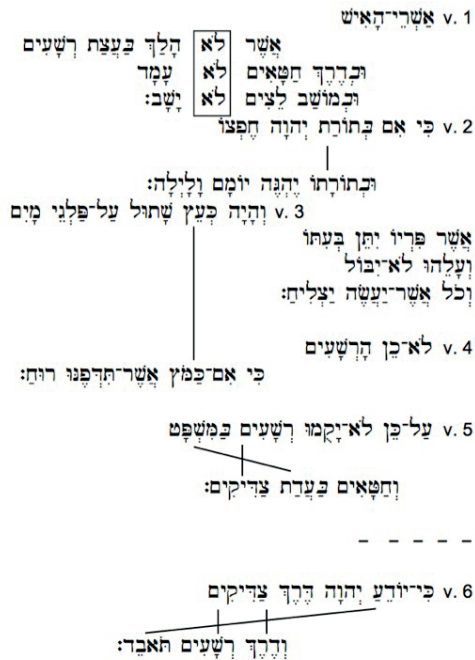


Appendix 7 A Rhetorical Analysis of Psalms 1 and 2

Various structural analyses have been conducted on Psalm 1; their results — mainly ABB'A' — are quite similar.⁹¹⁷ We propose a different chiasmic analysis, AA'B'B',⁹¹⁸ leaving out v. 6 with the following MT layout for Ps 1:1-6 (italics ours for emphasis):



917 Ps 1:1-6 can be seen as ABB'A' with some modifications. For example, Auffret dissects Psalm 1 as aBbA: a, v. 1; B, vv. 2-3; b, v. 4; A, vv. 5-6. Auffret, "Essai sur la structure littéraire du psaume 1," *BZ* 22 (1978): 41. Robert L. Alden sees Psalm 1 as A¹A²BBA¹A² (each verse corresponds to A or B). See idem, "Chiastic Psalms: A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalm 1-50," *JETS* 17 (1974): 14. Peter Craigie, however, provides an ABBA structure but leaves out v. 6 (*Psalms* 1-50, 59).

918 Our schema is: A, vv. 1-2; A', v. 3; B', v. 4, and B, v. 5. This chiasmic structure is not in conflict with the inter-verse connections within the structure. Our analysis is brief here but similar to our treatment of Psalm 110: for vv. 1-2, the preposition of ב; for vv. 2-3 (cf. Jer 17:7-10), the word-play on חָפַץ and צָלָה: interchange ח with פ; for vv. 3-4, the preposition ב and the presence of אֲשֶׁר; for vv. 4-5, the phrases לֹא-בִּי and the wicked רָשָׁעִים; for vv. 5-6, a chiasm as follows

- a רָשָׁעִים
- b צָדִיקִים
- a רָשָׁעִים
- b צָדִיקִים.

Is there any inclusio between v. 1 and v. 6? Two words are suggestive: דָּרַךְ and רָשָׁעִים. But we believe that the poem seems to leave v. 6 as an open end, or at least the redactor seems to connect this psalm with Psalm 2.

Obviously, vv. 1-3 talk about the person (הַיָּשָׁר), who – not yet labeled as “righteous” (צַדִּיק) until v. 5⁹¹⁹ – is depicted in both negative and positive ways while vv. 4-5 talk about the wicked.

Most interpreters are troubled by the negative descriptions (in the form of “wicked”, “sinners”, “scoffers”) in v. 1, which throw off their chiasmic analysis.⁹²⁰ Nonetheless, our observation of the presence of אֵל (5x) in vv. 1-2 should tie these two verses together because of their semantic value, that is, the person is not אֵל “in” the wicked circle but – in contrast (note אֵל אֵל – אֵל “on” the Torah. This constitutes A in the chiasm.

Verse 3 continues the depiction of this person but in a tree-simile with this Hebrew אֵל (“like”), thus constituting A'. Verse 4, in contrast with v. 3,⁹²¹ depicts the wicked in a chaff-simile with the same Hebrew אֵל (“like”), thus constituting B'.⁹²² Verse 5 continues the thought about the wicked;⁹²³ note the double occurrence of אֵל there,⁹²⁴ thus constituting B. Verse 6 by itself can be analyzed as having an “internal chiasmic structure”:⁹²⁵ verse 6a is about the righteous, which corresponds to AA' (vv. 1-3) while v. 6b the wicked, corresponds to B'B (vv. 4-5).⁹²⁶ Diagrammatically, our rhetorical structure of Psalm 1 is as follows:



⁹¹⁹ Fokkelman calls this one of the two “stylistic subtleties” that explain why the poet avoids the word “righteous” until v. 5. Idem, *85 Psalms*, 55.

⁹²⁰ Zenger is one of the few exceptions. In his co-authored commentary, he points to a similar outline (not chiasmic structure): vv. 1-3 as “Der Lebensweg des Gerechten,” vv. 4-5 as “Der Lebensweg der Frevler,” and v. 6 as “Abschliessende Begründung.” Zenger and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, *Die Psalmen I*, 46-48.

⁹²¹ Note that the verse begins with אֵל אֵל (“not so”).

⁹²² The tree-chaff idea in vv. 3-4 is indebted to Alden, “Chiastic Psalms,” 14.

⁹²³ Notice that the verse begins with אֵל אֵל (“therefore”), a clear-cut connection back to v. 4.

⁹²⁴ In v. 1, אֵל (“not,” 3x) occurs together with אֵל. Cf. v. 5: אֵל (implied in v. 5b) also with אֵל.

⁹²⁵ Our observation is indebted to Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 59.

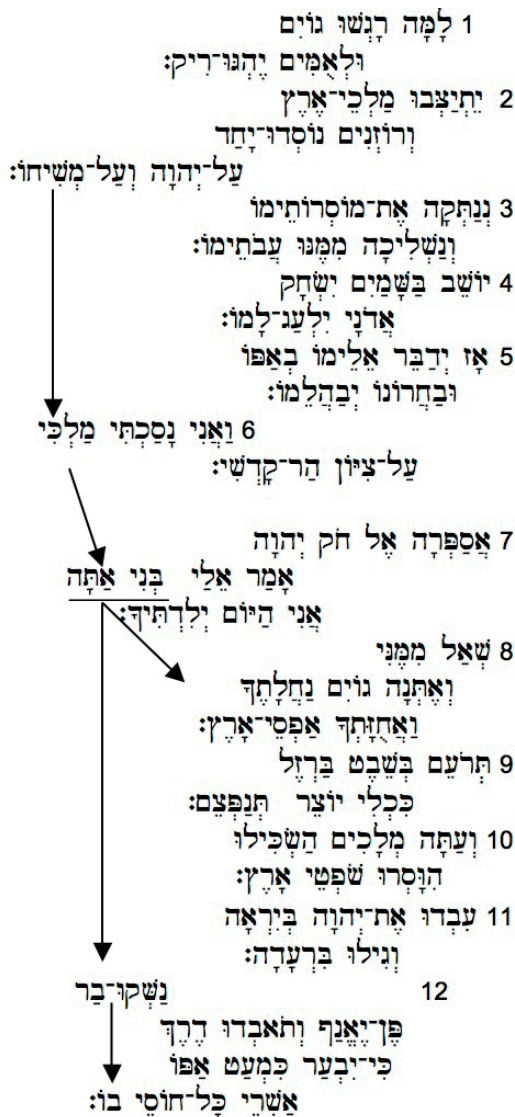
⁹²⁶ The notion of v. 6a as a recap for AA' and v. 6b for BB' is indebted to Auffret, “psaume 1,” 28. There, he diagrammatically summarizes two works: Jean Magne, “Répétitions de mots et exégèse dans quelques psaumes et le Pater,” *Bib* 39 (1958): 191-92 and Ridderbos, *Die Psalmen*, 119-20. Cf. Girard, *Analyse structurelle*, 56 for the role of v. 6.

The following analysis will examine the rhetorical structure of Psalm 2;⁹²⁷ thus, a detailed exegesis is not included. The majority of scholars view this poem as a 4-strophe structure.⁹²⁸ Fokkelman comments that the “overall outline is clear: four strophes of three verses, whose contents or semantic coherence show the AB-B'A' pattern.”⁹²⁹ In the following MT layout (for Psalm 2), several observations will be rendered.

927 For the composite nature of Psalm 2, see Oswald Loretz, “Eine kolometrische Analyse von Psalm 2,” in *Beiträge zur Psalmenforschung*, 9-26. Loretz argues that Psalm 2 contains both pre- and post-exilic elements but bound together in the post-exilic period (p. 25). A word of caution: the method to determine so-called pre- and post-exilic elements (original vs. later insertion) is subjective and therefore open to many inconclusive possibilities. To illustrate, Loretz argues “der Grundtext von Ps 2 in v. 1-5, 10-12a gegeben ist.” (p. 26). But according to Bardtke, the “Urform” of Psalm 2 only contains vv. 1, 3, 2[sic], 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12 (with deletion in v. 12). Idem, “Erwägungen zu Psalm 1,” 18. This illustrates the subjectivity of scholars who attempt to argue for the composite nature of a literary work.

928 Girard remarks that Psalm 2 should be divided into three strophes (“trityque”) instead. Idem, *Analyse structurelle*, 59: vv. 1-3, 4-9, 10-12. In vv. 4-9, Girard sees a chiasm ABBA, with vv. 6-7 as the center (p. 63). Then he surveys Auffret’s proposal (a similar view adopted by others in footnote 8, p. 63) of the rhetorical structure of Psalm 2 and rejects it (pp. 62-64), though later admits the proposal does not contradict Auffret’s (p. 64). The key difference is how vv. 4-9 is viewed. See Auffret, *The Literary Structure of Psalm 2*, JSOTSup 3 (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1977). Cf. also P. Lucas Kunz, “Der 2. Psalm in neuer Sicht,” *BZ* 20 (1976): 240-41.

929 Fokkelman, *85 Psalms*, 55. Concerning the syllable count: Fokkelman remarks that AA’ (total 114 syllables: 58+56) is “practically equal.” But for BB’ (110 syllables: 47+63; with a change of אֲדִירָה to יְהוָה in v. 4; cf. p. 388), it seems uneven. Note that at BB’, vv. 6-7 are crucial to our interpretation of this psalm. (We have observed, in our chapter 7, how the same thing occurs in Psalm 110 where vv. 3-4 seem to be out of sync or rhythm in the syllable count.)



First, the extra cola in v. 2 in the first strophe should be retained and read as a foundation for the theological development in this psalm. In the first strophe, vv. 1-3 each has two cola except v. 2 (cf. vv. 7, 8, 12).⁹³⁰ The extra cola in v. 2, *עַל-יְהוָה וְעַל-מֹשִׁיחוֹ*, is not in sync with the rest and hence is suggested to be a gloss,⁹³¹ which by implication

⁹³⁰ Ridderbos notes that vv. 2, 7, 8, and 12 are “Tristichen.” Idem, *Die Psalmen*, 83. Cf. Alfons Deissler, “Die Stellung von Psalm 2 im Psalter: Folgen für die Auslegung,” in *Beiträge zur Psalmenforschung*, 77.

⁹³¹ See *BHS*; Soggin supports the phrase as gloss. See Soggin, “Zum zweiten psalm,” in *Wort-Gebot-Glaube*, 193.

should be deleted. Yet this extra cola is the key that unlocks the rest of Psalm 2. It sets the stage for the text portraying these two characters, Yahweh and the messiah, *interactively* with each other and with the kings and the nations.

Second, verse 6 – a regular poetic line in strophe 2 – is an embedded speech itself, which links the messiah to the king.⁹³² The identity of the speaker is made clear by vv. 4-5, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ . . . יְהוָה Yahweh. Yet who is “my king” that Yahweh is going to set up? The only other (singular) character present – besides גוֹיִם “nations” and מְלָכֵי-אֶרֶץ “kings of the earth” (all plural) – is מָשִׁיחַ, the messiah.

Third, concerning the third strophe, identifying the speaker in v. 7 proves challenging but continues to tie Yahweh closely to his messianic king. Ridderbos observes:

Der Übergang von v. 4-6 (wenn man will: v. 1-6) zu v. 7-9 ist viel fließender: v. 7-9 enthalten eine genauere Ausarbeitung von v. 6. Dennoch hat auch dieser Übergang etwas Abruptes an sich; man beachte z. B. folgendes: das “Ich” in v. 6 ist das “Ich” Jahwes, das “Ich” in v. 7a ist das des Königs.⁹³³

The “I” in v. 7a (אֲנִי) refers back to “my king” in v. 6. According to the above analysis of v. 6, it is the same person, the messiah. Thus, v. 7a is the messianic king’s speech while v. 7b is the quotation of Yahweh’s words by the messianic king. The beginning phrase of v. 7b אֱלֹהֵי אֲמַר can then be glossed: “Yahweh said to me (messianic king).” The rendering of v. 7 should be [messianic king said:] “I will proclaim Yahweh’s decree, he [Yahweh] said to me [i.e., the messianic king]: ‘today I give you birth’.”⁹³⁴ If this interpretation is right, then vv. 8-9 are still a quotation of Yahweh’s speech: the “I”/“me” refers to Yahweh and the “you” to the messianic king.⁹³⁵

Fourth, concerning strophe 4, the use of וְעַתָּה (“and now therefore”) is meant to alert the reader that there is an informed inference or consequence here.⁹³⁶ The addressees are clearly stated in v. 10, that is, the kings and rulers, although the speech could either belong to Yahweh or to the poet himself or herself.⁹³⁷

⁹³² Fokkelman, *85 Psalms*, 55.

⁹³³ Ridderbos, *Die Psalmen*, 74.

⁹³⁴ We should reject Sonne’s reconstruction of this verse without textual support (אֲנִי יְהוָה הַמְלִיכָךְ) and read it in the historical situation about King Hezekiah. See idem, “The Second Psalm,” 50-54.

⁹³⁵ Cf. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 63. Note the use of double and single quotation marks in his translation.

⁹³⁶ BDB, 254. Major English translations render וְעַתָּה as “therefore.”

⁹³⁷ For some, vv. 10-12 are a continuation of Yahweh’s speech quoted by the messianic king. Auffret, *Structure of Psalm 2*, 26. According to Huub van de Sandt, the reason the LXX divides Psalm 2 into three parts (vv. 1-3, 4-5 and 6-12) is that they assume vv. 6-12 are credited to the same speaker and thus these verses should be considered an integral whole. van de Sandt, “The Quotations in Acts 13, 32-52 as a Reflection of Luke’s LXX Interpretation,” *Bib* 75 (1994): 31 (footnote 13).