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An Education in Prayer: Historical Recital in Second Temple Judaism

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Abstract

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By Aubrey E. Buster

This dissertation examines the role of historical recital in post-exilic Judean texts in the Hebrew Bible and Dead Sea scrolls as a strategy of creating, confirming, and transmitting a shared functional memory. Using theoretical tools and paradigms drawn from the study of cultural and social memory, it analyses poetic recitals of Israel's history in Psalms, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Chapter 1 outlines the paradigms of cultural memory and historical poetics and introduces a functional distinction between the extended histories of Israel as memory and the role of abbreviated performed master narratives. Chapter 2 examines the historical psalms as a resource for functional memory, while chapters 3-4 examine the role of this functional memory in communal ceremonies represented within narrative texts in 1 Chron 16:8-36 and Neh 9:5b-37 respectively. Both of these performances of poetic recitals within narratives highlight their function as public texts designed to create or reinforce a basic functional memory among the populace. Chapters 4 and 5 shift from the biblical literature to the Dead Sea Scrolls in order to examine a new type of evidence for the development of the social practice of historical recital in Second Temple Judaism. The scrolls found at Qumran provide manuscript evidence for the role of historical recital and the description of the ideal participant in this recitation as well as formal and text-critical markers of communal engagement. Finally, chapter 5 analyses *4QDibre Hame'orot*, an extended historical recital from Qumran that not only provides further evidence for the practice of reciting history and its development, but also demonstrates how the practice of reciting history itself becomes a mark of communal identity.

This dissertation demonstrates how models adapted from cultural and social memory studies illuminate the communal function of biblical and post-biblical recitals of history. It seeks to both refine the application of models drawn from memory studies to ancient texts and to demonstrate the development of Judah's speech about their past across the Second Temple period. Therefore, in addition to contributing insights into how the practice of reciting history developed over the course of the Second Temple period, this research also demonstrates how the study of ancient texts contributes to ongoing conversations about the formation of social memory.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

THE PRAYING OF HISTORY IN SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM

In a now famous experiment from the beginning of the twentieth century, Frederic Bartlett asked Cambridge students to read and recall the Native American folktale “War of the Ghosts.”¹ They read the text and then had to write it down from memory at various intervals, which ranged from fifteen minutes to many years after reading it.² In findings that would become influential for the study of memory for the entire twentieth century, he noted that in almost every case, students produced substantially condensed and altered versions. Bartlett’s scientifically staged “telephone game” demonstrated the use of “mental schemata” in our memories, “an active organization of past reactions, or of past experiences.”³ In each case, Bartlett’s students reproduced a narrative reconfigured from memory into a meaningful whole, even as details, proper names, and numbers were lost in the reproduction.

Bartlett asked his students to read a work that was foreign to their culture and of limited value to their present. They had neither a base of familiarity with the story nor a social reason to appear versed in its contents. Therefore, several things distance this experiment from the social world of Second Temple Judaism and its relationship to its developing base of national history, preserved in the texts of the Hebrew Bible. Yet the use of abbreviated schemata in order to organize and remember events remains suggestive. Schemata condense and organize information so that it can be recalled and wielded in ever differing contexts. While Bartlett’s students and the Judeans of the Persian and Hellenistic periods occupy very different cultural spaces and interact

¹ Frederic C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (New York: Macmillan, 1932), 63–94.

² Bartlett, *Remembering*, 64–66.

³ Bartlett, *Remembering*, 201.

with very different bodies of knowledge, Bartlett's study still points to something fundamental about the structure of human memory.

Alongside the extended national histories of Israel, the Pentateuch, Deuteronomistic history, and the Chronicler's history, there is a "mnemonic strategy," a significant collection of abbreviated histories of Israel inserted into familiar prayers and liturgical forms. The communal practice of reciting Israel's history is an important component of public speech throughout the Hebrew Bible. The "great histories" of ancient Israel are masterful feats of historiography, but they likely would have been inaccessible to all but a select few.

Continued research into literacy rates in ancient Israel suggests low levels of functional literacy among non-elites and the extensive development of a scribal class to serve the elite. Christopher Rollston and Ian Young have argued that the Hebrew Bible itself is "primarily a corpus written by elites to elites."⁴ There is some evidence to suggest a more widespread "semi-literacy," the ability to read and produce relatively simple texts or to "label" objects with one's name.⁵ This level of ability, however, is a far cry from the ability needed to read and reference the large historical books of ancient Israel.

The Hebrew Bible includes an alternate set of resources designed to engage the Israelite people in their history. There are limitations, of course, inherent in studying ancient texts. We cannot conduct a Pew survey of historical knowledge among the ancient Judean populace or

⁴ Christopher A. Rollston, "The Extent of Literacy in Ancient Israel," in *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age*, SBLABS (Atlanta: SBL, 2010), 127–36; Ian M. Young, "Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence," *VT* 48 (1998): 239–253; Ian M. Young, "Israelite Literacy: Interpreting the Evidence. Part 2," *VT* 48 (1998): 408–422.

⁵ Rollston, "The Extent of Literacy in Ancient Israel," 127. See also the evidence that Hess uses to argue for widespread literacy, in Richard Hess, "Literacy in Iron Age Israel," in *Windows into Old Testament History: Evidence, Argument, and the Crisis of Biblical Israel*, ed. V. Phillips Long, Gordon J. Wenham, and David Weston Baker (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 82–102. The evidence he presents does indeed suggest a level of widespread *semi-literacy*. Cf. Seth Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 103–13.

witness the performance of a historical recital. What we do have is a remarkable array of liturgical texts that transmit abbreviated historical summaries. These texts both appear in psalm collections (e.g., Pss 78, 105, 106, 135, 136) and embedded in narratives (e.g., Neh 9:6–37). Some (e.g., portions of Pss 105 and 106 in 1 Chron 16) occur in both. They occur in a variety of genres, crossing (and blending) the boundaries of poetry and prose. Texts found at Qumran provide further evidence for the creation of these summaries. An extant weekly liturgy cycles through the history of Israel every seven days, (e.g. 4Q504–506), and several additional prayers are attributed to historical figures (e.g. 4Q381). This type of text only proliferates in literature that dates from the post-exilic period, during which the great histories were being written and collated. The presence of these recitals is all the more remarkable as there is no comparable practice in our sources from the ancient Near East.⁶ There are, to be sure, royal monuments, edicts, and treaties, writings that recorded the kings’ conquests, edicts, and successful building projects, that were likely read from or recited at particular points and translated into local languages,⁷ But these histories were *royally* centered; they did not focus on the history of the people, as the biblical texts do.⁸

The range of texts that contain these summaries reveals another cultural dynamic at work. As Pajunen has recently suggested, the psalms themselves, as a growing collection of liturgical and literary prayers, began to be perceived as records and vehicles for history-telling in the Second Temple period. This development coincides with this proliferation of “story-telling”

⁶ Stauffer relates the “theological summaries of history” in the Old Testament to the “liturgical series of ascriptions of glory” with which the ancient Near Eastern gods were praised, but to me this seems to be a categorical error. E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology*, trans. J. Marsh (London: SCM, 1958 [1948]), 239. Such “liturgical series” correspond more closely to biblical hymns.

⁷ Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 122.

⁸ As Sanders puts it, even in the written vernaculars of the Levant, history in the ANE begins as the “voice of the king.” Sanders, *Invention of Hebrew*, 113.

forms and a general increase in interest in the nation's history.⁹ It cannot be definitively ascertained whether certain texts remained within the purview of the state and its elite, or whether these texts were indeed known and performed among the populace. Nevertheless, through an analysis of both textual content and transmission, we have compelling evidence for a study of the performance of history in communal prayer in the Second Temple Period.

Overview of Interpretation of Historical Recital in Ancient Israel

I am certainly not the first to draw attention to the variety of biblical and extra-biblical texts that refer to the major events of Israel's history in abbreviated form. Over the course of the twentieth century, scholars of the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature have noted the collection of biblical and extra biblical texts that describe the major events of Israel's early history in an abbreviated and condensed form.

Broadly speaking, the majority of previous analyses of the biblical historical recitals have tended to fall into two camps in twentieth-century research: the first adopts an evolutionary approach and the second an intertextual or tradition-historical approach. The most well-known and influential analysis in the first camp was conducted by Gerhard von Rad in his *Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs*.¹⁰ In this essay, von Rad identifies several textual summaries, beginning with Deut 26:5b–9, “my father was a wandering Aramean,” as remnants of an ancient “creed” that originated in cultic contexts. He notes that the “little historical credos”

⁹ Mika S. Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect and Justice for All: Reading Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls in Light of 4Q381* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 326–33.

¹⁰ Gerhard von Rad, *Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuchs*, BWANT (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1938); repr. and trans. in Gerhard von Rad, “The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch,” in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), 1–78. His theory also appears in Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper, 1962), 121ff.

that he identifies describe a very consistent set of events, what he calls the “canonical pattern of the saving history.”¹¹ The oldest examples are preserved in Deut 26:5–9, 6:20–24 and Josh 24:1–13, and according to von Rad, they constitute Israel’s earliest historical and theological articulation of their faith.¹² This early schematic narrative outline was then expanded into what would become the Hexateuch. Later forms of this creed, found for example in 1 Sam 12:8, Pss 105, 135, 136, and Exod 15, are cultic vestiges of an ancient performance of this basic narrative schema expanded to include events that postdate the conquest. He notes concerning these later historical recitals that

These historical summaries in hymn form are still thoroughly confessional in kind. They are not products of a national or even a secular view of history, but clearly take their stand on that old canonical picture of saving history, the pattern of which was fixed long ago for all time. They are of course no longer confessions in the strict sense of Deut XXVI. Concentration on the facts alone has been abandoned. A tendency towards epic elaboration, and also towards reflexion, is apparent.¹³

Von Rad’s interpretation of these recitals and those related to them are evolutionary in the sense that they assume that simple short forms are early (the creeds, which “concentrat[e] on the facts alone”), and that more complex forms (such as the Hexateuch and later “epic elaboration[s]” of the basic form of the recital) develop later. While the specifics of von Rad’s thesis, including the antiquity of the creeds found in Deuteronomy and Joshua and their

¹¹ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 123.

¹² One of the most common critiques of von Rad’s hypothesis is the early dating of these texts. See J. Ph. Hyatt, “Were There an Ancient Historical Credo in Israel and an Independent Sinai Tradition?” in *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of H.G. May*, ed. Harry Thomas Frank and William L. Reed (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 152–70; Leonard Rost, “Das kleine geschichtliche Credo,” in *Das kleine Credo und andere Studien zum Alten Testament* (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1965), 12–22.

¹³ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 123.

purported relationship to the development of the Hexateuch, have largely been discredited, the reliability of his observation regarding the existence of such a form endures.¹⁴

The second group of textual analyses focuses instead on how these short recitals function as *reception* of the extended literary works upon which they are assumed to be based. The recitals therefore function source-critically to demonstrate how Israel was reading and re-reading the long-form narrative histories. These studies focus on identifying textual links between these recitals and the sources from which they are understood to be derived. This category includes both detailed analyses of single texts¹⁵ and studies encompassing a variety of texts,¹⁶ which often emphasize a historical core and its diachronic development. Such analyses are fundamentally “intertextual,” asking how different events are selected from the biblical narratives and reinterpreted through specific viewpoints.

Examples of this type of analysis include Judith Newman’s treatment of Neh 9 and related extra-biblical texts in her 1999 book *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in the Second Temple Period*. She treats only Second Temple prayers, as indicated by the title, including Neh 9:5–37; Judith 9:2–14; and 3 Macc 2:2–20. In these prayers, she identifies three patterns of “scripturalization”: 1) “exact or nearly exact citation”; 2) reuse of a phrase whose sources are identifiable or that has become a stock phrase; 3) and a more diffuse

¹⁴ See the critiques against von Rad’s hypothesis, primarily concerning his early dating of the creeds in Deut 26:5–9, 6:20–24 and Josh 24:1–13 in Hyatt, “Were There an Ancient Historical Credo?” 152–170; Rost, “Das kleine geschichtliche Credo,” 12–22. Others critique his fundamental separation of the Exodus and Sinai traditions. See Herbert B. Huffmon, “The Exodus, Sinai, and the Credo,” *CBQ* 27 (1965): 103–107; Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development*, trans. D. M. Barton (New York: Associated Press, 1961), 83–88. For a notable example of its ongoing influence, see Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 32–34.

¹⁵ Mark J. Boda, *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*, BZAW 277 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999); Jeffery M. Leonard, “Historical Traditions in Psalm 78” (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 2006).

¹⁶ Judith A. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1999).

allusion.¹⁷ In each of these cases, her primary emphasis is on the use of “written traditions—and interpretive traditions” that “have become the means by which the past is recalled.”¹⁸ She emphasizes how later texts interpret earlier texts.

Another more recent work that covers an earlier set of historical summaries (it ends, instead of begins, with Neh 9) is Anja Klein’s *Geschichte und Gebet*.¹⁹ While her study will be discussed in more detail in the second chapter of this dissertation, I present her method briefly here because it relates to larger patterns of research. Her study is decidedly text- and redaction-critical. She analyzes the reception of a historical thread that begins in Exod 15 and continues in Pss 78, 105–106, 114, and 135–137 before culminating in Neh 9, in which a history contained in prayer is transferred back into a narrative context.²⁰ Her stated goal is to examine how “[die] Rezeption der biblischen Geschichte in den Psalmen des Alten Testaments befasst [ist],”²¹ and she accomplishes this goal in three ways: First, she profiles the way in which the literary-historical process of re-reading a core of historical events is accomplished in the psalms; second, she analyses how the reception of these historical texts influences the formation of the Psalter as a whole; and finally, she demonstrates how this exegetical process contributes to biblical Judaism’s “search for identity.”²²

¹⁷ Newman, *Praying by the Book*, 81–82.

¹⁸ Newman, *Praying by the Book*, 61. See Eskenazi’s critique of this assumption. She notes that “the emphasis on a written precedence is problematic because it depends on assumptions regarding the formation of the Bible that can no longer be made without some explanation.” Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, “Nehemiah 9–10: Structure and Significance,” *JHS* 3 (2001): 1.7.

¹⁹ Anja Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet: Die Rezeption der biblischen Geschichte in den Psalmen des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen: Georg-August-Universität, 2014); Klein also summarizes her primary arguments in Anja Klein, “Praying Biblical History: The Phenomenon of History in the Psalms,” *HEBAI* 4 (2015): 400–426.

²⁰ Klein, “Praying Biblical History,” 401.

²¹ Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 1.

²² Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 401.

Both of the above views, the evolutionary and the tradition-historical or intertextual, assume, however, that the recitals and the narrative histories function primarily as *derivatives* of one another. A few studies, however, stand out for their interpretation of the historical recitals as a mode of thought or speech about Israel's history, one that does not strictly slot into previous models of intertextuality or inner-biblical exegesis. McCarthy in a short 1969 article on the "historical creeds" suggested that the data for what von Rad called a "creed" is more accurately described as a set of rhetorical "commonplaces" or "topoi," part of a habit of trained speech that dictates the appropriate type of speaking about Israel's history in particular situations.²³ The "grammar" for these historical recitals is limited compared to their extended narrative and Chronistic counterparts. It is this conservatism, this appeal to a foundation of things that could be known by a large populace, that constitutes the vitality of this tradition.²⁴

Thomas Römer likewise challenges the assumption that the historical summaries reflect a unified historical consciousness.²⁵ He builds on McCarthy's brief suggestion²⁶ that the historical summaries function as historical rhetoric and highlights that the selection of episodes and the beginning and ending points of the "story" differ in different corpora and within different genres. Römer traces the contours of historical summaries as represented within five major biblical traditions: 1) the pre-exilic prophets (esp. Hosea and Jeremiah); 2) the Deuteronomistic History (esp. Deut 6:20–24; 26:59; 32; Josh 23; 2:6–23; 1 Sam 12:8–12; 1 Kgs 8; 2 Kgs 17); 3) Ezek 20; 4) Priestly texts (esp. Exod 6:2–8; Ps 105) and 5) post-exilic texts (esp. Ps 135; Neh 9; Josh 24;

²³ Dennis J. McCarthy, "What Was Israel's Historical Creed?" *LTQ* 4 (1969): 46–53.

²⁴ See related comments about the role of history in Greco-Roman oratory in Nicole Loraux, *The Invention of Athens* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 222.

²⁵ Thomas Römer, "Résumer l'histoire en l'inventant: formes et fonctions des "sommaries historiques" de l'Ancien testament," *RTP* 43 (1993): 21–39, esp. 22. He critiques these understandings as too "evolutionary" and "harmonizing."

²⁶ See reference to McCarthy's work in Römer, "Résumer l'histoire en l'inventant," 22.

Gen 15:13–16). He emphasizes that “[a] cette diversité des forms correspond une diversité de fonctions et de conceptions.”²⁷ There are certainly affiliations between the versions of history contained in these various corpora, but there are also breaks, disjunctions, differences in emphasis, and even contradictions.²⁸

Carol Newsom outlines a middle ground between those who emphasize continuity in the historical recitals and those who emphasize their diversity. She identifies in the “historical résumés” a way of thinking about history that expresses the human tendency to discover patterns in the events of the past. One of the functions of this “cultural mode of cognition” is to construct coherence out of these events in search of a “master” or “grand narrative.”²⁹ The episodes that comprise this constructed story are generally familiar to the audience; this familiarity is part of the master narrative’s cultural power. But the mechanics of narrative structure allow for multiple stories to be told out of this familiar material.³⁰ The act of selection and configuration can produce sharply contrasting narrative wholes that reflect the complexity of history and the variety of ways in which humans can “make sense” of their past.

In a second related article, Newsom applies the concept of cultural memory to her study of the historical recitals.³¹ She defines a cultural master narrative in this context as a “body of tacit knowledge organized by a basic chronology of key episodes that is shared by a community

²⁷ Römer, “Résumer l’histoire en l’inventant,” 37.

²⁸ I would add to this that a diversity of forms corresponds to a diversity of mnemonic media and strategies.

²⁹ Carol A. Newsom, “Rhyme and Reason: The Historical Résumé in Israelite and Early Jewish Thought,” in *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past: Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite History in Honor of John H. Hayes*, ed. Brad E. Kelle and Megan B. Moore (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 215.

³⁰ Newsom, “Rhyme and Reason,” 219, 221–222.

³¹ Carol A. Newsom, “Selective Recall and Ghost Memories: Two Aspects of Cultural Memory in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz*, ed. Tom Thatcher (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014), 41–56.

and that can be activated and engaged by a particular performance.”³² The historical recitals, which she notes are likely an oral performance genre, are a media of cultural memory designed to do this work of “activating” and “engaging” a culture’s shared memory. Similarly to Römer, however, she notes that while shared, this tacit knowledge is more heterogenous and extensive than any single iteration of it.³³

Newsom makes a brief but compelling statement at the end of her article on cultural memory: “Whether Israelite and Judean scribes were using inherited traditions about their own origins and experiences or whether they were attempting to master experiences thrust upon them by the events of international powers, the work of producing *usable* cultural memory was a critical task.”³⁴ This comment opens up the question of the social function of various forms of cultural memory and the possibility of access to these forms of knowledge that are assumed to be “shared,” a question which is not fully engaged in any of the above studies. What constitutes “usable” cultural memory in ancient Israel?

With the exception of Newsom’s final article, the above listed works do not engage directly with the concepts native to “cultural memory.” Memory studies have provided new perspectives on the construction of discourse concerning Israel’s past and the ways in which different forms and their accompanying “participatory structures”³⁵ influence how a society perceives its own history. My driving hypothesis in this study is that these recitals, both in terms

³² Newsom, “Selective Recall and Ghost Memories,” 43.

³³ She also observes that in some cases, the act of configuring a selective account of Israel’s history as occurs in the historical résumés could result in “near contradictory understandings of the common tradition.” Newsom, “Selective Recall and Ghost Memories,” 44. She therefore identifies “contradiction” as a factor of narrative emplotment rather than of severe ideological differences.

³⁴ Newsom, “Selective Recall and Ghost Memories,” 53. Italics added.

³⁵ Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 38–40. See Chapter 3 on Neh 9 for an in-depth analysis of the concept of the “participatory structure.”

of their role in prayer and liturgy and in the literary representations of ideal community participation, demonstrate a social strategy to create a common memory that ultimately undergirds the authority of a textual canon and the professional guilds that preserve it. Therefore, the summary recitals and extensive historiographies are neither preliminary nor derivative but exist as two corresponding memory systems that play mutually re-enforcing though different social roles.

In order to explore this thesis concerning historical prayer and its cultural mnemonic role, I propose to begin with Aleida Assmann's category of "functional" memory. Assmann has constructed a heuristic distinction between *ars* and *vis*, the storage memories and functional memories of a society.³⁶ She defines *ars* as "storage memory... every mechanical process that aims at an identity between recording and retrieving."³⁷ This storage serves as the potential memory of the culture: its physical counterpart is the archive. The *vis* marks the difference between potential and present memory. It is the "process of remembering," which brings latent memory into the lived experience of the culture. "*Vis*" or "functional memory" is the process of selecting from this database and framing the contents in such a way that they play a functional role within lived society. One of the roles of collective agents, such as nations, is to "create for themselves a functional identity memory through which they adapt a certain version of the past and define their goals for the future."³⁸ The group creates a shared base of knowledge through an education (formal or informal) in this memory, to establish a shared understanding of key national events and their symbolic significance. The concept of functional memory is a way to

³⁶ Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 17–22, 119–34. I am grateful to Eric Jarrard for his detailed engagement with this portion of the dissertation.

³⁷ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 18.

³⁸ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 127–28.

differentiate the extended histories of Israel, the Pentateuch, Deuteronomistic history, and Chronicler's history, which form part of Israel's *canon* and *cultural memory*, from the particular role of performed master narratives, which transform narrative into replicable schemata and easily shared symbols.³⁹

While theories of cultural memory powerfully outline the effective relationship between memory and the societies who transmit them, the continued reliance on Maurice Halbwachs's original dichotomy between history and memory tends to ignore their shared narrative structure.⁴⁰ To remedy this and to offer to us better categories with which to understand how the narrative structure of memory "means," I turn to Paul Ricoeur's analysis of the narrative

³⁹ It is important to acknowledge that, at a broad level, any canonical text could be considered to be "functional memory" as opposed to an archive of texts that is never accessed. As Ehud Ben Zvi and Ian Wilson argue, for example, most of the texts in the Hebrew Bible would have been functional memory for a small subset of Judean literati who were likely responsible for their preservation, and the formation of new texts which reflect on them. See Ehud Ben Zvi, "The Urban Center of Jerusalem and the Development of the Literature of the Hebrew Bible," in *Aspects of Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete*, ed. Walter E. Aufrecht, Neil A. Mirau, and Steven W. Gauley, *JSOTSup* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 194–209; Ben Zvi, "Towards an Integrative Study of the Production of Authoritative Books in Ancient Israel," in *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud*, ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (London: Equinox, 2009), 15–28; Ben Zvi, "Introduction: Writings, Speeches, and the Prophetic Books-Setting an Agenda," in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*, ed. E. Ben Zvi and M. H. Floyd, Symposium (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 1–29; Ian D. Wilson, *Kingship and Memory in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 10–22. There is then, technically, a spectrum of "functionality," from texts that nobody references, confined wholly to "potential memory," through to the very limited cultural knowledge shared by the majority of a populace. I am concerned primarily with the level of functionality that exists between cultural "experts" and a populace that possesses a basic understanding of key national events and their symbolic significance. For this latter group of people, the entirety of the canon's contents, or even just the "Torah," would have possessed only an iconic function; their knowledge of its contents would have been limited at best and filtered almost entirely through oral performances and ritual events.

⁴⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. and ed. by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992). This tendency to base an analysis on the presumed differences between history and memory is also a tendency of recent explorations of the historical psalms. See Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 10ff. Gärtner bases her study on the distinction between pragmatic history in the sense of history and paradigmatic history in the sense of story, referencing Eric Voegelin, *Ordnung und Geschichte: Israel und die Offenbarung — Die Geburt der Geschichte* (München: n.p., 2005), 25–30, 37–39, 86.

structure shared by history and memory.⁴¹ If Aleida Assmann provides me with my overarching heuristic categories, Paul Ricoeur will guide me in identifying the particular mechanism by which the “storage memory” of a culture, all potential knowledge about that culture’s past, *becomes* “functional” through narrative configuration. This process of configuration involves both *selection* and *ordering*. While Ricoeur’s categories were developed to reflect on the historical impulse generally and hermeneutically, I will return to the particular identifying function of memory encapsulated in Assmann’s definition at the end of my present discussion through Ricoeur’s concept of narrative and historical ordering.

Cultural Memory and Historical Poetics

Aleida Assmann’s analysis belongs to the realm of memory studies that originated with Maurice Halbwachs’ work in the early twentieth century, in which he articulated his influential theory of the *mémoire collective*. A student of Henri Bergson and Emile Durkheim, he outlined his theory of *mémoire collective*, “collective memory,” in three texts: *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925); *La Topographie légendaire des Évangiles en Terre Sainte* (1941); and *La mémoire collective* (1950; published posthumously). In his work, Halbwachs drew a sharp distinction between “history proper,” which is concerned with accurately representing the past, and “collective memory,” which plays the primary role of forming group identity. This shared memory is created for and sustained by particular social frameworks, which transmit and re-shape traditional material in light of present concerns.

Halbwachs summarizes his position in the following way:

Collective frameworks of memory are not constructed after the fact by the combination of individual recollections; nor are they empty forms where recollections coming from

⁴¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984–1985).

elsewhere would insert themselves. Collective frameworks are, to the contrary, precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society.⁴²

All memory, for Halbwachs, is collective memory. He argues that individuals cannot remember independently of cultural forces, because these forces direct even the way in which they narrate the stories of their own lives. These formative social frameworks consist first of the people who surround an individual, the social groups with whom they interact. Within these frameworks, a person is encouraged not only to remember collectively experienced events but also to learn about important dates and cultural facts, ways of telling stories, and commemorating particularly significant life episodes, primarily through interaction with this group. A significant aspect of Halbwachs's work, especially given the confirmation it would find in later psychological studies on memory, is his emphasis that these social frameworks of memory were not merely constructed by shared *contents* of memory but also by culturally specific patterns of thinking or schemas that guide *how* people within any given culture remember.

People are typically part of several different sociological frameworks (*cadres sociaux*), each of which contributes to an individual's experience of memory. For example, family groups will typically share a set of oral stories, told and re-told at family gatherings. This supports a form of intergenerational memory that stretches as far back as the oldest member of the family can remember. Collective memory is, strictly speaking, the group's own past experience. It is upon this focus on "lived" memory that Halbwachs constructs his dichotomy between history and memory: "by definition," he writes, collective memory "does not exceed the limits of the group. When a period ceases to interest the period that follows, it is not the same group that

⁴² Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 40.

forgets part of its past: there are, in reality, two groups that succeed one another.”⁴³

Halbwachs therefore identifies collective memory as the *living* shared memory of a society; this collective memory does not include their stored traditions or archived texts. These traditions he associates with “history,” which “starts only when tradition ends and the social memory is fading or breaking up.”⁴⁴ History is universal and neutral; collective memory is particular and ideological. There is, therefore a significant limitation to Halbwachs’s conception of memory. One of his most notable critics, Marc Bloch, observed that, within Halbwachs’ definition, “collective memory” cannot sufficiently explain how memories are transmitted from generation to generation.⁴⁵ Such an explanation, Bloch continues, would necessarily differ depending on the nature of the group. Halbwachs, however, sidesteps the question entirely.

In Halbwachs’s conception, “collective memory” is an essentially reconstructive task, aimed entirely towards meeting the needs of the group in the present. It can become a gradual process of distortion, whereby the “reconstruction of the past” is “achieved with data borrowed from the present,” and which relies furthermore on a past whose “images had already been altered.”⁴⁶ Thus the communication of memory can be viewed as an intergenerational game of telephone, in which each progressive reconstruction becomes further removed from objective reality.

In Halbwachs’s later works, he breaks away somewhat from his strict focus on the intergenerational aspect of memory to focus on those objects and topographical features of a

⁴³ Maurice Halbwachs, *La Mémoire collective* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997 [1950]), 131, translated by author.

⁴⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Cambridge, 1980), 78.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Jeffrey K. Olick, et al., “Marc Bloch (1886–1944): From “*Mémoire collective*, tradition et coutume: À propos d'un livre récent”,” in *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 152.

⁴⁶ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 69.

mnemonic landscape that have the potential to structure a more long-term memory.⁴⁷ While the shifting nature of Halbwachs's work has precluded the development of a single cohesive theory of collective memory, his work has proven to be a generative site from which other theorists develop related ideas of cultural and collective memory.⁴⁸

Aby Warburg, a cultural historian working primarily in art history, is the second “father” of cultural memory studies. He is associated with the related term “social memory” and the study of how variations in this memory reflect a societal re-interpretation of received cultural symbols. The transmission and transformation of a limited set of *symbolic images* play a dynamic role in facilitating the transmission of cultural memory. These *pathosformeln*, “emotionally charged visual tropes,” continue to appear and re-appear in different settings, bringing with them their stored “mnemonic energy,” which is then actualized in new particular settings.⁴⁹ As Halbwachs described the nexus between memory and the social group, Warburg introduced the relationship between memory and its linguistic and cultural forms.

Very little work was done in memory studies between Halbwachs's and Warburg's independently conceived projects in the 1920s–1940s and the resurgence of interest in cultural memory in the 1980s and 1990s. Pierre Nora's study on the *lieux de mémoire* inaugurated this resurgence of interest in the topic, and Jan and Aleida Assmann's respective projects followed, each of which sought to expand, critique, and define the field of collective memory studies.

⁴⁷ Maurice Halbwachs, *La topographie légendaire des Évangiles en Terre Sainte: étude de mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1941); Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 18.

⁴⁸ Astrid Erll, for example, has identified three primary aspects of Halbwachs's work that have proven particularly influential for later conceptions of memory, collective memory, and cultural memory: 1) the dependence of individual memory on social frameworks (and vice versa); 2) intergenerational memory; and, in his later work, 3) transmission of cultural knowledge. Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 18.

⁴⁹ Colleen Becker, “Aby Warburg's *Pathosformel* as methodological paradigm,” *Journal of Art Historiography* 9 (2013): 1; Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 19–20; Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 215.

Pierre Nora's primary contribution to memory studies lay in his development of physical and material manifestations of memory, what he calls "sites of memory" (*les lieux de mémoire*).⁵⁰

These sites could be monumental or geographic. Nora identified three distinct dimensions of memory sites: the material, symbolic, and functional.⁵¹ The sites are material, in that they occupy physical space; functional, in that they play a societal role; and symbolic, in that they represent something other than themselves. These sites, however, not only represent *memory*, but also the recognition that there has been a break with the past, that there must be a memorialization in order to support the potentially lost memory: "there are *lieux de memoire*, sites of memory," Nora writes, "because there are no longer *milieux de memoire*, real environments of memory."⁵²

What all of these theorists share is a fundamental opposition, whether implicit or expressed, between memory and history. The following quotation from Nora vividly outlines this opposition: Memory, on the one hand, "remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived." History, on the other hand "is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer."⁵³ Memory and history, Nora concludes, "appear now to be in fundamental opposition."⁵⁴ His rhetoric reveals a value-laden dichotomy between distortion and construction,

⁵⁰ As laid out in three volumes published between 1986 and 1992: Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire I: La République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984); *Les lieux de mémoire II: La Nation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986); *Les lieux de mémoire III: Le France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992). For an abridged English translation, see idem, *Realms of Memory*, trans. Artheru Goldhammer; ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996–1998).

⁵¹ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989): 19.

⁵² Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7.

⁵³ Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7.

⁵⁴ Nora, "Between Memory and History," 8.

manipulation and reconstruction, which places history on the side of truth, and memory on the side of ideology.

Jan and Aleida Assmann: Cultural vs. Communicative Memory

Following Nora's landmark study, Jan and Aleida Assmann published a series of highly influential German studies on cultural memory. In an early essay, Jan Assmann described "cultural memory" as a "body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self image."⁵⁵ He introduced a fundamental distinction between what he will call "communicative memory," which aligns with what Halbwachs described as "collective memory," and "cultural memory," which describes the realm of objectivized culture.⁵⁶ The first— "communicative memory"— comprises memory that is transmitted socially via communication networks. Communicative memory is non-institutional. It requires no specialists and possesses a limited time span. It resides in the realm of every social interaction.⁵⁷ This memory spans a few generations at maximum. Cultural memory, on the other hand, is supported via complex mechanisms of transmission. It requires preserving media, mnemonic devices, experts, and institutions of memory. For Assmann, this cultural memory has six primary characteristics:⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 132.

⁵⁶ Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: New York, 2008), 109–18.

⁵⁷ Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," 110.

⁵⁸ Assmann, "Collective Memory," 130–133.

- 1) “The concretion of identity”: Cultural memory is always related to and defining of a social group. Through this, Jan Assmann reinforces Halbwachs’ understanding of the nexus between memory and group definition.
- 2) Capacity to reconstruct: This relates to, though it restates, some of the tendencies to emphasize the reconstructive dimension of memory (over and above history). It also emphasizes the service that this reconstructed past renders in the present: as cultural memory, the past is never reconstructed for its own sake but is in service of the present. Here Assmann is still restating Halbwachs’s core recognitions.
- 3) Formation: Formation signifies the necessity of an objective form of communicated meaning and a crystallization of collective shared knowledge: What will be shared, and is it in a form that can be successfully transmitted? Here is where the Assmanns decisively move beyond Halbwachs’s prioritization of informal social frameworks of memory to formal cultural institutions of memory.
- 4) Organization: While formation refers to the material of the memory itself, organization refers to the supporting societal structures for the transmission of that memory. The transmission of cultural memory requires communicative ceremonies, the establishing and training of specialized bearers of memory, and the formation of regular communal participation where necessary.
- 5) Obligation: This fifth component describes the people’s normative and ethical response to what is their cultural memory. Cultural memory bears with it a system of values that has a binding effect on the group.

- 6) Reflexivity: With this term, Assmann again emphasizes the relationship of the past to the present and echoes the insights of Halbwachs.⁵⁹ Cultural memory is shaped, to a certain extent, in the self-image of a particular social group in the present.

By dividing collective memory into its communicative and cultural aspects, the Assmanns highlight the means by which a society preserves and transmits its memories. This area of inquiry extends beyond the temporal confines of the lifespan of living bearers of memory. As Jan Assmann states, “In order to be able to be reembodied in the sequence of generations, cultural memory, unlike communicative memory, exists also in disembodied form and requires institutions of preservation and reembodiment.”⁶⁰ The Assmanns also introduce a social distinction: within their framework, there is a highly differentiated possession of cultural memory. There are some who know more and some who know less. The structure that supports the cultural memory relies on specialists who preserve and transmit cultural knowledge, and who then convey to the populace what is necessary to know. These institutions preserve and transmit this memory, successfully transforming it from mere information into something with enough societal impact to *become* normative and formative.

The Assmanns’ construction of cultural memory offers two distinct contributions. First, it provides a theoretical framework not only to describe the artefacts of memory themselves, but also to interrogate their social function, method of transmission, and the organization of societal assent to these memories. These are the means by which *communicative memory*, which spans only a few generations, is transformed into *cultural memory*. By focusing on the institutions of preservation and transmission necessary for memory to survive, the Assmanns have addressed

⁵⁹ Cf. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 40.

⁶⁰ Assmann, “Communicative and Cultural Memory,” 111.

Marc Bloch's foundational critique concerning Halbwachs's lack of attention to the means and media of transmission.

"Communicative" and "cultural" memories do not form a strict dichotomy, however. The institutions that preserve cultural memory also provide ways for its re-integration into living social structures. The Assmann's second contribution is to offer an evaluative category for the importance of explicit education and formalized rites of participation. What has been called "cultural memory" is not properly *remembered* like other events in our life, but is "memorized," that is, it is acquired through mechanisms established by the group.⁶¹ This introduces the issue of the media and rituals of memory. For example, related specifically to this project, the Hebrew Bible presents "historical recital" as a means by which a limited common cultural memory is established among the populace.

Here I return to Aleida Assmann's heuristic distinction between what she calls "storage" and "functional" memory. The Assmann's conception of cultural memory designates the *potential* memory of a society. This memory is externalized in storage media and managed by "institutions of memory maintenance and mediation of knowledge."⁶² Because cultural memory is necessarily externalized (this is the distinction between communicative and cultural memory) it creates for itself the possibility that it will be forgotten, or, more accurately, become the

⁶¹ See the concept of the "collective-semantic" memory in Gerald Echterhoff, "Das Aussen des Erinnerns: Was vermittelt individuelles und kollektives Gedächtnis," in *Medien des Kollektiven Gedächtnisses: Konstruktivität—Historizität—Kulturspezifität*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 75–82.

⁶² Aleida Assmann, "Vier Formen des Gedächtnisses," *Erwägen, Wissen, Ethik* 13 (2002): 189. Quoted and translated by Thiemo Breyer, *On the Topology of Cultural Memory: Different Modalities of Inscription and Transmission* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), 94.

“potential” memory of a society that might (or might not) be actualized through discovery or through reconfiguration in a mode that is more accessible to the public.⁶³

“Functional memory” on the other hand, is active within a society. What is particularly important has been selected, arranged, and interpreted in such a way that it plays an active role in social discourse. This is not the same as communicative memory, which is limited by living bearers of memory and is “picked up” in the midst of social interactions. “Functional memory” is a formalized memory that has been transmitted within a society. Tiemo Breyer describes “functional memory” using a suggestive economic metaphor: “The content of function-memory,” he writes, “consists of information which is essentially open to the whole collective (all the citizens of a state, for instance) in that there is a market which provides the media for the distribution of this information.”⁶⁴ In this description, Breyer captures the sense that functional memory requires both a supply and a demand and a mechanism of distribution. Thus a society’s “functional memory” contains the stories that its members tell each other about their shared defining narratives and their mutually recognized symbols.

Historical Poetics

From its inception as an area of study, cultural memory has been defined over against history. This dichotomy results in a lack of reflection on memory and history’s *shared narrative poetics*. Even the Assmanns, in their disagreement with the strict memory/history dichotomy of their forbears, continue to think in terms of heuristic dichotomies: inhabited vs uninhabited memory, or Aleida Assmann’s “storage” vs “functional” memory. What is missing from these analyses is

⁶³ This potential is demonstrated most vividly in the image of the archive, or in the trope of the “discovered book.”

⁶⁴ Breyer, *On the Topology of Cultural Memory*, 94.

the fundamental question of *why* societies rely so much on narratives and their associated symbols and *how* these narratives create meaning for those societies. Paul Ricoeur in his three-volume work *Time and Narrative* investigates the narrative structure and sense of temporality that both shared cultural memories and histories often have in common.⁶⁵ In this way, he constructs a historical poetics, a description of the mechanism of selection, configuration, and symbolic transformation that gives to both history and memory their fundamental narrative shape. In the following I will present two primary functions of this historical poetic and how they relate to the historical recitals investigated in the course of this dissertation: selection and configuration, and symbolism.

Selection and Configuration

Ricoeur describes the most basic relationship between history and narrative as the fact that they are both “grounded in a pre-understanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources, and its temporal character.”⁶⁶ At an elementary level, narratives, including both Israel’s extended histories and its condensed master narratives, contain characters who operate according to the temporal nature of the world (organized by concepts such as before, presently, and afterwards). The act of configuration selects from these various actions or records of these actions to organize them within time “in an act of judgment which manages to hold them together rather than reviewing them *seriatim*.”⁶⁷ This action involves *selection*, the choosing of significant episodes needed to tell the story and the requisite rejection of other potential episodes,

⁶⁵ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, esp. 1:52–90.

⁶⁶ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:54.

⁶⁷ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:156.

their *arrangement*, and their *placement* into a temporally defined “whole,” a meaningful structure with an artificially imposed beginning and end.

This act of configuration arranges events in an order that leads to a pre-determined ending. The overarching organizational force exerted by this movement towards the narrative’s final resting place is what Frank Kermode dubs “the sense of an ending.”⁶⁸ The events within the narrative receive their full significance as they contribute to the relentless movement toward their fulfillment. In this way, Ricoeur’s conception of narrative structure overlaps with one of the central tenets of cultural memory studies: the story is retold to arrive at this new ending point, and this can occur anew in each retelling. In the case of identity-defining “master narratives,” it is the community itself that serves as the culmination of the story, and part of the configurational act is to identify how these events from the past relate to the present.

This process of selection and configuration is not, however, recreated anew in every generation. The re-use of traditional material is both a function of previous processes of selection (that which is continually brought to mind will likely be brought to mind again) and also a function of the power of historical rhetoric itself. As Ricoeur states:

As soon as the story is well known—and this is the case for most traditional or popular narratives, as well as for those national chronicles reporting the founding events of a given community—to follow the story is not so much to enclose its surprises or discoveries within our recognition of the meaning attached to the story, as to apprehend the episodes which are themselves well known as leading to this end.⁶⁹

By their very recursive nature, formative cultural narratives tend to be those to which members of a culture will be continually exposed.

⁶⁸ Frank Kermode, *Sense of an Ending* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

⁶⁹ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:67.

This has profound implications for how we analyze the historical summaries as interpretations of older material. As noted above, some commentators have seemed to assume that the individual author of each summary returns to the source material (usually the contents of a Pentateuchal or Hexateuchal *Vorlage*) to rework and to interpret it directly. Each variation from its hypothetical source material is therefore a deliberate interpretive move. As Bartlett observed in his Cambridge study, however, schemata, once formed, function in and of themselves as powerful shaping forces in the construction of a culture's memory. It is because they are memorable that they exert their influence on later iterations of this memory.

Aleida Assmann's category of functional memory provides an alternative to this form of "intertextual" reading. The master narratives rehearsed in the historical summaries are not intended to be educational in the sense of merely conferring knowledge nor exegetical in the sense of providing an interpretive commentary on previous historical material with which their readers or listeners would be familiar or would be able to reference. In each case, the selective process is to some extent predetermined. Baruch Schwartz describes this as the "path-dependence" of cultural memory. It is "affected not only by its social contexts" (the ever-moving present which re-interprets the past), but also "by previous representations of its contents."⁷⁰ Part of the effect that oral performances of shared memory would have on the community would be their familiarity with this memory from previous performances and cultural exposure. Each of the historical recitals analyzed in this dissertation is either presented as part of a public ceremony or in a cultural form that is based on such ceremonies (in the case of the psalms, which are presented as hymns or laments). Whether this is a literary fiction or a mark of actual practice is an active question in each case, but this does not change the fact that they *present themselves* as

⁷⁰ Baruch Schwartz, "Rethinking the Concept of Collective Memory," *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, ed. Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen (New York: Routledge, 2016), 15.

knowledge designed to be common, even if it is not actually as common as they might represent.⁷¹ While the very “counterpresent” nature of the concept of cultural memory requires that there be a first exposure to its contents (this brings to mind the education of the catechumen in religious traditions), the very nature of its public performance assures that once a person *does* hear it, they recognize that this is something that they are meant to know as part of a group.⁷²

The understanding that this communal speech has an effect on the people’s present and future requires that we move beyond the buzzword of “identity-conferring” narrative to describe the relationship of the past to the present in these prayers. Instead, I will argue that the configuration of these historical memories participates in self-conscious and active constructions of agency: an understanding of “who we are” also relates to the possibilities of “what we can do.” As I analyze the construction of history in each of these psalms and prayers, I will show that the interrogation of the past results in an expectation for the future, which the very act of recital itself mobilizes. This expectation for the future results in the ability of the speaker of the psalm to act in such a way as to affect that future. To stretch Assmann’s terminology, then, memory is not only functional but also grants a function to those who speak it.

Symbolism

Part of the transformation and expansion in the significance of familiar historical episodes is the transformation and development of their communal symbolism. Both Ricoeur’s concept of

⁷¹ On the power and function of common knowledge, see Michael Suk-Young Chwe, *Rational Ritual: Culture, Coordination, and Common Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁷² Cf. studies on social literacy and the value given to interacting with texts in a particular way: Jenny Cook-Gumperz, “The Social Construction of Literacy,” in *The Social Construction of Literacy*, ed. Jenny Cook-Gumperz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–18; Maria Lucia Castanheira et al., “Interactional Ethnography: An Approach to Studying the Social Construction of Literate Practices,” *Linguistics and Education* 11 (2001): 353–400.

narrative and the theories of cultural memory introduced above feature discussion of symbols. Aleida Assmann identifies the creation of shared national and communal symbols as a central role of functional memory.⁷³ She does not, however, define what she means by these culturally important “symbols.” What does it mean to transform events and personalities into national “symbols”?

Symbols Rooted in Culture

What scholars mean when they use the word symbol varies and is not always consistent, even within the work of individual scholars. For some, a symbol indicates a cipher, one thing that signifies another thing. For others, a symbol constitutes an object of iconic significance. The ubiquity of the term in discussions of cultural memory requires a definition of the term and a description of its role in remembering. The basic linguistic character of a symbol is that it is one thing that signifies another thing. This constitutes the symbol’s characteristic “double-meaning.” The nature of its double meaning, however, is not the same as that of a metaphor, in which one thing is viewed *as if* it were another thing, or in which the poet freely invents the connection between the two things. A symbol is also not, as an aspect of cultural memory, the same as an allegory, in which it functions as a cipher whose meaning is meant to be decoded. There are three important issues in relationship to the symbol that differentiate it from the metaphor on the one hand and the cipher on the other: 1) it is a product of culture, as opposed to literary art; that is, a symbol possesses a shared significance within a particular group 2) it is prefigured in the world of reality; 3) it is over-signified.

⁷³ Aleida Assmann, “Canon and Archive,” in *Cultural Memory Studies*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 101.

First, as Ricoeur observes, symbols are cultural phenomena, grounded and rooted in the inhabited world and texts of a culture. People use symbols “in real life” and not only in the stories that they tell. Narratives themselves already rely on the symbolic resources native to human action. As Ricoeur states “If, in fact, human action can be narrated, it is because it is always already articulated by signs, rules, and norms. It is always already symbolically mediated.”⁷⁴ In this description he draws on the work of Clifford Geertz, who identified the function of culture itself as the formation of symbolic systems, shared between people. In Geertz’s words, “culture is public because meaning is.”⁷⁵ Symbols are constructed and shared meaning. The Hebrew Bible itself is a symbolic system, a “system of interacting symbols,” of “patterns of interworking meanings.”⁷⁶ It is, of course, a partial system. There are pieces of the cultural system that we are missing, other texts, public rituals, and experiences characteristic of Israel’s daily life. But we can still assess the significance of symbols within this partial network.

To provide an example: the cross is a symbol within the Christian tradition. It does not “represent” salvation, or sin, in a way that we could say, “now we have exhausted the cross’s significance.” One cannot understand the “cross” as Christian symbol outside of its larger mythic complex associated with the particular historical event of Jesus’ death. It is this embedded character that Ricoeur identifies as the “bound character of symbols.”⁷⁷

This leads to my second point: symbols are prefigured in the real world. In discussing the difference between metaphors and symbols, Ricoeur notes that while they are superficially

⁷⁴ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:57: “Symbolism” is “a meaning incorporated into action and decipherable from it by other actors in the social interplay.”

⁷⁵ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Book, 1973), 12.

⁷⁶ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 207.

⁷⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 61.

similar in that both stand for something else, they are different in their relationship to history. While a metaphor is a linguistic innovation, a symbol is “not innovative but already pre-existing, with a lost origin. It does not fade over time, however, but rather maintains its cultural potency, albeit re-appearing in different forms.”⁷⁸ Therefore the symbol is bound to the cosmos in a way that metaphors, as free inventions of discourse, are not. To return to the example given above, the cross begins to stand as a central symbol for salvation in the Christian tradition. It is not, however, a *metaphor* for salvation; Christians usually understand the cross to have existed in the physical world. It is because of its physical role in the death of Jesus that it comes to be strongly associated with a key act between God and God’s people at a particular time and place.

Finally, symbols do not merely possess a one-to-one correlation with meaning, like a system of simple notation. Symbols, based on their cultural persistence, become *oversignified* or *saturated* with meaning. An event, a place, or an object can function as a symbol, and each entity often retains that direct, primary, literal meaning. But as a symbol, it comes to possess a “surplus of significance.”⁷⁹ Part of this surplus, in the case of the symbol, is due to its rootedness in a people’s experience and its persistence in their shared discourse. As members of a culture or subculture, people develop a vocabulary of symbolic meanings. To return a final time to the cross as a symbol within Christianity, the proliferation of significances can be seen in the various “sayings” and “exhortations” that surround the cross as a symbol of Christian experience. People can “carry their cross,” “lay their sins at the foot of the cross,” “look to the cross,” or “cross themselves.” The symbol’s recurrence, in images, language, and shared stories, is also what leads to its continuing to accrue meaning as it appears and re-appears in significant contexts. This

⁷⁸ Karl Simms, “Metaphor and Symbol,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Niall Keane and Chris Lawn (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 413.

⁷⁹ Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 55–56.

recurrence in and among a group of people is the process by which shared cultural memory produces shared national symbols.

Hebrew Bible and Israel's Functional Memory

The Hebrew Bible is a rich repository of Israel's cultural memory. Alongside the extended historical works, the primary and secondary histories, there are a variety of historical recitals, abbreviated overviews of Israel's history, many of which appear ensconced in traditional ritual forms, including psalms and penitential prayers. What we witness in the historical psalms and other forms of Israelite historical recital are schematic iterations of Israel's shared *functional* memory. From the perspective of memory studies, these forms present an ideal basis on which to construct a shared understanding of the world and of the Israelite position within it. In terms of "cultural memory" specifically, these abstract narratives, couched in modes of public address, are also ideally formed to accommodate communal performance, facilitating the memory's transmission to a broader cultural audience even in light of low literacy rates.

But, as several scholars have observed, the presence of a shared cultural narrative does not imply that this narrative will be uniform in every case or that it will not contrast with other iterations of the narrative in significant ways. Barry Schwartz has compared the concept of "cultural memory" as a construct and its various manifestations with Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*: cultural memory as a whole provides the *langue*, the material of the language itself, with all its possibilities. Its particular instantiations constitute the *parole*, the great variety of concrete sentences that can be constructed from the material of the *langue*.⁸⁰ This is a helpful way to conceptualize the instantiations of Israel's master narrative in their

⁸⁰ Barry Schwartz, "Harvest," in *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz*, ed. Tom Thatcher (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014), 314.

psalms and prayers: as will be seen, the story can be told and retold with very different effect.⁸¹ Therefore, while part of the basis of the cultural authority of a master narrative is its familiarity, there is flexibility as to where that story will lead, what aspects will be assumed, and how these aspects will be ordered. Ultimately, this is part of the cultural persistence of master narratives:⁸² their flexibility allows them to be told and retold and perceived as valid in multiple different historical situations. These narratives can explain the past in times of plenty and in times of hardship, in times of power and in times of defeat. Indeed, as the retellings multiply, the symbols that populate this narrative accrue meaning, suitably reflecting the present in their multivalence, while giving the appearance of connecting that present to an unchanging past. This flexibility is a function of the power of historical poetics: by selecting and arranging the pieces of Israel's "master narrative," each retelling highlights (and, occasionally, creates) particular salient features and mutes others. Each retelling conforms the image of the narrative into its chosen beginning and links them to its selected end. This act of retelling reconfigures a past that gives to each member of the community a role in the present, a continued sense of agency to act as God's people.

Scope of the Dissertation

As demonstrated even by this select overview of previous studies, one of the difficulties in analyzing the phenomenon of historical recital in the Hebrew Bible is appropriate methodological reflection on selecting a corpus for analysis. Some studies solve this issue by

⁸¹ Newsom highlights this when she notes the juxtaposition between Psalm 105 and 106 especially; see Newsom, "Rhyme and Reason," 222.

⁸² Anthony Giddens describes the evidence for a narrative's "*embeddedness*" in a culture as its "historical persistence" and "chronic reproduction," as well as its general resistance to change. See Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 288.

analyzing a single text⁸³ or limiting their analysis to texts from a single corpus.⁸⁴ My study is not by any means comprehensive, but I have sought to establish a unified corpus of texts for analysis.

My criteria for selection of texts are the following: Attending to Römer's caution that a diversity of forms relates to a diversity of function,⁸⁵ I have limited the texts that I analyze to those that correspond to both a liturgical form and function. I therefore focus on psalms and prayers and their performance by the community or by the community's cultic representatives in narrative. I also deal only with texts that refer in sequential form to at least three events from Israel's past. This removes from consideration texts that simply use one or two historical "examples," but whose emphasis is not to convey a configured story.⁸⁶

Several texts that potentially could fit into a study of this nature are therefore not included on the basis of their rhetorical situation or the brevity of their historical review. I do not include the divine speeches or the speeches of particular individuals that are not presented as a performance in which the community participates.⁸⁷ Therefore, I do not include historical "sermons," the category into which Ezek 16 and 20 fit. These sermons make ample use of their

⁸³ Boda, *Praying the Tradition*; Leonard, "Historical Traditions in Psalm 78."

⁸⁴ See, for example, Judith Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen* (München: University Press, 2012).

⁸⁵ Römer, "Résumer l'histoire en l'inventant," 37.

⁸⁶ As Pajunen observes, an interest in past events is no novelty in the psalms, though most references to "biblical" history in the Psalms are brief, and extended meditation upon history tends to be late. Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect*, 322–23.

⁸⁷ This would include, for example, the divine speeches in Gen 15:13–16; Exod 3:16–22; Exod 6:2–8; 7:3–5; 19:3–6; 14:20–24; Moses' speeches in the Pentateuch (Num 20:14–16; 32:6–15; Deut 1–3; 5:1–5, 19–28; 6:20–25; 7; 8:2–6, 14–18; 9:1–5, 8–10:11; 26:5–10; 32:7–18); Joshua's speeches (Josh 23:9–13; 24:2b–13); Jephthah's speech (Judg 11:16–22); and Samuel's speeches (1 Sam 10:17–19; 12:8–12). In Chapter 3, I will treat some royal speeches in Chronicles, as they inform the communal performance of the psalm in 1 Chron 16:8–36. In Chapter 4, I will also briefly address the relationship between Solomon's prayer in 1 Kgs 8 and its relationship to Neh 9:8–36.

audience's "functional memory,"⁸⁸ but do not play the same communal role as prayed history. They fulfill a different rhetorical role. As Hall notes, "in each of these passages... the historical résumé justifies the action God proposes in the consequence."⁸⁹

Based on these focusing criteria, the biblical texts that I have selected for analysis are Pss 78, 105–106, 135–136, the reprisal of Pss 105–106 in the cultic celebration in 1 Chron 16:8–36, and the Levitical prayer performance in Neh 9:5b–37. Certain Qumran texts witness to the ongoing practice of historical recital in the later Second Temple period. To demonstrate this, I will conclude the dissertation with an analysis of the use of historical psalms in the Qumran psalters and the recital of history in the liturgy preserved in 4Q504–506, the "Words of the Luminaries." While this study is not comprehensive, attention to a very specific text form will yield information that can then be used in treatments of a more extensive array of material.

Terminology

A related issue in the study of these and related texts is the variety of terminological labels that have been used to describe the summaries of history contained in the biblical and extra-biblical literature. While the terminology is, to a large extent, determined by the corpus of texts selected, names for the phenomenon of abbreviated histories in the Hebrew Bible include "historical

⁸⁸ See Robert G. Hall, *Revealed Histories: Techniques for Ancient Jewish and Christian Historiography*, JSPSup 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 48–51, for an overview of these "historical sermons."

⁸⁹ Hall, *Revealed Histories*, 51. These include the prophetic speeches in Ezek 16:1–34; 20:3–32; 23:2–21. Cf. Gillingham's similar distinction in relationship to her own study on the "participation in history through liturgy." She observes that "it would be difficult to argue that Deuteronomy 26, Exodus 12, and Joshua 4 were actually composed for any liturgical purpose: each text simply informs us *how* historical creeds were used liturgically, but they are not themselves part of a living liturgical performance." Sue Gillingham, "Psalms 105 and 106 and the Participation in History through Liturgy," *HEBAI* 4 (2015): 462. She also notes that the same might be said of Isa 63 and Neh 9, both of which I reference in my study, but she acknowledges that, due to their form, it is "more possible that these texts might also have been appropriated from (or for) actual post-exilic liturgies of penitence" (462).

résumés,”⁹⁰ “historical recital,”⁹¹ “historical summaries,”⁹² and “summaries of Israel’s story.”⁹³ I use the term “historical recital” to emphasize the performed dimension of the texts with which I am dealing. Each of the texts I investigate is either presented in a liturgical form or is depicted within a narrative context as a communal performance. This terminological label differentiates this group of texts from the more general category of historical “summaries,” which can refer to texts embedded in other prophetic, narrative, or legal literature, and which play various rhetorical roles.

Memory is also a “buzzword” in the academy, and the accompanying proliferation of terms related to memory requires clarification regarding what I am and am not doing by employing this word in this study. First, I am not concerned with memory as a cognitive function of the individual mind, except in so far as this function dictates what a group of persons is most likely to remember. Therefore, I will not be engaging primarily with psychological literature on memory. I am also not concerned with the extensive literature on autobiographical memory, how an individual constructs a sense of his or her life, or how cultural forces inevitably shape this construction. I am instead concerned with the cultural structures that support and form the memory of groups.⁹⁴ This requires significant cultural investment, the implementation of structures for participation, and the formation and maintenance of motivating forces to engage

⁹⁰ Newsom, “Rhyme and Reason,” 215–33.

⁹¹ Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 22, 31, 66, 67, 76, 84.

⁹² Römer, “Résumer l’histoire en l’inventant,” 21–22 uses “sommaires historique.” Cf. Joachim Jeska, *Die Geschichte Israels in der Sicht des Lukas: Apg 7,2b–53 und 13, 17–25 im Kontext antijüdischer Summarien der Geschichte Israels*, FRLANT 195 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001).

⁹³ James B. Hood and Matthew Y. Emerson, “Summaries of Israel’s Story: Reviewing a Compositional Category,” *CurBR* 11 (2013): 328–348.

⁹⁴ Cf. Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins’ comments on social memory. They note that there is no such “thing” as a “mystical group mind,” but only “sets of mnemonic practices in various social sites.” Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 112.

with this memory. We have no recourse to ancient Israelite memory as experienced by individuals. But we have significant access to cultural tools of memory and to narrative scenes that depict ideal acts of remembering taking place.

Various theorists have given this phenomenon different names based on their evidence, and some of this terminological evolution is discussed above in the section on “Cultural Memory and Historical Poetics.” In most cases, I find Jan Assmann’s term “cultural memory” to be the most helpful in describing the biblical phenomena, as the Hebrew Bible is a cultural product designed to preserve and transmit a people’s memory. On occasion, I will use related terms, most particularly “social memory,” to describe the related concept of what people of a particular social group likely knew or the representations of such knowing in narrative texts.

Overview of Chapters

In his analysis of the “little historical credo,” von Rad aimed to reconstruct the formation of a Hexateuch.⁹⁵ He therefore sought the most ancient simple creeds and traced their development into an extended narrative tradition. My goal is not to reconstruct the formation of texts but to inquire into their social role at a later stage of Israel’s developing textual tradition, to discover not the *formation* of this history but the formative social role of its continued reading. It is not remarkable that in the course of Israel’s history this people produced historical texts; what is remarkable is the emphasis on the people *knowing* these texts. Israel successfully cultivated not only remarkable literary achievements but the formation of a shared attitude toward their cultural literature. Their texts preserve both extended histories and also potential strategies for assuring that people would know, at least to a very limited extent, what those texts contain.

⁹⁵ Von Rad, “The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch,” 1–78.

In the following chapters, I will trace this strategy of reciting history communally in the Second Temple period. This study will not constitute a claim about the origin of the practice but will instead explore its persistence as a successful mode of communal education and engagement. I will begin with the performance and praying of history in the Psalter (Pss 78, 105–106, 135–136). Not only do these texts present multiple iterations of Israel’s master narrative, often presented side by side, but they also mobilize Israel’s memory among the populace: they identify their listening audience and the roles that they are meant to play. They characterize not only Israel’s history but also those who know and speak that history. This will become an important theme in Second Temple historical discourse: knowledge of the past itself becomes a communal virtue.

From these texts, I will move to the reconstructed performances of Judah’s memory (Erll’s category of *memory in literature*⁹⁶) in which successful performances of these psalms and a related liturgy are recounted (1 Chron 16; Neh 9).⁹⁷ While the psalms present only the script *for a recital*,⁹⁸ narrative texts with embedded recitals present a situated memory performance by the Levites before the people, in which the people respond to and affirm the contents of the presented memory. These passages place the performance of historical recitals (at least retrospectively) into the public sphere at key political and cultic junctures in the life of Israel.

⁹⁶ Erll constructs a three-fold schema of memory’s relationship to literature. She distinguishes between the “memory of literature,” which she equates with genre and form, “literature as a medium of cultural memory,” and “memory in literature” which constitutes the representation of the act of remembering within individual texts.” See Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 67–82.

⁹⁷ I refer to these as “successful” or “ideal” performances, in that the ideal participation in and response of the people themselves, participating in and assenting to the contents of the recital, is explicitly recorded.

⁹⁸ Though the increase in the practice of inserting superscriptions does suggest that there was an effort to situate even these psalms into concrete performance situations.

Finally, I will turn to both biblical and extra-biblical recitals preserved at Qumran. These texts contribute novel evidence to the ongoing scholarly discussion concerning the practice of historical recital. The Qumran Psalter witnesses to the varied use of some of the historical psalms contained in the MT, juxtaposed with extra-biblical psalms that explicitly reflect on the practice of reciting Israel's history in liturgy. These psalters from Qumran provide not only textual reflection on the practice but manuscript evidence for the development of reciting history in the Second Temple period. The arrangement of historical psalms in these texts from the Dead Sea attest to patterns of use as well as continued reflection on the value placed on historical knowledge within the communities that used these psalters. Finally, 4Q504–506, *Dibre Hame'orot* is a collection of prayers prescribed for each day of the week that moves consecutively through key events in Israel's history. The oldest copy (4Q504) has been dated, paleographically and based on literary dependence, to the mid-second century BCE.⁹⁹ This dating, combined with the lack of distinctive sectarian terminology, indicates its likely non-Qumranic origin. It is possible, therefore, that it reflects a more widespread practice in Second Temple Judaism. The text provides a clear liturgical framework, offering invaluable information about the social practice of at least one ritual that celebrated Israel's history communally. Each day begins with the invocation "Remember, Lord" followed by a recollection of specific events, beginning with the creation of Adam, the sins in Eden, and the flood (first day), through the revelation at Sinai (fourth day), wilderness and the construction of the first temple (fifth day), and the description of the exile and return (sixth day). This text also reflects upon the act of historical recital itself and presents the participation of the people in this extended recital as

⁹⁹ Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 61; Maurice Baillet, "Un Recueil liturgique de Qumran, grotte 4: Les paroles des luminaires," *RB* 68 (1961): 247–250.

evidence of divine action in the speaker. These texts together provide evidence for a vibrant tradition of praying history and the important social role that this practice played in Second Temple Judaism.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL PSALMS AS CULTURAL MEMORY

Introduction

Psalm 78 begins its recital of Judah's history by calling its audience to attend to a "parable" and a "riddle." This parable will not be composed of new information, but of Judah's own traditions:

¹ Listen, O my people, to my instruction;
 incline your ears to what my mouth speaks!
² I will open my mouth in a parable;
 I will utter ancient riddles,
³ things that we have heard and known,
 that our fathers have recounted to us.
⁴ We will not hide them from their children,
 But to the next generation we will recount
 the glorious acts of the LORD, and his might,
 and the wonders that he has done.

With these words, the psalm introduces its recollection of the exodus, wilderness wanderings, and conquest, those traditions it describes as both "heard and known." Yet the psalm implies that these traditions have not been properly understood or effectively taught. The deeds of the Lord and the wonders that he has done, the content of their historical witness, have become a "riddle," difficult to understand, whose meaning risks remaining hidden.

In order to complete its program of education, the psalm brings Judah's traditions into speech. In an ancient Near Eastern setting, the historical traditions known to professional liturgists like the Asaphites would have been largely inaccessible to a non-literate populace, unless they were presented via public ritual and teaching.¹⁰⁰ By presenting its historical recital as

¹⁰⁰ Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 10–14. Cf. Young, "Israelite Literacy, 239–253; Young, "Israelite Literacy, Part 2," 408–22.

an oral performance, the psalm records a *mnemonic practice* designed to facilitate the process of social remembering, to bring to light what risks being hidden.

In the terms outlined in the introduction, Ps 78 and the other historical psalms to be analyzed in this chapter demonstrate a resource for Israel's "functional memory."¹⁰¹ They preserve the "process of remembering," the process of selecting from Israel's traditions and framing the contents in such a way that they perform a particular role for their audience in the present.¹⁰² These psalms therefore correspond to the extended historical narratives of the Hebrew Bible as two different types of mnemonic media: one is suitable for the preservation and transmission of Judean memory that can be read by the elite,¹⁰³ and the other facilitates the transmission of a schematic presentation of events in order to educate a population about its central shared narrative.

The historical psalms also demonstrate both the characteristic persistence and limited adaptation of a cultural master narrative as it moves through different presents.¹⁰⁴ Each of the historical psalms offers a limited but consistent narrative that includes a version of the exodus, wilderness wanderings, and conquest. These episodes are not only narrated in such a way that they are recognizably referring to the same events, but the accounts also tend to use a core set of symbols in their descriptions.

¹⁰¹ See the distinction between "storage" and "functional" memory developed by Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 123–28, and discussed in the introduction above.

¹⁰² Assmann, *Cultural Memory*, 18.

¹⁰³ This concept is developed extensively by Ehud Ben Zvi and Ian Wilson, who emphasize the textual production of a small group of literati in late Persian period Jerusalem. As an example of some of the works that outline this approach, see Ben Zvi, "The Urban Center of Jerusalem, 194–209; Ben Zvi, "Looking at the Primary (Hi)Story and the Prophetic Books as Literary/Theological Units within the Frame of the Early Second Temple: Some Considerations," *SJOT* 12 (1998): 26–43; Ben Zvi, "Towards an Integrative Study, 15–28; Wilson, *Kingship and Memory*, 10–17.

¹⁰⁴ On the topic of cultural persistence, see Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 288.

A brief qualification on the psalter as a source of cultural memory is in order. The Masoretic Psalter is a self-consciously literary work, divided into five parts designed to recall the format of the written Torah. The historical psalms themselves play an important structuring role in the book of Psalms as a document.¹⁰⁵ Recent scholarship on the psalms has therefore emphasized the role of the Psalms' *Sitz im Buch* above its *Sitz im Leben*, turning to literary features of the Psalter as a whole over and above the possibility of individual psalm's actual communal performance.

But there is evidence that the psalms themselves preserve a catechetical tradition, a mode of reading and perhaps performing history that becomes increasingly influential in later accounts of the communal performance of Israel's texts.¹⁰⁶ The psalms preserve that limited and schematic history in the form of public prayer. As I noted in the introduction, previous work on the historical summaries has tended to either interrogate these texts as a form that evolves from simple and short utterances to more advanced versions of the practice or as a repository for inner-biblical exegesis. Less attention has been paid to the social space outlined in this text and the way in which the psalms facilitate participation in Israel's history.

As a performance genre that brings the historical traditions of Israel into public speech, the psalms play an important social role in transmitting and confirming a shared memory among the populace. When read in this way, the psalms are a strategic resource for creating and

¹⁰⁵ Gärtner particularly emphasizes this in her analysis of the historical psalms' role in the structuring of the Psalter. See Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 29–34. For other analyses of the role of particular historical psalms as structuring texts in the psalter, see John E. Anderson, "Remembering the Ancestors: Psalms 105 and 106 as Conclusion to Book IV of the Psalter," *PRSt* 44 (2017): 185–196; Lindsay Wilson, "On Psalms 103–106 as a Closure to Book IV of the Psalter," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. Erich Zenger, *BETL* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 755–66; Christoph Levin, "Psalm 136 als zeitweilige Schlussdoxologie des Psalters," *SJOT* 14 (2000): 17–27.

¹⁰⁶ This will also be supported in this dissertation by the developments apparent in the Qumran Psalter, which will constitute the theme of Chapter 5.

confirming modes of collective historical discourse and shared memory among the population that reads and performs them. In each of the psalms that I will analyze in this chapter, I will therefore not only identify the rhetorical features of its narration of Israel's history but also observe the way in which the audience is characterized and encouraged to participate in and assent to the content of the psalms' narrative. As Aleida Assmann observes, relationship to cultural memory is always necessarily constructed.¹⁰⁷ The psalms compel a response from their listening audience, to *identify with* one or another characters drawn from history, and ultimately to identify with the constructed identity of the "one who recites Israel's history" itself.¹⁰⁸ In a limited manner, some of the psalms analyzed in this chapter will also provide ways for the listening audience to display their shared knowledge, a key factor in strengthening the social value of a presented master narrative.¹⁰⁹

Finally, due to their schematic structure, the psalms provide a compelling resource for the investigation of the historical poetics of memory. They not only demonstrate the influence of a chosen beginning or ending point, but they also display the ways in which symbols, abbreviations of plots, and sites of memory accrue significance via their role in traditional narratives. Because the psalms themselves use only a relatively limited "historical vocabulary," the marked repetition between narrated events and the images and figures associated with those events provide one with a textual "laboratory" in which to observe the process of symbolic construction in action.

¹⁰⁷ Assmann, "Vier Formen des Gedächtnisses," 183–190.

¹⁰⁸ This identification reaches its zenith in the "Words of the Luminaries" (4Q504–506), but aspects of it are present already in the historical psalms. See esp. Ps 106, as discussed below.

¹⁰⁹ Castanheira et al., "Interactional Ethnography," 353–400.

Recent Scholarship on Historical Psalms

The identification of a set of “historical psalms” goes back to the research of Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, who identified three psalms (Pss 78, 105, and 106) as *Legende*. This label was not a genre classification as such; Gunkel observed that each of the psalms that shared “history” as a common focus also belonged to other distinct psalm genres.¹¹⁰ He also understood this historical material in the psalms as being fundamentally derivative, an extension of the parenetic speeches in Deuteronomy.

Since Gunkel’s identification of these three psalms as *Legende*, scholars have argued for different groups of historical psalms, based on a variety of criteria.¹¹¹ There is still not a firm consensus on which psalms may most properly be considered “historical,”¹¹² but most scholars accept this label for Pss 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136. Research on the historical psalms has been dominated by three areas of inquiry: first, the psalms’ relationship to the narrative traditions of the Hebrew Bible, second, the role of these psalms in organizing the psalter as a book, and third, the role of these psalms in the reader’s present.¹¹³ Most recently, Anja Klein and Judith Gärtner,

¹¹⁰ Gunkel identifies Ps 78 as a “wisdom poem” that presents history for the purpose of “admonition and indoctrination,” Ps 105 as a hymn, and Ps 106 as a “communal complaint with a hymnic entry.” See Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, trans. Joachim Begrich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 205.

¹¹¹ Aare Lauhe defines the “historical psalms” as those that are entirely concerned with “legendary material,” either in succession or as a single historical incident. He includes in this group Pss 78, 105, 106, 111, 114, 135, 136, and 137, along with Exod 15. See Aare Lauha, *Die Geschichtsmotive in den alttestamentlichen Psalmen* (Helsinki: n.p., 1945), esp. 128. Claus Westermann, on the other hand, includes only Pss 78, 105, and 106, as well as Exod 15, Deut 32, and Isa 63:7–14 as historical psalms. He understands this group to share a common interest in God’s work in history. See Claus Westermann, “The Re-Presentation of History in the Psalms,” in *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1981), 214–49. This divergence in the genre label led Dietmar Mathias to discard it entirely in favor of the term “Geschichtssummarien,” a category in which he included texts from any genre whose goal was to summarize history. See Dietmar Mathias, *Die Geschichtstheologie der Geschichtssummarien in den Psalmen*, BEATAJ 35 (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 31.

¹¹² Part of the difficulty is that several psalms reference historical events in the course of their prayer; it is difficult to determine in which cases history itself rises to the level of a theme.

¹¹³ See the orienting essay in Judith Gärtner and Anja Klein, “Editorial: The Historical Psalms,” *HEBAI* 4 (2015): 369–372. The essays in that volume admirably demonstrate each of these research areas.

in monographs published in close succession, conducted thorough reviews of related material: Klein sought to investigate the conceptual category of “Geschichte und Gebet,”¹¹⁴ while Gärtner discussed “die Geschichtspsalmen” proper, which she identified as Pss 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136.

Klein stated from the outset that her study sought to “[deal] with the reception of biblical history in the psalms of the Old Testament.”¹¹⁵ In her study she included Exod 15, which she considered to be the first sustained treatment of history in the form of a prayer, as well as Pss 114, 78, 105–106, and 135–137, and concluded with some reflections on the penitential prayer of Neh 9. These prayers fit the following criteria: 1) they contain historically themed content; 2) they refer clearly to the narrative overview of biblical history; and 3) they share as a hermeneutical principle the selection of historical events for the purpose of appropriating them as prayer for the community.¹¹⁶

Klein’s primary interest was the reception of biblical history in these psalms, as demonstrated both by the development *between* these versions of prayed history and in the development *of* the individual psalms. She re-constructed a complex history of redaction for each psalm; new textual layers form the response of a new group or generation to previous iterations of history expressed in the psalm. In this way, she described a dynamic process of reading and re-reading Israel’s history.¹¹⁷ Her study is situated firmly in the group of textual analyses that focus on how these recitals receive and interpret preceding texts, both the extended literary works and preceding historical recitals to which they refer. As she stated at the opening to her book, her study dealt with the “reception of biblical history in the psalms of the Old Testament.”

¹¹⁴ Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*; Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*.

¹¹⁵ Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 1.

¹¹⁶ Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 3.

¹¹⁷ Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 392.

By contrast, the aims of Gärtner's study align much more closely with my own and represent a decisive progression in research on the historical psalms. Gärtner's aim was to analyze how each psalm functions as "paradigmatic history," a concept that she derived from Eric Voegelin. Voegelin distinguished between "pragmatic" and "paradigmatic history": "pragmatic" history corresponds to a critical representation of history, while "paradigmatic" history comprises meaningful story, sacred history, and culturally significant symbols. Paradigmatic history, according to Voegelin, finds its fulfillment in an overarching divine plan and grants an identity to those whose story it tells. In this construct each event reveals itself to be a "Paradigm[a] für Gottes Weg mit den Menschen in dieser Welt."¹¹⁸ Gärtner identified four aspects of Voegelin's viewpoint that have ramifications for her interpretation of the historical psalms:

- 1) Paradigmatic history always involves a process of interpretation, by which the past is interpreted according to particular hermeneutic principles;
- 2) These hermeneutic principles imply a process of conscious selection; paradigmatic history is both reconstructive and selective;
- 3) For those who ascribe to the contained memory, it possesses an "identity-forming function";
- 4) The meaning of this remembered history is dependent upon the contemporary situation of the remembering community.¹¹⁹

Gärtner's study also engaged several more recent developments in cultural memory studies. She demonstrated how the reconstruction of history is always necessarily selective and intentionally ordered, citing the work of Günther Lottes,¹²⁰ and ultimately forms a narrative

¹¹⁸ Voegelin, *Ordnung und Geschichte*, 37. Quoted in Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 13.

¹¹⁹ Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 14–15.

¹²⁰ Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 19–22. Cf. Günther Lottes, "Erinnerungskulturen zwischen Psychologie und Kulturwissenschaft," in *Erinnerung, Gedächtnis, Wissen: Studien zur kulturwissenschaftlichen Gedächtnisforschung*, ed. G. Oesterle (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 163–84.

system which is used to construct memories.¹²¹ She also suggested that the historical psalms themselves can serve as paradigms for the formation of cultural memory, since they reflect on the process themselves (cf. Ps 78:1–8). They can therefore contribute to contemporary discussions concerning the self-conscious reflection on the creation of shared memories.¹²²

The second broad aim of her study was to understand how the historical psalms function within the psalter. She asserted that the historical psalms have a fundamentally *literary* and not a *liturgical* function.¹²³ Thus, for each historical psalm she investigated, she identified its paradigmatic “hermeneutical key” as well as the redactional process by which that key is situated in its present position in the psalm. She also argued that the historical psalms are situated in redactionally significant locations within the psalter: Psalm 78 stands in the center of the Asaph collection; Pss 105–106 conclude the fourth book of the psalter, and Pss 135–136 form the segue to the final Davidic collection. Therefore, they are crucial pieces in the development of the book of Psalms as a whole.

Gärtner’s study represented a decisive advance in the study of the historical psalms as cultural memory, and she expanded categories of “relecture” while remaining primarily within a disciplinary methodology that emphasizes the historical psalms’ receptive reading of the narrative literature. Her focus was also, in the end, theological. Therefore, while her study is a compelling conversation partner, my focus will extend into an inquiry of the nature of the psalms

¹²¹ W. Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies,” *History and Theory* 41 (2002): 179–197. Gärtner cites W. Kansteiner, “Postmoderner Historismus: Das kollektive Gedächtnis als neues Paradigma der Kulturwissenschaften,” in *Handbuch der Kulturwissenschaften: Band 2: Paradigmen und Disziplinen*, ed. Friedrich Jaeger and Jürgen Straub (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2004), 136.

¹²² Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 373.

¹²³ Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 29. For an opposing response, see Gillingham, “Psalms 105 and 106,” 450–475.

as a media of memory and the role of the psalms in confirming a particular Judean identity and agency.

Historical Psalms as Cultural Memory and Social Strategy

In this chapter on the psalms, I address Pss 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136. These psalms present a sequence of events from Israel's shared history, not just reflection on a single event, as one finds, for example, in Ps 114.¹²⁴ My analysis of each psalm will demonstrate both how the psalm demonstrates a historical poetic, and how it plays a role in constructing and confirming Judah's cultural memory. As Aleida Assmann notes, groups do not "have" a common memory; they must "make" a common memory.¹²⁵ This activity involves the artistic construction of these memories, through a process of selection, abbreviation, and configuration, but also the formation of modes of communal address and participation. Mnemonic media and rites of memory provide opportunities for individuals to commit publicly to (*einschwören auf*) a particular set of memories.¹²⁶ Memories must become public to be shared effectively.

In my analysis of Pss 78, 105–106, 135–136, I will first present each individual psalm's configuration of Judah's master narrative. But I will also identify the ways in which the psalm uses this reconfiguration in order to "do something" with that history in the present. In this way, the psalms provide a resource for later events and become a key resource for the reading of Israel's history. In the course of this presentation, I identify five primary functions for Judah's memory as performed in the psalms:

1) Memory as a tool of distinction and identification

¹²⁴ On differing ways of categorizing the historical psalms, see Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 2–5.

¹²⁵ Assmann, "Vier Formen," 186.

¹²⁶ Assmann, "Vier Formen," 186.

Assmann has argued that the primary roles of a culture's functional memory are *legitimization*, *delegitimization*, and *distinction*.¹²⁷ Although these are only a few of the multitude of purposes to which memory can be put, these three tasks provide a heuristic framework with which to assess the audience function in the historical psalms. Particularly in Pss 78, 105 and 106, Israel's shared memory is used as a tool of distinction, but one that distinguishes between very different parties: Psalm 78 creates a fundamental distinction between the story arcs of Judah and Ephraim; Psalm 105 defines Israel over against the onlooking nations; and Ps 106 constructs the possibility of a distinction internal to the people themselves: "who [among them] can utter the works of the Lord? (Ps 106:2)." Judah uses these recitals of their history as a tool with which to identify external boundaries, and also to unify the people internally through and around an appeal to a common past.

2) Memory as a tool for present agency

It is a truism in memory studies that memory relates the past to the present. The task of the interpreter is to determine what *function* memory plays in the present. To Assmann's threefold schema of *legitimization*, *delegitimization*, and *distinction*, I add a fourth primary function for memory: the construction of agency. The concept of "agency" is a notoriously slippery one. For the purposes of my analysis, I find the definition offered by Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische to be the most helpful to articulate the relationship of images of the past to both present and future action.¹²⁸ Emirbayer and Mische conceptualize agency as

a temporal process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its 'iterational' or habitual aspect) but also oriented towards the future (as a 'projective' capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a 'practical-evaluative'

¹²⁷ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 128.

¹²⁸ Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische, "What is Agency?" *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1998): 962–1023.

capacity) to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment.¹²⁹

In this way, they construct a definition of agency that fruitfully intersects with theories of how the formation of the past in cultural memory informs present and future action. As each psalm represents Judah's history, it not only constructs a static image of Israelite identity, but it also uses the material of the past to project an image and expectation of effective action in the future. The precise contours or articulations of this vision vary among the psalms. But this is an important dimension to add to Assmann's threefold heuristic: the past is not only good for "thinking through" what happened in the past, or even for thinking through how that past connects to each new present; it is also good for thinking through the ways in which the past constructs expectation for the future.

3) The poetics of memory

Fundamental to the psalms' poetic account of history is the presentation of that history, not as a succession of fully realized narrative events but as brief schematic representations of those narratives. These schemas both serve the function of communicability and memorability and also demonstrate the force of historical patterning; narrative details are subsumed in service of carefully constructed patterns that highlight the structural principals of cause and effect and contribute to the condensation of particular historical symbols. This results in often simple but shifting patterns, configured out of Judah's traditional material. Similarly, the function of poetic brevity facilitates the development of cultural symbols: individual images and events accrue significance as they are placed within these patterns and are required to "stand for more" than what they might have represented in their narrative situation. In this way, the psalms provide a base vocabulary for other symbolic constructions of history in the Second Temple period.

¹²⁹ Emirbayer and Mische, "What is Agency?" 962.

4) The wilderness as a “frame image”

Throughout the historical psalms, the period of the Israelite “wilderness wanderings” becomes a particularly generative site for images that will later be applied to the Judeans’ situation in the exile: the wilderness becomes a source for patterns of behavior that not only “frame” later occurrences of sin, but also the processes of divine grace, the possibility of human intercession, and the ongoing nature of divine provision. Barry Schwartz’s concept of the “frame image” proves particularly apt to describe the role that the wilderness comes to play in the post-exilic historical imagination. He has outlined the theory of the “frame image” in several of his works on memory. When these “frames”— archetypal events and images of the commemorated past—are connected to the present, they “define the meaning of problematic events by depicting them as episodes in a narrative that precedes and transcends them.”¹³⁰ People “key into” these images in order to match their present with a more suitable past.

In the case of the historical psalms, past events offer people the symbolism and imagery with which to “think through” the people’s present situation. This happens both through narrative connection (“this as a result of that”) and through the overlaying of imagery. This provides a way in which events that have not yet been understood, that have not yet been fully “emplotted” themselves, can be re-framed in light of past events whose significance is already understood (or has already been constructed).

5) Memory as a social strategy

As I argued in the introduction, the analysis of a culture’s memory requires not only the exploration of its artistic configuration of that memory but also the exploration of the way in which it is disseminated and confirmed among a population. This is where the feature of the

¹³⁰ Barry Schwartz, “Frame images: Towards a Semiotics of Collective Memory,” *Semiotica* 121 (1998): 8.

psalms as a record of historical “speech” becomes particularly salient. While the psalms themselves, as they appear in the psalter, provide only a set of potential historical scripts (it is impossible to prove their actual performance definitively), their presentation *as spoken scripts* influences the construction of Judah’s memory. In the psalms, therefore, we witness not just another formulation or reformulation of Judah’s history, but an addressed, situated, and spoken history, which identifies the present generation as key participants.

Psalm 78: The Sense of Ephraim’s Ending

Psalm 78 contains the first example of an extended historical recital in the Psalter. It is the first in terms of the order of the Psalter itself, but it is also likely the earliest example of historical recital in the psalms. The psalm recalls a schematic presentation of Israel’s history, from the divine wonders in Egypt through to the establishment of the Davidic dynasty. Most of the episodes that it contains are common to Israel’s historical recitals, including a focus on the exodus (Ps 78:13, 52–53), the wilderness wanderings (Ps 78:14–39, 52b–53a), and the conquest of the land (Ps 78:54–55). The psalm’s history is not merely didactic. The pointed “parable” (*māšāl*; Ps 78:2) it presents leads ultimately to a profound distinction between the story of Ephraim and the story of Judah. As I will argue below, Ps 78 is most likely an eighth-century psalm, composed and performed in response to the destruction of the northern kingdom. It therefore appeals to the resources of tradition in order both to re-frame Ephraim’s defeat as a clear conclusion to a pattern of sin reaching back to Israel’s time in the wilderness and to present a way in which divine action for Judah inaugurates a new historical possibility.

Date

While suggestions for the dating of the psalm range from as early as the reign of David ¹³¹ (due to the climactic declaration of his kingship at the end of the psalm) to the post-exilic period, ¹³² most scholars propose a date between 930 and 586 BCE. ¹³³ Within this range, it is most likely

¹³¹ Otto Eissfeldt, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32,1–43 und das Lehrgedicht Asaphs Psalm 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Mose-Liedes*, Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philosophisch-historische Klasse (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1958), 42. Eissfeldt proposes the earliest date for Ps 78, arguing that the psalm seeks to legitimate Jerusalem as the resting place for the ark. Campbell also proposes a tenth-century date for the psalm. He buttresses his argument with evidence that the psalm does not depend on the Deuteronomist, or even on the present Pentateuchal text, though he does allow for occasional Deuteronomic redaction. See Antony F. Campbell, “Psalm 78. A Contribution to the Theology of Tenth-Century Israel,” *CBQ* 41 (1979): 51–79; cf. Samuel E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*, trans. Baruch J. Schwartz (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992), 72–73.

¹³² Gunkel argues on generic grounds that this psalm was post-exilic, asserting that earlier, simpler, more constrained versions of genre preclude the extended forms that characterize the legends. See Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 247–49. Westermann also argues that early psalms of declarative praise did not focus on the people’s response to God’s great deeds, as the historical psalms do, and viewed this as a necessarily late development. See Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1981), 239–42. These arguments for dating depend, however, on the scholars’ pre-existing constructs for the development of psalmody. More common is the understanding that the psalm must post-date (or coincide with) the Deuteronomistic history based on the psalm’s affinity with a Deuteronomic presentation of history as a cycle of human sin and legitimate divine judgment. Cf. J. Köhlewien, *Geschichte in den Psalmen* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag Stuttgart, 1973), 98–99; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, CC (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), 247–49; Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC 20 (Dallas: Word Books, 1998), 285–86; Erhard Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations*, FOTL 15 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 97. Yet Jeffery Leonard has demonstrated that the identification of Deuteronomic language is better attributed to a reliance on Deut 32, a text that many understand to pre-date the Deuteronomic corpus. He posits, therefore, a dependence on proto-Dt language. See Leonard, “Historical Traditions in Psalm 78,” 301–16. Some who argue for the post-exilic date explain the apparent anti-Northern sentiment as deriving from the “struggles for the new establishment of the Samaritans’ sanctuary” to “emphasize anew the election of Zion and David over against the claims of Northern Israel” (Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 123–24).

Berlin and Tammuz argue for an exilic date, based both on the psalm’s apparent reliance on Deuteronomic sources and its reference to Shiloh. They interpret the psalm’s use of Shiloh as a response to Jeremiah’s polemical use of Shiloh in relationship to those who would understand Jerusalem as immune to a similar destruction (Jer 7:12–14). See Adele Berlin, “Psalms and the Literature of Exile,” in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception*, ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 78; Oded Tammuz, “Psalm 78: A Case Study in Redaction as Propaganda,” *CBQ* 79 (2017): 205–221. Louis Finkelstein suggested the latest (and outlying) date for the psalm, arguing in “Pre-Maccabean Documents in the Passover Haggadah (Concluded),” *HTR* 36 (1943): 24–27 that the psalm derives from Ptolemaic developments in the third century. This dating remains an outlier that has not found broad acceptance among other scholars.

¹³³ Day argues for a *terminus a quo* of 960 BCE based on a clear allusion to the Solomonic Temple. John Day, “Pre-Deuteronomic Allusions to the Covenant in Hosea and Psalm LXXVIII,” *VT* 36

that Ps 78 was composed in the wake of and as a response to the northern kingdom's demise in the last quarter of the eighth century BCE. Its narrated history purports to explain to a southern audience the importance of understanding their shared history and the corresponding risk of forgetting. This risk of forgetting is presented as one of the paradigmatic sins of Ephraim (v. 11), a sin that led to her fall. There are several points of evidence that converge to suggest that, in this case, the rhetorical presentation of the destruction of Ephraim is a historical response to the fall of the northern kingdom in the late eighth century BCE.

Although my brief argument in support of an eighth-century date follows below, I acknowledge that the dating of biblical texts is by its nature speculative. The question concerning date can therefore alternatively be posed in terms of the presented date of the speaker: the rhetorical situation from which the speaking voice of the psalm emanates is a situation unmarked

(1986): 1–12. Goulder has argued that the Asaphite collection as a whole derives from the northern kingdom immediately before their destruction (732–722 BCE). Northern documents were then brought to the southern kingdom after the North's defeat, and psalms like Ps 78 demonstrate a southern redaction of this collection. See Michael D. Goulder, "Asaph's History of Israel," *JSOT* 65 (1995): 71–81. Junker has argued that Ps 78 derives from the same circles that participated in Hezekiah's reforms. He also dates the writing of the Deuteronomistic literature to this time period, and so, though he acknowledges "die Anschauungen und den Einfluss des Deuteronomiums," evidence of Deuteronomistic influence on Ps 78 does not lead him to date the psalm in the exilic or post-exilic period, in contrast to scholars whose dating of the Deuteronomistic literature to these periods would require that Ps 78 is later. H. Junker, "Die Entstehungszeit des Ps 78 und des Deuteronomiums," *BK* 34 (1953): 487. To explain the psalm's wisdom vocabulary, he also points to the fact that the book of Proverbs associates Hezekiah with wisdom literature. See *ibid.*, 497–500. Clifford also associates Ps 78 with the reign of Hezekiah, rejecting post-exilic dating on the basis of the clear and "lively role of the Davidic shepherd as the unifying agent in vv. 70–72." See R. J. Clifford, "In Zion and David a New Beginning: An Interpretation of Psalm 78," in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith*, ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 138. Stern confirms a pre-exilic dating with an extensive analysis of textual parallels with the eighth-century prophets and by noting the complete lack of key theological themes that mark post-exilic texts, including the concepts of "'remnant, refugee, or return,' or postexilic concerns, such as the practice of intermarriage or the loss of Jewish sovereignty." See P. Stern, "The Eighth-Century Dating of Psalm 78 Re-Visited," *HUCA* 66 (1995): 44, 51. Holladay's study of the relationship of Jeremiah to the Psalter has likewise confirmed that the prophet more frequently relied on the Psalter, rather than the other way around. Specifically in relationship to Ps 78, Holladay suggests that its reference to the destruction of Shiloh might have "helped stimulate Jeremiah to refer to the event." See William L. Holladay, "Indications of Jeremiah's Psalter," *JBL* 121 (2002): 257–258; cf. Evode Beaucamp, *Le Psautier: Ps 73–150*, SB (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre J. Gabalda et Cie Éditeurs, 1979), 32.

by Judean defeat or by a challenge to the Davidic line. Jerusalem stands as the inviolable alternative to destroyed Shiloh (Ps 78:68–69). It is always possible that such a construction could be imagined after the exile, but if that were the case it is notable that no other clearly post-exilic historical psalm adopts these symbols, the very ones that would have lost some of their efficacy as endpoints for the returning exiles. Even those scholars who date this psalm later than my proposed date often confirm that Ps 78 is the earliest of the historical psalms, arguing that Pss 105, 106 and Neh 9 rely on Ps 78.¹³⁴ This relative dating is important for constructing a tentative timeline of the formation of Israel's functional memory and its role in the public cult. By roughly dating the five historical psalms examined in this chapter, we can trace shifts in historical construction and the formation of a historical schema and development of historical symbols.

a. Lack of Reference to the Babylonian Exile

Psalm 78 concludes with a celebration of the Davidic king as God's shepherd and the inviolability of Jerusalem as compared to Shiloh as the representative northern shrine (Ps 78:60–72). For the psalmist, this is the endpoint of history, the vantage point from which the significance of preceding events can be assessed and presented. There is no reference to the destruction of the temple, the defeat of the Davidic kings, or to the Babylonian exile. Instead, the psalm focuses on the defeat of Ephraim, identifying the roots of its final judgment in the sins of the wilderness, and the initial settlement of the land.¹³⁵ It is also significant that the late pre-exilic prophet Jeremiah uses "Shiloh" as a counterpart sanctuary to the temple in Jerusalem (Jer

¹³⁴ Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 239–41, 389–91.

¹³⁵ In later psalms and prophetic recitals, these same sins will function as explanations for the demise of the southern kingdom. See especially Ps 106:24–27 and Ezek 20:23–24. On the relationship of these two texts, see Gili Kugler, "The Dual Role of Historiography in Psalm 106: Justifying the Present Distress and Demonstrating the Individual's Potential Contribution," *ZAW* 126 (2014): 548–551.

7:12–14). Based on the lack of reference to the exile in the psalm and the focus on the final punishment of the northern kingdom (via its associated sites of Shiloh and Ephraim), I suggest that a strong argument could be made for the defeat of Jerusalem in 586 BCE as a probable *terminus ad quem*.¹³⁶ It is important to recognize that none of the historical psalms or related liturgies (Pss 105–106, 135, 136; 1 Chron 16:8–36; Neh 9:6–37) makes *extensive* reference to the exile.¹³⁷ This is a distinctive mark of their historical rhetoric and is due to their focus on Israel’s formative pre-exilic events (for more discussion of this phenomenon, see chapter on Neh 9).¹³⁸ Even though none of these recitals emphasize the exile, there are distinctive marks of its influence in their history: prayers to be gathered from the land (Ps 106:47); petition over the treatment of foreign overlords (Neh 9:36–37), or, as in the case of Ps 105, an emphasis on Israel’s history “among the nations.” Each of these tropes responds to a situation of perceived international weakness as opposed to the statement of the inviolability of Jerusalem that concludes Ps 78.

b. Sources Used

Arguments about the dating of Ps 78 are connected to arguments about the compositional history of related Pentateuchal narratives. While my goal is not to conduct a source-critical analysis of this psalm, such connections provide support for a particular dating of the text. Jeffery Leonard’s detailed study of the psalmist’s source materials argued for a marked reliance on the Song of the

¹³⁶ See n. 34 above.

¹³⁷ Psalms 105, 135, and 136 do not mention the exile at all; Ps 106:26–27 (//1 Chron 16:35) connects the exile to sins in the wilderness and concludes in v. 47 with a plea to gather “us from among the nations”; Neh 9:30b briefly mentions the exile.

¹³⁸ Cf. von Rad, “The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch,” 8–10.

Sea (Exod 15:1–18; cf. Ps 78:13–14, 52–55)¹³⁹; the Yahwistic and Elohist sources of the Pentateuch¹⁴⁰ (Ps 78:15–16, 18–31); and what Leonard called “proto-Dtr” materials, in particular the Song of Moses (Deut 32:1–43) and the Ark Narrative (1 Sam 4:1–7:1; 2 Sam 6). The verbal overlap between Ps 78 and the Song of Moses is particularly extensive.¹⁴¹ In his assessment of

¹³⁹ Leonard, “Historical Traditions in Psalm 78,” 107–10, 143–48, 149–57. Klein and Greenstein have also identified this strong reliance on Exod 15:1–18. See Clifford, “In Zion and David a New Beginning,” 129; Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 113; Edward L. Greenstein, “Mixing Memory and Design: Reading Psalm 78,” *Proof* 10 (1990): 204. Leonard does note, however, that the use of the phrase *bq’ + ym* seems to be a direct appeal to P’s narrative account of the crossing of the Red Sea (see Exod 14:16, 21). See his discussion of the direction of influence in Leonard, “Historical Traditions in Psalm 78,” 160–167.

¹⁴⁰ Leonard acknowledges that it is difficult to identify Elohist traditions, though he is inclined to identify a larger role for E than many scholars do. Cf. William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, AYB 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1998); Richard Elliot Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View into the Five Books of Moses* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 2003). Leonard presents the following texts as influenced by E: Exod 14:15 (Ps 78:52); and parts of the account of the provision of water at Massah/Meribah in Exod 17:1–7 (Ps 78:15–16, 20). He argues further that the eighth-century dating of the psalm, as well as its use of previous tradition, has suggested its value as an “external window sorts on various states of [the Pentateuch’s] formation.” Jeffery M. Leonard, “Identifying Inner-biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case,” *JBL* 127 (2008): 244. Goulder similarly states that “As we have sifted through these ancient prayers, a golden key has fallen into our lap: we have, for the first time, independent, datable evidence of the earliest form of Israelite historical traditions” in *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch: Studies in the Psalter, III*, JSOTSup 233 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 190.

There is disagreement, however, concerning the extent of the Pentateuchal references. Several scholars have argued that Ps 78 apparently relies on a completed Torah due to the extent and nature of its allusions. See Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 248; M. Treves, *The Dates of the Psalms: History and Poetry in Ancient Israel* (Pisa: Giardini editori e stampatori, 1988), 67; A. A. Anderson, “Psalms,” in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSF*, ed. D. A. Carson and H.G.M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 61; Greenstein, “Mixing Memory and Design,” 201–202. Most scholars, however, argue for partial reliance on particular sources. See Day, “Pre-Deuteronomistic Allusions,” 9, 11, who argues for a reliance on J; Franz Delitzsch, *Psalms*, K&D 5 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 522, 525, who argues for a reliance on D, E, and J; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, who argues that Ps 78 refers to the oral versions of JE sources, 123. Cf. Clifford, “In Zion and David a New Beginning,” 134n26; R. J. Clifford, *Psalms 73–150*, AOTC (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2003), 47; Notker Füglistner, “Psalm LXXXVIII [sic]: der Rätsel Lösung,” in *Congress Volume, Leuven 1989*, ed. John A. Emerton (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 264–97; Lauha, *Die Geschichtsmotive in den alttestamentlichen Psalmen*, 53, 73, 80, 132, argues that the psalm relies primarily on an older version of J. That some scholars have argued the inverse, namely that it is the Pentateuch that relies on this psalm, demonstrates the difficulty of ascertaining the direction of influence in the evolution of traditions. See Samuel E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*, trans. Baruch J. Schwartz (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992), 96; Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, 10, 203.

¹⁴¹ See analysis in Eissfeldt, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32, 1–43*, passim; cf. Leonard, “Historical Traditions in Psalm 78,” 301–316. As Leonard argues, many of the so-called Deuteronomistic traits might be better attributed to the song’s significant reliance on Deut 32. Corresponding to this

the traditions represented in Ps 78, Leonard concentrated especially on the significant terminological overlap between the psalm's plague account and the description of the plagues in what is commonly considered to be the JE source of the Pentateuch.¹⁴² The psalm seems less aware of the accounts typically attributed to a P source or editor, in marked contrast to the later Ps 105. Therefore, the psalm depends primarily on texts that are often considered to be earlier source texts for the Hebrew Bible, as well as some which originally circulated independently, the Song of the Sea in Exod 15¹⁴³ and the Song of Moses in Deut 32.¹⁴⁴ While on its own this is not

reliance on proto-Dtr material, Leonard notes that while there is some evidence for Deuteronomic language in the psalm, there is a lack of *phrases*, and the terms often differ from Dtr's usage. For a summary of his findings, see Leonard, "Identifying Inner-biblical Allusions", 322–326.

¹⁴² Leonard, "Identifying Inner-biblical Allusions," 248. He notes that "the psalmist refers to every one of the JE plagues, using the same vocabulary as JE to identify each one," and lists the following: *dām* (Exod 7:14–18, 20b–21, 23–25; Ps 78:44), *šēpardē'a* (Exod 7:26–29; 8:3b–11a; Ps 78:45b), *ārōb* (Exod 8:16–28; Ps 78:45a), *deber* (Exod 9:1–7; Ps 78:50), *bārād* (Exod 9:13–34; Ps 78:47); *'arbeh* (Exod 10:1–19; Ps 78:46); and *bēkôr* (Exod 11:4–8; 12:29–32; Ps 78:51). He also points out that though there are several references to the Tanak, lists of the plagues are only preserved in a handful of texts: JE, P, the composite text of Exodus, Ps 78 and Ps 105. This increases the likelihood that Ps 78 was relying on a textual tradition when it included a narration of the plague lists. This contra Campbell, who argues that the different order and the use of differing language precludes the fact that they are relying on one another. See Campbell, "Psalm 78," 69.

¹⁴³ Psalm 78:13 describes the miracle at the Red Sea by noting that "he made the waters stand like a heap" *wayyaššeb-mayim kēmô-nēd* (cf. Exod 15:8: *niššēbû kēmô-nēd*). This phrase (*kēmô-nēd*) uses the relatively rare term "*nēd*" "heap" (six times in the Hebrew Bible) strengthening the likelihood of an allusion. See Leonard, "Identifying Inner-biblical Allusions," 251. For an early dating of Exod 15, see David Noel Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 118, 177–78, 179–86, who dates the song to the twelfth century BCE; Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 121–25, who dates the composition of the song to the late twelfth or early eleventh century, but its conversion to a written work to the tenth century BCE; David A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry*, SBLDS 3 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1972), 154–55, concludes, based on the absence of standard forms in the song, that Exod 15 preserves the oldest example of Hebrew poetry in the Bible. He dates it to the twelfth century BCE. More recently, Brian Russell has defended a similar date, in *The Song of the Sea: The Date of Composition and Influence of Exodus 15:1–21* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008).

There are certainly dissenting voices. For an argument for the song's post-exilic dating, see Martin L. Brenner, *Song of the Sea: Ex 15:1–21*, BZAW 195 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 51. John Durham identifies a mediating position and notes that "there is little reason to deny at least echoes of contemporaneity to the poem, and no avoiding the obvious conclusion that with the passage of time the poem was expanded to incorporate new events important to Israel's faith, related to conquest and settlement." John I Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1987), 203.

¹⁴⁴ Eissfeldt, *Das Lied Moses Deuteronomium 32,1–43, passim*; Leonard, "Historical Traditions in Psalm 78," 300–316.

necessarily a convincing argument for a relatively early dating compared to later psalms (which clearly draw from the Priestly account, especially Ps 105), in tandem with the evidence from the content of the summary itself and the linguistic evaluations below, this suggests that Ps 78 is related to a more limited set of textual sources than were later psalms.

c. Linguistic Dating

While linguistic dating is not a completely reliable marker, particularly in typically linguistically conservative genres, it is a helpful corollary to other methods of dating. Robertson traces the development of Hebrew poetry from “early poetic Hebrew” in the thirteenth century BCE to the “standard poetic Hebrew” of the eighth century BCE by charting the distribution of “early” and “standard” linguistic features, respectively. With this information he constructs a relative chronology of Hebrew poetry, from what he considers to be the earliest exemplars of the form (namely Exod 15 and Judg 5, which he dates to the twelfth century) to the early ninth century BCE. He qualifies his specific results however, by arguing most strongly that Ps 78 should be dated to the period of the divided monarchy, a dating that is supported by the content of the psalm.¹⁴⁵

Wisdom as History

Psalms 78 draws selectively from previous sources but both reconfigures and reframes these sources in a carefully constructed admonition for the Judean people. In so doing, it presents an abbreviated account of Israel’s history that explicitly links the characteristic sins of the wilderness period to the demise of the northern kingdom and the characteristic wonders of God to Judean election. This psalm also provides valuable insight into how these early teachers of

¹⁴⁵ Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence*, 151. Cf. Stern, “The Eighth-Century Dating of Psalm 78 Re-Visited,” 43.

Israel's history understood their task of historical reflection. Its process of highlighting patterns in history, the "linked series of causes and effects"¹⁴⁶ created by any narrative text, relates to corresponding modes of wisdom discourse.

The significant use of distinctive wisdom vocabulary and themes in its presentation of Israel's history demonstrates the relationship of history to wisdom. The psalm opens with an admonition to "listen... to my instruction" (Ps 78:1a; cf. Prov 1:8)¹⁴⁷ and to "incline your ears to what my mouth speaks" (Ps 78:1b; cf. Prov 4:5; 5:7; 7:24; cf. Deut 32:1),¹⁴⁸ which reflects the father-son rhetoric characteristic of the book of Proverbs, here collectivized to address the people. It describes its content as a "parable" (*māšāl*) comprising "ancient riddles" (*hîdôt minnî-qedem*).¹⁴⁹ Continuing to the second half of the introduction, the phrase translated "keep his commandments" (Ps 78:7) uses the phrase $\sqrt{n\dot{s}r} + m\dot{s}wt$, a collocation that appears only in the wisdom literature.¹⁵⁰ The wisdom influence is not restricted to the introduction (vv. 1–11). Characteristic language and themes of wisdom appear throughout the psalm,¹⁵¹ most particularly

¹⁴⁶ Elizabeth Minchin, "Voice and Voices: Homer and the Stewardship of Memory," in *Voice and Voices in Antiquity*, ed. Niall Slater (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 12.

¹⁴⁷ "Instruction" (*tôrâ*) appears in Prov 1:8; 3:1; 4:2; 6:20, 23; 7:2; 31:6 to refer to the teachings of the speaker. The use of the first-person pronoun appended to *tôrâ*, and the parallel use of the phrase "what my mouth speaks," (*lê'imrê-pî*) strengthens the argument that the speaker is not in this case referring to the "law of Moses," but to the speaker's own "teachings." This differentiates the use in v. 1 from the later use in the psalm to indicate the Mosaic law (see Ps 78:5, 10).

¹⁴⁸ Prov 4:5; 5:7; 7:24 cf. Deut 32:1

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Prov 1:5f.; 3:1; 4:2; 5:1f., 7; 7:2, 24; 8:4–9; Sir 38:34–39:3; 47:17. For another instance of the use of *māšāl* and *hîdâ* in the psalms, see Ps 49:4–5, where they occur alongside *hokmôt* and *tēbûnôt*.

¹⁵⁰ Ps 119:115; Prov 3:1; 6:20.

¹⁵¹ For other examples of almost exclusively wisdom vocabulary, see the comparison of a human lifespan to a "breath" (*hebel*) in 78:33; cf. Ps 39:6; 144:4; Job 7:16; Ecc 2:23; 6:12; 7:15; 9:9; 11:8; "to seek God earnestly" in Psalm 78:34 ($\sqrt{s}hr + 'l$) occurs in some prophetic texts (Isa 26:9; 47:11; Hos 5:15) but primarily in wisdom texts (Job 7:21; 8:5; 24:5; Prov 1:28; 7:15; 8:17; 11:27; 13:24). Several other terms and phrases appear in what are likely the psalms' proto-Pentateuchal sources but are also commonly featured vocabulary in the wisdom literature. The Israelites are described as succumbing to their *craving* (*ta'āwâ*; Ps 78:29) in the desert. This term appears in Num 11:4, which is the likely source for the psalm, but also highlights a theme common to wisdom discourse: the risk of untrained desire, and a corresponding need to educate and guide these cravings (Prov 10:24; 11:23; 13:12, 19; 18:1). The only other reference to the trustworthiness of a spirit ($\sqrt{mn} + rûah$; Ps 78:8) occurs in Prov 11:13. Other

in the reflection on human weakness that concludes the first historical résumé in vv. 32–39: here the Lord restricts his wrath when he recognizes the nature of humanity as transient (Ps 78:39: *bāśār*; cf. Ps 78:33).

The most significant aspect of the engagement with wisdom terminology is the way that it characterizes the historical knowledge presented within the psalm. The use of wisdom terminology should not be understood as a “merging of genres” or a “mixed form,”¹⁵² but instead as complementary modes of cognition: both wisdom and history seek to understand the patterned order of the world.¹⁵³ In this way, the ordering of events characteristic of narrative emplotment, and the observation of the order of reality, the characteristic mode of wisdom enquiry, are presented as overlapping tools of understanding. It is only the material observed that is different:

instances of wisdom vocabulary include the description of the Lord’s wrath using the verb \sqrt{br} *hitpa’el*. Outside of the three occurrences in this psalm (Ps 78:21, 59, 62), it only appears in Deut 3:26; Ps 89:39; and then three times in Prov 14:16; 20:2; 26:17.

¹⁵² See Rebecca W. Poe Hays, “Trauma, Remembrance, and Healing: The Meeting of Wisdom and History in Psalm 78,” *JSOT* 41 (2016): 183–187. It is common in Hebrew Bible studies to insist on the intrinsic separation of wisdom and history in ancient cognition. Cf. the dilemma presented in John Goldingay, “The “Salvation History” Perspective and the “Wisdom” Perspective within the Context of Biblical Theology,” *EvQ* 51 (1979): 194; Walther Zimmerli, “Place and Limit of Wisdom in the Framework of the Old Testament Theology,” *SJTh* 17 (1964): 146–58. See also Katherine J. Dell, *Get Wisdom, Get Insight: An Introduction to Israel’s Wisdom Literature* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 2–3; Leo Perdue, *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 1–7. Roland Murphy, on the other hand, calls for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between wisdom and history in “Assumptions and Problems in Old Testament Wisdom Research,” *CBQ* 29 (1967): 414–415. In the case of Ps 78, however, the psalmist is attempting to draw his audience into a wisdom activity, discerning the patterns of cause and effect from their history, and drawing conclusions that might contrast desirable and destructive behaviors. See Crenshaw’s description of the “sage” in “The Sage in Proverbs,” in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 206–208.

¹⁵³ The practice of wisdom in the Bible is associated with the act of discerning observable patterns in the created order. Von Rad emphasized the role of *creation* in wisdom, calling biblical wisdom “the self-revelation of creation.” See Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 144–76. Leo Perdue has also emphasized theological precursors to biblical wisdom in the cosmogonic myths of the ANE in *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009); Perdue, *Wisdom Literature*, 15–36. Both of these studies emphasize the role of wisdom in discerning order and structure in creation. In this way, history can be understood as “received tradition,” in James Crenshaw’s sense, when he refers to the three sources of wisdom in ancient Israel: 1) empirical observation; 2) received tradition; and 3) divine encounter. See Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 120–30.

while wisdom typically observes patterns in the created order, this psalm seeks such patterns in the material of Israel's historical tradition. An understanding of the pattern leads one to discern modes of ideal behavior that corresponds to this reality. So Ps 78 outlines the risk of forgetting and the necessity of remembering as two paths,¹⁵⁴ though it diverges from the type of speech typical of wisdom discourse by assigning those paths to sociopolitical entities, Ephraim and Judah.

This is the significance of the psalmist's labeling of the psalm as a "parable" (*māšal*) and a "riddle" (*hîdâ*) (Ps 78:2). While the term *māšal* can indicate a "proverb" in the sense of a brief gnomic saying, it can also be translated "parable," signifying a brief exemplary story.¹⁵⁵ Correct understanding of the parable grants the audience discernment concerning the fate of those who follow this sage advice and the grim fate of those who do not. The understanding of the second

¹⁵⁴ Though the merging of wisdom and history is often understood to be a late phenomenon, inaugurated by Ben Sira in the second century. See James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 13. Collins has identified Ps 78 as an instance of its early merger: "the use of Israel's history as a source of wisdom and teaching was pioneered by Ben Sira, but also in a different way by the psalmists (e.g. Psalm 78)." John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 117. He also compares the "relatively traditional piece of wisdom teaching" found in 4Q185 to Psalm 78 (Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 116). Cf. Strugnell, who also identifies 4Q185 as a set of "sapiential meditations in the style of Psalm 78." J. Strugnell, "Notes en marge du volume V des 'Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan,'" *RevQ* 7 (1970): 269. Newsom has identified clear affinities between 4Q185 and 4Q370, another text that draws wisdom admonitions from a retelling of a biblical tale. Carol A. Newsom, "'4Q370': An Admonition Based on the Flood," *RevQ* 13 (1988): 24.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. LXX παραβολαι in v. 2. A *māšal*, while it can be used to describe the familiar brief gnomic saying, can also be used to describe examples derived from history, which then *become* parabolic via an extracted generalization. More often than not, these parables serve as warnings for future generations. Additionally, *māšal* is used in other psalms to indicate a warning example: as Hamilton argues, in Pss 44:14 and 69:11, as well as in the wisdom contexts of Job 17:6 "more is involved than simply scorn or derision. The point is that God has made Israel/Job a public example, an object lesson to their respective contemporaries." Victor P. Hamilton, "*māšal* 1258," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Jr. Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 533. This observation is strengthened by the use of the term in prophetic discourse: In Deut 28:37 the threat for Israel's sin is that their punishment might be so memorable and public as to become a *proverb*, a warning example imprinted upon the memory of the nations. This threat is echoed in 1 Kgs 9:7, Jer 24:9, and Ezek 14:8. In each of the prophetic contexts, a warning is issued via an object lesson, or an observation.

term *hîdâ* should be constrained by its conjunction with *māšal*. Klein argues that the “riddles of old” refer to the “inexplicable contradiction between YHWH’s glorious deeds and wonders and the disobedience of the biblical fathers.”¹⁵⁶ It is not necessary, however, to understand the term *hîdâ* as describing contradictions: it represents instead a conundrum, something that is not clearly stated, something that requires effort to understand. A riddle is often comprised of a series of images, which must be interpreted either as a demonstration of skill (Judg 14:12–19; 1 Kgs 10:1// 2 Chron 9:1) or, as is the case in our passage, as a necessary precursor to right action (cf. Ezek 17:2–15; Prov 1:6).¹⁵⁷

Material to be Remembered

The psalm appeals to two different authoritative types of knowledge for the construction of its story: the authority of transmitted tradition (v. 3: *āšer šāma ‘nû wannēdā ‘ēm*; “Things that we have heard and known”), and the authority of divinely given decrees (v. 5: *‘ēdūt... wētôrâ*; “testimony... and law”). In both cases, the witness of the psalm is derivative: the psalm claims neither to be an eyewitness account nor to be passing on particular divine revelation. The psalm refers to previously transmitted materials, both of which *should be* remembered, but which risk being relegated to the confines of “storage memory.”¹⁵⁸ The way in which it seeks to mitigate the risk of this knowledge remaining hidden is through speech.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Klein, “Praying Biblical History, 405.

¹⁵⁷ Notice that in each of these passages, “riddle” is placed in parallel with “parable,” as it is in our passage.

¹⁵⁸ For an overview of vocabulary for “remembering” and “forgetting” in the Asaphite psalm collection, see Karl N. Jacobson, *Memories of Asaph: Mnemohistory and the Psalms of Asaph* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 78–91.

¹⁵⁹ In Ps 78, memory is presented as spoken through several tropes: the first is the opening statement which, mimicking Moses’ song in Deut 32, asks the people to *listen/incline your ears*, to what the psalmists’ *mouth speaks*. While Ps 78 echoes the appeal of proverbial texts to attend to the speaker’s “instruction,” and the “words of my mouth,” a common wisdom exhortation, the envisioned audience is not “my son” as would be expected in a text designed for private use, or the “heavens and earth” as in the Mosaic text (see Deut 32:1), but “my people.” This address is also a feature of the Asaphite cult prophecy

In constructing this relationship, Ps 78 self-consciously identifies the dynamic relationship between cultural memory and the “functional” or “working” memory of a culture. As Assmann specifies, storage memory provides a “reservoir for future functional memories,” a “resource for all cultural renewal.” When the boundaries between storage and functional memory remain permeable, “elements can be exchanged, patterns of meaning can be altered, and even the general framework can be restructured.”¹⁶⁰ In Ps 78, traditions are re-framed in order to revive their circulation among a populace and to explain a current state of affairs. In order to do this, they are interpreted as stages in a plot moving towards a new ending (see “Sense of Two Endings” below).

This new ending is foreshadowed in the final verses of the introduction, when the reference to their fathers as a “stubborn and rebellious generation” (v. 8) is immediately followed by an enigmatic reference to an Ephraimite rebellion.¹⁶¹ The abrupt nature of the shift from a more general introduction to a specific (and un-identified) historical episode featuring the “sons of Ephraim” has led some commentators to view these verses as a late insertion.¹⁶² This

(see Pss 50:7; 81:3, 13), but in this case, the speaker does not authorize his words via new direct divine revelation, but by appeal to traditional texts, “what *we* have heard and known.”

¹⁶⁰ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 130.

¹⁶¹ Part of the difficulty of identifying the exact historical referent of the Ephraimites’ failure is the fact that the psalm itself immediately describes it in general terms of unfaithfulness and forgetfulness. That is, it describes the Ephraimites’ actions as the opposite of what the psalm itself is promoting. The psalm does not preserve clear memory of the event that inspired its description of this particular Ephraimite failure, but to characterize (or re-characterize) a remembered event in categories provided by the psalm.

¹⁶² Among scholars arguing the secondary nature of vv. 9–11, see Beaucamp, *Le Psautier: Ps 73–150*, 31; Mathias, *Die Geschichtstheologie*, 54–57; Thomas Hieke, “Weitergabe des Glaubens (Ps 78, 1–8): Versuch zu Syntax und Struktur von Psalm 78,” *BN 78* (1995): 49–62; Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 95; Erich Zenger and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100*, ed. Klaus Baltzer, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 287; Markus Witte, “History and Historiography in Psalm 78,” in *History and Identity: How Israel's Later Authors Viewed its Earlier History*, ed. Nuria Calduch-Benages and Jan Liesen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 23; Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 89–90, 126–27. Goulder, who understands the psalm to have originated in the North, views vv. 9 and 67–69 as glosses inserted by “the ill-natured Jerusalem community.” See Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch*, 126. Extended discussions of v. 9 are contained in F. A.

alternation between a generation that appears to involve the entirety of Israel and a sudden shift to identifying the northern tribes specifically is, however, a microcosm of the logic of the psalm as a whole. The presentation of two paths to be taken, one of remembering (vv. 1–7a) and one of forgetting (vv. 7b–8) is revealed to correspond to sociopolitical categories, the Ephraimites will represent the ultimate consequences of forgetting (vv. 9–11, 56–67) and the Judeans the possibility of remembering (vv. 1–7a, 68–72). Therefore, the psalm appears to be designed for communal performance, appealing to traditional materials to reframe them for the present, and to bring these traditional texts to light via a performance.

Story-telling and Structure

As I have argued above, Ps 78 reframes traditional material in order to facilitate its communication to its listening audience. While discussions of Ps 78's structure are many and varied,¹⁶³ partly due to its length and to its lack of correspondence to more common psalm forms, its structuring mechanism can be clarified best by comparing it to other cultural techniques of storytelling. Throughout the psalm there are key phrases that are repeated with

Gosling, "Were the Ephraimites to Blame?" *VT* 49 (1999): 505–513; Junker, "Die Entstehung des Ps 78," 487–500. Even scholars who understand these verses to be original often agree that they are difficult. See Greenstein, "Mixing Memory and Design," 213n58; Campbell, "Psalm 78," 53n11.

¹⁶³ My discussion of its structure is most closely related to that of Judith Gärtner and R. J. Clifford, though it explains the mechanism and function of this structure differently. Gärtner identifies three sections: an introduction (vv. 1–11); and two rounds of history (vv. 12–39 and 40–72 respectively). These two rounds are conceived of as a structural and conceptual analogy that are closely linked through hinge verses. Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 99ff. Clifford also identifies the role of hinge verses in the Psalm. He describes vv. 1–11 as introductory, followed by a unified recital in vv. 13–32, a meditation on previously narrated events in vv. 33–39, and a second presentation of historical traditions in vv. 40–64. He identifies vv. 65–72 as a conclusion to the psalm. Clifford, "In Zion and David a New Beginning," 127–29. Several other accounts of the psalm's structure seem beholden to identifying poetic strophes or complex structures to understand how the psalmist is constructing a series of narrative correspondences. See, for example Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, ECC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 564, who describes the psalm as marked by "prolixity and redundancy." Füglistner, as another example, identifies seven strophes, which are ordered in a concentric mirror structure. Füglistner, "Psalm LXXXVIII [sic]: der Rätsel Lösung," 275.

little variation. Each of these key phrases or “indices” (to be introduced below) serves as a textual marker that introduces a particular *fabula* or storyline. These repeated introductory statements serve both to highlight analogous storylines and to reveal the careful relationship of cause and effect that the psalmist identifies as a historical pattern.

Several scholars have articulated the relationship between this mode of memory indexing and its role in generating and structuring storylines.¹⁶⁴ Elizabeth Minchin in her study of this function in the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* observes that the use of “story labeling” is not only a specialized technique practiced by expert bearers of memory, but it also relates to the way in which all people organize mental information.¹⁶⁵ Story-tellers merely take advantage of a cognitive function by which particular schema are stored, recalled, and connected in the act of structuring a new tale.

Minchin specifically refers to the work of Roger Schank in her discussion of this story-telling device. Schank describes the key to an effective memory system as “effective storage.” To be effective, there must be a system in place by which one can easily retrieve needed information. He writes:

A mind must be able to find what it needs to find, and it must know that it has found it. To tell a story, you must have labeled it properly, stored it away with a name that will allow it to be found, possibly many years later, when some process calls its name. If it

¹⁶⁴ Elizabeth Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the Iliad and the Odyssey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Minchin, “Voice and Voices,” 11–30; Roger Schank and Robert Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals, and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1977); Roger Schank, *Tell Me a Story: Narrative and Intelligence* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1995).

¹⁶⁵ Minchin, “Voice and Voices,” 14–15; cf. Henry L. Roediger III, “Why Retrieval is the Key Process in Understanding Human Memory,” in *Memory, Consciousness, and the Brain*, ed. E. Tulving (Ann Arbor, MI: Psychology Press, 1999), 52–75; D. Gentner and L. Smith, “Analogical Reasoning,” in *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, ed. V. S. Ramachandran (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2012), 130. On the role of repeated retrieval in collective memory, see Henry L. Roediger III, Franklin M. Zaromb, and Andrew C. Butler, “The Role of Repeated Retrieval in Shaping Collective Memory,” in *Memory in Mind and Culture*, ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 138–70.

cannot be found by reference to its content rather than by reference to a number or unrevealing name, for example, then it might as well not be there.¹⁶⁶

The mechanism that Schank and Minchin identify as a means for retrieval is also a mechanism of pattern creation and recognition. That is, these “labels” can link multiple different stories that share a theme, and different aspects of those stories can be highlighted via a different label.¹⁶⁷ So, for example, in Ps 78, the wilderness wanderings provide an opportunity to demonstrate both the theme of divine wonders through the miraculous provision of food and the theme of sin through the people’s negative response to those miracles. Events rise to the level of a historical theme through this act of labeling.

Cognitive science has long posited the role of schemata in information storage and retrieval in the brain.¹⁶⁸ For cultural memory, however, schemata provide another benefit: they are not only easily *memorable* but easily *communicable*. As I argued in the introduction, the distinction between storage and functional memory is primarily one of access and communication: is the event or symbol referred to in discourse? Is it frequently recalled and discussed at regular intervals within a culture? Can it be easily retrieved and referenced? Alan Kirk summarizes the benefit of such a process for cultural memory, observing that

the encoding of memories in formulaic types and schemata with cultural resonance has a massive mnemonic pay-off: it stabilizes memories, gives them simplicity and coherence, and makes them capable of classification, all of which facilitates their recollection. At the same time, it renders memories intelligible and communicable into the social realm: genres and narrative schemes are not ideal type abstractions but instrumental media for communication. The effect, however, is not only to shape memories to these representational types. Because these genres and narrative scripts are interpretive

¹⁶⁶ Schank, *Tell Me a Story*, 84–113, here 84.

¹⁶⁷ Minchin, “Voice and Voices,” 16. Cf. Schank, *Tell Me a Story*, 112.

¹⁶⁸ Roediger, “Why Retrieval is the Key Process,” 52–75; Gentner and Smith, “Analogical Reasoning,” 130.

schemas, their effect is to summon up the existential and moral significance of a memory for the rememberer.¹⁶⁹

How does this technique of storytelling function in Ps 78? First, it organizes disparate events into a schematic outline of “divine wonders → human sin → divine judgment.” Second, it uses labels to create links between episodes. For example, as noted below, the use of the same “index” will explicitly link the sins committed in the wilderness with the sins of idolatry committed in the land. Finally, it distills material drawn from extended narratives or previous poetic sources into clear story themes, populated by symbols that are now associated with these themes. This use of a system of story labels facilitates the construction and communication of a clear historical pattern that leads to the psalms’ pre-determined end of distinguishing between Ephraim and Judah’s fate.

The resulting structure is as follows [The section title is in bold; the textual “story label” is in italics]:

Vv. 1–11 Introduction

Vv. 12–16: Divine Wonders

[vv. 11¹⁷⁰–12] *They forgot his works and the wonders that he had shown them*
Before their fathers he performed wonders in the land of Egypt in the field of Zoan

Vv. 17–20: Sins in the Wilderness

[vv. 17–18a] *Yet they sinned still more against him*
Rebelling against the Most High in the desert
They tested God in their heart

Vv. 21–31: Divine Judgment

[V. 21] *Therefore when the Lord heard, he was furious*

Vv. 32–41: Sins in the Wilderness

[V. 32] *In spite of this they still sinned*
 [Vv. 40–41: concluding verses] *How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness*
They tested God again and again

¹⁶⁹ Alan Kirk, *Memory and the Jesus Tradition*, The Reception of Jesus in the First Three Centuries 2 (New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2018), 63.

¹⁷⁰ Verse 11, as well as its corresponding v. 42 below, function as hinge verses between what precedes and what follows. Cf. Clifford, “In Zion and David a New Beginning,” 128. The description of “divine wonders” is always preceded by human forgetfulness.

Vv. 42–55: Divine Wonders

[Vv. 42–43] *They did not remember his hand or the day when he redeemed them from the enemy, when he performed his signs in Egypt and his marvels in the fields of Zoan*

Vv. 56–58: Sins in the Land

[V. 56] *Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God*

Vv. 59–67: Divine Judgement: First Ending

[V. 59] *When God heard, he was furious*

Vv. 68–72: The Selection and Election of Judah: Second Ending

Three sets of phrases label themes in Ps 78's narration of Israel's history. In vv. 12 and 43, a recitation of the miracle at the Red Sea and the plagues respectively are introduced with the very similar phrases “he performed wonders in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan” (*’āšāh pele’ bē’ereš mišrayim šēdēh-šo’an*) on the one hand, and “he performed his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the fields of Zoan” (*šām bēmišrayim ’ōtôtāyw ūmōpētāyw bišdēh-šō’an*) on the other. This phrase introduces the motive of “divine wonders” in the psalm, as well as roughly dividing the historical overview into two corresponding halves: vv. 12–41 and 42–72. Both narratives of “divine wonders” are also correlated through the description of the Lord as “leading” his people, using *√nhh* (vv. 14, 53, 72). Similarly, both invocations of “divine wonders” are preceded by a notice of forgetting in vv. 11 and 42, respectively.

Within these two halves other indexing phrases “label” aspects of the story and organize these stories into corresponding themes. Following the theme of “divine wonders,” the psalmist's presentation of the people's recurring sin begins with three phrases that will recur in other parts of the psalm:

Yet they sinned still more against him
 Rebelling against the Most High in the desert
 They tested God in their heart
 (Ps 78:17–18a)

In spite of this they still sinned... (Ps 78:32)

How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness... (Ps 78:40)
 They tested God again and again... (Ps 78:41)

Yet they tested and rebelled against the Most High God... (Ps 78:56)

Each of these three phrases that introduce the sin of the people in vv. 17–18 marks corresponding episodes of human depravity in the rest of the psalm. The indication that the people “continued to sin” (v. 17: *wayyôšîpû ‘ôd laḥăṭō*; v. 32: *ḥat’û- ‘ôd*) introduces the occasions of sin in the wilderness. The phrases immediately following in v. 17b–18a, indicating that they *rebelled against the most High* and *tested God in the desert* (*lamrôt ‘elyôn baṣṣiyyâ waynassû ‘ēl bilbābām*), appear again both at the conclusion of the wilderness episode (v. 40; *kamâ yamrûhû bammidbār*), and in v. 56 (*waynassû wayyamrû ‘et- ‘ēlōhîm ‘ēlyôn*) to describe the sin of idolatry in the land. These story headings therefore link disparate episodes in Israel’s history, strengthening the listener’s perception of meaningful patterns and the construction of relationships of cause and effect. In this case, the description of sin creates an analogy between the sin in the wilderness and the sin in the land. This organization contributes to the psalm’s overall intent: to reveal to its audience a pattern in Israel’s history.

Finally, the concluding piece of the constructed historical schema is the phrase that introduces divine wrath. In vv. 21 and 59 respectively, there is a variation on a distinctive phrase that differs only in terms of the divine name used: v. 21 reads “Therefore when the Lord heard, he was furious” (*lākēn šāma ‘ YHWH wayyit ‘abār*) and v. 59 reads “When God heard, he was full of wrath” (*šāma ‘ ‘ēlōhîm wayyit ‘abār*). This structure correlates divine judgment in the wilderness with God’s eventual rejection of Israel.

How then does this story-telling schema function as a mnemonic strategy? Assmann observes that it is through the accumulation of material that cultural memory risks losing its two central functions: affect and identity, that is, memory’s role as a “motivating force and a formative self-image.” The creation of a functional memory requires “acts of rigid selection that

involve modes of evaluation, social inclusion and exclusion and technical means of preservation” and transmission.¹⁷¹ The force of this schema, which so carefully organizes the past, also organize social relations in the present. I will demonstrate how Ps 78’s double ending crafts a relationship with their past via a mechanism that identifies regularity and also allows for the construction of a development that frees the present audience from the generational weight of their father’s sin.¹⁷²

Sense of Two Endings

The resulting structure is not a static one. When narratives are configured, structural principles can become equated with historical principles, the process of explaining causation. That is, through this act of retrospective patterning, the historian looks back upon events in order to construct patterns that could not have been perceived while they were occurring and demonstrates how they lead to a pre-determined end. This ending, however, can take several shapes in relation to previously constructed patterns: the ending can function as a culmination of a repeating pattern or a development that introduces hope for change.¹⁷³ In any narrative, it is the “sense of an ending,” the resting point towards which the story moves, that largely controls the

¹⁷¹ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 119.

¹⁷² And it is a development, against Gärtner’s and Clifford’s assessments that the psalm creates a parallel between God’s mercy in the middle of the psalm, and his mercy at the end of the psalm. Clifford argues that “the poet wanted to establish by means of the wilderness traditions that no matter how heinous the infidelity, God stands ready to begin again” (“In Zion and David a New Beginning,” 138) Gärtner also posits that Psalm 78 presents a cycle: 1) wonderful miraculous work of God; 2) shameful response of humans; 3) angry response of Deity; 4) compassionate response of deity. See *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 99ff. These analyses do not consider, however, the finality of God’s corresponding rejection at the end of the psalm.

¹⁷³ Cf. the four commemorative strategies of “regularity,” “continuity,” “development,” and “chance” identified by Jonas Grethlein in *The Greeks and Their Past: Poetry, Oratory, and History in the Fifth Century BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9.

composition of a series of events into a “plot.”¹⁷⁴ It is from this vantage point that one can look back and understand the significance of each event that previously occurred and how it has led to such a culmination. When the “story” is constructed of a culture’s memory, the sense of an ending possesses an even greater significance, for the “ending” of the story generally corresponds to the present. Psalm 78 uses the rhetorical resources of endings to “solve” a significant dilemma within a culture’s memory. Via the use of “story labels,” which group several historical events by theme, the psalm has constructed a careful continuity between events of the past, demonstrating how the inexorable persistence of human sin results in repeated divine acts of wrath that escalate in their effect and culminate in the destruction of Shiloh and the rejection of Ephraim (Ps 78:60–67). This is the “first ending.” The second ending, however, contained in vv. 68–72, will introduce a distinction between the fate of Ephraim and the fate of Judah.

The rhetorical mechanism by which the Judeans accomplish this act of identification and differentiation can be seen in their use of the terms “Israel” and “Jacob” to indicate the entirety of the people vs. “Judah” and “Ephraim” to indicate their division. The use of “Israel/Jacob” as parallel terms occurs in the introduction (v. 5) to describe the recipients of the testimony and law, and to describe the targets of the Lord’s wrath in v. 21 (cf. the “sons of Israel” in v. 31). These parallel terms indicate all of Israel without tribal distinction. The related term “Israel” also describes those who receive the gift of the land (v. 55), and those who are rejected through the destruction of the northern kingdom (v. 59). But the “second ending” reveals that as the rejection of Ephraim is a punishment that signifies the rejection of all Israel, so too the selection of Judah

¹⁷⁴ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1.66–67. He adopts the term “sense of an ending” from Kermode, *Sense of an Ending*.

is the mechanism of salvation for all of Israel. The resulting structure is visually presented as follows:

- ⁵⁹ When God heard, he was furious,
and he utterly rejected Israel.
- ⁶⁰ He forsook his dwelling at Shiloh,
the tent where he dwelt among humanity,
⁶¹ and delivered his power into captivity,
his glory into the hand of the enemy.
⁶² He gave his people over to the sword
and vented his fury on his inheritance.
⁶³ Fire consumed their young men,
and their young women had no marriage song.
⁶⁴ Their priests fell by the sword,
and their widows could not weep.
⁶⁵ Then the Lord awoke as from sleep,
like a strong man shouting because of wine.
⁶⁶ And he put his enemies to rout;
he gave them everlasting shame.
- ⁶⁷ He rejected the tent of Joseph;
he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim,
⁶⁸ but he chose the tribe of Judah,
Mount Zion, which he loves.
- ⁶⁹ He built his sanctuary like the high heavens,
like the earth, which he has founded forever.
- ⁷⁰ He chose David his servant
and took him from the sheepfolds;
⁷¹ from following the nursing ewes he brought him
to shepherd Jacob his people,
Israel his inheritance.
⁷² With upright heart he shepherded them
And with his skillful hand, he led them.

The two endings are clearly patterned to “pair” the destruction of the northern kingdom as the rejection of Israel for her past sin, and the election of David as the hope for “Israel’s” future. Similarly, the endings “pair” the destruction of Shiloh (see further below “The Destruction of Shiloh”) and the establishment of “his sanctuary (*miqdāšô*)” Mount Zion.

This pairing is confirmed by the second group of parallel terms describing Israel's relationship with Yahweh: "people/inheritance (*'am/naḥălâ*)." As demonstrated below, these terms are used to describe all Israel in the wilderness, the judgment on Shiloh, and the object of David's shepherding:

V. 21 describing Israel in the wilderness	V. 62 describing the destruction of Shiloh	V. 71 describing Judah
<i>wě'ēš niššēqâ</i> <i>běya'āqōb</i> <i>wěgam-'ap 'ālâ</i> <i>běyiśrā'ēl</i>	<i>wayyasgēr laḥereb</i> <i>'ammō</i> <i>ûbnaḥălātō</i> <i>hit'abbār</i>	<i>běya'āqōb</i> <i>'ammō</i> <i>ûbyiśrā'ēl</i> <i>naḥălātō</i>

This "pairing" of Israel's rejection and Israel's election stands on either side of the starkest act of differentiation in the psalm: he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim/ but he chose the tribe of Judah (Ps 78:67–68). In its use of names both to unite and divide, the text participates in the dialectical structure of the scapegoating process. Burke describes this rhetorical function in *Grammar of Motives* as including:

1) An original state of merger, in that the iniquities are shared by both the iniquitous and their chosen vessel; 2) a principle of division, in that the elements shared in common are being ritualistically alienated; 3) a new principle of merger, this time in the unification of those whose purified identity is defined in dialectical opposition to the sacrificial offering.¹⁷⁵

Ps 78 describes the sins of Israel/Jacob as a group in the wilderness and in the land, before the stark division made between Ephraim and Judah in vv. 67–68. The description of Ephraim's rejection "stands as" the rejection of all Israel described in v. 59. Finally, the selection of Judah "stands as" the means of Israel's ongoing survival. What Burke describes in terms of

¹⁷⁵ Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), 406.

rhetoric, however, is also a key function of memory. As Assmann describes, memory plays the crucial role of identification and differentiation, but also, as I have argued above, it plays the key role of constructing agency. This is the way in which Judah conceptualizes the defeat of the northern kingdom, its own participation in a history of sin, coupled with a confidence in their ongoing role as the people of God. As Burke comments elsewhere, the distinction between a factional scapegoat ritual and a universal tragedy is that in a universal tragedy, all people are implicated in the evil. When the tragedy is completed, there is no “unfinished business” still to be enacted beyond the confines of its end. The factional tragedy however, or the scapegoat process, attributes the evil or its consequences not to all but to some. The “cleansing” then leaves one with a “program of action” *beyond* the ritual’s completion.¹⁷⁶ Those who are left are freed from the weight of the evil that has been eradicated.¹⁷⁷ In a deft interweaving of story themes and symbolic constructions, Ps 78 both describes the culmination of a trajectory of sin and defuses its ongoing power through the destruction of the northern kingdom. In Grethlein’s terms, the psalm carefully crafts both continuity and development in its reading of Israel’s traditional narrative.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History* (Los Altos, CA: Hermes Publications, 1959), 188–189n.

¹⁷⁷ The optimism with which Ps 78 ends is tempered by its redaction together with Ps 79, which opens with a poetic account of the destruction of Jerusalem. “Words of the Luminaries” demonstrates that later readers of the tradition were likely reading these two psalms together as a construction of history. See 4Q504 4 V, 6; 1 + 2 iv XVII, 7–8.

¹⁷⁸ It is not only the depiction of God’s wrath, however, that is reflected in the material of Israel’s traditional narrative. While the particular fates of Ephraim and Judah diverge in vv. 67–68, the description of the Davidic dynasty returns to the more universal rhetoric of the rest of the psalm. David is declared as the shepherd for Jacob and Israel. David’s task links his work to God’s work in the exodus (v. 52). That which was positive in their history is therefore linked to their future. There is not a complete break. They are given a memory of God’s power that they might not forget, and a memory of God’s leading in the wilderness that they might follow their new shepherd and his representatives.

Excursus: The Destruction of Shiloh and the Constitution of a Historical Symbol

The reference to Shiloh in this psalm deserves particular attention, as it provides insight into the construction of historical symbols and sites of memory and demonstrates the role of these symbols in constructing story patterns and later use. Shiloh's defeat, which in and of itself is a narrative event preserved in Israel's memory, comes to stand as a symbol of defeat more broadly.

The position of Shiloh's defeat is significant within the psalm. Following the statements regarding idolatry, the final instance of "testing and rebelling" within the psalm, God's divine response is absolute (Ps 78:59–60). There is no hint in the initial statement of punishment to suggest, unlike previous iterations of divine wrath in the psalm, that the Lord held back his wrath (see v. 21). Instead, the rhetoric of the psalm states the rejection in absolute terms: Israel has been "utterly rejected" (Ps 78:59; *wayyim 'as mē'ōd*). This seemingly final act manifests itself, according to the syntax of the psalm, in God's departure from the shrine at Shiloh

Shiloh as a historical site was the center for priestly administration over the Ephraimite population in the pre-monarchic period as well as the residence for the ark of the covenant.¹⁷⁹ It is remembered in the narratives of Samuel as the central sanctuary for the Israelite cult during this period. These narratives also preserve an account of the impact of the Philistine wars on the shrine (see 1 Sam 4–6). Psalm 78:60–61 most likely narrates the destruction of Shiloh by the Philistines in the eleventh century BCE, and it certainly

¹⁷⁹ John Day, "The Destruction of the Shiloh Sanctuary and Jeremiah vii 12, 14," in *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament*, ed. J. A. Emerton, VTSup (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 87–94; Israel Finkelstein, *Shiloh: The Archaeology of a Biblical Site*, Tel Aviv Monograph Series (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1993); Donald G. Schley, *Shiloh: A Biblical City in Tradition and History*, JSOTSup 63 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 191–97.

describes the loss of the ark (signified by the Lord delivering his “power” [‘ōz] into captivity¹⁸⁰), which was housed after the Philistine wars in Kirjat Jearim (1 Sam 7:1).¹⁸¹

The signal that the destruction of Shiloh stands for something more than the destruction of the shrine itself is found in the expansive language that follows the initial notice of destruction (Ps 78:60–64). As Greenstein has observed, the language used to describe the destruction of the cult site is reminiscent of laments over destroyed cities in Mesopotamia.¹⁸² Its closest biblical parallel is the later lament over Jerusalem preserved in Lamentations.¹⁸³ The similarities to Lamentations lead Gerstenberger to conclude that Shiloh is in fact serving as a pseudonym for Jerusalem.¹⁸⁴ Berlin contests this interpretation, noting that it is “hard to maintain in light of the clear rejection of “the tent of Joseph” and the “tribe of Ephraim” in v. 67 and the choice of the tribe of Judah in v. 68”: “The Shiloh sanctuary in v. 60,” she continues, “is not a pseudonym for anything; it stands for itself.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ The ark is occasionally referred to as the “ark of your power” (‘ārôn ‘uzzekā; Ps 132:8; 2 Chron 6:41). Cf. Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 98.

¹⁸¹ Mark Leuchter identifies a “general scholarly consensus that the sanctuary was destroyed by the Philistines in the mid-eleventh century during the Battle of Aphek” in “The Reference to Shiloh in Psalm 78,” *HUCA* 77 (2006): 2; for an overview of the archaeology of the site, see Finkelstein, *Shiloh*; cf. Day, “The Destruction of the Shiloh Sanctuary,” 87–94. Schley, on the other hand, argues that it is “not at all evident from the biblical sources that Shiloh was destroyed by the Philistines in the wake of the disaster at Aphek. It is more likely that it was Saul’s defeat on Mt. Gilboa that brought an end to Shiloh’s pre-eminence among the old northern shrines and opened the way for David to establish a new sacral center in Jerusalem.” See Schley, *Shiloh*, 196.

¹⁸² Edward L. Greenstein, “Lament Over the Destruction of City and Temple in Ancient Israelite Literature,” in *Homage to Shmuel: Studies in the World of the Bible* (Jerusalem: Ben Gurion University Press, 2001), 88–97. Cf. Dobbs-Allsopp’s argument for the existence of a Mesopotamian city-lament tradition before 586 BCE, though he does not reference Ps 78. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993); Dobbs-Allsopp, “Darwinism, Genre Theory, and City Laments,” *JAOS* 120 (2000): 625–630.

¹⁸³ For the destruction of “young men” and “young women” (*bāhūr*; *bētūlā*) see Deut 32:25; Jer 51:22; Lam 1:15, 18; 2:21; 2 Chron 36:17; Ezek 9:6; Amos 8:13; Zech 9:17.

¹⁸⁴ Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 118.

¹⁸⁵ Berlin, “Psalms and the Literature of Exile,” 77.

Berlin is undoubtedly correct. Shiloh should not be seen as a cipher for the destruction of another city or shrine. This would be to misunderstand its *symbolic* function within the psalm. A cipher exists to be solved. A symbol, on the other hand, accrues meaning. It can still stand for itself, while continuing to accrue culturally significant meaning.¹⁸⁶ Psalm 78 can describe the shrine's remembered fate as an eleventh-century shrine in Israel, but can also reveal, as it progresses through its twofold ending, that Shiloh signifies a counterpart northern shrine to Jerusalem. Shiloh's relationship to Ephraim is based in part on its historical location in Ephraim. Through the mechanism of emplotment, therefore, its historical location and its defeat lead to a symbolic construction in which Shiloh represents a destroyed northern shrine and forms the counterpart to inviolable Jerusalem. Its location has come to signify in this psalm *more than* it did historically. This explains the ambiguity of vv. 61–64:¹⁸⁷ if viewed on their own, the verses preserve a city lament over the destruction of Shiloh. Within the constructed plot of the psalm, however, the destruction of Shiloh is an enactment of the utter rejection of Israel (v. 59) and a premonition of the rejection of Ephraim (v. 67).

As Shiloh stands *for* the northern kingdom, it can also stand *over against* Mount Zion/Jerusalem as its symbolic counterpart. This is because Shiloh was also understood as a legitimate sanctuary by Judean traditions (cf. the role of Shiloh in Jer 7:12–14; 26:6, 9).¹⁸⁸ Such an understanding of Shiloh's symbolic role explains why it stands as the

¹⁸⁶ As Ricoeur observes, a symbol “assimilates, rather than apprehends a resemblance.” Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 56.

¹⁸⁷ As Anja Klein representatively states: “Während die Nennung Schilos in V 60 eindeutig auf den Hintergrund 1 Sam 4–6 verweist, ist bei den Versen 61–64 umstritten, welches biblische Ereignis sie vor Augen haben. Als Alternativen werden die Philisterkämpfe oder die Exilierung vom Nord- bzw. Südreich genannt” (Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 98–99).

¹⁸⁸ Contra Schley, *Shiloh*, 186, who argues that Ps 78:60–62 is a “Jerusalemite taunt song which celebrates Elohim's rejection of Shiloh and his concomitant choice of the sanctuary on Mount Zion.”

representative northern sanctuary in this psalm, even if it is, as I argued above, an eighth-century composition that significantly post-dates the destruction of Shiloh itself.¹⁸⁹

Psalm 105

Psalm 105, while it contains many of the same episodes as Ps 78 and is clearly reliant on this previous model of historical recital, constructs a very different portrait of Israel's history. What is most notable about Ps 105's presentation of history is its uniformly positive account of the history of Israel from Abraham through to the conquest of the land. There is no hint of the recurring cycle of sin and judgment as is represented in either in its "twin psalm" 106 or in Ps 78.

This shift from a history of sin to an unblemished history of divine provision and protection is not due to an attempt to "whitewash" history or to contradict alternative accounts of Israel's past sin. It is due to a shift in the function that the recital plays in a very different present. As I argued above, Ps 78 sought to revive a practice of "history-telling" in Judah following the defeat of the northern kingdom and ultimately to re-frame the destruction of the northern kingdom in such a way as to defuse the threat of Judah's participation in ancestral sin. For this purpose, it constructs a fundamental distinction between "Ephraim" and Judah."¹⁹⁰ Psalm 105, by contrast, is almost certainly an exilic or post-exilic psalm and therefore reads history in light of the exilic event.¹⁹¹ This different situation makes salient a different aspect of the people's

¹⁸⁹ Some authors view the psalm as a polemic response to the use of Shiloh in Jer 7:12–14; 26:6, 9. See Berlin, "Psalms and the Literature of Exile," 79; Tammuz, "Psalm 78," 205–221. It is notable, however, that in Jeremiah's use of Shiloh as a symbol he presents himself as directly challenging those voices that are claiming the Jerusalem temple's indestructability (Jer 7:4), while there is no such direct polemic in Ps 78. Therefore, it is more likely that the psalm precedes Jeremiah and, perhaps, stands as one example of rhetoric surrounding the temple's inviolability.

¹⁹⁰ Aleida Assmann in particular highlights "distinction" as one of the three primary roles that "functional memory" plays in a society. See Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 128.

¹⁹¹ See discussion under "Date" below (pp. 80–81).

particular identity. The most relevant act of distinction between an insider and outsider, between an “us” and a “them,” is not a difference of tribe or kingdom but is the difference between Israel as a nation, marked by a continuity with previous generations, and the foreign nations among whom the exiles of Judah sojourn and who form the rhetorical audience to the psalm.

This use of cultural memory is demonstrated in two primary ways in Ps 105: first is the appeal to a foundational generation, and second to a construction of history that highlights the nations as audience to divine command and Israelite excellence.¹⁹² In the following, after dealing briefly with critical issues of date, genre, and performance situation, I will demonstrate how Ps 105 performs what Jan Assmann calls an “integrative function” for the exiles, constructing external difference in order to strengthen an image of internal cohesion in a time of national precarity.¹⁹³

Critical Issues

Date

Psalm 105 is almost universally considered to be a late exilic or early post-exilic composition.

This dating is due primarily to two sources of evidence: Psalm 105 refers to the Priestly traditions of the Pentateuch, most notably the sequence of patriarchal covenants,¹⁹⁴ as well as its

¹⁹² This appeal to a different beginning is also likely due to the development of a robust covenantal tradition in the Priestly Pentateuch. But this does not downplay the process of selection which *chooses* a point of beginning. That alternate points of origin could still function as the starting point for recitals is demonstrated in neighboring Ps 106, which begins its story with the exodus, though it was undoubtedly aware of the patriarchal traditions.

¹⁹³ Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 125.

¹⁹⁴ Most notable is the near quotation of Gen 17:8 in Ps 105:11. Cf. Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 198. Gärtner (among others) also highlights the theme of “covenant faithfulness” throughout the psalm as an extension of the theme of the eternal covenant familiar from the Priestly source in “The Historical Psalms. A Study of Psalms 78; 105; 106; 135; and 136 as Key Hermeneutical Texts in the Psalter,” *HEBAI* 4 (2015): 383–385; cf. Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 219f., 224, 238; contra Eric Haglund, *Historical Motifs in the Psalms* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1984), 26. Brettler argues that the psalmist had J and P, but only as separate sources, on the basis of the differing order of his plague account; see Marc Zvi Brettler, “The Poet as Historian: The Plague Tradition in Psalm 105,” in *Bringing the Hidden to Light*:

version of the plagues against Egypt.¹⁹⁵ This necessitates a reliance on later stages of the Pentateuch.¹⁹⁶ Similarly, commentators refer to the psalm's overall eager sense of restoration as evidence for situating it in the early post-exilic period.¹⁹⁷ Psalms 105 and 106 are most commonly considered to be sources for the work of the Chronicler, as segments of both psalms are performed in 1 Chron 16:8–36.¹⁹⁸ Thus the composition of the books of Chronicles provides a *terminus ad quem* for the psalm.¹⁹⁹

Genre and Performance Situation

Psalm 105 is generally classified as a hymn,²⁰⁰ the primary content of which is a recitation of the historical deeds of the Lord.²⁰¹ As is characteristic of hymns, it appears to be designed for communal performance. The psalm opens with an explicit address to the people using the second person plural and designates those who are worshipping using plural participles (Ps 105:3) and

The Process of Interpretation—Studies in Honor of Stephen A. Geller, ed. Kathryn Kravitz and Diane M. Charon (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 21.

¹⁹⁵ Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 309. Cf. Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalms 3*, 68. Lee argues further that the ordering of the plagues in Ps 105 depends upon the ordering of creation in Gen 1: from the heavens, to the water, to land and vegetation. There is also an emphasis on divine speech throughout the psalm, which likewise reflects the language of P's creation account. See A. C. C. Lee, "Genesis 1 and the Plagues Tradition in Psalm CV," *VT* 40 (1990): 257–263.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, WBC 21 (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2002), 55; B. Margulis, "The Plagues Tradition in Psalm 105," *Bib* 50 (1969): 491ff.

¹⁹⁷ S. Holm-Nielsen, "The Exodus Traditions in Psalm 105," *ASTI* 11 (1978): 27; R. J. Clifford, "Style and Purpose in Psalm 105," *Bib* 60 (1979): 427; Anthony R. Ceresko, "A Poetic Analysis of Ps 105 with Attention to Its Use of Irony," *Bib* 64 (1983): 45–46; Brettler, "The Poet as Historian," 20; Adele Berlin, "Interpreting Torah Traditions in Psalm 105," in *Jewish Biblical Interpretation and Cultural Exchange*, ed. Natalie B. Dohrmann and David Stern (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 22–25.

¹⁹⁸ Though George Brooke has challenged that assumption in "Psalms 105 and 106 at Qumran," *RevQ* 54 (1989): 267–292.

¹⁹⁹ Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 309. Cf. Nancy Declaisseé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014), 782.

²⁰⁰ Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 22ff.

²⁰¹ See A. A. Anderson, *Psalms*, NCBC (London: Oliphants, 1972), 725, who describes the psalm as a "History-Psalm (Geschichtpsalm) in the style of a hymn"; and Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 230–236, who classifies the psalm as both hymn and instruction.

adjectives (Ps 105:6). This self-presentation of the psalm as a communally performed speech is confirmed by its performance in 1 Chron 16:8–22. If the enactment in Chronicles is any indication, it might have been representative of the type of song sung by the Asaphites who were known to the Chronicler.²⁰²

Relationship to Psalm 78 and 106

Psalm 105 clearly relies on Ps 78.²⁰³ These two psalms share several relatively rare phrases, while a larger group of distinctive phrases are shared only with other psalms related to the Asaphite tradition.²⁰⁴ It is partially this overlap of vocabulary, as well as a distinct interest in preserving and proclaiming Israel's historical traditions within psalmody,²⁰⁵ that has led to the association of Pss 105 and 106 with the Asaphite tradition. While they lack the characteristic superscription of the "Asaphite psalms" proper, their similarity to this collection and their

²⁰² Harry Peter Nasuti, "Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1983), 392.

²⁰³ For a discussion of this reliance, see Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalms* 3, 68; Klein, "Praying Biblical History," 406–408; Lee, "Genesis 1," 261; Notker Füglistner, "Psalm 105 und die Väterverheissung," in *Die Väter Israels: Beiträge zur Theologie der Patriarchenüberlieferungen im Alten Testament*, ed. Augustin R. Müller (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1989), 46; Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 233–34.

²⁰⁴ Of particular relevance to this chapter are the shared references to Joseph in both Ps 78 and Ps 105, which is a unique characteristic of the Asaphite psalms (occurring in the psalter only in Ps 77:16; 78:67; 80:2, and 105:17). These two psalms also share the use of *šebet* to describe a "tribe," a usage almost entirely confined within the psalms to the Asaphite psalms (Ps 74:2; 78:55, 67, 68, and Ps 105:37). The only occurrences outside of the Asaphite psalms, or those related to them, are the occurrences in Ps 122:4, one of the psalms of ascent. So too, *nābî* is a rare term in the psalter, appearing only in Ps 74:9 and 105:15, as well as in the superscription to Ps 51:2. The pairing of "Moses and Aaron" occurs in the psalter only in Ps 77:21; 99:6; 105:26; and 106:16.; *hebel* and *naḥlā* occur together in a construct chain only in Deut 32:9; 78:55; 105:11// 1 Chron 16:18. See Nasuti, "Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph," 136, 142, 166n107, 187.

²⁰⁵ Harry Nasuti has posited a developing role for the Asaphites based on the shift in genre between those psalms designated with an Asaphite superscription, which focus on communal lament and cultic prophecy, and later psalms related to the Asaphite tradition, such as Pss 105 and 106, which are related to acts of praise and thanksgiving in 1 Chron 16. He argues therefore that "the Asaphites moved from primary concern with communal laments and cultic prophecy to the delivery of thanks and praise." *Ibid.*, 392.

attribution to Asaphite singers in 1 Chron 16 have led some scholars to attribute them to a “deutero-Asaphite” tradition.²⁰⁶

Another element of significance exists, however, in the relationship of Ps 105 to Ps 78. In my analysis of Ps 78 above, I noted a reliance on previous “sung” traditions, the Song of Moses in Deut 32 and the Song of the Sea in Exod 15. Psalm 105 continues this tradition by relying on what was most likely at this point a preliminary collection of psalmody that included the Asaphite collection.²⁰⁷ The psalmist, therefore, in constructing his historical narrative, relies both on Pentateuchal sources and also on previous psalmic historical recitals in order to re-tell Israel’s story. This pattern suggests that the psalms were already being read and received alongside other “performed” texts as sources of history. Alongside distinctive similarities in vocabulary, Pss 78 and 105 narrate a common core of events:

Shared material

Performing of wonders in Egypt	Ps 78:44–51	Ps 105:26–36
Exodus	Ps 78:13, 52–53	Ps 105:37–38
Wilderness wandering	Ps 78:13–16	Ps 105:39–41
Conquest	Ps 78:54–55	Ps 105:43–45

Israel Among the Nations

Despite this similarity in events, Pss 78 and 105 present very different visions of the character of Israel’s history: Ps 78 describes an unrelenting cycle of sin, and Ps 105 a story of divine provision and guidance, unsullied by human rebellion. This distinction in presentation corresponds to a distinction in the social function of each respective recital. Already in the

²⁰⁶ See especially Nasuti, “Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph,” 360–361, cf. 142, 144, 156n79, 166n107, 182n139, 187.

²⁰⁷ Nasuti, “Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph,” 390–392.

psalm's introduction (Ps 105:1), there is a hint of an integrative strategy, whereby the psalm will emphasize external difference to support internal unity:

Give thanks to the Lord;
Call upon his name;
Make known his deeds among the nations.

This presentation of history to an imagined “outgroup” has profound implications for the construction of cultural memory. From the beginning Ps 105 situates itself as a public proclamation, invoking the people to speak the Lord's deeds *not* to the next generation (internal transmission; cf. Ps 78), but to make them known to the nations (external proclamation). The “public” is first made up both of those Judeans invited to take part in the ceremony of praise, but the public also includes an imagined external audience to whom the participants are meant to proclaim the Lord's deeds: the surrounding nations.²⁰⁸ To aid me in making this distinction in audience function, I appeal to a framework constructed between the “setting” of the psalm, that is, its historical, social, and cultic situation of performance, and the “scenario” invoked by the psalm itself: As Berlin describes, “the setting is outside the psalm; the scenario is within it.”²⁰⁹ In Ps 105, there is both a hearing audience and an imagined audience: the Judean people who are called to praise (the “setting”) and the imagined foreign nations to whom that praise is declared (the “scenario”). The trope to “declare the Lord's praise among the nations” is, to be sure, a common rhetorical device in psalmody to indicate the universal acclaim of God.²¹⁰ But in Ps

²⁰⁸ That this was recognized as a theme by the psalm's earliest readers becomes apparent in the psalm medley contained in 1 Chron 16, which juxtaposes Pss 105 and 106 with Ps 96, another psalm that emphasizes the universal rule of God and uses the trope of public declaration among the nations (see Ps 96:10//1 Chron 16:24).

²⁰⁹ Adele Berlin, “Speakers and Scenarios: Imagining the First Temple in Second Temple Psalms,” in *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple Period*, ed. Mika S. Pajunen and Jeremy Penner (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 343.

²¹⁰ See Pss 9:12; 57:10; 77:15; 96:3, 10; 108:4.

105, this opening invitation to situate the story “in the midst” of other nations is enlivened to become a mode of reading history. Each episode recounted within the psalm tells a story of Israel “among the nations” and demonstrates how the Lord’s people, placed in disadvantageous situations in a foreign land, overcome or impress the foreign peoples in some way.

The power of this presentation does not result from a historical situation in which the nations would have been aware of the content of this psalm. Nor does it stem from international assent to this version of history. The power stems from the presentation *to the Judeans* of their distinctive historical preference vis à vis the nations and their assent and agreement to this portrait. It is their own public self-presentation that is being defined. But it is the status of the psalm as a public self-presentation that determines its monolithically positive tone.

It is common to observe that this psalm highlights the covenant tradition in order to root the group’s present claim to the land in a past promise.²¹¹ But the claim of this psalm, made via an appeal to a foundational generation, is much more fundamental in terms of group identification than merely a promise of the land.²¹² By extending the narrative back in time to include the earliest Israelite generations, Ps 105 constitutes an example of what Jan Assmann calls the “integrative” function of cultural memory. This function emphasizes external distinction

²¹¹ See, as recent examples of this interpretation, Berlin, “Interpreting Torah Traditions in Psalm 105,” 25–29; Gärtner, “The Historical Psalms,” 373; Anderson, “Remembering the Ancestors,” 188.

²¹² Land is certainly an element of constructions of historical continuity and group identity. But it is merely one among several made in this psalm. Hutchinson and Smith, for example, identify the common features of ethnic identity as “1. a common proper name, to identify and express the ‘essence’ of its community; 2. a myth of *common ancestry*, a myth rather than a fact, a myth that includes the idea of a common origin in time and place and that gives an *ethnie* a sense of fictive kinship...; 3. shared *historical memories*, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration; 4. one or more *elements of common culture*, which need not be specified but normally include religion, customs, or language; 5. a *link* with a *homeland*, not necessarily its physical occupation by the *ethnie*, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples; 6. a *sense of solidarity* on the part of at least some sections of the *ethnie*’s population.” John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6–7.

while simultaneously strengthening internal cohesion.²¹³ One of the key elements of social cohesion is a unified self-image, strengthened by a distinction from outsiders. This is what Assmann refers to as a community's "peculiarity." A key factor in the construction of a lasting cultural memory is the formation of images of its "peculiarity and durability": "through the image that it creates for itself, it emphasizes externally the difference that it plays down internally."²¹⁴ Both of these senses of peculiarity and durability are supported by a history-telling mode that forms a continuous consciousness of identity over time, supported both by appeals to a primordial common ancestor, as well as the establishing of a narrative that traces that ancestry to the present.²¹⁵

Foundation Stories and In-group/Out-Group Relationships

Throughout Ps 105, stories are selected and adapted in order to elevate the salience of social identity. In the opening invocation (vv. 1–6), those who are invited to praise the Lord and rejoice are also described according to several "in-group" categories, which serve both to strengthen the ties to the patriarchal generation whose story begins the recital and also to attach a positive ethical valence to that ethnic identity. The audience is described as "those who seek the Lord"²¹⁶

²¹³ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 125.

²¹⁴ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 26. Cf. M. A. Hogg and D. Abrams, eds., *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London: Routledge, 1988).

²¹⁵ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 26.

²¹⁶ The first identification that occurs within the psalm identifies the people based on ideal religious action as "those who seek the Lord" (*mēbaqšê YHWH*). "Seeking the Lord" is a common descriptor in the Hebrew Bible, and while the specific action referred to varies, it is used almost universally to describe a person correctly demonstrating their piety. See further discussion of this phrase in Chapter 3 on 1 Chron 16. Very briefly: this term can indicate "seeking the Lord" for a prophetic oracle (Gen 25:22; Exod 18:15, 2 Kgs 22:13 etc.); in the later books, especially the books of Chronicles, the phrase primarily refers to an intention fulfilled by the people in a cultic context before the temple or the ark. "Seeking the Lord," for the Chronicler, is a *situated* and *communal* activity, performed by the congregation around cultic centers. See 1 Chron 15:13; 2 Chron 11:16; 14:3, 6; 15:2, 12, 13; 30:19. 2 Chronicles 7:14 augments God's declaration to Solomon in 1 Kgs 9:1–9 by adding the clause concerning

(*mēbaqšē YHWH*), the “offspring of Abraham” (*zēra* ‘*’abrāhām*),²¹⁷ “the children of Jacob” (*bēnē ya ‘aqōb*)²¹⁸ and “his chosen ones” (*bēḥîrâw*).²¹⁹ There is no hint here of hierarchy or

the entire people who when they “humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face (*wîbaqšû pānay*)” will be heard. This variation can become a signal for the development of ideal religious actions. Within the psalms, the phrase (or variations thereof) is often used as a participle, describing a type of person, “those who seek the Lord” (Ps 24:6; 40:17; 69:7; 70:5). It is not always clear *what* action is entailed in this description of “seeking,” though occasionally it appears to be connected to the pursuit of the presence of God as manifested in sacred space (Ps 24:6; 27:4, 8) or to an act of sustained attention, which is sometimes fulfilled in speech (Ps 40:15, 17; 70:5; 105:3–4). It is clearly an *ideal* action, which in the case of Ps 105 is conjoined to a type of attention that is immediately directed to remembering divine deeds. This importance ascribed to the “type” of person who correctly remembers becomes a very important category in later recitals, reaching its zenith in 4Q504–506 as will be discussed in the final chapter.

²¹⁷ The term “offspring of Abraham” (Ps 105:6; *zēra* ‘*’abrāhām*) is likely derived from the promises of the land contained in Gen 17:9 and Gen 26:3. Cf. Gen 26:24; 28:13; 35:12; Exod 32:13; 33:1; Deut 1:8; 34:4; Josh 24:3; These passages do not contain the phrase “offspring of Abraham” (*zēra* ‘*’abrāhām*) but they describe the promises as given to Abraham and to his offspring. Outside of Ps 105, the phrase itself appears only in the exilic prophetic literature (Isa 41:8; Jer 33:26), and in Jehoshaphat’s prayer in 2 Chron 20:7. In Isa 41:8, the phrase appears alongside several terms that also appear in Ps 105: Israel is addressed as “my servant,” in conjunction with “Jacob, whom I have chosen,” before referring to the collective as the “offspring of Abraham.” This suggests that these phrases had become associated with one another in at least one other exilic tradition. Holm-Nielsen has also argued that Ps 105 has particular affinities with the presentation of the exodus traditions and their relationship to exile in Isaiah 40–55 in “The Exodus Traditions in Psalm 105,” 22–29. These terms appear together in a prophetic promise of divine aid to be given to Israel, even as they find themselves in the midst of the nations.

The corresponding usage in Jer 33:26 is of particular interest, as it highlights the use of the “offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” as a more universal designation for Israel over against the “offspring of Jacob and David.” The “offspring of Jacob and David” are here used to designate a political entity, the royal house of Davidic kingship, whereas the “offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” refer to the people themselves. The potential significance of the use of this term in an exilic psalm to designate the people *apart from* a Davidic king is strengthened in the fact that another title used to describe the chosen Davidic king in Ps 78, the divine “servant,” is here applied to Abraham, to Moses, and also to the Israelite people as a whole. The psalm’s appeal to patriarchal origins can therefore be interpreted as an appeal to origin that precedes political power, and that forms communal solidarity apart from political tribal affiliation. This is not to say that such affiliations had ceased to exist in Judah, but that the rhetorical world of the psalm is emphasizing the integration of the in-group via an appeal to their shared ancestor, as well as distinction from foreign outsiders.

²¹⁸ The term “sons of Jacob” (*bēnē ya ‘aqōb*; Ps 105:6b) is also relatively rare outside of its use in Genesis to describe Jacob’s twelve sons (1 Kgs 18:31; 2 Kgs 17:34; Mal 3:6; Ps 77:16; 105:6//1 Chron 16:13). It occurs elsewhere in the psalter only in Ps 77:16. Its use here likely connects the listening generation to the generation of the patriarchs.

²¹⁹ The third significant term for the in-group in the psalm is “his chosen ones” (*bēḥîrâw*). The people are referred to as “chosen ones” both in the hymnic introduction (v. 6b), as well as in the final summary statement of the exodus (v. 43). This is but one of several links between the opening identification of the people as related to Abraham and Jacob, and the fulfillment of the patriarchal promises in the final verses of the psalm. The term *bāḥîr* is a relatively rare term, occurring primarily in Isaiah and the Psalms; four of its sixteen occurrences appear in Pss 105 and 106. See also 2 Sam 21:6; Isa 42:1; 43:20; 45:4; 65:9, 15, 22; Ps 89:4; 105:6//1 Chron 16:13; Ps 105:43; 106:5, 23. For a discussion of

division within the in-group itself.²²⁰ All who participate in this ceremony participate by virtue of their status as “those who seek,” “those who are chosen,” and “those who are the offspring of the patriarchs.” Further, these identifying terms outline either an ideal way of *acting* or the way in which the listening audience is related to the individuals described within the psalm itself.

Finally, in relation to the introduction, the shift from the singular designation of “servant” in v. 6a to the plural “chosen ones” in v. 6b, while sometimes considered a textual error,²²¹ fits quite well into the logic of the psalm. Each reference to an ancestor is understood as a figure of the remnant of Israel themselves who are now sojourning in the land. The poetic expansion of the “fathers” formula in vv. 7–10 confirms this understanding of the ancestors as a figure for the people Israel. Following the statements of the covenant and promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the psalm performs a double entendre, using the common poetic parallelism that indicates the entire people (Jacob/Israel) as a final parallelism with Jacob. Therefore, the final

the relationship between the fourth book of the psalter and second Isaiah, see Jerome Creach, “The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Shape of Second Isaiah,” *JSOT* 80 (1998): 63–76. The concept of the “chosen people” however, is yet another category of *distinction*. As Max Weber observes, “behind all ethnic diversities there is somehow naturally the notion of the ‘chosen people,’ which is merely a counterpart of status differentiation translated into the plane of horizontal co-existence.” Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 391. It is a term native to maintaining group boundaries by reducing the effect of distinctions in status, since it can be claimed by every member of a group, and therefore subordinates differences in status to differences between the “chosen,” and those who are not chosen. This is another example of Jan Assmann’s concept of the “integrative” function of cultural memory. See Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 125.

²²⁰ As there is in Ps 78 in relation to the final distinction between Ephraim and Judah.

²²¹ There is no reason, however, to amend *bdw* to *bdyw* (δοῦλοι) with the LXX, which is a likely adjustment due to parallelism with the plural of “chosen ones.” Two mss along with 11QPs^a attest to a singular *bhyrw*, a reading which is also adopted by Hermann Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, HKAT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926), 459; Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, trans. Herbert Hartwell, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 671; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 307. Such a conceptual shift is not unknown in exilic/post-exilic texts and is supported by the poetic expansion of the “fathers” formula in vv. 7–10. For a discussion of the shift from singular to plural designations of “servant” language in another exilic/post-exilic text, see Holly Beers, *The Followers of Jesus as the “Servant”*: *Luke’s Model from Isaiah for the Disciples in Luke-Acts*, LNTS 535 (London: Bloomsbury, T & T Clark, 2015), 31.

covenant partner, the fourth member rounding out the patriarchal quartet, is the people themselves.

The outside group, by contrast, is characterized primarily by their reaction to the Israelites and to their God. They are named using generic designations of power (king, ruler, etc.), which facilitate the ironic reversals of power that occur in the psalm.²²² Outside of these generic titles, the nations are described based on their response to Israel and their acquiescence to divine command. They are fundamentally a *passive* presence within the psalm, unless they are acting to support the agency of an Israelite character. The account of the patriarchal sojourning (Ps 105:12–15) describes God as forbidding them from oppressing the Israelites (*lō' hinnîaḥ 'ādām lē 'āšqām*) and “rebuking” (*√ykh*) their kings. In the Joseph narrative (vv. 16–22), the use of the passive voice to describe Joseph’s internment reflects the focus on divine and Israelite agency: it is God who initially “sends” (*√šlh*) Joseph into the land, where he is sold, hurt, and bound, all described using the passive voice, or with an unspecified actor (*√mkr* [v. 17]; *√nh*; *√bw* [v. 18]). No foreign actor is granted agency in oppressing Joseph; the only foreign action recorded is when the king “sends” and “releases” Joseph to “make him Lord” of his house. This constitutes a response of the nations to an example of Israelite excellence.

Continuing to the account of the Egyptian enslavement and exodus, the Lord controls even the internal agency of the Egyptians. It is “he” (the Lord) who “turns” (*√hpk*) their hearts to hate his people (Ps 105:25). This effectively forms a linguistic parallel to the first plague, in

²²² The most common term to refer to the foreigner is via the generic *melek*, “king” (Ps 105:14, 20, 30). This term is used to describe both the kings of the Canaanite nations during the patriarch’s sojourning (105:14), the Egyptian pharaoh who interacts with Joseph (105:20), and the Egyptian elite who cannot escape the reach of the plagues (105:30). Pharaoh is also described as the *mōšēl ‘ammîm*, “ruler of the peoples (Ps 105:20).” Other terms include their *foes* (*šar*; 105:24), and the use of place names to designate a people, most explicitly in v 38, which describes “Egypt” herself as being glad at the Israelites’ departure.

which the Lord also “turns” the water into blood (Ps 105:29). Egypt is presented as just one of the natural forces over which the Lord has control. Finally, in Egypt’s sole self-initiated action, she responds to Israel’s departure with rejoicing (v. 38; cf. v. 3).

This presentation of the nations in Ps 105 contrasts with the presentation of the nations in Pss 78 and 106, where they are not significant actors in the story. In these psalms, the Egyptians and the conquered nations do not react to the plagues or to the conquest. In Ps 105 the nations are the audience both of Israel’s history and the rhetorical audience of the psalm’s declaration.

Comparison of Shared Accounts

The material discussed so far precedes the recounted events that Ps 105 shares with preceding historical Ps 78. Beginning in v. 26, however, the accounts converge, with sweeping accounts of the plagues, the exodus, the wilderness wanderings, and the conquest. The plagues are narrated in detail (vv. 26–36), and then the final three episodes occur in quick succession, a brief schematic representation of the exodus through the conquest (vv. 37–45). These final three episodes also constitute the material that will be reviewed, though with very different emphases, by Ps 105’s “twin psalm,” Ps 106.

These accounts shared between Pss 78, 105, and 106 are worth analyzing briefly for the way that they show how the same material configured in different ways plays a very different social function.²²³ These historical episodes—the plagues, the wilderness wanderings, and the

²²³ A telling example of this shift in identifying function is apparent in the transformation of the use of the character Joseph in this psalm. The designation “Joseph” appears rarely in the psalter; it is used only in Asaphite psalms 77:16, 78:67, and 80:2; as well as here in 105:17. In Ps 78:67, a psalm on which Ps 105 significantly depends both for its construction of history and its vocabulary, “Joseph” is used as a patronymic, standing for the rejected people of Ephraim, representing the northern kingdom. Psalm 78 reveals the tent of Joseph and the tribe of Judah as opposing structures: the one rejected and the other accepted. In Ps 105, however, Joseph stands as one of the paradigmatic ancestors of Israel. He is one of the “sent ones,” alongside Moses and Aaron. As one of the ancestors, he plays the function of

conquest—are not invented anew, or even changed in significant ways. They are recognizable as the same episodes previously recounted in Ps 78. But they have become generative sites with which to think through an alternative present, and they serve a different function within the community.

Plagues

Psalms 78 and 105 contain the only two listings of the plagues performed in Egypt outside of the exodus accounts in the Pentateuch. Several studies have already analyzed the particular difference between their accounts and the account recorded in Exod 7–12.²²⁴ My primary interest is in the way the construction of the plague accounts contributes to the overarching construction of history in each psalm, as well as how the points of most striking similarity point to the mnemonic function they were beginning to play within Israel’s historical liturgies. Particular aspects of the plague accounts were becoming liturgical commonplaces, symbols that could stand for the whole.

Both the beginning and the ending formulas of the plague accounts in Pss 78 and 105 are nearly identical. The plague account in Ps 105 is introduced using the formulaic parallelism “signs//wonders” (*’ôṭ // mōpēṭ*; Ps 105:27a–b). This phrase occurs throughout the Hebrew Bible to describe the divine wonders performed in Egypt, suggesting that it had attained the status of a

constructing continuity, just as it is possible for Joseph as a *tribal head* vs a *paradigmatic ancestor* to play the role of constructing division.

²²⁴ A. C. C. Lee, “The Context and Function of the Plagues Tradition in Psalm 78,” *JSOT* 48 (1990): 83–89; Lee, “Genesis 1,” 257–263; Samuel E. Loewenstamm, “The Number of Plagues in Psalm 105,” *Bib* 52 (1971): 34–38; Margulis, “The Plagues Tradition in Psalm 105,” 491–496; Brettler, “The Poet as Historian,” 19–28; W. Dennis Tucker, Jr., “Revisiting the Plagues in Psalm CV,” *VT* 55 (2005): 401–411.

stock phrase within some traditions.²²⁵ Within the psalter, however, the phrase appears solely in historical psalms Ps 78:43, 105:27, and 135:9, as well as in the related recital Neh 9:10, in each case to introduce the plagues in Egypt. As I discussed in relation to Ps 78 above, the use of story “labeling” can serve to identify familiar story schemata. Such repetition can also signify a point of stabilization in a tradition. The label, now familiar, marks for the audience the introduction of a familiar story type.²²⁶

Similarly, the accounts in Pss 78 and 105 are unified in their presentation of the killing of the firstborn as the final plague. The description of the final plague in almost identical language in Ps 78:51 and Ps 105:36 respectively (Ps 78:51: *wayyak kol-běkôr bēmiṣrāyim/ rē’šît ’ônām bē’ohōlē-ḥām*; Ps 105:36: *wayyak kol-běkôr bē’arṣām/ rē’šît lěkol-’ônām*) demonstrates the stability of this piece of tradition.²²⁷ It will also be this final plague that will stand for the whole of the divine activity in Egypt in Ps 136:10 (*lěmakkēh miṣrayim bibkôrêhem*).

Within the plague accounts, however, there are distinct differences. Some of these differences can be explained by reference to the Pentateuchal sources available to the respective authors of Pss 78 and 105. Beyond this, however, and in line with my interpretation of the rest of the psalm, it is apparent that in Ps 105 the Egyptians form the primary audience to God’s divine act of power. In Ps 78, by contrast, the plagues function primarily as a reminder for the Israelites. The language of judgment used in the plague accounts in Ps 78 recurs in the account of God’s judgment against Israel herself. For example:

²²⁵ Exod 7:3; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 13:2, 3; 26:8; 28:46; 29:2; 34:11; Isa 8:18; 20:3; Jer 32:20, 21.

²²⁶ David C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 37.

²²⁷ Cf. Deut 21:17; The use of the phrase “firstfruits of my strength” (*rē’šît lěkol-’ônām*) is particularly notable as “strength” (*’ôn*) is a rare term in the Hebrew Bible (11x) and it does not occur in other accounts of the plagues outside of these two psalms.

Ps 78:45 He sent among them swarms of flies, which *devoured* ($\sqrt{'kl}$) them and frogs, which destroyed them

Ps 78:63 Fire *devoured* ($\sqrt{'kl}$) their young men, and their young women had no marriage song.

Ps 78:47 He *killed* (\sqrt{hrg}) their vines with hail and their sycamores with frost

Ps 78:31 And he *killed* (\sqrt{hrg}) the strongest of them and laid low the young men of Israel

Ps 78:34 When he *killed* (\sqrt{hrg}) them, they sought him; they turned and sought God earnestly.

Ps 78:48 He *gave over* ($\sqrt{sgr hip 'il}$) their cattle to the hail, and their flocks to thunderbolts

Psa 78:50b... but *gave* their lives *over* ($\sqrt{sgr hip 'il}$) to the plague.

Ps 78:62: He *gave* his people *over* ($\sqrt{sgr hip 'il}$) to the sword...

Ps 78:49 He unleashed against them his burning *anger* ($'ap$), wrath, indignation...

Ps 78:21c: His *anger* ($'ap$) rose against Israel

Ps 78:31: The *anger* ($'ap$) of God rose against them

Ps 78:38b: he restrained his *anger* ($'ap$) often.

These echoes constitute part of Ps 78's warning against forgetfulness.²²⁸

In Ps 105, by contrast, the Egyptians comprise the rhetorical audience to God's divine acts of power. Immediately preceding the plague account, the hearts of the Egyptians are "turned" to "hate his people/ to deal craftily with his servants" (*hāpak libbām lišnō 'ammô lēhitnakkēl ba 'ābādāyw*; v. 25). When God responds with the plagues, the transformation in Egyptian response marks their success as a performance *for the Egyptians*. From hate, they turn to rejoicing ($\sqrt{smḥ}$; v. 38a; cf. v. 3), and from "dealing craftily" with them to being overcome with dread (*nāpal paḥdām 'ālêhem*; v. 38b).

²²⁸ Furthermore, it demonstrates the remarkable plasticity of these events in terms of altering vocabulary while still maintaining a recognizable event schema. While both retellings are easily recognizable as "plague sequences" to any knowledgeable party, in Ps 78 the schema of a "series of plagues" becomes related to divine judgment in general. In Ps 105, by contrast, the same schema becomes an instance of the efficacy of divine word, particularly against foreign power.

Wilderness Wanderings

The accounts of the wilderness wandering in both Pss 78 and 105 are organized to produce simple patterns and easily communicable schemata. Their shared use of a limited set of images from the wilderness demonstrates the presence of a general narrative schema shared between each of the accounts of the wilderness events. These images are: 1) the cloud by day and the fire by night (Ps 78:14; Ps 105:39); 2) the provision of quail and manna (Ps 78:23–31; Ps 105:40); and 3) the splitting of rocks to provide an abundance of water in the desert (Ps 78:15–16; Ps 105:41). The respective arrangement of these images, however, demonstrates the relative autonomy of symbol systems. That is, when events become effective symbols within a culture, these symbols can often be re-ordered in fresh combinations in order to contribute to an overarching message.²²⁹ In both psalms, the most basic components of the image are present (cloud/fire; food/water), and their basic symbolic significance remains: the fire functions as a positive symbol of divine guidance, while together food and water serve as a conceptual pair to indicate divine provision. Psalm 78, however, uses the natural binary between water and food to differentiate between two symbolic values: sustenance in the wilderness as divine provision (water events; Ps 78:15, 16, 20), and sustenance in the wilderness as the result of fleshly craving (food events; Ps 78:29–30; Num 11:31–35).²³⁰ The simple binary between divine provision and human sin constructed in Ps 78 provides a way to structure history so as to clearly delineate the good from the bad, the wise from the foolish. In Ps 105, by contrast, “food and water” function

²²⁹ Kirk, *Memory and the Jesus Tradition*, 45–48. As Geertz observes, cultural symbol systems and the social structures they support are not mere reflexes of one another: that is, society does not “invent” a past to suit them. Rather they are independent but interdependent variables. See *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 169.

²³⁰ Part of this difference is likely due to what many consider to be P’s amelioration of the JE murmuring tradition. But even then, the negative episodes related to the people’s complaining in the wilderness would still have been available to the author of Ps 105.

together as a simple demonstration of divine care: quail and meat as two types of “food” form a memorable parallelism, mutual evidence of God’s divine provision for Israel (Ps 105:40–41). Such simplification of purported source texts should not be cause for complex textual reconstruction of sources or theories of pointed re-interpretation but should be understood as the organization of complex source material into cognitively simple categories, apt for story-telling and conducive to memorization.²³¹

The hermeneutical force of the paradigm of provision constructed in Ps 105 is also present in its description of the people’s request in the wilderness. Ps 105 likely uses $\sqrt{s}’l$ in 105:40 under the influence of Ps 78:18.²³² This verb does not occur in any of the Pentateuchal accounts or in any other reported summary of the event. This reliance is made all the more remarkable by the clearly negative connotation present in Ps 78:18, where the verb is associated with “testing” (\sqrt{nsh}). In Ps 105, by contrast, the people’s “asking” is portrayed as a simple

²³¹ Cf. the heated disagreement between those who present the wilderness as a site for the construction of a nostalgic “nomadic ideal,” (cf. Karl Budde, “Das nomadische Ideal im Alten Testament,” in *Preussische Jahrbücher* [1896], 57–79; Eduard Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme* [Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1906]; J. W. Flight, “The Nomadic Idea and Ideal in the Old Testament,” *JBL* 42 [1923]: 158–226; Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, trans. John McHugh, vol. 1: Social Institutions [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961], 13–14) and those who deny such a nomadic ideal (Shemaryahu Talmon, “The ‘Desert Motif’ in the Bible and in Qumran Literature,” in *Biblical Motifs, Origins, and Transformations*, ed. A. Altmann [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966], 36–37). Coats argues for an originally positive assessment of the wilderness tradition, which then gradually were recast as negative instances of human rebellion. See G. W. Coats, *Rebellion in the Wilderness: The Murmuring Motif in the Wilderness Traditions of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1968), 14–17. But these assessments grant too monolithic a view to the way in which memory interacts with ideology. Simply put, the wilderness provided the mnemonic material to construct *both* rhetorical visions. Some have appealed to different tradent groups to explain these disparate visions. But within the historical psalms themselves (Pss 78, 105, 106), as well as with communal prayers related to them (Neh 9), we will see that the same source material can be used with remarkable efficacy to establish several modes of symbolic valence, each of which can be drawn upon in constructing visions of Israel’s past and its influence on the present.

²³² Klein notes other significant points of interrelation between Pss 78 and 105/106. See Anja Klein, “Fathers and Sons: Family Ties in the Historical Psalms,” in *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple Period*, ed. Mika S. Pajunen and Jeremy Penner (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 320–340. Though note that Gärtner denies a literary relationship between Pss 78 and 105/106. See Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 136.

request, which is easily fulfilled: they asked → he brought (v. 40a). The simultaneous reliance on and transformation of Ps 78 is also apparent in the use of \sqrt{sb} , which appears in 78:29 to indicate the people's point of satiety before divine punishment.²³³ In Ps 105 \sqrt{sb} represents the abundance of God's answer to their request: they asked and received abundantly (v. 40). All of the symbols of the wilderness period, though they are shared with Ps 78, are patterned differently to enforce a simple tale of continuing divine care.

Excursus: The Cloud as a Covering

The presentation of the wilderness wanderings in Ps 105 does diverge from other traditional recitals in one exceptional point: the description of the cloud as a “covering” (*māsāk*; 105:39). The wilderness episode features the common image of the “cloud and fire,” but in this case the fire “gives light” (\sqrt{wr} ; cf. Exod 13:21; 14:20; Neh 9:12, 19), while the cloud provides a “covering” (*māsāk*), a term that is otherwise used almost exclusively for the screen at the door of the tent of meeting,²³⁴ the screen at the gate of the court of the tabernacle²³⁵ that sets apart the Holy of Holies, and the veil that covers the ark of the testimony.²³⁶ The only other figurative use of the term is in Isa 22:8, where it describes the Lord's removal of Judah's defenses.²³⁷

²³³ It is also used this way in Exod 16:8.

²³⁴ Exod 26:36; 35:15; 36:37; 39:38; 40:5, 28; Num 3:25; 4:25.

²³⁵ Exod 27:16; 35:17; 38:18; 39:40; 40:8, 33; Num 3:26; 4:26.

²³⁶ Exod 35:12; 39:34; 40:21; Num 4:5; cf. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 605.

²³⁷ There is at least some discussion that the “covering of Judah” might be a physical term for an element of Judah's defense, or Jerusalem itself. See Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 13–27*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 366. It is more likely, however, that the reference to physical weakness in that text is being expressed figuratively. See Blenkinsopp's translation as “naked and defenseless” in *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 331–32.

The most common interpretation of this exceptional use of the term in Ps 105:39 is that it is describing the Lord's *protection* from the nations.²³⁸ Yet this ignores the significance of the spatial element of the imagery. The word *māsāk* in most cases does not signify an abstract mode of "protection" but a physical divider. In each cultic text in which it is used, it divides different levels of sacred space. It does not necessarily *protect* these spaces but serves to mark a fundamental distinction. Therefore, one of the typical images associated with divine guidance in the wilderness—the cloud and the fire—becomes yet another mode of distinction, setting the Israelites apart from the nations whose land they traverse.

Torah Observance and the Principle of Dedication

The problem of cultivating common *assent* to a particular version of history is an important part of the work of these historical recitals. The call to Torah observance that concludes Ps 105:45 marks a shift in the psalm from the narration of past events to the presentation of a current agenda. Psalm 105 presents a narrative with which it encourages the people to identify. It purports to tell stories of Israel's foundational generation and to describe the works of the God they have witnessed. But at its end, it shifts to describe the people's present action, the purpose towards which this history moves. In this way, it engages what some social scientists describe as the "principle of dedication."²³⁹ This principle identifies that social movements that require an

²³⁸ See Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 312; Holm-Nielsen, "The Exodus Traditions in Psalm 105," 26–27.

²³⁹ Ernest G. Bormann, John F. Cragan, and Donald C. Shields, "An Expansion of the Rhetorical Vision Component of the Symbolic Convergence Theory: The Cold War Paradigm Case," *Communication Monographs* 63 (1996): 11–12; cf. Donald C. Shields and John F. Cragan, "A Communication-Based Political Campaign: A Theoretical and Methodological Perspective," in *Applied Communication Research: A Dramatistic Approach*, ed. John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields (Prospect

intentional response from the people are being more successful in developing a shared rhetorical vision. Ernst Bormann notes that the most powerful rhetorical efforts end with “the new converts taking some action that publicly testifies to their assent.”²⁴⁰ In Ps 105, unlike in other texts to be analyzed in this dissertation, there is no recorded response of the people to its vision of Torah observance, only an outlined program of action for those who might choose to identify as “the chosen ones,” “those who seek the Lord,” and the “offspring of Abraham.” The display of public assent towards a particular cultural narrative, whether it is in a liturgical call and response or in a prescribed program of action, can authorize that narrative in the community. Particularly in historical recitals depicted within narratives, this display of assent constitutes a significant social strategy. In 1 Chron 16, for example, the people will respond with an “Amen,” a prototypical public statement of assent. In Neh 9, this assent will prove even more elaborate following the Levitical presentation of history: the people will sign a binding document, which is itself preserved in the text, and which describes their commitment to change their behavior. Each of these texts concludes with a strategy to invite the audience to demonstrate publicly their assent to the historical vision contained in their respective performances.

Psalm 106

Psalms 105 and 106 together form the conclusion to the fourth book of the Psalter. While they were originally independent compositions,²⁴¹ they have been redacted together as a twinned unit, “Zwillingspsalmen”²⁴² that together narrate a history of Israel from the patriarchs to the exile,

Heights, IL: Waveland, 1981), 181–91; cf. the characteristic “obligation” of cultural memory in Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 131.

²⁴⁰ Bormann, Cragan, and Shields, “An Expansion of the Rhetorical Vision,” 12.

²⁴¹ Brettler, “The Poet as Historian,” 19–20.

²⁴² Walther Zimmerli, “Zwillingspsalmen,” in *Wort, Lied, und Gottessprache*, ed. J. Schreiner (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1972), 109–11.

though with startlingly different perspectives on that history. As Carol Newsom has observed, the contrast between these two psalms suggests something about the nature of historical cognition: “Instead of the model of a single unified history that must be narrated in a single way, this material suggests that history sometimes can be rendered adequately by juxtaposing multiple narratives each with its own truth.”²⁴³ To expand upon her point, it is also in order to *perform the different functions that history plays* in a society that the material of memory must allow a certain degree of alteration. Simply put, the function of a historical recital for the audience changes what events are selected, how the content is arranged, and what beginning and endpoints organize the plot.

In the following section, after briefly discussing the critical issues surrounding Ps 106, I introduce the role of paradigmatic figures, particular people, places, or objects who become invested as sites of memory. In Ps 106, the focus is on figures who “pray effectively” in the wilderness, providing a model that is then taken up in the psalm’s speech itself (Ps 106:4–5, 47). Second, the psalm’s development of the Red Sea and wilderness wanderings demonstrates the framing function of memory whereby one event becomes reformed into the image of another. This allows me to observe once again the mechanism by which cultural memory progresses via the construction of historical patterns and tends toward what Anne Rigney calls the “principle of economy.”²⁴⁴ Ultimately, Ps 106 introduces the figure of the wilderness as a site for successful prayer, while also maintaining that site’s symbolic association as a place of human sin.

²⁴³ Newsom, “Rhyme and Reason,” 223.

²⁴⁴ Ann Rigney, “Plenitude, Scarcity, and the Circulation of Cultural Memory,” *Journal of European Studies* 35 (2005):18.

Critical Issues

Date

Psalms 106 is almost universally considered to be a post-exilic composition, post-dating Ps 105.²⁴⁵ It is the first of the historical psalms to reference the exile clearly and to connect it explicitly to Israel's conduct in the wilderness (Ps 106:24–27).

Genre and Performance Situation

Like Ps 78 before it, Ps 106 is difficult to assign to a particular genre. While its opening verse recalls the opening and closing of Ps 105 with its expression of praise (*halēlūyāh hōdū laYHWH*; Ps 106:1; Ps 105:1, 45), the majority of the psalm is taken up with expressions of lament and petition, alternating with its account of Yahweh's deeds with Israel. J. Clinton McCann summarizes the disagreements concerning its genre, stating that Ps 106 is “variously viewed as a song of praise (see vv. 1–2), a communal lament or prayer for help (see vv. 4–5, 47), a liturgy of penitence (see vv. 6–7), and a sermon, as well as the more frequent designation as a historical psalm.”²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 317; Anderson, *Psalms*, 736; Craig C. Broyles, *The Conflict of Faith and Experience in the Psalms: A Form-Critical and Theological Study*, JSOTSup 52 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 95–99; D. Frankel, *The Murmuring Stories of the Priestly School: A Retrieval of Ancient Sacerdotal Lore*, VTSup 89 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 9. A few outlying voices argue that the psalm should be dated to the period immediately following the northern kingdom's fall, but they are the overwhelming minority. See H. N. Richardson, “Psalm 106. Yahweh's Succoring Love Saves from the Death of a Broken Covenant,” in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope*, ed. J. H. Marks and R. M. Good (Guildford, CT: Four Quarters Pub. Co., 1987), 197; Weiser, *Psalms*, 680. Commentators also point to its affinity with the theology of the Deuteronomist to reinforce a post-exilic date. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 317. Kugler has recently demonstrated Ps 106's reliance on Ezek 20, which confirms the majority opinion that it is a post-exilic composition. Cf. Kugler, “The Dual Role of Historiography,” 548–552.

²⁴⁶ J. Clinton McCann, Jr., “The Book of Psalms: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander D. Keck et al., (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 1110; Lament: Clifford, *Psalms 73–150*, 156; Leopold Sabourin, *Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning* (New York: Alba House, 1974), 315. Wolvertson disagrees, arguing that Ps 106 “would have induced lament by the people; but it is not itself such a lament” in “Sermons on the Psalms,” *CJT* 10 (1964): 174; cf. Richardson,

Part of the generic confusion of the psalm is due to its literary redaction alongside Ps 105 as the conclusion to the fourth book of the psalter. The opening to the psalm “Hallelujah! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!” (*halělûyāh hōdû laYHWH kî-tôb kî lě’ôlām ḥasdô*) is most likely a literary addition, designed to unify Pss 105 and 106. It was not a part of the original psalm as performed (cf. Ps 105:1: “Give thanks to the Lord!” [*hōdû laYHWH*]; Ps 105:45c: “Hallelujah!” [*halělû-yāh*]).²⁴⁷ So too, v. 48 corresponds to the “blessing formula” that concludes each of the five book divisions within the psalter and functions as a “literary response to the fourth book of the Psalms.”²⁴⁸

Based on this observation, it is wise not to assign too much generic weight to the opening and concluding verse when discussing the nature of Ps 106’s possible performance. Beginning in v. 2, the psalmist opens with a reflection on the nature of a praying person, before moving to an opening statement of petition and penitence in vv. 4–6. This opening corresponds to the petition in v. 47, the final verse of the psalm before its redactional doxology. Between these two points, the psalm contains a historical recital stretching from the events at the Red Sea (vv. 7–12) through the wilderness wanderings (vv. 13–33), the conquest of the land (vv. 34–39), the exile (vv. 40–43), and return (vv. 44–46). Therefore, the genre of the psalm is best categorized as a historical recital with a penitential frame.

“Psalm 106,” 191; Mixed Praise/Petition: Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 316–17; cf. W. Beyerlin, “Der nervus rerum in Ps 106,” *ZAW* 86 (1974): 50–64; Mixed Hymn/Lament: Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 65–66; Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 244, argues that the psalm is a “communal confession” or “hymnic instruction.”

²⁴⁷ As Gerald Wilson identified, these are editorial markers: the *hōdû* formula marks the beginning of sections, and the *halělûyāh* the ending. See Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985); Wilson, “Evidence of Editorial Divisions in the Hebrew Psalter,” *VT* 34 (1984): 337–52. Thus, while Pss 105–106 have clearly been put together and redacted for literary purposes, (see Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 29), this does not negate a previous and/or ongoing liturgical use (see Gillingham, “Psalms 105 and 106,” 452). In fact, as will be argued in Chapter 5 on the Qumran psalter, Ps 105’s presence and positioning at Qumran suggests an ongoing liturgical function for the historical psalms.

²⁴⁸ Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 74; Gerald H. Wilson, “The Shape of the Book of Psalms,” *Int* 46 (1992): 129–130.

But how are these two sections related? How is petition related to memory? To answer this question, it is important to observe that while Ps 106 portrays Israel's history as a cycle of unrelenting sinfulness, it also identifies individuals who successfully *stood* before God and intervened in the face of divine judgment. These individuals are described in ways that relate their actions to the opening petitions: Moses is described as one of the "chosen ones" (Ps 106:23; cf. 106:5) and Phinehas is attributed "righteousness" for his actions (Ps 106:31; cf. 106:3). Thus, the episodes from Israel's history appear to be selected and configured not only to describe cycles of Israelite sin, a mark of the burgeoning genre of penitential prayer, but also to discover instances of successful petition in that history.²⁴⁹ The psalm performers, in voicing their concluding petition, understood their act of prayer as emulating those previous ideal exemplars.

There is also some evidence that Ps 106:47 constitutes a communal refrain, meant to be sung by the listening people as a response to the recitation of the psalm. Supporting this hypothesis is the fact that vv. 47–48 alone are reproduced from this psalm in 1 Chron 16:35–36, where they are introduced by a liturgical formula that invites participation (*wě'imrû*; 1 Chron 16:35). The understanding of v. 47 as a response explains the shift in pronominal form within the psalm: a singular voice calls the people to praise and issues a petition in the singular voice (Ps 106:4–5) before narrating the most complex portions of the psalm. In v. 47²⁵⁰ the people respond with a stereotypical refrain voiced in the first person plural and inspired by the content of the psalm. Finally, among the Qumran evidence, the only witness to any portion of MT Ps 106 is a portion of v. 48 found in 4QPs^d. It is possible, then, that this fragment preserves not the entirety

²⁴⁹ Cf. Kugler, "The Dual Role of Historiography," 551–552.

²⁵⁰ The following verse (48) is a redactional expansion of the conclusion, marking the end of the fourth book of the Psalter, though it is adopted by the Chronicler as part of the performed response of the people (1 Chron 16:36).

of Ps 106 but only its mobile refrain. These three pieces of evidence together suggest that the ending of Ps 106 might be an independent refrain used as a response to the content of this psalm.

Opening

The communal role that Ps 106 plays is marked in the introduction to the psalm. In contrast to Ps 105, which engaged the entirety of the audience in public praise by virtue of their shared identification and elevated their elected status among the nations, Ps 106 opens with a discriminating question: “who,” presumably among those gathered to hear the psalm, “can utter the mighty deeds of the Lord?” (v. 2). This introduces the notion of gradation within the ranks of the listening audience: some might not fulfill the requirements for this speech act. As Allen observes, this is not a rhetorical question. Verse 3 provides an actual response: It is the one who observes justice and who enacts righteousness at all times who can utter the deeds of the Lord.²⁵¹ More subtly, the psalm suggests that those who *do* proclaim the deeds of the Lord are making a claim about their own status. The proclamation of the Lord’s deeds becomes equated with a particular moral character.

The course of the historical recital reveals the salience of the identification of those who fulfill this criteria of justice and righteousness (vv. 2–3) to the voiced petition in vv. 4–5 and 47. The psalm constructs a cycle of sin marked by remarkable individuals who on the basis of their status can successfully intercede before the Lord (vv. 23, 30–31).²⁵² These figures stand both

²⁵¹ Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 70. This is also possibly an allusion to the qualifications that the Lord lists for Abraham in Gen 18:19, whereby the promises will come to Abraham if his children “keep the way of the Lord, by enacting righteousness and justice” (*wēšāmrû derek YHWH la ‘āsôt šēdāqâ ûmišpāt*; cf. Ps 106: *‘ašrê šōmrê mišpāt ‘ōšēh šēdāqâ*), before his prophetic activity of interceding for the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah.

²⁵² Kugler also argues that Moses and Phinehas are playing an exemplary role in this psalm: “Like Moses and Phinehas in the past – the speakers of the psalms themselves have a role in saving the nation, in their lifetime, in the present.” Kugler, “The Dual Role of Historiography,” 552.

within and yet act on behalf of the collective. What becomes clear is that these presentations form exemplars of ideal potential behavior on the part of the community. At the end of the psalm, those who have participated in this act of “uttering the mighty deeds of the Lord” will also be the ones to voice their plea to the Lord to save.²⁵³

Paradigmatic Figures

The commemorated past often projects a normative force on the present.²⁵⁴ Groups select past events and individuals to function as models and patterns for ideal behavior. This memory practice provides a reservoir of established ideal figures who, by virtue of their status, endorse particular types of action and models for social discourse. As Stephen Knapp writes:

Socially shared dispositions are likely to be connected with narratives preserved by collective memory, for example by oral tradition or a canonical literature. Beyond the *causal* role they play in influencing people’s dispositions, the narratives preserved by collective memory sometimes play a *normative* role—that is, they may in various ways provide criteria, implicit or explicit, by which contemporary models of action can be shaped or corrected, or even by which particular ethical or political proposals can be authorized or criticized.²⁵⁵

This normative role is strengthened for particular recurring “heroes” of memory, those figures who seem to accrue interest and significance through time.²⁵⁶ They become what Pierre Nora

²⁵³ While there might seem to be a radical disjunction between the acts of simply “speaking” the deeds of the Lord, and the people playing an intercessory role, these two functions appear to grow closer to one another in post-exilic prayer discourse. This movement is suggested in Ps 106, but is further conflated in Neh 9, which appropriates parts of the intercessory speech of Moses in the course of the Levitical prayer. By the writing of the *4QDibre Hame’orot* this function has become explicit, and the knowledge to recite history becomes a mark of divine transformation in the speaker, a transformation which accompanies an atoning function. See Chapter 4 on Neh 9 and Chapter 6 on *Dibre Hame’orot*.

²⁵⁴ Kirk, *Memory and the Jesus Tradition*, 30; Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 18.

²⁵⁵ Steven Knapp, “Collective Memory and the Actual Past,” *Representations* 26 (1989): 123

²⁵⁶ Cf. Ehud Ben Zvi, “The Memory of Abraham in Late Persian/ Early Hellenistic Yehud/Judah,” in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana V. Edelman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 6; cf. Schwartz’s analysis of the role of Abraham Lincoln in American memory as a legitimizing figure. See Schwartz, “Frame Images,” 1–40.

called “sites of memory,” and they become particularly powerful focal points for constructing ideal patterns of action.²⁵⁷

Moses is one of these “sites of memory” in biblical and post-biblical Judaism, though his name does not appear often in the Psalter: he is referenced only eight times, four of which are contained in Pss 105–106, and all but one in the fourth book of the Psalter.²⁵⁸ Phinehas also becomes a significant memory figure for a smaller subset of Second Temple Judaism.²⁵⁹ In Ps 106, these two figures together represent figures who petition the Lord successfully in the wilderness. In this way they prove to be “good for thinking about” Judah’s own present appeal to God.²⁶⁰

That Moses and Phinehas are functioning as exemplary figures is supported by several features of the recital. First, they are presented as models of action that are both beneficial for the community *and replicable*. That is, their actions constitute not just an individual phenomenon, associated with extraordinary status, but they mark out a pattern of action that is repeated both within the psalm’s narrative and then echoed in the appeal of the praying community (vv. 4–5, 47). Phinehas’s intercession is also already partially modeled on Moses’s. Both accounts emphasize that the figures “stand” ($\sqrt{\text{'md}}$) and are successful in turning away God’s wrath (v. 23b; 30b). While the psalm is very clearly aware of a Phinehas tradition related to the one preserved in Num 25,²⁶¹ it uses a rare verb ($\sqrt{\text{pll}}$ ²⁶²), to describe Phinehas’ action. In so doing,

²⁵⁷ Nora, “Between Memory and History, 7–24; cf. Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de mémoire*.

²⁵⁸ Ps 77:20; 99:6; 103:7; 105:26; 106:16, 23, 32; and the superscription to Ps 90.

²⁵⁹ See Yonatan S. Miller, “Sacred Slaughter: The Discourse of Priestly Violence as Refracted through the Zeal of Phinehas in the Hebrew Bible and in Jewish Literature” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2015).

²⁶⁰ Cf. Schwartz on the role of Lincoln in WWII. Schwartz, “Frame Images,” 4.

²⁶¹ Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalms* 3, 86; Sue Gillingham, “The Exodus Tradition and Israelite Psalmody,” *SJTh* 52 (1999): 40.

²⁶² There are two Hebrew verbal roots containing the consonants *pll*. The rarer of the two occurs in the *pi’el* and possesses several meanings, including “to pronounce judgment,” “to intercede,” “to speak

the psalm relates his action to that of Moses in v. 23. It is likely this desire to create two analogous actions that leads to the amelioration of his more violent act of “zeal” in Num 25.²⁶³ The formation of memorable patterns has already been explored in relationship to the wilderness wanderings and their rendition in Pss 78 and 105. Thus, the excision of Phinehas’ violence should not be understood first as an act of pious editing but as a result of an overarching poetic impulse to emphasize the “rhyming” value of history²⁶⁴ and, concomitantly, its replicability in the present.²⁶⁵

Second, this psalm presents divine salvation as motivated by human petition. It is common to interpret Ps 106 as primarily emphasizing the contrast between human failing and divine covenant fidelity.²⁶⁶ This downplays the fact that, with the exception of the salvation described at the Red Sea (Ps 106:8, 10), the mechanism of Israel’s survival is in every case initiated by human agents. That Ps 106 highlights this function is demonstrated by the marked contrast between Ps 106:23 and Ps 78:38. Both texts describe an event in which God relents from

up for” and “to assume.” The more common root appears in the *hitpa’el*, and can indicate “to act as an advocate,” or “to make intercession for.” Koehler/Baumgartner prefer the meaning “to pronounce judgment” for this verse, (contra Erhard Gerstenberger, “Art. פלל *pll*,” in *ThWAT* (1989): 613, while several modern Bible translations prefer “intervene” (ESV; NIV; cf. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 65); and the NRSV renders the term “interceded” (cf. Bernd Janowski, “Psalm CVI 28–31 und die Interzession des Pinchas,” *VT* 33 [1983]: 237–248; Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalms* 3, 90–91; cf. Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, JPS Torah Commentary [Philadelphia; New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 215).

²⁶³ For on overview of the history of reading Phinehas in Second Temple Judaism, see Miller, “Sacred Slaughter.”

²⁶⁴ Cf. Newsom, “Rhyme and Reason,” 215.

²⁶⁵ Contra Angelo Passaro, “Theological Hermeneutics and Historical Motifs in Pss 105–106,” in *History and Identity: How Israel's Later Authors Viewed Its Earlier History* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), 52. Passaro writes that the psalmist’s silence surrounding Phinehas’s violent deed is “an obvious condemnation of violence, required by the cultic destination which transforms the intervention of the priest into a non-violent act and emphasizes the faith of the intercessor which stops the divine wrath.”

²⁶⁶ Gärtner, “The Historical Psalms,” 385–88; Gärtner, “The Torah in Psalm 106. Interpretations of Jhwh’s Saving Act at the Red Sea,” in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. E. Zenger (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2010), 479–88; Anderson, “Remembering the Ancestors,” 191; Robert E. Wallace, *The Narrative Effect of Book IV of the Hebrew Psalter* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 82; Walter Brueggemann, *Abiding Astonishment: Psalms, Modernity, and the Making of History* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 17; Wilson, “The Shape of the Book of Psalms,” 141.

destroying Israel in the wilderness. Psalm 78, however, explains the Israelites' survival by appealing to God's nature:

Ps 78:38

כָּל־חַמְתּוֹ וְהוּא רַחוּם יִכַּפֵּר עֲוֹן וְלֹא־יִשְׁחִית וְהִרְבָּה לְהַשִּׁיב אִפּוֹ וְלֹא־יָעִיר^a

wēhû' rahûm yĕkappēr 'āwôn wēlō'-yašhît wēhirbâ lēhāšīb 'appô wēlō-yā 'îr kol-hāmātô

Yet he, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them;
he restrained his anger often and did not stir up all his wrath.

Echoing a similar vocabulary to indicate the relief of God's wrath, Ps 106 identifies a very different effective agent: it is *Moses* who turns aside God's wrath and prevents the destruction of Israel.

Ps 106:23

וַיֹּאמֶר לְהַשְׁמִידָם לוֹלֵי מֹשֶׁה בַּחֲרִיו עָמַד בַּפֶּרֶץ לִפְנֵינוּ
לְהַשִּׁיב חַמְתּוֹ מִהַשְׁחִית

*Wayyō 'mer lēhašmîdām lûlē mošeh bēhîrô 'āmad bapereš lēpānâw
lēhāšīb hāmātô mēhašhîr*

And he said that he would destroy them
Had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him
to turn aside his wrath from destroying them.

The convergence of vocabulary that occurs only in these two verses makes it likely that Ps 106 was re-reading Ps 78 in its presentation, but the mechanism of Israel's survival in the wilderness shifts to emphasize a human agent.

The argument that the psalm views these two exemplary intercessors as models for the contemporary praying community finds further support in the identification of Moses as “his chosen one” (*bēhîrô*; v. 23; cf. v. 5) and by Phinehas as being ascribed “righteousness” (*šĕdāqâ*;

v. 31; cf. v. 3).²⁶⁷ Both of these terms also appear in the frame verses: the first as an identification of the people as a whole, in parallel with “your nation,” and “your inheritance,” (v. 5) and the second in v. 3, after the psalmist has asked “*who is the one who could “utter” and “declare” the mighty deeds of the Lord and his praise.*” Therefore, the opening question followed by the opening prayer finds corresponding models in Israel’s history.²⁶⁸

Wilderness as “Frame Image”: Convergence and Coalescence in Cultural Memory

Both the re-telling of the deliverance at the Red Sea and the characterization of the exile in this psalm demonstrate how the wilderness wanderings become an effective “frame image” used to characterize other historical events. Following the introduction (vv. 1–5) and the confession of communal sin (v. 6) discussed above, Ps 106 opens its history of iniquity with an inaugural rebellion at the Red Sea (v. 7). Gärtner, in her analysis of this psalm, focuses on how the deliverance at the Red Sea becomes a repeating motif throughout the psalm. Narrated first in vv. 7–12, it is mentioned a second time following the people’s construction of the calf at Horeb (vv. 21–22); finally, vocabulary from the Red Sea episode describes the exile to be the inverse of that act of deliverance in vv. 41ff.²⁶⁹ Based on this pattern, Gärtner argues that “this saving action of Jhwh at the Red Sea thus infuses the whole psalm and marks the key turning points in Israel’s

²⁶⁷ In the description that his actions were “counted to him as righteousness,” the depiction of Phinehas is itself “keying into” a frame image of the patriarchal ancestor, Abraham (cf. Gen 15:6). Cf. Schwartz, “Frame Images,” 1–40.

²⁶⁸ This reading of the psalm as making a key distinction in its audience through the opening question is supported by the reading of 4Q380 1 I, 7–11 and 4Q380 1 II, 1–6, which identifies the ones who can “utter the name of Yahweh” and “declare all his praise” as the chosen ones who do good and hate the wicked. See Eileen M. Schuller, *Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran: A Pseudepigraphic Collection*, HSS 28 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986); Mika Pajunen, “The Textual Connection between 4Q380 Fragment 1 and Psalm 106,” in *The Hebrew Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. N. David, et al., *FRLANT* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 186–202.

²⁶⁹ Verse 10 describes their deliverance from the “hand of the foe,” (*miyyad ’ôyēb*)// v. 41 he gives them “into the hand” (*bēyad*) of the nations, so that “their foes” (*’ôyēbēhēm*) ruled over them; Gärtner, “The Torah in Psalm 106,” 480–485.

history.”²⁷⁰ But what is remarkable about the recounting of the Red Sea events as an act of memory is the way in which the “Red Sea” itself as a symbol of deliverance becomes recast in the image of the *wilderness* as the first act of human forgetfulness and sin. In this way, it reinforces the pattern created in the rest of the psalm.

The events at the Red Sea are recounted in Pss 78 and 136, as well as being the primary subject of Ps 114.²⁷¹ In each of these uses of the Red Sea motif, the episode functions simply as a paradigm for divine deliverance, one of the wonders of Egypt. In Ps 106:7, however, the motif is the first of the negative paradigms of human action. While there is some basis for understanding the psalm’s reading of the Red Sea as an allusion to the version of the event found in Exod 14:10–12, the language used to describe the rebellion adopts vocabulary more commonly associated with the rebellions in the wilderness period, particularly as recounted in Ps 78.²⁷² Not only is this convergence marked by the use of similar vocabulary for Israelite sin (*lō’ zākrû*; Ps 78:42; 106:7; *√mrh* Ps 78:17, 40; 106:7), but the miracle at the Red Sea itself is also described as God leading them through the deep as through the “wilderness” (*midbār*; cf. Ps 106:14, 26; Ps 78:15, 19, 40, 52).

As in the formation of the wilderness episodes in Pss 78 and 105, the poetic recollection of historical events tends toward emphasizing or creating patterns rather than including narrative detail or preserving nuance. The convergence of the images of the Red Sea and wilderness wanderings as mirroring images of human rebellion illustrates a similar phenomenon. Ann Rigney has observed that cultural memories, by their nature, tend to observe what she calls a “principle of economy.” This principle can be marked by a tendency to converge and coalesce.²⁷³

²⁷⁰ Gärtner, “The Torah in Psalm 106,” 480; cf. Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 241–42.

²⁷¹ Ps 78:13; 136:13–15; 114:3–6.

²⁷² Ps 106:7b/Ps 78:42; Ps 106:7c/Ps 78:17, 40, 56.

²⁷³ Rigney, “Plenitude,” 18.

Building on Pierre Nora's concept of "sites of memory,"²⁷⁴ she observes that particular places, text, and artifacts become the focus of collective remembrance and historical meaning. While a limited number of things are remembered (and even fewer things become part of a culture's functional memory), these few memories are "constantly being reinvested with new meaning": "Seen in this way, sites of memory can be said to function as a principle of economy in cultural memory, helping to reduce the proliferation of disparate memories and providing common frameworks for appropriating the past."²⁷⁵ This principle of economy supports the transmission of and education in a common memory. As fewer memories are heard and spoken about repeatedly in a culture, they form a basis of limited but shared knowledge. It is the scarcity of memory that supports its recursivity, the fact that utterances are "repeated, reproduced, transformed, and replicated."²⁷⁶

When events are transformed into these sites of memory, they can begin to "re-frame" other events. So, when the author of Ps 106 sought to portray the Red Sea as the first example of Israelite rebellion, he did not appeal to the vocabulary of Exod 14:10–12, but to an existing canon of images already in circulation in liturgical performances of Israel's history: those images and actions associated with psalmic representations of the wilderness. This casts the Red Sea into a pre-existing schema for "human rebellion."

The wilderness begins to function as a frame for the psalm's own post-exilic situation. Psalm 106 forges a link between the Israelites' sin in the wilderness, a commonly replicated event in their master narrative and their later expulsion from the land. Or, to state the case more

²⁷⁴ Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7–24; cf. Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire*.

²⁷⁵ Rigney, "Plenitude," 18 Cf. Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire*, who describes "lieux de mémoire" as possessing "un maximum de sens dans le minimum de signes," I, 38.

²⁷⁶ Michel Foucault, *L'Archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 156–57; translated by and quoted in Rigney, "Plenitude," 16.

accurately, Ps 106 adopts and adapts a framework for the southern kingdom that has already been established in Ps 78, which depicts the sins of the wilderness as leading to the destruction of the northern kingdom.²⁷⁷ In vv. 24–27, the psalmist writes:

Then they despised the pleasant land,²⁷⁸
 they did not have faith in his promise.
 So they murmured against their God
 they did not heed the voice of the Lord
 He lifted his hand against them
 to fell them in the wilderness
 and to fell their seed among the nations,
 and to scatter them in the earth.

This connection between their sin in the wilderness and the exile of the southern kingdom is remarkable for it is not present in the narrative literature.²⁷⁹ It is made only in the later poetic re-readings of Israel's history (cf. Ps 78; Ezek 20:23–24). Psalm 78 already introduces the wilderness grumbings as a paradigm for the idolatrous activity that will result in the northern kingdom's demise (though not the southern kingdom's exile).²⁸⁰ The historical recital in Ezek 20 likewise makes the connection between sin in the land and the eventual exile of Judah, and does

²⁷⁷ Kugler identifies the influence of Ezek 20 as well in "The Dual Role of Historiography," 548–552. It is important to note, however, that Ps 78 was the first text to forge this connection between the sins in the wilderness and eventual exile.

²⁷⁸ Kugler identifies the description of despising the pleasant land (v. 24: *wayyim 'āsû bē'ereš hemēdā*) as referring to the episode of the spies as it is described in Deut 1: Deut 1:26–27 "But you were unwilling to go up. You rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; you grumbled (*wattērāgēnū*) in your tents// Ps 106:25 "They grumbled (*wayyērāgēnū*) in their tents, and did not obey the voice of the Lord." Kugler, "The Dual Role of Historiography," 547.

²⁷⁹ Kugler notes that "nowhere in the Pentateuch is exile mentioned in connection with the Israelites' sins in the desert." Kugler, "The Dual Role of Historiography," 548.

²⁸⁰ Notably H. Neil Richardson argues that the frame verses of the psalm did not originally belong to the text and he dates the remaining part of the psalm to the fall of Samaria. He argues that the emphasis on the golden calf episode emphasizes the northern kingdom's sin that led to its destruction. See Richardson, "Psalm 106," 197. Cf. Arthur Weiser who contradicts the prevailing opinion that vv. 46–47 necessarily presuppose the Babylonian exile in *Psalms*, 680. As Kugler demonstrates, however; vv. 24–27 connect the wilderness wanderings to the exile as well. See Kugler, "The Dual Role of Historiography," 546.

so in language very similar to what is found in Ps 106.²⁸¹ The language between Ezek 20:23 and Ps 106 is so similar in fact that some scholars have argued that the psalmist is copying the text from Ezekiel and that it is Ezekiel who inspires the connection made between the exile and the story of the wilderness.²⁸² But, as we saw from Ps 78, and as will be confirmed in later texts, the wilderness had become a frame with which to think through the situation of exile before the composition of Ezek 20.

Psalms 135 and 136

Psalms 135 and 136 are chronologically the latest of the historical psalms, and also contain the most schematic representation of Israel's repeated master narrative. Each episode—the exodus, the wilderness wanderings, and the conquest respectively—is abbreviated to one or two lines. This elliptical reference to the events both assumes a prior knowledge and strengthens the memory's circulation within a community by facilitating participation. In the following analysis of these two psalms, I first observe how form functions as a mnemonic device, both to convey a simple historical schema and to craft a responsive script with which the people can respond and affirm their assent to the constructed history. Second, both psalms repeat almost verbatim their respective historical cores. This repetition offers us the opportunity to reflect on how abbreviation can enable stability in both oral and written traditions.

²⁸¹ Ezek 20:23: “Nevertheless I lifted my hand in the desert, that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the lands.”

²⁸² Kugler notes that the direction of copying can be discerned from the frequency of the term “lifted my hand” (*ʾn̄sʾ + yāḏ*) in the text of Ezekiel (See Ezek 20:5, 6, 15, 23), as well as his frequent references to God's “scattering them among the nations and dispersing them throughout the lands.” See Kugler, “The Dual Role of Historiography,” 548. She also points out that this would contradict Richardson's proposal that the psalm was written in the period following the northern kingdom's fall (Richardson, “Psalm 106,” 197).

Critical Issues

Date

Psalms 135 and 136 are almost universally acknowledged to be post-exilic. Most scholars also agree that they are the latest of the so-called “historical psalms” and are deliberate receptions of the traditions presented in these earlier examples.²⁸³ Linguistic evidence within the psalms confirms this late date. The divine title “God of Heaven” (‘*ēl haššāmāyim*; Ps 136:26) is a *hapax legomenon* related to forms that are more commonly attested in texts from the Persian period (see Ezra 1:2; 5:11; 6:9; 7:12; Neh 1:4; 2:4; Dan 2:18; Jonah 1:9; 2 Chron 36:23). Psalm 135 also uses the relative particle *š-* (Ps 135:2, 8, 10), a particle typically preferred in later texts.²⁸⁴

Structure and Unity

Both Pss 135 and 136 are clearly structured psalms written in the style of a hymn.²⁸⁵ They are generally considered to be literarily unified.²⁸⁶ Psalm 136 alternates between an a-line which refers to an act of the Lord, most commonly beginning with a participle, and a b-line, which consists of the repeated refrain “for his steadfast love endures forever” (*kī lē‘ōlām ḥasdô*). The

²⁸³ Klein, “Praying Biblical History,” 412–417. So also Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 291; Levin, “Psalm 136,” 17–27; Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalms 3*, 496, 505–506; Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 348; Marc Zvi Brettler, “Psalm 136 as Interpretive Text,” *HEBAI* 3 (2013): 373–395; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 497–498. An exception to this consideration of post-exilic dating is Weiser, *Psalms*, 788–89.

²⁸⁴ Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 288.

²⁸⁵ Klein, “Praying Biblical History,” 413, 415; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 287. Westermann describes Ps 136 as a typical psalm of descriptive praise in *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 126–27; cf. F. Crüsemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Dankleid in Israel*, WMANT 32 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 127ff; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 490, 496; Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalms 3*, 493–94, 504.

²⁸⁶ Brettler, “Psalm 136 as Interpretive Text,” 375; Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalms 3*, 505; contra Klein, “Praying Biblical History,” 318, who argues that vv. 18–20 are a late insertion; cf. E. Baumann, “Struktur-Untersuchungen im Psalter. 2,” *ZAW* 62 (1949–1950): 115–152; Yet Crüsemann in *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Dankleid in Israel*, 125–29, argues that the diversity of all of the elements in this psalm makes it difficult to support v. 21 as an interpolation.

use of the participle in the a-line reinforces the impression that these are God's defining characteristics: he is the *one who* does these things.

While Ps 136 is unified throughout by the refrain, the strophes can be further divided into six sections:

- 1) A threefold invocation to give thanks (vv. 1–3)
- 2) Meditation on creation: the first of Yahweh's deeds (vv. 4–9);
- 3) Meditation on historical deeds: From Egypt to the Wilderness (vv. 10–16)
- 4) Meditation on historical deeds: The Conquest of Canaan (vv. 17–22)
- 5) Meditation on divine rescue and care (vv. 23–25)
- 6) Concluding invocation to give thanks (v. 26)

The features of repetition and an opening three-fold invocation are both conducive to communal instruction, recital, and celebration. The alternation between an a-line and a repeating b-line suggests an antiphonal liturgy, a form that directly encourages and facilitates participation through the simple repetition of an easily remembered line.²⁸⁷ The likelihood that the alternating line “for his steadfast love endures forever” was indeed a line designed to be recited by an audience is strengthened by the fact that it appears in the Chronicler's narrative as a regular response by the people.²⁸⁸ The opening triptych supports this presentation of an oral performance: threefold formulas are a typical rhetorical formula associated with communal

²⁸⁷ Anderson, *Psalms*, 893; Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 385; McCann, “The Book of Psalms,” 1223; Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalms* 3, 504; Weiser, *Psalms*, 793; Brevard S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), 42; Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), 75; Bernhard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1983), 55; S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 2:83; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 231; Jacob Bazak, “The Geometric-Figurative Structure of Psalm cxxxvi,” *VT* 35 (1985): 129; Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*, JSOTSup 26 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 298–97; Adele Berlin, “Introduction to Hebrew Poetry,” in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Robert Doran, et al., (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 309. For extra-biblical parallels, see James L. Crenshaw, *The Psalms: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 45; Dirk J. Human, “Psalm 136. A Liturgy with Reference to Creation and History,” in *Psalms and Liturgy*, ed. Dirk J. Human and Cas J. A. Vos (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 73.

²⁸⁸ 1 Chron 16:34, 41; 2 Chron 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21.

liturgical statements.²⁸⁹ The *hōdû* formula “Give thanks to the Lord” also links Ps 136 to Pss 105 and 106, previous historical psalms, both of which open with the same formula. Unlike Pss 105 and 106, however, this *hōdû* is repeated three times in only slightly different form.²⁹⁰

Repeated vocabulary and grammatical forms also accentuate the formulaic and structured nature of this particular recital. In the meditation on creation (vv. 4–9), vv. 4–7 each begin with a participle describing the acts of God, while vv. 8–9 begin with the direct object marker *’et-* introducing the sun and the moon respectively. The two meditations on God’s historical wonders are marked by an introductory use of *√nkh* in vv. 10 and 17. This repetition designates them as two parallel demonstrations of divine power. The final meditation on God’s acts for Israel (vv. 23–25) relates these particular historical acts to his care for all of creation. In Ps 136, the power of God is universal and is demonstrated both for Israel and for all of the created order. This pairing, which is present in the body of the psalm through the connection between the creation of the entire world and God’s particular acts for Israel, is therefore summarized in vv. 23–25. It also confirms the structure of the psalm by recalling the more general appeal to creation in vv. 4–9.

Psalm 135, which is generally considered to be later than but is clearly reliant upon Ps 136, also presents a clear structure, bookended by repeating refrains, designed to invite participation.²⁹¹ It contains a brief summary of Israel’s master narrative, stated briefly in vv. 8–

²⁸⁹ They appear commonly in both Christian liturgy and in the book of Isaiah for acclamations of the divine king in the heavenly court. Skehan observes this phenomenon and lists the *Laudes gallicaneae* (Christus vincit; Christus regnat; Christus imperat); and the *Trisagion* (Holy God; Holy Mighty one; Holy Immortal, have mercy on us). See Patrick W. Skehan, “A Liturgical Complex in 11QPSa,” *CBQ* 35 (1973): 200–201. Cf. the role of “threes” in both folklore and long-term memory storage, see Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions*, 29, 102.

²⁹⁰ See Chapter 5 on the Qumran psalter for further evidence on the regular oral recital of Ps 136.

²⁹¹ The following structure diverges from that presented by Pierre Auffret in “Ton Nom Pour Toujours: Nouvelle étude structurelle du Psaume 135,” *ScEs* 57 (2005): 229–241, who relies too strongly on topical shifts and fails to recognize how the psalmist indicates particular actions culminating in their resulting conclusions in units. For example, he separates v. 4 as a meaningful unit from vv. 1–3 and v. 12 from vv. 8–11, each of which forms the culmination of their respective units. Cf. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968),

12. These verses almost exactly reproduce Ps 136:10–22, exempting the refrain. This recitation forms the central section surrounded by a compendium of quotations from other texts celebrating the unique greatness of God.

- 1) Invitation to praise (vv. 1–4)
- 2) Yahweh's Greatness (vv. 5–6)
- 3) Evidence of his greatness in history: from creation to the conquest (vv. 7–12)
- 4) Summary statement of the Lord's Renown (vv. 13–14)
- 5) Polemic against idols (vv. 15–18)
- 6) Final call to bless the name of the Lord (vv. 19–21)

Its introductory stanza (vv. 1–4) introduces the theme of praise for those who have come to worship. The repeated call to praise balances the final repeated call to bless the Lord in vv. 19–

21. The historical core provides an extremely abbreviated account of Israel's history that recounts creation, the exodus from Egypt, and the conquest of Canaan. This core is bookended by general statements concerning the Lord's greatness and renown. It uses historical events, shared with Ps 136, as instances of the exclusive power of Yahweh celebrated in the rest of the psalm.²⁹² The final section of the psalm presents a contrast between the power of God and the impotency of idols, who do not make but are themselves made.

The most distinctive trait of Ps 135 is its compilation of previous biblical texts and psalms, including quotations from Ps 115:4–8 (//Ps 135:15–18), Ps 136:10, 17–22 (//Ps 135:8–12), and language from Ps 113:1 (cf. Ps 135:1) and Ps 134:1, 3 (cf. Ps 135:1b–2, 21). It is a veritable mosaic of previous texts, both psalms and excerpts from narrative texts.²⁹³

Ps 135:1//Ps 113:1
 Ps 135:1b–2// Ps 134:1
 Ps 135:5// Exod 18:11

137. Auffret's resultant structure is vv. 1–3; 4; 5–7; 8–11; 12; 13; 14; 15–18; 19–21. My analysis accords more broadly with that presented by James M. Todd, III, *Remember, O Yahweh: The Poetry and Context of Psalms 135–137* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 9–36.

²⁹² Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 291–372.

²⁹³ Klein, "Praying Biblical History," 415.

Ps 135:6a//Ps 115:3
 Ps 135:7//Jer 10:13 = 51:16
 Ps 135:8a//Ps 136:10a
 Ps 135:8b//Exod 12:12; Num 8:17
 Ps 135:9b//Ps 78:43; Ps 105:27
 Ps 135:9b–c//Neh 9:10
 Ps 135:10//Ps 136:17–18
 Ps 135:11a–b//Ps 136:19–20
 Ps 135:12//Ps 136:21–22
 Ps 135:13//Exod 3:15
 Ps 135:14//Deut 32:36
 Ps 135:15–18//Ps 115:4–8
 Ps 135:19–20//Ps 115:12–13
 Ps 135:21//Ps 134:3

The tendency of the psalm to quote previous texts is further evidence of its dependence upon Ps 136. The portion of the psalm that retells Israel's master narrative is almost entirely derived verbatim from Ps 136, though it also demonstrates possible reliance on narrative texts for particular phrases.²⁹⁴ These psalms, therefore, allow us to see how two psalms frame and reframe a central episode in the life of Israel and also how a schematic "core" can function as a replicable unit. Furthermore, both psalms demonstrate ways in which a historical memory might be integrated into a formalized rite of participation. They present the most abbreviated and schematic representation of Israel's memory encountered so far in the psalms in a format that by all appearances is intended to facilitate participation. Therefore, they also provide the opportunity to investigate the intersection of liturgical form and communal memory.

²⁹⁴ Ps 135:8b echoes Exod 12:12 and Num 8:7; The phrase "signs and wonders" (*'ōtôt ûmōpětîm*; Ps 135:9) does not appear in Ps 136 but is repeatedly used to introduce the plague accounts in Ps 78:43 and 105:27, as well as in Neh 9:10, which is quoted in v.9c.

Genre, Liturgy, and Cultural Memory

Scholars are almost entirely unified in identifying both Pss 135 and 136 as hymns. This simplicity of genre identification, however, does not mean that the concept of genre is not a fruitful category with which to understand how Pss 135 and 136 contribute to our understanding of the development of historical prayer as cultural memory. Genres, the forms in which speech and writing occur, are mnemonic media themselves. They include, as Kirk notes, not only an “external formal structure,” but also a deep connection “into the symbolic resources of the encompassing cultural memory.”²⁹⁵ In other words, genres, as familiar modes of cultural expression, contain an orientation towards the material itself.²⁹⁶ They shape what and how events are remembered, and how people are asked to respond to these events. Readers and hearers are familiar with these genre conventions because of their consistent exposure to them. They understand their participant role and the role that the author or speaker claims. As Wesseling notes:

For the reader, genres constitute sets of expectations which steer the reading process. Generic repertoires may be regarded as bodies of shared knowledge which have been inferred from perceived regularities in individual literary texts. As sets of norms of which both readers and writers are aware, genres fulfill an important role in the process of literary communication.²⁹⁷

Liturgical scholar Julianne Day also discusses the role of genre in liturgical performance. She observes that knowledge of a generic code not only indicates how the text or liturgical performance should be *understood* but also encodes a particular attitude, posture, or response for

²⁹⁵ Kirk, *Memory and the Jesus Tradition*, 64.

²⁹⁶ Medvedev describes genres as “modes of perception”: “Every genre has its methods and means of seeing and conceptualizing reality, which are accessible to it alone.” P. N. Medvedev and M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, trans. Albert J. Wehrle (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 133.

²⁹⁷ Elisabeth Wesseling, *Writing History as a Prophet: Postmodernist Innovations of the Historical Novel* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1991), 18.

the participating worshipper: “Worshippers do not need to be told to adopt these attitudes, postures or responses; they are generated by the liturgical units themselves, and further it is not the content which produces this response, but it is anticipated on the basis of genre recognition.”²⁹⁸

Most interpreters have identified Psalm 136, with its alternating structure of an a-cola expressing an act of the Lord and a counterpart b-cola that repeats the refrain, as an antiphonal liturgy.²⁹⁹ The presence of a similar refrain in the narrative texts in 1 and 2 Chronicles,³⁰⁰ as well as the evidence from Qumran, which demonstrates the presence of oral variants in its preserved versions of Ps 136,³⁰¹ supports this performance situation, in which a liturgical professional recites the beginning of the line, and another group, presumably the lay Judean audience, completes it. The refrain itself, along with the first line of Ps 136, likely existed independently in Israel as an expression of praise and thanksgiving.³⁰²

Scholars frequently recognize the significance of the refrain in terms of identifying the psalm’s performance situation.³⁰³ What is the refrain’s significance for cultural memory? As

²⁹⁸ Juliette J. Day, *Reading the Liturgy: An Exploration of Texts in Christian Worship* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014), 57. Cf. the comments of Hans Jauss: he observes that genre possesses a “preconstituted horizon of expectations... ready at hand... to orientate the reader’s (public’s) understanding and to enable a qualifying reception.” See Hans Robert Jauss, “Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature,” in *Modern Genre Theory*, ed. David Duff (Harlow: Longman, 1982), 131.

²⁹⁹ See note 294 above.

³⁰⁰ See Chapter 3 in this dissertation; 1 Chron 16:34, 41; 2 Chron 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21.

³⁰¹ Chapter 5 presents these oral variants.

³⁰² Cf. James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1994), 418; Mark R. Shipp, “Remember His Covenant Forever: A Study of the Chronicler’s Use of the Psalms,” *ResQ* 35 (1993): 30; Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Heseb in the Hebrew Bible: A New Inquiry* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1978), 166–167.

³⁰³ Anderson, *Psalms*, 893; Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 385; McCann, “The Book of Psalms,” 1223; Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalms* 3, 504; Weiser, *Psalms*, 793; Brevard S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), 42; Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), 75; Bernhard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths: The Psalms Speak for Us Today* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1983), 55; S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 2:83; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 231; Adele Berlin, “Introduction to Hebrew Poetry,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Robert Doran, et al., (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 309. For

discussed above, features of genre shape both the reader/hearer's understanding of the historical events to be recounted and their expected participatory role. This function of genre in shaping the reception of a text and in conditioning the audience's response is a factor in each of the psalms that have been analyzed in this chapter. Each psalm begins with an orienting introduction, inviting the listener to "understand" or to "give thanks." In Ps 136, however, the appropriate response is not only entreated by a liturgical performer but is also communally confirmed through a brief repeated script. The audience is not only trained in "understanding" but is also required to acknowledge the recited material publicly.

This form of liturgical education confirms a knowledge of what is recited, the narrative schema exodus → wilderness → conquest, but perhaps more significantly, it directs the listening audience in how to talk about this knowledge. The narrative is both presented in a memorable form and introduced to the people as a form of speech to which they are meant to respond. The social role of this refrain will be taken up again in the following chapter on 1 Chron 16, but I will introduce some preliminary remarks here.

Jan Assmann expands the realm of Halbwach's conception of "collective memory" by making a distinction between "communicative memory," which is shared within social groups and supported by pre-existing social frameworks, and "cultural memory," which requires the support of institutional structures, modes of storage, and memory experts.³⁰⁴ Cultural memory has the advantage of longevity; it has the resources to last beyond "living memory" and to transcend breaks in living tradition. The very means of its long-term survival, however, create a risk that the content of the memory could be relegated to "storage," to the archive where it will

extra-biblical parallels, see James L. Crenshaw, *The Psalms: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 45; Dirk J. Human, "Psalm 136. A Liturgy with Reference to Creation and History," in *Psalms and Liturgy*, ed. Dirk J. Human and Cas J. A. Vos (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 73.

³⁰⁴ Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," 109–118.

languish, unknown and not spoken about or referenced. If this occurs, these memories and their associated symbols lack the cultural power to convince, to structure present experience, or to unify the group as a recognizable cultural entity. Cultural memory, if it is to be effective and to possess a meaningful function, requires pedagogical structures. These pedagogical structures are necessarily stratified. Simply put, some people within the culture will know more than others. But in order for a memory to possess an effective cultural function, there must be a basic level of shared knowledge among the majority of the populace. As Steinbock says, “social memory comes into existence when people *talk* about the memories that they consider important enough to share with others... For a memory to be shared, it first has to be articulated and thus depends on the shared cultural norms and conventions of language.”³⁰⁵

Within this framework, Ps 136 preserves a rudimentary form of communal speech about the past. I argued above that Ps 106:47 might function as a communal response to the historical recital in the body of Ps 106, but in Ps 136, the function of response as public participation is considerably developed. After each line, the psalm provides a simple responsive script for the people.³⁰⁶ In this way, Ps 136 encourages a minimal version of the “principle of dedication,” that is, public assent to a version of cultural memory that strengthens its social presence within the community.³⁰⁷ Anyone who participated in the ceremonial performance of Ps 136 would agree to

³⁰⁵ Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse*, 12. Cf. James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 47; Echterhoff, “Das Aussen des Erinnerns,” 75–82.

³⁰⁶ I will argue in Chapter 5 that further extra-biblical evidence in the Qumran psalms scrolls suggests an increased role for this mode of participation, the insertion of refrains into psalm performances. Some of the historical psalms, or liturgies featuring historical psalms, contain additional refrains in that text. Therefore, while Ps 136 might provide an isolated model of this mode of participation within the Masoretic Psalter, it proves to be a generative one, reflected both in that psalter and in 1 Chron 16.

³⁰⁷ Discussed above on pp. 96–97. Bormann, Cragan, and Shields, “An Expansion of the Rhetorical Vision” 12; Shields and Cragan, “A Communication-Based Political Campaign,” 181–191. Cf. Kirk Savage, “The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument,” in

each historical statement with the affirmation that the Lord's steadfast love extended to the present.

Abbreviation, Allusions, and Schemas in Cultural Memory

Genre not only directs participation but also affects how content is selected and configured in the construction of texts. Having analyzed the way in which the form of Ps 136 encourages participation in the recital of history, I now turn to the content and presentation of that shared history. Abbreviation is a feature of all historical narratives. The process of emplotting a narrative, transforming it from a series of historical data points into a meaningful unit, requires selection, abbreviation, and ordering into a meaningful and streamlined sequence. The abbreviation of these narratives into each of the psalm's poetic recitals continues this function.

In Ps 136, and by extension Ps 135, the narrative has been reduced to its most essential components. This abbreviation is part of the development from extended narrative to commemorative ritual. As Alan Kirk observes, in commemorative ritual

meaning and significance are distilled out and concentrated into sacralized, highly symbolic words, gestures, and objects. Historical detail recedes to the minimum required to support the symbolic appropriation, with this remainder conformed to the tight structure of the ritual, and with historical recitation itself coming to be affected by the contours of the ritual. A complex, diffuse history is thereby precipitated out into a stable ritual artefact, bearer of dense symbolic meaning, with enormous capacity to endure in multiple enactments through time.³⁰⁸

The condensing of historical detail into a brief form facilitates both its *appropriation* in commemorative ritual and its *stability* through multiple enactments. While Kirk, in the quotation above, is specifically talking about dramatic ritual, his statement could also be applied to spoken

Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 127.

³⁰⁸ Kirk, *Memory and the Jesus Tradition*, 20.

liturgy, in which the “ritual artefacts” and symbols are literary in nature, and the enactment occurs through scripted recitation.³⁰⁹ In the case of Ps 136 (and Ps 135), each of the key events of Israel’s history has been distilled into a single line or couplet. The result is a brief schematic representation of Israel’s shared memory.³¹⁰

Frederic Bartlett, whose experiment with the re-writing of “War of the Ghosts” opened this dissertation, provides an explanation for this mechanism.³¹¹ In these experiments, Bartlett asked students to read a story and then to return at pre-appointed dates to re-tell the story they had read. He observed that, as time went on, the students would reconstruct gradually more simplified versions of the story. At a particular point in the generation of these stories, the re-telling would assume a relatively stable form.

Bartlett also observed that in the course of the students’ re-telling, aspects of the story tended gradually to conform to pre-existing “cultural schemas,” simplified story patterns familiar from the reader’s own culture.³¹² Like the individual mental schemata that occupied much of his work, these cultural schemata could assimilate new material to a certain extent and also remain recognizably stable across time. Wagoner, a modern commentator on Bartlett’s work, describes the schema as a “flexible pattern... imposed on the incoming material, which changes the

³⁰⁹ This movement is an extension of what Ricoeur described in relation to the movement from historical event to narrative: from the process of arrangement that transforms a “succession of events” into “one meaningful whole,” the events as a plot can be translated into a “thought,” a “point,” or a “theme” (Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:67). This “figure from succession” can be condensed further into a symbol, which possesses both the traits of stability and flexibility. As Kirk describes: the “ritual artefact” itself is stable, but it is the “bearer of dense symbolic meaning” (Kirk, *Memory and the Jesus Tradition*, 20). So in Pss 135 and 136, each event has been reduced to its component pieces. In their translation between psalms, the pieces themselves remain stable in expression, but carry the potential to mean in different ways.

³¹⁰ Eric Voegelin observed this distillation and argued that it was in Ps 136 that the symbol system of ancient Israelite history was developed. Voegelin then drew his understanding of the historical hermeneutical categories for the rest of the historical psalms based specifically on this psalm. See Voegelin, *Ordnung und Geschichte*, 37–39, 86; cf. Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 12–13.

³¹¹ See p. 1.

³¹² Bartlett, *Remembering*, 64–66.

material but in so doing stabilizes it against additional dramatic changes.”³¹³ This allows for cultural stability, while permitting the input of shifting and alternate evidence.³¹⁴

The psalms differ from Bartlett’s experiments in several ways: first, they are not retellings based entirely on individual mental recall. Each of the psalms that has been analyzed in this chapter, including Pss 135 and 136, relies heavily on previously written texts. As a group, they are also telling their story to members of the community who are likely familiar with the story in some respects. By contrast, Bartlett’s experiment required British students to reconstruct a Native American tale. The students neither had facility with nor previous investment in the events, motifs, and symbols important to the story and therefore lost many of these culturally significant elements in their recounting.

Nevertheless, some observations of Bartlett and those theorists who have followed him are relevant, most notably the correlation between abbreviated narratives and simplified structures on the one hand and the potential for repeatability and memorability on the other. Simplified structures also aid in commemoration, which “has the purpose of bringing to life and stabilizing a collective identity through a process of symbolic dramatization.”³¹⁵ It is likely not a coincidence that the simplest, most abbreviated form of historical recital, as found in Ps 136, is also the model that most explicitly facilitates participation. Furthermore, it is notable that it is

³¹³ Brady Wagoner, “Bartlett’s Concept of Schema in Reconstruction,” *Theory & Psychology* 23 (2013): 559; cf. A. Collins, “The Embodiment of Reconciliation: Order and Change in the Work of Frederic Bartlett,” *History of Psychology* 9 (2006): 230–312.

³¹⁴ For evidence of this type of mnemonic stability across cultures and media, see Giorgia Proietti, “Beyond the ‘Invention of Athens.’ The 5th Century Athenian ‘Tatenkatalog’ as Example of Intentional History,” *Klio* 97 (2015): 516–538; Maria Michela Luisella, “The Ancient Egyptian Scene of ‘Pharoah Smiting His Enemies’: An Attempt to Visualize Cultural Memory?” in *Cultural Memory and Identity in Ancient Societies*, ed. Martin Bommas (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 10–25.

³¹⁵ Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 16.

this abbreviated form of Judean tradition that is repeated almost verbatim in its neighboring “twin psalm,” demonstrating the stabilizing effect of abbreviated schematic traditions.

Catchphrases and memory figures

The abbreviation of culturally memorable narratives does not occur only through a generalizing of the narrated events but also through the use of symbols or sites of memory. Psalm 136 does not introduce new figures or even new overarching categories to describe any of the events that it narrates. Instead it identifies concrete aspects of the tale and uses these parts to describe the whole. For example, the pieces of the plague narrative that Pss 136 and 135 appropriate have already proven to be stable aspects of tradition. While the plague lists in Pss 78 and 105 differ in the number, order, and to some extent description of each of the plagues they contain, they are unified in their presentation of the culminating death of the firstborn (see discussion above). They not only agree in placing this plague in the ultimate position, but they also describe it using essentially identical vocabulary:

Ps 78:51	Ps 105:36	Ps 136:10	Ps 135:8
<i>wayyak kol-bekôr bēmiṣrāyim/ rē'šît 'ônîm bē'ohălê-ḥām</i>	<i>wayyak kol-bekôr bē'arṣām/ rē'šît lēkol-'ônām</i>	<i>lēmakkeh miṣrayim bibkôrêhēm</i>	<i>šēhikkâ bēkôrê miṣrāyim</i>

Psalms 135 and 136 reconstruct the first line of both Ps 78:51 and 105:36, omitting only the descriptor *kol*. Psalm 135 adds several lines to its description of the plagues, but also includes the paradigmatic description of the plagues as “signs” (*’ōt*) and “wonders” (*mōphēt*), the paradigmatic heading used to introduce the respective plague accounts in Ps 78:43 and Ps 105:27

respectively.³¹⁶ In its most abbreviated form in Ps 136, however, the plagues are represented entirely through their most memorable example and not by a general descriptor.

Sihon and Og

Another use of representative “sites of memory” occurs in the description of the Canaanite conquest, using only two of its leading characters, Sihon and Og. Some commentators over-read the use of Sihon and Og as the representative kings who are conquered in the conquest of the land, based on a misunderstanding of the mechanisms of cultural memory. Fensham, as one example, expresses confusion over why Sihon and Og are singled out as the kings who were conquered without reference to “the other great acts of Joshua.”³¹⁷ Klein (following others), argues that Ps 136 is earlier than Ps 135 on the basis of its description of the conquest of Canaan. She argues that Ps 135 clarifies the misunderstanding apparent in Ps 136, whereby only Sihon and Og, kings east of the Jordan, are described. Psalm 135 clarifies this assumed oversight by stating that “all the kingdoms of Canaan” were also defeated.³¹⁸ While I agree with her conclusion on the relative dating of both texts based on other evidence, to posit that Ps 135 *clarifies* the account through expansion does not correctly understand how Sihon and Og function in Israel’s shared memory. They function as representative figures in the Canaanite conquest, standing as a part that represents the whole. Their prominence perhaps stems from the

³¹⁶ So Habermas notes about the power of the condensed symbol: “Symbolic form is thus originally generated by a stylizing force, which condenses the dramatic impact of experiences.” Jürgen Habermas, *The Liberating Power of Symbols: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2001).

³¹⁷ F. C. Fensham, “Neh 9 and Pss. 105, 106, 135, and 136: Post-Exilic Historical Traditions in Poetic Form,” *JNSL* 9 (1981): 44.

³¹⁸ Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 326.

fact that they were the first kings conquered.³¹⁹ But as Erll observes, one of the major functions of cultural memory is “condensation,” the “compression of several complex ideas, feelings, or images into a single fused or composite object.”³²⁰ In the case of Ps 136, the Canaanite conquest as a whole has been condensed into the representative figures of Sihon and Og.

Their relationship to Israel’s conquest of the land is further clarified through Jan Assmann’s concept of “memory figures.” Assmann, building on Halbwach’s conception of “recollections,”³²¹ has identified three characteristics of what he calls the “memory figure” (*Erinnerungsfiguren*), an “indissoluble merging of idea and image.”³²² He identifies three special features of a successful memory figure: 1) a concrete relationship to time and place, 2) a concrete relationship to a group, and 3) an independent capacity for reconstruction. Assmann’s “memory figures” have much in common with the concept of the “symbol” that I have explicated above. These concrete personalities accrue significance as their stories are told and retold. Sihon and Og, by virtue of their primacy of place as the first kings conquered, now represent the entirety of the conquest.

The mode by which particular figures come to stand for concepts or more extended events varies: in the case of Sihon and Og, via the literary trope whereby the part stands for the whole, the first of the Canaanite kings comes to stand for the whole of the successful conquest. In the case of the plague of the death of the firstborn, this representative role is likely due not only to its ultimate position and its relative devastation, but also to its regular ritual celebration

³¹⁹ Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, trans. A. F. Rainey (London: n.p., 1966), 187ff.

³²⁰ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 146.

³²¹ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 35–190. These memory figures are not always historical: inhabited space, on both the domestic and geographical level can become saturated with socially constructed memory.

³²² Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 24.

via Passover. The focus on these events as representative can be understood as a reflex of cultural memory's preference for a "concrete orientation."³²³

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I will return to the categories I outlined in the introduction and demonstrate how each of them has been fulfilled in my analysis of the historical psalms.

- 1) As I noted in the introduction to the present chapter, memory functions as a tool of distinction and identification. Yet the potential divisions and identities that are constructed vary remarkably. In Ps 78, in a complex hermeneutical move demonstrating the constitutive force of endings, the shared history of Ephraim and Judah diverges sharply at the point of the destruction of Shiloh: the northern kingdom pays the penalty for the sins of the wilderness, which have been revealed to have continued into the sins of the land, while the southern kingdom experiences a new beginning led by a Davidic king. In Psalm 105, the constitutive distinction emerges between the Judean exiles (or returnees) and the foreign nations, who comprise the primary audience for the wonderful deeds wrought by God for Israel. Psalm 106 shifts its discerning gaze inward to identify among the ranks of the Judean returnees the possibility of the righteous who can successfully "utter the deeds of the Lord" (Ps 106:2).
- 2) This identifying and distinguishing function, however, does not result in static categories. The construction of a past is used to imagine possibilities of action in the

³²³ That Sihon and Og functioned as "memory figures" for the conquest of the Canaanite lands, can be demonstrated by their function in another Persian period text: Nehemiah 9. This extended historical recital names only Sihon and Og as the representative kings of the defeated Canaanites (Neh 9:22).

present that might affect the future. Psalm 78 defines a Judean present in which the cycle of ancestral sin has potentially been broken; divine wrath has been spent.

According to the rhetorical world of the psalm, the people need only remember and understand the “parable of Ephraim.” The *reconstruction* of their shared history of sin as Ephraim’s story demonstrates both the ability to construct continuity and strategically to disconnect the present audience from the sins of the past. This agency can no longer be spoken about in the same way after exile. Psalm 105 identifies ways of living “among the nations” that re-imagine this position of perceived weakness as one of imminent strength as it constructs a history of regular power reversals orchestrated by God. Psalm 106 uses normative “memory figures” from Israel’s shared past to identify a pattern of successful prayer in the wilderness. This presentation of the wilderness itself as an imagined *site* for prayer will prove to be influential in later iterations of Second Temple prayer.

- 3) The psalms also demonstrate how features of poetry communicate features of story. The repetition of key phrases facilitates not only the organization of complex stories into simplified patterns but also suggests analogies between earlier and later events in Israel’s history. The psalm can construct contiguity as cause. The sparse nature of the psalm line highlights the organization of significant symbols in order to characterize periods of Israel’s history as well as demonstrating their inherent multivocality. Bread and meat, for example, can signify divine provision or human craving, depending on their situation within the story and how they are arranged. The psalms also provide a convenient short form with which to witness the effect of a shifting beginning and ending point in a narrative.

- 4) The wilderness proves to be a particularly generative site with which to frame later experiences in the land and after the exile. Beginning in Ps 78, there is a tendency in the recitals to connect the sins of the wilderness with the eventual destruction first of the northern kingdom (Ps 78:60, 67), and then of the southern kingdom (Ps 106:24–27; cf. Ezek 20:23). The wilderness also serves as the site in which the speakers of Ps 106 identify successful intercessory events, which in turn inspire their own (Ps 106:47). This emphasis on commemorating the wilderness events and identifying them as a source for imagining later models of both sin and salvation will continue to play a formative role in the practice of later historical recital, particularly in the recitals in Neh 9 and 4Q504–506.
- 5) Finally, the psalms present themselves in each case as an oral performance genre. They are spoken explicitly to a Judean audience and they facilitate rudimentary forms of participation in the form of either commitment to present action (Ps 105:45) or brief communal refrains (Ps 106:47; Ps 136:4b, 5b, etc.). The mode of participation elicited differs among the psalms, but in each case, the psalm constructs a role for the audience. In this way, the psalms not only configure and preserve Israel’s memory, but they also construct modes and media of transmission.

The Second Temple texts (1 Chron 16; Neh 9; 11QPs^a; and 4Q504–506) that comprise the heart of this dissertation’s focus emerge in a context in which the Torah and related texts were becoming increasingly influential, and in which there appears to have been a distinct interest in reading and re-reading Israel’s history. Corresponding to this interest by the literate scribal class, there seems to have been an interest in pedagogically-oriented ceremonies which, at least as portrayed in the literary text, were designed to establish a common set of memories through public recital. Apart from these isolated performances in these late books, our primary

evidence for a liturgical performance of Israel's history is found in psalters, specifically the historical psalms investigated above and the historical psalms in the Qumran psalter, which will be the subject of Chapter 5.

As I observed in the introduction, it is difficult to assess the practice of or actual experience of texts, but in later chapters I will examine how extra-biblical exemplars of historical recital contribute to an overall portrait of their performance in the Second Temple Period. At the very least, the psalms provide a historical script that inspired and facilitated the later practice of a communal recitation of Israel's shared history. Both texts from Qumran to be analyzed in this dissertation (Chapters 5 and 6 respectively) demonstrate traits of historical performance: the Qumran psalter contains oral variants as compared to its counterpart in the MT and groups the historical psalms into smaller thematic liturgies. While the historical psalms in the MT appear at key *literary* junctures (see esp. Pss 105–106 above), these smaller liturgies featuring historical psalms in the Qumran psalter appear to be more carefully designed for liturgical performance. Further, the marked variants present in the historical psalms in that later text suggest a dynamic tradition of use and re-use, reading and re-reading at a late point in the tradition.

Similarly, *4QDibre Hame'orot* (4Q504–506) demonstrates more significant liturgical markers than the Masoretic psalter, and it draws significantly on several paradigms that are present in nascent form in the psalms analyzed above: most significantly, the recital of Israel's history becomes not just a source in which to discover paradigms of intercession, atonement, and salvation. The act of recital itself begins to demonstrate something key about the one who recites. It serves as an intertextual answer to the question posed by the opening of Ps 106: “who *can* utter the deeds of the Lord?” Finally, the following chapters on the biblical performances of prayed history (1 Chron 16; Neh 9) will provide the opportunity to expand other themes present

in this chapter, including the importance of psalms as shared communal scripts (1 Chron 16) and the role of the wilderness as a site for successful penitence (Neh 9).

CHAPTER 3

1 CHRONICLES 16:8–36: HISTORICAL PSALMS AS SOCIAL STRATEGY

Introduction³²⁴

The historical psalms presented in the previous chapter portray a collection of liturgical reflections on Israel's "functional memory." Each of these psalms both draws from and adapts this narrative schema and re-presents it in the form of a communal liturgy. While the psalms preserve several iterations of this functional memory ensconced in traditional liturgical forms, the following two chapters on 1 Chron 16:8–36 and Neh 9:5b–37 respectively will examine the role of this functional memory as part of represented communal ceremonies within narrative texts. Both of these performances of poetic recitals within narratives highlight their function as public texts designed to create or reinforce a basic functional memory among the populace. Both are performed by cultic representatives for a group of Israelites who are characterized as ideal participants in this communal education. While these texts are literary representations of this communal activity and not transparent windows into social practice, they characterize their portrait of an ideal Israelite as a person who possesses a certain shared knowledge of his history and liturgical script and they present public occasions during which such knowledge might be performed. They demonstrate the manifestation and transmission of a shared functional memory across different Second Temple corpora.

1 Chronicles 16:8–36 marks the celebration of the ark's arrival in Jerusalem and David's inauguration of the psalmic rites of thanksgiving. To celebrate this climactic moment in the narrative, the Chronicler preserves the singing of a composite psalm, comprised of portions of historical psalms Pss 105 and 106, as well as Ps 96. The psalms are reproduced with only minor

³²⁴ I am very grateful for Brett Maiden's insightful engagement with the following three chapters.

alterations³²⁵ as compared to their counterparts in the Masoretic Psalter.³²⁶ These psalms appear, at first glance, to be a strange choice to commemorate this significant event in Israel's cultic history: a scene in which David first "appoints thanksgiving to be sung to the Lord by Asaph and his brothers" (1 Chron 16:7) features three psalms that have no claim to Davidic tradition and that require explicit removal of anachronisms in order to fit the context.³²⁷ The final refrain of the psalm appeals to God to "gather and deliver us from among the nations" (1 Chron 16:35). Furthermore, in a narrative that many scholars have argued significantly downplays the pre-

³²⁵ Several studies document the changes in wording that the Chronicler introduces into the psalm. My concern is not, however, with these text-critical matters but with the role of psalm performance and *historical* psalm performance particularly in Chronicles. For an overview of the text-critical differences between 1 Chron 16:8–36 and its counterpart MT psalms, see Mark A. Throntveit, "Songs in a New Key: The Psalmic Structure of the Chronicler's Hymn (1 Chr 16:8–36)," in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*, ed. B. A. Strawn and N. R. Bowen (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 153–70; Trent C. Butler, "A Forgotten Passage from a Forgotten Era (1 Chr. 16:8–36)," *VT* 28 (1978), 142–143; John W. Kleinig, *The Lord's Song: The Basis, Function, and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles*, JSOTSup (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 139–41; Howard N. Wallace, "What Chronicles Has to Say about Psalms," in *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture*, ed. M. Patrick Graham and Steven L. McKenzie (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 269–71.

³²⁶ Scholars generally agree that the Chronicler is making use of previously available psalms, likely closely textually related to those available in the MT. See Adele Berlin, "Psalms in the Book of Chronicles," in *Shai le-Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, its Exegesis, and its Language*, ed. Mosheh Bar-Asher (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2007), 21. Exceptions to this view, however, are Gerald H. Wilson and George Brooke. Wilson argues that 1 Chron 16 was composed from "floating bits of liturgical material." Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 81. Berlin, however, points out that while the practice of pastiche was common in the psalms, it does not follow that the material for the pastiche was not drawn from specific psalms. Berlin, "Psalms in the Book of Chronicles," 21; cf. J. A. Sanders, "Cave 11 Surprises and the Question of Canon," *McCQ* 21 (1968): 287. George J. Brooke, "Psalms 105 and 106 at Qumran," 267–292, argues that Pss 105 and 106 are dependent on Chronicles. So too Peter R. Ackroyd, *1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah*, TBC (London: SCM Press, 1973), 64–65, and Hartmut Gese, "Die Entstehung der Büchereinteilung des Psalters," in *Wort, Lied und Gottespruch, Festschrift für Joseph Ziegler*, ed. Josef Schreiner, *BEvT* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1972), 161–62, deny that the Chronicler was relying on the canonical book of Psalms. That the Chronicler was relying on a source text that at least *resembled* the fourth book of the Masoretic psalter is made more likely by the fact that each of the psalm texts quoted are drawn from the fourth book of the Psalter, and the same concluding refrain is shared between the Chronicler's psalm and this book of the Psalter (Ps 106:47–48//1 Chron 16:35–36). I do argue below that this refrain likely circulated independently, but the concomitant use of Ps 105 suggests that it was indeed inspired by the collation of Pss 105 and 106 at a late point in the psalter's development. Cf. James W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative*, JSOTSup 139 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 167–68.

³²⁷ Butler, "A Forgotten Passage," 143; Andrew E. Hill, "Patchwork Poetry or Reasoned Verse? Connective Structure in 1 Chron 16," *VT* 33 (1983): 98–99.

history of Israel, the quoted portion of Ps 105 features the covenant made with Abraham. Why, then, choose these psalms to commemorate the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem?

I suggest that this quotation of historical psalms in a significant cultic event in the life of Israel reflects a more general memory practice already reported in the books of Chronicles. While certain events from Israel's pre-history are not retold in the *narrative* portions of the book, these events—including the covenant with the patriarchs, the exodus from Egypt, and the conquest of the land—appear as part of the people's memory in performed speech and song. That is, the presentation of ideal Israel in the books of Chronicles includes the presentation of Israel as correctly educated in a shared "functional memory" of the main events in Israel's history. The performance of historical psalms in 1 Chron 16:8–36 represents the convergence of two *types* of shared knowledge demonstrated throughout the books of Chronicles: First, the people share a limited knowledge of psalm scripts. That is, when the people speak in the book of Chronicles, they often speak using psalms or respond to the performance of psalms. Second, within the public speeches that key characters perform in Chronicles, there are brief references to historical events that do not play an extended role in the narrative itself but are alluded to as though they were common knowledge. The performance of historical psalms in 1 Chron 16 is presented not as an isolated instance of the performance of a historical recital but instead as a rhetorical extension of a knowledge that is ideally shared among the populace. Psalms functions as a public text and the public shares a basic schematic knowledge of their history.

Chronicles and/as Social Memory

It is important at this point to distinguish between Chronicles as a product of cultural memory itself and its literary portrayal of a more limited functional memory that its characters possess. Chronicles represents the historical record and reflection of at least one primary Judean social

group on their shared history and a reconstruction of some of their central texts, including the *Vorlage* to the books of Samuel-Kings. It narrates culturally significant events from Israel's past, and is designed, as Ben Zvi argues, to “encode, evoke, and contribute to the processes of shaping social memory.”³²⁸ These books would have functioned as an aid to memory for a very small subset of literate elite, those who could read them and have access to them.³²⁹ It is also a book that was eventually canonized. It becomes part of the “functional memory” for those who had access to all of the books comprising the Hebrew scriptures. And yet, within this work, written by a literate elite for an elite audience, oral performance—the communal recital of psalms, prayers, and speeches—plays an increased role as compared to its primary *Vorlage*, the books of Samuel-Kings. These representations of oral genres depict public acts of remembering that involve the people. They therefore contribute to the ideal characterization of the people as those who bear a particular knowledge, a shared “functional memory.” It is important, therefore, to distinguish between the book as a *whole* as cultural memory, and the way in which psalms and a schematic functional memory facilitate the process of remembering within the book itself. Chronicles is a product of cultural memory, but it is also a book about remembering.

The content of this “functional memory” within the book of Chronicles has two sources: 1) a small repertoire of psalm refrains that either introduce or comprise the participation of the people; 2) an abbreviated narrative schema of events that are used in speeches and cultic performances. These two sources are mutually reinforcing: the psalms, as a public text, are used

³²⁸ Ehud Ben Zvi, “Chronicles and Samuel-Kings: Two Interacting Aspects of One Memory System in the Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Period,” in *Reading the Relecture? The Question of (Post)chronistic Influence in the Latest Redactions of the Books of Samuel*, ed. Uwe Becker and Hannes Bezzel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 41.

³²⁹ Ehud Ben Zvi, “Chronicles and Social Memory,” *ST* (2017): 1–3, 18–19.

not only as a script for praise and thanksgiving but also to reinforce this set of shared memories among the populace.

Two theoretical frameworks significantly influence this chapter: Bernd Steinbock's recent research on the construction of social memory in Athenian oratory³³⁰ and the scholars who have articulated the "new literacy."³³¹ First, Steinbock appeals to the evidence in recorded orator's speeches and the speeches in Xenophon's *Hellenica* to reconstruct what he calls the "social memory" of fourth-century Athens. In a setting in which oral performances that feature historical allusions coincide with the burgeoning practice of writing extended histories, orators are likely to appeal to what they considered to be a widely shared and familiar version of Athenian history, even if they are aware of a diverging account in Herodotus or Thucydides.³³² There is a distinction between the use of meaningful allusions in oral performance genres and the developed histories that are recorded in long-form literary works. They appeal to mutually influential but ultimately separate memory systems. Steinbock argues that a particular piece of information can be considered part of a shared "social memory" if there is evidence that the information is both clearly and frequently communicated within a social group and bears a social relevance and shared significance.³³³ Such familiar and frequently referenced historical events

³³⁰ Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse*, 19, 41.

³³¹ For an introduction to the concept, see Brian V. Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Street, *Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography, and Education* (London: Longman, 1995); Cook-Gumperz, "The Social Construction of Literacy," 1–18.

³³² Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse*, 41. Cf. Rosalind Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*, Cambridge Series in Oral and Literate Culture 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 200; Katherine Clarke, *Making Time for the Past: Local History and Polis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 300, 303; Andrew Wolpert, *Remembering Defeat: Civil War and Civic Memory in Ancient Athens* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), xiii.

³³³ He calls this the "communicative aspect" of sharing memories of the past and the "social relevance for the members of the group" respectively. Each of these aspects are constitutive of his theory of social memory. Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse*, 19.

begin to accrue “symbolic capital”; that is, they acquire a shared meaning that can then be used to enforce or reinforce contemporary social, religious, or political agendas.³³⁴ While the book of Chronicles is a fundamentally literary work and not a recording of an oral speech, it does contain within its narrative the recording of several speeches and communal performances. This narrative feature allows us to ask whether there is a distinction in what is remembered within the narrative history and what is remembered in the course of communal speech events within that narrative.

Second, the scholars of the “new literacy” have articulated the way in which a relationship to texts and culturally significant knowledge is constructed and performed by the members of a society. “New Literacy” studies have emerged in the last couple of decades as one facet in a challenge to the consensus concerning literacy that dominated the first half of the twentieth century. According to that earlier view, there was a clear cognitive development between “oral mindsets” and “literate mindsets.”³³⁵ The arrival of this “literate mindset” accompanied cognitive and practical advances, including the clear emergence of a document-oriented society. This consensus has shifted dramatically, however, in both the classicist and sociological literature, and to some extent in biblical studies,³³⁶ to emphasize instead that literacy

³³⁴ Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse*, 31. Cf. Ehud Ben Zvi, “Potential Intersections Between Research Frames Informed by Social-Memory and ‘Bourdieuian’ Approaches/ Concepts: The Study of Socio-Historical Features of the Literature of the Early Second Temple Period,” *BZAW* (forthcoming). Shared with the author.

³³⁵ Cf. the classic theories of Jack Goody and Ian Wyatt, “The Consequences of Literacy,” *CSSH* 5 (1963): 304–345; Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982); Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).

³³⁶ See, for example, Susan Niditch, “Oral Tradition and Biblical Scholarship,” *Oral Traditions* 18 (2003): 43–44; Niditch, “Hebrew Bible and Oral Literature: Misconceptions and New Directions,” in *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres*, ed. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 6–7; Ruth Finnegan, “How Oral is Oral Literature?” *BSOAS* 37 (1974): 52–64; Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988); Finnegan, “Literacy Versus Non-Literacy: The Great Divide?” in *Modes of Thought*, ed. Robin Horton and Ruth Finnegan (London: Faber & Faber, 1973), 112–44.

is not a monolithic skill set determined primarily by available technologies but is an embedded cultural practice. In classical Athens, for example, while written documents were consistently used in economic and military contexts, community membership was determined primarily by oral witnesses.³³⁷ A shared knowledge of *polis* history was created by both oral performance as well as an increasing number of extended written histories.³³⁸ Literate and oral knowledge exist together, often in a mutually reinforcing relationship.³³⁹ The concept of literacy itself is redefined, moving away from categories of skill or the presence and availability of written documents to the evaluations of the relative social value given to various forms of communicated knowledge.

Scholars of “new literacy” focus on the social construction of literate persons instead of arbitrary markers of reading or writing ability. As Castanheira and her co-authors write, “what counts as literacy in any group is visible in the actions members take, to what they orient themselves, for what they hold each other accountable, what they accept or reject as the preferred responses of others, and how they engage with, interpret, and construct text.”³⁴⁰ This “new literacy” thus moves beyond the technical skills of reading and writing to ask what “counts” as knowledge in a particular social sphere and for a particular type of person. Whether a person can read becomes less important than what that person reads, how a person talks or conducts herself

³³⁷ Geoffrey W. Bakewell, “Written Lists of Military Personnel in Classical Athens,” in *Politics of Orality*, ed. Craig Cooper, *Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 89–102; Adele Scafuro, “Witnessing and False Witnessing: Proving Citizenship and Kin Identity in Fourth-Century Athens,” in *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology*, ed. Alan L. Boegehold and Adele C. Scafuro (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 156–98; cf. Aubrey E. Buster, “Written Record and Membership in Persian Period Judea and Classical Athens,” in *Voice and Voices in Antiquity*, ed. Niall Slater, *Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 309–15.

³³⁸ Loraux, *The Invention of Athens*; Grethlein, *The Greeks and Their Past*.

³³⁹ See esp. the analyses by Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–50; Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*, 15–94, 196–237.

³⁴⁰ Castanheira et al., “Interactional Ethnography, 353.

in a classroom space, a home, a workplace, or the market in relationship to written texts or spoken word. Each of these spaces and a person's relative role in these spaces determines the level and content of someone's communication and interaction with cultural knowledge.³⁴¹

These two theoretical frameworks help to compose my analytical questions for the book of Chronicles. The book portrays several scenes of oral performance within its narrative. These speeches and prayers refer to a functional memory, shared between ideal speaker and ideal audience in the book. The historical tropes referred to in these speeches evince a slightly different profile from what scholars have emphasized as the historical priorities of the book's narrative framework.³⁴² Specifically, these oral performances feature elements of what I have identified as Israel's master narrative in the psalms: the promise to the patriarchs, the exodus, and the conquest of the land.³⁴³ What people know in Chronicles varies based on their social position and role. In any society with a sense of communal solidarity, however, there must be a modicum of shared knowledge, even if the members of that populace differ in their levels of

³⁴¹ Cf. David Carr's distinction between the "literacy" that is typically referred to today, which connotes a basic reading and writing ability, and "literacy" in the ancient world, where the literacy that counted was a "mastery of a given, textualized cultural tradition," what Assmann has called the "cultural text." David M. Carr, "Response to W. M. Schniedewind, How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel," *JHS* 5 (2005): 8; Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," 125–33; cf. Jan Assmann, "Form as Mnemonic Device: Cultural Texts and Cultural Memory," in *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark*, ed. Richard A. Horsley, Jonathan A. Draper, and John Miles Foley (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 67–82. Modern scholars of literacy likewise question this distinction that Carr presents as functional in the ancient world. They note that what "counts" as literate activity is largely determined socially, in the type of texts and the type of social situations in which literate activity is performed.

³⁴² I will specifically interact with Japhet's influential thesis that the covenant with the patriarchs, the exodus from Egypt, and the conquest of the land play little to no role in the book of Chronicles. See Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1989), 292–307; Philippe Abadie, "Quelle place occupe l'exode dans le livre des Chroniques?," *Cahiers de l'atelier* 482 (1998): 90–100.

³⁴³ What is missing from the Chronicler's schema is any mention of the wandering in the wilderness. The giving of the law to Moses in the wilderness is mentioned on occasion (see below), but there are no references to the common images and tropes repeated in the psalms, nor, as will come to be seen in Neh 9, the giving of food and water, the leading by cloud and fire, and the people's rebellion.

cultural literacy. Chronicles highlights the means by which this shared memory is constructed: it highlights the people's participation in key rituals and festivals and portrays the institutions of temple and palace as key leaders in the institution of this cultural memory.

Outline of Chapter

In order to construct a profile of what was considered to be “functional memory” for the Chronicler, I attend first to the performance of psalms as a public script. Psalms, for Chronicles, are a form of communally shared speech that facilitates the people's participation and identifies the people as important speakers. The modifications of the narrative surrounding the composite psalm recited in 1 Chron 16:8–36 as compared to its *Vorlage* in Samuel-Kings accentuate the emphasis on psalms as a script for the people. Second, I identify what the Chronicler presents as Israel's shared “functional memory.” Here, 1 Chronicles 16:8–36, with its citation of Ps 105:1–15, introduces the particular set of historical events that populate spoken discourse in Chronicles. By examining references to Israel's history in public speeches performed in Chronicles, I will identify a consistent and limited version of Israel's story that the Chronicler presents as *shared knowledge*. Therefore, 1 Chron 16, with its presentation of historical psalms in a communal psalm performance, represents the convergence of two strands of public knowledge in the book: a knowledge of psalms and a knowledge of a basic historical schema that the ideal Israel depicted in Chronicles shares. Finally, I use this evidence and its comparison with comparable history in Samuel-Kings to suggest a larger thesis: that these public recitals of history are a social strategy to develop a shared functional memory and its particular development in the Second Temple Period.

Psalms as Public Texts in Chronicles

The psalms play a unique role in Chronicles as a participatory script for the people. This role becomes clear when one observes the contrast between the performance of psalms (that is, the recognizable quotation of a text from the MT book of Psalms) and other forms of religious speech addressed to the deity. Public prayer generally, defined as an address to God performed among the people, is a key communal event in Chronicles in which important figures display their piety and familiarity with correct cultural scripts. The script that a character uses is related to their social status and narrative role. There is a difference in the Chronicler's presentation of how kings and leaders pray and how the people as a whole pray. This distinction provides some insight into the nature and division of public vs. specialized knowledge within Chronicles. The prayers of the people primarily contain quotations recognizable from the MT Psalter, while the prayers of kings are more loosely based on general references to events contained in Israel's traditional texts. When kings and people speak, therefore, they speak differently: kings pray, but the people recite psalms.

The Chronicler describes twenty separate occasions on which a figure prays *not* using the words of a psalm.³⁴⁴ This number includes both a simple mention of the act of prayer as well as the full transcription of the prayer text.³⁴⁵ Twelve of these prayers are unique to the

³⁴⁴ I am defining "psalm" as a text recognizable as a psalm or portion of a psalm closely related to a text from the MT Psalter.

³⁴⁵ 1 Chron 4:10; 5:20; 14:10; 17:16–27; 21:8, 17, 26; 29:10–20; 2 Chron 1:8–10; 6:14–42; 13:14; 14:10; 18:31; 20:6–13, 26; 30:18–19; 31:8; 32:20; 32:24; 33:12–13. These instances include references to a figure or figures *calling out to* (√qr' l-) the Lord, *crying out to* (√t' q l-/ √z' q) the Lord; *inquiring of* (√š' l b-) the Lord; *blessing* (√brk) the Lord; *interceding* (√pll ['l-]) before the Lord; and simply speaking (√mr ['l-]) to the Lord. These references include both instances in which the words of the prayer are recorded and in which they are not recorded. Cf. Pancratius C. Beentjes, "'Give Thanks to YHWH. Truly He is Good': Psalms and Prayers in the Book of Chronicles," in *Tradition and Transformation in the Book of Chronicles* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 141–75. I do not include 2 Chron 6:3–11 as a prayer, contra Beentjes, as the speech is not directed to God, but is instead directed to the people.

Chronicler.³⁴⁶ Of the twenty non-psalmic prayers, seventeen are attributed to kings,³⁴⁷ and only one is attributed to the Judean populace as a whole (2 Chron 13:14).³⁴⁸ The remaining two appear in the opening genealogy and are ascribed to Jabez (1 Chron 4:10) and the warring Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (1 Chron 5:20) respectively. Scholars have frequently commented on the prevalence of royal prayer in the book as a source of distinctive Chronicist theology.³⁴⁹ Schweitzer, for example, notes in his description of the “Utopian state” in Chronicles that prayer is emphasized through its royal practitioners: “the repeated depictions of the kings praying suggest that this is a practice to be imitated as well... all of the prayers offered in Chronicles are answered by God with results that are viewed positively by the one praying.”³⁵⁰ Yet while the praying kings are undoubtedly viewed positively, they are notably *not* imitated by non-kingly figures within the books of Chronicles themselves.

³⁴⁶ 1 Chron 4:10; 5:20; 29:10–20; 2 Chron 13:14; 14:10; 20:6–13, 26; 30:18–19; 31:8; 32:20; 32:24; 33:12–13.

³⁴⁷ David (six times): 1 Chron 14:10; 17:16–27; 21:8, 17, 26; 29:10–20; Solomon (three times): 2 Chron 1:8–10; 6:3–11, 14–42; Asa (once): 2 Chron 14:10; Jehoshaphat (three times): 2 Chron 18:31; 20:6–13; 20:26; Hezekiah (four times): 2 Chron 30:18–19; 31:8; 32:20, 24; Manasseh (once): 2 Chron 33:12–13.

³⁴⁸ Further, this reference is to Judah specifically, and not to the actions of “all Israel,” the characteristic Chronicist term emphasizing communal unity of action.

³⁴⁹ Richard L. Pratt, “Royal Prayer and the Chronicler's Program” (ThD diss., Harvard University, 1987); Mark A. Throntveit, *When Kings Speak: Royal Speech and Royal Prayer in Chronicles* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1987); Richard Otis Rigsby, “The Historiography of Speeches and Prayers in the Books of Chronicles” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1973); S. E. Balentine, “‘You Can't Pray a Lie': Truth and Fiction in the Prayers of Chronicles,” in *The Chronicler as Historian*, ed. M. P. Graham, K.G. Hoglund, and S. L. McKenzie (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 246–67; William Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); R. Mason, *Preaching the Tradition: Homily and Hermeneutics After the Exile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Mark A. Throntveit, “The Chronicler's Speeches and Historical Reconstruction,” in *The Chronicler as Historian*, ed. M. P. Graham, K.G. Hoglund, and S. L. McKenzie (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 225–45; Beentjes, “‘Give Thanks to YHWH. Truly He is Good’,” 141–75.

³⁵⁰ Steven Schweitzer, “Reading Utopia in Chronicles” (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2005), 408.

The language of the psalms, by contrast, is not predominantly presented as royal speech, but as speech ideally spoken by the community and its cultic representatives.³⁵¹ Seven times the Chronicler describes the singing of a psalm or a portion thereof.³⁵² In six of seven cases, representative cultic singers recite the psalms in public recitals in which the people participate in various ways. Even Solomon's single royal quotation from a psalm occurs in the very public gathering to celebrate the construction of the temple and immediately leads into the people's response, which is, incidentally, also a psalmic refrain (2 Chron 6:41–42// Ps 132:8–9). The psalm functions as a transition to a responsorial refrain (2 Chron 7:3). Within the ideal narrative world of the Chronicler, therefore, the psalms function as a public script for the people. They are featured in public cultic ceremonies that emphasize the people's participation and constitute the speech of the people in these situations. Using the terms of the "new literacy," therefore, a properly educated Israelite layperson, according to Chronicles, would know when and how to use a small repertoire of psalm refrains. The psalms are viewed as a public text, a way to introduce and facilitate communal participation.

³⁵¹ I am defining "psalm," in this case, as a text that reproduces in whole or in part a recognizable segment of a text that appears in the Masoretic Psalter. The important element is not any particular identifying genre marker that might differentiate the "psalms" from "non-psalmic prayers" but is the recursive use of a text that also appears in a liturgical collection. As will become clear, this element of cultural repetition is reproduced in the use of psalms within the book of Chronicles itself: that is, the psalm scripts used within the book also tend to be repeated.

³⁵² 1 Chron 16:8–36, 41; 2 Chron 5:13; 6:40–42; 7:3; 6; 20:21. Cf. Beentjes, "'Give Thanks to YHWH. Truly He is Good'," 143. Adele Berlin adds 1 Chron 29:15 as an echo of Ps 39:13; and 1 Chron 29:10 as resembling doxologies in Pss 41:13; 72:18; 89:53; and 106:48. Berlin, "Psalms in the Book of Chronicles," 22. The latter refrain, however, is too general to be considered a direct citation; the former refers to a common psalmic characterization but does not quote the psalm verse itself. Therefore, they fall outside the purview of this investigation.

Psalms and Participation in the Cult

Psalms performances in the two most significant cultic moments in the books of Chronicles—the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem in 1 Chron 13–16 and Solomon’s prayer following the completion of the temple in 2 Chron 6—confirm this understanding of the psalms as a public text. I will focus in the following on the role of psalms in 1 Chron 16:8–36, the psalm that accompanies the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem, but I will also reference the psalm in 2 Chron 6. Both the length of the psalm in 1 Chron 16:8–36 and its role as the culmination of the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem demonstrate its importance for the narrative as a whole. As Eskenazi observes, the “amount of space devoted to the scene gives a clear clue to a locus of narrative interest.”³⁵³ Chronicles not only designates that a psalm was sung but also provides the text of the psalm in full. While I will discuss the specific *contents* of the psalm sung in 1 Chron 16:8–36 below when I address the nature of historical knowledge in the books of Chronicles, here I focus on the psalm’s context. The Chronicler modifies the account contained in its *Vorlage*, 2 Sam 6:17–20a, in order to expand and develop the people’s participation. While some scholars argue that the primary focus of the Chronicler’s use of psalms is to provide Davidic authorization for the cult,³⁵⁴ the transformation of the *Vorlage* notably abbreviates David’s role at the point of the singing of the extended psalm. The first and last sections of this chapter are drawn, with very little variation, from the Chronicler’s source material in 2 Sam 6:17–20a. The

³⁵³ Tamara Eskenazi, “A Literary Approach to Chronicles’ Ark Narrative in 1 Chronicles 1–16,” in *Fortunate the Eyes that See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman*, ed. A. Beck et al., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 269. She refers to Mieke Bal’s observation that space devoted to an event or details “indicates something about how the attention is patterned.” Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. C. van Boheenen (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1985), 69.

³⁵⁴ See Berlin, “Psalms in the Book of Chronicles,” 25–26; Wallace, “What Chronicles Has to Say about Psalms,” 288–289. Cf. David N. Freedman, “The Chronicler’s Purpose,” *CBQ* 23 (1961): 437; James M. Street, *The Significance of the Ark Narrative: Literary Formation and Artistry in the Book of Chronicles*, StBibLit 129 (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 62–65.

narrative in 2 Sam 6 focuses almost entirely on David as the protagonist. In the four verses that describe the installation of the ark at Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:17–20a), David is the only named actor, accompanied by an unspecified “they” (v. 17) and “the people” (v. 19, to indicate their departure). His name is repeated four times in the narrative, as the one who pitches the tent for the ark (v. 17), offers burnt offerings and peace offerings (v. 17), blesses the people (v. 18), and distributes the food for the feast (v. 19). In 1 Chron 16:1–43, however, the weight of the ceremony, its rhetorical center, focuses on the inclusion of the entire community of Israel in the grand feast that accompanies the offering to the Lord at the temple. See the respective accounts below.

2 Samuel 6:17–20a	1 Chronicles 16:1–3, 43
<p>17 וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן יְהוָה וַיַּצִּיגוּ אֹתוֹ בַּמִּקְלוֹמוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הָאֹהֶל אֲשֶׁר נָטָה־לּוֹ דָּוִד וַיַּעַל דָּוִד עֲלוֹת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וּשְׁלָמִים:</p> <p>18 וַיִּבֶל דָּוִד מִהַעֲלוֹת הָעוֹלָה וְהַשְּׁלָמִים וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת־הָעָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:</p> <p>19 וַיַּחֲלֶק לְכָל־הָעָם לְכָל־הַמִּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמֵאִישׁ^a וְעַד־אִשָּׁה לְאִישׁ חֶלֶת לֶחֶם אֶחָד וְאַשְׁפּוּר^b אֶחָד וְאַשִּׁישָׁה אַחַת וַיֵּלֶךְ כָּל־הָעָם אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ:</p> <p>20 וַיָּשָׁב דָּוִד לְבָרֶכֶּךָ אֶת־בֵּיתוֹ</p>	<p>1¹ וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים וַיַּצִּיגוּ אֹתוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הָאֹהֶל אֲשֶׁר נָטָה־לּוֹ דָּוִד וַיַּקְרִיבוּ עֲלוֹת וּשְׁלָמִים לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים:</p> <p>2 וַיִּבֶל דָּוִד מִהַעֲלוֹת הָעוֹלָה וְהַשְּׁלָמִים וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת־הָעָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה:</p> <p>3 וַיַּחֲלֶק לְכָל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאִישׁ וְעַד־אִשָּׁה לְאִישׁ כֶּכֶר־לֶחֶם וְאַשְׁפּוּר וְאַשִּׁישָׁה:</p> <p>43 וַיֵּלְכוּ כָל־הָעָם אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ וַיֹּסֵב דָּוִד לְבָרֶכֶּךָ אֶת־בֵּיתוֹ:</p>
<p>17 And they brought the ark of <i>the Lord</i> and they set it <i>in its place</i> inside the tent, which David had set up. And <i>David</i> offered burnt offerings before <i>the Lord</i>, along with peace offerings.</p> <p>18 When David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts.</p> <p>19 And he apportioned to <i>all of the people, to all of the multitude of Israel</i>, from the men to the women, to each a <i>portion</i> of bread and <i>one</i> date cake, and <i>one</i> raisin cake, and all the people departed, each to his own house. And David <i>returned</i> to bless his house.</p>	<p>1 And they brought the ark of <i>God</i> and they placed it inside the tent, which David had set up, and <i>they</i> offered burnt offerings <i>and peace offerings</i> before <i>God</i>.</p> <p>2 When David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord.</p> <p>3 And he apportioned to <i>each person of Israel</i>, from the men to the women, to each a <i>round loaf</i> of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake. [...]</p> <p>43 And all the people departed, each to his own house. And David <i>returned</i> to bless his house.</p>

In 1 Chron 16:1, David’s name is replaced with the “they” who accompany him: “they” offer the burnt offerings and peace offerings. In the next section, vv. 4–36, added by the Chronicler,

David's name appears only once: it is the Levites, listed by name in vv. 5–6,³⁵⁵ who sing the song of praise and the people who confirm the song with their concluding speech in 1 Chron 16:36. David is given no direct speech at all in this narrative. While the narrative in 2 Sam 6 focuses almost entirely on David as the protagonist, the narrative in 1 Chron 16 focuses on the inclusion of the entire community of Israel in the Levitical liturgy and feast that accompanies the Ark's arrival in Jerusalem.³⁵⁶ The emphasis on all Israel, a familiar trope in Chronicles (*lěkol- 'iš yisrā 'ēl*; v. 3; “all the people” [*kol-hā 'ām*]; v. 36),³⁵⁷ is employed here to emphasize communal participation in this cultic recital.³⁵⁸

In Chronicles, participation in the cult is structured by and connected to psalm texts. I have described above how the context in which the psalm is recited shifts to emphasize the role of the people and the Levites in the cult. The composite psalm itself also provides a model of

³⁵⁵ There is debate whether this list and its following psalm are a later interpolation or were found among the Chronicler's sources. Knoppers has argued convincingly that the lists and the psalm should be considered original to the Chronicler's text and not part of a later Priestly redaction. See Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 12A (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 655–56. Cf. Sara Japhet, *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTL (London: SCM Press, 1993), 311–13; Jacob Myers, *1 Chronicles*, AB 12 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 119–23; Butler, “A Forgotten Passage,” 142–150; contra Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles*, WBC 14 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 187–89.

³⁵⁶ This emphasis on the people's participation in the establishing of the ark at Jerusalem is a feature throughout the ark narrative: 2 Sam 6:12b states that David “went and brought up the ark” (*wayyēlek dāwid wayya 'al 'et- 'ārôn*) while the Chronicler includes the elders and the commanders (*wayēhî dāwid wēziqnē yisrā 'ēl wēšārē hā 'ālāpîm hahōlēkîm lēha 'ālôt 'ēt- 'ārôn*; 1 Chron 15:25) and concludes in 1 Chron 15:28 that it was “all Israel” who brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord. This is a “corporate act” by all Israel “rather than an expression of David's personal faith.” Martin J. Selman, *1 Chronicles*, TOTC 10 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 165.

³⁵⁷ Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 209–16; Louis C. Jonker, *Defining All-Israel in Chronicles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 151–89.

³⁵⁸ This shift from David's role in the cult to the people's participation is all the more remarkable in light of Freedman's fundamental observation concerning the purpose of the Chronicler's history to “write a history of the dynasty of David,” and to establish through his narrative the “proper, legitimate pattern of institutions and their personnel for the people of God.” Freedman, “The Chronicler's Purpose,” 437.

how people are expected to respond to a performed psalm, as indicated by their final “amen” (1 Chron 16:36b).

There are also a few compelling reasons to understand the final verses of the psalm itself (1 Chron 16:35–36a/Ps 106:47–48) as a familiar liturgical refrain that ends both 1 Chron 16:36 and Ps 106, rather than a quotation of a portion of an extended psalm.³⁵⁹ First, the purported quotation of Ps 106 is introduced in 1 Chron 16:34 with the refrain “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever” (1 Chron 16:34; cf. Ps 106:1; from here on “*hesed* formula”). This refrain is the most common psalm citation in Chronicles and on several occasions represents the appropriate cultic response of the Levites and the people (2 Chron 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21), as will be discussed in more detail below. Second, Ps 106:47 is recited as a response to this paradigmatic call to worship (“and say also” [*wē’imrû*]; v. 35),³⁶⁰ before all the people join in for a final “amen” in v. 36. The *hesed* formula also marks the inauguration of temple worship in 2 Chron 5:13. While it is spoken by the Levitical singers before Solomon’s prayer, the entire people respond to Solomon’s prayer with a recital of this refrain (2 Chron 7:3). The Levites in 1 Chron 16, therefore, also model such a responsive practice. They introduce their concluding psalm refrain (1 Chron 16:35–36/Ps 106:47–48) with the *hesed* formula. Following these refrains, the people participate in a rudimentary way with an “amen,” though in 1 Chron 7:3, they too will recite the *hesed* formula.

Manuscript evidence from Qumran confirms a practice of combining a historical psalm with a concluding communal refrain. This suggests that the model present in Chronicles, which

³⁵⁹ Ackroyd argues likewise in *1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah*, 64. Contra Butler, “A Forgotten Passage,” 142–150; Hill, “Patchwork Poetry,” 97–101; Throntveit, “Songs in a New Key,” 153–170; Wallace, “What Chronicles Has to Say about Psalms,” 267–291.

³⁶⁰ Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 74.

is clearly not a reflection of a historical psalm performance at the entrance of the ark,³⁶¹ could reflect a developing contemporary practice. Sara Japhet has highlighted the general practice of combining psalms and portions of psalms at Qumran. She lists the psalm created from fragments of Ps 118 in 11QPs^a.³⁶² Even more closely related to the composite psalm in 1 Chron 16:8–36 is the fragment 4Q95, which preserves portions of Pss 135:6–8 and 135:11–12, along with 136:23–24, including the join between vss. 12 of Psalm 135 and vv. 23 of Psalm 136. These two compositions (1 Chron 16:8–36 and 4Q95) form an analogy on two levels: First, they both excerpt and combine two historical psalms that are adjacent in the MT. Second, in each case it is only the concluding doxology of the second psalm that is preserved alongside the historical summary of the first psalm. Along with the liturgical marker “and say also” (*wě'imrû*) that introduces the doxology in 1 Chron 16:35, this suggests that the final verses of the psalm in 1 Chron 16 fulfill the role of an associated refrain, rather than that of an abbreviation of a *Doppelpsalms*.

Four additional psalm quotations occur in the context of Solomon's dedication of the temple (2 Chron 5:13; 6:41–42; 7:3, 6). This account also demonstrates an emphasis on the people's participation in the ceremony as compared to its parallel account in 1 Kings.³⁶³ Before Solomon prays, the Levitical singers praise the Lord by reciting the *hesed* formula, familiar from 1 Chron 16:34 (2 Chron 5:13). Solomon concludes his prayer in Chronicles with an excerpt of Ps 132:8–9 that leads into the people's response, also unique to the Chronicler. In 2 Chron 7:3,

³⁶¹ The psalms performed clearly post-date the bringing of the ark into Jerusalem and do not have a connection to a Davidic tradition. For a discussion of the dating of Pss 105 and 106 see Chapter 2, pp. 80–81, 100.

³⁶² Japhet, *I and II Chronicles*, 312; James A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs^a)*, DJD 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 37.

³⁶³ The Chronicler depicts David's dedication of the ark and Solomon's dedication of the temple as two parallel events. Cf. Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 601. In both, the culminating event is marked by a psalm to which the people respond.

following Solomon's quotation of Ps 132, "all the people of Israel" bow down, worship, and give thanks to the Lord by quoting "for he is good, his steadfast love endures forever." In this way they both respond to Solomon's prayer and also echo the refrain sung by the priests at the opening of the temple liturgy (2 Chron 5:13; 7:6; cf. 1 Chron 16:34). In contrast, the version of Solomon's temple dedication prayer in 1 Kgs 8 concludes with an extended blessing, in which he is the *sole speaker and actor* (1 Kgs 8:54–61). Therefore, the narrative in Chronicles emphasizes the presence and participation of the people and introduces that participation with the strategic use of psalms.

Finally, in another important cultic performance in the book, Jehoshaphat "takes counsel with the people," and "appoints those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him" before miraculously defeating the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir (2 Chron 20:21–22). Those appointed to sing before the advancing army adopt the *hesed* formula as their script of praise (2 Chron 20:21). This key psalm refrain is therefore used as the representative script of the temple singers and of the people themselves.

As Sanders has recently noted, genres, the forms in which texts are presented, are a tool of social organization with defined participant roles.³⁶⁴ Psalms, as a text form in Chronicles, are used to indicate the participant roles of the people. The text portrays the people in Chronicles as competent participants in a limited cultic script, which features psalm language.

Historical Knowledge Network in Chronicles

The above analysis of the use of psalms in Chronicles, and in 1 Chron 16 in particular, demonstrates the way in which the psalms facilitate the people's participation in the central

³⁶⁴ Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 105.

activity of the cult. In the next section of the chapter, I investigate the historical *content* of the psalm performed in 1 Chron 16:8–36 as part of a network of functional historical knowledge presented within the book. Here I want to return to Steinbock’s fundamental observation that “social memory” —that is, the memory that is assumed to be shared among members of a community—can be discerned in those events that are repeatedly communicated and that demonstrate ongoing social relevance.³⁶⁵ While the Chronicler’s narrative itself, outside of its introductory genealogy, focuses on the royal history of Israel from the death of Saul through to the edict of Cyrus, the text —both in its reported psalms and in character’s speeches—refers to earlier events, including the covenant with the patriarchs, the exodus, the giving of the law to Moses, and the conquest of the land, as remembered events. This suggests that these are understood to be common knowledge for the community and to serve as a functional memory bank with which to illustrate the significance of later events.

Sara Japhet claims in her published dissertation that the Chronicler presents a thoroughly revised presentation of Israel’s pre-history. She writes

Chronicles presents a different view of history; the dimensions of the Babylonian conquest and exile are reduced considerably, the people’s settlement in the land is portrayed as an uninterrupted continuum, and, in the same way, the constitutive force of the Exodus from Egypt is eliminated. Chronicles simply omits the entire historical context—slavery, exodus, and conquest.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse*, 19.

³⁶⁶ Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 386. Scholars had previously observed that the Chronicler does not describe the exodus from Egypt. See Gerhard Von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes*, BWANT 54 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1930), 65; Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1943), 175; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1955), ix; A. M. Brunet, “Le Chroniste et ses sources,” *RB* 61 (1954): 361–362; R. North, “Theology of the Chronicler,” *JBL* 82 (1963): 377–378. Cf. Jürgen Kegler, “Das Zurücktreten der Exodus-Tradition in den Chronikbüchern,” in *Schöpfung und Befreiung: für Claus Westermann zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Rainer Albertz, Friedemann W. Golka, and Jürgen Kegler (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1989), 54–66; Thomas Römer and Albert de Pury, “Histoire de la Recherche,” in *Israël Construit son Histoire: L’historiographie deutéronomiste à la lumière des recherches récentes*, ed. Thomas Römer, Albert de Pury, and Jean-Daniel Macchi (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1996), 117; Abadie, “Quelle place occupe l’exode dans le livre des Chroniques,” 90–100; Abadie, “Une ‘histoire corrective’: le modèle du Chroniste,” *Theophilyon* 2 (1997): 65–90. Japhet reiterates her position in later work.

This is an important observation on the relative weight given to various historical events portrayed in Chronicles. Yet it ultimately fails to recognize that these events *are* present in the book in the context of public prayer, public oration, and in cultic celebration.³⁶⁷ Far from being de-emphasized, these core events are presented as part of the *common knowledge already possessed by the community*. They are not present as narrated events but as *remembered* events.

The distinction between Japhet's argument and my own requires more discussion. Japhet largely bases her argument concerning the relative emphasis placed on particular historical events on the *number* of times that such events appear in the narrative, whether the reference to them was part of the Chronicler's *Sondergut*, and whether the Chronicler omits a reference to an event contained in a source text. Events or ideas that are frequently referenced are emphasized; those that occur infrequently are downplayed. Events that are described in a portion of the text that is taken from a previous source, whether that is Samuel-Kings or the Psalms, Japhet considers to be less important than events that are described in a portion of the text that is the original work of the Chronicler. I argue, however, that the role of Israel's pre-history should be re-considered based on an understanding of *where* those references occur and *who* speaks them.

"Postexilic Historiography: How and Why?," in *Israel Constructs its History: Deuteronomistic History in Recent Research*, ed. A. de Pury, T. Römer, and J.-D. Macchi, *JSOTSup* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic 2000), 160. Even when a scholar does not *deny* a reference to the exodus in the Chronicler, he or she often argues for its considerably diminished historical role. See Abadie: "Le modèle historiographique proposé par le Chroniste diffère sensiblement de ce modèle intégrateur. S'opposant à la fois aux historiographies deutéronomiste (exodique) et sacerdotale (synthèse des deux origines), il développe à l'extrême le mythe autochtone de l'origine patriarcale, alors même qu'il relègue à l'état de témoin passé la référence à l'exode. Centré sur un espace (*'erets yisra'el*) et une lignée (*dauidique*), il se présente comme une 'histoire corrective', par quoi il faut entendre 'une minutieuse' reformulation de l'histoire ancienne selon une perspective nouvelle, 'moderne', qui réagit à son temps." Abadie, "Une 'histoire corrective'," 70. Beentjes, on the other hand, challenges this consensus, arguing that, if the Chronicler was attempting to "omit the exodus," it is difficult to explain why the Chronicler would omit references to the exodus as found in some of his source texts on the one hand and adopt them on the other. He asserts instead that these references to Israel's pre-history were simply "processed in a more subtle way." Beentjes, "The Chronicler's View of Israel's Earlier History," 106–107.

³⁶⁷ Beentjes asserts that these themes are simply *reworked*. Beentjes, "The Chronicler's View of Israel's Earlier History," 109.

As Japhet acknowledges in the introduction to her work, the role of speeches and prayers as theological texts is extremely important for the Chronicler's worldview.³⁶⁸ I suggest that the Chronicler understands particular events in Israel's history to form a basis of tacit knowledge to which characters can refer. These events are simply spoken about in these performed speeches and prayers, rather than re-narrated.

The book of Chronicles *presupposes* a coherent portrait of an Israelite functional memory, which includes the covenant with the patriarchs, the exodus, the giving of the law to Moses, and the conquest. This portrait, however, is primarily contained in character's speeches. By piecing together each reference to a historical event that predates the Chronicler's own narrative, we can determine a clear picture of what the Chronicler considered the essential components of an ideal Israelite "functional memory." The book accomplishes this indirect reference through a key mechanism of social memory: represented public discourse.

The concept of "functional memory" intersects deliberately with what Steinbock has discussed under the rubric of "social memory," but also provides helpful clarity in distinguishing between the rather broad range included by the latter term. Social memory is a helpful heuristic framework to describe sociological practices related to various repositories of commonly shared memories. Texts can be archives of social memory, in that they store potential aspects of a culture's memory. Canonical texts are all the more likely to be called upon. It is what makes them canonical. I am using "functional" memory, however, to describe the necessarily abbreviated mental schemata that any definable group most commonly shares. A group's functional memory includes the shorthand to commonly referenced events and their associated

³⁶⁸ Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 7–8. Previous voices that have asserted the importance of the speeches for the Chronicler's worldview include K. H. Graf, *Die Geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig: 1866), 122, and S. R. Driver, "The Speeches in Chronicles," *Expositor* 6/1 (1895): 241–256; 6/2 (1895): 286–308.

idioms and requisite cultural rhetorical force. These memories are talked about, considered relevant to the present actions of the community, and carry shared rhetorical force. The evidence that a historical event has moved from a society's *archival* (or potential) memory to its *functional* memory³⁶⁹ relies on several markers that can be tabulated: frequent reference to an event in public discourse, often in idiomatic or stylized language, with little to no clarification as to what is meant by the reference. These textual markers can signify that the audience is presumed to be familiar with the term or event. At the next level of analysis, a reader or hearer can ascertain the emotive appeal that the orator expects to engender within his audience from his reference to this familiar event. The often-allusive nature of these references, clearly fraught with emotive appeal for their ancient audiences, provides privileged access to what speakers considered to be shared knowledge between themselves and their audiences. Steinbock suggests that an orator is, in fact "more likely to sway public opinion if he simply allude[s] to the lessons provided by the master narrative, since he could be sure to strike an emotional cord with his audience."³⁷⁰ This emphasis on the familiar is demonstrated in Athens, for example, by the frequent allusions to certain sections of Homer's poems, works that held canonical status in Athenian society. It is, in fact, when the orator's analysis needed a less familiar historical parallel that the orator had to explain his historical example in more detail.³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 17–22, 119–36.

³⁷⁰ Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse*, 97. Ehud Ben Zvi also recognizes this social constraint in his article on the "limits of malleability" in Chronicles. Ehud Ben Zvi, "Shifting the Gaze: Historiographic Constraints in Chronicles and Their Implications," in *The Land that I Will Show You: Essays on the History and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East in Honor of J. Maxwell Miller*, ed. M. Patrick Graham and J. Andrew Dearman, JSOTSup (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 2001), 38–60. He notes that the Chronicler *avoids* changing certain aspects of Israel's history, which were perhaps commonly held, in order to allow him to shift other aspects. These unchanging aspects for Ben Zvi include much of the information contained in the genealogies, the lists of kings and their respective regnal periods, the division of the kingdoms, and the motifs of Moses, the covenant at Horeb, and the exodus.

³⁷¹ Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse*, 355. Cf. Diana Edelman and Lynette Mitchell, "Chronicles and Local Greek Histories," in *What was Authoritative for Chronicles?* ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana V. Edelman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 229–52. Edelman and Mitchell

Similarly, within its historical universe the Chronicler presents a unified functional memory through the depicted oral performances of the kings and the people. Repeated reference to the events, their presumed connection with one another, and their symbolic weight suggests that there is a central functional historical schema presumed to be shared between the Chronicler and his (admittedly ideal) audience. In setting these events as temporal or ideological reference points, the Chronicler assumes a shared knowledge among the narrative's "ideal audience" and a shared knowledge with his reader.³⁷²

Profile of the Chronicler's Functional Memory

A re-examination of the Chronicler's references to events that predate his narrative (not counting the history recounted in the genealogies, a separate topic entirely) reveals twenty-three instances in which an event from the Chronicler's pre-history is mentioned or alluded to. Seven of these are spoken by the "narrator," that is, they are not represented in direct discourse (1 Chron 15:15;

also point out that "Homer's poems held canonical status, and reference to Homeric epic was generally allusive... [I]n contrast, when early genealogies, local histories, or critical inquiries were used as sources by subsequent writers, material was often cited verbatim, with credit given to the earlier author" (238). Cf. Pearson, who observes that orators were careful to avoid appearing *more* educated than their audience when it came to shared history. Therefore, they avoided giving the impression that they were attempting to educate them, and instead presented material as common knowledge in order to increase solidarity with the audience. L. Pearson, "Historical Allusions in the Attic Orators," *CPh* 36 (1941): 213–229.

³⁷² A key part of Japhet's argument is her assertion that "according to the genealogical introduction to Chronicles, the people living in the land in David's time are directly descended from the sons of Jacob." Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 296. This argument ignores the fact that it is *common* for genealogies, particularly in oral societies, to evince what is called the "floating gap," in which a record of the originating generations is preserved, and a record of the most recent generations are preserved, but there is a loss of the intervening generations. See Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 23f. Therefore, the fact that these intervening events *do* appear in the speech of key characters suggests that they are not forgotten events, or events that are being intentionally hidden, but that the Chronicler was attempting to forge a continuity between the originating and royal generations. This continuity does not compromise the role of these intervening historical events, however, in public ceremonies or in the public commemoration of kings.

21:29; 2 Chron 1:3; 5:10; 8:13; 24:9).³⁷³ Almost all of these refer to Moses' receiving of the law, most commonly the divine instructions transmitted through him in relation to the ark and the tabernacle or the celebration of sacred days. One of these references (2 Chron 5:10) connects the construction of the ark, the covenant made between the Lord and Israel at Horeb, and the exodus. The remaining sixteen instances are contained in direct or reported discourse and refer to four periods/events in Israel's history: the patriarchal period, the exodus from Egypt, Moses' receipt of the law and construction of the tabernacle, and the expulsion of the nations to give the land to Israel. To this number can be added the two references to the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel" that are preserved in the prayer of David (1 Chron 29:18) and in the public missive of Hezekiah (2 Chron 30:6).³⁷⁴ The following table presents a complete listing of these:

The Patriarchs

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Speaker</i>
<i>The promise of the land to the patriarchs</i>	
1 Chron 16:16–18 ³⁷⁵	Levitical Singers
2 Chron 6:25 ³⁷⁶	Solomon
2 Chron 20:7–11	Jehoshaphat
<i>The patriarchal sojourn</i>	
1 Chron 16:19–22 ³⁷⁷	Levitical Singers
<i>"God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel"</i>	
1 Chron 29:18	David
2 Chron 30:6	Hezekiah

³⁷³ Each of the narrator's historical references describes the actions taken by the community as conforming to the standards given to Moses by the Lord. They are statements of legal conformation, affirming that the actions that David, Solomon, and Joash enact respectively are correct in the eyes of the narrator.

³⁷⁴ This is a variation of the divine epithet "God of the Fathers," which is very common in the Chronicler. Japhet argues that, while these epithets ("God of the Fathers" and "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel") are related in the broader Hebrew Bible, "God of the Fathers" in Chronicles does not refer specifically to the patriarchal generation. Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 11–15. Troy D. Cudworth, "The 'God of the Fathers' in Chronicles," *JBL* 135 (2016): 483–491, argues against her interpretation, asserting that the name in each case evokes the promise of the land to the patriarchs.

³⁷⁵ //Ps 105:9–11.

³⁷⁶ //1 Kgs 8:34.

³⁷⁷ //Ps 105:12–15.

Redemption from Egypt

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Speaker</i>
1 Chron 17:5 ³⁷⁸	The Lord (via the prophet Nathan)
1 Chron 17:21 ³⁷⁹	David
2 Chron 5:10 ³⁸⁰	Narrator
2 Chron 6:5 ³⁸¹	Solomon, quoting 1 Chron 17:5
2 Chron 7:22 ³⁸²	The Lord (via a vision)
2 Chron 20:10	Jehoshaphat

*Giving of the Law to Moses*³⁸³

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Speaker</i>
1 Chron 15:15	Narrator
1 Chron 22:13	David
2 Chron 8:13	Narrator
2 Chron 24:6	Joash
2 Chron 24:9	Narrator
2 Chron 33:8	Reported divine speech
2 Chron 35:6	Josiah
<i>Moses' construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness</i>	
1 Chron 21:29	Narrator
2 Chron 1:3	Narrator
2 Chron 5:10	Narrator

Driving out the nations from the land

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Speaker</i>
1 Chron 17:21 ³⁸⁴	David
2 Chron 6:25 ³⁸⁵	Solomon
2 Chron 20:7	Jehoshaphat

³⁷⁸ //2 Sam 7:6.³⁷⁹ //2 Sam 7:23.³⁸⁰ //1 Kgs 8:9.³⁸¹ //1 Kgs 8:15.³⁸² //1 Kgs 9:9.³⁸³ Moses' name is mentioned an additional three times in various genealogies, (1 Chron 6:34; 23:15; 26:24) and an additional four times in the phrase "Law of Moses" (2 Chron 23:18; 30:16) or the "Book of Moses" (2 Chron 25:4; 2 Chron 35:12).³⁸⁴ //2 Sam 7:23.³⁸⁵ //1 Kgs 8:34.

None of these events is expanded upon. None of them is narrated at any length. But, contra Japhet's claim that they are not a factor in the construction of the Chronicler's history, these events become an ideological cipher through which to view the history that the Chronicler does narrate—that of the rise and establishment of temple worship in Israel.

The narrative paradigm created by the Chronicler's historical references does not occur whole in any single text. It is instead a cognitive construct to which several different texts refer. Events are selected from this paradigm, not in order to educate the audience about them, but in order to support *other* rhetorical points through their already assumed familiarity. The rhetor in each case assumes their public value and uses their "symbolic capital" to reinforce his message.³⁸⁶

This symbolic capital should not be thought of as a "timeless significance" or a "theological datum." In each case, these events from Israel's history retain their fundamentally narrative shape: they are preserved as events connected to other events that precede or follow them. They retain their temporal structure. This narrative structure is demonstrated most clearly by the Chronicler's references to the exodus. Chronicles references the exodus from Egypt six times, five of which occur in reported speech. The exodus is referred to once by God speaking via a prophet to David (1 Chron 17:5, a quotation that will later appear in Solomon's prayer; 2 Chron 6:5); once in David's prayer to God (1 Chron 17:21); once in Solomon's temple-dedication prayer (2 Chron 6:5); once in the Lord's visionary response to Solomon (2 Chron 7:22); and once in Jehoshaphat's prayer (2 Chron 17:22). While the Chronicler omits some of the

³⁸⁶ Cf. Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse*, 31; cf. on the concept of "symbolic capital," Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991); on "social capital" in memory, Ben Zvi, "Potential Intersections."

references to the exodus contained in its source texts,³⁸⁷ he notably preserves references to the exodus in four instances of royal or divine speech, and then *adds* Jehoshaphat's speech, which includes a reference to the exodus. Jehoshaphat's speech includes both a reference to the exodus and a reference to Abraham and the conquest of the land.³⁸⁸ It is therefore modeled on previous examples of ideal royal speeches.

³⁸⁷ Japhet argues that the absence of the exodus account is significant to the Chronicler's ideology. Four of the passages that reference the exodus and are listed above (1 Chron 17:21; 2 Chron 5:10, 6:5; 7:22) have been transferred intact from Samuel-Kings (2 Sam 7:23; 1 Kgs 8:9, 16; 9:9 respectively). She argues that the reference to the exodus has been expunged in a remaining five instances (1 Chron 16:8–36/Ps 105:1–15; 1 Chron 17:5//2 Sam 7:6; 2 Chron 3:1–2//1 Kgs 6:1; 2 Chron 6:11//1 Kgs 8:21; 2 Chron 6:40–42//1 Kgs 8:50–53). I suggest instead that we should attend not only to the comparative number of instances in which the exodus is mentioned, but also to the speech situation in which these references occur, and the way in which they are given meaning within the Chronicler's framework.

While Japhet considers 1 Chron 17:5 to be an instance in which the reference to the exodus is erased, the use of *ʾlh hip'il*, with the Lord as its subject and the people as its object, almost always refers to the exodus event within the Hebrew Bible. While the phrase is usually completed, as it is in 1 Sam 7:6 with a specific reference to Egypt, any potential ambiguity to the Chronicler's reference in 1 Chron 17:5 is clarified in the Chronicler's later reference to this divine word in Solomon's prayer, which includes the specific reference to Egypt (2 Chron 6:5). It should not therefore be considered an instance in which the Chronicler has "erased" the exodus.

The ending to Solomon's prayer has been altered from its parallel in 1 Kgs 8:50–53, with the result that the reference to the exodus is removed. As I have argued above, however, the use of a concluding psalm to introduce the people's response is significant to this prayer's function and serves to craft a parallel between this fulfillment of the temple's construction and the psalm performance that marked the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem in 1 Chron 16:8–36. This latter psalm performance also ends with a refrain which serves as the responsorial transition into the people's "amen." In one other instance in Solomon's temple prayer, 2 Chron 6:11(//1 Kgs 8:21), the reference to the exodus is removed, though it is still present in the body of the prayer itself, in 2 Chron 6:5 and again in his later prayer in 2 Chron 7:22. This is not primarily an instance in which the exodus is systematically erased from the narrative, but an instance in which the Chronicler sought to promote another liturgical agenda within the text. The text ends in a liturgical response.

The reference to the exodus is removed in the reference to the relative timeframe between that founding event and the construction of the Temple recorded in 1 Kgs 6:1//2 Chr 3:1–2. The reference to the 480 years between the exodus and the building of the Temple, however, has been understood to be a reference to the particular narrative chronological framework of the Deuteronomistic history, a chronological framework that is not functional for the book of Chronicles. See Volkmar Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, CC (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 69–70; Simon J. De Vries, *1 Kings*, 2nd ed., WBC 12 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 2003), 93–94; Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 18–27. The use of the exodus as a significant point in time that marks the beginning of a period that culminates in the building of the temple is preserved in both reported divine discourse (1 Chron 17:5) and Solomon's temple prayer (2 Chron 6:5).

³⁸⁸ A point also noted by Beentjes, "The Chronicler's View of Israel's Earlier History," 107–108, who observes that the "descendants of Abraham" in this case are identified as those who built the temple.

Evidence that an event plays a functional role within a society's memory is found in its assumed communal significance. The ways that the Chronicler preserves the links between the exodus event and the construction of the temple, using the memory of the former to assert the significance of the latter, most clearly demonstrates the ongoing relevance of the exodus event. The exodus event exists as a temporal origin; a chronological reference point to which the temple construction is related.³⁸⁹ This narrative in miniature, marked at one point by the exodus and the other by the construction of the temple, is related first in the divine speech that describes the long stretch of time during which God lived among Israel without a temple: "*Since the day I brought up Israel to this day....*" (1 Chron 17:5; cf 2 Chron 6:5).³⁹⁰ Solomon then re-quotes this divine speech to David through Nathan when he reflects on the significance of his own age and the construction of the temple. He expands upon and clarifies the idiomatic reference to Israel's "bringing up" by specifying the location of Egypt:

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, 'Since the day that I brought my people out of

Japhet argues that the reference to the exodus is functioning as "simply a fact of history" and not a "theological doctrine." Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 299. This is not, however, a functional distinction when one considers the significant role of the exodus within biblical history. Such a statement requires an *a priori* assumption that the exodus did not possess a theological function within the narrative, an assumption that I am challenging. I argue that the fact that the ideal speech performances by specific kings include a reference to the exodus indicates its ongoing significance for the community. Jehoshaphat's speech models its inclusion of events from Israel's history after speech patterns established by David and Solomon.

³⁸⁹ Contra statements such as those made by Abadie that "Pour le Chroniste, l'événement fondateur d'Israël n'est pas l'exode, mais ce legs culturel qui ouvre un avenir de louange en Israël." Abadie, "Une 'histoire corrective'," 77–78. In this case, Abadie is representative of those who have confused the emphasis associated with the sense of a fulfilling ending with the significance of an origin. On the emphasis on ending above beginning in literary scholarship, see Niels Buch Leander, *The Sense of a Beginning: Theory of the Literary Opening* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2018), 1–10. Japhet similarly states that there is "no reference to the exodus as the fundamental, constitutive event in the relationship between God and Israel." Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 298.

³⁹⁰ This functional timeline is notable in that the terminus *a quo* for the Chronicler is *not* creation, but is the creation of Israel as God's people, the probable understanding of the exodus event. This reference to the exodus as a starting point is all the more remarkable in that other nations in the ANE tended to place greater emphasis on creation rather than history in their liturgical poetry. Cf. Gärtner, *Die Geschichtspsalmen*, 11–24; Gillingham, "Psalms 105 and 106," 462.

the land of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house... Nevertheless, it is not you who shall build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name. Now the Lord has fulfilled his promise that he made" (2 Chron 6:5–10)

The exodus is referred to as though it is already familiar to the audiences of these royal speeches. It therefore functions as an effective vehicle for cultural meaning, imbuing significance to Israel as God's people, the chosen status of each of these kings, and the building of the temple. It is presented as a founding event, though one whose true significance is only *fulfilled* in the construction of the temple.³⁹¹

The exodus is also presented as the basis for Israel's *singularity*; as David declares: "*Who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people... your people whom you redeemed from Egypt*" (2 Chron 17:21). Solomon's temple-dedication speech reinforces the event as a trope of singularity, using its rhetorical weight to highlight the significance of his building the temple: just as Israel is the *one* nation chosen by God, so too Jerusalem is the *one* city chosen to house the temple, and Solomon is the *one* king chosen to build it (2 Chron 6:5–10).

The exodus plays a role in another remembered narrative schema: God's rescue of Israel from Egypt *in order to* bring them into the land.³⁹² These two events, the exodus and the

³⁹¹ This use of the exodus as a founding event also challenges Japhet's claim that "in Chronicles, there is no connection between the building of the temple and the Exodus from Egypt." Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 298. It is true that the connection is made more obliquely than its corresponding representation in the book of Kings. The exodus does not appear in the structure of the narrative as it does in 1 Kgs 6:1 ("In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord"), an omission that many scholars have noted, but the exodus is referenced in two speeches. Noth and Rudolph connect this omission to an anti-Samaritan polemic; Brunet and North to the Chronicler's preference for the Davidic covenant over the Sinaitic. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, 175; Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, ix; North, "Theology of the Chronicler," 377–378; Brunet, "Le Chroniste," 368–369.

³⁹² Japhet argues that this tradition is not only de-emphasized but erased, based on her analysis of the genealogies, which skip the generations of the conquest and directly tie the people living in the land in

conquest, are connected in both David's and Jehoshaphat's public prayers (1 Chron 17:21; 2 Chron 20:7–10), creating a type of miniature narrative paradigm. In each case, this narrative schema constructed from Israel's functional memory is then connected to the present. David's prayer portrays the building of the temple as the final piece in this causal chain (1 Chron 17:23–28). In Jehoshaphat's prayer, which also includes the promise to the patriarchs (see below), this memory schema supports the expectation that God will now defend them against invaders (2 Chron 20:7–12). The references to a functional memory, therefore, appeal not only to knowledge of the event, but also to knowledge of its basic narrative structure and relevance to the present.

The second event tied to the giving of the land is, unsurprisingly, the promise of the land to the patriarchs. These episodes are remembered in a simple promise-fulfillment matrix attested in both Solomon's and Jehoshaphat's references to the land promise (2 Chron 6:25; 20:7). The connection is made most clearly in Jehoshaphat's prayer, which is likely original to the Chronicler: "Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land from before your people Israel, and give it to the offspring of Abraham, your friend, forever"? (2 Chron 20:7). There are several telling features of this reference that demonstrate the ongoing significance of the conquest of the land as a fulfillment of the promise to Abraham: it is *our God* (*'ēlōhênû*) who accomplished the conquest, and the effect of that conquest endures forever (*lě'ôlām*). That is, the Chronicler understands the patriarchal promise and the conquest of the land as events that culminate in the people's present and the impending conflict against their neighbors. These references situate the imminent catastrophe and hope for divine rescue within a broader narrative constructed by the people's shared memory.

David's time to their eponymous ancestors. This type of elision, however, is a common genealogical convention, in which originating generations are connected directly to more contemporary generations. It is so common that Vansina has coined the term "the floating gap" to describe it. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 23ff.

“God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel”

The use of the divine name “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel” in Chronicles also contributes to an understanding of the role of the patriarchs within the Chronicler’s functional memory schema. The related name “God of the fathers,” and its variations,³⁹³ is a common divine epithet in Chronicles, appearing twenty-seven times in the book. As Japhet points out, the two titles, “God of the fathers,” and the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and *Jacob*”³⁹⁴ are related in the broader Hebrew Bible.³⁹⁵ The references to the name in Exod 3–4 identify “the God of your fathers” with “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” indicating that the “fathers” in this case should be identified with the patriarchs.³⁹⁶ So too, the references to “God of the fathers” in Deuteronomy appear to relate the fathers to “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” and thereby function to create a link with the patriarchal generation. Japhet identifies a shift, however, in the term’s usage in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles that coincides with her thesis that the patriarchal generations are overlooked in Chronicles as a whole: the name “God of the fathers” and its variations link Israel to all previous generations in an “eternal, uninterrupted continuity.”³⁹⁷ She asserts that there is therefore no

³⁹³ These variations include “the God of their fathers,” “the God of our fathers,” “the God of his father,” YHWH God of their fathers,” “YHWH God of our fathers,” “YHWH God of your fathers,” “YHWH, God of his fathers.” See Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 11; Cudworth, “The ‘God of the Fathers’ in Chronicles,” 483–491.

³⁹⁴ Replacing the name Jacob with Israel is a convention of the Chronicler.

³⁹⁵ “God of the Fathers” appears nineteen times in the Bible, outside of Chronicles, in Exodus (four times), Deuteronomy (eight times), Joshua (once), Judges (once), 2 Kings (twice), Daniel (once), and Ezra (three times).

³⁹⁶ Exod 3:6, 15, 16; 4:5. Japhet raises the possibility that the care given to present both versions of the title suggests that they might have originally been two separate epithets that were intentionally unified. Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 12n12.

³⁹⁷ Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 14. Cf. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29*, 564; P. B. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles*, trans. Anthony P. Runia, HCOT (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 92. Contra von Rad, *Geschichtsbild*, 7, who argues that this epithet is an example of Chronicles’ direct dependence on Deuteronomy.

specific allusive reference to a remembered patriarchal generation when the phrase “God of the fathers” is used.

There are two instances, however, in which the Chronicler uses the epithet “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,” and in which the connection with the patriarchs is unmistakable. Both of these are in the context of public speech events. The fact that this epithet is not simply interchangeable with “God of the fathers” strengthens the intentional reference to the fathers in these particular instances, as it is unlikely that the phrase “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel” serves as a stereotyped formula for the Chronicler. The first reference occurs in David’s prayer prayed “in the presence of all the assembly” (1 Chron 29:10–19). This prayer is not contained in Samuel-Kings, and the characteristic Chronistic replacement of “Jacob” with “Israel” suggests that the phrase was not simply lifted wholesale from a preceding source. Furthermore, the reference to the patriarchs in 1 Chron 29:18 follows the characterization of the people as “sojourners like their fathers” in v. 15, an image traditionally associated with the patriarchs, and which appears already in Chronicles in the description of the patriarchs in 1 Chron 16:19–20. Therefore, in David’s public prayer before the assembly, he uses references to and images associated with the patriarchs in order to create a cluster of historical allusions that undergird his public proclamation of support for Solomon’s temple building. Memory plays a communal rhetorical role. The second use of the divine name “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel” appears in Hezekiah’s missive to the people of Israel and Judah (2 Chron 30:6). His letter sent “throughout all Israel” is once again a piece of public literature, designed to be transmitted broadly among the populace, which references the relationship of God to the paradigmatic patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. This appeal to the relationship between God and Israel’s foundational generations grounds Hezekiah’s call to re-instate the traditional celebration of the Passover (2 Chron 30:1, 6, 9).

Therefore, while the Chronicler prefers the divine name “God of the fathers” and does not appear always to be referring specifically to the patriarchs in its use of that divine name,³⁹⁸ he portrays kings as using specific references to the patriarchs via the divine name “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel” in order to make particular rhetorical arguments. These kings are likely depicted as drawing on a pre-existing “functional memory” to which rhetors can appeal when they desire to call upon corresponding imagery of “sojourning” or the ongoing faithfulness of God to a remnant. The Chronicler, in constructing his narrative world, appears to assume that such references would be meaningful to his audience, even as he uses terms differently within the narrative itself.

The Chronicler draws from (and presents his characters as drawing from) a limited schematic pre-history of Israel. This network of significant events is not unique to the Chronicler and is not developed within the Chronicler’s reconstructed narrative. It is, however, exactly in its widespread familiarity that it can function as a source of effective historical tropes within public speeches and circulated letters within the book. Indeed, in this case, the rhetorical effect of the character’s speeches relies on these events being well-known. In the terms of the new literacy, each of these kings—David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah—indicate their familiarity with this functional memory schema in ideal speech acts. They are “fluent” in the constitutive

³⁹⁸ Troy Cudworth argues, against Japhet, that the title “God of the fathers” is a “concise shorthand phrase” designed to be evocative of “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” in almost every occurrence. Cudworth, “The ‘God of the Fathers’ in Chronicles,” 488n18. He bases his argument most strongly, however, on two exceptional passages. The first is David’s prayer, listed above, and the second is Jehoshaphat’s prayer, in which he begins with an address to “YHWH, God of our fathers,” and goes on to describe the conquest of the land based on the corresponding promise to the patriarchs. The reality is likely in the middle path between these two viewpoints: that is, the phrase “God of your fathers” can bear several potentially allusive meanings based on the speaker or the narrative context. It can occur in close proximity to references to the patriarchs or can alternatively be used to refer to the generation of the exodus (2 Chron 7:22), or to describe adherence to orthodox religion more generally (2 Chron 34:32–33). What Japhet has demonstrated is that a strong claim to the land does not need to be intimately connected to a robust development of the patriarchal promise. Cudworth over-emphasizes the relationship between the giving of the land and the memory of the patriarchs.

events within Israel's history. Furthermore, the public nature of their performance suggests that they assume that the basic significance of the events referred to would be familiar to their audience.

1 Chronicles 16:8–36 as Social Strategy

With this framework of a shared functional memory in mind, I return to the psalm in 1 Chron 16:8–36. I noted above how it is the oral public performances in the book that refer to a schematic narrative framework that is absent in the narrative portions of the book. Some of these speech events are adopted from the Chronicler's *Vorlage* and some are unique to the Chronicler. I also argued that the psalms themselves were understood as texts that are particularly conducive to public participation, and that the "ideal" Israelite participant in the cult had mastery of at least a small number of psalm responsories. In 1 Chron 16:8–36, the use of psalms to present and confirm a particularly *historical* knowledge is institutionalized in the scene that describes the founding of the temple liturgy. The cult is the place in which these historical traditions can be transmitted. The role of liturgy to confirm both a knowledge of the proper way to participate in the cult and an education in the most central historical symbols of the people is part of this ideal reality that the Chronicler constructs.

1 Chronicles 16:8–36 reproduces Ps 105:1–15, Ps 96:1–13 and the opening verse and concluding refrain of Ps 106:1, 47–48. In its reference to the patriarchs in vv. 16–22 (//Ps 105:9–15) this composite psalm also contains the first reference to the functional memory I outlined above. Through its quotation of Ps 105, 1 Chron 16:16–22 explicitly references at least two events from this functional schema: the covenant with the patriarchs, including their sojourn in

the wilderness, and the connection of the covenant with the promise of the land of Canaan.³⁹⁹ In the context of the prayer, these events are chosen as ciphers to represent the community's true concern, revealed in the final refrain: that the Lord might save them, and gather them in from the nations, just as he protected the fathers in their sojourning (1 Chron 16:35–36). In the context of the book of Chronicles, the prayer introduces two tropes related to these historical events that will recur later: the eternal giving of the land (inaugurated by a historical covenant with Abraham; cf. 2 Chron 20:7) and the image of the patriarch's sojourning (cf. 1 Chron 29:15, 18). Therefore, the psalm uses a technique that occurs in several speeches in Chronicles, in which an event from Israel's functional memory is taken up as a symbol of their current plight. The

³⁹⁹ Interpreters have analyzed this selection in various ways. Trent Butler argues for a theological recontextualization of Israel's history. The setting is no longer that of an extended patriarchal history but is instead cataloguing the divine stance towards international politics. Butler, "A Forgotten Passage," 144. Loader made a similar argument two years before this, arguing that the theme of the psalm is "Israel among the nations." J. A. Loader, "Redaction and Function of the Chronistic 'Psalm of David,'" *OTWSA* 19 (1976): 69–75. He argues that the cutting off of the history at Ps 105:15 was motivated by the Chronicler's desire to highlight the points in Israel's history where they were "among the nations." This is also the stance of Simon J. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, FOTL 11 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 151. Braun goes so far as to remove the historical dimension from the psalm entirely, arguing that "By concluding with v. 15 of the psalm [105], the writer has permitted vv 12–15 (=1 Chr 16:19–22) to stand more in the nature of a timeless principle applicable therefore in his own day: *It is the people Israel, reduced in number and without a homeland, which is protected by God.*" Braun, *1 Chronicles*, 191.

Others highlight the general theological affinities the psalm shares with the rest of the book, including, most commonly, 1) the covenant of the God of the fathers (J. Haussmann, "Gottesdienst als Gottes Lob: Erwägungen zu 1 Chr 16:8–36," in *Spiritualität: Theologische Beiträge*, ed. H. Wagner [Stuttgart: 1987], 83–92); 2) Israel's place among the nations (Loader, "Redaction," 69–75; Butler, "A Forgotten Passage," 144; De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 151. Mark Shipp focuses particularly on the unique connection between the Psalms in Chronicles and the appeal to "remember." Shipp, "Remember His Covenant Forever," 33–39; cf. Throntveit, "Songs in a New Key," 153–170; Hill, "Patchwork Poetry," 99) and salvation from among them cf. Harm van Grol, "1 Chronicles 16: the Chronicler's Psalm and its View of History," in *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes*, ed. Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011], 119); 3) international and cosmic praise (Ralph Klein, "Psalms in Chronicles," *CurTM* 32 [2005]: 264–75); and 4) God's sovereignty and rule (Throntveit, "Songs in a New Key," 153–70). My argument does not deny such theological affinities but emphasizes how it is specifically historical events that the Chronicler uses to make these theological statements.

Chronicler introduces these historical tropes via a traditional text performed in a public setting.⁴⁰⁰

Furthermore, the Chronicler's presentation of the psalm with its performative character and demonstration of the people's response communicates and emphasizes the social value of the knowledge contained in the psalm. This social value is communicated in two ways: first, the psalm positively characterizes the person who participates in its recital (1 Chron 16:10–11); second, it provides an opportunity for a public display of assent through the use of a responsive refrain.

The psalm characterizes the worshippers in 1 Chron 16:10–11 as those who *seek the Lord* (*mēbaqšē YHWH*; 1 Chron 16:10). The phrase “to seek the Lord” ($\sqrt{drš} / \sqrt{bqš} + ['ēt-]$ *YHWH/ 'ēlōhîm*) does not have a static meaning throughout the Hebrew Bible, but almost universally describes the correct performance of piety. Because of this, the variations in its meaning become a marker of the development of different ideal religious actions. This feature may be demonstrated by observing the development between the meaning of this phrase in Samuel-Kings and in Chronicles itself. In Samuel-Kings, the phrase “to seek God” indicates seeking a divine word or an oracle and is usually accomplished by means of a prophet.⁴⁰¹ It is,

⁴⁰⁰ It is therefore incorrect, in my opinion, to argue that the psalm is not attempting to make a specific reference to the patriarchal history. Contra Butler, “A Forgotten Passage,” 144; Braun, *I Chronicles*, 191. The use of a quoted source to convey a historical event, furthermore, does not undermine the significance of the historical reference for the Chronicler. On the contrary, it sets it apart for special attention. Contra Japhet, *Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, 81.

⁴⁰¹ The phrase “to inquire of the Lord” (*lidrōš et-YHWH/ 'ēlōhîm*) is used in 1 Sam 9:9; 1 Kgs 22:8; 2 Kgs 3:11; 8:8; 22:13, 18. Cf. 1 Kgs 22:5, which explicitly indicates that the object of inquiry is a “word of the Lord” (*debār YHWH*); and 2 Kgs 1:2, 3, 6, 16 where the same phrase is used to indicate enquiring of a foreign God. Several times, the prepositional phrase “by him” (*mē'ôto*), that is by means of a prophet, is used to indicate clearly the instrument via which the word from the Lord is sought (2 Kgs 3:11, 8:8). The phrase “inquire of God” ($\sqrt{bqš} + et + 'ēlōhîm$) is used only once, in 2 Sam 12:16, when David intervenes before God on behalf of his and Bathsheba's child. These uses are very different from the Chronicler's use of the phrase as a term for cultic piety. Cf. Jacob L. Wright, “Seeking, Finding and Writing in Ezra-Nehemiah,” *Unity and Disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah*, HBM 17 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 277–304.

furthermore, an action performed by an individual, almost always a king, who is seeking this divine word.

The primary meaning shifts in Chronicles. While the phrase is still used occasionally to indicate seeking a prophet's oracle,⁴⁰² it is primarily used to describe an intention properly fulfilled by the people in a cultic context before the temple or the ark. "Seeking the Lord" becomes a *situated* and *communal* activity, performed by the congregation around cultic centers.⁴⁰³ The significance of the action described by this phrase, and the importance of its proper fulfillment, is revealed when the Chronicler attributes the ark's first failure to take up its place in Jerusalem to the fact that the Israelites "did not seek [God] according to the rule" (*kî-lō' dērašnuhû kammišpāt*; 1 Chron 15:13).⁴⁰⁴ As portrayed in Uzzah's ill-fated end (1 Chron 13:9–14), there is a correct and an incorrect way to seek the Lord. In contrast, the ceremony that celebrates the ark's successful return in 1 Chron 15–16 is accomplished correctly. In the context of that ceremony, communal acclamation repeatedly encourages the cultic personnel and the people to *seek the Lord* continually, an action that is set in parallel with "singing praises" and "remembering the wondrous works" of the Lord (1 Chron 16:9, 12). The ongoing importance of the public demonstration of the act of "seeking the Lord" culminates in Chronicles when it becomes a marker of community membership. 2 Chronicles 15:12 describes a covenant ceremony in which the people swear together not only to "seek the Lord" but also to put to death those who do not. "Seeking the Lord," that is the actions that the *Chronicler* prescribes as

⁴⁰² 1 Chron 10:14; 2 Chron 18:4, 6, 7; 34:21, 26.

⁴⁰³ See 1 Chron 15:13; 22:19; 2 Chron 11:16; 14:3, 6; 15:2, 12, 13; 30:19. 2 Chronicles 7:14 augments God's declaration to Solomon in 1 Kgs 9:1–9 by adding the clause concerning the entire people who, when they "humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face (*wībaqšû pānay*)," will be heard.

⁴⁰⁴ This is the first instance of what De Vries calls the "regulation formula" which is used in Chronicles to refer to David or a Davidic king, but which always relates to the tasks of the Levites. See Simon J. De Vries, "Moses and David as Cult Founders in Chronicles," *JBL* 107 (1988): 619–639.

fulfilling the mandate to seek the Lord, becomes the distinguishing marker between outsiders and insiders, those who have the right to belong to the community and those who do not. It is significant then, that in the ceremony described in 1 Chron 16, “seeking the Lord” is equated with actions fulfilled in the singing of a psalm.

Within the psalm performance of 1 Chron 16:8–36, the people are entreated to seek the Lord, his “strength,” and his “presence” (1 Chron 16:10–11// Ps 105:3–4) three times. This threefold appeal is both preceded and followed by the command to “make known” (*vyd’hip’il*) the Lord’s deeds and to “remember” (*vzkr*) his wondrous works, miracles, and judgments, a command that is accomplished by the remainder of the psalm. The people’s public commitment to “seek the Lord” is explicitly and externally confirmed in a cultic celebration that takes place in the assembly among those who are celebrating the return of the ark. The final chorus of “amen” that follows the performance of the psalm confirms this commitment (1 Chron 16:36).

Therefore “seeking the Lord,” which is associated in Chronicles with public cultic activity and which is essential to membership within Israel (cf. 2 Chron 15:12), is here associated both with the script of the psalms and with the act of remembering. This act of remembering is then demonstrated through a reference to the patriarchs and the promise of the land (1 Chron 16:13–22). There is therefore a matrix of cultic activity associated both with remembering and with psalm recitation in the public space of the temple and precedent cult spaces. The historical events of Israel’s past once again accrue social significance: they are to be remembered as part of an ideal religious ceremony (1 Chron 16:4) and they also function as effective symbols to frame appeals related to the people’s present (1 Chron 16:36). In the language of classicist Bernd

Steinbock, these events are repeatedly “communicated,” “talked about” and considered relevant for present concern.⁴⁰⁵

Social Strategy and Cultural Literacy

As seen above, Chronicles depicts several social type scenes that present the people as key participants in these knowledge-sharing and affirming ceremonies. These scenes are marked by distinctive descriptions of piety, the recital of psalms, and the invocation of a consistent shared functional memory. The events that populate this memory are not narrated within Chronicles itself but comprise part of the symbolic world of its characters. It is, of course, a literary depiction: these scenes depict speech acts performed by ideal characters. But the emphasis on this knowledge as a public knowledge, spoken by kings, affirmed by the people in particular mnemonically socializing events, is evidence that, taken together with the evidence to be examined in Ezra-Nehemiah and the Dead Sea Scrolls in the following chapters, will present a compelling picture for the use of these historical recitals as a social strategy within Second Temple Judaism, designed to unite a people around a common language populated with a common set of symbols.

Public Participation in the Book of Chronicles

To summarize, in the book of Chronicles as a whole, this public participation in a functional memory occurs on three levels, in order of increasing engagement:

- 1) The first is the people’s role as presumed audience for the several public speeches that allude to a shared functional memory (1 Chron 16:8–36; 29:10–19; 2 Chron 6:1–42;

⁴⁰⁵ Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse*, 19.

20:6–12; 30:6–9), comprised of references to the patriarchs, the exodus from Egypt, the giving of the law to Moses, and the conquest of the land.⁴⁰⁶ There is both an implied communal assent to the events to which king and deity refer in their speeches and also a sense of their shared meaning, which makes these events conducive for re-framing events in the people's present. While the people's role is passive, these scenes demonstrate both the communication of the knowledge and its ongoing social relevance.

- 2) The second is the people's communal assent to the public ritual presentation of a schematic "history" of Israel in 1 Chron 16:16–22. The people actively *assent* to this version of history and its immediate social relevance through their communal "*amen*" (1 Chron 16:36). The responsorial structure of the psalm presents the possibility that the community might also be engaged in reciting portions of it. This response is still a very simple mode of participation.
- 3) The final mode of participation presented in Chronicles is that of the performance of a limited script, the refrain "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his steadfast love endures forever" (2 Chron 7:3; cf. 1 Chron 16:34, 41; 2 Chron 5:13; 20:21). This refrain implies not only a familiarity with the script but also with the communal practice of the responsorial, in which the people reply to known texts, at a known point in time, with a scripted response.

At this stage, I want to situate the Chronicler's portrait of a society that shares a basic functional memory comprised of psalm scripts and rudimentary historical schemata within its social context in the Second Temple Period. While the exile and subsequent return to the land

⁴⁰⁶ Within these speeches, references to historical events occur in 1 Chron 16:16–22; 28:18; 2 Chron 6:5, 25; 20:7–11; 30:6.

prompts a remarkable process of textual assembly and canonization in Persian period Judea,⁴⁰⁷ recent archaeological discoveries suggest a marked dip in extant evidence for widespread written activity in the fifth to third centuries BCE as compared with the (relatively) widespread epigraphic evidence for public writing in the eighth to sixth centuries, in the late monarchic period prior to the exile.⁴⁰⁸ The writing of the book of Chronicles, most likely in the fourth century BCE,⁴⁰⁹ coincides with the period of cultural re-establishment following the exile. Such a social situation could explain the several scenes within the book that emphasize the presentation of a particularly *textual* knowledge, that is the reproduction of cultic texts (psalms) and references to a Torachic narrative, in primarily oral settings. Public oral performance is presented as a valid and widespread technology to disseminate cultural knowledge. Chronicles therefore navigates a binary between *literate* and *oral* knowledge: it draws heavily on classic written

⁴⁰⁷ The Chronicler almost certainly compiled his work in the post-exilic province of Yehud. See summary of evidence in Louis C. Jonker, *Defining All-Israel in Chronicles*, 68–71.

⁴⁰⁸ According to Sanders, the epigraphic evidence in the eighth to sixth centuries suggests a “uniformity across space and a uniform direction of change across time” in both orthography and technique. There is also evidence for a formal and semi-formal register that suggests that both professional scribes, and some non-professionals possessed these abilities. Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 127. On the peak of epigraphic evidence for written Hebrew in the eighth to sixth centuries, see David Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 164–66; William Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 98–99. My understanding of the situation is much more qualified than that presented by Schniedewind, who describes the dispersion of literacy as “commonplace”: “With the emergence of literacy and the flourishing of literature a textual revolution arose in the days of King Josiah. This was one of the most profound cultural revolutions in human history: the assertion of the orthodoxy of texts. As writing spread throughout Judean society, literacy broke out of the confines of the closed scribal schools, the royal court, and the lofty temples... Basic literacy became commonplace, so much so that the illiterate could be socially stigmatized.” Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 91. While the epigraphic evidence suggests that inscriptions had “broken out” of the confines of the temple and the palace, and played a role in public life, there is hardly evidence for “commonplace” literacy.

⁴⁰⁹ Most recent scholarship agrees on a very general date for the Chronicler in the fourth century BCE. See Rodney Duke, “Recent Research in Chronicles,” *CurBS* 8 (2009): 16–22. Cf. Steven L. McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 29–33; Yigal Levin, “Who was the Chronicler’s Audience? A Hint from the Genealogies,” *JBL* 122 (2003): 229; L. C. Allen, “The First and Second Books of Chronicles,” in *The New Interpreters’ Bible*, ed. L.E. Keck et al. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999), 299–301; Louis C. Jonker, “Solomon in an International Arena: The Significance of the King of Peace for Yehud in the Persian Era,” *OTE* 21 (2008): 653–669.

sources to authorize its account of history but portrays a central position for methods of oral publication. It emphasizes public performances of key texts in large social gatherings and the widespread and wholehearted participation of the people in these rituals, according to simple, formulaic, and accessible scripts.⁴¹⁰

There is an increasing consensus among modern scholars of literacy to move away from older models that highlighted the availability of particular technologies (including syllabic scripts)⁴¹¹ to a model that highlights the respective social value that is ascribed to “literary” pursuits and the knowledge that can be acquired through them.⁴¹² This social perspective on literacy looks at literacy not only as a set of technical skills to be acquired (or not) but rather as a public means for demonstrating what you know. As Cook-Gumperz summarizes, “Literacy involves a complex of socio-cognitive processes that are part of the production and comprehension of texts and talk within interactional contexts that in turn influence how these literate products will be valued.”⁴¹³ This approach recognizes that there are certain “literate” practices that are required for participation in different membership groups. This literacy can include the ability to read and write, especially in contemporary society in which this is the mark of an educated person, but they can also become coterminous with what David Carr describes as “cultural literacy,” which requires a knowledge of the appropriate vocabularies and the wielding of appropriate scripts to display one’s insider knowledge.⁴¹⁴ Therefore, it becomes possible to

⁴¹⁰ Jeremy Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, STDJ (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 63n65.

⁴¹¹ Cf. the classic theories outlined in Wyatt, “The Consequences of Literacy,” 304–345; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*; Havelock, *Preface to Plato*.

⁴¹² Cook-Gumperz, “The Social Construction of Literacy,” 1–18; Castanheira et al., “Interactional Ethnography,” 353–400; Street, *Social Literacies*; Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice*.

⁴¹³ Cook-Gumperz, “The Social Construction of Literacy,” 4–5. Cf. Castanheira et al., “Interactional Ethnography,” 353–400.

⁴¹⁴ Carr, “Response to W. M. Schniedewind,” 8; See also the socially constructed nature of the “intertext” in D. Bloome and A. Egan-Robertson, “The Social Construction of Intertextuality in Classroom Reading and Writing Lessons,” *Reading Research Quarterly* 28 (1993): 303–334; D. Bloome

talk about an increase in “Torah” or “psalm literacy” among a populace, even as evidence for widespread writing and reading activities decreases. This Torah and psalm literacy would comprise a high social value given to participation in communal activities that feature or celebrate texts or the performance of texts. Such a program does not require that its participants be able to read the text themselves; they merely value the acquisition of a limited familiarity with its contents and provide social support for those communal experts who assure its ongoing preservation and transmission.

Education in this type of cultural literacy requires a social strategy for making texts “public.” A “public text” must be not only *accessible* but must also conscript its public as a participant in its story. This is accomplished partly via linguistic form: Seth Sanders has recently pointed to the influence of the use of second person address and vernacular language in the early development of a distinctive Hebrew literature.⁴¹⁵ But as Sanders also acknowledges, the concept of a public text moves beyond issues of vernacular vs. erudite language into the presentation of a genre and its expected participants.⁴¹⁶ A public text is also one with which the public interacts. It is one that is populated by symbols, characters, and events that *have meaning for those reading (and/or speaking)*.

With this theoretical framework in mind, I return to the data presented in the book of Chronicles. I have noted particularly the methods of engagement with historical knowledge via public processes, communal cultic events, and scenes of public exhortation. This communal molding of a particular type of speech that demonstrates familiarity with key events in Israel’s

and F. Bailey, “Studying Language Through Events, Particularity, and Intertextuality,” in *Multiple Disciplinary Perspectives on Literacy Research*, ed. R. Beach, et al., (Urbana, IL: NCRE and NCTE, 1992), 181–210.

⁴¹⁵ Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, esp. 75.

⁴¹⁶ Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew*, 105.

history is demonstrated not only in the sources the Chronicler uses, but in the way that he depicts the people as accountable for a particular response. Even though this response is *simple*, it is *expected*, and models a pattern of engagement with traditional Israelite knowledge. Chronicles outlines a model to engage the people in traditional texts: it is a minimal beginning, but it demonstrates a key aspect in the development of a common cultural language, fluency in a native and shared tongue that encompasses not only language but a requisite vocabulary of significant cultural events. As Cook-Gumperz articulates above, strategies of literacy also contribute to the social valuation of literate products themselves.⁴¹⁷ Within Chronicles, the people's familiarity with a small range of psalms and traditional history confirms the role of the book of psalms and extended written histories themselves, as well as the social role of those cultic experts in traditional knowledge, and the growing cultural authority of the cultural texts of Judaism.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the oral presentation of a shared “functional memory” plays an important socially constructive role in Chronicles. The content of this “functional memory” is imparted almost entirely in speech, the speech of the people and the speeches of kings, in ways that suggest that the material was commonly known, and, in the cycle of social reinforcement, should be commonly known.⁴¹⁸ This knowledge is refreshed, reshaped, and re-utilized in scenes in the public square. The people are portrayed as active participants who know their cultural script. Chronicles as a whole, as well as the scenes of psalm-singing within it, is an eminently

⁴¹⁷ Cook-Gumperz, “The Social Construction of Literacy,” 4–5: “Literacy involves a complex of socio-cognitive processes that are part of the production and comprehension of texts and talk within interactional contexts *that in turn influence how these literate products will be valued.*” Emphasis added.

⁴¹⁸ Chwe, *Rational Ritual*, 14–19.

literary product, copied from presumed written documents, but it is a literary product that highlights scenes of the oral recitation of a community's commonly shared history.

This literary portrayal stands in a trajectory, however, that will become more prominent as I continue my chronological exploration of the phenomenon of creating and transmitting a shared “functional memory” through the oral recitation of abbreviated histories in the Second Temple period. While the scenes in Chronicles remain just that—literarily constructed scenes—evidence from Qumran suggests that this practice of reciting poetic summaries of Israel's history expands as a practice within (at least) sections of ancient Israel. This representation is also significant for the question of canonical authority. The authorization of texts for a society requires the assent of an elite scribal class but it is reinforced by textually inspired group practices that do not require extensive literacy. These practices undergird a network of social support for the development of a limited common knowledge of what is in these texts.

This interplay between two memory systems—a basic schematic knowledge shared through occasions of oral performance on the one hand, and a more extended knowledge contained in texts that would be accessible to only a few on the other—is part of a sophisticated interaction between the contents of cultural texts “published” (that is in the sense of “being made public”) through communal acts of recitation and the contents of these cultural texts as they are solidified within scribal circles. The biblical narrative contains hints of a social strategy to “make public” knowledge of these texts. This strategy cannot, of course be taken at face value. It presents ideal situations of performance and ideal constructions of these texts. But the marked pattern of the use and development of these recitals within texts, as well as manuscript evidence from Qumran together can suggest a pattern of socio-historical use of these recitals.

CHAPTER 4

PRAYING IN THE WILDERNESS (NEH 9:5B–37)

Introduction

We need history, certainly, but we need it for reasons different from those for which the idler in the garden of knowledge needs it, even though he may look nobly down on our rough and charmless needs and requirements. We need it, that is to say, for the sake of life and action.

—Friedrich Nietzsche
Twilight of the Idols

In Chapter 2, I argued that the historical psalms provide a socially strategic resource for confirming modes of collective historical discourse and establishing a shared “functional memory.” These psalms not only demonstrate the construction of memorably schematic narratives and the codification of a key set of repeating historical images, but they also construct a role for the audience who hears this history recounted. In Chapter 3, I argued that the books of Chronicles portray an ideal society of persons who share a common memory. Chronicles narrates only a limited history, but within this narrative, ideal figures remember a core set of events that correlate to the master narrative also preserved in the psalms. The use of a functional narrative schema that recurs in both liturgical texts and Second Temple narratives forms the basis for my hypothesis that these historical recitals were becoming an increasingly important mode of historical understanding in this period.

In the present chapter, I turn to the historical review recorded in Neh 9:5b–37. This recital, performed by the Levites as part of a penitential ceremony, is the third of three ceremonies celebrating the people’s dedication to Torah (Neh 8–10). The chapter not only depicts the *contents* of their act of remembering, which includes a sophisticated expansion of the functional schema that I have identified in the previous chapters, but it also depicts the

communal transformation that accompanies the successful public performance of this historical knowledge. As I have argued previously, communal memory requires not only a means of communication but also the societal motivation to participate in these communicative events. In order to analyze both the significance of what is remembered as well as the characterization of those who participate in memory, I will consider Neh 9:5b–37 through the lens of Astrid Erll’s concept of memory *in* literature, that is, the depiction of remembering itself as depicted in literary works, and Jan Assmann’s description of memory’s “participatory structure,” the way in which societies orchestrate their members’ regular interaction with shared memory.⁴¹⁹

Critical Issues

Before addressing how Neh 9 relates to and transforms the functional memory of Israel’s history, I will briefly situate the chapter within several critical conversations, including questions surrounding its dating, relationship to its literary context, and genre.

Date

Nehemiah 9 presents particular difficulties in precise dating, due in part to its possible independence from its surrounding narrative texts.⁴²⁰ It is now generally accepted, against earlier scholarship, that neither Ezra-Nehemiah nor the prayer in Neh 9 was composed by the

⁴¹⁹ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 70–82.

⁴²⁰ So H. G. M. Williamson, “Structure and Historiography in Nehemiah 9,” in *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography*, ed. H. G. M. Williamson (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 285; H. Graf Reventlow, *Gebet im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1986), 281; Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 11.

Chronicler.⁴²¹ While suggested dates for the prayer range from the seventh century⁴²² to the fourth/early third century,⁴²³ to as late as the early Hellenistic period,⁴²⁴ it is most commonly dated to the post-exilic period, preceding the narratives in Ezra-Nehemiah.⁴²⁵ Some argue, however, that it was written at a late stage of the book's development specifically for its present context.⁴²⁶ The primary evidence for the dating of the prayer typically revolves around three issues: 1) the relative *lack* of emphasis on the exile; 2) the prayer's relationship to previous texts, including the Pentateuch, Prophets, and Psalms; 3) and the expression of strong distress at the Persian overlord's treatment of the Judean people, a sentiment that is at odds with the more mild assessment of Persians by the rest of the books of Ezra-Nehemiah.

The first point concerning the prayer's lack of emphasis on the exile relates to the surprisingly understated reference to that event in Neh 9:30b. After the extended description of Israel's more ancient history, it is surprising that such a cataclysmic event is rendered simply, in

⁴²¹ See the influential arguments made in Sara Japhet, "The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew," *VT* 18 (1968): 330–371.

⁴²² A. C. Welch, "The Source of Nehemiah ix," *ZAW* 47 (1929): 130–137. Boda addresses and critiques each of his points, however, in Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 13–14; Gili Kugler, "Present Affliction Affects the Representation of the Past: An Alternate Dating of the Levitical Prayer in Nehemiah 9," *VT* 63 (2013): 605–626.

⁴²³ G. Hölscher, "Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia," in *Die heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments II*, ed. E. Kautzsch and A. Bertholet (Tübingen: Mohr, 1923), 491–562; Sigmund Mowinckel, *Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemiah I: Die nachchronistische Redaktion des Buches. Die Listen* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1964), 56; H. Schneider, *Die Bücher Esra und Nehemiah* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1959), 39, 218; U. Kellermann, *Nehemia: Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte*, BZAW 102 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967), 35–36; V. Pröbstl, *Nehemia 9, Psalm 106, und Psalm 136 und die Rezeption des Pentateuchs* (Göttingen: Cuvillier Verlag, 1997), 103–105. For a detailed assessment of the date of Neh 9, see Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 11–16. Boda ultimately supports a date in the early Persian period, pointing particularly to the affinity between Neh 9 and Haggai and Zech 1–8 (Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 189–91).

⁴²⁴ Jacob Wright, "Ezra," in *The New Interpreter's Bible: One Volume Commentary*, ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David Petersen (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010), 263.

⁴²⁵ See Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 189–94, 197. Oeming supports a date in the middle Persian period. See Manfred Oeming, "See, We Are Serving Today (Nehemiah 9:26): Nehemiah 9 as a Theological Interpretation of the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 572, 584.

⁴²⁶ Jacob L. Wright, *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah Memoir and its Earliest Readers* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 317–19, 340; Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 382–83.

half a verse, as the Lord giving them “into the hand of the peoples of the lands” (*wattittēnēm bēyad ‘ammē hā’ārāšōt*). Based on this seeming understatement, Gili Kugler has revived an argument, originally voiced by A. C. Welch, that Neh 9 preserves a late pre-exilic prayer that has been inserted into its present context.⁴²⁷ Verse 30b is not, according to her argument, a reference to the Babylonian exile at all but alludes to “invading conquerors who settle in the land.”⁴²⁸ She also bases her assessment on the marked difference in penitential posture between Neh 9 and other commonly referenced exemplars of penitential prayer and a reinterpretation of the direction of Ezekielian influence.⁴²⁹ Her analysis of the distinction between the prayers in Dan 9, Ezra 9, and Neh 1 is well-noted. The understated reference to the exile in v. 30b, however, correlates to the relative understatement of all of the most recent events contained in the prayer, from the point in which the Israelites enter the land (v. 22) through to the exile (v. 30b). The treatment of these events is not evidence for the text’s dating. It *does* mention the exile.⁴³⁰ The lack of specific reference to more recent events is a rhetorical device typical for appeals to a common memory. Simply put, some events become more “functional” than others, particularly when traced through similar modes of discourse. As I will demonstrate below, it is the constitutive narrative of Abraham, the exodus and the wilderness wanderings that serve as the focus for the prayer as a whole and creates the most effective frame for the people’s present.

⁴²⁷ Kugler, “Present Affliction,” 621; cf. Welch, “The Source of Nehemiah ix,” 130–137. Contra Rodney A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1998), 57.

⁴²⁸ Kugler, “Present Affliction,” 621.

⁴²⁹ Kugler, “Present Affliction,” 605–626. She also provides evidence for the fact that the prayer, both its body and concluding appeal, comes from the hand of a single author (Kugler, “Present Affliction,” 620n35).

⁴³⁰ Cf. Boda’s critique of Welch’s argument in *Praying the Tradition*, 12–14.

The evidence leads more strongly to a date for Neh 9 in the exilic or post-exilic period. The prayer references both Deuteronomic and Priestly texts,⁴³¹ demonstrates a considerable Ezekielian influence, and relies on and develops the symbolic complexes presented in the historical psalms. Williamson argues that the prayer was written by those who stayed behind in the land after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. He links the prayer to Ezekielian quotations, comparing the reference to Abraham's election (Neh 9:7–8) to claims made by those left behind in the land (Ezek 11:15; 33:24).⁴³² He therefore dates it after the event of the exile, but does not offer a specific date. Chrostowski similarly identifies links with Ezek 20. He ultimately argues that Neh 9 represents an interpretation of Ezek 20.⁴³³

Boda, in his detailed tradition-historical reading of Neh 9, also identifies Ezekielian influence and dates the text specifically to the early Persian period, contemporary with the prophet Zechariah.⁴³⁴ He bases his argument for dating on the affinity between Neh 9 and Haggai and Zech 1–8, which he accepts as genuine witnesses to the activity and theology of the early Persian period. He identifies the “need for dramatic rescue,” the “longing for autonomy,”

⁴³¹ For the most detailed analysis of these references, see Boda's assessment of the Priestly and Deuteronomic traditions in this text in *ibid.*, 89–197.

⁴³² H.G.M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, WBC 16 (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 309; Williamson, “Structure and Historiography in Nehemiah 9,” 292–293; Williamson, “The Torah and History in Presentations of Restoration in Ezra-Nehemiah,” in *Reading the Law*, ed. J. G. McConville and Karl Möller (New York: T & T Clark), 167–68. Cf. D. Frankel, *The Land of Canaan and the Destiny of Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 13–14.

⁴³³ “We may fairly assume that the prayer of Ezra was composed in the circles directly connected with the prophet Ezekiel, perhaps with his disciples and followers. The affinities are so striking that it is probable that Neh 9:6–37 is a careful interpretation of the prophetic oracle preserved in Ez 20.” Waldemar Chrostowski, “An Examination of Conscience by God's People as Exemplified in Neh 9, 6–37,” *BZ* 34 (1990): 259; cf. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel Chapters 1–24*, trans. R. E. Clements, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1979), 405n3, who also links Ezek 20 with penitential prayer. Cf. Boda, who has further identified significant Ezekielian influence on Neh 9. Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 189–97.

⁴³⁴ Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 189–95; cf. Boda, “Zechariah: Master Mason or Penitential Prophet,” in *Yahwism After the Exile*, ed. Bob Becking and Rainer Albertz, STR (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2003), 49–69; cf. Kyung-Jin Min, *The Levitical Authorship of Ezra-Nehemiah* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 114.

“evidence of economic pressure,” and the “leading role played by the prophets,” as well as formal textual links between Zech 1:2–6; 1:7–17 and Neh 9 specifically to make his argument.⁴³⁵ He also appeals to Rendsburg’s defense of a post-exilic dating for the prayer based on the presence of several traits of late biblical Hebrew in the text.⁴³⁶

Ultimately, I find a general Persian period date for the prayer the most tenable. The remarkable level of influence of the biblical corpus on the prayer, which includes Priestly and Deuteronomic influence,⁴³⁷ as well as observed connections between Neh 9 and Josh 24,⁴³⁸ Pss 78,⁴³⁹ 106,⁴⁴⁰ and Ezek 20,⁴⁴¹ suggests that the prayer should be dated after these textual corpora were largely completed. There is also a brief but clear reference to the exile. Rendsburg’s analysis of the linguistic character of the prayer further supports a post-exilic dating.⁴⁴² The

⁴³⁵ Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 190–91. On Haggai and Zech 1–8 as genuine historical witnesses, see P. A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 10n5; C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Haggai and Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1987), xlv; J. E. Tollington, *Tradition and Innovation in Haggai and Zecharia 1–8*, JSOTSup 150 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993).

⁴³⁶ Gary Rendsburg, “The Northern Origin of Nehemiah 9,” *Biblica* 72 (1991): 363. He relies on the work of Hurvitz (A. Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem*, CahRB 20 [Paris: Gabalda, 1982]) and Polzin (R. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose* [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976]) to identify the following LBH traits in Neh 9: *ḥāyāh* for “live” in 9:29; the order of *ḥannūn wəraḥūm* (vs. *raḥūm wəḥannūn*) in 9:17; 3) the expression *‘ad hā’ōlām* with the definite article, vs without (9:5); 4) the lack of the use of *‘et* with a pronominal suffix, and the use instead of the pronominal suffix attached to the verb itself (no uses of former and 23 uses of the latter in Neh 9); 5) and the preference for plural forms of words that were previously used in the singular. Rendsburg points to the use of *‘ittim* in Neh 9:28 “times” instead of the standard *‘ēt*, “time.” For a critique of his broader argument concerning the northern origin of the prayer, see Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 16.

⁴³⁷ For the most detailed analysis of the influence of the Pentateuch on Neh 9, see Boda, *Praying the Tradition*; cf. Newman, *Praying by the Book*, 55–116.

⁴³⁸ Cf. Christophe Nihan, “The Torah between Samaria and Judah: Shechem and Gerizim in Deuteronomy and Joshua,” in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding its Promulgation and Acceptance*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns), 196.

⁴³⁹ Richard J. Bautch, *Developments in Genre Between Post-Exilic Penitential Prayers and the Psalms of Communal Lament* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 116–21.

⁴⁴⁰ Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 382–91.

⁴⁴¹ Chrostowski, “An Examination of Conscience,” 253–61; Kugler, “Present Affliction,” 622–624.

⁴⁴² Rendsburg, “The Northern Origin of Nehemiah 9,” 348–366.

marked difference in rhetoric concerning the perception of Persian overlords between the text and the rest of Ezra-Nehemiah is most likely due to the social situation of the prayer's primary audience, as will be explicated below ("Genre and Participation"). It is also part of the rhetorical presentation of the people as the suffering petitioners, an image that is "framed" in the prayer by the presentation of slavery in Egypt (see "Wilderness as Divine Provision").

Role of the Chapter in Nehemiah 8–10

The dating of the prayer also relates to its potential independence from its context in Neh 8–10. Was it written for its current position in the book, or was it an already circulating prayer that was inserted into the book? While scholars often view Neh 8–10 as the literary and theological climax of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah,⁴⁴³ there is very little agreement concerning the unity and origin of these chapters.⁴⁴⁴ One of the primary issues arguing against the original unity of these chapters is the sudden convergence of the ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah after Ezra's complete absence from Neh 1–7:5.⁴⁴⁵ Similarly, many scholars identify the abrupt change from joy to mourning between Neh 8:18 and 9:1 as signs of inelegant redaction⁴⁴⁶ and correlate the

⁴⁴³ Michael W. Duggan, *The Covenant Renewal in Ezra-Nehemiah (Neh 7:72b–10:40): An Exegetical, Literary, and Theological Study*, SBLDS (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 67; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 330; Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose*, 95.

⁴⁴⁴ For a listing of the primary issues in positing the unity of Neh 8–10, see Mark J. Boda, "Redaction in the Book of Nehemiah: A Fresh Proposal," in *Unity and Disunity in Ezra-Nehemiah*, ed. Mark J. Boda and Paul L. Redditt, HBM (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008), 28–29.

⁴⁴⁵ Some, however, have argued for the chapters' intentional rhetorical design. See Duggan, *The Covenant Renewal in Ezra-Nehemiah*, 47; Min, *The Levitical Authorship of Ezra-Nehemiah*, 105–15.

⁴⁴⁶ Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 309; Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, OTR (New York: Routledge, 1998), 55.

separation from foreigners mentioned in Neh 9:2 either to the dismissal of the foreign wives in Ezra 9–10⁴⁴⁷ or to a later editorial hand.⁴⁴⁸

Yet there is reason to critique this evaluation of the disunity of the chapters. Eskenazi has argued that the source of these perceptions, the “dramatic change in the representation of the people between Nehemiah 8 and 9,” is not a trace of redaction but rather “at the heart of EN’s message”: “Repeated readings of the Torah (see Neh 8:18) have transformed the people from ignorant passive recipients to well-versed active practitioners; from those who can only hear to those who can speak, teach, implement.”⁴⁴⁹ Nehemiah 8–10 is better read as a literary complex designed to demonstrate the people’s successful education in Torah.⁴⁵⁰

So too Boda observes how well the narrative introduction reflects the content of the prayer: both involve worship, recitation of Torah, and confession. He argues based on this that there is no good reason to separate the narrative introduction from the prayer that follows.⁴⁵¹ Blenkinsopp confirms a “striking parallelism” between the opening of this chapter and the ceremony described in Neh 8:1–12.⁴⁵² This parallelism links the openings of the two chapters.

⁴⁴⁷ Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 310. Blenkinsopp, however, observes that Ezra 9 focuses on foreign women, whereas Neh 9 refers to all foreigners as a class. There are also no references to laws regarding foreign women, despite references to other legal matters. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1988), 295–301. Clines suggests that the list in Neh 10 should follow Neh 13, based on the presence of Nehemiah’s name in the list. D. A. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, NCB (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 199.

⁴⁴⁸ Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 318–19.

⁴⁴⁹ Eskenazi, “Nehemiah 9–10,” 2.5; cf. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 95–104.

⁴⁵⁰ Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 318–19.

⁴⁵¹ Boda, “Redaction in the Book of Nehemiah,” 25–54. He also notes the following unifying links between Neh 9 and 10: 1) the similar lists of Levitical names in Neh 9:4–5, and at the beginning of the document in Neh 10; 2) the emphasis on the Sabbath; 3) the description of the document as an *‘amānā*, reflecting the opening emphasis on Abraham in Neh 9:7–8 (cf. M. A. Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, IBC [Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1992], 108; Frederick Carlson Holmgren, “Faithful Abraham and the ‘amānā Covenant Nehemiah 9,6–10,1,” ZAW 104 [1992]: 249–254); 4) the people separating themselves from foreigners (Neh 9:2; 10:20); 5) the law being given through the hand of Moses (Neh 9:14; 10:29); and 6) the lists of terms for laws used (Neh 9: 13–14; 10: 29).

⁴⁵² Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 294.

I agree with those who observe the rhetorical fittingness of the prayer with its context. To add to their arguments, I will argue below first that the links between the presentation and importance of the wilderness in the recital in Neh 9 correspond to the emphasis of re-enacting the wilderness episode in the Festival of Booths (Neh 8:13–18). Both appeal primarily to the same historical location in Israel’s memory in order to “frame” present experience. Second, one of the key points of the argument that Neh 9 originally followed Ezra 9–10 is the reference to separation from foreigners.⁴⁵³ Yet this ignores the fact that the combination of verbs to “separate” (*√bdl*) and “stand” (*√ʿmd*) is a description of a cultic activity associated with the Levites. This chapter as a whole portrays the people and the Levites engaging in very similar activities and is likely part of a rhetorical strategy to emphasize the community’s successful education in matters related to Torah. The process of education described in Neh 8–10 presents the people as “co-bearers of memory.” The defining traits that identify those who possess a requisite basic knowledge (cultural literacy) and those that identify community membership are becoming coterminous. Therefore, terms that describe cultic identity (those who separate themselves and stand before God; Neh 9:2) and terms that describe understanding (those who understand; Neh 10:28) bracket the intervening ceremony in which the Levites speak the contents of the prayer and present their communal petition. The prayer forms a necessary link between these two stages. While it is possible that Neh 9 represents a careful adaptation of an independent liturgical tradition, it is more likely that it has been written for its context, though it draws significantly in both form and content from other communal recitals of prayer.⁴⁵⁴ Furthermore, its adaptation to its present situation inspired the composition of the following

⁴⁵³ Wilhelm Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia Samt 3. Esra*, HAT 20 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1949), 154.

⁴⁵⁴ See Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 382–91 for a discussion of how Neh 9 intentionally re-interprets the historical psalms.

document contained in Neh 10, which demonstrates several textual affinities to the prayer, as Boda and Wright lay out in detail.⁴⁵⁵

Memory in/as Literature

In order to understand the various ways that cultural memory and the act of remembering function in Neh 9:5b–37 and the surrounding narrative, it is necessary to parse the distinction between narrative depictions of acts of remembering and texts as a medium of cultural memory. Erll provides a heuristic framework to distinguish between these functions. First, she describes the memory *of* literature as the intertextual nature of all acts of writing: the term can function as a *genitivus subjectivus* to describe the way that words always construct meaning in relationship to other words.⁴⁵⁶ Genres constrain meaning based on readers’ and hearers’ previous experience with similar genres; symbols constructed in one work re-appear in another. Statements made in written works assume the reader’s familiarity with previously written iterations. No text constructs meaning in a vacuum.⁴⁵⁷ In addition, the phrase “memory *of* literature” can function as a *genitivus objectivus* to describe the social frameworks that ensure the remembering of particular texts through canonization and the writing of literary histories.⁴⁵⁸

Erll’s second concept is that of “literature as a medium of cultural memory.” Literature and memory share several important features, which Erll collates into categories of condensation, narration, and the use of genres.⁴⁵⁹ In memory studies, “condensation” refers to the “compression

⁴⁵⁵ Boda, “Redaction in the Book of Nehemiah,” 37. Cf. Wright, who asserts the unity of Neh 9 and Neh 10:1–30 and attributes Neh 10:1–30 to a later hand responding to the prayer (Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 212–20).

⁴⁵⁶ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 70–74.

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. Renate Lachmann, *Memory and Literature*, Theory and History of Literature 87 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 14–15.

⁴⁵⁸ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 70–74.

⁴⁵⁹ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 144–45.

of several complex ideas, feelings or images into a single, fused or composite object.”⁴⁶⁰ This results in highly over-determined sites of memory. These “charged” points of memory then become interpreted in later iterations and become generative sites for constructing meaning across multiple presents. Such condensed mnemonic signifiers are then combined in temporal and causal order through the process of narration. The ways in which people structure their experience of time, both individually and communally, privileges the literary processes of narrative: they give form to experience by creating relationships between past and present events. The term for this is “emplotment.”⁴⁶¹ Memory and narrative therefore participate in similar modes of “meaning-making.” Finally, genres provide conventionalized forms for remembering events and experiences.⁴⁶² Just as functional memory is comprised of a limited set of narrative symbols and schemata, genres are additional cultural scripts that determine how we preserve and express memory.

The third concept of memory *in* literature foregrounds the dialogical relationship between the written word and extra-literary acts of remembering. Literary works can “stage” performances of cultural remembering and therefore comment not only on reproduced past events but on the act of remembering itself.⁴⁶³ The books of Ezra and Nehemiah already stage an act of remembering through their use of the narrating “I” who purports to remember the events contained in their respective memoirs.⁴⁶⁴ But in Neh 8–10, it is the people who are engaged in progressively more active modes of remembering. The narrative depicts the people enacting several different rites of memory and documents their accompanying transformation. As the

⁴⁶⁰ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 145.

⁴⁶¹ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:52–90.

⁴⁶² Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 147.

⁴⁶³ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 77.

⁴⁶⁴ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 77–78; cf. Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 72–74.

people grow in their knowledge, they become more active participants in the cult, from passive observers through to those initiating action and pledging future reformation.⁴⁶⁵ The culmination of this communal transformation is a performance of Israel's master narrative in Neh 9:5b–37. Nehemiah 8–10 therefore not only re-presents Judah's shared memory and its ongoing influence but also demonstrates the cultural value of the act of remembering itself.

Each of these relationships between memory and literature plays a role in this chapter. Nehemiah 9:5b–37 demonstrates a sophisticated interaction with previous texts, drawn both from pentateuchal narratives and previous iterations of historical recital in the Psalms and the Prophets. In this way, it demonstrates Erll's first concept of the memory *of* literature. So too, the way in which the memory is structured and described in Neh 9 is a function of "literature as a medium of cultural memory": Judah's memory is presented as a schematic narrative, populated with both culturally significant symbols and a structured set of temporal causal relations that are characteristic of a narrative mode of cognition. I will analyze these aspects most specifically in the final section of this chapter. But it is the final concept in Erll's schema, that of the staging of memory *in* literature, on which I will focus in this chapter. The text not only describes an act of memory but positively characterizes the people as those who remember. In so doing, it constructs a social value for the act of remembering itself, a key component in inspiring future ceremonies of remembering.

The narrative schema of the prayer itself provide a historical basis for the value of communal education in Torah and its constitutive narrative. The prayer effectively re-frames the people's present, and their experience of displacement, oppression, and political instability, with images drawn from Israel's wandering in the wilderness. This period is transformed from a time

⁴⁶⁵ Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose*, 95–104.

of punishment to a time of 1) divine provision; 2) divine education; and 3) divine mercy. It is the wilderness that provides the dominant conceptual frame for the people's present as a time of successful education. The focus on the wilderness reiterates the status of this event as a generative site of memory in the Second Temple period, good for thinking through issues related to prayer and the formation of community.

Memory's "Participatory Structure"

Nehemiah 9 as a depiction of "memory *in* literature" further serves as a literary portrayal of what Jan Assmann calls memory's "participatory structure."⁴⁶⁶ This participatory structure describes the social dimension of remembering, the means by which cultures interact with their constitutive memories and replicate their cultural significance across generations. Assmann coined an important distinction between *communicative* memory, which refers to events or facts that are passed on informally through social networks of communication, roughly corresponding to "living memory," and *cultural* memory, which is organized and institutionalized to endure past the temporal confines of living memory.⁴⁶⁷ Cultural memory requires specialists, memory bearers who possess both the requisite knowledge and a mastery of memory-preserving objects, rituals, and texts. These specialists assure the conservation of particular knowledge, whether procedural or historical, within the community.⁴⁶⁸ This results in a hierarchy of memory bearers. Some members of the community will be more educated in this way than others. This is where the concept of "participatory structures" comes in. Because the increasing intricacy of cultural memory necessitates the training of specialists, it must also establish formal modes of

⁴⁶⁶ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 38.

⁴⁶⁷ Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," 131.

⁴⁶⁸ Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," 131.

participation for the members of the group as a whole. While the community does not possess equal types and levels of memory, there is still a minimal level of shared knowledge required for the memory to play a defining role within the community. Participation in cultural memory is therefore controlled in both senses of the word. As it becomes more complex, it is restricted by competence, training, or sometimes by class, race, or gender. But it is also controlled in the sense that it is intentionally transmitted via established rituals that ensure that members of relevant groups will be aware of it. This is the means by which the material that is stored and learned by experts maintains its relevance to the community.

Assmann identifies three mnemonic functions that must be performed to create group unity and inspire action: *storage*, *retrieval*, and *communication*.⁴⁶⁹ The act of *storage* preserves records of events, identifying documents or literary texts for later use. It constitutes the act of recording itself and its vessels of storage, parchment, clay, archive, the library, and the memory of the oral poet. To be referenced later, a record must be preserved in a mnemonic medium, a written chronicle, an oral poem, a monument, or a rite. The act of *retrieval* describes both the ability to retrieve these materials and the act of doing so.⁴⁷⁰ Stored memories must be made accessible, or they will be lost. Finally in Jan Assmann's schema is the act of *communication*. To establish a shared memory within a given group the memory must be both communicable and regularly and consistently communicated. Assmann correlates these actions of storage, retrieval,

⁴⁶⁹ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 41.

⁴⁷⁰ As I demonstrated in a comparative study with ancient Athens, these two acts of storage and retrieval are not necessarily counterparts of one another. Societies sometimes develop technologies for the former without developing a demand or a process for the latter. Buster, "Written Record and Membership," 297–320. This development is also clarified in Aleida Assmann's binary contrast between storage and functional memory. Only a limited amount of a society's cultural memory is given a social function, that is, is actively retrieved and referenced. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 119–36.

and communication to “poetic form, ritual performance, and collective participation” respectively.⁴⁷¹

Embedded in the act of collective participation is the persuasion of the group *to* participate, and, in the case of newly constituted (or re-constituted) groups, the pledge to participate in the future. Echterhoff observes that inaugural and ongoing collective memory events serve both to create and to establish a functional memory for the people: salient items have been selected for a common orientation and then are presented publicly to encourage communal adherence.⁴⁷² This public presentation ensures not only collective knowledge but also a collective assessment of the knowledge’s present value, emphasizing the “affective-evaluative dimension of past events and their relation to contemporary social action.”⁴⁷³ Strict ceremonies of adherence often support a cultural commitment to memory, particularly at key moments of transition.⁴⁷⁴ Bormann and his co-authors refer to this trait as the “principle of dedication,” noting that successful “consciousness-raising” events often end with “the new converts’ taking some action that publicly testifies to their conversion.”⁴⁷⁵

Nehemiah 9 in particular and Neh 8–10 more broadly construct a narrative that portrays a “participatory structure,” a series of communal events designed to engage the people in Torah discourse through education, ritual enactment, and a cultic ceremony that performs the Torah’s constitutive narrative and explicitly connects it to the people’s present. This participatory structure involves not only the presentation of memory and its requisite “bearers” —in this case the validation of the role of the Torah and the Levitical teachers—it also begins to present the

⁴⁷¹ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 42; cf. M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1979), 125.

⁴⁷² Echterhoff, “Das Aussen des Erinnerns,” 78–82.

⁴⁷³ Echterhoff, *Das Aussen*, 82. Translated by author.

⁴⁷⁴ Cf. Assmann, “Vier Formen des Gedachtnisses,” 183–190.

⁴⁷⁵ Bormann, Cragan, Shields, “An Expansion of the Rhetorical Vision,” 12.

people as a particular type of remembering community, i.e. a community who values knowledge about its past and an awareness of how this past relates to the present. These structures therefore influence the perception both of the memory itself and also of the people who participate in them.

Genre and Participation

Nehemiah 9:5b–37 opens in the manner of a hymn, with a psalmic invocation to bless the name of the Lord (Neh 9:5b).⁴⁷⁶ It continues with a historical résumé that demonstrates the influence both of the historical recitals preserved in the psalms but also appropriates more significant direct quotation from the Torah (Neh 9:6–31).⁴⁷⁷ Finally, the extended historical résumé transitions into a petition and (brief) confession, before characterizing the dire situation of the people (Neh 9:32–37).⁴⁷⁸ This blend of genres indicates a complex interaction between a community, their leaders, and their traditional knowledge.⁴⁷⁹ Nehemiah 9 strategically links its performance to several

⁴⁷⁶ Gunkel classifies Neh 9:6–15 as a hymn. See H. Gunkel, *Einleitung in die Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933), 22.

⁴⁷⁷ Cf. Newman, *Praying by the Book*, 55ff.

⁴⁷⁸ This corresponds roughly to Williamson's analysis, that the prayer begins as a hymn, continues with a "substantiation [of that praise] in narrative style" and turns at v. 32 to a prayer of communal lament (Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 306).

⁴⁷⁹ The extent of Neh 9's links with previous texts has also led to several different generic "genealogies" for the prayer, though most analyses highlight its relationship to penitential prayer, as will be noted below. Gilbert has suggested that the prayer shares formal features with multiple brief expressions of individual and collective confessions found in historical books. He identifies a class of prayers which are structured as a confession followed by a prayer, punctuated by a transitional *wē'attâ*. M. Gilbert, "La place de la loi dans la prière de Néhémie 9," in *De la Tôrâh au Messie*, ed. M. Carrez, J. Doré, and P. Grelot (Paris: Desclée, 1981), 307–16. He argues, therefore, that the prayer might be based on an expansion of common prayer forms that are present in Israelite life. *Ibid.*; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 306.

Fensham and Klein highlight Neh 9's relationship to the historical psalms on the basis of its extended historical recital. Fensham, "Neh 9 and Pss. 105, 106, 135, and 136," 35–51; Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 382–91; Oeming, "See, We Are Serving Today," 574. Fensham classifies Neh 9 as a "penitential song in the form of a prayer," that nevertheless possesses a "hymnic character. Charles F. Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 39. He systematically, but briefly, observes the overlapping treatment of traditions between Neh 9 and the

related performances and communal texts. In so doing, this prayer, and more broadly viewed, Neh 8–10 as a whole, develops a participatory structure between the people and the texts that communicates their constitutive memory.

Nehemiah 9:5b–37 is most commonly identified as an example of “penitential prayer,” a genre that emphasizes the justice of God over against the guilt of the people and appeals to the ongoing faithfulness of God and acknowledgment of the people’s sin as the mechanism to appeal for God’s salvation.⁴⁸⁰ As a biblical example of “penitential prayer,” therefore, Neh 9:5b–37 is most commonly grouped with Ezra 9:6–15, Neh 1:5–11, and Dan 9:4–19.⁴⁸¹ It is important,

historical psalms, concluding that the “historical scheme of Neh. 9, Pss 105, 106, 135, and 136 shows that it follows the broad sequence of events described in the Pentateuch,” though “not one of them has the scheme in its entirety.” Fensham, “Neh 9 and Pss. 105, 106, 135, and 136,” 44–45. Both Blenkinsopp and Williamson also note the similarity between Neh 9 and Psalm 106 (Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 302; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 306–307). While Fensham’s analysis relies on comparison and does not make an argument concerning the relative derivation of traditions between historical psalms and Neh 9, Klein argues more strongly for Neh 9’s intentional reception of the historical psalms (Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 389–91). The prayer provides an editorial re-interpretation of the historical psalms, designed to demonstrate a literary education that has been shaped equally by narrative and poetic tradition (Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 382). The use of an opening psalm refrain further indicates the deliberate connection to a liturgical discourse. As Williamson observes, “to press Neh 9 into the mold of a single *Gattung* would be to miss much of its forcefulness” (Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 307).

⁴⁸⁰ Kühlewein, *Geschichte in den Psalmen*, 124. In these analyses, history is understood as facilitating this confession and grounding appeals to God’s mercy (Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 307; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 302). Richard Bautch, for example, has argued that Neh 9:6–37 is a communal lament in which generic transformations have occurred, in the adding of a historical recital and a confession of sin (Bautch, *Developments in Genre*, 101–36). This description of a “mixed” genre, however, most often gives way to descriptions of Neh 9 as a development of the communal lament form and an early example of the post-exilic genre of penitential prayer. Fensham is a good example of this, in his description of the opening psalm line *alone* as a hymn, followed by an extended “prayer of penitence” (Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, 223).

⁴⁸¹ As just a few examples of scholars who identify these four texts as the primary biblical examples of “Penitential prayer”: W. Sibley Towner lists these together as “Prose Prayers of Penitence” (“Retributional Theology in the Apocalyptic Setting,” *USQR* 26 [1971]: 209–212); Koch includes 1 Kgs 8:41–51 and Ps 106 in his category of “Liturgie pénitentielle de la communauté post-exilienne” (R. Koch, “La Rémission et la Confession des Péchés selon l’Ancien Testament,” *Studia Moralia* 10 [1972]: 234–239; idem, “Nachexilische Bußfeiern,” in *Theologie der Gegenwart in Auswahl* [Münster: 1985], 29); Lacoque describes these as “Prose Prayers of Penitence” (A. Lacoque, “The Liturgical Prayer in Daniel 9,” *HUCA* 47 [1976]: 121–124); Anderson groups them together as “Post-exilic Penitential Prose Prayers” (C. R. Anderson, “The Formation of the Levitical Prayer of Nehemiah 9” [Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1987], 109–38); Balentine as “Prose prayers of penitence” (Samuel E. Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue*, OBT [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress,

however, to understand how the distinct *differences* between Neh 9:5b–37 and the corresponding prayers of penitence contained in Ezra-Nehemiah and Daniel correspond to their differing social functions. While the penitential prayers of leading individuals appear to be driven by two basic and related functions, namely to *confess the extent of the people's sin* and to *appeal to divine favor for the repentant*, Neh 9, a communal penitential performance led by the Levites, downplays the aspect of confession and situates the people's plight in the context of Israel's larger story.⁴⁸² Indeed, Neh 9:5b–37 displays a *marked lack* of penitential language, if that is defined as an expression of remorse over sin, compared to the other typical instantiations of the genre. Explicit expression of guilt on the part of the current generation within the prayer itself is limited to the phrase in v. 33 “we have sinned” (*wa'ānaḥnū hiršā nū*).⁴⁸³ The stereotypical

1993], 103–17); Rendtorff as “Penitential Liturgy” (Rolf Rendtorff, “Nehemiah 9: An Important Witness of Theological Reflection,” in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, ed. Barry L. Eichler Mordechai Cogan, and Jeffrey H. Tigay [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997], 111–19); and Werline as “Penitential Prayer” (Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution*). Most of these scholars also identify clear post-biblical examples of this genre, but most restrict the biblical examples to Neh 1, 9, Ezra 9, and Dan 9. Mark Boda has provided an appendix containing the various designations and included references for “Penitential prayer” in his published dissertation (Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 198–202). He also groups Neh 9 with Ezra 9, Neh 1, Dan 9, and Ps 106 as examples of penitential prayers (Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, x).

⁴⁸² The dividing phrase indicating that it was Ezra who spoke the prayer (“And Ezra said”) that introduces v. 6a in the LXX, and is included in some English translations, is not preserved in the MT. The question of whether Ezra's name was original to the Hebrew manuscript would affect this debate considerably, but I argue that the evidence overwhelmingly supports its secondary insertion. First, as noted by several other commentators who support the MT reading, the insertion of Ezra's name interrupts two very similar phrases. See Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 300; Newman, *Praying by the Book*, 58. It is unlikely that Ezra would appear on the scene so abruptly, not having been mentioned in the preceding description of the penitential ceremony. Furthermore, the addition of Ezra's name by the translators of the LXX could easily be explained as an attempt to harmonize this penitential performance with other biblical examples of penitential prayer, which are all spoken by leading individuals: Nehemiah (Neh 1:5–11), Ezra (Ezra 9:6–15), and Daniel (Dan 9:4–19). This motivation to harmonize with other examples of penitential prayer further supports the evaluation of the LXX addition as secondary. It is less likely that the participation of Ezra would have been lost in the process of transmission.

⁴⁸³ Eskenazi notes as well that Neh 9 carefully separates out the sins of the previous generation from the present generation with an erudite use of third-person vs first-person pronouns. While the historical recital emphasizes the transgressions of the ancestors (“they”), the present praying community emphasizes their plight and their pledge of loyalty. She concludes that “if Nehemiah 9 is a Confession or a Penitential Prayer, then it is a most unusual one.” (Eskenazi, “Nehemiah 9–10, 2.8–9). Even this

hitpa'el of *√ydh* does occur in the *context* of the prayer, in vv. 2 and 3, to describe the general events of the day, but it does not occur in the body of the prayer at all. Compare this to Neh 1:6–7; Ezra 9:6, 7, 13, 15, and Dan 9:5–11, which contain hyperbolic and extended expressions of guilt, explicitly formulated using first person plural language.⁴⁸⁴

Instead of expressions of penitence, Neh 9:5b–37 prioritizes an extended historical review. The sheer range of the historical recital provides a marked contrast from the prayers of individuals, including Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, whose prayers are typically grouped with the communal performance of Neh 9. The historical recital in Neh 9 spans twenty-six of its thirty-two verses, and describes creation, the covenant with Abraham, the exodus from Egypt, the giving of the law at Sinai, the wilderness wanderings, the conquest, and life in the land until the exile; compare this with comparable references to the past in Neh 1, Dan 9, and Ezra 9, which, with a single exception, are restricted to five tropes:

- 1) historical guilt of the ancestors reaching to the present day (Ezra 9:7; Neh 1:6)
- 2) the breaking of the commandments (Neh 1:7; Ezra 9:10–11; Dan 9:5)
- 3) the exile as punishment, sometimes with a quotation of the corresponding Pentateuchal threat (cf. Lev 26:33; Deut 28:64) (Ezra 9:7; Neh 1:8)
- 4) the promise of restoration based on repentance, also an echo of the corresponding Pentateuchal promise (cf. Deut 30:4) (Neh 1:8–9; Dan 9:13)
- 5) the characterization of God as one who “keeps covenant and steadfast love” (Ezra 9:9; Neh 1:5; Dan 9:4–5)

The prayers of the leaders all share this limited narrative schema: history of guilt → exile as punishment → promise for restoration. The single extension to this narrative arc, which contrasts the steadfast love of God with the ancestors who broke divine commandments and were therefore

expression of guilt is qualified by what comes after: the identified guilty parties are listed as “our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers” (Neh 9:34). Cf. Kugler, “Present Afflictions,” 605–626, who also argues that Neh 9 should not be grouped among the penitential prayers.

⁴⁸⁴ Gilbert highlights the fact that while the second-person pronoun “you” is used frequently throughout Neh 9:6–37, there is no corresponding use of the first-person plural “we.” Gilbert, “La place de la loi,” 310.

exiled, is the brief mention of the exodus in Dan 9:15. Each of the other tropes refers to events in general ways: the entire history from the patriarchs through to the exile is summarized simply as a statement of guilt; no event is described directly, except for indirect references to the exile.

Furthermore, their similarity to one another suggests that their authors were drawing from a common pool of accepted “idioms” for penitential prayers, dominated by the above tropes. Nehemiah 9, on the other hand, refers vividly to Israel’s shared history *before* the exile. The exile itself barely receives a mention.

The primary goal of Neh 9 within the narrative of Neh 8–10, therefore, does not appear to be confession or the expression of penitence but a portrayal of the people’s plight in the context of the Torah narrative. The differences between the Levites’ prayer and the prayers of individual leaders indicated above point to the ways in which speech about the past is socially organized. Communal speech about the past continually revolves around a limited set of images and tropes, reinforced by rituals of common memory (see below on the Festival of Booths) and preserved in easily replicable genres (see above on the Psalms). Nehemiah 9:5b–37 presents the concerns of the people’s present using features of this narrative. While the community leaders focus on performing a script of communal guilt, the prayer performed by the Levites before the people instead seeks to re-inscribe their social reality with categories drawn from their shared history.

Part of Neh 9’s distinctive expression of the genre of “penitential prayer,” if it should be called that at all, is therefore its *communal nature*. While Bautch lists a “communal dimension”⁴⁸⁵ as a distinctive marker of penitential prayer as it develops from communal laments, it is notable and indeed decisive for determining the purpose of the prayer to note that in the other three exemplars a single communal leader is speaking; in two of the three cases, this individual appears to be alone

⁴⁸⁵ Bautch, *Developments in Genre*, 1–6.

(Neh 1:5–11 and Dan 9:3–15).⁴⁸⁶ While the communal dimension in each of these prayers is expressed in generational solidarity and first person plural language, the community is not described as participating at all. In Neh 9, by contrast, the narrative emphasizes the participation of the community: the people of Israel initiate the assembly (Neh 9:1–3) and respond to the prayer through a formal ceremony of commitment (Neh 10:1–40).⁴⁸⁷ Furthermore, as will be discussed below, the use of an opening psalm refrain ties this performance to previous communal celebrations surrounding the construction of the Temple (Ezra 3:10–11). This time, however, a familiar psalm refrain introduces a performance of the Torachic master narrative.

These three differences—Neh 9’s relative lack of penitential language, its extensive historical review, and its nature as a communal performance—are linked and contribute to an ultimate understanding of the role that Neh 9 plays within the narrative of Ezra-Nehemiah. The primary role of this act of history-telling is not to express penitence but is to unify the people around their common narrative: the ideal education of the community includes an extended historical recital. The recital is not, however, merely a Levitical sermon designed to educate the people. The concluding petition uses images from the past both to locate a historical precedent for the success of the Levites’ prayer and to undergird the communal program of Torah education by identifying historical models of communal pedagogy. Simply put, the prayer provides a narrative in which the people can play a key role, and which contributes to their ideal characterization at this point in the narrative. As Aleida Assmann observes, functional memory deals with the creation of symbols: historical figures, eras, and events, that accrue social significance that then transforms them from mere historical knowledge into symbols. As

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. Eskenazi’s comparison of Neh 9:6–37 to other extended prayers such as 1 Kgs 8, which are also spoken by a leading representative (Eskenazi, “Nehemiah 9–10,” 2.2).

⁴⁸⁷ As Eskenazi notes, this communal participation is, in fact, one of the themes of Neh 8–10 as a whole (Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose*, 95–104).

symbols, they perform social functions. The prayer in Neh 9 is a particularly clear example of selected historical events in Israel's history being transformed into *functions* that can be taken up by the praying society in their present space.

Nehemiah 8–9, the Festival of Booths, and the Education of the People

Before turning to the content of the prayer in Neh 9:5b–37 itself, I will comment on the literary positioning of the prayer within the ceremonies recounted in the preceding chapter and the ways in which the prayer extends and develops themes presented therein. As I noted in the introduction, understanding Neh 9 as the staging of memory *in* literature requires a careful attention to its constructed context. I will then turn to the components of the prayer itself, its psalmic introduction, its historical review, and its concluding petition, in order to demonstrate how the psalm presents shared historical knowledge as part of the people's ideal characterization.

I argued in the introduction to this chapter that Neh 8:13–18 forms a unit with Neh 9:1–10:40. Both not only re-enact celebrations of communal remembrance, they also activate the symbolism of the wilderness period as a frame for the people's situation. Additionally, the celebration of the Festival of Booths in Neh 8:13–18 recapitulates the celebration of that same festival recounted in Ezra 3, though with significant developments. As Eskenazi has observed, these accounts of events in the "7th month" are preceded by the registers in Ezra 2 and Neh 7. Ezra 2–3 on the one hand and Neh 7–8 on the other form an intentional *inclusio*, marking the book's structure and linking these two accounts.⁴⁸⁸ Wright goes one step further, noting that there is not a static equation of events but a marked progression.⁴⁸⁹ While in Ezra 3 the authors

⁴⁸⁸ Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose*, 88–93; cf. Wright, "Writing the Restoration," 20–23. The repetition of the preceding register of returnees in Ezra 2 and Neh 7:5–72 respectively reinforces the parallel function of the two accounts of the festival celebration.

⁴⁸⁹ Wright, "Writing the Restoration," 20.

describe a ceremony celebrated with sacrificial rites, Neh 8:13–18 focuses on the reading of the book of the law (vv. 13, 18), with no mention of sacrifices at the altar.⁴⁹⁰ Wright identifies this development as a sign of the “incipient tension between Temple and Torah” in the book as a whole.⁴⁹¹ There is a further dimension to this progression, however. The chapter presents not only a contrast constructed between Temple and Torah, but also between the ideal space of the Temple complex and the ideal space of the wilderness, which is portrayed as the ideal space in which to be educated in Torah. In Neh 8:13–18 a full four verses describe the construction of temporary shelters to mark the celebration of the festival between the two references to Torah reading. In contrast, the record of the corresponding celebration in Ezra 3:4–6 does not mention the construction of booths at all, but merely indicates that they “kept the Feast of Booths, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the rule” (*wayya ‘āšû ’et-ḥag hassukkôt kakkātûb wē’ōlat yôm bēyôm bēmispār kēmišpaṭ*; Ezra 3:4). The ceremonial context for the Torah reading in Neh 8:13–18 is the re-enacted wilderness. The full significance of this complex of symbolic re-enactments will come to light in the following prayer: it is in the wilderness that the people receive direct divine instruction via the Torah (Neh 9:13) and the Spirit (Neh 9:20).

Excursus: Festival of Booths in Neh 8:13–18

What event was the celebration of the “Festival of Booths” meant to memorialize in Neh 8:13–18? This festival is a multivalent celebration within the Pentateuchal record; the symbolism associated with it varies depending on the source that recounts its significance. The feast to be held on the “15th day of the 7th month” is described in five pentateuchal

⁴⁹⁰ Wright, “Writing the Restoration,” 20.

⁴⁹¹ Wright, “Writing the Restoration,” 20.

accounts: Exod 23:16; 34:22; Lev 23:33–43; Num 29:12–38; and Deut 16:13–15. While Exod 23 and 34 clearly understand it as a vintage festival, the “ingathering at the year’s end,” the account in Lev 23 co-opts this traditional festival and transforms it into a memorial of the wilderness wanderings when God “made the people of Israel dwell in booths” (Lev 23:43). This is the most likely source for Neh 8, as it is the only account to emphasize the construction of and dwelling in booths.⁴⁹² Nehemiah 8:13–18 does not, however, contain a plain citation of the preceding legislation in Lev 23:33–43. Scholars have explained the lack of an exact textual referent for the festival enacted in Neh 8:13–18 in various ways. Some argue that Ezra is harmonizing the accounts of the celebration between Lev 23:33–43 and Deut 16:13–15;⁴⁹³ others argue that he is engaging in creative exegesis,⁴⁹⁴ or that Ezra was focusing on the aspects of the ceremony that would have been least familiar to his audience, since the festival was a well-known celebration of the

⁴⁹² Cf. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 294. Cf. Franz V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map: Constructing Biblical Israel's Identity*, JSOTSup 361 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 165–67; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 109–111; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 295–96; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 290–93. There are, however, important features of the description of the celebration in Lev 23 that are notoriously missing from the account of the celebration in Neh 8, and there is also an additional “citation” from the law that is not found in the corresponding legislation in Leviticus: 1) Lev 23:40 states that fruit and branches are to be taken from the trees as part of the celebration; 2) the statement in v. 15 that they should “Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written” has no counterpart in the law. For a full discussion regarding theories concerning the Feast of Booths, including its origin and evolution, see Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, “The History of Sukkot During the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods: Studies in the Continuity and Change of a Festival” (Ph.D. diss., 1992), 36–61; Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 495–502; George MacRae, “The Meaning and Evolution of the Feast of Tabernacles,” *CBQ* 22 (1960): 251–276; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Worship in Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1966), 61–66.

⁴⁹³ Y. Kaufmann, *Toledot ha-Emunah ha-Yisra’elit*, 4. vols., (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: The Bialik Institute and the Devir Co. Ltd., 1937–56), 4:327–329 cited in Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 109–111, who disagrees with his analysis.

⁴⁹⁴ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 109–111.

harvest.⁴⁹⁵ When considering the emphasis on the construction of booths, however, it is important to consider the literary role of the ceremony's immediate juxtaposition with the prayer ceremony in Neh 9. In this case, both events—the celebration of the Feast of Booths and the extended prayer performance in Neh 9—recall and reconstruct the wilderness wanderings in the people's memory. The account of the Feast of Booths in Neh 8:13–18 clearly emphasizes the rather peripheral legislation related to commemorating the wilderness wanderings (Lev 23:43) by highlighting the physical construction of and dwelling in temporary shelters.⁴⁹⁶ The description of the people as “those who had returned from captivity” strengthens the constructed parallel between this generation and the generation of those who experienced the first exodus.⁴⁹⁷ It recalls their transient state before they were settled in the land. In the prayer that follows in Neh 9, therefore, much as they have just re-enacted their living situation during the wilderness *en tableau vivant*, so now they will invoke the rules of that space for relating with God.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁵ Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 295. He writes, on the omission of the command in Lev 23:40 to bring both fruit and branches, that “since this feast was a celebration of harvest, it had long been the practice to bring fruit to the ceremony.” On the potential process of interpretation that led to a movement from the command in Lev 23:40 to collect branches and fruit to the interpretation in Neh 8 that the branches were to be used to construct *sukkoth*, see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 292; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 109–111. Fishbane argues that Neh 8:14–17 is neither an enforcement of the plain sense of Lev 23:39–42, nor a harmonization of it with Deut 16:13–15 (as argued by Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 4:327–329) but is instead a creative exegesis of the Levitical command. Blenkinsopp also notes that it is unnecessary to posit that the erection of some of the booths in the temple precincts is an allusion to the Deuteronomic law, since the Holiness Code “also speaks of festal rejoicing “before YHWH your God,” namely at the sanctuary” (Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 292).

⁴⁹⁶ It was also this aspect of the festival that had likely fallen out of use “from the days of Joshua” (v. 17). As Myers explains, “to recall the time of Joshua is to associate the Festival of Booths with the wilderness period when Yahweh dwelt in a tabernacle and the people in booths (Lev 23:43; Hos 12:9) and to dissociate it from the vintage customs related to the agricultural festivals that proved to be so attractive to Israel” (Myers, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 157; cf. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 296).

⁴⁹⁷ Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 296: this verse “suggests that the living in booths was regarded as a deliberate re-enactment of the Israelites’ wandering in the desert following the Exodus.”

⁴⁹⁸ Lambert’s recent analysis of the associated rites of repentance might provide a suggestive explanation of the logic of such an account. He argues that the rites are a form of embodiment, a way of inscribing suffering upon the body, so that the deity might be motivated to relent. See David A. Lambert,

The way in which Neh 9 constructs its participatory structure is in part through the adaptation of previous liturgical and textual genres. The textual relationship between Ezra 3:8ff. and Neh 9:1ff. sheds further light on the relationship between the introductory use of the psalm refrain in Neh 9:5b and the presentation of the Levites and the people respectively as “bearers of Torah memory.” In contrast to the previous ceremonies depicted in Neh 8, it is the people who instigate the rites of penitence in Neh 9. Besides describing the people’s active role in initiating the penitential ceremony, the rhetoric of verses 1–3 also begins to blur the distinction between the particular function of the Levites and that of the community as it relates to knowledge of Torah and the practice of effective penitential prayer. The people themselves are portrayed in the opening verses as engaging in “Levitical behavior”: the “seed of Israel” (*zera’ yiśrā’ēl*)⁴⁹⁹ “separate themselves (*√bdl nip’al*)” and “stand (*√’md*) to confess their sins and the iniquities of their fathers (Neh 9:2).⁵⁰⁰ These phrases together appear only two other times in the biblical text, in both cases to describe the Levites’ being set apart for the temple service (Num 16:9; Deut 10:8). This “separation” from foreigners does not need to be connected to the separation from

How Repentance Became Biblical: Judaism, Christianity, and the Interpretation of Scripture (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 13–31. Here, the people, though they have returned to the land and presumably settled it in part, are embodying their state as those who are still wandering in the wilderness as part of their appeal for God to strengthen their civic situation. Appealing to a legal precedent for such a festival, they embody their diasporic state through a physical manifestation of the transient housing appropriate to such a state.

⁴⁹⁹ This is a relatively rare expression that occurs elsewhere only in 2 Kgs 17:20; Isa 45:25, Jer 31:36, 37, Ps 22:24, and 1 Chron 16:13. The prophets use this reference to refer to the sure restoration of God’s people from exile, a corollary to the single description in the narrative literature in 2 Kgs 17:20, which definitively states the punishment of the “seed of Israel” (*zera’ yiśrā’ēl*) for all of their sins. This phrase occurs nowhere else in Ezra or Nehemiah.

⁵⁰⁰ This recognition that the people are being portrayed as participating in Levitical behavior also challenges interpretations that suggest that their “separation” indicates that this ceremony is linked with the putting away of the foreign wives in Ezra 10 and confirms the unity of these verses. Contra Jacob Myers, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, AB (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), 166; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 300ff.

foreign women described at the end of the book of Ezra.⁵⁰¹ In its context and in collocation with $\sqrt{\text{'md}}$, the action acquires a cultic significance: it designates the people as set apart before they engage in their ceremony of remembering. After the prayer concludes, the same representative group agrees to the pledge (Neh 9:2, 10:29–30) and describes themselves as those who had “*separated* themselves from the peoples of the lands (cf. Neh 9:2, discussed above) to (follow) the law of God, *their wives, their sons, and their daughters, all those who had knowledge and understanding*” (10:29). These criteria of “separation” (coinciding with the group of people who participates in the described ritual; see Neh 9:2) along with “knowledge” and “understanding” provide further clues to the role of this recital as a demonstration of knowledge that is key to community membership. Terms of cultic identity (those who separate themselves and stand before God; Neh 9:2), and terms that describe understanding (those who understand; Neh 10:28) bracket the intervening ceremony in which the Levites speak the contents of the prayer and present their communal petition. The people are designated as ideal participants in this display of memory, but they also begin to participate in the type of activity suitable for memory bearers themselves.

Scholars usually discuss the significance of the Levite’s opening line in Neh 9:5b⁵⁰² in terms of its debated relationship to the body of the prayer proper, contained in vv. 6–37: does it form the conclusion to an unspoken or elided preceding ceremony,⁵⁰³ introduce the following

⁵⁰¹ Blenkinsopp also notes this distinction, using it to argue against Williamson’s suggestion of the original placement of this chapter after Ezra 9–10 (Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 295, 301).

⁵⁰² See n. 489 above for a discussion of the textual variant indicating that Ezra spoke the prayer.

⁵⁰³ Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 300. Williamson argues that it is “widely agreed that there has been some textual loss at the beginning of the prayer, because by the final line of this verse the address has already passed over to the 2nd pers.” Torrey fills in the previous line, presumed missing, based on its similarity to the formula that occurs at the end of Pss 41 and 106 (cf. 1 Chr 20:10) with “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.” Charles C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1910), 280–82.

prayer proper,⁵⁰⁴ or constitute the first verse of the prayer itself, inseparable from the body, which begins in v. 6? Nehemiah 9:5b is comprised of stereotypical psalm language, markedly similar to the endings of Ps 41:14 and 106:48.⁵⁰⁵ Based on the similarity of the phrasing⁵⁰⁶ between Neh 9:5b and the endings of these psalms, Blenkinsopp has argued that the refrain belongs “not to the beginning but to the end of a liturgical psalm,” and that the psalm refrain is therefore distinct from the following long confession beginning at v. 6.⁵⁰⁷ In order to answer this question, however, we should not posit an event *behind* the text, that is, an imagined preceding psalm ceremony, but we should attend to the ways in which the opening psalm indicates something about the nature of the people’s participation and their act of remembering within the narrative itself. When the Levites begin to speak in Neh 9:5b, they speak initially in a priestly blessing formula that approximates the rhetoric of psalm introductions and conclusions. The action of “blessing” is one of the actions that the Levites were “set apart” to perform in Deut 10:8. The Levites are therefore leading the people in the action for which *they* are now set apart.

Consideration of the place of this prayer performance in the wider context of Ezra-Nehemiah also leads to a greater understanding of the Levites’ use of a psalm introduction for their prayer. Significantly, both Neh 9 and Ezra 3:8–13 are directly preceded by performances of the Festival of Booths. Nehemiah 9 describes a ceremony of praise, historical recital, and penitence led by the Levites; Ezra 3:8–13 describes the appointment of the Levites and their

⁵⁰⁴ Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, 223.

⁵⁰⁵ But also note that phrases from Neh 9:5b occur in several more psalms separately from one another, indicating that it is stereotypical psalm language: the imperative of \sqrt{brk} + [’et-] *YHWH* occurs in Ps 28:6; 31:22; 72:18; 103:1, 2, 20, 21, 22; 104:1, 35; 124:6; 134:1, 2; 135:19, 20, 21; 144:1; Ps 72:19 ends with “Blessed be his glorious name forever” (*ûbārûk šēm kēbôdô lě’ôlām*); Ps 89:53 ends with “blessed be the Lord forever! Amen and amen” (*bārûk YHWH lě’ôlām ’āmēn wě’āmēn*).

⁵⁰⁶ He also notes some similarity with Ps 45:18; 72:19; 89:53; 115:18. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 296.

⁵⁰⁷ Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 296.

celebration at the foundation of the temple.⁵⁰⁸ In both ceremonies, the Levites' psalm refrain introduces the participation of the people (Ezra 3:11; Neh 9:6–37; 10:28ff.), though the nature of both the Levitical script and the people's participation differs between these two performances. In Ezra 3:10–11, the priests and the Levites “praise the Lord, according to the directions of David king of Israel,” “singing responsively,” “praising,” and “giving thanks to the Lord.” These generalizations of their activity are accompanied by what is likely a representative quotation of an antiphonal psalm refrain: “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel” (*kî tōb kî lē'ōlām ḥasdō 'al- yiśrā'ēl*).⁵⁰⁹ This use of the psalm refrain introduces the people's response (Ezra 3:11b), much as it did in Chronicles (see previous chapter). Some “shout with a great shout,” and others weep at the comparative inadequacy of the new Temple (Ezra 3:11–13).

In the counterpart ceremony of Levitical praise in Neh 9, the people have inaugurated the cultic event (Neh 9:1–3), but the Levites enter to instigate both the praise and petition (Neh 9:4–5). The text describes them as opening their prayer with a psalm refrain. This psalm refrain, as observed above, is comprised of stereotypical psalm language, associated more frequently with the conclusion of a psalm's recital than with its opening. The Levites, however, do not end there but continue their performance with an extended historical recital, influenced and expanded in light of the Torah that has just been read. It is likely that the text is co-opting a previously established mode of cultic participation, integrating “Torah discourse” into “psalm discourse” to shift the emphasis to the education of the people as those who understand and respond correctly to Torah. While in Chronicles and in the earlier texts in Ezra-Nehemiah the people display their functional cultural literacy by responding with psalm scripts and participating enthusiastically in

⁵⁰⁸ As has been demonstrated with other units in these chapters, Ezra 3 and Neh 8–9 likely form corresponding pieces in an intentional literary structure. Cf. Wright, “Writing the Restoration,” 20.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. the uses of this refrain in 1 Chron 16:34, 41; 2 Chron 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21.

the cult, at this point in Nehemiah the people respond appropriately to Torah and its fundamental narrative.

As will be seen in the remainder of this chapter, Neh 9 supports this mode of participation by conceptualizing the wilderness period as a time in which God's spirit educated the people directly. It therefore provides a symbolic resource with which to imagine such a program of community participation. This social structure is not presented as an innovation but as a recapitulation of an original state. In what follows, I demonstrate how the retold history in Neh 9, particularly its focus on and development of the wilderness wanderings, re-imagines this formative time as one of provision, guidance, and education *for the people*. Therefore, they re-imagine themselves in the wilderness, being taught by God with the aid of his Spirit and his Torah in a process of education that will result in their becoming the memory-bearers for the community.

Excursus: Cultural memory, possessed or created?

One of the perennial questions surrounding the formation of cultural memory in the Hebrew Bible in general and the presentation of Neh 9 in particular is the question of whether psalms and other collective liturgies are *drawing on* a memory that the people already possess, or whether they are *creating* a new form of memory. Are the people informed or uninformed participants? This question is in some sense misplaced. As Aleida Assmann observes, cultural memory is by its nature constructed:⁵¹⁰ not one of the Judeans reciting their cultural memory in song or speech or hearing it recited for the first

⁵¹⁰ Assmann observes that "zur wichtigsten Voraussetzung dieser Forschung gehört, dass Institutionen und Körperschaften wie Nationen, Staaten, die Kirche oder eine Firma kein Gedächtnis 'haben', sondern sich eines 'machen'" (Assmann, "Vier Formen," 186).

time experienced the events narrated therein. The members of the community will always at one point or the other receive these constructed memories anew for themselves. But it is through recurring exposure to these memories and through evidence of their being recycled in different genres and performance scenarios that the probability of their being discussed or presented in Judean life increases.

There are, however, clues in the narrative to suggest that Neh 9 is *presenting* this as an inaugural remembering ceremony for the people: that is, the people are participating not as experts in this common memory but as eager seekers of this knowledge. The dominant trope in Neh 8–10 is the re-discovery of previously unknown information: first, the people require *interpretation* to understand the reading of the law (Neh 8:8). Second, the celebration of the Festival of Booths is inaugurated with a textual discovery: “And they found it written” (*wayyimšē’û kātûb*; Neh 8:14). Once this information is discovered, the people act eagerly and immediately. The narrative constructs a difference in the level of knowledge between the “memory bearers” (Ezra, the Levites, and the Torah) and the populace, and the goal of education is to *lessen* that difference. This happens not only via information transmission but is reflected in the description of the people themselves, who in Neh 9 begin to mimic Levitical behavior. They are, in a sense, inaugurated into the ranks of neophyte memory-bearers themselves.

Constructing a Community in the Wilderness

Above I described how the ceremonies in Neh 8–10 construct a series of participatory structures by which the people gain knowledge of their authoritative text and formative past. This latter function is fulfilled primarily by the prayer in Neh 9:5b–37, which opens with a psalmic invocation and continues with a review of Judah’s history up until the present, before concluding

in an appeal and a pledge for future action. This is not merely an exercise in catechesis nor is it a mere rhetorical device to support the preceding praise or the following petition. This prayer strategically frames the people's situation using images from the past in order to portray their own prayer situation as one of effective penitence and communal education. The prayer uses three primary strategies to do this. First, the prayer uses a focusing technique called "telescoping," whereby more recent events are overlooked in favor of more ancient paradigmatic events. Second, the prayer redefines the importance and impact of the wilderness wanderings. It uses traditional images to describe that period of time but also alters and expands their presentation, effectively transforming its memory from a time of prolonged rebellion and punishment into a time of provision, successful petition, and communal education. Third, the Levites then use language drawn from these early events in Israel's history, the covenant with Abraham, the exodus, and the wilderness wanderings to re-imagine their present and to frame their petition. In doing so, they give the past a function in the present.

Telescoping: A Function of Selectivity

All historical accounts are by their nature selective. A narrator always chooses to relate particular episodes and not others. But in the case of cultural memory, commemorative rituals typically sustain re-enactments of a community's master narrative. The selective process is, to some extent, pre-determined. As Schwartz comments, "collective memory is 'path dependent' – affected not only by its social contexts but by previous representations of its contents."⁵¹¹ Limited narrative schemata appear frequently in a community's discourse and ritual action, thereby supporting their ongoing cultural influence.

⁵¹¹ Schwartz, "Rethinking the Concept of Collective Memory," 15.

Anthropologists have long observed this tendency to focus commemoration on originating events in oral societies. This myth of origins is generally stable (has “master narrative” status) and considerably influences the way that the present society structures itself and understands its identity as a community, whereas the construction of the more recent past is more subject to alteration.⁵¹² Vansina describes this phenomenon as the “floating gap,” meaning that oral societies tend to remember their originary myths and their most recent history;⁵¹³ events in between are often less well-represented in commemorative rituals. This is in some sense counterintuitive; one might expect that it is the ancient past that is more easily forgotten. But while this gap is more pronounced in oral societies, it is also a relative feature of most society’s functional memory. Even when records of intervening episodes are kept, there are particular periods that capture the historical imagination more thoroughly, in which more appears “to happen.”⁵¹⁴ Communities of memory are united by the retelling of this same “constitutive narrative.”⁵¹⁵ The past is not configured anew in each generation. A relatively stable guiding pattern links subsequent generations through a common heritage.

This is not only a feature of historical narration, but is also the nature of historical *explanation*, the use of past events as a source of symbols, narrative schemata, and images, which impose meaningful order on the present. The “guiding pattern” granted by a constitutive narrative is an expedient guide to interpreting and configuring a group’s understanding of the present. National origins and the events that surround them are often ascribed prototypical status,

⁵¹² Grethlein, *The Greeks and Their Past*, 111–12; Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 23–24, 117; David P. Henige, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition: Quest for a Chimera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974) 27–38.

⁵¹³ Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 23–24.

⁵¹⁴ See Levi-Strauss’s theory of “hot” chronologies, those periods of time in which historians consider numerous influential events to have occurred. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: Chicago University Press), 259.

⁵¹⁵ Robert N. Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 152–55.

revealing an effective pattern that plays an influential role in determining later events.⁵¹⁶

Therefore, in Neh 9, this tendency to overlook more recent events and to focus on a more distant past is likely a factor of a common rhetorical strategy when invoking the past. While the lack of emphasis on the exile has occasionally been used to support a pre-exilic date for the prayer,⁵¹⁷ it should instead be understood as a relatively common memory phenomenon, pointing to the preference for certain events in publicly performed history. Judah's functional memory remains anchored in fixed points in the past.⁵¹⁸

The frames to which a society appeals, furthermore, tend to be relatively stable. That is, multiple contemporary events tend to appeal to a limited array of frames.⁵¹⁹ These frames are typically constructed of simplified versions of the past and have come to represent an established set of cultural ideals, which can then be transferred to the present situation. The present situation is successfully "re-framed" by that past event. By overlaying the present event with a completed

⁵¹⁶ Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 101; Schwartz, "The Social Context of Communication, 375–376.

⁵¹⁷ Kugler, "Present Affliction," 620–621; Welch, "The Source of Nehemiah ix," 130–137.

⁵¹⁸ Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," 113.

⁵¹⁹ On the "principle of economy" in cultural memory see, Rigney, "Plenitude, 18. An example from American culture is the use of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington as formative memory figures for later experiences. See the analyses of Barry Schwartz in Schwartz, "Frame Images," 1–40; Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Schwartz, *George Washington: the Making of an American Symbol* (New York: Free Press, 1987). He identifies Abraham Lincoln and George Washington as two examples of frequently referenced "frames." This once again demonstrates the force of a minimal master narrative. See Newsom, "Selective Recall and Ghost Memories," 43. Cf. Allan Megill's distinction between the "master narrative," the "grand narrative," and the "metanarrative." Megill, *Historical Knowledge*, 167. A suggestive parallel is found in the Athenian "Tatenkatalog," a compendium of Athenian feats of war, which developed in the fifth century, and became canonical in fourth-century oratory. This "Tatenkatalog" first appears in a pictorial cycle of the Painted Stoa in the agora and described in detail by Pausanias (1.15.1–3). It is then attested in Herodotus in the context of the Athenian argument with the Tegeats before the battle of Plataea (9.27.1–5). Finally, it becomes commonplace in fourth-century public oratory. It comprises a set of deeds, including the Trojan War, the Amazonomachy, the war against the Thracians, the battle of Marathon, and the aid given to the Argives and Heraclidae. See Proietti, "Beyond the 'Invention of Athens,'" 516–538. Cf. Loraux, *The Invention of Athens*. Newsom defines the "master narrative" as a "body of tacit knowledge organized by a basic chronology of key episodes that is shared by a community and that can be activated and engaged by a particular performance" (Newsom, "Selective Recall and Ghost Memories," 43).

event from the past, the narrative with the more developed symbolic structures and complete narrative schema can be transposed onto another event or narrative whose ending is not yet known or whose full significance has not yet been discovered. By retelling Judah's story but emphasizing particular "scenes" and narrative "schemas" above others, the prayer in Neh 9:5b–37 effectively displaces the overlooked event in favor of the more suitable narrative: the present can be re-framed with the image of a better past. This better past, for the Levites, is not their life in the land before the exile, or even their life in the land at all, but the constitutive events of God's relationship with Israel, the election of Abraham, the redemption from Egypt, and the wilderness wanderings. Focusing techniques demonstrate this particular attention. While events of the returnees' more recent past are treated in a cursory or generic fashion, the promise to Abraham, the exodus, and the wilderness wanderings are both treated at greater length and with features of rhetorical emphasis: the use of proper names and direct speech.

First, looking to each part of the text in detail and moving backwards from the petitioners' present situation (*wě'attâ*...; Neh 9:32), there is only a single verse that hints at the return from exile (v. 31), and only *half a verse* dedicated to the exile itself (v. 30b): *wattittēnēm beyad 'ammē hā'ārāṣōt*, "and you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the land."⁵²⁰ This reference is couched in an unremarkable idiom that portrays the exile as simply one in a series of divine punishments that characterize life in the land. Judah is "given into the hand of" their enemies in vv. 27 and 28, and the successful conquest of the land by the Judeans is described as God giving the people of the land into *their* hand (Neh 9:24).

⁵²⁰ The only reference to exile within the prayer occurs in 9:30b–31a: "and you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the land. But in your great mercies you did not make an end of them, and you did not forsake them, for you are a gracious and compassionate God." The phrase "You did not make an end of them," has a counterpart both in Jeremiah's prophecy regarding Israel's survival of the exile (Jer 30:11; 46:28), and also in Ezekiel's "alternate" historical resume where he uses it to describe the people's survival in the wilderness (Ezek 20:17). See Duggan, "Covenant Renewal in Ezra-Nehemiah," 360.

Second, the type of language used to describe various past events suggests emphasis or lack thereof. In terms of specific data, events *preceding* “life in the land” (vv. 23–31) are characterized by the use of personal names and significant “sites of memory.” The text refers to Sihon and Og, the kings of Heshbon and Bashan, as the representative defeated kings (v. 22).⁵²¹ The section on the wilderness wanderings is portrayed with even more specificity (vv. 12–21). Besides the specific references to Egypt, the Red Sea, the Torah, Sinai, and Moses, this section also includes preserved direct discourse (v. 18b), an almost exact citation of the statement of the people in Exod 32:4, 8.⁵²² Finally, the section that begins the prayer and describes creation and the covenant with Abraham specifically (vv. 7–8) refers to the character Abraham himself as well as his place of origin (v. 7) and an extended list of the original inhabitants of the land (v. 8). In marked contrast, there is only a single proper noun (*hakkēna ‘anim*) used in vv. 23–31, which describes the Israelites’ life and rebellion in the land.⁵²³ All specifically identifiable referents have been erased, replaced by a cyclical and generic portrayal of events, occupied by nameless prophets, enemies, and saviors.

Many commentators have compared this rendition of events in Neh 9:26–31 to the account in Judges and attributed its cyclical structure to the work of the Deuteronomist.⁵²⁴ If this

⁵²¹ Their names are also included in previous historical recitals, including Pss 135 and 136, suggesting that these names had become representative of the Canaanite conquests. See the section on the role of Sihon and Og as condensed symbols in Pss 135 and 136 in Chapter 2.

⁵²² Neh 9:18b: *wayyō ‘mrû zeh ‘ēloheykā ‘āšer he ‘elkā mimmišrāyīm* (and they said, “This is your God who brought you out of Egypt.”); Exodus 32:4, 8: *wayyō ‘mrû ‘ēlleh ‘ēloheykā yišrā ‘ēl ‘āšer he ‘ēlūkā mē ‘ereš mišrāyīm* (and they said, “This is your God, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.”)

⁵²³ The single proper noun is the “Canaanites” (*hakkēna ‘ānīm*) in v. 24.

⁵²⁴ Kellermann, *Nehemia*, 35; Gilbert, “La place de la loi dans la prière de Néhémie 9,” 312; Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, 40n48; D. A. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (NCB; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984); Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 316; Williamson, “Structure and Historiography in Nehemiah 9,” 288; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 305–306; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomist School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 12–13; Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 174.

is the case, it is all the more remarkable that the prayer lacks specific reference to events that were key to the narratives of the Deuteronomist. There is no mention of David or the covenant made with him; in fact, there is no mention of any specific king at all. There is also no reference to the Temple, a particularly glaring omission,⁵²⁵ especially since many commentators argue that this prayer is a deliberate re-enactment of Solomon's Temple prayer.⁵²⁶

Excursus: Solomon's Temple Prayer as an Inspiration for Neh 9:5b–37?

The rhetorical telescoping that characterizes Neh 9's retelling of Israel's history, in which more recent events are effectively *overlooked*, *overstepped*, or read in light of more ancient models, challenges certain penitential models that other scholars have suggested. Some scholars have argued for the significant influence of Solomon's prayer as recorded in 1 Kgs 8//2 Chron 6 on Neh 9.⁵²⁷ The verbal influence is certainly there, but not in the way that is commonly portrayed. Nehemiah 9 is not modeled on Solomon's temple prayer. On the contrary, it appeals to Moses' intercession in the wilderness as a superior model and places the vocabulary most characteristic of Solomon's intercession in the section of the prayer that describes life in the land.

The clearest references to the prayer in 1 Kgs 8 occur in Neh 9: 27–28, in the cycle of disobedience that characterizes Israel's residence in the land. The text quotes Solomon's characteristic plea that the Lord might “hear from heaven” (*tišēma ‘ haššāmayim*) in order

⁵²⁵ Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 14.

⁵²⁶ This begs the question, however, of how much in the forefront Solomon's prayer can be with no mention of the Temple or the Davidic dynasty of which he was a part. Jacob Wright notes that neither Neh 1 nor Neh 9 prioritizes the Temple, and he deliberately contrasts this with the Temple-focused prayer practices in 2 Kgs 19:14ff./Isa 37:14ff. and 2 Chr 20:5ff. There is a deliberate shift away from focus on the Temple, an anomaly if Neh 9 is based on Solomon's temple prayer. See Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 19–21.

⁵²⁷ See Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 151, 55, 210–13.

to forgive the sins of Israel and bring them back into the land (1 Kgs 8:34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49; Ps 76:9; 2 Chron 6:21, 23, 25, 27, 30, 33, 35, 39; 7:14). The phrase appears only in Neh 9 and 1 Kgs 8//2 Chron 6. The other potential references to Solomon's prayer in Neh 9 are not unique. They include God "making a covenant with" an ancestor (\sqrt{krt} ; Neh 9:8; 1 Kgs 8:9; 8:21) and the temporal phrase "as it is this day" (*kěhayyôm hazzeh*; Neh 9:10; 1 Kgs 8:24, 61). Boda has argued that the nominal form *selîḥôt*, which occurs only in Neh 9:17 and Dan 9:9, is a sign of the influence of Solomon's prayer which contains the most occurrences of \sqrt{slh} of any passage in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kgs 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 50// 2 Chr 6:21, 25, 27, 30, 39).⁵²⁸ However, there is a passage that accounts for a much more *dense* and *unique* constellation of relations to Neh 9 that also features \sqrt{slh} , and that is the intercession of Moses in Num 14, where \sqrt{slh} occurs twice (Num 14:19, 20). So while it might be true that Solomon's prayer influenced the genre of penitential prayer,⁵²⁹ its influence on Neh 9 as a model of prayer is markedly mitigated.⁵³⁰ According to Neh 9's appropriation of distinctive terminology from Solomon's prayer, its fulfillment is portrayed as *already having happened* in Israel's cycle of rebellion and salvation in vv. 23–31. They had indeed prayed and God had indeed heard them from heaven when they prayed before the Temple of God. This interpretation aligns with the marked repression of any king or temple imagery in the prayer at all in preference for imagery drawn from Abraham, the exodus, the wilderness wanderings, and the conquest.

⁵²⁸ Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 210.

⁵²⁹ Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 50, 213; Werline, *Penitential Prayer*, 28.

⁵³⁰ Boda also argues that $\sqrt{lō' + \sqrt{zb}}$ (Neh 9:17, 19, 31) only occurs elsewhere in relationship to the wilderness tradition in 1 Kgs 8:57 (Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 155), but this is inaccurate: 1 Kgs 8:57 contains the phrase $\sqrt{al + \sqrt{zb}}$.

The prayer also constructs links between these originating events and the praying people's present: as Eskenazi has observed, Neh 9:9 describes the affliction of "our ancestors" in Egypt, whereas the rest of the historical recital does not create such a link with past generations.⁵³¹ In the verse immediately following, the prayer indicates that through the wonders in Egypt "you [God] made for yourself a name *as of this day*."⁵³² Turning to the final section of the prayer (vv. 32–37), in which the people provide their own connection to the recited material, they explicitly appeal to specific symbolic complexes from the preceding prayer. While they describe themselves as *in* the land (v. 30), their self-characterization draws primarily from tropes that populate the beginning of the prayer, the early events of Israel's life with God, before they enter the land. Beginning in Neh 9:32, the petitioners frame their request in terms related to the wilderness, the exodus, and Abraham in reverse chronological order. In this way, they portray their request as an inverse reflection of their recited narrative. First, in v. 32, they identify God as the one who "keeps covenant" (*šômēr habbērit*; cf. Neh 9:8) and "steadfast love" (*ḥesed*; cf. Neh 9:17). Both of these are characterizations drawn from Abraham and from the wilderness intercessions respectively. Second, they identify themselves as having undergone great *hardship* (*hattēlā'â*; v. 32). This is a rare term that occurs only five times in the Hebrew Bible, two of which appear in the Pentateuchal narratives to describe the adversity experienced in the context of the exodus (Exod 18:8) and the wilderness wanderings (Num 20:14).⁵³³ Third, in Neh 9:36, when the people describe the specific *nature* of their hardship, they identify themselves twice as slaves, preceded by the focusing particle *hinnēh*: "We are slaves this day; in the land that you

⁵³¹ Eskenazi, "Nehemiah 9–10," 2.12–2.13.

⁵³² Eskenazi, "Nehemiah 9–10," 2.12.

⁵³³ The two other, unrelated occurrences appear in Mal 1:13 and Lam 3:5. In the former, it refers hyperbolically to the people's viewing of proper sacrifice as a burden. In Lam 3:5, it refers to the perceived oppression of God against the individual lamenting.

gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves” (*hinnēh ’ānaḥnū hayyôm ’abādīm wēhā ’āreṣ ’āšer-nātattā la ’ābōtēnū le ’ēkōl ʾet-piryāh wē ’et-tūbāh hinnēh ’ānaḥnū ’ābādīm ’ālēhā*). The importance of this identification for getting the attention of the deity is highlighted by the double “hinneh.” The parallel between their reference to their slavery (*’abdut*) in Egypt in v. 17 and their claim to be slaves (*’ābādīm*) in their present context (Neh 9:36) forms its connection to their previous status as slaves in Egypt.⁵³⁴ Therefore, while they are in the land, the people explicitly appeal to the exodus and wilderness wanderings as ciphers for their present situation. Finally, their commitment to renew the covenant between themselves and God, and the action that defines them apart from the sins of the ancestors, the writing of their new pact (*’āmānā*), is described using a play on the use of *√’mn*, which describes the faithful action of Abraham in Neh 9:8.⁵³⁵

This recognition of the cultural force of a constitutive narrative schema forms an alternative explanation to the more common argument that the lack of reference to the exile intends to emphasize the people’s continuity in the land. Newman expresses this viewpoint:

Neh 9:30 contains the only reference to the exile; yet the exile is not described explicitly; there is no mention of deportation or life outside of the land; rather, the verse states that God gave them into the hands of the “peoples of the lands,” ... This circumlocution contrasts with explicit descriptions of the loss of land and deportation found in the Deuteronomistic History as well as in other later Second Temple literature. The reason for the de-emphasis would seem to lie with the author’s desire to establish an inalienable claim to the land, a claim writ large in the prayer. How better to establish such a claim than to mitigate the aspect of the Exile having to do with the loss of the land as punishment? Here the punishment for disobedience lies in the fact that the Israelites were put under foreign rule.⁵³⁶

⁵³⁴ This re-framing and connection to their previous status as slaves in Egypt motivates their rhetorical selection. Contra Oeming, “See, We Are Serving Today,” 582.

⁵³⁵ Frederick Carlson Holmgren, “Faithful Abraham and the ‘amānā Covenant Nehemiah 9,6–10,1,” ZAW 104 (1992): 249–54; Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 214.

⁵³⁶ Newman, *Praying by the Book*, 99–100

The problem with this explanation is that it does not correspond to the focus of the prayer itself on experiences *outside* of the land. The majority of the prayer as well as the majority of the positive interactions between God and the Israelites within the prayer occur outside of the land, before the Israelites enter it. Furthermore, and as argued above, the preceding celebration of the Festival of Booths has already highlighted the salience of the wilderness wanderings to the presentation of the people in Neh 8–10. The de-emphasis on the exile and subsequent deportation is perhaps best explained by recognizing the tendency of cultural memory schemas to appeal to events related to origins, rather than more recent events, as explanatory of the present. Eskenazi has highlighted how creation, the covenant with Abraham, and the exodus from Egypt constitute a “foundational paradigm” upon which the community builds.⁵³⁷ She identifies a shift from the description of this paradigm in vv. 6–10 and vv. 11ff. But I will argue that the wilderness also constitutes part of this “foundational paradigm,” and that the Levites rely on the use of tropes drawn from the wilderness period to frame their own experience of Torah education so central to each of the ceremonies depicted in Neh 8–10.

Wilderness as a Space of *Divine Provision*

As I argued in Chapter 2 on the presentation of the wilderness wanderings in the psalms, the readings of past events should not be understood as independent re-readings of Judah’s canonical texts. Collective memory is what Barry Schwartz has called “path-dependent”: it is affected not only by shifting social contexts but also by previous ways of representing those contents.⁵³⁸ Nehemiah 9 demonstrates a keen awareness of the symbolic complexes related to the wilderness wanderings present in the psalms. As in the psalms, the wilderness is described as a time of

⁵³⁷ Eskenazi, “Nehemiah 9–10,” 2.16–2.17.

⁵³⁸ Schwartz, “Rethinking the Concept of Collective Memory,” 15.

divine guidance and provision, featuring the images of the pillar of fire and cloud, and the provision of food and water in the desert (cf. Pss 78:14–16; 105:39–42). It is also a place where petition is successful (see below; cf. Ps 106:23, 30). By attending to the functional symbolism of the people’s portrayal of the wilderness wanderings in this prayer, we can identify what the wilderness has come to stand for, a time in which God acted in compassion to ensure the people’s survival, *despite* their sin. Further, by structuring the exodus and wilderness accounts as extensions of one another, we can group both events under the rubric of divine salvation and provision in the face of suffering. Through historical selection and patterning, the wilderness wandering is identified not as a period of divine discipline (cf. Ps 78; Ps 106) but as an ideal period of divine provision and mercy.⁵³⁹ The account in Neh 9 expands this symbolic complex, however, to include references to divine education by Torah and Spirit. The original formative period of education thus grounds the people’s *current* participation in a program of Torah education.

The exodus and wilderness wanderings are unified *in terms of the pattern of divine-human interaction*, which is schematically structured *suffering – salvation – sustenance*. The final theme of sustenance can be further divided into motifs of presence, instruction, and provision in three repeating tropes: the pillars of cloud and fire, instruction from God, and the provision of bread from heaven and water from the ground.

One can see how these events are patterned after each other in the schema below:

⁵³⁹ M. Gilbert notes this as one of the unique foci of the prayer in Nehemiah 9: “le plus fréquent [thème] est celui du don de Yahvé. Il donne généreusement: le verbe revient 14 fois dans ce sens (vv. 8 [2 fois]. 10.13.15 [2 fois]. 20 [2 fois]. 22.24.27 [2e fois]. 35 [2 fois]. 36). Il donne la Terre, la Loi, la manne, l’eau, son Esprit, les oppresseurs, mais aussi les sauveurs. Trois fois seulement, il donne le châtime (vv. 27 [1e fois]. 30.37)... aucun text biblique n’a, semble-t-il, utilisé si fréquemment le verb ‘donner.’” Gilbert, “La place de la loi dans la prière de Néhémie 9,” 310.

Nehemiah 9:9–21

Suffering: ⁹And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and their cry you heard at the Red Sea.

Salvation: ¹⁰You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted arrogantly against our fathers. And you made for yourself a name, as it is to this day. ¹¹The sea you split before them, so that they passed through the midst of the sea on dry land, but their pursuers you cast into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters.

Sustenance:

Presence: ¹²By a pillar of cloud you guided them by day, and by a pillar of fire by night to light for them the way in which they should walk.

Instruction: ¹³Upon Mount Sinai you descended and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right judgments and true instructions, good statutes and commandments, ¹⁴and your holy Sabbath you made known to them, commandments and statutes and a Torah you commanded by the hand of Moses your servant.

Provision: ¹⁵Bread from heaven you gave them for their hunger and water you brought for them out of the rock for their thirst, and you told them to go in to take possession of the land that you had sworn your hand would give to them.

Suffering: ¹⁶But they and our fathers acted arrogantly and stiffened their neck and did not listen to your commandments. ¹⁷They refused to listen, and they did not

remember your wonders that you did among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt.

Salvation: But you are a God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them.¹⁸ Even when they had made for themselves a golden calf and said, ‘This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt,’ and had committed great blasphemies,¹⁹ you in your great mercies did not abandon them in the wilderness.

Sustenance:

Presence: The pillar of cloud to guide them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should walk.

*Instruction:*²⁰ Your good spirit you gave to instruct them.

Provision: Your manna you did not withhold from their mouth and water you gave them for their thirst.²¹ Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they did not lack anything. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.

God’s first response to Israel’s suffering is laid out in v. 9: in response to their father’s affliction in Egypt, the Lord acts with great provision, because he sees that *they* (that is the Egyptians) acted arrogantly (*√zyd hip ‘il*; Neh 9:10).⁵⁴⁰ Verse 9 describes the affliction as ‘*anî* but it

⁵⁴⁰ This same term will be used to describe the presumptuous sins of the Judean forefathers in the recapitulation of the Deuteronomic narrative of sin and salvation in Neh 9 (Neh 9:16, 29), but at this stage

is paraphrased retrospectively in v. 17 as *‘abdut*, “slavery,” a characterization that will recur in the description of the Judean’s current state (v. 36). It is also in this first section in which a brief formula is embedded, one that explicitly relates the character of God in the Exodus to the character of God today: *watta ‘aš-lěkā šēm kěhāyyôm hāzzeh* “and you made a name for yourself, *as it is to this day*” (Neh 9:10).⁵⁴¹ The people remember God’s abiding character as the God who saves slaves. It is this sense of continuity that is explicitly derived from the past and extended into the present.

In v. 16, at the beginning of the second cycle, the ancestral sin that in Num 14 *results* in the wilderness wanderings as punishment is recast in an Egyptian image, strengthening the parallel between the two cycles: the fathers are described as acting “arrogantly” (*√zyd hip ‘il*) (v. 16), and as threatening a return to slavery (*‘abdut*) in Egypt (v. 17). In this way, it is the threat of Egyptian slavery that looms continually in the drama presented in the first half of the prayer. God effectively saves them from slavery *twice* in the span of these verses. Furthermore, it is not Moses’ intercession before God on behalf of the people that motivates divine salvation (contra Exod 32:11–14; Num 14:13–19; cf. Ps 106:23). His intercessory action is omitted, as is the characterization of the forty years wandering in the wilderness as mitigated punishment.⁵⁴² Instead, God’s eternal traits lead to yet another occasion for divine provision.

The pillars of fire and cloud structurally reinforce the continuity between the images of divine sustenance in the exodus and the wilderness episodes. These symbols first appear at the

in the prayer it describes the Egyptian offense against Israel. Both Childs and Lee identify this version of the narrative with the Exodus narrative produced by P in which the sea event is associated with the departure from Egypt rather than with the wilderness tradition. The source matters less, however, than the parallel construction of the recital. See Brevard S. Childs, “A Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition,” *VT* 20 (1970): 407; Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 222–23; A. C. C. Lee, “The Context and Function of Historical Recitation in Ancient Israel: A Study of the Historical Psalms 78, 105, and 106” (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1980), 98, 104, 33.

⁵⁴¹ Williamson, “Structure and Historiography in Nehemiah 9,” 286; Eskenazi, “Nehemiah 9–10,” 2.12.

⁵⁴² Kugler, “Present Affliction,” 612.

conclusion to the recounted exodus event in v. 12 and re-appear in v. 19 as confirmation that the Lord remained with them following their blasphemy. In this summary, therefore, the symbols unite the salvation act of the exodus (vv. 9–12) with the divine guidance through the wilderness (vv. 15–21). Far from being a state imposed as a penalty, then, the desert becomes an extension of the salvific event of the exodus.

The importance of divine instruction within the exodus and wilderness accounts is discussed in the following section. Finally, two accounts of divine sustenance, the manna from heaven, water from the rock, clothing that did not wear out, and feet that do not swell (vv. 15, 21) together summarize the significance of these episodes in Israel's history. These symbols, which function in some historical schemata to illustrate Israelite rebellion (cf. Ps 78:15–31) by showing how Israel rebels despite the Lord's care, here purely represent miraculous divine provision (cf. Ps 105:39–42).

Wilderness as a *Space of Instruction*

Part of the motivation for understanding the wilderness as a generative analogue for the returnees' present situation is their presentation of that period as a time of privileged divine instruction. There are two significant innovations within this historical recital that together emphasize the divine education of the entire people within the wilderness context. The first innovation is the inclusion of the Sinai pericope.⁵⁴³ The second and even more significant

⁵⁴³ Von Rad noted the curious absence of the Sinai pericope from previous historical summaries in "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch," 1–78; Martin Noth, *Geschichte Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 120–21, 25–30; Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1948), 42, 48–54, 62–67. They argued that it originally existed as a separate tradition and was only later integrated with the fixed canonical pattern traditions about the patriarchs, the exodus, the wilderness journey, and the Canaanite settlement. This original assessment has been challenged on several bases, including the alleged antiquity of the supposed oldest version of the creed in Deut 26:5–9 (see Th. C. Vriezen, "The Credo in the Old Testament," in *Studies on the Psalms; Papers Read at the 6th Meeting [of] Die Ou Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika* (Potchefstroom: 1963), 5–17; Hyatt, "Were There an Ancient Historical Credo," 152–170) as well as the supposed covenant renewal ceremony that celebrated the Sinai tradition.

innovation is the reference to the “good spirit” instructing the people in the desert (Neh 9:20). As noted above, Eskenazi has identified how the narrative in Neh 8–10 emphasizes the people’s correct communal action. In Neh 9, historical precedent for this form of communal education appears through a retelling of the wilderness period as a time where God’s Torah and God’s Spirit worked together amongst the people as a teacher.

While the attribution of the prophetic word to the Spirit of the Lord later in the recital (v. 30) draws on a great history of prophetic inspiration by a divine spirit,⁵⁴⁴ the description of God’s “good Spirit” who instructs the people (Neh 9:20) is a remarkable innovation that does not have a clearly identifiable referent in preceding narrative literature. The strongest case can be made for a potential allusion to the role of the spirit in Num 11:16–25, in which the spirit put upon Moses is divided among the elders and causes them to prophesy.⁵⁴⁵ It is far from an exact quotation, however. In Num 11:17, the “spirit” is merely described as the “spirit that is on you” (*hārûah ’ăšer ‘ālêkā*) of which a portion is then placed upon the elders. It is unclear whether this is Moses’ spirit or Yahweh’s spirit previously given to Moses.⁵⁴⁶ Moreover, in the Numbers account, the spirit is placed upon the elders in order that they might share in Moses’ leadership, to enact their role as judges; it is not described as interacting with the community as a whole.

⁵⁴⁴ J. R. Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 194. Levison particularly connects this with the editing of the prophecies of the Isaiah corpus and Ezekiel, “both of which amply connect prophecy with the Spirit.”

⁵⁴⁵ The probability of this allusion is strengthened by the many references to Numbers throughout the prayer (Neh 9:12: Num 14:14; Neh 9:14: Num 12:7; 36:13; Neh 9:15: Num 20:8, 10; Neh 9:17: Num 14:4; Neh 9:19: Num 14:14; Neh 9:21: Num 14:33, 34; 32:13; Neh 9:22: Num 21:21, 23, 26–29, 33–34; 32:22, 33; Neh 9:23: Num 14:3, 8, 24; Neh 9:24: Num 14:14; 32:17; 33:52, 55; Neh 9:32: Num 20:14) and the relationship between the giving of the Torah through Moses, and the giving of the Spirit to educate the people. For a careful analysis of the giving of the Torah and the giving of the Spirit as literary parallels in this passage, see Mark J. Boda, “The Torah and Spirit Traditions of Nehemiah 9 in their Literary Setting,” *HEBAI* 4 (2015): 476–491.

⁵⁴⁶ Timothy R. Ashley, *Numbers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 211; Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 324.

Levison and Boda in their comments on the presence of the Spirit in Neh 9 note that the Spirit functions here (v. 20) as a parallel to the *Torah* (v. 13): both are given by God as methods of instruction for the people.⁵⁴⁷ In previous liturgical iterations of Israel's history, even those that highlight the wilderness wandering as a space of alternating divine grace and human failure, there is not a corresponding reference to enabling instruction or divine revelation.⁵⁴⁸ This is a development that correlates to the focus on the people's education in Torah in Neh 8–10 as a whole. Their shared adjective strengthens the connection between Torah and the Spirit: both the statutes and commandments given in 9:13 and the Spirit in 9:20 are described as “good.” This is a notable and rare descriptor for the divine spirit, occurring elsewhere in the biblical corpus only in Ps 143:10. The rarity of the phrase strengthens the argument that it is provided to reinforce the relationship between Spirit and Torah.

Furthermore, the role given to the Spirit in Neh 9:20 echoes the form of communal education demonstrated in Neh 8:13, in which the people congregate in order to “study” (*√škl hip'il*) the words of the law. Nehemiah 9:20 identifies the Spirit as the agent of this instruction in the wilderness, using the same *√škl*.⁵⁴⁹ As the focus in Ezra-Nehemiah shifts in these later parts of the book from Temple to Torah,⁵⁵⁰ we see the people identifying their own participation in Torah learning with a historical precedent set before the Temple even existed. This perhaps

⁵⁴⁷ Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism*, 195; Boda, “The Torah and Spirit Traditions of Nehemiah 9,” 486–87; Boda, “Word and Spirit, Scribe and Prophet in Old Testament Hermeneutics,” in *Spirit & Scripture: Examining a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, ed. K. L. Spawn and A. T. Wright (London: T & T Clark, 2011), 30.

⁵⁴⁸ There is, however, a prophetic reference in the “counter-history” of Ezek 20. Ezekiel 20:10–13 refers to the giving of statutes and rules in the wilderness, though not a specific reference to Sinai. Klein identifies the reference in Neh 9 as an “innerbiblische Polemik” against the prophetic historical review in Ezek 20. See Klein, *Geschichte und Gebet*, 389.

⁵⁴⁹ Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism*, 190–211. The use of the word *mēpōrāš* in Neh 8:8 also, according to Boda, via Yoo, relates the process to the awaiting of divine revelation, which is connected with the spirit and with prophecy in Num 11. Boda, “The Torah and Spirit Traditions of Nehemiah 9,” 487 and n. 30; P. Y. Yoo, “On Nehemiah 8,8a,” *ZAW* 127 (2015): 502–507.

⁵⁵⁰ On this dynamic in Neh 8–10 see Wright, “Writing the Restoration,” 22–23.

explains, in part, why the Temple does not appear in the historical recital; the focus is instead on the wilderness as the ideal space for the reception of divine revelation and the experience of a divine educating presence. Part of the shift from Temple to Torah is a corresponding focus on replicable strategies for communal education.

Relation to Post-Exilic Spirit Traditions

Yet the significance of the Spirit tradition in this prayer diverges significantly from its probable inspiration in the pentateuchal narrative contained in Num 11:16–25. Nehemiah 9 is not the only post-exilic text to evince a keen interest in the Spirit's role in the wilderness period. It is likely that we are here witnessing an element of burgeoning importance in the post-exilic period, which, though it has roots in the biblical texts, will begin to develop independently of those narratives. The growing importance attributed to the role of the Spirit is connected with (and is perhaps due to) a re-visioning of the wilderness wanderings as a time of divine intimacy, access, and instruction, to which the newly returned exiles appeal.⁵⁵¹

A (relatively) contemporary prophetic historical recital—Isa 63:15–64:11—provides evidence for another post-exilic text that retrojects the role of the Spirit into the exodus and wilderness wanderings. This text shares many motifs with Neh 9 and has occasionally been grouped with the penitential prayers.⁵⁵² Both texts share an extended historical review: in Isa

⁵⁵¹ It is also not insignificant that such an emphasis accompanied a ceremony that de-centered power from the temple cult, and essentially overlooked the monarchy except for references to sins committed by “kings” and “priests.” Furthermore, if Jacob Wright is correct about the compositional process of the following *’āmānā*, the original version of this document did not contain stipulations related to the temple either. See Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 212–13.

⁵⁵² As “liturgical prose prayers”: James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927), 362; as *Tôdâ*: J. Harvey, “Le RIB-pattern, réquisitoire prophétique sur la reupture de l’alliance,” *Biblica* 43 (1962): 194–195; J. Harvey, *Le Plaidoyer Prophétique contre Israël après la Rupture de l’Alliance* (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1967), 158; as “laments of covenant renewal”: K. Baltzer, *Das Bundesformular* (WMANT 4; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner, 1960), 48–70; as an earlier intermediate form of “les confessions nationales”: E. Lipinski,

63:11–14, the Spirit is both in the people’s midst at the Red Sea event (Isa 63:11) and is the agent who accomplishes their entry into the land (Isa 63:14). Besides the unique references to the Spirit of God in the midst of the people in the wilderness contained in Neh 9:20 and Isa 63:11, 14, there are several vocabulary items that draw these two accounts together, suggesting that they at the very least draw on a common tradition. These similarities include an emphasis on “distress” ($\sqrt{\text{šrr}}$; Neh 9:27; šārâ ; Neh 9:27, 37; Isa 63:9); the people’s sin described in terms of rebellion ($\sqrt{\text{mrh}}$; Neh 9:26; Isa 63:10); and a focus on God’s “compassion” (raḥāmîm ; Isa 63:7, 15; Neh 9:19, 27, 28, 31) and the “abundance of his steadfast love” (rōb ḥsādāyw ; Isa 63:7; cf. Neh 9:17, 32). The passages are also related structurally; they both begin their respective appeal sections with wē’attâ (Neh 9:32; Isa 64:7).⁵⁵³

Besides similarities of vocabulary and theme, these two passages also share a penitential logic: in both cases, the initiative to forgive the people’s sins lies within God and is not attributed to the initiative of Moses (Isa 63:11). As Kühlewein has argued, the description of the exodus

La Liturgie Pénitentielle dans la Bible (LD 52; Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1969), 35–39; as “postexilic communal confessions”: Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 181–82, 209, 302; as Weiterentwicklung der Volksklage: V. Pröbstl, *Nehemia 9, Psalm 106, und Psalm 136 und die Rezeption des Pentateuchs* (Göttingen: Cuvillier Verlag, 1997), 47. Both the composition of the unit Isa 63:7–64:11 itself, its relationship to the composition of Isaiah as a whole, and its relative dating with other post-exilic texts is discussed extensively within scholarship. Bautch, for example notes that the extent of the Deuteronomic theology in Isa 63 strongly suggests that this section was either composed or significantly re-worked by members of the Deuteronomistic school at some point after the exile. He argues that the prayer evidences three strata: 1) a Deuteronomic stratum not later than the seventh century found in the first lament Isa 63:15–19a; 2) a second lament in Isa 64:7–11 that corresponds to the second stratum from the sixth century, which reflects the trauma of exile; and 3) a clearly post-exilic Deuteronomistic stratum that adds the historical recital and call for epiphany (63:7–14; 19b–64:4a). See Bautch, *Developments in Genre*, 82–83. Viewing this as a Deuteronomistic work, Bautch explicitly disagrees with Paul Hanson, who argues that this prayer is the work of Levites who want to champion over a certain group of Zadokites who has assumed the monikers “Abraham” and “Israel.” Paul Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), 98. H.G.M. Williamson also critiques this view of Hanson. See H.G.M. Williamson, “Isaiah 63:7–64:11. Exilic Lament or Post-Exilic Protest,” *ZAW* 102 (1990): 48–58; cf. G. I. Emmerson, *Isaiah 56–66* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

⁵⁵³ H. G. M. Williamson, “Isaiah 63:7–64:11,” 57; cf. Gilbert, “La place de la loi dans la prière de Néhémie 9,” 307–316.

and wilderness provides a basis for the following petition. The people ask God to help Israel *as he did previously*: “Funktion der V 7–14 ist es also – wie auch sonst im Bericht von Jahwes früherem Heilshandeln in der KV – die Klage zu verschärfen und die Bitte zu unterstützen: Jahwe soll helfen wie damals.”⁵⁵⁴ Isaiah 63 directly appeals to the deity to act as he did in this former time, remembering this as a time when God’s Spirit interacted intimately with the people of God.⁵⁵⁵

This specific constellation of concepts in Neh 9—*historical re-reading, the Spirit of God, and the Spirit’s instructing role*—will also play a significant role in another Second Temple text that confirms the ongoing life of this nexus of symbols and reveals its significance for communal

⁵⁵⁴ Kühlewein, *Geschichte in den Psalmen*, 122.

⁵⁵⁵ In this way, this passage draws on significant wilderness themes from Second Isaiah in which God is portrayed as coming from the wilderness. Isaiah 40:3 was particularly influential in the Qumran community, where it was used to articulate their own journey into the desert to prepare the way for the Lord. See 1 QS 8:13–16; 9:19b–21; cf. Alison Schofield, “The Wilderness Motif in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Israel in the Wilderness*, ed. Kenneth Pomykala (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 45–46; James Charlesworth, “Intertextuality: Isaiah 40:3 and the Serek ha-Yahad,” in *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Shemaryahu Talmon (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 207–208.

The trope of the wilderness as a site of *instruction* and *transformation* and concomitantly an understanding of the people’s current exile as a second and more effective wilderness experience presented in these two biblical texts develops as a theme in Second Temple Judaism. As Najman notes, “Although wilderness can be understood to signify suffering and destruction, it can also be used as the locus for healing and moral transformation, where it becomes the locus for spiritual purification” (Hindy Najman, “Towards a Study of the Uses of the Concept of Wilderness,” *DSD* 13 [2006]: 100). The wilderness therefore becomes the site in which the people are prepared for their final redemption. It is this vision of the wilderness that motivated some of the Qumran community to realize this community by quite literally returning to the desert. 1QS 9:19–21 describes the Instructor as leading people back into the desert in order for them to be taught. Here, as Najman observes, “the cult in the wilderness creates the proper context for revelatory prayer” (“Towards a Study of the Uses,” 110.) This vision will become radicalized among some members of the Qumran sect, who will view their retreat into the desert as an imitation of Israel’s action in the desert. See N. Wieder, “The ‘Law-Interpreter’ of the Sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Second Moses,” *JJS* 4 (1953): 158–75, esp. 72; Schofield, “The Wilderness Motif in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 37–54. James Vanderkam summarizes, “As they awaited the end, as they prepared the Lord’s way, they situated themselves in the very place where God’s salvation would become manifest and they arranged themselves in conformity to the pattern established when God had revealed himself at Sinai.” James C. Vanderkam, “The Judean Desert and the Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Antikes Judentum und frühes Christentum: Festschrift für Hartmut Stegemann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Wolfgang Reinbold Bernd Kollmann, and Annette Steudel (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 1999), 171.

iterations of penitential prayer in particular. *4QDibre Hame'orot* (4Q504–506), a Second Temple text likely dated to the second century BCE, again revives the wilderness period as an effective image to re-frame the community's present situation. This seven-day liturgy, which the final chapter of this dissertation examines in detail, refers to the Holy Spirit as an explicit agent of knowledge for the community (see 4Q504 4 5), and the wilderness as the space in which this penitence ideally takes place.⁵⁵⁶

The development of the wilderness as a site of communal instruction illumines its centrality in this section of Nehemiah. In the course of the people's re-education in the present and their reconstitution as a community defined by their knowledge of Torah, the Levites re-tell their constitutive narrative and augment the wilderness account as an originary site of divine pedagogy, before temple or kingdom. These texts suggest a trajectory of interpretation within the Second Temple period that emphasizes the role of the Spirit of God in the wilderness and that contributes to the wilderness wanderings as a type of "golden age" in the relationship between God and Israel. Nehemiah 9:5b–37 highlights the wilderness as a space of privileged instruction, which is only now being revived in Judah. It also demonstrates a broader point about the nature of literature as a mnemonic medium: it is, as Erll observes, both "memory-productive," and "memory reflexive."⁵⁵⁷ The Levitical prayer claims as a whole to be a mnemonic reflection on pre-established events in Israel's history, but it is participating in a larger cultural reconstruction of the wilderness period as a time of pneumatic vitality. Later "reflections" on this period therefore develop this construction, which is itself based on an act of remembering.

⁵⁵⁶ Cf. 1 QS 8.8–10; 4Q171 3.1 in which they call themselves the "returnees/penitents of the wilderness" (*šb' hmdbr*); Schofield, "The Wilderness Motif in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 50.

⁵⁵⁷ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 151.

Wilderness as a *Space for Successful Petition*

The final characteristic of the wilderness that presents it as an ideal memory with which to re-frame the Judean situation is the construction of the wilderness as an ideal space for prayer. As the wilderness wanderings are characterized by divine mercy, so also are they characterized by successful intercession. That the wilderness was emerging as a remembered model for effective prayer has already been discussed in relationship to Ps 106, where Moses and Phinehas stand as ideal memory figures whose prayers were heard in the wilderness (Ps 106:23, 30). The re-reading of Moses' intercessions in Exod 32 and Num 14 respectively within Neh 9:6–37 reveals a developing understanding of the efficacy of the Levites' own recital of God's deeds.

The author of the prayer is clearly aware of both intercessory traditions, and he mixes elements of each into his abbreviated schemata. After a general statement of the people's stubborn sinfulness, a "kind of Deuteronomic 'biblicizing' meant to be evocative of the Israelites' general behavior during the wilderness experience,"⁵⁵⁸ their "acting arrogantly," "stiff necks," and "lack of obedience," the gaze of the narrator focuses on the particular episode recounted in Num 14:4, in which the people cried out to "appoint a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt." The referent is unmistakable. Then in Neh 9:18, the author describes the golden calf episode (Exod 32:1–35) and includes the only instance of dialogue in the entire prayer to record the people's blasphemous speech, "This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt." Sandwiched between these two accounts of rebellion is the most complete reference to Yahweh's creedal attributes within the prayer:

⁵⁵⁸ Newman, *Praying by the Book*, 88.

Neh 9:17a “They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and *appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt* (// Num 14:4)”

Neh 9:17b “But you are a God of forgiveness, *gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love*, and did not forsake them.” (// Exod 34:6; Num 14:18)

Neh 9:18 Even when they had made for themselves a *golden calf* and said, ‘*This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt*,’ and had committed great blasphemies. (//Exod 32:4, 8)

The prayer conflates two accounts of rebellion and links them via the recitation of divine traits and the resulting continuation of the divine presence. We also can see another effect of the conflation of a prayerful petition with a narrative recollection of history: the eternal attributes of Yahweh, which by this time had become a type of liturgical formula, mobile and replicable in varied contexts, are here re-situated within Israel’s master narrative.⁵⁵⁹ The appeal for Yahweh to act according to his eternal character is reconnected with an intercessory context and with the associated wilderness landscape and narrative setting. Therefore, the references to these attributes that introduce their concluding petition in v.31b (*kî ’ēl-hannûn wěrahûm ’āttâ*) appeal to the wilderness events as a mnemonic frame.

But while the text specifically refers to these accounts, in both cases it erases Moses’ own act of intercession as a catalyst for God’s forgiveness. In its absence, what remains is a programmatic statement about God’s attributes. It was these attributes that served in the wilderness setting to guarantee God’s presence with the people. This erasure of Moses is not due to a tendency within the prayer itself to avoid referring to Moses at all. He is described a few verses earlier as the agent through which the commandments and statutes and laws are given (Neh 9:14). So why, in a passage that is marked by very specific references to particular episodes from the Pentateuch, is one of the most key characters within the scene erased? In effect, the

⁵⁵⁹ Cf. Jonah 4:2; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; 112:4; 145:8; Joel 2:13; 2 Chron 30:9; Nah 1:3.

Levites themselves “speak Moses’ role” even as he disappears from the scene; they recite back to God the divine attributes of graciousness, mercy, slowness to anger, and abundance of steadfast love.⁵⁶⁰ While Moses himself disappears at this point in the text, his prayer remains. The praying Levites effectively serve as his proxy, adopting his rhetorical strategy to summon consistent reminders of God’s effective attributes back to him in the midst of a recital of the consistent mercies of the Lord. The barren terrain of the wilderness, the site of suffering, of displacement, and the revelation of human frailty and guilt also becomes a site in which that suffering might be overcome.

Conclusion: History, Participation, and Genre in Neh 9

In conclusion, I return to Erll’s concept of “memory *in* literature,” the staging of remembering acts within narrative itself. In Neh 8–10, the community undergoes a significant transformation in terms of their access to and understanding of Torah. This transformation is emphasized through their correct reaction to the Torah reading in Neh 8:1–12, their eagerness to enact the mandated festivals in Neh 8:13–18, their initiation of penitential practices in Neh 9:1–3, and their assent to the contents of the written *’āmānā* in Neh 10:1–40. Nehemiah 9 provides for the people a *historic* and *authoritative* grounding for this transformation. It models within the narrative the possibility of communal transformation based on a correct understanding of Israel’s history. It locates the symbolic language to describe this education in the contents of Israel’s memory and

⁵⁶⁰ In fact, rhetoric that echoes the effective prayer of Moses is sprinkled throughout the prayer like a leitmotif, unifying the composition. There is a cluster of terms taken from Moses’ prayer, which all occur together in Num 14, though they are not unique to that text, and are therefore difficult to pinpoint as specifically referencing that prayer. This includes the reference to the “inhabitants of the land” (Neh 9:24) and the repeating designation of the “pillar of cloud by day” and the “pillar of fire by night” (Num 14:14//Neh 9:12, 19). Numbers 14:33–34 also includes a reference to the wilderness wanderings as lasting forty years, a length of time that is repeated in the prayer (Neh 9:21).

then re-enacts such an ideal ceremony in the narrative itself. It envisions the wilderness as an ideal site for the community's education both within the prayer and in its narrative frame.

The prayer is also set within a drama of participation. As a narrative staging of memory, the frame provided by the Abrahamic covenant, exodus, and wilderness wandering coincides with the people's own increase in understanding. The people begin to identify with the Levites who speak the prayer, while the Levites liturgically invite and historically frame the people's enthusiastic and successful participation. While the people are not *yet* "experts" in memory, participatory structures are established in order to move the people towards "understanding." The text uses the material of Israel's memory to legitimate particular forms of communal speech and to mobilize action in accordance with the community's reforming goals. This moves beyond a static understanding of "shared memory" as a tool of group "cohesion." Here, the material of shared memory provides the material for a group's social transformation. Slippery terms like "identity," give way to an evaluation of function: what resources does our shared history provide with which to re-interpret our present concerns? The vision that the Levites give to the people provides for them a set of images that not only re-describes their present but also influences their future by framing their less than ideal present with a past narrative situation in which suffering was connected to divine provision and successful education. Therefore, as Schwartz observes, they connect their present to such a past and "defin[e] the meaning of problematic events by depicting them as episodes in a narrative that precedes and transcends them."⁵⁶¹

But this narrative representation of memory also creates a commentary on the practice of historical recital itself. Nehemiah 9 presents a social strategy in which the contents of a textual memory, threatened by limited access and the destruction of centralized institutions designed to

⁵⁶¹ Schwartz, "Frame Images," 8.

preserve its contents, are transformed into shared knowledge, a “functional memory.” Its performance contributes to the ongoing education of the people in their common text and their common memory. This common memory both connects the people to their shared history and traditional texts and identifies a historical framework for construing the people as potential “memory bearers” themselves. It both creates and validates the larger pedagogical structure of the people’s relationship with Torah as narrated in Neh 8–10.

As I noted above, the creation of a “functional memory” requires both access and motivation. The historical frame constructed in the prayer identifies a model for successful penitential prayer, therefore validating itself as a structure of discourse, and identifies a social function for the act of historical recital. The setting described within the prayer and the ideal response of the people in its narrative context demonstrate the value of this cultural act. Both contribute to a shared communal understanding. The prayer reconstructs a narrative that enshrines the value of the acquisition and performance of the historical knowledge contained therein: the wilderness, where the Spirit and the Torah educated the people, is also the site where divine compassion can be realized. This memory therefore undergirds the narrative’s presentation of a central social role for a range of “literate practices” in this newly established community of Judea, integrated into cultic practice, communal prayer, and the litigation of social action (Neh 10; 13). The people are here *demonstrating*, or being invited to demonstrate, a knowledge of their own history, particularly as it is contained in the Torah, and they are therefore defined at the conclusion of the recital as those who possess knowledge and understanding (Neh 10:29).

CHAPTER 5

THE RECITAL OF HISTORY IN THE QUMRAN PSALMS SCROLLS

Introduction

[Bind] with the good, your souls,
 And with the pure to glorify the Most High.
 Join together to make known his deliverance,
 And do not hesitate to make his strength known and to glorify him before the simple.
 For to make known the glory of the Lord, wisdom has been given;
 And to recount the multitude of his deeds, she has been made known to humanity.
 To make known to the simple his strength;
 To convey to those who lack thought his greatness.
 (Ps 154:3–6; 11QPs^a XVIII, 1–5)

These lines introduce the sapiential ode contained in Ps 154 and describe the revelatory role of wisdom. Psalm 154, which before the discoveries at Qumran was known only in its Syriac versions,⁵⁶² was found in its original Hebrew in the Great Psalms Scroll 11QPs^a, a scroll that was copied around 30–50 CE.⁵⁶³ In 11QPs^a, this eloquent reflection on wisdom's pedagogical role follows a set of psalms that celebrate the “multitude of [the Lord's] deeds” by means of historical psalms 135 and 136. Psalm 154 describes the purpose of wisdom as the recital of this historical knowledge, an act that is facilitated by the very psalm liturgy that precedes it.

⁵⁶² James VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (New York: T & T Clark, 2002), 191–193. The psalm appears as Syriac Psalm II in the *Book of Discipline* by the tenth century Nestorian Bishop Elijah of al-Anbar, and as Ps 154 in a manuscript from Mosul, which also preserves the oldest extant Syriac version of this psalm. See the Mosul manuscript at Mosul/Baghdad, Library of the Chaldaean Patriarchate 1113. Based on comparison with the older Hebrew version in 11QPs^a, James Sanders identified the Mosul manuscript as the “most faithful Syriac version of the psalms available to date.” James A. Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 53, 104–107, 110–111.

⁵⁶³ Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms*, STDJ 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 7.

Psalm 154's reflection on the role of wisdom in "recounting the multitude of [the Lord's] deeds" within the Qumran community provides a transition to our next source of evidence on the role of historical recital in Second Temple Judaism: the psalms scrolls found in the caves surrounding the Dead Sea.⁵⁶⁴ The psalms scrolls found at Qumran provide a new type of evidence for the development of the psalms as a technology of Israel's functional memory in the Second Temple period. In Chapter 2, I argued that the historical psalms as they appear in the MT provide an importance resource with which to transmit and confirm a functional memory among a populace. In Chapters 3 and 4, I analyzed two narrative scenes in which the people participated in historical recitals, in 1 Chron 16 and Neh 9 respectively. Each of these recitals narrates the public performance of a foundational historical paradigm. These performances demonstrate, in terms of Astrid Erll's categories, the presentation of memory *in literature*.⁵⁶⁵ Each presents a climactic scene in which the people participate ideally in the ceremonial commemoration of Israel's history. They are, however, literarily staged performances of cultural memory that occur at important junctions within their respective narratives.

While one can speculate about how the narration of such events reflects actual practice, what we are missing are independent manuscripts of the liturgies. The scrolls found at Qumran potentially fill a missing link between the psalms as a literary collection, the psalms as the shared performance of a community, and the psalms as a mnemonic and pedagogical aid for the dissemination of a common cultural memory in Second Temple Judaism. In my evaluation of the Qumran Psalms scrolls, therefore, I will return to visit the psalms and their particular literary potential as a *medium of cultural memory*.⁵⁶⁶ As Aleida Assmann notes, groups must create a

⁵⁶⁴ For an account of the discovery of 11QPs^a, see Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 3–8.

⁵⁶⁵ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 77.

⁵⁶⁶ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 144–145.

shared base of knowledge through education if they are to establish a shared understanding of key national events and their symbolic significance.⁵⁶⁷ This requires not only a cache of stored knowledge but also a technology suitable for its distribution. In this chapter, I will consider in turn what the material evidence found at Qumran tells us about the function of individual psalm scrolls and the performance of psalms, the role of historical recital within these psalms and their description of the ideal participant in this recitation, and formal and text-critical markers of communal engagement with this material. In so doing, I hope to describe practices surrounding the psalms, particularly those that contain the “functional memory” of Israel, in the Second Temple period.

My argument consists of two major parts. First, the manuscript evidence from Qumran suggests that in the second century BCE to first century CE psalms were primarily consumed within the Qumran community in small functional textual groupings, suitable for liturgical performance. These groupings often share a theme or a formal trait, such as an antiphon, which supports this picture of the psalms as pieces of short formal liturgies designed for performance. Evidence of what David Carr has called “oral-written variants” among these manuscripts, and between these manuscripts and the psalms preserved in the Masoretic text, support this portrait of regular recital by the community.⁵⁶⁸ Furthermore, the formal characteristics of psalmody, their ability to function as self-contained units, the brevity of their component lines, which permits the insertion of additional elements, and their use of frequently stereotypical language facilitates the compilation of novel and variant “psalm groups.” The Qumran psalms demonstrate this facility through their preservation of previously unknown orderings of psalms, and psalms that possess

⁵⁶⁷ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 17–22, 119–136.

⁵⁶⁸ David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 18–25.

major insertions and variants. Each of these features informs our understanding of the way in which the psalm form itself functions as a medium of cultural memory.

This first half of my argument concerning the formal and manuscript features of psalmody in general leads directly into my second argument concerning the use of historical psalms in particular as a vehicle for transmitting and supporting communal knowledge of history. Portions of each of the historical psalms, 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136 are extant at Qumran.⁵⁶⁹ I will focus, however, on two particular liturgical groupings contained in 11QPs^a, one of which features Pss 105, and the other, Pss 135 and 136. These groupings are both clearly designed for communal performance and also contain explicit reflection on the value of the historical knowledge contained within them. The evidence for the regular communal recitation of the historical psalms and their social importance is comprised of three primary sources: *explicit rhetorical reflection* on the practice, the *formal* and *liturgical* characteristics of these collections, and *text-critical signs* of oral-written variation. In this way, the Qumran psalms scrolls contribute to a dynamic portrait of the use and development of historicized prayer in the Second Temple Period, and the “process of remembering” as facilitated by traditional psalm texts.

Material Features of Psalmody at Qumran

The Qumran scrolls offer unique material evidence for the function and use of the psalms in Second Temple Judaism. I will first address the manuscript evidence pertaining to the format of psalms generally at Qumran before I address the material evidence for historical psalms particularly. Psalms are found in forty-two manuscripts near Qumran, one at Nahal Hever and

⁵⁶⁹ Ps 78: 4QPs^c (Ps 78:6–7, 31–33); Pap6QPs (Ps 78:36–37); 11QPs^b (Ps 78:1); 11QPs^d (Ps 78:5–12, 36–37 (?)); Ps 105: 4QPs^c (Ps 105:1–3, 23–25, 36–45); 11QPs^a (Ps 105:1–11, 25–45); Ps 106: 4QPs^d (Ps 106:48(?)); Ps 135: 4QPs^k (Ps 135:6–16); 4QPsⁿ (Ps 135:6–8, 11–12); 11QPs^a (Ps 135:1–9, 17–21); Ps 136: 11QPs^a (Ps 136:1–16, 26); 4QPsⁿ (Ps 136:23–24).

two at Masada, making the psalms the most well-represented biblical book found at Qumran.⁵⁷⁰ Along with the significance of the sheer number of scrolls is the significance of the various ways in which the psalms were preserved. While the vagaries of preservation and text decay prevent a completely clear picture of the original format of these psalms scrolls, it appears that the psalms were most often preserved and consumed in small collections, ranging from a single psalm to several psalms. This practice of creating small liturgical collections and excerpted scrolls would be encouraged by both material and functional reality: the scroll itself as a form has natural limitations in size.⁵⁷¹ But it also points to a communal demand for these small excerpted psalters and the preservation of the psalms in a form that facilitates liturgical performance or personal memorization, a demand that correlates to a communal function to be examined below.

Most of the scrolls found at Qumran are fragmentary: Flint estimates 100,000 pieces of different scrolls have been found, many “no bigger than a postage stamp.”⁵⁷² Many of the identified psalm manuscripts at Qumran have decayed to such a fragmentary state that definite indicators of original length such as margins or column height are no longer available. But of the scrolls that do present enough physical evidence to indicate their original size, several appear to have been created to fulfill a demand for “excerpted” scrolls of significant texts.⁵⁷³ I adopt

⁵⁷⁰ Peter W. Flint, “Unrolling the Dead Sea Psalms Scroll,” in *Oxford Handbook of Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 229. For the purposes of this chapter, I am defining psalm scrolls as those that primarily contain texts that correlate to those found in the Masoretic psalter. Therefore, I am not treating compositions that contain psalm-like texts but are wholly unique to Qumran, such as 4Q380 and 4Q381.

⁵⁷¹ Flint notes that the 11QPs^a which contains 49 psalms is already 5m long. For a scroll to contain all 150 psalms, it would need to be close to 15m long. Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms*, STDJ 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 40, 48.

⁵⁷² Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 1.

⁵⁷³ See, on the phenomenon of excerpted scrolls at Qumran, Emanuel Tov, “Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts from Qumran,” *RevQ* 16 (1995): 581–600; Brent A. Strawn, “Excerpted Manuscripts at Qumran: Their Significance for the Textual History of the Hebrew Bible and the Socio-Religious History of the Qumran Community and Its Literature,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community*, ed. James Charlesworth (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006); Strawn, “Excerpted ‘Non-Biblical’ Scrolls at Qumran? Background, Analogies, Function,”

Tov's definition of "excerpted texts" as "biblical texts, excerpted for a special purpose, and presented without commentary."⁵⁷⁴ He differentiates these excerpted texts from re-written Bible texts on the one hand, and biblical texts excerpted with accompanying commentary on the other. Such "pocket-sized" scrolls facilitate easy reference and use, either as reference texts for liturgy or for the purposes of memorization and study. The excerpted psalms scrolls might contain a single psalm or set of psalms, with no accompanying commentary,⁵⁷⁵ and are often marked by their small size.⁵⁷⁶ Several Psalms manuscripts in particular appear to fit these criteria: 1QPs^b, of which only portions of Pss 126, 127, and 128 are extant, contained only the Psalms of Ascent according to the scroll's original editors.⁵⁷⁷ Three psalms scrolls, 5QPs, 4QPs^g, and 4QPs^h, likely contained only Ps 119.⁵⁷⁸ 4QPsⁿ is particularly significant for this study, as it contains a

in *Qumran Studies: New Approaches, New Questions*, ed. Michael Thomas Davis and Brent A. Strawn (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 65–115.

⁵⁷⁴ Tov, "Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts," 583.

⁵⁷⁵ In contrast to, for example, 4QFlorilegium, 4QCatena^a, 4QMidrEschat^{a, b}, all peshers, which excerpt biblical texts but then include their interpretation (Tov, "Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts, 581–582).

⁵⁷⁶ Cf. Strawn, "Excerpted Manuscripts at Qumran," 114–116; cf. Julie Duncan, "Excerpted Texts of Deuteronomy at Qumran," *RevQ* 18 (1997): 49. The Psalms are one of four biblical books and one extra-biblical book (Hodayot) that are preserved in collections of drastically differing sizes. The book of Genesis is preserved in copies that range from 11 lines to 50 lines; copies of Deuteronomy range from 22–24 lines for excerpted scrolls to 22–39 lines for regular Torah scrolls. Ezekiel is not as well-represented of a book at Qumran as the scrolls from the Pentateuch, but one copy of only 11 lines (4QEzek^b; probably excerpted) has been preserved alongside two other witness (4QEzek^a and MasEzek) both of which have 42 lines. 4QH^c contains only 12 lines as opposed to the best-preserved copy of the Hodayot (1QH^a) which extends to 41–42 lines.

⁵⁷⁷ D. Barthélemy and J.T. Milik, *Qumran Cave I*, DJD I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 71; though Flint considers it impossible to prove the extent of the original scroll, due to its fragmentary state. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 31n15.

⁵⁷⁸ 4QPs^g preserves Ps 119:37–92 in a stichometric layout. Fragment 1 preserves the entire height of the manuscript at 8 lines, 8.4 cm. high. 4QPs^h preserves a wide right-hand margin next to the first extant column, and this almost certainly marks the beginning of the manuscript. Both manuscripts lay out Ps 119 stichometrically, with the separate stanzas clearly marked out, either by a space (4QPs^g) or, where preserved, by a Cave 4," *RevQ* 16 (large marginal *lamed* (4QPs^h). See Patrick W. Skehan, Eugene C. Ulrich, and Peter W. Flint, "Two Manuscripts of Psalm 119 from Qumran 1995): 478. The fact that each of these iterations of Ps 119 is written stichometrically indicates its special status among the psalms. Tov, "Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts," 590. Most psalms manuscripts found at Qumran are written in prose format.

condensed version of Pss 135 and 136, in which Ps 136:22–23 follows directly after Ps 135:11–12.⁵⁷⁹ 4QPs^l, which contains Ps 104:3–5, 11–12, written stichometrically, is also likely an excerpted psalm.⁵⁸⁰ This combination of portions of two psalms can either indicate an alternate textual tradition or, more likely, an excerpting and combination of two thematically similar psalms, not unlike what is seen in 1 Chron 16:8–36. Other psalm texts illustrate their use in liturgy: 2QPs contains portions of Pss 103–104, in which the first two verses of Ps 103 are in red. The red ink most likely functions as a liturgical directive of some kind.⁵⁸¹ This manuscript evidence suggests that, while larger psalms collections such as 11QPs^a did exist, there is another simultaneous tradition of creating copies of individual psalms or small collections, perhaps for personal or devotional use, and liturgical copies of scrolls that contained psalms for particular occasions. Even as the psalter was being read and produced in its proto-Masoretic form in the Second Temple period, it was still being performed as a set of communal liturgies and personal prayers.⁵⁸² So too, excerpting itself, even when the exact use of the excerpted manuscript itself is ambiguous, is a mark of the particular emphasis given to particular texts: these are texts that would be more commonly known, read, and referenced than texts that were not excerpted but were preserved entirely in long-form scrolls.

⁵⁷⁹ Strawn lists this text as “probably excerpted.” Strawn, “Excerpted Manuscripts at Qumran,” 113–114. The editors of the text judge that the “preserved text represents a new Psalm, which forms a coherent whole and presumably comprised 135:1–12 + 136:23–26.” See Patrick W. Skehan, Eugene C. Ulrich, and Peter W. Flint, “4QPsⁿ,” in *Qumran Cave 4. XI: Psalms to Chronicles*, ed. E. Ulrich et al., *DJD* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 137.

⁵⁸⁰ Brent A. Strawn, “Psalms,” *The Hebrew Bible, Vol. 1C: Writings*, ed. Armin Lange and Emanuel Tov, *The Textual History of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 9. It is possible that Ps 104 would have been grouped with 105, as it is in both the MT and 11QPs^a ordering. This of course cannot be verified by our current evidence.

⁵⁸¹ Y. Nir-El and M. Broshi, “The Red Ink of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Archaeometry* 38 (1996): 97–102.

⁵⁸² Eva Mroczek has argued in a compelling study that “book” is probably not the best category to use for the Psalter in Second Temple Judaism. See Eva Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound: Ancient Concepts of Textual Tradition” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Toronto, 2012), *passim*.

A second related point of evidence for the way in which psalms were used at Qumran is the marked variance in the order of psalms across manuscripts.⁵⁸³ While the often-fragmentary preservation of psalms disallows complete analyses of the extent and arrangement of these scrolls, there is significant evidence indicating the alternate order of contiguous psalms. Some psalms manuscripts support the ordering of the MT;⁵⁸⁴ others support an ordering similar to that found in 11QPs^a.⁵⁸⁵ Yet other manuscripts present idiosyncratic groupings of psalms.⁵⁸⁶ This evidence leads to one of two conclusions: 1) the presence of multiple psalm “canons” present at Qumran;⁵⁸⁷ or 2) a pattern of psalm use, in which psalms are selected and arranged according to different liturgical or literary purposes.⁵⁸⁸ Combined with the practice of excerpting psalms for personal or liturgical use outlined above, the second option appears more likely. Even as

⁵⁸³ See a programmatic analysis of these different psalm orders in Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 150–171.

⁵⁸⁴ E.g. 4QPs^s; Seiyal 4; 11QPs^c; 5/6 Hev Ps; 4QPs^r; 4QPs^c; 4QPs^r; 11QPs^c; MasPs^a.

⁵⁸⁵ 4QPs^b (supports Masoretic ordering in psalms preserved earlier in the collection.); 4QPs^c; 4QPs^d; 11QPs^b.

⁵⁸⁶ 4QPs^a and 4QPs^q agree in placing Ps 33 directly after Ps 31; 4QPs^a also places Ps 71 after Ps 38.

⁵⁸⁷ Sanders argued, for example, that 11QPs^a represents a “genuine scriptural psalter” that preserves an alternate arrangement to the MT. See James A. Sanders, “Variorum in the Psalms Scroll,” *HTS* 59 (1966): 83–94; Sanders, “Cave 11 Surprises and the Question of Canon,” *McCQ* 21 (1968): 101–116; Sanders, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a) Reviewed,” in *On Language, Culture, and Religion: In Honor of Eugene A. Nida*, ed. M. Black and W. A. Smalley (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 79–99. Cf. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 204–206. This side of the debate has been assessed by Wilson in “The Qumran Scroll Reconsidered: Analysis of the Debate,” *CBQ* 47 (1985): 624–42, and more recently by Eva Mroczek in “Psalms Unbound,” 22–50. See further in “Critical Issues” below.

⁵⁸⁸ This has been most vehemently argued by Patrick Skehan, who maintains that 11QPs^a represents a secondary collection, compiled either for liturgical purposes or to preserve a “library” edition of representative Davidic psalms. See Patrick W. Skehan, “Qumran and Old Testament Criticism,” in *Qumran: sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu*, ed. M. Delcour (Gembloux: Duculot, 1978), 168–169; Skehan, “The Divine Name at Qumran, in the Masada Scroll, and in the Septuagint,” *BIOSCS* 13 (1980): 42. Cf. also Shemaryahu Talmon, “Pisqah Be'emsa' Pasuq and 11QPs^a,” *Text* 5 (1966): 13; M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, “The Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a): A Problem of Canon and Text,” *Text* 5 (1966): 22–33; Ben Zion Wacholder, “David's Eschatological Psalter,” *HUCA* 59 (1988): 23–72. Cf. Mroczek, who argues that there is no sense of the “Psalter” as a “book” or as a coherent collection at all at this time in “Psalms Unbound,” 22–50.

particular psalm orderings became “standardized,” psalms were simultaneously read and/or performed in smaller groups crafted for particular occasions.⁵⁸⁹

What are these occasions? Several scholars have discussed these psalm texts in the context of the larger phenomenon of textual excerpting in the ancient world.⁵⁹⁰ The demand for excerpted scrolls was not limited to the psalms. Excerpted texts containing portions of Deuteronomy, Exodus, the Song of Songs and Ezekiel have also been found at Qumran.⁵⁹¹ Strawn, in his article on the phenomenon, points to examples extending as far back as the Assyrian and Babylonian chronicles,⁵⁹² excerpted from larger astronomical texts; two Ugaritic tablets (KTU 1.7–8) that are apparently excerpts from the larger Baal cycle (KTU 1.1–6);⁵⁹³ and the Ketef Hinnom tablets.⁵⁹⁴ Moving to a time period contemporary with the Qumran scrolls, Greek and Egyptian educational practices also commonly included the use of excerpted texts,⁵⁹⁵ particularly of poetry and lists, which were understood to provide material more suited for memorization.

⁵⁸⁹ The arrangement of the MT also preserves several smaller collections which maintain their distinct features, even as compelling cases are forwarded for the function of the MT Psalter as a whole as a meaningful unit.

⁵⁹⁰ See Strawn, “Excerpted Manuscripts at Qumran,” 107–168; Strawn, “Excerpted ‘Non-Biblical’ Scrolls at Qumran?” 65–115; Tov, “Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts,” 581–600.

⁵⁹¹ See 4QDeutⁱ; 4QDeutⁿ; 4QDeut^q; 4QExod^d; 4QDeut^k; 4QCant^a; 4QCant^b; 4QEzek^a; 4QExod^e; 5QDeut; See Tov, “Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts,” 581–600; Strawn, “Excerpted Manuscripts at Qumran,” 107–168; Julie Duncan, “4Q37. 4QDeut^j,” in *Qumran Cave 4: IX. Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Kings*, ed. Eugene Ulrich et. al (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 75–91; Duncan, “Considerations of 4QDeut^j in Light of the ‘All Souls Deuteronomy’ and Cave 4 Phylactery Texts,” in *Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid. 18–21 March 1991*, ed. J. Treballe Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner, *STDJ* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 199–215; Duncan, “A Critical Edition of Deuteronomy Manuscripts from Qumran Cave IV: 4QDeut^b, 4QDeut^e, 4QDeut^h, 4QDeut^j, 4QDeut^k, 4QDeut^l” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1989); Duncan, “Excerpted Texts,” 43–62.

⁵⁹² Strawn, “Excerpted Manuscripts at Qumran,” 107–108; A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (NY: J.J. Augustin, 1975), 4–5.

⁵⁹³ Cf. Nicolas Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit: Words of Ilmilku and His Colleagues* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 148–152.

⁵⁹⁴ Strawn, “Excerpted Manuscripts at Qumran,” 107–108.

⁵⁹⁵ Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 181–182.

Strawn succinctly summarizes the state of scholarship on the function of excerpted texts when he notes that “the *primary functional categories* for excerpted texts are liturgical or pedagogical, whether these are corporately or privately construed.”⁵⁹⁶ Tov argues that the excerpted texts from Qumran appear to have a liturgical purpose, a purpose he correlates with the use of the phylacteries.⁵⁹⁷ He is not alone in this comparison: Julie Duncan also notes that “it seems likely... that the greater part of [these excerpted texts from Qumran]... would have had a liturgical or devotional function, especially given the fact that they so clearly duplicate the corpus of phylacteries (and *mezuzot*).”⁵⁹⁸ Where the excerpted texts duplicate the range of texts found in the phylacteries, this might be the case: they would be a supplementary text form, designed to support the memorization and communal knowledge of the texts enshrined in the phylacteries. Yet we must not so quickly conflate these small groups of texts together. Firstly, the function of the *tefillin* was clearly symbolic: they were written on remnants of skin, often in a running script that lacked line breaks and word dividers, folded in a particular way, and worn.⁵⁹⁹ Their tiny housings were sewn shut, indicating that they were not designed for repeated reading.⁶⁰⁰ The Ketef Hinnom amulets, another example offered by Strawn, also falls squarely into the symbolic camp, worn as an amulet for apotropaic purposes.⁶⁰¹ These worn texts play an important social role, marking their wearer as a member of the community;⁶⁰² the psalms

⁵⁹⁶ Strawn, “Excerpted Manuscripts at Qumran,” 155. Italics original.

⁵⁹⁷ Tov, “Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts,” 586–587.

⁵⁹⁸ Duncan, “Excerpted Texts,” 50.

⁵⁹⁹ Yigael Yadin, *Tefillin from Qumran (XQPhyl 1–4)* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1970), 15–21; Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 34, 36, 242–243.

⁶⁰⁰ Yehudah Cohn, *Tangled up in Text: Tefillin and the Ancient World*, BJS (Providence, RI: Brown University, 2008), 56–59.

⁶⁰¹ Strawn, “Excerpted Manuscripts at Qumran,” 107–108; Jeremy Smoak, *The Priestly Blessing in Inscription and Scripture: The Early History of Numbers 6:24–26* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 12–42.

⁶⁰² Several symbolic connotations have been suggested for the biblical regulation regarding the tefillin: Speiser argued that the biblical *tôṭāpôt* as well as the post-biblical *tefillin* also involved apotropaic

manuscripts, however, do not demonstrate these characteristics. Psalm 119 in each of its individual manuscripts is clearly stichometrically divided and copied on lined parchment. 4QPs^b, a partial psalter, is also written on lined parchment and written stichometrically, though the line length varies between psalms.⁶⁰³ The excerpted psalm manuscripts were not designed to be worn but to be read or recited, either individually or as part of a communal liturgy. This does not mean that they are any less “identity-defining” texts, but that the mark of membership that they provide is executed differently.

David Carr draws an explicit comparison between excerpted texts at Qumran and the Hellenistic practice of excerpting texts for educational purposes.⁶⁰⁴ His comparison stems in part from his consideration of the social, educational, and liturgical factors together: memorization of important cultural texts unites rather than divides these three. Carr observes that in Greek education “as in other cultures... this work of memorization was aided from the outset through the predominance of oral performance....the oral register was important both for achieving initial mastery of cultural tradition and for proving that mastery to others.”⁶⁰⁵ This early stage of oral performance was also marked by singing exercises, designed to aid the memory, as well as the study of lists and glossaries.⁶⁰⁶ The goal of this memorization was not only to internalize the

notions. E. A. Speiser, “Twtpt,” *JQR* 48 (1957–58): 208–217. Rothstein disagrees with Speiser’s overlaying of the ancient Near Eastern apotropaic amulet onto the biblical regulation, arguing instead with alternate comparative evidence that the amulet, bound upon the body, symbolizes possession, and marks the person as owned by God. David Rothstein, “From Bible to Murabba’at: Studies in the Literary, Textual, and Scribal Features of Phylacteries and Mezuzot in Ancient Israel and Early Judaism” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1992), 74–98. Michael Fox asserts a primary mnemonic meaning for the “sign,” arguing that it will remind the people of what the Lord has done for them. Michael C. Fox, “The Sign of the Covenant: Circumcision in the Light of the Priestly ‘ot Etiology,” *RB* 81 (1974): 557–96.

⁶⁰³ Patrick W. Skehan, “A Psalm Manuscript from Qumran (4QPs^b),” *CBQ* 26 (1964): 313–22.

⁶⁰⁴ Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 177–200.

⁶⁰⁵ Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart*, 181.

⁶⁰⁶ A.K. Gavrilov, “Techniques of Reading in Classical Antiquity,” *Classical Quarterly* 47 (1997): 56–73; W. B. Sedgewick, “Reading and Writing in Classical Antiquity,” *Contemporary Review*

message, but also to be able to perform appropriately in particular social settings: knowledge of particular Greek poetry was put on display in small social gatherings in order to demonstrate that one possessed the requisite knowledge to participate in a particular social circle. These performance settings created a social value for the knowledge of the poetry and its painstaking memorization. These aspects of oral performance and social value will also be explored in relationship to the psalm texts below.

Adding to Carr's argument, these categories of "educational" vs "liturgical" must be reconsidered in light of our category of a culture's "functional" or "working" memory. Each of the scholars mentioned above has outlined his or her category in light of communal structures designed to disseminate knowledge: Tov refers to the practice of excerpting texts as preparation for devotional practices. Duncan compares the phylacteries to the excerpted texts of Deuteronomy, likely designed to aid memorization. David Carr refers to the educational system of Classical Athens, which had as its central goal the enculturation of the ideal Athenian citizen. Viewed in this way, the categories of "liturgical" vs "educational" fulfill very similar goals, ensuring a common core of knowledge whether through mandated cultic or pedagogic participation. This shared knowledge (and, as will be explored below, the occasion of its sharing) marks a person as a certain type of person or a member of a group, whether it is through the recitation of texts at a communal meal or gathering or through the physical mark of a worn text, whose contents were presumably known. What these scholars are all observing is the people's encounter with these texts via smaller textual collections, excerpts of larger works, which have been reduced in size to facilitate accessibility. The psalms at Qumran fit into this category. They

135 (1929): 90–91; Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 99–152.

appear to have been primarily consumed (that is heard, read, and/or performed) in smaller thematically linked groupings to facilitate performance and reading.

Historical Psalms at Qumran

While the manuscript evidence offers clues to the psalms' use at Qumran, the communal attitude towards history and its perceived function in the community must come from an examination of the texts themselves. Portions of each of the historical psalms, 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136 are extant at Qumran,⁶⁰⁷ but most of the evidence is too fragmentary to assess how the psalms were being read and used. There is, however, a relatively well-preserved record of the historical psalms extant in 11QPs^a, the "Great Psalms Scroll." While the status of 11QPs^a as a "scriptural psalter" or a "liturgical compilation" in Qumran or in broader Second Temple Judaism is widely contested,⁶⁰⁸ the psalter appears to contain several discernible sub-collections that correspond to liturgical performance. Some of these sub-collections are shared with the Masoretic psalter, including the majority of the Psalms of Ascent (Pss 120–132)⁶⁰⁹ and possibly the Passover Hallel (Pss 113–118).⁶¹⁰ The rest are unique to 11QPs^a and related psalters.⁶¹¹ As we will see, two such collections feature historical psalms: Ps 105 stands in the center of a liturgy that comprises Pss 104–147–105–146–148, and Pss 135–136 open a second liturgy that continues with the *Catena*–

⁶⁰⁷ See n. 569 above.

⁶⁰⁸ See further below in "Critical Issues."

⁶⁰⁹ This collection is marked by the superscription *šyr hm lwt* in both the Masoretic text and is also extant in fragmentary form in 1QPs^b, which contains portions of Pss 126, 127, and 128 (Barthélemy and Milik, *Qumran Cave I*, 71). Psalms 133 and 134 occur later in 11QPs^a.

⁶¹⁰ Though this is conjecture, as only part of Ps 118 is extant, the presence of this Hallel is potentially confirmed by the manuscript witness of 4QPs^c. See further below.

⁶¹¹ See the discussion of the ordering of the psalms in Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 135–149, 254; cf. Gerald H. Wilson, "The Qumran Psalms Manuscripts and the Consecutive Arrangement of Psalms in the Hebrew Psalter," *CBQ* 45 (1983): 377–88; Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 116–121; Wilson, "The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a) and the Canonical Psalter: Comparison of Editorial Shaping," *CBQ* 59 (1997): 448–64.

Ps 145 and concludes with the reflection in Ps 154 that opened this chapter. I will argue in the following that these two psalm groups are designed for communal performance and also contain explicit reflection on the value of establishing shared historical knowledge among the community. Several insertions and major variants as compared to the corresponding versions in the MT serve to emphasize and clarify the implicit role of such master narrative recitation within the community.

Critical Issues in 11QPs^a

Before I turn to examine the role of historical psalms within the Qumran Psalter, I will address necessary critical issues regarding the status of 11QPs^a as a “scriptural” psalter, its sectarian or non-sectarian provenance, as well as its relationship with the proto-Masoretic psalter. I will ultimately conclude, following a modified version of Mroczek’s thesis, that the pre-conceived categories of “scriptural” vs “liturgical” psalter present a false dichotomy.⁶¹² The primary question should remain one of communal function: how were the psalms performed? Were they perceived as “authoritative” discourse in the order and form in which they were experienced? The evidence from Qumran strongly suggests that the psalms were preserved in easily performed sets, and were respected as “scriptural” utterances, even when re-arranged or adapted for liturgical purposes. As for the second question of sectarian provenance, the situation is complex. The first question is, of course, what are we counting as psalms?⁶¹³ Among the “biblical” scrolls that I focus on in this study, the majority of the texts, as one might conclude from the title “biblical” scrolls itself, are shared with the MT and cannot be of sectarian provenance. The

⁶¹² As articulated in Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound,” 59–61.

⁶¹³ See George Brooke’s critique of Flint’s numbering of “psalms” scrolls found at Qumran in “The Psalms in Early Jewish Literature in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 11–12.

question is then whether the peculiar ordering of the psalms found at Qumran, along with the “extra-biblical” compositions and major variants within these texts, originated at Qumran or were used more broadly in Second Temple Judaism. Based on current evidence, I will argue below that it is most prudent to conclude that the textual family represented by 11QPs^a, 11QPs^b, and 4QPs^c represents a text form that was used primarily, if not solely, at Qumran.

Introduction to the Scroll

11QPs^a is the best-preserved and most extensive of 42 manuscripts containing psalms among the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁶¹⁴ It preserves psalms from books III–V of the MT but in a markedly different ordering, and it includes ten psalms that do not occur in the MT.⁶¹⁵ The top of the scroll is fairly well-preserved, while the bottom is considerably damaged.⁶¹⁶ The conclusion of the scroll is extant, as indicated by a final blank column following Ps 151b.⁶¹⁷ Its beginning is far less certain, but most scholars understand the scroll to begin with Ps 101.⁶¹⁸ The compositions are

⁶¹⁴ Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 28–33, 160–165; Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 40; Flint, “Unrolling the Dead Sea Psalms Scroll,” 232–233. Brooke argues for a different number of relevant “psalms” manuscripts at Qumran. He includes, for instance, 4Q448 and 4Q380–381 as relevant collections of psalms and asserts Flint’s bias to define psalms in relationship to the MT. Brooke, “The Psalms in Early Jewish Literature,” 5–24, esp. 11–12.

⁶¹⁵ Catena (XVI, 1–6); Ps 154:3–19 (XVIII, 1–16); Plea for Deliverance (XIX, 1–18); Ben Sira 51: 13–23, 30 (XXI, 11–18 – col. 22:1); Apostrophe to Zion (XXII, 1–15); Ps 155 (XXIV, 3–17); Hymn to the Creator (XXVI, 9–15); David’s Last Words//2 Sam 23:1–7 (XXVII, 1); David’s Compositions (XXVII, 2–11); Ps 151 a and b (XXVIII, 3–12, 13–14). Based on Flint, the ordering of the psalms are roughly as follows: Ps 101 → 102 → 103; 109; 118 → 104 → 147 → 105 → 146 → 148 [+ 120] → 121 → 122 → 123 → 124 → 125 → 126 → 127 → 128 → 129 → 130 → 131 → 132 → 119 → 135 → 136 → Catena → 145 (with postscript) → 154 → Plea for Deliverance → 139 → 137 → 138 → Sirach 51 → Apostrophe to Zion → Ps 93 → 141 → 133 → 144 → 155 → 142 → 143 → 149 → 150 → Hymn to the Creator → David’s Last Words → David’s Compositions → Ps 140 → 134 → 151A → 151B → blank column [end]. Ordering adopted from Flint, “Unrolling the Dead Sea Psalms Scroll,” 232.

⁶¹⁶ See images in Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 138.

⁶¹⁷ Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 40, and pl. VII.

⁶¹⁸ As first argued in detail by Skehan, “Qumran and Old Testament Criticism,” 169–170, and followed by Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 40–41; Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound,” 22–26. Michael Chyutin is a notable exception who thinks that the scroll originally also contained the equivalent of the first part of the Masoretic Psalter. This extended beginning is necessitated by his reconstruction of the

written in prose format, with the exception of Ps 119, which is written stichometrically.⁶¹⁹ Based on its orthography, it has been dated to 30–50 CE.⁶²⁰

“Scriptural” or “Liturgical”?

A considerable debate surrounds the scriptural status of 11QPs^a. Scholars either characterize 11QPs^a as one of several authoritative versions of the Psalter that existed at Qumran or understand the scroll as a literary or liturgical compilation of psalms and related texts. The question of the scroll’s “scriptural” status is complicated by the presence of ten extra-biblical compositions interspersed within the manuscript, five of which contain material unknown before the discovery of the scroll.⁶²¹ James Sanders, the modern editor of the scroll, argued initially that 11QPs^a and related psalters⁶²² represented an early text form of the psalter that existed prior to the fixation and canonization of its form and contents.⁶²³ Since 11QPs^a dates to the early first century CE, Sanders’s claim challenged the thesis held by several scholars (including Patrick W.

collection based on the ‘catalogue’ in Col. XXVII. See Michael Chyutin, “The Redaction of the Qumranic and the Traditional Book of Psalms as a Calendar,” *RevQ* 63 (1994): 367–395. Wacholder is also an outlier, placing the beginning of the scroll at Ps 100. Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter,” 23–72. Mroczek points out that this is unlikely since “Ps 101 begins on the top of the sheet, and Ps 100 would not have filled up the entire column before it, if one had existed.” Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound,” 25n8. The likelihood that the scroll contained only the latter part of the psalter (Pss 101–150f), vs. beginning earlier in the collection) is increased by the fact that only five psalms manuscripts (1QPs^a, 4QPs^e, 4QPs^f, 11QPs^b and 11QPs^d) preserve compositions from both Pss 1–89 and 90–150. It is also supported by the physical improbability of a scroll of that length.

⁶¹⁹ It was apparently common practice to write Ps 119 stichometrically. See 4QPs^g, 4QPs^h, 5QPs; Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 35.

⁶²⁰ James A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs^a)*, DJD 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 6–9; Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 6.

⁶²¹ Catena (XVI, 1–6); Plea for Deliverance (XIX, 1–18); Apostrophe to Zion (XXII, 1–15); Hymn to the Creator (XXVI, 9–15); David’s Compositions (XXVII, 2–11).

⁶²² Flint has pointed out several fragmentary psalters that appear to agree in part with the distinctive ordering of 11QPs^a, and which therefore appear to comprise a textual family. He lists 4QPs^e and 11QPs^b, which contain the ordering 118→104→[147→]105→146, and 141→133→144 respectively. See Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 169.

⁶²³ Sanders, “Variorum in the Psalms Scroll,” 83–94; Sanders, “Cave 11 Surprises and the Question of Canon,” 1–15; Sanders, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a) Reviewed,” 79–99.

Skehan, Shemaryahu Talmon, and M.H. Goshen-Gottstein) that the Psalter's form was largely fixed by the fourth century BCE.⁶²⁴ Sanders argued instead that the manuscripts found at Qumran suggest that the Psalter gradually stabilized over time: the first three books of the psalter (Pss 1–89) appear to have achieved a more stable form by the first century CE, while the final two books (Pss 90–150) remained fluid in both their content and ordering until later.⁶²⁵ 11QPs^a represents a psalter from a period in which the canonical psalter was still in a state of flux. Flint later expanded Sanders' argument and divided the Psalter's growth into two distinct stages: Pss 1–89 were finalized as a collection prior to the first century BCE, and Pss 90 onward towards the end of the first century CE.⁶²⁶ He argues therefore that the manuscripts at Qumran represent “at least three literary editions of the Psalter”:⁶²⁷ Pss 1–89; Pss 1–89 + 11QPs^a, and Mt–150 Psalter.⁶²⁸ These editions were each understood by Flint to represent a “true scriptural psalter.”⁶²⁹

Several dissenting voices, including M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, Shemaryahu Talmon, Patrick Skehan, Ben Wacholder, and Ulrich Dahmen, have argued instead that 11QPs^a and the manuscripts with which it agrees do not represent an alternate “scriptural” psalter, but a liturgical

⁶²⁴ Skehan, “Qumran and Old Testament Criticism,” 163–182.

⁶²⁵ Sanders, “Variorum in the Psalms Scroll,” 83–94; Sanders, “Cave 11 Surprises and the Question of Canon,” 1–15; Sanders, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a) Reviewed,” 79–99. Cf. the statistics listed in Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 238.

⁶²⁶ Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 135–149.

⁶²⁷ Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 239.

⁶²⁸ Cf. Ulrich's view in which multiple literary editions of texts were often present within a text's history up to the final “perhaps abrupt, freezing point of the Masoretic tradition.” Eugene Ulrich, “Multiple Literary Editions: Reflections toward a Theory of the History of the Biblical Text,” in *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conference on the Texts from the Judean Desert, Jerusalem, 30 April 1995*, ed. D. W. Parry and S. D. Ricks, *STDJ* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 78–105, 89. Ulrich defines “multiple literary editions” as a “literary unit – a story, pericope, narrative, poem, book, etc. – appearing in two or more parallel forms (whether by chance extant or no longer extant in our textual witnesses), which one author, major redactor, or major editor intentionally changed to a sufficient extent that the resultant form should be called a revised edition of that text” (Ulrich, “Multiple Literary Additions,” 89).

⁶²⁹ Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 204–206.

or literary compilation.⁶³⁰ As noted above, Skehan argues that the format of the MT-Psalter, its fivefold division, 150 psalms, and their sequence, precedes the Book of Chronicles, and can be dated c. 400 BCE.⁶³¹ The Qumran psalter therefore represents a derivative edition of that Psalter. The perceived function of this collection varies: Skehan asserts that 11QPs^a represents a “library edition” of the works of David that contains “liturgical regroupings” of an already authoritative proto-Masoretic Psalter;⁶³² Dahmen argues that the additions to the psalms reveal that 11QPs^a was not intended to be a copy of the “Book of Psalms” but was instead a sectarian compilation designed for liturgical purposes.⁶³³ Wacholder also maintains that 11QPs^a represents a liturgical, and not a “scriptural” collection, a secondary arrangement of a proto-MT Psalter designed to celebrate an eschatological liturgy led by a Davidic figure.⁶³⁴ What all of these scholars agree on, however, is that “liturgical” describes an alternate category to “scriptural.”

This dichotomy between “liturgical” and “scriptural” considerations, however, is a false one. The Masoretic psalter itself preserves liturgical arrangements.⁶³⁵ Eva Mroczek has recently

⁶³⁰ See Goshen-Gottstein, “The Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a): A Problem of Canon and Text,” 22–33; Talmon, “Pisqah Be'emsā' Pasuq and 11QPs^a,” 11–21; Skehan, “Qumran and Old Testament Criticism,” 163–182; Skehan, “A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a,” *CBQ* 35 (1973): 195–205; Wacholder, “David's Eschatological Psalter,” 23–72; Menahem Haran, “11QPs^a and the Canonical Book of Psalms,” in *Minhah le-Nahum: Biblical and Other Studies presented to Nahum M. Sarna in Honour of His 70th Birthday*, ed. M. Brettler and M. Fishbane, JSOTSup (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 193–201.

⁶³¹ Skehan, “Qumran and Old Testament Criticism,” 167–168. Talmon also maintains that “in the mainstream community the biblical Psalter of 150 songs had already then achieved a formative and textual fixity.” Shemaryahu Talmon, “Review of *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* by Peter S. Flint” [sic], *JBL* 118 (1999): 547; cf. Talmon, “Pisqah Be'emsā' Pasuq and 11QPs^a,” 11–21. He points particularly to the fragments of the book of Psalms from Masadah and Naḥal Ḥever which witness to the “existence of a proto-masoretic *textus receptus*.” Talmon, “Review of *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*,” 547.

⁶³² Patrick W. Skehan, “The Scrolls and the Old Testament Text,” *McCQ* 21 (1967–68): 278; Skehan, “A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a,” 201n24.

⁶³³ U. Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption im Frühjudentum. Rekonstruktion, Textbestand, Struktur und Pragmatik der Psalmenrolle 11QPs^a aus Qumran*, STDJ 49 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 313–318.

⁶³⁴ Wacholder, “David's Eschatological Psalter,” 23–72, esp. 56.

⁶³⁵ As Gerald Wilson has observed, the MT Psalter and the Qumran psalter share features of liturgical arrangement. See Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll,” 464.

challenged the foundations of this debate by questioning whether an authoritative “Book of Psalms” existed in Second Temple Judaism at all. She argues that

While psalms were certainly being copied and accorded great authority in the Second Temple period, and while there is evidence for the *de facto* stabilization and copying of the arrangement of the first 89 or so compositions, [there is] no evidence that “The Book of Psalms” or “the Psalter” was operative *as a concept*, as a way of defining and categorizing psalms as written texts, at all.”⁶³⁶

In place of the idea of a “Book of Psalms,” she posits that writings considered inspired and authoritative for the community could be imagined in terms of “looser, perhaps scattered, overlapping, unbound pieces, clusters, and collections.”⁶³⁷ These collections represent different “versions, precursors, developments and portions of the collection” that would eventually become a “Book of Psalms.”⁶³⁸ She therefore questions the assumptions of both the scholars who consider the Psalms scroll to be non-scriptural and those who consider it to be an alternate edition of a scriptural Psalter.

At this point, the other manuscript evidence from Qumran can be re-introduced into the discussion. As I discussed above, the practice of excerpting psalm texts or creating small manuscripts that preserve distinct sub-collections or compilations of psalms was common at Qumran. These excerpted manuscripts preserve texts in both Masoretic and non-Masoretic ordering. The excerpting, compilation, or re-ordering of psalm texts would not have been perceived as diminishing the “authority” of these texts when read or recited.⁶³⁹ Indeed, the practice of excerpting manuscripts provides evidence that the psalms were viewed as

⁶³⁶ Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound,” 35.

⁶³⁷ Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound,” 35.

⁶³⁸ Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound,” 41.

⁶³⁹ Cf. the recitation of psalms in 1 Chron 16, in which a unique compilation of psalms is used to commemorate the inauguration of temple psalmody itself. Cf. Strawn, “Psalms,” 9.

authoritative for the community.⁶⁴⁰ The “authority” of psalms in general should not be disputed, even when re-ordered or excerpted.

Furthermore, Mroczek’s alternate concept of a group of meaningful clusters and collections is a helpful category with which to think through my question concerning the use of psalms within the community and its preservation of a “functional memory” for a community in which very few members would have encountered the psalter as a long-form document. Most members of the community would have encountered the psalms primarily in the context of worship and communal recitation.⁶⁴¹ The sub-collections and excerpted texts found at Qumran likely represent the scripts for these ceremonies.⁶⁴² Such liturgical performances, however, would not have *reduced* the authority of the psalms performed therein. On the contrary, they provide evidence for the reverence given to psalms. The multiplication of excerpted texts and the preservation of sub-collections within more extended manuscripts strongly suggest that the psalms were experienced as “scripture” by the community when performed within these smaller groupings.

⁶⁴⁰ Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound,” 32. The “authority” of psalms at Qumran is further supported by their use in the pesharim, and the concluding claim in 11QPs^a XXVII that David wrote 4,050 psalms “through prophecy.”

⁶⁴¹ On the importance of the role of speech in the Qumran community, see Carol A. Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space: Constructing Identity and Community at Qumran*, STDJ 52 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1–3.

⁶⁴² Mroczek recognizes this when she questions the concept of “publishing” a text in the Second Temple Period: “[the] statement that the Book of Psalms was ‘published’ is incomprehensible in the context of the Second Temple period; it is unclear what this concept might mean for that culture, or where evidence of such a moment or process may be found. If we consider ancient analogues to modern publishing – that is, making texts public – two possibilities come to mind: first, oral recitation by an authority figure to a community, such as public covenant renewal and ratification of the Law by a witnessing stone in Joshua 24:25–27, the reading of a scroll of the Torah by Ezra in Nehemiah 8, or the reading of the Greek translation of the scriptures in the Letter of Aristeas; and second, public display of the texts, such as the command to display the Decalogue on doorposts and gates (Deut 6:9)” (Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound,” 38).

Sectarian or Non-Sectarian?

Even if one objects to the distinction between a “scriptural” psalter and a functional “liturgical” psalter, the question remains whether 11QPs^a represents a textual tradition shared with the broader community of Second Temple Judaism or whether it was used only by the Qumran sect. In his initial assessment of the scroll, Sanders asserted that 11QPs^a was a product of the Qumran community, compiled by a member of the sect.⁶⁴³ He was later influenced by Flint, who argued that 11QPs^a was a psalm tradition that also existed outside of the bounds of the Qumran sect.⁶⁴⁴ Sanders revised his original assertion and argued instead that the tradition represented by 11QPs^a was brought into the Qumran community from the outside, likely by an initiate, before the stabilization of the MT Psalter.⁶⁴⁵ Flint based his assessment primarily on the use of the solar calendar in 11QPs^a and in *DavComp* in particular, a calendar that was also used in *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*.⁶⁴⁶ This “11QPs^a-Psalter” is therefore but one iteration of a psalm tradition within Judaism that co-existed or preceded the proto-Masoretic Psalter and was likely introduced to the community by an initiate.⁶⁴⁷ Both psalters correspond to a stage in the development of the

⁶⁴³ Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 10–14; Sanders, “Variorum in the Psalms Scroll,” 83–94; Sanders, “Cave 11 Surprises and the Question of Canon,” 1–15.

⁶⁴⁴ Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 8, 202–227; Flint, “The Contribution of the Cave 4 Psalms Scrolls to the Psalms Debate,” *DSD* 5 (1998): 320–33; Flint, “The ‘11QPs^a Psalter’ in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Including the Preliminary Edition of 4QPs^c,” in *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders*, ed. C. A. Evans and S. Talmon (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 173–99; Flint, “Psalms and Psalters in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Princeton Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 1:233–272.

⁶⁴⁵ James A. Sanders, James H. Charlesworth, and H. W. L. Rietz, “Non-Masoretic Psalms,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, vol. 4A, *Pseudepigraphic and Non-Masoretic Psalms and Prayers*, ed. James H. Charlesworth et al., *The Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 213; James A. Sanders, “Psalm 154 Revisited,” in *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel für Norbert Lohfink S.J.*, ed. Georg Braulik, Walter Gross, and Sean E. McEvenue (Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 301–302; Sanders, review of *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* by Peter W. Flint, *DSD* 6 (1999): 84–89.

⁶⁴⁶ Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 182–186, 192–193.

⁶⁴⁷ Flint, *Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 199–200.

psalter's final form. Sanders's and Flint's claim that 11QPs^a is not a sectarian psalter is supported by the marked difference between even the apocryphal compositions in 11QPs^a and clearly sectarian collections such as the Hodayot. These songs of thanksgiving are not attributed to David and appear separately in their own collection. As Pajunen points out, the Qumran movement generally avoided attributing their own texts to biblical figures.⁶⁴⁸

Several scholars, including Patrick W. Skehan, Menahem Haran, Moshe H. Goshen-Gottstein, Ben Zion Wacholder, Emanuel Tov, Ulrich Dahmen, Brent Strawn, and Andrew Witt, however, have contested Sander's and Flint's hypothesis concerning the non-sectarian origin of the 11QPs^a text-tradition.⁶⁴⁹ These scholars generally understand 11QPs^a to be a sectarian compilation designed for liturgical use by the community. Most maintain the priority of the MT-Psalter. The "Qumran Psalter" therefore represents an intentional adjustment of that corpus by the sectarians. Many of these scholars appeal to the provenance of the extra-biblical compositions to assert that 11QPs^a was specific to the "Qumran Covenanters."⁶⁵⁰ Most recently, Strawn and Witt have developed this aspect of the argument by arguing that the "extra-biblical" compositions contain specifically sectarian rhetoric.⁶⁵¹ Strawn argues that the description of David as one "perfect of (the) way" ([*tmym* + *drk*]; 11QPs^a XXVII, 3) in *DavComp* is a distinctly sectarian phrase and suggests a sectarian origin for the arrangement of psalms contained in

⁶⁴⁸ Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect*, 88.

⁶⁴⁹ Skehan, "A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a," 195–205; Skehan, "Qumran and Old Testament Criticism," 163–182; Haran, "11QPs^a and the Canonical Book of Psalms," 193–201; Goshen-Gottstein, "The Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a): A Problem of Canon and Text," 22–33; Wacholder, "David's Eschatological Psalter," 23–72; Tov, "Excerpted and Abbreviated Biblical Texts," 581–600; Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, *passim*.

⁶⁵⁰ Goshen-Gottstein, "The Psalms Scroll (11QPs^a)," 28.

⁶⁵¹ Brent A. Strawn, "David as One 'Perfect of (the) Way': On the Provenience of *David's Compositions* (and 11QPs^a as a Whole?)," *RevQ* 24 (2010): 607–627; Andrew Witt, "David, the 'Ruler of the Sons of His Covenant': the Expansion of Psalm 151 in 11QPs^a," *JESOT* 3 (2014): 77–97.

11QPs^a as a whole.⁶⁵² He points out additionally that there is no manuscript evidence *outside* of Qumran that supports the arrangement attested in 11QPs^a.⁶⁵³ Witt agrees and argues that the description of “the sons of his covenant” (*bny brytw*; 11QPs^a XXVIII, 12) is yet another sectarian phrase in 11QPs^a, contra Flint’s statement that no such sectarian rhetoric exists.⁶⁵⁴

Newsom has provided additional categories with which to think through the categories of “sectarian” and “non-sectarian” texts. She distinguishes between sectarian *authorship*, sectarian *use* and *readership*, and sectarian *rhetorical stance*, that is, those texts which specifically discuss the separation of the community and its distinctive tenets.⁶⁵⁵ While it is difficult to determine whether or not the scroll was compiled or partially composed by sectarians, the fact that several manuscripts found at Qumran attest to the 11QPs^a text-form points to its sectarian use.⁶⁵⁶ Conversely, the fact that no evidence for this text-form has been found outside of Qumran strengthens this argument.⁶⁵⁷ Based on available evidence, therefore, it appears most likely that the tradition represented in 11QPs^a, and the performance practices indicated by that collection of psalms, was functional primarily within the Qumran community.

⁶⁵² Strawn, “David as One ‘Perfect of (the) Way’,” 607–27. He acknowledges, however, that proving the sectarian provenance of this composition does not *necessitate* that the whole of 11QPs^a is sectarian (Strawn, “David as One ‘Perfect of (the) Way’,” 623; Cf. Sanders, “Variorum in the Psalms Scroll,” 89.) Indeed, this can hardly be asserted, given that the majority of psalm compositions present in that text are also present, with minor textual variations, in the Masoretic psalter.

⁶⁵³ Strawn, “David as One ‘Perfect of (the) Way’,” 612n20, 614. He points out MasPs^b at Masada, and 5/6Hev–Se4 Ps at Nahal Hever. Cf. Strawn, “Psalms,” 10; Talmon, “Review of *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*,” 547; Talmon, “Hebrew Fragments from Masada,” in *Masada VI: The Yigael Yadin Excavations*, ed. Joseph Aviram, Gideon Foerster, and Ehud Netzer (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Hebrew University, 1999), 76–97.

⁶⁵⁴ Witt, “David, the ‘Ruler of the Sons of His Covenant’” 77–97.

⁶⁵⁵ Carol A. Newsom, “Sectually Explicit Literature from Qumran,” in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters*, ed. W. H. Propp, B. Halpern, and D. N. Freedman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 172–185. Strawn makes use of Newsom’s categories in arguing that the fact that 11QPs^a was clearly *used* at Qumran indicates that it is, at least according to the second category, sectarian. Strawn, “David as One ‘Perfect of (the) Way’,” 613.

⁶⁵⁶ Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 159–165.

⁶⁵⁷ Cf. Strawn, “David as One ‘Perfect of (the) Way’,” 614.

The psalter is, however, very clearly not an entire Qumranic *composition*, since the majority of the psalms contained therein are also attested in the Masoretic psalter. The text therefore remains useful for text-critical evaluation of the psalms that it shares with the MT.⁶⁵⁸ There are both minor and major variants present within 11QPs^a that attest to the psalms' liturgical function at Qumran. These variants will be discussed below, particularly those that either demonstrate the marks of oral-written variation, and therefore support a case for ongoing performance, and those that facilitate participation. It is difficult in many cases to argue for the direction of the text-critical changes; these will be addressed on a case by case basis.

Liturgy as Discourse

Many of the critical questions above derive from the particular nature of psalms as liturgical discourse. The same discursive features that facilitate the psalms' ordering and re-ordering into varying groups also facilitate the psalms' liturgical performance and their function as a technology of cultural memory. These features will emerge as particularly important in my discussion of the historical psalms below. Every type of discourse possesses unspoken rules that dictate how statements can be grouped together, added to, and ordered. These rules are not just a factor of *texts and their poetics*, but they also reflect the social forces that can motivate particular statements to be joined together and the way in which the resulting product is required to function. As an example, one could contrast the alternative logic demonstrated by an ancient collection of proverbs and a modern collection of legal texts.⁶⁵⁹ Proverbs are collected, often

⁶⁵⁸ Cf. Strawn, "David as One 'Perfect of (the) Way'," 614.

⁶⁵⁹ Cf. the trait of discourse which Foucault labels "additivity." He notes that "the types of grouping between successive statements are not always the same, and they never proceed by a simple piling-up or juxtaposition of successive elements. Mathematical statements are not added to one another in the same way as religious texts or laws (they each have their own way of merging together, annulling one another, excluding one another, complementing one another, forming groups that are in varying

thematically, but in a way that suggests priority of compilation over organization. Contradiction between proverbs is not necessarily a significant issue but outlines the very contours of the wisdom that the proverbs seek to engender in their audience. In legal texts, however, organization is key. Each law is numbered and carefully arranged by category and sub-category for the purpose of reference. Fundamental contradiction would lead to chaos in the courts.

Psalms, based both on their literary form and the social contours of their communal use, can be selected and arranged both for literary and liturgical functions. The way in which psalms can be re-arranged is determined in part by characteristics of their form, including their *brevity*, their *stereotypical vocabulary*, and their *poetic structure* as a series of brief poetic lines.

1. The psalms' combination and recombination are facilitated by the form's inherent *brevity*. As self-contained units, psalms have *no necessary link* to one another. While scholars have recently observed many ways in which contiguous psalms are linked through catch-phrases or themes,⁶⁶⁰ these links are not necessary like those found in narrative, in which rules of causation apply. Psalms can be combined and recombined in a variety of ways to form a series of decipherable and meaningful relations. The transformative force of this simple addition of a concluding psalm is demonstrated, for example, by the addition of Ps 154 to the psalm series beginning with Ps 135 (see below). Through the addition of this psalm, the knowledge presented in the historical psalms that open the collection is transformed into a vehicle for the public display of

degrees indissociable and endowed with unique properties)." Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 124.

⁶⁶⁰ See for example, David M. Howard, "The Structure of Psalms 93–100" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1986); Gerald H. Wilson, "Understanding the Purposeful Arrangement of the Psalms: Pitfalls and Promise," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, ed. J. Clinton McCann Jr., JSOTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 42–51.

wisdom. Likewise, the simple term *m'šy YHWH* in Pss 154 and 145 receives specificity from the twofold narration of these deeds that occurred at the beginning of this collection, in Pss 135 and 136. A term that could refer to *any* of the “works of YHWH” comes to signify his particular deeds as recounted in these two accounts of Israel’s “functional memory.” A related feature of the psalms is the ease with which superscriptions can be added or edited. Since psalms are self-contained units, they can be given new titles, or extensions to the titles that they already possess. This pattern of addition encourages and allows their direct association with particular figures and mutually enforces the authority of both psalm and accredited sage.⁶⁶¹

2. The relative frequency of *stereotypical psalm vocabulary* further facilitates this recombination.⁶⁶² While scholarship has drawn attention to the carefully crafted links between consecutive psalms, these links can occur effectively between several different psalm pairs and groups. This will be seen particularly clearly in the discussion of 11QPs^a 104–148 below. The ordering of psalms differs significantly here from that found in the MT (Pss 104–147–105–146–148), but both groupings demonstrate links of vocabulary and theme. This is a function of psalm discourse.
3. The brevity of the psalm form as a whole finds its counterpart in the brevity of the meaningful unit, the line. The brevity of the line allows for additions to be made between lines with ease. The significance of this becomes clear in the differences between MT Ps 145 and 11QPs^a Ps 145, for example: in this case the insertion of a

⁶⁶¹ Pajunen observes that this pattern of adding superscriptions to psalms in the Second Temple Period could result in chronological problems as overlapping and even contradictory superscriptions were given to the same psalms. Pajunen, *Land to the Elect*, 330–331.

⁶⁶² Cf. Adele Berlin, “Parallel Word Pairs: A Linguistic Explanation,” *UF* 15 (1983): 7–16; Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 76–83.

repeated refrain between each line transforms the psalm into a structured antiphonal call and response, without significantly disturbing the content of the psalm.⁶⁶³ Such alteration can facilitate its performance and recall among a populace by encouraging participation.

4. The characteristics described above are a feature of the psalm's form, its text and poetics. The second factor to consider is the way the text is used. In order to facilitate communal recital, psalms could be selected from a larger collection similar to the Masoretic Text or 11QPs^a, excerpted and re-arranged. The demand for summary scrolls, likely to facilitate reference and performance, resulted in the selection and arrangement of particular small groups of psalms. This would likely not have changed the audience's recognition that they were reciting sacred psalmody. Such discursive rules are not simply a facet of language (this statement can be added to that statement) or simply a social phenomenon (where the situation allows and encourages particular statements to be grouped together); these "rules" develop at the intersection of formal and social concerns and through their mutual influence. The product is the psalm discourse evident at Qumran: it is an authoritative discourse, related to the figure of David, with remarkable influence on the acceptable expression of piety in the Second Temple period, but which can be combined and recombined in several possible groupings.

⁶⁶³ Note that this extreme "additivity" has been posited by certain scholars for an array of biblical texts. But for the psalms, we have *explicit* evidence of their textual manipulation.

Historical Psalms in 11QPs^a

With this reflection on the formal traits of the psalms in the background, we now turn to the formal, text-critical, and literary markers of the role of the historical psalms within 11QPs^a. Taken together, these markers function to demonstrate that the historical psalms were part of liturgies designed to play the role laid out in Ps 154, which opened this chapter: to recite them in the group in a way that the simple will be educated and in which the pure and righteous might take part. These liturgies are designed for participation, conducive to easy memorization, and function ultimately as culturally educative discourse. The realization of this model is facilitated by poetic additions and transformations that encourage participation and aid the memory. Traits that permit the formation of several different psalm arrangements at Qumran also facilitate the formation of effective liturgical groups. These psalm traits undergird the educational program presented throughout this dissertation: that poetic, easily remembered forms contribute significantly to the spread of cultural knowledge.

11QPs^a preserves portions of historical Pss 105, 135, and 136 in two sub-collections within the scroll, each of which is ordered differently than its counterpart in the MT. Psalm 105 forms the center of a grouping of psalms that appears in the sequence Ps 104—Ps 147—Ps 105—Ps 146—Ps 148 (11QPs^a E I, 6—II, 16). Psalms 135 and 136 form the introduction to a collection that continues with an abbreviated form of Ps 118, typically referred to as the “Catena,” an embellished version of Ps 145, and Ps 154, a psalm previously known only in Syriac (11QPs^a XIV, 7—XVIII, 16).⁶⁶⁴ Both groups combine communal hymns of praise with historical psalms. As will be seen, this different order does not disrupt meaning but instead develops the themes of each psalm in new ways. Each of these sub-collections constitutes a functional performance unit.

⁶⁶⁴ See n. 562.

Therefore, the groups featuring historical psalms provide insight into the way in which the Qumran sect was using communal performance of traditional texts to construct and reinforce a common memory among their membership.

In my discussion of each collection, I will first define the formal boundaries of each unit. Secondly, I will demonstrate how the historical psalms provide the organizing center to these liturgies, transforming them into a vehicle to both provide and confirm a basis of common knowledge within the communities that recite them.⁶⁶⁵ Finally, I will show how the psalm collections present the type of textual variants typical of literature that is transmitted both orally and in written form. Such texts demonstrate what Carr has described as “memory variants,” which can arise in texts that are frequently orally recited.⁶⁶⁶

Psalm group #1: 11QPs^a E I, 6—II, 16 (Pss 104–147–105–146–148)

The first liturgical grouping featuring a historical psalm comprises 11QPs^a E I, 56–II, 16 and contains extant portions of Pss 104, 147, 105, 146, and 148. I will argue that this set of psalms forms a clearly demarcated liturgical group within 11QPs^a, bordered at its end by the Psalms of Ascent and bordered at its beginning by the Passover Hallel. The five psalms themselves each conclude with a “hallelujah.”

⁶⁶⁵ The role of the historical psalms within their respective collections in 11QPs^a is particularly notable in light of the recent trend in psalms research that has highlighted the organizing role of historical psalms within the MT. Judith Gärtner, for example, has argued that Ps 78 forms the compositional center of the Asaph collection (Pss 73–83) in *Die Geschichtpsalmen*, 102–134; Gärtner, “The Historical Psalms,” 380–382. Wilson has identified Pss 105 and 106 as playing a key role in closing book 4 of the Psalter, while Pss 135 and 136 function as a transition into the final Davidic collection (Pss 138–145). Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 185–189.

⁶⁶⁶ Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 13–36.

The Psalms of Ascent, which are distinguished from surrounding psalms by their shared superscription *šyr hmylwt*, follow Ps 148 and form a clear final boundary to the collection.⁶⁶⁷ The beginning, however, is more debated. Psalm 104 is immediately preceded by a portion of Ps 118,⁶⁶⁸ which some scholars, following Gerald Wilson, have considered to be the functional beginning point of the collection. In Wilson's initial assessment of the structure of the scroll, he applied one of the primary criteria he had used to determine the structure of the Masoretic Psalter: the presence of *hllwyh-hwdw* superscripts and postscripts. In the MT, groups of "hallelujah" psalms close the last two books: Book IV of the MT Psalter concludes with Ps 106 (presumed not to be present in 11QPs^a) which opens with *hllwyh-hwdw* and concludes with a *hllwyh* doxology, and the Psalter as a whole ends with a set of five hallelujah psalms (Pss 146–150). The *hwdw* psalms serve to open new segments.⁶⁶⁹ Applying these criteria to 11QPs^a, Wilson argues for the following group:

118: *hwdw lyhwh ky twb...*
 104: *hllwyh*
 147: ... [*hllwyh*]
 105: *hwdw lyhwh ky twb ...*
 146: ...*hllwyh*
 148: ...*hllwyh*

Wilson initially identified Ps 118 as the opening to the collection. The *hwdw* at the opening of Ps 105 in 11QPs^a served as the link between the two halves of the collection.⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁷ This superscription is extant in this collection at 11QPs^a 26 I, 5 (Ps 126:1); Ps 120 is not extant in 11QPs^a, but it almost certainly was lost in the lacuna preceding col. III. The remainder of the arrangement of the psalms of ascent are identical with the MT for Pss 121–132. Psalms 133–134, however, do not appear in this collection, but appear in cols. XXIII and XXVIII respectively. The status of the Psalms of Ascent as an independent and established psalm collection is confirmed by its likely preservation as a separate psalms collection in 1QPs^b. See DJD I, 71.

⁶⁶⁸ The join is preserved in 1QPs^a E I, 5–6.

⁶⁶⁹ Wilson, "The Qumran Psalms Scroll," 456.

⁶⁷⁰ Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 157–158.

There are two points, however, that advise against beginning the collection with Ps 118. The first is that each of Pss 104–148 ends with a final *hllwyh*. The *hllwyh* is extant at the conclusion of two of the five psalms (Ps 104:35 [11QPs^a E II, 14]; Ps 146:10 [11QPs^a II, 4]) and presumed at the conclusion of three psalms, based on analogy with the MT and manuscript space (Ps 105:45; 147:20; 148:12). Both “sets” of psalms (104–105) and (146–147–148) are part of groupings motivated by a shared *hllwyh* refrain in their corresponding MT settings and all extant evidence points to a similarly motivated grouping for their placement in 11QPs^a. This subscription is *lacking* in the conclusion of Ps 118 (11QPs^a E I, 29), which is extant in the scroll. This lack would be very distinctive if this psalm were indeed included in this collection.

The second point against including Ps 118 in the group of psalms that follows is the likelihood that it forms the conclusion of a collection of psalms similar to the “Passover Hallel” (Pss 113–118) in the MT. Only vv. 24b–29 of Ps 118 are extant in the scroll, and there is a gap of an unknown size between Frg. E and the preceding Frg. D, which contains portions of Ps 109. Flint has corroborated Skehan’s initial assessment that Pss 113–117 were originally present between frags. D and E on the basis of the textual witness of 4QPs^e.⁶⁷¹ 4QPs^e preserves fragments of Pss 113–118, as well as the distinctive connections between Ps 118:29–104:1 (4QPs^e 14, 1–2) and 105:45–146:1 (4QPs^e 18 II, 7–8). It is therefore likely that 4QPs^e is a member of the same textual family as 11QPs^a. If this is the case, it provides strong evidence that Ps 118 does conclude a missing Passover Hallel previously present between 11QPs^a D and E.⁶⁷²

⁶⁷¹ Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 188–189; contra Wilson, “Qumran Psalms Scroll,” 458–459; Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter,” 45–46.

⁶⁷² The manuscript evidence is further corroborated by the relatively early use of the Egyptian Hallel (Pss 113–118) as a group in Jewish liturgy. See Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993), 114–115.

Finally, and subordinately to the formal and manuscript evidence listed above, Ps 118 displays both generic and thematic distinctions from the following five hymns of praise and historical psalms. Ps 118 is an individual song of thanksgiving. As Ulrich Dahmen summarizes in his own analyses of this psalm collection, “zum folgenden Ps 104 hat Ps 118 praktisch keinerlei Verbindung.”⁶⁷³ Based on this evidence, it is most likely that Pss 104–148 comprise a unified liturgical collection of praise psalms, each of which concludes with a *hllwyh*. This collection is bounded on one side by the Passover Hallel (Ps 113–118), and on the other side by the Psalms of Ascent (Pss 120–132).

Pss 104–147–105–146–148 and its reflection on history

As I noted above, the form of the psalms allows for combination and recombination. These differing arrangements are not compositionally *necessary*, but they do encourage the development of particular themes when read together, particularly as a unified liturgy. It is worth attending, therefore, to the way in which the arrangement of historical and praise psalms in this first liturgical group (Pss 104—148) constructs a relationship between historical knowledge (most particularly expressed in Ps 105) and the surrounding psalms of praise. If Michael Goulder is correct, that “the oldest commentary on the meaning of the psalms is the manner of their arrangement in the Psalter,”⁶⁷⁴ then 11QPs^a provides compelling commentary on the role of historical psalm 105 in its liturgy of praise.

My reading of Ps 105 here reflects not on an alternate text⁶⁷⁵ but the influence of an alternate context. The place to begin an examination of the influence of Ps 105’s context is with

⁶⁷³ Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 284.

⁶⁷⁴ Michael Goulder, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*, JSOTSup 22 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 1.

⁶⁷⁵ For a discussion of the minor textual variants, see n. 682 below.

the textual variants present in surrounding Pss 147 and 146 respectively. These insertions offer additional clues as to how Ps 105 is being read at Qumran, clues that can strengthen interpretations of the psalms' arrangement. What interests me here is the relationship that is formed between special and public knowledge and community identity.⁶⁷⁶

As I argued in Chapter 2, MT Ps 105 fashions the surrounding nations in the image of an attentive audience: each of the historical events in which the Lord acts as Israel's provider and defender occurs among or before the nations. This theme is confirmed in 11QPs^a, not only through the progression of psalms, but also most effectively in two key textual variants in Pss 147 and 146, which emphasize on the one hand the distinction between the Lord's dealings with Israel and the nations (11QPs^a 147:20b), and on the other hand, the revelation of God to the nations via his works (see the addition between 11QPs^a 146:9 and 10). This liturgy rehearses a movement, therefore, from the general deeds of the Lord in the world to the Lord's particular deeds for Israel, and from what can be known by all (and should be declared by Israel), to what is known only by those to whom the appropriate knowledge is given. Notably, in this case, historical knowledge is framed as public knowledge, to be proclaimed among the nations by Israel (Ps 105:1–5 [11QPs^a E III, 8–12]; Ps 146:9–10 [11QPs^a II, 1–4]).

In the order found in the Masoretic Text, Ps 104 immediately precedes Ps 105: the progression between these two psalms moves from God's primordial acts at the beginning of time and God's general care for creation, to God's *historical* acts for Israel and God's particular care for them through these acts. In 11QPs^a, Ps 104 leads into Ps 147, which shares with the

⁶⁷⁶ In the case of this group of psalms, I am defining "special" knowledge as knowledge that only a select group of people possesses, and "public" knowledge as knowledge that is or *must be made* available to all. This is primarily a rhetorical distinction, as even the information that is "declared among the nations" within these psalms would have been knowledge of special concern only to those communities who revered the psalms.

former its themes of meditation on creation, division and provision. Psalm 147, however, focuses on the particular implications for Israel. As noted above, the stereotypical nature of psalm language facilitates the interconnection between these two psalms. Psalm 147⁶⁷⁷ shares with its preceding Ps 104 not only general themes (the provision of food for the earth and its creatures: Ps 104:13–14; Ps 147:9) but also specific vocabulary. The concluding command to *sing praises* (\sqrt{zmr}) in 104:33 reappears in Ps 147:1 and 7 to open each of these strophes, and both psalms refer to the *growing of the grass* ($\sqrt{smh} + hšyr$; Ps 104:14; 147:8; the *setting of a boundary* ($\sqrt{šym} + gbwl$; Ps 104:9; 147:14); and the overabundance of provision for creation ($\sqrt{šb}$; 147:14; 104:13, 16, 28). This overlap in vocabulary facilitates the connection of these two psalms.

Ps 147:20, however, introduces a textual variant as compared to the MT that provides a notable transition to Ps 105, which follows. MT Ps 147:20 reads “he has not done this for any other nation; they do not know ($y d'wm$) his judgments”. This statement functions as the culmination of a psalm that describes the particular care of the Lord for Israel among all of creation. In 11QPs^a 147:20, however, a small change in the stem of \sqrt{yd} from *qal* to *hip'il* shifts the meaning of the final verse: “he has not *made known* ($hwdy'm$) to them his judgments.” The use of the *hip'il* ($hwdy'm$) in 11QPs^a as opposed to the *qal* ($y d'wm$) in the MT emphasizes the Lord’s agency in revealing this knowledge *only* to the Israelites.⁶⁷⁸

Such a contextual shift in and of itself might seem minor, a simple emphasis on the “special treatment” of Israel in relationship to the nations. A similar textual variant in the psalm that *follows* Ps 105 in 11QPs^a, Ps 146, however, underlines this interpretive difference. Only vv.

⁶⁷⁷ Only Ps 147:1–2, 18–20 are extant in 11QPs^a, but what is present largely follows the MT. Furthermore, Ps 147:1–4, 13–17, 20, are extant in 4QPs^d, a manuscript that also groups together Ps 147 and 104 though in reverse order. Missing verses have therefore been supplied from the MT. See detailed listing of minor variants in Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 114, and Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 164–165.

⁶⁷⁸ 4QPs^d likely supports the MT and reproduces the *qal*.

9–10 of Ps 146 are extant in 11QPs^a.⁶⁷⁹ Between vv. 9 and 10 of Ps 146, the following insertion appears:

11QPs^a II, 2–4

2 מִיְהוָה כֹּל הָאָרֶץ מִמֶּנִּי וְיִגְדְּלוּ כָל-יֹשְׁבֵי תִבְלִי
3 בַּהֲדוּעוֹ לְכֹל מַעֲשָׂיו בְּרָא []
4 גְּבוּרָתוֹ

[*Fear*

2 the Lord, all the earth, [*let all the inhabitants of the earth stand in awe of hi[m]!...*]

3 in his being known through all his works (which) he created

4[...../?] his mighty works.⁶⁸⁰

The variant draws attention again to the revelation of God through his works of creation and history. The addition is a telling inclusion to this psalm, emphasizing how the knowledge of the works of God results in universal acclaim. There is a significant shift, however, between Ps 147:20, which emphasizes the knowledge that only Israel possesses, and the conclusion to Ps 146, which emphasizes the public nature of knowledge of divine works. At this point, we return to Ps 105, and the way in which its altered context allows one to speculate concerning the way in which the hearers and readers at Qumran would have understood its account of the deeds of the Lord.

11QPs^a E III, 8–17—Col I 1–16: Ps 105:1–11; 25–45

Portions of Ps 105:1–11 are extant (11QPs^a E III, 8–17), along with a very fragmentary version of vv. 25–45 (11QPs^a I, 1–16). Where the text is extant, it contains minor textual variants, but

⁶⁷⁹ What is preserved is identical to the MT, with the exception of the insertion between vv. 9–10. The join between Ps 105 and Ps 146 is also confirmed by 4QPs^c 18, II, though only a fragment of 146:1 is preserved.

⁶⁸⁰ As reconstructed by Sanders in *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 36–37. Cf. Ps 33:8 and Ps 145:10–12.

very few extensive changes in meaning.⁶⁸¹ My reading of Ps 105 here will therefore not reflect on an alternate text but the influence of an alternate context. As I noted in Chapter 2 of this dissertation on the historical psalms, Ps 105 uses the events of Israel's "functional" memory to craft a distinction between Israel and the nations, the nations who also form the rhetorical audience to the psalm. This distinction is accompanied by a specific prescription. This prescription is, on the one hand, described as the *telos* towards which each divine action leads as indicated by the culminating purpose clause: all this has happened "so that they might keep his statutes and observe his laws" (Ps 105:45; 11QPs^a I, 16). In the psalm order of 11QPs^a, these statutes and laws of the Lord have also been the culminating distinction of the previous psalm (11QPs^a E III, 7 [147:20]): they are the knowledge that only Israel has. The opening lines of Ps 105, however, urge the people to "make known" the Lord's deeds (11QPs^a E III, 9 [105:1]), to "tell of all his wondrous works" (11QPs^a E III, 9–10 [105:2]), and to "remember" (publicly) (11QPs^a E III, 11 [105:5]) his works, miracles, and judgments (*mšptym*; cf. Ps 147:20). What was previously special revelation to Israel now constitutes their public message, a message accomplished via the Lord's historical deeds.

Psalms 104 and 147 create concentric circles of distinction. The psalms move from the boundaries of creation (Ps 104:8–9) to the boundaries of the city Jerusalem (Ps 147:13–14) and

⁶⁸¹ 11QPs^a Ps 105 opens with a *hōdû* formula lacking in its MT version: *hwdw lYHWH ky twb ky...* (11QPs^a E III, 8). 11QPs^a E III, 10 (Ps 105:3) contains the only significant variant within the text of Ps 105 itself, which reads "yśmḥ lb mbqš ršwnw," "let the heart of the one who seeks his favor rejoice," vs the MT's "yśmḥ lb mbqšy YHWH" "let the hearts of those who seek the Lord, rejoice." It is possible that this is an intentional development of the text at Qumran. Dahmen views this as a mark of the text's "Qumranizing" of the proto-Masoretic text. (Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 288). There are other small variations in the singular vs plural descriptions of the people as the offspring of Abraham and Jacob: 11QPs^a E III, 13 reads *'bdyw* instead of MT *'bdw*, and *bḥyrw* instead of MT *bḥyryw*. Notably, the distinctive alternation between singular and plural in Ps 105:6a–b is maintained but reversed. Psalm 105:25–45 is extremely uncertain as only the endings of each line is preserved. There are a couple of variations in the preserved lines, perhaps arising from a copyist copying from memory as discussed below in "Signs of Oral-Written Variation." For a detailed analysis of each of the textual variants, see Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 35, 165, and Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 98.

the limits of revealed knowledge (11QPs^a 147:20). Psalm 105 re-enforces this act of boundary creation through a cluster of identifying terms that designate the one who is called to its task of proclamation: he is the “one who seeks [the Lord’s] favor,” the “offspring of Abraham,” “his servants,” and “children of Jacob.”⁶⁸² The identifying marker in this case is the message. The identification of a person into these positive categories coincides with the declaration of this particular historical knowledge: “Give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples... Remember the wonders that he has done, his miracles, and the judgments of his mouth (*mšpt̄y pyw*; Ps 105:1, 5). The Israelites as the recipients of a unique divine communication (11QPs^a 147:20) now must declare this communication in understandable terms: the deeds of the Lord and his public historical judgments (Ps 105:5). While divine words were not revealed to the nations [11QPs^a E III, 7 (147:20)], divine deeds *are*. The nations function as the rhetorical audience for Israel’s recitation, as they functioned as the audience for the divine acts themselves.⁶⁸³ The “judgments” (*mšpt̄*; Ps 147:19, 20; Ps 105:5, 7) that constitute the Lord’s unique word to Israel are in Ps 105 publicly displayed (Ps 105:5, 7).

As I noted above, it is not an altered psalm *text* that makes the presence of Ps 105 in 11QPs^a worthy of study but the effect of the altered *context*. Overall the recombination of psalms in 11QPs^a results in a rhetorical development that presents an explicit role for the knowledge that Ps 105 contains, placing it within a framework of divine revelation that culminates with its role for Israel in particular, and in a language communicable to the rest of the nations.

⁶⁸² There are small variants in the singular vs plural descriptions of the people as the offspring of Abraham and Jacob: 11QPs^a E III, 13 reads *bdyw* instead of MT *bdw*, and *bhyrw* instead of MT *bhyryw*. Notably, the distinctive alternation between singular and plural in Ps 105:6a–b is maintained, but reversed.

⁶⁸³ See a more detailed analysis of this phenomenon in ch. 1 above.

Psalm group #2: 11QPs^a XIV, 7—XVIII, 16 (Pss 135–136–Catena–145–[154])

The second sub-collection within the scroll that features historical psalms is contained in 11QPs^a XIV, 7—XVIII, 16. This group of psalms demonstrates several features that support communal participation, including the presence of antiphons and a subscript that probably functions as a liturgical marker. Most significantly, the sub-collection ends with Ps 154, a psalm that explicitly reflects on the theme of historical recitation and its pedagogical role within the community. I will argue below that formal and thematic markers point to the fact that Pss 135–145 comprise a unified liturgy to which Ps 154 functions as a concluding literary reflection. The group therefore opens with two historical psalms and ends with a psalm that equates the practice of historical recitation with a public display of wisdom. After defining the boundaries of this liturgical unit below, therefore, I will first analyze the stated role of historical recitation as it is contained in Ps 154, before returning to the preceding psalms in the collection.

A functional divide between Ps 135 and the preceding Ps 119 makes the opening of the collection clear. While Gerald Wilson and Ulrich Dahmen both argue, though for different reasons, that the psalm complex includes the preceding Psalms of Ascent and Ps 119, they do not take into account the manuscript evidence from Qumran, which suggests that in terms of functional liturgical categories, Ps 119 was most frequently read and recited as a single psalm.⁶⁸⁴ Furthermore, thematic and structural indications link Ps 135 to the four psalms that follow.⁶⁸⁵ As

⁶⁸⁴ See 4QPs^g, 4QPs^h, and 5QPs. Cf. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 48.

⁶⁸⁵ Wilson's argument is largely based on his understanding that *halēlū-yāh* and *hōdû* psalms form a primary structuring principle for 11QPs^a as a whole. Wilson, "The Qumran Psalms Scroll," 456–461. He understands Pss 135–145 to be a group of *halēlū-yāh* and *hōdû* psalms whose primary function is to demarcate a literary unit beginning with Ps 120. His concern, however, is not to identify functional liturgical units, but to identify a structuring principle analogous to that which he discovered in the Masoretic Psalter. Dahmen considers Pss 120–132 + 119 + 135–136–Catena to comprise a "zentrale Komposition" within 11QPs^a. Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 290. He acknowledges the unity of the Psalms of Ascent, as reflected in the MT-text form but understands the final Pss 133 and 134 to be *replaced* with Pss 119ff. The "orientation to the temple," which concludes the Psalms of Ascent in the Masoretic Psalter, is therefore replaced with an orientation to Torah by placing Ps 119 after Ps 132

Skehan observes, “evidences of deliberate liturgical grouping” begin in Ps 135, with the call of a single voice “urging the worshippers of the Lord to praise the name of the Lord.”⁶⁸⁶ The relationship between Pss 135 and 136 is preserved in both the MT and in 4QPsⁿ, which preserves a compilation featuring portions of each of these psalms.⁶⁸⁷ Skehan also points to the mirrored declarations of exaltation that open Ps 135 and Ps 145 respectively. These mirrored declarations suggest that they might have functioned as liturgical bookends.

(Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 290–291). He does not, however, consider the impact of the manuscript evidence at Qumran, which suggests that both the Psalms of Ascent (cf. 1QPs^b) and Ps 119 (cf. 5QPs, 4QPs^g, and 4QPs^h) form separate liturgical units. As for the inclusion of Pss 135–136 with the preceding Psalms of Ascent, Dahmen relies on their contiguity in the MT and to thematic affinities. As I will argue, however, one must attend to the structural and performance features of the psalm to ask whether these psalms were designed to be *performed* together. Thematic arguments can be very vague in a genre such as the psalms, which tends to repeat themes frequently. One can ask, of course, what the impact is of the ordering of these three liturgical units, Pss 120–132, Ps 119, and Ps 135–Catena respectively *within* 11QPs^a, but it is overstating the case to describe these psalms together as a “*zentrale Komposition*.”

Dahmen’s analysis is also based on the premise that 11QPs^a represents an early reception of the proto-Masoretic text, rather than an independently developing psalter. Therefore, in his estimation, 11QPs^a rearranges psalms as a direct interpretation of and commentary on the psalms’ respective arrangement in the MT. His analysis is subject to the criticism Flint aims at Skehan and Wilson, however, as he ignores the force of the respective form of these psalms that he groups together. See Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 188. The Psalms of Ascent share a unifying theme, while Ps 119 is a wisdom Psalm and 135ff. form a unified antiphonal celebration of praise, focused on Israel’s history.

Michael Chyutin’s interpretation is anomalous in considering the preceding Ps 119, along with 135, 136 (+ Catena, which he considers an extension of Ps 136), and 145 as four psalms for the memorial days (see Chyutin, “Redaction,” 378–379). He attributes Pss 119 and 135 to the days of ordination at the beginning of the year in the Qumran calendar, while Pss 136 (+Catena) and 145 are recited at the memorial day marking the beginning of the winter half-year. Chyutin’s analysis is extremely detailed, but his particular arguments for placing these psalms are based on evidence that is not particularly convincing: it is unlikely that Pss 135 and 136, two psalms that are united in both the MT and 11QPs^a, would be separated in this way. This objection to Chyutin’s separation of the psalms in the liturgical calendar is strengthened by their combination in 4QPsⁿ, another psalm text from Qumran, in which Ps 135:11–12 is followed by 136:22–23. Furthermore, the links that he establishes with the respective festivals (connecting “who gives food to all flesh” in Ps 136:25 to a harvest festival, for instance) are far too general to be conclusive. The concept of divine sustenance appears in several places in the psalter (e.g. Ps 104:10–15).

⁶⁸⁶ Skehan, “A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a,” 196. He labels this set of psalms the “clearest of the liturgical groupings” in 11QPs^a (195).

⁶⁸⁷ In this text, Ps 135:11–12 is followed by 136:22–23.

11QPs ^a XIV, 7–9 (Ps 135:1–2)	11QPs ^a XVI, 7–9 (Ps 145:1)
7 הללו עבדי יהוה הללו את שם יהוה הללו יה	7 תפלה לדויד ארוממכה יהוה ⁶⁸⁸ אלוהי המלך
8 ורוממו יה שעומדים בבית	8 ואברכה שמכה לעולם ועד ברוך יהוה וברוך שמו
9 יהוה בחצרות בית אלוהינו ובתוכך ירושלים	9 לעולם ועד

The strongest evidence that Pss 135–145 form a functional liturgical unit, however, are the formal principles that unite these psalms and the concluding postscript that follows Ps 145 and indicates that the preceding collection is set apart “for a memorial” (*zw’t lzkwn*).⁶⁸⁹ At the most basic level, each of the four psalms that comprise this liturgical unit are hymns.⁶⁹⁰ Psalm 136, *Catena*, and Ps 145 are further formally unified by their repeated refrains: Ps 136 features the phrase “*ky l’wlm ḥsdw* (for his steadfast love endures forever)” following each line. 11QPs^a 145 includes an additional refrain not present in the Masoretic version: after each verse “*brwk YHWH wbrwk šmw l’wlm w’d*” (blessed be the Lord and blessed be his name forever and ever) is recited. Both Pss 136 and 145 therefore feature a refrain that appears as the b element after each line. This is a distinctive feature within psalmody and strongly suggests an antiphonal liturgical performance situation. Similarly, both 11QPs^a 135:6 (XIV, 13–14) and the *Catena* feature threefold repeating formulas that are unique to 11QPs^a.⁶⁹¹ Similar performance features are not included in the preceding or following collection of psalms.

This leaves the question of how Ps 154 relates to the preceding psalms. The extracanonical Ps 154 was known only in Syriac before the discovery of 11QPs^a.⁶⁹² Parts of the psalm are also

⁶⁸⁸ *YHWH* here is noted as a scribal error.

⁶⁸⁹ The significance of this enigmatic postscript will be considered in detail below.

⁶⁹⁰ The corresponding sub-collection in 11QPs^a analyzed above also combines historical psalms with hymns, suggesting that the combination of these two psalm types was common at Qumran.

⁶⁹¹ Cf. Skehan, “A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a,” 196.

⁶⁹² J. Strugnell, “Notes on the Text and Transmission of the Apocryphal Psalms 151, 154 (=Syr II) and 155 (=Syr III),” *HTR* 59 (1966): 257–281, esp. 258; Patrick W. Skehan, “Again the Syriac

found in 4Q448, the “Prayer for King Jonathan,” a manuscript copied in the first century BCE.⁶⁹³ Psalm 154 is very clearly a different type of psalm from the communal antiphonal hymns that precede it, but functions, I will argue, as an extended reflection on the communal recital of history performed in the preceding collection. Psalm 154’s unity with the preceding collection is supported formally by its structure as a hymn, lexically through its distinctive linguistic affinities with the previous collection, and thematically in that it contains an explicit reflection on the practice of reciting the historical deeds of the Lord in the community, an act performed in the preceding psalms. It does not appear, however, to fulfill the same liturgical function. While it generally conforms to the formal structure of the hymn, it lacks the antiphon characteristic of the previous psalms (Pss 136 and 145). Its didactic tone also transforms the focal point of the speaker from a figure speaking *within* the congregation in the midst of praise to an astute observer *reflecting on* the practice of praise. The curious postscript following Ps 145 (זַו’ת לזְכָּרָנָא) also strongly indicates a concluding function. Based on this and the preceding evidence, I conclude that while Ps 154 did not constitute a part of the communally performed liturgy, it was intentionally juxtaposed to form a reflection on the use of the previous psalms and to provide a key to their social influence and community-defining power.

As I noted above, Skehan and Wilson assert that the sub-collection ends with Ps 145. Flint, however, includes Ps 154 with the previous psalms on a formal basis, “since all five

Apocryphal Psalms,” *CBQ* 38 (1976): 143–158; Sanders, “Psalm 154 Revisited,” 296–306; A. Hurvitz, “Observations on the Language of the Third Apocryphal Psalm from Qumran,” *RevQ* (1965): 225–232.

⁶⁹³ E. Eshel, H. Eshel, and A. Yardeni, “A Qumran Composition Containing Part of Ps 154 and a Prayer for the Welfare of King Jonathan and His Kingdom,” *IEJ* 42 (1992): 199–229; E. Eshel, H. Eshel, and A. Yardeni, “4Q448, 4QApocryphal Psalm and Prayer,” in *Qumran Cave 4, VI. Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 1*, ed. E. Eshel et al., *DJD* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 403–425; H. Eshel and E. Eshel, “4Q448, Psalm 154 (Syriac), Sirach 48:20, and 4QPsIsa^a,” *JBL* 119 (2000): 645–665; Eric D. Reymond, *New Idioms within Old: Poetry and Parallelism in the Non-Masoretic Poems of 11Q5 (=11QPs^a)* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 75–76.

compositions are hymns of praise or thanksgiving, while the following group contains only prayers of supplication” (Plea for Deliverance → 139 → 137).⁶⁹⁴ He objects to Wilson’s overreliance on the juxtaposition of opening and closing *hallelujahs*, and considers Skehan biased against including “apocryphal” compositions in liturgical groupings.⁶⁹⁵

Mroczek expands upon Flint’s argument that Ps 154 should be included with the previous psalms by further explicating the links in vocabulary and theme between Ps 154 and the collection that precedes it. She points to several specific linguistic parallels that link this psalm to those preceding: discussion of the Lord’s *salvation* ($\sqrt{y}\check{s}$ ‘; $y\check{s}$ ‘w; Ps 145:19; Ps 154:4 [11QPs^a XVIII, 2]), *glory* (*kbwd*; Ps 145:5, 11, 12; Ps 154:5 [11QPs^a XVIII, 3]); greatness (*gdwlh*; Ps 145:3, 6; Ps 154:7 [11QPs^a XVIII, 5])) and *deeds* (*m*‘*śh*; Ps 135:15; 145:4, 9, 10, 17; Ps 154:6, 10 [11QPs^a XVIII, 4, 7]); as well as the actions of *making known* ($\sqrt{y}d$ ‘ Ps 145:12; 154:4, 5, 7, 14 [11QPs^a XVIII, 2–4, 12]); and *recounting* ($\sqrt{s}pr$; Ps 145:6; Ps 154:6 [11QPs^a XVIII, 3]), which are accomplished by the *faithful* (*ħsyd*; Ps 145:10; Ps 154:12 [11QPs^a XVIII, 10]). These specific overlapping vocabulary items support the development of the central theme of praise for the deeds of God, a theme that comes explicitly into focus as evidence of the speaker’s access to wisdom in Ps 154.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁴ Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 188.

⁶⁹⁵ Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 188.

⁶⁹⁶ Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound,” 80. Ulrich Dahmen also groups Pss 145 and 154 together, not as the conclusion to the collection beginning with Ps 135, but as the introduction to a subsequent set of psalms ending with Ps 138. The formal components that motivate him to consider these psalms together, *despite* the weight of the postscript concluding Ps 145, include what he deems a “programmatic” opening *tplh* (vs. *thlh* in the MT), the unique affinity of Ps 154 with 145, and the framing function of Pss 138 and 145 in the MT, which is here reversed. Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 295. He identifies an overall formal structure in which Pss 145 and 138 serve as a frame of thanksgiving while the internal psalms of the collection are *Bittpsalmen*, moving concentrically inward from the communal emphasis of Pss 154 and 137 to the individual emphasis of the central psalms, “Plea for Deliverance” and Ps 139. While many of Dahmen’s structural observations are astute, there are several reasons to ultimately reject this structure: Ps 154 can hardly be classified as a *Bittpsalm* but should instead be considered a hymn of praise with strong wisdom characteristics. Here Flint’s criticism is useful again as he realizes the generic link between Pss 145 and 154 that *separates* them from the following collection (cf. Flint, *The Dead Sea*

With the boundaries of this sub-collection so established, I will now turn to the question of the use and function of these psalms. The regular communal recitation of history and its social importance are enforced by explicit rhetorical reflection, the formal characteristics of the psalms within these collections, and text-critical signs of oral-written variation. Each of these aspects will be examined below in turn. The final Ps 154, with its overt reflection on the role of particularly historical knowledge in defining community identity, is particularly significant for my thesis, and so I will begin my discussion with this psalm before returning to discuss Pss 135–145.

Psalm 154, Social Power, and Literate Knowledge

Psalm 154 describes an intricate web of relations defined in relationship to knowledge of the Lord's deeds. In this way, it displays one of the characteristic modes of wisdom discourse, which carefully articulates human character through the designation of groups. The measuring lines, however, for membership in these groups in Ps 154 is their knowledge and celebration of the deeds of the Lord. The psalm ascribes the title of friend and foe, and the innocently ignorant, and identifies critical lines of action for each participant. In short, this psalm answers the question *who* is part of this community, *how* should these community members speak, and *what* should be

Psalms Scrolls, 188). The second point of evidence is the distinct antiphonal character of Ps 145 which most likely links the composition formally to the previous collection, particularly Ps 136 and the Catena. On this, see Reinhard Kratz, "Blessed Be the Lord and Blessed Be His Name Forever: Psalm 145 in the Hebrew Bible and in the Psalms Scroll 11Q5," in *Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature*, ed. Jeremy Penner, Ken M. Penner, and Cecilia Wassen, *STDJ* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 235–238. Kratz understands the liturgical additions to Ps 145 as being, in part, a stylistic harmonization with Ps 136, and he, along with Wilson, points to the importance of doxological formulae in determining the division of groupings with the Psalter (contra Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 276–278). He also seems to assume that 11QPs^a preserves a deliberate reordering of the Masoretic text, as he refers to "already existing references between Todah and Hallelujah Psalms" as motivation for the new groupings, particular between Pss 118, 135, and 136 and 104–105. Kratz, "Blessed be the Lord," 238.

the content of their speech? In so doing, the wisdom hymn Ps 154 explicates the social function of the historical psalms at Qumran.

11QPs^a XVIII preserves vv. 3–20a of Ps 154. Translations of vv. 1–2 and 20b–23 have been supplied from the Syriac.

11QPs ^a XVIII, 1–16	
1	154:3 לטובים נפש תכמה ולתמימים לפאר עליון 4 החבירו יחד
2	להודיע ישעו ואל תתעצלו להודיע עוזו ותפארתו
3	לכול פותאים 5 כי להודיע כבוד יהוה נתנה חוכמה 6 ולספר
4	רוב מעשיו נודעה לאדם 7 להודיע לפותאים עוזו
5	להשכיל לחסרי לבב גדולתו 8 הרחוקים מפתחיה
6	הנדהים ממבואיה 9 כי עליון הוא אדון
7	יעקוב ותפארתו על כול מעשיו 10 ואדם מפאר עליון
8	ירצה כמגיש מנחה 11 כמקריב עתודים ובני בקר
9	כמדשן מזבח ברוב עולות כקטורת נחוח מיד
10	צדיקים 12 מפתחי צדיקים נשמע קולה ומקהל חסידים
11	זמרתה 13 על אוכלמה בשבע נאמרה ועל שתותמה בחבר
12	יחדיו 14 שיחתם בתורת עליון אמריהמה להודיע עוזו
13	15 כמה רחקה מרשעים אמרה מכול זדים לדעתה 16 הנה
14	עניי יהוה על טובים תחמל 17 ועל מפארו יגדל חסדו
15	מעט רעה יציל נפש [18] יהוה גואל עני מיד
16	[19] ל [20] קוב ושופט

1 [With a loud voice glorify God;
in the congregation of the many proclaim his majesty.

2 In the multitude of the upright glorify his name,
and with the faithful recount his greatness.]

3 [Bind] with the good, your souls,
and with the pure to glorify the high one.

4 Join together [2] to make known his deliverance,
and do not hesitate to make known his strength
and to glorify him [3] before all the simple.

5 For to make known the glory of the Lord, wisdom is given,⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹⁷ Reymond translates this as “is given” as Sanders and others do “since the ‘giving’ of wisdom is something that might take place with each person.” Reymond, *New Idioms within Old*, 83; Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 69.

- 6 and to recount [4] the multitude of his deeds,⁶⁹⁸ she is made known to humanity,
 7 to make known to the simple his strength,
 [5] to convey to those who lack thought his greatness;
 8 those who are far from her gates
 [6] those who are cast out from her entrances;
 9 For the Most High, he is the Lord of [7] Jacob;
 and his splendor is above all his deeds.
- 10 The one who glorifies the Most High [8] will be accepted like the one who brings an offering.
 11 Like the one who brings rams and the sons of cattle,
 [9] like the one who cleans the ashes of the altar of the abundance of burnt offerings,
 like incense smoke of appeasement from the hand of the [10] righteous.
- 12 From the mouths of the righteous, her voice is heard,
 and from the assembly of the faithful [11] her praise.
- 13 When they eat in abundance, let us speak,
 and when they drink in unison [12] together,
 14 they meditate on the Torah of the Most High,
 their words to make his power known.
- 15 [13] How far are the wicked from her word,
 from all the insolent, to know her!
- 16 Behold [14] the eyes of the Lord upon the good ones are compassionate,
 17 and upon those who glorify him he increases his steadfast love.
 [15] From a time of evil, he will deliver [their] soul
- 18 [Bless] the Lord who redeems the humble from the hand of the [16] stranger...
 [and delivers the pure from the hand of the wicked;
 19 Who establishes a horn out of Jacob
 and a judge of peoples out of Israel.
 20 He will spread his tent in Zion
 and abide forever in Jerusalem.]

There are three focal points around which this meditation on historical knowledge coalesces: the *communal boundary*, which is determined by a relationship to the *communal text* and displayed within *communal space*. These three focal points construct spaces of relationship

⁶⁹⁸ While the term “deeds” (*m’sy*) is ambiguous in and of itself, in the context of this liturgy on the historical deeds of the Lord, it most likely refers to the Lord’s actions of salvation, supported by the reference to salvation in vv. 4a, 17b, 18b, and 18c. In other contexts, it would be possible for the Lord’s deeds to refer to his creative acts.

and division through the progression of the psalm. The question of the relationship between the rhetorical ideal presented in the psalm and its influence on practice is provided by what social scientists call “reference groups.” This concept describes the “group, collectivity, or person which the actor takes into account in the course of selecting a behavior from among a set of alternatives, or in making a judgment about a problematic issue.”⁶⁹⁹ The “reference group” describes in social-scientific terms what in rhetorical terms is referred to as “characterization.” These two concepts together help to describe the relationship between the rhetorical projection of an ideal community and its influence on practice. It is from this selection of projected characters that a person finds their reference point for behavior.

There are four reference groups that function within the psalm: the *audience* to whom the opening imperative is directed, who exist in the space before the decision that will identify them; the “*righteous*,” known by several names, including the “upright,” the “faithful,” the “good,” “pure,” and the “humble;” the “*simple*,” who are to be educated, and the “*wicked*,” who exist irreconcilably outside of the bounds of the community. Each of these groups is defined by its relationship to the knowledge that wisdom gives and that consists of a public meditation upon the Lord’s deeds.

With the reference groups and their respective spaces so outlined, one can begin to investigate the relationships within each of these groups, to ask what defines a person as a member of each, and to locate the role of communal recitation in confirming these boundaries. The demarcation of the good and upright versus the simple and the wicked is decided based on their publicly displayed knowledge: this is the effective communal boundary. A simple analysis of each verb ascribed to these characters clarifies the identity of the “righteous” and “good”:

⁶⁹⁹ Theodore D. Kemper, “Reference Groups, Socialization, and Achievement,” *American Sociological Review* 33 (1968): 31–45.

those who have *bound* and *joined* ($\sqrt{h}br$; $\sqrt{y}hd$; l. 1), now *glorify* ($\sqrt{p}'r$; ll. 1, 7), *recount* ($\sqrt{s}pr$; l. 3), *make known* ($\sqrt{y}d'$, *hip'il*; ll. 2, 3, 4, 12), and *speak* ($\sqrt{'mr}$; l. 11). This cluster of terms outlines the actions of public praise that take place within the congregation, actions which are rooted in a shared and confirmed knowledge. The first two stanzas outline a chain of pedagogy: the righteous are those who display their knowledge of the deeds of the Lord before the simple (ll. 1–3), a knowledge that is revealed to have come from Wisdom herself (ll. 3–7). As Reymond puts it so pithily, “Wisdom is made known (N-Stem of *yd'*) in order for humans to literally make known (H-stem of *yd'*) God’s glory (vv. 6–7); the words of the pious are implicitly compared to “her word” (vv. 14–15).”⁷⁰⁰

Another boundary image reinforces the community-defining effect of this wisdom: the image of the walled city is superimposed upon the previously established social stratification in ll. 5–6. While in l. 3a the simple are imaged in the place of the student, sitting “before” the righteous, now those who lack knowledge are separated “far” from the gates of this city. These boundaries are created poetically and spatially: the simple are described *outside* of the poetic rhythm of the first stanza. They are described in the final line of an unexpected tricola following two balanced bicola. And they are also *outside* the metaphorical city emerging in the second stanza. While they are outside, however, they are still within reach. The righteous glorify God *before them*, and wisdom might still be conveyed to those who lack thought. Not so for this third group, described as the “wicked” and “insolent” (*rš'ym*; *zdym*; l. 13) Spatial metaphors

⁷⁰⁰ Reymond, *New Idioms within Old*, 91. Psalm 154 shares both the association between the praise of God and wisdom and also its description of the pious as taking on the role of wisdom herself with Sir 51:13–30, suggesting that these ideas were becoming common associations at this time. The particular emphasis of this psalm, however, is that this wisdom, possessed and enacted by the pious is demonstrated specifically in the celebration of the Lord’s deeds. Furthermore, the placement of this psalm following a liturgical collection that celebrates the historical deeds of the Lord transforms the general equation of wisdom and praise into a commentary on the wisdom of participating in these particular psalm recitals.

culminate in the exclamation of v. 15, which, after describing at length the commune of the righteous, marvels at the distance separating this pedagogical space from the wicked. “How far!” the psalm cries, “are the wicked from her word, from all the insolent to know her.”

Communal Text

The division of people into the wise, the simple, and the wicked is not unique to Ps 154.⁷⁰¹ What is distinctive is the particular means by which these divisions are made. What is the content of this community-defining knowledge revealed by wisdom and displayed to the simple? As I argued above Ps 154 forms a concluding reflection on the ceremony of praise and historical reflection performed in Pss 135–136–Catena–145 that precede it. The relationship of Ps 154 to the psalms that precede it is facilitated by a series of lexical links describing God’s *glory*, *greatness*, *deeds*, *salvation*, as well as the acts of making these deeds *known* and *recounting* them within the community. These lexical affinities merely reinforce the continuity supplied by the topic of the previous psalms: an abbreviated narration of the deeds of the Lord in a format conducive to public recitation. The communal text, therefore, can be equated with the psalm script contained in the preceding psalms.

If my analysis is correct, that the preceding psalms form a compendium of praise and recitation of the Lord’s deeds concluding with this psalm, then the addressees of Ps 154 have *already* participated in the activities that group them together with the “righteous”: they have already glorified God and celebrated his deeds in the assembly. By concluding this series of praise with a reflection on the role of wisdom, the community identifies themselves as those who

⁷⁰¹ See for example the categorical introduction of the wise and the simple in Prov 1:1–6, and the selection of wise/wicked antitheses in Prov 10–15.

possess the wisdom requisite to praise God correctly. This reveals one of the powerful shaping forces of this historical liturgy: it both educates and identifies the public who recites it.

Communal Space

In the third stanza (vv. 10–15; ll. 7b–13), this display of cultural literacy is related to two key sites of social demonstration: the sacrificial altar and the table. What each of these spaces have in common is that they are important performative spaces for communities. The sacrificial altar is a public space, a central communal site with both voluntary and mandated social participation. It is a place where one publicly demonstrates membership within a community and the proper performance of its stipulations. The comparison with sacrifice, therefore, not only bestows upon the recitation of this text a cultic efficacy but also equates the performance of a text with another significant type of social display. This is an important distinction: it is not just the *content* of the historical recital that bestows a sense of “identity” upon the speakers and hearers. It is also the shared performance of this knowledge.

The social force of the temple analogy in the poem is reinforced by the reference to the meal (vv. 13–14): the juxtaposition of these two images suggests through the force of analogy that each identifies a space for social performance. Meals are important spaces for creating and demonstrating social ties. As Emma Blake describes:

commensalism always has some bearing on social relations and on the identities of the participants, whether creating them, reinforcing them or even masking them. Thus the punctuated occasion of the feast sheds light on ongoing social roles: Who is hosting the feast? Who are the participants? Who is excluded? What kind of obligations does this event place on its participants?⁷⁰²

⁷⁰² Emma Blake, “The Material Expression of Cult, Ritual, and Feasting,” in *The Archaeology of Mediterranean Prehistory*, ed. Emma Blake and A. Bernard Knapp (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 107. Cf. Robertson Smith who writes that “According to antique ideas those who eat and drink together are by this very act tied to one another by a bond of friendship and mutual obligation.” W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (Edinburgh, 1889), 247–248. Cited in Jack Goody,

Meals not only confirm these social bonds, but they are also primary sites for social performance and the demonstration of cultural knowledge. While opinions diverge as to whether 11QPs^a was a “sectarian” Psalter, the ritual meal practices of the Qumran sect provide a helpful comparative data point. As Bo Reike originally observed, and Carol Newsom and Judith Newman have more recently explicated, the communal meals at Qumran bear great similarity to Philo’s description of the banquets of the Therapeutae and Therapeutoides.⁷⁰³ According to Philo’s description, following the reading of scripture at these communal meals, the leader of the community would rise and sing a “hymn composed in honor of the Deity, either a new one of his own composition, or an old one by poets of an earlier age.”⁷⁰⁴ Following this performance each of the members would also sing a hymn before the company.

This type of ritualized presentation of knowledge is not unique to the Therapeutae: scholars have compared the social practices of the *yaḥad* to other Greco-Roman voluntary associations.⁷⁰⁵ Meals provided a space for the performance of one’s mastery of cultural

Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 11–12.

⁷⁰³ Bo Reike, “Remarques sur l’histoire de la forme (Formgeschichte) des Textes de Qumran,” in *Les manuscrits de la mer Morte: Colloque de Strasbourg 25–27 Mai 1955*, ed. E.E. Ellis and M. Wilcox (Paris: Paris University Press, 1957), 38–44; Newsom, *The Self as Symbolic Space*, 203–204; Judith Newman, “The Composition of Prayers and Songs in Philo’s *De Vita Contemplativa*,” in *Empsychoi Logoi—Religious Innovations in Antiquity*, ed. Alberdina Houtman, Albert de Jong, and Magda Misset-van de Weg (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 457–468.

⁷⁰⁴ Philo, *Vit. Cont.* 80, trans. D. Winston.

⁷⁰⁵ Moshe Weinfeld has explored the analogies between the statutes preserved by these associations and the rule books found at Qumran. Moshe Weinfeld, *The Organizational Pattern and the Penal Code of the Qumran Sect: A Comparison with the Guilds and Religious Associations of the Hellenistic Period*, NTOA 2 (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1986); cf. Hans Bardtke, “Die Rechtsstellung der Qumran-Gemeinde,” *TLZ* 86 (1961): 93–104; Carl Schneider, “Zur Problematik des Hellenistischen in den Qumrāntexten,” in *Qumran-Probleme*, ed. Hans Bardtke (Berlin: Akademie, 1963), 229–314. Collins has highlighted both the similarities and the differences with these voluntary associations, noting that they perhaps provide a closer analogy to the “family-based movement of the *Damascus Rule* than the *yaḥad*,” which he describes as a “greedier” organization. See John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI:

knowledge. As Rosalind Thomas notes, “the types of traditions that are found in a society are linked extremely closely to its institutions or social structure.”⁷⁰⁶ To put it another way, cultural literacy is acquired in the form in which it can be modeled to one’s peers. As an example, Greek cultural life often centered around certain small gatherings, the Cretan *andreion* and the Athenian *hetaireia*, the drinking party that followed the meal. Henri Marrou describes each of these as possessing its own

strict rules and formal etiquette: each of the guests in turn received the myrtle branch that meant that it was his turn to sing, and the song... zig zags from one to another... any child who wished to take his place one day at the banquets as an educated person had not only to learn a certain amount of Homer’s poetry... but also to set about acquiring a repertoire of what were essentially lyrical poems.⁷⁰⁷

In Hellenistic circles, these banquets provided an opportunity to model cultural literacy, defined not as the ability to read and write but defined as being learned in the areas in which culture deems it important to be.⁷⁰⁸ As social scientist Jenny Cook-Gumperz notes,

William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 79–87, here 81. Matthias Klinghardt has argued that the yahad functioned as a “synagogue community,” who would gather at regular intervals to participate in rituals of blessing, eating, and counsel, as described in 1QS 6. Matthias Klinghardt, “The Manual of Discipline in the Light of Statutes of Hellenistic Associations,” in *Methods of Investigation of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects*, ed. Michael Owen Wise et al., ANYAS (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), 251–270. Collins disagrees, however, asserting that such a “synagogue community” is not compatible with the extreme nature of the communal requirements in both 1QS and the *Damascus Rule* (Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 82). He argues instead for an analogy with the Pythagorean community, who held their possessions in common, and were alleged in the literature from the fifth c. BCE (Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 83–87).

⁷⁰⁶ Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record*, 198.

⁷⁰⁷ Henri I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 41–42.

⁷⁰⁸ The importance of the appearance of cultural literacy is demonstrated most vividly when Aeschines accuses his opposing rhetorician of patronizing the crowd by insinuating they are not familiar with the classical poets:

But since you make mention of Achilles and Patroclus, and of Homer and the other poets—as though the jury were men innocent of education, while you are people of a superior sort, who feel yourselves quite beyond common folks in learning—that you may know that we too have before now heard and learned a little something, we shall say a word about this also. (Aesch. 1.114; trans. Adams)

To insinuate that an Athenian did *not* possess the requisite cultural literacy was viewed as a slight.

The social perspective on literacy looks at literacy learning not only as the acquisition of cognitive skills but rather as a means for demonstrating knowledgeability. Literacy involves a complex of socio-cognitive processes that are part of the production and comprehension of texts and talk within interactional contexts that in turn influence how these literate products will be valued.⁷⁰⁹

What Cook-Gumperz highlights is that the social value of literacy is not measured according to a rubric of abstract reading and writing skills but as a measure of social competence. It is both a means to present oneself as knowledgeable and a means by which particular texts or text-related products accrue social value. Cook-Gumperz also notes that, with this definition, oral and strictly literate forms of communication are not necessarily opposites but can be “different ways of achieving the same communicative ends.”⁷¹⁰ “Literacy” is a form of cultural capital, by which one demonstrates that one is a certain type of person, depending on what is valued in one’s particular context.

Returning to Ps 154, it is clear that the circumscribed spaces of the sacrificial ritual, with its extensive guidelines for correct public practice, and the space of the communal meal, whose boundaries are reinforced by a double descriptor (when they drink *in unison together* [*bḥbr yḥdyw*; 11QPs^a XVIII, 11–12; Ps 154:13]) become the spaces where another knowledge is displayed far from the wicked and in the presence of the simple: the recital of the deeds of the Lord. This marks the knowledge that is recited in the previous psalms as knowledge of high social significance. In this way Ps 154 provides explicit internal reflection on the role of the historical psalms in the Qumran psalter and in the life of the community.

⁷⁰⁹ Cook-Gumperz, “The Social Construction of Literacy,” 4–5.

⁷¹⁰ Cook-Gumperz, “The Social Construction of Literacy,” 3.

Pss 135–136–Catena–145–[154]

The display of knowledge that is celebrated in Ps 154 is performed in the psalm collection that precedes it. The communal demonstration of this knowledge is facilitated by several psalm features that enable communal participation. I will focus my analysis of 11QPs^a 135–145, therefore, on the formal features that correspond to patterns of communal use described in Ps 154. These formal features include the addition of repeated refrains, a subscription that describes a commemorative function, and textual variants “typical of [the] memory-reconstructive processes” that mark frequently recited texts.⁷¹¹

Psalms 135 and 136, with their repeated schema of historical events, constitute the script for “recount[ing] the multitude of his deeds” described in Ps 154. Together, they introduce the content and focus of the collection through their recitation of a repeated set of events, but they also introduce the antiphonal form and repeated refrains that will comprise the most distinctive liturgical characteristic of this collection. Some of these liturgical characteristics are shared between the Qumran and Masoretic versions of each of these psalms; some are unique to 11QPs^a. The textual variants between Pss 135, 136, and 145 and their counterparts in the MT are listed and discussed in detail by Peter Flint and Ulrich Dahmen.⁷¹² I will focus particularly on those textual differences that can point to liturgical performance.

Major textual variants are present in Pss 135, the addition of the Catena to Ps 136, and in Ps 145. Each of these variants potentially facilitated participation in the psalms’ performance. While MT Ps 135 opens with a three-fold expression of praise,⁷¹³ 11QPs^a features an additional

⁷¹¹ Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 17.

⁷¹² Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls*, 113–114; Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 196–203.

⁷¹³ The threefold opening is preserved but reversed in 11QPs^a 135. See “Signs of Oral-Written Variation” below.

threefold refrain between vv. 6 and 7 of Ps 135. Patrick Skehan has identified this feature as an interjected responsorial.⁷¹⁴

Whatever the Lord pleases, he does
in heaven and on earth he will do

There is none like Yah

There is none like YHWH

There is no one who acts like the King of the Gods in the seas and in all the deeps.

['yn kyh

'yn kYHWH

w'yn šy 'śh]⁷¹⁵

This preference for threefold statements is also demonstrated in the *Catena*, a carefully structured text that follows Ps 136 and is compiled almost exclusively of lines familiar from Ps 118. It consists of an introductory statement that echoes the refrain of Ps 136 (*hwdw lYHWH ky twb ky l'wlm ḥsdw*), followed by two threefold declarations: three statements concerning the “right hand of the Lord” and three “better than” statements, two of which are also preserved in MT Ps 118, and one which is added in 11QPs^a:

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good for his steadfast love endures forever.
The sound of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous.
The right hand of the Lord has acted valiantly.
The right hand of the Lord is exalted.
The right hand of the Lord has acted in strength.
It is better to trust in the Lord than in people.
It is better to seek refuge in the Lord than to trust princes.
It is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in thousands of people.
Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His steadfast love endures forever.
Hallelujah!

⁷¹⁴ Skehan, “A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a,” 196.

⁷¹⁵ Cf. Skehan, “A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a,” 196–197 on a possible performance structure for this psalm.

The Catena is the first non-Masoretic composition that appears in the scroll, though it consists of material found both in Ps 136 and in Ps 118.⁷¹⁶ Its suitability for oral performance is enhanced by its abbreviation of Ps 118 into a formal structure consisting of two sets of tricola. As Skehan points out, threefold formulas are a typical rhetorical formula associated with communal liturgical statements. They appear both in Christian liturgy⁷¹⁷ and in the Hebrew Bible.⁷¹⁸ It is possible then that the Catena, with its repeated three-fold recitation, constitutes a communal response to the recitation of the Lord's deeds in Ps 136, a summary statement of the power of the Lord's right hand and the concomitant pious response of trust. It also echoes the threefold declaration that opens Pss 135 and 136 and the threefold refrain that appears between vv. 6 and 7 of 11QPs^a Ps 135, thereby formally unifying the collection.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁶ The opening and closing *hôdû* refrain ties this composition to the preceding Ps 136, leading to debate concerning whether the *Catena* should be considered an independent psalm (See P. Ackroyd, "Some Notes on the Psalms," *JTS* 17 [1966]: 396–399; Ackroyd, "The Open Canon," *Colloq* 3 [1970]: 279–291) or an appended coda to 11QPs^a Ps 136 (Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 295). As Sanders originally noted, there is an "unusually small space interval" between Ps 136 and the Catena. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPs^a)*, 37. In all other cases the division between compositions is clearly marked. It is possible, therefore that the supposed ending of Ps 136 that opens this column is an introduction to the Catena. On the other hand, the linking of these two psalms could be facilitated by the "simple mnemonic connection of the refrain 'for his steadfast love endures forever'" Mroczek, "Psalms Unbound," 75.

⁷¹⁷ Skehan lists the *Laudes gallicaneae* (Christus vincit; Christus regnat; Christus imperat); and the *Trisagion* (Holy God; Holy Mighty one; Holy Immortal, have mercy on us). See Skehan, "A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a," 200–201.

⁷¹⁸ cf. Isa 33:22; Skehan, "A Liturgical Complex in 11QPs^a," 200–201.

⁷¹⁹ While the majority of the Catena is comprised of exact quotations from Ps 118, there are several small variants. In line 3, where the MT 118:16 repeats the line "the right hand of the Lord acts valiantly" (*ymyn YHWH 'śh hyl*) 11QPs^a XVI, 3 reads "the right hand of the Lord acts in strength" (*ymyn YHWH 'śth gbwrh*). The phrase, however, is composed of a combination of such stereotypical psalm language that E. L. Greenstein is probably correct when he identifies this variant as a particularly good example of a misquotation from memory. See E. L. Greenstein, "Misquotation of Scripture in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume*, ed. Barry Walfish (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 1992), 77. "Yahweh's right hand has shown valor" reflects common biblical usage: the arm of the Lord acting valiantly, the collocation of *gbwrh* with *'śh*, and the association of *ymyn* with the verb *'śh* all suggest that this would be an easily constructed line of praise using stereotypical psalm language. Ben Zion Wacholder identifies the additional phrase in Col. XVI, 5, "It is better to rely on the Lord than to rely upon a thousand peoples" as an intentional sectarian insertion referring to a specific historical event, either the Greek defeats of Persian at Marathon or Gaugamela, the Maccabean victories over the Seleucid armies, or a reference to the eschatological victory of David ben Jesse. See Wacholder, "David's

Psalm 145 also receives an additional refrain interjected between each of its poetic lines: “Blessed be the Lord and blessed be his name forever and ever.”⁷²⁰ The formal evolution of this psalm links it more intimately with the preceding Ps 136 and creates a formally unified recital. All of these variants together create a strong impression of communal participation. Each psalm facilitates a response to the proclamation of the Lord’s deeds, a response that is easily memorized and performed by the congregation.

Evidence for the liturgical and mnemonic use of this psalm collection is further provided by the enigmatic postscript “*zw’t lzkwn*,” preserved at the ending of 11QPs^a Ps 145 (XVII, 17). The translation of the term is debated. I translate the phrase “This is for commemoration,” for reasons I will enumerate below. Sanders originally translated the term “memorial.”⁷²¹ Wacholder emphasized the communal function of the text by translating it “this is for a memory,” which he takes to imply “for memorization.”⁷²² Kimelman objected to this translation on the grounds that

Eschatological Psalter,” 62. This is too specific a referent for a line which is probably inserted to complete the tricola, and complete the progression from an *individual* to several *princes* to the multitude of *thousands*.

⁷²⁰ While I do not always assume the priority of the MT version of these psalms, and I certainly do not assume the priority of the MT’s ordering of these psalms, it is very likely that this refrain is added to Ps 145 from a version of the psalm similar to the MT. It is usually more likely that text is added rather than omitted in a later version, and a repeated refrain is unlikely to be unintentionally overlooked in the process of scribal transmission. There are also several micro-variants present in this version of the psalm in comparison to the Masoretic Text:

- 1) the shift in the superscription from *thlh* to *tplh*.
- 2) *bkl ywm* (v. 2) → *brwk ywm* (v. 2)
- 3) v. 6 lacks the 3rd person feminine suffix on *‘sprnh*
- 4) The “nun” line of the acrostic, not present in the MT, is included here, following v. 13: “The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works” (v. 13b)
- 5) 11QPs^a includes an extra *‘th* (2ms) in v. 16
- 6) the switch from *b’mt* to *b’mwnt* in v. 18
- 7) The switch from those who “love” God (*kl ‘hbyw*; MT Ps 145:20) to those who “fear” God (*kwl yr ‘yw*; 11QPs^a XVII, 14). Dahmen explains this as a Qumran-specific alteration. Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 201. It is also possible, as Kratz points out, that these variations are secondary harmonizations with context. See Kratz, “Blessed be the Lord,” 235.

⁷²¹ Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll*, 67.

⁷²² Wacholder, “David’s Eschatological Psalter,” 50. Interestingly, Wacholder questions whether the postscript refers to the psalm (or psalm collection) in its entirety, or only to the antiphonal response

the structure of the psalm itself, based around a refrain, indicates that it was used for communal recitation and therefore the postscript should be translated “This is for recitation.”⁷²³ In this, Kimelman demonstrates a confusion between the roles of public recitation and the promotion of memorization within a community by viewing them as *alternatives*. Memorization, however, is not only a function of textual study but also occurs in public contexts in the setting of communal recitation. Regular recitation is both a mark and a means of memorization.

This phrase does not appear in the MT psalter, though the similar phrase “for the memorial offering” (*lhzkyr*) occurs in the superscriptions of Pss 38 and 70. Elsewhere *zkrwn* indicates a festival commemorating an event in Israel’s history (Exod 12:14; 13:9; Lev 23:24; Num 10:10), or a physical cultic object (Exod 28:12, 29; 39:7; Josh 4:7). It does refer to written materials explicitly three times (Exod 17:14; Mal 3:16; Esth 6:1),⁷²⁴ but the meaning of the term overwhelmingly indicates a communal cultic setting.⁷²⁵ This nuance is confirmed in the term’s usage in the Dead Sea Scrolls, where it often indicates an appointed communal event, or the implements used therein (1QS X, 5; 1QM VII, 13; 4Q320 4 III, 6; 4 IV, 2; 4 V, 5; 4Q409 1 I, 5; 11Q19 XIX, 9, etc.). Based on its context within this particular psalm collection,⁷²⁶ the postscript likely identifies this collection as a recital in a public cultic setting, marking the entire collection as a ceremony designed to remind those participating of the past acts of the Lord. It serves as

that immediately precedes it. If the latter, it could indicate that the antiphonal addition is to be memorized as a piece of corporate worship.

⁷²³ Reuven Kimelman, “Psalm 145: Theme Structure, and Impact,” *JBL* 113 (1994): 56.

⁷²⁴ Once to indicate Moses’ written memorialization of the Amalekite transgression (Exod 17:14); once, indicating the “book of remembrance” kept by the Lord (Mal 3:16); and once indicating the royal records of a foreign king in Esther (Esth 6:1).

⁷²⁵ As Childs points out, “the word in its active sense carries cultic connotations with it in almost every instance.” Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel*, 69. Cf. P. A. H. de Boer, *Gedenken und Gedächtnis in der Welt des Alten Testaments*, Franz-Delitsch-Vorlesungen (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1962), 24, 44, 63; Robert Martin-Achard, “Souvenir et memorial selon l’Ancien Testament,” *RTP* 15 (1965): 302–310.

⁷²⁶ See Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 126; Wilson, “The Qumran Psalms Scroll,” 457–458 on the concluding function of the postscript.

evidence for the liturgical and mnemonic use of this psalm collection, and the translation “commemoration” captures the active sense of the term most precisely.⁷²⁷

Overall, this evaluation of the sub-collections containing historical psalms in 11QPs^a has highlighted textual features that support communal recitation, combined with formal markers that indicate their purpose: the postscript appended to Ps 145 indicates its use “for commemoration,” and the explicit reflection of Ps 154 on the communal use of the historical psalms provide support to other, more speculative suppositions based on psalm form and order. To conclude this section, I turn to one other sphere of evidence to support these psalms’ frequent use within the community: text-critical variants that arise in contexts where the scribe is inscribing a psalm from memory or where performance situations have influenced such recall.

Signs of Oral-Written Variation

The traits listed above suggest that these psalms were *designed* for oral recitation; the textual variants present between the MT and 11QPs^a support their use as orally recited texts. Several traits of the Qumran psalter suggest a transmission of written documents undergirded by occasions of oral performance. In *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, David Carr outlines a model of “writing-supported” memory transmission. This model describes a middle ground between a completely oral transmission without the assistance of written technology and a completely written transmission in which scribes simply copy and re-copy archival manuscripts.

⁷²⁷ Evidence of Ps 145’s use at Qumran is undergirded by its apparent influence on the *hodayot* hymns. As Bonnie Kittel identifies, “Stanzas A and B [of Hodayot 11] for all their uniqueness in organization, bear many similarities to Psalm 145, which also stresses divine attributes. In fact, of the 48 different words used in Stanzas A and B, 25 also appear in Psalm 145, a higher proportion of vocabulary than the hymn shares with other psalms.” Bonnie Kittel, *The Hymns of Qumran*, SBLDS 50 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981), 117. This influence is not limited to sectarian compositions. Its influence in other sectors of Judaism is confirmed by the (albeit late) recommendation in the Talmud that Ps 145 be recited daily (B. Ber. 4b).

Signs of written transmission include extensive verbatim agreement and an emerging stabilization of the macro-collection, as one sees in the psalms. The addition of superscriptions as titular forms also suggests written preservation and transmission.⁷²⁸ But, as Carr points out, some of these ancient texts also evidence signs of variation “typical of memory-reconstructive processes.”⁷²⁹ These processes are betrayed by, among other things, the substitution of semantically similar words, the insertion of a common refrain, or the influence of another similar tradition.

In the case of the Masoretic Text and 11QPs^a, there are variants that might have arisen by means of copyists who are also familiar with a tradition of oral recitation and are inscribing parts of the psalm through memory: these include the substitution of a word or phrase of equivalent meaning for a given word or phrase; a new formation of a sentence with virtually the same meaning; shifts in order; the absence or presence of optional prepositions; and word-order variations that preserve meaning.⁷³⁰

As an example of this phenomenon in 11QPs^a, one can look at just a few of the “micro-variations” that are present in this scroll. In the two collections containing historical psalms analyzed above, several variants are likely to result from oral performance:

- 1) The opening of Ps 135⁷³¹ that appears in 11QPs^a XIV, 7 inverts the order of the first and third line of the tricola found in MT Ps 135:1. The resulting invocation to praise reads: “Give praise servants of the Lord/ Praise the name of the Lord/ Praise the Lord [*hllw 'bdy YHWH/ hllw 't šm YHWH/ hllw yh*].” A transformation of this nature does not change the content of the opening invocation, and it contains three standard phrases that, while difficult to confuse graphically, would be easily shifted

⁷²⁸ Note in particular the ubiquity of psalm superscriptions in the Septuagint Psalter.

⁷²⁹ Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 17.

⁷³⁰ Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible*, 25. See also on “memory variants” in psalm manuscripts more generally, Strawn, “Psalms,” 5n2.

⁷³¹ It is very likely that the MT Psalter preserves an older version of Ps 135. Not only does it feature the addition between Ps 135 vv. 6–7 discussed above, but 11QPs^a XIV, 12 also harmonizes MT’s *w’dnyrw* (Ps 135:5) to *w’lwhynw* in light of the following *’lwhym*. Allen also suggests that this could be a harmonization to *’lhyrw* in v. 2. See Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 286.

in a context where a scribe records the invocation from memory. Each line of the tricola contains a common and essentially interchangeable expression of praise.

- 2) In 11QPs^a XIV, 10, the semantic equivalent *hllw 't YHWH* replaces the MT's short form *hllw-yh* (Ps 135:3). This is an unlikely copying or aural error, but it could arise as the semantic equivalent if memorized and recorded. It is not a case of linguistic updating or general movement from long to short forms as the short form *hllw-yh* already appears in the first verse. Prepositional differences are also present in vv. 3b and 4b.⁷³²
- 3) 11QPs^a Ps 105 begins with expansion of the *hôdû* formula found in the MT: *hwdw lYHWH ky twb ky [l'wlm hsdw]* is added before the similar *hwdw* phrase that opens the psalm in the MT (*hwdw lYHWH qr'w bšmw*), thereby aligning this psalm with the formula opening Pss 118 and 136.⁷³³ The repeated appearance of this refrain in liturgical contexts suggests that it was a familiar piece of a communal liturgy, an easily remembered antiphonal response, particularly associated with the catalogue of the Lord's actions for Israel. Its frequent recitation also explains the synchronization of texts to the longer opening.⁷³⁴
- 4) The evidence from Ps 105:25–45 in 11QPs^a is unfortunately fragmentary, but from what is extant, it contains these few probable word substitutions characteristic of a text that is transmitted orally:⁷³⁵ the first term of v. 29 reads *šm* “to make” instead of the MT's *hpk*, “to change.” So too v. 37 reads *'mw* “his people,” instead of MT's “them.”

These transformations are innocuous in terms of meaning and are unlikely to arise from intentional editing or graphic confusion: they fit squarely into David Carr's categories of a variant produced from memory, the type that arises when a text is recited or when a text is frequently memorized.

⁷³² The concluding blessing formula in 11QPs^a XV, 4 contains the jussive *ybrkkh* as opposed to the MT's *brwk* (Ps 135:21). This is a possible memory variant. It is an unlikely graphical error as the two forms appear very differently. It also could arise, however, from the uncommon use of the preposition *m-* and the influence of other psalm lines which use the jussive formulation (cf. Ps 128:5).

⁷³³ Though Pss 106 and 107 are not extant in 11QPs^a, it is also the formula that opens these Psalms in the MT, creating a “*hôdû*-psalm grouping” that is here broken up.

⁷³⁴ This extended refrain also opens Ps 105 in 4QPs^c, a text that appears to be a member of the same textual family as 11QPs^a.

⁷³⁵ Psalm 105 also contains these variants, but they are not as characteristic of the specifically oral-written variety discussed here: V. 6: *'bdyw* vs *'bdw* (MT); *bhyrw* vs. *bhyryw*; v. 7 “*ky hw*” *Y[HWH...]* vs *hw*’ *YHWH 'elhyw* (MT); v. 9 *'m* *'brhm* vs *'t-* *'brhm* (MT).

One of the key components of understanding what texts are meant to *do* in a community is to trace patterns of textual transformation that provide clues as to their use. These clues include rhetorical features, such as the repetition of different forms, words, and images, but they also include, when available, the evidence provided by textual variants and manuscript features such as length, layout, alternative arrangements, and significant omissions or additions. Such traits are markers of a dynamic interaction with texts, and these markers provide support for readings based on literary features alone. From this analysis of the Qumran psalters and 11QPs^a, an emphasis on the communal importance of reciting history emerges, one that is facilitated by textual additions, encouraged by explicit rhetorical reflection, and evidenced by an accumulation of textual variants typical of texts that are frequently orally recited.

Conclusion

The Qumran psalms scrolls contribute to our understanding of the social role of the knowledge contained in the historical psalms, both through their formal characteristics and rhetoric and also through the manuscript evidence that they provide. The manuscripts point to a pattern of psalm use, in which single psalms and small liturgical collections circulated independently of larger psalm collections. This suggests that the psalms were being read and performed relatively widely and not only in long-form psalm collections. This manuscript evidence for the use of “portable” psalms scrolls then influences the reading of longer scrolls, which often appear to group psalms together based on liturgical considerations. As Mroczek argues, this evidence points away from reading the psalms primarily as a *book*, with a pre-determined order, and towards attending instead to patterns of use.⁷³⁶

⁷³⁶ Mroczek, “Psalms Unbound,” 41, and *passim*.

Turning to 11QPs^a, the most well-preserved witness of the historical psalms at Qumran, we see that historical recital plays a significant role in two of these liturgies. In both liturgies, the recital of the Lord's deeds, which is accomplished via the performance of the schematic "master narrative" that is reproduced with minor variations in the historical psalms and related texts, plays a central role. Surrounding psalms provide explicit rhetorical reflection on the community-identifying role of this knowledge. In the case of the first liturgy, 11QPs^a E I, 6–II, 16, major variants in Ps 147, which precedes Ps 105, and Ps 146, which follows, both highlight the *unique* knowledge given to Israel on the one hand and their responsibility to display it via recitation of the Lord's deeds on the other. These additions provide information concerning how Ps 105 was being used and read in one textual tradition at Qumran. As the conclusion to the second group, which opens with historical psalms 135–136, Ps 154 relates the retelling of Israel's history to the transmission of wisdom as one of the necessary pedagogical processes within the community. Taken together, these reflections provide support for an ongoing practice of historical recital at Qumran, facilitated by brief liturgies that feature historical psalms. The evidence suggests that the psalms were a key vehicle for Qumran's "functional memory," facilitating the process of remembering, by which key events are selected and framed for regular communal performance. The psalms facilitated the creation of a shared basis of knowledge through an education in this memory, a key facet in how the histories of Israel might have been consumed or taught within at least the Qumran sect. This ongoing use of psalms is particularly important to emphasize in light of continued emphasis on the formation of the psalter as a *book*, a category which, even if functional, would only have been functional for a select few.

While the use of 11QPs^a and the ordered psalms within its collection can only be demonstrated for the Qumran sect, in my final chapter, I will investigate another scroll from Qumran that likely reflects a practice of historical recital in broader Second Temple Judaism.

Dibre Hame'orot represents not only this broader practice but also the most extended example of the phenomenon of the communal recital of history. It comprises a complete seven-day communal liturgy centered around a recitation of the deeds of the Lord. Here we will also see the culmination of the rhetorical transformation of this recitation into a performance of atonement for the community and for their ancestors.

CHAPTER 6

4QDIBRE HAME'OROT (4Q504–506): HISTORY AS LITURGY

“The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.”
- G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*

Magna ista vis est memoriae
- Augustine, *Confessions*

Introduction

Dibre Hame'orot (4Q504–506; 4QDibHam) represents one of the most intriguing examples of what Pajunen identifies as a “general enthusiasm about the nation’s past and its study” in Second Temple Judaism.⁷³⁷ It comprises a seven-day liturgical cycle, in which each day contains a meditation on a segment of Israel’s history. Its language demonstrates the scripturally defined spirituality characteristic of the texts found at Qumran, drawing from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Psalms, just to name the most frequently cited texts.⁷³⁸ Its narrative shape, however, derives its essential outline from the practice of historical recital. Day one opens with the creation and fall of Adam, and each day thereafter progresses through the exodus, wilderness wandering, election of David, and the exile, before culminating in a Sabbath celebration of thanksgiving. Each day opens with a liturgical marker “Prayer for the first day, prayer for the second day, etc.,” and in this way, Israel’s history is inscribed into a weekly ritual. This structure suggests the prayer’s regular recitation, a way to confirm a shared base of knowledge through regular communal recitation.

What is most remarkable about this recital in terms of this dissertation, however, is the way in which historical knowledge itself is spoken about. Education in a shared history is a

⁷³⁷ Pajunen, *The Land to the Elect*, 327.

⁷³⁸ For a listing of scriptural texts referenced by 4QDibHam, see Jeremy Penner, “The Words of the Luminaries as a Meditation on the Exile,” *RevQ* 28 (2016), 180–181; for a discussion of the methods of scriptural interaction, see Esther G. Chazon, “Scripture and Prayer in ‘The Words of the Luminaries,’” in *Prayers that Cite Scripture*, ed. James L. Kugel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 25–41.

central aspect of social identity. 4QDibHam, however, describes the people's understanding of the deeds of the Lord as evidence of an understanding given to the community by God (4Q504 4 V, 4–5; 1 + 2 vi XIX, 3–11). The events narrated in this prayer are not new information themselves, but the people's "recounting" of the deeds of the Lord is described as evidence of a "strength of heart" bestowed by the divine upon the people (4Q504 1 + 2 vi XIX, 9–10).

Previously discussed texts such as Ps 154 present a strong identifying role for public participation in knowledge conferring rituals, and the trope of enjoining the people to "proclaim the deeds of the Lord" is familiar from the historical psalms (Ps 105:1–6; 1 Chron 16:8–13). In 4QDibHam, however, participation in the recital is itself a result and sign of a receipt of the Holy Spirit that results in a correct display of prayer (4Q504 1 + 2 v, 17–18). In this liturgy, the exile is understood as a temporal "break," a decisive shift in which a communal education, more effective than those in ages past, has been accomplished. The ability to understand and to proclaim a common memory provides evidence of a divine action within the community. Furthermore, the display of this knowledge, which appears to be conferred by the Holy Spirit (cf. Neh 9:20), is also a mark of the people's effective penitence: they cite their response to exile as a reason for which the Lord should atone for both their iniquities and the iniquities of their fathers.

I suggest that 4QDibHam provides valuable insight into two key areas concerning the role of historical recital in Second Temple Judaism. Firstly, 4QDibHam presents another source of evidence for the ongoing practice of reciting history in liturgy. While much of the biblical evidence *narrates* liturgical events, ultimately these "events" are literary creations, prayers that perform a distinctive literary function with only speculative ties to actual regular liturgical practice. *Dibre Hame'orot*, on the other hand, provides us with an independent manuscript with clear liturgical directives that exists in multiple copies (see below, "Dating, Manuscripts, and Sectarian Status"). This manuscript evidence contributes to an argument for the ongoing

influence of historical recital on the development of social and cultic practices in the Second Temple period.

Secondly, this set of prayers displays three key rhetorical developments in its retelling of history. There is an appeal to what Mary Douglas calls “naturalization:”⁷³⁹ a stabilizing principle whereby a social structure locates an analogy to itself in the natural world. The pattern of human action that dominates the recital is rooted in its natural “origins,” the first man Adam. This marks a significant development within the historical recitals. The historical recitals that I have considered thus far in this study refer to the divine act of creation but not to the creation of the first humans. Secondly, history is read as a source of effective patterns. This reading strategy itself is not a development: as Newsom has observed, “schematic narratives that recount the major events in history, often... highlight the ‘rhyming’ quality of history.”⁷⁴⁰ The task of interpreting 4QDibHam, however, requires identification of *what* patterns introduce and organize the rhyme, and in what ways the later iterations are related to the first instance of the pattern. In the course of my analysis I will identify the roles of Adam, Moses, and the wilderness as historical figures and sites that ground these patterns. The audience of 4QDibHam is then encouraged to relate to these paradigmatic individuals in varying ways. The exact function of these paradigms and their relation to later iterations of the pattern vary and move beyond the functions of historical patterns identified in previous recitals. Tracing the relationship of the praying generation to its history demonstrates the ways in which history can be used to ground social realities. Jonas Grethlein, whose work was introduced in chapter 1 of this dissertation, has constructed a simple heuristic framework that will provide the basic vocabulary with which to describe these relationships. He identifies three general commemorative strategies to “bridge the

⁷³⁹ Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 45–48.

⁷⁴⁰ Newsom, “Rhyme and Reason,” 215.

gap between past expectations and experiences in order to be able to project new expectations onto the future”⁷⁴¹: continuity, regularity, and development. While in many ways, the praying people identify patterns for action in their predecessors, they will also identify ways in which they surpass these preceding generations. While there is a process of scriptural exegesis at work that has been thoroughly explored by various commentators, there has been less work done on the force of discerned historical paradigms and the construction of a careful set of relations to these representative figures. Adam, as the first man, and Moses, as the representative intercessor, provide selective filters through which other related episodes are read and through which the present generation of Israelites will translate their current experience of God and their understanding of their own effective practice of prayer. Finally, 4QDibHam reflects on the nature of historical recital itself as an activity. Historical knowledge is not only something to be possessed or taught but is also evidence of an epistemological transformation in the present generation. Through the use and development of both Adam and Moses as paradigms, 4QDibHam constructs a drama of effective vs. ineffective knowledge that culminates in an assertion of the present community’s role to atone for the sins of the past. *Dibre Hame’orot* not only establishes a common “functional memory” through the strategy of regular communal recital but also christens the act of historical recital itself as a demonstration of the effective transformation that has taken place in those who recite it.

⁷⁴¹ Grethlein, *The Greeks and Their Past*, 9.

Introduction to the Text

Dating, Manuscripts, and Sectarian Status

Three copies of 4QDibHam have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, copied across at least two centuries. The earliest and most complete copy (4Q504) has been dated, paleographically and based on literary dependence, to the mid-second century BCE.⁷⁴² The second and most fragmentary text, 4Q505, found together with a copy of the *Festival Prayers* and written in a late Hasmonean hand, was also identified by Baillet as a copy of 4QDibHam.⁷⁴³ The latest copy, 4Q506, was found on the verso of the same papyrus and has been dated by Baillet to the middle of the first century CE. The dating of 4Q504 to the mid-second century BCE, combined with its lack of distinctive sectarian terminology (considered below), indicates the pre-Qumranic origin of the text.⁷⁴⁴ This provenance is significant, for it indicates that the text originated in a non-sectarian milieu before its adoption for use by the sectarians.

⁷⁴² Maurice Baillet, *Qumran Grotte 4 III (4Q482–4Q520)* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 137; Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 61. As Chazon notes, this early dating has occasionally been used to argue for a pre-Qumranic origin, though, strictly speaking, the lower limit for this earliest copy would place the text within the earliest settlement phase at Qumran. It is not then, by itself, enough evidence to argue for a non-sectarian authorship of this piece. See Esther G. Chazon, “Is Divre Ha-Me’orot a Sectarian Prayer?” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research*, ed. Devorah Dimant and Uriel Rappaport (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 8–9. Cf. the assessment of Roland de Vaux that phase 1B was settled during the time of Alexander Yannai in 103–76 BCE and 1A shortly before that. Roland de Vaux, *Archeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 4–19. More recently, de Vaux’s Period 1A has come under fire. See Jodi Magness, *The Archeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, SDSSRL (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 47–69, esp. 63. Cf. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 170.

⁷⁴³ Baillet, *Qumran Grotte 4 III (4Q482–4Q520)*, 137, 168, 170. Florentino Garcia Martinez and Daniel Falk criticized this identification, arguing that the 4Q505 and 4Q509 should be read together as a single copy of the *Festival Prayers*. See Florentino Garcia Martinez, “Review of Maurice Baillet, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert VII. Qumran Grotte 4 III (4Q482–4Q520)*,” *JSJ* 15 (1984): 161–162; Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 60. Cf. James R. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, ECDSS 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 240. Chazon has recently defended the original assessment of Baillet. See Esther G. Chazon, “The Classification of 4Q505: Daily or Festival Prayers,” in *Go Out and Study the Land (Judges 18:2): Archaeological, Historical, and Textual Studies in Honor of Hanan Eshel*, ed. Aren M. Maeir, Jodi Magness, and Lawrence H. Schiffman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 23–34.

⁷⁴⁴ Chazon presents four major criteria for determining whether or not 4QDibHam is a sectarian prayer: 1) whether or not it presents features of a distinct scribal school; 2) evidence presented by

While 4QDibHam contains a liturgy that likely originated outside of Qumran, all copies found at Qumran are written in a Qumran orthography and the oldest and most well-preserved copy (4Q504) displays typical features of the Qumran scribal school: the presence of scribal marks, the use of initial-medial letters in final position and the use of particular materials.⁷⁴⁵ These points of data are, of course, consistent with a text that was copied at Qumran but do not necessarily indicate that its autograph originated with the Qumran sect.

The non-sectarian origin of the text is further supported by its language, which evinces a pan-Israelite rhetorical stance.⁷⁴⁶ The “we” speakers throughout the prayer do not refer to any internal division within Israel; the “other” is the nations, from which Israel dwells decidedly apart.⁷⁴⁷ There is also no mention of sectarian history, such as one finds in the Damascus Document (e.g, CD 1, 1–2, 1): while the prayer presents perhaps the most extended historical recital extant in Second Temple Judaism, the final section moves from the exile directly to the praying community. *Dibre Hame'orot* does not appeal to polemical sectarian rhetoric that sets

paleographical dating; 3) identity with a non-sectarian text; 4) assessment of its terminology and ideas (“Is Divre Ha-Me'orot a Sectarian Prayer?” 4).

⁷⁴⁵ Emanuel Tov, “The Biblical Scrolls Found in the Judean Desert and Their Contribution to Textual Criticism,” *JJS* 39 (1988): 5–37.

⁷⁴⁶ While Chazon initially viewed the question of the scroll’s use of sectarian terminology as inconclusive, she has recently confirmed that its pan-Israelite suggests its pre-Qumranic origin. Esther G. Chazon, “Prayer and Identity in Varying Contexts: The Case of the *Words of the Luminaries*,” *JSJ* 46 (2015): 484–511. For her earlier view see Chazon, “Is Divre Ha-Me'orot a Sectarian Prayer,” 4; Cf. Eileen M. Schuller, “Prayers and Psalms from the Pre-Maccabean Period,” *DSD* 13 (2006), 210–311. M. R. Lehmann argues, based on significant parallels, that 4QDibHam corresponds to an early version of the supplicatory prayer known as the *Tahanun* (“A Re-interpretation of 4Q Dibre Ham-Me'oroth,” *RevQ* 5 (1964): 106–110). His understanding has largely been critiqued however: there is no conclusive evidence for such an early Tahanun liturgy and, as Chazon points out, the parallels adduced only demonstrate common reliance on biblical prayers and stock liturgical formulae. See Chazon, “Is Divre Ha-Me'orot a Sectarian Prayer?” 10; cf. Lawrence H. Schiffman, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Early History of Jewish Liturgy,” in *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. I. Levine (Philadelphia: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1987), 33–48; Moshe Weinfeld, “Prayer and Liturgical Practice in the Qumran Sect,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research*, ed. Devorah Dimant and Uriel Rappaport (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 241–258.

⁷⁴⁷ Chazon, “Prayer and Identity,” 488–489.

apart the praying community from the larger community of Israel.⁷⁴⁸ Arnold adds that the petitionary nature of the prayers, rare among the Qumran community, is further evidence that the liturgy originated outside of the sect.⁷⁴⁹ Overall, the lack of explicitly sectarian rhetoric along with the text's probable (though borderline) early dating tips the balance in favor of identifying 4Q504 as a pre-Qumranic, and therefore non-sectarian, text that was nevertheless preserved by the community.⁷⁵⁰ The fact that the manuscripts found at Qumran are separated by almost two centuries does suggest a somewhat consistent tradition of use.⁷⁵¹ As Davila observes, it was a text likely "adopted by the sectarians and used by them for a very long time."⁷⁵²

Liturgical Directives

While we only have access to a text and not records of practice, several pieces of evidence point to the community's liturgical appropriation of 4QDibHam.⁷⁵³ The text assigns titles that relate each prayer to a specific day (e.g., "Praises on the Sabbath day") and preserves a closing responsive benediction of "Amen, Amen" after the prayer for each day. The prayer is not presented as an extemporaneous utterance but as part of the religious system of the community,

⁷⁴⁸ As discussed in the previous chapter on 11QPs^a, Carol A. Newsom has helpfully distinguished between several different types of sectarian status for a text: sectarian *composition* is only one of the ways in which a text might be considered sectarian. Another is sectarian reception or use. Newsom, "Sectually Explicit Literature, 172–179. Newsom argues, based primarily on rhetorical criteria, that neither 4QDibHam, nor the related Daily Prayers show evidence of sectarian authorship or a particular affinity with theological themes characteristic of the Qumran community (Newsom, "Sectually Explicit Literature," 171).

⁷⁴⁹ Russell C. D. Arnold, *The Social Role of Liturgy in the Religion of the Qumran Community* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 131.

⁷⁵⁰ See Chazon, "Prayer and Identity," 499–511, for a careful analysis of how these non-sectarian themes might have been read by the sectarians.

⁷⁵¹ Arnold, *Social Role of Liturgy*, 131. For an argument defending 4Q505 as a copy of 4QDibHam, see Chazon, "The Classification of 4Q505," 23–33 Cf. n. 746 above.

⁷⁵² Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 242.

⁷⁵³ Esther G. Chazon, "4QDibHam: Liturgy or Literature?" *RevQ* 15 (1992): 450–451.

marking out a week with a set practice of daily prayer.⁷⁵⁴ This structure, along with the consistent use of first person plural pronouns, suggests the text was designed for communal recitation.⁷⁵⁵ Such an intention within the text does not, of course, mean that it was necessarily used in this way, but it does indicate that the text was designed to be enacted within such a communal performance.

Each day follows a consistent structure, beginning with the invocation “Remember, Lord” followed by a historical retrospective and a final petition. Portions of four days are meaningfully extant: the first day begins with the creation of Adam and ends with the sojourn in the wilderness; the fourth day continues to describe the wilderness sojourn and describes the revelation at Horeb; the fifth day describes the election of Jerusalem and David; and the sixth day contains a description of the exile and the people’s response before a concluding Sabbath worship on the seventh day. The liturgy’s primary structure is a unified chronological progression. *Dibre Hame’orot* organizes this material into a prescribed schedule of recitation; while textual directives are minimal, events from Israel’s history are tied to a weekly cycle, designed to culminate in Sabbath worship. By inscribing an extended historical summary onto the weekly cycle, lived time can become circumscribed by a larger story: to use Ricoeur’s words, the week becomes effectively *emplotted*, a historical progression from creation to praise that determines the rhythm of the week.⁷⁵⁶ Daniel Falk has noted a correspondence between the topic of each day’s assigned prayer and several other liturgical celebrations and suggested a potential correlation between the content of the prayer and existing religious festivals which fall on

⁷⁵⁴ Falk also considers the texts to be genetically linked to the *Festival Prayers*, and therefore considers the four extant manuscripts of that text to support the likely use of 4QDibHam as part of the liturgical life of the community (Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 87) See also Chazon, “4QDibHam,” 447–455.

⁷⁵⁵ Chazon, “Prayer and Identity,” 488.

⁷⁵⁶ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 66–67.

particular days of the week.⁷⁵⁷ If Falk is correct, this liturgy does not merely correlate particular events in Israel's history to particular days in a week, but relates these events to dates that are significant within the entire liturgical year.

History as a Source of Paradigms

Donald Polkinghorne has identified a phenomenon in his analysis of the narrativization of memory that he calls “sharpening,” whereby key episodes of a familiar story are elaborated or exaggerated in order to provide a focusing paradigm for the plot.⁷⁵⁸ Many of the episodes in 4QDibHam are familiar from the previous historical recitals analyzed in the preceding chapters of this dissertation, and the language is dominated throughout by both adapted and verbatim scriptural quotations. Yet three particular episodes have been “sharpened,” both elaborated and exaggerated, to function as focusing paradigms through which the community understands themselves and the purpose of their narratively structured prayer: the creation of Adam, the sojourn in the wilderness, and the intercession of Moses.

Liturgy, Natural Analogy, and the First Human

Dibre Hame'orot both participates in the familiar practice of reciting an abbreviated résumé of historical events familiar from Israel's scripture and also introduces new strategies for

⁷⁵⁷ Daniel K. Falk, “Liturgical Progression and the Experience of Transformation in Prayers from Qumran,” *DSD* 22 (2015): 271. Here he agrees with Annie Jaubert's proposal that a key feature of the 364-day calendar is to align annual and historical festivals to the “rhythm of a liturgical cycle.” See Annie Jaubert, *The Date of the Last Supper*, trans. I. Rafferty (Staten Island, NY: Alba, 1965), 30; cf. summary in James C. VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time* (London: Routledge, 1998), 54–56. Chazon disagrees, however, critiquing the original attempt by Baillet to find a correlation between the calendar of *Jubilees* and the prayers in 4QDibHam (Chazon, “4QDibHam,” 450; cf. Baillet, “Un Recueil liturgique de Qumran, grotte 4,” 247–250.)

⁷⁵⁸ Donald Polkinghorne, “Narrative Psychology and Historical Consciousness: Relationships and Perspectives,” in *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness*, ed. Jürgen Straub (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 9.

legitimizing its function within society. The first strategy is the expanded role of analogy with the natural world, represented firstly by the prominent role given to aligning the recital of particular historical events to the temporal rhythms of the day and week,⁷⁵⁹ and secondly, an appeal to natural origins, in this case, the primacy given to the “first human,” Adam.⁷⁶⁰ While previous historical recitals reference creation to establish an insight into *divine* character (Ps 136:5–9; Neh 9:6) or appeal to Israel’s *national* origins in order to strengthen group cohesion (Ps 105:1–6), these previous revivals do not appeal to the creation of the first human. The only potential reference to an Adam narrative in the Masoretic texts outside of the narratives in Gen 1–11 are the references in Hos 6:7 and 1 Chron 5:1 (and, possibly, Job 31:33).⁷⁶¹ Hosea 6:7 refers to Adam as a comparative example, “*like Adam (k’dm)*, they transgressed the covenant,” and thereby indicates that there was enough knowledge about an Adam figure that he could function as a rhetorical example at the point at which the text was written. Here in 4QDibHam, however, Adam becomes representative of the primeval ancestor in an account clearly based on Gen 2 and comprises the first character in a series of patterned historical narratives concerning knowledge, glory, and election.

⁷⁵⁹ The title “*Dibre Hame’orot*” (“Words of the Luminaries”) proves enigmatic. In the Hebrew Bible, the term “*mā’ôr*” (“luminary”), signifies the heavenly bodies that regulate the times and the seasons (Gen 1:14–16; Ps 74:16; Ezek 32:8; cf. 1QS X, 3). In the Qumran literature it also assumes the designation of angels (1QM X, 12; 1QH^a 9, 13; 13, 34). Chazon has interpreted this phrase to indicate that the words are to be recited at the times marked by celestial luminaries. Esther G. Chazon, “*Dibre Hamme’orot: Prayer for the Sixth Day (4Q504 1–2 v–vi)*,” in *Prayer from Alexander to Constantine: A Critical Anthology*, ed. M. Kiley (London: Routledge, 1997), 24. The construct “*dibrê*” most often signifies words spoken by a figure or figures.

⁷⁶⁰ *Dibre Hame’orot* is not the first Second Temple text to be interested in Adam, but it is one of the first extant historical summaries to begin with his creation. For the development of interest in Adam in the Second Temple period, see John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: From Sirach to 2 Baruch*, JSPSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), and discussion below.

⁷⁶¹ For a discussion of the translation of Job 31:33, see Manfred Oeming, “To Be Adam or Not to Be Adam: The Hidden Fundamental Anthropological Discourse Revealed in an Intertextual Reading of *’dm* in Job and Genesis,” in *Reading Job Intertextually*, ed. Katherine Dell and Will Kynes (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 27.

By beginning with Adam, the historical recital begins with an appeal to human origins as a focusing paradigm. The beginning of the recital corresponds to the beginning of *time*. The “order of things” as established at their origin provides a particularly powerful basis for grounding a later and derivative order. This rhetorical strategy can serve to ground an artificially composed convention (such as a narrative pattern) in the natural order at its very inception. Mary Douglas describes the powerful role of natural analogy in establishing popular consent to ideologies in her book *How Institutions Think*. She observes that, “to acquire legitimacy, every kind of institution needs a formula that founds its rightness in reason and in nature... for a convention to turn into a legitimate institution it needs a parallel cognitive convention to sustain it.”⁷⁶² These cognitive conventions are analogical, constructing a mirror for a set of artificial social relations in the physical or supernatural world or in eternity, “anywhere,” Douglas says, “so long as it is not seen as a socially contrived arrangement.”⁷⁶³ What Douglas derives from her work in anthropology has been put another way by Kenneth Burke in his discussion of rhetoric. The linguistic accident whereby the logically prior is expressed in the temporally prior also lends to the origin the force of a cause. As Burke states, the “*logical* idea of a thing’s essence can be translated into a temporal or narrative equivalent by statement in terms of the thing’s source or beginnings.”⁷⁶⁴ To ground a pattern “in the beginning” suggests (though does not necessarily need to prove) that such a pattern lies at the center of the thing, and is therefore viable and replicable, akin to Douglas’s socially determinative analogy.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶² Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, 45.

⁷⁶³ Douglas, *How Institutions Think*, 48.

⁷⁶⁴ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969 [1950]), 13; cf. Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 430–440.

⁷⁶⁵ This is very similar to the relatively contemporary originary figures that we see in Greek rhetoric: the explanatory power of an originary figure makes various visions of origin a significant source for rhetorical topoi. Cf. Isocrates, *Panathenaicus*, 120; *Panegyricus*, 25; Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates* 83; Grethlein, *The Greeks and Their Past*, 115.

The establishment of a liturgical cycle of prayers is not unique to 4QDibHam nor is the connection of patterns of prayer to a particular calendar that is understood to have cosmic significance.⁷⁶⁶ What is unique about the presentation of 4QDibHam is its concomitant ritualization of time and of the material of Israel's history. To extend the pattern laid out in Israel's historical recitals backwards into the very first created person also serves to naturalize and therefore authorize via analogy this discourse in a profound way: as it was in the beginning, so also it is now.

Adam in *Dibre Hame'orot*

The discussion of Adam in 4QDibHam corresponds to a marked interest in the first man emerging more generally in Second Temple Judaism.⁷⁶⁷ As John Levison has observed, the increase in re-interpretations of an Adam figure in Second Temple texts requires a careful assessment of the way in which each author's *tendenz* determines the reading of common material.⁷⁶⁸ One should not search for clues to a monolithic Adam "mythology" or a unifying

⁷⁶⁶ See Jaubert, *The Date of the Last Supper*, 30; VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 54–56. Rob Kugler calls this the "hegemony" of ritual at Qumran. See Rob Kugler, "Making All Experience Religious: The Hegemony of Ritual at Qumran," *JSJ* 33 (2002): 131–152. Kugler uses Catherine Bell's paradigm of ritual in which the intensification of existing rituals and the creation of new ones creates a higher "ritual density" than the fellow religionists. See Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 91–137. This emerges out of a climate of religious conflict, serving to differentiate the group as "more religious" than other competing groups. The Qumran community made large portions of their experience "religious," including their experience of time, through the use of festal calendars and programs of daily prayer.

⁷⁶⁷ See, for example, 1QS 4:22–23; 1QH^a 4:27; 4Q265 7 ii, 11; 4Q269; 4Q303 9; 4Q381 I, 3–12. Gary Anderson notes that 4QDibHam contains one of the most interesting references to Adam among the Dead Sea Scrolls in terms of his position at the head of a weekly liturgy: "thus the fall of Adam would have been read in a weekly fashion as a part of this liturgy, and it certainly would have become a central *topos* in the imagination of those who recited the prayer" (Gary A. Anderson, "Adam," ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam, 2 vols., vol. 1, *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). 7–9. Cf. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism*, *passim*. This interest is potentially invigorated by a corresponding interest in origins in Hellenism more broadly..

⁷⁶⁸ Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism*, 13–14, and *passim*.

motif such as “the exalted Adam”⁷⁶⁹ but should instead recognize the force of Adam in each case as a grounding rhetorical *topos*, a powerful paradigm supported by the determinative force of origin. In 4QDibHam, Adam becomes both the original model of a historical pattern that will be re-enacted and of a lost greatness that might be regained.

4Q504 8 I, 1–15⁷⁷⁰

1 [תפלה ליום הראישון זכור] אד[ו]נ[י] כיא מעמ[
 2 [...]] קתנו ואתה חי עול[מים]
 3 [...]] נפלאות מקדם ונוראות[משנות עולמים
 4 [...]] אדם א[בינו יצרתה בדמות כבוד] כה
 5 [...]] נשמת חיים נ[פחתה באפו ובינה ודעת] מלאתה אותו
 6 [...]] בג[ן עדן אשר נטעתה המשלח] ה אותו
 7 [...]] ולתהלך בארץ כבוד א.
 8 [...]] א שמר ותקם עליו לבלתי ס[ור
 9 [...]] בשר הואה ולעפר ה[
 10 [...]] תו vacat ואתה ידעתה .
 11 [...]] לדורות עולם
 12 [...]] אל חי וידכה
 13 [...]] האדם בדרכי
 14 [...]] למלוא את הארץ ח[מס ולשפוך] דם נקי
 15 [...]] [...]]

4Q504 8 I, 1–15

Introduction⁷⁷¹

1 [Prayer for the first day. Remem]ber, Lord, that ... [...]
 2 [...]] ... us. And you, who lives for ev[er, ...]
 3 You have done] wonders of old, and awesome deeds [long ago.

Historical Prologue

4] You formed [Adam,] our [fa]ther, in the image of [your] glory;
 5 the breath of life] you [br]eathed into his nostrils, [and filled him] with understanding and knowledge.[
 6 [...] Y[ou] set him to rule [over the gar]den of Eden that you had planted.[
 7 [...]and to walk about in a land of glory [

⁷⁶⁹ Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism*, 160.

⁷⁷⁰ Transcription of text mostly follows that found in “4Q504 (4QDibHam^a),” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader, Volume 5, Poetic and Liturgical Texts*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 491–511.

⁷⁷¹ Structure adopted from Esther G. Chazon, “‘Words of the Luminaries’ (4QDibHam): A Liturgical Document from Qumran and Its Implications” (Ph.D diss., Hebrew University, 1991).

8 [...]he guarded it. You impressed upon him not to turn as[ide]
 9 [...]flesh is he, and to dust h[e]
 10 [...]vacat And it is you who knows [
 11 [...]for everlasting generations [
 12 [...]the living God, and your hand[
 13 [...]humanity in the ways of[
 14to fill with vi]olence and to she[d innocent blood
 15 [...] ... [...] ⁷⁷²

The rhetorical force of Adam as the “original human” is a focusing technique through which the rest of the narrative will be viewed. The rare reference to Adam as *our father* (‘bynw; 4Q504 8 I, 4), a title usually reserved for previous generations of Israelites, stretching back only so far as Abraham (cf. Neh 9:9, 16, 23), serves to telescope primeval history into an earthly temporal register and to re-focus a potentially universal message to one that concerns a particular people (see below, comparing Ben Sira.) It also serves to bolster the natural analogy of creation through the equally natural analogy of procreation by aligning historical events with the linking power of genealogy. The Adamic episode presents the first of a series of *tragic* figures: he is given glory in both form (“image of your glory”; 4Q504 8 I, 4) and function (“you set him to rule over the garden of Eden that you had planted ... and to walk about in a land of glory”; 4Q504 8 I, 6–7), knowledge (“the breath of life you breathed into his nostrils and filled him with understanding and knowledge”; 4Q504 8 I, 5), and the prototype of divine law (“you impressed upon him not to turn aside”; 4Q504 8 I, 8). But the first man falls precipitously, as indicated by the reference to mortality (“flesh is he, and to dust he...”; 4Q504 8 I, 9) and the descent into

⁷⁷² Unfortunately, the exact role of the flood narrative within this work is unclear due to its fragmentary nature. Devorah Dimant has analyzed other texts preserved at Qumran that link the flood narratives with the patriarchs, however, and notes that the patriarchs, and eventually the Israelite remnant are viewed as the “righteous replacement for the wicked antediluvian humans and the sinful postdiluvian offspring of Noah.” See Devorah Dimant, “The Flood as a Preamble to the Lives of the Patriarchs: The Perspective of Qumran Hebrew Texts,” in *Rewriting and Interpreting the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Devorah Dimant and Reinhard Kratz (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 130.

violence and brutality in the span of a few lines (“to fill the earth with violence and to shed innocent blood...”; 4Q504 8 I, 14, cf. Gen 6:11; Ezek 8:17).⁷⁷³ Thus, in the careful rhetoric of the course of this prayer, the penitents will both identify themselves with this “first of their fathers,” grounding an ongoing pattern in the divine-human relationship modeled in the garden, but will also carefully differentiate the space between themselves and the tragic patriarch. I will outline the key aspects of Adam’s description in 4QDibHam below and then demonstrate how he grounds a pattern against which following generations will be compared and contrasted.

“Image of Your Glory”

The text describes Adam as being “formed... in the image of your glory” (*yšrth bdmwt kbwd[kh]*), a description that conflates language from both biblical creation accounts in Gen 1 and 2 and augments this description with speculation derived from the prophetic and extra-biblical wisdom traditions. Genesis 2:7 refers to the Lord’s *forming* of Adam, using *√yšr*⁷⁷⁴ while Gen 1:26 reports that humanity is formed in the divine “image according to our likeness” (*bšlmnw kdmwtnw*). The term here is the second one, *dmwt* (“likeness”), further specified with a reference to the Lord’s glory. The term *dmwt* does not occur to describe human creation outside of Gen 1 in the MT, and its appearance here is remarkable in its qualification as an image of the Lord’s “glory,” a term that does not occur in Gen 1. The collocation of *dmwt* with the Lord’s *kbwd*

⁷⁷³ This is very likely an allusion to the wickedness in the land that preceded the flood. For a conservative discussion of this fragment see Garcia Martinez, “Interpretations of the Flood in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Interpretations of the Flood*, ed. Garcia Martinez and G. P. Luttikhuisen (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 93; Moshe Bernstein, “Noah and the Flood at Qumran,” in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls*: (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 221–222; in response to Esther G. Chazon, “The Creation and Fall of Adam in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Judith Frishman and Lucas Van Rompay (Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 15–16.

⁷⁷⁴ The very distinctive term used to describe God’s act of creation in Genesis 1, *√br*, will appear later to describe the “creation” of Israel as a nation (4Q504 1 + 2 iii XVI, 5).

(“glory”) is often understood as a reference to Ezek 1:26–28, where the glory of God appears in the likeness of a human form.⁷⁷⁵ This collocation is likely an example of implicit exegesis, by which the question of the nature of Adam’s likeness and image is answered by reference to the vision in Ezekiel.⁷⁷⁶

What, then, is the significance of this poetically expanded rendition of the figure of Adam in this liturgy? Amidst speculation on this rightly fascinating text, Van Kooten’s brief but insightful consideration of “Adam’s glory” in 4Q504 pursues the correct trajectory by considering the contextual use of glory in the rest of the work before comparing it to other comparable Dead Sea texts.⁷⁷⁷ The concept of “glory” in this text is related not only to Adam and his pre-lapsarian state but is the first introduction to a *topos* that re-appears throughout the composition in various relations to later generations of Israelites. Van Kooten concludes from these references (1–2 III, 4; 1–2 IV, 8–9; 3 II, 6, 10–11; for a discussion of these see below) that the author’s reference to God’s initial creation of humanity in the likeness of God’s glory is “the background against which the present glory of the community is to be understood.”⁷⁷⁸ He does

⁷⁷⁵ Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 42 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 93; Baillet, *Qumran Grotte 4 III (4Q482–4Q520)*, 162–163. Other Qumran texts also use the term *dmwt* to approximate heavenly visions. See in particular 4Q405 14–15 I, 2, 5, 7; 20 II–22, 10; 23 II 9.

⁷⁷⁶ On the practice of implicit exegesis in Jewish scriptural interpretation, see Lidija Novakovic, “The Scriptures and Scriptural Interpretation,” in *The World of the New Testament: Cultural, Social and Historical Contexts*, ed. Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 88–89.

⁷⁷⁷ Geurt Hendrik Van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 15–22.

⁷⁷⁸ Van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology in Context*, 17. Van Kooten (16) expresses the content of this passage in the most general terms when he notes that “the notions of man’s creation in the image and after the likeness of God (Gen 1) and God’s apparition in the likeness of man (Ezek 1) both express the idea that man and God are related.” It is the nature of this relation, however, that is under debate. Nicholas Meyer proposes that the fashioning of Adam in the likeness of God’s glory merely suggests that Adam is a “copy” and that this “glory” is not a trait that can be lost. Nicholas A. Meyer, “Adam’s Dust and Adam’s Glory: Rethinking Anthropogony and Theology in the Hodayot and the Letters of Paul” (McMaster University, 2013), 84n151. This is contra Fletcher-Louis’ more radical claim, as part of his

not go so far as Fletcher-Louis who equates this divine glory bestowed upon Adam with an *ontological* affinity between the human and the divine,⁷⁷⁹ but he does posit that the community hopes for a restoration of primordial glory in their own time. Van Kooten compares this text to other Qumran texts that refer to the “glory of Adam” as a state to be renewed for the Qumran community: “4Q504 works on the assumption that man’s present divine glory within the community is the restoration of what was already fully available to Adam.”⁷⁸⁰

The discursive field within which Van Kooten formulates his questions partially determines the direction of his focus on Adam’s glory and the restoration of the image of God. He is reading this text as part of a tradition that will come to emphasize the “image of God” as a primary category of divine-human relation (see the title of his book: *Paul’s Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity*.) Esther Chazon, reading this text through the genealogy of penitential prayers, understands this text as dominated by the motif of sin and its resulting punishment.⁷⁸¹ Instead of emphasizing the pattern of a glorified Adam whose glory will be restored to Israel in the end times, Chazon understands the Adam episode as primarily establishing a historical pattern of human sin and divine judgment, immediately confirmed by the fragmentary reference to antediluvian sin (4Q504 8 I, 14).⁷⁸²

larger thesis regarding divine anthropology, that Adam’s “glory” is indicative of a pre-lapsarian divine or angelic humanity, to which the Qumran community also aspired. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, xii, 12, 92–93. James Davila also associates this tradition with other early Jewish traditions regarding the loss of a formerly possessed “glory of God” (3 *Apoc. Bar.* 4:16; Gk.). Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 245.

⁷⁷⁹ Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 94.

⁷⁸⁰ Van Kooten, *Paul’s Anthropology in Context*, 19.

⁷⁸¹ Chazon, “The Creation and Fall of Adam,” 14–16; cf. Chazon, “The Words of the Luminaries and Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Times,” in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 2: The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 177–186.

⁷⁸² Chazon, “The Creation and Fall of Adam,” 14–16.

It is tempting, of course, to read the presentation of Adam within one of these two traditions, the tradition of penitential prayer, understood as a genre based off of the opposition of human sin and divine righteousness, or the tradition of a glorified humanity (*Urzeit=Endzeit*). But one should resist this temptation in exchange for a keen sense of the gradations of difference between the presentation in 4QDibHam and both of the above presented options. The rhetorical power of the figure of Adam lies in between these two stated extremes, Adam as the “original sinner” and Adam as the “original saint.” Adam is presented in some ways as an ideal, bestowed with divine knowledge and formed in the likeness of the glory of God. But as Chazon notes, his is also the first of a tale of sin and failure, a failure repeated in later generations but to which the current generation will not be subject. The representation of Adam is part of, but not the entirety of, the envisioned restoration. Adam also functions as a prototype whose failure will serve to foreground the advancement of the current generations who surpass Adam in his understanding.

“[And Filled Him] with Understanding and Knowledge”

The next key feature of the paradigm is the presentation of an original grant of divine knowledge. The creation of Adam in the likeness of God’s glory is immediately associated with the gift of “knowledge” and “understanding” that accompanies his invigoration (4Q504 8 I, 5). The connection between the breath of life (*nšmt hyym*) and understanding is familiar to strands of wisdom theology (cf. Job 32:8), but the extra-biblical motif of Adam’s creation with knowledge develops in Second Temple Judaism (Cf. *Ben Sira* 17:6). Ultimately, within 4QDibHam, Adam presents the first example of a tension between effective and ineffective knowledge. Though given knowledge and understanding, Adam will still sin; so too the fathers, who receive the Torah and a “heart to know,” will likewise be found wanting in the attributes necessary to respond correctly to God (4Q504 7 + 18 XII, 17–20).

Other Second Temple texts also use Adam as a generative site for meditation on the relationship of knowledge to moral culpability. For Ben Sira, knowledge is the necessary precondition for right action (16:24–17:14).⁷⁸³ The faculties of speech, sight, hearing, knowledge, and understanding were bestowed upon humanity at the point of their creation.⁷⁸⁴ These faculties, furthermore, undergird the human capacity to comprehend good and evil (17:7).⁷⁸⁵ Even the prerequisite for the Jews’ acceptance of the law is grounded in the innate capability for knowledge given to humans at creation. Adam’s first knowledge is understood by Ben Sira to be a universal knowledge that offers to humanity as a whole the ability to view creation correctly, if they so choose, resulting in the praise of God.⁷⁸⁶

Similarly, 4QInstruction grounds its epistemological division of humanity in an interpretation of Gen 1–3. In both wisdom texts, the innate mental and moral capabilities of humans are bestowed at creation. In Ben Sira’s writings, these inclinations are universal; in 4QInstruction, God grants to one group “meditation” (*hgwy*) and denies this revelation to another group on the grounds that they do not “know the difference between good and evil” (4Q417 1 I,

⁷⁸³ Cf. Shane Berg, “Ben Sira, the Genesis Creation Accounts, and the Knowledge of God’s Will,” *JBL* 132 (2013): 144.

⁷⁸⁴ According to Miryam T. Brand, “Ben Sira may also be responding to a Judean development based on broader Hellenistic thought that assumed a determinism underlying human agency.” *Evil Within and Without: The Source of Sin and Its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature*, *Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements* 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 96.

⁷⁸⁵ Berg, “Ben Sira,” 148.

⁷⁸⁶ Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism*, 38. Cf. Berg, “Ben Sira,” 145–154. Knowledge then is not connected to an Adamic glory or Israel’s election. In fact, the bestowal of knowledge for Ben Sira is preceded by an unambiguous affirmation of human mortality. The knowledge bestowed upon all of humanity, the wisdom with which to view creation generally, is perfected in the revelation of Torah at Sinai, but is also available to all. It is this observation that leads Berg to disagree (correctly in my opinion) with Jervell’s hypothesis that Ben Sira 17 describes Israel rather than humanity as a whole. Cf. Jacob Jervell, *Imago Dei. Gen 1, 26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen*, *FRLANT* 76 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 31–32. Ben Sira’s grounding of his affirmations about human nature in creation provides a universal grounding for the particular points that he will make about the capability of the Jews to obey the covenant.

17–18). In both texts, the structure of knowledge is established at creation, but the makeup of this primordial structure differs significantly

Dibre Hame'orot shares with Ben Sira the emphasis on a particular knowledge that accompanies the creation of the first human. The focus, however, appears to be on Adam as the first Israelite ancestor (Adam *our father*), contra Ben Sira's use of creation to identify universal human traits.⁷⁸⁷ Comparing these two uses of Adam reveals two potential functions for the presentation of originating figures: in one model these figures provide a timeless template, grounding the identity of the present people (cf. Ben Sira 16:24–17:24). In another model, however, the *prototypical* model, originary figures provide the starting point in comparison to which the present generation will note their improvement.

The relationship between the Adamic paradigm and later generations of Israelites in 4QDibHam is complex. It demonstrates both a continuity but also a marked development.⁷⁸⁸ Firstly, Adam stands as the model for Israel's creation in glory: as he was created in the image of divine glory, so too this is the trait which will set Israel apart from the other nations:

4Q504 1 + 2 iii XVI, 4–6

4 כול הגוים [כא]ין נגדכה [כ]תהו ו אפס נחשבו לפניכה
5 רק בשמכה [הז]כרנו ולכבודכה ברתנו ובנים
6 שמתנו לכה לעיני כול הגוים

4 all the peoples are [like not]hing before you;

[as] chaos and nothing /[they] are reckoned/ in your presence.

5 We have [in]voked only your name; for your glory you have created us;

6 you have established us as your sons in the sight of all the peoples.

⁷⁸⁷ Note the very different emphasis in Ben Sira 49:16, a reference to Adam as an individual whose splendor surpassed any other. Here Adam is portrayed explicitly in his capacity as an Israelite ancestor, and the reference to his glory as Israel's first ancestor is emphasized. Cf. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism*, 44–45, 47: “Because Ben Sira desires to glorify Israel, he presents Adam, the first human, as the first Israelite whose glory excelled all.... Adam, like the famous personages after him, shares the glory of God” (47).

⁷⁸⁸ Cf. Grethlein's categories in Grethlein, *The Greeks and Their Past*, 9. See further below.

Israel is described here as being created (\sqrt{br}) for the Lord's glory, as opposed to the nations who are merely chaos (*thw*), a distinctive group of terms used in the Genesis creation accounts (Gen 1:1–2a; cf. Isa 43:1, 7). The author of 4QDibHam participates here in a prophetic tradition of re-reading Gen 1 represented by Isa 43, which describes Israel's creation as for the Lord's glory (*wlkbwdy br'tyw*; Isa 43:7), but in the context of this liturgy, it also portrays Israel as another Adam, the firstborn (4Q504 1 + 2 iii XVI, 7). Fletcher-Louis uses this description of Israel as evidence for his broader claim that the Qumran community was developing a "divine anthropology," which understood humanity in its original state to be divine. 4Q504 1 + 2 iii XVI, 4–6, he writes, "proclaims that humanity as it was originally intended is only present in Israel and that all other peoples are consigned to a state of pre-creation nothingness."⁷⁸⁹ Fletcher-Louis helpfully identifies the connection that the text makes between Adam, "our father," and his descendants, Israel, but he underplays considerably the tension that the text creates between Adam and Israel's glorious beginnings and their respective downfalls, collective and individual. Even though Adam was created in the image of glory, and given understanding and knowledge, this was not sufficient for him to obey the divine command (4Q504 8 I, 8–9). The description of Israel's numinous creation transitions immediately in 4Q504 1 + 2 iii XVI, 7–15 to a vivid description of the exile.

Therefore, the creation of Adam provides a template for Israel's glorious creation, but it also provides a template for one of the primary tensions within the text: while Adam was created in glory and given knowledge, he fell precipitously from favor. Adam demonstrates the risk of an *ineffective* knowledge, a threat that will also materialize in the prayers' account of the wilderness wandering, but will be overcome by the present generation due to a new divine intervention.

⁷⁸⁹ Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 94.

Adam therefore stands as the starting point in a historical development that will reveal the superiority of the present reciting generation.

To conclude this section, two things can be noted: The first is the strength of the “primeval” man as a *topos* for a proposed pattern of history. As noted in the discussion of Ben Sira, such a figure serves to ground the cosmic observations of the rhetor: to quote a later contributor to the Adam tradition: “*as in Adam, all men*” (1 Cor 15:22). The fertility of the Adamic *topos* leads us, however, not to a monolithic construction of this “first human,” but to a particularly honed sensitivity to the function of this figure within this particular composition. And we shall find that the epistemological pattern “as in Adam, so also” will fit here very nicely. Adam grounds the conception of glory and knowledge which will be expanded upon in the remainder of the composition.

But, and this is the second point, the model in this prayer differs from the *Urzeit/Endzeit* patterning in which Adam figures so prominently in certain other Qumran texts. The pattern presented here is less one of a circle, returning to its origin, than of a developing progression, culminating in the present generation. Adam provides a generative frame image, triggered through the repeated reference in the liturgy to both *glory* and *knowledge*, but which leads to knowledge that will surpass Adam’s in its effectiveness to encourage success in following the divine commands.⁷⁹⁰ The historical pattern constructed is not a static repetition, nor purely cyclical, but is clearly understood as a development. He serves both as the prototype, but also as the naturalizing anchor.

⁷⁹⁰ For a discussion of “frame images,” see Schwartz, “Frame images,” 1–40, and the discussion in Chapter 1.

Wilderness as Site of Education

I turn next to the wilderness and its significance as a site within the prayer. The wilderness occupies a notable space in the prayer, not only due to the sheer *length* of its recollection, but also due to the particular immanence with which it is ritually invoked. As far as can be ascertained from the extant text, the people begin their recollection of Israel's time in the wilderness on the first day (4Q504 6 III, 6), and this recollection continues until the fourth day (see references to the forgiveness of the fathers in the wilderness at the end of the fourth day in 4Q504 7 + 18 XII, 17–20). The particular configuration of divine presence associated with the wilderness sojourn is also ritually invoked by the use of present participles to indicate that the people are portraying themselves as experiencing aspects of the wilderness as they enact this liturgy.⁷⁹¹ Divine presence demarcates a space of glory, as it did in the garden (4Q504 6 III, 10–11; cf. 8 I, 6–7). The wilderness therefore occupies a central space within both the order of the prayer but also within its constructed drama of knowledge. It is, like Adam's creation and placement in the garden, ultimately a retelling of the giving of an *ineffective* knowledge. In the wilderness, both the law and a "heart to know" will be granted to the ancestors, but they will still fall from favor. This first wilderness experience, however forms a significant "frame image" for the exile, in which both the knowledge and the necessary ability to follow it will be given via the agency of the Holy Spirit. Finally, the wilderness is also the site in which Moses accomplishes his intercessory activities. Moses is the third and final paradigmatic image for the praying community and will be discussed below.

⁷⁹¹ See discussion in Falk, "Liturgical Progression," 273–277, which will be considered further below.

4Q504 6 III, 1— 4 V, 15

6 III, 1–22

- 1 [...]דם וכ[...] [...]
- 2 [...]ת ופרי מחשבת אש[...] [...]
- 3 [...]ה להתבונן בכול חוק[...]י [...]
- 4 [...]שר תבואתה להתבון[...]נן [...]
- 5 [...]ור א[...]ת בעלילותיכה תמיד [...] [...]
- 6 [...]ז] כור נא כיא עמכה כולנו ותשאנו פלא[י]ם [...]
- 7 [...]על כנפי [...]נשרים ותביאנו אליכה וכנשר יעיר קנו] על[[...] [...]
- 8 [...]גוזליו] ירחף יפרוש כנפיו ויקח וישאהו {א} על [אברתו] [...]
- 9 [...]ש] כנו בדד ובגוים לוא נתחשב וא[...] [...]
- 10 [...]אתה בקרבנו בעמוד אש וענן ב[...] [...]
- 11 [...]קוד] שכה הולך לפנינו וכבודכה בתוכ[נו] [...] [...]
- 12 [...]פני מושה עב[דכה] [...] [...]
- 13 [...]כיא אתה ה[...] [...] [...]
- 14 [...]ה ונקה ולוא תנק[ה] [...] [...] [...]
- 15 [...]כיסר איש [את בנו] [...] [...] [...]
- 16 [...]קדו] שים וטהור[ים] [...] [...] [...]
- 17 [...]אשר יעשה אותם ה[אדם וחי במ] [...] [...] [...]
- 18 [...]הש] ב[ו]עה אשר נשב[עתה] [...] [...] [...]
- 19 [...]ים בפניכה [...]ה[...] [...] [...] [...]
- 20 [...]ברוך אדוני] [...] [...] [...] [...]
- 21 [...]נחקר גדולות[יכה] [...] [...] [...] [...]
- 22 [...]רוח כול חי] [...] [...] [...] [...]

4 V, 1–15

- 1 [...]אוי[...] [...] [...]
- 2 [...]א] שר רציתה [ל]דורות [...] [...] [...]
- 3 [...]ה] ארץ ועבודת כול ה[...] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...]
- 4 [...]בטוב לבבם כי]א אתה אל הדעות [ו]כול מחשב[ת] [...] [...] [...]
- 5 [...]לפניכ]ה אלה ידענו באשר חנאות[נו] [רוח ק]ודש רחמנו [...] [...] [...]
- 6 [...]ואל תז]כור לנו עוונות רשונים בכול גמולם הר[ע ואשר] [...] [...] [...]
- 7 קשו בעורפם אתה פדינו וסלח [נא] לעווננו ולח[טתנו] [...] [...] [...]
- 8 [...]חו]קיכה תורה אשר צו[יתה] ביד מוש[ה] [...] [...] [...]
- 9 [...]אשר [...]בכ[ו]ל[ל] [...] [...] [...] [...]
- 10 [...]ממלכת] כוהנים וגוי קדוש [...] [...] [...] [...] [...]
- 11 [...]א]שר בחרת מולה עורלת[לבנו] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...]
- 12 [...]עוד חזק לבנו לעשות] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...]
- 13 [...]ל]לכת בדרכיכה vacat [...] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...]
- 14 [...]ברוך] אדוני אשר הודי[ענו] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...]
- 15 [...]אמן אמן vacat [...] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...]

4Q504 6 III, 1— 4 V, 15

6 III 1–22

Introduction

- 1 [...] and []
 2 [...]And the fruit of intentions...
 3 [...]to understand all statutes....
 4 [...]its produce and to understand...
 5 [...]in your deeds continually...

Historical Prologue

- 6 [...] Re]member, please, that all of us are your people. You have lifted us wonderfully
 7 [upon the wings of] eagles and you have brought us to yourself. And like the eagle which watches
 its nest,
 8 circles [over its chicks,] stretches its wings, takes one and carries it upon [its pinions]
 9 [...] we dwell apart and among the nations we are not reckoned. And [...]
 10 [...] You are in our midst, in a column of fire and cloud [...]
 11 [...] your [hol]iness goes before us, and your glory is in [our] midst [...]
 12 [...] the face of Moses, [your] serv[ant]
 13 [...] For you [...]
 14 [...] ^{and he is innocent} and you do not consider him innoc[ent ...]
 15 [...] as one punishes [his son ...]
 16 [...] hol]y ones and pure [ones ...]
 17 [...] the] one [who does them] shall live by them [...]
 18 [...] the o]a[t]h which [you] swo[re ...]
 19 [...] in your face [...] ... [...]

Doxology

- 20 [...] Blessed, Lord, [...]
 21 [...] we examine [your] splendors [...]
 22 [...] the spirit of every living being [...]

4 V, 2–15

- 2 [...wh]ich you were pleased [throughout] generations [...]
 3 [...] the] earth, and the work of all the ... [...have] You [given to them]
 4 [together with the j]oy of [their] hear[t. Sure]ly you are the God of knowledge [and] every
 though[t of our hearts]
 5 lies open[before Y]ou. We know these things because You have graciously granted us [Your]
 h[oly] spirit.

Petition

- [Have pity on us]
 6 [and do not ho]ld against us the iniquities of the forefathers in all their wic[ked] behavior, [nor
 that]
 7 [they were stiff]-necked. You, redeem us and forgive, [please,] our iniquity and [our] s[in]

8 [...] your [prece]pts, the law which [you] comman[ded] through the hand of Mose[s ...]
 9 [...] which ... [...] in a[l]l [...]
 10 [...] a kingdom of] priests and a holy people [...]
 11 [...] wh]ich you chose. Circumcise the foreskin of [our heart ...]
 12 [...] ... again. Strengthen our heart to do [...]
 13 [...] to] walk in your paths Blank [...]

Benediction

14 [...] Blessed is] the Lord who taug[ht us ...]
 15 [...] Amen. Amen.

The pattern introduced with Adam in the garden is reflected in the next partially preserved section of the prayer, which continues the catalogue of the Lord's "wonders and awesome deeds" by recounting portions of the wilderness wandering. This second fragment belonging to the first day, fragment 6, is unfortunately poorly preserved at both its opening and conclusion. The theme of understanding appears conspicuously at the opening; the only preserved object of this understanding are divine statutes, presumably the law given to Moses. This is confirmed by a probable quotation of Lev 18:5 near the end of the historical prologue: "those who do them shall also live by them" (*'šr y'šh 'wtm h'dm why bm*; 4Q504 6 III, 17). The antecedent of the "them" in Lev 18:5 is the *statutes* and *rules* divinely appointed for the Israelites. Again the fragmented nature of the text prevents a comprehensive analysis of these relations, but it is clear that the giving of the law is here celebrated.

Lines 6–8 describe the election of Israel with nearly verbatim quotations of Exod 19:4 and Deut 32:11. These quotations link two separate biblical phrases through their mutual avian imagery, transforming only the person of Exod 19:4 and adding the exclamatory adverb "wonderfully" (*pl'ym*). In this way, the author of these prayers demonstrates a detailed knowledge of available scriptural traditions. So also, the transformation of the first-person statement made by God in Exod 19:4 "I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself" into a reminder couched in the second person "Remember... *you*..." both creates an aesthetically

pleasing symmetry between the two linked verses but also serves quite viscerally as a reminder: “remember, O Lord, what you said.” This “memory performance” leads into a claim to present experience. Falk observes that the community graphically visualizes the glory of the Lord in their midst *now*, using the present participle: “You are in our midst in a pillar of fire and cloud... your holiness goes [*hwlk*] before us and your glory is in our midst” (4Q504 6 III, 10–11).⁷⁹² As Adam was appointed to abide in a “glorious land,” so too Israel is set apart to dwell in proximity to divine glory.

The wilderness is remembered primarily within the extant material as a site of remarkable divine proximity, education, and successful intercession. Daniel Falk uses quotations from the wilderness episodes to argue for an overarching thesis regarding the use of “scripted visualization” in the prayer. He argues, based on the intermingling of first and third person language, as well as the use of present participles and “visualizing language” that the praying community leads themselves through a scripted visualization whereby they participate in episodes from their past history.⁷⁹³ He points to language used in 4Q504 6 III, 10–11:

10 [...] אתה בקרבנו בעמוד אש וענן ב[...]
11 [...] קוד[ש]כה הולך לפנינו וכבודכה בתוכ[נו] ...

10 You are in our midst in a pillar of fire and cloud [...]
11 [...] your [holi]ness goes before us and your glory is in [our] mid[st]

And in the prayer for the fourth day (4Q504 3 ii XI, 10–11):

10 [...] עין[]בעין נראיתה בקרבנו[] ...
11 [...] א[]ודברי קודשך שמענ[] ...

⁷⁹² Falk, “Liturgical Progression,” 273. See further discussion about Falk’s theory below.

⁷⁹³ On “scripted visualization” see Barbara Newman, “What Did It Mean to Say ‘I Saw’? The Clash between Theory and Practice in Medieval Visionary Culture,” *Speculum* 80 (2005): 1–43; Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 150–156; R. Noll et al., “Mental Imagery Cultivation as a Cultural Phenomenon: The Role of Visions in Shamanism,” *Current Anthropology* (1985): 443–461.

10 [...eye] to eye you appeared in our midst [...]
 11[...] and w[e] heard your holy words [...]

Both of these examples are taken from the description of Israel's time in the wilderness. Falk identifies this text as a type of "scripted vision," a ritual experience that Ann Taves describes as a "cultivated movement from visualizing to seeing, which subjects experience as a movement from imagination to reality, from seeing 'as if' one were present in the imagined world to a sense of actually being there."⁷⁹⁴ Falk argues that the progression in 4QDibHam invites the people to graphically visualize the glory of the Lord in their midst *in the present day*.⁷⁹⁵

Contra Falk's interpretation, however, this claim to re-vision a portion of Israel's history is not a general characteristic of this liturgy as a whole. The use of the present participle to claim a present reality occurs only in 4Q504 6 III, 10–11 in the extant text to describe *this particular historical moment*: the people deliberately place themselves, experientially, within the wilderness, where God's pillar of cloud and fire went before them, and God's glory dwelt in their midst. This specific act of envisioning should not be conflated with rhetoric throughout the prayer that functions more simply to reinforce communal solidarity, as is the case with the use of "we" language in Falk's second example listed above.⁷⁹⁶ Such language simply indicates continuity with the experiences of the ancestors: By giving the law to them, you give it as well to us.

⁷⁹⁴ Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 156. Taves is referring to Newman, "What Did It Mean to Say 'I Saw'?" 1–43.

⁷⁹⁵ Falk, "Liturgical Progression," 273.

⁷⁹⁶ For example, Falk points to 4Q504 6 III, 6–7 later on in his article: "Remember, please, that all of us are your people, and you bore us up wonder[fully on the wings] of eagles and you have brought us to yourself." This is an example of identification with the election of the entire community, and should be considered a more common use of first-person language in the recital of a community's shared memory.

The people's invocation of the pillars of cloud and fire as presently in their midst plays a specific function as part of the rhetoric of penitence invoked in this prayer. It is a reference to Num 14:14, in which the pillars of cloud and fire function as the "proofs" of God's presence, witnessed by the nations, and which form the basis of Moses' argument that the Lord should pardon the iniquity of his people. Therefore the appeal to these symbols of God's presence among the praying community undergirds their own intercessory appeal. This is the significance of the use of the present participle *for this section of the prayer*.⁷⁹⁷

The role of the wilderness in the prayer continues to become clear when one attends to the relationship between the recollection of the wilderness in the retrospective portion of the prayer (4Q504 6 III, 6–19) and the following meditation on the people's present knowledge (4Q504 6 III, 20 – 4 V, 15) contained in the associated petition and doxology. The shift to the present in the concluding petition is marked both by language of *reflection* ("we know these things") and also by the introduction of the first petition ("remember not to hold against us the iniquities of our forebears"). Knowledge is a central theme in this recital, as is the distinction between the ineffective knowledge given to previous generations and the effective knowledge that the present generation now possesses. Here, the appeal to a *new* knowledge, "these things" that are now known by the people, is framed by the knowledge described in the retrospective portion of the prayer, that given to Adam and to the ancestors in the wilderness (the holy words which "we heard"). As was the case with Adam, knowledge once again accompanies a vivifying agent (cf. 4Q504 8 I, 5):

4Q504 4 V, 4–5

4 כי־א אתה אל הדעות ו[כול מחשב] ת...
5 [לפניכ]ה אלה ידענו באשר חנואת[נו] רוח ק[ודש]

⁷⁹⁷ The role of Moses as a paradigm for prayer will be discussed further below.

4 “You are the God of knowledge, [and] every though[t of our hearts]
 5 Lies open be[fore y]ou. We know these things because you have graciously granted us
 [your] h[oly] spirit.

Nitzan and Falk argue that the reference to “these things” reflects a claim to a hidden knowledge, revealed to the community.⁷⁹⁸ It is more likely, however, that 4QDibHam is building upon a broader post-exilic tradition of reading the wilderness period as a particularly rich time of divine education and proximity, as was demonstrated by both Neh 9 and Isa 63, analyzed in Chapter 4 of the present work (see Neh 9:20; Isa 63:1–11, 14). Nehemiah 9:20, especially, describes the spirit of God as an educating force which serves to inculcate in the people a knowledge of Torah. This assertion, that “these things” refer to a knowledge of their history and an understanding of divine statutes and law, finds support if one analyses the objects of knowledge within the structure of the entire text. Within 4QDibHam, where the object of knowledge is specified, it describes the laws, statutes, and judgments that were revealed to the people in the wilderness and to an understanding of God’s actions for Israel (see 4Q504 6 III, 3; 1 + 2 ii XV, 18; cf. 1 + 2 ii XV, 14–15; 1 + 2 vi XIX, 10–11).⁷⁹⁹ The concluding doxology, “*Blessed is the Lord for making known to us...*” (4Q504 4 V, 14) is also predicated on the Lord’s act of bestowing knowledge, but even in this case, the expressed gratitude follows a series of fragmentary allusions to the law and to divine intervention in the self to enable Israel to carry out the law: the biblical phrase “*circumcise the foreskin of our heart*” (cf. Deut 30:6) is bolstered by a reconstituted biblical allusion to a “strengthening of the heart” (*h̄zq lbnw*) that will enable the

⁷⁹⁸ Bilha Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*, STDJ 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 342n57 and 344n60; Falk, “Liturgical Progression,” 275. Though Falk claims a non-sectarian origin for the text he notes the “significance” of this language, which has a “technical usage in sectarian texts” (275).

⁷⁹⁹ Chazon indicates that the demonstrative pronoun *’lh* “simply refers to the immediately preceding praise for God’s benevolence to humanity (4Q504 5:3–4// 4Q506 131–132 4–9).” Chazon, “Prayer and Identity,” 496. This is partially correct, but it does not attend to the carefully constructed development of the people’s knowledge within the text as a whole.

community to enact divine law. There is not a straight line of continuity, however, between the knowledges given to Adam, to the ancestors in the wilderness, and to the present generation. There has been a temporal break, which has both been the occasion of a new divine revelation, but which also provides the reflective distance to perceive the nature of their history, “these things” that they are now reciting. While not yet clear from this prayer on the first day, by the sixth day it will become apparent that the shift which has occurred was occasioned by the exile. The doxology on day one therefore introduces one of the most remarkable themes of this recital, which is the reflection on the nature and possibility of historical knowledge in general and its public display in participatory recital.

The themes of divine proximity and education continue in the prayer for the fourth day, the next meaningfully extant day in *4QDibHam*.

4Q504 3 ii XI, 8—1 + 2 i XIV, 8

3 ii XI, 8–22

8 [תפלה ביו]ם הרביעי זכור אדוני]
 9 [...] לִיכָה יתקדש בכבוד]
 10 [...] עֵין [בעֵין נראיתה בקרבנו]
 11 [...] א ודברי קודשך שמענו]
 12 [...] כה עלפנינו לבלתי נ.
 13 [...] שם קו]דשכה הגדול]
 14 [...] ה[ארץ התבון]
 15 [...] [ובעבור נאמין].
 16 לעולם ותכרות אתנו ברית בחו]רב
 17 על כול החו]ק]ים והמשפטים הא[לה
 18 והטוב[ים [...] ים וקדושים ו.
 19 אשר [...] ביד [מושה ו...]
 20 בכול [...] [...] פנים אל פנים דברת^ה אות]
 21 כבו]ד [...] רציתו וימצאון] חן בעיניכה
 22 [...] כול [...] המה בידו לעינינו]

7 + 18 XII, 3–20

3 [...] תה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל את
 4 [...] הנפ]לאים אשר עשיתה
 5 [...] ישראל^ל לספר דורות עולם
 6 [...] מעשי ידיכה

- 7 [...] ר. לכבודכה
 8 [...] היאה לוא תקצ'
 9 [...] לוא יב צר ממכה כול
 10 [...] ה. היאה
 11 [...] שמתה שימה
 12 [...] ש ואל תטושנ'
 13 [...] רך וברחמיכה
 14 [...] שות קדמנו
 15 [...] א שר נשאתה
 16 [...] לאבותינו... הנו ל... ת... במד... בר אשר המרו
 17 [...] את פיכה נ[תתה להמה לב [לדעת] וינ^יכוה וימצאוכה
 18 [...] עינים] לראות ואוזנ[ים לשמוע וה]ם ל[וא] האמינו
 19 [...] אחרון ותשע[עיניהמה אש] ר ראו ... א
 20 [...] א רוח ב [...] ל[... עינים]

1–2 i XIV, 8

8 [...] אמן אמן

3 ii XI, 8–22

Introduction

- 8 [Prayer for the] fourth [da]y. Remember O Lord, [...]
 9 [...] your [...] shall be consecrated in glory [...]

Historical Prologue

- 10 [...an eye] to eye, You have appeared among us [...]
 11 [...] Your holy words we have heard[...]
 12 [...] upon us not [...]
 13 [...] your great and [ho]ly [Name ...]
 14 [...] the] earth ... [...]
 15 [...] and because we trust [...]
 16 for ever. And you made a covenant with us in Ho[reb ...]
 17 upon all the[se statutes and judgments [...]
 18 and the good [] ... and the holy and [...]
 19 which [...] Through] Moses and ... [...]
 20 in all [...] face to face ^{[yo]u spoke} to [him ...]
 21 glo[ry ...] you were pleased with him. And they found [favour in your eyes ...]
 22 [...] all] them in his hand/s/ before our eyes [...]

7 + 18 XII, 3–20

- 3 [...] ... making straight the
 4 [...] the won]ders which you have done

5 [...] ^{Israel} to recount to future generations
 6 [...] the works of your hands
 7 [...] for your glory
 8 [...] it shall not be short
 9 [...] no]thing [shall be re]duced for you
 10 [...] she/it
 11 [...] You placed a treasure

Petition

12 [...] and do not forsake us
 13 [...] your... and your mercy
 14 [...] ... we approached
 15 [...] wh]ich you forgave

Historical Epilogue

16 [our fathers...] ... who rebelled in the desert
 17 [against your command] You gave them a heart [to know] but they tested you and found you
 18 [eyes] to see and ear[s to hear but] they did n[ot] trust
 19 [...] at the end, and You blinded [their eyes, those w]ho saw
 20 [...] spirit [...] the eyes

Benediction: Lost

1–2 i XIV, 8

Response:

8 [...] Amen. Amen.

The fourth day continues to celebrate the Israelites' sojourn at Horeb. Even in this fragmented text, the emphasis on divine proximity and glory in the wilderness is clear. The theme of "glory" is associated here with a probable reference to the tabernacle (*ytqdš bkbwd*; 3 ii XI, 9), the central locus of divine glory during the wilderness wandering. The collocation $\sqrt{qdš} + kbwd$ appears in the biblical text only to describe the tabernacle in Exod 29:43 as the space which is "made holy by my [the Lord's] glory" (*nqdš bkbdy*). This space, marked by the presence of the glory of the Lord, and invoked in the present by the praying people, also becomes the space where Moses' effective intercession is recalled. The reference to the Lord

being seen “eye to eye” in their midst ([*ʿyn*] *b ʿyn nr ʿyth bqrbnw*) recalls Num 14:14 “You O Lord are in the midst of this people. For You O Lord, are seen eye to eye...” (*ky ʿth YHWH bqrb h ʿm hzh ʿšr- ʿyn b ʿyn nr ʿh*). As in the first day (4Q504 6 III, 10–11) the penitents adopt the ancient leader’s own words to establish an effective “meeting space” in their own time modeled after Moses’ meeting with the Lord.

The prayer for the fourth day presents a stark distinction between the *ineffective knowledge* of previous generations (including Adam) and the *effective* knowledge that the present generation claims to possess: 4Q504 7 + 18 XII, 17 describes a divine gift of knowledge to the ancestors that remained insufficient: “You [ga]ve them a heart [to know] but they tested you and found you/ [eyes] to see and ear[s to hear but] they did n[ot] trust/ [] at the end, and You blinded[their eyes,...”⁸⁰⁰ In reporting their ancestor’s testing of God (*ʿnsh*) the petitioners repeat a trope common to the historical recitals: the testing of God appears as the paradigmatic sin in both Pss 78 and 106⁸⁰¹ and is referred to in God’s promised judgment in Num 14:22. But

⁸⁰⁰ Incidentally, if this is the correct reading of the manuscript, this text implies an early reading of a conundrum presented in the text of Deut 29:3 (29:4 in English) which reads “The Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear to this day” (*wl ʿ-ntn YHWH lkm lb ld ʿt w ʿynym lr ʿwt w ʿzynym lšm ʿ d hywm hzh*). Wrestling with the implications of this text, Millar writes that “although God has done much for Israel (e.g. vv. 5–8 [MT 4–7]), it seems here that he has not as yet done that which they needed most (see also 29:25–28 [MT 24–27]).” See J. Gary Millar, “A Faithful God Who Does No Wrong’: History, Theology, and Reliability in Deuteronomy,” in *The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture*, ed. Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 14. Part of the debate centers around the meaning of the phrase “to this day,” whether it indicates that the lack of a heart to understand extends to the current generation or to their pre-wilderness condition. Begg argues that the wilderness experience served as a “supplementary measure” to help the people understand the significance of God’s activity. Christopher Begg, “Bread, Wine and Strong Drink in Deut 29:5a,” *Bijdragen* 41 (1980): 273. Or, it is possible that the exposition of the Torah by Moses, contained in Deuteronomy provides the means to understand the previous history. See Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 340. The author of the 4QDibHam clearly reads Moses’ words as indicating that there *was* a heart given to understand, either through the wilderness wanderings or through Moses’ exposition of the law, but that this intermediary phase was still not sufficient for Israel to correctly implement the law before the Lord, or to correctly understand the deeds of God in the Exodus from Egypt and at the Red Sea.

⁸⁰¹ Pss 78:18, 41, 56; 106:14.

in 4QDibHam this testing is explicitly portrayed as an inability to correctly respond to a particular knowledge. In an ironic modification of the quotation of Deut 29:4 (which indicates that Israel's ancestral sin occurred because Israel had *not* received a heart to know, eyes to see, or ears to hear), the petitioners describe the ancestors' received knowledge as fundamentally ineffective to prevent future sin. The ancestors repeat the pattern begun with Adam in which understanding is *given* (4Q504 8 I, 5), but in which this understanding is insufficient to prevent their straying from the righteous path. By contrast, the present generation, in their recollection of Horeb, responds to *their* hearing of the holy words with the very trust that their ancestors lacked (\sqrt{mn} ; 4Q504 3 ii, XI, 15; cf. 7 + 18 XII, 18). They thereby rectify the deficiency of their ancestors in the process of their recollection.

4Q504 1 + 2 I XIV, 9—1 + 2 iv XVII, 16

1 + 2 i XIV, 9–11

9 [תפלה ליום חמישי זכור אדוני ...] ונפלאות

10 [...] ממצרים

11 [...] מדבר

1 + 2 ii XV, 7–20

7 [...] ... [תיכה] ...

8 אנא אדני עשה נא כמוכה כגדול כוחכה אש[ר] נ[שאת]ה[ה]

9 לאבותינו בהמרותם את פיכה ותתאנף במ להשמידם ותחס

10 עליהמה באהבתכה אותם ולמען בריתכה כיא כפר מושה

11 בעד הטאתם ולמען דעת את כוחכה הגדול ואת רוב חסדכ[ה]

12 לדורות עולם ישוב נא אפכה וחמתכה מעמכה ישראל על כול הטאתם וזכרתה

13 את נפלאותיכה אשר עשיתה לע(י)ני גוים כיא נקר^א שמכה עלינו

14 [...] ל[...]. בנו בכול לב ובכול נפש ולטעת תורתכה בלבנו

15 [לבלתי סור ממנה ללכת] מימין ושמאול כיא תרפאנו משגעון ועיריו ותמהון

16 [לבב ... הן בע] וונותינו נמכרנו ובפשעינו קרתנו

17 [...] .. והצלחנו מחטוא לכה

18 [...] .ת ולהבינו לתעודות

19 [...] לות אתה עשיתם

20 [...] .ם ופעולתם

1–2 iii XVI, 3–21

3 אוז[...]... [...]נחשב א[...]ש הן

- 4 כול הגוים] כא]ין נגדכה] כ[תהוו ואפס ^{נחשב}] לפניכה
5 רק בשמכה] [הז]כרנו ולכבודכה ברתנו ובנים
6 שמתנו לכה לעיני כול הגוים כיא קרתה
7 [לי]שראל בני בכורי ותיסרנו כיסר איש את
8 בנו ות"ב {רנו} vacat אותנו בשני דורותינו
9 [...]חוליים רעים ורעב וצמא ודבר וחרב
10 [...]מת בריתכה כיא אותנו בחרתה לכה
11 [לעם מכול] הארץ עלכן שפכתה אלינו את חמתכה
12 [ואת קנא]תכה בכול חרון אפכה ותדבק בנו
13 [...]...[מץ]ותיכה אשר כתב מושה ועבדיכה
14 הנביאים אש[ר ש]לחתה ל[קר]תנו הרעה באחרית
15 הימים כיא [...]]
16 ומליכינו כיא [...]]
17 לקחת בנות[נו ...]
18 וישחיתו בח[...]
19 בריתכה ול[...]
20 זרע ישראל[...]
21 תצדק למ[...]

1-2 iv XVII, 3-16

- 3 מ[ש]כנכה [...] .מנוחה
4 בירושל'לים העיר אשר בח[רתה] בה מכול {ל}הארץ
5 להיות [שמכ]ה שם לעולם כיא אהבתה
6 את ישראל מכול העמים ותבחר בשבט
7 יאודה ובריתכה הקימותה לדויד להיות
8 כרעי נגיד על עמכה וישב על כסא ישראל לפניך
9 כול הימים וכול הגוים ראו את כבודכה
10 אשר נקדשתה בתוך עמכה ישראל ולשמכה
11 הגדול ויביאו מנחתם כסף וזהב ואבן יקרה
12 עם כו[ו]ן ל חמדת ארצם לכבד את עמכה ואת
13 ציון עיר קודשכה ובית תפארתכה ואין שטן
14 ופגע רע כיאם שלום וברכה ממ[...]
15 ויוא[כ]לו וישבעו וידשנו [...]
16 [...]ה והשל[אש] [...]

4Q504 1 + 2 I XIV, 9—1 + 2 iv XVII, 16

1 + 2 i XIV, 9–11

Introduction

9 [Prayer for the fifth day. Remember, Lord ...] marvels

Historical Prologue

10 [...] from Egypt

11 [... de]sert

1 + 2 ii XV, 7–20

Petition

7 [] your []

8 Please Lord, act, then, as you do, in accordance with your great power, you, wh[o did for]give
9 our fathers when they made your mouth bitter. You became angry with them as to destroy them;
but you pitied

10 them because of your love for them, and on account of your covenant—for Moses atoned
11 for their sin—and in order that they would know your great power and your abundant kindness
12 for everlasting generations. May, then, your anger and your rage /for all [their] si[n]/ turn away
from your people Israel. Remember

13 your marvels which you performed in the sight of the peoples, for your name has been called
out over us.

14 [...] ... with all (our) heart and with all (our) soul and to implant your law in our heart,
15 [so that we do not stray from it,] either to the right or to the left. For, you heal us of madness,
/blindness/ and confusion

16 [of heart ... Behold, for] our [in]iquities were we sold, but in spite of our sins you did call us
17 [...] and you freed us from sinning against you.

18 [...] and to make us understand the testimonies

19 [...] you made them

20 [...] and their work.

1 + 2 iii XVI, 3–21

Historical Epilogue

3 [...] reckoned [...] Behold,

4 all the peoples are [like not]hing before you; [as] chaos and nothing /[they] are reckoned/ in your
presence.

5 We have [in]voked only your name; for your glory you have created us;

6 you have established us as your sons in the sight of all the peoples. For you called

7 [I]srael my son, my first-born and have corrected us as one corrects

8 his son. You have [created us] raised us over the years of our generations

9 [...] ^{evil} illnesses, famine, thirst, plague, the sword

10 [...] requi]tal of your covenant, for you chose us

11 [to be your people amongst all] the earth. For that reason you have poured on us your rage

12 [and] your [jealou]sy with all the intensity of your anger. And clung to us

13 [...] your [pre]cepts which Moses wrote and your servants

14 the prophets who[m] you [s]ent, so that evil would [over]take us in the last

15 days. Because [...]

16 and our kings, for [...]

17 to take [our] daughters [...]

18 and they acted pervertedly with [...]

19 your covenant and [...]

20 the seed of Israel [...]

21 You are just for [...]

21and ... [...]

1 + 2 iv XVII, 3–16

3 your re[si]dence [...] a place of rest
 4 in Jerusa[lem the city which] you [cho]se from the whole earth
 5 for [your Name] to be there for ever. For you loved
 6 Israel more than all the peoples. And you chose the tribe of
 7 Judah, and established your covenant with David so that he would be
 8 like a shepherd, a prince over your people, and would sit in front of you on the throne of Israel
 9 for ever. And all the peoples have seen your glory,
 10 for you have made yourself holy in the midst of your people, Israel. And to your
 11 great Name they will carry their offerings: silver, gold, precious stones,
 12 with all the treasures of their land, to honour your people and
 13 Zion, your holy city and your wonderful house. And there was no opponent
 14 or evil attack, but peace and blessing ... [...]
 15 And they a[t]e, were replete, and became fat [...]
 16 [...] ... and ... /.../ [...]

The prayer for the fifth day continues to reveal the means by which the praying people have surpassed both Adam and their ancestral fathers in the wilderness. The people declare that they have been the recipients of a newly accomplished divine action. In the prayer for the first day, the gift of knowledge and glory precedes a particular divine command: Adam is compelled *not to turn aside* (*lbtly s[wr]*; 4Q504 8 I, 8). In the prayer for the fifth day, the petitioners claim that one of the Lord's intentions in the events of the exile is to *plant the law in their hearts in order that they will not turn aside, straying either to the right or to the left* (*wlṭ 't twrtkh blbnw/ lbtly swr mmnh llkt mymyn wsm 'wl*; 4Q504 1 + 2 ii XV 14–15). Both the imagery of *planting* (*√nt*'), a unique formulation in relation to the law and the collocation *not to turn aside* (*lbtly +√swr*) relate to the story of Adam where rule over the Lord's planted garden is contingent on a following of the Lord's singular command (4Q504 8 I, 6–8). Here we see the use of Adam as both a model and a foil: he is the first human to whom this divine injunction is given, but the petitioners will be able to fulfill it due to a new divine intervention. While the description of a Torah planting participates in a tradition of agricultural metaphors that describe the “planting of

which a new divine act has occurred. Both the preceding and following lines indicate that this new planting is a result of the exile (4Q504 1 + 2 ii XV, 14, 16). This divine action will enable them to better fulfill the glorious purpose of their creation. In this, they supersede Adam.

Moses as Paradigm

The *topoi* of effective and conversely ineffective divinely given knowledge unify the contents of the extant prayer.⁸⁰⁶ Knowledge was given to Israel's first father and to earlier generations of Israelites, but each of these nonetheless succumbed and was not able to achieve the fruits of this knowledge. The present praying generation, however, wields a scripturally informed language and a claim to a newly invigorated understanding. It perceives in its patterned history a particular role in which it will play an atoning function for the community. While Adam introduces the prayer and constitutes a dominant paradigm throughout the recital, it is Moses and his characteristic speech of intercession that organizes the people's petitionary act. The people's petition contains an expansion of Moses's intercessory prayer, recorded in Exod 32:11–14 and Num 14:13–19, texts that have already played a significant role in both Ps 106 and Neh 9.⁸⁰⁷ It will be through comparison with Moses's brief theological dictum that the relationship between historical recital and its atoning function is made explicit. The wilderness, furthermore, functions as it has in preceding recitals, particularly Neh 9 and Ps 106, as the space in which Moses atones effectively. As noted above, part of the rationale for the particular "re-visioning" of the wilderness is due to the present re-creation of Moses' act of petition (cf. Num 14:14).

⁸⁰⁶ On "knowledge" as a theme of the prayer as a whole, see Chazon, "Prayer and Identity," 495–498.

⁸⁰⁷ See Chapters 2 and 4 of the present work, respectively.

Dibre Hame'orot is not unique in considering Moses as a counterpart figure to Adam. Other, likely later, traditions also set up Adam and Moses as a corresponding pair. Some texts preserve a tradition in which Moses, when he ascended to Mount Sinai, received the glory that Adam had lost in the Garden of Eden. *Memar Marqa* 5.4 reads “He [Moses] was vested with the Form which Adam cast off in the Garden of Eden; and his face shone up to the day of his death.”⁸⁰⁸ The content of this “form” as the divine image is specified later in *Memar Marqa* 6.3:

“He [Moses] drew near to the holy deep darkness where the Divine One was, and he saw the wonders of the unseen – a sight no one else could see. His image dwelt on him. How terrifying to anyone who beholds and no one is able to stand before it.”⁸⁰⁹

As April de Conick observes, this tradition of reading Gen 1–3 as a record of Adam’s loss of the divine image appears to be early and may already be attested in *Wisdom of Solomon* 2:23–24.⁸¹⁰ It reads, “For God created man for incorruption, and made him in the image of his own eternity, but through the devil’s envy death entered the world, and those who belong to his party experience it.”

Dibre Hame'orot also configures Adam and Moses as a pair. Moses is equipped to be the recipient of a divine glory which, since it is accompanied by the law, supersedes that given to Adam. One of the key marks of this supersession, according to 4QDibHam, is that Moses successfully atoned for Israel when they sinned. Notably in 4QDibHam, while Moses’ intercession is described as being efficacious *for the survival of Israel at that time*, they are now able to pray a prayer that atones for their fathers and for themselves. As the people view the exile

⁸⁰⁸ John Macdonald, *Memar Marqah. The Teaching of Marqah*. (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1963), 209.

⁸⁰⁹ Macdonald, *Memar Marqah*, 223.

⁸¹⁰ April D. De Conick, *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 159–160.

as a second more effective wilderness experience, they will be able to pray a second and more effective prayer of penitence.

The influence of the figure of Moses and his prayer in 4QDibHam is demonstrated through the prayer's particular reliance on Exod 32 and Num 14, the adaptation of the structure of those prayers into the structure of the prayers as a whole, and a characteristic "pairing" of Moses with the praying community. Esther Chazon and Jeremy Penner have thoroughly analyzed and presented the influence of Exod 32 and Num 14 on the liturgical progression of 4QDibHam, and so the primary parallels will be presented only in brief below.⁸¹¹

4Q504 3 ii XI, 9–11 reads:

[...] לִיכָה יתְקַדֵּשׁ בְּכָבוֹד [...] 9
[...] עֵין [בְּעֵין נִרְאִיתָה בְּקִרְבָּנוֹ] 10
[...] א וְדִבְרֵי קוֹדֶשׁ שָׁמַעְנָו [...] 11

9] your shall be consecrated in glory [
10 eye] to eye, you have appeared among us[
11 your holy words we have heard

The idiom here translated "eye to eye" appears in only two biblical texts: Num 14:14 and Deut 19:21. The different translations of this phrase in the collection of Dead Sea Scrolls edited by Martinez and Tigchelaar ("eye to eye") and the translation by M. Wise, M. Abegg, and E. Cook ("eye for an eye") respectively indicate that there is disagreement over which biblical text the idiom is referring to.⁸¹² The context, however, makes it likely that this is a reference to Num

⁸¹¹ See especially Chazon, "Scripture and Prayer," 28–32; Penner, "Words of the Luminaries," 180–181 Cf. Mark J. Boda, "Penitential Innovations within the Twelve," in *On Stone and Scroll: Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies*, ed. Katherine J. Dell Brian A. Mastin, and James K. Aitken (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 391–407, who demonstrates how Exod 32–34 is used in the penitential tradition more broadly.

⁸¹² *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition (Translations)*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 2:1012; "4Q504 (4QDibHam^a)," ed. M. Wise, M. Abegg, and E. Cook, 497.

14:14, and that it should be translated “eye to eye,” indicating divine proximity. Both texts include a reference to the Lord’s appearance “in the people’s midst” (*ky-’th YHWH bqrb h’m* [Num 14:14]; *nr’yth bqrbnw* [3 ii XI, 10]), and the reference to the tabernacle in the previous line (that which is “consecrated in glory” [*ytqdš bkbwd*]) suggests that the section as a whole is describing divine proximity, as opposed to the legal context of Deut 19, which describes the legal argument of *lex talionis*. The people are therefore appropriating a key piece of Moses’ intercessory argument within their own prayer. They argue that the Lord has been seen in their midst; he should, therefore, not continue to be angry with them.⁸¹³

In the opening of the prayer for the fifth day, the petitioners also quote a modified version of Num 14:13–19. In their modification, they reveal the functional logic that undergirds their appropriation of the Mosaic prayer and its connection to the act of reciting history.

4Q504 1 + 2 ii XV, 8–12

8 אֲנִי אֲדֹנִי עֲשֵׂה נָא כְמוֹכָה כְּגֹדֹל כּוֹחֲךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה [ה]
 9 לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּהִמְרוֹתָם אֶת פִּיִּי וְתַתָּאֲנִי בָם לְהַשְׁמִידָם וְתַחַס
 10 עֲלֵיהֶם בְּאַהֲבָתְךָ אוֹתָם וּלְמַעַן בְּרִיתְךָ כִּי אֵין כֹּפֶר מֹשֶׁה
 11 בְּעַד הַטָּאָתָם וּלְמַעַן דַּעַת כּוֹחֲךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְאֵין רֹב חֲסָדְךָ [ה]
 12 לְדוֹרוֹת עוֹלָם

8 Please Lord, act, then, as you do, in accordance with your great power, You, wh[o did for]give
 9 our fathers when they made your mouth bitter. You became angry with them as to destroy them;
 but you took pity
 10 on them because of your love for them, and on account of your covenant—for Moses atoned
 11 for their sin—and in order that they would know your great power and your abundant kindness
 12 for everlasting generations.

⁸¹³ The force of the analogy between the people and Moses is also supported through the prayer’s structure: as it has claimed that the Lord is present face to face with the people, just a few lines later, the prayer refers to the scriptural dictum used to emphasize Moses’s unique contact with God in that God spoke *face to face with Moses* (*pnym ’l dbr[t]h pnym*). The structuring device of parallelism strengthens the analogy between the people and the authoritative speech of Moses: they have adopted his words; as Moses spoke face to face with God, God appears eye to eye with the people. The penitents adopt the ancient leader’s own words to establish an effective “meeting space” in their own time modeled after Moses’ meeting with the Lord. Such pairing also appears in more fragmentary form in 6 III, 10–12. Here, while the Lord’s holiness goes *before* the people [*lpnynw*], in the next line, an unknown subject appears *before* Moses [*pnym mwšh*]. The evidence is fragmentary, but based on the proximity of the terms, as well as the pairing movement occurring elsewhere in the prayer, it is very likely that a comparison was being made in this text as well.

This section of the prayer appeals both to Israel's time in the wilderness as a time in which the Lord's compassion was displayed and also to Moses as the effective agent of atonement. Chazon identifies distinctive verbal parallels with Moses' intercessory prayer: the phrase "who did forgive our fathers" (*'š[r n]š't[h] l'bwtnw*; 4Q504 1 + 2 ii XV, 8–9) closely adapts Num 14:19 "as you forgave this people" (*k'sr nš'th l'm hzh*). The adaptation of the same verse "according to the greatness of your steadfast love" (*kgdl ḥsdk*; Num 14:19) to read "according to the greatness of your strength" (*kgdl kwḥkh*; 4Q504 1+2 ii XV, 8) is made, according to Chazon, on the basis of Moses' opening request to "make your strength great" (*ygdln' kh*; Num 14:17).⁸¹⁴ This text clearly adopts Mosaic rhetoric; the people pray as Moses prayed and ask God to forgive them as he forgave the people when Moses intervened. As Chazon observes, the author of 4QDibHam not only

alluded to and quoted from Moses' prayer following the sins of the Twelve Spies but actually modeled a new petition upon the biblical paradigm. Such modeling lends special authority to the new petition, endowing it with the added force of resemblance to a prayer offered by the foremost leader and prophet.⁸¹⁵

The last section of the petition, however, reformulates the reason for God's mercy and relates it to the social practice of reciting history communally: while in Num 14, Moses appeals to the *nations'* attention as the reason for the Lord to pardon the iniquity of the people (Num 14:15–16), 4QDibHam appeals to the people themselves as the primary audience. They request atonement so that the everlasting generations of *Israel* might know the great power and abundant kindness of the Lord. The form of Moses's petition is therefore related to the form of historical recital. By noting that part of God's motivation is the proclamation of his historical deeds ("You pitied them because you loved them... and in order that they would know your great strength and

⁸¹⁴ Chazon, "Scripture and Prayer," 29. This is likely not a significant theological interpretation as both divine traits, "strength" and "steadfast love" are referenced throughout the passage.

⁸¹⁵ Chazon, "Scripture and Prayer," 30.

your abundant kindness for everlasting generations (4Q504 1–2 ii XV, 8–11), the petitioners effectively blend Moses’s intercessory prayer with an elevation of the practice of historical recital. They ground the reason for God’s intervention in the ability of the people to continue doing what they are in fact already doing in their recitation of this liturgy: assuring the Lord’s future recognition and praise.

Reference to a Mosaic paradigm occurs both in the prayers’ content and in the overall structure of the prayers. Each successive daily prayer begins with the vocative: “Remember, O Lord!”⁸¹⁶ This is not a unique opening for Qumran prayer texts, and Chazon argues that this formula (*zkw* *YHWH*) represents an ancient liturgical opening formula that was used interchangeably with an opening *berakhah*.⁸¹⁷ Falk questions this conclusion and argues that the opening vocative formula “is simply the adoption of a biblical model as a stereotyped way to begin a series of prayers.”⁸¹⁸ This formula is only used, however, to open a biblical prayer in two cases, Ps 132:1 and Lam 5:1. The phrase can hardly be described as stereotypical based on two occurrences. Further, in each of these cases, the topic of remembrance is the hardships endured by the petitioner and not the historical deeds of God. The key to the formalization of the opening in 4QDibHam is probably more significant than this. The content of the remembrance for the first day is fragmentary, but what is preserved indicates that what the Lord is called to remember

⁸¹⁶ This call to the Lord to remember also opens the *Festival Prayers* (1Q34 1+2, 6; 4Q507 3, 3; 4Q508 2, 2; 4Q509 8 III, 4; 131 II, 5). In the *Festival Prayers*, the extant content of the remembrance includes the feasts (the Lord is asked to remember “the feast of your compassion and the time of the return” (4Q508 2, 2), and an unidentified “feast” (4Q509 131–132 II, 5), as well as more typical objects of divine remembrance “the abundance of your kindnesses” (in the context of the feast of booths) (4Q508 22 + 23, 2=4Q509 8 III, 4); “the distress and weeping” (4Q509 12 III, 6). It also appears that the Lord was asked to remember the events that inspired the Passover (4Q505 125, 1–4).

⁸¹⁷ Chazon, ““Words of the Luminaries’ (4QDibHam),” 12, 100–101.

⁸¹⁸ Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 80. There are several biblical prayers which call upon God to remember, though they do not begin the prayer and do not appear to be part of a self-contained formula. See esp. Ps 132:1 and Lam 5:1, cf. Ps 25:6; 74:2; 89:50; 137:7. With *zkw* alone, see Deut 9:27 and Neh 1:8.

(and the praying community by proxy) are the “wonders of old” and “awesome deeds” that God has performed, beginning with the creation of Adam (4Q504 8 I, 1–3). In these cases, what the Lord remembers are *his own* actions, not the suffering of the speaker or the transgressions of the enemy. The plea therefore resembles the cry of Moses to remember the Lord’s own character and covenant (Exod 32:13). The framework of Moses’ petition structures the entire prayer. The expected efficacy of such a prayer is also undergirded by an interpretation of Lev 26:42, a base text for Second Temple petitionary prayer,⁸¹⁹ in which the Lord responds to communal confession with a remembrance of the Lord’s covenant with “Jacob...Isaac... Abraham... [and] the land.”⁸²⁰ In 4QDibHam the summary remembrances that characterize both Moses’s intercessory prayer and Lev 26, and which are repeated in Second Temple penitential prayer, are significantly expanded. The basic trope of requesting for the Lord to remember his people becomes the basis for an extended summary of Israel’s dealings with God, marked by explicit scriptural quotation. The comprehensive nature of the prayer’s historical rhetoric epitomizes a particular type of historical discourse developed in the historical summaries. Moses’s prayer provides both a form of speech in which to pray and also a way in which the people can understand historical recital as part of an effective prayer ceremony.

Finally, in the prayer for the sixth day, each of these historical paradigms converges in a final meditation on the demonstration of effective knowledge. Throughout the prayer there have been implicit and explicit references to the exile as an event that precipitated the divine gift of an ability to know, to understand, and to obey. The sixth day contains an extended description of the divine agency that accompanied the exile event, its effect on the people, and their ideal response.

⁸¹⁹ Chazon, “Scripture and Prayer,” 34–38; Chazon, “The Words of the Luminaries and Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Times,” 182–184.

⁸²⁰ Chazon, “Scripture and Prayer,” 34–38.

4Q504 1 + 2 v XVIII, 2—1 + 2 vi, 18

1 + 2 v XVIII, 2–22

2 [...] י ירי [...] ...
 3 מקור מים חיים א [...] שם ...
 4 ויעבדו אל נכר בארצם וגם ארצם
 5 שממה על אויביהמה היא [נש] פכה חמתך
 6 וחר'ני אפכ' באש קנאתכה להחריבה
 7 מעובר ומשב בכול זואת לוא מאסתה
 8 בזרע יעקוב ולו געלתה את ישראל
 9 לכלותם להפר בריתכה אתם היא אתה
 10 אל חי לבדכה ואין זולתכה ותזכור בריתכ^ה
 11 אשר הוצאתנו לעיני הגוים ולוא עזבתנו
 12 בגוים ותחון את עמכה ישראל בכול
 13 [ה] ארצות אשר הדחתם שמה להשיב
 14 אל לבבם לשוב עודך ולשמוע בקולכה
 15 [כ] כול אשר צויתה ביד מושה עבדכה
 16 [כי] א יצקתה את רוח קודשכה עלינו
 17 [לה] ביה ברכ'תיכה לנו ל {מ} פקודכה בצר לנו
 18 [ולל] חש בצקון מוסרכה { ... } ונבואה בצרות
 19 [ונגי] עים ונסויים בחמת המציק היא גם
 20 [הו] גענו א^ל בעווננו העבדנו צור בחט[תנו]
 21 [אתה] העבדתנו להועיל מדרכי[נו] בד[רך]
 22 [אשר נלך] בה [ו] לוא הקשבנו א[ל מצוותיכה]

1 + 2 vi XIX, 3–18

3 [...] ותשליך מ[ע] לינו כול פשעינ[ו] ות[ט] הרנו
 4 מחטתנו למענכה לכה אתה אדוני^י הצדקה היא
 5 אתה עשיתה את כול אלה ועתה כיום הזה
 6 אשר נכנע לבנו רצינו את עווננו ואת עוון
 7 אבותינו במעלנו ואשר הלכ'י בקרי ולוא מאסנו
 8 בנסוייכה ובנגיעיכה לוא געלה נפשנו להפר
 9 את בריתכה בכול צרת נפשו^י היא אתה אשר השלחתה בנו את אויבינו
 10 חזקתה את לבבנו ולמען נספר גבורתכה לדור^י
 11 עולם אנא אדוני כעשותכה נפלאות מעולם ועד
 12 עולם ישוב נא אפכה וחמתכה ממנו וראה ע[ו]נינו
 13 ועמלנו ולחצנו והצילה את עמכה ישר[אל] מכול
 14 הארצות הקרובות והרחוקות א[שר הדחתם]
 15 שם כול הכתוב בספר החיים [...] ...
 16 לעובדכה ולהודות ל[שם קודשכה] ...
 17 מכול צורריהמה [...] ...
 18 מ'מכשלים [...] ...

4Q504 1 + 2 v XVIII, 2—1 + 2 vi, 18

1 + 2 v XVIII, 2–22

Historical Prologue

2 [...] ... [...] [They abandoned]
 3 the fount of living water [...] ...
 4 and served a foreign god in their land. Further, their land
 5 became a wasteland thanks to their enemies. For your wrath was [pou]red out
 6 and your burning anger was a zealous flame, leaving the land desolate,
 7 so that no one went to and fro. Nevertheless, you did not reject
 8 the seed of Jacob, nor spew Israel out
 9 making an end of them and voiding your covenant with them. Surely you
 10 alone are the living God; beside you is none other. You have remembered /your/ covenant
 11 whereby you brought us forth from Egypt as the nations looked on. You have not abandoned us
 12 among the nations. You have shown covenant mercies to your people Israel in all
 13 [the] lands to which You have exiled them. You have again placed it
 14 on their hearts to return to you, to obey your voice
 15 [according] to all that You have commanded through your servant Moses.
 16 [In]deed, You have poured out Your holy spirit upon us,
 17 [br]inging Your blessings to us. You have caused us to seek You in our time of tribulation,
 18 [that we might po]ur out a prayer when Your chastening was upon us. We have entered into
 tribulation,
 19 [cha]stisement and trials because of the wrath of the oppressor. Surely we ourselves
 20 have [tr]ied ^{God} by our iniquities, wearying the Rock through [our] si[ns].
 21 [Yet] You have compelled us to serve You, to take a [pa]th more profitable
 22 [than that] in which [we have walked, though] we have not harkened t[o Your commandments.]

1 + 2 vi XIX, 3–18

3 [...] You have thrown awa[y f[r]om us all ou[r] failings and have [pu]rified us
 4 from our sin, for yourself. To you, to you, ^{Lord} belongs the justice, for
 5 you are the one who has done all this.

Petition

And now, on this very day
 6 on which our heart has been humbled, we atone for our iniquity and the iniquity of
 7 our fathers, for our disloyalty and ^{our} [his] rebellious behaviour. We have not rejected
 8 your trials, and our soul has not despised your punishments to the point of breaking
 9 your covenant, in spite of all the anguish of our soul ^{when you sent our enemies against us}. Surely it is you who
 10 has strengthened our heart, to the end that we recount your mighty works to
 11 everlasting generations. O Lord, since you work wonders from everlasting to
 12 everlasting, may, then, your wrath and rage withdraw from us. Look at [our] d[istress,]
 13 our labour and our affliction, and free your people Isra[el from all]

14 the lands, both near and far, to where [you have exiled them].
 15 All who are written in the book of life [...]
 16 to serve you and give thanks to [your holy name]
 17 from all their oppressors [...]
 18 ^{who} cause stumbling [...]

It is due to the experience of exile and the people's proper response to it that the petitioners can make claims about their divinely renewed state and their coinciding ability to atone successfully as Moses atoned. For the author of 4QDibHam, Israel is still in exile, and so this prayer is situated, not in the mouths of those who have returned, but in the mouths of those who are currently undergoing its tribulation ("on this very day, on which our heart has been humbled" [4Q504 1 + 2 vi XIX, 5–6]).⁸²¹ While in the prayer for the first day the people claim to be reliving the wilderness experience yet also need to receive divine circumcision and strengthening of the heart (4Q504 4 V, 11–12), as the prayer progresses, the people begin to claim that their response to the exile has effected a divine transformation within them ("for you have strengthened our heart" [*ky' 'th hzqth 't lbbnw*; 4Q504 1 + 2 VI, 9–10]).⁸²² The pouring out of the Holy Spirit, a divine gift that had come to be associated in the Second Temple Period with the wilderness wanderings (cf. Neh 9:20; Isa 63:11), is the direct cause of their seeking him in

⁸²¹ Penner, "Words of the Luminaries," 178–179. Penner argues that this prayer views the exile positively, as the place where "one can experience God's mercy, where one can receive a theological education, where one learns to rely upon and enjoy God's blessings" (179). Cf. for ambivalent or even positive views on the exile, Isaiah Gafni, *Land, Center, and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity*, JSPS 21 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); John Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996); Noah Hacham, "Exile and Self-Identity in the Qumran Sect and in Hellenistic Judaism," in *New Perspectives on Old Texts: Proceedings of the Tenth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, January 2005*, ed. Esther G. Chazon, Betsy Halpern-Amaru, and Ruth Clements, 3–21; Esther G. Chazon, "'Gather the Dispersed of Judah': Seeking a Return to the Land as a Factor in Jewish Identity of Late Antiquity," in *Heavenly Tablets: Interpretation, Identity and Tradition in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Lynn R. Lidonnici and Andrea Lieber, *JSJSup* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 159–176.

⁸²² See also the discussion above, where it is the exile which effected the planting of the law in the people's hearts: 4Q504 1 + 2 ii 14; "[These things were done] that we might [repe]nt with all our heart and all our soul, to plant Your law in our hearts/ [that we turn not from it, straying] either to the right or the left."

the time of their tribulation and their chastening (4Q504 1 + 2 V, 17–18). They claim to have responded correctly to this act of divine discipline, in contrast to previous generations:

5 ועתה כיום הזה
6 אשר נכנע לבנו רצינו את עווננו ואת עוון
7 אבותינו במעלנו ואשר הלכנו בקרי ולוא מאסנו
8 בנסוייכה ובנגיעיכה לוא געלה נפשנו להפר
9 את בריתכה בכול צרת נִפְשָׁנו

5 And now, on this very day
6 on which our heart has been humbled, we atone for our iniquity and the iniquity of
7 our fathers, for our disloyalty and ^{our} [his] rebellious behaviour. We have not rejected
8 your trials, and our soul has not despised your punishments to the point of breaking
9 your covenant, in spite of all the anguish of our soul.
(4Q504 1 + 2 vi XIX, 5–9)

This very strong statement (Chazon dubs it “brazen”) suggests an understanding of the ritual efficacy of the prayer liturgy: it serves to both humble their hearts (now *on this very day*, on which our hearts have been humbled; 4Q504 1 + 2 vi XIX, 5–6) as well as expiating their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers. This claim to efficacy is rooted partially in the recovery of Moses’ intercessory prayer, as noted above. But ultimately the people’s claim surpasses even that of Moses: to atone for generations past and future.

The evidence, furthermore, that the Lord has indeed answered their prayer for the “strengthening” of their heart reveals a strong claim for the function of communal historical recital. Continuing their claim, the worshippers state that:

9 כִּי אַתָּה
10 חֲזַקְתָּה אֶת לִבֵּנוּ וּלְמַעַן נִסְפֹּר גְבוּרַתְךָ לְדוֹרוֹת
11 עוֹלָם

9 [...] Surely it is you who
10 has strengthened our heart, to the end that we recount your mighty works to
11 everlasting generations.

(4Q504 1 + 2 VI, 9–11)

In this supporting clause, the experience of the worshipper who recites a liturgical progression of Israel's history is transformed into a liturgy of assurance: each successive recital, bringing Israel through the wilderness again and culminating in the exuberant praise of the Sabbath prayer, provides proof that one is counted among the numbers of the strengthened who can recount the continued mighty deeds of the Lord. It is certainly possible, as noted by Falk, that the words themselves were bolstered with a ritual performance of the Day of Atonement.⁸²³ There is, however, a much more explicit relationship between spoken word and the creation of reality that need not appeal to theories of ritual enactment: it comes close to the category of the performative utterance in speech-act theory. The prayer claims that its very language demonstrates the intended effect.⁸²⁴ Those who recite are those who understand and can effect atonement. *Dibre Hame'orot* creates a tension between effective and ineffective knowledge throughout the weekly liturgy, but the final proof of having received effective knowledge is revealed to be the very practice of engaging in this recital. The praying people claim to have rightly understood the deeds of the Lord in a way that their ancestors did not. They have demonstrated a knowledge of both a shared scripture and a shared form of prayer, which both mutually reinforce a shared memory of exile as the catalyst for their internal transformation.

Historical Discourse

Dibre Hame'orot constructs a discourse that reflects not only upon Israel's shared history but also upon the nature of reciting history itself. The knowledge that the speakers claim is comprised of two sources: the testimonies and statutes given by Moses and the ability to follow

⁸²³ Falk, "Liturgical Progression," 271–272.

⁸²⁴ J. L. Austin, "Performative Utterances," in *Philosophical Papers*, ed. J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 233–241; J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 6ff., and *passim*.

them, and an understanding of the historical events that they recite. At several points in the earlier days within the recital, the praying people refer to the superior knowledge that they possess, particularly in relationship to the two contrasting figures who lack this understanding, Adam and the ancestors.

Extensive and verbatim scriptural quotation supports the people's claim to knowledge. Previous historical recitals in the MT have fashioned a mode of speech whose field of reference is increasingly dominated by scripture.⁸²⁵ *Dibre Hame'orot* contains explicit and relatively lengthy quotations, as demonstrated particularly by the interlinked quotations of both Exod 19:4 and Deut 32:11 in the prayer for the first day. Furthermore, the shift into a poetic register for the quotations from both Exodus and Deuteronomy would likely have marked these lines as quotations from a separate source for most listeners, regardless of their familiarity with the scriptural tradition. This shift in register, which in effect "marks" a quotation, is a development from previous historical recitals which have imbedded quotations more subtly into the structure of their recitals.⁸²⁶ *Dibre Hame'orot* therefore undergirds a particular curriculum of scriptural literacy through enacted liturgical recital, encouraging repetition of particular idioms in order to create familiarity and to bring particular members of a developing canon to a central position within the community.⁸²⁷

On an even more intriguing level is the development of the *purpose* of this scriptural knowledge in the life of the community. More so than any of our previous exemplars, the recitation of these past historical events itself becomes the object of reflection within the prayer.

⁸²⁵ Cf. Newman, *Praying by the Book*, *passim*.

⁸²⁶ Cf., for example, the discussion of the poetic patterning of historical episodes in Pss 78, 105, 135, and 136 in Chapter 2 of the present work.

⁸²⁷ George Brooke, "Canonisation Processes of the Jewish Bible in the Light of the Qumran Scrolls," in *"For it is Written": Essays on the Function of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Jan Doehhorn (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2011), 13–35.

While encouraging passive familiarity with scriptural texts through repeated exposure, particularly in the form of a communally mandated liturgy, the rhetoric of the prayer itself also assigns a nearly soteriological value to the acquisition and proclamation of the very historical knowledge it itself contains.

How Are They Reading History and to What Effect?

In each of the historical recitals examined thus far, the Judeans seek to, in some fashion, construct a relationship to their past history. The past, and by the point of the writing of 4QDibHam, the biblical text itself, provides the images, the patterns, and the figures that dominate the people's construction of their present reality. In some measure this is an authorizing strategy: new modes of speech co-opt the authority of an accepted biblical text. But it is also a signifying strategy, designed to ascribe to their present a simultaneously numinous and narrative status. As Schwartz observes, this practice "defin[es] the meaning of present events by linking them to great and defining events of the past."⁸²⁸ By attaching present events to past events that already possess a sacred status, the praying people confer such meaning on their own experience. As I have traced the progression of historical recital in the Second Temple period, there is a movement towards reflexivity in the act of historical recital. That is, the act of reciting history itself is given significance. This occurs to some extent in the biblical examples but becomes more prominent in the textual examples from Qumran. There is an impulse not only to recite history, which is, in and of itself, a unifying social strategy that identifies the person speaking as possessing a "particular type of knowledge" and therefore being a "particular type of

⁸²⁸ Schwartz, "Frame Images," 8.

person,” but there is also an impulse to classify “historical recital” as a ceremony with expected ritual effects.

Halbwachs asserted that memories can present a normative vision for a society’s ideal, one that provides “models, examples, and elements of teaching.”⁸²⁹ But 4QDibHam demonstrates that the relationship of the historical paradigm to a societal ideal is complex. Historical models can represent foils, prototypes, or models to be imitated, to name just a few. I introduced Jonas Grethlein’s schema of strategies for bridging the “gap between past expectations and experiences in order to be able to project new experiences into the future” in Chapter two of this dissertation. His model is also particularly applicable in this case and provides a helpful heuristic framework with which to organize the various ways of reading the past discussed above. Grethlein argues that there are four dominant strategies used to order history: chance, continuity, regularity and development.⁸³⁰ Each of these strategies, for Grethlein, constitutes a means of coping with contingency: in the face of the unrelenting forces of chance, the discernment of grounded historical patterns provides a means to re-interpret present experience and to seek to effect an amenable future.⁸³¹

Using Grethlein’s work as a model, we can outline the strategies by which 4QDibHam re-presents the past. There are five primary strategies present:

1. Continuity is established by means of identification. Within this model, the people craft various explicit relationships to figures or events from the past. Adam is described as the first of the ancestors of Israel, “our father” (4Q504 8 I, 4). Throughout the recital, the first-person plural pronouns “we/us” are used to indicate the people’s communal

⁸²⁹ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 59.

⁸³⁰ Grethlein, *The Greeks and Their Past*, 9.

⁸³¹ Grethlein, *The Greeks and Their Past*, 9.

identification with their past. As Chazon notes, the “‘we’ speakers identify completely and unequivocally with the entire nation of Israel.”⁸³² There is no hint of an internal division within Israel based on religious or social practices or beliefs. References to particular historical events, particularly the creation of the covenant and the election of Israel, are described as exerting a continuous force on the present generation. So too, scriptural language that referred first to a former generation is applied without hesitation to the present generation: e.g. “You have lifted us wonderfully [upon the wings of] eagles and have brought us to yourself” (4Q504 6 III, 6–7; cf. Exod 19:4).

2. History is read as a source for patterns that might be revived and redirected in the present time. This reading of the past corresponds to a model of “regularity.” In 4QDibHam, two historical episodes in particular play a powerful paradigmatic function and determine a trajectory of reading other historical events throughout the seven days. The paradigm begins with Adam, the primordial human, whose creation in glory and receipt of an ultimately *ineffective* divine knowledge set the primary themes of the narrative in motion. Adam becomes both a prototype and a faulty figure to be surpassed, particularly in his ability to enact the law. The second paradigmatic figure is Moses: he provides a model who successfully intercedes for the people in prayer. The people appropriate his speech and update it to apply to their current situation.
3. Related to the above are the techniques for indicating development, common in the penitential prayer tradition and in historical recitals more generally.⁸³³ In 4QDibHam this

⁸³² Chazon, “Prayer and Identity,” 488.

⁸³³ As Falk notes, this is most clearly differentiated in Neh 9:6–37, in which the first section of the prayer deals with the historical relationship between Israel and God, and a marked break (*w’th...*) occurs (Neh 9:32) when the people transition to discussing their present situation. Other penitential prayers demonstrate a more complex structure, but they still distinguish clearly between historical events

reading strategy primarily takes the form of asserting a transformation that has taken place in the speakers, demonstrated by their response to the exile and their understanding of the deeds of God and his given statutes. Because of the transformation effected by the exile, the people are able to surpass previous historical models, Adam, the ancestors, and even Moses.

4. *Dibre Hame'orot* introduces a development in the recollection of historical events that has not appeared in the previous recitals analyzed in the present work, and which exceeds the boundaries of Grethlein's schema. In 4QDibHam, some events are retold as though they were being experienced by the current generation. This "re-visioning" differs from the claims to continuity, regularity, and development outlined above.⁸³⁴ Such rhetoric moves *beyond* the concept of regularity to the concept of recurrence. I have demonstrated above, however, that this method is applied only to a limited segment of the extant prayer and for the purpose of re-iterating one of Moses' intercessory strategies.
5. Finally, and moving beyond Grethlein's categories once again, we see that the act of reciting history itself has become a symbolic performance. It signifies a particular type of person who is not only reciting "catechetically" but understands the process of reciting itself as an activity moving towards a particular end *beyond* simply displaying or conveying knowledge. Historical recital functions as proof of a definitive transformation

experienced by the ancestors, and those experienced by the petitioner in their present. See Falk, "Liturgical Progression," 272–273.

⁸³⁴ This innovation is noted by Falk who applies to the text Barbara Newman's concept of "scripted visions" which involves a "cultivated movement from visualizing to seeing, which subjects experience as a movement from imagination to reality, from seeing 'as if' one were present in the imagined world to a sense of actually being there." Newman, "What Did It Mean to Say 'I Saw'?" 1–43. Cf. Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 156.

within the speaking community and ultimately as evidence that their petitionary prayer will also be successful.

Conclusion

As Jonas Grethlein notes in his discussion of contemporary Athenian modes of historical commemoration, the “temporal unfolding of human life appears under the conditions of chance, continuity, regularity, or development....The panopticon of events as well as the poetic continuum provides a narrative reply to the detrimental force of contingency of chance.”⁸³⁵ In 4QDibHam, this narrative reply is the construction of a historically supported agency in which knowledge of the past gives rise to present effective action. But it must also be predicated on a knowledge of a new action, in which the present generation escapes the cyclical pattern demonstrated by their elect forefathers. *Dibre Hame'orot* moves beyond the “construction of the past as continuity or regularity” in order to balance an appeal to continuity with a glorious past while also identifying a decisive historical shift that takes place with the exile, in which a new divine action decidedly raises the present generation above the failings of the fathers.

The authority of the liturgy to claim to have done this is derived from several related structures, designed to assure the status of Israel's history as a functional memory: the force of natural analogy, both in terms of a daily cycle and the extension of the presented model back into the beginning of time, and the mutually reinforcing relationship emerging between scripture and liturgy. This function is supported through a patterned form and the perception of historical patterns. So too, the very function of the historical recital itself is presented as an atoning knowledge: patterned on the person of Moses as the one who previously “reminded” God of

⁸³⁵ Grethlein, *The Greeks and Their Past*, 9.

God's glorious actions with God's people, so also now the people atone. In a divine act that supersedes even the glory of previous ages, "God has strengthened our heart so that we can recount your mighty works to everlasting generations": the recounting of the history of Torah is understood as *evidence* for the very "heartwork" that grounds obedience to Torah. In order to demonstrate that one possesses the requisite knowledge, one ideally participates in the recitation of these everlasting works.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In the Second Temple period, we witness a culturally recursive movement whereby a community, decimated and dispersed by war and exile, re-establishes a nation via a shared history, a shared religion, and eventually a shared collection of texts that will become the Hebrew Bible. This remarkable feat takes place in an age where literacy rates are low, and in which regular access to texts would not have been available to the majority of the population. The present work sought to examine the cultural practice of reciting history in the Second Temple period, its means, media, transmission, and poetics, and the influence that it might have had on the construction of such a powerful shared group identity. As Mario Liverani observes concerning historiographical literature, a historiographical document is not primarily a source of knowledge of the events that are depicted in the document, but it is a “source for the knowledge of itself.”⁸³⁶ These performances of Judah’s history witness to the role of different forms of speech and cultural media for sharing historical knowledge. It is this role, the function of this form of historical recital and its relationship to other networks of historical knowledge developing in the Second Temple period, that I have sought to delineate in this study.

In so doing, I attempt to provide an alternative to the way in which scholars analyze texts that reconfigure stories that are also contained in narrative sources. As I discussed in the introduction, research on the recitals of history in prayer and liturgy have tended to coalesce around one of two poles: they are either treated as early expressions of what would *become* narrative, or more commonly, they are treated as intertextual interpretations of narrative, forms of theological commentary. Very few studies consider how the very media in which the

⁸³⁶ Mario Liverani, “Memorandum on the Approach to Historiographic Texts,” *Orientalia* 42 (1973): 179.

historical recitals are represented, namely, as liturgical texts designed for communal recital, affects their literary character, historical hermeneutic, and social influence.

In order to break out of this twofold division, I have used categories derived from the study of social and cultural memory. In these methodologies I have found the material for a more dynamic understanding of the social structures of memory that document the influence of textual traditions on culturally endorsed patterns of speech. Ian Wilson is correct: it is important to not confuse “memory studies” with “redaction criticism” or “source criticism.”⁸³⁷ To study a society’s memory is not just to trace particular themes through culturally significant texts, but it is to observe the influence of particular media, of means of transmission, and of the construction of “participatory structures,” the ways in which people interact with their society’s memory.

At the opening to this project, I described two heuristic distinctions constructed by the Assmanns. The first is between “communicative” and “cultural” memory, and the second is between “functional” and “storage” memory. Jan Assmann’s distinction between cultural and communicative memory highlighted the fundamental importance of formal participatory structures, the means by which members of a society are encouraged to interact with cultural memory.⁸³⁸ Cultural memory is not a memory that has been actively experienced by all members of the group. In order to be shared, it is not remembered but memorized. Aleida Assmann crafts another important distinction between “functional” and “storage” memory.⁸³⁹ Her distinction recognizes a very basic difference between what *could be* remembered, that is, what mnemonic media exists in a culture, and what *actually is* remembered. “Memory,” if it is defined loosely as anything that a culture stores, can just as easily become a tool for forgetting. Functional memory

⁸³⁷ Wilson, *Kingship and Memory*, 31–32.

⁸³⁸ Assmann, “Communicative and Cultural Memory,” 109–118.

⁸³⁹ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, 119–134.

must be regularly brought to the attention of the group in order for such memories to become and remain functional. Cultures do not “have” a memory, Assmann writes, they must “make” a memory.⁸⁴⁰

The Hebrew Bible witnesses to a set of resources in which the functional memory of the community is condensed and organized into memorable patterns. We cannot assess what kind of memory an ancient Israelite *had*. We can, however, analyze what kind of memory the Hebrew Bible sought to create. This memory is usable to a group; it can be both recorded in text and performed in order to encourage that communal “memorization” that undergirds the vitality of remembered tradition. But the Hebrew Bible also attends to the social forces that encourage this very act of condensing, organizing, and then performing and transmitting memory. This is the insight that Bartlett’s Cambridge experiment, referenced at the beginning of the present work, did not measure: the human mind is well equipped to remember condensed and carefully organized information, but it is not always motivated to do so. It is important, therefore, to attend to the way in which the Hebrew Bible not only constructs historical summaries, the *media for memory*, but also presents the information contained within these summaries as vital to membership within the community, the *motivation to remember*. Such communally celebrated recitals demonstrate not only the means but the motivation to create a community unified around a common ritual celebrating a common story, which eventually undergirds a communal adherence to a common text.

One of the primary sites of memory that demonstrates this interplay of social motivation, cultural persistence, and narrative generativity is the wilderness as a site and symbol for the praying of history in Second Temple Judaism. As we have seen in the texts analyzed in this

⁸⁴⁰ Assmann, “Vier Formen,” 186.

present project, the wilderness is remembered as a site of successful petition, pneumatic vitality, fateful sin and divine provision. In the historical psalms and Neh 9 in particular, the characteristic symbols of the wilderness period, the cloud and the fire, and the food and water occur in various combinations, each of which outlines a remembered relationship between God and Israel. These images demonstrate the characteristic persistence of dominant cultural symbols as well as their relative autonomy. Symbols, once active in a community, can be arranged and rearranged in the service of different narratives.

The wilderness, however, becomes not only a source *for* memory, but it also shapes the expectation of the efficacy of the recital of history. In Ps 78, the forgetfulness that characterizes the sin in the wilderness is retold as a warning parable. The action required is to remember, unlike the ancestors. But in later recitals, the wilderness is remembered as the site for successful petition (Ps 106:23; Neh 9:18), and it begins to inspire an understanding of the role of the petitioning community themselves (Ps 106:47; Neh 9:32–36; 4Q504 6 III, 10–11). The wilderness provides both ideal models *for* prayer (Ps 106:23, 30), a script to pray (Neh 9:17) and finally a set of images to be revived in the present day as proof of the present community's proper exercise of prayer (4Q504 6 III, 10–11). It is not just a space to be remembered in prayer but a space in which to pray.

It is common in memory studies to emphasize that memory plays an *identifying* role. You know who you are in part by what stories you know. Part of enculturation in a particular group is learning about the past that each member of the group shares, whether actually or figuratively. In the course of the Second Temple period, however, the identifying role of memory becomes soteriologically significant. In 4QDibre Hame'orot, participating in the liturgy is considered to be a display of knowledge that confirms that the one who speaks has experienced a strengthening of the heart, a strengthening of the heart that results in a claim to be able to atone for their sin

(4Q504 1 + 2 vi XIX, 5–7). Our sources in the Hebrew Bible and Dead Sea scrolls therefore demonstrate the need to attend to both the content of historical speech and to the social value placed upon one's participation in this form of history re-telling. Such claims are often implicit in texts, but in the Dead Sea scrolls what was once implicit has become explicit.

This is where the form of liturgical memory once again comes to the fore. Liturgically recited memory not only confirms a knowledge of what is recited, but it also directs the listening audience in how to talk about this knowledge. It trains the participant in the correct response and in the social weight of the display of that response. The social role facilitated through psalms appears as well in narrative texts, where ideal individuals and the ideal collective both are portrayed as remembering correctly. The historical psalms and other historical recitals examined in this project do not only constitute an "education in prayer." They are also a vehicle by which to demonstrate that one is part of an educated community. In the end, the Hebrew Bible and literature of the Second Temple period offer a rich resource to explore not only historical issues of textual construction and transmission, but also the way in which communities in general think about, speak about, and perform their pasts.

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