

GOD AND ZION:  
FORM AND MEANING IN PSALM 48

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One of the gains achieved by form-criticism has been the study and classification of the psalms by *Gattungen* or "types"<sup>1</sup>. Such categorization leaves as an open question the central message of individual psalms even within the same *Gattung*. While designated a "Zion hymn" or "Canticle of Zion"<sup>2</sup>, Psalm 48 has been described by some scholars as praising Zion<sup>3</sup> and by others as extolling God<sup>4</sup>. Still others offer a synthesis of these two views. In A. Weiser's view<sup>5</sup>, praise of Zion cannot be separated from the glorification of God. Similarly M. Dahood calls Psalm 48 a hymn celebrating "the beauty and impregnability of Zion as well as the kingship of God who resides in Zion"<sup>6</sup>. The formulation of Weiser and Dahood capture the double character of praise in Psalm 48. The purpose of this discussion is to demonstrate how the poetics of the psalm clarify and contribute to the praise of God and Zion.

The strophic structure of Psalm 48 has been worked out by R. Kittel<sup>7</sup>, J. Calès<sup>8</sup>, E. Podechard<sup>9</sup>, and, in the greatest detail, L. Krinetzski<sup>10</sup>. The poem is divided into two halves, vv. 2-9 and 10-15, and each of these two halves has parts, thus forming four strophes of nearly equal length: vv. 2-4, 5-9, 10-12 and 13-15<sup>11</sup>. Verse 1 is extra-metrical. Verse 9, at the very heart of the poem, varies metrically from the rest of the psalm. Furthermore, verse 9 stands at the center of a large chiastic structure, specifically a "concentric pentacolon"<sup>12</sup>. This chiastic arrangement is formed largely by particles. Together these particles also create an alliterative effect as most of them begin with the letter kaph:

- A *kî* (v. 5)
- B *hēmmā* ... *kēn* (v. 6)
- C *ka'āšer* ... *kēn* (v. 9)
- B' *kē-* ... *kēn* (v. 11)
- A' *kî* (v. 15)<sup>13</sup>

The basic message of verse 9 is that the city attests to God's power. Throughout Psalm 48 the experience of God through the city is conveyed by the many verbs describing perceptions of, and reactions to, the divine presence in the city. The verbs reveal the many ways by which Gods' people and enemies experience divine salvation: praising God who is in his city (v. 2); knowing God in Zion as a refuge (v. 3); seeing and marvelling at the construction of Zion (v. 6); trembling before Zion and the God who dwells within its walls (vv. 6-7); hearing and seeing God's act of old in establishing Zion (v. 9); contemplating God's steadfast love, *ḥasdēkā* (v. 10); rejoicing because of God's judgements, *mišpāṭēkā* (v. 12); going about Zion and counting the towers (v. 13); and, finally, being led by God (v. 15). These diverse modes of experience point to the twin themes of Psalm 48: (1) God established Zion forever as his power dwells within her, freely guaranteeing her ongoing existence (vv. 2, 9); and (2) Zion's physical continuation witnesses to God's protective care for Israel (vv. 6-7, 13-14). These two themes are by no means unrelated. Specifically, "we" in the city have heard of God's great deeds in the past, and these include God's protection of the city. The city's ongoing life is a witness in the present time to God's faithfulness in past times of crisis. A number of poetic techniques link these themes together in Psalm 48 in such a way that these themes become mutually reinforcing.

## I

Chiasms are especially evident in Psalm 48. Some conspicuous examples include: *ʿīr*, "city" (v. 2) : *melek*, "king" (v. 3) :: *hammēlākīm*, "the kings" (v. 5) : *ʿīr* (v. 9); *ʿōlām*, "forever" (v. 9) : *siprū*, "count" (masc. pl. impv.; v. 13) :: *tēsappērū*, "you may recount" (v. 14) : *ʿōlām* (v. 15); *har šīyyôn*, "mount Zion" (v. 3) : *melek* (v. 3) :: *hammēlākīm* (v. 5) : *har šīyyôn* (v. 12); *ṣedeq*, "righteousness" (v. 11) : *har šīyyôn* (v. 12) :: *bēnôt yēhūdāh*, "daughters of Judah" (v. 12) : *mišpāṭēkā* (v. 12). The words *ʿēlōhīm* and *ʿēlōhēnū* occur eight times in Psalm 48 (vv. 2, 4, 9 [twice], 10, 11, 15 [twice]). As a result of this frequency, *ʿēlōhīm* and *ʿēlōhēnū* figure in a multitude of chiasms. *ʿēlōhīm* and *ʿēlōhēnū* in vv. 2 and 15 constitute the outside terms of chiasms with *har* (vv. 2, 3), *melek* and *hammēlākīm* (vv. 3, 5), *siprū* and *tēsappērū* (vv. 13, 14), *šīyyôn* (vv. 3, 12, 13), *ʿarmēnôtēhā*, "its (her) palaces" (vv. 4, 14) and *ʿōlām* (vv. 9, 14). *ʿēlōhīm* and *ʿēlōhēnū* in vv. 9 and 10 serve as the inside elements of chiasms with *šīyyôn* (vv. 3, 12, 13), *har* (vv. 2, 15) and *ʿarmēnôtēhā* (vv. 4, 14). One result

of the many chiasms with *ʿēlōhīm* and *ʿēlōhēnū* is to identify Zion, the mountain and its palaces with God. The chiasms formed by *ʿēlōhīm* and *ʿēlōhēnū* as the inside terms in vv. 9 and 10, especially suggest that God resides in Zion. Correspondingly, the chiasms with *ʿēlōhīm* and *ʿēlōhēnū* as the outside terms set God around Zion, the mountain and her palaces. The rhetorical impact of these chiasms is to assert that God's protective care surrounds Zion<sup>14</sup>, and that his presence dwells within the city. These chiasms recapitulate the double themes of Psalm 48: Zion is a physical witness to God's protection and God is present in the city.

The poetic effects with the word *ʿēlōhīm* extend beyond chiastic structures. In vv. 14-15 the audience is asked:

šitū libbēkem lēhēlāh<sup>15</sup>  
 passēgū<sup>16</sup> ʿarmēnōtēhā<sup>17</sup>  
 lēmaʿan tēsappērū lēdōr ʿaḥārōn  
 kī zeh ʿēlōhīm  
 ʿēlōhēnū ʿōlām wāʿed

Set your heart on her rampart  
 Divide her citadels  
 So that you may recount to another generation  
 That this is God,  
 Our God forever and ever.

The immediate antecedents of *zeh*, "this"<sup>18</sup>, are *ʿarmēnōtēhā*, "her citadels" and *hēlāh*, "her rampart", which are to witness to the next generation about God. Dahood<sup>19</sup> translates *zeh ʿēlōhīm* as "This is God's", based on the supposed analogy with *zeh sīnay*, "the one of Sinai", in Judg. 5:5<sup>20</sup>. This analogy is, however, imprecise since, according to Dahood's own translation, *zeh ʿēlōhīm* does not constitute a construct phrase. Of greater difficulty, *zeh sīnay* contains a place name, while no place name occurs in *zeh ʿēlōhīm*. Most commentators assume that *ʿēlōhīm* always means "God" in Psalm 48, and this would apply apparently in the case of *zeh ʿēlōhīm*. The following phrase *ʿēlōhēnū ʿōlām wāʿed*, "our God forever and ever", would seem to require of *zeh ʿēlōhīm* the translation "this is God". Otherwise, an inexplicable change in subject would result. Still, the translation, "this is God", is awkward for Biblical Hebrew, and another translation may be indicated. As *zeh* refers to God's palaces and ramparts, *ʿēlōhīm* in v. 15 may be translated "divine"<sup>21</sup>. This meaning is known elsewhere in the

Bible<sup>22</sup> and may apply in this instance. Whether *ʿēlōhīm* in Ps. 48:15 is to be translated by "God" or "divine", the phrase *zeh ʿēlōhīm*, in referring to Zion, strengthens the identification of Zion with God. The divine name here points back to the physical structures of the city, and thereby highlights the interrelationship of God and Zion. Zion is the continual sign of God's care for Israel.

The identification of a mountain as the home of a deity is not uncommon in the Canaanite world<sup>23</sup>. Mount Saphon of Ugaritic lore, the abode of the god Baal, especially invites comparison with Zion in Psalm 48, since this psalm calls Zion *yarkētē šāpôn*<sup>24</sup>. The similarities by no means end there<sup>25</sup>. In the Ugaritic story of King Keret, Mount Saphon laments the ailing monarch:

tbkyk ʿab ḡr bʿl  
 špn ḥlm qdš  
 ʿany ḥlm ʿadr  
 ḥl rḥb mknpt

The mountain of Baal weeps for you, father,  
 Saphon, the holy precinct,  
 The mighty precinct groans,  
 The precinct, wide of span<sup>26</sup>.

First of all, this passage, like Psalm 48, uses the Northwest Semitic word, *ḥl*, "rampart"<sup>27</sup>. Perhaps by way of synecdoche, *ḥl* refers not only to the ramparts around the city, but also to the area inside them. Secondly, the picture of Mount Saphon lamenting the illness of King Keret serves as an apt foil to the description of Zion in Psalm 48. Just as Mount Saphon weeps for the life of one king, Zion rejoices in the power of a second king, namely God. Finally, much as Mount Saphon is called *ʿil*, "divine", in Ugaritic (CTA 3.3.26, 3.4.63), so *ʿēlōhīm* is applied perhaps to Zion in Psalm 48.

## II

Like *ʿēlōhīm*, *ʿōlām* is a word applied to both God and Zion in Psalm 48, and thereby magnifies the relationship between the two. As commentators have noted for a long time, *ʿōlām* closes both vv. 9 and 15, which correspond to the ends of Psalm 48's two halves. In v. 9 God is said to have established her<sup>28</sup>, that is Zion, *ʿad-ʿōlām*, "forever". In v. 15, God is called *ʿēlōhēnū ʿōlām wāʿed*, "our God forever and ever". The attribution of *ʿōlām* to both God and Zion is

further strengthened by the chiasm formed by *‘l*m and *‘d* in vv. 9 and 15, namely *‘ad: ‘ólām :: ólām : wā‘ed*. Zion's eternity is founded on God's own eternity. Confidence in the city's eternity rests on God's own nature, and conversely, the city's presence through the ages points to God's own eternal care for Israel.

### III

Psalm 48 contains additional means of linking Zion with God. One way involves the image of God as the speaker's refuge, frequently found in the Psalms<sup>29</sup>. In Ps. 48:4 God is described not only as a "refuge" (*mišgāb*) in general terms, but specifically it is God in Zion's palaces who is known as a refuge. Zion is known as the place whose safety is guaranteed by God. A similar effect is achieved in Ps. 48:2: *gādól yhwh ūmhullāl mē'ōd*, "great is Yhwh and greatly praised". This phrase occurs in other psalms, but with the difference that Ps. 48:2, *bē'ir 'ēlōhēnū*, "in the city of our God", connects it with God's city<sup>30</sup>. Whereas this phrase is not tied to a locale elsewhere in the Psalms, Ps. 48:2 is specific in defining God's city as the place where God is especially recognized. God thereby provides both security against external threats (vv. 5-8), and safe contemplation within Zion's walls (v. 10) (which may be liturgical in character in vv. 13-14<sup>31</sup>). The modification of the images of God as a "refuge" in v. 4 and "great and greatly praised" in v. 2 intensifies the message that God's very presence resides within the city and protects it. Wordplay with the root *\*gd* occasions yet another means of identifying God with Zion. The word *gādól* in v. 1 refers to God's greatness, whereas *migdālēhā* in v. 13 are "her", i.e. Zion's "towers". This wordplay draws attention to God's magnitude as the basis for Zion's towers which in turn witness to God's omnipotence. Similarly, the wordplays between *šām*, "there" (v. 7), namely Jerusalem<sup>32</sup>, and *šimkā*, "your name" (v. 11), that is, God's name, and between counting (*siprū*) towers (v. 13) and recounting (*tēsappērū*) to another generation that "this is God" (*zeh 'ēlōhīm*) (vv. 14-15) contribute to the interrelating of praises of God and Zion<sup>33</sup>.

In conclusion, Psalm 48 contains numerous chiasms, wordplays, and attributions of similar traits to both God and Zion to show how the qualities of God form the basis of, and are demonstrated by, the ongoing existence of Zion. The "divinity", eternity and safety of Zion all hinge on God's own nature as divine, eternal and caring. God is the basis of Zion's continuation, and concomitantly, Zion is the concrete sign to each generation that God has bestowed blessings to

the people. The praises of God and Zion magnify one another in Psalm 48.

- <sup>1</sup> B.S. Childs, *Reflections on the Modern Study of the Psalms*, in F.M. Cross-W.E. Lemke-P.D. Miller, Jr (eds), *Magnalia Dei. The Mighty Acts of God. Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, Garden City, New York 1976, 377-79; E. Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, in J.H. Hayes (ed.), *Old Testament Form Criticism*, San Antonio, Texas 1977, 198-99.
- <sup>2</sup> H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (HAT), Göttingen 1926, 205; H. Gunkel-J. Begrich, *Einleitung in die Psalmen* (HKAT suppl.), Göttingen 1933, 82; H.J. Kraus, *Psalmen* (BKAT XV/1), Neukirchen 1961, 356; S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (trans. D.P. Ap-Thomas), Oxford 1962, 1.90; R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (HSM 4), Cambridge, Mass. 1972, 143.
- <sup>3</sup> B. Duhm, *Die Psalmen* (KHAT 14), Freiburg-Leipzig-Tübingen 1899, 137; Podechard, *Le Psautier I. Psaumes 1-75*, Lyon 1949, 213; Kraus, *Psalmen*, 356; R. Tournay-R. Schwab, *Les Psaumes (La Sainte Bible, 3rd ed.)*, Paris 1964, 231; see also G. Wanke, *Prophecy and Psalms in the Persian Period*, in W.D. Davies-L. Finklestein (eds), *The Cambridge History of Judaism I. Introduction. The Persian Period*, Cambridge 1984, 185.
- <sup>4</sup> Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.35; C. Westermann, *Das Loben Gottes in den Psalmen* (2nd ed.), Göttingen 1963, 68; J. Kühlewein, *Geschichte in den Psalmen* (Calwer Theologische Monographien 2), Stuttgart 1973, 116.
- <sup>5</sup> Weiser, *The Psalms. A Commentary* (trans. H. Harwell), London 1965, 380.
- <sup>6</sup> M. Dahood, *The Psalms. I. 1-50* (AB 16), Garden City, New York 1966, 289. See also J. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* (HSM 10), Missoula, Mont. 1976, 15-16.
- <sup>7</sup> Kittel, *Die Psalmen* (KAT XIII), Leipzig-Erlangen 1922, 177.
- <sup>8</sup> Calès, *Les Psaumes des fils de Coré: Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 13 (1923), 547-53; and *Le livre des Psaumes I. Introduction, Psaumes: I-LXXII (Vulgate: I-LXXI)*, Paris 1936, 490.
- <sup>9</sup> Podechard, *Le Psautier*, 1.213.
- <sup>10</sup> Krinetski, *Zur Poetik und Exegese von Ps 48*: BZ, 4 (1960), 70-97. See also J. Morgenstern, *Psalm 48*: HUCA, 16 (1941), 1-95; M. Dahood, *The Language and Date of Psalm 48 (47)*: CBO, 16 (1954), 15-19; A. Deissler, *Der anthologische Charakter des Ps. XLVIII: Sacra Pagina*, 1 (1958), 495-502; C. Schedl, *Psalmen. In Rythmus des Urtextes*, Wien 1964, 87-88; M. Palmer, *The Cardinal Points in Psalm 48: Biblica*, 46 (1965), 357-58.
- <sup>11</sup> The first half of the poem is demarcated by the inclusions of *yhwh*, "Yahweh", and *bē'ir 'ēlōhēnū*, "in the city of our God", in

vv. 2 and 9. <sup>2</sup>Ēlōhīm, "God", opens and closes both halves of the poem in vv. 2, 9, 10 and 15. The larger chiasmic structures of the poem and the use of <sup>ʿ</sup>ōlām, "forever", and <sup>ʿ</sup>ed, "ever" in vv. 9 and 15 confirm this division. (On the larger chiasm involving <sup>ʿ</sup>ōlām and <sup>ʿ</sup>ed, see below). The outstanding poetic features of the first stanza, vv. 2-4, include (besides those examined below): chiasms, <sup>ʿ</sup>ir <sup>2</sup>ēlōhēnū : har qodšō, "his holy mountain" :: har šiyyōn, "mt Zion" : qiryat melek rāb, "in the city of the Great King"; and, bē<sup>ʿ</sup>ir : <sup>2</sup>ēlōhēnū :: <sup>2</sup>ēlōhīm : bē<sup>ʿ</sup>armēnōtēhā, "her palaces"; assonance, ā and ō in gādōl, šāpōn; ē and ō/ō in mē<sup>ʿ</sup>ōd, "greatly", <sup>2</sup>ēlōhēnū, <sup>2</sup>ēlōhīm, bē<sup>ʿ</sup>armēnōtēhā; ō/o in nōda<sup>ʿ</sup>, "is known", nōp, "height", mēšōš, "joy", kol, "every", šiyyōn, qodšō, alliteration, r and y in haR šiyyōn YaRkētē Šāpōn qiryat melek Rāb. The choice of rāb instead of gādōl is evidently due to considerations of alliteration and meter. (On melek gādōl and melek rāb corresponding to Akkadian šarru rabū in 2 Kgs. 18:18, 29; Isa. 36:4, 13; Ps. 47:3; Eccles. 9:14; Mal. 1:14; see J.J.M. Roberts, *Zion in the Theology of the David-Solomonic Empire*, in T. Ishida [ed.], *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays*, Winona Lake, Ind. 1982, 94; A. Malamat, *A Political Look at the Kingdom of David and Solomon and its Relations with Egypt: Studies in the Period of David and Solomon*, 197). The -ū assonance is especially strong in vv. 5-9, as is the -kā/-ékā assonance-consonance in vv. 10-12. For further poetic features, see Krinetski: BZ, 4 (1960), 77-97, esp. 77-79; Palmer: *Biblica*, 46 (1965), 357-58.

- 12 W.G.E. Watson, *Chiasmic Patterns in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, in J.W. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, Hildesheim 1981, 130, 143; Id., *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (JSOT Suppl 26), Sheffield 1984, 187-88.
- 13 For a "concentric pentacolon" in another Song of Zion, see n. 28. To the major chiasmic structure of Psalm 48, one might add bē- in vv. 8 and 10, which would cast doubt on the emendation of bē<sup>ʿ</sup>ūah to <sup>ʿ</sup>kērūah proposed by many commentators. One may also note that <sup>2</sup>ēlōhīm in vv. 4 and 15 and <sup>2</sup>ēlōhēnū in vv. 2 and 15 form a further chiasm with the chiasmic structure of particles. If one were to add the wordplay of šām (v. 7) and šimkā (v. 11), a larger chiasmic arrangement may be perceived:

- A <sup>2</sup>ēlōhēnū (v. 2)  
 B kī (v. 5)  
 C hēm māh ... kēn (v. 6)  
 D šām (v. 7)  
 E bē- (v. 8)  
 F k- ... kēn (and <sup>2</sup>ēlōhēnū = A and A') (v. 9)  
 E' bē- (v. 10)  
 D' šimkā (v. 11)

C' *kē*- ... *kēn* (v. 11)

B' *kī* (v. 15)

A' *'ēlōhēnū* (v. 15)

On the poetic alliteration of *k*- in this chiasmic structure, see Krinetzski: BZ, 4 (1960), 78.

<sup>14</sup> See Ps. 145: 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> Reading 3 fem. sg. suf., with LXX τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῆς, "in its strength" and Peshitta *haylāh*, "her strength". So Duhm, *Die Psalmen*, 136; Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 208; Kraus, *Psalmen*, 356 and many other commentators. P. Jouon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique*, Rome 1923, §94h, offers the grammatical explanation that the mappiq in the suffix has been omitted, as happens before the *bgdkpt* letters. The fem. absolute form, *hēlāh*, as preserved by MT, is otherwise unattested in BH. The masc. forms *hēl* and *hēl* appear nine times in BH. See TDOT 4: 268-69, and n. 27 below.

<sup>16</sup> Calès (*Le livre des Psaumes*, 488) renders *passēgū* as "divide", i.e. to "consider piece by piece". Kittel (*Die Psalmen*, 177) reads *piqqēdū* for *passēgū*. G.R. Driver (*Notes on Psalms I, 1-72*: JTS, 43 [1947], 155) translates *passēgū* by "bestride her palaces". Driver took as cognates the Arb. root \**psq* "to part the legs" and Akk. *pussuk/qu*, "to travel" (cf. AHW, 839). Dahood (*The Language and Date*, 17) proposes to take *psgw* as the particle *p*- "and", plus *sūgū*, G masc. pl. impv. of *sūg*, "to fence in". The root *psg* is *hapax legomenon* in BH, but occurs in post-BH and Aramaic in the meanings, "to divide, branch off; cut one's way through" (M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumin, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, London-New York 1903, 1.1191-92, see BDB, 819. Cf. LXX καταδιέλεσθε, "divide", Vulgate *separate* and Peshitta *'qwrw*, "pull down" (see F.E. Greenspahn, *Hapax Legomena in Biblical Hebrew. A Study of the Phenomenon and Its Treatment Since Antiquity with Special Reference to Verbal Forms* [SBLDS 74], Chico, Cal. 1984, 57 n. 48, 72, 151). The choice of such a rare word may have been inspired in part by the alliteration it creates with the root \**spr* in vv. 14-15: *siprū* ... *passēgū* ... *tēsappērū* (note also the final -ū in all three verbs).

<sup>17</sup> On this word, see S.E. Loewenstamm, *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literature* (AOAT 204), Kevelaer-Neukirchen-Vluyn 1980, 3-5.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. M. Battenweiser, *The Psalms*, Chicago 1938, 109.

<sup>19</sup> Dahood, *Psalms*, 1.289.

<sup>20</sup> See F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, Cambridge, Mass. 1973, 99-105, esp. 100-103; Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 108-20, esp. 108.

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- 21 Or is *ʾēlōhīm ʾēlōhēnū* an Elohist recension of *yhwh ʾēlōhēnū*, as has been detected in Ps. 45:8 (so R.E. Murphy, *Psalms*, in R.E. Brown-J.A. Fitzmyer-R.E. Murphy [eds], *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1968, 1.584) ? Cf. GKC, 126aa; Levenson, *Theology of the Program*, 23 n. 47. It is possible also to translate v. 15: "that it is he, God, our God forever and ever, it is he who leads us". See GKC, 136d.
- 22 See D.W. Thomas, *A Consideration of Some Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew* : VT, 3 (1953), 210-19; and *Some Further Remarks on Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew* : VT, 18 (1968), 120-21; Murphy, *Psalms*, 584; TDOT 1:282.
- 23 See Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*.
- 24 For the much-discussed connection between Zion, Saphon and Ugaritic *špn*, see Morgenstern, *Psalm 48*, 47-48; M. Astour, in RSP II, 318-24; Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 142-44; J.J.M. Roberts, *Šāpôn in Job 28:7* : *Biblica*, 56 (1975), 554-57; E.T. Mullen, *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (HSM 24), Chico, Cal. 1980, 154-55; G. Wanke, *Die Zions Theologie der Korachiten* (BZAW 97), Berlin 1966, 66-68; Kraus, *Psalmen*, 342-45; Weiser, *The Psalms*, 381; A. Robinson, *Zion and Šāpôn in Psalm XLVIII 3* : VT, 24 (1974), 118-23; J.M. Miller, *The Korahites of Southern Judah* : CBQ, 32 (1970), 62 n. 12; H. Gese-M. Höfner-K. Rudolph, *Die Religionen Altsyriens, Altarabiens und der Mandäer* (Die Religionen der Menschheit 102), Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln-Mainz 1970, 376 (and the review by M.H. Pope: UF, 3 [1971], 376); E. Lipiński, *El's Abode* : OLP, 2 (1971), 58-64.
- 25 See especially Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 143, n. 63. The piling up of epithets of Zion in Ps. 48:2-3 is especially comparable to CTA 3.3. 27-28 for both content and style.
- 26 For text, notes and translation, see H.L. Ginsberg, *The Legend of King Keret* (BASOR suppl. series 2-3), New Haven, Conn. 1946, 44; TOu, 550-51; MLC, 309.
- 27 Noted by J.F.A. Sawyer-J. Strange, *Notes on the Keret-Text* : IEJ, 14 (1964), 96-98. Most commentators posit an etymological relationship between BH *hēl/hēl* (*hēlah*) and the general Semitic root *\*hy/wl*, "to go around" (see BDB, 196; HAL, 199). An exception is C. Rabin (*Hittite Words in Hebrew* : Or., 32 [1963], 299). For further discussion of Ugaritic *hl*, see Ginsberg, *The Legend of King Keret*, 44; M. Dietrich-O. Loretz-J. Sanmartin, *Zur ugaritischen Lexicographie III, Vormauer, Vorwerke* : UF, 7 (1975), 159, 161; P. Marrassini, *Formazione del lessico dell'edilizia militare nel semitico di Siria* (QuSem 1), Firenze 1971, 56-63; J.C. de Moor-K. Spronk, *Problematical Passages in the Legend of Kirtu (II)* : UF, 14 (1982), 181. See also n. 15 above. Ugaritic *hl* occurs in cultic texts which might lend credence to an

interpretation of Ps. 48:13f. as a cultic procession to the city walls (see n. 31 below). The pertinent Ugaritic texts do not refer, however, to processions (as far as the texts reveal), but to rituals for royal purification (see J.-M. de Tarragon, *Le culte à Ugarit* [Cahiers de la RB 19], Paris 1980, 82-83). On the motif of the lamenting wall in BH, see Lam 2: 13-19.

- 28 The theme of God's establishing Zion occurs in the center of another Song of Zion, Ps. 87:5. There the phrase *wēhū' yēkōnēnehā 'elyōn*, "for the Most High himself will establish her" (RSV), follows *bah*, "in her", a word at the middle of an A B C B' A' chiasm (*bāk* [v. 3] :: *šām* [v. 6] : *bāk* [v. 7]).
- 29 God is called a "refuge" under a variety of BH synonyms: (a) *mišgāb*, Pss. 9:10; 18:3; 46:8, 12; 48:4; 59:10, 17, 18; 62:37; 94:2, 3; 144:2; (b) *mahseh*, *mahāseh*, Pss. 14:6; 46:2; 61:4; 62:8, 9; 71:7; 73:28; 91:2, 9; 94:22; 104:18; 142:6; (c) *mā'oz*, Pss. 27:1; 28:8; 31:3, 5; 37:39; 43:2; 52:9; 60:9; 71:7; 108:9. The psalmist is often said "to take refuge (*hsh*) in God (Pss. 2:11, 20; 5:12; 7:2; 11:1; 16:1; 17:7; 18:3, 31; 25:20; 31:2, 19, 20; 34:9, 23; 36:8; 37:40; 52:2; 52:7; 61:5; 64:11; 71:1; 91:4; 118:8, 9; 141:8; 144:2). See the comments of Deissler, *Der anthologische Charakter*, 497.
- 30 Pss. 96:4; 145:3; see also 1 Chron. 16:25. See Deissler, *Der anthologische Charakter*, 495-96. The occurrence of this phrase in both Psalms 48 and 96 raises at least the issue of the relationship between "Songs of Zion" and "Enthronement Hymns". Note also the correspondence between Pss. 47:11 and 97:8, and the occurrence of *melek rāb* in Ps. 48:3 compared with *melek gādōl* in Ps. 47:3 (see n. 11; and G. Buccellati, *The Enthronement of the King and Capital City in Texts from Ancient Mesopotamia and Syria*, in *Studies Presented to A.L. Oppenheim*, Chicago 1964, 54-61, esp. 60-61).
- 31 See, for example, Duhm, *Die Psalmen*, 137; Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 207; Kittel, *Die Psalmen*, 177; Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1.7, 85, 87, 142, 151-52; Dahood, *Psalms*, 1.292; Weiser, *The Psalms*, 383. The alternative is non-liturgical. These verses may simply invoke the audience to consider the physical complex of the city as a sign of God's powerful deed in establishing Zion. One may compare Gilgamesh, Tablets I:16-19 and XI:305-308. In these passages, Gilgamesh tells Urshanabi to go up on the walls of Uruk which witness of the monumental labor of the seven sages (see ANET<sup>3</sup>, 73, 97; J. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*, Philadelphia 1982, 140, 146-149; D.J. Wiseman, *A Gilgamesh Epic Fragment from Nimrud: Iraq*, 37 [1975], 157-63).
- 32 For *šām* as referring to Jerusalem, see Krinetski: BZ, 4 (1960), 89; and R.J. Tournay, *Quand Dieu parle aux hommes la langue de l'amour. Études sur le Cantique des Cantiques* (Cahiers de la RB

21), Paris 1982, 37, n. 17. For a different grammatical interpretation of *šām*, see Buittenweiser, *The Psalms*, 108.

- <sup>33</sup> The wordplays, *melek* and *hammēlākīm* (vv. 3, 5) and *nōda<sup>c</sup>* and *nō<sup>c</sup>ādū* (vv. 4, 5), contrast God with the enemy kings (see Dahood, *Psalms*, 1.291). The wordplay *hēlāh* and *hīl* (vv. 7, 14) links the defenses of Zion with the enemies' fearful reaction before Zion and the powerful God who dwells in the city. The pairs, *nōda<sup>c</sup>* and *nō<sup>c</sup>ādū*, and *hēlāh* and *hīl*, form a number of semantic-sonant chiasms (on which, see J.S. Kselman, *Semantic-Sonant Biblical: Biblica*, 58 [1977], 219-23; and Watson, *Chiastic Patterns*, 132). *Nōda<sup>c</sup>* and *nō<sup>c</sup>ādū* form semantic-sonant chiasmus with *ʾēlōhīm* (vv. 4, 7); *bēʿir ʾēlōhēnū* (vv. 2, 9); *hāʾāreṣ* (v. 3) and *ʾereṣ* (v. 11); *šiyyōn* (vv. 3, 12). *Hēlāh* and *hīl* form semantic-sonant chiasmus with *ʾēlōhīm* (vv. 4, 14).