

MARK S. SMITH

Psalms

The Divine Journey

*Forschungen
zum Alten Testament
199*

Mohr Siebeck

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Edited by

Corinna Körting (Hamburg) · Konrad Schmid (Zürich)
Mark S. Smith (Princeton) · Andrew Teeter (Harvard)

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Psalms
The Divine Journey

Collected Essays
(1988–2026)

With the assistance of
Shayley Martin and Brenna Salverson

Mohr Siebeck

Mark S. Smith, born 1955; 1984–2000 taught at Saint Paul Seminary, Yale University and Saint Joseph's University; 2000–2016 Skirball Professor of Hebrew and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at New York University; since 2016 Helena Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary.
orcid.org/0009-0009-3044-3164

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past and present,
with my deepest gratitude

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It is fitting to add my thanks to Princeton Theological Seminary in connection with this project. Well before I was invited to join its faculty, it was there that the invitation to the FAT came. It took place in the main dining of Mackay Hall over by the windows overlooking Templeton Hall (and ever since my favorite place to visit with people on campus). There I met with Hermann Spieckermann who issued the board's invitation. This book also marks an ending at the seminary, which has been very good to me. Nearing my phased retirement, I recognize that this year might be the last time I teach my course on the Psalms at the seminary. So, it feels fitting to thank those who have accompanied me on my divine journey with the Psalms, beginning with students at Saint Paul Seminary (1984–1986) and culminating with students at Princeton Seminary (2016–2026). The editing and production of this volume was aided by two research assistants, provided thanks to Princeton Theological Seminary. Shayley Martin and Brenna Salverson helped me to collect and work through the essays in this volume. I also thank Tobias Stäbler and Susanne Mang for their help in publishing this work. I could not have produced this book without them. They are, of course, not responsible for any remaining errors.

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Even earlier, the Benedictine monks of Saint Anselm's Abbey School provided my first experience of the Psalms at midday office at the monastery church. The antiphonal practice of chanting instilled a resonant feeling for the Psalms. I am thankful to the monks: as then, when I dedicated essay 18 to them, so also *'ad hayyôm hazzeh* as the Bible says, "up to this day." In less perceptible ways, my journey with the Psalms began with my devout and devoted parents and my wonderful six sisters and two brothers, who would all pile into our 1967 Ford station wagon to go to Mass; Psalms were a part of that, too.¹ I submit the volume to the FAT today, the very date of my mother's birthday in 1923. So, from beginnings to ends.

7 May 2026

Mark S. Smith

¹ See Michael Peppard, *How Catholics Encounter the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 23–64.

Abbreviations

This volume uses the abbreviations listed in *The SBL Handbook of Style, Second Edition* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), as well as the following abbreviations and grammatical terms, as well as sigla:

ET	English translation (such as NRSV) where the Hebrew Bible version differs
RIH	Ras ibn Hani inventory number for texts
RS	Ras Shamra inventory number for texts
SAC	Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith, <i>Stories from Ancient Canaan</i> . Second revised and expanded edition. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012.
SHCANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
G-stem	Basic verbal conjugation (BH <i>qal</i>)
D-stem	Factitive verbal conjugation (BH <i>piel</i>)
C-stem	Causative verbal conjugation (BH <i>hiphil</i>)
//	poetic parallelism or parallel passages
*	hypothetical form, including roots

Introduction

This volume of collected essays reflects my journey with the Psalms for nearly forty years. The original publications have been left largely intact. Some bibliographical references have been updated, but no subsequent bibliography was added nor were significant changes made in content. As a result, some lack of uniformity remains in the articles' style and their footnote format. There is also some overlap in content between some of the essays, which has not been eliminated. I have made corrections as well as minor changes for the sake of greater felicity in expression. In addition, cross-references to articles in this volume have been added in some footnotes.

I am grateful to be able to share these studies, gentle reminders of paths taken across the decades and of others left aside.¹ A longstanding concern has been to ground the study of psalms in their cultural contexts or "worlds." For example, the interest in pilgrimage began with a short juvenalium, *Psalms the Divine Journey* (1987), continued in another book, *The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus* (1997), and informed a third, *Profiles in Family and Public Leadership* (2026). The topic informs several essays in this volume (essays 3, 4, 10, 15, 18, and 20). Another important cultural horizon reflected in this work has involved the body and body-parts in tandem with emotions. When I first turned to this topic (see Part Two of this volume, especially essay 11), it was not terribly prominent in the field, but interest in it has escalated. As long recognized in biblical studies, other backgrounds of the Psalms (Part Three) have long informed their imagery and worldviews, and fathoming these has helped to indicate something of their brilliance. Culture matters.

This volume also reflects literary aspects of Psalms research, especially Form Criticism and literary structures. Both have contributed a great deal, yet to my mind their implementation has been somewhat problematic (including on my part at times). I begin with Form Criticism. When I was a student, it was baked into my young mind that each psalm basically had a single genre. Perhaps it also had optional elements associated with that genre, and it could have additional components. Still a single genre per psalm was commonly the

¹ One example: at the mutual agreement of the then in-house editor and myself, I returned the assignment for the Psalms commentary for the Old Testament Library series in the late 1990s.

operating assumption. While this scholarly presupposition does not hold the sway it once enjoyed, it still seems a dominant way of thinking about the Psalms. One reason it does is because many psalms can be associated with particular genres with relatively little difficulty. Initially my thinking about the Psalms' genres shifted as I embraced a more formal "Form Criticism," deemphasizing some traditional content-oriented categories that were included as genres in much traditional psalms research. (For example, what had long been called "royal psalms" represent different genres with royal content, such as instruction in Psalm 2, thanksgiving in Psalm 18, and lament in Psalm 89; there is not really a genre of "royal psalms.") This change in my thinking is reflected in essay 19.

Since that time, I have continued to work with more formal form-critical categories, but I have also noticed that many psalms switch out elements of multiple genres, sometimes so much so that attributing a single genre to a psalm seems more like a guessing game. What has struck me in teaching psalms over the past decade is how many do not seem to follow the script that a strong genre approach would seem to prescribe. When it comes to genre elements, many psalms flow. It is part of their magical power to move, shift course, double-back or slip sideways (or not), revoice earlier elements; and so speak to the heart. Readers will note this concern particularly in essay 4. Genre creativity matters.

Literary structures in the Psalms lie at the heart of several of the early essays in this volume. For example, chiasm is reflected across whole psalms or major parts of them (essays 5 and 7). This was quite the rage in the 1980s, and it retains a value in discerning poetic turns or highpoints as well as different levels of unity within the Psalms (whether "primary" or "secondary" in Luis Alonso-Schökel's terms).² At the same time, not unlike a strict form-critical approach to the Psalms, the practice of identifying their structures can sometimes be quite two-dimensional. Thanks to my engagement with the work of Chip Dobbs-Allsopp and Elaine James, further efforts on my part have gone into reading in three dimensions, with attention paid to the dynamism and flow of psalms' imagery and language in tandem with structure (see essays 1, 3 and 4). Their literary creativity really matters. In this connection, I have also taken deeper note of sound (essay 1). Psalm sounds matter. Finally, thanks particularly to my teacher Brevard Childs, thinking about the Psalter as a whole work became important in Psalms research. It has become wildly popular, inviting many speculations; I've included mine (as Part Four).

² Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, SubBib 11 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1988), 189: "A later writer could take already completed pieces and bring them together skillfully to form a new and complex unity."

Part I

Studies of Specific Psalms

1. Psalm 1: Sonant Particles and Parallelism, with Speculation on the Poem's Scribal Production¹

"This Psalm is the most excellent of all the Psalms"
attributed to R. Yudan²

Among biblical compositions, Psalm 1 has received its share of attention in recent decades, quite often for its place at the head of the Psalter.³ Commentators have also noted its focus on *tôrâ* (explicitly in v. 2) and specifically on a life grounded

¹ I am deeply thankful to Chip Dobbs-Allsopp for many good conversations about this essay and for his comments on an early draft. This study also benefitted greatly from its discussions at the Old Testament Colloquium held at Saint John's University, Collegeville, MN, on January 28, 2022, and at the University of Zürich on May 13, 2022. My gratitude goes as well to Andrew Garbarino and Hannah Lee for their assistance with some of the bibliography.

² Midrash Tehillim to Ps 1:3, in William G. Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms, Vol. 1*, YJS XIII (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 6.

³ Comments along these lines have long been common, for example by Hans-Joachim Kraus: "Psalm 1 is the preamble of the Psalter." See Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 122; note also Artur Weiser, *The Psalms*, trans. Herbert Hartwell, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 102, 108. More recently among interpreters, see William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 16 and 131 (see also p. 215); C. L. Seow, "An Exquisitely Poetic Introduction to the Psalter," *JBL* 132 (2013): 275–93, here 292–93; Nancy L. DeClaisé-Walford, "The Meta-Narrative of the Psalter," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 363–76, here 369; Mark Leuchter, *The Levites and the Boundaries of Israelite Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 246 and 250; Susan Gillingham, *Psalms Through the Centuries: A Reception History Commentary on Psalms 1–72: Volume Two*, Wiley Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 11–13; and Beat Weber, "Meint die Tora JHWHs in Psalm 1,2 (auch) den Psalter? Erkunden zur Reichweite des Tora-Begriffs," *BN* 178 (2018): 75–102, here 76–77. For a critical response, note Harry P. Nasuti, *Defining the Sacred Songs: Genre, Tradition and the Post-critical Interpretation of the Psalms*, JSOTSup 218 (Sheffield: Sheffield, 2009), 180: "Psalm 1 is less a guide to the rest of the Psalter than the starting point of a journey through the whole"; see also his thoughtful remarks on pp. 203–5. See also David Willgren, *The Formation of the 'Book' of Psalms: Reconsidering the Transmission and Canonization of Psalmody in Light of Material Culture and the Poetics of Anthologies*, FAT 2/88 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 135–71, and David Willgren Davage, "Why Psalms 1–2 Are Not to Be Considered a Preface to the Book' of Psalms," *ZAW* 130 (2018): 384–97. Note also Michael Lefebvre, "'On His Law He Meditates': What is Psalm 1 Introducing," *JSOT* 40 (2016): 439–50; and Philip J. Botha, "Indications of Intentional Interconnectedness between Psalms 1–2 and Ps 37 and the Implications for Understanding the Concerns of the Editors of Book I of the Psalms," in *The Formation of the Hebrew Psalter: The Book of Psalms Between Ancient Versions, Material Transmission and Canonical*

in it.⁴ Its poetics have likewise attracted considerable commentary. Psalm 1 is a poem of particles,⁵ which serve to structure its antitheses and asymmetries,⁶ as

Exegesis, eds. Gianni Barbiero, Marco Pavan and Johannes Schocks, FAT 151 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 167–85.

⁴ For this psalm as instruction, see James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1994), 41; and Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms: Part I with an Introduction to Cultic Poetry*, FOTL 14 (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 42. In older scholarship, Psalm 1 was also claimed to be a “wisdom psalm”; so Weiser, *The Psalms*, 102–3, 105; and Mitchell J. Dahood, S. J., *Psalms I. 1–50: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 16 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 1. According to Angelika Berlejung, Psalm 1, 19, and 119 combine law and wisdom. See Berlejung, *Studies on the History of Religion and Anthropology of the Ancient Near East and the Old Testament*, Orientalische Religionen in der Antike 42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), 312. Slightly differently, for William P. Brown wisdom and *tôrâ* psalms overlap as instruction. See Brown, “The Law and the Sages: A Reexamination of *Tôrâ* in Proverbs,” in *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride, Jr.*, eds. John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 2005), 251–80, here 253. Recontextualizing the genre issue in terms of reading the Psalter as a whole, the canonical approach taken by Gerald T. Sheppard favored a wisdom reading of Psalm 1 based on wisdom as a “hermeneutical construct” informing the Psalter. See Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in the Sapientializing of Old Testament Traditions*, BZAW 151 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 13; see also the thoughtful canonical considerations in Nasuti, *Defining the Sacred Songs*, 178–80.

To be sure, several features in Psalm 1 do appear also in “wisdom literature” (especially Proverbs), such as the contrasting “wicked” and “righteous” (see below); these also appear well beyond putative “wisdom literature” as noted by Will Kynes, *An Obituary for ‘Wisdom Literature’: The Birth, Death, and Intertextual Reintegration of a Biblical Corpus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 223. The problem of a “wisdom” category of psalms based on specific vocabulary was recognized by Avi Hurvitz, *Wisdom Language in Biblical Psalmody* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), confining the classification to Psalms 19b, 34b, 37, 112, and 119. Some skepticism was expressed about some of the diagnostic elements in these five psalms (as claimed by Hurvitz), by David Marcus, Review of Hurvitz, *Wisdom Language in Biblical Psalmody*, HS 34 (1993): 145–48. More recently, the thematic bases for a category of “wisdom psalms” have been doubted by Kynes, *An Obituary for ‘Wisdom Literature,’* 44–47, 246, and 253 n. 4, responding to (among others) James L. Crenshaw, “Wisdom Psalms?” *CurBR* 8 (2000): 9–17. In view of the minimal content for wisdom according to Hurvitz and Kynes, an approach weighted to content may be less advisable. Genres use content in conjunction with function (or pragmatics, what they “do”). Accordingly, instruction might be a more useful term for texts labelled as wisdom psalms where instruction is in evidence (although to be sure these may reflect multiple modes of instruction and viewpoints). In any case, instruction appears fitting for Psalm 1, especially in view of v. 2. So John Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 1. Psalms 1–41*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006), 80. More recently, William P. Brown well suggests that *tôrâ* replaces wisdom in Psalm 1; see Brown, *Deep Calls to Deep: The Psalms in Dialogue and Disruption* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2021): 343–45. More broadly and rather vaguely, Psalm 1 has been classified a “psalm of orientation” (a category proposed by Walter Brueggemann), according to William H. Bellinger, Jr., “Psalms and the Question of Genre,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 317.

⁵ Besides *’äšer* (the focus of the discussion that follows), there are notably several particles with *k-*, a number of them fronting lines: *kî ’im* in v. 2; *kē-* in v. 3; *lō’-kēn*, *kî ’im* and *ka-* in v. 4; *’al-kēn* in v. 5; and *kî* in v. 6. See also *wēkōl* in v. 3b. See further below for a number of these.

⁶ Seow (“An Exquisitely Poetic Introduction to the Psalter,” 275–93) comments on Psalm 1’s antitheses and asymmetry.

discussed in part I of this essay. The point of departure for this study, introduced in part II, is an observation about the poetic effects of the relative particle *’āšer* within the psalm’s larger poetic presentation. Part III contextualizes this usage by a general consideration of *’āšer* as a “prose particle” used in BH poetry from the eighth century onward. Part IV explores some of the implications for Psalm 1, specifically the question of its scribal production.

I. Psalm 1: Antitheses and Asymmetries

To situate the poetic effects of *’āšer* within Psalm 1, it may be helpful to begin with some observations about its major literary features.⁷ This poem is well known for its overarching antithetical parallelism of vv. 1–3 and 4–5, echoed in the antithetical bicolon concluding in v. 6.⁸ Antithesis between the major sections, vv. 1–3 and vv. 4–5, is strongly marked by the opening to v. 4, “not so the *rēšā’im*.”⁹ Antithesis is also a feature within each of these two subunits of vv. 1–3 and vv. 4–5. Verses 1–3 defines *hā’īš*, “the person” (literally “the man”)

⁷ The following observations (as well as a number of others) are made in Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 114–17; Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 81–86; Friedhelm Hartenstein and Bernd Janowski, *Psalmen*, BKAT XV/1, Lieferung 1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2012), 7–54. See also Mays, *Psalms*, 40–41; Brown, *Seeing the Psalms*, 55–79 and 131; and Seow, “An Exquisitely Poetic Introduction to the Psalter,” 275–93.

⁸ On this verse, see the extended discussion of Bernd Janowski, *Leben in Gottes Gegenwart: Beiträge zur Theologie und Anthropologie des Alten Testament* 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 65–96.

⁹ See BHS and NABRE favoring the longer LXX *ouk houtōs hoi asebeis ouk houtōs* issuing in greater balance with the surrounding lines (see too Kraus, *Psalms* 1–59, 113; cf. the parallelism of lines both with *lō’-kēn* in Isa 10:7). It is regarded as a haplography, in *Textual Notes on the New American Bible* (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony’s Guild, nd), 380. Moreover, the tendency to gloss in LXX Ps 1:4 is noted by Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancient Testament: Tome 4. Psaumes*, eds. Stephen Desmond Ryan and Adrian Schenker, OBO 50/4 (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 3, referring to the LXX expansion at the very end of v. 4 relative to MT, “from the face of the earth” (*apo prosōpou tēs gēs*); see also BHS and Hartenstein and Janowski, *Psalmen*, 11 (with both additions in the Psalterium Gallicanum but not in the Psalterium juxta Hebraicum). The repetition of the phrase in the longer reading in Ps 1:4a, identified as the stylistic feature of “epizeuxis” (Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle*, 1–3), is compared to a similar repetition of *nākōn libbī* underlying LXX Ps 108:2 and preserved in MT 57:8 (noted also in BHS), possibly suggestive of “les oscillations possible” (Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle*, 2). If stylistic comparison may serve as a consideration, the stylistically similar expression in Num 12:7 would not recommend the longer text of LXX. See further Part IV below for *lō’-kēn*.

who is *ʾašrê* (either “blessed”¹⁰ or “happy,”¹¹ or perhaps “commendable,”¹² “fortunate”¹³ or “content”¹⁴), first by what that person is not (v. 1) and then by what that person is and does (vv. 2–3). By contrast, vv. 4–5 first define the *ršāʾim*, “the wicked,” by what they are and then by what they will not do relative to *šaddîqîm*, “the righteous.” The plant images of vv. 3 and 4 are likewise antithetical (just as they are in the often-compared images in Jer 17:5–8 and Egyptian Instruction of Amenemope).¹⁵

These antitheses in vv. 1–5 are additionally expressed by means of their overall structure as an antithetical chiasm, as claimed by a number of interpreters¹⁶:

¹⁰ For a defense of the traditional, “blessed is ...,” see Mays, *Psalms*, 40–41.

¹¹ Cited by Mayer I. Gruber in support are LXX *makarios*, “happy,” and Vulgate *beatus*, “happy, blessed,” as well as some medieval Jewish commentators. See Gruber, *Rashi’s Commentary on Psalms 1–89 (Books I–III), with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, SFSHJ 161 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 50 n. 2, based on the noun **ōšer*, “happiness” (Gen 30:13; cf. “fortunate” in NJPS) and its usage with *ʾôb* in Ps 128:2 and Prov 16:20. See also “Glücklich” in Hartenstein and Janowski, *Psalmen*, 9, 19 and 23; and “Glückpresungen” in Weber, “Meint die Tora JHWHs in Psalm 1,2 (auch) den Psalter?” 75. Joy or jubilation is defended by Waldecir Gonzaga and Antonio Marcos dos Santos, “Salmo 1: o portao de entrada para se meditar sobre o cominho dos justos e dos impios,” *Teocomunicação: Revista de Teologia da PUCRS* 50/2 (2020): 1–17, here 3. Note that *ʾašrê* has been analyzed as a third-weak root elative adjective “most happy” and not construct, by Aaron D. Rubin, “The Form and Meaning of Hebrew *ʾašrê*,” *VT* 60 (2010): 366–72.

¹² So Seow, “An Exquisitely Poetic Introduction to the Psalter,” 277–78, echoing Rashi, in Gruber, *Rashi’s Commentary on Psalms 1–89*, 49 and 50 n. 4, based on the usages of the verbal root in Prov 31:28 and Song 6:9 (cf. Prov 14:21).

¹³ So Brown, *Seeing the Psalms*, 55 and n. 231 n. 4; and Scott C. Jones, “Psalm 1 and the Hermeneutics of Torah,” *Bib* 97 (2016): 537–51, here 537. See also “The good fortune of the person who ...,” in Goldingay, *Psalms*, 79 and 81.

¹⁴ Declaissé-Walford, “The Meta-Narrative of the Psalter,” 369.

¹⁵ For the debate over the direction of influence, see William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1–25*, ed. Paul D. Hanson, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 489–90, favoring the influence of Psalm 1 on Jer 17:5–8. I would not be so sure. See F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “The Art of Poetry of Jeremiah 17:5–8,” in *Ve-Ed Ya’aleh (Gen 2:6): Essays in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies Presented to Edward L. Greenstein: Volume 2*, eds. Peter Machinist, Robert A. Harris, Joshua A. Berman, Nili Samet, and Noga Ayali-Darshan (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2021), 713–27, here 721–24. The Egyptian parallel from the fourth chapter of the Instruction of Amenemope (John A. Wilson, “The Instruction of Amen-em-opet,” *ANET* 422; Miriam Lichtheim, “Instruction of Amenemope,” *COS* 1.117) is noted by Holladay and many other commentators, including Hartenstein and Janowski, *Psalmen*, 35–38. As this Egyptian text was evidently received into Judean literary tradition in some form and fashion as suggested by its reflexes in Prov 22:30–23:25, it might be suggestive of a broader set of known tropes. To be sure, this section of Proverbs has no arboreal parallel. At the same time, virtually all lines in Psalm 1 enjoy strong parallels (as noted further below), suggestive of its richly traditional content.

¹⁶ Modified from Brown, *Seeing the Psalms*, 56, who includes v. 6 with v. 5 as A; see also Dahood, *Psalms I. 1–50*, 5; and Hartenstein and Janowski, *Psalmen*, 16. That vv. 1 and 5 (and not v. 6, *pace* Brown) correspond not only in content is further indicated by the sonant-syntactical parallelism between *baʾšat* in v. 1 and *baʾdat* in v. 5, sharing /b/, /ʾ/, and /t/, as well as the

A (vv. 1–2): description of the “man” not going, standing, sitting among the wicked in v. 1; plus *tôrâ* in v. 2

B (v. 3a–b): tree metaphor for the *tôrâ*-oriented “man” as defined in vv. 1–2

C (v. 3b): the prosperity of that “man” (alternatively, of the tree)

C’ (v. 4a): “not so the wicked” as denial of their prosperity

B’ (v. 4b): chaff metaphor for the wicked as identified in v. 4a

A’ (v. 5): description of the wicked not rising among the righteous

At first glance, this structure’s macrostructure seems apparent. However, lacking any correspondence in v. 5, the divine *tôrâ* in v. 2 stands out: it is the singular guide in the approved life (as famously known also in Deut 17:18–20 and Josh 1:7–8).¹⁷ It provides a specific answer to the seemingly enigma opening of Psalm 1: its first verse relates only what literally “the man” (but better “the one”) is not or does not do; only with the second verse is there clarification as to the positive alternative. The negative characterization in v. 1 perhaps offers a sort of rhetorical puzzle leading audiences to await further clarification about “the person,” which v. 2 provides with its rather specific answer in a life of *tôrâ*. In short, the major thematic point made about *tôrâ* in v. 2 stands out structurally due to its asymmetrical position within the otherwise general symmetry between vv. 1–3 and vv. 4–5.

Corresponding to Psalm 1’s antithetical structure are the poem’s antithetical terms for types of persons. As signaled by Psalm 1’s chiastic structure in vv. 1–5 as noted above and echoed in the antithetical conclusion or coda of v. 6, the first group is labeled *rěšā’im*, “the wicked,” at the outset in v. 1 (developed further by parallelism with additional terms). Then they are named twice in the section

same vowels (Goldingay, *Psalms*, 87); note similarly /b/, /m/, and /š/ in *ûbēmôšab* in v. 1 and *bammîšpāt* in v. 5.

¹⁷ The idea of *tôrâ* in v. 2 referring to the wider *tôrâ* literature of the Hebrew Bible has been discussed recently, for example by Jones, “Psalm 1 and the Hermeneutics of Torah,” 537–51; and J. Gerald Janzen, “Psalm 1 and the Torah that Transplants,” *Canadian-American Theological Review* 8/2 (2019): 119–26. For an expansive view of the referent to Genesis-Deuteronomy plus the Prophets, see Weber, “Meint die Tora JHWHs in Psalm 1,2 (auch) den Psalter?” 75–102. For the Pentateuch as the possible referent, see Samuel E. Balentine, “The Politics of Religion in the Persian Period,” in *After the Exile: Essays in Honour of Rex Mason*, eds. John Barton and David J. Reimer (Macon GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 129–46, here 133–34. This view is inferred from on the understanding of Psalm 1 as the introduction to the Psalms whose five books evoke the five books of Moses. This view is possible, as an initial *tôrâ* collection of the Psalms (as suggested for Psalms 1–119; see below) may presuppose priestly cult as well as the behavior recommended for persons more broadly. However, in view of the resonance of Ps 1:2 with Deut 17:18–20 and Josh 1:7–8, *tôrâ* as Psalm 1’s norm may suggest deuteronomic law as the central guide to behavior more broadly recommended for the “righteous” as opposed to the “wicked” (as in the book of Proverbs) and consistent with the law of the king in Deut 17:18–20 as opposed to traditional royal “mandate model” as found in “royal psalms”; see Dylan R. Johnson, “The Torah and the King: Zedekiah’s Edict (Jer 34) and Deuteronomistic Redaction,” *ZAW* 134 (2020): 40–54. For a more limited approach, see Lefebvre, “On His Law He Meditates,” 439–50. This question lies beyond the scope of this essay.

devoted to their description in vv. 4 and 5, and once again at the close in v. 6. By contrast, the party antithetical to *rěšā'im* is referenced initially in v. 1 without a clearly contrasting noun. Instead, v. 1 opens by referring more generically to *hā'īš*,¹⁸ more specifically characterized with the highly alliterative phrasing *'āšrē hā'īš 'āšer*. This category of figures is unveiled as *šaddiqim*, “righteous,” only at the end of v. 5 and then more explicitly at the first line of the coda in v. 6. Indeed, in both vv. 5 and 6, the pair of masculine plural terms, *šaddiqim* and *rěšā'im*, stand in parallelism. This double-juxtaposition of this word-pair within these two verses is further notable for their chiasmic arrangement, as observed by Anthony R. Ceresko.¹⁹ The parallelism of these two nouns in v. 6 is marked further by *derek* standing in construct to both nouns in parallelism.²⁰ As with this pair (as noted above), this usage of *derek* in v. 6 appears traditional as seen from its attestations elsewhere, for example in Proverbs (4:19, 12:26, 15:9 for “the way of the wicked”; cf. “the way (that is) straight” in Prov 14:12 = 16:25; see also Prov 29:27). The general notion of v. 6 also seems traditional, to judge from the similar expressions elsewhere, for example in 1 Sam 2:9, Ps 68:3–4, and Prov 10:28.

In Psalm 1's coda in v. 6, these two plural nouns for the contrasting figures come into focus as the poem's contrasting yet correlating topics, again following traditional usage known elsewhere (e.g., Ps 37:17; Prov 10:28, 11:10, 23, 12:5, 7, 13:9, 15:29, 28:12, 28, 29:16; Eccl/Qoh 8:14, twice). Indeed, given the many other attestations of various combinations of *rěšā'*/*rěšā'im* and *šaddiq*/*šaddiqim* across the biblical corpus,²¹ these pairs would appear to be quite traditional. Thus, it may be that the strong use of *rěšā'im* expressed in relation to its opposite “person” up through v. 4 primes its audience(s) for the unveiling of its commonly used antithetical term, *šaddiqim* in v. 5 and then again in v. 6. In any case, the poem

¹⁸ Cf. Hartenstein and Janowski, *Psalmen*, 17.

¹⁹ Ceresko, *Psalmists and Sages: Studies in Old Testament Poetry and Religion*, Indian Theologies Studies Supplements 2 (Bangalore: St. Peter's Pontifical Institute, 1994), 47–48, with a total of nineteen examples.

²⁰ For the poetic parallelism of the same word, see Thomas P. McCreesh, *Biblical Sound and Sense: Poetic Sound Patterns in Proverbs 10–29*, JSOTSup 128 (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1991), 120–42. The similar terms, *ba'āšat* in v. 1 and *ba'ādat* in v. 5 (see below), perhaps also cue the parallelism of the two nouns that follow each prepositional phrase, *rěšā'im* in v. 1 and *šaddiqim* in v. 5.

²¹ That the usage is traditional may be seen further with the singular forms of these nouns attested together in parallelism or in a single clause in Pss 7:10, 11:5, 37:12, 16, 21, 32, 58:11; Prov 10:16, 25, 11:8, 31, 13:5, 14:32, 15:6, 17:15, 18:5, 21:18, 24:15, 29:7; Qoh 3:17, 7:15, and 9:2. Prose contexts also use the two singular nouns together, e.g., Gen 18:23, 25 (twice); Exod 23:7; Deut 25:1; 1 Kgs 8:32//2 Chron 6:23; Ezek 18:20, 24, 21:8, 9, 33:12; Hab 1:4, 13. Note also plural paired with singular in different configurations, in Ps 75:11; Prov 3:33, 10:3, 6, 7, 11, 20, 24, 30, 32, 12:10, 12, 21, 26, 13:25, 14:19, 15:28, 21:12, 24:16, 25:26, 28:1, 29:2, 27; Isa 5:23; Ezek 13:22; cf. Exod 9:27. For this feature with this word-pair, see Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, rev. and expanded ed., The Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans; Dearborn, MI: Dove Booksellers, 2008), 48. According to *DCH VII*:561, no other contrasting term occurs with *rěšā'im* nearly as often.

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