

# The Psalms as Hymns in the Temple of Jerusalem

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From as far back as our sources allow, hymns were part of Near Eastern temple ritual, with their performers an essential component of the temple functionaries.<sup>1</sup> These sources include Sumerian, Akkadian, and Egyptian texts from as early as the third millennium BCE.<sup>2</sup> From the second millennium BCE, we gain further examples of hymns from the Hittite realm, even if most (if not all) of the poems are based on Mesopotamian precursors.<sup>3</sup> Ugarit, our main source of information on ancient Canaan, has not yielded songs of this sort in

1. For the performers, see Richard Henshaw, *Female and Male: The Cultic Personnel: The Bible and Rest of the Ancient Near East* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1994) esp. ch. 2, "Singers, Musicians, and Dancers," 84–134. Note, however, that this volume does not treat the Egyptian cultic personnel.

2. As the reader can imagine, the literature is extensive, and hence I offer here but a sampling of bibliographic items. For Sumerian hymns, which include compositions directed both to specific deities and to the temples themselves, see Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once...: Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), esp. 99–142, 375–444. Notwithstanding the much larger corpus of Akkadian literature, hymns are less well represented; see the discussion in Alan Lenzi, ed., *Reading Akkadian Prayers and Hymns: An Introduction*, Ancient Near East Monographs (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 56–60, with the most important texts included in said volume. For Egyptian hymns, see Jan Assmann, *Ägyptische Hymnen und Gebete*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999); André Barucq and François Daumas, *Hymnes et prières de l'Égypte ancienne*, Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient (Paris: Cerf, 1980); and John L. Foster, *Hymns, Prayers, and Songs: An Anthology of Egyptian Lyric Poetry*, Writings from the Ancient World 8 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1995). A sampling of Sumerian, Akkadian, and Egyptian hymns also may be found in William W. Hallo, ed., *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 1: *Canonical Compositions* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

3. See the discussion in Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers*, Writings from the Ancient World 11 (Atlanta: Scholars, 2002), 3. Note, however, that some original Hittite hymns are incorporated into prayer texts, as illustrated by texts no. 8 and 9 in said collection.

the native language, Ugaritic,<sup>4</sup> but strikingly, the documentary evidence from this important site includes the world's oldest hymn containing both the libretto and the musical notation. I refer to the hymn to Nikkal, composed in Hurrian, and whose musical system was deciphered by Anne Kilmer and colleagues, then made available to the public at large with the felicitous title *Sounds from Silence*.<sup>5</sup>

In view of this widespread religious tradition, spanning time and place, it is striking that hymnic recitation is completely absent from the ritual texts in the priestly source of the Torah. Indeed, speech is barely mentioned! The occasional mentions of speech in the Yom Kippur ritual (Lev. 16, though even there by inference only) and in the ordeal of the woman accused of adultery (Num. 5:21-22) do not, in this case, disprove the rule. The great synthesizer of Israelite religion, Yehezkel Kaufmann, whose monumental eight-volume work *Toledot ha-'Emuna ha-Yisra'elit* (*The History of Israelite Religion*) remains a tour-de-force three generations later,<sup>6</sup> opined that the lack of speech and recitation, hymn and psalm, in the priestly conception of the cult resulted from a conscious effort to distance the ritual worship of Yahweh from the ritual worship systems of the polytheistic deities—an estimation with which I concur. In Kaufmann's words, "The priestly temple is the kingdom of silence."<sup>7</sup> This is to say, as one reads through the large chunks of priestly literature—spanning the latter part of Exodus, all of Leviticus, and large portions of Numbers—the lack of spoken word, chanted libretto, and musical instrumentation stands in sharp contrast to

4. Note that the term "hymn(s)" appears but once in the index to the massive reference work, *Handbook of Ugaritic Studies*, ed. Wilfred G. E. Watson and Nicolas Wyatt, *Handbuch der Orientalistik* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 832 (with reference to pp. 272-73). I am not convinced by the argument of Yitzhak Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994), 277-307, that CAT 1.108 = RS 24.252 constitutes "A Ugaritic Hymn in Honor of El" (thus the name of his chapter). For alternative understandings of this text, see Gregorio del Olmo Lete, *Canaanite Religion According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 184-92; and Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, *Writings from the Ancient World* 10 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 192-95. Both of these scholars link this composition to the royal cult, with specific attention to the deification of the deceased king.

5. Anne D. Kilmer, Richard L. Crocker, and Robert R. Brown, *Sounds from Silence: Recent Discoveries in Ancient Near Eastern Music* (record with booklet), 1976. Now available in CD-format at <http://www.amarantpublishing.com/hurrian.htm> or <http://www.bellaromamusic.com>.

6. Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Toledot ha-'Emuna ha-Yisra'elit*, 8 vols. (Tel-Aviv: Bialik/Devir, 1937-1956). Much more accessible is the abridged English version: Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. Moshe Greenberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), from which I cite herein.

7. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, 303. For the treatment of this subject in the Hebrew original, see Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-'Emuna ha-Yisra'elit*, 2:476-78.

the ancient Near Eastern temple traditions outlined above. The effect is clear: in the vision of the priests responsible for these Torah texts, the Tabernacle (and in its wake the Temple) was indeed a “sanctuary of silence.”<sup>8</sup> And just as the texts of Lev. 16 and Num. 5:21–22 do not invalidate this statement for the spoken or chanted word, the same is true for Num. 10:10, a passage that might imply that the silver trumpets were used in the cult of Yahweh as envisioned by the priests, though which more likely (with Kaufmann) reflects popular religious practice, as an extension of the trumpets’ original role in a military context.<sup>9</sup>

The priestly conception, however, is only one view of the way things are, were, or should be.<sup>10</sup> The Book of Deuteronomy, as is well known, presents a different picture of the ancient Israelite cult,<sup>11</sup> and this book in turn serves as the ideological and theological basis for much of Israelite historical writing, including the Book of Kings. Thus, for example, and perhaps most famously, during the dedication of the Temple as described in 1 Kings 8, the author places into the mouth of Solomon a speech that refers repeatedly to the Temple as a place of prayer—not sacrifice.<sup>12</sup> To gain a flavor of these words, we may consider 1 Kgs. 8:28–30:<sup>13</sup>

Turn to the *prayer* of your servant and to his *supplication*, O Yhwh my God, to hear the *cry* and the *prayer* which your servant *prays* before you this day. May your eyes be open toward this House night and day, toward the place of which you have said, “my name shall be there,” to hear the *prayer* which your servant *prays* toward this place. And when you hear the *supplication* of your servant and of your people Israel, which they will *pray* toward this place, give heed in your abode in the heavens—give heed and pardon.

8. This term serves as the title of a more recent work on the subject by Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), esp. 148–52.

9. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, 306. For more on the trumpets, see Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers: The JPS Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 72–75, 372–73.

10. This point raises an entirely different topic, to which I hope to return on another occasion: the dialectic within ancient Israel and early Judaism. Indeed, the stage is set in the first two chapters of Genesis, with two different creation accounts exhibiting many differences. The way of the Bible (by which I mean its editors/compiler/redactors/et al.) is not to present a single unified voice on any subject but to allow for different voices to be heard.

11. See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, Anchor Bible 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 25–44.

12. To be sure, the sacrifices are offered when the ceremony is concluded (see 1 Kgs. 8:62–63), but they are not mentioned in Solomon’s speech.

13. I have placed the three Hebrew nouns *rinna* “cry,” *ṭəpilla* “prayer,” and *ṭəhinna* “supplication” in italics, along with the verb *p-l-l* (T-stem) “pray,” to highlight these repeated usages.

And then additional excerpts as Solomon's speech continues:

*1 Kgs. 8:38*—Every *prayer*, every *supplication*, which will be to every person among all your people Israel.

*1 Kgs. 8:45*—And you shall hear in the heavens their *prayer* and their *supplication*.

*1 Kgs. 8:49*—And you shall hear in the heavens, the habitation of your abode, their *prayer* and their *supplication*.

Now, to be sure, there is a difference between prayer, which may contain words alone, and hymns, which include both words and music (with the words sung and with instrumental accompaniment). So it is possible that even the author of 1 Kings 8 did not envision music in the Temple. Regardless, it did not take long for musical traditions to invade the Temple rituals—or perhaps, in light of our first passage to be considered, I should say, temple rituals (with lower/case “t”).

Amos 5:21-23 is set in the city of Bethel, and hence in the kingdom of Israel, with its own ritual practices, no doubt at times consonant with the rituals of the Jerusalem Temple, while at other times different. It is here that we gain our first certain reference to hymns and music as part of religious worship. The passage reads as follows:

<sup>21</sup> I loathe, I spurn your festivals, I do not (delight in the) smell of your solemn-assemblies. <sup>22</sup> If you offer me burnt-offerings, or your meal offerings, I will not accept them; and to the gift of your fatlings, I will pay no heed. <sup>23</sup> Remove from me the loud-sound of your hymns (*šīrīm*), and the music (*zimra*) of your lyres let me not hear.

This passage constitutes one of the most famous of the prophetic critiques of the sacrificial worship system: v. 21 begins with mention of the festivals; v. 22 refers to the different specific sacrifices; and then v. 23 concludes with mention of both vocal and instrumental music. These verses from Amos clearly attest to a well-developed musical tradition in the temple at Bethel by the mid-eighth century.<sup>14</sup> Did such activity also take place in Dan, where a second temple to Yahweh stood in the northern kingdom (1 Kgs. 12:29)?

14. Because the verse is so famous, it is worth quoting the following passage here, with Amos's recipe for a better approach to a religious lifestyle: “But let justice well up like water, righteousness like an unfailing stream” (5:24).

Did such activity also take place in the temple to Baal that Ahab built in Samaria (1 Kgs. 16:32)—at least until it was destroyed by Jehu (2 Kgs. 10)? Did such musical traditions penetrate southward to Jerusalem already in Amos's time? We have no way of answering the first two questions concerning Dan and Samaria, though given the evidence of Bethel, I believe that we may posit answers to these questions in the affirmative. We are on firmer ground, however, when we turn our gaze southward, thanks to a single reference which allows us a glimpse into the Jerusalem Temple. I refer to the words of King Hezekiah, spoken c. 710 BCE, as part of his psalm of thanksgiving upon recovery from illness (a poem found in the historical appendix to First Isaiah, but not found in the Book of Kings).<sup>15</sup> The key passage is Isa. 38:20, the last line of the poem:

Yhwh, to save me, And my musical instruments we will play, All the days of our lives, At the house of Yhwh.

Such is my very literal translation, according to my usual system of rendering biblical Hebrew passages into English. In this case, I admit, a more standard translation such as that of the RSV may capture the sense better:

The Lord will save me, and we will sing to stringed instruments all the days of our life, at the house of the Lord.

Regardless, the point is clear: musical instruments (and presumably song) are assumed to be a regular part of the Jerusalem Temple ritual during the reign of King Hezekiah, in the late eighth century BCE.<sup>16</sup>

If only we had more explicit evidence to pursue this inquiry into the First Temple period. Unfortunately, though, the next biblical passage that we can cite comes from more than a century after Hezekiah, at the very end of the First Temple period. I refer to Jer. 33:11, a most illuminating text:

15. The basic study of this poem is Michael L. Barré, *The Lord Has Saved Me: A Study of the Psalm of Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:9-20)*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 39 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005). Contra many scholars, my standpoint here is that the poem dates to the pre-exilic period, c. 700 BCE. As Barré has shown (pp. 216–27), the linguistic evidence certainly points in that direction—and let us recall that such testimony remains the most objective manner for the dating of biblical texts (even if many biblical scholars continue on their merry way and ignore such data).

16. For a detailed discussion on the crucial centuries separating Amos in the mid-eighth century and Hezekiah in the late eighth century, see the Excursus.

The voice of joy, the voice of gladness, the voice of bridegroom and the voice of bride, the voice of those who say, “Give thanks to Yhwh of Hosts, for Yhwh is good, for his kindness is forever!” as they bring the thanksgiving-offering to the House of Yhwh. For I will restore the captivity to the land, as of old—says Yhwh.

The prophet Jeremiah not only witnesses the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE, but he also anticipates a time when it will be rebuilt, when worshippers will once again bring their offerings to the locus of Jewish ritual worship. The “voices” at the beginning of the verse refer not to spoken words, most obviously, but rather to joyous vocal music.<sup>17</sup> No doubt Jeremiah observed people singing the words “Give thanks to Yhwh of Hosts, for Yhwh is good, for his kindness is forever!” as they brought their thanksgiving-offering (*tōda*) to the Temple, a scene which he assumes will be recreated in the rebuilt Temple.

Now, what is truly remarkable about this passage is its connection to Psalm 100, whose superscription (v. 1) reads “a psalm of thanksgiving” (*mizmōr lə-tōda*), whose penultimate line (v. 3) bids the offerers “enter his gates with thanksgiving (*tōda*),” and whose concluding line (v. 5) reads:

For Yhwh is good, his kindness is forever, and until every generation is his faithfulness.

with the a-line of this couplet echoing the words that Jer. 33:11 reproduces! And while the word “thanksgiving” (*tōda*) appears elsewhere in the Book of Psalms, only Psalm 100 bears the superscription “a psalm of thanksgiving” (*mizmōr lə-tōda*) with its concomitant description of individuals arriving at the Temple with offering in hand.<sup>18</sup> Let us recall that the interconnection between these two texts cannot be a “set-up,” as if the final editor of Jeremiah and the final editor of Psalms were in conversation with one another. Quite the contrary, these two books have very different editorial histories, a point that makes the nexus between Jer. 33:11 and Psalms 100 all the more noteworthy.

With our nod to Psalm 100, this essay arrives at its logical destination, adumbrated in the title, the Book of Psalms. Linguistic analysis reveals that most of the psalms were composed in the First Temple period<sup>19</sup> though the crucial question still remains: how many of the individual poems were used in the

17. For additional passages, where Hebrew *qōl* “voice” clearly refers to singing, see 2 Sam. 19:36, Isa. 24:14, 52:8, Ezek. 33:32. See David J.A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 8 vols. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 1993–2011), 7:215.

18. Though see also Psalm 50.

Temple rituals, say, by individuals arriving with offerings, as we saw in the case just described?<sup>20</sup> A further insight in this direction may be forthcoming from the following converging lines of evidence.

Of the 150 canonical psalms, eleven bear the superscription assigning them to the “sons of Korah” (Pss. 42, 44–49, 84–85, 87–88), while twelve bear the superscription attributing them to the “sons of Asaph” (Pss. 50, 73–83)—*bənē qōrah* and *bənē ’asap*, respectively. As we shall see below, these two groups are associated with the Temple rites in the Book of Chronicles, written during the post-exilic, or Persian, period. The question arises: since there are no unequivocal pre-exilic texts which indicate Korahites and Asaphites serving as Temple singers, can we nonetheless push this tradition back to the era of the First Temple? A hint, but no more than that, is forthcoming from a Hebrew inscription found at Arad in southern Judah. The epigraph, known as Arad ostrakon 49, contains a list of officials, some as groups (“sons of X”), some as individuals, and among the former are the *BNY QRH*, that is, *bənē qōrah* “sons of Korah” (more properly “Qorah”).<sup>21</sup> The location of this inscription, moreover, is most revealing: the ostrakon was found in a room adjacent to the Arad temple, a structure that existed and operated as a local or regional cultic center for about a century or two, until it was destroyed c. 700 BCE.<sup>22</sup> It is most enticing to connect the mention of the “sons of Korah” at Arad in a late eighth-century

19. This is one of the conclusions forthcoming from the work of Avi Hurvitz, *Ben Lashon le-Lashon* (English title: “The Transition Period in Biblical Hebrew: A Study in Post-Exilic Hebrew and its Implications for the Dating of Psalms”) (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1972). Also of note are the many points of contact between the language of Psalms and Ugaritic poetry, which suggests an earlier rather than a later date for most of the compositions. This point was grossly overstated and pushed to the extreme by Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms*, 3 vols., Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966–1970), but the general conclusion still can be sustained, for which see Jonas C. Greenfield, “The Hebrew Bible and Canaanite Literature,” in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 545–60; and James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 467–70. To be sure, the conclusions of some early twentieth century scholars, that many of the Psalms date to the Hellenistic, even Maccabean, period, is simply untenable.

20. For an imaginative recreation of how the psalms may have operated in such a setting, see Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, 463–65.

21. For photograph, line drawing, transcription, and translation, see Shmuel Ahituv, *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period*, ed. Anson F. Rainey (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 145–48.

22. The destruction of the Arad temple either was caused by the Assyrian invaders (see 2 Kgs. 18:13; and with greater detail the three prism inscriptions of Sennacherib [London, Chicago, Jerusalem] with the Assyrian perspective) or was due to the centralization of worship program initiated by King Hezekiah (see 2 Kgs. 18:4–6).

context, during the heyday of the monarchy, with the contemporaneous poems ascribed to them and the (albeit later) biblical tradition that Korahites were Temple singers (2 Chron. 20:19).

Regardless of what we make of the mention of “sons of Korah” in Arad ostrakon 49, one point remains clear. The testimony of Amos’s critique in Amos 5:21–23, Hezekiah’s prayer in Isa. 38:20, and Jeremiah’s description of the Temple ritual in Jer. 33:11 converge to demonstrate that hymns and music found a home in ancient Israel’s ritual spaces, most famously the Jerusalem Temple. The priestly conception in the Torah may be a fine ideal—but the populace at large could not countenance the “sanctuary of silence” forever. The basic human need to communicate with its deity, especially with song,<sup>23</sup> could not be quieted, and thus psalmody entered the Jerusalem Temple rituals by at least the end of the eighth century BCE.

One still may wish to ask, why is it that the biblical sources from the monarchic period, especially the Book of Kings (note that our three passages above derive from prophetic works), tend to ignore this point? Especially in light of the contrast with the Book of Chronicles, which, as we shall see, places such importance on this feature of ritual worship. The question is hardly ever asked, but we may venture a hypothesis. First, if Amos 5:21–23 and Arad ostrakon 49 are an indication, it is possible that psalmody arose outside the Jerusalem Temple, developed by guilds of singers, which only later made their way to the main locus of worship in the capital city of Judah.<sup>24</sup> Secondly, this new mode of devotion to Yahweh must have remained secondary in the Jerusalem Temple, with the focus clearly on the sacrifices themselves. It was only in the Second Temple period, as we shall see, that hymns took their pride of place in the official cult.

And with that comment, we may segue nicely to the Book of Chronicles, mentioned several times thus far. Both Kings and Chronicles relate the history of the Judahite monarchy (and in the case of the former, the history of the northern kingdom of Israel as well), but there is a major difference between these two sources. Kings is based on authentic archival material, composed during the reigns of the individual kings, whether they be rulers of Israel (c. 930–721 BCE) or Judah (c. 930–586 BCE),<sup>25</sup> with its final editing during the Babylonian Exile. For the period that precedes c. 930 BCE, the epoch of

23. And dance, I should add!—a point that Michal did not understand (see 2 Sam. 6:14–16).

24. See the classic study by Nahum M. Sarna, “The Psalms Superscriptions and the Guilds,” in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History: Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Siegfried Stein and Raphael Loewe (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1979), 281–300. We will explore this point further in the Excursus.

the united monarchy under David and Solomon, we also have more or less contemporaneous sources incorporated into the canonical Book of 2 Samuel (re: David) and the first eleven chapters of 1 Kings (re: Solomon).<sup>26</sup> Chronicles, by contrast, was written/compiled in the fifth (if not fourth) century BCE, during the Persian period, with the goal to glorify the former kings of Judah (from David onward). Much of Chronicles parallels (verbatim or nearly so) the books of Samuel and Kings; when new information, not encountered in the earlier books, is provided, scholars typically debate how historical the portrayal may or may not be. Throughout, however—as is true of all authors—the compiler/redactor of Chronicles betrays his own epoch, the Second Temple period.<sup>27</sup> This is especially the case when the Temple rituals are described, and it is here that one reads repeatedly of the use of vocal and instrumental music mentioned. Also relevant to this discussion is the Book of Ezra–Nehemiah (a single work in the Jewish tradition, two separate books in the Christian tradition), which relates the history of the fifth century BCE, and thus serves as a valuable source of information for the Persian period.

To demonstrate a crucial distinction between Samuel–Kings, on the one hand, and Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah, on the other, we need only look at the use of a single lexeme in these different compositions. The verb *h-l-l* “praise” occurs only twice in all of Samuel–Kings, neither with reference to God,<sup>28</sup> whereas this verb occurs twenty-five times in Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah, almost always with reference to God.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the derived noun form *təhillā*

25. See such statements as 1 Kgs. 14:19 (re: Israel) and 1 Kgs. 14:29 (re: Judah), which repeat throughout the Book of Kings. For the relevant linguistic data, see Gary A. Rendsburg, *Israelian Hebrew in the Book of Kings*, Occasional Publications of the Department of Near Eastern Studies and the Program of Jewish Studies, Cornell University 5 (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2002).

26. Most of the material concerning David is characterized by epic treatment (hence we have superb narrative prose in tales such as the adultery with Bathsheba in 2 Sam. 11–12), while most of the material concerning Solomon betrays its origins in the archival record (as may be indicated, for example, by 1 Kgs. 11:41)—though both types of writing “smack of an intimate familiarity with the events narrated.” For the transition from the epic style to the annalistic style, see Cyrus H. Gordon and Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (New York: Norton, 1997), 207–08; for the quote just given, see p. 215.

27. This is certainly true from the linguistic standpoint, since Chronicles is written in Late Biblical Hebrew, as opposed to the Book of Kings, written in Standard Biblical Hebrew (at least for the parts emanating from Judah; see previous note).

28. In 2 Sam. 14:25, the object of the admiration is Absalom; while in 1 Kgs. 20:11, the context is self-praise or boasting by a military man. I do not include here 2 Sam. 22:4, which occurs within a poem, indeed one paralleled in Ps. 18.

29. The only exceptions are 2 Chron. 23:12–13.

“praise” never occurs in Samuel-Kings, whereas it occurs four times in Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, each time with reference to God.

Now, to be sure, the Chronicles frequently uses the term anachronistically, as for example in the following passages:

*1 Chron. 16:4*—“And he [David] placed before the Ark of Yhwh from among the Levites ministers, to invoke and to give thanks and to praise Yhwh the God of Israel.”

*1 Chron. 23:5*—“And four thousand praises of Yhwh with instruments that I [David] have made for praising.”

As noted earlier, there is no indication of such activity by David in the Book of Samuel (nor any reflex thereof in the Book of Kings), so clearly these “data points” constitute imaginations by the Chronicler reflecting his contemporary Second Temple period, during which time song and music had been upgraded to a central role within the cult. The authors of our Persian-period books even provide the names of singers, both individual ones and groups thereof. The name that emerges most of all is Asaph (see especially *1 Chron. 16:5*, where said individual is appointed as “head (singer)” [Hebrew: *rōš*], but also *Ezra 2:41 // Neh. 7:44*); while among the other names we also find Korah (*2 Chron. 20:19*)—hence our attention above to the various poems ascribed to Asaph and Korah in the Book of Psalms.

Of the many texts within Chronicles on which one could focus, a very crucial one is *1 Chronicles 16* (an excerpt of which appears just above), which constitutes the Chronicler’s understanding of how the Ark of God was transferred to Jerusalem during the reign of king David. The text first speaks of the sacrifices that were performed (vv. 1-2), we then read (as per the above) of the appointment of the Levites with musical responsibilities (vv. 4-7), after which follows an actual hymn, comprised of excerpts from three psalms that eventually found their way into the canonical Book of Psalms. Without presenting the actual words here, we may chart this material as follows:

<i>1 Chron. 16:8-22</i>	=	Ps. 105:1-15
<i>1 Chron. 16:23-33</i>	=	Ps. 96:1-13
<i>1 Chron. 16:34</i>	=	(see below)
<i>1 Chron. 16:35-36</i>	=	Ps. 106:47-48

Of the various verses from these poems, one may be cited, since it is so characteristic of ancient Israelite hymnic psalmody (indeed, let us transcribe the Hebrew here: *hōdū la-yhwh kī tōb / kī lə-‘ōlam ḥasdō*), to wit, 1 Chron. 16:34:

Give thanks to Yhwh for he is good, For his kindness is forever.

Indeed, a variation of this couplet was quoted above in Jer. 33:11 ~ Ps 100:5. The exact words, with both stichs, appear in Ps. 106:1, 107:1, 118:1, 118:29, 136:1; variations appear in Ezra 3:11, 2 Chron. 5:13, 7:3, 20:21; and the second stich alone appears three additional times in Psalm 118 (vv. 2-4) and a whopping twenty-five times more, as the refrain, in Psalm 136 (vv. 2-26).<sup>30</sup> Finally, at the end of this pericope, we read in 1 Chron. 16:48:

“Blessed is Yhwh God of Israel from eternity until eternity”; and all the people said “Amen,” and they praised Yhwh.

A narrative that began with the sacrifices, a ritual limited to the priests, transitions to the Levites’ singing psalms of praise, and ends with the population at large engaged by proclaiming “amen,” along with (apparently) their own words of praise to God. In this snapshot, we see the movement in ancient Judaism from a cult limited to the priesthood to one in which everyone may participate in devotional worship.

As one other indication of this transition, we may note the difference between Solomon’s dedication of the Temple in 1 Kings 8 (which we discussed earlier) and the same event as handled by the Persian-period writer in 2 Chronicles 6. 2 Chron. 6:1-40 parallels closely 1 Kgs. 8:12-52; the main difference is what follows. In the Kings version, Solomon adds a single line of prose (1 Kgs. 8:53) to complete his long speech. In the Chronicles version, he pronounces two poetic lines (2 Chron. 6:41-42):

And now, arise O Yhwh God, to your resting place, you and your mighty Ark; Your priests, O Yhwh God, are clothed in triumph, And your loyal-ones rejoice in goodness. O Yhwh God, do not turn away from the face of your anointed-one; Remember the loyalties of David your servant.

30. Note that this makes for twenty-six repetitions of the refrain “for his kindness is forever,” thus equaling the numerical equivalent of Yhwh, whose name is invoked in the opening verse of Psalm 136. I do not believe that this is a coincidence, but rather speaks to the (albeit sporadic) use of *gematria* in biblical times already.

If this poetic coda to Solomon's prose prayer in the Chronicles version was not enough to demonstrate the trend at hand, the picture comes into greater focus when we realize that these verses appear (with minor variants) in Ps. 132:8-10. Which is to say, taking into consideration both 1 Chron. 16 and 2 Chron. 6, by sometime c. 425 BCE and c. 350 BCE, when the Book of Chronicles was written/compiled/edited/redacted, hymns of praise and thanksgiving that eventually would be canonized in the biblical Book of Psalms, already were well ensconced in the Temple ritual.

As we move beyond the biblical period, we have additional evidence for the use of psalms in the Temple liturgy, from three sources. The first is Ben Sira (also called Sirach or Ecclesiasticus), the Jewish sage who wrote his book of wisdom c. 180 BCE. In his paean to the heroes of old, towards the end of his long opus, Ben Sira has this to say about King David (Ben Sira 47:9-10):

[David] established harp-singers before the altar, also to make sweet melodies with their ringing sounds. He gave dignity at the feasts, and he arranged seasons until completion, When they were praising his holy name, and from early morning the holy precinct was resounding.

Ben Sira was written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek by his grandson in the year 132 BCE. The above passage is taken from the Greek version,<sup>31</sup> because (and how often does this happen in scholarship!) the Hebrew manuscript (MS B) that contains this portion of the text (Bodleian MS.Heb.e.62 folio XVI verso) is damaged. Nevertheless, we can make out the following Hebrew words: NGYNWT "tunes," šYR "song," and Q[w]L "sound," as well as QWL MZMWR HN'YM "sound of sweet music" in a marginal note. The reader will realize the same anachronistic thinking in Ben Sira's portrayal of David as appears in Chronicles, but that is irrelevant for our present purposes.

A more accurate reflection of Temple practice, contemporary with the author's own time period, occurs several chapters later, when Ben Sira describes with great detail the wonder and splendor of the high priest Shim'on ben Yoḥanan (Simeon son of John) (Ben Sira 50:1, with this pericope continuing through v. 21). After the poetic depiction of the sacrificial service, Ben Sira states (again using the Greek as the basis<sup>32</sup>):

31. I have used here the translation of Benjamin G. Wright, "Sirach," in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 758.

And the harp-singers sang praises with their voices, a melody was made sweet with a full tone. (Ben Sira 50:18)

Which is to say, by Ben Sira's time, the use of hymns in the Temple was, as we would expect, a fundamental part of the ritual.

The glory exhibited in Ben Sira's description of the high priest and the Temple ritual came to an end (from the perspective of the "Yahweh only" party, at least) within a decade or so of this ancient composition. I refer, of course, to the persecutions introduced by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid ruler of the land of Israel, in 168–167 BCE, which included the transformation of the Temple into a temple to Zeus. This transformation was short-lived, though, for in 164 BCE, the Maccabees successfully rebelled and restored the Temple to the worship of the God of Israel. The relevant texts from that period again provide testimony to the use of hymns in the Temple rituals.

*1 Macc. 4:54*—At the very season and on the very day that the gentiles had profaned it, it [the Temple] was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals.

*2 Macc. 10:7–8*—They offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place. They decreed by public ordinance and vote that the whole nation of the Jews should observe these days every year.

Notwithstanding the fact that the events described here are connected to a specific festival occasion (a second Sukkot, according to 2 Macc. 10:5–8, which eventually morphed into Hanukkah), once more we observe the use of hymns in the Temple ceremony.

The third of our relevant sources from this general period is Josephus (fl. 70–90 CE). His great work, *Antiquities of the Jews*, echoes the material in Chronicles and Ben Sira, by attributing to David the institution of hymns sung by the Levites (*Ant* 7.12.3):

[David] taught the Levites to sing hymns to God, both on the sabbath day and on other festivals.

32. Though not because the Hebrew is not extant or is damaged, but rather because the Greek is more expressive than the very terse Hebrew original, which also requires emendation to gain sense. See Moshe Zvi Segal, *Sefer Ben Sira ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1971–72), 346. Once more the English presented here is that of Wright, "Sirach," 760.

If only for its quaintness, based on Josephus's need to explain Judaism to his Greco-Roman audience, I also quote here his identification of the Levites as Temple singers (*Ant* 20.9.6):

The Levites, which is a tribe of ours, were singers of hymns . . . and a part of this tribe ministered in the temple.

Until this point, we have spoken only in the most general of terms, concerning the recitation of Psalms in the Temple. True, Chronicles allows us an occasional glimpse into a specific text used in the Temple service (see above), but by and large we have no contemporary material that provides further information on this subject. Fortunately, a later rabbinic text may offer additional insight. The Mishnah was compiled c. 200 CE by Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, in Sepphoris in the Galilee, approximately 130 years after the destruction of the Temple. Yet at least one-third of this compendium of Jewish religious practices (as observed by the rabbinic class at least)—and whose importance cannot be overstated—includes information relevant to Temple practices (sacrifices, purity laws, etc.).<sup>33</sup> The question debated by scholars is the following: to what extent does the Mishnah's descriptions of Temple rituals reflect the historical reality of the pre-70 CE period? This is clearly not the place to delve into this question in depth, but we can state the following. One of the major findings emanating from Dead Sea Scrolls research is that the very issues discussed in the Mishnah, including specific stances taken by the rabbis, underlie the polemics of the Qumran sect (as seen most of all in 4QMMT, the Halakhic Letter).<sup>34</sup> To my mind, accordingly, the default position in response to the question posed above should be this: unless there is evidence to the contrary, one may assume that the Mishnah reflects earlier practice.

With this as background, we turn to the Mishnah's mention of specific Psalms used in the Temple ceremony, starting with the list provided in Mishnah

33. For general orientation, see David Kraemer, "The Mishnah," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 4: *The Late Roman—Rabbinic Period*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 299–315.

34. See the brief statement by Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 87. Additional literature includes Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Qumran and Rabbinic Halakhah," in *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period*, ed. Shemaryahu Talmon (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991), 138–46; Elisha Qimron, "The Halakha," in *Qumran Cave 4: V: Miqṣat Ma'ase ha-Torah*, eds. Elisha Qimron and John Strugnell, Discoveries in the Judean Desert 10 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 123–77, especially the succinct conclusion on p. 177; and Ya'akov Sussmann, "The History of the Halakha and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Qumran Cave 4: V: Miqṣat Ma'ase ha-Torah*, 179–200.

Tamid 7:5 for the psalms recited on a daily basis.<sup>35</sup> In this particular case, we also may add that many specialists in rabbinic literature aver that Tamid is one of the oldest tractates (if not *the* oldest tractate) in the Mishnah (which is to say, it incorporates *written* material from several generations before Judah ha-Nasi),<sup>36</sup> and hence regardless of one's position on the question addressed in the preceding paragraph, one may utilize Tamid as a reliable source on older practices. The relevant passage reads as follows:

The song that the Levites would recite in the Temple: on the first day, they would recite, "to Yhwh is the earth and its fullness, the world and its inhabitants"; on the second [day], they would recite, "Yhwh is great and much praised, in the city of our God, his holy mountain"; etc.

In typical Jewish tradition, this text provides only the incipit for each psalm. To translate this into our system of numbering the Psalms—including not only the two cited above, but the entire roster of seven poems (note the 'etc.' at the end of the excerpt)—we gain the following list:<sup>37</sup>

Day 1	Psalm 24
Day 2	Psalm 48
Day 3	Psalm 82
Day 4	Psalm 94
Day 5	Psalm 81
Day 6	Psalm 93
Sabbath	Psalm 92

In the Masoretic codices, only one of these psalms bears a superscription that connects it to a specific day; not surprisingly that psalm is the last on this list, whose introductory verse reads as follows:

*Ps 92:1* 'A psalm, a song, for the Sabbath day'

35. The term Tamid means literally "continual"; in this context it refers to the daily sacrifices offered each morning and afternoon in the Temple.

36. See especially Louis Ginzberg, "Tamid: The Oldest Treatise of the Mishnah," *Journal of Jewish Lore and Philosophy* 1 (1919): 33–44, 197–209, 265–95; and Jacob N. Epstein, *Mevo'ot le-Sifrut ha-Tanna'im*, ed. E.Z. Melamed (Tel-Aviv: Devir 1957), 27–31. For a dissenting voice, see Jacob Neusner, "Dating a Mishnah-Tractate: The Case of Tamid," in *History, Religion, and Spiritual Democracy: Essays in Honor of Joseph L. Blau*, ed. Maurice Wohlgeleter (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 97–113.

37. In both this chart and the one following, I opt to use the Jewish system of "counting" the days of the week, which lack individual names, except for the Sabbath day.

Quite remarkable, however, is the additional testimony of the Septuagint (LXX), which assigns specific days to five of the seven psalms, namely:<sup>38</sup>

Day 1	Psalm 24 (LXX Psalm 23)
Day 2	Psalm 48 (LXX Psalm 47)
Day 4	Psalm 94 (LXX Psalm 93)
Day 6	Psalm 93 (LXX Psalm 92)
Sabbath	Psalm 92 (LXX Psalm 91)

Moreover, there is agreement between this list and the rabbinic list (notwithstanding the omission of the psalms for Day 3 and Day 5 in the Septuagint). These lines of evidence (which are very much independent of each other) converge to allow us to reconstruct the ritual recitation of these psalms in the Temple during its last century of existence.

An inspection of these individual psalms reveals (in most cases) why these particular compositions would have found their way into the Temple ritual.<sup>39</sup> Pertinent passages, which disclose the Temple setting, include the following:<sup>40</sup>

*Psalm 24*<sup>3</sup> Who may ascend the mountain of Yhwh? And who may stand in his holy place?<sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart. . .  
<sup>7</sup> Lift up your heads, O gates, And be raised, you everlasting doors, So that the King of Glory may enter.<sup>8</sup> Who is the King of Glory? Yhwh, mighty and valiant, Yhwh, valiant in battle.<sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, O gates, And lift up, you everlasting doors, So the King of Glory may enter.<sup>10</sup> Who is he, the King of Glory? Yhwh of Hosts – He is the King of Glory!

38. Yes, the system is complicated because the numbering of the individual psalms in the Septuagint typically does not correlate to the numbering system commonly used for the Hebrew text of Psalms. The vast majority of English translations adhere to the latter scheme.

39. I would not, however, go so far as Peter L. Trudinger, *The Psalms of the Tamid Service: A Liturgical Text from the Second Temple*, Supplements to Vestum Testamentum 98 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), who claims, as per the title, a) that these seven psalms may be read as a coherent whole, with a continuous them running through them, and b) that the group was in place “perhaps in the mid-second century, if not earlier” (p. 54). See the review by Eileen Schuller, *RBL* (August 2006), available at [http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/4373\\_4384.pdf](http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/4373_4384.pdf).

40. Note the intriguing suggestion by Moshe Weinfeld, “Instructions for Temple Visitors in the Bible and in Ancient Egypt,” in *Egyptological Studies*, ed. Sarah Israelit-Groll, Scripta Hierosolymitana 28 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), 224–50, that texts such as Ps. 24:3–6 (along with Ps. 15, Isa. 33:14–16), with the listing of “moral qualities required for admission to the Temple” (p. 224), were posted at the entrance to the Temple (see esp. 237–38).

*Psalm 48* <sup>2</sup> Yhwh is great and much praised, In the city of our God, his holy mountain. <sup>3</sup> Beautiful view, joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, summit of Zaphon, City of the Great King. . . . <sup>10</sup> We envision, O God, your kindness, In the midst of your temple, <sup>11</sup> As is your name, O God, so is your praise, Unto the ends of the earth. . . . <sup>15</sup> For this is God, our God forever, He will lead us evermore.

*Psalm 93* <sup>5</sup> Your decrees are indeed enduring, In your house, befitting holiness, Yhwh, for length of days.

*Psalm 92* <sup>13</sup> The righteous shall flourish like the palm, Like a cedar in Lebanon he shall grow strong. <sup>14</sup> Like seedlings in the house of Yhwh, In the courts of our God they shall blossom.

The Mishnah furnishes additional information concerning other psalms recited on other occasions. <sup>41</sup> Mishnah Middot<sup>42</sup> 2:5 reads,

And there were fifteen steps that went up from its midst to the court of Israel, corresponding to the fifteen Songs of Ascent that are in [the Book of] Psalms, on which the Levites would stand in song.

The reference is to Psalms 120–134, each of which bears the superscription *šir ham-ma'alōt* “a song of ascents.”<sup>43</sup> The attentive reader will note that this Mishnah passage (which occurs in a tractate devoted to the Temple layout and measurements [see n. 42], not to Temple ritual practice) does not inform us *when* such a recitation of these fifteen psalms would have occurred. That information is forthcoming from another tractate, Sukkah 5:4, which describes a ceremony held during the days of Sukkot (Feast of Booths):

Pious and distinguished men would dance before them with torches, and they would recite hymns and words of exaltation before them.

41. For a general survey, see Mark S. Smith, “The Psalms as a Book for Pilgrims,” *Interpretation* 46 (1992):156–66.

42. The term means literally “measurements,” in this context with reference to the Temple layout and measurements.

43. Ps. 121:1 contains the slightly variant Hebrew wording *šir lam-ma'alōt*, though with the same meaning, “a song of ascents.” This is typical of Hebrew literary style, to break the monotony of verbatim repetition, even if the remaining thirteen superscriptions return to the wording of the first one.

And the Levites accompanied them with harps, lyres, cymbals, and musical instruments without number—on the fifteen steps that go down from the court of Israel to the court of the women, corresponding to the fifteen Songs of Ascent in [the Book of] Psalms, on which the Levites would stand and would recite in song.

Even at a distance of two thousand years, one can envision the scene and well nigh hear the vocal and instrumental music produced by the Temple professionals, that is, the Levites.

And why might this collection of psalms be appropriate for recitation on the festival of Sukkot? During this holiday (and also on Pesah [Passover], though most likely to a lesser extent on Shavu'ot [Weeks]), large numbers of Jews made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Two passages from the beginning and the end of Psalms 120–134 are especially suitable for such a setting. Ps 120:5 reads,

Woe is me, that I reside in Meshech, That I dwell amongst the tents of Kedar.

Meshech is a region in Anatolia, to the far north of Jerusalem, while Kedar is a region in Arabia, to the far south of Jerusalem.<sup>44</sup> These places represent the extremes of Israel's geographical horizons,<sup>45</sup> the farthest extent from which pilgrims would come to Jerusalem (even if but once in their lifetimes, certainly not annually).

Ps. 134:1–3 provides a fitting farewell:

<sup>1</sup> A song of ascents: Behold, bless Yhwh, all servants of Yhwh; Who stand in the house of Yhwh at night; <sup>2</sup> Raise your hands to the holy-place, and bless Yhwh. <sup>3</sup> May Yhwh bless you from Zion, the maker of heaven and earth.

Here one can imagine the visitors to Jerusalem taking their leave, with v. 3 suggesting the words spoken by those (the priests, for example) who were remaining in the city. In addition, we cite a passage that we have seen earlier,

44. Meshech is to be identified with the Mushki known from Assyrian sources and the Moschoi known from Greek sources. Kedar (more properly Qedar) occurs in Assyrian and Arabian sources as a people connected to the desert; see Israel Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984), 223–27.

45. At least for this poet, since technically speaking Cush (= Nubia, Sudan, etc.; see Amos 9:7) is still more distant.

namely, Ps. 132:8-10, which occurs towards the end of the “Song of Ascents” collection:

<sup>8</sup> Arise O Yhwh God, to your resting place, you and your mighty Ark. <sup>9</sup> Your priests are clothed in righteousness, And your loyal-ones exult. <sup>10</sup> On account of David your servant, do not turn away from the face of your anointed-one.

The reader will recall that the Chronicler placed these words (with slight textual variants) in the mouth of Solomon upon the conclusion of his prayer (2 Chron. 6:41-42). This case represents, accordingly, a correlation between a Psalms passage known from the liturgy as preserved in rabbinic tradition and a much earlier reference in the narrative of the Book of Chronicles.

The third key Mishnah text is Pesahim<sup>46</sup> 5:7, which informs us very succinctly that while individual Israelites appeared before the priests with their personal sacrifice in hand, “they read the Hallel.” The term means literally “praise” (see above, for our earlier discussion), with specific reference to Psalms 113–118, due to the ten-fold presence of the verb *h-l-l* “praise” in these poems. While not stated explicitly (note the generic “they”), one assumes that the Mishnah intends that the Levites recited the Hallel psalms while this ritual took place.

To return to Sukkot, we also know from Mishnah Sukkah 3:9 that specifically Psalm 118 was chanted during that festival ceremony, and so we may extrapolate that the Hallel psalms as a whole were part of the ritual for both holidays, Pesah and Sukkot.<sup>47</sup> In fact, a particular passage in Psalm 118 seems to refer to Sukkot explicitly:

<sup>26</sup> Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yhwh; we bless you from the house of Yhwh. <sup>27</sup> Yhwh is God, and he has given us light, bind the festival-offering with branches, unto the horns of the altar. (vv. 26-27)

The Hebrew word for “branches” here is *‘abōtīm*, the very word used for “branch” (in the singular: *‘abōt*) in Lev. 23:40 with reference to Sukkot.

46. The Hebrew term for “Passover,” though actually in the plural form here, as per typical Mishnaic Hebrew usage.

47. And by extension Shavu'ot as well, as per later rabbinic practice, and still part of Jewish liturgy to the present day.

Finally, we learn from Mishnah Ta'anit<sup>48</sup> 4:5 that a fast could not be proclaimed on the first day of the month of Tevet, because the community recites Hallel on said day. This date falls within the eight days of Hanukkah, and hence we learn from this rabbinic text that Psalms 113–118 were recited on this festival as well—a point which makes sense, given our statement above that Hanukkah originated as a second Sukkot, with explicit mention in 2 Macc. 10:7–8 to the singing of hymns during the holiday.<sup>49</sup>

In sum, as these Mishnah texts make clear, a variety of psalms were used in the Temple ritual on different occasions, with the seven Tamid psalms recited on a daily basis, one for each day of the week, with Psalms 120–134 playing a special role on Sukkot (and perhaps, if not presumably, at other times), and with the Hallel psalms (113–118) filling a significant role on the major festivals. While individual psalms may not have been written with the cult in mind, by the time that the canonical Book of Psalms received its final editing, clearly these stirring poems had found a home in the liturgy.<sup>50</sup> For how else, one may ask, can one explain the placement of Psalm 150 as a coda to the compilation,<sup>51</sup> with its central verses presenting the complete orchestra, as it were, of the ancient Temple?<sup>52</sup>

Praise him with the blast of the shofar, Praise him with lute and lyre.  
Praise him with timbrel and dance, Praise him with strings and pipe.

48. This term means “fast,” with the tractate devoted to public and private fasts on different dates during the year.

49. Once more this remains Jewish practice to the present day.

50. On the subject of the final shape of the Book of Psalms, see Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 76 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985); Susan Gillingham, “The Zion Tradition and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter,” in *Temple and Worship: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 308–41; and Susan Gillingham, “The Levitical Singers and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. Erich Zenger, BETL 238 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 91–123 (along with many other contributions to this volume).

51. As intimated below, a different arrangement of the individual psalms obtains in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, so that Ps. 150 does not serve there as the coda to the compilation. Nonetheless, it appears very near the end of the scroll, with the succeeding material as codas to the coda, one might say.

52. One also should note the Late Biblical Hebrew usage in vv. 3–4, with the three-fold non-repetition of the preposition in the collocations “with lute and lyre,” “with timbrel and dance,” and “with strings and pipe.” In Standard Biblical Hebrew, the preposition would be repeated before each noun. This is a little-known point in the historical development of the Hebrew language, for which see Abba Bendavid, *Leshon Miqra u-Leshon hakhamim*, 2 vols. (English title: “Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew”; Tel-Aviv, Devir, 1967–1971), 2:455–56. This linguistic usage reveals Ps. 150 to be a Persian-period poem, further demonstrating that it was composed specifically for placement as the finale to the Book of Psalms.

Praise him with cymbals of sound, Praise him with cymbals of clashing. (vv. 3-5)

No survey of our topic would be complete without a look at Qumran. Amongst the biblical manuscripts found at Qumran, the best-represented book is Psalms, with thirty-nine different manuscripts (all fragmentary, with the largest extant scroll, 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, containing about a third of the canonical book, albeit with the psalms in a different order).<sup>53</sup> This point alone speaks to the importance of these compositions within the religious life of the Yahad members.<sup>54</sup>

As for use of the Psalms, the most telling evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls is the prose addendum to the aforementioned 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, which reads as follows (11QPs<sup>a</sup> col. 27, lines 4-10):<sup>55</sup>

4. and he wrote: psalms,
5. 3,600; songs to sing before the altar accompanying the
6. daily-perpetual burnt-offering, for all the days of the year, 364;
7. for the Sabbath offerings, 52 songs; and for the New Moon offerings,
8. all the festival days and the Day of Atonement, 30 songs.
9. The total of all the songs that he composed was 446, and songs
10. to play on the seasonal-encounter days, 4. And the sum total was 4,050.

Indeed, David was one busy man! But apart from the obvious hyperbole inherent in this text, our attention is drawn to the statement that David composed a special song for each day of the year (numbering 364, according to the Qumran calendar). The Hebrew word used here, in line 6, is the very word *tamid*, which we have explored earlier, rendered here as “daily-perpetual,” describing the daily sacrifice offered in the Temple. In addition, special hymns

53. By comparison, we note thirty-one manuscripts of Deuteronomy (again all fragmentary) and twenty-two manuscripts of Isaiah (including one complete copy, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>).

54. On the Psalms at Qumran, see Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1997). For the theory that 11QPs<sup>a</sup> represents a liturgical reordering of the Masoretic Book of Psalms, with Flint's assessment thereof, see p. 209. For a more recent and more succinct treatment, see Peter W. Flint, “Psalms and Psalters in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. 1: *Scripture and the Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 233–72.

55. See James A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumrân Cave 11 (11QPs<sup>a</sup>)*, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 4; Oxford: Clarendon, 1965); and James A. Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), esp. 86–87, with discussion on pp. 134–35.

accompany each of the Sabbath, New Moon, and festival offerings, according to this text. And while the Qumran sect distanced itself from the Temple (given their much stricter purity concerns, with their concomitant belief that the Temple was impure and polluted), nevertheless, in their minds (and in some reality?) they continued to perceive themselves as observing a Temple-centered cult. It was important, accordingly, to continue to declaim the daily Tamid psalms, as well as the special festival hymns, as a ceremonial complement to the sacrificial cult. We therefore gain a modicum of support for the hypothesis advanced above, that the performance of psalms in the Temple, as mentioned in the Mishnah (Tamid 7:5, Middot 2:5, Sukkah 5:4, Pesahim 5:7, Ta'anit 4:5) reflects an actual practice dating back to the late Second Temple period.

The Dead Sea Scrolls provide additional evidence for the use of hymns (though not necessarily the canonical Psalms) in the liturgy. The most prominent texts are:

- a. the *Hodayot* scroll, or *Thanksgiving Hymns* (1QH), comprised of about twenty-five individual hymns (many commencing with the expression 'ōdeka 'adōnay 'I give thanks to you, O Lord'), though their exact use still is open to debate;<sup>56</sup>
- b. the *Works of the Luminaries* (4Q504–506), admittedly more like prayers than hymns, but noteworthy is the ascription of particular texts to be recited on particular days, with one section of the text introduced as a hymn for the Sabbath day (4Q504 20:5 *hwḏwt bywm ḥšbt*) and with its style and vocabulary evoking the biblical Psalms;<sup>57</sup>
- c. two very fragmentary manuscripts (4Q380–381) containing non-canonical psalms, with superscriptions such as “psalm of Obadiah” and “psalm of the man of God”;<sup>58</sup> and
- d. the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q400–407, 11Q17, plus one Masada manuscript), poems chanted by the angels in heaven on each of the first thirteen Sabbaths of the year, to accompany the sacrifices

56. For an interesting suggestion, connecting the *Hodayot* poems to the use of hymns among the Therapeutae, as described by Philo, see Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), 244.

57. Esther Chazon wrote her Hebrew University doctoral dissertation (1991) on this composition and is preparing the text for its official publication in the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert series. For the nonce, see Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 364–67.

58. Eileen Schuller, *Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran: A Pseudepigraphic Collection*, Harvard Semitic Studies 28 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986).

offered in the Temple,<sup>59</sup> thereby implying, in Geza Vermes's felicitous words, "the simultaneity of heavenly and earthly worship"<sup>60</sup> (and is not that a lovely thought). So while none of these texts constitutes evidence for the use of psalms specifically in the religious worship at Qumran, taken collectively they indicate that a hymnic tradition was very much alive and well among the Dead Sea sectarians.<sup>61</sup>

Finally, we arrive at that one other crucial source for Jewish religious life at the end of the Second Temple period, to wit, the New Testament. In light of all that has been said until this point, it will come as no surprise to learn that Psalms is the most commonly quoted book in the Christian scriptures, with sixty-nine citations.<sup>62</sup> Jews (and Luke too!) simply knew their Psalms during the time of the florescence of the Jerusalem Temple—and indeed after its demise as well.

59. Carol Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition*, Harvard Semitic Series 27 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1985).

60. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 321.

61. For general discussion, see Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*, trans. Jonathan Chipman, Studies on the Text of the Desert of Judah 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 190–200; and Esther G. Chazon, "Hymns and Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, 2 vols., ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. Vanderkam (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1:244–70, esp. 264–67 concerning hymns. For hymns in the larger context of early Judaism, see James C. Charlesworth, "A Prolegomenon to a New Study of the Jewish Background of the Hymns and Prayers in the New Testament," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 265–85 [= *Essays in Honour of Yigael Yadin* (ed. Geza Vermes and Jacob Neusner)], with the very useful catalogue on pp. 274–75; and George J. Brooke, "The Psalms in Early Jewish Literature in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 5–24. Finally, for a recent treatment of the subject of liturgy in general, see the programmatic essay by Esther G. Chazon, "Shifting Perspectives on Liturgy at Qumran and in Second Temple Judaism," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Context: Integrating the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Study of Ancient Texts, Languages, and Cultures*, 2 vols., ed. Armin Lange, Emanuel Tov, and Matthias Weigold, Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 140 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 2:513–31.

62. By comparison, the next most cited books are Isaiah (fifty-one times) and Deuteronomy (thirty-two times). Psalms holds pride of place across genres, be it the Gospels, Acts, Romans, or Hebrews. The reader will recall (see above) that Psalms was also the most widely read book at Qumran, at least judging from the number of manuscripts found amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls. On the other hand, judging by the lists compiled by Armin Lange and Matthias Weigold, *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), overall it appears that Deuteronomy outranks Psalms, when all of the relevant Jewish texts of the age are taken into consideration. While this important reference tool does not produce actual counts, I have reached this conclusion, based on the number of pages devoted to each biblical book in the catalogue (Deuteronomy, 18 pages; Psalms, 16 pages; Isaiah, 16 pages; and so on).

Obviously, the use of Psalms in the New Testament is a topic deserving of its own treatment, and space considerations do not allow a thorough discussion here.<sup>63</sup>

I elect, accordingly, to focus on one particular verse, Ps 118:26—the only Psalms passage to be quoted by all four gospels:

*Mark 11:9 = Matthew 21:9 = John 12:13*

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου

*Luke 19:38*

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος,

ὁ βασιλεύς ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου

Mark, Matthew, and John quote the verse verbatim (indeed, this is the reading of the LXX) – although John adds “the king of Israel” afterwards (not indicated above), while Luke takes the liberty of tweaking the verse by inserting the word “king” (βασιλεύς) as the explicit subject. The setting, of course, is Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem, as he is greeted by his followers with this Psalm passage. Moreover, the next event narrated, at least in the synoptic gospels, is Jesus’ entrance into the Temple (Mark 11:11, Matt. 21:12, Luke 19:45). In light of this venue, the verse proclaimed by Jesus’ followers is a most fitting one, indeed, perhaps *the* most fitting one that people would invoke at this point. The reader will recall our discussion of this verse above, in the context of Sukkot and the explicit mention of Psalm 118 in Mishna Sukkah 3:9. When one notices that Jesus’ followers also greet him with palm branches (John 12:13), which are a central feature of the festival of Sukkot (see Lev. 23:40), then our picture is complete. One can hardly imagine a better window into the use of the Psalms by Jewish worshippers in the last century of the Temple’s existence.

#### EXCURSUS: THE KORAH AND ASAPH PSALMS

The picture presented in the main body of this article, regarding the origin of the liturgical use of Psalms in temple sites outside Jerusalem, with a focus on Bethel and Arad (since our evidence stems from these two locales), speaks in general terms only. This excursus attempts to refine that picture, even if, by necessity, it must do so with a modicum of speculation.

63. The reader will find a series of essays in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

Our attention is turned to the Psalms of Korah and Asaph, especially since these two names appear as Levitical singers (or groups of singers) in the post-exilic books of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah (Asaph in particular [1 Chron. 16:5, etc.], though see 2 Chron. 20:19 for Korah). Several scholars, the present writer included, have opined that the Psalms of Korah included in the canonical Book of Psalms originated in the northern kingdom of Israel.<sup>64</sup> In the words of Michael Goulder, “The Korah series contains several references which read as though the water available were plentiful.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, for example: “Therefore I recall you from the land of the Jordan” (Ps. 42:7); “The deep calls to the deep at the sound of your cataracts, all your breakers and waves pass by me” (Ps. 42:8); “The river, its streams gladden the city of God” (Ps. 46:5); and “All my springs are in you” (Ps. 87:7). In addition, one finds reference to northern toponyms, such as *ḥermōnīm* and *har miš‘ar* (both in Ps. 42:7)—the former is an unusual plural form, referring to the multiple peaks of the Hermon range; while the latter is to be identified with *za‘ōra*, a place three miles south of Banias.<sup>66</sup> A striking passage is Ps. 46:3–4:

Therefore we will not fear should the earth shift,  
And should the mountains tumble into the heart of the sea;  
Should its waters rage and foam,  
Should the mountains quake in its swell.

These verses describe the meeting of mountains and the roaring and foaming sea. The only places where such occurs in Israel is in the north, with mountains such as Carmel and Rosh ha-Niqra cascading down into the sea (especially the latter, which is my personal choice for the setting of this passage).

Ps 48:3 famously refers to *yarkātē šapōn*, “the far north,” even if it is used as a synonym for Mt. Zion<sup>67</sup>—a point to which we will return below (see n. 75).

Finally, there is the toponym *emeq hab-baka* “the valley of Baka” in Ps. 84:7, a term that has engendered much debate in biblical studies.<sup>68</sup> The best solution

64. See most importantly, John J. Peters, *The Psalms as Liturgies* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), esp. 62–64; and Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*, Journal for the Study of Old Testament Supplement Series 20 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1982); along with my linguistic analysis: Gary A. Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 43 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990), 51–60.

65. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*, 13–14.

66. The original identification was made by Gustaf Dalman, “Zu Psalm 42, 7.8,” *Palästinajahrbuch* 5 (1909): 101–103, and has been adopted by several Psalms commentators such as Morris Buttenweiser, *The Psalms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), 231; and Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalmen*, 2 vols. (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1960), 1:320.

is Goulder's, which identified the Baka of Ps. 84:7 with the Baka (Baka) in Upper Galilee mentioned by Josephus in *Jewish War* 3.3.1.<sup>69</sup> It is also tempting, moreover, to associate the *b3k3*-tree mentioned in Papyrus Anastasi I, col. 23, line 7, referenced in connection with the tribe of Asher.<sup>70</sup>

All of this, in short, associates the Psalms of the sons of Korah (nos. 42, 44–49, 84–85, 87–88) with northern Israel (notwithstanding the threefold reference to “Zion” in Psalm 48 [one of which we alluded to above], along with an additional mention in Ps. 84:8; again see further below).

As with the Psalms of Korah, so too with the Psalms of Asaph. Here too, scholars have detected a northern provenience, based once more on items mentioned in these poems, along with the linguistic evidence.<sup>71</sup> The former include the following:

1. northern tribes such as Joseph (77:16, 78:67, 80:2, 81:6) and Ephraim (78:9, 78:67, 80:3), with single mentions of Benjamin (80:13) and Manasseh (80:13);
2. northern cities, to wit, En-dor and Adamah (both in 83:11);
3. enemies from northern Israel's historical past, such as Sisera and Jabin (83:10) and Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, and Zalmunna (83:11); and
4. northern topography, e.g., *hararē 'ēl* “mountains of God” (50:10), *naharōt 'ētan* “rivers of might” (74:15), and *'arzē 'ēl* “cedars of God” (80:11), all of which evoke the Galilee region.

67. See Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 38 (where the reference to Ps. 43:8 is a misprint for Ps. 48:3); and A. Robinson, “Zion and Saphon in Psalm XLVIII 3,” *Vetus Testamentum* 24 (1974): 118–23.

68. See A. Robinson, “Three Suggested Interpretations in Ps. lxxxiv,” *Vetus Testamentum* 24 (1974): 378–79.

69. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*, 40.

70. For the Egyptian text, see Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1911), 25\*, 70. I first made this suggestion in Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origins of Selected Psalms*, 53. This is not to say that this particular tree (whatever its official botanical identification) is limited to northern Israel, for it also is mentioned in 2 Sam. 5:23–24 (// 1 Chron. 14:14–15) in a southern geographical setting.

71. For earlier discussions, see Martin J. Buss, “The Psalms of Asaph and Korah,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 82 (1963): 382–392; Harry P. Nasuti, *Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 88 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988); and H.L. Ginsberg, *The Israelian Heritage of Judaism* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1982), 31–34 (on Psalms 77, 80–81, not the entire Asaph collection); along with the linguistic evidence in Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms*, 69–81.

At this point, the reader may wish to know: Why is all this information about the northern provenience of the Korah and Asaph Psalms relevant to our study? As we saw in the main essay, the post-exilic Judean tradition placed a great emphasis on these two groups (the Asaph one, in particular) as levitical singers in the Jerusalem Temple; anachronistically retrojecting them in this role back to the time of David—even though our pre-exilic sources are silent on this matter. I would like to suggest that the priestly source of the Torah represents the manner in which the Jerusalem Temple indeed operated, in whole or in part, for its first several centuries of existence. In other parts of the country, however, a different approach was in place. I find it rather striking that our first reference to music in a temple context comes from Amos, with reference to Bethel c. 750 BCE, and only later do we find evidence from southern Judah, in the more or less contemporary documentation from Hezekiah (embedded in Isaiah) and the Sons of Korah at Arad (by inference, to be sure). What transpired in between the former (Amos) and the latter (Hezekiah / Arad)? The answer: The destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel by the hands of the Assyrians in 721 BCE.

As we know both from the Bible and from archaeological sources, a significant portion of the population of the northern kingdom of Israel, especially from its southern borderland area, emigrated to Judah to escape the Assyrian devastation.<sup>72</sup> Among these sources is the description in 2 Chronicles 30 of Hezekiah's invitation of northern Israelians to participate in the observance of Passover in the Jerusalem Temple along with their southern Judahite compatriots.<sup>73</sup> And while the author of Chronicles introduces hymns and music into the Temple at various times in his narrative, the following verse (2 Chron. 20:31) is rather intriguing:

And the Israelians who were present in Jerusalem observed the holiday of matzot seven days, with great joy—with the Levites and the priests praising Yhwh every day with musical instruments, unto Yhwh.

72. For a recent discussion, with much bibliography, see William M. Schniedewind and Gary A. Rendsburg, "The Siloam Tunnel Inscription: Historical and Linguistic Perspectives," *Israel Exploration Journal* 60 (2010): 188–203.

73. The historicity of this episode is greatly debated by scholars. For discussion, see Hugh Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 361–64; and Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 934–36.

Equally curious is the author's use of the phrase *kəle 'ōz* for "musical instruments," a term used only here in the Bible.<sup>74</sup> This suggests that the term is not one of the Chronicler's "pet phrases," but rather, just perhaps, an expression found in his historical source.

In light of the above evidence, I would propose, with all due caution, that the musical traditions attached to the ancient Israelite cult began in the northern kingdom, where apparently there was less attention paid to the major break with polytheism attempted by the Judahite priesthood, as described by Kaufmann. The northerners, after all, were the ones who permitted physical representations of Yahweh, the god of Israel (1 Kgs. 12:28-30), and hence one can imagine their continuation of the ancient Near Eastern musical traditions associated with temple rituals. It may not be coincidental, therefore, that Amos 5:21-23 constitutes the earliest biblical text to mention music and song alongside altar and sacrifice. In such fashion, moreover, we can understand the origin of the Asaph and Korah Psalms in northern Israel, especially if they represent two early collections of religious poetry.<sup>75</sup>

All of this, of course, came to an end in 721 BCE—in the north, that is. For as intimated above, the Israelians brought these traditions with them to Judah, not only to Jerusalem, where they would remain in place until 70 CE.

To repeat, none of this can be proved to the extent that would satisfy a historian with more evidence at his or her disposal. But based on the clues presented in the biblical sources, I am content to speculate, with all due caution, on the matter. In the very least, should the reader of these pages find the hypothesis too speculative, he or she will have gained some insights into, and hopefully also some appreciation for, two of the poetic collections incorporated into the Book of Psalms.

74. Or, if one follows the reading of the Septuagint, then in 2 Sam. 6:14 as well. Note that the two Hebrew nouns collocated in Exod. 15:2 (quoted in Isa. 12:2, Ps. 118:14), namely, *'ōz* and *zimrat* both bear double meaning, with one set of connotations relating to music and the other set to strength. The phrase thus can be read as *both* "Yah is my music and my song" *and* "Yah is my strength and my might." Such literary brilliance is typical of the ancient Hebrew literati who provided us with so much wonder to behold. Though most scholars do not recognize the point made here and thus typically opt for one set of meanings only; for discussion of the individual terms, see William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, Anchor Bible 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 511-13.

75. To be sure, the term "Zion" appears in these psalms (for example, three times in Psalm 48), which may indicate that these poems were doctored (ever so slightly, though, given their northern linguistic profile) when they were incorporated into the Jerusalem cult.

# JESUS AND TEMPLE

## TEXTUAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS



JAMES H. CHARLESWORTH, EDITOR

Fortress Press  
Minneapolis

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Cover design: Tory Herman

Cover image © Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available*

Print ISBN: 978-1-4514-8036-8

eBook ISBN: 978-1-4514-8180-8

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences — Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z329.48-1984.

Manufactured in the U.S.A.

This book was produced using PressBooks.com, and PDF rendering was done by PrinceXML.