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Psalms Through the Centuries
A Reception History Commentary on Psalms 1–72

Psalms Through the Centuries

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Psalms Through the Centuries:
Volume Two

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For Abbie and Esther
with thanks for all your encouragement and support

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Musical score (p. 160)

David Mitchell: An interpretation of the singing of Psalm 24 in its earliest setting. Reproduced with the kind permission of David Mitchell, Director of Music in Holy Trinity Pro-Cathedral, Brussels; website: <https://sites.google.com/site/brightmorningstar624/home>.

Preface

First in the long list of the many people who have helped in this lengthy and complex project must come the Series Editors, John Sawyer and David Gunn. This commentary had several early blips—for example, whether, after *Psalms through the Centuries Volume One* (2008) there should be just one further volume or two—and it was the editors' unfailing support which made a three-volume work possible. Both read the manuscript with extraordinary care, giving particular attention to the problem of the transliterations of the Hebrew and Greek. I am particularly grateful to John Sawyer for his help with rabbinic sources and to David Gunn for further suggestions about metrical psalmody and early poetic imitations of psalms. The book would be very different without their input; any remaining errors are mine.

Next, I must thank Rebecca Harkin, who was Publisher for Religion when I wrote Volume One and later was Publisher for Humanities, and so the Wiley-Blackwell Commentaries have consistently been her remit. Working originally with Blackwell and now, some eight years later, with Wiley-Blackwell has had its challenges, but Rebecca has been a consistent source of wisdom and good humour. Manish Luthra and Vimali Joseph have each been a mainstay in seeing the book through production, especially over the visual impact of the Plates and Figures. Carolyn Holleyman has done superb work, under pressure of very tight deadlines, with the copy-editing.

My sabbatical leave and research assistance for Volume Two has been in part financed by the University of Oxford and Worcester College. I want to thank the Faculty of Theology and Religion for allowing me two terms' research leave, especially Alison Broadby for her administrative support. I am equally grateful to the John Fell Fund of the University of Oxford for resourcing substitute teaching and research assistance, and at Worcester College to the Bartlett Sisters' Theology Fund, supported mainly by alumni. Particular thanks are due at Worcester to Rhian Perridge, Phillipa Tarver, Scott Scullion, Trish Pease, Carmy Strzelecki, Elizabeth Smith and Emma Standhaft for their various forms of administrative support. My third source of funding was The St Luke's Foundation, and I thank David Benzie and the trustees for their most generous support towards the production of the images.

Any work on reception history requires inter-disciplinary collaboration. I am particularly indebted to three close colleagues in Oxford. Peter Groves read the manuscript giving attention to my use of the church fathers and modern theologians, as well as my citations of English poets. Matthew Cheung-Salisbury read the commentary with his expert eye for Christian liturgy and music. John Barton, who has supported my work for more years than I can remember, looked at the text from the viewpoint of a biblical scholar. Any existing errors are my responsibility alone.

Two Oxford projects have encouraged my work—The Centre for Reception History of the Bible, directed by Chris Joynes, and The Oxford Research Centre for the Humanities (TORCH) which sponsors the Oxford Psalms Network. I am particularly grateful to my fellow-coordinators, Francis Leneghan and Helen Appleton, for new insights into the reception of the psalms in medieval English literature.

Two other communities, through their music, have enabled me to appreciate the psalms in a different context: I am grateful for the superb singing of the choir of Worcester College Oxford, and for the continuous chanting of psalmody by the new choir of St. Barnabas Church, Oxford.

I have been working on this commentary, amidst other publications, since 2008. Natasha O'Hear was my first research assistant, and after two years'

sterling service she handed on to Holly Morse, who worked with me until 2016. I owe a great debt to Holly, for she was in large measure responsible for assembling, then processing the data for me to use within the commentary: her organisational skills and artistic expertise were invaluable. John Ritzema and Danny Crowther have worked with me for the last year, contributing to the final stages of the publication. All have been indispensable in helping to speed up the process of preparing a somewhat challenging manuscript.

Collaboration outside Oxford has involved many colleagues. They include Eberhard Bons (Stuttgart), for invaluable resources on the *Septuagint* version of the Psalms; Laurence Clémencau (Villefontaine), for online resources for patristic commentaries and illuminated manuscripts; †Peter Flint (Vancouver), for resources on the Psalms scrolls at Qumran; †Erich Zenger (Münster), †Frank-Lothar Hossfeld (Bonn), Bernd Janowski (Tübingen), Friedhelm Hartenstein (München), Hermann Spieckermann (Göttingen), Beat Weber (Liestal), Johannes Bremer (Bochum), Till Steiner (Jerusalem), Stefan Attard (Malta), Giovanni Barbiero (Rome), Bill Bellinger and Dennis Tucker (Baylor), William Brown (Columbia), and Dirk Human, Alphonso Groenewald, and Philip Botha (Pretoria) for their various contributions on the literary and theological shaping of the Psalter which marks the first vital stage of the reception history process. Robert Atwell, Bishop of Exeter, has been a constant source of encouragement in matters liturgical, as also was †Geoffrey Rowell (Chichester). Jonathan Magonet (Leo Baeck College, London) has been most generous in offering his own resources on Jewish liturgy. Those who have advised on and contributed images of the psalms include Elizabeth Solopova (Oxford), especially on Latin illuminated Psalters; Frans Sellies (Utrecht), for extra insights into the *Utrecht Psalter*; Ed van der Vlist (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague) for many online resources of fourteenth and fifteenth century Psalters; Mordechai Balouka (Jerusalem), for information and images of the Museum of Psalms; Michael Falter (London), for regular access to facsimiles of illuminated Jewish Psalters and Prayer Books; Roger Wagner (Oxford), and Michael Jessing (Peebles), for freely allowing me to print their own individual images of psalms. Those who have helped me with their musical expertise in psalmody include Jonathan Arnold and Alexander Massey (Oxford), Howard Goodall (London), David Mitchell (Brussels), Siobhan Dowling-Long (Cork) and John Sawyer (Amble).

The Preface for Volume One concluded with thanking my immediate family, and it is appropriate that I end similarly here. My daughters have moved on, but I frequently visit The Hague, where Abbie, Omar and Sophia now live, and use it as a base for writing and research. Esther now works between the UK and Brazil: she too has shown an extraordinary belief in a project which has taken so long to materialise. Equally remarkable is the confidence of my husband

Dick, who has travelled with me, both literally and metaphorically, for many years in this project, accommodating my constant distractions. Since his retirement in 2011 he has used much of his time to support me in so many practical ways, as well as reading the first draft of the manuscript with a scrupulous eye to detail. I dedicated my last volume to him, 'my fiercest critic and closest friend'. It is appropriate that I dedicate this second volume to Abbie and Esther, in gratitude for their similar loving support: this project has been consuming, but their role has been to remind me that there are other important concerns even beyond the reception history of the Psalms.

Abbreviations

ACCS	<i>Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture</i>
ACTP	<i>Ambrose: Commentary on Twelve Psalms</i>
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
ALW	<i>Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft</i>
AnSac	<i>Analecta sacra et classica spicilegio solesmensi</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols 1953–)

EETS	Early English Texts Society
<i>Est Bib</i>	<i>Estudios bíblicos</i>
<i>Exp</i>	<i>Expositor</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FC	Fathers of the Church: A New Translation (Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C.; 45 volumes)
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>HBTh</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HSS	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Studies</i>
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KHAT	Konkordanz zum Hebräischen Alten Testaments
LCC	The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953–1966; 26 vols.)
<i>MusicLett</i>	<i>Music and Letters</i>
NPNF	A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Church (eds. P. Schaff et al., Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1886. 14 vols.)
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>NRSV</i>	<i>New Revised Standard Version</i>
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i> . The Old Testament Society of Southern Africa (OTSSA)
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca</i> . Ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1857–1886. 166 vols.
<i>PIBA</i>	<i>The Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina</i> . Ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1844–1864. 221 vols.
<i>POG</i>	<i>The Proof of the Gospel</i> . Eusebius. 2 vols. Trans. W.J. Ferrar. London: SPCK, 1920.

<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNT	Schriften des Neuen Testaments
<i>StPat</i>	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
<i>StTh</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>ThLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WGRW	<i>Writings from the Greco-Roman World</i> . Ed. R.F. Hock. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001
WSA	<i>Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the Twenty-First Century</i> . Ed. J.E. Rotelle. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1995–
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Introduction: How is a Reception History Commentary a Different Genre?

This book is not a typical commentary. First, it does not include the usual historical–critical explanation of the text. So it does not focus primarily on how the text might have been assembled, neither does it provide an exegesis of every difficult word, verse by verse, in a particular psalm. Nor does it seek to give answers about the date, or provenance, or the original purpose of a single psalm. There is some emphasis on all these issues, but only when they are relevant to the reception history of a particular psalm in its earliest stages, Jewish or Christian. Furthermore, this is not a classical ‘devotional’ commentary. It does not focus exclusively on the spiritual value of the psalms as prayers of faithful Jews and Christians. There is a good deal of interest in such matters, from the point of view of both Jewish and Christian reception, but there is more to the commentary than this perspective alone. Thirdly, this is not a typical literary–theological commentary. The interest is only in part in the analysis of the *words* of the text; it is also about a psalm’s later performance through liturgy, music and art. So although there are discussions of, for example, the possible strophes of each psalm, and of the way the language of any one psalm is echoed in psalms before and after it, this serves only as a starting point for its developing reception history. The literary interests are actually found more in a psalm’s reception in later literature (especially after the early Middle Ages, and in English).

So what then is this commentary about? It starts where most commentaries end: it examines interpretations of the psalms *after* their composition up to the

present day, and examines their later reception in both Jewish and Christian tradition. It is always in search of a different perspective, another insight, something hidden and then uncovered by the later accretions of interpretation.

This volume is based on the first two books of the Psalter—Psalms 1–41 and 42–72. This takes us almost to the mid-point of the one hundred and fifty psalms.ⁱ Each book is subdivided into smaller collections: the Table of Contents makes these divisions clear. For each psalm, I use a similar method, which follows seven interrelated stages.

The first stage is a focus on the compilation of a collection of psalms, because the placing of each psalm in the Psalter as a whole signifies the first stage in its reception history. This is why I begin by comparing the linguistic equivalences between one psalm and its neighbours, to illustrate that the reception of a psalm into a larger collection has not been accidental.ⁱⁱ This is also why I spend some time discussing the division of the psalms into two books (1–41; 42–72), and the different collections within these books, and the different arrangements of psalms within these collections. I do not believe a psalm can be understood as an isolated unit independent of its neighbours. Thus reception history starts with the process of compilation.

The second stage is about Jewish reception from the second century BCE onwards. It includes early translations of each psalm in Greek, as well as different Hebrew versions in the *Qumran Scrolls. The focus is on examples which have a trajectory in later reception history. This then leads to a consideration of other aspects of Jewish reception history, including the Aramaic paraphrase of the psalms in the **Targum* and the use of the psalms in rabbinic sources such as the **Talmud* (and within this, the **Mishnah*), the **Midrash Tehillim*, and medieval commentaries by, for example, *Rashi and *Kimḥi.

Jewish and Christian commentators are often in dialogue with one another, so the third stage examines the reception of a particular psalm in Christian tradition. This starts with the New Testament, and progresses to look at readings of the psalms by the church fathers and medieval commentators, writing in both Latin and Greek. So this also includes looking at the (Christian) Latin translation of the (previously Jewish) Greek translation. The final part of this third stage looks at a huge span of Christian commentary starting with the early church, then the so-called early Middle Ages (c. 600–1300), the later Middle Ages (c.1300–1500) up to the early Modern Period in the mid-seventeenth century.

ⁱ Volume Three will cover Books Three (Psalms 73–89); Four (Psalms 90–106) and Five (Psalms 107–150).

ⁱⁱ I also examine, where relevant, the headings to a psalm, because these additional titles to the psalms often highlight the differences between Jewish and Christian interpretations.

Compilation, translation and commentary are, however, not the entire story. A large proportion of this work looks at the more practical and aesthetic modes of reception. Hence the fourth stage examines various prominent adaptations of a psalm (or a psalm verse) through Jewish and Christian liturgy from as early as the third century up to the present day. The fifth stage traces its representation in Christian and Jewish art, starting with ninth-century *Carolingian and Byzantine illuminated manuscripts and also discussing, where relevant, later paintings, woodcuts, and sketches and more contemporary artistic interpretations. The sixth stage assesses significant Jewish and Christian musical arrangements of each psalm. These are usually compositions from the Renaissance and Reformation experimentation to the present day, and this leads to a consideration of the very different forms of a psalm when it is adapted for a performance in a church, synagogue, theatre or concert hall.

The seventh stage is to examine, where appropriate, the various imitations and interpretations of a particular psalm in English, from the early modern period up to present times. This might be through old English *Glosses in early Medieval Psalters, or through poetry and drama from the later Middle Ages onwards, or through political, social or gendered discourse; it also includes any pertinent English translations as well as modern imitations in poetry, and of course this includes examples from both Jewish and Christian tradition.

This, then, is a skeletal outline of the method I use for each individual psalm. But who is this commentary for?—Its purpose is in part to bridge the gap between the academy and the synagogue or church: so it is directed at two different kinds of reader. The first is a more academic person: this includes not only those who are working on the psalms (and so would appreciate a different and broader perspective on a specific academic project) but also those who are working on a different aspect of reception (and so would use a study of the psalms as a specific point of reference for a larger project). The second type of reader is anyone who enjoys reading, using, praying, and disseminating the psalms; their concerns are more pastoral and confessional, and in this respect their interests coincide with the ways faithful Jews and Christians through the centuries have used the psalms in this way as well.

This dual readership poses something of a problem. The academically involved reader would expect, for example, my references to psalm texts to be precise in their enumeration—for the Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Aramaic are notoriously different from the English psalm numbers and verses—but those more interested in the more practical dissemination of the psalms would find such academic detail somewhat alienating. Similarly academic colleagues would expect extensive references to Rabbinic, Patristic, Medieval and Reformation sources, yet I have tried to simplify the references where too much precision might estrange other readers. This also applies to the use of liturgical sources, and

to citations relating to illuminated manuscripts, to musical composers, and to the poetry of the psalms expressed in different ways in English: a more general readership could again find some of this extraneous detail over-intrusive. Some compromise is therefore necessary, and I have addressed this in the following ways.

The first challenge concerns the different versions of the psalms in different languages and the use of different numbers for the psalms and their verses. I offer as an Appendix a chart of the versification of psalms, with the NRSV as the normative text. Hence I only use the variant versification and psalm numbers (in parenthesis) when I am explicitly citing a psalm verse in the Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Aramaic. Otherwise I use only the NRSV psalm numbers and verses: those who wish for more consistency can consult the Appendix. Related to this, when citing a word in another language, particularly when that script is not the same as the English alphabet, this is presented in its transliterated form, in italics. A connected issue is knowing which actual Greek or Latin or Aramaic version to use: the best known version in Greek, for example, is the **Septuagint*, but other Greek versions seem to be cited in the New Testament, and there is also the *Old Greek Psalter* and works by **Origen*. My preference is to cite from the *Septuagint* translation.ⁱⁱⁱ Similarly the preferential Latin version I cite is **Jerome's *Vulgate*: this is not to overlook the several other versions in circulation before and after Jerome, and I recognise that the *Vulgate* is one of three versions which he translated.^{iv} As for the Aramaic **Targums*, I have chosen to use, primarily, the work edited by D.M. Stec.^v Finally, as far as the English version is concerned, for reasons of space I have not been able to print out the NRSV text, but readers are advised to read this commentary with that edition beside them.

A second problem has been trying to account for the early Jewish and Christian liturgical uses of psalmody. There are several works which discuss the general use of the psalms in worship.^{vi} Nevertheless, we know very little about the specific use of psalmody in the ancient synagogue traditions and in the early Roman and Orthodox Rites in western and eastern Christendom. Hence I have considered it wiser to omit material when I could not be confident of its purported source. I did, however, decide to use Neale and Littledale's four-volume *Commentary on the Psalms from Primitive and Medieval Writers*, published between 1874–79. I am indebted to this work, partly because nothing more recent is quite like it, but I have used it with some caution. It is clear now that we know very little of the **Mozarabic*, **Ambrosian* or **Gregorian* liturgies themselves, even though it is possible to speak of, for example, psalms being

ⁱⁱⁱ For a brief account of these issues see Gillingham 2008:8–9.

^{iv} For a brief account of Jerome's different translations of the Psalms see Gillingham 2008:31–37.

^v See Stec 2004. For a brief account of this edition and the various versions of *Targums*, see Gillingham 2008:71–72.

^{vi} For example, Donin 1980; Reif 1993; Elbogen 1993; Lamb 1962; Box 1996; Pickett 2002; Trudinger 2004.

sung to Gregorian and Ambrosian plainsong, or to psalms influencing Mozarabic collects. So instead I refer more generally to ‘the Roman Rite’ when referring to western liturgies, of which the so-called Mozarabic, Ambrosian and Gregorian liturgies are little more than ‘dialects,’ and to refer to just ‘the Orthodox Rite’ when referring to the liturgies of the East.^{vii}

A third decision was whether to use the sources for Jewish and Christian commentators in URL formats. Online versions might not always offer the best translations, but they do provide an easily accessible source, and the more advanced reader would know which hard-copy resource to consult. So I use many online sources, also including those of illuminated manuscripts, or of different musical compositions. The advantage of a digital version is that readers can then *view* the text, *see* the image, and *hear* the music as well.

A fourth decision has been to offer the reader a fairly detailed Glossary. Even here it was difficult to know how to make the selection, and how to pitch a reader’s familiarity with, for example, Christian heresies, or Jewish liturgical terms, or musical and artistic terminology. But the advantage of a Glossary is that, having cited a particular commentator or heresy (and this is clear in the text by the use of an asterisk next to the term), it needs no further repetition when the same individual, or theological term, or illustrated Psalter occurs several times in later psalms. Those who have no need for this can put the asterisk aside and read on; but those who might need further clarification can at least turn to the Glossary, which has over three hundred entries for this volume alone.^{viii}

Two earlier publications have been a vital preparation for this work. My *The Psalms Through the Centuries Volume One* is a companion for this commentary and it offers a broader chronological and geographical overview of the reception of the Psalter as a whole.^{ix} And *A Journey of Two Psalms: The Reception of Psalms 1 & 2 in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, which looks at the reception history of just two psalms in considerable detail, uses a similar methodology to the one described above, and this provided a ‘micro’ assignment for the ‘macro’ analysis of the other hundred and forty-eight psalms, where of course there is much less attention to detail.^x

A Journey of Two Psalms could afford to be reasonably comprehensive in its assessment of the reception history of just two psalms. In this volume, however, working with approximately fifty times fewer words per psalm, there has inevitably been more selectivity.

^{vii} I am indebted to Matthew Cheung-Salisbury for his advice here.

^{viii} I have not included terms in the Glossary which I only use once or twice, instead giving information about them in the commentary itself.

^{ix} See Gillingham 2008.

^x See Gillingham 2013(c).

One decision has been how to determine the balance between the eastern and western reception history of psalmody. I have had to focus increasingly on the western tradition of reception, given that the ultimate destination is the reception of the psalms in English. This has been difficult, because the early origins and development are obviously from the ancient Near East and the Levant, and much of the early Jewish and Christian commentary tradition I refer to here is from these sources, whether from 'Palestine' and 'Babylon' in Jewish tradition, or from (for example) Antioch and Alexandria in Christian tradition. An engagement with eastern Christian reception is vital when assessing liturgical and artistic examples of psalmody: for example, many of the most significant ninth-century psalms manuscripts are from Byzantium. One casualty, however, has been any real focus on the Syriac tradition, especially the **Peshitta Psalter*. Occasionally I consider some of its psalm headings, for they reveal a fascinating variety of interpretations.^{xi} Hence the context of this reception history, at least from the ninth century onwards, becomes increasingly western as the language medium progresses from Latin to English. A very different second casualty related to this is a lack of engagement with many examples from the Third World: the bias in this commentary is British, European, and American. It would have been an impossible task in the space allowed to add anything like a 'global commentary'.^{xii}

Another issue in selecting material is more about history than geography, and that has been in determining how much material to use from a particular period. I decided to focus on aspects of reception which have stood the test of time, partly because they have provided the foundation for some of the newer developments today. This is why I spend some time discussing the translations, metrical paraphrases, and liturgical experimentation of the Psalms up to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries before I look at the developments from the eighteenth century up to the present day.^{xiii} I have also had to be pragmatic in some choices: for example, I have had to use illuminated Psalters which have a secure online presence, because I wanted readers to view these for themselves.^{xiv}

^{xi} An important paper in this respect is by Taylor 2006: 365–78.

^{xii} Another mode of reception which is not as rich as one might have expected is Jewish reception in art, and, until modern times, also in music. On this issue see Gillingham 2008: 104–113, 163–66, 239–240, 290–93.

^{xiii} For an account of the more recent translations and liturgical adaptations of various psalms see Gillingham 2008: 246–54 and 254–66.

^{xiv} The website <http://ical.princeton.edu/> is an excellent resource for specific images of many Byzantine Psalters, such as *Khludov*, *Pantokrator* and *Hamilton*. But this usually requires institutional access, and because many readers have not such retrieval, I have usually omitted the more specific URL references to these Psalters. Instead I have referred readers to other Byzantine Psalters held by the British Library, such as the *Theodore Psalter*, which is available on the 'turning pages' of that website. See, for example, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f049v, which refers to fol. 49v.

I have been similarly selective in offering musical arrangements of psalms: partly this is because early church and synagogue music is difficult to cite with any confidence, and partly it is the reverse problem of the sheer profusion of musical material on the psalms from the sixteenth century onwards. Metrical psalmody, for example, whether it is Calvinist, Scottish, English and American, has a vast repertoire and much is available online. So I only refer to specific metrical psalms when there is an interesting paraphrase or the arrangement is significant from a reception history perspective. The same is the case with other musical arrangements of psalms for more traditional liturgical occasions, and also with those poetic imitations of psalms which were so popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: if there is a different, well-known example, I usually cite it, but it would be impossible to refer to everything.

Hence I have not been able to use as many recent or contemporary examples of reception as readers might like. I can hardly deny that a huge sea-change has taken place in the reception of psalmody over the last century or so, but my aim is to offer a much broader perspective of interpretation. Where relevant I do offer examples of contemporary liturgical innovations and modern translations of the psalms, both in Jewish and Christian tradition, because these illustrate that the language of the psalms has now to be open to gender inclusivity and has to be more politically sensitive. But the number of versions of the Psalms which one could now use, whether for private prayer, public worship or literary enjoyment is again vast and I have had to be selective.

What I do present from a contemporary perspective is the more recent ideological criticism of some of the psalms, partly because this often reverses a long-standing tradition of interpretation and so makes us think about these texts from a different viewpoint. So I sometimes give examples from more recent political and social commentators; I present the views of those who question centuries of assumptions about the 'maleness' of the psalms; and I include those writers who are critical of earlier anti-Semitic and anti-Christian interpretations. Mostly I have left the reader to form their own view of these observations: my own concern is to produce a reception history which was as varied and multi-faceted as possible.

As the commentary has progressed, I have become increasingly aware of specific themes in the reception of particular psalms. First, some psalms bear witness to the very different (often bitter and conflicting) Jewish and Christian interpretations. Secondly, other psalms have an unusual theological, political or ethical trajectory, usually with respect to particular verses, and this dominates the psalm's reception. Thirdly, some psalms consistently reflect more universal concerns, and these bring together the persuasions of different faiths, whilst still allowing for the integrity of one particular faith-reading. I make clear these particular themes by way of conclusion to each individual psalm.

It is clear that some psalms are more rich in reception than others: there is an inevitable unevenness in the length of each psalm commentary, and by this the reader can ascertain the most significant psalms, some of which they might not have expected.

So what I offer is what I have referred to elsewhere as an ‘anthology with a purpose.’^{xv} I leave it to the reader to decide whether my selection from the huge reserves of the reception of psalmody has been worth the effort.

^{xv} See Preface to *Psalms through the Centuries*, paperback version, 2012.

BOOK ONE: PSALMS 1-41

Davidic Piety and
the Conflict of Faith
and Experience

Psalms 1 and 2: The Prologue to the Psalter

Psalm 1, with its singular verbs and its solo voice, is about any individual who is devoted to the study of the law. By contrast, in Psalm 2 the subject is a specific individual, namely the king, and addresses three audiences—the Gentile nations (twice), the nation of Israel, and the king. In Psalm 1, God is found wherever the Torah is read; in Psalm 2, God is found in Zion and the Temple. Psalm 1 has been influenced by the moral teaching found, for example, in Deuteronomy and Proverbs, with the emphasis on personal responsibility; Psalm 2 has echoes of the teaching of the eighth century prophets, with the emphasis on divine retribution on foreign nations.¹ So why should such different psalms be read together as one composite psalm?

There are in fact several thematic connections between Psalms 1 and 2. In Psalm 1, the model individual meditates by day and night on the Torah of the Lord (*be-torat yhw*) and is contrasted with the wicked people around him; in Psalm 2, the ideal king is invited to trust in the decree of God (*hoq yhw*) and is contrasted with the *hubris* of the Gentile nations surrounding him. A sequential reading of the psalms suggests that the king, too, should be subject to the Torah.² Psalm 1 ends with the judgment on all the wicked, and Psalm 2 ends with the judgment on the hostile nations. Furthermore, the fate of the godless is described in eschatological terms: Ps. 1:4 offers the image of chaff, with

¹ See P.J. Botha 2005: 518; also Cole 2012: 88.

² See Deut. 17:19; also Daly Denton 2010: 54.

its associations with harvesting at the day of judgment, whilst Ps. 2: 4–5 depicts God, seated on his heavenly throne, judging the nations.

Throughout their reception these two psalms have frequently been read as a composite unit. One example is a *Qumran psalms scroll, 4Q174, where both psalms are cited together with their apparent interest in the Temple as a conjoining theme.³ Similarly in several manuscripts of Acts 13:33, Psalm 2 is cited as ‘the first psalm’.⁴ Early commentators such as *Justin Martyr, in *1 Apol.* 40.8–10 (c. 150 CE) read Psalms 1 and 2 as one continuous narrative of salvation, seeing the first psalm about Christ crucified ‘on the tree’, and the second psalm as the reason for this—the conspiracy against Christ by Herod, Pilate, and the Jews.⁵ Similarly *Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170–235) views Psalm 1 as a prophecy about the birth of Christ, ‘the blessed Man’, and Psalm 2 as a prophecy about Christ’s passion and death.⁶ Jewish commentators similarly read the two psalms together: in *Berakot 9b–10a*, in the Babylonian **Talmud* we read: ‘Happy is the man’ and ‘Why are the nations in an uproar’ which form one chapter.⁷ Similarly **Midrash Tehillim* views Psalms 1 and 2 as both referring to the enemies of the Jewish people.⁸

The ‘prayers of David’ do not begin until Psalm 3, leaving Psalms 1 and 2 out of the sequence. So when were these psalms added to the Psalter? Psalm 2, untitled, has correspondences with Psalms 41 (at the end of Book One), 72 (at the end of Book Two) and 89 (at the end of Book Three). It is likely that Psalm 2 was chosen to introduce Books One to Three, *before* the addition of Psalm 1. Its purpose was to announce the rise of the Davidic dynasty and so give the first three books, which end with the demise of David, a royal focus.⁹

Once the Psalter had further evolved into five books, imitating the five books of the Law, Psalm 1 was probably added, giving the Psalter overall a complementary ‘Torah’ emphasis.¹⁰ Additions were probably made to Psalm 2 (in

³ See Gillingham 2013c: 17–22 and pp. 12–14, 26 following.

⁴ These include fifth century Latin manuscripts, the sixth century D Codex, and some eighth century Latin manuscripts associated with *Bede: see Gillingham 2013c: 42–3.

⁵ See http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.viii.ii.xl.html#-_Ps_1_0_0_0.

⁶ The citation is taken from Waddell 1995: 512. See Gillingham 2013c: 48–9.

⁷ Psalms 1 and 2 are in fact united in several Kennicott manuscripts (Mss. nos 17, 37, 216, 409 and 505) and in some of the de Rossi versions (mss. nos. 17, 37, 216, 505 [again]), 554, 596 and 782); they are separated in, for example, the Codex Leningradensis, a seminal version for BHS.

⁸ See Gillingham 2013c: 68–9, 76–81.

⁹ See Barbiero (1999: 50–5 and Rösel (1999: 89–91). On Books 1–3 as an independent collection, see Wilson (1985: 209–28) and Flint (1997: 168–70), who notes that 4QPs^a, 4QPs^c and 11QPs^c each testify to Psalms 2–89 as a separate collection of psalms.

¹⁰ See Hartenstein and Janowski (2012: 4) and Kratz (1996: 1–2 and 8–12). Another possibility is that Psalm 1 was added earlier, at a point when Psalm 119 completed the Psalter, before Book Five was extended up to Psalm 150, thus giving the Psalter an ‘inclusio’ based on psalms 1 and 119, emphasising the Torah.

verses 10–12, whose textual difficulties suggest some redaction) to create a clearer correspondence between these first two psalms. Three of the linguistic similarities between Psalms 1 and 2 actually occur in 2:10–12 (*derek* [‘way’] in 1:6 and 2:12; *’abad* [‘perish’] in 1:6 and 2:12; and *’ashere/’ashre* [‘blessed’] in 1:1 and 2:12). 2:10 and 2:2 have clear correspondences in their concern for the foreign kingdoms and Israel’s God, so verses 10–12 create a good conclusion.

Psalm 1: Who is the ‘Blessed Man’?

Because Psalm 1 is one of the latest psalms in the Psalter, it has links with earlier texts but has not influenced any other biblical texts.¹¹ Its primary relationship is with *Psalm 2*: as well as the links between 1:1, 6 and 2:10–12 referred to above, we may also note the use of the root *y-sh-b* to depict the seat of the scoffers in Ps. 1:2 (twice), echoed in Ps. 2:4 which describes God sitting ‘enthroned’ (*yashab*); the use of *hagah* to describe the reflective murmuring on God’s Law in Ps. 1:2 and to depict the sinister growlings of the nations in Ps. 2:1; the use of *yomam* (‘by day’) in Ps. 1:2 and *ha-yom* (‘this day’) in 2:7. As with the correspondences noted above, it is difficult to know whether these affinities were due to coincidence or redaction; all we can conclude is that the compilers intentionally connected these psalms together.

An early stage of reception of Psalm 1 is the **Septuagint* translation.¹² At least one shift in theology is visible: an emphasis on a future eschatological hope.¹³ This is evident in verse 5, where the Hebrew *lo’-yaqumu resha’im ba-mishpat* (‘the wicked will not stand’) is translated as *ouk anastēsontai asebeis en krisei*. The Hebrew *qum* suggests the idea of the wicked not ‘standing up’—in the sense of ‘not enduring’—at the time when justice is meted out; the use of *anistēmi* in the Greek suggests the idea of ‘rising’ (from the dead) when judgment comes.

In **Targum Psalms* one notable difference is in verse 1 (‘Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit at table in the company of scoffers’) where the verb *s-h-r* (‘sit’) has been used instead of *y-sh-b* and this implies an idiom ‘sit around to dine’.¹⁴ This is

¹¹ One example of an indirect influence is Jer. 17:5–8, with its extended simile of the tree by the waters: see Gillingham 2013c: 13–17.

¹² On the use of this term for the Greek version, see Gillingham 2013c: 23–4.

¹³ On eschatology in the Greek Psalter, see Schaper (1995: 26–30), and for Psalm 1 in particular (pp. 46–8 and 155).

¹⁴ See Edwards 2007: 43.

about shunning ‘table fellowship’ with those who ‘scoff’ at the Torah: it suggests the fragile Jewish/Gentile relationships at a later time.¹⁵

Another difference is in verse 5 where a future interpretation is evident in the phrase ‘the wicked will not be acquitted *in the great day of judgement*’. Like the *Septuagint*, *Targum Psalms* makes the fate of the wicked (Gentiles) clear: they will not only fail to be acquitted in any human (Jewish) court of justice, but they also will not be acquitted in the divine judgement, in the Last Days.

In **Midrash Tehillim* over half the commentary on Psalm 1 offers different answers to the question: ‘*Who is the blessed man?*’ (Ps. 1:1). Seven models of ‘blessedness’ are given.¹⁶ The first is Adam, before he sinned in the garden of Eden; then Noah, who is called righteous (Gen. 6:9) and who (according to *Gen. Rab.* 16:6) mediates the seven laws even the Gentiles are to live by; another is Abraham, ‘who did not walk with the sinners of Babel, nor stand with those at Sodom, nor sit with scornful Abimelech...’ Moses, however, is not the ‘blessed man.’ Instead, he imparts blessings: ‘Moses blessed Israel with the words *Blessed art thou, O Israel* (Deut. 33:29), so David blessed Israel with the words *Blessed is the man*.’ Two other examples of ‘blessedness’ are the Levites and, surprisingly, the sons of Korah. The seventh figure of blessedness is unnamed, for it is any righteous, law-abiding Jew (Ps. 84:13) for whom the Torah is the Tree of Life.

*Rashi reads the first psalm in the light of the entire Psalter.¹⁷ Much of his commentary uses *Midrash Tehillim*: for example, Abraham exemplifies true obedience (verse 1), even though he lived before the age of the Torah of Moses. Rashi’s comment on verse 6 clarifies earlier tradition: this refers not only to the judgements in the synagogues (‘the Assembly of the Righteous’) but also, ultimately, to God’s coming ‘Day of Judgement’.¹⁸

A more expansive example of disputation with Christian readings is found in the commentary of David *Kimḥi. His two objections to Christian exegesis were their doctrines of Law and Messiah: so Psalms 1 and 2 were particularly pertinent.¹⁹ The Law in Psalm 1 is the Torah, transmitted from Moses to David, which has eternal validity for all Jews. Those who neither respect nor keep the Torah are, primarily, Christians.²⁰

Christian reception of Psalm 1 started with a very different premise. *Jerome’s **Vulgate*, which was the basis for later commentators and *glosses

¹⁵ Stec (2004: 2–3). We might compare this with the use of Psalm 1 to legitimise the Jewish community at *Qumran over and against the Jewish priesthood in the Temple.

¹⁶ See Braude 1959:3–34.

¹⁷ See Gruber 2004: 45–6.

¹⁸ See Gruber 2004: 50–1.

¹⁹ See Gillingham 2008b: 86–7.

²⁰ See Box and Finch 1919: 10–11.

and manuscript illuminations, is a critical work. We see, for example, an allusion to doctrinal controversies in the phrase in verse 1 ‘*et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit*’, which evokes an image of teachers in session imparting harmful Christian heresies to their students.²¹ In verse 3, the use of ‘*lignum*’ (‘wood’) and ‘*aquarum*’ (‘waters’) is significant because this suggests the ‘wood’ of the cross and the ‘waters’ of Christian baptism—a point already being made in earlier commentaries and illustrated Psalters, as will be seen below.

Although Psalm 1 was not used in the New Testament, the early church fathers used this psalm to establish Christian theology. One early writing, the *Epistle to *Barnabas* 11 used Ps. 1:3–6 to show how the doctrines of the cross (‘the tree’) and baptism (‘the waters’) were prefigured in the Old Testament.²² Similarly Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* 86 identified the tree with the cross and the waters with baptism, and *Origen of Alexandria argued in *Tomi in Psalmos* that ‘the man’ in Psalm 1 refers to Jesus Christ ‘who was man in the Saviour’.²³ Origen read Psalm 1 in a *prosopological way, whereby one voice is Christ identifying with our humanity and the other, Christ vindicating his Church.

*Gregory of Nyssa, in *Inscriptiones Psalmorum*, usually focusses on how separate titles to each psalm form a progressive account of the ascent of man’s soul towards God. Because Psalm 1 has no title, it serves as a title to the Psalter as a whole: its very first word ‘blessed’ is about ‘becoming like God’. So the ‘blessed man’ is the Christian soul and not Christ Himself (for Christ is the one who is already blessed, in being One with God).

*Hilary of Poitiers also understood that the Psalter offered ‘a detailed map for growth in Christian holiness’.²⁴ Dividing the Psalter into three stages of ascent, Psalm 1 is again the first and most formative psalm.²⁵ Christ is ‘hidden’ in this psalm, especially in the reference to ‘*the tree of life*’. The tree is wisdom, (Prov. 3:18), Hilary argues, so Christ, who is wisdom, offers gifts of immortality though its fruits and leaves.

In *Augustine’s *Expositions on the Psalms* we find another Christian reading of Psalm 1. First, to identify Christ as the ‘Blessed Man’ is about a theology of the Incarnation (an important observation, given the *Donatist crisis in the north African churches).²⁶ Secondly, an engagement with a theology of works in the light of the grace of God allows the psalm a voice in the refutation of

²¹ So Ladouceur 2005: 52.

²² See the citation in <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.vi.ii.xi.html>.

²³ See Daley 2004: 193, n. 11, referring to *Philocalia* frag. 2.4.19–24.; also p. 194, referring to *Philocalia* frag. 2.1.1–10.

²⁴ The phrase is from Daley (2004: 199).

²⁵ See *Hilary, *Tractatus super Psalmos* Ps. 10–11 (CCSL 61.10) on the threefold division of the Psalter.

²⁶ See Hegbin and Corrigan (1960: 21).

*Pelagianism: ‘... It is one thing to be in the law, another to be under the law. Whoso is in the law, acteth according to the law; whoso is under the law, is acted upon according to the law; the one therefore is free, the other a slave.’²⁷ Thirdly, Augustine developed the *prosopological approach of Origen, hearing the human and divine voices of Christ in the psalm.

This approach was also developed by *Cassiodorus in his *Explanation of the Psalms*, where much of his commentary is a defence of *Chalcedonian orthodoxy and a polemic against *Nestorian heresy.²⁸ Cassiodorus was also interested in the psalms’ titles. ‘The reason why this psalm has no heading is because nothing is to be put before the Head of our Lord Saviour... for undoubtedly He is the Beginning of all things.’²⁹ This led to observations on this being the *first* psalm: ‘... the placing of the Lord Jesus Christ at the beginning of the collection is no idle arrangement. He is the unique Oneness, simple and perfect, having need of nothing...’³⁰ So this offers Cassiodorus the opportunity to teach against Nestorian heresy on the Oneness of the Two Natures of Christ.

A very different approach is found in the Abbreviated Psalter usually attributed to *Bede. This selects a few verses which epitomise the meaning of an entire psalm: this was to help the less learned monks who needed a more easily memorable book of instruction and prayer.³¹ For Psalm 1, a comparatively short psalm of six verses, Bede actually selects the first three—and so, unusually, uses half the psalm. But for Bede this was a critical psalm. He saw the ‘Blessed Man’ not only, following Cassiodorus, as Christ, but as everyman—or rather, every monk in his monastery at Jarrow. The central part of his selection is in verse 2, where the emphasis on meditating on the law of the Lord ‘by day and night’ could also include the **Opus Dei* which is a summary of the monastic ideal.

Thomas *Aquinas also wrote his *Postilla super Psalmos* for a monastic community. In Psalm 1 the blessed one is ‘a man who is lifting his eyes to the entire state of the world and considering how some do well, and others fail’; yet it is also ‘Christ... the first among the blessed ones...’³² So Christ is our Exemplar for faith.

Two commentators sought to bring the best of the Hebrew tradition to serve the church. In *Psalterium cum commento* *Herbert of Bosham focusses on the meditation on the ‘Torah’ in verse 2, referring explicitly to the **Midrash Tehillim* and to *Rashi.³³ *Nicholas of Lyra, who wrote *Postilla litteralis*, applied his skills

²⁷ See http://ccel.org/ccel/scaff/npnf108.ii.I_1.html.

²⁸ See Walsh 1990: 43, 45.

²⁹ Walsh 1990: 45.

³⁰ Walsh 1990: 56–7.

³¹ See Browne 2001; (trans) 2002. See also Ward 2002: 12–14.

³² See Waddell 1995: 509, n. 36. The English translation used above is taken from http://www4.desales.edu/~philtheo/loughlin/ATP/Psalm_1.html.

³³ See Loewe 1953: 55 and de Visscher 2009a: 264–5.

in the Hebrew language to engage with the Jews on their own terms. Also citing Rashi, Nicholas makes it clear that the 'Blessed Man' of verse 1 is every pious believer who seeks to study Scripture. He never refers to the Blessed Man as Christ, and he never assumes the Law to be anything other than the words of Scripture—shared by Jews and Christians. The tree by the waters, bearing fruit, represents the *doctores*—again, Jewish and Christian teachers alike.³⁴

By contrast, Desiderius *Erasmus Roterodamus was unsympathetic to a Jewish exegesis of the psalms.³⁵ His commentary on the first four psalms arose out a concern that those who recited them should do so with a considered understanding of their Christian meaning.³⁶ *Enarratio in Primum Psalmum* (on Psalm 1, in 1515) argues that temptation can be overcome with due meditation upon Christ who gives us the supreme example of the practice of virtue. His commentary also criticises those in authority in church and state who substitute an empty religiosity for true blessedness and true virtue. 'The church is full of those who, day after day, mumble their way through psalms they don't understand... those who approach the mystic writing seeking ammunition for their frivolous debates...'³⁷ This was written just before *Luther's Reformation; it undoubtedly illustrated the signs of the times.

Martin *Luther gave his first lectures on the psalms between 1512 and 1513. Here the appeal is to the eternal but hidden voice of Christ in Psalm 1. A second series of lectures was published in 1519 and there his reading of Psalm 1 has more social and political comment, as Luther worked out his antithetical theology of 'Law' and 'Gospel'. The key problem was how a Christian could 'delight in the law': it encouraged the alleged works-righteousness of the Roman church which resulted in both the suppression of the laity and indeed of the true voice of Scripture itself. So Luther first identifies the wicked and the sinners in verse 1 as the Jews. Stressing, as did *Erasmus, the 'seat of pestilence' as an example of wrong teaching, Luther's reading places the full blame on the Jews, whose errors have been passed on to the church today. Their teaching is like the chaff that the wind takes clean away (verse 4); and on the Judgment Day they will meet the fearful storms of God's wrath (verses 5–6). Thus 'the law' has been 'lived under' rather than 'lived in'. Like Erasmus, Luther uses this psalm to voice the concerns which were leading to the break with Rome.

John *Calvin also uses Psalm 1 to reflect on the relationship between the Old Testament Law and the New Testament Gospel. Noting its place as a Preface to the entire Psalter, Calvin applies the attainment of 'Blessedness' not to David,

³⁴ See Gross-Diaz 2000: 120–4.

³⁵ See Heath (1991: 367), referring to *Erasmus' use of *Nicholas on Psalm 2.

³⁶ See Rummel 2008: 219–30.

³⁷ See Heath 1997: 30.

nor to Christ, but to his own congregation. What follows could not be more different from *Erasmus's or *Luther's reading of this psalm. The antithesis implied by 'the righteous' and 'the wicked' is not between Jews and Christians, nor between corrupt and genuine leaders of the church in teaching and in practice; the antithesis is between the church and world. By learning a joyful and constant meditation on the Law (i.e. Scripture), they will receive the blessing from God and it is this which will make them flourish like a tree. This is a practical, contemporary application of Psalm 1.

As for the liturgical use of this psalm, it is found in more popular Jewish liturgy. One is a New Year tree-planting found in *Tu B'Shevat*.³⁸ The citation of Ps. 1:3, with its motif of the Tree of Life, was used both literally and metaphorically to encourage obedience to the Law. A second more magical use is found in **Shimmush Tehillim* and is to prevent a miscarriage. The threefold occurrence of the Hebrew letters *aleph* and *shin* in the first verse create an incantation; the first three verses of the psalm were written down and a prayer made to *El Kad* (meaning 'the only strong God, with letters taken from various verses in the psalm). The prayer is placed in a small bag and hung around the woman's neck, so it rests against her body with the prayer against miscarriage.³⁹

In Christian liturgy, because of its first place in the Psalter, Psalm 1 is often used at *Prime on Mondays. In the Roman Rite it was apparently a *Proper Psalm at the *Nocturne for Corpus Christi, and the Feast of Agnes and Agatha.⁴⁰ The commentary tradition also influenced its use: it is prescribed, along with Psalm 2, at *Matins on Easter Day, at the Feast of the Invention and Exaltation of the Cross, and again at the Feasts of the Crown of Thorns and of Spear and Nails: here the 'tree' is the cross and the Blessed Man is the obedient Christ.⁴¹ The Roman lectionary prescribes Psalm 1 on the second Friday of Advent and the Thursday after Ash Wednesday, because of its teaching on the two ways (Deut. 30:15–20 being the Old Testament lesson). So here the one blessed is the obedient Christian.

Psalm 1 offers an interesting challenge for liturgical revisionists because of its 'gender-specific' reference. Those against any revision would read the 'Blessed Man' as Christ; others prefer a more inclusive tone. **Common Worship* reads verses 1–2 in the third person:

Blessed are they who have not walked
in the counsel of the wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the assembly of the scornful.

³⁸ See Gillingham 2013c: 136.

³⁹ See Gillingham 2013c: 90–91.

⁴⁰ See Neale and Littledale I (1874–79: 89–90).

⁴¹ Quoted in Neale and Littledale I (1874–79: 89).

The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) uses the second person format:

‘If you would be happy: never walk with the wicked, never stand with sinners, never sit with cynics, but delight in the Lord’s teaching and study it day and night.’

We now turn to the depiction of Psalm 1 in art. In Christian Psalters, because Psalm 1 serves as a gateway into the Psalter, it has a particularly rich history of illumination. Often just the letter ‘B’ (for ‘*Beatus*’ [Blessed] in Latin) is illustrated to encapsulate a key theme in the psalm.⁴²

In the **Utrecht Psalter* Psalm 1 (fol. 1v) is presented on a full folio and the psalm is illustrated as a continuous narrative.⁴³ The ‘blessed man’ sits at the top left outside a small circular temple. The sun and moon above indicates he is reading ‘by day and by night’. The angel standing behind marks him out as blessed. Opposite him is the ungodly man, seated on a ‘chair of pestilence’, surrounded by soldiers and demons. Below the temple structure is the tree planted by the waters, and the wind is personified so that it blows about the soldiers as if they were chaff (verses 3–4); as they are propelled downstream, their eventual destiny is the pit in the bottom right (verses 5–6).⁴⁴

The **Carolingian Stuttgart Psalter* has by contrast one multi-coloured image to encapsulate the ‘story’ of the entire psalm. In Psalm 1 (fol. 2r) the ‘blessed man’ is no longer the typical Christian but the crucified Christ, who hangs on the tree of life (verse 3), which is the cross; this is ‘guarded’ by a Roman centurion; the ‘ungodly men’ turning from the cross are depicted as the ‘wicked Jews’.⁴⁵

The Byzantine **Khludov Psalter* offers a clear anti-Jewish stance in Psalm 1 (fol. 2r). The blessed man is David, studying the law; two wicked men, also apparently studying the law, are set to his right; a haloed Christ observes their fates. The rest of the illustrated margin depicts the effects of the wind as it blows figures across the surface of the page. And those who suffer most, driven into the pit, are no longer armed soldiers, or even peasants: they are three Jews, evidenced by their attire, which matches that of the figures studying the law in the image at the top of the page.⁴⁶

In the **Theodore Psalter*, Psalm 1 is preceded by a ‘*Makarios*’ (‘Blessed’) page (fol. 1r) suggesting again that the entry into the Psalter as a whole is through the words of Psalm 1. The Greek text of Psalm 1 starts under this; to the left is an

⁴² Gillingham 2013c: 163–81.

⁴³ Bibliotheek der Universiteit, Utrecht, MS 32/484 fol. 1. See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=9&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

⁴⁴ See Van der Horst, Noel and Wustefeld 1996: 56–7 and 85.

⁴⁵ The image of the crucifixion for Psalm 1, used initially by *Justin Martyr (see pp. 139–142, 192) was a popular motif in Christian art.

⁴⁶ An illustration of this psalm is found in Gillingham (2013c) plate 9.

image of Christ and Blessed Virgin facing each other, with their arms creating the latter 'M' for 'Makarios'). Above is Christ, with white hair, in a *mandorla, with a book on his knee: so he is also the 'Blessed Man'. Further illustrations are on fol. 1v. Here the tree of life dominates; a figure reaches up to take fruit from the tree, standing between two rivers running from urns, echoing various myths of the Paradise Garden. Under this is the wind, personified as a figure with a cape: it blows some sort of pipe so that the three figures on the ground are blown away. In the very bottom right are three figures; the two standing are dressed as Jews, gesturing as if disputing what is being said.⁴⁷

The later English **Gorleston Psalter* offers a good example of the *Tree of Jesse alongside the *Beatus* of Psalm 1. The bottom of the 'B' shows Jesse sleeping, and the top part shows Christ enthroned. The three upper sides around the B are filled with kings and prophets, and the bottom border has scenes from the annunciation, nativity, and the Presentation in the Temple. A distinctive image—one used in other illuminated Psalters as well—is of some huntsmen chasing a stag at the top of the illustration; this is a symbol of the soul being attacked by the huntsmen (who are the ungodly in the psalm).

One early Jewish example is the **Parma Psalter*. The illumination of Psalm 1 is unusual because the entire psalm is bordered, its four frames containing flora and foliage. The four foliate borders may be an oblique reference to the tree planted by the waters in verse 3. At the top of the frame the word 'ashere, taking up the space of three lines, is enclosed in a wider foliate frame. Another most unusual Jewish image, from fifteenth century Italy, is of David, depicted as Orpheus, playing his harp. This is a preface to a selection of psalms: King David is surrounded by wild animals, apparently singing the words of Psalm 1, as evidenced by the opening word 'ashere ('blessed') at the top of the picture. The words of the rest of the psalm are written in Ashkenazic script under the image.⁴⁸

There are several contemporary images of Psalm 1. Arthur *Wragg depicts Psalm 1 in a pen and ink drawing which reflects the social setting of the Great Depression.⁴⁹ The caption is, 'But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night'. The image is of an old man, watering a withering plant, surrounded by factories and tenement blocks. The only thing of beauty is the plant, and to water this is the only act of piety which the man can perform. His face is resigned; he is not looking at the plant, but beyond it, as if

⁴⁷ An illustration of this psalm is found in Gillingham (2013c) plate 14.

⁴⁸ This is from the Rothschild Miscellany, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Rothschild Ms 24, dated around 1470. The image can be seen in Gillingham (2013c), plate 22.

⁴⁹ *The Psalms for Modern Life* (1933). For an illustration of this image, see Gillingham (2013c), plate 25.

he is trying to summon up a vision from outside the scene around him. So here the 'Blessed Man' is anyone struggling to find God in the midst of oppression and suffering.

In the *Saint John's Bible*, the Psalms present one of the most unusual books in the whole project because their six illustrations encourage 'hearing' as well as 'seeing' the psalms.⁵⁰ The singing and chanting are represented technologically, using black 'oscilloscopic voiceprints' on the vertical axis, with wavy gold bars, echoing musical notations, on the horizontal axis. The actual notes are represented as gold squares, suggesting neumes in *Gregorian plainsong*: they ascend and descend a four-line staff, sometimes drifting out to the borders. Psalm 1 is illustrated down the left hand margin and across the bottom border, in undulating gold and blue calligraphy, echoing again the rise and fall of the voice in chanting.⁵¹ It is extraordinary how one can capture sound by sight: golden musical notations travel across the page, and the black voiceprints undulate alongside them: the reds and golds and blues add to the richness of the tone. At the top of the illustration are three *menorah* lights: the middle signifies an entrance to the Temple, thus suggesting Psalm 1 is a gateway to the Psalter as a sacred place.

Marc Chagall's sketch of Psalm 1, entitled 'The Two Ways', depicts the 'Blessed Man' lying in a tree, literally 'like a tree planted by the waters'. In the sky is an angelic figure, blessing the Man. But he is not studying the law: the Torah is placed on another tree, just below him: the Torah is thus the tree of life.⁵² A female figure under the tree suggests Eve, thus alluding to the Blessed Man as Adam (as in *Midrash Tehillim*).

A Jewish artist we shall refer to frequently is Moshe Tzvi HaLevi Berger⁵³ Psalm 1, with the dominant hues of turquoise, purple and green, is based upon verses 2 and 3 (parts of which are written in Hebrew in the sky to the right of the tree): the key motifs are thus the Torah and the Tree of Life. The tree resembles a *menorah*, and seems to be planted within a stream of water: fishes swim in it to signify its life-giving properties. Surrounding the tree are plants flicked with red, reminiscent of the Burning Bush: the scene is thus infused with the mysterious presence of God. The rushing wind which blows across the image picks up the theme of the dispersal of the wicked at the end of verse 3.

⁵⁰ See Jackson 2006; Sink 2007. See <http://www.saintjohnsbible.org/Explore.aspx?ID=4>.

⁵¹ The Psalter version is the NRSV. Psalms 1 and 2 are both the work of one calligrapher, Brain Simpson. The illumination of the frontispiece and of Psalm 1 are also the work of one hand, Donald Jackson, who has been the director of the whole project. See Plate 1.

⁵² Just as the Tree becomes the Cross in some Christian art (see for example the Stuttgart Psalter, p. 19) so here in Jewish art the Tree becomes the Torah. See Gillingham (2013c), plate 32.

⁵³ See <http://themuseumofpsalms.com/the-museum/> See the image in Gillingham (2013c), plate 34.

When it comes to the musical arrangements of the psalms it is most frustrating that although they were clearly sung from early times, little is known about how this sounded. Over the last fifty years or so several Hebraists, also trained musicians, have offered different theories about what the psalms sounded like in their original, by trying to ‘decode’ the various *sigla* in the Hebrew text as musical annotations as well as signs of punctuation.⁵⁴ Rather like the *St John’s Bible*, it is possible that the musical representations from the Hebrew are intended to fit aesthetically with the words. Psalm 1 is considered an excellent example of ‘word-painting’.⁵⁵

Jewish arrangements of Psalm 1 are not really in evidence until the twentieth century.⁵⁶ Lazar Weiner’s version of Psalm 1 was, appropriately, a composition in Yiddish.⁵⁷ *Ashrei ho-ish asher lo holach* was actually first performed as a concert piece, in New York, in 1956. It was written for a cantor solo, a mixed chorus, accompanied by the organ. Being not so much a prayer as a reflective poem, Psalm 1 was an ideal example of bridging the two worlds of the theatrical and liturgical, yet in each case providing a marker for a distinctively Jewish ethnic identity.

It is not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that complete versions of Psalm 1 are in evidence in Christian music. Thomas Tallis used Archbishop Matthew Parker’s *The Whole Psalter translated into English Metre* (1567), intended as a devotional exercise rather than for public use; this metrical version of Psalm 1 was a way of experimenting with four-voice harmony and psalmic forms. Its title is ‘*The first is meek: devout to see*’. Compared with his arrangement of Psalm 2, this is a more sustained and reflective composition.⁵⁸

Metrical psalmody, because of its paraphrase of the text, allows for a good deal of ‘Christianisation’. Isaac Watts, for example, ends with an explicit reference to Christ as Judge:

How will they bear to stand
Before that judgement-seat
When all the saints, at Christ’s right hand,
In full assembly meet.

Psalm 1 was also composed for more theatrical purposes. One example is by Sergei Rachmaninov whose setting of parts of Psalms 1–3 is in his *All Night*

⁵⁴ Scholars include Werner 1959; Haïk-Vantoura 1976, ETr 1991; Weil 1995; and Mitchell 2012a and Mitchell 2012b. See also <http://www.musicofthebible.com/teamim.htm>.

⁵⁵ For a representation of this music, see David Mitchell’s score Gillingham (2013c): 196–97.

⁵⁶ Salamone Rossi from Mantua (whom we shall refer to frequently later) did not, it seems, compose anything on Psalms 1 and 2.

⁵⁷ A selection of Weiner’s psalms was produced in 2006 as ‘Psalms of Joy and Sorrow’: see <http://www.allmusic.com/album/psalms-of-joy-and-sorrow-mw0000561687>.

⁵⁸ For the music of both psalms, see Gillingham (2013c): 218–19 and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/profiles/tallis.shtml>.

Vigil, also known (somewhat inaccurately) as *The Vespers*. Composed in 1915, it was initially given as a fund-raising concert in Moscow in aid of the war against Germany. Through the use of ancient liturgical cantillation (Jewish, Slavonic, Greek) the whole performance is a way of affirming Russian nationalism, and the stability of tradition at a time of chaos. There is no musical accompaniment, because Orthodox liturgy prohibited it, so the impact depends totally on the contrasting tones of human voices: although a four-part harmony is the most common, the harmonies increase up to eleven parts in places. Verses from Psalms 1, 2 and 3, each important parts in the Easter Liturgy of the Orthodox Church, create the third movement: the chant used is Rachmaninov's own, with an easily memorable melodic refrain. The movement is sung mainly by alto and tenor, with the Alleluia refrain between each verse sung by a full chorus, effecting a sense of expectation by repeated changes of key. Using the theme of blessing, words from the beginning of Psalm 1 ('Blessed is the Man...') are followed by the verse at the end of Psalm 2 ('Blessed are they that put their trust in the Lord') and then a further verse from the end of Psalm 3 ('Salvation is the Lord's: Thy blessing is upon Thy people').

It is interesting to see the place of Psalm 1 in contemporary musical culture through the motif of the tree by the waters. One example is the American folk song, 'We Shall Not Be Moved', which probably goes back to protest songs about the slave trade, although it has been adapted many times by other activists and has been popularised since the 1960s by, for example, Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, Joan Baez, and Judith Durham. The lyrics are defiant; but the image of the tree is stable and unchanging: 'We shall not, we shall not be moved... Just like a tree, that is planted by the waterside...'⁵⁹ This image of the tree is central to another interpretation by composer and presenter Howard *Goodall. His 'Lyke a Freshly Planted Tree/ *iuxta rivulos aquarum*' (2010) uses Philip *Sidney's sixteenth century version of Psalm 1.⁶⁰ The theme of water and its refreshment for faith is found in many of the psalms in this collection. This arrangement opens with the third verse:

He shall be lyke a freshly planted tree,
To which sweet springs of waters neighbours be;
Whose branches faile not timelie fruite to nourish,
Nor with 'red leafe shall make it faile to flourish:
So all the things whereto that man doth bend
Shall prosper still with well-succeeding end.

⁵⁹ See, for example, the performance by the Seekers on www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYtyxc-m-4.

⁶⁰ This is the final psalm in a collection of thirteen, recorded as *Pelican in the Wilderness: Songs from the Psalms*, with the 'Enchanted Voices' female choir and the Tippett Quartet Classic FM 2010: CFMD13. Part of this psalm can be heard on <http://www.classicfm.com/shop/cds/listen-pelican-wilderness/>

The theme of judgement on the unrighteous so dominant at the beginning and ending of this psalm has been modified not only by the use of Sidney's gentler version but also by the focus on this third verse. In Howard Goodall's own words, 'the anger is softened'; instead of defiance we hear a more wistful and poignant interpretation, especially because of the haunting female voices, on the refreshment God may give those who trust in him.

As for poetic imitations of this psalm, John *Milton's version was a private exercise, as his blindness worsened; his knowledge of Hebrew meant that he translated directly from original. Like Sidney, he used heroic couplets, imitating the binary nature of the righteous and wicked in the psalm. Its regular aa-bb rhyme and 10-10-10-10 rhythm fit the reflective nature of the contents: it has a universal appeal, and it is not surprising that this was later set to music.

Bless'd is the man who hath not walk'd astray
In counsel of the wicked, and in th' way
Of sinners hath not stood, and in the seat
Of scorners hath not sate. But in the great
Jehovah's Law is ever his delight,
And in his Law he studies day and night...⁶¹

Music and poetry give the psalm space for a more universal adaptation. Against this, however, some biblical scholars often display an anti-Semitic bias, sometimes fuelled by a Lutheran faith. Several commentators have castigated the poet of Psalm 1 for his arrogant and exclusivist (Jewish) view of community, not least his assumption that reading and obeying the 'Law' can make him righteous and bring about his own salvation. Examples include German commentators Wilhelm de Wette, and Bernard Duhm, who both read Psalm 1 as representing the 'stultifying Jewish legalism' which Jesus Christ had to come to redeem.⁶²

It is interesting that more contemporary imitations of Psalm 1, often from Jewish poets, reflect on the integrity of the faith of the psalmist and so, again, its universal appeal. One striking example is David Rosenberg's *Blues of the Sky* (1976).⁶³

Happy is the one
stepping lightly over
paper hearts of men

and out of the way
of mind-locked reality
the masks of sincerity

⁶¹ See <http://www.cgmusic.org/workshop/milton/milton%201.htm>.

⁶² See for example Bauer 1997: 13–15, and the discussion in Gillingham 2013c: 263–66.

⁶³ See Rosenberg 1976: 1–2.

he steps from his place at the glib café
to find himself in the world
of the infinite...

while bitter men turn dry
blowing in the wind
like yesterday's paper

unable to stand
in the gathering
light

they fall
faded masks
in love's spotlight...

but My Lord opens
his loving one
to breathe embracing air.

Here we see a clear shift in metaphors: 'the paper hearts of men' are those termed 'wicked' in the original psalm, whilst the 'glib café' is the place where the 'scoffers' meet. Instead of referring explicitly to the Torah, the poet encounters now 'the world of the infinite'. The agrarian metaphors are converted into a more urbanised symbolism, and now the wicked blown like chaff in the wind are 'bitter men turn[ed] dry' 'blowing in the wind like yesterday's paper'. Their 'hearts of paper' burn up, whilst the poet's experience of salvation is to find he is breathing 'embracing air'.

Perhaps this is the best place to end these observations on Psalm 1: a psalm which has fuelled controversy between Jews and Christians has, over recent times, recognised that what unites the two faiths is more than what divides them. A similar trajectory is evident in the reception of Psalm 2.

Psalm 2: Who is 'My Son'?

We have already seen how the first stage of reception history is the literary placing of a psalm in the Psalter, which affects its meaning, impact and future reception. This is why we examined the thematic and linguistic correspondences between these first two psalms, including possible additions to Psalm 2 (verses 10–12), because these represent a very early stage of reception history.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ See pp. 11–12 previously.

As with Psalm 1, other early stages of reception include the **Septuagint* translation and the use of the psalms at *Qumran. Starting with the *Septuagint*, we can see how the Greek here plays down messianic expectations and emphasises more its didactic elements.⁶⁵

The most important change is in verses 6–9. In the Hebrew these comprise a speech by God to the king (verse 6), followed by a citation by the king (or a cultic official on behalf of the king) concerning the promises of God (verses 7–9); in the Greek, however, this has become one long speech by the king himself. So verse 6 is read as reported speech: *egō de katestathēn basileus hup' autou epi Siōn oros to hagion autou* ('I was established as king by him/on Zion, his holy mountain'); this is continued in verse 7 by the introduction 'declaring the decree of the Lord'. Hence this is no longer addressed *to* the king *by* God but *by* the king *to* the rebel rulers. Any suggestion of a dialogue between God and the king has been erased. Taking away the direct divine authority of the promises which are evident in the Hebrew thus diminishes the impact of any Messianic expectations.

The other notable change is in verse 12. The difficult phrase *nashequ-bar* (often translated as 'kiss the son!') is in the Greek *draxasthe paideias* ('seize upon instruction!'), thus eradicating a royal role and emphasising instead the didactic impact of the psalm. Another important change to verse 12 is *kai apoleisthe ex hodou dikaias* ('and you will perish from the righteous way'): the Hebrew reads, simply, 'the way', but the Greek addition links this with the same phrase concerning the righteous at the end of Psalms 1 ('for the Lord watches over *the way of the righteous*'). This, along with the deliberate repetition of 'blessed' in the use of the singular *makarios* (Ps. 1:1) and plural *makarioi* in Ps. 2:12, heightens the instructional element in this psalm, and so draws it closer to the same elements in Psalm 1.

The most significant use of Psalm 2 at *Qumran is in 4QFlor I (lines 18–19), after the quotation from Ps. 1:1 in line 14. Verses 1–2 are used to show how the whole community are now the recipients of these promises once made to David. The Hebrew word 'anointed one' is now in the plural, and is followed by 'the chosen ones of Israel'. Hence the entire community, oppressed by the raging of the 'nations' (probably an allusion to Rome), are the inheritors of the messianic hope.

In **Targum Psalms*, we find a different adaptation of the 'messianic' elements in this psalm. This is best seen in verses 6–7; here the Aramaic borrows the Hebrew format, so God is speaking:

⁶⁵ Schaper (1995: 72–6) sees the psalm as a 'messianic hymn' by the time of the Greek translation (p. 75), but Cox (2001: 289–311) and Janse (2010: 40–4) see little evidence of it.

‘But I have *anointed my king and installed him* on Zion, the mountain of my sanctuary.’ I will tell of the decree of the LORD; he said to me, ‘You are *as dear to me as a son to a father, pure as though I had created you this day.*’⁶⁶

The ‘installing’ as well as ‘anointing’ of the king in verse 6 is an interesting ‘double translation’, emphasising divine authority. In verse 7 the avoidance of the Hebrew word *yalad* (‘to give birth’) may be to circumvent an anthropomorphism, for this is replaced by the Aramaic word meaning, simply, ‘create’. Given that Christians had been using this verse since New Testament times to claim that here was a prophecy about the Father/Son relationship fulfilled in Jesus, the choice of this Aramaic translation is significant. The figure referred to in both verses 6 and 7 is not, literally, God’s Son: he is certainly beloved, like a son, but he has not been physically ‘begotten’ by God.⁶⁷

In **Midrash Tehillim* a similar question is posed as was seen in Psalm 1: instead of ‘Who is the blessed man?’ this time we read: ‘Why do the nations rage?’ Again, various figures of the past are recalled, and all ten are enemies of the whole people. They include Pharaoh, Sisera, Nebuchadnezzar, and Gog and Magog who typify all the pagan nations.⁶⁸ Thus here we find a political reading which speaks to diaspora Jews in the Middle Ages. The commentary on verse 7 is interesting in this light. After the briefest of references to God’s promise in verse 6 to ‘install the king on Mount Zion’, the next question which needs an answer is—‘*Who is the ‘son’?*’ One answer is ‘the children of Israel are declared to be sons in the decree of the Law, in the decree of the Prophets, and in the decree of the Writings.’⁶⁹ Then, as in **Targum Psalms*, a discussion follows about whether the Hebrew verb meaning ‘give birth to’ is really correct. The conclusion is the same: this cannot be read literally. The Christian reading of this text as Jesus ‘begotten’ of the Father is again, by implication, refuted.

Finally, from verse 8 onwards, the commentary begins to refer to a figure termed ‘the Messiah’; much of the discussion implies this is Israel. So the reading ‘Do homage to (“kiss”) the son’ in verse 12 is again Israel: ‘Go and sing (a song of homage) to Israel.’ The final verse is thus interpreted: ‘*Blessed are all they that take refuge in Him*, is spoken of the children of Israel, for they are the ones who take refuge in the Holy One, blessed be He.’⁷⁰ Just as the idealised figure (‘the Blessed Man’) in Psalm 1 is the law-abiding Jew; the idealised figure

⁶⁶ Stec 2004: 29–30. Italics again denote ‘unequivalences’.

⁶⁷ Behind this also lie the debates about Israel, not Jesus, as God’s Son, developed, in the **Midrash Tehillim* and other Jewish commentators. See Edwards (2007: 151–5) and Stec (2008: 30, n. 7).

⁶⁸ Braude 1959 I: 35.

⁶⁹ Braude 1959 I: 40.

⁷⁰ Braude 1959 I: 48.

(‘My Son’) in Psalm 2 is the people as a whole; each is seen through the prism of King David.

As with Psalm 1, Jewish commentaries in the Middle Ages used philology to refute Christian exegesis. This is clear at the very beginning of *Rashi’s commentary in Psalm 2.⁷¹ The psalm is about the historical David and historical Israel; its context is 1 Sam. 5.17–25, when the Philistines heard that David has been made king over all Israel, and they came up to attack him. This explains verse 1: ‘Why do the nations assemble...’ The anointing of David as king was ratified by the prophetic ministry of Nathan and so verses 6–7) are from 2 Samuel 7; so because David is king he is now able to be called God’s Son.

This way of reading Psalm 2 might be termed **peshat*; Rashi also applies another hidden level of meaning (**midrash*) by seeing also a reference to the future of Israel; this is especially evident in his comments on verse 7 which speak of the Messiah being chosen *by* Israel and *for* Israel. This use of the literal and the hidden meaning in the text show the reaction against Christian interpreters.⁷²

Jacob ben *Reuben’s *Milhamot ha-Shem (The Wars of God)* was written in about 1170. The third chapter concerns the Psalms, and the first psalm to be considered is Psalm 2. This is another refutation of the Christian interpretation of this psalm, especially of verses 7 and 11–12: if David is God’s first-born, and if Israel is God’s son, Jesus is hardly God’s unique and only son. He is but one of many sons of God. Van Reuben thus turns the Christian method on its head: it might claim to use allegory and typology, but it is in fact over-literal.⁷³

*Kimḥi’s reading of Psalm 2 is more literal, for like Rashi he reads it in the light of King David’s experiences in 2 Samuel 5 and 7. So, of verse 7, Kimḥi observes: ‘And the Nazarenes interpret it of Jesus; and the verse they adduce by way of proof and make it a support of their error is really their stumbling block.’⁷⁴ Kimḥi argues that to speak of God ‘giving birth’ to a son divides the unity of the deity; this is a metaphor, in the same manner as speaking of the mouth and eyes and ears of God.⁷⁵ Kimḥi rebukes Christian commentators for not following through their non-literal approach with enough rigour.⁷⁶

For medieval Jewish scholars, Psalm 1 is an inspiration for Jewish piety, and Psalm 2 is a commentary on Jewish identity. So their complaint was about Christian *supersessionism: just as in Psalm 1 the tree had become the Cross

⁷¹ See Gruber 1998: 10.

⁷² See Gillingham 2013c: 81–84.

⁷³ Jacob bar Reuben’s approach is found in Chazan (2004: 236–8).

⁷⁴ Finch and Box 1919: 18.

⁷⁵ See Gillingham 2013c: 85–7.

⁷⁶ See Chazon 2004: 238–41.

of Christ, so the Davidic covenant in Psalm 2 had been replaced by new ideas of Jesus as 'Son of God'. Hence these 'unrighteous' and the 'heathen nations' referred to in both psalms had taken their Scriptures and re-used them as their own.

Unlike Psalm 1, Christian interpretation of Psalm 2 begins with the New Testament itself. Psalm 2 is frequently cited or alluded to in the Synoptic Gospels and in Acts, Hebrews and Revelation as a prophecy in the process of fulfilment.⁷⁷ There are four clear citations of Psalm 2: one is of verses 1–2 and three are of verse 7.

In Peter's prayer in Acts 4:24–31, recalling the hostility against Christ within the city of Jerusalem, Ps. 2:1–2 is cited in verses 25–26, using it to refer generally to the hostility of the Gentile peoples but (in verse 27–28) applying this to Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and the Jews. The parallels are clear. The geographical setting in each case is Jerusalem and in each case the opposition is against God's anointed one (termed *christos* in both the psalm and Acts).⁷⁸

Acts 13:32–27 is a speech of Paul at Antioch, and the focus is now on the resurrection. Here Ps. 2:7 is used as part of a **catena* of psalms to demonstrate that Christ has fulfilled the 'prophecies' of David and Isaiah. It is claimed that the one addressed as God's Son is not in fact David (who 'experienced corruption' and only received the promise) but Christ, hidden in the words of the psalm. It is an unusual use of the verse of this psalm: perhaps what is intended is an image of the 'enthronement' of Christ, through his resurrection.

Two other **catenae* which cite Ps. 2:7 are found in Hebrews. Heb. 1:5–13 is part of a longer passage (1:5–2:18) demonstrating Christ's superiority over the angels. Ps. 2:7 (along with 2 Sam. 7:14, or perhaps Ps. 89:26) is used in verse 5:

For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you'? Or again, 'I will be his Father, and he will be my Son'?

Several other texts are interwoven here, reminding us of 4Q174 in the **Dead Sea Scrolls*.⁷⁹ Psalms 2 and 110 are particularly important: each psalm speaks of a Davidic king and the intimate relationship between God and king refers now to Christ. The same two psalms are cited again together in Heb. 4:14–5:14, where the writer seeks to demonstrate Christ's superior role not only as King but also as the great High Priest. Here, Heb. 5:5–6 cites Ps. 2:7 alongside 110:4. This seems to have been influenced by the tradition of two coming Messiahs, one

⁷⁷ See the chart of references in Janse (2009: 80).

⁷⁸ See Weren 1989: 197.

⁷⁹ See Brooke 1985: 209–10.

royal and one priestly: so this shows Jesus' royal rule and sacral role which is now located in a Heavenly Court and a Heavenly Temple.⁸⁰

There are also several allusions to Ps. 2:7 in the accounts of the Baptism and Transfiguration. Here this verse provides an echo for the celestial voice which ratifies the authority of the Son and his intimate relationship with God. In Mk. 1:11 ('and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my Son, the beloved: with you I am well pleased"'). The verse is alluded to again in the Transfiguration, near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, thus forming a fitting commentary on Jesus' earthly ministry.⁸¹

Other allusions to Psalm 2 are found in the book of Revelation; these take up the theme of the hostility of the nations expressed in verses 1–2 and 8–9 of Psalm 2. Revelation 2:26–27 uses the imagery in Ps. 2:8–9 in its references to the 'rod of iron' and the shattered pots: this is in the context of God's vindication of those who remain faithful in the church of Thyatira, alongside a promise that they will rule over the Gentiles.

So in the Synoptic Gospels Psalm 2 serves as a commentary on Jesus' earthly ministry; in Acts, it serves to interpret the cross and resurrection; in Hebrews, it illustrates further Christ's eternal Sonship; and in Revelation, it is used to illustrate God's coming kingdom through Christ his Royal Son.⁸²

After the New Testament period, Psalm 2 is often used to establish a particular point of doctrine. The apologist *Irenaeus in *Proof of Apostolic Preaching* 49 (c. 180), uses verses 7–8 alongside Ps. 110:1–2 to demonstrate Christ is the Son of God and King of all:

'These things were not said of David; for neither over the Gentiles nor over the utmost parts did he rule, but only over the Jews. So then it is plain that the promise to the Anointed to reign over the utmost parts of the earth is to the Son of God...'⁸³

Similarly in *Hippolytus' use of Psalm 2 the words of the psalm almost disappear and what we see and hear instead is the suffering and death of Christ.⁸⁴

We now turn to *Jerome's Latin translation of this psalm. Given the more muted Messianic emphasis in the *Septuagint*, which was one of Jerome's key

⁸⁰ See the discussion of this passage in Janse (2009: 119–224).

⁸¹ Other occurrences are in Luke 3.22 (the Baptism) and 9.35 (Transfiguration) and in Matt. 3.17 and 17.5. For a further discussion of these verses see Gillingham 2013c: 39–43.

⁸² See Watts (1990: 82) for a similar summary to this; also Bons 1995: 168–71.

⁸³ Taken from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/irenaeus/demonstr.toc.html>.

⁸⁴ Taken from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05.iii.iv.i.v.ii.html>. For an extract of the text, see Gillingham 2013c: 48–49.

sources, Jerome made a theological compromise in some parts of the **Vulgate* translation of this psalm. This is best seen in verses 6–9, which in the Hebrew is a dialogue between God and the king, but in Greek is flattened to become reported speech by the king about God.⁸⁵ The Latin follows this reading, so that in verse 6 he speaks on his own authority: ‘*ego autem constitutus sum rex ab eo super Sion montem sanctum eius*’. The adherence to the Greek follows throughout the rest of the psalm. The odd expression in verse 12 (literally, from the Aramaic, ‘kiss the son’) which in the Greek is read as ‘seize instruction!’ is the same in the Latin which reads ‘*adprehendite disciplinam*’ or ‘accept instruction [discipline]’).

Despite this, *Augustine applies a thoroughgoing Christological approach to Psalm 2.⁸⁶ Verses 1–3 are about ‘the Lord’s persecutors’ raging against Christ the Messiah; verse 4 concerns God’s laughter—in pleasure of those saints who will partake in the future victory achieved by Christ, and (verse 5) in derision of those refuse to know him. Verse 6 ‘is obviously spoken in the very person of our Lord Jesus Christ’: Zion is the Church, and Christ announces Himself as King over His Church.

*Cassiodorus starts his commentary on Psalm 2 in a similar manner to Psalm 1. First, the classification of the psalm: this is in his second category of psalms which offered insights into the nature of God the Father. Then, the number two: just as Psalm 1 spoke of the *Oneness* of the Two Natures of Christ, so Psalm 2 speaks of *two* monads, the one who is Creator, the other who is created.⁸⁷ In this way Cassiodorus instructs the faithful about *Chalcedonian orthodoxy.⁸⁸

*Bede’s selection of verses for his Abbreviated Psalter is made with the instruction of the monastic community at Jarrow in mind: only the last three verses are selected—the instruction to the Gentile nations to learn wisdom and to serve the Lord in fear—thus omitting all the controversial elements about Christ’s two natures earlier in the psalm.⁸⁹

*Aquinas’s commentary on Psalm 2 sees the psalmist is speaking about Christ.⁹⁰ Accepting the (lesser known) tradition that Psalm 2 has the title ‘psalm of David’, Aquinas notes how David’s kingdom is a prefiguring of the kingdom of Christ. So the tribulations described in the psalm can be read on two levels—literally, against David, and typologically, against Christ. In the context of the

⁸⁵ See p. 26 (on **Septuagint* for Psalm 2).

⁸⁶ The following summary and citations are taken from Quasten and Burghardt (1960: 25–30).

⁸⁷ See Gillingham 2013c: 96–99; also Walsh 1990: 56 and 67.

⁸⁸ Walsh 1990: 68.

⁸⁹ See Ward 2002: 12.

⁹⁰ Taken from http://www4.desales.edu/~philtheo/loughlin/ATP/Psalm_2.html.

more blatantly anti-Jewish exegesis in other commentaries at this time, this is a different approach.⁹¹

*Nicholas of Lyra's approach to Psalm 2 is in effect a dialogue between *Rashi and of the New Testament. So, first, the psalm is about David and the wars with the Philistines; and because David was the first ruler of Israel he could rightly have be understood as 'the firstborn' (verse 7). But then, using the fact that in Hebrew tradition this psalm does not have a title, Nicholas then suggests that the psalm was never seen in Jewish tradition as referring to David, but to one greater than David. This then leads to a citation of Acts 4:25–28, where the first two verses of this psalm are seen to concern not David, but Christ.⁹²

Psalm 2 offers us a good example of the progression in *Luther's thinking: in his first commentary (1513–1516), Psalm 2, following Augustine, is applied to Christ alone, as Luther worked out systematically his theology of redemption within the psalms.⁹³ The second commentary (1518–1519) is more specific on verses 1–2; based upon Acts 4, this refers to Herod, Pilate, the Jews and the Gentiles as 'enemies' of Christ. His experiences with the church's leaders at Worms only two years previously is evident here: 'Anyone who wishes to be a sincere Christian... will suffer his Herods, Pilates, rulers, kings, Gentiles, and other people who rage against him, meditate vain things, set themselves against him, and take counsel together... But he who sits in heaven laughs at them, and the Lord has them in derision...'⁹⁴ His comments on verses 6, 7 and 12 make a clear distinction between the empty power of a monarchy and the spiritual power of the kingdom of Christ.⁹⁵

By March 1532, when Luther turned again to Psalm 2, the tone is notably harsher. In the short preface the enemies are now named as priests who make impious sacrifices, including the 'reprobate pope along with his doctors.' So through this psalm 'David... "console(s) and teach(es) the church about the spreading of Christ's kingdom in spite of the powers of the world..."⁹⁶ Verses 1–2 of this commentary focus especially on the adversaries of the sixteenth-century church.⁹⁷ Luther's overall view of this psalm is that if what the psalm says is true, then the allegations and aims of the papists are stark lies and folly.

*Calvin's reading starts with the psalm's context of the life of David, so making a break with earlier Christian exegesis. Calvin has a very different response

⁹¹ See http://www4.desales.edu/~philtheol/loughlin/ATP/Psalm_2.html.

⁹² See Gross-Diaz 2000: 123–34.

⁹³ See Goldingay 1982: 47–8; Holladay 1993: 192–3.

⁹⁴ See Oswald 1974: 321.

⁹⁵ See Oswald 1974: 328.

⁹⁶ See Pelican 1955: 4–6.

⁹⁷ See Pelican 1955: 41–2.

to Jewish tradition, using both Hebrew and *midrashic exegesis to highlight the importance of a historical David-centred reading, but is not dependent either upon rabbinical tradition or any Christological exegesis. Furthermore, Luther tends to see the Jews as enemies of the church; Calvin actually promotes Jewish exegesis and sees its emphasis on David as vital in feeding the faith of the Christian church. It becomes clear that Calvin *identifies* with the figure of David:

‘... As that holy king was harassed by the Philistines and other foreign enemies... so I can say as to myself, that I have been assailed on all sides... but have always had to sustain some conflict either from enemies without or within the Church... For although I follow David at a great distance, and come far short of equalling him ... yet if I have any things in common with him, I have no hesitation in comparing myself with him.’⁹⁸

But only half way through this section does Calvin start to write about David’s temporal kingdom as a shadow of Christ’s eternal kingdom. So the sonship declared in verse 7 first belongs to David ‘who could with propriety be called the son of God on account of his royal dignity’, but this also pertains to Christ, because he has been given a kingdom (as in verse 8) far greater than that of David. This approach continues to the end of the psalm.

Turning to Jewish liturgical reception, the use of this psalm is surprisingly more personal. For example, it is alluded to in *Berakot* 30b in the context of appropriate behaviour and posture in synagogue worship, remembering that one is ‘standing before the King’. And, like Psalm 1, it is also used for quasi-magical purposes in **Shimmush Tehillim*. It is to be written on a potsherd and thrown into the raging sea for deliverance from a storm: verse 9 (‘you shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel’) is the pertinent verse here. Here the holy name *Shaddai* (‘mighty God’) is found by extracting the consonants from verses 1, 2 and 9 of the psalm. The psalm is also deemed to be a remedy against headache. The first eight verses (aptly finishing with God’s calming of the raging of the nations), along with the Holy Name and the appropriate prayer, are to be written on pure parchment and hung around the patient’s neck.⁹⁹

In early Christian liturgy we may note the use of Psalm 2 in the Roman Rite, for use at *Matins on Christmas Day, where the *antiphon is from verse 7 (‘The Lord said unto me Thou are my Son, this day have I begotten Thee...’). Another use is for Matins on the Feast of the Epiphany, in celebration of the Baptism of Christ, where the antiphon is taken from the way the Gospels used 2:7 at

⁹⁸ See ‘The Author’s Preface’ at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.i.html>.

⁹⁹ See Foder (1978: 67–71) and for a citation of the prayers see Gillingham 2013c: 92.

Christ's Baptism: 'The Holy Ghost came in the form of a dove; the voice of the Father was heard, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

The Roman Rite also associated this psalm with Easter: it is prescribed for the *Nocturne on Good Friday and on Easter Day. For Good Friday the Easter antiphons use Ps. 2:2 ('the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed...'). whilst on Easter Day verse 7 is used: 'I desired of my Father, Alleluia... He gave me the Gentiles, Alleluia... for an inheritance, Alleluia.'¹⁰⁰ It is also prescribed for *Nocturne at the Feasts of the Invention of the Cross and the Exaltation of the Cross, the Feast of Spear and Nails, and the Feasts of Agnes and Agatha.

A contemporary liturgical use of Psalms 1, 2 and 3 being prayed or sung together is at the Additional Liturgy of *Tenebrae*, on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Saturday of Easter Week. This is a tradition of both Catholic and Anglican worship.¹⁰¹ Together the psalms witness to the battle between light and darkness, goodness and evil, and the final judgment of God over darkness. The three psalms are also read together at the *Nocturne for the Exaltation of the Cross in Orthodox and Catholic liturgy.

We start our assessment of the artistic reception of Psalm 2 with the **Utrecht Psalter*. Here the image is on fol. 2r, opposite Psalm 1 which is on fol. 1v.¹⁰² So the two images are seen alongside each other, and it is possible to see shared themes. Here the key figure is in the middle of the image, with a halo, standing on Mount Zion (verse 6), ruling over a group of people who stand to his right, as armed men, ready for war. This kingly figure is marked out as Jesus Christ, and the hand of God raised in blessing in the top right corner refers to the words addressed to this figure: he is God's 'son' (verse 7). On the left of the king, the Gentiles (also dressed as soldiers) conspire and rage (verses 1–3) and the demons in the top left of the illustration are laughing at their audacity (verses 4–5), shooting arrows into the sky and throwing down spears, routing the Gentiles and forcing them into some sort of pit (in the bottom left). The Christ figure is holding a rod which is about to break open an already cracked cooking pot, symbolising what will happen to the peoples on the left (verses 8–9). In the bottom right corner is a tree (not referred to in the psalm) and this denotes the words of blessing for the king found at the end of the psalm (verses 10–11, especially 11b).

¹⁰⁰ See Neale and Littledale I 1874–79 : 97.

¹⁰¹ See Neale and Littledale I 1874: 14–15.

¹⁰² <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=10&res=1&x=0&y=0>. Both psalms are found in Gillingham (2013c), plates 1 and 2.

Like Psalm 1, the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fols. 2v and 3r) has an anti-Jewish reading. Here there are two images.¹⁰³ The first, illustrating verses 1–2, and reinterpreting traditional Christian commentaries with the enemies as Herod and Pilate during the trial of Jesus, takes us not to the trial of Jesus but to the passion in the Garden of Gethsemane, where the betrayers nevertheless are still both Romans and Jews. The second image depicts Christ after his resurrection (illustrating verses 6–7 and 8–12), ruling over all those who had betrayed and opposed him.

The Byzantine **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 2v), illustrates how the images have been as much influenced by the **Gloss* as the text itself. That next to verse 7 is of the Nativity, and this is followed down the page to the bottom, where a stable, with an ox and ass, illustrate that the one pronounced Son of God is the incarnate Christ. But the image goes one stage further: the inscription across the top of the folio reads ‘woe to the sinful nation’, taken from Isa. 1:4, and is clearly an allusion from this verse to the ox and ass ‘who know the master’s crib’, whereas the disobedient people of Israel do not. The two figures at the very bottom suggest another two Jews who (like the rebellious nations in the psalm) do not know Christ, as Isaiah prophesied.¹⁰⁴

The **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 2r) shows, in the top right margin, two groups—one of two kings (presumably Herod and Pilate) addressed by a Jew, and one of three figures below, who appear to be Annas, Caiaphas and Christ.¹⁰⁵ This is again linked to the Christian commentaries on Ps. 2:2, where the nations who once threatened God’s anointed one are now the Jews and Romans opposing Christ. At the bottom right is a depiction of the nativity. Mary is on a bed, with Joseph next to her, and two protecting angels are hovering above. The empty manger is bathed in light, and close to it are a donkey and an ox: to the left, the baby Jesus is being bathed by two midwives. Further left is another angel announcing this birth to two shepherds.¹⁰⁶

One unusual depiction of Psalm 2 in art, not within a Psalter, is by the early Renaissance painter Piero della Francesca. The original frame of *The Flagellation* had the words ‘*convenerunt in unum*’ (‘they assembled together’) taken from Ps. 2:2, echoing the debates in Christian exegesis of this verse, that those who put Christ to death were Herod, Pilate and the Jews. The figures at the back, around the cross, certainly suggest this interpretation: Herod is wearing a turban and Pilate is seated, with some sort of staff. The conspiracy against Christ is mirrored in the three figures in the foreground: one is the Count of Urbino, also

¹⁰³ fol. 2v <https://goo.gl/PgxFC3> and fol. 3r <https://goo.gl/3MUQvc>. See also Gillingham (2013c), plates 7 and 8.

¹⁰⁴ See Plate 2.

¹⁰⁵ http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f002r. See Gillingham (2013c), plate 14.

¹⁰⁶ This composition is shared in the **Bristol Psalter*, and the **Barberini Psalter*.

conspired against and later murdered, and those with him are two of his betrayers. This is one of the few 'narrative' accounts of Psalm 2 in art, and it is an unusual one.¹⁰⁷

There are two important contemporary Jewish depictions of this psalm. One is by Marc *Chagall, in his *Psaumes de David*, a sketch which seems to be an intentional echo of Psalm 1.¹⁰⁸ The psalm has the title 'The Lord and His Anointed'. Here a figure, dressed as a Jew, but also a royal figure with a crown on his head, stands on a hill overlooking Jerusalem: this is represented by the Dome of the Rock and a church spire (or possibly a minaret). Coming towards him, out of the sky, is what seems to be an army on horseback driven by some demonic host. Above the figure is the sun, and in the middle of the sun is, again, the Torah: the figure stands resolute against an impending attack, because he is protected by the light of the Law (from Psalm 1). There are hints here, therefore, of the restoration of Jerusalem. Chagall has made both psalms speak of the struggles for Jewish identity through the Temple and Torah.¹⁰⁹

The depiction of Psalm 2 by Moshe *Berger is also linked to Psalm 1.¹¹⁰ Psalm 2 picks up some of the blue and purple hues of Psalm 1, but blends them with tinges of pink and ochre which frame the base of the image, giving the impression of a smouldering fire. Verse 6 ('I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill') is the key text, and although there is no figure in this image, the Hebrew calligraphy which both ascends from the base of the picture and descends in a thick cloud from the sky suggests a theophany: the letters, in purple and turquoise, are dense and jumbled, but the impression is of various oracles of assurance uttered from above which answer the cries of anguish from below. At the centre of the illustration are many thinly pointed turrets and towers, suggesting Jerusalem, and these reach up to the heavens, receiving the words which are descending upon the city. The verdant warmth of Psalm 1, with the Torah and Tree of Life at its heart, contrasts with the sharper images of ice and fire in Psalm 2, with Zion, the city of God, at its heart. So, albeit in a very different way, the complementary relationship of these two psalms is again implied.

Psalm 2 has been re-created by using words and well as images. One of the best examples of a more literal re-creation is by Philip *Sidney. Here, because the subject matter was the king, Sidney uses rhyming hexameters and trimeters to create 'heroic couplets' in order to imitate a royal style, emphasising the victory of the righteous king over the wicked nations. An extract of the first half

¹⁰⁷ This is now in the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche in Urbino, Italy. See <http://www.italian-renaissance-art.com/Piero-della-Francesca.html> for a copy of this painting.

¹⁰⁸ On Chagall and Psalm 1, see p. 21.

¹⁰⁹ See this image in Gillingham (2013c), plate 33.

¹¹⁰ See this image in Gillingham (2013c), plate 35.

of the psalm makes this clear; the enjambments between almost every pair of lines in each psalm is particularly effective in stressing the relentless continuity of the psalm:

What ails this heath'nish rage? What do these people mean
To mutter murmurs vain?
Why do these earthly kings and lords such meetings make
And counsel jointly take
Against the Lord of Lords, the Lord of everything
And his anointed king?
'Come let us break their bonds,' say they, and fondly say
And cast their yokes away.
But he shall them deride, who by the heav'ns is borne,
He shall laugh them to scorn...¹¹¹

John *Milton set Psalm 2 to Italian tercets, with a *terza rima* beginning in the fifth line, which speaks of the deposition of kings and powers. The poem has an internal continuity, being set in a 10-10-10-10 rhythm.

Why do the Gentiles tumult, and the Nations
Muse a vain thing, the Kings of thèarth upstand
With power, and Princes in their Congregations
Lay deep their plots together through each Land,
Against the Lord and his Messiah dear?
Let us break off, they say, by strength of hand
Their bonds, and cast from us, no more to wear,
Their twisted cords: he who in Heaven doth dwell
Shall laugh, the Lord shall scoff them, then severe...¹¹²

Again the use of enjambments, a notable difference from the Hebrew, Greek and Latin, is an effective way of maintaining the unremitting flow of the psalm.

Musical adaptations of Psalm 2 lack detailed evidence before the sixteenth century. We know of a version of the introit *antiphon from Ps. 2:7 for the night before Christmas ('The Lord said to me: You are my Son, this day I have begotten Thee...') in *Gregorian plainchant, but there is little else documented.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Hamlin (ed.) 2009:11–12.

¹¹² Taken from http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/psalms/psalm_1/index.shtml and http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/psalms/psalm_2/index.shtml.

¹¹³ For a fuller account, see Gillingham 2013c: 200–204.

But from the sixteenth century onwards there are many examples, not least in metrical form. Thomas *Tallis used Psalm 2 as his third choice, after Psalm 68: its title is '*The third doth rage: and roughly brayeth*.'¹¹⁴ The contrast between the first two psalms is deliberate: Psalm 2 undoubtedly 'rages' in forceful rising fourths, whilst Psalm 1 ('*he first is meek*') is more sustained and reflective.

Like Psalm 1, metrical psalmody allows for some explicit Christianising, and again Isaac *Watts offers a good example. Just as Psalm 1 ended with a specifically Christian appropriation, so too does Psalm 2:

Be wise, ye rulers, now,
And worship at his throne
With trembling joy, ye people, bow
To God's exalted Son.

Hymnody can be even more free in its adaption of an ancient text. Charles *Wesley, who acknowledged his debt to Watts' *Psalms of David*, wrote a hymn 'The Kingship of Christ', but it requires some detailed knowledge of Psalm 2 to recognise its influence. This version is sung frequently in Methodist churches, associated mainly with the Feasts of Ascension and Transfiguration, but few would know its source:

Jesus, the conqueror, reigns,
In glorious strength arrayed,
His kingdom over all maintains,
And bids the earth be glad.
Ye sons of men, rejoice
In Jesus' mighty love,
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice,
To him who rules above.

Extol his kingly power,
Kiss the exalted Son
Who died, and lives, to die no more,
High on his Father's throne;
Our Advocate with God,
He undertakes our cause,
And spreads through all the earth abroad
The victory of his cross...¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ See Gillingham 2013c: 219 and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/profiles/tallis.shtml>.

¹¹⁵ Taken from www.ccel.org/w/wesley/hymn/jwg0277.html?scrBook=Ps&scrCh=2-2&scrV=0-0.

Other musical versions of this psalm are not intended for congregational participation. Henry *Purcell, who served both the royal court and, from time to time, the secular theatre (especially during the Commonwealth when his musical career both at the Chapel Royal and at Westminster Abbey was interrupted) composed ‘Why do the Nations?’ between 1683 and 1684, just before the accession of James II. Although this was a sacred anthem for the royal court the political overtones are all too clear.

By the eighteenth century performances of Psalm 2 started to take place in the concert hall rather than the synagogue or church. The psalm was set, a number of times, uniquely for theatrical purposes, by George Frideric *Handel. It was after 1711 that Handel, as composer for the Hanoverian English court, used this ‘royal psalm’ in a more theatrical way. The *Brereton Psalm 2* (‘a Protestant Version of the Second Psalm’) was written in 1715 as a response to the Jacobite rebellion against George I.¹¹⁶ Psalm 2 was again used at the end of the fourth Act of his oratorio *Athalia*, taken from Jean Racine’s play *Athalie*, which was performed in Oxford in 1733, on the occasion when Handel was recommended for an honorary doctorate by the University. This time the psalm, as part of the whole oratorio, served implicitly to support the more Jacobite sentiments in that city: Athalia, daughter of the wicked king Ahab (2 Kings 8) is presented as a tyrant queen who usurps the throne, but whose reign comes to an abrupt end when a rightful heir replaces her. The choral interlude using verse 2 fits the appropriate theme of the wicked attempting to oppose God’s reign on earth through his ‘anointed one’: the psalm again serves a political purpose more than a theological one.¹¹⁷

Psalm 2 was also used politically in Handel’s *Occasional Oratorio* performed at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden in 1746, in response to the 1745 Jacobite rebellion against George II: set in three Acts, with forty-four movements, Psalm 2 ‘Why do the Nations Tumult?’ is the fourth movement of Act 1, set as a Bass Solo (with appropriate militaristic woodwind interpolations followed by trumpets and drums). It is hinted at again in the commanding Bass Aria of the twelfth movement of Act 1, ‘His sceptre is the rod of righteousness’. Its final appearance is in the last movement of Act 3, sung by the full Chorus: ‘Blessed are they that fear the Lord’. Much of this oratorio actually re-used older material—some from *Israel in Egypt* and some from *The Messiah*. The reception was not as rapturous as the then impecunious Handel had hoped.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ See Smith 1995: 216–7; Rooke 2012: 53–73, especially pp. 65–6.

¹¹⁷ Rooke 2012: 53–73, especially pp. 65–6.

¹¹⁸ New College Choir, Oxford with Robert King (conductor) and the King’s Consort Choristers have recorded a version of *Handel: The Occasional Oratorio* on the Hyperion label B000002220 (2000).

By far the best known of *Handel's versions of this Psalm is from his *Messiah*, performed in Dublin in 1741. Psalm 2 is used continuously in Part Two, Movements 40–43. The first two verses ('Why do the nations so furiously rage together...') are a Bass Aria; verse 3 ('Let us break their bonds asunder...') is sung as a Chorus; verse 4 ('He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn...') is a Tenor Recitative; and verse 9 ('Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron...') is a Tenor Aria, anticipating the jubilant mood of the Hallelujah Chorus (from Revelation 19) which brings Part Two to its fitting climax—that the Messiah has conquered death and has risen.¹¹⁹ So the previously political appropriation of Psalm 2 is here replaced with an overt Christological reading: it is somewhat ironical that the subsequent reviews which hailed this as Handel's greatest oratorio were reflections on a work which was as much personal and cathartic for the composer as designed to please others.

Another example of the use of Psalm 2 in the concert hall is by Felix *Mendelssohn. This is in one of his choral works, and his Jewish-Christian background meant that large-scale choral cantatas of psalms were an obvious choice. Mendelssohn's version of Psalm 2, as part of a composition of three psalms (also 43 and 22) designed both for soloists and a double chorus, was composed between 1843 and 1846, published in 1848 and performed in 1849, shortly after his death. This was an ambitious arrangement of *Luther's version of Psalm 2, moving between an animated eight-part *antiphonal composition to a more simple arrangement for single voices, and ending with a confident four-part Canon in the final *Gloria*.¹²⁰

The arrangement of Psalm 2 by the English composer Ralph *Vaughan Williams could not be more different. Originally a composition for the Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester Cathedral in 1910, Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, using two string orchestras and a string quartet was an interpretation, in three movements, of the third mode on Psalm 2 by *Tallis himself. This arrangement had already been used by Vaughan Williams in 1906 when he was editing *The English Hymnal*, as the accompaniment to Joseph *Addison's *When Rising from the Bed of Death*. *Fantasia* was revised again in 1913 and 1919. The melody has been used as a theme tune for a number of films since the 1990s, including *The Passion of Christ* (2004), where the

¹¹⁹ For a website with access to *Handel's compositions of psalms see <http://www.classicalarchives.com/handel.html> It is impossible to list just one recording: see <http://www.classicalarchives.com/work/11524.html> which lists some of the best. To hear a full performance, see www.youtube.com/watch?v=imLgyjxTLqo (June 2012: accessed September 2012).

¹²⁰ See <http://www.classicalarchives.com/work/93610.html>. For a critical performance of these three psalms, see 'Mendelssohn: Sacred Choral Works' by the choir of Trinity College Cambridge (conductor Richard Marlow) Chandos Records 2006 CHAN 10363.

militaristic and nationalistic elements in the psalm served a more sceptical theological purpose.¹²¹

Another secular performance of Psalm 2 is by the American Jewish émigré, Leonard *Bernstein. The invitation to compose a piece for the Chichester Cathedral Festival ‘with a hint of *West Side Story*’ was an interesting challenge, and Bernstein almost certainly used *Stravinsky’s *Symphony of Psalms* (composed in 1930) as a prototype.¹²² The first four verses of Psalm 2 are at the end of the second movement: they create an aggressive and discordant piece, with an agitated, percussion-dominated, increasingly frenzied beat, sung only by a male chorus. This piece had actually been discarded from the opening of *West Side Story*—it was originally called ‘Mix’—but here the words, in Hebrew, narrated the crisis of Jewish and Christian faith which was now so clearly apparent in post-war Europe and America, and the musical medium evoked not so much the hope of peace as the ongoing threat of war.

The last few musical examples illustrate the way Psalm 2 was used to echo universal concerns about war and peace. A reaction against this use is found in the same kind of historical-critical scholarship which refuted the more universal adaptation of Psalm 1.¹²³ The nineteenth-century German commentator, Wilhelm de Wette, for example, argues that the contents of Psalm 2—especially references to the oppressive world dominion of the king—have no correlation with the reigns of any known Jewish king, and certainly not David nor Solomon; but, unlike Psalm 1, this psalm cannot be given a Christian interpretation either, as Jesus Christ was a suffering Messiah ‘whose kingdom was not of this world’.¹²⁴ Similarly another nineteenth-century commentator, Bernard Duhm, argues that the ‘world rule’ in Psalm 2 contradicted all known experience: it was not even fulfilled by ‘christliche Rom’. Hence an ‘eschatological’ reading is the only one which takes any real meaning from the exaggerated claims of this psalm with its imagined utopia.¹²⁵

So is Psalm 2 relevant at all in contemporary reception? Here David Clines offers a most provocative response. Applying his well-known ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’, he questions both the ‘world of the text’ and the scholarly tradition which has uncritically accepted it. The ‘world of the psalm’ is about a conflict—‘between Yahweh, his anointed one and the poet on the one hand, and the nations and rulers on the other hand’.¹²⁶ Looking at the psalm through the eyes

¹²¹ For the performance of this psalm, see www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RCZFwDbFko.

¹²² On *Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms*, http://www.proarte.org/note/*Bernstein.html.

¹²³ See de Wette and Duhm on Psalm 1 on p. 24.

¹²⁴ de Wette 1929: 89.

¹²⁵ Duhm 1922: 6–13.

¹²⁶ D.J.A. Clines 1995: 245.

of those nations who in the imagination of the psalmist have been subjected to an Israelite king, Clines notes how the Israelite king has a divine imprimatur to deal ruthlessly with any possible rebellion. Clines asks why we view this psalm only through the eyes of Yahweh and his anointed one, assuming it was the Israelite king's right to dominate rebellious foreign nations: we rarely question this as an appropriate ideology.¹²⁷ Christians are as guilty of condoning the world-view of the psalm as are Jews; indeed, by identifying Christ with the Israelite king, the problem is exacerbated. Clines asks: 'What is an appropriate response to assertions of national dependence and claims to national self-determination...?'¹²⁸ He offers a partial answer: '...while Israel is very happy to have been liberated itself, this psalm does not want anyone else to be liberated.' The result is the perpetuation of a political nationalism and religious exclusivism: 'The text has been chanted by millions of the faithful over two millennia, sublimely supporting, *inter alia*, papal authority, the divine right of kings and the British empire too...'¹²⁹ Clines thus challenges readers who unthinkingly accept the ideology within Psalm 2, without considering the political and social consequences.

Alistair Hunter also raises questions about the world view of Psalm 2:

'The messiah indicated by Psalm 2 is clearly a powerful military figure, merciless towards his enemies, but a source of succour to his friends. Vengeful and despotic, he is as careless of his defeated victims as a potter of damaged vessels: they are fit only for scrap... There is no suffering messiah here, no gentle victim blessing his enemies and praying for his persecutors.'¹³⁰

Hunter observes, somewhat differently from Clines, how the psalm was originally about a Jewish sect within a pagan world, but has since also been used by 'the secular power which is Christendom', which in turn results in the forging of an alliance with the nations whose hatred for the Jews culminated in the Holocaust.¹³¹ Hence violence turns back on itself: the perpetrators become the victims: so 'Zion' in the psalm later becomes 'Zionism' and a reborn Israel, but also the *Al Quds* of Muslim tradition as imagined in the rhetoric of Hamas, and the vision of Jerusalem in Christian apocalyptic.¹³² Like Clines, Hunter asks what can therefore be taken from this psalm. He concludes with a pertinent question: 'Am I the problem, or part of the answer?'¹³³

¹²⁷ D.J.A. Clines 1995: 257–60.

¹²⁸ D.J.A. Clines 1995: 268.

¹²⁹ D.J. A. Clines 1995: 275.

¹³⁰ A.G. Hunter 1999: 111.

¹³¹ A.G. Hunter 1999: 114.

¹³² A.G. Hunter 1999: 115–6.

¹³³ A.G. Hunter 1999: 117.

So, like Psalm 1, the reception of Psalm 2 also reflects a more recent tendency to transcend the more disputatious uses of the psalm, affirming a more radical and universal message. As these psalms provide a combined entry into the Psalter, this suggests that other psalms might also be read in this way. Whilst recognising the importance of integrity in the history of Jewish and Christian responses to different psalms, this third approach, which seeks creatively a way of ‘universalising’ the message of the psalms, is an important theme in what follows.

PSALMS 3–41: THE FIRST DAVIDIC PSALTER

This collection of psalms—other than 10 and 33—is distinguished from the first two psalms because of the heading ‘Of David.’¹³⁴ Overall it can be divided into four smaller collections, one of twelve psalms (3–14), two of ten psalms (15–24; 25–34) and a final collection of seven psalms. An early stage of reception can be seen in the way that extra details are added to these Davidic headings: for example, we read of a ‘*Mizmor* of David’ (for example, 3–6, 8, 9, 12–13), a ‘*Miktam* of David’ (16), a ‘*Prayer* of David’ (17) or a ‘*Maskil* of David’ (32).¹³⁵ Other psalms add further biographical details which loosely correspond with the books of Samuel (Psalms 3, 7, 18). In some cases a title runs through a sequence, as with Psalms 3–6, which are all headed ‘*Mizmor*’. Other psalms have further superscriptions indicating that they have been brought together to be performed to music, prescribing specific stringed and wind instruments (e.g. Psalms 4–9). Also linked to performance, several psalms are entitled ‘by the leader’ (e.g. Psalms 4–6, 8, 9, 11–14): in some versions this is translated as ‘for the choirmaster.’¹³⁶

¹³⁴ This could in fact mean ‘about David’ or ‘for David’. Only Psalms 10 and 33 lack this heading.

¹³⁵ ‘*Miktam*’ implies a reflective psalm; and ‘*Miskal*’, a psalm of instruction. ‘*Mizmor*’ probably means a hymn. We shall look more closely at these titles in the commentary on Book Two on pp. 257–58 and 302–3.

¹³⁶ The Greek translates this quite differently (‘for the end’): it seems to have less of an interest in the musical performance, as many of the Hebrew terms are also read in a different way, as we shall see below.

Psalms 3–41 form one of three ‘Davidic Psalters.’ It is the longest, with thirty-nine psalms. The ‘Second Davidic Psalter’ (Psalms 51–72) comprises twenty-two psalms, and the ‘Third Davidic Psalter’ (Psalms 138–45), just eight. Two other smaller groups with Davidic headings are also evident (101–103; 108–110) and there is also the odd isolated psalm with a Davidic heading above it (for example, 132). The figure of David therefore heads up almost half of the 150 psalms in the Psalter: even though he may not have been the actual author of these psalms, reception history testifies to his role as a figure of exemplary piety—a motif which Jews and Christians have read in many different ways.

Taken as a whole, Book One includes psalms with a variety of styles and from a variety of different settings: most are personal complaints and petitions to God, and four (Psalm 8, 19A, 29 and 33) are hymns praising God as Creator. In different ways they seek to provide models for prayer when *experience* (of illness, harsh and malicious words, feelings of guilt, and persecution) flies in the face of *faith* in a loving, protecting creator God.

Psalms 3–14: Praying by Night and Day

Psalms 1 and 2 were concerned with the conflict between the righteous and the wicked; Psalm 2 was about the conflict between the 'anointed one' and the nations. In Psalms 3–14, exemplified by the longer title over Psalm 3, we come to the conflict between 'David' and his enemies. 'Torah' (Psalm 1), 'Messiah' (Psalm 2) and 'Psalm of David' (3) thus introduce three key themes in the Psalter.¹³⁷

But, as the first stage of the reception of the psalms, why should this particular group of twelve psalms have been brought together? It is interesting that in such a personal collection, Psalms 3 and 14 both end with prayers for the restoration of the entire people ('May the blessing be on your people!' [3:8]; 'When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people' [14:7]). It is also noteworthy that the second psalm and second to last psalm in this collection each begin with the cry 'How Long?' (4:2, twice; and 13:1–2, four times). This collection has been organised so that five psalms of lament (3–7) are followed by a hymn to God as Creator (8) which is then followed by five other psalms of lament (taking Psalms 9–10 as one psalm, with a continuous acrostic form).¹³⁸

By taking into account the headings of the psalms in the Hebrew and balancing this with the contents, it is possible to see how, in this first stage of reception, these more personal 'Davidic prayers' came to be used publicly in the liturgy of the Second Temple. This can be discerned further in the first part of this collection, where there is a clear alternation between psalms which focus on the hope for God's care during the day and then during the night. Psalm 3:5 is a morning psalm;

¹³⁷ Cite Weber 2010: 834–5.

¹³⁸ Cite Barbiero 1999: 63–64.

Ps. 4:8, by contrast, indicates that this psalm about God's care at night; Ps. 5:3 takes us back to the morning; Ps. 6:6, to night. Psalm 7:11 remembers God's care day by day; whilst Ps. 8:3 reflects on God's care at night. Again, the use of these psalms for private and public prayer was an important motive in creating this collection.

Psalm 3: A 'Morning Psalm'

Psalm 3 comprises both petitions and confidence in God. Here, unlike most other psalms in this collection, the heading gives no evidence of musical use (although the threefold **selah* at the end of verses 2, 4 and 8 might suggest some sort of liturgy); instead the psalm is placed biographically in the life of David.¹³⁹ The reference to 'his son Absalom' links the psalm to events between 2 Samuel 15 and 19: perhaps the mockery (verse 2: see 2 Sam. 16:7), the danger by night (verse 5: see 2 Sam. 17:1) and the multitudes of people set against David (verse 6: 2 Sam. 15:13 and 17:11) might have suggested that the psalm could be read in this way. Psalm 3 has several resonances with Psalm 2: 'my holy hill' in 2:6 is now 'his holy hill' in 3:4, and the references to the adopted 'son' of God in 2:2 (also 2:12) links with the 'son' of David in the title of Psalm 3. The military language in 3:7 ('Rise up, O Lord!') and 3:8 ('Deliverance belongs to the Lord') is also reminiscent of the military overtones in 2:1–2, 8–9. So as the first stage of reception, the placing of these psalms next to each other is not accidental.

The Greek translation has two notable differences from the Hebrew original. One is the frequent change of tenses, so that, for example, verse 4 is read as if in the past, and verse 5, as if in the future. Another change is the word 'shield' (Hebrew *magen*) in our verse 3, which in Greek reads, more personally of God, as *antilēptōr mou ei* (you are my supporter/helper)—a detail which has been continued into the Latin which is '*tu autem Domine susceptor meus*' ('you, Lord, however, are my protector/defender'). The Latin, interestingly, reverses the tenses in verse 4, which are read as future, and in verse 5, which are read as past ('*Ego dormivi et soporatus sum exsurrexi...*': 'I have lain down and slept and got up again'). We shall see the significance of this shortly.

One of the problems in early Jewish readings of this psalm was anachronism: assuming David to have been the composer, then if David had not built the Temple, what is meant by God answering the suppliant from his 'holy hill' in verse 4? Kimḥi presumed this to be Mount Moriah, where a sanctuary (although not yet the Temple) might have been. A further chronological problem

¹³⁹This feature, with the exception of Psalm 18, is more common in the 'Second Davidic Psalter' (51–72) in Book Two.

was why this event of the conflict with Absalom, which was so late in David's life, appears so soon in this third psalm? The answer in **Midrash Tehillim* is that the psalm has been set here because it fits with the scene of the international uprising against the king in Psalm 2: here, with similar Gog/Magog proportions, we have a deeply personal revolt against the king.¹⁴⁰ A good deal of discussion is about the 'shield' (*magen*) in verse 3: is this like the 'shield of Abraham' (Gen. 15:1)? What might have been inscribed upon this shield? The conclusion suggests that the star of David was in fact David's true shield, protecting him from six points of the compass.¹⁴¹ The commentary on verse 5 also takes up a popular motif of David's harp blowing in the wind whilst the king slept, thus protecting him with psalms unsung.¹⁴²

Just as there is little evidence of this psalm at *Qumran, so too there is little of it in the New Testament. The mockery in verse 2 ('There is no help for you in God') is seen by some commentators to approximate the taunting of Jesus on the cross (Matt. 27:43) but there are no obvious citations.¹⁴³

Much early and medieval Christian commentary focusses on verses 2 and 5. *Origen was one of the first to read verse 2 in the light of the betrayals of Judas and Caiaphas, and also saw it in the light of the taunting of Christ on the cross.¹⁴⁴ By the time of *Bede this was clear: 'By David understand Christ; by Absalom, Judas Iscariot.' Bede saw this as one of only six psalms which clearly witnessed to the Passion of Christ.¹⁴⁵ Verse 5 was an important part of this. As early as *Clement of Rome (c. 96 CE) the references to 'sleeping' (past tense) and 'waking' (future tense) were seen to point to Christ's death and resurrection. *Irenaeus, in *Against Heresies*, understood this psalm to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over Judaism.¹⁴⁶ *Origen, too, reading the **Septuagint* version and its use of tenses, saw this as about Jesus' humanity in his death ('sleep') and about his exaltation ('awake'). *Augustine, pausing to make a brief comment about the irony of Absalom's name ('*patris pax*' or 'a father's peace') also saw the person of Christ in the psalm: using his 'prosopological' approach this is Christ as Body speaking in his distress and passion, and Christ as Head speaking in his exaltation.¹⁴⁷ Despising the literal reading here ('otherwise one is reduced to the silly supposition that the prophet wished to communicate to us the really remarkable news that he himself fell asleep and later woke up')

¹⁴⁰ See Feuer 2004: 73; Braude 1959 I: 50.

¹⁴¹ Feuer 2004: 6 n. 1.

¹⁴² See pp. 333–34 (on Psalm 57) and p. 363 (on Psalm 67) for similar readings on this theme.

¹⁴³ See Kraus 1988: 139.

¹⁴⁴ *Selection from the Psalms* 3:2–3 in PG 12:1120 and 1129, from ACCS VII 2008: 21–22.

¹⁴⁵ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 104–5.

¹⁴⁶ See www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.i.html.

¹⁴⁷ *Expositions on the Psalms* 3.1 in WSA 3 15:76 from ACCS VII 2008: 19.

Augustine stresses the use of the word 'ego' in the Latin: this is what Christ did of his own will.¹⁴⁸

*Cassiodorus, with his typical interest in the numbers of the psalms, takes a different approach. He notes how appropriate it is to have this 'third' psalm here, rather than later in the Psalter: 'Psalm 1 contains the Lord's moral aspect; Psalm 2, His natural aspect, that is, His human and divine being; and Psalm 3, by speaking of His resurrection, His reflective aspect... it was right that the psalm which embraced the power of the holy Trinity and the mysteries of the resurrection on the third day should hold the third place.'¹⁴⁹

*Aquinas, following earlier *Carolingian commentators such as Haimo of Auxerre, read this psalm on three levels: the story of David and Absalom; the passion and resurrection of Christ; and the personal appropriation in our own lives. On the third level, for Aquinas, the enemies were seen as both inner attacks, such as evil thoughts (common to the *Victorine reading of the enemies in the psalms) but also as those who were persecutors of the church.¹⁵⁰

*Erasmus also wrote a short paraphrase on Psalm 3 in 1525, which was really a sermon in genre. He noted its close relationship with Psalm 1 (an 'exposition', written in 1522) and Psalm 2 (a 'commentary', written in 1524). The 'enemies', he noted, are prevalent in all three psalms; in Psalm 3, however, these are more treacherous, being personal tormentors (and here Erasmus notes the sufferings of his previous twenty years in public life). Taking, like Aquinas, a threefold application of the psalm, Erasmus develops the wilderness theme throughout the three levels of reading: for David, this was seen literally, as the place where he encountered Absalom; for Christ, this was to be read both literally, in the temptations, and spiritually, on the cross; the reader should apply it more figuratively.¹⁵¹

*Luther, like Erasmus, held Psalms 1, 2 and 3 together. Psalm 2 was about the fury of both *Jews and Gentiles against Christ throughout his Passion; Psalm 3 he read as a complaint from Christ against the Jews. And just as Christ complained against his enemies, so too we are free to complain against all tyrants and heretics who attack the church. *Calvin's approach was similar to Luther's: this belonged to a group of psalms asking for protection against enemies, of which 3, 46, 114, 137 and 143 were paramount.¹⁵² In this way Psalm 3 provided an ideal means of being a 'mirror on the soul' (a phrase used by Calvin for many

¹⁴⁸ *Augustine in *City of God* 17.18 in FC 24:68–9 from ACCS VII 2008: 22.

¹⁴⁹ Walsh 1990: 72 and 68 respectively.

¹⁵⁰ On Haimo of Auxerre, see Waltke 2010: 187–8; on *Aquinas, see Waltke 2010: 190.

¹⁵¹ See Heath 2003: 365 and Bouyer 1969: 500.

¹⁵² See Gillingham 2008b: 142 and Mays 1990: 200.

of the psalms): by seeing David's feelings on account of the treachery of Absalom, we are given permission to give voice to our feelings too.¹⁵³

It is not surprising that a psalm so rich in Jewish and Christian commentary should play an important part in liturgy. It is used in Jewish worship for morning prayer: in **Pesuqe de-Zimra* Psalm 3 comes before Psalms 145–150 and sometimes after 1 Chron. 16:8–36. A curious use prescribed in the Kabbalistic **Shimmush Tehillim*—perhaps associating the enemies with illness rather than any external threat—is for 'severe headaches and backache': the psalm must be recited over olive oil to which salt is added, and the aching part of the body should be rubbed with the mixture.

In monastic tradition, Psalm 3 soon became an important morning psalm (again on account of verse 5) along with Psalms 63, 140 and 95; the wrestling with the enemies became associated with fighting with the demons of the night, and Ps. 3:5 became a means of catharsis and release from the experiences of the dark.¹⁵⁴ These associations also resulted in its use in the catholic rite of exorcism. The 'rising from sleep' imagery encouraged its associations with Easter, as seen by the eleventh century in illuminated Psalters from the West. The Rule of Benedict required it regularly at **Vigils* (51:15 was followed by reading/chanting Psalms 3 and 95, along with *glorias* and **antiphons*). By the Council of Trent in the middle of the sixteenth century, Psalm 3 was still the morning psalm in the **Divine Office*, and especially at Sunday Vigils.¹⁵⁵ It was also prescribed in the Roman calendar for the **Nocturne* on Easter Day, and for the Feast of the Invention and Exaltation of the Holy Cross: the Latin **antiphon* is, 'I laid me down and slept, and rose again, for the Lord sustained me. Alleluia!'

Many artistic representations reflect the commentaries and liturgies of their own tradition. The ninth century **Corbie Psalter*, for example, with its illuminated initials to each psalm, presents for Psalm 3 a tonsured and **nimbed* monk (itself unusual in **Carolingian Psalters*) being called to morning worship: his figure is in the letter 'D' (*Domine* is the first Latin word in the psalm) and at the top a hand emerges which is placed on his head, in blessing.¹⁵⁶

Many psalters focus on a more literal reading, depicting the conflict between David and Absalom, occasionally adding an image of **Christ-Logos* as the 'protector/defender' (from the Latin translation of verse 3) in the second of (usually) two illustrations. For example the **Theodore Psalter* (fols. 2v and 3r) has an image of David crowned, surrounded by soldiers holding lances and battle axes, fleeing from Absalom, who is mounted on a horse; the second

¹⁵³ Cited in Mays 1990: 200.

¹⁵⁴ See Evagrius of Ponticus, *On Prayer*, pp.83–88, in Waltke 2010: 185–6.

¹⁵⁵ See Gillingham 2008b:52; also Holladay 1993: 223; also Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 105.

¹⁵⁶ See Bessette 2005: 95–7.

image is of a rayed hand of God emerging from heaven, with a *nimbbed angel standing beside David, still crowned, but in bed.¹⁵⁷ The earlier *Carolingian Psalters, such as **Stuttgart* (fol. 3v) and **Utrecht* (fol. 2v) also use David and Absalom as a key image.¹⁵⁸ The ‘rising from sleep’ motif is found in an eleventh century illuminated manuscript lectionary held at the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels (9428: fol. 92v) which cites verse 5 and depicts three veiled woman arriving at the sepulchre, here represented as a sarcophagus, with its lid open and grave clothes within it.

More contemporary Jewish representations of this psalm also use a more historical reading. For example, Marc *Chagall’s etching of Psalm 3 for Vollard’s *Illustrated Bible* (1930, published in 1955) is also of David and Absalom. Moshe *Berger’s image also has the same motif. The artist comments: ‘One of the most tragic events in David’s life was that he had to flee from his son. The red letters [in Hebrew calligraphy] represent Absalom as a monster trying to swallow his fleeing father. But his scheme cannot succeed. That is the will of the Almighty.’¹⁵⁹

One telling account of this psalm in a poetic medium is by John *Milton. The heading is August 9th, 1653—a period when Milton produced Psalms 1–8 as an experiment in what could be heard, for example through versification, whilst struggling with his debilitating blindness. Psalm 3, like 4 and 7, is written in six-line stanzas. Milton has no compunction in naming God as his shield, and verse 5 is developed in a personal but not specifically Christian way:

...But thou Lord art my shield and glory,
 Thee through my story
 Thèxalter of my head I count
 Aloud I cry’d
 Unto Jehovah, he full soon reply’d
 And heard me from his holy mount.

 I lay and slept, I wak’d again,
 For my sustain
 Was the Lord. Of many millions
 The populous rout
 I fear no though incamping round about
 They pitch against me their Pavillions....’¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Fol. 2v http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f002v and fol. 3r http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f003r.

¹⁵⁸ For *Stuttgart*, see <https://goo.gl/GYVYii>; and for *Utrecht*, <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=11&res=1&cx=0&y=0>.

¹⁵⁹ See <http://themuseumofpsalms.com/the-museum/>; also http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=15141&showmode=Full.

¹⁶⁰ See https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/psalms/psalm_1/text.shtml.

Isaac *Watts' metrical psalm (1719) offers a more specifically Christian reading, especially in verses 7–8 which plays on images of death and resurrection:

Arise, O Lord, fulfil thy grace,
While I thy glory sing;
My God has broke the serpent's teeth,
And death has lost his sting.

Salvation to the Lord belongs;
His arm alone can save:
Blessings attend thy people here,
And reach beyond the grave.¹⁶¹

For good or ill, the use of paraphrase in metrical psalmody allows for artistic and theological freedom. Other similar versions hymns include 'Now that daylight fills the sky', translated from an old eighth-century manuscript and found in Latin in several medieval breviaries, and Bishop *Ken's 'Awake my soul and with the sun', written in the seventeenth century for Winchester schoolboys, loosely based on Psalm 3.¹⁶²

After the Reformation, metrical psalms were for the active participation by all present, rather than sung only by those gifted in chanting. These are very different from, for example, the **a capella* arrangement of verses 1–2 by *Orlando Gibbons: 'O Lord how do my foes increase' in about 1617. Heinrich *Schütz's version, from *Luther's translation some two or three years later, is a more lavish interpretation of verses 5–8, compared with the hymns noted above.

Two other musical arrangements, one from the seventeenth century and the other from this century, show the variety of readings possible from just seven verses. Henry *Purcell wrote '*Jehova, Quam multi sunt hostes mei*' ('Lord how many are my foes') as a motet for chorus, soloists, and continuo; this was probably composed for the private Roman Catholic chapel of Catherine of Braganza, Charles II's Queen, around 1684. It is innovative and bold in its use of harmony, yet its roots are in the traditions of *Tallis and *Byrd. It opens with a chorus representing the tens of thousands (verse 6) who, using the words of verses 1 and 2, pose as the psalmists' enemies. Tenor and baritone solos (here especially reflecting Italianate influence) respond by singing of God's power (verse 3), to which the chorus answers '*Respondit mihi*', repeated several times in polyphony, emphasising the urgent need for God's response (verse 4). Sopranos sing in parallel thirds 'For the Lord sustains me' (verse 5); this is followed by a bass solo

¹⁶¹ <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/Watts/psalmshymns.Ps.7.html>.

¹⁶² See J.R. Watson 2002: 32.

‘I am not afraid of ten thousands of people’, and the piece ends with a chorus in triple metre proclaiming God’s salvation and blessing.¹⁶³

If Purcell focusses more on the personal threat of the enemies, including those (like Absalom) close to the royal family, then John *Tavener’s interest is more about the use of the psalm in liturgy. His all-night ‘Veil of the Temple’ was first performed 2003, using music from Orthodox vigil service: Psalm 104 is used as an anthem along with some other six psalms, including Psalm 3, as well as other texts from Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, in at least six languages. This is the call to prayer for faiths throughout the world.¹⁶⁴ So again we might note how this psalm, like Psalms 1 and 2 before it and several psalms following it, can be used both within and beyond the two faith traditions which have received it.

Psalm 4: An ‘Evening Psalm’

Both in its contents and reception, Psalm 4 is could be seen as a ‘twin psalm’ with Psalm 3. The similar use of **selah* (which occurs only once more in this collection, at the end of Psalm 9) is found in both psalms, hinting at some liturgical use in each case. The phrase ‘there are many who say’ (verse 6) mirrors ‘many are saying to me’ in 3:2. The plea to be rescued from ‘my foes’ (*šaray*) in 3:1 uses the same root *šar* as the plea to be rescued from distress (*ba-šar*) in 4:1. Another shared issue seems to be the ‘vain words’ threatening the psalmist, spoken in 3:2 and reported in 4:2. ‘Crying’ and ‘answering’ are motifs in both 4:1 and 3:4. The presence of God in his sanctuary in 3:4 also has an echo in 4:5, with reference to the offering of sacrifices. The most obvious similarity, even in English, is the expression of confidence in God, whether waking or sleeping, in 4:8 and 3:5. One key difference is the title: here there is no biographical association; instead, the reference to musical instruments dominates.

The different translations in the Greek and Latin each give rise to specific emphases in later reception. The Greek translates ‘to the leader’ in the Hebrew as *eis to telos*—literally, ‘for the end’, giving the psalm some future orientation; furthermore, ignoring the reference to stringed instruments, it assumes this is simply a ‘psalmic ode’. The Greek also changes imperatives (such as ‘answer me!’ in verse 1) into the past tense: *eisakousen mou* means simply ‘he answered me’. Similarly in verse 6 the plea to God to ‘make his face to shine’ upon the suppliant is translated as ‘the light of your face was made a sign (literally, stamped) upon us, O Lord’. The mood of the psalm is similarly tempered by the

¹⁶³ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 117.

¹⁶⁴ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 251–2.

change of the Hebrew in verse 4 ‘Tremble and do not sin’ to ‘Be angry and yet do not sin’ in order to give a clear interpretation to this enigmatic command.¹⁶⁵ Finally (a point taken up by Christian commentators) the Greek adds ‘oil’ to the references to grain (corn) and wine in verse 7.

The Latin closely follows the Greek. The title is ‘*in finem*’ (‘for the end’) and again there are no references to musical instruments: this is now simply ‘*in carminibus*’—‘in verses’. The Latin translates the reference in verse 7 to the corn and wine (and, following the Greek, the oil) as ‘You have put joy in my heart more than (the joy from) the fruit of their grain and wine and oil’, thus contrasting divine joy with the temporal joy of the world.¹⁶⁶

The **Targum* understands the enigmatic Hebrew trembling to refer to the fear of God, not anger, so we read ‘Tremble because of Him and not do sin; say prayers with your mouth and petitions in your heart; pray upon your couch and remember the days of death. For ever.’¹⁶⁷ Verse 5, with its reference to sacrifices, offered a problem because of the destruction of the Temple and the impossibility of this form of worship, so it now reads: ‘Subdue your inclinations and it will be reckoned to you as sacrifices of righteousness.’¹⁶⁸

Jewish commentators have noted that whereas the previous psalm addressed God, here the psalmist addresses his enemies, and, despite the different heading, this follows Psalm 3 in referring to David’s flight from Absalom.¹⁶⁹ *Rashi, reading the Hebrew word translated as ‘leader’ as from a different root, *n-š-h*, ‘to be victorious’, saw this as a song in adversity whose singing would secure victory: this was David’s song of faith.¹⁷⁰ The reference to ‘pondering’ at night in verse 4 was seen as an allusion to the recital of the **Shema*, to keep the demons from entering the home.¹⁷¹ Verse 7, with reference to the ‘grain and wine and oil’ shows how creation also provides for the Gentiles: ‘even the dogs get their fill when the king holds his feast’. But how much more the provision for those who keep the 613 commandments: a lavish feast has been prepared for them.¹⁷²

The psalm is alluded to only once in the New Testament: ‘Be angry and do not sin’ is a surprisingly stark reading of the controversial verse 4, given the Greek translation noted above. The reference is in Eph. 4:26, and here there is no differentiation between ‘anger’ and ‘sin’. The equation between anger and sin

¹⁶⁵ See Pietersma 2000: 3.

¹⁶⁶ Ladouceur 2005: 60–1.

¹⁶⁷ The reference to ‘days of death’ rather than ‘be silent’ is due to the Hebrew verb *d-m-m* also meaning ‘to destroy’.

¹⁶⁸ See Stec 2004: 32.

¹⁶⁹ Feuer 2004: 82.

¹⁷⁰ Gruber 2004: 185; also Feuer 2004: 83.

¹⁷¹ Braude 1959 I: 73–4.

¹⁷² Feuer 2004: 88.

did however concern the church fathers. *Diodore of Tarsus, for example, provided an alternative reading: ‘Be angry and then trust God’s Providence and don’t sin again.’ John *Chrysostom wrote about ‘a right and wrong anger.’¹⁷³ Another controversial issue was how to understand the Greek translation ‘for the end’ in the heading of the psalm (Psalm 4 being the first of the fifty-five times this term is used). *Origen, for example, argued that this was to announce the victory of Christ ‘to end all evil.’¹⁷⁴ Another Christian concern was the phrase ‘let the light of your face shine on us’ in verse 6. *Didymus the Blind saw this as referring to Christ, as the image of the unseen God; this view is expressed in miniatures in the margins of some psalters, which illustrate David before the cross.¹⁷⁵ However, given the amount of discussion as to whether ‘sleeping and arising’ in Ps. 3:5 denoted the death and resurrection of Christ, it is interesting to find so little on this with respect to 4:8. *Eusebius is one of the few to comment thus: ‘even if grief, calamities, temptations, disasters are not lacking to me in this present life, nevertheless there is a future time for me in which I will depart from the body and sleep in peace.’¹⁷⁶

*Augustine and *Cassiodorus give particular attention to this psalm. Augustine, like Eusebius, reads verse 8 in a future tense: not ‘I rested and fell asleep’ but ‘I will rest and fall asleep—and put on incorruptibility (1 Cor. 15:54)’. Similarly, the preceding verse (‘grain, wine and oil’) Augustine reads as references to the sacraments of the church, all having their origins in the Passion of Christ—the Eucharist, and *Chrism. Hence ‘I will rest and fall asleep’ is the consequence of having partaken in the sacraments of Christ.¹⁷⁷ Augustine understands the speaker to be the voice of the church; this is developed by Cassiodorus, whose commentary, dividing the psalm into three, uses the feminine form throughout: first she asks for her prayer to be heard, then she warns the world it must abandon deceitful superstition, and finally she speaks of the great gifts bestowed on Christians.¹⁷⁸ And why, asks Cassiodorus, the number four? This is about the forces of the Gospels, sent to the four corners of the earth, which is itself marked by four seasons and four winds; it reminds us too of the four virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.¹⁷⁹

*Erasmus’s sermon (*concio*) on Psalm 4 was written in 1525; he minimises any musical comment (which of course neither the Greek nor Latin contained),

¹⁷³ See Hill 1998: 56–61.

¹⁷⁴ *Selections from the Psalms* 4.1 in PG 12:1133; from ACCS VII:26.

¹⁷⁵ Walter 1986: 279–80.

¹⁷⁶ *Commentary on the Psalms* 4:9–10 in PG 23:109,112 from ACCS VII:37.

¹⁷⁷ Waltke and Houston 2010: 213–15; Neale and Littledale I 1874–79:115.

¹⁷⁸ See Walsh 1990: 74. *Bede takes up the voiced of ‘Mother Church’ in the psalm, as she first asks that her prayers be heard, and then admonishes the Gentiles for their false superstition.

¹⁷⁹ Walsh 1990: 80.

arguing that Christians do God more honour by leading godly lives than by singing hymns and praises, reflecting a certain pre-Reformation *Humanist reading of the psalms.¹⁸⁰ *Luther, like Augustine, particularly valued this psalm. Verse 2 spoke to him, as it did to Augustine, about the enemies of the church. The final verse was important as he approached death: 'Ich lieg und schlafe ganz mit Frieden.'¹⁸¹ *Calvin, by contrast, uses both Kimḥi and Chrysostom in his own commentary, adapting the psalm for daily meditation and avoiding any references to life beyond death from verse 8.¹⁸²

Its liturgical use mirrors Psalm 3. The **Talmud* refers to verse 8 (made plural, 'he makes *us* lie down') as 'the long redemption'; this is an expression about the One Who spreads the tabernacle of peace over all Israel. Hence its use in the Evening Service.¹⁸³ Its use for evening prayer is also found in the monastic tradition: along with Psalms 91 and 134 this is used daily at *Compline, in both Roman and Orthodox Rites).¹⁸⁴ The Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council appointed Psalm 4 for evening use; so too the lectionary to the Book of Common Prayer; and in the Orthodox Church it is used as a gradual at daily **Vespers* on Monday, and at 'Great *Compline' throughout Lent.

Three themes are evident in the artistic representation of this psalm, each pertaining to the issues in translation and commentary noted earlier. The first is its associations not only with evening prayer but with life beyond death. The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 2v), and the related **Harley Psalter* (fol. 2v) and **Eadwine Psalter* (fol. 9r) each present the psalmist standing inside a sarcophagus, addressing two armed men who turn away from him. His left hand points to the *Christ-Logos in heaven, and his right hand points to the sarcophagus, hinting at the last words of the psalm ('in peace... I will lie down'). The 'speakers of vanity' are represented as those who bring offerings of wine and corn into a church or temple, and as those, with horses and dogs, who seem to be returning from a hunt.¹⁸⁵

A second theme focusses on the oppression of the enemies and the protection of David by the cross. This is found especially in Byzantine Psalters, linking this with the veneration of the cross in the context of *iconoclasm: **Theodore* (fol. 3r and 3v), **Khludov* (fol. 4r), and **Hamilton* (fol. 47r and 47v) make this especially clear. In the *Khludov Psalter* David bows before a medalion image of Christ on the cross, the 'sign' or 'image' of God's face shining on

¹⁸⁰ Waltke and Houston 2010: 219.

¹⁸¹ Prothero 1903: 16.

¹⁸² Waltke and Houston 2010: 221.

¹⁸³ Elbogen 1993: 87.

¹⁸⁴ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 110.

¹⁸⁵ For the *Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 2v) see <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=11&res=1&x=0&y=0> and for the *Eadwine Psalter* (fol. 9r) see <https://goo.gl/cBVtf0>.



FIGURE 1 Arthur Wragg, 'How long, my people, shall my honour suffer shame?' (Ps. 4:2)

his people (verse 6). The inscription in the margin 'David prophesies concerning the cross' makes this anti-Jewish rhetoric clear.¹⁸⁶

A third theme is the importance of living with integrity. The eighth-century **Stuttgart Psalter* has an illustration of the Eucharist, with scoffers and carousers surrounding the priest at the altar. This cleverly contrasts both verse four ('be angry and sin not) and verse five ('offer right sacrifices').¹⁸⁷ More recently, the twentieth-century artist, Arthur **Wragg*, offers a different social comment in his caption of verse 2: 'how long, my people, shall my honour suffer shame?'. The stark black and white image, from the 1930s, is of a pregnant girl sitting forsaken in an attic room¹⁸⁸ (Figure 1).

¹⁸⁶ See Corrigan 1992: 72–3.

¹⁸⁷ See <https://goo.gl/i8B4xY>.

¹⁸⁸ **Wragg* (1934): no p. nos.

Musical compositions of this psalm predominantly concern its use as an evening prayer. Orlando di *Lasso's arrangement of verses 7–8 (in Latin, 9–10) for three equal voices, John *Blitheman's '*In pace*', performed in the Chapel Royal between 1558–91, and Heinrich Schütz's '*Lord Hear My Prayer*' each testify to a less anguished restorative use of the psalm. The emphasis on peace is also apparent in hymns such as '*Before the ending of the day*', a translation of an early Latin hymn by *Newman, and '*Glory to thee my God this night*', by Bishop *Ken (with its repetition of '*Keep me, O keep me...*'), each purportedly inspired by the last two verses of this psalm and its continual use at *Compline.

The contrast of the artistic and musical interpretations of this psalm illustrate its dual reception: it can be read as a psalm of daily suffering and despair, or a night prayer of trust and hope, and like Psalm 3, it has the potential as a prayer for anyone to use.

Psalm 5: A 'Morning Psalm'

Psalm 5 has correspondences with Psalm 3 in being another morning psalm. It shares with both Psalms 3 and 4 the expression *we'attah yhwah / ki-'attah yhwah* 'But (for) you, O Lord' (3:3; 4:8; 5:12). It shares with Psalm 4 a similar musical heading in the Hebrew ('To the leader; for the flutes; A Psalm of David'). There are also similar references to prayer (4:1 and 5:2) and to the 'righteousness' of God (4:1 and 5:8). The conflict of faith and experience also place it close to Psalm 4, although the imprecation in verse 10 is the harshest thus far in the Psalter.

The immediate problem in the Greek is the translation of the headings. 'For the end' is again used instead of the NRSV translation 'to the leader', whilst 'for the flutes' (*'el-ha-nehilot*) is rendered as 'for inheritances' (*huper tēs chlēronomousēs*), reading the noun 'flute' as from the verb 'to acquire, obtain'. The Latin follows the same reading: *pro ea quae hereditatem consequitor* means 'on behalf of the one (feminine form) who acquires (divine) inheritance'.¹⁸⁹ This might explain in part the heading in the Syriac (*Peshitta) Psalter, which is 'A Prayer of David in the person of the Church when in the morning he went up to the temple of the Lord'.¹⁹⁰

The only other significant change is in verse 8 (verse 9 in Latin) where the **Vulgate* follows the Greek variation of the Hebrew: *dirige in conspectu meo viam*

¹⁸⁹ We shall see shortly how the fathers read these headings; it is interesting how this feminine form caused Augustine and Bede to see that this suggested it was the Church speaking. See Ladouceur 2005: 61–2.

¹⁹⁰ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 117.

tuam reads, literally, ‘direct my way in your sight’. This has had an interesting reception history. The whole of verse 8 (NRSV) was used in the first *Nocturne for the Office of the Dead; so the first word, ‘dirige’ came to refer to the recitation of the entire Office, and the obligation to pray for the dead. From this usage the word ‘dirge’ (as in funeral dirge) was derived.¹⁹¹

The psalm is found in part at *Qumran—indeed, as the first psalm in 4QPs^a in a sequence which continues up to Psalm 69. Verses 7–12 are in 4QPs^s and verses 8–12 in 4QPs^a (where one difference is in verse 10 where the singular rather than plural is used of the enemy). Verse 10 is also found in 4QCatenaA 10–11 line 5.¹⁹² But it is in later Jewish tradition, not least the *Targum, where variations are most evident. Part of the heading reads *nehilot* as ‘a swarm of bees’, thus suggesting the sounds made by stringed instrument which replicate the droning of bees. The main discussion in *Targum* is verse 7: ‘I will bow towards your holy temple’: like Psalm 3, the problem was that the temple would not have been built in David’s day, so the suggestion is that this refers to the sanctuary where the ark was kept (Shiloh, Nob or Gibeon).¹⁹³

Other Jewish commentators have similarly read the psalm historically, assuming a specific event in the life of David, as with Psalms 3 and 4. The enemy presumed this time is Ahithophel and the text is 1 Samuel 16 and 17; one whom David once trusted, like Absalom, becomes his enemy. So here the title ‘*nehilot*’ refers to David’s enemies droning around him like a swarm of bees.¹⁹⁴

The only allusion to this psalm in the New Testament is in Rom. 3:13, which uses verse 9 (‘for there is no truth in their mouths...’) as part of a *catena of many verses from the psalms to illustrate the universality of sin. The early fathers also read the psalm in a practical way. The dictum by *Athanasius summarises this well: ‘When you see the evildoers planning to lie in wait for you, and you wish your prayer to be heard, get up at dawn and say Psalm 5.’¹⁹⁵ But it was the psalm’s title which, as in Jewish tradition, created much interest: *Jerome, for example, notes that the Jews have failed to interpret properly ‘unto the end’ (as referring to Christ’s coming) and also, as from the Latin, ‘for her that obtains her inheritance aright’ (as referring to the voice of the Church).¹⁹⁶ From this, a common approach (for example, in *Augustine, *Chrysostom and *Cassiodorus) is to read the psalm through the feminine form, as the voice of

¹⁹¹ R.S. Thomas 1997: 29–30.

¹⁹² See Flint 1997: 220.

¹⁹³ Stec 2004: 33.

¹⁹⁴ See for example *Rashi, in Gruber 2004: 188. *Midrash *Tehillim* also reads *Nehilot* as ‘possessions’ and so the psalm is seen through the eyes of Moses and the promise of inheritance of land when in the wilderness. See Braude 1959 I: 80.

¹⁹⁵ See *Interpretation of the Psalms* referred to in ACCS VII: 38.

¹⁹⁶ This play on ‘inheritance’ contrasts sharply with *Midrash Tehillim*. See *Homily on Psalm 5* in FC 48:15–16, in ACCS VII: 39.

the church, with references to what the Bride (the church) will receive from the Bridegroom (Christ). For example, Cassiodorus reads verse 7 ('I will bow down to your holy temple') as the Church turning to Christ.¹⁹⁷ From this ecclesial reading it was possible to view the enemies as heretics: using verse 9 more specifically than Paul in Romans, Jerome writes that 'Arius, Eunomius and other heretics have tongues like arrows, jaws like empty tombs...'¹⁹⁸

An ancient setting for this psalm might be an early dawn ceremony where the suppliants entered the courts of the temple and prostrated themselves in the holy place.¹⁹⁹ Pertinently, verse 7 is one of the first psalms to be used at the morning service in **Pesuqe de-Zimra*; it is also used in the first prayer *Mah Tob* which starts with Num. 24:5 and also uses verses from 95:6 and 69:13.²⁰⁰ In Christian liturgy, verse 3 ('O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice') resulted in the use of the psalm at **Lauds*: the **Benedictine Rule* has always assigned this and Psalm 36 to be used at **Lauds* on Mondays. This became an established part of the **Divine Office*, and continued through the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council. Ironically, the more recent **Daily Office* had difficulty with verse 10, which was omitted on account of its imprecatory nature. Nevertheless, it became a regular **Matins* psalm in the 1559 Prayer Book, and in Orthodox liturgy it is one of the fixed psalms of the First Hour.

The reception history of this psalm in art and music is mainly Christian in its emphasis. Illuminated Psalters as early as the ninth century take up the idea that the voice of the church is heard in this psalm. The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 5r) depicts in two of its three images the church praying in view of her enemies (the heretics).²⁰¹ In fol. 5v, verse 7 is illustrated as the personified church entering the mystery of the God's Temple, whose side view prevents the viewer seeing the entrance.²⁰²

The references to lying in verses 4–6 and 9 became the subject of Byzantine Psalters. **Hamilton* (fols. 48r, 48v and 49r) depicts, in its second image, Christ, cross-nimbed, preaching the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:22 is the text) and denouncing those who did not do his will; alongside this is a figure holding a spade, standing beside an open sarcophagus ('their throats are open graves').

¹⁹⁷ On Chrysostom, see Hill, 1998: 78–94.; on Cassiodorus, see Walsh 1990: 85. On Christ as the Temple, see Evagrius of Pontus, *Notes on the Psalms* 5.8 AnSac2:455, ACCS VII:43.

¹⁹⁸ *Homily on Psalm 5* in FC 48:20 from ACCS VII:43–4.

¹⁹⁹ See for example Eaton 2003:74.

²⁰⁰ This group of psalms has also been found along the east and west walls of the fourteenth century synagogue at El Tránsito, Toledo.

²⁰¹ See <https://goo.gl/Kj4Qv2>.

²⁰² See <https://goo.gl/UcckfB>.

In the final image two men are being pushed from behind by a *nimbed angel, illustrating verse 10.²⁰³

In contemporary Jewish art, *Chagall's etching of this psalm is telling. David, crowned, is holding what seems to be lyre as he sings his prayer above crowds who seem to be aggressively opposed to him. Above him are the moon, the star of David and a protecting angel, as the morning watch for the redemption of Israel is awaited.

The associations of the whole of Psalm 5 with morning prayer in Christian liturgy have resulted in several musical arrangements of selected verses. For example, Orlando di *Lasso composed a piece (for SATTB on verses 2–6, in Latin), whilst Heinrich *Schütz composed two pieces for SATB, also, on this occasion, using the Latin, on verses 2–3 and 4–5. Psalm 5, in its entirety, was one of Thomas *Tallis's eight compositions for Archbishop *Parker's Psalter: 'Expend O Lord my plaint of word/In grief that I do make' is sung in metrical form to the sixth *phrygian mode.²⁰⁴ A very different interpretation is by Felix *Mendelssohn who composed 'Lord hear the voice of my complaint' in 1839; whilst, in the later part of the nineteenth century, Samuel *Wesley's 'Lead Me Lord', based on verse 8, is a simple, wistful and well-known short anthem of this psalm.²⁰⁵ Finally, and in a completely different mood and mode, Edward *Elgar wrote 'O hearken thou', using *Coverdale's version of verses 2–3, as an offertory hymn for chorus, organ and orchestra (op 64) for the coronation of King George V at Westminster Abbey in 1911.²⁰⁶

In this case, in some respects echoing Psalm 4, it is the early liturgical use of Psalm 5 which has determined its exegetical, artistic and musical reception; like Psalms 3, this is a morning psalm which could be used by anyone seeking God at a time of oppression and persecution.

Psalm 6: An 'Evening Psalm' of Penitence

Psalm 6 has frequently been noted for its correspondences with the book of Jeremiah, especially the more personal passages (termed the prophet's 'Confessions') in which he laments his calling by God.²⁰⁷ This is undoubtedly a psalm which labours under the 'fear of God': it might originally have been a

²⁰³ The *Utrecht Psalter* creates a similar impression in its single composition, which includes an open sarcophagus and demons prodding the wicked who have fallen into a pit of fire. See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=12&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

²⁰⁴ For a download of this psalm, see <http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/tw.asp?w=W14737>.

²⁰⁵ There are some ten versions of this arrangement on *You Tube*.

²⁰⁶ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 173.

²⁰⁷ For verse 1, see Jer. 10:24 and 15:18; for verse 2, see Jer. 17:14; and for verse 10, see Jer. 17:18 and 20:11.

psalm of sickness, as suffering was closely linked to a consciousness of sin. Verse 2 ('Be gracious to me, O Lord... O Lord, heal me') is an example of this. The change of mood in verse 9 indicates that the prayer has been heard. On this account it has been classified as a '*penitential psalm'—the first of seven in the Psalter, and this has dominated much of its reception history.

The compilers seem to have placed this psalm, intentionally, next to Psalm 5. It looks back on a sleepless night of suffering, contrasting with the focus on the morning in the previous psalm. 5:3 ('...in the morning you hear my voice') echoes 6:6 ('every night I flood my bed with tears'). The rather ominous 'workers of evil' in 6:8 are also present in 5:5, which in Hebrew uses the same expression both times. Furthermore, each psalmist is aware in their distress of God's 'steadfast love' (5:7 and 6:4).

The main issue in the Greek translation is, yet again, the title. Here 'with stringed instruments' and 'upon the *Sheminit*' are read as *en hymnois hyper tēs ogdoēs*—'a song of praise over the eighth', an ambiguous reference which elicited a good deal of reinterpretation, as will be seen. The Hebrew in verse 5 reads, literally, 'for in death there is no remembrance of you'; the Greek changes the noun into a participle (*hoti ouk estin en tō thanatō ho mnēmoneuōn sou*) so this now could read 'for in death there is no one who makes mention of you'²⁰⁸ which undoubtedly changes the sense of the Hebrew.²⁰⁹

Parts of the psalm are found three times at *Qumran (4QPs^a; 4QPs^d, 4QCaten A 12–13 lines 2–3,5)²¹⁰ but it is in **Targum Psalms* that we observe some clear changes in reception history. Staying close to the Hebrew, the title is 'upon the lyre with *eight* strings'. Other Jewish commentators, assuming this to be about David, bedridden and with a terrible illness, ask why this is '*eight* strings' and not six (which shows perfectionism, as of a cube) or seven (signifying perfection, as in creation). The answer is that 'eight' speaks of a release from this world: the psalm looks to future redemption, and this echoes the way that circumcision is performed on the 'eighth' day as a portent of future blessing.²¹¹ So this psalm is not for David alone, but for any exiled Jew who is sick and oppressed, seeking their future redemption beyond the grave.²¹² This is why the psalm is used in the daily prayers (the **Tahanun*) as a plea for forgiveness and

²⁰⁸ Pietersma 2000: 4.

²⁰⁹ This may seem an innocent change, but from this reading, commentators such as Augustine would argue that no repentance was possible after death (*Expositions on the Psalms* 6.6 WSA 3 15:107–8); this influenced the Reformation denial of purgatory and the need for indulgences to buy off specific sins before death.

²¹⁰ Flint 1997: 220.

²¹¹ Braude 1959 I: 94–6.

²¹² This of course makes verse 5, discussed above, a puzzle in the Hebrew, although resolved by the Greek (and Latin).

mercy.²¹³ Sickness and suffering are thus clearly linked together: one cannot recover from illness until sins have been confessed: ‘All infirmities of the body stem from blemishes and sins of the soul.’²¹⁴ The psalm might therefore be linked to David’s sin with Bathsheba: only when he had truly confessed (verse 6) could he be healed.²¹⁵ It is interesting to see the very different process, in Jewish tradition, by which this psalm became associated with penitence and healing.

However, it is the belief in *discontinuity* between suffering and sin, in Christian tradition, which is read from this psalm. As early as New Testament times verse 3 (‘My soul also is struck with terror’) may well be alluded to in John 12:27 (‘My soul is troubled’), on the lips of Christ, just after his entry into Jerusalem (John 12:12–19). If so this associates the psalm with the sacrifice of Christ and his suffering for the sins of others, rather than because of his own sin. Verse 8 of the psalm may also be alluded to in Matt. 7:23 and Luke 13:27 (‘Depart from me, you workers of iniquity’).

Two themes developed in the early, medieval and reformation commentators are, first, the interest in the number eight (from the title), and secondly the use of the psalm by the penitent sinner in relation to the sinless Christ.

Discussions about the number eight are closely related to the Jewish readings. Following the Greek and then the Latin translations, this is seen to refer to the age of ‘perpetual bliss’, i.e. after the seventh day of judgement, or the final judgement day after the seven-day work of creation is over.²¹⁶ *Gregory of Nyssa, for whom the inscriptions of the Psalms were a major concern, referred to this as ‘*akolouthia*’—when the ordered sequence of time will be taken over by the eschatological, inspired by the hope in the resurrection, for which the first step of ascent, as here, is confession.²¹⁷

Other Jewish traditions are similarly reapplied: according to *Didymus the Blind, the psalm sings about the end and speaks of our spiritual circumcision.²¹⁸ *Jerome, linking ‘the eighth’ to ‘the end’, illustrated his discussion with examples of Noah and the eight saved at the end of the flood and of David, the eighth and last son of Jesse.²¹⁹ *Chrysostom is more specifically anti-Jewish: citing Deut. 17:2–6 he argued that this defends the ‘rightness’ of God’s anger against anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses: so if this was because of an offence

²¹³ Feuer 2004: 101.

²¹⁴ Feuer 2004: 104, citing *Talmud *b.Ned.* 41a.

²¹⁵ Even *Midrash Tehillim*, which does not really emphasise David’s need for penitence, acknowledges that ‘the eye consumed with grief’ might be a reference to Bathsheba. See Braude I 1959: 100.

²¹⁶ For example Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 6.1–2 WSA 3 15:103, 105, in ACCS VII: 47.

²¹⁷ See Waltke 2014: 44–50.

²¹⁸ *Fragments on the Psalms* 6.1 PG 39:1173D–1176 A.

²¹⁹ See R. Hayward 2011: 141–59; here, pp. 143–6.

against the law, Chrysostom argued, how much greater the sin of spurning the Son of God?²²⁰

*Cassiodorus also utilised Jewish tradition: after seven ages, the eighth will be when God comes to judge the world.²²¹ He also refers explicitly to this psalm as the first of seven concerning penitence: classifying the psalms into twelve categories, the seven *penitential psalms formed his sixth category. His interest in numbers caused him to ask: so why the sixth psalm? He answers, because sinful man had been created on the sixth day, and because Christ was crucified on the sixth day for the forgiveness of sins.²²² Slightly later in the eighth century *Alcuin also terms Psalm 6 the first penitential psalm, linking it closely with 38 because of the identical first verse ('O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger...').

*Luther wrote *The Seven Penitential Psalms* in 1519, two years after his displaying his ninety-five theses against the need for specific indulgences to buy off specific sins. Luther drew both from Augustine and from *Lefèvre's *Quincuplex Psalterium* (a polyglot Psalter dating from the late fifteenth century, which Luther used for his lectures in 1514, with its annotations and *glosses on the importance of justification by faith). Here he saw the relationship of Christ and the sinner in this psalm: Christ shares our suffering but not our sin.²²³ Hence in Psalm 6 (and also 38) his voice is heard in the psalm insofar as he 'remembers' us, and 'buys off' the penalty for all sins.²²⁴ This psalm was also important for *Calvin: 'My soul also is struck with terror' (verse 3) was a verse he frequently used, hearing here first the voice of David, and then a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

The liturgical reception of this psalm follows a similar trajectory in both Jewish and Christian tradition. We have noted already that (at least since the fourteenth century, in *Ashkenazi tradition) it is one of the daily penitential supplications referred to earlier as the **Tahanun*, which the suppliant prays seated, bent over, their face lowered on the left forearm as a sign of penitence.²²⁵ By the Middle Ages this was the first of the church's seven penitential psalms, seen as 'seven weapons to oppose the seven deadly sins; seven prayers inspired by the sevenfold gifts of the spirit; seven guardians for the seven days of the week; seven companions for the seven hours of canonical prayer.'²²⁶ Psalm 6 was to fight the deadly sin of anger, or wrath.

²²⁰ In Hill 1998: 95–101.

²²¹ See Walsh 1990: 89, on Cassiodorus' use of this tradition of the seven stages to heaven. See also Daley 2002: 190–217, on this same theme in Gregory of Nyssa.

²²² This is developing a reference to the seven psalms by Augustine. See Walsh 1990: 99.

²²³ See the discussion on the possible use of verse 3 in John 12:27 earlier (p. 63).

²²⁴ This contrasts with Luther's view about the other five penitential psalms: we hear the 'voice of David' in Psalms 32 and 51, and the 'voice of the church' in 102, 130 and 143.

²²⁵ See Holladay 1993: 141 and 145.

²²⁶ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79:125.

In addition, its link with the *eighth* stage of new creation (though its title), after the seven stages of ordinary creation, made it a psalm for baptism, in celebration of a ‘new creation’: this was probably as early as the time of *Ambrose of Milan, in the fourth century. Furthermore, and partly because of verse 5, the psalm was used by the ninth century in the Office of the Dead, as well as before the Advent Offices. It was also included, with illustrations, in *Prymers and Books of Hours to depict the first of the seven stages of penitence in David’s life.²²⁷ By the late Middle Ages it had become associated with the sacrament of penitence and indulgence against the sin of anger. It was used in amulets to ward off disease and suffering.²²⁸ By the sixteenth century it was assigned in a lectionary using *Coverdale’s psalms for use on Ash Wednesday, with the other penitential psalms. Perhaps its liturgical use can best be summarised in the following *Mozarabic Collect: ‘Regard, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the supplications of Thy people; and, as Thou inflictest on us the severity of just correction, give us also the assistance of merciful consolation.’²²⁹

Its liturgical use inspired a vast amount of artistic representation. **Stuttgart* (fols. 6r and 6v) is one of the earliest ninth century Psalters which brings together the two main motifs of the psalm—the suppliant, in the first half, and Christ, in the second. In the first illustration, based on verse 2 (‘O Lord heal me...’), the psalmist is in bed, looking up at the hand of God raised over him in blessing; in the second, based on verse 8 (‘depart from me, all you workers of evil’) we see the last judgement (also taken from the idea of the ‘octave’ in the title to the psalm) in the context of Matt. 25:41, the parable of the sheep and the goats, where Christ blesses a sheep with his right hand by signing the cross on its throat, and turns away a goat (with a demon’s face) to his left.²³⁰

Somewhat dramatically, **Khludov* (fols. 5r and 5v) illustrates verse 5 with a dead man, prostrate, and verse 6, with David lying on his bed weeping.²³¹ By contrast, **Vaticanus Graecus 752* (fols. 27v and 27r) has the title ‘*Etimasia*’ (‘preparation’) in Greek; the first illustration is of Christ enthroned, surrounded by archangels (and bishops). The second illustration is of the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31): Dives, nude, is with a group of the damned, attacked by two devils.²³²

²²⁷ Gillingham 2008b: 113–14.

²²⁸ E. Davis 1992: 174.

²²⁹ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 130.

²³⁰ See <https://goo.gl/GBW7MG> and <https://goo.gl/Z71YbH>; also Bessette 2005: 288–96.

²³¹ See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.005r.jpg> and <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.005v-2.jpg>.

²³² See Crostini and Peers 2016:457, Fig. 27.

Another illustration, linking this psalm with another psalm of penitence, 51, presents two images: of Bathsheba with David watching, and David at prayer.²³³ An illustration from a Book of Hours (influenced by a Jewish reading of the psalm's title as 'from Gath') has David slaying Goliath.²³⁴ Here again we note the dynamic relationship between Jewish and Christian representations of art.

Poetic imitations of this psalm are also prolific because of its penitential use. One notable example is Philip *Sidney, who uses the 'Sapphic' model for this psalm, in imitation of a lover's complaint: this poem, however, is structured in stanzas of three lines with ten (not eleven) syllables, although final line is in five beats. Verse 1 reads as follows:

Lord, let not me, a worm, by thee be shent,
While thou art in the heat of thy displeasure:
Ne let thy rage, of my due punishment
Become the measure.²³⁵

John *Milton, who by the time of his composition of this psalm in 1653 was completely blind, was interested in the sound of this psalm. He chose a five-line stanza for his English version. What is interesting here is the clear allusion to his blindness ('waxen old and dark') in his representation of verses 6 and 7:

Wearied I am with sighing out my days;
Nightly my couch I make a kind of sea;
My bed I water with tears; mine eye
Through grief consumes, is waxen old and dark
I'the midst of all mine enemies that mark.²³⁶

From the sixteenth century onwards, musical arrangements of this well-known psalm were either for liturgical purposes or for performance in the concert hall. The first category offers many examples: two arrangements, in English, by William *Byrd, of which one, on verses 1–2, uses a metrical version of this psalm; two arrangements, in Latin, by Orlando di *Lasso; one, on verses 1–4, also in Latin, by Monteverdi; and four versions by *Schütz, of which three are in Latin, on 1–4, 5–7, 8–10. Schütz's arrangement of the entire psalm, in

²³³ On this theme in Psalm 51, see pp. 311–312. See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/princeton/ga57.148v.jpg> and <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/princeton/ga57.149r.jpg>.

²³⁴ See <https://goo.gl/x8gOs4>.

²³⁵ Hamlin (ed.) 2009: 17.

²³⁶ Hamlin 2004: 143–4. Herbert, too, in his poem 'Love Unknown' draws from the same metaphor of 'watering his couch with tears': see Kinnamon 1981: 15.

German, is part of his collection ‘Psalmen Davids’: ‘Ach Herr, straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn’ (SWV 24) is a plaintive composition set as a polychoral dialogue between two four-part choirs; the larger work was dedicated to his patron Johann Georg in 1619.²³⁷ *Orlando Gibbons’ ‘O Lord in thy Wrath’ is an **a capella* piece based on verses 1–4, using frequent discords to capture the anguish of the penitent. Similarly *Mozart’s ‘*David Penitente*’, for soprano and tenor soloists, chorus and orchestra, composed for a Lenten concert in 1785, sets the *penitential psalms in an Italian paraphrase, with the music deriving from the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* of the C Minor Mass (1782–83): in addition to new settings for tenor and soprano, the mood is ultimately optimistic, and the last movement ends with a joyful *cadenza*.²³⁸ Examples of music outside specific liturgy include *Mendelssohn’s use of verse 6 in his *Elijah*: this is in Part One, No. 8, sung by the widow whom *Elijah* has visited (‘What have I to do with thee?’); it starts with 1 Kgs. 17:17–18 and Ps. 6:6, as well as verses from Ps.38:7 (another penitential psalm) fit the mood of distress of the widow.

Given its penitential nature, there are many metrical hymns of this psalm, by, for example, *Sternhold and Hopkins, *Tate and Brady, and Isaac *Watts.²³⁹ Other examples include ‘In Mercy, not in Wrath, Rebuke’, from the **Olney Hymns*, one of the few hymns to be based on the entire psalm, and Catherine *Winkworth’s ‘Not in Anger, Mighty God’, composed almost a century later. A contrasting example is the choral piece by Thomas *Weelkes’: ‘I am Weary of My Groaning’ is based on verse 6, using *melismatic expressions for verbs such as ‘I am weary’; ‘I flood (my bed)’ and ‘I drench (my couch)’; furthermore, discordant chords for nouns such as ‘my moaning/my tears/my weeping’ capture the pain and distress and the suppliant.²⁴⁰

It is not easy to bring together such a diffuse account of the reception history of this psalm. Perhaps a compelling example, from over nine hundred years ago, is of Henry II using this psalm as expiation for the death of Thomas Beckett. Tradition has it that the king entered the cathedral on 12 July 1174, semi-naked, and recited this psalm as a penitential means of averting the wrath of God, then prostrating himself on the tomb of the Archbishop to be publicly scourged by the bishops, abbots and monks who were associated with the cathedral.²⁴¹ In whatever generation, in whatever the context, Psalm 6 has consistently witnessed to the character of God in the face of human frailty. To refer

²³⁷ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 191.

²³⁸ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 59.

²³⁹ See <https://goo.gl/8pfjzG>.

²⁴⁰ On Gibbons, see Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 174; on *Weelkes, see Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 138.

²⁴¹ Prothero 1903: 76.

to a more recent arrangement of this psalm, David Rosenberg's version, taken from the Hebrew of Psalm 6, illustrates this well:

Lord, I'm just a worm
don't point to me
in frozen anger

don't let me feel
I more than deserve
all your rage

but mercy, Lord, let me feel mercy
I'm weak, my spirit is so dark
Even my bones shiver...²⁴²

Psalm 7: A 'Morning Psalm'

Psalm 7 is really about one falsely accused. The incident recorded in the heading is not referred to elsewhere in the Bible, although David's other conflicts with Saul and the Benjaminites are documented in 1 Samuel 24–26: this *lacuna* gave later commentators the opportunity to add various explanations, as will be summarised below. The focus on God's anger links this with the previous psalm, although there God's anger was an experience of the psalmist (6:1, 'Do not rebuke me in your anger...') whilst here it is turned against the psalmist's enemies (verse 6: 'Rise up, O Lord, in your anger... against the fury of my enemies'). The night-time suffering (6:6) is now experienced during the day (7:11) and God is told to 'Rise up' and 'Awake' (7:8). The same fear of death also pervades both psalms (6:5; 7:13). Like Psalm 6, there are some clear connections with Jeremiah (11:20; 20:12; 17:10) and verse 9 ('you who test the hearts and minds...'). So again it would seem that these psalms have been intentionally placed together.

This is a psalm with several syntactical problems, although few of them have specifically influenced its later reception.²⁴³ One exception is verse 15 (Hebrew 16), which does have a rich reception history; the Hebrew plays on the pun of *yippol* for 'fall' and *yip'al* for 'make' ('they fall into the hole that they have made') which cannot be rendered in English, nor in Greek or Latin.

The Greek translation has in some respects 'flattened' the Hebrew: for example, the three words for 'sin/evil' in Hebrew in verses 3 (Heb. verse 4: *awe'l*), 14

²⁴² D. Rosenberg 1976: 2.

²⁴³ See E. Bons 2003: 512–28.

(Heb. verse 15 *'awen*) and 16 (Heb. verse 17: *ḥamas*) are all translated as *adikia*, 'injustice'. Similarly the different words for 'people' in verses 7–8 (Heb. verses 8–9) *le-'ummim*, meaning 'nations' and *'ammim*, 'peoples') are simply *laoi* in the Greek. A more substantial change is in verse 11, where, by adding two adjectives and a negative, the Hebrew reading 'God is a righteous judge, and a God who is angry every day' reads in the Greek as 'God is a righteous judge, and strong and patient, who *does not come to anger* every day.'²⁴⁴ Another oddity is in verse 14, where the Hebrew reads 'conceive... be in labour... give birth' and the Greek reverses the order, perhaps for rhetorical purposes.

Later Jewish tradition has focused primarily on the heading to this psalm. **Targum* reads '*Shiggaion*' as 'a loud song of thanksgiving ...which he sang before the Lord, because he uttered the song about the misfortune of Saul the son of Kish, who was from the tribe of Benjamin.'²⁴⁵ So 'Cush' here is read as Saul, the son of Kish, and here we see a more generous attitude to Saul. **Midrash Tehillim* agrees that the psalm concerns David and Saul, but in this case *Shiggaion* is taken from '*shegi'ah*', to mean 'impulsive speech': so this was a song David sung on impulse concerning Saul.²⁴⁶ By contrast, *Shiggaion*, *Rashi argues, comes from *mashgeh* (or *mishgeh*) meaning 'error', or 'mistaken choice', so David never intended to sing this psalm at all. This concurs with the earlier testimony of *Targum*: the context is presumed to be about David's regret for all the bloodshed caused over his enmity with Saul, and David is praying that he and his people be judged according to their merits, not according to their sins (verse 8).²⁴⁷

Christian commentary has little to say about the heading, and focusses mainly on individual verses within the psalm. Verse 9, for example, about the God 'who tests/examines the minds and hearts', is alluded to in Rom. 8:27 (God 'who searches the heart') and again in Rev. 2:23 ('I am the one who searches minds and hearts'), although this could be part of a formulaic expression as it is also used in texts such as Jeremiah.²⁴⁸ *Chrysostom takes up the image of 'the lion' in verse 2, and, using 1 Pet. 5:8, sees this as the devil dressed as a lion attacking those who have faith in Christ.²⁴⁹ Indeed, Chrysostom argues that here David is an exemplar of faith; his treatment of Absalom has a parallel in Jesus' treatment of Judas. The annotations in Alfred the Great's *Carolingian Psalter reveal the same pursuit of the model of David as the ideal king.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁴ See Bons 2003: 74; also Pietersma 2000: 5.

²⁴⁵ Stec 2004: 35.

²⁴⁶ Braude 1959 I: 101–3.

²⁴⁷ Gruber 2004: 193–4.

²⁴⁸ The Greek translation, *etazōn*, has the meaning of 'examine, test, search'; the Latin translation, *scruto*, has assumed the meaning of the Greek.

²⁴⁹ *Commentary on the Psalms* 7:3 CCOP 1:116–17, from ACCS VII: 58.

²⁵⁰ Waltke (ed.) 2014: 75–79.

*Gregory of Nyssa gives the entire psalm a Christian interpretation by reading verse 5 in the context of Christ's Passion, whereby verse 6 ('Rise up!') refers to the Resurrection, and verse 17 is about God's blessings on the Church.²⁵¹ *Eusebius meanwhile sees verse 15 as a prophecy: 'they fall into the hole they have made' was apparently fulfilled by Constantine's victory in 312 over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge, when the bridge of boats filled with water and Maxentius and his army drowned in the Tiber.²⁵² *Cassiodorus reads the last part of the psalm as a warning to Jews who have ignored God's provision, so that this 'seventh' psalm is now for Christians to use for their rest and contemplation.²⁵³ The Syriac Psalter sums up the psalm in its heading thus: 'The conversion of the Gentiles to the faith, and to the confession of the Trinity'.²⁵⁴ So, overall, Jewish readings, seeing the psalm as expressing David's regret over his dealings with Saul, and Christian interpretations, reading the psalm as about the conversion of the Gentiles, could not be more different.

The Reformers found this a difficult psalm, for two reasons. The first was because of the psalmist's appeal to his own righteousness as the reason for his redemption (verse 8). *Luther tried to show that this was the psalmist comparing himself with his enemies, not God, as if he was saying 'in this instance, not guilty'. The second was on account of the principle of retribution evident in verses 13–16 cited above, which again Luther justified by the context: this was about 'self-punishment'.²⁵⁵

So this is indeed a psalm about one wrongly accused. The liturgical use of the psalm, however, hardly accords with this: Psalm 7 is 'the song of the day' at **Purim* (*Sop.* 18:2) on the presumption that Mordecai was a descendent of Saul, so the reference in verse 15 is to Haman digging a pit to fall into himself.²⁵⁶ In Christian tradition verse 2 ('or like a lion they will tear me apart...') was read as a reference to the devil (as in Chrysostom citing 1 Pet. 5:8), and so this became an *antiphon at the Office for the Dead.²⁵⁷

A few illuminated manuscripts read the psalm as a whole narrative. For example **Stuttgart* (fol. 7r) offers an image of verse 2 by way of a huge lion about to attack the psalmist from behind; this is followed (fol. 7v) by an image of verse 5, where the psalmist sits on the ground and looks up at the hand of God in the heavens as his enemies are poised to attack him. The third image opposite (fol. 8r) is of verses 14–15, illustrates now that it is Christ in danger, as he was betrayed by Judas (whose punishment also falls on himself: his suicide

²⁵¹ *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms* 2.10.125–6, from ACCS VII:60.

²⁵² <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iv.vi.i.xxxviii.html>.

²⁵³ Walsh 1990: 108–9.

²⁵⁴ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 131.

²⁵⁵ See Kraus 1988: 172, citing Luther in *Operationes in Psalmos*, and Kraus 1988: 174–5.

²⁵⁶ Feuer 2004:109; Willems 1990:412.

²⁵⁷ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 132.

is represented on the far right of the page).²⁵⁸ Hence the *Stuttgart Psalter* reads this psalm rather like Psalm 6, referring first to the psalmist's condition and then reflecting on the life of Christ.

A group of Byzantine Psalters offer a different account. The **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 5v, which also illustrates the end of Psalm 6) depicts, like *Stuttgart*, for verse 2, a lion tearing a male figure; but fol. 6r, based on verse 6 ('Rise up, O Lord!') has an image of David bending over the tomb of Christ, with the guards thrown to the ground. The inscription reads 'Prophecy. Resurrection.'²⁵⁹ The **Hamilton Psalter* (fols. 50r, 50v), the **Theodore Psalter* (fols. 5v and 7r) and the **Barberini Psalter* (fols. 12r and 12v) have a similar image. *Hamilton* (fol. 51r) also includes Jeremiah prophesying (the inscription reads Jer. 11:20) for verse 9, about God who tests the hearts and minds; and both *Hamilton* (51v) and *Barberini* (fol. 13v) include the trope of men falling into a pit they are digging (verse 15).

There are few notable musical arrangements of this psalm although several poetic imitations might be cited. An interesting example is of George **Herbert's* setting of this psalm, which might be compared with **Milton's* work. The imitations of verse 15 offer a good example. Herbert's version runs as follows:

The wicked digged, and a pit
for others ruine wrought:
But in the pit which he hath made
shall he himself be caught.

To his own head his wickedness
shall be returned home:
And on his own accursed pate
his cruelty shall come.²⁶⁰

At almost the same time, in 1653, Psalm 7 was one of the first eight psalms Milton set to verse, using six-line stanzas, and reading the psalm through David's eyes and the enemy here as 'Cush the Benjaminite'. Verse 15 reads as follows:

He digg'd a pit, and delv'd it deep,
And fell into the pit he made;
His mischief that due course doth keep,
Turns on his head, and his ill trade
Of violence will undelay'd
Fall on his crown with ruine steep.

²⁵⁸ Augustine and Cassiodorus both read the betrayal of Judas into this psalm. See Bessette 2005: 296–301 and <https://goo.gl/fpyS3H>; see also http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/vpc/VPC_search/record.php?record=32113; and http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/vpc/VPC_search/record.php?record=31970.

²⁵⁹ Corrigan 1992: 66 and 117–18.

²⁶⁰ Herbert also captured the essence of this verse in the fortieth of his 'Outlandish Proverbs' (1640): 'Who remove stones, bruise their fingers.'

The trope of ‘digging a pit’ is not unique to this psalm: it comes six times in the Old Testament, including Ps. 9:15–16. It is a trope with a rich literary history: it was used, for example, by Sherlock Holmes in *The Case of the Speckles Band*: ‘the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another.’²⁶¹ So Psalm 7 may have a somewhat conflicting commentary tradition, and be less rich in liturgical or musical resonances, but some of its verses have lived on in unexpected ways.

Psalm 8: An ‘Evening Hymn of Praise’

Psalm 8 is one of the best examples in the Psalter of the different trajectory of reception found in Jewish and Christian tradition: is it a hymn to God as Creator, or a prophetic text about a ‘redeemer figure’?²⁶² The psalm was plainly composed as a hymn of creation, probably with Genesis 1 in mind (although there creation comes about by a divine fiat, and here it is by the fingers [verse 3] and hands [verse 6] of God). The creation of luminaries in verse 3 echoes Gen. 1:14–19; the praise of humans at the apex of creation in verse 5 brings to mind Gen. 1:26–27; and the responsibility of humankind for the natural order in verses 7–8 has clear correspondences with Gen. 1:29–30. The psalm suggests a *chiasmus in its creation theme: it begins and ends with praise to God in the heavens (verses 1a, b and 9); at the heart of the psalm is God’s affirmation of the place of man on earth (verse 4), and on each side of this the God of the heavens interacts with humans on earth (verses 1c, 2–3; 5–8).²⁶³

It looks as if the entire psalm was a later addition to the collection of laments in Psalms 3–14. It is found at the very heart of this collection, with five complaints before it and five complaints (counting Psalms 9–10 as one psalm) after it.²⁶⁴ Psalm 7:17 ends with a promise to sing praises to the ‘name of the Lord, the Most High’; 9:1–2 begins with the same promise: ‘I will sing praises to your name, O Most High’. Psalm 8 is precisely this psalm of praise: it begins and ends with ‘How majestic *is your name* in all the earth!’ The psalm differs from its neighbours because of its elevated depiction of humankind (verse 4–5); the enemies are now not those of the psalmist but of God (‘your foes’ in verse 2). Just as other psalms of creation seem to have been placed deliberately at the heart of discrete collections in Book One (19 in Psalms 15–24 and 29 in 25–34), so Psalm 8 plays the same function here, contrasting in theme and purpose with those before and after it.

²⁶¹ Cited by Catherine Brown in R.S. Thomas (1997: 34–6), which gives an account of the rich reception history of this trope.

²⁶² S. Gillingham 2008b: 167–96; here, p. 167.

²⁶³ See Gillingham 1998: 241, fig. 24.

²⁶⁴ See the discussion in relation to Barbiero (1999) on p. 12 & 46 previously.

It is not without its problems of translation. Different versions either link verse 1 b ('you have set your glory above the heavens') with verse 2 ('Out of the mouths of babes and infants...') or keep them separate; the NRSV makes the latter choice but verse 2 does then read rather oddly. It seems best to let verse 1 (as with verse 9) consist of the refrain alone. So, by reading the verb 'set' in verse 1 (Hebrew, *natan*) as the passive tense of a different verb altogether (*tanah*, 'praise in song'), the result would read continuously: 'You whose glory is praised in the heavens... by the mouths of babes and infants', thus linking this phrase to verse 2 and keeping the refrain in verse 1 separate. The Greek and Latin translations illustrate the difficulty here: they actually read 'your glory is lifted up (set) above the heavens by the mouths of babes and infants...' (*epēthē hē megaloprepeia sou huperanō tōn ouranōn; elevata est magnificentia tua super caelos*). This is not just a syntactical riddle; it makes a difference to the way in which this verse was used in Matthew, as we shall shortly see.

This is just one example of the problem later interpreters had with the text. Both the Greek and Latin had problems with the actual title to the psalm. The word *gittit* in Hebrew suggests a musical instrument, such as a lyre: the Greek reads it as from the word *gat*, meaning winepress. So along with its translation of the Hebrew 'to the leader' as *eis to telos*, 'for the end', the overall impression is either of a harvesting song (fitting with the theme of creation in the psalm), or, more probably, of 'harvesting judgement at the end of time'. The Latin follows this: *in finem pro torcularibus*: 'at the end; for the winepress'. This then suggests something more than a hymn of creation: it has a judgemental element in it as well.

Verse 4 is a key verse. In the Hebrew it reads, literally, 'What is man ('*enosh*) that you are mindful of him, what is the son of man (*ben 'adam*) that you care for him?' The word '*enosh*' is a term used to describe all humankind (as in Ps. 90:3) and the second Hebrew term (*ben 'adam*) simply makes this more particular and individual: Ezekiel, for example, is often referred to as 'son of man' (for example 2:1, 3, 6; 3:1, 3, 4, 10, 17, 25) and Pss. 11:4 and 12:2 use this in a similar way. The Greek, however, uses the same word twice: *anthrōpos* for '*enosh*' and *huios anthrōpou* for *ben 'adam*. The Latin does the same: *homo* (man), and *filius hominis* (son of man): it is not difficult to see how Christians could see this as referring to the human Christ, the Son of Man.

The last contentious verse is 5: 'You have made him (i.e. man) a little lower than God'. The problem here is that if God is addressed in the first part of the verse, why use 'God' in the third person at the end of the verse? The Greek translated this last word God (*elohim* in Hebrew) as a plural word meaning 'gods', or 'heavenly beings'—and then used the word 'angels': this is unusual, as the Greek only translates *elohim* as 'gods'/'angels' elsewhere in Pss. 97:7 and 138:1. So the Greek reads 'You have made him a little lower than the angels (*par' angelous*). The Latin does the same: *minuisti eum paulo minus ab angelis* (literally, 'You have made him [in small amount] less than the angels'). Again, it is

not difficult to see how this was read as a reference to Christ, who in the humility of his incarnation was made less than the angels.²⁶⁵

And yet in the Hebrew this is so clearly a song about creation. It is cited as such at least twice elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (unusual for a psalm); in each case the tenet of faith in God as Creator is actually brought into question. Psalm 144:3–4 cites verse 4, but then adds more cynically, ‘They are like a breath; their days are like a passing shadow.’ Job 7:16–18 cites verses 4–5, but in the context of questioning God’s care in having created him: the preface in verse 16 makes this clear: ‘I loathe my life ... let me alone, for my days are a breath.’²⁶⁶

Although the psalm is found in the *Dead Sea Scrolls, it is never cited in a soteriological way.²⁶⁷ Only later—partly influenced by Christian interpretations—did Jewish commentators deal explicitly with those more contentious parts of the psalm. The *Targum, for example, has a telling paraphrase of verse 4: ‘What is the son of man that *you should remember his deeds*, or the son of man that you visit him?’ In the Aramaic *bar nasha* (‘son of man’) is thus used twice: the reference to ‘remembering his deeds’ makes one think of a human, rather than elevated figure, subject on earth, to God above. This counters the Christian readings. The Babylonian *Talmud also makes this clear: the figure is *Moses* (*bRSh*. 21b and *bNed*. 38a). *Midrash Tehillim* is clearer still: this refers to all the heroes of Israel’s history, from Adam to Moses, from Moses to David. Rabbi Malbim argues similarly: ‘son of man’ means ‘mere mortals.’²⁶⁸ *Rashi, too, takes up this theme: the ‘deeds of the son of man’ are all the heroes of the past, such as Joshua who made the sun stand still (*Josh*. 10:12–14) and who dried up the Jordan (*Josh*. 3:9–17) or Moses who split the Red Sea or Elijah who revived the dead.²⁶⁹ Another view, according to Rashi, is that the son of man is also the whole people of Israel; the ‘enemy and the avenger’ (verse 2) are thus Israel’s enemies (who are also God’s enemies) who refuse to recognise them as God’s people.²⁷⁰

The following verse 5 has the contentious reference to man being lower than ‘the angels’ in the Greek and Latin. Here *Targum* has no problem: it preserves this reference, because it is partial to angelic beings, but this is not to over-elevate humankind.²⁷¹ The *Talmud (for example, *b.Sanh*. 38b) reads this verse in the light of verse 4: so there the question is posed as if from angels, outraged at the

²⁶⁵ This will be seen in our discussion of Christian reception of this psalm below.

²⁶⁶ The verse is also alluded to in a taunting way by Eliphaz in *Job* 15:14.

²⁶⁷ Verses 3–9 are found in *Sieyal* 4; verses 6–7, in *1QS* 3:17–18.

²⁶⁸ Feuer 2004: 126.

²⁶⁹ Gruber 2004: 198.

²⁷⁰ Gruber 2004: 198–9.

²⁷¹ Stec 2004: 37. The explicit reference in *Targum* to ‘Leviathan’ in verse 8, with reference to the sea creatures, is also part of the personification of good and evil expressed here in angelic beings.

suggestion that God made man in ‘our image’ (Gen. 1:26)—i.e. in their image as well as the image of God. Humankind is viewed as always lower than God.

Finally, Jewish reception has used their readings of the title of the psalm as a filter through which to read the rest of it. *Targum* reads *gittit* as ‘the lute that David brought from Gath.’ The reference to this Philistine city has overtones of Goliath and David’s victory over this giant: David, too, is the ‘son of man’ whose deeds are to be remembered. **Midrash Tehillim*, by contrast, reads *gittit* as the winepress (as in Is. 63:2) which then sees the psalm as about the harvest of Israel’s enemies—Babylon, Media, Greece and Edom.²⁷² Israel, as the son of man, will soon be crowned with ‘glory and honour’ (verse 5).

New Testament writers focussed mainly on verses 4–6. One exception is an attempt to make sense of the relationship between verses 1b and 2, which was discussed earlier.²⁷³ This is in Matt. 21:16, just after Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:1–11); the people’s praise ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ is now being sung in the Temple ‘by children’ and this infuriates the chief priests and scribes. The citation of Ps. 8:1b–2, clearly using a different version of the Greek (‘Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself’) is a means of contrasting the simple praise of the children with the cynicism of the religious leaders, who have become ‘the enemy and the avenger’. Another layer of meaning lies behind this, too: the praise once offered to God in the actual psalm is now offered to Christ, and the verse is thus read as a prophecy in the process of fulfilment in the life of Christ.

Three other New Testament texts use verses 4–6 to show how this psalm of creation can now be read in a more Christological way. Hebrews 2:5–9 makes particular use of Ps. 8:5 to illustrate both the humiliation of Jesus (‘made lower than God’) and his later exaltation (‘crowned with glory and honour’). The reference to the angelic beings is particularly important as it shows Christ’s superiority over the angels (‘subjecting all things under his feet’) on account of his exaltation (i.e. resurrection).²⁷⁴ Secondly, 1 Cor. 15:27–28 cites part of Ps. 8:6 (‘you have put all things under their feet’) in the context of an argument about the resurrection of Christ; parts of the psalm are again beginning to be read as prophecies which found their fulfilment in Christ.²⁷⁵ Thirdly, Eph. 1:22 alludes to the same part of Ps. 8:6 in a similar argument about the resurrection and exaltation of Christ and his subjugation of powers and dominions.

²⁷² Braude 1959 I: 119; also p. 130. This fourfold reference to Israel’s enemies is a common motif here, where ‘Edom’ denotes the Romans and all Gentile nations who oppose them.

²⁷³ See p. 73.

²⁷⁴ Psalm 8 in Hebrews is the subject of four papers in D.J. Human and G.J. Stern (2010). See especially C.L. de Wet 2010: 113–25.

²⁷⁵ See Lambrecht 1982: 502–57 and Urassa 1998: 155–93.

Not surprisingly, this approach is taken further by the church fathers. As early as *Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* (114:3) verses 4–5 are read as referring to Christ's world dominion, not man's. And by the third century both *Origen and *Athanasius see this as a thanksgiving hymn of redemption, not creation.²⁷⁶ *Chrysostom sees Psalm 8 as about the supremacy of Christ and the ignorance of the Jews: hence the 'enemy and avenger' are the Jews 'who drove out Christ as their enemy'. Chrysostom also uses the psalm against heretics such as Paul of Samosata who denied the divinity of Christ by showing that the two natures of Christ, humanity and divinity alike, are hidden in the psalm.²⁷⁷ Even more literal exegetes such as *Theodore, although assuming Davidic authorship, had to concede some Christian emphasis: 'In this psalm blessed David delivers a prophecy about Christ; under the influence of the Spirit he predicts that the children will sing his praises in the temple.'²⁷⁸ Theodore's exegesis tended to compartmentalise the two natures of Christ in this psalm, for example referring to 'God the Word' and to 'Man assumed', rather than seeing one Incarnate Logos; it was this in part which led to his condemnation at the Council of Ephesus in 431.²⁷⁹

By contrast, for *Augustine this was the ideal psalm for developing his prosopological reading of Christ the Body and Christ the Head. Accepting the Latin translation in the title as 'winepress' he notes that this refers not to Israel but to the church; 'as the grapes are stripped of their skin... good people may be sifted out.'²⁸⁰ In verse 4 Augustine sees that *homo* (man) refers to Adam and the fallen human race; whereas *filius hominis* (son of man) refers to both Christ and His People, the Church.²⁸¹ His commentary is assembled from sermons preached at Hippo and Carthage; hence anti-*Donatist references, and the pastoral and allegorical readings. A typical example from the end of the psalm is that the 'fowls of the air' are ambitious Christians, the 'fish of the sea' are ordinary Christians, regenerate of water, and those 'passing through the paths of the seas' are troubled Christians.²⁸²

*Cassiodorus similarly sees the voice of the church throughout the psalm: hence intriguingly for a modern reader, the feminine pronoun dominates his discussions. Verses 5–6, however, are about the two natures of Christ, and,

²⁷⁶ Waltke and Houston 2010: 245.

²⁷⁷ See Hill 1998: 158; also Waltke and Houston 2010: 247.

²⁷⁸ Cited in Hill 2006: 168–73. There is a connection here with the title in the Syriac Psalter accompanying this psalm: 'A Prophecy that the Infants and Children would Sing Hosannas to the Lord'. (Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 143). As Stroumsa 1992: 283–91 has pointed out, Syriac and Arabic translations of verse 4 read 'Who is the Man?', noting some possible ambivalence in the Hebrew ('What is Man?').

²⁷⁹ See Waltke and Houston 2010: 246; Rondeau 1985: 287–94.

²⁸⁰ *Expositions on the Psalms* 8.1 WSA 3 15:129, in ACCS VII:67.

²⁸¹ *Expositions on the Psalms* 8.10 WSA 3 15:134, in ACCS VII:70.

²⁸² Neale and Littledale II 1874–79: 148–9.

using Phil. 2:7 ('he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant') Cassiodorus also reads this in the masculine, as about the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection of Christ.²⁸³ Finally, Cassiodorus has much to say about the number 8: following some of *Jerome's comments about the number 8 in Psalm 6, he sees here a witness to Christ's rising from the dead on the eighth day (i.e. the day after the Sabbath): so, like Psalm 68, this belongs to his twelfth category of psalms: it is about the exaltation of Christ.²⁸⁴

Amongst medieval commentators, *Bede points to the Great Commission in Matt. 28:18 to illustrate that Ps. 8:5 ('you have put all things under their feet') is another prophecy about Christ's exaltation.²⁸⁵ *Aquinas too sees the matter of the psalm as Christ, and the goal as the Gospel: so the psalm is first applied to David, then to Israel, and then to the Church and to Christ. So, in the title, 'Gittith' stands for the vineyard of Israel which was in need of pruning, and the church is the new vineyard, whose wine is the martyrs of faith.²⁸⁶ Aquinas used the *glosses of both Augustine and Cassiodorus: on this account he was able to develop the notion that the psalm also spoke of the Ascension of Christ, thus addressing its increasing popular liturgical use.²⁸⁷

Martin *Luther wrote two extant commentaries on Psalm 8, one as part of his lectures at Wittenberg in 1513 and the other as a sermon for All Saints Day in 1537. His first has little explicit Christology, although he does use some of Augustine's more pastorally focussed allegories. His second focusses entirely on the two natures of Christ within this psalm, and adds to this a Trinitarian emphasis, whereby 'Christ is the true and eternal God with the Father and the Holy Spirit in an undivided divine being and true natural man.'²⁸⁸ It is interesting to see how this theology is found in Luther's metrical version of this psalm, adapted in an arrangement by Heinrich *Schütz: 'Du wirst ihn lassen eine kleine von Gott verlassen sein/aber mit Ehren und Schmuck wirst du ihn krönen' ('You will let him be forsaken by God for a little while/but you will crown him with glory and honour') refers to the *God-forsakenness* at the crucifixion and the Kingship of Christ through the resurrection.²⁸⁹

*Calvin also published a commentary on Psalm 8 in 1557, the summation of earlier lectures and sermons. His 'anagogical' approach resulted in seeing not one but two meanings in the psalms—the meaning for both the Old and the

²⁸³ *Expositions on the Psalms* 8.6 ACW 51:113, in ACCS VII:70–71. See also Walsh 1990: 113 and 115.

²⁸⁴ See Cassiodorus on Psalm 68, p. 370.

²⁸⁵ *Homilies on the Gospels* 2.8 CS 111:71, in ACCS VII: 72.

²⁸⁶ We may note how different from *Midrash Tehillim* these comments are. See Gillingham (2008b: 118–19). This analogy was developed by Peter Lombard in his *In totium psalterium commentarii PL* 191:123B. See also Waltke and Houston (2010: 250).

²⁸⁷ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 141.

²⁸⁸ See Waltke and Houston (2010: 251–2) citing Hannes 2007.

²⁸⁹ See Schütz, p. 80.

New Covenants. The creation aspects of this psalm therefore matter: Calvin speaks a good deal about how we can learn from ‘babes and infants’. But because of the corruption of creation by sin, a new creation is also important: here Calvin also reads verses 4 and 5 as about Christ.²⁹⁰

This creation/redemption trajectory has continued in commentaries over the last four hundred years. Ironically it is mainly the academic commentaries which emphasise the creation aspects of the psalm, using models from the ancient Near East and appreciating the psalm in its ancient setting, whilst more spiritual works tend to introduce more Christianised readings.

When looking at the liturgical use of this psalm, Jewish and Christian differences are very clear. In Jewish tradition this is a psalm *about creation* and especially about the place of Torah in creation.²⁹¹ In Christian tradition this is a psalm for Ascension Day, for Easter, for the Transfiguration, and for Christmas.²⁹² Furthermore, the reference to the ‘babes and infants’ in verse 2 also suggests its use at the Feast of Holy Innocents. It is used at Baptism, to reflect on the transformation from ‘sons of Adam’ to ‘infants of God’. It is also used as in the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the references to the ‘moon and stars’ in verse three suggest the ‘Mother of God’ and the ‘Star of the Sea’ through whom is born the ‘son of a woman’.²⁹³ And in the Orthodox Church it is the communion hymn for ‘Lazarus Sunday’, the day before Palm Sunday, also sung at *Matins on Palm Sunday itself. And it is also occasionally a harvest psalm. This is perhaps the most diversely used liturgical psalm in the Psalter.

The liturgical use has also influenced the artistic representations of this psalm, both Jewish and Christian. Both *Carolingian and *Byzantine Psalters frequently depict two themes: the human Jesus, entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (for verse 2), and, secondly, either Christ, having all things subjected under him (for verse 6), or Adam, being given dominion over the animals either through the *Christ-Logos or the arc of heaven. The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fols. 8v and 9r) clearly depicts Palm Sunday and the dominion of Christ.²⁹⁴ Several Byzantine Psalters depict Psalm Sunday, but the second illustration is usually of Adam, thus bringing together the redemption and creation themes in this psalm. This is the case with the **Hamilton Psalter* (fols. 52r and 52v, which also has Christ-Logos) the **Barberini Psalter* (fols. 14r and 14v), and the

²⁹⁰ See <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.xiv.iv.html>; also Waltke and Houston (2010: 252–3).

²⁹¹ For example, as the ‘Song of the Day’ at the occasion of *Rejoicing in Torah*, discussed earlier. See Feuer (2004: 121), citing *Masseh Rav* 234.

²⁹² Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 141–2.

²⁹³ The idea of ‘born of a virgin’ was not unusual in Middle English translations of this psalm. For example, John Purvey’s Wycliffite translation for verse 4 reads ‘What is man, that thou art myndeful of him; *eithir the sone of a virgin*, for thou visitist hym?’. See Gillingham (2008: 171–2).

²⁹⁴ See <https://goo.gl/yg1J4b>; also <https://goo.gl/HX9Pli>.

**Theodore Psalter* (fols. 6r and 6v, each of which has a starred arc of heaven) as well as the **Bristol Psalter* (fols. 15v and 16r, with Adam alone).²⁹⁵

In the **St Albans Psalter*, the dedication to the anchoress Christine of Markyate gives the image a more female representation. The initial 'D', introducing this psalm in Latin, is divided into four sections to represent the four quarters of the whole earth, set against a starry backdrop. Above are two mothers, feeding their babies; below are children on their mothers' knees clearly praising God. There is a hint here of representations of the Virgin and Child.²⁹⁶

East Anglian Psalters mostly offer little specifically theological commentary in their artistic decorations of psalms, but the creation theme of Psalm 8 is a possible exception in this case. The recently discovered **Macclesfield Psalter*, for example, has a rabbit and a dog playing the organ (fol. 15r) and two long-nosed hybrids praising God (fol. 15v).²⁹⁷ This use of animal imagery has some interesting correspondences with the Jewish **Parma Psalter* (fol. 8b) which has a bird with a long tongue curving around the title to the psalm.²⁹⁸

There are many other illustrations illustrating the *creation* theme of this psalm, Christian and Jewish alike. William *Blake's 'What is Man?' has many unusual overtones in its depiction of a chrysalis and a caterpillar.²⁹⁹ Another example of the creation-orientated use of Psalm 8 is in 'The Four Angels of Creation' at the church of St Alban the Proto Martyr, Romford, completed in 2005.³⁰⁰ A very different depiction, also in a church, is Marc *Chagall's use of Psalm 8 in the windows on the north aisle of All Saints Church, Tudeley, Kent, in 1978. Having created the crucifixion east window in 1967, these two themes complement one another.³⁰¹ Another image of Psalm 8 in stained glass is by the contemporary artist Thomas Denny in the Chapel of St Catherine and St John the Baptist, in Tewkesbury Abbey. One of two windows, completed to celebrate the nine hundredth anniversary of the Benedictine foundation of the Abbey, each takes up the Benedictine idea that 'to work is to pray'. Both windows have three slim lancets, dominated by golds and greens; the south-east window is on 'Prayer', the South (right-hand) one is on 'Work', based partly on Ps. 104:24 and Ps. 8:4–5. The middle lancet has a figure clothed in green leaves and crowned with oak-leaf garland: he is wreathed in light. There are hints here of the 'Green

²⁹⁵ For the *Theodore Psalter* fol. 6r http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f006r and 6v http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f006v See also Corrigan 1992: 12.

²⁹⁶ <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page083.shtml>.

²⁹⁷ <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/gallery/macclesfield>.

²⁹⁸ Gillingham 2008b: 189.

²⁹⁹ <http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/images/gates-child.d.p1.300.jpg>.

³⁰⁰ See <https://goo.gl/mChHPx>.

³⁰¹ Rosen 2013: 111–113.

Man, but also of the one crowned with thorns. He is looking up to the top of the lancet, where the angels are praising God. So this figure, where Christ or us, is 'a little lower than the angels.'³⁰²

Finally, recent Jewish representations include Irv Davies' use of Psalm 8 'for July'. It is of Adam and Eve in Eden, and illustrates the *mystery* of creation for ancient mankind in contrast with many modern views.³⁰³ Another is Moshe *Berger's more symbolic depiction of Psalm 8 which offers a pertinent observation from the artist: 'Here we can see Creation in its perfection—maybe paradise that was entrusted to man. Why did we fail? It is a mystery. Maybe that we might have a second chance to achieve perfection. What a mighty test!'³⁰⁴

Musical arrangements only rarely have a Christian reading of this psalm. Metrical versions, for example by *Sternhold and Hopkins and *Tate and Brady, as well as the *Genevan Psalter in English, keep this as a psalm of creation.³⁰⁵ The creation theme is also preserved in John *Milton's and John *Keble's versions,³⁰⁶ and the *antiphonal setting by *Gelineau is also a creation hymn.³⁰⁷ Isaac *Watts, however, in one of his three versions of this psalm, does offer a Christianised version: and because of its tune, it is the most well-known. For verse 4, for example, we read:

'That thine eternal Son should bear
To take a mortal form
Made lower than his angels are
To save a dying worm?'

The version actually ends with 'Jesus, our Lord, how wondrous great/Is thine exalted name...'³⁰⁸

Non-hymnic versions have similarly been set as creation hymns. One of Heinrich *Schütz's versions (SWV 27), which combined Italian Catholic techniques with Lutheran sacred music, is perhaps exceptional, in that it uses *Luther's version of this psalm, referred to earlier, whereby verse 5 is interpreted in the light of the Cross and Resurrection.³⁰⁹ But other versions

³⁰² Pocker 2016:37–43.

³⁰³ See http://judaism.about.com/library/2_artlit/bl_artpsalm_k.htm.

³⁰⁴ See <http://themuseumofpsalms.com/gallery-item/the-psalms-series/>

³⁰⁵ For *Sternhold and Hopkins, see http://www.cgmusic.org/workshop/oldver/psalm_08.htm; for *Tate and Brady, see http://www.cgmusic.org/workshop/newver_frame.htm; for the Genevan Psalter, see <http://www.genevanpsalter.com/music-a-lyrics/1-individual-psalms/50-psalm-8>.

³⁰⁶ These are both printed out in Gillingham 2008b: 195–6.

³⁰⁷ http://www.hymnary.org/text/how_great_is_your_name_o_lord_our_god.

³⁰⁸ <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/watts/psalmshymns.Ps.16.html>.

³⁰⁹ See Luther on this psalm on p. 77.

focus entirely on this as a psalm about God as Creator. They include *Giovanni Gabrieli's and Orlando di *Lasso's versions in Latin; Henry *Lawes' setting, using *Coverdale's version; *Purcell's version, when serving as court composer to Charles II between 1680–85; Robert *Schumann's setting in 1823, using a version by the *Benedictine Abbot of Melk, Maximilian Stadler, in 1823; Franz Schubert's arrangement, from the same period, using the same version as Schumann's; the Coverdale version, set by Healey Willan, for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953; and Hal Hopson's interpretation, composed in 1997, sung in unison to six handbells. More recently, *Zoranda Temmingh, one of South Africa's foremost organ improvisers, has recorded a most original arrangement of this psalm, adapting the metrical version by de Villiers (1937). Initially it sketches the earth as devoid of form and substance through ominous dissonance. A single high note depicts the infinite celestial sphere. The first verse emerges out this musical emptiness, leading into a flowing chorale to represent the night sky. As the music becomes more consonant, a crescendo of rising motifs portray the glory with which God crowns man. The final verse is majestic, denoting man's responsibility in the care of creation.³¹⁰

All the above examples testify to the psalm's rich liturgical use. On account of its familiarity, other composers took Psalm 8 out of the church and synagogue and into the concert hall. One of the most unusual, for his day, is Salamone *Rossi's version of this psalm, '*La-menašseah 'al ha-gittit*', from about 1623, which was composed not in Latin for the court of Mantua where he served, but in Hebrew for the Jewish ghetto where he lived. It combined Hebrew *melismatic singing with polyphonic elaborations, so, given the then ban on such music in synagogue worship, Psalm 8, like many of the other psalms he composed, was for life outside synagogue liturgy. It is one of the first known Hebrew versions of this psalm set to music.³¹¹

Other examples include *Beethoven's 'Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur', the fourth of his sacred songs (op.48), with choir and ensemble, but also using an instrumental solo: this praises the wonders of creation, inspired by part of Psalm 8.³¹² Similarly *Handel's 'How excellent thy name', set to organ and piano, using Charles Jennens as the librettist, is used in the very first scene of his oratorio 'Saul', where the chorus celebrates David's defeat of Goliath and the Philistines: much of this focusses on David and Goliath (a common theme in Jewish tradition, as we

³¹⁰ This is taken from an email correspondence with Zoranda from September 2016. See *Lingua Laudis, Organ Improvisations, Track 16*, 'Daar is green land', at <http://www.zoranda.co.za/>

³¹¹ See <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/culture/Music/TOSynagogueMusic/Rossi.htm>.; also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/artists/9c800302-1c6d-483e-8cf2-316ac5eeb4e9>.

³¹² Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 54.

have seen, so it is interesting that Handel used it as well) but the refrains in verses 1 and 9 are familiar enough.³¹³ And finally, in *Mendelssohn's oratorio 'Elijah,' after the prophet's ascension into heaven, the last part of the final chorus ('And then shall your light break forth') uses texts from Isa. 58:8 and Ps. 8:1.

One of the key issues with reading this psalm today is its view of the hierarchical placing of humans over the created order; in the light of present ecological concerns, many would argue for a model of co-dependency, and stewardship of creation.³¹⁴ Another contemporary concern—which was highlighted at the beginning of the review of this psalm—has been the translation of this psalm, not least of verse 4. The NRSV allows for a gender-free version in its 'What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals than you care for them?' but of course this loses all sense of our wider theological converse; so too versions which use, less aesthetically, 'child of Adam' or 'human'. A Carmelite translation which sets the whole psalm in the first person is another way of allowing this creation psalm to include the voices of women and children but it has to contort the text. The issue is as much theological as political: if one wants to give the psalm a Christian emphasis, then 'son of man' has to be retained.³¹⁵

Much has been written on the inspiration of this psalm in modern discourse about the nature of being human, sharing traits with the animals and the angels.³¹⁶ Its theme of creation is not only one for Jews and Christian, but for Islam too, not least given its invocation of the divine name as a prelude to any undertaking. For example, Al-Sinhaji, a Muslim apologist who searched the Bible for proofs for prophecy about Muhammad, cited the Syriac/Arabic rendering of this text: 'Who is the Man of whom you are mindful?' He answers it: Muhammad.³¹⁷

But we might also take the impact of this psalm even further: at the time of Apollo 11's first moon landing on 20 July 1969, Neil Armstrong's famous 'That's a small step for (a) man, one giant leap for mankind' was made in the context of Psalm 8. His co-astronaut, Buzz Aldrin, actually cited 8:4–5 to the media: the psalm was then put into a capsule and placed in the lunar dust. The reception history of the psalms has not yet travelled further than this.³¹⁸

³¹³ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8LtMEHaqgY>.

³¹⁴ Gillingham 1998: 240–2.

³¹⁵ For a selection of translations, both designed for private reading and for public worship, see Gillingham 2008b: 194–5.

³¹⁶ See for example Mays 1993.

³¹⁷ This citation by Abu al-'Abbas al-Sinaji is cited by I Goldziher (1878: 377), in Stroumsa, 1992:283–91.

³¹⁸ See Gillingham 2008b: 193.

Psalms 9 and 10: An Acrostic Psalm

We have already noted that the beginning of Psalm 9 is very similar to Psalm 7, suggesting that Psalm 8 was a later insertion in being the promised hymn of praise to the name of God. Psalm 9 has other links with Psalm 7: ‘Rise up O Lord’ is found in 7:6 and 9:19; both psalms speak of the ‘justice’ and ‘righteousness’ of God (7:11 and 9:8); and the ‘pit’ into which the wicked fall in 7:15 is echoed in 9:15. Furthermore, just as Psalms 3 and 4, introducing the first half of this collection, could be seen as ‘twin psalms’³¹⁹ so Psalm 9 and 10, introducing the second half, might be seen as even more closely connected. They share an acrostic form which (with a few omissions) runs throughout every two verses, thus denying Psalm 10 a specific title. God’s enthronement, his judgement on the nations and his defence of the poor are shared themes. Neither psalm has any clear strophic structure, although there is some movement from a short thanksgiving (9:1–12), to a lengthier lament (9:13–10:13) and a short vow of confidence (10:14–18).

One difficulty in Psalm 9 is that the acrostic is so disjointed, particularly after verse 16 and at the beginning of Psalm 10: one suggestion is that the text was damaged during its transmission. A key controversy in the psalm’s reception has been the title to Psalm 9: the NRSV simply offers this as ‘according to *Muth-labben*’. The **Septuagint* reads the Hebrew as ‘concerning the secrets of a son’, reading ‘ben’ (in ‘*labben*’) as ‘son’: this is also taken up in the Latin, so the title reads ‘*in finem pro occultis filii psalmus David*’: that is, ‘about the end, concerning the hidden things of the Son.’ It is not hard to see why some saw this as indicating that the passion and death of Christ are hidden in the psalm.

**Targum Psalms* finds in the title a different interpretive key: it states ‘concerning the death of a man who went out, a general from among the armies.’ In this instance the word ‘*Muth*’ has been read as the Hebrew word ‘*mut*’, meaning death (a reading which a different Christian Greek translation, **Symmachus*, also uses). Furthermore, the word ‘ben’ is read in the Aramaic as ‘*ish habenim*’: this could mean ‘the man between’, or ‘champion’, which in 1 Sam. 17:4 is a term used for Goliath. So verse 5 therefore reads: ‘*You have rebuked the nations of the Philistines; you have destroyed the wicked Goliath*’.³²⁰ This more historical Jewish reading deflected from the Christian reading of the psalm which emphasised ‘the son’. So **Kimḥi* read the first part of the psalm as about David’s victory song after the death of Goliath, and the second part he saw as pointing to the downfall of the wicked nations (‘Edom’) and Israel’s final redemption.³²¹ **Rashi* preferred to read the title as ‘On the ‘*almot*’ as ‘beyond death (for the son)’

³¹⁹ Ref: page number for Psalm 4.

³²⁰ Stec 2004: 38–9.

³²¹ Cohen 1992: 20–1; also Feuer 2004:131–3.

seeing this as about Israel's future hope as 'the son', thus deliberately diffusing the Christian reading about 'a son': the psalm for Rashi is about Israel's experience, past, present and future.³²²

**Midrash Tehillim* offers several possible meanings for what it terms 'muth-labben' in the psalm's title, including 'hidden from the son' or 'death for the son'; or, reading 'Lab' as 'heart', 'hidden from the heart'.³²³ Taking this psalm, alongside 10, as a continuous acrostic, *Midrash Tehillim* argues that as this uses all twenty-two letters (*sic*) it indicates 'completion': the psalm is a reference to Torah, the complete revelation of God throughout Israel's history.³²⁴

Christian discussions of the psalm are found mainly in the church fathers and medieval commentators (otherwise the psalm is read more pastorally and as instruction). *Jerome, whose **Vulgate* version produced 'for the hidden things of the son' also considers *Symmachus' Greek version, 'for the death of a son', and in his commentary reads the psalm as about the passion of Christ.³²⁵ *Theodoret makes much of the Greek heading ('secrets of the son') and argues that this is why Jesus taught in parables for those who had things 'hidden from their eyes' (Luke 18:31–34).³²⁶ *Chrysostom reads the reference in verse 11, to the Lord dwelling in Zion, as now about 'spiritual Mount Zion, which is the church (Heb. 12:22–28)'.³²⁷ *Cassiodorus, by contrast, focusses on God's rebuke of the nations in verse 5: 'From this point on, the most sacred event of the second coming of the Lord is explained... (which) signifies the Lord's future kingdom', and notes that this is the first psalm which prophesies the coming of the Antichrist.³²⁸ The reference to the 'Antichrist' is a point *Cassiodorus returns to in later psalms. Referring to the number nine, he notes that this speaks of the death of the son, for Christ gave up the ghost at the ninth hour. His reading of verse 7 ('...he has established his throne for judgement') is typically concise: 'So he who was judged upon the cross should judge upon the throne'.³²⁹ His comments have some affinities with the title to the Syriac Psalter: 'Of Christ, receiving the Crown and the Throne, and putting his enemies to flight'.³³⁰

*Aquinas offers a different reading in the light of the title. Psalms 9–10 are part of his discourse of 1–10 as a whole, as he discusses the psalms in five tens within three fifties; so here he has an eye to other psalms in this smaller

³²² Gruber 2004: 202–4.

³²³ Braude 1959 I: 131–4.

³²⁴ Braude 1959 I: 135–46.

³²⁵ *Homily on Psalm 9* FC 48:35–6, in ACCS VII:75.

³²⁶ *Commentary on the Psalms 9.1* FC 101:87–8, in ACCS VII:75.

³²⁷ *Commentary on the Psalms 9.6* CCOP 1:189–90, in ACCS VII:81.

³²⁸ *Exp. Ps.* 9.6 ACW 51:119, in ACCS VII:77.

³²⁹ Walsh 1990: 134.

³³⁰ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79:151.

collection, and sees its context as 2 Samuel 18–19 (i.e. the same as for Psalm 3): this is about the death of a son, namely David's son, Absalom. But there are also hidden things in the psalm about the son: so the psalm's second level of meaning is that of the death of another son, Jesus Christ.³³¹

Partly because of its theme of judgement on the wicked, the psalm is used liturgically on the ninth day of **Sukkot* (instead of Psalm 12) and, with Psalm 10, on the Day of Atonement, the only festival to extend for two days (Lev. 23:22).³³² In Christian Liturgy, by contrast, the **Benedictine Rule* assigns it to **Compline* (or **Vigils*) on Sundays. Because of the two themes of the protection of the poor and of judgement on the wicked, verses 18–20 were sung as an **antiphon* for the Third Sunday in Lent from the Council of Trent to the second Vatican Council.

The **Stuttgart* and **Utrecht Psalters* each illustrate Psalms 9 and 10 together, given that they are one psalm in the **Vulgate*. The combined two themes are clear: God's judgement on the wicked, and his defence of the (both physical and spiritual) poor. In three different images, **Stuttgart* (fols. 9v, 10r and 10v) interprets Psalm 9. The first is an unusual frontal image of Christ as Judge, with Peter to his right and groups awaiting judgement to the left; the second, however, is of Christ as Protector, with his arm around the naked psalmist, who is at his feet seeking protection from his enemies: he holds a giant lock, so that, rescued from death, he can enter the gates of Zion (verse 14). The third illustration is a dreadful scene of hell, with people burning in ovens and others being dragged by demons to the fire: the hand of God above the scene is probably to be read as his blessing on the martyrs of the church.³³³ **Utrecht* (fol. 5r), as well as **Harley* (fol. 5r) and **Eadwine* (fol. 15v), offer a narrative of both Psalms 9 and 10 in one full image; the left half focusses on Psalm 9. **Christ Logos* is in a globe-**mandorla* holding a pair of scales (verses 4, 8, 20). The psalmist stands upon a tower above the 'gates of death' (verse 13); to the right an angel is herding people into a fiery furnace which has a satyr-like head personifying death (verse 17).³³⁴

The motif of the 'Personification of Hell' (from verse 17) was in part popularised through the illustrations to this psalm. The fourth image in the Byzantine **Hamilton Psalter* (fol. 54v) shows a **nimbed* angel pushing three nude figures towards a personified hell, whilst David, crowned, reaches out to what seems to be the holy sepulchre. A similar scene is in the **Bristol Psalter* (fol. 18r, where 'Personified Hell' seems to emerge from a cave) and in the **Theodore Psalter*

³³¹ Ryan 2000: 21–7.

³³² See Willems (1990: 412) and Chyutin (1994: 388–9).

³³³ See Bessette (2005: 301–10). See also <https://goo.gl/ZeXUZv>; and <https://goo.gl/upb4jf>; and for fol. 10v, see <https://goo.gl/WVMvo7>.

³³⁴ <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=16&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

(fol. 9r, where Hell is portrayed with arms, although the Hand of God issues from the arc of heaven, symbolising his protection of the poor and needy). Hell is also portrayed with a monstrous face and grasping at sinners in **Khudov* fol. 8v, in **Pantokrator* fol. 23r and in **Barberini* fol. 16v. Some classical influence is evident here: for example, ancient sarcophagi depict Hades lunging out of a pit, or the myth of Pluto dragging Persephone down into Hades.³³⁵

It is interesting to see how a contemporary Jewish illustration has completely reversed this image of 9:1. Moshe *Berger depicts Jerusalem, with its Temple, atop of a garden: angels watch, and the sun, moon and birds represent 'Herut' where humans are freed from all suffering in a messianic age.³³⁶

In terms of music, there are several lengthy metrical versions of this one psalm, but *Giovanni Gabrieli's is one of the few composers to have used the entire Latin text (published posthumously in 1615). Given the narrative value of the psalm in art, it is surprising to find so few examples in music. Usually selections are chosen, such as *Schütz's use of verses 11–12 in German, and, much more recently, Lloyd Larson's setting of verses 1–10 in English (1997).

Finally, the protection of the poor, against the backcloth of the mighty judgement of God, has resulted in the psalm being used at times of religious persecution. The *Lanterne of Litz* (1408), a *Lollard treatise produced in the same year as Archbishop Thomas Arundel's Constitutions against the Lollards, connects Archbishop Arundel with the Antichrist, using Ps. 9:20 (noting the identification of the Antichrist in the psalm goes back to the early church fathers), thus reading this as a prophecy about the persecutions of the Lollard faithful.³³⁷ Psalm 9 was also important for the Huguenots: the 'five scholars of Lausanne' sang Psalm 9 as their Protestant witness under threat of death at the stake.³³⁸ And Archbishop *Laud cited verse 12 ('for he who avenges blood is mindful of them') from the Scaffold of Tower Hill (1645).³³⁹ Like so many psalms which speak of the judgement on the wicked and the protection of the innocent, Psalm 9 has thus served many different causes within and between the Jewish and Christian faiths.

Psalm 10 must always have existed alongside 9, given its acrostic form, even though the alphabetic structure breaks down at the beginning of the psalm. The letter *mem* is missing, and the letter *nun* for verses 3–4 is not evident at the beginning of verse 3; furthermore, the letters *pe* and 'ayin are in reverse order,

³³⁵ See Corrigan (1992: 12–13). For the image in the **Bristol Psalter*, see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_40731_f018r.

³³⁶ See <http://themuseumofpsalms.com/the-museum/>; also <https://goo.gl/r3IzBg>.

³³⁷ On the Arundel Constitutions, see <http://www.bible-researcher.com/arundel.html>; also Kuczynski (1995:183).

³³⁸ Reid 1971: 46.

³³⁹ Prothero 1903: 240.

and the *tsade* in verse 10 is not at all clear. Part of the problem is that this psalm (as also Psalm 9) is not divided into equal verses.

Psalm 10 is more personal in tone than 9, and here God is less prominent than the wicked, but the psalm is nevertheless closely linked to 9. The ‘rise up O Lord!’ in 9:19 is repeated in 10:12; the ‘needy and poor’ (*’ebyon* and *’ani*) in 9:18 (Heb. 9:19) are also found in 10:9 (where *’ani* is used twice); God sits enthroned ‘for ever’ in 9:7 and in 10:16 he is king ‘for ever’; God is a stronghold in ‘times of trouble’ in 9:9 but he is hidden in ‘times of trouble’ in 10:1, using the same expression in Hebrew (*le-’ittot ba-šarah*).

When it comes to translation, two theological changes in both the Greek and Latin have affected later reception history. The first is the removal of anthropomorphic language in verse 1, so that ‘Why do you hide yourself?’ becomes ‘Why do you overlook (me)?’; this is found both in the Greek (using *huperoraō*) and the Latin (using *dispicio*, which could mean ‘Why do you despise (me)?’). The second change is in verse 4, which speaks of the wicked whose thoughts are ‘There is no God. Here the Greek is *ouk estin ho theos enōpion autou* (‘There is no God *in his presence/opinion*’) and the Latin, *non est Deus in conspectu eius* (‘There is no God *in his thoughts*’): in each case this indicates that this is not an expression of atheism but that the foolish lack of belief that God is present.³⁴⁰

Jewish commentators tend to read the ‘wicked’ in this psalm as the godless within Israel, rather than external enemies, as they did for Psalm 9. **Targum* actually preserves and expands the anthropomorphism in verse 1 to emphasise the absence both of God and of his protective angels: ‘Why do you hide yourself *in the dwelling place of the holy ones* in times of trouble?’³⁴¹ As for verse 4, *Rashi reads it as an aphorism and paraphrases the citation as ‘There is no Law, there is no Judge.’³⁴²

The words of the wicked, cited four times in this psalm (verses 4, 6, 11 and 13), are also recalled in Rom. 3:10–18, which is a **catena* of several psalms. 10:7 (‘their mouths are filled with cursing and deceit’) is cited from the Greek in Rom. 3:14; the whole *catena* is used to describe emphatically those under the power of sin.³⁴³

There is much less later evidence of Christological readings of this psalm. Even the ‘Rise up O Lord!’ in verse 12 is usually read as a metaphor for God to take note, rather than a hidden reference to the resurrection.³⁴⁴ Instead, Psalm 10

³⁴⁰ See commentary on Psalm 14:1 on pp. 99–100.

³⁴¹ Stec 2004 :40–1.

³⁴² Gruber 2004: 209.

³⁴³ For the relevance of this in Psalm 14, see pp. 98–99.

³⁴⁴ For example, Diodore: Hill (2005: 35). Calvin actually reads this expression as not about inciting God to action, as if he is idle, but rather about exciting our own hope in God; it is to change us, not God. See CO 31:115 in Pitkin (1993: 852).

is read in continuity with Psalm 9: *Cassiodorus, for example, continues to find the Antichrist here as well ('lurking like a lion' as in verse 9); he applies the psalm to persecuted Christians, and emphasises (as he did for Ps. 9:7) the throne imagery (10:16) which he sees again as referring to the Day of Final Judgment.³⁴⁵

The several references to tyranny and the plight of the poor have given the psalm a place in both Jewish and Christian liturgy. In *Ashkenazi ritual, the psalm is recited during the 'ten days of repentance' before the Day of Atonement (*bRSh.* 18a), and sometimes, with Psalm 9, on the Day of Atonement itself.³⁴⁶ In Christian liturgy in the West Psalm 10 is often used with Psalm 9, at *Vigils on Sundays. The bias to the poor, especially at the end of the psalm, has inspired several collects praying that God will attend to their voice.³⁴⁷

Many illuminated Psalters illustrate Psalms 9 and 10 together. The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fols. 11r, 11v and 12r), with its depictions of hell and the persecution of the poor, continues these themes as in Psalm 9.³⁴⁸ **Utrecht* (fol. 5r) depicts Psalm 9 in the left half of the picture and Psalm 10 on the right. So for this psalm the focus is on the proud and wicked who attack the poor: the 'lion in its den' illustrates verse 10, and the impact of the imagery is the victimisation, rather than the vindication, of the poor.³⁴⁹ Some evidence of Christianising is in Byzantine Psalters, which illustrate 'Rise up O Lord!' in verse 12, by David extending his hands to the Holy Sepulchre, alongside the inscription 'To arise'. This is found in **Hamilton* fol. 56r; **Theodore* fol. 10r; **Khludov* fol. 9v; **Pantokrator* fol. 24v; and **Barberini* fol. 18v. Meanwhile *Khludov* and *Pantokrator* actually read 'David prophesying the *Anastasis* (of Christ)'; and even more vividly in *Pantokrator*, Christ steps out of the tomb, with David on a ledge behind it, gesturing to the inscription.³⁵⁰

Two Jewish Psalters, illustrated some seven hundred years apart, but each compiled in settings of persecution, take very different motifs from this psalm. The **Parma Psalter* (fol. 11B) offers an image of verse 9 in the lower margin, between the text and commentary, of a lion, trailing its tail, haunches low, shoulders high and its mouth open.³⁵¹ Moshe *Berger has an image of Psalm 10 which is of Jerusalem, the Temple, and attacking forces: this has correspondences with his image of Psalm 9, although there is no sun nor any birds as there were in Psalm 9. 'Opposing forces pierce a representation of truth. Why does the Lord let it happen? Perhaps to test our loyalty and to challenge us. In overcoming temptation, we may become worthy to receive the highest award—eternity.'³⁵²

³⁴⁵ *Explanation of the Psalms* 10:29–30 ACW 51:129, in ACCS VII:91.

³⁴⁶ Feuer 2004: 145.

³⁴⁷ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79:170.

³⁴⁸ See pp. 85–86 and <https://goo.gl/7GG7CF>; <https://goo.gl/NixIfR>; and <https://goo.gl/9sYuN1>.

³⁴⁹ See pp. 85–86 and again <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=16&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

³⁵⁰ For **Khludov* see also Corrigan (1992: 66–7); also fig. 35 and 36.

³⁵¹ Metzger 1996:66.

³⁵² <http://themuseumofpsalms.com/the-museum/>; <https://goo.gl/enIRRh>.

Perhaps the best known example of part of Psalm 10 in music is the use of verse 16 ('The Lord is king forever and ever'), along with other psalms which speak of divine kingship over human kingship, in *Walton's 'Belshazzar's Feast', taken mainly from Daniel 5. For example, in Part Two, after the feast has begun but before the vision of the writing on the wall, the chorus addresses Belshazzar: 'Then they pledged the king before the people, crying/Thou O King are King of Kings: O King live forever...' The vanity of wickedness and the clash between the two kingdoms encapsulates a key theme in the reception of these two psalms.³⁵³

Psalm 11: The 'All-Seeing God'

Psalm 11 is the first psalm in this collection which does not actually address God; it is a dialogue with those who counsel flight. Its view of the 'all-seeing God' (verse 4) gives it a universalistic use, as was seen for Psalms 3–6. Yet the compilers have placed it here to link it with Psalm 10. The long citation of 'the wicked' in verses 1–3 corresponds with four shorter citations of the wicked in Psalm 10 (verses 4, 6, 11 and 13) which also speaks of the all-seeing God (verse 14). Just as the wicked lurk to seize the poor in Ps. 10:8–10, they wait to 'shoot in the dark' at the upright in Ps. 11:2.

Verses 1, 4 and 6, with their rich imagery, are those most used in the reception of this psalm. The Hebrew in verse 1 could be translated, literally, as 'flee into your hills, your birds!'. Both the Greek and the Latin (and also the **Targum*) correct this to read more specifically 'Flee like a sparrow to the mountains', suggesting the perception of the enemies of the vulnerability of the suppliant. Verse 4 reads, literally in Hebrew, 'his eyes see, his eyelids examine the sons of men.' The vivid image of God looking out from heaven is actually preserved in both the Greek and Latin: the words for 'eyes' and 'eyelids' are actually preserved in each account.³⁵⁴ The final imprecatory image of God raining 'sulphur' on the wicked (verse 6) is clearly an allusion to Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen. 19:24. This allusion, too, is preserved in both the Greek and Latin.

Jewish commentators tend to read this psalm as the experience of David with Saul, thus linking it to Psalms 5 and 7. The image of the bird is seen as Israel suffering in exile, experiencing the taunts of her enemies.³⁵⁵ The reference to the Lord looking down from his throne in verse 4 is understood both as a reference to heaven, but also, in the allusion to the Temple, as showing that God's presence has never departed from that site.³⁵⁶ The raining of burning

³⁵³ Stern 2011: 467–8.

³⁵⁴ This is also preserved in verse 4 of this psalm found in the *Dead Sea Scrolls (Seiyal 4).

³⁵⁵ Braude 1959 I: 159.

³⁵⁶ Braude 1959 I: 160.

coals is a reference not only to Sodom but also to Nebuchadnezzar, and to ‘Gog and Magog’—Israel’s enemies throughout time.³⁵⁷

This image of fire and brimstone is not unique to this psalm, but it could well be verse 6 which is alluded to in Rev. 14:10, which concerns the outpouring of God’s judgement after the announcement of the fall of ‘Babylon’ in verse 8. In Revelation the recipients are of course Christians rather than the Jewish nation. Hence later Christian commentators read the reference to the temple in verse 4 not as Jerusalem, but as the church ‘of many members... built together by love into one structure.’³⁵⁸ The psalm overall was seen to speak of Christ’s passion (verses 1–3), his resurrection and ascension (verse 4) and the throne of judgement and condemnation of unbelievers (verses 5–7).

A key inspiration for this Christianised reading was actually the Latin version of verse 3: ‘*quoniam quae perfecisti destruxerunt iustus autem quid fecit*’ means, literally, ‘when the things which have been completed are destroyed, what can the just man do?’ Reading the first part of the verse as a reference to those who destroyed (crucified) Christ, the inference in the second part was ‘What has Christ, the just man, done to deserve such treatment?’³⁵⁹ This was then also applied to the persecuted Christians: *Cassiodorus, reading this psalm as ‘number ten’ (given that Psalms 9–10 were read as one unit) sees it as containing the sacred power of the ten commandments, condemning men’s vices and strengthen the upright in orthodox belief.³⁶⁰

Its liturgical use, also linked to the idea of persecution, is seen in verse 7, which was an *antiphon sung in in liturgies which commemorated the martyrs of the church: ‘He loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.’ And verse 4, concerning the Lord in his Temple looking down upon humankind, gave the psalm an association with the Feast of Ascension.³⁶¹ The calling down fire and brimstone on the enemies has been more controversial in worship: as a ‘cursing verse’ it was left out of the **Daily Office*.

Many early Psalters play upon this vivid image of fire and brimstone, as well as the images of God ‘looking out’ from heaven and the psalmist being told to flee ‘like a bird’ to the mountain. **Utrecht* (fol. 6r) achieves this in one complete narrative image; **Stuttgart* (fols. 12v and 13r) achieves it in two discrete cameos.³⁶² The two images of the bird and fire and brimstone are also evident in Byzantine Psalters such as **Theodore* (fols. 10v and 11r) and **Khludov* (fols. 10r and 10v). These witness to the experience of conflict and persecution: in *Khludov* (fol. 10v), as well as the wicked being tormented by flames coming out

³⁵⁷ Braude 1959 I: 161–2.

³⁵⁸ Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 11.7 WSA 3 15:166, in ACCS VII:96.

³⁵⁹ Ladouceur 2005:76.

³⁶⁰ Walsh 1990: 139.

³⁶¹ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 171.

³⁶² For *Utrecht*, see <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=18&res=1&x=0&y=0>; for *Stuttgart*, see <https://goo.gl/KhH78b> and <http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/vpc/search/record.php?record=31975>.

of heaven, a sinner is having his tongue pulled out by an angel, and under it is written ‘one who blasphemes against the holy church of God.’³⁶³ The very same verse which some twelve hundred years later was excluded from use in liturgy is here the key explanation for the violence in the psalm.

The **Parma Psalter* (fol. 13A), also crafted in the heat of Jewish persecution, has a very different image: an eagle sits to the left of the initial Hebrew word for ‘leader’, spreading its wings between Psalms 10 and 11. It too illustrates verse 1. Such a mighty bird would never have been threatened by the archer (verse 2) but no other bird would have been strong enough to fly to such a distant refuge and indeed inhabit it.³⁶⁴ Within the context of the psalm, this actually makes more sense than ‘sparrow’ used in the Greek and Latin.

Musical arrangements of this psalm are not profuse, although one of **Luther’s* best-known hymns in German is based on verse 4: ‘Ach Gott vom Himmel, sieh darein’, was included in the oldest Lutheran Hymnal, the *Achtliederbuch*, compiled by Jobst Gutnecht in Wittenburg in 1524, and adapted by **Schütz* almost a century later. Metrical paraphrases are very much in evidence: they include a version by Claude **Goudimel* (in French) for the Genevan Psalter, two by Thomas **Ravenscroft* and Thomas **Sternhold* for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformed congregations in England and Scotland, and one by William **Billings* for Reformed Churches in New England. **Handel’s* ‘In the Lord I put my Trust’ is one of his Chandos Anthems, based on Psalm 11—and here serving more as a simplification of a motet than the development of a hymn. And finally, Psalm 11 appears in *Le Roi David*, composed by Arthur **Honegger* in Switzerland in 1921, using the librettist Rene Morax; this is a story of the rise of King David designed to inspire hope in the renewal of culture after the First World War. In Part One, ‘From Shepherd to King’, Psalm 11 is sung as a tenor solo just after the entrance of Goliath: ‘How can you say to me, “Flee like a bird to the mountains?”’³⁶⁵

Taken together, these musical arrangements of Psalm 11 testify to the universal concerns of the psalm expressed at the end of verse 4.

Psalm 12: ‘Flattering Lips’

Psalm 12 is a well-constructed psalm and has clear links with Psalms 9–10–11. An **inclusio* is provided by the expression ‘sons of men’ in verses 1 and 8 (translated ‘humankind’ in the NRSV, but the phrase is also in Ps. 11:4). The ‘sons of

³⁶³ Corrigan 1992: 14, fig. 16; also <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow/129.010v.jpg>.

³⁶⁴ Beit-Arie, Silver and Metzger 1996: 66.

³⁶⁵ Stern 2011: 232–9.

men' are those who flatter—perhaps even necromancers seeking advice from idols—whose false words (cited in verse 4) contrast with the words of God (cited in verse 5) which offer protection to the poor and needy (a theme also prominent in Psalms 9–10). The imagery of the 'flattering lips' and 'tongue that boasts' (verse 3), contrasted with the 'pure promise of God, purified seven times' (verse 7), has been particularly prominent in the reception of this psalm. 'I will now rise up' (verse 5) has obvious links with Pss. 9:19 and 10:12 ('Rise up, O Lord!')³⁶⁶ and this too has provided a good deal of Christian commentary about the promise of resurrection in this psalm.

The title '*Sheminit*' is also found in Psalm 6, and the Greek and Latin have used the same translation ('octave') here as there. Verse 6 provides difficulties: the Hebrew reads, literally, 'like silver refined in the furnace of the earth'. The Greek translates this as *dokimion tē gē* ('tested for the earth'). The **Vulgate* has followed the Greek literally.³⁶⁷ Verse 8 is another difficult verse: the NRSV has simply 'On every side the wicked prow' but the Hebrew suggests 'walking round and round in circles'; the Greek and Latin both take this up and this has provided somewhat amusing images in illuminated Psalters.

The **Targum* translates the heading as it did for Psalm 6: 'upon the lute with eight strings'. Verse 4—another difficult phrase in Hebrew, which reads literally 'our lips are with us: who is our master?'—is expanded to read '*those who deny the existence of our Lord*' (as in 10:4). Verse 8 is difficult in Hebrew but it reads somewhat vividly in the Aramaic: 'On every side the wicked go about, *like a leech that drains the blood of the sons of men.*'³⁶⁸

Other Jewish commentators read also '*Sheminit*' in the same way as for Psalm 6: after seven ages of unbridled evil (noting the 'seven times' in verse 6) the Messianic era will dawn, and the poor and needy will be made secure (verse 5).³⁶⁹ *Rashi sees 'the wicked' in this psalm as those who committed atrocities during the reign of Athaliah: this was eight generations after David (again referring to the number 'eight' in the title) but David as a prophet foresees this, and so prays here that his line will not be destroyed.

Christian commentators view the numbers seven and eight a similar way: the psalm is thus about the 'octave' when after seven ages of wickedness God (in Christ) will arise in judgement against all evil.³⁷⁰ So as for Psalm 6, the motif of final judgement and the coming Messianic era is read similarly by Jews and Christians alike: it is just that the agency and recipients are different. *Eusebius, for example, reads the entire psalm as a prophecy about the Advent of Christ.³⁷¹

³⁶⁶ Also in 3:8 and 7:7.

³⁶⁷ Ladouceur 2005: 78.

³⁶⁸ Stec 2004: 43.

³⁶⁹ Feuer 2004: 169.

³⁷⁰ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 180.

³⁷¹ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 176.

*Cassiodorus uses verse 5 ('I will arise') to this end: 'I shall appear and be manifest in the Son (John 14:9)'.³⁷²

Another key use of this psalm in Christian tradition is for moral exhortation: verses 1–4 are part of a string of psalms used in this way as early as *1 Clement* 14–15, concerning the care of the poor. *Augustine also reads 'seven times' purified in a didactic way: this is the fear of God, devotion, knowledge, fortitude, deliberation, understanding, and wisdom.³⁷³ Much is also made of the evil nature of 'the tongue' and 'flattering lips'—'twelve poor and learned men on one side, all the eloquence of Greece and Rome arrayed on the other. From the time of Tertullus to that of *Julian the Apostate, every species of oratory, learning, wit, was lavished against the Church of God.'³⁷⁴ This provides the context for Augustine's observations above—that true wisdom and knowledge are found in the 'fear of God'.

The use of the psalm in Jewish liturgy is connected with the numerical elements in the psalm: it is to be read on the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, as the 'Song of the Day' after the seven days of offerings brought for the seventy nations; the eighth day is for Israel alone, preparing for the dawning of the Messianic era which will set her free.³⁷⁵ Its liturgical use influenced Salamone *Rossi's arrangement of the first three verses to music: '*La-menasseah 'al hasheminit*' was composed in the early seventeenth century. The use of the psalm in Christian worship focusses more on the restoration of the poor and needy. It has been seen as one of sixteen laments for mourning women, and, along with Psalms 9, 10 and 11, several collects on the plight of the poor derive from this psalm.³⁷⁶ In Orthodox liturgy parts of the psalm are used in the marriage ceremony as part of a prayer for the union of the husband and wife, and verses 1 and 7 are used as part of the regular **Prokeimenon* in Sunday liturgy over an eight-week cycle.

The use of this psalm in art plays upon its striking metaphors. **Utrecht* (fol. 6v), for example, focusses on *Christ-Logos stepping out of a globe-*mandorla ('I will now arise!'—verse 5); an angel with a cross-spear smites the wicked (with their 'flattering lips', as in verse 3). Two other groups of wicked are walking round a circular object and pushing a turnstile ('on every side the wicked prowl'—verse 8).³⁷⁷ In the middle register are the 'poor and needy', in whose defence Christ has risen. In the upper right the psalmist holds a scroll ('the words of the Lord'—verse 5) and points to two smiths working at a forge ('refined in a furnace'—verse 6).³⁷⁸ Such a narrative review of the psalm shows clearly its

³⁷² *Explanation of the Psalms* 12.6 ACW 51:142, in ACCS VII:102.

³⁷³ *Expositions on the Psalms Ps. 12.7 WA* 3 15:171, in ACCS VII:102.

³⁷⁴ Cited in Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 178.

³⁷⁵ See Feuer 2004: 163.

³⁷⁶ Davison p. 160; Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 182.

³⁷⁷ This could well be taken from Cassiodorus who makes much of this image in his *Explanation of the Psalms* 11:9: see Walsh (1990: 143–4).

³⁷⁸ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=19&res=1&x=0&y=0>; See also Bessette (2005: 145–55).

two most important themes: the difference between ‘human speech’ and ‘divine speech,’ and, from this, God’s rising up to protect the oppressed poor.

Several Byzantine Psalters emphasise these two themes. The **Hamilton Psalter* (fol. 57v) has a double image of two **nimbed* angels attacking the lips and tongue of a prostrate man, and David standing before the holy sepulchre proclaiming the ‘rising of the Lord’. A similar dual image is found in **Theodore* (fol. 11v) whereas in **Barberini* (fols. 20r and 20v) it is divided into two such images. **Pantokrator* (fol. 26v) uses the motif of resurrection: its image is similar to the previous psalm where David stands behind the tomb and gestures to Christ who is within it, visible from the knees up. **Khludov* (fol. 10v) uses image of deceitful human speech from verse 3: it adds an inscription ‘one who blasphemes against the holy church of God’—a significant note, because this verse was used at the Council of Nicea in 785 to condemn the **iconoclasts*.³⁷⁹

Two very different images are found in thirteenth-century Psalters: in the *Munich Golden Psalter* (fol. 36v) and in the *MS. Ashmole 1525* are historiated initials of the first letter ‘S’ (*‘Salvum me...’*). In the upper section God (or perhaps Christ) holds a book and his hand is raised in blessing; at the bottom we view a crowned woman with a halo, representing Ecclesia, holding a chalice and scroll. In this case the psalm is read as a conversation between Christ and his Church.³⁸⁰

The image of the sevenfold purification of words is a typical example of how a verse from a psalm can become a literary as well as artistic trope. It is adapted in *The Merchant of Venice* ii 9.63–64) where Aragon, having chosen from the silver casket (with its inscription ‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves’) opens her choice and reads to Portia, “The fire seven times tried this/ Seven times tried that judgment is/ That did never choose amiss./ Some there be that shadows kiss.” From almost the same period, Psalm 12 was one of seven psalms included by Francis **Bacon* in his *Translation of Certain Psalms into English Verse* (1625). Each was composed in different quantitative metres, dedicated to his ‘good friend, George **Herbert*’. The ‘sevenfold’ image from Psalm 12 is now of gold, taken from the mine, and refers to the Word of God. Verses 5 and 6 read:

Now for the bitter sighing of the poor,
The Lord hath said, I will no more forbear
The wicked’s kingdom to invade and scour,
And set at large the men restrain’d in fear.
And sure the word of God is pure and fine,
And in the trial never loseth weight;
Like noble gold, which, since it left the mine,
Hath seven times pass’d through the fiery strait.

³⁷⁹ See Corrigan 1992: 14.

³⁸⁰ Both images can be found on the LUNA site. For *MS Ashmole 1525*, see <https://goo.gl/72cyaX>.

From later in the seventeenth century an amusing adaption of this psalm from the viewpoint of the notorious Earl of Rochester, is John *Wilmot's *Rochester Extempore*:

And after singing Psalm the Twelfth,
He laid his book upon the shelf
And looked much simply like himself;
With eyes turned up, as white as ghost,
He cried 'Ah Lard! ah, Lard of Hosts!
I am a rascal, that thou know'st!'

The psalm has a more serious meaning. In *Right and Wrong* (1952) Martin *Buber wrote about Psalm 12 in the light of the post-Holocaust eclipse of God, to show that despite the appearance of the victory of evil in the world, another scale of values shows that it has been neutralised. The human lies ('our lips are our own: who is our master?') were in the Nazi 'final solution'. The other scale of values is expressed in 'I will now arise', when evil is defeated forever: 'The lie is from time and will be swallowed up by time; the truth, the divine truth, is from eternity and is in eternity'.³⁸¹

Psalm 13: The Fear of Death

The cause of complaint in Psalm 13 is sickness and the threat of death. It has three clear strophes—a lament expressed in a fourfold 'how long?' (verses 1–2), a prayer for deliverance (verses 3–4) and a sudden change of mood of confidence (verses 5–6). Its heading is as for Psalm 12 except for the omission of *'al ha-sheminit* and although the cause of suffering is different it has much in common with this psalm, starting with its plea to God in the introduction ('Help, O Lord' in 12:1; 'How long, O Lord?' in 13:1). Recognising this continuity, *Rashi actually read both psalms together without a break, omitting the title to Psalm 13.³⁸²

Jewish commentators—for example *Rashi and *Kimḥi—see the speaker as Israel suffering oppression from her neighbours. Nebuchadnezzar and the exile are most discussed, although the fourfold cry 'How Long?' is seen to refer to Babylon, Media, Greece and Rome (or Edom, representing Gentile oppression beyond the fall of Rome).³⁸³ The four expressions of faith in verses 5–6 ('I trust in

³⁸¹ See H.J. Levine 1984: 214–15.

³⁸² Gruber 2004: 221.

³⁸³ Note the commentary to Psalm 8 which refers to the four kingdoms in a similar way (p. 75).

your steadfast love'; 'my heart shall rejoice'; 'I will sing to the Lord'; 'He has dealt bountifully with me') are intended to contrast with these four exiles; they all refer to sorrow turned to joy because of the promise of bounty at the Feast of Booths.³⁸⁴

Christian commentators have read the psalm either historically, or more practically. *Antiochenes such as *Diodore of Tarsus and *Theodore argued historically that this was by David, lamenting the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba. So according to Diodore, the psalm itself is a form of discipline. According to Theodore, it serves as a psalm of penitence.³⁸⁵ *Cassiodorus comments on the reference to the 'sleep of death' in verse 3 as suggesting that the light of faith has been buried, a sleep over which the enemy delights.³⁸⁶ Again Cassiodorus is interested in the number of the psalm: in Latin this is now 12, not 13, and he opines that it reminds us of the teaching of the twelve apostles, and their promise after suffering in this life of twelve seats in the judgment to come.³⁸⁷ *Calvin's commentary is much more cautious: the psalm is, quite simply, about faith and providence like Psalm 11; this was important for David and for later generations, as it speaks about the nature of faith when God seems absent.³⁸⁸

The reference in verse 3 to 'Give light to my eyes' and to the 'sleep of death' have linked the psalm with morning prayer in Jewish liturgy and with evening prayer in Christian worship. The chain of psalms which follows the Morning Blessings in **Pesuke de-Zimra* includes 13:5–6: 'But I trusted in your steadfast love' (noting again the more corporate reading of the psalm in Jewish tradition).³⁸⁹ However, the emphasis on turning to God for protection has meant that this has often been used in the Eastern Orthodox Church at the service of Great *Compline from Monday to Thursday throughout Lent.³⁹⁰

It is the motif of the 'sleep of death' which dominates many illuminated Psalters. In the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 7r) the *Christ-Logos, in the upper left, unusually has his back to the psalmist ('How long will you hide your face from me?'—verse 1); he holds a lighted torch whose rays fall onto the eyes of the psalmist under a tree in the lower right corner. This diagonal (suggesting a relationship between Christ and the suppliant) is broken, however, by a group of enemies in the middle of the image and an open sarcophagus by the psalmist's feet.³⁹¹

³⁸⁴ See Feuer (2004: 171–80), also citing *Midrash Shocher Tov*.

³⁸⁵ Diodore, *Commentary on Psalms 13*, WGRW 9:40–41, in ACCS VII:104. For Theodore, see Hill (2006: 149–51).

³⁸⁶ *Explanation of the Psalms 13.4* ACW 51:147, in ACCS VII:105.

³⁸⁷ Walsh 1990: 149.

³⁸⁸ Pitkin 1993: 852–3; also Bloch 1992: 272–3.

³⁸⁹ There is also evidence of the use of verse 4 'Give light to my eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death' as medical amulets to ward off disease and suffering. See E. Davies (1992: 174).

³⁹⁰ See Holladay 1993: 183.

³⁹¹ See Bessette (2005: 212–18); also <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=20&res=1&cx=0&y=0>.

A different image on the same theme is in **Vaticanus Graecus* 752 (fols. 44v and 45r). In the first image, in a cloudy arc of heaven, Christ is half-seen cross-nimbed above a cave of death in which a prostrate man is being attacked by the Personification of Death; Adam and Eve emerge from behind the cave and below a group of men and veiled women each emerge from a sarcophagus. The illustration is based upon 1 Cor. 12:21–22 and pseudo-Anastasius' interpretation of the psalm.³⁹²

The range of musical arrangements of this psalm is extraordinary. William *Byrd, Johannes *Brahms, *Andrea Gabrieli, Heinrich *Schütz, William *Billings have each produced one or more versions of the psalm; six other examples, four of them quite recent, are worth further note, because they reveal how both the poignant start and the final resolution to this psalm have inspired such different responses. First, *Christopher Gibbons' 'How Long O Lord?' is a simple and haunting work, for performance at the Chapel Royal, with organ and two solo trebles. The German composer Franz Liszt arranged three variations of this psalm ('Herr wie lange?') between 1855 and 1862, also lingering on the fourfold 'How Long?' at the beginning of the psalm.³⁹³ Thirdly, the more contemporary composer, John Bell, included Psalm 13 in his 'Songs for Sorrow and Bereavement': it is sung in unison to cello accompaniment. An African-American Spiritual ('I'm gonna sing til the Spirit moves in my Heart') includes Ps. 13:6 ('I will sing unto the Lord') in its various Bible references; arranged by Moses Hogan (1995) the **a capella* chorus is based on the call and response pattern and repetitive rhythms of traditional spirituals, capturing a 'whirlwind of sound' to evoke the movement of the Spirit of God.³⁹⁴ Another very different arrangement is by American composer Milton *Babbit, who included Psalm 13 (along with stanzas from Psalms 40 and 41), in his *From the Psalter* (2002). This is set in a jazz medium, using the *Sidney Psalter version to create precise rhythms and rhymes. Finally, 'The Nothing That Is' by Libby Larsen (2004) is a most unusual piece, combining a text adapted from the *Apollo 13* flight transcript with biblical verses, including Psalm 13 (and also 90 and 131). This is about the role of faith in survival: a baritone singer is the guide, with narrators as astronauts and ground crew, and the chorus as countdown. The work ends with a resolution taken from Ps. 13:5 ('But I trusted in your steadfast love').³⁹⁵

Many psalms tell a story of suffering and restoration, and this allows for a rich reception history, mostly with universal connotations. Psalm 13, considering the fear of death, is no exception.

³⁹² See Crostini and Peers (2016: 238, fig.4; 558, fig. 8).

³⁹³ See [http://imslp.org/wiki/Psalm_13,_S.13_\(Liszt,_Franz\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Psalm_13,_S.13_(Liszt,_Franz)).

³⁹⁴ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 109.

³⁹⁵ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 168.

Psalm 14: The Fool says ‘There is no God’

The reception history of Psalm 14 is complicated by the evidence of a very similar version, Psalm 53. In that psalm, its different literary setting, its additional titles, its different names for God, its different Greek version between verses 2 and 3, as well as its somewhat more bloodthirsty version of verse 5 (in Psalm 14, verses 5–6) mean that it has had a different reception compared with Psalm 14.³⁹⁶ So our account of Psalm 14 requires us to deal firstly with these five issues.

The literary setting of Psalm 14 gives it a more personal tenor and a bias to the poor: this bias has been seen in Psalms 9–10, 11, 12 and 13, and it is seen here in verse 6 (‘You who would confound the plan of the poor...’). However, Psalm 14 stands out from these earlier psalms because of its general description of the corruption of mankind, rather than arising out of any specific need. Because of its literary setting, it has neither the title *maskil* nor ‘according to *Maḥalat*’ as in 53 (‘maskil’, for example, is a title shared with Psalms 52 and 54 and 55). Psalm 14 has simply ‘To the leader. Of David’, and to this end Jewish and Christian commentaries, enjoying different exegeses of the title as a means of making sense of the psalm, have less to say than for 53. As for the different names for God, both psalms start with the word *’elohim* (‘Fools say in their hearts, “There is no God [’elohim]”’). But in verses Ps. 14:4, 6 and 7, ‘Yahweh’ rather than *’elohim* is preferred: again this is due to the different literary context, for the entire first book (Psalm 1–41) has a preference for Yahweh rather than *’elohim* for God.

Some Greek versions have added an additional lengthy text between verses 2 and 3: *‘Their throat is an open grave;/ (with) their tongue they have used deceit./ Viper’s poison is under their tongue,/whose mouth is replete with oath and deceitfulness./ Their feet are swift to shed blood./ Destruction and misery are in their ways,/ and the way of peace they have not known./ There is no fear of God before their eyes.’* This entire passage (beginning with Ps. 14:1–2 and 53:1–2) is cited in Rom 3:10–18, and is really a collection of other psalms as well as 14 and 53 (e.g. Pss. 5:10; 140:3; 10:7 and 36:1). The great problem for reception history is: who influenced whom? Did Paul know of this Greek addition to Psalm 14, and so in effect was citing particularly from this psalm, or was this added after Rom 3, not least because it began with the first verse of this psalm and then was a **catena* of other psalms? It is impossible to tell. The **Septuagint* does not contain it; but one Hebrew manuscript (Rossi IV, 7) does. The **Vulgate*, dependent upon the Greek, omits it, as does **Jerome’s Iuxta Hebraeum*, his translation based on the Hebrew version; but his **Gallican Psalter* includes it.

Compared with Psalm 53, 14 has less emphasis on God’s judgement of the oppressors, and lacks the imprecatory verse in Ps. 53:5 (‘...but God will scatter

³⁹⁶ On Psalm 53, see p. 320.

the bones of the ungodly; they will be put to shame, for God has rejected them...'). Again this is due to the different literary context of Psalm 14, which adds instead verses 5–6 about God being in the company of the righteous and protecting the poor.

Nevertheless, both Psalms 14 and 53 begin with announcing 'the fool' and end with a prayer for the restoration of Zion. The beginning provokes later discussion about the identity of the fool who speaks 'in his heart' rather than in public (*Augustine states that nobody would dare to say this even if he dared to think it).³⁹⁷ The ending gives the impression that the psalm has arisen from an exilic context, when the hope for a restored Zion was especially relevant, and this is what many Jewish commentators assume.³⁹⁸

Taking Jewish reception first, the **Targum* makes some changes to Psalm 14 which are not in 53. The first is a different title. This is '*When the spirit of prophecy was upon David*', as if David is looking ahead to the exile. The citation of the fool in verse 1 reads 'There is no *rule of God in the land*'—i.e., like Ps. 10:4 and 12:4, avoiding the denial of the existence of God.

There have been many attempt to explain the existence of two such similar psalms. Some argue that this is because David (the prophet) composed one song for the destruction of the first Temple (so this is Psalm 14 and the 'fool' here is Nebuchadnezzar) and another song for the destruction of the second Temple (so this is Psalm 53, and the 'fool' is Titus). So Psalm 14 is read in the light of the Babylonian exile.³⁹⁹ *Kimḥi actually sees verse 5 ('There they shall be in great terror...') as a reference to Belshazzar's feast.⁴⁰⁰ *Rashi, also using Isaiah 14 to illustrate the pride of Babylon, also reads Psalm 14 from a Babylonian exilic viewpoint.⁴⁰¹

Christian readings follow overall the same commentary as for Psalm 53, although more is made (from verse 1) of those who do not denounce God openly but only in their hearts, 'poisoning their own spirit... in the heart is where their integrity is most, not in their mouths.'⁴⁰² And in the light of the reference to God 'looking down from heaven' in 11:4, this is expanded in verse 2: but here it is Christ looking down upon the children of men, where his Godhead once dwelt.⁴⁰³ There is some anti-Jewish rhetoric as well: *Augustine rephrases verse 7 to read 'Who will give Israel salvation out of Zion?', and seeing the psalm as a prophecy about Christ's restoration of his people, reads

³⁹⁷ Ladouceur 2005: 80–81.

³⁹⁸ The commentary for Psalm 53 will focus on these two verses, so we shall not deal with their reception history in detail here. See pp. 320–21.

³⁹⁹ Feuer 2004: 176–7.

⁴⁰⁰ Feuer 2004: 181–2.

⁴⁰¹ Gruber 2004: 222.

⁴⁰² *Eusebius, *Commentary on Psalms 14.1* AnSac 3:407–8, in ACCS VII:109.

⁴⁰³ Neale and Littledale 1 1874–79:190.

‘Israel’ in the very last line as the Gentiles, the new Israel, who will receive the gift of salvation.⁴⁰⁴ *Bede reads this differently: the psalm is about the Church of Christ condemning the madness of the Jews who will not believe: however, their conversion (to Christ) is predicated at the end of the psalm.⁴⁰⁵ *Erasmus used Psalm 14 in his *On the Purity of the Christian Church* (1536). Here the ‘fool’ and the general wickedness of humankind is seen in the light of the Turkish threat: verse 7 is even seen as a mandate to take the Holy Land from the Turks. Such Christian readings might be set against the so-called 1716 ‘Fool’s Bible’, which, for Psalm 14, mistakenly translated the first verse as ‘The fool hath said in his heart, “There is a God”’.

In Jewish liturgy, **Shimmush Tehillim* 14 records its use as an incantation ‘against defamation, and when one’s veracity is doubted’.⁴⁰⁶ In Orthodox (Christian) liturgy the psalm is used in the Ninth Hour Prayers on Good Friday, at the hour of Christ’s death (‘Fools say in their hearts, “There is no God”’). In the **Daily Office*, however, Psalm 14 is omitted because of its ‘doublet’ in 53 (an oddity, given that Psalm 53 includes verses which are more vindictive).

The images in the **Hamilton Psalter* (fol. 59r) and the **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 11r) are of Christ addressing the rich young man: *Aquinas makes a reference to this in his commentary, stating that verses 1–3 encapsulate Jesus’ words to the rich young man who asked what he should do to be saved: how this tradition found its way into Byzantine Psalters is again an interesting issue for the reception of this psalm.⁴⁰⁷

The final word is from Martin *Buber, who continues his work on ‘Right and Wrong’ by referring to Psalm 14 as well as Psalm 12. Here—and this against some of the anti-Semitic comments noted above—Buber attacks the Jewish post-war belief that the Jewish cause was all good and their enemies were all evil. ‘My people’ (verse 4), argues Buber, are both the righteous and the oppressed; so the restoration of Zion which is prayed for in verse 7 is not about the topographical Zion but about the community of the righteous and oppressed. In this way there is healing for Israel and this is the harbinger for the redemption of the whole world.⁴⁰⁸

To conclude this collection, we might observe that within Psalms 3–14 every psalm is associated with the theme of faith speaking against adversity, and most of them are thus open to a more universal, personal usage. The next collection, Psalms 15–24, is different, as many psalms have more particular and specific connotations, with fewer opportunities for universalising the experiences of the psalmists.

⁴⁰⁴ *Expositions on the Psalms* 14.8 WSA 3 15:178, in ACCS VII:112.

⁴⁰⁵ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 188.

⁴⁰⁶ Magonet 1994: 6–7.

⁴⁰⁷ See <http://www.dhspriory.org/thomas/PsalmsAquinas/ThoPs13H14.htm>.

⁴⁰⁸ See Levine (1984: 214) citing Buber (1953: 18–19).

Psalms 15–24: Bringing Prayer to the Temple

Psalms 15–24 form a specific more self-contained collection. It is possible to view these psalms as having a striking *chiastic arrangement:

Ps. 15: an entrance liturgy: who shall dwell on God's holy hill?

Ps. 16: confident trust in God

Ps. 17: lament for deliverance from personal enemies

Ps. 18: royal psalm: thanksgiving for victory in battle

Ps. 19: hymn to God as Creator and giver of the Law

Pss. 20–21: royal psalms: prayer and thanksgiving for victory in battle

Ps. 22: lament for deliverance from personal enemies

Ps. 23: confident trust in God

Ps. 24: an entrance liturgy: who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?

As well as this structural arrangement, another reason which suggests this collection has been closely bound together, which itself constitutes the first stage of reception, is the linguistic affinities between the corresponding psalms in this *chiasmus. For example, Ps. 16:5 refers to God as a chosen portion and 'my cup' and Ps. 23:5 states 'my cup overflows'—the only times this term is used in the Psalter. A confidence in spared death is also found in Pss. 16:10 and 23:4, as is the desire to live in God's presence for ever (Pss. 16:11 and 23:6).

Other affinities can be found in Psalms 15 and 24, and in 17 and 22, and in 18 and 20, 21⁴⁰⁹

The overall theme of this collection is the justice of God and concern for the poor (evident, as we saw, in the latter part of Psalms 3–14) which is found especially in Psalms 16, 17, 22 and 23. Furthermore, Psalms 15 and 24 refer to laws which uphold the protection of the poor, Psalms 18 and 20–21 highlight David's exemplary piety whose poverty of spirit was rewarded by God, and Psalm 19, at the heart of the collection, emphasises the importance of order in the world, which implicitly would benefit the poor. The placing of Psalm 19 between the royal psalms 18, 20–21 also highlights the need for the King to submit to the law (as the advocate for the protection of the poor).⁴¹⁰

Zion and the Jerusalem Temple are also central themes. Ps. 15:1 begins by asking who is worthy of being admitted to the Temple, followed by a list of conditions for entry (verses 2–5), and this matches Ps. 24:3, with its similar questioning, followed by a similar list of requisite moral qualities (verses 4–6). The Temple is present in the royal psalms at each side of Psalm 19 ('From his temple he heard my voice' (18:6); 'May he send you help from the sanctuary, and give you support from Zion' (20:2)). The importance of the sanctuary is increasingly apparent near the end of this collection: Ps. 22:25 concludes 'From you comes my praise in the great congregation', and Ps. 23:6 ends with 'I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever'. Perhaps this collection was used by pilgrims having journeyed to Jerusalem from diaspora communities, like Psalms 120–134.⁴¹¹

Psalm 15: An Entrance Liturgy

Psalms 15–24, as a collection, are also linked to psalms on each side of it. Starting with Psalm 15, which begins by affirming that it is possible to do good through striving to be moral, this psalm takes up a key theme in Ps. 14:1, which states that there is no one who does good.⁴¹² Psalm 15 is more liturgical than Psalm 14: it might be termed an 'entrance liturgy' at the Temple gates, like that described in Mic. 6:6–8 and Isa. 33:14–16.⁴¹³ It has a clear structure, starting

⁴⁰⁹ See Hossfeld and Zenger (1993: 166–82); also Gillingham (2005: 329–331).

⁴¹⁰ The relationship between the Law and the King was discussion in Psalms 1–2, pp. 11–12 and 27–29. See also P.D. Miller (1994: 127–42).

⁴¹¹ Barbiero (1999: 324); Hossfeld and Zenger (1993: 181).

⁴¹² See Waltke and Houston 2010: 276 and 281.

⁴¹³ See Kraus 1988: 227.

with a question (verse 1: possibly from the congregation) then offering a longer answer (verses 2–5b, probably from a cultic official) and finishing with a blessing (verse 5c). Ten ‘commands’ are given in the answer: three positive (verse 2), three negative (verse 3), two positive (verse 4) and two negative (verse 5).⁴¹⁴

Verse 5, with its two references to usury, is perhaps the most used from this psalm within its reception history. In terms of translation, however, there are few issues which stand out in the psalm’s reception.

The psalm does not have a rich tradition in early Jewish reception. We can detect a reference to the synagogue rather than the Temple in **Targum Psalms* (‘Who is worthy to dwell in the mountain of the house of your sanctuary?’) although this might refer to a heavenly rather than earthly sanctuary.⁴¹⁵ The **Talmud* (*b.Mak.* 24a) notes that all 613 commandments of the Torah are summarised in the eleven commands here (reading three, not two, commands into verse 4), and observes that this is not about relations first with God, and then the rest of the community, as in the Decalogue, but rather the reverse.⁴¹⁶

Nor is this psalm cited much in early Christian tradition: it is not used in the New Testament, whilst later commentators focus mainly on themes of humility and usury found in the psalm. *Hilary of Poitiers uses Lk. 18:11–14 as an example of humility based upon this psalm.⁴¹⁷ The psalm is used by *Basil of Caesarea for the church’s teaching on usury in verse 5 (a matter of concern, for example, at the Council of Nicaea). Basil argues that those who lend should gain their wages by applying themselves to a craft, and those who borrow should learn that it is better to have financial suffering than to ask for a loan. He wrote two sermons on this Psalm, mainly on its teaching about usury, which he argued destroys lives: citing Matt. 5:42 he opined that ‘usury involves an act of greatest inhumanity, because it exhibits greed against the poor.’⁴¹⁸ *Cassiodorus, who speaks of the psalm containing ‘the great Divine Decalogue, the spiritual psalter of ten chords’, refers to Christ’s cleansing the Temple as the fulfilment of this psalm, which then leads to him advising against usury which leads to vice and greed.⁴¹⁹ Finally, *Calvin uses the psalm to show how it speaks about an inner disposition, not outward acts. Referring also to usury, Calvin argues that this too arises out of lack of consideration to one’s neighbour.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁴ Craigie 1983: 150.

⁴¹⁵ Stec 2004: 45.

⁴¹⁶ Cohen (1992: 35–6); also Feuer (2004: 183), citing Abraham and Jacob as examples.

⁴¹⁷ Waltke and Houston 2010: 277, citing *In Psalms 1–CXI*, p. 91.

⁴¹⁸ *Homilies on the Psalms* 12.5 FC 46:190–2, in ACCS VII:117–18. See also Waltke and Houston (2010: 279).

⁴¹⁹ *Explanation of the Psalms* 15.1,5, ACW 51:156, 159, 160, in ACCS VII:117.

⁴²⁰ *A Commentary on the Psalms, Volume I* (ed. T.H.L. Parker), 1965, p. 203, cited in Waltke and Houston 2010: 288.

It is not surprising that a psalm which suggests some pilgrimage to the Temple should be used in Jewish liturgy at the festivals of Passover (this is the fifteenth psalm, to be used on Nisan 15 when Unleavened Bread takes place) and the Feast of Booths—again noting that this is the fifteenth psalm, to be used on Tishri 15, which commences this festival. (The fifteen psalms of Ascents, purportedly sung on the fifteen steps of the Temple, were also used for the Feast of Booths.) In Christian liturgy, this imagery of being admitted to the presence of God in the Temple was seen as referring to Christ being admitted to the presence of God at his Ascension: this is a psalm both for the Feast of the Ascension in Anglican worship and for the Feast of Transfiguration in Orthodox liturgy.⁴²¹

It is not surprising that the teaching on usury in Psalm 15 is a motif in illustrated *Carolingian Psalters, given that the role of the Emperor was to protect the poor and the use of lending with interest was forbidden. So in an early Paris Psalter (*Gr* 923, fols. 142r and 142v) one image is of a usurer holding a box of money, giving alms to three figures: the inscription reads ‘Basil the Great, Homilies on the Psalms 14’. Another image is of a debtor awake on his bed and a creditor, seated, waiting for his due; the third image is of the creditor demanding money from the debtor cowering in this house, and again Basil’s sermon is cited.⁴²²

The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 8r) depicts, as usual, the entire narrative of the psalm: the psalmist is addressing the hand of God coming out of heaven, which is blessing another figure reading the Law; below two righteous pilgrims are entering the Temple. However, in the centre a man with spear, shield and a pair of scales, symbolising ‘justice’ (verse 2) is trampling upon the usurer and instead handed his bag of money to a group of poor and crippled.⁴²³ Similarly in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 16r) a man is giving his money to an angelic figure, rather than lending it at interest.⁴²⁴

The concern about usury in the twelfth century resulted in this psalm being cited five times in Langland’s **Piers Plowman*. It is usually the first verse which is cited: in Passus II 39, for example, in a speech by Conscience about taking ‘Mede’ (money for personal profit) and ignoring Caritatis (‘men þat cacchep Mede’) Ps. 15:1 is cited. In Passus III 234–35 Conscience cites 15:1 in Latin then translates it into the vernacular (‘Lord, who shal wonye in thi wones with thyne holy seintes?’) with verse 2 following in first the Latin and then the vernacular.

⁴²¹ Neale and Litledale I 1874–79: 195.

⁴²² See <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525013124/f287.image> and <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525013124/f288.image>.

⁴²³ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=22&res=1&cx=0&y=0>.

⁴²⁴ See <https://goo.gl/erLZZS>.

This mode of recital in *Piers Plowman* takes us back to Psalm 1: who can become, like David, the *beatus vir*?⁴²⁵

Musical experimentation with this psalm flourished amongst sixteenth-century composers. *Tallis's '*Dominus, qui habitabit?*' stays close to the Latin text, emphasising the repeated use of the identity of those who are '*Qui*'; this is a rather chaste and serious work with minimal embellishment. *Byrd's motet for nine voices changed some of the psalm's Latin wording; but, like Tallis, this is a reflective arrangement, fit for the theme of the nature of Christian piety. Other composers from this period include Robert White (who composed three versions). An eighteenth century example is by William *Boyce (1790) who set '*Who Shall Dwell*' to the organ with SATB, again illustrating how the words shaped the music.

Thus far we have noted how frequently contemporary scholars refuse to accept a psalm's premise at face value, but rather pursue a more universal meaning in a different way. In a thought-provoking piece on the relationship between worship and ethics, the Cambridge professor Ronald Clements argues that this psalm's teaching operates at a level more profound than an entrance liturgy sung between the priest and people. Its teaching about 'compassion, responsible and truthful conduct' covers many issues—not just usury, but also perjury, malicious accusations, and bribery, all of which *could* have been dealt with in the law courts. But here the setting is the cult. Clements argues that from the beginning the legal system needed the authority of the cult in its promotion of social order and justice: 'the sanctuary provide(d) a powerful sanction when the law was vulnerable.'⁴²⁶ He notes how this led to the practice of claiming asylum in the sanctuary when the law failed to protect the individual (Exod. 21:14). Hence a place of worship was more able to test truthfulness and integrity of behaviour, and more likely to promote a general lifestyle of moral decency, than was a court of law. 'Justice through the Law' and 'Righteousness within Religious Practice' have a symbiotic relationship, and this psalm testifies to it.

Psalm 16: Confident Trust in God

Psalm 16 shares the title '*Miktam*' with Psalms 56–60, and there it suggests a personal and reflective prayer. This would fit the mood of this psalm as well: its structure is rather like Psalm 15, although it alternates more between

⁴²⁵ See Gillingham 2008b: 126.

⁴²⁶ See Clements 1999: 89.

addressing God (verses 1–5, 6, 9–11) and the people (verses 2–4, 7–8). Like Psalm 15, its subject matter (after a short plea in verse 1) concerns confidence in God. There is a more explicit link, too, between Ps. 15:5 (those who do these things shall never be moved) and 16:8 ('because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved'), in each case using the word *mot*, with its connotations of 'totter, tumble', thus indicating how obedience to God results in security in his presence. All this suggests a considered connection between the two psalms in the process of their compilation.

The psalm presents notorious problems for translation from the Hebrew into Greek, especially verses 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10. In verse 4, for example, it seems a colon is missing, and the first line in the Hebrew could be read as 'Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows' (although the word 'god' does not actually appear in the text). The Greek prefers to read this as 'Their infirmities were multiplied; after that, they were quick' (*meta tauta etachunan*), reading the Hebrew word *mahar* ('choose, acquire') as *maher* ('hasten, hurry').

Another translation with ramifications for later reception history concerns verses 9 and 10, where the tenses of the verbs are unclear. The problem is whether this is about present security in God, in the light of an experience of near-death (which seems to be more the case when reading the Hebrew), or about a future hope in life beyond death, which is a possible reading in the Greek. So the Hebrew *'af-besari yishkon la-beṭaḥ* ('my body rests in safety') has a different connotation in the Greek *eti de kai hē sarx mou kataskēnōsei ep' elpidi*: 'moreover, my body shall live in hope'. Furthermore, at the end of verse 10, the Greek translation no longer presumes an escape from an experience of *Sheol in the midst of this life, as in the Hebrew, but the expression *hoti ouk egkataleipseis tēn psychen mou eis haden* ('you will not leave my soul in Hades') followed by *oude dōseis ton hosion sou idein diaphthoran* ('you will not permit your faithful one to see corruption') hints at a transformation which will take place not in this life, but beyond death. This is exactly why this verse was used in Acts to testify to the resurrection of Christ, as we shall shortly see; and when later still it was translated from the Greek into Latin by *Jerome, the phrase *non dabis sanctum tuum videre corruptionem* was an even more clear reference to the resurrection of the body in the light of the experience of Christ's resurrection. But this is not particularly evident in the Hebrew.

In **Targum Psalms*, the title '*Miktam*' is termed 'an upright composition', reading the word as combining the Hebrew *miktab* ('writing') and *tam* ('blameless').⁴²⁷ This was seen to apply not to the psalm, but to David himself: *mik* is read now as 'humble', and *tam*, as 'blameless'; so this is about the image of David which we find throughout this psalm.⁴²⁸ *Targum* also offers

⁴²⁷ Stec 2004: 46–7.

⁴²⁸ Feuer 2004: 192.

further insights into the meaning of verse 4 in a different social context: ‘Those who increase their images afterwards hasten to offer sacrifices; I will not accept with pleasure their libations and the blood of their sacrifices, or mention their name upon my lips.’ Here is a reference to the renunciation of pagan sacrifices, and not to Jewish idolatrous ones, as was the earlier concern of the psalm.

**Midrash Tehillim* reads the psalm not through David but in the light of Abraham through Genesis 15: he was the one who blessed the Lord (verse 7), who saw the Torah, Temple and its offerings (Gen. 15:9) and **Gehenna* (Gen. 15:17) and the darkness of the exile (Gen. 15:12).⁴²⁹ This illustrates the primacy of the Torah, whenever possible, in interpreting the psalms.

One other interesting Jewish reading is *Rashi’s refutation of the Latin translation of this psalm. *Jerome read ‘*miktam*’ as ‘humble and blameless, or pure’ but saw this as an implicit reference to Christ and his passion. *Rashi does not, in this case, emphasise the traditional reading and apply the psalm back to David; instead he considers the title refers to the psalm’s melody and rhythm. *Jerome’s reading of verse 4 (‘those who chose another God multiply their sorrows’) is about the nature of Christ’s sacrifice superseding the old covenant; Rashi notes that such a reading displays the very idolatry which the passage condemns.⁴³⁰

The early Christian reception of this psalm is totally dependent upon the different translations of difficult verses. The use of this psalm in Acts 2:25–31 and 13:35 shows just how far-reaching this can be. The context in Acts 2 is Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost, which is an explanation of the death and resurrection of Jesus in the light of the coming of the Spirit. In Acts 2:27 Peter cites Ps.16:10. ‘For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption’: this is a citation of verse 10 in the Greek, not the Hebrew. The verse is read as a *future hope* in the resurrection of the dead. Psalm 16:11 is cited immediately after it, in Acts 2:28 (‘You have made known to me the ways of life...’). In this case the Greek version uses the past tense (‘you have shown me’) whilst the Hebrew uses the future (‘you will show/make known to me’). The change of tense in the Greek is again turned to a Christian advantage: God *has now made known* to Peter and the early church the reality of the resurrection hope expressed in this psalm, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead some forty days before. Peter then combats the Jewish belief that David may not have died, and that this is a reference to David’s immortality, not Christ’s. So the reference in Acts 2:29 (‘and his tomb is with us today’) deliberately contrasts the mortality of David with the risen Christ and

⁴²⁹ Braude 1959 I: 200.

⁴³⁰ Shereshevsky 1970–71: 83–4.

the empty tomb. Even more boldly, in Acts 2:30–31 Peter embellishes this with another citation of Ps. 16:10: ‘...God had foresworn an oath that he would put one of his descendants on the throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, “He *was not abandoned to Hades*, nor did his flesh experience corruption”. Here the past tense is used. The variant readings of the Greek and Hebrew gave the writer of Acts the liberty to interpret the psalm in different ways, using Peter as the speaker.

In Acts 13:35, Ps. 16:10 is cited again, but by Paul, and, not surprisingly, it is used yet again in a different way. Paul’s sermon is at Pisidian Antioch. Having offered several scenes from the history of the Jewish people, partly to show the Jewish roots of Jesus and the antiquity of the prophecies about him, Paul also uses Ps. 16:10 as a *prophetic* text in the process of being fulfilled. Acts 13:35 reads: ‘Therefore he said in another psalm, “You will not let your Holy One experience corruption”. The meaning is quite different from Peter’s speech: here it means that just as David experienced release from **Sheol in this life*, Jesus experienced release from *Sheol for good*. This was not another untimely death: through it, all after were released from the fear of death.⁴³¹

Not surprisingly, the early fathers interpret this psalm almost unanimously as about a belief in life beyond death. *Origen, commenting on verse 9 (in the Greek, ‘my flesh shall rest in hope’) uses the examples of Enoch and Elijah being ‘translated’, but argues that only Christ ascended into heaven as the first-fruits of all those who have died. Similarly verse 10 (‘You do not give me up to **Sheol*’) could not be about David, but could only refer to Christ who went down to *Sheol* and came back from the dead.⁴³² *Athanasius is quite clear: commenting on the reference to the ‘cup’ in verse 5 as concerning Christ’s death (Matt. 20:22 and 26:39) and verse 10 as concerning his resurrection, he argues that Psalm 16 reveals Christ’s resurrection from the dead. *Eusebius makes the same point, drawing also from Ps.30:3.

We have already noted *Jerome’s reading of ‘miktam’ through *Rashi’s response. His translation of this title was ‘A psalm of David for the humble and poor’. Because, as we saw for Psalms 3–14, the titles of the psalms become a significant means of understanding the psalm, this was quickly seen as a hidden reference to Christ, whose humility and poverty reached perfection through suffering.⁴³³ So the psalm is about Christ’s death and resurrection: his body and soul descended to the dead (verse 10) and rose again (verse 11, reading ‘You show me the path of life’ as a manifestation of the resurrection).⁴³⁴ This is in

⁴³¹ Craigie 1983: 158–9.

⁴³² Origen, *Selection from the Psalms* 16.9 PG 12:1215–16, in ACCS VII:123.

⁴³³ Jerome, *Homily on Psalm 15 [16]* FC 57:33–4, in ACCS VII:124.

⁴³⁴ See Waltke and Houston 2010: 311.

part a refutation of *Arianism, which argued that the resurrection was the assumption of the body *without* the soul: *Theodoret of Cyrhus develops this idea, making it clear that in verse 10 Christ is speaking (*sic*) about his *soul* not being abandoned in Hades.⁴³⁵

*Cassiodorus adapts a prosopological reading and argues that the psalm is both about the human Christ, asking to be saved (verse 5) and the divine Christ, reflecting on the glory of his resurrection.⁴³⁶ Cassiodorus makes much of the way this psalm refers to Christ's 'human soul' crying out to God: this is partly to refute another heresy of his day, *Apollinarianism, which argued against Christ having a rational soul.⁴³⁷

A later adaptation of this view is found in *Lombard's commentary, which sees the psalm as about the psalmist and the Christian and not directly about Christ. Verse 6 is important here, in its reference to a 'goodly heritage': this has a double meaning, referring to our loss of inheritance through the disobedience in the Garden, and Christ returning it to us.⁴³⁸ This more cautious Christocentric approach is also found later in *Calvin's commentary. Here Calvin typically interprets the psalm as within the life of David: this is a soliloquy with his soul, as he seeks to separate himself from those who worship idols (verse 4) and asks that his life might be prolonged (verses 9–10). Calvin notes that the reference in Acts 2 shows how Christ was exempted from death, and David saw this.⁴³⁹

Psalm 16 is, perhaps predictably, used in both Jewish and Christian liturgy with respect to mourning and burial rites for the dead. In Jewish familial prayers it is used in place of **Tahanun*, usually at home, for mourners during the Feast of the New Moon, and also at **Hanukkah*. This is preceded by the prayer 'O Lord and King, who art full of compassion... receive we beseech Thee, in thy great loving kindness, the soul of... who hath been gathered to his/her people' and followed by the **Kiddush* of Renewal (which also alludes to the rebuilding of the Temple and Jerusalem in the future world).

As early as the **Apostolic Constitutions* Psalm 16 was part of burial liturgy in Christian worship, along with Psalms 22, 33, 83, 88, 116 and 139.⁴⁴⁰ In the **Benedictine Rule*, Psalm 16, along with 17 and part of 18, is used at **Prime* on Fridays (the day of consideration of the death of Christ). This is to reflect not only on Christ not being left in hell, but also on the fact that all Christians share

⁴³⁵ See Theodoret, *Commentary on the Psalms* 16.7 FC 101:117, in ACCS VII:125.

⁴³⁶ See Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 16.1 ACW 51:161, in ACCS VII:120.

⁴³⁷ See Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 16:10. ACW 51:165, in ACCS VII:125; also P.G. Walsh 1990:165.

⁴³⁸ See Waltke and Houston 2010: 313.

⁴³⁹ Calvin, *Commentary on Psalm 16*, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.xxii.html?highlight=psalm,16#highlight>; also Waltke and Houston 2010: 315–17.

⁴⁴⁰ Gillingham 2008b: 237.

in the blessings of his resurrection: thus the psalm is democratised, returning to its earlier use, where it is for use by everyone as well as about Christ. But the focus is on Christ alone when it is used on Easter Evening, as it has been since the Roman Rite of the western church: the *antiphons ‘In Thee have I hoped, save me, O God’ and ‘My flesh shall rest in hope’ make this clear.⁴⁴¹

A very different depiction is in a twelfth century *Glossed Psalter preserved in the Morgan Library (M338: fol. 47r). This is found in the initial ‘C’ beginning the psalm in Latin (*Conserva me Domine*). Here Eve is taking the fruit from the tree, and she is extending her hand to Adam to do the same. The serpent—again, the symbol of death—coils round the tree.⁴⁴² A related image, also using the letter ‘C’, is found in the **St Albans Psalter*: here the psalmist presents a chalice to God. The caption reads ‘The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my chalice’ which refers to the words which would be spoken by the abbot and repeated by the monk before he received his tonsure. Here we thus find a more sacramental reference to the ‘cup’ in verse 5; it is the cup of suffering, but for the disciple of Christ who is also nourished by him.

A most unusual use of verse 5, from the same period, is cited in **Piers Plowman*, Passus XII line 89: it is cited as a ‘neck verse’, which if it could be recited by heart, in the Latin, was a test of literacy and so saved a condemned criminal as it demonstrated he was a scholar and so accountable to the church not the state.⁴⁴³

As for musical arrangements of verses from this psalm, two most memorable compositions are found in oratorios, and a third is a contemporary version. *Handel’s *Messiah*, in Part II no. 29, uses the controversial verse 10 in ‘But thou didst not leave his soul in hell’ (although the reference to ‘his soul’ is more like Acts 2:31 and so implicitly points to Christ), here sung as a tenor air, with a clear reference to the resurrection of the dead. And in *Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Part I no. 15, set in the context of Elijah’s encounter with the prophets of Baal, the Quartet ‘Cast your burdens on the Lord’ is taken from Pss. 55:22; 16:8; 108:4 and 25:3; similarly in Part II No. 36, after Elijah has been ministered to by angels, the Chorus and Recitative ‘Go again in the Strength of the Lord’ uses Pss. 71:16 and 16:9. In this case, the psalm is used to comfort Elijah in the face of the threat of death in this life rather than pertaining to the resurrection. A completely different and contemporary version, from the beginning of this

⁴⁴¹ Neale and Littledale I 1874: 203–15.

⁴⁴² See <http://corsair.morganlibrary.org/icaimages/3/m338.047rb.jpg>.

⁴⁴³ For a similar use of a ‘neck verse’, see Psalm 51:1, p. 308.

century, is a setting of the whole psalm by Judy *Rogers; here the setting is more wistful and again more Celtic in its musical style; and this is as much about life here and now as life beyond.⁴⁴⁴

The reception of Psalm 16 makes it difficult to find any ‘universalising’ middle ground. So here we have a good example of the need to hold side by side very different Jewish and Christian readings, arising partly from the translations used in each tradition, but also from a different understanding of the afterlife in each tradition. So the psalm can be about a present experience of being saved from death in this life, but it can also provide a hope in life beyond our own death, particularly through those who see in this psalm the death and resurrection of Christ.

Psalm 17: Lament for Deliverance

Psalm 17 could be read as another night-time psalm, like Psalms 4, 6 and 8; this is taken from verses 3 (‘you visit me by night’) and 15 (‘when I awake, I shall be satisfied...’). Its distinctive features are the very physical nature of the prayer: the lips (verse 1), face and eyes (verse 2), heart and mouth (verse 3), lips (verse 4), feet (verse 5), right hand (verse 7), eye (verse 8), face (verse 9), mouth (verse 10), eyes (verse 11), face and self (verse 13), hand and belly (verse 14), and again, face (verse 15) all describe the psalmist’s physical needs, where, unusually, Yahweh also is a physical, anthropomorphic part of this process of prayer (verses 2, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15). A text which the psalm probably drew from is Deuteronomy 32 in its references to ‘the apple of the eye’ (Deut. 32:11; Ps. 17:8), Yahweh’s protective wings (Deut. 32:11; Ps. 17:8) and Jeshurun, who grows fat (Deut. 32:15; Ps. 17:10). More general links with various Confessions of Jeremiah are also evident (for example Jer. 11:20 has correspondences with verses 1–3; Jer. 12:3 and 20:2 echo verse 3; whilst Jer. 15:11–16 suggest verses 3–5; and Jer.15:15, 17:18 and 18:20–23, verses 10–14).

In terms of its earliest stage of reception, Psalm 17 has been placed next to its neighbours with care. The reference to the verb *mot* in 15:5 and 16:8, referred to earlier, is continued in 17:5 (‘my feet have not slipped [stumbled]’); and the opening to 16:1 (‘Protect me, O God’) uses *shamar*, which is the same word used in the similar pleas to God to be a refuge in 17:8 (‘Guard me...’). God’s right hand (Ps. 16:11) is also referred to 17:7, again in the context of God as refuge. And the reference to waking and beholding the likeness of God (17:15) corresponds with the reference to awakening from a near-death experience at the end of Psalm 16 (verse 10).

⁴⁴⁴ See <https://goo.gl/8C2CYL>.

Reception history continues through the process of translation. The most challenging verses are 4 and 10. The NRSV for verse 4 reads ‘As for what others do, by the word of your lips, I have avoided the ways of the violent’ and this follows the Hebrew quite closely. The **Vulgate*, however, reads the latter part of this verse as *ego custodivi vias duras: ‘I have kept hard paths.’*⁴⁴⁵ And in verse 10 the **Septuagint* translation is *to stear autōn synekleisan* (‘they closed up their fat’), whilst the Hebrew, also evident in the NRSV, might be read as ‘they closed their mouths to pity.’⁴⁴⁶

**Targum Psalms* is interesting in that it does not deal as radically as might be expected with the many anthropomorphisms. There are a few changes: ‘shadow of your wings’ in verse 8 becomes ‘the shadow of your **Shekinah*’. Similarly the ending of the psalm which speaks directly of seeing God’s face and ‘likeness’ (*temunah* has connotations of a physical representation by way of an image) reads as ‘I shall see *brightness* of your countenance. *At the time* when I awake I shall be satisfied with *the glory of your face*.’⁴⁴⁷

One phrase rich in reception history is ‘the apple of the eye’ in verse 8. **Rashi* reads the Hebrew as ‘the pupil of the eye’, upon whose soundness sight depends, so our eyelids protect it with utmost care.⁴⁴⁸ He also debates whether *ke’ishon* (‘like a pupil of the eye’) really is a diminutive for man, denoting the little image one receives of oneself when looking into the pupil of the eye of another: this is perhaps what is intended in the Latin ‘pupilla’ (literally, ‘tiny doll’), which *Rashi* would have known about. Either way this is about God’s protection of that which is small and vulnerable.⁴⁴⁹ **Midrash Tehillim* reads this phrase quite differently: citing Ps. 91:11, it is simply a reference to God’s protective angels.⁴⁵⁰ So whence the phrase ‘apple of the eye’ in English, which seems to have been used as early as King Aelfred? It was popularised by Shakespeare in *Midsummer Night’s Dream* Act III Scene 2 line 104: ‘Flower of this purple dye, Hit with Cupid’s archery, Sink in apple of his eye’ was probably taken from the *Geneva Bible* or **Coverdale’s Psalter*. Perhaps it was quite simply a way of describing the circular shape of the pupil.

Interestingly in Jewish tradition there is no reference to any possible reference to life beyond death at the end of the psalm. Indeed, a ‘this-worldly’

⁴⁴⁵ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 218.

⁴⁴⁶ Pietersma 2000: 12.

⁴⁴⁷ Stec 2004: 88–90.

⁴⁴⁸ Cohen 1992: 41; also Feuer 2004: 205.

⁴⁴⁹ See Gruber (2004: 235), where *Rashi* also refers to Zech. 2:12 where the inference is more ‘gates to the eye’ (*bevavat eno*) or eyelids.

⁴⁵⁰ Braude 1959 I: 212–13.

reading is given to the entire psalm: it was composed after Joab brought the news of the death of Uriah, so this is about David's contemplation on his sin and a plea for restoration to God's grace. So 'you visit me by night' is an explicit reference to the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba (see 2 Sam. 11:2).⁴⁵¹ The problem here is that the first five verses appear to be more a protest of innocence than of guilt.

Christian interpretation of this psalm is also similarly restrained. It is not found in the New Testament. Nothing in later tradition is made of the anthropomorphic language in terms of the incarnation, and little is even made of any belief in life after death. *Bede is one of the few commentators to see the psalm as about the resurrection and eternal blessedness, by referring to verse 15.⁴⁵² *Luther takes a similar view: of verse 15, he writes, 'beautifully has he brought in a word of resurrection, "when I awake", that is, from the sleep of death.'⁴⁵³

There are several different responses to the sense of the oppression by enemies in the psalm (verses 6–12). To some Christian writers this suggests Christ's experience of Jewish opposition and the Church's experience of heretics (so *Jerome); others see it as specifically about Christ, cast out of the city, surrounded by his Jewish enemies, and speaking to his Father about them as 'a lion greedy for the prey'.⁴⁵⁴ *Calvin is a key Christian commentator to refute this anti-Jewish reading, arguing that this concerns David, awakening from some acute affliction.⁴⁵⁵

Even in liturgy the use of this psalm is surprisingly small. Verse 15, for example, is recited at the beginning of a memorial service for the dead. It is somewhat ironic that it is the cursing language (verses 13–14) which is used in Jewish liturgy. In Jewish mysticism, *Havdala de-Rabbi* shows how verse 13, spoken forwards then backwards, effects the magical incantation of a curse: it reads, 'Rise O Lord! Go forth to meet him. Bring him down; rescue me from the wicked with your sword. With our sword from the wicked my soul rescue. Him bring down; to meet him go forth. O Lord, arise!'⁴⁵⁶ In the Christian Liturgy of Hours the same verses are used, but they are softened: '... You give them the fill of your treasures; they rejoice in abundance of offering and leave their wealth

⁴⁵¹ See Feuer 2004: 201; also Gruber, concerning Rashi, (2004: 232–3).

⁴⁵² Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 215.

⁴⁵³ WA 5; 489, 39 ff. in Kraus 1988: 250.

⁴⁵⁴ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 215.

⁴⁵⁵ Kraus 1988: 250.

⁴⁵⁶ Nitzan 1993:365.

to their children.⁴⁵⁷ And because of its night-time allusions, verses 10 and 15 are frequently used at *Compline.

Perhaps one of the most interesting illustrations of this psalm is in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 17v and fol. 18r). The first image is of a man in a doorway, with his feet in stocks, but his head turned to the hand of God, holding scales, reaching from the heavens. So who is this man? It might be Jeremiah (Jer. 20:2); there is no reference to Christ in stocks, so if not Jeremiah it is more probably an allusion to the personified church; or it could simply personify the binding of passions.⁴⁵⁸ The second image has close connections with Psalm 1, through the connection of ‘wicked speech’, a theme which both *Augustine and *Cassiodorus explored in their sermons, citing both psalms. The psalmist is kneeling, making his appeal to God, whilst a hand emerges from heaven in blessing. The proud speech of the three enemies in the background is intended to contrast with the sincerity of the psalmist at prayer.⁴⁵⁹ This is a good example of the moral, less explicitly Christian reading of the psalm.

The historiated initial ‘E’ in the **St Albans Psalter* (*Exaudi Domine iustitiam meam*) is a different example of the use of a Christian reading. In the upper section Christ holds a cross, shaped in the letter ‘T’ (a tau crozier), and blesses the psalmist, whilst below, the psalmist addresses Christ with one hand and points to the psalm text with the other: ‘Give ear to my prayer... Protect me under the shadow of your wings...’⁴⁶⁰

Two contemporary artists take the theme of protection in two different ways, one more social, and the other more theological. Arthur *Wragg’s depiction of a prostitute half-hidden and half-exposed under the shadows thrown by a gas street light (the context again is the Great Depression) has the caption: ‘Hide me under the shadow of thy wings’⁴⁶¹ (Figure 2).

Meanwhile Moshe *Berger’s more recent bold image of the ‘countenance of God’ in yellow, white, red and blue, with Hebrew letters forming the shapes of the reds and blues, is about our inability to grasp the form of God, except by using ‘a mere metaphor made of letters, lines and colours to make someone rejoice.’

As for musical arrangements of this psalm, the only explicit ‘Christianising’ is in metrical versions: this was a relatively new development, given that Psalm 17 was rarely Christianised in earlier tradition, being read more for moral

⁴⁵⁷ Holladay 1993: 311.

⁴⁵⁸ See Bessette 2005: 257–8; also <https://goo.gl/zEf7sj>.

⁴⁵⁹ See Bessette 2005: 261–2; also <https://goo.gl/uCNFTI>.

⁴⁶⁰ <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page096.shtml>.

⁴⁶¹ Wragg (1934): no p. nos.



FIGURE 2 Arthur Wragg, 'Hide me under the shadow of thy wings' (Ps. 17:8)

purposes. Yet Isaac *Watts is able to give the last verse of the psalm an expanded Christian meaning:

I shall behold the face
Of my forgiving God;
And stand compleat in Righteousness,
Wash't in my Saviour's blood.

There's a new Heav'n begun,
When I awake from Death,
Drest in the Likeness of thy Son,
And draw immortal Breath.

Watt's interpretation is rare; other versions, such as that by Hubert *Parry, whose brief use of the psalm introduces Thomas *Ken's doxology 'Praise God from

whom all blessings flow’, alongside verse 15, tend to stay close to the original ancient meaning—a prayer for deliverance from affliction and one’s enemies.

So this is a psalm whose reception history has no one coherent theme, other than in the different responses to its general message of deliverance. It is perhaps best not to be too specific, as is *Church, who, ignoring the anthropomorphic language and personal allusions, proposes that because this is Psalm 17, it is a prophecy referring to the liberation of Jerusalem in 1917.⁴⁶²

Psalm 18: Thanksgiving for Victory

Psalm 18, the third longest psalm in the Psalter after 78 and 119, has a clear structure. It begins and ends with praise (verses 1–3 and 46–50) and the rest is a first-person account of God’s involvement in the life of the psalmist—firstly, through natural phenomena (verses 4–19, then as a protector (verses 20–30), and finally as a military helper (verses 31–45). Its title and its contents suggest it is a ‘royal psalm’.

Issues of reception history arise because of its very close similarities to 2 Samuel 22. Which text is primary? In this psalm David is presented as a paradigm of faith. There is the additional reference to David as ‘servant’ in the title; and in verse 1 we have a most unusual addition, ‘I love you (*’erhomka*) Yahweh, my Strength’. Furthermore, verse 2 omits ‘you save me from violence’ (which is found in 2 Sam. 22:3); and verse 42 omits ‘I crushed them and stamped them down’ which is in 2 Sam. 22:43. By contrast, in the context of 2 Samuel, David is presented as a more flawed character.⁴⁶³ It may be that the Samuel version is older, and that the psalm has received and developed this text, hence also incorporating its ancient mythological references to the God’s conflict with the sea.⁴⁶⁴ This is rather like the way that Psalm 17 used Deuteronomy 32 and parts of Jeremiah’s Confessions. But unlike Psalm 17, this psalm is actually re-used in another psalm, so its reception seems to start with the Psalter itself: Ps. 144:5–8 is a shortened and adapted version of the theophany found in verses 18:7–16.

Again the earliest stage of reception can be seen in the process of compilation, and here we note various clear links with Psalm 17. Both psalms have a good deal of anthropomorphic language: for example, each uses ancient Near Eastern iconography (the ‘shadow of God’s wings’ under which there is protection in 17:8, and the ‘wings of the wind’ in 18:10, upon which God, riding a

⁴⁶² Church 1990: 72–4.

⁴⁶³ Vesco 1986: 57.

⁴⁶⁴ Craigie 1983: 173–4.

cherub, flies); each speaks of God's 'hearing' prayer (17:6 and 18:6); and the 'eyes' of God in 17:2 bring down those with 'haughty eyes' in 18:27. And in each psalm the focus is on God's righteousness (17:15; 18:20.24) which can effect restoration.

The **Septuagint* makes some minor changes. In verse 35, for example, the Hebrew denotes that God's 'humility' (*anawah*) has made the psalmist great; the Greek (and Syriac) modify this, so it reads that God's 'discipline' (*paideia*) has achieved this greatness. Other changes include the change from God as 'Rock' (*sur*) in verse 2 to 'helper' (*boēthos*).

Versions of this psalm at **Qumran* include the expression in **Hodayot* 2:21 'the cords of death encompassed me', which is an interesting adaptation of 18:5; this indicates that, like Psalm 144, this psalm associated with David's victories as king was beginning also to have a more universalised significance by then.⁴⁶⁵

A more 'messianic' reception of this psalm is apparent in later Jewish tradition. In **Targum* the title is 'David who sang in prophecy before the Lord' and gives the psalm's contents a future authority, through the voice of prophecy. Verse 5 'Distress surrounded me like a woman who sits upon the birthstool and she does not have enough strength to give birth, and is in danger of dying...' may simply be an expansion of the phrase 'cords of death', but it also speaks of the birth pangs of the messianic age. Verse 28 similarly expands the imagery of light and darkness in the Hebrew. The Aramaic reads: 'For you light the lamp of Israel that is extinguished in the exile, for you are the Lord of the light of Israel'. Verse 31 is another interpretive expansion about the incomparability of Yahweh, adding in references to 'the anointed one': 'For an account of the sign and the redemption that you work for your anointed one and for the remnant of your people who are left, all peoples, nations and languages will give thanks and say 'There is no God except the Lord'. The final verse 50 has a similarly clear 'messianic' interpretation: 'He works much salvation with his king, and does goodness to his anointed one, to David and his seed for ever.'⁴⁶⁶

The **Targum* also reads the psalm 'backwards', in the light of the Torah, referring for example to the place of Abraham and Jacob in the plan of salvation (verse 25–26). **Midrash Tehillim* similarly refers to Abraham (again using Genesis 15) and Moses (again using Exodus 3).⁴⁶⁷ But mostly this is read in the light of 2 Samuel, being understood literally as about the life of David; for

⁴⁶⁵ See Kittel 1981: 53. Partly because of its length, partly because of its being read as a victorious song of David, the psalm has often been found at **Qumran*: examples from there and from sites nearby include: verses 2–13, 15–16, 31–35, 38–40 in 4QPs; the title and 1–11 in 11QPs; verses 5–11, 17–35, 37–42 in 5/6HevPs; verses 5–12 in 8QPs; and verses 25–28, 38–41 in 11QPs^d and verses 25–28 in MasPs^a.

⁴⁶⁶ Stec 2004: 49–53.

⁴⁶⁷ Braude 1959 I: 250–52; Feuer 2004: 237.

example, the last verse is seen to recall 2 Samuel 7 and the covenant with David. So *Midrash Tehillim* looks backwards, not forwards: a ‘messianic’ reading is by no means uniform throughout Jewish tradition. *Rashi, for example, views the psalm as having been written by David in his old age, after a life of trials and tribulation; and *Abraham ibn Ezra argues that it was composed on the day when David was told he was too old to fight the battles with his people (2 Sam. 21:17), the earlier version being preserved in 2 Samuel.⁴⁶⁸

Despite the testimony to David throughout this psalm, and the reference to the king as the ‘anointed one’ in verse 50, Psalm 18 is only used once in the New Testament. This is in the citation of the Greek version in Rom. 15:9 (‘Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name’) where Paul quotes this verse (18:49) in a larger **florilegium* of several Old Testament texts concerning the inclusion of the Gentiles; here ‘nations’ (*goyim*) are read as Gentiles, and the context in Romans presumes that this is Christ speaking.⁴⁶⁹

One would expect a psalm which speaks of a figure who suffers and is restored by God to be read on a par with, for example, Isaiah 53; but later Christian interpreters use this psalm far less than the Isaianic text. The following examples show that Christianising the psalm is sometimes the case, but most commentators (even *Augustine) read the psalm as an encouragement in discipleship.⁴⁷⁰ *Hilary of Poitiers is unusual in making much of verse 43 (‘a people whom I had not known served me’) as the voice of the Son speaking; this is probably borrowed from *Origen’s prosopological approach in his *Tractatus*.⁴⁷¹ *Eusebius similarly refers to verse 7 (‘the earth reeled and rocked’ as the Son of God ‘shaking the world systems’.⁴⁷² Furthermore, the heading in the Syriac Psalter is that this is a ‘Thanksgiving of David, and concerning the Ascension of Christ’.⁴⁷³ Later still, the tradition associated with *Aquinas is that here David is speaking of the passion and vindication of Christ.⁴⁷⁴ Overall, however, Christian commentators expand surprisingly little of any Christian interpretation of this psalm. *Diodore takes a typically Davidic reading, arguing that this is about David’s blessing which affects us all.⁴⁷⁵ *Calvin brings together Davidic and Christian readings: noting that David’s sufferings anticipate those of Christ (verses 33–42), and exonerating David for shedding much

⁴⁶⁸ Gruber 2004: 267.

⁴⁶⁹ The expression ‘horn of salvation’ in Luke 1:69 could also be seen as using Ps. 118:2, but as this is also found in Ps. 131:7 this is less clear.

⁴⁷⁰ *Expositions on the Psalms* 18.34. WSA 3 15:195, in ACCS VII:142.

⁴⁷¹ See Gillingham 2008b:36.

⁴⁷² *Commentary on the Psalms* 18.8 PG 23:169, in ACCS VII:137.

⁴⁷³ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 227.

⁴⁷⁴ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 226–27.

⁴⁷⁵ Diodore, *Commentary on the Psalms* 18 WGRW 9:58–59, in ACCS VII:144–145.

blood as he was ‘under divine orders,’ *Calvin turns to the nature of Christ’s kingdom, for Christ was obedient and fought for a tranquil kingdom, as we should too.⁴⁷⁶ So the Christological readings of this psalm are certainly various.

Given the length of the psalm, it is not surprising that in liturgy it is mainly *antiphons which are used, both in Jewish and Christian liturgy. Verse 30 (‘this is our God—his way is perfect...’) is used, for example, at the Sabbath morning service. In an Orthodox Christian liturgy of the Mass, verse 1 is used as an antiphon (‘I love you, O Lord my strength’); verses 1–2 are then sung by a choir; verse 1 is again sung as an antiphon; then verses 3 and 46 are sung by a choir; this is followed with verse 1; then verses 49–50 by the choir; then verse 1 is used again as the antiphon. Also in Orthodox liturgy the end of the psalm (in its eight-weekly cycle) is used as part of the Alleluia acclamation before the reading of the Gospel. So although the psalm would be read in its entirety in monastic and cathedral offices, its rich store of metaphors allow for a variety of shorter liturgical uses.⁴⁷⁷

In terms of illumination, most Psalters similarly illustrate single verses within the entire ‘narrative’. The **Stuttgart Psalter* offers no less than five images. The first (fol. 19r, from the title) is of David fleeing from his enemies;⁴⁷⁸ the second (fol. 19v, from verse 10) which describes God ‘riding on a cherub’ is an image of Christ in a *mandorla being carried by angels;⁴⁷⁹ the third (fol. 20v, of verse 27) is of Christ delivering the humble and bringing down the haughty, with a cross in the background;⁴⁸⁰ the fourth (fol. 20r, on verses 33–34) is of the psalmist with feet ‘like deer’ fighting his opponents;⁴⁸¹ the fifth (fol. 21v, on verse 39) is another image of the psalmist being armed for battle, taking up a typical *Carolingian theme.⁴⁸² Hence most of these images are political, military and, initially, David-centred; only two of the five are read in Christian terms. Just occasionally the image of God flying in heaven is adapted to Christ’s Ascension, as in the Byzantine **Hamilton Psalter* (fol. 63r) and the **Bristol Psalter* (fol. 27v).⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁶ Calvin, *Commentary on the Psalms* 18:37–40 lls. 294–6; see <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.xxiv.html>.

⁴⁷⁷ Gray 2014: 210–11.

⁴⁷⁸ See <https://goo.gl/G61Xdw>.

⁴⁷⁹ See <https://goo.gl/6WO0nu>. This theme is also taken up in the *Utrecht* and *Bristol* Psalters. See Corrigan (1992: 21).

⁴⁸⁰ See <https://goo.gl/JPCQ8K>.

⁴⁸¹ See <https://goo.gl/4zpHTn>.

⁴⁸² See <https://goo.gl/RDmXof>.

⁴⁸³ http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_40731_f027v.

One later illustration of this psalm is an ink and watercolour painting by William Blake. 'David Delivered out of Many Waters' (verse 16) captures two motifs in the psalm: David calling out to God to be saved from his enemies (verse 3), and God riding with the wings of the wind on the cherub (verse 10). Here David is sprawled out at the bottom of the psalm, face upwards, arms outstretched, but bound with cords, and surrounded by miry waves, calling out for salvation; Christ appears at the top, bathed in golden light, riding on the wings of seven angels, each with their arms outstretched. The sense of David's need and Christ's gentle power to save is striking.⁴⁸⁴

It is interesting to compare this with the verbal imagery relating to the same verse in a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins. 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' brings together the God who comes in a spiritual storm to Hopkins with the God who comes in a physical storm to the nuns in a shipwreck. In stanza 2, God is presented as the one who brings about 'lightening and lashed rod' (Ps. 18:13–14). In stanza 32, God is the one who holds back the chaotic waters as in Ps. 18:15 and who is the rock of 'granite' as in Ps. 18:2:

I admire thee, master of the tides,
Of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall;
The recurb and recovery of the gulf's sides,
The girth of it and the wharf of it and the wall;
Staunching, quenching ocean of a motionable mind;
Ground of being, and granite of it; past all
Grasp God, throned behind
Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides...⁴⁸⁵

Stanza 33 invokes the descent of Christ to Hades, reminiscent of Ps. 18:4–5; the stanza ends with Christ's victory over the waters of death ('Our passion-plungèd giant risen,/ The Christ of the Father compassionate, fetched in the storm of his strides.') which again invokes the experience of the psalmist in 18:16.⁴⁸⁶

Many musical arrangements of Psalm 18 focus on one verse or a series of verses, rather than the whole (lengthy) psalm. Buxtehude's cantata for orchestra and choir of verses 1–3 ('Lieb Hab Ich Dich O Herr') is a full and confident setting of the beginning of this psalm.⁴⁸⁷ An English anthem by Henry Purcell ('I will love thee O Lord') is taken from verse 1–6 and 16–18; the contents of the psalm, concerning the king and his enemies, were ideal subject matter for the period in which it was written (in about 1680) with Charles II fighting off

⁴⁸⁴ See Plate 4.

⁴⁸⁵ Gerard Manley Hopkins 1967: 62.

⁴⁸⁶ For a further discussion of Hopkins and the Bible, see P. Fiddes (2009: 570–3).

⁴⁸⁷ Bux WV41/1. See <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Herzlich-Lieb-Hab-Dich-Herr/dp/B001ILJDO4>.

Monmouth's uprisings. The anthem is dominated by the solo bass, and the opening sings confidently of God's strength to protect from enemies (verses 1–3). The mood becomes more sombre and *melismatic as the psalmist considers himself experiencing the 'cords of death and Sheol' (verse 4–6). The music rises chromatically as he calls upon 'my God' to help (verse 6). A quietly lilting piece reflects on 'So he shall hear my voice', whilst 'he shall send down from high to fetch me' moves up and down one and a half octaves, leading to four rising petitions ('they are too mighty for me) and ending with a short reflective chorus 'They prevented me in the day of my trouble' (verses 16–18).⁴⁸⁸

The political background to the psalm, evident not least in its title concerning David and Saul, has resulted in its inclusion in several oratorios. Arthur *Honegger's *Le Roi David* uses Psalm 18 in Part III, which highlights David's liaison with Bathsheba, where Psalms 51 (for repentance), 121 (as an expression of devotion), and 18 (an oath of loyalty) are sung, mainly in unison, with a melody simulating folk music that spins on continuously, but never repeats itself, in eight notes, changing from major to minor scales emulating the mix of the sacred and the secular.⁴⁸⁹

Other contemporary uses of this psalm include 'Elijah Rock' (2010), an African-American Spiritual by Right Cogency, where the 'rock' imagery in 18:2 is used as a metaphor during Elijah's Ascent to Heaven and is a call to sing and dance.⁴⁹⁰ 'The Lord is My Rock and Salvation', part of the *Sing Praise to the Lord Project* (2005), by Dan and Heidi Goeller, also makes use of 18:1–3, as well as parts of Psalms 27 and 46. It is arranged as a Spanish-style choral anthem for SATB chorus, orchestra and drums; choral syncopation in the first part conveys God's love even when under attack; dotted crotchets enhance the words 'my faith will not be...' ending on a sustained note for 'swayed'. As Siobhan Dowling Long notes, this is an interesting example of 'word painting' through music.⁴⁹¹

Finally Steve *Reich in *Tehillim* (1981) chose Psalm 18 as one of four psalms (the others being 19, 34 and 150) to express in different ways the idea of the kingship of God *for all peoples*. An expert in cantillation, he uses a variety of techniques to convey the traditional meanings of the texts, but reinterprets them using unexpected chromatics and sudden mood changes. Psalm 18 is the third movement: Reich called it the most chromatic piece he had ever composed. Its very slow tempo makes much of the call-and-response nature of the psalm, as one chorus sings half a line ('with the merciful...') and another replies ('You are merciful').⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁸ See http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W7191_GBAJY9366307.

⁴⁸⁹ Stern 2011: 237.

⁴⁹⁰ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 75.

⁴⁹¹ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 237. See <https://goo.gl/volwbv>.

⁴⁹² See Steve Reich: *Tehillim and Three Movements*, Schönberg Ensemble, conductor Reinbert de Leeuw, 7559–79295–2 (WE810), Elektra Entertainment, Germany, 1994.

The Cambridge scholar, Alison Gray, has recently written an entire monograph on the metaphorical imagery of Psalm 18. She argues that ‘Strength’ is the common theme behind all the metaphors, starting with the first verse (‘I love you, O Lord my strength’) which accounts for the king’s deliverance and victory as the psalm progresses. Gray notes how at the start the psalmist is in the depths of the earth (verses 4–7) yet ends with being exalted to great heights (verses 44–46); and throughout the psalmist is raised up and cast down, whilst also, in the heart of this psalm, he is given a ‘broad place of deliverance’ (verse 19).⁴⁹³ Gray’s analysis is a good summary of a psalm whose richness of metaphor is particularly evident in its reception history through art, poetry and music—a richness which, as Steve Reich’s interpretation also suggests, is for a more universal than specific appropriation.

Psalm 19: A Hymn of Praise

Psalm 19 is really two psalms in one. It comprises an earlier psalm (verses 1–6) praising God (called El) as Creator of the Sun, adapting much ancient Near Eastern mythology, and a later psalm (verses 7–14) praising God (called Yahweh) as giver of the law, taken from Israel’s own traditions. The overall theme is about order, both in the natural world and in relation to the community; not surprisingly, the parallelism and structure of the psalm are equally well-ordered. It is likely that the compilers brought the two psalms together under the theme of ‘speech’: in verses 1–6 creation speaks, in verses 7–11 Yahweh speaks, and in verses 12–14 the psalmist speaks, and so the movement is from the universe to the Torah to the individual heart. It is as if that which cannot be fully perceived (‘there is no speech...’) through creation is made fully known through the Law (‘the commandment of the Lord is clear...’). The word *’omer* (‘speech/utterance’) is found in verses 2, 3, and 14, whilst the word *nistar* (‘hidden’) is another link (verses 6 and 12).

Not only have the two psalms been intentionally brought together, but the insertion of the entire psalm into this collection is equally purposeful. Like Psalm 8, it was probably a later addition.⁴⁹⁴ There are links with Psalm 18, in the references to ‘servant’ (in the title to Psalm 18, concerning David) and, in 19:11, 13, concerning the one who keeps the law: this is the first time the word ‘servant’ is used in an actual psalm. Furthermore, the word *tamim* (often translated as ‘blameless’ or ‘perfect’) is found in 18:2, 46 and 19:13 as is the word *barar* (often translated

⁴⁹³ Gray, 2014: 189–201.

⁴⁹⁴ On Psalm 8, see p. 72.

as ‘pure’) in 18:26 and 19:9. The reference to God as ‘my rock’ is in 18:2, 46 and in 19:14. The voice of God is thus heard in the Temple (18:6) and in creation (19:4).

One odd word is *yabbia* ‘in verse 2, translated as ‘pours forth’, although the Hebrew really means ‘bubble forth’, like prophetic speech. The Greek uses *ereugomai* (‘proclaim’); the Latin, however, uses ‘*eructat*’, perhaps trying to accommodate the Hebrew, but this has a more crude connotation of ‘belch, blurt out’—a meaning often taken up in later reception history, as will be seen. A difficult verse is 19:4. Here the Greek translators read the unusual Hebrew word *qaw* (meaning ‘cord, line’) as ‘voice’, substituted a lamed (the equivalent of a letter ‘l’) to the end of the word, which makes more sense in its context: this is used in the NRSV translation, and is employed by Paul in Rom. 10:18 to refer to the preaching of the apostles. Another problem in verse 4 is the change in the Greek so that God now sets his tent *in* the sun, rather than *for* the sun, as in the Hebrew; this change might make more sense, but has more mythological connotations. Again, this had enormous doctrinal ramifications for Christian thinkers, as will be seen shortly. Finally, consistent with 18:2, the Greek in 19:14 also changes the metaphor ‘rock’ to ‘helper’ (*boethos*).

Turning to Jewish commentators, the personification of creation caused some issues in **Targum Psalms*. The relevant verses are expanded as follows: ‘*Those who observe the heavens tell the glory of the Lord, and those who examine the expanse declare the works of his hands. Day to day increasingly utters the word and night to night decreasingly declares knowledge...*’ (verses 1–2). And of the sun in verse 5: ‘*And in the morning he goes forth like a bridegroom from his chamber in a chariot and at midday he rejoices like a mighty one, and he arrives to run by way of his gate in the evening.*’⁴⁹⁵ Noting the six appellations of Torah in verses 7–9 (law/testimony/orders/command/fear/judgements), these are seen to correspond to the six orders of the **Mishnah*; hence in the context of this psalm as a whole, study of Torah surpasses our knowledge of the universe with the aid of scientific research, for only Torah can help us to become who we should be in the cosmos.⁴⁹⁶

**Midrash Tehillim* actually reads the whole psalm as about Torah, not about Creation: so verse 2 is seen as an allusion to Moses receiving the Torah, and the ‘day’ and ‘night’ refer to his forty days and nights in the wilderness (Exod. 34:28).⁴⁹⁷ In part this is because of the way Christians put such limited value on the Torah part of the psalm; hence **Kimḥi*, for example, compares the sun with the Torah—its light, fire, purity, and bringing of order—and sees that Torah makes explicit the speech of the sun (following **Midrash Tehillim* here), and that as the sun is to the world, so Torah is to the soul.

⁴⁹⁵ Stec 2004: 54–5.

⁴⁹⁶ Feuer 2004: 239–40.

⁴⁹⁷ Braude 1959 I: 276.

Early Christian readings not only minimised the Torah, but also, in some cases, creation as well, either using these first six verses to encourage the mission to the Gentiles, or finding here a prophecy about the Virgin Birth. Rom. 10:18, as was noted earlier, uses 19:4 to refer to the preaching of God's word by the apostles to the Gentiles. *Justin, in *Apol* 1:40, uses this verse in the same way as Paul, as do *Clement in *1 Clement* 27:7 and *Tertullian.⁴⁹⁸ *Augustine, in one of his two discourses in this psalm, takes this even further: the speech from the heavens is that of the Holy Evangelists who proclaim the glory of Jesus Christ.⁴⁹⁹ Of verse 5, Augustine notes that the phrase 'like a bridegroom' means 'comely as a bridegroom... he took possession of the womb of his mother. In this burial (also nuptial) chamber, that is, in the womb of the Virgin, he united human to divine nature...'⁵⁰⁰ So this explains how Christ is born of the Father not by a temporal but by an eternal generation; so Christ also embodies the law, being 'the immaculate law, He who did no wrong'.⁵⁰¹

This extraordinary link to the Virgin Birth is taken up by several other commentators. *Arnobius the Younger speaks of Christ 'stepping forth from the Virgin like a bridegroom from the bridal chamber'.⁵⁰² *Bede speaks of David as a prophet making the comparison of the Bridegroom and the Chamber to refer to the Incarnation; and in *Thomasius, the tradition associated with *Aquinas, verse 5 implies '...that Christ entered the Virginal Shrine and proceeded from it to make known the secrets of men'.⁵⁰³ *Gilbert of Poitiers takes the whole psalm one stage further still: its two parts speak of the two natures of Christ.⁵⁰⁴

*Luther did not emphasise the Virgin Birth in this way. In his private commentary on this psalm, to his fellow Reformer Philip Melancthon, which was published in Latin in 1531, he undoubtedly saw the reference to the 'sun' as to Christ, but the 'tent for the sun' is now Christ, the Bridegroom, ruling through his church, the Bride, in all lands. The first part of the psalm is read as a prophecy, but with a different slant. A prophetic element is found in the first verse, which Luther, developing the apostle Paul, sees as a prophecy about preaching the Gospel to the whole world (and so the need for God's word—his 'handiwork'—to be proclaimed in his, Luther's, own day).⁵⁰⁵ A distinctive contribution is Luther's emphasis on the prayer of repentance at the end of the psalm.

⁴⁹⁸ See Gillingham 2008b: 26.

⁴⁹⁹ Quasten and Burghardt 1960: 177.

⁵⁰⁰ *Sermon I* 195.3 FC 38:42–43, in ACCS VII:153. See also Quasten and Burghardt 1960:178. The Greek translation 'he set a tent in the sun' (noted earlier) would suggest this allegorisation.

⁵⁰¹ Quasten and Burghardt 1960: 178–9.

⁵⁰² *Commentary on the Psalms* 19 CCL 25:24–25, in ACCS VII:151.

⁵⁰³ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 258.

⁵⁰⁴ Gillingham 2008b: 90.

⁵⁰⁵ See Pelikan 1956:141; an online text is <https://archive.org/details/complecommenta01luth>.

This is found in verse 13: ‘do not let the [insolent] have dominion over me’: it is a prayer that ‘neither the pope nor Campegius, neither the Salzburger nor Eck shout me down, knock me out... Then shall I be blameless.’⁵⁰⁶

*Calvin does not equate the sun with Christ, as many commentators from *Augustine to Luther do. Calvin notes that the reference to ‘day to day pours forth speech’ in verse 2 is not about preaching, but about Creation by the Word (as in Genesis 1). He treats the psalm as first about Creation, then about Torah; and as lawyer, Calvin makes much of the law in its literal sense and its setting within the covenant with Israel as well as its value for the church in his day.⁵⁰⁷

Within Jewish liturgy, verses 7–10 are used as the Song of the Day for *Shavuot*—the giving of the Torah on Sinai, recited when the Torah is taken out of the Ark. These verses are read in the *Ashkenazi tradition at the Sabbath morning service as one of nine psalms before the reading of the Torah and after the verses ‘The Lord is King!’ with Psalms 100, 136 and 1 Chron. 16:8–16.⁵⁰⁸ Verse 14 is recited as the concluding prayer after the *Eighteen Benedictions in the Sabbath morning service.

This last verse (‘Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you...’) is frequently used liturgically before preaching. More interesting is the connection of the first part of the psalm with the virginal conception: it is used at the *Nocturne at the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary and also, in Cranmer’s lectionary of *Coverdale’s psalms, on Christmas Day. So verse 5 is read as revealing Christ as the newborn Son, who gives the true light to the world. Part of the psalm is even associated with Christ’s Ascension (verse 6: ‘its rising is from the end of the heavens’).⁵⁰⁹

The association of Christ with the Sun resulted in some interesting Medieval illustrations of ‘Christ as a Giant’, sometimes with his head in the heaven and his body on earth.⁵¹⁰ This might have been also influenced by the additional comparison to the ‘strong man’ in verse 5; certainly *Ambrose illustrated this verse with reference to Gen. 6:4 and the race of giants. The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 23r) does this more discreetly, with Christ ascending to heaven, and a soldier and lion (representing strength) below.⁵¹¹ The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 10v) has the personifications of the sun and moon (twice, to illustrate ‘day to day’ and ‘night to night’ in verse 2), but also has the figure of Christ emerging between two parted curtains of a tabernacle; to his left is a figure who looks like

⁵⁰⁶ See Pelikan 1956:144; also Waltke and Houston 2010: 349.

⁵⁰⁷ See Pitkin 1993: 858, n. 1. Also <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.xxv.html>.

⁵⁰⁸ Elbogen 1993: 95.

⁵⁰⁹ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 258, 269–70.

⁵¹⁰ See W. Travis 1999: 167–89.

⁵¹¹ See <https://goo.gl/Zq3ZI4>.

Hercules.⁵¹² The **Harley Psalter* has a similar image. The **Eadwine Psalter* clearly depicts an extra large albeit youthful giant.⁵¹³ One of the *Paris Psalters* also has a very large figure but one who is old, with a beard.⁵¹⁴ The **St Albans Psalter* similarly depicts Christ stepping from a doorway, as a bridegroom coming out of his marriage chamber, with the sun behind, though he is not outsize.⁵¹⁵

The other theme most commonly illustrated in medieval Psalters is that of the preaching of the apostles, using verse 4 as interpreted by Rom. 10:18. This is the theme of the first image in the *Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 22v) which depicts a vast crowd listening to the preaching.⁵¹⁶ It is also found in Byzantine Psalters such as the **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 17r), the **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 19v), and the **Barberini* (fol. 32r) **Hamilton* (fol. 66v) and **Bristol* (fol. 31r) Psalters.⁵¹⁷

The Jewish **Parma Psalter* follows a different trajectory; its illustration is of a blue quadrant inside which are six-ray white stars and two human faces, one with the eyes closed and the other with them open (probably illustrating ‘night and day’): the image illustrates the heavens opened, telling the glory of God, and day by day speech is pouring forth (19:1–2).

The two major themes in the psalm—creation and law—have also influenced a vast amount of poetry from the sixteenth century onwards. Perhaps one of the most memorable representations is Philip **Sidney’s* poem. The first stanza (8:7:8:7) on the first part of the psalm evokes so well the dawn of creation:

The heav’nly frame sets forth the fame
Of him that only thunders;
The firmament so strangely bent,
Shows his hand-working wonders.

Day unto day, it doth display,
Their course doth it acknowledge:
And night to night succeeding right
In darkness teach clear knowledge...⁵¹⁸

An unusual representation of the second half is by George **Herbert*, whose sonnet ‘The Holy Scriptures I’ uses the form of secular love poetry to praise the

⁵¹² <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=27&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

⁵¹³ See <https://goo.gl/WDC5ob>. This image is to be found here as also Plate 5.

⁵¹⁴ See <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52506823m/f77.image.r=ms%20lat>.

⁵¹⁵ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page104.shtml>.

⁵¹⁶ See <https://goo.gl/y3j73K>.

⁵¹⁷ For *Theodore Psalter* fol. 19v see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f019v; for *Bristol Psalter* fol. 31r see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_40731_f031r.

⁵¹⁸ Hamlin (ed.) 2009:36.

Bible (not just Torah) as an object of desire (from verse 10: ‘more to be desired are they than fine gold...’):

Oh Book! infinite sweetness! Let my heart
Suck ev’ry letter, and a hony gain
Precious for any grief in any part;
To cleare the breast, to mollifie all pain,
Thou art all health, health thriving till it make
A full eternitie; thou art a masse
Of strange delights, where we may wish & take.
Ladies, look here: this is the thankful glasse,
That mends the lookers eyes...⁵¹⁹

In the reception of hymnody, one of the best known hymns based on Ps. 19: 1–4 is ‘The spacious firmament on high’, by the poet and Enlightenment philosopher Joseph Addison, which was published in *The Spectator* in 1712. The psalm was at that time read as an ode about science and religion joining together in worship, reflecting the many early eighteenth-century debates about God as Creator.⁵²⁰ This was set to the tune ‘Firmament’ by Walford Davies in 1908.

Metrical psalmody often manages to combine, theologically, the two themes of the psalm. The version attributed to *Calvin (or at least to *Marot) neatly brings the two themes together, with an emphasis on morality as much as praise:

O like the sun, may I fulfil
Th’appointed duties of the day
With ready mind and active will
March on and keep my heavenly way...⁵²¹

A more unusual version is by Isaac *Watts, who is clearly aware of the Medieval motif of the sun (and Christ) *as a giant*:

God of the Morning, at whose Voice
The chearful sun makes haste to rise,
And like a Giant doth rejoyce
To run his Journey through the Skies.⁵²²

⁵¹⁹ See J. Drury, in Lemon 2009: 256.

⁵²⁰ See J.R. Watson 2002: 153–4.

⁵²¹ For a similarly early French version, see ‘*Du Fond de ma Pensée: Vocal Music of the French Reformation*, Chant 1450, CHR 77297. ‘Fantasie VI’ by Caurroy is on Psalm 19. See <https://goo.gl/Co9orw>.

⁵²² <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/watts/psalms/hymns.Ps.43.html>.

Watts also wrote a time-specific political version of verse 4. This was no longer about the preaching of the apostles, but about Britain in his day:

‘Ye British lands rejoice
Here he reveals his word
We are not left to Nature’s voice
To bid us know the Lord.’

Charles *Wesley later changed this first line to ‘Ye happy lands rejoice.’⁵²³

Motets and anthems based on Psalm 19 are abundant: most of them focus on verses 1–4, thus reading the psalm essentially as about creation. Nevertheless, *Handel’s composition on verse 4, in English, could not be more different from Watts’; and the two versions by *Schütz (‘Die Himmel erzählen’), based on *Luther’s version, are different again. *Beethoven, ever aware of the glory of God in creation, composed ‘Die Himmel rühmen’, which was adapted into English as ‘The Heavens are telling’; other familiar versions include J.S. *Bach’s ‘Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes’ and *C.P.E. Bach’s ‘Die Himmel rufen’. And in English, *Purcell’s ‘Lord who can tell’ and Thomas *Birks’ ‘The Heavens Declare your Glory’ evoke in distinct ways the creation theme of this psalm.

Perhaps one of the best known examples of this psalm as ‘theatrical performance’ is in *Haydn’s ‘Creation’, an oratorio composed between 1797–98. Psalm 19:1–4 is the last movement of Part I, on Day Four (the creation of the ‘greater light and lesser lights’). It is sung as a chorus (in C Major) three times, interrupted by three reflective soloist pieces; the psalm almost never seems to end, as coda after coda repeats ‘und seiner Hände Werk...’⁵²⁴

By the eighteenth century, Jewish compositions could be either for a sacred performance or for something more secular. *Bloch’s ‘Sacred Service’ (‘*Avodath Hakodesh*’) was premiered at Turin in 1834. Written for the Sabbath, its five movements include morning blessings, verses of song and the **Shema*, the **Amidah*, Torah Readings, closing hymns, and a final adoration. Psalm 19:14 (May the words of my mouth...) opens Part II, by an **a capella* choir before the Ark, as part of Torah Service: it is sung in a modal harmonic style which make it sound like prose, using syncopations and cross accents and changes of metre.⁵²⁵ Steve Reich uses Psalm 19 in his *Tehillim* (1981) as the first of four psalms, an experimentation in cantillation and plainsong. The solo introduction opens out into a kaleidoscope of sound as the voice reaches out to the glory of God in the heavens.⁵²⁶

The concern for the ordering of the world in this psalm has resulted in its being used from the fifteenth century to the present day as an argument from

⁵²³ See Stackhouse 1997: 39.

⁵²⁴ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 53–4.

⁵²⁵ See Stern 2011: 117–21.

⁵²⁶ For the use of Psalm 18 in Reich’s *Tehillim*, see pp. 121–122.

design for the existence of God, as evidenced for example by William Paley's *Natural Theology* and his analogy of the clockmaker and the clock. The philosophical response is that, outside the psalm, the Designer could also be seen as careless, wasteful and arbitrary. Nevertheless, the connection between the Sun and Justice, between cosmic order and societal order, has inspired humankind as early as Hammurabi's Law Code in c. 1800 BCE ('By the order of Samas, the great judge of heaven and earth, may my justice prevail in the land') and in Egyptian and Assyrian religion, where social order is frequently linked to the sun god.⁵²⁷

So this is a psalm with a rich and varied reception history. Yet nothing could have anticipated the extraordinary use of this psalm in 'Polari Evening Prayer'. This uses language 'from the fringe'—a coded gay slang which dates from the 1960s when homosexuality was illegal in the United Kingdom. The 'Polari Bible' was produced as the project of the so-called Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence of Manchester Chapter. The use of this language in liturgy has been considered 'transgressive'; it has a clear horizontal axis in its intention to subvert and to shock. One example is Psalm 19. In Polari slang the psalm starts 'The heavens screech the fabeness of Gloria...'; verse 7 reads 'The law of the Duchess is absolutely fantabulosa, converting the nishta lucoddy...'; the psalm ends with 'Let the lavs of my screech, and the meditation of my thumping cheat be acceptable in thy vardaing, O Duchess, my butchness, my redeeme.' Its unauthorised use in Anglican liturgy has been widely criticised.⁵²⁸

Taking this theme into a very different and more universal kind of contemporary reception, Psalm 19 is used every single day by pilgrims of both the Jewish and Christian faiths, who still ascend *Jebul Musa* to St. Catherine's Monastery, the traditional site of Mount Sinai, hours before daybreak: as the first light dawns, the pilgrims recite Psalm 19 in their many languages, as the sun's rays burst upon the rugged landscape where Moses, according to Exodus 19–20, received the Law.⁵²⁹ The scope of this psalm to offer a shared experience of God as Creator of the World and Sustainer of Justice could not be more clear.

Psalm 20: Thanksgiving for Victory

Psalm 20 has some very early affinities with an Aramaic Prayer to the God Horus. Its opening prayer to God to answer (verse 1), its request for help from the sanctuary (verse 2) and to be granted the heart's desire (verse 3), as well as

⁵²⁷ For further examples, see W. P. Brown 2002: 81–103.

⁵²⁸ See <http://www.polaribible.org/>. An unauthorised service took place at Westcott House Chapel in January 2017 which created considerable press coverage.

⁵²⁹ Taken from Brown 2002: 103.

its ending that the prayers will be heard (verse 9) are all remarkably similar to this Aramaic prayer in order and content.⁵³⁰ The essential difference is the role of the king, which is more explicit and expanded in Psalm 20.

Verses 1–5 form an address to the king invoking God's help (a similar 'May he...' format is found in Psalm 72). Verses 6–8 are spoken in the I/We form, to the 'anointed one', suggesting some liturgical ritual has occurred between the two parts of the psalm: here we have a victory song anticipating the answer to the earlier prayer. The psalm ends as it began: that Yahweh will answer the prayer (verse 9).

The psalm has more connections with Psalm 18 than Psalm 19, although the heading ('To the leader. A Psalm of David') is the same for Psalms 19, 20 and 21. There are correspondences between 18:50 and 20:6, concerning the victories given to the 'anointed one'; and also between 18:6 and 20:2, concerning prayer at the Temple/sanctuary of Zion; so these two psalms belong more together, and indeed the whole content of each psalm, concerning a prayer for military deliverance from enemies, is an obvious link. This might suggest that, like Psalm 8, Psalm 19 was a later addition into this collection, with its two different but complementary themes of creation and Torah.

A few changes in the Greek and Latin translations are evident in the psalm's reception. One interesting word change in the Greek is in verse 5 (Heb. verse 6): the Hebrew uses *dagal* ('to lift a banner') but the Greek reads this as *gadal*, reversing two letters, and reads it then as *megalynō* ('to make great', or 'exalt'), taking away the more specific military connotations; the Latin follows the Greek. Another change in the Greek and Latin is the last verse, which in Hebrew could read 'Give victory, O Lord; let the King answer us when we call'. In this context the King would appear to be Yahweh. The Greek changes this to 'Give victory to the king, O Lord; answer us when by day we call' which matches more the sense of 20:1.

Jewish commentaries note how the prayers for victory can only come after study of the Torah (in Psalm 19) thus linking the two psalms together.⁵³¹ **Targum Psalms* accepts the Hebrew reading at the end of the psalm: 'O Lord, deliver us; O mighty King, accept our prayer in the day when we call' is read as a prayer to God as King and not as a prayer for the human king.⁵³²

The psalm is not found in the New Testament, and the early fathers also made minimal use of it; it was not until *Carolingian times that it was important as a

⁵³⁰ Papyrus Amherst Egyptian 63 dates from about the second century BCE; the prayer (Column XI lines 11–19) is just eight lines on one column out of twenty-three in this Demotic text which has clear Egyptian influence in its address to the falcon god Horus although its origins may well be traced back to Canaan. For an outline of the prayer see Z. Zevit 2001: 669–74.

⁵³¹ Feuer 2004: 253.

⁵³² Stec 2004: 55–56.

typical prayer for the Emperor. *Cassiodorus, like several early Christian commentators, argues from verse 7 that the ancients understood two kinds of triumphs; one celebrated in chariots ('a laureled triumph') the other called an ovation, because it seeks to exalt the Lord's name.⁵³³ The prayer thus becomes for the kingdom of Christ, as with Psalms 2 and 72. So, much later, *Luther applies the psalm literally to the 'princes' who had to think about a legitimate use of power, comparing it to Ps. 33:16–17.⁵³⁴ And *Calvin, who understood this psalm as David's prayer in battle also, typically, applies it to his own enemies.

Within Jewish liturgy the psalm as sometimes used at **Kedushah de-sidra* in the Middle Ages, when in order to be quorate a congregation of ten was required: this psalm was ideal as it had ten verses.⁵³⁵ It is often sometimes part of an evening service, with verse 9 following Ps. 78:38 ('But he being compassionate...').

Artistic representation highlights the two themes noted by *Cassiodorus—kingship, human and divine. So the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 11r), with its visual exegesis of the 'narratives' of the psalms, holds the two together.⁵³⁶ The psalmist stands to the left, with spear and shield and a company of soldiers: but he is appealing to *Christ-Logos, seated in globe-*mandorla, attended by three angels. Below and to the right, the psalmist appears again as king, bringing his offerings to the sanctuary. In the far right a number of soldiers who have put their trust in chariots and not in the name of the Lord (verse 7) have been struck down.

The theme of human and divine kingship is developed quite differently in the **St Albans Psalter*.⁵³⁷ Here the psalmist, depicted as a Christian holy man (with a cross on his hat) addresses Christ (to his left) with the prayer in the first verse. But he also points to David to his right, who is crowned and kneeling in supplication: 'Lord, save the king'.

A more recent representation by Moshe *Berger also pictures the kingdom of God but it is the Temple (verse 3) which is central in focus, not the king. The image moves downwards from a cluster of red Hebrew letters, to blue, to white, and below this a city with a Temple emerges like an island from a sea of people, represented in blue and red letters below. The artist comments that at the top is a letter Yod, split in two, so that the upper part cannot be seen and thus hints at infinity. Out of the Yod letters are tumbling down; at the bottom, letters representing people march to towards the city. *Berger contemplates a time when the

⁵³³ Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 20.8 ACW 51:207, in ACCS VII:160.

⁵³⁴ See Kraus 1988: 282, citing *Luther in WA 5:569, 8.

⁵³⁵ Hoffman 2004: 48.

⁵³⁶ <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=28&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

⁵³⁷ <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/index.shtml>.

third Temple will be built, when the letters will merge, so also merging the spiritual and material, and challenging us with our more material concerns today.⁵³⁸

In the light of the change made to the Hebrew noted earlier, it is interesting that the image of ‘royal banners’ in verse 5 has been retained in the NRSV as appropriate for the psalm as a whole. It was actually this motif which influenced *Venantius Fortunatus to ‘Christianise’ this psalm in 569; it was translated by John Mason *Neale in 1851, and is still sung today, usually on Good Friday. The first three verses read:

The royal banners forward go,
the cross shines forth in mystic glow;
where he in flesh, our flesh who made,
our sentence bore, our ransom paid.

Where deep for us the spear was dyed,
life’s torrent rushing from his side,
to wash us in that precious flood,
where mingled water flowed, and blood.

Fulfilled is all that David told
in true prophetic song of old,
amidst the nations, God, saith he,
hath reigned and triumphed from the tree...⁵³⁹

*Handel took the phrase ‘the king shall rejoice’—also from verse 5—and combined this with Ps. 21:1–3 in the third of his four coronation anthems for George II and Queen Caroline in 1727 (the first was the better known, ‘Zadok the Priest’). This was further popularised as part of the ‘Dettinger Anthem’ in Handel’s oratorio *Esther*, which had its first public performance in 1732. The piece is in five parts (‘The king shall rejoice’; ‘Exceeding glad he shall be’; ‘Glory and worship’; ‘Thou has prevented him’; ‘Alleluia’) ranging from a majestic opening with trumpet fanfares and full chorus and orchestra, with a sustained *melisma on ‘rejoice’, to the second piece in triple metre with an exuberant fugue for the final ‘Alleluia’.⁵⁴⁰

Like all the royal psalms, but particularly those which focus on military victory, this raises the same questions about the relationship between war and religion which was discussed at the end of Psalm 2.⁵⁴¹ An interesting reflection in terms of Psalm 20 is that it is very like the National Anthem in content and

⁵³⁸ See <http://themuseumofpsalms.com/the-museum/>.

⁵³⁹ <http://www.oremus.org/hymnal/t/t309.html>.

⁵⁴⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Mursg7TZsE. See also Dowling Long and Sawyer 78 and 236–7.

⁵⁴¹ See pp. 41–42.

spirit: much depends on an appropriate interpretation of verse 7 ('Some take pride in chariots and some in horses, but our pride is in the name of the Lord our God'): this could be used either to evoke further the spirit of Holy War, or to constrain military might and keep it in proportion.

Psalm 21: Thanksgiving for Victory

Psalm 21 is often considered as a pair with Psalm 20: *Handel's use of them together shows how these two psalms are matched. Psalm 20 is seen as a prayer before battle; Psalm 21, as a thanksgiving after it. We have seen already how many psalms are set as pairs, either because of their contrasting themes (1 and 2), or because of an acrostic shared by each (9–10) or even two contrasting psalms made into one (19A and 19B). Several others (90 and 91, 105 and 106, 111 and 112, 135 and 136) also fit this pattern. But one of the most interesting things about Psalm 21 is its very different Jewish reception history when compared with its neighbour.

The two psalms were undoubtedly meant to be read together: 20:4 prays that the king may be given his 'heart's desire', and 21:2 confesses 'You have given him his heart's desire'. The headings are identical, and each is structured with an **inclusio* (20:1 and 9, on God answering prayer; and 21:1 and 13, which sings about God's strength). 21:8–12 serve the purpose of an oracle, perhaps spoken by a court prophet, similar to 20:6–8.

What is surprising, therefore, is that, despite the clear reference to the 'anointed one' in Ps. 20:6, it is Psalm 21 which, unusually, is given a messianic reading in Jewish tradition. **Targum* reshapes verse 1: 'O Lord, in our strength the *anointed* king reigns', and verse 7 is seen to refer to 'King Messiah'. Verse 12 connects this messianic reading with the law and temple, so it reads: '...within the cords of *your tabernacle* you will establish *the Law* before them.'⁵⁴² A Davidic authorship is presumed, whether when Hebron had just been taken and there were longings for a greater kingdom, or at a time when David was taunted about Bathsheba.⁵⁴³ *Rashi is clear about the need for Davidic authorship: 'Our rabbis interpreted it as a reference to the king Messiah, but it is correct to interpret it as a reference to David himself as a retort to the Christians who found in it support for their erroneous beliefs.'⁵⁴⁴ But this is not to deny the importance of a second level of meaning in the psalm: it is indeed about the Messiah, and

⁵⁴² Stec 2004: 56–7.

⁵⁴³ Feuer 2004: 263; Cohen 1992: 58.

⁵⁴⁴ Gruber 2004: 253. Rashi nevertheless interprets verses 10–12, about the 'blasphemer' as a prophetic reference to Titus, slashing the curtains of the Temple.

this is again in *Rashi's refutation of Christian claims who saw the Messiah as having already come as Christ. So **Midrash Tehillim* reads verses 1–2 in the light of Isa. 11:10, and exhorts 'Seek the Messiah, David's son who will remain hidden until the time of redemption.' Verses 6–7 are also a reference to the Messiah, who is given honour through God's gift of salvation.⁵⁴⁵

The assigning of a psalm to such a clear messianic reading is certainly unusual in Jewish tradition. And why this psalm, and not Psalm 20? Some have argued that the mythical 'divine warrior' imagery is much more forceful in Ps. 21:8–12, with its references to the 'right hand', the 'fiery furnace', the swallowing, extinguishing, taking aim with the bow, which imply something more than an ordinary battle of an Israelite king. Psalm 20, by contrast, is much more physical and literal in its imagery. In this way it fitted the eschatological hope of Yahweh as warrior using his Messiah to conquer the nations in the last days.⁵⁴⁶

Christian messianic hope also looked back (but to Christ, not to David) and forward (to Christ as King bringing in his kingdom at the end of time), and Psalm 21 fitted this perspective well. This is precisely what *Athanasius speaks of when he writes about the judgement brought in by Christ's kingdom as part of this psalm.⁵⁴⁷ *Cassiodorus sees Psalm 21 as about the divine and human natures of Christ, who here speaks with two voices, one concerning his kingdom achieved on earth and the other concerning his kingdom being fulfilled in heaven.⁵⁴⁸ It is in this psalm, and in Psalm 22 following, that *Aquinas bypasses any historical setting altogether and focusses only on the Christian meaning: Psalm 21 is about Christ in truth and David in figure, whilst Psalm 22 also depicts David in figure and Christ literally.⁵⁴⁹

Christian liturgical adaptations of this psalm take this further still: it is about the triumph of Christ in his resurrection. It is used in the **BCP* Lectionary as a psalm for Ascension Day. It is also recited during the ritual of the 'stripping of the altars' in the Latin churches. In the Orthodox churches, verses 1–6 and 13 were seen as referring to the gift of the Spirit; so the psalm is used at Pentecost. The problematic verses about the destruction of the king's enemies are, however, often omitted from liturgy: they are, for example, taken out of the **Daily Office*.

However, in Christian art, where one might have expected more imaginative Christological symbolism, the emphasis is as much on David as King as Christ as King. The composition in the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 11v) is very much like Psalm 20, although here Christ holds a book of judgement flanked by six angels,

⁵⁴⁵ Braude 1959 I: 293–5.

⁵⁴⁶ See Klingbeil 1999: 82–4.

⁵⁴⁷ Athanasius, *Interpretation of the Psalms* 26, in ACCS VII:161.

⁵⁴⁸ Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 21.1, ACW 51:208–09, in ACCS VII:162.

⁵⁴⁹ Ryan 2000: 109.

and a huge hand of God attacks a troop of armed soldiers at the bottom of the image; but in the heart of the illustration an angel is placing a crown of gold on a human king's head.⁵⁵⁰ The **Stuttgart Psalter* has two images of this psalm, and the hand of God is depicted in each: in the first (fol. 24v) it sets a golden crown on the king's head, and in the second (fol. 25r), it reaches down from heaven to set on fire a large pot which contains several men.⁵⁵¹

Byzantine Psalters appear to take a similar David-centred reading, and Christ rarely features at all: examples include the **Hamilton Psalter* (fol. 68r), the **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 21r and fol. 21v), the **Barberini Psalter* (fol. 34v) and the **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 18v).⁵⁵² This may in part be out of due respect for the role of the Emperor, although this is not consistently the case with illustrations of other royal psalms; it may also be to refute Jewish claims about the coming Messiah in this psalm.

So in Christian writings and Christian liturgy a messianic approach is also evident, but in Medieval Christian art the emphasis is more on the crowning of a human, royal figure. A specifically 'royal' reading of this psalm is also very evident in music, especially in eighteenth century arrangements of Psalm 21.

We have already noted how **Handel* used this as a coronation psalm, along with Psalm 20.⁵⁵³ *Isaac *Watts* not only used metrical psalmody for specifically Christian readings, but also for political purposes, in allowing the imperialist theology in many of the psalms to speak to the ideology of the British Empire. At about the same time as *Handel's* compositions of this psalm, i.e. during the reigns of George I and George II in the early eighteenth century, *Watts* wrote several versions of Psalm 21. One was understood to be a 'Psalm to the British King,' with a subtitle 'Our King is the Care of Heaven.' The first lines were: 'The King, O Lord, with songs of praise/ Shall in thy strength rejoice.' **Mycall*, an emigré to America, who then elected to adapt psalms for newly founded American churches, rewrote the subtitle as 'America is the care of heaven' and the first lines as 'Our States, O Lord, with songs of praise/ Shall in thy strength rejoice.' By 1785 *Barlow* had subtitled it 'National Blessings acknowledged' and it read 'In Thee, great God, with songs of praise/ Our favour'd realms rejoice'; verses 3–4 were an implicit reference to the Revolution ten years before ('In deep distress our injur'd land/implor'd thy power to save...'). By 1800 **Dwight* had re-written it again to read 'Rulers are the care of heaven' and the

⁵⁵⁰ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=29&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

⁵⁵¹ See <https://goo.gl/m98QMg> and <https://goo.gl/QHrpcO>.

⁵⁵² For an image from the *Theodore Psalter*, for fol. 21r see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f021r and for fol.21v see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f021v.

⁵⁵³ See p. 132.

first lines were ‘Our rulers, Lord, with songs of praise/ Shall in thy strength rejoice.’⁵⁵⁴ Thus the original version by *Watts was less used, even though it had theological as well as political overtones. For example, Watts’ version ‘Christ exalted to the kingdom’ has as its first lines:

David rejoic’d in God his strength,
Raised to the Throne by special Grace;
But Christ the Son appears at Length,
Fulfil the Triumph and the Praise...⁵⁵⁵

This psalm has served several coronations of monarchs since the eighteenth century. One more recent composition is ‘King Solomon’ by Sir Granville Bantock, a piece in three movements for a chorus, narrator and orchestra, for the coronation of George VI in 1937. Psalm 21 opens the work, with a fanfare and orchestral march reminiscent of *Handel’s composition.⁵⁵⁶ Here the composer, like Handel, stayed more closely to the text of the psalm and allowed any specifically political ethos to be more implicit through the music.

So the reception history of this psalm is interesting, because when one might expect more theological and explicitly Messianic readings from Christian interpreters, this is mostly found instead in Jewish commentators, and when one might expect more literal and explicitly Davidic and royal readings from Jewish interpreters this is mostly found in Christian reception—not least in music and art.

Psalm 22: Lament for Deliverance

Psalm 22 is another psalm, like 20 and 21, whose mood changes near the end. It begins with a long lament (verses 1–21) pleading for God to answer/rescue (Hebrew *’anah*) and ends (verses 22–31) with a psalm thanking God for having answered/rescued (again, Hebrew *’anah*). It is likely that the first part was composed some time prior to the second, more liturgical occasion (‘in the great congregation’ appears twice, in verses 22 and 25, in verses 22–31).

Psalm 22 has particular affinities with 17, not least in its metaphors of longing and suffering which use bodily and animal imagery. Just as Psalm 17 refers to

⁵⁵⁴ See Stackhouse 1997: 73–4; also J.M. Hull 2005: 59–79.

⁵⁵⁵ See <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/watts/psalmshymns.Ps.49.html>.

⁵⁵⁶ The work continues with Solomon’s request for wisdom and ends with Psalm 148. See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 133–4.

the lips, ear, eyes, heart, mouth, feet, hand, belly and face, so Psalm 22 refers to the mouth, womb, breast, bones, heart, tongue, hands, feet and face. And as Psalm 17 uses the imagery of the lion, so too Psalm 22, uses images such as the worm, lion, dogs and wild oxen. So Psalms 17 and 22 have been seen as part of the *chiasmus in Psalms 15–24.⁵⁵⁷

The later reception of this psalm is closely connected with the different translations of some of its difficult verses. Verse 29 (Hebrew 30) for example, reads literally in the Hebrew, ‘They ate, and all the fat ones in the earth shall bow down’; the Greek and Latin both keep this translation, but other versions see this, in the context of the rest of the verse, as a reference to life after death: ‘all who *sleep in the earth* shall bow down’ (changing the Hebrew *dashen* [fat ones] to *yashen* [sleep]).

The most controversial changes involve animals—the lion, the dog, and the bull. Verse 16 (Heb. 17) has in the Hebrew: *ka’ari yaday weraglay*, which translated literally means ‘like a lion my hands and feet...’ The Greek reads the word ‘like a lion’ (*ka’ari*) as another Hebrew word, *karah*, which in Greek is ‘dig up’ (*orussō*) so the line then reads, in Greek, as ‘they dig up (?pierce) my hands and feet’. The fact that this version is also found in the *Dead Sea Scrolls (5/6HevPs) shows that this reading was known in early Hebrew as well as Greek. ‘Lions’ and ‘dogs’ are common metaphors in this psalm (see verses 13, 16, 20 and 21): they are metaphors of a physical attack on the psalmist, so it is easy to see why the word ‘lion’ was included in verse 16. Although this verse is not cited in the New Testament, it was used by the early Christians as further evidence that the verse referred to Christ’s physical sufferings on the cross.

Another notable reference affecting later reception is the translation of the word *re'em* (wild ox) in verse 21 (Heb. verse 22) to *monokerōs* (‘unicorn’) in the Greek (and later in the Latin, *unicornus*). Again the initial symbolism is of an animal with power to maul and kill, rather like the bulls in verse 12; the Hebrew in verse 21 could mean ‘a one-horned animal’, and this might have originally meant the rhinoceros. However, given the Greek and later Latin translations, as early as *Tertullian Jesus was identified as the unicorn, with the horn denoting his cross. By the Middle Ages the legend of the hunted unicorn and a virgin becomes transformed into an image of the Virgin Mary protecting Christ as the hunted unicorn. The implication is that Christ puts aside his power and his purity (the unicorn’s horn was a symbol of purity, in its ability to cleanse water) and the great hunter becomes the hunted. Some images illustrate the unicorn resting in Mary’s lap, as a kind of *pieta*, as in Ps.92:10, and others are of the Virgin protecting the unicorn as it is pierced in the chase. The *Ormesby Psalter*, for example (Oxford, Bodleian Library, *MS Douce* 366), illustrates Psalm 22

⁵⁵⁷ See pp. 101–02 (i.e. at very beginning of Psalms 15–24).

with a historiated initial at the beginning of the psalm, which is of Christ being tried by Pilate, and at the bottom of the folio we see Christ as a unicorn being pierced by a Roman soldier, evoking Jn. 19:34. The unicorn, in some anguish, has fled into the lap of the Virgin.⁵⁵⁸

Much reception history has focussed on the title of this psalm, 'Deer of the Dawn'. The Greek and Latin read it more generally as about receiving 'help' in the early morning. **Targum* reads this similarly: 'To the singer, *concerning the help of the continual offering of the morning*'. So here this is about early morning prayer in the synagogue. Also in *Targum*, verse 8 is now read not as a taunt-song from the people, but as an expression of the psalmist's faith in crisis: 'I sang before the Lord, and he rescued me; he delivered me, because he took delight in me'. Verse 16 stays close to the Hebrew: 'an assembly of evildoers have encircled me; they bite my hands and feet like a lion.' Verses 26–31 give interesting insights into the variant versions of *Targum*: a copyist's note in the margin states that what follows is lacking in his manuscript, but he nevertheless translated it from memory: 'May the spirit of prophecy dwell in the thoughts of your heart for ever!'

Other Jewish commentators read this psalm in as unexpected a way as they read Psalm 21. The psalm is a prophetic reference to Haman's plot to destroy Israel, and the title of the psalm is in fact a reference to Esther, the heroine of the story: she is the 'hind of dawn', arriving at Israel's darkest hour and being like a 'morning star'. So this is a psalm to celebrate the miracle at **Purim*.⁵⁵⁹ The link with David is through Shimei, who cursed the king; but David pardoned him and allowed him to live (2 Sam. 16:5–13); Mordecai is a descendant of Shimei (Est. 2:5); so it was because of David's pardon that the progeny could save Israel. Hence Ps. 22:1–21 are Esther's prayer, interspersed with the prayers of the people; even verses 9–11 are a reference to the tragic circumstances at her birth (Est. 2:7) when she was raised by Mordecai as an orphan. Verses 15, 19 and 21 similarly are read as describing circumstances in Esther's life.⁵⁶⁰

However, many Jewish commentators have refuted this reading. *Rashi read the 'deer/hind' as a musical instrument; he also read the word as feminine, so referring to the 'loving wife', or the congregation of Israel. So the psalm is about the sufferings of Israel throughout time—not only about the period concerning Esther. It is certainly not about the sufferings of Christ; nor will God resurrect the souls of the Gentiles from **Gehenna* (verses 29–31) as some Christians believe.⁵⁶¹ *Kimḥi also followed this historical and corporate reading, seeing it as a reference to the ongoing exile of the Jewish people; the reference to 'dawn'

⁵⁵⁸ Van Boxel 2009:63–68.

⁵⁵⁹ Feuer 2004: 270.

⁵⁶⁰ Feuer 2004: 284; Braude: 1959 I: 297–313.; Dorival 2002.

⁵⁶¹ Gruber 2004: 258 and 261.

in the title suggested its imminent end, so this was also a prophecy about the coming Messiah. The sufferings of the people went beyond the time of Esther: the ‘dogs and lions’ also represented the Arab and Christian persecutors of Medieval times, so this was as much about awaiting future redemption as about celebrating a past miracle of redemption, through Esther.⁵⁶² From a contemporary perspective, Rabbi Jonathan Magonet sums up the Jewish reading of Psalm 22 well: the sufferings are not just about Israel, or about one generation of suffering, but about a people yet unborn (verse 31): ‘Uncertainties allow for a multiple use of the Psalm, the various metaphors permitting us to fill in our own fears or distress.’⁵⁶³

Psalm 22 has played a critical role amongst all the psalms in shaping an understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus in the Christian tradition. In Mark, for example, twelve passages allude to eight different psalms of lament, and Psalm 22 is used three times in the passion narrative (in reverse order of the verses). Verse 18, on the dividing and casting lots for garments, is found in Mk. 15:24; verses 7–8, on the taunting and mockery, is used in Mk. 15:29; and verse 1, on being forsaken by God, is used in Mk. 15:34. Matthew follows Mark in this respect: verse 8 is in Matt. 27:43, verse 7, in Matt. 27:39, and verse 1 is found in Matt. 27:46 (the reference to casting lots for the garments is omitted). Luke and John use the psalm, but less so: 22:17–18 (on the garments) is included in Lk. 23:34 (with Psalm 35:5 replacing the cry of God-forsakenness in 22:1). John similarly uses 22:17–18 in Jn. 19:24 (and 22:1 is replaced with the cry ‘It is finished’). In addition, Hebrews also refers to this psalm: Heb. 2:5–18 is a song about the suffering and exaltation of Jesus, and in the section on his exaltation, verse 22 (...in the midst of the congregation I will praise you...) is put onto the lips of Jesus himself, so here the psalm is a testimony to his resurrection rather than to his suffering.

Amongst early Christian writers, the *Epistle of *Barnabas* is the first to apply the Greek of verse 16 (the piercing of the hands and feet) to the crucifixion.⁵⁶⁴ *Justin Martyr is the first apologist to cite this psalm in full, arguing that ‘no one else who has been called King or Christ has ever had his hands or feet pierced whilst alive, or had died in this mysterious fashion.’⁵⁶⁵ Psalm 22:1 is used in *Diaogue with Trypho* 98; 22:7–8 is used in *Apology* 1:38 (where this applies to the taunts of pagans). 22:18 is cited in *Apology* 1:35, 38 and *Dial* 97:3. The latter part of the psalm (verses 21, 22, 23, 28) is used throughout *Dialogue* 98–106 as a predication of the resurrection of Christ. Anti-Jewish rhetoric is

⁵⁶² See Cohen 2000: 412; Gillingham 2008b:87; Cohen 1992: 61.

⁵⁶³ Magonet 1994: 114.

⁵⁶⁴ Waltke and Houston 2010: 378.

⁵⁶⁵ Waltke and Houston 2010: 397.

freely applied: the dogs are the Jews, the oxen and fat bulls are the scribes and Pharisees, and the lion is Herod. Like Justin, *Eusebius argues that ‘...the psalm refers to Christ and no one else, for its contents harmonise with none other but him...’⁵⁶⁶ And, also like *Justin, the same anti-Jewish rhetoric is evident: the dogs were the rulers of the Jews, the scribes and the high priests and the Pharisees.⁵⁶⁷

*Augustine uses the psalm against *Donatism, making much of Christ incarnate in the psalm, not least that the Word is physical (using verses 9–10) and the Word can suffer (verses 14–15).⁵⁶⁸ Again we note the anti-Jewish rhetoric arising from *Augustine’s readings of the psalm. Of verse 9, he argues: ‘You have drawn me out the womb of the Jewish race, that womb which still envelops in darkness all those unborn as yet to the light of Christ, who place their salvation in the exterior observance of the Sabbath, in circumcision...’⁵⁶⁹

*Cassiodorus also classifies this psalm as one of those explicitly prophesying Christ’s passion, and he too uses the psalms against the Jews: ‘*Many calves* are clearly the Jewish people, who do not experience God’s yoke, and sport with heedless wantonness. They are also shameless and foolish, for... with wandering and fluid course skip and bound towards wicked designs... by fat bulls he designates the Jewish leaders, who like bulls raised their heads high, and puffed out their wickedness and pride... spilt the blood of the guiltless One.’⁵⁷⁰

This psalm was to become a test of Christian orthodoxy. *Theodore of Mopsuestia argued that the Greek translation of verse 1, which read the Hebrew word ‘moaning’ as ‘transgressions’ (‘Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my transgressions?’) could not refer to Christ, for he was sinless; hence the whole psalm was to be understood in the light of an experience of David. This was an unfortunate move: it led in part to his condemnation a century later at the Fifth Ecumenical Council.⁵⁷¹

*Bede seems to have been amongst the first in aligning the title with Christ, the ‘hunted stag.’⁵⁷² *Aquinas’ commentary on this psalm runs to thirty-three pages. His reading starts with David, and then moves to all Israel, progressing to Christ’s death and resurrection, and to his God-forsakenness on behalf of humanity. Yet *Aquinas too sees the references to the dogs are to the Jews, the

⁵⁶⁶ Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel* 10.8. 491–2 POG 2:216–17, in ACCS VII:168–69.

⁵⁶⁷ Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel* 10.8. 505–506 POG 2:231, in ACCS VII:172–73.

⁵⁶⁸ Waltke and Houston 2010: 383; Quaston and Burgstadt 1960: 207–8.

⁵⁶⁹ Quaston and Burgstadt 1960: 202.

⁵⁷⁰ Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 21, 13 CCL 97, 196; trans. Walsh 1990: 222.

⁵⁷¹ See Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 288; Hill 2006: 243.

⁵⁷² Neale and Littledale I 1874–79:286–9.

High priest and scribes are like the one-horned unicorn, and Pilate is the ravening lion.⁵⁷³

By the late Middle Ages the psalm is used increasingly as a prayer for those who are also suffering and in distress. The *Lollards used it to identify their enemies as their persecutors, using the second half of the psalm to argue that they too would be vindicated as Christ had been.⁵⁷⁴ *Calvin also used the psalm in this way: noting that these are firstly David's cries, who sets before us in his own person a type of Christ, a model of faithful wrestling with God in times of adversity, Calvin concludes, 'there is not one of the godly who does not daily experience in himself the same thing...he thinks he is cast off and forsaken by God.'⁵⁷⁵

In Jewish liturgy, it is not surprising that Psalm 22 is used at **Purim*, given its links with Esther. Verse 4 ('In you our ancestors trusted...') is also a verse used frequently at the Sabbath evening service. In Christian liturgy the whole of Psalm 22 was used in catechisms, with verses 1–2 expressing the sufferings of Christ and verses 22–31, his victory over death. As early as the time of *Hippolytus, the psalm was used on Good Friday. In western liturgy verse 19 ('But you, O Lord, do not be far away!') has often used with Psalm 51 on Maundy Thursday, and in the Orthodox church it is used as the **prokimeinon* verse on Holy Friday; verse 19 is also cited in several Byzantine manuscripts of Psalm 22 (including *Theodore, as will be seen below).⁵⁷⁶

From the ninth century onwards, the imagery of the crucifixion became increasingly used in western art.⁵⁷⁷ Psalm 22 actually makes an early appearance in art in the Window of Redemption at Chartres Cathedral, which has a medallion of Jesus being taken down from the cross, and underneath is David holding a scroll, alongside a pelican with its young (a Medieval symbol of Christ in that the mother feeds her young with her blood). Part of Psalm 22:1 is written on the scroll in Latin and this links these two images: the psalm is ascribed to David, but it prophesies the sufferings of Christ.⁵⁷⁸

A most unusual ninth century illustration of this psalm is in the **Corbie Psalter* (fol. 18v) where the illustrated initial letter 'D' (*Deus, deus meus...*) encloses Christ, with both hands upwards, beseeching God the Father (not as a hand from heaven, but in embodied form) who looks down from above in a

⁵⁷³ See Waltke and Houston 2010: 388.

⁵⁷⁴ Gillingham 2008b:115; also Kuczynski 1995: 151–88.

⁵⁷⁵ Taken from *Psalms* 1.356–7 22:20. See also Holladay 1993: 333; Pak 2010: 87–8.

⁵⁷⁶ Holladay 1993: 172 and 221.

⁵⁷⁷ See C. Chazelle 2001.

⁵⁷⁸ See <http://www.therosewindow.com/pilot/Chartres/w37-59-20.htm> and <http://www.therosewindow.com/pilot/Chartres/w37-59-22.htm>. For the image of this psalm linked with Jesus being taken from the cross see Plate 6.

gesture of love and blessing. The sense of unity of purpose between Father and Son, despite the expression of abandonment in this first verse, is most striking.⁵⁷⁹ It could not be more different from its contemporary **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 12v) which is a typical narrative of the entire psalm, albeit in two settings: in the bottom half is the crucifixion with all the motifs of the passion as told in the psalm, and in the top half and down the left side is the *Christ-Logos with six angels blessing the ‘congregation’ before a tabernacle. Below is a table from which the poor (seven women with babies on their laps) are to eat and be satisfied (verse 26).⁵⁸⁰ In the **Stuttgart Psalter*, two of the five images are of the crucifixion: the first (fol. 25v) is of Christ on the cross being laughed to scorn by a Jew and a Roman (verses 7–8);⁵⁸¹ this is followed by two scenes of a figure being attacked by bulls (fol. 26r—verses 12–13) and by dogs (fol. 26v—verse 16); the final crucifixion scene (fol. 27r) is of the dividing of the garments (verse 18) and the attack by a lion and unicorn (verse 21). Behind this is a floating chalice, not in the psalm, but showing the relationship between this scene and the Eucharist.⁵⁸² The final image (fol. 28r) is of all nations giving homage to God (verses 24–30).

We noted earlier how Justin Marytr in his *Dialogue with Trypho* writes (in ten chapters) on the way this psalm refers to Christ’s crucifixion and subsequent rejection by the Jews. The **Khudov Psalter* (fol. 19r) and **Pantokrator Psalter* (fol. 10r) represent this visually, where the marginal images against verses 1 and 7 are clearly Jews (see Matt. 27:39–43). In the **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 22v) and the **Barberini Psalter* (fol. 37r) the images against verses 12 and 16 actually represent the Jews as bulls and dogs, as seen *Theodore’s citation: ‘The bulls are the Hebrews.’⁵⁸³

Two more recent Jewish images are completely different. *Chagall’s pen and ink sketch (1980) represents King David, crowned, on the left, with the angel of God’s presence above him; right of the centre is a woman, nursing a child, surrounded by people giving praise. This is of the end, not the beginning of the psalm, and in some ways typifies a motif we noted in the *Utrecht Psalter*: these are the ones—some of them the poor (verse 26) who are telling ‘a people yet unborn’ about the deliverance of God (verse 31).⁵⁸⁴ A different representation is the image by Moshe *Berger. This is of the ‘morning star’ (taken from the link with Esther in the title, ‘The Offering at Dawn’). It is made up of red, flaming

⁵⁷⁹ Besette 2005: 178–9.

⁵⁸⁰ <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=30&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

⁵⁸¹ See <https://goo.gl/2S2aPV>.

⁵⁸² <https://goo.gl/2TEyrr>.

⁵⁸³ For the *Theodore Psalter*, see <https://goo.gl/9Ji1J7>. See also Corrigan 1992: 48–49. Corrigan (1992: 81–82) makes the additional point that this was important in the debate with Muslims, who did not believe the Jews killed him, but only his likeness (*Surah* 4:157–158); this image shows that Jesus actually died, at the hands of the Jews.

⁵⁸⁴ See <https://goo.gl/uHojC5>.

Hebrew letters (which *Berger notes is a metaphor for the Almighty) which split the deep blue behind it—apparently like the splitting of the Red Sea. The motif of the dispelling of darkness fits the theme of the psalm.⁵⁸⁵

As for musical compositions, there are numerous motets and anthems, many of these arrangements for Holy Week. Some focus on the suffering figure (in Christian tradition assumed to be Christ) in the first part, whilst others focus on the restoration and rejoicing in the second part. Philippe de *Monte's 'Deus meus' (1583) is a typical example of an **a capella* composition from his time in the Habsburg court; whereas *Andrea Gabrieli, tutor to *Giovanni Gabrieli's, composed a version of the first part of this psalm, to be performed at St Mark's, Venice, using a mixed ensemble and larger choir. Several eighteenth century composers were also interested in this psalm. *Handel's use of verses 7–8 in his *Messiah* (1741), uses a recitative and tenor for verse 7 ('All that see him laugh him to scorn') alongside the choral outburst ('He trusted in God!') for verse 8; both settings, near the beginning of Part II, capture the mockery of those standing by the cross. The staccato rhythm (especially used by plucked strings and the dotted crotchets in the choir's response) evokes the taunting humiliation of the scene. *Brahms' 'Unsere Väter hofften auf Dich', takes up verses 4–5, two of the most positive verses in Ps. 22:1–21. *Mozart's use of the same verses after his 'Sanctus' in his *Requiem Mass* (K626; Vienna, 1791), shows they are to be sung for a royal (but heavenly) coronation.⁵⁸⁶

More unusual modern versions include a chorale for the organ by the French composer and organist Charles Tournemire (op 67, 1935) which was based on Jesus' Seven Last Words on the Cross. Psalm 22:1 is part of the fourth Movement, set as a *passacaglia*, in slow triple time with variations dominated by the bass keys; the opening is only in pedals, and intensifies throughout, demonstrating by ear the experience of abandonment by God at the beginning of this psalm.⁵⁸⁷ A version by *Vaughan Williams, *A Choral Finish* (1956), uses the latter part of this psalm along with Psalm 23; the mixed chorus, organ and trumpets depict the mood of restoration at the end of the psalm. A more contemporary version is by the American folk-singer Ralph McTell, whose 'Travelling Man' (1999) has a piece on why Jesus wept: so the Crusades, the Inquisition, Hiroshima are all invoked, but also Peter's denial, Judas's kiss, the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Crucifixion. For the latter, Psalm 22 (as well as Isaiah 53) plays an important part.⁵⁸⁸ Finally, Schulamit Ran's *Supplications* (2002), which is about the 'quest for faith', starts with the **Shema*, and then, partly in English and partly in Hebrew, the piece takes in lingering harmonies, crashing cymbals

⁵⁸⁵ <http://themuseumofpsalms.com/the-museum/>; <https://goo.gl/UeVwaj>.

⁵⁸⁶ See Stern 2011: 305–6.

⁵⁸⁷ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 16.

⁵⁸⁸ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 121.

and choral eruptions, comparing the affirmation of faith in Psalm 23 with the protest of faith in Psalm 22.⁵⁸⁹

Given the jarring anti-Jewish exegesis of this psalm, both literal and visual, in earlier centuries, it is interesting to see how, since the Second World War, this is now a formative prayer in the Jewish experience of persecution. Psalm 22 is a rough-edged and turbulent psalm: its personal application by the Nicaraguan poet Ernesto Cardinal testifies to that.⁵⁹⁰ So perhaps a final testimony to its reception history is to combine René *Girard's use of the psalm as 'scapegoating violence' (not least verses 12–18), where it is possible that violence can be overturned by peaceful but supported resistance) with the use of the psalm in feminist writings. At the heart of Psalm 22 is an extraordinary image of birth and breast-feeding (verses 9–10): in Jewish tradition the feminine imagery has recalled Esther as the heroine (surrounded by metaphorical lions, like Daniel). The imagery of women giving life to a 'generation yet unborn' at the end of the psalm (verse 31), depicted in the **Utrecht Psalter* and by Marc *Chagall, allows for the identification of women with the history of the Jewish people, but also with the story of Jesus from his birth to crucifixion and resurrection. Rosemary Radford Reuther used this psalm as a dramatic performance. The psalm is the voice of a woman with children, who tells of her suffering and beatings, citing verse by verse Psalm 22. First she speaks of herself ('I am a worm, and not human; scorned by others, and despised...'); this is interspersed with a corporate voice repeating her testimony from the psalm. So she seeks help from the clergy, from her doctor, from the police (here verse 1 is cited: 'Trouble is near, and there in none to help...'). Again this is recited back to her by her 'community of friends'. The drama ends with verse 19 ('come quickly to my rescue!').⁵⁹¹ This is in no way to diminish the sufferings of the whole Jewish people, or of the readings that this is the individual suffering of Christ on the cross in the psalm: indeed, by highlighting these two very different trajectories, it gives those who are also oppressed, such as forgotten and abused women, a more poignant and universal voice within the context of a particular focus.

Psalm 23: Confident Trust in God

Psalm 23 is a much loved and well-crafted psalm. It has been variously read as dating from the time of David (against the background of 2 Samuel 15–19), or of a later Davidic king, or about the community in exile, or from an individual

⁵⁸⁹ See www.americancomposers.org/rel20021103.htm.

⁵⁹⁰ Holladay 1993: 298.

⁵⁹¹ Holladay 1993: 297–9.

making pilgrimage to the Temple after the exile, or by a ‘priest-king’ of the *Maccabean period.⁵⁹² It is impossible to know. Its focus is on God as Shepherd (verses 1–4) and as Host (verses 5–6). Its three sections centre on three statements of confidence: ‘I shall not want’ (verse 1–2); ‘I fear no evil’ (verse 3–4); ‘I shall dwell’ (verses 5–6).

The compilers again placed this psalm within the collection with some care. We noted earlier the links with Psalm 16, the other psalm of confidence within Psalms 15–24.⁵⁹³ The imagery of thirst in Psalm 22 (verse 14–15) is complemented by the imagery of refreshing water in Psalm 23 (verse 2). The movement of each psalm, from suffering, a ‘near-death experience’, and back to life and restoration to the sanctuary, is the same; 22:31 (Heb. 22:32) promises to speak of God’s righteousness (*ṣedaqah*) and 23:3 speaks of being led in the paths of righteousness (again using *ṣedeq*); God’s presence in the great congregation in 22:25 is developed further in 23:6, which speaks of living in God’s house for ever.

Two particularly important changes in the Greek translation are in verses 4 and 6. The Hebrew *šalmawet* really means ‘a death-like shadow’, or ‘a deep shadow’ and also occurs in Pss.44:19 and 107:10,14, where the context shows it is not about death at all, but about a state of deep darkness. The Greek however uses *skias thanatou: shadow of death*. Similarly the Latin is *umbrae mortis*: this is about facing death, not just darkness. The same interest in death might be seen in the translation of verse 6; in Hebrew this reads, literally, ‘and I shall return to the house of the Lord for my length of days.’ The Greek connects more closely verses 5 and 6, and reads the verb not as ‘return’ but as ‘dwell’ (*chatoicheō*) adding *eis makrotēta hēmerōn*—i.e. ‘for the length of days’. The Latin follows the Greek; so the inference in both translations is that the suppliant has had a close encounter with death, but for the rest of his life will seek security in God by remaining in the sanctuary. Nevertheless this psalm has been closely associated with funerals, when the metaphors are read not as about ‘death in the midst of life’ but about life beyond; so it is interesting that neither the Hebrew nor the Greek nor the Latin has this explicit connotation.

**Targum* reads this psalm as about the experience of exile. So the imagery of God as Shepherd encourages a hopeful interpretation about being rescued from Egypt: ‘It is the Lord who fed his people in the desert; they lacked nothing’ (verse 1). In verse 3 the soul is restored ‘with manna’. Verse 4 starts: ‘Even when I go into exile in the valley of the shadow of death... your straight staff and your

⁵⁹² Gillingham 2002: 46–62, which also develops the borrowing of the metaphors of shepherding from the ancient Near East (pp. 47–8).

⁵⁹³ See p. 101.

Law—they comfort me.⁵⁹⁴ The end of the psalm is seen as about ‘dwelling’ in the house of the Lord ‘for length of days.’ So here is a this-worldly reception of the psalm, and ‘death’ is read as a metaphor for the dark exile.

Other Jewish interpreters read the hope in restoration at the end of the psalm alongside Psalm 22, where the means of restoration for some Jewish commentators was focussed on Esther.⁵⁹⁵ So this is again about exile. **Midrash Tehillim* argues throughout that the entire Psalm applies, through Esther, to the children of Israel.⁵⁹⁶ But this then entails a messianic reading, whereby David is the first anointed one and the Shepherd figure is the second Messiah (thus reading the psalm alongside Ezek. 34 and Zech. 10) leading his people to their messianic banquet (verse 5) of manna and quails.⁵⁹⁷ Verse 6 is thus a plea for the Shepherd-King to restore of the Temple.⁵⁹⁸ So whereas Psalm 22 looked back to Esther, Psalm 23 looks ahead to a messianic deliverer.

The ‘Shepherd’ figure is clearly applied to Jesus, the messianic deliverer, in early Christian tradition; one example is Jn. 10:11.⁵⁹⁹ Although Psalm 23 is not referred to here, nor in 1 Pet. 2:25 and 5:4, where Christ as Shepherd appears again, 23:1–2 is alluded to in Rev. 7:17, where the Lamb becomes the Shepherd, guiding the martyrs of the church to springs of waters and life. Images of Christ as Shepherd have been found in the catacombs from the second century onwards, and early Roman Christians had statues of Christ as the Good Shepherd;⁶⁰⁰ a similar depiction is found beside a third century Syrian house-church at Dura Europos.⁶⁰¹ So it is surprising that so few early Christian writers use this psalm in this way: *Tertullian does, but he is exceptional.⁶⁰² What interests the fathers more is the *sacramental* quality of the psalm, with its images of water (verse 2: for Baptism) and feasting (verse 5: for the Eucharist) and being anointed with oil (verse 5: for *Christm).

*Ambrose is amongst the first to develop the idea that these three sacraments are found in the psalm.⁶⁰³ *Gregory of Nyssa also reads the psalm as a type of journey through the sacraments: so verse 2 is about being buried with Christ at baptism, going through the valley of death (verse 4) to rise again with Christ. Verse 5 speaks of arriving at the sacramental table, and being anointed

⁵⁹⁴ Stec 2004: 61.

⁵⁹⁵ Feuer 2004: 291.

⁵⁹⁶ Braude 1959 I: 297–326.

⁵⁹⁷ Cohen 1992: 67; Braude 1959 I: 334.

⁵⁹⁸ Feuer 2004: 292.

⁵⁹⁹ See also Mark 6:34; Matt. 15:24; Luke 15:3–6.

⁶⁰⁰ Holladay 1993: 12.

⁶⁰¹ Pickett 2002: 23.

⁶⁰² Gillingham 2008b:26.

⁶⁰³ *On the Sacraments* 5.3.13 in FC 44:312, in ACCS VII:178.

with the oil of the Holy Spirit; there we are brought wine which gladdens our hearts with sober intoxication. *Ambrose, *Augustine and *Cassiodorus each use the psalm in this ‘sacramental’ way.⁶⁰⁴ *Bede sees the sacrament of baptism as paramount in the psalm, and finds ten blessings within the psalm which are linked to it.⁶⁰⁵

*Nicholas of Lyra’s commentary has a very different slant. In the Hebrew, Greek and Latin, the phrase translated as ‘The Lord is my shepherd’ uses a verb, so it should read literally ‘The Lord shepherds/tends me.’ In the Latin ‘*Dominus reget me*’ suggests the reading is ‘The Lord directs/rules me.’ So *Nicholas, using Jewish commentators, sees this as a promise for Israel to be returned to God’s ‘rule’ and to ‘pasture’ once again in her land. Nothing here is made of the earlier sacramental readings.⁶⁰⁶

Christian commentators—from *Origen onwards—have also used the psalm for practical and pastoral purposes, applying the image of sheep which have to be fed on grass and water, to humans who have to be fed on action and knowledge.⁶⁰⁷ This is developed later by *Erasmus, who also builds upon the sheep/church and Shepherd/Christ typology. Erasmus even places a paraphrase of part of the psalm onto the lips of Christ: ‘When I hungered and thirsted after men’s salvation... he... refreshed my soul... I lived among the dead... yet by my death I conquered death.’⁶⁰⁸

This more practical use of the psalm is developed by other Reformation writers. Here there is little talk of the three sacraments. Rather, the renewed interest is in **sola scriptura*, the Word of God in this psalm: so this is Scripture as grass, water, path, rod, staff, table, and oil. *Luther’s sermon on this psalm (thirty pages in his *Selected Psalms*) was given in about 1536, apparently after grace at a dinner table. Luther shows how this psalm reveals all the different aspects of the Word of God (although the ‘table’ is in fact seen as a reference to the Eucharist).⁶⁰⁹ He then applies the last verse of the psalm to his own condition: ‘In this way I also have been preserved by the grace of God the past eighteen years. I have let my enemies rage, threaten, slander, and damn me... I... have not worried greatly about their raving and raging, but have clung to the staff of comfort and found my way to the Lord’s table.’⁶¹⁰

It is interesting to compare Luther’s use of Psalm 23 with *Calvin’s response to it. The motif of God as Shepherd was clearly significant for Calvin during his

⁶⁰⁴ RSR: 369–377; 378–81; 386–87.

⁶⁰⁵ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 315. This idea of the ‘benefits’ in the psalm is taken up by Calvin.

⁶⁰⁶ Waltke and Houston 2010: 420.

⁶⁰⁷ See Holladay 1993: 170–2.

⁶⁰⁸ See C. White 2011: 269–70.

⁶⁰⁹ See Goldingay 2006: 254; Waltke and Houston 2010: 426–7. Also *Luther’s *Works* 12:148.

⁶¹⁰ See Luther’s *Works* 12:175.

experience of persecution, and given his consistent identification with David in the psalms, Calvin found much consolation in this psalm. In David, elevated from being a humble Shepherd to a great king, Calvin could identify with his own life of being taken from (what he saw as) a humble condition to now being invested with higher office. So for Calvin, God was not his Ruler, but his Shepherd; and this ‘shepherding’ was passed from God to David, from David to Calvin, and from Calvin to the flock of Christ.⁶¹¹ Nothing is said here of symbolism of the sacraments within the psalm, not even about its allusions to the Word of God: everything is about the pastoral care of the church.

The two main uses of Psalm 23 in Jewish liturgy are at meals and funerals. **Mishnah Berurah* cites the custom of reciting this psalm before washing hands before a meal and before the reciting of the blessing of bread; the tradition is that its 57 words correspond with the word ‘zan’ (‘nourish’) whose numerical equivalent in Hebrew letters is 57, and its 227 letters correspond with the word ‘berukah’ (‘blessing’).⁶¹² It is also often cited in the afternoon Sabbath service. As for funerals, it is not as prominent as Psalm 91; but the psalm has clearly been used since the end of the nineteenth century as part of the ‘homily’ in the funeral service, and it is also a psalm to be read at civil funerals at a cemetery.

In Christian liturgy, this psalm is often used in prayers before the Eucharist, especially in the Orthodox Church. Similarly in this tradition verses 1 and 4 are used as **antiphons* during Lent. ‘The table of the Lord is prepared for us against all them that trouble us’ is another antiphon taken from verse 5, for the Feast of Corpus Christi. But—as we saw for Psalm 16, a similar psalm which later was seen to refer to hope beyond death—there is little evidence of its early use in burial liturgies, although it does seem to have been part of the Office of the Dead; its popular adaptation as a metrical psalm about the life beyond resulted in its being frequently sung at a death bed. Nevertheless, it was not used for the Burial Liturgy in the **BCP*; Psalms 39 and 90 were preferred up till the twentieth century. It was, however, included in the 1928 Prayer Book Burial Liturgy, indicating the more prominent use of the psalm in this respect, perhaps after the experience of the First World War.

The psalm’s representation in art also does not often focus on life beyond death. The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 13r) depicts the usual narrative of the psalm, but the essence is about being preserved from dangers in this life.⁶¹³ The one image in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 28v) shows Christ in the valley of the shadow of death, with a serpent.⁶¹⁴ The Byzantine **Vaticanus Graecus 752* (fol. 72v)

⁶¹¹ Waltke and Houston: 429–31.

⁶¹² Feuer 2004: 287.

⁶¹³ <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=32&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

⁶¹⁴ See <https://goo.gl/Q69O8c>.

depicts David the shepherd of flocks and men, implying through the citation of Gregory of Nazianus that this is to be the model for pastoring the flock of Christ.⁶¹⁵ And the Jewish **Parma Psalter* almost jollifies the psalm, with its illustration of a human figure with an animal head, wearing a large brimmed hat, standing on a grassy bank with flowing water below.⁶¹⁶

It was probably the experience of war, as early as the nineteenth century, which influenced the artistic representations of the psalm with death. Roger Fenton's 1855 photograph from the Crimean War of a narrow ravine which ran between the British camps and the Russian fortifications ('a place rough with shot, and bare, stony and blasted as an accursed and unholy place') became an iconic image of the futility of war: it was called 'The Valley of the Shadow of Death.'⁶¹⁷ Yet this was still about life in the midst of death. Arthur **Wragg's* image, coming from the inter-war years, offers a glimmer of hope, but yet again is about our rescue in this life: the caption is 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil', and the black and white image is of an operating table, a patient undergoing surgery, and six doctors and nurses, all masked, with the light from above falling on each one of them. The mood is stark; but hope is there.

Depictions of this psalm in literature follow a similar trajectory: clearly it was well-known in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, for many poets sought to capture the bucolic imagery in terms of the conventions of classical pastoral scenes. So we read of 'pastor's fayre' and 'waters calme' (**Sternhold*); of 'pastures green' and 'streams which run pleasantly' (**Whittingham*); 'fragrant meads' and 'softly sliding waters' (**Sandys*); 'tender grass' and 'streams that gently pass' (**Herbert*).⁶¹⁸ The first of four stanzas of Philip **Sidney's* version, with 8-6-4-8-6-8 syllables, in ABBACC rhyme, captures this as efficiently as any:

The Lord, the Lord my shepherd is,
 And so can never I
 Taste misery.
 He rests me in green pasture his;
 By waters still and sweet
 He guides my feet.

However, only the first three verses of this psalm are pastoral; in verse 4 the imagery changes to one of journeying. The popularisation that this was a journey to a life beyond death was undoubtedly helped by **Bunyan's Pilgrim's*

⁶¹⁵ See Crostini and Peers 2016:449, Fig. 11.

⁶¹⁶ See Beit-Arie, Silver and Metzger 1996: 68–9.

⁶¹⁷ The photo and commentary are from the exhibition of Roger Fenton's work at Tate Britain in 2005.

⁶¹⁸ See Hamlin 2004: 147–8.

Progress (1678), where Christian, wife and children, in order to reach the Celestial City, have to pass through the Valley of the Shadow of Death ('as dark as pitch; ...we also saw there Hobgoblins, Satyrs and Dragons of the pit... a continual howling and yelling, as of people under unutterable misery...'). Psalm 23 is vital in the pilgrimage: so Bunyan's imagery of the River of God which also had to be crossed resulted in his reversing the psalm, so that the 'still waters' (verse 2) came after the valley of death: the pilgrims then travelled to a heavenly banquet (verse 5: but the Lamb of God is Host), following the imagery in Revelation.⁶¹⁹

Psalm 23 has also morphed into many modern idioms. Examples include 'The Lord is my Pacesetter/ I shall not rush...';⁶²⁰ and 'The Lord is my Banker, my credit is good... And I shall do business in the name of the Lord for ever'.⁶²¹

We noted earlier that metrical psalmody may also have played its part in the reception of this psalm's associations with death as well as with life. It was the matching of Francis Rowe's version (1650) in *The Scottish Psalter* ('The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want/ He makes me down to lie...') with the hymn tune Crimond (1872) which gradually influenced its popularity at weddings and funerals, both private and public: it was used both at the wedding of the then Princess Elizabeth and Philip (1947) and at the tenth anniversary memorial service for Diana Princess of Wales (2007).⁶²²

Just as there has been a prolific amount of more private poetic experimentation in the psalm, this has been matched by a similar profusion of copies of metrical psalms (and in some cases there has been an overlap between the two). For example, *Sternhold and Hopkins, *Whittingham, John *Cotton's **Bay Psalm Book*, *Tate and Brady, Isaac *Watts, Charles *Wesley, Henry *Baker, and John *Keble typify metrical imitations of Psalm 23 which span over four hundred years; indeed, there are more versions of Psalm 23 (often in the same hymnal) than of any other psalm. Sung to popular melodies, many of these became the versions people chose for their own weddings and funerals. Sometimes this was helped by their Christianisation: Henry Williams *Baker's version (1868), sung to a well-known melody attributed to Dykes, has a subtle example of this in verses four and five:⁶²³

⁶¹⁹ See Hamlin 2004: 165–72.

⁶²⁰ http://www.appleseeds.org/23rd-Psalm_Busy-People.htm.

⁶²¹ See <https://www.facebook.com/bibletalkchristians/posts/534461263292311>; also Magonet, 1994: 54–55, citing 'The Lord and I are in a Shepherd/Sheep situation, and I am in a position of negative need...'

⁶²² See <http://www.oremus.org/hymnal/t/t267.html>.

⁶²³ http://www.hymnary.org/text/the_king_of_love_my_shepherd_is.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and oh, what transport of delight
from *thy pure chalice* floweth...

Almost every composer interested in sacred music has had a hand in arranging this psalm as a motet or anthem. *Schütz's German version represents the Venetian polychoral style of *Giovanni Gabrieli; and *Bach composed three versions, using different German translations, setting them for the second Sunday after Easter.⁶²⁴ Franz Schubert's version (1820) used *Mendelssohn's translation of the Hebrew. Actual Hebrew versions include Boscovich's 'Adonay Roi' and Joffé's 'Mizmor Le David'.⁶²⁵ Antonin *Dvorak's version is written as a Czech folk song: it is one of his ten biblical songs written in the late nineteenth century, and its simple triadic harmonies and supportive choral texture on the piano evoke much of the psalm's pastoral imagery (in this case, of Dvorak's native Bohemia).⁶²⁶ And Ralph *Vaughan Williams used Psalm 23 alongside Psalm 22 in his 'Choral Flourish.'

This psalm has also been used in oratorios and other public works. It is used near the beginning of *Honegger's *Le Roi David* (1921), to show David's transformation from shepherd boy to king; sung as a folksong, using a child's voice, accompanied by wind instruments to suggest the shepherd's pipes, its polytonal style also indicates David is no ordinary shepherd boy.⁶²⁷ A similar reading in a very different style is the use of Psalm 23 by Tim Rice and Alan Menken in *King David, The Musical* (1970) which also develops episodes in the life of David, again starting with his youth as a shepherd boy. More liturgically, *Howells used Psalm 23, *a capella* style, in his *Requiem* (1936); he had used the psalm earlier in his 'Three Psalms Preludes' published in 1921: in each case the psalm is used to speak of transience and loss, and to offer hope in everlasting life for the departed.⁶²⁸ *Bernstein used the psalm, in Hebrew, in his *Chichester Psalms*. Verses 1–4 occur in Movement 2, sung by a male counter tenor to harp accompaniment, merging into a choir of upper voices. Verses 5–6 follow, set between Psalm 100 and 2:1–4, here with a mixed chorus and soloist: the melody fights with the aggressive rhythm of male voices, to return to a peaceful resolution by

⁶²⁴ These were in 1724:BWV 104; 1725:BWV 85; and 1731:BWV 112.

⁶²⁵ See Goralí 1993: 273.

⁶²⁶ Stern 2013:126–34.

⁶²⁷ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 142–143.

⁶²⁸ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 242.

a soloist, upper voices and the organ. This has been described as Psalm 23 for the musical theatre.⁶²⁹

Another imaginative representation on the organ is by *Zorada Temmingh: adapting the melody of a metrical psalm by Jannasch (1919) a tranquil melody with flowing arpeggios suggests the pastoral scene of the first verse. The valley of the shadow of death is depicted through muted, dark chords that haltingly accompany the melody in a minor key, whilst dissonant descending chords indicate loneliness at the fear of death. As a sense of God's presence emerges, the calm accompaniment in the major key as in the first verse is used: the last verse grows in strength to create a festive sense of homecoming.⁶³⁰

In more radical contemporary terms, once a psalm is well-known it can be used in parody. Pink Floyd's rock song 'Sheep', on the album *Animals*, denounces the greed and violence of capitalism. Here Psalm 23 is used with a vocoder to the accompaniment of bleating sheep.⁶³¹ A total contrast is Howard *Goodall's arrangement of Psalm 23 as the theme tune for the British sitcom *The Vicar of Dibley*: the melody, and the accompanying film of rural England, evoke traditional memories of Anglican rural parish ministry, at its best and its worst.⁶³²

It is extraordinary to see how this psalm came to be embedded in national consciousness. Its brevity, its personal metaphors about life and death and its simple expression of faith have probably all contributed to it. It has even inspired recent films: for example, the sound track of the film *Dangerous Minds* (1995) uses verse 4 of this psalm, arranged by the rap artist, Coolio: the music accompanying 'valley of death' anticipates the hero of the film, reflecting on his emptiness after a life of violent crime.⁶³³ This psalm has arguably been used more in film than any other: in John Wayne's *Rooster Cogburn* (1975) the female protagonist cites this psalm in the face of her attacker. Clint Eastwood's *Pale Rider* (1985) includes a scene of a woman, dispossessed of her land, sitting at the grave of her dog and reciting verses of the psalm only to protest against them: 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want: but I do want! They killed my dog!...' 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I shall fear no evil... but I am afraid! We need a miracle...' 'I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever... But I'd like to get more of this life first...'⁶³⁴ And in the film *Titanic* (1997) a priest reads this psalm as the ship is about to sink. In the words of Mark Roncace, Psalm 23 is still a 'cultural icon'.⁶³⁵

⁶²⁹ Stern 2013:169–76; also Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 45.

⁶³⁰ This is part of an email correspondence (October 2016). See <http://www.zorada.co.za/albums.htm>.

⁶³¹ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 220.

⁶³² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAZN1oVir5A>.

⁶³³ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 88.

⁶³⁴ See K. Jacobson 2009: n.p.

⁶³⁵ See <http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/passages/related-articles/psalm-23-as-cultural-icon.aspx>.

It was verse 4 of the psalm which George W. Bush cited to the American people after 9:11. For some it is an attempt to rekindle faith in the valley of deep darkness; for others it is a song rejoicing in the security of faith in God. For most it is somewhere in between.⁶³⁶ But as a universal prayer for those of any faith, Psalm 23 is perhaps the best known psalm in the entire Psalter.

Psalm 24: An Entrance Liturgy

Psalm 24 seems to comprise two liturgies. (The corresponding psalm, 15, has only one.) The theme of the first is God as Creator, evidenced in verses 1–2: God has made the world and so has the power to order it. Verses 3–6, like Psalm 15, respond to this by way of a question and answer liturgy as to who qualifies to enter the presence of God. Verses 7–10 present a second liturgy, on the theme of God as Warrior, suggesting a procession with the Ark through the ancient Temple gates. As with Psalm 19, this is a composite psalm; the different liturgical associations have actually brought the two parts together, so the theme moves from the God of the Cosmos to the God of the Temple.

If the first stage of reception concerns the connecting together of two separate psalms, the second is the placing of the whole unit within Psalms 15–24. We have already noted how this psalm forms a fitting conclusion, given that the subject matter of the first half is like Psalm 15.⁶³⁷ But it has also been judiciously placed next to Psalm 23: indeed, ‘the house of the Lord’ in 23:6 is where the liturgy in Psalm 24 begins. The waters of nourishment in 23:2 are the subdued waters of chaos in 24:2. So in terms of the psalm’s reception, it was intended to be read in the context of its neighbours.

Another early stage of reception is translation. The Greek adds a liturgical title fitting for this liturgical psalm: this is for ‘the first day of the week’ (*tēs mias sabbatōn*), probably because 24:1 seemed to refer to the first day of creation. So this is also the Christian Sunday, the day *after* the Sabbath: in Christian reception this is the day of resurrection, and much was made of this, as will be seen. Another significant change is in verse 7. The Hebrew reads ‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors!’—as if addressing directly the ‘gates’ and ‘doors’ at the Temple entrance. The Greek reverses the subject and object so this now reads, more literally: ‘Raise up the gates, O heads; be lifted up, O gates!...’ thus addressing this to the ‘heads’—i.e. the liturgical leaders—and using the word ‘gates’ on each occasion (*arate pulas hoi archontes hymōn kai eparthēte pulai aiōnioi*). This affected the Christian reception of

⁶³⁶ See Magonet 1994: 64–5; 65–6.

⁶³⁷ See pp. 101–02 earlier.

the psalm, through the Latin version, which adapted the Greek title and also followed the Greek reading of verse 7; in the Latin the two verbs for 'lift up' (*ad tollite* and *elevamini*) were read allegorically to depict the 'leader' as Christ the King, lifting up the gates of death or heaven, or the believer, lifting up the 'gates of the soul' for the 'King of glory' to come in.⁶³⁸

Not many psalms have been re-used at *Qumran, but the two distinctive phrases 'King of Glory' and 'The One Mighty in Battle' are found at the beginning of a hymn in the *War Rule* (1QM XII 7–10) in the eschatological battle between the sons of light and of darkness. The *Qumran community could no longer use the psalm literally, to refer to the Temple, so this is an early instance of its eschatological use.⁶³⁹

A psalm so closely connected with the physical Temple is bound to undergo a good deal of reinterpretation after the Temple's destruction by Titus in 70 CE. So in **Targum Psalms* we read for verse 3: 'Who shall ascend the mountain of *the house of the sanctuary* of the Lord?' which here suggests the synagogue. This is evident again in verse 7: 'Lift up your heads, O gates of *the house of the sanctuary*.' Verse 9 is more unusual: 'Lift up your heads, O gates of *the garden of Eden*.'⁶⁴⁰ This refers to Jewish tradition which assumed the first half of the psalm to be about the construction of the Temple on Mount Moriah where Adam was created (and so worthy of having been written by Adam himself); this was because of the references in verses 1–2 to being 'founded on the seas' and 'established on the waters'.

Other Jewish commentators focus on 2 Sam. 24:18–25 (the purchase of the threshing floor as the site for the Temple), seeing how the psalm moves from God's presence throughout the world (verses 1–2) to a focus in the holiest place within the Ark (verses 7–10). In this reading the rivers (verse 2) are read literally: they are the four rivers in the then land of Israel, the Jordan, Yarmuk, Karmiyyon and Figa.⁶⁴¹ **Midrash Tehillim* hence makes it clear that the psalm unites the transcendence of God through Creation (verses 1–2) with his immanence through Torah (verses 3–6). *Midrash Tehillim* also asks questions about the identity of the one asked to 'ascend' the hill of the Lord: it refers to Abraham (Gen. 22:2, ascending Moriah), to Jacob (Gen. 35:1, at Bethel), and to Moses (Exod. 19:3, receiving the Law on Sinai), as well as to David and Solomon—and also to all Israel.⁶⁴²

The psalm is possibly used twice in the New Testament. The creation theme from verse 1 is alluded to in 1 Cor. 10:26, in an argument about the freedom and responsibility of Christian conscience: 'For the earth and its fullness are the

⁶³⁸ See pp. following.

⁶³⁹ See Holladay 1993: 105–6.

⁶⁴⁰ Stec 2004: 62.

⁶⁴¹ This is from the *Talmud* (*b.Bat.* 74b), cited in Feuer 2004: 297, also by Rashi and in Braude 1959 I: 341.

⁶⁴² Braude 1959 I: 341–3.

Lord's'. And in Matt. 5:8 the Beatitude 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' may be an allusion to 24:4, not least given the use of other psalms in this part of the Sermon on the Mount.⁶⁴³

There is no 'Christianisation' of this psalm in the New Testament. But by the time of *Augustine many commentators used this psalm in connection with the Ascension of Christ into the gates of heaven.⁶⁴⁴ Certainly as early as in *Justin's *Dialogue* (36:3) the question in Ps. 24:8 and 10 ('Who is the King of Glory?') is answered in relation to Christ's Ascension: the reason given is that it could not be Solomon, as everyone would know who he was, so it must be Christ. *Justin then read the entire psalm as about Christ's Ascent to Heaven.⁶⁴⁵ This was followed by *Irenaeus, *Tertullian and *Hippolytus, the latter who notes that the 'heads' are now the angels opening the doors of heaven.⁶⁴⁶

*Ambrose, however, read the gates (verses 7 and 9) as the gates of the human soul, yielding to Christ in his Glory.⁶⁴⁷ This is in part taken up by *Augustine, but his focus is also on the additional title in the Greek and Latin. 'The First Day' refers not to Creation, but to the Resurrection: this is about Christ's kingship over the cosmos, so the psalm should be read in the light of Christ having been raised from the dead on the first day of the week.⁶⁴⁸ The psalm speaks of Christ's descent into hell, and his ascent into heaven. Much later *Bede also sees the latter part of the psalm as referring to Christ's resurrection: this is to be seen first in the address to the human race ('The earth is the Lord's': verse 1) and then to the church ('Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?': verse 3).⁶⁴⁹

The theological differences in the Jewish and Christian readings of this psalm are echoed in their different liturgical use. It was one of the seven psalms used in the ancient **Tamid* service, sung at both the morning and evening offerings on the first day of the week.⁶⁵⁰ So traditionally this has been a liturgical psalm prescribed for daily use, and it still has a vital place in Jewish worship. Because of its apparent focus on the Ark in verses 7–10, it is frequently recited by the congregation when accompanying the Ark back to its place in the synagogue. It is also used daily with Psalms 92 and 93 at morning prayer and for blessings before a meal.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴³ See for example Psalm 37, pp. 223–24.

⁶⁴⁴ Kähler (1958: 53–5) claims that one of the earliest reference is in the Apocalypse of Peter in the early second century (Justin in *Apology* 1:9 seems to cite 24:7).

⁶⁴⁵ Justin, *Apology* 1:51; *Dialogue with Trypho* 36 and 85. See Gillingham 2008b:35.

⁶⁴⁶ Kähler 1958: 59.

⁶⁴⁷ Kähler 1958: 62.

⁶⁴⁸ Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 24.1, WSA 3 15:246, in ACCS VII:184–85.

⁶⁴⁹ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 325.

⁶⁵⁰ See Trudinger 2004: 54–75.

⁶⁵¹ Maier 1983: 380–6.

In Christian liturgy Psalm 24 is, not surprisingly, used on Ascension Day; the *BCP prescribed it, along with Psalms 8, 19, 47, 48, 72, 96, 97 and 98, here building on an early tradition. Its associations with the resurrection also meant it became a prominent psalm at Easter: in the Roman Rite it was part of the *Nocturne for Easter Eve (the *antiphon being from verse 7). In Orthodox liturgy verses 7–10 are still proclaimed as the priest knocks on the church door, symbolising the triumphal entry of Christ into heaven on the ‘day after the Sabbath’. The *antiphon is ‘The gates of death lift up their heads for the King of Glory who has defied death to come in.’ A curious English appropriation of this is the Easter Sunday Office at Barking, Essex, where the nuns and abbess shut themselves in chapel, and the priests and ministers arrive with cross and banner to pound on the doors, representing Christ breaking down the doors of Hell.⁶⁵² The psalm is also used at *Vigils on Trinity Sunday, as well as for the Feast of Guardian Angels and the Common of Many Martyrs. In the *Benedictine tradition verse 7 is often cited at a graveside, with the earth scattered in the form of a cross over the grave. And more practically, it is one of the psalms, mainly with Psalm 84, assigned when one dedicates a church.⁶⁵³

One of the most interesting artistic representations of this psalm is in the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 13v), which is dominated, on the right of the image, by a walled enclosure.⁶⁵⁴ Across the bottom is flowing water, with ships, fishes and monsters: this is the sea upon which the earth is founded (verses 1–2). In the enclosure, set on a hill, is the tabernacle (verse 3) where the obedient gather to worship (verse 6). To the left, in the heavens, the Hand of God blesses the ‘King of Glory’: this is Christ, cross-*nimbed, somewhat confusingly carrying a spear, and dressed in military apparel, and accompanied by an armed guard—ready, it seems, to do battle (verse 8). But he is about to enter the gates of the enclosure (verse 7) and ascend the hill of the Lord (verse 3) so the battle is a spiritual one as well. Its setting might be Jerusalem; but because the ‘tabernacle’ is clearly a church, with a cross on top of it, this is less likely. It is possible that this ‘holy place’ simply represents paradise, where the souls of the righteous can enter. So the image has two dimensions, one earthly (Christ as Soldier) and the other heavenly (with Gates of Paradise).⁶⁵⁵

Several Byzantine Psalters, perhaps like *Utrecht*, read the psalm in the light of the Ascension. So the **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 22r) has Christ, cross-*nimbed,

⁶⁵² See Kähler 1958: 93–113; Pickett 2002: 11–13; Prothero 1903: 109–12. The association of this psalm with the ‘Harrowing of Hell’ will be discussed on pp. 157–58.

⁶⁵³ Neale and Littledale I 1874–79: 326.

⁶⁵⁴ <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=33&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

⁶⁵⁵ See Besette 2005: 218–25. The image of this psalm in the *Utrecht Psalter* is found in Plate 7.

sitting on an arc within a *mandorla, raised by two angels, so it reaches the orb of heaven. At the entrance to the orb are two more angels: they are lifting the gates of Paradise, through which gates Christ has already entered to ascend in glory. The figure underneath, hunched in prayer, could be the psalmist.⁶⁵⁶ The second of the two images in the **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 25v) follows the same theme.⁶⁵⁷

If these psalters suggest the belief in Christ ascending into heaven through the gates of paradise, the **Stuttgart Psalter* develops another theme, also popular by the ninth century, namely the harrowing of hell. The first image (fol. 29r) is of an individual (possibly the king, emerging from his palace) ascending the 'hill of the Lord'; the second (fol. 29v) depicts the flames of hell and Christ seeking to break down its gates. This reads verse 7 ('lift up your heads O gates') in yet another and more dramatic way.⁶⁵⁸ The same theme is illustrated in several later psalters: a different, though related, image is preserved in a lesser-known Byzantine Psalter (fol. 34r).⁶⁵⁹ It shows Christ, cross-nimbed, holding a cross-staff, grasping the hand of Adam and Eve, rising out of a sarcophagus; to the right David and Solomon (both crowned) and John the Baptist are rising out a second sarcophagus. Christ's cross rests on Hades, and two angels are opening the gates of hell, whilst three others attack the demons who protect it.

The belief in the 'harrowing of hell', and the use of Psalm 24 within this tradition, possibly finds its origins in the Apocalypse of Peter, where, at the Transfiguration, Peter is given a vision of Moses and Elijah ascending to the first heavens, where angels guard the gates.⁶⁶⁰ This is developed in the Greek Appendix to the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (or *Acts of Pilate*), perhaps from the third century. Chapter 5 records Satan and Hades in dialogue fearing Christ may be about to enter hell: they hear a voice, like thunder 'Lift up your gates, you rulers'. Satan is ordered by Hades to withstand Christ outside the gates. Hades and his demons bolt and secure the gates from within. The voice sounds again 'Lift up your gates, you rulers'. The question is asked 'Who is the King of Glory?' and the answer is given: 'The Lord Strong and Mighty, the Lord strong in Battle'. Christ appears and breaks the gates and bars of bronze and releases the captive

⁶⁵⁶ <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.022r.jpg>.

⁶⁵⁷ http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f025v.

⁶⁵⁸ See <https://goo.gl/WtW0LH>.

⁶⁵⁹ This is preserved in the Staatsbibliothek in Munich Library (stav.4). See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/083854.gif>.

⁶⁶⁰ The Ethiopic text reads: '...the angels pressed one upon another that the word of the scripture might be fulfilled which saith: Open the gates, ye princes...' See <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/apocalypsepeter-mrjames.html>.

dead. 'And the King of Glory came in the form of a man, and all the dark places of Hades were lighted up.'⁶⁶¹

The association of Psalm 24 with the tradition of the Harrowing of Hell was embellished and popularised further in the thirteenth century *Golden Legend* ascribed to Jacobus de Voragine, where the miraculous lives of various saints used parts of Ps. 24:7–10 as a means of defeating evil in heaven, in hell and on earth. The psalm is alluded to in the same way, some four hundred years later, in *Milton's *Paradise Lost*. This passage describes gates of heaven opening to allow the descent of Christ onto earth, and is an intentional reversal of the imagery about the gates of hell in Book II (where Psalm 24, however, is not recalled). But in Book VII (lines 205–209) we read:

Heav'n op'nd wide
Her ever during Gates, Harmonious sound,
On golden Hinges moving, to let forth
The King of Glorie in his powerful Word
And Spirit coming to create more Worlds.⁶⁶²

Thus hymns such as 'The Golden Gates are Lifted up' (Cecil Alexander, 1858), may well also use Psalm 24 in the knowledge of its trajectory of Christian beliefs in the incarnation, resurrection, the harrowing of hell, and ascension. Charles *Wesley's hymn based on this psalm certainly captures the rich legacy of this psalm. For example, verse 6:

Our Lord is risen from the dead
Our Jesus gone up on high!
The powers of hell are captive led,
Dragged to the portals of the sky...

And in verse 9:

Who is this King of Glory? Who?
The Lord that all our foes o'ercame;
The world, sin, death, and hell o'erthrew;
And Jesus is the conqueror's name.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶¹ Satan is eventually bound by Christ's angels and kept in Hades until the second coming; and the Archangel Michael then escorts Adam and the Patriarchs and Prophets to the gates of Paradise. This is part has been influenced by 1 Pet. 3:19 and 4:6. See <http://blog.cnaughton.com/mediafiles/pdfs/nicodemus.pdf>. For a discussion of Psalm 24 and this tradition, see P. Sumpter 2015: 234–7.

⁶⁶² https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/pl/book_7/text.shtml.

⁶⁶³ http://www.cgmusic.org/workshop/misc/psalm_24.htm.

Hymnody usually adapts the whole psalm, whilst anthems and motets, not designed for congregational participation and teaching, usually focus on parts of it. Psalm 24 is no exception, mainly because it falls in two parts. So de *Monte's Latin version of verses 1–5, from the late sixteenth century, focusses on the earlier theme of creation and obedient faith, and there is no evidence of the 'Christianising' of the psalm which was seen in *Wesley's hymn; so too at the beginning of the twentieth century *Ives' chromatic experimentation 'The Earth is the Lord's' and *Stanford's version with the same title. But most arrangements of this psalm, partly because of its use in liturgy, partly because of its rich Jewish and Christian legacy, use the latter part, where a Christian overlay is more implicit. So *Byrd's Latin version is a striking setting of verses 7, 8 and 10.⁶⁶⁴ So too is *Orlando Gibbons' arrangement of verses 7 and 10, which uses *Coverdale's version in the *BCP. *Handel's version 'Lift up your heads O ye Gates', which is a resounding choral response after the more reflective 'But thou didst not leave his soul in hell' (Ps. 16:10), in his *Messiah* (Part Two, No. 32), invests in many traditional responses: the Messiah, strong in battle, has not only defeated chaos in creation by defeating death itself, but by his resurrection is now enthroned as King of all. Much more recently, William *Mathias 'Lift up your Heads O Ye Gates' (1969) offers a similarly confident hope, using more jazzy syncopations. So too the album 'Psalms for I' (1975) for Rastafarian Prince Far I: Psalm 24, chanted in spoken style for those not able to read, uses heavy root rhythms to communicate the confident hope in 'the King of Glory'.

The composer and conductor David Mitchell has arranged a very different musical version of this psalm, using Hebrew cantillation to create a piece which could well resemble its earliest musical use. The score is presented below and shows how Mitchell reads the liturgy of this psalm, using the *Massoretic *sigla* as musical annotations, as a Hebrew hymn in its ancient setting. David Mitchell's intuition is right: this is an ideal psalm for attempting to represent the roles of different singers in the Temple cult (see Ezr. 3:11 and Neh. 12:24, 40–42). Its processional nature, its associations with the ancient royal cult, its question-and-answer format, all lead to the possible division of voices, for dramatic effect—those who declare the character of God to the people, and those who stand by the Temple doors and demand they be opened to let the King of Glory in. One can imagine the additional elements of trumpets and cymbals, elicited by **selah*. Much of this is represented in Mitchell's score, presented below.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶⁴ In *Psalms Songs and Sonnets*, which is a setting in English for Psalms 24, 114, 55 and 119.

⁶⁶⁵ This is part of email correspondence with the composer, David Mitchell (September 2016).

Psalm 24

CANTOR

1. L' - da - vid miz - mor.

CHORUS

li - yho - vah ha - a-rets u-m'lo - ah; tē - vêt v - yo-sh' - bei bah.

CANTOR

2. Ki - hu 'al-yam-mim y' - sa - dah; v - 'al-n'ha - rot y' - kho - n' - ne - ha.

SEMI-CHORUS

3. Mi - ya - 'a - leh b' - har - yho - vah; u - mi - ya - qum bi - m' - qom qod - sho.

CANTOR

4. N' - qi kha - pa - yim u - bar lê - bah, a - sher lo na -

CHORUS

sa la - sha - v' - naf - shi; v - lo nish - ba' l - mir - mah.

CANTOR

5. Yis - sa b - ra - kkhah mê - 'êt y' - ho - vah; u - ts - da - qah mê - e - lo - hei yish - 'o.

CHORUS

6. Zeh dor dor - shav; m' - baq - shei fa - ne - kha ya - 'a - qob se - lah.

CANTOR

7. S' - 'u sh' - 'a - rim ro - shê - khem, v - hin - na - s' u pit -

ALL

hei 'o - lam V' - ya - ho me - lekh ha - ka - bod.

VOICE FROM THE GATES

8. Mi zeh me - lekh ha - ka - vod

CHORUS

y' - ho - vah 'iz -

The musical score consists of five staves of music with Hebrew lyrics underneath. The first staff is labeled 'ALL' and contains the lyrics: zuz v - gib - bor; y' - ho - vah gib - bor mil - ha - mah. The second staff is divided into 'CANTOR' and 'CHORUS' sections, with lyrics: 9. S' - 'u sh' - 'a - rim ro - shê - khem, u - s - 'u pit - . The third staff is labeled 'ALL' and contains the lyrics: hei 'o - lam V' - ya - bo me-lekh ha - ka - bod. The fourth staff is labeled 'VOICE FROM THE GATES' and contains the lyrics: 10. Mi hu zeh me - lekh ha - ka - - vod. The fifth staff is divided into 'CHORUS' and 'ALL' sections, with lyrics: y' - ho - vah ts' - ba' - ot; hu me-lekh ha - ka - bod se - lah.

David Mitchell: An interpretation of the singing of Psalm 24 in its earliest setting

It is interesting to see how this psalm has been arranged by Jewish composers. Lewandowski, whose arrangement of 24:7–10 was for the Jewish community in Berlin in the 1870s, intended to encourage the faith of those who needed to hear of the coming of the ‘King of Glory’, one ‘Mighty in Battle’. Similarly *Bloch’s use of the psalm in his ‘Sacred Service’ (1930–33) was another arrangement reflecting on the Sabbath service, using several psalms but including, at the end, after the meditations before the Ark, Ps. 24:9–10 (by Cantor and Choir, using traditional Renaissance polyphony): the final **selah* which closes the psalm offers the same resolution as intended by Lewandowski.⁶⁶⁶

There is always a different trajectory of a psalm as rich in liturgy and theological interpretation as Psalm 24. It was used, from the period of the Wars of Religion from 1562 onwards, both on the Continent, in Scotland and later in England, as a battle hymn about ‘Christ the Warrior’, the one ‘strong and mighty in battle’. ‘Thy kingdom come’ is not only about using this psalm to exalt in God’s victory over evil in theological terms; it also suggests more specific political and military ramifications. So verse 10, for example, (‘Go forth

⁶⁶⁶ Stern 2011: 117–21.

with our armies!') was used as the shout of victory for Cromwell's army after the Battle of Dunbar in 1651.⁶⁶⁷

Within this context of reception history, David Clines has argued that 'in subscribing to Psalm 24, we are writing a blank cheque for war.'⁶⁶⁸ Clines asks why worshippers are asked to have 'clean hands' when the deity ascends the hill with his hands dripping with blood from battle.⁶⁶⁹ This issue has already been raised with Psalm 2. It is an honest one. Some might find it more helpful to focus on the ways in which the *reception* of this psalm, like Psalms 22 and 23, finds a resolution not in terms of human justice and a this-worldly setting, but in divine justice and in a kingdom without obvious territorial borders.

⁶⁶⁷ See Reid 1971:43. It was also adapted in the D-Day message of General Bernard Montgomery: 'Let us pray that the Lord Mighty in Battle will go forth with our armies...' as in <http://www.6jun1944.com/assaut/annexe.php?id=3>.

⁶⁶⁸ Clines 1993: 81.

⁶⁶⁹ Clines 1993: 85.

Psalms 25–34: Prayers and Thanks for Deliverance

Psalms 25–34 suggest a deliberate collection of ten individual psalms, arranged with a chiasmic structure rather like Psalms 15–24, thus creating a first stage in their reception history. So Psalms 25 and 34, at the outer ends of the *chiasmus, are similar psalms, both set as acrostics; each inexplicably lacks the letter *waw* and each includes an extra letter at the end to make up the requisite 22 letters. At the heart of Psalms 25 and 34, following a wisdom style, is a rhetorical question (‘Who are they that fear the Lord?’ [25:12] and ‘Which of you desires life?’ [34:12]). Both psalms identify with the poor (called *‘anawim*) in 25:9 and 34:2; both are concerned with the ‘fear of the Lord’ (25:12,14 and 34:7,9,11); and both focus on ‘trusting’ (or ‘taking refuge’) in God (25:20 and 34:8, each using the verb *hasah*). Psalms 26–28 are all similar: they are laments, and the presence of God in his sanctuary is a shared theme (26:8; 27:4; 28:2), as in Psalms 15–24. Psalm 29 lies at the heart of this collection. It praises God as Creator of the storm and the founder of the Temple and has affinities with Psalm 8, set in the heart of Psalms 3–14, which praised God as Creator of the moon and stars and all humanity, and Psalm 19, set in the heart of Psalms 15–24, which praised God as Creator of the sun and giver of the law. Psalms 30–32 all comprise thanksgiving psalms: although the sanctuary is no longer explicitly referred to, an attendant congregation is nevertheless presumed (30:4; 31:23; 32:11); these psalms emphasise the theme of the poor which is so prominent in Psalms 35–41. Only Psalm 33 stands apart: it is the only psalm without a superscription,

and is another hymn of praise to God as Creator, albeit more general in its orientation. It may well have been added later, although it has close relations with its neighbours. So, overall, this first phase of reception history reveals another carefully arranged collection, compelling us to read the psalms not only as isolated units but also as parts of a larger whole.⁶⁷⁰

Psalm 25: An Acrostic Concerning the Poor

Psalm 25, although the start of a new collection, has nevertheless been placed here because of some links to Psalm 24 before it. The most obvious is ‘God of their/my salvation’ in 24:5 and 25:5; another is the metaphor of ‘lifting up one’s soul’ to God (24:4 and 25:1). Psalm 25 subdivides into various prayers for help (verses 1–7), a hymn (8–10), and more petitions (11–22), in which guilt and sin are the key issues (verses 11 and 18). It also has some *chiasmatic structure: ‘do not let me be put to shame’ (verses 2 and 20); ‘my soul/life’ (verses 1 and 20: each time in Hebrew *nepesh*); ‘wait for you’ (verses 3 and 21); ‘instruct in the way’ (verses 8 and 12); and ‘his covenant’ (verses 10 and 14).

An early stage of reception is seen in the Greek translation, where occasional deficiencies in the acrostic are compensated by creating different line arrangements: it is not that the Greek creates its own acrostic, but that it seeks to improve the Hebrew line forms which prevent a consistent flow. So the Greek adds to the heading ‘*Psalm of David*’; and the phrase ‘O my God’ in verse 2 is moved to the end of verse 1, thus creating two poetic lines for verse 1 and two letters, not just the alpha letter, for verses 1 and 2. Similarly, by dividing verse 5 into cola, an extra line is created to compensate for the missing letter *waw* which creates a clear 22 letter format overall.

Later Jewish tradition focusses on the references to sin in the psalm. **Midrash Tehillim* reads verse 1 in the light of the destruction of the second Temple, and because no sacrifices can atone for sin all that can be done is to ‘lift up our souls and depend on God’s mercy.’ On this account the reference to ‘who is *the man* who fears the Lord?’ in verse 12 is seen to be Abraham, who feared the Lord before the Temple was built and also had trusted solely in God for his mercy (Gen. 20:7 and 22:12).⁶⁷¹ So in this psalm David is reflecting on Abraham.

⁶⁷⁰ For a more detailed analysis of this collection, see Hossfeld and Zenger 1994:375–88; Barbiero 1999:325–41.

⁶⁷¹ Feuer 2004: xxix–xxxi and p. 305.

Midrash Tehillim reads verse 1 in the light of Ps. 31:5 ('into your hand I commit my spirit') and notes that 'David the Upright' can be our intercessor for forgiveness of sin.⁶⁷²

Early Christian commentators took a similar view, although 'Christ as example' replaces David the exemplar: hence the psalm is about a good life, guided by Christ, who says "I am the way, the truth and the life."⁶⁷³ So this is not, as in many psalms, a prayer of, or by, Christ: it is the prayer of the Church to God.⁶⁷⁴ *Cassiodorus, continually fascinated by the symbolism of numbers, and reading the psalm as 24 in the Greek enumeration, argues this is a psalm of 2×12 , revealing heavenly mysteries with the 24 elders singing praises to lift us out of our suffering.⁶⁷⁵ Noting the ruptures in the Hebrew acrostic form, which are also evident in Psalms 34, 37 and 145, Cassiodorus notes that these reveal the hardships and suffering preventing perfect devotion.⁶⁷⁶ Finally, *Calvin added this psalm (as well as 36) to the traditionally accepted seven *penitential psalms, mainly because of its concern for forgiveness.⁶⁷⁷

Verses from the psalm have had a significant place in Jewish liturgy. Verse 6 ('be mindful of your mercy, O Lord...') is used in **Pesuke de-Zimra* in the selection of verses after Psalms 145–150 and 1 Chronicles 16. Like Psalm 6, it is also part of the supplicatory prayer, **Tahanun*, in *Ashkenazi tradition because of the references to the fear of enemies and fear of sin, cited by Maimonides to this end.⁶⁷⁸ In Christian Orthodox liturgy, because it covers all aspects of the life of prayer—the lifting up of one's soul, the walking in the way, the confession of sin—the whole psalm is read at Great *Compline from Monday to Thursday during Lent as well as in prayers at the Third Hour. Rachmaninoff's 'To Thee O Lord I lift up my soul' (25:1–2) from his *Twenty Five Anthems from Russian Liturgy* is an example of this as a church anthem. In the Roman Catholic Church, until Vatican II, the psalm was prayed at Mass on the third Sunday in Lent: the *introit* used 25:15–16 ('My eyes are ever toward the Lord') with the response from 25:1–2 ('To you O Lord I lift up my soul'). di*Lasso's '*Ad te Domine levavi*' illustrates well this liturgical use in Catholic liturgy. In the Anglican tradition, Christopher *Tye's 'My trust, O Lord' is an English example of sixteenth century church music for the royal court, using the same verses. Finally, verse 16 (in Latin, *Miserere Mei*: 'Be gracious to me, for I am lonely and

⁶⁷² Braude 1 1959: 347–8.

⁶⁷³ Jn.14:6. See Ambrose *On the Christian Faith* 3.7.51 in NPNF 2 10:250, in ACCS VII:19.

⁶⁷⁴ See Neale and Littledale I (1874: 338).

⁶⁷⁵ Walsh 1990: 256.

⁶⁷⁶ Walsh 1990: 246–47.

⁶⁷⁷ Gillingham 2008b:142.

⁶⁷⁸ Maier 1983: 73.

afflicted’) has frequently been used as an act of penitence: arrangements include those by *Boyce and *Haydn, and more recently, a popular Taizé chant has been composed on the same verse.

Literal representations of David speaking to God are found in early ninth century Psalters. The **Stuttgart Psalter*, fol. 30v, for example, depicts verses 1–2 as David, in flight, addressing a hand coming out of heaven.⁶⁷⁹ Various Byzantine Psalters offer a similar image: in the **Khudov Psalter*, fol. 22r, David, crowned, is prostrate in prayer;⁶⁸⁰ in the **Theodore Psalter*, fol. 25v, David is standing at prayer, lifting draped hands;⁶⁸¹ whilst in the **Hamilton Psalter*, fol. 73r, David is crowned, standing, with his hands extended to rays issuing from an arc of heaven. In the twelfth-century **St. Albans Psalter* David is on his knees, looking upwards, with his hands outstretched: his soul is gently drawn from his mouth by Christ, who inclines his head with a gesture of blessing.⁶⁸² There are few Jewish representations of this psalm: perhaps the best known is by Marc *Chagall, who in his *Psaumes de David* depicts the sun (with the star of David set inside it) pouring down on the righteous man; a protective angel flies near him, and, somewhat unexpectedly, an embracing couple are on the ground below.⁶⁸³

As well as musical arrangements for liturgical occasions, two nineteenth-century settings in oratorios reveal this psalm’s more universal appeal. Michael Costa’s ‘Eli’, first performed in Birmingham in 1855, was based on 1 Samuel 1–4. Part I begins with Hannah’s grief at her barrenness and the librettist W. Bartholomew uses as her prayer Ps. 25:16–17: ‘Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.’⁶⁸⁴ John Knowles Paine’s ‘St Peter’ was premiered in Boston in 1872. Part II relates Peter’s Denial and Repentance, based upon Matt. 26. After his denial, an orchestral lament is followed by an aria by Peter, again using Ps. 26:16. The first words ‘O God, my God, forsake me not! Turn Thee unto me and have mercy upon me’ also have echoes of Jesus’ use of Ps.22:1 on the cross.⁶⁸⁵

The universal appeal of this psalm for Jews and Christians alike is on account of its simple personal devotion framed by the acrostic form in the Hebrew, creating a number of prayers on a similar theme of human need and divine mercy. Philip *Sidney’s version encapsulates well the combination of

⁶⁷⁹ See <https://goo.gl/ZEMg0F>.

⁶⁸⁰ <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.022r.jpg>.

⁶⁸¹ <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmlondon19352.025v.jpg>.

⁶⁸² See <https://goo.gl/qWntUQ>.

⁶⁸³ See <https://goo.gl/Iz0HYs>.

⁶⁸⁴ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 74–75.

⁶⁸⁵ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 109.

emotion and form in the English language. The excerpt below is from verses 15 and 16:

Where then should my eyes be
But still on this Lord set?
Who doth and will set free
My feet from tangling net.
Oh, look, oh, help, let mercy fall,
For I am poor and least of all.⁶⁸⁶

Psalm 26: A Protest of Integrity

Whereas Psalm 25 was concerned with sin, Psalm 26 is more about integrity and innocence. Nevertheless it has been intentionally placed next to the previous psalm. For example, 25:21 ends with a statement of integrity, and 26:1,11 begins and ends with the same (both using the Hebrew word *tom*). Each psalm begins with an affirmation of ‘trust in the Lord’ (25:2; 26:1, again using the same word *batāḥ*). Each has a plea for God to ‘be gracious to me’ (25:16; 26:11, again each using the word *ḥanan*). In each God’s steadfast love and faithfulness are paired together (25:10 and 26:3), and the suppliant’s ‘eyes’ are always towards the Lord (25:15; 26:3). Like Psalm 25, this psalm has a clear structure and also an **inclusio*: verses 1–3 are an appeal for vindication, verses 4–7 a protest of innocence, and verses 8–12 prayers for restoration, and the **inclusio* is the phrase ‘I walk in integrity’ which occurs in 26:1 and 11.

Jewish reception has some focus on verses 1–2. So the imagery of ‘walking’ in the way and not ‘sitting’ with the wicked in verses 1 and 4–5, which has correspondences with Psalm 1:1, is used in **Targum Psalms* with the same word *s-ḥ-r* in the Aramaic. In the particular verbal form here means ‘sit down to dine’—the point being that the *Targum* view of this psalm is that one should refuse ‘table fellowship’ with the Gentiles, which illustrates well the difficult Jewish and Gentile relations at the time.⁶⁸⁷ Other Jewish commentators bring Psalms 25 and 26 close together by noting again an implicit repeated reference to Abraham’s faith in each. Assuming the psalm to be by David, and recognising that the psalm again recalls the liaison between David and Bathsheba, commentators note that David ‘fails the test’ of being flawless. Abraham, however, succeeded where David did not (the test in the sacrifice of Isaac is assumed

⁶⁸⁶ The excerpt is from verse 10 of **Sidney’s* poem. See Hamlin (ed.) 2009: 48.

⁶⁸⁷ See Psalm 1, p. 13; also Stec 2004: 64–65.

here); so the psalm is about David wanting to have the same integrity and innocence as his ancestor Abraham.⁶⁸⁸

**Midrash Tehillim*, referring to verse 2 ('Prove me, O Lord, and try me!') ponders why David here asks for God's judgement when in Ps.143:2 he apparently pleaded to God not to enter into judgement with him; the conclusion is that David's prayer in Psalm 143 is that God, once having judged in this psalm, should not enter into judgement with his servant again.⁶⁸⁹ Amongst Medieval commentators, it is *Rashi who offers the most interesting comments on the liturgical setting of this psalm: noting the reference in verse 6 to 'going around your altar', Rashi concludes the setting must have been **Sukkot*, or Tabernacles, the only service when the worshipper actually processes around the altar, holding a citron and palm frond (*Mish. Sukkah* 4:5). Hence the then familiar phrase 'a stolen palm frond is invalid' thus explains the emphasis on innocence and integrity in the psalm.⁶⁹⁰

The Christian commentary tradition is not very profuse. Although there may be an implicit reference to verse 6 ('I wash my hands in innocence') in Pilate 'washing his hands' of the blood of Christ (Mt. 27:24), this is Matthew's view of Pilate, and he would have been unlikely to have had such an insight. So a reasonable conclusion is that the psalm is not found in the New Testament at all. Later tradition had difficulties with the many pleas for integrity, for this seemed to have little to do with Christ speaking in the psalm: this reflects a similar situation to Psalm 25, where the problem was confession of guilt at sin. Nevertheless, the 'great congregation' (verse 12) in the **Vulgate* reading is translated as *in ecclesiis benedicam te Domine*, which suggests a reference to the church (*ecclesia*) and to her protection from heretics and schismatics by 'Christ the Head'. So, like Psalm 25, rather than being a psalm 'of' or 'by' Christ, this is a psalm addressed 'to' Christ: hence the prayer 'redeem me' (verse 11) is a plea to be protected by the precious blood of Christ.⁶⁹¹

The **Antiochenes* approached this psalm in a less Christ-centred way. *Theodore of Mopsuestia reads the psalm as a prophecy by David, referring to those who suffered innocently on account of their faith under Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3: so the Christian message is to learn from the faith of those innocently persecuted during the Babylonian exile.⁶⁹²

*Cassiodorus' numerological interests took a more Christ-centred approach but through a different route. In the **Septuagint* this is Psalm 25, so Cassiodorus read the psalm as a request for healing from one wrongly accused of having

⁶⁸⁸ Feuer 2004: 319–20.

⁶⁸⁹ Braude 1959: 357.

⁶⁹⁰ Gruber 2004: 273–4.

⁶⁹¹ For example, both *Augustine and *Cassiodorus, in *ACCS* VII:203.

⁶⁹² See Hill (2006: 255). This motif was taken up in illuminated Psalters, as will be noted shortly.

committed some sin; the number five is linked with the five porticos in John 5:2–18, where the sick were healed, and multiplying this again by five, so Cassiodorus sees that the psalm is ultimately about a Christian prayer when sick and falsely accused of sin.⁶⁹³ His further observation is that the second half of the psalm now concerns the Christian praying not only for healing, but to be set apart from the heretics. Cassiodorus' interpretation is found in several illuminated Psalters, as we shall see.⁶⁹⁴

The liturgical use of this psalm is centered on two verses. In Jewish tradition this is verse 8 ('O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell') which is often used on entering the synagogue and in the Sabbath evening service. In Christian tradition it is verse 6 ('I wash my hands in innocence...') which traditionally has been prayed by the priest in both Orthodox and *Mozarabic liturgy, after he has put on his vestments and washes his hands prior to the Divine Liturgy; the verse is also used in Catholic and Anglican liturgy as a private prayer of the celebrant before the saying of the Eucharistic Prayer. Anthems on this verse further illustrate its importance in liturgy: examples include Henry *Purcell's arrangement of verse 7 for Charles II; *Boyce's setting of verses 1–3, 6 and 7, using the *BCP; and *Haydn's arrangement of James Merrick's metrical paraphrase of verses 5–8 as the first of his Six English Psalms. Isaac *Watts' metrical version of the entire psalm is subtitled 'Self-Examination': 'Judge me, O Lord, and prove my ways'.

The motif of handwashing (verse 7) is found in several Psalters. The *Stuttgart Psalter (fol. 31v) has an illustration which offers insights into the incensing of the altar and the 'lavabo' (ritual washing) during the Mass.⁶⁹⁵ The *Utrecht Psalter (fol. 14v) picks up a similar theme: an elaborate lion-fountain at the end of an aqueduct spouts water into a basin, but here it is children who are washing their hands. Verse 2, 'Prove/Judge me O Lord' is depicted by a fiery furnace and Daniel 3: this may have been influenced by *Theodore of Mopsuestia's similar use of Daniel 3.⁶⁹⁶

A common motif in Byzantine Psalters is the innocence of Christians when confronted with heresy and schism. Verses 4–5 ('I do not sit with the worthless... I hate the company of evildoers') were cited at the Council against *iconoclasm in Constantinople in 787; and the events of the Iconoclast Council in 815, when John the Grammarian prepared the case against images for the Emperor Leo V, had still scarred the memory of those responsible for both the *Khludov Psalter and *Theodore Psalter. So fol. 23v (*Khludov*) and fol. 16r (*Theodore*) depict, against Psalm 26 (Greek 25), the Council in session; the

⁶⁹³ Walsh 1990: 262.

⁶⁹⁴ Walsh 1990: 256–57.

⁶⁹⁵ See <https://goo.gl/yzzYPf>.

⁶⁹⁶ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=35&res=1&xx=0&yy=0>.

Patriarch Nicephorus, who refused to participate, is holding an icon of Christ to show his allegiance to the iconophile cause. Leo V is seated, flanked by iconoclast bishops, and to his right two figures, with sponges on rods, are wiping out the icon of Christ. In the **Theodore Psalter*, **Theodore* himself is presented alongside Nicephorus. Each has a halo and stands above the scene, and they illustrate verse 1–3 ('Prove me, O God...'); they are appealing to Emperor Leo V below (illustrating verse 4–5), whilst three (inscribed) figures alongside him, whitewashing the icon, are Theodotus, Anthony and John the Grammarian, the latter of whom appears to be speaking. An anti-iconoclast poem has been inserted in the margin.⁶⁹⁷

If ecclesiastical politics influenced the images in Byzantine Psalters, other Psalters were more influenced by liturgical considerations. One example is the **St Albans Psalter*, which shows an acolyte pouring water for the Priest to use before the celebration of the Mass, illustrating verse 6 ('I will wash my hands in innocence'); below, a group of monks gather before an altar on which there is a golden chalice, illustrating verse 6b ('...and go around your altar, O Lord...').⁶⁹⁸

Some illustrations depict the more general theme of the psalm—the search for consolation. Moshe **Berger's* recent illustration of verse 3 portrays the trunk and black branches of a tree, resting on a blue and white base. Some of the twisted branches form Hebrew letters of the word for 'love'; the right half of the image has red and gold flickers of flame, and the left half, blue streams of light against a white background. For Berger the tree shows how the Almighty nurtures us: the colour red symbolises strength; blue stands for mercy, and white, for loving kindness: 'For your loving kindness is before my eyes...'⁶⁹⁹

Hence we can see how the two key aspects of this psalm—integrity of worship and prayer, and the relationship between the community of faith and those outside—are common to both Jewish and Christian reception, thus making this a less controversial psalm than many.

Psalm 27: Confidence and Complaint

Psalm 27, like 19, seems to be another example of two psalms brought together as one. The confidence expressed in verses 1–6, which speaks of God in the third person and uses a good deal of military imagery (verses 2–3, 6) is very

⁶⁹⁷ See Corrigan (1992: 120–121); also figure 43 (for **Khludov*) and figure 111 (for **Pantokrator*).

⁶⁹⁸ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page117.shtml>. See also Plate 8.

⁶⁹⁹ See <http://sufferingwithjoy.com/2010/07/10/praying-the-psalms-psalm-26/>

different in tone from verses 7–14, which is a lament, using a striking metaphor from family life (verses 9–10), although the presence of the enemies is found here as well (verse 12) and expressions of trust recur throughout the psalm (verse 1, 13–14).

The psalm was certainly read as a whole by the time of its placing within the Hebrew Psalter, because the links with Psalm 26 occur in both parts of the psalm. The oppression of evildoers in 26:5 is repeated in 27:2 (both using *mere'im*); each psalm refers to the importance of singing within worship (26:7 and 27:6); the sanctuary (or temple, as in 27:4) is named the 'house of the Lord' in each psalm (26:8; 27:4); and both refer to the importance of being on a 'level ground/path'—using the fairly rare word *mishor* in each case (26:12 and 27:11). So again the formation of a collection, making intentional links between the psalms, is the first stage of reception.

The **Septuagint* creates an interpretive layer by its additional title of *pro tou christhēnai* ('for/before the anointing'), thus raising the question as to which 'anointing' is being referred to. It led to a Davidic and royal reading in Jewish tradition, with verse 2 often being seen as a reference to Goliath, whilst later Christian readings saw the title as a hidden reference to the 'anointing' of Christ.⁷⁰⁰ **Cassiodorus*, for example, read the psalm as about 'Christos, the anointed one', arguing that it was the second psalm (after 22) which pointed through David to the mysteries of Christ.⁷⁰¹ **Cassiodorus* argued that the psalm could not be referring to David and his conflicts with Saul, as Saul had died before David's first anointing at Hebron; so the subject must be Christ. Syrian Christians circumvented this interpretation by seeing the anointed king as Hezekiah, speaking about the threat of the Assyrians and his illness, a reading which continued through Psalms 28–31.)⁷⁰²

Verse 8 is another pivotal verse: it was rendered differently in both the Greek and Latin and produced a specifically Christian reinterpretation. The Hebrew reads, confusingly, 'Of you my heart says, [you pl.] seek my face!'. The Greek changes the sense to fit the second part of the verse: 'To you my heart said, he sought my face: your face, Lord, I will seek.' The Latin translated the verse in a similar way, and encouraged Christian commentators to see the verse as referring to the merciful face of Christ.⁷⁰³ This interpretation fitted with **Augustine's* view: the first part of the psalm are words of 'Christ the Body', speaking about his passion, whilst the second part, introduced by verse 8, are words addressed

⁷⁰⁰ Feuer 2004: 329.

⁷⁰¹ Walsh 1990: 262–3.

⁷⁰² For example, Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on the Psalms 27*; WGRW 9:82, in ACCS VII:205.

⁷⁰³ For example, Arnobius the Younger, *Commentary on the Psalms 27* CCL 25:34–35, in ACCS VII:208.

to 'Christ the Head', who now suffers with his Church.⁷⁰⁴ Much later, *Calvin offered a somewhat different interpretation: the first part is a prophecy of David about Christ's suffering (hence Calvin saw David as the speaker in verses 1–6) and the second part is where the Christian congregation identify with the sufferings of Christ; they are now 'seeking his face'.⁷⁰⁵

Verse 13 in Hebrew has also caused some confusion: most unusually the word *lule'* (if not, unless) has three dots above it and three underneath; this is its only occurrence in the Psalter, and Jewish commentators read this as an expression of doubt, translating the verse 'I know you will give the innocent a reward in the life to come, but I do not know if I have a portion with them'.⁷⁰⁶ This encourages the psalm to end on a note of doubt rather than confidence—a point which is taken up in music and art, as will be seen shortly.

Less controversial verses were formative in liturgy. Taking verse 1 as a starting point, **Midrash Tehillim* advises that the whole psalm is to be used for **Ro'sh ha-Shanah*, i.e. at the time of the New Year due to the phrase 'Adonai is my light' and for **Yom Kippur*, because of the phrase 'Adonai is my salvation'. This verse is read in the context of God creating light in Gen. 1:3–4, giving the festival a cosmic dimension, rather like Psalm 29.⁷⁰⁷ So the whole psalm is recited during the 'Days of Awe'—the ten holy days of preparation for dedication to God between the two festivals. The 'adversaries' (verse 2) are those internal 'promptings to sin' from which the community plead deliverance. The reference to being hid 'in his shelter' (verse 5, using the noun *sok* from which '*Sukkot*', or 'Booths' derives) has also led to its use throughout the entire festival of **Sukkot*, at the same time of year.⁷⁰⁸

Christian liturgy focusses more on the battle with evil expressed in the psalm. It is sung by the newly baptised in the Orthodox Church, just before the reading of Rom. 6:3–11; it is also sung on the Eve of the Epiphany, and on the Feast of the Baptism of Christ. As we saw in the commentary tradition, this psalm is also interpreted in the light of the events on Good Friday or Easter Eve: here, verse 12 (... 'for false witnesses have risen against me...') is the *antiphon and is applied not so much to the Christian as to Christ's passion.⁷⁰⁹ In present day Roman Catholic liturgy, verse 1 ('The Lord is my Light and Salvation') is used, as in Orthodox liturgy, during Epiphany: it is sung after a reading of Is. 9:1–4 ('The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light...') and before Mt. 4:12–23, where Jesus proclaims the good news of the kingdom: here

⁷⁰⁴ Quasten and Burghardt 1960: 216; see <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf108.ii.XXVII.html>.

⁷⁰⁵ See Holladay (1993: 333), noting that Calvin reads Psalms 2, 16, 41, 57 and 140 in a similar way.

⁷⁰⁶ So Rashi in Gruber (2004: 277, 280–81).

⁷⁰⁷ See Braude (1959: 365–66). For this view of Psalm 29, see pp. 184–86.

⁷⁰⁸ Feuer 2004: 333.

⁷⁰⁹ Neale and Littledale I 1874: 369.

the inference is of the giving of light to the Gentiles.⁷¹⁰ In the monastic tradition Psalm 27 is the second of the eight liturgical divisions of the Psalter (the others being Psalms 1, 39, 53, 69, 80, 97, and 110, using the NRSV numbering). Whilst Psalm 1 would be the first psalm to be sung on a Sunday, Psalm 27 was the first for Monday, finishing with Psalm 110, which was the first psalm sung at Sunday *Vespers. All these psalms were usually marked out by an illustration in their first initial: we shall see shortly how this affected artistic representations of Psalm 27.

The psalm is also used for funerals in Catholic, Methodist and Anglican traditions, revealing a different appropriation of its metaphors about victory over evil and trust in God. And on account of verse 4 ('...to inquire in his temple...') it is often used at the Feast of the Holy Family (commemorating Luke 2, when Jesus was found by his parents in the Temple).

It is not surprising that, given the several liturgical contexts of the psalm, it has been the subject of many church anthems and metrical psalms. *Byrd wrote '*Unam petii a Domino*', based on verse 4; *Schütz's '*Eins bitte Ich vom Herren*' is also based on verse 4; Henry *Purcell's '*The Lord is my Light*' is an arrangement of verses 1 and 3–6, as also is *Boyce's '*The Lord is my Light*', based on *Coverdale's version. One example of metrical psalmody is Billing's adaptation of Isaac *Watts' arrangements of the entire psalm.⁷¹¹

There are many examples of illuminated initials of this psalm, because of its place in the liturgical division of the Psalter according to the Canonical Hours. One popular image, derived from the psalm's title, is of David's anointing either by Samuel or of his being crowned. But more often, especially in Flemish Psalters from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, the image depicts David kneeling before God and pointing to his eyes (occasionally it is God's hand, pointing to David's eyes) in a literal illustration of verse 1. Several examples are preserved in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague.⁷¹²

An earlier but similar image is in the ninth century **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 15r) which depicts a cross-*nimbed Christ, carrying a torch, grasping the hand of the psalmist, who is also covered with rays of light from the hand of God above him. (This image was copied in the later **Harley Psalter*, fol. 15r and the **Eadwine Psalter*, fol. 44v.)

⁷¹⁰ Daly Denton 2010: 206–212.

⁷¹¹ For the lyrics, see <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/watts/psalmshymns.Ps.63.html>.

⁷¹² See, for example, http://manuscripts.kb.nl/zoom/BYVANCKB%3Amimi_69b10%3A012v_init (David points to his own eyes: *MS Den Haag KB 69 B 10*) and http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=17917&showmode=Full (God points to David's eyes: *MS Den Haag KB 128 C8*). For the image of David pointing to his own eyes, see Plate 9.

Another frequent motif is of verse 10 ('If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up...'). The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 33v) offers a literal image—the psalmist is fleeing uphill towards the hand of God as his parents turn away below.⁷¹³ This motif is also found in later Byzantine Psalters: the **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 29r) for example, depicts a cross-*nimbed Christ leading a youth, whose father and mother are walking away to the right.⁷¹⁴ The same image is found in the **Barberini Psalter* (fol. 45v) which, like *Theodore*, also has an image of David as a shepherd protecting his flock which is being attacked by wolves (fol. 44v); this image is also in the earlier **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 24r), thus illustrating the more Jewish Davidic focus of this psalm.

In the thirteenth century Psalter of Isabel of France (MS 300, fol. 26r, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) the image is of David praying to God in the upper part of the initial D (for *Dominus*), with two groups of monks and nuns below, praying to God. The gold oil lamps between them illustrate literally *Dominus illuminatio mea* ('God is my light'): as we view it we are invited to imitate David.⁷¹⁵ The same motif of learning from David is apparent in *The Psalter of King Henry VIII*: the image just before Psalm 27 (**Vulgate*, 26) is of David fighting Goliath (a motif from the Jewish commentary tradition). Henry clearly identified with the depiction of a king slaying evil, and in the marginal notes, for example by verses 11–12, we read of his affirmation of David's conviction that God would protect him against his enemies.⁷¹⁶

The danger of evil and the vulnerability of human life is a theme in other illustrations. The Jewish **Parma Psalter* (fol. 33B) depicts a human figure attacked by two dragons: one is swallowing his body from below and the other grasps his hood with a human hand whilst devouring his arm: this illustrates verse 2 ('...when evildoers assail me to devour my flesh') and reveals the context of the ever-present sense of persecution which dominated this defiantly lavish Psalter.⁷¹⁷ A very different and modern example is in Damien Hirst's 'Butterfly Art': this includes a painting of Psalm 27, which uses brightly-coloured butterfly wings against the backdrop of the psalm text, with metallic paint on canvas used to create concentric patterns rather like a stained-glass rose window, in shades of blue, red, white and yellow. Hirst used this psalm to capture the cycle of the transience of life but also perpetuity in death.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹³ See <https://goo.gl/vsu6TB>.

⁷¹⁴ http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f029r.

⁷¹⁵ See <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/illuminated/manuscript/discover/the-psalter-hours-of-isabelle-of-france/folio/folio-26r-371>.

⁷¹⁶ See <https://goo.gl/fKzzNP> (turning pages; fol. 30r.)

⁷¹⁷ Meztger 1996: 69.

⁷¹⁸ See <https://goo.gl/SZJTyx>.



FIGURE 3 Arthur Wragg, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living' (Ps. 27:13)

A different representation in art, set in the 1930s, but also on the theme of transience and suffering, is by Arthur *Wragg who provides an ironic reading of verse 13 ('I believe I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living') (Figure 3). The scene is of an elderly woman in a room full of shadows: she sits on a chair covered with a wrap and rug, and the light plays on her face to show resignation but also pride; loneliness but also resilience. A little dog sits on a rug and observes her: the bed, the bare table, and the kettle on the stove all suggest coldness, hunger and silence: 'Let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!' has a new meaning in the light of this image.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁹ *Wragg (1934): no p. nos.

We turn finally to other musical performances of this psalm. One example, by *Handel, is of Ps 27:14 (along with Ps. 118:24) as a wedding anthem for the daughter of King George II to Prince William of Orange (1734) in St James' Chapel. Its opening treble voices move into an atmospheric **a capella* section on this verse: 'Be strong and he shall comfort your heart'. John *Rutter also used this verse, for mixed chorus and organ, at the wedding of Prince William to Catherine Middleton in Westminster Abbey in 2011: the celebratory and reflective tone of each composition could not be more different from *Wragg's reading of the same verse, viewed above.⁷²⁰

*Elgar uses verse 8 ('thy face Lord, will I seek) in Part One, Section Three of his *The Apostles* (premiered in Birmingham in 1903); it is sung by Mary Magdalene, following her conversion and just before the account of the Passion. Prefaced by Jesus' words to Peter 'Thou art Peter, my Rock...' Mary's aria highlights the calling of all the disciples to a steadfast faith. The psalm is used similarly in *Honegger's *Le Roi David* (1921); Part One, Number 11 is of verse 1: 'The Lord is My Light'.⁷²¹ Another celebratory arrangement is by the American composer Jeffrey Honoré, whose more contemporary 'The Lord is my Light' is an arrangement for congregation, keyboard and handbells.⁷²²

As in art, the psalm has produced musical examples of a more thoughtful nature. It was one of the nine psalms used in *Rutter's *Psalmfest*, premiered at Dallas in 1993. The setting of 'The Lord is my Light and Salvation', for SATB, solo clarinet and organ or orchestra, was for a friend dying of AIDS: it opens with a gentle tenor solo, later answered by a soprano; but it is the haunting clarinet obligato which captures most the realism of the psalmist's confidence in God. Other versions include Lazar *Weiner's earlier version, '*Adonai Ori*', for a choir and organ, but based on a Yiddish folk song written during times of persecution; whilst the version 'We are singing for the Lord is our light' is from South Africa and based on 27:1–4, arranged by Hal H. Hopson, and sung in unison with keyboard, deriving from a Zulu freedom song about deliverance from adversaries (27:2).

The psalm has many metaphors of vulnerability and protection which have fired the imaginations of so many different faith traditions, and it is all but impossible to find a dominant theme. Yet perhaps that of the very first verse encapsulates its many moods. 'The Lord is my Light' is found as the motto on coats of arms of several religious and academic institutions: the crest of the University of Oxford used these words as early as the sixteenth century. The words '*Dominus illuminatio mea*' are written on an open book, on the right of

⁷²⁰ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 240.

⁷²¹ Stern 2011: 232, 234.

⁷²² <https://www.giamusic.com/bios/jeffrey-honore>.

which are set seven seals (recalling Revelation 5); two open crowns are set above the book, and one below, probably together symbolising the crowns of King Edmund. The reasons for the choice of this verse are unclear: one obvious universal appropriation is that no one is autonomous in their quest for enlightenment; light is a gift, not a right. It places all human knowledge in a finite perspective and requires it to search for inspiration beyond itself.

Psalm 28: Lament and Thanksgiving

In the manuscript used by *Rashi, Psalm 28 is taken as part of Psalm 27, so his comments are brief.⁷²³ This seems typical of the reception history of this psalm: it has many correspondences with Psalm 27, but there is much less reception worthy of note.

Psalm 28 begins with a lament concerning the wicked (verses 1–5) and ends with a thanksgiving (verses 6–9), with some elements of intercession (verse 9). The first stage of reception, namely its incorporation into a collection, is fairly clear. Although the order is the reverse of the previous psalm (which starts with confidence and ends with prayer) there are several linguistic correspondences. The lament in 27:7 begins with ‘Hear (*shema*) O Lord, when I cry aloud’ (using *qara*), and the lament in 28:1 starts similarly ‘To you, O Lord, I call... (also using *qara*)... Hear (*shema*) my voice!’. Like Psalm 27, the dominant concern is of oppression by the ‘workers of evil’ (*po’ale ‘awen* in verse 3) but, as in Ps. 27:6, a response in verse 7 is to offer a song and give thanks (using the noun *shir*; 27:8 uses the verb).

Whereas Christian commentators read only the first part of Psalm 27 as if spoken by Christ, many have read the whole of Psalm 28 as words of Christ at the time of his passion and then resurrection. *Arnobius the Younger argues that here the psalmist speaks in his soul of the Son of God, that he who committed no sins should not be handed over with sinners.⁷²⁴ *Augustine summarises the issue succinctly: ‘The speaker here is the Mediator himself, strong... in the conflict of his passion.’⁷²⁵ *Cassiodorus, somewhat typically, develops this idea: arguing that David can mean ‘strong of hand’ here we read of one ‘strong of hand’ who overcame death by dying—Christ himself. ‘This then is the third psalm to commemorate both the passion and resurrection of Christ’: in this Cassiodorus means that the lament part is about Christ speaking about his

⁷²³ See Gruber (2004: 282–83). Psalms 12 and 13 are similarly united; thus Psalm 29 in the NRSV is in this manuscript Psalm 27.

⁷²⁴ *Commentary on the Psalms 28* in CCL 25:35, in ACCS VII:210.

⁷²⁵ *Exposition of the Psalms 28.1*, WSA 3 15:291.

passion, and the thanksgiving part is about his resurrection; the other two psalms are 3 and 16.⁷²⁶ The tradition associated with *Aquinas also argues that the psalm tells how Christ rose from the sepulchre with a glorious Body and here he speaks against the Jews who betrayed him: the psalm is also the voice of the martyrs of the church, to be read alongside the book of Daniel (noting again, somewhat ironically in the light of the criticism, the use of Jewish tradition here).⁷²⁷

However, *Antiochene commentators such as *Theodoret of Cyrrhus read this psalm alongside Daniel but with different conclusions. Noting that David's prayer to the holy sanctuary (verse 2) had to be before the Temple was built, this is akin to Daniel's prayer in exile when the Temple had been destroyed, so it possible to uphold that David is speaking in this psalm. This is has some interesting connections with **Midrash Tehillim*, which also uses both David and Daniel as models of piety in persecution and, like *Aquinas above, compares the setting with the three men in the fiery furnace.⁷²⁸ A slightly different (earlier) reading is found in *Diodore, who also uses a more Jewish interpretation and sees this is Hezekiah speaking, as for Psalm 27, against the backcloth of the Assyrian crisis in the eighth century BCE.⁷²⁹ The voice of David thus takes precedence over the voice of Christ.

By the sixteenth century the psalm begins to take on a new life through Christian commentators such as *Erasmus, whose exposition of it in '*A Discussion Concerning the Proposals for War against the Turks*' applies the 'prophetic meaning' within the psalm not only to the life of Christ, but to the political and social issues of his day; here the Turks are those 'workers of evil' who 'speak peace with their neighbours' (verse 3) but who will be repaid by God according to their works (verse 3). *Calvin, by contrast, preferred to read the psalm as by David but as a prophecy of Christ (akin to Psalm 27). However, the prayer for vengeance in verses 4–5 clashed with his understanding of prayer labouring for the welfare of the whole human race: these verses were, according to *Calvin, 'intemperate zeal', and (for different reasons than those of *Erasmus) prevented over-Christianising this psalm.⁷³⁰

Thus some Christian commentaries have echoed Jewish readings; similarly Jewish and Christian correspondences can also be seen in the use of this psalm in liturgy. For example, verse 9 ('O save your people, and bless your heritage') is one of the regular verses used in **Pesuke de-Zimra* (along with 25:6). In this case the

⁷²⁶ See Walsh 1990: 271.

⁷²⁷ Neale and Littledale I 1874: 389.

⁷²⁸ On Theodoret, see *Commentary on the Psalms* 28.2 FC 101:179, in ACCS VII:212. On *Midrash Tehillim*, see (Braude 1959: 275–77).

⁷²⁹ See Diodore in Hill (2006: 85–86).

⁷³⁰ See *Comm.Ps.* 28.4; cited in de Jong (1994: 9–10).

reference is of course to the Jewish people. But this verse is also sung repeatedly in Orthodox liturgy in the *prokimenon* (whereby a psalm verse replaces an Old Testament reading), and indeed is often used as a prayer in Catholic and Anglican liturgy as well: in this case it refers to the Gentile inheritance gained through Christ.

Efforts to eradicate what *Calvin saw as ‘intemperate zeal’ in verses 4–5 were not made until liturgical reform in the middle of the twentieth century; these verses were then omitted both from the **Daily Office* as being too harsh in their treatment of enemies.⁷³¹ Yet vindictive thoughts persist in many versions of metrical psalmody: *Dwight’s eighteenth-century American version being one such example:

But while they plant the secret snare,
Thy searching eyes their path regard
Thy hands their dreadful doom prepare
and mete their guilt its just reward.

The Scottish Psalter, still used today, offers a similar reading. Much depends on how one perceives the character of God in relation to evil:

Give them according to their deeds
and ills endeavorèd:
And as their handy-works deserve,
to them be renderèd.

God shall not build, but them destroy,
who would not understand
The Lord’s own works, nor did regard
the doing of his hand.⁷³²

Images of the wicked falling into pits were undoubtedly popular in illuminated Psalters. The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 15v) shows a group of sinners being drawn off by winged demons and thrown into a fiery pit of Hell. The psalmist, standing under a tree, points to the pit with one hand and to an image of the *Christ-Logos with the other: ‘To you Lord, I call; for if you are silent to me, I shall be like those who go down to the Pit...’ (verse 1).⁷³³ The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 34v) is distinctly more irenic: this is a literal interpretation of verse 9 (‘O save your people, and bless your heritage...’) where Christ is sitting on a throne on a hill blessing multitudes of people kneeling before him.⁷³⁴

⁷³¹ Holladay 1993: 305, 333.

⁷³² Taken from <http://www.cgmusic.org/workshop/smpsalter/psalm-28.htm>.

⁷³³ <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=37&res=4&x=696&y=1238>.

⁷³⁴ See <https://goo.gl/qdD8Oh>.

Compared to the psalms marking the Canonical Hours division or the *penitential psalms, this psalm is relatively infrequently illustrated in a Christocentric way; instead, the focus is either on David or the ‘viewer-as-psalmist’. In addition, the psalm is devoid of much Jewish artistic or musical representation, and Christian poetic or musical interpretation has little significant to offer. Perhaps its limited appeal in art, music and poetry is quite simply because Psalm 28 is in the shadow of its two greater neighbours, 27 and 29.

Psalm 29: A Hymn of Praise

Psalm 29 is not by chance adjacent to Psalm 28. Each psalm begins with a recognition of the ‘holiness’ of God expressed in worship: in 28:2 this is at the ‘holy sanctuary’ and in 29:2 the heavenly beings praise God as ‘holy’: each uses different forms of the word *qodesh*. Each ends with a call to God to ‘bless’ his people (28:9 and 29:11, each using the verb *barak*) whose protection and reign is ‘for ever’ (28:9 and 29:10, both using *olam*).

However, Psalm 29 is a more powerful psalm in terms of structure and imagery. Its focus on God’s appearing through a storm follows a geographical movement, from its coming over the Mediterranean sea (verses 3–4) to its explosion with ‘fire’ in northern Israel (verses 5–9; first the trees, then animals, then the wilderness, and again the animals, and the trees) to the restoration of calm—suggesting that God has returned to his Temple (verses 10–11). There is a clear Phoenician background to much of this imagery; some have argued that it is actually based on a Canaanite hymn about Baal Hadad’s sevenfold lightnings.⁷³⁵ Seven times we hear of the ‘voice of the Lord’ (*qol Adonai* in verses 3, 4 [twice], 5, 7, 8, 9). Before the storm begins, our attention is directed to the glory of God amongst the heavenly beings (verses 1–2); and after God’s victory over the chaos represented by the storm, the end of the psalm turns our attention to the glory of God (verse 9, also as in verse 2, using *kabod*) this time in his earthly Temple.

So there is much material here for a rich reception history. The most debated verses include verse 1, with its reference in the NRSV to ‘heavenly beings’ and ‘ascribing glory and strength’ to God; verse 6, with its allusion to ‘*Siryon*’ skipping like a young wild ox; and verse 9, where the voice of the Lord (in the NRSV) makes the ‘oaks to whirl’. Because the psalm has a vast amount of Jewish and Christian commentary, and is particularly prominent in Jewish liturgy, it also has a large artistic and musical repertoire.

⁷³⁵ See for example P. Craigie 1983: 243–44.

An early stage of reception is the way that the *Septuagint adds to the title *exodiou skēnēs*, which could be translated either ‘upon leaving the tent’ or ‘of the going forth (from) the tabernacle’. It is hard to think the Greek could be referring to God leaving his tent of heaven, although a similar idea is in Ps. 19:4–5; the likelihood is that this refers to the people, associating the psalm with the autumnal Feast of Tabernacles. In verse 1 the Hebrew for ‘heavenly being’ reads *bene ’elim*, or ‘sons of gods’; surprisingly, the Greek (and later, the Latin) does not translate this as ‘angels’, but, literally, as *huiioi theou* or, in Latin, *filius Dei* (‘sons of God’). Another addition is at the end of verse 1, where we read *kriōn enegkate* (‘bring young rams’): this may be because the word for rams in Hebrew (*’elim*) is orally identical to the word for ‘gods’ (*’elim*), but spelled differently. Another animal image is found in verse 6b, where the Hebrew is difficult to understand, and the Greek reinterprets *siryon* as ‘beloved’ so the phrase reads ‘and he that is beloved is like a son of unicorns.’ A third animal image is in verse 9a: here the Greek reads the Hebrew as ‘he causes the deer to calve.’⁷³⁶ All three additions to the text have inspired some novel images in art, as we shall see.

**Targum* interprets these verses in a different way. For verse 1 we read ‘Ascribe praise before the Lord, O bands of angels...’. The reference to *siryon* in verse 6 is seen to belong to a Semitic root meaning ‘to be dry/to decay/to have an offensive smell’; so this becomes ‘the mountain that produces rotten fruits’. Another interesting point is in verse 10: ‘The Lord sat for judgement against the generation of the flood to punish them; and the Lord sat upon the throne of mercy and rescued Noah, and reigns over his sons for ever and ever’. For verse 11, *Targum* typically interprets the word ‘strength’ as ‘Torah’, so we read ‘The Lord will give the Law to his people...’⁷³⁷ In this way a specifically Jewish interpretation is given to the end of the psalm.

Several Jewish commentators, starting with the Greek addition to the title, argue that the latter psalm was composed to fulfil the vow made in Ps. 28:7 (‘with my song I give thanks to him...’). Citing 1 Chron. 16:28–29, Psalm 29: 1–2 is seen as the song of David as he moved the Ark from its temporary shelter (noting the Greek addition to the heading) to its permanent abode in preparation for the building of the Temple.⁷³⁸ So an interest in the Temple is paramount: noting that the name of God occurs eighteen times, this is seen to match the *Eighteen Benedictions, which end, like the psalm, with God’s blessings on his people from the Temple.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁶ See Schramm 2009: 9–24.

⁷³⁷ See Stec 2004: 67–68.

⁷³⁸ Feuer 2004: 347.

⁷³⁹ Braude 1 1959: 381–85.

Another theme, following from **Targum Psalms*, is to argue that the psalm speaks about the giving of the Torah stage by stage—at Exodus, through the waters (verses 3–4); in the desert and the wilderness (verses 5–9); and finally giving strength to his people. Linked to this is the tendency to see the theme of Torah also linked to the seven days of creation—the chaotic waters, their separation, the provision of plants, the creation of the luminaries, the creation of man who is driven out to the wilderness, and finally, the Sabbath rest of God.⁷⁴⁰

Finally, commentators such as **Rashi* have re-read the mythological reference to the ‘sons of gods’ in verse 1, seeing this as about the ‘sons of the powerful’ as in 2 Kgs 24:15 (*‘ele ha-’ares*) and in Ezek. 17:13. Linking verses 1–2 to the first three of the **Eighteen Benedictions*, this is then seen as a reference to the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The ‘rams’ which could be read from the Hebrew of verse 1 is thus an allusion to Abraham and the command to sacrifice Isaac (see Gen 22:11–14).⁷⁴¹ **Abraham ibn Ezra*, by contrast, sees the reference to the ‘sons of gods’ as the stars of heaven.⁷⁴²

There are no citations of this psalm in the New Testament, although it is possible that the so-called ‘Call of Ten Thunders’ in Rev. 10:3–4, using similar storm god imagery, may be an allusion to it. But by the time of the church fathers, motifs such as the waters, the voice of God, the ‘rams’ in verse 1, and the completion of the Temple, are all commented on in detail.⁷⁴³

The sevenfold ‘voice’ of God is variously associated with that of the Father or the Son. Unusually, **Theodoret* (who normally adapted a more Jewish David-centred reading) sees the ‘voice on the waters’ in verses 3–4 as the voice of the Father at Jesus’ baptism; the ‘sons of God’ in verse 1 are the Apostles. The ‘voice breaking the cedars’ in verse 5 is the voice of the Father destroying all idols.⁷⁴⁴ **Arnobius the Younger* followed this view: the voice in verse 3 speaks ‘You are my Son.’ *Arnobius* also argues that the psalm is about the completion of the Temple at the end of time, and as the offspring of rams are lambs, the reference in verse 1 alludes to those who will one day worship God in his heavenly Temple.⁷⁴⁵ **Augustine*, taking the expression ‘the thunder of the Gospel’ from **Theodoret*, argues that here we hear the voice not of the Father but of the Son: he speaks over the many waters of the nations, preaching for repentance. Noting the number seven speaks of perfection, *Augustine* also argues that this is about the developing perfection of the church in the world, not about the future.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴⁰ Sometimes Creation and Torah are read together in this psalm: see Feuer (2004: 348–355).

⁷⁴¹ Gruber 2004: 284–89.

⁷⁴² Feuer 2004: 348.

⁷⁴³ See Gibson 2009.

⁷⁴⁴ *Commentary on the Psalms* 29.6 FC 101:184, in ACCS VII: 217.

⁷⁴⁵ *Commentary on the Psalms* 29 CCL 25:36, in ACCS VII: 215.

⁷⁴⁶ *Exposition of the Psalms* 29.1 WSA 3 15:294 in ACCS VII: 215–216.

*Cassiodorus opines that the psalm ‘teems with the Holy Spirit, who makes such (present) perfection possible’: so in verse 6 (reading the Latin as ‘sons of unicorns’) Cassiodorus takes up the tradition of Christ as the unicorn who died to perfect his church. So the psalm is about the voices of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the undivided Trinity: this is a clear attack, therefore, against *Arianism.⁷⁴⁷ Pseudo-Bede develops this further: the rams are the leaders of the flock who follow the Lord; to the angels are called upon to bring these faithful (rams) into the Temple; what follows is about the completion of the tabernacle which is about the perfection of the church.⁷⁴⁸

Christians also offered different readings. Just as they did with Psalm 27, *Theodore of Mopsuestia and *Diodore of Tarsus view this as another psalm where David sings a thanksgiving in the person of Hezekiah, having here gained victory over the Assyrians and repenting of his neglect of the Temple. The waters are the hosts of Assyrians, who appeared as tall as cedars but who are now trying to flee like calves or deer.⁷⁴⁹ By the sixteenth century, *Erasmus sees the psalm in the context of another war—again, that with the Turks. Appealing to this psalm in his *De Bello Turcico* he reads the waters as Christian peoples, tossed around by passions and false doctrines, over whom God sits, through the Turkish aggressors, in judgment. Only those who hear his voice will be protected.⁷⁵⁰ *Luther reads the imagery of destruction in the psalm not as a military attack but as a theological one: the recipients are the heretics and the sevenfold voice summons the church to turn their praise to the Son of God, the risen Christ.⁷⁵¹ By contrast, *Calvin is one of the very few commentators to note that this was ‘written’ by King David to demonstrate God’s power over nature.

It is not surprising that Psalm 29 has a rich Jewish liturgical tradition. The theme of worship which is both heavenly (verses 1–2) and earthly (verse 9) is a theme in the **Kedushah* in the **Amidah* prayer (taken from Is. 6:3 and Ezek. 3:12), and also in the first blessing before the **Shema* in the morning service and of course in Sabbath prayers. Psalm 29 also offers other, mainly numerical, features relating to mystical worship: the repetition of the number three (for example in the three calls to prayer in verses 1–2); the use of the number 7, in the sevenfold voice of God, which become linked to the seven names of God (Awesome, Mighty, Almighty, Holy, One and Only, Exalted, Knower of Inmost Thoughts;⁷⁵² the use of the number eighteen links it to the **Eighteen*

⁷⁴⁷ See Walsh (1990: 280–3). A similar identification of Christ as the ‘son of the unicorns’ sacrificed on the cross is also found in Aquinas: see Ryan (2000: 119–20). See also Psalm 22, pp. 137–38.

⁷⁴⁸ Neale and Littledale I 1874: 398.

⁷⁴⁹ See Hill 2006: 265–67.

⁷⁵⁰ Gillingham 2008b:134.

⁷⁵¹ See Handy 2009.

⁷⁵² Donin 1980: 258.

Benedictions. A further mystical reading is of the terms *qadosh, kabod and melek* (holiness, glory and kingship) (see verses 1–2 and 9–11). In this psalm humans do not join the heavenly praise of the ‘sons of gods’ (or angelic beings) in verses 1–2: they are our cantor, and God is the recipient of both human and heavenly praise, thus placing humanity, rather like Psalm 8, ‘a little lower than God.’⁷⁵³ And in terms of weekly worship, in the **Talmud* (*b.Berakot* 29a) the seven Sabbath benedictions are seen to correspond with the seven voices of God in this psalm; so in the use of the six psalms, corresponding to the six days of creation, sung to usher in the Sabbath, Psalm 29 is the sixth, because it alludes to the Sabbath day and it speaks of the world to come. Psalm 29 is a Festival Psalm: the Greek heading links it to Tabernacles, but it is also a Pentecost Psalm, on account of its creation theme.

It is just possible to find in this psalm the seven sacraments of the church: Baptism (verse 3), Confirmation (verse 4a), the Eucharist (verse 4b), Penance (verses 5–6), Matrimony (verse 7), Holy Orders (verse 8) and Unction (verse 9).⁷⁵⁴ Its emphasis on the ‘appearing’ of God (verses 3 onwards) has resulted in its being used throughout Epiphany in the Orthodox Church, and for Epiphany and the Transfiguration in the churches of the west, as well as for Baptism (reflecting here the Christian commentaries on the ‘voice of God’ over the waters).⁷⁵⁵

A result of this is the composition of many liturgical anthems, both Jewish and Christian. Salomone *Rossi’s ‘*Mizmor Le David*’ is probably one of the best known in Jewish tradition.⁷⁵⁶ Weisgell’s ‘*Havu l’Adonay bene elim*’ (Give unto the Lord, ye sons of might) is a composition (c. 1973) for the Sabbath at Passover.⁷⁵⁷ Examples of Catholic Italian sacred motets include *Palestrina’s arrangement of verse 4 (‘*Exaltabo te Domine*’), di*Lasso’s composition on the same verse, and, a century later, *Scarlatti’s version also of verse 4. *Schütz’s German anthem is of verses 1–2 (‘*Bringt her dem Herrn*’), and *Brahms’ version is of the last verse (‘*Der Herr wird seinem Volk*’). *Elgar’s arrangement of the whole of Psalm 29, for choir, organ and orchestra (1914) was intended to offer a poignant hope in the first year of the first World War: the psalm ends with ‘... the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace’. A very different contemporary version is by Michael Gungor, ‘The Earth is Yours’, on the liturgical ‘postrock’ album *Beautiful Things*: this celebrates the majesty of God in creation, with strains of the Sanctus representing the voice of God over the storm, rather than within it.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵³ See Sommer 2013.

⁷⁵⁴ Neale and Littledale I 1874: 401–402.

⁷⁵⁵ Neale and Littledale I 1874: 399.

⁷⁵⁶ See Rossi, ‘Ascribe to the Lord’ at, for example, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYHr0Q_bf0I.

⁷⁵⁷ See Goralí 1993: 268.

⁷⁵⁸ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 236.

As for illuminated Psalters, it is not surprising that the Baptism of Christ is a key feature in many Byzantine Psalters, including **Pantokrator* (fol. 20r), **Theodore* (fol. 31r), **Barberini* (fol. 47v), **Bristol* (fol. 44v), and **Hamilton* (fol. 78v), which usually feature John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit as a dove, and the imagined voice from heaven.⁷⁵⁹ Other Psalters focus on the additional reference to ‘rams’ in verse 1, and so in the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 16r) a procession of young men is seen bringing their sheep and lambs to a sanctuary inside a walled enclosure.⁷⁶⁰ The *MS Ashmole 1525* (fol. 22v) from Canterbury in the early thirteenth century has a similar image: a woman and bearded man present a lamb before an altar with a cross, all preserved within the initial A (from the Latin *Afferte domino filii dei*).⁷⁶¹

The **Parma Psalter* (fol. 36A), from northern Italy later in the century, has an interesting Jewish visual representation of these verses: a human figure is pointing upwards (verse 1: ‘Ascribe to the Lord...’) with a tall golden vase on his head; this possibly depicts the vases in the Temple, and the psalmist is ‘worshipping in holy splendour’ (verse 2). He points to a pair of rams above the Hebrew of verse 6 (noting that ‘rams’ is a variant reading of the Hebrew ‘gods’ in verse 1 with a different spelling), and to a lamb which is standing on its hind feet; a third lamb is at the bottom of the page, nibbling at the decorative foliage. So here we see humour as well as praise.⁷⁶² A more serious contemporary Jewish reading is Moshe **Berger’s* scene which depicts a shaft of fire, full of tiny red Hebrew letters, emerging into a yellow flame. The heat is represented by a blue flame at the top, also in Hebrew calligraphy. This is of verse 7 (‘The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire’). **Berger* notes how this devouring fire is special, because it can destroy but also purify; it can even light the path of those who are searching and lead them towards the life of the Eternal one.⁷⁶³

Verse 9 of this psalm was written on the title page of George **Herbert’s* *The Temple* (1633): ‘In his Temple doth every man speak his honour’ is from verse 8 in **Coverdale’s* version. That this collection of some 160 poems could be united by the theme of earthly and heavenly worship found in this psalm testifies to the psalm’s resilience, for poems on themes such as the church porch, the altar, church monuments, church windows, or on Lent, Easter, Christmas and Whit Sunday, or on confession, affliction, faith and virtue all seem to fit the theme of the psalm as expressed in its reception history.

⁷⁵⁹ See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/083855.gif>.

⁷⁶⁰ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=38&res=3&xx=0&yy=5>.

⁷⁶¹ See <https://goo.gl/7QPyiM>.

⁷⁶² Beit-Arie, Silver and Metzger 1996: 70–71.

⁷⁶³ http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=15162&showmode=Full.

A modern insight sets this psalm in a related context. As *Berger observed, the psalm presents the themes of both the destructiveness and creativity of God, where the divine light at creation can also turn into fire. Levine notes how a group of Kabbalistic Jews, enduring persecution and exile from Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century and inspired by the writings of Isaac Luria (1534–72), tried to make sense of catastrophe and exile when the promised redemption did not come. As a morning psalm and Sabbath psalm, 29 was important to them: it was sung with closed eyes (following the tradition that the **Shekinah*, the personification of the Glory of God, lost her eyes through weeping in exile). By shutting out the real world they could attain a vision of heaven, and so identify with blind *Shekinah*, the feminine suffering nature of God; using apocalyptic imagery they imagined a seven-fold dance of the *Sefirot*, shutting out the earth as a place of suffering, exile and extreme persecution. Like some of the early Christian writers, they understood this psalm as about the perfection of the believing community and also the song of the martyrs.⁷⁶⁴

Psalm 30: Thanksgiving for Healing

After Psalm 29, a pivotal psalm, the mood in the collection of Psalms 25–28 changes from lament to thanksgiving. Psalm 30 concerns restoration from illness. It begins with a hymn (verses 1–3), an address to the congregation (verses 4–5), with verses 6–12 as the actual thanksgiving. It actually has a close verbal relationship with Psalm 6, in its contrasting images of healing, restoration, terror and death; Psalm 6 fits better the collection of daytime/night-time psalms between 3–14.⁷⁶⁵ Psalm 30 undoubtedly has links with psalms on each side of it, suggesting again that the process of compiling these psalms was not arbitrary. The motif ‘forever’, noted at the end of Psalm 28 (verse 9) and Psalm 29 (verse 10) is found again at the end of Psalm 30 (12). The ‘strength’ of the Lord (29:1) which he gives to all his people (29:11) is also found in 30:7, where the psalmist claims God has made him a ‘mountain of strength’ (using the Hebrew *’oz* in each case). A final link is the ascribing of God’s name as holy in 29:2 and 30:4.

The reception of this psalm hinges mainly around its title. The Hebrew reads ‘A Psalm. A Song at the dedication of the Temple. Of David’, causing much debate as to how David could dedicate a Temple he never built. Two verses have also received much interpretation—verse 3, concerning the psalmist’s claim he been brought back ‘to life from among those gone down to the Pit’ (repeated in verse 9) and verse 5, which in the NRSV speaks of God’s anger being ‘but for a moment’.

⁷⁶⁴ See Levine 1984: 201–203.

⁷⁶⁵ Psalm 30 speaks of both the night time and the morning (verse 5).

Taking the difficult verse 3 first, there are issues even at the earliest stages of the Hebrew reception, which has a **ketib/qere* next to it. The **ketib* reads ‘you kept me alive from going down to the Pit’; the corrected *qere* version changes the form of the verb ‘restore, keep alive’ so that it is to be read as ‘you restored me to life from among those going down to the Pit’, thus suggesting a rather more dramatic state of affairs. The Greek follows the latter reading. We shall see shortly why this matters, not least in Christian interpretation. Verse 5 is also difficult because of the way the Greek corrects the Hebrew: the Hebrew word ‘for a moment’ is read as another word meaning ‘anger’, so that it reads, literally, ‘There is anger in his wrath, but life is in his favour.’ Again we will see how this is dealt with in the commentary tradition.

We now turn to the problematic heading. The traditional Jewish view is that the psalm was composed by David, forgiven after the affair with Bathsheba, as a thanksgiving in anticipation of the Temple which Solomon would build. In this way it is linked to Psalm 29, also purportedly by David, which also speaks of the Temple (29:9). The problem is that the contents of the psalm refer to healing from sickness, and nothing about the Temple: the response is that the sickness could be the consequence of the sin which prevented the building of the Temple, so, now healed, David anticipates its building and dedication.⁷⁶⁶ A different view is that David is foreseeing a later Temple still: this is not Solomon’s but (apparently) Ezra’s Temple, dedicated in 518 BCE, after the exile; and a third view is that it refers to the re-dedication of the **Hasmonean* Temple during the persecution under the Seleucids in c. 164 BCE, an event celebrated in the Jewish festival of **Ḥanukkah*. The last two options are either interpreted as David’s prophetic foresight or taken as evidence that the heading is a later addition.⁷⁶⁷ A simpler view, offered by the eleventh-century Spanish Rabbi Moses Ibn Ezra, is that the word ‘house’ in the title must instead mean David’s cedar palace as in 2 Sam. 5:11.⁷⁶⁸ So in Jewish tradition there is no final agreement on the interpretation of the title, and hence the use of the psalm.

Christian re-interpretation is in part influenced by another addition to the psalm’s heading in a Latin version (not the **Vulgate*) attributed to **Jerome*. The Latin reads ‘*Dedicatio domus David, resurrectio Saluatoris intellegitur, in qua omnia vitae nostrae corpora dedicantur*’, thus explicitly reading the psalm as about the resurrection of Christ.⁷⁶⁹ **Jerome*’s commentary on this psalm makes the same point: the psalm cannot be about David, but is a prophecy about the passion, resurrection and consummation of Christ.⁷⁷⁰ Thus verse 3, the difficult

⁷⁶⁶ Feuer 2004: 258–9.

⁷⁶⁷ These three views are all presented in Braude (1959: 390–91).

⁷⁶⁸ See Sæbø 2000: 285.

⁷⁶⁹ See D.P. McCarthy 1992: 182–83.

⁷⁷⁰ See *Brief Commentary on Psalms 30*, CCL 72:203, in ACCS VII: 221.

verse about being taken from the Pit, is about ‘resurrection joy’, and about an actual return from *Sheol, so it cannot be David speaking. So too verse 9: *Ambrose refers to this verse as about ‘the redemption won through the resurrection of Christ.’⁷⁷¹ Even *Theodoret of Cyrillus, recognising that David cannot possibly be the subject of this psalm, argues that the re-consecration of the house is about the restoration of humanity through Christ’s death and resurrection.⁷⁷² *Cassiodorus develops further the idea of ‘the house’ as the ‘Temple of the Lord’s Body, built at his birth’; the dedication refers to the ‘house’ he re-dedicated at his resurrection; so the beginning and ending of the psalm are about Christ’s resurrection (verses 1–4 and 8–12); Christ’s passion is the subject of verses 5–7, (which, as we noted earlier, refers to the changing of God’s ‘anger’ into his ‘favour’).⁷⁷³ *Basil also takes this view, but with his typical interest in the music of the psalms, also notes that the house built by Christ through his death and resurrection is one of ‘Divine and musical harmony’ as noted in the word ‘Song’.⁷⁷⁴

*Calvin interprets this psalm slightly differently. As with Psalm 28, he sees that the psalm is of David (despite the title), but again is a prophecy about Christ, and a prayer enabling us to identify with Christ in worship. Calvin has a long tract on verse 5, noting that here we are given insight into the balance between God’s anger and favour: but in the light of verse 3, Calvin sees this as referring more to life beyond the grave, when God’s people are chastised no more.⁷⁷⁵

Jewish liturgical practice uses this psalm in three different festivals. The obvious one is **Hanukkah*, the ‘Feast of the Dedication of the Temple’, thus assuming the heading is indeed more about the second century than the time of David, with 1 Maccabees 4 in mind (as in *b.Sop. 18.3* in the **Talmud*). Another tradition is to read verse 9 (‘What profit is there in my death?...’) as a song related to the Feast of **Purim*, rather like Psalm 22:1 was read in relation to Esther and Mordecai, with the song of jubilation coming after the despair.⁷⁷⁶ The thanks-offering element in the psalm, according to **Mishnah Bikk. 3.4*, also assigned it to Tabernacles, when the people carried their first-fruits to the temple, to be greeted by the Levites who were singing this psalm. Parts of the psalm are also recited daily as an overture to **Pesuke de-Zimra*: the synagogue

⁷⁷¹ See Ambrose, in ACCS VII: 225.

⁷⁷² See *Commentary on the Psalms 30.1* FC 101:187, in ACCS VII: 221.

⁷⁷³ Walsh 1990: 283–4.

⁷⁷⁴ See Homilies on the Psalms 14.1 (Ps 30) FC 46.213–14, in ACCS VII:222.

⁷⁷⁵ Holladay 1993:333; also Kraus 1988: 355. For *Calvin’s reading of verse 5, see <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.xxxvi.html?highlight=psalm,30#highlight>

⁷⁷⁶ See p. 138, on *Purim* in Psalm 22.

is viewed as a miniature Temple, where prayers take the place of sacrifice, and the psalm is followed by the hymn ‘Blessed is he who spoke.’⁷⁷⁷

We noted earlier the similarities of this psalm with 6: like that psalm, it has also been found on Hebrew amulets because of its prayers for release from suffering and near-death. So verse 4 (‘...You brought up my soul from *Sheol’) is a verse used for incantational purposes.⁷⁷⁸

It goes without saying that the chief use of this psalm in early Christian liturgy was at Easter. So, in an interesting parallel with the Hebrew amulets, it is that very same verse (‘You have brought up my soul from *Sheol’) which as chanted as an *antiphon in the Roman Rite on Easter Eve.

It is not surprising that illuminated Psalters also emphasised the theme of resurrection in this psalm. The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 16v) depicts the hand of God coming out of heaven, whilst the *Christ-Logos attended by three angels is lifting the psalmist out of a sarcophagus, who is being attacked by snake-like demons who reach out for him with hooks (illustrating verse 3).⁷⁷⁹ The same theme is found in Byzantine Psalters, although the motif is usually of Christ raising Lazarus from the dead, sometimes with Mary and Martha kneeling at the feet of Christ, often with some scene of the personification of Hell and a figure dressed like a Jew unwinding the cloths from the body: this is in the **Pantokrator Psalter* (fol. 29r), the **Barberini Psalter* (fol. 48r), the **Hamilton Psalter* (fol. 79r), and the **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 31v).⁷⁸⁰

A few Psalters take the motif of the dedication of the Temple and apply it to the dedication of a church, so that David, crowned, appears to be blessing bishops: **Vaticanus Graecus* 752 (fol. 88v) is a good example, possibly also including an image of *Theodoret of Cyrrhus, whose commentary it is following.⁷⁸¹ This is an obvious theme in Jewish tradition: the **Parma Psalter* (fol. 37A) has a striking image of a high building with several storeys, with a golden arched door, apertures and windows, with a loggia above with two rose windows above that and battlements on the top. A figure in the loggia is raising his hands to heaven. This evokes an image of the restoration of the Temple; it also recalls the Festival of **Hanukkah*, and in its thirteenth-century setting it may also be about the ongoing hope for the future restoration of Jerusalem and its Temple.

This then is a psalm where a communal experience is consistently given a personal voice: the images of transience and the human vicissitudes are particularly dominant, as the psalmist moves between the past and the future,

⁷⁷⁷ Feuer 2004: 357.

⁷⁷⁸ Davis 1992: 174–75.

⁷⁷⁹ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=39&res=3&x=208&y=696>.

⁷⁸⁰ http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f001r.

⁷⁸¹ http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.752.pt.1.

between lament and dancing, between despair and hope.⁷⁸² We referred to the use of Psalm 29 by George *Herbert in his collection of poems in *The Temple*. In one of these poems, entitled ‘Employment I,’ *Herbert captures the images of despair and hope found in verses 3 and 9 of this psalm, evoking the words in verse 9 ‘What profit is there in my death? Will the dust praise you?’:

For as thou dost impart thy grace,
The greater shall our glorie be.
The measure of our joyes is in this place,
The stuffe with thee.

Let me not languish then, and spend
A life as barren to thy praise,
As is the dust, to which that life doth tend,
But with delaies.⁷⁸³

So in various ways the psalm is given a universal appeal: it is not only about David and his Temple, or even about Christ and his Resurrection, but it is about the conquering fear of death by trust in (and gratitude for) the graciousness of God.⁷⁸⁴

Psalm 31: Confidence through Fear

Psalm 31 has several associations with 30. In terms of content, its oscillation between despair and hope and its lack of confession of sin (despite the admission of suffering) remind us of the previous psalm. There are a few linguistic links as well: the most obvious are the references to the ‘enemies’ in 30:1 and 31:8 as the cause of distress (using *’oyeb* in each case) and the plea ‘Be gracious to me’ in 30:10 and 31:9, using the same verb and address to God (*hanneni yhwh*). Psalm 31 has a more clear ‘double structure’ and also uses a good deal of formulaic language—‘take refuge’ (verses 1, 19); ‘be ashamed’ (verses 1, 17); ‘save/deliver’ (verses 2, 15); ‘the hand of the enemy’ (verses 8, 15); ‘your hand’ (verses 5, 15); ‘trust in the Lord’ (verses 6, 14); and ‘your steadfast love’ (verses 7, 16, 21). These are found in each of the two clearly structured parts of the psalm. Verses 1–8 comprise a plea for help (verses 1–3), a description of distress (verse 4) and a vow of confidence (verses 5–6) and trust in deliverance from the

⁷⁸² See Levine 1984: 150–54.

⁷⁸³ For the full version of this poem, see <https://www.ccel.org/h/herbert/temple/Employment.html>.

⁷⁸⁴ So Brueggemann and Bellinger (2014: 154), applying Karl Barth’s observations on divine grace and human ingratitude to this psalm.

enemy (verses 7–8). Verses 9–22 similarly start with a plea for help (verse 9), a description of distress (verses 10–13), a vow of confidence (verses 14–15) and a long description of deliverance from the enemy (verses 15–24).⁷⁸⁵

The **Septuagint*, as with Psalm 30, offers an addition to the heading, although less controversially: *ekstaseōs* ('bewilderment, or astonishment') describes the contents of the psalm, rather than any later use of it (as was more likely with Psalm 30 and the 'dedication of the Temple'). This may well be because of its obvious associations with the prophet Jeremiah: examples include the description of being like a broken vessel (verse 12) which echoes Jer. 22:28, and the description of whispering suggesting 'terror on every side' (verse 13), which is identical to Jer. 6:25, 20:3,10 and 46:3, and also the plea not to be put to shame, whilst the enemies should be put to shame (verse 17) which again echoes Jer. 17:18. The suffering David is seen as a model for the suffering Jeremiah, and the Greek heading may well be a way of describing this agitation in suffering. It is interesting that the Greek word *elpizō* ('hope') is used five times throughout this psalm, translating three different Hebrew words (verses 1 and 19, for *ḥasah*, 'take refuge'; verses 6 and 14, for *batāḥ*, 'trust'; and verse 24, for *y-ḥ-l*, 'hope').⁷⁸⁶ Like Jeremiah, the psalmist's restoration still lay in the future (see verse 24: 'Wait (Hope) for the Lord!') and the Greek translators naturally focused on this.

At *Qumran, verses 2–21 (*MT 3–22) are found in 5/6HebPs:31, and verses 22–23 (*MT 23–24) in 4QPs^a, and verses 23–24 (*MT 24–25) in 4QPs^d. In 4QPs^a and 4QPs^d, which each cite the end of Psalm 31, this is immediately followed by Psalm 33. This perhaps raises more questions about Psalm 32 than 31: was that psalm lost at Qumran, or was it never known there? There are clear links in the Hebrew (*MT) between Psalms 31 and 32, so this is a curious lacuna in its reception history. Various formulaic expressions found in Psalm 31 are also found in **Hodayot*: for example 1QH V:9–15.32–36 cites several phrases from 31:8–14, showing that the identification of this psalm with the 'poor and needy' (31:8) was a theme which promoted its popularity in early Judaism.⁷⁸⁷

Psalm 31 is one of the very few psalms cited by Philo when making an exegetical point on the Torah. In his *De confusione linguarum* 39 on the Tower of Babel story in Genesis 11, Philo comments: 'As one of the disciples of Moses... prayed in his hymns and said "Let their cunning lips be devoid of speech..."' citing 31:18. We might note here that Philo chose not to debate the issue of the authorship of the psalms.

⁷⁸⁵ On the links with both Psalms 30 and 32 and 33, see Bons (1994: 259–64).

⁷⁸⁶ For the different verse numbers in the Hebrew and Greek, see Appendix I. On the use of *ekstaseōs* and *elpizō* as marking out the twin themes of despair and hope in this psalm, see Bons (1994: 265–70).

⁷⁸⁷ See Bons 1994: 264–65.

This verse is used twice in the New Testament. Some argue that Luke chose to use 31:5 ('into your hand I commit my spirit') as an important citation in Jesus' prayers from the cross, rather than 22:1, as in Mt. 27:46 and Mk. 15:34, to avoid citing any Aramaic for his Greek readers. It is more likely that this verse fits better with Luke's picture of Jesus who stoically accepted his death—even speaking with the criminals on each side of him, and answering the thief's question on whether or not he feared God (note here Ps.31:19). It is noteworthy that a psalm which suggests such agitation elsewhere offers such calm acceptance in this particular verse. This accords with what we noted about the twin themes of despair and hope added to this psalm within the Greek translation: it was an ideal psalm to represent Luke's view of Christ's submission to God on the cross.⁷⁸⁸ Verse 5 is also adopted at Stephen's martyrdom in Acts 7:59, where the first martyr accepts his death with the same calm, albeit grim, acceptance as his Master.

It is interesting to compare Luke's use of this psalm with a comment on verse 5 found in *Rashi, who adds an adverb to the Hebrew—'*tamid*', or 'always'; the verse can thus be translated 'Into our hand I *shall* entrust my spirit *always because you redeemed me from trouble*'. This takes away the Christian focus of its past use by Christ, just once, on the cross.⁷⁸⁹

By contrast, Luke's use of verse 5 is clearly a key theme for the church fathers, and is developed as early as *Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* (105:5) where Jesus becomes the model for all Christian martyrs. So *Athanasius advises: 'And if you see your acquaintances turning against you, do not be alarmed, but separate yourself from them and turn your mind to the future and sing Psalm 31.'⁷⁹⁰ Various verses were read through the lens of the suffering not of Jeremiah, but of Christ: so verse 4 ('take me out of the net...') might be about David's deliverance after the plot of Ahithophel, according to *Theodoret,⁷⁹¹ but it was more usually seen as Christ's deliverance 'from the snare of the Jews' by commentators such as *Augustine and *Cassiodorus.⁷⁹² Verse 11 ('...I am an object of dread to my acquaintances') describes Christ's rejection by the Jews, and verse 12 ('I have become like a broken vessel...') describes the humility of Christ in subjecting himself to the physical sufferings during his trials.⁷⁹³ The voice of the sufferer is the voice of Christ; the enemies are always the Jews. According to

⁷⁸⁸ See Bons (1994: 270–74) who notes also a similar use of Ps. 16:8–11 (**Septuagint* 15:8–11) in Acts 2:25–28.

⁷⁸⁹ Gruber 2004: 293–95.

⁷⁹⁰ See ACCS VII:226. See also <http://www.Athanasius.com/psalms/aletterm.htm>.

⁷⁹¹ *Commentary on the Psalms* 31.4 FC 101:193 in ACCS VII:230.

⁷⁹² Walsh 1990: 292.

⁷⁹³ Walsh 1990: 295–6.

*Thomasius, *Aquinas sees the entire psalm as the voice of Christ upon the cross, praying for himself and the Church.⁷⁹⁴ The use of the whole psalm, with its various depictions of agitation in suffering, takes us far away from the Lukan use of the one verse which focusses on the serenity of Christ in the face of death; but on the other hand, rather like the use of Psalm 22, it displays the humanity of Jesus in a very stark way.

The psalm has a prominent use in Christian liturgy, partly because it is another 'Passion Psalm.' It is used at *Compline throughout Lent in the Orthodox Church, along with Psalm 22. Verse 1 ('In you, O Lord, I seek refuge...') is one of the verses used regularly in the 'Alleluia acclamation' before the Gospel as part of the eight-weekly cycle of *antiphons in the eastern churches.⁷⁹⁵ The psalm also plays a significant part in the Easter liturgy in the western churches: Verse 5 has been used daily at Compline in the monastic tradition, and verses 1–5 are frequently found in fourteenth-century *Prymers, along with the first part of Psalm 22, to be used throughout Lent in preparation for Easter. It is usually Psalm 30 which speaks of Christ's resurrection, and Psalm 31 which speaks of his suffering and death. Its prominent use, however, created a problem in liturgical revision during the last century: the **Daily Office* resisted the use of verses 17–18, which is an imprecation for the wicked to go to hell.

It is not surprising to find a number of church anthems have been composed from this psalm, particularly connected with Lent and Easter. For example, three sixteenth-century Italian composers, *Palestrina, *Giovanni Gabrieli and Gesualdo, arranged '*In Te Domine Speravi*' ('In You, Lord, I trust/seek refuge') based on 31:1–5 for Catholic liturgy. Lutheran examples based on these verses include *Schütz's setting in the '*Beckerscher Psalter*', and J.S. *Bach's '*In dich hab' ich gehoffet, Herr*', which was a choral prelude from a hymn by the sixteenth-century writer, A. Reissner. *Mendelssohn's version of the psalm (1839) was similarly based on these verses. In England, *Tallis's motet with a five-part chorus, '*In Manus Tuas*', was a special composition for Compline on Passion Sunday: this combined Lk. 23:46 and Ps. 31:5 through an exchange of polyphony; the phrase 'you have redeemed me!' used choral homophony to emphasise the grace of God in human need.⁷⁹⁶ *Orlando Gibbons' version of 31:4–10, Thomas *Weelkes 'In Thee O Lord', Christopher *Tye's 'O Lord deliver me!' and Thomas Ravenscroft's metrical version are further examples of the extent of the use of this psalm, each emphasising verse 5. More contemporary versions include John Michael Talbot's 'Father I put my life in your hands' (1997), and the Taizé chant composed for the funeral of Brother Roger in 2005.

⁷⁹⁴ Neale and Littledale I: 471.

⁷⁹⁵ Holladay 1993: 180.

⁷⁹⁶ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 110.

Three other notable arrangements of this psalm are, first, ‘O Sacred Head, Sore Wounded’ from the Lutheran Oratorio of seven cantatas for five voices by *Buxtehude (1689), which was based on a medieval poem meditating on the seven wounds of Christ; the seventh is on the face of Christ, and Ps. 31:5 is adapted and sung in six parts with an extended Amen.⁷⁹⁷ Secondly, *Elgar set 31:5 to music in his *Dream of Gerontius*, adapting *Newman’s use of this psalm: Gerontius cites these words as he is dying and his soul and its guardian ascend to heaven. Ps. 31:1–5 was also used in *Penderercki’s Latin Oratorio (1966) based on St. Luke’s Passion: ‘*In Te Domine, speravi*’ is sung by soloists and chorus in the call for deliverance.

We noted earlier how Christian illuminated Psalters emphasised the resurrection in Psalm 30; in 31, it is the death of Christ which receives attention. So in the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 17r) we see again three angels with the *Christ-Logos, but this time they are attempting to succour the psalmist as he rushes with outstretched arms towards them, trying to escape a net spread over a pit which contains two demons.⁷⁹⁸ The first of the three images in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 37r) depicts the agony of Christ in the Garden, but places it against verse 5.⁷⁹⁹ The **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 26v) and the **Pantokrator Psalter* (fol. 30v), by contrast, have an image of the risen Christ before his tomb: this appears to be partly dependent on Mt. 28:4, as his guards are at his feet, but the image is close to verses 5–7. In **Khludov* David stands behind Christ, with the inscription ‘Concerning the *Anastasis* (‘resurrection’) he says...’ This depiction is also found in other Byzantine Psalters, such as **Barberini* (fol. 49v), **Hamilton* (fol. 80v), and **Theodore* (fol. 32v).⁸⁰⁰

Two striking contemporary images of this psalm do not use such specifically Christian readings. *Chagall’s depiction (1979) is very much like that for Psalm 25, where the psalmist is being protected by a flying angel. Two illustrations by Roger *Wagner use the imagery of ‘hands’ in the psalm: the first, by verse 5 (‘...into your hand...’) is of two hands trying to grasp each other, the one gnarled with suffering, the other steady and firm, and the second, by verse 15 (‘My times are in your hand’) is of the two hands firmly grasped together⁸⁰¹ (Figure 4).

Finally, it is moving to see how many times this psalm has been used by those imprisoned or martyred for their faith. Thomas *More’s ‘godly mediations’ in the margins of his Latin Psalter, written when he was imprisoned in the Tower of London (1534–5), have six comments next to Psalm 35: next to

⁷⁹⁷ Dowling Long and Sawyer (2015: 156). Few would realise this hymn is inspired by Ps. 31:5.

⁷⁹⁸ <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=40&res=3&x=65&y=213>.

⁷⁹⁹ See <https://goo.gl/uH8KPA>.

⁸⁰⁰ See Corrigan (1992: 67). For **Pantokrator*, see <https://goo.gl/KWGcbN>.

⁸⁰¹ Wagner 1994: Psalm 31 (no page numbers).

Into your hand
I commit
My spirit
You have
Redeemed me
LORD God
Of truth.



בְּיָדְךָ אֶפְקֹד
רוּחִי פְדִיתָהּ
אֹתִי יְיָהוָה
אֵל אֱמֶת:

But I, in you
I have trusted LORD
I have said:
“You are my God
My times are in your hand.”



וְאֲנִי עֲלֶיךָ
בְּטַחְתִּי יְיָהוָה
אָמַרְתִּי
אֱלֹהֵי אֲתָהּ:
בְּיָדְךָ עֲתָתִי

FIGURE 4 Roger Wagner, *Psalm 31* from *The Book of Praises* (1994)

verse 5 (Latin verse 6) we read ‘*periclitantis aut morientis oratio*’—‘the prayer of one in grave danger of death.’ Next to verse 21 (Latin verse 22), ‘for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me’ we read ‘*concolatio spiritus in tribulatione*’—‘spiritual consolation in times of trial.’⁸⁰²

Dietrich *Bonhoeffer, like More, also turned to Psalm 31 when in prison. Noting that on his cell door someone had scribbled ‘In one hundred years it will all be over,’ *Bonhoeffer responded ‘My times are in your hand’ (31:15).⁸⁰³ Finally, we know that when Pope John Paul II visited *Yad Vashem* in 2000 he ended his address with 35:12–14 (‘I have passed out of mind like one who is dead... But... I say ‘You are my God’) to which he added ‘Here... we are overcome by the echo of heart-rending laments of so many.’⁸⁰⁴ Such illustrations pertaining to both Christian and Jewish suffering show this to be another psalm with the potential for universal appropriation.

Psalm 32: Confession and Healing

Although there was no explicit reference to penitence in Psalms 30 and 31, Psalm 32 links together, very closely, repentance and healing. But here the ‘confession’ is much about speaking to the community as it is about acknowledging sin to God: indeed, the actual act of confession to God is missing in the psalm, being only cited as a past event. Furthermore, the psalm has a number of speakers and audiences: verses 1–2 are spoken as instruction in the third person to the

⁸⁰² See Zim 1981: 96–97.

⁸⁰³ Bonhoeffer 1997: 82.

⁸⁰⁴ See <http://www.yadvashem.org/pope-visits/john-paul/speech>.

community; verses 3–7 address God, with the account of a previous confession at the heart of it; verses 8–9 are spoken as if from God to the psalmist, in oracular form; and verses 10–11 end as the psalm began, as instruction to the community, with verse 10 again in the third person but verse 11 addressed to the community in the second person.

So the psalm is very different from the two before it, although it does again have some linguistic correspondences. The emphasis on ‘trust’ in God is clear in 31:6 and 32:10, each using the Hebrew verb *b-t-h*. Each stresses the importance of ‘rejoicing’ (literally ‘shouting with joy’) in 31:7 and 32:11, using the verb *g-y-l*. The formulaic word ‘steadfast love’ (Hebrew *hesed*) also appears in 31:21 and 32:10. And finally, and perhaps most pertinently, each uses the form ‘And I said/ I had said’ especially in 31:22 and 32:5, followed by the citation of a previous prayer. So again the first stage of reception—the compilation of the psalms in Hebrew—suggests some purposeful arrangement.

The **Septuagint* on this occasion offers no extra heading. One of the problematic phrases is in verse 6: the Hebrew reads, literally, ‘at the time of finding’, and the Greek reads this as ‘in/at a fitting time’; the Latin reads ‘in due season’. The NRSV translation is ‘at a time of distress’. Although the thrust of the verse has not changed, this is a small example of how translation is also interpretation. Verse 4b (‘my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer’) is another example, for again the Hebrew is difficult to ascertain. So the Latin reads *consumersum in aerumna mea*: ‘I writhed in my misery while a thorn was fixed through me’—a strange image, but one which was adapted in several illuminated Psalters, as we shall see.

We noted earlier that Psalm 32 is not found at **Qumran*.⁸⁰⁵ Later Jewish readings are minimal: other than arguing that this is another psalm concerned with the sin of David and Bathsheba, showing the importance of admission of guilt, and the importance of receiving pardon for sin, with verse 5 being the prayer of penitence by David before Nathan, little is developed here. Additions to two verses reflect interpretations from a later period. **Targum* expands verse 3 (‘While I kept silence, my body wasted away’) to ‘Because I was silent of the words of the Law, my bones wasted away’, showing the central significance of Torah in making confession; and for verse 6 (‘at the time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach him’) *Targum* reads ‘...but at the time when many nations will come like waters, they shall not reach him to do harm’, showing the enemy was physical as well as spiritual.⁸⁰⁶ The ‘nations’ sometimes seem to feature as the enemy in these personal psalms: they are, in Jewish reception, the Gentiles, who come upon the Jews ‘like the rushing of many waters’.

⁸⁰⁵ See Psalm 31, p. 191.

⁸⁰⁶ See Stec 2004: 72.

This point is developed in *Rashi's commentary on verse 6, showing how even personal psalms with a quest for spiritual healing can be read in a corporate and national way.⁸⁰⁷

The Christian tendency is to view this psalm as more consistently personal and spiritual. Verses 1–2 are cited in Rom. 4:7–8 as part of Paul's argument about justification by faith, not by works: 'So David also speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose sins are forgiven... blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not reckon sin"'. Here David's words prepare the way for the new covenant under Christ.

This point is repeated in *1 Clement* 50:6 and in *Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, showing just how early in Christian tradition part of this psalm was connected to confession of sin.⁸⁰⁸ Some three centuries later it is actually *Augustine who provides the most seminal comments about Paul's use of the psalm, to speak about the grace of God given to us in Christ. For Augustine, reading this psalm was closely tied to his spiritual journey in the *Confessions*: it is about *confessing* sin to God, and *confessing* faith to the Christian community.⁸⁰⁹ His second homily on this psalm, in about 412–13, develops this idea further of 'living out grace': the preface includes a long account of Paul's view of grace (something so paramount in his conversion), and there is a lengthy commentary on verse 11 ('Rejoice, O righteous...') where Augustine makes it clear that the 'righteous' are not the 'just' but the 'justified', using Rom. 5:30–35 (a point taken up later by Luther).⁸¹⁰ *Luther actually called this psalm '*David Eruditio*', for he argued that David spoke as a Christian theologian in his understanding of justification by faith not by works.

*Cassiodorus has a different slant. The psalm is a dialogue between the repentant David addressing Christ and Christ replying to show he understands our sinful condition. So in the first three parts it is David speaking (verses 1–2, 3–5, 6–7), and in the last two parts (verses 8–9, 10–11) it is Christ replying. Cassiodorus makes much of the fact that the psalm has ten verses, like the ten commandments: more than any of the seven *penitential psalms this one assures us of God's mercy and love.⁸¹¹

Psalm 32, the second of the penitential psalms, has traditionally been read as against Pride; it became a familiar psalm on account of its use in Lenten liturgy.

⁸⁰⁷ See Gruber 2004: 298.

⁸⁰⁸ For *1 Clement* 50:6, see <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ii.ii.1.html>.

⁸⁰⁹ This is from the first homily on Psalm 31, in *Exposition of Psalm 32.1.9 WSA* 3 15:362, 371, cited in *ACCS VII*: 238.

⁸¹⁰ See Waltke 2014:103–4 on Augustine's use of this psalm.

⁸¹¹ See Cassiodorus in Walsh (1990: 304–5, 313).

In monastic tradition it was used every day in Lent at *Prime. In the medieval church all seven psalms were recited during Lent after *Lauds, whilst Psalms 6 and 32 (the first two) were also used at *Matins on Ash Wednesday. The lectionary in the 1559 Prayer Book required that all seven psalms should be said on Ash Wednesday, and all seven *penitential psalms were used in England at Coronation Services until 1603. And in the Orthodox Church Psalm 32 is used when the newly baptised are brought out of the water and given their white garments.

But its penitential appeal did not only appeal to Christians. Psalm 32 is the ‘song of the day’ for *Yom Kippur (*Maaseh Rav* 216) and in the *Ashkenazi tradition it is also read on the Sabbath preceding *Yom Kippur. So ‘David’ speaks not as a Christian theologian, but as a Jewish theologian, and much of what Christians say about God’s forgiveness in this psalm is apparent without additional explanation, as it is in the psalm already.

Examples from music are mainly from the Christian tradition, with particular compositions having been commissioned for the period of Lent. Di*Lasso’s ‘*Psalmi Davidis Poenitentiales*’ (1653) is a collection of seven motets for five voices; Psalm 6 is set in the first mode, and Psalm 32 (*‘Beati quorum remissae sunt’*) in the second mode, and so on. It is a collection with a great range of emotional intensity.⁸¹² Henry *Purcell’s version of verses 1–7, 10 and 11 (*‘Blessed is he’*) is also an arrangement initially for use in Lent. And so too *Mozart’s ‘*Davide Penitente*’ (1785); Psalms 6, 32 and 51 derive from the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* of the C Minor Mass. The emphasis on justification by faith made it a popular psalm in Protestant worship: Charles *Wesley’s ‘Blest is the Man’ (on 32:1–6) and ‘Thou art my Hiding Place’ (on 32:7–12) is an example, and *Watts’ metrical version illustrates well the Christianising of the psalm:

Happy the man to whom his God
No more imputes his sin,
But, washed in the Redeemer’s blood,
Hath made his garments clean.’

Latin illuminated Psalters reveal not only the interest in confession and forgiveness, but also contain peculiar images taken from the Latin translation. So in the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 18r) we see three angels supporting two large curtains covering two groups of people: their ‘sin is covered’. Nearby the psalmist is crouched among thorn bushes (the Latin for verse 4 speaks of suffering as if pierced by thorns). At the bottom, fish are swimming across the waters: these suggest the ‘floods’ which overcome the psalmist in verse 6. This is a literal

⁸¹² Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 191.

interpretation of the ‘story’ of the psalm.⁸¹³ The **Stuttgart Psalter* has an amusing image (fol. 39v): the reference to not being stubborn or resistant in the confession of sins in verse 9 uses the metaphor of the horse and mule who need to be curbed with bit and bridle. The image is of both animals on hind legs, and the owner is between them attempting to curb their obstinacy.⁸¹⁴ The other image in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 39r) is more serious: this is of David as penitent actually confessing his sins into the ‘hand of God’.⁸¹⁵

The image of David the penitent is common for this psalm; it has several correspondences with Christian images in Psalms 6 and 51.⁸¹⁶ The *Books of Hours*, with their collections of *penitential psalms, illustrate this well: one example is from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (*Musée Condé, Chantilly, MS 65, fol. 65v*), which depicts David, bent over his throne, in conversation with the prophet Nathan who is accusing him of his adultery with Bathsheba.⁸¹⁷ At other times the image is not of David, but of the psalmist as everyman, where the viewer is invited not to observe but to participate, in also asking for forgiveness. So for example in the **St Albans Psalter* the psalmist is crouched at the bottom of the letter ‘B’ which commences this psalm in Latin; he is almost trampled on by two writhing sinners whom Christ, seated in the top of the letter ‘B’ is trying to control with goad and bridles.⁸¹⁸ This illustrates verses 5 and 9 and shows the seriousness of sin and the necessity of repentance.

In his discussion of this psalm, Levine observes how Psalm 32 shows the performative dimension of human speech; it is ‘confession’ which brings about the consciousness of atonement. ‘The certainty of God’s love and forgiveness comes to the soul not from God’s mouth, but from our own.’⁸¹⁹ Just as in group therapy which seeks to help to overcome addiction to drugs, alcohol, sex or overeating, when speaking out loud can sometime release the sufferer from the paralysing grip of shame, so to the penitent can receive forgiveness by ‘confession’—to God, and within the community. The different speech actions in Psalm 32 show just how important this interrelationship is, and how important words are in this process.

Whether we are listening to the figure Hope in **Piers Plowman* (Section 5) who recites Ps. 32:1 ‘in a field full of folk’, with Dreamer also watching, or to the many vernacular rhyming versions of the *penitential psalms in Anglo-Norman times; or to the re-created liturgies of penitence in sixteenth-century

⁸¹³ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=42&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

⁸¹⁴ See <https://goo.gl/qgwLfv>.

⁸¹⁵ See <https://goo.gl/oG5ZLZ>.

⁸¹⁶ For the images on Psalm 6, see pp. 65–66; and on Psalm 51, see pp. 311–12.

⁸¹⁷ <http://www.christusrex.org/www2/berry/f65v.html>.

⁸¹⁸ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page129.shtml>.

⁸¹⁹ Levine 1984:98.

England, or to the experimentation with the words of this psalm by poets such as Philip *Sidney, or to the play on the words and rhyme and rhythm in the metrical psalmody of the seventeenth and eighteenth century—it is the words which make incarnate the act of confession which lies at the heart of Psalm 32. For this reason it seems appropriate to conclude by offering two contemporary accounts of this psalm—one forthright in its use of the English language, and the other, constrained by the *Haiku* format for every verse, terse and clinical in its use of words.

So an extract of Gordon Jackson's recent version of Psalm 32 (here, verses 3–5) reads:

While I kept my misdemeanours to myself
I was eaten alive by the guiltiness inside me;
It was no joy to think of you,
I couldn't even bear to mention your name;
I knew you only as a threat
and inside of me my spirit was all dried up.
Then I came to my senses, I said *I will tell him all,*
*I'll make a clean breast of it, I won't hold anything back...*⁸²⁰

Whereas Gwyn's *Haiku* version of the same verses is as follows:

While I kept silent
my bones were wasting away;
I groaned all day long.

By day and by night
Your hand lay heavy on me
and my heart was parched.

Then I found the strength
to acknowledge I had sinned
to tell of my guilt.

As soon as I said
'I shall confess to the Lord'
You forgave my sin.⁸²¹

This is a curious psalm. The specific words of penitence are not at all obvious, and its importance lies in what the psalm teaches generally about God's forgiveness. But in later liturgical and poetic imitations of the psalm, the actual

⁸²⁰ See Gordon Jackson 1997:40–41.

⁸²¹ Gwyn 1997: 32.

words perform an act of penitence for each of us: whether or not they are accompanied by any liturgical or sacramental act, the words are, to cite again Levine, ‘speech acts’.

Psalm 33: A Hymn of Praise

Psalm 33 is another psalm of creation, and it is curious that it was never included as a fourth creation psalm in the fourth collection of Psalms 35–41, not least because of its reference to feeding the people in famine (verse 19), which corresponds well with the theme in that compilation. But whereas the other three creation psalms (8, 19, 29) focus on the relationship of God with parts of the cosmos (the stars, the sun, the storm) this is about the more general creative power of God’s word, first in creation (verses 4–9) and then within history (verses 10–19). The psalm has no superscription: it is likely it was brought later into this collection. Nevertheless it is linked to Psalm 34 in its 22-letter structure (although here it does not use an actual alphabetic acrostic) and it is linked to Psalm 32 not only in language, but as the hymn of praise which the people are called to offer in 32:11, where the call to ‘shout for joy’ (*ranan*) in 32:11 is repeated in 33:1.

If Psalm 32 was a confession of human weakness, Psalm 33 is a different sort of confession, about God’s greatness. It follows a typical structure as a hymn of praise: verses 1–3 are the call to praise, verses 4–19 offer the various reasons for doing so, and verses 20–22 conclude with an affirmation of faith. There is little doubt of its close linguistic relationship with Psalm 32. The ‘*ashre*’ (‘Blessed/Happy’) sayings in 32:1–2 are echoed in 33:12 (also in 34:8); the imagery of waters and deeps in 32:6 is echoed in 33:7, but here in terms of God as Creator; each psalm is concerned with the right ‘counsel’ (Hebrew ‘*eṣah*’) which God offers his people (32:8 and 33:11); the ‘eye of the Lord’ in 33:18 can be referred back to 32:8; and each psalm ends with an appeal to the people to ‘be glad’ and ‘trust’ in God (32:10–11; 33:21).⁸²²

One early stage of reception is seen in the way the **Septuagint* avoids the preposition ‘by’ in the Hebrew of verse 6 (‘By the word of the Lord the heavens were made...’) but, by translating the Hebrew word ‘*ʾasah*’ (‘make’) with the Greek verb *stereoō*, this would remind a reader versed in Greek of Genesis 1, where the ‘making’ of creation (with the same Greek verb) comes about directly through the ‘Logos’ (*tō logō*) or ‘divine command’. These associations with Genesis 1 were important in both Jewish and Christian tradition, as we shall see shortly.

⁸²² See Barbiero 1999: 433–434.

The *Qumran scrolls also use part of Psalm 33; we noted earlier how Psalm 32 is omitted and in 4QPs⁹ Psalm 33 follows on directly from 31 (with an additional heading: 'For David. A Song. A Psalm'). Like Psalm 91, parts of Psalm 33 are used as 'anti-demonic' hymns at Qumran, where God's powers are seen not only for all the inhabitants of the earth but also over all supernatural powers. The reference to the power of music in verses 2–3 may have played a part in this as well.⁸²³

Despite its creation emphasis, Jewish tradition has little exceptional to say about this psalm, other than to note its links with Psalm 32 and 34.⁸²⁴ And, despite its use of 'Logos' theology in the Greek of verse 6, this psalm has no citation in the New Testament. There may be an allusion in Jn. 1:3, but no more. Similarly the use of the 'new song' (33:2) in Rev. 5:9 and 14:3 need not refer to this psalm: the term is found several times inside and outside the Psalter (for example, 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1 and Is. 42:10). So the first innovative reception of this psalm is in the church fathers.

*Origen is one of the first to comment on verse 6 as referring to the Trinity: 'And David also points us to the mystery of the Trinity when he says, "By the Word of the Lord all the heavens were made strong; and all their power by the Spirit of his mouth"'. So by reading the Hebrew word for 'breath' as 'spirit', Origen sees the twin agencies in creation as the Word/Logos and the Spirit.⁸²⁵ This interpretation is developed by *Theodoret who reads the agency of God the Creator, Word and Spirit in Ps. 33:6 as echoed in Jn. 1:1.⁸²⁶ *Hilary of Poitiers argues the same point.⁸²⁷ And *Jerome observes: 'The Trinity is clearly declared here: Lord, Word, Spirit of the Lord.'⁸²⁸ *Gregory of Nyssa makes a slightly different (less Trinitarian) point: the Word (Logos) of God is the God who came down to earth from heaven: the Word of Creation becomes the Word of the Incarnation.⁸²⁹

The references to 'the harp of ten strings' in verse 2 has also elicited some interesting Christian commentary. *Basil the Great sees that this implies that we are Psalters and *our bodies* are the instruments of praise.⁸³⁰ Yet other commentators were anxious not to let the musical analogy stray too far, given its pagan associations: for *Augustine, the ten strings are the ten commandments,

⁸²³ The texts are 4Q510 and 4Q511.

⁸²⁴ See Stec (2004: 73) on 33:21 and 3:4; Feuer (2004: 394) on Psalm 32:10–11 and 33:20–22.

⁸²⁵ See *First Principles* 4.4.3, FP 317, in ACCS VII:249.

⁸²⁶ Theodoret, *Commentary on the Psalms* 33.4, FC 101:203–4, in ACCS VII:249.

⁸²⁷ *On the Trinity*, 12.39 FC 25:52, in ACCS VII:249.

⁸²⁸ *Brief Commentary on Psalms* 33 CCL 72:204, in ACCS VII:249.

⁸²⁹ *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms* 2.8.29, GNTIP 145, in ACCS VII:251.

⁸³⁰ *Homilies on the Psalms* 15.2 (Ps. 33) in FC 46:229–30 cited in ACW:247.

and we ‘pluck the Psaltery’ by fulfilling the Law: ‘Let nobody’s thoughts revert to the musical instruments of the theatre.’⁸³¹ *Calvin, writing some eleven hundred years later, took a similar view (for metrical psalmody was then sung without accompaniment). Stressing the importance of the ‘word of the Lord’ in verse 4, Calvin argued that true worship is the praise of an obedient heart (‘living in the fear of the Lord’ as in 33:18).⁸³²

In Jewish worship, parts of this psalm are chanted (without accompaniment) in the **Pesuke de-Zimra* in both the *Ashkenazi nine-psalm tradition (after the Great Hallel, i.e. Psalms 145–150), and the Sephardic fourteen-psalm tradition (after Psalm 19). Psalm 33, with its cosmic concerns, also plays a part in Sabbath liturgy, rather like Psalm 29. In Christian liturgy, verse 1 (‘Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous...’) has a very different use: it is a communion refrain in the Orthodox Church in commemoration of great saints. Along with the last verse (‘Let your steadfast love be upon us...’) it is one of the eight **Prokimena* sung during Eucharistic liturgy. But following the early Christian commentators, verse 6 is read as a revelation of the Trinity, Father, Word (Son) and Spirit, along with the angels (‘the host’): hence the psalm is sung at Pentecost.

Various composers arranged this psalm not so much for a specific liturgical occasion but rather as a hymn praising God as Creator; in some cases they were understandably attracted to the references to music in verse 2–3. *Schütz’s ‘*Freut euch des Herrn*’ is based on *Luther’s version of verse 1, and *C.P.E. Bach composed ‘*Jauchzet, ihr Gerechten, dem Herrn*’ also based on verse 1. Thomas *Weelkes’ composition, ‘Rejoice in the Lord’, for choir and organ, was based on verses 1–5, but also made full use of the musical allusions in verses 2–3. By contrast Giovanni *Gabrielli’s ‘*Benedicam Dominum*’ is based on verses 10–12, and John *Stainer, some three hundred years later, also instead verses 12, 10–11. Samuel *Wesley’s ‘O Thou art my God’ (1839) includes a short bass solo from verses 21–22, set between verses from Is. 25:1, 4, and 8: unusually it is not about creation but more about hope beyond death. Different musical associations are found in *Vaughan Williams ‘A Choral Flourish’ (1956): this uses the contrasting psalms 22 and 33 alongside each other, with a mixed chorus, organ and two trumpets. Another upbeat example is the Beckenhorst Press setting (1995), with an optional brass quartet. A complete contrast is the more reflective and moving version by *Howells, composed after the death of his son. His ‘Psalm Prelude Set 2’ (1938) interprets several psalms entirely on the organ: Psalm 130:1 forms a cry of despair, 139:12 quiet reflection, whilst 33:3 is used—beginning and ending on C Major—with some resolution of faith (‘with a loud noise’). Despite the commentary tradition, however, few composers chose to

⁸³¹ *Expositions of the Psalms* 33.6 WSA 3 15:398–99, cited in ACW:247.

⁸³² *Commentary Psalm 33:1* (<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.xxxix.i.html>).

focus on the controversial verse 6, as a possible allusion to the Trinity. Even *Watts' two metrical versions of this psalm, with their free paraphrases, make no reference to it.

The theme of music is also apparent in several illuminated Psalters. The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 18v) depicts the psalmist with a harp, looking up at the *Christ-Logos and pointing to a large group of people playing instruments and singing to God. 'He gathers the waters of the sea as in a bottle' (verse 7) has an interesting image of the sea personified, sitting on the back of a sea monster, pouring water from an urn. The Trinitarian implications of verse 6 are not represented. The provision of God as Creator (verse 19) is, however, depicted: an angel, at the bottom of the image, distributes food to those who need to be 'kept alive in famine'.⁸³³ By contrast, the single image of two figures playing a harp and an instrument of ten strings in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 40r) focusses only on the musical motif.⁸³⁴

The musical associations of the psalm are evident in Raphael's painting of St. Cecilia with the Apostles Paul, John, Augustine and Mary Magdalene. The choir of angels in the cloud above the scene are singing verses from 33:1–3.⁸³⁵ A similar connection is evident in Francesco Gagna's painting of the same scene.⁸³⁶

A most unusual image (within the context of the collection of other images) is by Arthur *Wragg, whose stark black and white image from verse 2 is of a man at the keyboard (only his face is seen above the lid of the piano) in some sort of theatre (evident by the black and white images of faces caught in the shadows behind him) (Figure 5). His expression is intent; the world of the 1930s is lost; the music is transformative. In the context of the psalm being about God as Creator and Provider within History, the psalm is heard in quite a different way because its prism is music which temporarily releases us from the cares of this life. It is impossible to know whether *Wragg also had in mind the then) most pertinent verse 19 ('...to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine').⁸³⁷

So despite some of the more Trinitarian overtones in early Christian commentary, the psalm is ultimately about both the universal care of God in creation and his particular care in sustaining his people—two themes shared in different ways by Jews as well as Christians.

⁸³³ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=43&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

⁸³⁴ See <https://goo.gl/rAoa4n>.

⁸³⁵ See http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=2947&showmode=Full.

⁸³⁶ http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=39992&showmode=Full.

⁸³⁷ *Wragg 1934 (no p. nos.).

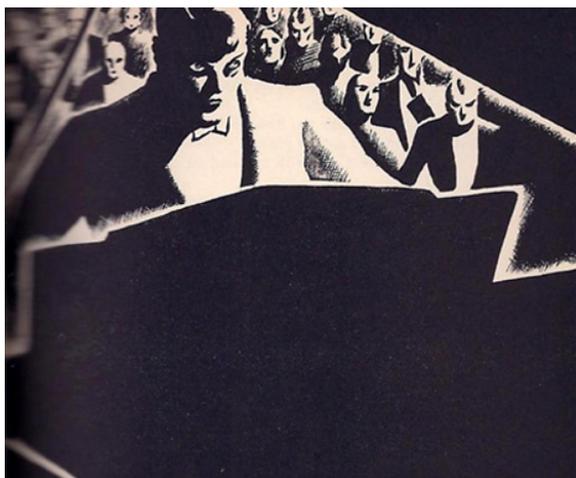


FIGURE 5 Arthur Wragg, 'Praise the Lord with the lyre... Sing to him a new song' (Ps.33:2–3)

Psalm 34: An Acrostic concerning the Poor

Psalm 34 closes this collection, and with its acrostic form and missing letters and its ending with the letter פ (Peh) to create 22 letters overall, it is very similar to Psalm 25, the first psalm in this group.⁸³⁸ Its instructional element, using maxims found in Proverbs, allows it to embrace a number of connected themes: words such as 'hear' (verse 18), 'deliver' (verses 4, 17, 19); 'fear' (verses 7, 9, 11); 'good' (verses 8, 10, 12, 14); 'evil' (verses 13, 14, 16, 19, 21); and 'righteous' (verses 15, 19) recur throughout, announcing that this is as much directed to the community as to God. Verses 1–3 form a hymnic introduction; verses 4–10 testify more specifically to God's goodness; whilst verses 11–22 form the major didactic section of the psalm about justice for the poor.

Not only have the compilers taken care in choosing appropriate psalms to begin and conclude this collection, similar attention is apparent in their placing this psalm next to 33. 'Happy are those...' (a typical *'ashre* saying) is repeated in 34:8 from 33:12 (and 32:1–2). The 'fearing the Lord' is another shared theme (33:18 and 34:7, 9, in each case using *yare*). The 'eye of the Lord' turned to those who fear him or who are righteous is another motif (33:18 and 34:15; see also 32:8).

⁸³⁸ See pp. 164–67 on Psalm 25 and acrostic form.

The most contentious part of the psalm's reception is actually its heading. In the Hebrew David 'feigns madness' before Abimelech. The **Septuagint* reads, literally, 'changed his face' (*ēlloiōsen to prosōpon autou*), which is an echo of the Greek text in 1 Sam 21:14—the historical setting to which the title is referring. Jewish commentators were consistently confused about the naming of Achish in the Samuel text and Abimelech here in the psalm; some argued that the psalm was referring to the same king by a different royal title, rather like 'Pharaoh' in Egypt, or that it was a generic name given to all Philistine kings.⁸³⁹ Christian commentators such as *Augustine had an intriguing way of dealing with this: just as David changed his behaviour before Abimelech, so the 'true David' came in a way the Jews were not expecting, bringing in 'the kingdom of the Father' (a loose reading of the Hebrew name Abimelech). Just as David 'affected' madness, so Christ 'took our affections' on himself.⁸⁴⁰ So the title anticipates Christ. And by the time of *Aquinas, this reading now refers to the way that Christ changed the old 'paschal sacrament' of the Jews into the new Eucharistic sacrament, changing God's focus on the Jews to the Gentiles.⁸⁴¹ In this way the difficulties in the title in its Davidic context are re-shaped in Christian reception so that the whole psalm, taking its lead from the title, might be seen through the lens of Christ rather than David.

One of the earliest uses of part of this psalm is actually in the New Testament: 1 Pet. 3:10–12 cites verses 12–16a in full, within a context of the ways in which the Christian community should love one another, before a lengthy passage on the need to emulate Christ's example of suffering and sacrifice. Here the second person imperatives in the psalm are turned into the third person, giving the sense of this being part of a baptismal sermon. Other examples of the vocabulary in Psalm 34 are also found throughout the letter, especially in 1 Pet. 1:3–9, concerning how to behave in persecution; it is possible that other parts of the psalm were used as well (for example 1 Pet. 2:3 alludes to 34:8) so Psalm 34 encapsulates what the author is wanting to say about suffering and martyrdom, following the example of Christ. But the author wishes to comfort, not threaten: so the last part of the last verse, concerning the evildoers being 'cut off' and not remembered on earth has been omitted.⁸⁴²

The psalm is alluded to in other non-Pauline epistles. Verse 13 ('Keep your tongue from evil...') is alluded to in James 1:26, on 'bridling' the tongue; verse 14 ('Depart from evil, and do good'), similarly, might be used in Heb. 12:14, on the pursuit of peace. It is also alluded to in the Gospel of John. The reference in

⁸³⁹ Cohen (1992: 99); also Gruber (2004: 303–5).

⁸⁴⁰ Neale and Littledale 1874: 525.

⁸⁴¹ See Ryan 2000: 115.

⁸⁴² See Eriksson (1991: especially 118); also Woan (2004: 213–29).

34:20 ('not one of his bones will be broken') is most likely the verse which is cited in Jn. 19:36, when the soldiers pierce the side of Jesus rather than breaking his legs; it would fit with the use of the psalms as fulfilling prophecy in this whole chapter in John (for example, Ps. 22:18 in Jn. 19:24 on the dividing of his garments, and Pss. 22:15 and 69:21 in Jn. 19:28, on Jesus' thirst).⁸⁴³

Mainly, however, the reception of this psalm has been more didactic than Christological, even though it was used as both instruction and prophecy in the early church. In *1 Clement* 22:1–7, verses 11–17 are used in the context of keeping order in the family and the church: phrases such as the fear of the Lord, the tongue, and the pursuit of peace are common expressions. The phrase in 34:11 ('Come, O children. Listen to me!') is now a formula about Christ addressing his church.⁸⁴⁴ Similarly the *Epistle of *Barnabas* 9:2, in a specific passage about circumcision, uses several citations from the Old Testament: Ps. 34:12 is the fifth, beginning with 'and again, the Spirit of the Lord prophesies'. The thrust in this familiar passage ('Which of you desires life...') is that true circumcision is about belief not ritual: the citation actually omits the word 'man' in the Greek, which starts 'who is the man (*tis estin anthrōpos*) who is eager for life?'. The passage now reads 'Who longs for eternal life?'.⁸⁴⁵ *Irenaeus, in Book Four of his *Against Heresies*, uses 34:12–14, 15 and 16 in a similar way to show the superiority of Christ over Judaism, this time in relation to priesthood and sacrifice. By the late second century the psalm had become an important *testimonia* to right living and belief.⁸⁴⁶ So for example Ps. 34:13 ('Keep your tongue from evil'), alluded to in James 1:26, was used by *Ambrose in his teaching on anger, and was an important verse for *Chrysostom and *Basil the Great (and also *Benedict) in their advice about *silence* in the monastic rule.⁸⁴⁷

A very different teaching is found in, for example, the works of *Diodore of Tarsus and *Theodore of Mopsuestia. Psalms 29–34 (other than 31) were read as psalms not from the voice of David, but from Hezekiah. The catechetical element is still preserved, and the pragmatic teaching is applied to the church: but the source of this ethical teaching is not Christ, nor David, but the eighth century BCE, in Hezekiah's battles with the Assyrians. These few psalms provide an interesting example of a pragmatic, literal, more Jewish reading.

Verse 8 ('O taste and see that the Lord is good') became an important *testimonium* to new life in Christ. *Clement of Alexandria, in chapter 9 of his

⁸⁴³ Augustine undoubtedly read this verse as a prophecy which was fulfilled on the cross: see *Exposition of the Psalms* 34:24, WGRW 5:335, in ACCS VII:268. See also <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf108.ii.XXXIV.html>

⁸⁴⁴ See www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/1clement-lightfoot.html.

⁸⁴⁵ Eriksson 1991: 141.

⁸⁴⁶ See <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/irenaeus-book4.html>.

⁸⁴⁷ See ACCS VII:264–5.

Exhortation to the Greeks, and in Book Five of his *Miscellanies*, when arguing about new life in the covenant, cites verse 8, suggesting that it was being used as a proof text about mystic contemplation on Christ. The reference at that time was actually not so much to the Eucharist as to Scripture: this is about the importance of ‘eating and drinking the Divine Word’.⁸⁴⁸ By the fifth century, however, as seen in *Arnobius the Younger, the verse has clear Eucharistic connotations: ‘Taste the body of life and see how sweet is the Lord. He has life in himself who eats his flesh and drinks his blood, and then he will be blessed.’⁸⁴⁹

Ps.34:8 also featured as an *antiphon from early times in Christian liturgy, not only in Eucharistic but also in Baptismal liturgy, as witnessed, for example, in the **Apostolic Constitutions*, from the late third century. The *Septuagint* translation of this verse reads, ‘Taste and see that good (*chrestos*) is the Lord’: the meaning could be changed, most appropriately, to ‘Taste and see that *Christ* is the Lord’. Similarly, in Orthodox liturgy, this verse is sung just before Communion, and the whole of the psalm is used to accompany the distribution of the bread, or follow it. Verse 8 is also sung as a refrain to accompany Psalm 39 at the presentation of the sanctified gifts at the beginning of Lent. For its part, verse 7 (‘The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him...’) is another important liturgical *antiphon, used in the Russian Orthodox tradition before the dismissal of the faithful. This theology has found its way into Catholic and Protestant liturgy, as we shall see.

From the sixteenth century onwards, most arrangements of this psalm, using verse 8 in particular, were for use in the Eucharist. Examples from both Catholic and Protestant traditions include *Andrea Gabrieli and di*Lasso, both Catholics; *Schütz, a Lutheran; *Ravenscroft, a Protestant; *Billings, an American Puritan; and, much later, *Vaughan Williams, an Anglican.⁸⁵⁰ Of these perhaps the best known, because in Britain it was set for the coronation communion of Elizabeth II, is Vaughan Williams’ ‘O Taste and See’: the piece is haunting and memorable because it is first intoned by a solo treble and then taken up in sustained polyphony by the chorus.⁸⁵¹

Other versions were compositions as Graduals for Pentecost, or for the Commemoration of Saints. *Byrd’s version (‘*Qui est homo?*’) is of verses 12–14, as used in 1 Peter 3. And a moving interpretation of 34:6 (‘This poor man cried, and was heard by the Lord’) is part of *Howells’ ‘Three Psalms Preludes, Set 1;

⁸⁴⁸ See <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf02.vi.ii.ix.html>. The same point, also using Ps.34:8, is made by Jerome in his *Homily on Psalm 127 (128)* FC 48:319–20, in ACCS VII: 262–63.

⁸⁴⁹ *Commentary on the Psalms 34* CCL 25:44, in ACCS VII:262.

⁸⁵⁰ For other examples see http://www1.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Psalm_34. For modern versions of ‘Taste and See’, also composed for communion, see Laster2002:10–11.

⁸⁵¹ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 176.

using the organ alone, and composed in 1915–16, it reflects in part on the horrors of the First World War. Starting with an opening five-bar melody in D minor, Ps. 34:6 is the first psalm to be used, echoing hope for the downtrodden, with a slow prolonged rise and unhurried fall, with a minor tonality.⁸⁵² A completely contrasting version, upbeat in its confidence in God, is James Chepponis' 'Morning Star' (1999) which is for the organ, strings, woodwind, timpani, cymbals, and handbells. Its liturgical and musical reception alone shows this is a psalm of many voices.

Psalm 34 also plays a significant part in Jewish liturgy, although different verses are used. It is part of **Pesuqe de-Zimra* in **Ashkenazi* tradition, with parts of Psalm 33; verse 14 ('Depart from evil and do good') is used in the meditation at the Sabbath evening service, and this verse is also used following the daily **Amidah*. As for the Sabbath morning service, verse 3 is used ('O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together') along with other passages following the opening of the ark.⁸⁵³ A musical arrangement of this psalm by Steve **Reich*, who combines Psalms 19, 34, 18 and 150, is notable for its changing moods which are captured by playing between **melisma* and counterpoint, with two-voice canons and instrumental solos. All four psalms were deliberately chosen because they echoed the piety of Jews and non-Jews alike: they are intended for a concert-hall performance rather than composed for synagogue liturgy.⁸⁵⁴

'Taste and see' has become a prominent theme in many illustrated Psalters, whether **Carolingian*, *Byzantine*, or *Anglo-Norman*. What is also emphasised is the motif in verse 13 of 'keep your tongue from evil' (pertinent to the monastic tradition from which all these Psalters arose). The theme of martyrdom, emulating the sufferings of Christ, is taken from verse 20 ('he keeps all their bones; not one of them will be broken'). Furthermore, because it creates such interest for artists, the trope of the protecting angel (verse 7) is also important.

The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 19r) brings together three of these four themes. The **Christ-Logos* is at the centre, holding a sword, flanked by six angels: another flies up to receive that sword (verse 7). Rays of light point down to the psalmist amidst a group of people he seems to be teaching: he is pointing to his mouth (verse 13). More rays of light point to the bottom of the image, where St. Peter, St. Paul and St. Lawrence are all being martyred (verse 20). Interestingly verse 8 is not illustrated here.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁵² For the second psalm, 37:11, on justice for the meek, and the third, 23:4, on hope of everlasting life, see pp. 228 and 151.

⁸⁵³ See Magonet 1996: 29–30, 115–16, 69–70 respectively.

⁸⁵⁴ See www.steverreich.com.

⁸⁵⁵ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=44&res=1&xx=0&yy=0>.

This theme, along with that of silence, is fully represented in, for example, the **Khludov Psalter*. Verse 13 here has a particular political overtone: it is used to illustrate the condemnation of the speeches of the **iconoclasts* at the 787 Council. Hence the image in fol. 30v is of a group of righteous (34:19) dressed as monks, and the second image in fol. 30r is of a man with his hand to his mouth, with the inscription ‘he says, keep your tongue.’⁸⁵⁶ The first image in fol. 30r is of the feeding of the five thousand, with the crowd eating their fill (verse 8).⁸⁵⁷ The very first image here is a more literal one: it is of David feigning madness (fol. 29v): the **Pantokrator Psalter* also has this image of David (fol. 36v). Its illustration of verse 8 (fol. 37r) is actually of Communion, with Christ, cross-nimbed, with a paten in his left hand, standing behind a vessel on an altar, giving bread to five apostles, whilst a further six, to the right, drink from a chalice.⁸⁵⁸ A similar image of Communion is repeated in the **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 37v) which is of a contemporary bishop, Alexander; an extra scene of verse 11 depicts Arius being attacked by a winged demon on his way to Communion. And on fol. 38r, verse 20 is used to depict the martyrdom of Stephen: three Jews are hurling stones at his kneeling figure, with Paul, inscribed, bearing witness.⁸⁵⁹

The image in the **Parma Psalter* (fol. 43A) is unusual because it offers an almost complete representation of a human figure, dancing barefoot with dishevelled hair: this represents the title to the psalm, where David feigns madness. However, next to this is a figure praying, with eyes raised to heaven: this represents the ‘true David’ of verse 1 and opens up the way to reading the entire psalm in this light: ‘I will bless the Lord at all times.’⁸⁶⁰

The other motif which occurs in some illuminated psalms, but more frequently in paintings from the nineteenth century onwards, is of the ‘protecting angel’ encamping around those who fear God (verse 7). The French artist Jacques (James) **Tissot’s* ‘Guardian Angel’ shows us an ethereal female, appearing with a sword amongst a company of Jews at prayer.⁸⁶¹ Thomas Blackpear, a contemporary African-American artist, combines Ps. 91:11 and 34:7 in his ‘Watchers in the Night’: this angel is male and more stern, holding a candle in one hand and spear in the other, with enormous wings which encompass the

⁸⁵⁶ See Corrigan (1992: 122); also <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.030v.jpg>.

⁸⁵⁷ See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.029v.jpg>.

⁸⁵⁸ See <https://goo.gl/CJpDIM>.

⁸⁵⁹ http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f037v.

⁸⁶⁰ See Metzger 1996: 73. For an image of this psalm, see Plate 10.

⁸⁶¹ See <https://goo.gl/HOj6lk>.

bed of a sleeping child.⁸⁶² The interest in angelic protectors in American culture has led to a number of similar images of 34:7 (and 91:11), of which Ron Dicianni's 'Angels Unseen', also of a bedtime scene, and an aid to prayer, is but one example.⁸⁶³

As was observed for Psalm 33, it is ironic that a psalm so interested in appropriate speech (verse 13) should create many challenges for modern translators. Like Psalms 1 and 8, this is a psalm with the potential for a universal appropriation, and this is not only about Jewish and Christian appropriation but about it being open to use by females as well as males. Much of the original language in this psalm is undoubtedly male, encapsulated in verse 6: the *New International Version* (1978, revised 1984) and the more Catholic *English Standard Version* (2001) still read this verse as 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.' The *Jewish Study Bible* (1985) reads similarly: 'This poor man called and *HASHEM* hears—and from all his troubles he saves him.' The *New Jerusalem Bible* (1985: another Catholic version) has 'A pauper calls out and Yahweh hears, and saves him from all his troubles', thus avoiding masculine nouns and pronouns in the first half of the verse, but not the second. But it is possible to transcend this issue with care (albeit perhaps a certain amount of paraphrase), as seen in the following examples. The *Good News Bible* (1976) reads 'The helpless call to him and he answers! He saves them from all their troubles'; the *Contemporary English Version* (1995) has 'I was a nobody, but I prayed, and then the Lord saved me from all my troubles.' The NRSV is 'This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord, and was saved from every trouble.' Gender-inclusivity has obviously been an issue in several other psalms; but in Psalm 34 this is more evident than most, given the general teaching of the psalm.

In this context it is fitting that our final example is from a recent poet, Denise Levertov (1923–97), an anti-war activist and author of several books of poetry. The poem below starts by reversing the form and content of a traditional romantic poem by William Wordsworth, 'The World is too Much with Us': the lack of rhyme, blank verse, and iambic stress reveal immediately that here is something more radical and different. Ps. 34:8 is referred to in line three: it starts the exploration that we must live life to the full, even though the 'imagination's tongue' (34:13) may result in dark speech as well as blessings (34:1). The tangerine similarly suggests the bitter-sweet nature of life (34:14). But life is too short to ignore what it has to offer (lines 11–15):

⁸⁶² <http://www.greenwichworkshop.com/details/default.asp?p=1717&t=4>.

⁸⁶³ <https://uk.pinterest.com/pin/197454764884914802/>

The world is
not with us enough.

O taste and see
the subway Bible poster said,
meaning The Lord, meaning
if anything all that lives
to the imagination's tongue
grief, mercy, language,
tangerine, weather, to
breathe them, bite
savor, chew, swallow, transform

into our flesh our
deaths, crossing the street, plum quince,
living in the orchard and being
hungry, and plucking
the fruit.⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁶⁴ Taken from Atwan and Wieder (eds.) 1993: 298–99.

Psalms 35–41: Poverty, Sickness and Trust in God

We now turn to the final collection of seven psalms in Book One, which falls into two related groups. Psalms 35–37 are concerned with the external threat of ‘enemies’ who undermine the wellbeing of the suppliant; their identity is unclear, but they are undoubtedly malevolent (35:11) and wicked (36:1, 11; 37:1, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 28, 34, 35, 38, 40). Psalms 38–41, meanwhile, are more about the internal problem of sin and suffering: each psalm contains a citation of the psalmist’s inward thoughts, starting with ‘I pray...’ or ‘I said...’ (38:16; 39:1; 40:7; 41:4). All seven psalms are concerned in different ways with the fate of the poor, who are characteristically termed ‘poor and needy’ (*‘ani we’ebyon*) as in 35:10; 37:14; and 40:17.⁸⁶⁵ The first and last psalms form ‘bookends’, on a shared theme: in Psalm 35 the enemies are those who once were friends (verses 13–14), and in Psalm 41 the suppliant feels betrayed by a ‘familiar friend’ (verse 9). These betrayers mock the psalmist: an unusual expression, used only here in the Psalter, is ‘Aha! Aha!’ (*he’ah*) (35:25; 40:15; see 41:6).⁸⁶⁶ An interest in ‘the land’ runs throughout the entire collection:

⁸⁶⁵ See Hossfeld and Zenger 1992: 21–50 and Barbiero 1999: 543–717. As for the possible identity of these compilers, see Gillingham 2014: 201–13.

⁸⁶⁶ This also occurs in 70:3, but which is a duplicate of Ps. 40:13–17.

Ps. 35:20 advocates the cause of those who are ‘the quiet in the land’ and Ps. 41:2 defends the cause of those who are called ‘the happy in the land’: each is a unique expression. The motif of ‘inheriting the land’ dominates Psalm 37, and we will shortly note what an unusual psalm this is. So the ways in which the compilers have sought to create connections between these seven psalms represent an early stage of their reception.

Psalm 35: Friends and Enemies

One of the greatest problems with Psalm 35 is determining whether the enemies are foreign nations and the threat is one of war: this means that the language of fighting, shield, buckler, spear, javelin in verses 1–3 is read in literal rather than metaphorical ways, and the vindictive language in verses 4–6 is read in the context of treaty curses. Against this view we might argue that these are personal metaphors suggesting an ancient setting of someone who has been persecuted and is now being brought to trial (verses 11, 22–28); the personal aspects are enhanced by noting the many links with Jeremiah’s Confessions.⁸⁶⁷

A significant link with Psalm 34 is the reference to the ‘angel of the Lord’ who protects those who fear him (34:7; 35:6)—a trope found nowhere else in the Psalter. Other motifs such as the imagery of lions (34:10 [Heb verse 11]; 35:17, using *kepirim*) and of the psalmist’s bones (34:20 [Heb verse 21]; 35:10, using *’ešem*), and the reference to God protecting his servants (34:22—plural; 35:27—singular) again suggest that the connecting together of Psalms 25–34 with 35–41 was not accidental.

Psalm 35 is actually a damaged text whose structure is difficult to discern. Verses 1–10 seem to be a prayer for help, using military imagery; verses 11–18 is a lament, with another prayer for rescue; and verses 19–28 being a prayer against enemies, ending with an assurance of being heard. Verses 7, 12, 15–17 and 25 have caused particular problems in translation. One example is in the **Targum*, where the Aramaic paraphrase for verse 15 reads, somewhat dramatically, ‘...*although they were tearing my skin they were not drawing blood...*’. Here the Hebrew reads, literally, ‘they tear away and they are not silent’. The word ‘to be silent’ is *damam*; the word for blood is *dam*; so the Aramaic emphasises further the physical language of torture. Similarly in verse 25: the Aramaic reads ‘*Lest*

⁸⁶⁷ For example the references to the enemies being brought to shame and dishonour in verse 4 correspond with Jer. 15:15, 17:18 and 20:11, and the appeals to God as a personal Judge and defender in verses 23 and 24, with Jer. 11:20 and 12:3.

they say “We have eaten him to the bone”’. The Hebrew reads, literally, ‘Do not let them say, “We have swallowed him up”’ (using the verb *bala* ‘). The choice of verb in the Aramaic is *gamar*, ‘destroy’; a similar-sounding word *garam* means ‘bone’; hence again the more vivid idea ‘we have destroyed/eaten him to the bone’. This is a good example of how this Aramaic paraphrase can bring in different allusions, albeit consonant with the rest of the text, when the sense of a particular verse is unclear.⁸⁶⁸

Despite suggestions that the enemies might be foreign nations, Jewish reception has mainly read the psalm from a personal point of view. *Kimḥi attributes the psalm to David when hunted by Saul. By contrast, the sixteenth century Italian commentator Obadiah Sforza sees this is another psalm about David and Absalom, where he is held guilty for crimes he did not commit.⁸⁶⁹ The reference in verse 20 ‘they did not speak peace’ is supposedly a play on the name Absalom, who promised peace (*shalom*) but did not bring it.⁸⁷⁰

It is not surprising to see how in Christian reception the language of an innocent figure being brought to trial was applied Jesus, and later to his disciples. So verse 19 (‘those who hate me without cause’) is alluded to in John 15:25, which describes the way Jesus’ disciples will, like their Master, experience the world’s hatred without due cause. *Cassiodorus includes this psalm in his fifth category of psalms about Christ’s Passion, along with 22, 55, 69 and 109. So the first section is spoken by Christ concerning his trials and suffering on the cross; the second section is Christ’s rejoicing in his resurrection; and the third is praise for the consequent hope of the faithful throughout the world.⁸⁷¹

Cassiodorus thus included the words of retribution in the first section of the psalms as actually uttered by Christ against his enemies the Jews. In this he took his lead from Paul in Romans 11:9, who alludes to the curses which the psalmist gave to his oppressors in Ps. 37:8 (and also in Ps. 69:23–24) to indict Israel, refusing to hear the Gospel, thus inverting the meaning of the psalm. Much Christian reception, however, struggled with how to deal with the curses in this psalm (verses 4–6, 8, 26). Commentators such as *Arnobius the Younger asked how we could pray such a psalm, when in the Gospel Jesus requires us to bless our enemies, not curse them? Rather, says Arnobius, we ought to fast and pray and remember the suffering of the Lord and let God fight for us instead.⁸⁷² By contrast, the *Lollards almost relished the curses in this psalm, as they did

⁸⁶⁸ Stec 2004:76–77.

⁸⁶⁹ Cohen 1992:103–107.

⁸⁷⁰ Feuer 2004: 421–35.

⁸⁷¹ Cassiodorus, in Walsh 1990: 336.

⁸⁷² *Commentary on the Psalms 35* in WGRW 5:349–51, in ACCS VII:272.

those in Psalm 137, to speak against their political opponents and defend their own cause.⁸⁷³ *Luther, too, at a time of depression in 1527, seeing himself as a second Job, used this psalm as a means of understanding his vindication, although he also developed its more confident expressions of faith: so “I am your salvation” in verse 3 instilled in him great hope that his sins might not be held forever against him.⁸⁷⁴

Christian liturgy has similarly been ambivalent about how to use this psalm. *Ambrose, followed by *Augustine, saw the psalm, like Psalm 22, as referring to the Passion of Christ (verses 13–16 and 20 especially) and so in the Roman Rite Psalm 35 was used on Good Friday.⁸⁷⁵ The Orthodox Church still follows this practice, noting that the references to false witnesses (verse 11) as well as verses 15, 16, 21 and 22 together suggested the sufferings of Christ, so this is a ‘Passion Psalm’ prayed at the Third Hour on Good Friday. But in recent liturgical reforms (for example, the **Daily Office*) the imprecations in verses 4–8, 20–21 and 24–26—not least those citing the jeering of the enemies—have been deemed inappropriate for public prayer and omitted.

Illuminated Psalters have less sensitivities about the imprecations and also see in this psalm the sufferings of Christ. The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 42v) depicts verses 12–13: the angel of the Lord is pursuing the enemy as dust before the wind. And in fol. 43v, using the Latin of verse 15 (*‘congregata sunt super me flagella’*, i.e., ‘scourges were gathered together upon me’) the image is of the flagellation of Christ, although his *nimbus has been omitted.⁸⁷⁶ Similarly fol. 44r depicts verse 21 (*‘et dilataverunt super meos suum’*, i.e. ‘and they opened their mouth wide against me’) with an illustration of the trial of Christ before Caiaphas, where a Jew offers verbal abuse, perhaps in the cry ‘Crucify him!’⁸⁷⁷ Byzantine Psalters follow the same trend: **Khludov* fol. 31v reads verse 11 through Matt. 26:57, 60–61, and depicts Christ standing before Caiaphas with two accusers, who are clearly dressed as Jews.⁸⁷⁸ A similar image is found in **Pantokrator* fol. 39v; Ananias (John 18:13) is the one named here, but two Jewish accusers are again present. Similar images are in **Theodore* fol. 39r, which has Christ before three figures—Ananias, Caiaphas and Pilate, and **Hamilton* fol. 87v, which includes a Roman soldier.⁸⁷⁹

Jewish illustrated Psalters obviously move in a different direction. The **Parma Psalter* (fol. 45A) links the suffering here with King David: the marginal

⁸⁷³ See Gillingham 2008b:255.

⁸⁷⁴ See Bornkamm 1983: 555–558.

⁸⁷⁵ Neale and Littledale 1874–79, Vol II: 548.

⁸⁷⁶ Corrigan 1992:47–8. See <https://goo.gl/e2SNzG>.

⁸⁷⁷ See <https://goo.gl/dgbs8r>.

⁸⁷⁸ <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.031v.jpg>.

⁸⁷⁹ For Theodore, see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f039vr.

illumination depicts a human figure wearing a crown and fur tippet raising his hand and pointing with the other to a shield and *rondache*: the figure could be David or any royal figure, but it illustrates verses 1–2: ‘Contend O Lord with those who contend with me...’⁸⁸⁰ A different interpretation is found in Moshe *Berger’s contemporary image, which democratises any royal interests in the psalm and applies them to anyone. At the bottom left, in many Hebrew letters, in reds, greens and blue, armies, horses and archers seem to appear: in the top right a blue whirling image, out of which a bright white light shines, affords protection. The artist comments that even a powerful king like David needs protection: and what can be a better shield than of the Almighty? ‘A person who trusts in Him always knows that His salvation is on hand but one must understand the time and meaning of one’s afflictions.’⁸⁸¹

The Lenten and Easter associations of this psalm are also apparent in a wide variety of Christian music. Psalm 37:13 (‘I humbled my soul with fasting’) is part of a Latin hymn found in two eleventh-century manuscripts in the British Museum; it was translated as an English metrical psalm by *Neale to the tune of ‘Jesu Corona’.⁸⁸² The Dutch composer Jan Pieterzoon Sweelinck made an arrangement of every psalm in the Psalter: his version of 35:6 (‘Deba contra mes débatteurs’ was written in Amsterdam in the early seventeenth century. Meanwhile *Weelkes, a near contemporary, wrote ‘Plead my cause’, using verses 1–9, 18 and 5. In the early eighteenth century Benedetto Marcello’s compositions of Psalms 35–41, in Italian, included an arrangement of Psalm 35: ‘L’empio coll’opre sue’ is for tenor, bass, and continuo. In each case the personal suffering evoked through the music calls to mind the passion of Christ.

One contemporary musical arrangement is very different. Marlon Asher’s reggae Rastifarian version of Psalm 35 (2015), like Psalms 55 and 137, uses the protests of the psalmist within a Caribbean social setting. Its popularity is on account of its appropriation as another psalmic protest song: hence the curses are an integral part of the psalm, to be used by any righteous sufferer—whether David or Christ, whether Jew or Christian, or anyone suffering oppression: this illustrates the psalm’s potential for anyone who will call to God to bring about justice, when betrayed by friends and when the poor and needy are abused (verses 22–28).⁸⁸³

⁸⁸⁰ Metzger, p. 73.

⁸⁸¹ See <https://goo.gl/vOk9cG>.

⁸⁸² See <https://goo.gl/VP2CCM>.

⁸⁸³ See <http://www.crosscurrents.org/murrell.htm>; also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewjLRAuU67o>.

Psalm 36: The Plight of the Poor

Psalm 36 is also concerned with arrogant oppressors (verse 11) but the mood is less urgent and more reflective than Psalm 35: verses 1–4 instruct the congregation about the plight of the poor in the face of the wicked; verses 5–9 are a hymn addressed to God; only verses 10–12 are a prayer, with the imprecatory tone more muted. The ‘servant’ in 35:27 (also 34:22) is now particularised as being David (as in the title of Psalm 36: ‘David, the servant of the Lord’).

One difficult phrase which affected the reception of this psalm is the first three words. The NRSV translation is ‘transgression speaks to the wicked’; but the Hebrew *ne’um-pesha’ la-rasha’* could read either as ‘pleasing (*na’im*) is transgression to the wicked’ or ‘an *oracle/utterance* (*ne’um*) of transgression of the wicked...’ (i.e. highlighting the purported inspiration of the wicked).

Jewish tradition focused on this verse. It understood *ne’um* as an utterance and ‘evil inclination’—a personalised ‘spirit of transgression’ which convinced others there was no God in charge of the world. This brings the psalm close in intent to Psalm 14 and 53, where the fool says in his heart there is no God; it contrasts with the spiritual enlightenment of the righteous in 36:9.⁸⁸⁴ Verse 6 (on God’s righteousness and judgements being like the mountains and the great deep) created a debate amongst Jewish commentators: *Rashi argued that the verse made it seem this was as if God had moved his faithfulness out of our reach; *Kimḥi claimed the verse was more about God’s kindness filling both earth and heaven.⁸⁸⁵

The nature of wickedness in the first verses is referred to in Rom. 3:9–20, where Paul is demonstrating that all, both Jew and Gentile, are under the power of sin (even though the second part of Psalm 36 clearly distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked). Interestingly Rom. 3:10–12 also uses verses from Ps. 14:1–3 / Ps. 53:1–3. Psalm 36:1 is then used in Rom. 3:18, where Paul concludes this **catena*: ‘There is no fear of God before their eyes’.

Later Christian commentary focusses more on the enlightenment of the righteous found in the second part of this psalm. Verse 9 (‘With you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light’) is particularly important, as the references to life/light/seeing light suggested the work of the Trinity: hence it was

⁸⁸⁴ So Kimḥi and Malbim: see Feuer 2004: 437–448.

⁸⁸⁵ Cohen 1992: 108–110.

termed ‘David’s Beatific Vision’.⁸⁸⁶ *Augustine comments on verse 9 that Christ is the fountain of life, who renews our weariness and slays our thirst; we will never be in the darkness, for he is our light.⁸⁸⁷ *Cassiodorus confirms the Christ-centred reading of this part of the psalm, by noting that the title ‘servant of the Lord’ tells us that this is about Jesus.⁸⁸⁸

Verses 7–10 (‘...they feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights...’) are popular in both Jewish and Christian liturgy. These are recited when putting on the prayer shawl during the Sabbath service; and verses 9–10 are sung in the Great Doxology at the close of the Sunday service of *Matins in Orthodox churches.

Byzantine Psalters offer some interesting artistic representations. First, the suggestion of a personalised form of evil, first proposed in Jewish reception as ‘the evil inclination’, is personified as being about Judas. Secondly, instead of reading of the Trinity into verse 9 (‘fountain... life...light’) a common motif is Christ offering living water to the Samaritan woman. So, for example, in the **Khludov Psalter* fol. 32v (where verse 1 reads in the Greek ‘the transgressor says within himself’) Judas is represented, with his name inscribed, holding a money bag;⁸⁸⁹ and in fol. 33r (on verse 9) we see a crowned David pointing to Christ, cross-nimbed, sitting on a rock, addressing a woman to the right of a well, with a bucket attached to a cord above the well-head, and a pitcher on the ground. The woman is labelled and in the right hand margin John 4:15 is inscribed, referring to when Christ promises a spring of water welling up to eternal life. An inscription above David reads ‘David says that Christ is the fountain of life.’⁸⁹⁰ These two images are also found in the **Pantokrator Psalter*, fol. 42r and fol. 42v. A third image, also in *Khludov*, but developed further in *Pantokrator*, is of Christ meeting Judas and soldiers at the time of his arrest, and they have fallen to the ground as recorded in Jn. 18:1–6. This image is just below that of the Samaritan woman; it contrasts the woman who recognises Jesus as the Messiah and the soldiers and Judas who do not, and so develops the theme of the wicked and the righteous in the psalm itself.⁸⁹¹ These three images

⁸⁸⁶ See Neale and Littledale 1874–79, Vol II: 78–80; also Theodoret of Cyrhus, *Commentary on the Psalms* 36.6, FC 101:220–221, in ACCS VII:284.

⁸⁸⁷ *Discourse on Psalm 35* (36):243–44. See <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801036.htm>.

⁸⁸⁸ See Walsh 1990: 349–51.

⁸⁸⁹ See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.032v.jpg>.

⁸⁹⁰ See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.033r.jpg>; also Corrigan p. 65.

⁸⁹¹ See Corrigan, p. 65.

also occur in the **Theodore Psalter* (fols. 40v, 41r and 41v) and the **Barberini Psalter* (fols. 60r, 60v and 61r).

A contemporary sequence of images using some of this tradition is found in two Millennium Windows at Great Malvern Priory, designed by Thomas Denny, the same artist who designed windows in Tewkesbury Abbey on Psalm 8.⁸⁹² These take up several motifs from verses 5–10, with their metaphors of heavens, clouds, mountains, deeps, wings, fountains and especially, light. So in the western window a wing-like form hovers over all four lights, representing verse 7 ('All peoples may take refuge in the shadow of your wings'). In the first light, a bird ascends to the sky (verse 5: 'Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens'). In the second, a figure stands in awe (verse 9: 'in your light we see light'); in the third, two figures kneel at the foot of a spring of water (verse 8: you give them drink from the river of your delights'). The fourth light shows two figures walking in a landscape (verse 8: 'they feast on the abundance of your house...'). Intriguingly in two spaces at the top of the window we see Christ depicted as the light of the world (Jn. 8:12), and in the other, Jesus with the woman of Samaria (Jn. 4:6–30). The eastern window develops the creation imagery in verse 6: Great Malvern is represented by way of a mountain and a pool ('your righteousness is like the mighty mountains/ your judgements are like the great deep').⁸⁹³

Although there are few musical arrangements of this psalm, recent commentaries offer a several responses to it, noting on the one hand personified wickedness at the beginning of this psalm, and on the other, the 'creation theology' in its hymnic part, where in verses 5–10 the whole world is viewed as God's sanctuary, fed by the rivers of life.⁸⁹⁴ A particularly personal reflection is offered by the German theologian, Jurgen Moltmann. It was verse 9 of this psalm which inspired him in moments of darkness, from his time as a prisoner of war to the present day: so here Moltmann sees God as both the source of all our knowing (the fountain of life) and also the object of our knowing (flooding all creation with light). In the shadows of darkness one encounters 'a well of life...enlightening light, like sunrise in the morning [which] is good for the mind and all our senses'. Moltmann muses on how just this one verse, which could be seen as about the revelation of God in Christ through the Spirit, encapsulates more about the Trinity than any theological tome—even more than Karl Barth's 8,000 pages in *Church Dogmatics*.⁸⁹⁵

⁸⁹² See p. 79 (on Denny, Psalm 8); also Pocker 2016: 37–43.

⁸⁹³ http://www.greatmalvernpriory.org.uk/photos/gallery.php?gallery_id=3&pg=1. See also Plate 11.

⁸⁹⁴ See for example Brueggemann and Bellinger 2014:179–80.

⁸⁹⁵ See Stockton 1977:180–188. The references to Psalm 36 are from Moltmann 1997:12 and 68.

Psalm 37: The Poor and the Land

Psalm 37 plays a distinctive role in the entire Psalter in its explicit bias to the poor. If the theme of the land is a concern in 35 and 41, the first and last psalms of this collection, it dominates Psalm 37. Here the word *'ereš* (sometimes translated 'earth', sometimes 'land') occurs six times, once in relation to 'dwelling' in it (verse 3—using *shakan*) and five times in relation to 'inheriting' it (verses 9, 11, 22, 29 and 34, using *yarash*). The phrase 'they shall inherit the land' is used only in this psalm and nowhere else in the Psalter. Elsewhere, especially in the Deuteronomistic literature, it is used fairly frequently as a literal, material promise and it is addressed to the entire people of Israel; but in this psalm, it no longer applies to the entire people, but only to a righteous few.⁸⁹⁶ The righteous are very prominent in this psalm: there are more references to the 'righteous' here than in any other psalm, including 119.⁸⁹⁷ Conversely, there are also more references to the 'wicked' than anywhere else.⁸⁹⁸

One curious issue which affects its reception is that the psalmist does not actually seem to be in abject poverty, but rather is a landowner who identifies with the rights of the poor. For example, verse 25 ('I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread') hardly suggests poverty; similarly the references to the righteous being generous, giving liberally, and lending (verses 21 and 26) suggest some access to material wealth. Furthermore, the literary form of the psalm, one of the eight acrostic psalms in the Psalter, suggests the psalmist was educated and so had access to material resources.⁸⁹⁹ Its use of many of the aphorisms taken from the Book of Proverbs might identify the psalmist with the proverbial sages, who in their day would be the educated middle-class.⁹⁰⁰ So the psalmist, rather like some of the prophets, seems to be relatively well-off, but with a concern for the poor, looking to the day when

⁸⁹⁶ See Ruiz 2015: 26–27.

⁸⁹⁷ See verses 12, 16, 17, 21, 25, 28, 29, 30, 32, 39.

⁸⁹⁸ See verses 1, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 28, 32, 34, 35, 38, 40.

⁸⁹⁹ Also Psalms 9–10; 25; 34; 111; 112, 119 and 145. In this psalm the acrostic form stretches over four lines per letter; only verses 14 (the letter het), 25 (the letter nun) and verse 28 (the letter ayin) is the acrostic form somewhat broken.

⁹⁰⁰ Verses 1–2: Prov. 24:1,19 and 23:17; verses 5–6: Prov. 16:3; verses 16–17: Prov.15:16 and 16:18; verses 21–22: Prov. 3:33; verses 23–24: Prov. 24:16; verses 30–31: Prov. 10:31–32; and verses 32–33: Prov. 1:11. See Craigie 1983: 297–99. Furthermore, the psalm has several links with Psalm 1, again suggesting a psalmist at the heart of the society, rather than at the fringes of it: For example, each expresses delight in Yahweh (37:4; see 1:2) and in keeping God's law (37:31; see 1:2); each speaks of the wicked disappearing like chaff or smoke (37:20; see 1:4); each claims special protection for the righteous (37:39–40; see 1:6); each stresses the two ways (37:7,23; see 1:6). All this at least suggests a shared cultural context if not direct borrowing.

their cause will be vindicated by God. The situation of social deprivation reminds one of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah: the Persian period, with all its uncertainties about land possession, caused by factions within and foreign rule without, may well be the context for this psalm.

Despite its unique emphasis—a theme which is recurrent in its later reception history—the compilers have embedded this psalm within Psalms 35–41 as a whole. For example, the end of Psalm 36 (verse 11–12) has an identical concern to the beginning of Psalm 37 (verses 1–2); the former concerns the fate of the ‘evildoers’ (the *po‘ale ‘awen*) and the latter, the fate of the ‘wicked’ (*mere‘im*). The importance of God’s light (36:9; 37:6) and of refuge in God (36:7; 37:39, 40) pervades both psalms.

It is noteworthy that later Jewish interpretations of Psalm 37 are offered from ‘outside the land’, so that in different ways they are concerned with the problem of incongruity, in that promises of inheriting the land had clearly not been fulfilled. One of the earliest Jewish responses is from *Qumran. Although the provenance is not far from Jerusalem, in the Judean desert, the sectarian community there considered themselves to be ‘in exile’, far from the City and the Temple. 4QpPs^a is an important scroll in this respect: it is a **peshet* on much of Psalm 37, and this is the only psalm to receive such detailed interpretative treatment in the *Dead Sea Scrolls. Its frequent refrain ‘...the interpretation of it concerns...’ shows how what was once a didactic and even homiletic psalm has now become a specific prophecy applied to the community at *Qumran.⁹⁰¹ So Fragments 1–10, organised in 4QpPs^a as Columns I, II III and IV, read parts of verses 5–39 as prophecy. They identify themselves as ‘the congregation of the poor’, and acrid disagreements between their ‘Teacher of Righteousness’ and the ‘Man of Lies’ (or the ‘Wicked Priest’, probably at the Jerusalem Temple) are all too evident. For example, verse 11 (‘the meek shall inherit the land’) is interpreted to refer to ‘the congregation of the Poor who shall accept the season of penance and shall be delivered from all the snares of Belial. Afterwards, all who possess the earth shall delight and prosper on exquisite food.’ For verses 18–19 (‘The Lord knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will abide forever’) we read, ‘Its interpretation concerns the penitents of the desert who, saved, shall love for a thousand generations and to whom all the inheritance of Adam shall belong, as also to their seed for ever.’ For verses 21–22 (‘...for those blessed by the Lord shall inherit the land...’) we read ‘Interpreted, this concerns the congregation of the Poor, who shall possess the whole world as an inheritance. They shall possess the High Mountain of Israel for ever, and in his sanctuary shall delight.’ If ever there was a good illustration as to how the psalms were read as prophecies in early Judaism, this is it.

⁹⁰¹ See the translation by Vermes 1997:487–91; also Carmignac 1961: 235–70 and Holladay 1993: 104–5.

**Targum Psalms* similarly applied Psalm 37 to its own community of faith. Now ‘the wicked’ and ‘evildoers’ in Psalm 37 are no longer schismatic Jews as at *Qumran, but oppressive *Gentiles* outside the community. And here there is no expectation of immediate re-possession of ‘the land’: the hope for restoration has now been deferred to the final day of judgement. So Ps. 37:20 (‘the wicked perish, ...they vanish—like smoke they vanish away’) is now a reference to the wicked *Gentiles* who will be punished on the final day of judgement: ‘...as for the enemies of the Lord...*even so shall the wicked come to an end, and they shall be destroyed in the smoke of *Gehenna.*’ And verse 33 (which speaks of the cause of the righteous being upheld when brought to trial) now applies to any righteous Jew *when they stand for judgement* (i.e. on the final day).⁹⁰² The psalm is thus read in the light of the continual battle between the wicked *Gentiles* and the righteous Jews: some five hundred years since the destruction of the Temple, the idea of actually inheriting the land, as believed at *Qumran, has become a utopian hope.

**Midrash Tehillim* has a different perspective. Also recognising that the promises of ‘inheriting the land’ have not been fulfilled, *Midrash Tehillim* argues that rewards are no longer to be measured in terms of prosperity, but in terms of a *relationship with God*, using Abraham and Solomon as examples.⁹⁰³ Hence Psalm 37 is read alongside Psalm 73, because that psalm, which also deals similarly with the prosperity of the wicked, stresses that a relationship with God is all important.⁹⁰⁴

However, commentators such as *Rashi and *Kimḥi do refer to ‘inheriting the land’ in material terms. Writing from the perspective of persecution in western Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries respectively, ‘the land’ is again a reward for the righteous Jew, having endured for so long an experience of exile. Rashi is particularly clear about this.⁹⁰⁵ Kimḥi reads the imperative call (in Hebrew) ‘Dwell in the land!’ quite literally: ‘the wicked will lose everything and the righteous will take what is left behind.’⁹⁰⁶

Christian reception of this psalm leans towards a more spiritual reading. The earliest example is in the Sermon on the Mount, where ‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth’ (Matt. 5:5) is a citation of Ps. 37:11. Matthew uses the *Septuagint* version of this verse. So, like the *Septuagint*, which translates ‘*anaw* in verse 11 as *praus*, meaning humble, or gentle of spirit, Matthew also uses the same word, thus interpreting this verse as

⁹⁰² Stec 2004: 79–82.

⁹⁰³ See for example K. Schaefer 2001: 94.

⁹⁰⁴ See Volume Three, on Ps. 73:17–26; also Braude 1992: 422–34.

⁹⁰⁵ This is clear in his commentary on verse 3. See Gruber 2004: 313.

⁹⁰⁶ *Kimḥi, cited in Cohen 1992: 112.

about a poverty *of spirit*. So ‘Blessed are the meek, *for they will inherit the earth*’ is a metaphor for receiving spiritual blessings, and, like other Beatitudes such as verse 8 (‘they will see God’) and verse 10 (‘they will inherit the kingdom of heaven’) the promise here is about inheriting the kingdom of heaven.⁹⁰⁷

Early Christian commentators never read this psalm in the context of regaining the land and of rebuilding Jerusalem: this was such an obviously Jewish belief that they deliberately distanced themselves from it. Instead, like Matthew, they spiritualised the idea of ‘inheriting the land’. For example, by the third century CE, *Origen’s reading of verse 3 (‘Dwell in the land!’) is typically allegorical: this means ‘you will live in the land, and enjoy security’ and is interpreted as a reference to our need to purge our soul (‘the land’) from its faults so we may live in the security of God’s presence for ever.⁹⁰⁸

By the fourth and fifth centuries, this is the dominant view. *Augustine’s comments on verse 11 are that this is more about the importance of *achieving meekness* than *inheriting land*; indeed, possessing God is far more important than possessing wealth or land: ‘You will possess God and God will possess you and you will need nothing else’.⁹⁰⁹ Augustine actually reads the whole psalm as about the indispensability of divine grace, seeing its counterpart in Jn. 15:5 (‘without me you can do nothing’).⁹¹⁰

*Cassiodorus, writing from his monastery in southern Italy a century and a half later, reads the psalm as ‘the voice of the Church for the correction of the people’.⁹¹¹ So the whole psalm is about the abundant grace of God through Jesus Christ for his church. The land is the new Jerusalem, ‘a city filled with sweet blessings where inhabitants do not trade but feed on their delight on God’.⁹¹² Hence the familiar references in verses 3 and 11 are an encouragement to Christians to contemplate Christ, for the satisfaction of their soul.⁹¹³ From verse 18 (‘The Lord knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will abide forever’) Cassiodorus notes that our inheritance is ‘*heavenly Jerusalem* most rich in eternal peace’.⁹¹⁴

However, some Christian commentators did assume Psalm 37 taught about unfair distribution of wealth, even though they did not read it as about (Jewish)

⁹⁰⁷ The fact that Psalm 37 is not cited in Luke’s version of the Beatitudes in Lk. 6:20–26, with its more material promises, reinforces this view.

⁹⁰⁸ Origen, *Homily 1 on Psalm 37.3*. See SC 411:72, in ACCS VII:290

⁹⁰⁹ Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms* 37.12, WSA 3 16 :101, in ACCS VII:293.

⁹¹⁰ Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms* 37.16. See WSA 3 16:115–116, in ACCS VII:296.

⁹¹¹ Cassiodorus *Explanation of the Psalms* 37.11 in ACW 51:357.

⁹¹² This could not be further removed from the community at Qumran. See Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 37.11 ACW 51:362, in ACCS VII:293.

⁹¹³ Cassiodorus *Explanation of the Psalms* 37.11 in ACW 51:359.

⁹¹⁴ Cassiodorus *Explanation of the Psalms* 37.11 in ACW 51:362 and 365.

claims of land inheritance. *Ambrose, for example, uses verse 21 ('the righteous are generous and keep giving') as about the importance of lending money without interest—but then allegorises the verse, arguing that this is not really about lending money generously, but about sharing one's faith to the Gentiles.⁹¹⁵

*Aquinas's reading of the psalm similarly begins with teaching on wealth—that it is better to have a little and to be just than to have much and to be unjust—but then develops this into reading the psalm as an example of Christ's suffering, whose model of obedience was to resist evil and to act justly. Christ's suffering on the cross, facing evil without anger, reveals how good can come out of innocent suffering.⁹¹⁶

*Calvin has an interesting reading of this psalm: noting that rich men (for example Lazarus in Lk. 16:20–31) have in fact been reduced to becoming beggars; he questions the observation of the sage in verse 25 ('I have not seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread') and notes that the psalm cannot therefore be about the promises of material gain for obedience and trust. But this then allows him to argue that the ethos of this psalm must be about spiritual blessings, and that the psalm has been fulfilled in Christ.⁹¹⁷

In Jewish liturgy, it is ironic that verse 25 is used as a Grace after meals, assuming its teaching to be about God's apparent provision for all our needs. Its use in Christian worship is entirely different: based on verses 30–31, about the witness of the righteous, and on verses 39–40, on God's ultimate vindication of the righteous, the psalm is used in Orthodox liturgy to commemorate the Feast of John the Baptist and other followers of Christ who have endured martyrdom.

Christian illuminated Psalters, however, do follow the theme that the psalm teaches about social justice for the *materially* poor. The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 21r), for example, presents in its collocation of scenes the theme of justice and injustice noted in the psalm. The psalmist sits just below Christ, who looks down from heaven, surrounded by six angels; he sits before a lectern containing a book and a pair of scales. Two young men stand beside him, and the personification of the sun is placed above the book and scales ('He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light and thy judgment as the noonday', as in verse 6). On a hill four righteous men are being served at a table by an attendant ('in the days of famine they shall be satisfied', as in verse 19). Beside the table an angel is

⁹¹⁵ Ambrose, *Commentary on Twelve Psalms* 37.62 ACTP 93, in ACCS VII:297. A more literal application of lending money without interest is found in illuminated manuscripts, which will be seen shortly.

⁹¹⁶ See Ryan 2000: 121, 195.

⁹¹⁷ Calvin 1979: 3. Calvin is not entirely novel, however, but dependent upon the commentaries of the fathers (for example Ambrose) who also cited Lazarus and noted other scriptural examples of begging for food (Jacob and his family going down to Egypt in famine; Elijah and the woman from Zarapeth).

supporting another ‘righteous’ man who is about to fall (verse 24). In the middle register at the right a man is distributing provisions to a group of poor and needy (verse 26). At the left a group of people is pointing at a man falling out of a tree (verse 35) as if from his ‘high estate’ (verse 36).⁹¹⁸

The **Stuttgart Psalter* offers three images focussing on the wicked rich and the righteous poor. Fol. 45v represents the wicked as idolaters who avoid the cause of the poor (verse 1); fol. 46v shows the wicked attacking the poor and needy (verse 14); a more spiritual interpretation is however found in fol. 47r, which shows the psalmist being upheld, literally, by the hand of God (verse 24).⁹¹⁹ There is none of the typically Jewish interest in the physical inheritance of the land.

Given the teaching against usury throughout the early Byzantine Empire, it is not surprising that relevant verses from Psalm 37 were illustrated in striking ways in Byzantine Psalters. The second and third of the three images in the **Khludov Psalter* are good examples of this. The second (fol. 35r) is an image of Charity, dressed as a woman, in royal garments, distributing alms; this is taken from verse 26 (‘They are ever giving liberally and lending’) and Charity is giving money to some monks; an inscription, in Greek, reads ‘Holy and good Charity teaches and manifests her own glory; and happy is he who will do and will teach’. The third image (fol. 35v) illustrates verse 35 (‘I have seen the wicked oppressing ...’) and is of John Grammatian (a figure associated with Simon Magus, a heretic who was denounced at the Council of Nicaea). He holds a money bag in his right hand, and a basket full of coins is on his left. He is inspired by a small demon. He is a sorcerer: he holds a serpent in his left hand and his shock of hair stands on end, so he looks like the devil who inspires him. This is a figure which Christians, rich or poor, should not emulate.⁹²⁰ Another related representation is in the fourteenth-century **Hamilton Psalter* (fol. 92v), where Charity is here a male figure, giving alms to the poor (one holding a staff).

Several contemporary illustrations of this psalm also read the psalm as about the defence of the materially poor. The artist Arthur **Wragg’s* depiction of verse 40 (‘the Lord helps them and rescues them’) could be read as either ironic or hopeful. Here the ‘meek’ and ‘righteous poor’ are the economically deprived: they walk the streets, abject and helpless, overshadowed by high buildings and dark mills (Figure 6). They seem to await some physical restitution.⁹²¹

⁹¹⁸ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=48&res=1&cx=0&y=0>.

⁹¹⁹ On fol. 45v, see <https://goo.gl/rYHKb>; on fol. 46v, see <https://goo.gl/B36qgc>; and on fol. 47r see <https://goo.gl/giObBJ>.

⁹²⁰ See Corrigan 1992: 28–29. See the two images of fols. 35r and 35v as Plates 12 and 13.

⁹²¹ See Wragg 1934 (no p. nos.).



FIGURE 6 Arthur Wragg, 'The Lord helps them and rescues them' (Ps.37:40)

In Roger *Wagner's *The Book of Praises* there are four images of this psalm, each of them interpreting it in a material way, and the last image ends with hope. The imagined scene is of Acts 16.25–26 where Paul and Silas are in prison, in chains; the first woodcut image, again in black and white, shows them singing in their chains; the second image represents the earthquake, the third, their prayer for release, and the fourth, them speaking about their deliverance to the jailor after the earthquake. This is a graphic illustration of the teaching of the psalm about focussing on God and not on the evil that surrounds us, and it affirms that salvation and deliverance will ultimately follow.⁹²²

In Jewish art, a concern for the poor is found as early as the **Parma Psalter*. This is a lavish edition: so its illustration over Psalm 37 suggests that, like the psalmist, this the work of one who is not poor but seeks to side with the poor—in this case, the Jewish community undergoing persecution and isolation in thirteenth century northern Italy. This Psalter has very few full human figures (mostly the figures are of animals, or of animals with human heads) but in

⁹²² Taken from email correspondence with the artist (31-07-16).

fol. 48B the image is of a figure, in a dark blue hooded garment, bending his face upwards to the heavens: he has white hair and an aged face. The illustration evokes verse 25 ('and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread...'), and as well as being influenced by this being used as a prayer at meals, it also reveals an interest in the issue of justice.

As for contemporary Jewish illustrations of Psalm 37, one example is Moshe *Berger, whose image reflects the ongoing insecurities of land possession since 1948, and so accords with the sentiments of the psalmist we noted earlier. It depicts the city of Jerusalem being protected in what seems to be a golden orb set against hues of red, blue and silver, each containing Hebrew calligraphy. The focus is on the Hebrew of verse 3 ('Dwell in the land! Enjoy security!'). The artist comments most pertinently: 'King David's advice is to the one who does good—only he has the merit to dwell in the land. And then this land may nurture him with faith, for it is a holy land, a land where the Almighty's blessings will remain forever.'⁹²³

Musical compositions focus on both the spiritual and material understanding of poverty in this psalm. A motet by *Byrd, on verse 25–28, focusses on the material teaching on social justice. *Mendelssohn's *Elijah* offers a more spiritual interpretation. Verses 7, 4, 5 and 1 are all used in Part Two; the piece follows no. 30, 'Arise Elijah', a recitative between the angel and prophet. The setting is Elijah's flight to the wilderness, tortured by self-doubt but looked after by angels. 'O rest in the Lord' (no. 31) is based especially on verse 7 ('Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him'), and is a part of the encouragement to Elijah to return to face Ahab and the prophets of Baal. Perhaps the most unusual interpretation is Howell's *Three Psalms Preludes* (Set 1): the second of these, on Psalm 37:11, corresponds in many ways with *Wragg's visual representation, as it was composed during the First World War.⁹²⁴ Its mood, composed for the organ only, is shared with the other two psalms in the set: whilst Ps. 34:6 evokes hope for the downtrodden, and Ps. 23:4, on everlasting life for the departed, Psalm 37 is about a crisis of belief in God's goodness. It begins in a minor key and so creates an introspective and anxious mood; this rises to an impassioned climax as the expression of faith ('the meek shall inherit the land') is fully realised: it then transforms to a diminuendo with a major tonality as the resolution is achieved. God has heard the psalmist's cry.⁹²⁵

A good deal of Jewish music adapts a literal interpretation of 'inheriting the land'. One example is Otto *Goldschmidt, in his Opera 'Ruth', for the London Three Choirs Festival (Op. 20, 1867), who emphasises this theme as Ruth

⁹²³ http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=15170&showmode=Full.

⁹²⁴ Herbert Howells, *Three Psalm Preludes, Set 1*. Op 32 (1915–16). See Dowling-Long and Sawyer 2015:242. See also pp. 151 and 209 on Psalms 23 and 34.

⁹²⁵ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bauamBpKW60>.

prepares to travel with Naomi to a land she does not know.⁹²⁶ A recent example is *Shulamit Ran's 'The humble shall inherit the earth', composed for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the New York Virtuoso Singers in 2012.⁹²⁷ It uses the constancy of the voices of the male cantors to evoke sonority and calm, whilst the experimental—sometimes cacophonous—harmonies of the alto and soprano voices suggest transformation and change. The piece moves from verses 25, 35, 36, 29 to 11, and so changes from exuberance to silence as it considers a day when the earth might be imbued with a time of peace.

Contemporary writings reflect the familiar shift in 'universalising' the psalm, so that the 'poor' are understood materially, but this now applies to those who are impoverished everywhere, and the 'land' includes the entire 'earth'—i.e. wherever injustice to the poor prevails. Beth Tanner, in the recent *New International Commentary on the Psalms*, sums this up well: 'This psalm needs little translation in today's world... it is now clear that many, many bankers, con artists, and mortgage brokers feed off the dreams and hopes of those who have less resources and education... The psalm offers a pair of glasses with a longer vision that offers us a way to see the world through kingdom eyes. There are values that last and make for peace and those that are transitory and destroy, even if at the time the latter look tempting'.⁹²⁸

This new appropriation also allows for a new freedom to question a key assumption made by the psalmist, namely his certitude that material rewards—the land itself—would be given to the poor. So the poem by Edmund Blunden, again from the Great Depression, and entitled 'Report on Experience', reverses the observations of the sage in verse 25.⁹²⁹ Blunden reflects:

I have been young, and now am not too old;
And I have seen the righteous forsaken,
His health, his honour and his quality taken.
This is not what we were formerly told.

Robert Carroll adds a further comment: 'Too many Jewish children begged in the streets and ghettos of the Third Reich (not to mention through the long history of Christian Europe) for the modern reader to be impressed by its writer's faith. ... We cannot now read the text without reflecting on how false it sounds...'⁹³⁰

⁹²⁶ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 201.

⁹²⁷ See '25 x 25: 25 Premieres for 25 Years', by The New York Virtuoso Singers, conductor Harold Rosenbaum, Soundbrush Records 2013, SR1027.

⁹²⁸ Tanner in De Claissé-Walford, Jacobson and Tanner (eds.) 2014: 354.

⁹²⁹ 'Report on Experience' is in Blunden, http://www.poetsgraves.co.uk/Classic%20Poems/Blunden/report_on_experience.htm, cited in Carroll 1992: 68–9.

⁹³⁰ Carroll 1992: 69.

This echoes the sentiments of Jacqueline Osherow, in her poem entitled ‘Psalm 37 at Auschwitz’. She concludes that, after the horrors of the Holocaust, the promises offered in Psalm 37 just do not accord with Jewish experience.⁹³¹ There is an obvious contradiction between the faith of the psalmist in verse 10 (‘just a little longer and there will be no wicked one’) and the experience of Auschwitz. Osherow also considers the phrase in verse 25, not least because for Jews it is such a familiar verse as a Grace after meals. ‘I have never seen the righteous or their children begging for bread’: she reflects on the word ‘begging’—and notes there was plenty of that; she reflects sardonically on whether the psalmist intended his people to survive on faith alone. The poem ends:

I know it sounds crazy, but couldn't one of them—
Not that it matters, they all died anyway—
But still, so many people, and enough time
For reciting what the dying are supposed to say

(*Hear O Israel, et cetera*) and a psalm.
Or not even a whole psalm. Just one line.
All those people waiting. Couldn't one of them
Have mumbled to a brother, a father, a son

(The women, of course, were on another line
And this was not a psalm they would have known),
Just a little longer and there will be no wicked one;
Just a little longer... he'll be gone.

But this psalm is not only about the Jewish dispossession of land, particularly in a contemporary setting. Walter Brueggemann universalises the psalm in an important way. He reminds us, like Tanner, that in the psalm ‘...property, security, wealth and power are here drawn into world of faith.’⁹³² He also argues that the voice in verse 25 seems to be that of a self-assured property-owning middle class, affirming that the system of land-ownership works.⁹³³ He notes the irony in that the voice is of one who considers himself ‘blameless’ (verses 18 and 37, using *tamim* and *tam*). Brueggemann suggests that the psalm is to be read as a *challenge*, ‘not as congratulations for the landed but as a ground of hope for the landless.’⁹³⁴ The core message is that indifferent land ownership is not viable, and that exploitation damages not only all those who dwell in the land but the land itself.⁹³⁵

⁹³¹ See J. Osherow 1999: 60–4.

⁹³² Brueggemann 1995: 235–57; here, p. 237.

⁹³³ Brueggemann 1995: 239.

⁹³⁴ Brueggemann 1995: 249.

⁹³⁵ Brueggemann 1995: 257.

A more passionate echo of the theme of land possession is found in Eleuterio R. Ruiz's account of Psalm 37, which arises from his experience of working with the landless in Brazil and Argentina. Of all the works cited above, these reflections have a real cutting edge, as Ruiz pleads for a prophetic vision that God will indeed act to upturn the present realities of the poor and exploited everywhere. Ruiz reminds us that, whatever our own situation and it is our ability, like the psalmist himself, to *identify* with the poor and landless which makes all the difference.⁹³⁶

Psalm 38: Penitence and Sickness

Psalm 38 is the first of the four psalms concerned with sickness concluding Book One. It has a clear structure, with its cries for help at the beginning and the end, and its descriptions of distress in the middle. Although some of its imagery suggests the influence of Jeremiah, as with Psalm 36 (for example verse 1, identical to Ps. 6:1, is like Jer. 10:24) the connection between suffering and sin also connects the psalm with Job, as Christian and Jewish commentators have both suggested.

The psalm also has several associations with other neighbouring psalms. The sense of being abandoned by former friends (verse 11) links the psalm with 35:13–14 and 41:9. Its 22 verses, in two-line units (three for verse 12), imitate the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in the same way as Psalm 33 did. Furthermore, there are some clear associations with the acrostic Psalm 37, for example in the contrast of the utterances of the righteous in 37:30 with the mutterings of the wicked in 38:12 (in each case using the Hebrew word *hagah*) and the resolution at the end of each psalm, in the 'salvation' (*teshu'ah*) of God (37:39; 38:22). This then is the first stage of reception history of this psalm, playing its part towards the conclusion of Book One.

The various headings over the psalm have resulted in different perceptions as to its use. The Hebrew title reads 'A Psalm of David, for the memorial offering'. This implies the psalm had some cultic associations. The Greek, however, reads *psalmos tō Dauid eis anamnēsin peri sabbatou*: so instead of giving the psalm a cultic connection, the Greek simply termed it 'a psalm of David for remembrance', and added that this is a psalm especially 'for the Sabbath'.⁹³⁷

⁹³⁶ Ruiz 2015:105–106.

⁹³⁷ The **Vulgate* also follows this addition: '*Psalmus David in rememorationem de sabbato*'. See Ladouceur 2005:98. This connection with the Sabbath provokes some interesting Christian comments, as will be illustrated shortly.

This connects Psalm 38 with 92. Psalm 38, with its pleas for deliverance, and Psalm 92, with its confidence in the God who judges the wicked, offer two complementary Sabbath themes.

In relation to the literary context of this psalm, Psalm 38 is one of the very few psalms in Books One to Three to be given a different ‘neighbour’ in the *Dead Sea Scrolls. 4QPs^a places Psalm 38 (or at least verses 2, 4, 6, 8–10, 12, 16–23 of it) not before Psalm 39 but before Psalm 71. It would seem that this is because Psalm 70 also has the same heading as 38—‘for the memorial offering’—and Psalm 71 was understood to follow a psalm with this heading, so it was assigned to follow Psalm 38 instead.⁹³⁸ This reveals a certain elasticity of the ordering of the psalms at *Qumran, one which will become more apparent in Books Four and Five.

Jewish commentators were interested in the psalm’s heading. **Targum* reads ‘A Psalm of David: *over a bunch of frankincense, as a memorial for Israel*’. This might be an allusion to the use of frankincense for memorial offerings in Lev. 2:2,16: the addition is the same in Psalm 70.⁹³⁹ Here the liturgical connections are recognised. But this is not for David, but ‘for Israel’: an apparently personal psalm is now applied to the entire nation. *Rashi followed this reading, upholding that the psalm was about the long dark exile, and that David had *all Israel* in mind when he composed the psalm. God has thus ‘brought to remembrance’ all Israel’s troubles, not least in the context of the crusades, forced conversions and persecutions.⁹⁴⁰ Other rabbis took a more personal interpretation—for example, *Kimḥi argued that David composed the psalm for all those who were critically ill, and Rabbi Malbim related it to the consequences of David’s sin with Bathsheba.⁹⁴¹ However, the prominent view in Jewish reception is the importance of the repentance of the entire people, which will bring about their redemption: it is not surprising that Psalm 38 was never used officially as a personal psalm of penitence, as it was in Christian tradition.

Christian reception moves between reading the psalm entirely personally, and reading it in relation to the sufferings of Christ through his trials and death on the cross. An obvious problem was its association with repentance, when it was clear that Christ had no need to repent. So only certain verses were used for a Christological reading: those speaking about the sin of the suppliant, such as 3–6 and 17–18, could not be adapted. Other parts of the psalm, which described physical pain and betrayal, could be seen as prophecies concerning the sufferings of Christ, like Psalms 22 and 35. So it is possible that Lk. 23:49, which

⁹³⁸ See commentary on Psalm 71, p. 382.

⁹³⁹ Stec 2004:82.

⁹⁴⁰ Gruber 2004:319 and 322.

⁹⁴¹ On Kimḥi, see Cohen: 117–20; on Kimḥi and Malbim, see Feuer 2004: 471–3.

describes Jesus' acquaintances 'standing at a distance', might be an allusion to Ps. 38:11 ('My friends and companions stand aloof from my affliction...').

Amongst the church fathers, *Origen is one the earliest to be aware of this issue, unusually opining that this was originally about David, the archetypical sinner. But Origen also notes that the journey of every Christian soul includes repentance, moving from purification to imitation, and so becoming like Christ who is the agent of purification. So Christ is to be found in the psalm, but as teacher (in our purification) and presence (for our imitation).⁹⁴²

Other Christian commentators preferred a more literal approach. *Diodore, for example, read this psalm, like Psalm 6 (and following a Jewish approach), as about the consequences of David's sin with Bathsheba.⁹⁴³ *Theodore of Mopsuestia similarly related this to the life of David, who even after having received forgiveness for his sin with Bathsheba from Nathan, still *remembered* it (hence the psalm's heading) as he saw his sufferings with Absalom as a refining process. David is thus our exemplary penitent: 'All my desire is in you' (verse 9).⁹⁴⁴

Even *Ambrose read the psalm in the light of David and Job, rather than Christ, noting nevertheless that it was Christ who destroyed our human sinfulness in his flesh. So this was a psalm for all penitents, particularly for those fighting the attacks of sin, the flesh and the devil—not least at baptism.⁹⁴⁵ *Cassiodorus, too, wrote at length about hearing the voice of Job (not Christ) in this psalm, crying to God, describing his distress, and coming to a resolution.⁹⁴⁶

For *Augustine the psalm provided a good example of a prosopological reading, where, using 1 Cor. 12:12–27 as a guide, we find both Christ the Body (suffering with us) and Christ the Head (praying for us in our sins).⁹⁴⁷ *Hesychius places an interesting emphasis on the heading of the psalm in the Greek and Latin: the 'memorial offering for the sabbath' refers to the *Sabbath sacrifice of Christ*, assuming our humanity. So verse 3 ('there is no health in my bones because of my sin') is a reference to Christ bearing the sins of the whole human race, but not to his own sins; similarly verse 18 ('I confess my sin...') are words which Christ now utters on behalf of the church.⁹⁴⁸ This was exactly the same point *Luther was making in his commentary on the seven *penitential psalms in 1519: both for Psalms 6 and 38, this is about Christ's *remembering* on our behalf.⁹⁴⁹

⁹⁴² The complete text of Origen's commentary on this psalm is in a translation by Rufinus: see R. Price 2011:1–15.

⁹⁴³ See Hill 2005:121–124.

⁹⁴⁴ See Hill 2006: 441–44.

⁹⁴⁵ See *Commentary on Twelve Psalms*, ACTP, p. 119 in Waltke *et al* 2015: 122–131.

⁹⁴⁶ Walsh 1990:377–87.

⁹⁴⁷ *En in Ps*, CCL 38.394.

⁹⁴⁸ See Price 2011: 9–1).

⁹⁴⁹ See Luther on Psalm 38 at <https://www.stepbible.org/?q=version=Luther|reference=Psa.38>.

The commentary on Psalm 6, the first so-called ‘penitential psalm’ of which Psalm 38 is the third, has dealt with some of the issues of both the positive and negative ways these psalms were used.⁹⁵⁰ On the one hand, they encouraged a genuine piety and devotion; but on the other, they contributed to the sale of indulgences for the salvation of the soul from sin.⁹⁵¹ By the ninth century, partly popularised earlier by *Cassiodorus and then by *Alcuin, the seven *penitential psalms received recognition through their use in the Office of the Dead, when they were used in the early dawn offices of *Lauds or *Prime; but by the fourteenth century, these were also the key psalms used to buy off individual sins through indulgences.⁹⁵² Psalm 38 was to be used against the sin of Gluttony.

In eastern Christendom the Orthodox Church did not use Psalm 38 in this way. Instead it was the second of six used at *Matins (3, 38, 63, 88, 103 and 143)—a different collection of six psalms which dealt more directly with the cause of suffering as sin. Yet it also spoke of the sufferings of Christ. Verse 17 (‘For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever with me’) is still an *antiphon in Orthodox liturgy used on Good Friday at the Third Hour of prayer, before the scripture readings: taken from the *Septuagint* translation, it reads, literally, ‘I am ready for wounds, and My pain is with Me always’.

It is noteworthy that compared with Christian liturgy, Psalm 38 was never used as a personal, penitential psalm in Jewish worship. This was about the suffering of the entire people; associated in some traditions with the Sabbath, its corporate appropriation has always been primary.⁹⁵³

In terms of artistic reception, the Christian use of this psalm follows the same two paths as in the commentary tradition: either this is a psalm for any individual penitent to use, or it is to be read in the light of who Christ is and what he has done for us. So in the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 22r) the psalmist is represented as a leper, with sores (verses 3 and 5) all over his body; he has a heavy sack over his back and shoulder, representing his sins (verse 4) and he is appealing to the *Christ-Logos at the top of the image to take them from him.⁹⁵⁴ Another interesting Christological reading is found in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 49r) which depicts verse 11 and 14 as referring to the denial of Peter (‘my friends and companions stand aloof from my affliction’; ‘I am like the one who does not hear...’).⁹⁵⁵

⁹⁵⁰ See Psalm 6, pp. 64–67.

⁹⁵¹ One such positive account of Psalm 38 is Richard Rolle’s commentary: see Hudson (ed.) 2013:427–36. For a discussion of the negative use of the penitential psalms, see Gillingham 2008b:62.

⁹⁵² See Neale and Littledale 1874–79, Vol I: 606.

⁹⁵³ See Holladay 1993:145, who notes that also Psalms 32, 51, 102 and 143 have never been used as penitential psalms in Jewish tradition.

⁹⁵⁴ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=50&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

⁹⁵⁵ See <https://goo.gl/bfsiQS>.

By contrast, other Psalters read the psalm as concerning the penitent sinner. So the *St. Albans Psalter* shows the psalmist as bowed down, performing extraordinary contortions, because of his sin and guilt. This illustrates is verse 4: ‘My iniquities have gone over my head’ they weigh like a burden too heavy for me.’⁹⁵⁶

Because this is a *penitential psalm, it has a rich afterlife in many *Books of Hours*. A standard image which has been reproduced many times is found in *MS. Douce 12* (fol. 96v); this is from a prayer book of a wealthy female patron, and it depicts David, in a full page miniature, kneeling in prayer, with his hat and harp on the ground, in a traditional fifteenth-century Flemish landscape with a castle surrounded by a moat: this is about the piety of any (western) king. But it is also a call to others, royal or not, male or female, to follow his example.⁹⁵⁷

In the same vein, its use as a penitential psalm resulted in a vast array of responses through poetry and music, where again the relationship between suffering and the sin is taken for granted. George *Herbert’s poem ‘Complaining’ illustrates this well:

Do not beguile my heart,
 Because thou art
 My power and wisdom. Put me not to shame,
 Because I am
 Thy clay that weeps, thy dust that calls.

 Thou art the Lord of glory:
 The deed and the story
 Are both thy due: but I a silly fly
 That live or die
 According as the weather falls.⁹⁵⁸

A near contemporary, William Habington, in his poem ‘*Cogitabo Pro Peccato Meo*’ on the first part of the psalm, is even more explicit:

In what dark silent grove
 Profaned by no holy love,
 Where witty melancholy ne’er
 Did carve the trees or wound the air,
 Shall I religious leisure win
 To weep away my sin?⁹⁵⁹

⁹⁵⁶ <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanpsalter/english/commentary/page145.shtml>. See Plate 14.

⁹⁵⁷ See <https://goo.gl/yECyOs>.

⁹⁵⁸ See Wieder (ed.) 1995: 301.

⁹⁵⁹ See Wieder (ed.) 1995: 299.

In a more contemporary style, Gordon Jackson's imitation of the first verses of this psalm makes the same point:

O Lord, correct me, but please, not while you are angry;
 chastise me as you will, but not while you're seeing red.
 Your arrows have hit their mark,
 Your hand has bruised me all over;
 The marks of your fury cover the whole of my body;
 I know I have sinned; my body is paying for it...⁹⁶⁰

This psalm has also resulted in countless motets and anthems, many from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, some of them part of a collection of all seven *penitential psalms. Di*Lasso's collection, '*Psalmi Davidis Poenitentiales*' is one example. Psalm 38, '*Domine ne in furore tuo*' was written for *a capella voices (five parts) in 1563 for Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria, published in 1584. The whole collection adapts the church modes, so Psalm 38, the third *penitential psalm, is in the third mode. This is a typical example of di*Lasso's '*musica reservata*', with its range of techniques and emotional expressions.⁹⁶¹ Another memorable arrangement is *Mozart's collection, '*Dauid Penitente*', his cantata in Italian written for solo voices, chorus and orchestra. Like Psalms 6 and 32, it was written for a Lenten benefit concert.⁹⁶²

A more recent example is Howard Blake's '*Benedictus*', premiered in St. Albans Cathedral in 1986. This takes passages from the Rule of Benedict, interspersed with psalm settings, rather like *Bernstein's '*Psalmfest*' or *Stravinsky's '*Symphony of Psalms*'.⁹⁶³ The piece, which has a penitential tone overall, opens with a tenor voice (representing the novice monk about to take his first vows) intoning Psalm 38, which is accompanied only by woodwind—anguished, relentless, and intense—and is later followed by the words from Francis Thompson's '*The Hound of Hell*' ('I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears I hid from Him...'). It is a most striking musical adaptation of this psalm.

We have already referred to *Tavener's '*Veil of the Temple*' (2003) in relation to Psalm 3, which uses music from the Orthodox Vigil Service.⁹⁶⁴ The whole piece comprises eight cycles, moving from the destruction of the old Temple to the gradual unveiling of the celestial sanctuary. At the end of the first six cycles a psalm is sung; Psalm 38 completes the second cycle, which has contemplated

⁹⁶⁰ Jackson 1997: 48.

⁹⁶¹ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 191.

⁹⁶² See Mozart in Psalm 32 p. 198.

⁹⁶³ See <https://goo.gl/8wev2c>.

⁹⁶⁴ See p. 53 (for Psalm 3) and p. 234 (for Orthodox use of psalms in Psalm 38).

the beauty of God and the gates of paradise, and so emphasises human suffering and imperfection as part of the grand scheme of things.

Overall, therefore, Psalm 38 is a psalm with a vast reception history and its theme of penitence, like Psalm 32, gives the psalm a universal purpose.

Psalm 39: Penitence and Human Transience

Psalm 39, like Psalm 38, reflects in a penitential mood on some form of sickness, but here within the context of the brevity of life (verse 4–6, repeated in verse 11c) which is a theme developed further in Psalm 40. The psalm begins with a vow of self-imposed silence, which is in part a spoken description of distress (verses 1–3) and following verses (4–11) are marked by the incongruity between the need for words and the limitations of speech (so verse 9: ‘I am silent; I do not open my mouth’). The psalm also ends (verses 12–13) somewhat curiously with a prayer that God will ‘turn (his) gaze away from me, that I may smile again’ (literally in Hebrew, ‘look away from me, that I may brighten up’). These inconsistencies and changes of mood, and the protests that the suffering is undeserved (verse 11) bring the psalm even closer to Job than Psalm 38.

A key difference from Job is the liturgical style, evident in the repeated refrain ‘everyone is a mere breath’ in verses 5 and 11, each ending with **selah*. It is for this reason that the additional title ‘Jeduthun’ (used only elsewhere in Psalms 62 and 77) is usually read as the name of a musician, or a form of confession (from the Hebrew verb *y-d-h*, ‘to confess’). This is a common view in Jewish reception: **Targum*, for example, adds ‘To the singer *in charge of the house of the sanctuary, by the mouth of Jeduthun*.⁹⁶⁵ Noting that in 1 Chronicles 25 Jeduthun is director of a choir, the conclusion is that this is to be sung ‘in the style of Jeduthun.’⁹⁶⁶

The references to speech and silence, and to the brevity of life, usually mean that in Jewish reception, unlike Psalm 38, the psalm is understood in personal terms. **Targum* typically intensifies the metaphors of pain and suffering (for example, for verse 2, ‘I was dumb, *I was silent*, I ceased from *the words of the Law, therefore my wound is plucked open*’). Verse 5 reads, more hopefully, but still personally: ‘*My body* is as naught before you; surely *everyone is reckoned as naught; surely all the righteous raise to eternal life*’ (reading **selah* here as a reference to eternity).⁹⁶⁷ **Rashi* typically sees the psalm as about a personified

⁹⁶⁵ Stec 2004: 84.

⁹⁶⁶ Cohen 1992: 120–123.

⁹⁶⁷ Stec 2004: 84.

Israel, assuming that in verses 1–2 it is the people who are speaking about their unending time in exile. But even he notes that the references to death and life beyond pertain to the individual and are not another metaphor of exile.⁹⁶⁸

The expression ‘I am your passing guest, an alien...’ in verse 12 is translated into the Greek as *paroikos egō eimi para soi kai parepidēmos*: the combination of terms *paroikos* and *parepidēmos* is only found here and in Gen 23:4. So the pairing of these two words in the Greek of 1 Pet. 2:11 (‘as aliens and exiles’) may well be an allusion to this psalm; given the interest in Psalm 34 in 1 Peter this is quite likely.⁹⁶⁹ If so, the Christian interpretation of the psalm corresponds to Jewish readings: it is about the transitory nature of the journey of the people of God through this earthly life.

Both the Greek and the Latin translations assume a personal understanding of the psalm. Each offers a more enlightening ending to the psalm: *hasha‘ mim-menni* (‘Look away from me!’; in verse 13 [Hebrew verse 14]) becomes *anes moi* in the Greek and *remitte mihi* in the Latin; it could now mean ‘Do not abandon me’ (to judgement). A more curious translation is of verse 10 (Hebrew verse 12) as ‘you chastise mortals... consuming like a moth what is dear to them...’ The Hebrew *‘ash* means a moth; the Greek uses the word *arachnē*, or spider; the Latin follows the Greek and uses *aranea*: the spider is a symbol of an insect which wastes away by making its own web of destruction, so the image is a vivid one. This is taken up in several illustrated Psalters, as will be seen.

Christian reception had different views of ‘Jeduthun’ in the title. Commentators such as *Diodore follow the Jewish reading, that this was one of David’s singers;⁹⁷⁰ according to *Theodore of Mopsuestia this gives the psalm a focus on David and the context is assumed to be his suffering under Saul.⁹⁷¹ *Augustine, *Jerome and *Cassiodorus, reading ‘Jeduthun’ in the Latin, assume the word meant ‘*transiltor*’ or ‘one who jumps over’. The psalm is then read from a hopeful perspective: it is about ‘jumping over’ the vices and vicissitudes of this world in order to receive future blessedness.⁹⁷² *Jerome fills out the meaning of verse 13 in this light: ‘the psalmist is asking to be granted time to repent of his sins, for in hell no one has the power to confess sins.’⁹⁷³

By the period of the Reformation, *Erasmus (who wrote a commentary on this and ten other psalms), as well as *Luther and *Calvin, argue that the psalm is about staying quiet when suffering persecution and oppression. *Erasmus in

⁹⁶⁸ Gruber 2004: 323–327.

⁹⁶⁹ See Psalm 34, p. 206.

⁹⁷⁰ See Hill 2005:124–5.

⁹⁷¹ See Hill 2006:436–64.

⁹⁷² See for example Walsh 1991:387–88.

⁹⁷³ *Homily on Psalm 103 (104)* in FC 48:229, cited in Wesselschmidt (ed.) 2007:317.

particular reads the psalm autobiographically: for some ten years he had been subject to slander from both Catholics and Reformers (his *ennaratio* on this psalm was written in about 1532), the psalm was about ‘leaping over’ desire and grief and trusting God alone: ‘My hope is in you’ (verse 7).⁹⁷⁴

Perhaps predictably the reflections on transience have resulted in this psalm being used for funeral liturgies: in Reform Judaism, this is the psalm assigned ‘for a house of mourning’. In Christian liturgy one of the verses taken up into the monastic tradition is verse 1: ‘that I may not sin with my tongue’ is cited in the *Benedictine Rule of Silence.

We noted in our discussion of Psalm 27 (**Vulgate* 26) how this is the third of the psalms placed at the beginning of the eight liturgical divisions within the Psalter: the result is that the first initial to the first word of the psalm allowed for a number of different images in Christian art, usually based on the first verse.⁹⁷⁵ So we find an extraordinary number of images based upon ‘speech and silence’, with David pointing to his mouth (we may note how Psalm 27 had images of David pointing to his eyes, illustrating 27:1). Psalm 39 (**Vulgate* 38) marks the fourth liturgical division. Sometimes the illustration of 39:1 included a small devil: the online *Luna* page on Psalm 39 (**Vulgate* 38) which lists a number of manuscripts in this respect, gives some idea of the extent of this interest.⁹⁷⁶ The trope is found as early as the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 22v), where the psalmist is standing beside a bed, covering his mouth with his hands, with three demons beside him, one holding a trident, another a measuring tape, and another counting the fingers of his hand, as if counting the days of his life: this illustrates verses 1–3 and 4–6. They are looking up to *Christ-Logos within a *mandorla, with three angels. Below him is a spider’s web (verse 11).⁹⁷⁷ The three images in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fols. 49v, 50r and 50v) have similar (independent) images; in the last one the psalmist is asking mercy from God; at one side we see a spider, and on the right, a shrunken soul.⁹⁷⁸

Byzantine Psalters tend to interpret the psalm through the life of Christ. In the **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 37v) the image against verses 1–3 is Christ, prophesying Peter’s denial: the inscription reads, ‘I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue.’⁹⁷⁹ A second image (fol. 38r) is of the arrest of Christ, with an image of Isaiah and a citation from Isa. 53:7 (‘So Isaiah says, he opens not his mouth, and so on...’). Isaiah is pointing to Matt. 26:63, when Christ is brought

⁹⁷⁴ Heath and Baker-Smith 2003:111.

⁹⁷⁵ See comments on Ps. 27, p. 173 (on liturgical divisions).

⁹⁷⁶ See <https://goo.gl/7SrNQA>.

⁹⁷⁷ <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=51&res=1&cx=0&y=0>.

⁹⁷⁸ See <https://goo.gl/FIRCj5>.

⁹⁷⁹ See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.037v.jpg>; also Corrigan, pp. 122–123.

before Pilate and is silent. The inscription above Christ reads ‘Christ says through the prophet, I was dumb and so on.’⁹⁸⁰ A third image (fol. 38v) is of the cock crowing and Peter weeping.⁹⁸¹ **Pantokrator* (fol. 48r) makes this even more striking by placing Peter’s denial under the figure of Christ, who is refusing to speak at his trial. Other Byzantine Psalters such as **Theodore* (fols. 46v and 47v), **Barberini* (fols. 57v and 68v), **Bristol* (fol. 65v) and **Hamilton* (fols. 96r and 97r) also use and adapt the trope of Peter’s denial, both prophesied by Christ and repented of by Peter. In the light of the need to resist blasphemy at the *iconoclastic trials and councils, which were often compared with the Sanhedrin that condemned Christ to death, this would have been a powerful mode of communication.⁹⁸²

There are fewer Jewish representations of this psalm in art. One most notable and recent is *Chagall’s ‘Show Me the Number of My Days’ (39:4) as one of his psalm etchings from his *Psaumes de David*. This concerns the second of the two main images in the psalm: not that of speaking and keeping silent, but that of the brevity of life. The psalmist is dressed as a modern Jew, sitting on a modern chair, in conversation, it seems, with King David who is seated on his throne. A little devil is at his back and a customary angel hovers overhead.⁹⁸³

The theme of speaking and being silent has some affinities with the much earlier poem by Henry *Ainsworth on verses 6–13:⁹⁸⁴

Fire in my meditation burned;
I with my tongue did speak.
Jehovah, make me know my end,
What my days’ measure eke,
Know let me how short lived I am.
Lo, thou hast given my days
As hand-breaths, and my worldly time
Fore thee as nothing weighs.

Finally, we turn to some musical representations of parts of this psalm. An unusual piece is by Elizabeth Rogers, who, as a Royalist in late seventeenth century London or Oxford, produced musically challenging versions of four psalms, using William *Lawes’ *Choice Psalmes put into Musick* (1648). Psalm 39:10–11 is a highly embellished re-reading of Lawes: it is full of ornamentations, vocal leaps, and chromaticisms: the turbulent cry of the psalmist

⁹⁸⁰ See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.038r.jpg>.

⁹⁸¹ See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.038v.jpg>.

⁹⁸² Corrigan 1992:122–23, 65–66 and 122.

⁹⁸³ See <http://www.fineallarts.com/etching-15-psalm-39-psalms-de-david-1979-p-23003.html>.

⁹⁸⁴ Taken from Wieder (ed.)1995: 302–303.

concerning his life and death is transferred into another generation over two millennia later.⁹⁸⁵

Part of Psalm 39 is also in *Brahm's 'German Requiem.' Verses 4–7 ('...Lord let me know my end...') feature in the fourth of the seven movements, presented as a mournful chorus in a minor key, and answered by verses from Wisd. Sol. 3:1.⁹⁸⁶ Some fifty years later, in 1918, Hubert *Parry's 'Let me know my end,' on 39:4, was composed as part of his 'Songs of Farewell' for a double choir. This was profoundly influenced by his experiences of the First World War; Parry died in the same year.⁹⁸⁷

It would be impossible to comment on the musical arrangements of Psalm 39 without reference to Igor *Stravinsky's 'Symphony of Psalms,' for mixed chorus and orchestra (with violins, violas and clarinets, with two pianos, harp and lower strings, woodwinds, bass and percussion). The composition is in three movements, from three psalms, and was composed in 1926, at a point when Stravinsky was beginning again to embrace his Orthodox faith, and premiered in 1930 in Brussels. Psalm 39:12–13 is used in the first movement (in Latin, 38:13–14: '*Exaudi orationem meam, Domine*' is its title).⁹⁸⁸ It begins with an E minor chord played by woodwinds, brass, strings and percussion, followed by fast sixteen-note arpeggios in the first oboe and bassoon, 'writhy and windy' completed by another E-minor chord (Figure 7). This is repeated, in several different time signatures (2/4, 3/4, 1/4) to create unexpected sharp bursts of sound throughout the various imperative verbs (in English, 'Hear my prayer/give ear to my cry/do not hold your peace/turn your gaze away...'), interrupted by the rise of fall of the sixteen notes at the beginning to show the constant but troubling sense of God's presence. This leads to the final '*remitte mihi!*'—now repeated using the entire chorus in polyphony. The final 'before I depart' becomes increasingly slow, heavy and persistent: only the final loud and sustained G major offers some resolution of faith and trust.⁹⁸⁹



FIGURE 7 Introduction to Stravinsky's interpretation of Psalm 39:12–13 (*Vulgate 38:13–14)

⁹⁸⁵ See Austern 2011:111.

⁹⁸⁶ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015:90.

⁹⁸⁷ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPj6hHF0Y7I>; also Gillingham 2008b:227.

⁹⁸⁸ The second and third movements are from 40:1–3 and 150.

⁹⁸⁹ See Stern 2013:159–67; I am also indebted an article by J. Le Mon 2017 (forthcoming).

*Ambrose said of this psalm that ‘the one who wounds also heals.’⁹⁹⁰ In both a Jewish and Christian sense, this is both disconcerting but palpably true. And what Stravinsky’s account of these final verses shows us is that the immediate source of pain is not physical, but the apparently inactive presence of God within it. Stravinsky brings together so many themes in the reception of this psalm by presenting through his music the paradox that God’s presence is both the increased source of suffering and yet the solution to it.

Psalm 40: Thanksgiving and Sacrifice

Psalm 40 comprises two parts (verses 1–10, 11–17), of which the second part is repeated in Psalm 70 as an independent prayer.⁹⁹¹ One of the issues for Psalm 40 is determining why the psalm is in such an odd internal order, with the prayer for help following the thanksgiving. They seem to be two separate psalms, but with shared linguistic correspondences (one of the most obvious being the praise concerning God’s ‘steadfast love’ in verse 10, and the prayer that God’s ‘steadfast love’ would keep the psalmist safe in his distress in verse 11) they now cohere as one unit.

The first part of the psalm actually follows as the answer to the prayer offered at the end of Psalm 39: the psalmist has been taken out of ‘the desolate pit’ and is now secure ‘upon a rock’ (40:2). There are other links as well. Although the preoccupation with death is not as protracted in Psalm 40 as in 39:4–6, 11 and 13, a near-death experience seems to be implied in 40:2 and 14. Furthermore, the vow of silence in 39:1–2, 9 is contrasted with 40:9 where the psalmist cannot ‘restrain his lips’. The physicality of both psalms is also striking: although Psalm 39 speaks mainly of the mouth and tongue (verses 1, 3, 9) Psalm 40 is aware not only of the mouth (verse 3) and the lips (verse 9) but also of feet (verse 2) ears (verse 6) heart (verses 10, 12) and life itself (verse 14). It is not surprising that in Jewish tradition it was assumed that David composed his ‘new song’ (40:3) after the illness in Psalm 39 had left him;⁹⁹² similarly in Christian tradition it was understood that Psalm 40 followed 39 as an answer to its prayer.⁹⁹³

⁹⁹⁰ *Commentary on the Twelve Psalms* 39.33, ACTP 161.

⁹⁹¹ On the reception of Psalm 70 as a separate psalm, see pp. 379–80.

⁹⁹² Feuer 2004:497–98.

⁹⁹³ See for example Arnobius the Younger, *Commentary on the Psalms* 40 in CCL 25:55–56 cited in Wesselschmidt (ed.) 2007:314.

One of the difficult passages in Psalm 40 is that in verse 6–8, not just because of its radical criticism of ritual in worship, but because of the phrase in verse 6 translated as ‘you have given me an open ear’. The Hebrew *ʾoznayim karita li* means, literally, ‘ears you have dug for me’. The *Septuagint* reads *ōtia de katērtisō moi*: literally, ‘but ears you have fashioned for me’. However, a different Greek version uses the word *sōma*, or ‘body’ instead of ‘ears’: ‘but a body you have prepared for me’. It did not take Christians long to see the implications of this translation, as we shall see shortly, beginning with Hebrews 10, and this altered the sense of the entire psalm.

Much Jewish tradition has focused on verses 6–8. **Targum*, for example, reads for verse 6 ‘sacrifice and offering you do not desire; ears to listen to your commandments you have dug for me...’. The reference to listening to God’s commandments leads to a distinctive emphasis on the Torah in the following verse, somewhat different from the original Hebrew: ‘Then I said, Behold, I have entered *eternal life when I am occupied with the scroll of the book of the Law*, which was written for my sake’.⁹⁹⁴ The critical attitude to sacrifice in 40:6–8 has occupied other commentators. **Kimḥi* opines that this is about the primary obedience to the Law over sacrifice, citing Deut. 10:12 and Mic. 6:8.⁹⁹⁵ **Rashi* and **Midrash Tehillim* similarly argue that verses 6–8 show that sacrifices are voluntary, not obligatory (Lev. 1:2), and that dedicated service to the Torah (the ‘scroll of the book’—verse 7) supersedes all sacrifice.⁹⁹⁶

Another Jewish feature is to read the psalm as the experience of ‘all Israel’, speaking about their liberation from the sea (verse 2) offering a ‘new song’ of forthcoming redemption (verse 3). *Rashi*, for example, notes references to Exodus, the crossing of the Sea, and Sinai in verses 1–10 (i.e. the ‘pit’ and ‘clay’ of verse 2; the ‘wonders’ of verse 5; the ‘scroll’ in verse 7). Reading the psalm as a whole, the ‘poor and needy’ in verse 17 thus become a metaphor for Israel waiting to sing her new song.⁹⁹⁷

Predictably, what is read as about Israel in Jewish tradition is read as about Christ in Christian reception. This is particularly evident in Heb. 10:5–10, using the alternative version of the Greek, allowing Ps. 40:6–8 to be used now to illustrate the permanency of the sacrifice of Christ. Hebrews 10 is concerned mainly about the priesthood of Christ, comparing the efficacy of his death once for all with the annual Day of Atonement. Jer. 31:31–34 is used to demonstrate that this is about the inauguration of the new covenant and the end of the old. So in Hebrews 10, Ps. 40:6–8 is cited as if Christ is speaking: ‘Sacrifices and

⁹⁹⁴ Stec 2004: 85–86.

⁹⁹⁵ Cohen 1992: 123–126.

⁹⁹⁶ Feuer 2004: 503–507.

⁹⁹⁷ Gruber 2004: 328–329.

offerings you have not desired; *but a body you have prepared for me...* Then I said “See, God, I have come to do your will, O God.” In the scroll of the book it is written of me...’ In complete obedience Christ offered his own body as a sacrifice; this was the will of God; it has been prophesied in the psalms; and (in the context of the rest of Hebrew 10) it is a sacrifice made once for all, thus annulling the need for sacrifices and offerings in the Temple. Psalm 40:6–8, when read in this way, suited the argument in Hebrews perfectly.

Jews and Christians also differed on the identity of ‘the scroll of the book’ referred to in verse 7. As seen in **Targum*, in Jewish tradition this was usually understood to be the Torah; but as cited in Hebrews it seems to imply the Old Testament as a whole, or at least that part of it which formed a collection of ‘prophecies’ about the coming of Christ, and thus especially the Book of Psalms. However, **Arnobius the Younger*, noting that in Latin ‘the scroll of the book’, taken from the Greek *en kephalidi bibliou* (‘roll of the book’) is *in capite libri*, or ‘head of the book’, argues that it must be the first psalm in the Psalter as a whole: Ps. 1:2 speaks of ‘delighting in the Law’ just as here the psalmist ‘delights in God’s will’⁹⁹⁸

Although some Christian commentators—including **Diodore* and **Theodore of Mopsuestia*—initially followed the Jewish reading that Psalm 40 was about the experience of all Israel (in exile, when obedience over sacrifice was paramount, given the destruction of the Temple), this was a minority pro-Jewish interpretation.⁹⁹⁹ Commentators such as **Cassiodorus* read this as not about Israel, but the Church: so Cassiodorus saw verses 1–10 were the Church giving thanks that she had been freed from ‘the grief of this world’ through Christ, and verses 11–17 were the voice of Christ explaining the mystery of his incarnation and asking for help to overcome the charges brought against him by the Jews.¹⁰⁰⁰

Different verses of the psalm have been used in different ways in both Jewish and Christian liturgy. Verse 10 (Hebrew verse 11), for example, is the third of a chain of psalms in the Morning Blessings within **Pesuqe de-Zimra*, just before Psalm 145–150: ‘... I have not concealed your steadfast love and faithfulness from the great congregation.’ In Christian liturgy, verses 6–8 are read with Messianic connotations: ‘You have prepared a body for me’ (as cited in Hebrews) resulted in the whole psalm being used on Good Friday in both eastern and western Christendom. The lectionary in the 1559 Prayer Book assigns Psalm 40, with Psalms 22, 54, 69 and 88 to this day. The psalm was also used on the Second Sunday of Epiphany and at the Feast of the Annunciation in western Christendom. It is ironic that although the **Daily Office* in the late 1960s censored verses 14–15, the identical Ps. 70:2–3 is retained.

⁹⁹⁸ See *Commentary on the Psalms 40* in CCL 25:55–56 cited in Wesselschmidt (ed.) 2007:314.

⁹⁹⁹ See Hill 2006:496–97.

¹⁰⁰⁰ See Walsh 1990:397.

In illuminated Psalters, one of the interesting tropes is the female personification of ‘steadfast love and faithfulness’ in verse 10. This is usually read as ‘mercy and truth’, as also in Ps. 85:10.¹⁰⁰¹ For example in the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 23r) two women wearing diadems and carrying palms approach the psalmist from the right: behind them is the ‘great congregation’. They are the female personifications of ‘mercy’ and ‘truth’.¹⁰⁰²

A different trope, this time connected with the translation of ‘scroll of the book’ (verse 7) as the ‘head book’ (from the Latin), is found in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 51v). The image shows that this book is not identified as the beginning of the Psalms, but as the start of John’s Gospel: the book open on a table to the left of the psalmist is set at John 1, and the psalmist is about to take the hand of God and reject the goat as a sacrificial offering which is to his right.¹⁰⁰³

A Jewish illustration which shows the different way in which verses 6–8 were translated is found in the **Parma Psalter* (fol. 54B). There the illustration is of the psalmist touching his ear with his left hand and raising his right: this refers to verse 6, where in Hebrew the verse could be read to mean ‘you have given me an open ear’. This avoids that Christian overlay as worked out in Hebrews (‘a body you prepared for me’).¹⁰⁰⁴ Hence the psalm is to be read as about the obedient faith of every Jew and not as about the sacrifice of Christ. Another more recent literal Jewish illustration is Phillip Ratner’s image of a globe: set within it are verses 1–3, whilst to the left, curled around the circle, David plays his harp.¹⁰⁰⁵

In poetry, Sir Walter *Scott offers a corporate, Israelite view of verses 1–10, noting (with Jewish scholars) that its first allusions suggest Israel’s redemption from Egypt; verses 6–8, on sacrifice and obedience, refer to the exile in Babylon, when sacrifice was no longer possible:

Our harps we left by Babel’s streams,
The tyrant’s jest, the Gentile’s scorn;
No censor round our altar beams,
And mute are timbrel, harp and horn.
But Thou hast said, The blood of goat,
The flesh of rams I will not prize;
A contrite heart, a humble thought,
Are mine accepted sacrifice.¹⁰⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰¹ Psalm 85 developed this tradition much further. See the commentary on Psalm 85:10 in Volume Three (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁰² <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=52&res=1&cx=0&cy=0>.

¹⁰⁰³ See <https://goo.gl/6ryBTO>.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Metzger 1996:74.

¹⁰⁰⁵ This is held at the Dennis and Phillip Ratner Museum, Bethesda, MD: <http://www.ratnermuseum.org/includes/images/photos/bible/bible-36.jpg>.

¹⁰⁰⁶ See Wieder (ed.) 1995: 303–304.

The singing of a ‘new song’ (verse 3) has been appropriated many times in the history of the psalm’s reception. A personal one concerns Charles *Wesley, having returned from his missionary work in Georgia, already ordained and still supporting the ‘Holy Club’ in Oxford. *Wesley, in hindsight, did not consider he had been converted until he read (on May 21st, 1738) Ps. 40:3: ‘He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God’. By the next day he had apparently composed ‘And can it be, that I should gain an interest in my Saviour’s blood?’¹⁰⁰⁷

This ‘new song’ is frequently taken up in poetry. One example is Gerard Manley *Hopkins’ version, composed in 1864, which combines Ps. 40:3 with imagery from Ps. 65:10–13:

He hath abolished the old drouth
And rivers run where all was dry.
The field is sopp’d with merciful dew.
He hath put a new song in my mouth,
The words are old, the purport new...¹⁰⁰⁸

This interest in the ‘new song’ is also found in music. For example, the Irish composer Charles Wood produced an anthem ‘*Expectans Expectavi*’ (literally, ‘I waited and waited’) which was composed in 1919, using the English words from the British war poet Charles Hamilton Sorley. The words describe a humble servant, standing before God, waiting to do his service. The music evokes the situation of despair of the millions of soldiers all over Europe on military service.¹⁰⁰⁹

Another example is *Stravinsky’s second movement in his *Symphony of Psalms*, following his first movement on Ps. 39:12–13. This is of Ps. 40:1–4.¹⁰¹⁰ Much of this second movement is a four-voice double fugue. It starts with the woodwinds, which leap between notes (C, E-flat, B, D) thus evoking some aural disorientation as the ‘waiting’ takes place. The chorus begins by making several vocal leaps which all lead to the word ‘*Dominum*’ at the end of verse 1a. Individual voices are now heard, in top down order; soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, as the tenor leads the progression towards ‘he heard my cry’ (verse 1b). Verse 2 starts with another contrapuntal section, again with the voices entering from top down, but this time separated by only one beat: they play on the theme

¹⁰⁰⁷ Gillingham 2008b:207.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Fiddes 2009:563.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 81.

¹⁰¹⁰ For an account of the first movement, using Psalm 39, see pp. 241–42. This analysis is again indebted to Joel Le Mon 2017: 25–49: see <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0020964316670949?journalCode=intc>.



FIGURE 8 Stravinsky's beginning of the second movement to the first oboe before Ps. 40:1

of waiting for God as he orders the psalmist's steps. The 'new song' is announced in a new section on verse 3a: it is announced by a trombone, which re-uses some of the initial fugue, suggesting that this is not an entirely new song. A soprano voice opens the 'song of praise' in verse 3b, followed by the chorus to introduce 'many will see and fear' (verse 3c and d). The movement ends with a piccolo trumpet again recalling the initial fugue—as if the memory of waiting for God to act is being considered all over again. Both this movement using the beginning of Psalm 40 (Figure 8) and the first movement using the end of Psalm 39 seem to suggest, in different ways, the conflict of faith and experience, of hope born out fear; in an extraordinary way Stravinsky is able to links these themes and these psalms together.

The importance of repetition, by using the first verses of this psalm, is also found in an adaption by the Irish rock band U2.¹⁰¹¹ Their arrangement was originally part of their 1983 album, *War*: since then this part of Psalm 40 has been performed over four hundred times, and its key element at the end of every performance is that the band finishes with this song and then leaves the stage—the singers first, then guitarists, and finally the drummer. The audience sings 'How long to sing this song?', continuing as the lights go up and they turn to the exits. The Song was first called '40' by Bono, to mark it as from this psalm, and the repeated chorus goes:

I will sing, sing a new song.
 I will sing, sing a new song.
 How long to sing this song?
 How long to sing this song?
 How long, how long, how long
 How long to sing this song?

So thousands of U2 fans, with little knowledge of the Bible, let alone the psalms, are given the last word on Psalm 40. The full content of the 'new song' might not be understood, but this does not prevent it refusing to have closure: its aspirations, as we noted in *Stravinsky's composition, move between serenity and anxiety, and these are continued through the audience's response. In the words of Bono: 'I had thought of it as a nagging question—pulling at the hem

¹⁰¹¹ See www.u2.com/lyrics/2.

of an invisible deity whose presence we glimpse only when we act in love. How long... hunger? How long... hatred? I thought it odd that the vocalising of such questions could bring such comfort; to me, too.’¹⁰¹²

Psalm 41: Friends and Enemies

Psalm 41, like Psalm 40, suggests several changes of mood: verses 1–3 form a didactic section, verses 4 and 10 are a prayer, verses 5–9 a lament, and the psalm ends with a short thanksgiving (verses 11–12). The compilers intentionally placed this psalm after 40: Ps.41:1 begins with the theme of the consideration of the poor (in the Greek, ‘poor and needy’ together), whilst 40:17 ended with God’s consideration of the poor and needy. There is a link here between sin and suffering (verse 4: ‘heal me, for I have sinned against you’), with a hope for some reward for the righteous (verse 12: ‘you have upheld me because of my integrity’).

An interesting early use of this psalm is at *Qumran. In the Thanksgiving Hymns (1QH V.23) verse 9 (‘Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted the heel against me’) is now re-written with the Teacher of Righteousness as the speaker: ‘But I have been iniquity to those who contend with me... *All who have eaten my bread have lifted their heel against me*, and all those joined to my Council have mocked me with wicked lips.’¹⁰¹³ There are some interesting correspondences here with the use of 41:9 by a righteous sufferer in the New Testament, to which we refer below.

A difficult phrase to translate is verse 3, which in Hebrew reads, literally, ‘all his bed you will overturn in his sickness’. The Greek and Latin offer a ‘word for word’ translation of this, although Pietersma’s paraphrase of the Greek is ‘when they were ill you completely restored them’.¹⁰¹⁴ The Aramaic also struggles with the meaning of this verse, so *Targum reads ‘*The Memra of the Lord will help him in his life, and be revealed to him upon his sickbed; you turn around all his bed in the time of his sickness.*’¹⁰¹⁵ This translation also finds its way into Christian art, somewhat amusingly, as discussed below.

Verses 3 and 9 (about the betrayal by a close friend, having possible correspondences with 35:14) result in the psalm being read in Jewish tradition as a

¹⁰¹² Cited in Bill Goodman, ‘Assured Lament: U2 Sing the Psalms’, pp. 15–16, in <https://relegere.org/relegere/article/view/483>.

¹⁰¹³ See Vermes 1997:269.

¹⁰¹⁴ Pietersma 200:39.

¹⁰¹⁵ Stec 2004: 86–87.

personal psalm of one suffering in body and soul.¹⁰¹⁶ Even *Rashi sees this is about real, physical sickness.¹⁰¹⁷ For those who argue the psalm should first be seen in the light of David, verse 9 is seen as a reference to Ahithophel, and verse 10 as alluding to the true cause of David's distress which was in not being allowed to build the Temple.¹⁰¹⁸

This personal reading is paralleled in Christian tradition, where instead of reading the psalm through the viewpoint of the distress of David it is read through the sufferings of Christ. The best example is in Jn. 13:18, set in the context of the Last Supper, where John refers to Jesus using 41:9 as a prophecy about the imminent betrayal of Judas ('But it is to fulfil the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me'). The Greek used here is different from the **Septuagint*—there is a different word for 'eat', and 'bread' is in the singular—but the specific reference to 'eating bread' becomes an appropriate literal reference to Judas receiving bread from Jesus during the following Passover meal, Jesus telling Judas to do what he was going to do, and Judas leaving (Jn. 13:21–30). So, according to John, Jesus uses Ps.41:9 (which would probably have some resonance with Ahithophel's betrayal of David) but this is to show that he is no longer the victim of circumstance, as was David, but one who is able to anticipate his own fate.¹⁰¹⁹

It is possible that this psalm is also alluded to in the account of Judas' betrayal in Mk. 14:17–21. The fact that this is taking place 'as it is written of him' (Mk. 14:21) and that the reference is to eating and betrayal (verse 18) might suggest that Ps. 41:9 also shaped the account: Jesus, like the psalmist, is the 'righteous sufferer'. Furthermore, in Acts 1:16 Peter's first sermon refers to scripture being fulfilled, 'which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas': it is more than likely, given the reference to 'David' and hence to the psalms, that Ps. 41:9 is the 'prophecy' referred to here.

There is no doubt about the identification of Judas with this psalm in early Christian commentaries. Verses 6 and 7 describe the plot against Christ; and verse 9 describes Judas' part within it.¹⁰²⁰ *Augustine's sermon on the Feast of the Martyrs, entitled 'Judas will not Triumph' starts with Ps.41:5–7 ('My enemies wonder in malice when I will die...') as if this is Christ himself speaking. Augustine argues that the devil lusted to extinguish Christ (noting that the reference to 'a deadly thing' in verse 8 is literally 'a thing of Belial'); and that Judas (the 'man of peace', translated as 'bosom friend' in verse 9) was set to slay Christ;

¹⁰¹⁶ Cohen 1992:127–129.

¹⁰¹⁷ Gruber 2004:331–334.

¹⁰¹⁸ Feuer 2004: 513–20.

¹⁰¹⁹ See Daly-Denton 2004:128–130.

¹⁰²⁰ Ambrose, *Commentary on Twelve Psalms* 41.7 ACTP 189 cited in Wesselschmidt (ed.) 2007:324.

but Christ, slain, rose again and so both the devil and Judas were convicted. Augustine ends this sermon by noting that Judas represents the hardness of heart of the Jews towards ‘the church of Christ, rooted in the thorns of the synagogue.’¹⁰²¹

It is difficult to acknowledge such anti-Semitic comments when one realises the importance of part of this psalm in Jewish liturgy. The concluding doxology (‘Blessed be the Lord’), for example, is now the basic form of Jewish prayer which had to include both God’s name and his kingdom. So out of the five doxologies concluding each book of the Psalter, of which Ps. 41:13 is the first, concluding Book One, arise the Jewish prayers such as ‘Blessed are You, Lord God, King of the Universe...’ and the *Eighteen Benedictions. This could not be further removed from anti-Jewish readings of this psalm noted earlier.

Not surprisingly, in Christian tradition, the imagining of Christ as the Speaker in this psalm, rather like Psalms 2, 16, 27, 57 and 140, makes it an ideal psalm for the Liturgy of Hours.¹⁰²² In Orthodox liturgy this is another Passion Psalm, in this case predicting Christ’s betrayal, and used on Holy Thursday and Good Friday. It was also used for the Office of the Dead, on account of the reference in verse 5 to the enemies, to death, and to the name perishing, especially in the Monastic traditions.¹⁰²³

Christian art provides interesting illustrations of the difficult versions of verse 3 (translated in the Latin, literally, as ‘all his bed you will overturn in his sickness’). The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 52r) has an amusing image of a man lying on the floor with his bed actually on top of him.¹⁰²⁴ In the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 24r) the psalmist is standing on a hillock beside a table spread with bread and wine; an upturned bed is at the bottom of the hill. But this cleverly integrates with an image at the very bottom of the page: the sarcophagus hints at the body of Christ within it, and this is seen through the open doors of the Church of Holy Sepulchre (‘they think ... that I will not rise again from where I lie’, is a reference to Matt. 27:15). Meanwhile, outside the building, Christ is seen appearing to the two women (Matt. 28:9), ‘upturning’ the expectations of Pilate and the Jews who sealed the sepulchre.¹⁰²⁵

Byzantine Psalters offer a more specific visual exegesis of the role of Judas in this psalm. The **Theodore Psalter* integrates this theme into the whole psalm. So in fol. 49v we see a ‘charitable man’, *nimbed because he is ‘blessed’, giving alms. In fol. 50r we see Judas receiving moneybags of coins from a group of

¹⁰²¹ The sermon can be found at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801041.htm>.

¹⁰²² Holladay 1993:333.

¹⁰²³ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 Vol II: 37.

¹⁰²⁴ See <https://goo.gl/qCg3Dt>.

¹⁰²⁵ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=54&res=1&x=0&y=0>

priests. Fol. 50v is of Christ, cross-*nimbed, at the Last Supper, reclining, with Peter, also *nimbed, to his right, with the ten apostles around the table: Judas has his hand in a dish and the inscription is from John 13.¹⁰²⁶ This triad of images is also found in the **Barberini Psalter* (fols. 71r, 71v and 72r). The earlier **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 40v) has two similar images, one of Judas receiving silver and the other of the Last Supper. Other similar Byzantine Psalters include the **Bristol Psalter* (fols. 68r and 68v) and the **Hamilton Psalter* (fol. 100r).

The **Parma Psalter* obviously omits any of the Christian overlay, but rather focusses on the importance of charity, as in verse 1. Fol. 56B depicts a human figure, begging: his head is hooded and his arms are bare, with a wooden bowl in his left hand. As with Psalm 37, this is another illustration showing an interest in the care of the poor: it illustrates verse 1: 'Happy are those (Blessed are they) who consider the poor!'¹⁰²⁷ It is interesting to see this same charitable theme (without any Christian overlay) in the **St Albans Psalter*: like the *Parma Psalter*, this illustrates only the first word of the psalm. So in the initial B ('*Beatus qui intellegit super egenum*') we see the psalmist, with a halo, in the top register, helping the poor and needy who reach up for rescue, whilst their enemies are turned away.¹⁰²⁸

Given the heading 'to the choirmaster', and the final doxology at the beginning and end of this psalm, it is appropriate to end this analysis with examples from music. These have little to do with the Christological (and often anti-Jewish) readings of this psalm, through the role of Judas; instead, most composers focus on the importance of charity to the poor expressed in verses 1–2, and they read the rest of the psalm through this more down-to-earth perspective. For example, *Purcell's 'Blessed is He that Considereth' (published in 1688) for solo, choir and organ, uses *Coverdale's version of 41:1–3; and *Handel's 'Blessed are they', composed as a Foundling Hospital Hymn, uses 41:1–3 alongside parts of Psalms 8, 72, 112, and Daniel and Revelation.

*Haydn's arrangement of 41:10–13, as one of his 'Six English Psalms' from around 1794, is more unusual: 'Maker of All, Be thou my Guard' uses James Merrick's metrical version of the psalms (1765). All six psalms were arranged in the hope of reforming English parish music, which tended to use either the sixteenth-century 'Old Version' by **Sternhold and Hopkins* or the late seventeenth-century 'New Version' by **Tate and Brady*. Merrick's version was considered more simple and refined, using a three part 'trio sonata', to which

¹⁰²⁶ http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f049v; http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f050r; and http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f050v.

¹⁰²⁷ Metzger1996:74.

¹⁰²⁸ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page152.shtmls>.

Haydn added several contrapuntal and harmonic features. His choice of verses from Psalm 41 also included the doxology (thus omitting the verses associated with Judas) so that the psalm as a whole is read as a prayer of confident and practical devotion, ending with praise.¹⁰²⁹ Some of Merrick's version runs as follows, ending with the doxology in verse 13:¹⁰³⁰

Maker of all! be thou my guard:
Give me, (my strength by thee repair'd,
Give me to teach the faithless band
To own the justice of thy hand...

O thankful bless th'Almighty Lord,
The God by Jacob's sons ador'd;
With joyful hearts his love proclaim,
And praise, O praise, his holy name.

His fame, e'er time its course began,
O'er Heav'n's wide region echoing ran;
To him through endless ages raise
One song of oft-repeated praise.

The concluding verse to Psalm 41 is of course the conclusion to Book One as a whole. Here again we see the work of the editors at the first stages of reception: just as the Psalter began with two psalms seeking blessing on individuals and on the whole people ('Happy are those...' in 1:1 and 2:12, using the same word *'ashre*) so the last psalm in this collection also uses the same expression in verse 1 (Hebrew verse 2, also in Ps. 40:1 and 4). In addition, the last verse of this last psalm invokes another blessing, but this time on God. Ps. 41:13 reads: 'Blessed (*baruk*) be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting (*'olam*). Amen and Amen.'¹⁰³¹ This verse is almost certainly additional: it is very different in tone from the rest of this psalm, being focussed entirely on God rather than on human need. The one editorial link with verse 12 is the use of the Hebrew word *'olam*, where the psalmist prays that God will keep him in his presence 'for ever'.

Jewish reception of this doxology in 41:13 notes how the phrase 'the God of Israel' demonstrates the corporate nature of Book One, sung on the lips of

¹⁰²⁹ See 'Haydn and his English Friends', by Psalmody and The Parley of Instruments (director Peter Holman), Hyperion Records Ltd, London, 2000 (CDA67150).

¹⁰³⁰ Taken from http://www3.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Psalm_41.

¹⁰³¹ 41:13 also shares some formulaic language with the last verses of Book Two (Ps. 72:18–19) and Book Three (Ps.89:52), where both invoke the same blessing (*beruk*) upon God and both use *'olam*. All three were probably additions to each psalm, bringing each book of the Psalter to a close.

God's people, for whom 'benediction' is the most basic form of prayer.¹⁰³² This is perhaps best illustrated in *Berger's image of this psalm, in which a letter 'Yod' rests over blue and red swirls of light in imitation of heaven meeting earth. Berger comments: 'The earth belongs to the Creator and Israel is His Chosen People who have the obligation to serve the Almighty ... with all their soul, with all their heart and with all their might ... This is all that counts... The last words of this first book of Psalms are the benediction of Israel to the Almighty...'¹⁰³³

There is actually little Christian reception of the doxology at 41:13: it is not used on its own in liturgy, music or art. This may be because of the corporate and explicitly Jewish expression of faith, which fitted less with a Christian reading at the end of Book One. Nevertheless, this concluding verse should have significance for Jews and Christians alike: it transforms Book One, which is predominantly a collection of laments, into an expression of corporate praise, so that our final focus is on God rather than on human need, and this prepares us for our entry into Book Two, which begins with two psalms expressing 'thirst' for God.

¹⁰³² Stec 2004:7; Feuer 2004:521 (citing Malbim).

¹⁰³³ <http://themuseumofpsalms.com/gallery-item/the-psalms-series/>

BOOK TWO: PSALMS 42-72

David and the
Temple: Nostalgia
and Hope

Book Two (Psalms 42–72) is complicated. The links with David are not as evident as in Book One: only eighteen of the thirty one psalms bear his name, and these psalms are part of what might be called a ‘second Davidic Psalter’ (51–72: the first Davidic Psalter being 3–41). Book Two is really more closely connected with Book Three.¹⁰³⁴ First, there is the common use of *’elohim* for God, which is used prominently throughout Psalms 42–83 (i.e. also including the first eleven psalms of Book Three).¹⁰³⁵ Secondly, the *Korahite collections extend between Book Two (42–49) and Book Three (84–89), and these have clear associations in language, interests and arrangement, despite the different use of the name for God (mainly *Elohim* in the former collection, mainly *Yahweh* in the latter).¹⁰³⁶ Thirdly, although most of the *Asaphite psalms (73–83) are in Book Three, there is one isolated Asaphite psalm (50) in Book Two.

The Asaphite Collection is possibly the oldest in the Psalter. Yet the twelve Asaphite psalms were deliberately split so that Psalm 50 (with very close links to 51, as we shall see shortly) acted as an introduction to the second Davidic Psalter (51–72). Psalms 73–83, the other eleven Asaphite psalms, were added at the end of this, and this work was perhaps expanded by appending to Book Two a Korahite collection (Psalms 42–49), with the predominant use of the word *’elohim* for God. The second Korahite collection (Psalms 84–89), at the end of Book Three, was the final addition: these psalms preserved, mainly, the use of *yhwh* (*Yahweh*) for God, even though they exhibit many correspondences in language and theology with the Korahite Psalms at the beginning of Book Two. So the Davidic Psalter (Psalms 51–72) is ‘framed’ by Asaphite psalms (Psalms 50, 73–83), and Books Two and Three are ultimately ‘framed’ by Korahite Psalms (Psalms 42–29, 84–89).¹⁰³⁷

Within this complex, some have argued that Psalms 42–83 once functioned as a discrete collection of forty-two psalms.¹⁰³⁸ As the Psalter is now arranged, however, Book Two presents two clear collections: the Korahite Psalms (42–49) and the second Davidic Psalter (51–72), with the one Asaphite Psalm (50) acting as a bridge between them. Our analysis of their reception history will therefore focus on these two collections and Psalm 50 in between.¹⁰³⁹

¹⁰³⁴The commentary on Book Three (Psalms 73–89) is in Volume Three of this series, which is forthcoming.

¹⁰³⁵*’Elohim* occurs some 245 times in Psalms 42–83; *yhwh* occurs some 45 times.

¹⁰³⁶The structure is personal lament (42–43/84); communal lament (44/85); psalms associated with David (45/86); Zion and Kingship Hymns (46–48/87); and a lament (49/88). Psalm 89 stands outside this sequence. The shared language includes expressions such as ‘the living God’; ‘your dwellings’; ‘the house of God’; ‘the city of God’; ‘holy mountain’; ‘Jacob’. See S.E. Gillingham (2007: 308–341; here, pp. 312–24).

¹⁰³⁷We shall discuss the problematic identity of Psalm 89 in Volume Three (forthcoming). See J.C. McCann 1993: 93–107; N. deClaisse-Walford 1997: 67–80; and E. Zenger 1994: 175–98.

¹⁰³⁸See Joffe 2002: 223–35, who notes the 42 lettered name for God (*b.Qid. 71a*) was used on amulets, to ward off evil (see 2 Kgs. 2:24). Given the focus on evil in many of these psalms, the number forty-two might be interpreted in a similar way.

¹⁰³⁹On Psalm 50 as a ‘bridge-psalm’, see Attard 2016:134–150; also Süssenbach 2005: 66–289, 290–8.

Psalms 42–49: Exile, Temple and King

The Temple is a shared feature in these eight psalms, with the exceptions of Psalms 45 (a wedding song of a king) and 49 (a more general psalm on injustice and repentance). Jewish tradition has an interesting explanation for this collection. It was apparently compiled by those sons of Korah (Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaf, as in Exod. 6:24) who, having repented, escaped the punishment suffered by their father Korah and his followers who had rebelled against Moses and Aaron (as in Num. 16). God provided a refuge for them on a high ledge—so they might escape being engulfed by the crater which had opened up below. There on this ledge they composed these psalms, in the spirit of prophecy, and there they wrote about the future Temple, David, and the exile. King David eventually found this scroll and rewrote the psalms in a more universal style, appointing his own *Korahite singers (the 14 sons of Heman, as in 1 Chron. 6:18) to perform them.¹⁰⁴⁰

Whatever we make of this legend, it is clear that Psalms 42–49 together do contain the themes of exile, Temple and King, and they also indicate some sort of dramatic liturgy, with Psalms 42–44 suggesting a more negative tone about the threat of dispersion (the end of 44 is quite similar to the end of 42–43) and Psalms 45–49 being more optimistic in their search for answers (with 42 and 49 also having associations, for example in their use of refrains). Seven of the eight psalms have titles, such as *'mizmor*, *'shir* and *'maskil*; and all but two have the heading 'for

¹⁰⁴⁰ See Feuer 2004: 523–4.

the choirmaster?; all therefore suggest some liturgical use.¹⁰⁴¹ So whatever one makes of the early Mosaic origins, a second Temple adaptation of this entire collection for worship, focussed on the fate of David and Jerusalem, seems to be clear.

Psalms 42–43: Longing for the Temple

Psalms 42–43 are closely connected. Psalm 42 has two titles; 43 has none. Each shares a refrain (42:5, 11 and 43:5) and an overall 3:2 rhythm.¹⁰⁴² Psalm 42:10, citing the adversaries' taunts 'Where is your God?' anticipates 43:2, which asks directly 'Why have you cast me off?' Each psalm yearns for a return to the Temple, and to see the 'face (or presence) of God' (42:2); to return to 'the house of God' (42:4); to return to God's holy hill (43:3) and to serve again at the 'altar of God' (43:4). Overall there are three clear strophes, divided by the same refrain ('Why are you cast down, O my soul?'). The strophes are 42:1–4 (which looks at the past, with metaphors of thirsting and weeping); 42:6–10 (which describes the present, with images of cascades and abysses); and 43:1–4 (which looks to the future, with references to God's refuge and his holy hill).¹⁰⁴³

Starting with early Jewish reception, it is possible to see allusions to the refrains in 42–43 in *Pss. Sol. 17:1 and 1QH 4:5; 8:32.¹⁰⁴⁴ *Targum expands the references to God and to the Temple in this psalm. So verse 2 reads 'my soul thirsts for God, *for the mighty, living and the enduring One...*' Then verse 4 runs '...when I pass *beneath the booth alone, I will go in strength with the camp of the righteous* and unto the house of *the sanctuary of the Lord*, with the voice of joy and praise, the throng of *nations that are coming* to celebrate the feast at *Jerusalem.*' 43:3 reads 'let them bring me to *the mountain of the house of the sanctuary of the Lord*, and to *the study of the house of your *Shekinah.*'¹⁰⁴⁵ The Temple community has now become the synagogue communities in exile; but the loss is the same. Later commentators such as *Rashi thus read the psalm as the threefold cry of the collective soul of Israel in captivity; each cry, divided by a refrain, is to be read in the context of the three nations, Babylon, Greece, and

¹⁰⁴¹ These titles (referred to earlier in the first Davidic Psalter: see p. 44) also create specific collections in Psalms 52–68.

¹⁰⁴² The *Septuagint* divides them by adding the title 'Psalm of David' to 43.

¹⁰⁴³ See Terrien 2003: 351–4.

¹⁰⁴⁴ There is no other evidence of the use of this psalm here other than the occurrence of 42:4 in 4QPs² and 43:1–3 in 11QPS^d.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Stec 2004: 91–3.

Rome, who have each subjugated God's people.¹⁰⁴⁶ Rashi, as well as the sixteenth century Italian rabbi, Sforno, interpret the cry in 43:3 ('Send out your light and truth!') as one for the third restoration of the Temple, heralded by 'King Messiah' and by Elijah who will prepare his way.¹⁰⁴⁷

By contrast, in Christian tradition the refrain in 42:5, 11 and 43:5 alludes to Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane in Matt. 26:38/Mark 14:34 ('I am deeply grieved, even to death'). The psalm corresponds with other psalms about 'righteous suffering' (18, 22, 31, 40 and 69) which are also used in the Gospels. The references to 'light', 'truth', 'way', the 'living God' and 'weeping' suggest some connection between this psalm and the discourses in John 11:33, 35, 38; 12:27; 13:21; 14:1–9, 27 and 19:28).¹⁰⁴⁸ The more personalised and Christocentric use of this psalm is the hallmark of early Christian commentaries, and contrasts with the Jewish reading above.

Several church fathers focus on the water motif in 42:7. *Augustine, noting the psalm is about 'holy longing for God', continues: 'Let us burn together with this thirst; let us run together to the fountain of understanding... Let us long for the wellspring of which Scripture says, "With you is the fountain of life..." The same theme is found in *Cassiodorus, who writes 'Christ the Lord is the fount of water from which flows all that refreshes us.'¹⁰⁴⁹ *Ambrose the Younger takes this further still, perhaps influenced by the idea of the Son calling to the Father in Gethsemane: 'When deep calls to deep, the Son calls the Father from the depth of land and river... As the Holy Spirit descends, the Father addresses the Son from the height of the heavens.'¹⁰⁵⁰ Another way of viewing this analogy is to allegorise further the motif of the deep calling to the deep in 42:7, seeing it, as does *Ambrose, as the Old Testament predicting the New. Cassiodorus, following *Jerome, also develops this theme: 'The Scripture of the Old Testament calls on Scripture of the New Testament for the consummation of holiness.'¹⁰⁵¹

Augustine also has a very different view to that expressed later by *Rashi, in his understanding the references to 'light and truth' in 43:3. Noting the two names are but one reality, in that God's light is God's truth, Augustine adds: 'Both of these are the one Christ, who says, "I am the light of the world... I am the way, the truth and the life". He is light, he is truth. May he come then, and deliver us.'¹⁰⁵²

¹⁰⁴⁶ Feuer 2004: 527, 529 and 534. See also Gruber 2004: 200 and 203 n. 18.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Feuer 2004: 539; also Braude 1959 I: 445, citing Ps. 132:11 as well.

¹⁰⁴⁸ See J. Beutler 1978: 33–57.

¹⁰⁴⁹ See Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms*. 42:2.3.5; also WSA 3 16:240–43 in ACCS VII: 328 and Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 42.2, in ACW 51:416, from ACCS VII: 328.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Arnobius the Younger, *Commentary on the Psalms* 42 CCL 25:60, from ACCS VII:331.

¹⁰⁵¹ On Ambrose, see ACW 327–8, in ACCS VII: 331. On Cassiodorus, see his *Commentary on Twelve Psalms* 36.18 ACTP 46–47, from ACCS VII: 331. See also Walsh 1990: 420.

¹⁰⁵² *Expositions on the Psalms* 43.4 in WSA 3 16:258–59, from ACCS VII: 334.

*Theodoret of Cyrrihus and *Diodore of Tarsus, from an *Antiochene tradition, argue that the sufferer is in fact all Israel, looking forward to God's grace: 'After the sad events, therefore, he proclaims pleasant ones and ahead of time teaches ... that they will return to the land of their desire, will celebrate their customary festivals.' The Christian might read this is a more universalistic way: '...Both psalms have the same meaning. Those using them encourage themselves to have stronger hope, overcome the feeling of discouragement and await the salvation from God that will doubtless be given them.'¹⁰⁵³

An interesting early example of the use of part of this psalm in early English poetry is found in Langland's *Piers Plowman, *Passus VII*, when Piers, rebuffing the priest about God's forgiveness of sins, quotes in Latin from Ps. 42:3 ('My tears have been my food day and night') to show that simple trust in the words of the psalms brings about forgiveness directly through the text, and not through priestly mediation, and that a life of prayer is what God asks of us:¹⁰⁵⁴

...The prophet his bread ate · in penance and sorrow,
And by what psalter saith · so did many others;
Whoso loveth God loyally · can live upon little:

Fuerunt mihi lacrimae meae panes die ac nocte.

The psalm is used many times in both Jewish and Christian tradition. It is a 'Song of the Day', assigned for the second day of **Sukkot*, or the Festival of Tabernacles, at the time in the feast for water drawing: this is partly due to the water imagery in verse 7.¹⁰⁵⁵ In Christian liturgy, the water imagery, and the symbol of the hart, are linked to baptism: this was one of the psalms sung at the Baptism of *Augustine by *Ambrose in April 387.¹⁰⁵⁶ In *Alcuin's lectionary, Psalms 42–43 are to be used 'in times of weariness'. Far more recently, both the Anglican and Methodist lectionaries prescribe their use at funerals.¹⁰⁵⁷ Psalms 42–43 have also been frequently turned into a popular metrical psalm. The earliest English version by **Sternhold and Hopkins* reads rather ponderously: 'Like as the hart doth pant and bray/The well-spring to obtain.' The version by **Tate and Brady* is perhaps better known today:¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁵³ See *Commentary on the Psalms* 42.3 in FC 101:249, from ACCS VII: 329; also *Commentary on the Psalms* 43.5 FC 101:253, from ACCS VII:335.

¹⁰⁵⁴ <http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/special/authors/langland/pp-pass7.html>.

¹⁰⁵⁵ See Feuer 2004: 523 citing *Maaseh Rav*, 234.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 55.

¹⁰⁵⁷ For Benedict, see Gillingham 2008b: 1–3; for Alcuin, see Gillingham 2008b: 61–2; on lectionary use, see Gillingham 2008b: 257.

¹⁰⁵⁸ See Watson 2002: 116–117.

As pants the hart for cooling streams
when heated in the chase,
So longs my soul, O God, for thee,
and thy refreshing grace.

Liturgical associations undoubtedly influenced choral arrangements of these psalms. *Tallis's version for Archbishop *Parker's Psalter (1567) used, as the fifth mode, Psalm 42: 'The fifth delighteth, and laugheth the more.' 'When like the hunted hind/the water brooks desire/E'en thus my soul/That fainted is/To Thee would fain aspire...' is an unexpected choice for this mode; but Tallis intended to show more positively, through music, the fulfilment of the soul in the presence of God. *Palestrina's '*Sicut Cervus*', first performed in 1581, is quite different: it plays upon the sounds of water and the soul's longing for God (for example, the plaintive *melismas on the Latin 'aquarium' and the syncopation on 'desiderat' and 'Deus').¹⁰⁵⁹ Furthermore, 'As pants the heart' was one of *Handel's eleven Chandos Anthems (1717–18) when he was composer in residence to James Brydges, first Duke of Chandos. The lament is taken up in the E minor key, sung as a soprano aria ('Tears are my daily food') and then as a soprano/tenor duet ('Why so full of grief, my soul?').¹⁰⁶⁰ *Mendelssohn's '*Wieder der Hirsch schreit*' (1837/38) was an experiment as a choral cantata; more poignantly, Psalm 43 was one of three psalms (along with 2 and 22) performed in 1849 just before his death. Charles *Ives also composed a memorable version of Psalms 42–43 in 1888, when only he was only fourteen years old, for solo, chorus, organ.

A different example is *Elgar's use of Ps. 42:8 ('By day the Lord commands his steadfast love') in his oratorio, the second of a proposed Trilogy, about the calling, mission and legacy of the apostles. Elgar's *The Kingdom* was performed for the Birmingham Festival in 1906, and this verse, along with 45:7, and parts of Psalms 104, 77, 63, Daniel 4 and Isa. 4:2 and 45:7, were sung by Mary (in her 'The Sun Goeth Down') after the arrest of Peter and John in Acts 3 and 4.

Herbert *Howells' well-known version, 'Like as the Hart', written for chorus and organ (1941) is only of 42:1–3. This was a limited experiment in tonal texture and chromatic mood changes: 'The beautiful blues-inspired, languid melodic lines of this work...evoke an air of eroticism in the deer's search for water and the soul's search for God.'¹⁰⁶¹ Similarly Arvo *Pärt's '*Como anhela la*

¹⁰⁵⁹ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 220.

¹⁰⁶⁰ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 43–44. Handel composed another version for the Royal Chapel in 1713, as a means of earning approval in royal court of Queen Anne.

¹⁰⁶¹ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 148.

cierva, premiered in Spain in 1999 for solo soprano and orchestra, is a piece of painful and poignant simplicity.¹⁰⁶²

A more radical use of Psalm 43:4 is found within the first few lines of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. 'Stately, plump Black Mulligan' stands at the top of the stairs, shaving, his razor and mirror forming a cross. He mockingly cites '*Introibo ad altare Dei*' ('Then I will go to the altar of my God', from Ps. 43:4) which was used as part of the preparatory prayers at the Mass. Looking down the stairwell he calls 'Come up Kinch. Come up, you fearful Jesuit.' In the mockery of the priestly drama that follows, Kinch is compelled to compromise his faith and mimic being 'server' to Mulligan the priest; we are immediately aware of the ridicule of religion in just these first lines of the book, as the original intention of the psalm is reversed so that it undermines the power of religious ritual rather than advocating it.

Most aesthetic reception is based on the first few verses of Psalm 42. In art, the symbol of the hart (which digs the earth for water, using its antlers), either as an allegory of the soul thirsting for the baptismal waters or of Christ thirsting during his Passion, is a common image. One of the most striking is the huge twelfth-century Apse Mosaic in the Basilica Di San Clemente, Rome, which is approached through a columned atrium. The first sight is the hand of God above the figure of Christ on the cross, whose head is inclined, the pain over. But here one does not see death, but life: four rivers of water flow from the cross, nourishing a network of vine branches interspersed with shepherds and peasants and monks. At the bottom is a deer, slaking its thirst; the image is of Ps. 42:1.¹⁰⁶³

In illuminated manuscripts, the illuminated initial 'Q' in the **St Albans Psalter* actually depicts the hart as the soul, devouring the serpent, the symbol of sin, which (according to *Augustine) then quenches that thirst through the waters of baptism.¹⁰⁶⁴ A more direct example of the hart is in the recent woodcut by Roger *Wagner in the second volume of his *Book of Praises*.¹⁰⁶⁵ Somewhat differently, Moshe *Berger's image portrays a rising sun behind a group of people (represented in Hebrew letters) suffering the dark of exile: '... As long as we are connected to Him, we are elected for eternity. And prayers mean connection to God.'¹⁰⁶⁶ A similar depiction of this yearning for God, with the Hebrew connecting the past and present yearnings in the psalm, is by Jewish Canadian artist Myra *Mandel, entitled 'From the Depths to the Heights.'¹⁰⁶⁷

¹⁰⁶² The UK premier was at the BBC Proms (July–September 2000), No. 56.

¹⁰⁶³ See <http://www.basilicasanclemente.com>. See Plate 15.

¹⁰⁶⁴ See <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/translation/trans154.shtml>.

¹⁰⁶⁵ See www.rogerwagner.co.uk. This is reproduced in Gillingham 2008b: 297, with permission.

¹⁰⁶⁶ See <http://themuseumofpsalms.com/gallery-item/the-psalms-series/>.

¹⁰⁶⁷ See http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=22104&showmode=Full.

Many poems dwell on the theme of the deer and the hunt, with Christ as the hunted stag. William *Cowper, for example, in ‘The Task’ (3:108–113), compares his soul as a ‘stricken deer’ nearing death, but who was ‘found by one who had himself/been hurt by the archers.’ Others focus on the motif of the ‘deep calling to deep’—*Milton, Pope, Vaughan, and *Hopkins have all used this image in their description of the soul’s yearning for God.¹⁰⁶⁸ R.S. *Thomas writes about it thus:

But the Silence in the mind
is when we live best, within
listening distance of the silence
we call God. This is the deep
calling to deep of the psalmist
writer, the bottomless ocean
we launch the armada of
our thoughts on, never arriving...¹⁰⁶⁹

Two examples of contemporary reception must suffice. One is Dietrich *Bonhoeffer’s sermon on Psalm 42–3 from June 1935, where he ‘cries out with the Jews’ and in this psalm creates a dialogue between the soul and God: the sufferer thirsting for God reflects an image of Christ on the cross.¹⁰⁷⁰ By contrast, Thomas *Merton, writing of the first three verses, takes another view: this is that ‘the sufferings of the soul that thirsts for God are blended with mystical joy... a soul that knows how to hope in the hour that would otherwise seem nothing but despair.’¹⁰⁷¹

So this profoundly personal psalm also has the potential for anyone to use, by Jews and Christians alike. Indeed, it gives a voice to anyone with faith who seeks to express a profound yearning for God.

Psalm 44: Praying for National Deliverance

Psalm 44 has many associations with 42–43, although focusses instead on *corporate* suffering. God is addressed as ‘El’ in 42:1, 8, 9; 43:4 and 44:21. We read of the enemy (‘*oyeb*’) in 42:9 (Hebrew 42:10) and 44:16 (Hebrew 44:17); of their

¹⁰⁶⁸ Taken from R.S. Thomas (1997). See also Jeffrey (1992): 32–33.

¹⁰⁶⁹ See <https://goo.gl/pHtZXq>.

¹⁰⁷⁰ See P.D. Miller 1994: 274–83.

¹⁰⁷¹ Merton 1956: 25.

taunts (from the root *ḥ-r-p*) in 42:10 and 44:13, 16 (Hebrew 42:11 and 44:14, 17); of oppression (*laḥaṣ*) in 42:9 (Hebrew 42:10), 43:2 and 44:24 (Hebrew 44:25); of being cast off (*zanaḥ*) in 43:2 and 44:9 (Hebrew 44:10); of being forgotten (*shakaḥ*) in 42:9 and 44:24 (Hebrew 42:10 and 44:25); and of not longing to see the face of God (*pene 'elohim*) in 42:2 and 44:24 (Hebrew 42:3 and 44:25). This protest, set as a rhetorical question, followed by an imperative call to help, is similar to the end of 42:11, 43:5 and 44:23–26. This is another illustration of the early reception of these psalms through the hands of the compilers.

Yet Psalm 44 is different: it is more like the later psalms of Asaph in its implied context of national defeat and its questioning of covenant theology.¹⁰⁷² It fits into three strophes: verses 1–8 recall the past (ending with **selah*), perhaps using alternating voices between the people and a cultic leader; verses 9–22 are the lament proper (noting the contrast of verse 9 ‘you have rejected us’ and verse 17 ‘we have not forgotten you’). Verses 23–26 form a concluding prayer.

Early references to this psalm are found in 1 Macc. 1:36–40; 2:7–13; 3:45 and in 4 Ezra 15:10–11 which, in the context of the persecution of Antiochus IV, allude to this and to corresponding **Asaphite* psalms, 74 and 79.¹⁰⁷³ *B.Sotah* 48a in the **Talmud* records how the Levites used to recite daily verse 23 (‘Rouse thyself! Why do you sleep, O Lord?’)—in bewilderment, not as a taunt—before the reign of John Hyrcanus (143–104 BCE). This practice apparently was prevented by Yochanan, the High Priest, as it was nevertheless deemed blasphemous.¹⁰⁷⁴ The addition to verse 23 in the **Targum* brings out the same sense: ‘*Show yourself strong, O Lord! Why should you be like a man who sleeps?...*’ This psalm is about the gift and the loss of the land, and with this the belief that the people had been ‘planted’ in the land (verse 2) and that God would drive out the *goyim* (the native peoples) and the *le'ummim* (the foreign nations): this has been a constant Jewish theme throughout the Christian era.

The reception of this psalm in Christian tradition is, predictably, quite different. The only reference to it in the New Testament is the citation of verse 22 in Rom. 8:36, where the crises of the Jewish people now becomes the crisis of the church in Paul’s day.

Christian commentators used this psalm in a particularly didactic way, initially reading it within the context of the church and the Roman Empire. **Origen*, for example, in his *On Martyrdom*, reflects especially on 44:13–16:

¹⁰⁷² The reference to ‘Jacob’ in v.4 and the expression ‘sheep for the slaughter’ (v.11) is reminiscent of the references to the exiled flock in the *Asaphite* psalm 77:15 and 20.

¹⁰⁷³ See Volume Three on Psalms 74 and 79 (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁷⁴ See Feuer 2004: 557.

this is now the prayer of the martyrs.¹⁰⁷⁵ *Chrysostom, referring to verse 26, unusually commends the faith of the Jews in the same way: ‘See how they concluded the discourse: despite their countless good deeds, on what grounds did they appeal to be saved? On the mercy, the loving kindness, the name of God... Despite being in a position to take pride in so many troubles and dangers, they referred everything to God.’¹⁰⁷⁶ *Ambrose, who apparently was making a commentary on Psalm 44 shortly before he died, was, however, more critical: God’s delight in Israel (verses 2–3) is not by their merits, ‘lest they should attribute it to the Law and not to grace.’¹⁰⁷⁷ *Augustine makes this clearer still: ‘All those disasters befell them so that as God’s holy ones were stripped of their possessions, and even of temporal life itself, they might learn not to worship the eternal God for the sake of temporal advantages but in pure love for him to endure all the trials that they had to undergo for a time.’¹⁰⁷⁸ A millennium later, *Luther, influenced by Augustine, also read the psalm as judgement on Jewish self-righteousness, citing 1 Peter 4:17 alongside it; but he also affirmed that for those who were genuinely suffering, the psalm showed how evil could be transformed into a blessing.¹⁰⁷⁹ So the psalm increasingly became the ‘voice of the martyrs and confessors’ and, more specifically, ‘the voice of the whole church, asking for help in times of persecution.’¹⁰⁸⁰ *Calvin was one of the few later commentators to apply the psalm not only to the history of the church (verses 1–8) but also to the history of Israel, arguing that God knew all those who had kept the covenant, and despite all he would be faithful to all of them.¹⁰⁸¹ Interestingly, rabbinic tradition, at the time of persecution during the Crusades, used this psalm in a similar way, arguing the suffering of the Jews was for the ‘sanctification of God’s name.’¹⁰⁸²

Psalm 44 has been used somewhat differently in Jewish and Christian liturgy. For example, verse 26 (‘Rise up, come to our help’) is part of sequence of psalms used in **Pesuke de-Zimra*; but in *Alcuin’s list of psalms it is a prayer to be used at times of abandonment by God. From this, in Medieval Mystery Plays, a notable Christian reinterpretation is of an angel citing the last verse of the psalm (‘Rouse yourself!’) to encourage Christ’s rising from the dead. This

¹⁰⁷⁵ Waltke 2014:176–77.

¹⁰⁷⁶ See *Commentary on the Psalms* 44.2 in *CCOP* 1:233–34; also Hill 1998: 233–34, citing 44.9 in *CCOP* 1:251, from *ACCS* VII: 340–341.

¹⁰⁷⁷ See Ambrose, *Commentary on the Twelve Psalms* 44.12, in *ACTP* 213, from *ACCS* VII: 338. See also Prothero 1903: 18.

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Expositions on the Psalms* 44.16, in *WSA* 3 16:274, from *ACCS* VII:340.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Waltke 2014: 178–80.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 73–4.

¹⁰⁸¹ Waltke 2014: 180–182.

¹⁰⁸² See for example Samuel Usque’s use of 44:23 to glorify martyrdom in Levine 1984: 206.

may well have been influenced by a liturgical formulae referred to in Psalter illuminations, as seen below.

Artistic representations, both western and eastern, have also focussed on the last verses of this psalm. The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 25r, lower image) depicts a group of angels waking the Lord from his bed, thus representing verse 23 ('Awake, do not cast us off forever!').¹⁰⁸³ The same verse is illustrated in the **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 44r) as David stands by the tomb of Christ, whilst below are two sleeping guards and to the right, two women are bearing incense. One of the inscriptions reads: 'David prophesies concerning the *Anastasis.' And next to verse 27, another two women are depicted, also next to the tomb.¹⁰⁸⁴

Jewish representations of this psalm are again quite different. The **Parma Psalter* (fol. 159B) has an illustration of two symmetrical figures, reaching out their arms and touching their ears, probably a literal reference to verse 1. 'We have heard with our ears, O Lord...' This could not be more different from the allegorical (Christian) readings above.¹⁰⁸⁵ Similarly **Chagall's* sketch of this psalm, with the crowds of Israelites at the bottom, a protective angel hovering above, a priest blowing the **shofar* to the right, and a bright wheel of light emerging from the top right, demonstrates that this is a prayer for the physical protection of God's people, Israel.¹⁰⁸⁶

Musical arrangements of this psalm are less prominent. One example is **Howells'* use of this psalm alongside 42, as one of his *Four Anthems*: 'We have heard with our ears' is about transience and loss, hope and faith.¹⁰⁸⁷

The most striking reception of this psalm is in post-Holocaust writings. For example, a contemporary American writer, H.J. Levine, takes up the 'sheep for the slaughter' imagery in verse 11 and links this with verse 23. So the following poem reads:¹⁰⁸⁸

What wilt thou do without houses of prayer
And without Jews—no Jews anywhere?
Who will recite the Psalms of the Day
And who will suffer gratuitously?

¹⁰⁸³ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=56&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

¹⁰⁸⁴ See Corrigan 1992: 67.

¹⁰⁸⁵ See T. Metzger 1996: 74.

¹⁰⁸⁶ See <https://goo.gl/SbDYnR>. See Plate 16.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Cite Psalm 42, p. 261.

¹⁰⁸⁸ See Levine 1984: 205, citing Y. Katznelson 1989: 219. See also D.R. Blumenthal 1993: 99–100 on 'Lord Sleeping', verses 23–24.

Another application of this psalm to the sufferings of the Jews is traced back, by Levine, to 1903; this is a ghetto song which interspersed ancient promises (from a medieval litany) with radical biblical questions, especially from Isaiah 63, Psalms 74 and 44.¹⁰⁸⁹

O look from heaven and behold,
Look down from the skies and see!
For we have become a derision,
A derision among the nations,
We are surely a laughing stock to them.
We are accounted as sheep to the slaughter.
O Creator, how can You look upon this?...

A similar use of this psalm is by the twentieth-century Israeli poet, Uri Zvi Greenberg, who uses Ps. 44:11 to turn the tables on God, by arguing that if He is Israel's Shepherd, He will soon have no sheep to care for: 'Go wander about Europe, God of Israel, Shepherd-Seer, and count your sheep... And so You will return to heaven, a dumb Shepherd-Seer, after the shepherding and the seeing... where your dead flock is hidden...'¹⁰⁹⁰ Greenberg notes that even sheep would have been treated better than this: 'Not like sheep to the slaughter we were brought in train loads.' Hence he reads verse 12 as 'You let them devour us like Jews/You disperse us among the nations.'¹⁰⁹¹

Hence this psalm about corporate suffering has the capacity to address directly more recent Jewish experience, especially using the psalm in anger against God; but over time it has also been relevant to Christian experience, for example in the application of the psalm to the doctrine of grace over works. Overall, like 42–43, Psalm 44 does retain a more universal appeal in the way it seeks to address undeserved suffering experienced by the community of faith as a whole.

Psalm 45: A Wedding Song for the King

Psalm 45 has many problems of translation, compounded by its several Aramaisms and traces of northern influence which have given rise to different types of interpretation which have affected the psalm's reception history. From its title ('A Love Song') and judging by its contents was once a wedding

¹⁰⁸⁹ Levine 1984: 208.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Levine 1984: 210, taken from Roskies 1989: 573, translation by Robert Friend.

¹⁰⁹¹ Levine 1984: 211.

song—whether of Solomon¹⁰⁹², or of a northern king such as Ahab or Jehu, is unclear—but this setting is rarely noted in later reception, as will be shown below.¹⁰⁹³

There are several associations with 44. The tenor of defeat (possibly of the king) in Psalm 44 is now contrasted with the upbeat mood of Psalm 45, where the king is not only a groom, but also a successful warrior. In Psalm 44 it is God who is King (verse 4) and Lord (verse 23); here, in verse 11, the two terms come together with respect to the human king ('... and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your lord, bow down to him...'). Verse 1 provides a threefold introduction: in its context this appears to be the work of a court poet, or a royal scribe, and corresponds with verse 17, with is also an address in the first person. The psalm has a clear structure: verses 2–9 are in praise of the groom, and verses 10–15 are in praise of the bride. Verses 16–17 again address the king: having been blessed by God forever (*le-'olam*) in verse 2, here he is praised by the people forever (*le-'olam*).

Two of the most contentious verses are 1 and 6; the first concerns the nature of inspiration of the psalm, and the other addresses the question of the Messiah. These issues are already evident in the Greek translation. In verse 1 the Hebrew is *sofer mahir* (also at Ezra 7:6) which the Greek translates literally as *grammateōs oxygraphou* —i.e. a 'speedy' scribe, whose mind and hand are moved by the Spirit of God.¹⁰⁹⁴ In context of the rest of the psalm, verse 6 is most awkward as nowhere else in the psalm is God addressed directly; so it seems here that *the king* is indeed being addressed, and his throne is thus being called 'divine'. Making some adaptations, it is possible to read the Hebrew as 'Your throne is [like] God's, forever' or perhaps, changing the noun into a verb, 'God has enthroned you (the king) forever'. This requires some contortion of the Hebrew, but it circumvents the idea that the king is being directly addressed as 'Elohim', or 'God'.¹⁰⁹⁵ The NRSV reads, 'Your throne, O God, endures forever'), and this is taken from the Greek which is *ho thronos sou ho theos eis ton aiōna tou aiōwnos*; the Latin is similar, also taking 'God' as in the vocative: *sedis tua Deus in saeculum saeculi*.

Early Jewish use of this psalm begins with *Qumran. 4QPs^a is a **peshet* on parts of Psalms 37, 45, 60; 4QPs^c also contains verses 6–9 (Hebrew verses 7–10) and 11QPs^d has vv. 4–6 (Hebrew verses 5–7) illustrating the development of this 'royal' wedding psalm in a more generalised way, in the life of the community.

¹⁰⁹² 1 Kgs 3:1 refers to the marriage alliance of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter.

¹⁰⁹³ Northern origins are suggested by references to Tyre (verse 12), thus suggesting the Queen is Jezebel, and the ivory palaces (verse 8), a feature of Samaria.

¹⁰⁹⁴ See E. Bons 2007: 455.

¹⁰⁹⁵ See Craigie 1983: 336–7.

The **Targum* of verse 1 reads ‘the ready scribe’ as the one who announces a prophecy: ‘*that which was spoken through the holy spirit by the sons of Korah...*’ The implications of the Davidic king having messianic (though not divine) status are evident in verse 2, which adds ‘*Your beauty, O anointed king... exceeds that of the sons of men... the spirit of prophecy is given upon your lips...*’ The contentious verse 6 becomes an address to God, not to the king: ‘Your throne, O God, is *in the heavens* for ever and ever’. Hence in verse 7, the king is ‘*the anointed king*’. The reception of the second part of the psalm in **Targum* is interesting, because verse 9 deliberately omits any reference to the queen: ‘... *The provinces of the kingdom come to visit you and to honor you at the time when the book of the Law is made ready at your right hand side, and written in pure gold that is from Ophir*’ (verse 11). The Davidic emphasis in verses 2–9 now becomes an emphasis on the submission of the Gentiles and the elevation of the Law. Verse 10 reads: ‘*Hear the Law of his mouth, O Assembly of Israel, and see his wonderful works; and you shall incline our ears to the words of the Law, and forget the evil deeds of the wicked ones of the people, and the house of the idols that you worshiped in your father’s house...*’ Hence in *Targum* the psalm is a prophecy by an inspired scribe, and the Messiah and the Law replace any actual King and Queen: both are to be worshiped by the nations (verse 16) and ‘*they that become proselytes will offer you praise for ever and ever*’ (verse 17).¹⁰⁹⁶

**Midrash Tehillim* makes no reference to this psalm other than it is a wedding song, being more interested in the meaning in the title ‘of the Lilies’ rather than the title ‘A Love Song’. It does not even refer to David as the ‘anointed one’. Instead, Moses is the central figure: for example, references such as ‘gird your sword’ in verse 3 refer to the Torah and so also to Moses. The one ‘anointed’ in verse 7 is also not the king; it is the high priest, Aaron. (Interestingly there is not a single comment on the ‘divine throne’ in verse 6.) Following the **Targum*, the ‘Queen’ in verse 9 is again the Torah, and the children of Israel (also in verse 9) are like the gold of Ophar.

Jewish commentators develop these ideas in different ways, mainly allegorical. **Rashi*—confronting Christian readings of Christ the Messiah—understands the psalm as addressed to the ‘Torah scholar’, and reads verse 6 as ‘your throne, O judge, is forever’, seeing the Torah scholar as judge. The reference to the ‘anointed one’ in verse 7 is Israel.¹⁰⁹⁷ **Abraham ibn Ezra*, by contrast, sees verse 6 as about David, who as the anointed one sits on the ‘throne of God’, like Solomon in 1 Chron. 29:23; this is to make it clear that the psalm is about David and not about a Messianic figure, as the Christians suppose.¹⁰⁹⁸ Instead of reading the

¹⁰⁹⁶ See Stec 2004: 95–7.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Feuer 2004: 566.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Feuer 2004: 568.

Queen as ‘Torah’, *Abraham ibn Ezra sees this as referring to Israel herself, bound to God: the marriage is thus of God and Israel.¹⁰⁹⁹ The homage of the people (verses 16–17) includes Tyre (verse 12) which is really Edom (i.e. a synonym for Roman/Gentile rule) which will one day be overthrown so Israel will be returned to the land. *Kimḥi, meanwhile, sees the psalm as a ‘song of love for his Messiah’, although in the light of the Christian interpretation of Christ as the Messiah sees this to be about King David, not a coming figure.¹¹⁰⁰

The various Christian interpretations undoubtedly influenced the Jewish interpretations above. However, only verses 6–7 are cited in the New Testament: like many other psalms, such as 1 and 35, Psalm 45 became prominent somewhat later. So Heb. 1:8–9 (a **catena* of several psalms, including 2:7; 97:7; 102:25–27; 104:4 and 110:1 as well as 2 Sam. 7:14 and Deut. 32:43) is used to illustrate to Christ’s superiority over the angels. Here we may note that the writer assumes, from the context of Hebrews 1, that God is the speaker, and that the following phrase is to be seen as a prophecy about the Son:

But of the Son he says:

‘Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever...’

The New Testament view of God as the speaker is carried through in later Christian readings.¹¹⁰¹

A different approach is to view this as *David speaking of Christ*: this is found as early as *Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*: Psalm 45 is cited four times, once (38.3–5) in its entirety and three times (56.14; 63.4–5; 86.3) in part. Justin’s focus is on verses 6–7, which he sees could not refer to a human king, so it must be about Christ, the timeless word of God, and his authority over David.¹¹⁰² *Irenaeus also uses Psalms 45 and 132 in his *Against Heresies* to show Christ’s authority over David.¹¹⁰³ *Athanasius similarly comments: ‘Well aware that the Word is the Son of God, the psalmist sings in 45 in the voice of the Father, “My heart has uttered a good word.”’ The rest of the psalm is the voice of David, about Christ himself.¹¹⁰⁴ Even the *Antiochene commentators, who

¹⁰⁹⁹ Feuer 2004: 570.

¹¹⁰⁰ Feuer 2004: 561. An interesting reading from the *Kabbalah* concerns the scolding wife: if the husband is at fault he must pronounce Psalm 45 over pure olive oil and anoint his body with it: it is to be the ‘oil of gladness’.

¹¹⁰¹ See Williams 2011:17–32, which discusses in particular Origen’s views in the light of the reference in Hebrews, and its part in the *Arian controversies with particular reference to *Athanasius’ use of this psalm.

¹¹⁰² See Gillingham 2008b: 25.

¹¹⁰³ Gillingham 2008b: 26.

¹¹⁰⁴ Gillingham 2008b: 29. Also *OIP* 58, in *ACCS*: 341. On Athanasius’ use of this psalm in the early days of the Arian controversy, see R. Williams 2011: 24–9.

were more prone to take a Davidic/historical reading, read Psalm 45 in this way: *Diodore of Tarsus comments: “This psalm seems to refer to the Lord Jesus, not to Solomon, as Jews claim... the verse “Your throne O God, is forever and ever”...completely shuts their mouth, since Solomon was not called God and did not reign forever...”¹¹⁰⁵ Similarly *Theodore of Mopsuestia, reading verse 6 as an announcement that the psalm is to be read as a prophecy, with ‘the psalm as pen and the scribe as the Spirit’, sees verse 2 as spoken by David about Christ, who speaks in this way throughout the psalm. His understanding of verse 6 is like Diodore: Solomon is unworthy such an accolade.¹¹⁰⁶

A second mode of reception is to see the psalm, as in the New Testament, as about *God speaking of Christ*. *Cyril of Alexandria thus reads verse 1 as a prophecy (and here sees Christ is the pen and the Father is the scribe) and verse 2 is then an address by God to Christ as King. God speaks directly throughout the psalm; whenever there is a change of speakers (for example ‘God has blessed you’, in verse 2 and ‘God has anointed you’ in verse 7) God is addressing the church, or perhaps Christ in his human form.¹¹⁰⁷ The same idea is taken up by *Theodoret of Cyrillus: of verse 6, he states, “The prophetic word afterwards teaches the nature of God the Word incarnate himself... that he is God and eternal king, not having had a beginning and not due to have an end. This is what “forever” suggests.”¹¹⁰⁸ *Augustine takes a similar view, also recognising a theological problem in verse 7: ‘God is anointed by God. In Latin it looks as though the word *God* is just repeated in the nominative case, but in Greek the distinction is perfectly clear: one name belongs to the one addressed, the second to the person who addresses him... God was anointed by God, and when you hear the word *anointed*, understand that it means Christ...’¹¹⁰⁹

A related reading is to see the psalm teaching the church about the *humanity and divinity of Christ*. This was the great issue in the *Arian controversy, and this psalm was used by both sides to defend their cause. *Cassiodorus reads the first half of the psalm as about the Bridegroom, both in his divinity (verse 6) and his humanity (verse 7, which is about his anointing [his incarnation]); verse 8, in its reference to ‘myrrh’, is about his passion, and his death and burial. The second half is then about the Bride, his church.¹¹¹⁰ This idea, which has some problems in its demarcation of the humanity and divinity of Christ in this way, was also developed earlier by *Theodore of Mopsuestia and *Basil the

¹¹⁰⁵ Diodore, *Commentary on the Psalms* 45, WGRW 9 142–43, in ACCS: 343.

¹¹⁰⁶ See for example Cox 2015: 180.

¹¹⁰⁷ Cyril, *Expositio in Psalmos*, PG 69:717–1274 (1028–1040).

¹¹⁰⁸ Theodoret, *Commentary on the Psalms* 45.5 FC 101:262 ACCS 348.

¹¹⁰⁹ Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 45.19 WSA 3 16:296–97 ACCS 349.

¹¹¹⁰ Cassiodorus in Walsh 1990: 440.

Great.¹¹¹¹ *Hesychius sees the Passion even earlier in the psalm, in verse 3: ‘By “sword” he means the cross, using it just like a sword... powerful in appearance and beauty’.¹¹¹²

Another similar interpretation is to focus on the relationship between the Groom and the Bride, and from this, between *Christ and the Church*. *Basil reads Psalm 45 alongside Song of Songs, and compares the analogies in the first part of the psalms of the soldier and athlete (where previously erotic images, such as the sword and the arrows, are transformed into Christian analogies) with the female images of queen, virgin and mother. Basil also uses the marriage image of ‘mutual indwelling’ as a means of showing the intimacy between Christ and his Church.¹¹¹³ This view was still prevalent in the popular sermons of the nineteenth-century reformed Baptist, Charles Spurgeon. In a more contemporary mode, he speaks of those who see only the wedding of Solomon and Pharaoh’s daughter in this psalm as short-sighted; those who see both Solomon and Christ as cross-eyed; ‘well-focussed spiritual eyes see Jesus only, the heavenly bridegroom speaking to his spouse the church’. Here he is actually refuting *Calvin, who saw the first half of the psalm as about both Solomon and Christ, and the second half as about the queen representing the church.¹¹¹⁴

A further reading of this is to see Psalm 45 as about the relationship between *Jesus and the Virgin Mary*. One of the earliest references is found in *Athanasius’ *Letter to Marcellinus*: this is unusual, as in the fourth century the bride was still identified as the Church rather than the Virgin.¹¹¹⁵ There are some difficulties in pursuing the imagery here too far, although the references to her seated on the ‘right hand’ of the King (verse 9) are of course apt. References are mainly found in liturgy and in illuminated manuscripts.¹¹¹⁶

A more individualised reading is to see the Bride as a *symbol of the Christian soul*. This is also expressed by Basil, who says of Ps. 45:9 ‘The queen... is the soul that is joined with the Word, its Bridegroom... it stands on the right hand of the Saviour in gilded clothing, that is to say, adorning itself charmingly and religiously with spiritual doctrines, interwoven and varied.’¹¹¹⁷ *Jerome also develops this view: ‘what can be fairer than a soul that is called the daughter of

¹¹¹¹ See Cox 2015: 187, outlining a similar view taken by Theodore of Mopsuestia. On Basil, see *Homilies on the Psalms* 17:9 (Ps 45) FC 46:290–91, in ACCS VII: 351.

¹¹¹² Hesychius of Jerusalem *Commentary on Psalms* 45.5 PG 93:1196, in ACCS VII:346.

¹¹¹³ See Basil, *Homiliae super Psalmos* PG 29: 209–214; here, on Ps 44, PG 29:388a; trans FC 46:275.) For a critique of this gender differentiation, see Harrison 2015: 127–148.

¹¹¹⁴ See Gillingham 2008b: 210; for Spurgeon, see www.spurgeon.org/treasury/ps045.php; for Calvin, see <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/calvin/cc09/cc09010.htm>; also Holladay 1993: 343.

¹¹¹⁵ See <http://www.athanasius.com/psalms/aletterm.htm>.

¹¹¹⁶ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 109–12.

¹¹¹⁷ Basil, *Homilies on the Psalms* 17.9 (Ps 45) FC 46:291, in ACCS VII: 351.

God and that seeks itself no outward adorning. She believes in Christ, and dowered with this hope of greatness, makes her way to her spouse ... her bridegroom and her Lord.¹¹¹⁸

A final Christian reading is a more *pragmatic and ecclesial*. *Ambrose, for example, in *De virginibus* II.31–38, uses Psalm 45:9–11 to argue that consecrated virgins, unlike Christian virgins who will one day marry, are the Brides of Christ; and as bishop and hence their ‘father’ this psalm served to consolidate his authority.¹¹¹⁹ Jerome, meanwhile, writing in the context of mentor not to consecrated virgins but to ascetic women, such as Marcella, Paula, and Principia, uses the bridal imagery to discipline their formation and affirm his own role as teacher in supporting their participation in the sacrament of the spiritual marriage to Christ.¹¹²⁰ *Augustine, on the other hand, continually fighting the controversies of *Donatist exclusivism and *Manichean asceticism, uses Psalm 45 to refute any form of elitism in church, emphasising the Church as a Bride who is an obedient and chaste virgin. His *Expositions on the Psalms* offers a complex series of analogies from the latter part of the psalm: the multi-coloured robe of the queen (verse 14) suggests Christian doctrine, diverse in many parts but held together as one, and the sons of the queen (verse 16) are the apostles whilst those who become princes are the bishops of the church. The final part of the psalm Augustine reads eschatologically, about the church’s future consummation.¹¹²¹

The debates about this psalm continued beyond the period of the early Fathers. It is one of the few psalms where the twelfth-century theologian Peter *Lombard makes his concerns more explicit: he links the psalm with the Feast of the Virgin and reads the queen at the right hand of the king (verse 9) as Mary.¹¹²² *Nicholas of Lyra, writing in the early fourteenth century, similarly reads the psalm as a prophecy about Christ’s incarnation, passion and resurrection. So the ‘myrrh, aloes and cassia’ (verse 8) are the spices brought by the women after his death; and the call to the daughter to ‘forget her people’ is a call to the church to forget Jewish rituals and ceremonies.¹¹²³ *Luther took a similar view: the wedding lyric veils the true meaning, which is about the cross and the church; the theme of ‘two kingdoms’ runs throughout the psalm, but Christ alone is the true King.¹¹²⁴ *Calvin, typically, initially reads the psalm according

¹¹¹⁸ Jerome *Epistulae* 54.3 NPNF 2 6:103, ACCS VII: 351.

¹¹¹⁹ Hunter 2015: 156–7.

¹¹²⁰ See Jerome, *Epistulae* 65 in CSEL 54; also Hunter 2015: 160–2.

¹¹²¹ Augustine uses Psalm 45 in *Civ.* 17.16 (CSEL 40/2: 250.11–12). See also Hunter 2015: 164. See also *Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 45.17 WSA 3 16:294, in ACCS VII:348.

¹¹²² See Colish 1992: 535. Taken from *Biblica Latina cum glossa ordinaria*, Ps. 44 PL113:911 B–C.

¹¹²³ *Glossa Ordinaria* 509; see Pak 2010: 15–18.

¹¹²⁴ See Pelikan 1956:197–207 and 230–6 (on verse 6).

to its more natural meaning, as about Solomon's marriage to a foreigner: it explains why Song of Songs is in the Hebrew Bible. It foreshadows the Gentiles being brought into the kingdom of God (verses 16–17); and because of Solomon's disobedience, the ultimate glory of kingship belongs to Christ.¹¹²⁵ John *Wesley, too, wrote about this psalm, as an 'illustrious prophecy of the Messiah'. It does not refer to Solomon; it is about the holy love between Christ and his church. Like Calvin, the end of the psalm is about the place of the Gentiles in the church.¹¹²⁶ Charles *Wesley made his reading of this psalm known through hymnody:

'My heart is full of Christ, and longs
Its glorious matter to declare...
Dispread the victory of thy cross
Ride on and prosper in thy deed...
Through earth triumphantly ride on,
And reign in every heart alone.'¹¹²⁷

Despite the controversial nature of this psalm and its subject matter, the psalm was not in frequent use in Jewish or Christian liturgy. In the *Liturgy of Hours* the psalm was mostly used in addressing Christ as King and the Virgin Mary as Queen. In the early Middle Ages the second half was used at Masses for the Virgin Mary and female saints. By contrast the *BCP lectionary takes the psalm away from Marian theology and prescribes it for Christmas Day. It is used at the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin (September 8th) in the Orthodox Church, where the Alleluia following the *Magnificat* comprises parts of verses 10–12. And when the priest puts on the *epigonation* (the pendant with a cross, which hangs on his right thigh) he recites verses 3–4 of this psalm.¹¹²⁸

Artistic representation is almost as rich as the commentary tradition. The **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 44r) illustrates the first verse as a prophecy through the clipeate icon of Virgin and Child, and the hand of God which appears from the heavens; a ray of light has fallen on the icon, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove is on the rim of the medallion.¹¹²⁹ For verse 10 ('Hear O daughter, and see...') both **Khludov* (fol. 45r) and **Pantokrator* (fol. 55v) have an image of the Annunciation with David gesturing to the scene; the inscription in **Khludov* is

¹¹²⁵ Calvin Com Ps 45.8. See <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.i.html>.

¹¹²⁶ See <http://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=wes&b=19&c=45>.

¹¹²⁷ For Charles Wesley, see http://www.hymnary.org/text/my_heart_is_full_of_christ_and_longe. See also the representation of this psalm in the *Genevan Psalter* ('with noble themes my heart and mouth are singing...'): http://www.spindlegworks.com/BOP/mobile/PSALM_045.html.

¹¹²⁸ See Holladay 1993: 181–2.

¹¹²⁹ Corrigan 1992: 76; also fig. 72.

‘David says, hear the voice of the angel’, and in **Pantokrator* it reads ‘That is to say, (in Greek, *‘toutestin’*, a motif to introduce prophecy) hear the voice of the angel. The **Bristol Psalter* (fol. 74v) takes this further still: the inscription reads ‘Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.’¹¹³⁰ Even later western Psalters, such as the English *Luttrell Psalter*, not known for a surfeit of theological symbols, has an image of the annunciation on the first folio (fol. 86r), an image of the nativity on the next, and also, making clear the theme of ‘Christ as King’, has an image of the arrival of the Magi on the next (fol. 86v).¹¹³¹

The so-called *Biblia Pauperum* was a means of presenting, in pictures, a series of typological scenes of Christ in the Old Testament, with hardly any text other than Bible verses in Latin. By the early fourteenth century these were also preserved as block-books using woodcuts. One of these, now preserved in the Esztergom Cathedral Library, depicts Psalm 45 in a tableau which has the coronation of the Virgin Mary at its centre, with Bathsheba and King Solomon to the left (1 Kgs. 2:19) and Esther and Ahasuerus are to the right (Esth. 2:17). Psalm 45:13 and Song 8:5 are inscribed at the top of the page, and Isa. 35:2 and Wis. 4:1 at the bottom.¹¹³²

This could not be more different from a contemporary Jewish painting of this psalm by Moshe **Berger*, presented in reds, blues and purples: Jerusalem rather than the Virgin Mary is depicted with a kingly throne behind it, from which red rays of light, with Hebrew lettering, emit forth. ‘This psalm gives praise to the Messiah. It represents Jerusalem, the place from where the reign of his majesty will spread...’¹¹³³

It is interesting that two notable musical arrangements both take up the very earliest context of the psalm and read it as a royal wedding psalm. **Purcell* used Ps. 45: 1 and 9 with Ps. 147:2 in his ‘My heart is inditing’, which was for the coronation of King James II (1685). **Handel’s* arrangement is by the same name, using verses from Psalm 45 and texts from Isaiah as a coronation anthem for George II and Queen Caroline in Westminster Abbey (1727). Its stately opening (using verse 1) is followed by two lyrical movements using verse 9 (‘the king’s daughters’ and ‘upon thy right hand’). The ending is from Isa. 49:23, set to a magnificent fanfare of trumpets.¹¹³⁴ This arrangement contrasts with more recent versions of this psalm in honour of the Virgin Mary. The composition by the contemporary American composer, Leonard Bobrowski (1995) is for the

¹¹³⁰ Corrigan 1992: 64–5. See also http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_40731_f074v.

¹¹³¹ http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_42130_f086r and http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_42130_f086v.

¹¹³² See E. Soltész 1967: fig. 36. See here Plate 17.

¹¹³³ http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=15178&showmode=Full.

¹¹³⁴ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 163–4.

Feast of the Assumption: it sets verses 10, 11, 12 and 16 to be sung by cantor and congregation to keyboard accompaniment, is one such example.¹¹³⁵

Female writers have offered a range of readings on this psalm. Mary *Sidney's version, for example, partly influenced by her own background as, for a time, lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth I, and intrigued by the position of women in the court, read this psalm literally, as a wedding song. She viewed it as enforcing the Divine Right of Kings ('The king is beyond other men, a reflection of God on earth...') but similarly affirming the position of the Queen in relation to her King: 'For onlie he on thee hath lordlie right.'¹¹³⁶ Some recent female writers have affirmed the psalm because of its potential support of mixed marriages, but mainly they are critical of the 'silent woman' in this psalm, compared with the prominent voice of a women in the love poetry of Song of Songs: the idea of the Queen bowing down and submitting to her King is treated with some suspicion: 'It should be omitted from corporate worship!'¹¹³⁷

Psalm 45 is undoubtedly one of most controversial psalms in Psalter; there are differences amongst Jews regarding its interpretation as well as amongst Christians, and of course there are the usual differences between Jews and Christians concerning readings of particular verses. Much depends on the different ideologies brought to the psalm, and this echoes the same issue in the vast reception history of other royal psalms, such as 2 and 72. It is ironic that much historical-critical scholarship, focussing primarily on the psalm in its ancient Near Eastern setting because of its elevated view of the ruling king, misses many of these other readings.¹¹³⁸ This is a good example of the way in which historical readings can limit the perspective of such a multi-layered psalm because they fail to engage with its later reception history.

Psalm 46: God is King in Zion

In Psalm 46 the general hope that the king might be worshipped 'forever' in Ps. 45:17 now becomes a specific hope that God will also protect his city (verse 4) in times of trouble. Like 45 this psalm also has several allusions to ancient Near Eastern mythology, especially about God's sovereignty over the chaotic seas and his place at the confluence of rivers (verses 4–6).¹¹³⁹ The title '*al-'alamot*

¹¹³⁵ See http://www.giamusic.com/search_details.cfm?title_id=3699.

¹¹³⁶ Lines 6–8, and line 43. See Fiskens 1985: 172–5.

¹¹³⁷ See N.R. Bowen 2003: 153–71; also Dombkowski Hopkins 2016:30–33.

¹¹³⁸ See for example the discussions of Psalm 45 in Craigie (1983) and Goldingay (2007).

¹¹³⁹ See Craigie 1983: 344–6.

suggests the singing of high notes; some would ascribe this psalm to women's voices, on the grounds that women did apparently sing in the cult.¹¹⁴⁰ The superscription 'to the leader (choirmaster)', used in all the psalms between 42 and 49 (except for 43) again makes clear the psalm's place in liturgy; this is further suggested by two refrains, each ending with **selah* (verses 7 and 11): it is possible that another refrain occurred after verse 3, which now ends only with **selah*.

The psalm seems to be a unified composition, falling into three interlinked strophes. Verses 1–3 celebrate God's control of the cosmos; verses 4–7 are about God's overthrow of the nations, ending with the refrain 'The Lord of Hosts is with us...'; and verses 8–11, perhaps added later, take a longer term view about God inaugurating a reign of peace, ending with the same refrain (also noting the motif of *'ereṣ* [earth] occurring throughout the psalm, in verses 2, 6, 9 and 10).

The **Septuagint* translates *'alamot* in the title as *kruphiōn*, possibly indicating a musical instrument, rather than voices of women. In verse 9, the Hebrew word *'agalot* (chariots) is translated *thureous* (shields); the image of leather shields being burnt with fire fits better with the military imagery (the bow and the spear) earlier in the verse. This is the sense of the NRSV and highlights the military reception of this psalm, as discussed below. Amongst other early Jewish reception we might note Philo's allegorical (and rare) use of psalmody: reading the 'city of God' as the cosmos, Philo argues that the river symbolises the Logos 'gladdening the Universe'.¹¹⁴¹

The **Targum* offers a different reading of *'alamot* in the title. Seeing this as from the verb *'alam* ('conceal' or 'cover'), this is seen as another reference to the **Korahites* who were 'covered' (i.e. delivered) from the abyss which swallowed up their father (Numbers 16): 'At the time when their father was covered up from them but they were delivered, they uttered this song: ...' The mythological allusions are taken out of verse 4, so it reads 'Nations are like rivers and their sources are coming and making glad the city of the Lord, and praying in the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, in the tabernacle of the Most High.' Verse 6 makes an additional reference to the Torah: 'At the giving of the Law to his people the nations were in tumult...'¹¹⁴²

**Midrash Tehillim* also understands *'alamot* as 'cover' but then reads the psalm to be about 'hidden things.' This allows the **Korahites* a prophetic role. So the three sons of Korah apparently composed this psalm at the time of Moses, looking ahead, in the spirit of prophecy, to the time when Sennacherib of Assyria attacked the city in 701 BCE yet Jerusalem escaped intact; this fits the

¹¹⁴⁰ For example Exod. 15:19–21 (Miriam) and 1 Sam. 18:6.

¹¹⁴¹ *De Somniis* 2.246–249 (A18) noted in Runia 2001:119.

¹¹⁴² See Stec 2004: 97–99.

mood of the psalm. Later Jewish commentators, including *Abraham ibn Ezra, also held that Sennacherib's siege was indeed the historical context which provoked the psalm.¹¹⁴³ *Abraham ibn Ezra similarly read the psalm to be about a day when God would intervene for his people through the cataclysmic forces of nature; verse three is read as a metaphorical description of Jewish sovereignty.¹¹⁴⁴ The end of the psalm is read eschatologically, as about the battle of Gog and Magog, which will leave Jerusalem unscathed.¹¹⁴⁵

Christian reception takes a somewhat different approach, although the eschatological elements correspond to the one New Testament allusion to this psalm. Luke 21:25 speaks of the distress of the nations, confused by the roaring of the sea and waves; the context is an attack on Jerusalem (verses 20–24) so this appropriately combines the metaphors in Ps. 46:3 and 6. It is interesting to see how this psalm was read eschatologically even by New Testament times.

The rich Christian use of the psalm really begins with the church fathers. Some of it, like Psalm 45, is more Christological; but there are also many ecclesial readings, concerning God as the church's refuge in times of war and strife. An example of the former reading is *Ambrose, who sees Ps. 46:5 ('when the morning dawns') as a reference to Christ's resurrection, dispelling the darkness.¹¹⁴⁶ *Augustine has an unusual take: citing Rom. 11, he reads the psalm as about the exultation of Israel among the nations, but this can only take place after the conversion of the Gentiles, on account of which Israel can be saved (Rom. 11:26).¹¹⁴⁷ John *Chrysostom reads the psalm more pragmatically: the rivers in verse 4 are a metaphor for God's providence, which 'flows everywhere, spreading copiously, advancing in a rush and covering everything'.¹¹⁴⁸ *Theodoret of Cyrillus, meanwhile, sees the rivers as the preaching of the Gospel, and the city as the church.¹¹⁴⁹ *Cassiodorus, following the Jewish emphasis on the prophetic role of the 'sons of Korah', sees this not as a prophecy about Israel but about the church: hence in the second strophe the *Korahites prophesy Christ appearing in the midst of the church, building it on firm rock (an idea also developed by *Bede); and in the third strophe they encourage believers to gaze on the great things God has done in Christ.¹¹⁵⁰

¹¹⁴³ Feuer 2004: 577.

¹¹⁴⁴ Feuer 2004: 579.

¹¹⁴⁵ Feuer 2004: 583, referring to Sforno.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ambrose, *Commentary on the Twelve Psalms* 46.14 ACTP 265 ACCS 358–59.

¹¹⁴⁷ Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 46.15 WSA 3 16:323 ACCS 360. His interest in the 'city of God' as an enduring city is also prevalent in this psalm: see also Psalm 87 in Volume Three (forthcoming).

¹¹⁴⁸ Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms* 46.1 CCOP 1:293, in ACCS: 357; also Hill 1992: 292–93.

¹¹⁴⁹ Theodoret, *Commentary on the Psalms* 46.5 FC 101:270, in ACCS: 358.

¹¹⁵⁰ Cassiodorus, in Walsh 1990: 452–3. On Bede, see Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 120–1.

This was also a practical psalm of protection for the Reformers. It was a favourite of *Luther's, who apparently sang his own German metrical version ('Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott') as he entered Worms Cathedral in 1521.¹¹⁵¹ It was also in *Calvin's first collection of (French) metrical psalms of penitence and protection. The psalm was known in the Calvinist churches as 'a Battle Hymn of the Lord', or the 'Marseillaise of the Reformation': it became the battle hymn of Protestant Germany, Protestant Geneva, and later, of Protestant Europe.¹¹⁵² John Knox's metrical version of this psalm was popular with the Scottish Covenanters during the Scottish Civil War of 1559–67, where the *Sternhold and Hopkins version was sung as the battle hymn of the Parliamentary armies:

The Lord is our defence and aid,
the strength whereby we stand;
When we with woe are much dismayed
he is our help at hand...¹¹⁵³

Cromwell, exhorting the second Parliament of the Protectorate almost a hundred years later in 1656, also used Psalm 46: 'Luther's Psalm... a rare psalm for a Christian! And if he set his heart open... we *shall* hear him say 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble... If Pope and Spaniard, and devil and all, set themselves against us—yet in the name of the Lord we should destroy them!'¹¹⁵⁴ Its political use continued when it was sung during on the streets of Paris and in Berlin during the Napoleonic Revolution in 1848.¹¹⁵⁵

As for liturgy, in Jewish worship verses 7 and 11 are part of the daily Morning Blessings in **Pesuke de-Zimra*, just before Psalms 145–150. For reasons given above it was understandably an important voice in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Christian hymnody. Isaac *Watts composed a version of verses 1–5 and then a second version of verses 6–11. The first, 'God is the Refuge of his Saints,/ When Storms of sharp Distress invade' appeared in 1719 with the title 'The Church's Safety and Triumph among national Desolations'. Despite its political overtones, however, the rivers in verse 4 now become streams of life, love and joy, and there are hints of a coming Messiah.¹¹⁵⁶ Watts' version of the later verses

¹¹⁵¹ This version was adapted by Dietrich Buxtehude as an organ chorale, by J.S. Bach as cantata, and also by Felix Mendelssohn: see Stern (2013): 49–62.

¹¹⁵² For a comparison of the (English translation of) Calvin's and Luther's versions of this psalm, see Gillingham 2008b: 143.

¹¹⁵³ See Gillingham 2008b: 156. Also W.S. Reid 1971: 36–54.

¹¹⁵⁴ Prothero 1903: 259.

¹¹⁵⁵ Prothero 1903: 358.

¹¹⁵⁶ See <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/watts/psalmshymns.Ps.104.html>.

had as its title simply ‘God fights for his Church’, but the tenor was the same: ‘Let Zion in her King rejoice/Tho’ Tyrants rage and kingdoms rise.’¹¹⁵⁷

Parts of Psalm 46 also appeared in **Olney Hymns*, published in 1779; ‘Glorious things of thee are spoken’ uses many biblical texts, including Psalm 87 and Isaiah 33, but it is also likely that John **Newton* used Ps. 46:4 to this end as well. It was later used in a German version by **Haydn*, to the tune *Austria*, the same tune which was used for the German National Anthem.¹¹⁵⁸ By contrast, **Luther’s* German version was popularised in English through Thomas Carlyle’s translation, which appeared in 1831. This is better known than **Watts’* version, for example:¹¹⁵⁹

A safe stronghold our God is still,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He’ll help us clear from all the ill
That hath us now oertaken...

Carlyle’s version a good deal of military, overtly masculine imagery, and the last verse merits some feminist critique: ‘And though they take our life,/Goods, honour, children, wife/Yet is their profit small’. A similarly strident, but more explicitly Christian version (1852) is by Frederick Henry Hodge (‘A mighty fortress is our God,/a bulwark never failing’) which nevertheless failed to dislodge the popularity of Carlyle’s psalm.¹¹⁶⁰ It is interesting to set these latter two versions alongside Katharina von Schlegel’s version in 1752, translated by Jane Borthwick in 1855, as part of *Hymns from the Land of Luther*: it was later used by Sibelius (1899) to the tune of *Finlandia*.¹¹⁶¹ Catherine **Winkworth’s* less well-known but more explicitly Christian version, also in 1855, was a more gentle—and Christianised—adaptation of Luther’s version:¹¹⁶²

God is our stronghold firm and sure,
Our trusty shield and weapon,
He shall deliver us, whate’er
Of ill to us may happen.
Our ancient Enemy
In earnest now is he,

¹¹⁵⁷ See <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/watts/psalmshymns.Ps.105.html>.

¹¹⁵⁸ A further discussion of this, in relation to Psalm 87, will be found in Volume Three (forthcoming). See Watson 2002: 216–18; also Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 92.

¹¹⁵⁹ See http://www.hymnary.org/text/a_safe_stronghold_our_god_is_still.

¹¹⁶⁰ See http://www.hymnary.org/text/a_mighty_fortress_is_our_god_a_bulwark.

¹¹⁶¹ See <http://www.blueletterbible.org/hymns/hymn.cfm?hymnID=190>.

¹¹⁶² See http://www.hymnary.org/text/god_is_our_stronghold_firm_and_sure.

Much craft and great might
 Arm him for the fight,
 On earth is not his fellow.

Our might is nought but weakness, soon
 Should we the battle lose,
 But for us fights the rightful Man,
 Whom God Himself doth choose.
 Asketh thou His name?
 'Tis Jesus Christ, the same
 Whom Lord of Hosts we call,
 God only over all;
 None from the field can drive Him....

Coleridge, who had experimented in hexametrical versions of parts of Isaiah, produced a non-liturgical composition of Psalm 46 somewhere between 1799 and 1802.¹¹⁶³ One of the oddest claims to fame, however, is that made in *The Times* some sixty years ago: Shakespeare, having apparently advised on some of the psalms translated for the *KJV published in 1611, had a special interest in Psalm 46. In 1610 Shakespeare was 46; the claim goes that his influence is seen in Psalm 46 by counting 46 words (in the *KJV) from verse 1 (starting with 'God') to arrive at 'Shake', whilst by counting 46 words from the end we arrive at 'Spear'. This is achieved by omitting the two *selah's in verse 3 and 11. It is, unsurprisingly, without any external substantiation.

A most unusual artistic representation of this psalm is a mosaic behind the altar in Hagia Sophia in modern day Istanbul. It is of the Virgin Mary, with the inscription from verse 5: 'God is in the midst of her, therefore she shall not be moved'.¹¹⁶⁴ An older and more literal interpretation is in the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 26v), which depicts the psalmist in the holy tabernacle safe inside the city walls, and Christ in a *mandorla above. Angels blow trumpets (to depict the voice of God which makes the earth melt). The waters and personified sea gods sun across the bottom of the image, the personified sun god is in the top corner, and at the bottom a bonfire burns the sword, bow and shield.¹¹⁶⁵ Similar images are found in the **Harley Psalter* (fol. 26v) and the **Eadwine Psalter* (fol. 80v). The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 58v) also uses the image of bonfires burning the weaponry as well as the personified sun.¹¹⁶⁶ Other explicitly Christian representations are found in Psalters such as **Khludov* (fol. 45v) which, for verses 2 and 3, depicts Golgotha, and at its foot flows a stream; next

¹¹⁶³ *Wieder 1995: 69.

¹¹⁶⁴ Prothero 1903: 39.

¹¹⁶⁵ <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=59&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

¹¹⁶⁶ See <https://goo.gl/ppr6rq>.

to it various anxious-looking figures stand (probably Jews or Muslims). The moon is set on the left, not the right, depicting the ‘changing’ of the earth.¹¹⁶⁷ Verse 5 offers another crucifixion scene, of Christ and the two thieves on three hills; beneath Christ’s cross is the skull of Adam, with two soldiers to the right, and two figures discuss the meaning of the cross; anti-Jewish and anti-Moslem overtones are again present there.¹¹⁶⁸ In the later and western **St Albans Psalter* the saviour figure is represented in the initial ‘D’ as a warrior, carrying a spear and shield; he is stepping outside the initial (‘come and see the works of the Lord’) and the psalmist is pointing to the text ‘Our God is a refuge and strength.’¹¹⁶⁹

A very different, contemporary image, seen in Figure 9, is by Michael **Jessing* who develops more the ecological and social issues also implicit in this psalm. The psalm, in his view, points to the city of God as a spiritual home where the streams offer an image of hope during times of turbulence. On either side of the central panel we see the heathen raging, the earth melting and God making the wars to cease. The words ‘Be still and know that I am God..’ are implicit in the image of the central panel.¹¹⁷⁰

As well as being frequently used in metrical psalmody, Psalm 46 has also played its part in sacral and secular music. **Pachelbel* composed a motet from this psalm for Catholic **Vespers*, creating a melody which was sustained, phrase by phrase, by lengthy notes, in order to expand upon the meaning. By contrast, J.S. **Bach’s* cantata of **Luther’s* version of this psalm (BMV 80) was composed in Weimar in 1715 for the Feast of the Reformation; his chorale prelude (BWV 720) also used *Luther’s* metrical version. **Mozart*, too, composed a version in 1765, aged nine; it was signed and presented to the British Museum in the same year during his visit to London (*Ms K20*). **Rameau’s Grand Motet* ‘Dieu est notre refuge’ is another familiar version, also from the eighteenth century. **Stanford’s* ‘God is our Hope and Strength’ (1877) is a five-movement choral piece suggesting strains of **Handel*, with its love of counterpoint in the first and last parts, its solo and baritone/chorus settings for the second and fourth parts, and its scherzo movement in the middle; it was an unofficial supplication for the Doctor of Music at Oxford. Both traditional and innovative, *Stanford* nevertheless did not put forward another supplication.¹¹⁷¹

The religious and social elements of the psalm influenced compositions for the concert hall. **Mendelssohn* used the music (but not the words) of **Luther’s*

¹¹⁶⁷ Corrigan 1992: 85; also fig. 89.

¹¹⁶⁸ Corrigan 1992: 83 and 87.

¹¹⁶⁹ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page162.shtml>.

¹¹⁷⁰ See <http://www.psalms-mixastudio.com/psalms-33-48.php>.

¹¹⁷¹ J. Dibble 2002:75–6.



FIGURE 9 Michael Jessing, 'Be still and know that I am God' (Ps. 46:10)

version, in 1830, with full orchestra, in his final movement of his Symphony 5 in D major/D minor; known as the Reformation Symphony, it was intended to be used at the celebrations of the three hundredth anniversary of the Augsburg Confession in Berlin.¹¹⁷² Richard Wagner's appropriation of some of the psalm in his *Kaisermarsch*, composed in 1871 to celebrate the foundation of the German Empire after the Franco-Prussian War.¹¹⁷³ Similarly the nineteenth-century American composer Dudley Buck composed a cantata for four voices, chorus and orchestra: 'God is our Refuge' was first performed in Boston in 1872 as an example of American Victorian 'hymn to music': its version of verse 10 ('Be still then and know that I am God' has some affinity to *Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.¹¹⁷⁴

¹¹⁷² See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqdcnNYROLo>.

¹¹⁷³ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 178.

¹¹⁷⁴ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 85.

One final and much more contemporary reception of this psalm was when it was read by Barack Obama on the tenth anniversary and at the site of 9/11.

Reception history thus confirms the public performative nature of this psalm; it has served the needs of both Jewish and Christian communities, yet also provided a bridge between them in their general protest when the affairs of the state threatened traditional values.

Psalm 47: God is King

Psalm 47 develops the theme of 46: because ‘all nations’ have now been subdued (verses 3–4; see 46:6, 8–9) ‘all peoples’ are called to praise God’s name. The sense of God being exalted above all nations is the same in each psalm (46:10; 47:8). God is known as the Most High (*elyon*) in his ‘holy habitation’ in 46:4; here in verse 2 he is known as the Most High (*elyon*) in the context of being a great King over all the earth. The hymn divides into two strophes, each starting with a call to praise (verses 1 and 6, each using ‘shout’ [*teru’ah*] and ‘sound’ [*qol*]). Verses 2–5 concern God’s universal kingship for the sake of his people ‘Jacob’; and verses 7–9 are about his kingship in the context of all the people of ‘the God of Abraham’ (see Gen. 12:3); each strophe refers to God as King (*melek*) over all the earth (*kol ha-’ares*).

Verse 5 (‘God has gone up with the sound of the trumpet’) has been rendered in various ways. Was this once a description of some ritual activity involving the king, or cultic leaders, representing the deity, or is it just a metaphor? **Targum* circumvents this by the paraphrase ‘Let the name of God be exalted with a shout’.¹¹⁷⁵ Another difficult verse is 8: has God somehow ‘been made’ king, or is this again a metaphor describing his always having been king? The Greek (*ebasileusen*) and the Latin (*regnavit*) imply the latter. Verse 9 poses difficulties too: do the leaders come willingly, or as captives, like Ps. 68:18? And who are these families of Abraham’s line? The Greek uses the preposition ‘*meta*’ (with) in verse 9, so that it translates ‘the peoples gather with the people of the God of Abraham...’), thus indicating the superiority of the Jews here.

This latter interpretation is of course paramount in Jewish tradition. It is sometimes termed ‘A Psalm dedicated to the era of the Messiah’; verses 2–3 are recited as a prelude to the **shofar* service at **Ro’sh ha-Shanah*, along with Ps. 98:6, Num.29:1 and Ps. 81:4–5; verse 5 is also used, when the *shofar* is sounded to symbolise the redemption of sins.¹¹⁷⁶ *Abraham ibn Ezra, seeing verses 8–10

¹¹⁷⁵ Stec 2004: 99–100.

¹¹⁷⁶ Feuer 2004: 587–8.

in the context of a final victory over Gog and Magog, argues that this addresses the survivors of this battle, when all are under the authority of Israel. 'Jacob' refers to the patriarch's time on Mount Moriah (Gen. 28:17), and so the psalm concerns the place of Jerusalem in the final days. The whole psalm is also linked to David bringing the Ark into Jerusalem in Psalm 132, and the universalism at the end of 47 is thus tempered by citing Ps. 132:13, which sees God's presence first and foremost in Zion; proselytes have to come and worship Abraham's God in Jerusalem.¹¹⁷⁷

Christian interpreters, starting with the New Testament, similarly assume an eschatological tenor in the psalm, but turn the Jewish ideas above into a theme of universal salvation. This is most evident in the allusions to verse 9 in Revelation, which similarly describes the one sitting on a throne (47:8) and receiving universal acclamation (Rev. 9–10; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:10, 15; 21:5).

The association of Psalm 47 with the Day of Ascension becomes a recurring theme in the church fathers. The cry 'God has gone up!' is about Christ 'going up' to a Temple not made with human hands. *Athanasius writes that 'Psalm 47 announces the Saviour's ascension into heaven... and the calling of the Gentiles'.¹¹⁷⁸ The 'pride of Jacob' (verse 4) is now the Christian. *Chrysostom uses Rom. 9:6–8 to this end, comparing human and divine kingship in this psalm: 'A great king is the one who made the whole world heaven, caused savages to have values and persuaded them to imitate angels'.¹¹⁷⁹ From the *Antiochiene tradition, *Theodoret of Cyrrus concurs: this is a hymn of victory, first for the Jews, now for the whole earth.¹¹⁸⁰ By the time of *Bede, the second half of the Psalm is very clearly about the Ascension of Christ. *Aquinas also sees this as referring to the Ascension of Christ, who receives through this psalm two kinds of song: that of the apostles, and that of the angels.¹¹⁸¹

It is clear that this psalm, with its potential for *antiphonal singing, has had an important role in both Jewish and Christian liturgy. The *Mishnah assigns it as a New Year Psalm. The *Siddurim (from Reform Judaism) use 47:5 (with its reference to blowing the *shofar) alongside Psalm 30 (with its title 'A Song for the Dedication of the Temple') at the Festival of *Hanukkah. In Christian worship both the Roman Lectionary and Anglican Common Lectionary use Psalm 47 for Ascension Day. More generally, in Orthodox liturgy Ps. 46:6 and 1 form one of eight passages used in the *Prokeimenon on an eight weekly cycle.¹¹⁸²

¹¹⁷⁷ Feuer 2004: 590–7.

¹¹⁷⁸ Athanasius, *On the Interpretation of the Psalms* 26.8 OIP 72, 60, in ACCS: 361.

¹¹⁷⁹ Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms* 47.3 CCOP 1:303 and 47.5 CCOP 1:305, in ACCS: 362–63; see also Hill 1998:298–303.

¹¹⁸⁰ Theodoret, *Commentary on the Psalms* 47.1 FC 101:273, in ACCS: 362.

¹¹⁸¹ http://www4.desales.edu/~philtheo/loughlin/ATP/Psalm_46.html.

¹¹⁸² Holladay 1993: 180.

Because of its connections with Psalm 46, this psalm has also had political associations. *Watts ingeniously combined the themes of the elevation of the king and the Ascension of Christ with a contemporary view that Britain was the inheritor of the promises to Israel, so the last two verses read:¹¹⁸³

In Isr'el stood his ancient throne,
He loved that chosen race
But now he calls the world his own,
And heathens taste his grace.

The British islands are the Lord's,
There Abraham's God is known
While powers and princes, shields and swords,
Submit before his throne.

John *Wesley, adapting the psalms for Methodist congregations in New England, changed 'The British islands are the Lord's' to 'Remotest nations are the Lord's'. This was maintained during the American War of Independence (1775–88): there is some irony that the earlier British orientation is now Americanised.¹¹⁸⁴

Artistic representations make much of the idea of the Gentiles worshipping Christ as King, especially in Byzantine Psalters. The **Khludov Psalter* (fol. 46r) offers a crucifixion image on the facing page, and on fol. 46v an Arabic figure is depicted clapping his hands (verse 1). Other groups in ethnic dress (possibly Bulgars, Khazars, Armenians and Slavs) seem also to be in some act of reverence. Verse 5 ('God has gone up with a shout' has an image of Christ in a *mandorla, carried to heaven by the angels (an image also in Pss. 16:11; 55:6 and 106:6).¹¹⁸⁵ The Ascension theme is further developed in the **Bristol Psalter*.¹¹⁸⁶ The **Parma Psalter* (fol. 164B) by contrast, uses the reference to Abraham in verse 10 to depict the head of an old man with long white beard, resting on a dragon's body.¹¹⁸⁷

A very different artistic medium is taken from a typical *Biblia Pauperum* woodblock which is a typological interpretation of this psalm.¹¹⁸⁸ Here the core theme is the Ascension. The central image is of the Ascension of Christ; to the right Enoch is being taken up the heaven (Gen. 5:24) and to the left, Elijah ascends in a chariot of fire (1 Kgs. 2:11–13). Psalm 47:5 and Isa. 63:1 are cited

¹¹⁸³ <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/watts/psalmshymns.Ps.106.html>.

¹¹⁸⁴ Gillingham 2008b: 160–1; also Stackhouse 1997: 39–40.

¹¹⁸⁵ Corrigan 1992: 88 and 93; also fig. 90.

¹¹⁸⁶ Corrigan 1992: 21.

¹¹⁸⁷ See Metzger 1996: 78.

¹¹⁸⁸ For a previous discussion of these woodcuts, see p. 275 for Ps. 45.

at the top of the tableau, and Deut. 32:11 and Mic. 2:13 at the bottom. Like the account of Psalm 45, this reads typologically, as a prophetic foretaste of the Gospel accounts.¹¹⁸⁹

Another unusual depiction, this time in a painting, is by the pre-Raphaelite artist, Thomas Cooper Gotch, in his 'Alleluia' which is based on Ps. 47:6–7 (written in Latin in gold leaf at the top of the canvas), which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1896. Two rows of children, dressed in damask and brocade costumes from around the world, form a 'Cherub Choir' to sing this psalm. On the one hand, we see the innocence of childhood, and on the other, the universalism of worship; given its appearance just before Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, we also see, more politically, the glorification of the British Commonwealth. The painting is held at the Tate.¹¹⁹⁰

This psalm has produced a vast number of musical arrangements. Several musical compositions were, predictably, for court occasions. Christopher *Tye's *'Omnes gentes, plaudit manibus'*, for example, was composed for use in the royal chapels of both Edward and Mary. *Palestrina's *'Ascendit Deus'* (1593) was a sacred motet in polyphonic style, ensuring the imagery in the words of the psalm corresponded to the phrases in the music; based on verse 6, and written for Ascension Day, it encapsulated in one verse the Christian reading of the entire psalm. The early seventeenth-century five-part chorus by Thomas *Weelkes (*'All People Clap your Hands'*), also for Ascension Day, has a distinctive ascending and descending melody line, imitating the sound of the trumpet for verse 5 ('God is gone up') as well as its final seven-measure Amen.¹¹⁹¹ Another arrangement is *Orlando Gibbons' *'O Clap Your Hands'* (1622) which was apparently written as part of an exercise for admission to the degree of Doctor of Music at Oxford; it is still used at Evensong on Ascension Day. Its typical use of contrapuntal exchanges of voices for 'O sing praises' combined with the quick notes and leaps for 'Clap' and 'God has gone up' (here using the trumpet) is an exercise in 'word painting' and dramatic polyphony.¹¹⁹²

More recently, the French composer Florent *Schmitt wrote a version (1904) which displays the exotic oriental style influenced by a visit to Turkey in 1903. This is typified by the spirited opening and sensuous soprano solo to verse 4: parts of it were sung at the baptism of Prince Albert of Monaco in 1958.¹¹⁹³ More conventional pieces include 'O Clap Your hands' by *Vaughan

¹¹⁸⁹ See Soltész 1967: fig. 34.

¹¹⁹⁰ <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gotch-alleluia-n01590>.

¹¹⁹¹ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 13–14.

¹¹⁹² Gillingham 2008b: 186; Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 171.

¹¹⁹³ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 192–3.

Williams (1920) and ‘God has gone up’ by Herbert *Howells (1944). A composer of Jewish origins, who composed music with Christian themes, is Gerald Finzi: his ‘God is Gone up’ (1951) was arranged in three parts for the Feast of St Cecilia and also celebrates Christ’s Ascension: the first and last parts contain a triumphant fanfare on the organ with ‘shout’ as *fortissimo*, contrasted with a more serene second part which imagines Christ in a chariot ascending to heaven.¹¹⁹⁴ John *Rutter used this psalm as one of nine at his *Psalmfest* in Dallas, Texas, in 1993.¹¹⁹⁵ Another example is by Israel Houghton, a minister at Houston, Texas, who since 1997 has produced Grammy Award-winning Christian music, working in Gospel, jazz, folk and reggae: his ‘Resurrection Power’ is based upon Psalm 47.¹¹⁹⁶ The version of Psalms 47, 48 and 150 by Tzvi Avni (1999) entitled ‘*R’nanah*’ celebrates the kingship of God from a more Jewish perspective.¹¹⁹⁷

Finally, a recent and imaginative adaptation on the organ alone is by *Zorada Temmingh. She takes the sounds of the clapping of hands and sounding of horns and trumpets, and, using Louis Bourgeois’ melody to this psalm, recreates on the organ the imagery in the psalm of mountains and lands to imagine a man of Africa walking towards a mountain playing a simple melody on his mbira; he is joined by another who plays the first part of the melody on his flute, to be joined by others, each playing their own instruments as they walk to the mountain top. There they join together in a mighty hymn of praise in 7/4 measure (typical of ethnic music) and then descend through the mists as each goes their own way, the mbira and flute being the last to be heard in the distance.¹¹⁹⁸

Hence like the two psalms on either side of it, Psalm 47 is a psalm associated with public performance, and its key theme of the Kingship of God over the nations has given it a rich musical and liturgical history which is shared by Jews and Christians alike.

Psalm 48: God is King in Zion

Psalm 48 has close affinities to Psalms 47 and 46. Like 46, it bears the influence of Canaanite mythology, for example in its reference in verse 2 to Zion as a Mount Zaphon, the dwelling of Canaanite deities, and its imagery of the storm

¹¹⁹⁴ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 93.

¹¹⁹⁵ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 191.

¹¹⁹⁶ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 71; also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7cvbYtzgOQ>.

¹¹⁹⁷ See ‘Rhythms of Israel’ on <http://rnanah.tripod.com/html/CDInfo.html>.

¹¹⁹⁸ This is part of an email correspondence with *Zorada Temmingh (September 2016). See *Lingua Gratiae: Zorada Temmingh. Organ Improvisations on Church Melodies*.

god in verse 7. Furthermore, the unusual description of Zion as ‘the city of God’ in 46:5 is also found in 48:2 and 9. God is a refuge—*misgab*—in both Ps. 46:7, 11 and 48:3. The appellation *yhwh šeba’ot* (Lord of hosts) in 46:7 and 11 is also found in 48:8 (Hebrew 46:8, 11 and 48:9).

After the introduction in verse 1, three (uneven) strophes suggest a hymn, like 46, in praise of Zion: verses 1–8 take up the seven epithets of Zion, followed by a response by the congregation (verses 9–11) and an unusual call (in psalmody) to walk around the city (verse 12–14). The emphasis on ‘seeing’ and ‘hearing’ (verse 8) ‘in the midst of your temple’ (verse 9) and on processing round the city (verses 12) and proclaiming to future generations (verse 13) would suggest that, although the actual rubrics are missing, this is a psalm with some specific ritual enactment. Like Psalms 46 and 47, it has an eschatological ending in its vision of Zion at the centre of the entire world.

The **Septuagint* adds *deutera sabbatou* to the title to this psalm: it is for Monday, the second day of the week and the second day of creation, when God separated the heavens and earth and the upper and lower waters. This brought about its liturgical use in the ancient **Tamid* service. The *Septuagint* also attempts to make sense of the last two words (‘*al-mut*’) of the last verse of the psalm. The words literally mean ‘unto/against death’; the Greek translation is *eis tous aiōnas* (‘to eternity’) and from this the NRSV reads ‘for evermore’. However, if this is a specific reference to God’s presence ‘against’ death, as the Hebrew implies, it fits well with the reflections on the temporality of life in Psalm 49, and this may be what the later compilers of this collection intended.¹¹⁹⁹

The **Targum* is notable for its Jewish paraphrase of the last verse: ‘For this is our God, he is our God; his **Shekinah* is in her midst, and his dwelling place is in the heavens for ever and ever; he will lead us as in the days of our youth.’¹²⁰⁰

Later commentators refer to the importance of this being a psalm for the ‘second day’, by linking the foundation of Zion with the second act of creation, so that the creation of the tabernacle and later the Temple and their separation from the world correspond to the separation of heaven and earth. In this way, Zion is in the heart of God, even from the beginning of creation. Thus **Midrash Tehillim* refers to walking around Zion and numbering her towers (verses 12–13) as if this is alongside the wonders of creation: ‘How many gardens? 1184. How many towers? 1485. How many mansions? 1496. How many fountains? 676. Where is the water from? 900 Aquaducts...’¹²⁰¹

¹¹⁹⁹ Hence ‘*al-muth*’ might actually belong to the title of Psalm 49, where it would read as a musical direction, like the superscription to Psalm 46, ‘a song for high voices’.

¹²⁰⁰ Stec 2004: 100–1. This reads the Hebrew expression ‘*lmwt*’ (against death) as ‘*lwmyym*’ (in the days of our youth).

¹²⁰¹ Braude 1959 I: 462.

Jewish commentators disagree about the ending of the psalm. *Rashi concurs with **Targum* ('He will guide us like children') and reads this in a this-worldly way as about God preserving our youthful energy. *Kimḥi and *Abraham ibn Ezra see this as two words, and with the *Midrash Tehillim*, read it as 'He leads us to immortality', thus noting the movement in this psalm, from the hope in the physical restoration of Jerusalem, to Psalm 49, with its more spiritual hope in the survival of the individual beyond death.¹²⁰²

Christians have tended to interpret 'Zion' as either the earthly church or the heavenly city. The only literal allusion in the New Testament is in Matt. 5:35, which when speaking of Jerusalem refers to it as the 'city of the great king' (Ps. 48:2). Otherwise the theme of the spiritualisation of the Temple (for example in 1 Cor. 3:16–17; Eph.2:21) paves the way for the more Christological and ecclesiological approaches of the early fathers.

*Ambrose, for example, reads the psalm as about 'Christ our Temple', as the one who purified our sins in his body.¹²⁰³ *Augustine reads verse 3 as the city (set on a hill): 'the city which can endure is that whose foundation is Christ'; and of verse 8, he comments: 'O blessed church, at one time you heard, and at another time you saw... Everything that is now being realised was prophesied beforehand... Look at the inheritance that stretches to the ends of the earth; see how the promise is being made good.'¹²⁰⁴ This psalm also influenced Augustine's understanding of the 'City of God'; a fuller exposition of that theme will be given for Psalm 87.¹²⁰⁵ *Theodoret, by contrast, understands the 'city of God' simply as a 'way of life' built upon Scripture. On verses 11–12, he comments 'Zion is the church throughout the world, and the towers are those of virtue.'¹²⁰⁶ *Bede reads the *Septuagint* heading ('for the second day') as about the 'firmament' which is the edifice not symbolising the Temple and City of Jerusalem, but the Church, brought about by the victory of the Lord's Passion after the second day. Finally, the tradition associated with *Aquinas reads the psalm as about the heavenly Jerusalem: the psalm should be read alongside Revelation.¹²⁰⁷

In Jewish liturgical tradition, as well as being used for evening prayer on Mondays, Psalm 48 has also been associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. Christian tradition has often assigned it as a *Proper Psalm for Pentecost: the Zion theme is appropriate, because Jerusalem was the location for the birth of

¹²⁰² Feuer 2004: 602–3.

¹²⁰³ Ambrose *Commentary on Twelve Psalms* 48:16–17 ACTP 280. ACCS 369.

¹²⁰⁴ Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 48.4 WSA 3 16:339 ACCS 368; 48.7 WSA 3 16:342 ACCS 369.

¹²⁰⁵ Volume Three (forthcoming).

¹²⁰⁶ See *Theodoret, *Commentary on the Psalms* 48.1 FC 101:276 ACCS 367; also 48.6 FC 101:279, in ACCS: 370–71.

¹²⁰⁷ See Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 136.

the church during Pentecost (Acts 2). It is also used in the *Vigils for Trinity Sunday with Psalm 47 and seven other psalms.

In terms of hymnody, the twelfth-century Benedictine, Bernard of Cluny, composed a hymn which was translated by *Neale as ‘Jerusalem the Golden’: this has in part been influenced by Psalm 48, although Psalm 87 is the primary source.¹²⁰⁸ *Elgar’s ‘Great is the Lord’, written for the foundation or commemoration of a church, and performed at Westminster Abbey in 1912, is a notable version of this psalm. The reflections on God’s greatness at the start of the psalm are sung in unison; the more specific theme on the beauty of Mount Zion is by sopranos and altos. A syncopated section (verses 4–8) depicts the arrival and hasty departure of the foreign kings. The next section (verses 9–10: ‘We have thought on thy loving kindness, O God’) is a bass solo. The psalm ends with a jubilant chorus (‘Let Zion be glad’).¹²⁰⁹ Another more recent example is by *Penderecki, to celebrate the third millennium of Jerusalem in 1996. This plays on the number seven: he chooses seven psalms, with frequent repetition of seven notes on a single pitch, and seven *fortissimo* chords at the end. Psalm 48 opens the choral symphony and, with citations from other prophets and psalms, closes it.¹²¹⁰

In artistic representations a common motif is that of Christ, seated in a tabernacle depicted as a church, teaching either David or the church, or both. The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 60r) depicts Christ and David; **Utrecht* (fol. 27v) and **Harley* (fol. 27v) and **Eadwine* (fol. 82v) all depict Jesus teaching the people. Each plays on the scene of the storm at sea (referring to the destruction of the ships of Tarshish in verse 7). The thirteenth-century *Psalter MS Ashmole 1525* (fol. 38v), held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, also depicts in its initial M Christ teaching within the church.¹²¹¹ **Khludov* is influenced by commentaries by *Athanasius and *Didymus, where each reads this psalm as about Christ ruling in Zion, but referring also to the incarnation; so in *Khludov* (fol. 48v) we see a rising sun and flaming chariot at the top of the page, and at the bottom, the sun sinking behind a mountain. In the middle of the margin Habakkuk (suggesting 3:3) and David point to and venerate an icon of Christ. Although the image in **Pantokrator* (fol. 61r) is damaged it too has a similar design, as does the **Bristol Psalter* (fol. 80v).¹²¹²

Jewish illustrations are somewhat different. The **Parma Psalter* (fol. 65B) by contrast, uses a colourful image of Zion, in the top right corner, following the title

¹²⁰⁸ See Ps 87 in Volume Three (forthcoming).

¹²⁰⁹ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 95.

¹²¹⁰ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 232.

¹²¹¹ See <https://goo.gl/V0tDAS>.

¹²¹² Corrigan 1992: 70 and 71 and fig. 80 and 81. For **Bristol Psalter* see also http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_40731_f080v.

of the psalm; it shows the Temple, palaces, towers, and city gates. The use of gold leaf indicates the holiness of Zion. A human figure with a griffin's head points to this image, and holds a *phylactery on which the first words of verse 1 Great is the Lord are written.¹²¹³ Jewish contemporary art takes up the same scene. The sketch by *Chagall illustrates a group of people celebrating the protection of the city, which is behind them.¹²¹⁴ Moshe *Berger uses the same red, blue and purple hues as for Psalm 46; the ice-blue city is protected by a thick band of red Hebrew lettering, symbolising the presence of God, and thick band of blue letters, symbolising protecting angels: blessings descend to bring about justice on earth.¹²¹⁵

We end with two completely different attempts to contemporise the psalm, one direct and prophetic and the other more subtle. In *Hidden Prophecies in the Psalms*, *Church views Psalm 48 as referring to the birth of Israel in 1948.¹²¹⁶ This has some connotations with the earliest explanation of this psalm as prophecy, composed by the *Korahites sitting in safety on their ledge in a rock, apparently creating prophecies through these psalms about events involving Assyria some five hundred years later. Very differently, in a recent commentary Dombkowski Hopkins also wrestles with the idea of birth and new life in this psalm. She notes how so often the imagery of the female personification of Zion has been somewhat destructively associated with military violence and violation, yet in Psalm 48 she sees some redemption of this image by a phrase in verse 6, which describes the fear of advancing hostile kings as 'trembling... with pains as if a woman in labour'. Zion is the woman in actual labour: and through her pain there is the suggestion of the birth of a new age in which both Zion and her offspring are safe.¹²¹⁷

To conclude, compared with Psalm 47, the preoccupation with 'the city of our God' in Psalm 48 has led to very different readings in Jewish and Christian reception: much depends on whether this psalm should be read literally or allegorised. There are many similarities with Psalm 87 in this respect.

Psalm 49: A Psalm of Complaint and Instruction

Psalm 49 is both very different from all the other *Korahite psalms, with their repeated allusions to Zion, and has much in common with them, but also points beyond them, in its theme of the need for repentance, to Psalms 50 and 51.¹²¹⁸

¹²¹³ Metzger 1996: 78. See Plate 18.

¹²¹⁴ http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=22824&showmode=Full.

¹²¹⁵ http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=15180&showmode=Full.

¹²¹⁶ Church 1990: 149–52.

¹²¹⁷ See Dombkowski Hopkins 2016:55–56.

¹²¹⁸ See Attard 2016: 450–452.

Like Psalms 42–43 and 46 it is a psalm with a refrain (verses 12, 20); its hortatory introduction is similar to Ps. 45:1; it has exactly the same threefold heading as Psalm 47 and its opening verse, addressed to ‘all the peoples’ is also reminiscent of 47:2. Its preoccupation with death suggests a link with the Hebrew of the last two words of 48 (‘against death’). Yet its more obvious ‘partner’ is the *Asaphite psalm, 73, with a similar questioning spirit about injustice and the vanity of wealth and a similar resolution of seeing this life in the context of life beyond death.¹²¹⁹

It is likely that it has been inserted here because of its closer relationship with another Asaphite Psalm, 50, mainly because of its similar concern for integrity of worship and social justice. It is by no means as well structured as the previous *Korahite psalms: nor is it as well preserved, and it has no obviously regular rhythm. After its introduction (verses 1–3) the psalm can be divided up thematically into two sections, each ending with the same refrain: all will die (verse 5–12); but some will live beyond death (verses 13–20, noting the **selah* in verse 15, after the verses about God receiving the soul after death).

There are several puzzling verses (one marked with **ketib/qere*) which early translators have tried to solve; all of them occur in verses which reflect on life and death (7, 9, 11, 13 and 14). For example, in verse 11 (Hebrew verse 12) the Hebrew reads *qirbam* which could be understood as ‘their inner thought’: this is the interpretation given by *Rashi, and also in the **KJV*, which reads ‘their inward thoughts is that their houses shall continue for ever’. The Greek and Syriac read this word as *qiberam* and so translate this word as ‘their grave’, which is what is used in the NRSV (‘their graves are their homes for ever’). This fits better with the tenor of this psalm which is about possible survival of the righteous beyond death.

The interest in teaching ‘wisdom’ in verse 3 (‘my mouth shall speak wisdom’) has resulted in the psalm being used in two later wisdom books, taking up the twin themes of the vanity of riches and the suddenness of death. *Wisdom 4:7–18 has affinities with much of Psalm 49, especially verse 17a and Ps. 49:10, and Wisdom 5:8 takes its rhetorical questions from Ps. 49:6. Baruch 3:17–19 has also clear correspondences with Ps. 49:6, 10 and 13.

The Aramaic **Targum* is surprisingly specific about the fate of the dead. For example, the problematic verse 11 reads: ‘*They shall remain in their graves for ever, and not rise from their dwellings to all generations, because they acted proudly and acquired an evil name upon the earth.*’ Verse 15, stressing the contrast between the wicked and the righteous, reads ‘*David said through the spirit of prophecy, “But God will redeem my soul from the judgment of *Gehenna, for he will teach me his Law.” For ever.*’ *Targum* and *Rashi read the whole psalm through the eyes of the *Korahites: it was Korah’s greed for wealth which led to

¹²¹⁹ See Psalm 73, Volume Three (forthcoming).

his downfall, hence the sons of Korah composed this Psalm to criticise such greed, so that dependency on physical possessions should not destroy the immortality of the soul. Hence in *Targum* verse 16 is completely different: ‘Concerning Korah and his company, he [David] prophesied and said “Do not fear, O Moses, when Korah the man of strife becomes rich, when the glory of those of his house becomes great.”¹²²⁰ Interestingly **Midrash Tehillim* has nothing to say about life after death in this psalm, other than reading *qirbam* (their inner) as *qiberam* (their grave) which in this case is again a reminder of the fate of Korah. Instead this is a psalm preoccupied with the Torah: verse 2, for example, is a consideration of those who are rich in Torah and poor in Torah.¹²²¹ And verse 3 (‘my mouth shall speak wisdom’) is really a reference to Torah, as is the reference to ‘proverb’ in verse 4.¹²²²

So Jewish tradition is by no means united about this psalm, mainly on account of its textual variations. Moses and the *Korahites (and even Adam, in verse 1, in *Targum*) come into purview; but nothing is said about the themes of David and Zion, as in other *Korahite psalms. The discourse is sometimes specifically about obedience to the Torah, sometimes more generally about avoiding the trappings of wealth and greed. But rarely does the interest in life beyond death receive detailed attention, despite the clear preoccupation with this theme throughout the psalm.

The psalm does not seem to have been used at all in the New Testament, and incisive insights by the early church fathers are similarly scarce. Later Christian reception of this psalm offers two specific emphases. One is more pragmatic, taking the theme of the emptiness of wealth in the face of death; the other is more theological and allegorical. In some cases these two overlap in the same interpreter. *Augustine, for example, has much to say on the theme of the acquisition of wealth from this psalm, citing 1 Tim. 6:17–18 and Luke 12:33 to make his point: worldly greed will reap its rewards at death.¹²²³ *Cassiodorus sees the psalm to be about ‘the ostentation of the wealthy dead’ who once thought that everything that they had built would last forever. ‘What help will riches lend to the dead... who succumb to the eternal punishment which they thought they could never suffer?’ The images the ‘senseless beasts’ (in the refrains, in verses 12 and 20) and of sheep falling into a pit (verse 14) reveal just how bestial humans can become.¹²²⁴

¹²²⁰ Stec 2004: 101–3.

¹²²¹ Braude 1959 I: 465–6.

¹²²² Feuer 2004: 614.

¹²²³ See Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 48,9 (CCSL 38:558).

¹²²⁴ See Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 48,13 (CCSL 97:436).

More allegorical interpreters include *Ambrose, who understands verse 1 to be a call by the ‘Lord of salvation’ inviting the Gentiles into his church.¹²²⁵ *Augustine also reads the psalm in this way. Of verse 15 (‘God will ransom my soul’) he states: ‘The psalmist has in mind the salvation that Christ has already demonstrated in himself...’¹²²⁶ Several other commentators play on the theme of the ‘price of ransom’: *Basil the Great explains that no one can ransom themselves, and the price of our ransom was Jesus Christ.¹²²⁷ The same idea is echoed by *Theodore of Mopsuestia and John *Chrysostom.¹²²⁸ *Cassiodorus, reading the psalm theologically as well as practically, understands the first half of the psalm to be a message to the faithful in the light of Christ’s incarnation, and the second half, an address to the foolish in the light of the second coming.¹²²⁹

Given Jewish interpretations of this psalm, it is interesting that in Jewish liturgy the psalm plays a part in mourning ceremonies: it is used at end of morning and evening services for those who mourn their dead, especially on the New Moon and **Hanukkah*. The psalm is also recited after prayers in house of mourning during seven days of mourning (‘Shivah’), as suppliants reflect on the meaning of life and death.¹²³⁰

There are some intriguing artistic representations of this psalm. The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 28r) depicts the grazing sheep at the bottom of the image, stumbling into a pit; in the centre of the illustration are four ‘senseless beasts’ (verses 12, 20) just above sarcophagi, containing corpses, as well as a large sepulchre (‘their graves are their homes for ever’). The teaching about wealth is encapsulated by a king with a spear and scales, ready to measure his gold. Several people near him are emptying their treasures into a chest: in the context of the nearby sarcophagi, this container could also symbolise death.¹²³¹ Another interesting motif shared by **Khludov* (fol. 47v), **Barberini* (fol. 82v), **Theodore* (fol. 60r) and **Hamilton* (fol. 109r) is an illustration of John *Chrysostom (named), as the fourth century preacher with the ‘Golden Mouth’; he is wearing bishop’s vestments and holds a book, addressing individuals who represent all peoples (verse 1–2). Chrysostom is the one who speaks the wisdom of old (verses 3–4).

Musical arrangement of this psalm are not immediately evident. One example is by *Haydn: verses 1–6 (i.e. the verses before the reflections on life after

¹²²⁵ Ambrose, *Commentary on the Twelve Psalms* 49.1–2 *ACTP* 285–86, in *ACCS VII*: 374.

¹²²⁶ Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 48.15 *WSA* 3 16:372, in *ACCS VII*:381. Note also Augustine’s interest in the number 153 in this psalm: see Gillingham 2008b: 39.

¹²²⁷ See Basil, *Homilies on Psalms* 19.4 (Ps 49) *FC* 46:318–19, in *ACCS VII*: 377.

¹²²⁸ On Chrysostom, see Hill 1998: 328–30.

¹²²⁹ See Walsh 1990: 470.

¹²³⁰ Holladay 1993: 144.

¹²³¹ See Bessette 2005: 207–8.

death) were used as one of his six English Psalms (c. 1794): this provides an interesting example of how a Catholic who composed for the concert hall could arrange sacred music for the Protestant church as well.¹²³²

One unusual representation of verse 7 ('Truly, no ransom avails for one's life...') is by Matthew *Arnold. This is from his 1867 poem 'Oberman Once More', which Arnold based upon Senancour's French novel, *Obermann*, with its themes of inner integrity and the strength of the free spirit, even when outwardly held captive. The following section, part of a longer piece on the passion of Christ, which plays upon the movement between silence and questions, is a poignant reflection on the power of the inner self and a necessary independence from religious dogma:¹²³³

'From David's lips this word did roll,
'Tis true and living yet:
*No man can save his brother's soul,
Nor pay his brother's debt.*

'Alone, self-poised, henceforward man
Must labour; must resign
His all too human creeds, and scan
Simply the way divine!

Like Psalms 42–43 at the beginning of this *Korahite collection, this is a psalm which lends itself to more universal use. Its reception history shows it has been used more for instruction, particularly in its attitudes to wealth and poverty, than for doctrine—despite the specific references to life beyond death, which are unusual in the Psalter overall.

¹²³² A recording of Haydn's English Psalms has been produced by Hyperion (67150) as 'Haydn and His English Friends'.

¹²³³ See <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/172853>.

Psalm 50: An Asaphite Psalm about Repentance and Sacrifice

Psalm 50 has some associations with 49 in its attitude to injustice, and implicitly, to repentance, as well as the importance of integrity and purity of motives, and, like 49, it addresses the people rather than God.¹²³⁴ It also resembles another *Asaphite psalm, 81, which similarly contains prophetic oracles against the people about the need for integrity in worship and the need for some renewal of the covenant.¹²³⁵

It seems that Psalm 50 has been placed next to the earlier *Korahite collection through its interest in worship in Zion (verse 2); furthermore, it is one of the few *Asaphite psalms without explicit references to the north, and this might have been another reason for its having been split from the other eleven psalms. It is also closely related to Psalm 51, with a similar emphasis on integrity of spirit and the sacrifice of thanksgiving.¹²³⁶ Psalm 50 falls into three clear sections: verses 1–6 are a summons to the people (and there are some links here with 49:1–3, here using the voice of a prophet, rather than that of wisdom); verses 7–15 form the oracle proper, about the true meaning of sacrifice; and verses 16–23 are a warning to the wicked, about obedience to the law. So the first stage of reception history witnesses again to its considered placing in the Psalter as a whole.

¹²³⁴ Attard 2016:93–107.

¹²³⁵ See Psalm 81 in Volume Three (forthcoming).

¹²³⁶ Several scholars have brought out the close proximity between 49/50/51 despite each psalm belonging to a different collection. See S.M. Attard 2016: 109–32 and 452–3.

The first verse is difficult, because it appears to have vestiges of polytheism: the Hebrew reads, literally, ‘God of gods, the Lord...’ (*’el ’elohim yhwh*). The *Septuagint and the *Vulgate (as well as the Syriac) translate this exactly as it is, not acknowledging that this might be a polytheistic inference: so, *theos theōn kurios* and *Deus deorum Dominus*.¹²³⁷

The *Targum changes this verse to ‘*The Mighty One and God, the Lord*’. Verse 2 has a familiar reference (also seen in Psalm 48) in its equating Zion with the creation of the cosmos: ‘*and the beginning of the creation of the world was from Zion; and from there (in) the perfection of his beauty God was revealed*’. This is now directed to the present community of faith. Verse 3 refers to the day of great judgement, and verse 5 is expanded to refer to the Torah as a form of sacrifice: ‘*... and those who stand in my Law, and let them occupy themselves with prayer, which may be compared to an offering*’. Verse 9, on God’s rejection of false sacrifices, now reads: ‘*Since the day when the house of my *Shekinah was destroyed I have not accepted from your hand an ox, or goats from your folds*’, and verse 13, on the same theme, states ‘*Since the day when the house of the sanctuary was destroyed I have not accepted the flesh of the sacrifice of fatlings, and the priests have not sprinkled before me the blood of goats*’. Living in the period when sacrifices were no longer possible, this then lays greater responsibility on the people: the end of verse 21 reads ‘*I shall reprove you in this world, and I will arrange *Gehenna before you in the world to come*’. Verse 23, meanwhile, summarises the theme of the entire psalm with a contemporary application: ‘*As for him who sacrifices the evil inclination, it shall be reckoned to him as a thanks offering that glorifies me...*’¹²³⁸

This emphasis on ‘right sacrifice’—not the physical act of sacrifice, but the heart and soul given over to Torah, with pure motives—is a common theme throughout the Jewish reception of this psalm. Even the three names for God in verse 1 are used to this effect: *’el*, the Almighty Creator, and *’elohim*, Judge of all people, and *yhwh*, the Merciful, are all motivations for devout obedience.¹²³⁹ Like *Targum*, the address in verse 5 is to the present community: the ‘faithful ones’ are now Israel in exile, now offered a promise of ingathering, conditional upon her obedience (verse 7).¹²⁴⁰ Later commentators go beyond *Targum*, reading verse 8 in the light of the contingent nature of sacrifice, so that the confession of thanks (as in verses 14 and 23) is *greater* than the act of sacrifice itself.

¹²³⁷ This allowed the psalm to take on Trinitarian overtones in its later reception, as we shall see below.

¹²³⁸ Stec 2004: 104–106.

¹²³⁹ Feuer 2004: 636.

¹²⁴⁰ So both Kimḥi and Rashi, in Feuer 2004: 637. The same idea is found in *Midrash Tehillim*: see Braude 1959 I: 468.

But this attitude to integrity also applies to Torah: it too can be abused, and obedience to Torah has to be more than any pleasant intellectual sacrifice.¹²⁴¹

It is surprising that a psalm with this more radical and prophetic approach to sacrifice is not alluded to more in the New Testament: verses 14 and 23, on offering to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, may have been an influence in Heb. 13:15, which similarly refers to right sacrifices as ‘sacrifices of praise to God’, but because this idea is found frequently outside Psalm 50, it can be no more than an allusion.

In the early church sometimes this psalm is used, as was Psalm 49, as part of moral exhortation: verse 12 is cited by *Justin in *Dialogue with Trypho* 22:9; and verse 14, in *Dialogue* 22:9–10, on the right response to sacrifice and oblations.¹²⁴² *I Clement* 35:7–12 uses the warning to the wicked in verses 16–23 to illustrate the importance of faith in doing things which are acceptable to God.¹²⁴³ The same idea, of sacrifice being a whole life pleasing to God, is taken up by many of the fathers, including *Hesychius, *Chrysostom, *Augustine, *Diodore of Tarsus, and *Theodore of Mopsuestia.¹²⁴⁴

The psalm is often read more theologically. *Athanasius, for example, argues that Psalm 50 is about the coming of the Saviour, who will dwell among us.¹²⁴⁵ *Augustine takes this argument further, and sees the psalm announcing the ‘new covenant’—i.e. the day of judgement when all sacrifices will cease.¹²⁴⁶ *Theodore develops the same theme when he comments on verse 16 (which reads ‘But to the wicked God says, “what right have you to recite me statutes?”’) that ‘knowing the law is not enough.’¹²⁴⁷ *Cassiodorus goes further still: this is a psalm addressed to the Jews, but now by the Christian Church. ‘Why do they cut themselves off from the universal remedy... Seek mercy, and baptism... and take the flesh which you crucified, drink the blood which you shed.’¹²⁴⁸ *Chrysostom, too, uses verse 2 (‘God shines forth’) to argue that although this was once applied to the Temple, God now shines through the cross, resurrection and ascension of Christ.¹²⁴⁹ *Theodoret similarly argues that verse 3 (‘Our God comes and does not keep silent’) is a reference to the second coming, when

¹²⁴¹ See for example Hirsch, in Feuer 2004: 643.

¹²⁴² <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/01282.htm>.

¹²⁴³ Clement, ANF 1:14, in ACCS VII:392.

¹²⁴⁴ See ACCS VII:389–90.

¹²⁴⁵ Athanasius, *On the Interpretation of the Psalms* 5 (OIP 58), in ACCS VII:384.

¹²⁴⁶ See Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms* 50:16 WSA 3 16:396, in ACCS VII:388.

¹²⁴⁷ See Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Psalm 50.16* WGRW 5:661, in ACCS VII:390.

¹²⁴⁸ Cassiodorus, *Psalms* 1:479–92; also Walsh 1990: 192. A similar reading of this psalm is found in the third century Cyprian’s *Testimonies against the Jews*, Book 1, Chapter 16.

¹²⁴⁹ See Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms* 50.1 CCOP 1:350:51, in ACCS VII:386; see also Hill 1998: 350–35.

Christ will no longer appear in lowly poverty but as a 'devouring fire'.¹²⁵⁰ And finally *Thomasius, referring to *Aquinas, and using the threefold description of God in verse 1, declares Christ as God of gods, and reads the psalm as a rebuke of the Jews.¹²⁵¹

Psalm 50 plays a part in Jewish liturgy precisely because of its emphasis on the right spirit in worship. In *b.Suk.* 55a we read of it being used on the second day of the Feast of Booths, taking up the emphasis on penitence for sin in the Day of Atonement a week earlier. It is used in this way in Christian liturgy, too: verses 8–13, emphasising a 'sacrifice of thanksgiving' over animal sacrifice, are sometimes used as a preparation for the 'sacrifice' of the Eucharist, releasing us from the burden of our sins.¹²⁵²

There are two interesting representations of Psalm 50 in art. One, common to Byzantine Psalters, is of the appearance of Christ as the personification of the sun (from verses 1–2: 'from the rising of the sun to its setting... God shines forth'). In some cases Christ is the midday sun: **Pantokrator* (fol. 61r), **Bristol* (fol. 80v) **Barberini* (fol. 81v) and **Theodore* (fol. 61v) all use this image.¹²⁵³ In **Khludov* (fol. 48v) Christ appears as the setting sun, with David and Habakkuk (see Hab. 3:4). The theme of the final day of judgement is a development of this theme: the **Hamilton Psalter* (fol. 110v) depicts Christ seated surrounded by six angels and *seraphim*, and the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist; and fol. 111r is of Michael weighing human souls on scales, and two winged demons hanging on.

Another representation, also in the Byzantine tradition, is of the hospitality of Abraham, taken from Gen. 18:1–8: illustrating Ps. 50:12–15, **Khludov* (fol. 49v) shows Abraham carrying a bowl of food to three angels; he is followed by Sarah, and a calf is at his feet. **Theodore* (fol. 62v) and **Barberini* (fol. 81v) use the same theme: alongside the three angels is an inscription, '*agia trias*', thus suggesting the Trinity: this was iconic from as early as the fifth century and was popularised in Byzantine art from the eleventh century onwards.¹²⁵⁴ The offering of food also prefigures the Eucharist, blessed by the angels, and the calf becomes a type of Christ.¹²⁵⁵

¹²⁵⁰ See Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Commentary on the Psalms* 50.2 FC 101:289, in *ACCS VII*:387.

¹²⁵¹ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 164–5. See also http://www4.desales.edu/~philtheo/loughlin/ATP/Psalm_49.html.

¹²⁵² Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 171–3.

¹²⁵³ See http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f061v. For this image from the *Theodore Psalter*, see Plate 19.

¹²⁵⁴ The fifth century representation is in the church of Saint Maria Maggiore in Rome. Andrey Rublev drew from this tradition of which Psalm 50 is a part.

¹²⁵⁵ Corrigan 1992: 53–5, also fig. 68 and 69.

Although there are few well-known musical arrangements of this psalm, two examples from metrical psalmody are striking: Henry White's late eighteenth-century version 'The Lord God is clothed with Might' is based on verse 1, and Samuel *Longfellow's 'God of the Earth, the Sky, the Sea' (1864) is based on verse 12.¹²⁵⁶ Interestingly neither equates Christ with the rising or setting sun, and neither views Christ as co-Creator with God: each takes the view that this is about God as Creator.

A final curious use of this psalm is in literature; this is in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). When Crusoe, on the Island of Despair, opens one of the Bibles in his shipwrecked boat he comes upon verses 12–13 from Psalm 50; these verses lead to his renewal of faith in his isolation and his prayer for forgiveness as a slave trader. The psalm is thus read in this context as about repentance and obedient faith—without any need, on the island, for any sort of sacrifice.

To conclude, Psalm 50 is a psalm which has often united Jews and Christians in its view about the importance of the integrity of spirit and the relationship between sacrifice, repentance and obedience. Yet is also became a more divisive psalm when used to demarcate the different Jewish and Christian attitudes to 'covenant', when Christians read this only through the life and death of Christ. At this point there is some *supersessionism, making too stark a comparison between the old covenant of sacrifice and law and the new covenant of God's mercy and grace.

¹²⁵⁶ See <https://goo.gl/ljJy2M> (White) and <https://goo.gl/VkAfCe> (Longfellow).

PSALMS 51–72: THE SECOND DAVIDIC PSALTER

It is likely that this collection of twenty-two psalms is the oldest of all the three Davidic Psalters (the other two being 3–41 and 138–145). If so, this was the first collection to have been included within the ancient *Asaphite collection of twelve psalms.¹²⁵⁷ Its organisation is clear: Psalms 51 and 72 serve as ‘bookends’, with Bathsheba featuring in the title to Psalm 51 and her son Solomon in that to 72.¹²⁵⁸ Each of them addresses the issue of the obedience of the king in matters of social justice and concern for the poor. Together these two psalms reflect a major theme of the other psalms: the exemplary figure of David, who was sustained by God, despite his failures.

Like Psalms 42–49, Psalms 52–68 are each headed ‘To the leader/choirmaster’ (one exception being 63) and so some liturgical and musical performance might be presumed for the collection as a whole. However, Psalms 52–68 can be subdivided on account of the descriptions of their genres in their titles: 52–55 contain the title ‘*maskil*’ (‘instruction’), with the key theme being David’s betrayal and persecution. 56–60 have the title ‘*miktam*’ (‘reflective psalm’) and they focus on David’s search for some refuge in God. 62–64 are each called ‘*mizmor*’ (‘hymn’): Psalm 61 might be included here, even though its heading does not contain the word *mizmor*, it is like the others in its general petitions for protection by God. All these psalms are essentially individual and personal

¹²⁵⁷ See pp. 257–8 (introduction to Book Two).

¹²⁵⁸ In Christian tradition Psalm 51 is read as a prayer of Christ, and 72, as a prophecy about Christ.

in nature, and many of them (52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60) contain a large number of biographical details. They appear to have been collected to reflect David's paradigmatic faith, to inspire and teach the Jewish community after the exile. Psalms 65–68 contain several titles, but are united in their use of the word *shir* (song) and their dedication to the choirmaster (*lamnaṣṣeah*); these share the theme of God's rule over the cosmos and nations. This leaves us with Psalms 69–71, of which 69 and 70 also share the title 'to the leader/choirmaster'. But this collection is more thematic than unified by any particular heading: it consistently emphasises God's care for the poor and needy and shares a focus on the theme of the 'righteous sufferer'.

This entire 'second Davidic Psalter' is a paradoxical collection: it has many personal psalms of lament, but reflects a piety which is often difficult to emulate due to the vast store of warlike metaphors, fearful imprecations, and statements of self-righteousness: several parts of these psalms have often been 'censored' from Christian liturgy.

Psalm 51: ‘The Psalm of Psalms’

Psalm 51 has a rich reception history, as the length of this particular commentary testifies. Its understanding of sin and guilt is very like Jeremiah: its use of the verb *k-b-s* (‘wash’ in verses 2 and 7) is very like Jer. 2:22 and 4:14, and its reference to a ‘new heart’ in verse 10 has affinities with texts such as Jer. 31:33. It is likely that this is a later psalm, and Jeremiah is the primary influence. Its links with 2 Sam. 11–12 are intentional (for example verse 1 echoes 2 Sam. 12:22, verse 4, 2 Sam. 12:13 and 27, and verse 17, 2 Sam. 12:15–17). These, and the title, encourage us to read the psalm as if they are the words of David after his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah.

Just as the title pertains to a later stage of the reception of the psalm, encouraging us to read it initially through the life of David, a further stage of reception is when the compilers placed it alongside Psalm 50. The teaching on sacrifice in 50:3 corresponds with 51:12 and 14; the theme of the righteous judgement of God in 50:6 fits with 51:4 and 16; and the specific teaching on ‘right sacrifice’ at the end of Psalm 51 (verses 18–19, almost certainly an addition) summarises the Psalm 50 in its entirety.¹²⁵⁹ Indeed, the connections are so close it was sufficient for the *Asaphite collection to have been split so that the compilers placed Psalm 50 at the head of the Davidic Psalter and the other Asaphite psalms, 73–83, to conclude it.

¹²⁵⁹ ‘What the God of the theophany in Psalm 50 demands, the person praying the following Psalm 51 promises.’ (Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 24) See also Attard 2016:446–452.

Despite the intensity of expression, the rhythm and structure of the psalm is surprisingly regular. A 3:3 rhythm dominates, other than in verses 1, 11 and 17, and there are two clear strophes: verses 1–9, with the word 'blot out' occurring in verses 1 and 9, and verses 10–17, with the word pair 'heart' and 'spirit' in both verses 10 and 17, whilst verses 18–19 serve as an epilogue. The psalm has several difficult verses which again have affected its reception history. One is verse 4, for the Hebrew and Greek are different, with the latter placing more emphasis on what God requires, and the former, on what we should do to gain forgiveness. Verse 5 ('...a sinner when my mother conceived me') has influenced much Jewish and Christian discourse on 'original sin'. Another difficulty is the reference to the 'holy spirit' in verse 11, which in Christian tradition raised questions as to whether David received the spirit exceptionally, or whether the 'holy spirit' was universally present before the time of Christ. Verse 14 'deliver me from bloodshed', translated by *Coverdale as 'blood-guiltiness', has raised similar questions: is this sense of guilt particular to the psalm, and so concerns guilt for the shedding of blood, such as David did with Uriah, or does this refer to the curse of original sin running throughout our blood? Most translations render this as peculiar to David.

Of the several changes in Greek, two examples deserve particular mention. One is the intensification of the plea in verse 1 (verse 3 in the Greek) which reads 'Have mercy on me O God, according to your great mercy and your vast compassion...'. This is continued in the Latin versions as well. The Greek also translates the Hebrew plural 'transgressions' in our verses 1 and 3 as singular (*anomēma* and *anomian*), which makes its choice of the word for sin in verse 5 also as *anomia*s (plural) an interesting comment about whether birth and conception in themselves are 'sinful' or whether this is a reference to specific sins - in this case, of adultery and murder.

It is likely that this psalm was frequently used at *Qumran. Verses 1–5 are found in 4QPs^a and verses 3–5 in 4QPsⁱ, but there are also allusions to expressions such as 'clean heart' and 'right spirit' (verses 10) in 1QH 2:5; 4:13 and 5:17 and even to the phrase 'broken spirit' (verse 17) in the *Community Rule* concerning the character leaders in the community.¹²⁶⁰ The Syriac Psalm 155, also found at *Qumran, contains confessions of sin very like those in Psalm 51.

Later Jewish tradition, however, emphasises David as a model of penitence (by focussing on his remorse) and thus deals with his forgiveness rather than condemning him. The psalm is seen as a basic foundation for all the twenty principles of repentance, where Love is seen to be superior to Fear.¹²⁶¹ The tradition of Uriah having been promised a wife by David after the defeat of Goliath,

¹²⁶⁰ Holladay 1993: 109–10.

¹²⁶¹ Feuer 2004: 649–50.

as the Hittite had helped him remove chain mail from the dead giant, and God being angry that Bathsheba had been promised to the Hittite first, as she had been foreordained for Israel's king, is an unusual means of exonerating David from the full implications of his guilt.¹²⁶² Another key concern is the relationship between forgiveness and sacrifice. So for example **Targum* for verse 9 reads: 'Sprinkle me like the priest who sprinkles upon one who is defiled the water of sprinkling with hyssop from the ashes of the heifer...' and verse 19 is seen as an expression of hope that the priests may once again offer bulls on God's altar.¹²⁶³ This verse is seen to refer to the days of the Messiah when no one will sin, hence no guilt offerings are necessary; instead, *only* peace offerings and burnt offerings will be made (as the verse states).¹²⁶⁴

Another Jewish preoccupation is with the meaning of verse 5, and whether this referred to sexual intercourse as being inherently sinful: if this is the case, it then gives rise to further iniquities. One view was to attribute the sin to David's mother, as Jesse had to be without personal sin;¹²⁶⁵ hence *Rashi argued that the sin was not the act of intercourse *per se*, although this was an act capable of corruption.¹²⁶⁶

A different view is expressed in Christian tradition. There are allusions to the teaching arising from verses 4–5 in the discourse between the (healed) blind man and the Jews in John 9:34 ('You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?'). Paul's teaching about being 'sold to sin' in Rom. 7:14 might also be associated with this same idea. Ps. 51:4 seems to have been used by Paul (in its different Greek translation) in Rom. 3:4, when he argues that only God is true, and that all men are liars: 'Let God be proved true, as it is written, "So that you might be justified in your words, and prevail in your judging"'. Otherwise in the New Testament both verses 4 and 5 of Psalm 51 are used on the lips of penitents: verse 4 is alluded to in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:18 and 21 ('Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you...'), and verse 1 in Luke 18:13, in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, when the latter cries 'God be merciful to me, a sinner!'

Later Christian readings focus, first, as with Psalm 50, on the relationship between sin and Temple sacrifice. By c. 130 CE the *Epistle of *Barnabas* (for example 2:10) used verse 17 to show that Jewish sacrifices have been abolished and that Christ's sacrifice was now all-sufficient. Another key text in the

¹²⁶² Feuer 2004: 651.

¹²⁶³ Stec 2004: 106–8.

¹²⁶⁴ Feuer 2004: 662–3.

¹²⁶⁵ Feuer 2004: 655.

¹²⁶⁶ See Gruber 2004: 385, especially note 7. We may note here the interest is more on the sexual act than on (the more Christian concern about) original sin.

commentary tradition was, predictably, verse 5. Both *Clement of Alexandria and *Origen linked original sin with sexual intercourse, from Adam and Eve onwards: hence the need for infant baptism to eradicate not only inherited but also original sin. Reading verse 5 alongside Gen. 8:21 and Job 14:4, *Jerome also argued that this reading confirmed that our sins start with Adam himself.¹²⁶⁷ In the light of the *Pelagian controversies, this was a vital point for Christian leaders such as *Augustine: everything is dependent upon God's grace, from our conception to birth to infancy.¹²⁶⁸ Reading the prayer in verse 10 ('Create in me a clean heart') as a reference not to the natural human heart but to the heart which only God's Spirit can bring about, Augustine preached that God requires not only repentance but humility.¹²⁶⁹ Augustine's interpretation led to the whole psalm being read as about what God in Christ had done for us: in verse 7, for example 'hyssop' is seen as the blood of Christ, and the addressee is Christ himself.¹²⁷⁰ So in *Bede's *Abbreviated Psalter*, where Psalm 51 was used at *Lauds on Sundays, the key verses are 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 17; for verse 12 ('Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit') the Latin reads as follows: 'Restore to me the joy of your Jesus and with your powerful Spirit strengthen me'.

However, this emphasis on penitence created problems in the Medieval Church. Peter *Lombard's *gloss on this psalm shows how it was beginning to be associated with formal penance. Citing Matt. 16:19, Lombard added that not all priests are worthy confessors.¹²⁷¹ Over a century later, *Aquinas also sought to read the psalm as more about the importance of penitence than penance, and follows Lombard in calling it a 'Jubilee Psalm': as the 50th psalm in the **Vulgate* it echoed the teaching in Leviticus 25, that in the fiftieth year all those enslaved in debt should be liberated.¹²⁷² This was not a psalm to increase a sense of sin and guilt, but rather to release one from them.

The psalm also evoked a good deal of anti-Jewish polemic at this time. Hildebert wrote in the thirteenth century (at about the same time as *Aquinas):

Bathsheba is the Law: King David, Christ;
 Uriah is the Jew;—the girl disrobed
 Pleases the King; and the Law, stripped of types,
 Unhidden in its beauty, pleases Christ,

¹²⁶⁷ See NPNF 2 6:273.

¹²⁶⁸ See Augustine, *Sermons* 170.4, in WSA 3 5:241 p. 5. See also Cooper 2011: 74–96.

¹²⁶⁹ Augustine, *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love* 9.31 LCC 7:357 p. 8; also *Sermons* 19.3 in WSA 3 1:380 p. 11.

¹²⁷⁰ See R. Price 2011: 4, citing Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria and Augustine.

¹²⁷¹ Waltke and Houston 2010: 455.

¹²⁷² Waltke and Houston 2010: 457.

Who takes it from the Jews to be His own.
 Uriah enters not his house: nor does
 Israel go into the inward sense.
 Letters Uriah bears, dies by their fraud;
 Holding the letter, likewise dies the Jew.¹²⁷³

By the fourteenth century verse 1 was known as a 'neck-verse': 'if someone was taken for stealing bacon, for burglary, murder, rape; if he could but rehearse his neck verse he could never fail to escape'. In other words, it was assumed that as only the clergy were literate, to be able to recite Ps. 51:1 in Latin showed the one accused was educated and so a cleric, thus avoiding the civil courts. Linked to this ethos, it was Archbishop Albrecht von Brandenburg's requirement that the whole psalm be recited as a prayer for indulgence which enraged *Luther.

Luther wrote about Psalm 51 at least three times, and this registers part of his journey towards a new understanding of justification by faith, particularly through reading previous *penitential psalms such as 6, 32 and 38. The first lecture was at when he was at Wittenberg (1513–15): *Dictata super Psalterium* used *Lefèvre's *Quincuplex Psalterium* with its medieval divisions of interlinear and marginal *glosses, and its dialectical arguments about justification by faith.¹²⁷⁴ Behind Luther was the figure of *Augustine: Luther's own version reveals a number of glosses and rhetorical questions concerning the issue of 'justification by faith'. In 1517 *The Seven Penitential Psalms* (revised in 1525) still used proof texts from Scripture but now with a greater emphasis on a true and penitent heart. In 1532 Luther delivered eleven classroom lectures on the Psalms in Wittenberg; by now, in over a hundred pages, the overall importance of the psalm and its teaching on justification is set out. This was one of the few psalms Luther read in a literal sense: David, not (the sinless) Christ, is speaking, albeit through the prophetic voice of the church. The psalm now encapsulates 'a recognition of sin and a recognition of grace'. Luther's understanding of verse 5 is clear: 'the human seed ... is totally corrupt. The material itself is faulty. The clay... is damnable'.¹²⁷⁵

Like Luther, the *penitential psalms, including Psalm 51, were an important part of *Calvin's journey to repentance and faith. The 'purging with hyssop' and 'washing and sprinkling' are references to the sacrifice by which Christ reconciled us to God. However, Calvin's view of verse 4 was very different from Luther's: whereas Luther read this as primarily concerned with God's judgement, Calvin (who read the Hebrew as well as the Latin) saw it as about human repentance.

¹²⁷³ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 183–4.

¹²⁷⁴ Refer to Ps. 38, p. 233 for the same use.

¹²⁷⁵ Pelikan 1956:183.

The use of this psalm in liturgy is vast, although it has been used more in Christian than in Jewish tradition. However, perhaps predictably, it is used at *Yom Kippur; it is also read on the Sabbath of Passover, along with the portion about the rite of the red heifer; and verse 17 is used in the prelude to the **Amidah*. But its Christian use is more pervasive (and complex). Its first appearance is probably as a funerary inscription on a Cecilian tomb.¹²⁷⁶ By the time of *Ambrose 'purge me with hyssop' accompanies the putting on of white robes after baptism.¹²⁷⁷ *Augustine was apparently the first to write at length about the seven *penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 and 143), and this was developed by *Cassiodorus, who included these penitential psalms as one of his twelve categories of psalms. This undoubtedly promoted their use in liturgy and the association of Psalm 51 with the sin of Lechery (the fourth of the seven deadly sins). It is noteworthy, in the light of the discussion about penance earlier, that even by 598 at the Council of Toledo the psalm was cited for its use with payment of fines to the bishops to avoid punishment and to achieve forgiveness: debates whether the psalm did or not require the presence of a priest continued throughout *Carolingian times.¹²⁷⁸

The psalm was used in the offices of prayer from early times. In the early fifth century John *Cassian, in his *Institutes*, notes that it was used daily in the first morning service. The Roman Breviary, in use at least by the end of the fifth century, states its use at the conclusion of every Hour of Prayer, i.e. seven times a day, except during Christmas and Lent. The Rule of Benedict requires 51:15 ('O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise') as the first prayer on Mondays at *Vigils, and indeed every day at *Lauds (except Sunday) along with Psalm 67. The Rule of *Francis states: 'As for the failings and negligence of the brothers they should say daily the *Miserere mei, Deus...*'

We return to the use of the psalm in parish and cathedral liturgy. Its role as a penitential psalm, and its particular use at Advent, Lent and Easter resulted in its inclusion in *Prymers and Books of Hours, of which perhaps the best known is Dame Eleanor Hull's Middle English translation of the French, for St Albans Abbey, called *The Seven Psalms*, which moves between the voice of David, Christ, the early fathers and her own community.¹²⁷⁹ By the fifteenth century it was part of the *Glorious Mysteries of Mary* and *The Eight Hours of the Virgin*; Psalms 51–60 were part of the Sorrowful Mysteries, entering into the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. By the Council of Trent in the

¹²⁷⁶ Waltke and Houston 2010: 447. By the ninth century the psalm is also part of the Office of the Dead.

¹²⁷⁷ *On the Mysteries* 7.34 NPNF 2 10:6, in ACCS VIII:321.

¹²⁷⁸ Waltke and Houston 2010: 452–3.

¹²⁷⁹ Gillingham 2008b: 114.

mid-sixteenth century it was commonly used at *Vespers on Maundy Thursday, at the time of the stripping of the altar, and every Friday, as a sign of the crucifixion, for Morning Prayer. The *Book of Common Prayer* assigned all the *penitential psalms as *Proper Psalms for Ash Wednesday; Psalm 51 was also used at the Communion Litany prescribed in the *BCP during Lent. And the *Divine Office of the Eastern Orthodox Church usually includes Psalms 51 and 102 at the Great *Compline.¹²⁸⁰

Just as verse 1 'Lord have mercy' became the essence of all monastic prayer, so too verse 15 'O Lord open thou my lips' became a regular part of non-monastic prayer, both Jewish (in the *Eighteen Benedictions, for example) and Christian, at both morning and evening prayer. So it is no surprise to find that of all the psalms 51 has also inspired a rich poetic, artistic and musical reception history.

As early as Langland, Passus XV, on Charity, cites Ps. 51:17 to emphasise the contrite heart. The psalm is also used in Passus V and Passus XVIII, where verse 4 is cited by Christ to demonstrate that he has borne the sins of all and so can also absolve them.¹²⁸¹ The psalm was used by the *Lollards in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to indict those in ecclesiastical power: 'you know your transgressions, and your sin is ever before you' (verse 3, with a change of person). Its popularity in liturgy resulted in its appearance in early metrical psalters, such as the *Surtees Psalter*, which was a translation of the *Vulgate into rhyming couplets, long before the time of Calvin.¹²⁸² Verse one, which compares the smallness of the penitent with the greatness (mikelne) of God reads:

God þou have mercy on me
 After mikel mercy of þe.
 And after of þi reuthes þe mikelnes
 Þou do awai mi wickedness.¹²⁸³

The tradition of translation in the sixteenth century is frequently exemplified by Mary *Sidney, whose version of verse 4 followed more the emphasis on human repentance espoused by Calvin than divine grace emphasised by Luther:

Just, judge, true witness
 in order that for righteousness
 thie doome maie passe against my guilt awarded,
 thie evidence for truth maie be regarded.^{1,1284}

¹²⁸⁰ Holladay 1993: 183.

¹²⁸¹ Gillingham 2008b: 126.

¹²⁸² Sutherland 2015:50–54.

¹²⁸³ Atkin and Leneghan 2017:19.

¹²⁸⁴ Hamlin 2004: 181.

Nevertheless *Sidney, as a mother, read verse 5 in the light of maternal guilt: 'My mother, loe! When I began to be, conceaving me, with me did sinne conceive'.¹²⁸⁵ This was one of only two of her psalms to be set to music and published in Ravencroft's *Whole Booke of Psalms* ('to be sung with low voice and long measure').¹²⁸⁶ A very different and more polemical version was William *Hunnis' *Seven Sobbes of a Sorrowfull Soule for Sinne* (1583), first starting with Creation and working through Jewish history to end with Christ, thus using the psalm to show that Jewish sacrifice was obsolete and only Christ could atone for sin.

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England the phrase 'broken and contrite heart' was common parlance, as was also 'burnt offering', referring (critically) either to Jewish Temple ceremony or, in some circles, the Catholic mass. This is exemplified not only in 'The School of the Heart' and the drawings of the *Emblemists in the seventeenth century, but it also surfaces in works such as George *Herbert's *The Temple*, whose poem 'The Altar' speaks of the offering of the heart in this way, alluding to 51:16–17; another example is found in Ben *Jonson's 'Poems of Devotion' with its threefold reference to the offering of a broken heart.¹²⁸⁷ It is small wonder that in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* we read of Psalm 51 being the psalm most frequently cited Christians facing death for their faith, whether by the Catholic Thomas *More (1535) or the Protestant Lady Jane *Grey (1554) or the Scottish reformer George *Wishart (1545).¹²⁸⁸

It is interesting to see how frequently illuminated Psalters take us back to the story of the psalm as alluded to in its title. Both the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 29r) and the **Eadwine Psalter* (fol. 88v) portray Nathan indicting the young king David, with Bathsheba standing in a doorway to the left, and Uriah lying dead in the centre of the image. The bottom of the composition 'narrates' the parable of the ewe lamb: Nathan points to it, the rich man standing by his sheep and cattle is directing his servant to take away the one lamb from the poor man seated to his right.¹²⁸⁹ This composition is so unusual in a Psalter where otherwise the words of the entire psalm are visualised: it seems that here, just as David has to be transformed by what he sees, so too, the viewer has to be transformed by what we see David seeing.¹²⁹⁰

¹²⁸⁵ Hamlin 2004: 184. This is perhaps not as graphic as Carew's version: 'Even from my birth I did begin/With mother's milk to Suck in Sin' (*ibid.*: 184).

¹²⁸⁶ See Austern 2011: 101–105.

¹²⁸⁷ Hamlin 2004: 190.

¹²⁸⁸ Hamlin 2004 209–10; also Prothero 1903: 130, 155, 263 respectively.

¹²⁸⁹ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=64&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

¹²⁹⁰ See Bessette 2005: 338. This has correspondences with a seventeenth-century image of the psalm by the Catholic Elisabeth Chéron, who translated the Sidney version into French and whose Huguenot brother Louis did the illustrations. Here we see the king, an empty throne in front of a curtain, Nathan, and the ewe-lamb, again combining story, parable and psalm. It is a moving image: see A.L. Prescott 2011: 252.

The Byzantine tradition uses this same effect. *Khuldov* (fol. 50r) depicts Nathan approaching David, sitting on a ciborium, with Bathsheba behind him. In the left margin, by the psalm title, we see a crouching figure, which is possibly the repentant David. Much is also made here of verses 18–19 of the psalm, where (fol. 51r) we see Zion represented by an image of the church.¹²⁹¹ The **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 64v), by contrast, following the Maundy Thursday use of this psalm, has as its inscription 'the washing', and the image is of Christ washing St Peter's feet, with the disciples on a bench waiting for their turn.¹²⁹²

The fourteenth-century **St Albans Psalter*, meanwhile, reads the psalm through the controversial verse 5. Whilst the psalmist begs for mercy on his sins, Christ sends a cleansing ray onto a naked white baby, held up by its (sinful) mother.¹²⁹³ A different (Jewish) contrast is the Vollard sketch by Marc **Chagall*, who has David, crowned, praying from a book; the angel with a **menorah* flying above him symbolises the assurance of God's ultimate care for the king and his people.¹²⁹⁴

We turn finally to the musical arrangements of this psalm. From Josquin des Prez in the late fourteenth century to Leonard Cohen in 1984, countless composers have been intrigued with the whole or parts of Psalm 51. We can only note in passing Tomas Luis de **Victoria's Miserere* for Maundy Thursday in the late sixteenth century; **Scarlatti's* theologically charged version of the torment of the soul, from the early eighteenth century; **Pergolesi's* 'Miserere' from his *Stabat Mater* in 1736; one of **Handel's* Chandos Anthems 'Have Mercy on Me O God' (in eight parts, including the introductory Sonata), also composed around this time; **Brahms's* arrangement of verses from Psalm 51 in the second of his *Two Motets* in 1860; Herbert **Howells's* arrangement of Walter de la Mare's 'King David', based on 2 Sam. 12:14–31 and parts of Psalm 51, in c.1919; Aaron **Copland's* Jewish version of Psalm 51 as the third in his *Four Motets* (composed in 1921, published in 1979); and Howard **Goodall's* exquisite use of female voices in 'Have Mercy on Me' (*Pelican in the Wilderness*, 2010).

Other notable composers include Orlando di **Lasso*, who wrote a motet cycle for **capella* voices on the **penitential psalms* in 1563 (published in 1584), and was possibly the first composer to set these psalms together as a group. Each psalm presents duo, trio and quartet settings. Psalm 51, the fourth

¹²⁹¹ See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.050v-2.jpg> ; for the **Pantokrator Psalter* (fol. 63r) see <https://goo.gl/6xLsFh>.

¹²⁹² See http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f064v.

¹²⁹³ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page171.shtml>. See Plate 20.

¹²⁹⁴ See <https://ruach.wordpress.com/2009/06/19/sin-and-forgiveness-in-psalm-51/>.

penitential psalm and so composed in the fourth church mode, is highly emotional and expressive: solemn, mournful, jubilant, always moving on, often word-painting, and never drowned by guilt and sorrow, but always aware to of cleansing and restoration. Whereas Josquin presented a much darker piece, with a sense of man defenceless before God, di *Lasso interpreted this psalm with a sense of hope in forgiveness.¹²⁹⁵

Similarly *Byrd's *Miserere* (using verses 1–2), first published in 1591, deserves further mention. The words are taken from the Catholic Reformer, Girolamo Savonarola, almost a century earlier: his version, known as *Infelix Ego*, was penned in Florence and was Savonarola's response to his guilt for making a false confession when tortured on the rack. The Tridentine Edict of 1562, which called for greater comprehensibility of words within music, gave Byrd the opportunity to compose Psalm 51 as simple chordal homophony for moments of emotional intensity; as a Catholic in Protestant England, Byrd could to some extent identify with Savonarola's confession of guilt, and his *Miserere* testifies to the complex relationship between music and words, and to the integrity of faith and devotion, in late sixteenth-century England.¹²⁹⁶

Gregorio *Allegri's *Miserere Mei* was composed in the 1630s and is the last and best known of his *falsobordone* settings; written for choirs of four and five voices, *Allegri alternates *falsobordone* with monophonic chant. This piece was always sung by the Papal Choir in the Sistine Chapel, in complete darkness at the end of the *Tenebrae* Service in Holy Week. Tradition has it that it was never written down but *Mozart (aged about fourteen) heard it, memorised it and gave a score to Charles Burney who published it in 1771. This is one of the best known versions of this psalm: it was later re-worked by *Mendelssohn (1831) and Liszt (1862).¹²⁹⁷

J.S. *Bach had a Lutheran respect for penitence. As well as using various verses from Psalm 51 in his cantatas (see for example BWV 105) he re-worked the melody of *Pergolesi's version into a German Cantata format, also called *Stabat Mater* (BWV 1083), which transforms Pergolesi's interpretation of sorrows of the Virgin Mary into a universal confession of sin and hope for forgiveness. Verse 1 has several appoggiaturas, showing the uneasy nature of the words against the melody, with the last phrase repeated five times; the second and third movements suggest the same unease. By verses 11–15 (*andante*) the

¹²⁹⁵ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 191.

¹²⁹⁶ Taken from Jonathan Arnold, 'How Shall We Sing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land? Theological Turmoil and the Use of Psalms in Early-Modern English Music', TORCH lecture, Oxford, February 2017.

¹²⁹⁷ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 158.

mood is more of confident reflection, although the shift of key to F Minor ('a broken and contrite heart...') for verses 17–19 changes the mood again.¹²⁹⁸

'Davide Penitente' was composed by *Mozart for a Lenten Concert in Vienna in 1785, as part of his arrangement for all the *penitential psalms; here he assumes this is linked to David's sin with Bathsheba. The music derives from the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* of the C Minor Mass, albeit with a different tenor and soprano aria. The cadenza at the end offers a note of joy at being forgiven.¹²⁹⁹

Even metrical psalmody often required that the tune for this psalm was in 'dark phrygian mode'. William *Cowper's 'O broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise' was published in **Olney Hymns* in 1770. William *Billings adapted verses 10–13 of one of Isaac *Watts' versions for his congregation in New England ('Create in Me a Clean Heart') as part of his four-part Canon 'When Jesus Wept'. Charles *Wesley's 'O for a heart to praise my God' was based on verse 1 of the psalm. Perhaps the best known, from the mid-nineteenth century, is his grandson Samuel Sebastian's version, 'Wash me Thoroughly', based on verses 2–3 (taken from *Coverdale's version) and his 'Cast me not Away' (using verses 11–12 from the *KJV).

Felix *Mendelssohn's oratorio 'St Paul' received its first British premier in Liverpool in October 1836. In some ways championing *Handel, Mendelssohn combined parts of Acts, Paul's letters, and the Psalms to tell the story of Paul: Psalm 51:3, 13, 19, 15 and 17 (known as 'Gott sei mir gnädig', No. 18, sung as an Aria) were sung as part of Paul's prayer for forgiveness after his conversion. There is a good deal of testimony here to Mendelssohn's father, who, like Paul, as a Jew, converted to Christianity. Mendelssohn deals sensitively with his source material from Acts, avoiding material which depicts the Jews as villains of the piece, but the message is undoubtedly a Lutheran one, about original sin and justification by faith.¹³⁰⁰

Other versions focus on the repentance of David. George Macfarren's opera *King David* (1883) also uses Psalm 51 in a mournful E flat key, which is contrasted with a joyful chorus of texts from the New Testament to illustrate, from a New Testament perspective, David's forgiveness.¹³⁰¹ Arthur *Honegger's opera *Le Roi David* (1921), following a similar drama by Rene Morax, is an account of the life of David through spoken narration, songs, choruses and instrumental interludes; Psalm 51 (from the *Geneva Psalter*) is used in Part III, which starts with Bathsheba and ends with an aging David, and with Psalm 61 is sung by a

¹²⁹⁸ Thompson 2015.

¹²⁹⁹ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 59.

¹³⁰⁰ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 131–2.

¹³⁰¹ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 131–2.

chorus with a narrator. Here David is very much a human figure, whose life and restoration was supposedly to bring hope to audiences in the post-war years.

In 1984 Leonard Cohen published his first version of this psalm. The lyrics juxtapose David the great psalm singer with David the great sinner:

Now I've heard there was a secret chord
That David played and it pleased the Lord
But you don't really care for music, do you?
It goes like this, the fourth the fifth
The minor fall, the major lift
The baffled king composing Hallelujah...
Your faith was strong but you needed proof
You saw her bathing on the roof
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew you
And she tied you to a kitchen chair
She broke your throne, she cut your hair
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah...

Cohen's second version omitted several of the more specific references to David and Bathsheba.

In 1989 Arvo *Pärt composed his *Miserere*, which he revised in 1992. It was a thirty-five minute experiment in *tintinnabuli*, a slow modulation of sounds, like pure bells or voices, influenced by the music of the Orthodox Rite. Much depends on the use of silence: verse 3, sung by a tenor, ends with a bar of silence, followed by a clarinet, 'suspending time', and contrasts stunningly with verse 5, with its cacophony of sound echoing *Dies Irae*. Verses 6 and 7, reflecting on the state of sin, make dramatic use of the bass clarinet. Verse 14 ('Deliver me from bloodshed, O God') make *antiphonal use of voice and wind, expressing suffering but also hope. The mood changes by verse 18, with its instrumental and four-part solo sections, as some reconciliation is made between divine anger and forgiveness. The psalm ends quietly, with a solo bass, and evaporates into silence as one senses the awesome distance between man and God.¹³⁰²

This contrasts with the cello solo by the Flemish composer Rudi Tas (2003) which is a moving non-verbal interpretation of this psalm. Another perspective is given by Gil Shohat's 'Songs of Bathsheba' (2005) which focusses on the Queen Mother after David's death, looking over her life, and using, mainly, 2 Samuel 11–12 and Psalm 51; here we see the feminist slant, as Bathsheba cites the controversial verse 5 of this psalm to accuse David of blaming primeval sin for his own wickedness.¹³⁰³ Another oratorio, *David and Bathsheba* (2008) by

¹³⁰² See Thompson 2015.

¹³⁰³ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 225.

the Norwegian Ståle Kleiberg also uses 2 Samuel 11–12 and Psalms 51 (and Psalm 8). Four monologues, set as Arias, perform the narrative; Psalm 51 is in the second section, and its focus is, quite differently from other readings, a plea with God to save the life of his little son.¹³⁰⁴

James MacMillan's 2009 version brings his Roman Catholic faith into the public forum. Using the Latin text, this is, in the main, a dark lament, with a series of voices moving up and down the scale in darkness. Its darkness is partly alleviated by a soprano voice in verse 3, but the use of *acciaccatura*, bringing in Celtic sounds and suggesting the sound of sobbing, gives the effect of sin more than cleansing. Verses 10–13 ('Create in me a clean heart') suggest a partial parody of *Allegri's *Miserere*, in the note progressions, and even verse 17–19, also in a *plainchant form, invoke *Allegri: the traditional use of both Celtic and *plainchant forms results in a sense of acceptance and peace at the end of the psalm, with its slow crescendos suggesting some of resolution.¹³⁰⁵

Hence this psalm, with its most universal concern for reconciliation with God, particularised through King David, suggests an extraordinary variety in its various readings. Its vast appeal is even perhaps evident in Islam. According to a widely recognised Muslim tradition, the prophet Muhammad used to begin every one of his personal supplications with the prayer: 'O God, put me between me and my sins the distance that Thou has put between the east and the west. O God, cleanse me from my sins as a white robe is cleansed from dirt. O God, wash me from my sins with snow and water and ice'.¹³⁰⁶ That this prayer has echoes of 51:7 (as well as 103:12) is incontrovertible. Whether the resemblance came from knowledge of the text itself is unlikely; it probably bears the influence of an oral tradition, perhaps through the medium of liturgy.¹³⁰⁷

Finally, this writer cannot but recall the most bizarre (but still pertinent) use of all: she was once called to be an 'expert witness' at a murder trial where Psalm 51, with its blood-stained page, was found next to the body of one of the supposed victims.¹³⁰⁸ The emphasis on sin, guilt and repentance does indeed make it the 'psalm of the Psalms'.

¹³⁰⁴ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 58.

¹³⁰⁵ Thompson: 2015.

¹³⁰⁶ The tradition is reported in Sahih al Bukhari (chapter 12, hadith 711), Sahih Muslim (chapter 70, hadith 1245), Sunan Ibn Majah (chapter 7 hadith 805) and Sunan an-Nasai (chapter 8, hadith 1500). See Bishop 1965:19–27.

¹³⁰⁷ I am most grateful to Daniel Crowther for his insights here.

¹³⁰⁸ <http://www.jeremy-bamber.co.uk/the-bloodied-bible>.

Psalms 52–55: Learning from the Life of David

We now turn to four personal psalms of instruction, compiled for public use through the addition of *'maskil'* in their titles.

Psalm 52: For Instruction on the 'Deceitful Tongue'

Psalm 52 starts by addressing the congregation and ends by addressing God. Its key theme is the 'deceitful tongue' (verses 2 and 4) which contrasts with the 'confessing tongue' of the petitioner in 51:14. The imagery of the wicked being felled in the land of the living has some associations with the affirmation of God's presence in Zion in 51:18–19. The reception of these psalms into a particular collection does not seem to be accidental.

The only significant change in the Greek is that instead of Ahimelech in the title (see 1 Samuel 21–22) this is now Abimelech. But the key focus is on Doeg the betrayer. **Midrash Tehillim* reads the whole psalm as an instruction by David about the treachery of Doeg. David might have sinned by eating the sacred bread of the sanctuary at Nob, and causing the death of the priest Ahimelech, killed by Saul for treason; but God's kindness overcomes his judgement and the ultimate guilt lay with Doeg who does not receive forgiveness.¹³⁰⁹

¹³⁰⁹ Braude 1959 I: 475–83.

He is one who according to **Targum* ‘did not make the *Memra of the Lord* his strength’ (noting this addition to verse 7).¹³¹⁰

The Fathers mainly developed the motif of the ‘deceitful tongue’, linking it to Babel and seeing it redeemed by Pentecost.¹³¹¹ This was also linked with the figure of Judas: ‘Christ is represented by David; Saul is the persecuting Jew; Doeg is Judas the traitor; Ahimelech is the disciples. So in the first half of the psalm the prophet (*sic*) inveighs against Judas, and in the second, his destruction.’¹³¹²

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the psalm was entitled ‘The Folly of Self-Dependence’, to be used against proud rulers. For example, Joel Barlow’s American version was a revision of **Watt’s* psalm. Verse one reads:

Why should the haughty hero boast
His vengeful arm, his warlike host?
While blood defiles his cruel hand,
And desolation wastes the land...

Timothy **Dwight*, meanwhile, understood the psalm to be about condemning those who espoused Deism and spoke out against Christianity. Verse 4 reads:

Thy law and gospel they despise,
Vain of their taunts, of madness proud;
Too rich thy grace to seek, or prize,
To bow too lofty, even to God.¹³¹³

Such metaphorical imagery undoubtedly encouraged a variety of artistic responses, and often the image was unusually large, because Psalm 51 (from the Latin numbering) represented the first of the second third of the Psalter, and the Psalter was often read in ‘three fifties’.¹³¹⁴ A Psalter preserved at Würzburg (*Ms Ludwig VII 2*, fol. 61v) depicts in the initial letter ‘Q’ Michael fighting the dragon and overcoming evil.¹³¹⁵ An image in the initial ‘Q’ in the thirteenth-century *Bute Psalter*, from northern France, depicts a soldier stabbing a priest: this is believed to illustrate the betrayal and murder of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1170, another symbol of treachery and evil.¹³¹⁶

¹³¹⁰ Stec 2004: 108–9.

¹³¹¹ **Gregory of Nazianzus On Pentecost, Oration 41:16* NPNF 7 384–5, p. 13.

¹³¹² Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 210–11 citing both Bede and Aquinas.

¹³¹³ Stackhouse 1997: 81.

¹³¹⁴ Gillingham 2008b:116.

¹³¹⁵ See <http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=3511>.

¹³¹⁶ See <http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=1880>.

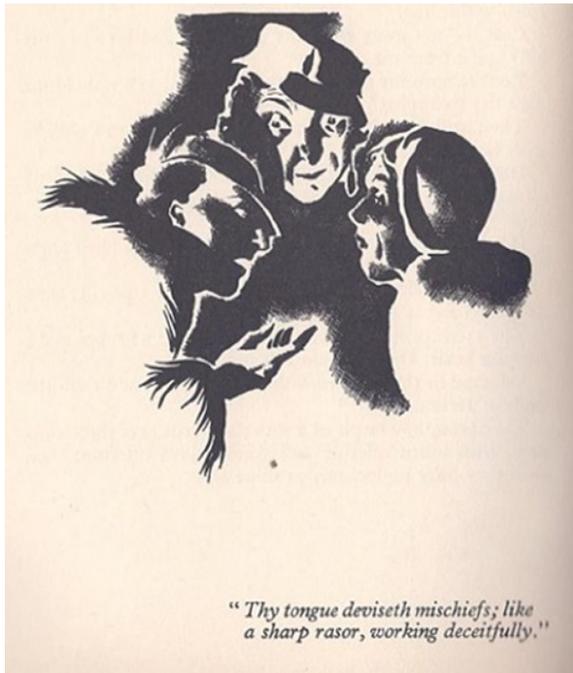


FIGURE 10 Arthur Wragg, 'Your tongue is like a sharp razor' (Ps. 52:2)

Some Byzantine Psalters focussed more on the abuse of wealth (verse 7: '[he] sought refuge in wealth...'). **Khludov* (fol. 51v) and **Pantokrator* (fol. 64r) and **Theodore* (fol. 65v) all use the incident of Peter and Simon Magus in Acts 8:9–24; Simon's silver spills all over the page, and Peter tramples upon Simon (perhaps here drawing from the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*).¹³¹⁷ The **St Albans Psalter* depicts a related scene, with a woman as the personification of malice, wearing a purse round her neck, surrounded by seven men symbolising, probably, the Seven Deadly Sins.¹³¹⁸ The Jewish **Parma Psalter* (fol. 71B) depicts more generally the 'deceitful tongue': a dog-headed human figure looks upwards, protruding his tongue, which a bird has caught in its beak.¹³¹⁹ A modern version of this theme is a black and white sketch by Arthur *Wragg, who depicts a rather sinister group of people, in twentieth-century dress, wagging their tongues and devising evil (Figure 10).¹³²⁰

¹³¹⁷ See Corrigan 1992: 27, also fig. 38. For the *Khludov Psalter* see <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.051r.jpg>. For the *Theodore Psalter*, see Plate 21.

¹³¹⁸ <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page173.shtml>.

¹³¹⁹ See Metzger 1996: 79.

¹³²⁰ Wragg 1934: no p. nos.

Musical representations of the psalm are minimal. It is interesting, therefore, that this Psalm was chosen by *Tallis as one of eight tunes for Archbishop *Parker's *The Whole Psalter* (1567). 'The seventh treadeth stout: in froward race: Why brag'st in malice high' is composed in the seventh ('authentic') mode. The theme is again that of 'the evil tongue'.

Again the sense of God's love overcoming the effects of malice and evil takes up the key concern of this psalm, shared by Jews and Christians alike, thus making this another psalm which is open to a more universalised appropriation.

Psalm 53: For Instruction on the 'Fool'

Psalm 53 is very similar to Psalm 14, so we shall only deal with the distinguishing features here. One is its expanded heading: this is again a '*maskil*', but also 'according to the Mahalath'. The latter information provided some debates in both Jewish and Christian commentaries, as we shall see. Its more general use of the word '*elohim*' for God has often been noted (in Psalm 14 'Yahweh' predominates). Verses 5–6 are also different from Psalm 14 in their more blood-thirsty sense of God's judgement on oppressors (Psalm 14 refers more to God's defense of the poor).

The links with Psalm 52 are clear, partly through the title and through verses 5–6: this is another psalm about the threat of the wicked and powerful; whereas in 52 the enemy 'devours' with his words, in 53 they 'devour' the people as a whole.¹³²¹

**Targum* seeks to understand the term '*maḥalat*', reading it from a Hebrew root *ḥalal*, so that in its present form it means 'profane'. So the psalm's title now reads '*concerning the punishment of the wicked who profane the name of the Lord. Good insight*'. Verse 6 reads 'When the Memra of the Lord restores the exiles of his people', taking the word 'fortunes' to come from a different Hebrew word '*shabah*', 'to take captive', thus giving the psalm a clear exilic context.¹³²² Jewish tradition is by no means united about the meaning of the psalm. Some commentators read it as about the oppression due to the exile and the hope for future redemption (thus reading it more corporately than Psalm 14). The enemies (who are identified not only as Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, but also as Titus and Rome) are therefore to suffer the same

¹³²¹ However, Psalms 52 and 54 are much closer; it may well be that Psalm 53 was inserted later.

¹³²² See Stec 2004: 109–110.

fate as Doeg (Psalm 52) and the Ziphites (Psalm 54). The ending of the psalm suggests the coming of the Messiah who will bring about the Third Temple.¹³²³ **Midrash Tehillim*, by contrast, personalises the psalm and reads it within the context of the life of David as in 1 Samuel 25, where Nabal (meaning ‘fool’), husband of Abigail, appears; so verse 1 reads ‘Nabal says in his heart...’ The psalm is thus a conversation between Abigail and David about the foolishness of Nabal.¹³²⁴

Christian commentators are also divided regarding the psalm’s meaning. It is possible that verses 1–3 (or 14:1–3) are adapted in Rom. 3:10–12. But beyond the New Testament ‘the fool’ is often read as the devil personified, threatening all moral and religious order (as depicted in artistic representation, as will be seen below). Anselm of Canterbury even cites the fool’s assertion in verse 1 of this psalm in his ontological argument his *Monologion* and *Proslogion*; according to the tradition from *Aquinas, ‘the fool’ is to be corporately, to include Jews and all infidels.¹³²⁵ A different reading is to focus on the speaker of the psalm, not ‘the fool’: *Augustine reads ‘Mahalath’ in the title as a reference to labour pains, and sees the psalm as about the church suffering and groaning on account of those who deny God and disregard good.¹³²⁶

Two poems based on this psalm make interesting use of its metaphors. Laurence *Wieder’s striking version of verse 2 reads: ‘God peered down through his window/ in the sky, to see his children...’¹³²⁷ Another is the more ironic take on the first and last verses by the satirical nineteenth-century poet, Arthur Clough, who resigned his Fellowship in Oxford in 1849 because of his frustration with the University’s debates about religion. The poem is called ‘Atheism’:

‘There is no God,’ the wicked saith,
And truly it’s a blessing
For what he might have done with us
It’s only better guessing...
And almost everyone when age
Disease or sorrows strike him
Inclines to think there is a God
Or something very like him.¹³²⁸

¹³²³ Feuer 2004: 675.

¹³²⁴ Braude 1959 I: 484–6.

¹³²⁵ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 217.

¹³²⁶ Augustine classified psalms as about praising, groaning, rejoicing and sighing; hence this psalm fits the second category. See M. McCarthy 2015: 247–8.

¹³²⁷ Wieder 1995: 77.

¹³²⁸ See A. Kenny 2006.

This psalm has also been used in the protest music of the Rastafarians. 53 is one of the tracks on 'Psalms for I' (1975, released again in 2002), sung in the rhythm of Lee Scratch Perry's 'Mighty Cloud of Joy', but in the style of those who cannot read the Bible: its key theme is that 'Babylon the oppressor' should repent.¹³²⁹

This psalm is set at the fourth of the eight liturgical divisions of the (Latin) Psalter, thus encouraging a number of images in its first initial. More generally, some of the artistic motifs took up some of the radical readings noted above. An early clear representation of the 'fool' as a mad demoniac is in the Byzantine Psalter **Vaticanus Graecus* 752. The image is found on fol. 168v, where the man, hands tied behind his back, hair unkempt and wearing only a loin cloth, is flanked by two groups of men.¹³³⁰ Later representations of the suicide of the fool are, however, somewhat more surprising. *Ms. B.II.4* (c. 1240, no folio given), from Trinity College Library, Cambridge, shows a king on a throne stabbing himself with sword, with the devil trying to grab the king's soul, which is a tiny naked figure coming from his mouth.¹³³¹ Another thirteenth-century manuscript (*Ms. McClean* 15, fol. 184, from Fitzwilliam College Cambridge) similarly shows the king on his throne stabbing himself in the back. The *Ramsey Psalter* (fol. 64) also has same scene with the fool also present.¹³³² There have been several interpretation as to who this king is: in the light of the surrounding psalms, it might be Saul (see 1 Sam. 31:4) although this does not fit well with the contents of Psalm 53 (and see also 2 Sam. 1:9–10). It is more likely to be Herod, whom medieval Christians saw as 'mad sinner'.¹³³³ The *Peterborough Psalter* (fol. 24) actually places the suicides of Saul and Herod alongside each other. The figure (in Latin, the *insipientis*) could be just a heretic who has been proved wrong. Against this background it is a light relief to see the illustration in *The Psalter of Henry VIII* (c. 1530–47) presenting Henry as David with his well-known and much loved court jester, William Somer (Sommers).¹³³⁴

So overall this is a didactic psalm whose message is shared without much contention by Jews and Christians alike.

¹³²⁹ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 192.

¹³³⁰ In part this may also be due to the reading of '*Mahalath*' in the title as 'sick', and in part due to the commentary of pseudo-Athanasius on the title of this psalm, which was one of the influences in this Psalter.

¹³³¹ Belkin 1988: 75.

¹³³² Belkin 1988: 75–77. See also *The Barlow Psalter* fol. 67 (Ms Barlow 22 Bodleian, Oxford).

¹³³³ Belkin 1988: 81.

¹³³⁴ See Reeve 2007: 159; also http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_2_a_xvi_fs063v. See also Plate 22.

Psalm 54: For Instruction on Persecution

Psalm 54 has a combination of headings; it is more like 52 with the additional historical heading concerning David's flight from Saul (this time taken from 1 Sam. 23:14–28, especially verse 19; verse 3 also echoes 1 Sam. 23:15). The psalm has a clear structure. The cry for help in verses 1–3 begins with a prayer in God's name, then concerns the suppliant's enemies and a threat on his life; the vow of praise in verses 4–7 begin with the preservation of his life, then his vindication against his enemies, ending with a prayer in God's name. Both Psalms 52 and 54 end with a vow of praise: it is possible that originally Psalms 52 and 54 were once placed together, and the compilers added 53 later.

As with 52, Jewish readings of the psalm mainly read 54 through the life of David, arguing that the 'men of Ziph' are the corporate example of the 'fool' in 53. Worse than in 52, these men are, unlike Doeg, David's kinsmen.¹³³⁵

Amongst the church fathers, *Hilary of Poitiers is amongst the first to read David as a type of Christ in Gethsemane, praying for deliverance when attacked by enemies. In part this was a defence against the *Arians, for verse 5, for example, then becomes a prayer to God the Father from the Son: John 5:19 is an important proof-text to this end.¹³³⁶ It was this approach to prayer which enabled martyrs such as Thomas *More, reading Psalm 54 in his Book of Hours when imprisoned in the tower, to read the psalm as an expression of his own isolation and tribulation and an act of faith in Christ who prayed to the Father for him.¹³³⁷

The associations of this psalm with the sufferings of Christ resulted in its frequent use during the liturgies of Easter. In the monastic tradition verse 3 was used as a Good Friday *antiphon.¹³³⁸ It was also a psalm used in the *Divine Office at *Prime (along with 118 and 119:1–16). The *BCP uses it on Good Friday (along with Psalms 22, 40, 69 and 88). By the time of the publication of the *Daily Office, verse 5 (the very verse used by *Hilary as if by Christ in Gethsemane) was censured for its harshness on the enemies.

Because of its more specific liturgical use, musical arrangements have not been profuse, and most of them are associated with Easter. *Giovanni Gabrieli and Orlando di *Lasso both set verses 1–4 as a Latin motet for Easter. Henry *Purcell set most of the psalm, except verse 5, to music. Charles *Ives' *Psalm 54: for Unaccompanied Voices* (1894) is probably the best known, with its experiments

¹³³⁵ Braude 1959 I:489–90; also Feuer 2004: 683.

¹³³⁶ *Hilary, *Homily on Psalm 54.4* NPNF 2 9:244 p. 17; also C. Jacob 1996: 689.

¹³³⁷ See Zim 1981: 98–9.

¹³³⁸ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 223.

in harmony and counterpoint, also drawing from American vernacular music. Verses 1–2 are sung by men, in progressive tones, with the women's voices, increasingly chromatic, providing the rhythm; in verse 7 the female voices dominate and the men's create the counterpoint. Verses 3–6 form a double canon, using individual voices and dissonant clashes to highlight the fear of 'the insolent ... and ruthless' (verse 3).¹³³⁹ Other versions include a setting on Ps. 54:2 and 55:6–7 by *Mendelssohn using soprano, mixed chorus and strings and its adaptation by *Bernstein in *Chichester Psalms*.

Byzantine representations in art follow, roughly, those for Psalm 52. *Khuldov* (fol. 52v) and **Pantokrator* (fol. 65v) use an image of Saul, enthroned, receiving two Ziphites reporting on David. **Barberini* (fol. 90v), **Theodore* (fol. 67r), and **Bristol* (fol. 86r) all use similar images.¹³⁴⁰ The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 66r) has a similar image, with David in the centre, hiding behind a shield. One puzzling image is in the *Verona Psalter*, possibly from Ravenna, whose text, based upon commentaries from *Augustine, is as early as the fifth century, with illustrations from the seventh–eighth centuries. This has an image of an eagle with the word 'Joannes' above it. Given the associations of this psalm with John's Gospel through commentators such as Hilary and Augustine, it might be an indication of a Johannine 'lens' (for example, John 5:19) through which the psalm should be read.¹³⁴¹

One final illustration is by the contemporary Jewish artist Moshe *Berger. The image first appears as a vermilion flower with a white centre. Of it we read that the colour red indicates strength, 'and the painting attempts to address the Mighty Creator who power can overwhelm evil.'¹³⁴²

Hence most of the adaptations of this psalm, like Psalm 52, reflect on God's victory over evil, and so Psalm 54 too has a more general theme which can be used by Jews and Christians alike.

Psalm 55: Instruction on Betrayal

Psalm 55 is the last of these four 'psalms of instruction' and is the longest and most difficult psalm of the collection. It would appear to have been placed intentionally after 54: the title, other than the absence of the historical details, is the same, and 54:2 ('Hear my prayer, O God') is very similar to 55:1 ('Give ear to

¹³³⁹ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xsl1cer1nvQ>.

¹³⁴⁰ See Corrigan 1992: 15; also fig. 20 (*Khuldov*) and 21 (*Stuttgart*).

¹³⁴¹ Bessette 2005: 23–4.

¹³⁴² See <https://goo.gl/yfUBWI>.

my prayer, O God'). It also has several affinities with two laments in Jeremiah 4 and 9.¹³⁴³ It is not as coherent as the previous psalm, lacking any uniform rhythm and indeed any structure: it has two quite different outbursts (verses 1–8, 9–14) followed by two declarations of trust (verses 15–21 and 22–23).

The Septuagint offers several variations. Perhaps the most interesting is verse 14. The NRSV, referring to betrayal by a 'familiar friend' reads 'with whom I kept pleasant company; we walked in the house of God with the throng'. The Greek translates the last three words as *eglychanas edesmata*; this is most unclear, and could mean 'with the confusion/din of the crowd', with a quite different and more hostile reading than the Hebrew (and here, also than the English). The **Vulgate* reading is closer to the Hebrew, by its translation '*cum consensu*'. However, the Latin in the first part of the verse is '*qui simul mecum dulces capiebas cibos*' ('who together received sweet food with me') which almost certainly is due to the Christian readings which saw this as a reference to Judas, dipping his hand in the same dish as Christ at the Last Supper.

This reference to the 'familiar friend' has similarly puzzled Jewish commentators. **Targum* adds 'But it is you, *Ahithophel*, a man like me, a teacher who instructed me and one who made me know wisdom.' The reference to Ahithophel is taken from 2 Sam. 15:32–25 and also from 1 Chron. 27:33, and this identification is also made in **Midrash Tehillim*.¹³⁴⁴ On account of this, Ahithophel is explicitly cursed (along with Doeg) in verse 15. Ahithophel is further alluded to as the 'friend' whose speech is 'smoother than butter ... words ... softer than oil' in verse 21: '*The words of his mouth were smoother than the cream of cheese, but his heart was like weapons of war...*' and here the presumed narrative is probably 2 Sam. 17:1–4. *Tehillim* clarifies this further: the move from the enmity of Doeg (Psalm 52) to the Ziphites (54) to Ahithophel (55) shows an increasing sense of despair, David being now opposed by a wise sage and intimate friend who schemed with Absalom to kill him and take the crown.¹³⁴⁵ Hence this entire collection of 'instructional' psalms is read in the Jewish tradition as part of a biography of David.

This is another example of how the interpretation of an entire psalm can be determined on the selective reading of just one or two verses. Although the psalm is used more generally in the New Testament (verse 22 is probably the

¹³⁴³ For example, compare vv. 4–5 with Jer. 4:19; verses 6–11 appear to be a variation of Jer. 9:1–6; verse 8 ('a lodge in the wilderness' is an echo of Jer. 9:2; and verse 9, with Jer. 9:3, 8.

¹³⁴⁴ On *Targum*, see Stec 2004: 111–13; on *Midrash Tehillim*, see Braude 1959 I: 491–2.

¹³⁴⁵ Feuer 2004: 689.

source for 1 Pet. 5:7, and verse 15 has influenced Rev. 19:20, for example), the same controversial verses noted above feature repeatedly in the church fathers. *Eusebius, for example, reading the psalm in the light of the life of Christ, not David, reads Judas as the treacherous friend throughout verses 12–15.¹³⁴⁶ *Basil the Great reads the verse as a prophecy concerning Judas.¹³⁴⁷ *Aquinas' commentary on the entire Psalter stops at 55:11, shortly before his death at Naples; but the prologue to the psalm, associated with his works, views the psalm as a prophecy concerning Christ and the traitor Judas.¹³⁴⁸

Other verses in the psalm have played an unexpected role in liturgical reception history. Verse 17 ('Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint...') in part influenced the Jewish tradition of reciting the Benedictions three times a day (Dan. 6:10 being another 'proof text'). And Christians read verse 7 ('I would flee far away; I would lodge in the wilderness') as a scriptural warrant for monasticism. In Christian worship verses such as 15 and 23 have been frequently censored for their harshness, despite the fact that often the speaker in the psalm has otherwise been read as Christ.¹³⁴⁹

Despite this, early English metrical psalmody attempted to 'redeem' the bloodiest parts of the psalm, including verses 15 and 23. So *Sternhold and Hopkins' version of verse 23 reads:

But God shall cast them deep in pit
That thirst for blood always:
He will no guileful man permit
To live out half his days...

Mary *Sidney's non-liturgical version is more subtle:

But, Lord, how long shall these men tarry here?
Fling them in pitt of death where never shin'd
The light of life; and while I make my stay
On thee, let who their thirst and bloud allay
Have their life-holding threed so weakly twin'd
That it, half spunne, death may in sunder sheare...¹³⁵⁰

¹³⁴⁶ See Rondeau 1985: 403–13.

¹³⁴⁷ See Letter 265 in FC 28:245–46, p. 21.

¹³⁴⁸ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 227.

¹³⁴⁹ For example, these verses were removed from the Roman Catholic *Liturgy of Hours*, and also, in 1968, from *Daily Office*. See Gillingham 2008b: 255.

¹³⁵⁰ See Rathmell 1963: xiv.

If verses such as 15 and 23 posed a challenge for poets, they were usually avoided in musical arrangements of this psalm. Examples include *Byrd's setting in his *Psalms Songs and Sonnets*; similarly Orlando di *Lasso's arrangement is only of verses 1–2, and *Dvorak includes only verses 2–3 and 5–9 in his 'Biblical Songs'. *Honegger uses verses 6–7 ('O for the wings of a dove') to soprano solo in his *Le Roi David*; these verses were also popularised by the late American country music songwriter, Bob Ferguson, and were immortalised in the version by the actress and singer Dolly Parton (1971). The folk musician and singer-songwriter Ralph McTell used verses 13–14 in his 'Jesus Wept', on his album *Travelling Man* (1999): but McTell also used verse 15, partly 'Jesus Wept' contemplates the horrors of betrayal through the events of Palm Sunday, the Crusades, the Inquisition, Hiroshima—and Judas' kiss.¹³⁵¹

Specific reference must be given to three pieces. One is the setting by *Giovanni Gabrieli, sometime before 1612, and published posthumously as *Timor and Tremor*. A grandiose work, intended for Holy Week, Gabrieli uses only the most personal verses 5–7 of this psalm, alongside Pss. 57:1 and 61:1 and the *Te Deum*. The result is a polychoral motet form, designed for 'split choirs' of instrumentalists and voices in the musicians' galleries of St Mark's Basilica, Venice.

Felix *Mendelssohn's *Hör mein Bitten*, for treble soloist, chorus, organ and orchestra was published in 1844. This is taken from verses 1–8; verse 6 ('O that I had wings like a dove!') is often sung in own right, notable for its soaring melody illustrating the flight of dove, and concluding with chorus and soloist to the words 'and remain for ever at rest'.¹³⁵²

Finally Zoltán *Kodály based his cantata, written for tenor, chorus, and orchestra, on a Hungarian paraphrase; it read Psalm 55 in the spirit of a Hungarian folksong, and was composed in 1923 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the unifying of the towns Buda and Pest, thus transforming a lament of David into a psalm of celebration. Kodály included a children's chorus on the first part of the psalm ('Sad was King David'). The harp interlude with orchestra divides the psalm in two, and makes way for David's re-affirmation of faith ('God will protect me, save me, drive away all my care', using verses 16–23). Hence in this composition the entire psalm becomes a story about betrayal and redemption, 'relevant for Christians everywhere'.¹³⁵³

Several responses to this psalm in art focus on the imagery of the dove in verse 6. The first image in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 66v) depicts a figure pursued by an opponent on horseback; in the upper right we see the dove, also

¹³⁵¹ On Charles Ives, see Goralı 1993: 263–4; and on Ferguson and McTell, see Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 129 and 121.

¹³⁵² See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 99.

¹³⁵³ See Holladay 1993: 280; also Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 192; also Stern 2013:145–58.

fleeing the chaos below.¹³⁵⁴ Although the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 31r) typically paints and narrates the entire psalm, which details the various scenes of evil and violence in the psalm, the two dominant motifs are the hand of God coming out of heaven, and, in the upper right corner, a dove flying off into the wilderness.¹³⁵⁵ The **St. Albans Psalter* takes a more literalist approach: King David himself, holding a golden book, has sprouted wings as a dove flies out of the image set within the initial ‘E’ (for ‘*Exaudi Deus*’, or ‘Hear me, O God’) of the first verse of the psalm.¹³⁵⁶ The more recent depiction by Moshe *Berger is similar: a fleeing dove, set in a confused mass of purple and white and red, is clearly trying to escape. The artist comments, citing Ramban, that we should assume the attitude of a bird, feeling civilisation as a threat to body and soul. So, if in a country where there is much evil, we should flee—even to the wilderness—to escape the detrimental influence of sinners.¹³⁵⁷

Two more images are each based on different individual verses. One is James *Tisso’s ‘Deceit and guile depart not from her streets’, taken from verse 11 of the psalm (‘ruin is in its midst...’); the contemporised image is of a late nineteenth-century middle Eastern market.¹³⁵⁸ The other more contemporary (and western) image is again by Arthur *Wragg, who depicts verse 21 (‘speech smoother than butter’) as a huge fat despot sitting on a throne, wearing a crown, trampling on all the figures around him who are either dead or dying: he has ‘patriotism’ written on a sash across his shoulder (Figure 11).¹³⁵⁹

In more recent times this psalm has attracted several other ‘protest’ readings. One is by the Rastafarians: Ps. 55:3, 9 and 11 (along with Pss. 35:1–4 and 137) are seminal verses-in-song to protest against black oppression and exile. Here the imprecatory genre becomes an ideal means of fighting for identity in Africa and the Caribbean.¹³⁶⁰ Another reading is taken from John Goldingay’s commentary: he notes that this psalm should always be associated with September 11, but also should commemorate *all* acts of terrorism: this should also include the Rwandan genocide in 1994.¹³⁶¹ Finally, a very different and more personalised reading of this psalm by the feminist writer Ulrike Bail, who places its metaphors of violation in the context of rape against women: seen in its ancient context of texts such as Genesis 19 and Judges 19, and in its imagery of the flight to the desert

¹³⁵⁴ See <https://goo.gl/MhB6jy>.

¹³⁵⁵ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=68&res=1&cx=0&cy=0>.

¹³⁵⁶ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanpsalter/english/commentary/page177.shtml>.

¹³⁵⁷ See http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=15186&showmode=Full.

¹³⁵⁸ See http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=3626&showmode=Full.

¹³⁵⁹ Wragg 1934: no p. nos.

¹³⁶⁰ See Murrell 2000–2001: 527–8.

¹³⁶¹ Goldingay 2007 II: 179.



FIGURE 11 Arthur Wragg, 'With speech smoother than butter, but with a heart set on war' (Ps. 55:21)

after the overpowering of the (feminised form of the) city, this reading also allows us to wrestle with the problem of evil in a contemporary context.¹³⁶²

Hence a psalm with such a vitriolic response to evil can only properly be understood by those who have had to confront evil in its worse forms. The more recent adaptations of this psalm, whether in music or art or commentary, have understood this and highlighted its relevance for secular culture as well as in Jewish and Christian tradition.

¹³⁶² See U. Bail 1994: 67–84.

Psalms 56–60: Reflecting on the Life of David

This is another collection of personal psalms with a different shared title, *'miktam'*, which indicates that they were later received for public use to encourage a reflective faith, relating personal details of David's faith to a later community. The titles offer several biographical details (56, 57, 59, 60).

Psalm 56: Reflections on Persecution

Psalm 56, opening the collection, is more closely linked, by way of its titles and contents, to Psalm 57 rather than to 55. Not only does each share the title *'miktam'*, but each is set in the context of David fleeing from Saul. They also start in a very similar way: 'Be gracious to me/be merciful to me (*honneni*) O God'. In 56:2 and 57:2 the specific address is to God Most High (*'el 'elyon*). The enemies, unusually, 'trample' the suppliant (*sha'ap* in 56:2 and 57:3). The emphasis on 'my soul' (*napshi*) in 56:6, 13 is also found in 57:1, 4, 6; and the prayer to 'cast down' the peoples (*ammim*) in 56:7 becomes a witness against the peoples (also described as *'ammim*) in 57:9. The compilers linked these psalms together, and possibly also edited them: again this demonstrates an early stage in the reception history of this psalm.

One word which does link this psalm to 55 is the reference to the 'Dove' in the title. Although here this might suggest a hymn tune, it clearly has been given some connection with 55:6 ('O that I had wings like a dove...'). The more

personal metaphor in the previous psalm has become a corporate reference to Israel, who is ‘the dove’, far from her sanctuary, now in exile. The refrain in verse 4, expanded in verses 10–11 (and perhaps added once more, concluding the psalm) suggests an early liturgical use.

The biographical details in the title have created difficulties in interpretation: the context might be either 1 Samuel 21–22 or 27–29, although neither account refers to David being taken captive. Later Jewish readings, such as **Targum*, interpret the entire title as follows:

*‘Concerning the Assembly of Israel that they may be compared to a silent dove, at the time when they are far from their cities, and they return and sing to the Lord of the World, like David the humble and blameless one...’*¹³⁶³

**Midrash Tehillim* links this psalm with Dan. 6:28, assuming an exilic setting and that the refrain (‘in God/the Lord whose word I praise’) could refer to the God of Daniel who, in exile, worked miracles for his people.¹³⁶⁴

Early Christian commentators have focussed more on the connections between David and Christ, also using the title of this psalm. *Cassiodorus, for example, suggested connections between the ‘arrest’ of David here and the arrest of Christ.¹³⁶⁵ *Bede reads the ‘dove’ in the title to refer first to David’s personal sufferings (i.e. not to the people, Israel), and then to Christ’s.¹³⁶⁶

Like Psalm 55, the later liturgical use of this psalm has been constrained because of the verses which show a harsh view of the enemies: although most of the psalm could be seen through the experience of Christ; verses 6–7 lie outside this and so in Christian tradition have often been omitted (for example in the **Daily Office*).

Poets such as Mary *Sidney again sought to embrace such psalms through a sympathetic ‘poetic’ translation, with accented metres and clever phrasing. Her account ‘Betrayal’ shows what is possible on a more personal level, but the public use of this psalm has always been muted.

I, as I can, think, speake and doe the best:
They to the worst my thoughts, wordes, doings wrest.
All their hartes with one consent
Are to work my ruine bent,

¹³⁶³ See Stec 2004: 113–15.

¹³⁶⁴ Braude 1959 I: 497–8.

¹³⁶⁵ *Explanation of the Psalms* 56.1 in ACW:38. This motif was brought out in illuminated manuscripts, as will be illustrated later.

¹³⁶⁶ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 241.

From plotting which, they give their heads no rest...
 Gods never-falsed word my boast shalbe,
 My boast shalbe his word to sett me free,
 God shall be my hopfull stay;
 Feare shall not that hope dismay,
 For what can mortall men doe unto me?¹³⁶⁷

The psalm's reception in music, as with Psalm 55, has mainly focussed on the requests for mercy. In di *Lasso's *Timor et Tremor* (1564) the syncopations and contrasting polyphony and homophony all relate back to the first verse; little is made of the curses on the enemy. Similarly *Tallis's use of the refrain in verses 4 and 11 ('In God I trust. I am not afraid. What can a mere mortal do to me?') in his *Spem in alium nunquam habui* shows how harmonic rhythms enable us to focus on the more positive aspects of this psalm. *Byrd's 'O God Give Ear' is also based on verse 1, and *Purcell's arrangement is of verses 10–11. Finally, a recent 'counter-use' of the psalm's sentiments is Karl *Jenkins' *The Armed Man: Jenkins' 'Save me from Bloody Men!*', uses both Psalms 56 and 59, as an interfaith reflection on the effects of war in Kosovo, on the eve of the millennium.

Artistic representations of the psalm have viewed the violence at its heart by comparing the twin themes of the arrest of David and the arrest of Christ. This is found as early as **Stuttgart* (fol. 67v) but also in **Khludov* (fol. 54 v), **Pantokrator* (fol. 68v), **Bristol* (fol. 89r), and **Hamilton* (fol. 118v and 119r) which all depict these two themes.¹³⁶⁸ **Pantokrator* (fol. 69r) and **Theodore* (fol. 70r) have additional scenes of Christ disputing with the Jews, who reject his words; each has an inscription to this effect, with **Pantokrator* noting that 'the Jews abominated the words of Christ'.¹³⁶⁹ A somewhat different reading, but also advocating the monastic teaching about accepting adversity without vindictiveness, is the **St Albans Psalter*: the image depicts a violent aggressor kicking and hitting a monk, who points to God for mercy, recalling verse 1: 'Have mercy on me God, because man has trampled me underfoot'.¹³⁷⁰

This is another example from Psalms 52 and 60 which depict an aggressive response to violence; this both limits its use to the less violent verses, but it also allows its wider message to be appropriated by anyone, Jew, Christian or neither, in the fight against injustice and evil.

¹³⁶⁷ Wieder 1996: 80–1. See also Rathmell 1963: xxiii.

¹³⁶⁸ For *Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 67v) see <https://goo.gl/1JbqEL>; for *Bristol Psalter* (fol. 89r) see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_40731_f089r.

¹³⁶⁹ Corrigan (1992: 47), suggests this is due to the influence of Hesychius' commentary, which sees verse 5 as referring to the sins of the Jews against Christ. For the **Theodore Psalter*, see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f070r.

¹³⁷⁰ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page180.shtml>.

Psalm 57: Reflections on Violence

Psalm 57 offers similar problems of interpreting the vitriolic images of violence in a psalm. Again its title is hard to contextualise: David ‘fleeing from Saul’ could refer to 1 Sam. 21:10–22:1, or 1 Samuel 24; possibly the earliest editors were working from a now unknown tradition. The re-use of verses 7–11 in Ps. 105:1–5 also compounds the problem of its opaque early reception history. Nevertheless, its close associations with 56 show its inclusion here has been part of a deliberate editorial process. Like 56, it has a refrain (verses 4, 11) which actually suggests an early liturgical use. Its additional title ‘Do Not Destroy’ (indicating David’s miraculous protection by God) further unites it with Psalms 58 and 59 following.

A difficult phrase is ‘in the shadow of your wings’ in verse 1. Like 17:8, 36:7, 61:4 and 63:8 this may be an allusion to winged deities in other cultures, especially in Egypt. It appears to be both an idiom referring to some imagery in the Temple itself, and also a metaphor for protection. Both the Greek and the Latin translations imply the latter. We shall see shortly how this image has been used to redeem some of the more violent imagery in the psalm.

The psalm was known at *Qumran. Verses 1 and 4 appear in a brief *midrashic comment in 1QpPs lines 1–2, and the phrase ‘in the midst of lions’ (verse 4) also occurs at the beginning of 1QH.¹³⁷¹ Perhaps the most memorable *midrash on this psalm is from verse 3. In the **Targum*, we read: ‘*I pray before the Lord Most High, to the Mighty One who commanded the spider to complete a web for me in the mouth of the cave. He will send the angels from heaven above and deliver me...*’¹³⁷² Setting aside the more explicable reference to ‘angels’ in *Targum*, a spider hardly makes sense. However, Jewish tradition, using 1 Samuel 24 as context for this psalm, referred to a legend that God sent a spider to weave across the cave, so that when Saul saw the unbroken web he thought no one could be inside.¹³⁷³ A similar imaginative reading of verse 8 is found in **Midrash Tehillim*: ‘I will awake the dawn’ is read as David awakening the dawn, not the dawn wakening David, through playing his harp and lyre: he played his harp by the window as he studied Torah; but after midnight when he stopped the harp played by itself in the wind and so awoke the dawn.¹³⁷⁴

¹³⁷¹ See Sanders 1965: 18.

¹³⁷² See Stec 2004: 115–16.

¹³⁷³ See Feuer 2004: 57–9. See also the reference to a spider in Psalm 39, pp. 238–39.

¹³⁷⁴ Braude 1959 I: 501–2. See also p. 48 (on Psalm 3) and p. 363 (on Psalm 67) for similar readings on this theme.

Christian commentators tend to focus on verse 1, which like 51:1 ('Have mercy!') is seen as the prayer of the great saints, and the refrain in verses 5 and 7 ('Be exalted, O Lord...') is read as a prophecy about Christ, for example spoken by Simeon in Luke 2:25–35.¹³⁷⁵ Perhaps the most evocative reading, in the light of the Jewish reading of the harp and lyre, is by George *Herbert in his poem 'Easter'. Taking the threefold use of the word 'awake' in verse 8, Herbert sees this as a reference to Christ's 'wakening' from the dead.¹³⁷⁶

Rise, heart; thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise
 Without delays,
 Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise
 With him mayst rise....

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part
 With all thy art.
 The crosse taught all wood to resound his name,
 Who bore the same.

His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key
 Is best to celebrate this most high day.

By seeing the speaker as Christ in his Passion, this has often been a *Proper Psalm for Easter *Matins: the *BCP also prescribes it for Easter Day, with Psalms 2, 111, 113, 114 and 118. The Rule of Benedict uses it on Tuesdays at *Lauds—precisely because of the reference to the 'dawn' in verse 8. Its liturgical use has also inspired its musical reception, as seen in Henry *Purcell's version of verses 10–11 from the *BCP*; a similar use is evident in *Schütz's version of verse 7 ('Mein Herz ist bereit, O Gott': 'My heart is steadfast, O God') in his *Sacred Symphonies*. *Giovanni Gabrieli arranged verse 2 along with 56:2–4 in his 'Timor et Tremor', composed for Holy Week; and *Stanford adapted verse 1 in his 'Be Merciful to me' (1928), also originally composed for Holy Week.

Several illuminated Psalters, both *Carolingian and Byzantine, have taken the liturgical context of Ascension rather than Easter as their focus. *Stuttgart (fols. 68v and 69r) *Utrecht (fol. 32r) *Harley (fol. 31r) and *Eadwine (fol. 98v) all have the image of Christ within a *mandorla, supported by two angels, standing on a hill with, possibly, eleven apostles (verses 5 and 11). Other details vary: in *Utrecht, the psalmist, holding a harp, stands in front of a bed (verse 8), supported by an angel with huge outspread wings (verse 1). The

¹³⁷⁵ See Augustine, *Sermons* 262.4 in *WSA* 3 7:217, p. 31.

¹³⁷⁶ Bloch 1992: 248–51. Bloch refers to this as 'Christ broken and risen, as the singing master of the soul'.

enemies are represented by a lion and lioness (verse 4) and men are digging a pit and falling into it (verse 6).¹³⁷⁷ Byzantine Psalters such as **Khludov* (fols. 55r, 55v) **Theodore* (fols. 70v and 71r) and **Barberini* (fols. 95r and 95v) have two images: one of David praying in the Cave at Adullam, and the other of Christ within a **mandorla* supported by two **nimbed* angels with David below him.¹³⁷⁸ This is quite different from the image in the initial letter ‘M’ (‘Miserere...’) in the **St Albans Psalter*: here we see the psalmist ‘offering his naked trusting soul to God’ (verse 1).¹³⁷⁹

One final observation is of the way feminist writers use the imagery in verse 1 of the psalm to redeem some of its violence. Noting that ‘the shadow of your wings’ suggests that this ‘winged deity’ evokes an image of God as a ‘mother hen’ as expressed in Matt.23:37, Denise Dombkowski Hopkins, for example, notes that, following the iconography of the ancient world, here is a depiction of God as one who both reigns supreme yet offers tender maternal care. ‘If the image of a strong, feminine God seems incongruent, perhaps the problem is modern, not ancient.’¹³⁸⁰ The issue is then whether this insight resolves some of more violent imagery in the psalm, or whether it complicates it further.

So again we see here the universal potential of this psalm as a prayer against evil; in this case an avoidance of violent imprecations in the text and a more feminist contemporary reading of its imagery allows it to be opened up to a more universal reading which is neither exclusively on the side of a Jewish cause nor of a Christian one.

Psalm 58: Reflections on Confronting Evil

Psalm 58 is a very difficult text. It is exceedingly turbulent in its response to evil in the world. One of its headings, ‘Do Not Destroy’, shared with 57 and 59, is somewhat ironic in the face of the psalm itself. It has no obvious structure, although it is clearly an impassioned imprecation against corrupt judges. As well as its title, which is almost the same as 57, it shares other similarities

¹³⁷⁷ For *Utrecht*, see <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=70&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

¹³⁷⁸ For *Theodore*, see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f070v and also http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f071r.

¹³⁷⁹ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page181.shtml>.

¹³⁸⁰ Dombkowski 2016:117.

with that psalm: for example, the lion metaphor in 57:4 is continued 58:6, as also the image of ‘teeth/tongues’ and ‘teeth/mouth’ in the same verse.

There are many contentious verses. One is the meaning of *’elem* in verse 1 (translated as ‘lords’ in the NRSV, but as ‘gods’ in other versions); another is verse 7 (literally, ‘let them step on arrows as though they were cut off’) which makes little sense. Verse 10, which refers to the righteous bathing their feet in the blood of the wicked, has associations with ancient Near Eastern mythology (for example, the Canaanite goddess Anat celebrated her victories in this way) but is an impossible image to use.¹³⁸¹ However, much of the psalm, with its additional metaphors of adders and serpents (verse 4), snails and unborn embryos (as in verse 8, which might also read ‘as a mole that is blind’) gives it a somewhat unpleasant and chequered reception history. It is no surprise that in **Shimmush Tehillim* the psalm was to be read for protection ‘against vicious dogs.’¹³⁸²

**Targum*, **Midrash Tehillim* and other Jewish commentators offer various translations of the difficult terms noted above.¹³⁸³ There is an attempt to contextualise the psalm (1 Sam. 26:9 is the most obvious passage) and some **midrash* is also offered in order to explain aggressive imagery. For example, David is spared the sword by a flea which bites Abner, who cannot move his leg and so allows David to escape.¹³⁸⁴ Much of the psalm is still left unexplained, however.

Christian tradition has sought instead to reinterpret the recipients of the imprecations in this psalm. **Thomasius*, referring to **Aquinas*, notes that the enemies are those who did injustice to Christ—the Jews and the priests of the people.¹³⁸⁵ For **Calvin*, among others, the psalm was an attack on established religion: the psalm was to be sung in unison as a defiant stance against those in power. William **Barton*, similarly, used a Scottish metrical paraphrase of the psalm ‘against ungodly governors... showing their corrupt dishonesty and utter destruction.’

Liturgically the shifts in the speakers and addressees have made the psalm difficult to appropriate, and many of the verses (not least verse 11) have been deemed too difficult to use. The **Daily Office*, for example, omitted the entire psalm, along with 83 and 109.

By contrast, artistic representations have not made light of the imagery in this psalm: indeed, there might be some enjoyment interpreting some of it. Much is made, for example, of the snake/serpent/dragon in verse 4, with a charmer blowing his horn at the ‘deaf adder’. The **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 70r)

¹³⁸¹ *UT nt* lines 27–35.

¹³⁸² See Magonet 1994: 6–7.

¹³⁸³ See Stec 2004: 116–17; Braude 1959 I: 506.

¹³⁸⁴ Feuer 2004: 723–4.

¹³⁸⁵ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 269.

offers one image of a man defending himself against a huge serpent, and another of the victor wiping his hands in the blood flowing from the neck of a decapitated soldier. **Utrecht* (fol. 32v) includes a similar image at the bottom of its illustration, which is also of a group of judges (and a serpent and asp placing its head on the side of the building so as not to hear).¹³⁸⁶ Some Byzantine Psalters associate the serpent with the devil, and portray the baptism of Christ as a symbol of his taking on the forces of evil: one example is the **Hamilton Psalter* (fols. 121r and 121v). Others include **Khludov* (fol. 56r) **Bristol* (fol. 92r); **Theodore* (fol. 72r) and **Barberini* (fol. 96v) which all focus on the snake and its charmer and on the deaf adder.¹³⁸⁷ The **St Albans Psalter* illustrates the letter 'S' (*Si vere...*) with a sinner astride a serpent/dragon at the top and a snake charmer grasping the animal by its tail.¹³⁸⁸ Evil cannot easily be erased: this is also the theme of James *Tissot's painting of the psalm in 'Their poison is like the poison of a serpent', reproduced in his illustrated Old Testament (1904).¹³⁸⁹ This may be what is alluded to in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, when in Act II Scene II Hector speaks to Paris, 'Pleasure and revenge have more ears than adders to the voice of any true decision.'

Andrew Mein has recently written about how Psalm 58 became part of a wartime controversy in Britain in July 1917.¹³⁹⁰ On the one hand the revisions of the Church of England's Prayer Book were beginning to culminate and were advocating that offending verses of cursing psalms should no longer be used in worship; they recommended the omission of the whole of Psalm 58 (and other verses such as 55:16,24–25; 68:21–23; 69:23–29; 109:5–19; 137:7–9; 139:19–22; 140:9–10; 143:12). On the other hand, in the context of the German bombing of London and the South East in that same summer, imprecations against the enemy seemed most appropriate to some. The *Express* newspaper (July 6, 1917) ran a headline 'Bishops Boycott David's Reprisal Psalms', with Psalm 58 as the clearest example of a psalm which indeed should be used in wartime British worship. Mein shows (through a fascinating array of records from that period) just how much the public imagination rose in defence of using Psalm 58 against German barbarism, a view which was opposed by clerics who argued this would simply escalate the spiral of violence. As Mein argues, much depends on whether one sees this psalm as part of a process towards the restoration of justice, or whether it impeded such a process.

¹³⁸⁶ See <https://goo.gl/48Qf4e> and <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=71&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

¹³⁸⁷ See for example the *Bristol Psalter*: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_40731_f092r.

¹³⁸⁸ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page183.shtml>.

¹³⁸⁹ See http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=3627&showmode=Full.

¹³⁹⁰ See Mein: *The Reader*, Summer 2017: 22–23.

The latter position was the one taken in *Bonhoeffer's sermon on this psalm, preached on July 11, 1937, at the seminary at Finkenwalde, the fourth year into the Hitler era: it was already forbidden to refer to specific persons in sermons and intercessions, and his friend Martin Niemöller had been arrested ten days earlier, with Bonhoeffer present. To read the sermon perhaps makes one realise that unless we have really confronted terrible evil we lose the right to make judgements on the psalm. So Bonhoeffer first asks how anyone can pray Psalm 58 when their sins are as bad as those of their enemies? 'Only one who is innocent can pray this psalm. So David cannot pray it. Only David taking upon himself the innocence of Christ can pray it... If we want to turn away from this psalm we have not understood the true nature of evil and violence.'¹³⁹¹ According to Bonhoeffer, Christ alone has made us free from God's anger, so as long as Satan continues to fight against Christ and his church only he can pray this psalm for us. By giving himself as an offering for sin and evil only he can call for God's anger and justice upon them. He transforms this psalm and transforms us, delivering us from the anger and justice of God. Accordingly, 'Vengeance psalms are fulfilled in the crucified Lord': so our question is not so much about what the psalm has to do with us, but what it has to do with Jesus Christ.

This was no armchair theology, for Bonhoeffer paid for these words with his life. Perhaps this should be the last word on our own view of the vengeful nature of this psalm.

Psalm 59: Reflections on Enemy Aggression

Psalm 59 is linked to 57 and 58 by its title 'Do Not Destroy' as well as by the heading '*miktam*'. The contents of the heading, with the biographical details about Saul and David, make it closest to Psalm 57, although the imagery is more warlike. Like 57, it also has a refrain (verses 6 and 14). The debated verses are 4–5 ('Rouse yourself... Awake!') which imply the God of Israel has been asleep and the refrain ('Each evening they come back, howling like dogs') which raises questions on the identity of the assailant.¹³⁹²

An interesting change in the Greek, made at the end of the psalm (verses 16–17), is the more personal appropriation of God as 'helper and support' (*antilemptōr mou kai kataphugē*). This is quite different from the more military

¹³⁹¹ See Bonhoeffer 2005: 53–66, especially p. 63.

¹³⁹² Josephus makes reference to this image of mad dogs looking for food in *Jewish War VI* (line 96) when he describes those who were starving from famine during the siege of Titus.

imagery of fortress (stronghold) and refuge (citadel). The more personal imagery is also developed in later Jewish tradition. Again 1 Samuel is seen as the narrative context for this psalm, and chapter 19 is the focus, because this is the account which explains how David ‘escaped’ from Saul.¹³⁹³

Christian readings have preferred to focus on the imagery of swords and weapons as a reminder of the tribulations of this world: as the ‘sword’ pierced Mary’s heart, so it pierces ours as well.¹³⁹⁴ In this case, more often than not, the ‘enemy’ is specified as the Jews.¹³⁹⁵ One of most offensive uses of the psalm is the *glossing of verse 11 (‘Do not kill them, or my people may forget...’) by Pope Innocent III in *Constitution for the Jews* (1199). ‘Do not wipe out the Jews completely, lest perhaps Christians might forget Thy Law, which the former, although not understanding it, present in their books to those who do understand it.’ ‘Taking the sword and perishing by the sword’ (Matt. 26:52) is a verse that comes to mind in the light of the military metaphors in the psalm.

It is not surprising that this is another psalm which has often been omitted from regular worship: the **Daily Office* is one such example. But it is also not surprising that metrical versions of this psalm, as with the previous psalms, became an important social comment on political powers: *Barlow’s 1785 version assigns the psalm as ‘a prayer for national deliverance’, with the memory of the French and Indian and revolutionary wars not long past.¹³⁹⁶ So the paraphrase of verses 2 and 3 reads:

Behold, from distant shores,
And desert wilds they come,
Combine for blood their barbarous force,
And through thy cities roam.

Beneath the silent shade,
Their secret plots they lay,
Our peaceful walks by night invade,
And waste the fields by day.

This is a good example of how paraphrase can so contemporise a psalm it makes it barely recognisable. It is undoubtedly a psalm for times of war. It is a psalm prescribed for Masses on the battlefield; and this is the psalm which Karl *Jenkins adapted, alongside 56, as part of his ‘Save me from Bloody Men’ in *The Armed Man*.¹³⁹⁷

¹³⁹³ Braude 1959 I: 509–11.

¹³⁹⁴ Augustine, *Epistulae* 149 FC 20 264–5, p. 38.

¹³⁹⁵ For example, Eusebius in Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 277.

¹³⁹⁶ Stackhouse 1997: 82.

¹³⁹⁷ See Psalm 56, p. 332.

Byzantine Psalters focus on some Jewish readings of Psalm 59 and then ‘Christianise’ them. The **Khudov Psalter*, for example (fol. 56v and 57r) has as its first image David being let from a window by Michal, with Saul and armed bodyguards watching at the gate; the second image is of the *Christ-Logos, with his foot on the edge of the orb of heaven, extending his rays to the prostrate David.¹³⁹⁸ The **Barberini Psalter* (fol. 97v and 98r) has a similar pair of images.

The last word on Psalm 59 is through a contemporary illustration by Moshe *Berger. The bottom, left and right of his picture are framed in dark blue. A white fire burns in the heart of which red flames emerge and blaze up to the top of the image. The comment is: ‘King David is surrounded by enemies... In his distress, he calls to the Almighty. So much hatred; what a catastrophe.’¹³⁹⁹

Psalm 60: Reflections in Times of War

Psalm 60 is connected with the three previous psalms on account of the title ‘*miktam*’, but its even more violent warlike imagery suggests the context is now a critical military disaster. The references to some crisis in the northern kingdom in verses 6 and 7 suggest a time after 721 BC, and the references to Edom in the title and in verses 9 and 10 imply a period after the exile when enmity with Edom reached its height. Verses 6–12 have been re-used in Psalm 108 alongside 57:8–12; although we shall deal with that psalm later, it is noteworthy that this event was sufficiently engrained in the people’s memory to be referred to a second time in a later psalm.

The title is the most extensive in the entire Psalter. As well as ‘*miktam*’ a second didactic word *le-lammed* (for learning) is also used. Its overall message has been much debated in Jewish tradition, as will be seen below. The **Septuagint* makes some changes to the psalm, updating the geographical references and omitting mention of Edom; this suggests some time after the *Hasmonean Judas Aristobulus (c. 104 BCE) and its purpose was to give the psalm some hope. Other examples include the end of verse 1 which now reads, ‘You became angry *and had compassion on us*’ and also verse 7 which now reads ‘Judas is my king’ and verse 10 which is ‘Moab is a cauldron of my hope.’¹⁴⁰⁰

¹³⁹⁸ See <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.056v.jpg>.

¹³⁹⁹ See http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=15189&showmode=Full.

¹⁴⁰⁰ See Pietersma 2000: 57.

Other Jewish commentators have re-read the title in order to re-interpret the psalm as a whole. *Targum reads ‘Lily of the Covenant’ as ‘the ancient testimony that was between Jacob and Laban’, reading ‘lily’ (Hebrew, *shushan*) as meaning ‘ancient’, from the root *ysn*, ‘to be old’. So the psalm is about the breakdown of an ancient truce set back in Gen. 31:47.¹⁴⁰¹ *Midrash Tehillim, however, reads *shushan* as a reference to the Sanhedrin, the protectors of Israel, and so it is about David’s vision for universal peace and is dedicated to his court advisors in time of war. 2 Samuel 7 and 8 are the narrative through which the psalm is read (even though it is impossible to find all the references to Joab and Edom, and to Moab and Ammon in these two chapters). The reference to ‘Judah is my scepter’ at the end of verse 7 is then seen as a reference to the coming Messiah. The reference to the ‘fortified city’ (verse 9) is identified as Rome, whilst Edom (also verse 9) is Constantinople; the Messiah’s world-rule will be over the East and West.¹⁴⁰²

It is inevitable that Christians have read these references in entirely the opposite way. *Eusebius, predictably, sees the psalm as about the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews—despite the fact that all the specific references are to Gentile kingdoms and cities over which the Jews are clearing praying for victory.¹⁴⁰³ Despite this, verse 12 (‘it is [God] who will tread down our foes’) was used as part of the *Hōrologion* (*Divine Office for laity) at the Great *Compline in the Byzantine Church in defiance of the infidels, who included both Jews and Arabs.¹⁴⁰⁴

One of the most innovative commentaries on this psalm is by *Maximus the Confessor, which was written c. 626 in the monastery at Cyzicus, near Constantinople, probably when the city was under siege by Avars and Slavs. Noting the dislocation between the title of the psalm which notes David’s successes, and the psalm itself, which is about defeat in battle, Maximums reads the psalm as about ‘living in the meantime’; he then transfers this into a Christian context which is about living between the ultimate victory of Christ over evil and our sinful nature now. The Greek title ‘*eis to telos*’ is thus about the future—not simply ‘unto the end’, but ‘for those who shall be changed’ (*eis to telos tois alloiōthēsomenois*)—so the psalm is about ‘living in the meantime’. On this account Maximus creates an interesting dialogue between the voices of

¹⁴⁰¹ Stec 2004: 119–200.

¹⁴⁰² Braude 1959 I: 516.

¹⁴⁰³ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 294.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 304.

David and Christ within the psalm, taking into account the several different changes of person, where it is David (and we) who complain and Christ who assures us of victory.¹⁴⁰⁵

Whenever a literal interpretation is presumed, which leads to a military consideration of the violence of warfare, the psalm is often omitted from liturgy. Phrases such as ‘Moab is my washbasin’ thus become difficult to appropriate, as seen from its omission from the *Common Lectionary* and the **Daily Office*. But when the imagery is applied more allegorically to the battle with evil, the psalm actually survives in liturgy, at least in hymnody. We have referred earlier to the connection between Psalm 20 and the hymn ‘The Royal Banners forward go/The Cross shines forth in mystic glow’ by Venantius **Fortunatus* (a near contemporary of **Maximus the Confessor*) which was translated in the nineteenth century by J.M. **Neale*; ¹⁴⁰⁶ this hymn also has some affinities with verses 4–5 of Psalm 60, and is frequently sung to describe, in similar terms as *Maximus*, the ultimate victory of Christ. Not surprisingly, the psalm has also been used in a metrical form in a political and military context. Isaac **Watts* entitled Psalm 60 ‘On a Day of Humiliation for Disappointments in War’. Hence verse 3 reads:

Great Britain shakes beneath thy Stroke
And dreads thy threat’ning Hand;
O heal the Island thou hast broke,
Confirm the wav’ring Land.¹⁴⁰⁷

Christian appropriations in art similarly waver between the literal and the spiritual readings of the warfare imagery. As for the former, a window in the twelfth century Gothic part of Canterbury Cathedral, which depicts the siege of Canterbury by the Danes, is an intriguing replica of Psalm 60 in the **Harley Psalter*.¹⁴⁰⁸ And some Byzantine Psalters depict the image of David fighting the Ammonites in the long heading to the psalm, with a second image of the victory of Constantine (named), with his shield and cross-spear, sometimes with the sun-disk above, trampling on his enemies. This is found in **Khludov* (fols. 58r and 58v), **Barberini* (fols. 99v and 100r), **Hamilton* (fols. 123v and 124r) and **Theodore* (fols. 74v and 75r).¹⁴⁰⁹ And using a completely different art form, the tenth-century *Psalterium Aureum Codex 22* (fol. 141)—often termed the ‘Golden

¹⁴⁰⁵ See P.M. Blowers 2015: 257–83, with a translation of the commentary at the end.

¹⁴⁰⁶ See Psalm 20, p. 132.

¹⁴⁰⁷ See Gillingham 2008b: 160; also <http://www.hymnary.org/hymn/PHW/Ps.129>.

¹⁴⁰⁸ See Gillingham 2008b: 102.

¹⁴⁰⁹ For *Khludov*, see <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.058r.jpg> and <https://ica.princeton.edu/images/millet/manuscript/bgmmoscow129.058v.jpg>.

Psalter', from the monastery of St. Gall, uses Psalm 60 to depict the siege and sack of a town.¹⁴¹⁰

Spiritualised depictions of this psalm in art are surprisingly few. One notable contemporary example is by Roger *Wagner, in his *Book of Praises II*: here we see an enormous blue angel (perhaps resembling Michael) astride a winding river, flinging his shoe—towards the viewer.

One of the issues which has arisen out of this psalm and indeed from several psalms preceding it is the extent to which reception history enables us to be what David Clines calls 'resisting readers', so that we might question the right of one people to celebrate the defeat of another and thereby suggest that God has his favourites. For example, it is important to view the repugnant imagery of verses 6–8 ('Moab is my washpot...') in the light of a victory stele called the Moabite Stone (the Mesha Stele) which describes King Mesha's annihilation of the people north of Israel in an equally bloodthirsty way. The psalms have to be read, initially, in their context before they can be properly understood. From this we are able to become 'resisting readers': we 'celebrate' the brutal physicality of such imagery, whether from the viewpoint of victim or victor, at our peril.¹⁴¹¹ It may well be that the early readings of **Midrash Tehillim*, which view the psalm in the light of a hoped for universal reign of peace, may be nearer the mark than much of the later Christian reception.

¹⁴¹⁰ See <http://library.artstor.org/library/iv2.html?parent=true#>.

¹⁴¹¹ See S.E. Gillingham 2013b: 61–71.

Psalms 61–64: Hymnic Reflections on God's Protection

This collection, with the exception of 61, shares title '*mizmor*', again suggesting that the first stage of the reception of the psalms is their arrangement. Here the compilers seem to have adapted more personal psalms to become hymns to be used by the entire community.

Psalm 61: A 'Psalm' about Refuge in God

Psalm 61 has close relations with 62: God is rock (verse 2; see 62:2) and refuge (verses 3–4 and 62:2,7). It has also correspondences with 64, starting in a similar way ('Hear my cry, O God...') with the same concern about seeking refuge (Hebrew, *hasah*) in God (61:4; 64:10). In Psalm 61 the suppliant seems far from the Temple (verse 2: 'from the end of the earth I cry to you') and the language of 'rock', 'refuge', 'tent' and (again) 'shelter of your wings' is likely to be metaphorical. The difficult verses are the prayers for the king in 6–7: not only do they interrupt the sequence of ideas, but it is difficult to know whether to read them as references to the past, present or future. Some would argue the editors added this as a prayer for the Persian king (see Ezr. 6:10; 7:23); others would read it, either as an addition or as an original part of the psalm, more eschatologically.

The **Septuagint* gives the psalm a future orientation by translating some of the imperatives into a future tense, so that verse 4, for example, reads 'I will dwell

in your tent for ever' (*paroikēsō en tō skēnōmati sou eis tous aiōnas*), which could be read as hoping to dwell in the heavenly sanctuary beyond death.¹⁴¹²

**Targum* reads verses 6 and 7 in a future sense: 'May you add days for the world to come to the days of the messianic king!' 'May he sit for ever before God; may goodness and truth from the Lord of the world preserve him.' The psalm ends 'as I pay my vows on the day of the redemption of Israel, and on the day when the messianic king is anointed to become king'. Only here and in 21:2, 8 and 72:1 is the word 'melek' for king translated into the Aramaic as *meshiaḥ*—the Messiah, or anointed king.¹⁴¹³ **Midrash Tehillim* reads the first part of the psalm as from an exilic context, yet it too sees verse 6 as a reference to the Messiah, and reads this as a prayer that his years may be as many 'as the generation of this world and the world to come'. The words 'mercy and truth' in verse 7 (*ḥesed we'emet*) are similarly read as qualities of the Messianic age, citing also Ps. 89:15 in this respect.¹⁴¹⁴ Given the resistance to offer a Messianic reading to psalms typically read as such by Christians, this psalm, less frequently read as 'Messianic' by Christians, is an interesting choice.

Christian commentators make much of the imagery of the 'rock' in verse 2, and, by using Matt. 16:18, see this as a reference to the church. *Augustine, for example, preaching in the context of *Donatist heretics who refused those who denied their faith under persecution readmission to the church, interprets the psalm to mean that those who cry to God 'from the ends of the earth' will be readmitted to the church, which is 'the rock' (verse 2).¹⁴¹⁵ So verses 2, 3 and 4 especially were references to the church; and verse 8 ('... I pay my vows day after day') was then used as a reference to the making (or re-making) of baptismal vows.

George *Herbert, in his poem 'Assurance' (lines 31–36) also uses the images of 'rock' and 'tower' with a Christian focus, but applies this not to the church but to the individual Christian:

Wherefore if thou canst fail,
Then can thy truth and I: but while rocks stand,
And rivers stirre, thou canst not shrink or quail;
Yea, when both rocks and all things shall disband,
Then shalt thou be my rock and tower,
And make their ruine praise thy power.'¹⁴¹⁶

¹⁴¹² See Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 109.

¹⁴¹³ Stec 2004: 120–1. Psalms 45:3,8 and 80:16 also refer to the 'king Messiah'.

¹⁴¹⁴ Braude 1959 I: 518.

¹⁴¹⁵ *Augustine, *Answer to Petilian the Donatist* 2 109–246, NPNF 1 4:595. See also <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/14092.htm>.

¹⁴¹⁶ See Bloch 1992: 274.

A Christian appropriation of these images is also found in some musical arrangements of this psalm. Both *Giovanni Gabrieli and di *Lasso used part of it in their compositions, *Timor and Tremor*. Gabrieli combined the first two verses with 55:5–6 and 57:7, whilst di Lasso used these two verses as part of a prayer of petition (alongside 56:1) which was responded to, using syncopation, in 71:1, producing overall an urgent cry in prayer.¹⁴¹⁷ *Dvorak used 61:1–4 (and 63:1, 4–5) as one of his ‘Ten Biblical Songs’ (1894) again to illustrate the cry of distress. Very different compositions include *Handel’s use of the prayers for the king in verses 6–8 in one of his six ‘English Hymns’ (1794), and, much more recently, Francis Pott’s use of these verses in *Choirbook for the Queen*, two volumes of contemporary anthems to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in 2012.¹⁴¹⁸

A frequent artistic representation is, again, the image of ‘the shelter of your wings’. This often occurs in the **Utrecht Psalter*; so in Psalm 61 (fol. 34v) we see the psalmist standing on a rock, before a ‘tent’ (tabernacle) with a cross on it, raising his hands to an angel with his wings outspread; to the left a king kneels before the cross-*nimbbed *Christ-Logos.¹⁴¹⁹ The **Parma Psalter* (fol. 82B) actually has a similar image, without the Christian *gloss: a human figure with a dog’s face raises his head, and flying toward him is an eagle or large bird. Both verses 1 and 4 are thus illustrated here.¹⁴²⁰ A contemporary Jewish illustration by Moshe *Berger also develops the theme of protection and exile in its kaleidoscopic image of blues, interspersed with reds and whites, to suggest extended protective wings. Berger says of this psalm: ‘Please hear me even though I am in exile and distant from You at the ends of the land. The rock symbolises the much yearned for land of Israel seemingly inaccessible to those in exile.’¹⁴²¹

After the previous more vehement psalms, these professions of trust create a welcome and positive way of uniting faith traditions in an understanding of the need for refuge in God. This is what W.H. Bellinger observes in his recent monograph on this psalm: its ambiguity of language frees it from its Jewish cultic context (to which we might add the overlay of Christian interpretation) to give it a universal appropriation.¹⁴²² Only verses 6–7, concerning the king, are more controversial.

¹⁴¹⁷ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 243.

¹⁴¹⁸ See Dowling Long and Sawyer: 46.

¹⁴¹⁹ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=75&res=1&x=0&y=0>

¹⁴²⁰ Metzger 1996: 82.

¹⁴²¹ See http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=15191&showmode=Full. See Plate 23.

¹⁴²² See W.H. Bellinger 1995: 64.

Psalm 62: A 'Psalm' about the Silence of God

Psalm 62 seems to be set near or within the sanctuary, contrasting it with Psalm 61, if we are to take the metaphors of refuge in verses 2 and 6–7 more literally. The problem here is the silence of God (as in verse 1, 'my soul waits in silence', repeated in verse 5) who does not 'speak' until the very last verse. The heading is now 'A Psalm of David'—a title which continues up to Psalm 65 (where the extra heading 'Song' is added). The psalm is linked in its motif of 'refuge' to both 61 and 63; it is further linked to 63 in the repetition of 'my soul' (*napshi*) as in 62:1, 5 and 63:1,5 and 8. Psalm 62 has a fairly clear structure: its partial refrain in verses 1–2 and 5–6 and its use of **selah* divide up verses 1–4 and 5–8, and create an independent didactic ending (verses 9–12) which addresses the congregation in ways of right living.

This is the only lengthy homiletical address to the congregation within this group of psalms. Verses 9–12 stand out from their context, a point which is made clear in both the Greek and the Aramaic of verse 8. The **Septuagint* adds 'trust in him *all you congregation of the people*' (*synagōge laou*). Similarly the **Targum* reads: 'Trust in *his Memra* at all times, O people of the house of Israel...'

Verse 11 in the *Targum* is particularly interesting. It reads: 'God has spoken one *Law*; and twice I have heard this *from the mouth of Moses the great scribe*, that strength is *before* God.'¹⁴²³ In the NRSV the verse reads quite differently: 'Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this', and in Christian reception this has been seen as a prophecy about God speaking once through the Law but secondly (and definitively) through Christ. The point which the *Targum* sought to address was that if God spoke twice, each time it was (only) through the mouth of Moses.

Although the psalm does appear in the New Testament, it is only the didactic section which is used. There are allusions to verse 10 in 1 Tim. 6:17; the wisdom maxim at the end of the psalm ('For you repay to all according to their work') is also used in Matt. 16:27, Rom. 2:6 and 2 Tim. 4:14. The practical teaching in the psalm is also found in early Christian commentators. *Eusebius saw verses 8–12 as about our duties to God;¹⁴²⁴ *Basil the Great used the psalm (especially verse 10) to preach about the futility of trusting in riches;¹⁴²⁵ and

¹⁴²³ Stec 2004: 121–22.

¹⁴²⁴ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 132.

¹⁴²⁵ *Homilies on the Psalms* 21:2–3, 4 in FC 46:343–4.

*Augustine also preached more practically on the psalm, on the theme of subjecting oneself to God in silence.¹⁴²⁶

The motif of subjection to God in silence and waiting to hear God speak has dominated much of the psalm’s later reception. It is emphasised in Claude *Goudimel’s arrangement of the entire psalm in French for the Geneva Psalter in 1542/3; it is also expressed in di *Lasso’s Latin version (1588) of verses 9 and 11 (English verses 8 and 10). *Goudimel’s version (translated into German) became a familiar chorale which was adapted by J.S. *Bach in two of his cantatas: ‘There uprose a fierce strife’ and ‘Watch ye, Pray ye’. In each case the music enhances the sense of silent waiting at the start of the psalm.

The motif of silence can be woven into words as well. It is admirably expressed in the fourth stanza of Mary *Sidney’s version:

Yet shall my soule in silence still
 On God, my hope, attentive stay:
 Yet hee my fort, my health, my hill,
 Remove? O no: not move I may.
 My God doth me with glory fill,
 Not only shield me safe from harme:
 To shun distresse, to conquer ill,
 To him I climb, in him I arm.¹⁴²⁷

The theme of waiting for a silent God is also expressed in both Christian and Jewish art. In the **St Albans Psalter* the initial N (*‘Nonne Deo subiecta erit anima mea’*) shows King David offering his soul, a small naked body, to God. The soul reaches up in a gesture of adoration and God blesses him.¹⁴²⁸ It is found in Moshe *Berger’s contemporary and abstract image of this psalm, which represents verses 6–8: a white triangular prism tilts upwards from what looks like water comprised of dense Hebrew letters towards fiery red flames (also made up of Hebrew letters). The artist speaks of this representing the poet completely committed to God, who alone is his salvation, thus inspiring the credo of all those in exile yearning for redemption.¹⁴²⁹

The motif of silence in this psalm taken up by the Jewish philosopher André *Neher. Writing about the experience of Auschwitz, Neher called

¹⁴²⁶ Both the Greek and the Latin lose the essence of the Hebrew’s ‘wait in silence’ by using verbs which can also mean ‘be subordinate to/be subject to’, so the expression ‘subject oneself in silence’ encapsulates the essence of the verse. See *Sermons* 60.3 in FC 11:261–63.

¹⁴²⁷ Taken from the 1963 edition. See *Wieder 1995: 88–9.

¹⁴²⁸ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page189.shtml>. We noted a similar image for Psalm 57, p. 335. See Plate 24 for the image of Psalm 62.

¹⁴²⁹ See http://www.biblical-art.com/artwork.asp?id_artwork=15192&showmode=Full.

silence 'the metaphysical form of the cosmos', veiling and unveiling the infinity of the Creator who may ultimately be only identified with no words.¹⁴³⁰ Neher highlights Psalm 62:1, 5 (and 67:7) as 'the silence of the Ineffable before the Infinite'; yet this is not about non-silence, which can be negative and producing a terror of the divinity, but about a creative silence and an experience of a hidden God.¹⁴³¹

Thus like Psalm 61, this is another personal psalm for universal use, whose didactic concerns and motif of silence before God has been used by Jews and Christians alike.

Psalm 63: A 'Psalm' Seeking God in the Morning

Psalm 63 is linked to 62 and 64 (and 65) by the heading 'Psalm of David'. It also adds historical information about David in the wilderness of Judah, thus suggesting a context like Psalm 61: the suppliant is far from Jerusalem, reflecting on his experience of worship when he was there (verse 2). A similar phrase 'in the shelter (*be-seter*) of your wings' in 61:4 is also found in 63:7, here as 'in the shadow (*be-šel*) of your wings'. Furthermore, the last verse of Psalm 63 ('the king shall rejoice in God') is reminiscent of the last verses of 61. Its references to 'the soul' thirsting (verse 1), being satisfied (verse 5) and clinging to God (verse 8) have associations with the silent and attentive soul in 62:1, 5; but whereas that psalm only addressed God in the last verse, in this psalm all but the last verse is addressed to God. Again there is some evidence of deliberate compilation within this small collection of psalms.

Nevertheless **Targum* does not develop the final verse about the king in the same 'messianic' way as in Psalm 61. 'But the king [here presuming David] shall rejoice *in the Memra of God...*' There is some acknowledgement of rewards beyond this life in verse 4: 'So I will bless you during my life *in this world, and in the name of your Memra I will spread out my hands in prayer in the world to come*'.¹⁴³² **Midrash Tehillim* similarly reads the psalm in relation to David, understood to have been trapped in the desert, as in 1 Sam. 23:14 or 24:2, and his experience is a paradigm of faith for Jews exiled from the land. Like *Targum* and unlike Psalm 61, no Messianic references are evident.¹⁴³³

¹⁴³⁰ Neher 1981: 9–10, cited in Levine 1984: 221–3.

¹⁴³¹ Neher 1981: 11–12, cited in Levine 1984: 222.

¹⁴³² Stec 2004: 123.

¹⁴³³ Braude 1959 I: 525.

The Hebrew of verse 1 could read ‘Early will I seek you’ (*’ashaḥarekka*) and the Greek certainly read this in terms of time (*pros se orthrizō*); the Latin made it even more apparent (*ad te de luce vigilo*). On this account Psalm 63 was quickly used in Christian liturgy as ‘the morning psalm’. One early reference to this is at the end of the fourth century when a Spanish nun named Egeria, observing on her pilgrimage the *Divine Office in Jerusalem, noted Psalm 63 being used as the opening psalm of the day. This use is confirmed in the **Apostolic Constitutions* (c. 380, in Syria) and it was also noted by John *Chrysostom in *On the Epistle to the Hebrews* from the same time.¹⁴³⁴ The psalm became established as a morning psalm in liturgical practices in both East and West: John *Cassian’s *Institutes*, written to support all monastic communities, assigns Psalm 63 for prayers at sunrise (partly also on account of verse 6, ‘in the watches of the night’), along with Psalm 119. By the time of the Rule of Benedict, some one hundred and fifty years later, Psalm 63 (despite its imprecations in verses 9–10) is clearly the established ‘morning psalm’ (with Psalm 141 being the ‘evening psalm’).¹⁴³⁵ Not only was the psalm such a suitable morning psalm on account of verses 1 and 6, but it was also appropriate for liturgical use because of the intense desire for the presence of God expressed in verses 2–4, 5, and 7–8.

This use continued in cathedral as well as monastic liturgy. The psalm was also designated a *‘canticle’—along with some twenty other psalms—so it could also be used as an alternative to Psalm 128 in the marriage service, and even as an alternative to the *Nunc Dimittis* (a non-psalmic *canticle, from Luke 2:29–32) at Evening Prayer. It was only more recently that in the attempts to scour many of the psalms of their imprecations, verses 9–10 were eventually omitted from the **Daily Office* (1968).

This liturgical use has also inspired musical interpretations of this psalm; these were usually compositions for Morning Prayer which later were used for other occasions. Giovanni Gabrielli arranged verses 2–5 in Latin (English verses 1–4), possibly originally for only two voices, later ten, with instruments, for the morning service at St. Mark’s Venice in 1587. *Purcell used verses 1–5 and 7–8 in English, again for singing at Morning Prayer: the first verse, ‘early will I seek thee’, is followed by a part for lower voices, ‘My soul thirsteth for thee’. The ascent through the musical scale towards ‘and I will lift up my hands in thy name’ is brought to resolution by the phrase ‘shadow of thy wings’, taken *antiphonally between two choirs.

¹⁴³⁴ On Chrysostom, see 14.9 NPNF 1 14:437, from ACCS VIII: 55.

¹⁴³⁵ See Gillingham 2008b: 40; also Lamb 1962: 33.

A more original use of this psalm outside a liturgical context is *Elgar's *The Kingdom*, first performed at the Birmingham Festival in 1906. 'The sun goeth down', from Scene Four, is a version of verse 6 ('... I meditate on you in the watches of the night') by Mary Magdalene as she reflects on all she has seen and heard since the Crucifixion.

Byzantine Psalters mostly represent this psalm more historically, in the context of David, 'in the Forest of Hareth', who sits on a rock and raises his hands to rays of light (or the hand of God) coming from an arc of heaven. This is the image in **Hamilton* (fol. 126v), the **Theodore* (fol. 77v), and **Barberini* (fol. 102v). **Khludov* [fol. 60r] and **Pantokrator* [fol. 76v] omit the latter part of this description, despite its more obvious liturgical connotations.¹⁴³⁶ The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 35r) typically presents a more expansive illustration suggesting its liturgical connotations. The psalmist stands beside a bed placed in front of a tabernacle with drawn curtains revealing an altar and a hanging lamp (verse 2). He raises his left hand to his mouth to indicate the thirsting of his soul (verse 1) whilst his right hand is raised (verse 4) towards the personified sun in the heavens, suggested by the word 'early' in the Latin of verse 1. An angel has its wings turned towards the psalmist: he rests in 'the shadow of God's wings' (verse 7).¹⁴³⁷

The **St Albans Psalter* presents a very different 'morning reading'. In the initial 'D' ('Deus') David is represented as approaching Christ with a lighted candle and pointing to the text '*for you I seek at the break of day*' (*itself a combination of verses 1 and 6*). Christ's head is illuminated by a sunburst, showing he is not only the true light (John 1:9) but also the 'morning star' (Rev. 22:16).¹⁴³⁸

This is also a psalm whose metaphorical imagery inspired several poets. One of the best known is T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' (5:346–358) which also plays on the imagery of spiritual drought and thirst for life-giving waters. Although also taken from the motif of the water from the rock in Exod. 17:6, this nevertheless echoes the first verses of Psalm 63, which play on the absence of God (in thirsting for God) and the presence of God (found in taking refuge in 'the sanctuary').

If there were no water
And no rock
If there were rock

¹⁴³⁶ For the image in the *Theodore Psalter* see www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f076v.

¹⁴³⁷ For this and the exposition of other verses see <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=76&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

¹⁴³⁸ See <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page190.shtml>.

And also water
And water
A spring
A pool among the rock
If there were the sound of water only
Not the cicada
And dry grass singing
But sound of water over a rock
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water.¹⁴³⁹

The imagery of the soul thirsting for God at the beginning of the psalm, as well as its liturgical use, is a motif found in the musical, artistic and poetic reception of this psalm, thus, like Psalms 61 and 62, pointing to the psalm's universal appeal.

Psalm 64: A 'Psalm' about Protection

Psalm 64 is a much more problematic (and indeed, vindictive) text, related more to Psalms 52 and 53 in its prayers for the exoneration of the righteous through a series of imprecations. It is nevertheless linked to its neighbouring psalms, not only by virtue of its title 'A Psalm of David' (also in 62, 63 and 65) but also in the way its ending corresponds with 63:11. There, the king rejoices in God; here, in a more democratised way, the righteous one rejoices on account of a similar response to God's promise of protection.

There are two connected parts to this psalm: verses 1–6 concern the scheming 'workers of evil', who 'whet their tongues like swords' and whose words are like 'poisonous arrows' (verse 3) shooting out magical spells (verse 4); verses 7–10 concern God who 'will shoot his arrow' at them (verse 7), and 'because of their tongues he will bring them to ruin' (verse 8) thus causing the righteous to rejoice (verse 9–10).

The Greek translation plays upon the contrast of the 'tongues' in the two sections but omits the image of God 'shooting with arrows' in the second part. The Hebrew in verses 6–7 is difficult, and the Greek reads instead in verse 7 that 'a person of deep heart will come, and God will be glorified': the arrows of the wicked are ineffectual, simply 'the darts of infants'. Whether 'the person of

¹⁴³⁹ Cited in Z. Zieba 2013: 167–8.

deep heart' is a coming figure who will vindicate the righteous, or whether it refers to the psalmist himself, is unclear.

**Targum* also has difficulty making sense of verses 7–10 of this psalm, translating verse 8 somewhat opaquely as 'they shall stumble (though) their own tongue is for them'.¹⁴⁴⁰ The 'person of deep heart' referred to in the Greek is now Daniel, and the whole psalm becomes his prayer, based upon Daniel 6. He thirsted for God, as did David; he refused to capitulate to Darius, and petitioned God instead. So the 'tongues' and the 'arrows' are about the Persians, and verses 1–6 are read in the light of the Persian decree in Dan. 6:8–9, which resulted in Daniel being thrown into the lion's den; the change of mood in verses 7 onwards are the result of Daniel's protection by God in the den and the prayer in verse 10 is thus Darius's prayer in Dan. 6:26–28, which is in effect a prayer of victory for Daniel. Given the imagery of lions in previous psalms (for example 57:4 and 58:6, which also associate lions with the wicked tongues of the enemy) it is odd to see that this is the psalm which uses Daniel 6 as its context; nevertheless it is a theme developed by **Midrash Tehillim* and other Jewish commentators and is now a dominant Jewish reading of the psalm.¹⁴⁴¹

Otherwise Psalm 64 is neither rich in liturgical use (although in the Benedictine Rule it is used with Psalms 63 and 65 for Wednesdays at *Lauds), nor abundant in its use by patristic or medieval commentators. A tendency in Christian reception is to read the psalm in the light of the Passion of Christ praying for deliverance from the cruelty of the Jews.¹⁴⁴²

The literal appropriation of the imagery of 'arrows' also appears in illuminated manuscripts. In the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 35r) it is used generally, which presents an angel in the centre of the picture, holding a scarf—a symbol of protection—over the head of the psalmist who petitions a Hand of God appearing from heaven. Two men below the psalmist shoot at a group of evildoers (verse 7) whilst one of them is shooting an arrow at the psalmist himself (verse 3). Between them is a pit, or snare (verse 5).¹⁴⁴³ A more specific image is in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 74v) where the person with the halo being killed by arrows (verse 4–6) suggests Saint Sebastian; if so, this is the earliest known representation of his martyrdom.¹⁴⁴⁴ This image of martyrdom—for Sebastian died for his faith at the time of the Diocletian persecution in the third

¹⁴⁴⁰ Stec 2004: 124.

¹⁴⁴¹ See Braude 1959 I: 526; also Feuer 2004: 785–9, citing both Rashi and *Midrash Schocher Tov*.

¹⁴⁴² See for example Bede and Aquinas in Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 322–3.

¹⁴⁴³ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=77&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

¹⁴⁴⁴ See Warburg Iconographic Database: http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/vpc/VPC_search/record.php?record=32166. For an image from the Psalter, see <https://goo.gl/xu0dZF>.

century—gives the psalm a different potency than the other readings associating it with David or Daniel, who each were vindicated by God.

So this is an unusual psalm, insofar as in both Jewish and Christian tradition it has been attached to heroes of faith such as Daniel and Sebastian, a factor which has given it a more general and practical interest. Hence as a collection Psalms 61–64 have a universal appeal: whilst other Jewish and Christian readings vary, there is little here which is controversial.

Psalms 65–68: God's People Sing of his Praise

Psalms 65–68 add to the title '*mizmor*' the additional heading 'song'; and although in the second Davidic Psalter, 66 and 67 do not even directly claim Davidic authorship. The theme throughout these psalms is of God's rule over all peoples and here the outlook is more Israel-centred than David-centred, with the mood shifting away from lament and more, as the title '*shir*' ('song') suggests, towards praise. Again the arrangement does not seem to be accidental.

Psalm 65: A Sanctuary Song about God's Sustenance through Nature

In Psalm 65 the mood changes from the other psalms in the 50s and 60s to some sort of festival celebration. The theme of water pervades the psalm (the seas and waves in verses 5 and 7; the rains in verses 9–10). The structure is quite clear. The first part (verses 1–4) is both praise and a prayer for forgiveness (the first verse, translated literally 'For you there is silence, a song of praise' reflecting something of this paradox); the second part (verses 5–8) praises God for his silencing of the chaotic waters (an exilic theme, as we shall see with Psalm 74); and the third part (verses 9–13) is a harvest psalm, continuing the theme of God's dominion over the cosmic waters.

There are clear links with Psalm 66: the first part of 65 (verses 1–4) are very like the latter part of 66 (verses 13–20) in the focus on vows, prayers, and praise. 65:1 uses the specific word *tehillah* for praise, as does 66:2 and 8; and this is compared with the word *tepillah* for prayer in 65:2, found also in 66:19,20. The reference to God's 'awesome/fearful deeds' (*nora'oth*) in 65:5 is echoed again in 66:3 as *mah-nora' ma'aseka* ('how awesome/fearful are your deeds', using the same verb. These psalms are not identical; but they seem to have been compiled together on account of some similarities.

The **Septuagint*, associating this psalm with the theme of the exile, adds to the title '*the words of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, from the words of the congregation as they were about to depart*'. This theme is developed in some Byzantine Psalters, as we shall see shortly. The Greek actually reads the word for 'silence' in the first verse as 'to be like, to be fitting', so the translation reads literally 'to you, O God, praise is fitting in Zion' (which the NRSV adopts). Verses 5 and 6 are divided differently, ending with the temple as a place of deliverance; thus verse 6 starts with an imperative ('Answer us, God of our salvation!'). And the different Hebrew words for 'grow' in verses 9, 10 and 13 are served with the same word *plēthunō* in the Greek, thus emphasising the continuity of God's gift of fertility.¹⁴⁴⁵

**Targum* seeks to make sense of the Hebrew in verse one as follows: '*Before you praise is reckoned as silence, O God whose *Shekinah is in Zion...*' The exilic context is highlighted by translating verse 5 as 'O God of our deliverance, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and the *isles of the sea that are far from the dry land...*'¹⁴⁴⁶ **Midrash Tehillim* accounts for the reference to silence in verse 1 by arguing that Zion has been desolated, hence 'For Thee silence is praise' is about waiting patiently for God to act (as in Ps. 37:7).¹⁴⁴⁷ **Rashi* argues that this is either about God's silence in Zion, as he waits to take vengeance on his enemies, or that it means we can never recount all God's virtues so we are ultimately brought to silence.¹⁴⁴⁸

There is no specific use of this psalm in the New Testament, although some scholars have proposed the influence of themes such as the stilling of the seas in Luke 8:22–25, and the God who brings rain and harvests in Acts 14:15–17; certainly these were themes developed by the church fathers who used this psalm.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Pietersma (2000: 260–5) argues that the probably Egyptian background of the translators may have influenced their interest in water and fertility in these verses.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Stec 2004: 124–6.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Braude 1959 I: 530.

¹⁴⁴⁸ See Gruber 2004: 436.

A typical example may be found in *Augustine's sermon on the versions of this psalm.¹⁴⁴⁹ First the reference to Jeremiah and Ezekiel in the title indicates to *Augustine that this psalm is a prophecy; it is a psalm waiting for fulfilment. So deliverance has indeed come from Zion (verse 1); the God of salvation is indeed the hope of all the ends of the earth (verse 5); the heathen, who are the sea, have been overcome (i.e. converted: verse 7); the rivers of God flow freely in and through the Church (verse 9–10); and the fields are now white for the harvest (verses 12–13, using John 4:15). The psalm partly about creation has been fulfilled in Christ and in his church.

Several Christian illustrations of this psalm are somewhat curious. The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 36r) and the **Eadwine Psalter* (fol. 109v) each has a most unusual circular form of composition, partly suggesting the idea of the earth and the waters, partly in apparent imitation of the signs of the zodiac from verse 8 ('... awed by your signs...'). In the heart of the psalm, within an enclosure below a mountain is the 'blessed man' (verse 4) who dwells in God's courts. Outside is the sea, gushing out from rocks; vines and flocks testify to the fertility imagery here. On the top of the mountain is the *Christ-Logos, with four angels.¹⁴⁵⁰

Another unusual illustration is in the eleventh-century Church of Hagia Sophia, Thessalonika. On the domed apse in the sanctuary is a depiction of Mary, *nimbed and veiled, holding the Christ-child, cross-nimbed with his hand raised in blessing; the inscription is from Ps. 65:4–5 (Greek verses 5–6).¹⁴⁵¹ There is a play here on the 'holy temple' and the 'awesome deeds of deliverance' which the artist(s) saw emanating not only from Zion but also from the Virgin and Child.¹⁴⁵²

The **Theodore Psalter* is notable for its third illustration of this psalm. The first (fol. 79r) is of Jeremiah and Ezekiel as in the Greek and Latin titles, and, like *Augustine's interpretation, gives the psalm a sense of prophecy. The second (fol. 79v) is of a rayed hand of God blessing a bishop, inscribed as Gregory Thaumaturgus, a third century bishop known for his miracles (not least against seas and floods). The third (fol. 80r) is of the 'rivers of God'. Christ enthroned sits at the top, hand raised, blessing creation. Two rivers, personified as male naked figures, in grey, flow down the page and 'water' creation, as the sheep and goats pasture amongst the trees. Yet again the Christian reading of the psalm is about both physical and spiritual.¹⁴⁵³

¹⁴⁴⁹ See <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801065.htm>.

¹⁴⁵⁰ For the *Utrecht Psalter*, see <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=78&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

¹⁴⁵¹ See <http://www.inthessaloniki.com/en/agia-sofia%20>.

¹⁴⁵² There are some similarities here with an image of Psalm 46 in what was the cathedral of Hagia Sophia of Constantinople, modern day Istanbul; see p. 281.

¹⁴⁵³ See http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f079r; also http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f079v.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poetry and hymnody also presented the psalm in this dual capacity. Mary *Sidney achieves this in a typically subtle way, as she writes both lyrically about the bounty of nature, but also realistically as she sees this as a reminder of our mortal roots. This has no Christian overlay; its message is universal:

Thy eie from heavn this land beholdeth
Such fruitfull dewes down on it rayning,
That, storehowse-like her lap enfoldeth
Assured hope of plowmans gayning.
Thy flowing streames her drought doe temper so,
That buried seed through yielding grave doth grow.¹⁴⁵⁴

Isaac *Watts, meanwhile, takes the harvesting imagery to refer to the church's witness to the Gentiles, although curiously this is combined with specific references to the role of Britain in this process:

The Praise of Sion waits for Thee,
My God; and Praise becomes thy House;
There shall thy Saints thy Glory see,
And there perform their publick Vows.

O Thou, whose Mercy bends the Skies
To save when humble Sinners pray,
All Lands to Thee shall lift their Eyes,
And Islands of the Northern Sea.

Against my Will my Sins prevail,
But Grace shall purge away their Stain;
The Blood of Christ will never fail,
To wash my Garments white again...¹⁴⁵⁵

Several harvest hymns have made some use of this psalm. The following harvest hymn, by W. Chatterton *Dix (1864), has an evocation of Ps. 65:12–13 at the end of the first verse:

To thee, O Lord, our hearts we raise
in hymns of adoration,
to thee bring sacrifice of praise
with shouts of exultation.
Bright robes of gold the fields adorn,

¹⁴⁵⁴ See Fiskens 1985: 179.

¹⁴⁵⁵ The line in italics refers to Britain. See <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/watts/psalmshymns.Ps.136.html>.

the hills with joy are ringing,
the valleys stand so thick with corn
that even they are singing.

The third verse, however, speaks of a spiritual harvest as well:

....may we, the angel-reaping o'er,
stand at the last accepted,
Christ's golden sheaves for evermore
to garners bright elected.

This literal and spiritual use of the psalm, dealing in part with praise of the natural order, in part with praise of some forthcoming spiritual restoration, is also found in Gerard Manley *Hopkins, who borrows from two lines of this psalm and gives each a deeper meaning. Hopkins' 'He hath abolished the old drouth' (1864) is not only about nature's renewal, but about a 'new song' ('He will live, he shall not die'). Verses 9–10 are undoubtedly evident in two lines of this poem.¹⁴⁵⁶

And rivers run where all was dry,
The field is sopp'd with merciful dew...

A more contemporary writer offers a different counter-voice. H.N. Wallace views the psalm as not only about the 'God of Zion' (verse 1) but also about the 'God of Earth' (verse 9–11). Noting the ancient Near Eastern associations between the Temple and fertility, and even between pardon and blessing through fertility, Wallace argues that the primary concern of the psalm is about the 'earth's voice' reminding us to be thankful to God.¹⁴⁵⁷ So this 'earth-centred' view of the psalm, which views it as much about creation as about Israel or the church, is another example of a psalm having a universal claim on Jews and Christians alike.

Psalm 66: A Sanctuary Song about God's Sustenance through History

Psalm 66 has two clear sections. In the first part (verses 1–12) the pronoun 'we' is dominant, alongside the invitation to the world to 'come and see' (verse 5); in the second part (verses 13–20), the pronoun 'I' dominates, and the invitation is

¹⁴⁵⁶ See p. 246 on Ps. 40; also Fiddes 2009:570–73.

¹⁴⁵⁷ See H.N. Wallace 2001.

to 'come and *hear*' (verse 16). The interplay of voices and the 'seeing' and 'hearing' motifs point to its liturgical origins.

Already we have noted how, in the first stage of reception, the compilers placed this psalm alongside 65. There are also some general themes which link the two psalms together. These include the hope for the return of the abundance of God's 'blessings' (65:10 and 66:8, 20); the role of the whole earth in receiving God's munificence, and, despite what might be seen as an 'earth-centredness' in both psalms, the place of Jerusalem within it (visiting the Temple is referred to in 65:4 and 66:13).

Some Greek versions offer a further addition to the heading: this is *ōdē psalmou anastaseōs*—literally, a 'song of a psalm of resurrection' (or 'restoration'). Like Psalm 65, this suggests a promise of the recreation of the earth and the return from exile in Jewish reception, whilst in Christian reception the water and recreation motifs suggested more the sacrament of baptism and the new age in Christ.

The exilic hope is found in early Jewish reception. For example, in **Targum*, verse 11 includes the Babylonian as well as Egyptian exile: '*You brought us into Egypt as into a net, you imposed the rule of the Babylonians upon us; and we became as though a rope of distress had been placed upon our loins*'. This is made even more explicit in verse 12: '*The Medes rode over us, and the Greeks came up over our head; you brought us in among the Romans [i.e. the Edomites]...*' Yet despite the recognition of a much later and ongoing exile, verse 13 suggests that there is hope: '*Even as you love us, redeem us; and we will come into the house of your sanctuary with burnt offerings, and pay you our vows...*'¹⁴⁵⁸ The idea of a 'threefold' exile is also read into the 'threefold' heading to the psalm, where it is seen as referring also to the three oppressive nations—Babylon, Media and Greece.¹⁴⁵⁹ **Midrash Tehillim*, however, assumes the exilic context to be, primarily, the Babylonian one. Like Psalms 56 and 64, *Midrash Tehillim* uses Daniel 6 as the 'narrative context', so that the words of the psalm echo the conflict between Daniel and the Persians, and verses 1–2 are seen as the prayer of Darius in his acknowledgement of Daniel's God.

Exegesis of this psalm in the early fathers tended to focus on Exodus/Baptism typology. So a text such as 'He turned the sea into dry land' (verse 6) was understood as being about 'salvation by water'. **Theodoret of Cyrrhus* used this psalm in this way.¹⁴⁶⁰

The use of the psalm in worship is also due to its Exodus/Exile typology. In Jewish liturgy it was used as the 'Song for the Day', on the sixth day of Passover:

¹⁴⁵⁸ See Stec 2004: 126–7.

¹⁴⁵⁹ For Rashi on 66:7 (Hebrew verse 8) see Gruber (2004: 810).

¹⁴⁶⁰ See *Commentary on the Psalms* 66.4 in FC 101:372–3 in ACSS II: 60.

its emphasis on the redemption at the sea in verse 6 made it an obvious choice.¹⁴⁶¹ In a corresponding way, the psalm also became associated not only with Baptism but also with Easter in Christian worship: the Orthodox Church, for example, uses verses 1–4 in the **typika* of its Easter liturgy.¹⁴⁶²

The illustrations of Psalm 66 in Christian art were also influenced by the theme of God 'turning the sea into dry land' so that 'the people passed through the river on foot' (verse 6). This motif is dealt with in some Byzantine Psalters in an extraordinary way. The **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 81r) and the **Barberini* (fol. 107r), for example, each depict the persecution of martyrs. Their third scene is of nude individuals being forced to swim in an icy lake; the fourth is of one martyr, overcome by cold, entering a warm bathhouse, whereupon a converted soldier strips off and takes his place; the fifth scene is of two executioners throwing the bodies of the martyrs into flames. This illustrates, literally, verse 5 ('come and see that the Lord has done!') and verse 12 ('we went through fire and through water'). It is the scene of the forty martyrs of Sebaste, where in c. 320 a number of converted Roman soldiers died for their faith.

In the eighteenth century John **Bunyan* also used this psalm in his spiritual autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. Writing during his imprisonment in about 1666, he describes in more personal terms what is presented as allegory in his *Pilgrim's Progress*. This is about a spiritual journey from death to life. On the title page is a motto from Ps. 66:16: 'Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for me.'¹⁴⁶³

It is interesting that musical arrangements of this psalm do not make much of the call to all peoples to 'come and see' and 'come and hear' (verses 5 and 16) what God has done. Instead compositions focus on the more general verses of the psalm. These include Jean-Joseph de **Mondonville's* '*Jubilate Deo omnis terra*' which was based on verses 1–2, and this was probably due to its use as the offertory anthem at both Easter and Epiphany.¹⁴⁶⁴ Similarly **Giovanni Gabrieli's* '*Jubilate*' was based upon verse 1, and was an **antiphonal* experimentation between singers and instrumentalists, in nine parts, and fitted well the mood of this verse ('Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth...'). In 1822 **Mendelssohn* also composed two pieces on verse 1 ('Jauchzet Gott, alle Lande') as well as on verse 20 ('Gelobet sei Gott'), each on the similar theme of calling to all peoples to join in the praise of God. As others had done before him, Ralph **Vaughan Williams*, in the early twentieth-century, set to music George **Herbert's* 'Let all

¹⁴⁶¹ Feuer 2004: 805.

¹⁴⁶² See Holladay 1983: 181; this is along with Pss. 67:1–3 and 68:1–3.

¹⁴⁶³ See Prothero 1903: 245; also <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/bunyan/grace.html>.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Bibliothèque municipale d'Avignon Ms 1188 p. 36; see Gorali 1993: 245.

the world in every corner sing' (1633) which develops the psalm's first verse as follows:

Let all the world in every corner sing, my God and King!
The heavens are not too high, his praise may thither fly,
the earth is not too low, his praises there may grow.
Let all the world in every corner sing, my God and King!

Let all the world in every corner sing, my God and King!
The church with psalms must shout, no door can keep them out;
but, above all, the heart must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in every corner sing, my God and King!

So in Jewish tradition the psalm's reception has focussed on the hope of restoration from exile, with the focus again on Daniel, the hero of faith; Christian reception, meanwhile, has focussed on restoration in a more personal and spiritual way, also making more of the call to all peoples to join in praise of Israel's God.

Psalm 67: A Sanctuary Song about God's Universal Blessings

Psalm 67 is a shorter psalm, sharing almost the same title as 65 and 66 ('To the leader/*mizmor*/song'), with the addition 'with stringed instruments'. It was probably compiled alongside 65 and 66 because of several shared themes. One obvious motif is that of blessing (65:10; 66:8; 67:1, 6 and 7); another is the fruitfulness of all the earth (65:9–13; 67:6); another is an interest in the awe and/or praise of all peoples (65:8; 66:8; 67:3–5, 7). Praise at the sanctuary is also implied in all three psalms (65:1–4; 66:1–4, 13–20; 67:1) which suggests that together these three psalms were used liturgically, probably at harvest festivals.

The theme of 'blessing' is most developed in Psalm 67. Verse 1 begins by citing the Aaronic Blessing from Num. 6:24–26, although it uses the three verbs ('be gracious'; 'bless'; 'make his face to shine') in a different order, and it also includes in its purview not only Israel but the whole world (verse 2: '...all nations). Its refrain (verses 3 and 5) also makes this point clear. The translation of verse 6 is contentious: it is difficult to know whether to read the verb *natenah* as in the past tense ('the earth has yielded its increase', as in the NRSV) or as a plea in the jussive ('*May* the earth yield...', as with verse 7, '*May* God continue to bless us...'). The reason this is important is that the emphasis in the psalm would

then be a changed from a thanksgiving for what God has done to a prayer for rain and God's blessings on all people, in anticipation of what God will do. This also affects the universal tenor of the whole psalm: if the jussive form is emphasised throughout ('May/let the peoples bless you' in verses 3 and 5) it implies Israel is the present beneficiary and other nations are not yet included.

A most unusual reception of the psalm in Jewish tradition is related to this. It is argued that the psalm was revealed first to Moses, who found it hard to visualise the form of a **menorah* of gold (see Exodus 25) and so God sent him in a vision of a *menorah* of fire, along with Psalm 67 arranged in the shape of a *menorah*. So David did not compose this psalm; it was revealed to him on a golden plate which was in the same form of *menorah* shown to Moses. David then carried the emblem Psalm 67 in the form of a *menorah* on his shield which he took into battle.¹⁴⁶⁵ What gave rise to this tradition was the recognition that the psalm had seven verses, and its forty-nine words corresponded to the tradition that the decorative elements of 'bowls, knobs and flowers' on the *menorah* totalled forty-two, with the 'seven branches' amounting to forty-nine, each branch being a symbol of blessings for Israel.¹⁴⁶⁶ The use of the Aaronic Blessing in verse 1 is also important here, because the focus is on blessing for Israel alone. Hence any Jew who prays this psalm by focusing on the *menorah* will receive God's blessings in this world and in the life to come. This has been re-shaped in the **Zorah* tradition so that this psalm, without a Davidic heading, is ascribed to having direct inspiration from David's harp, which could play its notes even when David was asleep, when it was struck by the wind.¹⁴⁶⁷ So first Moses received this psalm in the form of a *menorah*, and then it was revealed to David as a 'psalm of the harp': in this sense this psalm plays an exceptional part in the Psalter, not only because of its divinely inspired authorship but because of its very shape emulating the mystery of that authorship. A typical example of the design of these seven verses is seen in the illustration in Figure 12.¹⁴⁶⁸

These *menorah* associations gave the psalm particular importance in Jewish liturgy. The number forty nine equalled the forty-nine days of seven weeks which preceded the giving of the Torah to Moses so it recited on each of the forty-nine days between Passover and Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks), slowly anticipating the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. There is also early evidence that the psalm was used in Jewish prayer as a personal amulet: by

¹⁴⁶⁵ Spero 2009:11–12.

¹⁴⁶⁶ So Rashi on Exod.25:35; see also Spero 2009:12–13.

¹⁴⁶⁷ See p. 48 (on Psalm 3) and pp. 333–4 (on Psalm 57) for similar readings of David's harp.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Taken from <https://beneisrael.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/psalm67.jpg>.



FIGURE 12 Psalm 67 in the form of a menorah¹⁴⁶⁹

reciting it seven times before a journey one was assured of safety and prosperity.¹⁴⁷⁰ Furthermore, when the *menorah* is lit in a synagogue or at home, and this psalm is sung, it symbolises protection in the present whilst also giving hope for the restoration of the Temple: so at the end of Sabbath worship, Psalm 67 is often sung to a special tune. It was this liturgical background which

¹⁴⁶⁹ See <https://beneisrael.wordpress.com/2013/08/21/psalm-67-the-menorah-psalm/>.

¹⁴⁷⁰ See <http://www.imj.org.il/imagine/collections/item.asp?itemNum=369678>, which is a eighteenth/nineteenth century Shiviti amulet with Psalm 67 inscribed on its *menorah*; and <http://www.imj.org.il/imagine/collections/item.asp?itemNum=397474>, an eighteenth century amulet from Persia with a *menorah* inscribed with Psalm 67. See also Spero 2009:11 and 16.

influenced Salamone *Rossi's motet on the psalm, '*Lamnatseah bingiot mizmor shir*', for the ghetto synagogue in Mantua, raising the community's spirits with the psalm's focus on the genre of *song* to acknowledge God's power. (The irony was that in the case of synagogue music in Mantua this had to be *without* the instruments suggested in the title [*bingiot*]; it had to be based on choral polyphony alone.)

Psalm 67 is also represented to the present day on *Shiviti* plaques (taken from the phrase in Hebrew '*I have set the Lord always before me*' from Ps. 16:8). The forty-two letter name for God is inscribed round the margins and Psalm 67 is presented, in its seven-verse **menorah* form, in the middle. The plaque is found near the Ark in the synagogue, as an aid to prayer, but it is also used in homes.¹⁴⁷¹ This would also explain the popularity of the psalm in synagogue architecture, for example at the fourteenth century El Tránsito synagogue at Toledo, where Jewish psalms and Arabic art coincide.¹⁴⁷² It would also explain its representation in Hebrew calligraphy next to the form of a flower found in the **Geniza* at Cairo.¹⁴⁷³ The use of this text in inscriptions on actual synagogue doors is also well testified.¹⁴⁷⁴

Christian tradition has had a very different trajectory, with its clear emphasis, as with Psalm 66, on God's blessing on all peoples. The phrase 'that your way may be known upon earth' in verse 2 was understood to refer to Jesus, as the only way (John 14:6); so the psalm was read as a testimony to Christ. 'The earth has yielded its increase' in verse 6 was seen as a reference to the Virgin Mary and the birth of Christ (in turn bringing about the birth of the church).¹⁴⁷⁵ *Cassiodorus read the psalm as Christ's blessing on all nations 'sweet in its brevity, preeminent in its prophecy.'¹⁴⁷⁶ *Bede read the psalm as a song of blessings as a result of the 'song of resurrection' in the previous psalm, thus seeing it as about the calling of the Gentiles and the preaching of the Apostles.¹⁴⁷⁷

Its liturgical use also fits with this. In the **Benedictine Rule* verse 1 ('May God be gracious to us and bless us') is the call to prayer at **Lauds*, to be used

¹⁴⁷¹ Reeve 2007: 45.

¹⁴⁷² See Gillingham 2008b: 109–10.

¹⁴⁷³ See http://jbnqnewjewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/371/371_menorah.pdf. A typical *menorah* form of Psalm 67 can be seen on <https://beneisrael.wordpress.com/2013/08/21/psalm-67-the-menorah-psalm/>

¹⁴⁷⁴ See Feuer 2004: 817–18. See, for example, <http://www.imj.org.il/imagine/collections/item.asp?itemNum=366114>, which is of Psalm 67 inscribed as a *menorah* on a seventeenth century synagogue in Krakow, Poland. The image is also found in Skolnik 2007: 1035, figure 4.

¹⁴⁷⁵ See for example Augustine, *City of God* 10.32 CG 422–3 p. 63; also Jerome, *Homilies on the Psalms* 6 FC 48:47.

¹⁴⁷⁶ See Walsh 1991: 121.

¹⁴⁷⁷ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 366–7.

along with 63, with one Gloria, combining the themes of thirst for God, the place of the Gentiles, and the mercy and blessing of God. Is it often used on Good Friday: as early as *Cyril of Alexandria, in the fourth century, we read of how the first verse was used at the time of the veneration of the cross. Verses 1–3 are still recited in the Orthodox Church in the **typika* of the Easter liturgy (with 66:1–4 and 68:1–3).¹⁴⁷⁸

By the sixteenth century this psalm had been set to music many times. *Tallis arranged it as one of the psalms for Archbishop *Parker's *Whole Psalter* (1567). Known as 'God Grant with Grace' it was the eighth of the nine psalm tunes, set to the eighth church mode, and the one which is perhaps the most familiar on account of the tune being called *Tallis' Canon*.¹⁴⁷⁹ It was also used as a *Bach chorale (BWV 312). And to illustrate the eclectic nature of this psalm, its words were also arranged by William *Mathias as an anthem for chorus and organ ('Let all the people praise thee O God') at the wedding of Prince Charles to Diana in 1981.

These arrangements could not be more different from its use by Isaac *Watts, who particularised the Christian emphasis on its universalism so that the psalm referred to Britain alone. One of his twenty-eight more political psalms, the first verse reads:

Shine, mighty God, on Britain shine
With Beams of heavenly Grace...
Whilst British tongues exalt his praise
and British hearts rejoice.

Verse 4, based on the fourth verse of the psalm, reads:

Sing to the Lord, ye distant lands
Sing loud with solemn Voice;
While British Tongues exalt his Praise
And British Hearts rejoice.

The American edition of verse 4 was changed by *Mycall (once the outcome of the revolution was known) to:

Sing to the Lord, ye rescu'd States,
Sing loud with solemn Voice;
While thankful Tongues exalt his Praise
and grateful Hearts rejoice.

¹⁴⁷⁸ See Holladay 1993: 181.

¹⁴⁷⁹ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IroZ1UrfT5g>.

Contemporary psalmody often echoes, for its own culture, the concerns of the composers of metrical psalms. One such example is the *Hip Hop Prayer Book*. Psalm 67 is included in this liturgical collection as part of 'prayers for the family'; rather than taking up social and political concerns, it returns to the more familial and material reading of this psalm. Hip hop worship derives from South Bronx, the birthplace of Hip Hop produced by rappers and musicians: the use of Psalm 67 is another example of the ways in which certain psalms can express a contemporary voice of liberation. Timothy Horder, as Rector of the Historic Church of the Ascension, in Atlantic City NJ, claims that his radical use of the psalms is not different from the reinterpretation of Isaiah 61 by Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth in Luke 4. Horder's HipHopEMass is testimony to this. So Psalm 67 reads:

*Master be merciful manifest grace
Mold and make us as models of your face
Acquaint us with your way Jahway
You're a balm in every lawn across all the yard gates
We holler 'Halle' give palm praise
Wave our hands and feet
Let every nation be glad and sing
Your majesty is more than the average King
Great and gorgeous God, really ravishing...
Praise to your name across the hills and sea.¹⁴⁸⁰*

There are yet other ways of reading this psalm: *Church, for example, takes a very different liberation/political perspective when he argues that 'Psalm 67' was a prophecy fulfilled in 1967 during the Six Day War which lead to the reunification of Jerusalem (here pointing to verses 4 and 5).¹⁴⁸¹

It is ironic that a psalm which is so emphatic about the generosity of God's material blessings—on his people, on creation, and perhaps also on all people—could be so 'possessed' that much of its reception is read in the light of the claims of one community of faith so that its more universal message is made less visible.

Psalm 68: A Sanctuary Song about the Divine Warrior

Psalm 68 has undergone a similar history. It is a much longer and more archaic psalm, with the twin themes of 'the God of Sinai' (verses 8, 17) and, by implication, 'the God of Zion' (verse 15–16). God is so clearly portrayed here as Israel's

¹⁴⁸⁰ See Holder 2006:30.

¹⁴⁸¹ Church 1990: 182–4.

Warrior Deity; the psalm comprises a number of fragments of war poetry (many with a northern influence, and with correspondences with Canaanite texts, suggesting this is quite an old psalm). The emphasis on the processions to the sanctuary (verses 15–18, 24–27) suggest the psalm became a liturgy composed of many ancient parts. Its core appears to be verses 11–27 (beginning and ending with fragments about women in warfare, as in verses 11–14 and 24–26). Verses 7–10 and 28–31 suggest a further addition at the beginning and end, on the theme of God ‘leading’ his people in warfare. Verses 4–6 and 32–33 suggest another outer ring, on God as the ‘rider of the clouds’ (originally apparently using Canaanite mythological imagery). Verses 1–3, taking up the ‘ark saying’ from Num. 10:35 and verses 34–35, also focussed on God in his sanctuary, suggesting a final addition to one of the most complex psalms in the Psalter.

Of course none of this is proven. It is just one means of trying to make some sense of a psalm whose rhythm is totally irregular and whose meaning is often impossible to discern. Some themes connect it back to Psalm 67, such as the emphasis on blessing (verses 19, 26, 35), but it is somewhat of a ‘bridge psalm’, having affinities with Psalm 69 as well. These include the phrase ‘God of Israel’ (68:25; 69:6), and God’s provision for the poor and needy (68:10; 69:29, 32–33). But this psalm is undoubtedly *sui generis*.

It is not surprising that the Greek translation has many variations. Some are small, such as in verse 6 where the rebellious live in ‘tombs’ rather than in a ‘parched land’. Verse 12 is barely recognisable in translations of the Hebrew and Greek. It begins in the same way, with God announcing some great victory; the NRSV (following the Hebrew here) reads: ‘The kings of the armies, they flee! They flee! The women at home divide the spoil...’ but the translation of the Greek reads (somewhat opaquely): ‘The king of hosts of the beloved, and to divide the spoil for the beauty of the house.’¹⁴⁸² We shall see the implications of this in the psalm’s reception shortly. Similarly in the Hebrew of verse 27 Benjamin, the youngest, is seen as the leader of the procession, but the Greek translation is, ‘There is Benjamin, the youngest, in a trance’ (by translating the Hebrew verb *radah*, or ‘rule’, as if from a different root). Again this has resulted in some interesting reception history.

The psalm is found in at least two of the scrolls at *Qumran. 68:1–5, 14–18 occur in 11Q Ps^d; and 68: 12–13, 26–27, 30–31 are found in 1QpPs (1Q16) where there is some evidence that these verses were fragments of a commentary on the psalm, suggesting that its ethos of Holy War suited well the concerns of the *Qumran community.¹⁴⁸³

¹⁴⁸² See Pietersma 2000: 63. In this translation the role of the women has completely disappeared.

¹⁴⁸³ See Carmignac 1961–1962: 527–9.

**Targum* has some interesting additions on the relationship of the two mountains. For example, the paraphrase of verse 15 reads: 'Mount Moriah, the place where the fathers of old worshiped before the Lord, was chosen for the building of the sanctuary, and Mount Sinai for the giving of the Law; Mount Bashan, Mount Tabor and Carmel were rejected (and) made humpbacked like Mount Bashan'. Mount Sinai is thus where God's **Shekinah* dwells (verse 16); this is later transferred to Jerusalem, where God's *Shekinah* now resides (verse 29). In the light of Christian teaching on verse 18 ('You ascended the high mount...')—which will be seen later—*Targum* emphasises explicitly the role of Moses: 'You ascended to the firmament, O prophet Moses, you took captives, you taught the words of the Law, you sent them as gifts to the sons of men.'¹⁴⁸⁴

Other Jewish commentators make a good deal of the emergence of Israel as God's people from this psalm (thus bringing it close in its reception to Psalm 67). Playing on the word *sane*' 'to hate', from which 'Sinai' might derive, they argue that 'Sinai' was 'hated' by Israel's enemies and they sought to destroy Israel as a people.¹⁴⁸⁵ *Rashi and *Kimḥi make quite clear in their commentaries (again against Christian interpreters) that the psalm is about the final redemption of Israel; verses 32–35 are read as referring to the coming of the Messiah.¹⁴⁸⁶ **Midrash Tehillim* similarly emphasises the pre-eminence of Israel, and, like **Targum*, emphasises the place of 'Moriah', or Mount Zion (David's mountain, corresponding Moses' mountain which is Sinai). Interestingly, despite the Davidic heading to the psalm (which is not in Psalms 67 or 66, but it is in 65), there is actually very little about David here. Moses and the Torah are paramount, and in fact Mount Sinai is as important as Mount Zion; the focus is on Israel as a people, who will be restored and redeemed.¹⁴⁸⁷

The New Testament, the early church fathers, and medieval commentators read the psalm as about the superiority of Christ over Moses and the Torah—also rarely referring to David. The use of this psalm by the author of Ephesians is one key text in this process. Ephesians 4:7–10 borrows from Ps. 68:17–18, verses which are extremely difficult to understand. The NRSV reads 'the Lord came from Sinai into the holy place. You ascended the high mount, leading captives in your train and receiving gifts from your people.' So is 'the holy place' now Jerusalem? And who is 'You'? **Targum* asserts this is Moses; but in the text it could be God himself. Eph. 4:8, adapting the Greek, reads: 'Therefore it is

¹⁴⁸⁴ See Stec 2004: 128–34; also E.M. Cook 2002: 189–91. A further explanation was that the angels tried to keep the Torah captive in heaven, but God told the angels they had no need of it, so it was given to Moses instead.

¹⁴⁸⁵ See Feuer 2004: 823, citing Kimḥi who sees verse 1 as directed against Assyria, and Rashi, who sees it directed against the Amalekites.

¹⁴⁸⁶ See Feuer 2004: 823.

¹⁴⁸⁷ See Braude 1959 I: 544–5.

said, “When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.” The imagery of ‘ascending’ now refers to Christ; that which has been taken captive is the Torah itself; and instead of God *receiving* gifts (which is clear not only in the Hebrew, but also in the Greek) God now *gives* them: the gift, by implication, is that of the Spirit, given to supersede the Law at Pentecost. So 68:17–18 is used to show the authority of Christ over Moses, in his ascent into heaven and so also the superiority of Christ over Torah; and the release from captivity (to the Law) through the ‘gift’ [of the Spirit] from God.¹⁴⁸⁸

By the second century Apologists such as *Irenaeus read this part of the psalm as a prophecy about the Ascension of Christ. The earlier references to the ‘high mountain’ further confirmed it.¹⁴⁸⁹ By the sixth century *Cassiodorus had included Psalm 68 in his twelfth category of psalms, along with Psalm 8, as another psalm ‘of the exaltation of Christ.’¹⁴⁹⁰ *Ambrose, in the fourth century, read verses 17–18 as about the sending of the Spirit, whilst verse 21 (‘God will shatter the heads of his enemies’) referred to the punishment of the heretics (including the *Manichees, *Donatists, and *Montanists) of the church.¹⁴⁹¹ *Jerome was particularly explicit about the gift of the Spirit hidden in these verses: “Ascending the high mount... receiving the good gifts from God’s people”: this is the grace of the Holy Spirit shed from the cross, Jesus first having led captivity [here *Jerome thinks this is Satan] captive.¹⁴⁹² *Augustine’s commentary on this psalm is clear from his reading of verse 1 (‘Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered...’): ‘Already this hath come to pass, Christ hath risen up, who is over all things, God blessed for ever.’ As for verse 18, Augustine expounds it in the light of the Ephesians 4, and concludes: ‘And let it not move us that the Apostle making mention of that same testimony saith not, “Thou hast received gifts in men;” but, “He hath given gifts unto men.” For he with Apostolic authority hath spoken thus according to the faith that the Son is God with the Father. For in respect of this He hath given gifts to men, sending to them the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son...’¹⁴⁹³

Thus a Christian, prophetic reading of part of this psalm starts with the New Testament, and this becomes increasingly expanded by later commentators. However, given the history of Christendom, it is not surprising that the particular earthly and military imagery of the psalm was also used in a literal way.

¹⁴⁸⁸ See Moritz 1966: 56–86.

¹⁴⁸⁹ For example, Irenaeus, in *Against Heresies* (2.20.3; 3.23.1; and 5.21,1,3) and *Proof of Apostolic Preaching*, chs 53–85.

¹⁴⁹⁰ See *Explanation of the Psalms* 67.22 ACW 52:132–33, in ACCS:72.

¹⁴⁹¹ See *On the Holy Spirit* 1.5.66 NPNF 2 10.102, in ACCS:71.

¹⁴⁹² Jerome, *Homilies on the Psalms* 7 LCL 14b 506–7, in ACCS:68.

¹⁴⁹³ Augustine, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801068.htm>.

So, for example, this was Charlemagne's favourite psalm.¹⁴⁹⁴ The first verse ('Que Dieu se montre seulement') was also the Battle Song of the Huguenots.¹⁴⁹⁵ Apparently *Henry of Navarre sang it, using the words of Beza from the *Geneva Psalter*, at the Chateau d'Arques in 1589 when victory was still under threat.¹⁴⁹⁶ And Cromwell recited the same psalm in 1653, at time of the expulsion of the Rump: 'Let God arise', in the context of kings and armies having fled and spoil having been divided, had a certain resonance.¹⁴⁹⁷

The liturgical use of the psalm is somewhat piecemeal. In early Judaism it seems to have been associated with the Feast of Weeks—i.e. the festival which later focussed on 'the rejoicing of the Law' where it was used as a 'Song of the Day'. And verses 34–35 ('Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel') became part of a chain of psalm verses in **Pesuke de-Zimra*, before the recitation of Psalms 145–150. Ironically these ancient Sinai allusions also promoted the Ascension theme in Christian hymnody. One example is the eighth century hymn by Cosmas of Jerusalem, 'In days of old on Sinai the Lord Almighty came', translated by *Neale.¹⁴⁹⁸ Another is from an early *Mozarabic collect, again translated by *Neale: 'O Lord, Who ascendest up on high, leading captivity captive, deliver us by the triumph of Thy victory from the captivity of the devil, that whilst Thou givest Thy gifts to men, Thou mayest make men themselves altogether partakers of Thy gifts'.¹⁴⁹⁹ Others are more recent: two, using congregational singing, are Charles *Wesley's '*Our Lord Is Risen from the Dead*', from verse 18 of the psalm, and Timothy *Dwight's '*Shall Man, O God of Light and Life*', also based on this verse.¹⁵⁰⁰ Christopher *Wordsworth's version, '*See, the Conqueror Mounts in Triumph*', adapted by Hubert *Parry in 1897, has the same emphasis.¹⁵⁰¹

The length of the psalm and its complexities of translation have meant that, in art, representations have usually focussed on two or three pertinent verses. So, for example, the image in the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fol. 77v) is of verse 18, but, avoiding both Jewish and Christian controversies, it apparently presents an image of the assumption of Elijah.¹⁵⁰² Several Byzantine Psalters select just three verses. Verse 1 ('Let 'Let God rise up') is an image of the Harrowing of Hell: **Bristol* (fol. 104r) and **Khludov* (fol. 63r) have an image of Christ turning to

¹⁴⁹⁴ Prothero 1903: 71.

¹⁴⁹⁵ See Gillingham 2008b: 157.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Prothero 1903: 200.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Prothero 1903: 258.

¹⁴⁹⁸ See www.oremus.org/hymnal/i/i237.html.

¹⁴⁹⁹ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 395.

¹⁵⁰⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/hymns/o/our_lord_is_risen_from_the_dead.cfm.

¹⁵⁰¹ See <https://goo.gl/de9k6o>.

¹⁵⁰² See <https://goo.gl/wq81rg>.

pull back Adam and Eve from the fire. This is undoubtedly a novel, spiritualised, interpretation of this verse. A second selection is often of verses 15–16, about the supremacy of the ‘mountain of God’, where a more polemical intention is evident (**Bristol* fol. 105v; **Khludov* fol. 64r). Here, most surprisingly, the image is from Dan. 2:31–36 and 44, concerning Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the great mountain. Both Psalters connect this with the *iconoclastic controversies. At the top of the mountain is the Virgin Mary, holding the cross-nimbed Christ: the inference is that the Incarnation brings an end to idolatry, and the production of Christian images can continue.¹⁵⁰³ A third popular verse is 27, concerning Benjamin. The **Bristol Psalter* (fol. 106v) links this with the Apostle Paul’s ancestry, and Paul’s representation thus confirms the place of the Gentiles in this psalm. **Khludov* (fol. 65r) also includes an image of Benjamin for verse 27, but illustrates the following verses about the submission of the wild animals to God’s might (68:28–29) with the miracle of the Gerasene swine (Luke 8:26–39), and, in the light of 68:31, about the submission of the Ethiopians, it also illustrates Philip baptising the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–40).¹⁵⁰⁴

It was this psalm which Thomas *Tallis chose as part of his eight for Archbishop *Parker’s Psalter in c. 1567. This psalm is set in the second mode: ‘Let God arise in Majesty’ could not be more different in its metrical tone and mood from his setting of Psalm 67.¹⁵⁰⁵ Psalm 68 was also the subject one of *Handel’s *Chandos Hymns* (1717–18); an ambitious anthem, set in B flat major, it is based on both Pss. 68:1 and 76:6: given the complexities of each psalm, it is interesting that it features a unison of voices in its final chorus, ‘Alleluia’. Handel also incorporated verse 18 into *Messiah*: ‘Thou art gone up on high’ is, perhaps predictably, about the Ascension.¹⁵⁰⁶ *Elgar also used this psalm, with two double chants, along with Psalm 75, with somewhat more nationalistic connotations.¹⁵⁰⁷ *Howells experimented more aesthetically with Psalm 68, using the heights and depths in the text to link with cathedral space: his ‘Let God arise’ was one of four psalms (122, 44 and 42 were others) whose music fluctuated between transience and loss, hope and faith.

Some modern compositions are in the form of a protest song. One is by the Rastafarians, based on verse 31 (‘Let bronze be brought from Egypt’). Another is Duke Ellington’s version, sung by Alice Babbs, as a jazz and vocal improvisation

¹⁵⁰³ See Corrigan 1992: 37–40.

¹⁵⁰⁴ On the **Bristol Psalter*, see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_40731_f106v and following pages; on the **Khludov Psalter*, see <https://goo.gl/DPXPIz>.

¹⁵⁰⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fOz3iVH96M>.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 44.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Gillingham 2008b: 224–5.

of verses 4–5, called ‘Praise God and Dance’. Also as protest genre, Shavit Ravitsky’s ‘*Shirat Hayam*’ (‘Song of the Sea’, deliberately echoing the Song sung by Miriam in Exodus 15) is written in the style of Mediterranean Rock; based on verses 25–28, it has a post-Zionist appeal in its interpretation of these verses as ‘an impromptu procession to a visionary Temple.’¹⁵⁰⁸ Finally another contemporary version of this psalm by singer Judy *Rogers (called ‘Savior’), on her album ‘*Never Be Shaken*’ is composed in a Scottish/Celtic musical style which could not be more different from the roughness of the psalm in its ancient development.¹⁵⁰⁹

This ‘protest’ theme, particularly based on verse 5 (‘Father of orphans and protector of widows...’) and verse 31 (‘...Let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out its hands to God...’) has given this esoteric psalm enormous popularity in African-American worship. ‘Surely our God is able’, by Herbert Brewster, is one example. Like the Rastifarians, these communities often identified themselves with Ethiopia, which legitimised their identity and common humanity; frequently parentless and powerless, the image of God as father and mother has been an affirming and powerful image. Like the marginalised Huguenot communities referred to above, black communities have found a practical resonance in these two verses alone.¹⁵¹⁰

Reception history yet again shows us the diverse ways in which one text can communicate many different readings. Whether as a theological text, justifying the national or spiritual identity of both Jewish and Christian interpreters, or as a work of art providing a myriad of apparently unrelated themes, or as a musical arrangement justifying various Jewish and Christian causes, this ancient and complex war poem has resulted in a myriad of different receptions.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Stern 2013:193–97.

¹⁵⁰⁹ See <https://judyrogers.bandcamp.com/album/never-be-shaken>

¹⁵¹⁰ See Dombkowski Hopkins 2016:190–93.

Psalms 69–71: Psalms of the Righteous Sufferer

This group of three psalms do not share the same titles (Psalm 71 has none) but they do share the same theme of a suffering, sin and righteousness, where the individual's only refuge is in God.

Psalm 69: Righteous Suffering of the One and the Many

The central concern in Psalm 69 is that the individual feels 'cast out' (verses 4–12). It is difficult to see if this is on account of illness (verse 3) or religious zeal (verses 9–12, remembering that this verse 9 was cited when Christ cleansed the Temple [John 2:17]). It is hard to guess; the psalmist undoubtedly feels unjustly treated (verses 4–5), and it is not difficult to see why he has often been compared with the prophet Jeremiah. There are links with both Psalms 68 and 70 in the view that God is on the side of the poor (68:10; 69:29, 32–33; 70:5) and the 'jeering enemies' link 69:6 with 70:3.

Unlike Psalm 68, the psalm is in quite good textual tradition and its structure, although comprising of some apparently unconnected verses, is quite typical of a lament. Verses 1–3 (also 4–6) are the plea for deliverance; verses 7–21 form the description of distress; verses 22–28 are curses on the enemies (often omitted from public reading); and verses 29, 30–36 form a vow to give praise upon restoration. As well as verses 22–28, other contentious verses in the

psalm's reception have been verses 4–5 (with their assumptions about the connections between suffering and sin) and verse 28 (in its allusion to the 'book of the living').

The reception of the psalm begins with its use at *Qumran. Verses 1–19 are found together in 4QPs^a—more verses than any other psalm in Book Two. Although the first part of verse 3 is missing, the latter part (where both the Hebrew and Greek might be translated as 'My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God') reads '*My teeth are consumed in anguish for the God of Israel*, developing the imagery in a graphic way, and giving the psalm a more corporate sense (evident, actually, in the term 'God of Israel' in the Hebrew of verse 6).

Just as at *Qumran there is a bias towards reading the psalm in a corporate way, later Jewish tradition also read it in the context of the suffering of all Israel now exiled. The imagery of drowning and sinking in the mire (verses 1–2, 14–15) is seen as a reference to the experience of exile. The **Targum* of verse 14 reads: 'Rescue me from the *exile that may be compared to mire...*' and verse 15 continues '*Let not a mighty king exile me, and let not a strong ruler swallow me up, and let not *Gehenna be opened up for her mouth to cover me.*'¹⁵¹¹ **Midrash Tehillim* similarly reads the reference to the 'deep waters' in verse 2 as about the exile in Media and Persia, Greece and Edom—a continuing exile.¹⁵¹² All the personal details—for example, about being given 'poison for food' in verse 21—are read in the light of the people's earlier history; this reference is seen as allusion to the Jews being given salted food by the Ishmaelites.¹⁵¹³ The psalm is thus read in the same corporate way as Psalm 68 before it, and the triumphant hymn of praise at the end (verses 34–36) apparently confirms this communal interpretation. **Rashi* actually reads the reference to the 'God of Israel' in verse 6 as confirmation that the whole psalm is to be interpreted as the personification of Israel, collectively, through the patriarch Jacob. So the reference to 'brothers' and 'children' in verse 8 refers to the disputes between the children of Jacob (the Jews) and the children of Esau (the Gentiles).¹⁵¹⁴

Christian interpretation could not be more different. After Psalm 22 this is the most cited psalm in the New Testament, and always in an individual way. Verse 21 ('for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink' is cited in Matt. 27:34, 48; Mark 15:23, 36; and Luke 23:36. In John's Gospel the psalm is used more frequently, and always with the motif of the 'righteous sufferer'. Verse 9 is cited, as we have already noted, in John 2:17, when Jesus meets hostility after his cleansing of the Temple. Verse 4 ('those who hate me without cause') is cited in John

¹⁵¹¹ Stec 2004: 134–47.

¹⁵¹² Braude 1959 I: 550.

¹⁵¹³ Feuer 2004: 862.

¹⁵¹⁴ Gruber 2004: 317, n. 8.

15:25, as a prophecy about to be fulfilled in the death of Jesus. And verse 21 is used in John 19:28–29, again to signify that this psalm was prophesying about Jesus, the righteous sufferer.¹⁵¹⁵ An intriguing use is that of verse 9 ('the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me') in Rom. 15:3; here, the first personal singular pronoun is assumed to be Christ, suggesting this was beginning to be an established view by the time Paul wrote. A similar use of the same verse is found in Heb. 11:26. It is also interesting to see how many of the 'cursing' verses are alluded to, and even occasionally cited, but now in a Christian context: 69:22–23 in Rom. 11:9–10; 69:24 in Rev. 16:1; 69:25 in Acts 1:18–19, 20, in relation to the death of Judas; and 69:28 in Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 21:27 (on the book of life).

This individual reading is taken further in the church fathers. *Tertullian views verses 20–29 as prophecies about Christ's suffering and crucifixion, including (or perhaps especially) the cursing verses.¹⁵¹⁶ *Augustine reads verse 2 ('I have come into deep waters') as a prophecy of Christ's death.¹⁵¹⁷ The use of Psalm 69 in John's Gospel was developed earlier by *Origen as well as by *Augustine.¹⁵¹⁸ Augustine's *prosopological reading was developed by several commentators, arguing that this is a psalm about Christ the Body rather than Christ the Head, although Christ is speaking not only in his own name but also in the name of our (feeble) humanity, and he can intercede for those who suffer like him.¹⁵¹⁹ It is hard to find an early Christian commentator who does not at some point relate the psalm to the person of Jesus. *Cassiodorus placed 69 in his fourth category of psalms which speak of Christ's passion and resurrection; and *Bede apparently reads the psalm as the voice of Christ at the time of his passion, speaking this psalm in the form of a servant, trusting his Father, and even calling himself 'poor.'¹⁵²⁰

The different Jewish and Christian readings are also evident in the liturgical uses of this psalm. Psalm 69:4 is used during the Sabbath evening service, typifying the sufferings of the people. Similarly 69:14 is used in the Sabbath afternoon service, after 'And a Redeemer will come to Zion' followed by the **Kaddish*.¹⁵²¹ Psalm 69:13 ('My prayer is to you, O Lord, At an acceptable time, O God') is a popular liturgical verse, frequently found in **Siddurim*; for example,

¹⁵¹⁵ See Gillingham 2008b: 19.

¹⁵¹⁶ Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews* 12 ANF 3:169, in ACCS VIII:81.

¹⁵¹⁷ Augustine, *Sermons* 75.7 WSA 3 3:306–7 p. 76; also *In Answer to the Jews* 5.6 FC 27:397, in ACCS VIII:77.

¹⁵¹⁸ See Origen, *Commentary on Gospel of John* 10: 22 FC 80:304, in ACCS VIII:77; and Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 119.4 FC 92:47–48, in ACCS VIII:82.

¹⁵¹⁹ See Rondeau 1985: 260–4, on the way Didymus used this psalm alongside Phil. 2:7 and Heb. 4:15.

¹⁵²⁰ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 396.

¹⁵²¹ Elbogen 1993: 99–100.

it is included in the verses before the morning blessings. However, a more curious use is of the way verse 7 in the Hebrew (in English, verse 6: ‘Do not let those who hope in you be put to shame because of me, O Lord God of Hosts’) has been used in the *Kabbalah* tradition as part of a medical amulet as protection against evil. The first letter of each of its words is taken and made into an acronym which sounds like ‘Ibka Yazai Bamai’ and although its meaning or source is unclear, this is known in as ‘the chief of medical amulets’, thus illustrating the private and personal use of this psalm in the Kabbalistic prayer.¹⁵²²

By contrast, in Christian liturgy, Psalm 69 has always been used on Good Friday (along with 22, 40, 54 and 88). It has inspired more collects than any other psalm, each of them associating the psalm with the sufferings of Jesus.¹⁵²³ But its cursing verses (for example, ‘let their eyes be darkened so they cannot see...’) are often omitted for public use: the *Daily Office*, for example, excludes them.

Illuminations are certainly not of one type, although they mostly take a more personalised and Christian reading of the psalm. Because this psalm begins the fifth of the eight liturgical divisions found in some Psalters, there are several examples of illuminated initials of the first word.¹⁵²⁴ The French *Ingeborg Psalter* (c. 1205) has an image of David, with a winged demon at his side, kneeling in the lower half of the letter ‘S’ (opening this psalm, from ‘Salvum me fac Deus’ in the Latin) and looking up in prayer at Christ, flanked by angels, in the top part of the initial, offering his blessing. The shape of the ‘S’ and the addition of the demon and angels contrast clearly the earthly and heavenly realms.¹⁵²⁵ By contrast, an interesting motif in Flemish art is to illustrate the letter ‘S’ with an image of David (or sometimes Jonah) in the water. Several of depictions of verse 9 are found in the collections at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague. In a Flemish Breviary (c. 1470) David, still wearing his crown, is waist-deep in water, set against two boats in the background: he is crying out to God (*Den Haag KB 76 E8*, fol. 27r).¹⁵²⁶ *The History Bible of Utrecht* (c. 1443: *Den Haag KB 69 B10*, fol. 21r) with its illustrations of the New Testament and Psalms, depicts an alarmed David, still wearing his crown, under grey waters; that he is sinking fast is seen by the tip of hill with a fort behind him. God, bearded and haloed, looks out from the waters in heaven with a smile on face: he will protect David.¹⁵²⁷

¹⁵²² See E. Davis 1992: 174–5.

¹⁵²³ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 416–18.

¹⁵²⁴ See Psalm 27 (liturgical divisions).

¹⁵²⁵ <http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=136155> (Ms 66, fol. 70v).

¹⁵²⁶ http://manuscripts.kb.nl/zoom/BYVANCKB%3Amimi_76e8%3A027r_init.

¹⁵²⁷ http://manuscripts.kb.nl/zoom/BYVANCKB%3Amimi_69b10%3A021r_init. See Plate 25.

Byzantine Psalters mainly illustrated the psalm through the life of Jesus. Examples include **Hamilton* (fol. 134v, 135v), **Theodore* (fol. 86v and 87v) and **Khludov* (fol. 66r and 67r) which offer images of Jesus cleansing the Temple (to illustrate, more precisely, verse 9) and of the crucifixion (to illustrate verse 21). A further image included in **Theodore* (fol. 87r) and **Khludov* (fol. 66v), illustrating 69:19–20, is of Christ in Gethsemane.¹⁵²⁸ Another telling image (in **Theodore* fol. 88r and **Khludov* fol. 67r) is of verses 28, entitled ‘Destruction’; it is of two iconoclasts destroying an icon of Christ: these are painted as Jews, and one holds a lance used to pierce Jesus’ side, whilst the thrusts into his face a sponge, dipped in lime, as if to whitewash his image.¹⁵²⁹

One memorable image is by the Kabbalistic Israeli artist and social commentator, Mordecai Ardon. *Missa Dura: The Knight, Crystal Night, House No. 5* comprises three panels, dating from 1958–60, depicting the suffering of the Jews during the Second World War. ‘Black Sermon’ (*Missa Dura*) has a commentary by way of a poem, written by the artist, originally in German, in August 1960:

In the beginning were Knight, Newspaper and Decree.
 Then the jackboot sang:
 ‘The crooked Jews run back and forth ...’
 Psalm LXIX is rasped;
 Words choke in parchment
 While mouth cries and moustache shrills.
 Midnight, and the ninepins tumble into the grave
 they themselves have dug.
 Flame left its wick,
 heart’s ripped from yellow badge.
 And the mouse appeared,
 only she knew her way about.
 He blessed her and the spring of ’33,
 saw it was good. Then there was night,
 then morning ...

The reference to Psalm 69 is striking as it is portrayed in the triptych as a whole. The verses are written on a torn parchment in the middle panel, immediately catching the eye as it is the only script set amidst abstract and symbolic remains.¹⁵³⁰

¹⁵²⁸ For the *Theodore Psalter* (fols 86v; 87v; 87r) see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f086v; and http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f087v; and http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f087r.

¹⁵²⁹ See Corrigan 1992: 21. See also, for *Theodore* (fol. 88r), http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f088r.

¹⁵³⁰ This is preserved at the Tate Gallery. See <https://goo.gl/qFsjmS>; also Plate 26.

Psalm 69 has been adapted in Jewish music because of its liturgical use. One example is *Avodath Hakodesh* ('Sacred Service') by Ernest Bloch (1933). In five parts, in Hebrew and spoken English, with a cantor, chorus, orchestra, Bloch composed this for the Sabbath Morning Service; it includes a six-note leitmotif based upon the Gregorian 'Magnificat'. After a Symphonic Prelude, Part One uses texts from the Torah and Ps. 69:13, followed by a setting of *Kedushah* (Sanctus) in Part Two.¹⁵³¹

*Haydn also used 69:13 (and 14–17, which describe more the personal suffering of the psalmist) as his text for one of his 'Six English Hymns'. But probably the best known is *Handel's use of verse 20 ('insults have broken my heart'). This tenor recitative, also incorporating verses from Isaiah 53, is used in Part II, Scene 1, at a point of the anticipation of the death of Christ which is later developed in Scene II. 'Thy rebuke hath broken his heart' makes effective use of chromatic chords which depicts the 'brokenness' of the Passion.

So this is a psalm which illustrates so clearly the very different—but, nevertheless, shared—Jewish and Christian approaches to psalms of suffering and restoration. Jewish traditions read Psalm 69 in the light of the experience of the people; Christian traditions read it in the light of Christ and his disciples. Perhaps the final word is in Denise Dombkowski Hopkins' recent commentary, which applies a feminist biblical interpretation to the psalms: Psalm 69 is examined through the perspective of Job's (unnamed) wife, watching Job's suffering but being unable to prevent it, adding a further paradigmatic dimension which actually draws both traditions more closely together.¹⁵³²

Psalm 70: Righteous Suffering and the Plea for Deliverance

Psalm 70 is an independent psalm with a curious history. It has been appended to Ps. 40:1–12 where it assumes the name Yahweh, not Elohim, for God.¹⁵³³ Its force here on its own is as a pure plea. But it has also been put alongside Psalm 71, and is often considered one with it.¹⁵³⁴ It also has close links with laments in Jeremiah and with Psalm 35. The compilers seem to have included it here because of its close ties with both 69 and 71. All three psalmists plead with God to be freed from their enemies (69:14; 70:1; 71:1,10); each feels their life to be under threat

¹⁵³¹ Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 22.

¹⁵³² See Dombkowski Hopkins 2016:205–207.

¹⁵³³ See commentary on Psalm 40, pp. 242–43.

¹⁵³⁴ See commentary on Psalm 71, pp. 381–82.

(69:1, 10; 70:2; 71:9, 12); each assumes Yahweh will save, (69:1, 29, 35; 70:4; 71:2, 15); and each suppliant cries to God for speedy help (69:17; 70:1, 5; 71:12).

Other than the imprecations in verses 2–3, which have often been censored from public liturgy, the psalm has a straightforward structure; it is a fivefold plea for deliverance. The Greek expands the title, changing the Hebrew ‘for the memorial offering’ to read ‘As a reminder (*eis anamnēsin*) that the Lord might save me’. This is quite different from **Targum*, which takes the title ‘for the memorial offering’ literally, and refers to the rituals prescribed in Lev. 2:2, 16 and 6:8, whereby the offering of frankincense adds to the seriousness of the psalm (as also for Psalm 38, with the same title).¹⁵³⁵ This has encouraged a more personal reading of the psalm—particularly so when comparing it with communal readings of Psalms 68 and 69. Here the focus is on *David’s* ‘remembrance’, and the psalm is thus an exemplary prayer of David, and can be read in the context of his struggles with Saul and Absalom.¹⁵³⁶ **Midrash Tehillim* provides a further context in its allusions to its use by Daniel, seeing this, for example, as the prayer by the three friends in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:28).¹⁵³⁷

The psalm does not appear explicitly in the New Testament, nor is it prominent in early Christian interpretation. The main tendency is to read it either alongside Psalm 69 as a further reference to the Passion of Christ, or to see it reflecting the experience of the persecuted disciples.¹⁵³⁸ Its liturgical use, however, is more in evidence. This is partly due to **Cassian’s* suggestion that verse 1 (‘Be pleased, O God, to deliver me’) should open all monastic prayer, seeing the verse as a spiritual weapon against inner demons and diseased thoughts.¹⁵³⁹ ‘Hence the first verse is notable as being more often recited in the Western Church than any other part of the Old Testament.’¹⁵⁴⁰ Its attachment to the canonical Hours of Prayer influenced its inclusion as a versicle at both Morning and Evening prayer in cathedral worship.

This in turn has given rise to a number of musical arrangements. ‘*Deus in Adiutorium*’ was its familiar title, taken from the Latin of this first verse: ‘*Deus in adiutorium meum intende*’ (translated as ‘Be pleased to deliver me’). Jacob Handl, a Cistercian monk who later served as choirmaster to the Bishop of Olomouc, Moravia, wrote a polychoral piece on this verse in 1591.¹⁵⁴¹ **Schütz’s* ‘*Eile mich, Gott, zu erretten*’ written as a **Vespers Psalm* for the church in

¹⁵³⁵ See Stec 2004: 137.

¹⁵³⁶ Feuer 2004: 876.

¹⁵³⁷ Braude 1959 I: 553.

¹⁵³⁸ For example, Aquinas, cited in Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 419.

¹⁵³⁹ See Daley 2004: 190–191; also Box 1996: 118.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 420.

¹⁵⁴¹ See Gorali 1993: 216.

Dresden, was based on the second half of verse 1. Similarly the Italian Baroque composer, Antonio Vivaldi, composed a sacred motet (*Domine ad adiuvandum me festina*) as a *Vespers Psalm, with a two oboes, strings, and a double choir, ending with a haunting Gloria, sung by a solo soprano.¹⁵⁴² Benjamin *Britten's more recent arrangement of this verse (1944–45) is an ambitious, haunting and dramatic piece, ending with the Gloria, for a SATB chorus **a capella*.

Hence most musical compositions focus on just one verse, mainly due to the psalm's liturgical popularity in Christian tradition. By contrast, the **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 39v) offers a representation of the entire psalm, but here it reads the psalm as *answered* prayer. The psalmist, with a purse round his neck (from verse 5: 'I am poor and needy!'), appeals to the *Christ-Logos who has already sent an angel to assist him (verse 1). Below a group of armed men, his 'enemy' fall about in 'confusion' (verses 2–3). Another group of 'all those that seek me' (verse 4) are rejoicing over their downfall.¹⁵⁴³

This contrasts with Moshe *Berger's contemporary abstract account which, unusually, actually depicts the face of King David as he is surrounded by blazing flames; but above him, in blue, are the protecting wings of angels. The Hebrew letter *Yod*, for Yahweh, is close to the psalmist (who is also represented by a white bird, as the 'sweet singer of Israel') to remind him that salvation is always close at hand.¹⁵⁴⁴

It is extraordinary that this short psalm, one third of which is an imprecation, has such a rich reception history in both Jewish and Christian tradition, the former focussing more on David as a paradigm for faith, and the latter more on the suppliant as 'everyone'.

Psalm 71: Righteous Suffering as a Model for Faith

Psalm 71 is sometimes termed an 'orphan psalm' as it lacks a superscription—only it and Psalm 43 do not have one in Book Two (and 43 is wedded to 42). Like Psalm 70, to which it is close (joined to it in some manuscripts) it has used several parts of other psalms (for example, 22:10, 31:1–3, 34:22, 40:14–16 and 70:2–3). Furthermore, partly due to its several borrowings, there is no clear adherence to any form: the cry for help continues through verses 1–8, the

¹⁵⁴² For Vivaldi's interpretation, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSnlrz89SaY>.

¹⁵⁴³ See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=85&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

¹⁵⁴⁴ See <https://goo.gl/piDftK>.

description of distress lasts only for verses 9–11, with verses 12–13 being a short imprecatory prayer for vindication, whilst verses 14–24 form a very lengthy vow. The numerous references to God's faithfulness and righteousness nevertheless continue throughout the psalm. Similarly, the word '*tamid*' ('always') occurs in verses 3, 6 and 14. The psalmist also appears to be an old man (verses 9 and 18: 'Do not forsake me when my strength is spent').

There are many obvious links with Psalm 70; the compilers brought together these two psalms because of similar themes and linguistic correspondences. 'O Lord, make haste to help me!' is found in 70:1 (also verse 5) and in 71:12 (noting the difference here where it is 'my God'). The verb *hiššil* ('rescue') is in 70:1 (Heb. 70:2) and 71:2. The plea for the shaming of the enemies in 70:2 is very like 71:13 and 24; and *tamid* (continually, always) is not only used in 71:3, 6, 14 but also in 70:4 (Heb. 70:5).

The Greek adds 'of David' as a heading, as well as 'For the sons of Jonadab and the first who were sent into banishment' (perhaps on the basis of verses 18–19), thus linking the psalm with an exilic experience. The prayer in verses 20–21 is translated in the aorist tense, as if the psalmist's words have already been heard, thus creating a smoother transition for the praise in verses 22–24.

One of the most interesting insights into the reception of this psalm is found at *Qumran, where in 4QPs^a it actually comes after Psalm 38. It is possible that this is because both Psalms 38 and 70 have as their headings 'for the memorial offering' in the Hebrew, so Psalm 71 was intended to follow one of these psalms, and the *Qumran compilers chose 38 not 70. Psalm 71 certainly has an insecure textual tradition.¹⁵⁴⁵

Later Jewish commentators preferred to read Psalm 71 alongside 70. Understanding this to be about David in old age, the context is assumed to be David's agitation with Absalom at his bid to take the crown. So verse 20 is a prayer to be rescued from the depths of the earth: there is purportedly a play here on the fate of Absalom, who in 2 Sam. 18:17 was thrown into 'a great pit'.¹⁵⁴⁶ **Midrash Tehillim*, however, reads the psalm not individually but corporately, as of Israel in exile. Hence verse 9 ('Do not cast me off in the time of old age') is read as if Israel is speaking: 'I have become old in exile... And all the rest of the Psalm deals with the anguish of the exile.'¹⁵⁴⁷ The only (idiosyncratic) reading is of verse 20, where 'revive me again' is seen to be an individual reference to being quickened at the time of the resurrection of the dead.¹⁵⁴⁸

¹⁵⁴⁵ See also the comments on Psalm 38 on p. 232.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Feuer 2004: 889–90.

¹⁵⁴⁷ Braude 1959 I: 555.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Braude 1959 I: 556.

Interestingly the church fathers usually deal with this psalm as a practical lesson on patience in suffering. *Tertullian is somewhat unusual in his attempt to read the Trinity in this psalm, using it in the context of the doctrinal disputes of his day. So of verse 18, taken from the Greek, Tertullian states: ‘He [Christ] speaks of Himself likewise to the Father in the Psalm: “Forsake me not until I have declared the might of Your arm to all the generation that is to come”’. This Trinitarian reading is expressed as a prayer by Christ to God, with the Spirit speaking to the Father and the Son.¹⁵⁴⁹ But usually this psalm—partly because it is a prayer of one in old age—is not read as a prayer of Christ, or indeed even about Christ.

The first two verses of this psalm (like Ps. 31:1–2, from which it was probably borrowed) were important to *Luther. In his days as an Augustinian friar, when he wrote his *Dictata super Psalterium* (1513–15) ‘In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me’ (71:2) was understood fearfully, as a reference to God’s avenging anger. By 1518–21, when he was imprisoned and writing his *Operationes in Psalmos*, Luther saw the vital importance of the words ‘your righteousness’: righteousness was a gift of God, so the verse bears witness not to God’s anger, but to his mercy, making the believer righteous by their faith.¹⁵⁵⁰

Given the paucity of early commentators who read this psalm through the Passion of Christ, it is interesting to see how many liturgical collects nevertheless utilise this theme.¹⁵⁵¹ And given the reference to Luther above, it is equally interesting to see that in Jewish liturgy the references to ‘righteousness’ in this psalm are actually also read in the light of the *mercy* of God. For example, the Sabbath afternoon service, after the **Amidah*, uses passages such as 71:19 (‘Your power and your righteousness, O God, reach to the high heavens’) alongside other verses such as 119:142 and 37:6 which similarly focus on the ‘righteousness’ of God.

This is a psalm with a capacity to ‘narrate’ a story and the illustrations in both *Carolingian and Byzantine Psalters do precisely this. The **Utrecht Psalter* (fol. 40r) has a very similar account to the shorter psalm 70, except that here the emphasis is on the age of the psalmist. The **Eadwine Psalter* (fol. 121v) is similar to *Utrecht* in this respect. They depict a bearded psalmist, pointing to his mouth (verses 8, 23 and 24), standing before a tabernacle (verse 3), asking for help from the beardless, cross-*nimbed *Christ-Logos (verses 1 and 2). He holds a book, suggested by the words of verse 17: ‘O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds’. The psalmist holds

¹⁵⁴⁹ See *Against Praxeas* 11 ANF3:606; also <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0317.htm>.

¹⁵⁵⁰ See the discussion on Psalm 38 (p. 233) and 51 (p. 308) of Luther’s gradual reading of the psalms in this way, partly under the influence of Lefèvre.

¹⁵⁵¹ Neale and Littledale 1874–79 II: 439–40.

a lute (using the additional Greek and Latin headings this might imply the psalm is about the aged harpist, David.) Beside him is a harp and what appears to be a pipe organ (verses 22 and 23). Below him to the left are three demons brandishing tridents and serpents which represent the ‘troubles’ which the psalmist has seen and from which he has been delivered ‘from the depths of the earth’ (verse 20). To the right is an armed group of the ‘enemy’ who are shouting threats at the psalmist (verse 11).¹⁵⁵²

Byzantine Psalters create a similar narrative, but through marginal illustrations of particular verses. The **Hamilton Psalter* (fol. 138r) illustrates verse 10 (‘For my enemies speak concerning me...’) with two winged devils, conferring together. Verse 18 of the psalm (‘So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me’) is illustrated by an old man holding a staff, his eyes lifted to rays of light coming from an arc in the heaven.

In music, too, the narrative elements of the psalm have been explored. Walford Davies’ oratorio ‘The Temple’ (1902) is an account of this psalm in the context of being next to Psalm 72, with its heading ‘Of Solomon.’ The work is in two parts, and the libretto is also by the composer. The oratorio is about David’s desire to build a Temple and Solomon’s fulfilment of it; it does not only use Psalm 71, but one of its most reflective movements is a baritone solo of David’s prayer from Ps. 71:5 ‘For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord from my youth...’¹⁵⁵³

Psalm 71 is also used as part of the conclusion to di Lasso’s ‘*Timor et Tremor*’, full of ‘chromaticisms, syncopations, polyphony and homophony’. The first verse (‘Let me never be put to shame’) is scored in syncopation to highlight the confusion due to the sense of the absence as well as the presence of God at the beginning of the psalm.¹⁵⁵⁴

Finally, poetry illuminates this psalm by selecting just one verse and expressing its imagery in a new way. This is the case with George **Herbert*’s ‘The Flower’, influenced especially by verse 20 (‘You... will revive me again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again’). By the seventeenth-century this psalm was used for the visitation of the sick, so it was a familiar prayer. For Herbert, ‘the depths of the earth’ are like a gardener’s flowerbed. The first six stanzas reflect on this image by asking how we understand the love of God if we have not suffered the deaths and rebirths of the spirit. Lines 8–11 are particularly pertinent:

Who would have thought my shrivel’d heart
 Could have recover’d greenness? It was gone
 Quite under ground; as flowers depart
 to see their mother-root, when they have blown...

¹⁵⁵² See <http://psalter.library.uu.nl/page?p=86&res=1&x=0&y=0>.

¹⁵⁵³ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 234.

¹⁵⁵⁴ See Dowling Long and Sawyer 2015: 243.

The image continues in lines 15–17:

These are Thy wonders, Lord of power,
Killing and quickning, bringing down to Hell
and up to Heaven in an hour...

Just as Psalm 71:22–24 ends with hope, so *Herbert, having reminded us of our mortality ('we are but flow'rs that glide' [line 44]) also ends with an allusion to what lies beyond: 'Thou hast a garden for us where to bide' (line 46).¹⁵⁵⁵

So this psalm has a similar reception history to Psalm 70, being used personally both by Jews and Christians. Jewish reception focusses on David as a model for prayer, and Christian reception, on the psalm in the life of a Christian believer.

¹⁵⁵⁵ See Kinnamon 1981: 18–22. See also Bloch 1992: 304.

Psalm 72: ‘Of Solomon’: The Completion of the Prayers of David

Psalm 72 closes Book Two. We have already noted its relationship with 51, concerning Bathsheba and Solomon, which opened Book Two. It comes almost at the mid-point of the Psalter; it is one of the most contested of the psalms, with Jews and Christians interpreting the prayers for the king—for justice and cosmic fertility (verses 1–7, 12–14, 16) and for world-wide dominion (verses 8–11, 17, 17)—in entirely different ways. It is a paradoxical psalm: on the one hand, it has an exaggerated ideology, in its view of the homage of far-off nations around the Mediterranean coast, whilst on the other, it suggests a pragmatic realism in its repeated prayers about the king’s obligation to social justice and care for the poor (the latter theme which suggests clear correspondences with Psalm 51, and to some extent with Psalms 69–71 before it). Both the ideology of world dominion and the concern for the poor are at the heart of the contentious and different ‘messianic’ readings given to it by both Jews and Christians.

In its earliest setting this may well have been a coronation psalm, suggested by the reference to the ‘king’s son’ in verse 1. There may even be some intentional correspondences with the way other kings were crowned in the ancient Near East, for example in Assyria (in the reference to the king receiving ‘judgments’ (plural) in verse 1, and references to the sun in verse 5); its purpose here is to advocate the superiority of Israel’s king.¹⁵⁵⁶ However, because it would have been included at the end of this collection long after the monarchy had come to

¹⁵⁵⁶ Comparisons have been made with Ashurbanipal’s coronation hymn in c. 669 BCE.

an end, it would have been used with an eye as much to the future as to the past—hence its later 'messianic' interpretation.¹⁵⁵⁷

In Psalms 70–71, if we read them together, we had the prayer of the aged king David; here, through the title, we have the prayer for succession of kingship to the younger Solomon. Certainly there are links with Psalm 71: the emphasis on 'righteousness' in 71:2, 15, 16, 19, and 24 is taken up in 72:1; the reflections on later generations in 71:18 is taken up in 72:5; the word *tamid* used in 70:4 (Heb. 70:5) and 71:3, 6, 14 is also found in 72:15. The first stage of the reception of this psalm at the end of this long collection was not accidental.

The Greek translation offers an important insight into one early stage of reception. Yet again, the prayers in the jussive form in the Hebrew (for example '...May his name endure for ever'... 'May all nations be blessed in him' [verse 17]) are now found in the future tense (*diamenei to onoma autou kai eulogēthēsontai en autō pasai hai phulai tēs gēs*) which again suggest a more eschatological (but perhaps not yet specifically 'messianic') emphasis; this illustrates a different attitude to the monarchy after its centuries of failure, compared with the time when the psalm might first have been composed.¹⁵⁵⁸ A similar but even more emphatic hope is found in *Pss. Sol. 17, probably from about the same period as the *Septuagint translation: this develops many of the themes from this psalm, seeing a future king who will inaugurate a universal rule, taking tributes from foreign monarchs, and who will nevertheless be a model of wisdom and justice throughout the land.

By the time of *Targum this hope is more explicitly Messianic. The title is expanded to read 'By Solomon, it was said in prophecy...' Verse 1 reads: 'Give the *halakot* of your justice to the *anointed* king...' and verse 17 expands the verse even more than the Greek: 'May his name be *remembered* for ever – *even before the sun existed his name was being prepared* – and may all the nations be blessed through *his merit* (= him) *and say, 'Blessed be he!'*¹⁵⁵⁹ However, later commentators such as *Kimḥi preferred to place more emphasis on the historical reading: Solomon is the hope for all that David had not achieved and because his rule resembled that of the future Messiah, it is possible to speak of Solomon here as the Messiah, whose kingdom flourished in wisdom, justice and peace (citing 1 Kings 10:21–23 as selected evidence).¹⁵⁶⁰ A compromise is

¹⁵⁵⁷ In many ways the psalm's possible origins, and its contentions in its later reception history, are very similar to Psalm 45 (pp. 267–68).

¹⁵⁵⁸ See E. Bons 2006: 230–7.

¹⁵⁵⁹ Stec 2004: 139–40.

¹⁵⁶⁰ Feuer 2004: 893. It is interesting to compare the 'white-washing' of Solomon in this psalm with the same approach to David in Psalm 51.

found in **Midrash Tehillim*: this starts with Solomon and reads the first verses in the light of 1 Kgs. 3:5–12 to demonstrate that Solomon had indeed the wisdom of God in making his judgements. A change is seen in the discussion of the world dominion of the king: 'May he have dominion from sea to sea' (verse 8) receives the additional comment: 'All this glory of dominion will be the Messiah's'.¹⁵⁶¹ The reference in verse 17 '(may) his fame continue as long as the sun' prompts reflections about the seven things which existed before the world existed (i.e. when there was only the sun), of which the name of the Messiah is one. So of verse 20 we read 'All of these prayers David uttered concerning his son Solomon *and concerning the King Messiah*'.¹⁵⁶²

This interpretation of the 'world dominion' being greater than anything Solomon experienced also became the basis of attacks on Christian readings of the psalm. In a disputation with Christians in Barcelona in 1263, Rabbi *Nahmanides argued that as Jesus had never received early dominion as stated in this psalm, so he could not be the Messiah, and the doctrine of the Second Coming was a contrived way of circumventing the problem. *Kimḥi, following the historical reading noted above, similarly argued that the psalm could not refer to Christ as the Messiah, as kings and nations never bowed down to serve him, as in verses 8–11; so this is a prophecy about a Messiah who is yet to come.¹⁵⁶³

Christians were otherwise persuaded. The references to the 'gifts of gold' being brought to the king (verse 15) were seen as fulfilled in the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus (Matt. 2:11).¹⁵⁶⁴ Even the separate doxology in verses 18–19 was seen as re-used in the words of Zechariah in the '*Benedictus*' in Luke 1:68.

However, unlike 'messianic' psalms such 2, 8, 45 and 110, Psalm 72, perhaps surprisingly, is never directly cited in the New Testament, even though by the second century the psalm was almost unanimously read as about Christ and his kingdom. *Justin refers several times to this psalm in his *Dialogue with Trypho*: for example, in addressing his Jewish opponents, he writes: 'And when the psalm says, "Give to the king your judgement, O God" you claim that the words were spoken of Solomon because he was king, whereas the words clearly proclaim that they were spoken of the eternal King, that is, Christ.' So the argument used later by Jews against Christians is here used by Christians against Jews.¹⁵⁶⁵ Similarly *Eusebius of Caesarea argued that in 72:8–11 was a prophecy about

¹⁵⁶¹ Braude 1959 I: 562.

¹⁵⁶² Braude 1959 I: 563.

¹⁵⁶³ See Gillingham 2008b: 85.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3:13. ANF 3:332, in ACCS VIII:98.

¹⁵⁶⁵ Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 34 PC 6:197–8 in ACCS VIII:94.

justice and peace, whose vision of world dominion was even greater than *pax romana*, could only be fulfilled in Christ.¹⁵⁶⁶ Eusebius even observed that it was fortuitous that the Second Book of Psalms should end with the kingship of Christ and his call to the nations.¹⁵⁶⁷ Even *Theodore of Mopsuestia's historical reading only went as far as verse 9, where he understood the word 'peace' (for example in verse 7) to refer to Solomon (*Shelomo*), which might reflect 1 Kings 10:1–10; but verses 10 onwards Theodore saw had to point to Christ's kingdom, not that of Solomon.¹⁵⁶⁸ *Augustine argued similarly that Solomon the 'peacemaker' was a faint foreshadow of Christ, whom all nations will serve.¹⁵⁶⁹

*Cassiodorus had much to say about this psalm. Dividing it into seven parts, the first (verses 1–4) was the Son addressing the Father, as the judge of all nations. The second (verses 5–6) was the prophet speaking of those who will be saved, and of Christ's birth from a Virgin. The third (verse 7) concerns the blessings received from Holy Spirit and Christ, born of Mary. The fourth (verses 8–11) is about the Lord who is to be adored by all kings for his victory over evil. The fifth (verses 12–14) is about Christ being the mainstay of believers. The sixth (verses 15–17) is about praises to be given to Lord by the world. The seventh verses 18–19) is a devotional hymn.¹⁵⁷⁰ This is therefore another psalm about God in his two natures (here Cassiodorus confronts heretics such as the *Nestorians), showing us how Christ was born of the Virgin, sharing both divine and human nature. 'Invisible in divinity, He became visible in humanity.'¹⁵⁷¹

Like Psalm 45, its royal associations must have resulted in the psalm having had a significant liturgical Jewish history which has now been lost. The most frequent liturgical use today is actually its doxology ('Blessed be the Lord... Blessed be his name') which is found in the *Eighteen Benedictions. In Christian liturgy the psalm as a whole is usually associated with Christmas and Epiphany (on account of the references to kings bearing gifts) and on Maundy Thursday (on account of the monarch's concern for the poor and needy).

Two main themes, namely the Adoration of the Magi and the 'Virgin's Fleece', are frequently found in illuminated Psalters. For example, the **Stuttgart Psalter* (fols. 83v and 84r) has two illustrations: for verse 6 ('He shall come down like rain upon the fleece/mown grass') we see a typological illustration of

¹⁵⁶⁶ Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel* 7,1 POG 2:81. Pp. 94–95; 7.2 POG 2:89–90.

¹⁵⁶⁷ PG XXIII, 821D.

¹⁵⁶⁸ See Holladay 1993: 174.

¹⁵⁶⁹ Augustine, *Epistulae* 173 FC 30:80 in ACCS VIII:97.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 71.1. ACW 52:183–184.

¹⁵⁷¹ Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 71.19. ACW 52:195–96. This is the fourth psalm used thus far by Cassiodorus as a prophecy about the two natures of Christ. The others are 2, 8 and 20.

the Annunciation; and for verse 10, we see the adoration of the Magi.¹⁵⁷² Byzantine Psalters developed these themes as well. **Hamilton* (fol. 140r) portrays the Adoration of the Magi as one of its four images; so too does **Bristol* (fol. 115v) and **Barberini* (fol. 120r). **Pantokrator* (fol. 93v) makes explicit use of the Jewish and Christian contentions: by the title to the psalm Solomon stands, gesturing to the figure of Christ. **Pantokrator* (fol. 94r) also depicts more explicitly the Incarnation: by verse 6 ('May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass...') there is an image of David with Gideon and his fleece (Judg. 6:36–40) and above his head, the inscription 'in the womb of the virgin', as the dew-soaked fleece which would not wet the ground was seen as an image of the virgin birth.¹⁵⁷³ This same 'double image' of Gideon and the Virgin is also in The **Theodore Psalter* (fol. 91v) with the inscription 'Theotokos' ('God-Bearer'). **Theodore* (fol. 92r) is based on verses 10–11 ('May kings fall down before him...') and is again of the Adoration of the Magi. The later, very different English **St Albans Psalter* uses similar typology, again partly influenced by the use of this psalm at the Mass of the Epiphany. The Virgin sits with Christ on her lap, holding a book (suggesting that this psalm is part of a prophecy). Christ is blessing the three kings who come bearing gifts.¹⁵⁷⁴

One very different imperial image of this psalm is found in the tenth century *Paris Psalter* (fol. 7v) David stands between two female figures, Sophia, on his left, and, on his right, Prophecy, who points to the words in David's open book which is taken from Ps. 72:1. The Greek word *basileus*, twice in this verse, is a clear reference also to the Byzantine Emperor (Constantine VII at the time). David is even wearing the attire of a Byzantine king. So the psalm not only confirms the right ordering, through wisdom, of the king's rule, but the confirmation, through prophecy, that the Emperor has the same divine imprimatur which David had.¹⁵⁷⁵

One contemporary artistic representation of this psalm is by Michael **Jessing*, who has two very different versions of this psalm. The first (1999), in blacks, greys and whites, depicts the sun and moon, and the corn on the mountain; the poor man is in the foreground and the king is set back, on a hill (Figure 13). The second (2010) is in colour and the harshness of judgement, temporal and eternal, is much more central; the poor man is set back and angelic beings dominate the scene. The 1999 version is preferred by the artist.¹⁵⁷⁶

¹⁵⁷² See <https://goo.gl/dTRcdy>.

¹⁵⁷³ See Corrigan 1992: 71, 76–7 and fig. 83. On Gideon and the Virgin in **Theodore* (fol. 91v) see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f091v.

¹⁵⁷⁴ <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page210.shtml>.

¹⁵⁷⁵ The manuscript is preserved in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* (MS gr 139). See Plate 27.

¹⁵⁷⁶ Email correspondence, 11 May 2016. See <http://www.mixastudio.com/psalm-illustrations.php>.



FIGURE 13 Michael Jessing, 'Give the king your justice, O God...May he judge your people with righteousness' (Ps. 72:1-4)

Hymnody, starting with the metrical psalmody of Isaac *Watts, offers a curious combination of spiritual and (like Psalm 72 in the *Paris Psalter*) imperial power. Watts' title for this psalm is 'Christ's Kingdom among the Gentiles'. Its first verse is well-known:

Jesus shall reign where e'er the Sun
Does its successive Journeys run
His Kingdom stretch from Shore to Shore
Till Moons shall wax and wane no more.

Perhaps less well known is the more specifically political rendition of the verses that follow, where Jesus' Kingdom is no longer compared to Byzantium but to Britain ('the Islands'):

Behold the Islands with their Kings,
And Europe her best Tribute brings:
From North to South the Princes meet
To pay their Homage at his Feet.

There Persia glorious to behold,
There India shines in Eastern Gold,
And barbarous Nations at his Word
Submit and bow and own their Lord.¹⁵⁷⁷

Hymnic compositions of this psalm are interesting because of the way their lyrics paraphrase very different (usually Christian) views of the main themes of this psalm. For example, James *Montgomery's 'Hail to the Lord's Anointed' is a combination of Psalm 72 and 110; taken from *Songs of Sion, being Imitations of the Psalms* (1822), it is a more theological (and liturgical) version of the psalm. By contrast, Henry Scott Holland (Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford until 1918) wrote 'Judge Eternal, throned in splendour', which was first published in 1902 in *The Commonwealth*; it uses Ps. 72:4 and 33:22, verses which are typical of Holland's concerns for social reform in the Edwardian age, and the text is more social and political.¹⁵⁷⁸ The internationally known hymn-writer, Brian Wren, composed 'With Humble Justice Clad and Crowned' (*Psalm Praise*, 1973) from this psalm: it is another version which interprets Psalm 72 from the point of view of social justice. The last verse reads:

Say not that justice never dawns,
that peace on earth will never come.
The promise shines from Bethlehem,
for all, forever, like the sun.
Along the highway of the weak,
the poorest and the most distressed,
Christ comes again, and yet again,
till earth, and all on earth, are blessed.

¹⁵⁷⁷ See <http://cyberhymnal.org/htm/j/s/jsreign.htm>.

¹⁵⁷⁸ See J.R. Watson 2002: 383–4. Some of the verses have now a different version. For example verse 3 'Feed the faint and hungry heathen...' is now 'Feed the faithless and the hungry', and 'Cleanse the body of this Empire' is now 'Cleanse the body of this nation'.

Howard *Goodall's more recent composition, 'He shall keep the simple folk', from his *'Pelican in the Wilderness'*, has yet another emphasis. Goodall's version has a strong resonance with the Magnificat, with its emphasis on 'putting down the mighty from their seat' and 'exalting the humble and meek'. 'It is the kind of sentiment that occasionally ripples up through... the forgiving and redemptive spirituals of enslaved African-Americans'. Goodall thus emphasises the concern in the psalm for social justice (verses 4, 12–14), but not only for men, but for women as well: hence the appropriateness of women's voices carrying this theme in this version. 'This lilts along in a one-in-a-bar triple time, which is a way of saying social reform... comes with gentle persuasion.' As for using a Latin medium, 'this allows for smoothing off rhythmic edges, and the vowel-based sounds reach beyond than the mere *literalness* of the words.'¹⁵⁷⁹

It is interesting to see a trajectory of interpretation from a mainly theological reading of this psalm to include a more social and political interpretation over the last three hundred years. It is appropriate, therefore, to conclude with two recent articles which make some interesting points on political and ethical readings of the psalm. David Jobling argues that the psalm's ideology is in fact focussed on social and economic realities in its own time: the king's need to provide for the poor (verses 12–14) and to create trade with other nations (verse 8–11) are about the pragmatic realities of the survival of a nation which underlie this psalm.¹⁵⁸⁰ Andrew Mein, asking about who might have composed this psalm, suggests that it reflects the ideology of Judah's élite, and this psalm is about the ethics of kingship which both elevates the monarchy and, implicitly, is also critical of it. Mein sees such a critique in William *Laud's sermon on 72:1 in March 1631, at the time of the king's accession to the throne and the birth of Charles II. But then Mein also notes how these themes could be developed by the Parliamentarian Joseph Caryl, in his sermon on Psalm 72 in March 1643, when civil war was in full flow: 'This I say to the King and Queen, humble yourselves, sit down; for the glory and beauty of your Principalities are very much darkened and obscured...'¹⁵⁸¹

These two examples concern the use of this psalm in a temporal and literal way. But they also offer some important corrections for those whose reading of the psalm is entirely based upon a Messianic interpretation, whether Jewish or Christian. It is hard to read so-called 'royal psalms' such as 2, 45, 72, 89 and 110

¹⁵⁷⁹The commentary is from an email correspondence 23-05-16.

¹⁵⁸⁰Jobling 1992: 95–127.

¹⁵⁸¹This is taken from an unpublished paper by Andrew Mein, with permission of the author: 'Psalm 72 and the Ethics of Royal Power' was read at the ProPsalms conference, Pretoria, in August 2008.

without any theological bias, but it is nevertheless important to read them ethically. This is particularly the case with Psalm 72, which, unlike most of the other royal psalms, also emphasises kingship as service.

And so this Davidic Psalter ends as it began, with an emphasis on justice and righteousness and the importance of repentant faith in effecting restoration. Psalm 51 offers more personal reflections; Psalm 72 is for public use. Nevertheless these two themes are maintained, sometimes more aggressively than others, throughout the different collections within this Second Davidic Psalter as a whole. Psalm 72 maintains at the end of Book Two a positive faith in the Davidic covenant and in God's dealings with the Jewish people.

At the start of Book Three, Psalm 73 offers a very different picture, with a more negative view of the injustice and inequality in the world, and both Jewish and Christian readings concur that this is a dominant theme in that psalm. Psalm 73 actually sets the tone for the more pessimistic tenor of Book Three as a whole, whose last psalm (89) ends with a cry of despair because God seems to have forgotten the covenant he once made with David. Any further discussion, however, must be left to the third, concluding volume of this commentary series.

Appendix

Psalms Numbering Table

NRSV	MT	LXX	VUL
Psalm 1.1	Psalm 1.1	Psalm 1.1	Psalm 1.1
Psalm 2.1	Psalm 2.1	Psalm 2.1	Psalm 2.1
Psalm 3.1	Psalm 3.1–2	Psalm 3.1–2	Psalm 3.1–2
Psalm 4.1	Psalm 4.1–2	Psalm 4.1–2	Psalm 4.1–2

(Continued)

Psalms Through the Centuries: A Reception History Commentary on Psalms 1–72, Volume Two, First Edition. Susan Gillingham.

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NRSV	MT	LXX	VUL
Psalms 5.1	Psalms 5.1-2	Psalms 5.1-2	Psalms 5.1-2
Psalms 6.1	Psalms 6.1-2	Psalms 6.1-2	Psalms 6.1-2
Psalms 7.1	Psalms 7.1-2	Psalms 7.1-2	Psalms 7.1-2
Psalms 8.1	Psalms 8.1-2	Psalms 8.1-2	Psalms 8.1-2
Psalms 9.1	Psalms 9.1-2	Psalms 9.1-2	Psalms 9.1-2
Psalms 10.1	Psalms 10.1	Psalms 9.22	Psalms 9.22
Psalms 11.1	Psalms 11.1	Psalms 10.1	Psalms 10.1-2
Psalms 12.1	Psalms 12.1-2	Psalms 11.1-2	Psalms 11.1-2
Psalms 13.1	Psalms 13.1-2	Psalms 12.1-2	Psalms 12.1
Psalms 14.1	Psalms 14.1	Psalms 13.1	Psalms 13.1
Psalms 15.1	Psalms 15.1	Psalms 14.1	Psalms 14.1
Psalms 16.1	Psalms 16.1	Psalms 15.1	Psalms 15.1
Psalms 17.1	Psalms 17.1	Psalms 16.1	Psalms 16.1
Psalms 18.1	Psalms 18.1-2	Psalms 17.1-2	Psalms 17.1-2
Psalms 19.1	Psalms 19.1-2	Psalms 18.1-2	Psalms 18.1-2
Psalms 20.1	Psalms 20.1-2	Psalms 19.1-2	Psalms 19.1-2
Psalms 21.1	Psalms 21.1-2	Psalms 20.1-2	Psalms 20.1-2
Psalms 22.1	Psalms 22.1-2	Psalms 21.1-2	Psalms 21.1-2
Psalms 23.1	Psalms 23.1	Psalms 22.1	Psalms 22.1
Psalms 24.1	Psalms 24.1	Psalms 23.1	Psalms 23.1
Psalms 25.1	Psalms 25.1	Psalms 24.1	Psalms 24.1
Psalms 26.1	Psalms 26.1	Psalms 25.1	Psalms 25.1
Psalms 27.1	Psalms 27.1	Psalms 26.1	Psalms 26.1
Psalms 28.1	Psalms 28.1	Psalms 27.1	Psalms 27.1
Psalms 29.1	Psalms 29.1	Psalms 28.1	Psalms 28.1-2
Psalms 30.1	Psalms 30.1-2	Psalms 29.1-2	Psalms 29.1-2
Psalms 31.1	Psalms 31.1-2	Psalms 30.1-2	Psalms 30.1-2
Psalms 32.1	Psalms 32.1	Psalms 31.1	Psalms 31.1
Psalms 33.1	Psalms 33.1	Psalms 32.1	Psalms 32.1
Psalms 34.1	Psalms 34.1-2	Psalms 33.1-2	Psalms 33.1-2
Psalms 35.1	Psalms 35.1	Psalms 34.1	Psalms 34.1
Psalms 36.1	Psalms 36.1-2	Psalms 35.1-2	Psalms 35.1-2
Psalms 37.1	Psalms 37.1	Psalms 36.1	Psalms 36.1
Psalms 38.1	Psalms 38.1-2	Psalms 37.1-2	Psalms 37.1-2
Psalms 39.1	Psalms 39.1-2	Psalms 38.1-2	Psalms 38.1-2
Psalms 40.1	Psalms 40.1-2	Psalms 39.1-2	Psalms 39.1-2
Psalms 41.1	Psalms 41.1-2	Psalms 40.1-2	Psalms 40.1-2
Psalms 42.1	Psalms 42.1-2	Psalms 41.1-2	Psalms 41.1-2
Psalms 43.1	Psalms 43.1	Psalms 42.1	Psalms 42.1
Psalms 44.1	Psalms 44.1-2	Psalms 43.1-2	Psalms 43.1-2
Psalms 45.1	Psalms 45.1-2	Psalms 44.1-2	Psalms 44.1-2
Psalms 46.1	Psalms 46.1-2	Psalms 45.1-2	Psalms 45.1-2

NRSV	MT	LXX	VUL
Psalms 47.1	Psalms 47.1-2	Psalms 46.1-2	Psalms 46.1-2
Psalms 48.1	Psalms 48.1-2	Psalms 47.1-2	Psalms 47.1-2
Psalms 49.1	Psalms 49.1-2	Psalms 48.1-2	Psalms 48.1-2
Psalms 50.1	Psalms 50.1	Psalms 49.1	Psalms 49.1
Psalms 51.1	Psalms 51.1-3	Psalms 50.1-3	Psalms 50.1-3
Psalms 52.1	Psalms 52.1-3	Psalms 51.1-3	Psalms 51.1-4
Psalms 53.1	Psalms 53.1-2	Psalms 52.1-2	Psalms 52.1-2
Psalms 54.1	Psalms 54.1-3	Psalms 53.1-3	Psalms 53.1-3
Psalms 55.1	Psalms 55.1-2	Psalms 54.1-2	Psalms 54.1-2
Psalms 56.1	Psalms 56.1-2	Psalms 55.1-2	Psalms 55.1-2
Psalms 57.1	Psalms 57.1-2	Psalms 56.1-2	Psalms 56.1-2
Psalms 58.1	Psalms 58.1-2	Psalms 57.1-2	Psalms 57.1-2
Psalms 59.1	Psalms 59.1-2	Psalms 58.1-2	Psalms 58.1-2
Psalms 60.1	Psalms 60.1-3	Psalms 59.1-3	Psalms 59.1-3
Psalms 61.1	Psalms 61.1-2	Psalms 60.1-2	Psalms 60.1-2
Psalms 62.1	Psalms 62.1-2	Psalms 61.1-2	Psalms 61.1-2
Psalms 63.1	Psalms 63.1-2	Psalms 62.1-2	Psalms 62.1-3
Psalms 64.1	Psalms 64.1-2	Psalms 63.1-2	Psalms 63.1-2
Psalms 65.1	Psalms 65.1-2	Psalms 64.1-2	Psalms 64.1-2
Psalms 66.1	Psalms 66.1	Psalms 65.1	Psalms 65.1
Psalms 67.1	Psalms 67.1-2	Psalms 66.1-2	Psalms 66.1-2
Psalms 68.1	Psalms 68.1-2	Psalms 67.1-2	Psalms 67.1-2
Psalms 69.1	Psalms 69.1-2	Psalms 68.1-2	Psalms 68.1-2
Psalms 70.1	Psalms 70.1-2	Psalms 69.1-2	Psalms 69.1-2
Psalms 71.1	Psalms 71.1	Psalms 70.1	Psalms 70.1
Psalms 72.1	Psalms 72.1	Psalms 71.1	Psalms 71.1-2
Psalms 73.1	Psalms 73.1	Psalms 72.1	Psalms 72.1
Psalms 74.1	Psalms 74.1	Psalms 73.1	Psalms 73.1
Psalms 75.1	Psalms 75.1-2	Psalms 74.1-3	Psalms 74.1-2
Psalms 76.1	Psalms 76.1-2	Psalms 75.1-2	Psalms 75.1-2
Psalms 77.1	Psalms 77.1-2	Psalms 76.1-2	Psalms 76.1-2
Psalms 78.1	Psalms 78.1	Psalms 77.1	Psalms 77.1
Psalms 79.1	Psalms 79.1	Psalms 78.1	Psalms 78.1
Psalms 80.1	Psalms 80.1-2	Psalms 79.1-2	Psalms 79.1-2
Psalms 81.1	Psalms 81.1-2	Psalms 80.1-2	Psalms 80.1-2
Psalms 82.1	Psalms 82.1	Psalms 81.1	Psalms 81.1
Psalms 83.1	Psalms 83.1-2	Psalms 82.1-2	Psalms 82.1-2
Psalms 84.1	Psalms 84.1-2	Psalms 83.1-2	Psalms 83.1-2
Psalms 85.1	Psalms 85.1-2	Psalms 84.1-2	Psalms 84.1-2
Psalms 86.1	Psalms 86.1	Psalms 85.1	Psalms 85.1
Psalms 87.1	Psalms 87.1	Psalms 86.1	Psalms 86.1
Psalms 88.1	Psalms 88.1-2	Psalms 87.1-2	Psalms 87.1-2

(Continued)

NRSV	MT	LXX	VUL
Psalms 89.1	Psalms 89.1–2	Psalms 88.1–2	Psalms 88.1–2
Psalms 90.1	Psalms 90.1	Psalms 89.1	Psalms 89.1
Psalms 91.1	Psalms 91.1	Psalms 90.1	Psalms 90.1
Psalms 92.1	Psalms 92.1	Psalms 91.1–2	Psalms 91.1–2
Psalms 93.1	Psalms 93.1	Psalms 92.1	Psalms 92.1
Psalms 94.1	Psalms 94.1	Psalms 93.1	Psalms 93.1
Psalms 95.1	Psalms 95.1	Psalms 94.1	Psalms 94.1
Psalms 96.1	Psalms 96.1	Psalms 95.1	Psalms 95.1
Psalms 97.1	Psalms 97.1	Psalms 96.1	Psalms 96.1
Psalms 98.1	Psalms 98.1	Psalms 97.1	Psalms 97.1
Psalms 99.1	Psalms 91.1	Psalms 98.1	Psalms 98.1
Psalms 100.1	Psalms 100.1	Psalms 99.1	Psalms 99.1–2
Psalms 101.1	Psalms 101.1	Psalms 100.1–2	Psalms 100.1
Psalms 102.1	Psalms 102.1–2	Psalms 101.1–2	Psalms 101.1–2
Psalms 103.1	Psalms 103.1	Psalms 102.1	Psalms 102.1
Psalms 104.1	Psalms 104.1	Psalms 103.1	Psalms 103.1
Psalms 105.1	Psalms 105.1	Psalms 104.1	Psalms 104.1
Psalms 106.1	Psalms 106.1	Psalms 105.1	Psalms 105.1
Psalms 107.1	Psalms 107.1	Psalms 106.1	Psalms 106.1
Psalms 108.1	Psalms 108.1–2	Psalms 107.1–2	Psalms 107.1–2
Psalms 109.1	Psalms 109.1	Psalms 108.1	Psalms 108.1–2
Psalms 110.1	Psalms 110.1	Psalms 109.1	Psalms 109.1
Psalms 111.1	Psalms 111.1	Psalms 110.1	Psalms 110.1
Psalms 112.1	Psalms 112.1	Psalms 111.1	Psalms 111.1
Psalms 113.1	Psalms 113.1	Psalms 112.1	Psalms 112.1
Psalms 114.1	Psalms 114.1	Psalms 113.1	Psalms 113.1
Psalms 115.1	Psalms 115.1	Psalms 113.9	Psalms 113.9–10
Psalms 116.1	Psalms 116.1	Psalms 114.1	Psalms 114.1
Psalms 116.10	Psalms 116.10	Psalms 115.1	Psalms 115.1
Psalms 117.1	Psalms 117.1	Psalms 116.1	Psalms 116.1
Psalms 118.1	Psalms 118.1	Psalms 117.1	Psalms 117.1
Psalms 119.1	Psalms 119.1	Psalms 118.1	Psalms 118.1
Psalms 120.1	Psalms 120.1	Psalms 119.1	Psalms 119.1
Psalms 121.1	Psalms 121.1	Psalms 120.1	Psalms 120.1
Psalms 122.1	Psalms 122.1	Psalms 121.1	Psalms 121.1
Psalms 123.1	Psalms 123.1	Psalms 122.1	Psalms 122.1
Psalms 124.1	Psalms 124.1	Psalms 123.1	Psalms 123.1
Psalms 125.1	Psalms 125.1	Psalms 124.1	Psalms 124.1
Psalms 126.1	Psalms 126.1	Psalms 125.1	Psalms 125.1
Psalms 127.1	Psalms 127.1	Psalms 126.1	Psalms 126.1
Psalms 128.1	Psalms 128.1	Psalms 127.1	Psalms 127.1
Psalms 129.1	Psalms 129.1	Psalms 128.1	Psalms 128.1

NRSV	MT	LXX	VUL
Psalms 130.1	Psalms 130.1	Psalms 129.1	Psalms 129.1
Psalms 131.1	Psalms 131.1	Psalms 130.1	Psalms 130.1
Psalms 132.1	Psalms 132.1	Psalms 131.1	Psalms 131.1
Psalms 133.1	Psalms 133.1	Psalms 132.1	Psalms 132.1
Psalms 134.1	Psalms 134.1	Psalms 133.1–2	Psalms 133.1–2
Psalms 135.1	Psalms 135.1	Psalms 134.1	Psalms 134.1
Psalms 136.1	Psalms 136.1	Psalms 135.1	Psalms 135.1
Psalms 137.1	Psalms 137.1	Psalms 136.1	Psalms 136.1
Psalms 138.1	Psalms 138.1	Psalms 137.1	Psalms 137.1
Psalms 139.1	Psalms 139.1	Psalms 138.1	Psalms 138.1–2
Psalms 140.1	Psalms 140.1	Psalms 139.1–2	Psalms 139.1–2
Psalms 141.1	Psalms 141.1	Psalms 140.1	Psalms 140.1
Psalms 142.1	Psalms 142.1–2	Psalms 141.1–2	Psalms 141.1–2
Psalms 143.1	Psalms 143.1	Psalms 142.1	Psalms 142.1
Psalms 144.1	Psalms 144.1	Psalms 143.1	Psalms 143.1
Psalms 145.1	Psalms 145.1	Psalms 144.1	Psalms 144.1
Psalms 146.1	Psalms 146.1	Psalms 145.1	Psalms 145.1
Psalms 147.1	Psalms 147.1	Psalms 146.1	Psalms 146.1
Psalms 147.12	Psalms 147.12	Psalms 147.1	Psalms 147.1
Psalms 148.1	Psalms 148.1	Psalms 148.1	Psalms 148.1
Psalms 149.1	Psalms 149.1	Psalms 149.1	Psalms 149.1
Psalms 150.1	Psalms 150.1	Psalms 150.1	Psalms 150.1
[Psalms 151.1]	N/A	Psalms 151.1	Psalms 151.1

Glossary

A capella: singing without instrumental accompaniment.

Ainsworth, Henry (c.1571–1622): English non-conformist minister and Hebraist; from exile in Amsterdam produced metrical Psalter for English-speaking congregations.

Alcuin of York (c.735–804): Anglo-Saxon monk and scholar at court of Charlemagne. *De Psalmorum Usa* was commentary on *penitential psalms and psalms of ascents (120–134).

Alexandrian commentators: interpreters of scripture who used the allegorical method of Philo (25BCE–50CE), *Clement of Alexandria (150–215) and *Origen (185–254).

Ambrose of Milan (c.339–97): spiritual advisor of *Augustine; opposed *Arianism; his *Expositio Psalmi* combined pastoral and Christian allegorical readings.

- Ambrosian chant:** Milanese liturgical tradition associated with *Ambrose of Milan; psalms were chanted by choir and congregations (*schola cantorum*).
- 'Amidah'**(standing): core prayer of the Jewish liturgy; recited, standing, three times daily; a.k.a. **Shemoneh Esrei* and *Eighteen Benedictions.
- Anselm of Laon** (c.1050–1117): founded cathedral school at Laon; helped establish *Victorine School: his *Gloss was key influence in 13c.-15c. Psalters.
- Antiochene commentators:** rejected the allegorical method in favour of basing scriptural interpretation on more literal and historical readings.
- Antiphon:** single psalm verse, often containing the central message of the psalm; sung by choir before and/or after singing whole psalm.
- Apostolic Constitutions:** collection of eight treatises on Christian doctrine, morals and worship, purporting to be written by the Twelve Apostles but from Syria in late 4c.
- Aquinas, Thomas** (1225–74): Italian *Dominican friar. *Postilla super Psalmos* (Psalms 1–54) was unfinished commentary using *Scholastic approach to psalms.
- Arianism:** 4c. teaching that Jesus Christ was created and not fully divine; condemned at Councils of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and *Chalcedon (451).
- Arnold, Matthew** (1822–88): Professor of Poetry at Oxford 1857–67.
- Asaphite:** guild of Levitical singers associated with music in Second Temple (see 1 Chronicles 15–16). Psalms 50 and 73–83 (mainly communal laments) are attributed to Asaph.
- Arnobius the Younger** (d. c.460): Author of *Commentarii in Psalmos*, written c. 428, an allegorical and typological commentary, popularised by *Erasmus (c.1522).
- Ashkenazi:** Jewish diaspora of Northern Europe; liturgy perpetuated Yiddish culture.
- Athanasius** (c. 296–373): Bishop of Alexandria (328–373), chief defender of doctrine of Council of Nicaea (325); wrote epistolary treatise on the Psalms 'for Marcellinus'.
- Augustine of Hippo** (354–430): Bishop of North African churches of Hippo and Carthage. His *Enarrationes in Psalmos* is first complete psalms commentary from this period.
- Babbit, Milton** (1916–2011): 20c. American jazz composer and advocate of electronic music. *From the Psalter* (2002) includes several psalms set to jazz.
- Bach, Carl Philipp Emmanuel** (1714–88): composer, son of *Johann Sebastian Bach. Liturgical compositions of psalms include 19, 130 and 148.
- Bach, Johann Sebastian** (1685–1750): German composer, Lutheran and organist at Leipzig. His vast musical output of Biblical texts includes some fifty of psalms.
- Bacon, Francis** (1561–1626): English philosopher and poet; authored *Translation of Certain Psalms into English Verse*.
- Baker, Henry Williams** (1821–77): hymn writer who helped produce *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861), including 'The King of Love My Shepherd Is' (Psalm 23).
- Barberini Psalter** (c.1050): Byzantine illustrated Psalter. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Barb. gr. 372.
- Barnabas, Epistle of:** Christian polemical writing of 1c./2 c.; allegorical work with many quotations from psalms.
- Barton, William** (c.1597–1678): translator, author of hymns and editor of metrical Psalter.
- Basil of Caesarea** (c.330–379): *Cappadocian Father, brother of *Gregory of Nyssa; a.k.a. Basil the Great, reformer of monastic life and commentator on Psalms.

- Bay Psalm Book:** a.k.a. *The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre* (1640); printed in North America for congregationalist churches of New England.
- BCP:** 'Book of Common Prayer' is name used for related prayer books published in 1549, 1552, 1559, but especially 1662, using *Coverdale's version of the Psalms.
- Bede** (c.637–735): Benedictine monk at Jarrow. The *Abbreviated Psalter* attributed to him uses condensed readings of psalms to enable less literate monks to pray through Psalter.
- Beethoven, Ludwig van** (1770–1827): German composer based in Vienna, advancing the classical tradition of *Mozart and *Haydn; arranged several psalms to music.
- Benedictine Rule:** 'handbook' of Benedictine monks, with threefold emphasis on prayer, study and manual work. Psalms play a seminal part in the Benedictine *Divine Office.
- Berger, Moshe Tzvi Ha-Levi** (1924–2015): Founder of *Museum of Psalms* (1995). His images of psalms reflect influence of Jewish mystical teaching in the *Zohar: <https://goo.gl/xB54HS>.
- Bernstein, Leonard** (1918–90): American Jewish conductor. Composed *The Chichester Psalms* (performed 1965 at Chichester Cathedral).
- Billings, William** (1746–1800): American composer and choral master; published *The New England Psalm-Singer* (Boston, 1770).
- Blake, William** (1757–1827): English poet and painter, unorthodox in religion; created striking depictions of Biblical and mythical scenes, including several from Psalter.
- Blitheman, John** (c.1525–91): sometimes known as William Blitheman. English composer of psalms and organist, connected to Christ Church, Oxford and Chapel Royal.
- Bloch, Ernest** (1880–1959): Swiss-American composer and teacher. His *Avodath Hakodesh* ('Sacred Service') uses psalm texts from Reform Jewish *siddur* or prayer book.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich** (1906–45): German Lutheran pastor, theologian and anti-Nazi resistance activist. During imprisonment wrote at least two works on praying the psalms.
- Boyce, William** (1711–79): English composer of choral music. Editor of *Cathedral Music* (first published 1760).
- Brahms, Johannes** (1833–97): German composer active in Vienna. Religious pieces used psalm texts e.g. in 'German Requiem', composed after death of his mother (1865).
- Bristol Psalter** (11c.): Byzantine Psalter containing Psalms and Biblical Odes; related to **Khudov* and **Theodore* Psalters. British Library Add. MS 41865.
- Britten, Benjamin** (1913–76): English composer particularly of opera. As well as *War Requiem* also produced notable settings of Psalms 70 and 150.
- Buber, Martin** (1878–65): Vienna-born Jewish philosopher. *I and Thou* (1923) often used psalms. *Right and Wrong* (1952) reflected on psalms in light of Holocaust.
- Bunyan, John** (1628–88): critic of established church and author of *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666) and *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678).
- Burns, Robert** (1759–96): Scottish Romantic poet who occasionally adapted psalms (e.g. Ps. 1) to question religious orthodoxy of the Kirk (Church of Scotland).

- Buxtehude, Dietrich** (c.1637–1707): German-Danish composer and organist. Vocal works frequently used psalms from *Luther's Bible and **Vulgate*.
- Byrd, William** (c.1540–1623): composer, organist, colleague of *Tallis at Chapel Royal. Composed English settings from *Coverdale's Psalter as well as psalms for Latin Masses.
- Calvin, John** (1509–64): Protestant Reformer. Promoted metrical psalmody, in (French) vernacular; *Geneva Psalter* (1562) largely due to his influence.
- Canticles**: collection of (usually 14) songs of praise from biblical texts outside Psalter.
- Cappadocian fathers**: collective name given to the 4c. monastic theologians *Basil of Caesarea, *Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus.
- Carolingian**: 8c/9c. dynasty and empire of Charlemagne and his successors: resultant revival of Roman Christian culture is called the 'Carolingian Renaissance'.
- Cassian, John** (c.360–435): monk and theologian. Author of monastic rule *Institutes*: major influence on *Benedictine Rule, prescribing certain psalms for *Divine Office.
- Cassiodorus** (c.485–585): Roman Senator; later monk. His *Expositio Psalmorum* developed the *Gloss, using earlier commentators, especially Augustine, in margins of Psalms.
- Catena**: collection of diverse texts (also called *florilegium*) quoted as one text. Found at *Qumran and used in the New Testament (esp. Romans and Hebrews).
- Chagall, Marc** (1887–1985): Russian born Jewish artist encouraging Jewish/Christian reconciliation through e.g. mosaics and stained glass. Key work: is *Psaumes de David* (1979).
- Chiasmus**: rhetorical device where words, clauses or ideas are presented, then re-presented in reverse order, for example, A B C - C B A.
- Chrism**: consecrated oil used in Christian worship, for anointing newly baptised, confirmed, ordinands and dying; also for consecration of church buildings and sacred objects.
- Christ-Logos**: depiction of Christ as the eternal Word (*logos*) of God.
- Chrysostom, John** (c.344–407): Archbishop of Constantinople from 398. Vast corpus of homilies includes some 60 on Psalms.
- Church, J.R.** (1938–2011): founder of American television ministry 'Prophecy in the News'.
- Clement of Alexandria** (c.150–215): writer of several homilies on psalms using the allegorical method; influenced by Neo-Platonist and Stoic philosophy.
- Clement of Rome**: purported author of letter (c. 90) to Christians of Corinth attempting to reconcile their schisms; alludes to several psalms.
- Common Worship**: Prayer Book of the Church of England, authorised in 2000.
- Compline**: night prayer of the *Divine Office (usually around 9pm).
- Copland, Aaron** (1900–90): American-Lithuanian Jewish composer; created distinctive American style across variety of musical genres; experimented with psalm settings.
- Corbie Psalter** (early 9c.): Frankish Psalter, with illuminated initials and iconographic similarities to **Utrecht Psalter*. Amiens Bibliothèque Municipale. MS 18.
- Cotton, John** (1585–1652): Puritan clergyman, subsequently minister at Boston, Massachusetts; probably influenced production of **Bay Psalm Book*.

- Council of Chalcedon** (451): 4th of 7 Ecumenical Councils whose major concern was to repudiate heresies (e.g. *Nestorianism) and uphold Christ as both human and divine.
- Coverdale, Miles** (1488–1569): English Augustinian friar turned Reformer; Bible translator and contemporary of Tyndale; his version of the Psalms was used in **BCP*.
- Cowper, William** (1731–1800): English poet; after nervous breakdown underwent evangelical conversion (1764); some of his psalm-like hymns reflect this experience.
- Cyril of Alexandria** (c.376–444): Patriarch of Alexandria, biblical exegete and defender of orthodoxy; often cited psalms to make his case.
- Daily Office**: text published by Joint Liturgical Group in 1968 with psalms/psalm verses appropriate for liturgy.
- Dead Sea Scrolls**: collection of c. 930 texts (many fragmentary) found in the vicinity of *Qumran from 1947–1956, written from 3c. BCE to 2c. CE; about 36 are psalm texts.
- Didymus the Blind** (c.313–98): teacher at Alexandria, opponent of *Arianism; prolific commentator on Scripture; significant fragments of major Psalms Commentary survive.
- Diodore of Tarsus** (d. c.390): Antiochene commentator on psalms; Hezekiah (not David or Christ) as key figure. Tutor of *Theodore of Mopsuestia; accused of *Nestorianism.
- Divine Office**: a.k.a. ‘Canonical Hours’ or ‘Cursus’: refers to monastic hours of prayer.
- Dix, William Chatterton** (1837–98): English hymn writer who used psalms: e.g. harvest hymn ‘To thee, O Lord, our hearts we raise’ echoes Psalm 65.
- Dominican Order**: 13c. Mendicant order (see *Aquinas) known for liturgical use of Psalms.
- Donatism**: 4c. heresy popular in Carthage: effectiveness of all sacraments dependent upon moral purity of minister. Expelled all those who compromised under persecution.
- Dwight, Timothy** (1752–1817): American congregationalist minister and hymn writer. Produced *The Psalms of David* (1817) to replace Isaac *Watts’s *Psalms and Hymns*.
- Dvorak, Antonin** (1841–1904): Czech composer whose ‘Ten Biblical Songs’ included arrangements of psalms imitating the simplicity and directness of Bohemian folksongs.
- Eadwine Psalter** (c.1150): illuminated, interlinear ms. from Christ Church, Canterbury; influence of **Utrecht Psalter*. Trinity College, Cambridge. *MS R.17.1*: <https://go.ox.ac.uk/3tt9L3>.
- Eighteen Benedictions**: a.k.a. *Shemoneh Esrei* and **Amidah* prayer actually comprising 19 blessings pronounced towards God along with requests for aid.
- Elgar, Sir Edward** (1857–1934): English composer; arranged settings for several psalms.
- Emblemists**: 16c./17c. artists and authors who produced books containing allegorical pictures (emblems) accompanied by moral sentences or verses, sometimes using psalms.
- Erasmus** (1466–1536): Dutch Christian *Humanist from Rotterdam; wrote philological commentaries on psalms, applying them to contemporary theological and political concerns.
- Eusebius of Caesarea** (c.260–340): Bishop of Caesarea Maritima (Palestine); biblical interpreter and author of *Ecclesiastical History* and *Commentaria in Psalmos*.

- Evagrius of Pontus** (c.345–399): Deacon, student of *Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus. Wrote Psalms Commentary and *scholia* (shorter comments with *Glosses).
- ibn Ezra, Abraham** (c.1089–1164): Hebrew grammarian; philological commentaries on Psalms were printed alongside Hebrew text in rabbinical Bibles. Opponent of *Karaites friend and cousin (?) of Moses ibn Ezra (d.1138).
- Florilegium**: collection of excerpts of texts. See **catena*.
- Franciscan Order**: 13c. mendicant order founded by Saint Francis of Assisi, instructing life of poverty; psalms play major part in prayer and liturgy.
- Gabrieli, Andrea** (c.1532–85): composer and organist at San Marco, Venice; uncle of *Giovanni Gabrieli; psalm settings reflect style of Imperial and Bavarian court chapels.
- Gabrieli, Giovanni** (c.1554–1612): composer and organist from San Marco, Venice, and nephew of *Andrea Gabrieli; arranged many psalms; worked under Orlando di *Lasso.
- Gallican Psalter** (386–87): a.k.a. *Psalterium Gallicanum*; translation into Latin based on the Greek text by *Jerome in Caesarea. Included in **Vulgate*.
- Gehenna**: valley outside Jerusalem; synonym for death and fiery punishment.
- Gelineau, Joseph** (1920–2008): French Jesuit priest; developed ‘Gelineau’ method of singing metrical psalms with responsorial antiphons between verses; popular at Taizé.
- Geniza**: storage in synagogue or Jewish cemetery for old sacred texts which cannot be disposed of like profane literature.
- Gibbons, Christopher** (1615–76): son of *Orlando Gibbons and composer of several psalms; after the Restoration became organist of the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey.
- Gibbons, Orlando** (1583–1625): English composer, later senior organist of Chapel Royal; father of *Christopher Gibbons.
- Gilbert of Poitiers** (c.1080–1154): Bishop who worked with *Anselm at Laon where he wrote his Psalms Commentary which was an expansion and classification of the *Gloss.
- Girard, René** (1923–2015): French literary critic and philosopher; theory of scapegoating and cathartic violence often applied to the so-called ‘cursing psalms’.
- Gloss**: notes made in margins or between lines of a book, in which meaning of the text is explained by using other commentators, usually in Latin, Greek or the vernacular.
- Gnosticism**: way to salvation through acquisition of esoteric knowledge; popular movement in 2c. and opposed by *Justin and *Irenaeus in their commentaries on psalms.
- Goldschmidt, Otto** (1829–1907): German composer and pianist from family of liberal Reform Jews; converted and became Episcopalian. Studied under *Mendelssohn at Leipzig.
- Goodall, Howard**: contemporary English composer of choral music, musicals, and film and television scores. Psalm compositions use all-female choir with string accompaniment.
- Gorleston Psalter** (c.1300): named after town in Norfolk; uses *Tree of Jesse and colourful marginalia. British Library Add. MS 49622: <https://goo.gl/W8exMQ>.
- Goudimel, Claude** (c.1515–1572): French composer; arranged many metrical Psalm settings for John *Calvin’s *Geneva Psalter. Psalms de David* produced c. 1564.

- Gregorian Chant:** associated with *Gregory the Great; uses three inflections (beginning, middle and end of verse) rather than the two inflections of *Ambrosian chant.
- Gregory the Great** (c.540–604): Pope from 590. Commentaries on psalms were partly historical, partly allegorical, partly moral, fostering *Benedictine use of psalmody.
- Gregory of Nyssa** (c.335–95): one of the *Cappadocian fathers; *Inscriptiones Psalmorum* reads each psalm allegorically as progressive account of soul's ascent to God.
- Grey, Lady Jane** (1537–54): proclaimed Queen in July 1553; deposed by Mary.
- Hamilton Psalter** (c.1300): bilingual Byzantine Greek and Latin psalter (with twelve canonical Odes) from many scribal hands. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett. MS 78 A 9.
- Handel, George Frideric** (1685–1759): German/English composer; *Messiah* (1741) adapted many psalms, as did other oratorios; pioneer of performing psalms in concert halls.
- Harley Psalter** (c.1020): incomplete copy (up to Ps. 143) in style of *Utrecht Psalter; produced in Canterbury. British Library Add. Harley MS 603.
- Hasmonean:** see *Maccabean period.
- Haydn, [Franz] Joseph** (1732–1809): Austrian composer who influenced *Mozart and *Beethoven; sacred choral music includes metrical setting of *Six English Psalms*.
- Herbert of Bosham** (c.1120–90): influenced by *Victorine School. His *Psalterium Hebraicum* included *Gloss, using comments from Jewish as well as Christian commentators.
- Herbert, George** (1593–1633): Church of England priest and poet. Much of his devotional poetry was published posthumously as *The Temple*.
- Hesychius of Jerusalem** (400–50?): priest and biblical commentator. Fragments of work on the Psalms which survive use *Alexandrian readings.
- Hilary of Poitiers** (c.310–67): Opposed *Arianism; adapted *Origen's *prosopological approach in his homilies on Psalms and in his *Tractatus super Psalmos*.
- Hill, Lauryn** (b. 1975): American songwriter. Songs allude to several psalms.
- Hippolytus of Rome** (c.170–235): Bishop and liturgist; opposed *Gnosticism and *Montanism: read psalms as prophecies about life, death and resurrection of Christ.
- Hodayot** (c.50 BCE): collection of thanksgiving hymns found at *Qumran, composed in style of biblical psalms.
- Honegger, Arthur** (1892–1955): Franco-Swiss composer; wrote *Le Roi David* (1921) which used several psalms.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley** (1844–89): English religious poet; initially *Tractarian and later Jesuit priest, through influence of *Newman; several poems allude to psalms.
- Howells, Herbert** (1892–1983): composer whose works were shaped by WW1 and death of his son (1935); composed two sets of 'Psalm Preludes' (1915–16 and 1938–39).
- Humanism:** focus on study of classical languages and literature (*studia humanitatis*) after Renaissance. (Not to be confused with modern secular humanism.)
- Hunnis, William** (d.1597): English Protestant composer and poet: *Seven Sobs of a Sorrowfull Soule for Sinne* (c.1581) was on *penitential psalms.
- Iconoclasm** (a.k.a. iconoclasm): objection against the use of religious images, particularly of Christ and the saints, notably in 8c. under Byzantine Emperor Leo III.
- Inclusio:** literary device whereby repetition of similar words or phrases brackets a text.
- Irenaeus** (c.130–200): Bishop of Lyons; Apologist, whose polemical work *Against Heresies* uses many psalms as prophecies pointing to Christ.

- Ives, Charles** (1874–1954): American composer and organist. Psalm settings are form of experimentation using different musical styles.
- Jenkins, Karl** (b. 1944): Welsh oboist, saxophonist and composer. His mass *The Armed Man* interprets e.g. Psalms 56 and 59 for an interfaith context.
- Jerome**: (c.347–402): Bible translator; of his four versions of Psalms *Gallican Psalter was the one included in **Vulgate. Tractatus* and *Commentarioli* were works on select psalms.
- Jessing, Michael**: contemporary Northumberland painter, using allegorical and ecological representations of psalms: <https://goo.gl/Uggcah>.
- Jonson, Ben** (1572–1637): British poet and playwright; cited as avoiding hanging for manslaughter by reciting a ‘neck-verse’ (e.g. Ps. 51:1). *Poems of Devotion* echoes psalms.
- Julian the Apostate** (c.330–63): philosopher, general and Roman Emperor (361–363); sought to revive Greco-Roman paganism and Neo-Platonist philosophy.
- Justin Martyr** (c.100–165): Christian Apologist based mainly in Rome; frequently used psalms in his argumentations against pagan and Jewish ideas.
- Kaddish** (Aramaic for ‘holy’): prayer of praise to God used in Jewish liturgy, especially at funerals or memorial services.
- Karaites** (from *qara*, to read): Jewish sect dating from 8c.; understood the biblical text alone to be authoritative, rejecting rabbinic authority and tradition.
- Kedushah/Kedushah de-sidra**: prayers recited in Jewish liturgy; key components include Isa. 6:3, Ezek. 3:12 and Ps. 146:10.
- Keble, John** (1792–1866): Professor of Poetry at Oxford (1831–41); leader of Oxford Movement, co-founder of *Tractarianism; produced *Psalter in English Verse* (1839).
- Ketib/qere**: places in which the text of the Hebrew Bible is written (*ketib*) in one way, but by tradition recited (*qere*) in another way.
- Khludov Psalter** (9c.): Byzantine Psalter using **Septuagint*; over 80 miniatures illuminate Christologically relevant verses in margins of text. Moscow History Museum. MS D. 129.
- Kiddush**: a blessing recited over wine at the start of a Jewish Sabbath or religious holiday.
- Kimḥi, David** (1160–1235): a.k.a. RADAQ (Rabbi David Qimḥi), renowned for works of Hebrew grammar and philological (often anti-Christian) commentaries, including Psalms.
- KJV**: ‘King James Version’ a.k.a. ‘Authorised Version’ (AV); Bible translation authorised by King James in 1611, for preaching and teaching rather than liturgical use.
- Kodály, Zoltán** (1882–1967): Hungarian ethnomusicologist. Composed *Psalms Hungaricus*: Psalm 55 arranged, typically, in a Hungarian folk setting.
- Korahite**: guild of Levites, singers and gatekeepers of Jerusalem Temple (see 1 Chronicles 15–16). Psalms 42/3, 44–49, and 84–85, 87–88 are explicitly attributed to the ‘Sons of Korah.’
- di Lasso (de Lassus), Orlando** (c.1532–94): Franco-Flemish Roman Catholic composer of polyphonic sacred choral music; *Timor et Tremor* (1564) uses several psalms.
- Laud, William** (1573–1645): Archbishop of Canterbury under Charles I; defender of episcopacy and Divine Right of Kings; beheaded during English Civil War.
- Lauds**: in the *Divine Office, refers to dawn prayer (generally between 3am and 6am).

- Lawes, Henry** (1596–1662): English composer, songwriter for Chapel Royal; with brother William published *Choice Psalmes put into Musick* (1648).
- lectio divina** ('sacred reading'): use of scripture for meditative prayer; originally a monastic discipline, especially using Psalms.
- Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques** (c.1455–1536): French Humanist; his *Quincuplex Psalter* placed earlier versions of psalms alongside **Vulgate*. Influenced *Luther's use of Psalms.
- Lollards**: 14c. movement which placed authority of scripture above clergy, following teachings of Oxford scholar John Wycliffe; condemned by secular and religious authorities.
- Lombard, Peter** (c.1100–60): *Scholastic theologian at Paris; *Four Books of Sentences* became standard textbook of mediaeval theology; wrote *Psalterium Scholasticorum*.
- Longfellow, Samuel** (1819–92): American Unitarian pastor and hymn writer using psalms.
- Luther, Martin** (1483–1546): *Augustinian friar, priest, reformer, theologian, and composer; produced lectures, commentaries, sermons and hymns on psalms.
- LXX**: see **Septuagint*.
- Maccabean period** (167–63BCE): a.k.a. *Hasmonean, the period following the revolt of Judah Maccabee and his four brothers which ended when Pompey conquered Jerusalem.
- Macclesfield Psalter** (c.1330): uses whimsical marginal illuminations with animal grotesques. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. *MS 1–2005*: <https://goo.gl/wf3S2J>.
- MacMillan, James** (b. 1959): Scottish Celtic Roman Catholic composer with universal and eclectic influences; sacred music, including psalms, often performed in secular context.
- Mandorla**: almond-shaped cloud of light used in Christian art to indicate a holy person.
- Manichaeism** (from 3c. Iranian 'prophet' Mani): mix of Christian and traditional Persian religious beliefs and practices.
- Marot, Clement** (1496–1544): French poet, *Humanist, Protestant sympathiser; translator of many metrical psalms.
- Masoretic Text (MT)**: text of Hebrew Bible standardised in 6c.–9c. by addition of vowel symbols, cantillation marks and notes.
- Matins**: prayers of *Divine Office of midnight, or, more usually, of 2:30am.
- Mathias, William** (1934–92): Welsh composer and pianist; settings for individual psalms include *Lux aeterna*, a requiem mass using psalms.
- Maximus the Confessor** (c.580–662): Byzantine monk and theologian, opponent of monothelism (Christ with one will, not human and divine); *Commentary on Psalm 59*.
- Melisma**: several different notes sung on a single syllable (as opposed to syllabic singing).
- Mendelssohn, Felix**: (1809–47) son of Moses, a German Jewish convert. Music reflects Jewish sympathies, e.g. his oratorio *Elijah*, which uses several psalms.
- Menorah**: seven-branched, golden lampstand, decorated with cups shaped like buds and flowers (Exod. 25:31–40).
- Merton, Thomas** (1915–68): American Trappist monk, student of comparative religion; poetry used psalms to evoke mysticism in Roman Catholic faith.
- Midrash**: Jewish exegesis of Hebrew Bible.

- Midrash Tehillim:** 13c. commentary on the Psalms (*Tehillim*) relating texts to Jewish traditions of the Torah from 3c. onwards.
- Milton, John** (1608–74): schoolmaster, civil servant for Cromwell, poet, and author of *Paradise Lost*; composed metrical psalms in style of *Sidney and *Sandys.
- Mishnah** ('repetition'): a written collection of the orally memorised and 'repeated' rabbinic teaching prior to 2c.; application (*halakah*) of biblical injunctions.
- Mondonville, Jean-Joseph de** (1711–72): French composer, contemporary of *Rameau; *Pièces de clavecin avec voix ou violon* uses collections of psalms texts.
- Montanists:** 2c. ecstatic prophetic movement of Montanus of Phrygia; spread throughout Roman Empire; read psalms as prophecies.
- de Monte, Philippe** (c.1521–1603): Flemish composer at court of Hapsburg; collaborated with di *Lasso and *Byrd: Italian madrigals and some motets used psalms.
- Montgomery, James** (1771–1854): hymn writer and poet, for whom psalms were a major source text; his 1825 hymnal was published as *The Christian Psalmist*.
- More, Sir Thomas** (1478–1535): English Lord Chancellor under Henry VIII; wrote *Glosses' alongside various psalms during his imprisonment; martyred for his Roman Catholic faith.
- Mozarabic:** Christian culture originally in Muslim Al-Andalus (Spain and Portugal). Liturgical rites were celebrated in Latin as well as in Arabic; used many psalms.
- Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus** (1756–91): prolific composer born in Salzburg; wrote arrangements for the *penitential psalms as well as many psalms for liturgy.
- Mycall, John** (c.1750–1833): American printer; *The Psalms of David* used *Watts's Psalter where references to Great Britain were replaced with references to American Revolution.
- Nahmanides** (1194–1270): Rabbi Moshe ben Nahman, mediaeval scholar from Catalonia; used psalms in disputations with Spanish Jewish converts to Christianity.
- Neale, John Mason** (1818–66): Anglican priest and scholar; translated Greek and Latin hymns; co-edited, with R.F. Littledale, 4-volume liturgical and patristic work on Psalms.
- Neher, André** (1914–88): Franco-Israeli Jewish philosopher and academic; *The Exile of the Word*, about divine revelation and silence after the Holocaust, uses some psalms.
- Nestorianism:** teaching that divine/human natures of Christ are distinct, not inseparable; advanced by Nestorius, condemned at Councils of Ephesus (431) and *Chalcedon (451).
- Newman, John Henry** (1801–90): Anglican priest, *Tractarian, convert to Roman Catholicism (1845). Hymns and *Dream of Gerontius* include allusions to many psalms.
- Nicholas of Lyra** (c.1270–1349): *Franciscan monk and Hebraist. *Postilla super Psalterium et Cantica Canticorum* is *glossed Christian commentary on Psalms and Song of Songs.
- Nimb:** in art, a nimbus or halo; so 'cross-nimbed', a halo containing within it the shape of a cross, typically seen over icons of Christ.
- Nocturne:** midnight prayers of *Divine Office, a.k.a. *Vigils; now usually included in *Matins.
- Olney Hymns:** collection of evangelical hymns by John Newton (1725–1807) and William *Cowper (1731–1800), including 'Amazing Grace'. Many draw from metrical psalmody.

- Opus Dei** (work of God): refers here either to seven offices of prayer of *Divine Office, or to threefold monastic principle of prayer, study and manual work.
- Origin of Alexandria** (c.185–254): 3c. scholar, famed for *Hexapla* (first polyglot Old Testament); allegorical and *prosopological approaches to psalms influenced *Augustine.
- Pachelbel, Johann** (c.1653–1706): German Lutheran composer and organist; set psalms to music in German and Latin for Lutheran and Roman Catholic liturgical use.
- da Palestrina, Giovanni Pierluigi** (c.1525–94): Italian composer of rich polyphonic liturgical music, including madrigals and psalms: *Sicut Cervus*, from Psalm 42, is one of best known.
- Pantokrator Psalter** (9c.): damaged Byzantine Psalter, with marginal illustrations, kept at Pantokrator monastery, Mt. Athos. *Pantokrator cod.* 61.
- Parker, Matthew** (1504–75): Archbishop of Canterbury for Elizabeth I; produced an English Metrical Psalter with introductory notes and collect for each psalm; see *Tallis.
- Parma Psalter** (c.1280): Hebrew Psalter, with colour illustrations of first word of each psalm; used *Abraham ibn Ezra's commentary; Biblioteca Paletina. *Ms Parm.* 1870: <https://goo.gl/NUvfBT>.
- Parry, Hubert** (1848–1918): English composer of many psalms; setting for Psalm 122 ('I was glad') used at many royal and state occasions.
- Pärt, Arvo** (b. 1935): controversial Estonian composer; converted from Lutheranism to Russian Orthodoxy; *Miserere* (Psalm 51) shows eclectic musical influences (E. and W.).
- Pelagianism**: heresy of 4c. British monk Pelagius, that humans are responsible for their own salvation; condemned at Councils of Carthage (418) and Ephesus (431).
- Penderecki, Krzysztof** (b. 1933): Polish composer of *Psalm Dawida* and choral symphony *Seven Gates of Jerusalem*, celebrating 3rd millennium of Jerusalem.
- Penitential Psalms**: Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 and 143. These 7 psalms made penitence for the 7 deadly sins (gluttony, lust, greed, pride, sorrow, anger, vainglory and sloth).
- Pergolesi, Giovanni Battista** (1710–36): Italian composer; *Stabat mater* includes a setting of the *Miserere* (Psalm 51).
- Pesuke de-Zimra** ('verses of song'): Jewish prayers of morning praise, mostly drawn from the psalms, especially Psalms 145–150.
- Peshaṭ** ('simple'): refers to the 'plain sense' of a text in its first context.
- Pesher** ('interpretation'): practice, e.g. at *Qumran, of reading scriptures in light of contemporary events, combining psalm texts with other texts to create new meanings.
- Peshitta**: Syriac translation of Bible, used by Syriac/Aramaic speaking Christians from 2c.
- Phylacteries**: from Greek 'to guard, protect', a.k.a. *tefillin*. Small leather pouches holding verses of the Torah, worn on arm and forehead by adult male Jews during morning prayers.
- Phrygian Mode**: using 7 intervals on musical scale (semitone-tone-tone-tone-semitone-tone-tone), this is Third Mode, evoking 'exuberance'.
- Piers Plowman** (c.1380): Middle English poem on Christian discipleship, accredited to William Langland; includes the persona Will the Dreamer, a 'Psalter-clerk'.
- Plainchant** (a.k.a. plainsong): associated with Bishop *Ambrose; monophonic, whereby singers follow same melody; used in both monastic offices and cathedral liturgy.

- Prime:** early morning prayer of **Divine Office*, recited during first hour of daylight.
- Prokeimenon** (lit. 'that which proceeds'): in Orthodox liturgy, a psalm text or another short passage of scripture sung antiphonally before reading of the daily Epistle.
- Proper Psalm:** specific psalm appointed for special occasions throughout church year.
- Prosopological exegesis:** interpretation initially used by *Origen and *Augustine to identify the two natures /voices of Christ, human and divine, speaking in the same psalm.
- Prymer:** Medieval Prayer Book of devotions for laity, with prayers for the Blessed Virgin, the Dead, *Vigils and *Lauds, Litany of Saints, *penitential psalms and gradual psalms (120–134).
- Psalms of Solomon:** Jewish Greek text from 1c. BCE, comprising 18 imitations of 'psalms'.
- Purcell, Henry** (1659–95): composer in the Chapel Royal for Charles II and James II.
- Purim** ('lots'): Jewish festival, usually held around February/March, to commemorate rescue of Jews from Haman's pogrom, as narrated in Esther.
- Qumran:** site of community centre of a 2c./1c. BCE Jewish sect, first discovered in 1948 near shore of Dead Sea; some 930 biblical and religious texts were hidden in jars in caves.
- Rachmaninov, Sergei** (1873–1943): Russian born Orthodox composer; *All Night Vigil* employs psalmody outside context of church liturgy.
- Rameau, Jean-Philippe** (1683–1764): French composer and musical theorist. His *Grands Motets* include versions of psalms, mainly written for non-liturgical use.
- Rashi** (1045–1105): from Rabbi **Shlomo Yiṣḥaq** (Solomon Isaac); French exegete of Talmud and Bible; anti-Christian polemicist, as seen in commentary on Psalms.
- Ravenscroft, Thomas** (c.1588–1635): English composer; psalm settings of *The Whole Booke of Psalmes* (1621) influenced *George Herbert.
- Reich, Steve** (b.1936): American composer, pioneer of 'minimal music'; album *Tehillim* (1981) offers imaginative use of psalms: <https://goo.gl/9Aexs2>.
- Rosh Hashanah** ('the head of the year'): Jewish New Year, usually around September.
- Rossi, Salamone** (c.1570–1630): Jewish Italian composer from Mantua; psalm settings were unaccompanied, polyphonic and *melismatic, for festal occasions often outside synagogue.
- Rutter, John** (b. 1945): English composer in choral tradition of *Howells and *Vaughan Williams; Christmas motets used psalms; also *Psalmfest* (1993).
- Saint John's Bible** (1998–2008): first hand-illustrated Benedictine Bible since 15c.; joint project of St John's Abbey, Wales and University of Collegeville PA: <https://goo.gl/7TQRCB>.
- St Albans Psalter** (c.1137): Anglo-Norman Benedictine Psalter; each psalm has illuminated initial illustrating a verse. St Godehard's church, Hildesheim. *MS1*: <https://goo.gl/sjFaUe>.
- Sandys, George** (c.1577–1644): English poet; *Paraphrase upon the Psalms of David* (1636) experimented with metrical psalms; later set to hymn tunes.
- Scarlatti, Francesco** (1666–1741): Italian Baroque composer and violinist who worked at Palermo. Choral settings include Psalms 51, 110 and 112.

- Scholasticism:** prominent in 12c.-14c.; combined ancient classical philosophy with medieval Christian theology. *Aquinas's commentary on the Psalms used this approach.
- Schumann, Robert** (1810–56): German 'Romantic' composer; composed psalms settings at beginning and end of his career.
- Schütz, Heinrich** (1585–1672): German composer; applied Italian (Catholic) techniques to German (Lutheran) sacred music; *Psalmen Davids* (1619) and *Becker Psalter* (1628).
- Scott, Sir Walter** (1771–1832): Scottish novelist and Romantic poet who occasionally used psalms to serve historical, political and literary interests.
- Selah:** used 71 times in 39 psalms, usually in middle or at end of verse; unknown meaning, perhaps to mark an interlude or pause, as understood in the **Septuagint*.
- Septuagint:** a.k.a. *LXX, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible purportedly completed in Alexandria by 72 rabbis in 72 days in the third century BC.
- Shekinah** ('dwelling' or 'settling'): rabbinic term for divine presence, associated with Tabernacle or Temple, and later, with synagogue worship.
- Shema** (*shema'*, 'Hear!'): Jewish confession of monotheism, taken from Deut. 6:4, recited at morning and night prayer.
- Sheol** (*she'ol*): underworld inhabited by shades of dead (*repha'im*).
- Shimmush Tehillim** ('Magical Uses of the Psalms'): Jewish text, dating from late antiquity.
- Shofar:** musical horn made of a ram's horn, blown on **Rosh Hashanah* and **Yom Kippur*.
- Shulamit Ran** (b. 1949): contemporary Israeli-American composer; sets Hebrew poetry – including psalms – to modern music.
- Siddur** ('order'): Jewish prayer book, for use at home and synagogue.
- Sidney, Mary** (1561–1621): Countess of Pembroke, sister of Philip; revised his work on Psalms 1–43 and added original imitations of Psalms 44–150 for *The Sidney Psalter*.
- Sidney, Philip:** (1554–86): Elizabethan poet; work on Psalms 1–43 was innovative with different metres and forms to suit the mood of different psalms.
- Simḥat Torah** ('joy of the Law'): two-day thanksgiving for the Torah, celebrated as the culmination of **Sukkot* (usually in October).
- Sola scriptura** ('by scripture alone'): Protestant Reformers' doctrine that the Bible is uniquely authoritative in matters of faith, above the authority of church.
- Stainer, Sir John** (1840–1901): Organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, London; composer of sacred choral music including several psalms settings.
- Stanford, Sir Charles Villiers** (1852–1924): Professor of Music at Cambridge (1887–1924); his Anglican liturgical music included many psalm settings.
- Stern, Max** (b. 1947): American musical critic; composer of orchestral, chamber, choral and vocal works for synagogue and theatre.
- Sternhold and Hopkins:** authors of *Whole Book of Psalms*, published in England in 1562; popular metrical Psalter of Reformed churches until *Tate and Brady.
- Stravinsky, Igor** (1882–1971): Russian-born composer; *Symphony of Psalms* was orchestral and choral performance of psalms for theatre as well as church/synagogue.

- Stuttgart Psalter** (c.825): *Carolingian Psalter with 316 colour images, using every psalm. Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart. *Cod Bib Fol 23*: <https://goo.gl/c3cvtS>.
- Sukkot** ('booths/tabernacles'): one of three ancient Jewish (harvest) festivals; here, in autumn, remembering Israel's tabernacle-shelters after flight from Egypt.
- Supersessionism**: Christian belief that the New Testament fulfils the Hebrew Bible and, in terms of the psalms, that Christ fulfils the prayers and 'prophecies' of David.
- Symmachus**: translator of Old Testament into Greek, used in *Origen's *Hexapla*.
- Tahanun** ('supplication'): Jewish prayers for morning and afternoon services; includes prayer for deliverance using Psalm 6 (or, in Sephardic tradition, Psalm 25).
- Tallis, Thomas** (c.1510–85): English court composer of Chapel Royal, from 1542; arranged psalms both as Latin motets and as metrical psalms (8 published in *Parker's 1567 Psalter).
- Talmud**: expanded (Palestinian and Babylonian) version of **Mishnah*; produced 4c.-6c.
- Tamid** ('always'): perpetual morning and evening sacrifice; includes recital of Psalms 24, 48, 82, 94, 81, 93 and 92 as prescribed in **Mishnah* and, in part, by their *Septuagint* headings.
- Targum**: amplified translation of Hebrew Bible into Aramaic; *Targum Psalms* (*TgPss*) translated 4c.-6c. and rendered in English, for example, by Stec (2004).
- Tate and Brady**: editors of *New Version of the Psalms of David* (1696), the metrical Psalter that superseded *Sternhold and Hopkins.
- Tavener, Sir John** (1944–2013): British composer and Orthodox Christian; *Song for Athene*, sung at funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales (1997), used psalm texts from Divine Liturgy.
- Tertullian** (c.160–240): convert from Carthage, author of polemical texts; used proof texts from psalms; joined *Montanist sect which read psalms as contemporary prophecies.
- Theodore of Mopsuestia** (c.350–429): pupil of *Diodore of Tarsus, central figure in development of *Antiochene School; accused of *Nestorianism after his death.
- Theodore Psalter** (1066): Byzantine Psalter from Studious Monastery; 480 marginal, mainly Christological, illustrations. British Library Add. MS 19352: <https://goo.gl/R74s96>.
- Theodoret of Cyrrhus**: Bishop of Cyrrhus and *Antiochene commentator, although psalms commentary allows Christological and typological readings.
- Thomas, R.S.** (1913–2000): metaphysical poet and priest of the Anglican Church in Wales; poetry shows influence of *BCP psalms.
- Thomasius, Josephus Maria** (1649–1713): Italian scholar and cardinal; *Psalterium cum Canticis* (1697) represents thought of Thomas *Aquinas, source for *Neale and Littledale.
- Tissot, Jacques** (1836–1902): French Roman Catholic painter of biblical art (aka James Tissot).
- Tractarianism**: 19c. Anglo-Catholic Oxford movement; distributed ideas through 'Tracts for the Times' (see *Newman, *Keble). Sermons on church reform frequently used psalms.
- Tree of Jesse**: image of tree often used in Christian art to depict lineage from Jesse of Bethlehem and David to Jesus Christ, e.g. **Gorleston Psalter*.

- Tye, Christopher** (c.1505–73): English composer of Latin psalm motets during reign of Mary; and of English metrical psalms during reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I.
- Typika**: service of Eastern Orthodox liturgy when no priest is present.
- Utrecht Psalter** (c.830): *Carolingian Psalter from Hautvilliers; 160 pen and ink drawings to create narrative of single psalm. Utrecht University. *MSS* 32: <https://goo.gl/TE86A5>.
- Vaticanus Graecus 752** (c.1039): Byzantine Psalter; 56 gilt colour images with liturgical, ecclesiastical and Christological concerns. Vatican Library. <https://goo.gl/Zm5dpU>.
- Vaughan Williams, Ralph** (1872–1958): British Anglican composer; trained under *Hubert Parry and *Charles Stanford; editor of *English Hymnal* (1906).
- Venantius Fortunatus** (c.540–605): Bishop and poet at court of Frankish kings; hymns using psalms (e.g. Psalm 20) still sung today (usually in translation).
- Vespers**: late afternoon prayer of *Divine Office.
- de Victoria, Tomás Luis** (c.1548–1611): Spanish composer, priest and organist; poly-choral psalm settings, incl. *Miserere* (Ps. 51) and *Laetatus Sum* (Ps. 122).
- Victorine School**: founded in 12c. at Augustinian Abbey of St. Victor, near Paris; revived interest in Hebrew and Jewish commentators, meditative learning and **lectio divina*.
- Vigils**: middle of night prayer of *Divine Office, sometimes known as *Nocturnes, *Matins.
- Vulgate** ('common'): *Jerome's translation of the Bible into Latin; used *Gallican Psalter (from Greek), not *juxta Hebraicum* (from Hebrew).
- Wagner, Roger** (b. 1957): poet and artist, influenced by Albrecht Dürer; uses various mediums incl. wood engravings as in *Book of Psalms*: <https://goo.gl/fm95xD>.
- Walton, Sir William** (1902–83): English composer, controversial for modernism; *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931), choral cantata based on Old Testament, alludes to psalms.
- Watts, Isaac**: (1674–1748): English non-Conformist hymn writer; composer of metrical psalms, many with Christian and political overtones: <https://goo.gl/11x7vC>.
- Weelkes, Thomas** (1576–1623): English composer, organist of Winchester College and Chichester Cathedral; madrigals and choral music taken from *Coverdale's Psalter.
- Weiner, Lazar**: (1897–1982): Russian born American composer of Yiddish and Hebrew songs and psalms for synagogue and secular settings: <https://goo.gl/DoHVUX>.
- Wesley, Charles** (1707–88): co-founder, with brother John, of Methodist movement; prolific hymn writer; *Collection of Psalms and Hymns* (1737) has clear Christian overlay.
- Wesley, John** (1703–91): Anglican priest; with brother Charles founded Methodist movement; psalms influenced sermons and hymn writing: <https://goo.gl/tPUdp5>.
- Wesley, Samuel Sebastian** (1810–76): composer of psalms, organist; grandson of Charles Wesley.
- Whittingham, William** (c.1524–79): English minister at Geneva; helped produce *Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter.
- Wieder, Laurance** (b. 1946): American poet, critic and anthologist of poetry using psalms.
- Wilmot, John** (1647–80): second Earl of Rochester, Restoration poet, satirist and courtier. His 'Rochester Extempore' is comic poem featuring psalmody.

- Winkworth, Catherine** (1827–78): English translator of German hymns, many adapting psalms. *The Chorale Book for England* was published in 1860s.
- Wisdom of Solomon**: 1c. BCE text, probably from Alexandria, influenced both by Hebrew Bible and Hellenism; incorporates allusions to several psalms.
- Wishart, George** (c.1513–46): Scottish *Humanist, executed for evangelical faith at St. Andrews; apparently sang metrical version of Ps. 51 at arrest.
- Wordsworth, Christopher** (1807–85): Bishop and nephew of William Wordsworth; composed several hymns based upon psalms.
- Wragg, Arthur** (1903–76): Christian Socialist and commercial illustrator of satirical black and white cartoon-like images, as in *The Psalms for Modern Life* (1934).
- Yom Kippur** (Day of Atonement): day of repentance, fasting and prayer before **Sukkot*, obligatory festival for all Jews, usually in September/October.
- Zohar, Book of**: commentary on mystical aspects of Torah; foundational work for *Kabbalah Judaism. Moshe *Berger's images of psalms are influenced by it.
- Zorada Temmingh**: contemporary church organist in Stellenbosch (South Africa); integrates psalms with well-known melodies: <https://goo.gl/BFpMjF>.

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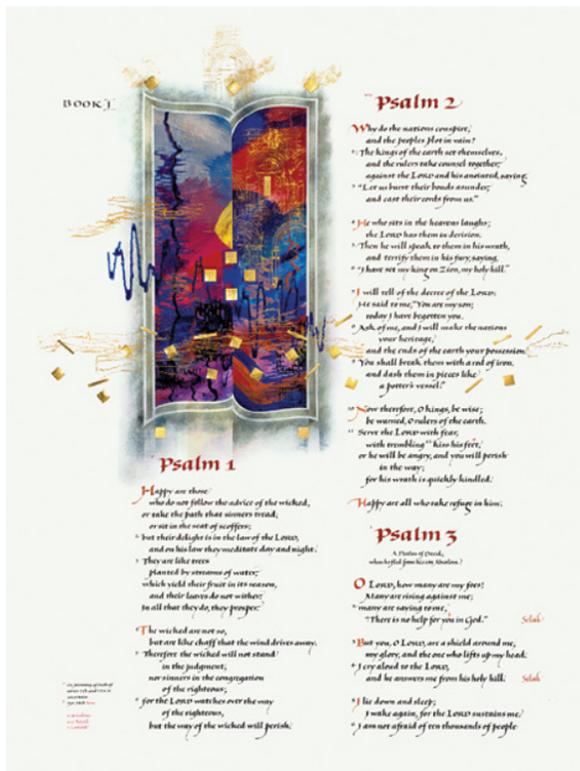


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PLATE 2 Psalm 2 through the eyes of the Nativity. *Khudov Psalter*, The State Historical Museum, Moscow, MS D 129, fol. 3v (with permission from History Museum, Moscow). Image provided by Giovanni Scorcioni, www.FacsimileFinder.com.

Psalms Through the Centuries: A Reception History Commentary on Psalms 1–72, Volume Two, First Edition. Susan Gillingham.
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PLATE 3 Psalm 16 through the eyes of the Resurrection. *Utrecht Psalter*, University Library of Utrecht, MS Bibl. Rhenotraiectinae 1 Nr 32, fol. 8r (with permission from the University Library Utrecht).



PLATE 4 Psalm 18: 'David delivered out of Many Waters' by William Blake. Tate Gallery 02230 (with permission from Tate ©2017).

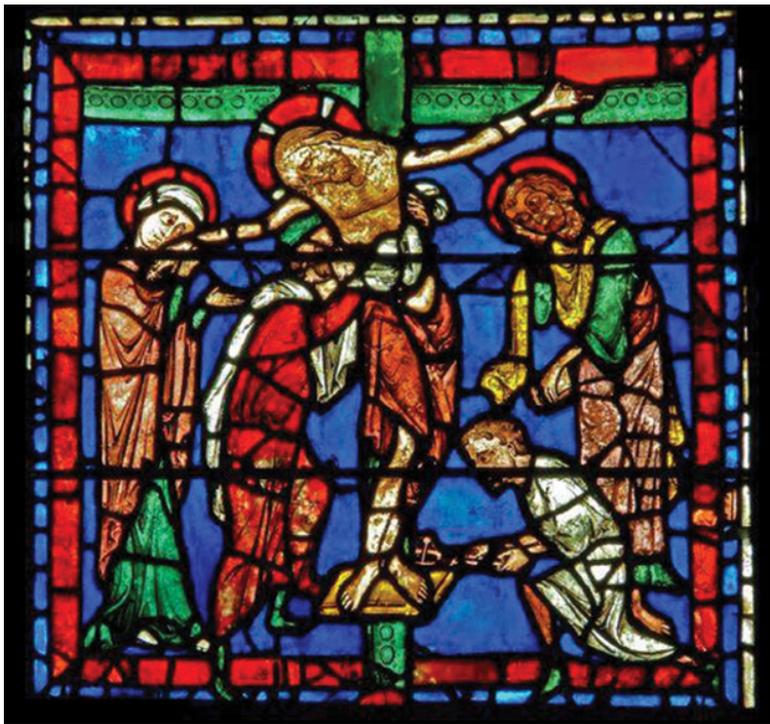


PLATE 6 Psalm 22 in the Window of Redemption at Chartres Cathedral. (Photograph by Painton Cowen at www.therosewindow.com).

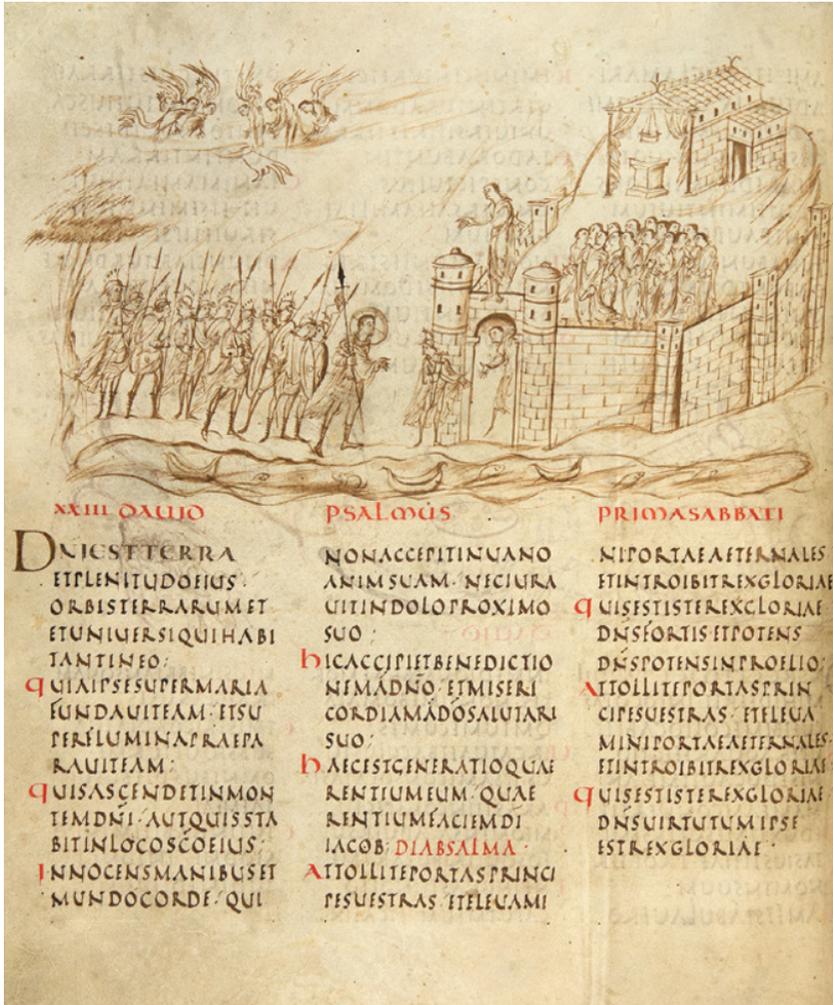


PLATE 7 Psalm 24: Christ as Warrior and King. *Utrecht Psalter*, University Library of Utrecht, MS Bibl. Rhenotriactinae 1 Nr 32, fol. 13v (with permission from the University Library Utrecht).



PLATE 8 Psalm 26: 'I will wash my hands in innocence' and the 'Lavabo'. *St Albans Psalter*,
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 english/commentary/page117.shtml](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanpsalter/english/commentary/page117.shtml).



PLATE 9 Psalm 27: David points to his eyes. *The History Bible of Utrecht*, 1443. Den Haag KB, 69 B 10, fol. 12v (with permission from Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag).



PLATE 10 Psalm 34: David feigns madness. *Parma Psalter*, Biblioteca Paletina, Parma, MS Parm 1870 (Cod. De Rossi 510), fol. 43A (with permission from the owners of the facsimile of *The Parma Psalter*, at www.facsimile-editions.com).



PLATE 11 Psalm 36 in the Millennium Windows at Great Malvern Priory (published by permission of the Priory).



PLATES 12 AND 13 Psalm 37 on Charity and Greed. Two images from *Khudov Psalter*, The State Historical Museum, Moscow, MS D 129, fols. 35r and 35v (with permission from History Museum, Moscow). Images provided by Giovanni Scorcioni, www.FacsimileFinder.com.



PLATE 14 Psalm 38 and the Penitent Sinner. *St Albans Psalter*, image © Hildesheim, St Godehard, taken from <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page145.shtml>.



PLATE 15 Psalm 42 in the Apse Mosaic at Basilica Di San Clemente, Rome. (Permission given by the Prior of Basilica San Clemente).



PLATE 16 Psalm 44: 'The Protection of Israel' by Marc Chagall from *Les Psaumes de David*, Gérard Cramer Editeur, Geneva, 1979. (Permission given by DACS London, 2017; image provided by Agence Photographique de le Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris).



PLATE 18 Psalm 48: The Elevation of Zion. *Parma Psalter*, Biblioteca Paletina, Parma, MS Parm 1870 (Cod. De Rossi 510), fol. 65B (with permission from the owners of the facsimile of *The Parma Psalter*, at www.facsimile-editions.com).



PLATE 19 Psalm 50: Christ as the Personification of the Sun from the *Theodore Psalter*. British Library, MS 19.352, fol. 61v (with permission from the British Library Board).



PLATE 20 Psalm 51: Christ cleanses the Sins of a newborn Baby. *St Albans Psalter*, image © Hildesheim, St Godehard, taken from <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page171.shtml>.



PLATE 21 Psalm 52: 'He sought refuge in wealth' (verse 7) from the *Theodore Psalter*. British Library, MS 19.352, fol. 66r (with permission from the British Library Board).



PLATE 24 Psalm 62: The Psalmist offers his small naked Body to God. *St Albans Psalter*, image © Hildesheim, St Godehard, taken from <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanpsalter/english/commentary/page189.shtml>.



PLATE 25 Psalm 69: *Missa Dura: The Knight, Crystal Night, House No. 5* by Mordecai Ardon. Tate Gallery 00608 (with permission from Tate ©2017).



PLATE 26 Psalm 69: David in Water. *The History Bible of Utrecht*, 1443. Den Haag KB, 1939.69 B 10, fol. 21r (with permission from Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag).



PLATE 27 Psalm 72: David as King, attended by Sophia and Prophecy. *Paris Psalter*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Gr 139, fol. 7v (with permission from Bibliothèque nationale de France 2017).

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