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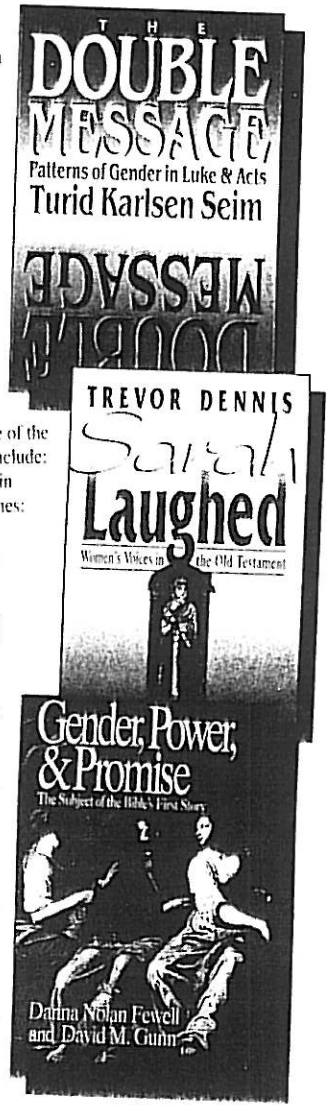

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PSALM 145: THEME, STRUCTURE, AND IMPACT

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This study is a rhetorical analysis of Psalm 145 with a focus on its theme and structure followed by an inquiry into its communal liturgical use. The aim is to uncover the poetics that inform and frame the message in order to make the structural intention and achievement of the psalmist discernible.[1]

In order to identify the structural profile of the psalm, the analysis highlights positional features such as chiasm,[2] juxtaposition, and *inclusio.* By throwing into relief the discrete components of the psalm, the process of their jelling into a whole can be elucidated. Through uncovering the poetics that inform and frame the message, the structural intention and achievement of the psalmist can be appreciated. The criterion of success "is how well a proposed structure helps to illuminate the poem's movement, its overall thought, the interaction of characters, and—to a lesser extent—the light it sheds on interpretational difficulties."[3] Psalm 145, comprising twenty-one bicola, consists of four stanzas,[4] introduced by a prelude, intersected by an interlude, and concluded with a postlude,[5] which may be diagramed as follows:

[1] I am indebted to my colleague Dr. Marc Brettler for help on structure, language, and bibliography.

[2] For the literature on chiasmus as a structural device in the Bible, see Meir Weiss, *The Bible From Within: The Method of Total Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984) 96 n. 11.

[3] Michael L. Barré, "Psalm 116: Its Structure and Its Enigmas," *JBL* 109 (1990) 61–78, 63. The advantages of the approach of rhetorical criticism adopted here for psalm analysis have been presented by Leslie C. Allen, "The Value of Rhetorical Criticism in Psalm 69," *JBL* 105 (1986) 577–98.

[4] For strophes and stanzas in the Psalms as a whole, see Paul R. Raabe, *Psalm Structures: A Study of Psalms with Refrain* (JSOTSup 104; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) 21–28.

[5] As far as I have been able to ascertain, the first to note both the tripartite division based on the key word "blessing" and the extended *inclusio* of the prelude and interlude was Rokeah (*Siddur Ha-Tefillah La-Rokeah* [ed. M. Hershler; Jerusalem: Machon Ha-Rev Hershler, 1992] 159, 163, and 165). Since this twelfth-century commentary was only recently published, it was left to Leon J. Liebreich to rediscover this structure and add the strophic analysis of four stanzas ("Psalms 34 and 145 in the Light of Their Key Words," *HUCA* 27 [1956] 187). Liebreich's thesis was adopted and expanded by Meir Weiss ("A Psalm of David" [Hebrew], in *Yuval Shay* [ed. B. Kurzweil; Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1958] 185–209; reprinted in idem, *Scriptures in Their Own Light* [Hebrew] [Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1987]) and accepted by Alfons Deissler

Prelude: vv. 1–2
I: vv. 3–6
II: vv. 7–9
Interlude: v. 10
III: vv. 11–13
IV: vv. 14–20
Postlude: v. 21

The wooden translation that follows reflects its structure as well as its internal connections by adhering, unless too awkward in English, to the Hebrew order and choice of terms. The highlighted print demarcates the four stanzas and establishes the connections between the three stages, whereas capitalization highlights the links between the opening and concluding expressions of praise.

PRELUDE

THE PRAISE OF DAVID:

א 1. **I extol** you, my God, the king,
and **bless your name forever and ever.**

ב 2. Every day **I bless** you
and praise **your name forever and ever** [saying]:[6]

Stanza I

ג 3. "**Great** is YHWH and exceedingly praised,
and to his greatness there is no limit."

ד 4. Generation to generation lauds your works,
and your mighty acts they declare.

ה 5. The glorious majesty of your splendor,[7]
and your wondrous things I narrate.

(*Die Psalmen* [Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1964), by Leopold Sabourin (*The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning* [New York: Alba House, 1974]), by Adele Berlin ("The Rhetoric of Psalm 145," in *Biblical and Related Studies Presented to Samuel Iwry* [ed. A. Kort and S. Morschauser; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985] 17–22), and by Barnabas Lindars ("The Structure of Psalm CXLV," *VT* 29 [1989] 23–30). The strictures of Leslie C. Allen (*The Psalms 101–150* [WBC 21; Waco: Word Books, 1983] 296) are oblivious to Weiss's contributions and fail to grasp the pattern-making effect of the *inclusio* formulation. Jacob Bazak overly forces the Psalm into a structure based on the hexagram (*Structures and Contents in the Psalms: Geometric Structural Patterns in the Seven Alphabetic Psalms* [Hebrew] [Jerusalem: Dvir, 1984] 11–47). Other strophic analyses, such as that of F. Bermejo, who divides the psalm into two distinct parts and then subdivides the first part into four sextains of vv. 1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12, and the second part into vv. 13b–14, 15–16, 17–18, 19–20, do little to illuminate the psalm (*Le Psautier: Ps 73–150* [Paris: Gabalda, 1979]).

[6] The adding of "saying" in brackets will be explained below.

[7] The MT lacks a verb in the first colon. The reading of Qumran and the reading that lies behind the LXX (הדר כבוד הודך ידברו/ונפלאותיך אשיחה, "The glorious majesty of your splendor they will speak and your wonders I narrate") conform to the pattern of the context and parallel precisely the next line (see below). The difference between ודברי ("things") and ידברו ("they will speak") involves a metathesis of ר and ו or simply the common misreading of one for the other.

ו 6. Of the might of your awesome deeds they talk,
and your **greatness** I recount.

Stanza II

ז 7. Recitation[8] of your abundant **goodness they declaim**
and your beneficence they sing aloud [saying]:

ח 8. "Gracious and merciful is YHWH
slow to anger and abounding in kindness.

ט 9. **Good** is YHWH to all,
and his mercies are upon all his creatures."

INTERLUDE

י 10. All your creatures shall praise you, O Lord,
and **your faithful bless you.**

Stanza III

כ 11. The glory of **your kingship** they intone[9]
and of your might they speak—

ל 12. to make known to humanity his mighty acts
and the majestic glory of his kingship.[10]—[saying]:

מ 13. "**Your kingship** is a kingship for all ages,
and your dominion is for generation and generation."

[8] זכר is equivalent to הזכרת ("make mention"), in the construct, which in the *hiphil* form can mean "declare out loud" as evidenced by the parallel use of הזכירו and השמיעו (see *TDOT* 4. 64). For examples of זכר in the *qal* meaning "make mention," see Ps 137:6, and Jer 20:9. For this meaning in liturgical contexts, note ואזכרך בתפילה ("I shall make mention of you in prayer") of Sir 51:11, which is paralleled by אהללה שמך תמיד ("I shall praise your name regularly") and אזכירך לברכה of 11QPs[a] 22:1, 12. Also the Syriac *zakkura*, from the Akkadian *zakaru* ("call upon"), and the Arabic *dakar* ("make mention") are cognates of זכר. In any case, the meaning of the *hiphil* and *qal* frequently converge, as noted by Elisha Qimron (*The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986] 89). Thus, Ps 72:12 records a *kĕtîv* of אוכיר and a *qĕrê*'of אזכור, whereas rabbinic literature derives from למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים the directive מזכירין יציאת מצרים and glosses זכירה בפה by זכור את יום השבת. Or the reverse: *Midr. Ps* 70:1 asks of the term להזכיר in 1 Chr 16:4 לבית היו מזכירין, and answers citing וזכרו נפלאותיו (1 Chr 16:12); see Nissan Breggrin, "זכר = הזכיר, היציא דבר בפיו," *Leshonenu* 21 (1956–57) 279–82. The translation of the NEB, "They shall recite the story of thy abounding goodness," is hence right on target.

[9] The collocation אמר כבוד may denote a hymnic praise as in Ps 29:7 כולו אומר כבוד ("all intone 'Glory'"). Shemaryahu Talmon lists several collocations with כבוד that he feels indicate "hymns of praise" (*The World of Qumran from Within* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989] 254).

[10] "His" in both cola appears as "your" in the LXX.

Stanza IV

ס	YHWH **supports** all who stumble,	14.
	and straightens all who are bent.	
ע	The eyes of all look to you expectantly,	15.
	and you give them[11] their food on time.	
פ	(You)[12] Open your hand,	16.
	and satisfy the desire of all living.	
צ	Beneficent[13] is YHWH in all his ways,	17.
	and faithful in all his deeds.	
ק	Close is YHWH to all who call him—	18.
	to all who call upon him truly.[14]	
ר	The desire of those who revere him he does,	19.
	and their outcry he hears and delivers them.	
ש	YHWH **preserves** all who love him,[15]	20.
	and all the wicked he destroys.	

POSTLUDE

ת	THE PRAISE OF YHWH shall my mouth speak,	21.
	and **all flesh shall bless his holy name forever and ever.**	

The Psalm's theme of divine sovereignty is announced in the first line in the words "my God the king."[16] Although there are other psalms that proclaim "my king and my God" (Ps 5:3; 84:4), only Ps 145:1 uses the definite article for the apparent purpose of underscoring the exclusivity of divine rule. The opening with "my God the king," serves as a royal acclamation. It is the awareness of such sovereignty, according to the psalmist, that engenders the desire to extend divine sovereignty and share it with others. This desire is particularly pronounced in psalms that present God as king, as do Psalms 47, 93, 96, and 99.

Psalm 145 has its message of divine sovereignty broadcast in three stages to successively broader circles. Each stage is marked by the word "bless," which crops up strategically in the second colon of lines 1, 10, and 21, the three lines that serve as prelude, interlude, and postlude. The prelude starts: "I bless your name forever"; the interlude continues: "your faithful bless you," whereas the postlude climaxes: "all flesh shall bless his holy name forever and ever." The

[11] The Greek equivalent is missing from the LXX. Its presence overloads the line; cf. Ps 104:27.

[12] The Qumran version reads פותח אתה ("you open"), as does apparently the LXX.

[13] For this translation of צדיק, and of line 7, see *TWAT* 6. 197; see also Eliezer Berkovits, *Man and God: Studies in Biblical Theology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969) 305f.

[14] Qumran reads באמונה ("faithfully").

[15] Qumran reads יראיו ("who fear him").

[16] So Abraham Ibn Ezra to Ps 145:1.

correspondence between the psalmist's "I" blessing God's name forever at the outset and the expectation of all in the end doing so animates the whole psalm that it sets the initial tone and shapes the final cadence. At midpoint, in the interlude, the psalmist involves the faithful (חסידיך)[17] as the intermediate step to involving all. The drive toward inclusiveness is reinforced by the envelope structure. By having the end formally echo the beginning, the psalm paves the way from the "I bless" of the prelude to the "all flesh shall bless" of the postlude; both "forever and ever."

Stanzas I (lines 3–6) and II (lines 7–9) are also formally framed by an *inclusio* that marks out their thematic fields. Stanza I forms a quatrain on the subject of God's greatness. Line 3 opens with **great/greatness** as line 6 concludes with **greatness**. Stanza II forms a triad on God's goodness. Line 7 celebrates God's abundant **goodness** as line 9 proclaims that God is **good** to all. By opening and closing with "great" and "good" the two stanzas converge to make the point that praise is generated by appreciating the link between divine greatness and goodness. Indeed, the juxtaposition of the two intimates what is made explicit in the next stanza, namely, that God's goodness is an expression of his greatness.[18] Stanzas III (lines 11–13) and IV (lines 14–20) serve to advance the thesis of stanzas I and II through specification and concretization, as in much of biblical parallelism.[19] What is implicit in stanzas I and II becomes explicit in III and IV.

Thus the theme of sovereignty, intimated in stanza I through expressions of divine grandeur, is made graphic in stanza III. All the salient terms such as עז/ועז ("might"), הוד ("splendor"), הדר ("glorious"), נבורה ("might"), גדול ("great") have been shown to indicate divine strength and majesty.[20] This indication is intensified by the compounding of the following terms for such greatness in an ascending order: (1) וחלודו ("his greatness"), (2) ונדולתך ("and your mighty acts"), (3) ודברי נפלאתיך ("and your wondrous things"), (4) ועזוז נוראתיך ("and of the might of your awesome deeds"), (5) וגדולתיך ("and your greatness[es]"). The order of "greatness" ascends in each stage: First, term 2 exceeds 1 by being

[17] Probably Israel; see in the same cluster of psalms Pss 148:14 and 149:1.

[18] See *Sifre Num* 134, ed. H. Horovitz, p. 180, line 13: את גדלך זו מדת טובך ("your greatness, that is the measure of your goodness"). The link between divine greatness and goodness is also noted in the ancient sabbath morning acrostic hymn אל ארזן with the words גדלו וטובו מלא עולם ("his greatness and his goodness fill the world") (*Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, ed. D. Goldschmidt [Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1971] p. 71, line 12a). This is all the more striking in view of the fact that the image system of the hymn is structured around synonymy.

[19] So Weiss, who applies to the whole psalm the principles of verse parallelism ("A Psalm of David," 201), about which see James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981) 49–51; and Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985) 15 and 19.

[20] See Marc Brettler, *God Is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (JSOTSup 76; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989) 57–72. Indeed, as Brettler notes, even גדול when applied to God approaches the sense of "most majestic."

in the plural form, a form that is applied exclusively to God in the Bible;[21] and by the fact that in the next stanza, which itself intensifies the theme of divine grandeur by focusing on divine kingship, term 2 appears twice (lines 11 and 12) and 1 not at all. Terms 3 and 4, which share the same construction, continue the process of intensification by exceeding 1 and 2 by one word and by employing terms used exclusively of God in the Bible — נפלאות ("wonders") and עזוז ("might"). Within the two terms, 4 exceeds 3 as עזוז exceeds נפלאות. עזוז, the intensive form of its homograph עז,[22] appears only four other times in the Bible (Pss 24:8; 78:4; Isa 42:25; 43:17). Since ועזוז ונפלאתיו of Ps 78:4 is the closest parallel, term 4 can be alluding to this earlier verse delicately making the point that its נוראתיך exceeds נפלאתיך of term 3 by at least one notch only to be further heightened by עזוז. This intensified form is most fitting, for although עז is a term of strength applied to both human and divine kings, עזוז itself is used exclusively of the divine.[23] Since the idiom of term 4 occurs only here, it may have been minted precisely for the intensification effect. Finally, by recalling 1, term 5 seals the envelope structure. While that alone would suffice for 5's presence, the fact that it appears orthographically as plural, albeit vocalized as singular, serves as a subtle way of summing it all up, barring, that is, any orthographic irregularity.[24] Realizing that terms 2 to 4 are exclusively applied to God, whereas 1 and 5 when applied to God indicate divine majesty, reinforces the all-pervasive theme of divine sovereignty.

By employing such suggestive terms for sovereignty, the psalmist points to the boundlessness of the universe to alert his audience to the suggestions of divine majesty reverberating everywhere. The thematic link between stanza I and stanza III is furthered by the terminological chiasmus between the two. Line 4, immediately after the performance line 3 (about which see below) of stanza I begins דור לדור ("generation to generation"), whereas stanza III (line 13) ends דור ודור. The other terminological commonality is found in lines 5 and 12, both of which are middle lines in their respective stanzas. Line 5 evolves from the general to the explicit of line 12 in the following chiastic manner:[25]

[21] As well as in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QH 4:29; 6:12; 9:17, and 4Q403 1 i 2–3). The plural form bears the meaning "wonders"; see Reuven Kimelman, "The Daily 'Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption," *JQR* 79 (1988–89) 165–98, esp. 187 n. 74.

[22] Matitiahu Tsevat, *A Study of the Language of the Biblical Psalms* (SBLMS; Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1955) 59.

[23] This holds also for the talmudic usage of עוז; see *Thesaurus Talmudis* (ed. C. Kasowsky; Jerusalem: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1954–82) 28, 314c–315a.

[24] See David Kimhi, *The Commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi on Psalms CXX–CL* (ed. and trans. J. Baker and E. Nicholson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973) ad loc.

[25] So Weiss, "A Psalm of David," 200–201.

line 5 הדר כבוד הודך

line 12 כבוד הדר מלכותו[26]

Similarly, stanza IV adduces cases of the mercies of God mentioned in stanza II, except that following in the wake of stanza III's emphasis on divine kingship, these acts of goodness up to and including providing for the righteous and doing away with the wicked (lines 14–20) now serve to dramatize signs of divine reign.[27] Hoping that perceiving the divine grandeur as refracted through a caring kingship will trigger the desire to acclaim God king, the psalmist anticipates all humanity joining in such an acclamation.

Each of the four stanzas, as we shall see, forms a step in the escalation of praise. The first stanza (lines 3–6) underscores the inadequacy of only the psalmist praising every day. Without an unending cross-generational symphony, perpetual praise cannot be sustained. The sheer magnificence and glory of God elicit a thesaurus of adulation that seeks to be exhaustive. Not only is God, according to the psalmist, "extolled, blessed, praised, yea exceedingly praised"; his works are "lauded, declared, narrated, talked of, and recounted." Nonetheless, however much "his greatness, mighty, wondrous, and awesome deeds" are exalted, divine grandeur remains limitless. Such a compounding of synonyms, found only here in the whole Psalter, indicates a structure of intensification, not simply a juggling of semantic equivalents. Through such a structure, the psalmist would have us believe that the loftiest encomium proves to be an understatement.

The second stanza (lines 7–9) celebrates the extension of divine goodness to all. The theme of divine beneficence envelops the whole section with a liturgical cast reverberating all the more loudly by capturing echoes of similar earlier verses. Line 8's cluster of epithets of grace resonates with echoes of the thirteen attributes of Exod 34:6 that was to become, if it had not already, a liturgical staple.[28] This reuse of the divine attribute formulary rings with a sophisticated play on Num 34:19 and Nah 1:3, highlighting the theme of divine goodness. Verse 8 reproduces the series of epithets of Exod 34:6, except that it has ונרול חסד ("abounding in kindness") instead of רב חסד ("abounding in

[26] The collocation of הוד ("splendor") and הדר ("glorious") of Ps 111:3 has become a tripartite phrase with the addition of כבוד and מלכות to underscore the motif of sovereignty. מלכות and הוד converge in הוד מלכיות of Dan 11:21; 1 Chr 29:25; and in 4Q*400* 2:3 (Carol Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987] 110). All four appear together in the phrase הוד והדר וכבוד מלכיותיך of the Qumran (?) psalm published by David Flusser and Shmuel Safrai ("A Fragment of the Songs of David and Qumran" [Hebrew], in *Te'udah, Biblical Studies* [Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbuts Ha-Me'uhad, 1982] 2, 83–105, esp. 86).

[27] Biblically, monarchy is ideally expressed in care for the disenfranchised, destruction of the wicked, and saving of the righteous; see Moshe Weinfeld, *Justice and Righteousness in Israel and the Nations* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1985) 26–33.

[28] Especially on holidays and public fast days. Its repeated use and revision in the Bible likely point to a liturgical function, about which see below.

kindness"), as do Pss 86:15 and 103:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; and Num 14:18. Deafness to biblical intertextuality would misleadingly suggest that גדל is employed because רב is already used up by רב טובך ("your abundant goodness") of v. 7. By initially following the standard order of the series of epithets, however, the reversal of anticipation draws attention to itself. The novel expression ארך אפים [וגדל חסד] ("[slow to anger] and abounding in kindness") contains allusions to גדל חסדך of Num 14:19 as well as to ארך אפים ונדול כח ("slow to anger and abounding in strength") of Nah 1:3. By substituting חסד for כח the vengeance context of Nahum is subverted, paving the way for the reintroduction of the forgiveness context of Numbers only to enhance at the same time the prominence of the divine חסד—the theme of the stanza![29]

Although it is difficult to determine whether "the phrases are self-conscious references to and quotations of other texts, or the product of a mind so steeped in searching other texts that they are used in a subliminal way in composition,"[30] the references here have all the hallmarks of compositional intentionality.[31] Moreover, the lack of allusion to any of the punitive attributes such as found in Nah 1:3 reflects the way ancient material was recast for liturgical recitation.[32] The interface of divine power and divine goodness between stanzas I and II was destined to play a dominant role in later liturgical compositions.[33]

To return to the structure: the interlude (line 10) performs two functions. Its first colon links up with the end of stanza II, whereas the second continues the theme of blessing of the prelude. The former reflects a kind of contrapuntal hymning invoked by God's mercies embracing all. Thus, on the heels of line 9—"his mercies are upon *all his creatures*"—line 10 states,[34] "*All your creatures* praise you.[35] The latter reflects an extension of the "I" of blessing in the prelude to the community of the faithful. The result is that both the prelude and the previous stanza are recalled in a manner that makes the interlude the bridge between the two halves of the psalm.

[29] It is clear from this context that God's care for all displaces the specific covenantal meaning of חסד; see S. Romerowshi, "Que Signifie le mot Hesed," *VT* 60 (1990) 89–103.

[30] James Luther Mays, "The Place of the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter," *JBL* 106 (1987) 7.

[31] See Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) 13, 335–50; and Weiss, *Bible From Within*, chapters 2–3.

[32] See Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 347. The later liturgical practice of subverting the import of Exod 34:6–7 by concluding the recitation with ונקה, thereby excluding לא ינקה, follows the tradition of late biblical practice, according to Jacob Milgrom, of "quoting the formula partially in order to appeal exclusively to God's mercy" (*Numbers, The JPS Torah Commentary* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990] 393). The various versions of the formulary of the thirteen attributes are charted in Adin Steinzalts, *Talmud Bavli, Rosh Ha-Shannah* (Jerusalem: Israel Institute for Talmudic Publications, 1982) 72.

[33] See Reuven Kimelman, "Adon Olam," *CLAL News and Perspectives* 2/4 (March 1987) 3.

[34] So Rokeah, *Perushe Siddur*, 147–49.

[35] This understanding of מעשיך follows its use in Pss 8:7 and 103:22 and not its use in line 4; see Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 7 n. 14.

Stanza III is marked by the theme of kingship. As realizing God's kingship induced the psalmist to bless God and extend his kingship by pointing out how his acts are to be praised in stanza I, so in stanza III (lines 11–13), the faithful bless God, realize his kingship, and seek "to make known to humanity his mighty acts" (line 12). The universal thrust of the line is thrown into relief by comparing it with the only other biblical witness of the expression "to make known his might" (Ps 106:8), where there is no mention of the audience "to humanity." What in the earlier psalm was for the sake of Israel becomes here for the sake of all. Stanza III thus advances toward the end (in both senses) of the psalm that all flesh join in such blessing. By bringing about a heightened consciousness of God's presence and work in the world, the psalmist aims to make all "alive to the awesomeness of God articulated in the order of the world."[36]

The goal of extending divine sovereignty receives visual support by the initial letters of lines 11–13 spelling out מלך (king) in a reverse acrostic. According to Rokeah, the acrostic literally spells out the theme of the stanza that God is sovereign, a point made in each of the three lines and reinforced by the anadiplosis of lines 12 and 13 that links "his kingship" and "your kingship."[37] G. E. Watson adds the observation that "the effect of inverting the root *mlk* over the three couplets . . . is to reverse the flow of time and so depict eternity."[38] Based on such phenomena in Babylonian name/sentence acrostics—which not only identify "the poem's author" or "the purpose of the composition" but also "the one to whom it is addressed"[39]—it can be surmised that the psalmist is applying this technique for dedicating the acrostic to God. Thus the opening line addresses God as "my God, the king," the sole psalm to do so.

The theme of divine sovereignty is further emphasized through the medium of the chiastic structure of lines 11 and 12:

כבוד מלכותך יאמרו וגבורתך ידברו

להודיע לבני האדם גבורתיו וכבוד הדר מלכותו[40]

In fact, in the very next line (13) the three letters of מלך, and only these three, appear six times throughout the line.[41]

[36] Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) 27.

[37] *Perushe Siddur*, 153, and 164 along with 149.

[38] G. E. Watson, "Reversed Rootplay in Ps 145," *Bib* 62 (1981) 101–2, esp. n. 10. The same idea results from Rokeah's observation that the three mentions of "kingship" indicate that "He was king, He is king, and He will be King" (*Perushe Siddur*, 153).

[39] William M. Soll, "Babylonian and Biblical Acrostics," *Bib* 69 (1981) 302–22, esp. 316.

[40] The chiastic structure is strengthened by the LXX's reading of this line in the second person, i.e., גבורתיך ("your mighty acts") and מלכותך ("your kingship").

[41] A similar, albeit more diffused, observation is made by Watson ("Reversed Rootplay in Ps 145," 102). These types of observations are frequently disregarded for dealing with units of meaning too small to be grasped by the hermeneutic net.

In the fourth stanza (lines 14–20) the shift from divine reign to divine regard is as dramatic as it is intentional. The cosmic ruler is also the daily nourisher. Since the giver of life is unconditionally the sustainer of life, regal power is mobilized in care of the downtrodden. And although, as line 17 proclaims, God is beneficent to all, there remains a correlation between the order of intimacy and the intensity of divine providence.[42] Progressing on an axis of increasing closeness, lines 16–20 state:

He feeds—all living (16);
He is close—to all who call him (18);
He does the desire—of those who revere him (19);
and preserves—all who love him (20).

The stanza reaches closure by noting God's special solicitude for his devotees as well as his doing away with the wicked. This recital of God's benefactions confirms the faith of hearers in his power and his commitment to protect those who are loyal to him.

All four stanzas are formally framed by the stylistic device of *inclusio* with three full envelope figures and a fourth partial one:[43]

stanza I	great/greatness	vv. 3–6	גדול/גדולתך
stanna II	good/goodness	vv. 7–9	טובך/טוב
stanza III	kingship/kingship	vv. 11–13	מלכותך/מלכותך
stanza IV	YHWH supports/YHWH preserves	vv. 14–20	סומך יי/שומר יי[44]

This structure also uncovers the alternating pattern of (1) transcendence, (2) immanence, (3) transcendence, (4) immanence, making the point, according to Abraham J. Heschel, that "the dichotomy of transcendence and immanence is an oversimplification." For as Heschel continues, "God remains transcendent in His immanence, and related in His transcendence."[45]

In addition, the stanzas are related by length. Stanza I comprises four verses (3–6), stanza II three verses (7–9), stanza III three verses (11–13), whereas stanza IV (vv. 14–20) comprises seven verses. By dividing the psalm at the interlude, the first two stanzas comprise seven verses and the last two comprise ten. By dividing them by subject matter, stanzas I and III comprise seven verses and stanzas II and IV comprise ten. Either way, the ratio remains seven to ten, confirming the original diagram.[46]

[42] So Amos Hakham, *Sefer Tehillim* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1984) 2. 577.

[43] On the different types of envelope figures, see G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 284.

[44] The form " appears four times in stanza IV. The framing terms are the first and last, both of which are verbal, whereas the middle two are adjectival.

[45] Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1962) 486.

[46] This concern for symmetry and size in the combination of stanzas characterizes the compositional nature of several psalms; see Raabe, *Psalm Structures*, 175–77.

The call of the postlude of line 21 is also the finale. With the realization that God is a caring king, the praise of God is extended to its fullest, climaxing in a crescendo resounding throughout humanity everywhere and forever. This extension is underscored by the contrast between the postlude and the prelude, which itself is replayed in the postlude except for the two exceptions shown below:

Prelude:	לעולם ועד	שמך	ואברכך
Postlude:	לעולם ועד	שם קדשו	ויברך כל בשר

In the postlude, the symphony of "all flesh" has joined the soloist of "my mouth" in blessing, though the soloist retains his voice; and the "name" of the prelude by virtue of its universal acceptance has become the "holy name."[47]

What began as "the praise to/of David" culminates as "the praise of YHWH."[48] By returning to the motif that was announced at the outset, the whole composition is ringed together from beginning to end by the theme of praise. Unmarred by any precatory element,[49] Psalm 145 ends up alone meriting the superscription "Psalm of David."[50]

The postlude of the Psalm can also serve as the prelude to the final five psalms of the Psalter, which conclude with Ps 150:6. The two endings are linked chiastically in the following manner:

[47] Obadiah Sforno makes the case for this use of "holy" by adducing Isa 54:5 (*The Writings of R. Obadiah Sforno* [Hebrew] [ed. Z. Gottlieb; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1987] 253). Berkovits adduces Isa 12:5–6 to make a similar case (*Man and God*, 144).

[48] The envelope structure was long ago noted by R. Zakkai (cited in Louis Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies* [Hebrew] [New York: Hermon Press, 1969] 1. 301, the sixth reason), followed by a host of medieval and modern commentators. Liebreich noted that about half the psalms are characterized by such structures ("Psalms 34 and 145 in the Light of Their Key Words"). The notion that the conclusion should recapitulate the opening (חתימתן מעין פתיחתן) became a liturgical principle; see *b. Pesah.* 104a, and *Tosafot Ha-Rosh* to *b. Ber.* 10a in *Sefer Berakhah Mešulešet* (reprint, Jerusalem: Moshe Leib Levine, 1968) 7b.

[49] So *Siddur of R. Solomon ben Samson of Garmaise including the Siddur of the Haside Ashkenas* (Hebrew) (ed. M. Hershler; Jerusalem: Hemed, 1971) 58.

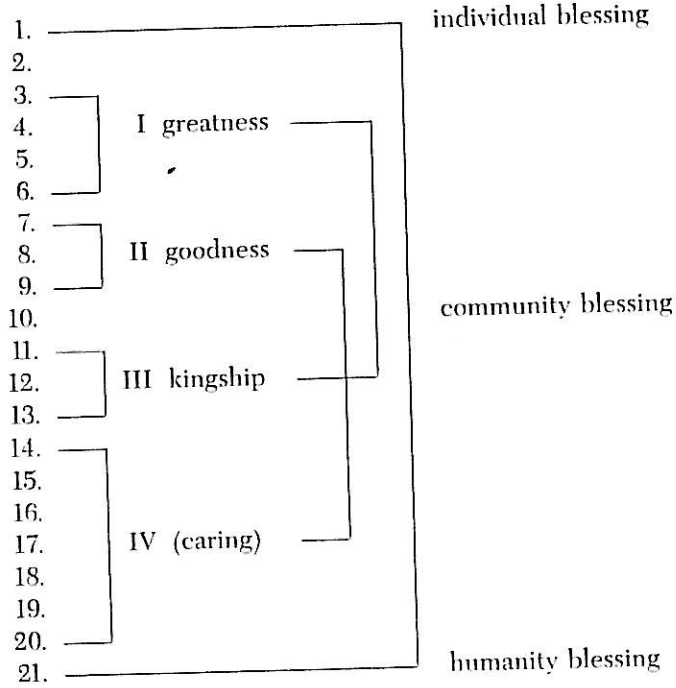
[50] The reference לדוד may simply indicate "in honor of David" (as opposed to the end of Psalm 72—תפלות דוד), since David was portrayed by the Chronicler (1 Chr 15:16–24) as a royal patron of psalms. The *lamed* would then be one of attribution or classification; see Sabourin, *Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning*, 15. David's involvement in psalmody and Temple choral music seems to be a postexilic tradition found in Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah; see Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and its Place in Biblical Thought* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1977) 197, and 396 n. 208, though his musical talents are noted earlier (Amos 6:5; 2 Sam. 1:17–27; 3:33–34). This would support the postexilic dating of the psalm. On the whole issue of whether biblical psalmody can be traced back to David, see Alan M. Cooper, "The Life and Times of King David According to the Book of Psalms" in *The Poet and the Historian* (ed. R. E. Friedman; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983) 117–31, esp. 127.

ויברך כל בשר / שם קדשו / לעולם ועד

כל הנשמה תהלל / יה / הללויה

Thus, Psalms 146–150 can "function as an answer to the exhortation" of the postlude that "all flesh shall bless his holy name forever and ever," by climaxing with the crescendo, "Let every breathing thing praise God" (Ps 150:6).[51]

The following diagram, illustrating the four stanzas along with the prelude, interlude, and postlude, indicates how the structure of the psalm reflects its alignment of ideas.



Clearly, "to understand how a poem is constructed is to begin to understand what it expresses."[52]

Psalm 145 is unified by both external and internal features. Its most noticeable external one is its Hebrew acrostic. There have been different positions on what role this structural device plays in the meaning of the psalm.[53]

[51] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 193–94.

[52] Berlin, "The Rhetoric of Psalm 145," 18.

[53] For a positive assessment of the aesthetic value of acrostics, see Liebreich, "Psalms 34 and 145" 181–84; and Soll, "Babylonian and Biblical Acrostics," 305 n. 1.

Those who deny it any substantive significance aver that vertical abecedary poems are by their nature artificial. As evidence in this case, they adduce the inversion of the word pairs in lines 8 and 21 as forced. In both they err. With regard to line 21, the error lies in failing to perceive the envelope structure of the whole psalm. Also those who fault חנון ורחום ("gracious and merciful") in line 8 for being a mechanical inversion of the רחום וחנון ("merciful and gracious") of Exod 34:6 in order to conform to the requirements of the acrostic do not realize that חנון ורחום is the standard order of late Biblical Hebrew,[54] whether prose or poetry, and as such appears in Pss 111:4; 112:4; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Neh 9:17, 31; and 2 Chr 30:9, as well as 1QH 16:7. The exceptions are Ps 86:15 and 103:8, which either evoke or cite Exod 34:6. Since the order of line 8 conforms to the type of late Biblical Hebrew that characterizes much of Psalm 145,[55] there is little evidence of any acrostic-imposed artificiality.

On the contrary, once the function of the acrostic is understood, it can be seen as integral to the message of the psalm. First, however, the role of the acrostic must be clarified, something that is problematic since there is little agreement on the function of acrostics in general. Some see the full alphabet as a metaphor for totality,[56] or as a reflection of the full range of human expression.[57] Others see it as a memory aid,[58] or as relating to the "enumerative character of Semitic poetry."[59] The explanation most apposite to its use in Psalm 145 is the metonymic understanding advanced by Berlin. She says, "the entire alphabet, the source of all words, is marshalled in praise of God. One cannot actually use all of the words in a language, but by using the alphabet one uses all potential words. So the form is made to serve the message."[60] Thus, she shows that the ordered poetics have not only not fettered expression but have been enlisted in the task of assimilating form to content.

The psalmist's sense of what is poetically apt is so acute that the anticipated *nun* verse between lines 13 and 14 has been excluded.[61] In fact, all the

[54] See John P. Peters, *The Psalms as Liturgy* (New York: Macmillan, 1922) 488; and Avi Hurvitz, *The Transition Period in Biblical Hebrew* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1972) 105.

[55] See Hurvitz, *Transition Period in Biblical Hebrew*, 83, 85, 87, 93, 94, and 105; along with E. Qimron, "Regarding Second Temple Language in the Book of Psalms" (Hebrew), *Beit Miqra* 23/73 (5738) 139–51, esp. 149; and below, n. 95.

[56] See *b. Šab.* 55a. Similarly, Norman K. Gottwald proposes that the acrostic form represents the idea of "completeness" (*Studies in the Book of Lamentations* [London: SCM Press, 1954] 32).

[57] David Abudarham, *Abudarham Ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem: Usha, 1963) 120.

[58] *Midrash Tadshe, Bet Ha-Midrash* (ed. A. Jellinek; Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1967) 3. 185.

[59] Soll, "Babylonian and Biblical Acrostics," 322.

[60] Berlin, "The Rhetoric of Psalm 145," 18. Similarly, Kimhi says, "inasmuch as this psalm in its entirety is a praise of God, he composed it in the form of an acrostic" (*Commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi on Psalms CXX–CL*, 129).

[61] On the whole question of partial acrostics, see Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 198–99;

other acrostic psalms ascribed to David (i.e., Psalms 25, 34, and 37) are missing a letter or two, whereas those lacking any ascription (i.e., 111, 112, and 119) are all perfect acrostics.[62]

Not able to leave matters alone, the Septuagint, Vulgate, Peshitta, and Qumran versions inserted a *nun* verse. In its Qumran version it reads נאמן אלוהים בדבריו וחסיד בכול מעשיו ("Faithful is God in his words and pious in all his deeds"). The authenticity of this verse is highly questionable. First, its second colon is identical to the second colon of line 17 in a psalm that otherwise lacks any colon duplication. Second, it announces itself as a non-scriptural insertion by employing אלוהים, as opposed to the sevenfold use of the tetragrammaton in the paleo-Hebrew script found throughout the Qumran version.[63] Finally, its first colon is suspiciously like the peroration of the post-*haftarah* blessing that reads האל הנאמן בכל דבריו[64] ("the God who is faithful in all his words") and thus may be a liturgical *topos* interpolated to complete the acrostic.

Another suggestion for the *nun* line appears in an eighteenth-century manuscript of a text entitled *The Words of Gad the Seer*. In chapter 10 there occurs a version of Psalm 145 with a *nun* verse that goes נפלו כל אויביך ה׳ וכל נכורתם בלעו ("All your enemies fell down, O Lord, and all of their might was swallowed up"). Despite the double mention of כל and the conjunctive *waw* beginning the second colon,[65] the verse must be adjudged an interpolation on two accounts: its mention of the downfall of enemies is inappropriate for a context of examples of God's care, and the verbs are in the perfect, unlike any other in the psalm.

Content-wise, there is no indication of anything missing.[66] On the contrary, it has been speculated that the absence of the *nun* line is part of the message; namely, as all human praise of God is theologically inadequate, so the psalm is alphabetically imperfect.[67] There are also structural benefits that accrue by virtue of the absence of a *nun* line. By preventing stanza III from eliding into stanza IV, its absence demarcates the thematic distinctiveness of both. It also makes line 11, with its expression about the intoning of God's majesty—

A. R. Ceresko, "The ABCs of Wisdom in Psalm xxxiv," *VT* 35 (1985) 99–104; and David N. Freedman, "Acrostic Poems in the Hebrew Bible and Otherwise," *CBQ* 48 (1986) 408–31.

[62] So Bazak, *Structures and Contents in the Psalms*, 10 n. 2.

[63] So Sidney Hoenig, "The Qumran Liturgic Psalms," *JQR* 57 (1967) 327–32, esp. 330.

[64] *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, p. 77, line 13.

[65] Meir Bar-Ilan adduces these as evidence for the authenticity of the verse ("The Date of *The Words of Gad the Seer*," *JBL* 109 [1990] 487 n. 34).

[66] So M. Dahood, *Psalms III: 101–150* (AB 17A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970) 335; and Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 193.

[67] So Yafet ben Eli (tenth century), as cited in Uriel Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms from Saadya Gaon to Abraham Ibn-Ezra* (Hebrew) (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1982) 75 n. 45.

כבוד מלכותך יאמרו ("the majesty of your kingship they intone"), the hinge verse. The result is that the central idea finds its expression at the center of the psalm.[68]

That the absence of a *nun* line is not an oversight is further evidenced by the psalmist elsewhere balancing the need for unifying factors against the precision of expression. Thus, of twenty-one lines only nineteen begin the second colon with the conjunctive *waw*.[69] Its absence in lines 8 and 18 simply conforms to the demands of content as does the absence of a *nun* line. Consistency is not allowed to straitjacket poetic felicity. As the ancients noticed, some poets fill out the acrostics totally while others do not (*Midr. Qoh. Rab.* 1:13).

One of the most obvious internal unifying features is the presence of כל, translated either as "all" or "every," which threads its way through the psalm seventeen times. Its virtual ubiquity highlights the unending universal chorus of praise to a God whose sovereignty and solicitude are not only eternal but everywhere breaking through both temporal and spatial frontiers.[70] So, for example, God, who is praised *every* day (line 2) and by *all* flesh, is good to *all*. As Berlin notes, "*all* should *always* praise him," since, "there is created a relationship between God's universal beneficence and the universal praise of him."[71]

A less obvious unifying feature is the phonemic sonority of the psalm. The pervasive use of alliteration, especially of sibilants, palatals, and labials,[72] creates sonant linkages among adjacent words. The sonority is mostly created through the use of alliteration that is especially pronounced in the aforecited chiastic sections. Two examples where the psalmist paid a price for such

[68] In defense of the presence of the *nun* line, Lindars rejects the hinge role for line 11, saying, "As the sense runs on from verse 10, it cannot be taken alone, and so it must be taken as the centre of a triad ending with verse 12. But this then leaves verse 13 hanging in the air" ("Structure of Psalm CXIX," 24). The flaw in Lindars's comment is found in his own acceptance of the organizing principle of *inclusio*. He states that "within this frame, verses 11–13 are bound together by the prominence of *malkût*. It is the second word in verses 11 and 13" (p. 26). By recognizing that lines 11–13 form a unit, Lindars should have seen that not only does the sense of line 10 not run on, but it forms an independent unit, namely, an interlude, and that line 13 is not "hanging in the air" but seals the *inclusio* with line 11.

[69] This observation harks back to R. Zakkai, in Ginsberg, *Genizah Studies*, 1. 301, and reappears in a host of medieval comments; see Abraham ben Nathan of Lunel, *Sefer Ha-Manhig* (ed. Y. Raphael; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1978) 1. 53 n. 28; and *Siddur of R. Solomon*, 59 n. 55.

[70] See Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 288. Allen adduces the sixfold occurrence of כל in each unit, according to his division, as additional evidence of the drive for symmetry that infuses the psalm (*Psalms 101–150*, 295). Bazak also underscores the aesthetic-symmetrical consideration (*Structures and Contents in the Psalms*, 26–29).

[71] Berlin, "The Rhetoric of Psalm 145," 19.

[72] See the examples cited by Bazak, *Structures and Contents in the Psalms*, 29; Watson, "Reversed Rootplay in Ps 145," 102 n. 6; and Gene M. Schramm, "Patterning in Biblical Hebrew," in *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of George C. Cameron* (ed. Louis Orlin; Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1976) 171.

euphony should make the point. The first is an example of final-letter first-letter alliteration. זכר רב טובך of line 7 could have profitably evoked כל טובי of Exod 33:19 by replacing רב by its *biblical* equivalent כל except that placing רב after זכר creates a syzygy for euphonious pronunciation while simultaneously allowing for easy elision into the *bet* of טובך. The second is that of line 20. The contrast between אוהביו ("who love him") and רשעים ("wicked") is notable since רשעים is normally coupled antonymically with צדיקים (righteous"),[73] whereas with שונאיו, אוהביו ("who hate him") would be in order. The advantage of רשעים lies in its consonance with the upcoming ישמיד ("he destroys"), which in turn reverts to the head word שומר ("preserves"), thereby underscoring the contrast between the consonantal שמר and שמד.[74] Finally, lines 19–20 contain a cluster of six different words with a ש followed by a מ, forming the word שם as a lead into the conclusion that "all flesh will bless his holy name (שם)."[75]

Poetically speaking, the perception of unity is compounded through the acrostic appealing to the eye, the alliterations to the ear, and כל combining both. In this manner, the external and internal linkages converge to produce a unified sensory experience.

Although the acrostic, the pervasive presence of כל, and alliterative sound patterns conspire to engender a sense of the whole, the constant variations of both the subject and object and the apparent erratic changes in the verb detract from that sense. Rokeah noted that there are twenty-three cases of God being referred to in the second person, twelve in the third, and ten without any personal pronoun,[76] but he does not offer any explanation for the variety. Noting the general change from first person verbs in the beginning to the fluctuation between first and third in the middle and the exclusive use of third person verbs in the end, Berlin claims that the variations are "not a random pattern, but one that emphasizes the major purpose of the psalm: through the psalmist's praise everyone will come to praise God."[77]

This understanding of the whole structure can resolve the crux of lines 5 and 6. Both, according to the LXX, fluctuate from third person plural to first person in the same line:[78]

5. הדר כבוד הודך ידברו ונפלאתיך אשיחה
6. ועזוז נוראתיך יאמרו וגדולתיך אספרנה

Since there are no subsequent first person verbs, this parallel strophe plays the pivotal role of transition from first person to third person. This transitional

[73] See the list in Weiss, *The Bible From Within*, 249 (Hebrew original, 122).
[74] Thus שומר is translated "preserve" in contrast to the "destroy" of ישמיד.
[75] So Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 296.
[76] Rokeah, *Perushe Siddur*, 165.
[77] Berlin, "The Rhetoric of Psalm 145," 21.
[78] This is not comparable to the common shift from first person singular to plural or vice versa; see Barré, "Psalm 116," 74 n. 50.

role would be more obvious if the first person verb had preceded the third person verb. Since there is no syntactical problem in reversing the order of the verbs, the present order ostensibly makes the point that even though "they" are expected to join the praise of the psalmist, the psalmist retains his leading position as in line 21.

With regard to the whole psalm, Weiss notes that while most of the lines describe human praise of God, what he calls "from below to above," lines 3 and 13 describe only God, whereas lines 8–9 and 14–20 (except for 15a) describe the relationship between God and humanity, what he calls "from above to below." He concludes, "There is therefore a special relationship between stanza I and III, and between II and IV . . . stanza I and III are parallel to each other chiastically. Common to both, moreover, is the presence of a verse that is not involved in a movement that rises from man to his God and not a movement that descends from God to man—rather one that speaks about God alone."[79] A similar observation lies behind the comment of the *Harper's Bible Commentary* that sees "the call to praise in vv. 1–2, 4–7, 10–12; motivation in vv. 3, 8–9, 13–20; and conclusion in v. 21."[80]

Common to both observations is the recognition that the following four verses or sets of verses—3, 8–9, 13, and 14–20—are of a different order from the rest. *Harper's Bible Commentary* refers to them as "motivation," whereas Weiss sees them as talking about God or God's relationship to humanity. In any event, it is significant that one set appears in each of the four stanzas of the structure and that the two that are about God alone (3 and 13) are in stanzas I and III whereas the two that talk about God's relationship to humanity (7–8, 14–20) are in stanzas II and IV.

This division seems to be alluded to also by Berlin when she says, "taken together, the two halves of the psalm constitute a poetic lesson in how to speak about God and what to say." She then goes on to say that "the psalm . . . is a good example of the very kind of thing that it is advocating. It succeeds in proclaiming praise to God."[81] In neither case, however, does she answer the question how the psalm specifies what to say.

The answer lies in focusing on those lines of a different order in the first three stanzas. They can be seen as the performance of the previous verbs. In stanza I, line 2 says, "I will praise Your name" and line 3 performs the praise saying, "Great is YHWH and exceedingly praised, and to his greatness there is no limit."[82] In stanza II, there are two lines of performance, one for each of the previous cola following an *a b b a* structure. Line 9, beginning with "good" is the expression of the "goodness" of 7a, as line 8 is the expression of the

[79] Weiss, "A Psalm of David," 191.
[80] *Harper's Bible Commentary* (ed. James L. Mays; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 493.
[81] Berlin, "The Rhetoric of Psalm 145," 20–21.
[82] So Rokeah, *Perushe Siddur*, 115.

beneficence of 7b. Thus the use of ירננו, translated as "sing aloud," which in its nominative form רינה is often parallel in use and in meaning to תפילה ("prayer"), especially in the Psalter.[83]

In stanza III, line 13: "Your kingship is a kingship for all ages, and your dominion is for generation and generation," is the performance of line 11: "The majesty of your kingship they intone and of your might they speak." Line 12—"to make known to humanity his mighty acts and the majestic glory of his kingship"—is parenthetic, as is made clear by the unique subordinate infinitive construction, the purpose of which is to supply the addressee of line 11.[84] Besides noting the addressee, it adds nothing. It simply reformulates the previous line as seen in the chiastic structure diagrammed above.

These so-called performance lines are characterized not only by similar function and grammatical structure but also by the fact that they all have biblical parallels. Line 3a is paralleled by Ps 48:2a[85] and 96:4a. The various formulations of line 8 were noted above with the closest being Ps 103:7. Line 13 recurs in an Aramaic version in Dan 3:33 and paraphrastically in 4:31. Also much of stanza IV is paralleled elsewhere in Psalms: line 14 is significantly paralleled by Ps 146:8b; lines 15–16 are similar in terminology and content to Ps 104:27–28; and lines 17 and 19 are redolent of Ps 34:18. Although it is popular to point to this as evidence of the anthological nature of Psalm 145, the fact that the overlap is precisely of these sections lends credence to the position that these recyclings through reformulations of earlier material are not just intertextual allusions, but liturgical *topoi*.[86]

A special case is the parallel in Daniel, which may already be a *topos* as evidenced by its parallel in Ugaritic literature.[87] Its place in Nebuchadnezzar's mouth is better explained as a liturgical *topos* than as a citation from Psalm 145.[88] A liturgical setting would account for its presence in both the Psalter and Daniel.

[83] Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:12; 1 Kgs 8:28 = 2 Chr 6:19; Pss 17:1; 61:2; 88:3; 119:169; see N. E. Wagner, "רנה in the Psalter," *VT* 10 (1960) 435–41. Good examples of such liturgical use in postbiblical literature are Sir 50:19: וירנו כל עם-הארץ בתפילה ("and all the people of the land sang aloud in prayer"), and the listings in Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1957) 341.

[84] For a similar use of להודיע ("to make known") before a liturgical proclamation, see 11QPs[a] col. 2:3–4, with Patrick W. Skehan, "A Liturgical Complex in *11QPs[a]*," *CBQ* 35 (1973) 195–205 esp. 205.

[85] Which itself was the levitical song for Monday; see the end of *m. Tamid*, and the superscription to Psalm 48 in the LXX.

[86] On formulaic language in the Psalter, see Robert C. Culley, *Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967) 112–19.

[87] *CTA* 2 iv *UT*, 68:10; see Avishur, *Studies in Hebrew and Ugaritic Psalms*, 162. In contrast to the Ugaritic psalm, where eternal kingship is established by defeat of enemies, it is established here by divine greatness and goodness.

[88] Apparently perplexed by this, the midrash (*Lev. Rab.* 13:5, and parallels) adduced it as evidence of Nebuchadnezzar's affinity for psalmist expressions!

The performance sections of each stanza also function structurally as do some refrains in the Psalter by either opening or concluding stanzas.[89] Such commonality in structural role may reflect a similarity of function. The imperative—albeit formulated in the jussive[90] form—call of others to praise can also be adduced as evidence of having been designed for liturgical use.[91] The notion that recognition of divine sovereignty generates the duty to induce others to do so is especially pronounced in liturgical texts in general,[92] and in the Psalter in particular.[93]

It has been widely assumed that the theme of universal divine sovereignty took on an added urgency in the Persian period, and that worship became less and less cult or Temple-centered.[94] A composition of this period[95] organized around the theme of universal sovereignty—which was also timeless, occasionless, and without connection to the cult or Zion—would be ideal for daily communal recitation. Such use would be facilitated by an easily recallable acrostic structure that reworked earlier psalmist elements. What better candidate than a psalm spelling out the process of universal acknowledgment of divine sovereignty by beginning with the words "Every day I bless You"—words that could easily have constituted "liturgical Everyman's" daily offering. Such a psalm could easily have become so significant that only an attribution to David would do.[96]

This evidence for an incipient liturgicality for Psalm 145 goes a long way toward accounting for its prominence in the communal liturgy of Qumran.[97]

[89] See Raabe, *Psalm Structures*, 164–65.

[90] Determining whether the verbs in the prelude, interlude, and postlude are cohortative or jussive involves a judgment of the psalm as a whole more than a grammatical assessment of the verbs alone.

[91] See Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981) 130. Allen and others whom he cites have argued for a cultic liturgical setting for Psalm 145 (*Psalms 101–150*, 297). Bazak goes so far as to chart the liturgical enactment by marking the lines of the alleged two soloists and antiphonal choirs that he claims operate throughout the psalm (*Structures and Contents in the Psalms*, 45–46).

[92] See, e.g., Jacob Licht, *The Thanksgiving Scroll* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1957) 44 n. 65; Flusser and Safrai, "A Fragment of the Songs of David and Qumran," 84–85 (2:9–14); and Kimelman, "The Daily 'Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption," 90 n. 83.

[93] See especially the refrains of Psalms 67 (vv. 4 and 6) and 107 (vv. 14, 21, and 31) along with 17. The theme of all recognizing God is also pronounced in the opening of Psalm 105, which via 1 Chr 16:8, found its way into the beginning of the morning liturgy, and in Psalms 96–100, which in the sixteenth century along with Psalm 95 achieved prominence as the liturgical welcome to the sabbath.

[94] See E. Beaucamp, "Psaumes, II. Le Psautier: Origine Cultuelle," *DBSup*, 132–57.

[95] The presence of late biblical Hebrew, the acrostic, the ascription to David, the theme of kingship, the incorporation of earlier biblical literature, especially of earlier psalms, and the affinity with postbiblical psalmody all point to a late postexilic dating.

[96] See Kugel, "Topics in the History of the Spirituality of the Psalms," 113–44.

[97] For a summary of the literature and a new proposal for the liturgical function of 11QPs[a], see Ben Zion Wacholder, "David's Eschatological Psalter 11Q Psalms[a]," *HUCA* 59 (1988) 23–72.

This liturgical prominence is attested to by its three major variations: its superscription (תפלה לדויד, "a prayer to/of David"), its subscription appended to line 21 (זואת לזכרון), and the refrain of each line (ברוך יי וברוך שמו לעולם ועד, "blessed is God and blessed is his name forever").

The change of the superscription from תהלה to תפלה underscores the liturgical role, as does the added subscription.[98] Unfortunately, the translation of the subscription by the editor as "This is for a memorial,"[99] is unclear and clouds this function. A slight improvement is made by Wacholder, who renders it as "this is for a memory," which he takes to imply "for memorization."[100] He, however, does not explain why this psalm or even just the refrain is to be committed to memory. Wacholder was right, however, in seeking linkage between the two special aspects of the Qumran version, namely, the subscription and the refrain. The point, however, is not memorization but recitation. Since the (choral?) refrain indicates that it was used for communal recitation,[101] the subscription should be translated as "This is for recitation," in conformity with the sometime use of זכר in late biblical Hebrew and postbiblical Hebrew (as noted above in the translation of זכר in line 7 as "recitation"). Such a usage for זכרון is subsequently attested to for introducing the recitation of the Shema'.[102] Thus the subscription is more than editorial, serving as it does as a liturgical directive[103] for recitation that appears to be an antiphonal rendition.[104]

The recurring refrain ברוך יי וברוך שמו לעולם ועד continues the performance mode of the psalm itself.[105] It implements the colon אברכה שמך לעולם ועד ("I shall declare your name 'blessed' forever," v. 1b), as is made visible in the following:

[98] None of the variants of the LXX support a *Vorlage* of תפלה, while the תהלה motif reappears in vv. 2, 3, and 21; see Eileen M. Schuller, *Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran: A Pseudepigraphic Collection* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 53 n. 7.

[99] James A. Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967) 67.

[100] Wacholder, "David's Eschatological Psalter," 50.

[101] On the antiquity of organized liturgical music in Israel, see N. M. Sarna, "The Psalm Superscriptions and the Guilds," in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (ed. S. Stein and R. Loewe; Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1979) 281–300, esp. 287–95.

[102] ומתחיל אז יחוד אלהיך זכרון שמע ישראל ("and then begins the unification of your God [by] reciting 'shema' Yisrael'"), as cited by Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies*, 2. 436, from a karaitic work. See also Hoenig, "The Qumran Liturgic Psalms," 328.

[103] See Wilson, *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 141 n. 3.

[104] It may not be insignificant that both Psalm 145 and the Shema' in liturgical contexts are associated with the term זכרון and that both were recited antiphonally; see Reuven Kimelman, "The Shema' and Its Rhetoric: The Case for the Shema' Being More than Creation, Revelation, and Redemption," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 2 (1992) 132–33.

[105] A variation of this refrain appears in the medieval response ברוך הוא וברוך שמו ("blessed is he and blessed is his name"); see Naftali Weider, "ברוך הוא וברוך שמו—ניקורו זמנו וניוסחו," in *Studies in Rabbinic Literature, Bible and Jewish History* (ed. Y. Gilat, C. Levine, and Z. M. Rabinowitz; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1982) 283–84.

אברכה שמך לעולם ועד
ברוך יי וברוך שמו לעולם ועד

אברכה functions not as a denominative but as a delocutive, declaring God and his name ברוך, as frequently is the case in liturgical texts.[106]

A communal liturgical setting for at least parts of Psalm 145, if not all, helps explain its impact on subsequent liturgical development such as the *hodayot* hymns,[107] and the *nišmat* of the sabbath liturgy.[108] Its daily recitation, recommended in the Talmud, may reflect an ancient tradition.[109]

There is even some indication that the three movements of Psalm 145 left traces on the opening formulary of the statutory benediction. The prelude begins with the self's relation to God; the interlude moves on to that of the faithful; and the postlude encompasses all of humanity. These three stages not only contain the word "bless," but they parallel those of the benediction[110]—as can be seen in the following chart:

"Blessed are you"	prelude	=	self	God
"O Lord our God"	interlude	=	community	God
"King of the universe"	postlude	=	humanity	God

Noteworthy is the fact that the Talmud traces the kingship requirement of the benediction to Ps 145:1.[111] In fact, the four requirements of the benedictory formulary ברכה (blessing), השם (the divine name), עולם (world/eternity), and הזכרת מלכות (kingship) appear together only in this verse.[112]

[106] See José Faur, "Delocutive Expressions in the Hebrew Liturgy," *JANES: Ancient Studies in Memory of Elias Bickerman* 16–17 (1984–1985) 4–54; and Skehan, "A Liturgical Complex," 197 and 195 n. 13.

[107] In general, see Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 44, esp. nn. 65 and 69. In particular, see Bonnie Kittel, who says "Stanzas A and B [of *Hodayot* II], 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" (*The Hymns of Qumran* [SBLDS 50; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981] 117).

[108] See Meir Bar-Ilan, *The Mysteries of Jewish Prayer and Hekhalot* (Hebrew) (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1987) 106.

[109] *B. Ber.* 4b; the requirement of a thrice daily recitation was a gaonic development. For a discussion of the verses prefixed and suffixed to Psalm 145 in its rabbinic liturgical context, see Reuven Kimelman, "*Ashre*: Psalm 145 and the Liturgy," in *The Rabbinical Assembly Proceedings 1992*, 54 (1993) 114–15.

[110] How the tripartite benedictory formula came to be by the third century CE still needs clarification. For now, note only that it differs from its closest biblical parallel (1 Chr 29:10) precisely in the shift from "the God of Israel" to "our God" and from "ever to ever" to "king of the world."

[111] *Y. Ber.* 9:1, 12d; see *Midr. Pss* 16:8. *The Siddur of R. Solomon*, 57, offers the interesting suggestion that the transition from direct to indirect speech of the benedictory formulary derives from Psalm 145.

[112] So Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies*, 1. 301, reason 7.

The six-word, tripartite structure of the benediction corresponds to the six-word, tripartite structure of the Shema' verse in the following manner:

שמע ישראל / ה' אלהינו / ה' אחד
ברוך אתה / ה' אלהינו / מלך העולם[113]

Thus, it is easy to view the benedictory formulary, the Shema' verse, and Psalm 145 as reflecting the same triple shift from self through community to humanity, all peaking in the realization and extension of divine sovereignty over everyone.[114]

By placing Psalm 145 at the head of the series of psalms that introduce the recitation of the Shema' and its blessings in the morning rabbinic liturgy, Psalm 145 serves to adumbrate the Shema' and its theme of the realization of divine sovereignty. This adumbration was alluded to by S. D. Goitein when he designated Psalm 145 "the Shema' of the Book of Psalms."[115] This designation marks the degree to which the structure and the content of Psalm 145 converge to promote the idea of the extension of divine sovereignty. In view of this subsequent role for Psalm 145, it should not be a great surprise to find the beginning of the liturgical trajectory in the psalm itself.

[113] Since, according to *m. Ber.* 2:2, the recitation of the Shema' verse is an act of realization of divine sovereignty, the last part of the benedictory formulary and that of the Shema' verse are functional equivalents, both affirming universal divine sovereignty. Thus *Sipre Deut.* end of 31, glosses "the Lord is one" with "for all humanity."

[114] The same three shifts characterize the upcoming three psalms (146–148) as well as the last fifteen blessings of the 'Amidah; see Kimelman, "The Daily 'Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption," 191.

[115] S. D. Goitein, *Biblical Studies* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Yavneh Publishing House, 1957) 228. Note the observations on kingship by Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989) 547, 549.

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JEHOSHAPHAT'S JUDICIARY AND "THE SCROLL OF YHWH'S TORAH"

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In standard treatments of ancient Israelite juridical polity, the depiction of Jehoshaphat disseminating law to the populace (2 Chr 17:7–9) and reorganizing the judiciary (2 Chr 19:4b–11) fulfills a critical function. The books of Samuel and Kings contain only incidental information about the monarch's role in administering justice, while the prophets only allude to royal involvement or corruption in the exercise of justice. Especially since Albright's study of Jehoshaphat's reforms, scholars have cited 2 Chr 17:7–9 and 19:4b–11 as generally trustworthy information for reconstructing the history of monarchical justice in ancient Judah. Albright's assessment that the Chronicler's depiction of Jehoshaphat's juridical reforms is "substantially correct" dominates contemporary scholarly opinion.[1]

Albright defended the historicity of Jehoshaphat's reforms by appealing to the witness of archaeology and the precedent of Haremheb's reforms in the fourteenth century BCE, but many other scholars have sought to uphold the historical accuracy of Jehoshaphat's reforms by arguing that Jehoshaphat's reorganization reflects a pre-Deuteronomic stage in Israelite judicial development.[2] According to H. J. Boecker, G. C. Macholz, A. D. H. Mayes, J. Myers, A. Phillips, K. Whitelam, H. G. M. Williamson, and R. R. Wilson, the Deuteronomic reform modifies the juridical policy implemented by Jehoshaphat.[3]

[1] W. F. Albright, "The Judicial Reform of Jehoshaphat," in *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume* (ed. Saul Lieberman; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1950) 61–82. For the range of opinion on the Chronicler's abilities as a historian, see the helpful surveys by S. Japhet, "The Historical Reliability of Chronicles," *JSOT* 33 (1985) 83–107; and M. P. Graham, *The Utilization of 1 and 2 Chronicles in the Reconstruction of Israelite History in the Nineteenth Century* (SBLDS 116; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990) 9–249.

[2] K. Whitelam disputes Albright's use of Haremheb's reforms as an analogy to Jehoshaphat's reforms (*The Just King: Monarchical Judicial Authority in Ancient Israel* [JSOTSup 12; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1979) 203–5.

[3] H. J. Boecker, *Law and the Administration of Justice in the Old Testament and Ancient East* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980) 47–49; G. C. Macholz, "Die Stellung des Königs in der israelitischen Gerichtsverfassung," *ZAW* 84 (1972) 157–82; idem, "Zur Geschichte der Justizorganisation in Juda," *ZAW* 84 (1972) 314–40; A. D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 261–69; J. Myers, *II Chronicles* (AB 12; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965) 99–117; A. Phillips, *Ancient Israel's Criminal Law: A New Approach to the Decalogue* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970)