


God is my inheritance: The voice of the woman in Psalm 16

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Differing with most scholars Psalm 16 was a personal lament Psalm voiced by a woman, with the central theme being, God is the portion of my inheritance. The concluding statement was revealed to us through the use of poetic criticism on Psalm 16. Poetic criticism is a new method of reading lament Psalms through the careful observation of elements contained in the lament Psalms, such as lament, feeling, the concept of God and mood of the text. The application of poetic criticism on Psalm 16 by studying the elements of the lament, feeling, concept of God, and changes of mood, has shown us that the psalmist successfully faced the struggles of life when she lost her husband and as a result, her inheritance, because God is her inheritance. In and through her suffering the psalmist was able to know God as her portion of inheritance.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: This research helps the readers understand the involvement of women in arranging the Psalms in the spiritual lives of Israel and Psalms can be studied now from feminist perspective.

Keywords: God; voice of the woman; lament Psalm; Hebrew poetry; poetic criticism.

Introduction

Gerstenberger (1988:32) states that Psalms were arranged only by men. In the same vein, David Clines, as quoted by Knowles (2014:425), stresses that Psalms were arranged from a male perspective and pre-occupied by the concerns of men. Brettler (2010:28) further claims, 'I believe that Psalms, largely Temple-based prayers, were written almost entirely by men for men'. Gerstenberger, Clines and Brettler's statements are actually nothing but affirmations of the postulate, which has been the starting point of the interpretation of the Psalms. Women do not have a role in the arrangement of the Psalms. Is this tenable? This article argues that Psalm 16, for example, was arranged by a woman. Along with that, this article also strives to reveal the central theme of Psalm 16. Revealing the central theme of Psalm 16 is done through the application of poetic criticism (see Barus 2014, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019).

A poetic reading of Psalm 16 is applied through the study of the elements of lament, feeling, God and changes of textual mood. An experience of lament in the psalmist produces feelings. In the midst of both lament and feeling, the psalmist then conveyed her own understanding of God. Her newfound understanding then brought her to a new knowledge of God. To use poetic criticism, we must first identify the lament of the Psalm itself. God, as known by the psalmist through and in her struggles of life, is examined by observing the psalmist's new understanding of God. The journey of the psalmist's struggles recorded in the Psalms leads to two aspects that need to be studied, the aspect of lamentation and the aspect of praise.

Before we dive into the poetic criticism of Psalm 16, it is appropriate to lay out beforehand the central theme of Psalm 16 as suggested by various scholars. Some interpreters conclude that the central theme of Psalm 16 is trust in YHWH (DeClaissé-Walford et al. 2014:176; Goldingay 2006:227; Limburg 2000:47; Weiser 1962:172). Others read Psalm 16 in a Christological sense. If we read the Psalm Christologically, then Psalm 16:8–11 is understood as a prophecy regarding the Messiah who will rise from the dead (Boers 1969; Kaiser 1980). Hence, some scholars conclude that Psalm 16 must be talking about Jesus Christ. This Christological view of Psalm 16 should not confuse us. Why? Psalm 16 is an important Psalm for the early Christian church. The importance of Psalm 16 is seen through the use of the Psalm in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, and Paul's sermon in the Jewish synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia. Nevertheless, the OT text should not be read typologically. The various interpretations of the central theme of Psalm 16 surveyed here, although brief, instantly show the possibility of another interpretation of the central theme of the Psalm that will enrich its interpretation.

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Structure of composition

Although several previous interpreters (e.g. Kraus 1993:235) view Psalm 16 as a prayer, Villanueva holds the view that Psalm 16 as a private lament, not a communal one (Gerstenberger 1988:90; Villanueva 2008:44). The use of the first person in Psalm 16 stresses the fact that this is a private lament.

Not including the superscription, Psalm 16 is arranged into four strophes with aspects of lament and praise alternating with each other, as shown below:

Superscription (v. 1a)

Lament (v. 1b)

Praise (v. 2–3)

Lament (v. 4)

Praise (v. 5–11)

The element of lament in Psalm 16 is relatively short compared with the elements of praise. The short lament of verse 1b continues into praise in verses 2–3. This is the first cycle of the lament Psalm. The second cycle then starts, after the praise of verses 2–3, with a lament in verse 4 followed by a relatively long praise of verses 5–11. Twice do we see the sudden change in the structure of the composition, which occurs when the lament transitions into praise. A sudden change in the structure of the composition needs an explanation that will be provided in the section discussing the change of the textual mood.

Poetic criticism of Psalm 16

Psalm 16 will be elaborated further as a Psalm of personal lament utilising methods of poetic criticism. The use of the methods will reveal not only the central theme of Psalm 16 but also the fact that this theme is voiced by a woman.

Lament

Some interpreters observe that the psalmist was facing two different laments, namely pressure from those worshipping foreign gods and a threat of death (Craigie 1983; Goldingay 2006:228). However, a reading of Psalm 16 using the methods of poetic criticism gives us a different result concerning the laments of the psalmist as explained here. The two laments of the psalmist towards God are: protect me (v. 1) and multiply the sorrows of those who run after other gods (v. 4).

Protect me (v. 1)

The psalmist introduces her personal lament with a petition to God for protection (v. 1). Why? Is the psalmist experiencing trouble or spiritual distress? Or is there a threat to her life? No. Why did the psalmist pray? Most likely, the psalmist lamented to God for protection so that she would not fall into the temptation of worshipping other gods like others. The psalmist feels that she does not have the strength in her to

resist falling into syncretism. The sin of syncretism is a recurring sin in the life of Israel as God's chosen people (Bright 1981:260–261). The psalmist petitioned to God for protection because her past spiritual experiences seem to be revealed through the perfect form of the verb *הִתְחַיֵּי* (v. 1). What is the meaning? The spiritual experience of the psalmist in the past is forcing her to continuously dwell in God's protection and enter into dialogue with God (Goldingay 2006:229; Weiser 1962:173). Again, it is possible that the psalmist had previously been involved in worshipping other gods. The imperfect verbs *בְּלִי-אֱלֹהִים* and *בְּלִי-אֱלֹהִים* (v. 4) give a strong indication to the psalmist's past entanglements with syncretism. The imperfect verb paints a picture of a former lifestyle committed in the past (Van Der Merwe, Naudé & Kroeze 2002:147).

How does God protect the psalmist? Through her community (v. 3). God puts in the life of the psalmist a fellowship of saints. These saints are God's people who did neither fall to syncretism, nor are they heavenly beings (M. Noth) (Clifford 2002:97) or priests (Kraus 1993:236) or the entirety of Israel as God's people (Weiser 1962:174). These saints, as they are referred to in Psalm 34:10, point to those who fear God (see also DeClaissé-Walford et al. 2014:179). Those who fear God are alive and practice the law through their lives and in their conducts. Within the fellowship of God's people who are not involved with syncretism, our psalmist feels and experiences God's protection in her life. These saints become the delight [*רֵצֵה*] of the psalmist (v. 3). Psalm 16 tells us that the joy of the psalmist comes from meditating on God's word (Ps 1:2) and delighting in saints who reject other gods. The term 'delight' points to the reality of being in fellowship. Being in fellowship is not only a source of the psalmist's joy but it also changed her whole life. The joy of the psalmist comes from fellowship with God's law and the saints, and as a result, this fellowship transformed the psalmist's lament into joy.

Sorrows of those who run after other gods (v. 4)

The psalmist is living in the midst of a nation involved in the worship of foreign gods (cf. Davidson 1998:58; DeClaissé-Walford et al. 2014:179–180). They worshipped not only YHWH but also other gods. Our psalmist observed her lives and summarised it with the phrase, '*עֲצָרָה*' (v. 4), which multiplied. The psalmist does not mean her own sorrow in verse 4, but rather the sorrows of those involved in the worship of other gods (v. 4). On the other hand, through this observation our psalmist realises that turning free from sorrows as a human being depends entirely exclusively worshipping of YHWH.

The psalmist writes that the sorrows of those who worship other gods will multiply. What does the psalmist mean? The sorrows of those involved in syncretism are not static but increasing in quality and quantity as time goes on. The development of their sorrows is described in detail by the psalmist. Simply, their sorrow comes from the realisation that God is not their inheritance. This sorrow ultimately

comes from a lack of fellowship and relationship with YHWH. The accumulation of their sorrow, as explained here, prohibits her from receiving these inheritances: God's counsel (v. 7), God's presence and protection (v. 8, 11) and eternal life (v. 9–10). Her sorrow is not only marked by the lack of fellowship with God in this life but ultimately by her lack of eternal life.

Syncretism is marked by a drink offering to and calling the name of these foreign gods in the worship of YHWH (see Table 1). Even though the psalmist formerly worshipped other gods, she has now rejected the sin of syncretism. How did they conduct their worship of other gods? The psalmist mentions two forms of worship, to pour our drink offerings of blood and speak the names of foreign gods. A drink offering of blood to the gods may point to animal or children sacrifices to demons (Ps 106:37–38) (DeClaissé-Walford et al. 2014:180). However, Israel's sacrificial system also involved the pouring of animal blood (Lv 1:5). Because of this, the problem is not with the pouring out of sacrificial blood itself. The psalmist rejects all worship of foreign gods. That's what the psalmist wants to emphasise. The psalmist also refuses to speak the name of foreign gods as her gods because such utterances are forbidden by the law (Ex 23:13). To speak the names of other gods does not refer to chanting spells with magical powers (Weiser 1962:174) but points to saying words that reflect close knowledge of other gods. In other words, the worship of other gods is demonstrated through words and deeds.

Feeling and affection

The laments experienced by the psalmist give rise to various feelings as explained here. The psalmist observes that syncretism causes deep sorrow in the life of a human being. On the other hand, someone who lives in fellowship with God brings deep joy into their life. Human beings do not have a choice but to serve and worship God.

Gladness of heart (v. 6)

The psalmist reveals her heart after confessing that God is her beautiful inheritance. The gladness of heart in the psalmist does not appear because she enjoys seeing spiritual misfortune in the lives of those worshipping other gods. The psalmist is experiencing gladness because God is her inheritance. The loss of her husband and the physical inheritance will make her despair. However, knowing that God is her inheritance transformed that despair into a gladness of heart.

The gladness of heart in the psalmist is expressed, as stated in verse 9, through praise in both deeds and words. In other words, the psalmist's life reflects her gladness of heart in response to her sorrows and laments.

TABLE 1: Psalm 16:4b Christian Standard Bible (CSB).

I will not	pour out	their drink offerings of blood
and I will not	speak	their names with my lips

Joy (v. 9, 11)

The other feeling expressed is that of joy. The joy experienced by the psalmist is because of God standing at her right hand. This means that God is present in her life and is protecting her. The presence and protection of God become an assurance for the psalmist as she is meditating on the Law night and day.

This feeling of joy is expressed, as we shall see in the given parallelism below, through the whole being rejoicing and the body resting (see Table 2). The pattern of heart, whole being, body may show parts of a human body, but in reality, it points to the totality of human beings.

Robert Menzies uses the LXX translation 'και ἡγαλλιάσατο ἡ γλῶσσά μου' to translate the Hebrew word לַגִּלְגָּל בְּבוֹנֵי as the basis for a messianic interpretation of Psalm 16 (Menzies 2014:24–29). Instead of using the translation 'my whole being rejoices' Menzies uses the LXX's 'my tongue rejoices', as it is quoted by Peter in the Pentecost sermon (Ac 2:26 'ἡγαλλιάσατο ἡ γλῶσσά μου'). Translating the Hebrew text according to the interpretation of the LXX is anachronistic and is thus no longer focusing on the Hebrew text. This is the major mistake of Menzies' reading. A messianic reading as done by Robert Menzies of Psalm 16 also produces an interpretation that 'the whole being rejoices' and [the tongue rejoices] points towards an occurrence of glossolalia [speaking in tongues. Without any hesitation, Menzies writes, 'a messianic reading of Psalm 16:9 provided the early church with its scriptural rationale for speaking in tongues' (Menzies 2014:47). Is this true? Glossolalia, as defined by Menzies himself, are words that originate from the Holy Spirit that cannot be understood by the speaker or the listener. Based on this understanding, was the event at Pentecost a case of glossolalia? No! Why not? There are a couple of reasons that can be given. Firstly, those who heard Peter's sermon understood what they had heard. Secondly, it is not clear whether the apostles spoke in languages that the listeners knew and understood, or whether the apostles spoke in Aramaic, but the listeners heard the words in their own language. Thirdly, the pattern in verse 9 shown here clearly points to human beings as a whole, not to a specific part of the human body, such as the tongue.

The psalmist was with gladness and joy and her body rests securely or rests hopefully (LXX). These give us an image of the psalmist's whole being filled with praise for YHWH. The psalmist praised God through all his words and deeds. Are these praises an example of glossolalia? We cannot be sure.

The totality of the psalmist in the third row of verse 9 is translated in the LXX with the phrase 'καὶ ἡ σὰρξ μου κατασκηνώσει ἐπ' ἐλπίδι' to translate the Hebrew clause

TABLE 2: Psalm 16:9b Christian Standard Bible (CSB).

Therefore	my heart	is glad and
	my whole being	rejoices;
	my body also	rests securely.

אֶת־רַחֲמֵי־יְהוָה לְבָרְכָהּ. In the OT, hope *ἐλπίς* points to living a life that has a new orientation towards worshipping only YHWH. If in the New Testament hope is understood in an eschatological way, hope in the OT is founded and tied to the faithful love of God. Kraus formulated that hope in the OT; it means joy (Kraus 1992):

[N]ot giving up, not growing tired, not surrendering to overwhelming grief, but persevering expectantly. The distinctive feature is the certainty that the eyes of the Lord are upon those who 'hope in his steadfast love' (Ps 33:18). The hope of those who wait is based on the conviction that Yahweh is gracious, that he will bestow on them his רַחֲמֵי [hesed, 'tender mercies']. (p. 158)

This is now the main characteristic of the life of the psalmist as a response towards the declaration that God is her inheritance as explained here. Joy is seen through the whole being worshipping God. The joy of the psalmist in her words are expressed with thanksgiving to God and through her actions manifested by diligently hoping in God's steadfast love.

God

In the journey of the psalmist in facing lament and the feelings that caused by it, the psalmist proclaims her knowledge of God.

You are my God (v. 2)

The psalmist finds her motivation to cry a lament to God through her personal relationship with God. Throughout this time, the psalmist knows God in a personal way. However, through her troubles and sorrow, the psalmist grows in her knowledge of God, as shown here, in a fresh way spiritually.

You are my inheritance (v. 5)

After voicing her laments in verse 4, the psalmist then turned the Psalm to praise. The understanding that God is her inheritance by the psalmist turned her lament to praise. Various questions can be asked from the psalmist's statement. Who is talking in verse 5? What does inheritance mean? Who is the 'my' referring to regarding the portion, the cup of blessing, and the lot? Or, in a general sense, who is speaking in Psalm 16? Several possibilities can be given.

The first possibility is a priest (DeClaisse-Walford et al. 2014:176, 180; Kraus 1993:235, 237). According to Kraus, Psalm 16:4–6 is a priestly remark who is portraying the special life of a chosen priest. For the priests, God is their portion [חֵלֶק] and their heirloom (Nm 18:20; Dt 10:9; Jos 13:14). The Levites did not inherit land as their source of livelihood, so the term חֵלֶק (v. 6), which is used in dividing the land, must be interpreted by Kraus as livelihood as given by YHWH (Kraus 1993:238). The priests' livelihood is different from the other tribes, as it comes from their devotion to God at the temple with God himself (mystic union with God). Kraus' interpretation, however, has two basic flaws. Firstly, the words,

חֵלֶקְךָ־לִי, חֵלֶקְךָ־לִי, חֵלֶקְךָ־לִי, in verses 5–6 point to a distribution or dividing of lands as seen in Joshua 13:23; 14:4; 15:13; 17:5; Numbers 18:21; 26:55–56; Deuteronomy 4:21 (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:87; Kraus 1993:237). Secondly, the priests did not receive land when it was given as stated in verse 5. Priests do not receive land as an inheritance like other tribes of Israel. It is clear that the voice speaking in Psalm 16 is not that of a priest.

The second possibility is the people of Israel. The people of Israel, just like the priests, are God's portion [חֵלֶקְךָ] (Dt 32:9). If the priests could not receive land as inheritance, other tribes of Israel were able to receive them. The promised land that God had promised to the forefathers of the nation of Israel was distributed to each of the tribes by casting lots (Jos 13–21). Each tribe, other than the Levites, received a portion based on the casting of lots. However, the singular form of the words portion, blessing, and even 'my' in all of Psalm 16 does not support this view. Again, the psalmist is not talking about land or city when talking about inheritance, but rather of God himself.

King of Israel is the third possibility (Kidner 1973:84–85). Based on his understanding that Psalm 16 is connected with King David, Derek Kidner states that God is the inheritance of David. In other words, King David is the voice behind Psalm 16. Kidner points to 1 Samuel 26:19 where David denounces Saul's actions by saying, 'They have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the LORD, saying, "Go, serve other gods"'. God is David's inheritance. This is why, as an echo of 1 Samuel 26:19, David refuses to worship other gods (v. 4). David repays evil with good. Saul's evil deeds forced David to flee away from the promised land given by God to his ancestors as fulfilment of his promises. David's words reveal his escape from Saul's crimes against him was like a condition of leaving the promised land. To leave the promised land is to worship other gods because, for David, the promised land given by God to tribes of Israel is synonymous with God's presence in the middle of his congregation. Therefore, David's claim that he did not receive a portion from God points to his state of flight from affliction, not a claim that God is his inheritance. Thus, it would be inappropriate to state that it was King David who spoke in Psalm 16.

The fourth possibility is a pious man (Brueggemann & Bellinger 2014:84–88; Craigie 1983:155–159). Peter Craigie claims that the voice behind Psalm 16 is one of a pious man. The pious man made his prayers known to God in his efforts to fight syncretism because it is dividing the fellowship of his people. Psalm 16:2–3 is interpreted by Craigie as written by someone involved in syncretism. Craigie translates verse 2 as, 'You have said to the LORD' (v. 2). On the other hand, Brueggemann has translated verse 2 as, 'I say to the LORD'. Using this translation, Brueggemann also comes to the conclusion that a certain pious man is the voice behind Psalm 16. The textual problems of Psalm 16 do not affect the interpretation of the passage (Clifford 2002:96). What is of note in view of this article's thesis is the identification of the gender of the pious person by both Craigie and Brueggemann

in Psalm 16. Craigie uses the masculine pronoun (he) while Brueggemann used a more inclusive pronoun. This means that neither Craigie nor Brueggemann opened the possibility that the pious person is a woman.

The fifth possibility is the non-Jewish people who repent (Clifford 2002:97–100; Dahood 1965:87). Psalm 16 portrays the repentance of the non-Jewish nations from polytheism into monotheism. They have rejected the worship of their gods. They have now chosen to worship YHWH alone while witnessing and experiencing joy in becoming God's people. However, as stated before, the main problem of Psalm 16 is its involvement in syncretism. Furthermore, the term or the expression of repentance is not used in Psalm 16. The claim that the nations are the voice behind Psalm 16 has no secure foundation.

The last possibility is a widow (Baker 2009:189–195). Priests, as explained here, claim that God is their portion [לֶחְלֵהָ] while, for the people of Israel, the promised land received by lot is their inheritance. The opinion that claims the voice of Psalm 16 is either priests or the nation of Israel, as explained here, is not very convincing. This article suggests that the widows are the voice behind Psalm 16. What's the reasoning behind this?

In a patriarchal society, it is common for widows to become the weakest group in society. This is the case for ancient societies such as the ancient Near East, which became the context of Israel's historical community. Ancient Near Eastern societies paid little attention to the rights of widows and orphans and are often treated unjustly. Baker (2009:190), after studying the laws of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Hittite and Assyrians concerning the rights of widows, concludes, 'In many of these laws it seems that the rights of the male relatives are the primary concern rather than those of the unfortunate widow'. Widows living in the ancient Near East not only lost their husbands but also their inheritance. What about the widows living in Israel? There's not much difference. Baker (2009) observes:

A widow in ancient Hebrew society had not only lost husband, but as a result had lost her protector and source of sustenance. It appears she had no inheritance rights and so would have been dependent on the goodwill of the community. (p. 194)

What is the response of an Israelite widow after losing their husband and as a result, their inheritance? In the midst of a syncretistic society, a society that no longer obeys the law concerning widows (Ex 22:22–24; Dt 24:17–18), who would the widow bring their complaints and claim their inheritance to? She brings her case to God as written in the law, 'If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry' (Ex 22:23). However, the loss of a husband and a physical inheritance does not immediately mean the widows lost everything. They still have their fellowship with God. This is how we can understand the widows of Israel to be the voice behind Psalm 16. Those who have lost their husbands and their inheritance now cry out to God, 'you are my inheritance!'

God is the inheritance of the psalmist. What is this inheritance? The relationship between inheritance and treasure, 'you hold my lot', as explained here, is dependent on the verb for 'held up and/or reinforced' [תִּמְכֶּנּוּ] (v. 5) (see Table 3). This verb is used in giving out the promised land as promised by God to the tribes of Israel. The widow who lost her husband ends up losing her right of inheritance. But now God himself has held up the promise that God is her inheritance. The verb 'held up and/or reinforced' pictures the sovereignty of God in leading human history (Ps 41:13; Is 41:10; Am 1:5, 8). The same verb is used in Exodus 17:12 when Aaron and Hur held up [תִּמְכֶּנּוּ] Moses' arms during the battle between Israel and the Amalekites. Therefore, the widow's plight is held up by God himself, so that he may earn a victory in the battle of her suffering.

The land that the widow was to inherit when her husband passed away was a bountiful land. However, the inheritance that the widow received from the LORD is better in every aspect. Her inheritance is described as a pleasant place and a beautiful inheritance (v. 6). Both of these point to God himself and all the blessings that he poured into the widow's life. Her life and her future now rest in God's hand.

Based on the change in the textual mood as demonstrated in Figure 1, the confession that God is her inheritance changed the psalmist's lament into praise. God as the inheritance is further explained by the psalmist as God who gives counsel (v. 7), God at her right hand (v. 9) and God who gives eternal life (v. 10):

- God who gives counsel (v. 7)

The psalmist states, unlike those who worship idols, she receives counsel. What is this counsel? It is not the freedom to obey or disobey God (Davidson 1998:59) or a voice in her heart counselling her to come to the LORD in prayer (Weiser 1962:175–176), or an oracle received by the psalmist from God (Anderson 1972:144), but the law of the LORD (see also Kraus 1993:238, 241). God the counsellor points to God the Law-Giver. The Torah taught the psalmist by night and became internalised in her life so that her conscience counselled her (Dt 30:14).

TABLE 3: Psalm 16:5 New Revised Standard Version (NRS).

The LORD	is my chosen portion and my cup
You	hold my lot

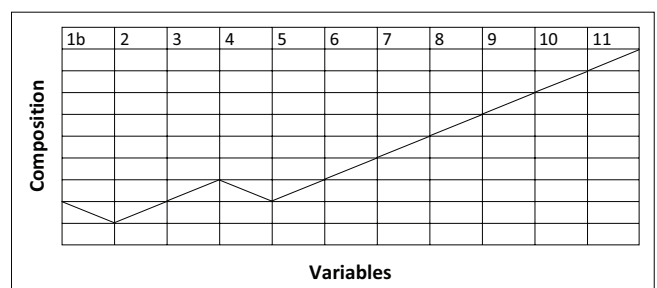


FIGURE 1: Change of textual mood.

The psalmist then responded to the counsel she received by praising the LORD. To praise is to 'recognise someone in his position of power and his claim of high position' (Kraus 1993:238). Worship is the proper response to God the Law-Giver.

- God who stands at my right hand (v. 8)

The statement that God stands at the right hand of the psalmist not only points to her place before God in verse 11, but also points to God's presence as a strong protector. God's strength is portrayed as stronger than the strength of human kings (Ps 110:5). God's strength is so overwhelming that it shatters the power of kings. The verb 'shatter' [רָחַץ] pictures total destruction as seen with Jael, a woman, crushing Sisera's head (Jud 5:26). God's strong protection prevents the psalmist from being shaken. 'Not be shaken' [לֹא-יִרְעָד] (v. 8) means that the psalmist does not worship God less even though she lives in a syncretistic community. Faced with the overwhelming protection of God, the psalmist can only respond by setting her sight on God. The expression 'setting our sight on God' does not refer to divine vision or a theophany of God, but to meditation on God's Law, day and night (Ps 1:2; 119:30).

- God who will not abandon (v. 10)

Verse 10 shows a comparison between three ideas: Sheol, corruption and path to life (see Table 4). The ultimate inheritance that the psalmist receives is eternal life. The psalmist does not claim that she will never die or is immortal (G. Beer) or claim to have protection from an evil death or a sudden death (Kraus 1993:240, 241) The psalmist, like every other human being, will die. However, her physical death will not separate her from God. Her fellowship with God will continue into life after death. The expression of Sheol [the realm of the dead] here does not point to a spiritual death (breaking of fellowship with God) (Davidson 1998:60) but rather a physical death. In fact, Psalm 16 does not express eternal life (Dahood 1965:91; Weiser 1962:178) as deliverance from death, immortality, or a 'course of life which enables the godly to fulfill his destiny' (Anderson 1972:146). The psalmist does not see death to mean separation from God in Sheol. God is still her inheritance in this world. It is with this understanding that the psalmist, through meditation of the Torah, sees living as a path of life, not a path of death. The path of life does not refer to the Temple (Clifford 2002:95, 99) or the role of the priest as a teacher of the people (DeClaissé-Walford et al. 2014:182) but to life in fellowship with God as our inheritance, now and forever (Weiser 1962:178). Psalm 16:10 is understood by the psalmist as pointing to eternal life. However, the NT interprets Psalm 16 as pointing to a reality of a future physical resurrection that is not clear to the psalmist.

Weiser (1962:178) interprets joy and pleasure in an eschatological sense. Joy and pleasure are still hidden in our reality now, but the LORD himself will reveal it in the future. However, verse 11 is not painting an eschatological reality. Joy [שְׂמֵחָה] and pleasure [נִשְׂמָחָה] are there in the life of the psalmist in this world (see Table 5). The word שָׂבַע translated [fullness] (LAI-TB) points to a physical wealth (Ex 16:3; Lv 25:19; Ps 78:25; Am 3:10; 13:25). The expressions 'in your

TABLE 4: Psalm 16:10 English Standard Version (ESV).

For you	will not abandon	my soul	to Sheol
	or let	your Holy One	see corruption
You	make known	to me	the path of life;

TABLE 5: Psalm 16:11b English Standard Version (ESV).

In your presence	there is fullness of joy,
at your right hand	are pleasures forevermore

presence', 'at your right hand' and 'forevermore' [לְעוֹלָם] refer to the presence of God as protector within the psalmist's life.

The psalmist is a widow who gives the testimony that, even as she lost her husband and her inheritance in the midst of a syncretistic community, God is still her inheritance. Her life will be provided and protected for, because God is her inheritance. This inheritance, as she tells us, includes God's law (v. 7), God's presence and protection (v. 8, 11) and eternal life (v. 9–10).

Change of textual mood

Psalm 16, as explained in the structure of given composition, contains elements of praise and lament arranged in an alternate fashion:

Lament (v. 1b)

Praise (v. 2–3)

Lament (v. 4)

Praise (V. 5–11)

The change of textual mood begins with lament (v. 1b) that immediately turns to praise (v. 2–3) before suddenly going back into lament (v. 4). The lament in verse 4 leads to a longer section of praise in verses 5–11. This extended praise happened when the psalmist sang 'LORD, you are my cup and my portions'. This claim from the psalmist changed the textual mood all the way to the conclusion of Psalm 16. There are no more laments. The majority of Psalm 16 conveys a positive voice. Aspects of praise dominate the Psalm. The graph in Figure 1 shows the change of textual mood in Psalm 16.

The change of textual mood in Psalm 16 clearly shows that the psalmist's understanding of the LORD being her cup and her portion is the central theme of the text. At the beginning of her suffering, the psalmist cried out 'Preserve me, O God' (v. 1). Her cry does not last long in the text. Her laments immediately turned to praise. Her personal relationship with the LORD became the motivation to turn her lament into praise. But it did not last long. The arrival of the psalmist in the midst of a syncretistic community caused her to cry out to God. Their lives only added to her sorrows. Even though her sorrows and sufferings exceeded the others' because of her loss of her husband and inheritance, at that moment, the psalmist understood God in a renewed way. God is her inheritance. This is corroborated by the fact that the statement 'The LORD is my portion' is used for the first time in Psalm 16:5.

Therefore, we are able to explain the change in textual mood from lament to praise in verse 5, a result of a renewed knowledge of God by the psalmist. Her sufferings have brought her to a deeper and renewed relationship with God. Borrowing Brueggemann's language, the psalmist's previous disoriented state changed to a new orientation because of her newfound knowledge of God.

Woman and the Psalms

The earliest Psalm that we know as recorded in Judges 5 was composed and sung by a woman. The involvement of women can also be seen in both Exodus 15 and 1 Samuel 2:1–10. These texts are viewed by biblical scholars as texts that come from the earliest and oldest traditions. Although Miriam's song of praise was brief (Ex 15:21), the text itself, as understood by many interpreters, seemed to be the oldest text in the OT (Brenner 1994:51–56; Janzen 1992:211–220). Craigie (1969), for example, evaluated Judges 5:1–31 as such:

It seems most likely that the song is a very ancient text which was probably incorporated into the framework of Judges without a comprehensive revision. The song is taken to be a victory song, *in toto*, with an initial *Sitz im Leben* in a celebration after the victory over the Canaanite confederation. (p. 254)

If these texts can be understood as coming from the oldest tradition, what is the obstacle in claiming the involvement of women in arranging the Psalms in the spiritual lives of Israel? Can we at this time decide to reject Erhard Gerstenberger's statement with absolute certainty? Are we able to emphasise the involvement of women in the writing of the Psalms?

Knowles attempts to give an answer from a feminist perspective. Knowles (2014:425–427) has built her arguments based on the picture of God as both masculine and feminine: a common feminist interpretation. The picture of God as feminine can be seen throughout multiple Psalms. However, the masculine and feminine images of God cannot be used as a basis for stating female authorship in the preparation of the Psalms. Even in emphasising the feminine image of God in the Psalms, an interpreter may be caught in the extreme conclusion that all the Psalms are composed by women. Regardless, an important point that must be observed in Knowles' article is the presence of women in the Psalms. For example, women are involved in public worship (Ps 148:12). Knowles (2014:431) even stated that the book of Psalms became the means of literacy for women from generation to generation in the Western world.

Previously, Davison (2001:155–167) also attempted to provide answers to the given questions. Davison realises that it is impossible to know the gender of all the psalmists throughout the book of Psalms. She has analysed the prayers of 11 women in the OT and the Apocrypha (Hagar, Rebekah, Miriam, Deborah, Hana, Esther, Susanna, Judith, Naomi, the women of Bethlehem [Rt 4:14] and the Queen of Sheba). Looking at this list, Davison surmised that at least some of the prayers actually came from the mouth of these women. Based on this conjecture, Davison then began to

construct more suppositions, such as the use of Psalm 43 in Hannah's prayer when Eli saw that her lips moved but no voice came out. Davison also suspected the involvement of women in the use of the Psalms based on the presence of mourning women singing songs of mourning at times of death (2 Chr 35:25; Jr 9:17–22). Davison then without hesitation proposed the notion that it is very likely the mourning women used the communal lamentation Psalms found in the book of Psalms when delivering mourning laments.

Knowles and Davison's attempts to interpret the Psalms seem to not have satisfying and convincing results. We need a more solid foundation to prove the involvement of women in the arrangement of the Psalms. Psalm 16, as argued here, is a Psalm with a woman's voice. Maybe this statement is not as close to the truth as we think because the actual reality is much bigger. Are there any major objections if we state, at this moment, that Psalm 16 was not only voiced but was also actually composed by women? What's more, do we hesitate to point out that women were involved in the composition of some of the Psalms in the book of Psalms? To say that women were actively involved in the earliest tradition of arranging the Psalms is not exaggerated if we reject the view that the Psalms are only arranged by men. Further studies require proof that women were actively involved in using and arranging the Psalms. Does the phrase 'מִקְרָאָם לְיָהּ' (v. 1) possibly imply that Psalms with similar phrases (Ps 56; 57; 58; 59; 60) were also arranged by women? If this article is able to motivate biblical scholars to prove the involvement of women in the arrangement of other Psalms, then the purpose has been achieved.

Conclusion

Even though the full social context of Psalm 16 cannot be concretely explained, the message of the Psalm can be summarised clearly through the use of poetic research methods. The methods previously used by scholars seem to contain an inherent methodological limitation to uncover the involvement of women in the arrangement of the Psalms. By using poetic research methods, we are able to present a more solid case for why Psalm 16 was arranged by a woman. If this view is correct, there would no longer be a strong objection against the proposal that multiple other Psalms in the book of Psalms were also arranged by women.

Poetic research applied to Psalm 16 helped to uncover its central message, that is 'God is the inheritance'. This central message is voiced by a widow who arranged Psalm 16. For her, 'God is the inheritance' means that her life as a widow in the midst of a syncretistic society is ultimately led by the law of God (v. 7), cared for through the presence and protection of God (v. 8, 11), and in the end, she would obtain eternal life (v. 9–10) as her ultimate inheritance.

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