

Psalm 49 and the book of Qohelet

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ABSTRACT

Psalm 49 and the Book of Qohelet

Although a number of scholars have criticised Casetti's analysis of Psalm 49, Zenger and Hossfeld employed his ideas in their recent commentary on the Psalms. According to these scholars the psalm consists of two distinct layers: a basic pessimistic psalm to which a second author later added two further strophes and an introduction. The basic psalm reflects the tone of the Book of Qohelet, but probably originated prior to that book as it does not reflect a hellenistic background. This article argues that the psalm should be read with the aid of Albertz' description of the social situation in Judaea during the fifth century BCE. There is no basis for splitting the psalm into two layers. Rather, Psalm 49 addresses two segments of the Judaeen upper class.

1 INTRODUCTION

Psalm 49 is one of the most difficult psalms in the Psalter to interpret. Scholars disagree on almost every aspect of it - the *genre*, the *Sitz im Leben*, the structure (strophic analyses and refrains), the Hebrew text (e.g. interpolations) or the interpretation and translation of specific verses (v 16).

Recent studies of this psalm have once again emphasised the disagreements. Goulder launched a scathing attack on (what he called) the "consensus interpretation" of the psalm, and he tried to show that it was used in the eighth century BCE during a cultic feast at Dan. According to him it should be read as a political text in which a warning is directed to "all you peoples"². Fohrer classified this psalm as a song of trust in God (*Vertrauenslied*) and thus not as a wisdom psalm or didactic poem³. Craigie classified the psalm as a wisdom psalm, but took verse 16 as the *ipsissima verba* of the powerful and the rich⁴. Raabe is of the opinion that the author was deliberately ambiguous and that a number of phrases have more than one meaning⁵. His ideas influenced Smith to discover "an idiom for summoning deceased ancestors" in verse 12c⁶. Casetti's study of the psalm led him to the conclusion that there are two distinct layers in the

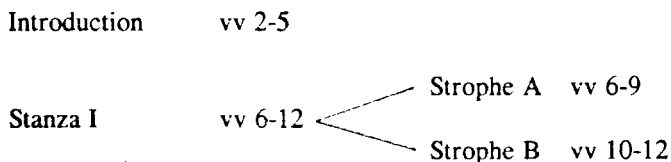
psalm. According to him there was originally a basic psalm (*Grundpsalm*, vv 11-15 and 21) to which a second author later added two further strophes (vv 6-10, 16-20) and an introduction (vv 2-5). The basic psalm is a pessimistic poem in the tone and manner of Qohelet⁷. Although Loretz identified a number of flaws in Casetti's arguments⁸, Zenger and Hossfeld propagated Casetti's conclusions by using his ideas in a book and a commentary on the Psalms respectively⁹.

On account of an own interest in the wisdom literature of Israel, as well as some research into Qohelet¹⁰, reading the works of Casetti, Zenger and Hossfeld prompted me to take a closer look at Psalm 49 and to try and establish its structure and the relationship between it and the book of Qohelet.

2 A CLOSE READING OF PSALM 49

In order to evaluate Casetti, Zenger and Hossfeld's identification of a basic psalm (*Grundpsalm*), a close reading is inevitable. Furthermore, special attention should be paid to research which has since appeared. Here one may refer to the studies of Raabe¹¹ (who did a thorough analysis of the psalm) and Loretz¹² (who criticised Casetti for neglecting the aspect of *parallelismus membrorum*, and for not paying attention to possible additions to the Hebrew text).

The refrains found in verses 13 and 21 clearly indicate that the psalm can be divided into three main sections: an introduction (vv 2-5) and two stanzas (vv 6-12 and vv 14-20) each concluding with the refrains (vv 13 and 21). A number of scholars¹³ take this as the basic structure of the psalm. However, when paying attention to the repetition of specific words and phrases, each stanza can be subdivided into two strophes. Raabe pinpointed most of the repetitions and concluded that the psalm consists of an introduction (vv 2-5) and four strophes (vv 6-9, 10-12, 14-16, 17-20). Furthermore, the repetitions do not occur haphazardly, but in such a way, that an almost, concentric structure can be identified¹⁴. His analysis of the psalm can be summarised as follows:



Refrain v 13 (C)

Stanza II vv 14-20 { Strophe B¹ vv 14-16
Strophe A¹ vv 17-20

Refrain v 21 (C¹)

2.1 The refrain (vv 13 & 21)

When verse 13 is labelled C and verse 21 as C¹, one will immediately discover that the elements in the second section of the psalm are presented in a different order¹⁵. The order of the first section (cf the analysis of Raabe above) is A, B, C, whilst the order in the second section is B¹, A¹, C¹. With a minor restructuring of the second section (transferring v 21 to a position between vv 13 and 14), one can create a mirror image of the first section: C¹, B¹, A¹. The two sections of the psalm then reflect a proper concentric structure: A, B, C and C¹, B¹, A¹ ¹⁶.

The C and C¹ elements of the psalm (vv 13 and 21) have always puzzled commentators since the Hebrew of the two verses is not identical. Some scholars therefore amend one of the verses to conform to the other one¹⁷; others delete the second verse (v 21) completely¹⁸. A third group accept the different Hebrew phraseology and maintain that refrains need not be identical¹⁹. Perdue made an interesting suggestion about verses 13 and 21. According to him, verse 21 contains the riddle to which the author refers in verse 5, whilst verse 13 contains the solution to the riddle²⁰. Raabe concurs, with some reservations, and argues that the riddle implied by the refrains is: "How are the wicked rich like the cattle they own?" The answer is then provided in both verses: "They are slaughtered like cattle (v 13) and they lack understanding like cattle (v 21)"²¹. De Meyer also emphasises the importance of these two verses for the understanding of the psalm and expressed the idea that they "seems to be the core of the poem"²². When verse 21 is printed directly below verse 13, a chiasm becomes evident:

13 ואדם ביקר בל-יילין	נמשל כבהמות נדמו
21 אדם ביקר ולא יבין	נמשל כבהמות נדמו

What is the function of this chiasm? Is it merely to effectuate an interesting sound pair²³, or does it provide a key to unlock the meaning? To be able to answer these questions one has to take a closer look at the strophes as well.

2.2 The introduction (vv 2-5)

The introduction to the psalm (vv 2-5) has four bicola with a 3 + 3 stress pattern in each bicolon²⁴. The first (v 2) and second bicolon (v 3) are closely related because the second bicolon expands the ideas of the first one. Moreover, the verbs of the first bicolon (שמעו, האזינו) serve as verbs for the second bicolon as well²⁵. The third (v 4) and fourth bicolon (v 5) are also related. This is established by the four words, normally associated with the wisdom tradition (חידה, משל, תבונות, חכמות)²⁶, and the four nouns with the suffix of the first person singular (פי, לבי, אוני, חידתי) in these verses.

2.3 The A and A¹ strophes (vv 6-10, 17-20)

The first strophe after the introduction consists of verses 6-10²⁷. Verse 9 should, however, be deleted as it is an addition (*eine erläuterende Glosse*)²⁸. The strophe has four bicola which correspond with the four bicola of the fourth and last strophe of the psalm (vv 17-20)²⁹. There are a number of repetitions in the two strophes which indicate that they are meant to be read as complementary strophes. Verse 6 begins with the words “Why should I be afraid” (למה אירא) and verse 17 with the words “Do not fear” (אל תירא). The last verse (v 10) of the first strophe ends with the words “and not see death’s pit” (לא יראה השחת) and the last verse (v 20) of the fourth strophe ends with the words “who will never again see light” (לא ירא אור)³⁰. The root עשר and the word נצה are repeated as well (cf vv 7, 17, 10, 20).

The four bicola of the first strophe (vv 6-10) can be grouped in two pairs as is the case with the introduction (vv 2-5). The second bicolon (v 7) refers to the acts of those “who slander” (עקבי, v 6b)³¹: they “trust in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches”. The fourth bicolon (v 10) commences with a *waw* which expresses purpose and thus completes the ideas of the third bicolon (v 8)³². Two changes should, however, be made to the third bicolon (v 8): אח should be changed into אך³³, and the verb יפדה (qal) should be changed into יפדה (niphāl)³⁴.

The four bicola of the last strophe (vv 17-20) can likewise be grouped in two pairs. The second bicolon (v 18) is linked to the first (v 17)

by means of the causal כִּי³⁵. The third bicolon (v 19) also commences with a כִּי, but here the particle carries a concessive meaning³⁶. The sixth colon (v 19b) is a direct discourse expressing how the rich man blesses himself: "They praise you for you do good to yourself". "The subject of the verb יִדַּךְ", according to Raabe, "is the rich man's followers who delight in his words"³⁷. The first verb of the last bicolon (v 20) should be changed to יָבֹא because this bicolon completes the "although" sentence which starts in verse 19: "Although he blesses himself (v 19) ... he will go to the generation of his forefathers" (v 20).

2.4 The B and B¹ strophes (vv 11-12, 14-16)

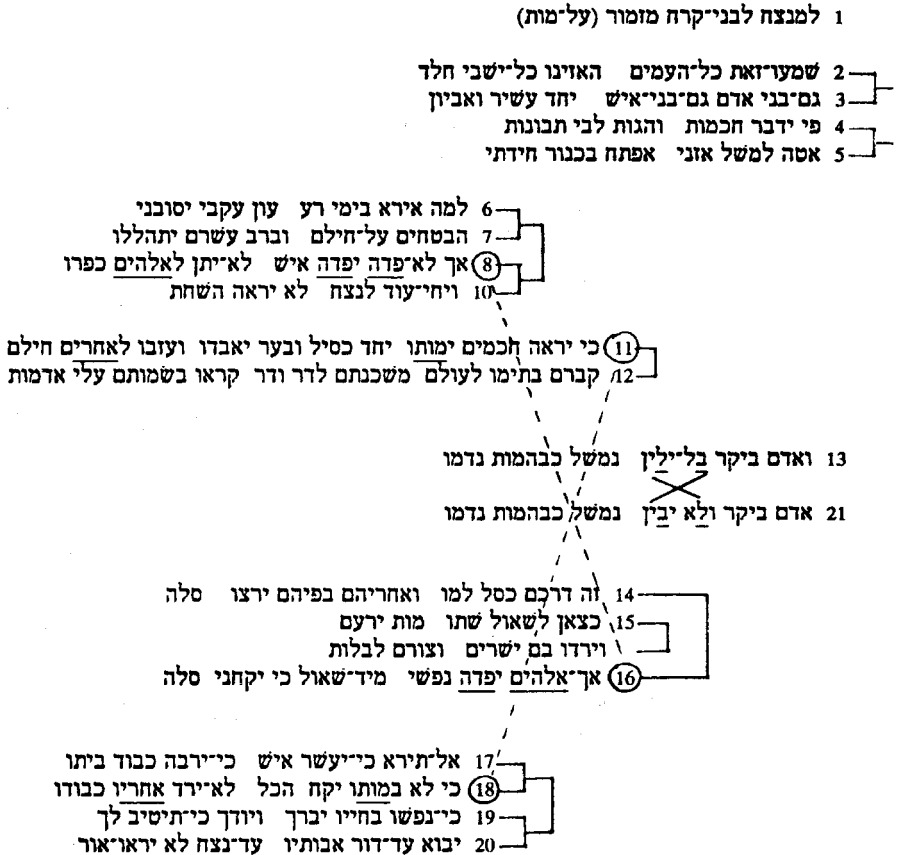
The second strophe, following the introduction, consists of verses 11-12 and the penultimate strophe consists of verses 14-16³⁸. They are also meant to be read as complementary strophes on account of the following: (1) a number of words are repeated³⁹; (2) both strophes deal with the fate of the rich when they die. Although the content agrees, the form of the strophes does not correspond as is the case with the strophes A and A¹. Strophe B (vv 11-12) has two tricola, while strophe B¹ (vv 14-16) consists of four bicola⁴⁰.

Gunkel regards verses 11 and 16 as later additions to the text⁴¹. However, by deleting them one will not only distort the structure but also the meaning of the psalm as the one (v 11) expresses thoughts which will be emphasised once more (v 18)⁴², whilst the other (v 16) reacts to thoughts that have been expressed (v 8)⁴³. Moreover, verse 11 contains the מִשַׁל and verse 16 contains the חִידָה⁴⁴. The author stated in verse 5 that he will listen to a wisdom saying (מִשַׁל) and will disclose his riddle (חִידָה) while playing the harp. Although one may argue that the words are used as synonyms, it is evident from the context that two different matters are meant, since the verbs which accompany them express different ideas. To "listen" (אָטַח אָזְנִי) can mean "to pay attention to someone else's words, "advice", etcetera, but to "disclose" (אִפְתַּח) means "to express your own ideas, feelings", etcetera.

The following reasons can be given for classifying verse 11 as a wisdom saying: (1) it has a paradigmatic and (2) a parabolic quality⁴⁵. Furthermore, it wants to convince the reader of the inevitability of death and that the dead inevitably have to leave their possessions behind⁴⁶. Verse 16 should be classified as a חִידָה as this is evidently meant as an enigma: "death is the one state from which neither rich nor poor, foolish nor wise can be redeemed (vv 7-10), yet he [the believer] affirms that he will be!"⁴⁷.

2.5 Structure and translation

Thus the psalm can be structured and translated in the following way:



- 1 For the musical director. Of the sons of Korah. A song (regarding death)⁴⁸.
- 2 Hear this, all you peoples,
pay attention, all you inhabitants of the world,
- 3 both lowly and noble,
rich and poor alike.
- 4 My mouth will speak wisdom,

- and the thoughts of my heart understanding.
5 I will listen to a wisdom saying,
I will disclose my riddle while playing the harp.
- 6 Why should I be afraid in evil times
when the iniquity of those slandering me surrounds me,
7 people who trust in their wealth
and boast of the abundance of their riches?
8 Indeed! No one can ever redeem himself,
nor can he pay a ransom to God
10 so that he would live on forever
and not see death's pit.
- 11 Indeed, anyone sees that the wise die
the fool and the jester perish alike
and leave their riches for others.
12 Their graves are their homes forever,
their dwelling places for generations
though they named lands their own.
- 13 Yes, humans in splendour are short-lived,
they are like cattle that perish.
- 14 This is the destiny of those who have foolish self-confidence,
and that of their followers who delight in their words. Selah
15 Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol;
death will shepherd them.
They go straight down to the grave,
their form will be consumed.
- 16 But God will ransom my life
from the power of Sheol — surely he will take me. Selah
17 Do not fear when someone becomes rich
when the wealth of his house increases.
18 For he can take nothing with him when he dies;
his wealth cannot descend after him.
19 Although he blesses himself in his lifetime
(saying), "They praise you for you do good to yourself".
20 He will go to the generation of his forefathers
who will never again see the light.

- 21 Humans in splendour do not understand,
they are like cattle that perish.

2.6 Chiasms and foci

When the psalm is structured in this way, then it is evident that there is not merely one chiasm (vv 13 & 21), but two⁴⁹. Verses 8 and 16 present the one *axis* of the second chiasm and verses 11 and 18 the other one. Moreover, these verses present the *foci* of the psalm. Verse 11 (the wisdom saying) states that anyone can see “that the wise die in the same way as the fool and the jester, and that they leave their riches for others”. Verse 18 elaborates on this by commenting that “humans can take nothing with them when they die — their wealth cannot descend after them”. Verse 8 stresses that “no one can ever redeem himself, or pay a ransom to God”; yet, verse 16 (the riddle) expresses the enigma that God will ransom the life of the believer and that “he will take him from the power of Sheol”. The one focus of the psalm addresses the rich oppressors: their social status will not help them to escape death, and their possessions will become the property of others when they die (vv 11,18). The other focus addresses that section of the upper class who show their solidarity with the poor: God will take care of those who put their trust in him and not in their possessions (vv 8,16).

The chiasm in the refrains once more emphasises the futility of wealth and wisdom. Verse 13a states that “humans in splendour are short-lived” (אדם ביקר בלילין = the rich will not live for ever); whilst verse 21a comments that “humans in splendour do not understand” (אדם ביקר ולא יבין = wisdom is of no avail to avert death). The chiasm in the refrains strengthens the argument: nobody can escape death — not even the wise⁵⁰ when they oppress the poor and put their trust in their wealth.

3 EVIDENCE OF A BASIC PSALM?

In the analyses above the strophes B and B¹ as well as the refrains (vv 13, 21) form the core of the psalm. When verse 16 is deleted the remaining verses represent Casetti, Zenger and Hossfeld’s original psalm to which a later author, according to them, added the A and A¹ strophes and the introduction⁵¹. They base their thesis on the following: (1) The theme of the original psalm differs from the theme of the final psalm; (2) the original psalm has longer lines — tricola instead of bicola; (3) the original psalm has more nominal sentences. Furthermore, when one compares the first

two cola of verse 11 with Qohelet 2:16c, the similarities between the latter two verses cannot be overlooked⁵²:

Psalm 49:11ab יחד כסיל ובער יאבדו כי יראה חכמים ימותו

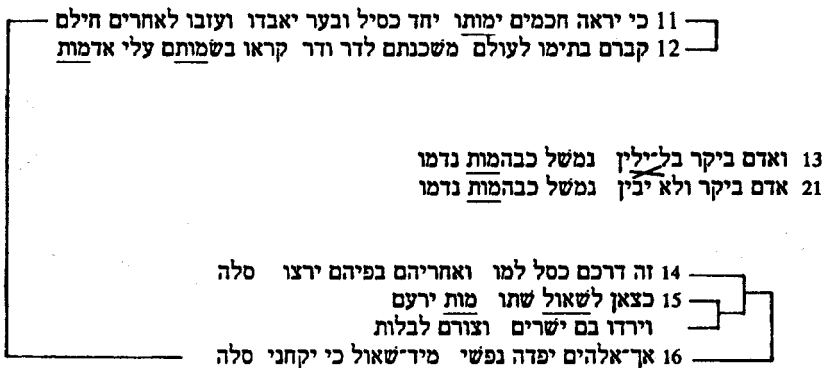
Qohelet 2:16c ימות החכם עם הכסיל

In the following sections I would like to discuss Casetti's thesis by reflecting on the theme of the psalm, the line-forms and the relationship between the psalm and Qohelet.

3.1 The theme

According to Casetti, Zenger and Hossfeld, the psalm does not have one theme, but two: (1) The rich and the poor and their future fate; and (2) the death of the wise and the fool⁵³. This discovery led them to the idea that originally there was a basic psalm in which the wisdom tradition is severely criticised. Verse 11 expresses the critique succinctly: "The wise will die just as the fool and jester and leave their riches for others". To die suddenly and leave your possessions to others was a type of punishment which was only the lot of fools and wicked people (Job 27:16-18; Prov 13:22). The doctrine of retribution which is the central tenet of the wisdom tradition, is severely undermined with the statement that the wise will experience the same fate as the fool and jester⁵⁴.

Casetti, Zenger and Hossfeld are correct by arguing for the prominent role that the notion of "death" (מות) plays in verses 11-15 and 21. The idea of death is indirectly also present in a number of plural occurrences⁵⁵. Compare the presentation below:



Verse 16 is included in this presentation to show its relationship to Casetti's basic psalm. From the above syntactical analyses it is evident that verse 16 should be read together with verses 14-15. The verse does not belong to the next strophe (vv 17-20) as Casetti, Zenger and Hossfeld would prefer. Verse 16 provides a contrast with verses 14-15: "This is the destiny of those... But God will ransom my life"⁵⁶.

The fate of those "who have have foolish self-confidence" and of their followers is vividly described in the two bicola of verse 15. Like sheep they are destined for שׂאול where מות will be their shepherd. They will descend straight away where "their form will be consumed". However, God will rescue those who show their solidarity with the poor from the power of שׂאול (v 16).

Furthermore, verse 16 should be read and studied in connection with verse 11. (Verses 16 and 11 are respectively the last and first verses of the two strophes). The psalmist used a critical wisdom saying (v 11) to emphasise the inevitability of death, but he eventually gives the assurance that what wisdom cannot do (to preserve one's life) God is able to do. He can even "take" one from the power of שׂאול (v 16).

Indeed there is an inherent critique of the wisdom tradition in the psalm, however, there is no basis for taking this as a theme unrelated to the theme in the other strophes. Moreover, one cannot, on account of the critical wisdom saying, postulate a basic pessimistic psalm from which a second psalm developed. The overall theme of the psalm is the relationship between the powerful rich and the powerless poor. The psalmist used a critical wisdom saying (v 11) in his argument in order to address that section of the upper class who oppressed the poor.

3.2 The line-forms

Casetti's second set of reasons for postulating a basic psalm, deals with the line-forms of verses 11-15. According to him the basic psalm consists of tricola. He bases his arguments on the fact that the first two lines (vv 11-12) have tricola. He therefore rearranges verses 14-15 to get a second set of lines with tricola⁵⁷. According to him verse 13 summarizes the content of the set of tricola in verses 11-12, whilst verse 21 summarizes the content of the tricola in verses 14-15. He structures the basic psalm as follows:

11	חכמים ימותו יחד	כסיל ובער יאבדו	ועזבו לאחריים
	חילם		
12	קברם בתימו לעולם	משכנתם לדר ודר	קראו בשמותם
	עלי אדמות		
13	ואדם ביקר בליילין	נמשל כבהמות נדמו	
14	זה דרכם כסל למו	ואחריהם בפיהם ירצו סלה	כצאן
	לשאול שתו		
15	מות ירעם וירדו במ	ישרים לבקר וצורם	לבלות שאול
	מזבל לו		
21	אדם ביקר ולא יבין	נמשל כבהמות נדמו	

Verses 11-12 do consist of two tricola. Casetti, however, is mistaken when he groups the first two words of verse 11 with verse 10. These two words are intrinsically part of verse 11. He also errs in his demarcation of the cola in verses 14-15. Loretz correctly criticizes Casetti in this regard by pointing out that he did not succeed in creating parallel lines, which play a dominant role in Hebrew as well as Ugaritic poetry⁵⁸.

3.3 Relationship with Qohelet

On account of the arguments presented in the two sections above, one can already conclude that Psalm 49 does not consist of two layers as Casetti, Zenger and Hossfeld would like us to believe. However, does this flaw their arguments concerning Psalm 49's connection with Qohelet?⁵⁹ Casetti, Zenger and Hossfeld are not the first to draw attention to the concurrences. A number of scholars have already given these concurrences some thought; so Robert Gordis who argues:

“The enigmatic Psalm 49 seems to be directed against wealth (v 7), but it possesses certain marks characteristic of the unconventional Wisdom books. Such is (sic) the stress on the uselessness of wealth or wisdom in averting death (vv 11, 18) as well as the note, particularly noticeable in Koheleth (...) on the tragedy of leaving one's wealth to others '*aherim*'⁶⁰.

However, literary agreements between Psalm 49 and Qohelet are insufficient reasons to postulate a connection. One should try to construe the historical situation during which the psalm and Qohelet originated, in order to grasp the relationship between them. The introduction (vv 2-5),

the vocabulary, and the wisdom saying (v 11) in Psalm 49 do reflect wisdom influence. Those scholars who classify Psalm 49 as a wisdom psalm or a didactic poem are correct⁶¹. The wisdom psalms originated during the post-exilic period and their authors were most probably part of the upper class⁶². At that stage (second half of the fifth century BCE) the upper class consisted of two groups: (1) Those who enjoyed their position in society and ignored the social rift between rich and poor; and (2) those who showed solidarity with the poor and tried to alleviate their plight, even though it sometimes affected their own financial circumstances⁶³.

The author of Psalm 49 probably belonged to the second group. He primarily wrote his psalm to criticize that section of the upper class who oppressed the poor. For this purpose he utilized a critical wisdom saying (v 11). In his arguments he emphasized the transience of wealth and the inevitability of death. However, he also tried to influence that section of the upper class to which he belonged. They should continue to show solidarity with the poor. He was convinced that God would not ignore such behaviour. On the contrary, God will eventually "work a miracle" and "take" them from *Sheol* (v 16) as he did with Enoch (Gen 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kgs 2:11-12).

On account of Albertz's⁶⁴ presentation of the social situation during the second half of the fifth century BCE, one may conclude that verse 11 was meant for one section of the upper class, and that verse 16 was meant for the other section. The author did not address the rich upper class and the poor lower class⁶⁵, but two different sections of the upper class. Furthermore, he did not hesitate to use ideas from the critical wisdom (coming of age during the Persian period)⁶⁶ to give credence to his arguments.

Although the author of Qohelet lived during the Hellenistic era (third century BCE) Judaeen society more or less looked the same as in the Persian period which preceeded the Hellenistic period: a rich upper class and a poor lower class (oppressed and exploited by the rich)⁶⁷. Sections of the book reflect something of this situation (cf Qoh 4:1-3; 5:7-8). However, nothing in the book reflects a solidarity with the poor which is so evident in Psalm 49. The book rather evidences the outlook of a rich person:

"The one phenomenon that truly seems to bring tears to his [Qohelet's] eyes is not poverty so much as the fall from riches, the fate of one whose father has lost the family fortune (5:12-17) or one who amasses wealth only to see it taken away by another (6:1-5)"⁶⁸.

Qohelet is a philosophical book in which the author reflects on the insoluble incongruities in life. According to him, people are born in a world which is characterized by tragicomic events and where no one can be sure what the future may hold for them — except that they will die.

4 CONCLUSION

No direct literary, ideological or theological link between Psalm 49 and the book of Qohelet can be established. They originated during different periods of the history of Israel and addressed different groups. The author of Psalm 49 was acquainted with critical wisdom, but unlike the author of Qohelet, his reflections show no sign of scepticism, pessimism or resignation. Furthermore, a serious analysis of the psalm offers no evidence to support Casetti, Zenger and Hossfeld's claim that the psalm consists of two layers: a basic pessimistic psalm and a final optimistic one. However, the psalm possibly addresses two distinct sections of the Judaeen upper class of the second half of the fifth century BCE.

NOTES:

- 1 A word of thanks to professor A J M Schoors of the Catholic University of Louvain with whom I was able to discuss some of my ideas during his visit as a research fellow to the University of South Africa (September 1995). A word of thanks to the Centre for Science Development of the Human Sciences Research Council for the grant that made his visit possible.
- 2 M D Goulder, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah* (JSOTS 20), Sheffield 1982, 181-195. He summarizes the consensus interpretation as follows (181): "...it is a didactic piece addressed not to God but to men, in which the moralist warns the wealthy of the emptiness of their values, and reassures himself and God's faithful poor, who are his fellows. They may be oppressed by the rich at the present time, but death is the great leveller, and ultimately will reveal the vanity of wealth. The poor, however, has put his trust elsewhere, and God will preserve him. In this way, the riddle of life's apparent unfairness can be resolved; comparison is often made with the parables of the Rich Fool, and of Dives and Lazarus, in St Luke's Gospel".
- 3 G Fohrer, *Psalmen* (De Gruyter Studienbuch), Berlin 1993, 203-210.
- 4 P C Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (Word Biblical Commentary 19), Waco 1983, 360.
- 5 P R Raabe, "Deliberate ambiguity in the Psalter", *JBL* 110 (1991), 213-227.
- 6 M S Smith, "The invocation of deceased ancestors in Psalm 49:12c", *JBL* 112 (1993), 105-107. Cf also M S Smith, "Yahweh and other deities in ancient Israel: observations on old problems and recent trends", in: W Dietrich & M A Klopfenstein (Hrsg), *Ein Gott allein? JHWH-Verehrung und biblischer*

Monotheismus im Kontext der israelitischen und altorientalischen Religionsgeschichte, Freiburg 1994, 197-234.

- 7 P Casetti, *Gibt es ein Leben vor dem Tod: Eine Auslegung von Psalm 49* (OBO 44), Freiburg 1982.
- 8 O Loretz, "Ugaritisches und Jüdisches. Weisheit und Tod in Psalm 49: Stil contra parallelismus membrorum", *UF* 17 (1986), 189-212.
- 9 E Zenger, *Ich will die Morgenröte wecken: Psalmenauslegungen*, Freiburg 1991, 215-221; F-L Hossfeld & E Zenger, *Die Psalmen: Psalm 1-50* (Neue Echter Bibel 29), Würzburg 1993, 299-308.
- 10 I J J Spangenberg, "Die Prediker se uitsprake oor en uitkyk op die dood", *Scriptura* 27 (1988), 29-37; I J J Spangenberg, "Die struktuur en strekking van Prediker 4:17-5:6", *NGTT* 30 (1989), 260-269; I J J Spangenberg, "Quotations in Ecclesiastes: an appraisal", *OTE* 4 (1991), 19-35; I J J Spangenberg, *Die boek Prediker*, Kaapstad 1993.
- 11 P R Raabe, *Psalm structures: A study of psalms with refrains* (JSOTS 104), Sheffield 1990, 68-89.
- 12 Loretz, *UF* 17 (1986), 189-212.
- 13 Cf J Lindblom, "Die 'Eschatologie' des 49. Psalm", in *Mélanges d'histoire des religions et de recherches bibliques offerts à Johannes Pedersen* (Horae Soederblomianae I), Stockholm 1944, 21; A Weiser, *The Psalms* (OTL), London 1962, 386; N Tromp, "Psalm 49: Armoede en rijkdom, leven en dood", *Ons geestelike leven* 45 (1968/69), 240; F de Meyer, "The science of literature method of Prof. M. Weiss in confrontation with form criticism, exemplified on the basis of Psalm 49", *Bijdr* 41 (1979), 158; Craigie, *op cit*, 358; E S Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 1: with an introduction to cultic poetry* (FOTL 14), Grand Rapids 1988, 203; Raabe, *op cit*, 84.
- 14 Raabe, *op cit*, 86-87. His analysis corresponds with that of L Perdue "The riddles of Psalm 49", *JBL* 93 (1974), 540. Perdue, however, did not mention that the first (vv 6-9) and the fourth (vv 17-20) as well as the second (vv 10-12) and the third (vv 14-16) strophes are related.
- 15 Raabe (*op cit*, 86-87) does not label the two verses C and C¹; this is done by myself to facilitate the present references to refrains.
- 16 By the restructuring, I do not suggest that the original order of the verses was different from the present. A restructuring is only necessary for the proper interpretation of the psalm. One can immediately recognize the chiasm in these verses when they are presented directly below each other.
- 17 Cf Gunkel, *op cit*, 212. This was already done in the Greek (LXX) and Syriac translations.
- 18 Cf Fohrer, *op cit*, 205.
- 19 De Meyer, *op cit*, 158; Casetti, *op cit*, 84.
- 20 Perdue, *op cit*, 538.
- 21 Raabe, *op cit*, 79.
- 22 De Meyer, *op cit*, 158.
- 23 A Berlin, *The dynamics of biblical parallelism*, Bloomington 1985, 124.
- 24 Cf Raabe, *op cit*, 79; Gunkel, *op cit*, 208.
- 25 Loretz, *op cit*, 194.
- 26 R N Whybray, *The intellectual tradition in the Old Testament* (BZAW 135), Berlin 1974, 95, 139-140.

- 27 I agree with Fohrer's demarcation (*op cit*, 203) of the first strophe, but disagree with Raabe (*op cit*, 86) who opines that the first strophe following the introduction consists of verses 6-9 and the second strophe consists of verses 10-12. Verse 10 should be linked to verse 8 as the *waw* at the beginning of verse 10 is a *waw* which expresses purpose. Furthermore, verse 10 has a number of words and expressions that correspond with verse 20 — the last verse of the last strophe.
- 28 Fohrer, *op cit*, 203. Cf also H-J Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A commentary*, Minneapolis 1988, 479; Loretz, *op cit*, 196.
- 29 Although both strophes have the same number of bicola, their stress patterns differ considerably. All the verses of the strophe A¹ (vv 17-20) have a 3 + 3 stress pattern as is also the case with the introduction (vv 2-5). The verses of the strophe A (vv 6-10) have the following stresses: verse 6 (4 + 3), verse 7 (2 + 3), verse 8 (4 + 3), verse 10 (2 + 2).
- 30 Read יראָה (third person singular) instead of יראוּ (third person plural).
- 31 Read עֲקָבִי instead of עֲקָבֵי — cf Raabe, *op cit*, 70-71.
- 32 Cf Fohrer, *op cit*, 203. Raabe (*op cit*, 72), however, regards this interpretation as grammatically possible "but it seems too complicated".
- 33 A number of commentators do not consider such a change to be necessary. According to them the word אָא can be understood as an interjection: cf M Dahood, *Psalms I. 1-50. Introduction, translation, and notes*, New York 1965, 298; De Meyer, *op cit*, 158; Casetti, *op cit*, 188-190.
- 34 Cf Gunkel, *op cit*, 211; Weiser, *op cit*, 384-385; Kraus, *op cit*, 517; Craigie, *op cit*, 356-357; Casetti, *op cit*, 190-191; Fohrer, *op cit*, 203.
- 35 R J Williams, *Hebrew syntax: an outline*, Toronto 1978, 72.
- 36 Williams, *op cit*, 73.
- 37 Raabe, *op cit*, 78.
- 38 The first word of verse 12 should be changed to read קִבְרָם ("their graves") to make sense. The stress pattern of verses 11 and 12 is 3 + 4 + 3 and 3 + 3 + 4 respectively.
- 39 Raabe (*op cit*, 86) lists the following words: ימֹתוֹ, כַּסִּיל, לַאֲחֵרִים (vv 11-12) and מוֹת, בַּסֵּל, אַחֲרֵים (vv 14-16).
- 40 One inevitably has to delete a few words in order to obtain four bicola. I agree with De Meyer, *op cit*, 156 who regards verse 15e (שְׂאוֹל מִזְבֵּל לוֹ) as a later addition, but regard לְבַקֵּר as an addition as well. The word לְבַקֵּר should be deleted *metri causa* as the two bicola of verse 15 has a 3 + 2 stress pattern. Verses 14 and 16 have the same stress pattern as well, namely 3 + 3 and are antithetical parallel lines which envelope the parallel lines of verse 15.
- 41 Gunkel, *op cit*, 210: "Ein Leser hat 11 seufzend im Stile des Predigers (Qoh 2:14-16) hinzugefügt, dass der Tod zwischen Weisen und Narren keinen Unterschied macht. Und eine fromme Seele hat 16 der gläubigen Gewissheit Ausdruck gegeben, dass Gott das eigene Leben dem Tode entreissen wird; auch dieser Vers fällt deutlich aus dem Zusammenhange...".
- 42 The repetition of the root מוֹת and the preposition אַחֲרַי evidence a link between the two verses as well.
- 43 M J Mulder, "Psalm 49:15 en 16: Twee problematische verzen", in: M H van Es et al, *Loven en geloven: Opstellen van collega's en medewerkers aangeboden*

- aan Prof dr Nic H Ridderbos, Amsterdam 1975, 130; De Meyer, *op cit*, 159; Raabe, *op cit*, 86-87.
- 44 I differ from Casetti (*op cit*, 273) who regards the basic psalm (vv 11-15, 21) as the *למשל*.
- 45 Cf C Klein *Kohelet und die Weisheit Israels: Eine formgeschichtliche Studie* BWANT 132, Stuttgart 1994, 25-39 for a discussion of these concepts.
- 46 Cf Klein, *op cit*, 34: "Das Ziel eines *masal* ist immer Konfrontation des Hörers mit der Botschaft zur Gewinnung seiner Zustimmung. Ein Sprecher zwingt den Hörer mittels eines *masal* zu einem *Überdenken* seiner Situation".
- 47 Perdue, *op cit*, 541.
- 48 The last two words of the previous psalm possibly belong to the title of Psalm 49.
- 49 Raabe *op cit*, 79-80 identifies chiasms in verses 3,7 and 8. These chiasms differ from the two that I identify as they are present in single verses.
- 50 Although the verb (לָמַד, v 21) can not be seen exclusively as a wisdom term, it is characteristic of the "intellectual tradition" and frequently appears in Proverbs and Job. Cf Whybray, *op cit*, 126-127.
- 51 According to Casetti, *op cit*, 26-27, the A and A' strophes consist of verses 6-10 and 16-20 and not as in my analysis verses 6-10 (excluding v 9) and verses 17-20. He also reads the first two words of verse 11 with verse 10 (Casetti, *op cit*, 45-47).
- 52 Casetti, *op cit*, 24-34; Zenger, *op cit*, 216-218. Hossfeld, *op cit*, 300.
- 53 Zenger *op cit*, 217, prefers to speak of two theologies about death ("*zwei Todestheologien*").
- 54 Casetti, *op cit*, 61.
- 55 I do not accept the suggestion by Smith, *op cit*, 105-107, that verse 12c is an "idiom for summoning deceased ancestors". The phrase underscores the datum that although one may have possessed land, the grave will eventually be one's only home. The words have been chosen for the effect that their plurals have on the overall emphasis on the inevitability of death. Loretz, *op cit*, 206 adamantly negates any possible reference to a cult of the dead in the psalm: "Ps 49 sind bereits alle Elemente fremd, die auf einen Totenkult hindeuten könnten. Wir befinden uns mit diesem Gedicht bereits in einer Zeit, in der die Ablehnung des Totenkultes in Israel aufgrund des sich durchsetzenden Jahwismus voll wirksam geworden ist".
- 56 The syntactic analysis differs from the poetic analysis (cf note 40). Both, however, indicates a link between verse 16 and verses 14-15. Raabe, *op cit*, 83.
- 57 Casetti, *op cit*, 122-124.
- 58 "Seine Trikola entsprechen in keiner Hinsicht den Anforderungen, die an ein Stück Poesie der Psalmen zu stellen sind. Er hat deshalb weder nachgewiesen, dass in V. 14-15 Poesie überliefert ist, noch hat er aufzeigen können, dass V. 14-15 in zwei Trikola zerfalle". Cf Loretz, *op cit*, 200-201.
- 59 Casetti, *op cit*, 285, concludes as follows: "In Ps 49:11-15, 21 und in Qoh sind in der Tat die neue und ermüchternde Erfahrung der Sterblichkeit gleich zentral, die deshalb notwendige Kritik an der klassischen Weisheit gleich radikal und die daraus resultierende Verzweiflung gleich bedrückend. Beide Texte scheinen einer gleichen 'Denkrichtung' anzugehören".

- 60 R Gordis, "The social background of wisdom literature", *HUCA* 18 (1943/44), 78.
- 61 S Mowinckel, "Psalms and wisdom", *VTS* 3 (1955), 205-224; R E Murphy, "A consideration of the classification 'Wisdom psalms'", *VTS* 9 (1962), 156-167; Whybray, *op cit*, 93-98, 154; L G Perdue, *Wisdom and cult* (SBL Dissertation Series 30), Missoula 1977, 261-343.
- 62 R Albertz, *A history of Israelite religion in the Old Testament period, Volume 2: From the Exile to the Maccabees*, London 1994, 501-502.
- 63 Albertz, *op cit*, 500-501.
- 64 Albertz, *op cit*, 493-507.
- 65 Cf Fohrer, *op cit*, 207: "Der Dichter will dem Reichen eine bittere Wahrheit sagen, dem Armen dagegen eine tröstliche Botschaft bringen".
- 66 H Gese, "Wisdom literature in the Persian period", in: W D Davies & L Finkelstein (eds), *The Cambridge history of Judaism; Volume one: Introduction, the Persian period*, Cambridge 1984, 189-218.
- 67 Albertz, *op cit*, 536.
- 68 J L Kugel, "Qohelet and money", *CBQ* 51 (1989), 46. Cf also F Crüsemann, "Die unveränderbare Welt: Überlegungen zur 'Krisis der Weisheit' beim Prediger (Kohélet)", in: W Schottroff & W Stegemann (Hrsg), *Der Gott der kleinen Leute: Sozialgeschichtliche Auslegungen*, München 1979, 80-104.