

Psalm 108 and the Quest for Closure to the Exile

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ABSTRACT

Ps 108 is studied as a composition sui generis in terms of its poetic features and ideological intent. It is subsequently also compared to its two donor texts (Ps 57 and Ps 60) to determine how the selection and editorial adaptation of those verses which were used to create the new composition reveal something about its textual strategy and purpose. The strategy of its authors seems to have been the transformation of the oracle found in Ps 60 from a context of lamentation to one of future hope. The authors emphasised YHWH's universal majesty in contradistinction to the local insignificance of their enemies; and the global power of YHWH in contradistinction to the futility of human endeavours.

A INTRODUCTION

Ps 108 is a poetic composition constructed from sections of Ps 57 and Ps 60. Psalm 57:8-12 was used to create Ps 108:2-6; while Ps 60:7-14 was re-contextualised as Ps 108:7-14. This means that the longish, davidizing headings and first parts of both donor psalms were removed and the two torsos united under a new, short Davidic heading. Certain small changes were also made to the borrowed verses in order to enhance the unity and/or purpose of the new composition (see the addendum for a comparison), creating a text which differs in genre and intent from the two donor texts and which is very different from the sum of its constituent parts.¹

It is the purpose of this paper to study the structure and argument of Ps 108 as a composition in its own right, but also to compare its strategy and ideology with those of the donor texts. It seems that the purpose of creating a new composition from two existing texts was to facilitate an “anthological”² re-

¹ It would therefore be wrong, for instance, to analyse the structure of vv. 2-6 (which originated from Ps 57:8-12) in isolation from vv. 7-14 as Pierre Auffret, *Voyez de vos Yeux. Étude structurelle de vingt Psaumes dont le Psaume 119* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 80-84 does. Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-50* (revised ed.; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 94 criticizes his carrying over the structure of the constituent parts to the new composition. Verse 6 in the new composition initiates a new section and forms enjambment with v. 7, which becomes a final clause for the command at the beginning of v. 6.

² The “anthological” style is a description of the type of psalm texts which the Levitical singers or authors created in post-exilic times in which they made extensive use of texts which had already assumed a kind of canonical status to create new ones. Psalm 119 is such an example, in which the author made use of the style of a lament

casting and re-reading of earlier texts which must have been known to the audience of Ps 108. In this way the earlier texts were “commented” upon and their horizons expanded.

B STICHOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND TRANSLATION OF PS 108

		1	שִׁיר מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד:	A song, a psalm of David.
I	A	2	נָכוֹן לִבִּי אֱלֹהִים	My heart is ready, O God,
			אֲשִׁירָה וְאֶזְמְרָה אֶף-כְּבוֹדִי:	I want to sing, and I want to make melody, also my glory!
		3	עוֹרָה הַנִּבֵּל וְכִנּוֹר	Wake up, lyre and harp!
			אֶעֱרָה שָׁחַר:	I want to wake up the dawn.
		4	אֹדֶךָ בְּעַמִּים יְהוָה	I want to praise you among the peoples, YHWH,
			וְאֶזְמְרָךָ בְּלֹא-עַמִּים:	and to make melody among the non-nations,
		5	כִּי-גָדוֹל מֵעַל-שָׁמַיִם חֶסְדְּךָ	for great is your fidelity beyond the heavens,
			וְעַד-שָׁחַקִים אֲמַתְּךָ:	and to the clouds your faithfulness.
	B	6	רְוַמָה עַל-שָׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים	Be exalted above heaven, O God,
			וְעַל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדְךָ:	and over all the earth your glory,
		7	לְמַעַן יִחַלְצוּן יְדֵיךָ	so that they can be saved, your beloved ones;
			הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעֲנֵנִי:	save (with) your right hand and answer me.
II	C	8	אֱלֹהִים דָּבַר בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ	God spoke in his sanctuary (holiness):
			אֶעְלֶזָה אֶחְלַקָּה שִׁבְמִי	“I want to exult, I want to divide Shechem,
			וְעַמְקֵי סְבוֹת אֲמַדְדֶּה:	and the valley of Sukkoth I will measure out.
		9	לִי גִלְעָד לִי מְנַשֶּׁה	Mine is Gilead; mine is Manasseh;
			וְאֶפְרַיִם מְעוֹז רֹאשִׁי	and Ephraim is the stronghold of my head;
			יְהוּדָה מַחְקֵקִי:	Judah is my staff.
		10	מוֹאָב סִיר רְחֵצִי	Moab is my washbasin (for feet);
			עַל-אֲדוֹם אֲשַׁלְּךָ נַעְלִי	upon Edom I cast my sandal;
			עַל-פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֶתְרוּעֵעַ:	over Philistia I shout triumphantly.”
III	D	11	מִי יָבִילֵנִי עִיר מְבֻצָּר	Who will bring me (to) the fortified city?
			מִי יַנְחֵנִי עַד-אֲדוֹם:	Who will lead me to Edom?
		12	הֲלֹא-אֱלֹהִים זָנְחָתָנוּ	Is it not God, you (who) rejected us?
			וְלֹא-תֵצֵא אֱלֹהִים בְּצַבָּאוֹתֵינוּ:	And you do not go forth, O God, with our armies!
	E	13	הִבְהִלְנוּ עֲזָרַת מִצְרַיִם	Oh, grant us help against the opponent;
			וְשׁוֹן תְּשׁוּעַת אָדָם:	yes, vain is the help of man.
		14	בְּאֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה-חִיל	Through God we will perform mighty acts;
			וְהוּא יְבוֹס צָרֵינוּ:	and he, he will tread down our opponents.

Notes on the text and the translation:

- **Verse 1** is not considered to be part of the poem, but the verse number-

and the language of wisdom psalms such as Pss 1, 19, 25, 34, etc., to create a new text. Further examples of such psalms are Pss 31, 33, 37, and many more. According to Raymond J. Tournay, “Psaumes 57, 60 et 108. Analyse et Interprétation,” *RB* 96 (1989): 5-26, 24-25, the reason why the anti-Edomite oracle of Ps 60 is taken up in Ps 108, is because the Levitical cantors were eager to fill in for the gradual disappearance of prophecy during the second temple period.

ing is retained in the numbers of the verse lines in order to avoid confusion. Verse 2 is thus actually the first verse line, although it is numbered 2 directly to the left of the Hebrew.

- **נכון** in the beginning of **verse 2** is usually rendered “firm,” “steadfast,” “sure,” but in later Hebrew (Ezek 38:7, 2 Chron 35:4) the niph'al can also mean “be ready.” In the present context (which does not apply to the donor context in Ps 57:8, where the psalmist declares certainty despite the net his enemies prepared for him – cf. the wordplay formed with **הכינו** Ps 57:7), “I am ready” could describe the psalmist’s state of being awake before dawn to sing the praises of God.³ Cf. also the combination of **בִּקֶּר** and **נכון** in Exod 34:2 (although it is used there with the preposition **לְ** before “morning”). In that verse, Moses is commanded to “be ready” in the morning to meet YHWH on the mountain. Weber⁴ proposes to read Ps 57:8a-b (= Ps 108:2a minus the repetition of **לְבִי**) as a quotation of the contents of the song together with verse 9 (= Ps 108:3 plus **עוֹרָה כְּבוֹדִי**). He carries this proposal over to the interpretation of Ps 108.⁵ This seems highly improbable for Ps 60, and even more so for Ps 108.
- **אף-כְּבוֹדִי** in **verse 2** could probably be rendered with “also my being,” despite the arguments of Zenger to the contrary.⁶ He argues that it is used here, in the new context, as a vocative directed to YHWH, pointing out a keyword connection with verse 6b where **כְּבוֹדִי** refers to YHWH’s glory. It should be noted, however, that in the corresponding verse to this one in Ps 57:9, **כְּבוֹדִי** even more clearly refers to the inner being of the poet, and that this does not affect the occurrence of **כְּבוֹדֶךָ** in both 57:6 and 57:12 negatively. The particle **אף** serves here as an expression of addition and emphasis⁷ and it more probably establishes a connection between **לְבִי** and **כְּבוֹדִי** than between **אֱלֹהִים** and **כְּבוֹדִי**. There is then a chiasmic parallel formed between **לְבִי** and **כְּבוֹדִי**, similar to the parallel between the same forms found in Ps 16:9. This is also the way Gesenius⁸

³ John Eaton, *The Psalms. A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation* (London: T&T Clark International, 2003), 378 also translates this form with “ready.”

⁴ Beat Weber, “‘Fest ist mein Herz, o Gott!’ Zu Ps 57, 8-9,” *ZAW* 107 (1995): 294-295.

⁵ Beat Weber, *Die Psalmen 73 bis 150* (vol. 2 of *Werkbuch Psalmen*; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2003), 212.

⁶ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld & Erich Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150* (Freiburg: Herder, 2008), 162.

⁷ Zenger’s rendering of this combination with “du, meine Ehre!” seems improbable (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 169).

⁸ H. F. W. Gesenius (author), E. Kautzsch (editor), A. E. Cowley (editor), *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, electronic version, § 144l, m.

explains the form in this verse. Tournay⁹ describes כְּבוֹדִי in verse 2 as “une vocalisation noble pour kebēdî.” “Liver” would form a parallel to “heart” or “soul” as an additional reference to the being of the suppliant. Emmendorffer¹⁰ describes the כְּבוֹד as “die göttliche Anteilgabe an den Menschen”. He¹¹ explains this as God’s giving glory to people and the world without diminishing his own glory. Repayment of this gift occurs when people praise God.

- The form בל־אֲמִים in **verse 4b** (a form which is also found in Ps 44:15; the donor text Ps 57:10; and in Ps 149:7) is explained by Tournay¹² as a depreciating spelling¹³ of “among the nations” which one should thus probably understand as “among the non-nations.” These nations have no claim to the status of a people as long as they do not accept the dominion of YHWH.
- The verb רוּמָה in **verse 6a** cannot provide completely through its supposed ellipsis for the syntax of verse 6b; a causative form of the same verb would be needed. It is possible that verse 6b is supposed to be read as a jussive nominal sentence (“and let your glory be over all the earth”).
- **Verse 7b** is possibly ambiguous, as is the case in other verses of the psalm also (cf. the possible translations of בְּקִדְשׁוֹ in v. 8a). A number of investigators point out that יְמִינְךָ functions as an adverbial accusative, thus “with your right hand.” This is also the interpretation of Gesenius¹⁴ of this verse.
- In **verse 8a**, בְּקִדְשׁוֹ should probably be translated “in his sanctuary” rather than “in his holiness.” This is determined by the importance of spatiality in the psalm. Zenger¹⁵ points out the parallel in Ps 89:36, “once I swore in my holiness,” which is also followed by an oracle. But in view of the connections with Ps 110, Zenger also decides in favour of “his sanctuary.” The parallel established with Ps 2:6, where the sanctuary (הֵר־קִדְשִׁי) also features in a subsequently related oracle, also suggests that this is probably better.

⁹ Tournay, “Psaumes 57, 60 et 108,” 25.

¹⁰ Michael Emmendorffer, *Der Ferne Gott. Eine Untersuchung der alttestamentlichen Volksklagelieder vor dem Hintergrund der mesopotamischen Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 178.

¹¹ Emmendorffer, *Der Ferne Gott*, 178-179.

¹² Tournay, “Psaumes 57, 60 et 108,” 25.

¹³ Tournay, “Psaumes 57, 60 et 108,” 25 calls it “une graphie dépréciative,” a peculiar way of writing the combination which could be understood as a denigrating term.

¹⁴ Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley, § 144m.

¹⁵ Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 162-3.

- In **verse 11a**, the form **יבלי** is a hiph'il of **בל**, which means “to bring as tribute.” The “fortified city” could be understood as the direct object, and the suffix first person singular attached to the verb as the indirect object: “Who will bring (to) me?” This is another instance of possible ambiguity, for the verb could possibly be read as being a semantic parallel of “Who will lead me?” This is the way it is interpreted here.
- In **verse 14a**, the instrument “through God” is emphasised by putting it first; while in verse 14b the subject “he” is emphasised through hyperbaton in which the subject is not only stated explicitly, but also made to precede everything in the colon as well.

C THE STRUCTURE AND ARGUMENTATIVE IMPACT OF PS 108

Psalm 108 can be segmented into five strophes: A: 2-5; B: 6-7; C: 8-10; D: 11-12; E: 13-14. In each of these strophes, the name and/or designation **אלהים** plays an important role:¹⁶ it is found in the first stich of strophes A, B, and C; the two rhetorical questions introduced with **מי** at the beginning of strophe D are answered with a double occurrence of **אלהים** (in 12a and 12b); the final, concluding verse line (14, the second line of strophe E) again begins with it, forming inclusio with verse 2. There is also one occurrence of **יהוה** – in verse 4 (where the donor text in Ps 57:10 has **אדני**), but this does not designate the beginning of a new section. The segmentation proposed here is based on a poetic analysis and a study of the contents of the verses, which can be described as follows:

I	A	2-5	A song of praise in a temporal-cosmic setting, based on the cosmic dimensions of YHWH’s covenant love.
	B	6-7	A prayer that YHWH will display his glory cosmically and universally so that his people can be saved.
II	C	8-10	Citation of an oracle telling of YHWH’s future military triumph, ¹⁷ describing the honourable and less honourable tasks assigned to various areas under his domain.
III	D	11-12	The expression of a desire for a final triumph over Edom

¹⁶ Beat Weber’s attempt to separate vv. 11 and 12 into two stanzas (so that **אלהים** serves as a marker for the beginning of the third stanza also) is the result of his interpreting v. 11 as part of the oracle. Cf. Beat Weber, *Die Psalmen 73 bis 150. Die Psalmen 73 bis 150* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2003), 212-213. This has not found much support. Verse 11 clearly describes Edom as a problem and contrasts it with the oracle of subjugation given in v. 10 as being an object of a future campaign. Verse 11 also returns to the distichic verse lines found in 2-7, while the report about the oracle is presented in tristichic verse lines.

¹⁷ Zenger (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 165-166) refers to the convention to acquire an oracle before a military campaign – which would then put the outcome of the conflict beyond doubt – by proleptically partitioning the spoils.

- and an end to the inactivity of YHWH.
- E 13-14 A supplication for help in this regard, since only YHWH can provide help as he will eventually do.¹⁸

Strophe C can also be demarcated as a separate stanza (II), while strophes A and B combine to form stanza I and strophes D and E combine to form stanza III. There is a parallel between strophes B and E, since both comprise a prayer for help (cf. *חֵלֶץ* and *יִשַׁע* in v. 7 and *עֹזֶרָה* and *תְּשׁוּעָה* in v. 13). Strophe A, on the other hand, forms a contrast with strophe D. YHWH's fidelity and faithfulness is lauded in verse 5; verse 12 complains that God has rejected his people and do not accompany them when they undertake conquests. Both can be described as arguments which serve as the basis for the prayers in B and E respectively – reminding YHWH of his covenant love of cosmic proportions (A) strengthens the supplication for intervention on behalf of his “beloved” people (B); the complaint that they have been rejected by God, who does not accompany them on military campaigns (local, geographical movement) (D) forms dissonance with the declaration of his cosmic covenant love (stretching beyond the heavens) at the beginning of the psalm, strengthening the argument that he must help them against their opponents (E). The middle stanza (II) has links to both I and III – it serves as a reminder to YHWH of his promise to subdue the enemies of his people, and thus enhances the arguments on both sides that it is time for him to intervene and reclaim his honour (as is asked in vv. 6-7 and 13-14).

There is a web of intratextual connections within each of the strophes. In verse 2 there is ABBA chiasmus of “my heart” (A), “I want to sing” (B), “I want to make melody” (B), and “my glory” (A). In the way it is understood here, there is thus ellipsis of *נִבְּוֶן* in verse 2b: Both the author’s “heart” and his “glory,” his innermost being, are ready to start singing. Apart from the assonance of the two suffixes, there is also alliteration of *א* (which occurs four times in prominent positions) in the verse as a whole. Verse 3 has parallelism of its two cola, since the verb *עוֹר* is repeated at the beginning of both, so that “lyre” and “harp” on the one hand also form a parallel with “dawn” on the other. The music instruments are roused from their sleep to serve as instruments for “waking up” the dawn. The implication is that the poet wants to start singing before daybreak, thus bringing on the blessings of healing and help associated with the dawn.¹⁹ *אֲשִׁירָה* in verse 2b also rhymes completely with *אֲעִירָה* in 3b, providing the explanation that it is the singing that will do the wakening. Verse 4 further explains that the purpose of the early morning singing is the

¹⁸ Emmendorffer (*Der Ferne Gott*, 177) proposes a very similar analysis of the structure, but separates v. 13 (as “Bitte”) from v. 14 (as “Bekennnis der Zuversicht”).

¹⁹ Zenger (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 169) refers to the dawn as symbolising the epiphany of God as king and the beginning of his life-sustaining and saving activity.

universal praise of YHWH. Cola 4a and 4b are completely parallel in morphology and meaning, so that six pairs of parallel elements can be identified. עמים and לאמים form a regular word pair, but mild contempt is expressed in the way which the last-mentioned word is combined with the preposition לְ to form the negative particle לֹא: The implication is that these people are not really deserving of the description “a people” (cf. the note above referring to Tournay).²⁰

The series of guttural sounds which opens 2b, 3a, 3b, 4a and 4b (after the *waw* copulative) is extended to the form ועד in 5b. The causal כִּי at the beginning of verse 5a breaks this series, but simultaneously establishes a close syntactic connection between 4 and 5: The reason why the poet so dearly wants to sing is the fidelity and faithfulness of YHWH. These qualities are described in cosmic terms: his fidelity reaches up higher than the heavens, and his faithfulness to the clouds. This establishes a fourfold morphological and semantic parallel between 5a and 5b, with ellipsis of גדול in 5b. שחקים is not semantically inferior to שמים in this parallel, since it seems to indicate thick, dark clouds which sometimes have a connection with an epiphany of YHWH.²¹

The preposition על which is used in the form מעל in verse 5a is repeated twice in verse 6, while שמים from 5a is also repeated in 6a. And yet, verse 6 is demarcated as the beginning of a new strophe. The reasons for this are that “God” is now addressed directly, and there is a change in tone, in mode, and in subject of the verbs, while verse 7 constitutes a final clause for the imperative in verse 6, so that a close connection is established between verse 6 and verse 7. The repetition of על and שמים in verse 6 is thus interpreted as serving to form an external parallel between strophe A and strophe B. This external parallel is enhanced by the morphological and auditive connection between the emphatic imperative in 3a and 6a, but since they are addressed to different subjects, this phenomenon does not prohibit the identification of a new strophe which begins at verse 6. Still, the repetition of second person suffixes referring to YHWH (4a, 4b, 5a, and 5b) and “God” (6b, 7a, and 7b) does establish a connection which is taken as an indication that strophe B should not be seen as the beginning of a new stanza. Because of YHWH’s fidelity and faithfulness which stretches up so high, he is called to reveal his own greatness “over heaven” and his “glory” “over all the earth” (6b). These spatial categories now form merismus for “the whole cosmos,” while horizontal dimensions also come into play in addition to the vertical dimensions found in verse 5. In verse 6a and b, repetition of the preposition על, the word-pair שמים and ארץ, and presumably “God” in comparison to “your glory” form parallels between the two cola. The purpose of this epiphanic activity of God is described as the “saving” of his “beloved ones.” The title “beloved” is used in the Bible to refer to Benjamin (Deut 33:12), to Solomon (2 Sam 12:25), to YHWH himself (the “beloved” of the pro-

²⁰ Tournay, “Psaumes 57, 60 et 108,” 25.

²¹ Cf. 2 Sam 22:12; Ps 18:12; and Ps 77:18.

phetic speaker in Isa 5:1), and to the people of Judah (Jer 11:15, cf. 12:7). There is a semantic parallel between חֲלָץ in 7a and ישׁע in 7b, but יִמְיָךְ is probably meant to serve as an adverb, describing the means by which God must save his people. The right hand is associated with acts of saving at the exodus and during the holy war, it is also the most important component of the hands-feet domain of human life, symbolising purposeful activity. The “staff” mentioned in verse 9, the “wash basin” and the “sandal” of verse 10, and the “trampling” or “treading on” of verse 14 are also relevant for this aspect. Another, internal, parallel is established in verse 7b between the two imperatives. The speaker who asks God to “answer me” must be the same speaker who announced the desire to sing early in the morning, probably thought of as King David in a prophetic capacity.²² The contents of the request are the revelation of YHWH’s כְּבוֹד, a display of his honour,²³ which is linked to the saving of his beloved people.

Verses 8-10 differ from the preceding as well as the subsequent verses, and deserve to be elevated as a separate strophe, but also a separate stanza. They stand out because of their tristichic form (all other verse lines are distichic); the divine first person speaker (the only place where God speaks in the psalm); the metaphoric language which turns into an allegory of place names as articles of military clothing (helmet and staff or baton) and the process of unclothing (washing the feet and storing the sandals); and the geographical pro-

²² Zenger (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 168-169) refers to the David of the heading as the “Gründungsgestalt der davidischen Dynastie, deren Restauration die Trilogie Ps 108-110 erhofft. Emmendorffer (*Der Ferne Gott*, 178) regards the first person singular forms in the poem as being collective forms for “die Gemeinde.” This makes it difficult, however, to interpret the first person plural forms further down. Weber (*Die Psalmen 73 bis 150*, 213) thinks of the speaker simply as a representative of the people, which is basically the way in which it is interpreted here also. But in post-exilic times David was already closely connected to the נָבֵל as a musical instrument, and with the concept of שִׁיר (cf. Amos 6:5, which is described by Ballhorn as late post-exilic). See Egbert Ballhorn, “‘Um deines Knechtes David Willen’ (Ps 132:10). Die Gestalt Davids im Psalter,” *BN* 76 (1995): 16-31, 17, n.2. In Ps 60 (a communal lament), David is given the status as spokesperson by the heading. See Ballhorn, “Die Gestalt Davids im Psalter,” 24. The first person plural of Ps 60:7 is changed to a singular form in Ps 108:7, so that “David” is even more clearly designated as the spokesperson for the people whom he mentions in vv. 12-14 as “us” (on Ps 60:1, cf. Ballhorn, “Die Gestalt Davids im Psalter,” 29).

²³ Cf. in this regard the parallel with Ps 97:9 (עֲלִיּוֹן עַל-כָּל הָאָרֶץ) and my article on the so-called Enthronement Psalms (“The ‘Enthronement Psalms.’ A claim to the worldwide honour of Yahweh,” *OTE* 11 (1998): 24-39). Christoph Levin, “Das Gebetbuch der Gerechten. Literargeschichtliche Beobachtungen am Psalter,” *ZTK* 90 (1993): 355-381, says (366) about this phrase that “Das Königtum des höchsten Gottes Jahwe über die ganze Erde ist für das nachexilische Zion der Anlass zum Triumph über die Völkerwelt, die Jahwes Herrlichkeit (*kābôd*) zu sehen bekommt (V. 6b).”

gression from north to south in the semantic field of place names. The introductory colon (8a) is ambiguous – it could be translated as “God spoke in his holiness,” but also (and more probably) as “God spoke in his sanctuary.” The tone of the oracle is triumphant, almost boastful, and the purpose must have been to instil confidence and certainty about God’s military power over the enemies of his people. The verb עלו is often used in the sense of “to exult,” “to be jubilant,” “to rejoice over victory” with a certain component of gloating. The joy is seemingly derived from the prospect to be able to “divide” or “measure out” the land, two concepts used in parallel with “exult.” The names Shechem²⁴ and Sukkoth²⁵ have strong reminiscences to the patriarchal time, and may suggest fulfilment of the promise about the land to Abraham. The three first person imperfect forms in verse 8 are parallel, and so are the two place names, creating chiasmus in 8b-c. Verse 9a has repetition of the preposition ל with suffix, and this creates a parallel within the colon with the help of Gilead²⁶ and Manasseh²⁷ as a geographical word-pair.²⁸ Another parallel is formed between 9b and 9c by the names Ephraim and Judah, and the metaphorical description of these areas as honourable pieces of clothing (a helmet for the head and a baton as a staff indicating office or authority). This parallel is strengthened by the alliteration of m and the assonance of ê in ראשי מעוזי and מחקקי.

There is an external parallel between verses 9 and 10, similar to the parallel between verses 8 and 9. But the parallel between 9 and 10 is closer, even though it is antithetic, since the metaphoric comparisons are continued in 10. Moab, as the basin of “my washing” stands in contrast to Ephraim as the honourable “helmet” and Judah the “staff” of dominion. There is a military connotation to many of the words in the oracle (“exult,” “divide,” “measure out,” “helmet,” “staff,” cf. also “right hand” in v. 7, and “armies” in v. 12), but the washing (of the feet) and storing of sandals indicate an end to the military activity – the campaign is over. Because “sandal” is mentioned, it is logical to expect that the washbasin is for the feet. Feet are a dishonourable part of the body (which symbolise honour for the owner when one treads on the head, neck or “heights” of the opponent), and 10b connects to this closely since it is metaphorically described as the storage space for God’s “sandal.”²⁹ This forms

²⁴ Cf. Gen 12:6, Abraham’s first place of worship in Canaan.

²⁵ Cf. Gen 33:17, Jacob’s home after he and Esau separated, and Esau went back to Seir.

²⁶ A name linked to the conquest of the land of Sihon in later times, cf. Deut 2:36.

²⁷ Manasseh and Ephraim were the sons of Joseph.

²⁸ The names Gilead and Manasseh represent the fallen northern kingdom of Israel (cf. Ps 80:3), and the verse implies that these areas become God’s personal possession.

²⁹ There is no suggestion that the “throwing” of the sandal symbolises an act of taking possession; it merely suggests that even this piece of land has some purpose or use, even though it is a very humble one.

a connection to “tread down” in verse 14b. “My washing” in 10a and “my sandal” in 10b form a close parallel, but 10b and c form an even closer parallel because of the repetition of the preposition על. Edom and Philistia are consequently also associated, and the two first person imperfect forms complete the parallelism. The two forms אָעֲלֶיָּהּ (8b) and אֶתְרוּעֶע (10c) form inclusio in strophe C (= stanza II), since they have the same form and belong to the same semantic field. This has the purpose of providing closure to the oracle.

Strophes D and E together form stanza III. They are united in this way since the (rhetorical) questions in verse 11 are (indirectly) answered in verse 14 – the question “who will lead me to the fortified city?” is answered by the statements “through God we will perform mighty acts” (14a) and “he will trample our opponents” (14b). But the questions in verse 11 are also answered by another rhetorical question and a statement in verse 12. “Who will bring me (to) the fortified city (or: as tribute)?” and “Who will lead me to Edom?” have the implied answer: “Only God can.” This is expressed by the subsequent rhetorical question and statement: “Is it not God, you (who) have rejected us?” and “and you do not go forth, O God, with our armies!” The first set of questions are parallel, verse 11 having three sets of parallel words; while the two cola of verse 12 also form a parallel with four sets of parallel elements, which are also arranged chiasmically: “God” and the verb switch positions, while the first person plural suffix is shifted from the verb (in 12a) to a noun (in 12b). There is strong assonance of “i” sounds in verse 11, while the six-fold repetition of א in verse 12 definitely forms alliteration. Verses 12-14 have a network of first person plural endings נוּ which also links up with the first person singular forms (נִי) in verse 11. The occurrence of the series תִּצֹ-אִצֹ-אִת in verse 12b³⁰ and the fourfold repetition of the sound lo in verse 12ab are also significant. The repetition of consonants in verse 12b in particular suggests that “our armies” are neutralised by God’s failure to “go out” with them.

Verse 13 subsequently formulates the implied statement hidden in the rhetorical question in 11a in the form of a direct request: “Give to us help against the opponent!” The opponent referred to is the same as the “fortified city” mentioned in 11a. This is not only implied, but also suggested by the wordplay between מְבַצֵּר in 11a and מְצַר in 13a, as well as the wordplay between אֲדוּם in 11b and אֲדָם in 13b. This play on sounds is continued in verses 13 and 14, where the repetition of צַר at the end of 13a (A) and 14b (A) form chiasmus with the antithetic relationship between אֲדָם and אֱלֹהִים in 13b (B) and 14a (B) respectively. All of these intratextual connections in stanza III can be summed up by stating that it suggests: “Only God can help us against our opponents from Edom, since human efforts are to no avail.”

³⁰ Correctly identified as an incidence of wordplay by Weber (*Die Psalmen 73 bis 150*, 213).

Stanza III is a brilliant piece of poetry and contributes to a large extent to the success of Ps 108 as an ideological text. The argumentative train of thought in Ps 108 runs as follows: it begins when a first person speaker, probably thought of as King David,³¹ tells God that he is praiseworthy because of the cosmic dimensions of his covenant love (vv. 1-5), and that he should display his glory similarly in cosmic dimensions by saving his people, endearingly referred to as “your beloved ones” (vv. 6-7). God is also asked to answer the speaker, who should probably be thought of as David (v. 7a). The speaker then quotes an oracle in which God himself speaks, suggesting that this is the answer (vv. 8-10) to his prayer. In the oracle, God promises that he will triumphantly partition the area which he promised to give to Abraham’s descendants; that he will assign honour to certain areas of the Holy Land, and that he will subject and humiliate the areas under the control of the enemies of Israel such as Moab, Edom, and Philistia. Four rhetorical questions (vv. 11-12) then highlight the contrast between the promise contained in the oracle and the state of affairs under which the speaker lives: Edom is unassailable to the speaker (David?) because God has rejected “us,” his people, and because he does not accompany them any more when they undertake military campaigns. This probably meant that God temporarily retracted his help to the army of David. But the post-exilic religious society would recognise the terminology as applicable also to their situation. David’s communication with God also had something to say to them. What David asked from God and what he said about help coming only from God, applied to them as well. A group of speakers (first person plural) subsequently directly asks God to change this state of affairs, to help them against “the opponent,” most probably a concealed reference to Edom (vv. 13-14). This group of speakers could have been thought of as the subjects of “David” during his reign. But the post-exilic community can fall in and use the words also about their own situation. The request is strengthened by submitting that only God can help, that human help is worthless, and by expressing the certainty that God will indeed intervene and that he himself will trample down “our opponents.” Here the psalm is not communicating primarily any more with God, but this is a communication of the speaker (“David”) with the community of worshippers – those contemporaneous to himself, and those of a future generation. When this request is eventually answered by another oracle in Ps 110, the implication is that God himself will accomplish the vic-

³¹ Zenger (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 168) describes the role of “David” in the psalm very aptly. He refers to David as the charismatic musician and supplicant to whom YHWH entrusts the oracle of future salvation. Simultaneously, however, David assumes the role of military commander who saves his people with the help of YHWH – in their memory he is the one who originally triumphed over these peoples. But he is also a personification of the hoped for “new” Davidic kingdom. The royal figure of Ps 108 and Ps 110 articulates the retention of the old promises, and simultaneously the subtle theological protest against the alien domination of the fourth century .B.C.E. during which the triptych Pss 108-109-110 probably originated.

tory, even though he will do it on behalf of the future (Messianic) priest-king, through which he will rule “for ever” (Ps 110:4). The focus is on YHWH: it is his kingdom, victory ultimately is his concern, and this relieves his people from the responsibility of fending for their own honour.

D THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE DONOR CONTEXTS TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF PS 108

It seems that stanzas II and III are the important parts of Ps 108. The oracle in which God announces a military victory over the enemies of Israel forms the core of the psalm. The composer of Ps 108, however, did not want to repeat simply what was already available in Ps 60. Psalm 60:3-6 constitutes a lament about the exile. Some exegetes read this as a lament about a natural disaster, thinking of an earthquake (cf. Ps 60:4, “You have made the land to quake, you have split it open”).³² But it is reasonably clear that a military defeat is spoken of in metaphorical language (cf. Ps 60:6, 12), and the occasion for composing the psalm probably was the exile. This can be ascertained from a comparison with similar language used in the exilic/post-exilic Pss 80 and 89.³³

It is therefore significant that the author of Ps 108 removed the lament about the exile from Ps 60 and replaced it with a song of praise from the second half of Ps 57. The first part of Ps 57, apart from the heading, which was not taken over, can be described as an urgent prayer for help of a persecuted person (Ps 57:2-7). The section which is repeated in Ps 108:2-6 follows after this plea for help against enemies, and in the context of Ps 57 it can be described as a declaration of confidence through which the poet is motivated to praise God, ending in a prayer. Without the context of the first part of Ps 57, however, verses 8-12 are given in Ps 108 the quality of an individual song of praise. That means that the lament part of Ps 60 was removed and replaced by a declaration of confidence and hymnic praise from Ps 57, which subsequently assumed the quality of a song of praise in its new context at the beginning of Ps 108. Consequently, Psalm 108:8-10 no longer resides in a bed of complaint, but is given the character of a hopeful prophecy about the future triumph of YHWH over the enemies of his people. This in turn enhances the element of hope in the prayer

³² Cf. Emmendorffer (*Der Ferne Gott*, 166-167) who thinks this verse uses metaphors from descriptions of a theophany and an earthquake to explain the global effect of the divine judgement. He also accepts, however, that the psalm refers to the fall of Jerusalem and the exile (Emmendorffer, *Der Ferne Gott*, 168).

³³ Cf., for example, the use of פִּרְץ in 60:3, 80:13; and also 89:39 and 41; the reference to Ephraim and Manasseh in 60:9 and also in 80:3; and the use of שָׁקָה in Ps 60:5 and 80:6. Tournay (“Psaumes 57, 60 et 108,” 14) further points out the parallels with Amos 9:11 (a post-exilic addition) where it is said that the “breaches” in the “hut” of David, his kingdom, will be repaired. Despite such hints, Knauf dates Ps 60 to exactly between 600 and 598, finding in it a description of a failed military campaign against Edom (Ernst A. Knauf, “Psalm LX und Psalm CVIII,” *VT* 50 (2000): 61).

at the end of the psalm and the declaration which expresses certainty that God will in the end tread down the opponents of his people. We may thus conclude that the tone of the oracle in Ps 108 is no longer determined by the setting of a lament about the exile, but by a song of praise about the Lord's covenant fidelity and a prayer to him to display his glory globally by intervening on behalf of his people.³⁴

The composers of Ps 108 made certain alterations (or these were made at a later time) to integrate the two pieces that were collected from different psalms, and probably also to shape the new composition towards achieving its communicative purpose:

- In Ps 108:2, the repetition of “my heart is firm” after אלהים was removed; כבודי from the following verse was shifted to the end of verse 2; and this word was linked with the conjunction וְ to the preceding words. Since the verse now serves as the opening line of Ps 108, the play on הכינו (“they set a net for my steps”) in Ps 57:7 was lost, and the precise meaning of the form נכון has to be determined from the context of the verse. “To be ready” now seems a more appropriate sense, since it is both the “heart” and the “glory” of the poet which are “ready” (rather than firm). “Ready” fits better as a description of “heart” and “glory,” since the psalmist declares that he wants to sing and to play an instrument and that he would like to “wake up” the dawn. By leaving out the second נכון לבי, the poet has created a new opening line with a different purpose.
- In Ps 108:3, it is no longer the “glory” of the poet which is ordered to “wake up.” This made good sense in Ps 57:9 as a kind of self-motivation, parallel to the command to the musical instruments to “wake up.” In Ps 108, the poet has indicated that his “glory” is already awake and ready in verse 2; it is therefore only the musical instruments which have to be awakened. The repeated command עורה is thus also left out.
- In Ps 108:4, the form of address אדני was replaced by יהוה. According to Zenger,³⁵ this was done because the form אדני is used in a different sense in Ps 110 and would have caused confusion in the triptych Pss 108-109-110.³⁶ This change also provides one of the important proofs that Ps 57

³⁴ Zenger (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 166) points out that Ps 108 still supposes the existence of a crisis, but that prayer is now the dominant literary form in the psalm, a prayer which grows from a hymn on the universal love and faithfulness of YHWH.

³⁵ Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 164.

³⁶ Zenger (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 164) also points out that this change could have been made to establish a connection with Ps 107, where the motif of giving thanks to YHWH serves to demarcate main sections.

was the original composition, and not Ps 108, since the compiler seems to have been unmoved by or ignorant of the systematic avoidance of יהוה and its substitution by אלהים in the elohistic collection of Psalms.³⁷

- In verse 5, the preposition עַד in the phrase “to heaven” is substituted by מֵעַל, “above” or “beyond.” This breaks the complete parallel between “heaven” and “clouds” found in Ps 57:11, and in fact suggests that the “clouds” are above the “heaven” spoken of. It is possibly simply a form of Steigerung to describe the covenant love of God which stretches beyond heaven.³⁸
- In Ps 108:6, an extra copulative *waw* was inserted between the two cola. This seems to render it more difficult to read the two cola as a parallelism in which there is ellipsis of the verb רוּמָה in the second colon.
- In Ps 108:7, it is easier to visualize “David” as the speaker, since the form “answer me” has a singular suffix. It seems (this is a case of *Ke-thib-Qere* variation) that Ps 60:7 has the form “answer us.” This would fit perfectly with the first person plural suffixes in Ps 60:3 (“you have rejected us,” “made breaches in us,” and “restore us”). This provides another cue that Ps 60 was in existence already when Ps 108 was composed, since the singular form in Ps 108:7 probably is an adaptation of Ps 60 so that the first person singular forms in Ps 108:2, 3, and 4 can be continued in verse 7.³⁹
- In Ps 108:9, a *waw* copulative is dropped from Ps 60:9. This does not seem to have any implications for the meaning of the verse.
- Ps 108:10 differs considerably from Ps 60:10. Instead of “over me Philistia shouts triumphantly,” the adapted version reads, “over Philistia I shout triumphantly.” It is possible that the original wording in Ps 60:10 was meant to be ironic, and then the difference would not be so great between the two versions, since both imply an un-cooperative subjection of Philistia. But it is also possible that the original context in Ps 60 implied that YHWH’s intervention on behalf of Judah would benefit Philistia (e.g., by freeing them from dominion by Egypt or Babylonia), and that this was then changed in Ps 108 into a verse that implies the hu-

³⁷ Johannes P. M. van der Ploeg, *Psalm 76 t/m 150* (vol. 2 of *Psalmen*; Roermond: J. J. Romen & Zonen, 1974), 232.

³⁸ This is one of the possible reasons according to Zenger (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 164). He says that not only the space between earth and heaven is thought of, but the whole cosmos (“Weltgebäude”). Allen, *Psalms 101-50*, 95, points out that מֵעַל in the sense “above” is a feature of late Hebrew.

³⁹ Cf. the similar explanation given by Zenger (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 165).

miliation of Philistia. A difference in the relationship between Judah and Philistia at the time of origin of the two texts would make the difference. On the other hand, it is possible that the author of Ps 108 simply took the opportunity to establish inclusio between the beginning of the oracle (“I want to exult,” v. 8b) and its end (“I shout triumphantly,” v. 10c).

- Ps 108:11 has a slightly different form (עיר מבצר) from that used in Ps 60:11 (עיר מצור), but both mean “fortified city.” The version in Ps 108, however, is closer to מצר in verse 13, so that wordplay is more clearly formed, while this is not so easily recognizable in Ps 60:13. This might therefore have been done on purpose and, if this is the case, would provide another reason to believe that Ps 108 has adapted a part of Ps 60 rather than the other way round.⁴⁰
- Ps 108:12a has left out the second person independent pronoun אתה in verse 12 which is found in Ps 60:12. This may be significant, since the original version in Ps 60 seems to mean: “Is it not you, O God? You have rejected us,” while it now reads: “Is it not God, you who have rejected us?” The first sounds like an accusation, while the second can be interpreted as providing a reason why military campaigns fail. The version in Ps 108 thus seems to provide a reason for the current state of affairs, rather than forming an accusation as part of a lament.

E HOW DOES PS 108 PROVIDE CLOSURE TO THE EXILE?

The following aspects deserve mentioning:⁴¹

- In comparison to its original context in Ps 60, where the same oracle is preceded by a national lament about God’s rejection of his people, the oracle in Ps 108 is preceded by a hymnic introduction and a supplication to God to be exalted so that his people could be saved. The hymnic part originally served as a thanksgiving after the lament section of Ps 57, but it now plays a new role and changes the mood of those verses which

⁴⁰ Zenger (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 165) is of a different mind: עיר מצור could have been a more precise reference to Bosra, and since Bosra was demolished in 552 B.C.E., this reference could have been revoked if Ps 108 was composed after this date. The oracle would then have been generalised.

⁴¹ Despite Kraus’ pessimism that it is difficult, if not impossible, to explain the message (“Aussagetendenz”) of the composition. See Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalmen 60-150* (vol. 2 of *Psalmen*; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1966), 743. Some commentaries deem Ps 108 not even worthy of separate comments, and simply refer the reader to the comments on the relevant parts of Pss 57 and 60. See, e.g., Arnold A. Anderson, *Psalms 73-150* (vol. 2 of *The Book of Psalms*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 758 and the brief notes of Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms. Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 740-742.

were taken over from Ps 60.⁴² Against the background of Ps 137, where the inability of the exiles to sing in Babylon is recounted (137:3-4), the witness that one is eager and ready to sing, does indicate at least a measure of closure (108:2). The oracle is also presented as the direct answer to the speaker's plea, rather than a part of an accusation to strengthen a complaint.⁴³ As Allen⁴⁴ remarks, "the postexilic community knew all too well the theme of divine judgment (cf. v. 12), and encouragement was what was needed on the occasion(s) when the new psalm would be sung."

- The sequence of a hymn followed by a prayer which now characterises Ps 108 also fits better after Ps 106 which also uses this sequence.⁴⁵ Despite the fact that Ps 106 forms the conclusion of Book 4 of the Psalter, the prayer directed to YHWH to save his people and gather them from the nations so that they can praise him in 106:47, seems to be answered by Ps 107 (which relates the return from exile), and this prepares the way for the prayer in Ps 108 for YHWH to intervene in a cosmically noticeable way. Especially the refrain of praise in Ps 107 establishes a connection to Ps 108, but also an impressive list of significant words which occur in both.⁴⁶
- The new introduction (borrowed from Ps 57) also affects the closing lines of the psalm. In Ps 60, verse 12 has the tone of an accusation: "Have you, O God, not rejected us?" By removing the emphatic personal pronoun, the composer of Ps 108 has changed this into an answer to the rhetorical questions put in verse 11: "Is it not God, you (who) rejected us?" Instead of serving as accusation, the verse now provides an answer (in the form of another rhetorical question) to the two questions in verse 11: "Only God can lead us to Edom." This idea is then formulated explicitly in verse 13b: "Vain is the help of man," and it is further strengthened by verse 14: "Through God we will perform mighty acts; and he, he will tread down our opponents." The idea that God is the only source of hope is more strongly emphasised, and this opens up a perspective to the future, for this is part of the covenant love about which

⁴² Cf. the remark of Emmendorffer, *Der Ferne Gott*, 175 to the same effect.

⁴³ In Ps 60, the oracle is quoted with more or less the same intention as the similar quotation of an oracle in Ps 89 – to emphasize the discrepancy between the promise of the oracle and current reality. Cf. also Emmendorffer, *Der Ferne Gott*, 171.

⁴⁴ Allen, *Psalms 101-50*, 95.

⁴⁵ Johannes van der Ploeg (*Psalm 76 t/m 150*, 233) associates this sequence with confessions of guilt.

⁴⁶ The important ones are the following: אדם, ארץ, חסד, ידה, יהוה, יצא, ישע, בון, בי, בל, עיר, עמ, ענה, עשה, חר, רום, שמים. For a discussion of the significant concepts which are shared by Pss 107 and 108, cf. Weber, *Die Psalmen 73 bis 150*, 214. See also the discussion below.

the author wants to sing according to verse 5.

- In contradistinction to Ps 60, Ps 108 is strongly reminiscent of the oracle in Ps 2⁴⁷ – the mentioning of the “peoples” (לְאֻמִּים in 2:1, cf. 108:4); the reference to “heaven” (שָׁמַיִם, 2:4, cf. 108:5, 6); the recounting of what God had “said” (אָמַר in 2:7, cf. דָּבַר in 108:8); the mentioning of the temple (הַר קְדֻשָׁה in 2:6, cf. קְדֻשׁוֹ in 108:8); the ends of “the earth” (אֶפְסֵי-אָרֶץ, 2:8, cf. עַל-כֹּל-הָאָרֶץ in 108:6) as gift to the new king; and the mentioning of the iron “sceptre” (שֵׁבֶט, 2:9, cf. מַחֲקֵק in 108:9) establish a certain parallel between the beginning of Book 1 of the Psalter and the beginning of Book 5 of the Psalter.⁴⁸ In Ps 108, however, it is not for an earthly king; it is the divine ruler himself who will partition his kingdom and take control of it. This provides a new perspective, and a way of looking beyond human rule, since “vain is the help of man” (v. 13b). Zenger⁴⁹ in a comparable manner interprets the removal of the headings which are used in Pss 57 and 60 (with their extensive descriptions of historical circumstances which occurred during the life of David) and the substitution of those with a-historical superscripts as providing a foundational perspective⁵⁰ for the triptych Pss 108-109-110.
- Psalm 108 also seems to provide answers to other burning questions which have still remained from earlier parts of the Psalter. There are a number of connections with Ps 44, for instance. Psalm 44 is a moving national lament which complains that God’s people endure humiliation because he has “rejected” (זָנָה)⁵¹ them and does not go forth (לֹא-יֵצֵא) with their armies (בְּצַבָּאוֹתֵינוּ) (Ps 44:10, cf. the conspicuous similarity with Ps 108:12). But instead of calling upon YHWH to “wake up” like Ps 44 does (עוֹרֵה and הַקִּיצָה in 44:24), the author of Ps 108 calls upon the lyre and harp, and upon the dawn to wake up (עוֹרֵה and אֶעֱרִיחַ in 108:3). The author of Ps 108 would agree with the author of Ps 44 that only God’s right hand can give victory (44:5, cf. 108:7), but in contradistinc-

⁴⁷ There are also a number of connections to the blessing of Jacob in Genesis 49 (cf. the use of חֵלֶק in Gen 49:7 and the reference to the מַחֲקֵק in Gen 49:10).

⁴⁸ In this regard it is significant that Ps 107 ends with a wisdom perspective in v. 43 (“Let those who are wise take note of these things, and let them consider the acts of steadfast love of YHWH!”), resembling the chokmatic notions in Ps 1 and also Pss 73 and 90 (cf. v. 12), thus at the beginning of Books 1, 3, 4, and 5 of the Psalter. Cf. also the remarks by Beat Weber, *Die Psalmen 1 bis 72* (vol. 1 of *Werkbuch Psalmen*; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 50; and Pierre Auffret, “Le Livre des Proverbes, la sagesse, la loi, et le Psautier,” *ETR* 81 (2006): 387-393, 393.

⁴⁹ Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 164.

⁵⁰ He speaks of “eine grundsätzliche Perspektive.”

⁵¹ The term זָנָה II (“reject”) is used quite a number of times in laments about the broken relationship with YHWH after the destruction of Jerusalem. Cf. Pss 44:10, 24; 60:3, 12; 74:1; 77:8; 89:39; 108:12.

tion to the idea expressed in Ps 44, he no longer expects that they themselves will “tread down” their enemies with the help of YHWH; this is now the task of YHWH himself (cf. נבוס קמינו in 44:6; and והוא יבוס צרינו in 108:14). This same perspective was also expressed in Ps 60, but the focus on the role of God is even stronger in Ps 108. This emphasis on divine help as the only viable possibility might have developed from repeated disappointments in human endeavours. In any case, it develops into a well-known theme in Book 5 of the Psalter.⁵²

- The composer of Ps 108 succeeds in providing a new spatial perspective to his audience. There is interplay between cosmological and geographical and between vertical and horizontal perspectives. Waking up the dawn (v. 3) has temporal as well as cosmological connotations – the author is awake before dawn and would like to hasten its advent. This does not only concern the aspect of time, but has cosmological and soteriological implications as well. The advent of day was generally seen as the time of help, of relief. The advent of the sun was also seen as an aspect which affected every part of the cosmos.⁵³ The desire to wake up the dawn thus is more than a way of saying that he would like to hasten its advent. It also has the implication of proclaiming the glory of God all over the cosmos (cf. God’s exaltedness and that of his כבוד in v. 6). God’s fidelity and faithfulness are also described as reaching beyond the heavens and to the clouds, thus high above everything. These characteristics should be noticed all over the world; therefore God is petitioned to exalt himself. God answers this request by referring to an oracle which he pronounced in his sanctuary, thus from this “centre” of the world.⁵⁴ In a certain sense, however, God’s sanctuary has cosmic dimensions. His כבוד fills the space between earth and heaven and beyond heaven (v. 6), not only the inside of the temple.⁵⁵ The words from Ps 60 which have reminded the people of the destruction of the temple have been re-

⁵² Cf., e.g., Pss 118:8-9; 124:2; 146:3. In the Song of Hannah, 1 Sam 2, the Deuteronomistic editors of the books of 1 and 2 Sam have emphasised that David’s success and Saul’s demise should respectively be understood as a consequence of trust in YHWH alone or trust in one’s own strength. Cf. in this regard Hans-Peter Mathys, *Dichter und Beter. Theologen aus spätalttestamentlicher Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 131.

⁵³ Cf. Ps 19:6, “(the sun’s) rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat” (ESV).

⁵⁴ Cf. Janowski’s explanation of the perspective of the world from its centre which is understood to be the temple in Jerusalem. Bernd Janowski, *Konfliktgespräche mit Gott. Eine Anthropologie der Psalmen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2003), 26.

⁵⁵ Cf. the similar description in Isa 6:1-3: the inside of the temple is filled by the hem of YHWH’s robe, as is the whole earth by his glory.

moved,⁵⁶ and God's "glory" is represented by his "holiness." The oracle concerns the surrounding areas,⁵⁷ but crosses the Jordan four times in moving from west to east and back again and generally also from north to south, and from honourable to dishonourable. The message of the oracle could have been that the unity of Israel and Judah will be restored, while God will humiliate Israel's neighbours. But the geographical names in Ps 108 should now also be read in the light of the cosmological description in verse 3 and 5, giving them a more universal connotation.⁵⁸ Judah is located in the centre of this area in geographical terms, but also in terms of honour. Moab, Edom, and Philistia form the southern border, and all three are depicted as being lowlier than the rest. The implication is that God will once again "go forth" from the centre – this time not with the armies of Israel, but on his own – and that he himself will trample down the enemies (vertical depth) because he himself is so exalted (vertical height). Chaos on the outskirts (represented by Edom as the "the fortified city" in v. 11) will once again be subdued and meaningful life restored.⁵⁹ Zenger⁶⁰ remarks that verse 11 implies that the restoration of the Davidic kingdom will begin with a campaign against Edom (cf. also Amos 9:11-12 and Obad 15-21). The geographical perspective of Ps 107 is also used as a kind of backdrop for Ps 108. In Ps 107, the gathering of the exiles from the east, west, north, and "sea" is mentioned. People are mentioned who "wandered" in the wilderness, seeking a habitable city (עיר, v. 4), but unable to find one. When they called to YHWH in their "distress" (צר, v. 6), he led them to such a city of habitation. It is these people who are urged to praise the steadfast love (חסד) of YHWH (107:8, see also the repetition of the refrain). Others who were captive, were "brought out" (יצא hi) from captivity; were "saved" (ישע hi) from their distress (v. 19); received the "word" (דבר as noun) which he sent to heal and save them (v. 20); still others were "brought out" (יצא hi) from their distresses at sea (v. 28) and "guided" (נחה) to

⁵⁶ Such as רעש (quake); פצם (split open); שֶׁבֶר (fracture).

⁵⁷ Zenger (Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 171) says that the geographical names remind the reader of the area of David's dominion, but that this was a political utopia in post-exilic times, as can be seen from the similarity with Isa 11:13-14 (where Ephraim, Judah, the Philistines, Edom, Moab, and the Ammonites are mentioned).

⁵⁸ Stephen L. Cook, "Apocalypticism and the Psalter," *ZAW* 104 (1992): 82-99, 92.

⁵⁹ Cook, "Apocalypticism and the Psalter," 92 sees Edom in Ps 108 as symbolic of aggressors, and the oracle about God as a divine warrior as an apocalyptic reinterpretation of that image in Ps 60. He points out the role of חלק, מדד, and בוס in apocalyptic contexts in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, and argues that the presence of these terms made the oracle well suited for apocalyptic reinterpretation. See Cook, "Apocalypticism and the Psalter," 92-93.

⁶⁰ Hossfeld & Zenger, *Psalmen 101-150*, 172.

their destination in order to “exalt” (רום polel) YHWH in the assembly of the “people” (עם). Many of these words have an echo in Ps 108, indicating that Ps 108 should be read as the remaining request of the returned exiles who want to see their God exalted among the nations and in the geographical theatre from where they returned.

F CONCLUSION

For Kraus⁶¹ it remained a mystery why two psalms which occur earlier in the Psalter would be cut up and used to create a new one. One possible answer must certainly be that the composers wanted to comment on these earlier texts. By segmenting them and realigning them, the impression left by these earlier compositions could be emended. The possibility that the composer or the editors thought it unlikely that worshippers would notice the duplicates can be neglected. These scribes knew the Psalter much better than anyone today. A new psalm had to be composed for new circumstances. It made use of a well-known oracle of God, but in a new political, social, religious, and/or historical context, that oracle had a new message. In a context of praise it opened a perspective to the future. It emphasized in a new way that God had to bring about the new dispensation, and that he would. They gave the faithful a new historical and cosmological perspective. The new psalm would fit into its literary context following on Ps 106 and 107, and preceding Ps 110. It would answer some remaining issues from the earlier books of the Psalter, and it would form a parallel to Ps 2, beginning the last book of the Psalter in a way comparable to the first, but now using the figure of David as a prophetic interpreter of the way in which God himself would establish his kingdom.

ADDENDUM: COMPARATIVE TABLE OF PSS 75, 60, AND 108

In the table that follows, the full Hebrew text of Ps 57 and Ps 60 is given, and the sections that were omitted or edited are shaded. The text of Ps 108 is given on the right to facilitate comparison. The same is done on the following page with a literal English translation of the three psalms.

⁶¹ Kraus, *Psalmen 60-150*, 743.

Psalm 57

1 לַמְנַצֵּחַ אֱלֹהִים לְדוֹד מִכְתָּם בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי־שָׂאוֹל
בַּמְעָרָה:
2 חָנְנִי אֱלֹהִים | חָנְנִי כִּי בֶּן חֲסִיָּה נַפְשִׁי וּבְצֹל־בְּנַפְיָךְ
אֶחְסֶה עַד יַעֲבֹר הַיּוֹת:
3 אֶקְרָא לְאֱלֹהִים עַלְיוֹן לֹאֵל גֹּמֵר עָלַי:
4 יִשְׁלַח מַשְׁמַיִם | וַיּוֹשִׁיעֵנִי חֲרָף שֹׂאֲפֵי סֵלָה יִשְׁלַח
אֱלֹהִים חֲסִדּוֹ וְאַמְתּוֹ:
5 נַפְשִׁי | בְּתוֹךְ לִבָּאֵם אֲשַׁכְּבָה לְהִטִּים בְּגִי־אָדָם
שְׂנֵי־הֵם חַיֵּית
וְחַצִּים וְלִשׁוֹנָם חֲרַב חֲדָה:
6 רוּמָה עַל־הַשָּׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים עַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדְךָ:
7 רִשְׁתָּ | הִכִּינוּ לַפְעַמִּי כַּפְּךָ נַפְשִׁי כְּרוּ לִפְנֵי שִׂיחָה
נִפְלוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ סֵלָה:
8 נָכוֹן לִבִּי אֱלֹהִים נָכוֹן לִבִּי אֲשִׁירָה וְאַזְמֶרָה:
9 עוֹרָה כְּבוֹדִי עוֹרָה הַנִּבְּל וְכִזּוֹר אֲעִירָה שָׁחַר
10 אוֹדְךָ בְּעַמִּים | אֲדַגֵּי אֲזַמְרֶךָ בַּל־אֲמִים
11 כִּי־גִדּוֹל עַד־שָׁמַיִם חֲסִדְךָ וְעַד־שְׁחָקִים אֲמַתְּךָ:
12 רוּמָה עַל־שָׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים עַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדְךָ:

Psalm 60

1 לַמְנַצֵּחַ עַל־שׁוֹשֵׁן עֲדוֹת מִכְתָּם לְדוֹד לְלַמֵּד:
2 בְּהַצּוֹתוֹ | אֵת אָרֶם נְהָרִים וְאֵת אָרֶם צוֹבָה וַיֵּשֶׁב
יִזְאֵב
3 וַיֵּךְ אֶת־אֲדָוִם בְּגִיא־מֶלֶח שְׁנַיִם עָשׂוֹר אֲלֵךְ:
4 אֱלֹהִים זָנַחְתָּנוּ פָּרַצְתָּנוּ אֲנַפְתָּ תִּשׁוּבָב לָנוּ:
5 הֲרַעַשְׁתָּה אָרֶץ פָּצַמְתָּה רֶפָה שְׁבָרִיָּה כִּי־מָטָה:
6 הֲרִאֵתָה עַמְּךָ קֶשֶׁה הִשְׁקִיתָנוּ יַיִן תַּרְעֵלָה:
7 נָתַתָּה לִירְאֵיךָ גַּם לְהַתְּנוֹסֵס מִפְּנֵי קִשְׁט סֵלָה:
8 לַמַּעַן יִחְלְצוּן יְדִידֶיךָ הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ (וְעִנְנוּ) [וְעִנְנוּ]:
9 אֱלֹהִים | דַּבֵּר בְּקִדְשׁוֹ אֲעֲלֶזָה אֶחְלָקָה שְׁכָם וְעַמְּךָ
סִכּוֹת אֲמַדְדָּ:
10 לִי גִלְעָד | לִי מְנַשֶּׁה וְאַפְרַיִם מְעוֹז רֹאשֵׁי יְהוּדָה
מִחֻקֶּיךָ:
11 מוֹאָב | סִיר רַחֲצִי עַל־אֲדָוִם אֲשַׁלֵּיךָ נַעֲלִי עָלַי
פְּלִשְׁתֵּי הַתְּרַעְעִי:
12 מִי יִבְלִנִי עִיר מְצוֹר מִי נַחְנִי עַד־אֲדָוִם:
13 הֲלֹא־אֲתָהּ אֱלֹהִים זָנַחְתָּנוּ וְלֹא־תִצָּא אֱלֹהִים
בְּצַבָּאוֹתֵינוּ:
14 הֲבֵה־לָנוּ עֲזָרָת מִצָּר וְשׂוֹא תִּשׁוּעַת אָדָם:
15 בְּאֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה־חֵיל וְהוּא יְבוֹס צָרֵינוּ:

Psalm 108

1 שִׁיר מְזֻמָּר לְדוֹד:
2 נָכוֹן לִבִּי אֱלֹהִים אֲשִׁירָה וְאַזְמֶרָה
אֶף־כְּבוֹדִי:
3 עוֹרָה הַנִּבְּל וְכִזּוֹר אֲעִירָה שָׁחַר:
4 אוֹדְךָ בְּעַמִּים | יְהוָה וְאַזְמְרֶךָ בַּל־אֲמִים:
5 כִּי־גִדּוֹל מַעַל־שָׁמַיִם חֲסִדְךָ וְעַד־שְׁחָקִים
אֲמַתְּךָ:
6 רוּמָה עַל־שָׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים וְעַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
כְּבוֹדְךָ:
7 לַמַּעַן יִחְלְצוּן יְדִידֶיךָ הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעִנְנוּ:
8 אֱלֹהִים | דַּבֵּר בְּקִדְשׁוֹ אֲעֲלֶזָה אֶחְלָקָה שְׁכָם
וְעַמְּךָ סִכּוֹת אֲמַדְדָּ:
9 לִי גִלְעָד | לִי מְנַשֶּׁה וְאַפְרַיִם מְעוֹז רֹאשֵׁי
יְהוּדָה מִחֻקֶּיךָ:
10 מוֹאָב | סִיר רַחֲצִי עַל־אֲדָוִם אֲשַׁלֵּיךָ נַעֲלִי
עַל־פְּלִשְׁתֵּי אֶתְרוּעֵעִ:
11 מִי יִבְלִנִי עִיר מְבָצָר מִי נַחְנִי עַד־אֲדָוִם:
12 הֲלֹא־אֲתָהּ אֱלֹהִים זָנַחְתָּנוּ וְלֹא־תִצָּא אֱלֹהִים
בְּצַבָּאוֹתֵינוּ:
13 הֲבֵה־לָנוּ עֲזָרָת מִצָּר וְשׂוֹא תִּשׁוּעַת אָדָם:
14 בְּאֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה־חֵיל וְהוּא יְבוֹס צָרֵינוּ:

Psalm 57

1. To the Conductor. On (the melody) "Do not destroy." Of David, a Miktam; when he fled before Saul into the cave.
 2. Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; and in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the threats pass over.
 3. I call to God, the Most High, to God who requites on my behalf.
 4. He will send from heaven and save me; he has confused him who longs to take my life. Selah. May God send his fidelity and his faithfulness!
 5. I have to lie surrounded by lions that gulp down, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongue is a sharp sword.
 6. Be exalted above heaven, O God, and over all the earth your glory!
 7. They set a net for my steps; bowed my soul down. They dug a pit before me; they have fallen into it themselves. Selah

8. My heart is firm, O God, my heart is firm. I want to sing, and I want to make melody!
 9. Wake up, my glory; wake up, lyre and harp, I want to wake up the dawn.
 10. I want to praise you among the peoples, O Lord, and to make melody to you among the non-nations,
 11. for great is your fidelity to the heavens, and to the clouds your faithfulness.
 12. Be exalted above heaven, O God, and over all the earth your glory!

Psalm 60

1. To the Conductor, according to Shushan Eduth. A Miktam of David; for instruction;
 2. when he fought with Aram-Naharaim and with Aram-Zobah, and when Joab returned and struck down Edom in the valley of salt; twelve thousand.
 3. O God, you have rejected us, made breaches in us; you were angry; but restore us.
 4. You have made the land to quake, you have split it open; repair its breaches, for it staggers.
 5. You have made your people see hard things; you have given us wine to drink that made us stagger.
 6. You have set up a banner for those who fear you to rally to; because of the bow. Selah
 7. So that your beloved ones can be saved: save (with) your right hand and answer us!
 8. God spoke in his sanctuary: "I want to exult; I want to divide Shechem and the valley of Succoth I will measure out.
 9. Mine is Gilead; and mine is Manasseh; Ephraim is the stronghold of my head; Judah is my staff.
 10. Moab is my washbasin (for feet); upon Edom I cast my sandal; over me Philistia shouts triumphantly."
 11. Who will bring me to the strengthened city? Who will lead me to Edom?
 12. Is it not you, O God? You have rejected us. And you do not go forth, O God, with our armies.
 13. Oh, grant us help against the opponent; yes vain is the help of man!
 14. Through God we will perform mighty acts; and he, he will tread down our opponents.

Psalm 108

1. A song, a psalm of David.
 2. My heart is ready, O God, I want to sing, and I want to make melody, also my glory!
 3. Wake up, lyre and harp! I want to wake up the dawn.
 4. I want to praise you among the peoples, O YHWH, and to make melody to you among the non-nations,
 5. for great is your fidelity beyond the heavens, and to the clouds your faithfulness.
 6. Be exalted above heaven, O God, and over all the earth your glory!

7. so that they can be saved, your beloved ones; save (with) your right hand and answer me!
 8. God spoke in his sanctuary (holiness): "I want to exult; I want to divide Shechem and the valley of Succoth I will measure out.
 9. Mine is Gilead; mine is Manasseh; and Ephraim is the stronghold of my head; Judah is my staff.
 10. Moab is my washbasin (for feet); upon Edom I cast my sandal; over Philistia I shout triumphantly."
 11. Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom?
 12. Is it not God, you (who have) rejected us? And you do not go forth, O God, with our armies.
 13. Oh, grant us help against the opponent; yes vain is the help of man!
 14. Through God we will perform mighty acts; and he, he will tread down our opponents.

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