

The Arrangement of Psalms 3-8¹

KEVIN G. SMITH (SATS) & WILLIAM R. DOMERIS (SATS)

ABSTRACT

An exhaustive analysis of Psalms 3-8 suggests that the editors of the Psalter juxtaposed psalms on the basis of link words. The headings and verbal links suggest that Psalms 3 and 7 belong together, as do Psalms 4-6. In this article, we propose that the editors formed this collection by inserting Psalms 4-6 between Psalms 3 and 7, which were neighbours in another collection. The strong verbal links between Psalms 3 and 4 provide the rationale for this merger. They then rounded off this miniature collection by joining Psalm 8 to Psalm 7, based on the hook word "name."

A INTRODUCTION

Psalms 1-8 are widely recognised as the first sub-grouping of psalms within Book I of the Psalter, with Psalms 1-2 as an introduction to the Psalter, and Psalms 3-8 as the first miniature sub-group within Book I.² In 1980, Joseph Brennan rightly observed that "one of the principles governing the compilation of this collection [Pss 1-8] was that of juxtaposing Psalms in such a way that various key words and expressions in one pick up and develop a theme already enunciated in another."³ Our exhaustive analysis of the verbal links between Psalms 3-8 not only confirms Brennan's observation, but also offers some clues as to how the editors might have compiled this collection of psalms. *While juxtaposing psalms with link words as their chief organising criterion, the editors may have inserted Psalms 4-6 between Psalms 3 and 7, which were neighbouring hymns in an earlier collection, and appended Psalm 8 as a conclusion to the collection.*

The support for our hypothesis begins with the headings, which bind Psalms 4-6 together, and tie Psalm 3 to Psalm 7. Abnormally strong verbal links between Psalms 3 and 7 indicate that they were once neighbours, while the equally strong ties Psalm 4 has with Psalm 3 accounts for their final positioning. Psalm 8 ends a series of laments on a note of praise, joined to

¹ This article summarises the conclusions of Kevin G. Smith, "The redactional criteria and objectives underlying the arrangement of Psalms 3-8," (Ph.D. dissertation, South African Theological Seminary, 2008).

² Casper J. Labuschagne, "Introduction to Book I: Psalms 1-41," 12-14. Cited 3 February 2010. Online: www.labuschagne.nl/intro1.pdf, sees Psalms 2-8 as a mini-corpus, with Psalm 1 as the introduction to the Psalter.

³ Joseph P. Brennan, "Psalms 1-8: Some Hidden Harmonies," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (1980): 25.

Psalm 7 by the hook word “name.” We shall now summarize the supporting evidence from the headings and the verbal links.

B THE HEADINGS

There is general consensus amongst scholars working on the arrangement of the Psalter that the headings played a significant role in the arrangement of the psalms, but that they were not the primary basis of arrangement.⁴ Since they probably served as an initial basis of collection, it makes sense to begin by analyzing links between the headings of Psalms 3-8. What links are evident amongst the headings of Psalms 3-8 and, more importantly, what significance do these links have for the arrangement of the corpus?

The only link shared by all six psalms is the designation דָּוִד (“of David”).⁵ If we are correct in judging that Psalms 1 and 2 serve as an editorial introduction to the Psalter,⁶ that Psalms 9 and 10 formed one composition, so that the heading of Psalm 9 subsumes Psalm 10,⁷ and that Psalm 33 originally

⁴ Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985). R. Dean Anderson, Jr., “The Division and Order of the Psalms,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 56 (1994): 219-241. Leslie McFall, “The Evidence for a Logical Arrangement of the Psalter,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 62 (2000): 223-256.

⁵ In Book I of the Psalter, all except Psalms 1, 2, 10 and 33 are דָּוִד psalms.

⁶ This view is supported by the following scholars, amongst others: Joseph P. Brennan, “Some hidden harmonies in the fifth book of the Psalter,” in *Essays in honour of Joseph P. Brennan* (ed. Robert F. McNamara, New York: St Bernard’s Seminary, 1976), 126-158, Brennan, “Psalms 1-8,” Brevard S. Childs, *An introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, Erich Zenger, “Der Psalter als Wegweiser und Wegbegleiter: Ps 1-2 als Proömium des Psalmenbuchs,” in *Sie Wandern von Kraft zu Kraft: Aufbrüche, Wege, Begegnungen—Festgabe für Bischof Reinhard Lettman* (eds. A. Angenendt and H. Vorgrimler, Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 29-47, Robert Cole, “An Integrated Reading of Psalms 1 and 2,” *JSOT* 26 (2002): 75-88, James Limburg, “Psalms, the Book of,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* 5: 522-536. John Goldingay, *Psalms: volume 1, Psalms 1-41* (Grand Rapids: Baker).

⁷ E.g. Robert G. Bratcher & William D. Reyburn, *A translator’s handbook on the Book of Psalms* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), James A. Motyer, “The psalms,” in *The new Bible dictionary: 21st century edition*, 4th ed. (ed. Donald A. Carson, Oak Harbour: Logos Research Systems, 1994), Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (Oak Harbour: Logos Research Systems, 1998), Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), John Strugnell & Hanan Eshel, “It’s elementary: Psalms 9 and 10 and the order of the alphabet,” *Bible Review* 17 (2001): 41-44, Samuel L. Terrien, *The Psalms: strophic structure and theological commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), Goldingay, *Psalms*. Labuschagne, “Introduction to Book I,” Patrick D. Miller, “The ruler in Zion and the hope of the poor: Psalms 9-10 in the context of the Psalter,” in *David and Zion: Biblical studies in honor of J. J. M. Roberts* (eds. B. F. Batto, J.J.M. Roberts, and K.L. Roberts, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004): 187-197.

bore a לְדָוִד inscription,⁸ then the entire body of Book I is a collection of לְדָוִד psalms. Therefore, part of the significance of לְדָוִד throughout Book I is that it served as the earliest and most basic criterion for bringing this group of psalms together.⁹

The next clearest parallel between the headings is that all except Psalm 7 bear the genre designation מְזִמּוֹר (“a psalm”). There are 57 מְזִמּוֹר psalms in the Psalter, 22 of them in Book I. Amongst the 57 מְזִמּוֹר psalms, only five occur in isolation (Pss 15, 73, 92, 98, and 143). The remainder all occur in clusters ranging in size from two to seven consecutive psalms.¹⁰ There is one cluster of seven, one of six, one of five, three of four, four of three, and five pairs. This indicates a tendency to group מְזִמּוֹר psalms.¹¹ With reference to the corpus under investigation, it marks Psalm 7 as the odd one out, the only non-מְזִמּוֹר psalm among Psalms 3-9/10. The implication is that genre considerations were a factor in the grouping of psalms, but they were not the overarching consideration. Given the clear tendency to cluster מְזִמּוֹר psalms, the editors must have had a reason for inserting a שְׁגִיּוֹן psalm (Psalm 7 is the only שְׁגִיּוֹן psalm in the Psalter) amongst six מְזִמּוֹר psalms (3-6 and 8-9/10).

Psalms 4-6 form a heading-defined trio of psalms. Their headings are virtually identical, as Table 1 illustrates.

⁸ It is probable that the לְדָוִד inscription in the heading of Psalm 32 covers Psalm 33 as well (e.g. Wilson, *Editing*, 131; Anderson, “Division and order,” 229). According to Craigie (*Psalms 1-50*, 270, n. 1), both the Septuagint and the Qumran evidence (see 4QPs) attribute Psalm 33 to David, while there are eight Hebrew manuscripts which join Psalms 32 and 33. Craigie tentatively concludes that Psalms 32 and 33 were originally separate compositions, each with its own Davidic inscription. Then they were combined into one psalm for a period, which resulted in the removal of Psalm 33’s heading. When the two psalms were later separated again, the heading of Psalm 33 had fallen away.

⁹ McFall, “Evidence for a logical arrangement,” 223-256.

¹⁰ Clusters include Psalms 3-6, 8-9, 12-13, 19-24, 29-31, 38-41, 47-51, 62-68, 75-77, 79-80, 82-85, 87-88, 100-101, 108-110, and 139-141.

¹¹ McFall, “Evidence for a logical arrangement,” 232-240, argues for a four-stage sorting process in the arrangement of the Psalter. The four stages he proposes are by (a) author, (b) preponderance of divine names (whether יְהוָה or אֱלֹהִים), (c) genre (primarily in Book II), and (d) shared words or themes.

Table 1: The headings of Psalms 4-6

Psalm 4	Psalm 5	Psalm 6
for the music director	for the music director	for the music director
with stringed instruments	For the flutes	with stringed instruments
		according to sheminith
a psalm of David	a psalm of David	a psalm of David

All three psalms belonged to the music director's collection (מְנַצֵּחַ). Fifty-five psalms belonged to this collection, all except four appearing in Books I-III of the Psalter. This means that 51 of 89 psalms in Books I-III belonged to the music director's collection. The מְנַצֵּחַ psalms appear to have been an earlier collection that the editors attempted to keep together in the final arrangement of the Psalter. Their clustering points to deliberate grouping rather than random arrangement. Amongst the 55 מְנַצֵּחַ psalms, there is a group of thirteen (49-62), one of seven (64-70), a string of six (8-14, counting 9/10 as one psalm), one of five (18-22), two of four (39-42 and 44-47), two triplets (4-6 and 75-77), and three pairs (80-81, 84-85, and 139-140). In a string of 32 psalms spanning Psalms 39-70, only three did not belong to the music director's collection.¹² Once again, the fact that Psalm 7 breaks what would otherwise be a sequence of nine consecutive מְנַצֵּחַ psalms (4-14)¹³ points towards its positional significance.

The headings of Psalms 4, 5, and 6 each mention the instruments that were to accompany the singing of these hymns in public worship. Only eight psalm headings mention instruments, namely, "stringed instruments" (Pss 4, 6, 54, 55, 61, 67, and 76) and "flutes" (Ps 5). Psalms 4-6 are the only three psalms in Book I for which instruments are indicated. They also form the only chain of three consecutive psalms mentioning instruments. Since only eight psalms indicate musical instruments, the statistical probability of three of them occurring consecutively by pure chance is remote (1 in 9845 to be exact). It seems likely that Psalms 4-6 were originally a trio of psalms within the music director's collection that the compilers kept intact when importing them into Book I.

¹² This assumes that any psalm not designated מְנַצֵּחַ did not belong to the music director's collection. This assumption is by no means certain, but it is reasonable given that the presence of מְנַצֵּחַ in the heading is the only evidence we have by which to identify psalms which once belonged to this collection.

¹³ We are once again counting Psalms 9/10 as a unit so that the heading of Psalm 9 covers Psalm 10 as well.

The fourth feature of the headings is that Psalms 3 and 7 have similar heading (see Table 2). They are two of thirteen Davidic psalms containing a historical note in the superscription. Unlike the other four psalms in our corpus, they lack the designation “for the director of music” and they do not contain any musical notations. Both contain three elements in the same order: genre, author, and occasion.

Table 2: The headings of Psalms 3 and 7

	Psalm 3	Psalm 7
Genre	a psalm	a shiggaion
Author	of David	of David
Occasion	when he fled from the presence of Absalom, his son	which he sang to the Lord concerning the words of Cush, a Benjaminite

It is possible that the compilers intentionally used Psalms 3 and 7 as some sort of literary frame around a previously existing group (Pss 4-6).¹⁴ The way headings of Psalms 3-7 form a neat chiasmic arrangement is noteworthy.

- Ps 3 historical psalm, regarding Absalom
- Ps 4 music director’s, with stringed instruments
- Ps. 5 music director’s, for flutes
- Ps 6 music director’s, with stringed instruments
- Ps 7 historical psalm, regarding Cush

Labuschagne argues that the menorah pattern, which consists of “7 items symmetrically or asymmetrically arranged around a distinct centre, ... occurs frequently throughout the biblical writings.”¹⁵ After a detailed logotechnical analysis, he concludes that Psalms 2-8 are a self-contained unit of seven psalms, deliberately and meticulously arranged in a menorah pattern, with Psalms 2 and 8 as a frame around the collection.¹⁶

It is plausible that the editors may have added Psalm 7 after Psalm 6 to balance Psalm 3 in a neatly crafted chiasmic collection. However, we think it is even more likely that Psalms 3 and 7 were neighboring hymns in an earlier

¹⁴ Mervin E. Tate, “An exposition of Psalm 8,” *Perspectives in religious studies* 28 (2001): 347, has suggested that the presence of historical notes in the headings of Psalms 3 and 7 identifies them as “the framing psalms of the run of psalms before Psalm 8.”

¹⁵ Casper J. Labuschagne, “General introduction to logotechnical analysis,” 10. Cited 3 February 2010. Online: www.labuschagne.nl/aspects.pdf, 10.

¹⁶ Labuschagne, “Introduction to Book I,” 12-14.

collection, but the insertion of Psalms 4-6 separated them. As we have noted, Psalm 7 interrupts a sequence of מְזִמּוֹר psalms (3-10) and breaks a collection of לְמִנְצִיחַ psalms (4-14). If the editors had Psalms 3-6 before them, and were seeking the next logical hymn for the collection, it is difficult to understand why they would have put Psalm 7 here. However, if they started with a pair of psalms with historical notations (3 and 7), neither of which were from the music director's collection, and inserted an existing 4-6 between them, the verbal connections between Psalms 3 and 4 would have taken precedence over the maintaining links between headings.¹⁷

C THE VERBAL LINKS

A close analysis of the verbal connections between psalms in our corpus reveals four important relationships.

- 1) There are strong verbal links between Psalms 3 and 4.
- 2) There are strong verbal links between Psalms 3 and 7.
- 3) There are some verbal links between Psalms 4-6.
- 4) There is a key verbal connection between Psalms 7 and 8.

These verbal links provide an important redactional criterion for the arrangement of the psalms.

1 Verbal links between Psalms 3 and 4

The verbal links between Psalms 3 and 4 are very striking.¹⁸ Taken together, there are 99 unique lexemes in the two psalms, 18 of which are shared. Measured quantitatively, 18.2 percent of the terminology is common, which is higher than the average for adjacent psalms.¹⁹ Amongst the shared terminology, six main points stand out.²⁰

- (a) Both laments begin by depicting the psalmist's situation using the root צַר (3:2; 4:2). This root can be used either as an abstract noun with the sense of "adversity" (43 times in the Old Testament, including 16 in the Psalter), or as a concrete noun meaning "adversary" (67 times in the Old

¹⁷ This would not negate the possibility that the neat chiastic arrangement was also intended. If Labuschagne's claim that the editors were artists at work in arranging the psalms into beautiful patterns, they may have found the merging of two mini-groups (Pss 3 and 7 with Pss 4-6) to form a perfect pattern quite appealing.

¹⁸ The structural similarities between the two hymns are equally striking, strengthening the sense that they are "sister psalms." For a detailed discussion, see Smith, "Redactional criteria and objectives," 153-165.

¹⁹ The proportion of shared terms is 11.5 percent between Psalms 4 and 5, 11.7 percent for Psalms 5 and 6, 12.3 for Psalms 6 and 7, and 11.7 for Psalms 7 and 8.

²⁰ All verse numbers are based on the numeration in the Hebrew Bible.

Testament, including 24 in the Psalter).²¹ Despite its relatively high frequency in the Psalter (41 times), its forefronted position in the opening verses of Psalms 3 and 4 is striking. These are the only two psalms containing *צָר* in their opening verse.

- (b) The exact form *כְּבוֹדִי* (“my glory” or “my glory”) occurs in both 3:4 and 4:3. This exact form occurs twenty-two times in the Hebrew Bible, including seven in the Psalter. These 22 occurrences cover three senses, namely, (a) depicting Yahweh’s glory, (b) referring to a human being’s honor, and (c) as a circumlocution for “self.” Amongst the seven occurrences in the Psalter, three are circumlocutions for the speaker’s self (Pss 16:9, 59:9, and 108:2). The remaining four refer to the psalmist’s honor (Pss 3:4; 4:3; 7:6; 62:8). Since *כְּבוֹדִי* occurs with reference to the speaker’s honor only seven times in the Hebrew Bible and only four times in the Psalter, it provides a strong verbal link between Psalms 3 and 4.
- (c) The exact phrase *רַבִּים אֹמְרִים* (“many are saying”) is found in 3:3 and 4:7, both times introducing the words of the psalmist’s enemies. These are the only two occurrences of *רַבִּים אֹמְרִים* in the Hebrew Bible.²²
- (d) The verbs *שָׁכַב* (“lie down”) and *יָשַׁן* (“sleep”) are joined by the conjunction *ו* to form a hendiadys *וַיִּשָׁן וַיִּשְׁכַּב* (“to lie down and sleep”) only in 1 Kings 19:5, and Psalms 3:6 and 4:9. The only other time that the two words are used in the same verse is in Job 3:13, where they occur in parallel poetic lines.
- (e) The verbs *קָרָא* (“call”) and *עָנָה* (“answer”) occur together in 3:5 and 4:2. These verbs appear in the same verse 15 times in the Psalter and a further 33 times in remainder of the Hebrew Bible.
- (f) *כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה* (“for you, O Lord,” 4:9) closely resembles *וְאַתָּה יְהוָה* (“but you, O Lord,” 3:5). The second person masculine singular pronoun combines with *יְהוָה* to form *אַתָּה יְהוָה* forty-two times in the Hebrew Bible, including twenty times in the Psalter.

Taken together, these six verbal links point to a strong relationship between the two psalms. Both begin with the psalmist’s lament to the Lord regarding their

²¹ All the statistics presented in this article are our own calculations, based on software-assisted studies of the Hebrew Bible.

²² The two terms occur consecutively five more times in the Old Testament (1 Sam 14:19; Isa 2:3; Jer 13:6; Mic 4:2, 11). In all five instances, *רַב* is the last word of a clause, modifying a noun, and *אָמַר* is the first word of the next clause. Only in Psalms 3 and 4 are the two terms collocated within a single clause, with “many” as the subject and “saying” the predicate.

צָר (“adversity/adversaries”). People are speaking (רְבִים אֹמְרִים) against the Lord and dishonoring the psalmists (כְּבוֹדֵי). In both, we find the psalmist “calling” (קָרָא) to Yahweh and Yahweh “answering” (עָנָה) him. Finally, both psalmists vow to “lie down and sleep” (שָׁכַב וַיִּשָּׁן), because “you Lord” (אַתָּה יְהוָה) will protect them.

2 Verbal links between Psalms 3 and 7

In the Hebrew Psalter, only Psalm 4 has stronger links to Psalm 3 than does Psalm 7. A careful look at the shared terminology flags five noteworthy verbal links between Psalms 3 and 7.

- (a) Their respective opening strophes share three similarities in phraseology. First, the psalmist’s enemies are speaking against “my soul” (נַפְשִׁי) in 3:3, while in 7:3 they are threatening to tear “my soul” (נַפְשִׁי) apart like a ferocious lion. Second, in both cases there appears to be no way of escape, indicated by the phrases “there is no deliverance” (אֵין יְשׁוּעָתָהּ, 3:3) and “none to deliver” (אֵין מַצִּיל, 7:3). Third, they share the cognate noun “deliverance” (יְשׁוּעָתָהּ, 3:3) and verb “deliver” (יָשַׁע, 7:2).
- (b) In Psalm 3:4, God will “lift the head” (רָאָשׁ) of the righteous psalmist to vindicate him against his foes, but in Psalm 7:16 the enemy’s mischief “returns upon his own head” (רָאָשׁ).
- (c) The exact form כְּבוֹדֵי occurs in 3:4 and 7:6. In 3:4, the psalmist uses it to call Yahweh “my glory,” likely meaning that Yahweh is the one who gives him honor and defends his honour. In 7:6, it is used in an imprecation saying that *if* the psalmist is guilty of wrongdoing, Yahweh should allow his enemy to take away “my honour.” The context makes it clear that he expects the opposite outcome. Since he is guiltless, Yahweh will vindicate him and defend his honour.
- (d) Both psalmists describe Yahweh as their protective “shield” (מָגֵן). Psalm 3:4 depicts Yahweh as “a shield about me,” whereas Psalm 7:11 reads, “my shield is with God.”
- (e) Immediately before their final declaration of confidence in Yahweh (i.e. 3:9 and 7:18), both psalms contain a section in which Yahweh fights against the wicked. Psalm 3 portrays Yahweh arising like a mighty warrior and fighting against the psalmist’s enemies, striking them on the cheek and breaking their teeth (3:7). Similarly, Psalm 7 describes God preparing his sword and bow to fight against the unrepentant (7:13-14). In both psalms, the object of Yahweh’s assault is “the wicked” (רְשָׁעִים, 3:8 and 7:10).

Coupled with the similarities between their headings, these five verbal links are enough to persuade us that Psalms 3 and 7 belong together, probably as neighbouring psalms in an earlier collection of Davidic psalms. In the final

form of Book I, they were separated by the insertion of Psalms 4-6. In other words, Psalms 3-7 result from merging two earlier collections, namely, a pair of Davidic psalms (3 and 7) with a pre-existing trio from the music director's collection (4-6).

3 Verbal links between Psalms 4-6

If we eliminate the headings as well as insignificant word groups,²³ these three psalms share three lexemes, namely, the verb שָׁמַע (“hear”) and the roots חסד (“steadfast love”) and פָּלַל (“prayer”). Because these terms are so common, their complete absence from Psalms 3, 7, and 8 is as striking as their presence in Psalms 4-6. In addition, the phrase “you Lord” (אַתָּה יהוה) occurs in all three psalms, albeit with slight variations (אַתָּה יהוה in 4:9, יהוה ... פִּי אַתָּה in 5:13, and וְאַתָּה יהוה in 6:4). In our judgment, measured across three consecutive psalms, these represent meaningful links.²⁴

4 A key link between Psalms 7 and 8

The primary rationale for the juxtaposition of Psalms 7 and 8 almost certainly lies in a single hook word, שֵׁם (“name”) in the last line of Psalm 7 and in the first and last lines of Psalm 8. The central theme of Psalm 8 is the majesty of Yahweh's name (שֵׁם־יְהוָה), as is clear from the opening and closing refrain (“Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth”), which frames the psalm. The allusion to שֵׁם־יְהוָה at the very end of Psalm 7—only the word עֲלִיּוֹן, “Most High,” follows it—provides a perfect opportunity to insert the a psalm celebrating the majesty of his name.²⁵ Thus no psalm in the Hebrew Bible offers a clearer tail-head connection for Psalm 8 than Psalm 7.

The sense that this was a deliberate editorial consideration in the placement of Psalm 8 is strengthened by the fact that there are two strategic references to his name in Psalm 9 (שֵׁם־יְהוָה in 9:3 and שֵׁם־יְהוָה in 9:11). The first occurrence in Psalm 9 is part of the opening strophe, hence forming another tail-head connection between the end of Psalm 8 and the beginning of Psalm 9. Just like the reference to שֵׁם־יְהוָה in 7:18, the allusion to שֵׁם־יְהוָה in 9:3 is immediately followed by a further description of Yahweh as עֲלִיּוֹן, the Most

²³ The categories we excluded were the article, prepositions, personal pronouns, common particles, and the names of God.

²⁴ Space does not allow us to discuss hook words linking Psalms 4-5 and 5-6 respectively, but these strengthen the ties between these three psalms (cf. Smith, “Redactional criteria and objectives,” 165-179, 220-225).

²⁵ No other psalm in Book I of the Psalter contains a reference to “his name” in its final verse. Six other לְדָוִד psalms (52, 61, 69, 140, 142, and 145) do contain references to שֵׁם־יְהוָה in their final verse, but none at the very end of the verse. The only non לְדָוִד psalm that contains a reference to the Lord's name in its final verse is Psalm 45, in which שֵׁם־יְהוָה occurs at the beginning of the verse.

High. Thus the end of Psalm 7 and the beginning of Psalm 9 provide a frame for the celebration of the name of Yahweh in Psalm 8—references to שֵׁם־יְהוָה (‘‘the name of the Lord, the Most High’’) frame the refrain אֲדַבְּרֵנּוּ יְהוָה (‘‘Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name’’).

I will sing praise to the name of Yahweh, the Most High (7:18)
 Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name (8:1)
 Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is your name (8:9)
 I will sing praise to your name, O Most High (9:3)

In Psalms 7-9 we have a cluster of three psalms linked by their references to שֵׁם־יְהוָה, with the focal Psalm 8 framed by the allusions to his name at the end of Psalm 7 and the beginning of Psalm 9.²⁶

D CONCLUSION

Our analysis supports Brennan’s earlier observation that the editors of this collection deliberately juxtaposed psalms which share key words.²⁷ Both the headings and the verbal data suggest that Psalms 3 and 7 might have been neighbours in an earlier collection, but were separated by the insertion of a pre-existing trio of psalms from the music director’s collection, Psalms 4-6, which are also bound together by their headings and shared terminology. The primary rationale for the positioning of Psalms 4-6 probably lay in the strong verbal ties between Psalms 3 and 4. The resulting collection of five laments climaxes with a vow to ‘‘sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High’’ (7:18), providing an ideal place to insert Psalm 8, which celebrates the majestic name of the Lord.

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²⁶ Labuschagne (‘‘Introduction to Book I,’’ 2) also observes the use of ‘‘name’’ as a key word in Psalms 7:18, 8:1 and 10, and 9:3 and 11, and is used to joint Psalms 7, 8, and 9.

²⁷ Brennan, ‘‘Psalms 1-8,’’ 25.

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- Kevin Smith, South African Theological Seminary, 61 Wessels Road, Rivonia. 2128. *E-mail*: Kevin@sats.edu.za.
- Bill Domeris, South African Theological Seminary, 61 Wessels Road, Rivonia. 2128. *E-mail*: wdomeris@gmail.com.