'Killing Them Softly with this Song …' The Literary Structure of Psalm 3 and Its Psalmic and Davidic Contexts[1]

Part I: An Intratextual Interpretation of Psalm 3

PHIL J. BOTHA AND BEAT WEBER
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Dedicated to the memory of Gerald H. Wilson (19.10.1945–11.11.2005) [2]

ABSTRACT
This is the first article in a series of two which investigate the meaning of Psalm 3. In this contribution, the syntax of the verbs and the aspects of time in Psalm 3 are analysed. This is correlated with a poetic analysis of the psalm. A division of three stanzas (2-4||5-7||8-9) is proposed in which each of the three sections is seen to describe a movement from prayer to a confession of trust. The first and the last stanza seem to be two parts of a prayer in the present tense, spoken by a suppliant who is under attack from a large number of enemies. The central stanza seems to contain a description of a prayer by the same person in the past, as well as the nocturnal answer of YHWH to this prayer, something that gave the suppliant the courage in his present situation of distress to react with confidence to the fear instilled by the enemies and their words.

A INTRODUCTION

The superscript of Ps 3 suggests a connection to David during the time of his flight from his son Absalom. This heading has been described by some exegetes as clearly spurious, while others have given some credit to its contextualization of the psalm. Gerald Wilson wrote that linking Ps 3 with the events in 2 Sam 15-16 may offer some insight into the internal mindset of

---

1 This article and a forthcoming one by the same authors have grown out of investigations and discussions during 2005 and again during 2008 at the Department of Ancient Languages at the University of Pretoria. Phil J. Botha is professor of Semitic Languages at this institution and Dr. Beat Weber is a visiting research associate of this department. The title of the article is a play on the song 'Killing me softly with his song', composed by Charles Fox and Norman Gimbel. It was inspired by a poem by Lori Lieberman, 'Killing me softly with his blues', which she wrote after seeing a then-unknown Don McLean perform the song 'Empty Chairs' live. The title was chosen because this psalm, in its present setting, tells about the life of David and how he overcame his enemies.

2 Gerald H. Wilson passed away unexpectedly and prematurely on 11 November 2005. This article is dedicated to his memory in gratitude for the great service he has rendered to all who are interested in the Psalms.

David at that time of his career, but that that is more helpful for understanding the Absalom narrative than for interpreting the psalm (cf. Wilson 2002:128). This article and its sequel do not challenge that view. It is rather an attempt to interpret the psalm in its own right as a poetic composition in the first place. But its contextualisation in the life of David in verse 1 is later also taken seriously (see the subsequent article), since this is the first heading encountered in the Psalter and the reference to David in its superscription establishes a special connection with the first Davidic collection and with the thirteen psalms that are contextualised biographically in the life of David.[3] In this first part of the investigation, the intratextual relations of the psalm will be analysed. A rather literal English translation is given here, but it should be noted that the translation presupposes certain decisions and conclusions which are discussed and explained only subsequently in the accompanying notes and the article itself.[4]

B TRANSLATION AND SEGMENTATION OF PSALM 3

		1	מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד	A Psalm, concerning David, when he fled
			בְּבָרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אַבְשָׁלוֹם בְּנוֹ׃	before Absalom, his son.
I	A	2	יְהוָה מָה־רַבּוּ צָרָי	YHWH, how have they increased, my adversaries,
			רַבִּים קָמִים עָלָי׃	many are rising up against me!
		3	רַבִּים אֹמְרִים לְנַפְשִׁי	Many are saying concerning my person:
			אֵין יְשׁוּעָתָה לּוֹ בֵּאלֹהִים סֶלָה׃	'There is no deliverance for him[a] through God!' – *selah.*
	B	4	וְאַתָּה יְהוָה מָגֵן בַּעֲדִי	But you, YHWH, [are] a shield around me,
			כְּבוֹדִי וּמֵרִים רֹאשִׁי׃	my honour and the one lifting up my head.
II	C	5	קוֹלִי אֶל־יְהוָה אֶקְרָא	Aloud I cried to YHWH repeatedly,[b]
			וַיַּעֲנֵנִי מֵהַר קָדְשׁוֹ סֶלָה׃	then he answered me[c] from his holy mountain. – s*elah.*
		6	אֲנִי שָׁכַבְתִּי וָאִישָׁנָה	I, I laid myself down and slept;[d]
			הֱקִיצוֹתִי כִּי יְהוָה יִסְמְכֵנִי׃	I woke up – because YHWH sustains me.
	D	7	לֹא־אִירָא מֵרִבְבוֹת עָם	I am not afraid of ten/many thousands of [military] people,
			אֲשֶׁר סָבִיב שָׁתוּ עָלָי׃	who have set themselves up around against me.

[3] The following psalms are meant: Pss 3; 7; 18; 34; 51; 52; 54; 56; 57; 59; 60; 63; 142. Ps 30 could possibly be added to the list (see its heading).

[4] The translation, segmentation and exposition of Ps 3 offered in Weber 2001:56-58 and Weber 2007a:239-248 are modified in this investigation.

III	E 8	קוּמָה יְהוָה ׀ הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהָי	Please rise, YHWH! Deliver me, my God,[e]
		כִּי־הִכִּיתָ אֶת־כָּל־אֹיְבַי לֶחֱי	since[f] you have struck (down) all my enemies [with regard to the] jaw,[g]
		שִׁנֵּי רְשָׁעִים שִׁבַּרְתָּ׃	[the] teeth of the wicked you have shattered![h]
	F 9	לַיהוָה הַיְשׁוּעָה	To YHWH [is] the deliverance!
		עַל־עַמְּךָ בִרְכָתֶךָ סֶלָה׃	On your people [is/comes/may come/will come] your blessing! – s*elah.*

Notes on the translation:

3[a] The Peshitta reads the second person feminine singular 'you' because the preposition לְ earlier in the line implies a direct address to the נפשׁ of the speaker. It also rendered the genitive third person masculine personal pronoun, which the LXX inserted after 'God', into a second person feminine suffix.

5[b] קולי is understood as a subject separate from the personal ('I'), cf. Gesenius & Kautzsch (1962:§144 l+m). Other syntactical possibilities are to understand קלי as a specifying accusative object – so Delitzsch 1973 [1867]:106 – or to take the phrase קולי אל יהוה as a nominal sentence (cf. Ps 77:2, on which see Weber 1995:40-42). It is in any case clear that קולי has an intensifying function by virtue of its being placed at the beginning of the line. In the strange sequence *yqṭl* (5a) → *wyyqṭl* (*waw consecutivum*) (5b), the verbal form is taken up here as *imperfectum iterativum*. It is understood as describing a repeated occurrence in the past.

5[c] The form *wyyqṭl* (*waw consecutivum*) refers to something that happened earlier (an expression of progression in the past). If one wants to translate with a present tense – as many exegetes do – the form should be pointed as *wyqṭl* (with *waw* copulative). Some take this option (which was also suggested by Bardtke in BHS, cf. Kraus 1978:157; and Craigie 1983:70f). This would be a rare occurrence of ענה with *waw copulativum* or *finalis*, while the *wyyqṭl* form occurs frequently in the Psalter (cf. especially Pss 120:1 and 138:3). Such a present tense translation should in any case explain how the continuing distress (2f.) and the appeal for rescue (8a) are linked to the divine answer (5b).

6[d] The accents used to demarcate cola in v. 6 create a dilemma for the interpreter and probably already point towards the significance of this verse as a crux in the interpretation of the psalm. The *rebia* in this verse is a *parvum* (it is followed by *ole w^{e}jored*). The first colon therefore ends with the *ole w^{e}jored* ('and slept'), since this accent is considered a stronger *distinctivus* than the *atnaḥ* (cf. Gesenius & Kautzsch 1962 [1909]:§15h). הקיצותי ('I woke up') was consequently read by the Masoretes as part of the second hemistich, since *atnaḥ* sometimes (in about ten instances in the Psalter) simply serves as a precursor for *silluq*. It also serves in this instance,

however, to place strong emphasis on this word ('I woke up') before the line proceeds to its end ('because YHWH sustains me').

8[e] The Masoretes read the two sets of imperative + vocative as *one* colon (inner-colonic parallelism) to form a tricolon together with the following two cola. They are followed here, as was also done by Van der Lugt (1980:225; 2006:106-109). Many investigators, however, read it as a bicolon on the grounds of the synonymity of the first two and the following two words (the line would then have a 2+2-*staccato*-rhythm suggestive of urgency), cf. Fokkelman 2008:58. One of our team tends also to prefer this colometric solution (cf. Weber 2001:56; 2007a:240).

8[f] The causality-indicating conjunction כי 'on the grounds of / because' (8bc, cf. also in 6b) grounds and justifies the prayer for salvation (8a) with a reference to an earlier intervention of YHWH against the enemies of the suppliant.

8[g] The second accusative (לחי) can be understood as a more precise explication of the first (את־כל־איבי): 'Since you have struck/slain all my enemies *with regard to the cheek / jawbone*' (cf. Gesenius & Kautzsch 1962 [1909]:§117ll). At the same time, however, the poetic diction leaves open the possibility (against the background of comparable places in Scripture), to explain the expression in greater detail as a striking *on* the jaw (על, cf. 1 Kings 22:24; Micah 4:14). It also calls to mind a biblical incident where the jawbone of a donkey was used as a weapon, thus a striking/slaying *with* a jawbone (ב, cf. Judges 15:15f.).

8[h] For the meaning of the *pi'el* of שבר, cf. Jenni 1968:141f, 181-183.

B GRAMMAR, FORMS AND LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

Despite its appearance as a simple lament or supplication of an individual, Ps 3 poses some significant interpretational problems. A major problem is the interpretation of the constellation of time-events.[5] Related to that is the understanding of the syntax of the verbs. Simultaneously, the meaning of verse 6 and its connections to the rest of the psalm pose a great challenge (cf. Fidler 2005).

1 Syntax and aspects of time

For the process of understanding Ps 3, it is vitally important to determine and demarcate the verbal forms, the sequence of events, and the temporal dimensions linked to this. Perusal of several commentaries shows that the *tempora* are viewed very differently, a fact that results in equally diverging explications. In the following section, the verbal forms are analyzed and conclusions drawn from the analysis.[6] The following table, which is subsequently discussed, sums up the syntax of the verbs in Ps 3:

---

5 Culley (1991:30) refers to this as 'apparent dissonances in time reference'.

6 For a theoretical explication of the verbal syntax of biblical Hebrew, cf. Bartelmus

2	Interrogative AC / NS //
3	NS / Negative NS //
4	NS / (NS) //
5	PC / waPC //
6	AC + waPC / AC + Causal PC //
7	Negative PC / Relative AC //
8	Impt (Adh) + Impt / Causal AC / AC //
9	NS / NS //

Table 1: Summary of the verbal syntax of Ps 3[7]

The first-person speaker 'I' calls to YHWH (*invocatio Dei*, 2a) and laments in a prayer about events and experiences which relate to the present. With the AC in 2a ('YHWH, how have they increased, my adversaries'), a situation is described which began in the past, developed progressively, and now determines the present.[8] The situation is described by the suppliant as continually becoming more threatening and alarming (NS 2b, 3a – 'many are rising up against me, many are saying concerning my person …'). The threat is not simply an external one demonstrated through the presence of a huge number of (military?) opponents, but also through their attacks on the connection between the suppliant and his God and the possibility of salvation for him (NS 3b – 'There is no deliverance for him through God!'). This is evidenced by the insertion of a quotation of the enemy which makes their voice also heard in the psalm. This technique serves as emphasis and enlivenment: the threat is intensified by it, while the urgency of the call of distress to YHWH is also strengthened. The 'יהוה' who is called upon by the supplicating 'I' (2a) is the God whom the enemies refer to as אלהים (3b) (*inclusio* 2-3), so that any saving relationship between YHWH and the speaker is flatly denied in a kind of negative confession. The confession of the supplicating 'I' which follows after that, with a renewed call to YHWH (4a, cf. 2a), similarly belongs to the present tense (NS 4ab – 'But you, YHWH, [are] a shield around me, my honour and the one lifting up my head'). The ואתה which introduces the section

1982; for its relevance in Psalmic poetry, cf. Weber 1995:42f.

[7] The abbreviations used are: AC = Afformative Conjugation ('Perfect', *qṭl*); Impt (Adh) = Imperative (Adhortative); NS = Nominal Sentence; PC = Preformative Conjugation ('Imperfect', *yqṭl*); wPC = Preformative Conjugation with simple/copulative *waw* ('Imperfect with simple/copulative *waw*', *wyqṭl*); waPC = Preformative Conjugation with *waw-consecutivum* ('Consecutive Imperfect', *wyyqṭl*); / = End of a colon, // = End of a verse.

[8] The fact that – different from 2b and 3a – not the nominal form רבים is used, but the verbal form (AC of רבב, a variant of the commoner רבה), is significant and should not be dismissed lightly as a stylistic variant (many exegetes do not make mention of this fine nuance; but note in contrast to this Delitzsch 1973 [1867]:104). It is quite possible that the expression 'they have become many' signifies the experience of a still-growing, overwhelming increase in the number of enemies.

syntactically marks a break, creating a strong semantic-pragmatic contrast between the two speech-acts of 'enemy-speech' (they → I, 'anti-confession', 3b) and 'I-speech' (I → you, confession, 4ab). The confession addressed to God (prayer) in 4 is in any case contrasted rather with the description of distress in 2 and 3a than with the enemy's quotation in 3b.

If one reflects the exceptional sequence of PC → waPC in 5ab ('Aloud I cried to YHWH repeatedly, then he answered me from his holy mountain') in the translation (see the notes on the translation) – and there seems to be no other possibility or reason to change this – one has to acknowledge that there is a shift on the time axis in the psalm from the present to the past.[9] At the same time, the speech form changes from supplication (addressee = God) to that of report (addressee not mentioned, ≠ God). If the PC in 5a is further understood as iterative and the nuance of the form waPC (5b) as progress, it becomes clear that the past is not meant as a specific point in time, but as a period of time. How long the loud calling to God continued ('I'-description) and when God answered ('he'-description) are not made explicit. The question of how the report from the past (repeated supplication → divine answer) in 4 should be related to the present supplication and the situation to which it refers in 2-3 still has to be explained. Verse 6 with its (altogether) four verbal forms has the sequence of AC → waPC → AC → PC. The time-frame of the past in 5b (indicated with the waPC – 'then he answered me from his holy mountain') is continued in 6a ('I laid myself down and slept'), but it must also still be explained whether (and how) what is described in 5 and 6 have any connection.

In the sequence of the two verbs in 6a there is a progress, but it is undecided whether the form waPC should be nuanced as constative ('I slept', see the translation) or ingressive ('I went to sleep'). The third verbal form (AC) is separated from the second (waPC) through the colometry and syntax (return to AC, no *copula* – 'I woke up'). It is true that the 'waking up' is logically linked to both the 'lying down' and the 'going to sleep' (which two are logically connected even more closely), but it is given its own Masoretic accent, an *atnaḥ*. This separating effect is strengthened even further if one sees a connection between the added causal sentence (כִּי-sentence) and the immediately preceding statement ('I woke up') which introduces the b-colon, rather than with the preceding chain of three verbal pronouncements. The verb in the causal sentence right at the end of the colon is in the PC ('he'-description – 'because YHWH sustains me'). It forms a contrast with the three past tense descriptions ('I'-description) and the use of the PC here could hardly be explained in another way as that the reason still holds true in the present and qualifies the present tense. This is why it is translated with a present tense

[9] In this sense also Calvin 1949 [1563]:30-33; Delitzsch 1973 [1871]:100; Hossfeld & Zenger 1992:57-58; Seybold 1996:34, 36; Fidler 2005:194. Different views in Kraus 1978:157 (conditional structure) and Craigie 1983:70f (futuristic representation); both modify the *waw consecutivum* to a simple *waw*.

above. The conjugation of the last verb in 6 is also used at the beginning of 7 (PC – 'I am not afraid'), but now with a preceding negation. There is also a logical progression from the end of 6 ('he supports me') to the beginning of 7 ('I am not afraid'). In other words: The event that took place in the past ('I woke up') is linked to a divine pronouncement ('he supports me'), which has a decisive effect on the subsequent past as well as the present tense; this in turn leads to a general pronouncement about the present state of mind of the speaker: 'I am not afraid …' (7a). We thus have a second confession in 7 (besides the one in 4), but the addressee remains unknown in this case. The relative clause in 7b ('who have set themselves up around against me') refers back to 2ab, as one can deduce from the situating description of רבבות עם 'ten / many thousands of [military] people'.[10] This completes the arch from the past back to the future (cf. in this regard the identical end of verses 2b and 7b in עלי). The AC of 7b ('who have set themselves up around against me') should also be interpreted similarly to that in 2a: The huge coalition of enemies began to form in the past and is now ready. But different from 2-3, the situation is not presented to God as a crisis, but in the form of a confession of absence of fear and presence of confidence (despite an overwhelming enemy force).

With the imperatives of 8a ('Please rise, YHWH! Deliver me, my God!') there finally is a return to the present tense, to the situation of distress and to supplication. Verse 8 consequently has a connection to 2-4, recognisable in the double *invocatio Dei* (8a, cf. 2a, 4a) and in the recurrence of the keywords (forms of the roots קום und ישע in 2b, 3b and 8). The appeal to God in this psalm, however, is not found immediately after the description of the crisis (2-3) – as is often the case in laments of an individual. It is co-determined and supported by the description of past events (4-5) and the statement about the absence of fear that grew from this (5). The supplicating 'I' is consequently encouraged to ask YHWH to act powerfully and decisively against the encirclement described in 7b. The request of 8a is, however, not founded only upon 5-7, but also on that which follows (8bc, כי – 'since you have struck (down) all my enemies [with regard to the] jaw, [the] teeth of the wicked you have shattered!' cf. 6b).[11] This means that there is another instance of harking back from the present to the past, clearly marked by the two occurrences of AC which form an inclusio for everything that is written between them. The prayer for God to intervene as judge/ruler and saviour (8a) is linked to an earlier instance of divine intervention on behalf of the suppliant against his opponents (8bc – 'since you have struck (down) all my enemies [with regard to the] jaw, [the]

[10] In this regard there is an inverted analogy between 2 (AC → NS [present]) and 7 (PC [present] ← AC). Note the repetition of the preposition על with suffix 1 singular at the end of these two lines, a fact that draws attention to the similarity.

[11] Instead of a causal function, it is also possible to detect an emphatic nuance in this.

teeth of the wicked you have shattered!').[12] The actual incident is not explained and the historical sequence remains unclear. One wonders what the temporal and logical connection is between the past tense descriptions of 6-7 on the one hand and 8bc on the other. With 9a, the time axis returns to the present (NS – 'To YHWH [is/belongs] the deliverance'). The psalm closes with another – the third – confession. But this time, the speaker is in the background, causing one to wonder whether it is the I-speaker who makes the confession about salvation or whether it is spoken/confessed/quoted by another speaker or perhaps a community. The final colon, 9b ('On your people [is/comes/may come/will come] your blessing!'), shows that a liturgical context is possible here. In it, the people of God is mentioned in stark contrast to the military group of people of 7a.[13] It also serves to reintegrate the isolated 'I' who stood against the mob of opponents into the community of God (against 3b!). The NS could be understood on the same level as 9a as a confession ('is/comes'), but also as an optative/future-related prayer or blessing formula ('may/will come'). The speaker similarly remains anonymous. From the use of the keywords, it can be seen that the final verse provides closure to the psalm. In addition to that, it also opens up the psalm and widens it through its use of generalizing formulae towards co-confessors and (liturgical) re-enactments.

Poetry differs from narrative texts inter alia in the fact that poetic texts characteristically have a less tight connection of sequences and time-frames. It consequently requires greater effort from the listener or reader to interpret poetry. Yet it could be shown that a careful analysis of the syntax of verbal forms and its connections with the speech situations renders a clear result. In broad terms, there is a clear sequence from the present time (2-4, supplication) to the past (5-7) and back to the present (8-9, supplication once more). All three these

[12] Hossfeld & Zenger (1993:55-57) translate the time dimensions likewise, but nevertheless describe the juxtaposition of prayer (8a) and statement about victory over the enemies ('Konstatierung der Besiegung der Feinde') (8bc) as the *crux interpretum*. The problem is solved, however, if the prayer is understood to refer to a *present* situation of distress, but the victory over the enemies is taken to refer in contrast to an *earlier* event, to which is now referred for the purpose of basing and substantiating the supplication.

[13] It is worth considering whether 9ab (or possibly only 9b) were added later in a context of worship. In favour of such a notion is the similarity of this line with Ps 14:7 (= 53:7) which seems to have a post-exilic origin (cf. its connections with Ps 126:1 and Isa 52:8). If this is indeed the case, the structural markers 'salvation' (cf. 3b, 8a) and 'people' (cf. 7a) are taken up knowledgeably in this addition. Although 9b contains the first clear reference to the in-group, the references to the out-group ('opponents', many who 'rise against me', a 'multitude' who 'surround' me, 'my enemies' and 'the wicked') as well as words suggesting a military confrontation ('a shield round about me', 'struck my enemies on the chin' and 'shattered the teeth of the wicked') point towards someone who represents the people of YHWH as a leader rather than an individual. The context of the in-group thus does not simply appear from nowhere in the last line of poetry.

parts are concluded with a 'confession'. A more detailed result will subsequently be explained in an outline and substantiated and expanded with form-critical remarks and notes about the communication situation. The syntactic analysis, however, also produced some questions about the temporal relationship. One of these is the question whether and to what degree the past events mentioned in 5 and 6 belong together and what the temporal and logical relationships are that these events have with the present-time events in 2-4. The precise meaning of 6, the most important verse for the understanding of the psalm, also needs more deliberation. And, finally, the events from the past which are mentioned in the prayer in 8bc have to be related to those mentioned in 5-6 and the present situation which is implied in 8a. These questions will also be addressed as far as possible in the next section.

2 Levels of Communication, Form-elements, and the Interpretational Background

Hermann Gunkel (1933:172) classified Ps 3 as an individual lament or prayer of supplication ('Klagelied [bzw. Bittgebet] des Einzelnen') and this classification is not challenged,[14] except for the question whether one should not think of the 'king' or 'David' or another leader rather than an 'individual', so that the psalm would be located in a national rather than an individual context (see Part II of the investigation). The following Form-elements can be abstracted from the psalm in conjunction with the remarks already made as to the syntax and the relationship between the aspects of time:[15]

[14] Cf., though, Schroeder (2000:101, 104; 2001:245), who describes Ps 3 as a 'psalm of confidence'.

[15] Cf. in this regard Westermann (1983:48-60, 139-149).

2-4	PRAYER (Part I)	PRESENT
2f	Supplication (I → you)	
	• Divine Address I	
	• Description of Distress (they)	
	• Quotation: Words of the enemy (they → I)	
4	Confession I (I → you)	
	• Contrast-opening	
	• Divine Address II	
	• Declarations of Trust & Protection	
5-7	EXPERIENCES OF PRAYER AND HELP IN THE PAST	
5	Description I	
	• Repeated, audible prayer (I → he)	
	• Divine Answer (he → me)	
6	Description II	
	• Lying down and going to sleep (I)	
	• Waking up → Divine Help (he → me)	past → present
7	Confession II ('I')	
	• Declaration of absence of fear	(past →) present
	• In the face of/despite greater numbers	present ← past
8-9	PRAYER (Part II)	PRESENT
8a	Supplication (I → you)	
	• Divine Address III+IV	
	• Appeal to intervene	
8bc	Description III (you → they)	past (→ present)
	• Nexus to prayer ('for')	
	• Divine intervention against enemies	
9	Confession III (ultimately with a wish for blessing)	present (/ future)
	• Pronouncement of salvation (he)	
	• Pronouncement of blessing (it)	

Table 2: Summary of aspects of time, form & communication in Ps 3

It thus seems that the prayer of the first person speaker in Ps 3, which permeates the present time, is split up and deposited at the beginning and end of the text. The first part is defined by descriptions of suffering and actions of the enemy, while the second contains appeals to God to intervene. In both parts, there are two addresses directed to God.

The inserted middle part of the psalm is noteworthy. It seems to have been inserted between the two sections of the prayer since the events which are described there are important for the present situation, leading to a renewed evaluation of that situation and a renewed prayer growing out of that. It is not completely certain whether the flashback in 5 has a more or less direct link to

the present situation of the suppliant. That is the impression one gets, in any case, from the final contextualisation of the pronouncement. That would imply that the prayer in 2-4 was preceded by a longer, more intense process of praying, which led to an answer from God. Such an answer would help to (better) explain the confession of trust and protection given in 4. But how is 6, in the middle of the psalm, to be interpreted?

Ruth Fidler (2005) has considered and summarised the possible ways of interpreting it. Within the context of the psalm, it seems appropriate to understand 6 as being connected in some way or another with 5 – which also describes a past experience. In our view it seems best to see in 6 a reference to the answer of God to the cries of the suppliant which are mentioned in 5b but the contents of which are not yet spelled out. The so-called 'spiritual explanation', which sees in the lying down to sleep and getting up again a repeated, generalised experience of the protection of God, on which the trust in YHWH's protection is based, is not made completely obsolete by this, but does not offer an adequate explanation. One problem with such an interpretation, which argues that the basis of the trust is a general experience similar to what is confessed in 4, is that there is very little that links it to a specific situation of distress such as is described in the psalm. The divine answer is then left unexplained. 6b would not be a continuation of 5b, but would form a parallel to 5b. A second problem with this interpretation is that the massive size of the threat, emphasized through the fact that the enemy even attack and verbally question the protecting relationship of the suppliant with his God, seems to call for an equally big answer coming from 'outside'. The spiritual interpretation with its closeness to a psychological interpretation is in this case too weak.

The 'institutional explanation' similarly fails to explain verse 6 in a plausible way. In this case, the background is explained as an oracle of incubation (in connection with a sacral-juristic process) which the suppliant receives or becomes aware of while he or she spends the night in the temple.[16] The support from God mentioned in 6 would then be the result of the divine message delivered to the suppliant. This interpretation has the advantage that it is specific and makes provision for a concrete intervention by God, so that 6 would provide an explanation of 5. But it crashes when one notes that the divine answer comes, according to 5b, 'from his holy mountain'. This means that the answer could not have been given *at* the temple in Jerusalem, since it emanated *from* the temple: The suppliant is some distance away from this temple.[17] Furthermore, an effective resolving of the crisis such as one would expect with a legal procedure is not (yet) visible in Ps 3.

---

[16] Cf. Seybold 1996:34-36 and earlier studies of Hans Schmidt, Lienhard Delekat and Walter Beyerlin. For criticism of this point of view, cf. Schroeder 2000:243-245.

[17] The opinion expressed by Fidler (2005:196, 212) and others (inter alia Walter Beyerlin) that it is a solution if one sees this as a short distance, so that the suppliant

It would seem to us that the most probable interpretation of the verse would be one which covers the middle ground between the two discussed propositions. First, one has to consider the nocturnal scene. The description of 'waking up' is slightly separated from the preceding two verbs through the syntax and the colometry of the verse. In contrast to a usual waking up in the morning, an early, sudden waking from sleep seems to be at stake. The trigger for this would be a nocturnal appearance or experience of God in a dream (as an audition or vision), which wakes the suppliant from sleep.[18] The contents of this nocturnal experience of God result in the certainty that YHWH supports him. It means that the causal formulation 'because YHWH supports me' is not linked simply in a general way to all three preceding verbs, but more closely to the immediately preceding one ('I woke up'). The pronouncement made by God in a dream causes the suppliant to wake up and this forms the foundation for the pronouncement of support.[19] It is acknowledged that such an interpretation does not have concrete support in the text. But biblical and extra-biblical reports of dream experiences (references in Fidler 2005:198-203) show that this cannot be considered far-fetched. The statement about God's support in a 'stumbling' situation (6b) points towards the contents of the divine answer of 5b, explains the pronouncement of trust in 4, and denies the truth of the quotation of the enemies in 3b. It further also leads to the (second) confession in 7 which is directly linked to it: The support of God completely overpowers the multitude of opponents and enables the first person speaker to articulate his lack of fear.

In 8a we have returned to the supplication as it is being formulated in the present. The appeal is strengthened by the divine answer in the middle of the psalm, yet it clearly implies that although a promise of God's help was given, the trouble is not yet effectively countered. The supplication contains a glance to what has happened in the past and is based on that (8bc). The particular incident which is referred to so dramatically and conspicuously – a striking on the chin/jaws and teeth of the enemy, thus a blow on the mouth so

---

is portrayed as waiting in the outer court while the divine answer comes from the temple itself, is not tenable. The mentioning of the 'mountain' implies that the suppliant is not on Zion, but far away.

[18] This line of interpretation links up with the thoughts of Schroeder (2000; 2001:100-105) and Fidler (2005), who adduces more texts (especially Ps 155:17-19 in 11QPs[a] Col. XXIV) and arguments. But it is not necessary to see the whole psalm as a psalm of trust ('Vertrauenslied', Schroeder). Another interpretation was given by Lindström (1994:400). He suggested that verse 6 is best understood if one recognizes in it the 'underlying idea of Sheol as a dormitorium'. 'Lying down' and 'sleeping' would then simply be euphemisms for an existence in the realm of Death, and 'awakening' would refer to the conviction of a renewed existence in the immediate presence of God.

[19] It is also possible to interpret this as an emphatic כי: 'Indeed: YHWH supports me!' In that case, the pronouncement would not be a 'he'-report, but a direct announcement of the 'I'.

that their mouths with which they have tried to revile the suppliant are closed shut – remains unexplained. But this effective, completed act of judgement on the part of God (both aspects in the AC) did not involve the enemy who surrounds him at present – unless the verbs are read as prophetic perfects, a possibility which we would consider to be not plausible. The earlier event probably simply serves to foster certainty of a new realisation of salvation in the face of the present threat.

The concluding confession in 9a(b) should then be read as a renewed (present) pronouncement of trust of the first person speaker. It is also possible that it was inserted here after the prayer in this psalm was answered and the divine intervention experienced as a kind of quotation or signature, and then afterwards linked to a wish for YHWH's blessing.

C POETIC ANALYSIS

	I			II			III	
	A		B	C		D	E	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	יהוה	אלהים	יהוה	יהוה	יהוה		יהוה אלהים	יהוה
			ו ו	ו	ו			
ל		ל ל						ל
מן				מן		מן		
		סלה		סלה				סלה
	על		*בעד*			על *סביב*		על
ב		ב						
		ישועה					ישע	ישועה
					כי		כי	
						עם		עם
	קום						קום	
	רבב/רב	רב				רבבה	*כל*	
	צר						***לשע/איב***	
			ראש				*לחי / שן*	

Table 3: The repetition of words and certain semantic fields in Psalm 3[20]

Psalm 3 is a fine poem in which many poetic devices are put to effective use. In communicating his message, the poet has made use of tropes such as parallelism, chiasmus, assonance, alliteration, rhyme, metaphor, hyperbole, crescendo, and inclusio. It seems that the repetition of words and ideas was one of the major strategies of the poet who used it to create a polarity between the suppliant

[20] Normal script indicates repetition of a root; italic script indicates synonymity.

and his enemies and between the threat of their attack and his trust in YHWH to protect and save him.

There is an internal semantic parallel in 2 (highlighted with repetition of רב and ־ָ־ָי) which is extended to an external grammatical parallel between 2 and 3a.[21] This parallelism is also highlighted through the fourfold rhyme in ־ִים between 2 and 3. A rhetorical question ('how have …') is used in 2 as a technique of enlivenment. The crescendo effect of the repetition of words with the stem רב (רבב → רב → רב → רבבה, building up to כל in 8) will be discussed below, but Kselman (1987:575) sees a crescendo effect also in the increase of the *number* of terms used to refer to the enemies.[22] Verse 3 ends in a quotation from the enemies, another technique which is used to enliven the prayer. The denial expressed in this quote of the enemies is countered through an emphatic adversative in 4 in which the independent pronoun is foregrounded to supplement the adversative *waw* (ואתה יהוה). Verse 4 contains another internal parallel (formed by the three epithets of YHWH and three first person singular suffixes). Another connection between 3 and 4 is the rhyme created between אמרים in 3a and ומרים in 4b.[23] Sound also plays a role, for the denial of the enemies in 3b (אֵין) is countered with the similar sounding confession מָגֵן in 4a.

Verse 5 contains yet another parallel which is arranged to form chiasmus: Noun+suffix 1 s, preposition, YHWH, verb → verb+suffix 1 s, preposition, noun, noun+suffix 3 m s:

קולי אל־יהוה אקרא
E D C B A
ויעננני מהר קדשו
B A AC B E

It thus becomes clear that קולי, apart from serving to emphasise the loud or repeated calling, also serves to establish a parallel to 'his holy (mountain)', binding the verse line together. Kselman (1987:577) calls attention to the fact that the focus in stanza II is entirely on the suppliant – the pronoun and first person suffixes contain ten references to the psalmist in this section.

Verse 6 contains another instance of chiasmus: 'I, I laid myself down' at the beginning is balanced by 'YHWH, he supported me' at the end, with two other verbs ('I slept' and 'I woke up') in the middle.

Verse 7 makes use of hyperbole ('ten thousands') to emphasise the trust of the suppliant, while there is also a conspicuous instance of alliteration of

[21] Adjective, participle, preposition, suffix 1 s.

[22] רבים אמרים לנפשי → קמים עלי → צרי.

[23] Kselman (1987:573) also refers to this.

sibilants in the verse (אֲשֶׁר סָבִיב שָׁתוּ). The mentioning of 'ten thousands' of the enemy also constitutes a crescendo with the previous uses of the stem רב in 2 and 3.

The focus of stanza III is YHWH, since he is referred to nine times in the subject of verbs; as a vocative; or in suffixes. Verse 8a uses internal parallelism to emphasise the urgent plea to YHWH to intervene, while 8bc describes YHWH's past intervention with a beautiful chiastic parallel (verb – metonymical object; metonymical object – verb). Verse 9 ends the poem with another parallelism (preposition, YHWH, salvation – preposition, YHWH's people, his blessing). The chiastic parallel establishes a close connection between Yahweh and his people, and simultaneously declares Yahweh's salvation to be a blessing. The use of inclusio will be discussed below, but one other insight of Kselman (1987:579) should be mentioned here: verse 9a is a confession that responds chiastically to the taunt of the enemies in 3b:

'There is no deliverance for him (A) through God! (B)'
'To YHWH (B) [is] the deliverance! (A)'

Various propositions have been made as to how the psalm should be segmented into strophes and/or stanzas.[24] Each proposition has merit, and the deciding factor often seems to be how the verbal aspects are understood. We distinguished three main sections in the psalm on the basis of the use of present tense, past tense, and present tense again. Verses 2-4 (which constitute stanza I) contain a prayer in the present tense which ends in a confession in 4; 5-7 (stanza II) contain a description of prayer and help in the past, which also ends in a confession (in 7); and 8-9 (stanza III) is the resumption of the prayer of part I, thus again in the present tense, and it also ends in a confession (9). Stanzas I and II each have two strophes, of which the first consists of two verse lines and the second of one verse line, while the shorter, third stanza has only one verse line in each of its two strophes. This segmentation is one that has also been proposed by Auffret (1979:94-95), Kselman (1987:574-580) Hossfeld & Zenger (1993:55-58), and Weber (2001:56f). Kselman also finds in each of the three sections (2-4|5-7|8-9) the sequence 'prayer → confidence'.[25]

The segmentation should be verified or falsified with the help of the poetic analysis above, and by comparison with the table of repetition of keywords and semantic fields. We can confirm that no parallel or instance of chiasmus

[24] According to Kselman (1987:573), most investigators suggest a segmentation of 2-3|4-5|6-7|8-9.

[25] Fokkelman (2000:57-59; 2002:17) attaches value to s*elah* as a marker with segmenting function. Other propositions were made by Weber (2007a:240): 2-3|4-5|6-7|8-9; Van der Lugt (1980:225-227): 2-3|4-7|8||9; but (2006:106-109): 2-3|4-5||6-7|8-9.

clashes with the proposed segmentation. The words and semantic fields that are repeated also seem to endorse the segmentation into strophes and stanzas. So, for instance, does the use of the divine name YHWH seem to be a strong demarcating factor in the psalm. Kselman (1987:574) has pointed out that each of the three sections of the psalm contains two instances of the name, one in the prayer section and one in the statement of confidence. The divine name introduces strophes A, B, and E as part of either an *invocatio* or a confession (2a: 'YHWH...!' 4a: 'But you, YHWH…', 8a: 'Please rise, YHWH…!') and it is also used in 5a, 6b, and 9a, but YHWH is not addressed in those verses and is rather spoken of in the third person. In 5 and 6, the two verse lines of strophe C, the occurrence of this name forms a small inclusio. But verse 9 stands in strong opposition to verse 3: It responds to the claim of the opponents (יְשׁוּעָתָה אֵין) with an antithetic communal confession (לַיהוָה הַיְשׁוּעָה), so that the use of *both* YHWH and 'God' at the beginning of strophe A and in strophe E can also be described as forming an inclusio, in this instance one that embraces the whole psalm with the exception of 9 (where YHWH on its own does also occur at the beginning of the line to form another inclusio with 2). The opponents refer to the God whom the suppliant addresses as 'YHWH', simply as 'God' (2-3), but he counters this in a certain sense by calling upon both 'YHWH' and '*my* God' in the same line (8), thereby reaffirming the close relationship he has with *his* God.

The repetition of keywords and key concepts thus seems to suggest a parallel, but also a strong opposition, between stanzas I and III. The preposition ל is used, for instance, in verse 3 to describe the opponents' denial of a special relationship between the suppliant and his God (they say *concerning* (ל) him that there is no <u>salvation</u> *for* (ל) him through God). In contrast to this, 9 confirms that <u>the salvation</u> belongs *to* (ל) YHWH. The repetition of ל and יְשׁוּעָה is therefore functional to highlight the trust in YHWH's ability and his willingness to save. A similar development is visible in the use of the prepositions על, בעד, and סביב which are used in the descriptions of the threat of the enemy and the confessions of trust in YHWH: 'many rise *against* (על) me' (2); 'you are a shield *around* (בעד) me (4); 'I am not afraid … who have set themselves up *around against* (סביב על) me' (7); '*on* (על) your people [may come] your blessing' (9). A similar reciprocity can be seen in the use of the stem קום, to 'rise'. On the one hand, there is the threat of many people *rising* (קמים) against the suppliant (2, stanza I), but this is balanced by the appeal to YHWH to 'please *rise* (קוּמָה)' (8, stanza III).

The enormity of opposition against the suppliant is vividly portrayed through the *Leitwort*-like repetition of רב(ב) in the psalm. But there is also an emphatic development through the stages: רבו 'have grown in number' (2a), → רבים 'many' (2b), → רבים 'many' (3a), → רבבות 'many thousands' (7a), → כל 'all' (8c). The first three instances are embedded in a description of hostile

threat, but the fourth, superlative use of the stem forms part of the 'I' confession of the suppliant which states that there is no fear, while the climactic expression 'all (כל)' at the end (8) is used in the context of YHWH's historical and complete elimination of their hostility.

One final instance of correspondence between stanza I and stanza III may perhaps be highlighted: In 4 the suppliant confesses that YHWH is the one who 'lifts up my *head* (ראש)'. As is clear from the parallelism in this verse and from social-scientific investigations into the culture of the Bible, the expression points towards the restoration of *honour*. Parts of the 'head' of the enemy are then also mentioned in 8: God has struck them on the *chin*/*cheek* (לחי), and has shattered their *teeth* (שן). These parts of the face and the actions to which they are subjected clearly point in the opposite direction, namely to the *shaming* of the persons to which they refer metonymically. Striking someone on the mouth would refer to a procedure of *silencing* the speech of that person, so that 8 consequently also stands in opposition to the verb אמר where it refers to the *speaking* of the opponents in 3.[26]

Finally, there are also instances of correspondence and contrast within stanza II itself and between stanzas II and III. The repetition of the preposition מן at the beginning and end of stanza II seems to suggest a connection between YHWH's answer to the prayer of the suppliant and his trust: YHWH answered him *from* (מן) his holy mountain (5), and this saves him from fear *of* (מן) the multitude of opponents who surround him in military style (7). The noun עם, people, is used for the first time in stanza II, and then repeated in stanza III. There is a strong contrast between the two instances, since in 7 it refers to an army of hostile people, but in 9 it refers to YHWH's own people, closely associated with YHWH's blessing, and thus peace. It is also possible to see in 9 an inclusion with 2-3, since the psalm began with a group (the many enemies of the psalmist in 2-3) and ends with the collectivity of the in-group in 9.

D CONCLUSION

This investigation began with a careful syntactic analysis of the relationship between the verbs used in the psalm. This relationship is one of the major problems of interpretation of the psalm. It was established that the psalm has three distinct sections. Stanza I and stanza III are two parts of the same prayer in the present tense, both consisting of a supplication and a confession. Stanza III, however, also has a reflection on the past, so that it is not completely concerned with the present. Between these two sections of the prayer, a description of past experiences of prayer and help is inserted (stanza II). This creates an ABA' structure between the three stanzas. The description of this experience

[26] Kselman (1987:579) also thinks of the לחי and the שן primarily as 'organs of speech'.

in the past also ends in a confession, so that there is a certain parallel between the three stanzas. Verse 6, which is considered by many to be a *crux interpretum* of the psalm, was then investigated more closely. The 'spiritual' and the 'institutional' explanations of how it happened that the suppliant received an answer by which he was encouraged for the present crisis were considered, but found to be insufficient. Instead, it was proposed that the suppliant refers to a nocturnal experience some distance away from the sanctuary in which he had a dream containing what he experienced as an answer from YHWH that helped him to overcome his fear of the enemies. The concluding confession in 9 should then be read as a renewed pronouncement of trust in YHWH's ability and willingness to save. Finally, a poetic analysis of the psalm was made to see whether the use of poetic devices confirms or clashes with the proposed segmentation of the psalm. The poetic analysis confirmed the segmentation and contributed towards our understanding of how the poet used such devices to communicate his trust in YHWH effectively. Stanza I and stanza III were found to be not only parallel in their movement from prayer to a confession of trust, but also suggestive of a strong contrast between the enemy with their ridicule that YHWH will not intervene and the suppliant with his trust in YHWH's willingness to save him.

Part II of this investigation (submitted for publication in the following issue of the same journal) will subsequently broaden the field of investigation. Psalm 3 will then be contextualized within the first part of the Psalter, and we will ask the question how it should be understood by someone who begins reading and meditating on the Psalms from Psalms 1 and 2. There seems to be important connections between Psalms 1-2 and Ps 3, but the question should also be asked how someone who has finished reading Ps 4 would interpret Ps 3. Ps 3 is further the first psalm with a superscription, one that links it to David at a specific time of conflict in the history of Israel. The superscript of the psalm, its immediate context in the Psalter, and intertextual links it may have with the rest of the Hebrew canon will be investigated to seek explanations for remaining questions and to deepen our understanding of the psalm if possible. In this connection the question will also be asked whether the first person speaker in Ps 3 should be thought of as an individual or – and possibly primarily – as a royal figure.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Auffret, P. 1979. Note sur la structure littéraire du psaume 3. *ZAW* 91, 93-106.

Barbiero, G. 1999. *Das erste Psalmenbuch als Einheit. Eine synchrone Analyse von Psalm 1-41*. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang. (ÖBS 16.)

Bartelmus, R. 1982. *HYH. Bedeutung und Funktion des hebräischen 'Allerweltswortes' – zugleich ein Beitrag zur Frage des hebräischen Tempussystems.* St. Ottilien: Eos. (ATSAT 17.)

Botha, P. J. 2005. The Ideological Interface between Psalm 1 and Psalm 2. *OTE* 18, 189-203.

Calvin, J. 1949 [1571]. *Commentary on the Book of Psalms, Vol. I.* Reprint of the first English Edition 1571. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Culley, R. C. 1991. Psalm 3: Content, Context, and Coherence, in Gross, W. et al. (eds), *Text, Methode und Grammatik*, 29-39. St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag.

Craigie, P. C. 1983. *Psalms 1-50.* Waco, TX: Word Books. (WBC 19.)

Croft, S. J. L. 1987. *The Identity of the Individual in the Psalms.* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. (JSOT.S 44.)

Delitzsch, F. 1973 [1867]. *Psalms.* Reprint of the English Translation of 1871, German 1867. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Fidler, R. 2005. 'A Touch of Support: Ps 3:6 and the Psalmist's Experience.' *Bib.* 86, 192-212.

Fokkelman, J. P. 2000. *Major Poems of the Hebrew Bible. At the Interface of Prosody and Structural Analysis. Volume II: 85 Psalms and Job 4-14.* Assen: Van Gorcum. (SSN.)

Fokkelman, J. P. 2002. *The Psalms in Form. The Hebrew Psalter in its Poetic Shape.* Leiden: Deo.

Gesenius, W. & Kautzsch, E. 1962 [1909]. *Hebräische Grammatik.* Reprint of the 28th edition, Leipzig 1909. Hildesheim: Olms.

Gunkel, H. (& Begrich, J.) 1933. *Einleitung in die Psalmen. Die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. (Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament II / Ergänzungsband, completed by J. Begrich.)

Hossfeld, F.-L. & Zenger, E. 1992. 'Selig, wer auf die Armen achtet' (Ps 41,2). Beobachtungen zur Gottesvolk-Theologie des ersten Davidpsalters.' *JBTh* 7, 21-50.

Hossfeld, F.-L. & Zenger, E. 1993. *Die Psalmen I.* Würzburg: Echter. (NEB 29.)

Jenni, E. 1968. *Das hebräische Pi'el. Syntaktisch-semasiologische Untersuchung einer Verbalform im Alten Testament*. Zürich: EVZ-Verlag.

Kleer, M. 1996. *'Der liebliche Sänger der Psalmen Israels.' Untersuchungen zu David als Dichter und Beter der Psalmen.* Bodenheim: Philo. (BBB 108.)

Kraus, H.-J. 1978. *Psalmen. 1. Teilband: Psalmen 1–59.* 5., grundlegend überarbeitete und veränderte Auflage. Neukirchen-Vluyn. (BKAT XV/1).

Kselman, J. S. 1987. Psalm 3: A Structural and Literary Study. *CBQ* 49, 572-80.

Lindström, F. 1994. *Suffering and Sin. Interpretations of Illness in the Individual Complaint Psalms.* Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell. (CBOT 37.)

McCann, J. C. 1992. The Psalms as Instruction. *Interp.* 46, 117-128.

Oeming, M. 2000. *Das Buch der Psalmen. Psalm 1-41.* Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk. (NSKAT 13/1.)

Schroeder, C. 2000. Psalm 3 und das Traumorakel des von Feinden bedrängten Beters. *Bib.* 81, 243-51.
Schroeder, C. 2001. *History, Justice, and the Agency of God. A Hermeneutical Investigation on Isaiah and Psalms*. Leiden: Brill. (BIS 52.)
Seybold, K. 1996. *Die Psalmen*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996. (HAT I/15.)
Terrien, S. 2003. *The Psalms. Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI & Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans. (ECC.)
Van der Lugt, P. 1980. *Strofiesche structuren in de Bijbels-Hebreeuwse poëzie. De geschiedenis van het onderzoek en een bijdrage tot de theorievorming omtrent de strofenbouw van de Psalmen*. Kampen: J. H. Kok. (DNS.T.)
Van der Lugt, P. 2006. *Cantos and Strophes in Biblical Hebrew Poetry with Special Reference to the First Book of the Psalter.* Leiden & Boston: Brill. (OTS 53.)
Weber, B. 1995. *Psalm 77 und sein Umfeld. Eine poetologische Studie*. Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum. (BBB 103.)
Weber, B. 2001. *Werkbuch Psalmen I. Die Psalmen 1 bis 72*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
Weber, B. 2007a. 'HERR, wie viele sind geworden meine Bedränger …' (Ps 3,2a). Psalm 1-3 als Ouvertüre des Psalters unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Psalm 3 und seinem Präskript, in *Der Bibelkanon in der Bibelauslegung. Methodenreflexionen und Beispielexegesen.* Edited by E. Ballhorn & G. Steins. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 231-251.
Weber, B. 2007b. Psalm 1 als Tor zur Tora JHWHs. Wie Ps 1 (und Ps 2) den Psalter an den Pentateuch anschliesst. *SJOT* 21, 179-200.
Westermann, C. 1983. *Lob und Klage in den Psalmen*. 6. Auflage. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
Wilson, G. H. 1986. The Use of King-Psalms at the 'Seams' of the Psalter. *JSOT* 35, 85-94.
Wilson, G. H. 2002. *Psalms – Volume I*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. (The NIV Application Commentary.)
Wünsche, A. 1999 [1892]. *Midrasch Tehillim oder Haggadische Erklärung der Psalmen. Nach der Textausgabe von Salomon Buber zum ersten Male ins Deutsche übersetzt und mit Noten und Quellenangaben versehen I/II*. Second reprint 1892. Hildesheim: Olms.

Phil J. Botha, Department of Ancient Languages, University of Pretoria, Pretoria 0002, South Africa. E-mail: phil.botha@up.ac.za

Beat Weber, Theologisches Seminar Bienenberg, Liestal, CH, in conjunction with the University of Wales, Lampeter, UK (Associate Lecturer) / Research Associate of the Department of Ancient Languages, University of Pretoria, Pretoria 0002, RSA. Birrmoosstr. 5, CH–3673 Linden BE (Switzerland). E-mail: weber-lehnherr@freesurf.ch