is the day’), whereas Deuteronomy and Joshua commonly present this in the attributive form (הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, e.g. Deut 26:16 or Jos 3:7) or simply by using הַיּוֹם in an emphatic sense (e.g. Deut 30:15-16 or Jos 24:15), however, the temporal stress is common to both Ps 118 and Deuteronomy-Joshua. The idea appears to be one of immediate application, as opposed to procrastination. In Ps 118:24, the speaker⁶⁵ announces today as the day which Yahweh has made, therefore no time should be wasted but the people should rejoice. One can imagine that this verse took on new meaning in the festivals of the post-exilic period when there must have been a great temptation for the people to set their hearts upon the future restoration of the king and kingdom. In its ambiguous setting and language, Ps 118 is designed to give hope in every situation, no matter how bleak, that Yahweh is still the God who delivers his people.⁶⁶ In Deuteronomy and Joshua, the temporal stress is normally connected with the presentation of choices to the people—*choose this day*, will you follow Yahweh or the foreign gods of the nations?⁶⁷

⁶⁵ It is not absolute clear whether this is the voice of the king or of the priests in vv 22-24. See Sanders, “NT Hermeneutic Fabric,” 181-2.

⁶⁶ Mays, “Ps 118,” 310.

⁶⁷ J. G. Millar, *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy* (Leicester: Apollos, 1998) 94-5. This could be a further echo of the Deut 30 motif in Ps 118. In the former Moses presents the ways of life and prosperity death and destruction to the people *today* (הַיּוֹם) and in Ps 118 the day to rejoice is today.

In both Ps 118 and the DtrH there is an inherent challenge: will the people stick with God as their Lord regardless of external pressures and circumstances or will they stray?⁶⁸

Secondly, the community prays in vv 25-27 that Yahweh will ‘save’ them (הוֹשִׁיעָה) and ‘prosper’ them (הַצְלִיחָה). The first of these pleas in Ps 118 reflects the same type of prayer as is found in Pss 18 and 20.⁶⁹ The second of these requests redirects the reader of the Psalter to Ps 1:3 and its context within Dtr theology. As we have argued in an earlier chapter,⁷⁰ the idea of God’s people prospering has become closely associated with keeping the torah of Yahweh. Ps 1:3 tells the reader that the blessed person delights in the torah of Yahweh and meditates upon it day and night; this person is like a tree planted by streams of water bearing fruit and in everything she does, she prospers (וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ). The prospering (both Ps 1:3 and Ps 118:25 use *hifil* forms of the verb צָלַח) is dependent upon the torah-obedience. This idea is accentuated positively in Jos 1:8, and negatively in Deut 28:29. A causal relationship between torah-obedience and prosperity is made in Joshua’s commissioning—if he meditates upon and obeys the law, he will prosper in all that he does (כִּי-אִז תִּצְלִיחַ אֶת-דְּרֹכְךָ וְאִז תִּשְׁכִּיל). Negatively, in the description of the covenant curses in Deut 28 the people are assured that if they reject the torah of Yahweh then they will not prosper in their ways (וְלֹא תִצְלִיחַ אֶת-דְּרֹכֶיךָ, v 29).⁷¹ So by implication this prayer for prosperity brings with it a tacit awareness that prosperity is dependent upon a certain lifestyle of torah-obedience—the people cannot expect prosperity in answer to their prayer without a lifestyle of torah-piety and the careful reader of the Psalter would be aware of this fact.

Thirdly, we see again that it is the one who enters the Temple ‘in the name of Yahweh’ who receives the priestly blessing (v 26). Implied in this formula is the fact that the one who comes is not found righteous by his own worth, rather, in accordance with his trust in and dependence upon Yahweh, he secures admittance into his presence.⁷² The connection between Temple (central sanctuary) and the name of Yahweh gives a strongly Dtr feel to this verse and to the poem as a whole.⁷³

3.1.10 Individual and Community

One other factor which is relevant to this thesis as a whole is the close interplay between the role of the individual (king) and community in Ps 118. Many of the commentators

⁶⁸ McCann, *Psalms*, 690.

⁶⁹ See Chapter 3 above,

⁷⁰ See above, pp 37-38.

⁷¹ This loss of prosperity is the direct result of not keeping the commandments and decrees of Yahweh commanded by Moses *that day* (Deut 28:15). Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 197-8.

⁷² Anderson, *Psalms*, 803; Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 699.

⁷³ Whilst rejecting the classical interpretation of Dtr ‘name theology’ (where the name is seen as a divine hypostasis), there is an obvious connection between the ‘name of Yahweh’ and the Temple in Deuteronomy 12.

comment upon the significance of God's deliverance of the king for the people as a whole.⁷⁴ In Ps 118:26, the blessing of the king leads to the blessing of the community. Sanders writes:

At the conclusion of the plea, which may in the actual ceremony have been much longer, full of joy and wonder, the priests, who had earlier fulfilled their role as gate-keepers (v 20), now joyfully intone the great 'Blessed be he who enters...', thereby officially recognising and receiving the one arriving as indeed the king. The climax of the ceremony has been reached. The king is once more king. *It would appear, as has been noted, that Yahweh's kingship is in part expressed in the earthly Davidic king so that the very presence of the king is the divine gift of light, and so the chorus and people affirm the point (v 27).*⁷⁵

Mays adds:

Fourth, the 'I' is understood in terms of the 'we.' The theological identity is corporate. Note the use of first-person songs for the people in narrative and prophetic contexts in the OT (e.g., Exodus 15; Isaiah 12). This does not cancel the function of the first-person style or eliminate the reading and the use of the psalm by individuals. Ps 56, which is similar in language and scenario, is attributed to a setting in David's life. *What happens, in the interplay of scripture, is a correlation of corporate and individual identities. David's narrative is taken as illustration and instruction about the people's life under God. Through David and his first-person style of the psalms, individuals understand their own existence in terms of the faith of the community.*⁷⁶

The implication of the antiphonal interaction between king, priests and people is that the king must be צדיק in order to enter into the Temple and receive the priestly blessing, and as such he is *exemplar* for the whole worshipping community.⁷⁷ As v 20 indicates, only the צדיקים may enter into the presence of God (not even the king is exempt from this necessity) therefore, the people too must follow his example in order to be declared right in God's eyes. The king is found righteous by the saving work of Yahweh, but also by a commitment to live in accordance with his torah. The same would be expected of the people. It appears that a major function of the torah-kingship redaction of the Psalter is to present a picture of the ideal (Dtr) king as an example for 'those who fear Yahweh' to follow. This function is at work not just in the editorial juxtaposition of Pss 118-119, but also within the text of Ps 118. The Davidic king, in entering into the presence of God, is seen as the quintessential 'fearer of Yahweh' and provides a pattern of piety for others to follow.

4. Ps 118 in the Light of Psalm Groupings 1-2 and 18-21

As well as assessing the Dtr background to Ps 118, we must also consider possible areas of connection with the torah-kingship psalms groupings previously analysed. Many of the lexical and thematic connections between Ps 118 and the previous psalm groupings have been mentioned above in our examination of Dtr influences upon this poem, so we need

⁷⁴ Mays, *Psalms*, 373-4; Mays, "Ps 118," 309; Sanders, "NT Hermeneutic Fabric."

⁷⁵ Sanders, "NT Hermeneutic Fabric," 182-3. Emphasis added.

⁷⁶ Mays, "Ps 118," 310 (emphasis mine).

⁷⁷ Cf. Allen, "David as Exemplar", with regard to a similar function of the figure of the king in Psalm 19.

not dwell on these features in great detail once again. There is, however, evidence that Ps 118 further extrapolates the theological emphases of Pss 1-2 and 18-21.

4.1 Salvation of the Lord's Anointed

Much in the same way as we find in Pss 2, 18, 20 and 21, the king of Ps 118 is faced with some sort of crisis, probably military. The nature of the threat is not made absolutely explicit in any of these psalms, so that the content of the poems will be applicable to many readers and situations.⁷⁸ However, the implicit background to these kingship psalms is one where Yahweh responds to the prayers of the king and people when his 'anointed' is faced with the rebellion of enemies. It is not that the king himself is of such great import, but rather the fact that he is part of the order which God has established for his people and the nations.⁷⁹ Although the word מָשִׁיחַ is not used in Ps 118, there seems to be ample evidence from the text to show that the 'one who comes in the name of the Lord' is the Davidic king,⁸⁰ as is seen, for example, in the significance of his deliverance for the wider community:

The messianic use of verse 26 [in the Gospel narratives] calls attention to the messianic dimensions of the figure in the psalm. In his conflict with all the nations and in the significance of his salvation for the people of the Lord, the celebrant in Ps 118 resembles the anointed king of Psalms 2; 18; 20; 21; and 89.⁸¹

So Ps 118's setting, as the thanksgiving lyric of the anointed king faced with crisis and deliverance, connects it with the psalms which we have previously examined.

4.2 Dependence upon Yahweh

Another characteristic of Psalm 118 which reflects the theology of the previous psalm groupings is the king's confession of total dependence upon Yahweh. Just as it was Yahweh who established the king in Zion in Psalm 2:7 and who protected him from the rebellion of the nations, so it is Yahweh who provides deliverance for the psalmist-king of Ps 118. Psalms 18, 20-21 also reflect the same sort of attitude—the appellatives of Ps 18, for example, indicating the king's reliance upon Yahweh as 'his Rock'. This attitude of submission and dependence is also testified to in the significance of the אֱלֹהִים-theology in Ps 20 and Ps 118—the strength and worth of the king lies not in any inherent righteousness or ability, but in his relationship with God. It is the fact that the king comes בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה that is significant for his admittance and acceptance. This reflects an attitude of deliberate dependence and subordination—Yahweh is the true king of all the earth and the significance of the Davidic king is found only in his relationship with the true king. The pleas

⁷⁸ Mays, *Psalms*, 375-6.

⁷⁹ See, for example, V. Sasson, "The Language of Rebellion in Psalm 2 and in the Plaster Texts of Deir 'Alla," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 24/2 (Summer 1986) 147-54, or Macintosh, "Consideration", for discussion of this idea.

⁸⁰ See pp 105-106 n. 11.

⁸¹ Mays, *Psalms*, 379.

for salvation (e.g. Ps 118:25, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא) that we find in Pss 18, 20 and 118 also show this attitude of reliance upon Yahweh. Neither the king nor the people can trust in any external factor for their salvation, their confession is that Yahweh alone is powerful to save and that he has, indeed, ‘become their salvation’. As we have seen previously, Deuteronomy and the DtrH view this attitude as a virtue.⁸² The king and the people are to trust in Yahweh and to live their lives as ‘fearers of the Lord’. Such is the attitude that we find in Psalm 118, as Eaton writes concerning this poem, ‘The ceremonies have taught confidence in God rather than in creaturely strength.’⁸³ This same lesson is found in Pss 1-2, 18-21 also.

4.3 Yahweh as Refuge

Connected with the above theme of dependence is the idea of Yahweh as refuge for king and, by implication, for people. As Jerome Creach has pointed out, the idea of Yahweh as refuge (מִלְטָה) plays a significant role in the theology of the Psalter,⁸⁴ and this is seen clearly in the three psalm groupings which we have examined. Psalms 2, 18 and 118 all stress the importance of taking refuge in Yahweh.⁸⁵ Ps 118:8-9 sets this act in deliberate contrast with trust in man—especially trust in princes and international alliances.

The use of the refuge metaphor in Isaiah and Zephaniah has parallels in the Psalter (i.e. Pss 2:12; 118:8-9)... Interestingly, these two prophets seem to have a close relationship to the monarch... The king spoke with this language to demonstrate his dependence on God in battle. The prophets, in turn, utilised similar vocabulary and figures of speech to describe proper political policy for the nation.⁸⁶

This idea of Yahweh as refuge seems to suggest that it is better for the king and the people to take refuge in Yahweh than to place their trust in policies which may seem more tangible but which ultimately draw the people away from Yahweh.⁸⁷ The fact that this theme appears again in Pss 118 and 119 is another indicator of the common theological perspective shared by Pss 1-2, 18-21 and 118-119.

4.4 Theology of the Two Ways

The theology of the two ways is brought back into focus in a strong way in Ps 118 (and in Ps 119). As our examination of both of the previous psalm groupings has shown, this Dtr/Wisdom theme plays a prominent role in these juxtaposed torah and kingship psalms.⁸⁸ Central to this antiphonal celebration is the entrance of the king and the people into the

⁸² Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 157; Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 57 f. 21.

⁸³ Eaton, *Psalms*, 272. Eaton interprets the deliverance of the king to be part of an annual ‘humiliation ritual’. Whilst this is possible, it could also be that some actual event of history provides the backdrop to this psalm. However, regardless of the nature of the deliverance the lesson learnt is the key issue, and that lesson is to trust in Yahweh rather than alternate sources of power.

⁸⁴ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 17-8.

⁸⁵ Pss 2:12; 18:3, 31 and 118:8-9.

⁸⁶ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 67.

⁸⁷ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209.

⁸⁸ See pages 41-42; 51-52; 68 etc.

Temple and verse 20 makes it clear that not all may enter, but only the צדיקים.⁸⁹ This reflects the ideology of the two ways: there is a righteousness defined by the torah, and those who seek after that righteousness shall gain admittance into the worship of the Temple—by implication therefore, those who do not seek to live in accordance with Yahweh's torah shall not be allowed to enter. The same ideas are also found in the concepts of 'those who fear Yahweh', 'those who take refuge in Yahweh', those for whom 'Yahweh has become their salvation' and also those who come 'in the name of the Lord'. Each of these phrases contains elements of inclusion and exclusion. A community is created of those who 'fear Yahweh', but the inevitable corollary of this like-minded community is the exclusion of those who do not fear Yahweh or take refuge in him.⁹⁰ Therefore, in reality, Psalm 118 is thoroughly grounded in the theology of the two ways and this provides a further connection with the previous torah-kingship psalm groupings.

4.5 Prayer Theme

Another connection between Ps 118 and the previous psalm groupings is the setting in prayer. Whilst Ps 118 does not substantially consist of direct prayers to Yahweh, vv 5-21 are essentially an account of the king's prayerful petition for salvation and Yahweh's response to it. What is more, vv 25 and 28 *are* direct prayer to Yahweh: the first is a prayer of the community in v 25, and, secondly, we hear the prayer of the king in v 28. Even after the account of Yahweh's deliverance of the king—with its corresponding benefits for the people—the congregation still prays that Yahweh will 'save' (הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא) and 'prosper' (הַצְלִיחָה נָא), showing a continuing attitude of dependence upon God which follows the example set by the king in his earlier account. This prayer, although voiced by the people, very much resembles the attitude of prayer attributed to the king in Psalms 18-21.⁹¹ Whilst the central works of the Psalms 15-24 collection focus on kingship and torah, prayer plays a significant part in that interaction;⁹² and we see that prayer connection reflected again in Psalm 118.⁹³ The second prayer (Ps 118:28) appears to be spoken by the king⁹⁴ and this too reflects the example which we have seen in Psalms 18-21. The prayer emphasises the psalmist's personal relationship with God, his dependence upon him and his delight in relationship with God. This is seen in the attitude of praise and the use of the first person singular pronominal suffix which is so characteristic of the prayers of Pss 18-21.⁹⁵ The theme of prayer undergirds Ps 118 and links it to the previous psalm collections.

⁸⁹ Anderson, *Psalms*, 797; Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 697; Briggs, *Psalms*, 402-3.

⁹⁰ Mays, "Ps 118," 304.

⁹¹ Miller, "Kingship," 134. Miller describes how in Pss 15-24 'the centrality of the king does not mean that the larger community's voice is not heard in these prayers. They are powerfully joined here.' The same principle seems to be at work in Ps 118, adding a powerful democratising effect to the central lesson.

⁹² Miller, "Kingship," 132 ff.

⁹³ McCann, *Psalms*, 1156.

⁹⁴ Sanders, "NT Hermeneutic Fabric," 183.

⁹⁵ Cf. Pss 18:3, 47-51; 19:15 etc., (see above pp 63-64; 69; 80).

4.6 Torah-Piety

One final, and significant, factor which links Ps 118 with the previous psalm groupings is its subtle connection with the torah-piety which influences the final form of the Psalter. Whilst the torah content of Ps 118 may not be as explicit as we have seen in some of the other psalms, it is clearly present nonetheless. First, Psalm 118's categorisation as an Entrance Liturgy places it within a worldview which elevates the role of torah in the life of the OT believer.⁹⁶ Secondly, the covenant context of *hesed* within Psalm 118:1-4 implies a responsibility on the part of both psalmist and people to live in accordance with the torah of Yahweh—that is their part of the deal.⁹⁷ Thirdly, assuming the temporal priority of Deut 17, according to what other standard would the Davidic king be declared righteous? The self-presentation of Deut 17:14-20 is that the king is obliged to live in accordance with the torah, and if the priests (cf. 17:18) are the ones calling him to account, prior to granting admittance into the Temple, then what other standard would they apply?⁹⁸ It may seem obvious, but the most logical source against which the *הקדש* of the king would be judged is the *תורת יהוה*. Fourthly, a righteousness based in torah-piety is suggested by the juxtaposition of Psalm 118 alongside Psalm 119. Psalms 118-119 serve as the focal point of Book V, together they are positioned in between two larger pre-existing collections which are in turn bracketed by two Davidic collections.⁹⁹ These factors combine to suggest that the readers of this psalm would have understood the righteousness which is required of the king (and by implication, of the people) to be a righteousness based in the torah of Yahweh.

4.7 Conclusion regarding Psalm 118

Once again, exegetical examination of the text seems to indicate that Psalm 118 borrows heavily from the theology of Deuteronomy and the DtrH. Secondly, there are signs that the theology of Psalm 118 is strikingly similar to the theology represented in Psalms 1-2 and 18-21. Furthermore, the democratising tendencies which we have seen in the other royal psalms are continued in Psalm 118, indicating that the piety of the king fulfilled not so much a sacral function, but an exemplary function—the piety of the king was meant to be an example of godliness for all the people. It remains to be seen how these themes and ideas are worked out in Psalm 119.

⁹⁶ Miller discusses how the Dtr ideal of torah-piety thoroughly permeates the Entrance Liturgies, Pss 15 and 24. It seems reasonable that the same standard be applied to a psalm which fulfills the same function within Book V of the Psalter, (see Miller, "Kingship," 139-41).

⁹⁷ See the argument outlined in pp 106-107 above.

⁹⁸ Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 16. Miller writes that the rule of the king is 'utterly determined by obedience to the law of the Lord'.

⁹⁹ We shall discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 6 entitled *The Editorial Placement of the Torah-Kingship Psalm Groupings*.

5. Analysis of Psalm 119

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אֲשֶׁרִי תְּמִימֵי-דֶרֶךְ הַהֲלָכִים בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה:
אֲשֶׁרִי נֹצְרִי עֲדֹתָיו בְּכָל-לֵב יִדְרֹשׁוּהוּ:
אֵף לֹא-פָעַלְוּ עוֹלָה בְּדַרְכָּיו הֶלְכוּ:
אַתָּה צִוִּיתָהּ פְּקֻדֶּיךָ לְשֹׁמֵר מְאֹד:
אֲחִלִּי יִכְנֹוּ דַרְכֵי לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֶּיךָ:
אֲזִי לֹא-אֲבוֹשׁ בְּהִבִּיטִי אֶל-כָּל-מַצּוֹתֶיךָ:
אוֹדֶךָ בַּיָּשָׁר לֵבָב בְּלִמְדֵי מִשְׁפָּטִי צִדְקָךָ:
אֶת-חֻקֶּיךָ אֲשֹׁמֵר אֶל-תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי עַד-מָאֵד:

בְּמָה יִזְכֶּה-נַעַר אֶת-אַרְחוֹ לְשֹׁמֵר כְּדִבְרֶךָ:
בְּכָל-לִבִּי דִרְשָׁתִּיךָ אֶל-תִּשְׁגֶּנִּי מִמַּצּוֹתֶיךָ:
בְּלִבִּי צִפְנֹתִי אִמְרֹתֶךָ לְמַעַן לֹא אֶחָטְא-לָךְ:
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה לְמִדְּנֵי חֻקֶּיךָ:
בִּשְׁפָתִי סִפְרֹתִי כָל מִשְׁפָּטֵי-פִיךָ:
בְּדֶרֶךְ עֲדוֹתֶיךָ שִׁשְׁתִּי כָעַל כָּל-הוֹן:
בְּפִקְדֹנֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה וְאֲבִיטָה אֶרְחֹתֶיךָ:
בְּחֻקֹּתֶיךָ אֲשַׁתְּעָשֶׂע לֹא אֲשַׁכַּח דִּבְרֶךָ:

גָּמַל עַל-עֲבֹדְךָ אֲחִיָּה וְאֲשִׁמְרָה דְּבָרְךָ:
גִּל-עֵינַי וְאֲבִיטָה נִפְלְאוֹת מִתּוֹרָתֶךָ:
גֵּר אָנֹכִי בָאָרֶץ אֶל-תִּסְתֵּר מִמֶּנִּי מַצּוֹתֶיךָ:
גִּרְסָה נִפְשִׁי לְתַאֲבָה אֶל-מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ בְּכָל-עֵת:
גִּעְרָתְךָ יוֹדִים אֲרוּרִים הַשֹּׁגִים מִמַּצּוֹתֶיךָ:
גַּל מַעְלִי חֲרָפָה וּבֹז כִּי עֲדוֹתֶיךָ נִצְרָתִי:
גַּם יָשְׁבוּ שָׂרִים בִּי נִדְּבָרוּ עֲבֹדְךָ יִשְׁחֹ
בְּחֻקֶּיךָ:
גַּם-עֲדוֹתֶיךָ שִׁעֲשָׁעִי אֲנִשִּׁי עֲצָתִי:

דְּבָקָה לְעָפָר נִפְשִׁי חֲיִנִּי כְּדִבְרֶךָ:
דַּרְכֵי סִפְרֹתִי וְתַעֲנִנִי לְמִדְּנֵי חֻקֶּיךָ:
דִּרְךָ-פִּקְוֹדֶיךָ הִבִּינִנִי וְאֲשִׁיחָה בְּנִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ:
דִּלְפָּה נִפְשִׁי מִתּוֹגָה קִיַּמְנִי כְּדִבְרֶךָ:
דִּרְךָ-שִׁקָּר הִסֵּר מִמֶּנִּי וְתוֹרָתְךָ חֲנִנִּי:
דִּרְךָ-אֲמוּנָה בְּחֻרָתִי מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ שְׁוִיתִי:
דְּבָקָתִי בְּעֲדוֹתֶיךָ יְהוָה אֶל-תִּבְיֹשְׁנִי:
דִּרְךָ-מַצּוֹתֶיךָ אֲרוּץ כִּי תִרְחִיב לִבִּי:

Translation

1 Blessed are those whose way is blameless; Those who walk in the torah of Yahweh.
2 Blessed are those who keep his statutes; with all their heart they seek him.
3 Surely they do no wrong; they walk in his ways.
4 You have commanded your precepts; to be closely kept.
5 Oh that my ways would be firm; to keep your decrees.
6 Then I will not be ashamed when I consider all your commands.
7 I give thanks to you in uprightness of heart, when I learn your righteous judgements.
8 Your decrees I keep; do not utterly forsake me!

9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.
10 With all my heart I seek you; Do not allow me to stray from your commands.
11 In my heart I store up your words; so that I will not sin against you.
12 Praise you, O Yahweh; Teach me your decrees.
13 With my lips I will recount; all the judgements of your mouth.
14 In the way of your statutes I rejoice; as *one would* concerning great riches.
15 I meditate upon your precepts; and I will consider your ways.
16 I take delight in your decrees; I will not forget your word.

17 Deal well with your servant so that I may live; and I will keep your word.
18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things from your torah.
19 I was a stranger in the land; do not hide your commands from me.
20 My soul is broken with longing for your judgements at all times.
21 You rebuke the proud who are cursed; those who stray from your commands.
22 Remove from me scorn and contempt; for I keep your statutes.
23 Even though princes sit speaking against me; your servant meditates on your decrees.
24 Also your statutes are my delight; they are my counsellors.

25 My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to your way.
26 I recounted my ways and you answered me; Teach me your decrees.
27 Cause me to understand the way of your precepts; and I will meditate on your wonderful deeds.
28 My soul weeps from sorrow; Establish me according to your word.
29 Cause me to turn aside from the way of deception; Be gracious to me through your torah.
30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have established your judgements.
31 I cling to your statutes, O Yahweh; Do not put me to shame.
32 I run in the way of your commands; for you have enlarged my heart .

הוֹרֵנִי יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ חֻקֶּיךָ וְאַצְרֶנָּה עֲקֹב:
הִבִּינֵנִי וְאַצְרֶה תוֹרָתְךָ וְאַשְׁמְרֶנָּה בְּכָל־לֵב:
הִדְרִיכֵנִי בִּנְתִיב מִצְוֹתֶיךָ כִּי־בוֹ חִפְצָתִי:
הִט־לִבִּי אֶל־עֲדוּתֶיךָ וְאֶל אֶל־בְּצַע:
הֶעֱבֵר עֵינַי מִרְאוֹת שׁוֹא בְּדֶרֶכְךָ חַיִּינִי:
הִקָּם לְעִבְדְּךָ אִמְרָתְךָ אֲשֶׁר לִירְאָתְךָ:
הֶעֱבֵר חֶרְפָּתִי אֲשֶׁר יִגְרָתִי כִּי מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ
טוֹבִים:

הִנֵּה תִאֲבָתִי לִפְקֻדֶּיךָ בְּצִדְקָתְךָ חַיִּינִי:

וַיִּבְאֵנִי חֶסֶדְךָ יְהוָה תְּשׁוּעָתְךָ כְּאִמְרָתְךָ:
וְאַעֲנֶה חֶרְפִּי דָבָר כִּי־בִטְחָתִי בְּדַבְּרֶךָ:
וְאֶל־תִּצַּל מִפִּי דְבַר־אֱמֶת עַד־מָאֵד כִּי
לְמִשְׁפָּטֶךָ יִחְלָתִי:
וְאַשְׁמְרֶה תוֹרָתְךָ תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
וְאַתְּהִלְכָּה בְּרִחְבָּה כִּי פִקְדֶיךָ דָּרָשְׁתִּי:
וְאִדְבָּרָה בְּעֵדוּתֶיךָ נֶגֶד מְלָכִים וְלֹא אֲבוֹשׁ:
וְאַשְׁתַּעֲשַׁע בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אֶהְבָּתִי:
וְאַשְׂא־כַּפִּי אֶל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אֶהְבָּתִי
וְאַשִׁיחָה בְּחֻקֶּיךָ:

זְכַר־דְּבָר לְעִבְדְּךָ עַל אֲשֶׁר יִחְלָתֵנִי:
זֹאת נַחֲמָתִי בְּעַנְיִי כִּי אִמְרָתְךָ חִיָּתֵנִי:
זֵדִים הִלִּיצֵנִי עַד־מָאֵד מִתּוֹרָתְךָ לֹא נָטִיתִי:
זְכַרְתִּי מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ מֵעוֹלָם יְהוָה וְאַתְּנַחֵם:
זִלְעָפָה אֶחֱזַתֵּנִי מִרְשָׁעִים עֲזָבִי תוֹרָתְךָ:
זְמֵרוֹת הָיוּ־לִי חֻקֶּיךָ בְּבֵית מְגוּרֵי:
זְכַרְתִּי בַּלִּילָה שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה וְאַשְׁמְרֶה תוֹרָתְךָ:
זֹאת הִיְתָה־לִּי כִּי פִקְדֶיךָ נִצְרָתִי:

חֲלָקִי יְהוָה אִמְרָתִי לְשֹׁמֵר דְּבָרֶיךָ:
חֲלִיתִי כָּנִיךָ בְּכָל־לֵב חֲנִינִי כְּאִמְרָתְךָ:
חֲשַׁבְתִּי דֶּרֶכִּי וְאַשִׁיבָה רַגְלִי אֶל־עֲדוּתֶיךָ:
חֲשַׁתִּי וְלֹא הִתְמַהֲמַהְתִּי לְשֹׁמֵר מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:
חֲבָלֵי רִשְׁעִים עֲוֹנֵנִי תוֹרָתְךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:
חֲצוֹת־לַיְלָה אָקוּם לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ עַל מִשְׁפָּטֶי
צִדְקָךָ:

33 Teach me, O Yahweh, the way of your decrees;
And as a consequence, I will keep it.
34 Give me understanding to keep your torah and I
will keep it with all my heart.
35 Cause me to tread the path of your commands;
For I delight in it.
36 Turn my heart to your statutes; and not to unjust
gain.
37 Avert my eyes from worthless things; Revive me
in your way.
38 Establish your word for your servant; so that
you may be feared.
39 Take away the scorn I dread; because your com-
mands are good.
40 O how I long for your precepts; By your
righteousness I am revived.

41 Let your steadfast love go with me, O Yahweh;
your salvation according to your utterance.
42 Then I will answer the one who taunts me; For I
trust in your word.
43 Do not take the word of truth from my mouth;
For in your commands I put my hope.
44 I keep your torah continually; forever and ever.
45 I walk in freedom because I seek your precepts.
46 I speak of your statutes before kings and I am
not ashamed.
47 I delight in your commands which I love.
48 I lift my hands concerning your commands
which I love and I meditate upon your decrees.

49 Remember your word to your servant; by which
you have given me hope.
50 This is my comfort in my suffering – that your
word gives me life.
51 The proud mock me badly; but I will not turn
from your torah.
52 I remember your eternal commands, O Yahweh,
and I find comfort in them.
53 Great zeal has seized me because of the wicked,
the ones who forsake your torah.
54 Your decrees have become my songs in my
dwelling place.
55 I remember your name by night, O Yahweh; and
I keep your torah.
56 This has become my *habit* for I keep your
precepts.

57 My portion is Yahweh; I have promised to keep
your words.
58 I seek your face with all my heart; Be gracious
to me according to your promise.
59 I consider my ways; and I turn my feet to your
statutes.
60 I hurry and do not tarry to keep your commands.
61 The bonds of the wicked surround me; But I
will not forget your torah.
62 In the middle of the night I arise to give thanks
to you for your righteous laws.

חִבֵּר אֲנִי לְכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִירָאוֹךָ וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי
פְּקוּדֶיךָ:
חֲסִדֶּךָ יְהוָה מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ חֻקֶּיךָ לְמִדְנִי:

טוֹב עָשִׂיתָ עִם־עַבְדְּךָ יְהוָה כְּדִבְרְךָ:
טוֹב טַעַם וְדַעַת לְמִדְנִי כִּי בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ
הֶאֱמַנְתִּי:
טָרַם אֶעֱנֶה אֲנִי שִׁגַּג וְעַתָּה אִמְרָתְךָ
שֹׁמְרָתִי:
טוֹב־אַתָּה וּמִטִּיב לְמִדְנִי חֻקֶּיךָ:
טָפְלוּ עָלַי שָׁקֵר זֵדִים אֲנִי בְּכָל־לֵב אֶצַּר
פְּקוּדֶיךָ:
טָפַשׁ כַּחֲלָב לִפֶּם אֲנִי תוֹרָתְךָ שֶׁעָשִׂעַתִּי:
טוֹב־לִי כִי־עֲנִיתִי לְמַעַן אֶלְמַד חֻקֶּיךָ:
טוֹב־לִי תוֹרַת־פִּיךָ מֵאֲלֹפֵי זָהָב וְכֶסֶף:

יָדֶיךָ עָשׂוּנִי וַיְכַוְּנוּנִי הִבִּינֵנִי וְאֶלְמַדָּה
מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:
יִרְאֶיךָ יִירְאוּנִי וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ כִּי לְדִבְרְךָ יַחְלֹתִי:
יִדְעֹתִי יְהוָה כִּי־צָדֵק מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ וְאַמוּנָה
עֲנִיתָנִי:
יְהִי־נָא חֲסִדֶּךָ לְנַחֲמֵנִי כְּאִמְרָתְךָ לְעַבְדְּךָ:
יִבְאוּנִי רַחֲמֶיךָ וְאַחֲיָה כִּי־תוֹרָתְךָ שֶׁעָשִׂעַתִּי:
יִבְשׂוּ זֵדִים כִּי־שָׁקֵר עֲוֹתוֹנִי אֲשִׁיחַ
בְּפִקּוּדֶיךָ:
יָשׁוּבוּ לִי יִרְאֶיךָ וַיִּדְעִי עֲדֹתֶיךָ:
יְהִי־לִבִּי תָמִים בְּחֻקֶּיךָ לְמַעַן לֹא אֲבוֹשׁ:

כָּל־תָּה לַתְּשׁוּעָתְךָ נַפְשִׁי לְדִבְרְךָ יַחְלֹתִי:
כָּל־יָעִינִי לְאִמְרָתְךָ לֵאמֹר מָתִי תִנְחַמְנִי:
כִּי־הִיִּיתִי כְּנֹאד בְּקִיטוֹר חֻקֶּיךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:
כַּמָּה יָמִים־עַבְדְּךָ מָתִי תַעֲשֶׂה בְּרֹדְפֵי מִשְׁפָּט:
כָּרוֹ־לִי זֵדִים שִׁיחוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא כָתוּרָתְךָ:
כָּל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֶמוּנָה שָׁקֵר רָדְפוּנִי עֲזָרְנִי:
כִּמְעֹט כְּלוּנִי בָאָרֶץ וְאֲנִי לֹא־עֲזַבְתִּי פְקוּדֶיךָ
כְּחֲסִדֶּךָ חֲיִנִי וְאֶשְׁמְרָה עֲדוּת פִּיךָ:

63 I am united with all those who fear you and with those who keep your precepts.

64 Your steadfast love fills the earth; Teach me your decrees.

65 You do good for your servant, O Yahweh, according to your word.

66 Teach me discernment and knowledge because I believe in your commands.

67 Before I was humbled I was going astray; But now I keep your words.

68 You are good and you do good; Teach me your decrees.

69 The proud smear me with deception; But I, with all my heart, keep your precepts.

70 Their hearts grow fat; But I rejoice in your torah.

71 It was good for me that I was humbled, in order that I might learn your decrees.

72 It is good for me, the torah of your mouth; [Better] than thousands of *pieces* of gold and silver.

73 Your hands made me and established me; Give me understanding that I may learn your commands.

74 Those who fear you look on me and rejoice because I have put my hope in your word.

75 I know, O Yahweh, that your commands are righteous; and in faithfulness you have afflicted me.

76 May your steadfast love comfort me according to your promise to your servant.

77 May your love go with me and I will live; For your torah is my delight.

78 Let the proud be put to shame for falsely accusing me; I will meditate on your precepts.

79 Let those who fear you return to me; those who know your statutes.

80 May my heart be blameless because of your decrees, so that I will not be put to shame.

81 My soul faints with longing for your salvation; For your word in which I put my hope.

82 My eyes fail for your utterance; To say, "When will you have compassion upon me?"

83 For I was like a wineskin in thick smoke; Your decrees I have not forgotten.

84 Until when *must* your servant wait? When will you bring my persecutors to justice?

85 The proud dig pits for me which is not in accordance with your law.

86 All your commands are faithful; Help me when the deceitful pursue me.

87 They almost wiped me from the earth; But I have not forsaken your precepts.

88 Be gracious to me in your steadfast love and I shall keep the decrees of your mouth.

לְעוֹלָם יְהוָה דְּבָרָךְ נִצָּב בַּשָּׁמַיִם:
 לְדֹר וָדֹר אֱמוּנָתְךָ כּוֹנֵנֶת אֶרֶץ וַתַּעֲמֵד:
 לְמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ עֲמָדוֹ הַיּוֹם כִּי הַכֹּל עֲבָדֶיךָ:
 לוֹלִי תוֹרָתְךָ שְׁעֲשָׂעִי אֲזִי אֲבִדְתִּי בְּעֲנִי:
 לְעוֹלָם לֹא־אֶשְׁכַּח פְּקוּדֶיךָ כִּי בָם חִיֵּיתָנִי:
 לָךְ־אֲנִי הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי כִּי פְקוּדֶיךָ דָּרָשְׁתִּי:
 לִי קוֹו רְשָׁעִים לְאַבְדָּנִי עֲדוֹתֶיךָ אֶתְבוֹנֶן:
 לְכָל תַּכְלָה רְאִיתִי קֶץ רַחֲבָה מִצִּוְתְּךָ מְאֹד:

מִה־אֶהְבֹּתִי תוֹרָתְךָ כָּל־הַיּוֹם הִיא שִׁיחָתִי:
 מֵאִי־בִי תַחֲכַמֵּנִי מִצִּוְתְּךָ כִּי לְעוֹלָם הִיא־לִי:
 מִכָּל־מְלַמְדֵי הַשִּׁכְלָתִי כִּי עֲדוֹתֶיךָ שִׁיחָה לִי:
 מִזְקָנִים אֶתְבוֹנֶן כִּי פְקוּדֶיךָ נִצָּרְתִּי:
 מִכָּל־אֲרָח רָע כָּל־אֲתִי רַגְלִי לִמְעַן אֲשֹׁמֵר
 דְּבָרְךָ:
 מִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לֹא־סָרְתִּי כִּי־אַתָּה הוֹרַתָּנִי:
 מִה־נִּמְלָצוֹ לְחֹכִי אִמְרָתְךָ מִדְּבַשׁ לִפִּי:
 מִפְּקוּדֶיךָ אֶתְבוֹנֶן עַל־כֵּן שָׁנֵאתִי כָל־אֲרָח
 שָׁקֵר:

גֵּר־לְרַגְלִי דְּבָרְךָ וְאוֹר לְנִתְיָבְתִּי:
 נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי וְאַקְיָמָה לְשֹׁמֵר מִשְׁפָּטִי צְדָקָה:
 נַעֲנִיתִי עַד־מְאֹד יְהוָה חֲיִנִּי כִּדְבָרְךָ:
 נִדְּבֹת פִּי רָצָה־נָא יְהוָה וּמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לְמַדְנִי:
 נִפְשִׁי בְּכַפִּי תָמִיד וְתוֹרָתְךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:
 נִתְּנוּ רְשָׁעִים פֶּחַ לִי וּמִפְּקוּדֶיךָ לֹא תָעִיתִי:
 נִחַלְתִּי עֲדוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם כִּי־שֹׁשׁוֹן לִבִּי הִמָּה:
 נָטִיתִי לִבִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת חֲקֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם עֲקֹב:

סֶעֱפִים שָׁנֵאתִי וְתוֹרָתְךָ אֶהְבֹּתִי:
 סִתְרִי וּמִגְנִי אַתָּה לְדְבָרְךָ יִחַלְתִּי:
 סוּרוֹ־מִמֶּנִּי מְרָעִים וְאַצָּרָה מִצֹּת אֱלֹהֵי:
 סִמְכֵנִי כְּאִמְרָתְךָ וְאַחֲיָה וְאֶל־תִּבְיָשְׁנִי
 מִשִּׁבְרִי:

89 Your word, O Yahweh, is eternal; It is established in the heavens.
 90 From generation to generation is your faithfulness; You established the earth and it continues.
 91 Your laws continue until today; for all things are your servants.
 92 If your torah had not been my delight; Then I would have perished in my suffering.
 93 I will never forget your precepts; for by them you revive me.
 94 I belong to you—save me because I seek your precepts.
 95 The wicked wait to destroy me; but I will consider your decrees.
 96 To all perfection I see an end; Your commands are very broad.

97 How I love your torah! All day long it is my meditation.
 98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.
 99 I have greater insight than all my teachers; for your decrees are my meditation.
 100 I have greater understanding than the elders because I guard your precepts.
 101 I have kept my feet from all the paths of evil, in order to keep your word.
 102 I have not turned from your judgements; for you yourself have taught me.
 103 How pleasant are your utterances in my palate; sweeter than honey in my mouth.
 104 I consider diligently your precepts therefore I hate all paths of deception.

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path.
 106 I swore and I confirmed that I would keep the commands of righteousness.
 107 I was humbled severely; O Yahweh! Revive me according to your word.
 108 Look favourably upon the free-will offerings of my mouth, O Yahweh; and teach me your judgements.
 109 My life is constantly in my hands; yet I will not forget your torah.
 110 The wicked set a trap for me, but I will not wander from your precepts.
 111 Your decrees are my inheritance forever; for they are the delight of my heart.
 112 I incline my heart to keep your statutes; they are my reward forever.

113 I hate the half-hearted, but I love your torah.
 114 You are my hiding place and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.
 115 Turn away from me, evil-doers, that I may keep the commands of my God!
 116 Sustain me according to your promise and I will live; do not turn my hope to shame.

סַעֲדֵנִי וְאַוְשַׁעַה וְאַשְׁעָה בְּחֻקֶּיךָ תָּמִיד:
 סָלִית כָּל־שׁוֹגִים מִחֻקֶּיךָ כִּי־שָׁקַר תִּרְמִיתָם:
 סָגִים הַשִּׁבֶּת כָּל־רָשָׁעֵי־אָרֶץ לָכֵן אֶהְבֵּתִי
 עֲדֹתֶיךָ:
 סָמַר מִפְּחָדְךָ בְּשָׂרִי וּמִמְשַׁפְּטֶיךָ יִרְאֵתִי:

עָשִׂיתִי מִשְׁפָּט וְצֶדֶק בִּלְתַּנְיַחֲנִי לַעֲשֹׂקִי:
 עָרַב עֲבָדְךָ לְטוֹב אֶל־יַעֲשֹׁקָנִי זָדִים:
 עֵינַי כָּלוּ לִישׁוּעָתְךָ וּלְאַמְרַת צִדְקָךָ:
 עָשָׂה עִם־עֲבָדְךָ כְּחִסְדְּךָ וְחֻקֶּיךָ לִמְדֵנִי:
 עֲבָדְךָ־אֲנִי הִבִּינִנִי וְאַדְעָה עֲדֹתֶיךָ:
 עֵת לַעֲשׂוֹת לַיהוָה הִפְרוּ תוֹרָתְךָ:
 עַל־כֵּן אֶהְבֵּתִי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ מִזֶּהָב וּמִפָּז:
 עַל־כֵּן כָּל־פְּקוּדֵי כָל יִשְׁרָתִי כָל־אֶרֶח שָׁקַר
 שָׁנֵאתִי:

פְּלֹאוֹת עֲדֹתֶיךָ עַל־כֵּן נִצָּרְתָם נִפְשֵׁי:
 פֶּתַח דְּבָרֶיךָ יָאִיר מִבֵּין פְּתִיִּים:
 פִּי־פָעַרְתִּי וְאַשְׁאַפָּה כִּי לְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ יֶאֱבָתִי:
 פִּנְה־אֵלַי וְחַנְּנִי כִּמְשַׁפֵּט לְאַהֲבֵי שְׁמֶךָ:
 פָּעַמִּי הֵכֵן בְּאַמְרָתְךָ וְאַל־תִּשְׁלַט־בִּי
 כָּל־אָוֶן:
 פִּדְּנִי מֵעֶשֶׂק אָדָם וְאַשְׁמְרָה פְּקוּדֶיךָ:
 פָּנֶיךָ הָאֵר בְּעֲבָדְךָ וּלְמִדְּנִי אֶת־חֻקֶּיךָ:
 פְּלִגִּי־מִים יִרְדּוּ עֵינַי עַל לֹא־שִׁמְרוּ תוֹרָתְךָ:

צָדִיק אַתָּה יְהוָה וַיִּשָּׁר מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ:
 צִוִּית צֶדֶק עֲדֹתֶיךָ וְאַמוּנָה מָאֵד:
 צִמְתַּתְנִי קִנְאָתִי כִּי־שָׁכַחוּ דְּבָרֶיךָ צָרִי:
 צְרוּפָה אִמְרָתְךָ מָאֵד וְעֲבָדְךָ אֶהְבָּה:
 צַעִיר אָנֹכִי וְנִבְזָה פִּקְדֶיךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:
 צִדְקָתְךָ צֶדֶק לְעוֹלָם וְתוֹרָתְךָ אֱמֶת:
 צַר־וּמְצוּק מִצְאוֹנִי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ שִׁעֲשָׁעִי:
 צֶדֶק עֲדֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם הִבִּינִנִי וְאַחֲיָה:

117 Support me and I shall be saved; I will lift up
 your decrees continually.

118 Make light of all those who stray from your
 decrees for their deceitfulness is vain.

119 You remove the dross of all the wicked of the
 earth; therefore I love your statutes.

120 My flesh shivers in dread of you and I fear
 your commands.

121 I have done justice and righteousness; Do not
 give me over to my oppressors.

122 Ensure your servant's good; do not let the
 proud oppress me.

123 My eyes fail *looking for* your salvation and
 your righteous promise.

124 Do for your servant in accordance with your
 steadfast love; and teach me your decrees.

125 I am your servant – give me understanding that
 I may know your statutes.

126 It is time to act, O Yahweh, they are breaking
 your torah.

127 Because I love your commands more than
 gold, more than pure gold;

128 Because I consider all your precepts upright – I
 hate all the paths of deceit.

129 Your statutes are wonders, therefore my soul
 obeys them.

130 The opening of your word brings light,
 understanding for the simple.

131 I open my mouth in longing, because I love
 your commands.

132 Turn to me and be gracious to me; according
 to your justice toward those who love your name.

133 Establish my footsteps according to your word
 and do not allow any sin to have mastery over me.

134 Ransom me from the oppression of men; that I
 may keep your precepts.

135 May your face shine upon your servant; that I
 may learn your decrees.

136 Tears go down my eyes; because they do not
 keep your torah.

137 You are righteous, O Yahweh, and your judge-
 ments are upright.

138 You commanded your righteous statutes and
they are fully trustworthy.

139 My zeal is putting an end to me because my
 enemies forget your words.

140 Your promise is exceedingly refined and your
 servant loves it.

141 I am insignificant and despised; But I do not
 forget your precepts.

142 Your righteousness is righteous forever and
 your torah is true.

143 Trouble and distress find me, but your com-
 mands are my delight.

144 Your statutes are righteous for ever; Give me
 understanding that I may live!

קראתי בכל־לב עֲנֵנִי יְהוָה חֲקִיךָ אֶצְרֶה:
 קראתיך הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי וְאַשְׁמְרֶה עֲדֹתֶיךָ:
 קדַּמְתִּי בַנֶּשֶׁף וְאַשׁוּעָה לְדַבְּרֶיךָ יִחְלָתִי:
 קדַּמּוּ עֵינַי אֲשֶׁמְרוֹת לְשִׁיחַ בְּאַמְרֹתֶךָ:
 קוֹלִי שִׁמְעָה כַּחֲסִדֶּךָ יְהוָה כְּמִשְׁפָּטֶךָ חֲיִנִּי:
 קרְבוּ רִדְפֵי זִמָּה מִתּוֹרָתֶךָ רַחֲקוּ:
 קרוב אַתָּה יְהוָה וְכָל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֱמֶת:
 קִדְּם יָדַעְתִּי מֵעֲדֹתֶיךָ כִּי לְעוֹלָם יִסְדָּתָם:

רֹאה־עֲנֵנִי וְחַלְצֵנִי כִּי־תוֹרָתֶךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:
 רִיבָה רִיבִי וּגְאֹלֵנִי לְאַמְרֹתֶךָ חֲיִנִּי:
 רְחוֹק מִרְשָׁעִים יִשׁוּעָה כִּי־חֲקִיךָ לֹא דָרָשׁוּ:
 רַחֲמֶיךָ רַבִּים יְהוָה כְּמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ חֲיִנִּי:
 רַבִּים רִדְפֵי וְצָרִי מֵעֲדוֹתֶיךָ לֹא נָטִיתִי:
 רִאִיתִי בְּגָדִים וְאַתְקוּטָטָה אֲשֶׁר אִמְרֹתֶךָ לֹא
 שָׁמְרוּ:
 רֹאה כִּי־פְקוּדֶיךָ אֶהְבֵּתִי יְהוָה כַּחֲסִדֶּךָ חֲיִנִּי:
 רֹאשׁ־דְּבָרֶךָ אֱמֶת וּלְעוֹלָם כָּל־מִשְׁפָּט
 צִדְקָה:

שָׁרִים רִדְפוּנִי חֲנָם וּמִדְּבָרֶיךָ פָּחַד לִבִּי:
 שֵׁשׁ אָנֹכִי עַל־אַמְרֹתֶךָ כְּמוֹצֵא שָׁלָל רָב:
 שָׁקַר שָׁנֵאתִי וְאַתַּעֲבֶה תוֹרָתֶךָ אֶהְבֵּתִי:
 שִׁבְעַת בְּיוֹם הִלְלֹתֶיךָ עַל מִשְׁפָּטֶי צִדְקָה:
 שָׁלוֹם רָב לְאַהֲבֵי תוֹרָתֶךָ וְאִין־לָמוּ מְכַשׁוֹל:
 שִׁבַּרְתִּי לִישׁוּעָתֶךָ יְהוָה וּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי:
 שָׁמְרָה נִפְשִׁי עֲדֹתֶיךָ וְאַהֲבֵם מְאֹד:
 שָׁמַרְתִּי פְקוּדֶיךָ וְעֲדֹתֶיךָ כִּי כָל־דַּרְכֵי נִגְדָּה:

תִּקְרַב רִנָּתִי לִפְנֶיךָ יְהוָה כְּדַבְּרֶךָ הִבִּינִנִּי:
 תָּבוֹא תַחֲנֹנִתִי לִפְנֶיךָ כְּאַמְרֹתֶךָ הֲצִילֵנִי:
 תִּבְעֶנָה שִׁפְתֵי תִהְלֶה כִּי תִלְמַדְנִי חֲקִיךָ:
 תַּעַן לְשׁוֹנִי אִמְרֹתֶךָ כִּי כָל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ צִדְקָה:
 תִּהְיֶי־יֶדְךָ לְעֲזָרָנִי כִּי פְקוּדֶיךָ בַּחֲרָתִי:
 תִּאֲבָתִי לִישׁוּעָתֶךָ יְהוָה וְתוֹרָתֶךָ שֶׁעֲשִׂיתִי:
 תִּחְיֶי־נַפְשִׁי וְתִהְלֶלְךָ וּמִשְׁפָּטֶךָ יַעֲזָרָנִי:
 תַּעֲיִתִי כְּשֶׁה אֲבִד בִּקְשׁ עֲבָדֶךָ
 כִּי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:

145 I call out with all my heart – answer me, O Yahweh – I keep your commands.
 146 I call out to you, save me and I will keep your statutes.
 147 I rise before dawn and I cry out for help; I have set my hope in your words.
 148 My eyes stay open through the night-watches to meditate upon your promises.
 149 Hear my voice in accordance with your steadfast love; O Yahweh, revive me in accordance with your justice.
 150 My persecutors are near, plotting; they are far from your torah.
 151 You are near, O Yahweh, and all your commands are true.
 152 From of old I have known your statute; for you established them forever.

153 Look upon my suffering and deliver me; because I do not forget your torah.
 154 Defend my cause and redeem me; revive me according to your promise.
 155 The wicked are far from your salvation; because they do not seek your decrees.
 156 Your compassion is great, O Yahweh; Revive me in accordance with your judgements.
 157 Many are my persecutors and enemies; I have not turned away from your statutes.
 158 I view the faithless with loathing; those who do not keep your utterances.
 159 See how I love your precepts; O Yahweh, preserve my life according to your steadfast love.
 160 All your words are true; All your commands are forever righteous.

161 Rulers persecute me without cause; but my heart trembles before your words.
 162 I rejoice continually in your promise; like one finding great spoil.
 163 I hate and abhor deception; I love your torah.
 164 Seven times a day I praise you because of your righteous commands.
 165 Much peace to those who love your torah and there is no stumbling block for them.
 166 I wait for your salvation, O Yahweh; and I keep your commands.
 167 My soul keeps your statutes and I love them greatly.
 168 I keep your precepts and your statutes; For all my ways are before you.

169 My cry for help draws near to your presence, O Yahweh; Give me understanding in accordance with your word.
 170 My supplication comes into your presence; Deliver me in accordance with your promise.
 171 Praise pours forth from my lips because you teach me your decrees.
 172 My tongue is occupied with your words because all your commands are righteous.
 173 May your hand be my help for I choose your precepts.
 174 I long for your salvation, O Yahweh; and your torah is my delight.
 175 My soul lives and will praise you; and your judgements are my help.
 176 I have strayed like a lost sheep—seek out your servant, because I have not forgotten your commands.

5.1 Deuteronomic Influences on Psalm 119

Arguably, the least controversial statement of all the suggestions contained in this thesis would be to say that Psalm 119¹⁰⁰ is thoroughly grounded in the torah theology of Deuteronomy. Were arguments proven solely on the basis of the number of commentators who agree on any given issue, then this question would be a dead certainty—all of the commentators, as far as I am aware, make some sort of connection between Psalm 119 and the theology of the Book of Deuteronomy. However, academic accord is not a sufficient standard of evidence, the text of the Hebrew Bible must be allowed to speak for itself. Therefore, we should take some time to examine the Dtr content in Psalm 119.

5.1.1 Torah Synonyms

Perhaps the most obvious Dtr connection is Psalm 119's use of תורה and its seven synonyms. Clearly, the central focus of Psalm 119 is the torah of Yahweh and its significance in the life of the speaker of the psalm. The eight-fold acrostic structure is matched by the use of eight torah words which are used interchangeably within this massive poem.¹⁰¹ The word used most commonly is תורה itself and the seven other words, in other contexts, seem to reflect particular aspects or elements of legal understanding,¹⁰² but here they are used as synonyms of תורה, to convey the same essential meaning using different words. The overall impression is not that the psalmist is trying to subtly distinguish between the various torah terms, rather that he uses them interchangeably to reflect the totality of God's revelation.¹⁰³

This preoccupation with torah terms is characteristic of the Book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic literature. All of the terms used in Psalm 119 are to be found in Deuteronomy itself, apart from פקודים which appears to be a poetic equivalent of חקים and is only to be found in the Psalms. What is especially characteristic of Deuteronomy is the use of many of these torah terms in close conjunction:

- a) Multiple Torah Terms. We have already discussed the poetic function of the multiple terms for Torah and the fact that throughout the legal traditions dual terms for Torah are

¹⁰⁰ Perhaps surprisingly for a poem of this length, the text of Ps 119 is largely unproblematic. Also the acrostic pattern means that it is not difficult to determine the structure of the psalm!

¹⁰¹ Mays, *Psalms*, 382; Soll, *Psalm 119*, 38-45.

¹⁰² I have chosen the following definitions of each of the synonyms: עדות - 'statutes'; פקודים - 'precepts'; חקים - 'decrees'; מצות - 'commands'; משפטים - 'judgments'; דבר - 'word(s)' and אמרה - also 'word(s)'. These largely follow the accepted definitions of these terms. Some scholars seek to define אמרה as 'promise', and it may sometimes have this meaning in certain contexts. Generally, I have decided to follow the LXX in translating דבר and אמרה in the same way, using 'word(s)' because it appears that אמרה functions as a poetic synonym of דבר, (Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 704), but occasionally it is translated as 'promise', when the context so suggests. תורה, I have left untranslated for the moment as the proper understanding of this term as it is used in the torah psalms will be the subject of later discussion

¹⁰³ R. N. Whybray, "Psalm 119 Profile of a Psalmist," *Wisdom, You Are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (CBQMS 29; ed. Michael L. Barré; Washington D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997) 31.

used. But it is particularly characteristic of the deuteronomic style to go even further than dual terms in its zeal for comprehensiveness where Torah is concerned.¹⁰⁴

Levenson further emphasises this connection between Deuteronomy, as opposed to the Priestly literature, and Ps 119:

The concern with commandments, under various names, is also common to Ps 119 and Deuteronomy. Indeed, in some Deuteronomistic paraenetic texts (e.g. Deut 4:1-6), one can hear as many as five of the eight synonyms of Psalm 119 in only a few verses. In contrast, distinctive Priestly terminology is largely absent in the psalm... The poet stands in the Deuteronomic tradition of repentance, not in the Priestly tradition of atonement and expiation.¹⁰⁵

Although each of these terms really functions in the same way in the poem, it is likely that the poet made use of all eight terms in order to stress the fullness and diversity of divine revelation, accentuating the completeness with which the word of God addresses the life of the OT believer. Again, this concern reflects the teaching of Deuteronomy:

Apparently the poet knew of eight principle terms in the authoritative tradition that named the subject about which he wanted to write. So he used the alphabet to signal completeness and the whole vocabulary to represent comprehensiveness.¹⁰⁶

[T]he conception associated with תורה in view of Psalms 1; 19B; and 119 is more narrow. One thinks of the canonised law of God, and especially of the norm brought about by Deuteronomy. In favour of this conception would be not only the variation of terms in Psalm 119 (and Psalm 19), which places clearly juridical terms like חק and משפט alongside of תורה, but also the inner content. Psalm 119 speaks about keeping, preserving, and not forgetting the Torah. Those are demands that constantly recur in Deuteronomy. Intensive, unremitting association with the Torah is commanded, especially in Deut 6:7ff and Joshua 1:8. Also taking the Torah to heart and its presence in one's innermost being, as is taught in Ps 119 is characteristic for Deuteronomic exhortation and theology (cf Deut 4:39; 6:6; 30:14). Worth noting, finally, is the living חַי character that clings to the תורה concept and then expresses itself also in Psalms 19 and 119. There can hardly be any doubt that there are close connections between Deuteronomic circles and the תורה piety of Psalms 1; 19B; and 119.¹⁰⁷

So we see that the use of multiple torah terms in Ps 119—as in Ps 19—grounds this poem in the piety of the Deuteronomist.

5.1.2 Language of Devotion

As well as picking up on the use of multiple legal terms in the above quote, Kraus points out another Deuteronomic connection in highlighting the language of devotion used in Psalm 119 which bears marked similarities to the paraenetic challenges of the Book of Deuteronomy. Many of the activities related to the law of Yahweh in Ps 119 are commanded in Deuteronomy—for example, as Kraus suggests, 'keeping, preserving, and not forgetting the torah'¹⁰⁸ are all commands which are commonly found in Deuteronomy (e.g.

¹⁰⁴ Soll, *Psalms 119*, 107.

¹⁰⁵ Levenson, "Sources," 564.

¹⁰⁶ Mays, *Psalms*, 382.

¹⁰⁷ Kraus, *Psalms II*, 413.

¹⁰⁸ Kraus, *Psalms II*, 413.

Ps 119:2, 4, 10 etc. cf. Deut 4:1-14; 6:1-25 etc.). Soll also argues that such language puts Psalm 119 firmly within the terms of reference of Deuteronomic theology and he goes on to add that the use of 'psychophysical terms' also reflects this worldview.

The characteristically deuteronomic phrase 'with all my heart' occurs six times in Psalm 119. The only difference is that Psalm 119 employs *běkōl lēb*, where the deuteronomic tradition prefers *běkōl lēbab*. It is used in Psalm 119, as in Deuteronomy and the deuteronomistic history, to modify verb phrases involving seeking YHWH (Psalm 119:2, 10, 58, 145; Deut 4:29 etc) and carrying out the commandments (Ps 119:34, 69; Deut 26:16; 30:2 etc).¹⁰⁹

Other commentators also draw attention to Psalm 119's use of a language of devotion which is very similar to the piety encouraged in Deuteronomy:

Commentators have called the psalm Deuteronomic in thought, and there are certainly affinities between the psalm and Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy employs seven of the key words (only *piqqûdîm* is absent), and many phrases appear in both places. Most important, Psalm 119 employs the affective language of Deuteronomy: love (*'āhab*) of *tôrâ* with all one's heart, listening and keeping *tôrâ*.¹¹⁰

The voice speaking in the psalm is that of a consciousness shaped by many influences, all of them scriptural. The psalmist knows and thinks with the theology and vocabulary of Deuteronomy. The great exhortation of Deuteronomy 6:1-9 to love the Lord by keeping and teaching his words is the central impulse of the psalmist's religion.¹¹¹

So it can be seen that the torah synonyms are not the only key areas of lexical connection grounded in Dtr theology, the whole language of devotion found in Ps 119 borrows heavily upon Dtr concepts of a proper, worshipful, obedient attitude towards Yahweh.

5.1.3 Dependence upon Yahweh — Name of Yahweh

Once again we see in Psalm 119 themes which have been constant refrains in the torah-kingship psalms. One of the most prominent themes in these psalms, and also in the Book of Deuteronomy, is the idea of total dependence upon God. This concept is foundational to the very idea of personal and corporate piety within the Psalter, which makes it clear that

¹⁰⁹ Soll, *Psalm 119*, 127-8.

¹¹⁰ Freedman, *Psalm 119*, 90-1. Freedman's consideration of Ps 119 in this work is insightful and theologically rich, however, I cannot agree with the central thesis of his work. He suggests that at some point the acrostic psalms formed a group in which the number of syllables in Ps 119 exactly corresponds to the combined syllable count of all of the other acrostic psalms. There are several problems with this thesis: (1) Freedman's theory is dependent upon a degree of exactness in the analysis of the text which is not available to us (as Freedman himself must admit, 'determining colon boundaries and hence the number of cola in a stanza or a poem is not an exact science... [p 18]; (2) The difference in vocalisation (which accordingly influences the number of syllables) between the original Hebrew text of these psalms and the MT is not properly taken into account (pp 59-61)—to split the difference between long and short spellings seems somewhat random and cannot guarantee a correct answer regarding the original number of syllables in each poem; (3) Other theories for assessing metre are not given proper consideration (p 77), the fact that counting syllables (as opposed to accented syllables) gives a neater result in this case is insufficient evidence in and of itself to establish that this method of syllable counting (if any) was employed by the author of Ps 119; (4) Even were this correspondence in the number of syllables to be the case it does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the acrostics once formed a psalm grouping.

¹¹¹ Mays, *Psalms*, 384. See also Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 704-5 and Kraus, *Psalms II*, 415.

there is no way for the believer to please God without a proper attitude of trust in him. Obviously, this theological emphasis has become a psalmic theme—something intrinsic to the theology of the psalms themselves—yet this is a concept which would have known roots in the Deuteronomic literature. In all situations, the Israelite believer and the community of believers should trust in Yahweh over and above all else: such is the message of Deuteronomy and of the Psalms.

Many verses of Ps 119 show this attitude of absolute trust in Yahweh as opposed to other potential sources of confidence. The following three verses are particular examples, but even a cursory reading of the psalm will reveal many such statements:

v 23 גַּם יֹשְׁבוֹ שָׁרִים בִּי נִדְּבָרוּ עֲבֹדְךָ יִשְׁיָה בַּחֲקִיד

Even although princes sit speaking against me; your servant shall meditate on your decrees.

v 72 טוֹב־לִי תוֹרַת־פִּיךָ מֵאַלְפֵי זָהָב וְכֶסֶף

The torah of your mouth is good for me; [better] than thousands of *pieces of* gold and silver.

v 114 סִתְרִי וּמִגְנִי אַתָּה לְדַבְרְךָ יַחֲלֹתִי

You are my hiding place and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.

These three verses illustrate repeated themes in the statements of trust in Yahweh in Ps 119. Whybray observes:

A number of themes are endlessly repeated: the psalmist makes it clear that God, whose will is expressed in his torah or teaching, *is the sole guiding principle of his life*: he loves and delights in his law, which is eternal and righteous, saves him, gives him life, freedom and superior wisdom. He studies it and meditates on it and so receives illumination. Yet he recognises that his understanding of it is incomplete, and he desperately longs for a deeper knowledge. He also recognises the *danger of being led astray by a desire for wealth and unjust gain, and prays that he may avoid this*. He feels isolated from society and *prays to be delivered from his tormentors who seek his life*. He prays for life, help, comfort and grace, and speaks of his frequent turning to God in prayer and praise.¹¹²

These repeated themes within the Psalm 119 echo the spirit of the Kingship Law.¹¹³ The three verses highlighted above show specifically how the psalmist declares his trust in Yahweh's torah as opposed to: 1) Princes and their mocking (corresponding to the international treaties sealed by royal marriages banned in Deut 17:17 cf. also v 46); 2) Great wealth; and, 3) Military strength (Yahweh is the psalmist's shield and hiding place, not weapons of war or armies). The three areas explicitly prohibited as sources of trust for the Israelite king are all explicitly addressed in the text of Psalm 119. This psalmist declares his absolute dependence upon Yahweh (by learning from and living in accordance with his torah), as opposed to all external factors, and in doing so he displays the type of priorities that are demanded of the king in Deut 17:14-20.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Whybray, "Psalm 119," 40 (emphasis mine).

¹¹³ As we shall see below, the prayer of Psalm 119 may well be the Davidic king.

¹¹⁴ Kraus, *Psalms II*, 415-6; Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 733.

This attitude of absolute dependence upon Yahweh is further solidified by the use of the שׁוּב motif in verses 55 and 132. The idea presented by the שׁוּב יְהוָה in Psalm 119 (as well as in the other psalms which we have examined) seems to reflect an understanding of the ‘real presence of God’.¹¹⁵ The name of Yahweh is used as a symbol of his actual presence with his people. It is ‘remembered’ (זָכַר) and ‘loved’ (אָהַב) in these two verses, thus reflecting the type of personification of the שׁוּב concept that we have seen in the other kingship-torah psalms. The underlying idea seems to be that Yahweh is truly present with the psalmist, therefore, the poet will place his trust in him, and not in anything else.¹¹⁶

Once again we see that the psalmist reflects an attitude which is commended—even commanded—in Deuteronomy. Throughout the Book of Deuteronomy this emphasis upon absolute trust in Yahweh is often repeated. Deut 6-8 reminds the people of the dangers of forgetting Yahweh and trusting in syncretism, or becoming proud of their election, relying upon wealth, and so on¹¹⁷—the constant theme of these chapters concerns *that which Yahweh has done for them and the necessity of trusting in him alone*. The same principle can be seen in the Kingship Law (Deut 17)¹¹⁸ and the law governing war (Deut 20)¹¹⁹ and at many other points throughout the book. Deuteronomy makes it clear that Yahweh is the source of all good for his people, therefore they should rely solely upon him and not turn to any other source of empowerment—this message finds a ringing reprise in the content of Ps 119.

5.1.4 Yahweh as Refuge and Torah

Connected with the above theme of dependence upon Yahweh, is the idea of Yahweh as refuge for his people. We have discussed the significance of this concept in terms of the editorial placement of the psalms, and examined the role that the הוֹדָה semantic group plays in the torah-kingship psalms. It seems significant, therefore, that the הוֹדָה group *does not* appear in Psalm 119, but rather the reader witnesses something of a transformation with regard to the concept of Yahweh as refuge in this poem. Jerome Creach points out that *the language which is normally associated with the הוֹדָה group becomes associated with the torah of Yahweh in Psalm 119*.¹²⁰ In fact, it appears that the torah has become (perhaps in late psalmic literature) a focal point for the believer’s understanding of refuge in God.

Again, Ps 119 speaks of trust in the *tôrâ* like other psalms in the Psalter refer to seeking refuge in Yahweh. In contrast to this portrait of righteousness, Ps 119 presents the wicked

¹¹⁵ See the discussion of ‘name theology’ at various points in Chapter 3, above.

¹¹⁶ Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 714. Kirkpatrick writes concerning the ‘name of Yahweh’ in v 55, ‘The constant recollection of all that He has revealed Himself to be, is the most powerful motive to observance of His laws.’

¹¹⁷ Millar, *Now Choose Life*, 53; Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 114-8.

¹¹⁸ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 208-10.

¹¹⁹ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 57 n. 21.

¹²⁰ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 72.

as those who fail to depend on *tôrâ*... Thus, Ps 119 takes over language previously applied to Yahweh to describe what seems to be the tutelary function of *tôrâ*. Yahweh's instruction, which perhaps includes the content of the Psalter itself, comes to be seen as a kind of refuge, an object of hope and a source of protection.¹²¹

This is an interesting phenomenon, and one worthy of further consideration. Just why is the language of refuge applied to the torah in Psalm 119? Creach suggests that the answer to this question is to be found in a process of democratisation:

It is also interesting that a number of late psalms... have adopted language of the *hāsâ* field to describe a proper stance before Yahweh (Pss 25, 34, 37, 119). This distribution of *hāsâ* and related terms may indicate a development in which later writings (wisdom books and late psalms) incorporated language of royal ideology (in royal psalms) and prophetic directives to the nation... to teach personal piety.¹²²

The *hāsâ* semantic field reflects the idea of God as Rock and Refuge which is rooted in Deuteronomic theology (e.g. Deut 32:37),¹²³ yet the language which is typically associated with God as refuge is applied to the torah in Psalm 119. This seems to reflect a process of democratisation by which the king's function as 'model Israelite' is now being presented directly to the people in order to encourage them towards a comparable type of personal piety.

*Namely, late Psalms seemed to borrow from earlier writings that described as national policy or the piety of the king in order to express and encourage a personal devotion. This development holds two important implications for understanding the present Psalter: (1) the incorporation of *hāsâ* and associated terms in some of the latest psalms of the book (i.e. Ps 119) is perhaps an indication that the ideas expressed by the *hāsâ* field were important for the final collection. (2) More specifically, the association of *tôrâ* with Yahweh's refuge provides a clue as to how Yahweh's instruction was understood and how the Psalter was meant to be read: the content of the Psalter seemed to be intended as a guide to a life of dependence; the most concrete way of expressing such allegiance was in the study of *tôrâ*.¹²⁴*

5.1.5 Theology of the Two Ways

Much of Psalm 119 is presented in almost adversarial tones (e.g. vv 21-23, 61, 69-70 etc.). Whilst most scholars describe Psalm 119 as a psalm of mixed genre, Soll makes a strong argument that Psalm 119 is, in fact, an individual psalm of lament. As is common with this genre of psalms, much of the content addresses issues concerning the psalmist's enemies, opposition and the persecution which he faces.¹²⁵ Often psalms of individual lament present the psalmist's lifestyle in contrast to that chosen by his enemies, and this is true of

¹²¹ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 72.

¹²² Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 68.

¹²³ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 72.

¹²⁴ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 73 (emphasis mine).

¹²⁵ Obviously, in a psalm of this length, there is going to be varied content—hence, the majority opinion that Psalm 119 is of mixed genre. However, much of Psalm 119 is made up of the declarations of innocence, cries of lament and petitions for salvation, all of which are common within the psalms of individual lament. Soll points out that over half of the verses of Ps 119 fall within the categories of petition or lament, which as a percentage is comparable to the petition/lament content in psalms which are universally acknowledged to be lament psalms (see Soll, *Psalm 119*, 69-70).

Psalm 119. Thus, it could be said that this psalm bears constant witness to the theology of the two ways. Every verse makes a statement concerning a way of life in relation to the torah of Yahweh—one either accepts that way and walks in accordance with divine revelation, or, alternatively, one rejects that way and therefore chooses to walk in the way of the wicked. This is shown most clearly in the *daleth* stanza, which gives the psalmist a natural opportunity to make use of the word דרך. Here, for example, we see the psalmist speak about ‘the way of faithfulness’ (דרך־אמונה, v 30) as opposed to ‘the way of deceit’ (דרך־שקר, v 29). However, the idea of the two ways is not limited to the *daleth* stanza, and it finds expression throughout the whole of Psalm 119, particularly in the usage of דרך and ארה, but the concept is inherent to the poetic intent of the whole psalm. The psalmist is making a declaration that he does follow and will follow a lifestyle based in the torah. This lifestyle has its counterpoint in a lifestyle based around the rejection of torah—be that conscious rejection or simply a lifestyle which places its priorities elsewhere. The reader is made aware of this fact from v 1:

אשרי תמימי־דרך ההלכים בתורת יהוה:

Blessed are those whose way is blameless; Those walking in the torah of Yahweh.

From the outset the reader sees that the psalmist is talking about a world-and-life view centred around the torah. This is shown not only by the use of דרך but also by the idea of ‘walking in the torah of Yahweh’ (הלך), which again reflects a choice of lifestyle and worldview, rather than a one-off act or declaration of loyalty. This choice of language sounds a note that rings loud in Deuteronomy:

Subsequent verses introduce other terms for God’s revelation. Verse 2 is reminiscent of Deuteronomy, where God’s ‘decrees’ (see Ps 19:7) are to be heard and kept (see Deut 4:45; 6:17, 20) and where God is to be sought wholeheartedly (see Deut 4:29; Ps 119:10). Verse 3 is unusual in that it does not contain one of the eight major synonyms. Rather, God’s ‘ways’ indicate God’s revelation in this case (see also vv 15, 37), and *the image of walking in God’s ways is again reminiscent of Deuteronomy, occurring often in parallel with keeping God’s commandments (see Deut 8:6; 10:12-13; 11:22; see Ps 119:6).*¹²⁶

The phrase itself [‘walk in his ways’, Ps 119:3] is a synonym of verse 1b. Deissler suggests that this expression has its home in the Deuteronomic circles, where it is usually coupled with loving Yahweh (Deut 19:9, 30:16) and keeping his Commandments (Deut 8:6, 26:17, 28:9, 30:16). Sometimes it may express one of the essential aspects of Israelite religion, as in Jeremiah 7:23: ‘Obey my voice... and walk in all the ways that I command you...’ (cf 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Chronicles 6:31; Isaiah 48:17).¹²⁷

Furthermore, Anderson points out that the ‘choose life’ language of Ps 119 reflects the Dtr challenge to live in accordance with Yahweh’s design rather than to choose alternative worldviews or lifestyles:

I have chosen thy precepts (v 173): cf. Deut 30:19 where Moses sets before his people the two possibilities: blessing or curse, life or death. The Psalmist has chosen to obey God’s

¹²⁶ McCann, *Psalms*, 1168 (emphasis mine).

¹²⁷ Anderson, *Psalms*, 809.

commandments by loving him and by walking in his ways (cf Deut 30:15f.), and therefore he can claim the promises of God.¹²⁸

So, we see once again, that a prominent Deuteronomic theme, which has played a significant role in the other torah-kingship psalms, is not only present in Psalm 119 but is fundamental to a correct understanding of the psalmist's intent. The piety of Psalm 119 is presented as a lifestyle, a path to be walked in.

5.1.6 Meditation and Prosperity

Our previous studies have shown that the torah-piety of the Deuteronomic literature has a dual focus upon attitude and effect.¹²⁹ That is, the right attitude towards torah brings positive effects. The Scriptures generally, and the Psalter specifically, make it clear that this link between torah-obedience and reward should not be understood formulaically,¹³⁰ nonetheless Deuteronomy and the DtrH seem to suggest that true and lasting reward results from obedience to Yahweh's word.¹³¹ This dual focus upon torah-obedience and the reward of Yahweh is also observable in the text of Psalm 119.

In a very literal sense the torah of Yahweh *is* the constant meditation of the psalmist throughout Psalm 119. There are, of course, verses which speak *about* the psalmist's meditation upon torah (e.g. vv 15, 23, 27, 48, 78 etc.), however the reality is that *Psalm 119, in and of itself, is an act of meditation upon the torah of Yahweh*. Psalm 119 is not merely an ode to torah, a celebration of its beauty and worth (as in Ps 19), rather it is an example of the piety endorsed by the Deuteronomic literature and Psalm 1:3. This fact is quite significant, raising implications both for our understanding of the canonical placement of this poem and with regard to the question of the identity of the individual in Psalm 119.

By asserting his determination to keep the statutes of YHWH, to meditate on them and delight in them, and by voicing his expectation that YHWH himself will be with him in this endeavour as teacher, the psalmist concludes his prologue with affirmations and aspirations that establish Torah not only as an expression of YHWH's revealed will, but also as the fundamental expression of his hope.¹³²

Furthermore, Psalm 119 expands the reader's understanding of reward by presenting the study of the word of God as *reward in itself*. In an interesting commentary upon the idea of reward, such verses as Ps 119:72, 103, 127 present the study of the law of Yahweh as being of greater reward than much silver, gold etc. This, of course, has implications for

¹²⁸ Anderson, *Psalms*, 846-7.

¹²⁹ See above, pp 37-38; 116-117.

¹³⁰ W. Brueggemann and P. D. Miller, "Psalm 73 as a Canonical Marker," *JSOT* 72 (1996) 45-56.

¹³¹ As can be seen in the paraenetic passages of Deuteronomy (e.g. Deut 6:4-9) and the commissioning of Joshua (Jos 1:8). Similar attitudes are to be found in Pss 119 (e.g. vv 18-19 etc.). At the very least, this relationship can be understood negatively, i.e. one should not expect to receive reward from Yahweh if one does not delight in the law.

¹³² Soll, *Psalm 119*, 93.

our understanding of the concept of 'reward' in the previous torah-kingship psalm groupings. Kraus picks up on both of these features in his discussion of the theological heart of Psalm 119:

Two observations in particular about the תורה understanding of Psalm 119 must be kept in mind: (1) The fact that an individual describes his relation to the תורה is striking (cf also Psalms 1 and 19B). Surely the OT revelation of the תורה always involves the ברית, i.e., the relation of God and people (cf also Psalms 78:5, 10; 105:45), but in Ps 119 the individual emerges. (2) The valuations and effects that are ascribed to the תורה are amazing. It is best first to bring together the statements about the value and the effect of the תורה. In Ps 119 the תורה (cf also the substituted terms) counts as the 'highest good,' more valuable than gold or silver (v 72); it is the essence of all that is reliable and lasting (v 142)... It is the צדיק who enjoys a particularly intimate relation to this תורה. Psalm 119 is filled with elements of lament and petition. The צדיק prays for a proper attitude to the Torah (v 34). He pleads: 'Bless me with your instruction!' (v 29). But then there are, in addition to the laments, numerous confessions that witness to the right relation of the צדיק to the תורה: 'Your instruction I do not forget' (vv 61, 109). I do not retreat from it (vv 61, 157). I keep it, walk in it (vv 34, 44, 55, and often). I love the Torah (vv 97, 113, 160, 165). I find joy and pleasure in it (vv 70, 77, 174). The צדיק constantly meditates upon the Torah (Ps 1:2, he carries the Torah in his heart (Pss 37:31; 40:8)).¹³³

Once again, the conclusion seems clear: The Deuteronomic teaching which focuses upon the vital importance of meditation on the law of God and the concomitant rewards of this act is echoed in Ps 119. Indeed, Psalm 119 adds to the reader's understanding of what is meant by the concepts of meditation and torah.

5.1.7 Continuous Torah Meditation

The Deuteronomic nature of Psalm 119's emphasis upon torah-meditation is further underlined by the psalmist's confession of the *constancy* of his meditation. The Book of Deuteronomy attests that the people of God should seek to apply the divine law in a constant manner (Deut 4:9-10; 6:1-2; 17:19, also seen in the DtrH e.g. Jos 1:8). This constant meditation should also be applied in a consistent and comprehensive manner—that is, not only should the law be the constant subject of the meditation of the people of God but it should also play a role in every area of area their lives. Psalm 119 echoes the ethos of these recommendations as the psalmist seeks to call upon the torah in every life situation and also to meditate upon it day and night with the type of constancy commended in Deuteronomy.¹³⁴

Very noteworthy is the Psalmist's enthusiastic love for the law. The love which the Israelite was bidden to cherish for Jehovah (Deut 4:5 etc.) is kindled by the manifold revelation of His Will in the Law. 'O how I love thy law: it is my meditation all the day' (97). It is no irksome restraint of his liberty, but his delight, his joy, his treasure, his comfort, *the subject of his meditations by day and by night, the source of trust and hope amid all the perplexities and troubles of life.* 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and the light unto my path.'¹³⁵

¹³³ Kraus, *Psalms II*, 412-3.

¹³⁴ See Ps 119:44, 55, 97, 117 etc., regarding temporal constancy in meditating upon the torah and vv 11, 23, 46, 50, 95 etc., regarding the comprehensive situational application of the torah.

¹³⁵ Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 704-5 (emphasis added).

Reflective self-observation is significant for the torah-piety of Ps 119 (v 59). It is required in view of the snares and traps that are set up by the רָשָׁעִים (v 61). The entire life—by day and by night—is determined by obedience and praise (verse 62, cf Psalms 1:2; 42:8; 63:6).¹³⁶

This constant meditation upon the torah and the psalmist's desire to apply the law in every situation provides the reader with yet another link between Psalm 119 and Deuteronomy.

5.1.8 Grace Enabling Obedience

Whilst obedience to the torah is clearly central to Psalm 119, there is also a strong awareness of this psalmist's need of the assistance of Yahweh if he is going to be able to be obedient. This is a concept which is prevalent throughout much of the OT, but it plays an important role in the theology of Deuteronomy.¹³⁷ Running alongside the constant call to obedience, the reader witnesses a strong sense of probability that the people are going to be unfaithful in Deuteronomy. This is implied in the closing paraenetic framework of Deuteronomy: Deut 30:1-10 basically declares that the curses of Deut 28 will take place because of the people's unfaithfulness (30:1); Moses angrily declares the likelihood of rebellion in Deut 31:24-29; and the Song of Moses in Deut 32 also implies that the people risk falling into apostasy. However, there is a constant thread of grace which weaves its way subtly through these passages: counterbalancing the sense of the inevitability of disobedience is the hope that Yahweh himself will work on the people's behalf in order to help them to be obedient. We see this in Deut 30:6, the verse that is central to Deut 30:1-10,¹³⁸ where Moses assures the people that, following their faithlessness, *Yahweh himself* will 'circumcise their hearts so that they may love him'. This is Yahweh's gracious response to the people's failure to meet the challenge (presented in Deut 10:16) to remain faithful by 'circumcising their hearts'—they were incapable of doing so themselves so Yahweh works for them to do that which they could not do for themselves. This divine grace on the people's behalf is also seen in the promise of restoration in Deut 32:36-43 and the promise of salvation for the tribes of Israel in Deut 33:26-29.

This same theme is important to the theology of Psalm 119, where—alongside this psalmist's declarations of obedience to the torah of Yahweh—we witness his pleas for help *that he may be* obedient to the torah of Yahweh. This dependence upon God for the ability to keep the torah in the reality of the psalmist's own life is often seen throughout the psalm; for example, in the *gîmel* stanza (vv 17-24) the psalmist prays that God will 'deal well' with him *so that* he may live and keep Yahweh's word.¹³⁹ There is also the constant prayer that Yahweh himself will teach the psalmist his law (vv 12, 27, 33 etc.)—as

¹³⁶ Kraus, *Psalms II*, 417.

¹³⁷ McConville, *Grace in the End*, 135-7.

¹³⁸ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 289.

¹³⁹ I have taken the link between the two cola to be a causative one.

Whybray writes: ‘Nowhere else in the OT is there such a constant appeal to God to instruct the writer as in this psalm’.¹⁴⁰ Over and above these prayers, the reader witnesses a sense of passion, bordering on desperation, in the psalmist’s prayers that God will keep him *from* the way of the wicked and walking *in* right ways (vv 28-29, 31, 35, 37, 81, 117 etc.). Perhaps the clearest expression of the psalmist’s dependence upon the grace of God comes in the closing *tāw* stanza, where v 176 presents an interesting echo of the teaching of Ps 1:

תעיתי כשה אבד בקש עבדך כי מצותיך לא שכחתי:
 I have strayed like a lost [perishing] sheep;
 Seek out your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands.

McCann points out the possible connection with the way of the wicked in Ps 1:6:

The word ‘lost’ (אבד *’ōbēd*) is more literally ‘perishing.’ Thus, just as Ps 119:1 was reminiscent of the first verse of Psalm 1, so also Ps 119:176 recalls the final verse of Psalm 1. But—and this is the remarkable thing—in Ps 1:6, it is the wicked who are to perish! The final verse of Psalm 119 is, therefore, the final reminder of what the psalmist has affirmed along: *The faithful are saved by grace.*¹⁴¹

The ideas of ‘straying’ and the ‘perishing’ are commonly associated with the rejection of the law in Deuteronomy. Whilst תעה is largely to be found in the wisdom and prophetic literature, the same sort of idea is conveyed by the Dtr usage of סור. This idea of not wandering from the law is commonly held out as a challenge to Israel (e.g. Deut 4:9; 5:32; 11:16 etc.), and, more specifically, the life of the king is to be so focused around the torah that he does not stray from it (17:17, 20). אבד is the alternative to ‘life in the land in Deuteronomy’, it is the result of rejecting God’s law or worshipping other gods (Deut 4:26; 8:19; 30:18).¹⁴²

It is, indeed, interesting that the psalmist chooses to conclude his epic work on this note, with a confession of his natural tendency to stray from the torah and an appeal to Yahweh for restoration. *The psalmist is entirely focused upon a piety based in torah-obedience, yet his confession is clear—apart from the grace of Yahweh, he is wholly incapable of such obedience.* This echoes the central idea of Deut 30:1-10. Other commentators have noticed this theme of the centrality of the grace of Yahweh towards the psalmist:

In the *beth* strophe Yahweh is celebrated as the wisdom teacher *par excellence* (vv 9, 11, 12b; cf. Prov 7:1). He affirms the joy afforded by preoccupation with his moral teachings, and declares his desire to set his mind on, and to govern his life by, Yahweh’s revealed standards. *But he confesses that he cannot cope unaided and prays for God’s personal help in his moral endeavour.*¹⁴³

[The psalmist’s] promises of piety do convey assurances in a manner similar to the vow of praise. That is, they express not only the psalmist’s willingness to respond to deliverance in an appropriate manner, but also imply that *YHWH will in fact provide the conditions that*

¹⁴⁰ Whybray, “Psalm 119,” 34.

¹⁴¹ McCann, *Psalms*, 1174. Emphasis added.

¹⁴² Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 214-5.

¹⁴³ Allen, *Psalms*, 142. Emphasis added.

*make this response possible.*¹⁴⁴

This psalm may be characterised as a prayer for salvation, the various supporting elements (testimony, profession of trust and loyalty, vows etc.) being built upon one great theme—the word of God... Such written deposits [the Pentateuch or proto-Pentateuch] were no doubt important for our author, but here and with all the other forms of the divine word *he is chiefly thinking of communion with God, the God who hereby touches him with the breath of grace and power.*¹⁴⁵

Once again, the careful reader of Ps 119 observes a type of piety that is rooted in a Dtr worldview—the psalmist bases the practice of his religion around torah-meditation and obedience, yet at the same time confesses his inability to keep the law and his great need for Yahweh’s grace.

5.1.9 The ‘I’ of Psalm 119 as the Dtr King

Whilst the above list of deuteronomic features in Psalm 119 is far from exhaustive, it is probably sufficient to establish the Dtr background to the theology of this psalm. There is, however, one further connection which bears examination: namely, the identity of the speaker in Psalm 119. Psalm 119, like Psalm 118, is without superscription, so there is no explicit editorial indication of who the pray-er might be, but the language used in Psalm 119 does provide the reader with some indication of the most likely identity of the speaker. Some commentators associate the speaker in Psalm 119 with some sort of wisdom figure (perhaps a wisdom teacher or pupil),¹⁴⁶ but there is good reason to question this suggestion.

Firstly, there are serious grounds to question the genre classification of Psalm 119 as a wisdom poem: 1) Whilst there are wisdom themes apparent in Psalm 119, it would be difficult to argue that these themes necessarily dominate the text. In fact, as Soll has argued, the presence of wisdom themes should not automatically lead to a wisdom genre classification:

These themes [fear of God, praying for wisdom, God as Creator, the dichotomy between the righteous and the wicked etc.] cannot be said to be ‘wisdom themes’ in any exclusive sense. At best, they become wisdom themes when discussed in a wisdom context. They cannot be assumed to be ‘wisdom themes’ when simply assumed or affirmed in the course of a prayer.¹⁴⁷

2) We have already noted the apparent connection between the piety of the wisdom tradition and that of the legal tradition, so it could be argued that many of the so-called ‘wisdom’ themes are in fact DtrN emphases.¹⁴⁸ 3) Psalm 119 is not treated as a wisdom poem by experts in the wisdom literature. The wisdom link seems to have derived from

¹⁴⁴ Soll, *Psalms 119*, 82. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁵ Eaton, *Psalms*, 273. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁶ Croft, *Identity*, 167, 181; Anderson, *Psalms*, 806-7.

¹⁴⁷ Soll, *Psalms 119*, 122.

¹⁴⁸ Soll writes, ‘Of course, according to Deuteronomy, to speak of Torah is to speak of wisdom in some sense. The Torah is marked by YHWH’s wisdom, and the people are wise for having received it (Deut 4:6)’, *Psalms 119*, 124, see also Weinfeld, *The Deuteronomistic School*, 244ff.

Mowinckel's classification of Psalm 119 as an example of late, nomistic poetry used as a didactic tool in the wisdom schools.¹⁴⁹ The repetition of this idea over the years, however, does not add weight to its original basis in textual evidence, and it appears that the text of Psalm 119 points the reader in a different direction. Two of the most influential studies on the wisdom psalms both exclude Psalm 119 from the list of psalms to be considered part of this genre.¹⁵⁰

Secondly, the internal indicators found in Psalm 119—especially the use of language and imagery—point the reader towards identification of this poem with the king.¹⁵¹ Psalm 119 displays many of the classic signs of a background in a royal setting: for example, we see the psalmist contrast his commitment to the torah with the attitude of princes and kings (Ps 119:23, 46).¹⁵² Other indications of a royal background would include the comparison of the worth of God's law over silver and gold, even fine gold (Ps 119:72, 127); the psalmist's use of 'your servant' (עַבְדְּךָ, Ps 119:17, 23, 38 etc.) is common in a royal setting where the king is speaking (especially as it seems to be used in antithetical correspondence to the 'princes' of v 23)¹⁵³; enemies, plotting and persecution (Ps 119:23, 98, 167) are also often associated with the psalms of individual lament, especially in Book I where they frequently have a Davidic superscription implying a royal background; the fact that Yahweh himself is the speaker's teacher seems to set the psalmist apart also (see the emphatic use of אָמַר in the v 102); and it is at least possible that the word אָמַר functions in the sense of 'promise' in certain verses and is intended to reflect the covenant between Yahweh and the Davidic king (see, for example, Ps 119:116).¹⁵⁴ Whilst these indicators may be open to alternative interpretations, given the fact that the king is associated with many of the psalms of individual lament, it seems most likely that the pray-er of Ps 119 is meant to be understood to be the king.

Although this argument is slightly circular, supposing the 'I' of Ps 119 to be the king makes good sense in the light of the Deut 17:14-20. In the previous pages we have been

¹⁴⁹ Mowinckel, *PIW*, 113-4.

¹⁵⁰ R. E. Murphy, "A Consideration of the Classification 'Wisdom Psalms'", *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom* (ed. J. L. Crenshaw; New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1976) and J. K. Kuntz, "The Canonical Wisdom Psalms of Ancient Israel: Their Rhetorical, Thematic and Formal Dimensions", *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (eds. J. J. Jackson and M. Kessler; Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1974).

¹⁵¹ It must be said that none of these indicators are absolutely conclusive (hence the continuing debate over the identity of the central figure in Ps 119), however, the combination of these various elements bears marked similarities to the psalms of Books I and II which are associated with the Davidic king (see B. K. Waltke, "Theology of the Psalms," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, Volume 4* [gen ed W. A. VanGemeren; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997] 1101-2).

¹⁵² It is possible that a wisdom teacher associated with the royal court may have such opportunity also, but the complete set of circumstances described in Ps 119 seem most suited to the figure of the king himself.

¹⁵³ See above pp 80-81.

¹⁵⁴ Soll, *Psalm 119*, 39.

able to observe Psalm 119's setting in Dtr theology—this epic poem is grounded in the worldview and teaching of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic History. Given that such is the theological setting of Psalm 119, which other individual would be expected to place such a strong emphasis upon the law of God? Deut 17:14-20 indicates that the king is to devote himself to meditation upon the torah, so that he will live in accordance with its teaching. It is this very principle that seems to dominate the thought and poetic expression of the psalmist-speaker in Ps 119.

The tradition of the deuteronomistic history and the royal psalms which we have just surveyed makes an excellent context for understanding the relation of the speaker in Psalm 119 to Torah. In both the deuteronomistic history and the Psalms, the king emerges as the individual with the greatest cause for preoccupation with Torah due to the role Torah plays in the royal ideology. Given Psalm 119's close associations with the Deuteronomic tradition, the king emerges as the one most likely to frame his prayer with continual reference to the law which is to be his constant meditation, his responsibility to promulgate, and on which his office depends.¹⁵⁵

Soll develops this argument further in his discussion of the setting of Ps 119:

The deuteronomistic history's conception of the king's relation to the law is therefore of great importance for our investigation [of Ps 119]. This relation may be summarised in the following points. 1) Observance of Torah, fostered by study and meditation, is a special duty of the king. 2) The Davidic dynasty's durability is conditional upon its obedience to Torah. 3) The king should lead his people in compliance with Torah; indeed, Torah requires a king for its full implementation... No doubt this law stems from the deuteronomistic desire to have the king carry out Torah, but for more than obedience to its explicit demands. The emphasis on continual study and absorption seems to indicate the Deuteronomist's recognition of the personal character of the king's leadership and the decisions he would have to make beyond Torah's stated requirements. These, while not legally prescribed should nonetheless be informed by Torah, to which end the deuteronomistic history wants Torah to be not only upheld by the king but continually on his lips.¹⁵⁶

Soll's argument is helpful for a proper understanding of Psalm 119. Deut 17 commands, not simply that the king obey the torah, but rather that he *steep himself* in the torah of Yahweh. The idea is that he should live not only in accordance with the express legal requirements, but that he comes to view life and the world around him from the perspective of divine revelation. This is precisely the type of attitude that the psalmist of Psalm 119 portrays.

The canonical placement of Ps 119 alongside Ps 118 emphasises this (slightly circular) association of the 'I' of Ps 119 with the Davidic king.¹⁵⁷ In Ps 118, we see the image of the king seeking entry into the Temple and being challenged by the priestly gate-keepers that

¹⁵⁵ Soll, *Psalms 119*, 135. See also Dahood who suggests that, '[T]he psalm was composed for a ruler—even, perhaps, a Davidic king who stood in special relation to God's law (cf. Deut 17:18ff; Ps 40:6-8)...' (*Psalms III*, 173) and Eaton, *Psalms*, 274.

¹⁵⁶ Soll, *Psalms 119*, 128-9. Whilst agreeing with the general thrust of this statement, I do not accept (*contra* Soll and Weinfeld) that the Torah requires a king for its full implementation. Rather the Torah *allows for* a king as part of its implementation.

¹⁵⁷ This suggestion cannot be seen to serve as a proof of royal background to Ps 119, rather my argument is to suggest that positing the king as the psalmist in Ps 119 makes good sense of the content of the psalm.

only the righteous may enter. The king replies with his account of Yahweh's vindication in Ps 118, and it is in Ps 119 that the reader of the Psalter is presented with a fuller account of the nature of the piety which has led to his acceptance by Yahweh. We have seen a similar pattern in both of the previous torah-kingship psalm groupings: the anonymous $\Psi^{\prime}\aleph$ of Ps 1 is set in parallel with the $\aleph^{\prime}\Psi$ of Ps 2,¹⁵⁸ suggesting that they may well be one and the same; the psalmist of Ps 19 is identified by a Davidic superscription, and his identity is further confirmed by the placement of his hymn and prayer amidst three royal psalms where the king seeks and receives Yahweh's deliverance.¹⁵⁹ We have already argued that Pss 118 and 119 form the joint-centrepiece of Book V of the Psalter, placed between two larger collections—the *hallel* psalms of 111-117 and the Songs of Ascents (120-134).¹⁶⁰ Here, we see the significance of that placement, both of these psalms are about the king—his righteousness is challenged in Ps 118 and the nature of that righteousness is explained in Ps 119. Whilst these arguments will definitely not be the last word regarding the identity of the speaker in Ps 119, it is at least possible (perhaps more than possible) that the one whose prayer is soaked in the piety of the torah is meant to be seen as the king.

6. Links between Psalms 118 and 119

There are canonical, lexical and theological links between Psalms 118 and 119, some of which have been discussed above, therefore we shall not dwell upon them.

6.1 Canonical

There are two main canonical reasons why these two psalms should be treated as having been deliberately juxtaposed in the position where they lie: (1) Their canonical position between two larger groupings of psalms; and, (2) Their lack of superscription. Each of these factors serves to link these two poems, whilst separating them from the neighbouring compositions. Regardless of praxis in the post-canonical Jewish festivals, which would see Psalm 118 as part of the Great Hallel, a canonical *reading* would lead one to a different conclusion—namely, that Psalm 118 is separated both from the preceding hallelujah psalms and the succeeding Songs of Ascents. Psalm 118 is dislocated from the surrounding psalm groupings and therefore is associated with its neighbouring work which also cannot reasonably be adjoined to either of the bracketing groups of psalms.

As with Psalm 1 and 2, neither Psalm 118 nor Psalm 119 bears a superscription of any kind, which is somewhat unusual in Book V of the Psalter. Whilst Wilson points out that there are fewer authorship designations in the superscriptions in Books IV-V,¹⁶¹ still the

¹⁵⁸ Miller, "Beginning," 91-2.

¹⁵⁹ Allen, "David as Exemplar," 546.

¹⁶⁰ See pp 102-103 above.

¹⁶¹ Wilson, "Shape," 131-2.

lack of *any* superscription is somewhat unusual within this section of the Psalter. Only Psalms 107, 118, 119, 136 and 137 lack any form of superscription.¹⁶² All of the other psalms bear either a superscription or postscript.¹⁶³ Therefore, due to the rarity of psalms without headings within Book V, the fact of Psalms 118 and 119's juxtaposition seems to be significant, associating these two psalms whilst, at the same time, differentiating them from the collections with headings on either side.

6.2 Lexical

There are lexical connections between Pss 118 and 119 which also point to deliberate concatenation of these texts. It can, of course, be argued that whenever a psalm as lengthy as Psalm 119 is placed alongside any other text there is bound to be lexical overlap based on sheer volume (i.e. there are so many words in Psalm 119 there is bound to be some overlap with the words of Psalm 118). Whilst this is true to a certain extent, the significant factor in terms of the lexical links between Psalms 118 and 119 is that there are certain concepts which are central to both psalms that are expressed using the same words or closely related synonyms. The main lexical links revolve around the words חסד, ירא, ישועה, חיה, אֱשֶׁר־בְּרַךְ and אֹר. Each of these words represents a concept which is somehow important to each psalm. The significance of the juxtaposition of two poems using these words is not necessarily found in the number of times that these words are repeated but rather in the centrality of the concepts which they express.

It is perhaps not surprising that the חסד of Yahweh is one of the central themes of both psalms as celebration of Yahweh's *hesed* is a constant theme in the Psalter (Ps 118:1, 2, 3, 4, 29; Ps 119:41, 64, 76, 88, 124, 149, 159). However, it is clear that the gracious, covenant love of God is important to the speaker in both Psalm 118 and in Psalm 119. This is not some theoretical or formulaic celebration of Yahweh's *hesed*, rather in both cases we see a heartfelt delight in Yahweh's covenant love. In both poems the speaker realises that, without this *hesed*, he is lost. It is the speaker's awareness of his absolute dependence upon the steadfast love of Yahweh in all things that strikes the common note between these two psalms.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² I agree with Zenger that Wilson overstates the significance of the use of *hōdû* at the beginning of Psalms 107, 118 and 136. This does not appear to function as a means of editorial division or an attempt to link these three psalms, therefore they should be treated as being without superscription. See Zenger, "Composition," 87.

¹⁶³ See the above discussion of Psalm 114, p 101 n. 6.

¹⁶⁴ Anderson writes concerning Ps 119, 'Whatever may have been the historical details of these key events, the basic truths illustrate the pre-eminence of God's grace,' (*Psalms*, 808). See also Kraus, *Psalms II*, 420, and McCann, *Psalms*, 1174, for similar sentiments with regard to Ps 119. Frost, "Psalm 118," 161, Sanders, "NT Hermeneutic Fabric," 181-2 and Mays, "Ps 118," 303-4, present similar analyses of the significance of *hesed* to the theology of Ps 118.

We noted above the significance of the address to ‘those who fear Yahweh’ (יִרְאֵי יְהוָה, v 4) in our assessment of Psalm 118:4, 6¹⁶⁵ and this is a concept which is also central to the theology of Psalm 119 (Ps 119:63, 74, 79, 120). The speaker in Psalm 119 declares himself to be part of a *community of Yahweh-fearers* (יִרְאֵי, v 63) and he goes on to make it clear how this community is defined: the fearers of Yahweh are those who ‘keep his precepts’. Therefore we see that the concept of fearing Yahweh from Ps 118:4 (יִרְאֵי יְהוָה) is, as was suggested, rooted in the ideas of torah obedience. This community aspect of fearing Yahweh is also emphasised in Ps 119:74 and 79.¹⁶⁶

Associated with the theme of absolute dependence upon Yahweh, which is central to both psalms, we find a lexical link in the word יְשׁוּעָה (Ps 118:14, 15, 21; Ps 119:123, 155, 166, 174). In each psalm we find strong expressions of the psalmist’s reliance upon salvation from Yahweh, the speaker is keen to confess his own inability and to stress his reliance upon a salvation which comes from Yahweh alone. This dependence upon God seems to be grounded in the speaker’s relationship with him (Ps 118:14; 119:166, 174). Trust in Yahweh’s salvation is, of course, related to the trials and circumstances which the psalmist faces, however there appears to be a very real sense in which dependence upon Yahweh for provision of salvation is an expression of the speaker’s piety and priorities. Certainly the idea of Yahweh’s salvation is central to the theology of both psalms and this is indicated by lexical as well as thematic links.¹⁶⁷

Perhaps the most significant lexical connection between Psalms 118 and 119 is the use of the verb חָיָה (Ps 118:17; 119:17, 25, 37, 40, 50, 77, 88, 93, 107, 116, 144, 149, 154, 156, 159, 175). This is the climatic declaration of the king in Ps 118:17 and is the constant subject of the king’s prayer in Ps 119. There appear to be two different contexts in which חָיָה is used in Psalm 119: first, the psalmist prays for life in order that he may continue to keep the torah of Yahweh (vv 17, 77, 88); and, secondly, the psalmist extols the reviving, life-giving power of Yahweh through his torah (vv 25, 37, 40 etc.). In each case there is a connection between keeping the law of God and choosing life, resonating with the king’s declaration in Ps 118:17 that he has been saved from death because he was found ‘righteous’ before Yahweh.¹⁶⁸

The idea of ‘blessedness’ also provides a lexical link between Psalms 118 and 119. The priestly response to the entrance of the king into the Temple, having been declared righteous, is to declare him ‘blessed’ (בָּרוּךְ, v 26) and, interestingly, Psalm 119 begins with

¹⁶⁵ Pp 109-110 above.

¹⁶⁶ Mays, “Ps 118,” 304.

¹⁶⁷ Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 133-4; Kraus, *Psalms II*, 398; Seybold, *Introducing*, 24.

¹⁶⁸ McCann, *Psalms*, 686-7; Anderson, *Psalms*, 846-7.

two verses which align ‘blessedness’ (אשרי, vv 1-2) with keeping the torah, seeking Yahweh and walking in blamelessness. Whilst it is not the same Hebrew word that is used in each case, we have already seen that (although there may be some difference in the contexts of their usage), the words ברוך and אשרי effectively function as synonyms within the Psalter.¹⁶⁹ In this way the reader is left with a clearer understanding of why the entering king is blessed by the priestly gatekeepers—Psalm 119:1-2 indicates that the reason for his blessing is to be found in his attitude towards the torah.

The king giving account of Yahweh’s deliverance also seems to be of importance in both psalms. ספר is found in Ps 118:17 and in Ps 119:13, 26, but it is particularly the connection between the ‘narrative’ account of Ps 118 and 119:26 that seems to be significant:

Ps 119:26 דרכי ספרתי ותענני למדני הקיך:
I recounted my ways and you answered me; Teach me your decrees.

The significance of Ps 119:26 is that it seems to recount the same sort of experience as took place in Ps 118. In the preceding antiphonal psalm we see the king give an account of his prayer and of Yahweh’s saving deliverance from distress in response to that prayer. It is this account of prayer and answer which is seen as a justification of the king’s righteousness by the Temple gate-keepers in verse 20. Ps 119:26 indicates an act of similar nature: the king recounts his ways (ספרתי) before Yahweh and is rewarded with an answer to his prayer.

There is one final lexical repetition worthy of note; namely, the use of אור (Ps 118:27; Ps 119:105, 130, 135). This particular connection is worthy of note because the use of the verb אור (Ps 118:27) seems slightly incongruous in the context of Psalm 118. This is a concept which is normally associated with teaching and learning, as is seen by its common usage within the Wisdom Literature.¹⁷⁰ However, Psalm 118 does not bear any of the typical characteristics of a wisdom psalm: the act of ‘enlightenment’ referred to in v 27 may be the realisation that the one rejected is actually accepted by Yahweh and important to him. Almost by way of explanation, Psalm 119:105 and 130 make it clear that enlightenment comes from the word of God. So, in a manner analogous to the idea of ‘blessedness’ mentioned above, we read of how the people give thanks to God that he has enlightened them to see that the rejected one is actually Yahweh’s chosen one in Psalm 118 and then Psalm 119 goes on to tell the reader that enlightenment comes from the word

¹⁶⁹ Kraus, *Psalms*, 115; Mays, *Psalms*, 41. Mays’ suggestion is that ברוך is used when the blessing of God is actually being evoked, and אשרי is used in beatitudes where a certain type of behaviour is being set up as an example for others. This seems to fit well with the usage of the respective terms in Ps 118:26 and Ps 119:1-2. See also pp 33-34 above.

¹⁷⁰ The Books of Job and Psalms alone account for over one third of all the occurrences of this word in the OT.

of Yahweh. Ps 119:105, 130 almost provide a corrective for the situation of Psalm 118. Yahweh's chosen one goes unrecognised and rejected until God's deliverance of him is recognised as a sign of blessing, the question therefore arises: How can the people of God avoid such a lack of awareness, failing to recognise the one whom Yahweh blesses? The answer is provided by the speaker in Psalm 119: The word of Yahweh brings light and understanding to the people of God.¹⁷¹

There are many other lexical repetitions to be found in Psalms 118 and 119: **יְיָ** (Ps 118:1, 19, 21, 28, 29; Ps 119:7, 62); **טוֹב** (Ps 118:1, 8, 9, 29; Ps 119:39, 65, 66, 68, 71, 72, 122); **עוֹלָם**, where the eternity of God's *hesed* is paralleled with the eternity of God's word (Ps 118:1, 2, 3, 4, 29; Ps 119:44, 52, 89, 93, 98, 111, 112, 142, 144, 152, 160); **עוֹזֵר** (Ps 118:7, 13; Ps 119:86, 173, 175) etc. However, these are words which are commonly found in the Psalter, so their repetition may not be so significant. The repetitions examined above are probably sufficient to show lexical, as well as canonical, association of Pss 118 and 119.

6.3 Theological

Most of the theological connections between Pss 118 and 119 have been more fully discussed above. Therefore it should be sufficient to merely draw attention to the theological points of contact that we have already highlighted. Theological concerns found in Ps 118 which are repeated in Ps 119 include: dependence upon Yahweh for salvation (including the idea of rejecting dependence upon other sources of power), name theology, Yahweh as refuge, the 'two ways' (including the link between obedience and prosperity) and the importance of a proper piety before Yahweh (the king's righteousness in Ps 118 and the torah obedience of Ps 119). Each of these theological concepts is significant to a proper understanding of both texts.

Therefore, it seems that these three types of connection—canonical, lexical and theological—were designed to point the reader towards association of Ps 118 with Ps 119, so that she would treat these two psalms as a nexus reflecting the interpretative hermeneutic established by the Psalter's introduction.

7. Psalm 119 in the Light of Psalm Groupings 1-2 & 18-21

Given the theological interconnections which we have already observed, it is perhaps not surprising to find that most of the emphases which we have observed in the previous psalm groupings are also apparent in Psalm 119. Many of the Deuteronomic themes which lie at the heart of Pss 1-2 and 18-21 also play a part in the king's prayer in Psalm 119.

¹⁷¹ Mowinckel observed with regard to Ps 119: 'The value of the law, because it enlightens the ignorant and admonishes the faltering, is particularly emphasised,' *P/W*, 113-4.

7.1 Torah-Piety

Most obvious of these connections is the torah-piety, abundantly present in Psalm 119, which is also to be found in Psalms 1, 18 and 19.¹⁷² It is as a result of this emphasis on the torah of Yahweh that the suggestion has arisen that Psalms 1 and 119 at some point represented the beginning and end of the Psalter.¹⁷³ The type of piety based around the study of Yahweh's word that is common to these psalms is reflected in several features observable in Psalm 119.

First, from a linguistic perspective, we see a particular emphasis on the singular form תורה, as is the case with Psalm 1;¹⁷⁴ yet, at the same time, Psalm 119 echoes the comprehensiveness of the five torah synonyms which are used in Psalm 19, and indeed, goes beyond this in adding three further synonyms.¹⁷⁵ The emphasis on תורה in Psalm 119—this word is only used in the singular (the others all use singular and plural forms)¹⁷⁶ and occurs more often than all of the other words¹⁷⁷—reflects the singular focus of Psalm 1 where torah is seen as the proper, singular response to the multiplicity of the ways of the wicked.¹⁷⁸ At the same time, however, Psalm 119 seeks to emphasise the holistic nature of torah and its applicability to every situation of life, just as does Psalm 19 through the use of multiple torah terms.¹⁷⁹

Secondly, we see that the torah—so emphasised throughout Psalm 119—is clearly the psalmist's *delight*, an attitude which is also idealised in Psalm 1:2 and Psalm 19:11-12. Psalm 119:35 makes this statement explicitly, using the same Hebrew word as in Ps 1:2 (חפץ) and v 92 makes the same point using a synonym (שעשעים). However, essentially the whole psalm testifies to the fact that the psalmist truly does delight in the torah of Yahweh. The whole, massive poem is a celebration of a lifestyle grounded in God's law and clearly reflects the type of attitude which Psalm 1 commends to the readers of the Psalter. This is seen in the psalmist's favourable comparisons of the torah to 'silver and gold' (זהב וכסף, v 72), 'gold and fine gold' (מזהב ומפז, v 127), etc. This favourable comparison of the torah of Yahweh to the finer things of life also reflects the theology of Psalm 19:11-12, and is a further indication of the likelihood that the speaker in Psalm 119 is in fact the king, who is

¹⁷² See above pp 35-37; 65-67; 76-77.

¹⁷³ Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 253; Smith, "Use and Influence," 11. We will discuss this more fully in Chapter 6, *The Editorial Placement of the Torah-Kingship Psalm Groupings*.

¹⁷⁴ Soll, *Psalm 119*, 35. Soll writes: 'The term *tôrâ* is used twenty-five times in Psalm 119. The eight terms for "law" in Psalm 119 are used almost interchangeably, but there is good reason for regarding the term torah as *primus inter pares*. It is the term employed in the first verse, and it is used a total twenty-five times in the psalm, the most of any term.'

¹⁷⁵ Allen, *Psalms*, 139; Kraus, *Psalms II*, 412-3.

¹⁷⁶ Whybray, "Psalm 119," 35.

¹⁷⁷ Soll, *Psalm 119*, 35.

¹⁷⁸ Gitay, "Psalm 1," 235-6.

¹⁷⁹ McCann, *Psalms*, 752, 1168.

much more likely to have experienced these luxuries than is a cultic prophet or wisdom teacher. Mays writes:

Ps 119 is the sequel to Psalms 1 and 19 in topic and outlook. Like the first, it knows the delight of the law of the Lord and the importance of the constant study of it. Like the nineteenth, it shows the inestimable value of the law in all its forms as a life-enhancing power. But in its design it has taken the topic to the limits of literary expression.¹⁸⁰

7.2 Meditation

Another aspect of torah-piety which is clearly to be seen in Pss 1 and 19, and which is re-emphasised in Ps 119, is the importance of meditation upon torah. The thrust of Pss 1 and 19 is that the torah, in all its forms, is to be internalised by way of prayerful reflection upon it. This is expressed clearly in Ps 1:2's description of the blessed person as one who 'meditates upon the torah day and night' (ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה). Ps 119 has a similar emphasis, although it uses slightly different vocabulary. Rather than using the verb *הגה* (as in Ps 1:2), the psalmist uses *שׁיח* (vv 15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 148) which is also best translated 'to meditate' and which reflects the same type of practice.¹⁸¹ The following quote from McCann describes the similar passionate meditation upon torah which exists in both Ps 119 and Ps 1:1-2:

As is always the case with the beloved person or thing, the psalmist has God's revelation always in mind (v 97b). The word 'meditates' (*שׁיח* *śîah*) occurs several times in Psalm 119 (see also vv 15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 99, 148), but this is the only place where the meditation is 'all day long' (see also the chronological references in vv 55, 62, 147-148, 164). Thus v 97 is reminiscent of Ps 1:1-2 (although the Hebrew words translated 'meditate' are different), where those who meditate on God's instruction are pronounced 'happy'. The psalmist in Psalm 119 exemplified such happiness; it is not a superficial cheeriness (see vv 81-88) but the happiness of a person who is in love with the one who truly offers life. Not surprisingly, v 103 employs the sensual language of the Song of Solomon (see 2:3; 4:11; 5:1, 16; 7:9; see also Ps 19:10; Prov 24:13-14). The psalmist has an emotional attachment to God's word that is indicative of his or her love for and commitment to God.¹⁸²

Secondly, as this quote also indicates, the temporal elements apparent in Ps 119 emphasise the same *type* of torah-piety, based on *constant* meditation, as is seen in Psalms 1 and 19. The reader of the Psalter is told in Psalm 1:2 that the blessed person meditates on Yahweh's torah 'day and night' (יומם ולילה), emphasising the benefits of the constant study of Yahweh's law.¹⁸³ Whilst the torah section of Psalm 19 does not explicitly give such a recommendation, this same emphasis upon constant reflection is implicit to the prayer con-

¹⁸⁰ Mays, *Psalms*, 381.

¹⁸¹ Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, 789. It is interesting that *שׁיח* and *הגה* seem to have the similar connotation of meditation by way of talking or muttering to oneself. Gesenius describes *הגה* as 'to meditate (prop. to speak with oneself, murmuring and in a low voice, as is often done by those who are musing' (p 215). In a similar vein, he describes *שׁיח* as 'to talk with oneself, i.e. to meditate, especially on divine things' (p 789). B-D-B contains similar definitions on p 211d and p 976c, respectively. See Chapter 7 for further discussion of the implications of these verbs.

¹⁸² McCann, *Psalms*, 1172.

¹⁸³ McCann, *Psalms*, 684-5; Craigie, *Psalms*, 60.

tent of Ps 19.¹⁸⁴ (This piety, founded upon consistent reflection, is also expressed in Ps 119:55, 62, 97, 148 etc.). The psalmist makes it quite clear that God's word is his permanent preoccupation—he prays and meditates upon it all day long and throughout all the days of his life. The psalmist clearly expresses a type of piety which is firmly rooted in the ideas of Psalms 1 and 19.¹⁸⁵

7.3 Blessedness and Prosperity

Another train of thought which is characteristic of the torah psalms is the idea of meditation on the law leading to 'blessedness' or 'happiness' and 'prosperity'. This is reflected in the opening words of the Psalter: אֲשֶׁרִי הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר. The person who rejects the way of the wicked (Ps 1:1) in favour of the way of Yahweh's torah is described as אֲשֶׁרִי—'blessed' or 'happy'. Ps 1:3 goes on to tell the reader how the person who makes the torah their first priority will be fruitful like a tree planted by streams of water and this is summarised by the declaration 'in everything he does he prospers' (וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ). This idea is echoed again in Ps 19:11-12 where the psalmist-king describes Yahweh's judgements as being more desirable than pure gold and honey and indeed 'in keeping them there is much reward' (בְּשִׁמְרָם עֵקֶב רַב)¹⁸⁶. This same concept of the 'happiness' as a consequence of torah loyalty is obvious in Ps 119. It is perhaps fortuitous that the word אֲשֶׁרִי begins with an *aleph* as this gives the psalmist the opportunity to begin the first two verses of his mammoth poem with this same word. Ps 119:1 certainly seems to be a deliberate attempt to connect the lessons of Ps 1 with the message of Ps 119. This verse uses many of the concepts of Ps 1—'happiness' (אֲשֶׁרִי cf. Ps 1:1), 'way of blamelessness' (דֶּרֶךְ תְּמִימִי־דֶרֶךְ cf. דֶּרֶךְ, Ps 1:6), 'walking' (לֹא הֵלַךְ בְּאֶצְת רָשָׁעִים cf. הֵלַכְתִּים, Ps 1:1) and 'in the torah of Yahweh' (בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה cf. בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה, Ps 1:2). So we can see that, from the outset, the psalmist seeks to frame his poem within the context of the theology of Ps 1. This is further underlined by the inclusion of ideas which also reflect the concept of reward as a result of torah-obedience (e.g. Ps 119:112).¹⁸⁷ Whybray offers this consideration of the author's purpose in linking Ps 119 with the theology of Ps 1:

Like Psalm 1, Ps 119:1-3 pronounces 'happy' (*'ašrê*) those who are sincerely devoted to the observance of God's law. This similarity perhaps suggests the kind of readership for whom Psalm 119 was composed. The use of the term *'ašrê* in vv 1 and 2 implies that the kind of spirituality displayed in the rest of the psalm is not something that is exclusive to the psalmist: that the psalm is, in a real sense, addressed to others who, whether or not they have reached the 'happy' state of the author, 'seek him (Yahweh) with the whole heart' (v 2b). The purpose of the author is to encourage them in that search.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Miller, "Kingship," 127-8; Wagner, "Psalm 19 as Prayer," 253.

¹⁸⁵ Mays, *Psalms*, 381.

¹⁸⁶ Again we have a different word for 'reward' cf. Ps 1:3, but the ideas reflected by these terms seem to be very similar.

¹⁸⁷ The idea of benefit from keeping the law is implicit throughout much of Ps 119, but is phrased differently from Ps 1 and is more in line with Ps 19. The psalmist positively compares torah-obedience to great wealth (v 72), to the sweetness of honey (v 103), he speaks of its reviving, life-giving power (vv 50, 93 etc.).

¹⁸⁸ Whybray, "Psalm 119," 32-3. See also McCann, *Psalms*, 684-5, 1168; Kraus, *Psalms II*, 116-7, 121.

7.4 Two Ways

Reflecting the ideas of Deuteronomy and the Wisdom Literature, the classic maxim of the 'two ways' is found in common to each of the torah psalms, and their companion kingship psalms. This theme is constantly in the mind of the psalmist in making his public profession of priorities in Ps 119, as is witnessed by two repeated themes—the psalmist's declaration of commitment to Yahweh and his torah (e.g. vv 1, 2, 3 11 etc.)¹⁸⁹ and the opposition of the 'proud', 'rulers', 'the wicked' (e.g. vv 21-23, 42, 53 etc.).¹⁹⁰ These themes represent the contrasting ways of Ps 1, the way of the righteous/happy person contrasted with the way of the wicked/perishing person (Ps 1:6). Interestingly, the idea of the two ways can be observed in all of the psalms that we have examined. Apparently, therefore, this notion is to be seen as central to the purpose of the redactors in shaping the Psalter in this way. The kingly example of commitment to Yahweh based on torah-observance is meant to function as an encouragement to the readers of the Psalter that they too should choose to walk in this way, regardless of their surrounding circumstances.¹⁹¹

7.5 Prayer

Psalm 119 continues the theme of prayer which plays a strong part in many of the psalms which have been the subject of our consideration. Apart from the first three verses, the entirety of Psalm 119 is a prayer addressed directly to Yahweh, hence the eight torah synonyms used throughout the poem always bear a second person, masculine, singular pronominal suffix—'your torah', 'your statutes' etc.¹⁹² This theme of prayer functions as a corollary to the emphasis upon torah-piety in the psalms groups which we have examined; the implication being that without Yahweh's intervention in response to prayer neither the psalmists nor the readers are actually able to live in accordance with divine revelation. This prayer theme runs throughout the three psalm groupings: from the Lord's anointed being encouraged to pray so that he would be granted the nations as an inheritance in Ps 2:7¹⁹³ to his prayers for deliverances of various types in the remaining psalms (Ps 18:4, 7; Ps 19:13-15; Ps 20:2, 7; Ps 21:3; Ps 118:5).¹⁹⁴ The link between torah and prayer finds its ultimate expression here in Ps 119 with 176 verses celebrating the torah of God and 173 of these verses consist of prayer to him. Soll points out that this torah-based prayer is most appropriate coming from the lips of the Dtr king: 'Given Psalm 119's close associations with the Deuteronomic tradition, the king emerges as the one most likely to frame his

¹⁸⁹ Anderson, *Psalms*, 809.

¹⁹⁰ Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 702.

¹⁹¹ The purpose of this redaction will be one of the main foci for discussion in Chapter 7.

¹⁹² Soll comments: '[T]he psalmist seeks to relate his prayer to Torah, and uses the eight Torah words to establish a basis for his petition,' *Psalm 119*, 148.

¹⁹³ McCann, *Psalms*, 689.

¹⁹⁴ See Miller, "Kingship," 132-3, for consideration of prayer in the psalm grouping 18-21; and Mays, "Ps 118," for discussion of prayer in Ps 118.

prayer with continual reference to the law which is to be his constant meditation, his responsibility to promulgate, and on which his office depends.’¹⁹⁵

7.6 Dependence upon Yahweh and the Kingship Law

An integral part of the prayer theme which so dominates Psalm 119 is the idea of the psalmist’s complete dependence upon Yahweh rather than upon alternative sources of security, which is a significant idea in Pss 1-2 and 18-21 also. As we saw above, the dependence theme in Ps 119 is seen in such verses as 23, 72 and 114 which intentionally reflect the limitations placed upon the power of the king in the Kingship Law.¹⁹⁶ Such expressions of dependence upon Yahweh can be found in the refuge idea of Ps 2:12b;¹⁹⁷ in the appellatives of Ps 18, all of which explicitly reflect trust in Yahweh;¹⁹⁸ in the prayer for protection from sin in Ps 19:13-15;¹⁹⁹ in the anti-militaristic ideas of Ps 20:8;²⁰⁰ and in the concept of salvation belonging to Yahweh in Ps 21:2, 6.²⁰¹ In reflecting the Kingship Law by stressing the rejection of all other sources of power and security, Ps 119 merely picks up on themes already apparent in the previous torah-kingship psalm groupings.

7.7 Name Theology

In his recent work on Ps 119, Freedman writes: ‘Another major difference between Deuteronomic theology and Psalm 119 is the absence of the Deuteronomic “name theology” associated with the Temple.’²⁰² Whilst Ps 119, indeed, does not emphasise name theology specifically ‘associated with the Temple’, Freedman’s statement does beg a question: ‘Is Dtr name theology necessarily to be associated with the Temple?’ Whilst this may not be a dominant theme, Ps 119 does contain elements of name theology in vv 55 and 132. These verses use the concept of the name of Yahweh to represent the spiritual essence or personship of God, his real presence with the pray-er. This type of understanding is consistent with the name theology apparent in the other torah-kingship psalms where the particular emphasis is upon Yahweh’s protective presence with his anointed and his people. Pss 18:50; 20:2, 6, 8; and 118:10-12, 26 all refer to the name of Yahweh in the context of his real presence and protection.²⁰³

7.8 Blamelessness of the King

At their deepest level the torah-kingship psalm groupings seem to be preoccupied with a particular type of piety, an attitude towards life and spirituality which is focused upon

¹⁹⁵ Soll, *Psalms 119*, 135.

¹⁹⁶ See above, p 136.

¹⁹⁷ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 18.

¹⁹⁸ Berry, *Psalms and Readers*, 93.

¹⁹⁹ Mays, *Psalms*, 99; Miller, “Kingship,” 132-3.

²⁰⁰ McCann, *Psalms*, 756; Kraus, *Psalms*, 282.

²⁰¹ Mays, *Psalms*, 103-4.

²⁰² Freedman, *Psalms 119*, 90-1.

²⁰³ See above, pp 87-88; 115-117.

divine revelation and prayer. This is reflected in the repeated theme of ‘blamelessness’ (not legalistic perfection but a total orientation of life towards God and his ways) throughout these psalms. The word תמים is used explicitly in Ps 18:24, 26, 31, 33; Ps 19:8 and Ps 119:1 and 80, but, in fact, this concept seems to be the (sometimes unstated) aim of each of these psalm groupings. Ps 1’s way of torah-obedience is essentially the way of blamelessness.²⁰⁴ The psalmist’s declarations of blamelessness in Ps 18:21-25 are to be held in tension with the psalmist’s prayer for Yahweh’s help to be blameless in 19:13-15.²⁰⁵ The king is, by implication, declared blameless in Ps 118 in that only the צדיקים may enter the Temple.²⁰⁶ The focus of Ps 119 as a prayer is also an appeal to Yahweh for his help and enabling so that the psalmist may fulfill his desire to be blameless.²⁰⁷ Yet again, a theme which is central to the torah-kingship psalms finds its fullest expression in Ps 119, and, yet again, this is a theme which borrows heavily from the theology of Deuteronomy.²⁰⁸

7.9 Conclusion

Central to this thesis is the question: ‘Is there evidence of deliberate editorial association in these three groups of psalms?’ One of the factors which seems to confirm this deliberate arrangement theory is the fact that Ps 119 takes into account most of the main theological emphases which are found not only in the other torah psalms (as one might expect), but also in the royal psalms juxtaposed alongside them. Psalm 119 could be described as a very lengthy summary statement drawing together the ideas of Pss 1-2 and 18-21. The lexical and theological overlap is such that one may reasonably be led to the conclusion that Psalm 119 could have been composed in order to echo the piety of Pss 1 and 19, and their associated psalms, in the concluding book of the Psalter. Certainly it reflects the same Dtr school of thought observable in the psalm groupings which we have previously considered.

8. Conclusion re. Torah-Kingship Psalm Groupings

Based on detailed exegetical examination of the psalm groupings 1-2, 18-21 and 118-119 we can make three general observations:

1. There has been a deliberate attempt on the part of the editors of the Psalter to juxtapose torah and kingship psalms, following the pattern established in the introduction to the Book of Psalms.
2. These juxtaposed royal and torah psalms bear marked similarities in the Dtr overtones of their use of language and theological content.

²⁰⁴ McCann, *Psalms*, 1168.

²⁰⁵ Allen, “David as Exemplar,” 546; McCann, *Psalms*, 752-3.

²⁰⁶ Mays, “Ps 118,” 304.

²⁰⁷ Whybray, “Psalm 119,” 40.

²⁰⁸ Miller, “Kingship,” 130.

3. The editorial placement of royal psalms alongside torah psalms seems to be an attempt to bring the theology of the Kingship Law to the forefront of the Psalter's call to piety and its eschatological expectation of a renewed Davidic kingship.

One more exegetical task remains, however, if we are ultimately to confirm these observations: namely, examination of the Kingship Law and its function within the Book of Deuteronomy. We have been able to present, perhaps, a strong *prima facie* case that Pss 1, 2, 18, 19, 20, 21, 118 and 119 are intended to reflect Deuteronomy's Law of the King in their association one with the other. By studying Deut 17:14-20 in more detail we should be able to establish more definitely the actual similarities that exist between these psalms and this passage. The torah-kingship psalms seem to suggest two things to the reader of the Psalter: (1) the ideal characteristics of the eschatological king, expected at the time of the book's closure; and (2) the type of piety which the reader should apply in his own life lived *coram Dei*. The question which we should now ask is: Are the concerns of these psalm groupings also to be found in Deuteronomy's Kingship Law?

Chapter 5

The Kingship Law as a Paradigm (Deut 17:14-20)

1. Introduction

‘The “Law of the King” has, as those familiar with the controversies over Deuteronomy in general will recognise, occasioned extensive debate.’¹ Such is the somewhat understated assessment of Baruch Halpern concerning the state of academic debate surrounding Deuteronomy’s Law of the King (17:14-20).² In common with most of the major areas of debate in Deuteronomy, the Kingship Law has proven to be the source of much discussion and no small amount of disagreement. Indeed, the complexities of interpreting this passage reflect many of the crux issues which fuel the debate with respect to the theology and historical setting of Deuteronomy.

Some of the contentious issues regarding this passage are historical: for example, does the Kingship Law reflect the royalist ideology of the Judean Court at the time of Josiah?³ Or, on the contrary, do the limitations placed upon the power of the king point the reader towards an anti-monarchic agenda in Israelite society?⁴ Other questions are more theological in nature: for example, do Deuteronomy and the DtrH speak with the same voice regarding the monarchy? Or could it be said that one is pro-monarchic whereas the other is anti-monarchic, and if so which is which?⁵ As well as such issues, there is also the challenge of the complex question of the origins of the text of Deut 17 and the succeeding influences of redactors, be they exilic or post-exilic?⁶

Much effort could be put into the discussion of these questions. However, such discussion is somewhat beyond the scope and remit of this thesis. Rather, our desire it is to ask the question, ‘Could the Kingship Law have functioned as a paradigm for the organisation of the psalm groupings considered in the preceding chapters?’ This line of enquiry requires investigation more from a textual and literary perspective than from a historical perspec-

¹ B. Halpern, *The Constitution of the Monarchy in Israel* (HSM 25; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981) 226.

² Lopez acknowledges that, ‘Dt 17,14-20 a été et continue à être l’objet de nombreuses polémiques,’ (“Le Roi d’Israel: Dt 17,14-20,” *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft* (ed. N. Lohfink; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985) 277).

³ One example, amongst others, would be M. Weinfeld, “Deuteronomy: The Present State of Enquiry,” *The Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* (ed. D. L. Christensen; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993) 28. Weinfeld attributes this ‘positive’ view of the monarchy to the ‘scribes of the courts of Hezekiah and Josiah’ (p 34).

⁴ Chiefly M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; trans. H. G. M. Williamson; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981) 91; G. von Rad, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (OTL; trans. Dorothea Barton; London: SCM Press, 1966) 120; E. W. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967) 49-50. There are others who follow this view, as will become clear in the course of this study.

⁵ Knoppers, “Deuteronomist and Deuteronomic Law of the King.”

⁶ See the discussion in Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 271, regarding possible additions to an ‘original’ law.

tive. Our quest is not to prove that Deuteronomy 17 is sufficiently ancient,⁷ rather it is to establish that the literary indicators are such that it seems convincing that the editors of the Psalter had the Law of the King in mind when juxtaposing torah and kingship psalms as part of their eschatological programme of kingship in the Psalms. The message of the canonical Psalter seems to be that a restored, Davidic king is to be expected. This is emphasised by the placement of royal psalms at key points throughout the book.⁸ The linking of kingship and torah psalms in Pss 1-2; 18-21; and 118-119, adds nuance to this sense of royal expectation, however. Namely, the king who is to come shall not be a king in the mould of the often bitter and disappointing experience of the DtrH, instead he shall be a king who functions as an exemplar of proper piety before Yahweh in accordance with the Deuteronomic Law of the King.

Of course, emphasis upon textual and literary connections does not make historical questions obsolete. On the contrary, we seek to argue that the ordering of these royal and torah psalms is part of a (perhaps much broader) Deuteronomistic redaction of the Psalter. If this is the case, then it would be reasonable to expect the view of kingship which is displayed in the Psalter to broadly reflect the DtrH's presentation of kingship. If the same hand lies behind both, then there should be some degree of observable overlap between these texts. We shall seek to answer this broader question in Chapter 7, entitled *Torah, Kingship and Democratisation*.

For now, our focus must be upon the exegetical examination of Deut 17:14-20. As throughout this thesis, our primary objective must be to allow the text to speak for itself. In order to establish the central argument of this thesis, it must be shown that there is substantial overlap between the content of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law and the content of the psalm groupings examined above. If we are to accept that the Law of the King functioned as the paradigm for the canonical placement of Pss 1-2, 18-21 and 118-119 then exegetical examination of the text must show that there are textual, thematic and theological similarities which may be observed in the Law of the King and in these psalm groupings. This is the task to which we now turn.

⁷ Not that this would be a contentious question. There is almost universal agreement that the canonical text of Deuteronomy (even were one to posit the latest suggested date for the formation of Deuteronomy) was closed prior to the final formation of the text of the Psalter.

⁸ Wilson, "Use of Royal Psalms," and *Editing*, 209-14.

2. Analysis of the Law of the King (Deut 17:14-20)

BHS

כִּי־תָבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן
לָךְ וַיְרַשְׁתָּהּ וַיֵּשְׁבָתָה בָּהּ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲשִׁימָה
עָלַי מֶלֶךְ כְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתַי:
שׁוּם תָּשִׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ מִקֶּרֶב אַחֶיךָ תָּשִׂים עָלֶיךָ
מֶלֶךְ לֹא תוּכַל לָתֵת עָלֶיךָ אִישׁ נָכְרִי אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־אַחֶיךָ הוּא:

רַק לֹא־יִרְבֶּה־לוֹ סוּסִים וְלֹא־יֵשִׁיב
אֶת־הָעָם מִצְרִימָה לְמַעַן הִרְבוֹת סוּס וַיְהִי
אָמַר לָכֶם לֹא תִסְפוּן לָשׁוּב בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה עוֹד:
וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה־לוֹ נָשִׁים וְלֹא יָסוּר לְבָבוֹ וְכֶסֶף
וְזָהָב לֹא יִרְבֶּה־לוֹ מְאֹד:

וְהָיָה כְּשִׁבְתּוֹ עַל כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ וְכָתַב לּוֹ
אֶת־מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת עַל־סֵפֶר מִלְּפָנֵי
הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם:
וְהָיְתָה עִמּוֹ וְקָרָא בּוֹ כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּו לְמַעַן
יִלְמַד לִירְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו לְשֹׁמֵר
אֶת־כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הַחֻקִּים
הָאֵלֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹתָם:

לְבָלְתִּי רוּם־לְבָבוֹ מֵאַחֶיו וּלְבָלְתִּי סוּר
מִן־הַמִּצְוָה יְמִין וּשְׂמָאוֹל לְמַעַן יֵאָרִיךְ יָמָיו
עַל־מַמְלַכְתּוֹ הוּא וּבָנָיו בְּקֶרֶב יִשְׂרָאֵל: ס

Translation

14 When you enter the land which Yahweh your God is giving you—when you take possession of it and dwell in it—and you say, ‘Let us set a king over ourselves like all the nations which surround us.’⁹

15 Be sure that you set a king over yourselves whom Yahweh your God chooses. You shall appoint a king over yourselves from amongst your brothers. You must not place a foreigner, who is not one of your brothers, over you.

16 Only he must not multiply for himself horses and he must not send the people back to Egypt in order to multiply horses, for Yahweh said, ‘Do not return that way ever again.’

17 And he must not multiply wives for himself so that his heart does not stray. Also he must not multiply much silver and gold for himself.

18 When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write out a copy of this torah for himself—taken from the priests who are Levites—into a book.

19 And he is to keep it with him and read it aloud all the days of his life, so that he will learn to fear Yahweh his God and to keep all the words of this torah and to follow [lit: *to do*] all these decrees.

20 He must not exalt himself over his brothers and he must not turn aside from the commandment, neither to the right or to the left, so that he and his sons may reign in Israel for many days.

The Law of the King is, without question, quite an extraordinary document in its context within the ancient Near East. Whilst Israel was not the only ANE society to provide written advice for rulers,¹⁰ we find no other ancient texts which seek to limit the power of

⁹ As is characteristic of this passage concerning the offices, and other sections, of the Book of Deuteronomy, the people are addressed using a second person singular form of address. Accordingly the first person deliberations of the people (translated above ‘Let us...’) are actually written in the first person singular in the Hebrew text (effectively ‘Let me...’). I have used the plural throughout in the English translation of this text in order to facilitate a more ‘readable’ working translation.

¹⁰ “Advice to a Prince” (W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1960] 110-115) bears some similarities to the Kingship Law, but does not explicitly limit royal powers: rather it discusses the possible consequences of the abuse of royal prerogatives. It certainly does not present itself as

the king in this way. Knoppers writes, 'In placing a series of major constraints upon the powers of kingship, the Deuteronomic law of the king is highly unusual. The powers of the monarchy, so dominant in the civilisations of the ancient Near East, are greatly circumscribed in Dtn 17,14-20.'¹¹ McConville emphasises this same point, 'Deuteronomy evidently intends somehow to circumscribe or restrict the powers of the king. The king as presented here differs enormously from that of the usual ancient Near Eastern concept of the king as the chief executive in all aspects of the nation's life.'¹²

The unusual nature of Deuteronomy's 'take' on kingship is further accentuated by its position within the laws dealing with the distribution of power within Israel (16:18-18:22). One would think that, whilst the law concerning the king seeks to limit his power, surely he is for all that still the central and most important figure in the power structure of ancient Israel. Whilst the DtrH seems to indicate that this was how the office of king developed in practice, the legal framework of Deuteronomy presents kingship as being of secondary importance to an impartial judiciary.¹³ So the reader—aware of the typical role of kingship in the ancient Near East—is confronted with a double challenge to his perception of kingship: the king is subject to legislation limiting his power (just like any other citizen of the land); and, secondly, his office is presented as secondary in significance to the function of judge. These unexpected perspectives lead one to formulate questions concerning the essence and function of the law of the king—just what is its purpose, what does it seek to achieve?

It is in answering these fundamental questions about the Kingship Law that the reader is led to certain conclusions about the theological quintessence of Deut 17:14-20. I would suggest that in examining the essential nature of this law our attention is drawn to certain themes and foci which, as we have already seen, are central to the meanings and purposes of our psalm groupings. The Kingship Law, following the unusual but important introductory verse 14,¹⁴ splits into four units (v 15, vv 16-17, vv 18-19 and v 20) dealing with four themes:

1. King as chosen by Yahweh (v 15);
2. King as one of the Hebrew brothers, i.e. democratising effect (v 15 and again in v 20);

having binding authority over the king.

¹¹ Knoppers, "Deuteronomist and Deuteronomic Law of the King," 329-30.

¹² McConville, "King and Messiah," 276. See also Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209, and Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 166, for further discussion of the unusual nature of the Kingship Law in its ancient Near Eastern context.

¹³ N. F. Lohfink, "Distribution of the Functions of Powers," *The Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* (SBTS, Vol. 3; ed. D. L. Christensen; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993) 347; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 207-8; Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 147.

¹⁴ Deut 17:14 is unusual from the perspective that it presents a scenario in which an office of leadership is created at the behest of the people rather than at the command of Yahweh.

3. Limitations on the power of the king, stressing dependence upon Yahweh (vv 16-17);
4. Centrality of *torah* in the life of the king (vv 18-19).

These key motifs, of course, require further elaboration, but first we must look at the question of whether or not the Kingship Law is inherently anti-monarchic, as this would fundamentally affect the interpretation of this text and its possible application as a paradigm in the Psalter.

3. Kingship Law as Inherently Anti-Monarchic?

The best way to seek to answer this question is by way of detailed analysis of the text itself. The first two verses of the Law of the King speak to the question of whether or not this text is explicitly against the idea of kingship.

3.1.1 Introduction to the Kingship Law (Deut 17:14)

Verse 14, by way of introduction, puts the following stipulations regarding the king into their proper context. Firstly, it stresses the absolute kingship of Yahweh and, secondly, it shows the ‘non-essential’ nature of kingship within the Hebrew constitution and power structures. The land is Yahweh’s to give (הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ, ‘the land which Yahweh your God is giving you’), not the king’s to allot which was one of the traditional functions associated with ANE kingship.¹⁵ Also the office of king is not commanded by Yahweh in the same manner as the judicial office, rather kingship is *allowed* to come into being following a time-delayed, and somewhat dubious request from the people. Compare וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲשִׁמָּה עָלַי מֶלֶךְ כָּכָל הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר (from Deut 16:18 with שִׁפְטִים וְשֹׁטְרִים תִּתֶּן-לָךְ, from Deut 17:14. The former is clearly ordained and commanded by Yahweh,¹⁶ the latter reflects an origin in the people rather than God and the reasons given run contrary to the basic theology of Deuteronomy.

So how are we to understand the kingship law in the light of its introduction? First of all, v 14 starts by accentuating the *kingship of Yahweh*. Human kingship is permitted but only in the context of the *ultimate* kingship of Israel’s God. Wright expresses this idea in discussing the overall impression of the pericope dealing with this office:

The supreme authority is thus Yahweh himself, whose theocratic focus of power and authority in a vertical sense effectively flattens and disperses power at the horizontal level.

¹⁵ McConville writes, ‘The limits on [the king’s] power are adumbrated by the formulaic introduction of the law, which reaffirms that it is Yahweh who has given the land (17:1); there is no sign here of the king as the one who makes land grants,’ (“King and Messiah,” 276).

¹⁶ Whilst the verb used in Deut 16:18 is a Qal, imperfect, 2ms form, rather than an imperative, the simple future translation of the verb gives it the imperative sense of an act commanded by Yahweh (‘You shall appoint...’). This is reflected in the EVV: NIV, KJV, NKJV, RSV, NRSV, ESV & NASV all translate this verse in this way.

The constitutional aspects of human authority are thus set firmly in the context of God's transcendent authority and revealed will and word.¹⁷

McConville makes a similar point:

[Deuteronomy's] covenantal theology is that of all Israel, and its covenantal story will lead in time to a monarchy in relationship with Yahweh. In this perspective, the law of the king itself anticipates something that is not yet a fact in Israel's life. Its stress is on constraint, and its aim to ensure the true primacy in Israel of Yahweh and his Torah (or law). It neither promotes nor criticises any actual dynasty, but certainly has the potential to do the latter. Second, any human kingship in Israel is seriously qualified by Deuteronomy's theology of Yahweh's kingship. This is implicit in the structure the book, which, as is well-known, closely resembles the form of a vassal-treaty, contracted between a greater and a lesser king. In terms of this metaphor, it is Yahweh who is the 'Great King.'¹⁸

Secondly, the office of king is portrayed as being *optional* by the way in which it is introduced. Speaking more specifically of the Kingship Law, Wright adds: 'This section, therefore, is permissive rather than descriptive legislation. It does not command monarchy but allows for it.'¹⁹ Similarly Craigie writes, 'This section, containing laws relating to kingship, is the only one of its kind in the Pentateuch. It takes the form of permissive legislation, rather than positing a requirement.'²⁰ Von Rad accurately sums up the overall impression given by the tone of v 14: 'the law concerning the king almost gives us the impression of being merely an "optional arrangement."²¹

Thirdly, the *reason* given from the people's request places kingship in a distinctly negative light when viewed from the perspective of the overall message of the Book of Deuteronomy. 'A king over ourselves *like all the nations which surround us*,' is a term which has unequivocally negative connotations in Deuteronomy. Tigay writes, 'Deuteronomy, by mentioning only this motive for wanting a monarchy, characterises the institution as unnecessary and unworthy.'²² For Nicholson this formulation is sufficient, in and of itself, to indicate that these stipulations are basically anti-kingship:

Indeed the law on kingship in Deuteronomy 17:14f makes it quite clear that the authors of the book had little regard for the institution of monarchy. The expressions 'like the nations that are round about' in verse 14 is itself polemical (cf. 1 Sam 8:5-9, 19-20). For Deuteronomy kingship is essentially an institution of foreign importation.²³

Certainly, the other occurrences of comparison with the surrounding nations are to be found either in the context of Israel being distinct from their practices (6:14, 13:7) or simply describing these nations as enemies from which Yahweh will give them rest (12:10, 25:19). Deuteronomy emphasises the fact that Israel is given the land in the first place, not

¹⁷ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 203.

¹⁸ McConville, *Grace in the End*, 31.

¹⁹ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 208.

²⁰ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 253.

²¹ von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, 120.

²² Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 166.

²³ Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition*, 49-50.

because of her inherent worth, but because of the wickedness of the nations (9:4). Clearly, the reason given for the request for a king is meant to be read in a negative light—whatever other motivating factors may be at work in this request, *the reasons given* should be understood negatively.

In summary, Deut 17:14 as an introduction to the law of the king leaves the reader with a rather negative view of human kingship. It stresses the ultimate kingship of Yahweh, the optional nature of the office of human king and the people's wrong reasons in making the request for a king in the first place. Were this the end of the legislation, there would be little doubt about the Dtr view of kingship. However, the author's perspective on the office of king is not so one-dimensional and the remaining verses of the statute leave the reader with competing information concerning the human king. These views of kingship are to be held in creative tension.

3.2 Kingship and Yahweh's Choice (Deut 17:15)

The transparently negative overtones regarding kingship in v 14 are immediately confronted with a quite different approach to kingship in v 15. The people are told to be sure that the king whom they install is the one chosen by Yahweh, that he is one of the Hebrew brothers and that he should not be a foreigner but (again) a brother. So the reader moves from the negative impression of the people's choice (based in an apparently inappropriate desire to be like the nations) to Yahweh's choice, implying divine approval for the king and kingship?

The contrast is stark and indicative of the complexities involved in trying to establish a single Dtr view of kingship. Inherent to the act of Yahweh's choosing is an implication of divine approval,²⁴ thus a different light is shed upon the ambivalent tones of v 14.

The concept of Yahweh's choosing is an important one in the OT especially in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History. When Yahweh chooses a people, or place for worship, or a king, he has determined the direction, and given his blessing on the choice. With this grace kingship is thus immediately placed under Yahweh's rule.²⁵

The common element in the 'choosing' contexts seems to be an insistence on Yahweh's prior or sovereign action in the arrangement of Israel's affairs. When it is said that Yahweh chooses the people, the king and the priests, it is clear enough in each case that the dominant idea is simply that of Yahweh's choice... Other occurrences of the choosing motif are also expressions of this grand truth. In 17:14f, the people's resolve to have a king ('I will set the king over me, like all nations that are round about me') is fundamentally changed in character by the qualification that that king shall be one whom Yahweh, as opposed to the people themselves, will choose. In this, according to Deuteronomy, the Israelite monarchy is to be distinct from that of the surrounding nations.²⁶

²⁴ B. E. Schafer, "The Root *Bhr* and Pre-Exilic Concepts of Chosenness in the Hebrew Bible," ZAW 89/1 (1977) 20-42.

²⁵ Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 110. .

²⁶ McConville, *Law and Theology*, 30-1.

The effect of v 15 upon the Kingship Law is marked. An initially sceptical approach to kingship—based in the optional nature of kingship and the questionable motives lying behind the request for a king—is qualified by Yahweh’s sovereign act of choosing. The implications of this reversal should be read back into verse 14 as well as forward into the remainder of the statute.²⁷ As part of Yahweh’s kingship, he is sovereign over the choice of any particular king and over the royal office in general.

This reversal in tone, as McConville points out above, leads us towards the very heart of the matter in terms of the Kingship Law. The central issue, in fact, is not the question, ‘Should there be a king in Israel?’ This is taken somewhat for granted in the text. Rather the key question is, ‘What should Israel’s king be like?’ The ensuing verses take up this question and make it clear that Israel’s king is to be radically different from all other ANE models of kingship. The tension with regard to the ‘rightness’ of kingship in Deut 17 is nonetheless real and should not be explained away too easily. However, I would argue that the qualifications found in v 14 are not sufficient to lead one to the conclusion that the voice of Dtr in the Law of the King is anti-monarchic, *per se*.²⁸ Rather, I would suggest that this verse sounds a strong note of caution with regard to the office of king. For it is, arguably, with regard to kingship that the risk of lapsing into the abuse of power is greatest and the effects of such abuse would be furthest-reaching.²⁹ This cautionary note, however, does not automatically indicate divine rejection of human kingship as being inherently incompatible with the kingship of Yahweh, as is testified by Yahweh’s insistence that he choose the candidate for king. Furthermore, Yahweh does allow kingship as part of this ‘polity of the covenant people’.³⁰ The king *has* a role to play: the main content of the Kingship Law is made up of discussion of what that king should be like—what should characterise Israel’s king? If the Psalter reflects a redaction which seeks to reflect the Kingship Law then we should expect some similarity between the characteristics of the

²⁷ Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 109-10.

²⁸ *Contra* von Rad, Nicholson *et al.* At the same time, I would not say that the Kingship Law is necessarily pro-monarchic in a royalist sense. The Law of the King is typically Deuteronomic in its content, i.e. it is more concerned with the worldview, humility and piety of the king as a leader of the covenant people and facilitator of covenant obedience, than it is with an abstract discussion of the pros and cons of monarchic rule.

²⁹ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 166.

³⁰ McBride, “Polity”. Wright summarises this tension well when he writes: ‘Kingship in Israel is immediately set in an ambivalent light. On the one hand, if it comes it will be by the people’s own request (v 14), but on the other hand, the individual king is to be Yahweh’s choice (v 15)... Though the literary account of the request in 1 Samuel obviously echoes the Deuteronomic phraseology, *the Deuteronomic law is not itself negative or hostile to the people’s request*. There is no harm in asking. The people ask other things of God that meet with approval (e.g., 12:20, 18:16f.). If the request for a king had been intrinsically incompatible with theocracy, it would doubtless have received a resounding rejection in the language of chapter 7. Yahweh is Israel’s supreme judge, but that does not rule out human judges as his agents. Likewise, Yahweh is the true king in Israel (cf Exodus 15:18; Numbers 23:21; Deuteronomy 33:5; Judges 8:23), but that does not totally exclude human kings...’ (*Deuteronomy*, 208, emphasis mine).

king as presented in the torah-kingship psalm groupings and the ideal king of Deut 17:14-20. Therefore, we now turn to consideration of the Dtr presentation of the ideal king.

4. Characteristics of the King (Deut 17:15-20)

As mentioned above, we perhaps do the text of Deut 17:14-20 a disservice in asking whether it is pro- or anti-monarchic.³¹ Kingship is posited as future fact, not a point of debate, within the text.³² The question which the text itself elaborates upon is, 'What should the king be like? What should typify his person and his office?' Craigie writes that the Law of the King 'anticipates a time when, for practical and pragmatic reasons, kingship might become a necessity. But the legislation does not expound in detail the character of the kingly office; rather it specifies the attitudes and characteristics that would be required of the king in a state that was primarily a theocracy.'³³ The focus of Deuteronomy 17 is not a detailed delimitation of the tasks, rights and responsibilities of the king, rather it focuses throughout on *character and attitude*. As mentioned above,³⁴ the text of Deut 17:14-20 breaks into four units, following the introduction, and these sections emphasise three additional themes.³⁵ Let us examine these sections in detail allowing these central themes to speak for themselves.

4.1 Essential Equality: Democratisation (v 15)

Following on from the injunction that the appointed king must be the one chosen by Yahweh. The law emphatically stipulates that the king should be appointed from within the covenant community (מִקִּרְבֵּי תְּשִׁימֶנּוּ, 'from amongst your brothers you shall appoint...', 17:15). The emphatic positioning of the source from which the king is to be drawn (מִקִּרְבֵּי תְּשִׁימֶנּוּ), placed before the verb underlines the importance of this command. The king is to be drawn from within the covenant community, the implication being (as will become clear) that he too is subject to the covenant and does not stand above it as a law unto himself. Most of the commentators pick up on this point:

Fellows: Literally, 'brothers,' underscoring the essential equality of the king and the other citizens. He is not their master.³⁶

³¹ Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 39-41, esp. 41. This view finds support in Howard, "The Case for Kingship in Deut," 101.

³² From the DtrH (e.g. the Book of Judges and the Samuel narratives), we see from a historical perspective, that there was a strong debate within Israel surrounding the monarchy. Several commentators pick up on this fact and read this back into the Kingship Law (e.g. von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, 118-120; Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition*, 49-50). However, despite the similarities in the language of Deut 17:14 and 1 Sam 8:5, we should not impose this debate upon the text of the Law of the King. Although the initial comments give rise to questions about the appropriateness of the office of king, the remainder of this passage moves on from there to treat kingship as a political fact. The only remaining question is with regard to the type of kingship which should be found in Israel.

³³ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 253.

³⁴ See pp 157-158.

³⁵ We have already discussed the important theme of Yahweh's choosing the king above, pp 163-165.

³⁶ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 169.

The deuteronomistic historian supplemented the law of the king through the addition of vv 18f., and the later deuteronomistic editor added a note in v 16, and a phrase in v 20, by which he drew out what was for him the consequence of the king being simply a fellow-Israelite, viz. that just as his people so the king was subject to the divine law.³⁷

In Deuteronomy, this [democratising effect] is especially seen in the law of the king. He is chosen by the people from among his brothers, is not to acquire things that would either turn him away from Yahweh or exalt him above his brothers, and is not to exalt himself above other members of the community (his brothers).³⁸

Finally the theme of brotherhood of the members of the people of Israel deserves mention. The term *'āhîm*, 'brothers', is Deuteronomy's characteristic expression for a referring to fellow-Israelites, regardless of social status or tribal divisions (e.g. Deut 1:16; 3:18, 20; 10:9; 15:3, 7, 9, 11). In 3:12-20 the point is made expressly that members of other tribes are also brothers. Even the king is to be 'one from among the brothers' (17:15). *Its use, therefore, has a levelling function in Israel.* Allied with this is the tendency to speak of Israel as a single whole, and what seems like a deliberate disregard for divisions within the people... The theme of brotherhood, like the other themes, serves Deuteronomy's deeper concern to express the need for Israel to respond to Yahweh's action on its behalf. On the one hand the law of the king (17:14ff) draws on the idea of brotherhood in connection with the theology of election (v 15). The king's election and his status as a brother in Israel become a twin motivation not to use his office for self-aggrandisement.³⁹

This emphasis adds a strong democratising element to the Law of the King. That is, the king is not to be set apart from the people because of his status, quite to the contrary, he is to be intimately associated with them, being constantly reminded that he is one of them.

The essential equality of the king with all Israelites is further stressed in v 15 by the direction that he should not be a foreigner, 'who is not one of the brothers' (אֲשֶׁר לֹא אֶחָיוּד הוּא). Whilst it is not easy to reconstruct a historical situation in which a foreigner would be appointed king in the pre-exilic period,⁴⁰ the key factor in this prohibition seems to be that a non-Israelite would not be subject to the covenant, and the king—as with all Israelites—*must* be subject to the covenant.⁴¹ So, from v 15 we can observe, first and foremost, an essential equality between king and people. He and they alike are subject to the covenant with Yahweh—subject, as we shall see, to the *torah* of Yahweh (Deut 17:18-19). This emphasis on democratisation is further elaborated upon throughout the remainder of the Law of the King.⁴²

³⁷ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 270-1.

³⁸ Miller, "Kingship," 131.

³⁹ McConville, *Law and Theology*, 19. Emphasis added.

⁴⁰ D. Daude, "One from Among Your Brothers Shall You Set Over You," *JBL* 90 (1971) 480-1, suggests a backdrop in the narrative concerning Abimelech in the Book of Judges (8:29-9:57). There is, however, insufficient indication of any specific historical setting in the Kingship Law to make such a concrete association. Tigay suggests that the scenario of a foreigner becoming king could result from a *coup d'état* where the military leader involved was a foreign mercenary (*Deuteronomy*, 167). Others see this as an exilic/post-exilic refusal to accept Babylonian or Persian imperial rule.

⁴¹ Schafer, "Concepts of Chosenness," 40; Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 148; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 254-5; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

⁴² This theme is mentioned in v 15 and again in v 20, so we shall return to further consideration of the democratising effect of the king's association with the covenant community later in this chapter.

4.2 Restrictions on the Power of the King (vv 16-17)

Perhaps the most immediately extraordinary fact concerning the Law of the King, given its ANE setting, is its focus on the restriction of the king's powers and privileges. Ancient Near Eastern kings were, generally speaking, the epitome of autonomy—laws unto themselves. As McConville notes, however, the king in Israel 'would be conspicuously less powerful than the common run of oriental kings.'⁴³ Wright observes the starkness of contrast between the stipulations governing the king in Israel and the royal practices common to that time and location:

These three restrictions (vv 16f.) are remarkable because they quite explicitly cut across the accepted pattern of kingship throughout the ancient Near East. Military power, through the building up of a large chariot force (the point of having great numbers of horses), the prestige of a large harem of many wives (frequently related to international marriage alliances), and the enjoyment of great wealth (large amounts of silver and gold)—these were the defining marks of kings worthy of the title. Weapons, women, and wealth: why else be a king?⁴⁴

What lies at the heart of these limitations placed upon the power of the king? Why is Israel's king *not* to be characterised by 'weapons, women and wealth'?

The text of the Kingship Law seems to suggest a two-fold answer to this question: First, the sole source of the king's power is to come, not from these external factors, but rather from absolute trust in Yahweh himself; and, secondly, the king is not to exalt himself over his brethren, over the covenant community, re-emphasising the democratising effect of v15. The limitations on the power of the king seem to be fundamentally based in the concept of covenant—the king is to be entirely dependent upon Yahweh's promise and he is to be equal in status with all Israelites as he and they are under the same covenant.

4.2.1 Absolute Dependence upon Yahweh

Key to the concept of 'polity'⁴⁵ in Deuteronomy is the fundamental theological message of the book as a whole—the sovereignty of God.⁴⁶ Yahweh reigns. It is the 'task' of the covenant people to respond to that sovereignty in obedient devotion to him. A. D. H. Mayes writes that, 'it should be noted that the task of the Deuteronomic law is not to pass judgement on the monarchy..., but rather to put over the characteristic Deuteronomic view of Israel as a whole...'.⁴⁷ Part of that 'characteristic Deuteronomic view' which is made apparent in the Law of the King is the notion of the people's absolute dependence upon Yahweh for all things. Just as the people are to place their trust in God entirely, so the king must do the same.

⁴³ McConville, "King and Messiah," 271.

⁴⁴ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209.

⁴⁵ Borrowing the term adopted by S. D. McBride in referring to *torah* in Deuteronomy as a 'national "constitution"'—*politeia* as opposed to *nomos*, ("Polity," 62).

⁴⁶ McConville, *Law and Theology*, 32.

⁴⁷ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 271.

The people's dependence upon Yahweh is made clear in such passages as Deut 6:10-12 where the people are charged not to forget Yahweh once they enter Canaan. When cities and homes and wells and fields are provided for the people, Israel is no longer as explicitly dependent upon Yahweh for the provision of food and drink as was the case in the desert. Deuteronomy 6 warns that this new found comfort should not become the people's alternative source of strength or comfort or dependence—they must not forget that their real hope lies with Yahweh alone.⁴⁸ A similar message is repeated again for the people in Deuteronomy 8—just as the people were absolutely dependent upon God in the desert, they should remember that they are no less so now, despite the fact that they live in a land of plenty. Mayes describes this constant appeal not to lose sight of one's dependence upon Yahweh as 'a regular theme of Deuteronomy.'⁴⁹ Such is the context within the theological understanding of the Book of Deuteronomy. In Deut 17:14-20 we see how these principles were to be applied by the king as leader and exemplar for the people.⁵⁰

Just as the people are warned that they are not to forget Yahweh once they are settled into the relative comfort of the land, so the king is warned that he is not to allow his kingship to be marked by the typical overindulgences of oriental kingship. Why not? Within the context of Dtr theology the answer is clear: trust in the multiplication of 'weapons, women and wealth' as a source of power leads to apostasy, to forgetfulness of Yahweh.

'Horses' (סוּסִים) most probably represent the power of chariotry, the greatest of military strengths in the Near East at that time.⁵¹ The Law of the King plainly states that the king is not to put his trust in military might. 'Wives' (נָשִׁים) represent the power of international diplomacy through political alliances cemented by marriage.⁵² The Kingship Law makes it

⁴⁸ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 101-3; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 80; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 173; von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, 64; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 178.

⁴⁹ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 178.

⁵⁰ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 272-3. One could also add here that the people and the king are both subject to the torah of Yahweh (Deut 6:1-2 cf. Deut 17:18-20). This responsibility to keep the divine law is a clear expression of the fact that Yahweh is the 'Great King' over all Israel, however, we will discuss this particular aspect of the Kingship Law in more detail below, pp 168-171.

⁵¹ In the OT possession of horses is also a symbol of wealth (Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 255), but given that 'silver and gold' (כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב) are used in v 17 as clear representations of wealth, it seems most likely that reference is made to the temptations of placing one's trust in military might. See also Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209; J. Ridderbos, *Deuteronomy* (BSC; trans. E. M. van der Maas; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 199-200. The ban on the multiplication of horses as a source of military strength is further accentuated by the call not to send the people back to Egypt in order to purchase these horses. The basic function of this prohibition within the text seems to serve as a reminder of God's sovereign work in the salvation history of Israel (no chariots were needed at the Exodus, indeed they did the Egyptians no good at all). For further discussion of this aspect of v 16 see D. J. Reimer, "Concerning Return to Egypt: Deuteronomy XVII 16 and XXVIII 68 Reconsidered," *Studies in the Pentateuch* (VTSup 41; ed. J. Emerton; Leiden: Brill, 1990).

⁵² Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 167; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209. A reason is given for this prohibition: the clear implication is that many wives (presumably of foreign origin cf. Deut 7:3-6) may lead the king towards the forbidden religious practices of these wives.

clear that the king's power does not lie in his skills as an international power-broker. 'Silver and gold' (וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב), quite obviously, serve to represent great wealth.⁵³ Neither is the king to find self-sufficiency through the gathering of great wealth.

The essential meaning of the prohibitions placed upon the power of the king is that he is to place his trust entirely in Yahweh and his ability to provide for king and people, not in the typical sources of royal power:

Israel might admire the kings of the nations. But the king they are to have is to be as unlike the kings of other nations as one can imagine. *Clearly the issue is not merely if Israel should have a king or not, but what kind of king that should be.* What matters fundamentally for Deuteronomy is whether or not *the whole covenant people of Israel will remain wholly loyal to Yahweh their God.* The value of a king is assessed solely by the extent to which he will help or hinder that loyalty. A king who will trust not in God but in his own defences (cf 3:21f.); a king whose heart turns away because of many wives (cf 7:3f.); a king whose great wealth leads to this snares of pride (cf 8:13 f.)—such a king will quickly lead the people in the same disastrous directions. History proves the point with depressing regularity, as the deuteronomistic historians show.⁵⁴

The important aspect is the religious one, for multiplying horses (in the context of establishing and strengthening a professional army) had definite religious implications. These are drawn out by the prophets, particularly Isaiah 2:7-9 and Micah 5:10ff., where horses along with wealth (cf. v 17) are seen as things which *lead to pride, to a loss of awareness of the need to trust in Yahweh, and so to unfaithfulness and apostasy...* But the intention is the same here as with the prophets, for, as the verse goes on to indicate, the danger of many wives is precisely that it *leads to apostasy from Yahweh to the religions of the wives...* [N]or shall he greatly multiply for himself silver and gold:... this represents the application to the king of the deuteronomic parenesis in 8:13f.⁵⁵

Second, these restrictions and injunctions serve the main purpose of Deuteronomy, *to enjoin a full and undivided allegiance to the Lord.* The primary commandment is everywhere present in these verses. Limitation of horses and wealth had definite religious implications, drawn out by the prophets, particularly Isaiah 2:7-9 and Micah 5:10-15, where horses along with wealth (cf 17) are seen as the things that lead to pride, to the loss of awareness of the need to trust in Yahweh, and so to unfaithfulness and apostasy (Mayes, p 272). The danger that foreign wives will turn the king's heart away from following after the Lord is explicitly stated in verse 17 and echoed by the historical example of Solomon in 1 Kings 11:1-8 and Ahab in 1 Kings 16:29-33... *The law of the king is, like all Deuteronomic instruction, a guard against apostasy and idolatry.*⁵⁶

The aim of the law is to show how the monarchy, if established, is to conform to the same theocratic principles which govern other departments of the community; and *how the dangers with which it may threaten Israel's national character and Israel's faith, may be most effectually averted.*⁵⁷

It seems quite clear that the law's purpose in limiting the power of the king is to emphasise *the king's absolute dependence upon Yahweh* in the broader scheme of things. The

⁵³ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148-9; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 256; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 168.

⁵⁴ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209. Emphasis added.

⁵⁵ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 272-3. Emphasis added.

⁵⁶ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148. Emphasis added.

⁵⁷ S. R. Driver, *Deuteronomy* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978) 210. Emphasis added.

proliferation of weapons or diplomatic alliances or wealth would incline the king towards an attitude of self-sufficiency. The Law of the King serves as a salient reminder that the king, like the people, is a recipient of benefits according to Yahweh's grace. The land with its bounty was a gift to the people (6:10-12). The king is such only by Yahweh's choice (17:15). The Kingship Law stresses, therefore, that God is sovereign in all the affairs of monarch and nation and without his gracious, sovereign intervention into the lives of king and people they would never have reaped the benefits in which they now set their store. The limitations of power placed upon the king are set as reminders of the 'really real'. The king is not to become caught up with the trappings of royalty, he is rather to be one who excels first and foremost in his devotion to Yahweh and trust in him. *Trust in anything other than Yahweh will lead to apostasy*: such is the message of Deuteronomy and this message finds specific application in the Kingship Law.⁵⁸

4.2.2 Democratising Effect

As well as reminding him of his need to trust completely in Yahweh, the limitations placed upon the power of the king are a further reminder that he should not exalt himself above his brothers. As well as being a source of military strength, chariotry was seen as a means of self-aggrandisement of the king in the ANE. Tigay notes with regard to the prohibition of the multiplication of horses, 'In the king's personal entourage these [chariots] represent royal self-aggrandisement, as indicated by the would-be kings Absalom's and Adonijah's use of them.'⁵⁹ Similarly with regard to a large harem, this too would set the king apart from the ordinary Israelite for whom the Dtr law forbade such intermarriage (Deut 7:3-4). A large harem of foreign princesses would imply one law for the king and another for the people. As Wright puts it, 'Functional authority must be exercised in a context of covenant equality...'⁶⁰ The same would, obviously, be true of the silver and gold which the king could amass for himself. Huge wealth would set the king apart from his fellows. Mayes writes that the prohibition on the king's gathering great wealth 'represents the application to the king of the deuteronomistic parenesis in 8:13f.'⁶¹ That is, the same rules regarding wealth and comfort are applied to both king and people with a view to preventing apostasy.

This second function of the limitation of the powers of the king reminds the Israelite who sits on the throne that he is an Israelite. Therefore, he is subject to the stipulations of the covenant in the same way that all other Israelites are subject to them. Gerbrandt discusses this issue in his consideration of the 1 Samuel 8-12 narrative in the light of the Kingship Law:

⁵⁸ This point is further emphasised in the discussion of the king's relationship to the *torah* in vv 18-19, see below pp 168-171.

⁵⁹ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 167.

⁶⁰ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 210..

⁶¹ Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 273.

The assumption behind this warning is that the king, although the supreme leader of Israel, *is still subject to the covenant and its law, and in this respect on equal footing with all other Israelites*. That the king also needs to follow the law is brought out clearly in 12:14. As we earlier noted, *this is also central to the law of the king in Deuteronomy 17*. There the king was told to study the law so that he would obey it. The same point was made by emphasising that the king was to be a brother (i.e. not a foreigner who was outside of Israel's law).⁶²

Miller adds that, 'The democratising tendency of Deuteronomy restricts even, if not especially, the king, whose heart must not be lifted up above his brethren.'⁶³

So the limitations upon the power of the king serve a two-fold purpose: First, reminding the king of his complete reliance upon Yahweh as opposed to any alternative source of power; and, secondly, as a reminder of the essential equality of status that exists between the king and his subjects.

4.3 Torah-Piety of the King (vv 18-19)

The third essential component in the Kingship Law's presentation of what the king of Israel should be like is the vital significance of the torah of Yahweh to the king's character and his exercise of office. The clear implication of vv 18-19 is that the king of Israel is to immerse himself in the divine teaching in order to learn 'the fear of Yahweh'. The reader, it appears, is meant to assume that this study will impact both the king's character (as is implied by the quest to 'learn the fear of Yahweh') and his exercise of office, as there are no other proactive stipulations in the kingship law apart from this one.⁶⁴ How, then, does the king learn to be king? By diligent study of the torah of Yahweh, is the answer indicated by the Law of the King.⁶⁵

The picture painted in vv 18-19 is one of educational endeavour, but even more than that, it is an image of an individual whose whole world-and-life view is thoroughly shaped by and grounded in the teaching of Yahweh. The educational process is aided by two 'classical' teaching strategies: first, the king writes out the torah himself from the copy kept by the Levites; and, secondly, he reads it (aloud) daily.⁶⁶ Both of these practices indicate a strong teaching function—the increased impact resulting from visual and audio memorisation, seeing the words written out and hearing them read.⁶⁷ It is a powerful image of one who is committed to do more than learn from his 'assigned text': he seeks to shape and form his whole life and outlook based around that text.⁶⁸

⁶² Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 148. Emphasis added.

⁶³ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148.

⁶⁴ McBride, "Polity," 74.

⁶⁵ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 257; Ridderbos, *Deuteronomy*, 201.

⁶⁶ Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 37-8.

⁶⁷ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 168.

⁶⁸ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 212; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209.

Torah, according to Deut 17:14-20, is vital to the king's vertical and horizontal relationships. If the king is to know the blessing of Yahweh (v 20), he is to live by the torah. If he is to relate properly to his fellows (v 20), he must live by the torah. So we see that the instruction of Yahweh is absolutely essential to every aspect of the king's exercise of monarchic rule. In fact, we can observe a principle of intensification at work here. The king is to be characterised by a typically Dtr attitude towards the torah, reflecting that which is to be expected of all Israelites.⁶⁹ According to Deuteronomy, *all of the people* are to absorb the divine instruction into their inner beings so that their lives and attitudes are shaped by it (e.g. Deut 6:1-9). In fact the whole nation is set apart as different from all others because of its possession of such fine governing principles (Deut 4:5-14). The king is to be no different. He too is to allow God's word to govern his inner being and outer actions. However, the essence of the kingship law is that the king is expected to do so *all the more*—this is the principle of intensification. The people are to follow the torah, to keep the torah, not to forget the torah, but the king is to excel in these areas even more so. The people are to learn and treasure the torah, but the king is to learn from it and treasure it to an even greater extent. Such is the implication of the added responsibilities placed upon the king to write it out for himself (וּכְתַב לּוֹ אֶת־מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת) and to read it aloud daily (וְקָרָא בּוֹ כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּו).⁷⁰ Such practices were not expected of the rest of the covenant community—not even of the judges, priests or prophets⁷¹—only of the king. Therefore it seems that the king is being set apart as *an exemplar* of torah-piety for all the people in the awareness that his example would have an effect on the torah-obedience of the whole nation.⁷²

Finally, the law of the king places upon that figure the obligations incumbent upon every Israelite. In that sense, Deuteronomy's primary concern was that the king *be the model Israelite*. This is seen especially in the fact that the essential responsibility of the king is to read and study the law constantly (cf 6:7 and 10:19), 'that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them' (v 19). This is the word that Moses constantly places on all Israel throughout his speeches... *The fundamental task of the leader of the people, therefore, is to exemplify and demonstrate*

⁶⁹ In a similar manner to the above endorsement that the king trust fully in Yahweh, just as is to be expected of all Israelites (see above pp 164-167).

⁷⁰ Tigay suggests that, '[s]ince reading in ancient times was normally done audibly (the Hebrew term for read, *kara'*, literally means "call out"), reading included reciting' (*Deuteronomy*, 169). This seems to echo the concept of קָרָא in Ps 1:2 (see pp 35-38 above). He also notes that, 'According to Philo, the king is required to make his own copy because writing makes a more lasting impression than does merely reading' (p 168). See also Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 37-8 and the discussion of the practice of meditation on torah in Chapter 7, *Torah, Kingship and Democratisation*.

⁷¹ The laws dealing with the official offices of Israel (16:18-18:22), however, do make it absolutely clear that all officials are subject to the *torah* of Yahweh both in terms of their character and practice. See Lohfink, "Distribution," 350, who argues that, 'the Torah always has pride of place' and that, 'all offices are subordinate to the Torah.'

⁷² The DtrH indicates, as a general rule of thumb, that 'as the king so the people'. Generally in the Dtr presentation of Israel's history, a king committed to Yahweh and life according to the *torah* headed a nation that followed the same standards. Conversely, the Deuteronomist(s) indicate that royal apostasy and national apostasy go hand-in-hand (Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 98-9).

*true obedience to the Lord for the sake of the well-being of both the dynasty and the kingdom. King and subject share a common goal: to learn to fear the Lord (v 19).*⁷³

As is so often the case, Deuteronomy mentions only what matters. In this case, it avoids the small print of an exhaustive job description for royalty and concentrates on the fundamental priority. *The law is to permeate the king's behaviour in every sphere, whether political, administrative, judicial, or military. He should be a model of what was required of every Israelite (v 19b).*⁷⁴

Torah was a divine constitution for a theocratic monarchy. The king was to study and 'meditate' on the book of the law in order that he might carry out its dictates and that his personal leadership might be informed by it as well. The sovereignty of his dynasty depended on his adherence to Torah, which adherence, *by example and set policy, would involve the adherence of the entire nation.*⁷⁵

The only positively specified task of the Israelite monarch is to study the written Deuteronomic polity throughout his reign and *to serve as a national model of faithful obedience to its stipulations (17:18-20)*. Therefore the executive neither makes the law of the land nor stands above it.⁷⁶

But the point of the Deuteronomic law of the king is that the king's responsibilities are the same as those of the people. He is to keep the torah continually and completely. *Thus he embodies faithful Israel and models Israel's way with the Lord.*⁷⁷

The king is to serve, once again, as an exemplar in a two-fold sense. Primarily his example is to be one of a life lived in commitment to Yahweh through torah-obedience. However, once again this devotion and subjection to the torah has a levelling effect in the king's relationship with the people. He is not subject to some special law but to the same law as are all the people.⁷⁸ Clearly, in being an exemplary covenant-keeper, the king shows that he too is bound to Yahweh in the same way that the people as a whole are bound to Yahweh, thus indicating an essential equality of status before God. Indeed, the importance of keeping the torah is directly linked with the kingship of Yahweh. He is the true King over the people including the human king, therefore all as one are subject to his revelation.⁷⁹ Wright observes that, 'In his submission to the law, the king must not consider himself better than his brothers (v 20), even though he has been set over them in political terms (v 14). Functional authority must be exercised in a context of covenant equality...'.⁸⁰ Further:

⁷³ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148-9. Emphasis added.

⁷⁴ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209. Emphasis added.

⁷⁵ Soll, *Psalms* 119, 133. Emphasis added.

⁷⁶ McBride, "Polity," 74. Emphasis added.

⁷⁷ Miller, "Kingship," 130. Emphasis added.

⁷⁸ It is unclear as to what exactly הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה represents. The commentators offer three main options: the Kingship Law itself (this is not a popular choice amongst recent commentators); the Book of Deuteronomy (von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, 120; Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 273); or the legal section of Deuteronomy in chs 12-26 (Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 168; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 212). Craigie discusses this issue (*Deuteronomy*, 256) and suggests that 'this law' may even have been the Book of the Covenant from Exodus. Given the usage of this phrase throughout Deuteronomy and the DtrH (e.g. Jos 1), it seems most likely that 'this torah' refers to Deuteronomy itself, or at least part thereof. This is the subject of further discussion in Chapter 7 below.

⁷⁹ Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 101. .

⁸⁰ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 210.

This book was to be the king's *vade mecum*, his life-long companion and source of wisdom and strength. By reading and learning, he would express true reverence for his God, exemplified by his keeping of the law and statutes of God. *True reverence for God would in turn keep the king mindful of his true relationship to his fellow Israelites (so that his heart is not exalted above his brothers, v 20). He would avoid being cut off from his fellows by virtue of his position or wealth (cf v 17).*⁸¹

The fact that the king was the administrator of the covenant did not imply that the king stood over the covenant. Rather, for the Deuteronomist the king was clearly also subject to the covenant. The king, like any other Israelite, was expected to obey the law as it was found in Deuteronomy.⁸²

So we see that the king's commitment to Yahweh via the diligent study of his torah has a dual effect: 1) The king is to serve as an example for the people of commitment to Yahweh and his word; and 2) Submission to the torah puts the king on an equal footing along with all of the people before Yahweh. This focus reflects the broader theology of the Book of Deuteronomy—a people subject to the kingship to God, living in a just society in the land. The king is to play an integral part in securing both aspects of this equation: He is to be an example of devotion to Yahweh and oneness in brotherhood with the rest of the covenant people. In essence the human king's submission to the torah manifests the ultimate kingship of Yahweh: he (like all Israelites) is subject to the sovereign rule of the Great King as expressed in his revelation.⁸³

4.4 Essential Equality (v 20)

The egalitarian emphases which we have seen throughout this study of the Kingship Law find further expression in the closing verse of this text. Verse 20 states that the king must refrain from two things: 1) exalting himself above his brothers (לבלתי רום-לבבו מאחיו) ; 2) straying from the commandment (ולבלתי סור מן-המצוה). In some ways this verse seems to function as a summary statement for the whole the Law of the King, drawing attention once again to these repeated themes of equality and torah-obedience, each of which is an expression of the true kingship of Yahweh.⁸⁴ Regarding this principle of equality, Miller writes: 'The king is "set over" (v 15) the people, but his heart may not be lifted above his compatriots (v 20).'⁸⁵ Tigay puts it even more forcefully in stating, 'Fellows: Literally, "brothers," underscoring the essential equality of the king and the other citizens. *He is not their master.*'⁸⁶ Driver adds that 'the same principles of loyalty towards God, and of sympathetic regard for men, which Deuteronomy ever inculcates so warmly, are to rule the life both of the king and of his subjects; he is not therefore to treat those who after all are

⁸¹ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 256-7.

⁸² Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 100.

⁸³ We shall consider this in more detail in Chapter 7 below.

⁸⁴ J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy* (Leicester: Apollos, 2002 [Forthcoming]).

⁸⁵ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 147..

⁸⁶ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 169 Emphasis added.

his “brethren” (5:15) with arrogance, or to forget the obligations towards them which his office involves...’⁸⁷

As before, there is a democratising effect in this reminder. The tension between the tendencies towards arrogant elitism which seem to be inherent in (ANE) kingship, on the one hand, and the covenant obligations of the king, on the other, is spelt out bluntly and not glossed over in the Kingship Law.⁸⁸ The DtrH makes it clear that elitist, royalist tendencies (Brueggemann’s ‘disorder’) won out far too often and the king neglected his covenant responsibilities (Brueggemann’s ‘order’) which, the Kingship Law was designed to preserve.⁸⁹ However, the ideal presented in this Law of the King is different from the observable practices of the royal lines described in the DtrH.⁹⁰ According to Deut 17:14-20, the king is like the people, not exalted over them. Equally, in as much as the king fulfills the role of torah-keeper, the people are meant to be like the king... subject to the rule of Yahweh.⁹¹

The reminder with regard to the keeping of ‘the commandment’ bears typically Dtr overtones. The king must not ‘turn from the commandment either to the right or to the left’ (cf. Jos 1:6-9). The question which springs to mind is, ‘Which commandment?’ What exactly does ‘*the* commandment’ represent? Mayes suggests that ‘the commandment’ is ‘used in the later parts of Deuteronomy comprehensively for the whole law.’⁹² Tigay adds that ‘the commandment’ is related to keeping the law generally and, more specifically, to the prohibition against idolatry.⁹³ Wright sees this as a reference to the ‘whole substance of the law referred to as a single entity, i.e., the fundamental principle of covenant loyalty.’⁹⁴ Similarly, Millar notes that, ‘the noun *mišwâ* occurs regularly as the lone singular... rather like the more familiar uses of *tôrâ* and *derek*. Along with the variety of verbal forms used, the ‘commandment’ and other nominal forms combine in Deuteronomy to represent an overall response which Yahweh deserves and demands.’⁹⁵ The usage of this term throughout the Book of Deuteronomy lends support to these interpretations, which are

⁸⁷ Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 212.

⁸⁸ W. Brueggemann, “Imagination as a Mode of Fidelity,” *Understanding the Word: Essays in Honour of Bernard W. Anderson* (JSOTSup 37; eds. J. T. Butler, E. W. Conrad and B. C. Ollenburger; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985) 26.

⁸⁹ McConville puts it thus, ‘DtrH wants to show that the history of kingship, even in its heroes, departs from the royal ideal of Deuteronomy,’ (“King and Messiah,” 292).

⁹⁰ As Wright reminds us, ‘The failure of so many of Israel’s kings to abide by [the Kingship Law’s] standards does not invalidate its moral force. We know how much they failed only and precisely because of the presence of a law like this,’ (*Deuteronomy*, 210).

⁹¹ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 149; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209.

⁹² Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 174, 274.

⁹³ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 169.

⁹⁴ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 92 Craigie also takes a similar view (*Deuteronomy*, 164-6).

⁹⁵ Millar, *Now Choose Life*, 51.

essentially very similar.⁹⁶ ‘This commandment’ refers to the essence of the law—covenant loyalty to Yahweh as True King—which encompasses all of the details of that law. The king is to keep the spirit of covenant loyalty by obeying the details of the torah, the subject of his daily meditations (vv 18-19).

4.5 Conclusion re. the Characteristics of the King

Detailed examination of the Kingship Law leads the reader to certain conclusions about king and kingship in Israel. First, by way of overview, the Kingship Law is not a detailed consideration of the office in its every aspect. Therefore, we ask the wrong question of the text when we ask, ‘Is the Law of the King pro- or anti-monarchic?’⁹⁷ Rather Deut 17:14-20 is an appeal for a certain type of kingship—for kingship in accordance with the Dtr agenda of a people wholly devoted to the sovereign rule of Yahweh. The king is to serve this end.

Secondly, regarding the character of the king, we observe that:

1. The king is to be chosen by Yahweh. This is an important part of the validation of the office of kingship, which is initially presented as optional and at the behest of the people, but the act of divine choosing places kingship firmly within the remit of God’s plan and polity for his people. Not just any king will do, only the one chosen by God to lead his people.
2. The king, again like the people, is to be entirely dependent upon Yahweh as his source of power and security. He is not to place his trust in other external factors—military might, international alliances or great wealth—and he should not allow the trappings of kingship to cause him to forget Yahweh as his sole source of security.
3. In serving this end, the king is to be an exemplar of torah-based devotion to Yahweh. He, like all the people, is to be obedient to the law. However, he is called to go further and deeper in his commitment to internalising the torah. He is to serve the people as a paradigm of one who is faithful to the covenant with Yahweh, and he is to attain to this state of devotion by way of constant meditation upon the torah. By way of this commitment to the torah, the king expresses his commitment to the True Kingship of Yahweh.
4. The king is not to exalt himself over his brothers. The Kingship Law strongly and repeatedly emphasises the essential equality of king and people as partners in the covenant with Yahweh. This democratising principle accentuates the king’s function as example for the people—he is to be wholly devoted to Yahweh’s covenant rule and, thus, an example to

⁹⁶ 5:31; 6:1, 25; 7:11; 8:1; 11:8, 22; 15:5; 17:20; 19:9; 27:1; 30:11; 31:5.

⁹⁷ Millar writes referring to the Kingship Law, ‘This law has been used repeatedly to argue for either a pro-monarchical (usually southern) or anti-monarchical (either northern or demythologizing) agenda in Deuteronomy. But a theologically sensitive reading of the text justifies neither... The law is for godly kingship and against ungodly kingship,’ (*Now Choose Life*, 127).

the people; they are able to follow that example because the king is essentially the same as they are.

The Law of the King paints a picture for the reader, an image of the function of the king within Israel according to God's plan. He is to be entirely devoted to Yahweh through torah-meditation, humble and to lead the people in covenant obedience. So now we must turn to the question, 'Is this the image of kingship which is presented in the psalm groupings 1-2, 18-21 and 118-119?'

5. The Kingship Law as a Paradigm in the Psalter

As we have argued above,⁹⁸ the placement of psalms within the canonical Psalter plays an important role in assessing the theological concerns of the editors of the Book of Psalms.⁹⁹ We have highlighted the particular significance of the torah psalms throughout the Psalter—why is this the opening voice of the Book of Psalms, in its introduction, and the dominant voice of the closing book of the Psalter?¹⁰⁰ We have also noted the 'coincidence' that each of the torah psalms (Pss 1, 19 and 119) is placed alongside a kingship psalm (Pss 2, 18, 20-21 and 118). Throughout this thesis we have been asking the question, 'Why is this the case?' When asked to consider the duet of torah and kingship voices, the reader's attention is drawn quite naturally to the Law of the King where these two themes play such an important joint role (as we have just seen).¹⁰¹

Accordingly, our quest has been to examine these psalms groupings in order to ascertain whether or not they bear the hallmarks of Dtr theology, and, more specifically, to ascertain whether their juxtaposition is designed to reflect the Law of the King (Deut 17:14-20). Having examined the exegetical content of these psalms and, now, the Kingship Law the next step is to discuss similarities and differences which exist between these respective texts. The question which we should bear in mind is, 'Was the Kingship Law the paradigm for the juxtaposition of these torah and kingship psalms?' In order to address this question, we shall take Deut 17:14-20 as our conceptual starting point, as (if our argument is correct) the original editors might have done. We must, therefore, compare the content of the psalm groupings examined above in the light of theological priorities of the Law of the King. The four summary statements with which we concluded the discussion of the 'Characteristics of the King'¹⁰² will provide the basis for our examination of the three

⁹⁸ See above, pp 8-13.

⁹⁹ Childs, *IOTS*, 512-23; Wilson, *Editing*, passim; "Use of Royal Psalms" and "Shape."

¹⁰⁰ Mays, "Place of the Torah-Psalms,"; McCann, "Instruction," and *Theological Introduction*; Miller, "Kingship." See above, pp 15-18.

¹⁰¹ This has been pointed out by a number of commentators. See, for example, Miller, "Kingship,"; "Beginning,"; Craigie, *Psalms*, 60; McCann, *Psalms*, 684-5; Mays, *Psalms*, 92-3 etc.

¹⁰² See above p 175.

psalm groupings. Interestingly, each of these four fundamental characteristics of the Dtr king is echoed in either one or more of the psalms within each of the highlighted psalm groupings.

5.1 King as Chosen by Yahweh

Fundamental to the theological basis of the Kingship Law is the idea that the king must be chosen by Yahweh. As we have seen above, Yahweh's act of choosing transforms the initial impression of kingship as being an ignoble demand of the people and places it firmly under his sovereign control as part of the polity of his people. The king must be Yahweh's king. He cannot be a foreigner, someone without the covenant—he must be one of the Hebrew brothers and what is more he must be Yahweh's selection from within the covenant community.¹⁰³ The idea of kingship in the Psalms is also intimately linked with Yahweh's choosing, as we see from Ps 89:3, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have promised my servant David.' So in the psalmic idea of kingship is implied the idea of divine choice.

5.1.1 Chosenness in Pss 1-2

The concept of chosenness in the first psalm grouping is inferred from the figure of the 'son' in Psalm 2.¹⁰⁴ The central figure in Psalm 2 is variously described as Yahweh's 'anointed one' (מְשִׁיחֹו, v 2), 'king' (מֶלֶךְ, v 6) and 'son' (בֶּן־י, v 7 and possibly v 12¹⁰⁵) and it is clear that he plays an important, if subordinate, role in Yahweh's rule over the nations (v 3). Each of these three terms is intimately connected with the idea of being chosen by Yahweh. The anointed one, the one set apart for Yahweh's purposes of ruling the kings and nations. The king whom Yahweh has installed in Zion, by divine, sovereign act. The son whom, this day, Yahweh has begotten. These notions are strongly linked with the act of divine choice, an essential component of the Kingship Law's portrayal of kingship.¹⁰⁶

5.1.2 Chosenness in Pss 18-21

Similar motifs are also observable in Pss 18-21, particularly through the powerful use of possessives throughout these psalms. The vivid use of appellatives in Psalm 18 (in which the king refers to God as 'my rock' [צוּרִי, v 47], 'my stronghold' [מְצוֹדִתִּי, v 3], 'my shield' [מָגִנִּי, v 3]) indicates—from the perspective of the psalmist—a special and intimate

¹⁰³ See pp 160-162 above.

¹⁰⁴ In the editorial linking of Psalms 1 and 2 a parallel is drawn between the figure of the 'blessed person' of Ps 1 and the 'son'/'messiah'/'king' of Ps 2. See above, pp 53-55.

¹⁰⁵ Ps 2:12 is notoriously difficult to translate. It may include the command to 'kiss the son', where the Aramaic word בֶּן־אֱמִי is used instead of the normal Hebrew בֶּן־אֱמִי. The question is why the psalmist would use the Hebrew form in v 7 and then switch to the Aramaic in v 12? This is difficult to explain, but none of the alternative translations offered are particularly convincing either. See the commentaries for further discussion and p 46 n. 45.

¹⁰⁶ Kraus, *Psalms*, 126-7; McCann, *Psalms*, 668-9; Craigie, *Psalms*, 64-5 etc.

relationship with Yahweh. This ‘chosen’ relationship is confirmed in v 51 where the psalmist is referred to as Yahweh’s מִשִּׁיחַ, the first occurrence of this term in the Psalter since its usage in Ps 2:2. Again, Psalm 18 emphasises that the king is chosen and set apart by Yahweh.¹⁰⁷ The same emphasis is seen in Pss 20-21, where the king is once again referred to as Yahweh’s מִשִּׁיחַ (Ps 20:7) and the recipient of Yahweh’s ‘perpetual blessing’ (כִּי־תִשְׁיָתֵהוּ בְּרָכוֹת לְעֹד, Ps 21:7).¹⁰⁸ Pss 18:1 and 19:12, 14 also refer to the psalmist-king as Yahweh’s ‘servant’ (עֲבָדְךָ¹⁰⁹), again suggesting that the central figure in these psalms is chosen by Yahweh to serve his purposes.¹¹⁰

5.1.3 Chosenness in Psalms 118-119

We witness a similar pattern in Psalms 118-119. The theme of chosenness is, perhaps, slightly more oblique in Ps 118, but it is nonetheless present in the imagery of the psalm. We read, for example that Yahweh is ‘for’ the central figure of this entrance liturgy (יְהוָה לִי, vv 6-7); that Yahweh has ‘become his salvation’ (וַיְהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה, v 14); and he is accepted into the Temple courts as ‘the one who comes in the name of Yahweh’ (הִבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, v 26). All of these phrases, in the context of the ‘narrative’ of the psalm, combine to make it clear that the ‘hero’ of this poem is chosen by Yahweh to serve a special purpose within the community of ‘those who fear Yahweh’ (v 4 cf. Deut 17:19).¹¹¹ In the psalmist’s prayer of Psalm 119, he constantly refers to himself as ‘your servant’ (vv 17, 23, 38 etc.), a phrase which, as we have seen above, has royal overtones in the Psalter. Indeed, there are other indicators within the text of this lengthy prayer which indicate that the speaker was, in fact, the king—Yahweh’s chosen one.¹¹²

5.2 King’s Dependence upon Yahweh

It is interesting that each of the Psalter’s torah psalms is paired alongside a kingship psalm, but even more interesting is the fact that in each of these kingship psalms we witness a situation where the king faces difficulties beyond his ability to cope and seeks the aid and assistance of Yahweh.¹¹³ In one form or another, each of Pss 2, 18, 20, 21 and 118 we see a confession of the king’s weakness and his dependence upon Yahweh. In no case is this

¹⁰⁷ See above, pp 71-72 etc.

¹⁰⁸ See above, pp 90-92.

¹⁰⁹ Which Ps 89:3 implies is a sign of being chosen by Yahweh.

¹¹⁰ See above, pp 80-81.

¹¹¹ See above, pp 104-105 n. 11, 107-109.

¹¹² See above, pp 139-142.

¹¹³ Sometimes the king pleads for this assistance himself (e.g. Ps 18), or he recounts Yahweh’s salvation in response to his plea (e.g. Ps 118). On other occasions there is a third party plea on behalf of the king in his inability to cope (e.g. Ps 20) or celebration of that assistance (e.g. Ps 21). The exact nature of the threat with which the king is faced is (typically) unclear in these psalms. The imagery used often gives the appearance of a military threat, but this type of language may be applied to other dangers as well. However, on each occasion we see God coming to the aid of the king, rather than the king asserting his own authority. In each kingship psalm we see this free expression of the king’s dependence upon Yahweh.

state of dependence hidden behind a plea of capability, rather the king openly professes his complete trust in Yahweh for deliverance.

5.2.1 Dependence Theme in Pss 1-2

The dependence theme is explicit in Ps 2 where we are party to a rebellion of the nations and peoples, their kings and rulers, against Yahweh and his anointed one (vv 1-3). It is difficult to definitively determine the various voices in Ps 2,¹¹⁴ but regardless of who is speaking the emphasis in vv 4-9 is clear. It is Yahweh who mocks the rebellion of the nations (v 4); it is Yahweh who speaks terror to them (v 5); Yahweh has set his king in Zion (v 6); Yahweh has given the nations to him as an inheritance (v 8); and it is Yahweh who will strike the rebellious nations (v 9). The central idea is the activity of Yahweh in response to this rebellion. The focus of the king's 'strength' (v 7) is his trust in the fact that Yahweh has declared him his 'son'. The king is co-regent with Yahweh, but it is clear that his rule is dependent upon the might and authority of God rather than any strength or power of his own.¹¹⁵

5.2.2 Dependence Theme in Pss 18-21

The theme of the king's dependence upon Yahweh as his source of deliverance is abundantly apparent in Pss 18, 20 and 21. The appellatives alone in Ps 18 illustrate where the king believes his real source of power to lie.¹¹⁶ The psalmist goes on, however, to express his absolute inability to save himself (vv 4-7) and recounts in terms of theophany how Yahweh came to his rescue (vv 8-25). There is no attempt to hide this state of absolute dependence upon divine assistance, indeed this is the focus of the whole psalm.¹¹⁷ Pss 20 and 21 echo similar themes from a different perspective. Ps 20:7-9 tells us that 'Yahweh saves his anointed one' (הוֹשִׁיעַ יְהוָה מְשִׁיחוֹ) and then offers an explicit link with the Law of the King, where v 8 celebrates the fact that 'some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will trust in the name of Yahweh'. This verse seems to echo the Dtr command that the king should not 'multiply for himself horses' (Deut 17:16), but that his trust should be in Yahweh.¹¹⁸ This confession of dependence is echoed in the inclusio which brackets Ps 21 rejoicing in the strength of Yahweh (בְּעֹזֶיךָ, Ps 21:2, 14).¹¹⁹ Over and above this, the psalmist's prayer at the end of Ps 19 expresses his incapability of living life in accordance with the torah, even although it is 'more desirable than gold... and sweeter than honey' (v 11). His prayer confesses that if he is going to 'walk the walk', he needs Yahweh's gracious help in order to do so.¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ See above, pp 47-48.

¹¹⁵ See above, pp 47-48.

¹¹⁶ See above, pp 63-64; 69.

¹¹⁷ See above, p 63ff.

¹¹⁸ See above, pp 88-89; 97-98.

¹¹⁹ See above, p 88.

¹²⁰ See above, pp 77-78.

5.2.3 Dependence Theme in Pss 118-119

Once again this theme is central to the message of Ps 118. In this entrance liturgy the king stands before the Temple gates seeking admittance (v 19) and the reply of the priestly gatekeepers is that only the righteous may enter (v 20). The king's public account of his deep distress when surrounded by hostile nations (vv 5, 10-13) and his total reliance upon Yahweh for his deliverance (vv 6-7, 13-14) is accepted by the priests as evidence of his acceptability to Yahweh, therefore his right to enter and offer sacrifice. The confession of trust in Yahweh and dependence upon him is central to the theology of Ps 118.¹²¹ This same trust in Yahweh is expressed in terms of the psalmist's reliance upon Yahweh for help in the face of the opposition of the wicked in Ps 119,¹²² and also the need for divine intervention if he is going to be obedient to the torah which he delights in.¹²³

5.3 King as Exemplar of Torah-Piety

Once again this is a theme which is readily apparent in each of the psalm groupings because of the torah psalms themselves. As we have examined this aspect of the theology of the psalms in some detail, I will do no more than mention where these torah emphases are to be found and provide cross-references to our previous discussions of this topic.

5.3.1 Torah-Piety Theme in Pss 1-2

Psalm 1, as part of the introduction to the Psalter as a whole, guides the reader towards a life-style in accordance with the theology of the psalms. That 'first word' on how the reader should live is clear—the 'blessed person' (אַשְׁרֵי-הָאִישׁ, v 1) is the one who 'delights in the torah of Yahweh' (בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חִפְצוֹ, v 2). The message is not one of simplistic legalism, but commends to the believer a world-and-life view based around divine revelation.¹²⁴ The 'blessed man' of Ps 1 is paralleled with the king/son/anointed one of Ps 2, thus painting a picture which bears remarkable similarities to the above study of the king according to the Kingship Law.¹²⁵

5.3.2 Torah-Piety Theme in Pss 18-21

The idea of a kingly figure who devotes his life to Yahweh through the study and application of his Word is expressed twice in this second psalm grouping. Firstly, central to Ps 18 is the stanza in which the king declares his righteousness before God (vv 21-25), and central to the chiastic structure of that stanza is the king's declaration of the importance of Yahweh's torah in his life. In these verses, again we see a clear reflection of the Kingship

¹²¹ See above, pp 109-112.

¹²² See above, pp 130-133.

¹²³ See above, pp 137-139.

¹²⁴ See above, pp 35-38.

¹²⁵ See above, pp 53-56.

Law upon the lips of the psalmist-king.¹²⁶ Secondly, the poetic celebration of the holistic good of God's law in Psalm 19 points the reader, once again, to the vitality of revelation in the life of the believer. The psalmist describes himself as 'Yahweh's servant' (vv 12, 14) and favourably compares the torah to gold (v 11), subtle indicators that the speaker himself is actually the Davidic king, delighting in the torah, as commanded by the law governing his office.¹²⁷

5.3.3 Torah-Piety Theme in Pss 118-119

Psalm 119, as a prayer offered to Yahweh is the prime example of a life devoted to God through meditation upon his revealed word.¹²⁸ Over and above the fact that Psalm 119 functions as an example of the type of piety commended by the Kingship Law, the reader is struck by the fact that, although the psalm is without superscription, the psalmist could well be none other than the king himself.¹²⁹ So we see in Ps 119 a vibrant example of the type of piety which the Law of the King commends.

5.4 Humility of the King

This particular characteristic of the Dtr king is, again, reflected in the psalm groupings studied, in a similar way to the theme of humility in the Kingship Law. The Dtr picture of the king's humility in Deut 17:14-20 is very much focused on the king's brotherhood with all of the covenant people and the fact that he is not to 'exalt his heart above his brothers' (v 20), and this is expressed through dependence upon Yahweh—like the people—and subjugation to the same torah as all the people. These expressions of a proper humility on the part of the king are found in the two characteristics of kingship which we have just studied: the psalmist-king, as we have just seen, celebrates both his dependence on God and his submission to the torah, as part of his acknowledgment of the ultimate kingship of Yahweh.

In each of these psalm groupings we witness the king's public confession of his own inherent inability to do the things that kings at that time were supposed to do; namely, lead the nation militarily.¹³⁰ This in itself, even if expressed in ceremony, must have been an act of some humility. He confessed his incapability to save even himself from peril, let alone the people, and the capability of Yahweh alone to provide such salvation. The second sign of royal self-denial is seen in the king's delight in the law: he too is subject to

¹²⁶ See above, pp 65-67.

¹²⁷ See above, pp 73ff.

¹²⁸ See above, p 122ff.

¹²⁹ See above, pp 139-142.

¹³⁰ This seems to be the characteristic most associated with kingship in an ANE setting. Indeed, this may have been the feature which most inspired the people to ask for a king 'like the nations which surround us' (Deut 17:14 cf. 1 Sam 8-12). See Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 98-102.

the same torah as are all the people of God. He is no different from all the others, his obligations are no different. If anything there is a sense in which the king is expected to excel in keeping the law as an example for the people. This is a public expression of brotherhood with all Israelites in the covenant.¹³¹

6. Conclusion

The Law of the King gives clear guidelines regarding the *character* of the king, even if it does not express the responsibilities of his office in great fullness. He has a part to play in the polity of the community, but it is a role which is not to be abused. He has some powers, but is to limit his exercise of them. He has some status, but is to use this for good, as an example of obedience to Yahweh. He is subject to the law, not above it; and he is one of the people, not above them. Such is the Dtr picture of kingship.

Our question at the start of this chapter was, 'Is this view of kingship reflected in Pss 1-2, 18-21 and 118-119?' Having examined in detail these psalms and the Kingship Law, it seems reasonable to conclude that there is a remarkable overlap in the expression of theological concerns found in Deuteronomy 17 and the psalm groupings in question. Does this 'prove' that the editors of the Psalter used the Law of the King as their paradigm for the juxtaposition of these psalms? That would over-state the case. However, the confluence of themes in these juxtaposed kingship and torah psalms does seem to indicate that the Dtr Law of the King could have played some part in the editors' decision to group these psalms together.

In the post-exilic period which saw the closure of the canonical Psalter, the expectation of a renewed Davidic monarchy featured highly in the religious life of the community. Indeed, the Psalter itself seems to emphasise this theme through the placement of kingship psalms at important places throughout its books. However, in juxtaposing these kingship and torah psalms, the editors of the Book of Psalms are sending out a particular message. Yes, the people are to expect a renewed kingship, but this is not to be represented by the worst excesses of the DtrH. Rather, this new kingship is to follow the ideal pattern established in the Dtr Kingship Law.

As well as putting a particular slant on the eschatological expectation of a renewed kingship, the editors also point the readers of the Psalter to a particular lifestyle, a particular worldview, a particular type of piety. According to Deut 17:14-20, the king was meant to be an example of commitment to Yahweh through immersion in his teaching. By placing these psalms together, it seems that the editors wanted to remind those who would read

¹³¹ Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 100-1.

their book of this Dtr teaching on how they should live. There may no longer have been a king to act as an example for the people to imitate, but the pattern of life reflected in the Kingship Law was to be their example anyway.

We have, therefore, been able to show that there is some repetition (perhaps even substantial repetition) of ideas between these psalms and the Kingship Law. We see that three major themes influence both the torah-kingship psalm groupings and the Law of the King: the role of the torah, the figure of the king and the idea of democratisation. However, the analysis until now remains at a descriptive level, pointing out textual repetition and correspondences. There are still *theological* questions that need to be answered. These texts are all part of broader theological programmes, so the question remains: 'Does this textual correspondence reflect the same theological agenda in both the torah-kingship psalms and the Deuteronomy's presentation of the king?' In speaking about these topics, do the Psalms and Deuteronomy speak with the same voice? When the psalms celebrate the torah of Yahweh, for example, are they speaking about the same thing as in Deuteronomy 17? Both passages speak about the king, but surely the expansive psalmic celebration of David and Zion is far removed from Deuteronomy's approach to kingship which can (at best) be described as cautious. Could the juxtaposition of kingship and torah psalms possibly have resulted from the same theological agenda that was at work in the Kingship Law? This is a question to which we shall return in Chapter 7. However, before we take up this question we must look at the significance of the placement of these psalm groupings within the Book of Psalms. It is to this issue that we now turn our attention.

Chapter 6

The Editorial Placement of the Torah-Kingship Psalm Groupings

1. Introduction

Hossfeld and Zenger provide a concise, helpful discussion of the levels at which a canonical analysis of the Psalter functions:

Im einzelnen muß diese 'kanonische' Psalmenauslegung folgende Schritte durchführen:

a) Sie achtet auf die Stichwortbeziehungen zwischen nebeneinander stehenden Psalmen und prüft, ob derartige sprachliche und motivliche Gemeinsamkeiten einfach Zufall sind, ob sie der Anlaß waren, die betreffenden Psalmen hintereinander zu stellen, ob bei der Nebeneinanderstellung nachträglich semantische Angleichungen vorgenommen wurden, ob einzelne Psalmen für ihren jetzigen literarischen (!) Zusammenhang geschaffen wurden und ob die so gezielt miteinander verketteten Einzelsalmen sich gegenseitig auslegen wollen.

b) Sodann stellt sich die Frage, ob es im Psalter erkennbare 'Psalmengruppen' bzw. 'Teilgruppen' gibt, innerhalb derer einzelne Psalmen einen hermeneutisch besonders relevanten Ort einnehmen. Die Bezeichnung 'Psalmengruppe' bezieht sich in diesem Falle nicht auf unter inhaltlichen und formalen Gesichtspunkten selektierte Einzelsalmen (also wenn die Exegese z.B. 'Königpsalmen', 'Geschichtpsalmen', 'Weisheitspsalmen' oder 'Klagepsalmen', 'Hymnen' nachträglich zu Gruppen bündelt und untersucht), sondern auf Reihungen von Nachbarpsalmen im vorliegenden Endtext des Psalters.

c) Da diese 'Teilgruppen' ihrerseits wieder im Zusammenhang eines der fünf Psalmenbücher stehen, ist auch diesbezüglich zu fragen, ob sich daraus auslegungsrelevante Gesichtspunkte ergeben, sei es hinsichtlich der Verhältnisse dieser 'Teilgruppen' zueinander, sei es hinsichtlich von strukturell herausgehobenen Einzelsalmen innerhalb der Gesamtkomposition.¹

With regard to the torah-kingship psalm groupings, Chapters 2-4 of this thesis have discussed the connections between the psalms under discussion in terms of the first two of the above mentioned levels. There has been detailed discussion, firstly, of the shared vocabulary, themes and theology which link the individual compositions within the three torah-kingship psalm groupings (*Stichwortbeziehungen*). Secondly, as a natural progression from this task, discussion has focussed on how these connected psalms form sub-groupings (*Psalmengruppen / Teilgruppen*) within the final form of the Book of Psalms: that is, Pss 1 & 2 function as a sub-group in their own right providing a hermeneutical construct for the interpretation of the whole book;² Pss 18-21 function as the pivotal centre of a pre-existing collection of psalms arranged in a chiastic structure;³ and Pss 118-119, in a manner similar to that observed with Pss 1-2, also function as a sub-group in their own right, separating the *hllwyh* collection (Pss 111-117) from the *Songs of Ascents* collection (Pss 120-134).⁴ The third level of canonical analysis suggested by Hossfeld and Zenger still needs to be addressed, however. Namely, how do these sub-groupings now function when read in the light of the final, five-book structure of the Book of Psalms? Why are

¹ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 24.

² Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 136-44; Miller, "Beginning," 84-7. See above, Chapter 2.

³ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 12-3, 105ff; Miller, "Kingship," 127-8; Auffret, *La Sagesse*, 407-38. See above, Chapter 3.

⁴ Freedman, *Psalms 119*, 4; Mitchell, *Message*, 87. See above, Chapter 4.

they to be found where they are, and how does their position impact the reader's interpretation of the Book of Psalms? It is to this third level of analysis that we now turn our attention.

In order to set about answering this question of how the torah-kingship psalm groupings influence psalm interpretation on a macro-level, we shall look first at how each psalm grouping functions within its respective Book of the Psalter and then how they influence the interpretation of the whole Psalter. However, before turning to this question, there is an issue of method which needs to be more clearly defined: that is, how does one go about defining what constitutes a psalm grouping?

2. Assessing Psalm Groupings: Conjunctive & Disjunctive Features

As discussed in Chapter One, an important element in the canonical approach to the study of the Psalms is the question of linked groups of psalms and their placement within the Psalter.⁵ Scholars point out how keywords (*Leitwörter* or *Stichwortbeziehungen*) or shared theological themes run through groups of juxtaposed psalms indicating the creation of a psalm grouping through deliberate concatenation.⁶ Wilson, to take just one example, points out that before the emergence of canonical readings of the Psalms, 'Few have considered the relation of groups of psalms to the books in which they reside, or to the final-form of the Psalter itself.'⁷ The implication is that the editorial association of psalms into groups sheds light on the theological priorities of the compilers of the Psalter and provides a broader context for the interpretation of individual compositions.⁸ However, whilst there is general acceptance of the fact that analysis and understanding of the function of psalm groupings is vital if we are to truly understand the 'message' of the Psalter, one finds relatively little methodological discussion of how one defines 'a psalm grouping'.

The key factor in discerning 'groups of psalms' seems to be the above-mentioned principle of concatenation through the use of keywords or the repetition of themes.⁹ Obviously, this is an essential feature indicating the deliberate association of juxtaposed psalms: where there is no repetition of words, ideas and motifs the reader makes no connection between neighbouring psalms. There is, however, an element of subjectivity in the definition of

⁵ See above, pp 9-13.

⁶ Howard, *Structure*, 100-2; Wilson, *Editing*, 182-97; Wilson, "Understanding," 48; Mays, "Question of Context," 16-7.

⁷ Wilson, "Understanding," 43.

⁸ Mays, "Question of Context," and "Ps 118,," Childs, *IOTS*, 518; D. M. Howard, "A Contextual Reading of Psalms 90-94," *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOTSup 159; ed. J. C. McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); Murphy, "Reflections".

⁹ Hosfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 24, 45, 51, passim; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 20-1; Mitchell, *Message*, 56; McCann, *Psalms*, 653; Wilson, "Understanding," 48; Howard, *Structure*, 100; Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 120-1; Murphy, "Reflections," 21.

keyword linking. When does the concatenation come to an end? Where did it begin? Sometimes linked groups of psalms have a very clear beginning and end,¹⁰ but often this linking is more difficult to define.¹¹

It seems that if a proper understanding of psalm groupings is key to the canonical approach to the study of the Psalter, then the method of delimiting groups of psalms needs to be more clearly expressed than it is at present. I would suggest that concatenation via keyword linking is not *always* sufficient to define a psalm grouping.¹² As well as looking for linking, the reader should also look for indicators of editorial separation of groups of psalms from their setting. The whole idea of a psalm grouping implies both a *conjunctive* and a *disjunctive* literary function. On the one hand, the idea of a 'psalm grouping' implies a degree of connection between the psalms within that grouping,¹³ and, logically, it in turn implies a degree of separation from the other neighbouring psalms which are *not* part of this psalm grouping. To date psalm groupings have been defined largely by focussing on the factors that link the psalms under examination. Little consideration has been paid to the factors which separate a group of psalms from its near neighbours.¹⁴ This seems to be a methodological weakness and clearer definition must be given to this important factor within the canonical approach.

With regard to the torah-kingship psalms, we have already looked in some detail at the factors which link these groups or pairings.¹⁵ However, we must also consider the disjunctive functions at work in each of these psalm groupings: that is, how are these groups of psalms distinct from their surroundings? It seems reasonable to expect that both of these characteristics are present if one is to describe a set of juxtaposed psalms as a 'psalm grouping'. Where only one of these characteristics is observable (be that conjunctive or disjunctive function), the evidence of that single function must be weighty if we are to accept that these juxtaposed compositions were, indeed, designed to function as a group. Therefore, throughout this discussion of how the torah-kingship psalms influence the reading of their respective Books and, indeed, of the whole Psalter, we shall assess both conjunctive and disjunctive features which delineate the extent of these groupings.

¹⁰ For example, the Songs of Ascents (Pss 120-134) in Book V or the Kingship of Yahweh psalms (Pss 93-100) in Book IV (see Howard, *Structure*).

¹¹ For example, how does the preponderance of laments in Book I relate to the question of groupings?

¹² Murphy, for example, expresses the need for caution in the association of psalms due to linguistic repetition, "Reflections," 22-3, 28.

¹³ That is, through the principles of concatenation mentioned above.

¹⁴ To be fair to Wilson, he does speak of the "separating" and "binding" functions of author and genre groupings, (Editing, 199). However, considerably more attention has been paid to the discussion of 'binding functions' than has been paid to the discussion of 'separating functions' in the literature which has subsequently adopted Wilson's canonical method of psalm interpretation.

¹⁵ See Chapters 2-4 above. We have seen how the torah-kingship psalms are linked by shared vocabulary and theology, much of which is grounded in Dtr concepts.

3. Psalms 1-2: Book I, the Davidic Psalter(s) & the Psalter

It is widely acknowledged that Pss 1-2 form the introduction to the Book of Psalms, indeed, this is often cited as one of the main indicators of purposeful, editorial activity in the compilation of the Psalter.¹⁶ Seldom are the implications of this theory discussed in detail, however.¹⁷ This first psalm grouping does give rise to a number of questions; for example, in what ways is this psalm grouping conjoined to the succeeding psalms and in what ways is it set apart as a pairing separate from the start of Book I? Also, is this an introduction the whole Psalter, to Book I or to both? And, how does this affect our reading of the Book of Psalms?

The first two psalms are linked by substantial internal linguistic, conceptual and theological repetition—that they are meant to be read together seems highly likely.¹⁸ However, these two works can be described as a ‘psalm grouping’ not only because of the internal linking factors, but also because of the unusual characteristics which separate them from the general content of Book I of the Psalter.

3.1 Disjunctive: Lack of Superscription

One of the most striking features of Books I-III of the Psalter is the almost universal presence of ‘authorship’¹⁹ designations within the superscriptions of each psalm. Of the 89 psalms in Books I-III, all but four of them (ignoring Psalms 1-2 for the time being) bear named superscriptions—the exceptions being Psalms 10, 33, 43 and 71. Wilson has argued that the placement of an untitled psalm immediately after a titled psalm is an editorial device to indicate the connection of these two compositions.²⁰ This argument is given added credence in the treatment of the above-mentioned psalms in various ancient texts. The Septuagint, for example, joins Psalms 9 and 10 as a single composition and

¹⁶ Childs, *IOTS*, 513-4; Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 142; Howard, *Structure*, 202-5; Miller, “Beginning,” 84-5; Mays, “Place of the Torah-Psalms.”; McCann, *Psalms*, 664.

¹⁷ This is one of the reasons given by Whybray for his critique of the canonical approach (see Whybray, *Psalms as a Book*, 78-81).

¹⁸ See the discussion in Chapter 2.

¹⁹ The question of the significance of these designations is a complex one. Traditionally, the named superscriptions were treated as signs of authorship, i.e. לְדָוִד was understood to signify that David had written any work headed by such a superscription. Critical scholarship, however, rejected this thesis for various reasons (linguistic and historical), instead suggesting that the superscriptions were late additions which bore no real similarity to the original *Sitz im Leben* of the text. This led to some modern English translations of the Old Testament omitting the superscriptions entirely, despite the fact that they are part of the Hebrew text (e.g. NEB, the GNB included the s/ss only as footnotes, and of the EVV only the NASB follows the MT’s verse numbering which includes the s/ss). Recent developments in the study of the Psalter have reframed the discussion somewhat (Wilson, *Editing*, 9-11, *passim*; Childs, *IOTS*, 521 and Howard, *Structure*, 103-4). Rather than discussing the historical implications of such designations (i.e. does a Davidic superscription imply Davidic authorship?), scholars now seek to discuss the literary functions of the s/ss (i.e., how does this particular heading relate to the s/ss or the content of neighbouring psalms?). For helpful discussion of the role and functions of superscriptions within the Psalter, see B. S. Childs, “Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis,” *JSS* 16/2 (Autumn 1971) 137-49 and Nogalski, “From Psalm to Psalms”.

²⁰ Wilson, *Editing*, 173-7.

adds Davidic superscriptions to Psalms 33 and 71. The textual apparatus of the BHS itself acknowledges that Psalms 9-10 and 42-43 are probably to be read together, the first of these pairings likely forming some sort of incomplete acrostic composition.²¹ Howard comments that, '[T]here is good evidence that the juxtaposition of an untitled psalm with a preceding titled one is an editorial device to signal the latter psalm's association with the preceding one. In some cases—most notably Psalms 9-10 and 42-43—the second psalm was originally almost certainly a unified part of the preceding psalm. In several cases, however, psalms that are almost universally judged to have been originally independent compositions now appear in the MT as "pairs" in which the first is titled and the second is untitled.'²²

Therefore, taking into account the fact that almost all of the psalms in Books I-III are headed by a superscription and that the few which are not are linked with preceding titled psalms, the omission of superscriptions in Psalms 1 and 2 is a marked disjunctive feature, separating this psalm grouping from its immediate context. This effect is accentuated when read in the light of the prominence of David in the superscriptions of Psalms 3-72.²³ The combination of this disjunctive device and the conjunctive intertextual associations which link these two works indicates clearly that Psalms 1 and 2 were meant to be understood as a sub-group within the broader context of the Psalter. Thus, in one sense, Pss 1 and 2 are set apart from their immediate context in Book I. We shall discuss the implications of this effect below.

3.2 Conjunctive: Davidic King in Psalms 1-2

The disjunctive evidence found in the lack of Davidic superscriptions would tend to suggest that the function of this introductory psalm grouping is related more to the Psalter as a whole than it is to Book I or, more broadly, to the first and second Davidic psalters (Pss 3-41 and 51-72). However, such a conclusion would be to ignore the *content* of Psalms 1 and 2. The figure of the king is prominent in the joint message of these two psalms. The 'blessed man' of Psalm 1 and the 'king/son/messiah' of Psalm 2 are figures which become linked by way of shared vocabulary and theology.²⁴ This association between the righteous

²¹ Freedman, *Psalms 119*, 15.

²² Howard, *Structure*, 103-4.

²³ If we accept the above hypothesis linking Psalms 10, 33, 43 and 71 with their respective, preceding Davidic psalms, then the figure of King David truly dominates Books I-II. Separated only by Psalms 42-50 (the superscriptions of which refer to the sons of Korah and Asaph), the reader is confronted with two lengthy Davidic collections (Pss 3-41 and 51-72, Psalm 72 is a Solomonic psalm rather than Davidic, however the content of this psalm is often taken to be a prayer of David for his son who is about to succeed him as king, [deClaisé-Walford, "Canonical Shape," 103]). Hence, these two collections are often referred to as the first and second Davidic psalters. This Davidic dominance is further emphasised by the postscript found in Ps 72:20: 'כלֹ תפִלֹת דָוִד בֶּן־יֵשׁוּעַ', 'Thus end the prayers of David, son of Jesse.' See Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 123ff; Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 144 and Allen, "David as Exemplar," for further discussion of the association of the figure of David with the Psalter.

²⁴ Miller, "Beginning," 91-2.

one who delights in Yahweh’s torah and Yahweh’s regent installed in Zion alerts the reader of the Psalter to the torah-kingship theology of Deut 17:14-20.²⁵ As this reader immerses herself in the text of the Book of Psalms, moving from introduction into the first and second Davidic psalters, punctuated only by nine psalms which bear no immediately apparent royal association,²⁶ it would be hard for her not to read the figure of King David back into the anonymous, righteous ruler of the introduction. As Zenger comments, ‘Wahrscheinlich denken die Redaktoren die Ps 1 and den Anfang des dem David zugeschriebenen Psalmenbuchs setzen, bei dem seliggepriesenen “Mann” zunächst an David als Psalmendichter und abgeleitet davon dann an alle, die in der Nachfolge Davids “seine” Psalmen beten.’²⁷ Therefore, it seems fair to suggest that Psalms 1-2 are also meant to be associated with the figure of David who so dominates Books I and II of the Psalter, thus also associating the introduction with Book I.

3.3 Conjunctive: Psalms 1-2 cf. Psalm 41

Another feature which reconnects Psalms 1-2 with Book I is the linguistic and conceptual association of Psalms 1 and 2 with Psalm 41 which concludes the first section of the Book of Psalms. Whilst this association is not quite as strong as the internal linkage between Psalms 1 and 2 themselves, the shared vocabulary between introduction and conclusion is substantial and suggests that their placement within Book I is not accidental.

Psalms 1-2		Psalm 41	
Ps 1:1/2:12	אֲשֶׁרִי	Ps 41:2	אֲשֶׁרִי
Ps 2:10	הַשְׁכִּילֹ	Ps 41:2	מִשְׁכִּיל
Ps 1:2	חִפְצֹ	Ps 41:12	חִפְצֹ
Ps 1:6	תִּאֲבֹד	Ps 41:6	וְאֲבֹד
Ps 1:5	לֹא יִקְמוּ	Ps 41:9	לֹא־יִוְסִיף יִקְוֹם

As well as this lexical repetition, there are also conceptual connections between Psalms 2 and 41. ‘Together, they plot against me, all those who hate me’ (יַחַד עָלַי יִתְלַחֲשׁוּ כָל, v 8, שֹׂנְאֵי) bears marked similarities to the kings and leaders of the nations plotting in vain against Yahweh and his anointed one in Ps 2:1-2. Similarly, the protection, preservation, blessing and deliverance from enemies in Ps 41:3 echoes the idea of Yahweh’s protection and exoneration of Ps 2’s king in the face of his enemies. Mitchell points out that, ‘There are also lexical links between Psalms 1 and 41, which form an inclusio demarcating the

²⁵ See Chapter 5 above.

²⁶ Although it may well be that the Asaphite and Korahite psalms are also meant to be associated with David and a royal setting (see Eaton, *Kingship*, 21).

²⁷ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 47. Miller makes a similar point in “Beginning,” 91-2, as does Sheppard in *Wisdom*, 142-4.

boundaries of Book I of the Psalter.’²⁸ Wilson has, also, noted that Psalm 2, ‘finds echoes in the concerns of Psalm 41, which concludes the first book. There David as the author speaks of the assurances of YHWH’s protection and security in the face of the malicious murmuring of his enemies.’²⁹

3.4 Conclusion re. Placement of Psalms 1-2

What conclusions then can be drawn from this observation of both conjunctive and disjunctive features at work in Psalms 1-2 in relation to the opening book of the Psalter? It seems apparent that Psalms 1-2 are indeed a late addition to a pre-existing ‘psalter’, added at some stage in the canonical book’s development.³⁰ The disjunctive effect of the lack of Davidic superscription tends to suggest that this introduction is meant to be applied beyond the immediate context of the Davidic psalters (Books I-II). Indeed, the desire of the editors not to associate these introductory psalms too closely with their immediate context—despite the fact that their content would readily lend itself to the addition of Davidic superscriptions³¹—tends to suggest that Psalms 1-2 were designed to function as a hermeneutical construct for the whole Book of Psalms at whatever stage they were added. ‘Together they form a joint preface to the *entire* Psalter.’³²

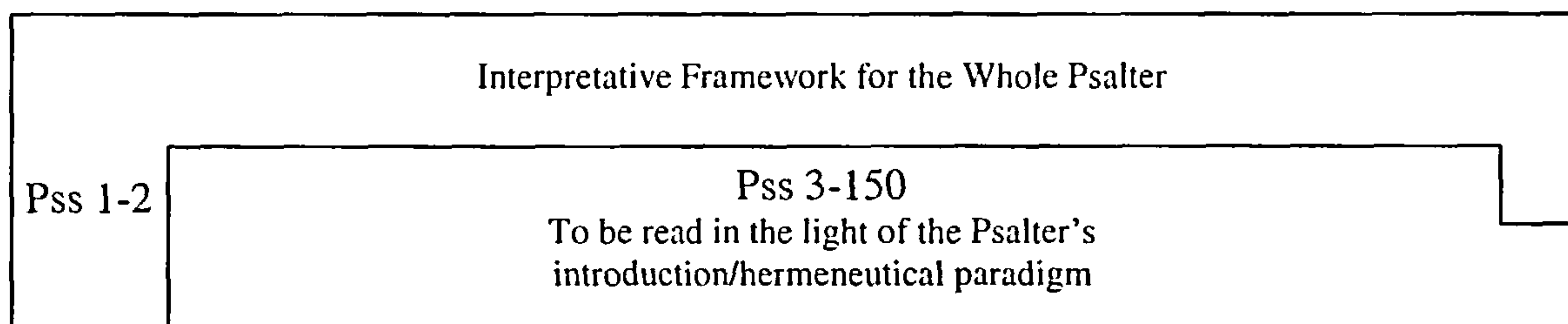


Figure 1. Pss 1-2 re. Whole Psalter

²⁸ Mitchell, *Message*, 74.

²⁹ Wilson, *Editing*, 209-10.

³⁰ It is difficult to say with any degree of certainty when Pss 1-2 were added to the Psalter. Miller’s comments reflect this uncertainty when he writes, ‘We are not making any effort to decide at what redactional stage Psalms 1 and 2 were added to the beginning of the Psalter as an introduction. As Sheppard has noted, this combined prologue may have been added at the latest stage in the redactional history of the Psalter or to an earlier smaller collection ending with either Psalm 119 or Psalm 41. Once the redactional move has been made, the introductory function works on all levels. We are attempting to show that is particularly the case with the first book of the Psalter without assuming necessarily that the Prologue was added at that point or is to be confined to that book in its function,’ (“Beginning,” 87). See also S. R. A. Starbuck, *Court Oracles in the Psalms: The So-Called Royal Psalms in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context* (SBLDS 172; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999) 110, who is similarly unsure of the chronology of when the introduction was added. This issue shall be discussed further below, pp 200-203.

³¹ This is seen most clearly in the fact that Acts 4:25 introduces the citation of Ps 2:1-2 with the words, ‘You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of our father, David, your servant...’ (ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου στόματος Δαυὶδ παιδός σου εἰπών). It appears that, by the 1st century CE, Psalm 2 had come to be seen as a Davidic psalm. This probably occurred partially, because of its content and, partially because of the broader association of the whole Psalter with David. Sheppard comments that, ‘In this regard, it is striking that Ps 2 lacks a title because, unlike most psalms, it presumes Davidic authorship by internal evidences. This statement, “the Lord said to me,” and what follows recall the oracle of Nathan to David.

Yet, at the same time, there are indeed observable links between Psalms 1-2 and the first and second Davidic psalters. What is more there also seems to have been an attempt to link Psalms 1-2 with Psalm 41 forming an inclusio which delimits Book I of the Psalter. Therefore, the literary function of Psalms 1-2 is perhaps more complex than simply saying that it functions as an introduction to the Book of Psalms. This introduction is linked to Book I by its linguistic and content associations with Psalm 41 and it is linked to Books I-II by way of the figure of David.³³ Miller writes that, ‘Pss 1 and 2 provide a kind of interpretive key to the Psalter and particularly to the first book, Pss 3-41.’³⁴ DeClaissé-Walford arrives at a similar conclusion:

Another explanation [of the change from third to first person address in Ps 41] is that the community which shaped the Psalter added verses 2-4... to the beginning of the first-person psalm to tie Book One securely with Psalms 1 and 2. These verses are, then, another “foot-print” of the shaping community. The end of Book One brings the reader back to the Torah, the instruction, at the beginning of the Psalter: ‘Happy is the one who trusts in YHWH.’³⁵

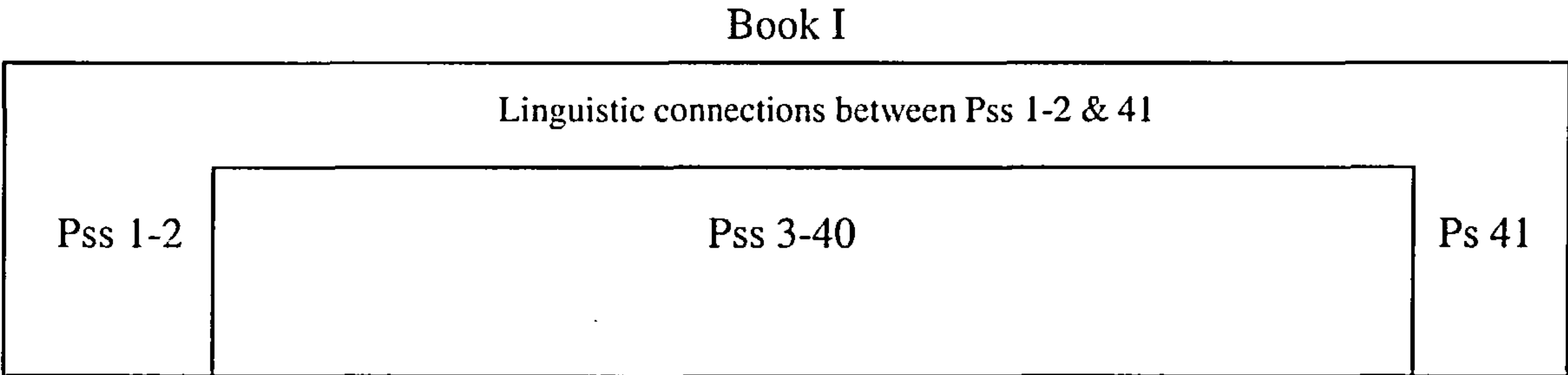


Figure 2. Pss 1, 2, & 41 as Book I Inclusio

Furthermore, the absence of a title for Ps 2 is highly significant because it offers internal evidence to invite such a titular designation, even during a time when untitled psalms were progressively gaining them,’ (*Wisdom*, 139). See also Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 121ff.

³² Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 141. See also Mitchell, *Message*, 73-4, 87; McCann, *Theological Introduction*, 40-1; Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 121-3 etc.

³³ It should be pointed out that this is an association with a typological or idealised ‘David’ rather than with the historical presentation of David found in the DtrH. Even the superscriptions which add a historical setting to Davidic psalms are not attempting to place the figure of David within its DtrH context, rather they seek to provide a rubric or example for the interpretation and application of these psalms by the reader (Childs, “Psalm Titles,” 148). Miller suggests with regard to Psalms 1-2 that, ‘the king, indeed David, is a representative figure, and never more so than as the one who lives by the Lord’s Torah,’ (“Beginning,” 91). Similarly, Mays writes, ‘The David in the psalms is the king of the Lord, the servant of the Lord, the chosen one, the anointed one (messiah), with whom the Lord has made covenant by solemn oath that his dynasty will last forever... The “messiah” or the “king” or God’s “servant” are textual directions to think of David. When the psalms attributed to David are read in light of what is said in the psalms about him, a messianic construal is cast over the collection. It was inevitable that the psalms would be read in the light of promises of a future Davidic messiah. The role of Psalm 2 as introduction to the canonical book is only one piece of evidence that prophecy has become a rubric in terms of which all the psalms may be read.’ He goes on to add, ‘In turn, David’s life becomes an illustration for those who use the psalms, of the way in which a life whose hope is in the reign of God is to be lived,’ (*The Lord Reigns*, 96, 98).

³⁴ Miller, “Kingship,” 127.

³⁵ deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 56.

The combined effect of these two phenomena on the interpretation of the Psalter is very interesting. On the one hand, as discussed above, the disjunctive function of the lack of superscriptions indicates that the introduction functions as a hermeneutical paradigm for the interpretation of the whole Psalter. In effect, this places the agenda reflected in the introduction beyond strict association with the Davidic psalters to incorporate *all* of the rich theological veins found in the complete book. Yet, on the other hand, the association of the introduction with Book I and the figure of David, is also clear to the reader of the Psalms. The net effect of this two-fold interaction is that the figure of David is read back *into* the introduction which is applied to the whole Psalter, leaving a decidedly Davidic flavour to the complete Book of Psalms—going beyond the obvious Davidic dominance in Books I-II.

In sum, Ps 1 and 2 have been redactionally ordered in a combined prologue to the Psalter... Ps 1 and 2 correlate the study of the Torah collection with the goal of attaining sacred wisdom like that found in the wisdom traditions, and perhaps in a set of biblical wisdom books. *By his associations with Ps 2, David, who is, in canonical terms, the chief architect of the Psalter, is identified fully in accord with the ideals of Psalm 1. The entire Psalter, therefore, is made to stand theologically in association with David as a source book of guidance for the way of the righteous.* In this fashion, the Psalter has gained, among its other functions, the use as a source for Wisdom reflection and a model of prayers based on such a pious interpretation of the Torah.³⁶

David has become firmly associated with the whole book of Psalms. Despite the presence of many psalms assigned to other figures before and after his time, the presentation of David within the book and elsewhere in Scripture provides the key sign of the book's coherence, as well as the context of its interpretation as a part of a larger Scripture. We begin to realise that the pre-scriptural hymns can be heard scripturally only when they are heard in just this association with David.³⁷

Thus the hermeneutical clues given for interpreting the Psalms by those who provided the headings say that it was primarily David's voice that has to be heard in the Psalter. And this one voice, which makes audible the *cantus firmus* of all the Psalms, is the voice of the promised king of Israel, the Messiah.³⁸

What then can one conclude from the function of this psalm grouping as an introduction to the Psalter? The reader is invited to follow an example in his interpretation and application of the psalms. The exemplar is David—presented as the ideal of kingship following the idealistic Kingship Law—and the example which he sets is one of torah obedience and trust in Yahweh.³⁹ The editorial function of this psalm grouping is marked, it sends out a clear signal to the reader: namely, the promotion of two key Dtr theological priorities, that is, to live life in accordance with the torah of Yahweh and to trust entirely in him—just as David did.

³⁶ Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 142. Emphasis added.

³⁷ G. T. Sheppard, *The Future of the Bible: Beyond Liberalism and Literalism* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1990) 84.

³⁸ H.-J. Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms* (trans. K. Crim; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986) 176.

³⁹ Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 173; Allen, "David as Exemplar," 545.

The effect of this linking [of torah and kingship psalms]... is to present David as the model Israelite whose relationship with Yahweh and obedience to Torah are the ideal to which every worshipper of Yahweh should aspire.⁴⁰

4. Psalms 18-21 within Book I of Psalter

The local function of the psalm grouping in which Pss 18-21 are found is, perhaps, more readily understandable than was the case with Pss 1-2. Clearly the chiastically-structured grouping of Pss 15-24 is part of Book I of the Psalter. The question, however, remains as to the significance of this fact: what role does psalm grouping 15-24 (and therefore the kingship-torah grouping 18-21) play within Book I? Also, how does its function within Book I relate this grouping to the rest of the Psalter?

Whilst Auffret, Miller and others helpfully discuss the internal—that is, conjunctive—features of the psalm grouping 15-24, there is little discussion of how this grouping relates to the rest of Book I.⁴¹ In fact, as far as I am aware, the only broader discussion of how Pss 15-24 fit within the first book of the Psalter is to be found in Hossfeld and Zenger’s commentary *Die Psalmen*. They suggest that Pss 15-24 form one of four psalm groupings which together make up Book I.⁴² The division of Book I as suggested by Hossfeld and Zenger follows this pattern:

Book I divides into four sub-groups			
Pss 3-14	Pss 15-24	Pss 25-34	Pss 35-41

Figure 3. Hossfeld/Zenger on Book I

They base this observation on two factors: first, the use of psalms of the same type as corner psalms (*Eckpsalmen*) delimiting the extent of each grouping; and, secondly, the inclusion of a central psalm in each collection which is markedly different in type/content from the neighbouring psalms within that sub-group.⁴³

Die stark anthropologisch orientierte Sammlung, die als Komposition eine umfassende Deutung der condition humaine bieten will, ist in die vier Teilgruppen 3-14, 15-24, 25-34, 35-41 gegliedert. Diese Gliederung ist zum einen durch die jeweiligen Eckpsalmen angezeigt, die vielfältig aufeinander hingebordnet sind. Zum anderen zind die Teilgruppen durch Psalmen im Zentrum markiert, die ihrerseits inhaltlich und formal aus ihrer Umgebung herausragen (Ps 8 – ein Hymnus inmitten von Klagen; Ps 19 – ein Gotteslob unter Königsgebeten; Ps 29 – ein JHWH-Hymnus im Kreis von Bitt- und Dankgebeten; Ps 38 – ein Bittgebet mit Konzentration der Hauptthemen der Nachbarpsalmen wie Krankheit,

⁴⁰ Wagner, “Psalm 19 as Prayer,” 257 n. 52.
⁴¹ Auffret, *La Sagesse*, 407-38; Miller, “Kingship.”
⁴² Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 12.
⁴³ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 12.

Feinde, Sünde, Südenbekenntis). Darüber hinaus sind sie motivlich-theologisch aufeinander bezogen.⁴⁴

The question which must now be raised is whether one observes similar conjunctive and disjunctive features at work in each of these proposed sub-groups to indicate that they are indeed designed to function as a psalm grouping? Psalms 15-24 seem to exhibit both conjunctive and disjunctive functions as a result of the chiasmic structure employed in this sub-group. We have already discussed the conjunctive features which unite these individual psalmic compositions into a collection—the chiasmic structure of Entrance Liturgies (Pss 15 and 24), psalms of comfort (Pss 16 and 23), psalms of lament (Pss 17 and 22), kingship psalms expressing dependence upon Yahweh (Pss 18 and 20-21), and the pivotal torah-psalm (Ps 19).⁴⁵ The repetition of Entrance Psalms at the beginning and end of this collection sets the limits of this sub-group, delimiting the boundaries by use of this inclusio.⁴⁶ However, one must ask oneself the question, would the inclusio marked by Pss 15 and 24—a disjunctive function—be sufficient in and of itself to indicate that Pss 15-24 as a whole function as a sub-group? I would suggest not. Rather, the disjunctive function marked by the inclusio of Entrance Liturgies is combined with the conjunctive function of linguistic concatenation and chiasmic structural association, thus linking the psalms throughout the collection to indicate that Pss 15-24 are, indeed, a sub-group in their own right.

The same question must be asked of the suggested sub-groups posited by Hossfeld and Zenger—can the reader discern both disjunctive and conjunctive features which would set these groupings apart as collections or sub-groups in their own right? Their observation concerning the corner psalms (*Eckpsalmen*) in these suggested collections is an astute one, possibly indicating disjunctive function.⁴⁷ Psalms 3 and 14 are both laments in which the psalmist beseeches Yahweh for deliverance from his enemies; Psalms 15 and 24, as we have seen above, are both Entrance Liturgies; Psalms 25 and 34 are both acrostic petitions with marked Wisdom elements;⁴⁸ and, in the lament Psalms 35 and 41, the psalmist again calls upon Yahweh to deal with his enemies. This phenomenon could indicate that these

⁴⁴ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 12.

⁴⁵ See Chapter 3 above, pp 57-59. This chiasmic structure is further accentuated by linguistic and thematic correspondences between the psalms of this grouping.

⁴⁶ An inclusio, by definition, indicates disjunctive function as well as conjunctive. The compositions on either side of the boundaries set by the inclusio are automatically understood to lie beyond the collection.

⁴⁷ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 12.

⁴⁸ This association requires further discussion, however. As is acknowledged by Hossfeld and Zenger, there are also marked similarities in content between Psalm 25 and 37 (also an acrostic) particularly in terms of the discussion of guidance, (*Die Psalmen I*, 162). It is debatable, therefore, as to which psalm would best correspond to Ps 25 in forming an inclusion. Due to the prayer elements of Pss 25 and 34, Hossfeld and Zenger associate these two psalms, however, the Wisdom elements of Pss 25 and 37 show considerable connection as well. Another question which requires more detailed consideration is the relationship between Pss 34 and 37—how are they associated? The answers to these questions influence the analysis of the ‘middle’ psalms as suggested by Hossfeld and Zenger, and, indeed, the notion of Pss 25-34 as a grouping.

psalms mark the borders of previous groupings which were incorporated together to form Book I of the Psalter. It should be noted, however, that *at best* this phenomenon indicates only the possibility of *disjunctive* function. It seems reasonable to suggest that, before these groups of psalms can truly be classified as groupings, there should be some indication of features which *link* the psalms within the boundaries set by these corner psalms.

Part of the difficulty in assessing the content of psalm groupings within Book I is the general dominance of lament psalms within the first Davidic psalter.⁴⁹ This is a feature which has often been noted in canonical studies of the Psalter—the movement from a preponderance of lament psalms in Books I-III (especially in Pss 3-41) to a majority of hymns of praise and thanksgiving in Books IV-V.⁵⁰ This general predominance of laments makes it difficult for the reader to ascertain, based either on content, type or superscription (all of which are Davidic), whether or not neighbouring psalms have been deliberately placed alongside one another to form a specific sub-group or are they simply part of a larger collection dominated by laments? Can these *Eckpsalmen*⁵¹ truly be described as demarcating groups of psalms, or are they merely representative of the dominance of lament in Book I?⁵² Also, it is difficult to know what to make of Hossfeld and Zenger's suggestion that the centre psalm in each of these 'collections' is markedly different from the surrounding psalms.⁵³ This is clearly the case with regard to Psalm 19, as one would expect of the pivotal composition in a chiastic structure. However, the evidence with regard to the other possible psalm groupings is mixed: Psalm 38, for example, does not appear to be *markedly* different from the other psalms in that 'grouping'. Even were we to accept that each of these groups of psalms did have a central composition substantially different in content from the others, one must ask oneself about the significance of this fact? What exactly does this establish? Is this an indicator of conjunctive function within each

⁴⁹ J. C. McCann, "Wisdom's Dilemma: The Book of Job, the Final Form of the Book of Psalms, and the Entire Bible," *Wisdom, You Are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (CBQMS 29; ed. Michael L. Barre; Washington D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997) 25-6; Miller, "Current Issues," 141; W. H. Bellinger, "Portraits of Faith: The Scope of Theology in the Psalms," *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms: Festschrift Marvin E. Tate* (eds. H. W. Ballard and W. D. Tucker; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000) 121; Mays, *Psalms*, 16, 51-4; deClaissé-Walford, "Canonical Shape," 96-7.

⁵⁰ Sheppard, *Future of the Bible*, 74-5; Miller, "Current Issues," 141; Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 252, 257-8. Westermann writes that, 'Book One contains almost exclusively Psalms of the individual and, even at first glance, in the entire first book LI (the lament of the individual) is absolutely predominant...' (p 252).

⁵¹ Two of the four suggested sub-groups of psalms are marked by laments as their *Eckpsalmen*.

⁵² In a similar vein, Vincent comments with regard to McCann's observation that the seam psalms which are not royal are laments: 'Second, the observation that Pss 3, 42 and 73 are laments is uninteresting, since most of the other psalms in these books are laments also. Psalm 3 does not stand out from any of the psalms which follow it as a lament; neither does Ps 42. In no way can these psalms be said to betray a clue about the organisational shaping of the Psalter; they are merely typical of the psalms that are to follow later in the respective book,' ("Shape of Psalter," 72-3). A similar conclusion could be offered with regard to the suggestion that Pss 3, 14, 35 and 41 indicate the beginning and end of collections of psalms.

⁵³ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 12.

of these 'sub-groups' or, indeed, between 'sub-groups'? It is unclear whether the central psalms of these 'groupings' really are so very different from their neighbours, and, even were this the case, the significance of this phenomenon is unclear.

What conclusions then can be drawn from the Hossfeld/Zenger suggestion that Book I divides into four sub-groups? Certainly, disjunctive functions *may* be at work in accordance with their thesis. The similarity in type and content of each of the psalms which begin and conclude these 'groups' could be described as distinctive with regard to two of the suggested groupings (Pss 15-24 and 25-34) and they could be said to bracket prior collections of compositions.⁵⁴ Other than this, the general preponderance of laments in Book I makes it difficult to suggest how Psalms 3-41 divide up into collections. Apart from the case of Psalms 15-24, there appears to be a lack of obvious conjunctive editorial activity linking the psalms within the boundaries suggested by the corner psalms. That is not to say that there is no evidence of linking between the psalms in these groups, however, further research seems to be required in order to establish clear indications of concatenation between the individual compositions of the remaining three suggested collections.⁵⁵

Therefore, the reader is left with a situation in which she may be able to observe the placement of psalms which seem to indicate a disjunctive function, separating Book I into four sub-groups. Yet, with the exception of psalm grouping 15-24, there are no obvious signs of the conjunctive association of psalms within these 'groups'. So we are left with (somewhat debatable) signs of disjunctive activity and no real signs of conjunctive activity in the three other suggested sub-groups. What conclusion is the reader to draw from this? On balance, it seems unlikely that Book I divides into four sub-groups of psalms.

4.1 Psalms 18-21: Central to Book I

An alternative, tentative thesis regarding the broader composition of Book I and the function of the Pss 15-24 subgroup within that collection would be to suggest that they make up a prior collection which has been placed in a roughly *central* position within the first Davidic psalter. The above consideration of the Pss 1-2 psalm grouping suggests that it functions as an introduction both to the whole Psalter and also to Book I, and, including these two compositions as part of Book I, the Pss 15-24 sub-group is preceded by 14 compositions and succeeded by 17 poetic works. Whilst, of course, this does not mean that Pss 15-24 are exactly central to Book I from an arithmetic point of view, it does tend to show that this collection dominates the heart of Pss 1-41.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ However, please note the above mentioned caveat with regard to the associations between Pss 25, 34 and 37.

⁵⁵ This, however, would be a task beyond the remit of this thesis.

⁵⁶ Mathematical permutations do not appear to have been the guiding principle for the editorial activity which has taken place within the canonical Book of Psalms. This is seen, for example, by the varying (and apparently random) lengths of the five books of the Psalter—Book I contains 41 compositions, whereas

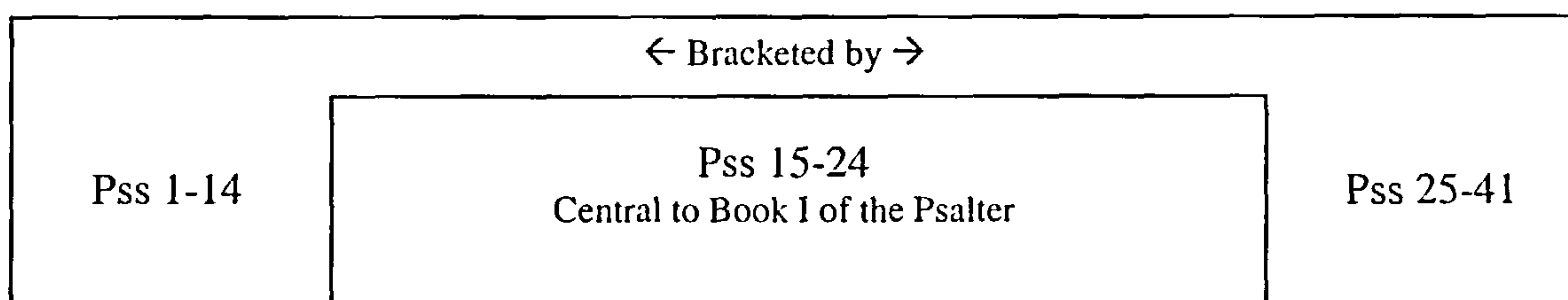


Figure 4. Pss 15-24 as Central to Book I

Even were one to accept Hossfeld and Zenger's theory about the division of Book I into four sub-groups,⁵⁷ at the very least one could say that Pss 15-24 function as one of the central collections within the first division of the Book of Psalms. Clearly, the incorporation of this collection, into the first Davidic psalter, makes a strong impact on the theological message of Book I as a whole. In Pss 1-41 we see a preponderance of psalms of lament, pleas, prayers for deliverance from enemies, sickness, trouble and despair. Whilst we do see elements of these themes within Pss 15-24 (e.g., Pss 17 and 22 are both laments), the dominant message of this collection is quite different from the overall tone of Book I. It is a message which points the reader towards the importance of Deuteronomic views of righteousness based in the law.⁵⁸ Psalms 15 and 24, at the beginning and the end of this collection, make it clear to the reader of the psalms that access to the Living God is to be found by living a life of righteousness with 'clean hands and a pure heart'.⁵⁹ This message is compounded by the central psalm's delight in the torah of Yahweh and the psalmist's prayer to be kept from sin that he too may walk in righteousness (Ps 19:13-15).⁶⁰ Such is the message that lies at the heart of Book I—amid the laments and the pleas borne out of despair—righteousness and relationship with God are to be found in the keeping of his torah.⁶¹ This is the central message of the first Davidic psalter and we shall see a similar message lying at the heart of Book V of the Psalms.

5. Psalms 118-119: Central to Book V

Various solutions have been offered regarding the structure of Book V.⁶² Each of these differs slightly from the others, yet each analysis shares one feature in common: somehow Psalm 119 is central to the structure of the Book, or, alternatively, Psalm 119 simply does not fit within the structure of the Book. Wilson, for example, writes: 'The positioning of

Book IV consists of only 17. There is no indication that the ordering which has taken place in the Psalms is based around mathematical considerations. See, for example, McCann's discussion of the canonical centrality of Ps 73 (*Theological Introduction*, 143).

⁵⁷ See Figure 3 above, p 192.

⁵⁸ Miller, "Kingship," 131; Brueggemann and Miller, "Psalm 73," 54-5.

⁵⁹ Kraus, *Psalms*, 119-20.

⁶⁰ Wagner, "Psalm 19 as Prayer."

⁶¹ Wagner, "Psalm 19 as Prayer," 257; Miller, "Kingship," 128; Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 103; McCann, *Psalms*, 752; Bellinger, "Portraits of Faith," 116.

⁶² See, for example, Zenger's analysis of the compositional theories of Wilson, Koch and Krantz, to which he adds his own suggestion, in his article: "Composition."

these three segments provides a collection characterised by a Davidic frame and *a centre focused on the massive acrostic Psalm 119*.⁶³ Similarly, Kratz sees Psalm 119 as having a special place within this Book of the Psalter ‘on the basis of his theory that the Psalter is the “Torah of David” without defining it more closely in terms of its structure.’⁶⁴ For Koch, Psalm 119 (together with Psalm 137) breaks the pattern which he proposes regarding the structure of Book V and its connections with Chronicles, and, therefore, he describes these psalms as ‘post-compositional additions.’⁶⁵ Psalm 119 so dominates the landscape of Book V that—almost intuitively—the reader comes to the conclusion that somehow it must be the focal point of the Psalter’s final addition.⁶⁶

Erich Zenger also suggests a structural breakdown of Book V which places Psalm 119 at the heart of this collection.⁶⁷ He sees five sections within this Book: a Davidic, eschatological framework which brackets beginning and end (Pss 107-112 and 138-144/145); a festal framework referring, first, to the Exodus (Pss 113-118) and later to Zion (Pss 120-137); and, finally, Psalm 119 stands central to these collections in celebration of the Torah of Yahweh.⁶⁸

R A		A		R A
107, 108-110, 111 & 112	113-118	119	120-136/137	138-144/145
David (eschatological/ messianic)	Exodus (Pesach)	Torah (Shabuoth)	Zion (Sukkoth)	David (eschatological/ messianic)

(R= royal psalm; A = acrostic psalm).

Figure 5. Zenger’s Structural Analysis of Book V

Whilst I find myself in substantial agreement with Zenger’s analysis of the content of Book V, there are some details which suggest a slightly different overall structure to Pss 107-145.

Zenger correctly highlights the function of both Davidic and festal frameworks in Book V,⁶⁹ however, there does appear to be a third framework which also plays a significant role in the breakdown of the overall structure of this book: namely, a ‘historical’ framework. This is seen in Psalms 107, and then again in Psalms 135-137. Why is this so? First, contrary to the suggestion of Wilson and in line with Zenger, Ps 107 is not part of the Davidic framework, rather, its position appears to be an attempt to link Book V with Book IV as an

⁶³ Wilson, “Shaping,” 79. Emphasis added.
⁶⁴ Zenger, “Composition,” 88.
⁶⁵ See Zenger, “Composition,” 84.
⁶⁶ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 102; Seybold, *Introducing*, 21ff.
⁶⁷ Zenger, “Composition,” 98.
⁶⁸ Zenger, “Composition,” 98.
⁶⁹ Zenger, “Composition,” 90, 98.

extension to the previous form of the Psalter.⁷⁰ Psalms 105-106 provide a lengthy, poetic account of the history of Israel, and the repetition of Ps 106:1 in the first verse of Ps 107 is an attempt to connect these psalms⁷¹ and, consequently, the ‘new’ Book V to the previous version of the Book of Psalms. It must be said, however, that Ps 107 is not a historical psalm in precisely the same sense as are Pss 105-106, rather, it is a ‘typical’ historical setting with wisdom overtones. Yet, the presentation of the psalm is as history—dealing with the past events of four types of people selected to make the psalmist’s point (travellers returning from exile, prisoners suffering in chains, fools rebelling against God and seafarers caught in a storm). The theological essence of the psalm is the same as that seen in Pss 105-106, namely, that Yahweh has looked after his people regardless of their circumstances, their rebellion, their stupidity or the depths of their plight.⁷² Long before the canonical approach to the study of the psalms became popular, Kirkpatrick wrote regarding the doxology at the end of Ps 106, ‘It came to be regarded as marking the end of the fourth book, although Pss 106 and 107 are closely connected together, and the division of the fourth and fifth books does not correspond to any difference of source or character, as is the case in the other books.’⁷³ Much more recently, Nancy deClaissé-Walford echoes this thought, writing: ‘Book Five opens with Ps 107, unquestionably placed at its beginning in answer to the request of the people at the end of Book Four.’⁷⁴ Ps 107 does not naturally belong to the Davidic collection of Psalms 108-110,⁷⁵ on the contrary, it seems more closely connected with Pss 105-106 and its function is to link Book V into the Psalter as a continuum from Book IV.

Secondly, Pss 135-137 do not naturally belong to the Songs of Ascents (Pss 120-134), as Zenger suggests,⁷⁶ nor to the Davidic frame as Wilson suggests.⁷⁷ Again, the content of the psalms in question makes it clear that they are historical psalms, similar in content to the compositions which end Book IV and begin Book V. Zenger is correct in pointing out that the repetition of content from Ps 134:1-2 in Ps 135:2 does indicate linking,⁷⁸ however, this should not result in the inclusion of these psalms along with the Psalms of Ascents in terms of structure. On the contrary, the superscriptions which head each of Psalms 120-134 fulfil both conjunctive and disjunctive functions—the extent of the psalm grouping in question is

⁷⁰ Wilson, “Shaping,” 79; Zenger, “Composition,” 88. However, when Zenger comes to plot the overall structure of Book V, he does not seem to distinguish Ps 107 markedly from the first part of the Davidic collection (“Composition,” 98, see Figure 5, above.)

⁷¹ Mays, *Psalms*, 344.

⁷² Mays, *Psalms*, 342-7.

⁷³ Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 634.

⁷⁴ deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 93.

⁷⁵ As well as the content differences between Ps 107 and Pss 108-110 and content similarities between Ps 107 and Pss 105-106, it should also be pointed out that Ps 107 bears no Davidic superscription.

⁷⁶ Zenger, “Composition,” 92.

⁷⁷ Wilson, “Shaping,” 79.

⁷⁸ Zenger, “Composition,” 92.

made clear not, primarily, by the content of the psalms, but by their superscriptions.⁷⁹ The inclusion of elements from Ps 134 at the beginning of Ps 135 appears, once again, to be an attempt to link and legitimate, the addition of other psalmic material to a previously existing version of the Book of Psalms.⁸⁰ Psalms 135-137 function as the second bracket of the historical frame within Book V. This historical frame combines with the Davidic and festal frames which Zenger and Wilson have pointed out to bracket the torah-kingship grouping (Pss 118-119) which lies at the structural centre of the Book, as the diagram below shows.

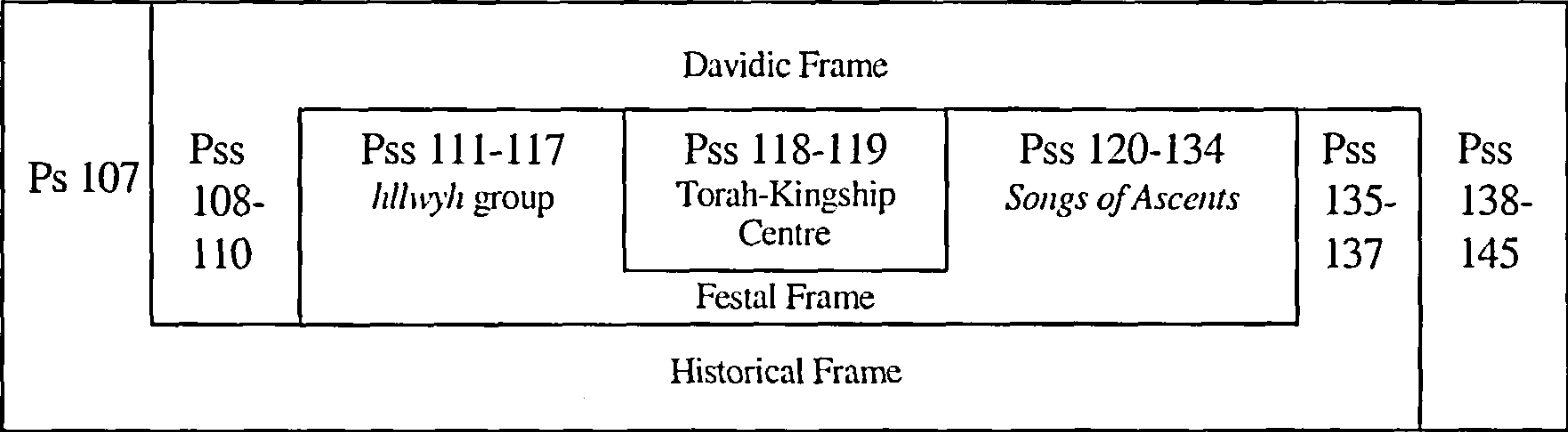


Figure 6. Pss 118-119 Central to Book V

We have already discussed at some length the reasons for linking Pss 118 and 119.⁸¹ The historical frame, together with the Davidic and festal frames, form an altered chiastic structure centering around the torah-kingship sub-group. The reader observes both conjunctive and disjunctive factors in each of these psalm groupings based upon either superscription or content. Psalm 107 is linked with the content of Pss 105-106 and the reason that it comes first (altering the chiastic structure) is in order to link Book V with the pre-existing Psalter which previously ended with Book IV. Then follows the first part of the Davidic frame, as is clearly indicated by Davidic superscriptions, which, again, both link the three psalms within that grouping and set it apart from the neighbouring collections.⁸² Following on from the Davidic collection comes the first element of the festal frame—the *hllwyh* group. Once again, the extent of this group is marked by the psalms' superscriptions/postscripts, each psalm is headed or concluded by a הללו־יה command.⁸³ Then, lying at the very heart of Book V, comes the torah-kingship pairing of Pss 118 and 119, which is

⁷⁹ Westermann writes, 'Psalms 120-134 constitute a self-contained book of Psalms which was later added to the collection framed by Pss 1 and 119' (*Praise and Lament*, 255).
⁸⁰ Westermann suggests that, at some point in the development of the canonical Psalter, Psalms 1 and 119 began and ended the book as a whole. His suggestion is that another pre-existing collection of psalms, the Songs of Ascents, was later added to this earlier form of the book and, yet later, further material was added to the Songs of Ascents giving us the final canonical form of the Psalter. See Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 253; Nogalski, "From Psalm to Psalms," 51-3 and Seybold, *Introducing*, 27-8.

⁸¹ See Chapter 4, above.

⁸² Seybold, *Introducing*, 18.

⁸³ Regarding Ps 114 and its superscription, see above pp 101-103.

followed by the correspondent sections of the festal (Pss 120-134), historical (Pss 135-137), and Davidic frames (Pss 138-145) respectively. As mentioned above, the שִׁיר־הַמַּעֲלוֹת superscriptions demarcate the extent of the second festal collection.⁸⁴ The second part of the historical frame is indicated by their common lack of superscription and similarity of content. Finally, the second part of the Davidic frame is clearly indicated by the Davidic superscriptions in Pss 138-145.⁸⁵

Therefore, I would suggest that the Deuteronomic torah-kingship theology which marks the introduction to the whole Psalter and lies at the centre of Book I is also central to the message of Book V. This, in effect, results in a bracketing function encompassing the whole Book of Psalms.

6. Bracketing Function of Torah-Kingship Groupings

The net effect of the central positioning of the torah-kingship psalm groupings within Books I and V is to indicate a type of *inclusio*, a bracketing function encompassing the whole spectrum of the Psalms.⁸⁶ This effect is further accentuated by the over-arching influence of Pss 1 and 2 as the hermeneutical paradigm for the whole Psalter.⁸⁷ The message of the introduction is that the reader should have a heightened awareness of its dual themes—the practice of torah-piety and complete dependence upon Yahweh for the governance of all events, no matter how great the scale—throughout their reading of the Psalms, following the example of the kingly figure in Pss 1 and 2.⁸⁸ These dual themes make two further prominent appearances at the heart of Books I and V respectively. That is, the torah-kingship theme reappears in the middle of the first and last books,⁸⁹ and this repetition acts as a type of *inclusio* bracketing the whole Psalter within the same agenda as is presented by the introduction.

⁸⁴ McCann, *Psalms*, 658.

⁸⁵ Seybold, *Introducing*, 18.

⁸⁶ McCann, *Psalms*, 1167-8; Mays, *Psalms*, 381.

⁸⁷ Westermann, Seybold and others discuss the possibility that the Psalter once opened and closed with Pss 1 and 119 (Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 253 and Seybold, *Introducing*, 27). Whilst this is possible, there is no diachronic evidence to support this hypothesis. However, their observation regarding the similarity of content and theology which led Westermann and Seybold to this conclusion can be applied in reading the final form of the text, leading to a slightly different conclusion. A formation-critical approach leads to the suggestion of a redactional layer where Pss 1 and 119 bracketed the psalms entirely, a synchronic analysis of the final-form leads to the idea of a torah-kingship bracketing function of Pss 1-2 and Pss 118-119. The introduction applies the theological priorities of Pss 1 and 2 to the whole Psalter and the repetition of these same themes at the centre of Books I and V has the same sort of effect. A synchronic approach may be different from the diachronic suggestions of Westermann and Seybold, but the conclusion is similar: torah and kingship are important to the theology of the Psalms.

⁸⁸ Mays comments, 'The two psalms together call for a piety composed of obedience and trust that is fostered by the entire book. Delight in the torah and taking refuge in the Lord to constitute the faith nurtured by the psalms. The psalms offer a way and a refuge in the midst of the wickedness and power of the world,' (*The Lord Reigns*, 123).

⁸⁹ Mays, "Place of the Torah-Psalms," 10; Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 16.

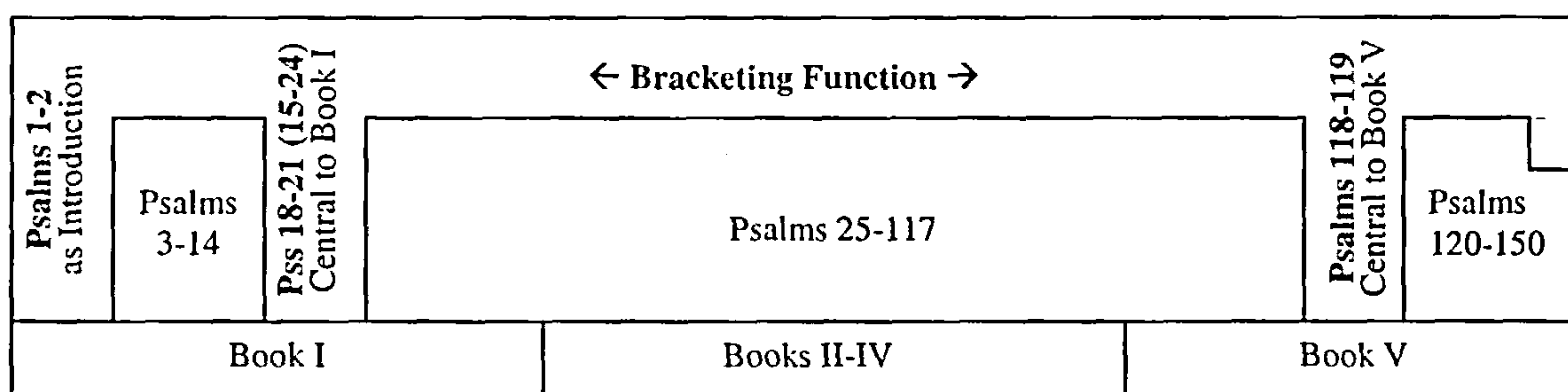


Figure 7. Bracketing Function of the Torah-Kingship Groupings

Returning to Hossfeld and Zenger's quote concerning the levels at which a canonical approach to the Psalms functions,⁹⁰ the evidence suggests that the positioning of these groups of psalms within the Psalter on a macro-level is as significant as their positioning within their respective books. The voice of the hermeneutical preface of the Psalms is reprised twice—once in the middle of the first book and again in the middle of the last book—further emphasising the fact that this theological programme is to have bearing upon the interpretation of the whole of the Book of Psalms.

7. Excursus: A Brief Word about History

Whilst this study employs a synchronic approach throughout, as this chapter has also touched upon questions of formation, it seems an appropriate moment to address the question of when these three psalm groupings were added to the Psalter. Most theories regarding the formation of the Book of Psalms take a strictly diachronic approach to this question, however, the problem with diachronic assessment of the composition of the Psalms is that the researcher is given so few internal, textual historical reference points,⁹¹ leaving assessment largely dependent upon external evidences. This problem is further compounded by the fact that the external evidence is far from easy to interpret.⁹² Shepherd

⁹⁰ See above, p 185.

⁹¹ For example, there are superscriptions which refer to events in the life of the historical David (e.g. Ps 3:1, Ps 18:1 etc.) but the self-presentation of these titles is as later additions so it is difficult to know what weight (if any) to attribute to these comments. Childs suggests that these titles may indicate that the superscriptions were added in a period when Midrash was becoming common in Israel (Childs, "Psalm Titles;" see also, Nogalski, "From Psalm to Psalms"), but, again, does this add much to our understanding of when and how the various stages of the Book of Psalms developed? Other possible historical points of reference may be derived from the content of individual psalms aiding the diachronic task, e.g. references to the Temple (Pss 15, 24, 118 etc.); the demise of the Davidic kingship (Ps 89) or the return from exile (Ps 126), all place the Psalter in specific historical settings. However, at best this tells us little more than the fact that the final form of the Psalter was reached at some point in the post-exilic period—hardly an epiphany. Internal textual signs are few and far between because of the nature of the psalms. These compositions are meant to be generic (i.e. not tied too closely to specific historical events), so that as many people as possible are able to relate the expression of prayer or praise therein to the circumstances of their own lives (see Miller, *Interpreting*, 8, 48-52; P. D. Miller, "Trouble and Woe: Interpreting the Biblical Laments," *Int* 37 [1983] 34-5 and Wilson, "Shape," 138). As the Psalms are not easily identifiable with historical events which sparked their writing, it becomes difficult even to find a starting point for a diachronic assessment of the formation of the Psalter.

⁹² For example, one can see that the Psalms in some ways reflect a common ancient Near Eastern practice of gathering poetic anthologies (often with prominent royal themes). Sumerian, Akkadian and Babylonian hymns of a similar nature are often compared to Hebrew psalms (Wilson, *Editing*, 6). However,

comments that, ‘the available historical evidence allows for only a bare skeleton of this development [of the formation of the Psalter]. One searches largely in vain for solid biblical or extra-biblical evidence by which to trace the real causes and motivations behind many of the crucial decisions.’⁹³ It goes beyond the remit of this thesis to enter into detailed diachronic discussion, however, the ideas mentioned above regarding the canonical placement of the torah-kingship psalm groupings may have a few implications for those engaging in historical research on the question of formation. Can the synchronic speak to diachronic? Yes, but only in a limited, broad brush-stroke manner. Some of the above observations may be of a little help with regard to the discussion of formation.

Which of the above sub-groups of psalms was the first to appear in the Psalter? Textual indications would suggest that Pss 18-21, as part of the prior collection of Pss 15-24, were probably the first to appear in the initial stages of formation as part of the first Davidic psalter.⁹⁴ The fact that the Pss 15-24 sub-group is part of the collection of Davidic compositions which have not undergone the later Elohist redaction indicates that this was, most likely, the initial ‘Book of Psalms’ to which was later added the Korahite collection and the second Davidic psalter (which has undergone Elohist revision).⁹⁵ These

the relationship between the Psalms and these other ANE hymnic materials is a complex one and it is difficult to know just what significance to draw from these similarities, other than the fact that a common type of hymnic tradition existed in the ANE throughout the period when the psalms were written and gathered (J. F. Drinkard, Jr., “The Ancient Near Eastern Context of the Book of Psalms,” *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms: Festschrift Marvin E. Tate* [eds. H. W. Ballard and W. D. Tucker; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000] 92). Another example would be Mowinckel’s influential theory regarding the Autumn Festival where the Israelite king undergoes some element of ritual humiliation, suffering or battle (as reflected in the laments), before being ceremonially vindicated (enthronement psalms), an idea largely based on the Babylonian *akîtu* festival (S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* [Vol. I; trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962] 106-92). Whilst this idea enjoyed some popularity for a considerable period of time, the lack of any evidence that such a festival took place in Israel has led to its rejection as an interpretative paradigm by most scholars in recent years (B. S. Childs, “Reflections on the Modern Study of the Psalms,” *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* [eds. F. M. Cross, W. E. Lemke and P. D. Miller; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976] 379-80; McCann, *Psalms*, 650; Mays, “Place of the Torah-Psalms,” 12 etc., all speak of the movement away from cult-functional interpretation towards literary readings of the psalms). These are just two examples from many possible illustrations of the same point—it is notoriously difficult to build a conclusive theory regarding the formation and use of the psalms from diachronic evidence. A further example of this difficulty in interpreting historical evidence related to the Psalter would be the discussion surrounding the Qumran psalms manuscripts and the formation of the Psalter (see Footnote 100, below).

⁹³ Shepherd, “The Book of Psalms,” 85-6. Childs adds: ‘the Jewish canon was formed through a complex historical process which is largely inaccessible to critical reconstruction. The history of the canonical process does not seem to be an avenue through which one can greatly illuminate the present canonical text. Not only is the evidence far too skeletal, but the sources seem to conceal the very kind of information which would allow a historian easy access into the material by means of uncovering this process.’ (*IOTS*, 68).

⁹⁴ ‘We may assume that the group Pss 3-41, numerically the largest group, forms the basis of the whole collection,’ (Seybold, *Introducing*, 19). Westermann comes to similar conclusions (*Praise and Lament*, 254, 257), as does Wilson (*Editing*, 210).

⁹⁵ Nogalski, “From Psalm to Psalms,” 53. Seybold, taking a slightly different approach, suggests that ‘David 1 and David 2’ made up the first collection (as reflected by the Ps 72:20 postscript) to which were added the Asaphite and Korahite collections, then followed the Elohist redaction (*Introducing*, 19-28). Whilst this is possible, Seybold does not effectively explain why the Elohist redaction did not touch Book I, the first Davidic psalter. In line with Nogalski’s suggestion, it seems more likely that the Elohist redac-

(diachronic) observations find support in this chapter's analysis of the canonical placement of the torah-kingship psalm texts. As argued above, the Book I collection of Davidic psalms gives the impression of having functioned as a unit, to which Pss 1-2 were added as an introduction at some later stage.

Whilst it is really impossible to determine conclusively at what point the Pss 1-2 introduction was added to the Psalter,⁹⁶ the synchronic evidence would suggest that this most likely occurred either before or after (but not as part of) the Elohist redaction as both psalms make prominent use of the divine name. The Elohist psalter seems to have been added at the second stage of the organic expansion of the Book of Psalms, which was then followed by the addition of the second Korahite collection and Ps 89, to complete Book III.⁹⁷ This indicates that the addition of the introduction would have occurred either at the time of the inclusion of the second main section of the proto-psalter or after the closure of Book III. Such is the general homogeneity of material in Book I, it would seem unnecessary to add a hermeneutical paradigm to the Pss 3-41 collection alone, and, broadly speaking, the same could be said with regard to the inclusion of the second Davidic psalter and associated smaller collections.⁹⁸ However, by the 'closure' of Books I-III the reader is confronted with a much broader canvas of authorship, type and content—as well as the crisis of the collapse of the Davidic monarchy in Ps 89—making the introductory guidelines for the understanding of the Psalter all the more necessary.⁹⁹ Therefore, it seems most likely that Pss 1-2 were added, chronologically speaking, as an interpretative aid to Books I-III.

Wilson points out that Books IV and V bear signs of editorial techniques that are different from those found in the first three books and that they were probably added at a later time to Books I-III.¹⁰⁰ Book IV was possibly added to Books I-III as a single unit, although

tion was applied to the second Davidic psalter prior to its inclusion in the proto-canonical Book of Psalms.

⁹⁶ 'Exactly when Ps 1 was added as an introduction to the Psalter remains elusive,' (Starbuck, *Court Oracles*, 110).

⁹⁷ Seybold, *Introducing*, 21-4; Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 254-5. It is difficult to know at what stage the additional groups were added to the second Davidic psalter and how the Elohist psalter (EP, Pss 42-83) relates to Books II and III as this redaction (if that is what happened) crosses between these two books of the Psalter. McCann suggests that the EP was not a redaction, but rather the association of original compositions where the use of *elohim* was preferred over Yahweh (see his *Psalms*, 658).

⁹⁸ Books I and II are both dominated by psalms of the individual, laments and Davidic superscriptions (Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 254-5). Therefore, it seems unlikely that a hermeneutical paradigm for interpretation was necessary at that stage.

⁹⁹ 'As already suggested, Psalms 1-2 are a fitting introduction to Books I and to Books I-III as a unit,' McCann, *Psalms*, 664.

¹⁰⁰ Wilson, "Shaping," 73. This distinction is largely based on different editorial techniques—greater use of author and genre designations in Books I-III cf. use of *hllwyh* and *hodu* headings in Books IV-V etc. However, some scholars also base this distinction on the evidence suggested by the Qumran manuscript 11QPs^a, which contains all or part of 41 psalms from the last third of the Psalter plus some additional hymnic/poetic material, however the ordering of the biblical psalms varies considerably from the MT, (R. L. Smith, "The Use and Influence of the Psalms," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 27/1 [Fall 1984] 16). Some scholars (generally basing their conclusions on the extensive work of James Sanders in the Qumran Pss Mss) interpret this as evidence that the shape of the canonical Book of Psalms was still in flux at the period of

other theories suggest the addition of a larger grouping which crosses over between Books IV and V.¹⁰¹ The limitations of a strictly synchronic approach are shown in the fact that the analysis found in this chapter cannot speak to such details, other than to confirm that Book V was most likely a later addition to the Psalter. However, the synchronic study of the final form does point out something which is often lost in the diachronic. Namely that, whilst Book V (along with Book IV) is undoubtedly a later addition, theologically it picks up on themes central to Books I-III. The theological voice which speaks in the introduction and at the heart of the first collection of psalms, is echoed at the very centre of Book V. So the late addition of Book V does not mean that it is in any sense divorced from the previous collections which were at one point viewed as the 'Book of Psalms'. On the contrary, Book V picks up on some of the central themes of the earlier collections as well as adding its own distinctive voice of praise.¹⁰²

8. Conclusion

Whilst there are many diachronic questions which remain untouched in this brief survey, discussion of the formation of the Psalter is not the goal of this thesis. However, some light may be shed from the analysis of the final form of the MT's Book of Psalms. It is likely that the first example of psalmic torah-kingship theology based on the Kingship Law is to be found at the heart of Book I in Pss 18-21, the focal point of the chiastically ordered

the Qumran community and that 11QPs^a represents an 'alternative' canonical Psalter (Wilson, *Editing*, 88-92; Wilson, "Shape," 132; McCann, *Psalms*, 658 *et al*). However, as is the case with most diachronic evidence relating to the Psalter, it is difficult to know what weight to attribute ms 11QPs^a in the discussion of the formation of the canonical Book of Psalms. Miller, Howard, Skehan, Goshen-Gottstein, Tov and others argue that because we have no idea how 11QPs^a functioned within the Qumran community we cannot say conclusively whether this was, in fact, a variant form of canonical psalter, or whether it was merely a liturgical collection of poetic works for use within the community (see, for example, Miller, "Current Issues," 141-2 and Howard, *Structure*, 26-7). '[W]e cannot learn anything from the Qumran texts about "the formative period of the building up of the standard collection of 150 Psalms,"' (Miller, "Current Issues," 142).

¹⁰¹ Wilson, (*Editing*, 214-9) suggests Book IV functions as a unit. Seybold, however, suggests that Pss 90-119 were added as a prior collection, resulting in Pss 1 and 119 opening and closing this version of the Book of Psalms (*Introducing*, 19-28). Whilst he does not deal with the stages of development of the Psalter in much detail, Westermann too suggests that: 'We can say therefore that there was once a psalter which began with Ps 1 and ended with Ps 119. Moreover this framework bears witness to an important stage in the "traditioning" process in which the psalter, as a collection, no longer had a cultic function primarily, but rather circulated in a tradition devoted to law. The psalms have now become the word of God which is read, studied and meditated upon,' (*Praise and Lament*, 253). The problem with Seybold's suggestion is that it does not take into account the disjunctive function of the book divisions. Why would Pss 90-119 be divided between two books if they were a single redactional layer known to the editors of that stage in the development of the Psalter? Perhaps the book divisions happened at a later stage entirely, but Wilson's suggestion seems the more likely. This does not necessarily deny the fact that Pss 1 and 119 could, at some point, have begun and ended the Psalter, however, it seems more likely that Book IV was added as a unit and, perhaps, Book V was added by the piecemeal addition of smaller collections. Having said that, there is no historical evidence to indicate that a psalter concluding with Ps 119 ever existed. It seems more reasonable simply to conclude that the themes of Book I and the introduction to the Psalter were being repeated at the end of the Psalter, resulting in 'torah-brackets' around the whole collection. See above, pp 199-200.

¹⁰² W. Brueggemann, "Bounded by Obedience and Praise," *JSOT* 50 (1991) 63-92; Seybold, *Introducing*, 27-8; Miller, "Current Issues," 141.

collection Pss 15-24. Thus the idea of a torah-piety by which the reader of the Psalms is to live, is set in a Davidic context. It is David, therefore, who functions as a type and exemplar of the righteous individual who is faithful to Yahweh throughout experiences which result in both lament and praise. Pss 1 and 2, in turn, apply this Davidic motif to the whole of the Psalter. Then, finally, the voice of this idealised David is heard again at the centre of Book V in Pss 118-119, as the king leads the people in worship and sets an example of piety based in Yahweh's instruction. At the beginning and end, the theological concern of the Psalter is repeated:

The faithful reader of the Psalter will do as the king is supposed to do: study and meditate on YHWH's disclosure of himself in both the Torah *and* the Psalter (Dt 17:18-19, Ps 1).¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Howard, *Structure*, 207.

Chapter 7

Torah, Kingship and Democratisation

1. Introduction

This thesis has considered the possibility that the placement of kingship psalms alongside the three torah psalms of the Psalter is not merely an accidental phenomenon, but one which results from deliberate editorial activity, designed to reflect the theology of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law. Moreover, this deliberate juxtaposition of kingship and torah psalms, it has been argued, reflects the theological concerns of the editors of the Psalter with regard to two particular issues: first, the editors wish to encourage a particular type of piety amongst the readers of the Book of Psalms; and, secondly, the editors wish to refine the Psalter's eschatological view of kingship in the post-exilic period. In considering these questions, the present thesis has given detailed attention to the exegetical examination of the torah-kingship psalms groupings (Pss 1-2; 18-21; 118-119)¹ and particularly to the deuteronomic themes which are apparent in these psalms. Secondly, the results of this exegetical examination have been compared, on a purely descriptive level, with the content of Deut 17:14-20;² and, thirdly, the significance of the canonical placement of these psalm groupings within the Book of Psalms has been considered.³ There remains, however, one final task in order to bring a sense of completion to this study: namely, a comparison of the key *theological* concepts of the torah-kingship psalms and the Kingship Law.

Both the psalm groupings which have come under consideration and the Law of the King appear to deal with the same issues—the significance of Yahweh's torah, the role of the king in Israel's society and the whole issue of the king as exemplar for the people—yet, the question must be asked, 'Do these passages speak with the same voice regarding these issues?' Even were one to accept that torah, kingship and democratisation are matters of primary concern both in Deut 17:14-20 and in the torah-kingship psalm groupings, attention must be paid as to whether these passages are actually speaking about the same things? When the Law of the King speaks about torah is it speaking about the same thing as Psalm 1? Or, does the Psalter's view of kingship bear any resemblance to the deuteronomic ideal?⁴ It is not sufficient merely to point out that similar concerns are observable in the Psalter and Deuteronomy, rather, one must ask the question: Are these various texts of the Old Testament addressing the same issues *in the same way*? How are they similar? Where do they differ?

¹ See Chapters 2-4, above.

² See above, Chapter 5.

³ See above, Chapter 6.

⁴ This is a question posed by McConville in his consideration of the Kingship Law: is not the Dtr view of kingship far removed from the David-Zion view of kingship in the Psalter? (McConville, *Deuteronomy*)

It would not be possible to examine in detail all of the deuteronomic concepts that have been drawn from the exegetical examination of the psalms in chapters 2-4.⁵ So, this chapter will focus its attention upon the main concepts aired in the torah-kingship psalms and the Law of the King, namely: torah, kingship and democratisation. The aim of this analysis is to seek to ascertain whether or not the editors of the Psalter were using the Kingship Law as their paradigm in juxtaposing kingship psalms alongside torah psalms. Whilst these major concepts are clearly present both in the Kingship Law and in the highlighted psalms, if they are being used in markedly different ways then one must question whether the Kingship Law did, in fact, function as the guiding principle for the placement of the psalms examined in this thesis. However, if there is a substantial degree of correlation between Deuteronomy's understanding of these key concerns and the use of these ideas in the torah-kingship psalms, then it would be reasonable to postulate that the Kingship Law did, indeed, function as the organisational paradigm for the placement of kingship psalms alongside the psalms which celebrate the torah of Yahweh.

2. Torah

Most scholars who have adopted a canonical approach to the study of the Psalms acknowledge that the placement of the torah psalms is of great significance.⁶ The previous chapter discussed why this is the case: the Psalter is headed by a torah psalm in Psalm 1, and Psalms 19 and 119 dominate the first and last books of psalms respectively. Yet, despite the substantial agreement concerning the significance of the torah psalms, the question of what 'torah' *means* within these psalms is somewhat more contentious. Many psalms scholars stress that torah cannot be simply understood as 'law'⁷ but that it refers to the 'instruction, teaching' of Yahweh in its broadest sense.⁸ They suggest that this torah does not simply refer to 'law proper', according to our contemporary understanding of that word, but also to narrative, prophecy, history and even poetry—torah is the instruction of

⁵ For example, such concepts as the name of Yahweh, the two ways of life and death etc., which have been highlighted in the study of the torah-kingship psalms as part of their more general background in Dtr ideas. Study of all of these concepts would require a much lengthier study than space and time allow. This seems to be an area worthy of further study; that is, to discuss the broader issue of deuteronomic influences within the Book of Psalms. Patrick Miller has suggested that there is ample scope for such dialogue between the Books of Deuteronomy and the Psalms (Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms"), and this present study picks up on one of the areas of confluence highlighted in Miller's works (i.e. the Kingship Law; see also "Kingship," 140-1 and "Beginning," 91-2]. However, one is left with the impression that there are many other deuteronomic influences in the Psalter and that these too are worthy of further study. Deuteronomy has influenced (to one degree or another) large sections of the OT, it should not be too surprising to find such influences in the Psalter as well.

⁶ Mays, "Place of the Torah-Psalms,,"; Brueggemann, "Bounded," 64; Wilson, "Shape,,"; Creach, *Yahweh Yahweh as Refuge*, 16, 73; McCann, *Psalms*, 650.

⁷ As תּוֹרָה is universally translated in the EVV, except the JPS *Tanakh* (1985) which translates תּוֹרָה יְהוָה as 'the Teaching of the Lord'.

⁸ McCann, *Psalms*, 684-5; deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 42; A. M. Harman, *Psalms* (Mentor Commentary Series; Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publishers, 1998) 72; Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 27.

Yahweh by, in and through any and all possible means.⁹ Therefore the word תורה is often defined by scholars as ‘instruction’ or simply ‘teaching’.¹⁰ Other scholars see in the Psalter’s references to torah a reflection of the sense of derivative authority which is, arguably, inherent to the Writings.¹¹ Whether this is the case or not, some scholars see torah in the Psalms as referring their readers back to the study of the Pentateuch, the Mosaic Torah, the authoritative source upon which their teaching is based.¹²

Similarly, and perhaps not surprisingly, there is in Deuteronomy studies perhaps an even greater degree of disagreement with regard to the definition of the word תורה. For some this is a reference to the Pentateuch (Torah) as a whole;¹³ for others, it seems clearly to be a reference to the book of Deuteronomy itself;¹⁴ still others would limit the extent of this reference to the Dtr law code in Deut 12-26;¹⁵ some would even suggest that the reference in the Kingship Law (Deut 17:18-19) which commands the king to meditate upon the torah is self-referent, i.e. referring to nothing more than the Kingship Law itself.¹⁶ It is also not uncommon for scholars to associate ‘torah’ as it is used in Deuteronomy with ‘its closest cousin,’¹⁷ the Book of the Covenant, as found in Exodus.¹⁸ The diversity of opinion as to the definition of torah both in the Psalms and in Deuteronomy is marked. The question must be asked therefore, are the torah psalms and the Kingship Law referring to the same thing when they speak of torah?

2.1 Torah in the Psalms

The main area of debate with regard to ‘torah’ in the torah psalms is precipitated by the unspecified, generic usage of this term in these psalms. Nowhere in Pss 1, 19 or 119 does the psalmist offer an explanation of what this ‘torah’ actually is, making it difficult to pin-

⁹ McCann, for example, writes referring to torah: “‘Instruction’ here refers not to a particular corpus of stipulations, but more broadly to the whole sacred tradition of God’s revelation,” (*Psalms*, 684-5.)

¹⁰ Whybray, “Psalm 119,” 40-1; Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 121-2; Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 27, 37-8.

¹¹ E. S. Gerstenberger, “Canon Criticism and the Meaning of ‘Sitz Im Leben’,” *Canon, Theology and Old Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (eds. G. M. Tucker, D. L. Petersen and R. R. Wilson; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) 24-5; J. J. Collins, “Before the Canon: Scriptures in Second Temple Judaism,” *Old Testament Interpretation: Past, Present and Future, Essays in Honour of Gene M. Tucker* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995) 638.

¹² Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 141-2, and “Theology,” 153-4; T. N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (ConBOT, Vol. 8; Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1976) 289; Whybray, “Psalm 119,” 39.

¹³ See Sonnet’s discussion in *The Book Within the Book*, 1-3.

¹⁴ J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC; Leicester: IVP, 1974) 206.

¹⁵ Ridderbos, *Deuteronomy*, 201; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 168; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 212; Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148.

¹⁶ See discussion in Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 256-7.

¹⁷ J. G. McConville, “Law and Monarchy in the Old Testament,” *A Royal Priesthood: The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically* (eds. C. Bartholomew, J. Chaplin, R. Song and A. Wolters; Carlisle / Grand Rapids: Paternoster / Zondervan, 2002 [Forthcoming]).

¹⁸ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 256-7.

point precisely what the term refers to.¹⁹ Eaton writes, ‘We have seen that some commentators pointed to teachings revered by the Deuteronomists, others to the whole Pentateuch, and others again to a wider collection. But the remarkable fact remains that none of these psalms gives a specification or an example of such Scripture.’²⁰ Speaking of torah in Ps 119, for example, Freedman writes, ‘In Psalm 119 *tôrâ* is a monolithic presence, consisting of individual laws and teachings to be sure, but described in only the most general terms, namely the eight interchangeable *tôrâ*-words.’²¹ This lack of clear definition with regard to the subject matter of the torah psalms is further accentuated by the apparent inadequacies of the English word offered by way of translation—‘law’. The meaning of the Hebrew word is clearly broader than our *contemporary* understanding of law proper.²² Craigie puts the case clearly:

Although the term *Torah* can be used of the law, or of the Pentateuch, or even (at a later date) of the Old Testament, its significance here is the most fundamental one. Basically, the word *Torah* means ‘instruction’; specifically, it is the instruction which God gives to mankind as a guide for life. Thus it may include that which is technically law, but it also includes other more general parts of God’s revelation.²³

Despite the broad agreement that ‘law’ is an inadequate translation,²⁴ much of the scholarly writing is still taken up with establishing the fact that a תורה based piety does not equate to legalism. Some scholars seem at pains to point out that the torah-piety of the Psalter has nothing to do with nomism, in any sense, and as a result reject or limit the idea that תורה in the Psalms is connected with a written text.²⁵ Torah is not ‘law’, but ‘teaching’, the argument goes, and clearly the psalmic ideas of torah-piety are quite different from deuteronomic (nomistic?) ideas of a book-based law code. Levenson, for example, states concerning torah in Ps 119:

Nothing in the psalm hints that the author considers his own pneumatic experience inferior to Moses’ and only corroborative of it. In fact, in contradiction to all the Deuteronomic tradition (including Jeremiah), Psalm 119 lacks any trace of book-consciousness. In contrast, the Deuteronomistic History, in language reminiscent of the our psalm, commends conformity to the Torah of Moses (by which is meant Deuteronomy).²⁶

Similarly, McCann writes concerning torah in Ps 1:

¹⁹ “[W]hen *tôrâ* is used without further specification, it is often difficult to say with certainty precisely what the content of this *tôrâ* is,’ (P. Enns, “Law of God,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, Volume 4* [gen ed W. A. VanGemeren; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997] 896).

²⁰ Eaton, *Psalms of the Way*, 56.

²¹ Freedman, *Psalms 119*, 89.

²² On this particular point there is (almost) universal agreement amongst commentators and in lexicons.

²³ Craigie, *Psalms*, 60. See also Dahood, *Psalms III*, 173; Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 104; Kraus, *Psalms*, 273-4; Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 37.

²⁴ We shall return to the question of the appropriate translation of תורה at the end of this section.

²⁵ The rationale behind this rejection of a book-based torah-piety seems to be that such a form of religious observance is more indicative of nomism than an experiential piety. Obviously, this is not necessarily the case, however, it seems that some scholars respond to the excessive legalisms of certain branches of late-Judaism (which did turn book-based piety into nomism) in this way.

²⁶ Levenson, “Sources,” 564.

Verse 2b is reminiscent of Josh 1:8. As Joshua succeeds Moses, he is told by God that ‘this book of the law’ is something he is to ‘meditate on... day and night’ in order to ‘make your way prosperous’ (NRSV; cf. ‘prosper’ in Ps 1:3). The king of Israel also is to have ‘a copy of this law’ and is to ‘read... it all the days of his life’ (Deut 17:18-19 NRSV). It is likely that ‘law’ in these two texts does, indeed, designate the Deuteronomistic code; however, such need not be the case in Ps 1:2. There is no mention of a book or a copy of the law.²⁷

Thus one could be led to the conclusion that the torah of the psalms is something quite *different* from the torah of the Kingship Law. Levenson and McCann (and others) seem to imply that the torah of the torah psalms is a concept more amorphous, general and directly experiential than the idea of torah in Deuteronomy or the DtrH. Deuteronomy and the DtrH clearly refer to a book-based piety,²⁸ but the psalms make no reference to ספר התורה (הזאת) or, for that matter, even to התורה with the definite article.²⁹ Therefore it may be argued that torah in the torah psalms is very different from the understanding of torah in Deuteronomy—one is book-based and legalistic, the other is understood as being much more direct, holistically-experienced and refers to every possible aspect of divine revelation (including, it must be said, proto-canonical books but by no means limited to them or centering upon such).³⁰ So does the theory of linkage between Deuteronomy and the Psalms fail before it starts because in referring to torah the respective passages are speaking about different concepts entirely?

2.1.1 Reading Torah in the Torah Psalms

Whilst the torah psalms do not speak explicitly about a ‘book of the torah’, the vocabulary which is used by the psalmists to describe a proper attitude towards Yahweh’s revelation indicates a practice grounded in reading and recitation—actions which cannot be performed without a book. Sarna gives detailed consideration to this issue with regard to תורה in Ps 1:2:

Such a notion [that Psalm 1 is not a devotional text] obscures a fundamental principle that the psalmist wishes to highlight by according the theme of Torah a pre-eminent position in the Psalter. It is that the *study of the sacred and revered text* itself constitutes a pious act, a profoundly religious experience, and is an important mode of worship. This seminal idea is emphasised and elaborated in Psalm 119 and it finds powerful expression in later Judaism.³¹

²⁷ McCann, *Psalms*, 694-85.

²⁸ As is indicated by the repeated phrases הספר התורה הזאת (Deut 28:61), ספר התורה הזה (Deut 29:20; 31:26; Jos 1:8), and is implied in such phrases as דברי התורה הזאת (Deut 17:18; 27:3, 8, 26 etc.).

²⁹ Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 37.

³⁰ Whilst Levenson seeks to limit the connection between torah in Ps 119 and the Dtr ideas of torah, he does also acknowledge that this connection cannot be entirely removed: ‘We have seen that the author of Psalm 119 recognizes three sources of *tora*: (1) received tradition, passed on most explicitly by teachers (vv 99-100) but including perhaps some sacred books now in the Hebrew Bible, (2) cosmic or natural law (vv 89-91), and (3) unmediated divine teaching (e.g., vv 26-29). The importance for him of books we consider “biblical” must not be minimized. They hold a kind of normative status for him; they provide the language with which to formulate a significant statement. Nonetheless, he never identifies *tora* with the Pentateuch. His own perspective is too close to that of the older wisdom tradition for him to do so,’ (“Sources,” 570).

³¹ Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 28-9, emphasis added.

Sarna then goes on to point out that, whilst the exact connotation of the reference to torah is uncertain, the verb which is used (הִלֵּל) clearly implies reference to a fixed text.³² He then goes on to elaborate on this conclusion, agreeing that torah does, indeed, refer to Yahweh's instruction generally, but also explaining that the psalmist does have a book in mind:

Our text makes no mention of a 'book' of the Torah. In fact, the word 'book' never appears in any reference to Torah in the Psalter; nor is the definite article ever attached therein to torah. Torah must here mean simply 'teaching', 'instruction.' Nevertheless, as noted above, 'the Lord's Teaching' must define a recognisable, established, and crystallized text that can be committed to memory and recited. This is so because the Hebrew verb, usually mistranslated 'meditates', carries a decidedly oral nuance, as anyone who consults a concordance of the Hebrew Bible for this stem *h-g-h* will soon discover. The verbal form is used for the moaning of a dove, and the growl of a lion; it takes as its subject the mouth, the tongue, and the palate. The action of the verb obviously has an acoustical effect because the throat can be its instrument... Moreover, the verb many times appears in a parallel relationship with another verb denoting sound. Finally, there are three nouns from this stem, all of which are used in contexts which suggest sound or tonality.

This understanding of the action of verse 2b as being recitative, not meditative, is reinforced by other biblical passages. A strikingly similar one is in God's address to Joshua upon his assumption of the leadership of Israel following Moses' death. It reads: 'Let not this book of Teaching [*torah*] depart from your mouth, but recite [*vehagiya*] it day and night' (Joshua 1:8). The mouth, of course, is here the organ of speech. This emphasis on the oral nature of the obligation is repeated several times.

In short, what all this means is that the person described in our Psalm is not one engaged in meditation and contemplation, such as is required in some mystical systems or traditions. *Rather, this individual studies a sacred text which is the object of intense focus and concentration; and the method of study is reading aloud, rote learning, and constant oral repetition.*³³

Sarna's conclusions with regard to Psalm 1 are reinforced by the use of the verb הִלֵּל with regard to the act of meditation³⁴ in Ps 119.³⁵ As with הִלֵּל in Ps 1, הִלֵּל indicates a vocal activity based around reading and recitation. The Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon defines this verb as meaning 'to meditate upon, study' or 'to talk about'.³⁶ Similarly, Gesenius offers the definition 'to talk with oneself, i.e. to meditate'.³⁷ The *New International Dic-*

³² 'It is not possible to determine what exactly was comprehended by that phrase [*torah*] in this context. From the second half of the verse—"and he recites His *torah* day and night"—it seems that it must pertain to a fixed text that can be memorised,' (*On the Book of Psalms*, 36).

³³ Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 37-8 (emphasis added). Kraus comes to the same conclusion in vol. 1 of his commentary, where he writes, 'In any case, however, the תורה in this sense is the authoritatively valid "Sacred Scripture,"' (Kraus, *Psalms*, 116) and Mays seems to imply the same sort of conclusion when he writes concerning the effect which Psalm 1 has on our reading of the Psalter as a whole: 'The book [of Psalms] is torah of the Lord. Torah means instruction, teaching, direction that can be given *in various literary forms*. The psalms provide torah that can be learned by study and meditation,' (*The Lord Reigns*, 121 [emphasis mine]). Freedman, in his detailed analysis of Ps 119 comes to the same conclusion with regard to the nature of torah: '[Torah] is the sacred, authoritative written revelation of God... Whatever its identity, *tôrâ* is the definitive sacred text,' (*Psalms* 119, 91-2).

³⁴ Or, to adopt Sarna's terms, 'rote learning'. Sarna is correct in pointing out that this is not the type of meditative contemplation practiced in many other religions, however, it should be pointed out that the desired end result of this practice is an internalisation and application of the torah of Yahweh. As long as 'meditation' is understood in these terms (rather than anything more ethereal) it does seem to be an appropriate translation of both הִלֵּל and הִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה.

³⁵ Psalm 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 148.

³⁶ Brown-Driver-Briggs, *B-D-B*; 967c.

³⁷ Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, 789.

tionary of Old Testament Exegesis and Theology suggests that the verb $\Pi\psi$ is an action ‘fluctuating between the act of speaking and thinking.’³⁸ Again, whilst the eight torah synonyms of Ps 119 are non-specific, the verb used to encourage individual interaction with the torah of Yahweh implies that the psalmist is calling upon a written text.³⁹ So, from the exhortations found in Pss 1 and 119,⁴⁰ the reader of the Psalter is expected to delight in the torah of Yahweh by way of reading, reciting and, thus, learning and internalising the divine teaching as it is found in a text. This, of course, begs a question: which text? To which text is the hearer of the psalms supposed to devote his attention?

2.1.2 Torah in the Torah Psalms and the Pentateuch

If the torah psalms are encouraging a piety based around the study of a sacred text, as is suggested above, then the identity of that text is of some significance if we are to come to proper understanding of the message of these three psalms. So which text(s) do the torah psalms refer to? There are, of course, various possible answers to this question and much depends on the period in which the torah psalms were originally written.⁴¹ Rabbinic scholars have traditionally linked the Psalter, with its five-book structure, and the Pentateuch as a whole;⁴² however, the torah synonyms found in Pss 19 and 119 are very reminiscent of the legal codes of Exodus and Deuteronomy, so others have linked the torah psalms more specifically with one or other collection of laws;⁴³ still others ask whether the ‘torah’ of the torah psalms might not be a reference to the Book of Deuteronomy itself.⁴⁴ So which text is to be the subject of torah-meditation?

³⁸ A. R. P. Diamond, “ $\Pi\psi$,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Volume 3 (gen ed W. A. VanGemeren; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997) 1234-5. Whybray comments, ‘However, of the many verses in which the psalmist speaks of this “law” of Yahweh and of his personal relationship to it, some make it plain that it is a written document (or documents). He frequently states that he has “kept” it or will keep it, does not forget it or does not turn away from it (the temporal significance of the verbs employed is not always clear). He speaks of his delight in it, his love of it, and his trust in it (v 66). He declares or recounts (*sippēr*) it (v 13); he clings (*dābaq*) to it (v 31); he has chosen it (v 173). He seeks guidance from it (*dāraś*, vv 45, 94). That it is, at least sometimes, a written document of which he has access to a copy is also probably implied by the use of the word *śiaḥ*, “meditate” (vv 15, 23, 48, 78, 99),’ (“Psalm 119,” 34-5).

³⁹ Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 28.

⁴⁰ Ps 19 is a slightly different type of text when compared to the other two torah psalms. It is (probably) an older text and, rather than serving as an exhortation to torah-piety *per se*, it is a hymn which celebrates the perfect nature of Yahweh’s teaching. Therefore, it contains neither $\Pi\psi$ or $\Pi\psi$ as part of its text. The strong lexical connections with Ps 119 and the final prayer in vv 13-15 imply, however, that the torah which is the focus of the psalmist’s celebration in Ps 19 is indeed meant to be studied and internalised.

⁴¹ Obviously, torah in the torah psalms cannot refer to the Pentateuch, for example, if the Pentateuch has not been written by the time of the psalm’s writing.

⁴² Nogalski, “From Psalm to Psalms,” 48. The *Mid. Tehillim* states that, ‘Moses gave Israel five books of the Torah, and David gave Israel five books of the Psalms,’ thus highlighting the ancient talmudic links between Psalter and Pentateuch. Some scholars link the 150 Psalms with the Palestinian triennial lectionary cycle, with a reading from the psalms accompanying the reading from the Torah (Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 18).

⁴³ Anderson, *Psalms*, 812; Briggs, *Psalms*, 168-9.

⁴⁴ Miller, for example, suggests: ‘What the conversation between these two books makes even clearer, however, is that for the Psalter, *the law is Deuteronomy*,’ (“Deuteronomy & Psalms,” 11). See also Kraus,

1. Five Book Structure

From the perspective of a canonical approach to the Book of Psalms, the five-book structure of the Psalter seems to be telling.⁴⁵ Whilst the reasons for this division are nowhere made explicit,⁴⁶ the most likely reason for this structure seems to be as a deliberate echo of the Pentateuch. Otherwise, the division of the Psalter is difficult to explain. Neither length, genre, authorship designations, or content demand this division. Each book varies in length and has a mix of genres, authorship and theological emphases. Indeed, there is no absolutely compelling reason to divide the Book of Psalms at all.⁴⁷ It seems unlikely that this division is the result of previous collections which had functioned separately as a unit. Each individual book of the Psalter seems to have absorbed smaller groups of psalms that had an existence prior to their inclusion in the Psalter⁴⁸ and at least one group of psalms appears to transcend the book divisions.⁴⁹ Thus it seems unlikely that the five-fold division of the Psalms corresponds to the existence of prior collections.

Why then five books of the Psalter? Whilst it is impossible to know for sure, the most likely reason is that the Book of Psalms was divided in this way as a deliberate echo of the Pentateuch. The editors of the Psalter in giving it a five-book structure were drawing a deliberate parallel with the Mosaic Torah:

The fivefold division of the book continues the identification. It gives the book a form that corresponds to the five books of the Mosaic Torah. The Psalter is a 'Davidic Torah,' which corresponds to and responds to the first one.⁵⁰

It is quite possible, therefore, that the fivefold division of the Psalter was intentionally created with that parallel in mind [i.e. with the five books of the Pentateuch].⁵¹

According to Psalm 1, the Psalms stand in the shadow of the Torah, which announces the principle subject matter of the Psalms and scripture as a whole. *The Torah finds its anchor in the Torah of Moses so that the Psalms, as do the Prophets, purport to be illuminating commentary on it.* Moreover, we see in the Psalms themselves that obedience to the law and trust in God as a 'refuge' is a response of loyalty to God's prior, free, and merciful claim upon Israel, rather than an effort to secure God's favour through 'works righteousness.'⁵²

Psalms, 116.

⁴⁵ This five-book division is one of the key indicators of editorial activity in the Psalter (see Wilson, *Editing*, 182-6; Childs, *IOTS*, 512).

⁴⁶ In rejecting a link between the Pentateuch and Psalter based upon the five-book structure, Nogalski writes, 'In short, the doxologies clearly divide the Psalter into five books, but the purpose of that division has not been ascertained with any degree of certainty,' ('From Psalm to Psalms,' 48).

⁴⁷ 'The pentateuchal division of the Psalter is very strange, considering that, unlike the Torah, this work is not so large as to require transcription onto several scrolls for ease of handling and convenience of study,' (Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 17).

⁴⁸ For example, the Songs of Ascents (Pss 120-134) have become part of a broader book in Book V.

⁴⁹ That is the Elohist Psalter which spans Pss 42-83 covering all of Book II and part of Book III.

⁵⁰ Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 121.

⁵¹ Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 17.

⁵² Sheppard, 'Theology,' 153 (emphasis mine).

The five-book structure is a key indicator of editorial activity in the Psalms, and the message of the redactor(s) draws the reader's attention to the parallels which exist between the Psalter and the text of the Pentateuch.

2. *Internal Indicators within Torah Psalms*

Over and above the five-book structure indicating the likelihood of a connection with the Pentateuch, there are internal indications within the torah psalms themselves (particularly Pss 19 and 119) which point towards a background in Deuteronomy, and hence, the Mosaic Law. Whybray, for example, points out with regard to torah in Ps 119 that, whilst the psalmist may have a broader notion of torah in mind, he is definitely drawing parallels with the Pentateuch:

He does not speak of the 'covenant' (*bĕrît*); but the 'law' (*tôrâ*) with its various equivalents, though its contents are not specified, *is certainly related in some way to the written laws of the Pentateuch*: this is indicated *inter alia* by the occurrence of words characteristic of Deuteronomy and the priestly laws: *tôrâ, dĕbārîm, mišwôt, mišpāṭîm*.⁵³

Similar conclusions may be drawn from analysis of Ps 19, as Mays alludes in his discussion of this text: 'The theological basis of this description [of torah in Ps 19] is the identification of the Sinai covenant and its teaching as the wisdom by which Israel is to live and find life (Deut 4:1-8).'⁵⁴ In the same vein, Kraus concludes that, 'In this expression of the will of God, which above all contains the law of God, also the historical proclamations are included (Deut. 1:5; Ps. 78:1; Neh. 8:13ff.). But the Law of God transmitted through Moses (Mal. 4:4) is and remains the real center of the תורה.'⁵⁵ Primarily, the internal indicators linking the torah psalms with the Mosaic Torah are the torah synonyms found in Ps 19 and 119.⁵⁶ As we have seen in Chapters 3 and 4 above, these terms link the torah psalms firmly with the book of Deuteronomy and thus with the Pentateuch.⁵⁷

However, the Pentateuchal connection is not solely limited to the torah terms of Pss 19 and 119: Schaefer, for example, is keen to stress that the concept of torah found in Ps 1 encapsulates both narrative and law proper within the Pentateuch, but clearly sees the psalmist's intent as linking torah with the Torah:

⁵³ Whybray, "Psalm 119," 39 (emphasis mine). Similarly with regard to the *tôrâ* referent in Ps 119, Freedman asserts that, 'The logical assumption is that the psalmist has the Pentateuch in mind,' and goes on to add that, 'the *tôrâ* that the psalm exalts includes at least the Pentateuch,' (*Psalm 119*, 89, 91).

⁵⁴ Mays, *Psalms*, 99.

⁵⁵ Kraus, *Psalms*, 273.

⁵⁶ Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 102, 704.

⁵⁷ Kraus, *Psalms*, 273. We should remember that the torah synonyms in Pss 19 and 119 also provide a link with the Pentateuch via Exodus and the Book of the Covenant (Sarna, *On the Book of Psalms*, 84-5) and also by way of the priestly legislation as well (Whybray, "Psalm 119," 39). So, whilst the primary internal connection is with the Pentateuch through Deuteronomy, the torah synonyms do connect the psalmic concept of torah with the Mosaic Torah more broadly.

The word *tôrâh* (translated 'law,' v 2) refers to the story of God's actions to create a people and guide them into the future, as described in Genesis and the first chapters of Exodus. Likewise it refers to the obligations, precepts and guidelines that shape the people's life, as in the rest of the first five books of the Bible, the Torah. These two dimensions, narration and obligation, or, in the Jewish tradition, *hagaddah* and *halakah*, are complementary.⁵⁸

There does, therefore, despite the protestations of some scholars, seem to be a strong link between the torah psalms and the Pentateuch. Whatever else the psalmists had in mind in their references to the torah of Yahweh,⁵⁹ it seems that the basis and backbone of the piety which they sought to promote is to be found in meditation upon and application of the Pentateuch, probably with a particular (but not exclusive) emphasis on Deuteronomy in mind.⁶⁰

2.2 Torah in Deuteronomy

תורה is clearly a significant concept within the Book of Deuteronomy. Of all the books of the OT, only the Psalter makes greater use of the term.⁶¹ Clearly, within Deuteronomy torah has multiple meanings,⁶² ranging from law proper⁶³ to teaching (catechesis)⁶⁴ to constitution (polity).⁶⁵ Commonly, torah is referred to with the definite article in Deuteronomy

⁵⁸ K. Schaefer, *Psalms* (Berit Olam; ed. David W. Cotter; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001) 3. Hossfeld and Zenger also see torah in Ps 1 as being linked with the Pentateuch: 'In Ps 1:2b geht es also um das halblaute Rezitieren der "Tora", damit daß Leben in Gottesfurcht (als Anfang der Weisheit: Spr 1:7) gelingt, genauer um das Begeisterung, Glück und Lust über "die Tora JHWHs" als der grundlegenden Welt- und Lebensordnung, die in der Tora des Mose geoffenbart wurde, (vgl. Sir 24), geschieht,' (*Die Psalmen I*, 37).

⁵⁹ As mentioned above, the exact extent of the sacred text to which the psalmists referred cannot be known for sure and depends on the time period in which the psalms were written. If, as seems likely, Ps 19 is the earliest of the torah psalms it may be the case that the psalmist celebrates some proto-pentateuchal text such as the Book of the Covenant or the Deuteronomic Book of the Torah (see Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 142). However, if Pss 1 and 119 are substantially later texts, it is highly likely that the psalmists' understanding of torah included *more* than just the Pentateuch (Vincent, "Shape of Psalter," 65; Allen, *Psalms*, 141-2; Childs, *IOTS*, 104-5 etc. My point here is not to suggest that the Pentateuch is the *only* source of divine revelation which the psalmists revered. Freedman, for example, suggests that the torah piety of Ps 119, as a late text, may refer to the Pentateuch, the Primary History 'or even to the entire Hebrew Bible essentially as it exists today (minus Daniel),' (*Psalms 119*, 91-2). Equally, it should be pointed out that there are strong Wisdom overtones in Pss 1, 19 and 119, so it seems likely that the Wisdom books would also be treated as 'torah' by the psalmists (Sheppard, "Theology," 153-4; Mays, *Psalms*, 98-9 etc.). In fact, the inclusion of Ps 1 implies that the Psalter itself is to be read as 'torah' (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 47; Childs, *IOTS*, 513-4). However, the Pentateuch does seem to underlie all other revelatory sources. The piety being endorsed is a book-based one, and whatever other sources of inspiration are included in their reckoning, the psalmists create a strong link with the Pentateuch as the source by which to arrive at the proper worldview according to which one lives a life of devotion to Yahweh.

⁶⁰ Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 11.

⁶¹ This, of course, is thanks to the frequent appearance of תורה in Ps 119.

⁶² Enns, "Law," 896.

⁶³ S. D. McBride, "Perspective and Context in the Study of Pentateuchal Legislation," *Old Testament Interpretation: Past, Present and Future, Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995) 47-8.

⁶⁴ D. T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994) 10-1; B. Lindars, "Torah in Deuteronomy," *Words and Meanings: Essays Presented to David Winton Thomas* (P. R. Ackroyd and B. Lindars; Cambridge: CUP, 1968) 117.

⁶⁵ McBride, "Polity," 62.

and also as a book, giving raise to the conclusion that reference is being made to some sort of fixed text.⁶⁶ However, one of the key texts with regard to a proper understanding of torah in Deuteronomy is our text from the Kingship Law (Deut 17:14-20). It is in Deut 17:18 that, for the first time, the text of Deuteronomy makes reference to *itself* as a coherent entity to be studied.⁶⁷ This self-reference has sparked much debate as to the content of the torah which the king is to write out for himself and study.⁶⁸ Does this refer to Deuteronomy as a whole, or to the legal codex, or to the kingship law itself, or to some altogether more ethereal concept? It is to this particular question that we now turn our attention.

2.2.1 'This Torah' in the Kingship Law

Most of the debate concerning the content of the reference to 'this torah' in Deut 17:18 circles around two possibilities: first, that this phrase refers to the Book of Deuteronomy itself; or, secondly, that it refers to the legal codex of Deuteronomy found in chapters 12-26.⁶⁹ In favour of the latter view are the legal overtones of the idea of torah, including the use of תורה alongside the various legal synonyms which were analysed in our study of Pss 19 and 119.⁷⁰ In favour of the former view that 'this torah' refers to the whole of the Book of Deuteronomy is the fact that the phrase often occurs in the framework of the book, seemingly denoting that the paraenetic passages which bracket the legal code are to be considered 'torah' as well.⁷¹ How can this debate be resolved and what are the implications for our comparison with the torah-kingship psalm groupings? In recent years something of a *via media* has arisen in the form of J.-P. Sonnet's work *The Book within the Book: Writing in Deuteronomy*.⁷² This re-working of Sonnet's doctoral thesis considers in great detail the Deuteronomic self-references to a written work and his conclusions are especially helpful with regard to the definition of 'this torah' in Deut 17:18. Therefore it seems appropriate to devote attention to a more detailed consideration of Sonnet's argument.

⁶⁶ See p 207f., above.

⁶⁷ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 71; Crüsemann, *Torah*, 273.

⁶⁸ See p 207, above, for a brief summary.

⁶⁹ As mentioned above (p 209) there are other possible interpretations, however, for various reasons these prove to be problematic, therefore attention shall be focussed on the two main interpretative possibilities, and the third (more recent) alternative offered by Sonnet.

⁷⁰ For example, תורה, משפט and חקים are all used in close proximity in Deut 4:1-8, and on various occasions one of the seven other legal terms used in Ps 119 is used in conjunction with torah in Deuteronomy, leaving a strongly 'legal' impression in the mind of the reader. Levinson writes concerning the concept of torah in the Kingship Law that, 'the reference seems in this context self-reflexive, and refers to the legal corpus of Deuteronomy 12-26,' ('The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah,' VT LI/4 [2001] 523). Many other commentators would share this view: Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148; Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 212; Ridderbos, *Deuteronomy*, 201 etc.

⁷¹ For example, Deut 1:5; 4:8; 30:10; 31:9 etc. (see Olson, *Death of Moses*, 10-1, 15, 139). His reasoning is different, but Mayes also seems to adopt the view that 'this torah' refers to the whole of Deuteronomy (*Deuteronomy*, 273); as does Thompson (*Deuteronomy*, 206).

⁷² J.-P. Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book: Writing in Deuteronomy* (BIS, Vol. 14; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

2.2.2 Sonnet on 'this Torah' in the Kingship Law

Sonnet describes his examination of writing in Deuteronomy as “‘a wheel within a wheel’ ... an act of communication about an act of communication,”⁷³ and he goes on to attest that, ‘in the Pentateuchal canon Deuteronomy is the book that tells about the rise of the (Torah) “book”’.⁷⁴ This is pertinent to our examination because we seek to answer the question: what is the referent of ‘this torah’ in the Kingship Law and what similarity—if any—does it bear to the concept of torah in the torah psalms?

Sonnet’s basic thesis is that there are two ‘acts of communication’ going on within the Book of Deuteronomy—the voice of the narrator and the voice of Moses—and that confusion about the content of the ‘Book of the Torah’ often stems from the confusion of these two communicative acts.⁷⁵ The narrator begins his narrative account of the people on the plains of Moab, about to enter the land but ‘almost immediately hands it over to its *dramatis persona*, whose direct speech gives the book its distinctive ring.’⁷⁶ The voice of the narrator is not heard again until 4:44-5:1 where, following on from Moses’ retelling of the historical setting which had led the people to the plains of Moab, he provides an introduction to ‘the law which Moses set before the Israelites,’ (וזאת התורה אשר-שם משה לפני בני ישראל). This interaction between narrator and central character is significant to a proper understanding of what is being expected of the king in Deuteronomy 17 because, according to Sonnet, the content of the ‘torah’ which the king is to meditate upon is what follows from 5:1b to 26:19.⁷⁷ In other words, Deut 17:18 proleptically projects the reception of the speeches and laws given by Moses into a book and this is to be the subject of the king’s meditation.⁷⁸

⁷³ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 1.

⁷⁴ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 3.

⁷⁵ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 1-3.

⁷⁶ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 1. This is significant because this introduction sets the proper parameters for understanding the text of Deuteronomy: ‘Deuteronomy is to be read within the poetic parameters established in its opening. It is not a prophetic work, but a narrative about Moses’ prophetic communication in Moab; it shares the historiographical claim made in the previous Pentateuchal narrative,’ (p 11).

⁷⁷ Sonnet suggests that Deut 27-28 should be added to this section as a kind of addenda which outlines the writing of Moses speech act in Deut 5-26 for the benefit of the people who will live ‘beyond the river’ in the land, following on from Moses’ death (pp 101-103).

⁷⁸ ‘In casting the king’s reception of (a copy of) “this Torah,” Moses’ speech projects its own reception—via the representativity of an exceptional reader. The producing and reading by the king of the Torah’s duplicate (משנה) in a particular “book” (ספר) therefore functions as what has been called in modern literary theory a *mise en abyme* or “duplication intérieure,” that is, the embedding in a work of a representation of this work. The royal duplicate on a particular scroll book is, within Moses’ Torah speech, an embedded representation of “this Torah” (in its future written form). The integrality of “this Torah” is thus anticipated and represented to the audience. “A condensed image of the overall design,” the *mise en abyme* is somehow chronologically disturbing, since it totalizes at one point what the linguistic message spells out discursively. The “duplication intérieure,” however, catalyses the addressee’s hermeneutic task in varied ways according to its place within the whole that it mirrors. In the projected “duplicate” of Deut 17:18, the audience (and, behind it, the reader) learns that Moses’ communication will eventuate in a written corpus, the standard copy that underlies the royal duplicate. The operations enjoined on the people in Deut 6:4-9 and 11:18-21 now have the background of a future, though not yet explicit, *Urschrift*.’ (Sonnet, *The Book Within*

The demonstrative 'this' [when used by the narrator] is then used as an anaphoric, referring to a previous mention of 'Torah' in the text, or to a previous stretch of discourse representing 'this Torah.' Back-reference suggests that 'this Torah (הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת)' is that which the reader perused within a definite part of the book of Deuteronomy, starting with 4:44, וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה, 'This is the Torah.' The anaphoric phrase הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, 'this Torah,' in 31:9 is thus presumably the counterpart of the cataphoric (i.e. forward-looking) one הַתּוֹרָה וְזֹאת [sic], 'This is the Torah' in 4:44 (the occurrence of 'this Torah' in 31:9 is the first use of the phrase *by the narrator* since 4:44). Whatever its exact extent, the Torah, now transcribed by Moses, is thus found between the two markers. By combining the deictic use of 'this' ('this Torah book') by Moses and its anaphoric use by the narrator ('this Torah'), Deuteronomy 31 points to the overlapping between the record on the narrative stage and a foregoing portion of the Book of Deuteronomy.⁷⁹

Therefore, Sonnet suggests that whilst the exact extent of 'this torah' as referred to in Deut 17:18 is difficult to define (i.e. is it 5:1-26:19 or 5:1-28:58) the basic content is clear: the torah which is to be the guide for the life of the king refers to the speeches of Moses from chapter 5 through until the end of the law code (and possibly beyond).⁸⁰ So the subject matter for the king's meditation is to be a book—not the Book of Deuteronomy (although ultimately this would become the case)⁸¹ nor the legal code of chapters 12-26: 'this torah' is a text made up of Moses' speeches, containing both exhortative and legal material, and this book (which was to be placed beside the ark in the tabernacle) was to be copied by the king and he was to read it daily as a life-guide.

Sonnet's thesis with regard to the Kingship Law's challenge to the king (Deut 17:18) is similar to Sarna's suggestion with regard to the piety encouraged by the torah psalms. Both indicate a practice of book-based recitation and meditation.⁸² The king in Deuteronomy is to be 'the Torah's arch-reader'⁸³ and this is to lead him to fear Yahweh in every area of practice:

The mediation of the Torah book warrants the presence of the totality of the covenant regulations next to the king; the same mediation also enables the king to have permanent access to this totality, as is required from him: וְקָרָא בּוֹ כָּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו, 'and he shall read in it all the days of his life' (17:19). This injunction features, in Moses' speeches (as in Deuteronomy), the first occurrence of the verb קָרָא, 'to call,' in the specific meaning of 'to read.'⁸⁴

the Book, 79-80).

⁷⁹ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 248.

⁸⁰ One of the other interesting features of Sonnet's work is that it suggests a cohesive approach towards understanding the interaction between narrative and legal texts within Deuteronomy, which has often been seen as a problematic issue within Deuteronomy studies.

⁸¹ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 260-2. Ultimately, for succeeding generations, the only access by which this original 'book of the torah' consisting of Mosaic speeches was available to the reader was by way of Deuteronomy as a book. Therefore, it appears that there is some merit in the suggestion that 'this book of the torah' effectively equates to Deuteronomy.

⁸² Sonnet points out the significance of the verb קָרָא, namely that the king in Deut 17:18 is also expected to internalise the torah by means of reading aloud (*The Book Within the Book*, 76). Sarna makes a similar point with regard to the practice of torah reading encouraged by Ps 1 (*On the Book of Psalms*, 38).

⁸³ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 82.

⁸⁴ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 76.

Sarna suggests that the piety of the torah psalms is based in the reverent study of a sacred text (at least the Pentateuch, but in later periods the expanding canon). Sonnet alludes to a similar idea; namely, that the king in the Kingship Law is called upon to live a life of fear of Yahweh, and is to do so also by the study of a sacred text. So it seems that there is some justification in coming to the conclusion that the 'torah' of the torah psalms and the 'torah' of the Law of the King are indeed referring to the same concept: the importance of the study of Yahweh's sacred text in order to develop a worldview that is pleasing to him.

2.3 Torah and Relationship with Yahweh

Another common feature when considering the similarities between the attitude towards torah in the Law of the King and in the torah psalms is the aim which both Psalter and Deuteronomy share: the exhortation of absolute devotion to Yahweh.⁸⁵ In some ways, although this is perhaps overstating the case, the torah is treated almost as a manifestation of Yahweh, similar to *הַכֶּמֶל* in Prov 8.⁸⁶ Certainly there is a close association between Yahweh and his torah in both Deuteronomy and the torah psalms and strong indication that devotion to the written torah has become an indispensable component for the true expression of devotion to Yahweh.⁸⁷ As Eaton points out with regard to the content of the torah psalms, 'The centre of interest... remains the Lord himself, and the relation to him.'⁸⁸ Allen likewise comments regarding the psalmist's attitude towards torah in Ps 119: 'There is no hint of legalism in any of its twenty-two strophes. It breathes a spirit of devotion and celebrates the closest of relationships between the psalmist as "your servant" and Yahweh as "my God."'⁸⁹ A similar idea is apparent in the calls to live by the torah of Yahweh

⁸⁵ Crenshaw, "Deuteronomist." Crenshaw rejects any substantial degree of Dtr influence in the Psalter based on linguistic connections and suggests that the links which do exist are unsurprising because these are similar discourses. This seems a somewhat curious argument, as if the fact that we should expect to find similarities between the Psalms and Deuteronomy somehow mitigates or dilutes the significance of these associations. The point here, however, is that, as Crenshaw points out, there are similar cohortative functions at work in the Psalter and Deuteronomy, encouraging devotion to Yahweh. The fact that we expect such ties ought to be a spur to examine these links in greater detail.

⁸⁶ This is Freedman's suggestion: 'In short, Psalm 119 gives *tôrâ* virtually the status of a divine hypostasis, like wisdom (*hokmâ*) in Proverbs 8. Psalm 119 and Proverbs 8 share vocabulary and theology. Neither *tôrâ* nor *hokmâ* can be separated from Yahweh, who created them; yet each embodies an essential aspect of Yahweh that nevertheless can be addressed, invoked, and appealed to itself as the object of devotion. Each has the power to order and bless the worshipper's life,' (Freedman, *Psalm 119*, 89-90). Whilst the attribution of 'divine hypostasis' to torah goes too far, Freedman's general point is helpful: the psalmist sees devotion to divine revelation as a very direct means of devotion to the Lord himself.

⁸⁷ Such is the extent of this association that Briggs, in his commentary, goes too far when he writes concerning the poet who penned Ps 119: 'It is not true that this author has the Deuteronomic spirit. The personal allegiance to Yahweh of D has become a legal allegiance... Love to the Law is characteristic of this poet: in the form of commands; of testimonies; of precepts... The love to the Law takes the place of the earlier Deuteronomic love to Yahweh... The object of the praise is the Law; but a later editor makes the God the object by a change of text at the expense of the measure,' (*Psalms*, 418-9, 424-5, 436). It is not that the Law itself has become the object of devotion, rather the psalmist sees it as the *essential means* for the expression of proper devotion to Yahweh.

⁸⁸ Eaton, *Psalms of the Way*, 52.

⁸⁹ Allen, *Psalms*, 141-2. See also Schaefer, *Psalms*, 47 and Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 701 for similar conclusions.

throughout the Book of Deuteronomy. Sonnet points out that it is through the written torah stipulations that Yahweh's voice continues to be heard by the people.⁹⁰ Also Deut 4:1-8 makes it clear that it is in the observance of Yahweh's ordinances Israel enjoys the nearness of God.⁹¹

2.4 Conclusion re. Torah

The idea of torah in the torah psalms and the Kingship Law is grounded in the same notion: a sacred text by way of which one comes to know the Lord and his ways through meditative recitation. Therefore it appears that, with regard to the concepts of 'torah' at least, the Kingship Law could have been the paradigm which inspired the placement of kingship psalms alongside torah psalms.

Excursus: Translation of Torah

The commentators devote considerable attention to explaining that the Hebraic understanding of תורה is much broader than our contemporary English understanding of 'law'. A modern English-language understanding of law equates the word with legislation, judicial declarations and the like: that is, with 'law proper'. The Hebrew understanding, as we have already seen is much broader than that, denoting holistic divine revelation: that is, law and narrative, poetry and prophecy—teaching in its widest sense. This has led some commentators to suggest that the English translation for תורה would be better as 'instruction' rather than 'law'.⁹² Undoubtedly, there is much merit in this suggestion, as the Hebrew concept is clearly broader than that which is found in 'law' as understood in Western society today. On the other hand, however, it seems that to follow this course of action in the translation of EVV would ultimately require as much, if not more, scholarly explanation than the present translation does. The problem with the translation 'instruction' is that contemporary Western society also lacks any concept of God's instruction within the context of binding covenant. 'Instruction' or 'teaching', according to modern understanding, implies a 'take-it-or-leave-it' educative function. We can accept or reject instruction as we please. 'Instruction' captures the didactic nature of the torah of Yahweh, but not its covenantal aspect. The torah *is* didactic, educational and *does* include much more than law. However, to adopt this as a translation in the EVV would require the added explanation that this 'instruction' is not an optional extra, but is absolutely binding on the people of God. McBride's comments are telling:

⁹⁰ 'In the perspective opened in 30:10, Moses' oral mediation gives way to the written document's: "since you will be hearing the voice of YHWH your God and keeping his commandments and his statutes which are written in this record of the Torah." The concept of obedience includes now the reference to the divine voice as well as the reference to the written record. God's voice that could not be heard except through Moses' is now mediated by the written stipulations of "this record of the Torah," (Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 110).

⁹¹ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 128-31; Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 53-7.

⁹² Lindars, "Torah."; Olson, *Death of Moses*, 10-1; deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 42; B. de Pinto, "The Torah and the Psalms," *JBL* 86 (1967) 155; Mays, *Psalms*, 41-2, and many others.

Although modern commentators often remark that the typical rendering of *tôrâ* as ‘law’ in English translations is misleading, the alternatives usually proposed on the basis of etymological considerations, ‘teaching’ and ‘instruction,’ are scarcely an improvement as far as the Deuteronomic usage is concerned. Conception of *tôrâ* as ‘teaching’ or ‘instruction’ has promoted a much too facile understanding of Deuteronomy itself as essentially a didactic, moralizing, or homiletical work. More importantly, neither term conveys the normative, prescriptive force of *tôrâ* in Deuteronomy. The ‘words’ or ‘stipulations’ of ‘this torah’ are not simply admonitions and sage advice offered in the name of Moses to guide the faithful along a divinely charted path of life; they are set forth as sanctioned political policies, to be ‘diligently observed’ by Israelite king and common citizen alike (17:19; 31:12; 32:45), and on their strict observance hangs the fate of the entire nation (e.g., 28:58-68). What speaks against the rendering ‘law’ is not some inchoate threat of legalism that might diminish the theological vitality of the Hebrew term, for while *tôrâ* in Deuteronomy is theologically cogent, it remains no less decidedly a jurisprudential concept. Rather, the problem is that neither our English word ‘law’ nor its Greek counterpart, *nomos*, is sufficiently discrete to express at once the distinctiveness and the scope which *tôrâ* exhibits, especially in Deuteronomic usage but also elsewhere. On the one hand, *tôrâ* in this usage is not an abstraction or umbrella term covering every rule, decision, and act that Israelite social authority might choose to acknowledge and enforce; on the other hand, it does connote the totality of particular categories of legislation and judicial practice appropriate to it. It is the type of law connoted by *tôrâ* that is at issue. We can name it most easily with reference to its self-declared function: ‘This torah’ is covenantal law, the divinely authorized social order that Israel must implement to secure its collective political existence as the people of God.⁹³

As McBride points out, the translation ‘instruction’ would be equally inadequate and would require clarification of a different type, explaining that this instruction is binding and essential to proper relationship with Yahweh.

What conclusions can be offered? First, it seems that the translation ‘instruction’ may accentuate antinomian tendencies which are all too prevalent in contemporary Christian churches (in Western societies, at least). Secondly, this translation would not do away with the need of further explanation, it would merely require a different type of clarification. Neither ‘law’ nor ‘instruction’ encompasses all aspects of the Hebrew תורה. Ultimately, there is no single English word which adequately conveys the various aspects of תורה.⁹⁴ The best solution seems to be the one suggested by the recently published ESV⁹⁵ which adheres to the traditional translation ‘law’ (thus indicating the binding nature of this divine revelation) but offers clarification, by way of footnotes, that this term also includes the nuance of ‘instruction’ (thus pointing out the didactic nature of this word).

⁹³ McBride, “Polity,” 65-6.

⁹⁴ Of course, there are instances of contextual usage where the word תורה does mean precisely ‘law’ or ‘instruction’ and in such cases the word should be translated accordingly. This discussion is pertinent to the many occasions where the context does not lead the reader to a specific understanding of this word.

⁹⁵ English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2001).

3. Kingship

If there is an area where one's first reaction would be to say that the Psalms and Deuteronomy certainly speak with different voices, it would be the area of kingship. First impressions seem to indicate that Deuteronomy is—at best—cautious about kingship,⁹⁶ whereas the Psalms are overwhelmingly positive about kingship.⁹⁷ As McConville points out in his forthcoming commentary, the Dtr view of kingship (as expressed in the Kingship Law) and David-Zion view of kingship (as found primarily in the Psalms) are different and we should not attempt to explain these differences away lightly.⁹⁸ However, this whole issue is relevant to the underlying analysis of this thesis: how does *the juxtaposition* of kingship and torah psalms influence the reader's understanding of kingship in the Psalter? Could it be that this editorial placement of psalms within the canonical Psalter subtly changes or redefines the psalmic view of monarchy?⁹⁹ It must also be admitted that Deuteronomy's view of king and monarchy is not straightforward either. Much scholarly discussion is focussed upon the issue of whether the book is pro- or anti-monarchic. Therefore, we must be careful to define the extent of the discussion in this section. The central question which will be addressed is: how do *the texts in question* view the concept of kingship and, again, could the Law of the King reasonably have acted as the paradigm for the juxtaposition of kingship and torah psalms in the Psalter?

3.1 Kingship in Torah-Kingship Psalm Groupings

One of the effects of a canonical approach to the Psalter is that individual poetic texts are to be read and interpreted within a broader context: the macro context of the Book of Psalms; the context of the book within which the poem is found; the context of a collection, perhaps; and the context of its placement alongside neighbouring psalms. This style of interpretation within various contexts has marked implications for the understanding of any given text.¹⁰⁰ For example, certain psalms, when read as individual texts, can seem to advocate a simplistic (almost formulaic) doctrine of 'health and wealth' for God's people, yet when these same texts are read in the broader canonical context of neighbouring laments and imprecations, their interpretation is modified and nuanced by that context.

⁹⁶ Halpern, *Constitution*, 226-31.

⁹⁷ Howard, "Case for Kingship in Pss."

⁹⁸ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 306. I am grateful to Dr McConville for a sneak preview of the section of his commentary dealing with the law concerning the offices.

⁹⁹ It should be remembered that the examination of kingship in the psalms in this section, focuses attention on the torah-kingship psalm groupings. This is not an attempt to provide a definitive discussion of the whole Psalter's view of the king, as such a task would go well beyond the remit of this thesis, taking into account many more psalms (including the remaining 'royal' psalms and many—if not most—of the 'I' psalms in the Psalter).

¹⁰⁰ Mays, "Ps 118," 302-3; Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 126-7; Schaefer, *Psalms*, xxi.

Ps 2 is seen as a classic example of a 'royal' psalm.¹⁰¹ As such it seems to celebrate the kingship of Yahweh's anointed unequivocally and without restraint.¹⁰² Such wholehearted affirmation of king and Zion could not seem further from the guarded approach of the Kingship Law with its limitations on the power of the monarch. In Ps 2 the king need merely ask to receive the nations as his inheritance; in Deut 17 he is instructed not to hoard silver and gold. On a *prima facie* level, these passages seem to reflect two entirely different views of kingship.

Such an interpretation results from reading Ps 2 as a text without a context.¹⁰³ Within the context of the Psalter as a whole, as we have seen in previous chapters, Ps 2 forms the second part of the introduction, and it is closely linked to Ps 1. Reading Psalm 2 in the broader canonical context of its association with Psalm 1 radically changes the interpretation of that text. How so? The בן-משיח-מלך of Yahweh in Ps 2 is to be read in the light of the שׂיח of Ps 1.¹⁰⁴ The chosen ruler is, like all Israelites, called to live life under the rule of Yahweh's torah. The implication seems to be that, for the chosen king to enjoy the support of Yahweh as indicated by Ps 2, the king—like the 'blessed man'—should delight in Yahweh's torah.¹⁰⁵ The monarchic power and privilege of Psalm 2 cannot be divorced from the covenant obedience of Psalm 1.

So, when reading Pss 1 and 2 in conjunction, the reader is left with a fused image of individual and king subject to the rule of Yahweh (through obedience to his torah) and taking refuge in him (dependent upon him).¹⁰⁶ This image, suggested by a canonical reading of Pss 1 and 2, is echoed in the other torah-kingship psalm groupings. In the king-

¹⁰¹ Gunkel's definition of 'royal' psalms as a form or type does seem fundamentally flawed, as most of the psalms classed 'royal' do, in fact, vary greatly in terms of generic type (Eaton, *Kingship*, 20-6; Waltke, "Psalms," 1103). Rather than being classified according to genre, these texts are defined by the fact that they mention the king or David or anointed one or Zion etc. Ps 2 is a good example of this type of psalm because it mentions 'king', 'anointed', 'son' and 'Zion' along with other pointedly royal images (e.g. 'scepter'). As far as I am aware the commentators all agree (with the exception of Gerstenberger who sees this psalm as late and eschatological in origin, *Psalms Part I: With an Introduction to Cultic Poetry* [FOTL, Vol. XIV; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988] 48-9) that this psalm is somehow connected with the Davidic monarchy.

¹⁰² Oesterley, *Psalms*, 123.

¹⁰³ Not that it would be hermeneutically inappropriate to examine Ps 2 as a text in its own right. The point is, however, that a canonical reading does make a difference to the interpretation of individual texts. Texts that have traditionally been understood in certain terms take on a more nuanced interpretation when read in the light of their neighbours: Ps 2 is a classic example of this principle at work. See, for example, Mays, "Question of Context," esp. 19-20 and Brueggemann responds in kind suggesting, 'The question of context is in the end, I believe, the invitation to try the literature as a whole, and *to interpret each of the parts in terms of the whole*,' ("Response to Mays, 'The Question of Context'," *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* [JSOTSup 159; ed. J. C. McCann; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993] 36, emphasis mine).

¹⁰⁴ Miller, "Beginning," 91-2.

¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Creach points out that the concept of 'taking refuge in Yahweh' (בִּלְטֹחַ יְהוָה, Ps 2:12) becomes intimately linked with the idea of torah-obedience when read in the context of the whole book (*Yahweh as Refuge*, 73). The king, in taking refuge in Yahweh, is expected to do so through living in accordance with his law.

¹⁰⁶ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 67, 80; Miller, "Beginning," 19-20; Mays, *Psalms*, 48-9.

ship psalms (Pss 2, 18, 20-21, 118) the psalmist paints a picture of the ruler as one dependent upon Yahweh for deliverance.¹⁰⁷ The torah psalms, in turn, emphasize the importance of the written revelation of God for king/individual to live righteously before him.¹⁰⁸ This constant juxtaposition of a monarch depending not on his own strength but on Yahweh and the importance of the individual's response to the יהוה תורת seems to echo the main thrust of the Kingship Law. Miller writes concerning this type of juxtaposition in Pss 1 and 2:

At this point, therefore, one recognizes a major link between Psalms 1 and 2 that is provided by Deuteronomy in its latest editorial stages. In the Deuteronomic law of the king, the ruler is given only one responsibility, one assignment. It is to have 'a copy of this law' (*mišnēh hattôrâ hazzō't*, Deut 17:18) with him always, to read in it all the days of his life, and to learn to fear the Lord by keeping all its words. In the Deuteronomic ideal of human rule, the 'îš or 'one' whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on it continually, is the king. The ideal ruler therefore is the model Israelite.¹⁰⁹

Miller develops this connection further with regard to Pss 18-19, where he observes that, 'the term "servant," according to the book in general, but more particularly in this collection, is to be associated with two figures, the ruler and the torah lover, *two figures who here merge into one*.'¹¹⁰ He goes on to suggest that, 'the collection in Psalms 15-24 may be seen as defining proper kingship at the beginning of the Psalter. Obedience to torah and trust in Yahweh's guidance and deliverance are the way of Israel and the way of kingship.'¹¹¹ These observations lead Miller to the conclusion, noted in the introduction, that, 'we are once more before the Deuteronomistic theology of kingship. It may be that all of this in fact reflects a Deuteronomistic influence on the redaction of the Psalter. I do not know. If it does, then we are made even more aware of the centrality of that particular stream in biblical theology and its influence on the theology of kingship and the royal ideal.'¹¹²

Finally, with regard to Pss 118 and 119, the reader is also aware of this same pattern of royal dependence upon Yahweh and the centrality of torah, thus pointing once again towards the Law of the King in the juxtaposition of these two texts. The king leads the people in worship and his central confession, which secures admittance to the Temple (118:22) refers to the deliverance of Yahweh in response to the king's impassioned plea

¹⁰⁷ This content has been discussed in some detail in Chapters 2-4 above.

¹⁰⁸ See also Chapters 2-4 above.

¹⁰⁹ Miller, "Beginning," 91. Miller goes on to add that, 'The 'îš of Psalm 1 is as much a ruler as the ruler of Psalm 2 is an 'îš,' thus showing that the instruction of Pss 1 and 2 applies as much to covenant individuals as it does to kings, we shall discuss this further below (pp 229-235), in the discussion of 'Democratisation', where we will also consider the idea of the king as 'brother' from the Kingship Law, which seems relevant to this consideration as well.

¹¹⁰ Miller, "Kingship," 128 (emphasis mine).

¹¹¹ Miller, "Kingship," 140.

¹¹² Miller, "Kingship," 141. The main emphasis of this thesis is an examination of the rhetorical question which Miller poses, and, indeed, it does appear that the Dtr theology of kingship does influence the Psalter's concept of 'the theology of the king and the royal ideal.'

(vv 5-14). The royal figure of Ps 118 makes clear his dependence upon Yahweh¹¹³ and the royal figure of Ps 119 makes clear his devotion to Yahweh by way of an archetypal example of devotion to his torah.¹¹⁴

3.1.1 Conclusion re. Kingship in Torah-Kingship Psalm Groupings

This examination of the view of kingship presented in the torah-kingship psalm groupings reveals that these particular psalms consider the king to be characterised by two features: dependence upon Yahweh and devotion to his torah. These features, as we shall discuss presently, clearly resonate with the Dtr presentation of the ideal king in Deut 17:14-20. Interpretation of these psalms in their canonical context adds nuance to the Psalter's presentation of the monarchy. Obviously, the psalmic view of kingship is broader than the psalms which have been considered, therefore, this conclusion must be held in creative tension with the presentation of the king found in, for example, Pss 72 and 110.¹¹⁵ The suggestion being proposed here is not that David-Zion theology is absent from the Psalms, but, rather that this theology—when the royal psalms in question are read from a canonical perspective—is, perhaps, not as far removed from the Dtr ideal of kingship as one might expect because it has been influenced by the theological ideas of the Dtr Law of the King.¹¹⁶

3.2 Kingship in the Kingship Law

The debate concerning kingship in Deuteronomy and the DtrH rages on unabated. In recent years Knoppers has suggested that Deuteronomy's view of kingship and DtrH's take on the same topic differ: the former being anti-monarchic and the latter pro-monarchic.¹¹⁷ Levinson has suggested that torah has been elevated above the monarchy at some late stage (possibly during Manasseh's reign) as a controlling ideal seeking (unrealistically) to limit the power of an ANE monarch.¹¹⁸ Both of these articles (and other scholarly works) point out differences between Deuteronomy and the DtrH in their presentation of kingship. This may well be the case, yet in a certain sense these works seek to answer a question not asked by the text. The question is not one of Deuteronomy being for or against the monarchy: rather the 'correct question' should be, as Gerbrandt puts it, 'to ask what kind of kingship he [the Deuteronomist] saw as ideal for Israel, or what role kingship was expected to play for Israel?'¹¹⁹ Such is the purpose of the Kingship Law, to tell the reader, not whether

¹¹³ Mays, "Ps 118," 306; Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 67; Harman, *Psalms*, 377.

¹¹⁴ For full discussion of the royal background to Pss 119 see chapter 4, pp 141-145. See also Soll, *Psalms 119*, 133-5; Eaton, *Psalms*, 274; Dahood, *Psalms III*, 173; Schaefer, *Psalms*, 10-1.

¹¹⁵ It should be added that these kingship psalms which seem, at first reading (like Ps 2), to express royal prerogatives strongly must also be read in the light of their context within the Book of Psalms. Such a reading may also lead to a slightly different understanding of the theology of these psalms.

¹¹⁶ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 306.

¹¹⁷ Knoppers, "Deuteronomist and Deuteronomic Law of the King."

¹¹⁸ Levinson, "Reconceptualization," 527-8.

¹¹⁹ Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 41.

there should be a king, but *what type* of king the community should seek to appoint.¹²⁰

To summarise the findings of Chapter 5, there appears to be one over-arching principle which dictates the tone of the Kingship Law, and this is manifest in two particular emphases of that particular law. The over-arching principle, as in the whole of Deuteronomy, is that Yahweh is the true King. Therefore he is Lord over all his people, including the king.¹²¹ This over-arching principle finds manifestation in two particular aspects of the Law of the King: the limitation of royal powers (forcing an attitude of dependence) and the king's submission to the torah of Yahweh.¹²²

These two emphases of the Kingship Law point the reader to conclusions similar to those observed with regard to the concept of kingship in our selected psalms. The king's powers are limited—neither military might, nor international treaties, nor wealth shall be the source of his strength—and the purpose of those limitations is to keep the monarch entirely dependent upon Yahweh, and not upon his own might or external factors.¹²³ Over and above this, the king (like the people) is subject to the rule of Yahweh's torah. He is not above the law, but subject to the same strictures of the covenant as are all Israelites.¹²⁴ These limitations, however, are not entirely negative. They do have a positive corollary: namely, the king becomes the archetypal follower of Yahweh.¹²⁵ The king was meant to be

¹²⁰ Chapter 5 of this thesis gives due consideration to this very question. It should be stressed, however, that the presentation of a theology of kingship in Deut 17 is only one of many voices throughout the OT concerning monarchy in Israel and Judah. Prophetic and historical accounts may, indeed, present kingship in a different light. One of the key issues in any such comparative study (viewing kingship from the perspective of Deut cf. DtrH, for example) is to have the right starting point. Both Knoppers and Levinson assume an anti-monarchic message in the Law of the King and this, obviously influences their conclusions. The desire here is not to try to reduce these voices into one, but rather to let the Kingship Law speak for itself uninfluenced by the various narrative traditions of the DtrH. The suggestion made in Chapter 5 of this thesis is that the Kingship Law is, in fact neutral, if cautious, concerning the idea of kingship (not anti-monarchic), but is quite explicit about the *type* of kingship which should function in Israel.

¹²¹ This principle is readily observable the content of the Book of Deuteronomy and also in its structure. The constant theme of the book is that Yahweh rules the people whether they are in the wilderness or in the land, (Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 208; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 523 etc.). It is also inherent to the suzerain-vassal treaty structure of Deuteronomy. The message of the structure of Deuteronomy is clear: Yahweh is the Great King and Lord over his people (Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, 205-6; Olson, *Death of Moses*, 128-9).

¹²² McBride, "Polity," 74; McConville, "King and Messiah," 276-8; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 166.

¹²³ Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 89. Gerbrandt particularly emphasizes the fact that the king is not to serve the primary function of military leader as this is Yahweh's remit. It is for this reason that Samuel and Yahweh react so negatively to the request for a king in 1 Sam 8. Gerbrandt submits that it was not the request for a king *per se* that provoked the divine reaction, but rather the fact that the people sought a king like the other nations 'to go before us and fight our battles' (8:20) that particularly provoked the divine and prophetic displeasure (p 101 etc.).

¹²⁴ As Lohfink points out, in the polity of Israel 'the Torah always has pride of place,' ("Distribution," 350-1). He goes on to add regarding the king that, 'First, the law concerning kings subordinates the king completely to the Torah. According to 17:18-20, he must possess a copy of the Torah and keep it always by him, reading from it daily, so that he learns to fear Yahweh and to observe all the words of the Torah. Like every other Israelite (17:20), he is thus totally subject to the Torah.'

¹²⁵ Various authors use a variety of phrases for this highly symbolic role of the king as an example for the people. For Sonnet, the king becomes 'arch-reader' of the Mosaic torah speeches when they attain written form (*The Book Within the Book*, 71). For Gerbrandt, the king becomes 'covenant administrator':

an example of these two factors for the people of Israel: (1) complete reliance upon Yahweh; and (2) excellence in devotion towards Yahweh by meditating on and living in accordance with Yahweh's torah.

3.3 Conclusion re. Kingship

Two features are central to the Dtr presentation of the king. First, the king is not to place his trust in anything or anyone other than Yahweh. He is to depend entirely upon God. Such total trust in Yahweh is echoed in the prayer, confessions and praises of the kingship psalms considered above (Pss 2, 18, 20-21 and 118). In each of these psalms Yahweh is the main protagonist on the monarch's behalf. In no case does the king even suggest self-sufficiency or trust in any other source—in fact, he frequently denies trust in alternative sources of power. Equally, the king according to the Deuteronomist is to learn to fear Yahweh by way of torah-meditation and application in his life (Deut 17:18, 20). Correspondingly, the royal psalms are placed alongside torah psalms (Pss 1, 19, 119), implying the same conclusion: the king in the Psalter is also subject to the torah of Yahweh. The Dtr ideal of kingship does, indeed, find expression in the Book of Psalms by way of the juxtaposition of torah and kingship poems.

One of the most interesting observations is that Psalms 1, 19, and 119 all occur in juxtaposition to a psalm about kingship. This pairing, Mays concludes, suggests that, in the thinking of the editors of the book,

life under the Lord must be understood and recited in the light of the reign of the Lord and that all psalms concerned with the kingship of the Lord must be understood and recited with the Torah in mind.

Within the matrix of meditation on *tôrâ* and submission to Yahweh's rule the whole Psalter is to be read and understood.¹²⁶

This matrix follows the pattern of the Kingship Law and became a paradigm for the redactors of the Psalter. This twofold message of torah-obedience and dependence on Yahweh provided a rubric for the encouragement of a similar devotion to Yahweh amongst the readers of the Psalter, thus influencing also the picture of the king of eschatological hope found in the Psalms.

4. Democratisation

The conclusions of this chapter so far indicate that there are, indeed, similarities between the psalmic view of torah and kingship, as found in the torah-kingship psalm groupings, and the view of these concepts presented in Deuteronomy's Kingship Law. There is, as we have seen in the discussion throughout Chapters 2-5, one further area of apparent cor-

'This is then our proposal for how the Deuteronomist understood kingship. It could be summarised by saying that the Deuteronomist expected the king to lead Israel by being the covenant administrator; then he could trust Yahweh to deliver. At the heart of this covenant was Israel's obligation to be totally loyal to Yahweh,' (*Kingship*, 104).

¹²⁶ Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*, 16, citing Mays, "Place of the Torah-Psalms," 10.

respondence between these texts which needs to be addressed: that is, the idea of democratisation. The Kingship Law explicitly speaks to the king, but it is also part of the Mosaic torah speeches which were ultimately to take the form of sacred text for the whole community in Israel.¹²⁷ What, then, does this text mean for the people? Is it no more than a yardstick by which to judge the actions of the reigning monarch? Or do the strictures and exhortations addressed to the king somehow speak to the community as a whole also?¹²⁸ Equally, within the Psalter the reader is placed in the somewhat unusual position of trying to understand a poetic book dominated in various ways by the figure of the king, yet, at the time of the book's closure there was no king in Jerusalem. Indeed, most likely, there had been no king in Jerusalem for some considerable time. How was it that these psalms survived?¹²⁹ How then is the reader to view these kingship psalms? Are they no more than historical curiosities?¹³⁰ Or have they taken on some new meaning for the reader of the Psalter?¹³¹

It seems that, in both Deuteronomy and the Psalms, the teaching concerning the king has come to mean more to the people than was originally the case, as succeeding generations—in changed historical settings—approach these texts afresh. The texts concerning the king speak also to the people.¹³² So we now turn our attention to this question of the democratisation of royal texts in the torah-kingship psalms and the Kingship Law.

4.1 Democratisation of Torah and Kingship Psalms

There is a sense in which the generic nature of all psalms means that they are democratised material. That is, the psalms were written by an individual with regard to a particular situation (be it factual or typical), yet they are expressed in such a way that the lessons learned or the prayers and praises offered may be adopted by *any* individual in *any* similar situation of need or gratitude.¹³³ However, there is a particular sense of interpretative movement with regard to the royal psalms. Poems which were at one point connected with the ceremonial, cultic, political or military activities of the Davidic king are, in the post-exilic (and therefore post-monarchic) period, interpreted differently.¹³⁴ This change of interpretative understanding manifests itself in two ways: in terms of eschatological re-reading and in terms of community adoption of royal texts.¹³⁵

¹²⁷ Sonnet, *The Book Within the Book*, 79-82.

¹²⁸ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148-9.

¹²⁹ Barth, *Introduction*, 23.

¹³⁰ McCann, *Psalms*, 649-50.

¹³¹ Starbuck, *Court Oracles*, 61.

¹³² Miller, "Beginning," 91-2.

¹³³ As Waltke puts it: 'Most of the psalms, including those whose author is identified, are written in abstract terms, not with reference to specific historical incidences, so that others could use them in their worship,' ("Psalms," 1103). See also Miller, "Current Issues," 138; Childs, "Psalm Titles."

¹³⁴ Sheppard, *Future of the Bible*, 64-6; Vincent, "Shape of Psalter," 66.

¹³⁵ The first of these strategies for the re-interpretation of the Psalter's royal psalms has been dealt with in some detail in Chapter 1 of this thesis (pp 25-30 above). Clearly, the post-exilic reader of the psalms

4.1.1 Reinterpretation of Royal Psalms

As the question of the eschatological re-reading of royal psalms has been dealt with in Chapter 1, the second of these strategies for the re-reading of the royal psalms shall here be the focus of our attention. The pre-exilic compositions written by or about the king are re-interpreted more broadly in the post-exilic period as dealing with situations that are common to all people. Starbuck describes how this process of re-interpretation came about:

The one-time representative for all of Israel is now represented through all Israel. It is not so much that the people collectively become 'king', but rather, that the oracular promises pledged of old are now re-interpreted as promises to the entire community. This reappropriation and reinterpretation is a most significant development of Israel's theological-anthropology. It is also inexplicable from the standpoint of court-sponsored royal ideology. At the same time, the understanding that any Israelite could become a faithful office bearer was already implicit in the traditions which combined an unconditional royal-grant of 'office' and 'dynasty' with a conditional approval of the individual filling the office.¹³⁶

As Starbuck points out, a significant part of this process of reinterpretation is based in the fact that even during the monarchic period the king as 'office bearer' was meant to act as an example of commitment to Yahweh for the people. Failure to follow the divine instruction would lead to removal from office.¹³⁷ It seems that the purpose of the office bearers in general, and of the king in particular, was to act as exemplar for the people—to be a model Israelite and example to follow.¹³⁸ This exemplary function is accentuated even further in the period when there was no king: the poetic presentation of the ideal of obedience to Yahweh is set up as an example for all the readers and hearers of the Psalms.

Thanks to this exemplary aspect to the role of the king, it seems that the hermeneutical re-interpretation of the royal psalms was not a fraught task, but one which would occur quite naturally to both redactor and reader.¹³⁹ During the time of the monarchy the royal psalms were examples of prayer and piety, lament and thanksgiving associated with the king, but

would feel as strong sense of dissonance concerning the content of the royal psalms and the historical reality of his or her day (in fact this would probably be true of the reader throughout much of the monarchic period also). Rather than rejecting these psalms in the final form of the book the editors retained them and placed them in prominent positions throughout the Psalter. One of the main reasons for doing so was the eschatological expectation of a renewed Davidic kingdom which seems to have been fairly prevalent around the time of the closure of the Psalter. See the quote from Vincent, pp 28-29 n. 121, above.

¹³⁶ Starbuck, *Court Oracles*, 211-2.

¹³⁷ 1 Kings 2:1-4; 11:11, 34 etc. The question of whether or not the Davidic covenant was conditional or unconditional is another area of DtrH studies which provokes a great deal of discussion. This is not an issue of central importance to the thesis proposed here, except to say that—based on the Kingship Law and certain texts of the DtrH—there does appear to be an expectation that the king follow the torah of Yahweh. However, this is not the only 'voice' on this matter, certainly torah-obedience is of considerable importance re. kingship, and yet words of divine grace based in the Davidic covenant are heard frequently in the OT also.

¹³⁸ Allen, "David as Exemplar."

¹³⁹ R. F. Melugin, "Canon and Exegetical Method," *Canon, Theology and Old Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (eds. G. M. Tucker, D. L. Petersen and R. R. Wilson; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) 55-6.

for the people as a whole.¹⁴⁰ The king's example of life *coram Dei*, expressed in the psalms, was exemplary for the people.¹⁴¹ As the king expressed his absolute trust in Yahweh, so the people could echo his words in prayer.¹⁴² As the king lamented over opposition, so the people could lament in the face of their own difficulties. The king in the psalms functions as a model for the people to follow,¹⁴³ therefore this process of post-exilic re-interpretation of royal texts from the perspective of the people would have been quite natural.¹⁴⁴

4.1.2 Democratisation of Torah-Kingship Psalm Groupings

Miller develops these thoughts with regard to the reinterpretation of two of the three torah-kingship psalms groupings.¹⁴⁵ First, with regard to the Psalter's introduction, it is worth quoting extensively from Miller's argument:

At this point, therefore, one recognizes a major link between Psalms 1 and 2 that is provided by Deuteronomy in its latest editorial stages. In the Deuteronomic law of the king, the ruler is given only one responsibility, one assignment. It is to have 'a copy of this law' (*mišnēh hattôrâ hazzō't*, Deut 17:18) with him always, to read in it all the days of his life, and to learn to fear the Lord by keeping all its words. In the Deuteronomic ideal of human rule, the 'îš or 'one' whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on it continually, is the king. The ideal ruler therefore is the model Israelite.

...There is also a reverse way of reading from these psalms into the ones that follow than the one outlined above. The dual introduction creates a certain ambiguity for the reading of the psalms. The subject introduced to us is clearly the king against his enemies. But it is also the 'îš against the wicked, that is, *anyone* who lives by the Torah of the Lord and thus belongs to the righteous innocent who cry out in these psalms. So one may not read these psalms as exclusively concerning rulers.

...[T]he ruler is the 'îš of Psalm 1, but to no greater extent than any member of the community who delights in the law of the Lord and walks in the way of the righteous. *Psalm 1 placed before Psalm 2, therefore, joins Deuteronomy in a kind of democratizing move that stands in tension with the royal one arising out of the placing of Psalm 2 as the lead into Psalms 3ff...* [T]he anointed one is simply a true Israelite even as he is a true king... The 'îš of Psalm 1 is as much a ruler as the ruler of Psalm 2 is an 'îš.¹⁴⁶

Miller makes the point concisely: there is a democratising principle at work in the juxtaposition of Pss 1 and 2 based around the Law of the King. The figure of the king is an example of proper piety for the people and the juxtaposition of the אִישׁ and מֶלֶךְ in Pss 1 and 2 makes this democratising principle clear. The people are expected to follow the example of piety as set in the ideal of kingship (Deut 17:14-20).

¹⁴⁰ Creach writes that, 'late Psalms seemed to borrow from earlier writings that described... the piety of the king in order to express and encourage a personal devotion,' (*Yahweh as Refuge*, 73).

¹⁴¹ Soll, *Psalm 119*, 133.

¹⁴² See Starbuck, *Court Oracles*, 103, where he writes, 'the [royal] prayers that were reused were appropriated not only by monarchs but by commoners as well.'

¹⁴³ Soll, *Psalm 119*, 130-1; Starbuck, *Court Oracles*, 210-1.

¹⁴⁴ Allen, "David as Exemplar," 545.

¹⁴⁵ See "Beginning," 83-92, with regard to the interpretation and re-interpretation of Pss 1 and 2 and "Kingship," 127-42, concerning the re-interpretation of the royal concepts of Pss 18-21.

¹⁴⁶ Miller, "Beginning," 91-2 (emphasis mine).

With regard to Pss 18-21, Miller argues that a similar principle is at work (again, a more extensive citation helps to clarify the overall argument):

[Pss 15-24] are a collection of psalms or prayers centering around loving obedience of the torah and the king as the embodiment of that way or that ideal. But it is clearly the case that this collection, introduced by Pss 1 and 2, resonates with Deuteronomy at one quite critical point: the equality of the king with other Israelites, the democratizing of kingship and the royalizing of the people. In Deuteronomy, this is especially seen in the law of the king...

I would suggest the same is the case here. There is no explicit reference to the king in Ps 15 nor to the human king in Ps 24. It is only from the center [i.e. Pss 18-21] that we move backward and forward to see in those psalms a reflection of the one who fulfills the righteousness they [Pss 15 and 24] seek. If the king passes Israel's test according to the Deuteronomistic formulation and models Israelite obedience according to the Deuteronomistic law, it is also the case that any member of the community may fulfill the torah-piety that is exemplified in the king and reflected in the answers to the liturgical questions of Pss 15 and 24. Whoever lives this way may enter into the presence of the Lord in the sanctuary. Whoever meets the requirements is the *ʾîš* of Ps 1, the torah lover and keeper... As I have suggested, 'the king, indeed David, is a representative figure, and never more so than as the one who lives by the Lord's torah.'¹⁴⁷

Once more, the centrality of the king in the collection of Psalms 15-24 is most significant because of the example that he sets for all of God's people. There is a democratising principle at work in this torah-kingship psalm grouping (Pss 18-21) which echoes the agenda of the Dtr Kingship Law: the king shall live as an example of commitment to Yahweh for all God's people to follow.

The same sort of democratising effect is at work in Pss 118-119, where the king leads the community in an entrance liturgy (Ps 118) and provides an example of prayerful devotion to Yahweh by way of commitment to his torah (Ps 119). Soll suggests that one of the reasons why the identity of the individual in Ps 119 is not defined more clearly is because of this very process of democratisation—the prayer of the king has become the prayer of the people.¹⁴⁸ Frost makes the same sort of observation with regard to Ps 118.¹⁴⁹ As with the previous two groupings, we see an association which reflects the theology of the Kingship Law: Ps 118 expresses the king's dependence upon Yahweh for deliverance and Ps 119 the king's delight in his torah. The psalmist-king is presented as the exemplar of these attitudes in Pss 118-119.

¹⁴⁷ Miller, "Kingship," 130-1.

¹⁴⁸ Soll, *Psalms 119*, 138-9. He comments that Ps 119, though once associated with the king, has become 'democratised and used in rituals for commoners.'

¹⁴⁹ Frost, "Psalm 118," 161-2. Frost suggests that, '[Ps 118] is itself the product of the inner court. It was the thanksgiving of the king for victory in battle and for his vindication in the eyes of the people. But when the kingship departed it was taken over for use with a wider reference and adapted for congregational use. The "I" of the psalm now became not the king but the nation. It was used to express the perennial sense of the people of God that "Zion with Babylon must cope," and she survives in her warfare only by the grace of God, and that as constantly renewed.' He goes on to add that, 'the democratisation of religion is a steady factor in the life of the ancient east,' (p 162).

Not only the theological content, but also the pattern of democratisation is common to all three of these psalm groupings. In them the idealised figure of the king is held up as an example to the people. The piety of the king (probably seen by most post-exilic readers as David¹⁵⁰) is held up as an example for the people to follow. Not only are these psalms meant to influence the Psalter's presentation of the eschatological king, but they also teach a worldview which, according to the editors of the Psalms, the people of God should adopt: one of complete reliance upon Yahweh and devotion to him through keeping his torah.

4.2 Democratisation in the Kingship Law

There is (at least) a twofold sense in which the Kingship Law may be seen as democratised. First, intrinsic to the text of Deut 17:14-20 is the strong association of the king with his Hebrew 'brothers'—he is no more and no less than that, one of the covenant community. Secondly, the Book of Deuteronomy has an inherently democratising quality about it, whereby officials and people alike are under the same covenant obligations.

4.2.1 King as One of the Hebrew Brothers

As we have seen in our examination of the Kingship Law, this association of king and individual member of the covenant community is important to a proper understanding of the monarchic office in Israel. Whilst the practice of kingship in Judah and Israel was often far too similar to the exploitative patterns of ANE monarchy, the Dtr ideal presents a very different picture; a picture of the king as one of the community and not exalted over his 'subjects'. Deut 17:15 states that the king must be one of the Hebrew brothers (מִלֵּךְ), and, whilst clearly designed to prohibit the kingship of a foreigner (one not under the covenant), this verse also indicates that, 'the essential criteria for Israel's appointment are that the king should be the one chosen by Yahweh, and that he should be a "brother"-Israelite'.¹⁵¹ This democratising criterion finds fuller expression in Deut 17:20, where the king is told not to 'exalt himself over his brothers' (לִבְלֹתִי רוֹם-לִבְבוֹ) (מֵאַחֲיוֹ).¹⁵² This emphasis on equality as part of the whole community under covenant allegiance, makes it clear that the king is not greater than the people, but is essentially part of the body corporate.¹⁵³ The emphasis of his role is not as administrator, judge or general, but rather as torah-keeper.¹⁵⁴ The king is to excel in keeping covenant with Yahweh and as

¹⁵⁰ A. G. Hunter, *Psalms* (OTR; London: Routledge, 1999) 10. 'The fact that Psalm 2 forms part of the introduction to the whole Psalter, that it makes explicit reference to the anointed (Hebrew *mashiach*), and that it uses exalted language for the relationship between the king and Yahweh — "You are my son: today I have begotten you" (2:7) — might very possibly be taken to demonstrate that Psalm 2 is one of those post-exilic writings (parts of Chronicles belong to the same type) which idealises the long-vanished Davidic monarchy in terms of an apocalyptic hope.'

¹⁵¹ McConville, *Deuteronomy*.

¹⁵² See above Chapter 5.

¹⁵³ Knoppers, "Deuteronomist and Deuteronomic Law of the King," 329-30; McConville, *Law and Theology*, 19.

¹⁵⁴ Howard, "The Case for Kingship in Deut," 102; Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 256-7.

such acts as an example for all of the Hebrew community.¹⁵⁵

4.2.2 Democratisation in Deuteronomy Generally

The idea of the monarch as a model of piety broadly reflects Deuteronomy's teaching with regard to those in power.¹⁵⁶ The stipulations addressed to the king echo obligations placed on the people throughout the book. The limitations on the king's power (no excess in terms of 'weapons, women or wealth'¹⁵⁷) and his positive duty (to keep the torah) echo similar obligations placed upon the people throughout Deuteronomy:

Finally, the law of the king places upon that figure the obligations incumbent upon every Israelite. In that sense, Deuteronomy's primary concern was that the king *be the model Israelite*. This is seen especially in the fact that the essential responsibility of the king is to read and study the law constantly... 'that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them' (v 19). This is the word that Moses constantly places before Israel throughout his speeches. The warning 'that his heart may not be lifted up' echoes the same warning to Israel in 8:14, even as the prohibition against multiplying silver and gold (v 17) is reminiscent of the words of 8:13-17 about Israel doing the same thing and then forgetting that it is the Lord who has given the wealth. So also the warning not to 'turn aside from the commandment, either to the right and or to the left,' is the same as or similar to words addressed to each Israelite (cf 5:32; 11:28; 17:17; 28:14; 31:29; Joshua 23:6) or to other leaders (e.g., Joshua 1:7). *The fundamental task of the leader of the people, therefore, is to exemplify and demonstrate true obedience to the Lord for the sake of the well-being of both the dynasty and the kingdom. King and subject share a common goal: to learn to fear the Lord (v 19).*¹⁵⁸

Yahweh calls upon the king to practice a worldview which has already been placed before the people. The community as a whole is expected (under the Dtr covenant) to live in accordance with the obligations and prescriptions of the Kingship Law, so what is the purpose of repeating these obligations again in the law governing the monarchy? Probably there is a dual reason for this repetition: first, to emphasize that the king does not stand above or beyond the covenant;¹⁵⁹ and, secondly, because the king must *excel* in that which all the people are called to do, in the keeping of the covenant with Yahweh.¹⁶⁰ Miller sums up these two factors in suggesting:

[T]he point of the Deuteronomic law of the king is that the king's responsibilities are the same as those of the people. He is to keep the torah continually and completely. Thus he embodies faithful Israel and models Israel's way with the Lord.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148-9.

¹⁵⁶ As Tigay puts it, 'The law about the king continues Deuteronomy's policy of limiting the power and prestige of human authorities,' (*Deuteronomy*, 166).

¹⁵⁷ Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209.

¹⁵⁸ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148-9 (emphasis mine). Mayes adds to Miller's list the concept of taking too many wives as another expression of an obligation placed first upon the people (Deut 7), tying it in with the rules rejecting the apostasy of the neighbouring nations (the assumption being that these are foreign wives, see his *Deuteronomy*, 272-3).

¹⁵⁹ 'Rather, for the Deuteronomist the king was clearly also subject to the covenant. The king, like any other Israelite, was expected to obey the law as it was found in Deuteronomy,' (Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 100).

¹⁶⁰ Lohfink, "Distribution," 349.

¹⁶¹ Miller, "Kingship," 130.

4.3 Conclusion re. Democratisation

So, finally, it appears that the torah-kingship psalms not only share the Dtr views on torah and kingship, but that their process of democratisation also reflects the theology of Deuteronomy and, in particular, of the Kingship Law. Deuteronomy's Law of the King sets the lifestyle which the king should follow as an example of proper conduct for the people. The torah-kingship psalms fulfil the same function. Not only are these psalms to be read as influencing the picture of the eschatological king, but they should also be read as commending a particular lifestyle to the reader of the Psalter—a lifestyle of complete trust in Yahweh and immersion in his word.

5. Conclusion

What then can be concluded from this analysis? Could Deuteronomy's Law of the King have been the paradigm which led to the juxtaposition of kingship and torah psalms? It seems that it could. The analysed texts show a notable correspondence to the ideals of Deut 17:14-20 in their teaching and theology. Their views of torah, kingship and democratisation are similar to such an extent that it does, indeed, seem (at least) possible that the Kingship Law was the paradigm which inspired the book's editors to place kingship psalms alongside the Psalter's three torah psalms. It appears that they had a twofold reason for doing so: (1) to nuance the image of the expected, restored Davidic king (i.e. a king in line with the ideal and not the historical practice); and (2) the reader of the Psalms should follow the world-and-life view represented in the Kingship Law and the torah-kingship psalms.

It may be premature to generalize about these questions, but I do believe that the biblical books of Deuteronomy and Psalms are amenable to an interactive relationship, capable of creating or evoking a conversation between them that enlarges our perception of both and contributes to a sense of the whole that is scripture.¹⁶²

I conclude, then, with Mays... that the organizing principle of the Psalter ultimately has to do with the reign of God as King. This theme manifests itself in the dual expressions of YHWH's divine kingship and the Davidic kings' human kingship, both of which find their earthly expression at Zion. The Zion, royal, and Davidic traditions displayed prominently and placed strategically throughout the Psalter take their place alongside the traditions of YHWH as King to portray the fact that YHWH's rule extends everywhere: to the nations, the cosmos, nature, and even Israel. Its expression in Israel is through the Davidic kingship, which is centered at Zion, and it is focused on YHWH through worship at Zion. *The faithful reader of the Psalter will do as the king is supposed to do: study and meditate on YHWH's disclosure of himself in both the Torah and the Psalter (Deut 17:18-19, Psalm 1).*¹⁶³

¹⁶² Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 3.

¹⁶³ Howard, *Structure*, 207 (emphasis mine).

Conclusion

Often, having read a doctoral thesis, one is left with the impression that much ground has been covered in the course of that study. A working hypothesis is proposed in the introduction, a method suggested, detailed exegesis carried out, a case argued and theological inferences are drawn. Drawing a brief conclusion from such a breadth of discussion is no easy job. The discussion has been *necessarily* broad in order to argue the case fully, therefore, it is difficult not to be overly reductive in summarising this discussion. However, such is the task at hand.

The working hypothesis suggested in the introduction was that the editors of the Psalter made use of the Kingship Law as an intellectual paradigm in their placement of kingship psalms alongside torah psalms at key junctures in the Book of Psalms. A two-fold rationale was suggested for this use of the Kingship Law: (1) in response to the climate of messianic expectation, the editors wished to make clear that the restored Davidic king should be one who follows the ideal of kingship rather than the historical examples found in Deuteronomic History; (2) the Law of the King defined the monarch as an example of devotion to Yahweh (by way of developing a torah-centered worldview) for the whole people, and the editors of the Psalter wished to pick up on this exemplary commitment to God, and set it as a model for the readers of the psalms to follow.

The method suggested was a comparative canonical-theological treatment of the texts of the Psalms and Deuteronomy.¹ This is perhaps best described as reflecting Miller's idea of 'conversation' between two books of the OT.² The aim (whilst intertextual 'in its most basic sense'³), was not to prove that the torah-kingship psalms were dependent upon the Law of the King, nor was it to show exact linguistic borrowing between one text and the other. Rather it was to depict a theology of the torah-kingship psalm groupings and to compare that with the theology of the Kingship Law. Miller describes this as interaction 'on a larger plane of theology and hermeneutics,'⁴ and our discussion has also been carried out on this level—a major element of discussion has been how the respective theologies of torah, kingship and democratisation in the Psalms and Deuteronomy compare. The text which was analysed was, necessarily, the final, canonical form of each book. Obviously, examination of the final text is key to the idea of the shaping of the Psalter, and is the necessary starting point for discussion of this thesis' central question of whether the final form of the Psalms has been deliberately framed to reflect Dtr (perhaps, more specifically DtrN) concerns, and, in particular, the Law of the King.

¹ See Chapter 1 above.

² Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms."

³ Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 5.

⁴ Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 5.

The exegetical examination was carried out over four chapters,⁵ looking in some detail at the text of the torah-kingship psalm groupings (Pss 1-2; 18-21; 118-119) and of the Kingship Law (Deut 17:14-20). At the risk of over-simplifying, strong echoes of the theology of Deuteronomy as a whole were found in the poems in question. Not just in the torah psalms (as one might expect), but also in the kingship psalms. The picture of the king presented in Pss 2, 18, 20-21 and 118, is of an individual entirely dependent upon Yahweh—reliant upon him for deliverance and refusing to trust in alternative sources of power. This is a central aspect of the theology of Deuteronomy and, more specifically, of the Kingship Law.⁶ Paralleled with this image of a king trusting in God is the idea of an individual living according to the torah.⁷ Once again, this is an important feature of Deuteronomy and one which is clearly encouraged in the Law of the King.⁸ These are not the only associations apparent between the torah-kingship psalms and the Kingship Law, but they are dominant features of both the psalmic and deuteronomic texts studied and shape the reader's understanding in each case. It seems clear from the exegetical examination of these texts that there is, indeed, a conversation going on between Deuteronomy and the Psalms; and this is a conversation surrounding the figure of the king, as presented in the Kingship Law.⁹

The case was then argued that these psalm groupings which reflect the Law of the King were positioned at key junctures in the final form of the Psalter.¹⁰ The first torah-kingship pairing (Pss 1-2) introduces the whole Book of Psalms: all of the discussions of kingship and piety which follow are somehow coloured by this image of the Dtr king found in that introduction. The remaining torah-kingship groupings are central to Books I and V of the Psalms, acting as a type of bracket, calling the reader's attention back to the message of the introduction. The Dtr influence upon the psalmic picture of the king is not peripheral; rather, it is prominent and positioned in such a way as to nuance the idea of kingship throughout the whole book. This redaction, clearly, does not reflect the complete or only view of kingship found in the Psalms, but it does influence the picture of the king in significant ways.

Theological inferences were also drawn from the analysis of the texts in question.¹¹ In particular, discussion focussed on the three main themes apparent both in the torah-kingship psalm groupings and the Kingship Law: torah, kingship and democratisation. The

⁵ Chapters 2-5 above.

⁶ Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148; Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 209.

⁷ Miller, "Beginning," and "Kingship."

⁸ Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 168; Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 141.

⁹ Miller, "Deuteronomy & Psalms," 16.

¹⁰ Chapter 6 above.

¹¹ Chapter 7 above.

analysis of these concepts in the Psalms and Deuteronomy showed a marked similarity in their usage in both books. Torah in the psalms seems to refer to the written revelation of Yahweh. Initially, this may even be a reference to the Book of Deuteronomy itself, but with the passage of time this reference expanded into the Pentateuch and beyond. Torah-piety was to be based in the study of Yahweh's revelation in written form. Similarly, the Kingship Law contains Deuteronomy's first self-reference to the speeches of Moses ultimately becoming a book to be studied by king and people alike. Analysis of the concept of kingship in these psalms and in Deut 17 also reveals notable similarities: both books indicate that he is to be one dependent on God before any alternative source of power and one who is not elevated over his brothers. This leads us to the idea of democratisation. In both the Kingship Law and the torah-kingship psalms, there seems to be an inherently democratising ideal. The king is not greater than the people; rather, he is one of them. He is subject to the same torah and his lifestyle is meant to be one of example for the rest of the covenant people, example of keeping that torah: the king as exemplar.

Final Words

How do the ideas of this thesis speak to the contemporary Christian community? One clear message concerns the importance of divine revelation for proper relationship with the Creator. The Law of the King and the Dtr redaction of the Psalms suggests to the reader that proper piety can only be attained through the diligent study and application of the Word. The theology of the two ways further emphasises this point in that, if one is to walk in 'the fear of the Lord', one must immerse oneself in his revealed torah. This speaks to the church, particularly in the West, where sometimes it appears that we are more concerned with the application of secular marketing principles and management techniques, than we are about giving primacy to the shaping of our worldview in accordance with God's teaching. If the church is to grow in depth *and numbers*, then we must follow the example of the king and devote time and energy to the application of divine instruction to our *Sitz im Leben*. Just as the Dtr king was not furnished with a lengthy list of regal 'dos and don'ts' but was expected to apply the principles of Yahweh's torah to every aspect of his life and service, so we today should engage wholeheartedly in this important hermeneutical task. We too should seek to apply the whole of God's revealed 'law' in our own particular life and circumstances. As with the king and the reader of the Psalms, the inculcation of a worldview is encouraged. It is about more than just following the particulars of the 'law', it is a holistic way of thinking and acting shaped by God's revelation—we too must strive to develop a biblical worldview.

A second area of application, which the Christian community should be aware of, is in terms of broader biblical interpretation. Have we, perhaps, been missing out on a messianic theme which is of broader significance than we first realised?

Much has been written about the way the messianic passages of the royal psalms and Isaiah point us to and find their actuality in Jesus of Nazareth. It is possible we have overlooked the text that may resonate most with the kingship he manifested; he was one who sought and received none of the perquisites of kingship, who gave his full and undivided allegiance to God, and who lived his whole life by the instruction, the torah, of the Lord.¹²

McConville points out that, 'The ideal of human kingship, introduced by the story of human failure and the gracious accommodation of God to it (in 1 Sam 8-12; 2 Sam 7), remains, however, for messianic appropriation.'¹³ And, in another article, he adds that, 'the concept of a king under Torah is not lost even in the entrance of Davidic dynastic concepts into the story. And it is instructive to observe connections with the teaching Messiah in Matthew's gospel.'¹⁴

Here it is that we return, at last, to the 'greatest mystery of religion... the representative figure that carries all the world's agony and hope'.¹⁵ In Christ we see the fulfilment of the exemplary piety endorsed both by the Kingship Law and the Dtr redaction of the Psalter. He lived the life of the king who was also the torah-keeper. Where even the best of the Davidic kings failed, he did not. He lived the life of absolute devotion to Yahweh, as an example for all the people to follow. He was the king who would not exalt himself over his brothers. He is the ultimate king and ultimate exemplar. We find the teaching in the Old Testament and the reality in the New—Ιησοῦς ὁ βασιλεὺς.

¹² Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 149.

¹³ McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 366.

¹⁴ McConville, "King and Messiah," 293.

¹⁵ Eaton, *Kingship*, preface, cited above, p iv.

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