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Remembered space:
Memory and imagination
in Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Philosophiae Doctor (Semitic Languages)

in the

Department of Ancient and Modern Languages and Cultures

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Supervisor: Prof. Gert T.M. Prinsloo

October 2023

Lord, you have been a dwelling place for us

from generation to generation.

Psalm 90:1

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the following role players, without whom this thesis would not have been possible:

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Professor Gert Prinsloo, who introduced me to critical spatial theory in the Psalter. His experience, creativity and passion for Semitic Languages and the Psalms created a space in which I could grow. His feedback and support have guided my inspiration.

I also want to thank Professor Phil Botha, who taught me the basics of Biblical Hebrew and introduced me to a language I would come to love. He also proofread and edited this dissertation, which I sincerely appreciate.

To my congregation, thank you for granting me the time and space to further my studies. I value your support and interest.

Lastly, I want to thank my family – especially my husband, parents, and sister. They have always loved me and supported my dreams. My faith in God and enthusiasm for the texts of the Bible originated with them. They are my space of belonging.

All praise and thanks be to YHWH – for he is good, his faithfulness and loving-kindness are forever (Psalm 106:1). May we continue to meet him in all spaces of being.

ABSTRACT

Reflecting upon the fall of the Davidic monarchy, with which Book III of the Psalter ends, Book IV is set during and after the exile. Book IV inspires hope to a traumatised people in crisis by providing a renewed theological framework for Israel. While the centre of Book IV focuses on YHWH as the universal king, the introduction and conclusion to Book IV, found in Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106, respectively, build upon collective memories of the shared history of Israel, especially as found in the exodus tradition, the figure of Moses and covenantal theology. In these psalms, it becomes apparent that Israel reimagined their past, present, and future through a process of remembered space consisting of memory and imagination.

By combining the model of critical spatiality with collective memory and religious imagination, this study illustrates that remembered space is the component that guided the people of Israel in reconstructing their religious life, identity, and future hope. As a result, it is argued that remembered space is the structuring principle according to which the introduction and conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter is fixed. Remembered space forms an *inclusio* around Book IV, placing the content of the psalms in this book and the faith community's experiences of exile and its aftermath into the space of remembered imagining. The post-exilic community used remembered space as a tool that provided them with the ability to reconstruct and reimagine stability, identity, and faith in YHWH as the true universal king through the collective memory of the defining events of their past and creative imagination amid cultural and religious instability, and a fragmented society. Employing remembered space, Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 become a prayer of the Israelite community. Aware of their transience, the community pleads with YHWH to repair their nation, identity, and faith.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and motivation for the study

With the prominent place that the Psalter has taken in religious thought through the centuries, it is no surprise that the book of Psalms has also been an important source of scholarly interest. Moreover, studies on Psalms have become increasingly popular in recent decades. This study aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation in Psalms studies, specifically in the field of critical spatiality and the Psalter. The study is conducted from the perspective that the Psalter is not a random collection of individual psalms but rather an edited collection containing smaller collections with an underlying narrative. Consequently, the psalms that this study focuses on, Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, were chosen since these psalms create the introduction and conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter. The study applies a feature of critical spatiality to this collection of psalms, called ‘fourthspace’ or remembered space. Accordingly, the study investigates the influence that remembered space, through the features of memory and imagination, had on Psalms 90–92 and 105–106. To achieve this goal, the study will analyse the Hebrew text of these psalms in their final form. It is, however, necessary to also place the study within the framework of currents in Psalter research. Therefore, the development and application of different interpretational techniques to the psalms will be attended to next.

In the twentieth century, Hermann Gunkel and Sigmund Mowinckel’s work on genre and form criticism dominated Psalms studies (Nasuti 2005:311). However, there is now scholarly consensus that the influential work of Gerald Wilson in his 1985 monograph, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter,* gave momentum to the renewed interest and research in the Psalter (see Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:8, as well as deClaissé-Walford 2019:23). Wilson’s work brought about an entire shift in the approach to Psalms studies. His insights led scholars to regard the five books of the Psalter as shaped to tell a story – the story of Israel's "past history, present situation and hope for the future" (deClaissé-Walford 2019:22). Following this, scholars started to study the Book of Psalms as a compilation with a specific shape and narrative, rather than a random collection of individual psalms. Reading and studying the Psalms in this way is what deClaissé-Walford (2019:22) calls "canonical criticism".

Although canonical criticism can be seen as the central approach to reading the collections of psalms within the Psalter, scholars apply many methods and theories within this framework in studying the psalms. Among those methods are narrative theory, social-scientific criticism, and the theory of critical spatiality. This study employs a combination of these methods and theories, functioning primarily within the sphere of critical spatiality (see Prinsloo 2013:4–5 concerning a combination of perspectives). The theory of critical spatiality as a lens through which the Psalms can be studied is continuing to grow (Warf & Arias 2009:1). Prinsloo (2021:168) believes that "the spatial story of the Psalter still needs to be told". Therefore, this study focuses on an aspect of critical spatiality that is still in its infancy: remembered space. Although the field of memory has gained popularity in biblical studies (Bosman 2014:1), the combination of space, memory and imagination applied to biblical studies in general and the Psalms, in particular, are yet to be fully explored.

Since the Psalms can be regarded as the *melody of Israel's*[1] *memories*, this study will take remembered space as the interpretive context for Psalms 90–92 and

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[1] Since this study focuses on the exilic and postexilic times, the term "Israel" is never used as a reference to the northern tribes after the split of the monarchy. On the contrary, whenever the study refers to "Israel", it is used in the following ways: first, to designate the group of people who settled in Canaan and who were in a covenant relationship with YHWH, second to refer to the independent political entity established by them and third, to indicate the land on which this group lived (cf. Matthews 2015:29).

Psalms 105–106. Furthermore, the study will build on memory and imagination as the basic tenets of remembered space as these features become apparent in the textual analysis of the individual.

1.2 Research question and hypothesis

As a result of the above-mentioned gap of research in the field of remembered space, the research question that arises and that this study addresses can be summarised as follows: What role did remembered space, in the form of memory and imagination, play in the introduction and conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter?

Flowing from the research question, the working hypothesis for this study can be formulated. The premise from which this study is conducted is the following: When Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106 are studied from the perspective of remembered space, it becomes clear that the introduction and conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter were spatially constructed through memory and imagination in order for Israel to reimagine their religious life, living space and future in terms of their faith in YHWH and covenantal theology.

1.3 Research approach and method

This section discusses the research approach and method from general to particular to indicate how the chosen psalms are studied. As mentioned in Section 1.1, a combination of approaches and methods is used to study Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106. The leading advocates and principles of each approach and method are discussed as they pertain to the present study. First, the general approach in the form of canonical criticism is described, after which the social-scientific theory is outlined as the hermeneutic theory through which the psalms are studied. Third, the features of critical spatiality are explained as the model on which the study is based, and lastly, remembered space is discussed as the method through which Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 will be investigated.

Ultimately, the methodology for this study can be demonstrated as a camera with multiple lenses zooming in on an object:

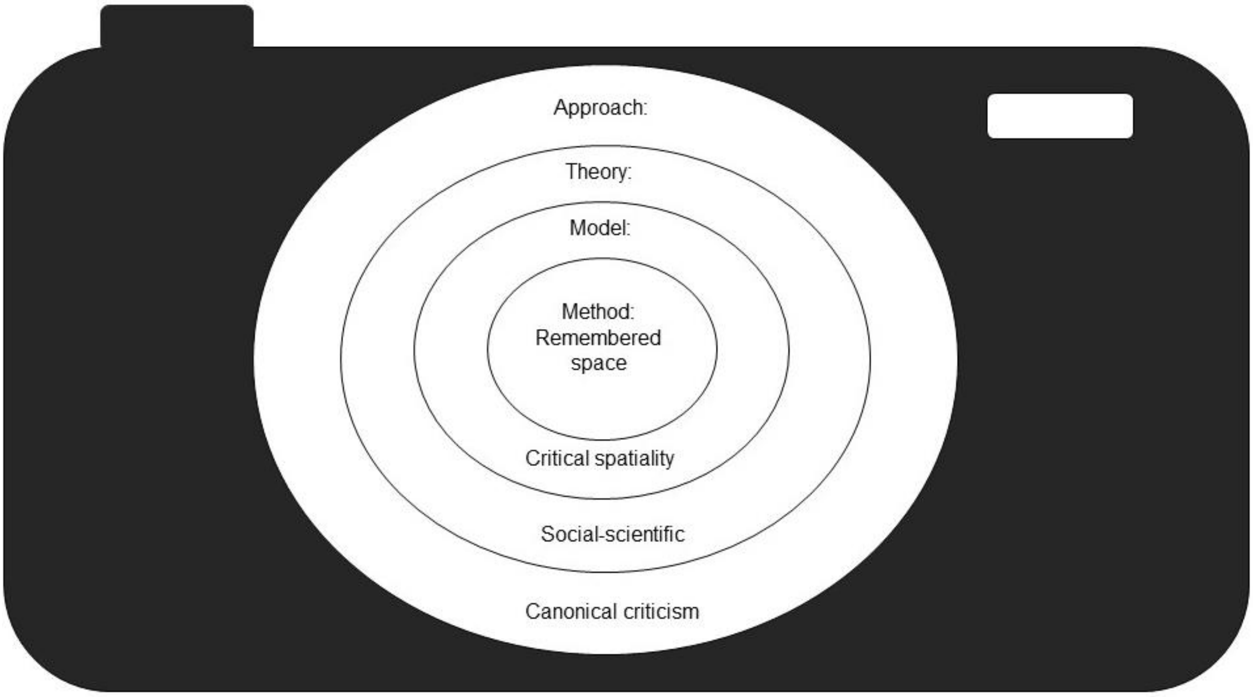
Approach:
Theory:
Model:
Method:
Remembered space
Critical spatiality
Social-scientific
Canonical criticism

Figure 1: The methodological lenses for this study

1.3.1 Canonical approach to studies of the Psalter

In Section 1.1, under the introduction and motivation for the study, a summary was given on the development of different approaches to studying the Book of Psalms. This section will not repeat what has already been mentioned but will rather elaborate more on the development of reading the Psalter from a canonical perspective.

As mentioned in the introduction (see p.1), the general approach to the Psalms prior to the work of Gerald Wilson in his *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (1985) was form-critical. Hermann Gunkel, who identified genre categories for the Psalms (*Gattungen*), endorsed the form-critical approach (Bellinger 2014:313). The study of the genre of Psalms included investigating the literary features and social settings of each psalm, mainly as it was presumed to have been used in the liturgy and worship of Israel (Bellinger 2014:314). Building on the work of

Gunkel was his student, Sigmund Mowinckel. He developed the notion of a *Sitz-im-Leben* for each psalm. According to this method, the broad *Sitz-im-Leben* of the Psalms was firmly situated in the cult of ancient Israel at the temple (deClaissé-Walford 2014c:363). However, Whybray (1996:16) notes that there are considerable difficulties in identifying the precise cultural and religious milieu for each psalm and in attempting to do so, one must speculate a great deal. Although there are scholars, especially within the German academia, such as Erhard Gerstenberger and Klaus Seybold, who still adhere to the form-critical and literary analysis of psalms, many interpreters have found these approaches to be too limiting, mainly because all the psalms do not fit into a cultic and worship *Sitz-im-Leben* (see Prinsloo 2021:147). A case in point is the remark of Brevard Childs (1979:75) in his influential work, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*:

> Having been trained in the form-critical method, I feel the force of these questions and am aware of the value of the approach. Still, I feel strongly that these questions miss the mark and have not fully grasped the methodological issues at stake…

The *questions* that Childs (1979:75) refers to are typical form-critical questions regarding the growth and formation of texts within a particular setting. By only focusing on a structural and literary analysis of texts, the form-critical approach often fails to interpret biblical texts concerning the “bigger picture” of their function in the final form of the text (Childs 1979:74).

Following growing criticism of the form-critical approach, the subsequent noteworthy development in the approach to Psalms studies was the work of Claus Westermann. While Westermann was still a form critic, the emphasis of his work fell more on the literary form of psalms (Bellinger 2014:316). Additionally, Westermann investigated the relationships between the literary forms and subsequently proposed that the Psalms should be read as a unified work, with Psalms 1 and 119 being the indicators of a shift from a cultic understanding of the individual psalms to a reading of the Psalms as a book (Whybray 1996:18). According to this interpretation, Psalm 1 and Psalm 119 were added to the Psalter at a later stage in order to provide a framework for the collection of psalms (Whybray 1996:18).

In the late 1970s, the work of Brevard Childs made headway in biblical studies. The conclusions that Childs drew were similar to those of Westermann, although Childs developed an entire approach from the idea of reading biblical books in their final form. Childs put forth an approach to biblical texts known as canonical criticism. Reading the biblical text as a whole, literary unit is the basic principle underlying the canonical approach to scripture (deClaissé-Walford 2014b:1). This means that Childs focused on the final shape of a biblical book in order to discern the interpretation of that book (Nasuti 2014:14). In effect, this meant a move away from the diachronic manner of reading biblical texts more to a synchronic reading. In this sense, the canonical approach shares traits with methods such as structural analysis of texts and rhetorical criticism. Nevertheless, the canonical reading of biblical texts should not be mistaken for an attempt to simply search for the "deeper meaning" behind the final, canonical version of a text. As Childs (1979:74) himself puts it:

> The canonical approach is concerned to understand the nature of the theological shape of the text rather than to recover an original literary or aesthetic unity.

The canonical approach rather focuses on the relationship between the text, Israel, and God in the sense that the final form of the biblical text is a witness to Israel's experience of God's activity in their lives (Childs 1979:76). This notion of working with the final form of the text, however, does not mean that historical and social features of the biblical text are irrelevant. Instead, the canonical approach opens up the possibility to engage with these features and the process underlying it in a critical, theological manner (Childs 1979:76). Building upon these insights of Childs, canonical criticism led interpreters to investigate the *shape* of the biblical text, and in the case of the Psalms to realise the interpretive importance of the sequence of collections of psalms for the book of Psalms (Nasuti 2005:312). James Sanders further developed the canonical approach by not only focusing on the (final) shape of biblical texts but also investigating the *shaping* of the texts as they went from their original forms to their final form in the life of the faith communities (Prinsloo 2021:148).

At this point in Psalms scholarship, Gerald Wilson's work was formative. Building on the insights of the canonical approach, Wilson (2005:229) argued that the book of Psalms resulted from an intentional editorial effort. He took the fivefold division of the book of Psalms as a starting point to indicate the importance of structural indicators in grouping the individual psalms together. This fivefold arrangement links the Psalter to the five books of Moses or the Torah (Brueggemann & Linafelt 2012:311). Furthermore, the five books of the Psalter are joined together as a unity by various "seams", such as the doxologies at the end of each book or the headings of psalms, as well as linguistic and thematic links between psalms (see Wilson 1993a:43 and Whybray 1996:20).

Following this line of thinking, Wilson (2005:229) deduced that Books I–III were an edited collection, while Books IV–V were added later as an independent collection. Through this reasoning, the narrative of the Psalter becomes apparent. Books I–III tell the story of the Davidic kingship in Israel and how it came to a fall, while Books IV–V tell of new hope during the exilic and post-exilic eras when YHWH came to be seen as the universal king (deClaissé-Walford 2014b:7).

Brueggemann and Linafelt (2012:311) further explain that the collection of psalms in the Psalter is made up of smaller collections that were formed over many years by several different editors. Small collections of psalms can be linked to specific groups in the Second Temple Persian Period, such as Asaph or Korah (Brueggemann & Linafelt 2012:312). With this in mind, one can also identify a structure for the psalms of Book IV of the Psalter. The psalms of Book IV are set in the period in which Israel was in exile (deClaissé-Walford 2019:27). This means that the psalms in Book IV reflect on the exilic circumstances of the people of YHWH. Gillingham (2015a:2) consequently identifies four collections of psalms within book IV: Psalms 90–92 that speak of Moses and the exodus experience; Psalms 93–100 which are known as the "kingship of YHWH" psalms; Psalms 101–103 going back to David; and then Psalms 104–106 reflecting again on the exodus and the figure of Moses, before concluding with a doxology. Through this structure, this study identifies the movement and relationship between Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 as the introduction and conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter.

The diverse approaches discussed in this section can be described as a search for meaning and understanding. Essentially, biblical studies are a search for the meaning of biblical texts. This study is, therefore, also a search for the meaning of the texts of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 within the larger framework of meaning in which they stand as part of Book IV of the Psalter. It is still, however, necessary to be aware of criticism of the canonical approach to the book of Psalms. Wilson (1993a:47–48) cites two main criticisms against this approach. First, one must be cautious that one’s hypothesis does not guide the investigation but rather allow the nature of the biblical texts to speak for themselves. Second, a canonical approach must still be accompanied by an in-depth analysis of the psalms under investigation. Nasuti (2005:311) warns against reducing and restricting the Psalter to a single theme. Similarly, for Prinsloo (2021:166), the pitfall in a canonical approach to the Psalms lies in promoting a single perspective as the only lens through which to study the Psalms. This leads to interpreters assigning a specific meaning to a specific sequence and selection of psalms. Interpreters should know the dangers of forcing pieces to fit (Nasuti 2005:312). In short, if one were to investigate the Psalter from a canonical approach, the book of Psalms should be seen as both a collection of individual psalms and a coherent literary unit (Nasuti 2014:17 and Prinsloo 2021:166).

In accordance with the above conclusions, Wilson (1993a:50) argues that a canonical approach to the Psalter can only be meaningful when done in conjunction with a linguistic, literary, and social analysis. Considering the numerous interpretational approaches to studying biblical texts, it seems like a combination of methods would be the most effective and responsible way to study the Psalms. Therefore, this study combines a synchronic and a diachronic reading. The synchronic reading is based on the canonical approach as discussed here, while the diachronic aspects of interpreting Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 are done using the social-scientific theory, which is next on the agenda.

1.3.2 Social-scientific criticism as hermeneutic theory

The emergence of social-scientific criticism as hermeneutic theory went hand in hand with the emergence of newer literary methods in the 1980s. Elliott (1993:16) defines social-scientific criticism as "the phase of the exegetical task which analyses the social and cultural dimensions of the text". In his book entitled *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction,* Norman Gottwald (1987:22) states that the social-scientific theory understands biblical texts as social documents that reflect the social world, structures, and history of Israel. When read from this perspective, the interpreter must pose specific questions to the biblical text, such as what were the dominant cultural values and social norms within which these texts emerged (Van Eck 2016:14). The *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, edited by Pilch and Malina (1993), gives a systematic exposition on the various social values from the biblical world. According to Pilch and Malina in the introduction to this book, kinship is the fundamental value underlying the biblical world. This means that one's familial status determined one's identity in the group to which one belonged: husband, wife, son, or daughter (Pilch & Malina 1993:xviii). In addition, people were grouped into categories of powerful and powerless, rich and poor and pious or impious (Pilch & Malina 1993:xviii). All of these categories were, in turn, built upon the honour and shame motif that dominated society at that stage. These are a few social values employed according to the social-scientific theory.

After an analysis of the social values present in a biblical text is done, the social-scientific theory then reconstructs the context of the biblical text by incorporating literary, historical, and other social aspects (Gottwald 1987:26). As a sub-discipline of exegesis, social-scientific criticism thus includes features of a diachronic reading. Essentially, the social-scientific theory makes it possible to combine elements of various exegetical methods by investigating textual, literary, historical, traditional and redactional features of the biblical text in the reconstruction of the world behind the text (Elliott 1993:18). Finally, the use of the social-scientific theory in investigating Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 will ensure that the study does not reduce the psalms to a single exegetical feature. The analysis of the social systems and institutions, as well as the patterns of sociality behind the psalms under discussion, will enable the studying of the interrelationships between communal behaviour, social systems, and faith systems (Van Eck 2016:17). Pertaining to Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, this entails an investigation into the faith history of Israel from the exodus as this history was reapplied to reflect on the exilic situation in the post-exilic time (deClaissé-Walford 2019:27). This is the main backdrop that influenced the social institutions and constructions of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106.

However, a social-scientific analysis is only the departure point in understanding these psalms. In order to develop a broader understanding of the psalms under investigation, it is necessary to zoom in further on the methodological camera (see Figure 1, p.4). From the social-scientific theory, the study moves on to the model applied, namely critical spatiality.

1.3.3 Critical spatiality as the model for the study

Turning from strictly historical to social-scientific theories in studying biblical texts opened up many possibilities for new perspectives. One of these perspectives is that of spatiality. Tally (2013:3) indicates that spatiality has become the dominant dimension in critical theory, taking the place of time and temporality, which largely dominated the twentieth century. This change resulted mainly from the Second World War, as a paradigm shift occurred from modernism to postmodernism and post-colonialism (Tally 2013:3). James Flanagan (1999:16) argues in an essay on this subject that critical spatiality brought a certain balance between an overemphasis on history on the one end and society on the other end. Critical reflection on space thus developed in the void between the disintegration of modernistic spatial and geographic limits and the postmodern consciousness of the construction of space and its influence on how people perceive their world. This is what Tally (2013:12) calls the “spatial turn”.

On understanding what the term “space” entails, Berquist (2002:15) writes that space is a social construct. In other words, humans and societies produce space and, therefore, can shape and transform space. In this sense, space is relational. In agreement with this view, Tuan (1977:1) argues that space is linked to human experience. Berquist (2002:15) defines spatiality as “aspects of reality that involve concepts of distance, height, width, breadth, orientation and direction, and also human perceptions, constructions and uses of these aspects.” An investigation into the space produced by a society thus offers a perspective on understanding that culture, their past traumas, and future hopes (George 2007:15). The effect of a spatial analysis on biblical texts, such as the Psalms, is far-reaching. The spatial orientation of a society has to do with their sense of place, which determines their identity and how they reconstruct their past and think about their future.

However, before turning to the model of critical spatiality applied to biblical texts, it is necessary to gain an overview of the work of the leading proponents of critical spatiality. The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre is primarily credited with the categorisation of space. Lefebvre (1991:1) argues that the understanding of space has come a long way since simply regarding it as a geometrical or geographical term. Therefore, Lefebvre’s (1991) exposition on social space in his book, *The Production of Space,* has been very influential. Lefebvre (1991:89) argues that social space ultimately consists of different social spaces intertwined with various social relationships embedded in it. The point of departure for a discussion on space is to identify the different categories of space. Lefebvre (1991:11) identifies physical space (spatial practice), mental space (representation of space) and social space (spaces of representation). He then elaborates on spaces of representation (social space), such as a society’s architecture, seen in temples and palaces, and representations of space (mental space), such as a culture’s artwork and writing systems (Lefebvre 1991:74). Spaces of representation include the institutions of a society, the “objective” knowledge and ideology within that society. In contrast, representations of space consist of *imaginary* and symbolic components which have a basis in the *history* *and memory* of a society (Lefebvre 1991:41–43). Representations of space will be of great importance to this study since the traces of memory and imagination can already be found in this understanding of space.

The geographer Edward Soja, who was profoundly influenced by Lefebvre's work, refined the space categories. Soja (1996:66) investigates the triad of space (physical, mental, and social), as identified by Lefebvre, further and consequently defines three *dimensions* of space: physical space as firstspace, or perceived space, mental/imaginary space as secondspace or conceived space and social space as thirdspace or lived space. These categories are also used to identify the different dimensions of space present in the texts of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106.

Another aspect of critical spatiality to be considered is that of orientation. In the ancient Near Eastern world, spatial orientation played an essential role in people's lives. Their spatial orientation determined whether they found themselves in a positive or negative space, "at-centre" or "off-centre" (Prinsloo 2013:11). However, one can only grasp the meaning of spatial orientation when one has an understanding of the three-storey ancient Near Eastern worldview. The three storeys are composed of heaven above, the earth as a flat plate and the netherworld below the waters of chaos (Prinsloo 2013:10). The ancient Near Eastern orientation is derived from this worldview. Wyatt (2001:35–36) describes this orientation in terms of the four directions according to the East-West and North-South axes. The East-West axis represents the temporal sphere, with the East being the past and the West being the future (Wyatt 2001:35–36). As the Hebrew word for "east" and "past" (קדם) also means "in front of" or "to face", for the ancient Near Eastern people the past was in front of them, while the Hebrew word for "west" and "future" (אחרון) also means "back", meaning that for the ancient Near Eastern people the future was behind them. The people of the biblical texts thus "saw" the past through memory and history, while the future remained unknown behind them (Wyatt 2001:36). On the North-South axis, the

North is to the left side and associated with danger, while the South represents well-being and security on the right side (Wyatt 2001:36). The centre of the cosmos is found where the two axes meet.

At this point, it is perhaps necessary to provide a definition for critical spatiality. This study defines critical spatiality as *a model through which the constructions of space on different levels – physical, mental, and social – is studied, as well as the ways in which these spatial constructions form, inform and transform human experience.*

The discussion in this section has made it clear that inherent spatial features are present in biblical texts. By applying the model of critical spatiality, one can discover the spatial contours of a text and learn to appreciate the spatial narrative that the biblical texts tell (Prinsloo 2013:11).

1.3.4 Narrowing down critical spatiality: Remembered space as a method

Section 1.3 has thus far described this study's approach, theory, and model. It has become clear that the study will be conducted using various lenses representing a combination of methods. Not only are Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 read in their final form as a unified whole (canonical approach), but they are also read from a social-scientific perspective (theory) with special attention given to a critical spatial analysis (model) of the psalms involved. This section now describes remembered space as a method for the study from the perspective of memory and imagination.

As discussed in Section 1.3.3, space is generally analysed within three dimensions: physical, imagined, and lived space. Yet, these three categories of space do not necessarily fully consider an important aspect that influences all dimensions of space: time. In reality, time cannot be separated from space. Tuan (1977:122,129) indicates that space is historical: "Historical time and oriented space are aspects of a single experience." According to this view, time and space coexist and are intertwined. This inherent time-space continuum is also seen in

Wyatt's (2001:35–36) and Prinsloo's (2013:9) description of the East-West axis as denoting past and future. Wyatt (2001:36) explains that spatially speaking, the ancient Near Eastern people "saw" the past through memory and narrative, and these spatial memories helped them to gain insight and perspective on their lives and circumstances.

Lefebvre (1991:91) also noted the important role of time and history in spatiality. In his treatment of social space, he writes the following:

> The real knowledge[2] we would hope to attain would have a *retrospective*[3] as well as a *prospective* import. Its implications for history, for example, and for our understanding of time, will become apparent… It will help us grasp how societies generate their (social) space and time – their representational spaces and their representations of space.

This retrospective element inherent to spatiality, to which Lefebvre refers, further proves the connection between space and memory. For this reason, Matthews (2013:62) argues that another, fourth, dimension can be added to the threefold division on the dimensions of space. This "fourthspace" is what Matthews (2013:62) calls remembered space. Remembered space relates to mental maps that form in a community's mind over time. Hartmann (2004:330) defines mental maps as subjective spatial images of one's spatial environment. These mental maps form in a society's collective memory after the other dimensions of space have served their role (Matthews 2013:62).

From the above, one can infer that remembered space follows naturally as the fourth dimension to the other spatial categories. Furthermore, remembered space is a tool for transforming space through memory to provide a foundation for the present and upon which to build the future (Matthews 2013:74). The study advocates this understanding of remembered space. This study thus defines remembered space as *the dimension of space in which the collective memories of a people's shared history are imaginatively reconstructed to transform their identity in light of present circumstances and future hopes.* In order to grasp the significance of this definition, two fundamental aspects of remembered space are examined next: memory and imagination.

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[2] The knowledge that Lefebvre refers to is knowledge of social space.

[3] Author's own emphasis.

1.3.4.1 Memory

Space, as a reflection and product of particular societies, has a story and history.

The above principle that space has a history serves as the point of departure for our discussion on memory as it pertains to spatiality (George 2007:29). Having established that there is indeed a link between space and memory, this part of the discussion examines memory studies as a building block of remembered space.

The ancient Near Eastern cultures are called "cultures of remembrance". These cultures use memory and history to create a cultural identity (Hartmann 2004:330). The mimetic term used to describe this kind of memory in cultures of remembrance is collective memory. Collective memory is dependent upon external circumstances such as the cultural context and society in which one lives (Halbwachs [1925]1992:54). Assmann (2011:5) distinguishes between four types of memory: first mimetic memory, which is the memory of learning, second, the memory of things, third, communicative memory developed in relation with others and last cultural memory which entails the handing down of memory and therefore, meaning. Of these, cultural memory plays the most crucial role in this study.

The biblical texts, especially those in the Old Testament, originated in an oral society, where most narratives, traditions and laws were memorised and orally transmitted from generation to generation (Hendel 2005:ix). The retelling (memory) of certain narratives from Israel's collective past is what strengthened their communal and religious identity (Hendel 2005:8). It is for this reason that memory studies have gained momentum in the field of biblical studies (Bosman 2014:1).

Some of the significant collective memories explored in the study of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 are that of Moses, the exodus and wilderness traditions. The study examines how the later Judean community reinterpreted these memories and appropriated them within new physical, lived, and religious spaces. However, for them to have been able to do so, the psalmists used imagination, the second building block of remembered space.

1.3.4.2 Imagination

Barnes (2012:70) writes in his book *Interreligious Learning: Dialogue, Spirituality, and the Christian Imagination* that theology is a cultural activity requiring creative imagination. Following this line of thought, one can perhaps go as far as to say that biblical scholarship in totality is a work of imagination. The interpreter of biblical texts must imagine the world in which those texts originated. A lack of imagination would lead to a problem of interpretation since the interpreter would not be able to gain insight into the world behind the biblical text without imagination. Moreover, the authors of biblical texts themselves applied religious imagination in representing the life of the people in their relationship with God (Prinsloo 2013:11). Yet, scholarly work has been primarily rational rather than imaginal (Viljoen 2016:1).

Before moving further into the conversation, defining what this study means with the term “imagination” is essential. Taliaferro and Evans (2011:12) define imagination in general terms: “Imagination is the power to create or form mental images”. According to this definition, imagination is not an object but a cognitive power, enabling us to “fill our worldviews” (Taliaferro & Evans 2011:30). Paul Ricoeur, like Brueggemann and Linafelt, treats both memory and imagination in his book *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004). He points out that the link between memory and imagination lies in “memory-images” (Ricoeur 2004:7). Memories primarily present themselves in images. Barnes (2012:63) applies this understanding of imagination to faith. He explains that faith is a search to remember the past by using imagination to put it back together and to recreate a hopeful future. Keeping this in mind, Matthews (2013:71) also links remembered space to imagination:

> Over time it becomes clear that spatial character can and is manipulated by conscious efforts to spark the imagination and the alteration of mental mapping associated with that space.

In line with these arguments, Brueggemann and Linafelt (2012:9) believe that biblical texts are a product of imaginative remembering. Imaginative remembering involves the formation, transmission, and interpretation of the biblical texts (Brueggemann & Linafelt 2012:9). In this process, the remembering that takes place is built on collective memory. At the same time, the imagining part includes the freedom to use the power of imagination to move beyond what strictly happened in order to reinterpret and reconstruct a certain memory. This does not mean that the biblical texts are wild imaginings not based on actual memories, but the intention of the imagining is to recreate a world of meaning relevant to the listeners – a world in which later generations can situate their own lives (Brueggemann & Linafelt 2012:10). To reinterpret collective memories of exile and the wilderness and Moses traditions was also the purpose of the remembered reimagining of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 in order that the (post)exilic community could situate their own lives and circumstances within the space of collective memory. The ability to imagine oneself as a participant in imaginative remembering is also one of the practical imaginal guidelines that Viljoen (2016:4–6) specifies in her exposition of imagination as a hermeneutical device. The other important guideline in the method of remembered imagining is to focus on the symbolic space and metaphors in the biblical text (Viljoen 2016:5). These guidelines are also followed in analysing remembered space and imagination in the Psalms.

We have reached the end of Section 1.3 and the accompanying explanation of the research approach, theory, model, and method used in this study. All four lenses on the methodological camera have been discussed, from general to specific. The next step is the literature review of the sources used in conducting the study.

1.4 Literature review

This section deals with an outline of the key sources – primary as well as secondary – which are used in the study. The review offers an overview of each work's main point of view as far as it corresponds to the topic of the study.

1.4.1 Primary sources

Since this is a literature study in Semitic Languages, and more specifically in the Hebrew Bible, the primary source of this study is the final form of the Hebrew text of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106. Each psalm is discussed separately in the study, which allows engaging with the psalm on a linguistic level before applying the theory of social-scientific criticism, the model of critical spatiality and the method of remembered space to the textual analysis of the psalms.

1.4.2 Secondary sources

The secondary sources to be drawn upon in this study will be ordered according to topic, such as commentaries on the psalms, spatial studies, and memory studies. Only the most prominent sources are discussed in this literature review.

Regarding the shape of the Psalter and the structure of Book IV, the seminal work of Brevard Childs (1979) in An Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture are essential in understanding the canonical approach to biblical texts. Furthermore, the investigation of Gerald Wilson (1985) in *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* is still the fundamental work to be consulted when writing on the structure of the Psalter. Besides these classic works, the book of which deClaissé-Walford (2014b) is an editor, *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current*

State of Scholarship, is also a valuable contribution to the studying of the Psalter from a canonical perspective. Prinsloo (2021), in his recent article in the journal *Currents in Biblical Research,* gives an informative overview of research regarding reading the Psalter as a book.

In order to study Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, it is essential to consult several commentaries on the Psalms. The most important commentaries to be utilised in this study are those of Hossfeld and Zenger – *Psalms 2: A Commentary* (2005) and *Psalms 3: A Commentary* (2011) and the *New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Psalms* by deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson and Tanner (2014a) as well as the *New Cambridge Bible Commentary* of Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014). In addition, the recent *Wisdom Commentary on Psalms Books 4–5* by deClaissé-Walford (2020) is also a valuable contribution to this study since it considers and interprets psalm groups. Furthermore, the study references earlier but still relevant commentaries, such as that of Klaus Seybold (1990). Whereas commentaries such as those of Seybold (1990) and Hossfeld and Zenger (2005 and 2011) focus more on literary and form-critical features of the psalms, the commentaries of deClaissé-Walford et al. (2014a:59) and deClaissé-Walford (2020) represent the canonical approach to the Psalter as a book. On the other hand, Van der Lugt (2014) contributes a rhetorical criticism to the psalms, which are also considered in the study. The commentaries mentioned here are not the only ones used, but they represent the commentaries that form a basis for investigating Psalms 90–92 and 105–106.

Turning to the social-scientific front, where the psalms are analysed from the perspective of the social-scientific theory, there are mainly two sources to notice. Norman Gottwald's 1987 monograph, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* and that of Elliott (1993), *What is Social-Scientific Criticism,* are consulted. The *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* (Pilch & Malina 1993) is used to apply the social-scientific theory to the psalms in this study. In addition, the essay of Gerstenberger (2007), *The Psalms: Genres, Life Situations, and Theologies – Towards a Hermeneutics of Social Stratification,* provides a form-critical meet social science perspective on the psalms calling for an investigation that does not remove individual psalms from their life settings. This provides a perspective that is also considered in the social-scientific analysis.

Concerning spatiality, the T&T Clark series *Library of Biblical Studies* on *Constructions of Space* is of immense importance for this study. This series represents a systematic approach to studying critical spatiality in Old Testament texts. Some of the essays which prove valuable to the study include Prinsloo (2013), *Place, space, and Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Theory and Practice with reference to the book of Jonah*, Berquist (2002), *Critical Spatiality and the Construction of the Ancient World,* as well as Bowman (2013), *The Place of the Past: Spatial Construction in Jeremiah 1–24* and Matthews (2013), *Remembered Space in Biblical Narrative.* Prinsloo (2013) and Berquist (2002) each give noteworthy expositions on the theory behind critical spatiality, while Bowman (2013) and Matthews (2013) focus specifically on the aspect of the past in spatiality, otherwise identified as remembered space. Brueggemann and Linafelt (2012) also contribute significantly to the notion of remembered space in *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination,* where they discuss the Old Testament as a product of imaginative remembering.

However, there are works of scholars from outside the field of biblical studies that prove to be essential to this study. Those include the ground-breaking work of philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1991), *The Production of Space*, and the geographer Edward Soja (1996), building upon Lefebvre’s categories of space. One must also take note of Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), who studies spatiality from the perspective of experience. More recently, geographer David Harvey (2000) wrote extensively on space, especially concerning utopian space and spaces of hope. Robert Tally (2013) also contributes significantly to the discussion of space in his monograph *Spatiality,* where he systematically sets out to study the spatial turn in scholarship and its consequences.

On memory, one encounters another set of scholars who made significant contributions to this study. Maurice Halbwachs ([1925]1992:1) is considered one of the most influential scholars examining collective memory. In the biblical field, Jan Assman contributed much of the material on memory studies in ancient Near Eastern cultures. In his more recent *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination,* Assmann (2011) also combines the themes of memory, imagination, and identity, which are important themes to be studied in the present context. Ronald Hendel is another biblical scholar who contributed to the field of memory in the Hebrew Bible. His 2005 work, *Remembering Abraham: Culture, Memory, and History in the Hebrew Bible,* continues to be one of the most comprehensive writings on this subject.

The last topic to review, in terms of literature, is imagination. Although work on imagination in biblical studies is becoming more popular, it is still a largely unknown field, especially concerning the practical application of imagination to biblical studies and texts (Viljoen 2016:1). Nonetheless, scholars from other disciplines have done some substantial work on imagination. The book *Memory, History, Forgetting* by philosopher Paul Ricoeur (2004) is of great significance to this study since he examines the phenomenological bases of memory and imagination from a philosophical perspective. Other recent literature on imagination that is employed in this study is the book of Taliaferro and Evans (2011), *The Image in Mind: Theism, Naturalism, and the Imagination*, and that of Barnes (2012), entitled *Interreligious Learning: Dialogue, Spirituality and the Christian Imagination*. In his multidisciplinary work, Barnes (2012) finally relates imagination to faith, which is also significant for studying how imagination enabled the community of faith from the Psalms to reconstruct their space and lives. The article of Viljoen (2006) regarding theological imagination as a hermeneutical device also proves to be insightful in applying imagination as an interpretive tool to Psalms 90–92 and 105–106.

This brief literature review introduces the most significant sources used in the study as it pertains to each topic. Since the methodology and literature review have been completed, we move on to a description of the objectives of the study.

1.5 Objectives of the study

This section states the aims of the study. These objectives are listed in the order that they will be treated in the study.

- To indicate that, from a canonical perspective, Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106 form a spatially structured introduction and conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter.
- To examine Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106 from a social-scientific perspective in order to:
    - place these psalms within a particular time and space in the history of Israel (reflecting on the crisis of exile from a post-exilic perspective while recalling a pre-exilic past);
    - understand the social, political, and religious setting within which these psalms originated and were interpreted.
- To investigate Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106 from the perspective of critical spatiality in order to:
    - examine the spatial contours of the texts;
    - relate the spatial meaning of the texts to the spatial narrative of Book IV.
- To gain an understanding of the influence of remembered space concerning memory and imagination on the post-exilic community’s faith, identity, and culture in order to:
    - reinterpret the past through collective memory;
    - reimagine past sufferings and present circumstances and build a space of hope for the future.

1.6 Expected results

Based on the methodology, literature review and objectives of the study, the expected results can now be summarised. After studying Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 from the perspective of remembered space as memory and imagination, it would become apparent how Israel reimagined their future in these psalms. The people of God did this by building on collective memories of the exodus tradition, the figure of Moses and covenantal theology. Religious imagination is the component that guided them in reconstructing their religious life, identity, and future hope through remembered space.

As a result, remembered space is the structuring principle according to which the introduction and conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter were fixed. These results also have a bearing on the narrative of Book IV as a whole. Remembered space forms an *inclusio* around Book IV, placing the content of the psalms in this book and the faith community's experiences of exile and post-exile into the space of remembered imagining. The post-exilic community used remembered space as a tool that provided them with the ability to reconstruct and reimagine stability, identity, and faith in YHWH as a true universal king through the collective memory of the defining events of their past and through creative imagination amid cultural and religious instability, and a fragmented society. Through remembered space, Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 become a prayer of the Israelite community. Aware of their transience, the community pleads with YHWH to repair their nation, identity, and faith.

1.7 Brief outline of content

The purpose of this section is to provide an outline of the content of each chapter of the study:

Chapter 2 represents the canonical approach to the study. This chapter investigates the structural issues surrounding the complete Psalter, the structure of Book IV, and, more specifically, the place of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 within Book IV.

In Chapter 3, the theory and model of the study are set out in detail. This entails an in-depth discussion of social-scientific criticism and critical spatiality and the identification of social-scientific and spatial categories according to which Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 are analysed.

Chapters 4–8 each treat an individual psalm from the selected collection of psalms. Therefore, the structure of these chapters is the same. Each chapter begins with a translation of the Masoretic text of the psalm, after which a complete social-scientific and spatial analysis is done.

Chapter 9 will serve as the highlight and conclusion of the study, bringing all of the analyses and meanings of the psalms together through the method of remembered space. This chapter will illustrate the role that remembered space plays in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 as an introduction and conclusion to Book IV, with specific reference to the role that collective memory and imagining play in the spatial narrative of these psalms. Finally, this last chapter will also paint a picture of the space this research aims to fill going forward, reflecting on the meaning and influence of the study.

1.8 Conclusion

With the basic building blocks of the study discussed here, we can now move on to further set the stage for reading Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106 from the perspective of remembered space. The following chapter focuses on the structural matters surrounding the composition of the Psalter, the widest lens on the methodological camera. The approach of canonical criticism on which Chapter 2 is built includes a discussion of the fivefold structure of the book of Psalms, as well as the construction of book IV in particular and, ultimately, the place of Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106 in Book IV.

CHAPTER 2
STRUCTURAL MATTERS

2.1 Introduction

Studies on the Book of Psalms have seen different approaches and methods through the centuries. The study of the Psalter has come a long way since Hermann Gunkel's form criticism regarding the *Gattungen* of psalms and his student Sigmund Mowinckel's identification of the *Sitz-im-Leben* of each psalm (Whybray 1996:15–16). As also discussed in Chapter 1, an entire shift in the approach to Psalms studies has occurred in recent decades. The focus has moved from the study of the Psalter as a random collection of individual psalms to the study of the book of Psalms as a purposeful compilation (deClaissé-Walford 2019:22).

In this regard, Prinsloo (2021:145) distinguishes between psalm exegesis and Psalter exegesis. Whereas the past saw nearly an exclusive focus on the exegesis of individual psalms, present studies now add a contextual analysis of groups of psalms (Prinsloo 2021:146). It is important to note that one does not exclude the other. The analysis of individual psalms, as well as the analyses of psalm groups, are both equally significant and even supplement each other (Zenger 2010:26). Howard (1993a:68) supports this approach when he states that the Psalter should be studied at the higher level of collections and systematising principles as well as at the lower level in the links between individual psalms. This means that an investigation into the structure of the Psalms should consider both the *shape* and the *shaping* of the Psalter. The *shaping* of the Psalter considers diachronic matters such as the historical and editorial growth processes through which the Psalter came to be (Prinsloo 2021:150). On the other hand, when studying the *shape* of the Psalter, attention is paid to a synchronic reading of the psalms as collections that convey meaning

(Prinsloo 2021:150). Focusing on the *shape* of the Psalter thus corresponds to the canonical approach to biblical texts.

With this in mind, the current chapter is dedicated to the structural aspects of the shape and shaping of the Psalter. Many scholarly works have been done on this subject, and all cannot be listed or reflected upon here. Therefore, this chapter only discusses the critical structural matters on the topic of the study, which will be to identify and describe the overall structure of the book of Psalms as well as the specific structure of the psalm groups to which Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 belong. This is done through canonical criticism, although matters of the *shaping* and editorial process of the Psalter will also come into question. Only through understanding the structure of the Psalter as a whole can one understand the significance of smaller collections of psalms in the sub-groups in which they appear.

2.2 Canonical approach: The Psalter as a composition of five books

In 1979, Brevard Childs put forth the theory of canonical criticism. Childs (1979:41) called for a return to studying the Bible as a whole, which includes studying the books of the Bible as literary units. The results of his study led interpreters to pay closer attention to the development and intrinsic structure of biblical books as literary units. Based on this premise, Gerald Wilson (1985) started to study the psalms from a canonical perspective in his book *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*. Consequently, Wilson developed the theory that the Book of Psalms was purposefully and editorially arranged to form the Psalter in the Bible. In a later essay, Wilson (2005:229) describes the turn from studying individual psalms in isolation to sensitivity to a specific arrangement of the psalms by editors:

> In contrast to the predominantly negative conclusion of a preceding generation of Psalms scholars that the canonical arrangement was largely random and without a unifying editorial purpose, recent scholarship has convincingly demonstrated that the canonical Psalter is the end result of a process of purposeful editorial

> arrangement of psalms and collections of psalms producing a unified whole marked by structures indicating editorial intent.

The "structures indicating editorial intent" to which Wilson (2005:229) refers are primarily the doxological markers recognised in Psalm 41:14, 72:18–19, 89:53 and 106:48. It is generally accepted that these doxologies appear at the "seams" of the larger units in the Psalter which divide the Psalter into five books. Based on these observations, scholars have identified a fivefold structure to the Psalter (Koorevaar 2010:580). According to this structure, the Psalter can be arranged into five books:

Book	**Psalms**
Prologue	1–2
I	3–41
II	42–72
III	73–89
IV	90–106
V	107–145
Concluding Hallel	146–150

Table 1: Division of the Psalter into five books

The above structure can be divided into even more detail. However, at this point in the discussion, it is only necessary to take note of the overall division of the Psalter into five books since this fivefold structure of the Psalter coincidentally reflects the fivefold division of the Pentateuch, also known as the Torah of Moses (Prinsloo 2021:147).[4] Since a significant number of the psalms are attributed to David, and the figure and monarchy of David play a significant role throughout the Psalter, scholars have come to refer to the Book of Psalms as the Davidic Torah (Gillingham 2015a:1). From this perspective, the Davidic psalms can be seen as a unifying theme in the book of Psalms (deClaissé-Walford 2019:23).

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[4] Some scholars challenge the notion of dividing the Psalter into five books (See Sanders 2010). This is also discussed in more detail in Section 2.2.1.

This Davidic focus was already recognised by the rabbis, and it most probably served to grant authority to the Psalter (Wilson 2005:230). The fivefold division of the Psalter does not, however, stand and fall by the figure of David alone. The different books in the Psalter each have their emphasis and history of development, which, when taken together, tell the story of Israel's history.

2.2.1 The *shaping* of the Psalter as the result of an editorial process

A canonical reading of the Psalter also entails a re-examination of the shaping of the Psalter. As mentioned earlier, intentional editorial activity in the Psalter can already be seen in the doxologies at the end of Psalms 41, 72, 89 and 106. However, not all scholars are convinced that editors added the doxologies to divide the Psalter into five books. Sanders (2010:678) argues that the doxologies could serve as conclusions to the individual psalms involved rather than conclusions to the different books of Psalms. Nevertheless, this study follows the reasoning of scholars such as Wilson (1993b:72) and Prinsloo (2021:162–164), which states that the doxologies at the end of Psalms 41, 72, 89 and 106 were indeed editorially inserted to distinguish five main divisions in the Psalter. According to Wilson (1993b:72), it is not only the doxologies at the end of the relevant psalms that indicate the presence of a meaningful structure in the book of Psalms. There are also changes in genre and author designation supporting the doxological division (Wilson 1993b:72–73). Moreover, Prinsloo (2021:164) indicates that the editorial additions, such as the prologue (Psalms 1–2) and doxologies, convert the Psalter into a book which can serve both for meditation and liturgy.[5]

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[5] In Section 2.2.2 the function and content of the prologue and doxologies are discussed in further detail.

Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:1) describe the formation of the Psalter as an editorial process spanning centuries. Editors put individual psalms, which shared specific ideas, together and thus psalm groups originated. This would mean that, in addition to the doxologies separating the five books of the Psalter, there are also other editorial markers dividing the five books into smaller sub-groups. The most obvious marker of sub-groups would be the assignment of psalms to individual psalmists such as David, Korah, and Asaph. Other psalms are identified as psalm groups based on the editorial superscriptions added to the psalms, for example, the “Songs of Ascent” (Psalms 120–134). Some psalms share a thematic perspective, such as the “enthronement” collection in Psalms 93–100 (McCann 2014:350). These various indicators point to editorial activity within the Psalter and serve as clues to the reader on how individual psalms should be read together with surrounding psalms as a “cluster” (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:2).

The considerable evidence of the purposeful editing of individual psalms to create a particular structure within the Psalter gives rise to further questions. The first is the question as to who was responsible for editing the book of Psalms. Wilson’s (1993b:74) identification of specific editorial frames within the Psalter, including a Davidic frame, a wisdom frame, and a royal covenant frame, assists in examining the possible editorial groups within the Psalter. Susan Gillingham (2014:201) also attends to this question in her essay “The Levites and the Editorial Composition of the Psalms”. There are several theories to the possible editors of the Psalms. Some of the suggestions include that post-exilic scribal schools edited the Psalms. These scribes were likely influenced by wisdom and Torah traditions (Gillingham 2014:201). In fact, the wisdom elements present in various psalms have led scholars to believe that a group of wisdom-oriented editors were working on the Psalter (Botha 2012:260; see also Petrany 2014:87–88). A case in point is Psalm 119, which reflects both wisdom and Torah traditions and which was also one of the later psalms placed in the Psalter to perform a crucial editorial function between the collections of the Egyptian Hallel and the Songs of Ascent (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:263). The fact that the theological traditions of wisdom and Torah gained more importance in the post-exilic period supports the notion of a (post-exilic) wisdom redaction in the Psalter (Whybray 1996:36).

Gillingham (2014:202), however, notes that a wisdom-oriented redaction of the Psalter only applies to a limited portion of psalms and, therefore, does not account for the editing of the Psalter as a whole. In another theory of the identity of the editors, Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:1) argue that the editors of most psalms were a group called the “poor”. This redactional group was identified as the “poor, righteous” Israel in a religious sense and originated in the early post-exilic period. Identifying such a redactional group is derived from the strong presence of a theology of the poor, especially in Books IV–V of the Psalter (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:7). But precisely whom this group consisted of remains unknown. According to Prinsloo (2021:155), it is probable that the editors working from this “poor” tradition acted over different periods – thus, different groups of editors worked on the psalms over time, although they came from a similar identity in regarding themselves as the “true Israel”. Furthermore, Prinsloo (2021:155) suggests that this “poor” redaction might also have been connected with emerging wisdom traditions. Another possible group of editors can be identified in the prophetic-messianic perspective present in the Psalter. This is seen in the movement from the reign of King David (Books I–III) to the reign of YHWH as king (Books IV–V) after the destruction of the monarchy (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:49). Prinsloo (2021:165) adds that a redaction, which focused on Jerusalem and Zion theology, was also active, as can be seen in the centrality of the cult in many psalms.

Perhaps the most convincing argument is found in Gillingham (2014:202–203), who focuses on the liturgical superscriptions to the psalms and concludes that a group of Levitical singers in the Second Temple period may have been responsible for the editing of the Psalter. According to Gillingham (2014:205–207), this could explain the importance of the figure of David in the Psalms, as well as the focus on cultic practice and the emphasis on Torah, didactic (wisdom) and prophetic material – all themes that were important to this group. Prinsloo

(2021:165) agrees that the socio-historical situation of the Levites in post-exilic Israel leans toward an interpretation of this nature. The Levitical temple singers of the post-exilic era experienced marginalisation and could even have identified themselves as the “poor” and “true righteous” of Israel (Prinsloo 2021:165–166). Although Gillingham’s suggestion that the post-exilic Levites were the editors of the Psalter does appear to have merit, it must not be reduced to a single group of editors. When taking into account the long and complex course over which the Psalter was formed, it becomes clear that the compilation and editing of the final form of the Psalter were not a once-off activity but rather an exercise in which different editorial groups from different theological traditions played a role. Brueggemann and Linafelt (2012:312) affirm this with their theory that different guilds of choirs in the Persian period developed hymnal collections, which were incorporated into a more extensive collection.

In the debate on the formation and redaction of the Psalter, the question of the identity of the editors closely relates to the question of the historical period in which the Psalter was compiled and editorial additions made. Consensus exists among scholars that the book of Psalms is the result of a multi-layered development process. Vos (2005:43) notes that this process involved the editing and combination of earlier collections of psalms. According to Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:1), the first partial collection of psalms would have been combined by the late pre-exilic period, while the final redaction likely took place late in the post-exilic period, around 200–150 BCE. This means that some of the earlier psalms, such as Psalms 3–41 (a Davidic collection), could have originated as early as the late pre-exilic period, while others were formed during the exilic times, after which the final redaction of the Psalter took place in the late post-exilic period (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:1).

Gerstenberger (2011:218) agrees with this principle in his investigation of biblical literature in the Persian period. Although Gerstenberger (2011:218) states that it is unlikely to accurately identify individual layers of redaction in the book of Psalms, he believes that the editorial activity and dates to some partial collections can be determined. According to him, the origin of partial collections of many psalms attributed to David, as well as the psalms of Korah and Asaph, the enthronement psalms and Songs of Ascent can all be traced back to the sixth and fifth centuries BCE – which correspond to the post-exilic Persian Period (Gerstenberger 2011:218). For the most part, the final redaction of the book of Psalms also took place in the post-exilic period, where older collections of psalms would have been reinterpreted and applied to new circumstances (Seybold 1990:58). This conclusion is in agreement with Wilson's (1993b:73) original observation that Books I–III of the Psalter were to a large degree formed in the pre-exilic period, while Books IV–V came into being in the post-exilic period. In his *Introduction to the Psalms,* Klaus Seybold (1990:24) notes that, as the historical periods between Books I–III and Books IV–V differ, the character of the collection as a whole also develops from beginning to end.

Ultimately, one single answer cannot be given to the questions on the *shaping* of the Psalter. From the discussion, it becomes clear that there are no certainties as to precisely who was responsible for the editing of the Hebrew Psalter as we have it today and when it took place. However, there are some plausible possibilities. When speaking about the editorial groups of the book of Psalms and the historical periods in which the redaction took place, one must consider the different redactional trajectories and the influence each had in shaping the final Psalter.

Whybray (1996:119) thinks there is limited direct proof of the internal or external process by which the Psalter took shape and that scholars can only speculate on this matter. However, Whybray (1996:119) concedes that there was a process and that "it was extremely complex, took place over a considerable time, and was influenced at its various stages by different editorial policies". deClaissé-Walford et al. (2014a:44–45) in a sense agree with Whybray. According to them, the process through which the book of Psalms came to its final form is not recorded in history, although superscriptions to the psalms do provide certain clues. Only by acknowledging the complexity of the editorial composition behind the Psalter, a process spanning over centuries, can one comprehend the multidimensional purpose of individual psalms and collections of psalms within the Psalter. I conclude with Nasuti's (2014:17) remark that the nature of the Psalter ultimately does not rest on a narrow and restricted interpretation by any one editorial group in any historical context.

2.2.2 The *shape* of the Psalter as a fivefold narrative

Now that the matters behind the *shaping* of the Psalter have been considered, it is time to discuss the *shape* of the Psalter. In order to obtain an understanding of the place of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 within the structure of the book of Psalms, it is necessary to examine the overall structure and narrative of the Psalter. Gillingham (2015a:1) describes the Psalter as "a drama in five parts". This statement supposes that, aside from each book in the Psalter telling its own story, the five books together also have a specific message. Following the fivefold division of the Psalter, scholars recognised the existence of interrelationships between the books. As a result of Wilson's (1985:209–214) work on the editing of the Psalter, there was the assumption that Books I–III are closely related, while Books IV–V form a pair. It has been determined that there are specific organisational techniques which indicate that Books I–III belong together and that Books IV–V were added later.

For example, Books I–III were mainly arranged according to authorship, whilst Books IV–V were arranged employing genre terms found in the superscriptions (Whybray 1996:120). Furthermore, most of the psalms in Books I–III are individual laments, while Books IV–V generally comprise communal psalms of praise and thanksgiving (Wilson 2005:231). In line with this observation, the first three books (Psalms 2–89) emphasise the figure and covenant of David, with most psalms having a superscription referring to King David (Gillingham 2015a:1). In Books IV–V (Psalms 90–150) only twelve of the sixty psalms contain the superscription "to David" (לְדוִד). Moreover, it is not the figure of David that enjoys attention in the last two books, but rather the themes of exile and return.

Wilson (1993b:75) proposes that in Books I–III, the psalms grapple with the failure of the Davidic monarchy, while Books IV–V respond to this crisis by offering a theological solution, namely that YHWH's kingdom and kingship are not affected. The content of each book of the Psalter will be discussed in what follows. The original work done by Wilson (2005:246) once again provides a guideline in describing the structure and content of the five books of the Psalter.

As discussed in Section 2.2, the book of Psalms structurally consists of an introduction (Psalms 1–2) and a conclusion (Psalm 146–150) with the five books between these. Before examining the content and message of the five books, we will begin with a brief description of the introduction and conclusion to the book of Psalms. Wilson (1993b:74) indicates that Psalm 1 forms a hermeneutical introduction to the Psalter. This introduction emphasizes the function of the psalms as a source of meditation and joy in YHWH's Torah. Concerning the relation between Psalm 1 and Psalm 2, Wilson (2005:233) believes that Psalm 2 originally functioned as an introduction to Books I–III of the Psalter (Psalms 2–89) and should, therefore, not be read with Psalm 1. Instead, the final redactors inserted Psalm 1 as an introduction to the *complete collection* at a later stage, after Books IV–V were added to the Psalter (Miller 1993:85). In this sense, Psalm 1 serves as a prologue, setting the stage for the lifestyle that the psalms in the collection encourage. This is a lifestyle according to the metaphor of life as a path or way in which the Torah and an intimate relationship with YHWH is the source (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:31). Already, the reader is introduced to the main characters in the psalms – YHWH, the righteous and the wicked.

Weber (2010:836), on the other hand, regards Psalms 1–2 as a joint introduction, with Psalm 3 being the beginning of the first Davidic collection (Psalms 3–14) in Book I of the Psalter. Psalm 1 can be categorised as a wisdom psalm, Psalm 2 is a royal psalm, while Psalm 3, starting the Davidic collection, has a Davidic superscription. Although certain links are found between Psalms 1–3 (cf. Botha & Weber 2008), this study holds that Psalms 1 and 2 form an editorial unit together, a notion strengthened by the lack of a superscription in either of these psalms (Sumpter 2019:517). In addition, Weber (2010:834) points out that in the editing process of the Psalter, wisdom and royal psalms were inserted at strategic places, influencing the shape of the Psalter. This seems to be the case with Psalms 1–2, forming a joint introduction to the Psalms, also called the “overture” to the Psalter (Botha & Weber 2008:276).

The grand finale of the narrative of the Psalter is found in Psalms 146–150. The results of the narrative between YHWH, the righteous and the wicked are given in these psalms. Psalms 146–150 are five Hallelujah psalms with a double purpose – serving as a doxology for Book V and acting as the climactic conclusion to the Psalter (Wilson 2005:232). Although these psalms are five individual psalms, they are linked together by the “Hallelujah” at the beginning and end of each psalm. Furthermore, Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:7) identify a combination of theologies interacting in Psalms 146–150, namely Zion theology, a theology of the poor and creation theology. In this sense, the conclusion of the Psalter in Psalms 146–150 brings together the message of the Psalter as a whole: praise for YHWH as the creator-king residing in Zion, who saves the poor, or righteous, of Israel and embraces them as his children, while the wicked are defeated (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:7).

Within this framework of Torah meditation and praise the five Psalter books find their meaning. As already mentioned, Books I–III are regarded as the earlier collections, while Books IV–V developed afterwards, well into the post-exilic era. However, with the final redaction of the Psalter putting these five books together, a striking narrative unfolds, reflecting the history of Israel and the people’s coming to grips with traumatic incidents in their collective memory. Wilson (2005:235) sees a movement, an interpretive dialectic between the first three books and the last two books of the Psalter. This is seen in the thematic focus of the two segments of the Psalter, with Psalms 2–89 concentrating on the struggles and ultimate end of the Davidic kingship and then Psalms 90–150 reflecting on rebuilding life in the aftermath of the destruction of the monarchy and temple (Wilson 2005:235).

In line with Wilson, deClaissé-Walford et al. (2014c:49) summarise the theme of each book of the Psalter in a discussion on the canonical shape of the Psalter. In Book I, the focus falls on the rule of David, whereas Book II moves on to the era of Solomon's reign. Book III takes place during the divided monarchy, Assyria's siege of the northern kingdom, and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem and the southern kingdom with the subsequent exile. Book IV reflects upon the crisis that the exile brought about, and the religious and identity struggles that the people had after losing their land, the monarchy, and their temple. Book V was written in post-exilic circumstances, focusing on the reconstruction of faith and identity.

Following the above outline, the remainder of the discussion will highlight the most critical aspects of each book. Book I of the Psalter comprises of Psalms 3-41, with most of the psalms containing the superscription 'to David', marking this as a Davidic collection. Gillingham (2015a:1) thinks that David functions as a model of obedience in Book I. This becomes especially clear in the way that the Davidic psalms of Book I cover all roles and aspects of David's life – his being king and warrior, but also a fallible human being and a devoted servant of YHWH (deClaissé-Walford 2019:24). Book I concludes with a doxology in Psalm 41:13.

Book II comprises Psalms 42–72, many of which are laments (deClaissé-Walford 2019:24). According to the superscriptions in Book II, the book consists of three collections. The book opens with a collection attributed to the sons of Korah – who were Levitical temple singers (deClaissé-Walford 2019:24). This Korahite collection, found in Psalms 42–49, focuses on Zion, the temple and Jerusalem (Gillingham 2015a:1). Psalm 50 is an Asaphite psalm. The Asaphites also had musical ties to the temple (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:413). The remainder of the psalms in Book II are attributed to David (Psalms 51–72). Many of the psalms in the Davidic collection recall the narratives about David's life in 1 and 2 Samuel, stressing the imperfect humanity of David (Gillingham 2015a:1).

On a redactional note, McCann (1993:102–103) believes that the psalms in Book II can also be interpreted from an exilic and post-exilic perspective. The many laments found in Book II can be seen as expressions of the difficulties of the post-exilic community as they searched for hope after trauma and tragedy (McCann 1993:102–103). Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:3–4) note that several psalms in Book II originated in the exilic era and were subsequently expanded in the post-exilic era to reflect a pre-exilic reality. Furthermore, the psalms of Book II are also part of the Elohistic Psalter (Psalms 42–83) in which the word *Elohim* is used when referring to God as opposed to *YHWH* in most of the other psalms in the Psalter (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:2). This suggests that the Elohistic Psalter was a separate collection incorporated into the Psalter (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:411). The concluding psalm to Book II, Psalm 72, is attributed to Solomon. It is one of only two psalms in the Psalter with Solomon's name attached to it (deClaissé-Walford 2019:24). This psalm is a royal psalm, praying that God will make the new king prosperous, while Gillingham (2015a:1) sees in it an implicit reminder of the later difficulties the monarchy faced. In Psalm 72:18–19, a doxology is found, which concludes Book II.

Book III of the Psalter runs from Psalm 73 to Psalm 89. Book III is considerably shorter than the first two books in the number of psalms it contains. Psalms 73–83 are an Asaphite collection, while Psalms 84–85 and 87–88 are part of the Korah Psalms. This means that Book III is dominated by collections connected to temple singers. McCann (1993:96) indicates that most of the psalms in Book III are community laments. The concluding psalm in Book III, Psalm 89, speaks about the final destruction of the monarchy, with the throne being "thrown to the ground" (Psalm 89:44–46). The last part of Psalm 89 refers to the historical events happening after the gradual decline of the monarchy, when the Assyrians destroyed the Northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE, and the Babylonians did the same to the Southern kingdom of Judah around 587/6 BCE. Book III culminates in the crisis confirmed by Psalm 89, where a disillusioned faith community laments, unsure of their identity and place in the world (deClaissé-Walford 2019:25).

Wilson (1993b:78) places Books I–III within a covenantal frame, stressing the importance of the Davidic covenant. The covenantal frame, consisting of Psalms

2, 72 and 89, concerns itself with the institution, transmission and eventual failure of the monarchy as expressed through the Davidic covenant (Wilson 1993b:78). Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:6–7) call it a messianic, or royal, theological frame. These three books contain pre-exilic content with exilic and post-exilic editorial additions. Therefore, Books I–III of the Psalter should be read in a pre-exilic setting from a post-exilic perspective, reflecting upon the history of the Davidic monarchy and the failure of that monarchy as one of the causes of the exile.

The fourth book of the Psalter comprises Psalms 90–106. It is the shortest book in the Psalter. Together with Book V, it forms the part of the Psalter that reflects on the exilic and post-exilic circumstances of the faith community. These last two books of the Psalter differ in form and content from Books I–III. The figure of David and the monarchy move into the background while a new vision of kingship is developed (Gillingham 2015a:2). There is continuity between Book III and Book IV. Book IV answers the theodicy questions that Psalms 88–89 – the conclusion to Book III – pose (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:670). The psalms this study will examine are also part of Book IV. Book IV opens with Psalm 90, attributed to Moses, and ends with Psalm 106, which also contains a reference to Moses. Psalms 93–100 are known as the Kingship of God psalms, while Psalms 101–104 are again credited to David. Since Book IV forms an integral part of the study, its complete structure and content are discussed in Section 2.3.

The last book in the Psalter to discuss here is Book V – covering Psalms 107–145, after which Psalms 146–150 conclude the Psalter as a whole. Book V also consists of several different collections, such as the Egyptian Hallel (Psalms 113–118), the Songs of Ascent (Psalms 120–134) and the last Davidic collection in the Psalter (Psalms 138–145). Book V begins with thanksgiving, celebrating that YHWH saved his people and brought them to their land again. Book V focuses on rebuilding the post-exilic community’s identity and religion in the aftermath of the exile. The psalms in Book V move the community from despair to praise – from hopelessness to hope in a new life under the reign of YHWH, the universal king (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:795).

In this section (2.2), the emphasis fell on the shape and shaping of the Psalter. From the description of the five books of the Psalter, it becomes clear that each psalm, each collection, and each book can be interpreted individually in a meaningful way. However, one should not overlook the value of interpreting the whole – since a new perspective arises when reading the Psalter as a drama in five parts (Gillingham 2015a:1). I conclude this section with Wilson's (1993b:82) significant observation as to the purpose of the Psalter:

> Rather than a hymnbook, the Psalter is a symphony with many movements, or better yet, an oratorio in which a multitude of voices – singly and in concert – rise in a crescendo of praise.

2.3 The structure of Book IV of the Psalter

> Lord, you have been a dwelling place for us from generation to generation (Psalm 90:1).

With this confession of faith, Book IV of the Psalter answers to the disappointed outcries of Psalm 89, where the people of YHWH expressed their feeling of being abandoned after the failure of the monarchy and the exile. Editorially, Book IV answers the theological questions arising out of Book III, while setting the stage for the post-exilic Book V, in which the faith community reconstructs their identity and faith symbols, such as the temple. Wallace (2007:15) argues that Book IV forms the "editorial center" of the final Psalter, with Psalm 90 signifying the "shift from Davidic monarchy to Yahwistic theocracy". This shift also becomes apparent in the profound theology developed throughout the different psalm collections in Book IV. In order to grasp the meaning of Book IV, it is necessary to become familiar with the book's structure.

There are differing views on the division of psalms within Book IV. Koorevaar (2010:589) gives an account of the traditional division, which consisted of the following: Psalms 90–92 (Moses), Psalms 93–100 (kingship Psalms) and Psalms 101–106 (David). However, with the studying of psalm groups and reading the books of the Psalter as a purposeful composition, this division has been revised.

deClaissé-Walford (2020:3) treats the psalms of Book IV as psalm groups in her *Wisdom Commentary on Psalms Books 4 and 5*. She considers Psalms 90–92 as a “single composition” with literary links, as well as shared motifs and a movement from lament to promise and then to thanksgiving between the three psalms (deClaissé-Walford 2020:3). Following this, Psalms 93–100 are grouped together by deClaissé-Walford (2020:19–20) based on their characterisation as enthronement psalms, celebrating YHWH’s sovereignty over all nations and the world. While Psalms 94 and 100 are not enthronement psalms in the strict sense of the word, deClaissé-Walford (2020:23) reads Psalm 94 as a contrasting response to Psalm 93, while she interprets Psalm 100 as the doxological conclusion to the group of enthronement psalms. DeClaissé-Walford (2020:43, 67) then continues to read Psalms 101–104 as a group and Psalms 105 and 106 as the conclusion to Book IV. From this perspective, Psalms 101 and 102 are grouped under the theme of YHWH’s loyal love (חסד) and sovereignty, while Psalms 103 and 104 are grouped based on the motif of YHWH’s mercy and sovereignty towards humans (Psalm 103) and creation (Psalm 104). Lastly, Psalms 105 and 106 are treated as historical twin psalms, closing Book IV. Human (2019:135) notes that Psalms 105–106 form a “doxological *finale”* to Book IV, in which the Pentateuch traditions found in Psalms 90–92 and kingship themes of Psalms 93–100 come together. In agreement with Human, deClaissé-Walford (2020:68) summarises the nature and content of Psalms 105–106 as follows:

> When read together, Psalms 105 and 106 are a stirring reminder of the complex history of YHWH’s relationship with the Israelite people…

In contrast with deClaissé-Walford (2020), Van der Lugt (2019:606–607) regards Psalms 90–100 as a deliberate composition of eleven psalms, with Psalms 90–94 and Psalms 96–100 forming two sub-cycles. In the larger cycle of Psalms 90–100, Psalm 95 stands in the centre (Van der Lugt 2019:623). Van der Lugt

(2019:630) bases his observations on the number of poetic lines, poetic structure, and guide lexemes, as was his approach in *Cantos and Stanzas in Biblical Hebrew Poetry III* (2014). Based on this methodology, Van der Lugt (2019), arrives at a conclusion differing from approaches such as those of Human (2019) and deClaissé-Walford (2020), which rest upon semantic fields and literary and thematic markers. Since the methodology of this study is determined by the principles of canonical criticism, thus reading the Psalter as a deliberately arranged work producing a particular narrative, the division of Book IV by deClaissé-Walford (2020) is accepted:

Introduction	Psalms 90–92 – *Mosaic* Covenant
Body	Psalms 93–100 – YHWH is king collection Psalms 101–104 – YHWH's loyal love and mercy as ruler over humanity and creation (with Davidic tones)
Conclusion	Psalms 105–106 – Historical twin psalms with a *Mosaic* focus

Table 2: Structure of Book IV

The following observations can be made as seen from the structure of Book IV in the above table and drawing upon Gillingham's (2015a:3) summary of Book IV. Psalms 90–92 are grouped as a Mosaic-themed introduction to the book, focusing on Moses as a mediator. Psalms 93–100 bring the perspective of YHWH as a universal king in the kingship collection, after which Psalms 101–104 reflect in particular on YHWH's reign over humanity and creation, with Davidic superscriptions. Psalms 105–106 then form a historical conclusion to Book IV, looking back on Israel's history from Abraham to Moses.

deClaissé-Walford (2019:27) explains the time frame within which Book IV should be read. Following the storyline of the Psalter, Book IV is set in the exilic period. However, the psalms in Book IV were read by a post-exilic audience, recalling the pre-exilic events of the exodus tradition. In support of this premise, Gerstenberger (2011:224) finds a post-exilic life setting in the kingship psalms of Psalms 93–100. The view of YHWH as a universal, omnipotent king developed not out of the Davidic tradition but rather out of the imperial ideology of Babylon and Persia (Gerstenberger 2011:224). Furthermore, the psalms from Book IV reflect inner-biblical influences from the Pentateuch and the prophet Isaiah (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:1).

These influences over three time frames mean that the post-exilic community developed a particular theology due to exilic experiences. How they legitimise this theology is found in recalling pre-exilic history – Psalms 90–92 and 105–106. As the people of YHWH had no king to protect and rule over them in exile, in a similar sense, they also had no king when they were in the wilderness during the exodus. In both instances, they had to trust in YHWH alone as ruler and protector (deClaissé-Walford 2019:26).

Following this thinking, Book IV can be regarded as a product of remembered space. The experience of loss brought about by the events of the exile led the post-exilic community to reimagine the formative aspects of their faith identity – land, temple, and king. Reimagining is done by remembering their collective history, primarily found in Moses, the Torah, the covenant, and the exodus tradition. This principle is the basis for this study, to read Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 from the perspective of remembered space. In the remainder of the discussion, we will briefly examine the content of Book IV within the framework of remembered reimagining.

2.3.1 Psalms 90–92 as an introduction to Book IV

Based on similarities in vocabulary and thematic links, as well as allusions to the figure of Moses and Deuteronomy 32–33, Psalms 90–92 are treated as a unit (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:6). Several manuscripts present Psalm 90 and Psalm 91 as a single psalm, especially since Psalm 91 does not have a superscription (Wallace 2007:23). Psalm 92 has the superscription of being a “song for the Sabbath”. These three psalms share the theme of human life’s quickly passing, fragile nature. In the light of the transience of life, one could not depend upon a worldly institution but on YHWH alone. Gillingham (2015a:4) notes that Moses is employed as a "mediator" in Psalms 90–92 to deliver this message to the post-exilic community.

The structure of Psalms 90–92 can be demarcated as follows: Psalm 90 contains a lament and petition; Psalm 91 serves as the response from God, and Psalm 92 is a thanksgiving psalm in answer to YHWH's response in the previous psalm (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:2). Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:6) argue that this structure enables the psalmist to develop a "theological anthropology", which aids in answering the theodicy questions that the end of Book III posed in Psalm 89. At the same time, Psalms 90–92 set the stage for the prominent figure of Moses throughout Book IV, as well as in the concluding psalms to the book (see the mention of Moses in Psalms 99:6; 103:7; 105:26 and 106:16,23,32).

2.3.2 Psalms 93–100 and Psalms 101–104 as the centre of Book IV

The centre of Book IV consists of roughly two groups of psalms, namely Psalms 93–100 and Psalms 101–104. Psalms 93–100 are known as the "enthronement psalms", the first collection at the heart of Book IV. These psalms imagine YHWH as a universal king on the (imagined) cosmic stage of Zion (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:2). According to Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:404), the collection of Psalms 93–100, similar to Psalms 90–92, was written as a reaction to the fall of the Davidic monarchy and the Jerusalem temple. With chaos dominating the lives of the exilic community, they turn to the notion that YHWH reigns, and unlike that of humans, YHWH's kingship is stable and trustworthy. The second group of psalms in the centre of Book IV is Psalms 101–104, which are connected with superscriptions ascribing these psalms to David. However, this study proposes that the references to David in Psalms 101–104 serve a thematic purpose – continuing the kingship theology found in the preceding Psalms 93–100. Instead of longing for a David-like monarchy, Psalms 101–104 reimagine the Davidic tradition in light of Psalms 93–100. Ultimately, Psalms 101–104 confirm the message of Psalms 93–100 that YHWH's reign of justice and mercy over humanity and creation is everlasting.[6]

2.3.3 Psalms 105–106 as a conclusion to Book IV

Connecting to the theme of YHWH's rule in Psalms 93–100 and 101–104, Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:2) summarise the topic of Psalms 105 and 106 as proclaiming YHWH's royal rule in the *history* of Israel – from Abraham to the exile. The rule of YHWH in history immediately follows Psalm 104, where YHWH's rule in creation is celebrated. Although many scholars treat Psalms 104–106 as a sub-collection, it is mainly based on the later editorial insertion of Hallelujah acclamations to link these psalms (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:2). This study, however, separates Psalm 104 from Psalms 105–106 and reads Psalms 105–106 as twin psalms focusing on Israel's history (Anderson 2017:186). Psalm 105 and Psalm 106 together conclude Book IV of the Psalter (Human 2019:133).

Psalm 105 is a hymn of praise that reflects upon how YHWH has provided for and sustained his people throughout their history (deClaissé-Walford 2019:26). The psalm begins Israel's history with Abraham and the covenant made with Israel's ancestors (Gillingham 2015a:10). Psalm 106 is a community lament, reminding Israel that even with the unfaithfulness of his people, YHWH remained faithful to his covenant (Gerstenberger 2011:223). Both psalms use the collective memory of Israel to stress different sides of Israel's relationship with YHWH (Human 2019:168). In Psalm 105, the fact that Israel was chosen is emphasised, while Psalm 106 emphasises the sin and unfaithfulness of Israel (Human 2019:168).

Yet, by recalling the covenant that YHWH made and upheld through history, the conclusion to Book IV encourages the post-exilic community to put their trust in

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[6] See Section 9.4.3 in the concluding chapter for a synthesis of how Psalms 93-100 and Psalms 101-104 fit into the remembered space of Psalms 90-92 and 105-106.

YHWH and learn from history in the restoration of their life and faith. Anderson (2017:196) provides a fitting analysis of the function that Psalms 105–106 fulfil as the conclusion to Book IV:

> Grounded in the promise of the ancestral covenant, Pss 105 and 106 remind ancient Israel of the long, uninterrupted history of YHWH's covenantal fidelity, regardless of its own infidelity. YHWH took the initiative and has remained constant throughout, even in the face of exile and its aftermath. As a vassal people, ancient Israel should not lose hope. YHWH's covenant guarantees their future.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter set out the canonical approach to the study by discussing the *shape* and *shaping* of the Psalter. This included an analysis of the structure of the Psalter as a whole, according to the narrative of the five books in which the Psalter is divided.

From examining the shape and shaping of the Psalter, it became clear that the book of Psalms underwent an extensive editorial process spanning centuries. Different editorial groups put together different collections, which together formed the Psalter. The last redaction of the Psalter took place in the post-exilic era. Concerning the fivefold division of the book of Psalms, it became apparent that Books I–III of the Psalter are closely related, while Books IV–V reflect Israel's exilic and post-exilic situation. Next, this chapter investigated the structure of Book IV in particular. From this, it was determined that Book IV serves as an answer to the exilic and faith crisis starting in Book III as well as a theological stepping ground for the restoration taking place in Book V. Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, respectively, serve as the introduction and conclusion to Book IV, creating a historical *inclusio* regarding the covenant and figure of Moses. The motivation for the particular choice and demarcation of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 was also discussed.

It was concluded that Book IV should be read and interpreted within three periods: set in the exile events, directed towards a post-exilic audience, and recalling a pre-exilic past. The psalms under investigation (Psalms 90–92 and 105–106) create a theology for a post-exilic community out of the loss and trauma of the exile by recalling the historical past of Israel.

Now that the structural matters representing the study's approach have been debated, the following chapter pays attention to the theory and method of the study. This includes an exposition of the social-scientific theory and method of critical spatiality, which will be applied to the relevant psalms in Chapters 4–8.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL PREAMBLE

3.1 Introduction

In his book, *Thirdspace – Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, Edward Soja (1996:71) proposes an ontological triad to existence, consisting of spatiality, historicity, and sociality. According to him, the production of space, time and society are critical in gaining knowledge of the world (Soja 1996:70). In this chapter, all three of these notions are discussed as the theoretical and methodological basis of the study. First, we will turn to the social aspects in the social-scientific theory, after which the method of critical spatiality is discussed, and lastly, the historical aspect will come into play when the notion of remembered space is described. Whereas Chapter 2 explored the organisation of the Psalter and delineated the psalms studied, the current chapter is concerned with examining the social-scientific theory and critical spatial method underlying the study.

In the first part of the chapter, the fundamental values and principles of the social-scientific theory are discussed, after which the specific social-scientific categories to be used to examine each psalm are outlined. The second part of the chapter is devoted to describing the model of critical spatiality, which includes an explanation of the Ancient Near Eastern worldview as it pertains to the biblical understanding of space and the differentiation between different dimensions of space. This leads to a detailed depiction of the spatial categories to be applied to Psalms 90–92 and 105–106.

This chapter forms the last portion of the theoretical basis of the study. From Chapter 4 onwards, the theoretical principles discussed in these first few chapters are applied to the psalms that form the object of this study. In order to ensure a comprehensive take on Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, a solid foundation must be laid out. In this sense, the current chapter acts as the last step in the departure point from which the psalms under investigation are discussed.

3.2 Social-scientific theory

The use of theories from the social sciences to study biblical texts came about some decades ago. Elliott (1993:27) notes that biblical scholars became interested in the social context of biblical texts in the 1970s, which ultimately brought about the convergence of social sciences with biblical exegesis. According to Elliott (2011:1), social-scientific criticism should not be seen as an independent paradigm but rather as a sub-discipline of exegesis. It was, in fact, historical criticism that paved the way for the emergence of a social-scientific dimension to exegesis (Van Aarde 2007:49). Elliott (1993:16) defines social-scientific criticism in his significant 1993 book *What is social-scientific Criticism?* in the following manner:

> Social-scientific criticism of the Bible is that phase of the exegetical task which analyzes the social and cultural dimensions of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models and research of the social sciences.

Although scholars such as the sociologist Max Weber and theologians such as Adolf von Harnack and Ernst Troeltsch have previously paid attention to social aspects present in biblical texts, the theory of social-scientific criticism involves an in-depth investigation of how social and cultural phenomena formed biblical texts from the perspective of the social sciences. The inherent social nature of biblical texts meant that methods from the social sciences, especially cultural sociology and anthropology, were apt to interpret biblical writings (Elliott 2011:1). Having originated within interacting social groups and social structures, such as the family structure, law, and government structures as well as the religious institution, biblical texts opened themselves up to be investigated from a social-scientific perspective (Gottwald 1987:26). Since the biblical texts are embedded within social systems, all aspects of the text – including genre, structure, message and meaning – are determined by culture and society (Elliott 2011:1). In this sense, a text is considered as being shaped through a process of social interaction (Schäder 2010:236). Studying biblical texts from a social-scientific point of view includes a study of the multidimensional relationships between all role players in the social field and how social interactions drive social action, as recorded in the texts.

Applying the social sciences to biblical texts has changed the perspective of biblical scholars on a range of matters, for example, on how the origins of ancient Israel are interpreted (Gottwald 1987:27). Furthermore, social-scientific criticism offers a variety of angles through which to study a biblical text. Scholars can focus on social values, systems and structures functioning in a particular society at a particular time while also considering the broader ancient Near Eastern social context (comparative sociology) and its influence on the biblical people (Gottwald 1987:27–28). In this way, scholars can understand the social dynamics present in communicating a message between composer and audience (Van Aarde 2007:50). Yet, social-scientific criticism does not merely have a descriptive task – to describe social values and relations – but instead has the task to analyse and explain what the social features of a text contribute to the ultimate meaning of that text (Elliott 2011:2). The ultimate need for the use of social-scientific criticism in exegesis, according to Elliott (2011:2), is because communication, imagination and understanding are all culturally and socially conditioned. This is also why the current study considers social-scientific criticism in the exegetical process of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106.

3.2.1 The social world of the Hebrew Bible

In order to gain an understanding of the necessity of social-scientific criticism in the process of studying biblical texts, it is crucial to describe the social world behind the Hebrew Bible. This enables one to identify and meaningfully interpret biblical social values and institutions, specifically as they pertain to this study in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106. Opening his discussion on the social world of the Hebrew Bible, Gottwald (1987:36) focuses on the geography or the physical space in which the events in the Hebrew Bible unfold. Since spatiality is fully discussed in Section 3.3, only a few basic remarks will be made here on the physical space in which the events of the biblical texts mainly took place.

The Promised Land, Canaan – also known as Israel or Palestine – form the backdrop to the events described in the biblical texts. Geographically, Canaan is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Jordan River valley to the east, which includes the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River and the Dead Sea (Isbouts 2007:19). To the south of Canaan lay the Negeb desert, while the northern border was characterised by hill country (Carr 2010:23). Overall, Canaan formed part of a larger area called the Ancient Near East. The larger Mesopotamian area is characterised by mountains, desert and the two main rivers – Tigris and Euphrates. However, Palestine, being mainly desert land, did not have one of these major rivers flowing through and consequently depended upon rainfall to cultivate crops. The main life-sustaining activity in the Ancient Near Eastern region was agriculture (Gottwald 1987:43). Although cities, monarchies, religious institutions, and political structures advanced to systems that were more complex as history went on, the ancient Near Eastern society reflected in the Hebrew Bible remained primarily agrarian (Isbouts 2007:30). This lifestyle influenced the social, cultural, political, and religious character of the people in the region. Hence, the social and cultural world of the different Ancient Near Eastern peoples shared specific characteristics (Elliott 2011:p3 of 10).

These mutual “social codes” of the ancient Near Eastern world explain why there are also considerable parallels in literature, as well as religious and cultural myths and rituals between the Israelites and other ancient Near Eastern people (Gottwald 1987:80). This means that the biblical texts are continuously in conversation with surrounding cultures, as it becomes evident upon consulting extrabiblical evidence, such as archaeology (Finkelstein & Mazar 2007:9). How Israel reshapes, polemicizes, and counter-culturally applies texts and traditions from surrounding ancient Near Eastern cultures, is what distinguishes the Hebrew people and their texts in the ancient Near East. However, this was not only done to texts of other cultures but also to Israel’s texts as later editors combined, redacted, and added material to the writings of the Hebrew Bible (cf. Section 2.2.1 on a discussion of the editing of the Psalter as a case in point).

Elliott (1993:79), in his exposition of the procedures of social-scientific criticism, distinguishes between the social and cultural systems of the Hebrew Bible. The social system comprises social institutions such as political and religious structures and institutions by which society functions, including patron-client relationships and kinship. Aspects of the cultural system include values such as honour and shame. Pilch’s and Malina’s (1993) *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* explains the social and cultural systems in the biblical texts. Referring to the cultural system in the world of the Bible, Pilch and Malina (1993:xv) define a social value as “a general, normative orientation of action in a social system”. Social values thus direct the quality and the purpose of a society’s behaviour. These values are expressed in what Pilch and Malina (1993:xvii) call “value objects”. Nature, time, space, the self, and others are all objects of social values. In addition, that which gives ultimate meaning to life, the All – personified in the biblical texts by God – is also a value object.

The system in which these values are realised leads to the creation of social institutions. Social institutions have the function of creating boundaries in which to live out social values. For example, kinship or family as a social institution not only has the function of nurturing individuals within a larger group but also delineates roles, statuses, and boundaries for all the members – fathers, mothers, children, husbands, wives and so forth (Pilch & Malina 1993:xvii). The four key social institutions in the ancient Near Eastern world were kinship, religion, politics, and economics (Pilch & Malina 1993:xx). Nevertheless, these four institutions did not function separately from each other. Elliott (2011:3) divides these four institutions into the city and the household. The “city” represents the political institutions or public spaces, while the “household” represents the kinship institution or private spaces. The other two institutions, economics and religion, were embedded into these. The economic institution was embedded in both the political institution and the kinship institution, while religion also functioned in both the public sphere (as official political religion) and the household (kinship) domain (Elliott 2011:3).

Pilch and Malina (1993:xx) are, nevertheless, of the opinion that the kinship institution was the most prominent social system of the ancient Near East. Kinship influenced the functioning of all the other institutions by placing the family as a group in society's centre – consequently, the broader society's social values derived from kinship rules. Since the family functioned as a group, and groups of families together made up a society, the ancient Near Eastern world was group-oriented. This meant that an individual's sense of self was determined by the group to which the person belonged (Neyrey 1993b:94). As Sigmund Mowinckel (1967:66) rightly notes, the people of Israel primarily experienced life not as individuals but as a community. Closely linked to the concept of group identity is the dyadic personality – according to which a person's identity is defined in terms of their relationship to something or someone, such as the place they come from, their nation or family (Neyrey 1993a:53–54). Consequently, an individual's actions directly impact the group as a whole. The responsibility to uphold the group's honour was collective (Mowinckel 1967:66). The values, goals, customs, and laws in ancient Near Eastern society were also collectively shared (Elliott 1993:136). Therefore, tradition and group members' handing down of tradition played a significant role. This means that the past was of the utmost importance for group consciousness and time orientation in the ancient Near East (Neyrey 1993b:95). Stories of past events shaped the collective thoughts, imaginations, and identity of groups. This observation is critically important for the study since the notion of remembered space acknowledges the role of the past in the lives of ancient Near Eastern people.

Another aspect of group dynamics in the ancient Near Eastern world was that relationships were shaped and structured in a specific manner. Groups functioned in coalitions and factions (Elliott 1993:136). This led to a distinction between different groups as in-groups and out-groups. The group to which "I" and "we" belong is considered the in-group, while the group to which "they" belong is considered to be the out-group (cf. Mowinckel 1967:42). Loyalty should be shown towards one's own group, the so-called in-group, and caution should be taken not to fall prey to the traps of the out-group and become associated with them. This group dynamic is especially seen in the Psalms, where a distinction is made between the "wicked" – the out-group – and the "righteous" – the in-group (Botha 2020:3–4). It is, however, not only relationships *between* groups that function in a certain way. W*ithin* the group itself, relationships were structured in a certain way, namely hierarchically. The most prominent hierarchical structure of relationships in the ancient Near East is found in the patron-client relationship. Malina (1993d:151) describes the patron-client relationship as a relationship between a person of power and high social status – the patron – and a person with less power and lower social status – the client. As a result, the notion of equality did not exist in the cultural value system of the ancient Near East (Elliott 2011:3). The client was primarily dependent upon the patron's favour, while the patron's honour would increase when the client praised him. The covenant relationship between YHWH and his people also reflects the patron-client relationship. YHWH acts as the patron, while Israel is seen in the role of the client. When analysing Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 in the upcoming chapters, attention will be paid to how the patron-client relationship emerges in the Psalms.

These group and relationship dynamics of the ancient Near Eastern world not only directed the social institutions of kinship, religion and the like but also led to the development of accompanying cultural system values. Therefore, society's values were closely related to the workings of social institutions. Although some notable values have already been discussed, such as group dynamics, societal roles and patron-client relationships, the central values influencing the institution of kinship and its associated relationships must still be attended to. The values of honour and shame are the most prominent in the ancient Near Eastern world. These values refer to a person's worth and social standing in society (McVann 1993:75). When a person "has" honour, it means that their worth is publicly acknowledged, while shame is the opposite of honour (Plevnik 1993:107). When one is shamed, it means that one is losing honour. In addition, honour and shame were seen as limited goods. Only a fixed amount of honour was available, and one can only add to one's honour by taking away honour from someone (Neyrey 1993c:123). For Israel as a people, their honour was derived from their covenant relationship with YHWH, their patron. YHWH's sustained kindness and love towards them prove their honour, but they are shamed when YHWH turns his back on his people (Plevnik 1993:109).

From the discussion, it becomes clear that the cultural values and social institutions of the ancient Near Eastern world are closely intertwined in their relation to the behaviour, group interests and worldview of the people of those societies (Elliott 1993:45). It is only by analysing the social values and institutions that one can come to a better understanding of the meaning of the biblical texts. Specifically about the Psalms, Gottwald (1987:537) asks important social-scientific questions:

> Who are the sufferers and the oppressors that so richly populate the psalms? How did the psalms function within the social transactions and power relations of the community? A clear starting point is that the psalms celebrate an order of life created by God which is badly shaken by crises of public and private life and is only recoverable at a new level after passing through limit experiences of severe disorder.

Gottwald's remarks correspond to the social-scientific reality of the psalms in this study. When concentrating on the socio-historical period in which Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 played a role, it becomes clear that it was a time in which the social institutions of Israel were deconstructed. Not only did the monarchy – representing politics and economics – end, but the religious institutions of Israel – centred on Jerusalem and the temple – were also destroyed. A specific socio-historic picture emerges within the Psalms when read from an exilic and post-exilic perspective. By applying the social-scientific theory in analysing each psalm in the chapters to come, the social picture of these psalms will become ever more evident.

3.2.2 Social-scientific categories for this study

Following the discussion on the social world of the Hebrew Bible, the social-scientific categories, which will be used to investigate Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, are identified in this section. The table below distinguishes between the social and cultural systems to be studied. The table serves as a simplified summary of the main social-scientific notions discussed in 3.2.1, which will also serve as a guideline in the social-scientific analysis of each psalm in Chapters 4–8.

Social systems (institutions)	**Cultural system values**
Kinship	Group orientation: - Family and gender roles - Identity and dyadism - In-group and out-group
Religion	Patron-client relationships - Grace and favour
Politics	Honour and shame - Limited goods
Economics	Power and privilege: - Rich vs poor - Powerful vs powerless

Table 3: Social-scientific categories to be applied to Psalms 90–92 and 105–106

3.3 Model and method: Critical spatiality with a focus on remembered space

Moving on from the theory of the study, this section aims to discuss the practical aspects of the model and method of the study. The model of the study, as referred to in Section 1.3.4, is critical spatiality, while remembered space is the method ultimately applied in studying Psalms 90–92 and 105–106. Since the method of remembered space is derived from the model of critical spatiality, this section will initially pay attention to aspects of critical spatiality before setting out the features of remembered space.

James Flanagan (1999:23) makes a convincing argument for the necessity of critical spatial studies in biblical texts. According to him, social-scientific studies primarily made a case for analysing the *material* aspects of the ancient world, such as social institutions, values, and structures. However, there was room for expanding this analysis to the *cognitive* aspects of the ancient Near Eastern social world, such as spatiality. This led to the emergence of critical spatiality as a subcategory of social-scientific studies. The first matter on the agenda concerning a critical spatial study is to describe the term “space”. When discussing the notion of “space”, we tend to join it conceptually with the notion of “place”. However, in the model of critical spatiality, a distinction is made between these two concepts, even though they are still closely related. Tuan (1977:6) describes the difference as well as the points of contact between these two ideas:

> “Space” is more abstract than “place.”…
>
> From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.

Following this line of thinking, it can be determined that “place” forms part of the material aspects of the social world, while “space” is part of the cognitive aspects. Nevertheless, these two are intertwined since a place is never just a place. People ascribe meaning to places, giving that place spatial significance. This suggests that the significance of place not only functions in a physical and material dimension but also in a symbolic dimension of meaning. As soon as a place begins to function on a symbolic, cognitive level, it becomes a space. As a result, material and cognitive aspects of place and space in the ancient Near Eastern social world are multifaceted. Furthermore, how people perceive place and space is determined by their worldview, social values, and the customs of society.

Investigations on the concept of space have thus led social science scholars to understand space as a social product. This notion has especially been endorsed by the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991:86), who found that social relationships are embedded into space. Hence, people and societies play a role in *creating* the spaces in which they live (Lefebvre 1991:73). Each society produces its own spaces of significance based on the meaning they ascribe to different spaces – whether it be religious, mythical, or symbolic (George 2007:15). Therefore, the model of critical spatiality is based on the principle that a society's understanding of space is not only limited to the physical space in which they live. Instead, space is understood as a mental construct with various dimensions. The construct of space is formed within the structure of human experience (Berquist 2002:14). Yi-Fu Tuan (1977), in *Space and Place – The Perspective of Experience*, focuses explicitly on how experience determines a society's production and interpretation of space. According to Tuan (1977:9), experience is learning from what has happened to a person and then creating reality out of what a person has undergone. In this sense, experience is a (social) construct – created out of feeling, thought and memory within a specific social context (Tuan 1977:10). All human experience is a social construct; therefore, experiencing space in its different dimensions is a subjective act.

The philosopher Michel Foucault (1986:24) argues that a society constructs its own space in utopias and heterotopias. Utopian space refers to the ideal or perfect spaces in a society and is, therefore, unreal spaces or spaces with "no real place" (Foucault 1986:24). In contrast with this, heterotopias are spaces that can be found in physical places, yet they contest or invert the other real spaces in society. Heterotopian spaces are spaces of crisis or deviation – spaces such as prisons, cemeteries, and psychiatric hospitals – removed to the outskirts of society (Foucault 1986:25). A society can alter what it perceives as heterotopian spaces throughout its history. The psalms investigated in this study also employed the notions of utopia and heterotopia. The desert experience and exile function as heterotopias or spaces of crisis, while the presence and saving acts of YHWH create a utopian experience for which the people of YHWH long.

Returning to the differentiation of space, quite a few scholars played a role in distinguishing between different dimensions of space. Lefebvre (1991:11,40) identifies three types of space: physical or perceived space, mental or conceived space, and social or lived space. These three dimensions of space are also termed spatial practice, representations of space and representational space or firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace. The three territories of space are interconnected and are not merely abstract concepts but take root in the life of a society. A society's physical space is seen in the places the members create, build, and inhabit, while the representations of space (mental space) become evident in their political and religious institutions. On the other hand, the social space or representational spaces of a society culminate in concepts such as their writing systems and artworks (Lefebvre 1991:43). Flanagan (1999:29) mentions that any space and all spaces consist of all three dimensions simultaneously.

Edward Soja followed the work of Lefebvre. He also pays close attention to the "trialectics of spatiality" as perceived or real space, conceived or imagined space and lived space or thirdspace. Soja (1996:74–76) focuses explicitly on thirdspace as a "third way" or an alternative understanding to a binary notion of space. By proposing that thirdspace represents a third option, the Other, Soja (1996:5) aims to inspire a critical spatial imagination in making sense of the world. Thirdspace as the "Other" can also be linked with Foucault's (1986:24) concept of heterotopias, or other spaces. Thirdspace allows for the creation of counterspaces and the transformation of other dimensions of space through imagination (Prinsloo 2013:8). These three dimensions of space are also applied when studying biblical texts from a critical spatial perspective. In what follows in 3.3.1, the spatial orientation of the ancient Near Eastern world is discussed, while another dimension of space, stemming from an ancient Near Eastern spatial orientation, is also introduced. This dimension is fourthspace, or remembered space, as Matthews (2013:62) calls it.

3.3.1 Critical spatiality as a construct in the ancient Near Eastern worldview

Corrigan (2009:157) notes that spatiality has always been an aspect of religious studies, as seen in cosmologies of the ancient world and investigations into religious space and place. Berquist (2002:25) believes that the Hebrew Bible, in particular, is preoccupied with space. The Promised Land, its conquest, loss, and restoration take centre stage in the narrative of the Hebrew Bible, thus placing the matter of space central (Berquist 2002:25). Regarding the link between critical spatiality and biblical studies, Prinsloo (2013:4) writes that the entire biblical narrative transpires in a “place and space of some kind”. In line with these observations, Foucault (1986:23) thinks that the construction of space is closely connected to the sacred. The differentiation between private space and public space, family space, social space, and cultural space, and between workspace and leisure space, are all undergirded by the presence of the sacred.

This principle is certainly evident in ancient Near Eastern cosmologies. How ancient Near Eastern people viewed their world was closely connected to their religion. Although more than one worldview is present in ancient cultures, biblical texts describe the world in three storeys: heaven, earth, and the underworld. In this worldview, heaven is the territory of the gods and heavenly beings, the earth is a flat plate resting on pillars on which humans live, and the netherworld is a negative space where the dead reside (Prinsloo 2006:743).

Keeping the three-storey cosmology in mind as a basis for differentiating between different dimensions of space in biblical texts, Prinsloo (2013:8), however, warns that one must be vigilant of a simplified application of critical spatiality. Rather, a combination of paradigms should be at work, including social-scientific criticism and a sensitivity toward the complex processes through which worldview(s) and space are shaped (Prinsloo 2013:9,11). Therefore, the method of critical spatiality is constructionist – investigating the social construction of how space(s) are perceived, transformed, and arranged (Berquist 2002:29). By using critical spatiality, Berquist (2002:29) argues that the biblical scholar can come closer to a text than a strict approach of historical criticism allows.

Turning to a more concrete description of an ancient Near Eastern spatial orientation, Wyatt (2001) provides valuable insights. According to him, ideas on time and space are culturally developed and specific (Wyatt 2001:33). These spatial-temporal notions shaped and framed the worldviews (s) of ancient Near Eastern societies. Regarding orientation, the four directions function on a spatial level, with the East being the primary orientation (Prinsloo 2013:9). The East directs one to the rising sun and signifies a new beginning and life. The Hebrew word for East, קדם, also means “face” or “past”, symbolising the orientation that one *faces the past*. Elaborating on the importance of this notion for spatial orientation in the ancient Near Eastern world, Wyatt (2001:36) writes:

> We “see” the past, which thus provides us, through memory and narrative, with accounts of how we came to be where we are.

According to this description, the past is in front of a person – one can look at the past, while the future remains unknown, behind a person (Prinsloo 2013:9). The past and remembering the past is one of the most important aspects of spatial orientation for this study since it directly links with fourthspace or remembered space. Fourthspace holds that remembering the past through the collective memory of a community reshapes, transforms, and reconstructs the usage of space – on firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace levels (cf. Matthews 2013:61). A more detailed description of remembered space follows in 3.3.2.

On the opposite side of East lies West. Like the word “East” in Hebrew, the word “West” (אחר) also has symbolic meanings. West means “back” or “future”. This implies that the future lies behind us, unknown and unseen (Wyatt 2001:36). Together, East and West lie on a horizontal axis and form the temporal aspect of ancient Near Eastern spatial orientation.

The directions of North and South also play an important role in spatial orientation. According to Wyatt (2001:36), the South is on the right side and is connected with morality, safety and well-being. North is on the left side and signifies danger (Wyatt 2001:36). Prinsloo (2013:9) elaborates on spatially significant terms for the ancient Near East. Near and far are both spatial terms – with “near” being positive and “far” being negative. Similarly, ascend and descend also function on a spatial level on the vertical axis. When moving “up”/ascending, one draws closer to heaven, the realm of the gods, which is a positive space. When moving “down”/descending, one draws farther from the realm of the gods and closer to the netherworld, a negative space (Prinsloo 2013:10).

At the meeting point between the vertical and horizontal axes lies the centre of the universe. In biblical terms, Zion and the Jerusalem temple form the centre and meeting place between heaven and earth (Prinsloo 2013:10). When moving farther away from the centre –Jerusalem and the temple – one is off-centre, which implies disorientation and chaos. Being at-centre signifies well-being, balance, and orientation (Prinsloo 2013:10).

Applying the model of critical spatiality to biblical texts consists of three movements. First, the features of an ancient Near Eastern spatial orientation are identified. Second, they are integrated with the three-storey worldview reflected in biblical texts. Third, the different dimensions of space – firstspace, secondspace, thirdspace and fourthspace – are investigated to ascertain how space is constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed. Flanagan (1999:39) takes Egypt, the Wilderness and the Promised Land, Canaan, as an example of how space in all its dimensions functions in biblical texts. On a firstspace level, Egypt is where the Israelites were enslaved and suffered. On the secondspace level, Egypt was experienced as a negative space of fear; on the thirdspace level, it was a space of obstruction. The Wilderness functions similarly – as a firstspace of desolation, a secondspace of a struggle with the presence of God, being off-centre and a thirdspace of negative life experiences and complaints. On the other hand, the Promised Land functions as a positive space, being at-centre and close to YHWH. These examples are also relevant for the psalms of this study since Psalms 90–92 are characterised as psalms of Moses, wishing to be at-centre and close to YHWH, while Psalms 105–106 remember the Egypt and Wilderness experiences of the Israelites through remembered space. This brings us to the fourth dimension of space, namely remembered space.

3.3.2 Remembered space

As discussed in 1.3.4, remembered space is what Matthews (2013:62) calls a fourth dimension of space. Remembered space is that aspect of space that comes to the fore after all other dimensions of space have played a role in the consciousness of a community. Remembered space aims to function within the collective memory of a society or community to conserve and sustain the multi-dimensional spatial notion of a community. The basic underlying principle to Matthews's (2013:74) remembered space is that the various dimensions of space are transformed as times and circumstances change. However, through memory, one can mentally recall what has taken place in that space in the past and the significance attached to that space. This is because every memory resulting from a community's interactions ascribes remembrance to space (Matthews 2013:74). In the end, this means that remembered space creates a link to the past, which at the same time provides a key to how space is produced in the future (Matthews 2013:75). This is done in two ways: through memory and imagination.

When speaking of memory, Ricoeur (2004:44) links it with imagination since memory is "an image of the past". Halbwachs ([1925]1992:41–42) writes on the social framework of collective memory and, in agreement with Ricoeur, notes that memory consists of images. Based on the work of these scholars, it becomes clear that there is a definitive link between memory and imagination. Yet, for this discussion, these two notions are handled separately to grasp the meaning of each for remembered space.

The type of memory that plays a role in remembered space is, more specifically, what scholars define as "collective memory" (Halbwachs [1925]1992:54). Collective memory refers to the memory that functions within a group or society. Brenner and Long (2009:2) distinguish between personal memory and public memory. Assmann (2011:5–6) categorises memory further into mimetic memory, communicative memory, the memory of objects and cultural memory. Cultural memory corresponds to collective memory and is the most important aspect of memory in remembered space. Cultural memory entails the “handing down of meaning”, as Assmann (2011:6–7) puts it. This is seen in society's rituals, icons, symbols, and representations, such as temples and monuments. By implication, this means that cultural or social memory encompasses first-, second- and thirdspace. Additionally, collective memory shapes the social identity of a group or society by actively remembering the past.

Assmann (2011:16) continues to point out that the Israelites were one of the communities that shaped memory culture, which has to do with remembering that forms a community. The space in which a society’s remembering occurs moves from certain fixed points, such as fateful events from the past (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995:129). In the context of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, the exodus and exile serve as these “fateful” events shaping the remembered space of Israel. In this sense, collective memory can also be selective, giving a people the space to reconstruct memory in the process of adding meaning to remembering (Brenner & Long 2009:4). Bowman (2013:93), in agreement with Brenner and Long, adds that the texts of Israel reflect a specific *way of remembering*. This way of remembering is informed by imagination.

Prinsloo (2013:11) notes that the Hebrew Bible is a product of religious imagination. According to Yates (2007:82,104), memory is achieved through place (or, in the case of this study, space) and the use of the imagination. Taliaferro and Evans (2011:1) believe that imagination is one of the most important forces determining our understanding of reality since imagination is the ability to form mental or memory images used to reinterpret and reconstruct the past as a community looks to the future. In the context of the biblical texts, imagination – similar to memory – functions collectively in society. Although imagination and the mental images formed through imagination are always subjective, whether individually or collectively, this does not mean that imagination is nonsensical or irrelevant. It is, however, still important to note

Ricoeur’s (2004:54) criticism concerning memory and imagination. Ricoeur (2004:54) considers one of the pitfalls of imagination to be that imagination functions on a hallucinatory level – meaning that remembering and imagining are two different things. Yet, together with Sartre (1965:261), this study appeals for a distinction between the imagined and the real, thus between the so-called “factual history” of something and the reinterpretation of past events. In line with the postmodern paradigm, there is, after all, no such thing as an objective view of the past. All accounts of the past are interpretations, and imagination plays a vital role in all of these interpretations. Taliaferro and Evans (2011:11) also have a more positive understanding of the function and meaning of imagination. They suggest that imagination has a fourfold function: first, to help us form an image of the state of matters; second, imagination is vital in ethical and philosophical consideration; third, imagination makes clear what our knowledge on a particular subject is; and fourth, imagination assists us in identifying the connections between things.

Brueggemann and Linafelt (2012:9) regard imagination as a positive contributor to the formation process of biblical texts. They call this process “imaginative remembering”. Here, memory and imagination once again come together to form remembered space. According to Brueggemann and Linafelt (2012:9), remembering the past has space for imagination. When we recall the past, we move into the realm or space of the imaginary (Ricoeur 2004:53). Through imagination, the space of the past is reinterpreted and reconstructed so that collective memory can have meaning for a new generation.

Viljoen (2016:3–6) suggests a few practical guidelines for applying a hermeneutic of imagination to studying biblical texts. First, scholars or exegetes should transport themselves from the twenty-first century to the ancient world. In the current study, this is done in a social-scientific analysis of the psalms. Second, attention should be paid to the symbols and metaphors in a text. Within the context of this study, it would imply that the symbols and metaphors in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 are studied in terms of spatial, memory and imaginal features. Thus, the role of imagination in interpreting biblical texts will turn up in the study’s theory, model, and method, with special mention of imagination in the method of remembered space.

3.3.3 Spatial categories for this study

Based on the discussion in this section (3.3), the following broad categories can be derived, which are used for the spatial analysis in this study. First, based on Wyatt (2001) and Prinsloo (2013), Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 are analysed according to an ancient Near Eastern spatial orientation. The classifications used for this orientation are seen in the figure below.

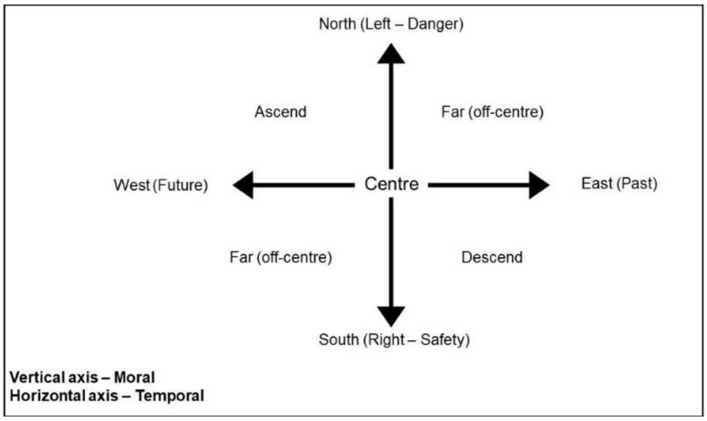
North (Left – Danger)
Ascend
Far (off-centre)
West (Future)
Centre
East (Past)
Far (off-centre)
Descend
South (Right – Safety)
Vertical axis – Moral
Horizontal axis – Temporal

Figure 2: Ancient Near Eastern spatial orientation

Second, the three-storey worldview discussed in 3.3.1 is also considered when studying the psalms. Third, the multiple dimensions of space are identified in each psalm. The meaning of these spatial dimensions is also taken into consideration. Special attention is paid to fourthspace as remembered space, where the role that memory and imagination played in the development of thought in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 is taken into account. A differentiation will also be made between public and private spaces, holy and unholy spaces, positive and negative spaces, and family and cultural spaces. An outline of the different dimensions of space is given in the table below:

Dimension of space	Explanation of dimension
Firstspace	Physical places

Secondspace	Mental space – societal institutions
Thirdspace	Social or lived space
Fourthspace	Remembered space

Table 4: Spatial dimensions to be examined in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106

3.4 Conclusion

This was the last chapter setting out the theoretical basis for the study. The chapter explained the theory, model, and method of the study. The groundwork for social-scientific criticism was laid, while the specific categories to be identified in the social-scientific analysis were also stipulated. Building upon the theory, the chapter moved to the model, which is critical spatiality. An ancient Near Eastern spatial orientation was explained, while the different dimensions of space to be recognised in the psalms were also described. Lastly, the two features of remembered space, memory and imagination, were defined. In the following chapters, each psalm included in the study is analysed individually according to the guidelines given in this chapter – social-scientific, spatial, and remembered space. We begin Chapter 4 with Psalm 90.

CHAPTER 4

PSALM 90

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first in which one of the psalms included in the study will be analysed individually. The structure of these chapters is the same. A translation is presented after a brief introduction to the psalm under investigation. Then, a social-scientific commentary on the psalm follows, after which the psalm is analysed from the perspective of critical spatiality. In conclusion, the influence of remembered space on the particular psalm is explained.

Psalm 90 forms the introduction to Book IV of the Psalter and is read in this study as part of the group consisting of Psalms 90–92.[7] The figure of Moses plays a prominent role in these three psalms. Psalm 90 is the only psalm in the Psalter with a superscription attributing it to Moses. While the narrative of the Psalter places Psalms 90–92 during the time of the Babylonian exile, these psalms recall, through the figure of Moses, the memory of the exodus from Egypt (deClaissé-Walford 2020:4). Psalm 90 functions as a theological reflection on Psalm 89 and the crisis that the exile and the fall of the monarchy brought. Before turning to a social-scientific and spatial analysis of Psalm 90, a translation of it will be offered.

4.2 Translation of Psalm 90

What follows in this section is a translation of Psalm 90.[8] The study focuses exclusively on the Masoretic text of Psalm 90. The purpose of the translation is to provide an understanding of the thematic content of the psalm based on the original Hebrew text. Since this is not a linguistic analysis, the focus is not on technical morphological and translational issues but instead on the social and spatial cues communicated through the language used – on both a literal and metaphorical level.

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[7] Refer to Section 2.3 for the discussion on the structure of Book IV.

[8] Masoretic text of BHS accessed on 31 July 2022 from:

https://www.academic-bible.com/en/online-bibles/biblia-hebraica-stuttgartensia-bhs/read-the-bible-text/bibel/text/lesen/stelle/19/910001/919999/ch/7d1f5e135e2639e24c203cd66057d667/

Stanza	Verse	Hebrew Text	Translation[9]
I	1a b c	תְּפִלָּה֮ לְמֹשֶׁ֪ה אִֽישׁ־הָאֱלֹ֫הִ֥ים אֲדֹנָ֗י מָע֣וֹן אַ֭תָּה הָיִ֥יתָ לָּ֗נוּ בְּדֹ֣ר וָדֹֽר׃	A prayer of Moses, the man of God. **/** Lord, you have been a dwelling place for us **/** from generation to generation.
	2a b c	בְּטֶ֤רֶם הָ֘רִ֤ים יֻלָּ֗דוּ וַתְּח֣וֹלֵל אֶ֣רֶץ וְתֵבֵ֑ל וּֽמֵעוֹלָ֥ם עַד־ע֝וֹלָ֗ם אַתָּ֥ה אֵֽל׃	Before the mountains were born **/** or you gave birth to the earth and habitable world, **/** from eternity to eternity, you are God.
	3a b	תָּשֵׁ֣ב אֱ֭נוֹשׁ עַד־דַּכָּ֑א וַ֝תֹּ֗אמֶר שׁ֣וּבוּ בְנֵי־אָדָֽם׃	You turn man to dust, **/** and you said: Return/turn back/come back, sons of man.
	4a b c	כִּ֤י אֶ֪לֶף שָׁנִ֡ים בְּֽעֵינֶ֗יךָ כְּי֣וֹם אֶ֭תְמֹל כִּ֣י יַעֲבֹ֑ר	Because a thousand years in your eyes **/** are like yesterday when it is past **/** and like a (night) watch in the night.

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[8] This is my own literal translation made by using Holladay (1971).

		וְאַשְׁמוּרָ֥ה בַלָּֽיְלָה׃	
	5a b	זְ֭רַמְתָּם שֵׁנָ֣ה יִהְי֑וּ בַּ֝בֹּ֗קֶר כֶּחָצִ֥יר יַחֲלֹֽף׃	You put an end to their lives – they are asleep. **/** In the morning, they are like grass that sprouts again.
	6a b	בַּ֭בֹּקֶר יָצִ֣יץ וְחָלָ֑ף לָ֝עֶ֗רֶב יְמוֹלֵ֥ל וְיָבֵֽשׁ׃	In the morning, he flourishes, and he passed away/vanished; **/** in the evening, he withers and dries away.
II	7a b	כִּֽי־כָלִ֥ינוּ בְאַפֶּ֑ךָ וּֽבַחֲמָתְךָ֥ נִבְהָֽלְנוּ׃	Because we are consumed by your anger **/** and by your rage, we are terrified.
	8a b	שַׁתָּ֣ עֲוֺנֹתֵ֣ינוּ לְנֶגְדֶּ֑ךָ עֲ֝לֻמֵ֗נוּ לִמְא֥וֹר פָּנֶֽיךָ׃	You have set our iniquities in front of you, **/** our secrets/faults in the light of your face/presence.
	9a b	כִּ֣י כָל־יָ֭מֵינוּ פָּנ֣וּ בְעֶבְרָתֶ֑ךָ כִּלִּ֖ינוּ שָׁנֵ֣ינוּ כְמוֹ־הֶֽגֶה׃	Because all our days are turned in your fury, **/** we finish our years just like a moaning/sigh.
	10a b c d	יְמֵֽי־שְׁנוֹתֵ֨ינוּ בָהֶ֥ם שִׁבְעִ֢ים שָׁנָ֡ה וְאִ֤ם בִּגְבוּרֹ֨ת שְׁ֘מוֹנִ֤ים שָׁנָ֗ה וְ֭רָהְבָּם עָמָ֣ל וָאָ֑וֶן כִּי־גָ֥ז חִ֝֗ישׁ וַנָּעֻֽפָה׃	The days of our years – in them are seventy years, **/** and, if in strength, eighty years. **/** But their pride is trouble and sorrow, **/** because he passes away quickly, and we fly off/away.
	11a b	מִֽי־י֭וֹדֵעַ עֹ֣ז אַפֶּ֑ךָ וּ֝כְיִרְאָתְךָ֗ עֶבְרָתֶֽךָ׃	Who knows the strength of your anger? **/** Your fury is like the fear of you.

	12a b	לִמְנ֣וֹת יָ֭מֵינוּ כֵּ֣ן הוֹדַ֑ע וְ֝נָבִ֗א לְבַ֣ב חָכְמָֽה׃	Teach us to count our days **/** so that we may bring a wise heart.
III	13a b	שׁוּבָ֣ה יְ֭הוָה עַד־מָתָ֑י וְ֝הִנָּחֵ֗ם עַל־עֲבָדֶֽיךָ׃	Return, YHWH. How long will it be? **/** Have pity/compassion on your servants!
	14a b	שַׂבְּעֵ֣נוּ בַבֹּ֣קֶר חַסְדֶּ֑ךָ וּֽנְרַנְּנָ֥ה וְ֝נִשְׂמְחָ֗ה בְּכָל־יָמֵֽינוּ׃	Satisfy us in the morning with your loving-kindness, **/** and let us shout with joy and let us rejoice/be glad in all our days.
	15a b	שַׂ֭מְּחֵנוּ כִּימ֣וֹת עִנִּיתָ֑נוּ שְׁ֝נ֗וֹת רָאִ֥ינוּ רָעָֽה׃	Make us glad for as much as the days that you oppressed us, **/** and the years we have seen evil.
	16a b	יֵרָאֶ֣ה אֶל־עֲבָדֶ֣יךָ פָעֳלֶ֑ךָ וַ֝הֲדָרְךָ֗ עַל־בְּנֵיהֶֽם׃	Let your work/deeds appear to your servants **/** and your glory/honour to their sons/children.
	17a b c	וִיהִ֤י נֹ֤עַם אֲדֹנָ֬י אֱלֹהֵ֗ינוּ עָ֫לֵ֥ינוּ וּמַעֲשֵׂ֣ה יָ֭דֵינוּ כּוֹנְנָ֥ה עָלֵ֑ינוּ וּֽמַעֲשֵׂ֥ה יָ֝דֵ֗ינוּ כּוֹנְנֵֽהוּ׃	Let the kindness of the Lord our God be upon us, **/** to establish/promote the work of our hands, **/** yes, to establish/promote the work of our hands.

4.2.1 Notes on the translation of Psalm 90

Based on the text and translation, a few brief remarks can be made:

- Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:417) note that Psalm 90 presents a challenge concerning translation and interpretation. Pinker (2015:497), in agreement with this observation, focuses on verse 10 as a point in case, illustrating the differing versions of verse 10 in the Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Vulgate, and Peshitta. However, in the above translation, the study has focused on the Masoretic Text, and any noteworthy translational or interpretational issues are discussed in Section 4.3.2.3.

- Intertextual links are found between the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 90:1–2, 15 (deClaissé-Walford 2020:4). The similarities include the words “generation” (דור), “years” (שׁנות), “days” (ימות) and “give birth” (חלל). Deuteronomy 32 serves as the basis text for Psalm 90 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:471).
- Further similarities are also identified between Psalm 90:13 and Exodus 32 in the words “turn” (שׁוב) and “compassion” (נחם), where Moses acts as intercessor and pleads with YHWH on behalf of the people (Wallace 2007:19). For Schaefer (2001:227), the call of YHWH to humans to “return” can be understood in two ways: first it can either be a return to dust, to the earth that humans come from, or a return to YHWH, who is a dwelling place for the faithful.
- Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:471) note that the word “dwelling” (מעון) in verse 1 can also be translated as “hiding place”. This noun is also used in Psalm 26 about the temple. Yet, in Psalm 90 it refers directly to YHWH, reflecting the shift taking place from temple-based worship to realising that YHWH is a space of protection and security for his people (Mournet 2011:70). No institution can provide stability and security; only YHWH himself is a refuge for his people (Gillingham 2015a:4). Referring to YHWH as a dwelling place is a spatial metaphor, which will be discussed further in the spatial analysis of Psalm 90.
- Schaefer (2001:225) notes that the question in verse 13: “How long?” (עד־מתי) links Book IV with Book III, since Psalm 89 asks the same question.

- Psalm 90 begins and ends by referring to God as Adonai (אדני) – forming an *inclusio* and alluding to God as the “sovereign Master” of the world (Terrien 2003:767).

4.2.2 Basic structure of Psalm 90

According to Van der Lugt (2014:14), Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:392), the content and structure of Psalm 90 can be divided into three parts:

Stanza I:	The short lifespan of a human in contrast to YHWH’s eternity (Verses 1–6)
Stanza II:	YHWH’s wrath about sin and humanity’s complaint about YHWH’s wrath (Verses 7–12)
Stanza III:	A petition and prayer for deliverance (Verses 13–17)

4.3 Analysis of Psalm 90

This section of the chapter elaborates on Psalm 90, ultimately focusing on social-scientific characteristics present in the psalm. The social-scientific categories identified in Chapter 3 are used for this purpose. A discussion of this nature will necessarily involve a description of the background and content of the psalm since these topics place the psalm within a particular social, cultural, and political period.

4.3.1 The place and historical associations of Psalm 90

Psalm 90 represents the introduction to Book IV of the Psalms and a theological shift within the Psalter. Wallace (2007:15) describes this shift as a move towards a “Yahwistic theocracy”, away from the Davidic focus of the previous three books of the Psalter. Therefore, a discussion on Psalm 90 must also consider the larger setting of Book IV. Gillingham (2015b:87) mentions that Book IV reflects on the failure of the monarchy and the resulting events of the exile. This setting is further reflected in the focus on Moses and the exodus traditions, similar to other biblical texts produced in the same period as the texts of Book IV. According to

Gillingham (2015b:87), there are notable similarities between Book IV and Isaiah 40–55, which also originated in and reflect exilic circumstances through the lens of the exodus traditions. However, Book IV shows more interest in the figure of Moses than Isaiah 40–55 does.

By focusing on Moses as a mediator, Psalm 90 takes the people of Israel back to a time before the Davidic monarchy, before temple worship. Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:392) state that Moses and the exodus remind Israel of a time when the temple and a king did not determine their relationship with God. Instead, their relationship with YHWH depended on his saving presence in the wilderness. Whereas the temple was their place of safety and a shelter of protection, in the exilic and post-exilic setting – as in the wilderness – it is YHWH who becomes a safe space for his people (Mournet 2011:70).

This reimagining of the role and spatial function of YHWH in Psalm 90 takes place through the memory of the wilderness experience and the figure of Moses. Although Psalm 90 does not represent a retelling of the history of Israel in the sense that Psalms 105–106 do, the psalm, through its subtitle, invokes those memories. Gärtner (2015:373) notes the importance of memories from the founding history of Israel, such as the exodus and conquest narratives, in reinterpreting the immediate situation of the people of YHWH. At this point, it is, however, as Gärtner (2015:374) also states, essential to distinguish between "history" and "memory". The distinction lies in that history and historical writing is concerned with retelling historical events, while memory is more concerned with the story behind the historical events (Gärtner 2015:374). Although all history is interpretation, historical memory is formed through a process of reception and interpretation of historical "facts", which then become representations of the past. Gärtner (2015:374–375) summarises this process in the following way:

> These representations of the past are then defined as narrative systems, which interpret and present the events of the past in an identity-forming and identity-reassuring way. They thus form the basis for the collective identity by which the recipients draw from the past in order to interpret their present in light of the past.

From Gärtner’s argument, it can be concluded that history becomes memory or remembering when representations of the past are placed into a narrative framework. These representations of the past are what Ricoeur (2004:7) calls memory-images. In contrast to Gärtner, Hendel (2005:97) argues that historiography does not function the same way in ancient Israel as it does in today’s social sciences. Therefore, a clear distinction between the notions of history and memory is almost impossible to make in biblical writings. When describing the importance of the past in the Hebrew Bible, Hendel (2005:97–98) stresses that the practice of historiography in the Hebrew Bible is characterised by combination and interpretation rather than verification and falsification. This means that the biblical writers creatively interpreted and joined different strands of information and tradition when reflecting upon historical events. They would emphasise events that they deem more important while omitting others. Ricoeur (2004:144–145) also regards the relationship between history and memory as overlapping.

Although the connections of Psalm 90 to the historical memory of Israel are not as explicit as in the classic historical psalms (i.e., Psalms 78, 105–106), the intertextual links, as well as the reference to Moses, place Psalms 90–92 in a framework of remembrance. These psalms, albeit on an implicit level, take memories of Israel’s history and interpret it anew. This view of Psalms 90–92 corresponds to deClaissé-Walford’s (2019:28) proposed time frame for Book IV, being shaped in the post-exilic time, recalling the events of the exile while building on the memories of a pre-exilic past.

Before moving to a description of the content of Psalm 90, it is important to take note of the relationship between Psalms 90, 91 and 92. Psalms 90–92 are linked by similar vocabulary, keyword themes, and questions that are asked by one psalm and answered in another, as well as a Mosaic *inclusio* (deClaissé-Walford 2019:28). Based on this, deClaissé-Walford (2020:3) reads Psalms 90–92 as a sub-group, a single composition introducing Book IV of the Psalter. In this, she follows Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:442), who say the following on the sub-composition of Psalms 90–92:

> In the intention of the Psalter redaction that secondarily both linked Psalms 90–92 through key words and placed them in sequence according to the formally and cultically inspired schema of lament/petition (Psalm 90) – assent/promise (Psalm 91) – thanksgiving (Psalm 92), these three psalms in sequence are meant to be read and meditated as a theologically relevant series.

Gillingham (2015a:3), in agreement with the scholars mentioned above, also sees a deliberate movement in these psalms from lament to promise to thanksgiving. Psalm 90 is a community lament, talking about an unnamed crisis from the perspective of the fleetingness of time and the wrath of YHWH (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:391–392). It ends in a petition to YHWH to let the people rejoice again. Psalm 91 answers the petition in Psalm 90 with a promise – YHWH will protect those who find refuge in him (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:442). Psalm 92 testifies to the rescue YHWH brought as an answer to the petition in Psalm 90 and the fulfilment of the promise in Psalm 91. Whereas Psalm 90 laments the mortality of people who spring up like grass in the morning and wither by the evening, Psalm 92 attests to people who are planted in the house of YHWH and still grow well into old age (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:442). Furthermore, Psalm 92:2 affirms Psalm 91:14, where YHWH states that he will protect the one who knows his name (שֵׁם). The introduction of Psalm 92 affirms that people who praise YHWH's name experience his steadfast love from morning until night (deClaissé-Walford 2019:33). This certainty leads to praise and thanksgiving towards YHWH.

The central theme of Psalms 90–92 is found in the motif of YHWH being the refuge of the people instead of any institution (Gillingham 2015b:88). Based on this, the words "rejoice" (רנן) and "satisfy" (שׂבע) resound throughout these psalms (deClaissé-Walford 2019:33–34). In Psalm 90:14, the people aspire to rejoice once again once YHWH satisfies them. In Psalm 91:16, YHWH promises to satisfy the faithful with a long life, and in Psalm 92:2–4 the theme of rejoicing and praising YHWH for his steadfast love concludes this theme within the subgroup. Lastly, the theme of dwelling in YHWH also develops in Psalms 90–92. In Psalm 90, the psalmist declares that YHWH has been a dwelling place from generation to generation. In Psalm 91, it is stated that the psalmist has made YHWH his dwelling place, and in Psalm 92, the psalmist is planted in the house of YHWH – thus "taking up residence" in YHWH (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:442).

4.3.2 Content of Psalm 90

In this subsection, the content of Psalm 90 is explained and interpreted from a social-scientific perspective. The discussion of the content of Psalm 90 is arranged according to the identified category and structure of the psalm,[10] which, in the case of Psalm 90, consists of three stanzas: Verses 1–6, verses 7–12, and verses 13–17.

4.3.2.1 Classification of Psalm 90

As mentioned above, Psalm 90 is characterised as a community lament. The superscription characterises the psalm as a prayer or petition (תפלה). Tate (1990:437) describes Psalm 90 as a communal prayer consisting of complaint, a petition for divine intervention, and grateful reflection on YHWH as creator and eternal being. Goldingay (2008:22) agrees in identifying Psalm 90 as a community prayer, dividing it into three parts. According to Goldingay (2008:22), verses 1-5 look back on the way things once were, while verses 6-12 reflect on the current state of how things are, concluding with verses 13-17 as a plea to YHWH to restore blessing. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:418) refer to Claus Westermann's categories for a communal lament. Applying it to Psalm 90, they identify verses 3–6 as a complaint against YHWH, while verses 7–10 are identified as a personal lament of the community, after which the psalm concludes with a petition to YHWH, which the community experiences as their enemy, to gain insight into the crisis that is lamented (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:418). Although Psalm 90 contains elements of lament and petition, scholars agree that the psalm comprises a mixture of different elements. The psalm begins as a hymn of praise in verse 1 within the setting of a prayer set in the second person, addressed to the Almighty (cf. Mowinckel 1967:91 and Wallace 2007:19). From there, it moves to lament the mortality and frailty of humans in the face of YHWH's wrath before petitioning YHWH to have compassion, satisfy and make the community glad again.

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[10] See Section 4.2.2.

In addition to the characteristics mentioned above in Psalm 90, a wisdom motif is also present. deClaissé-Walford (2020:8) regards verse 12 as the core of the psalm and as a reference to the wisdom tradition. This is found in the request of the community: "Teach us to count our days so that we may bring a heart of wisdom". The expression "heart of wisdom" is also found in Exodus, describing the craftspeople that built the Tabernacle (deClaissé-Walford 2020:7). Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:418) add to this the reference in verse 2 to the creation and birth of the world as a reminder of the creation of the world through wisdom in Proverbs 8. Wallace (2007:22) also notes the theme of life's futility ultimately ending in death as another indicator of the wisdom tradition in Psalm 90. From these observations, it becomes clear that Psalm 90 contains traces of wisdom theology, yet it also carries characteristics of prayer and petition.

A last matter about the categorisation of Psalm 90 is found in the term "servant" (עבד) used to refer to the community. The term is used in both verse 13 and verse 16. This term is a post-exilic development, thus confirming the psalm's post-exilic origin (Wallace 2007:20). According to Tate (1990:438), Psalm 90 was most likely prayed by one of these "servants" aiming to instruct and ensure fellow servants of YHWH's help and presence in a time of anguish.

4.3.2.2 Stanza I (Verses 1–6)

In Section 4.2.2, the first stanza of Psalm 90 was identified as extending from verse 1 to verse 6. Verse 1 consists of the superscription to Psalm 90 and an introductory confession of trust and faith in YHWH. After placing the psalm as a prayer in the context of the Moses tradition, the psalmist continues to confess the Lord as a dwelling place from generation to generation. The confession that YHWH is the people's dwelling place, or home, is especially significant when read as Moses' words, since the people did not have a home when Moses led them through the wilderness (Goldingay 2008:25). The title *Adonai* used to refer to God in this verse strengthens the notion of YHWH as a dwelling place or help for his people since the title traditionally implies the obligation of YHWH to protect and care for his servants (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:421 and Terrien 2003:767). From a social-scientific perspective, the patron-client relationship comes into play when this title is used for YHWH, confirming that YHWH is the patron of Israel, protecting and caring for his clients. When confessing that the Lord is a dwelling place for Israel, it not only joins the notion of YHWH as patron, but the word for "dwelling place"/ "fortress"/ "help" (מעון) also places a spatial perspective on the confession. This concept will be explored in more detail in Section 4.4 on spatiality and remembered space in Psalm 90. Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:392) mention that the reference to YHWH as a dwelling place, together with the phrase "from generation to generation", place the focus in the introduction of the psalm on stability. This is in sharp contrast to the instability that the community experienced after the fall of the monarchy and the resulting exile to Babylon.

Building upon this idea of stability, verse 2 testifies to the eternal character of YHWH – even before the mountains or the earth were born, YHWH was there. Indeed, YHWH was the creator of everything, the One who brought forth (birthed) the world.[11] deClaissé-Walford (2020:7–8), writing from a feminist perspective, notes the feminine imagery used here concerning the work of YHWH while also connecting it to the wisdom tradition (i.e., the imagery and vocabulary used in Proverbs 8). In addition, the reference to the creation of the earth and habitable world can also be read from a social-scientific perspective as it pertains to the worldview of the ancient Near East. Intertextually, it reminds us of Genesis 1 and other ancient Near Eastern creation narratives (Tate 1990:440). While verse 1 attests to the fact that the patron-God of Israel is a help and place of refuge to his people, verse 2 sketches the power of this patron-God in cosmological terms. This powerful yet personal patron provides stability and a space of safety from generation to generation, from eternity to eternity.

Whereas verses 1–2 focus on the work and actions of the patron of Israel, verses 3–6 represent the perspective of the clients – the Israelite community. In contrast to the eternal character of YHWH, verses 3–6 focus on the temporality of humans. It is also written in the second person, addressing this section to YHWH. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:422) call these verses a “lament over mortality”. This part of the stanza makes the theological assumption that human life depends upon a divine decree of mortality, therefore drawing God as the one with power over life and death and responsible for humanity’s transience (Tate 1990:441). Building on this, verse 4 moves to the passage of time – outlining YHWH’s view of time. Once again, time is contrasted with eternity. According to Lioy (2008:99), the Israelites divided a night into periods of three or four hours, with one such period representing a single night watch. Psalm 90 refers to this when stating that a thousand years are as short as the duration of a night watch to YHWH. Verses 5 and 6 continue the comparison. In verse 5, human mortality is compared to sleep – humans will meet their end just like when a person wakes up in the morning and their sleep has ended (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:422). Verse 6 compares the shortness of human life to the life cycle of grass in the desert that flourishes in the morning but withers in the evening (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:678). This flourishing and withering of humanity simultaneously represent the coming and going of generations, referring back to verse 1 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:422). Moving further away from the initial confession of YHWH as a dwelling place for generation after generation, verse 6 ends Stanza I on a note of disenchantment with the mortality of human life. From a social-scientific perspective, Stanza 1 connects with the notion of fate (Malina 1993b:79). Death is ultimately each human's fate, with YHWH, the patron of Israel, also controlling humanity's fate. Therefore, Psalm 90 laments the fate of humans in prayer to YHWH. Furthermore, the inevitable end of a person's life in death reminds the reader of the ancient Near Eastern value of limited goods (Neyrey 1993c:122). According to Psalm 90, life itself is "limited" by death and YHWH, as the patron, controls the limited good of life.

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[11] For a detailed discussion on the verb חיל (“to bring forth”), see deClaissé-Walford (2020:6-7).

4.3.2.3 Stanza II (Verses 7–12)

In the second stanza of Psalm 90, we encounter a shift in atmosphere. The first-person speaker from verse 1 returns. After lamenting human mortality in Stanza I, this stanza attempts to explain why death is part of life. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:422) state that verses 7–8 draw upon the notion that death results from sin – the so-called "wages of sin". On an intertextual level, this idea links with the storyline from Genesis, where the first man and woman were driven out of the Garden of Eden after sinning. It is also found in the book of Job, where Job's friends are convinced that the suffering he endures is the result of his sin and YHWH's subsequent wrath. The psalmist complains about YHWH's anger in vivid terms. God's anger consumes (כלה) his people; it terrifies (בהל) them. The word "consumes", which is used here, points toward something that has perished or wasted away (Lioy 2008:101). Using these verbs emphasises the people's sense of being overwhelmed by YHWH's wrath. Terrien (2003:769) notes that the argument of mortality being the result of divine wrath contrasts sharply with death being the natural course of life as described in Stanza I with metaphors and similes drawn from nature. However, when reading Psalm 90 from an exilic situation, it makes sense that a theology of divine anger as an answer to the people’s iniquities would be utilised to make sense of the suffering and death experienced with the exile.

Verses 9–10 link the passage of time from Stanza I with the notion of divine anger introduced in verses 7–8. Verse 9 represents the conclusion to which the speaker comes. Because life is lived under YHWH’s wrath, all human life seems like a moaning, a sigh (הגה). Tate (1990:442) indicates verses 7 and 9 form an *inclusio* around verse 8. Not only do both verse 7 and verse 9 begin with the conjunction “because” (כי), but both verses also use the verb consume/finish (כלה). Moreover, the guilt of the people’s iniquities in verse 8 is why they are consumed by YHWH’s rage and finish their years like a sigh. The use of the word for moaning or sigh (הגה) in verse 9 is notable. Wallace (2007:21) points out that this word is used more in the Psalter than in any other book of the Hebrew Bible. This root is used in the introduction to the Psalter in Psalms 1–2. First, it is employed where Psalm 1 states that a righteous person “meditates” (הגה) on the Torah. Second, it is used in Psalm 2 to indicate that the nations “plot” (הגה) against YHWH and his king. Its use in the introduction to the Psalter shows that, for a righteous person, הגה brings success, but the wicked turn הגה into the opposite (Wallace 2007:21). When used in Psalm 90, הגה connotes a wisdom meaning, stating that life is as fleeting as a sigh, a breath of the mouth, regardless of being uttered by the righteous or the wicked (Tate 1990:442, cf. Wallace 2007:21). Read from a social-scientific point of view, verses 7–9 can also be connected to the value of shame. The iniquities of the people, their sins and faults, brought shame upon them in the presence of the honourable patron, the Lord (cf. Oakman 1993:175).

According to Pinker (2015:498), verse 10 is one of the more difficult verses to translate and interpret. The rendering of verse 10 across different manuscripts and translations also differs considerably. Nevertheless, we will only focus on the version of verse 10 as found in the Masoretic Text. The first part of verse 10 states that the days of a human's years are seventy or eighty years. Some commentators interpret these numbers literally, as denoting a life span of seventy to eighty years (Lioy 2008:102), while others understand it symbolically. Clifford (2005:200) interprets the seventy and eighty years as representing a long time of affliction for the Israelites. In agreement with Clifford, deClaissé-Walford et al. (2014a:678) believe that these numbers reflect the period of Babylonian exile. In other parts of the Hebrew Bible, such as Jeremiah 25 and 29, the exile is depicted as a period of seventy years (Clifford 2005:200). In addition, the number seventy represents completion or perfection. Although this study favours the interpretation that understands the time as a reference to exile, the first part of verse 10 remains open for interpretation. Yet, regardless of how the seventy and eighty years are interpreted, the psalm undoubtedly states that these years pass with trouble and sorrow. There is uncertainty on the exact meaning of the word רהבם, translated in Section 4.2 as "pride". Other possibilities for translations include "span".[12] Nonetheless, considering the brevity of existence, the span of one's life, even the best years or periods, is filled with trouble and sorrow.

Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:422) describe verses 11–12 as the centre of Psalm 90. In verse 11, the psalmist acknowledges the power of YHWH's anger in the form of a question, which Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:422) relate to the scepticism found in Qoheleth. Yet this characteristic of wisdom literature links with the petition in verse 12, asking for a wise heart. According to deClaissé-Walford (2020:8), the request for a heart of wisdom relates to the art of living, to saying yes to life despite suffering and death. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:422–423) write about verse 12 from a similar perspective, arguing that this request asks YHWH to grant the ability to handle the knowledge of mortality and the transience of life in such a way that life – although fleeting – can still be regarded as a gift from YHWH.

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[12] See Tate (1990:431,435) and Brueggemann & Bellinger (2014:391).

4.3.2.4 Stanza III (Verses 13–17)

The last stanza of Psalm 90 begins with a call to YHWH to return. The word "return" (שׁוב) echoes Stanza I, verse 3, where YHWH calls upon humans to return, either to the earth or to YHWH (see Section 4.2.1). Now, it is the people calling on YHWH from their post-exilic situation to "turn" from his wrath and "return" to them (Tate 1990:443). It is still the figure of Moses speaking, calling on YHWH to return to his people, to have compassion for his servants. As mentioned elsewhere, the term "servants" is a post-exilic designation, strengthening the notion of an post-exilic setting for interpreting Psalm 90. The verbs from verse 13 are imperative, intensifying the call on YHWH to help his people. In contrast to YHWH's wrath, as attested to in Stanza II, verses 13–14 appeal to YHWH's compassion and loving-kindness (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:423). With this petition, the people of Israel call for restoring the relationship with YHWH as their dwelling place (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:393).

Verses 14–15 ask YHWH to satisfy his people and let them rejoice in their days. It is, in essence, a prayer for transformation, that despite death and the fleetingness of life, despite the dark and evil of this world, the people of YHWH may still experience the joy of a full life (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:423). They petition for as many days and years of joy as the days and years that they had to endure trouble and sorrow. The combination of the concepts "days" and "years" are also present in verses 4 and 9, thus linking Stanza III with Stanza I and Stanza II. In summary, verses 13–15 seek the favour of YHWH as Israel's patron (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:680).

The last two verses of Psalm 90 conclude the psalm with an appeal for blessing and the lasting favour of YHWH. Verse 16 asks for YHWH's works to appear to his servants, while verse 17 petitions YHWH to establish the work of the community’s hands. In verse 16, the psalmist calls for divine intervention spanning over all generations – reminding of verse 1, which confessed YHWH to be the dwelling place for Israel from generation to generation (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:393). In verse 17, the psalm concludes with a petition for the community’s work to be fruitful. deClaissé-Walford (2020:9) notes that the petition does not necessarily call for prosperity but rather for accomplishment and fulfilment for the works of their hands. As the psalm opens with a confession of faith, it ends with language of confirmation – in the end, the kindness of YHWH will come through, re-establishing the covenant relationship between YHWH and his people. This will ensure an eternal bond, outlasting even death and overcoming the disillusionment of a fleeting life filled with suffering and turmoil.

4.3.3 Social-scientific summary of Psalm 90

Although a few preliminary social-scientific remarks have been made throughout Section 4.3.2, this section discusses the most prominent social values in Psalm 90. Naturally, this discussion leads to a spatial analysis of Psalm 90, in which remembered space and the employment of imagination receive special attention.

Psalm 90 is read within the framework of the patron-client relationship, in which YHWH acts as patron to his clients, the Israelites. The term used for YHWH, “Adonai”, points to him being the patron and protector of Israel, while the term “servants”, referring to Israel, indicates their status as clients. As a patron, YHWH is the protector of his people, the creator of life, and the eternal one. As clients, the Israelite community seeks the favour of their patron, as is evident in verses 13–17, where the psalmist pleads with YHWH to satisfy them and provide them with happiness. A contrast between honour and shame regarding the patron-client relationship can also be seen in Psalm 90. Stanza II (verses 7–12) is concerned about the community's shame, brought on them by their sin and iniquities. In Stanza III, when seeking the favour of YHWH, the community petitions for YHWH’s honour. The community does this from a position of powerlessness amid their exilic circumstances.

In the face of their disappointment, after everything they had built up and relied upon was destroyed, the people of Israel recognise that their patron, YHWH, is the only one who can change their circumstances. They have come to know the hard realities of life. Confronted by the transience of life itself, they have realised that one's time on earth is a limited good, that grace and hope for their generation and the next is only found in the space of YHWH's loving-kindness. Therefore, the community finds their purpose, their end orientation in prayer for establishing their life's work to the glory of YHWH (cf. Oakman 1993:173). In contrast to the instability of their exile experience, Psalm 90 prays for stability and establishment by God, whose eternal nature is permanence.

4.4 Spatial analysis of Psalm 90

It has become apparent in the social-scientific analysis of Psalm 90 that the psalm could either be read in a broad sense, about life in general, or from the socio-historic perspective of the exile. The significance of Psalm 90, however, heightens when it is read against the background of the events of the exile right after the monarchy and temple were destroyed. This view opens up the possibility of seeing how Psalm 90 calls upon memory, space and imagination to transform the people's situation.

4.4.1 Critical spatiality in Psalm 90

Following the suggestion of deClaissé-Walford (2019:27), Psalm 90 is situated within three periods. The psalm is read by a post-exilic audience, albeit set during exile, while remembering the exodus events in the wilderness. This is the spatial starting point for Psalm 90. The firstspace, or physical space, present in Psalm 90 is simultaneously the desert during the exodus, Babylonia during exile and Judea during the post-exilic time. What these three spaces have in common is that they all represent spaces of disorientation. They are heterotopian spaces – spaces of crisis (cf. Foucault 1986:25). On a secondspace level, Psalm 90 thus denotes a space of instability and powerlessness on the part of the community. Being in exile, with their religious and political institutions in shambles, the

Israelite community found themselves in a negative space, off-centre, far from the presence of YHWH, as symbolised by the temple in Jerusalem. Everything that the people of YHWH had relied upon for security and meaning in their lives was destroyed. A post-exilic community, reading Psalm 90, would identify strongly with these experiences. Although they have returned from exile, they did it in a space of disillusionment – coming home to a city and life in ruins. Within a metaphor of life and death, they lament their reality, the fleetingness of life, and grapple with divine wrath as a consequence of their own wrongdoing. In this sense, time-space plays a vital role in Psalm 90, recalling Wyatt's (2001:33–36) argument on the link between time and space. Set within the space of Psalm 90, words such as days, years, morning, and evening all denote time. According to Psalm 90, the space in which time operates is negative since it is limited and finite. It is a space in which YHWH has the last say. YHWH is the orientation point in a world of disorientation (cf. Brueggemann 2007).

Desperately searching for reorientation, the community calls on YHWH. Starting with a confession that YHWH is their dwelling place, the community tries to make sense of life's trouble and sorrow on a thirdspace level. As a patron, YHWH is a safe (lived or third) space for his people. Therefore, they search for YHWH's presence amid chaos, petitioning that God turn back and show them compassion. The prayer that is Psalm 90 intends a reorientation of the relationship between YHWH and his people. In order to move closer to YHWH, the psalmist dangles between the danger of mortality and the safety of YHWH's infinity, between the past and the future.[13] To achieve this, the psalmist employs imaginative remembering.

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[13] See Figure 2 in Chapter 3 for a visual representation of the horizontal and vertical axes of ancient Near Eastern spatial orientation.

4.4.2 Remembered space in Psalm 90

In the introductory chapter to this study, remembered space is defined as *the dimension of space in which the collective memories of a people's shared history are imaginatively reconstructed to transform their identity in light of present circumstances and future hopes.* Building on this definition, the aspects of memory and imagination present in Psalm 90 now receive attention.

Based on the spatial analysis discussed in 4.4.1, Psalm 90 can be described as a *lament for lost space*. Not only did the Israelites physically lose their native land, but they also lost everything related to their lives there – on a second- and thirdspace level. To reconstruct their life, they turn to remembering, or fourthspace. The imaginative remembering in Psalm 90 is found on two levels. First, the Israelite community remembers their own history through the figure of Moses, to whom this psalm is ascribed. Second, they call on YHWH to remember to have compassion for them in their distress.

Using Moses and the exodus tradition as a fixed point, Psalm 90 creates a space for remembering the past while imagining a better future. The collective cultural memory of how YHWH rescued the Israelites from the wilderness gives the exilic and post-exilic communities the courage to imagine YHWH (re)turning to them. Furthermore, they call on the memories of past generations to confess YHWH as a dwelling place, a space of safety and stability (verse 1). Building on this surety, Psalm 90 imagines a future in which YHWH gives his people stability by letting them live in the space of his loving-kindness and by establishing and giving permanence to the work of their hands (verses 14 and 16).

From a situation of despair, Psalm 90 remembers that YHWH re-established his covenant with the Israelites in the desert through Moses and, therefore, imagines a time when YHWH will re-establish his relationship with his people again. Through memory and imagination, Psalm 90 reconstructs and transforms the people's lament of lost spaces into rejoicing in a returned God who is an everlasting dwelling place.

4.5 Conclusion

Psalm 90, the first psalm to open Book IV of the Psalter, is a prayer replete with spatial notions, collective memory, and imaginative outcomes. deClaissé-Walford (2020:9) summarises Psalm 90 in the following way:

> Thus with Moses' words in Psalm 90 the women and men in the time of the wilderness wanderings and the Babylonian exile cry out to God, who birthed the world (v. 2), to remember that they are mere mortals (v. 3) and to turn and change God's mind (v. 13) about their present situation. In the meantime they ask that God give them "a heart of wisdom" (v. 12) so that they might find meaning and importance in the work of their hands (v. 17).

When read from the perspective of critical spatiality, memory and imagination, the meaning of Psalm 90 is highlighted from a social-scientific viewpoint. The multi-faceted significance that the psalm has to this day also becomes apparent. Adamo (2020:9), writing from an African perspective, states that Psalm 90 is an "expression of faith" that YHWH will still protect and perform miracles as he did for ancient Israel – particularly in times of despair and hopelessness. Psalm 90 affirms that YHWH has been a constant presence on which Israel could rely through all time (Goldingay 2008:34). In this hopeful memory, we now turn our imagination to Psalm 91.

CHAPTER 5

PSALM 91

5.1 Introduction

Psalm 91 is a masterful poem, a witness to YHWH’s promise of protection against misfortune (Botha 2012:260). The psalm is an encouragement, a teaching on strengthening one’s faith (Tate 1990:450). Psalm 91 is the central psalm in the unit of Psalms 90–92 and forms the heart of the introduction to Book IV of the Psalter. Since this psalm has no superscription, it is read as a continuance of Psalm 90, with Moses still being the supposed speaker. Wallace (2007:23) indicates that several Hebrew manuscripts join Psalms 90 and 91 based on thematic and literary links between the two. In agreement with this argument, Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:395) note that Psalm 91 responds to Psalm 90 – assuring divine refuge following the petition of Psalm 90, which resulted from the fall of the monarchy and the crisis of exile.

Similarly to the previous chapter, the current chapter examines Psalm 91, starting with a translation and then moving to a social-scientific and critical spatial description of the psalm, after which the influence that remembered space in memory and imagination has on the psalm is explained.

5.2 Translation of Psalm 91

With the translation of Psalm 91, the same conditions are valid, as stated in Section 4.2 in the previous chapter. The chapter again works exclusively with the Masoretic text of Psalm 91, including the Masoretic text verse divisions. Following the translation, a few remarks are made about common translational issues in the Masoretic text or literary links and metaphors in the psalm.

Stanzas and Strophes	Verse	Hebrew text	Translation
I Strophe A	1a b	יֹ֭שֵׁב בְּסֵ֣תֶר עֶלְי֑וֹן בְּצֵ֥ל שַׁ֝דַּ֗י יִתְלוֹנָֽן׃	He who sits/dwells in the refuge/hiding place/shelter of the Most High, ***/*** will stay for the night/remain in the shadow of the Almighty.
	2a b	אֹמַ֗ר לַֽ֭יהוָה מַחְסִ֣י וּמְצוּדָתִ֑י אֱ֝לֹהַ֗י אֶבְטַח־בּֽוֹ׃	I will say of YHWH: My refuge and my stronghold, ***/*** my God, in him I will trust.
II Strophe B	3a b	כִּ֤י ה֣וּא יַ֭צִּֽילְךָ מִפַּ֥ח יָק֗וּשׁ מִדֶּ֥בֶר הַוּֽוֹת׃	Because he will rescue/deliver you from the snare/bird trap of a trapper/fowler/bird-catcher, ***/*** from the thorn/plague of ruin.
	4a b c	בְּאֶבְרָת֨וֹ יָ֤סֶךְ לָ֗ךְ וְֽתַחַת־כְּנָפָ֥יו תֶּחְסֶ֑ה צִנָּ֖ה וְֽסֹחֵרָ֣ה אֲמִתּֽוֹ׃	He will cover you in his wing, ***/*** and underneath his wings you may seek refuge. ***/*** His faithfulness is a shield and a wall.
	5a b	לֹֽא־תִ֭ירָא מִפַּ֣חַד לָ֑יְלָה מֵ֝חֵ֗ץ יָע֥וּף יוֹמָֽם׃	You will not fear the terror of the night, ***/*** nor the arrow that flies by day.
	6a b	מִ֭דֶּבֶר בָּאֹ֣פֶל יַהֲלֹ֑ךְ מִ֝קֶּ֗טֶב יָשׁ֥וּד צָהֳרָֽיִם׃	Nor the plague that walks in darkness, ***/*** nor the sting/prick/destruction that devastates at noon.
	7a b	יִפֹּ֤ל מִצִּדְּךָ֨ אֶ֗לֶף	A thousand will fall at your side, ***/*** a multitude/ten thousand by

	c	וּרְבָבָ֥ה מִימִינֶ֑ךָ אֵ֝לֶ֗יךָ לֹ֣א יִגָּֽשׁ׃	your right hand, **/** towards you it shall not draw near.
	8a b	רַ֭ק בְּעֵינֶ֣יךָ תַבִּ֑יט וְשִׁלֻּמַ֖ת רְשָׁעִ֣ים תִּרְאֶֽה׃	You will only look with your eyes **/** and see the retribution of the wicked.
Strophe C	9a b	כִּֽי־אַתָּ֣ה יְהוָ֣ה מַחְסִ֑י עֶ֝לְי֗וֹן שַׂ֣מְתָּ מְעוֹנֶֽךָ׃	Because you, YHWH, are my refuge. **/** You set the Most High your dwelling.
	10a b	לֹֽא־תְאֻנֶּ֣ה אֵלֶ֣יךָ רָעָ֑ה וְ֝נֶ֗גַע לֹא־יִקְרַ֥ב בְּאָהֳלֶֽךָ׃	Evil will not happen to you/fall on you. **/** No plague will approach your tent.
	11a b	כִּ֣י מַ֭לְאָכָיו יְצַוֶּה־לָּ֑ךְ לִ֝שְׁמָרְךָ֗ בְּכָל־דְּרָכֶֽיךָ׃	Because he will order his angels regarding you **/** to watch/guard you in all your ways.
	12a b	עַל־כַּפַּ֥יִם יִשָּׂא֑וּנְךָ פֶּן־תִּגֹּ֖ף בָּאֶ֣בֶן רַגְלֶֽךָ׃	On the palms of their hands, they will carry you, **/** so that your foot does not stumble over/strike a stone.
	13a b	עַל־שַׁ֣חַל וָפֶ֣תֶן תִּדְרֹ֑ךְ תִּרְמֹ֖ס כְּפִ֣יר וְתַנִּֽין׃	You will tread upon a lion and a snake; **/** you will trample a young lion and a serpent.
III Strophe D	14a b	כִּ֣י בִ֣י חָ֭שַׁק וַאֲפַלְּטֵ֑הוּ אֲ֝שַׂגְּבֵ֗הוּ כִּֽי־יָדַ֥ע שְׁמִֽי׃	Because he has loved me, I will bring him to safety/deliver him, **/** I will set him high/protect him, because he knows my name.
	15a	יִקְרָאֵ֙נִי֙ וְאֶעֱנֵ֔הוּ	He will call me, and I will answer him, **/** I will be with him in

	b c	עִמּֽוֹ־אָנֹכִ֥י בְצָרָ֑ה אֲ֝חַלְּצֵ֗הוּ וַאֲכַבְּדֵֽהוּ׃	distress, ***/*** I will deliver him, and I will honour him.
	16a b	אֹ֣רֶךְ יָ֭מִים אַשְׂבִּיעֵ֑הוּ וְ֝אַרְאֵ֗הוּ בִּישׁוּעָתִֽי׃	(With) long days I will satisfy him, ***/*** and I will show him/let him see my salvation.

5.2.1 Notes on the translation

- As Psalm 90 begins with a confession of faith, Psalm 91:1–2 follows a similar pattern. The word “dwelling place” (מעון) in 90:1 finds a literary link in 91:1 in the word “shelter” or “secret place” (סתר) and in 91:2 in the words “refuge” (מחס) and “stronghold” (מצודת). These words all act as spatial metaphors, describing the protection of YHWH as a safe and secret space in the life of the faithful. Additional images added to these metaphors in Psalm 91 include that one “lodges” or “lives” under the cover or protection of the one who is the secret space (Tate 1990:447).
- The terms used for God in Psalm 91 include “Most High” (עליון) and “Almighty” (שׁדי) – both terms that not only recognise YHWH as patron of Israel, but they were also used in pre-Mosaic worship. The name שׁדי appears in Exodus 6, while Moses himself uses the term עליון in Deuteronomy 32 (Wallace 2007:23). The use of these words in Psalm 91 not only continues the Mosaic influence with which Book IV opens but also links Psalm 91 with Psalm 90.
- Most translators and commentators note the shift in speakers in Psalm 91. Verse 1 begins with a third-person reference, while verse 2 shifts to a first-person speaker, “I”, who addresses a second-person audience – “you”. While some commentators, following Hermann Gunkel, opt to alter the text

or add words,[14] Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:427) believe that no such modifications are necessary since the text does not tend toward being a beatitude or blessing. In verse 14, yet another speaker switch occurs when YHWH himself speaks.

- Psalm 91 employs striking metaphors regarding how YHWH protects his people. In hyperbolic fashion, the psalm describes that no plague or evil will approach the faithful. Angels will protect them, and they will tread and trample on lions and snakes. More is said about these images in the discussion on the content of the psalm.
- Psalm 91 ends in verse 16 with a link to Psalm 90. Where Psalm 90 pleaded with YHWH to satisfy (שׂבע) them with his loving-kindness throughout their lives, YHWH promises in Psalm 91 that he will satisfy (שׂבע) his people with long days (ארךְ ימים), also a link to the time-space of Psalm 90.

5.2.2 Basic structure of Psalm 91

Regarding the structure of Psalm 91, commentators differ in opinion. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:427) propose a three-part structure, with verses 1–2 as a confession of trust, verses 3–13 as an explanation of how YHWH will be a refuge and protection, and verses 14–16 as direct divine discourse. The structure proposed by Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:427) is divided based on the speakers in the psalm – “I” (Stanza I), “you” (Stanza II) and YHWH (Stanza III). Tate (1990:450) suggests a similar structure, with verses 1–13 being the first stanza and verses 14–16 the second stanza. Instead of reading verses 1–2 as an introduction, Tate (1990:450) reads it as part of verses 3–13, which provides a

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[14] Gunkel made the suggestion to add the word אשרי to the beginning of Psalm 91 and alter the first-person verb in verse 2 (“I will say”) to a masculine singular participle (“saying”) – cf. deClaissé-Walford 2020:11.

“sermonette of encouragement”. Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:395) take over the threefold structure of Hossfeld and Zenger. Terrien (2003:775–776), based on the imagery used in the psalm, divides Psalm 91 into five stanzas. The first stanza consists of verses 1–3 with the imagery of secret places and a fortress, verses 4–6 form the second stanza with the imagery of being under divine wings, as Stanza three, verses 7–9, once again focuses on the imagery of a dwelling place and refuge. While Stanza four in verses 10–12 emphasises committed protection, Stanza five in verses 13–15b focuses on steadfast love. For Terrien (2003:776), the psalm concludes with an envoi in verse 15c–16, concentrating on rescue and glorification. The structure that Terrien proposes, however, is more a thematic outline of the psalm than a structural division based on structural markers in the text. Therefore, this study instead accepts the threefold structure of Psalm 91, which can be defined as follows:

Stanza I:	Introduction: Confession of trust (verses 1–2)
Stanza II:	Body: YHWH will provide refuge and protection (verses 3–13)
Stanza III:	Conclusion: Divine oracle (verses 14–16)

5.3 Analysis of Psalm 91

This section forms the heart of the chapter since it includes a discussion on the place of Psalm 91 within Book IV of the Psalter and an outline of the psalm’s content. The section concludes with a summary of the social-scientific values and themes present in Psalm 91.

5.3.1 The place and historical associations of Psalm 91

Psalm 91 is the second psalm in Book IV of the Psalter and compositionally forms part of the introduction to Book IV. In this study, Psalm 91 is read as a continuance of Psalm 90, with Moses still being the supposed speaker to a post-exilic audience haunted by the traumatic experiences of exile. When discussing the category, place, and historical associations of Psalm 91, it is, however, necessary to consider the arguments of various commentators.

Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:428) focus on the temple liturgy as a background to Psalm 91. From this perspective, the introduction to the psalm in verses 1–2 is a confession of faith as the pilgrims approach the temple, while verses 3–13 act as a priestly teaching in which the pilgrims are assured of the protection of YHWH. Consequently, the concluding verses represent the direct words of YHWH spoken to the pilgrims. This view corresponds to Sigmund Mowinckel’s analysis of Psalm 91 as a liturgy pronounced by a priest to a worshipper distressed by a life-threatening situation (Tate 1990:451). Tate (1990:451) also discusses various options regarding the background and historical situation of Psalm 91. According to him, Psalm 91 could have been part of a liturgy. Goldingay (2008:40) is, however, not convinced that of a liturgical setting and rather proposes a king’s enthronement as background to Psalm 91. Goldingay’s (2008:39) view is based on the parallels between Psalm 91 and Psalm 20. Similar to Psalm 20, Psalm 91 focuses on the rescue and protection offered by YHWH. Since it is especially the king who is in need of YHWH’s protection, Goldingay (2008:39) concludes that Psalm 91 can be interpreted as addressed to the king. In contrast, Wallace (2007:24) links the interpretive context of Psalm 91 to the address of Moses to the people in Deuteronomy 33, where he blesses Israel. Wallace (2007:24) argues that Psalm 90–91 parallels Deuteronomy 32–33. In Deuteronomy 32, Moses warns Israel that disobedience to YHWH will have consequences. Psalm 90 laments the exile as consequence of Israel’s disobedience. In Deuteronomy 33, Moses moves on to bless the people of Israel, while Psalm 91, in parallel with this, functions as a promise of blessing for the faithful. The links between Psalm 90 and Psalm 91 and its connections with Deuteronomy 32-33 suggest that the place of Psalm 91 has editorial significance within a post-exilic historical frame. This argument is further strengthened by the fact that some scribal interpreters read Book IV as a so-called ‘Moses collection’, which had the objective of calling the post-exilic community to faith in YHWH (Tate 1990:452).

Another perspective on Psalm 91 that cannot be overlooked is the influence of the wisdom tradition on the psalm. Tate (1990:452–453) already notes similarities between Psalm 91 and wisdom poetry. Botha (2012:260) argues that traces of the wisdom tradition are seen in the final shape of Psalm 91 as it persuades the faithful and righteous of the protection of YHWH, while the wicked will be judged. Furthermore, certain intertextual links between the wisdom literature of Job 5 and Proverbs 3 suggest that these texts influenced the formation of Psalm 91.

The wisdom motifs in Psalm 91 also link this psalm with the previous one, Psalm 90, with its call for a heart of wisdom in verse 12. Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:395) describe the whole of Psalm 91 as a reaction to Psalm 90. Psalm 91 provides assurance amid the chaos and challenges of the exile that Psalm 90 laments. Further links with Psalm 90 are found throughout Psalm 91 (Botha 2012:272–273). The word for “dwelling place” (מעון) in Psalm 90:1 is repeated in Psalm 91:9 in the confession that the Most High is the dwelling place of the faithful. Whereas Psalm 90 petitions for joy as opposed to the evil the people have seen, Psalm 91 testifies that evil will not happen to the petitioner. Psalm 91 concludes in verse 16 with a parallel to Psalm 90:14. In the divine oracle of 91:16, YHWH ensures his people that he will *satisfy* them with a long life (lit. *long days*). This is an answer to 90:14, where the petitioner calls out to YHWH to *satisfy* them and let them rejoice in *all their days*. Psalm 92 continues in this tradition by having various links with Psalms 90 and 91 (see Botha 2012:273). It answers the call in 90:14 to be made glad in 92:5, where the psalmist declares that YHWH made him glad. Psalm 92:2, 7 also take up the notion of knowing YHWH’s name from 91:14. There are still more links to be made and discussed between these three psalms, but the few examples mentioned here illustrate the close relationship that the psalm group of Psalms 90–92 have with each other. More literary links between Psalms 90–92, especially concerning Psalm 92, are discussed in Chapter 6.

Before moving to a detailed discussion on the content of Psalm 91, it is perhaps necessary to mention the overall nature or category of the psalm. As noted earlier in this section, some commentators regard Psalm 91 as a liturgical, temple psalm. However, as this study reads Psalm 91 as part of the cluster of Psalms 90–92 reflecting on the exilic circumstances from a post-exilic perspective, a purely cultic setting to Psalm 91 does not fit. As Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:395) rightly note, it is difficult to identify the setting of the psalm. The danger and trouble referred to could be caused by oppressors, sickness, or enemies, such as those faced by a king, causing the petitioner to seek refuge in the temple. While these are all plausible situations, this study instead finds the setting of the psalm in the circumstances of the post-exilic era, reflecting on the experiences of the people in exile, feeling uncertain, trapped, and lost without a land, temple, or monarchy. From this perspective, I agree with Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:395), ultimately describing Psalm 91 as a “psalm of trust”. This psalm of trust is placed in the mouth of Moses, a trusted figure in Israel, to remind the people that YHWH is their safe space, their refuge. From a spatial perspective, Psalm 91 does not call for a liturgy being performed in the physical temple in Jerusalem since the temple was already destroyed. Rather, Psalm 91 imagines the temple being embodied in YHWH. In this sense, Psalm 91 becomes a liturgy of life, a spatial liturgy placing trust not in an institution but in YHWH as the patron-protector of Israel.

5.3.2 Content of Psalm 91

In this part of Section 5.3, the content of Psalm 91 is described in detail. Special attention is paid to metaphors, social-scientific values, and literary links with Psalms 90 and 92. The material of Psalm 91 is discussed according to the threefold structure of the psalm as identified in Section 5.2.2.

5.3.2.1 Stanza I (Verses 1–2)

As mentioned under the translational notes of Psalm 91, commentators and translators have had difficulty translating verses 1–2. However, in this study, the Masoretic text is considered and translated as is since it best conveys the message of trust with which the psalm begins, and which characterises the rest of the psalm. Furthermore, when reading according to the Masoretic text, verse 1 introduces the subject of the encouragement as well as the speaker who speaks from verse 3 onwards (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:682).

Through vibrant metaphors and images, the first stanza testifies that the Most High, the Almighty, YHWH, is a God who provides a hiding place, a refuge, a stronghold. Therefore, the speaker places his trust in YHWH. In Stanza I, we already encounter a social-scientific value, laden with meaning, namely the value of *trust*, which played an essential role in the ancient Near Eastern world. According to Pilch (1993:202), the human experience that we are not in control of life leads people to search for certainty and security. People need something or someone to trust or base their hope on. From a social-scientific perspective, the patron of a group or person is usually the reliable source in which the person or group place their trust. For post-exilic Israel, YHWH is the source of their trust. To place one's trust in someone presupposes an interpersonal relationship. Therefore, the metaphors used in the psalm and especially in verses 1–2, build on the relationship between YHWH and his people based on everything that YHWH does in order for them to place their trust in him.

Tate (1990:453) interprets the metaphors of protection in the introduction of Psalm 91 as indicative of "a secure, protective area" assured by the presence of YHWH. In agreement with Tate, Terrien (2003:776) argues that the word סתר, translated as "hiding place" or "shelter", does not refer to the physical temple but rather to a consciousness of safety and security on a symbolic level. From the perspective of critical spatiality, it means that the metaphors of security in Stanza I do not function on a first-space level but rather on a second- and thirdspace level. In addition, the metaphor of a hiding place refers back to the end of Book III, where petitioners ask in Psalm 89:46, "*Will you hide forever?*" Here, in Psalm 91:1, an answer is provided. YHWH is not hiding; instead, he is the one *providing* a hiding place for the Israelite community (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:682–683). For Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:429), the metaphors of dwelling in the hiding place of the Most High and staying for the night in the shadow of the Almighty suggest an image of being "at home" in another person's living space. The psalm especially applies this experience of being "at home" in YHWH's presence to people who are homeless or persecuted and in danger (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:429). This is befitting of the experience of the exilic and even post-exilic communities, being without a place, a country, a city, a house to live in, and without a religious home – the temple.

Other metaphors about protection include YHWH being a refuge and a stronghold, recalling imagery of a military invasion (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:430). Lastly, there is also the metaphor of remaining in the shadow of the Almighty. In the ancient Near East kingship tradition, the metaphor of being in the "shadow of the king" was used to point to the king's protection (Tate 1990:453). In Psalm 91, it alludes to the protection that YHWH, the true and universal king, provides. In this sense, Tate (1993:453) sees a foreshadowing of the kingship collection of Psalms 93–100. Terrien (2003:776) sees a link between the metaphor of remaining in the shadow of YHWH and the metaphor of wings in verse 4 and angels in verse 11.

The last matter to discuss in Stanza I is that of the divine names used to refer to God. In verse 1, we find two titles for YHWH – first, the "Most High" (עליון) and second, Almighty (שַׁדי). In Deuteronomy 32, Moses uses the title "Most High", while "Almighty" is the name by which the patriarchs knew God, as stated in Exodus 6 (Wallace 2007:23). In her commentary on Books IV and V of the Psalter, deClaissé-Walford (2020:12) investigates the title "Almighty". She notes that this title comes from the root word שַׁד, meaning "mountain" or "breast". Taking the meaning of "breast", deClaissé-Walford (2020:12) relates the title used here for YHWH to Psalm 90, where it states that God gave birth to the earth. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:430) trace these divine names to different theologies in the Hebrew Bible. According to them, the name "Most High" relates to Zion theology, while "Almighty" is of priestly origin, denoting a God of promise connected to the primaeval ancestors of Israel. In addition, and in agreement with deClaissé-Walford (2020:12), Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:430) note that the title "Almighty" is also used in the book of Job to refer to God as the defender of the world order.

These two divine names already set the stage for the theology of Psalm 91. Based on the description of YHWH as “Most High” and “Almighty”, the speaker tells his audience that YHWH is the creator and sustainer of the world and its order. YHWH is the powerful protector, the one in whom a person and a community can place their trust.

5.3.2.2 Stanza II (Verses 3–13)

Stanza II begins with the particle “because” (כי), linking the new stanza to the introduction in verses 1–2. In this middle part of the psalm, various dangers, trouble, and crises are imagined, along with the protection YHWH provides against each one (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:395). Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:430) further divide verses 3–13 into two subsections: verses 3–8 and 9–13. The subsection of verses 3–8 begins and ends with a description of the violent world in which humans and all creation live (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:683). In verses 3–4, avian metaphors describe the protection YHWH provides (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:430). It is said that YHWH will rescue one from the trap of a bird-catcher and cover the reader with his wings; under his wings, one can seek refuge. Typically, the mother bird will protect her young from the dangers of traps and predators. Based on similar images found in Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy 32, Gillingham (2015a:4) argues that the images of birds and wings sketch YHWH as a mother eagle protecting the faithful day and night from the snare of the fowler. deClaissé-Walford (2020:13) relates the images of taking refuge under YHWH’s wings to ancient Near Eastern iconography. In his book on the symbolism of the biblical world, Keel (1997:192) traces the wing motif back to its origins in Egypt. From there, it spread to Palestine and Syria. The Israelites adapted and applied this image to their own worship and temple traditions. According to his discussion, the “wings of YHWH” can refer either to the wings of the cherubim extending over the ark or to the image from nature where a mother bird spreads her wings over her young (Keel 1997:190–192). Regardless, the metaphor expresses an act of protecting, as the image of wings in Egyptian hieroglyphs also means protection.

Verses 5–6 list several tragedies that can befall a person at any moment – terror by night, arrow by day, plague, and destruction. These verses were used as apotropaic texts, believed to have the power to protect and ward off evil (Gillingham 2015a:4). As Breed (2014:299) states, post-exilic readers would interpret the dangers in verses 5–6 as referring to evil spirits. Midnight was believed to be the most dangerous time of the night, hence the reference to "terror of the night", while the "arrow that flies by day" possibly refers to the noonday – the part of the day where midday heat was one of the most significant challenges in the ancient Near Eastern climate (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:431). The arrows by day can also refer to the arrows of the god of war and pestilence that bear sickness (Keel 1997:85). In fact, one of the Qumran-versions of Psalm 91 was used as an exorcism text (Breed 2014:299). Nevertheless, these verses not only list fearsome experiences but also testify that the people of YHWH need *not* fear these things since the faithfulness of YHWH is a shield and a wall – as the end of verse 4 confirmed. Verses 7–8 intensify the confirmation of protection. In a hyperbole, verse 7 states that even when thousands of people fall at one's side if one lives under the protection of YHWH, one will not be harmed by the cause of their downfall (Tate 1990:456). The righteous will merely look on as the wicked are subjected to God's judgment. From a social-scientific perspective, these verses all describe the destructive forces of the ancient Near Eastern life experience (Keel 1997:77–78). These forces include darkness or the night and enemies such as evil spirits, demons, and sickness. Nevertheless, these forces of chaos and evil will not overpower believers since they place their trust in YHWH, a refuge and a dwelling for them (verse 9). The focus on destructive forces and threats also has spatial implications. The evil and oppressive powers of the ancient Near East function in all dimensions of space – physical, imagined, and social space.

However, the message of Psalm 91 is that trust in YHWH transcends any spatial and temporal threats. This becomes clear in verse 9. The term “dwelling” (מעון) in verse 9 is the same word used in Psalm 90:1, where YHWH is confessed to be a dwelling place for the petitioner. Furthermore, 91:9 mirrors 91:2. Both verses describe YHWH as a refuge for those who trust in him. Whereas verse 2 makes this statement of faith from the outset, verse 9 makes the statement after listing the tragedies that can transpire and confirming that through it all, YHWH protects.

Verses 10–13 continue in the same fashion, assuring the righteous that evil and plagues will not come to pass over them. Verse 10 states that no plague will “approach your tent”. On a spatial level, “tent” can refer to the firstspace of a person’s physical home, but even more so, it applies on a second- and thirdspace level since the previous verse confessed YHWH to be the dwelling place of the believer. Thus, verse 10 confirms that no earthly or cosmic powers can touch the one who finds his home in YHWH.

In contrast to the list of dangers and evil powers in verses 5–6, verses 11–12 contain the promise of YHWH that his own heavenly powers and messengers – the angels – will accompany those who trust in him (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:431). Here, the three-storey worldview comes into play, with the angels as heavenly beings who reside in heaven with God, coming down to protect and guard the faithful. Tate (1990:457) indicates that the metaphor of angels carrying people on the palms of their hands so that no harm is done to them shows special care – similar to parents supporting a child to protect them from pain and misfortune. As YHWH covers the faithful with his wings (verse 4), his messengers will cover the faithful to protect them from misfortune and trouble (verse 12). According to Botha (2012:268–269), verses 11–12 are intertextually linked to Proverbs 3, which states that YHWH will prevent the foot of the wise from being caught in a snare. When Psalm 91 applies this imagery, the message remains the same: YHWH will protect those who trust in him on their life’s journey.

Verse 13, the last verse of Stanza II, employs imagination to triumphantly exclaim the final victory of the person who trusts in YHWH before the psalm moves to the divine oracle in verses 14–16. It is said that the faithful will tread on lions and snakes and trample young lions and serpents. By using the example of wild animals such as lions and snakes, the poet draws on ancient Near Eastern iconography and mythology in emphasising that those who trust in YHWH have the power to fight against chaos (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:431). Usually, this power was reserved for divine beings or royalty, but Psalm 91 stresses that everyone who trusts YHWH becomes invulnerable and can triumph over chaos and destruction (Keel 1997:352). A transformation of space has taken place where the previously weak, oppressed, and persecuted were transformed through their trust in YHWH into a courageous community enjoying divine protection.

5.3.2.3 Stanza III (Verses 14–16)

Tate (1990:457) describes verses 14–16 as “an oracle of assurance”. This divine oracle gives authority to the assurance of God’s protection in verses 1–13. After a long silence, stretching from the end of Book III in Psalms 88–89 and Psalm 90, YHWH speaks in the last stanza of Psalm 91 (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:683). Verse 14 bases YHWH’s saving and protecting acts on two conditions: loving YHWH and knowing his name. These actions relate to the intimate relationship one should have with YHWH (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:431). Terrien (2003:778) also points out that the theology of the name was especially prominent in the Sinai tradition with the covenant between YHWH and his people. Thus, we find another link here to the time of Moses. The notion of the name of YHWH, referring to his whole being and nature, is picked up again in Psalm 92:2. Verse 15 continues by affirming that the call of the faithful one will be heard and answered by YHWH. In addition, the promise is added that YHWH will bring honour to the people by making them victorious over the evil forces described earlier on, simultaneously shaming the evil forces (Goldingay 2008:49).

The conclusion to Psalm 91 recalls the words of Psalm 90. In verse 16, it is promised that YHWH will satisfy those who take refuge in him with a long life and show them his salvation, just like they have seen the retribution of the wicked in verse 8. By ending on this note with a promise of future salvation, Psalm 91 provides (eschatological) hope for a downtrodden community. These promises of YHWH, in verses 14–16, are oriented towards assuring the believers that they will find fullness of life, even in dire circumstances, when they take their refuge in YHWH. They will be granted satisfaction, salvation, and favour (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:431). They will achieve success and receive dignity. YHWH will set them high and honour them. From a social-scientific perspective, honour was one of the most critical values in the biblical world. For humans to receive honour from YHWH was highly unusual (Tate 1990:458). Yet, Israel's claim to honour depended upon its relationship with YHWH (Plevnik 1993:108). That is precisely the point of Psalm 91 – when one trusts in God and his protection, one will lead a fulfilled, honourable life despite the influence of destructive forces. Closely related to the honour the faithful will receive is the value of favour. Whereas the community petitions for YHWH's favour in Psalm 90:13–17, YHWH now promises that they will receive this favour when he bestows honour upon them.

5.3.3 Social-scientific summary of Psalm 91

Psalm 91 is a response to the lament and petition of Psalm 90. The social-scientific concepts in Psalm 91 also largely function in response to Psalm 90. Whereas Psalm 90 focused on the instability that the exile brought about, Psalm 91 focuses on the stability found in trusting YHWH. Psalm 90 provides the perspective of the clients in the patron-client relationship, while Psalm 91 is written as a confession of the power, trustworthiness, and protection that YHWH, the patron of Israel, provide. Therefore, the intimate and interpersonal relationship between YHWH and believers receives attention in Psalm 91. This relationship is built on trust, a social value seeking security in an uncertain world filled with forces beyond people's control. Closely related to the concept of trust is that of hope (Pilch 1993:202). To trust someone is to have hope and to rely on them. In this sense, Psalm 91 represents a transformation starting to take place, a move from hopelessness in Psalm 90 to hope and a future orientation in Psalm 91.

This move from negative to positive is also found in the ancient Near Eastern worldview of Psalm 91. Through an interplay between negative life experiences and how YHWH protects one from them, Psalm 91 stresses the difference between the chaos principle and the value of order. In the beginning, when God created the world, he did so by bringing order to the cosmic chaos (Osiek 1993:143). Psalm 90 reminisces the cosmic reality of death due to the chaotic forces in the world. Psalm 91 lists the destructive forces of chaos in a person's life, including being trapped, sick, subject to attack from evil powers and threatening enemies. However, both psalms eventually contain the promise that YHWH can order the chaos of life and overpower the destructive forces. YHWH brings order over the chaos primarily through his relationship as a patron with his client, Israel. In this relationship, YHWH favours those who trust in him; hence, those who know his name, remain loyal, and love him. They experience a fulfilled life in which YHWH's protection trumps all forces of chaos and evil in this life. In this way, the post-exilic community is transformed from being powerless to having power through the honour that YHWH bestows upon them. Moving from shame to honour also represents a social-scientific breakthrough between Psalms 90–91. In Psalm 90, the community reflects upon the shame brought about by their iniquities, resulting in exile. They plead with YHWH to return to them, to bring them honour. In Psalm 91:14–16, YHWH answers their plea, promising to set them high and honour them.

5.4 Spatial analysis of Psalm 91

Based on the social-scientific analysis, Psalm 91 can be described as a psalm of transformation. The transformation from negative to positive, from hopelessness to hope, is also apparent on a spatial level. The spatial analysis of Psalm 91 is divided into two parts. The first part describes the overall spatial orientation of the psalm and the different dimensions of space discerned in the psalm, while the second part focuses exclusively on the occurrence of remembered space in Psalm 91.

5.4.1 Critical spatiality in Psalm 91

The spatial narrative of Psalm 91 picks up where Psalm 90 left off. Psalm 90 was written from a place of disorientation and being off-centre in the aftermath of the exile. The people lamented lost space in all dimensions – their land (firstspace), their religious space (secondspace), and their lived and social space (thirdspace). Yet when all spaces are lost, remembered space remains. By building on the memory of Moses, Psalm 90 imagines YHWH as remaining a space of stability and safety. Psalm 91 continues this reimagining. The psalm represents an attempt at reorientation after the disorienting events of the exile. The psalm is a theological commentary on how to become at-centre again. In order to achieve this, the psalm engages with some of the most off-centre experiences in life – the realm of danger inhabited by evil, threatening enemies, sickness and wild animals. Psalm 91 recognises the crippling effect that these experiences have on a community, creating a negative space on all levels. On a firstspace level, these dangers led to the Israelite community being without their land and temple and, therefore, far from the presence of YHWH. On a secondspace level, all the social and ideological institutions in which they placed their security had failed them. On a thirdspace level, their lived space was ruined, and they were scattered between their homeland and a foreign land, confronted by another culture, religion, and social group. Therefore, Psalm 91 aims to transform the space of an oppressed, scared, and persecuted community by turning these heterotopian crises into a utopian space of hope. This is done by utilising the social value of trust and emphasising the already-known fact that YHWH is the patron and protector of Israel. The psalmist stresses that in a relationship with YHWH, a community's spatial existence is transformed as they enjoy divine protection. The metaphors used concerning YHWH – dwelling in the shelter of the Most High, seeking refuge under his wings, him being a stronghold – are all spatially associated. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:430) also note the spatial reach of Psalm 91, as it begins in the introduction and extends to the rest of the psalm:

> The worlds of imagery of vv.1-2 thus evoke an abundance of spatially associated experiences of rescue having to do with house, temple, city, fortress, and so on. The special point of the psalm is then the transfer of these combined worlds of imagery to YHWH himself through performative utterance. For that purpose the petitioner need not be in the Temple; YHWH *is* for him a protecting temple and saving fortress – no matter where the petitioner is.

YHWH becomes the dwelling place, the refuge, for those who trust him. A relationship with YHWH transcends any and all spatial and temporal threats since YHWH is the One in whom believers find safety and security.

5.4.2 Remembered space in Psalm 91

Psalm 91 may be read and understood within the context of remembered space. Not only does the psalm still resort under Moses as the supposed speaker, but it also draws on collective memories from Israel's history to confirm YHWH's protection in their current circumstances. Therefore, Psalm 90 and Psalm 91 are intimately linked from an editorial perspective, especially when considering the commentary of Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:420) which holds that Psalms 90-92 were created as an introduction to Book IV of the Psalms. Furthermore, the intertextual links that Psalm 91 has with Deuteronomy 32–33 attest to the influence of Israel's past on the faith confession in this psalm.

Based on their experiences of YHWH in the past, the psalmist dares to imagine a future in which their spatial reality is transformed. In this sense, remembered space is not only concerned with the past but also with the future. Whereas the memory-part of remembered space draws on collective memories from the past, the imagination-part of remembered space concerns the future – a future informed and created by the past. In Psalm 91, the various metaphors serve as the imagined transformation that takes place. The use of imagination is first seen in the iconographical metaphor referring to the wings of YHWH. Second, it is only with the use of imagination that the metaphor of trampling on lions and snakes in verse 13 can come to its right. Through all these metaphors and the intertextual references to Moses' speech in Deuteronomy 32–33, Psalm 91 imagines the future protection of believers. This imagined space is set in YHWH’s promises in the conclusion to Psalm 91 – the promise of protection, salvation, and a fulfilled life.

5.5 Conclusion

Psalm 91 have been described as a naive psalm in its confident trust in YHWH (Jacobson 2017:104). Yet, when read as part of the composition of Psalms 90–92, Psalm 91 can be characterised as a psalm that transforms the lost space of Psalm 90. Using remembered space, a new hope is found in a trusting relationship with YHWH. A transformation is imagined from negative to positive space, from fear to trust, persecution to protection. However, this transformation can only occur when the community finds their security in YHWH himself and when YHWH becomes their safe space. Refuge and protection are not to be found in the literal temple (firstspace) or societal institutions (secondspace), or even in social or lived space (thirdspace), but through remembered space – memory and imagination – in YHWH himself. As we move to Psalm 92, we encounter an even more hopeful spatial outlook on the situation of YHWH’s people.

CHAPTER 6

PSALM 92

6.1 Introduction

Psalm 92 concludes the group of three psalms, comprising Psalms 90–92, which opens Book IV of the Psalter. Psalm 92 is generally characterised as a thanksgiving psalm, following the lament in Psalm 90 and the promise of Psalm 91 (deClaissé-Walford 2020:13). Together, Psalms 90–92 respond to the crisis of exile on all levels – theological, political, and psychological (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:399). Following this line of thinking, Tucker (2019:358) argues that Psalm 92 represents a world ordered by YHWH, as opposed to the forces of chaos that erupted in the events of the exile and attested to in the previous two psalms.

In addition to Psalm 90, Psalm 92 also carries a superscription, namely “A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day”. This superscription acts as a liturgical indication, suggesting that it was performed on the Sabbath (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:437). However, as will become apparent in the analysis of the psalm, the superscription has less to do with the psalm’s liturgical function and more with the notion of celebrating the restored relationship between YHWH and his people despite the events of the exile. Psalm 92 is a thanksgiving prayer, praising YHWH for destroying the wicked and providing the righteous with a safe space to flourish.

6.2 Translation

As in the previous psalm chapters, the translation that follows here is a literal translation of the Masoretic text of Psalm 92. Following the pattern of previous chapters, literary links, metaphors, and translational issues are also discussed in this section, after which a basic structure for Psalm 92 is suggested.

Stanzas and Strophes	Verse	Hebrew text	Translation
I Strophe A	1a	מִזְמ֥וֹר שִׁ֗יר לְי֣וֹם הַשַּׁבָּֽת׃	A psalm. A song for the Sabbath day.
	2a b	ט֗וֹב לְהֹד֥וֹת לַיהוָ֑ה וּלְזַמֵּ֖ר לְשִׁמְךָ֣ עֶלְיֽוֹן׃	It is good to praise/give thanks to YHWH **/** and to make music/to sing praises to your name, Most High,
	3a b	לְהַגִּ֣יד בַּבֹּ֣קֶר חַסְדֶּ֑ךָ וֶ֝אֱמ֥וּנָתְךָ֗ בַּלֵּילֽוֹת׃	to declare in the morning your loving-kindness **/** and your steadfastness at night.
	4a b	עֲֽלֵי־עָ֭שׂוֹר וַעֲלֵי־נָ֑בֶל עֲלֵ֖י הִגָּי֣וֹן בְּכִנּֽוֹר׃	On ten strings and on a stringed instrument, **/** on resounding music and on the lyre.
II Strophe B	5a b	כִּ֤י שִׂמַּחְתַּ֣נִי יְהוָ֣ה בְּפָעֳלֶ֑ךָ בְּֽמַעֲשֵׂ֖י יָדֶ֣יךָ אֲרַנֵּֽן׃	Because YHWH made me glad/joyful/rejoiced in his work, **/** at the work of your hands, I shout with joy.
	6a b	מַה־גָּדְל֣וּ מַעֲשֶׂ֣יךָ יְהוָ֑ה מְ֝אֹ֗ד עָמְק֥וּ מַחְשְׁבֹתֶֽיךָ׃	How great are your works, YHWH, **/** your thoughts/plans are very deep.
	7a b	אִֽישׁ־בַּ֭עַר לֹ֣א יֵדָ֑ע וּ֝כְסִ֗יל לֹא־יָבִ֥ין אֶת־זֹֽאת׃	A stupid man cannot know (this), **/** and a fool cannot discern this.
Strophe C	8a b	בִּפְרֹ֤חַ רְשָׁעִ֨ים כְּמ֥וֹ עֵ֗שֶׂב וַ֭יָּצִיצוּ כָּל־פֹּ֣עֲלֵי אָ֑וֶן	The wicked sprout like grass **/** and they flourish, all the workers of

	c	לְהִשָּׁמְדָ֥ם עֲדֵי־עַֽד׃	injustice, ***/*** until they are to be exterminated/destroyed.
	9a b	וְאַתָּ֥ה מָר֗וֹם לְעֹלָ֣ם יְהוָֽה׃	But you are on high, ***/*** forever YHWH.
	10a b c	כִּ֤י הִנֵּ֪ה אֹיְבֶ֡יךָ יְֽהוָ֗ה כִּֽי־הִנֵּ֣ה אֹיְבֶ֣יךָ יֹאבֵ֑דוּ יִ֝תְפָּרְד֗וּ כָּל־פֹּ֥עֲלֵי אָֽוֶן׃	Because look, your enemies, YHWH, ***/*** because, look, your enemies, they will perish, ***/*** they will be scattered/separated from each other, all the workers of injustice.
Strophe D	11a b	וַתָּ֣רֶם כִּרְאֵ֣ים קַרְנִ֑י בַּ֝לֹּתִ֗י בְּשֶׁ֣מֶן רַעֲנָֽן׃	You lift up my horn like a wild ox, ***/*** I have been anointed with luxuriant oil.
	12a b c	וַתַּבֵּ֥ט עֵינִ֗י בְּשׁ֫וּרָ֥י בַּקָּמִ֣ים עָלַ֣י מְ֭רֵעִים תִּשְׁמַ֥עְנָה אָזְנָֽי׃	And my eyes have looked on my enemies ***/*** that rose/stood above me – evildoers ***/*** my ears have heard.
III Strophe E	13a b	צַ֭דִּיק כַּתָּמָ֣ר יִפְרָ֑ח כְּאֶ֖רֶז בַּלְּבָנ֣וֹן יִשְׂגֶּֽה׃	The righteous will sprout like a palm tree, ***/*** he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
	14a b	שְׁ֭תוּלִים בְּבֵ֣ית יְהוָ֑ה בְּחַצְר֖וֹת אֱלֹהֵ֣ינוּ יַפְרִֽיחוּ׃	Planted in the house of YHWH, ***/*** they will sprout/bloom in the (temple)courts of our God.
	15a b	ע֭וֹד יְנוּב֣וּן בְּשֵׂיבָ֑ה דְּשֵׁנִ֖ים וְרַעֲנַנִּ֣ים יִהְיֽוּ׃	They will still grow/prosper in old age; ***/*** they will be juicy/fat and fresh.

	16a b	לְֽהַגִּ֭יד כִּֽי־יָשָׁ֣ר יְהוָ֑ה צ֝וּרִ֗י וְֽלֹא־עֹלָ֥תָה בּֽוֹ׃	To declare that YHWH is just/right, **/** my rock, (there is) no injustice/unrighteousness/ wickedness in him.

6.2.1 Notes on translation

- Psalm 92 has many literary links pointing back to Psalms 90 and 91. The epithet “Most High” in 92:2 refers back to Psalm 91:1, where the same title was used to refer to YHWH. This title is related to the idea of “ascending” and, therefore, indicates God’s exalted status and power. Tate (1990:461) also notes that it is an epithet of kingship, thus anticipating the enthronement psalms in Psalms 93–100.
- Further literary links are found in verse 3 in the phrases “loving-kindness” and “morning”, which are direct parallels to Psalm 90:14, while the “morning” and “evening” in 92:3 also recall the promise of Psalm 91:5 that the faithful need not fear the terror of the “night” nor the arrow that flies by “day” (deClaissé-Walford 2020:14).
- In verse 4, the psalm refers to various musical instruments used to praise YHWH. In the above translation, it was translated as “ten strings”, “stringed instrument”, and “resounding music” since translations of instruments such as “lute”, “harp”, and “cithara” are all anachronisms. Rather, the instruments listed here should be understood as different types of lyres (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:435).
- Verse 9 presents the translator with a challenge. Tate (1990:461) reads the word מרום as a divine epithet. However, Tate suggests that if one translated it literally, it would read “You are (on) high”. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:435), following a literal translation, read מרום as an accusative of place instead of rendering the text to read as an epithet. In my translation of Psalm 92, I kept to the literal meaning, translating מרום as “You are (on) high”. This rendition of the word carries with it spatial

connotations, confirmed by other translational possibilities such as a “highly placed location” or “high position”, and it can even denote “heaven” or the “home of God” (Holladay 1971:215).

- The concluding verse of Psalm 92, verse 16, connects to the introduction in verse 3 via the word נגד, translated as “declare” (Cohen 2013:594). In addition, verse 16 corresponds to Deuteronomy 32:4, further strengthening the Mosaic influence on the composition of Psalms 90–92.

6.2.2 Basic structure of Psalm 92

Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:398) note various understandings of the structure of Psalm 92. They suggest a three-part structure with verses 1–7 voicing praise and thanksgiving to YHWH, verses 8–12 focusing on the enemies and verses 13–16 articulating hope for the community. DeClaissé-Walford (2020:14), on the other hand, divides Psalm 92 into two sections – verses 1–6, a call to praise and verses 7–16, a description of YHWH’s good works. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:436) also propose a tripartite division, yet it differs from that of Brueggemann and Bellinger. Following Tate (1990:464), Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:436) identify verses 1–4 as an introductory declaration of praise, while verses 5–12 form the main section of the psalm with verses 13–16 concluding the hymn with a declaration on the future of the righteous. The division between the first and second stanzas in verses 4–5 is based on the particle כי, which introduces a new section. Therefore, this study follows the suggestion of Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:436) rather than a two-part division or the three-part division that divides the first and second stanzas in verses 6–7. The structure of Psalm 92 can thus be described as follows:

Stanza I: Introduction: Testimony of praise to YHWH (verses 1–4)

Stanza II: Body: Testimony of YHWH’s works as seen in the contrasting fates of the wicked and the faithful (verses 5–12)

Stanza III: Conclusion: Testimony about the future of the righteous (verses 13–16)

6.3 Analysis of Psalm 92

This section analyses Psalm 92 according to its place in the subgroup of Psalms 90–92, as well as regarding the content of the psalm. As in Chapters 4 and 5, a social-scientific analysis is also done in this section before Section 6.4 discusses the aspects of critical spatial in Psalm 92.

6.3.1 The place and historical associations of Psalm 92

The categorisation of Psalm 92 is a disputed matter. Commentators differ on what type of poem this is. In the introduction to this chapter, it was already mentioned that Psalm 92 is generally described as a hymn of thanksgiving, focusing on YHWH destroying the wicked and providing a safe space for the righteous in which to flourish (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:685). With the clear distinction between the wicked and the righteous found in Psalm 92, commentators have also argued for a wisdom influence in Psalm 92. Tate (1990:464) indicates that the didactic characteristics in Psalm 92 place the psalm within a wisdom framework. Cohen (2013:596) remarks that the conclusion of Psalm 92 in verses 13–16, emphasising the fate of the righteous, is a wisdom conclusion. deClaissé-Walford (2020:15) indicates that various words in Psalm 92, such as “shout with joy” (רנן), “stupid” (בער) and “wicked” (רשׁעים), correspond to vocabulary found in the book of Proverbs. In addition, the wisdom theology in Psalm 92 also connects it to the wisdom motifs in Psalm 90, which pleaded with YHWH for “a heart of wisdom”. Psalm 92 responds to this plea by stressing that such a heart of wisdom can only be known by the faithful and the righteous – a stupid man and a fool cannot know this.

Wallace (2007:27) adds to the wisdom interpretation of Psalm 92 the royal motifs found in the reference to “a horn” and the “anointment” (verse 11). According to

Wallace (2007:27), these implicit royal references in Psalm 92 prepare the way for the Enthronement Psalms 93–100.

While recognising the wisdom motif, Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:436) also argue that Psalm 92 functions on a liturgical level within the temple tradition and its symbolism. The most prominent of these links is the superscription alluding to the Sabbath. The superscription, the only one of its kind in the Hebrew Psalter, may indicate that this psalm was used in the post-exilic temple at the Sabbath offerings (Tate 1990:465). Viewing the psalm as a hymn of thanksgiving also alludes to the liturgical function of Psalm 92, with Tate (1990:465) suggesting that the psalm was perhaps used in festivals and services when thanking and honouring YHWH for his works.

Considering the above discussion, it becomes clear that Psalm 92 employs a combination of motifs from different genres. Tucker (2019:360) believes that the various themes support the overall “hymnic tendency” of Psalm 92. Based on all the arguments, I propose that Psalm 92, with its mixed motifs, is meant to serve the larger narrative of Psalms 90–92. Whereas Psalm 90 was characterised as a lament for lost space and Psalm 91 promised protection from and transformation of chaotic spaces, Psalm 92 witnesses about the fulfilment of that promise in a psalm that gives thanks for the restoration and renewed ordering of space. In agreement with this interpretation, Tucker (2019:360–361) notes that the overall message of Psalm 92 lies in the claim that the world is once again ordered and stable under YHWH’s divine control.

Further strengthening the narrative between Psalms 90, 91 and 92 is the intertextual links that Psalm 92 has with Deuteronomy 32, similar to those in Psalms 90 and 91. Wallace (2007:29) stresses that Psalm 92:16 mirrors Deuteronomy 32:4, especially concerning vocabulary, and it also connects to the rest of Moses’ speech in Deuteronomy 33:11. In this way, Psalm 92 provides a fitting conclusion to the Mosaic introduction of Book IV. Only by remembering Moses and the exodus narrative can these three psalms bring closure to the people of Israel following the fall of the monarchy and the resultant exile. As Wallace (2007:30) writes:

> Moses' message in the Psalter was to remind the people that it was not the Davidic monarchy in which they place their trust, but something long before the Davidic monarchy.

6.3.2 Content of Psalm 92

A detailed description of the content of Psalm 92 follows in this part of the chapter. The metaphors, social-scientific principles and other literary devices are investigated according to the structure of the psalm identified in Section 6.2.2.

6.3.2.1 Stanza I (Verses 1–4)

The superscription to Psalm 92 and its influence on the characterisation of the psalm were already discussed in the previous section. Yet it can be noted here that the superscription, "a song for the Sabbath day", provides for a literal or symbolic interpretation. When taken as a literal reference to the Sabbath day, it corresponds to a liturgical reading of the psalm, which means that the psalm was used in the post-exilic temple worship on the Sabbath day. Although the superscription could have originated in this way, it is more likely to have developed an eschatological tone in a post-exilic world (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:437). This meant that the Sabbath referred to in the superscription can function in a symbolic way as the anticipated eternal Sabbath. In agreement with this, Goldingay (2008:53) notes that the superscription of Psalm 92 looks forward to the final redemption bringing true Sabbath rest, which will be everlasting.

Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:437) describe the remainder of Stanza I, verses 2–4, as the "hymnic introduction" to the psalm. In these verses, YHWH is praised and thanked for his steadfast love and kindness, which encompasses day and night in the life of the faithful. Verse 2 declares that it is "good" to sing the praises of YHWH. According to Friedman (2020:245), this phrase is predominantly found in post-exilic praise psalms. Furthermore, the use of the word "good" (טב) also reminds the reader of the creation tradition in Israel, where everything YHWH created was “good”. According to Tucker (2019:363), this is but one of a few links in Psalm 92 that point to the world being *ordered* by YHWH. Interestingly, the superscription in verse 1 referring to the Sabbath also fits into the creation theology of YHWH ordering the world. In this sense, Psalm 92 may suggest that where YHWH is present, controlling and ordering the world, a true Sabbath dawns. Regarding intertextual links between Psalms 90–92, the creation imagery in 92:2 recalls Psalm 90:2, where it is stated that YHWH gave birth to the world. Verse 2 also uses two words, “name” (שֵׁם) and “Most High” (עליון), which refer back to Psalm 91:1,14.

In verse 3, the steadfast love and faithfulness of YHWH are praised. These attributes of YHWH are also described in Exodus 34 and are the traits that made the Israelites’ rescue from Egypt possible (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:686). In this sense, it plays into the Mosaic motif present throughout Psalms 90–92. Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:399) note that psalms with a thanksgiving character, such as Psalm 92, tell of YHWH’s saving acts. The reference to YHWH’s loving-kindness and steadfastness is the first act of deliverance to be mentioned in Psalm 92. Through his loving-kindness and steadfastness, YHWH establishes “the order of righteousness” that he built into creation (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:437). On a liturgical note, the reference to “morning” and “night” in verse 3 has led some scholars to associate Psalm 92 with the morning and evening offerings at the temple (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:400). Yet, since the word “evening” does not appear, but rather the word “night”, Tate (1990:466) interprets the reference to “morning” and “night” as a merism, declaring the continual love and faithfulness of YHWH.

If one follows the suggestions of a liturgical setting, then verse 4, mentioning various instruments used in praising YHWH, fits well into the context. The instruments mentioned here were used in worship (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:686). They were all stringed instruments. Keel (1997:346) notes that stringed instruments, in particular, were used in celebrations of thanksgiving.

These first four verses of Psalm 92, which form the first stanza, contain the most explicit references to a liturgical setting in the temple. Thus, the psalm begins in the imagined space of the temple while simultaneously denoting creation imagery. This is all done through spatial memory or remembered space. Gillingham (2015a:5) connects the two notions of temple worship and creation when she argues that remembering the Sabbath is remembering that all humans were made in the image of God. Therefore, the liturgical acts that the psalm rejoices in are at the same time the acts of creation (Goldingay 2008:53). The Sabbath and creation also recall the particular order established in YHWH's creation and in the worship of YHWH. From this dual basis – temple worship on the Sabbath and YHWH's creation power – the psalm moves to Stanza II, which further describes the works of YHWH.

6.3.2.2 Stanza II (Verses 5–12)

This stanza forms the body of the psalm and is the most extended section of Psalm 92. It describes the fate of the wicked as opposed to the fate of the righteous. Based on this distinction, the stanza should be interpreted from a wisdom perspective.

Within Stanza II, a distinction can be made between different strophes: verses 5–7, 8–10 and 11–12. Verses 5–7 discuss the works of YHWH and connect to verse 3, which describes YHWH's saving acts with the characteristics of loving-kindness and steadfastness. The works of YHWH's hands refer to creation, as elsewhere in the Psalms and described in Stanza I (Tate 1990:466). In a synonymous parallelism, the psalmist expresses his joy in YHWH's works in verse 5. It recalls the "rejoicing" and "gladness" of Psalm 90:14 (deClaissé-Walford 2020:14).

In verse 6, the psalmist cries out in astonishment that the works of YHWH's hands are great. Tucker (2019:364) argues that this declaration is more than a mere admiration of YHWH's creation acts – it is, instead, a confession of YHWH's ongoing acts in creation. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:439) add that YHWH's ongoing creative works are shown in his redeeming care for the individual believer. Parallel to this line is the confession that YHWH's thoughts are profound. Tucker (2019:365) states that the word for "thoughts" (מחשבתיך) can also be translated as "plan" or "design". In this sense, it links with the notion of creation and YHWH's design for creation. The adverb used in combination with "design" or "plan" is the word "deep" (עמקו), which has a spatial connotation. On a spatial level, it means that YHWH's creation plan is deeply implanted in the order he created (Tucker 2019:365). In contrast to the faithful, who can appreciate the works of YHWH's creation and his saving acts in the life of his people, stands the fool or stupid person, who cannot recognise the saving actions of YHWH or the order he established in his creation. Whereas the righteous recognise YHWH's works and sing with joy in the face of it, the dullard misses the joy of thanking YHWH for his mighty acts (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:400).

In verse 8, the wicked are described in more detail. A simile from nature is employed in describing the wicked. They are like grass that flourish and prosper, but in the end, they are destroyed (Tucker 2019:368). According to Cohen (2013:599), the simile "like grass" refers to how fast grass grows but also to how fast it withers. Because of weak and shallow roots, the life span of grass is brief (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:439). After the rain, the grass shoots up, but as soon as the heat and dryness of the sun comes again, the grass wastes away quickly (Tate 1990:466). In this sense, the metaphor for the wicked is a temporal metaphor, connecting it to the temporal metaphors of Psalm 90, which described the transient nature of human existence in a similar language. Tate (1990:466) identifies the wicked as people whose behaviour threatens community life. The confirmation that the wicked will be destroyed, despite seemingly flourishing, affirms the justice and order of YHWH's world (Tucker 2019:368).

This fact is further attested in verse 9, the central verse of the psalm. The verse confesses that YHWH is on high, the exalted One who *is* forever. The eternal character of YHWH is here juxtaposed with the temporal and fleeting existence of the wicked in verse 8. The word "height" (מרום) denotes YHWH's existence on a spatial level, referring to the ancient Near Eastern worldview where YHWH lives in the upper realm of heaven (Tate 1990:467). Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:439) link this image to imagining YHWH as enthroned in heaven, where he acts as the royal judge to establish just order in the world. From this perspective, a connection is already made to the kingship psalms in Psalms 93–100.

Verse 10 takes up the theme of the wicked again, naming them YHWH's enemies and workers of injustice. Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:440) maintain that the enemies listed here do not refer to individuals but rather to a "system" that calls YHWH's righteousness and order into question. Yet, the end of the enemies of YHWH is the same as that of the wicked in verse 8 – they will perish. In addition, they will be scattered and separated from each other as a sign of YHWH's power to bring them down (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:440). Such a punishment makes sense against the background of a people scattered in exile. It also serves to shame the enemies of YHWH, bringing them low by the One on high. This verse reflects YHWH's triumph over enemies and the failure that YHWH's enemies will inevitably face (Tate 1990:467).

In the last strophe of Stanza II, the focus is shifted to the faithful or righteous. The psalmist declares that YHWH lifts up the horn of such a person and anoints him. In juxtaposition to the shame brought upon the enemies of YHWH, the ones that enjoy YHWH's favour are honoured. The horn metaphor symbolises a deity's power (Walton, Matthews & Chavalas 2000:514). When the psalmist reports that his horn is lifted, or exalted, by YHWH, it thus means that YHWH has given him strength and honour. Like a wild ox, ready for battle, the psalmist is given strength and power (Tate 1990:467). This metaphor comes from the world of battle and victory, implying that the faithful will reign victorious while the wicked will be destroyed (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:440). The metaphor of anointment with oil can be interpreted in several ways. First, it can be understood as referring to the "horn" in the previous colon, as the horn was oiled in preparation for battle (Cohen 2013:602). Secondly, Cohen (2013:6020) also states that the anointment can be interpreted as pointing to the psalmist being anointed, which would then indicate the psalmist’s victory. Thirdly, it may refer to the ancient Near Eastern custom of a host treating his guests at a banquet with refined oil to anoint their foreheads (Walton et al. 2000:547). Whichever interpretation prevails, this image illustrates how YHWH exalts the lowly and provides victory (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:440). In verse 12, the notion of the righteous coming out victorious continues. The psalmist testifies that he has seen and heard the downfall of his enemies (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:400). Victoriously, the psalmist is looking down on those who have previously stood above him. YHWH has turned shame into honour. According to Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:440), this verse is not meant to inspire revenge but rather leads to the teaching about the righteous in the poem’s last stanza.

6.3.2.3 Stanza III (Verses 13–16)

Following the victorious note on which Stanza II ends, the psalmist returns to plant metaphors in Stanza III, applying them to the righteous. Whereas the wicked and their fate were likened to grass in verse 8, sprouting and flourishing for a limited time, the fate of the righteous is now described in terms of trees. As opposed to grass, Lebanon's palm trees and cedars grow slowly, becoming tall while staying evergreen since they are deeply rooted (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:440). Tate (1990:467) lists the uses of palm trees: the leaves were used on roofs and woven to create carpets and baskets, while the fruit was eaten or drunk in the form of juice. Similarly, the righteous reflect the vitality and flourishing of these trees. deClaissé-Walford (2020:16) notes that date palm trees are associated explicitly with life-giving water, fertility, and femininity. On the other hand, the cedars of Lebanon were compared to royal power, strength, and longevity.

Comparing the righteous to trees not only echoes Psalm 1 but also thematically connects to wisdom theology. Tucker (2019:371) adds that the metaphor of the righteous being like trees also has spatial elements since the righteous are *planted in the house of YHWH* and will *bloom in the courts of our God* (verse 14). Here, the liturgical and Sabbath theme emphasised at the beginning of Psalm 92 returns. According to Tucker (2019:370–371), combining “garden” images with temple images serves to imagine a paradise or utopian space associated with the space of the divine. Friedman (2020:249) indicates that this proves a connection between temple Sabbath observance and creation, as the creation theme is also featured at the beginning of Psalm 92. The creation story served a liturgical purpose in the temple on the Sabbath. Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:400) add that gardens, as spaces of flourishing life, were connected to temples and holy spaces in the ancient Near East. The presence of YHWH provides the faithful with the nourishment to grow and prosper all their lives, well into old age (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:400).

The psalm concludes in verse 16 with a declaration that YHWH is just and right. This reflects the declaration in verse 3 about YHWH’s loving-kindness and steadfastness, but it is simultaneously a quote from Deuteronomy 32:4 where Moses, in his song, confesses YHWH to be a rock, just and trustworthy with no unrighteousness in him (cf. Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:441). The metaphor of YHWH as a rock introduces the reliability and consistency of having him as a patron (Tate 1990:468). The flourishing of the righteous is a testimony to YHWH being a rock (Tate 1990:468). The rock metaphor introduces YHWH as protection and shelter, as a safe space, but also refers to Zion, the “primaeval rock” and space from where YHWH provides protection for the righteous (Tucker 2019:373).

At the end of Psalm 92, it is essential to note the golden thread throughout the psalm in the characterisation of YHWH (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:441). In Stanza I, YHWH is called by the divine title “Most High”. In Stanza II, in the centre of the psalm, YHWH is described to be “on high forever”. In Stanza III, YHWH is called a rock. Tucker (2019:374) notes that this is not a haphazard placement but rather serves to acknowledge that YHWH is the one who orders a chaotic world, exalting the righteous and governing all of creation.

6.3.3 Social-scientific summary of Psalm 92

The social-scientific framework of Psalm 92 can be described as two movements. The first is the chaos versus order framework. The second framework consists of the fate of the righteous versus the fate of the wicked. These two social-scientific trajectories should also be regarded within the larger interpretive framework of Psalms 90–92. Psalm 90 is a lament for everything that the people lost with the exile, while Psalm 91 provides a promise to those who trust in YHWH. Psalm 92 represents the fulfilment of this promise in the form of thanksgiving. As such, Psalm 92 is a psalm of restoration. YHWH, the guarantor, or patron of the ordered world, restores the chaos forces to order (Tucker 2019:374).

From a social-scientific perspective, YHWH brought order from primaeval chaos by separating elements from each other in his act of creation – for example, light from dark and land from water (Osiek 1993:143). Another important aspect of ordering chaos is separating sacred time from profane time, as seen in the importance and rhythm that the Sabbath establishes in ordering life (Osiek 1993:143–144). It is also these two primary ordering principles – creation and Sabbath – that are reflected upon in Psalm 92 (Goldingay 2008:53). When the event of the exile took place, the neatly placed order of the world, according to which the people of YHWH were supposed to live, was destroyed. Their lives were upended, and chaos seemed to be reigning. Along with the chaos and disorder came loss, trauma, uncertainty, and doubt. This is attested to in the disorientation of Psalm 90. In Psalm 91, a reorientation starts taking place, while Psalm 92 attempts to orient and centre the faith community again. Tucker (2019:374) summarises the function of Psalm 92 by stating that it represents a "theological response" to the crisis of the exile with the purpose to convince the people that despite the seeming chaos and disorder of the world, YHWH still maintains the order that he established in creation.

How YHWH maintains this order is seen in the fate of the righteous as opposed to the fate of the wicked. In the ancient Near Eastern world, people believed that there was a fixed and determined destiny, or fate, for individuals and groups

(Malina 1993b:80). Hence, in an ordered world, the fate of the wicked was destruction and downfall, while the fate of the righteous was a full life under the protection of YHWH. Psalm 92 confirms the proper order of the world by claiming that the fate of the wicked is that they will perish and be destroyed, while the righteous will be like trees planted in the courts of the temple. Keel (1997:354–355) links the fate of the righteous with the metaphor of the faithful being trees with their roots in the temple courts of YHWH. In Psalms 1 and 52, similar imagery is found when describing the destiny of those who trust in YHWH.

Closely connected to the distinction between the faithful and their enemies are the notions of honour and shame and the notion of power. YHWH, as a patron to Israel, is described as the one who is high and powerful. Therefore, he can make his enemies powerless and low by shaming them (verse 10). On the other hand, YHWH gives the righteous honour, as illustrated by the image of their horn being lifted up (verse 11). In this sense, the powerless become the powerful. In addition, the classic in-group, out-group distinction is being made. The righteous becomes the in-group, while the wicked functions as the out-group. As a patron, YHWH favours the righteous and ultimately gives them victory over the wicked. In this way, the proper order of the world is restored after Israel's seeming defeat by the wicked in the events of the exile. Consequently, Psalm 92 ends on a high note, in which YHWH re-establishes the order of the world and restores the lives and honour of his people.

6.4 Spatial analysis of Psalm 92

Psalm 92 is not only the conclusion to the introduction of Book IV but also forms the ending to the spatial story told in Psalms 90–92. Psalm 92 ends the spatial narrative of Psalms 90–92 in a positive space. After grappling with the loss of space on all levels in Psalms 90–91, Psalm 92 reassures the post-exilic community that not all is lost. YHWH remains faithful to the righteous and restores the space of his people. To illustrate how this happens, the psalm is told within the imagined space of the temple on the Sabbath day. Within that ordered, holy space, the honour of the righteous of Israel is restored.

6.4.1 Critical spatiality in Psalm 92

The implied temple space in Psalm 92 functions within several dimensions of space. On a firstspace level, one must keep the second temple and its worship in mind when reading Psalm 92 since this study reads the psalms of Book IV from a post-exilic perspective. It is, however, also possible that the psalmist draws on memories (thus, remembered space) of the first temple in his account in Psalm 92. On a firstspace level, the psalm imagines a Sabbath day celebration with its accompanying liturgy. Music fills the literal space of the temple as the faithful come together to praise YHWH.

Regarding secondspace in Psalm 92, the role that the temple as a social and religious institution played in the minds and imaginations of Israel comes to the fore. Not only did the Jerusalem temple function as the meeting place between the heavenly realm and the earth, but it was also the space in which YHWH's presence was found. Therefore, Psalm 92 is at-centre in its spatial orientation. Spatial vocabulary such as "high" (מרום) contributes to an image of YHWH being in the highest position in creation, from where he orders the world. Creach (1996:95) notes that the word מרום is related to the notion of the cosmic mountain, or Zion. It can also denote a defensible position or fortified city (Creach 1996:96). This supports the idea of Zion theology, which regards Jerusalem, its temple and Mount Zion as a safe space based on the protecting presence of YHWH. Furthermore, YHWH's saving acts are described as encompassing all dimensions of space ("deep").

The cosmic battle between the righteous and wicked occurs on a thirdspace or lived space level. The contrast between these two groups is also described in the spatial terms of high and low. The shame brought upon the wicked is expressed as bringing them low and scattering them, referring to spatial disorientation. The righteous, however, are lifted up and honoured – denoting an ascending movement, which, spatially speaking, brings them closer to God.

6.4.2 Remembered space in Psalm 92

Together with Psalms 90–91, Psalm 92 functions within a framework of remembered space. With its allusions to Deuteronomy 32, the collective memory of Moses remains present in the subtext of Psalm 92. In Deuteronomy 32, Moses' song, Moses deals with mortality and his fate for not entering Canaan (Otto 2012:179). Similarly, Psalms 90–92 reflect upon mortality and the fate of YHWH's people in the aftermath of the crisis of exile. Eckart Otto (2012:180) provides an insightful argument on the meaning of the links between Deuteronomy 31–34 and Psalms 90–92. Among other things, Deuteronomy 32 conveys the message that YHWH will ultimately act in history and save Israel after its distress. Psalms 90–92 convey this same message by moving from disorientation (Psalm 90) to reorientation (Psalm 91) to orientation (Psalm 92), fulfilling the promise that the fate of the faithful is in YHWH's hand.

The intertextual memory of Moses that Deuteronomy 32 and Psalms 90–92 reflect upon is highlighted by imagining the righteous order according to which YHWH created the world as reflected in the celebration of the Sabbath. Imagination is further employed in the various metaphors used in Psalm 92. The metaphor of the righteous as trees in the temple, planted in the house of YHWH and blooming in the courts of God, all function within an imagined space set up to emphasise the collective memory of experiencing the presence of YHWH from the time of Moses up to the time of the exile and beyond. As an imagined space in which the presence of YHWH is found, the temple becomes a space of growing, prospering, fruit-bearing, and success. This aims to create hope for a future in which the faithful remain rooted in the presence of YHWH, finding a place of belonging in the safe space that YHWH creates. Psalm 90 begins with the confession: "Lord, you have been a dwelling place for us from generation to generation", and Psalm 91 answers with the admission: "You have made the Most High your dwelling". Psalm 92, in turn, represents the final taking up of residence in the safe space of the Most High (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:442).

6.5 Conclusion

With this chapter, we have come to the end of the introduction to Book IV of the Psalter. Up to this point, a case has been made for a spatial narrative weaving through Psalms 90–92 and linking the three psalms together. This spatial narrative is built on memory and imagination and moves from a lament of lost space to the promise of a transformation of space to the fulfilment of that promise in the restoration of space as expressed in the righteous ordering of creation. Throughout, the presence of YHWH as a safe space for his people has stood out.

A complete description of the spatial story of Psalms 90–92 and the role of remembered space (memory and imagination) in Psalms 90–92 is provided in Chapter 9.

In the upcoming chapters, it is, however, demonstrated how the spatial narrative continues in Psalms 105–106, the conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter. The figure of Moses returns in these psalms as well as memories connected to Moses and the collective history of Israel. Using imagination, the post-exilic community employed these memories to create a new identity and a hopeful future.

CHAPTER 7

PSALM 105

7.1 Introduction

Psalm 105 is the penultimate psalm in Book IV of the Psalter. Together with Psalm 106, it forms the conclusion to Book IV. In addition, Psalms 105–106 form a thematic pair, or twin psalms, since they are both characterised as historic psalms (Wilson 2010:764). Wallace (2007:76) reports that the editorial positioning of these psalms is not accidental. They serve a purpose in concluding Book IV with a reflection on Israel’s past. Yet, the historic psalms are more than simply a retelling of Israel’s history. According to Gärtner (2015:373), each of the historic psalms comments on and reinterprets a specific period in Israel’s history. Psalm 105 is, however, unique in the sense that it begins with the history of Abraham and the ancestors, as opposed to beginning with Moses (Gillingham 2015a:10). Thus, Psalm 105 focuses on YHWH’s faithfulness in the covenant with the patriarchs, with Moses only featuring later (Gärtner 2015:374). Continuing with the theme of Israel’s history, its twin, Psalm 106, recounts YHWH’s acts of salvation despite the unfaithfulness of the people. The emphasis in Psalm 105 is on the trustworthiness of YHWH, while Psalm 106 emphasises the need for repentance (Wilson 2010:764).

In this chapter, as in the previous three chapters, a detailed analysis is done on Psalm 105, with the ultimate goal being identifying and describing remembered space in the psalm.

7.2 Translation

Psalm 105 consists of 45 verses and is, therefore, one of the longer psalms in the Psalter. A translation of the psalm is presented here, with some notes on the translation following in 7.2.1. Similar to the previous analyses of psalms in this study, the analysis of Psalm 105 also focuses exclusively on the Masoretic text of the psalm.

Stanzas and **Strophes**	**Verse**	**Hebrew text**	**Translation**
I Strophe A	1a b	הוֹד֣וּ לַ֭יהוָה קִרְא֣וּ בִּשְׁמ֑וֹ הוֹדִ֥יעוּ בָ֝עַמִּ֗ים עֲלִֽילוֹתָֽיו׃	Praise/give thanks/testify to YHWH, call upon his name, ***/*** make known his deeds among the people!
	2a b	שִׁ֣ירוּ־ל֭וֹ זַמְּרוּ־ל֑וֹ שִׂ֝יחוּ בְּכָל־נִפְלְאוֹתָֽיו׃	Sing to him, praise him, ***/*** be concerned with speaking about all his wonders.
	3a b	הִֽתְהַלְלוּ בְּשֵׁ֣ם קָדְשׁ֑וֹ יִ֝שְׂמַ֗ח לֵ֤ב מְבַקְשֵׁ֬י יְהוָֽה׃	Glory in his holy name, ***/*** let the heart of him that seeks YHWH rejoice.
	4a b	דִּרְשׁ֣וּ יְהוָ֣ה וְעֻזּ֑וֹ בַּקְּשׁ֖וּ פָנָ֣יו תָּמִֽיד׃	Seek YHWH and his strength; ***/*** seek his face continually.
	5a b	זִכְר֗וּ נִפְלְאוֹתָ֥יו אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂ֑ה מֹ֝פְתָ֗יו וּמִשְׁפְּטֵי־פִֽיו׃	Remember his wonders, which he has done, ***/*** his wonders/signs and the judgements of his mouth.
	6a b	זֶ֣רַע אַבְרָהָ֣ם עַבְדּ֑וֹ בְּנֵ֖י יַעֲקֹ֣ב בְּחִירָֽיו׃	The seed of Abraham, his servant, ***/*** sons of Jacob, his chosen!
	7a	ה֭וּא יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֑ינוּ	He is YHWH, our God, ***/*** his judgements are in all the earth.

II Strophe B	b	בְּכָל־הָ֝אָ֗רֶץ מִשְׁפָּטָֽיו׃	
	8a b	זָכַ֣ר לְעוֹלָ֣ם בְּרִית֑וֹ דָּבָ֥ר צִ֝וָּ֗ה לְאֶ֣לֶף דּֽוֹר׃	He has remembered his covenant forever, **/** the word that he has commanded to a thousand generations,
	9a b	אֲשֶׁ֣ר כָּ֭רַת אֶת־אַבְרָהָ֑ם וּשְׁב֖וּעָת֣וֹ לְיִשְׂחָֽק׃	which he made with Abraham **/** and his oath with Isaac.
	10a b	וַֽיַּעֲמִידֶ֣הָ לְיַעֲקֹ֣ב לְחֹ֑ק לְ֝יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל בְּרִ֣ית עוֹלָֽם׃	He established it as a law for Jacob, **/** for Israel an eternal covenant,
	11a b	לֵאמֹ֗ר לְךָ֗ אֶתֵּ֥ן אֶת־אֶֽרֶץ־כְּנָ֑עַן חֶ֝֗בֶל נַחֲלַתְכֶֽם׃	saying: “To you I will give the land of Canaan, **/** the portion/territory of your inheritance,”
	12a b	בִּֽהְיוֹתָ֗ם מְתֵ֣י מִסְפָּ֑ר כִּ֝מְעַ֗ט וְגָרִ֥ים בָּֽהּ׃	when they were men in number, **/** (just) a few, and strangers/foreigners in her (= the land).
	13a b	וַֽ֭יִּתְהַלְּכוּ מִגּ֣וֹי אֶל־גּ֑וֹי מִ֝מַּמְלָכָ֗ה אֶל־עַ֥ם אַחֵֽר׃	And they went from nation to nation, **/** from (one) kingdom to another nation/people.
	14a b	לֹא־הִנִּ֣יחַ אָדָ֣ם לְעָשְׁקָ֑ם וַ֭יּוֹכַח עֲלֵיהֶ֣ם מְלָכִֽים׃	He did not allow any man to oppress them, **/** and he reproved kings over them.
	15a b	אַֽל־תִּגְּע֥וּ בִמְשִׁיחָ֑י	“Do not touch my anointed **/** and do not harm my prophets.”

		וְ֝לִנְבִיאַ֗י אַל־תָּרֵֽעוּ׃	
Strophe C	16a b	וַיִּקְרָ֣א רָ֭עָב עַל־הָאָ֑רֶץ כָּל־מַטֵּה־לֶ֥חֶם שָׁבָֽר׃	And he called famine over the land, **/** he broke the whole staff of bread.
	17a b	שָׁלַ֣ח לִפְנֵיהֶ֣ם אִ֑ישׁ לְ֝עֶ֗בֶד נִמְכַּ֥ר יוֹסֵֽף׃	He sent before them a man, **/** Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
	18a b	עִנּ֣וּ בַכֶּ֣בֶל רַגְלָ֑י בַּ֝רְזֶ֗ל בָּ֣אָה נַפְשֽׁוֹ׃	They forced his feet with fetters/shackles, **/** his neck was put in iron.
	19a b	עַד־עֵ֥ת בֹּֽא־דְבָר֑וֹ אִמְרַ֖ת יְהוָ֣ה צְרָפָֽתְהוּ׃	Until the time that his word came, **/** the word of YHWH tested/refined him.
	20a b	שָׁ֣לַח מֶ֭לֶךְ וַיַּתִּירֵ֑הוּ מֹשֵׁ֥ל עַ֝מִּ֗ים וַֽיְפַתְּחֵֽהוּ׃	The king sent and set him free – **/** the ruler of the people set him free.
	21a b	שָׂמ֣וֹ אָד֣וֹן לְבֵית֑וֹ וּ֝מֹשֵׁ֗ל בְּכָל־קִנְיָנֽוֹ׃	He set him up as lord of his house **/** and ruler of all his property
	22a b	לֶאְסֹ֣ר שָׂרָ֣יו בְּנַפְשׁ֑וֹ וּזְקֵנָ֥יו יְחַכֵּֽם׃	to bind his princes/officials in his will **/** and instruct his elders.
	23a b	וַיָּבֹ֣א יִשְׂרָאֵ֣ל מִצְרָ֑יִם וְ֝יַעֲקֹ֗ב גָּ֣ר בְּאֶֽרֶץ־חָֽם׃	And Israel came to Egypt, **/** Jacob sojourned/stayed as a foreigner in the land of Ham.

	24a b	וַיֶּ֣פֶר אֶת־עַמּ֣וֹ מְאֹ֑ד וַ֝יַּעֲצִמֵ֗הוּ מִצָּרָֽיו׃	And he caused his people to be very fruitful ***/*** and he made them stronger than their enemies.
	25a b	הָפַ֣ךְ לִ֭בָּם לִשְׂנֹ֣א עַמּ֑וֹ לְ֝הִתְנַכֵּ֗ל בַּעֲבָדָֽיו׃	He turned their heart to hate his people, ***/*** to behave cunningly/deceitfully with his servants.
III Strophe D	26a b	שָׁ֭לַח מֹשֶׁ֣ה עַבְדּ֑וֹ אַ֝הֲרֹ֗ן אֲשֶׁ֣ר בָּֽחַר־בּֽוֹ׃	He sent Moses, his servant ***/*** and Aaron whom he had elected.
	27a b	שָֽׂמוּ־בָ֭ם דִּבְרֵ֣י אֹתוֹתָ֑יו וּ֝מֹפְתִ֗ים בְּאֶ֣רֶץ חָֽם׃	He put/placed in them the words of his signs ***/*** and wonders in the land of Ham.
	28a b	שָׁ֣לַח ח֭שֶׁךְ וַיַּחְשִׁ֑ךְ וְלֹֽא־מָ֝ר֗וּ אֶת־דְּבָרֽוֹ׃	He sent darkness and made it dark, ***/*** and they were not disobedient to his word.
	29a b	הָפַ֣ךְ אֶת־מֵימֵיהֶ֣ם לְדָ֑ם וַ֝יָּ֗מֶת אֶת־דְּגָתָֽם׃	He turned their waters into blood ***/*** and killed their fish.
	30a b	שָׁרַ֣ץ אַרְצָ֣ם צְפַרְדְּעִ֑ים בְּ֝חַדְרֵ֗י מַלְכֵיהֶֽם׃	Their land swarmed with frogs ***/*** in the chambers of their kings.
	31a b	אָ֭מַר וַיָּבֹ֣א עָרֹ֑ב כִּ֝נִּ֗ים בְּכָל־גְּבוּלָֽם׃	He spoke and there came (a swarm of) gnats, ***/*** flies in all their territory (throughout their country).
	32a	נָתַ֣ן גִּשְׁמֵיהֶ֣ם בָּרָ֑ד	He gave them his rain of hail, ***/*** flaming fire in their land.

	b	אֵ֖שׁ לֶהָב֣וֹת בְּאַרְצָֽם׃	
	33a b	וַ֭יַּךְ גַּפְנָ֣ם וּתְאֵנָתָ֑ם וַ֝יְשַׁבֵּ֗ר עֵ֣ץ גְּבוּלָֽם׃	He destroyed/struck down their vine and their fig tree ***/*** and shattered the trees in their territory.
	34a b	אָ֭מַר וַיָּבֹ֣א אַרְבֶּ֑ה וְ֝יֶ֗לֶק וְאֵ֣ין מִסְפָּֽר׃	He spoke and locusts came, ***/*** (young) creeping locusts, without/beyond number.
	35a b	וַיֹּ֣אכַל כָּל־עֵ֣שֶׂב בְּאַרְצָ֑ם וַ֝יֹּ֗אכַל פְּרִ֣י אַדְמָתָֽם׃	And they ate all the plants in their land, ***/*** and they ate the fruit of the ground.
	36a b	וַיַּ֣ךְ כָּל־בְּכ֣וֹר בְּאַרְצָ֑ם רֵ֝אשִׁ֗ית לְכָל־אוֹנָֽם׃	He destroyed all the firstborn in their land, ***/*** the chief/beginning of all their vigour/strength/generative power.
Strophe E	37a b	וַֽ֭יּוֹצִיאֵם בְּכֶ֣סֶף וְזָהָ֑ב וְאֵ֖ין בִּשְׁבָטָ֣יו כּוֹשֵֽׁל׃	He brought them out with silver and gold, ***/*** and there were none among their tribes that stumbled.
	38a b	שָׂמַ֣ח מִצְרַ֣יִם בְּצֵאתָ֑ם כִּֽי־נָפַ֖ל פַּחְדָּ֣ם עֲלֵיהֶֽם׃	Egypt was glad when they went out, ***/*** because terror/fear of them fell upon them.
	39a b	פָּרַ֣שׂ עָנָ֣ן לְמָסָ֑ךְ וְ֝אֵ֗שׁ לְהָאִ֥יר לָֽיְלָה׃	He spread a cloud of covering ***/*** and fire to be lit in the night.
	40a b	שָׁ֭אַל וַיָּבֵ֣א שְׂלָ֑ו וְלֶ֥חֶם שָׁ֝מַ֗יִם יַשְׂבִּיעֵֽם׃	They asked and he brought quail ***/*** and the bread of heaven to satisfy them.

	41a b	פָּ֣תַח צ֭וּר וַיָּז֣וּבוּ מָ֑יִם הָ֝לְכ֗וּ בַּצִּיּ֥וֹת נָהָֽר׃	He opened the rock and water flowed/gushed out; **/** it walked in dryness like a river.
	42a b	כִּֽי־זָ֭כַר אֶת־דְּבַ֣ר קָדְשׁ֑וֹ אֶת־אַבְרָהָ֥ם עַבְדּֽוֹ׃	Because he remembered his holy word **/** to Abraham, his servant.
	43a b	וַיּוֹצִ֣א עַמּ֣וֹ בְשָׂשׂ֑וֹן בְּ֝רִנָּ֗ה אֶת־בְּחִירָֽיו׃	And he brought his people out in joy/exultation, **/** his chosen ones with a shout of joy.
	44a b	וַיִּתֵּ֣ן לָ֭הֶם אַרְצ֣וֹת גּוֹיִ֑ם וַעֲמַ֖ל לְאֻמִּ֣ים יִירָֽשׁוּ׃	And he gave them the lands of the nations, **/** they inherited/took possession of the land and produce of the people’s toil.
	45a b	בַּעֲב֤וּר יִשְׁמְר֣וּ חֻ֭קָּיו וְתוֹרֹתָ֥יו יִנְצֹ֗רוּ הַֽלְלוּ־יָֽהּ׃	In order that they guard/preserve his statutes **/** and that they watch/guard his laws. Hallelujah/Praise the Lord!

7.2.1 Notes on the translation

In this section, only a few brief comments are made on certain terms and phrases used in Psalm 105. The analysis in Section 7.3 elaborates further on the literary aspects of the psalm.

- The opening expression in Psalm 105, הודו, can be translated either as “give thanks” or “praise”. deClaissé-Walford (2020:67) adds that הודו can also be translated with “testify” or “confess”. When translated as the latter, Psalm 105 becomes a call to testify about the saving acts of YHWH throughout Israel’s history. The same word is used in Psalm 92:2 and at the beginning of Psalm 106. Hence, the introduction to Psalm 105 creates a link back to Psalm 92 and a link forward to Psalm 106.

- The reference to calling upon YHWH’s name (שֵׁם) in verse 1 recalls the name theology also present in the introduction to Book IV (see Psalms 91:14 and 92:2).
- The verb “remember” (זכר) is present throughout the psalm, drawing attention to YHWH’s faithfulness to his covenant and calling upon the community to remember the wondrous acts of YHWH. The whole of Psalm 105 recounts the deeds of YHWH in the lives of his people. But it is more than a recalling of memories from history. Instead, the remembering in Psalm 105 testifies to the existential character of YHWH (deClaissé-Walford 2020:71).
- According to Allen (2002:57), the term “chosen” (בחיריו) is connected to the post-exilic era and the promise of the land. This term is used in verse 6 in connection with the ancestors and again in verse 43.
- The concept of “land” (ארץ) plays an important role throughout Psalm 105. There are roughly ten references to “land” in the psalm. deClaissé-Walford (2020:69–70) understands this from an exilic perspective where the people had to grapple with the loss of their land. The themes of the possession and loss of the land are spatially significant. More attention is paid to it in the spatial analysis later in the chapter.
- The expression “land of Ham” (verses 23 and 27) is an alternative name for Egypt (Walton et al. 2000:550).
- Several historical figures are mentioned by name in Psalm 105. The first names to be mentioned are those of the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Joseph is also mentioned in verse 17, while Moses and Aaron come into play in verse 26. Of these, Abraham and Moses are called YHWH’s servants (עבד). The term “servant” is a post-exilic designation, usually referring to all of YHWH’s people. In the specific case of Psalm

105, references to the servant in Isaiah should also be taken into consideration since intertextual links with Isaiah 40–55 are found in the psalm (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:770; see also Hossfeld and Zenger 2011:68).

7.2.2 Basic structure of Psalm 105

There are wide-ranging views on the proposed structure of Psalm 105. Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:69) suggest a structure with eight stanzas. Gerstenberger (2001:230) demarcates three stanzas with several strophes under each stanza. Allen (2002:56–57) identifies four stanzas: Verses 1–11, the praise for YHWH's promise of the land; verses 12–23, the move from Canaan to Egypt; verses 24–36, the plagues in Egypt; and verses 37–45, the exodus and the promised land. Considering the suggestion of Allen (2002:56), this study combines it with the three-stanza structure Van der Lugt (2014:156) suggests. Van der Lugt (2014:156–157) divides Psalm 105 into the following stanzas: verses 1–6, 7–25, and 26–45. Following this, a detailed division of the structure of Psalm 105 is as follows:

- Stanza I: Calling on Israel to praise YHWH (Verses 1–6)
  - Strophe A: Call to praise and to remember (verses 1–6)
- Stanza II: YHWH's covenant with the ancestors and the move to Egypt (Verses 7–25)
  - Strophe B: YHWH's promise of the land to the ancestors (verses 7–15)
  - Strophe C: Causes leading to Israel living in Egypt (verses 16–25)
- Stanza III: Journey out of Egypt into the Promised Land (Verses 26–45)
  - Strophe D: Plagues in Egypt (verses 26–36)
  - Strophe E: Exodus, wilderness, and entry into Canaan (verses 37–45).

7.3 Analysis of Psalm 105

The analysis of Psalm 105 consists of a discussion on the place of the psalm in Book IV of the Psalter and the literary and historical links and connections that the psalm has to other biblical texts. The content of the psalm, as divided into the three stanzas, is also described in the second part of this section.

7.3.1 The place and historical associations of Psalm 105

As mentioned in this chapter’s introduction, Psalm 105 is categorised as a historical psalm. This places the psalm in the same category as Psalms 78, 106, 135 and 136. In her essay on the historical psalms, Gärtner (2015:374) states that these psalms interpret the history of Israel as it pertains to the immediate situation of the people. Therefore, the history remembered in Psalm 105 should be read and understood as interpreted, told from a certain perspective to address a particular situation. According to deClaissé-Walford (2020:68), the situation that Psalm 105 addresses is that of exile. Psalm 105 reminds the exilic community, which includes the post-exilic readers of the psalm, to remember the relationship that YHWH has had with them and their ancestors throughout Israel’s history. Goldingay (2008:200) rightfully describes the theme of Psalm 105 as “YHWH is still the same”.

Upon closer examination of the place that Psalm 105 takes in Book IV, one must keep the overall structure of Book IV in mind (see Table 2 in Chapter 2). Following Psalms 90–92 as the introduction, Psalms 93–100 are categorised as the Enthronement Psalms. The following few psalms in Book IV, Psalms 101–104, can be characterised as testifying to YHWH’s rule over humanity and creation from a Davidic perspective, while Psalms 105–106 then concludes with a historical overview of YHWH’s journey with Israel. Wilson (2010:764) argues that Psalms 103–104 form a thematic pair, focusing on YHWH’s kingship, specifically in creation. The twin psalms of Psalms 105–106 follow suit, but then with the emphasis placed on the redemption that YHWH provides, despite the unfaithfulness of his people. Wallace (2007:77) agrees that Psalm 105 continues the theme of YHWH’s creative power but moves away from the cosmos and emphasises YHWH’s creative power in creating his chosen people.

In their investigation of the origins of Psalm 105, Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:68) argue that Psalm 105 has ties to the Psalms of Asaph, giving it a deutero-Asaphite character. This becomes apparent in the covenant theology and Deuteronomistic language present in Psalm 105 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:68). Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:455) add to this the ideological use of Psalm 105 in 1 Chronicles 16:8–22 in favour of the monarchy. For Allen (2002:54), the 1 Chronicles use of this psalm points towards the cultic function of the psalm, although it does not necessarily point to a pre-exilic origin for Psalm 105. Human (2019:136) dates the psalm to the late exilic or post-exilic time. Later editors possibly used this psalm as it fit into their context and circumstances. Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:68) identify these editors as the post-exilic Levitical Temple singers.

Another important theological phenomenon to take note of in Psalm 105 is that of geographic reiteration. Matthews (2015:65) defines geographic reiteration as the occurrence of events at a significant place where “the memory of what has happened there before becomes a link to the past”. The whole of Psalm 105 is a journey on a firstspace level through historically significant places: from Canaan to Egypt through the wilderness to end in Canaan again. Yet, through the memory of this firstspace journey, these places become remembered spaces that function on a symbolic level to signify the exilic journey of the people. Furthermore, Wallace (2007:79) sees in the description of the first exodus in Psalm 105 an allusion to the “new exodus” or move out of exile, as also described in Deutero-Isaiah. Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:68) also understand the allusions to the exodus traditions in Psalm 105 from the events of the exile. How Isaiah 40–55 interprets the exile as a repetition of the exodus corresponds to the view found in Psalm 105 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:68).

The last discussion point in this section is the theological shift that Psalm 105 represents as part of the conclusion to Book IV. While some psalms (i.e., Psalms

101 and 103) preceding Psalm 105 reference David, an intentional move away from David and the Davidic monarchy takes place in Psalm 105. This shift takes place with a focus on the patriarchs, called “prophets” and “anointed”, as well as a focus on Moses. As mentioned in 7.2.1, both Abraham and Moses are also called “servants” of YHWH. These titles, “prophets”, “anointed”, and “servants”, were all applied to David. Yet, with the end of the monarchy and the resulting exile to which Book IV attests, it is instead the memory of the patriarchs and Moses moving into the centre of Israel’s theology again (Wallace 2007:78). The figure of Moses, as in Psalms 90–92, takes prominence in Psalm 105. In agreement with this, Human (2019:147) regards the Pentateuch traditions as the primary sources used in compiling Psalm 105. In addition, similar to Psalms 90–92, Deuteronomy 32 features in Psalm 105, this time focusing on the promise of land, as Wallace (2007:79) puts it:

> The remembrance of the promise of land in the exile would be a comfort for the singer. From the exile, the people must again resume possession of their territory, and it is necessary for them to renew the epic of the exodus.

It is ultimately the covenant, including the promise of land, which provides an impetus of hope for the people having lost their land, the monarchy, and the temple. YHWH’s faithfulness to his people makes this hope a reality.

From the discussion in this section, it has become apparent that Psalm 105 plays a vital role in the theology of Book IV of the Psalter. Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:68) argue that Psalm 105 is one of the source texts of the post-exilic period. In what follows, a more detailed analysis is made of the different stanzas and strophes of Psalm 105.

7.3.2 Content of Psalm 105

The three stanzas of Psalm 105 are now analysed according to their content. The literary devices and the place and meaning of each stanza are described in the larger whole of Psalm 105. Since this is a historical psalm, it can be described as a narrative in poetic form. The narrative of Israel’s history is told through the poetry of Psalm 105.

7.3.2.1 Stanza I (Verses 1–6)

This stanza introduces the psalm with a call to YHWH’s people, the descendants of Abraham and Jacob, to praise YHWH for the wonders that he has done in the past. In verse 45, the psalm ends with praise, placing a “hymnic frame” around Psalm 105 (Gärtner 2015:383). Throughout Stanza I, the imperative form of the verb is used, with one jussive in verse 3 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:69–70). The imperatives are all directed towards glorifying YHWH (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:452). Imagining the context of the exile, this stanza commands the community to testify to YHWH’s divine power and presence among pagan nations (Allen 2002:57). deClaissé-Walford (2020:69), in agreement with Allen, suggests that the imperatives in verses 1–2 can also be translated to be understood as words about YHWH, rather than words to YHWH. This leads to understanding the call in the first verses as a call to witness about YHWH and proclaim him to others.

The reason for praising YHWH is found in the “wonders” (נפלאותין) and “signs” (מֹפתיו) that he has done, as well as in the “judgements of his mouth” (מִשְׁפטי־פיו). These terms are all used by the Deuteronomist to describe YHWH’s saving acts in Egypt (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:70). The phrase “judgements of his mouth” is an unusual phrase but is connected to the semantic field of law and legal matters. Connecting all of YHWH’s actions is the imperative to “remember” (זכר). Writing on the terminology of remembering, Gärtner (2015:375) indicates that the miracles of YHWH are the object of the people’s remembrance. Therefore, remembrance, or to remember, presupposes the covenant relationship with YHWH since it is in the process of remembering that the works and wonders of YHWH are realised for the community (Gärtner 2015:375). This call to remember the wonders and signs of YHWH is followed by an interpreted description of Israel’s history in the second and third stanzas. Gärtner (2015:376) calls this the “development process of collective memories”. In this sense, remembering becomes the paradigmatic space within which Psalm 105 functions. A more detailed description of the function of remembered space in this psalm is given in Section 7.4.

The first stanza of Psalm 105 also encourages the community to seek YHWH and his presence, thus calling upon the people to (re)turn to YHWH. The turning to YHWH also has spatial connotations, especially concerning the exilic and post-exilic situations. Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:69) note that “those who seek YHWH”, or “the YHWH-seekers”, is a reference related to the theology of the poor, which developed in the post-exilic time. In verse 6, those seeking YHWH are defined more specifically as the “descendants of Abraham, his servant” and the “sons of Jacob, his chosen”. Gerstenberger (2001:230) mentions that these designations also stem from the post-exilic period. In addition, the titles “servant” (עבד) and “chosen” (בחיריו) used in Psalm 78 (also a historic psalm) and in Psalm 89 (the concluding psalm in Book III) concerning David, are now transferred to Abraham and Jacob (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:70). Yet, Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:70) go even further by situating the titles with Moses and the exodus community. Therefore, they argue that Psalm 105 ultimately encourages the post-exilic readers of the psalm to identify with the primitive community associated with Moses.

7.3.2.2 Stanza II (Verses 7–25)

The second stanza in Psalm 105 covers verses 7–25. It describes YHWH’s covenant with the ancestors, his promise of the land to them, and the causes leading to the move to Egypt. Within Stanza II, we differentiate between two strophes – verses 7–15 and 16–25. The covenant and land promise are emphasised in the first of the two strophes. Written from an exilic perspective in the post-exilic time, it makes sense that the psalmist looks beyond the Davidic covenant to the covenant with the ancestors, to a time when the promised land was still looming before it was lost in exile (deClaissé-Walford 2020:70).

Verse 7 reminds the reader of the *Shema Israel* in Deuteronomy 6 and confirms that YHWH's judgments, his commands and saving acts are universal (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:70). Verses 8–10 continue to describe the covenant that YHWH made with Abraham and Isaac. Anderson (2017:195) believes that the ancestral covenant is the interpretive context for Psalm 105 and its twin, Psalm 106. The covenant is described by the terms "eternal covenant", a "commanded word", and an "established law". The covenant is a divine promise. In describing the covenant in this way, Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:70) note that this description reflects both Priestly and Deuteronomic texts.

In verse 11, the gift of the covenant, the Torah, is tied to the gift of the land. deClaissé-Walford et al. (2014:771) state that this serves to remind the post-exilic community that, after returning to the land, they must also return to obedience to the law. The land that is promised also serves as a "portion of inheritance" for the people. According to Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:70), this phrase reminds of Deuteronomy 32:9, which further links Psalms 90–92 and reinforces the Mosaic focus found in the introduction and conclusion to Book IV. However, this promise of the land of Canaan seemed almost unattainable for the patriarchs since they were few and foreign in the land of Canaan (Allen 2002:58). The concept of being strangers or foreigners in the land was not unknown to the Israelites. During the exile, they were strangers in a foreign land, but with the return from exile, they felt like foreigners in their own land at first (Allen 2002:58).

Verses 13–15 testify to the protection that YHWH provided for his people when they were still nomads, moving landless from place to place (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:453). The notion of being foreigners in a foreign land is common in the ancestral narratives of Genesis (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:71). This concept also has implications for people's lives in all dimensions of space. This will be discussed in the spatial analysis of Psalm 105. Gärtner (2015:384) identifies this as the historical period of the patriarchs and matriarchs. YHWH intervened on behalf of the ancestors so that no harm came to them (Allen 2002:58). In this period, the covenant promise of the land had not been fulfilled yet, but YHWH led and protected the people on the way to fulfilling these promises (Gärtner 2015:384).

The second strophe in Stanza II begins with the leading cause for the ancestors to leave Canaan: famine came over the land. In this strophe, the story of Joseph is told, which is unique to the Psalter since the Joseph narrative does not feature much in the Old Testament tradition (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:453). The psalm states that Joseph was “sent” (שׁלח) to Egypt. Gärtner (2015:384) regards the word “send” as a keyword in the historical hermeneutic of Psalm 105. This word reappears at the beginning of Stanza III in verse 26 in connection with Moses being sent by YHWH. In this sense, the term “send” also functions on a spatial level throughout the poem. It signals a spatial transition in the historical narrative of Israel. In the following verses, the stages of Joseph’s life are recounted – being sold as a slave, being in prison, being set free by the king and set up as ruler of Egypt until Jacob, his father, came to Egypt. Allen (2002:58) sees reflected in Joseph’s experiences, as described in Psalm 105, the experiences of the people of Israel on a small scale. The message that YHWH was preparing the way for Joseph through hardship to eventual glory and blessing served as an encouragement for the exilic and post-exilic communities (Allen 2002:58). The brief overview of Joseph’s life can also be understood as a spatial journey – from negative to positive space. It can also be understood in social-scientific terms – from being powerless and vulnerable to becoming powerful and influential.

Verses 24–25 explain the causes leading to the exodus from Egypt. Yet, it is all placed within the framework of the powerful deeds of YHWH (Allen 2002:59). YHWH caused his people to become fruitful and strong and to flourish in Egypt. It is also YHWH who caused Pharaoh’s heart to harden towards the Israelites – compare Exodus 10:1,20,27. However, it is also YHWH who, once again, sent his servants to liberate his people. The actions of YHWH serve to emphasise his faithfulness, always on Israel’s behalf (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:775).

7.3.2.3 Stanza III (Verses 26–45)

Stanza III can also be divided into two strophes – verses 26–36 and verses 37–45. The first part of the stanza (verses 26–36) focuses on the plagues that led to Pharaoh allowing the Israelites to leave Egypt. The second part of the stanza focuses on the exodus and wilderness experiences and ends with the entry into the Promised Land. With this stanza, Psalm 105 turns from the memories of the ancestors to the memories of the exodus narrative (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:453).

In verse 26, the same verb “sent” (שׁלח) that was used to describe Joseph’s being sent is used to describe Moses’ coming onto the scene. In addition, Aaron is also mentioned with Moses as the “servants” whom YHWH elected. It is once again the titles of David, which were earlier applied to Abraham and the ancestors, which are now applied to Moses and Aaron as the people’s leaders (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:72). Through these human agents, YHWH fulfils his promises towards Israel (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:775). YHWH placed in Moses and Aaron his signs and wonders – a Deuteronomic formula used here to introduce the plague account that follows in verses 28–36 (Allen 2002:59). According to Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:453), the objective of recalling the plagues in Egypt and the resulting exodus, is to let Israel know that not only is YHWH their deliverer, but he is also the Lord of history.

The plague narrative is told with YHWH as the subject (“he”) who causes all the plagues to come over Egypt (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:453). The account of the plagues in Psalm 105 is based on the exodus narrative found in Exodus 7–12. Psalm 105 describes eight of the ten plagues from the exodus account. The first plague to be described, in verse 28, is that of darkness. Allen (2002:59) argues that darkness as the first plague represents YHWH’s first act against Egypt so as to contrast it with his first act in the wilderness, which was to provide light in the night (verse 39). The plague of darkness is followed by the water turning into blood in verse 29. Frogs, a swarm of gnats and hail, are subsequently described, followed by locusts and, ultimately, the death of the firstborn (verses 30–36). The death of the firstborn serves as the climactic end to the plague account in Psalm 105.

Upon closer inspection, the plagues are described so that they represent a “retraction of creation” in Egypt. Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:73) argue that this serves as a literary link to the creation theme in Psalm 104. Further, within the imagined world of Psalm 105, it also refers to the theme of YHWH’s power to destroy so that he can save his people. YHWH’s commands and acts of destruction are expressed with the verbs “spoke” (אמר), “gave” (נתן) and “destroyed” (נכה). The stanza ends with a triple use of the word “all” (כל), demonstrating the totality of the destruction that YHWH’s word caused (Allen 2002:59). In addition, on a spatial level, the plagues described here encompass the whole land – from water to crops to palace to air. The destruction that the plagues bring also plays out in all dimensions of space to overturn Egyptian society.

The last strophe in Stanza III begins in verse 37 and ends in verse 45. Verse 37 introduces the triumphant departure from Egypt with a Deuteronomic formula (Allen 2002:60). The exodus events are also credited to the work of YHWH, starting with the term “he brought them out” (ויוציאם). YHWH brought his people out with silver and gold gifted to them by the Egyptians – an indication of how YHWH provided for his people. In addition, the exit from Egypt took place without stumbling and with the rejoicing of Egypt since they were terrified of the Israelites. Although the author of Psalm 105 would have been familiar with the Reed Sea narrative, there is no mention of it here since the emphasis is rather on the saving act of YHWH, prevailing over Israel’s oppressors (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:776). Verses 39–41 demonstrate YHWH’s guiding presence in the wilderness through a cloud and a fire and providing food and water for his people

(Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:454). YHWH's caring protection transformed the wilderness from a hostile place into a place of life and abundance (Gärtner 2015:385). All these actions of YHWH emphasise his faithfulness and loving-kindness towards his people.

This fact is further attested to in verse 42, where the psalm returns to the ancestral covenant with Abraham (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:776). With the word "remember" (זכר), verse 42 refers back to verses 5 and 8, recalling the figure of Abraham and the land promise. Verse 43 summarises the entire exodus experience. It is stated that the exodus was in favour of the chosen ones of YHWH, thus, the descendants of Abraham (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:74). The joy with which the exodus takes place, according to Psalm 105, corresponds to the description of the "second exodus" or return from exile in Isaiah 40–48 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:74). Verse 44 represents the fulfilment of the land promise, confirming that YHWH gave the people the land; they inherited and took possession of the land after the exodus and wilderness wanderings. Allen (2002:60) sees the fulfilment of the promise at the end of Psalm 105 as a signal to the exilic and post-exilic communities that they can also trust in the fulfilment of YHWH's promise once again. Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:454) note at this point that the theme of promise and fulfilment creates a frame around Psalm 105, providing a framework in which the historical memory of Israel can be understood.

The concluding verse in the psalm, verse 45, denotes the appropriate response to the faithful fulfilment of YHWH's promises. To generate the appropriate response, the psalmist links the covenant promises to the laws and statutes of YHWH (Gärtner 2015:385). Keeping YHWH's laws is how the exilic and post-exilic communities can honour the faithfulness and fulfilment of promises that YHWH has granted them.

7.3.3 Social-scientific summary of Psalm 105

Quite a few social-scientific values present themselves in Psalm 105. The prominent social-scientific patron-client pattern is present throughout the psalm. Besides the patriarchs, who are considered the patrons of Israel, YHWH is also painted as the ultimate patron of Israel, who remains faithful to his clients, the Israelites. As his client, Israel enjoyed the favour of YHWH, their patron. The favour of YHWH is expressed in the covenant that he made with the ancestors, in the way that he led and protected his people throughout the ancestral period, and in the exodus and wilderness experiences. The proof of YHWH's faithfulness is seen in the fulfilment of his promise to Israel by leading them through the wilderness into the Promised Land.

The land issue, however, best demonstrates YHWH's patronage in Psalm 105. The most common form of the patron-client relationship in the ancient world was the relationship between landowner and tenant (Malina 1993d:153). Based on verses 44–45, deClaissé-Walford (2020:72) characterises YHWH as a jealous landowner expecting his tenants to follow his laws to be responsible tenants that care for the land entrusted to them. Human (2019:149) also mentions the close relationship between law and land in Psalm 105, noting that these notions are used in both a positive and a negative sense, with Egypt having a negative association and Canaan having a positive one. Keeping YHWH's laws represents the people's responsibility to keep their part of the ancestral covenant. This recalls law-mindedness or Torah orientation, which had the object of maintaining beliefs and values about all social, religious, and other institutions of society (Duling 1993:194–195). This Torah-oriented conclusion to Psalm 105 corresponds to the Mosaic focus found in Book IV (Wilson 2010:756).

Inheriting the land and taking possession of the land proves to take an important place in the (future) hope of the people of YHWH. The notion of allocating land as a possession to someone reminds the reader of the ancient Near Eastern idea where a suzerain grants land to a king, which then becomes a vassal state of the suzerain (Allen 2002:58). Within the inheritance rights of the ancient Near East, the eldest son of the *paterfamilias* (patron) had the inheritance right to his father's land. From this perspective, the act of land possession and inheriting land was also embedded within the core value of the patron-client relationship. The land is a significant promise to people who have sojourned as strangers and foreigners in a foreign land. The theme of foreigners in a foreign land is a type-scene throughout the Hebrew Bible. Therefore, the promise of their own land was still relevant in an exilic and even post-exilic situation; after the people had lost their land and found themselves in exile in a foreign land and even after they had returned to their land, which had become foreign to them (deClaissé-Walford 2020:70).

Psalm 105 draws a sharp distinction between Egypt and the Israelites. The psalm tells of the instances in the history of Israel where YHWH overturned the social order in favour of his people. The story of Joseph, as typology for Israel and told in verses 17–25, attests to Joseph's rise from being powerless to powerful. The plague events that follow from verse 26 onwards also demonstrate how YHWH makes Egypt poor and powerless, freeing the Israelites from their oppressors. Israel's history is remembered to confirm YHWH's faithfulness to his covenant and strengthen group identity within the exilic and post-exilic communities. In the ancient Near Eastern world, one's identity was formed within the group to which one belonged, and tradition, or the remembering of history, was the way through which identity was formed (Neyrey 1993b:95). In support of this, Gärtner (2015:374) notes that the historical psalms, such as Psalm 105, interpret the past in a way that is identity-forming and identity-reassuring for a particular group. In Psalm 105, the past is interpreted through remembered space to remind the Israelite community of the eternal covenant between them and YHWH.

7.4 Spatial analysis of Psalm 105

In this last section of Chapter 7, the narrative of Psalm 105 is told from a spatial perspective based on what has been discovered in the analysis in the previous section.

7.4.1 Critical spatiality in Psalm 105

Psalm 105 is saturated with spatial connotations, the most prominent being the references to “land” throughout. Egypt and Canaan are the firstspace, physical places that form the backdrop to the events in the psalm. Yet, the concept of land also functions on secondspace, thirdspace and fourthspace levels, as expressed in the promise of land to the ancestors. The promise of land played an important role in the people's mental space on a social, religious, and political level. The Promised Land was a space where the Israelites could be politically independent, a space where they could live as a people and worship YHWH. On a religious or secondspace level, the promise of land also included the promise of YHWH’s presence and protection. Allen (2002:60) states that Psalm 105 is centred around the interrelatedness of the land, the people and YHWH. This interrelatedness still determined the people’s identity in a post-exilic world. Aware of what they lost in exile, they yearned for their land to re-establish their religion, society, and identity. deClaissé-Walford (2020:72) calls the land Israel’s “storied space” provided to them by YHWH:

> The women and men who lived in exile in Babylon must have yearned for their storied, local, rooted placed, the land of promise where countless generations were born and raised, lived and died.

Psalm 105 testifies through memory and imagination that YHWH will continue to provide such a storied place for his people to call their own (deClaissé-Walford 2020:72). This testimony is confirmed throughout Psalm 105 in the way that the psalm attests to the transformative power of YHWH – the power through which God transforms the physical, mental, and lived space of his people. Even though the post-exilic people did not “own” the land, since they were still under foreign rule upon returning from exile, the return to the land proved to be transformative and restorative on various levels of space (Goldingay 2008:217). In each of the example-cases in Psalm 105, YHWH transformed their space from negative to positive, from hopeless to hopeful, from powerless to powerful, and from being foreigners in a foreign land to being at home in the promised land. This happened with Abraham, Joseph, and the Israelites in Egypt and the wilderness. YHWH transforms the space of his people through his divine acts and through staying faithful to his covenantal promise. Within their transformed space, the people can find a renewed collective identity and hope for the present and future. This hopeful picture is born out of imaginatively remembering the past.

7.4.2 Remembered space in Psalm 105

Psalm 105 is a classic example of imaginative remembering or remembered space. In Psalm 105, space and memory are intertwined in telling Israel's origin history to an exilic and post-exilic community. According to Human (2019:150), the remembrance of Psalm 105 is predominantly found in the ideology of the return to the land. Framing the retelling of Israel's historical journey in Psalm 105 is the term "remember" (זכר), which we encounter in verse 5 before the mention of the covenant with the patriarchs and again in verse 42 after the account of the exodus. Although classified as a historical psalm, Psalm 105 is not history in the strict sense of the word. Rather, the psalmist uses collective memories from Israel's shared history in an imaginative way to interpret their present circumstances and build an identity for the future. The "history" recounted in Psalm 105 can be described as Israel's "normative memory" (Human 2019:134).

More specifically, in the case of Psalm 105, the psalmist reflects upon the covenant promises that YHWH made to the ancestors. Through the covenant promise of land, the psalmist retells the history of Israel, starting with the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, moving to the Joseph narrative, then to the oppression of the Israelites and subsequent plagues in Egypt, after which the exodus and wilderness events are reiterated, ending with the fulfilment of YHWH's promise at the entry into Canaan. In its essence, this recalling is a spatial journey.

Through geographic reiteration, covenant remembrance takes place (Gärtner 2015:384). Covenant remembrance in Psalm 105 entails remembering the covenant relationship between YHWH and his people *in space*. In this process of remembering spaces from the past, the collective memories of a community become a mental map accessed through imagination. In Psalm 105, Egypt and the Promised Land hold spatial memories for the people of Israel (Matthews 2013:62). The psalmist reimagines these spatial memories in such a way that it acquires new meaning and creates new spaces of imagination for the post-exilic community, coming to grips with their new reality.

The reference to the Torah in the last verse of Psalm 105 can also be regarded as a spatial memory. It recalls the law YHWH gave to Moses, which took a central place in the lives of the Israelites before they came to the Promised Land. By drawing on the thematic memories of Moses and the law, the Mosaic frame in Book IV is upheld. Moses and the Torah are also presented as the key to upholding the covenantal relationship, ensuring a future for the people of Israel.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored Psalm 105, the first psalm in the conclusion to Book IV. The literary analysis of the psalm indicated that Psalm 105 can be characterised as a historical psalm, reinterpreting the history of ancient Israel in order to make sense of the situation of the exilic and post-exilic communities. The psalm imagines YHWH as the patron of Israel, keeper of history and saviour of his people. The technique that the psalmist used to demonstrate these truths about the relationship between YHWH and Israel can be described as “remembered space”. The psalmist employs collective memories of Israel, which are linked to spaces in Israel’s history, to reimagine a future for the people whose identity is rebuilt and their relationship with YHWH repaired.

Throughout Psalm 105, the theological focus was on YHWH’s faithfulness in fulfilling his covenant promises. In Psalm 106, the focus shifts to Israel’s guilt and wrongdoings in the covenant relationship with God. In this way, the twin Psalms 105–106 are juxtaposed. However, both are needed for a complete conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter.

Chapter 8

Psalm 106

8.1 Introduction

Psalm 106 is the final psalm in Book IV of the Psalter. As a twin psalm to Psalm 105, it is also classified as a historic psalm. Yet, whereas Psalm 105 focused on the faithfulness of YHWH to his covenant promises, Psalm 106 focuses on the failure of Israel to remember YHWH's faithfulness and their covenant relationship with him. Wallace (2007:80) mentions that Psalm 105 appeals to the people's trust in YHWH, while Psalm 106 appeals to repentance. Psalm 106 also employs remembered space in its construction of Israel's history of unfaithfulness, with the theme of remembering and forgetting woven through the psalm.

On the (liturgical) setting of Psalm 106, Gerstenberger (2001:244) writes the following:

> Although we are not able to determine every single liturgical move, the different elements of Psalm 106 do fit into Israel's communal worship service of postexilic times, when Scripture use was already at the center of the people's assemblies.

From this, it seems clear that Psalm 106 is a post-exilic creation, especially concerning its intertextual relationships with books such as Isaiah and Numbers (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:85). Goldingay (2008:222-223) also identifies influences of the book of Kings on Psalm 106, especially in the theological themes of Israel's guilt, sin and their accompanying responsibility for their actions. Similar to Psalm 105 and all the psalms in Book IV, Psalm 106 reflects on the situation and events of the exile from a post-exilic perspective. Psalm 106 also paves the way for Psalm 107, the first psalm in Book V. Psalm 107 can be read as a response to Psalm 106:47 (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:459). The concluding verse, Psalm 106:48, is generally considered the editorial doxology inserted to indicate the end of Book IV (Gerstenberger 2001:236). Psalm 106 also has connections to Psalm 90 – the opening of Book IV. Psalms 90 and 106 both call for repentance from the people (Gillingham 2015a:10). Yet, they do this based on the remembrance of YHWH's faithfulness and his ability to transform their space of uncertainty into a space of hope.

8.2 Translation of Psalm 106

The translation of Psalm 106 is treated in this section, after which a few remarks are made on certain terms, phenomena, and phrases in the psalm. This is, of course, all based on the Masoretic text of Psalm 106.

Stanzas and Strophes	Verse	Hebrew text	Translation
I Strophe A	1a b	הַֽלְלוּיָ֨הּ הוֹד֣וּ לַיהוָ֣ה כִּי־ט֑וֹב כִּ֖י לְעוֹלָ֣ם חַסְדּֽוֹ׃	Hallelujah/Praise the Lord, give thanks to YHWH, because he is good, ***/*** because his faithfulness/loving-kindness is forever.
	2a b	מִ֗י יְ֭מַלֵּל גְּבוּר֣וֹת יְהוָ֑ה יַ֝שְׁמִ֗יעַ כָּל־תְּהִלָּתֽוֹ׃	Who can utter/declare the powerful/mighty deeds of YHWH, ***/*** who can announce all his praise?
	3a b	אַ֭שְׁרֵי שֹׁמְרֵ֣י מִשְׁפָּ֑ט עֹשֵׂ֖ה צְדָקָ֣ה בְכָל־עֵֽת׃	Blessed is the guardian of judgment, ***/*** the worker of justice in all times.
	4a b	זָכְרֵ֣נִי יְ֭הוָה בִּרְצ֣וֹן עַמֶּ֑ךָ פָּ֝קְדֵ֗נִי בִּישׁוּעָתֶֽךָ׃	Remember me, YHWH, with the favour of your people. ***/*** Visit me with your salvation

	5a b c	לִרְא֤וֹת בְּט֫וֹבַ֤ת בְּחִירֶ֗יךָ לִ֭שְׂמֹחַ בְּשִׂמְחַ֣ת גּוֹיֶ֑ךָ לְ֝הִתְהַלֵּ֗ל עִם־נַחֲלָתֶֽךָ׃	that I may see the good of your chosen, **/** that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, **/** that I may boast with your inheritance.
II Strophe B	6a b	חָטָ֥אנוּ עִם־אֲבוֹתֵ֑ינוּ הֶעֱוִ֥ינוּ הִרְשָֽׁעְנוּ׃	We have sinned with our fathers, **/** we have done wrong, we have made ourselves guilty.
	7a b c d	אֲב֘וֹתֵ֤ינוּ בְמִצְרַ֨יִם לֹא־הִשְׂכִּ֬ילוּ נִפְלְאוֹתֶ֗יךָ לֹ֣א זָ֭כְרוּ אֶת־רֹ֣ב חֲסָדֶ֑יךָ וַיַּמְר֖וּ עַל־יָ֣ם בְּיַם־סֽוּף׃	Our fathers in Egypt **/** did not understand your wonders, **/** they did not remember the abundance of your goodness/loving-kindness, **/** but they rebelled at the sea, the Sea of Reeds.
	8a b	וַ֭יּוֹשִׁיעֵם לְמַ֣עַן שְׁמ֑וֹ לְ֝הוֹדִ֗יעַ אֶת־גְּבוּרָתֽוֹ׃	He saved them for the sake of his name, **/** to make his strength/might known.
	9a b	וַיִּגְעַ֣ר בְּיַם־ס֭וּף וַֽיֶּחֱרָ֑ב וַיּוֹלִיכֵ֥ם בַּ֝תְּהֹמ֗וֹת כַּמִּדְבָּֽר׃	And he rebuked the Sea of Reeds, and it dried up, **/** and he led them through the deeps of the sea as through the wilderness/desert.
	10a b	וַ֭יּוֹשִׁיעֵם מִיַּ֣ד שׂוֹנֵ֑א וַ֝יִּגְאָלֵ֗ם מִיַּ֥ד אוֹיֵֽב׃	And he saved them from the hand of those who hated them, **/** and he redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
	11a b	וַיְכַסּוּ־מַ֭יִם צָרֵיהֶ֑ם אֶחָ֥ד מֵ֝הֶ֗ם לֹ֣א נוֹתָֽר׃	And the waters covered their enemies, **/** not one of them was left.

	12a b	וַיַּאֲמִ֥ינוּ בִדְבָרָ֑יו יָ֝שִׁ֗ירוּ תְּהִלָּתֽוֹ׃	And they believed his words **/** and they sang his praise.
Strophe C	13a b	מִ֭הֲרוּ שָׁכְח֣וּ מַעֲשָׂ֑יו לֹֽא־חִ֝כּ֗וּ לַעֲצָתֽוֹ׃	They quickly forgot his works; **/** they did not wait for his advice/counsel.
	14a b	וַיִּתְאַוּ֣וּ תַ֭אֲוָה בַּמִּדְבָּ֑ר וַיְנַסּוּ־אֵ֝֗ל בִּישִׁימֽוֹן׃	And they craved an eager desire in the desert/wilderness, **/** and they tested God in the desert/wilderness.
	15a b	וַיִּתֵּ֣ן לָ֭הֶם שֶׁאֱלָתָ֑ם וַיְשַׁלַּ֖ח רָז֣וֹן בְּנַפְשָֽׁם׃	And he gave them their request, **/** but he sent emaciation/a wasting disease in their life/soul.
	16a b	וַיְקַנְא֣וּ לְ֭מֹשֶׁה בַּֽמַּחֲנֶ֑ה לְ֝אַהֲרֹ֗ן קְד֣וֹשׁ יְהוָֽה׃	And they were jealous of Moses in the camp, **/** and of Aaron, the holy one of YHWH.
	17a b	תִּפְתַּח־אֶ֭רֶץ וַתִּבְלַ֣ע דָּתָ֑ן וַ֝תְּכַ֗ס עַל־עֲדַ֥ת אֲבִירָֽם׃	The earth covered and swallowed up Datan, **/** and covered the company of Abiram.
	18a b	וַתִּבְעַר־אֵ֥שׁ בַּעֲדָתָ֑ם לֶ֝הָבָ֗ה תְּלַהֵ֥ט רְשָׁעִֽים׃	And a fire burned/blazed up in their company, **/** the flame devoured/scorched the wicked.
Strophe D	19a b	יַעֲשׂוּ־עֵ֥גֶל בְּחֹרֵ֑ב וַ֝יִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ֗וּ לְמַסֵּכָֽה׃	They made a calf in Horeb, **/** and bowed down/worshipped the cast image.

	20a b	וַיָּמִ֥ירוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדָ֑ם בְּתַבְנִ֥ית שׁ֝֗וֹר אֹכֵ֥ל עֵֽשֶׂב׃	And they changed their glory/honour **/** in the figure of an ox that eats plants/grass.
	21a b	שָׁ֭כְחוּ אֵ֣ל מוֹשִׁיעָ֑ם עֹשֶׂ֖ה גְדֹל֣וֹת בְּמִצְרָֽיִם׃	They forgot God their saviour, **/** who had done great things in Egypt,
	22a b	נִ֭פְלָאוֹת בְּאֶ֣רֶץ חָ֑ם נ֝וֹרָא֗וֹת עַל־יַם־סֽוּף׃	wonders in the land of Ham, **/** and fearful things at the Sea of Reeds.
	23a b c d	וַיֹּ֗אמֶר לְֽהַשְׁמִ֫ידָ֥ם לוּלֵ֡י מֹ֘שֶׁ֤ה בְחִ֗ירוֹ עָמַ֣ד בַּפֶּ֣רֶץ לְפָנָ֑יו לְהָשִׁ֥יב חֲ֝מָת֗וֹ מֵֽהַשְׁחִֽית׃	And he said that he would exterminate them, **/** if Moses, his chosen, **/** did not stand in the breach before him **/** to turn back his anger to ruin them.
Strophe E	24a b	וַֽיִּמְאֲסוּ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ חֶמְדָּ֑ה לֹא־הֶ֝אֱמִ֗ינוּ לִדְבָרֽוֹ׃	They refused/rejected the desirable/precious land, **/** they did not believe his word,
	25a b	וַיֵּרָגְנ֥וּ בְּאָהֳלֵיהֶ֑ם לֹ֥א שָׁ֝מְע֗וּ בְּק֣וֹל יְהוָֽה׃	but rebelled/murmured in their tents, **/** they did not listen to the voice of YHWH.
	26a b	וַיִּשָּׂ֣א יָד֣וֹ לָהֶ֑ם לְהַפִּ֥יל א֝וֹתָ֗ם בַּמִּדְבָּֽר׃	And he lifted his hand against them, **/** to cause them to fall in the wilderness/desert,
	27a b	וּלְהַפִּ֣יל זַ֭רְעָם בַּגּוֹיִ֑ם	and to bring down their seed/descendants among the

		וּֽלְ֝זָרוֹתָ֗ם בָּאֲרָצֽוֹת׃	nations, ***/*** and to scatter them in the lands.
Strophe F	28a b	וַיִּצָּֽמְדוּ לְבַ֣עַל פְּע֑וֹר וַ֝יֹּאכְל֗וּ זִבְחֵ֥י מֵתִֽים׃	They joined themselves to Baal-Peor, ***/*** and they ate the sacrifices of the dead.
	29a b	וַ֭יַּכְעִיסוּ בְּמַֽעַלְלֵיהֶ֑ם וַתִּפְרָץ־בָּ֝֗ם מַגֵּפָֽה׃	And they provoked him with their deeds, ***/*** and the plague broke out among them.
	30a b	וַיַּעֲמֹ֣ד פִּ֭ינְחָס וַיְפַלֵּ֑ל וַ֝תֵּעָצַ֗ר הַמַּגֵּפָֽה׃	And Phinehas stood up and mediated, ***/*** and the plague was restrained.
	31a b	וַתֵּחָ֣שֶׁב ל֭וֹ לִצְדָקָ֑ה לְדֹ֥ר וָ֝דֹ֗ר עַד־עוֹלָֽם׃	And it was reckoned for him to righteousness, ***/*** from generation to generation forever.
Strophe G	32a b	וַ֭יַּקְצִיפוּ עַל־מֵ֣י מְרִיבָ֑ה וַיֵּ֥רַע לְ֝מֹשֶׁ֗ה בַּעֲבוּרָֽם׃	And they provoked him at the waters of Meribah, ***/*** and things went wrong with Moses for their sake.
	33a b	כִּֽי־הִמְר֥וּ אֶת־רוּח֑וֹ וַ֝יְבַטֵּ֗א בִּשְׂפָתָֽיו׃	Because they rebelled against his spirit, ***/*** and he chattered/spoke rashly with his lips.
Strophe H	34a b	לֹֽא־הִ֭שְׁמִידוּ אֶת־הָֽעַמִּ֑ים אֲשֶׁ֤ר אָמַ֖ר יְהוָ֣ה לָהֶֽם׃	They did not exterminate the people/nations ***/*** that YHWH said to them.
	35a b	וַיִּתְעָרְב֥וּ בַגּוֹיִ֑ם וַ֝יִּלְמְד֗וּ מַֽעֲשֵׂיהֶֽם׃	But they mingled with the nations, ***/*** and learned their works/deeds.

	36a b	וַיַּעַבְד֥וּ אֶת־עֲצַבֵּיהֶ֑ם וַיִּהְי֖וּ לָהֶ֣ם לְמוֹקֵֽשׁ׃	And they served their idols, **/** which became a trap for them.
	37a b	וַיִּזְבְּח֣וּ אֶת־בְּ֭נֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בְּנ֨וֹתֵיהֶ֗ם לַשֵּֽׁדִים׃	And they sacrificed their sons **/** and their daughters to their evil spirits/demons.
	38a b c d	וַיִּשְׁפְּכ֨וּ דָ֪ם נָקִ֡י דַּם־בְּנֵיהֶ֣ם וּ֭בְנוֹתֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁ֣ר זִ֭בְּחוּ לַעֲצַבֵּ֣י כְנָ֑עַן וַתֶּחֱנַ֥ף הָ֝אָ֗רֶץ בַּדָּמִֽים׃	And they poured out clean (innocent) blood, **/** the blood of their sons and their daughters **/** whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan. **/** And the land was polluted with their blood.
	39a b	וַיִּטְמְא֥וּ בְמַעֲשֵׂיהֶ֑ם וַ֝יִּזְנ֗וּ בְּמַֽעַלְלֵיהֶֽם׃	They were unclean in their deeds **/** and acted as a harlot in their practices.
Strophe I	40a b	וַיִּֽחַר־אַ֣ף יְהוָ֣ה בְּעַמּ֑וֹ וַ֝יְתָעֵ֗ב אֶת־נַחֲלָתֽוֹ׃	And the anger of YHWH kindled/burned against his people, **/** and he abhorred his inheritance.
	41a b	וַיִּתְּנֵ֥ם בְּיַד־גּוֹיִ֑ם וַֽיִּמְשְׁל֥וּ בָ֝הֶ֗ם שֹׂנְאֵיהֶֽם׃	And he gave them in the hand of the nations **/** and they who hated them, ruled over them.
	42a b	וַיִּלְחָצ֥וּם אוֹיְבֵיהֶ֑ם וַ֝יִּכָּנְע֗וּ תַּ֣חַת יָדָֽם׃	And their enemies oppressed them, **/** and they were subdued under their hand.

	43a b c	פְּעָמִ֥ים רַבּ֗וֹת יַצִּ֫ילֵ֥ם וְ֭הֵמָּה יַמְר֣וּ בַעֲצָתָ֑ם וַ֝יָּמֹ֗כּוּ בַּעֲוֺנָֽם׃	Many times he delivered them, ***/*** but they rebelled in their advice, ***/*** and went down/sank in their guilt.
Strophe J	44a b	וַ֭יַּרְא בַּצַּ֣ר לָהֶ֑ם בְּ֝שָׁמְע֗וֹ אֶת־רִנָּתָֽם׃	And he saw their distress, ***/*** and he heard their cry/moaning.
	45a b	וַיִּזְכֹּ֣ר לָהֶ֣ם בְּרִית֑וֹ וַ֝יִּנָּחֵ֗ם כְּרֹ֣ב חַסְדּוֹ׃	And he remembered his covenant for them, ***/*** and he regretted in the abundance of his loving-kindness.
	46a b	וַיִּתֵּ֣ן אוֹתָ֣ם לְרַחֲמִ֑ים לִ֝פְנֵ֗י כָּל־שׁוֹבֵיהֶֽם׃	And he gave them compassion ***/*** in the face/presence of all their captors.
III Strophe K	47a b c d	הוֹשִׁיעֵ֨נוּ יְה֘וָ֤ה אֱלֹהֵ֗ינוּ וְקַבְּצֵנוּ֮ מִֽן־הַגּ֫וֹיִ֥ם לְ֭הֹדוֹת לְשֵׁ֣ם קָדְשֶׁ֑ךָ לְ֝הִשְׁתַּבֵּ֗חַ בִּתְהִלָּתֶֽךָ׃	Save us, YHWH, our God, ***/*** and gather us from the nations ***/*** to give thanks/praise your holy name ***/*** and glory in your praise.
Strophe L	48a b c	בָּ֤רֽוּךְ־יְהוָ֨ה אֱלֹהֵ֬י יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל מִן־הָֽעוֹלָ֨ם וְעַ֬ד הָעוֹלָ֗ם וְאָמַ֣ר כָּל־הָעָ֣ם אָ֭מֵן הַֽלְלוּ־ יָֽהּ׃	Blessed is YHWH, the God of Israel, ***/*** from eternity to eternity. ***/*** And let all the people say Amen! Hallelujah/Praise YHWH!

8.2.1 Notes on translation

- Psalm 106 begins and ends with the word “Hallelujah” (הללו־יה) that forms a framework around the psalm. This also links the psalm to its twin, Psalm 105, which closes with the word “Hallelujah”. Although Psalm 104 also closes with the word “Hallelujah”, it has already been stated in 2.3.3 that based on its content, Psalm 105-106 are treated as twin psalms, while Psalm 104 is grouped with Psalms 101-103.
- Like Psalm 105, we encounter the imperative “give thanks” (הודו) in Psalm 106:1. Yet, as in Psalm 105, deClaissé-Walford (2020:75) believes that the word הודו is better translated as “confess” or “testify”, which then focuses the attention outward to proclaiming the loving-kindness of YHWH to others.
- The statements about YHWH’s goodness and loving-kindness in the first verse are quoted from YHWH’s self-description in Exodus 33–34 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:87). This, together with references to Moses later on, affirms that the exodus tradition is present in Psalm 106.
- There are several words and phrases that were used in Psalm 105, which are repeated in Psalm 106. Among these are the words “chosen” (בחור) and “inheritance” (נחלה). According to Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:87), the use of both words in verse 5 is to be understood as the words of a proselyte, praying to be reckoned under YHWH’s chosen people, the Israelite community. In contrast, deClaissé-Walford et al. (2014:785) identify the person speaking as a Levitical priest or liturgical leader. They base this interpretation on the abstract meaning ascribed to the word “inheritance”, where the word refers to the Levites whose “inheritance” was YHWH since they did not inherit any part of the land. Within the context of Psalm 106:5, the word “inheritance” is used to describe the *community* as YHWH’s inheritance (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:785).

- Wallace (2007:81) notes that the use of the word “nation” (גוי) to refer to Israel instead of the word “people” (עם) is interesting. The word “nation” is usually employed in a negative sense to refer to the other nations that do not worship YHWH (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:88). The reason for this use of “nation” can be ascribed to the sinful condition of Israel reflected in Psalm 106, as well as the connection that Psalm 106 has with the Deuteronomist – compare Deuteronomy 32:28 (Wallace 2007:81).
- The use of the term “Sea of Reeds” (ים־סוף) in verse 9 indicates a post-exilic dating to Psalm 106 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:88). The material in Psalm 106 concerning the events at the Sea of Reeds closely resembles Exodus 14–15 (Walton et al. 2000:550).
- In agreement with Allen (2002:74), who identifies influences from the Pentateuch and Deuteronomistic history in Psalm 106, Wallace (2007:82) notes Deuteronomic influences in particular words used in the psalm. The use of the word “demons” (שׁדים) in verse 37 is a case in point. The only other instance of this word is in Deuteronomy 32:17. Although translated as “demons”, it can also be translated as “evil or malevolent spirits” (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:789). This term was well-known in Mesopotamia as *shedu*. Those creatures were described as winged creatures who could destroy or protect one’s health (Walton et al. 2000:550). The reference to this phenomenon in Psalm 106 functions as an indication of the idolatry that Israel practised.
- In verse 45, the word “regret” or “compassion” (נחם) is used to describe YHWH’s response to the crying and moaning of his people. This word is also encountered in Job 42 and Genesis 6, where it is rendered “repent” and “sorry”, respectively. Gärtner (2015:387) adds the prophetic perspective, indicating that the term is also employed in Joel 2:13 and Jonah 4:2, reflecting YHWH’s wrath and mercy. In Psalm 106, however, only the mercy of YHWH is focused upon. deClaissé-Walford (2020:79)

provides an additional view from Exodus 34:12,14, where the term is also used. In Exodus 34, it is translated as YHWH ‘changing his mind’. Since the exodus context also fits the background to Psalm 106, a similar translation makes sense – YHWH remembered his covenant and changed his mind in the abundance of his loving-kindness (חסד). The same word was also used in Psalm 90:13 in the call of the psalmist that YHWH should have compassion for his servants. This word establishes a link between the introduction and conclusion of Book IV of the Psalter.

- The theme of remembering (זכר) is juxtaposed with the theme of forgetting (שׁכח) throughout Psalm 106. According to Wallace (2007:81), the Deuteronomist is preoccupied with the people forgetting YHWH and his covenant, further strengthening the psalm’s ties with Deuteronomy. In this sense, Psalm 106 represents Israel’s memory lapses throughout its history (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:460).

8.2.2 Basic structure of Psalm 106

Since Psalm 106 is such a comprehensive psalm, there are diverging views on the structure of the psalm. Allen (2002:69–70) divides Psalm 106 in the following way: Verses 1–12 (praise, sin, and salvation), verses 13–23 (the wages of sin and an exoneration), verses 24–31 (further wages of sin and exoneration), verses 32–47 (further wages of sin and hope for salvation), verse 48 (doxology). Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:458) propose a more straightforward structure, with verses 1–6 as a summons to praise, verses 7–12 telling of Israel’s iniquity at the sea, then their unfaithfulness in the wilderness in verses 13–33, concluding with their sin in the land in verses 34–48. In his investigation of the chiastic structure of Psalm 106, Martin (2018:507) identifies a five-part structure in Psalm 106. Verse 1a is the first stanza containing the call to worship; verses 1b–3 are the second stanza of thanksgiving; verses 4–47 are the third and longest stanza praying for Israel’s salvation based on their history. The fourth and fifth stanzas are found in verse 48a and verse 48b.

Gärtner (2010:479) interprets Psalm 106 within a threefold structure, with verses 1–5 as a hymnic call to praise, verses 6–46 as Israel's history of guilt and verses 47–48 as a conclusion of prayer and praise. deClaissé-Walford's (2020:77–78) closely resembles that of Gärtner. She divides verses 1–6 into a first stanza, while verses 7–46 form the second stanza and verses 47–48 form the conclusion. Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:86–87) also divide Psalm 106 into three stanzas: Stanza I consists of verses 1–5 as the framing introduction, verses 6–46 create Stanza II and contain a history of the people's sins, while verses 47–48 act as the concluding frame.

From the discussion, it becomes clear that while commentators differ on the finer aspects of the structure of Psalm 106, a basic structure does emerge from their observations. Having considered this, the following structure is proposed for Psalm 106 (cf. Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:86–87 and deClaissé-Walford 2020:77–78):

Stanza I: *General introduction and call to praise YHWH (Verses 1–5)*

- Strophe A – Call to praise and to be part of YHWH's chosen (verses 1–5)

Stanza II: *Unfaithfulness and sin of Israel from the time in Egypt to the Babylonian exile (Verses 6–46)*

- Strophe B – Iniquities in Egypt and rescue at the Sea of Reeds (verses 6–12)
- Strophe C – Sin in the wilderness (verses 13–18)
- Strophe D – Events at Horeb (verses 19–23)
- Strophe E – Rejection of the promised land and threat of exile (verses 24–27)
- Strophe F – Idolatry and the reaction of Pinehas (verses 28–31)
- Strophe G – Unfaithfulness at the waters of Meribah (verses 32–33)
- Strophe H – Sin in the Promised Land (verses 34–39)
- Strophe I – The wrath of YHWH against the unfaithfulness of Israel (verses 40–43)

Strophe J – YHWH's faithfulness and compassion (verses 44–46)

Stanza III: *Concluding frame of praise (Verses 47–48)*

Strophe K – Plea for rescue and gathering of Israel's people (verse 47)

Strophe L – Doxology concluding Book IV

8.3 Analysis of Psalm 106

The analysis of Psalm 106 first treats the genre, place, and historical associations of Psalm 106. Second, each strophe and stanza of the psalm is analysed individually, after which the social-scientific values present in Psalm 106 are discussed.

8.3.1 The place and historical associations of Psalm 106

Identifying the genre of Psalm 106 is more challenging than it seems. Allen (2002:65) notes that the psalm has features of a communal lament and that of a hymn. The introductory words of "Praise YHWH" and "give thanks" or "testify" create the impression of a psalm of praise and thanksgiving (Gerstenberger 2001:237). Furthermore, the psalm also has aspects of a penitential prayer (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:83). deClaissé-Walford (2020:75) simply characterises Psalm 106 as a historical psalm, similar to Psalm 105. From an initial reading of Psalm 106, it is clear that the psalm comprises a mixture of features. Human (2019:151) mentions that the psalm functioned in various settings, including cultic, literary, and historical. Overall, however, the characteristics resort under the genre of a historical psalm as the psalm tells the history of Israel from exodus to exile, featuring the sin and regret of the people as well as the faithfulness and saving act of YHWH. The next feature to consider concerning Psalm 106 is its relationship to Psalm 105.

Much scholarly work has been done on the relationship between Psalms 105–106. In his well-known essay, "Zwillingspsalmen", Walther Zimmerli (1974:269–270) argues that Psalms 105–106 were never originally a single psalm. Based on their profiles and language, the two psalms could not have been written by the same person(s), but the psalms were intentionally paired and editorially edited to follow each other and form the conclusion to Book IV. Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:76) note that while Psalm 105 does not reflect redactional modifications, Psalm 106 does show signs of redactional activity, especially in the introduction (verses 1–5) and closing doxology (verse 48). According to Anderson (2017:186), Psalms 105–106 are a fitting theological insert at the end of Book IV to reflect on the crisis of exile from a historical perspective. The narrative of YHWH's faithfulness was placed before the guilt narrative of Israel (Gärtner 2015:389). Yet, Psalm 106 does end in a positive space, with YHWH's compassion being emphasised (verses 44–48).

In her discussion on the links between Psalms 105–106, Gärtner (2015:389) focuses on thematic and semantic links. Firstly, the covenant theology emphasised throughout Psalm 105 comes to the fore again in Psalm 106:45 regarding YHWH remembering his covenant and staying faithful to it. Secondly, the salvation-historical theme of election undergirds both Psalms 105 and 106. Despite their unfaithfulness, YHWH's mercy and loving-kindness remain a saving grace for his elected people. In this sense, the theological narrative Psalms 105–106 tell moves from salvation to repentance to salvation again (Gärtner 2015:389). Although the narration of specific historical events differs between the two psalms, they overlap in their focus on the exodus events and occupation of the Promised Land (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:95). In addition, Psalms 105–106 also overlap in the sense that in both psalms the speakers are a "we-group" that regards YHWH as their God (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:95). Summarising the relationship between Psalms 105–106, Wallace (2007:82) writes that these psalms represent the essence of Israel's relationship with YHWH – exemplifying the tension between the promises of YHWH and the stubbornness of the people.

About the relationship of Psalm 106 with neighbouring psalms, it is not only Psalm 105 that should be considered. As the last psalm in Book IV, Psalm 106 also sets the scene for Book V, starting with Psalm 107. The most obvious link between Psalms 106 and 107 lies in the introduction to Psalm 107. Psalm 107:1–3 can be read as an answer to Psalm 106:47. Another important tie between the two psalms lies in Psalm 106:44, which was taken up in the refrain of Psalm 107 – see 107:6, 13, 19 and 28. Based upon these and other links, Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:94) conclude that Psalm 107 was intentionally inserted as a response to Psalm 106 and as a bridge to Book V of the Psalter.

Lastly, the intertextual associations of Psalm 106 must receive attention. Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:77) maintain that Psalm 106 refers to the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Numbers. The account of the events at the Sea of Reeds recalls Exodus 14–15, while the events at Horeb reflect Exodus 32–34, and the rejection of the land in verses 24–27 is based on Numbers 14. Furthermore, Numbers 16 and 25 are alluded to in verses 16–18 and 28–31 (Allen 2002:67). Deuteronomic influences also seem notable in Psalm 105. In the notes on the translation (Section 8:2.1), it was already mentioned that Deuteronomic influences are to be seen throughout Psalm 106. Of these, Deuteronomy 32 plays a significant role (Wallace 2007:82). It is also important to note that Deuteronomy 32–33 was alluded to throughout Psalms 90–92 and Psalm 105, further strengthening the ties between the introduction (Psalms 90–92) and conclusion (Psalms 105–106) to Book IV of the Psalter.

Since Psalm 106 is the last psalm to be analysed in this study, a few preliminary remarks on the theological overtones of Book IV are in order, especially as it pertains to the intertextual influences on Psalms 90–92 and 105–106. Wallace (2007:82) emphasises that the theology of the exodus and the Mosaic tradition enjoys the most attention in Book IV of the Psalter, with Davidic and Zion theology stepping into the background. Deuteronomistic theology also plays an important role, with the Deuteronomistic structure underlying the psalms of the study (cf. Allen 2002:8). Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:95) add that Priestly theology, with its reference to the covenant with the ancestors, the land and the theology of the Name are also apparent, especially in Psalms 105–106. In summary, the Pentateuch, with its various theological emphases, can be identified as forming the background to Psalms 90–92 and 105–106. A more elaborate discussion of the links between these psalms follows in Chapter 9.

8.3.2 Content of Psalm 106

This part of the analysis of Psalm 106 discusses the content according to the stanzas and strophes of the psalm. An overall pattern emerges throughout the psalm: Israel sins – YHWH delivers – Israel believes and praises YHWH (Human 2019:157).

8.3.2.1 Stanza I (Verses 1–5)

The first stanza serves as an introduction to the psalm as a whole and was added as an editorial frame around the historical account of Psalm 106. The opening “Hallelujah” in verse 1 forms an inclusio with the closing “Hallelujah” in verse 48. The call to testify about and thank YHWH for his goodness and faithfulness is reminiscent of Psalm 105:1–2 and corresponds to the call of Psalm 107 (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:459). It also reminds the reader of the introduction to Psalm 92 in verses 1–3. According to Gärtner (2010:480), the faithfulness (חסד) of YHWH is one of the central theological themes in the psalm. In addition, the phrases in verse 1 constitute a formula that functions as an introduction to a thank offering (Allen 2002:70). In the larger context of Psalm 106, which emphasises the people's guilt, a thanksgiving and praise formula seems out of place. Nevertheless, this formula makes sense because of the psalm’s conclusion from verse 45 onwards, where the psalmist testifies that YHWH has remembered his covenant and showed his people compassion. YHWH remains faithful. For this reason, praise, testimony, and thanksgiving are in order.

Verse 2 asks a question that is answered in verse 3. In verse 2, the speaker asks who can declare the mighty deeds of YHWH and who can announce his praise. This parallelism stresses the overwhelming power of YHWH’s presence and actions. In the context of Psalm 106, it also demonstrates YHWH’s forgiveness and mercy towards Israel (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:785). Verse 3 answers the "who" question of verse 2 in the form of a beatitude. The guardians of judgement and the workers of justice are not only blessed but are also the ones who can recognise the mighty deeds of YHWH in their lives. Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:87) interpret the answer from a moral perspective – only a righteous person can praise YHWH. The right way of life is the requirement for salvation (Allen 2002:70). The words "judgement" (מִשְׁפָּט) and "justice" (צְדָקָה) both carry significant meaning. Both concepts are rooted in keeping the law of YHWH, as Psalm 105:45 concluded. However, deClaissé-Walford et al. (2014:785) regard this statement as ironic since the remainder of the psalm demonstrates that Israel has done the opposite – they have not kept justice and maintained righteousness.

Verses 4–5 represent the speaker's plea that YHWH would remember him, favour him, and save him. The reason why he asks this from YHWH is so that he can share in the fullness of life – to see the good of YHWH's chosen, rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and boast with YHWH's inheritance (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:459). These verses have a first-person speaker, who is identified by Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:87) as an outsider, a proselyte, hoping to become part of the "in-group", YHWH's people. Allen (2002:70), however, identifies the speaker in these verses as the worship leader. deClaissé-Walford et al. (2014:785), in following Allen, also regard the speaker as the liturgical leader or a Levitical priest. Nonetheless, when the petitioner asks to be part of the joy and salvation that a life with YHWH brings, he calls YHWH's faithfulness into memory. The speaker petitions to become part of the salvation history between YHWH and his people through remembered space.

8.3.2.2 Stanza II (Verses 6–46)

Stanza II is the most extended stanza of Psalm 106 and contains the body of the psalm. As per the structure suggested in Section 8.2.2, Stanza II can be subdivided into several strophes. Strophe B, the first strophe under Stanza II, extends from verse 6 to verse 12. In this verse, the speaker is still a first-person speaker. deClaissé-Walford (2020:77) indicates that verse 6 represents the shift to the historical recitation in the psalm. This verse is also a confession of sin, in which the psalmist admits that the people are sinful, just like their ancestors were (Wallace 2007:82). Underlying verse 6 is the Deuteronomistic principle of the exile being a punishment for the unfaithfulness and sin of the people (Allen 2002:70). Following this line of thought, Gärtner (2010:479) describes the history in Psalm 106 as a history of guilt. The seriousness of the people's guilt is described with three terms – "sin" (חטא), "to do wrong" (עוה) and "to make oneself guilty" (רשׁע).[15] This triple description emphasises the gravity of the unfaithfulness of Israel in preparing for the rest that follows in Stanza II (cf. Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:459).

From verse 7 onwards, the rebellion of Israel throughout their history is described in different episodes (Martin 2018:509). The first episode tells of the events at the Sea of Reeds. Verse 7a situates the psalm in Egypt, where the lack of the ancestors' understanding of YHWH's wonders and their forgetting of his loving-kindness are given as the reasons for the people's sin. This corresponds with the Deuteronomic understanding and is an intertextual reference to Deuteronomy 32:29 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:88). The reference to the "wonders" (פלא) of YHWH is reminiscent of Psalm 105:5, where the community is encouraged to remember YHWH's wonders. Now, they have forgotten that which they ought to have remembered. In addition to the sins of forgetting and not understanding, the people rebelled at the Sea of Reeds, continuing their sin as they left Egypt. The designation "Sea of Reeds" is a term used in post-exilic literature (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:88). Yet, despite their sin and unfaithfulness, verse 8 states that

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[15] The three negative terms denoting the people's guilt link with the description of the wicked in Psalm 92:8. These terms function within the same semantic field.

YHWH saves his people for the sake of his name and to make his might known. The name theology mentioned here is a tenet of Deuteronomistic theology and is also present in Psalms 91:14, 92:2 and 105:1. Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014:460) say that verse 8 not only refers to the events at the Sea of Reeds, but to the entire deliverance from Egypt.

Verses 9–10 describe how YHWH intervened to save the Israelites at the Sea of Reeds – he rebuked the sea so that it dried up and led them through the deep on dry ground. According to the three-storey worldview of the ancient Near East, the sea was one of the most dangerous places, home to monsters and other sea creatures. Because of this, water and the sea represented forces of chaos. This mighty act of rebuking the sea demonstrates that YHWH is the lord of the sea, God of creation (Gärtner 2010:481). On a similar note, Allen (2002:71) states that verse 9 places the mythical battle against chaos within a historical framework about the exodus. However, verses 10–11 do not explicitly name the Egyptians as the ones being destroyed. Rather, the enemies are described in more general terms, such as “those who hated them”, opening up the possibility of interpreting it as YHWH’s ability to save his people from any and all enemies they may face through the ages (Gärtner 2010:481). The same verb used in verse 8 to describe the saving act of YHWH (ישע) is again used in verse 10. The result of the saving act of YHWH at the Sea of Reeds led to the Israelites’ faith in YHWH being restored.

However, in verse 13, the pattern of sin repeats itself – soon after the miraculous deliverance at the Sea of Reeds, the people forgot about YHWH’s saving acts. This episode of rebellion is set in the desert. The desires the Israelites craved, and the consequent testing of God, refer to the people losing faith in YHWH to provide for them in the wilderness. Hence, they “put him to the test” for food and water (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:460). Intertextually, the craving and desire mentioned here allude to the account in Numbers 11 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:89). On an implicit level, these events denote the lack of trust in YHWH that the people experienced when faced with the fear and insecurity of the wilderness journey (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:787). Although YHWH did provide manna and water and, in this way, gave them their request, he also punished the people for their disobedience in the form of a plague breaking out. Allen (2002:71) notes that the motif of judgement in reaction to Israel's rebellion simultaneously serves as a catalyst for YHWH's loving-kindness to enter the story after the community realised their wrongdoing.

Nevertheless, the sin of the people continues in verses 16–18, where the uprising against Moses and Aaron, the leaders of the people, is reported. This account is based mainly on Numbers 16 (deClaissé-Walford 2020:79). The uprising was caused by Levites, including Dathan and Abiram (Gerstenberger 2001:240). They were also punished, however, for challenging the authority of the leaders whom YHWH had appointed. Tying back to the "wicked" in verse 6, verse 18 reports that a fire blazed up and devoured "the wicked". This also corresponds to the notion in Psalm 92:8 that the wicked will be destroyed. The punishment of the wicked in verse 18 reflects YHWH's judgement over the behaviour of the people against their leaders.

In verses 19–23, the narrative moves to Mount Horeb, or Sinai, where the golden calf incident occurred. Once again, the Israelites forgot God and what he had done for them in Egypt and at the Sea of Reeds. This led to the people's unfaithfulness, described in verses 19–20. The people made a calf in Horeb and worshipped the cast image. Bull or calf images were typical in Canaanite religion and signified strength and fertility (Walton et al. 2000:115). Yet, the idea of representing God through an image was forbidden in the Israelite religion since Israel was aniconistic: YHWH was not presented as an idol. The worshipping of a cast image is explicitly prohibited in the second commandment in Exodus 20:4. In verse 20, the psalmist further expresses the idolatry of the people with the phrase, "they changed their glory". Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:89) call this an exchange of glory like Hosea 4:7 and Jeremiah 2:11. When read from this perspective, the expression in verse 20 signifies that the people exchanged

YHWH for idols and, in the process, lost their honour, which was connected to YHWH, and thus humiliated themselves (Gärtner 2010:482). The result is that God wanted to exterminate and destroy the people. Moses is then presented as the one to intercede for the people, convincing YHWH not to ruin them. Through the priestly act of intercession, Moses turned away the threat of ruin from the people (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:787–788).

Verses 24–27 constitute the next strophe, testifying to the people about Israel's unfaithfulness. This time, the topic is about rejecting the Promised Land after the spies had explored it, according to the account in Numbers 13-14 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:90). On a theological level, these verses pertain to the people's inability to believe they could enter the land and overcome the people of Canaan (deClaissé-Walford et al. 204:788). Afraid of the unknown space that is the Promised Land, they moaned in their tents – their "safe space" – in the wilderness instead of trusting YHWH. A bilateral punishment follows in verses 26–27: The ancestors are brought down in the wilderness, while their descendants are said to be brought down in exile (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:90).

The next scene describes more instances of idolatry and is based on Numbers 25. The Israelites worshipped Baal-Peor with the Moabites and joined in their impure sacrifices. Once again, the punishment of YHWH was a plague. But this time, another figure, Pinehas, a descendant of Aaron, acted as intercessor. His intercession simultaneously consisted of serving as an agent of wrath for YHWH (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:90). YHWH regarded this as an act of justice, confirming his everlasting covenant with Pinehas.

Moving to a new space in history, verses 32–33 describe what happened at the waters of Meribah. The figure of Moses comes to the fore again. This time, the sins of the people caused Moses to sin. Wallace (2007:82) states that this is the last time that Moses is explicitly mentioned in Book IV of the Psalter, and in this way, the last remembrance of him is his ultimate failure.

In the next scene, verses 34–39, the people’s sins in the Promised Land are recounted. Even after they had entered Canaan, the people continued with their unfaithfulness and iniquities. Instead of destroying the nations that YHWH had assigned them to do, they mingled with them and worshipped their gods. They even participated in child sacrifices, something that was prohibited in Israel. They continued with their impure actions, breaking the covenant with YHWH and being unfaithful towards the one and only God.

All of these wicked actions on the part of the Israelites warrant a reaction from YHWH. Verses 40–43 describe YHWH’s reaction and the consequences the people suffered because of their unfaithfulness. YHWH’s wrath burned against the people because he was repulsed by them (verse 40). Therefore, he handed them over to the nations so that his people would be oppressed and subjected to the rule of foreign nations (Gärtner 2010:484). In these verses, the theological cause of the exile is explicated. Verse 43 provides a summary of the Israelites’ history as presented in Psalm 106: Many times YHWH saved his people, but time and again they rebelled against him until they were brought down to the lowest place possible by their guilt and iniquities (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:92).

However, when there is no hope for restoration, verses 44–46 bring a positive reaction from YHWH. These verses report that YHWH saw and heard his people crying in distress. Despite them forgetting him, he remembered his covenant with them and in his love and kindness, he “regretted” (נחם) his harshness. Therefore, verse 46 reports that YHWH showed compassion to his people when they were oppressed and held captive in exile. Verse 46 quotes 1 Kings 8:50, a Deuteronomistic petition (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:93). Verses 44–46 demonstrate that despite the people’s sin, YHWH remains faithful to his covenant – a theme also running through Psalm 105. In this second last strophe of Psalm 106, the two perspectives on history that Psalm 106 represents – the history of guilt and the history of salvation – are brought together (Gärtner 2010:487).

The conclusion to Psalm 106 is found in verses 47–48. Verse 47 represents the original conclusion to the psalm, while verse 48 is the later inserted doxology marking the end of Book IV (Goldingay 2008:241). Verse 47 contains a petition calling YHWH to save the people and gather them from exile. The purpose of the petition to save is that YHWH would have all the glory, so his name would be praised (Gerstenberger 2001:243). The doxology in verse 48 should be read together with the other doxologies at the end of the Psalter's first, second, and third books, namely in Psalms 41:14, 72:18–20 and 89:53.

8.3.3 Social-scientific summary of Psalm 106

From a social-scientific point of view, Psalm 106 shares certain characteristics with Psalm 105. The patron-client relationship found throughout Psalm 105 is also the underlying social value of Psalm 106. However, whereas Psalm 105 focuses on YHWH, the patron's part in the relationship, Psalm 106 focuses on the Israelites, or clients, in the relationship. In Psalm 106:4–5, the client asks YHWH, the patron of Israel, to favour him, to let him be a part of the "in-group", referring to the Israelites. Seeking a favour from the patron was one of the main functions of the patron-client relationship (Malina 1993d:153). However, the client also had the obligation to stay loyal to the patron, to honour and praise their patron. Psalm 106 is an apt example of how the people of God failed to be clients. Instead of putting their trust and allegiance in God, they rebelled against him. In the ancient Near Eastern world, faith and trust meant loyalty and commitment (Malina 1993a:74). People placed their trust in YHWH because he had the power to control what they could not – for example, nature. That is why, after rebuking the sea, proving his power over the chaos forces, verse 12 notes that the Israelites believed YHWH's words – thus had faith in him and trusted him. However, after the events at the Sea of Reeds, they quickly forgot his deeds and continued being unfaithful. Israel's lack of faith and trust in YHWH started in Egypt and continued into the wilderness.

The unfaithfulness of Israel reached its peak in the idolatrous behaviour of the people. They made the golden calf and worshipped it at Mount Sinai. However, it was in the Promised Land that the people's idolatry was worst. They rejected the gift of the land and worshipped Canaanite gods, mingled with other nations, served their idols, and participated in the sacrifices of their gods. These misdeeds were a direct obstruction of the covenant terms with YHWH. Nevertheless, in each instance of idolatry, YHWH ultimately showed compassion. With the golden calf incident, Moses acted as a broker or middleman of God's patronage – see verse 23 (Malina 1993d:154). After punishing the people for idolatry, YHWH remained loyal to his covenant by showing compassion to the people in the face of their captors – see verse 46. In the idolatry of Israel, the two profiles of YHWH – being a God of anger but also a God of mercy – are shown. Although these two profiles are in tension with each other throughout the psalm, it is ultimately the faithful mercy of YHWH which triumphs (Human 2019:166).

The covenant defined the patron-client relationship between YHWH and his people. The covenant made the people responsible for remaining loyal and faithful to YHWH. However, they could not keep their part of the covenant. With their idolatrous behaviour, the people broke the covenant with YHWH. The Deuteronomist described the exile as YHWH's punishment for the people's disobedience to the covenant (Matthews 2015:219). However, it remains a wonder how YHWH remained faithful to his covenant with the people despite their disobedience. Gärtner (2010:488) attributes this to the all-encompassing loving-kindness (חסד) of YHWH. The compassion of YHWH ultimately conquers all obstacles.

8.4 Spatial analysis of Psalm 106

Psalm 106 functions within all dimensions of space. Remembered space plays a crucial role in the psalm, with an interplay between the themes of forgetting and remembering. This spatial analysis section investigates all these spatial associations in Psalm 106.

8.4.1 Critical spatiality in Psalm 106

Like Psalm 105, its twin, Psalm 106, can also be regarded as a spatial journey. The spatial journey that is Psalm 106 takes place in all four dimensions of space.

On a firstspace level, the journey begins in Egypt, moving to the Sea of Reeds and then into the wilderness, recounting several episodes. In the wilderness, we journey amongst other places to Horeb and Meribah. The firstspace journey of Psalm 106 then moves to the Promised Land, describing first the rejection of the offer of the land and later the idolatry that took place in the land. The psalm ends with the Israelites losing the land and being exiled due to their unfaithfulness to YHWH.

This description of firstspace in Psalm 106 clarifies that the land plays an important role, just like it played an essential role in Psalm 105. The first part of Psalm 106 is a journey *to* the land, while the second part of Psalm 106 recounts the iniquities of the Israelites *in* the land. Before entering the land, the Israelites rejected the land as an unknown (or foreign) space. They would rather stay in the "safe" space of their tents in the wilderness than conquer a foreign space, the Promised Land (compare verses 24–25). Once in the land, the Israelites desacralized the sacred space of the Promised Land with their sinfulness (compare verses 34–39). Because the people rejected the land as their inheritance through their deeds, YHWH rejected Israel as his "inheritance". The term "inheritance" used in Psalm 106:6, 40 is a metaphor for the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel. God had chosen Israel to "inherit" a covenant relationship with him (deClaissé-Walford et al. 2014a:786).

The overall spatial atmosphere in Psalm 106 is negative and off-centre. The unfaithfulness of the people creates a negative space. The people's disobedience functions on second and thirdspace levels, breaking the covenant with YHWH (religious space) and bearing the consequences thereof in YHWH's punishment, resulting in exile (lived space).

8.4.2 Remembered space in Psalm 106

The historical unfaithfulness of Israel is expressed with the theme of remembering and forgetting in Psalm 106. In Psalm 105, the subject of YHWH remembering his covenant received attention. Now, in Psalm 106, the focus is on the forgetting of the covenant by Israel. Forgetting is an important aspect related to memory. Hendel (2005:x) emphasises that it is in the dialectic of memory and forgetting that identity is formed. In the ancient Near East, forgetting implied detaching oneself from something or someone, forsaking the other (cf. Malina 1993c:127–129). In this sense, forgetting is linked to the breaking up of a relationship. In their “not remembering” or “forgetting”, Israel broke the covenant relationship with YHWH.

Therefore, an apt summary of Psalm 106’s theological agenda would be along the lines of: “YHWH as the forgotten space of Israel’s history”. Indeed, the goal of the psalmist was to remind the people not to forget YHWH as they had done throughout their history. In order to achieve this, the psalmist imaginatively retells Israel’s history based on their collective memories from Egypt up to the time in the Promised Land. In the process, the memory of various spaces – Egypt, the wilderness, Sinai, Meribah and Canaan – are reinterpreted and given significance within the paradigm of Israel’s forgetting YHWH and their unfaithfulness to his covenant. However, the people are not left behind and forgotten in a space of unfaithfulness. Psalm 106 also stresses that YHWH *remembers* his covenant, even when the people forget. The memory of YHWH consists of mercy, compassion, and loving-kindness for his people. Because of this, the remembered space – the collective memories in Israel’s imagination – can be filled with hope and positive, life-affirming promises fulfilled by YHWH.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to discuss and analyse the content of Psalm 106. It was the last of the psalms to be investigated in this study. Psalm 106 and Psalm 105 serve as the conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter. These two psalms provide a historical overview of Israel’s relationship with YHWH, although each interprets Israel’s history from its own perspective. While Psalm 105 has a more positive portrayal of Israel’s history and Psalm 106 a more negative portrayal, both psalms are necessary for an overall picture.

In addition, it became clear that space plays a vital role in Psalms 105–106 and that the golden thread connecting the two psalms is found in the concept of remembered space. Drawing on collective memories from Israel's past, the psalms place these memories in a new space, interpreting them for a time of exile and beyond.

Based on the figure of Moses that features throughout Psalms 105–106, as well as both psalms' dependence on the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, Psalms 105–106 can also be linked to the introduction to Book IV, Psalms 90–92. The complete linked narrative between these five psalms is told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 9

REMEMBERED SPACE IN PSALMS 90–92 AND 105–106

9.1 Introduction

Imagine a world in which one has lost everything that provided meaning to one's existence – the sense of security, markers of identity, and the institutions of faith. The enormity of such a loss overwhelms all spaces of one's being. In the wake of a situation like this, instability, chaos, fear, and uncertainty erupt. Where does one turn to make sense, find hope, and begin anew?

Confronted by the trauma and loss of exile, the people of Israel turned to the collective memories of their shared history to examine their relationship with YHWH. This act enabled them to imagine new spaces of being in which they could reconstruct their faith, identity, and future. Book IV of the Psalter bears witness to the theological reflection of the post-exilic community on the events of the exile. This study paid particular attention to the introduction and conclusion of Book IV, found in Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106, and how these psalms employed space, memory, and imagination in their existential search for a world beyond the trauma and chaos of exile.

The journey through these psalms was facilitated using a combination of hermeneutical lenses. The first interpretive lens was canonical criticism, which implies that the focus was on the canonical shape of the psalms, revealing an intentional editorial narrative told by the Psalter. This study placed the narrative of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 in Book IV within the sphere of spatiality and memory, which formed the other hermeneutical lenses. In this chapter, an overview is given, first of the methodology employed in the study, after which the content and place of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 are discussed. The remaining sections of the chapter summarise the spatial narrative resulting from memory and imagination in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 and ultimately reflect on the influence of spatial remembering and imagining on Psalms studies.

9.2 (Re)Considering the methodology

In this section, a brief overview is given of the methodology that was employed in the study. In Chapter 1, the complete methodology was described with the help of the image of a camera with different lenses (see Figure 1). Following the explanation of the visual representation, the *approach* to the study was identified as a canonical reading of the Psalter. The *model* of the study was identified as critical spatiality, yet critical spatiality is embedded in the broader social-scientific *theory*. The *method* of the study flowed from the model of critical spatiality and was identified as remembered space. The objective of this section is not to repeat what had been worked out in detail in the first few chapters of the study. Instead, a concise description of each of the hermeneutical lenses is given here to contextualise the results from the psalm analyses.

Starting with an overview of the canonical approach of the study, one has to mention the publication of Gerald Wilson's *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter,* which appeared in 1985 and changed the trajectory of Psalms studies. In this work, Wilson (1985:199) argued that the Psalter is not a collection of random psalms but shows intentional editorial activity with the goal of arranging the Psalter into a meaningful whole. Read from this perspective; the psalms are interpreted as having a narrative impulse that ultimately conveys a message (Wallace 2007:1). This (canonical) view was followed in the present study when interpreting psalms from Book IV of the Psalter. The basic argument of the study holds that Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, as introduction and conclusion to Book IV, are spatially constructed to tell the story of Israel through remembered space.

In order to unlock this spatial narrative, the study analysed the psalms from a social-scientific perspective before applying a critical spatial analysis. Since the model of critical spatiality grew from the social-scientific theory, it was necessary to identify the social values and aspects of the ancient Near Eastern worldview present in the psalms. John Elliott (1993:18), one of the leading scholars on social-scientific criticism, writes that the social-scientific theory enables the exegete to take the socio-cultural, economic, and political currents behind a text into consideration when investigating that text. The social-scientific investigation into the text of each psalm is a crucial step in understanding its background and context. The social-scientific analysis of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 placed these post-exilic psalms in the historical period of the exile, reflecting on the pre-exilic history of Israel. The contents of the psalms reflect the instability, chaos, and powerlessness that the exile brought about. There were several social values that all five psalms had in common. The most prominent cultural system value was that of the patron-client relationship. When read together, the transformative power of the patron-client relationship stands out in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106. Within the patron-client relationship, YHWH restores and brings honour to his people.[16]

From the social-scientific analysis, the exposition of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 could move to an investigation of the spatial orientation of the psalms. Similar to the social-scientific criticism of biblical texts that developed from the social sciences, the use of critical spatiality as a model for interpreting biblical texts also developed from a spatial turn in the social sciences (Sleeman 2013:51). While mathematicians, philosophers and geographers traditionally studied space, scholars recognised the importance of space in biblical studies in the early 2000s. A ground-breaking notion involving space was developed by philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1991), who holds that space is a social construct produced by societies. This opened up a new way of thinking about the role of space in ancient societies as well. Lefebvre (1991:17) argued that space can be read and decoded to discover the meaning that specific societies in specific historical periods attributed to it. Biblical scholars generally analyse the spatial contours of a biblical text according to the “trialectics of space” first identified by Lefebvre and refined by geographer Edward Soja (1996). Soja (1996:10) differentiates between firstspace as concrete, physical space (“real space”) and secondspace as ideas about space, how space functions on a mental level in people’s lives (“imagined space”). Thirdspace is added to this as another form of spatial awareness that combines first- and secondspace, combining things and thought (Soja 1996:68). Yet, thirdspace also goes beyond the binary of first- and secondspace. In the spatial analysis in the psalm chapters, Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 were all demonstrated to contain elements of all three dimensions of space. However, as biblical scholars studied biblical texts from a spatial perspective, they became increasingly aware of another feature of space prominent in biblical texts, namely, memory.

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[16] More insights from the social-scientific analysis of these psalms are discussed in Section 9.3.

According to Mark George (2013:xii) in the introduction to *Constructions of Space IV – Further Developments in Examining Ancient Israel’s Social Space*, both individual and collective memory influence the production of space. Victor Matthews (2013:61) developed the concept of a fourth dimension of space connected to the important role of memory. Matthews (2013:62) calls this remembered space. Understanding the role of space in a text equals understanding how memory was formed by “placed experience” (Bowman 2013:93). Thus, space acts as a link to the past through memory and imagination (Matthews 2013:75). In their *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Walter Brueggemann and Tod Linafelt (2012:10) rightfully argue that the formation of biblical texts happens through “imaginative remembering”. Linking imagination with memory creates the freedom for a community to move beyond “what simply happened” in a certain space when reinterpreting events.

The combination of these three concepts – space, memory, and imagination – creates the remembered space method applied in this study. The outcome of remembered space is the reconstruction of a people’s collective identity. Consequently, the definition of remembered space developed in the study was described as: *The dimension of space in which the collective memories of a people’s shared history are imaginatively reconstructed to transform their identity in light of present circumstances and future hopes.*

In Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, the exodus tradition and the figure of Moses were found to be the principal memories playing a role in the imagination of Israel (Bowman 2013:92). These memories are placed within various dimensions of space. By recalling these collective memories in a time of crisis, the Israelite community reimagines and reconstructs their spatial existence as the people of YHWH.

9.3 Overview of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106: A summary

When studying the Psalter, it becomes apparent that the book of Psalms has inherent features that pertain to the meaning of its final shape. Besides the doxologies found at the “seams” of the Psalter that divide the Psalter into five books, there are also superscriptions to individual psalms and pre-existing collections of psalms incorporated into the Psalter (deClaissé-Walford 2014c:365–366). These characteristics of the book of Psalms all indicate some form of intentional editorial activity regarding the Psalter.

This insight opens up the possibility of interpreting the Psalter from a canonical perspective, which aims to understand the “nature of the theological shape of the text”, as Brevard Childs (1979:74) puts it. This means that when one applies a canonical reading to the Psalter, focusing on its shape as a whole, an overall narrative emerges. Nasuti (2005:313) notes that the Psalter contains narrative elements and historical references that affect the interpretation of the sequence of psalms. When read from a canonical perspective, the sequence of individual psalms emerges as a narrative and links between adjacent psalms acquire new meaning. Gerald Wilson (2005:391) found the grand narrative of the Psalter in the course of the five books of which the Psalter consist of. Wilson (2005:392) related the first three books of the Psalter (Psalms 2–89) thematically to the Davidic monarchy and the covenant with David. With Psalm 89, however, the third book of the Psalter ends with YHWH's rejection of the Davidic monarchy. According to Wilson (2005:392), the last two books of the Psalter, Psalms 90–150, were added in the post-exilic time as part of the final editing of the Psalter as a whole. Thematically, these books reflect on the failure of the monarchy and shift its focus to YHWH as king (Wilson 2005:392–393). In the subsection that follows, the theological agenda and structure of Book IV are discussed in more detail.

9.3.1 Book IV of the Psalter

The psalms that were the object of this study belong to the fourth book of the Psalter. Susan Gillingham (2015b:84) interprets the Psalter as a drama in five parts, within which Book IV, the fourth part of the drama, has a particular purpose. What sets Book IV apart from the others is its focus on Moses and the exodus tradition, in contrast to the prominence of David and the Zion tradition in the previous three books of the Psalter.

deClaissé-Walford (2019:27) places the psalms of Book IV historically in the time of the exile, although it addresses a post-exilic audience while remembering a pre-exilic history. This three-part time frame informs the contextual background against which the psalms in Book IV are interpreted. It also supports the theological agenda of Book IV. According to Wilson (1985:215), Book IV can be considered as the "editorial centre" of the Psalter. This is based on the theological shift in the psalms of Book IV from the Davidic covenant to the Mosaic covenant. RobertWallace (2007:8), writing on the narrative effect of Book IV, mentions that the theology of Book IV can be best described as "theocratic". This observation is derived from the focus of the psalms in Book IV. In order to understand the theological focus of Book IV, it is necessary to be reminded of the structure of Book IV.

In Chapter 2, the complete structure of Book IV was explained. The structure proposed by deClaissé-Walford (2020) in her commentary on Books IV and V of the Psalter was followed. According to this division, Book IV consists of four groups of psalms: Psalms 90–92, Psalms 93–100, Psalms 101–104, and Psalms 105–106. Within this structure, Psalms 90–92 form the introduction, while Psalms 105–106 form the conclusion of Book IV. The focus on Moses and the exodus traditions features the strongest in these psalms. In fact, Wilson (1993b:75–76) identifies Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 as a Mosaic framework for Book IV, found in the references to Moses, the exodus tradition and the archaic divine names used in these psalms. Following Psalms 90–92, Psalms 93–100 form a coherent subunit in Book IV and are known as the enthronement psalms (Howard 1993b:216). Scholars differ, however, about grouping the remaining psalms in Book IV – Psalms 101–106. Howard (1993b:215–216) treats these psalms as a single group. Other scholars, such as Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:2), group Psalms 101–103 together based on Davidic superscriptions in Psalm 101 and 103. Consequently, Psalms 104–106 are grouped as testifying to YHWH’s acts in creation and history (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:2). This study placed Psalms 101–104 together as these psalms continue the YHWH-is-king theology developed in Psalms 93–100 and testify that YHWH is the ruler over humanity (Psalms 101–103) and creation (Psalm 104). Since Psalms 105–106 are twin psalms, this study groups them as the conclusion to Book IV.

The following two subsections describe the content of Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106 as subgroups in Book IV of the Psalter. The outcome of the social-scientific analysis of these psalms, done in Chapters 4–8, is also incorporated into the discussion.

9.3.2 Psalms 90–92

Introducing Book IV of the Psalter is the group of Psalms 90–92. This group introduction has a double function in the structure of the Psalter. On the one hand, it reacts to the tragic end of the Davidic monarchy as described in Psalm 89 (Wilson 2010:761). On the other hand, it establishes the theological course for the remaining psalms in the Psalter. Psalms 90–92 move from lament in Psalm 90 to promise in Psalm 91 to the fulfilment of the promise and thanksgiving in Psalm 92 (deClaissé-Walford 2020:3). The movement between these psalms becomes apparent in their content.

Walter Brueggemann (1984:115) categorises Psalm 90 as a psalm of disorientation. In the wake of the fall of the monarchy and resultant exile, the people grapple with the meaning of life. The psalm begins with a superscription, placing the words of what follows in the mouth of Moses, the mediator between the people of Israel and YHWH. Following the superscription is a confession of faith, admitting that YHWH has been a dwelling place, a space of safety, for his people throughout their history. Furthermore, the psalm confirms an awareness of the transience of life in comparison with the eternal character of YHWH. Mindful of the iniquities that led them into this crisis, the exilic community pleads with YHWH to show them favour. On an intertextual level, Psalm 90 shows close connections to the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32–33. Beth Tanner (2001:92) writes in her study on the book of Psalms and intertextuality that, as Deuteronomy 32 functions as a prayer at the end of Moses' life, Psalm 90 functions as a prayer of Moses at the end of one era and the beginning of another era in Israel's life. The theological significance of this intertextual link is found in a relationship restored – as YHWH restored his relationship with the people in the wilderness, Psalm 90, in the "voice" of Moses, contains the implicit promise that the relationship will once again be restored in exile.

In Chapter 5, Psalm 91 was read as a response to Psalm 90. Psalm 91 signifies an interplay between threatening life experiences and how YHWH provides protection and rescue from them. Brueggemann (1984:156–157) describes this psalm as a psalm of reorientation or new orientation. In Psalm 91, a transformation begins, moving from lament and hopelessness in Psalm 90 to hope and promise in Psalm 91. In a world apparently ruled by chaos, YHWH is still in control, bringing order to those who trust in him. Intertextual references in

Psalm 91 include the divine names, also present in Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 90.

Psalm 92 represents the culmination of movement from Psalm 90 to Psalm 91. Psalm 92 as a whole is positive and orients the faith community after the traumatic events of the exile. It does this by referring to the temple tradition, even though the temple has been destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet, despite a templeless religion, YHWH restores the order of the world in Psalm 92 by granting the righteous a whole life in his protective presence.

When read together, Psalms 90–92 show several links. The first link is found on an intertextual level in the allusions to Deuteronomy 32–33 in all three psalms. Wallace (2007:30) stresses the Deuteronomistic theology underlying these references to Deuteronomy 32–33. In his final speech in Deuteronomy, Moses warned the people against disobedience. Psalms 90–92 grapple with the results of Israel’s disobedience that culminated in the exile. Yet, the psalms serve as a reminder that although Israel suffered the consequences of their disobedience, they can still find refuge in YHWH (Wallace 2007:30). The second major motif linking Psalms 90–92 is the wisdom tradition. Psalm 90:12 prays for a “heart of wisdom”, while Psalms 91–92 both reflect on the practical wisdom theme concerning the fate of the wicked versus the fate of the righteous. If the people were to hold on to the heart of wisdom that they prayed for and accept YHWH’s promise of protection, they would flourish in the presence of YHWH.

On a social-scientific level, the links between Psalms 90–92 become even more apparent. The patron-client relationship is present throughout these psalms. In Psalm 90, the focus is on Israel, the clients in the relationship. Their iniquities led to their honour being taken away, leaving them shamed and losing everything they knew. Amid instability and chaos, they pray for wisdom and the favour of their patron, YHWH. In reaction to this, Psalm 91 then focuses on the patron in the relationship. The psalm stresses the refuge and protection YHWH as patron will still provide to his clients. In an uncertain world, Israel can put their trust in YHWH because he remains trustworthy. Those who trust in him will receive honour and live in the favour of their patron. Psalm 92 continues the focus on YHWH as a patron. This time, his ability to bring order to the chaos in the world is prominent. Through this, YHWH brings stability back to the lives of his clients, re-establishing and maintaining the order that he put in place. In this way, the honour of his people is fully restored as they find mercy and hope in YHWH's loving-kindness.

The narrative of Psalms 90–92 is a narrative of restoration that moves from lament over the brevity of human life, to YHWH's promise of protection to the confirmation of restoration (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:6). The psalms move from disruption and brokenness to the hope of new meaning and a new beginning, ending in a reordered world and a reasserted belief in YHWH (Brown & Collicutt 2022:281–282).

9.3.3 Psalms 105–106

Psalms 105–106 not only serve as the conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter but are also considered to be twin psalms. These psalms are placed at a crucial spot in the structure of the Psalter – at the seam between Books IV and V, reflecting on the history of Israel from the time before the monarchy up to the time of exile (Anderson 2017:186). Hossfeld and Zenger (2011:76) also note that the whole history of Israel is told in these psalms, with a special focus on the exodus from Egypt and the exile, interpreted as the "new exodus". With references to the figure of Moses in both psalms, as well as intertextual links to Deuteronomy 32–33, Psalms 105–106 conclude the Mosaic frame around Book IV (Wilson 2010:761). The Priestly covenant theology, reminding of the time of Moses, is also prominent in Psalms 105–106 (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:75). This, of course, also links Psalms 105–106 to the introductory psalms of Book IV, Psalms 90–92.

Both Psalm 105 and Psalm 106 use collective memory to (re)interpret the events of the past and reconstruct the identity of a people who lost their way (Gärtner 2015:374–375). The term for "remember" (זכר) is found throughout these psalms.

According to Anderson (2017:187), the memory of Psalms 105–106 assists in addressing the identity crisis of the people of Israel in exile and a post-exilic world. The memories of Israel are reinterpreted as Psalms 105–106 take a spatial journey into Israel's past.

These two psalms, although they are both classified as historical psalms, differ in their focus. Psalm 105 focuses on the deeds and loving-kindness of YHWH, while Psalm 106 can be described as Israel's confession of guilt (Hossfeld & Zenger 2011:75). Psalm 105 can be regarded as an appreciative overview of YHWH's love and protection in Israel's history. Psalm 106, on the other hand, tells the opposite story. It narrates the history of Israel's rebellion and disobedience towards YHWH and his law. Psalm 105 begins its retelling of history with Abraham and the ancestors, while Psalm 106 begins in Egypt and at the Sea of Reeds. YHWH's fostering of the covenant relationship is stressed in Psalm 105, while Psalm 106 stresses the covenant rebellion of Israel. Both psalms end, however, with statements about YHWH's remembering his covenant and remaining faithful.

Like Psalms 90–92, the patron-client relationship is the determining force behind Psalms 105–106. In Psalm 105, the focus is on the patron, YHWH, and his faithfulness. Israel enjoys YHWH's favour in the covenant he made with them and in the protection he granted them throughout their history. The proof of YHWH's faithfulness is found in the fulfilment of the promise of a land. However, together with the inheriting of the land, Israel, as YHWH's client, had the responsibility to keep the Torah of God. Psalm 106, focusing on the client in the patron-client relationship, demonstrates how Israel failed as a client. Instead of putting their trust in YHWH, they rebelled against him. Instead of keeping the Torah, they disobeyed his stipulations and broke the covenant relationship with YHWH. Parallel to the promise of land in Psalm 105, Psalm 106 relates how the people's unfaithfulness peaked in their idolatrous behaviour within the land. In Deuteronomistic fashion, the eventual exile is interpreted as the punishment for their breaking the covenant. Nevertheless, as in Psalm 105, the end of Psalm

106 testifies to the compassion and loving-kindness of YHWH despite Israel's iniquities. YHWH remains faithful, and the promise of inheriting the land continues in the people's plea in Psalm 106:47, "please gather us from the nations."

Reflecting on the significance of Psalms 105–106, deClaissé-Walford (2020:68) states that these psalms not only bear witness to the covenant relationship of YHWH with his people but also remind the people in exile and in a post-exilic world to remember the past and to learn from it so that they can have the future hope of once again living in the promised land.

9.4 Remembered space in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106

At the outset of the study, it was argued that remembered space is the structuring principle on which Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 is based. The study investigated this hypothesis by reading these psalms from a canonical perspective against the background of social-scientific criticism, critical spatiality, memory, and imagination. Now, we have come to the findings of the study. In this section, the spatial narrative of the introduction and conclusion to Book IV is told as it emerged from the examination of Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106 in Chapters 4–8. This narrative is then linked to the notion of remembered space as it pertains to the Psalms.

9.4.1 Spatial narrative

The spatial journey that characterises the introduction and conclusion to Book IV can be described as "space lost, space remembered, space found." The loss of space is felt throughout Book IV. On a firstspace level, the people lost the land and the temple. On a secondspace level, they lost the social glue that kept them together – the monarchy, religious institutions and their theological certainties as embodied in the Zion theology. On a thirdspace level, the Israelite people were scattered away from their homeland into a foreign land. This led to experiences of disorientation, not belonging and ultimately, an identity crisis. With their city and life in ruins, the people of YHWH lived in a space of disillusionment. It is in this space that Psalm 90 begins the narrative of Book IV.

Psalm 90 was considered in the study to be a “lament for lost space”. Following the fall of the monarchy and the Babylonian exile, the people found themselves in a space of powerlessness. In the aftermath of the exile, in a space of crisis and instability, the Israelites are searching for a point of orientation. Off-centre, they call on YHWH to return to them. In Psalm 90, this call takes place within a metaphor of life and death. Within a negative time-space, they lament their fate, searching for a reorientation as they realise that YHWH is the only safe space in a world stripped of all meaning.

Psalm 91 answers the call for reorientation born in Psalm 90 and becomes a theological commentary on how to become at-centre again. Becoming at-centre, however, requires one to acknowledge the crippling effect that off-centre experiences have on one’s life. Psalm 91 describes the realm of danger and disorientation in the examples of evil, disease, threatening enemies, and wild animals, all contributing to a negative living space. Yet, the psalm contrasts these with the positive spatial experience of YHWH’s protection. Spatial metaphors are employed in describing YHWH’s protection, such as seeing YHWH as a dwelling place, finding security in the shelter of the Most High and seeking refuge under his wings. The spatial goal of Psalm 91 is to transform the space of an oppressed, scared, and persecuted people. The way in which the psalm achieves this is through stressing the importance of the social value of trust, based on divine protection. Because the patron-client relationship with YHWH promises them protection, the people can trust YHWH to transform their space.

Although a turn to positive space already started in Psalm 91, Psalm 92 ends the introduction to Book IV in an entirely positive space. Told in the imagined space of the temple on the Sabbath, Psalm 92 wants to assure the exilic and post-exilic communities that even after the loss of space on all levels during the exile, not all is lost. After all, YHWH is still the Creator-God, ordering the world. To confirm that YHWH indeed restores the righteous, Psalm 92 is told from the ordered, holy space of the temple. Using vocabulary that stresses spatial terms such as “high”, YHWH is placed in the highest position, emphasising his act to lift up the righteous, thus bringing them closer to him in the perspective of the three-storey worldview. The implications of the lifting up of the righteous are that they become at-centre; their honour is restored, while the wicked are brought low and shamed. In this wisdom motif featuring the fate of the righteous over against the fate of the wicked, the “correct” life order is restored and, in this sense, also the lived space of the people. Moving from the negative to the positive, from a crisis of faith to assurance of a complete and prosperous life, Psalms 90–92 bear witness to YHWH as a refuge, a rock, a dwelling place, and a safe space for his people through all life experiences.

As Psalm 92 ended in a positive space, Psalm 105 begins on a positive note. It begins with singing YHWH’s praises before giving an overview of the way in which YHWH stayed faithful to his covenant with Israel throughout their history. The protective presence of YHWH creates a space of belonging for the people of Israel. The spatial concept of “land” grounds the events of Psalm 105. On a firstspace level, land refers first to Egypt and then to Canaan or the Promised Land. On a secondspace level, the land fulfilled a political, religious, and social role in the lives of the people. On a thirdspace level, YHWH transformed the people from strangers in a foreign land to being at home in the Promised Land. The theme throughout Psalm 105 is that YHWH, in his faithfulness to the covenant, transforms the space of his people from negative to positive, from hopeless to hopeful and from powerless to powerful. The spatial transformation is illustrated in the various examples from history that Psalm 105 employed – the experiences of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. This message of YHWH’s faithfulness to his covenant and transforming his people’s lived space conveyed an encouraging message to a traumatised (post)exilic community.

In Psalm 106, the spatial picture changes, however. The overall positive space of Psalm 105 highlights the negative, off-centre experiences in Psalm 106. The spatial journey of Psalm 106 also takes the reader through the history of ancient Israel, from Egypt to the Sea of Reeds and into the wilderness, the Promised Land and ultimately exile. The psalm can be spatially divided into three movements: the journey *to* the land, iniquities *in* the land and the loss *of* the land. The firstspace report of Israel’s disobedience and rebellion also plays out on second thirdspace levels in their breaking of the covenant relationship with YHWH and ending in exile. However, Psalm 106 does not end in that negative space. A change comes in verse 44, when YHWH, who has punished his people for their disobedience, shows them compassion. The psalm ends in verse 47 with the hopeful plea that YHWH will save his people once again and gather them from the nations so that they, as his clients, will honour YHWH, their patron.

Wallace (2007:83) notes that while the overall space of Psalm 106 seems like a drop from the positive space in the enthronement psalms or even Psalm 105, there has, nevertheless, been a development in the narrative of Book IV. The spatial narrative that emerges in the introduction and conclusion to Book IV is characterised by an interplay between YHWH’s restorative faithfulness and the people’s lostness. Despite a loss of space, YHWH’s protection and presence encompass all dimensions of space. This narrative frames the centre of Book IV, consisting of psalms that celebrate YHWH’s reign over the entire cosmos, including humanity and creation. Because YHWH is the king, he can transform his people’s space from hopeless to hopeful. Where Psalm 90:13–14 call for YHWH’s compassion and loving-kindness, Psalm 106:45–46 bear testimony to the fact that YHWH had compassion in the abundance of his loving-kindness.

At this point, the spatial narrative of Psalms 90–92 can be illustrated as follows:

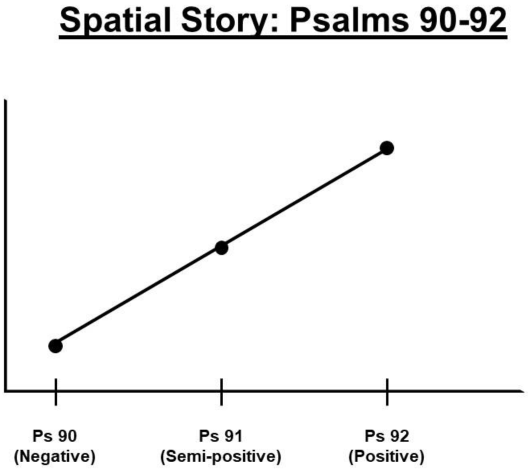

Figure 3: Spatial narrative of Psalms 90–92

As seen in the above figure, Psalm 90 begins in a negative space, a space of chaos in which the people are powerless. It is a lament for lost space. In Psalm 91, the space becomes more positive, the lost space is being transformed, and the people receive power through the honour that YHWH bestows upon them. This psalm can be characterised as transforming the lost space of Psalm 90. Psalm 92 ends the triptych in a positive space. In this psalm, the lost space is rediscovered in the imagined space of the temple, while the people's honour is simultaneously restored via YHWH's honour. The psalm can be described as a restoration of space.

The spatial narrative of Psalms 105–106 can be illustrated as follows:

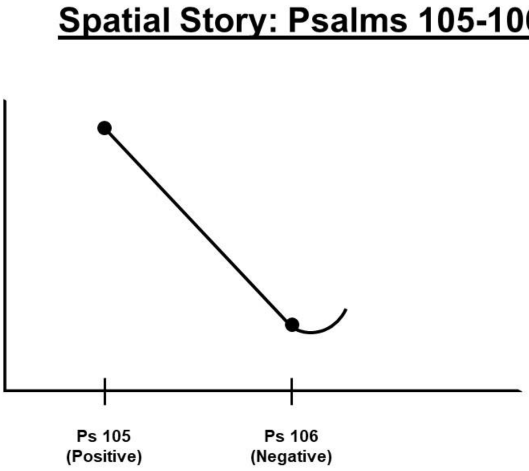

Figure 4: Spatial narrative of Psalms 105–106

From the figure representing Psalms 105–106, it becomes apparent that Psalm 105 begins in a positive space, remembering and giving a historical account of receiving space from YHWH in the form of the Promised Land. Psalm 106, however, takes a turn for the negative by retelling the story of the guilt and disobedience of Israel. This psalm gives a historical account of how they lost the space that YHWH had given them. Yet, the end of Psalm 106 provides hope for a positive ending – confirming that YHWH showed compassion and remained faithful despite the people’s wrongdoings. Although Psalm 106 is the end of the narrative of Book IV of the Psalter, it is not the end of Israel’s story. The confident prospect with which Psalm 106 ends is taken up in Psalm 107, the introduction to Book V of the Psalter.

When connected, the combined spatial narrative of Psalms 90–92 and Psalms 105–106 can be illustrated in the following way:

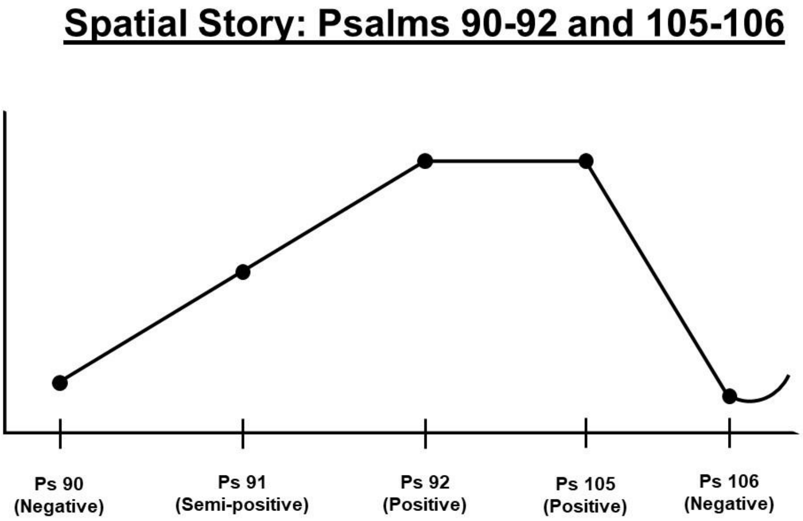

Figure 5: Combined spatial narrative of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106

Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 offer a window into the relationship between YHWH and his people in a time of disorientation, loss, and uncertainty. Yet, it is the memories of Israel that provided the framework in which to interpret the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel. This brings us to the foundation of remembered space in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106.

9.4.2 Memory and imagination as foundation of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106

In considering the spatial contours of a text, such as the spatial narrative in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 above, one inevitably comes across memory-links to the past. According to Victor Matthews (2015:35), collective memory is one of the tools that biblical writers used to provide a foundation for their texts. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Brueggemann and Linafelt (2012:6) argue that the texts in the Hebrew Bible consist of sustained memory interpreted over generations in an act of imagination that regards YHWH as the defining character in the world. As with all memories, the collective memories of Israel are also tied to place or space, as per the subject of this study. While remembering spaces past, a mental map is created in people's minds, accessed through imagination. The point where space, memory and imagination meet can be described as remembered space. When employed as a method in interpreting biblical texts, remembered space reveals how collective memories form the foundation of a particular text and how these memories contribute to the spatial and imaginative (re)construction of meaning in that text.

Based on this, the role of remembered space in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 can be traced along the lines of a few collective memories that form the foundation of these psalms. The collective memories in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 all connect thematically. The figure of Moses as intercessor, together with the exodus tradition, act as fixed points in creating a space to remember the past and imagine the future. These two major lines of remembered space are seen in the superscription of Psalms 90–92, ascribing the psalms to the figure of Moses.[17]

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[17] The name "Moses" is found in Ps 90:1 but thought to apply to all three psalms.

Through this reference, the exodus tradition is simultaneously recalled. In Psalms 105–106, remembered space presents itself more explicitly. For example, the term “remember” (זכר) is mentioned throughout, Moses is referred to in both Psalm 105 and Psalm 106, and the historical events of the exodus are also recounted.

In a further aspect of remembered space, the collective memories of events at certain places, such as Egypt, the wilderness, and the Promised Land, contribute to the concept of remembered space in these psalms. While not one of the significant collective memories, it is worth mentioning the imagined space of the temple that forms the background to Psalm 92 in particular. This imagined temple space helps the (post)exilic community to find the historical temple presence of YHWH in their present situation. Remembering the significance of specific spaces, such as the temple or the wilderness, is what Matthews (2015:65) calls geographic reiteration. Through geographic reiteration, space and memory intertwine, and the past is interpreted in light of the present circumstances of the exilic and post-exilic communities. The psalms link these spatial memories to Israel’s origin history in such a way that this history acquires new meaning, creating spaces of imagination in which the people of Israel can come to grips with their post-exilic reality.

Although remembered space is not explicitly mentioned in all the psalms, the main trajectory for remembered space, especially in Psalms 90–92, lies in the intertextual links with other texts in the Old Testament. Unique to Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 is that all these psalms use the same basis text for their collective memories, namely Deuteronomy 32–33, which is the song of Moses. Although each psalm also has intertextual links to other books in the Old Testament, semantic and literary links with Deuteronomy 32–33 are the most prominent. The song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 is one of the latest texts in Deuteronomy, redactionally added as part of the canon-building process (Otto 2012:180). Eckart Otto (2012:179–180) interprets the whole of Deuteronomy 31–34 as a reflection on Israel’s history of sin and salvation. In this sense, the last chapters of

Deuteronomy go beyond the Mosaic time that it narrates. As Moses' farewell speech, Deuteronomy 32–33 indicate the end of an era in the history of ancient Israel. Book IV of the Psalter, therefore, reimagines Moses' farewell speech as the theological basis for leading in a new era for the people of YHWH – a post-monarchic and even post-exilic era.

The Deuteronomistic influences in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 want to link this new era not to the covenant with David but rather to the Mosaic covenant, focusing on a new identity found in the collective memories of YHWH's saving presence and protection in the exodus and wilderness. Therefore, a "selective memory" is found in these psalms, where any reference to the monarchy is left out, "forgotten". Instead, the memories of YHWH's saving acts in a foreign space – Egypt and the wilderness – are taken as a model for how he will once again act in history in the foreign spaces of Babylon and post-exilic Judea to save his people from distress. This certainty is based on the covenant promises made to the ancestors and kept by YHWH throughout their history. Although the people's disobedience was situated in their unfaithfulness to and breaking of the covenant – "forgetting" the covenant – YHWH remembered the covenant and remained faithful to it. Precisely because the memory of YHWH consists of mercy, compassion and loving-kindness, the people of Israel can imagine a future filled with hope and positive life-affirming promises fulfilled by YHWH.

From the remembered space in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, a renewed theology and anthropology emerge. The overarching theme throughout the introduction and conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter is the covenant relationship between YHWH and his people. In the table below, the framework of the covenant relationship between YHWH and the people of Israel is illustrated as it emerges in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106:

Psalm	Focus: Patron/client	Orientation of psalm	Spatial status	Chiastic structure
Psalm 90	Client (Israel)	Disorientation	Lost space	
Psalm 91	Patron (YHWH)	Reorientation	Transformed space	
Psalm 92	**Patron (YHWH)**	**Orientation**	**Restored space**	
Psalm 105	Patron (YHWH)	Reorientation	Received space	
Psalm 106	Client (Israel)	Disorientation	Lost space	

Table 5: Chiastic structure of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106

In the above table, a chiastic structure emerges concerning Psalms 90–92 and 105–106. Psalms 90 and 106 create the outer frame, as both are psalms of disorientation, focusing on Israel and lost space. Psalms 91 and 105 – both psalms of reorientation – in which YHWH as patron plays the lead role, form the inner frame. The centre of these five psalms is found in Psalm 92, a psalm in which YHWH restores the space of Israel. This psalm is at-centre and oriented towards YHWH.

By remembering the covenant relationship through spatial memories, the people in exile and the post-exilic audience are enabled to reimagine their identity as the ones receiving YHWH's favour and honour. Even though they have not always remembered YHWH, he has stayed faithful to his covenant with them. He has kept his promises and shown compassion and steadfast love. Consequently, a spatial understanding of YHWH is developed in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, in which YHWH himself becomes a safe space, a dwelling place for his people. The transformative power of the covenant relationship with God restores the lived space of the exilic and post-exilic communities from hopeless to hopeful. A relationship with YHWH transcends all dimensions of space. Uprooted, with no space to call home, YHWH becomes their home.

However, at the end of this journey through remembered space, Psalm 106 warns of the dire consequences of YHWH becoming a forgotten space in Israel's history – they lose the space of the land given to them. Nevertheless, despite their memory loss, YHWH remembers. His memory is a space of compassion and loving-kindness. Therefore, the people can rejoice. The space they lost can be found again in memory and imagination.

9.4.3 Memory and imagination framing Psalms 93–100 and 101–104

While remembered space has been identified as the foundation of Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, how this insight influences the other psalms in Book IV remains to be pointed out. Upon studying the complete content of Book IV, it becomes apparent that two theological nuances are present. First, there are collective memories from Israel's exodus history focusing on the covenant, Moses and other Deuteronomistic themes. Second, there is the theme of YHWH's cosmic reign as king over Israel, humanity, and creation. As mentioned in Section 9.3.1, Book IV of the Psalter has an overall theocratic theology in which YHWH is placed in the middle as the one and true ruler of the world. The psalms that form the centre of Book IV, Psalms 93–100, 101–104, all attest to YHWH as the king who rules over humanity and creation. In the aftermath of a failed monarchy, the people realise that YHWH is the eternal king, better than any earthly human ruler. Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, as introduction and conclusion to Book IV, support this theology and message. In calling on the collective memories of YHWH's acts in the history of Israel, Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 already focus on YHWH as the central source of providence that the people should trust. In effect, YHWH has been his people's leader and ruler ("king") throughout their history. He has been that when they were in the wilderness, before the existence of a monarchy and a king, as attested to in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106. Therefore, YHWH remains their ruler after the monarchy has failed, and they found themselves in exile and beyond, as attested to in Psalms 93–100 and 101–104.

At first glance, it might seem that the themes of the exodus and Moses are predominantly found in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106, while the kingship theme is predominantly present in the centre psalms of Book IV, Psalms 93–100 and 101–104. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that these themes merge in the face of remembered space. The memory of the figure of Moses, the covenant tradition and the Deuteronomistic call to Torah obedience (Psalms 90–92 and 105–106) forms the prerequisite against which Israel can imagine YHWH as the everlasting king (Psalms 93–100 and 101–104).

With the main focus of Book IV being a post-monarchic YHWH-is-king model based on pre-monarchic memories, the references to the figure of David in Psalms 101–104 are somewhat perplexing. However, as mentioned in Section 2.3.2, the superscriptions ascribing Psalms 101–104 to David are used thematically. These psalms, following the theme of kingship, employ the collective memory of David, similar to the reference to Moses in the introduction and conclusion of Book IV. Similar to how the introduction and conclusion of Book IV reimagines YHWH's rule over Israel based on collective memories of the exodus, the centre of Book IV reimagines the Davidic monarchy in light of Psalms 93–100 which stipulates that YHWH is king and his monarchy is everlasting. Wilson (2010:756) merges the psalms in the introduction and conclusion of Book IV with the psalms in the centre of Book IV by pointing out that Book IV puts the *universal reign* of YHWH under *Mosaic authority*:

> …the *kerygma* of Book IV is that Israel needed to rediscover the Mosaic covenant in order to live fully under God's kingship.

Hence, Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 provide a historical ("remembered") basis on which YHWH's kingship is imagined in Psalms 93–100 and Psalms 101–104.

9.5 Remembering and imagining: Past, present, and future

Over the past decades, a myriad of approaches, perspectives and hermeneutical lenses have been developed in studying and interpreting biblical texts. In Psalms studies alone, scholars have applied and developed a variety of approaches. In an essay on the future of Psalms studies, Rolf Jacobson (2014:232) writes that the most productive approaches will continue to be influential in Psalms studies. These include the form-critical, canonical, theological, and poetic approaches. Each approach is a search to unlock the meaning of the biblical text. The fact that so many exegetical methods are in use is a positive feature of biblical studies, although it can be a pretty intimidating endeavour when one sets out. Nonetheless, each method contributes to interpreting a text, and no single method can fully comprehend a text in all its facets. Recognising this, many studies make use of a combination of methods.

The more recent dialogue in Psalms studies has focused on the shape and shaping of the Psalter, although more scholars are leaning towards a synchronised approach (Prinsloo 2021:167). This study found itself mainly in the canonical approach, focusing on specific psalm groups within the canonical shape of the Psalter. However, a combination of aspects was applied within the broader canonical approach to refine the study of the individual psalms in their groups. Jacobson (2014:242) notes that two significant tendencies in Psalms studies are to borrow interpretational methods used in other parts of scripture and use interdisciplinary methods. The social-scientific, critical spatial and memory foci employed in this study all attest to the value of interdisciplinary methods borrowed from the social sciences. This combination of hermeneutical lenses was used precisely for their unique perspective on the Psalms. Building on the notion of critical spatiality, which has already been in use for some time as a model for studying biblical texts, this study added the perspectives of memory and imagination to a spatial interpretation of the Psalms.

Although there has been some research on critical spatiality in the Psalter, the complete spatial narrative of the Psalter has not been developed yet (Prinsloo

2021:168). In addition, the dimension of remembered space, with its use of collective memory and imagination to shape identity in the Psalms, has not been fully explored. This study was merely an introduction to how remembered space can be employed to interpret biblical texts. The complete remembered space narrative of Book IV of the Psalter remains to be told. Furthermore, there are still plenty of opportunities to investigate the notion of remembered space, particularly the role of memory and imagination in other genres and texts of the Bible.

Ultimately, this study attempted to contribute to a spatial interpretation of the Psalter based on recognising the significance of spatial memory in biblical texts. Space is, after all, more than merely a geographical location or a physical place. All dimensions of our being exist in space (Prinsloo 2013:3). We attach meaning to spaces based on events (memories) happening there. Yet, memories are not only connected to physical places. Our memories also occupy space in our minds – remembered space ultimately resides in our minds and hearts. Similarly, faith functions within the sphere of remembered space. In order to make sense of life and attach meaning to experience, faith remembers the past and uses imagination to reconstruct the future (Barnes 2012:63). In an attempt to reconstruct their lives in the aftermath of exile, Israel turned to remembering a past that reminded them of YHWH’s faithfulness and compassion. On the certainty of YHWH’s love, they imagine a future filled with hope and salvation.

Through remembered space, hope is born in the spatial awareness of the power of collective memory and imagination. In this sense, the relevance of remembered space reaches beyond the Psalms and biblical texts. It reaches each person as they try to make sense of and find meaning in their existence-in-space: the physical space in which they live every day, their mental space pertaining to faith, politics and ideology and the lived space of their society. Acutely aware of the current state of brokenness that reaches all dimensions of space in the South African society, I believe that remembered space provides a tool to address our challenges. Collective memories can reprimand, teach, and encourage the imagination of a future with space for all and hope for all. In the use of remembered space, Psalms 90–92 and 105–106 teach us that how we reconstruct the space of the past determines how we will imagine the space of the future. Through collective memory and imagination, Israel, ridden with loss, rediscovers their identity in the unwavering space that *is* YHWH, their dwelling place.

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Topic of work: Remembered space: Memory and imagination in Psalms 90–92 and 105–106

1. I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.

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