A STUDY OF THE HEBREW TEXT OF PSALM 132

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By

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an exegetical study of Psalm 132, the most frequently discussed psalm among the Songs of Ascents, Psalms 120-134. Psalm 132 stands out from its collection mainly in terms of its length: it is twice the length of any of the other Songs of Ascents. My intent was to compile past and present scholarship and research on this particular psalm and provide a state of the field survey of the psalm.

The title over each psalm of the collection, šēr hammaʿālōt, is typically seen as the key to understanding the Songs of Ascents as a whole, and thus each psalm individually. In this study, I provide a history of interpretation of the collection and a summary of the early interpretation of Psalm 132. While not certain, it seems that Psalm 132 and the remainder of the šūrē hammaʿālōt were pilgrimage songs of some sort.

This paper then provides a thorough exegetical study of Psalm 132. I mention problematic and anomalous words and phrases, and provide possible solutions. Whenever possible, the Hebrew Bible and other ancient near eastern texts are used to clarify words and concepts in the psalm. A translation is proposed based upon this study.

Further attention is devoted to major features of the psalm, such as its poetry, its unity, its relation with 2 Samuel 6-7, its mention of the Davidic Covenant, and its date. Dating the psalm is difficult, as it seems to contain both pre- and post-exilic features. This could be due to the reuse of older liturgy in the current form of Psalm 132. Though
this may be the case, the redactor has produced a very poetic and unified final product. The major emphasis in this psalm is the combination of the theme of Yahweh’s eternal choice of Zion and his eternal choice of David. The covenant found in this Psalm differs from descriptions of the Davidic Covenant elsewhere, but this is a result of variations of the covenant at different times or places. In the conclusion of this paper, I summarize the findings of these studies. This paper should provide a good starting point for anyone doing further work on the collection of the šīrē hamma‘ālōt.
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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABD</td>
<td>Anchor Bible Dictionary. Ed. by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASV</td>
<td>American Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Bible Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJD</td>
<td>Discoveries in the Judean Desert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESV</td>
<td>English Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUCA</td>
<td>Hebrew Union College Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>JPS</td>
<td>Jewish Publication Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSOT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSOTS</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KRT</td>
<td>“The Legend of Keret”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint</td>
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<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Masoretic Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAB</td>
<td>New American Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>New American Standard Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIV</td>
<td>New International Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>NJB</td>
<td>New Jerusalem Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>NJPS</td>
<td>New Jerusalem Publication Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>NKJ</td>
<td>New King James</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTL</td>
<td>Old Testament Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>REB</td>
<td>Revised English Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td>Revised Standard Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBL</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature</td>
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VT  Vetus Testamentum

YLT  Young's Literal Translation

ZAW  Zeitschrift für die Alte Testamentliche Wissenschaft
Psalm 132 is the most frequently discussed individual psalm among the "Songs of Ascents," Šīr hammaʿālōt. This psalm finds its home among the "Songs of Ascents," Psalms 120-134, yet it does not share the same characteristics as the other psalms in the collection. It is twice the length of the other Songs of Ascents, which makes it obviously stand out from the collection. It is also unusual with regards to its poetry and language. This paper intends to analyze exegetically Psalm 132 and provide the state of the scholarship on the psalm.

The Songs of Ascents are unique in that they are the only psalms with headings that appear consecutively in the Psalter. Not one of the Songs of Ascents appears outside the group of Psalms 120-134. As a whole, interpretation of these fifteen psalms has focused on the meaning of the uncertain Šīr hammaʿālōt superscript. Scholars have typically viewed the translation of the superscript as the key to explaining the Sitz im Leben of the collection, and consequently each individual psalm in the collection (Crow 3). Though Psalm 132 has features that set it apart from the remainder of the Songs of
Ascents, it has been deliberately included in the collection. Chapter 1 of this paper will give a thorough history of interpretation of the collection of the Songs of Ascents and a summary of the interpretation of Psalm 132 in particular.

In chapter 2, I will give my own exegetical analysis of the text of the psalm. Chapter 3 will discuss relevant issues in the psalm, such as its poetry, unity, date, and its relation to other biblical passages. The goal of this is to provide an exhaustive study of Psalm 132, and in doing so, hopefully shed light on some of its problematic features and discover its function and purpose.

All translations in this paper are mine unless otherwise noted. English translations of the Hebrew Bible are from the New American Standard Bible. Exceptions have been noted accordingly.
For most of its textual history, Psalm 132 has been closely linked with the fifteen Songs of Ascents. The Psalm’s inclusion with this collection meant that it would typically be discussed, in antiquity and today, in terms of the group. Because Psalm 132 is inescapably joined to the Songs of Ascents, it is essential to understand the way this collection has been interpreted. The following is a summary of the scholarship regarding the collection of the Songs of Ascents.

2.1 Interpretation of the Superscript

Nearly all of the Songs of Ascents bear the title šīr hammaʾālōt.¹ The meaning of the title is difficult to understand, however, as the word maʾālōt is unclear. The word comes from the verb ʾlh, “to go up, ascend.” Technically, maʾālōt means, “that on which one climbs,” or “steps” (Fuhs 93). The term is used regularly in the Hebrew Bible, and it usually refers to steps of structures. In Neh 3:15 and 12:37, this word designates the steps leading down from the City of David. In 1 Ki 10:19-20 and 2 Chron 9:18-9:19, the word means the steps leading to the throne of the king. In Ezek 43:17, it refers to the

¹ The exception is Psalm 121, which reads šīr lammaʾālōt
steps to the altar, while in 2 Ki 9:13, the steps are to a house. In Is 38:8, ma'ālōt is used once for a stairway, and twice referring to "steps" of a shadow, as in the parallel passage in 2 Ki 20:9, 10, and 11. In Ezra 7:9, the term refers to the ascent from Babylon. Occurrences of the word in Amos 9:6, 1 Chron 17:17, and Ezek 11:5 are problematic. Ma'ālōt in these places may be describing the upper parts of the heavens, a man of high degree, and the ascent of thoughts, respectively. The exact nuance of the term in the Psalms of Ascents is therefore open to a number of possibilities, and, not surprisingly, many different interpretations for this title have been proposed throughout the years, which we will now turn to. These are divided into four major categories (after Crow 1996): Mystical, Historicizing, Formal, and Cultic interpretations. Within each category, I will present a (generally) chronological development of each interpretation.

2.1.1 Mystical and Allegorical Interpretation

The majority of early Christian scholars interpreted the superscript of the collection as an allegorical expression of spirituality. Allegory was a common hermeneutic to explore the significance of biblical passages. "The allegorical method provided a useful tool, since believers had to square their belief with sacred texts. Allegory allowed people to affirm the place of scriptures as divinely inspired with a message for the contemporary world, while also providing a method whereby believers could move in a Hellenistic framework" (Crow 4). For the church fathers, the "ascent" to which the Songs of Ascents referred was the ascent of the individual to God. Origen (ca. 185-253 CE), in his commentary on the Song of Songs, speaks about other biblical songs that should be placed together with Song of Songs. He includes the Songs of Ascents
among his list: "[One] will join to the others the fifteen songs of ascents...and by a
spiritual understanding will bring together the order and coherence of these matters.
Then he will be able to make clear with what noble steps the bride walks through all
these and arrives at the wedding chamber of the bridegroom."

Hippolytus (third century) rejected the belief that the Psalms of Ascents refer to
the steps to the Temple. Rather, he writes that the "ascents" mean the clergy, "the living
successors of the fathers of old, who praise God and manifest the mystery of the
doxology" (Hippolytus, On the Psalms, §14). Athanasius, an Alexandrian church father
(ca. 295-373), mentions the Psalms of Ascents in his "Letter to Marcellinus," a letter
concerning the interpretation of the Psalms. He says the Songs are fifteen odes that may
be recited as the Christian progresses in good deeds and righteousness (Athanasius
"Letter" §24). Augustine (354-430) similarly explains the Psalms of Ascents as psalms
that contain an exhortation to raise the heart in prayer to God. He stated that the Songs of
Ascents are referring to those "who progress towards the understanding of things
spiritual" (Augustine Homilies on the Psalms: Ps 120:2). He speaks of the life of the
Christian as a pilgrimage. The Songs of Ascents are sung while a Christian is on his
"ascent" in this life journey. To "ascend in heart" is to advance toward God (Augustine
Psalms: Ps 120:1).

Cassiodorus (sixth century) agreed that nothing physical is meant by the
superscript, but rather it should be interpreted as the ascent of the mind, and applied to
the progress of the soul. He explained that the purpose of these Psalms is "to unfold in

Origen, Commentary on the Song of Songs: Prologue (translation of Greer 239).


See Formal Interpretation.
fifteen ordered steps the blessedness of the faithful people” (Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*: Introduction to Psalm 119). To him, these ascents lead to the heavens and are to be compared to Jacob’s ladder, “for that ladder had upon it persons both mounting and descending, whereas on these steps the blessed merely mount” (Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*: Introduction to Psalm 119). Cassiodorus mentions the belief that the fifteen psalms paralleled the fifteen additional years of life given to Hezekiah (Is 38:5), though it is unclear where this association originated. All of these interpretations are invaluable in demonstrating the collective nature of the Psalms of Ascents in the early church, and in showing the preference for the allegorical interpretation of this collection, but they contribute little to our understanding of what šīr ḥammaʿālōt originally conveyed.⁵

### 2.1.2 Historicizing Interpretation

Another way to understand the collection of the Songs of Ascents was to interpret them in light of their (presumed) historical background. There are a number of possibilities as to what this background is. The Talmud records a legendary history of the Songs of Ascents. *Sukkah* 53a-b associates the Songs with the Water-Drawing Ceremony during Sukkoth:

Rav Chisda said the following to a certain Rabbi, who would recite Aggadic teachings before him. [Rav Chisda] said to him: Have you heard anything regarding these fifteen Psalms of Ascent; corresponding to what did King David say to them? He answered him: R. Yochanan said as follows: the waters of the deep came up and threatened to flood the world. David said the fifteen Songs of Ascent and thereby caused them to subside. Rav Chisda raises an objection to this explanation: If so, why are they called fifteen Songs of Ascents? They should be called Songs of Descents!

⁵ The allegorical method of interpretation does not cease in the sixth century, but in my limited research, I have not looked at other examples of this applied to the Songs of Ascents pre-nineteenth century.
He said to him: Since you have reminded me, I now recall that this is how the story was stated: At the time that David excavated the pits beneath the Altar the waters of the deep came up and threatened to flood the world... He [David] then wrote the Divine name on a shard and cast it into the deep. The deep subsided sixteen thousand amos. When David saw that the waters had subsided to such a great extent, he said: The higher the water, and thus the closer to the earth's surface, the more moist and fertile the earth above will be. So he said the fifteen Songs of Ascents and thereby brought the water back up fifteen thousand amos...(translation from Schottenstein edition of Talmud).

The Jerusalem Talmud provides a slightly different version of this legend in Sanhedrin 10:2:

And so you find when David came to dig the foundations of the Temple, he dug fifteen hundred cubits and did not reach the nethermost void. In the end he found one clay pot, and he wanted to remove it. It said to him, “You cannot do so...” Even so, [David] did not listen to it. When he removed the clay pot, the great deep surged upward to flood the world. And Ahithophel was standing there. He said, “Thus will David be strangled [in the flood] and I shall become king.” Said David, “He who is a sage, knowing how to stop up the matter, and does not stop it, will in the end be put to death through strangulation.” Ahithophel said what he said and stopped up [the flood]. David began to say a Psalm, “a song of ascents. [In my distress I cry to the Lord, that he may answer me]” (Ps 120:1). “A song of ascents” (ma‘alot) is for a hundred (me‘ah) ascents (olot). At every hundred cubits he would say a psalm (translation from Neusner 1984).

Rashi (R. Solomon b. Isaac of Troyes, ca. 1040-1105) was aware of this and other interpretations for the šīr hamma‘alōt superscript. In his commentary on Psalm 120 he states, “The Levites will say [them] upon the fifteen steps of descent from the Court of Israel to the Court of Women. Here there are fifteen psalms that are Songs of Ascents. And our rabbis say David established them to raise the deep, as it is described in Tractate Sukkah. And according to the Aggadah, we interpret a song for 100 ascents.”

Another ancient historical interpretation of the superscription is that which connects the Songs to the return from Babylonian captivity. The root of this interpretation seems to come from Ezra 7:9, where m‘lh is the word used for the journey of exiles returning to Jerusalem. Midrash Tehillim is one source that takes the superscript to mean an ascent from exile, although it does not seem to be a one-time
event. Rather, it is a series of ascents from exile and distress, both in the past and in the future. The Midrash notes that m’lwt is plural and not singular, hence the multiple ascents: “‘A Song of Ascent’ is not written here, but rather ‘Song of Ascents’ for when Israel goes up, it is not one height, but rather many heights.”⁶ Among the several interpretations of the superscript,⁷ which R. David Kimḥi mentions in his commentary on Psalm 120, he follows the Midrash in explaining that the Songs are for ascents from exile: “There is another interpretation that interprets the m’tlwt as ascents of the exile, where in the future Israel will go up from lands of exile to the land of Israel. And these songs are said according to the language of the sons of the exile. He [the psalmist] remembers the distress of the exile and he remembers the hope of salvation and the assurance that will be upon all faces” (Kimḥi, Commentary on the Psalms: Ps 120:1).

The Syriac Peshitta interprets the Songs of Ascents in this way as well. Psalm 120 contains the heading “Of ascent. His prophecy that is with regard to the return of the people from Babylon, and an exhortation to all men.” Psalm 132 in particular reads, “Of ascent... after the return of the people from Babylon to dwell together of the house of Israel and Judah.”⁸ For the Syrian church, the Songs progress historically in a linear fashion. “Each song constitutes one step further in the process of the history of redemption for the people of God” (Crow 11).

⁶ Midrash Tehillim on Psalm 120:1.
⁷ He mentions the interpretation that the songs were sung on the fifteen steps of the Temple, the story from the Talmud about David and Ahitophel, and Saadiah Gaon’s “high voice” theory (see below; Kimḥi Ps 120:1).
⁸ Translations by S. A. Meier.
2.1.3 *Formal Interpretation*

Some have seen the title of the Songs of Ascents as referring to their technical structure. In the tenth century, Saadiah Gaon viewed the title as a reference to a particular melody that was performed in a "loud and high voice." This interpretation is based on the use of the root 'lh in 1 Sam 5:12 and Jer 14:2 to mean a raising of the voice (Simon 17). Ibn Ezra in the twelfth century seemed to follow Saadiah Gaon in this interpretation (Ibn Ezra, *Standard Psalms Commentary*: Psalm 120:1):

The Gaon said that these fifteen songs correspond to the fifteen steps. He also said they are probably related to tunes sung in a loud voice. I already mentioned at the beginning [of my commentary on the psalms] that they seem to be a *Piyyut* and this is the song performed to the melody *hamma‘alōt*.

Ibn Ezra also wanted to make it clear that the fourteen psalms with the heading "*hamma‘alōt*" were to be sung with the same melody, while Psalm 121 with "*lamma‘alōt*" was sung to a different tune. John Calvin (1509-1564) agreed that the title denoted musical notes rising in succession. To him, the most likely explanation is that the Songs of Ascents were to be sung in a higher key than other psalms (Calvin, *Commentary on Psalms*, Introduction to Psalm 120).

Some have noticed a "step-like" structure among the Psalms of Ascent, which has led them to interpret the superscript based on this organization of the psalm. Wilhelm Gesenius proposed this in 1839. He regarded the title as an allusion to the stair-like structure, or anadiplosis, which he saw as prominent in some psalms in the collection: "I judge [that they] are so called because of the metre and rhythm found in most of them;

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9 Saadiah maintained that the singing of psalms in the Temple was restricted to particular melodies. He categorized musical instructions and other headings in the psalms and attempted to demonstrate that they all served as designations to melodies (Simon 16; cf. Athanasius in Gregg 124-125).

10 Liturgical poem.
the sense, as it were goes on progressively; thus the first or last words of a preceding sentence are often repeated at the beginning of those that follow” (Gesenius 1887: 1095). For instance, Psalm 121: “From whence shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord...He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper...the Lord will keep you from all evil; He will keep your soul” (Keet 7). This explanation was accepted by de Wette, and furthered by Delitzsch in the nineteenth century. “The songs are called Songs of Degrees or Gradual Psalms as being songs that move onward towards a climax, and...taking up again of the immediately preceding word by way of giving intensity to the expression; and they are placed together on account of this common characteristic” (Delitzsch 267). However, not all of the Songs of Ascents have this poetic device,¹¹ and the feature is not exclusive to our collection of psalms.¹² B. D. Eerdmans proposed a similar interpretation. He suggested the Songs were to be read in succession:

Though the singular form m'lh designates the caravan of Ezra from Babel to Jerusalem, the plural form always means ‘steps’, in each suite of psalms the songs appear to be mutually connected. Each of them is like a step in a flight of stairs. Song belonging to a suite of psalms seems to be the right interpretation. So after all the old versions appear to have been rightly rendered ‘Song of steps’. The title should be interpreted ‘stanza-song’ or ‘serial song’ (Eerdmans 571).

¹¹ Psalm 132 is among those that do not display this poetic feature.

¹² It occurs also in Psalms 93, 96, 103, and 118 (Kraus 1989 J: 23).
2.1.4 Cultic and Liturgical Interpretation

Many have argued that the title of the Psalms of Ascents has some sort of liturgical significance. Tractate Middoth relates that the title goes back to the psalms’ use by the Levites upon the Temple steps.\(^{13}\) This led to the belief that the Psalms of Ascents were meant to be sung by the Levites at the feast of Sukkoth while they were standing on the fifteen steps of the Temple (one psalm for each step). Tractate Sukkah reads:

> And countless Levites played on harps, lyres, cymbals, and trumpets and instruments of music, on the fifteen steps leading down from the Court of the Israelites to the Court of the Women, corresponding to the fifteen Songs of Ascents in the Psalms; upon them the Levites used to stand with instruments of music and make melody (Sukkah v. 4 from Danby 180).

\(^{4}\) "The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary," an apocryphal gospel of uncertain date pseudepigraphically attributed to Matthew, also mentions that the fifteen steps to the Temple correspond to the Songs of Ascents. Chapter 6:1 reads:

> And when the circle of three years had rolled round, and the time of her weaning was fulfilled, they brought the virgin to the temple of the Lord with offerings. Now there were round the temple, according to the fifteen Psalms of Degrees, fifteen steps going up; for, on account of the temple having been built on a mountain, the altar of burnt-offering, which stood outside, could not be reached except by steps. On one of these, then, her parents placed the little girl, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This belief that the songs were sung on the Temple steps probably is a result of the coincidence of the number fifteen, rather than from actual occurrence. The Mishnah never says the Songs were actually sung upon the steps, only that they correspond to the fifteen steps. The fact that there are two explanations for these psalms in the Talmud (see pp. 6-7) shows the speculative nature of this interpretation.

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\(^{13}\) "Fifteen steps led up from within it [the Court of Women] to the Court of the Israelites, corresponding to the fifteen Songs of Ascents in the Psalms, and upon them the Levites used to sing" (Middoth 2:5 in Danby 592-3). The notion is that there were fifteen steps to the Temple comes from Ezek 40:26, 31.
Martin Luther (16th century) noted that there are several possibilities for the interpretation of the superscription of the psalms. He conjectured that the title was referring to the position of the singers of the choir vis-à-vis the congregation. Luther wrote a commentary on the Songs of Ascents ca. 1514: *A Commentary on the Psalms, called Psalms of Degrees; in which, among many interesting subjects, the scriptural doctrine respecting the divinely instituted and honourable estate of matrimony is explained and defended, in opposition to the Popish errors of monastic seclusion and enforced celibacy.* In it, he judges the Songs to be titled “because the Levites or priests were wont to sing them upon the stairs or some high place; even as with us he that beginneth the Psalms, or preacheth, standeth in a place above the rest, that he may be better seen and heard” (Luther, *Commentary on the Psalms of Degrees*: Ps 120:1). Some understand Luther’s interpretation to mean “a song for a choir in a high place,” i.e., a raised platform. Others understand Luther’s “*ein Lied im höhern Chor,*” to mean “a song for a higher choir,” in the sense of higher tones (Grossberg 18).

Probably the most popular interpretation for the Songs of Ascents is that they are “pilgrim songs.” Pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem for the three annual feasts presumably sang these songs on their journey. The verb *'lh* is found with the meaning of going on pilgrimages in Deut 17:8, Judg 20:3, and 1 Sam 1:3 (Keet 15). Every male Israelite was commanded to journey to Jerusalem three times each year for the major feasts: at Passover, *Shavu'ot* or the feast of the harvest, and *Sukkot* or the feast of tabernacles (Deut 16:16; Ex 23:13-17; 34:18-23). In further support of this, Is 30:29 says that singing and
rejoicing accompanied these journeys to Jerusalem. J. Alexander in 1850, and E. W. Hengstenberg maintained this was the most probable interpretation; they seem to be the first to interpret it in this way (Alexander 199; Hengstenberg 408-411).

2.1.5 Modern Scholarship

The historicizing method of interpretation has continued into modern scholarship. For example, Heinrich Ewald also regarded the ascent from Babylon as the correct interpretation of the title. He explained that the Songs of Ascents reflected the thoughts and aspirations of the exiles returning. However, he believed that, with the exception of Psalm 132, they might have been written by a poet who lived in some part of Palestine, rather than composed in Babylon. Ewald translated the title as “the Songs of the Pilgrim Caravans” or “of the homeward marches,” in accordance with his belief that these were travelling songs (Delitzsch 264). More recently, Michael Goulder propounded this “ascent from Babylon” Sitz im Leben for the Songs of Ascents. In his 1998 book The Psalms of the Return, he argues that the Songs indeed stem from Nehemiah’s time (see Goulder 29). He notes that the plural, “ascents,” could refer to the three separate “goings up” from Babylon under Sheshbazzar, Ezra, and Nehemiah (Goulder 21). While it seems unlikely that these Songs were composed by Babylonian exiles returning to Jerusalem, Goulder’s suggestion that a later person who envisioned such a return composed them seems reasonable. There seems to be a cultus in operation in Jerusalem (Psalms 132 and 134), and Ps 122:7 suggests the city walls are in place, all of which are said to be accomplished by the returned Babylonian exiles. Some of

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14 Ewald suggested that Zerubabel composed Psalm 132 in Jerusalem (Ewald II 239).
Goulder's correlations between the individual Songs and the passages in Nehemiah are rather weak.\textsuperscript{15} His overall thesis is insightful, but not convincing, for the content of Psalm 132 does not require such a particular setting. The themes in the Psalm are not unusual, and could be fit into other situations as well.

On the basis of the \textit{Apostrophe to Zion}, Col. XXII, Line 14 at Qumran, Mitchell Dahood proposed a new translation for šīr hamma‘ālōt. \textsuperscript{14} QPsa\textsuperscript{a} Zion XXII.14 reads, ‘rbh b‘p tšbḥt k sywn m‘lh lkwl tbl, which Dahood translates as “may your praise, O Zion, enter into his presence, extolment from all the world.” \textsuperscript{16} “Thus m‘lh, ‘extolment,’ makes it possible to propose ‘song of extolments’ as the translation of šīr hamma‘ālōt, a term which fits most, though not all of these psalms” (Sanders 1965: 87, Dahood \textit{III} 195).

This term does not fit Psalm 132.

L. Liebreich proposed another “steps” theory. On the basis of the language within the Songs, he correlated the collection with the Priestly Blessing.\textsuperscript{17} According to a passage in \textit{Tosefta Sotah}, the priests pronounced the Priestly Blessing on the steps of the hall (m‘lwt h‘wlm) leading to the interior of the Temple (\textit{Tosefta Sotah} VII.7). Liebreich interprets šīr hamma‘ālōt as a “Song rendered in conjunction with the Priestly Blessing which was pronounced on the steps of m‘lwt h‘wlm.” He suggests that the Psalms of Ascents preserve the earliest interpretation of the Priestly Blessing (Liebreich 36).

\textsuperscript{15} For example, he connects Psalm 132 with Neh 13:30-31, “Thus I purified them from everything foreign and appointed duties for the priests and the Levites, each in his task, and I arranged for the supply of wood at appointed times and for the first fruits. Remember me, O my God, for good” (Goulder 90-101). The only real correlation between the two is the request for God to remember good deeds.

\textsuperscript{16} Sanders translates this as “Praise from thee is pleasing to God, O Zion, ascending through all the world (Sanders 1965: 87).

\textsuperscript{17} He demonstrates that the Songs are related to the Priestly Blessing (Num 6:24-26) by four key words: \textit{ybrkk, wysmrk, wyttnk}, and \textit{slwm} (Liebreich 33ff.).
Though there are a number of correlations between the Priestly Blessing and the Songs of Ascents, not all of the Songs contain the similarities. Psalms 124, 126, and 131 lack the key words noted by Liebreich that connect the Songs and the Blessing.

Hermann Gunkel was one of the most influential scholars for psalm research. Since his work on the Psalms, the tendency in psalms research has been to explain individual psalms based upon their presumed cultic background. He argued for the primacy of genre research (Gattungsgeschichte) in the psalms, interpreting them in light of other psalms of the same genre (Gunkel 5). The cultic background of the psalm determines its genre (Gunkel 16). He collected elements of various psalms with the same motif, allowing difficult texts to be understood in light of psalms of the same genre (Gunkel 18). He acknowledges that it is difficult to understand the purpose of the Psalms of Ascents, since it is unclear what the superscript means. He conjectures that they are “pilgrimage” songs, meant to be sung on the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but says, “one cannot advance beyond suppositions at this point,” due to the uncertainty of the superscript (Gunkel 347).

Sigmund Mowinckel, Gunkel’s student, built upon these foundations set by his teacher. Mowinckel’s goal was to find the place and function of psalms within the cultic setting of ancient Israel. He believed that “to understand a psalm means to see it in the right cultic connection” (Mowinckel I 34). He found evidence of cultic use in many psalms (Mowinckel I 2-3).\(^\text{18}\) His tendency was to relate psalms directly to the cult, and he argued that, with few exceptions, the psalms were originally composed for use in the cult. According to Mowinckel, many psalms were originally composed for the New Year

\(^{18}\) Though he notes that later cultic use does not prove a cultic origin of a psalm. It is possible that poems not originally composed for cultic use may later have been used in the cult (Mowinckel I 3).
festival in ancient Israel.\textsuperscript{19} This took place in the autumn, and celebrated Yahweh as king and affirmed his enthronement. Much of Mowinckel's basis for reconstructing such a festival came from the Babylonian \textit{Akitu} festival.\textsuperscript{20}

Mowinckel believed the Songs of Ascents were special "festival psalms," and were sung at the water-pouring rite on the feast of Tabernacles (Mowinckel I 3). He calls the \textit{sîrê hamma'âlôt} the "songs of the festal processions," and believed they had nothing to do with pilgrimages (so Gunkel 347), but rather belonged to the Temple and were used at the festival of harvest and tabernacles (Mowinckel II 208). To him, the title, which has some sort of cultic or liturgical sense, was originally over the entire collection, then was given to each of the individual psalms (Mowinckel II 208). His interpretation is based on the fact that the verb '\textit{lh}, "ascend," is the word used for the ascent of Yahweh in a "festal procession of the Temple" in Psalm 47:6, and in general the term for the "marching up" of what he identifies as a festal procession in Psalm 24:3 (Mowinckel II 208).

Cuthbert Keet's 1969 \textit{A Study of the Psalms of Ascent} marked a returned interest in the Psalms of Ascent as a whole, after years of being concerned with the \textit{Sitz im Leben} of the individual songs in the collection (Goulder 22), especially Psalm 132. Keet conjectured that the Psalms of Ascents at one time comprised what he called a "small Psalter" of the same title (Keet 1). He came to the conclusion that the Songs were put together in a liturgical setting for the pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem for the offering of the \textit{Bikkurim}, the first fruits (Keet 17).

\textsuperscript{19} "Considering all we know about the way cult institutions and the foundation of a kingdom were celebrated in the ancient orient, we may take it for granted that such a ceremony would be repeated as an annual festival; and then every thing indicates that the festival at the institution of the Temple and cult in Jerusalem was identical with the new year festival, the enthronement festival of Yahweh" (Mowinckel I 175).

\textsuperscript{20} For further discussion of the \textit{Akitu} festival p. 46 below.
From 1978, we have Klaus Seybold’s *Die Wallfahrtpsalmen*. As the title implies, Seybold considered the Psalms of Ascent to be pilgrimage songs. The originally independent works were compiled to cover a pilgrim’s expedition from start to finish (Seybold 1979: 69-75). This is also the view of Loren Crow, who proposed that the Psalms of Ascents were redacted in the Persian period and placed in the context of pilgrimage. He saw Psalm 120 as displaced from elsewhere to the introduction of the collection due to its depiction of exile.\(^{21}\) This gave shape to the collection for its use as pilgrim Psalter. “As a whole, then, the Songs of Ascents not only depict but make a case for pilgrimage from outlying areas to Jerusalem” (Crow 15).

The collection as a whole does lend itself to interpretation as pilgrimage songs, though not each individual Song is a travelling song. Psalm 120 begins as a plea by a sojourner to God for deliverance. Psalm 121 seems to be a blessing for those about to set out on a journey: “The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever.” Other songs speak of the return to Jerusalem (Psalm 126), the plea for deliverance from those who hate Zion (Psalm 129), and the establishment of worship at the Temple (Psalm 134; Crow 12). The remainder of the Songs, while not containing material that would contradict their use of pilgrimage songs, do not in any way support such use.\(^{22}\)

Some of these proposals for the meaning of the title of the Songs of Ascents carry more weight than others. However, an explanation suitable for some of the Songs does not accurately explain others of the Songs. The best interpretation is probably that the širē hammaʾālōt were some sort of pilgrimage songs, though it is difficult to be more

\(^{21}\) “Woe is me, for I have sojourned in Meshek, I have dwelt among the tents of Qedar” (Psalm 120:5).

\(^{22}\) See discussion of pilgrimages on pp. 45f.
precise. For our purposes, the different historical interpretations all presuppose that the Psalms belong together and should be grouped as a collection. Psalm 132 has principally been understood in this respect. As we continue with the study of Psalm 132, we will see how this psalm fits in as a pilgrimage or processional psalm, as well as its unique elements that set it apart from the collection.

2.2 Wrapping Up: Interpretation of Psalm 132

Now that we have looked at how the collection as a whole has been interpreted, we will turn to the ways in which some of these methods of interpretation have been applied to Psalm 132 individually. Ibn Ezra, who interpreted the collection with regards to its formal use, states in his commentary on Psalm 132, that “the fields of Jaar” (v. 6) are to be associated with the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (1 Chron 22:1).

David Kimhi expands on this comment, and places Psalm 132 at this event: “David said this psalm when he built the altar at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, according to the word of the prophet Gad.” According to 1 Chronicles 21 (=2 Sam 24:18-25), David builds an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, where the angel of the Lord ended his destruction of Israel. David offered sacrifice there, and the Lord ended the plague as a result. Kimhi states that David recited Psalm 132 at this occasion.

This viewpoint may come from the juxtaposition of 1 Chronicles 21 and 22. Chapter 21 contains the story of the sacrifice David made at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, while chapter 22 describes David’s preparations for the Temple. Psalm 132 seems to be concerned with the preparations for the building of the Temple as well.
Cassiodorus, who interpreted the collection allegorically, explains Psalm 132, the thirteenth Song in the collection, as a description of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. “It was right after the twelvefold aggregate of the apostles, the Lord himself should come as the thirteenth, since he is the head of all” (Cassiodorus, *Explanation*: Intro to Ps 131). He understands “David” in the psalm to be speaking of Christ, and the “tabernacle” as Christ’s heavenly dwelling. If there is any historical event to be seen in the psalm, it is that of Christ’s crucifixion on the cross (Cassiodorus, *Explanation*: Ps 131:7).

According to Luther, Psalm 132 seems to be a prayer written by Solomon, and is a “prayer for the kingdom and the priesthood; for these two are the principal gifts of God in this world” (Luther 391). Luther divided the psalm into two portions, which to him represented the way the kingdom of God is divided into corporeal and spiritual parts (Luther 394). Though Luther preferred to interpret the collection of Songs in light of their liturgical use, he not surprisingly interpreted Psalm 132 allegorically.

Before the nineteenth century, Psalm 132 was nearly always discussed as a part of the greater collection of the Songs of Ascents. It rarely appeared on its own other than the few examples given above. If the psalm was discussed, it was either because it was a part of the collection, or because it was included in a commentary on all of the psalms.

### 2.3 *Sitz im Leben* of Psalm 132

Psalm 132 really began to take on a life of its own, apart from its collection, beginning with Hermann Gunkel. Gunkel classified Psalm 132 as a “Royal Psalm,” concerned with kings. He also includes the song among the “communal complaint

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23 Other Royal Psalms include 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 144:1-11.
songs\textsuperscript{24} along with 144:1-10 (Gunkel 82). He believed that the Royal Psalms in general were performed at some sort of court festivity, and that Psalm 132 in particular was a liturgy performed on the day celebrating the founding of the Temple (Gunkel 101-2). He conjectures that Psalm 132 was “performed annually to recall the transport of the ark from Kiriath-Jearim to Zion,” and that this may have been symbolized by a processional (Gunkel 315). To Gunkel, the psalm “allows one to deduce a festival that was dedicated to the founding of the royal house and its sanctuary,” similar to festivals celebrated in the Assyrian court (Gunkel 100).

Psalm 132 was a key text for Mowinckel. He was convinced that the psalm was part of a text for a procession performed during the annual festival of Yahweh's enthronement, which took place during the New Year festival of Israel\textsuperscript{25}. He suggested that this procession was the main event of the festival, with its “dramatic and symbolic character, the personal presence of Yahweh being symbolized by the ark” (Mowinckel I 129). Mowinckel placed Psalm 132 in the context of the “royal entry” of Yahweh during this enthronement festival,\textsuperscript{26} and within this context deals with the preparation for the transport of the ark from some place outside the sanctuary (Mowinckel I 172). The procession is looked upon as a repetition of Yahweh’s first entry into Jerusalem, when David brought the ark to Jerusalem as the center of the cult and the symbol of Yahweh’s presence (Mowinckel I 174).

\textsuperscript{24} The goal of the complaint songs was to receive something from Yahweh.

\textsuperscript{25} Psalm 132 “belongs without any doubt to a dramatic festal procession, Yahweh’s entrance into his palace...we can hardly doubt that this episode had its place within the framework of the New Year festival” (Mowinckel I 129).

\textsuperscript{26} He placed Psalm 68 and 24 in this context as well. To him, Psalm 68 reflects the beginning of the procession, and Psalm 132 continues after the procession has passed through the gates of the Temple (Mowinckel I 172).
The majority of scholars have followed Mowinckel in his thesis that Psalm 132 presumes a cultic procedure commemorating the choice of Jerusalem with an ark processional. The interpretation of מ' לוט then would be a processional “ascent” to the Temple. For example, Leslie Allen supports this interpretation in his commentary on the Psalms: “the cultic language to be found within the collection and the apparent participation of priests in a number of its texts favors this...suggestion; one may also envision the involvement of a Levitical choir/orchestra and soloists” (Allen 194).

Nearly all work on the psalms since Gunkel and Mowinckel has reflected their influence. H. J. Kraus associated the autumn festival primarily with the Hymns of Zion and certain of the royal psalms. He called the festival a “Royal Zion Festival,” which celebrated the founding of the Davidic dynasty and the choice of Mt. Zion as the dwelling place of the ark and the Temple (Kraus 1986: 116). This festival demonstrated the election of Mt. Zion for the twelve tribes, and was celebrated in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles (Kraus 1989: 477). Kraus (1986) agreed with Mowinckel that the root of Psalm 132 was in a cultic festival, but he argued that, “not even a trace of an enthronement of God can be found in these texts [Psalm 132, 2 Samuel 6, 1 Kings 8]” (Kraus 1989: 477). His festival was rather similar to Mowinckel’s New Year festival. Obviously, Psalm 132 is a key passage in this festival, with the major theme of Yahweh’s choice of the Davidic dynasty, and the choice of Zion as his dwelling place and the place of the ark. Kraus believed this festival in memorial of the establishment of the royal house and its sanctuary could be inferred from Psalm 132 (Kraus 1989: 475):

In the annual celebration of the royal Zion festival, however, and in the act of enthronement the king was at the center of the cultic event, as can be deduced especially from Psalm 132. Since the motifs from the enthronement at the beginning of a reign and those from the regularly celebrated festivals overlap, it seems best to discuss the cultic
those from the regularly celebrated festivals overlap, it seems best to discuss the cultic features of enthronement in the light of all the available texts, and then on the basis of Psalm 132 to seek to identify aspects of the annual festival (Kraus 1986:111).

To him, the content of Psalm 132 reflected a "genuine and primary" part of Israelite cultic tradition (Kraus 1986: 115). Artur Weiser took another approach to developing Gunkel's method of psalm interpretation. He proposed that most of the Psalter was composed for use in the cult, and compared the autumn festival to a "Festival of Covenant renewal." To him, many psalms were composed for this celebration. This Covenant festival was basically to recall the founding of Israel at Sinai, and was an act of national renewal (Weiser 23-35). To Weiser, Psalm 132 was part of the liturgy used at the feast of the dedication of the Jerusalem Temple, which was a major part of the Covenant Festival (Weiser 779).

Though not all scholars agree that the processional of the ark in Psalm 132 was a regularly repeated event, many see that the historical referent in the psalm is an ark processional (so Seow 1989:196). This tended to be assumed by most scholars after Mowinckel. However, not all considered the matter proven. D. Hillers in his article, "Ritual Procession and the Ark," disagreed, for he saw that the basis for the assumption (i.e., the use of Psalm 132:8) was simply not enough evidence to assume an annual festival. He called for a new approach to understanding the psalm, since to him the association with a cultic procession of the ark was not convincing (Hillers 1968: 56). His central argument was that the *lamed* in Ps 132:8 has the meaning of "from," rather than "to." He translated the verse as, "Arise, O Yahweh, from your resting place, You and
your mighty ark” (Hillers 1968: 50). With his new translation, he argued the “specific cultic act or occasion with which the psalm is associated is no longer certain” (Hillers 1968: 52). 27

It is difficult to be very precise when identifying the specific cultic event for which Psalm 132 was composed, if there even is a specific event. The psalm does seem to be a processional psalm, but it is speculative to attach it to any particular festival in Israel. The festivals to which Mowinckel, Kraus, Weiser, and others have applied Psalm 132 are re-created mostly on the basis of parallel festivals occurring in the ancient Near East, and are not certain. Complicating matters is the fact that the psalm could have been composed for one situation, and only later would it then have been re-used later for liturgical purposes.

2.4 The Unity of the Collection

The issue of the unity of the Songs of Ascents has fascinated researchers for some time. Some see an artificial unity within the collection, which results from the redactional reworking of the individual psalms into collective ones. 28 Others see an organic unity to the entire collection. 29

27 See further discussion in The Text on v. 8.


29 So Viviers 288-289; Keet 177. Keet assumes that the group is a unity, but does not go so far as to say that a single author composed all of the Songs.
Besides the obvious element that all of the psalms share the šir hammaʿālōt heading, one of the most notable unifying elements in the collection is the brevity of the psalms compared with the remainder of the Psalter. The language of the collection seems to be a “dialect significantly different from that of most other psalms” (Crow 129). For example the particle $&$ appears ten times in the Songs of Ascents, and only eleven times in the remainder of the Psalter. The Songs also contain what scholars have considered an abundance of Aramaisms and northern Israelite Hebrew elements (Crow 129). As Dahood states, “Psalms 120-134 teem with dialectal elements…” (III: 196). This concentration of unconventional language sets the Songs of Ascents apart from other poetry (Grossberg 48). Another unifying factor is the “Repeated Formulae” noted by Loren Crow (see Crow 131). These are word repetitions and similar figures of speech that are found throughout the collection. Another common factor is the psalms’ concern with Zion. Seven of the fifteen psalms mention Zion (125, 126, 128, 129, 132-134), with Psalm 122 mentioning Jerusalem. Psalms 121, 123, and 124 contain formulations associated with Zion (Allen 194). The so-called “step parallelism” (mentioned above, p. 10) also serves to bring together the psalms. Though this does not occur in every psalm of the collection, it does occur with a high concentration in the Songs of Ascents.

On the other hand, there is great diversity among the Songs of Ascents. As Crow noted, “the songs are self-evidently diverse in respect to genre, meter and other poetic devices, theme and presumed world” (Crow 129). Crow gives examples such as the fact

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30 The average length of a psalm in the Psalter is 16.9, while the average length of the Songs of Ascents is 6.7 verses. Without Psalm 132, the number becomes 5.9 verses (Crow 129).

31 See Grossberg 48-50 for a list of words that are peculiar to the collection.

32 See Viviers 278-279 for a list of the most important similarities and repetitions throughout the Songs.
that in Psalms 120 and 123, foreigners are the cause of distress, while in Psalm 126 they praise Yahweh. The statements of innocence in Psalms 120 and 131 seem to contradict the admission of guilt in Ps 130:3 (Crow 136). The collection is also made up of different form-critical genres. According to Gunkel’s designations, Psalms 121, 126, 132, and 134 are liturgies designed for performance in the cult. Psalms 120, 130, and 131 are individual complaint psalms, while Psalm 123 is mixed between an individual and a communal complaint psalm. Psalm 125 is a “communal song of confidence,” with Psalms 124 and 129 being communal thanksgiving songs. Finally, Gunkel designates 127:1-2, 3-5; 128; and 133 as “wisdom songs” (Gunkel 347). Regardless of whether one accepts Gunkel’s categories, it is clear that the Songs are quite different from one another in form.

The collection as a whole likely came into being some time in the post-exilic period, although some of the songs may originate earlier. The Songs of Ascents seem to have come from different authors at different times and different Sitze im Leben. There is no simple explanation to explain the unifying elements within the group. Crow has proposed that there was a nucleus group of psalms that were edited by a redactor, who added the elements of unity, and also added several new psalms (Psalms 121, 122, 132-134; Crow 129-158).

33 Some of the Songs are most likely post exilic: Ps 120:5, “Woe is me, for I sojourn in Meshech, for I dwell among the tents of Kedar!” (see discussion of date in Crow 37). Ps 126:1, “When the Lord brought back the captive ones of Zion, We were like those who dream…”

34 Psalm 122 seems to be pre-exilic; it speaks of the walls of Jerusalem and states that Jerusalem is a well-built city (this early date is debated, however. See discussion in Allen 212). Our psalm too contains earlier elements (See discussion on p. 78f.). For further discussion on the unity of the Songs of Ascents, see Viviers; Crow 129-154; Grossberg 15-54; Allen 194-197; Goulder 24-27; Seybold 1982: 61-68.
Psalm 132 stands out in the collection in that it is comparatively quite long, it
contains none of Crow's "Repeated Formulae," it has no "step parallelism" (though
others in the collection also do not), and the *Sitz im Leben* seems different.\(^{35}\) The idea of
God's dwelling place is not the same: in Psalm 132 Yahweh clearly dwells in Zion (see
*Discussion*), while in Psalm 123, he is "enthroned in the heavens" (v. 1).

2.5 *In Summary*

As we have seen, Psalm 132 tended to be interpreted only as part of its larger
collection, the Songs of Ascents, in early (pre-nineteenth century) discussions about the
psalm. The title of the Psalms of Ascents, *šīr hammaʿālōt*, has been the subject of much
of the discussion regarding the collection. The interpretations of the superscript tend to
be allegorical, historical, formal, or cultic in nature. Later, beginning in the nineteenth
century, Psalm 132 began to be discussed individually, disregarding its place in the
collection of the Songs of Ascents. This development of how the psalm has been
interpreted is, more than anything, a reflection of the development of psalms' scholarship
in general.

The collection of *šīrē hammaʿālōt* as a whole is quite notable within the Psalter.
The psalms have many similarities to one another, especially with regards to their length.
At the same time, there are many differences. The collection seems to have been
assembled from already existing psalms, rather than all of the psalms being written

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\(^{35}\) "The only, and striking, exception to this case [of the unity of the collection] is Psalm 132, which is not
included on any of the counts: it is not brief, it has no step parallelism, it contains none of the repeated
phrases and it has no simile [elements that Goulder noted as being unifying]" (Goulder 27).
together at one time. Psalm 132 in particular exhibits many elements that make it stand apart from the group. Most noteworthy are the length of the psalm and the poetry. We will now turn to a study of the text of Psalm 132 in order to clarify these points.
Psalm 132 contains a number of features that scholars have called "unique" and "peculiar" (Dahood III 241). The first part of this chapter gives notes to the Masoretic text of Psalm 132, mentioning these unique and problematic forms, as well as possible solutions. The second part contains an exegetical discussion of the psalm, using the work of modern scholarship in addition to my own study of the psalm.

3.1 The Text

1. šír ḫam̄maʾālōt zēḵōr yhwh lēdāwīd ēt kōl ṣnōtō

   The form ṣnōtō is problematic: this is the only place we find a puʿal infinitive construct in the Bible (GKC §52r). The MT vocalization is usually translated something like "his affliction." Because this is the only occurrence of such a form, many would like to emend the vocalization. Dahood would like to read ṣnōtāyw, a defective plural spelling of ṣnōh, which he translates "triumph," based on evidence from Phoenician.36 It is true that the root ṣn in Phoenician means "conquer, defeat" (KAI 26 A I 18/20;

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Krahmalkov 382), and could easily be translated as “triumph.” However, based on the context of this psalm, the “triumph” of David is probably not what Yahweh is asked to remember. Another option is to read ‘anwātō, “piety” (Hillers 1983: 53; Johnson 1967: 20; Seow 1989:151).

Many scholars would like to restore a word here metri causa, such as lēṭōb or lē’abdēkā. This seems unnecessary. The meter is unbalanced only when determined by syllable counts of the verse, rather than by accentual units or word count (see Poetic Structure and Form). Regardless, an unbalanced meter alone does not necessitate the addition of a word. There is neither textual evidence nor a convincing explanation for the loss of a word in this verse.

4. 'ım 'ettēn šēnat lē'ēnāy lē‘ap 'appay tēnūmāh

The šēnat that appears here is a rare form. As it stands in the text it would mean “year,” in construct form. The word is not in construct, and to give a “year” to one’s eyes clearly does not make sense. Multiple manuscripts read šēnāt, “sleep.” This is the form most scholars agree upon, the archaic singular form with the feminine ending –āt (GKC §80g ). The MT pointing “rather convincingly indicates that the Masoretes did not understand the form šnt, which they vocalized anomalously” (Dahood III 243). Rendsburg believes this form preserves the northern feminine singular nominal ending (87). Cross believes this is an archaism, perhaps a combined reading of variants šnh, the usual Hebrew for “sleep,” and dialectal št “sleep,” known from tenth century Phoenician (1973: 97). Regardless of how the form originated, it is clear that the intended meaning is “sleep.”
8. qūmāh yhwh limnūḥātekā attāh waʿārōn ʿuzzekā

This verse is normally translated as, “Arise, O Lord, to thy resting place.” D. Hillers, however, argued that the traditional understanding of this verse was “impossible,” and suggested the *lamed* here should be translated as “from,” rather than “to” (Hillers 1968: 49). His reasons for this interpretation are that *lamed* is not normally used with *qūm* in the Hebrew Bible in this way, and that *qūm* is not used elsewhere in a pregnant construction, “to rise up (and go) to.” Hillers finally finds the idea “Arise, O God, and rest” to be incongruous (Hillers 1968: 50). Hiller’s proposal has been well received (Cross 1973: 95, Rendsburg 89, McCarter 177). In this interpretation, Yahweh is asked to remember what David has done, and to therefore arise on his behalf, “to stir himself from inactivity for the sake of David” (McCarter 177). Though we find a *m-* prefix to mean “from” elsewhere in the psalm (v. 11), if this verse has been extracted from an older liturgy, as has been proposed, it would not be surprising to find a *lamed* instead of the *m-* prefix used to mean “from,” elsewhere in this psalm (v. 11). Other psalms that have a lamed meaning “from” are Pss 68:21, 40:11, 45:14, and 84:12. This meaning is also found in Ugaritic (Gordon §10.1).

On the other hand, *mēnūḥāh* in the Hebrew Bible is never a locale from which one departs, “it is always a destination or a goal, a promise, or the result of successful battles, namely, rest from war” (Seow 1989: 170). We expect, then, the meaning “to your rest” here. This is the traditional understanding of this verse: “Arise, O Lord, to thy resting place.” In all major translations (ASV, ESV, NAB, NAS, NIV, NKJ, RSV, JPS, YLT), it is “to” the resting-place, rather than “from” it. Verse 14 in our psalm reads, “This is my

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37 Cf. Deut 12:9; Is 28:12; 32:18; 66:1; Mic 2:10; Ps 23:2; 95:11; 1Chron 28:2; Num 10:33; 1 Ki 8:56.
resting place (mēnūḥātī) forever, here I will dwell, for I have desired it.” In this context, the verse should be translated “to your resting place.” God would not be asked to rise up from his resting place, and then respond that it is his resting place “forever.” There is a nice parallelism between verses seven and eight:

nābô ṣāḥb lēmiṣkennayw ništahāweh ḥahadom rāḏāyw
qūmāh yhwh ṭimmunbafēkā attāh waḏon ṭuzzēkā.

“His dwelling place” corresponds to “your resting place,” and “his footstool” corresponds to “the ark of your strength.” Hiller’s translation would destroy this parallelism (Dahood III 245). Also, in the parallel passage in Chronicles, God was asked to approach his rest, rather than depart from it (2 Chron 6:41).

11. nîšbāḥ yhwh lēdāwīd ḫemāt lo’ yāsāḥ mimmennāh mippērī biṣnēkā ḫāṣīt lēkissē lāk

It has been noticed by many there is a lacuna in this verse; the parallelism and meter require another element. Commentators have proposed words such as mlk mpry, mlkym mpry, or bnym mpry. Seow proposes the word ḫwṣyb was lost by homioarkton with the word ḫṣyt, perhaps when it was written defectively (Seow 1989: 179). Cross proposes the insertion of ḫqym, “I will raise up.” Kruse wants to add l’d because he sees the essential element of perpetuity, which is conserved in verse 12, has been lost. The simplest solution is to provide either “sons” or “kings” as the missing object. There are some who would choose to add nothing: Dahood says, “it is difficult to believe the text is defective here” (246). Ellipsis of this type is common in the Hebrew Bible (see GKC §117f), so this should not be seen as a problem.

38 The current 2+2 beat of the second hemistich could be due to the falling out of a word; the prevalent measure throughout the poem is 3+3.
12. 'im yismeru badeyka berii we 'edoi zii 'alammedem gam benem 'ade 'ad yevey lakkiss lakan

'Edoi here is in a strange form. It appears to be plural feminine with the singular form of the first-person suffix. This is the only occurrence of such a form. We would expect 'edotay here. 'Edoi is has the singular form of the first person suffix ('-i) on a noun appearing to be plural ('edoi).39 'Edot has been explained as the Phoenician feminine singular which ends in -ot, hence affixing the suffix -i would be correct (Dahood III 246). This form could be considered as a singular suffix with the plural of 'edah, which occurs in the MT only in the plural, rather than changing to a plural suffix (Fretheim 290). Gesenius gives this form as an example of the singular suffix occurring with ending -ot, probably through the influence of Aramaic, unless perhaps it is singular for 'eduti (§ 91n). Seow would like to vocalize here 'edut, "my stipulation," on the basis of the parallelism with "covenant" (1989: 178). This may be preferable, as it would then be a singular noun with a singular suffix.

This verse contains a rare form of the relative pronoun. Normally, it appears as zeh, zu, zo 't, and occasionally zoh. Here, the text points the consonantal zw as zo. The only other occurrence of this form in the Hebrew Bible is in Hosea 7:16, the southern Judean prophet Hosea's words addressed to northern Israelites. In 2 Kings 6:19, a narrative taking place in the northern kingdom, it appears spelled zoh. Both of these spellings exhibit dialectal peculiarities. In the MT only this form spelled zo survives.

39 'Ed, 'edah, or 'eduti would be the singular
Kutscher believes it is probable that the form *zo-zoh* existed from early times as a dialectal variant mainly in the northern speech. It then eventually spread to the south (Judah) and replaced the longer form *zō't* (Kutscher 31).

### 3.2 Discussion

1. *šīr hamma‘ālōt zēkōr yhw lēdāwīd 'ēt kol ‘unnōtō*

   See *History of Interpretation* for discussion of the title of the collection, *šīr hamma‘ālōt*. The phrase *zēkōr yhw lē-* appears twice in the Hebrew Bible, once here, and once in Ps 137:7, “remember Yahweh, the sons of Edom.” The psalm requests God to remember negatively Edom; the petition is that God repay Edom for its evil. The root *zkr l-* (without *yhw*) has fourteen other occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. Four of these instances are “remembering” in the negative sense\(^40\), while ten are remembering for the good.\(^41\) We clearly have here a petition for God to remember something for the good of David. This is quite a common idea: the appeal for the deity to remember is found on inscriptions in the ancient Near East (Hillers 1983: 53), for example, there is a Phoenician inscription reading “may Melqart [the god] remember me” (KAI 43.15).

   The question here remains whether we are dealing with a request for Yahweh to remember David, or whether the petition is for Yahweh to remember on behalf of David’s merits (Kruse 281). The latter is probably the best interpretation. If it were a request to remember David, we would not find the object ‘*ēt kol ‘unnōtō* here. David’s efforts to build the Temple are recorded in the next few verses. This is probably what is meant by ‘*unnōtō*.

\(^{40}\) Jer 31:34; Neh 6:14; 13:29; Ps 79:8.

\(^{41}\) Ps 136:23; Neh 5:19; 13:14; 13:31; 2 Chron 6:42; Jer 2:2; Lev 26:45; Ex 32:13; Deut 9:27; Ps 119:49.
In 1 Chron 22:14, the root 'ny denotes David’s efforts to assemble the materials for Solomon to build the Temple. Perhaps this is what the author is intending here, “efforts,” rather than “hardships” or other similar translations. It can also be translated “humility,” which is a “mark of legitimate leadership” and “virtually synonymous with piety” (Seow 1989:156). The idea of humility being an attribute of a leader or king is not found in the Hebrew Bible. However, humility or affliction is almost always portrayed as a positive character trait, mentioned numerous times in the Psalms. The ASV and NAS translate the word here as “his affliction,” the RSV and YLT as “his afflictions,” the ESV, NIV, NJB as “hardships,” the NAB as “his anxious care,” and the JPS as “his extreme self-denial.” The NAS translates “Remember, O Lord, on David’s behalf, all his affliction” (cf. also ASV, NKJ, YLT). Other options are “all the hardship he endured” (ESV, cf. NIV, NJB, RSV), “all his anxious care” (NAB), and “his extreme self-denial” (JPS). The roots ‘ny and ‘nw are commonly translated as “poor, afflicted, humble, meek” (BDB 776). “His afflictions” is a good translation; usage of the root elsewhere (see footnote 43) normally refers to those who are poor or afflicted.

2. 'ašer nišša 'layhwh nādar la 'ābīr ya 'aqōb

There is a switch from the reference to God in the second person (v. 1) to the third person of this verse. Dahood says this is one of the features of the “court style,” which is preserved in some royal psalms (Psalm 2, 82, here) (Dahood III 243). We find a parallel in the prose Phoenician inscription of Yehawmilk of Byblos from the fifth

With the possible exception of Num 12:3.

century. In the first 8 1/2 lines of the 15 line inscription, Yehawmilk speaks of himself in the first person, by the end he has switched to the third person (Dahood III 243). It is difficult to prove, however, that there was a particular style of poetry used in the courts, as we find this change in person outside of the “royal psalms,” including Psalm 46, 75, 81, and 95.

It is notable that God is twice called 'ābīr ya‘āqōb in this psalm. Some see this as a reference to the ark, but it is preferable due to the parallelism of the verse to see it as an epithet for Yahweh. The first attestation of 'ābīr ya‘āqōb we find in the Bible is in Gen 49:24, which contains Jacob’s blessing to Joseph. Some have come to the conclusion from this usage that this is an ancient north Israelite expression (Rendsburg 87). The root 'br appears in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Aramaic. Ugaritic 'br means some sort of strong animal, and is usually translated as “bull,” or “wild ox” (Kapelrud 42). The Akkadian abāru means “power, strength,” and does not necessarily refer to a bull. 'abbīr is used in the Old Testament for strong animals, stallions, and war-horses, as well as for bulls and wild oxen. All major translations, with the exception of the New English Bible, which reads “powerful ruler of Jacob,” translate “the Mighty One of Jacob.” The pointing of 'ābīr is not what we would expect. Normally, we find a dagesh in the bet.

44 “I, Yehawmilk, king of Byblos have made (these things) for my mistress, the Lady of Byblos, and she heard my choice and treated me kindly. May the Lady of Byblos bless and preserve Yehawmilk, king of Byblos, and prolong his days and years in Byblos, for he is a righteous king…” (ANET 656).

45 “In light of the fact that the ark is mentioned in vv. 6-8, it is evident that ‘The Mighty One of Jacob’ is intended as an epithet for the ark” (Fretheim 291).

46 Which he swore to Yahweh // vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob.


48 ASV, ESV, NAB, NAS, NIV, NJB, NKJ, REB, RSV, JPS, and YLT.
The non-dageshed version appears five times in the Hebrew Bible, as opposed to 17 occurrences with the *dagesh*. It is noteworthy that the only places that ‘ābīr occurs without the *dagesh* are referring to God. It has been said that this by-form is the Masoretic way of distinguishing the divine “mighty” from “mighty” applied to men (Kapelrud 43). Another view is that the Masoretes wanted to separate Yahweh from the idea of the bull. This is perhaps due to concern over the conditions during the time of Jeroboam I, when he established the worship of the golden calves in Bethel and Dan (1 Ki 12:25-33; Kapelrud 43):

The Masoretes understood ‘strong one’ (rather than a metaphorical reference to an animal) to be the primary meaning in this expression, and tried to guard against this theriomorphism in description of God. However, in light of Jeroboam’s revival of the calf as a symbol of YHWH, it seems likely that this archaic symbol continued to be used in north Israel while it was seen as apostate in the south (Crow 100).

Though this may be a northern phrase, our psalm, and Is 1:24, 49:26, 60:16 all purport to be Zion texts, specifically southern. This is perhaps used as an archaizing element in the Isaiah passages in order to attribute power and strength to God (Kaiser 1983: 44). The epithet is possibly used in our psalm due to the “amalgamation of the north Israelite and Judean cult traditions which David undertook” (Kapelrud 44). 50


*Bē’ōhel bēti* is a phrase used only here. Literally, it means in the “tent of my house.” Gesenius translates “the tabernacle of my house” (§128m), while Dahood sees the *ōhel* as referring to the canopy over the bed (Dahood III 243). “Tent of my house” could refer to a tent erected on a roof in order for sleeping, cf. 2 Sam 16:22 (Homan 21).

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50 Crow suggests that northern symbols (he considers the ark to be a northern symbol due to its original location at Shiloh) are used in our psalm to emphasize the importance of Zion for north Israelites (Crow 106).
Due to the parallelism with the next phrase, however, it seems best to translate as two synonyms in construct, “tent of my house,” or the “tent that is my house.”\textsuperscript{51}  ‘Eres yēšūʾ āy, literally the “couch of my bed,” is also a phrase used only here. In the ancient Near East, ordinary people did not sleep on beds; they would sleep on the ground on spreads or rugs (Judg 4:18, Ex 22: 26-27; Angerstorfer 379). The bed would have been a piece of luxury furniture, for kings and the wealthy.\textsuperscript{52} The word yṣ, “couch, bed,” comes from the root meaning to “lay, spread,” as in spreading a bed or couch (Is 58:5, Ps139:8).

There are various ways these words are translated: “tabernacle of my house// my bed” (ASV); “the house where I live// the couch where I sleep” (NAB); “house// bed” (NAS, NIV, ESV, RSV, JPS); “chamber of my house// comfort of my bed” (NKJ); “tent of my house// couch of my bed” (YLT).

Here it is possible that this vow not to enter the “tent of his house” or the “couch of his bed” refers to refraining from sexual relations until the vow is fulfilled. We find this connotation of the words used here in our psalm also in Gen 49:4. In this verse, Rueben is chastised for sleeping with his father’s concubine: “because you went up (‘ālītā) to your father’s bed; then you defiled it- he went up to my couch (yēšūʾ ī).” In 2 Sam 16:22, an ‘öhel is pitched for Absalom on the roof, where he proceeds to publicly sleep with his father’s concubines. The vow in our psalm could be a vow to abstain from women, rather than to forgo sleep. However, since the following verse mentions not giving sleep to his eyes or slumber to his eyelids, it is probably better to interpret the vow

\textsuperscript{51} Another example of a “genitive of association” is found in Gen 8:9, kap-raglih, “sole of its foot” (see Waltke and O’Connor §9.5.3).

\textsuperscript{52} Amos 3:12, 6:4, S of S 1:16, Deut 3:11, Prov 7:16.
as a hyperbole for the extent that David will go to in order to find a dwelling place for Yahweh. In the Hebrew Bible, sleep is at times portrayed as a sign of laziness, as in Prov 6:10, 20:13, 24:33, Is 56:10, and Nah 3:18 (Schüpphaus 440). The opposite found here, sleeplessness, could be used to show how diligent David is.

There is evidence for this motif elsewhere in the ancient Near East. In the cylinders of Gudea we are told that Gudea, ruler of the city of Lagash, was instructed to build a temple for the deity Ningirsu (Seow 1989: 157). In Cylinder A vi.12, Gudea is commanded: “In order to build the temple, you will not let your eyes sleep” (in E. J. Wilson 33). “On account of building the temple for his master, sleep did not enter in at midnight, sleep did not form in his head at noon.”

Ps 76:12 gives the command to “make vows to the LORD your God and fulfill them.” Ps 116:14, 18; 56:13; 65:2; and 66:13 also speak of making vows to God. Ps 132:3 contains the first two parts in a triple-part oath. This is an example of an apocopated oath. “Oath making was so stereotyped in ancient Israelite literature that the first clause (‘thus and more may God do to me/you’) was often dropped, leaving only the if ‘I/you’ clause” (Cartledge 15).

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53 On the issue of the date of Gudea, see Steinkeller.
54 Column XVII: 7-9 (E. J. Wilson 79-80).
55 While this verse is often said to contain a vow, it is actually an apocopated oath, and the two should not be equated. A vow begins with a plea for divine action, while an oath begins with human action (Cartledge 16).
A portrait statue of Gudea found from the Ur III Period shows Gudea with the temple plan on his knees. The statue was intended to remind the god of all the good deeds Gudea had done in order to secure all the necessary materials for building the temple (Keel 18). The king is typically portrayed as the one in charge of building the temple in Mesopotamian and Egyptian tradition.56

4. †im 'ettîn šēnat lē 'ēnây lē 'ap 'appay tēnûmâh

Prov 6:4 reads 'al tittîn šēnâh lē 'ēneykâ ātēnûmâh lē 'ap 'appeykâ, “do not give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids.” JPS is the only version that translates “Give your eyes no sleep, your pupils [rather than eyelids] no slumber.”57 The similarities to our verse are obvious. This seems to be a stock formula to express diligence (Crow 100).

5. 'ad 'emš‘ä mâqôm layhwh miškânôt la 'ābîr ya'āqôb

According to Dahood, the use of the word mâqôm here recalls the narrative of the ark’s procession in 2 Sam 6:17, “and they brought in the ark of Yahweh and set it in its place (mēqōmō) inside the tent which David had pitched for it” (Dahood III 244). The mâqôm of the ark is a concept found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. 1 Sam 5:11 and 6:2 tells that the Philistines realize the ark must leave their land and return to its mâqôm. The word is not used to describe the various stages of the ark’s return,58 but it is used when

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56 For iconography of the king portrayed as the temple builder see Keel, pp. 270-271.

57 “Eyelash,” the usual translation of ‘ap ‘appay may not be an accurate translation, according to Dahood. He gives as evidence Ugaritic ‘p p, “pupils,” and 4Q184:13, “and she wantonly raises her pupils to see,” w p'pyḥ bbhɪz trm br'w[t] (Allegro 82). One cannot see with the eyelashes! Dahood states that neither in Hebrew nor in Ugaritic does this word signify eyelashes, but rather the eye itself (III 244).

58 1 Sam 6:19-7:1; 2 Sam 6:10-11.
David returns it to the tent (2 Sam 6:17), and when Solomon brings it into the Temple.\textsuperscript{59} However, it is clear here that the \textit{māqōm} is not that of the ark, but that of Yahweh. Or probably \textit{for} Yahweh is a better translation. Only rarely does the word \textit{māqōm}, out of not quite 400 occurrences, speak about the place of God specifically. Jer 7:12 speaks of the Shiloh Temple as God’s place (\textit{mēqōmī}). Hos 5:15 gives a statement from God, “I will go away and return to my place (\textit{mēqōmī})/ Until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face…” The Hosea passage is unclear whether or not “the place” is referring to the Temple.

\textit{Miškānōt}, a feminine plural, seems to be occasionally used in a seemingly singular sense in the poetry of the Hebrew Bible. Ps 43:3 is translated by the RSV as, “Let them lead me, let them bring me to thy holy hill and to thy dwelling (\textit{miškēnōteykhā}).” Though the word is plural, it is here understood to mean God’s dwelling place in a singular sense, especially with the parallelism of “Thy holy hill (singular).” Ps 84:1 is similarly translated, “How lovely is thy dwelling place (\textit{miškēnōteykhā})...(RSV).” Again, it is understood as “dwelling place,” singular. The remainder of the chapter speaks of the courts of this dwelling place, and the “house of God,” all the more reason to interpret it as singular in meaning. Ps 46:5 has a similar usage, only here the word is a masculine plural: “there is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation (\textit{miškēnēy}) of the Most High.” Parallelism seems to lean towards a singular interpretation: “city of God” parallel to “holy habitation of the Most High.”\textsuperscript{60} Gesenius notes this form appears usually in poetry and is an

\textsuperscript{59} 1 Ki 8:6, 7; 2 Chron 5:7,8; Gamberoni 1997: 540.

\textsuperscript{60} The same intensive plural seems to be used with “holy mountains,” RSV “holy mount,” in Ps 87:1, and Ps 133:3, “mountains of Zion,” plural in most translations, but likely singular in meaning.
example of a "plural of amplification" (§124b). Loren Crow suggests the "plurals probably connote the grandeur or superlativity of God's dwelling" (100). Keel says that the plural "indicates the special quality of this particular dwelling place" (151). The word itself usually refers to some sort of tent or tents.\(^{61}\) The singular, \textit{mškn}, is the word used for the Tabernacle. It is interesting that this word is also used for a permanent dwelling such as the Temple. Though \textit{miškānōt} seems to imply a non-permanent tent, it is applied to the Jerusalem Temple, the successor of the Tabernacle (Meyers 352).\(^{62}\) Perhaps this was to preserve the tradition of the Tabernacle even though there was now a permanent sanctuary.\(^{63}\) The tent-words '\textit{hl} and \textit{mšknw}t are used for the Jerusalem Temple only in the psalms (Ps 15:1 and 43:43). The word \textit{mškn} is used for a permanent dwelling elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, mostly in the Psalms: Ps 26:8; 46:5; 74:7; Ezek 37:27, and the above mentioned Ps 15:1 and 43:3. The fact that both David (verse 3) and Yahweh (here) are said to dwell in tents, to a certain extent, models the king after the deity (Homan 21).

\(^{61}\) Job 21:28; S of S 1:8; Num 24:5; Is 54:2; Jer 30:18; Ps 78:28.

\(^{62}\) Though there are those who see the reference here to the tent- shrine of the ark rather than the Temple itself (see McCarter 177-178 and Cross 244). The evidence from Ps 74:7, 1 Kgs 8:4, Josephus \textit{Ant} 8.101, and Lam 2:6-7 seems to imply that the Tabernacle was brought into Solomon's Temple (see Friedman 292-300). This adds to the confusion of what the word \textit{mškn} refers to, as the term could have evolved to mean the Temple with the Tabernacle inside, and eventually come to refer to the Temple itself.

\(^{63}\) "Public acceptance of the relocation of the ark was more likely if sacred tradition was preserved as much as possible" (McCarter 172).
This concept of God having an earthly dwelling place is a likely a pre-deuteronomistic idea.64 There is no example in the deuteronomistic literature of God dwelling in a place such as the Temple, or of the building of a house for God. The Temple is always said to be the dwelling of his name; the house is always built for his name,65 rather than for God himself.66 This seems to be a theological change by the deuteronomist, to “correct” the belief that God sat enthroned between the cherubim in the Temple (Weinfeld 1992: 176).67 It seems to be a later, deuteronomistic development that God was portrayed as not dwelling in the Temple.68 The concept that God’s habitation was Mt. Zion may be earlier (see verse 13). We find this viewpoint of Yahweh dwelling in Zion also in Pss 9:11; 50:2; 76:2; 84:7; 134; 135:21.

6. hinneh šēmaʾānūhā bēʾeprātāh mēšāʾnūhā bišdē yāʾar

This verse is quite problematic. First of all, there is the issue of the feminine pronominal suffixes of šēmaʾānūhā and mēšāʾnūhā. It is unclear what these suffixes refer to. Most scholars take these endings as referring to the ark. Arguably, though, that

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64 The “deuteronomistic history” is the term used to designate the book of Deuteronomy and the Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, and 1-2 Kings as a unified history. Noth, the originator of the theory, dated the deuteronomistic history to the middle of the sixth century BCE, though the question of the authorship and date is one of the most debated issues in biblical studies. Similar language and ideology throughout the deuteronomistic history is given as evidence for its unity. The thought is that the deuteronomist selected traditions for his purposes and brought them together (McKenzie 160).

65 The deuteronomist consistently used this phraseology, and “never made the slightest digression from it” (Weinfeld 1972: 193). See 1 Ki 3:2; 5:17, 19; 8:17, 18, 19, 20, 44, 48. Also Ezra 6:12.


67 This was the prevalent view in ancient Israel: 1 Sam 4:4, 2 Sam 6:2, Ps 80:2, 2 Ki 19:5= Is 37:16.

68 See 1 Ki 8:27, 30, 39, 43, and 49. This prayer in 1 Kings 8 is attributed to the Deuteronomist. The presumably ancient story of the dedication of the Temple in 1 Ki 6:1,2; 8:13 speaks clearly about a house for God (Weinfeld 1992: 176). See also Yahweh’s rejection of his earthly dwelling in Is 66:1. The prophets vary in their terminology: Joel 3 and Is 8:18 state that Yahweh dwells on Zion, while Is 18:7 states that his name dwells there.
is not likely, as the ark has not yet been mentioned in our psalm. There is also the problem of gender: the suffixes appear to be feminine, while the ark is normally masculine. However, we do find two instances in the Hebrew Bible where the ark is feminine (1 Sam 4:17 and 2 Chron 8:11). Following the Vulgate, some scholars would like to emend the endings to the masculine ending. If these next few verses, vv. 6-9, are extracted from an older text, as some scholars think, than the “it” may indeed refer to the ark (Seow 1989: 165).

Another option is to see the suffixes as semantically neuter and referring “vaguely to the object of the preceding verses, the aim of David’s vows and efforts whatever the gender of the preceding noun is” (Kruse 293). Dahood agrees, finding the problem quite solvable. He argues that the suffixes are referring back to David’s oath in verse two (244). The Hebrew word for “oath” is feminine, so this would fit. Another suggestion is that the suffixes could refer to God, though they would be the wrong gender for this (so Eissfeldt 1959: 482). All of the alternatives “suffer from the lack of any clear nominal antecedent and from ambiguity about how each of these interpretations relates to the rest of the psalm” (Crow 103). The antecedent is most likely the same for both of the pronouns due to the parallelism. Though this may not have originally been the meaning, it seems in the present context of the psalm that the suffixes are referring to the ark.

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69 Kruse states that it is a mistake to see the pronouns as referring to the ark. According to him, this “comedy of errors” came about from the ark being feminine in German. He discounts the two feminine occurrences as problematic (Kruse 293).
Also problematic with this verse is the identification of \textit{bēˈeprātāh} and \textit{bišdē yāˈar}. The meaning of the suffixes of \textit{šēmaˈānūhā} and \textit{mēşāˈnūhā} obviously affect the interpretation of these words. The following discussion assumes the suffixes on these verbs are referring to the ark.

According to 2 Chron 2:50-51, Ephrathah was originally a Judahite clan named after its matriarch, which settled near Bethlehem. With the rise of the Davidic dynasty, it seems that Ephrathah began to be equated with Bethlehem, David’s birthplace (Luker 558).\textsuperscript{70} This is the first option for interpreting Ephrathah here: it is speaking of David’s hometown of Bethlehem.\textsuperscript{71} The inference is that this is where David first heard of the ark. Though the ark has no real connection with Ephrathah, this view can be supported by the context of the psalm: it is concerned with David and his role in providing God and the ark with a resting-place (Fretheim 297).

Another option is to see \textit{eprātāh} as referring to the territory of Ephraim, where the ark was located previous to its Philistine capture (Weiser 780).\textsuperscript{72} 1 Sam 1:1 uses the gentillic \textit{ˈprty} to mean “Ephraimite.” Though there is no evidence that either the tribe or the territory of Ephraim was called Ephrathah, the fact that the gentillic appears makes it a possibility that the reference here is to Ephraim.

It is also possible to see Ephrathah as a general description of a geographical zone (Crow 103), such as “fertile plains,” or “fruitland” (Kruse 294). This would make a natural parallel to \textit{šēdē yāˈar}, if it is translated literally as “fields of a forest.” This could\textsuperscript{70} The clarification of Ephrathah, “that is, Bethlehem,” is a gloss, as in Gen 35:19 and 48:7 (Westerman 1989: 555).

\textsuperscript{71} This is the viewpoint of Briggs (470), Buttenweiser (378), Fretheim (297), and Weiser (780).

\textsuperscript{72} During the period of the Judges, the ark was brought to the Shiloh temple, which was in the territory of Ephraim (1 Samuel 1-4).
be speaking of Kiriath Jearim, since literally it is the “city of forests.” According to 1 Sam 7:2, the ark was kept at Kiriath Jearim for twenty years upon its return from the Philistines.

1 Chron 2:50 reads, “These were the sons of Caleb. The sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, were Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim.” According to 1 Chron 2:19, Caleb begot Hur by Ephrat. From Hur stems a Bethlehemite clan (2 Chron 4:4), and through his son Shobal the clan which settled Kiriath Jearim (2 Chron 2:50). So perhaps we are to identify Ephrathah with Kiriath Jearim (Cross 1973: 94, Delitzsch 313). This is the name left not only to the clan, but also to the region it inhabited (Luker 558). The connection between Ephrathah and Kiriath Jearim also relates to the ark, as this is where it spent twenty years.73 Due to this connection, and because of the parallelism here and elsewhere in the psalm, this seems to be the best interpretation.

The simplest interpretation of bišdē yā‘ar is to see it as an alternative name for Kiriath Jearim, “city of forests,” which has a clear connection with the ark.74 However, the LXX translates as an appellative, “in the fields/ plains of the woods.” Lebanon is also called “fields of the wood,” so it has been proposed that this is a reference to Lebanon in the north, in antithesis with Bethlehem in the south (Robinson 221). The inference here is that all people, both in the north and south, are called. Kruse believes the words in this verse would have called to mind the famous prophecy of pre-exilic Jerusalem, Mic 3:12, which reads: “Zion will be plowed as a field (šdḥ), Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest (lhmwt yʾr”).

73 This is the viewpoint of Delitzsch (310) and Cross: “there is no escape from the conclusion that Ephrat is a clan name in the district of Kiryat Yearim” (Cross 1973: 9).

74 This is the view held by most scholars. See Briggs 470 and Weiser 780.
Kruse would like to do away altogether with the efforts to pinpoint the location of the events of this verse, and take it simply to mean post-exilic Jerusalem with the connotation of devastation (Kruse 294). Robinson states, “There is no solution [to the place names] which can be claimed to be firmly convincing, for most of the attempts to relate the two stichoi strain either the Hebrew or the imagination” (221). He proposes the emendation *hen hāšamāʾnū habeʾ parot hāmēṣaʾnūha bišēdē jaʾād* [sic!] 75 meaning, “Surely, we heard the oxen leading on? Surely we found the ark in the field he appointed?” (Robinson 221). This would then be a reference to the story of the ark in 1 Samuel 6. While this is a creative proposal that fits the context, his emendation destroys the parallelism occurring in this verse and throughout the psalm.76 The best interpretation is to see this as another, perhaps a poetic, form of Kiriath Jearim. It is not unusual to find varying forms of the name Kiriath Jearim. Jer 26:20 calls it *qyrṭ hîʾym*, Ezra 2:25 gives *qyrṭ ʾrym*, Josh 18:28 gives merely *qyrṭ*, with Josh 15:60 giving the alternative *qyrṭ bʿl*, and Josh 15:9 *hgbwl bʿlh* (Delitzsch 311).

7. *nābōʾāh lēmiškēnōtāyw niṣṭṭahāweh lahādōm raglāyw*

The term *nābōʾāh*, “let us come,” gives the feeling of a processional or a pilgrimage. This first person plural cohortative form is frequently an introduction to pilgrimage songs: “let us go up” (Is 2:3; Mic 4:2; Jer 31:6); “let us go” (Ps 122:1) (Gunkel 1998: 236).

75 The only consonant change is the *resh* to a *dalet* in *yaʿār*.

76 Johnson proposed another, less impressive emendation. He emends *yaʿār* to *yaʿir*, since David’s original name is argued to be Elhanan ben Jair (2 Sam 21:19; Johnson 21). Both names would then refer to Bethlehem.
Processions in ancient cultures were performed for a variety of reasons, such as to avert disaster, ensure the fertility of crops, to enthrone a king, to welcome a conquering ruler, for a wedding or funeral, or to honor a deity (Duff 469). The majority of processions in the ancient Near East were repeated symbolically and usually occurred in the context of a religious festival (Duff 470). The focus of the Israelite procession was the ark, as is evident from 2 Samuel 6, the most detailed account of a processional in the Hebrew Bible (Duff 471). The psalms also contain a number of allusions to processions. Though there are a number of biblical processions in the Bible, such details as significance, frequency, and origin of processions are disputed (Duff 471).

Keel distinguishes two types of sacral processions: 1) the procession in which Yahweh himself participates, and 2) the pilgrimage or visit to the Temple, in which the people advance to the sanctuary. Pilgrimages to the Temple or holy site were an obligation for male Israelites three times a year (Ex 23:17; 34:23; Deut 16:16), and the pilgrims traveled in caravans with others (Luke 2:41-45). These sorts of pilgrimages make up the second category of processions. Psalm 132, as an account of the transfer of the Ark to Zion, falls into the first category. In both categories of processions, the pilgrims were often said to be “going up,” as in Is 2:3; Mic 4:2; and Jer 31:6. ‘Alalah, “ascend” is used about the festal procession in Ps 47:5, and is also used for the procession up to the sanctuary in Psalm 68:18 (Mowinckel I 172). This could well correspond to the

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77 Psalms 24, 68, 118, and 132 are all considered pilgrimage songs (Mowinckel I 170).
78 Pss 24:7-10; 47:5; 68:18, 24-25; 132
79 Pss 24:3-5; 84:7; 118; 122; Keel 323
appropriateness of the title of the šīr hammāʿālōt. In comparison with Babylonian and Canaanite enthronement festivals, the “going up” may have been understood secondarily as a triumphant, victorious procession (Keel 323).

Processions often marked the high point of religious festivals in the ancient Near East (Duff 470). In Babylon, a procession was the climactic event of the New Year akitu festival. This consisted of a divine procession to the akitu temple and the celebration of the akitu ritual there. The king always played a major role in this New Year festival (Klein 138). As previously mentioned, since Mowinckel’s work, several scholars would like to see Psalm 132 in light of an Israelite festival with similarities to the Babylonian akitu festival.

Lahādōm raglāyw refers either to the sanctuary where the ark will be temporarily placed, or to the ark itself. The word hādōm, “footstool,” occurs only six times in the Hebrew Bible. In each occurrence, it appears in construct with rgl, meaning “footstool of the feet.” The post-exilic 1 Chron 28:2 is the only place it clearly refers to the ark. In Is 66:1, the earth is the footstool, in Ps 99:5 the footstool may refer to the Temple, and in Lam 2:1 the word could refer to the ark, the Temple, or Zion as a whole.80 In general, hdm can refer to the ark, the Temple, Zion, or even the entire holy land (Fabry 333). The question here is whether it is a reference to the ark or to the entire Temple. Due to the parallelism of this verse: “Let us go into his dwelling place// let us worship at his footstool,” it seems that “footstool” = “dwelling place,” and therefore the Temple is meant here.

80 The occurrence in Psalm 110 is not relevant here; it is referring to enemies who will be made into a footstool.
According to Cross, **miškênôt** here in all probability refers to the tent shrine, with **hādōm** referring to the ark (Cross 1973: 95). McCarter also sees **miškênôt** as a tent provided for the ark in Kiriath Jearim (McCarter 177). Though this is possible, it seems more likely that it is referring to the Temple, using terminology carried over from the tent shrine (see notes on verse 5). The idea of the deity dwelling in **miškênôt** and possessing a footstool is also found in Ugaritic.  

8. qūmāh yhwh limnūḥātekā attāh waʾārōn ʿuzzēkā

In 2 Chron 6:41-42, the Chronicler ends Solomon's prayer of dedication of the Temple with a version of Ps 132:8-10. It is uncharacteristic in Chronicles for an existing psalm, rather than an original composition, to be used for a prayer (Japhet 601). Solomon's prayer here is taken from 1 Ki 8:22-53, nearly word for word, with the exception of the beginning and end portions. Our psalm does not appear in the King's text; it is the conclusion to the Chronicles version, giving it "a more elevated form than the parallel prose" (Japhet 601).

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81 The god 'El is portrayed this way in KTU 1.4.IV.20-30.

82 The only other example of this is in 1 Chronicles 16. 16:8-22 corresponds to Ps 105:1-15; 16:23-33 corresponds to Psalm 96; and 16:34-36 with Ps 106:1, 47-48. The ceremony of the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem is concluded by these psalms, sung by Asaph. It is quite intriguing that 2 Chronicles 6 and 1 Chronicles 16 are the only two places that a psalm is quoted in Chronicles. The first is dealing with David's transfer of the ark to Jerusalem, and the second with Solomon's transfer of the ark to its final place in the Temple.
So why was this particular portion chosen for the conclusion of the prayer? Japhet believes this passage purposes to bring Solomon’s prayer back to the point of departure: the bringing of the ark to the Temple (607). A further result of adding this portion is that it switches the “rather melancholy” theme to a “more optimistic and elevated one.”

None of the three lines are identical in both texts:

Psalms: קום יהוהław ת trú אל תעו צדיק
Chronicles: קום יהוה אלוהים וแท้ו צדיק אלוהים

Psalms:编号 צדק והсудיה ירננו
Chronicles: כנתיך יהוה אלהים לבלב תעשו והсудיה ישמעה בו בוכי

For the final line, the order is switched. In Chronicles, God is first asked not to turn his face from his anointed, then asked to remember David his servant. In our psalm, the petition is that “for the sake of David,” God is asked not to turn his face from his anointed.

According to Japhet, “it is evident that a great effort was made to make the psalm a proper vehicle for different ideas” (602). Indeed, the psalm has been deliberately changed; we see none of the rhythm and parallelism from our psalm. The biggest change in Chronicles is the addition of יָהָוֶה יֶחְדֵּימ, appearing three times, rather than יָהָוֶה

83 “The recurring supplication, that God may hear the people’s prayer, almost necessarily made Solomon’s prayer center on distress, sin, repentance and forgiveness, rather melancholy themes. The Chronicler’s conclusion is much more optimistic and elevated, represented by words like ‘might,’ ‘salvation,’ ‘rejoice,’ ‘goodness,’ never mentioned in the original prayer” (Japhet 602).
alone, appearing once in Psalm 132. Japhet sees this as a refrain, similar to refrains in Ps 136, 148, 150, 135:19-21. It is making the statement here: “Yahweh is God, Yahweh is God, Yahweh is God” (Japhet 602).

Another change in Chronicles is *mnw+hk* to *nw+hk*. It is not entirely clear what the significance of this change is. However, the difference in the concept of rest between Chronicles and our psalm should be noted. It is clear in the psalm that God’s own rest is the intended meaning. In Chronicles, the idea of rest refers to the rest of the ark, and not of God. 84 This may be due to the later care that was taken to avoid thinking of God as dwelling or resting in an earthly location. The change of “righteousness,” *sdq*, to “salvation,” *tsw’h*, may be due to the influence of Ps 132:16, which reads *wkhnh ’lbyš yš* *w*ḥṣydyḥ *rnn yrnw*.

“Resting place,” *mēnūḥāḥ*, seems to refer to a place free from war. This idea is found in Is 32:18, “my people will live in a peaceful habitation, and in secure dwellings and in undisturbed resting places (*mēnūḥōti*).” 85 In Num 10:33, a resting place is sought for the ark. In Is 66:1, God asks “where is my resting place?” The theological view of the temple as the resting-place of the deity is ancient and can be found in Ugaritic texts.

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84 “A house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD” (1 Chronicles 6:16, 28:2; Japhet 603).

85 This concept is also found in 1 Chron 22:9, “Behold a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days.” This idea of “rest” being the opposite of war may be why God will not allow David who is “a man of war” who has “shed blood” to be the one who will build his “house of rest” (*byt mnw+hk*; 1 Chron 28:2).
In Ugaritic, *nḥt*, "resting place," is used to speak of the throne of divine kings.\(^{86}\) There are only two places outside of this psalm where the word *mēnūḥāḥ* refers to the resting place of God, Is 66:1 and 1 Chron 28:2.

The background of *qūmāḥ* should be seen in the language of holy war\(^{87}\) when the ark sets out. The ark seems to have been used as a war palladium (Num 14:44, 1 Sam 4:2-9), and was the place where the tribal leaders sought oracles for holy war (Judg 20:26-27). It seems the ark was carried into war during the early period of the monarchy as a concrete representation of Yahweh’s presence on the battlefield (Num 10:35-36, Joshua 6, 1 Samuel 4-7). The ark symbolized the divine presence among Israel, and led the people on their march through the desert (Num 10:33) and in battle (Num 14:44). It is difficult to be clear about the exact function of the ark in the holy wars, but certainly there is a connection (von Rad 1991: 42). The word *qwmḥ*, “arise,” is used in the language of holy war in Jud 4:14; 5:12; 7:9,15; and Ps 68:2. It seems to be used in the general sense of “attack” (Cross 1973: 95). *Qwm yhwh* is used in Num 10:35, which is possibly an ancient liturgy used in Israel’s holy wars: “then it came about when the ark set out that Moses said, ‘Rise up, O LORD! And let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You’” (Harrison 1990: 179). This usage of *qūmāḥ* is related to the idea of the ark as the throne or the footstool of the throne of Yahweh (Noth 1968: 79). Perhaps the *qūmāḥ* here should not be seen as an imperative at all, but rather as an interjection, “Come Yahweh! To your rest.” The NJPS translates, “advance, O

\(^{86}\) Cross compares the use of *nḥt* in CTA 16 (KRT C) 23f: “He sat upon his royal throne, on the restful seat of dominion” (Cross 1973: 94).

\(^{87}\) Wars in the ancient Near East were seen as conflicts between opposing gods, and thus all wars were “holy,” with the people fighting on behalf of and with the assistance of their god (Harrison 1990: 170).
Lord," which gives more of a warlike sense to the saying. Baruch Levine translates, "attack, Yahweh" (Levine 318). A paradox is created in this psalm by the use of the holy war imagery: God is addressed with the same formula, qwmh, but rather than being called to war or wandering, he is summoned to his resting-place (Japhet 603).

Here, the ark is called Yahweh’s 'ārōn 'uzzekā, “ark of strength.” This seems to contradict the view of the ark found in the deuteronomistic history. The deuteronomistic conception of the ark is that it was used exclusively to hold the tablets of the covenant (Deut 10:5). The ark serving as God’s vessel to disperse his enemies does not occur as it does in Num 10:33-36. We can see this difference in viewpoints when we compare the deuteronomistic Deut 1:42-43 to pre-deuteronomistic Num 14:42-44. The absence of the ark is noteworthy in the deuteronomistic law of warfare (Deut 23:15; Weinfeld 1992: 176). As the ark is called God’s “ark of your strength,” and he is asked to rise up with it, it seems we have a non-deuteronomistic conception of the ark in our psalm. Early in its history, the ark was associated with the presence of Yahweh: wherever his ark was present, Yahweh was though to be present (Seow 1992: 388; Ex 15:3). Psalm 78:61 calls the ark God’s “strength.” Though it does not mention the ark explicitly, from the context it is clear that the ark is intended: “...he abandoned the dwelling place at Shiloh, the tent which he had pitched among men; and gave up his strength to captivity.” Perhaps this terminology comes from the association of the ark with God’s presence in going out to battle.

88 In deuteronomistic passages, the ark is even called “the Ark of the Covenant:” Deut 10:8; 31:9, 25, 26; Josh 3:3; 8:33; 1 Ki 3:15; 6:19.
9. kōhāneykā yilbēšū šedeq waḥāsīdeykā yērannēnū

Japhet suggests that ḫydyym in this verse is referring to the people at large, rather than to a specific group of people. Her basis for this is that the context of the psalm is not specifically cultic, but rather portrays the general well being (Japhet 603).

The 2 Chronicles passage reads the trisyllabic tsw 'h, “salvation,” rather than the bisyllabic ṣdq, “justice.” It perhaps makes this change on the basis of verse 16 of our Psalm. Dahood maintains that the current 9:9 syllable count sustains the Psalm text against the Chronicles account. The 9:9 syllable count also discounts the insertion of the absolute infinitive rnn before yērannēnū, as has been proposed on the basis of verse 16 (Dahood III 246). There is no real need for rnn to be inserted here, the text is fine as it stands. Throughout the psalms, rnn refers to praising and shouting for joy, as in Ps 5:12; 20:6; 33:1; 51:16; 63:8; 84:3; 95:1; 145:7, etc.

10. baʿābūr dāwīd ʿabdekā 'al tāšēb pēnēy mēṣīhekā

Though verse 9 may be from an older liturgy (see p. 71), there is a nice transition between that verse and verse 10. The root šwb appears in both: verse 9, “do not turn away the face of your anointed,” and verse 10, “he will not turn back from it” (Seow 1989: 177). The usual meaning of the idiom hšb pnym is “to refuse, to reject” (BDB 999).

This idiom is used 10 times in the Hebrew Bible: here and 2 Chron 6:42, 1 Ki 2:16, 17, 20, 2 Ki 18:24=Is 36:9, Dan 11:18, 19, and Ezek 14:6. In places it has a positive meaning, to “turn to” something (Dan 11:18, 19), but it is normally negative, “turn away from,” “repulse,” “refuse,” or “reject.” Here it is clearly negative. Most translations
translate either "do not turn away the face of your anointed" (ESV, NAS, NKJ), or "do not reject your anointed" (JPS, NJB, NIV, NAB). The general meaning of "refuse" or "reject" is to be preferred over "turn away the face of," which is another idiom, ḫāṣēb pānîm (Japhet 604). The root in the idiom here is šwb, which has the usual meaning of "turn back, return;" whereas the root in the second idiom is sbb, "to turn about" (BDB 685; 996). This is the final petition in this psalm. In v. 1, God is asked to "remember David," and in v. 8, he is asked to "arise." It is on the basis of the first petition, Yahweh remembering David, that this final request is made.

There is the question here of to whom the "anointed" refers. The Chronicles version reads mēšîḥēkā, plural. Both occurrences in our psalm, however, are singular (vss. 10 and 17). The singular ought to be preferred, as in v. 17, the "anointed one" is in synonymous parallelism with "David." Here in v. 10, this is probably the case as well. In the Chronicles passage, however, it seems Solomon is intended to be "the anointed one" (Japhet 604).

In the Chronicles passage, zkrh ḫṣdy dwyd ḥdk replaces bʾbw r dwd ḥdk. The clause in Chronicles has a parallel in Neh 13:14,89 possibly a basis for the change. In Chronicles, ḫṣdy seems to have the meaning of "good deeds," as in 2 Chron 32:32 and 35:26.90 The Chronicler seems to be paraphrasing the verse to refer to one of the major themes of our psalm, David’s efforts to bring the ark to its resting place (Japhet 605). The Chronicler goes back to verse 1 of Psalm 132, with the use of the verb zkr, and the motif of David’s efforts or good deeds.

89 Zkrh-l ḫṣdy wʾl-m ḫṣdy ṣr šty bbyt ḥy wbmsmryw.

90 "Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah [Josiah in 35:26] and his deeds of devotion..."
11. nišbā’ yhwh lēdāwīd ‘ēmet lo’ yāšūb mimmennāh mippērī biṯnēkā ‘āšīt lēkisse’ lāk

The change from the third person in the first half of this verse to the first person in the second half of the verse seems to introduce a quote. There is no introduction to this quote; all translations merely put in quotations the portion in the first person, putting the words directly in the mouth of God.

The RSV joins ‘ēmet to the first colon: “The Lord swore to David a sure oath.” This would split the verse as: nšb ‘-yhwh ldwd ‘mt / l’-yšwb mmnh, which makes the meter irregular. There are a several ways the translators understand this verse: “Jehovah hath sworn unto David in truth…” (ASV, cf. NKJ); “The Lord swore to David a sure oath…” (ESV, RSV, cf. JPS); “The Lord swore an oath to David, a pledge never to be broken…” (NAB); “The Lord has sworn to David, A truth from which he will not turn back…” (NAS); “The Lord swore an oath to David, a sure oath he will not revoke…” (NIV); “Yahweh has sworn to David, and will always remain true to his word…” (NJB); “Jehovah hath sworn truth to David…” (YLT). The phrase in this verse: “Surely he will not turn (l’ yšwb) from it,” is in response to the request in the preceding verse “do not reject (l’ tšb) the face of your anointed.”

The suffix on mimmennāh is feminine. Perhaps the antecedent for the suffix is the feminine šbw’h, “oath,” the implied object of the first colon nšb ‘, “has sworn” (Dahood III 246). However, this may simply be the preservation of an old spelling of mimmennū (Cross 1973: 232). The archaic third person masculine ending would have been a heh rather than a waw (Sáenz-Badillos 57).91

91 See discussion on p. 79.
The expression 'āšīṯ lēkissē' lāk may be archaic. In later Hebrew, the expression would have been 'l rather than l- (Seow 1989: 179). This idiom of enthronement is frequent only in early Hebrew poetry (Judg 5:17, Ps 29:10), and in archaizing contexts (Ps 9:5; Is 47:1; Cross 1973: 297). “To sit upon the throne,” means “to be king,” as in 1 Ki 24:4692 (Keel 264). The 11QPs variant for 'āšīṯ lē- perhaps is evidence that the earlier form has been changed to the newer form: 'šīṯ 'l kš' lkh (Sanders 1965: 27). The only other Biblical occurrence of sīṯ lē- occurs in the ancient Ps 21:4 (Dahood III 247).

This verse reads literally “from the fruit of your womb.” Crow finds it notable that clearly feminine language is being used here to describe a male’s production of offspring.93 For the woman, beṯ’en usually refers to the pregnant belly or womb (Hos 9:11; Jer 1:5; Ps 22:11; Job 3:11; 10:18,19; 31:15). However, the word is used in reference to a male’s offspring elsewhere in the Bible: Mic 6:7; Deut 7:13; 28:4; 28:9, 11, 18, 53; 30:9. In fact, out of 10 occurrences of the phrase mpry bṭn, only three places do not refer to a male’s offspring (Is 13:18, Gen 30:2, Ps 127:3). beṯ’en probably refers here to “body” and not “belly” (Freedman and Lundbom 95).

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92 “Solomon has even taken his seat on the throne of the kingdom.”

93 “The use of this clearly female language to describe a male’s production of offspring is striking” (Crow 101).
Yahweh’s oath in this verse corresponds nicely to David’s in verse 5. The irrevocable nature of this oath is attested elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. 2 Sam 23:1-7, “The Last Words of David,” reads “he has made an everlasting covenant with me,” and Ps 89:35-36, “Once I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me.”

12. ‘im yišmērū bāneykā bērītī wēʾédōī zō ’ālammēdēm gam bēnēhem ’ādē ’ad yēšēbū lēkissē’ lāk

The word ‘dwt in 2 Ki 11:12, “then he brought the king’s son out and put the crown on him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king and anointed him...” clearly refers to a physical object that could be handed to the king, and was most likely something written (von Rad 1966: 225). Weinfeld believes it is likely that ‘dwt refers to a covenant document (Weinfeld 1972: 86). Ps 2:7 and 89:39 also speak of giving such an ordinance to the king (Keel 259). The plural form, found here, occurs mostly in legal texts of Deuteronomy or in texts exhibiting deuteronomistic influences. The word is used 22 times in Psalm 119, a psalm praising God’s law. In general, the word refers to legal statutes, and when it is used with bryt, as here, it refers probably to “covenantal regulations” (Simian-Yofre 514). Modern translations translate the word as “testimony” (ASV, NAS, NKJ), “testimonies” (ESV, RSV, YLT), “laws” (NAB), “statutes” (NIV), “instructions” (NJB), and “decrees” (JPS).

94 See more on the Davidic Covenant on p. 75f.

95 Von Rad notes the correlation between the Israelite ‘dwt and the Egyptian nḥb.t, the royal protocol containing ancient titles and sovereign rights and duties conferred on Pharaoh by the god. In short, it contained the king’s authority to rule as the surrogate of the god (von Rad 1966:225).

96 Deut 4:45; 6:20; Neh 9:34; 2 Ki 2:3; 17:15; 23:3; Jer 44:23; 1 Chron 29:19; 2 Chron 34:31; Ps 25:10; 78:56; 93:5; 99:7. In the Deuteronomy texts, ‘dwt probably refers to the entire law (Simian-Yofre 514).
We again find the early form יֶשֶׁבּ וְלֵקִסְסֶה לָךְ. The change in 11QPs, יִלְו וּלְקִסְסֶה לָךְ is again perhaps an attempt to update the Hebrew. The copyist may have changed the older idiom יִשְׁבּ לָ- (Cross 1973: 247, Sanders 1965: 27). יִשְׁבּ לָ- seems to be an archaism. The idiom “sitting on a throne” is often used for kings and gods, meaning that they are reigning (Assyrian Dictionary I/2 (1968), 396f.). A similar usage of this idiom occurs in 1 Kings 1:13, 17, speaking of how Solomon will reign after David, “Surely your son Solomon shall be king after me and he shall sit on my throne.” The idea of “sitting on the throne” is not limited to the kings of Israel. Pharaoh is said to be one who sits upon the throne (חַשּׁב וְלָקִסְסֶה) in Exodus 11:5. A similar form appears in Ugaritic97 (Avishur 1994: 104).

13. כִּי בָּהֲר יְהוֹ ה בֶּשִׁי יָם וְלֶמָּסָּב לֹ

Here the point of view shifts again from the third to the first person. Cross notes that the root skb and its derivatives, especially sebet and mösäb, are used of the earthly shrine of Yahweh almost exclusively in archaic contexts.98 Mwšb is a term that does not appear in the deuteronomistic writings of God’s dwelling place (Seow 1989: 188). This theme of Yahweh dwelling in Zion again is a pre-deuteronomistic concept. This idea is reiterated throughout the psalm: in verse 5, a “dwelling place” (מִשְׁקַנְוֹת) is sought for Yahweh. In verse 7, the people are charged to go to the resting-place (מִשְׁקֶנְוֹתָיָיו) of Yahweh. The same concept is found in verse 8, which speaks about God’s resting place, and in this verse we are told that God chose Zion for his dwelling. The next verse (14)

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98 Ex 15:17; Ps 68:17; 1 Ki 8:12.
again tells that God will dwell in Zion, and that it will be his resting-place forever. This chapter continually stresses the idea that Zion and the Temple are the place of God’s dwelling.

Here, the election of Zion as the place of Yahweh is not something that is attributed to the will of the king, but rather to Yahweh’s own choice (Seebass 81). The idea of Yahweh choosing Zion is also found in Ps 78: 67-68, “He did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which he loved.” The same concept is found in Ps 68:16-18.

‘Iwwāh, from the root ‘wh, means “to desire.” It is synonymous with ḫmnd, “to desire, take pleasure in.”99 Here, the verb is parallel to bhr, “choose.”

14. zō’t mēnūḥāti ‘ādē ‘ad pōh ‘ēšēb kī ‘iwwitāh

Pōh, “here,” is a hapax legomenon in the Psalter (Dahood III 247). It connects this verse to verse 17, where šām, “there,” occurs (Dahood III 248). This verse in particular shows the unity occurring throughout this psalm. The phrase ‘ādē ‘ad, “forever,” is repeated from verse 12: “your sons forever (ādē ‘ad) will sit upon your throne.” The connection between verse 8 and this verse has already been noted. Here Yahweh says this will be his “resting place forever.” This is the response to the request for Yahweh to “arise” and go to his “resting place.” In verse 13 and this verse, Yahweh’s choice and desire of Zion is emphasized; the root ‘wh, “desire,” is used twice, in addition to bhr, “choose.”

99 Gen 3:6; also Ps 68:17 uses ḫmnd the same way that our verse uses bhr (Mayer 1977:135).
15. ṣēḏāh bārēk 'ābārēk 'ēhyōneyhā 'ašbīa' lāḥem

Ṣēḏāh is literally “its hunting.” The noun could also be translated “food supply” (Crow 101). It is normally translated as “provisions,” as in provisions for a journey. Most modern translations translate “provision,” or “provisions.” Exceptions are the NAB, which translates “meat,” NJB gives “produce,” and JPS gives “store of food.”

Bārēk 'ābārēk balances rannēn yērannēnū of the following verse, and the syntax of 'ašbī'a lāḥem is identical to the following verse’s 'albīš yeša‘ (Dahood III 247).

Dahood notes that this chiastic pattern of verses 15 and 16 suggests the consonantal ṣydḥ is the opposite of ḫsydyḥ, “her devoted ones.” Two ancient Greek manuscripts, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus read, “widow(s),” and the Vulgate reads “her widow.” “Hence, vocalize either ṣayyēdāh or participle ṣādēhā, literally ‘those who travel to her,’ from the root ŠW/yd which means ‘to hunt,’ but also, as is clear from Ugaritic usage, ‘to travel, range’” (Dahood III 247).

This verse indicates the importance of the Temple for the fertility of the land, a concept that is typical of Canaanite ideology, according to Antti Laato (Laato 1992:65). Laato’s thought is that this verse is connected with Canaanite culture. However, the securing of material life is common both to agricultural and nomadic cultures (Bentzen 42). The provision of food here perhaps alludes to the banquet in 2 Sam 6:19, where David distributes food to all the people of Israel upon the ark’s arrival to the tent shrine. The procession of the ark resulted in the deity pouring blessings upon his people (Seow

100 Gen 42:25; 45:21; Ex 12:39; Josh 1:1; 9:11.
The psalms portray several cases where Yahweh is a host who provides for his people. “He prepares the table for his guests, anoints their head with oils, and amply fills their cups”\(^{101}\) (Keel 195).

Throughout the Psalms, we find the motif of the ’bywn, “the poor,” seeking favor from God.\(^ {102}\) Ps 69:34 tells us that “the Lord hears the poor, does not spurn those in bondage,” and acts on behalf of the poor (Ps 12:4,6; Ps 140:13). Ps 72:4 talks about the king helping the poor as well.

16. wêkôhănêhâ ’albbîš yeša’ waḥäsîdeyhâ rannen yërannênû

The idea of God clothing someone with salvation is also found in Is 61:10, “My soul will exult in my God, for he has clothed me with garments of salvation.” Metaphors of clothing are used to characterize those who are righteous as well as unrighteous (Gamberoni 1995: 464; Ps 132:9, 16; Is 61:10). In Ez 7:27, judgement comes to the prince for his wickedness, and he will be “clothed with horror” (cf. Is 14:18). Hebrew idiom often pictures virtues and failures as clothing- cf. Pss 93:1; 104:1; 109:18, 29; Ezek 26:16; Job 8:22; 29:14 (Keet 95).

17. šām ’aṣmîaḥ qeren lêdâwîd ʿâraktî nēr limšîḥî

The metaphor of the second colon suggests that in the first colon, ’aṣmîaḥ bears the primary sense of this verb in Syriac, “to shine brightly” (Dahood III 248). In general, the term qeren indicates the horn of a beast (this is the primary meaning), a projection designed on the altar, a metaphor suggesting vanity, pride, force, dignity, and power.

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101 Ps 23:5; 36:8; 63:5; 65:4; 103:5.
102 Ps 40:18; 69:30; 70:6; 86:1; 109:22.
Rarely, if ever, does it mean light; in fact, only twice out of about 67 occurrences does
the noun *qeren* refer to something other than a horn.\(^{103}\) In Isaiah 5:1, it seems to refer to
a summit or a hill. In Hab 3:4, *qrn* refers to rays of light: “his radiance is like the
sunlight, he has rays (*qrnym*) flashing from his hand.” The symbol of the horn, which
appears about a dozen times in the psalms,\(^{104}\) primarily signifies strength in the face of, or
deliverance from, opposition. Here, the meaning is perhaps tied specifically to the
removal of prosperity and security for the Davidic king and for Jerusalem (Crow 14).
Another instance of a horn symbolizing the favor that Yahweh shows his anointed one
occurs in 1 Sam 2:10. The expression “I will make a horn to sprout” is found only
elsewhere in Ezek 29:21,\(^{105}\) which is a later addition to one of Ezekiel’s oracles against
Egypt (Eichrodt 1970: 407-412). There are two translations possible here: “There I will
cause a light to shine for David/ I have prepared a lamp for my anointed,” or “There I
will cause a horn to sprout for David/ I have prepared a lamp for my anointed.” The first
translation has the light // lamp parallelism in its favor. However, in consideration of the
textual evidence of the words used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the second translation
is the better translation.

There is no agreement concerning the meaning of the traditional rendition, “I will
make a horn sprout for David.” We do see a similar motif in Ps 75:11, 89:18, 92:11,
148:14, and 1 Sam 2:1. It may mean that Yahweh will restore the prosperity of the house
of David, or it could refer to the prophecies of Jer 23:5, Zech 6:12, and Ezek 29:21 where

\(^{103}\) The verb *qārān* in Ex 34:29,30,35 does seem to mean, “to send out rays,” however. From the context, it
cannot mean “horns” as it refers to Moses’ skin (Childs 609; Noth 1962: 267).

\(^{104}\) Ps 18:3; 22:22; 118:27; 75:5, 6, 11; 89:18, 25; 112:9; 92:11; 148:14.

\(^{105}\) “On that day I shall make a horn sprout for the house of Israel…”

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šmh, “sprout” is used as the title of the Messianic king (Dahood III 248). The root šmh is often used in contexts dealing with plant life in the Hebrew Bible. It therefore here specifies, “the unfolding of life, political success and…an image of hope” (Haney 149). ‘Araktī here is reminiscent of ‘rwkh in 2 Sam 23:5, “The Last Words of David” (Seow 1989: 200).

Several times in the Bible, ner, “lamp,” speaks of God’s preservation of the righteous, while the wicked will have their lamp put out. For instance, Prov 13:9 reads, “The light of the righteous rejoices but the lamp of the wicked goes out.” In 2 Sam 21:17, David is called “the lamp of Israel.” The word ner here is to be understood in the same way as in 1 Ki 15:4, “Yet for David’s sake the Lord, his God, gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, raising up his son after him and permitting Jerusalem to endure.” This verse is a nice parallel to our psalm; both have the theme of David’s good deeds, which result in Yahweh giving him an eternal dynasty in Jerusalem/Zion. The lamp is a symbol for David’s enduring dynasty. Cross would prefer to read here nir, “mandate,” parallel to qeren, “a living use of nir, in contrast to the frozen cliche of the deuteronomist, parallel to nir in Num 21:30” (Cross 1973: 97). With the above evidence, however, “lamp” is to

106 For instance Jer 23:5, “‘Behold the days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch (šemah); and he will reign as king and act wisely, and do justice and righteousness in the land.’”

107 Gen 2:5, 9; 41:6, 23; Ex 10:5; Ps 85:12; Ecc 2:6; Ezek 17:6; Is 44:4 for example.

108 See also Prov 20:20; 24:20; Job 18:5; Jer 21:17.

109 Also in 1 Ki 11:36, 2 Ki 8:19, and 2 Chron 21:17, cf. also 2 Sam 14:7.
be preferred here, due to its use in the other passages speaking of David’s enduring legacy. These symbols, “lamp” and “horn” are tied here to the Davidic kingship, and later became associated with Messianic hope.

18. 'oyēbāyw 'albbīš bōšet wē 'āļāw yāšēs nizrō

Again we see a change in viewpoint. This verse moves to the third person from the direct address of verse 17. The first half of this verse, “his enemies I will clothe in shame,” is in opposition to “her priests I will clothe in salvation” in verse 16.

It is not entirely clear who the “upon him” refers to in this verse. It could mean David himself, or it could be the heir to the Davidic throne. Due to the parallelism in the previous verse, “there I will cause a horn to sprout for David…” David himself is most likely meant. It probably evolved over time to include his descendants.

Yāšēs means usually “to blossom,” or “to flourish.” It also is translated at times “to sparkle, to shine.” This second translation may be due to the association of $yṣ with gold. This was either the name for the gold rosette on the diadem of the high priest, or it referred to the high priest’s “blossom shaped crown.”

The LXX seems to understand nizr in its more usual sense, “consecration,” and therefore interprets it as the “consecrated place” or “temple,” which properly belongs to God rather than to David, hence the first person possessive plural (Crow 101). The noun nēzer, meaning “consecration,” or “diadem,” occurs about 25 times. The diadem was a metal band with holes for laces, ornamented with decorations such as rosettes or precious stones (Zech 9:16; Mayer 1998: 310). It was a sign of royalty, given to the king by the

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110 Ex 28:36; 39:30; Lev 8:9; see Steins 367-368.
priest at his enthronement (2 Ki 11:12; 2 Chron 23:11). Ps 89:40 shows the symbolic importance of the crown, “You renounced the covenant with your servant, defiled his crown in the dust.” The king is crowned directly by God in our Psalm, as well as in Psalm 89.

The relation of “crown” and “testimony” (v. 12) occurring in this chapter also appears in 2 Ki 11:12 (Seow 1989: 184). In this chapter, the coronation of the king is described. Jehoiada the high priest “brought the king’s son out and put the crown (nzw) on him, and gave him the testimony (‘dwr); and they made him king and anointed him.” Von Rad identified the diadem and the protocol, or the crown and the testimony as the two most important items of coronation of a king (von Rad 1966:229).
3.3 Consecutive Translation

1. A Song of Ascents.
   Remember, Oh Yahweh, David and all his afflictions,
2. And how he swore to Yahweh,
   He vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob:
3. “I vow to not enter the tent of my house,
   Nor go up to the couch of my bed,
4. I vow to not give sleep to my eyes,
   To my pupils slumber,
5. Until I find a place for Yahweh,
   A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.”
6. Behold! We heard of it in Ephrathah,
   We found it in the fields of Ya’ar.
7. Let us come to his resting place,
   Let us bow down to the footstool of his feet.
8. Arise, Oh Yahweh! To your resting-place,
   You and the ark of your strength.
9. Let your priests be clothed in righteousness,
   And let your pious ones shout for joy.
10. For the sake of David your servant,
    Do not reject the face of your anointed.
11. Yahweh swore to David,
    Surely he will not turn from him:
    “From the fruit of your body
    I will place on your throne.
12. If your sons keep my covenant,
    And my regulations that I will teach them,
    Also your sons forever
    Will sit upon your throne.”
13. For Yahweh chose Zion,
    He desired it to be his dwelling:
14. “This is my resting-place forever.
    Here I will dwell, for I desire it.
15. Her provision I will greatly bless, her poor I will satisfy with bread,
16. And her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her righteous ones will indeed rejoice.
17. There I will cause a horn to sprout for David,
    I have prepared a lamp for my anointed.
18. His enemies I will clothe in shame,
    But upon him his diadem will flourish.”

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CHAPTER 4

SPECIAL ISSUES IN PSALM 132

The exegetical study brings to light several important elements in Psalm 132. This chapter is devoted to those which deserve further attention, as they are the main features and themes of the psalm, and are able to tell us the most about the psalm. The chapter will look at the psalm’s form, content, and arguments regarding its date.

4.1 Poetic Structure and Form

Our psalm has a very regular metrical pattern. Scanning the poem by its accentual units provides the most discernable regularity. The verses are divided into cola based on their balance or symmetry, then counted by the accentual units (see Cross and Freedman 1997: 5-18). The 18 verses have the following meter: 2:2; 3:3; 3:3; 3:2; 3:3; 2:2; 3:3; 2:2; 3:3; 2:3 2:2; 3:3 2:2; 3:3; 2:3; 3:3; 4:3; 3:3. The prevailing pattern is 3:3 (ten lines), and 2:2 (five lines). Three lines have a 2:3 pattern, and one has 4:3.112

111 Rather than by word count (3:3; 3:3; 4:5; 4:2; 4:3; 3:3; 2:3; 3:3; 3:2; 3:4; 3:4; 2:3; 4:3; 4:3; 4:4; 3:3; 3:3; 4:3; 3:3) or syllable count (7:5; 7:7; 7:8; 8:7; 8:8; 10:8; 8:9; 8:7; 7:8; 7:8; 7:7; 5:6; 9:8; 7:6; 8:6; 8:8; 7:8; 9:11; 8:7; 5:7).

112 Though there is no consensus on any of the methods of scanning biblical Hebrew poetry, the point here is to identify patterns in the psalm. Psalm 132 exhibits a high degree of regularity when scanned by accentual units, but this will not necessarily reappear in other Biblical Hebrew poems from other times and locales.
The parallelism is fairly regular throughout the psalm. The following shows verse by verse the structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Meter</th>
<th>Parallelism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>šīr ḥammaʿālōt</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zēkōr yhwh lēdāwīd</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'ēt kōl 'umītō</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>synthetic parallelism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2)  'ašer nîšāḇ layhwh

|       | nādar lāʾābr yāʾagōb | 3     | synonymous |

Though the parallelism is synonymous, the verbs are in a different form. nîšāḇ is a niphal verb, while nādar is in the qal form. The root šb⁺ is not found in the qal.

3)  | im ḥaḇ bēʾāneḥ béhōl | 3     | synonymous |

4)  | 'îm 'ēṭtēn sēnāḥ lēʾēnāḥ | 3     | synonymous |

|       | lēʾāb yāʾagōb lēʾēnāḥ | 2     | synonymous, chiasm |

5)  | 'aḏ ḫemšʿā magōm layhwh | 3     | synonymous |

|       | miskānōl lāʾābr yāʾagōb | 3     | synonymous |

6)  | hīnḥēḥ sēma lāmīhā bēʾerāmah | 2     | synonymous |

|       | mēṣāʾāmīh bēʾērē ṣōr | 2     | synonymous |

7)  | nāḇōʾāḥ lēʾmiskānōmah | 2     | synonymous |

|       | nīṣṭākōwēḥ lāḥadōm rāglāw | 3     | synonymous |

The first verb is qal, while the second is hiphil.

8)  | qūmāh yhwh limēnūḥātekā | 3     | 69 |
The verbs are in different forms, the first is qal, and the second is piel.

This verse has a rather strange structure. There is little parallelism to speak of. It seems that a word has fallen out in the third line.
Verses 15 and 16 form a chiasm.

17) ᵁᵃᵐ ᵃᵐⁱᵃ’h ᵃʳᵉⁿ ᵃˡᵉᵈᵃˡⁱᵃ  4
   ᵃʳᵃᵏᵗˡ ᵃˡ ᵃᵐᵉˢʰⁱⁿ  3  synonymous

The verbs are different tenses. ᵃᵐⁱᵃ’h is in the imperfect hiphil, “I will cause to sprout,”
while ᵃʳᵃᵏᵗˡ is a qal in the perfect form, “I have prepared.”

18) ᵇᵉᵛᵉʰᵃ/vnd ᵃˡ.biˢ ᵃᵇᵉˡ  3
    ᵇᵉʷᵃˡᵃ/vᵃˢⁱˢ ⁿⁱʳᵉ  3  antithetical

Structurally, the psalm has been seen in a number of different ways. On the most
basic level, it is divided into two portions, though it is not always agreed where this break
occurs. Gunkel divides the psalm into two portions: vv. 1-10 and 11-18. The first
portion is a petition; the second is the response to that petition (Gunkel 315, cf. Crow
104). Fretheim, on the basis of repeated words, makes the division between verses 9 and
10, rather than 10 and 11. This seems to be a better separation, as verses 1 and 10 make
similar petitions (Fretheim 291).

Scholars divide the strophes of the psalm in a variety of ways. Huwiler
understands the structure of the psalm based on the repeated formula occurring in vv. 1,
8, 11, and 13: inflected verb+Yahweh+ preposition noun. This pattern appears only in
these four lines. She then sees each strophe as containing a “movement from person to
place or vice versa” (Huwiler 201-202). Laato structures the psalm with four strophes: 1-
Allen divides the psalm into two poems consisting of smaller divisions. The first poem is made up of vv. 1; 2-5; 6-9; 10, with the second poem consisting of vv. 11-12; 13-16; and 17-18 (Allen 266). Philip Nel makes the division of vv. 1-5; 6-8; 9-10, corresponding to 11-12; 13-14; and 15-18 respectively (Nel 1993: 184). Each of these ways to see the psalm provides defensible rationales for their structural format. This further shows the unity within the psalm as a whole. There are many different large- and small-scale connections throughout the psalm.

Regardless of how the psalm is divided, it is obvious that it is a well-constructed psalm with important correlations and connections throughout. These unifying elements in the psalm have caused some to see the psalm as being an organic whole, perhaps with one exception. Related to the structure of the psalm is the argument of its unity.

### 4.2 Unity of the Psalm

Psalm 132, as we have seen, is an integrated whole and exhibits many unifying features. In spite of this, it is thought that Psalm 132 was perhaps not composed at a single time by a single author, but rather was written using portions from existing liturgies. There are a number of reasons for this perspective.

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113 Laato sees v. 10 as closely connected with the second strophe, parallel to the fourth strophe. He connects vv. 9 and 16 with 10 and 17, due to the “terminological parallels with ‘priests’, ‘clothing’, and faithful,” and the “terminological parallels with ‘David’ and ‘Messiah.’” Also, the parallelism between vv. 9-10 and 16-17 to him argue that 17-18 belong to the fourth strophe (Laato 1992: 50, ad. Fretheim 292).

114 Allen puts a break before vv. 14 and 17, due to the $ph$ and $šm$ that occur there. Vv. 17-18 answer the prayers in vv. 1 and 10 (Allen 266).

115 Each of these separate poems begin and end with a “Yahweh-David polarity.” The opening in v. 1 is answered by the action of Yahweh in v. 11. “Although two distinct units are demarcated in Psalm 132, the introduction of the second poem stresses the symbiosis of the two. It is therefore impossible to separate them altogether” (Nel 1988: 184).

116 See below.
Many scholars see the break in continuity in verse 6 as evidence that this may be an insert from another (older) text, perhaps used for an ark procession (Seow 1989: 202, Allen 256). The interjection hinneh indicates a shift in focus: we move from David’s oath in vv. 1-5 to a group of people speaking. Eissfeldt seems to be the first to suggest that vv. 6-9 of our psalm are extracted from an older poem (Eissfeldt 1959: 482). Several scholars follow him in this suggestion. These verses seem to be unrelated to what precedes and follows them. As mentioned earlier, vv. 8-10 are quoted in 2 Chron 6:41-42, further evidence to some that this portion is not original to our psalm, but was rather from another liturgy. This would explain why it is unclear what the “it” suffixes in verse six refer to. They may well be speaking of the ark from another liturgy. Even if this portion is an insertion from an older text, there is a nice connection between verses five and six with the root ms: in verse five, ’emš’ā, and in verse six, mēšā’nuhā. Verse 5 is also connected with vv. 7-8 with the word miškan and the root qwm. Seow notes “this may be correct inasmuch as vv. 3-5 and 6-9 may have come from different parts of an ancient ark liturgy. On the other hand, such repetitions and shifts in persons would not be out of character with liturgical material, so that vv. 3-5 and 6-9 may belong to a common liturgy after all” (Seow 1989: 165). He sees vv. 3-9 and vv. 11b-15 as the core of an ancient liturgy (Seow 1989: 202). If there is indeed older liturgical material incorporated into the psalm, it is probably vv. 6-9. The most logical breaks occur before and after these verses.

117 So Seybold 1982: 43; Houk 46, Hillers 1968: 51, Fretheim 299. Seybold, however, suggests that rather it is vv. 3-5 which represent the earlier cultic text that has been incorporated into the psalm (Seybold 1982: 43). Crow sees vv. 7-9 (not including v. 6, but including v. 7) as the earlier fragment (Crow 105), though it is not clear why he chooses to divide it in this way.
We have already noted the relationship between verses seven and eight:

\[ \text{nābō'āh lemiskēnotayw nistahāweh lahāḏom rāglāwyw} \]

\[ \text{qūmāh yhw̱h līmu̱kalōka attāh wā'ārōn yēzēka} \]

"His dwelling place" corresponds to "your resting place," and "his footstool" corresponds to "the ark of your strength."

"Your priests" and "your godly ones" (God's) from verse 9, become "her priests" and "her godly ones" (Zion's) in verse 16. The correlation between these two verses provides greater unity to the psalm as a whole:

(9) \[ \text{kōḥāneykā yilbēšū ṣedeq waḥāsīdeykā yērannēnū} \]

(16) \[ \text{wēkōhānēhā 'albīš yeša' waḥāsīdēhā rannēn yērannēnū} \]

Verse 16 seems to be a response to the request in verse 9.

There are a number of repeated words throughout that also serve to unify the psalm as a whole. For instance, 'īm appears at the beginning of the lines in vv. 3 (twice), 4, and 12, and 'ādē 'ad appears in verses 12 and 14. Other words include mēnūḥāh (vv. 8 and 14), and miškēnōt (vv. 5 and 7). Pōh (v. 14) contrasts well with šām in verse 17.

Regardless of whether or not Psalm 132 was an original poem or made up of older parts, the author has produced a very artistically unified final result.
There are strong parallels between our psalm and 2 Samuel 6-7. 2 Samuel 6 is a narrative account of David’s transfer of the ark to Jerusalem, and 2 Samuel 7 contains Nathan’s prophecy about the building of the Temple and God’s covenant with David. It is important to note some of the major correlations and viewpoints between these chapters and Psalm 132.118

2 Samuel 6 speaks of David and 30,000 “chosen men of Israel” going to Baale-judah (Kiriath-jeirim) to bring the ark to Jerusalem. To some, there “can be little doubt that the events in 2 Samuel 6 are referred to in Ps 132:6,” due to the (presumed) mention of Ephrathah and Kiriath Jearim in the psalm (McCarter 176, cf. Kraus 1989: 475). Indeed, Psalm 132 seems to fit very well into the account given in 2 Samuel 6. Besides the major connection of the ark moving to Jerusalem from Kiriath-Jearim, smaller correlations such as the blessing of food (Ps 132:15; 2 Sam 6:18-19) have been noted (Porter 168; Seow 1989: 202). The relationship between 2 Samuel 6 and Psalm 132 has been compared to the relationship between the “Song of Deborah” in Judges 5 and the narrative account in Judges 4 (Porter 167).

There are, however major differences that cause some to see the two traditions as “wholly independent” (Cross 1973: 97). Episodes mentioned in the 2 Samuel account, such as those dealing with Obed-edom or Michal, were not included in the psalm.119 There is also no mention of David’s vow in Samuel.120 Another objection is that Ps


119 According to McCarter this is because they were extraneous to the purpose of the psalmist (McCarter 178).
132:6 seems to imply that the ark has fallen from memory, as they “heard” of it and then “found” it, while in 2 Samuel 6 it was known exactly where the ark was (Cross 1973: 96). Though both deal with the same historical event, it is possible that Psalm 132 draws upon a separate ark tradition from that of 2 Samuel 6 (Laato 1992: 54).

2 Sam 7:12-15\(^{121}\) contains Nathan’s prophecy about the Davidic dynasty:

\[
\text{...I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with a rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but my lovingkindness shall not depart from him.}
\]

This promise appears in “altered form” in our psalm (Kraus 1989: 476): “The Lord has sworn to David, a truth from which he will not turn back; ‘Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne. If your sons will keep my covenant, and my testimony which I will teach them, their sons shall sit upon your throne forever” (132:11-12). Most see the theological contexts of the two passages as being essentially the same, in that they both exemplify the hieros logos of the ark sanctuary in Jerusalem. There are shared themes in the two passages, such as the idea of rest: David does not rest (vv. 3-4) until Yahweh has his rest (v. 14) in the psalm, and in 2 Samuel 7, David has rest from all his enemies (Fretheim 295).

The use of \textit{māqōm} in 2 Samuel and Psalm 132 is a noteworthy connection between the two passages. In 2 Sam 7:10, Yahweh appoints David ruler over his

\(^{120}\) McCarter believes that perhaps the vow did appear preceding 2 Sam 6 in its original context, but was not included later. To him, the vow belongs early, as the “place” in Psalm 132 is clearly Jerusalem (McCarter 178). He does not feel it necessary to assume that the two versions are substantially different; perhaps Psalm 132 is “based on material more nearly complete from the story of the transfer of the ark in the very early version from which 2 Samuel was drawn” (McCarter 178). To McCarter, 2 Samuel 6 likely belonged to a larger collection or composition, which the author of our psalm was familiar with. This would have mentioned David’s vow, described the capture of Jerusalem, and reported the discovery of the ark at Kiriaith Jearim (McCarter 184; cf. Cross 1973: 255).

\(^{121}\) 2 Samuel 7 has been generally regarded as a late insertion into Samuel (see discussion in McCarter 210).
people, and promises to “appoint a place (māqōm) for my people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again.” We find the opposite in Ps 132:5: David promises to find a place (māqōm) for Yahweh, a “resting place” for the Mighty One of Jacob.

However, the basic differences in the two texts have led some to the conclusion that 2 Samuel 7 cannot possibly be the conceptual framework of Psalm 132 (Nel 1988:186). 2 Samuel is not concerned with the foundation of the cult in Zion, as the psalm is, but rather concentrates on the building of the Temple. From the structure of Psalm 132, it seems the election of the Davidic dynasty is a direct result of David’s establishment of the cult in Zion. This is in contradiction to the deuteronomistic theology in 2 Samuel 7, where it is emphasized that Yahweh was the sole initiator (Nel 1988: 187). It has often been suggested that Psalm 132 exhibits a later development of the basic promise of Nathan in 2 Samuel 7, though many argue Psalm 132 is the older text, and the Samuel passage is based on that (Nel 1988: 187). Complicating factors are the common understanding that 2 Samuel 6 and 2 Samuel 7 are heterogeneous chapters, and that the unity of 2 Samuel 7 is debated (see discussion in McCarter 182-184; 210ff.). It is impossible to say whether Psalm 132 preceded 2 Samuel 6 and 7 or vice versa, or whether all are drawing from another independent tradition.

122 According to Nel, it can be concluded that, “the contents of the Psalm are, therefore reminiscent of a theology distinct from and older than that of 2 Samuel 7. The theology of Psalm 132 is therefore also not typically deuteronomistic” (Nel 1988: 187). He believes that 2 Samuel 7 is a derivative of Psalm 132.

123 “This psalm presupposes the existence of the prophecy of Nathan. The mention of David’s dynasty, his ‘sons’, in v. 11-12 reflects the dynastic revision of the earlier text” (Mettinger 1976:257; cf. Briggs 468).
4.4 The Davidic Covenant

It is unclear in our psalm what bērīṯ, “my covenant” and ‘ēdōṯ, “my testimony” refer to in v. 12. Could bērīṯ be speaking of the Davidic covenant? Or perhaps it refers to the Sinaitic covenant, or maybe neither of these. The “Davidic covenant,” found in 2 Sam 7:8-16 as well as Psalm 89, refers to Yahweh’s promise to David to preserve his dynasty forever (Guinan 69). Some see Psalm 132 as the “earliest witness to the Davidic covenant” (Cross 1973: 232). The fact that Yahweh’s vow is called ‘mt in our psalm (v. 11) echoes David’s words in response to Nathan’s oracle in 2 Sam 7:28: “You are God, and you words are truth (‘mt), and you have promised this good thing to Your servant” (Seow 1989: 179). Indeed, we have already seen the correlation between our psalm and 2 Samuel 7.

If this is the same Davidic covenant in our psalm, it is unusual in the way that it speaks of this covenant. The difficulty is that the Davidic covenant in both 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89 is unconditional, while the covenant appearing in v. 12 of our psalm is conditional, “If your sons will keep my covenant.” In 1 Kgs 2:2-4; 6:12-13; 8:25; 9:4-5, the promise for the Davidic dynasty is formulated conditionally as well. The words used in these verses are mšwḥ, ḫūq, mšpt, and ‘dwt. The word bryt, “covenant,” is not used in the above Kings passages.

124 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 89:32 speak about the possibility for punishment for sins, but the promise remains unconditional and eternal.

125 In addition to the condition in Psalm 132, another difference is that there is no mention of the divine sonship of the king, as in 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 89:26 (Mettenger 1976: 257).

126 For further cautions in interpreting Psalm 132 in light of these deuteronomistic passages in Kings see Laato 1992.
Another objection that is raised to the Davidic covenant being seen in Psalm 132 is that it was personal to David alone, as a result of Yahweh’s choice in 2 Samuel and Psalm 89 (Kruse 285). Here, the covenant is contingent upon the obedience of David’s descendants.

Cross says that “such a conception of Davidic covenant is precisely in agreement with the concept of kingship in the era of Saul and in the later Northern Kingdom. It conforms with the status of David’s kingship at the beginning of his reign. At the same time, it stands in sharp contrast to the standard Judean ideology of kingship promised the Davidic house” (Cross 1973: 233).

The Sinaitic, or Mosaic, covenant refers to the covenant Yahweh made with the Hebrews at Sinai after they fled Egypt. The basic description of the covenant is found in Exodus 19-24, and includes the “Covenant Code” of law (Guinan 906). The bryt here could refer to this Sinaitic covenant (so Kruse 286, Haney 145. The conditionality here would be a “vaticinium ex eventu and presupposes bitter experiences with the Davidic monarchy” (Kruse 286). The interpretation would thus be that David’s descendants must keep the Sinaitic covenant and the testimonies that Yahweh will teach them in order to continue to reign.

The Sinaitic covenant has typically been seen as conditional, and the Davidic covenant as unconditional. But these are perhaps not mutually exclusive. The Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89 seem to presuppose an obligation to the Sinaitic Covenant (see Levenson 210-215).
Due to the close correlation of our psalm with the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7, it cannot be said that the two are not related. Psalm 132, rather reveals "new formulations" of the Davidic covenant (Kraus 1989: 208). Kraus explains the basic promise of Nathan would have been re-told to David's descendants by cultic prophets, and that these "contemporizations easily explain the variety of the statements in 2 Samuel 7, Psalm 89, and Psalm 132" (Kraus 1989: 477). Perhaps there was a development of the ideas of the covenant. Fretheim suggests that in the first part of the period of the monarchy, the fulfillment of the promises were contingent upon the obedience to the law. Then as the monarchy progressed, the Davidic covenant overshadowed the Sinaitic covenant, and the promises were no longer seen as being conditional (Fretheim 298; cf. Cross 1979: 260-264). It seems best to interpret the covenant in our psalm as a variation of the Davidic covenant given through Nathan. H. Ringgren states that "this shows that the Israelite royal ideology was not completely homogeneous: some placed more emphasis on the king's responsibility, others on Yahweh's irrevocable promise" (Ringgren 1988: 230).

4.5 Dating Psalm 132

Dating psalms according to their vocabulary, theology, and themes is problematic: "On the one hand, a text that contains ancient motifs and themes may be a late text showing the conservatism which is sometimes demonstrable in transmission of literary texts. On the other hand, a text which can be dated to a late period may represent a reworking of an ancient text" (Laato 1999:28). There are conflicting views concerning
the dating of Psalm 132. Some say it is very old and reflects ancient ideology.\textsuperscript{127} Others say that the date is rather late, some time in the post-exilic,\textsuperscript{128} or even into the Greek period.\textsuperscript{129} Following is a summary of the elements that may provide a clue to the psalm’s date.

The orthography of “David” in this psalm is the older, defective spelling. After the sixth century BCE, the name would have been written dwyd rather than the dwd found here. Hebrew was written in a purely consonantal script before the ninth century BCE, as shown by the Hebrew epigraphic evidence. Around the ninth century, final\textit{ matres lectionis} were introduced and began to be marked regularly. It was not until the sixth century BCE that medial\textit{ matres lectionis} begin to appear.\textsuperscript{130} The spelling dwd for David occurs throughout the psalm: in vv. 1, 10, 11, and 17. This would seem to suggest a pre-sixth century (pre-exilic) date for our psalm. However, the book of Psalms as a whole seems to prefer the older spelling,\textsuperscript{131} so this may not provide much evidence for us. The redactor(s) of the Psalms could have standardized the spelling of the name David. In verse 3, ‘ābō’, is spelled defectively, reflecting the pre-sixth century spelling.

Possible archaic (tenth to sixth century BCE) elements in the psalm are the pronoun zō in v. 12, and the form šēnat, “sleep,” in v. 4 (Dahood \textit{III} 243). \textit{Mnh} in verse 11 is possibly the archaic spelling of \textit{mimmennū}. Though the Masoretic text vocalizes


\textsuperscript{128} Kruse 285; Mettinger 1976: 256-57, 277-278; Patton 647ff.; Goulder 90-100.

\textsuperscript{129} Briggs 468-469.

\textsuperscript{130} Various medial\textit{ matres lectionis} begin to appear with the Lachish ostraca in the sixth century BCE (Sāenz-Badillos 66).

\textsuperscript{131} 88 of 89 occurrences of “David” in the Psalms are defectively spelled (Anderson and Forbes 4).
mimmennāh, the vocalization is not always trustworthy. Though generally reliable, there was a great deal of time between the canonization of the biblical texts and their pointing by the Masoretes, which allowed time for the original vocalization to have been altered (Sáenz-Badillos 78). Verses 10 and 11 read, according to the Masoretic vocalization, “for the sake of David your servant, do not reject the face of your anointed. Yahweh swore to David, surely he will not turn from it [feminine].” The object of swearing, šbw 'h, “an oath,” is feminine, but this word does not appear in the verse. It seems more likely that the original meaning of the verse was, “Yahweh swore to David, surely he will not turn from him [David].” This is in response to verse 10, “for the sake of David your servant, do not reject the face of your anointed.” In pre-sixth century BCE orthography, mimmennū would have been spelled mnnh (rather than mnnw), which is how the word would appear in an unvocalized text. As noted above (p. 54), the idiom yṣb l- (vv. 11, 12) is used in earlier sources; the later form is yṣb 'l (Cross 1973: 97).

Verse 8 contains the only explicit reference to the ark in the psalms. For many, the mention of the ark here is proof that this psalm is pre-exilic. But can we be certain that the ark is indeed existent at the time of this psalm? God is asked to come with the ark. Kruse believes the congregation is asking for the ark because it is not there (291). This is the only alternative to the suggestion that this verse refers to a pre-exilic ritual,

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132 See discussion in v. 6 on p. 41.
133 H at the end of a word could stand for either e, a, or o (Sáenz-Badillos 66).
134 Though other allusions do seem to occur.
since it is assumed the ark was not in use during the Second Temple. The mention of both the ark and the priests in this psalm seems to presuppose the existence of a temple in Jerusalem.

There are several elements in this psalm pointing to a later date as well. H. Kruse argues for a later date for the psalm. His evidence lies in vocabulary and concepts that he identifies as post-exilic. He notes that words such as God’s “resting place” tend to be used later in the post-exilic period (Kruse 287). He believes “the ark is prayerfully mentioned because it is not there, so are the solemn garments of the priests and the joyful shouts of the pious, because in fact the priests are squalid and the pious are in tears” (Kruse 292). To him the descriptions given in our psalm are reminiscent of the conditions after the exile as described in the book of Nehemiah (Kruse 288, cf. Goulder 20-33). He dates the psalm to the end of the sixth century BCE, when the Temple would have been rebuilt, and the ark would have been missing permanently (Kruse 295).

The presence of the direct object marker 'āt in verse 1 seems to point to a later date for this psalm, or at least this particular verse, as the direct object marker is not used in archaic poetry, though we do find it used in pre-exilic prose (Sáenz-Badillos 71, Cross 83).

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135 The Bible does not mention when and how the ark was lost. Shishak perhaps took it along with the other treasures of the Temple (1 Ki 14:25-28; 2 Chron 12:1-12). Other evidence points to the exilic period for its disappearance (2 Macc 2:4-8; 2 Esdr 10:20-23). It appears that the ark was not rebuilt for the Second Temple. Jeremiah declares that it was not to be made again: “And it shall be in those days when you are multiplied and increased in the land,” declares the LORD, “they shall say no more, ‘the ark of the covenant of the LORD.’ And it shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they miss it, nor shall it be made again” (Jer 3:16). Ezekiel does not mention the ark in his blueprint for the new Temple in Ezekiel 40-48. According to Josephus, in 64 BCE, when Pompeii entered the Temple, the Romans saw the sacred objects, which Josephus lists without mentioning the ark (Ant 14.71-72; Seow 1992: 390-391).

136 Ps 95:11 (misidentified by Kruse as Ps 90:11); Is 11:10; 66:1; 1 Chr 28:2; Numbers 10:33. Psalm 95 is of uncertain date. It could be pre-exilic (Kraus 1989:246), and therefore cannot be used to support his conclusion.
and Freedman xi, 19). We also find 'ēt used as early as the 9th century BCE in Moabite on the Mesha Stela. Though the object marker is rarely used in archaic poetry, when it does, it may have a “special demonstrative force” (Sáenz-Badillos 58, Cross and Freedman 19). Also, “not impossibly, we may restore the waw-conjunctive with the LXX and assume defective orthography for 'wt, ‘sign,’ which would have easily led to the misinterpretation of the word as the mark of the direct object” (Seow 1989: 155). The argument is that 'wt would have appeared in pre-sixth century BCE orthography as 't, and would have been indistinguishable from the nota accusativi. Presumably the translation would then be, “Yahweh, remember for David, a sign of all his afflictions.” Though this is speculative, the presence of the 't here is not sufficient evidence to be confident in any way of a late date for the psalm.

The 'āšer in verse 2 makes an archaic date for the verse unlikely. In archaic poetry, the 'āšer is almost never present.137 Though the 't in the first verse was not enough evidence to give us a late date for these verses, that feature combined with the presence of 'Sr is difficult to fit into an archaic context.

Also relevant when discussing the date of Psalm 132 is the presence or absence of deuteronomistic ideas.138 Though it is precarious to assign dates to different concepts and theologies, it is worth noting the major issues in our psalm. As mentioned previously (p. 40), the idea of God dwelling in an earthly location is generally perceived as a pre-deuteronomistic concept. The deuteronomistic “Name Theology” replaces the idea of the

137 “The relative 'āšer [in archaic Biblical poetry] is nearly always replaced by an asyndetic clause, or on occasions, by such particles as ʿ, zh or zw, or h- followed by a participle” (Saenz-Badillos 59).

138 The deuteronomistic history is usually dated to 7th-6th century BCE, although the question of the date as well as authorship of the deuteronomistic history is greatly debated (McKenzie 162).
Temple as Yahweh’s abode. Some see the promise of Yahweh to David in the psalm (see *The Davidic Covenant*) as being deuteronomistic in formulation (Mettinger 1976: 256), but this is by no means certain.\(^{139}\) We have already looked at some of the complications that result from seeing deuteronomistic formulations in our psalm regarding Yahweh’s covenant with David.

It is therefore difficult to be very precise when dating this psalm. It is a psalm that “does not demand any date in Jerusalem’s cultic calendar; its prayer need not be so tied, and its reassurance would be welcome at any time” (Allen 267). There does seem to be more evidence for an early date. Some scholars have suggested that there was a pre-exilic original version of Psalm 132 that was “substantially the same” as its present form, which was reworked at a later time. Patton asks the question whether we have a pre-exilic psalm that continued in use throughout Israel’s history due to its adaptability, or if we have a post-exilic psalm that uses motifs from Israel’s past (Patton 653). Most scholars do believe that Psalm 132 in its present form quotes older liturgical material.\(^{140}\) If this is the case, the redactor did a very impressive job of producing a unified final poem (see *Unity of the Psalm*). The Chronicler’s quotation of Psalm 132\(^{141}\) provides a *terminus ante quem* for the psalm.

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\(^{139}\) See discussion in Laato 1992.

\(^{140}\) Cross 97; Laato 1999:33; Nel 1988: 189; Seow 1989: 202; Weiser 779. There is “nothing that prevents us from assuming the basic elements of the form in which it has been handed down date from the era of Solomon. It is possible that details of its present wording may have suffered modifications in the course of history” (Weiser 779).

\(^{141}\) See discussion of this issue on p. 47f.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The first part of this paper provided a history of interpretation of Psalm 132. Before the nineteenth century, the focus was on the entire collection of the Songs of Ascents. This group of songs was addressed in both early Christian and Jewish literature and biblical commentaries. Interpretation of the collection has always focused on their perplexing title, šīr hammaʿālōt. Generally, explanations fall into one of the categories of allegorical, historicizing, formal, or cultic. In modern scholarship, the identification of the psalms as pilgrimage songs, perhaps for an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem, has been the most accepted. Following Mowinckel’s thesis that Psalm 132 was a key psalm for the reconstruction of an annual New Year festival in ancient Israel, it became especially popular to discuss Psalm 132 on its own terms. Less notice has been taken of the function of Psalm 132 as a part of the šīr hammaʿālōt, but it suffices to say that with the collection’s concern with Zion, Psalm 132 is an obvious choice for inclusion.

In the next part of the paper, I provided my own study of the psalm, using modern scholarship, the context of the Hebrew scriptures, as well as texts from the ancient near east in order to illuminate words and phrases that were unclear. Chapter 3 dealt with the major issues of the psalm: its poetry and form, unity, its relation to 2 Samuel, the Davidic
Covenant, and its date of composition. Dating Psalm 132 is difficult, as it contains possible archaic (tenth to sixth century BCE) elements, as well as later, perhaps post-exilic elements. One explanation for this is that Psalm 132 could contain portions of earlier liturgies. We saw that the meter of the psalm is prevailing:ly 3:3 when counted by accentual units, and the psalm demonstrates fairly consistent synonymous parallelism. Though Psalm 132 may consist of older liturgies reworked into the present state of the psalm, it is clear that the redactor was a very skilled poet; the psalm contains a high number of elements that serve to integrate the psalm as a whole.

Most important in Psalm 132 is the combination of themes that it presents. Psalm 132 contains the major themes found in 2 Samuel 6-7: the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem and the election of the Davidic dynasty in the form of the “Davidic Covenant.” While the covenant described in our psalm is conditional, as opposed to the unconditional covenant in 2 Samuel 7, it seems that we are looking at a variation of this same covenant. Our psalm contains a number of close connections with 2 Samuel 6 and 7, but it is would be speculative to say whether Psalm 132 is earlier than the Samuel passages or vice versa, or whether all are drawing from an independent tradition.

Psalm 132 links together the establishment of Zion as Yahweh’s dwelling-place with the establishment of the Davidic dynasty. The psalmist wants to show beyond a shadow of a doubt that Yahweh dwells in Zion his chosen place, and that it is David’s efforts (not Solomon’s!) that have provided this resting place for Yahweh. As long as the Davidic line follows Yahweh’s commandments, the dynasty will be perpetuated and all who dwell in Zion will be blessed.
APPENDIX

Transliteration of the Text

(1) śīr hamma‘ālōt zēkōr yhwh lēdāwīd ‘ēt kol ‘unnōtō
(2) ’ašer nišā‘ layhwh nādar la‘ābir ya‘aqōb
(3) ’īm ’ābō‘ bē‘ōhel bētī ’īm ‘e‘ēleh ‘al ‘ereš yēsū‘āy
(4) ’īm ‘ettēn sēnat lē‘ēnāy lē‘ap‘appay tēnūmāh
(5) ‘ad ‘emš‘ā māqōm layhwh miškānōt la‘ābir ya‘aqōb
(6) hinneh šēma‘ānūhā bē‘eprātāh mēšā‘nūhā bišdē yā‘ar
(7) nābō‘āh lēmiškēnōtāyw nišṭṭaḥāweh lahādōm raglāyw
(8) qūmāh yhwh limnūḥātekā attāh wa‘ārōn ‘uzzekā
(9) kōhāneykā yilbēšū śedeq waḥāsidēykā yērannēnū
(10) ba‘ābūr dāwīd ‘abdekā ‘al tāšēb pēnēy mēšīhekā
(11) nišbā‘ yhwh lēdāwīd ‘ēmet lo‘yāšūb mimmēnāh mippērī biṯnēkā ‘āšū lēkissē‘ lāk
(12) ‘īm yišmērū bāneykā bērūtī wē‘ēdōtī zō ‘ālammēdem gam bēnēhem ‘ādē ‘ad yēšēbū lēkissē‘ lāk
(13) kī bāḥar yhwh bēṣiyōn ‘iwwāh lēmōṣāb lō
(14) zō‘t mēnūḥāi ‘ādē ‘ad pōh ‘ēsēb kī ‘iwwitiāh
(15) šēdāh bārēk ‘ābārēk ‘eb[yōneyhā ‘ašbīa‘ lāḥem
(16) wēkōhānēhā ‘albbīs yeṣa‘ waḥāsidēyhā rannēn yērannēnū
(17) šām ‘aṣmīaḥ qeren lēdāwīd ‘ārakī nēr līmēliḥī
(18) ‘oyēbāyw ‘albbīs bōset wē‘ālāw yāṣīš nizrō
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