Narrating YHWH's Kingship in Psalms[1]

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UDK: 26-246.2:2175.7
Review paper
https://doi.org/10.32862/k.17.2.2

Abstract

Psalms 93-100 function within Book 4 of the Psalter to advance the narrative of YHWH's kingship over the cosmos. Whatever the origins of the constituent psalms, their current sequencing within Book 4 softens the despair that appears in psalms like Psalm 89, the ending of Book 3. As a kind of narrative used in liturgy, these psalms develop characters and plotlines that concentrate upon YHWH's kingship and proper ordering of the world, which, in turn, benefits Israel and through them, the world.

Keywords: *Psalms, narratology, the kingship of God*

Introduction

In his 1922 volume, *Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs und der Ursprung der Eschatologie*, Sigmund Mowinckel famously argued for the existence of an annual festival of enthronement of Israel's God analogous to the Akitu festival in Babylonia. He pieced together the festival from clues in a range of psalms, especially those explicitly mentioning YHWH's kingship (Ps 47; 93-100), but also others with similar motifs. He identified some of the religious ideas animating that reconstructed festival and those texts and, perhaps most interestingly, claimed that "Fest und

1 This article is associated with the project: *Narrative and Metanarrative in Biblical Psalmody and Biblical Psalter: How the Narrative in Biblical Poetry is used for Conveying Content and Message* (project leader: Danijel Berković).

Kult gehören daher zusammen" ("festival and cult belong together") (Mowinckel 1922, 19). He went on to describe the cult, and therefore the setting of the narrative in the psalms of YHWH's kingship, as a "drama." Yet it was no ordinary drama, but one that both created and reflected a reality, or in a word, a sacrament.[2] Mowinckel further explored the nature of the cult as a drama, including the psychological dimensions of performance.

As students learn in courses on Psalms, Mowinckel's notion of a single festival enacting and dramatizing YHWH's kingship has not found universal acceptance. In the form he proposed, his hypothesis has seemed to many scholars overly speculative. Yet, as a number of recent assessments have argued, he was on the right track in seeking a cultic setting for the performance of these psalms of kingship and so for understanding divine kingship as something to be narrated and enacted, rather than a static, objective reality to be acknowledged. The dating of Psalms 47 and 93-100 and the tightness of their relationship with one another remain debatable, though understanding them may not depend on an agreement on those points. Rather, I wish to argue, as they exist currently, these psalms do cohere as a way of narrating YHWH's kingship over against potential rivals, whether human or divine (Roberts 2005, 97–115; Clifford 2014, 326–337).

Still standing is Mowinckel's basic insight that the psalms of YHWH's kingship figure in a drama, or better, a narrative, and as such they should be understood not as a description of an objective reality but as a discourse in which both divine and human actors participate. Divine kingship, like human kingship, requires not only actions by the monarch but also repeated acts of affirmation by an audience participating in liturgies that depict characters moving about in relation to one another toward certain ends. Kingship also needs enemies, potential or real. In short, divine kingship can be the subject of narrative.

What do we mean by "narrative," then? A number of definitions exist, differing in how one conceives of the role of the plot (i.e., the sequence of events), of the audience, and of the relationship between the act of narrating, the product of narration, and the matter narrated (the story). Here I will follow the influential narratologist Monika Fludernik (2009, 6), who says that "A narrative… is a representation of a possible world in a linguistic and/or visual medium, at whose center there are one or several protagonists of an anthropomorphic nature who are existentially anchored in a temporal and spatial sense and who (mostly) perform goal-directed actions (action and plot structures)." Here I will consider some of the psalms of divine kingship, Psalms 93-100, as narrative in several stages. The first step is to position Psalms 93-99, especially within the larger context of Book

2 Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien II,* 21. He writes, "Nicht lediglich ein gespieltes Drama, ein Spiel, sondern ein wirkliches und Wirklichkeit hervorbringendes Drama, ein Drama, das mit realer Kraft das dramatisierte Ereignis verwirklicht, eine Wirklichkeit, aus der reale Kräfte hervorstrahlen, oder mit anderen Worten ein Sakrament."

4 of the Psalter (Ps 90-106). The second is to identify narrative elements in those psalms: the imagined world it creates, the characters, and the plot structure. The final point will be to argue that the narrative as we have it, while it functions in its present location in Book 4 as a rejoinder to Psalm 89's questioning of YHWH's ability to run the world well, has a logically prior function of affirming divine kingship against all comers. That is, the *YHWH mālak* psalms provided the impetus for the creation of Book 4 rather than the other way around.

1. Book 4 of the Psalms as a Single Narrative

Mowinckel and many subsequent scholars, especially form critics, thought of Psalms 93-99 or 93 and 95-99 as a coherent collection even if he and his immediate successors tended to think of individual psalms as manifestations of genres and ignore the meaningful shaping of the Psalter as a whole or collections within it.[3] Influenced by the work of Gerald Wilson and others, more recent scholarship has shifted decisively toward approaches that try to understand the book as a meaningful whole, not limited in significance to the form or content of each individual psalm or sub-collection of psalms (Wilson 1985; McCann 1993; Howard 1993). For Psalms 93-100, in particular, new scholarship does well to investigate the relationship between these texts and the lyrics preceding and following them in Book 4 of the Psalter.

Hossfeld and Zenger, for example, accept the widespread view that Psalms 93-100 form a coherent unit preexisting its current location in the Psalter, while Psalms 90-92 are a coherent unit collected (composed?) to supplement an earlier version of the Psalter ranging from Psalms 2-89 (Hossfeld and Zenger 2005, 5–7; Ndoga 2014, 149–159). In that view, Psalms 90-92 constitute a bridge linking two collections.

Perhaps even more radically, deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner (2014, 38) understand the entire Psalter as a narrative of Israel's history, with Book 3 (Ps 73-89) reporting the tragic end of the monarchy, and Book 4 (Ps 90-106) the restoration of the people after the deportations to Babylonia. Often with a high level of nuance, they read each psalm on its own and through the narrative grid they believe shaped the formation of the Psalter as a whole.

This view is not far from that of Samuel Terrien, who argued that Book 3, and especially Psalms 73 and 89, forms the pivot around which the rest of the Psalter rotates. As he puts it (2003, 24), "These [psalms] bear the signs of sapiential disquisition, but they are also impregnated with a tragic sense of human existence as well as being steeped in a theology of heroic nobility, both divine and

3 For example, Mowinckel devotes only five pages to the Psalter's development as a collection of collections in his seminal *Psalms in Israel's Worship* (1962, 2:193–197).

human…" These claims are fair enough, though Terrien's universalizing interpretation should not be taken to obscure the true focus of these texts on the particularity of Israel's experience in the forced migrations and returns of the mid-first millennium BCE. That is, the universal and the particular must both figure in the proper interpretation of the texts.

The point here is not to rehearse the current state of the discussion of the evolution of the Psalter or these psalms' place within it. It suffices to note that reading Psalms 93-100 as the psalms of YHWH's kingship within a larger sequence of psalms fits well with contemporary moves in biblical scholarship. The point is to understand those psalms and their announcement of YHWH's kingship within a larger context of the psalms as performed texts. The performance practices and purposes of the psalms of YHWH's kingship may well have evolved over time, and their inclusion in Book 4 of the Psalter may have altered those purposes, though it is sometimes difficult to say precisely how.[4] It would be unwarranted to argue that Psalms 93-100 originated during Israel's post-monarchic era, for the idea of divine kingship is much older in both Israel and the rest of the ancient Near East. However, the selection and placement of these psalms in their current location amid other psalms seems both deliberate and meaningful. This combination of the psalms meaningfully responds to a particularly traumatic era in Israel's history.

If we accept Terrien's notion that Psalms 73 and 89 together form the pivot around which the Psalter rotates, we find a book that both celebrates "how good Elohim is to Israel" (Ps 73:1) and invites the same deity to "remember the disgrace of your servants" (Ps 89:51 [ETT 89:50]). The Psalter never fully resolves – indeed, refuses to resolve – the tension between praise and protest, forcing both its readers and God to live in the tensions of history. Israel confesses its hopes in God's goodness and acknowledges its own sins (Ps 78) but nevertheless also objects to the suffering that sin has brought about and expects YHWH to relieve that suffering. No final resolution of these tensions occurs, nor can it occur in this life, since history never arrives at utopia. However, a worshiping community needs language that allows it to manage the tension, if not eliminate it altogether. Book 4 provides that language.

It makes sense, then, to sketch the narrative flow of Book 4, however briefly. Psalms 90-92 respond to Psalm 89's lament of the loss of the king by acknowledging God as "our rock" (Ps 90:1) and "my refuge and stronghold" (Ps 91:2) and by making the metacomment on the psalms themselves, "It is good to praise YHWH" (Ps 92:2 [ETT 92:1]) (see Steymans 2005, 265–276). Again, to speak of

4 For example, the inclusion of Ps 96 in 1 Chr 16 in an abbreviated form, whatever else it might say, shows that the text could be used in multiple ways. See the discussion in Schnocks 2019, 223–240; Magonet 2014, 161–177.

these psalms as "responding" to Psalm 89 does not imply that they were composed after it, merely that their placement in Book 4 constitutes such a response. These psalms are populated with characters that defend the righteous (Ps 91:11-12), while the enemies "perish" (Ps 92:10 [ETT 92:9]). The survival of the righteous betokens the reversal of Psalm 89's despair at the loss of monarchy (Ps 92:13-14 [ETT 92:12-13], echoing or anticipating Ps 1). In short, the Babylonians do not get the last word in the affairs of YHWH's people.

If Psalms 90-92 form a bridge to the psalms of YHWH's kingship, Psalms 100-106 form an offramp from them. Psalm 100 underscores the scope of divine kingship by calling upon "all the earth" to praise YHWH. Psalm 101 uses the human king, now restored after the debacle detailed in Psalm 89, as the spokesperson for a commitment to justice in the land. Psalm 102 petitions YHWH to help the one praying during a time of distress, or as the superscription says, "when the poor person … pours out his petition" (Ps 102:1). Psalm 103 responds to the divine act of salvation by calling upon the praying person's נפש to "bless" (ברכי) YHWH, that is, to thank the benevolent deity for help. Psalm 104 expands this sentiment of gratitude and wonder with a celebration of the intricacy and beauty of nature. Finally, Psalms 105-106 recounts the history of Israel and Judah, though in a much happier way than Psalm 78, and probably in answer to that earlier psalm.

In speaking of the "narrative flow" of these psalms, I do not wish to say that the characters change or that a clear plotline emerges. The narrative has a static quality, as one might well expect in a liturgical text. Just as Jesus always dies and rises again in Christian hymnody, here YHWH always remains king, YHWH's enemies remain enemies, the world remains the theater of YHWH's actions, and the singers of the psalms always must decide on the degree to which they embrace the words they sing. Ritual performance creates not narrative progression but a sense of the trueness of the narrative, its "givenness" for the audience.

This givenness emerges because, collectively, these texts create a negotiation among various voices (the singer, worshipers in Judah, other members of humankind, and celestial beings) about the announcement of divine kingship. Observed from several vantage points, the psalms in Book 4 respond to Book 3's movement from the affirmation of Jerusalem's human ruler that ends Book 2 in Psalm 72 to its lament for his defeat (and so the crushing of the people's dreams of hegemony or at any rate independence) in Psalm 89. Book 4 affirms the continuation of YHWH's kingship and the survival of YHWH's people even in their new world (Wilson 2010, 757–760).

This brings the discussion to Psalms 93-100 as part of a larger flow of texts. Psalms 93, 97, and 99 begin with the claim יהוה מלך ("YHWH is king"), while Psalms 96 and 98 open with שירו ליהוה ("sing to YHWH"). In other words, the sequencing of the Psalms creates an opportunity for Israel as a worshiping community to affirm the reality of YHWH's kingship while acknowledging that oth-

ers may rebel against it. Affirming the reality of divine rule makes it a fact of life to which the congregation must respond. Psalm 95 opens with a call, also to the congregation of worshipers to sing out, "because YHWH is a great God (אל גדול), a king over all gods" (Ps 95:3). The call to worship the king of the gods points to the large-scale conception of these psalms. YHWH's realm was not limited to Israel or even the human world. It encompassed everything.

The seeming outlier in this sequence of psalms is Psalm 94. However, the sequence of Psalms 93-100 could be understood as a sort of mortice-and-tenon structure, with 94 linking two separate clusters of יהוה מלך hymns (93; 95-99). Although, as Howard has shown, Psalm 94 has many thematic links with the texts surrounding it, it differs from them in genre and what we might call "voice." Many of Howard's links are fairly common words, and as he notes, Psalm 94 also has similar links to "many non-adjacent psalms" (Howard 1993, 123). This fact must indicate that Psalm 94 originally existed independently of Psalm 93 and 95-99 and was added to them as part of the editorial process creating Book 4. On the other hand, the placement of Psalm 94 amid others shows a high level of artistic and theological intentionality. Psalm 94 troubles the affirmation of YHWH's kingship even as it ultimately accepts it. The psalm reminds readers that not everyone accepts divine rule as a given. Psalm 94 ends (almost) by denying the appropriateness of an alliance between YHWH and "the throne of destruction(s)" (כסא הוות; Ps 94:20), that is, entanglement between Judah and foreign powers. Here YHWH is the divine emperor who might make an alliance with a good throne but not with evil ones. The imagery is that of international politics during the mid-first millennium BCE in which alliances and counter-alliances served the purposes of both weak and powerful states. YHWH is not a king like other kings, never needing to compromise principles in order to hang on to power. In other words, Psalm 94 does "fit" its surroundings even as it reshapes them.

2. The *YHWH mālak* Psalms as Narrative

Just as Book 4 presents a somewhat coherent story or reflection on a story (i.e., a metanarrative in the narratological sense), Psalms 93 and 95-99 have many elements of narrative in Fludernik's sense, as the preceding brief sketch of them in the sequence indicates. Collectively, they depict an imagined world, name important characters, assign them distinguishable traits, and create a plot that they follow over time and space. This plot figures as a subtext in Book 4, as well.

The Imagined World. The principal characters of these psalms include YHWH, chthonic forces (rivers and seas as in Ugaritic mythology, as well as heaven and earth) (Ps 93:3-4; 95:5; 96:1-2, 5, 11; 97:6a; 98:7-9), the Israelite/Judahite audience

(often marked as "we") (Ps 95:1-2, 6-7; 98:3), other gods (Ps 95:3; 96:4; 97:7, 9),[5] Israel's rebellious ancestors (Ps 95:8-9; cf. 99:7), Israel's famous leaders of the past (Moses, Aaron, and Samuel; Ps 99:6), the nations (Ps 96:3, 9, 10, 13; 97:1, 6b; 98:2, 3; 99:1-2; cf. 47:8-9), Zion and its satellite cities (Ps 97:8; 99:2), and the righteous or "friends of YHWH" (Ps 97:10-12). These characters, about which more momentarily, inhabit a world in which the vast cosmic forces ordered (conquered?) in the original creation of the world remain subject to their sovereign, YHWH. They may "lift up their voices" (Ps 93:3-4), but this noise does not threaten the basic order of the world. The primordial combat will not be repeated.

There is something curious about the texts' imagined world, however. Though YHWH is ruler over the nations, no specific nation is named, and the deity's kingship extends over the world, again without any specific region being mentioned. The ambiguity of the references signals a desire to speak of truly universal rule, not subject to the vicissitudes of political change. By avoiding excessive historical detail and resorting instead to the language of the divine realm, the Psalms can, therefore, serve a liturgical purpose in many historical settings. These texts are at once ahistorical (in the sense that they can operate in many settings) and historical (in the sense that they were composed in particular settings and reused in others, in particular in the Persian period when Book 4 was compiled and performed).

Indeed, the only place these psalms mention by name is Zion (Ps 99:2), which becomes the location of divine justice, both retributive and reparative. From Zion, YHWH responds to the cries of people seeking protection from unnamed (therefore, any) evildoers (99:6-8; cf. Ps 94). Interestingly, the prime "callers upon YHWH's name" are Samuel, Moses, and Aaron, figures who operated elsewhere than Zion but whose memory and moral legacy have been entrusted to the care of the priests and others dwelling in Zion. The city, in other words, has become the magnet for Israel's traditions, even those originating elsewhere in Israel/Judah, as well as its hopes for a better future. Admittedly, virtually all, if not all, of the Psalter presupposes Zion as the locale of its performance. Yet naming the previously unnamed if assumed place has a dramatic purpose.

There is no strong reason to assume, as is often done, that such attention to Zion must postdate the era of the so-called Babylonian Exile. It may do so, but it is hard to imagine that a Zion tradition arose out of nowhere in the era when the city lay in ruins or had been restored only as a tiny settlement in the early Persian period. Much more likely, the psalms reflect the ongoing relevance of the Zion traditions as they developed before, during, and after the sixth century BCE.

The characters. I have already named the key characters in these psalms. The most important are YHWH and the collective community of worshipers. The texts focus on YHWH by inviting the worshipers to gaze upon YHWH, to notice

5 On the meaning of אלילים ("gods"), see Hamilton 2019.

the various other characters, all with their own back stories, and to understand the roles those figures play in the drama of divine kingship. For example, Psalm 93's evocation of the sea and the ancient Near Eastern stories of creation as the conquest of watery forces not only triggers the congregation's memories of such older stories of creation through combat (cf. the references to slaying the dragon in Job 9:13; 26:12; Ps 40:5 [ET 40:4]; 87:4 [ET 87:3]; 89:11 [ET 89:10]; Isa 51:9) but also reaffirms those stories' continuing relevance. Likewise, the recall of the stories of Israel's ancestors, whether negative (Ps 95:8-10) or positive (Ps 99:6-7), forces the congregation to consider itself part of the centuries-long drama on which it is gazing. Israel both acts on the stage and spectates in the drama's audience. Its gaze falls upon the divine actor YHWH while also turning back on itself.

Manfred Jahn, commenting on the work of Gerard Genette, speaks of "external focalization" as a narrative option. That mode of narration "marks the most drastic reduction of narrative information because it restricts itself to 'outside views,' reporting what would be visible and audible to a virtual camera" (Jahn 2007, 98). As Jahn points out, again following Genette, the narrative focus can shift in a narrative, and maintaining a truly stationary "camera" is rare. To take the example at hand, the *YHWH mālak* psalms adopt such a focus, displaying a panorama of characters parading across the worshiping community's field of vision, but never exploring in any detail the characters' identity, motives, or fates. The focus remains on the divine king and the worshiping community celebrating that king's rule from Zion.

In a general way, the texts' method of externally focalizing the narrative is reminiscent of another ancient Near Eastern medium, the presentation scenes in royal palaces. In such scenes, the friends and foes of the king parade across the stone wall, always subject to the king's power (voluntarily or otherwise), always pointing to the irresistible rightness of that power, which comes from the divine realm and supports the due order of the world.[6] That connection may seem less than obvious for the psalms in question, but several scholars have pointed to it for other texts such as Isaiah 60-61 and Esther (Strawn 2007; Machinist 2018; Hamilton 2021). The comparison is apt here because these psalms imagine YHWH enthroned in the heavenly and earthly throne room, the temple in Jerusalem (Ps 93:1). Narrative can occur in multiple media, and the conventions of one medium may influence others. The depiction of characters as a part of the scenery of kingship, which appears in reliefs, also appears in texts, as here.

The point is that most of the characters in the *YHWH mālak* are intentionally flat, forming the landscape through which the divine king moves. They do not, and cannot, develop because they must play the same unaltering role if divine

6 A voluminous literature exists on this subject. A useful set of essays identifying the major issues is Bach and Fink 2022.

kingship is to continue. The exception to this rule is the congregation itself. The worshipers singing these psalms must decide whether to imitate their querulous ancestors in the wilderness, their polytheistic neighbors or the superhuman forces previously rebelling against YHWH, on the one hand, or the great heroes of their people like Moses, Aaron, or Samuel, on the other. Their participation in the narration of YHWH's kingship in the performance of these psalms implies that they have made, or should make that choice.

Plot actions. To continue with Fludernik's categories, it is important to consider the plot of these psalms. In addition to the community narrating its own participation in YHWH's rule as loyal subjects, what happens in these psalms? In a recent essay, Jorge M. Blunda Grubert (2019) understands Psalms 93 and 95-100 as the core of Book 4 and as a response to the collapse of the monarchies of Israel and Judah. He argues, as many other scholars have also done, that the "answer" of Book 4 is to emphasize the role of the divine monarch, YHWH, as a replacement for human monarchy, and the post-monarchic age as a return to the pre-monarchic one (hence the recurring mention of Moses in Book 4). It is true, as already noted, that Book 4 responds to the fall of the native Judahite monarchy to the Babylonians and recasts Israel's story in a more hopeful direction in Psalms 105-106, the conclusion of the book. The despair evident in Psalm 89 (or Lamentations, similarly) has given way to a more hopeful view of the past and future. On the other hand, unlike Isaiah 40-55, none of the psalms in Book 4, and certainly not the *YHWH mālak* psalms, expects foreign rule to become the vehicle of divine grace. Whereas Blunda Grubert connects these psalms to Isaiah 40-55, a more appropriate comparison would be Isaiah 56-66, which portray YHWH's kingship as operating in a world ultimately without Gentile control (see Isa 66:22-24), without promising the restoration of a human ruler over Judah.

Does this mean that these texts saw a native Israelite/Judahite monarchy as theologically and politically obsolete, or merely secondary in importance? Does the absence of the human king in Psalms 90-106 (except in Ps 101) imply a commitment to a non-monarchical form of government, or merely a concession to the uncertainty of the moment, a sort of hedging of bets? Certainly, in an ancient Near Eastern context, the human king ordinarily featured as the viceroy of the divine realm, a trustee of the chief deity's earthly realm. That view also appears in various forms in the royal psalms (Ps 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 89; 101; 132; and 144) and elsewhere (2 Sam 7). The silence of the *YHWH mālak* psalms on this point is susceptible to over-interpretation, though it must mean something. The ambiguity of the texts allows their liturgical use in a variety of settings, even if the Israelite monarchy was somehow restored (as it briefly was under the Hasmoneans).

This ambiguity takes us back to the question of what has happened in the narrative now performed by the congregation singing these psalms. Book 4 narrates the period of the ancestors and the exodus, though emphasizing liberation and

promise, not lawgiving (Ps 105-106). It has also narrated the primordial time of creation (Ps 93; 104). It presupposes the calamities of the eighth-sixth centuries BCE but without naming them as such. This silence is surprising if Book 4 is really an answer to Psalm 89 (and Book 3 more generally).

This silence is compounded by another. Corinna Körting (2019, 249–253) in a recent essay has noted that the appearance of Zion in Psalm 99 is conspicuous for its singularity – none of the other *YHWH-mālak* psalms explicitly locates YHWH anywhere on earth. For Körting, this absence of location means that the reference to Zion entered the Psalms only at a comparatively late stage in their development. It would follow from this understanding that the emphasis on Zion comes only during the period after the Babylonian deportations and the return of the deportees to their homeland. That conclusion might be correct, though it is striking that, while the psalms in question do not otherwise place YHWH in Zion, they also do not locate the deity anywhere else on earth.

If we consider the placement of the reference to Zion in Psalm 99:2 in its context, an alternative understanding presents itself. Psalm 99 begins with the third affirmation of YHWH's kingship (cf. 93:1; 97:1). It follows the differently focused Psalm 98, which like Psalm 96, calls upon the people to sing. In other words, Psalm 99 names the primary focus of these psalms, YHWH's kingship, to which the secondary focus (the congregation) must respond. The congregation itself exists in Zion, not only in Psalm 99 but throughout the *YHWH mālak* psalms and, indeed, Book 4. There is no evidence that the psalms existed elsewhere than Jerusalem. Nor does placing them in that city speak to their date of composition or incorporation in the list. In other words, Körting has answered a narrative question historically, and possibly mistakenly.

What does it mean that Zion appears for the only time in Psalm 99:2? The delay in naming the place has deepened a sense of suspense and accentuated the ritual scenery of the psalms. The congregation sings them in YHWH's "gates" (Ps 100:4), again making Zion the site of their storytelling in song. The theme of the revelation of the temple after the establishment of the divine rule is a theme long predating these psalms, already evident in the Ugaritic "Baal Epic," for example. In other words, the story of the deity's rule must end in a temple. For the Judeans composing the *YHWH mālak* psalms before the fall of Jerusalem and the creators of Book 4 of the Psalter reappropriating them decades later, Zion was the inevitable location of that temple. The delay of its identification serves a dramatic purpose, clarifying once and for all the center of YHWH's rule and the focus point of the worship of YHWH's subjects.

If we understand the placement of the Zion reference here as a decision made in the narrative, in which the disclosure of vital information can be reserved for a critical moment, then another idea may follow. It may be possible to resolve the problem of the two seeming omissions in one motion. The most important thing

that has happened in the narrative is the restoration of Zion itself. The time of its destruction goes unnamed because it was not necessary to name it. It exists again as a place of worship. It is the throne room of the creator and redeemer, YHWH.

Psalm 99 depicts YHWH's rule in Zion as having several characteristics: rule over all the peoples (על כל העמים), hence the end of imperial rule over the land of Israel (v. 2); justice for Jacob (v. 4); and a functioning priesthood that intercedes for worshipers, continuing the era of Moses and the origins of the people (vv. 6-8). Jerusalem, as imagined and experienced space, will be, the liturgy of these psalms avers, the center of an empire operating by rules differing from those of earthly empires, an idea also presented in Isaiah 56:9-59:21, possibly a text contemporaneous with Book 4.

Conclusion

To conclude, Fludernik describes narrative as involving characters who are "existentially anchored" in their stories. The *YHWH mālak* psalms as placed in Book 4 of the Psalter focus the attention of a renewed Judean community on a deity so anchored, committed to the well-being of a people in spite of appearances. The suffering of the mid-to-late sixth century BCE could not offer the final verdict on the divine attitude toward Israel. In celebrating the rule of the divine king, Book 4 tells a story of Israel's present and future that draws upon pre-exilic traditions for key plot points and character roles while also continuing the story into a new era. The period of deported people and ruined cities becomes a parenthesis, not a determining element in the overarching story. By celebrating YHWH's kingship centered on a renewed Zion, Book 4 of the Psalter invites the community of Israel during the Persian period to live with hope even in times of political uncertainty. That invitation still stands for those praying these psalms today as part of their own story.

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Pripovijedanje o YHWH-inoj kraljevskoj vlasti u Psalmima

Sažetak

Svrha je psalama 93–100 u Četvrtoj knjizi Psaltira da promiču pripovijest o YHWH-inoj kraljevskoj vlasti nad svemirom. Bez obzira na njihovo porijeklo, njihov trenutan redoslijed u Knjizi 4 ublažava očaj koji se javlja u psalmima poput Psalma 89, kojim završava Knjiga 3. Kao vrsta pripovijesti koja se koristi u liturgiji, ovi psalmi razvijaju likove i radnje koje se koncentriraju na YHWH-inoj kraljevskoj vlasti i ispravnom poretku svijeta, što zauzvrat koristi Izraelu i, po njima, cijelom svijetu. Služe kako bi dalje razvili pripovijest o njegovoj vlasti nad svemirom.