

Chapter I

1.1 Introduction

The form-critical and cult-functional approaches, which were represented by Gunkel and Mowinckel, have dominated the study of the Old Testament psalms in the twentieth century, but the insight has been growing that these approaches have a limited value in studying the psalms, and consequently their gains have begun to decrease.¹ These approaches ignore the canonical order of the psalms and rearrange psalms according to the genre and *Sitz im Leben* of each psalm, but the result has by no means been satisfactory.

Recently, the attempt to understand the present shape of the Psalter has been growing among many scholars.² Many recent essays,³

¹ Childs (1976:378-379) notes the limitation of these approaches as follows: “Much of the exegetical gain of determining the original setting of a psalm is jeopardized when the proposed *Sitz im Leben* rests on an extremely fragile and hypothetical base. Moreover, the function of a secondary setting often seems to be more significant for exegesis than a fixation with an alleged original *Sitz*....At least for an increasing number of scholars the problem of understanding the present shape of the Psalter including both the consonantal and vocalic traditions emerges as a more pressing problem than the reconstructed original form of the text.”

² McCann (1992:117) points out that instead of the approaches associated with Gunkel and Mowinckel, the study of the canonical form of the Psalter is a recent development: “It has become clear in recent years, however, that form criticism and the cult-functional method are not sufficient. Newer approaches place their emphasis on the Psalms as literature. Attention is being addressed to understanding the shape of the Psalter as literary collection and the editorial activity that led to its final form.” Howard (1993a:52) also notes that the study on the shape of the Psalter is “the current trend in biblical studies toward unitary, literary and ‘canonical’ readings of the Bible.” Kuntz (1994:93) notes that there is a growing new movement on the study of the shape and shaping of the Psalter “under the influence of Childs (1979), Sanders (1984) and Mays (1987).”

³ For example, Goulder (1975:269-89); Brennan (1976:126-58, 1980:25-29); Waltke (1981:3-18, 1991:583-596); Walton (1991:21-31); Sheppard (1992:143-55); McCann

books,⁴ dissertations⁵ or commentaries⁶ reflect this new trend in the study of the psalms. However, this new interest has not been without its precursors. Brennan (1976:1226) points out that the early rabbinic and Christian commentators paid much more attention to the connections between psalms than do the scholars of today. Already, in the nineteenth century, Delitzsch (1973:19-23) revealed in his commentary an interest in the shape of the Psalter under the title “Arrangement and Inscriptions”. Noting the connections between adjacent psalms, he remarked as follows:

This phenomenon, that psalms with similar prominent thoughts, or even with only markedly similar passages, especially at the beginning and the end, are thus strung together, may be observed throughout the whole collection.⁷

The interest in the canonical form of the Psalter has largely been

(1992:117-128; 1993a); Wilson (1983:377-388, 1984:337-352, 1985a, 1985b:404-413, 1986:85-94, 1992:129-142); Anderson (1994:219-41); Krüger (1994:191-219); Miller (1994:127-142); Zenger (1991b:236-254, 1994a:37-54, 1994b:151-178); Beckwith (1995:1-27); Houston (1995:93-111); Christensen (1996a:421-432); Prinsloo (1995c:459-69, 1997:207-213) and many others. The collection of essays from the SBL Book of Psalms Group in J.C. McCann, Jr (ed.), 1993., addresses the issues relating to this subject.

⁴ Goulder (1982, 1990, 1996); Wilson (1985a); McCann (1993); Millard (1994); Koenen (1995); Whybray (1996); Creach (1996); deClaisse-Walford (1997). The works of Wilson, Millard, Creach and deClaisse-Walford were originally publications from dissertations.

⁵ Howard (1986); Davis (1996); and Cole (1996).

⁶ Stuhlmüller (1983); Tate (1990); Zenger (1991a); Hossfeld and Zenger (1993); Mays (1994a); and McCann (1996).

⁷ Cassuto (1973:2) deplores the fact that Delitzsch’s attention to the links between psalms was forgotten in the course of time. His essay was originally delivered at the World Congress of Jewish Studies in 1947. For a comprehensive review of the research works on this subject, see Howard (1993a:52-70).

pursued in two types of research. One of these, which is reflected in the works of Wilson (1985a) and Millard (1994), and in part also in those of Creach (1996) and deClaiss-Walford (1997), entails treating the whole of the Psalter as a single text and looking at psalms within the larger structure of the Psalter. The other consists in selecting a limited number of psalms in the Psalter and investigating the relationship between them. This trend is found in the works of Howard (1986), Koenen (1995), Davis (1996) and many other exegetes. If the former tendency is called the work at a higher level (or a macrostructure) - the structure of larger collections - then the latter can be designated as the work at a lower level (or a microstructure) - the structure of individual psalms. The main assumption of these two types of approaches is not only to see psalms as individual texts, but also to treat them as a book. Brennan (1976:126-127) aptly notes this:

A careful reading indicates that the Psalter has not developed in a haphazard and arbitrary way, but has been carefully woven together in such a manner that previously independent compositions, or smaller collections of such compositions, now comment upon or respond to one another. Hence, for a proper understanding of the Psalter it is not enough to study each of its 150 components in the historical context from which it originally sprang. They must all be studied in their relationship to each other, since all of them together convey more than they do if looked at separately.

Our concern in this dissertation is to investigate the psalms in Book IV (90-106) not only in terms of the relationships between them, but also in terms of the relationships between Psalm 89 and each of Psalms 90-103, and to clarify the relationships between these psalms, thus following the second tendency as noted above.

This study forms a reaction to the study of Howard (1986).⁸ He has limited himself to the structural study of Psalms 93-100 and has attempted to understand them in relation to the links established between them, but he fails to provide the whole contour of Book IV by narrowing his study,⁹ though his study was extended to Psalms 90-92 at a later stage (1993b). Thus, complementing and modifying the results of Howard's study in significant ways, this work will provide the whole contour of Book IV and its relationship with Psalm 89 (see the scope of the study). Consequently, this study is indirectly dedicated to clarifying the function of Book IV within the Psalter and its theology from the canonical perspective of the Psalter.

1.2. Overview of the studies related to the contextual analysis of Psalms 90-106

Relatively many studies have concentrated on the contextual reading of Book IV in the Psalter, and its history can be found in the work of Delitzsch. Though he was not fully aware of the canonical shape of the Psalter in the same way as is the case today, he likewise pointed out the links between the psalms in Book IV, for example, between 90 and 91 (1973:61), between Psalms 91:8 and 92:12 (p.67), between Psalms 94 and 92-93 (p.78), as well as the links formed

⁸ The present work originally started with a question about Howard's work, "Why Psalms 93-100, but not Psalms 90-106?" However, in the course of writing my dissertation, Koenen's (1995) study dealing with Book IV (i.e. Psalms 90-110) was discovered. Despite the overlapped field of study, my study differs from that of Koenen on many points. For a brief review of his work, see below.

⁹ Indeed, Wilson (1993b:50) notes this point as one of the major defects of Howard's work.

between the end of Psalm 94 and the beginning of Psalm 95 by the use of the word “Rock” (p.85). Delitzsch understood that there are certain links between adjacent psalms.

In his *Studies in the Psalter* published in 1934, Snaith paid attention to the formation of Psalms 90-99. He regarded these psalms as being composed for the liturgy of the Sabbath morning and afternoon service and interprets each of these psalms from the perspective of the ideas associated with such a liturgy. He pointed out close links between the psalms and Deuteronomy 32, Exodus 32, and Isaiah 40-55. Similarly Goulder (1975) also proposed a liturgical setting for the interpretation of the psalms in Book IV. According to him, all these psalms are associated with the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles in the post-Exilic period.¹⁰

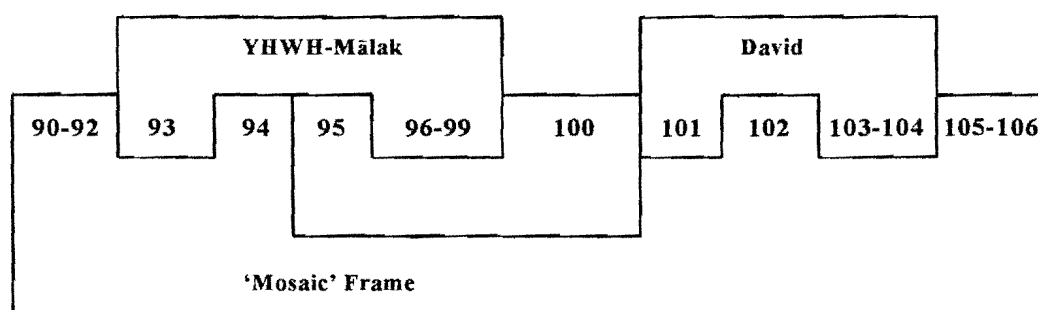
Wilson’s dissertation “The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter” published in 1985 marks a great contribution not only to the study of the entire collection of the Psalter, but also to the canonical frame of Book IV. He starts his analysis with comparative texts, i.e. Sumerian temple hymns, collections of Mesopotamian hymns and Qumran Psalm manuscripts, and then turns to the evidence of editorial techniques within the Psalter itself. He confirms the evidence of ‘purposeful, editorial organization’ and concludes his evaluation concerning the position of Book IV within the Psalter as follows (1985a:215):

... Pss 90-106 function as the editorial ‘center’ of the final form of the Hebrew Psalter. As such this grouping stands as the ‘answer’ to the problem posed in Ps 89 as to the apparent failure of the Davidic covenant with which Books One-Three are primarily concerned. Briefly summarized the answer given is: (1) YHWH is king; (2) He has been our ‘refuge’ in the past, long before the monarchy existed (i.e.

¹⁰ For a further review of Goulder’s study on Book IV, see Howard (1993a:64-66).

in the Mosaic period); (3) He will continue to be our refuge now that the monarchy is gone; (4) Blessed are they that trust in him!

In his 1993a essay, Wilson continues his arguments and further clarifies his theme for Book IV. He divides Book IV into two major blocks - the YHWH-*mālak* psalms (93, 96-99) and the Davidic collection (101, 103-104), and he then schematises the whole of the book as follows (p.76):



Howard's 1986 dissertation on the shape of Book IV has received much attention from scholars. If Wilson's study is focused on the whole structure of the Psalter (i.e. overarching macrostructures), Howard limits himself to the structural study of Psalms 93-100, thus employing the study of microstructures. He compares each of the psalms with every other psalm within the group by focusing on lexical, thematic and structural analyses. In his study he discovers that Psalms 95 and 100 frame Psalms 96-99, while Psalm 93 introduces YHWH-kingship psalms, 96-99, and Psalm 94 reveals close ties with what precedes and what follows, though it is disjunctive in many ways (for further information on Howard's study, see Chapter III).

Howard's further study on this subject was published in a 1993b essay. He there analyses the structures of Psalms 90-94 and regards them as a unit. In addition, he divides Book IV into three parts: Psalms

90-94, 95-100 and 101-106.

Tate's (1990) commentary on Psalms 51-100 reveals his interest in the shape of Book IV, in part reflecting the position of Wilson and Howard. He sees Psalms 90-94 as a coherent unit dealing with "the languishing faith of troubled communities in the post-exilic era" (p.489) and regards Psalms 96-99 as a unit, divided into two pairs: 96-97 and 98-99. Concerning the position of Psalms 95 and 100, he understands the former as serving to frame both the first five psalms of Book IV (90-94) and the following four psalms (96-99) along with Psalm 100. On the whole, he understands that Book IV reflects the failure of the Davidic dynasty, suggesting that the message of the book is related to the exilic situation.

Zenger published two essays (1991b, 1994b) on the shape of Book IV. His method is similar to that of Howard in that he also employs a contextual reading in searching for the links between the psalms. He identifies four groups within the psalms in Book IV: Psalms 90-92; 93-100; 101-104 and 105-106,¹¹ and regards Psalms 93-100 as the climax of the book. Psalms 90-92 deliver three theological themes: prayer (Ps 90), promise (91), thanksgiving (92) and all these psalms display a Moses-oriented tendency. Within the group of Psalms 93-100, Psalm 97 is framed by Psalms 96 and 98, while in turn these three psalms are framed by Psalms 95 and 99. Zenger sees Psalm 94 as fitting in with Yahweh's kingship psalms, since it contains the theme of the king as a judge who is responsible for widows and orphans. Psalm 93 proclaims the theme of Yahweh-kingship and the following psalms further advance the theme. All these psalms deal with the universal

¹¹ In his 1994b work Zenger divides the structure of Book IV as follows: Psalms 90-92, 93-100, and 101-106.

scope of Yahweh-kingship and Psalm 100 functions as a conclusion to these psalms. Zenger regards Psalms 101-104 as describing a Davidic perspective and Yahweh's royal work with a broader horizon: messianic king (101), Zion (102), Israel (103), and creation (104). He sees Psalms 105-106 as twin psalms dealing with the covenant history of Israel.

Krüger's 1994 essay also treats the structure of Book IV. He regards the book as reflecting the exilic or post-exilic situation and understands that the whole of Book IV provides a theological interpretation in the situation in the present time of what happened in the past. He sees Psalms 90-92 as a small unit and notes three theological themes, thus adopting the position of Reindl and Zenger: lament (90); promise (91) and thanksgiving (92). As in Zenger, Krüger treats Psalms 93-100 as a unit dealing with Yahweh's kingship, but he especially suggests that Psalms 91-101 should be read as one composition reflecting the theological theme described in Psalm 90. He notes connections between Psalms 103 and 104 as well as between Psalms 105 and 106, and he especially attempts to link Psalm 90 with the rest of the psalms in Book IV, thus suggesting that Psalms 91-106 give theological explanations of the situation described in Psalm 90.

Koenen's 1995 work is focused on the study of Psalms 90-110. He divides the psalms into two parallel sections (90-101 and 102-110), each forming a unit, and he identifies within each of these two sections a movement from lament (e.g. Pss 90 and 102) to an announcement of future salvation. He largely uses key-words and themes to establish the connections between adjacent psalms and a sequence of thought running through each of the two sections. In each case Koenen marks the links between adjacent psalms and identifies the following two larger parallel units within the group of Psalms 90-110 (p.113):

90 ----	102	Lament: transience
91 ----	102:13-23	Promise of salvation
92 ----	103	Hymn of thanks: immortality of the righteous
93 ----	104	Retrospect: ancient action of Yahweh
94 ----		Lament
95 ----	105-107	Retrospect: historical action of Yahweh
96-98 ----	108	Promise of salvation: Yahweh takes over power
97 ----	109	Destruction of the sinners
99-100 ----		Trust
101 ----	110	Royal song: the righteous receive a royal position

Koenen understands that the whole group of these psalms reflects the post-exilic situation and each of the sections begins with a lament mentioning the circumstances in the post-exilic period, but he also understands that the message of the whole group proclaims Yahweh's salvation which can provide the righteous with hope and bring judgement upon the wicked.

Koenen's work has many echoes in that of Zenger and also in those of others, but his study seems stimulating in that his arguments have been thoroughly worked out. However, his division of Psalms 90-110 into two parts still remains doubtful, since Book IV ends with Psalm 106, not with Psalms 107-110.

Auffret has published a series of studies of many psalms within Book IV. (1984, 1985, 1985-86, 1993a, 1993b, 1995). As expected, his study is focused on the surface structure based on the use of word pairs, parallelism or chiasmus between the psalms being compared rather than on the exegetical study most scholars use. He points out the connections between adjacent psalms or between non-adjacent psalms, largely on the basis of the structural analysis, and sometimes by the use of thematic aspects. He connects Psalms 90-91, 91-92, 95-96, 102-103, 103-104, 104-105, and 105-106, and he notes that Psalm 96 parallels Psalm 97, while Psalm 98 parallels Psalm 99.

Creach's 1996 work illustrates that the idea of 'refuge' constitutes a scheme for the whole organization of the Psalter. Looking at the links between individual psalms or at psalms within the whole structure of the Psalter (e.g. Book IV within the whole of the Psalter), he demonstrates that the psalms in Book IV, especially Psalms 90-92 and 94, are arranged around the idea that Yahweh is a refuge.

All these exegetes under review, being concerned with the canonical shape of the Psalter, regard groups of psalms, or the whole book of the Psalter, as one coherent text and on this basis they find theological themes within the whole unit or a relationship between the individual psalms.

1.3. Scope of the present study

As noted, Howard's work (1986) reveals a limitation by taking Psalms 93-100 (and 90-92 in a later stage) as the scope of his study. It would have been better to take all the psalms of Book IV into consideration. The limitation of Howard's study is observable on several points. For example, he attempts to connect Psalms 92 and 101 without making detailed analyses of them, but our study seems to suggest a link between Psalms 94 and 101. In addition, he fails to illustrate the functions which Psalms 93-100 have regarding other psalms within Book IV itself by limiting his study. As will be seen later, it seems that Psalms 95-100 should be connected to Psalms 105-106.

Koenen (1995) was unable to identify the structural units existing between the psalms within Book IV since he extended his study to Psalms 107-110, which form part of Book V. Since the Masoretic text itself closes Book IV with Psalm 106, it is more appropriate to take

this distinction into consideration. Indeed, this study will illustrate that there are possible structural units within Book IV itself.

Several scholars understand the psalms in Book IV in the light of the theological themes of Book III. For example, Tate (1990), adopting Wilson's position, interprets many psalms in Book IV as reflecting the situation after the fall of the Davidic dynasty in Psalm 89. Krüger (1994) also follows a similar line. He starts the structural study of Book IV after reviewing the situation described in the psalms in Book III and associates the whole of Book IV with the situation after the destruction of the Davidic dynasty. However, no scholar, including these two, provides clear clues to the connections between the psalms in Book III-IV or between Psalm 89 and some of the psalms in Book IV which can cause us to read the texts in the light of interrelationships.¹²

Keeping the views noted above in mind, the primary purpose of this dissertation is to analyse the complete internal structure of Psalms 90-106 and to demonstrate not only close links between adjacent psalms, but also the relationship between Psalm 89 and each of Psalms 90-103.¹³ In addition, the present study is extended to the identification of cross-structural units within the psalms in Book IV in the perspective of overarching structures. Thus, this work sets up three primary goals (which are also the assumptions of this dissertation) to be accomplished: (1) we shall attempt to illustrate the connections between Psalm 89 and each of Psalms 90-103; (2) the connections between adjacent psalms in Book IV are highlighted, and thus we shall

¹² Concerning this matter, scholars' arguments seem to be largely based on Wilson's thesis that Book IV is an editorial "center."

¹³ The comparison of Psalm 89 with Psalms 104-106 is omitted, because the links between these psalms are not sufficient to suggest relationship between them.

deal with all the psalms of Book IV; (3) in contrast to the view of Koenen, it will be shown that there are possible cross-structural units which may mean that we do not need to connect any of the psalms in Book IV with other psalms in Book V.

Sharing the general view of scholars that groups of psalms should be read as one coherent text, in order to pursue the goals noted above, the three processes of the study constituting Chapter III can be noted:¹⁴ (1) Psalm 89 is compared with each of Psalms 90-103 in terms of lexical, thematic, and structural aspects. Wilson (1985a:215, 1986) presents the view that Book IV of the Psalter functions as an answer to the questions set forth in Psalm 89,¹⁵ and in this dissertation our first concern is to trace the connections between Psalm 89 and each of Psalms 90-103 through the use of the research methods noted above (for the methods in detail, see Chapter III). The result of this study will confirm that Psalm 89 forms significant links with each of Psalms 90-103, which also suggests that the psalms in Book IV should be interpreted in the light of the contents of Psalm 89.

(2) The second process is to search for the links existing between adjacent psalms, using the methods mentioned above. This process it is suggested, will lead us to see that there are purposeful, rather than random, lexical and thematic connections between adjacent psalms and that Book IV as a whole constitutes a coherent structural unit.

¹⁴ Methodology will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

¹⁵ Wilson (1986:90-91) explains the position of Psalm 89 within the Psalter as follows: "...for Ps. 89 the Davidic covenant is not only an event of the distant past, neither is it simply the source for later kingly authority, rather it is now a covenant *failed*. Yahweh is depicted as rejecting his anointed king and renouncing the Davidic covenant... It is this problem of the failure of YHWH to honor the Davidic covenant that stands at the heart of Ps. 89 and is the object of the plea with which the psalm and the first major segment of the Psalter end."

that Book IV as a whole constitutes a coherent structural unit. Especially, it will be argued that Psalm 95:1-5 may serve as an introduction to Psalms 96-97, while Psalm 95:6-11 form an introduction to Psalm 98-99. Furthermore, in contrast to the view of most scholars who argue for the existence of parallels between Psalms 96 and 98 on the one hand, and between 97 and 99 on the other, we shall attempt to show from two different perspectives that Psalms 96-99 are juxtaposed as two sets of twin psalms, thus Psalms 96-97 and 98-99.

(3) In the third process our concern will be with the analysis of cross-structural units within Book IV, and much attention will be paid to searching for units in the perspective of the overarching contour of Book IV. Using the methods noted above, we will then identify four possible small units as follows: 90-91 and 102-103; 92-93 and 104; 94 and 101; 95-100 and 105-106. On the whole, it seems that Book IV can be divided into two larger sections which are parallel to each other: 90-100 and 102-106, while Psalm 101 is positioned in the middle between these two sections.

All processes in the section noted above will be dealt with in Chapter III. The present Chapter I provides general overviews necessary to the process of any dissertation: an introduction, a survey of the relevant studies, the scope of the study, as well as a section dealing with methodological considerations. Chapter II is devoted to the analysis of the text itself by means of a text-immanent approach, and its methodology will be discussed in the following section. Chapter IV comprises a summary of Chapter III, but a concerned effort is made to integrate and highlight the insights from the discussions of Chapter III. The dissertation is concluded with suggestions about the possible theological perspectives of Book IV.

approaches have been raised among exegetes¹⁶ and attempts to combine these two approaches have also been suggested under the name of a “complementary method”.¹⁷ For example, Deist (1983:86) notes this as follows:

What we need is a marriage of structural and historical awareness *within the perceiving mind of the exegete*.... An exegete has to be trained to be constantly on the lookout for all sorts of structural and historical indicators in the text and to integrate them into the process of understanding.

However, such a complementary method has also been criticised. Nel (1989:68) skeptically denounces this approach when he notes that: “It is doubtful whether this still constitutes a method with a particular theoretical rationale. It rather seems to be a method of methods,” and Vorster (1989:53-63) also claims that the combination of these two methodological approaches under discussion cannot be compatible with each other.

The questions relative to the methods of biblical exegesis are various and complex. There is no agreement among scholars concerning the use of methods. However, the question of what method should be used seems dependent upon what kind of text is concerned. According to Bosman (1986:14), texts dealing with history, chronicles, genealogies, or laws are suited to the use of historical-critical methods, namely the diachronic approach, while stories and poems, which are concerned with meaning created by the internal relations among the elements of the text, are suited to the method of immanent reading, which is the synchronic approach. Berlin (1983) also expresses a similar view:

¹⁶ See Prinsloo (1979:201-210), for the views of scholars concerning the use of the methodological approaches, and Clines (1995:52-71).

¹⁷ Deist (1983:73-88); Prinsloo (1988b:196-209); cf. Loader (1977/1978:95-109); Botha (1989:113-127); Beuken (1994:25-32).

Our choice of the synchronic approach does not mean that it is more important than the diachronic approach. In this dissertation our main purpose is to examine the text as it exists in the Masoretic Text (MT), while the questions about the original author(s) or editor(s) are beyond our concern. We will analyse the text in its final form in the Psalter by means of the text-immanent approach, but will not attempt the reconstruction of the actual historical events or motives behind psalms. Moreover, our concern is limited to the Masoretic Text itself rather than to the material from Qumran or any other manuscript.

interrelationship.”