

The Servants in Psalms 22, 69, and 102

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1. Introduction

An examination of the Psalter reveals a handful of references to those called the “servants” and “offspring,” some of which coincide to a surprising extent with themes and locutions that are also prominent in Isaiah 40–66.¹ Three psalms in particular are notable in this respect: Psalms 22, 69, and 102. But who are the “servants” / “offspring” mentioned in these psalms? And how should the similarities in theme and outlook between these psalms and the book of Isaiah be explained? In this chapter I will show how Psalms 22, 69, and 102 have been editorially coordinated to an extended argument in Isaiah 40–66, one which is generally agreed to have come into being by a process of *Fortschreibung*. Thus the editorial growth of these psalms reflects the extension of an argument that is already formed in the composition of the book of Isaiah itself. The editing of these psalms can be attributed to scribes who sought to define their identity and the identity of their community in terms of the “servants” of Isaiah 54, 56–66.

With respect to the identity of the “servants” in Isaiah 54, 56–66, scholarship has long been aware that they are connected in some way to the “Servant of Yhwh” in Isaiah 40–55.² In Isaiah 53, it is said that the “Servant of Yhwh” who suffers and dies will “see offspring” (v. 10) and “make many righteous” (v. 11). After this chapter, the Servant drops out of the book, and is replaced by

¹ The plural form “servants” should be distinguished from the self-deprecating singular expression “your servant” (e.g., Ps 119.17) and from the references to “your servant David” or “your servant Moses.”

² See the Introduction to this volume.

references to the “servants” and the “offspring.”³ As Willem Beuken has shown, the main theme of the latter part of Isaiah revolves around these servants and their destiny—and how it is that they constitute Yhwh’s purpose to bring about righteousness in Israel and the nations.⁴

Joseph Blenkinsopp has argued that while some of the occurrences of עַבְדֵי יְהוָה in Isaiah 40–55 refer to Israel, others refer to a prophetic figure within Israel whose righteous suffering was commemorated by his disciples.⁵ The “servants” of Isaiah 54, 56–66 represent a community who formed themselves around the values of this Servant.⁶ Just as the Servant suffered (Isa 50:6; 53:2–12), the servants also suffer persecution from others (Isa 57:1; 66:5); just as the Servant was vindicated (Isa 50:7–9; 52:13; 53:10–12), the servants also are promised vindication (Isa 54:14–

³ References to the “servants of Yhwh” occur in Isa 54:17; 56:6; 65:8, 9, 13, 14, 15; 66:14, and references to the “offspring” of the Servant (cf. Isa 53:10) occur in Isa 59:21; 61:9; 65:9, 23; 66:22.

⁴ W. A. M. BEUKEN, “The Main Theme of Trito-Isaiah ‘The Servants of YHWH,’” *JSOT* 47 (1990): 67–87; idem, “Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI: Trito-Isaiah and the Closure of the Book of Isaiah,” in *Congress Volume: Leuven 1989*, ed. J. A. Emerton (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 204–21.

⁵ Joseph BLENKINSOPP, “The ‘Servants of the Lord’ in Third Isaiah: Profile of a Pietistic Group in the Persian Epoch,” *PIBA* 7 (1983): 1–23; repr. in *“The Place Is Too Small for Us”: The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship*, ed. R. P. Gordon (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 392–412 (here 408–10); idem, “The Servant and the Servants in Isaiah and the Formation of the Book,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. C. Broyles and C. A. Evans, VTSup 70/1 (New York: Brill, 1997), 155–75 (here 164–65, 173).

⁶ BLENKINSOPP, “Pietistic Group,” 411: “If, moreover, the titles (Servant, Servants) are the same, it is because the disciples embody the form and exemplify the consequences of the prophet founder’s ministry”; idem, “A Jewish Sect of the Persian Period,” *CBQ* 52 (1990), 5–20 (here 14): “. . . the statement that the servant will see his offspring and the outcome of his travail implies either belief in a miraculous restoration to life or, more probably, that his work and mission will be continued by those who, like the speaker, have come to believe in him and have answered the call to perpetuate his mission and teaching.” See further BLENKINSOPP, “The Servant and the Servants,” 170–73; idem, *Isaiah 56–66. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19B (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 33–34, 63–66, 132–33, 275–83, 293–301.

17; 65:13–16; 66:2, 5–6); and just as the Servant is depicted as one who brings about the universal recognition of Yhwh (Isa 49:5–7; 53:11), in the same way the servants are also connected with this goal, whether as members of restored Zion whose light will attract the nations (Isa 65:9; 66:10–14; cf. 60:3–14; 62:1–2) or in their connection with the proclamation described at the end of the book (Isa 66:14, 18–19, 21–23).⁷ Blenkinsopp further notes that this community identified as the “servants” bears all the hallmarks of a sectarian group, and can be located in the tumultuous years of the early Persian period.⁸ The existence of a distinct social movement and the literary outworking of this movement’s values provide the background for the scribal activity I describe below. As Ulrich Berges has noted, “it can be safely stated that there is a growing awareness that the term עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה in Isaiah is not only a term for the pious but a pointer to a special group of people in post-exilic times who were active in the shaping of the literary heritage of Ancient Israel.”⁹

2. The Coordination of Psalms 22, 69, and 102 to Isaiah 40–66

Many commentators have detected parallels between Isaiah 40–66 and Psalms 22, 69, and 102, and some have even suggested that these psalms were edited in light of Isaiah. Joachim Becker argued that all three of these psalms shared the same motifs and “same salvation-historical situation” as Isaiah 40–66.¹⁰ Joseph

⁷ On the difficulties of Isa 66:18–23, see BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56–66*, 314–16.

⁸ BLENKINSOPP, “Pietistic Group,” 397–403; idem, “The Servant and the Servants,” 168–71, 173–75.

⁹ Ulrich BERGES, “Who Were the Servants? A Comparative Inquiry in the Book of Isaiah and the Psalms,” in *Past, Present, Future: The Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor and Harry F. van Rooy, OTS 44 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1–18, here 6. See also Joseph BLENKINSOPP, *The Beauty of Holiness: Re-Reading Isaiah in the Light of the Psalms* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), esp. 121–33.

¹⁰ See Joachim BECKER, *Israel deutet seine Psalmen: Urform und Neuinterpretation in den Psalmen*, SB 18 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk,

Blenkinsopp suggested the possibility of a shared “cultic connection” between Trito-Isaiah and Psalms 69 and 102, all of which mention the “servants of Yhwh.”¹¹ And Ulrich Berges has argued that certain psalms mentioning the “servants” arise from the same circle of tradents as Trito-Isaiah, and that those who self-identified as the “servants” were involved in the editing of the Psalter.¹² But what were the motives for the redactional coordination of these psalms to the book of Isaiah, and how was this accomplished? To answer these questions, we must first trace the flow of thought in each psalm and identify the themes and locutions common to these psalms and Isaiah 40–66. In particular, we will look for the presence of themes describing innocent or righteous suffering, hope for vindication from God, and the future universal recognition of Yhwh and his kingship.

2.1 Psalm 22

Psalm 22 is remarkable for its diverse genre features, which occur in three sequential sections. We find language characteristic of individual complaint in vv. 2–22a (e.g., complaint, vv. 2–11, 13–19; petition, vv. 12, 20–22a), individual thanksgiving in vv. 22b–27, and universal praise in vv. 28–32 (note the disappearance of the individual in these verses). These differences of language and outlook are so pronounced that Bernhard Duhm suggested Psalm 22 was made up of two completely different psalms, one consist-

1966), 42–53; the shared motifs he identifies include Yhwh’s kingship, the release of captives and restoration of Zion, the recognition of Yhwh, and the possession of the earth by the descendants of Yhwh’s servants. See esp. 43: “Gedanken und Sprache lehnen sich anerkanntermaßen stark an deutero- und tritoisaianische Texte an, die ja auch aus derselben heilsgeschichtlichen Situation heraus geschrieben sind.”

¹¹ BLENKINSOPP, “The Servant and the Servants,” 166; see also idem, *Opening the Sealed Book: Interpretations of the Book of Isaiah in Late Antiquity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 200–201.

¹² Ulrich BERGES, “Die Knechte im Psalter. Ein Beitrag zu seiner Kompositionsgeschichte,” *Biblica* 81 (2000): 153–78; idem, “Who Were the Servants?,” 1–18.

ing of vv. 2–22, and the other consisting of vv. 23–32.¹³ But whatever its compositional history (see below), the psalm’s structure is in fact tripartite: vv. 2–22a, 22b–27, 28–32. Curiously, the transition between complaint (v. 22a) and thanksgiving (v. 22b) occurs within a line-pair (at least in the MT); this may indicate the presence of editorial shaping.¹⁴

Prominent images and repeated vocabulary include wild animals (bulls, lions, dogs) representing enemies (Ps 22:13–14, 17, 21–22), vivid depictions of physical discomfort (vv. 15–18), and forms of the words “far off” (קַחֲרָ, vv. 2, 12, 20) and “help” (רַצָּה, vv. 12, 20). The flow of the argument begins with two complaints (vv. 2–11): the speaker feels that God is distant (vv. 2–3), and onlookers mock the speaker’s reliance on Yhwh (vv. 7–9). Following each complaint is a reference to the past: in vv. 4–6, to Yhwh’s deliverance of “our fathers,” and in vv. 10–11, to the speaker’s reliance on Yhwh from birth. The rhetorical function of these references to the past is to motivate Yhwh to act again in the present. Psalm 22 then shifts to petitions in vv. 12, 20–22; these call on God to “not be far off” and to “deliver.” The petitions in these verses bracket a new set of complaints in vv. 13–19, which depict an “assembly of evildoers” in terms of vicious animals and describe the speaker’s extreme physical distress. In the middle of a petition (v. 22), the speaking voice suddenly affirms that “You answered me!” This abrupt shift to thanksgiving then moves into vows to praise (v. 23, 26) and calls to praise (v. 24, 27b) for Yhwh’s deliverance of the afflicted (v. 25, the suffering individual; v. 27a, the “poor”). At this point the psalm again shifts abruptly; the speaking individual vanishes, and the scope of the senti-

¹³ Bernhard DUHM, *Die Psalmen*, KHC (Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1899), 74: “Ps 22B [= vv. 23–32] ist wesentlich ein Produkt des liturgischen Bedürfnisses und darum als Gedicht nicht bedeutend . . . Dass der Ps der späteren Zeit angehört, ist klar, ebenso, dass er mit Ps 22A nicht das mindeste zu thun hat.” This suggestion is not unreasonable when we consider Psalm 108 (Ps 108:2–6 = Ps 57:8–12; Ps 108:7–14 = Ps 60:7–14).

¹⁴ MT v. 22b: עֲנִיתִי “you answered me!” The LXX translator took v. 22b as continuing the complaint, which caused him to construe the form as a suffixed noun (τὴν ταπεινώσιν μου).

ments becomes global and even eschatological.¹⁵ In vv. 28–32 we find the statements that “all the ends of the earth” will turn to Yhwh, whose kingship is over all; that both living and dead will worship him; and that his righteousness will be declared to future generations.

There are few features that would allow us to date the psalm with certainty, other than the outlook expressed in v. 30 (which is surely late).¹⁶ Most models for the composition of Psalm 22 postulate an original core with later redactional additions (typically, vv. 28–32); most also agree that there is some kind of literary relationship with the book of Isaiah.¹⁷ In particular, a number of

¹⁵ So Klaus SEYBOLD, *Die Psalmen*, HAT (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr / Paul Siebeck, 1996), 97: “Ein eschatologischer Ausblick auf das Königtum JHWHs bildet den letzten Teil (28–32), der die Dokumentation fortschreibt und zugleich in eine universale Perspektive stellt”; see also Hubert IRSIGLER, “Psalm 22: Endgestalt, Bedeutung, und Funktion,” in *Beiträge zur Psalmenforschung: Psalm 2 und 22*, ed. J. Schreiner (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988), 193–240, esp. 196.

¹⁶ The statement that the dead will worship Yhwh (לפניו יכרעו כל־יורדי) עפר, v. 30) is a departure from the belief expressed in e.g. Pss 88:6, 11–13; 115:17; see Hans-Joachim KRAUS, *Psalms 1–59*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 300; SEYBOLD, *Die Psalmen*, 99.

¹⁷ For a survey of compositional models, see Gottfried VANONI, “Psalm 22: Literarkritik,” in *Beiträge zur Psalmenforschung: Psalm 2 und 22*, ed. J. Schreiner (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988), 153–92 (here 156–61); Marko MARTTILA, *Collective Reinterpretation in the Psalms: A Study of the Redaction History of the Psalter*, FAT II/13 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 99–105. For Wood, vv. 2–19 constitute the original psalm, and vv. 4, 10, 20–32 represent a “rewriting” of it; see Joyce RILLET WOOD, “Writing and Rewriting of Psalm 22,” *Studies in Religion* 48.2 (2019): 189–215. For Hossfeld and Zenger, vv. 2–3, 7–23 constitute the original psalm; this influenced the composition of the Deutero-Isaian Servant passages. The original psalm was then given a series of editorial additions, the latest of which was vv. 28–32; see Frank-Lothar HOSSFELD and Erich ZENGER, *Die Psalmen I: Psalm 1–50*, Neue Echter Bibel (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1993), 145, 149. For Gelin, vv. 2–27 constitute the original psalm, and vv. 28–32 represent a post-exilic editorial expansion dependent on Deutero-Isaiah; see A. GELIN, “Les quatre lectures du Psaume xxii,” *BVC* 1 (1953): 31–39. Martin-Achard also understood vv. 28–32 to be a later addition, but noted similarities between the *original* lament and Deutero-Isaiah; see R. MARTIN-ACHARD, “Notes Bibliques: Remarques sur le Psaume 22,” *Verbum Caro* 17 (1963): 78–87 (here 81, 82). My reconstruction follows

commentators have argued that Psalm 22 was composed and/or edited in light of the so-called “Servant Songs” of Isaiah 40–55.¹⁸ There are in fact numerous shared words between these texts: Ps 22:2–3 // Isa 49.8 (עֲנָה, יְשׁוּעָה); Ps 22:7 // Isa 49:7; 53:3 (בְּזָה); Ps 22:9 // Isa 53:10 (חֲפִיץ); Ps 22:10–11 // Isa 49:1, 5 (מִבֶּטֶן, אִם); Ps 22:12 // Isa 49:8 (עֲזָר); Ps 22:16 // Isa 53:12 (מֹת); Ps 22:19 // Isa 53:12 (חֲלֵק); Ps 22:22 // Isa 49:8 (עֲנָה); Ps 22:23 // Isa 52:15 (סִפֵּר); Ps 22:24 // Isa 53:10 (זָרַע); Ps 22:25 // Isa 49:7; 53:3, 4, 7 (בְּזָה, עֲנָה, סִתַּר פְּנֵי); Ps 22:27 // Isa 57:15 (לִבִּי / לֵב); Ps 22:28, 30 // Isa 49:7 (חֹה); Ps 22:31 // Isa 52:15; 53:8, 10 (זָרַע, דֹּר, סִפֵּר, דֹּר).

But while it is possible that the composer of Psalm 22 was borrowing vocabulary from the depiction of Deutero-Isaiah’s suffering Servant, it should be noted that none of these words are exclusive to Psalm 22 and Isaiah 40–55; they can in fact be found in many complaint psalms. It is not simply shared vocabulary that suggests a relationship between Psalm 22 and Deutero-Isaiah, but shared themes and argument structure (see below). Furthermore, one should also take into account the *differences* between the de-

that of Briggs, for whom both the original core (vv. 2–23) and later expansions (vv. 24–25, 27 and vv. 28–32) were post-exilic and dependent on Isaiah 40–66, though the composer also undoubtedly drew on the motifs and language of traditional complaint and thanksgiving psalms. See C. A. BRIGGS and E. G. BRIGGS, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 2 vols.; ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1906), 1:190–91.

¹⁸ See BRIGGS and BRIGGS, *Psalms*, 1:190: “The ideal of the Ps. is so nearly related to the suffering servant of Is.² that there must be dependence of the one upon the other If the suffering servant of Is.² is exilic, that of the Ps. is post-exilic”; Claus WESTERMANN, *Gewendete Klage: eine Auslegung des 22. Psalms* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1955), 63: “Es ist auch nicht zufällig, daß gerade dieser Psalm deutliche Anklänge an die Gottesknechtlieder in Deuterojesaja zeigt (vgl. Jes. 53,3; 52,14; 49,7; 53,10)”; Carroll STUHLMEYER, *Psalms 1–72* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1983), 147: “the psalmist nonetheless found companionship—or better, sheer survival—by repeating over and over the laments particularly of the prophet Jeremiah but also the Servant Songs of Second Isaiah, and then by absorbing and recasting them into new forms.” See also DUHM, *Die Psalmen*, 72; S. R. DRIVER, *Studies in the Psalms* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 171, 180; A. GELIN, “Psaume xxii,” 36.

piction of the Deutero-Isaian Servant and the sufferer of Psalm 22. First, the Isaian Servant does not feel abandoned by God, whereas in Psalm 22 the speaker does (though obviously not enough to prevent him from crying for and expecting help!). Second, the Servant's suffering is mysteriously linked to God's design (Isa 53:10), while the speaker's suffering in Psalm 22 is not depicted as part of a divine plan. Third, the Isaian Servant's suffering is for the benefit of and in the place of others (Isa 53:5, 6, 8, 12; he is even described as "bearing sin"), whereas the sufferer of Psalm 22 is not described in this way. Finally, the Servant figure actually dies (Isa 53:8, 9, 12), whereas the speaker in Psalm 22 feels close to death (v. 16), but does not in fact die (vv. 22b, 25).

It seems to me, then, that the suffering individual of Psalm 22 is not simply a "collectivization" of the Deutero-Isaian Servant figure.¹⁹ Rather, as I have argued elsewhere, Psalm 22 should be understood as a *paradigmatic* reading of Isaiah in light of how the values of the Servant are taken up by the servants of Isaiah 54, 56–66.²⁰ First, we find in Ps 22:31 a reference to the "offspring" (זרע), which is the very same designation that we find in Isaiah for the servants, the ostracized group who saw themselves as faithful to Yhwh.²¹ Moreover, Psalm 22 seems to refer to the Servant of Isaiah 53, the one from whom the servants derived their identity:²² "*And the one who did not preserve himself alive—*

¹⁹ As is argued by BRIGGS and BRIGGS, *Psalms*, 1:191–92; DRIVER, *Psalms*, 181–82; BECKER, *Psalmen*, 52, 53.

²⁰ Michael A. LYONS, "Psalm 22 and the "Servants" of Isaiah 54, 56–66," *CBQ* 77.4 (2015): 640–56.

²¹ See also BECKER, *Psalmen*, 52, 53; MARTTILA, *Collective Reinterpretation*, 211.

²² LYONS, "Psalm 22," 650. See already Matthew Poole, who took Ps 22:30–31a as a parallel to Isa 53:10 ("if he makes himself (נפש) a reparation offering, he will see offspring"); POOLE, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible. Vol. I*, ed. Thomas Parkhurst et al. (London: John Richardson, 1683). BECKER, *Psalmen*, 53, also sees a parallel to Isaiah 53, but reads the reference collectively: "Die Stelle gehört nicht (wie etwa Ps 71,18) dem Bereich der individuellen Heilserfahrung an, sondern ist wie die angeführten Parallelstellen vom Volk zu verstehen, das als Knecht Jahwes in den Tod gegeben wurde (Is 53,8–9), aber in der Nachkommenschaft, dem künftigen Geschlecht, Jahwe dienen wird. Es

offspring will *serve* him (ונפשו לא חיה זרע יעבדנו, Ps 22:30d–31a).²³

Second, we find locutions and arguments in Psalm 22 that are derived from passages outside the so-called “Servant Songs” and that play a key role in the broader argument structure of Isaiah 40–66:

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth (כל-אפסי-ארץ) (Isa 45:22)

All the ends of the earth (כל-אפסי-ארץ) will remember and return to Yhwh. (Ps 22:28)

Sing, O heavens, because Yhwh has acted (כי עשה)! Shout aloud, O lower parts of the earth! Break forth, O mountains; sing, O forest, and every tree in it, because Yhwh has redeemed Jacob, and in Israel he will be glorified! (Isa 44:23)

They will come and proclaim his righteousness to a people about to be born, because he has acted (כי עשה)! (Ps 22:32)²⁴

Third, we see the same tripartite argument structure (righteous suffering, vindication, universal recognition of Yhwh) in Psalm 22 that we see in Isaiah 54, 56–66 in the argument about the servants. In fact, it seems to me impossible to explain the logic of Psalm 22 apart from the argument structure of Isaiah. After all, what possible connection is there between the sufferings of an individual and the universal recognition of Yhwh that we see in Ps 22:28–32?

wird offenbar, daß der interpretierende Bearbeiter die Duldergestalt in Ps 22 vom Volke verstanden hat.”

²³ I follow the lineation of IRSIGLER, “Psalm 22,” 197: “MT 30d (= korr. 30c) und MT 31a verknüpfen sich primär am ehesten zu einem Satzgefüge” (yielding a balanced tricolon in v. 30).

²⁴ On this parallel, see in particular BECKER, *Psalmen*, 51.

But once we recognize that the psalm's depiction of suffering has been brought into the sphere of the Isaian argument about the Servant and servants, it makes sense: in Isa 57:1; 66:5 the servants are persecuted and mocked for their trust in Yhwh, while in Ps 22:7–9, 13–19 the speaker is persecuted and mocked for his trust in Yhwh.²⁵ Likewise, it is argued in Isa 54:14–17; 65:13–15; 66:2, 5–6 that the servants will be vindicated, and in Ps 22:22b–25 we find a description of the suffering individual's vindication. Finally, in both Isaiah 54, 56–66 and Psalm 22 we have a shared eschatological outlook in which there is global recognition of Yhwh (Isa 66:18, 23; Ps 22:28) and proclamation about Yhwh (Isa 66:19; Ps 22:31–32). So while it is true that locutions from Isaiah 40–55 may be found in Psalm 22, they are being used in light of the broader argument about the relationship of the servants to the Servant which is reflected in the final edited shape of this psalm.²⁶ The psalm in its present form invites those who suffer righteously to enter into the hope for vindication and eschatological restoration that is promised to the servants of Isaiah 54, 56–66.

2.2 *Psalm 69*

Psalm 69 contains the features of an individual complaint psalm: petitions (vv. 2a, 14b–19), complaints (vv. 2b–5, 8–13, 21–22, 30a), and expressions of praise and confidence (vv. 31ff). Hossfeld and Zenger provide a structural analysis identifying three sections (vv. 2–14a, 14b–30, 31–37), each made up of two smaller sections:²⁷

²⁵ The statements in Isa 65:8–11, 13–15; 66:14 likewise indicate conflict between the servants and their opponents. On Isa 57:1–2, see BEUKEN, “Main Theme,” 69. Blenkinsopp (*Isaiah 56–66*, 148–51) takes these verses as a lament for the Deutero-Isaian Servant by his disciples.

²⁶ See MARTTILA, *Collective Reinterpretation*, 133, who argues that Psalm 22 was edited in light of both Trito- and Deutero-Isaiah.

²⁷ Frank-Lothar HOSSFELD and Erich ZENGER, *Psalms 2*, Hermeneia, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 172–74. Groenewald divides Psalm 69 into five stanzas of two strophes each: Stanza 1, vv. 2–4, 5; Stanza 2, vv. 6–7, 8–14a; Stanza 3, vv. 14b–16, 17–19; Stanza 4, vv. 20–22,

- vv. 2–14a lament
 - vv. 2–5 water and mud imagery
 - vv. 6–14a concrete social problems
- vv. 14b–30 petition
 - vv. 14b–19 water and mud imagery
 - vv. 20–30 concrete social problems
- vv. 31–37 praise
 - vv. 31–34 individual praise (the poor and the prisoners)
 - vv. 35–37 cosmic praise (heavens, earth, and sea)

The options for dating Psalm 69 can be determined by the reference to the speaker's "zeal for [God's] temple" (v. 10) and by the expression of hope that God will "save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah" (v. 36). The latter statement demands a post-exilic date at least for the last few verses of the psalm. The former statement could reflect a pre-exilic date for the core of the psalm, or a post-exilic date for its entirety. The question of dating, then, goes hand-in-hand with the question of the psalm's compositional history: either a pre-exilic psalm was expanded after the exile, or else the entire psalm was composed and edited after the exile.²⁸

Running throughout the psalm is the keyword חרף / חרפה "reproach" (Ps 69:8, 10, 11, 20, 21). We find other repeated words and images distributed in the same order in parallel blocks: vv. 2 // 14d (הושיעני / ישעך), vv. 2–3 // 15–16 (שבלת, מעמקי־מים) / יון / טיט, טב, שטף, טיט, vv. 5 // 15 (שנאי), vv. 6 // 20 (אתה ידעת), vv. 7–8 // 20 (בוש, כלם, חרפה), vv. 10–11 // 21 (חרפה), vv. 12 // 22 (נתן), vv. 14a // 30 (ואני).²⁹ Also notable are the imprecation in vv. 23–29 (connected to the preceding verse by shared food/table image-

23–30; Stanza 5, vv. 31–34, 35–37); see Alphonso GROENEWALD, *Psalm 69: Its Structure, Redaction, and Composition*, ATM 18 (Münster: Lit, 2003), 39.

²⁸ For a summary of different compositional models for Psalm 69, see GROENEWALD, *Psalm 69*, 176–94; HOSSFELD and ZENGER, *Psalms 2*, 174–76. It seems likely that there were multiple layers of redactional activity besides the "servants"-oriented layer discussed here.

²⁹ See Leslie ALLEN, "The Value of Rhetorical Criticism in Psalm 69," *JBL* 105.4 (1986): 577–98; HOSSFELD and ZENGER, *Psalms 2*, 172–74; Marvin E. TATE, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC 20 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 193.

ry), and the seemingly cult-critical statement in vv. 32 (connected to the preceding verse by wordplay).³⁰

The flow of the argument begins with an initial petition to save (v. 2a) followed by complaint (vv. 2b–5); the latter is offered as justification (כִּי, v. 2) for the petition. The complaint uses water/mud imagery (v. 3; cf. Pss 32:6; 40:3; 124:4–5) to express a feeling of despair, followed by the description of physical pain (v. 4, a throat sore from crying out, and eyes that fail; cf. Pss 6:7–8; 119:82). The complaint then names the specific cause of distress: numerous enemies who offer false accusations (v. 5; cf. Pss 35:11–12, 19–20; 38:20; 40:13). There is a transition in v. 6; this is not a specific confession of sin, but an acknowledgment that God knows the speaker’s failings, which flows into a wish (v. 7) that those who “wait for” and “seek” God not have any cause to be ashamed by the speaker’s actions. At this point one might expect a protestation of innocence, but what we actually find is a protestation of piety: in vv. 8–13 the central complaint is that the speaker’s piety has provoked the hostility of others. The speaker reminds God that he has acted “for your sake” (v. 8), that he is estranged from family members because of his “zeal for your temple” (vv. 9–10), and that his weeping, fasting, and self-abasement are mocked by others (vv. 11–13)—yet the speaker nevertheless continues to pray to God (v. 14a). The complaint gives way to a lengthy petition (vv. 14b–22) to “answer” and “deliver.” This petition is linked by repeated vocabulary to the complaint in vv. 3–13, and is supported by reasons for God to act. In vv. 23–29 we find an imprecation against unnamed opponents. It begins with a wish that “their table” become a snare (v. 23); this seems to function as a response in kind to the complaint in v. 22 that the speaker has been given “poison” and “vinegar” as food and drink. Other than this, the imprecation is not strongly connected to what we have seen so far but introduces completely new vocabulary and imagery (divine punishment, v. 27; the language of “righteousness” and the “book of life,” vv. 28–29). The impre-

³⁰ GROENEWALD, *Psalms* 69, 140: “according to the text Yahweh prefers a שִׁיר (song) to a שֹׂר (bull), even when this is a spotless and ritually flawless sacrificial animal.”

cation is bracketed by complaint language in vv. 20–22 (which serves as justification for the petition to “ransom” in v. 19) and in v. 30a (“But I am afflicted and pained”). This complaint in v. 30a (. . . ואני) both contrasts with the preceding imprecation and mirrors the end of the earlier complaint (. . . ואני, v. 13b), and is followed in v. 30b by an expression of confidence that God’s salvation will “set on high” the speaker.

We then see a vow to praise (v. 31a). But what follows next is unusual: first, we find a statement in v. 32 that the “song” of v. 31 will please Yhwh more than a “bull”—a reflective sentiment that seems to be derived from a theme expressed elsewhere.³¹ Next, we find a statement in v. 33a that “the poor will see and rejoice.” But what will they “see”—that song is accepted rather than a bull, vv. 31–32, or the “deliverance” of v. 30? The latter seems more likely, given that the rationale for v. 33b is the similar deliverance described in v. 34 (“Because Yhwh hears the needy, and does not despise the prisoners who are his”). The praise at the individual level in vv. 31–34 is unexpectedly expanded to praise at the cosmic level in v. 35 (“heavens and earth . . . seas and all that swarm in them”). Even more unexpected is the rationale for this praise, described in vv. 36–37: the restoration of Zion, and its possession by the “offspring of his servants.” But what does the restoration of Zion have to do with the earlier complaint of the individual, and who are these heretofore unmentioned “servants”?

Verses 35–37 can be best explained as a later addition to Psalm 69, since their cosmic scope and reference to “rebuilding the cities of Zion” have no intrinsic connection to the problem of individual distress recounted earlier.³² Moreover, it is these verses

³¹ For other passages containing language which is seemingly cult-critical, or which depicts prayer, obedience, and praise in terms of or as a substitute for sacrifice, see Pss 40:7–9; 50:7–14, 23; 51:18–19; 141:2

³² So already Herman VENEMA, *Commentarius ad Psalmos LXV–LXXXV* (Leovardiae: H. A. de Chalmot, 1766), 265–66, who noted that the style of these verses differs from the preceding, and identified them as an “apostrophe” put into the mouth of a persona created by the author to express praise. See also BERGES, “Who Were the Servants?,” 14–15; BRIGGS and BRIGGS, *Psalms*, 2:115, 120; GROENEWALD, *Psalm 69*, 193–94, 221–45; idem, “Who are the “Servants” (Psalm 69:36c–37b)? A Contribution to the History of the Literature

that contain the clearest points of contact with Isaiah. They mention the “offspring of [God’s] servants”—the destiny of whom is, as Beuken has pointed out, the main theme of Isaiah 56–66.³³ Even more significant is the fact that what is predicated about the “offspring/servants” in both compositions is identical:

And I will bring forth offspring (זרע) from Jacob, and one who possesses (ירש) my mountains from Judah; and my chosen ones will possess (ירש) it, and my servants (עבדי) will dwell (שכן) there. (Isa 65:9)³⁴

For God will save Zion, and rebuild the cities of Judah, and they will live there and possess (ירש) it; the offspring of his servants (זרע עבדיו) will inherit (נחל) it, and those who love his name will dwell (שכן) in it. (Ps 69:36–37)³⁵

The theme of the inheritance of the “servants” is particularly prominent in the last part of the book of Isaiah, occurring in Isa 54:17 (נחלה); 57:13 (נחל, ירש); 61:7 (ירש); 65:9 (ירש).³⁶ The importance of this theme in Isaiah 54, 56–66, the incongruity of its appearance in Psalm 69, and the number of shared locutions between Isa 65:9 and Ps 69:36–37 suggest that Psalm 69 has been edited in light of Isaiah 40–66.³⁷ Moreover, the mention of salvation for Zion in Ps 69:36 is paralleled in Isa 46:13; 52:7; 62:1, 11,

of the Old Testament,” *HTS* 59.3 (2003): 735–61; Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 192–95.

³³ BEUKEN, “Main Theme,” 67–87; References to the “servants of Yhwh” occur in Isa 54:17; 56:6; 65:8, 9, 13, 14, 15; 66:14, and references to the Servant’s “offspring” (cf. Isa 53:10) occur in Isa 59:21; 61:9; 65:9, 23; 66:22.

³⁴ Earlier it was stated that “The one who takes refuge in me will inherit [נחל] the land and will possess [ירש] my holy mountain” (Isa 57:13).

³⁵ The depiction of the “servants” as “those who love Yhwh’s name” (Ps 69:37) can also be seen in Isa 56:6.

³⁶ BEUKEN, “Isaiah LXV–LXVI,” 206–207; idem, “Main Theme,” 77–78; BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56–66*, 276–78; idem, “The Servant and the Servants,” 174–75.

³⁷ BECKER, *Psalmen*, 45–48; GROENEWALD, *Psalms 69*, 239–60; HOSSFELD and ZENGER, *Psalms 2*, 176.

and the reference to rebuilding the cities of Judah is paralleled in Isa 44:26; 58:12; 60:10; 61:4.³⁸ Finally, the theme of the universal recognition of Yhwh (Ps 69:35) is prominent in texts such as Isa 44:23; 45:22; 52:10; 66:18–19, 23 (note also the shared motif of cosmic witness and response of praise to God’s salvific work in Isa 44:23; 49:13).³⁹

What facilitated this redactional coordination of Psalm 69 to the arguments of Isaiah 40–66? The most significant factor was undoubtedly the theme of righteous suffering that was already present in the psalm. The speaker in Psalm 69 has suffered reproach for God’s sake (עָלִיךָ, v. 8), is ostracized from family because of his zeal for God’s temple (vv. 9–10a), claims to share in the reproach that is directed at God himself (v. 10b), and suffers mockery for the expressions of his piety (vv. 11–13). Similarly, according to Isa 57:1–2; 66:5 the servants suffer for God’s sake, and like the Deutero-Isaian Servant (cf. Isa 50:6; 49:7; 53:3, 7), they are hated by others.⁴⁰

Other lexical and thematic similarities between Psalm 69 and Isaiah 40–66 probably acted as additional triggers for the redactional insertion. The theme of vindication by God—implied in Psalm 69 by the petitions in vv. 14b–19, and expressed explicitly by the statements of confidence in vv. 30b, 34—is also prominent in Isaiah 40–66 (the Servant hopes for and is vindicated in Isa

³⁸ On the connections between Isa 44:26 and Ps 69:36, both of which refer to the “cities of Judah” being “built” and “inhabited,” see Craig C. BROYLES, “The Citations of Yahweh in Isaiah 44:26–28,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans, VTSup 70/1 (New York: Brill, 1997), 399–421 (here 401).

³⁹ See BECKER, *Psalmen*, 51: “Daß sich diese deuteroisianische Stelle auf die Befreiung aus dem Exil bezieht, und daß “Er hat es getan” hier entsprechend zu deuten ist, bedarf keines Nachweises. Wir haben hier einen Text, der die Brücke von Ps 22 nach Ps 69 und Ps 102 schlägt und diese drei Psalmen miteinander verklammert. Denn wir finden das heilsgeschichtliche “Er hat es getan” von Ps 22,32 und zwar in ausdrücklicher Beziehung zur Befreiung aus dem Exil, und den zum Vorstellungsbereich vom Königtum Jahwes gehörenden kosmischen Jubel von Ps 69,35. Die ausdrückliche Erwähnung der Befreiungstat verbindet Is 44,23 mit Ps 69 und Ps 102.”

⁴⁰ On Isa 57:1–2, see BEUKEN, “Main Theme,” 69; see also Isa 65:8–11, 13–15; 66:14.

49:4b, 7; 50:7–9; 52:13; 53:12; the servants are promised vindication in 54:15–17; 56:6–7; 65:9–15, 23; 66:5, 14). The petition “do not hide your face” (Ps 69:18) is paralleled by statements in Isaiah that God has “hidden his face” from Israel but will no longer do so (Isa 54:8; 57:17–18). The petition “answer me!” (vv. 14, 17) is paralleled by statements in Isaiah that God does answer the needy (Isa 41:17; 49:8; 58:9; 65:24). The words “shame” (בוש), “disgrace” (כלם), and “reproach” (חרפה, חרף)—which form a *leitmotif* in Psalm 69 (cf. vv. 7–11, 20–21)—also play a significant role in Isaiah 40–66: the Deutero-Isaian Servant voices his confidence that he will not be “humiliated and ashamed” even though he “did not hide his face from disgrace” (Isa 50:6–7). When delivered, Israel will no longer experience “shame” or “disgrace” (Isa 45:17; 54:4), and those who “wait [קוה] for Yhwh will not be ashamed [בוש]” (Isa 49:23 // Ps 69:7). And the servants of Trito-Isaiah—who are “hated,” and rejected by their “brothers” for Yhwh’s sake (Isa 66:5 // Ps 69:5, 8–9)—will not experience “shame”; rather, their opponents will (Isa 65:13; 66:5).⁴¹ The complaint that “I waited for pity [נוד] and for comforters [מנחמים]” (Ps 69:21) is paralleled in the description of devastated Zion (Isa 51:19) before restoration: “who will show pity to you [מי ינוד לך] . . . how shall I comfort you [מי אנחמך]?” The comment that enemies have persecuted the one whom God struck (v. 27) is reminiscent of the picture of the Servant in Isaiah 53.⁴² The argument that God responds to the “afflicted” (עני, Ps 69:30), the “poor” (עניים, Ps 69:33), the “needy” (אביונים, Ps 69:34), and the “prisoners” (אסירים, Ps 69:34) can be found in Isa 41:17 (עני, אביונים); 49:13 (עני); 54:11 (עניה); 61:1 (אסורים, עניים).⁴³ In Isa 66:2, it is the “afflicted” (עני)

⁴¹ Compare the imprecation in Ps 69:23–29 to the polemic against those who persecute the servants in Isa 65:11–15.

⁴² GROENEWALD, *Psalm 69*, 174–75.

⁴³ For a discussion of the identity of the “poor” and “needy,” and of their appearance in Isaiah and the Psalms, see Ulrich BERGES, “Die Armen im Buch Jesaja. Ein Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte des AT,” *Biblica* 80 (1999): 153–77; Johannes BREMER, “Die Armentheologie als eine Grundlinie einer Theologie des Psalters,” *HEBAI* 5.4 (2016): 350–90; Sue GILLINGHAM, “The Poor in the Psalms,” *ExpTim* 100 (1988): 15–19; GROENEWALD, *Psalm 69*, 144–53, 194,

that God regards—and these are the “servants”! The wish that the “heart” of “those who seek Yhwh” will “live” (Ps 69:33) is paralleled by the statement in Isa 57:15 that God will “cause the heart of the crushed to live” and by an extended argument about those who “seek God” (i.e., the servants) in Isa 55:6; 65:1, 10.

What is the argument of Psalm 69 in light of its redaction, and what was its significance for the community in which it was shaped and used? The addition of vv. 35–37 coordinates the psalm with Isaiah 40–66 by linking righteous suffering to vindication and eschatological renewal. All creation will acknowledge Yhwh, and the individual sufferer of the psalm is made to be one of the servants, who wait in hope for their inheritance—the restored Zion (Ps 69:36–37; Isa 65:9). As Briggs notes, “This sufferer is doubtless the ideal community of Ps. 22, Is. 53.”⁴⁴

2.3 *Psalm 102*

Like Psalms 22 and 69, Psalm 102 also contains some features of an individual complaint psalm: petitions (vv. 2–3, 25) and complaints (vv. 4–12, 24). But there are also communal features present (vv. 13–23) that complicate our understanding of this psalm’s genre.⁴⁵ Hossfeld and Zenger identify its major sections as follows:⁴⁶

- vv. 2–12 petition and complaint of individual
- vv. 13–23 communal prayer for Zion
- vv. 24–29 complaint and petition of individual; promise of the future

217–20; W. Dennis TUCKER, Jr., “A Polysemiotic Approach to the Poor in the Psalms,” *PRSt* 31 (2004): 425–39.

⁴⁴ BRIGGS and BRIGGS, *Psalms*, 2:113.

⁴⁵ See Erhard S. GERSTENBERGER, *Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations*, FOTL 15 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 210–15.

⁴⁶ Frank-Lothar HOSSFELD and Erich ZENGER, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, Hermeneia, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 19–20.

The dating of the final form of this psalm to the post-exilic period is established by the reference to the “rebuilding of Zion” (v. 17) after the confidence that God would “arise and have compassion on Zion” (v. 14) for its ruined state (v. 15).⁴⁷ As with Psalm 69, scholarship is divided over whether there was an earlier core that was subsequently expanded (so Marttila), or whether the entire psalm is a late literary unity (so Steck).⁴⁸

The keyword “my days” (ימי, vv. 4, 12, 24, 25) runs throughout the individual complaint sections, and brackets the communal language in vv. 13–23. It is in fact part of the pervasive time-related language that plays a key role (see below) in the argument of this psalm: “day of my distress” (v. 3, יום צר); “all day long” (v. 9, כל-היום); “forever” (v. 13, לעולם); “all generations” (v. 13, לדר ודר); “time to favor it” (v. 14, עת לחננה); “appointed time” (v. 14, מועד); “later generation” (v. 19, לדור אחרון); “in all generations are your years” (v. 25, בדור דורים שנותיך); “your years” (v. 28, שנותיך). Other repeated language and imagery includes “to dry up like grass” (vv. 5, 12, עשב + יבש), and the three solitary birds to which the speaker compares himself (vv. 7–8).

The psalm begins with a petition (vv. 2–3) for Yhwh to hear and answer the prayer of the supplicant. This is followed by the complaint (vv. 4–12; note the *inclusio* formed by the repetition of “my days”). The complaint initially focuses on the internal experience of the supplicant: his bones “burn,” his heart is “stricken,” his “groaning” is so intense that it affects his body, and he feels as isolated as a wilderness bird (vv. 4–8). It then shifts to a description of external factors: the mockery and reproach of enemies (v. 9), and the belief that God himself is angry with and has rejected the sufferer (v. 11). The complaint finishes in v. 12 with language linking back to v. 4 (“my days”) and v. 5 (“dry up like grass”).

⁴⁷ HOSSFELD and ZENGER (*Psalms* 3, 19) note the shift from the prefix conjugation in v. 14 to the suffix conjugations in vv. 17–18, 20 (which “describe completed stages”).

⁴⁸ For compositional models, see HOSSFELD and ZENGER, *Psalms* 3, 20–22; MARTTILA, *Collective Reinterpretation*, 128–35; Odil Hannes STECK, “Zu Eigenart und Herkunft von Ps 102,” *ZAW* 102 (1990): 357–72.

The shift to communal prayer in vv. 13–23 displays a remarkable change of topic: an acknowledgment of Yhwh’s eternity (v. 13; cf. Ps 9:8; 29:10; 135:13), followed by the certainty that God will “have compassion” on ruined Zion because “your servants” are attached to it (vv. 14–15)—an action that will elicit the universal recognition of Yhwh (v. 16). Verses 17–23 form a retrospective statement that God *has* rebuilt Zion and responded to the prayers of the destitute, an action that should be permanently recorded so that all peoples may recognize it when they gather in Zion to worship Yhwh.

In vv. 24–25 the psalm shifts back to the perspective of the individual, who complains that God has “shortened his days” and then petitions God (whose “years are for all generations”) not to remove him halfway through his life. The theme of God’s eternity is continued in vv. 26–28, where it is contrasted with the temporality of the earth and heavens. Throughout the psalm, then, the individual petitioner is strongly aware of his own transitoriness (and that of creation itself), and asks God—who abides forever—to intervene. The final verse (v. 29) shifts away from the complaint of the individual with a statement that the “sons of your servants” and their “offspring” will dwell and be firmly established before God.

As in Psalms 22 and 69, we have in Psalm 102 material that bears no intrinsic relation to the problem of a suffering individual. In fact, the references in Psalm 102 to the restoration of Zion and the destiny of the servants represent Isaian themes that have been *brought into relationship* with the suffering individual, because they are *already* related to each other in Isaiah 40–66. The deviations from the individual complaint that reflect on the future of Zion and the servants (Ps 102:13–23, 29) constitute an editorial coordination of this psalm to Isaiah.⁴⁹ As in Psalms 22 and 69, we find in Psalm 102 references to the Isaian “servants” (Ps 102:15,

⁴⁹ See Gunild BRUNERT, *Psalm 102 im Kontext des Vierten Psalmenbuches*, SBB 30 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1996), 189–94; see also BECKER, *Psalmen*, 44–45; BERGES, “Who Were the Servants?,” 9–10; MARTTILA, *Collective Reinterpretation*, 133; Steck, “Ps 102,” 367–70.

29) and “offspring” (v. 29).⁵⁰ The incongruous final verse in Psalm 102 draws on the Isaian argument about the destiny of the servants:

And I will bring forth offspring (זרע) from Jacob, and one who possesses (ירש) my mountains from Judah; and my chosen ones will possess (ירש) it, and my servants (עבדי) will dwell (שכן) there. (Isa 65:9)

The sons of your servants (עבדיך) will dwell (שכן), and their offspring (זרע) will be established before you. (Ps 102:29)

Psalm 102:13–23 also articulates Isaian arguments: the hope that Yhwh will “have compassion” (רחם, v. 14) on Zion after its devastation can be found in Isa 49:13; 54:8, 10; 60:10, and the “rebuilding” (בנה, v. 17) of Zion by Yhwh is hoped for in Isa 44:26 (cf. Isa 58:12; 61:4). The statement that Yhwh “has appeared in his glory” (v. 17) is also linked to the restoration of Zion described in Isa 60:2. Psalm 102:16, 23 describe the universal recognition of Yhwh—which is not only what the Deutero-Isaian Servant brings about (Isa 49:6; 51:4–5; 52:10; 53.1), but what the Trito-Isaian servants participate in. Just as foreigners are welcomed to become part of the “servants” in Isa 56:6–8, so the incorporation of other peoples as those who “serve” Yhwh in Jerusalem is depicted in Ps 102:23. Note the connections below:

And the foreigners who join themselves to Yhwh, to minister to him and to love the name of Yhwh, to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath so as not to profane it and those who hold fast to my covenant—I will bring them to my holy mountain, and make them rejoice in my house of prayer Utterance of Lord Yhwh, who gath-

⁵⁰ References to the “servants of Yhwh” occur in Isa 54:17; 56:6; 65:8, 9, 13, 14, 15; 66:14, and references to the “offspring” of the Servant (cf. Isa 53:10) occur in Isa 59:21; 61:9; 65:9, 23; 66:22.

ers the banished ones of Israel: I will still gather to it, to its already gathered ones. (Isa 56:6–8)

And they will fear from the west the name of Yhwh, and from the rising of the sun, his glory; for he will come like a narrow river which the wind of Yhwh drives along. (Isa 59:19)⁵¹

And I—their works and their thoughts—it has come to gather all the nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory. (Isa 66:18)⁵²

And nations will fear the name of Yhwh, and all the kings of the earth your glory⁵³ . . . when the peoples are gathered together, and the kingdoms, in order to serve Yhwh. (Ps 102:16, 23)

Other Isaian motifs and locutions are also present in Ps 102:13–23: the release of “prisoners” (Isa 49:9; 61:1 // Ps 102:21);⁵⁴ Yhwh’s “holy height” (Isa 57:15 // Ps 102:20); and “recounting Yhwh’s praise” (Isa 43:21 // Ps 102:22).

Outside of these verses we find words and themes also occurring in Isaiah 40–66 which may have provided some of the impetus for the redactional adjustment of Psalm 102 to Isaiah: the comparison of humans to withering vegetation (Ps 102:5, 12) can also be found in Isa 40:7–8; the theme of having felt Yhwh’s anger and rejection (Ps 102:11) can also be found in Isa 54:8–9;

⁵¹ For a discussion of the argument in Isa 59:15b–20, and its compositional connection to Isa 63:1–6, see BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 56-66*, 194–99.

⁵² For the function of this verse in the larger argument of Isaiah, see BEUKEN, “Isaiah LXV-LXVI,” 209–10.

⁵³ Note that 4QPs^b reads “his glory”—a harmonization of this verse to the locution in Isa 59:19, prompted by the already-existing relationship between these verses.

⁵⁴ Ps 102:21 uses the same locution as Ps 79:11 (אֲנָקֶת אֲסִיר . . . בְּנֵי תַּמּוּתָהּ). Note that Psalm 79 also mentions the “servants” (Ps 79:2, 10) and laments the ruin of Jerusalem (v. 1). The final form of Psalm 102 therefore seems to constitute an editorial solution to the problem posed in Psalm 79.

57:16–17; 60:10; 64:4, 8, where it is acknowledged that Yhwh was temporarily angry at Israel and exiled them. But it is in the last few verses of the psalm that we find some of the most significant similarities:

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look to the earth beneath; because the heavens will be dispersed like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and its inhabitants will die like gnats; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness not be shattered. (Isa 51:6)

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. (Isa 65:17)

For just as the new heavens and the new earth, which I am about to make, will remain before me—utterance of Yhwh—thus your offspring and your name will remain. (Isa 66:22)

Beforehand you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain, and all of them will wear out like a garment; you will change them like clothing, and they will pass away. But you are he; and your years will not come to an end. The sons of your servants will dwell, and their offspring will be established before you. (Ps 102:26–29)

As I noted above, the controlling theme of Psalm 102 is the contrast between human temporality and divine eternity. In the earliest form of the psalm, the speaker—overwhelmed by his ephemerality—recognizes Yhwh’s eternity. He pleads with him to not snatch his life away, noting that although even the heavens and earth will pass away, Yhwh will remain. In Isa 51:6, the author contrasts the temporality of the heavens and earth with the permanence of Yhwh’s deliverance (note that both Isa 51:6 and Ps 102:27 use the expression בלה כבגד). In the transition from Deu-

tero-Isaiah to Trito-Isaiah, we learn that Yhwh’s deliverance is carried out by his Servant, who creates a community of righteous offspring—the servants. In Trito-Isaiah, the author argues that the “servants” / “offspring” will endure and inherit the “new heavens and new earth” that Yhwh will create (Isa 65:9–17, 23; 66:22). By adding the final verse about the permanence of the servants (Ps 102:29), the redactor of Psalm 102 has used Isaiah to address the complaint posed by the original speaking voice in the psalm: the solution to human temporality is to partake in the community of Yhwh’s servants, for he has promised that it is they who will remain and inherit the blessing of a restored cosmos. Just as Isaiah 40–55 and Isaiah 54, 56–66 link suffering to vindication and the universal recognition of Yhwh, Psalm 102 is brought into the Isaian argument structure, even though the suffering in the earliest form of the psalm was not overtly depicted as suffering righteously or for Yhwh’s sake. Similarly, the relationship between individual suffering and references to Zion’s destiny in Psalm 102 is difficult to explain—unless one recognizes the prior connection between the persecuted servants and their glorious inheritance in Isaiah 54, 56–66.

3. Conclusion

In the analysis above, I have outlined how Psalms 22, 69, and 102 were editorially coordinated with the argument about the Servant and the servants in Isaiah 40–66. All three psalms mention the Trito-Isaian “servants” / “offspring” (Pss 22:30d–31a; 69:36–37; 102:15, 29), and all three make heavy use of Isaianic locutions at points where they show signs of editorial expansion (e.g., Pss 22:28–32; 69:35–37; 102:13–23, 29). Two of the three psalms follow Isaiah in explicitly hoping for the restoration of Zion (Pss 69:36–37; 102:14–17; cf. Isa 52:7–9; 58:12; 60:10; 61:4), and Psalm 22 might be said to presuppose it.⁵⁵ Similarly, all three psalms follow a three-part argument structure which is incompre-

⁵⁵ See GROENEWALD, *Psalm 69*, 229–32.

hensible without reference to the Isaian argument structure about the Servant(s):⁵⁶

	<i>Suffering</i>	<i>Vindication</i>	<i>Universal Recognition of Yhwh</i>
Isaiah 40–55 (the Servant)	50:6; 53:2–9	49:4b, 7; 50:7–9; 52:13; 53:10–12	49:5–7
Isaiah 54, 56–66 (the servants)	57:1; 66:5	54:14–17; 65:13–15; 66:2, 5–6	66:18–19, 21–23
Psalms 22	22:2–22a (persecution for piety, vv. 7–9, 13–19)	22:22b–25	22:28–32
Psalms 69	69:2–30a (persecution for piety, vv. 5, 8–13)	69:33–34, 36–37	69:35
Psalms 102	102:2–12, 24 (persecution, v. 9; despair at ephemerality, vv. 4, 12, 24)	102:14–15, 17–18, 20–21, 29	102:16, 19, 22–23

As Marttila notes, “In the light of these numerous examples there can hardly be any doubt that the collective redaction in Pss 22, 69 and 102 which emphasized the return and rebuilding of the country and Yahweh’s kingship over all the world had its background and model in the compositions of Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah.”⁵⁷

Furthermore, there are good reasons to believe that Psalms 22, 69, and 102 were formed in relation to each other as well as to Isaiah 40–66. They have numerous locutions in common: Ps 22:3, 22 // Ps 69:18 // Ps 102:3 (ענה); Ps 22:4 // Ps 102:13 (ישב, of Yhwh); Ps 22:23 // Ps 102:22 (ספר שם); Ps 22:25 // Ps 69:30, 34 // Ps 102:18 (עני, בזה); Ps 22:25 // Ps 69:18 // Ps 102:3 (סתר פנה); Ps 22:27 // Ps 69:33 (דרש, ענוים); Ps 22:31 // Ps 69:37 // Ps 102:15, 29 (זרע, עבד); Ps 22:31–32 // Ps 102:19 (עם נברא, דור) / (עם נולד); Ps 69:34 // Ps 102:21 (אסיר). This fact is recognized by modern commentators, but even pre-critical commentators were

⁵⁶ TATE, *Psalms 51–100*, 194: “Ps 22 has the same literary structure as Pss 69 and 102, much of the same basic context, and is about the same length. It is possible that these three psalms all emerged from the same context . . .”

⁵⁷ MARTTILA, *Collective Reinterpretation*, 135.

aware of the relationships between these psalms.⁵⁸ The following verses show particularly striking resemblances:

The afflicted will eat and be satisfied; let those who seek him praise Yhwh; may your heart live forever! (Ps 22:27)

The afflicted will see; those who seek God will rejoice; and may your heart live! (Ps 69:33)

Note likewise the following:

For God will save Zion, and rebuild the cities of Judah, and they will live there and possess it; the offspring of his servants will inherit it, and those who love his name will dwell in it. (Ps 69:36–37)

The sons of your servants will dwell, and their offspring will be established before you. (Ps 102:29)

The locutions, outlook, and argument structure shared by these psalms indicate that they are all of a kind. On the basis of this evidence, both Groenewald and Marttila argue that Psalms 22, 69,

⁵⁸ For modern commentators, see e.g. BRIGGS and BRIGGS, *Psalms*, 2:124 (on the connections between Ps 22:25, 27 and Ps 69:33, 34); Corinna KÖRTING, *Zion in den Psalmen*, FAT 48 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 55–56 (on the connection of Ps 102:15, 29 to Psalm 69); TATE, *Psalms 51–100*, 194–95: “Note similarities between 69:18 and 102:3; 69:33 and 102:18; 69:36 and 102:17; 69:37 and 102:29; 69:34 and 102:21. . . . As noted above, some parallels with Ps 22 are also evident, and the two psalms possibly stem from the same circles.” For pre-critical commentators, see Ibn Ezra’s comment on Ps 22:31 (where he noted the similarity to Ps 102:29); see Menachem COHEN (ed.), *Mikraot Gedolot ‘Ha-Keter’: Psalms*, 2 vols. (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University, 2003); John CALVIN, *Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. James Anderson (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), 3:45: “There is a close resemblance between this psalm [= *Psalm 69*] and the twenty-second”; Herman VENEMA, *Commentarius ad Psalmos LXV–LXXXV*, 263 (on Ps 69.33): “Conf. Ps. xxii:27., qui locus nostro parallelus est.”

and 102 all went through the same multi-stage redactional process.⁵⁹

It is important to note, however, that the relation of these psalms in their current form to Isaiah 40–66 cannot be explained by a simplistic appeal to a shared “post-exilic context.” To be sure, I do think it likely that the editing of all three psalms occurred in the early Persian period among the original group who self-identified as the “servants.”⁶⁰ But as we see from the books of Daniel and Wisdom of Solomon, later communities throughout history were also inspired by the book of Isaiah to shape their identity around the righteous suffering and mission of the Servant and the servants. The deployment of borrowed locutions and the presence of the same argument structures in these texts point to a more specific relationship than can be explained by simply locating them in the same temporal period. The redaction of Psalms 22, 69, and 102 represents an attempt to constitute identity *exegetically*: that is, scribes reflected on Isaian texts and carefully edited earlier traditional psalms (the contexts of which lent themselves to this activity) in light of an Isaian argument structure in order to produce new texts that provided solutions to specific social problems. This is revealed by their appropriation of psalms containing references to communal conflict and to a persona who experiences reproach and distress at the hands of others. Through the redaction of these psalms, those who suffer for their devotion to Yhwh (Pss 22:7–9; 69:8–13) and experience despair at the thought of their ephemerality (Ps 102:4, 12, 24) are brought into the sphere of a textually-constituted community. This community will receive the inheritance promised to the servants of Isaiah 54, 56–66, namely, vindication by God and eschatological restoration, in which the

⁵⁹ GROENEWALD, *Psalms 69*, 245–46; MARTTILA, *Collective Reinterpretation*, 132–33.

⁶⁰ STECK, “Ps 102,” 369–71, dates the composition of the entirety of Psalm 102 to the 3rd-2nd century BCE. Note however Marttila’s argument that while such a date is reasonable for what he identifies as redactional additions, nothing in the remainder of Psalm 102 demands to be located in this period; see MARTTILA, *Collective Reinterpretation*, 131–32.

renewal of Zion and the universal recognition of Yhwh will be realized.

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