

**UNDERSTANDING THE LITERARY  
STRUCTURES OF ACROSTIC PSALMS:  
AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POEMS**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

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## **ABSTRACT**

By means of literary, linguistic and comparative literary approaches, this study examines the literary structure of the alphabetical acrostic poems in the Psalms. First, a literary approach is used to analyze the form and content of each alphabetical acrostic poem to show that the literary structure of the poems is varied. Selected Psalms 9-10, 111 and 112 are translated from the Hebrew and compared to ancient Near Eastern languages especially Akkadian and Ugaritic.

Second, by means of linguistic approaches, the literary structure of each poem is determined on both micro and macro levels using the researcher's own translations of these psalms.

Furthermore, a comparative literary approach is employed to compare the forms of ancient Near Eastern acrostics, in particular Akkadian, Egyptian and Ugaritic poems, to Hebrew acrostics. The analysis reveals both similarities with other ancient Near Eastern forms as well as the uniqueness of the Hebrew alphabetical acrostic poems. Both linguistic and literary insights are used to determine the relationship between the different forms. The findings suggest that the alphabetical acrostic poems were probably written around or after 1000 B.C.E. since the ancient Near Eastern poems were written before 1000 B.C.E. The unique 22-line form of the Hebrew alphabetical acrostics also indicates that Hebrew thought was distinct from what can be observed in other ancient Near Eastern texts.

On the basis of this research, a conclusion is reached and suggestions for future research are made.

## OPSOMMING

Deur literêre, linguistiese en vergelykende literêre benaderings ondersoek hierdie studie die literêre struktuur van die alfabetiese akrostiese gedigte in die Psalms. Eerstens word 'n literêre benadering gebruik om die vorm en inhoud van elke alfabetiese lettervers te ontleed om aan te toon dat die literêre struktuur van die gedigte verskillend is. Die gekose Psalms 9-10, 111 en 112 word uit die Hebreeus vertaal en in vergelyking met die Ou-Nabye-Oosterse tale, veral Akkadiese en Ugaritiese, bespreek.

Tweedens, deur linguistiese benaderings, word die literêre struktuur van elke gedig op beide mikro- en makro vlakke bepaal deur gebruik te maak van die navorsers se eie vertalings van hierdie psalms.

Verder, word 'n vergelykende literêre benadering aangewend om die vorms van die Ou-Nabye-Oosterse akrostiese gedigte, in die besonder Akkadiese, Egiptiese en Ugaritiese gedigte, met Hebreeuse akrostiese gedigte te vergelyk. Die ontleding toon die ooreenkomste met ander antieke Nabye-Oosterse vorms sowel as die uniekheid van die Hebreeuse alfabetiese akrostiese gedigte. Beide linguistiese en literêre insigte word gebruik om die verhouding tussen die verskillende vorms te bepaal. Die bevindinge dui daarop dat die alfabetiese akrostiese gedigte waarskynlik geskryf is rondom of later as 1000 vC, angesien die antieke Nabye-Oosterse gedigte voor 1000 vC geskryf is. Die unieke 22-reël vorm van die Hebreeuse alfabetiese akrostiese gedigte dui ook aan dat die Hebreeuse denke te onderskei is van wat in ander antieke Nabye-Oosterse tekste gereflekteer word.

Gebaseer op hierdie navorsing, word tot 'n gevolgtrekking gekom, en word voorstelle vir toekomstige navorsing gemaak.

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ἐγὼ τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὰ, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος  
(Revelation 22:13)

**Sola Scriptura**

**Sola fide**

**Sola gratia**

**Solus Christus**

**Soli Deo gloria**

## ABBREVIATIONS

4QPs <sup>f</sup>	Cave 4 Qumran Psalm <sup>f</sup>
11Qpsa	Cave 11 Qumran Psalm <sup>a</sup>
11QPsb	Cave 11 Qumran Psalm <sup>b</sup>
AAP	Acrostic Alphabetic Psalms
ALCBH	Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew
ANEA	Ancient Near Eastern Acrostics
ANEL	Ancient Near Eastern Literatures
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CDA	A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian
CHALOT	A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
COS	The Context of Scripture
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
HB	Hebrew Bible
HL	Hebrew Literature
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
UT	Ugarit Textbook
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In Hebrew Psalms, the Acrostic or Alphabetic Psalms are often regarded as the most beautiful poems in the collection. The acrostic form is found in ancient Near Eastern literatures such as Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Egyptian as well as in the Old Testament, that is, in Psalms (9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145), Proverbs (31:10-31), Lamentations (1-4) and Nahum (1:2-8). These texts are structured in an alphabetic order. Some scholars agree that one characteristic feature of the acrostic is its usefulness for memorizing texts.<sup>1</sup> However, the acrostic form is also closely associated with Wisdom traditions in ancient Near Eastern literature.

In this study, several questions about acrostic Psalms will be addressed from literary, linguistic and comparative-literary viewpoints. The first set of questions that relates to the literary features of acrostic poems is as follow:

- What are the characteristics of the acrostic form in Psalms?
- Do the form and content of acrostic poems in Psalms relate to each other?
- How does the literary structure of the acrostic poem in Psalms help to understanding its significance?

The second set of questions deals with the structures of selected texts and their understanding in a linguistic analysis:

- What structures can be identified in the selected Hebrew texts?
- How do those structures relate to the selected texts' interpretation?

The third set of questions involves some comparative aspects:

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wenham (2012: 41-56) and Lee (2011) argue that the Psalter is an anthology designed to be memorized. Craigie (1983:297) also agrees that the alphabetic pattern of the psalm doubtlessly had a mnemonic function.

- Presupposing Hebrew acrostic poems were influenced by Ancient Near Eastern acrostics, in which period was this acrostic form of the Psalms used?
- Are there similarities and/or differences between the usage of this form in Hebrew poetry and ancient Near Eastern texts?

These different research questions which are posed from different viewpoints will all contribute to address the central research problem of this thesis, namely: *What contribution can a study of the acrostic form of some Hebrew Psalms make towards our understanding of these psalms?*

## **1.2 HYPOTHESES**

In order to resolve the research problem, two hypotheses will be expounded:

1. Form is regarded as being connected to, and inseparable from, content because ‘content is determined by form.’ Therefore, the form of the alphabetic acrostic will be regarded as significant, as it could help reveal the content of the text. By analyzing the literary structure of Psalms therefore, the form of the acrostics which is implicitly connected to the content will be uncovered. In the literary structure of acrostic poems, the connection between form and content will help reveal the thought and intent of the author. (Although we are well-aware of the fallacy of “authorial intention,” we remain convinced that the form and content of a literary work are reflections of the thoughts and intent of its author.)

2. The acrostic form has its origin in ancient Near Eastern literature but exists also in Hebrew literature. Thus, the acrostic poems of the book of Psalms could be interpreted as being related to ancient Near Eastern literature and the study will consider the similarities and differences between the Hebrew and ancient Near Eastern literatures.

## **1.3 PRELIMINARY STUDY**

### **1.3.1 Review of the literature by recent scholars**

Several contemporary scholars have approached the book of Psalms from different perspectives. For example, **Hans-Joachim Kraus** (1978) wrote a Psalms commentary which was more of an updated version of Gunkel’s form-critical approach. Kraus included a

comparative analysis of the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint (LXX). Whereas Kraus employed redaction criticism to evaluate the editing of Psalms, he also analyzed Psalms from a form-critical point of view with emphasis on the *Sitz im Leben*. In particular, Kraus explained the relationship between the history of Israel and the Psalms from a literary viewpoint.

On the other hand, **Brevard S Childs** interpreted the Psalms using a canonical-Messianic methodology. Childs' canonical interpretation was based on a historical survey of the Old Testament. His analysis of the Psalms was rooted in historical contexts.<sup>2</sup>

In his 1977 study, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, **Claus Westermann** regarded praise and lament as prayers to God. Subsequently, he describes Psalms of lament and the descriptive praise of an individual or community in his 1979 book, *The Psalms: Structure, Content and Message*. In *The Living Psalms* (1989), Westermann examined individual Psalms under his main theme, "Psalms of Lament". He aimed to determine the genre of the Psalms from a literary and formal-critical standpoint.

On his part, **Walter Brueggemann** (1984) investigated the "Theology of Psalms", that is, by using a theological approach. He claimed that the use of Psalms and their meanings could be applied to specific faith and church communities. Therefore, Brueggemann's study of the Psalms can be understood in terms of the connection between the "life of faith" and the Psalms.

**Erhard Gerstenberger** (1998, 2001) understood the Psalms as belonging to "the genres of cultic poetry". He described the importance of the role of Psalms as being based on the relationship between the social history of Israel and the cult of the Psalms.

The impact of these approaches has still been influenced to most scholars. After Gunkel, subsequent scholars have researched the Psalms as different perspectives. But finally, it will be seemed that the work of Gunkel has been developed by them as a great achievement.

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<sup>2</sup> Childs (1979: 508-523).

### 1.3.2 Psalms Conference in Oxford 2010<sup>3</sup>

At the Psalms Conference held in Oxford in 2010, various themes in the Psalms were presented and discussed. The various themes represent current developments in the study of Psalms which will be reviewed in the proposed thesis but summarized briefly below.

The first major area of interest had to do with the representation of the Psalms in the Dead Sea Scrolls. **Peter Flint** who introduced the Psalms Scrolls discovered in Qumran examined the value of the Psalms Scrolls to understand the development of the book of Psalms as a collection. He claims that the Psalms Scrolls are valuable to the understanding of the oldest Hebrew text of the Psalms. In his paper, he identified Psalm 145 as an alphabetic poem and compared its Masoretic text with the 11QPsa.

The second area focused on “Medieval Jewish Interpretations of the Psalms”. Under this topic, **Adele Berlin** attempted to address three issues namely the relevance of the *peshat* interpretations to the rabbinic Midrash in the Jewish tradition, the problem of the authorship of the Psalms, and the meaning of words. Her article focused on the history of Psalms interpretation.

The third area concerned the “Psalms in the Ancient Near East.” **John Day** tried to trace the analogy between the ancient Egyptian Akhenaten’s Hymn and Psalms 104 of the Old Testament while **Erhard Gerstenberger** sought a link between the Old Testament Psalms and Sumerian Hymns.

The fourth major topic dealt with “The Psalter and Theodicy”. **Bill Bellinger** attempted to resolve the issue of theodicy based on Gerald Wilson’s supposition that the notion was rooted in the fall of the Davidic monarchy before the exile and the reign of Yahweh in exile and its aftermath. Bellinger examined Book III of the Psalms especially in recent theological works on theodicy.

The last broad theme considered “the Psalter as a Book”. **Klaus Seybold** (1990) reconstructed the origin of the Psalms as a book. He outlined the Book of David in 2 Macc.

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<sup>3</sup> The title of the conference was “*Conflict and Convergence: Jewish and Christian Approaches to the Psalms*.” An international conference of studying the Psalms held at Worcester College, Oxford, on 22-24 September 2010.

2:13-15 but also identified 4QPsa and 11QPsb of Qumran as important scrolls, as well as the LXX<sup>C</sup> Psalms in the form encountered in the New Testament, and the Masoretic codices such as the codices of Aleppo and St. Petersburg. Specifically, Seybold dealt with the development of the Psalms as a book.

Many insights flow from this Psalms. Particularly, noteworthy for our study is the prominence given to comparative study of the ancient Near East literature and the Psalms. This aspect will therefore also be emphasized in our comparative study.

### 1.3.3 The Ugaritic Psalms

Archaeological findings after the nineteenth century have confirmed that the text of the Bible was influenced by the cultural exchange between Israel and the ancient Near East. Accordingly, the Psalms of the Old Testament were linked to poems of the ancient Near East in past scholarship. **Mitchell J. Dahood** (1966-1970) who wrote a commentary on the book of Psalms compared the text of the Psalms with Ugaritic poems. It seems that the motivation behind Dahood's study, which is based on linguistic classification, is the proximity between Hebrew and Ugaritic language. Among the Semitic languages, there is the Northwest Semitic group which includes Ugaritic, Canaanite, and Aramaic while the Canaanite group is subdivided into the Hebrew, Moabite, and Phoenician languages.<sup>4</sup> If the linguistic relationship between the languages shows that Ugaritic influenced Hebrew, then, from that point of view, the alphabetic poems will be valuable in determining the connection between the Psalms of the Old Testament and Ugaritic poems.

Although this study does not intend touching on all the issues raised in past and present-day scholarship, the overview given above shows that the research problem of the present thesis is relevant, and that the choice of a literary-comparative method, in particular, could be very useful in the analysis of acrostic psalms.

### 1.3.4 Recent Acrostic Studies

- Hanson, K. C. 1984. *Alphabetic Acrostics: A Form Critical Study*. A Doctoral Dissertation of Claremont Graduate School.

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<sup>4</sup> See Rubin (2010: 3-21).

- Maloney, Leslie D. 2005. *A Word Fitly Spoken: Poetic Artistry in the First Four Acrostics of the Hebrew Psalter*. A Doctoral Dissertation of Baylor University.

Acrostics has been studied recently by two scholars, namely Hanson (1984) and Maloney (2005). Both gave overviews of the history of research in this field. Hanson researched scholars' works in the 19th century to the 20th century. On the other hand, Maloney introduced acrostic studies from Philo of Alexandria to modern scholarship. Maloney seems to complement parts of Hanson's research. The contribution of their acrostic research is estimated highly in this study. In terms of methodology both focus on form criticism. However, Hanson has also tried to resolve understandings of the texts by means of rhetorical criticism. Maloney, on the other hand, has emphasized the historical approach.

- Eijzeren, M.J. van. 2012. *'Halbnachts steh' ich auf'. An Exploration into the Translation of Biblical Acrostics*. Master Thesis of Universiteit Utrecht.

Eijzeren (2012) has highlighted the problem of the translation of acrostics which lets the Hebrew alphabet disappear in other versions. How can the acrostic poems be translated in order to give expression to the Hebrew alphabet? Additionally, Eijzeren (2012:5) has proposed some important questions: "What are the functions of the Biblical acrostics, what are the problems attached to translating them, and what possible solutions are there?" The aim of this study is to be sensitive in the translation of acrostic poems to the fact that their alphabetic order serves a mnemonic purpose (which normally disappears in translation).

#### **1.4 LIMITATION**

The proposed study will be limited to selected Old Testament acrostic Psalms. In terms of structure, Psalms 9-10 (in Book I of the Psalter) as well as 111 and 112 (in Book V) are alphabetic poems. On a literary level, Psalms 9-10 forms a unit, and Psalms 111 and 112 also make a pair as a literary and structural mirror. These literary similarities between the two pairs could potentially be very helpful for our investigation of the influence of the literary structure of the acrostic Psalms on their understanding. The thesis will therefore concentrate on these two pairs. Apart from the literary analysis, these alphabetic Psalms and their connection to the ancient Near Eastern acrostics will be examined.

Briefly, this thesis will only focus on insights gained from literary criticism and literary comparative methodology. Although other approaches, for example, historical, theological, and sociological methodologies, could potentially also deliver valuable insights, the scope of this Master's thesis requires a narrower focus on the mentioned approaches.

## 1.5 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology for this study will be based on three comprehensive approaches, related to the three sets of research questions that have been introduced above. The first is a **literary approach** which takes its point of departure in the works of Wellhausen and Gunkel (1998). The second approach is a **linguistic analysis** which analyzes the structures of and finds translations for the selected texts. The third is a **comparative method** in which the influence of ancient Near Eastern acrostics on the Hebrew psalms will be investigated.

In Chapter 2, a **literary approach** will therefore be employed to investigate the characteristics of the acrostic Psalms in general and to demonstrate the relationship between the form and content of the alphabetic acrostic Psalms. In Psalms, the alphabetic order form is displayed as a whole from ‘א’ to ‘ת’.

In Chapter 3, a **linguistic analysis** will follow in which it will be demonstrated that the use of cantos and strophes in the structuring of the alphabetic acrostics not only distinguishes each of the acrostic Psalms, but also shows their connection to one another. The chapter will further illustrate these features by means of a linguistic analysis of Psalms 9-10, 111 and 112.

In Chapter 4, a **comparative method** will be used to investigate the relationship between Hebrew acrostic Psalms and ancient Near Eastern acrostics. However, a description of the acrostic Psalms in the Old Testament and the ancient Near Eastern acrostics will be provided first. The comparative study will also focus on Ancient Near Eastern influence in our example texts, namely Psalms 9-10 and 111-112.

In Chapter 5, the **conclusion** of my thesis will be given. Other important issues that should be researched in future will also be proposed and introduced.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ACROSTICS AS LITERARY DEVICE – AN OVERVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Although Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar* contains only a brief introduction of the alphabetical Psalms<sup>5</sup> (Gesenius 1910:15-16), it is K. C. Hanson's dissertation that provides a historical description of studies in acrostic texts from that of Pastor Frohnmeyer of Württemberg in the 1850s to M. H. Floyd's in 1980 (1984:3-12). Subsequently, from the late twentieth century to the early twenty-first century, several other scholars have studied acrostic texts including Watson (1984:190-200), Freedman (1972:367-92; 1986:408-31; 1992:125-38; 1999; 2005:87-96), and Auffret (1988:5-31; 1992:49-61, 69-92; 2003:1-34; 2004:348-363). For W.G.E. Watson, acrostics are the related patterns between stanza and strophe and D. N. Freedman considers the pattern of acrostic poems through statistical results of used words in acrostics poems, while P. Auffret is interested in the structure of acrostic poems in Hebrew acrostics.

This chapter will attempt to define alphabetic acrostic poems in the Psalms. It will examine the characteristics of the acrostic form in Old Testament Psalms. The relationship between the form and the content of acrostic poems will also be probed in order to understand the literary structure of the acrostic poem in Psalms. Finally, the focus will be on the alphabetic acrostic poems of Psalms 9-10, 111, and 112. It will be suggested that these specific psalms could help to understand the literary structure of the alphabetic Psalms in general.

##### 2.1.1 The alphabetic acrostic poem in Hebrew literature

The letters of the biblical Hebrew alphabet are twenty-two in number and are ordered as follow:

ת ש ר ק צ פ ע ס נ מ ל כ י ט ח ז ו ה ד ג ב א

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<sup>5</sup> Boardman (1886:334-335) was the first to introduce the concept of alphabetic acrostics in Hebrew Bible scholarship.

From the right to the left, the letters read from אto ן. In Psalm 119, for example, the first letter of each verse or line starts in the alphabetic order. This poem therefore forms an alphabetic acrostic<sup>6</sup>. According to Klaus Koenen (2010), an acrostic is defined as follows:<sup>7</sup>

*Akrostichon bedeutet „Versspitze/Versanfang“. Der Begriff bezeichnet ein Gedicht, in dem die Anfangsbuchstaben bzw. -zeichen der einzelnen Zeilen senkrecht gelesen ein Wort oder einen Satz ergeben. Eine besondere Form des Akrostichons bilden Alphabetgedichte. In ihnen ergeben die Anfangsbuchstaben der einzelnen Zeilen das Alphabet. Das setzt eine Buchstabenschrift mit einer festen Reihenfolge der Zeichen voraus.*

In Koenen's words, the acrostic refers to the "top or beginning of a verse." The term is used for a poem, in which the first letters or marks of some rows, vertically read, result in a word or a sentence. A special form of the acrostic forms the alphabetic poems. In them, the first letters of some rows represent the alphabet. This presupposes a fixed order of letters. Therefore, in alphabetic acrostics, the alphabetic order of the Hebrew letters is important. This fixed order has a significant meaning and form itself.

In this study, the typical form of alphabetic acrostic poems will be examined as well as the characters and meanings of the Hebrew alphabet in order to understand the literary, comparative and historical elements. Therefore, it will be necessary to carry out a comprehensive analysis of acrostic poems, in this case, of Psalms 9-10, 111, and 112.

The style of writing poetry with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet seems to be one form of the acrostic expression in Ancient Near Eastern Literature (ANEL) in general. Since a comparative study of ANEL can shed some light on the relationship between Hebrew and ANEL acrostics, this will be carried out in the next chapter. However, it will be useful to investigate first the construction of the Psalms designated as alphabetic poems.

### **2.1.2 The position of alphabetic acrostic poems in the Psalms**

The book of Psalms is a work in five volumes. In the Psalms, alphabetic acrostic poems belong to the first and the fifth books with in each book four pieces of acrostic poetry. While

<sup>6</sup> See Watson (1984:190-191).

<sup>7</sup> Koenen, K. 2010. *Akrostichon*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/print/nc/wibilex/dasbibellexikon/details/quelle/WIBI/referenz/12961/cache/2889f8f6c233a0a850093faa4c89bd02/> [2012, March 5].

Book I comprises Pss 9-10<sup>8</sup>, 25, 34 and 37, Book V includes Pss 111, 112, 119 and 145, all of which are alphabetic in form.

In Book I, the alphabetic poems are referred to as the Psalms of David, that is, they are strongly associated with the tradition of David. This serves as proof of David's association with the alphabetic acrostic poems. On the other hand, the only alphabetic acrostic poem with a Davidic title in Book V is Psalm 145. From a redactional-structural perspective, Book I and Book V of the Psalms can be outlined as follow:

- Table I -

Heading	Book I	Total (40)	Heading	Book V	Total (44)
Untitled	Pss 1-2	2	Untitled	Ps 107	1
David	Pss 3-8	6	David	Pss 108-110	3
David-Alphabetic Acrostic	Ps 9-10	1	Hallelujah-Alphabetic Acrostic	Pss 111-112	2
David	Pss 11-24	14	Hallelujah	Pss 113-118	6
David-Alphabetic Acrostic	Ps 25	1	Untitled-Alphabetic Acrostic	Ps 119	1
David	Pss 26-33	8	A Song of degrees-(David & Solomon)	Pss 120-134	15
David-Alphabetic Acrostic	Ps 34	1	Hallelujah-Acrostic (?)	Pss 135-137	3
David	Pss 35-36	2	David	Pss 138-144	7
David-Alphabetic Acrostic	Ps 37	1	David-Alphabetic Acrostic	Ps 145	1
David	Pss 38-41	4	Hallelujah	Pss 146-150	5

In Book I which is made up of Davidic Psalms, the alphabetic acrostic poems are located between the other Davidic Psalms. In Book V, the relationship between the Davidic and Hallelujah Psalms needs to be examined in order to understand the Davidic tradition of alphabetic Psalms. This will be dealt with in detail in Chapter Four.

Thus, we can assume that these alphabetic poems have an important place in the first and fifth books of the Psalms. The significance of the alphabetic acrostic poems is shown clearly in the whole Psalms. Indeed, the final redactor(s) of the Psalms had collected and selected the poems of David, that is, those he/they would concede as the Psalms written by David or by the authority of David. This issue will also be discussed further in Chapter Four.

<sup>8</sup> Psalms 9-10 is regarded as a literary unit (cf. the Septuagint and the Vulgate). These versions differ from the MT. See also Van der Lugt (2006:155-157). With the exception of De Wette, Delitzsch, Kittel, Ridderbos, and Girard, most scholars are of the opinion that Pss. 9 and 10 are one poem according to Terrien (2003:138).

### **2.1.3 Research problems**

Analyzing alphabetic poems in the Psalms through a structural approach presents some problems. Therefore, firstly, the content and the form of alphabetic poems have to be examined because the form of these poems is obviously different from that of other poems. The content of this special form is expressed in a poem; it is therefore also important to explain how the alphabetic form in poems is used and applied. Furthermore, the alphabetic form and its content also have to be examined.

Secondly, since various structures occur in the alphabetic poems of Psalms, they have to be distinguished morphologically as perfected and unperfected structures of alphabetic poems. Through a synthetic-comparative analysis of the Psalms, the forms of alphabetic acrostic poems will help to classify the literary structure of alphabetic acrostic Psalms.

Lastly, the literary structure of selected Psalms (9-10, 111, and 112) will have to be analyzed using the methods mentioned above while the similarities and the differences between Psalms 9-10 and 111-112 will also have to be identified.

## **2.2 FORM AND CONTENT IN ALPHABETIC ACROSTIC PSALMS**

### **2.2.1 Form of alphabetic acrostic Psalms**

In poetry, the form of a poem could determine its classification as either a “fixed verse” or “free verse” poetry. In fixed verse poetry, the form of the poem has a regular frame. The poem is expressed and composed in the number of words, the rhythm or some other standard. Free verse poetry on the other hand does not stick to any rule used in composing a poem. In modern poetry, the alphabetic acrostic Psalms belong to fixed verse poetry. The basic form of the alphabetic acrostic Psalms is the list with the order of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the case of the MT, forms of the alphabetic acrostic Psalms, arranged in alphabetical order, are as follow:

# Note. In Form and Structure, if a poem has twenty two lines of with the full Hebrew Alphabet, it is classified as ‘Clear’. On the other hand, if a poem does not have twenty two lines with the full of Hebrew Alphabet, it is classified as ‘Unclear’.

- Table II -

	Psalm 9-10	Psalm 25	Psalm 34	Psalm 37	Psalm 111	Psalm 112	Psalm 119	Psalm 145
א	9:2-3vss.	1 vs.	2 vs.	1-2vss.	1a vs.	1a vs.	1-8 vss.	1 vs.
ב	4-5vss.	2 vs.	3 vs.	3-4vss.	1b vs.	1b vs.	9-16 vss.	2 vs.
ג	6-7 vss.	3 vs.	4 vs.	5-6vss.	2a vs.	2a vs.	17-24 vss.	3 vs.
ד	X	4 vs.	5 vs.	7 vs.	2b vs.	2b vs.	25-32 vss.	4 vs.
ה	8-9 vss.	5 vs. 5a	6 vs. 6a	8-9 vss.	3a vs.	3a vs.	33-40 vss.	5 vs.
ו	10-11vss.	22 vs. 5b	23vs. 6b	10-11 vss.	3b vs.	3b vs.	41-48 vss.	6 vs.
ז	12-13vss.	6 vs.	7 vs.	12-13 vss.	4a vs.	4a vs.	49-56 vss.	7 vs.
ח	14-15vss.	7 vs.	8 vs.	14-15 vss.	4b vs.	4b vs.	57-64 vss.	8 vs.
ט	16-17vss.	8 vs.	9 vs.	16-17 vss.	5a vs.	5a vs.	65-72 vss.	9 vs.
י	18 vs.	9 vs.	10 vs.	18-19 vss.	5b vs.	5b vs.	73-80 vss.	10 vs.
יא	19-21vss.	10 vs.	11 vs.	20 vs.	6a vs.	6a vs.	81-88 vss.	11 vs.
יב	10:1-3a vss.	11 vs.	12 vs.	21-22 vss.	6b vs.	6b vs.	89-96 vss.	12 vs.
יג	5b-6 vss.	12 vs.	13 vs.	23-24 vss.	7a vs.	7a vs.	97-104 vss.	13 vs.
יד	3b-5a vss.	13 vs.	14 vs.	25-26 vss.	7b vs.	7b vs.	105-112 vss.	X (?)
טו	X	14 vs.	15 vs.	27-28a vss.	8a vs.	8a vs.	113-120 vss.	14 vs.
טז	8b-9 vss.	15 vs.	16 vs.	28b-29 vss.	8b vs.	8b vs.	121-128 vss.	15 vs.
טז	7-8a vss.	16 vs.	17 vs.	30-31 vss.	9a vs.	9a vs.	129-136 vss.	16 vs.
יז	10-11vss. (x)	17 vs.	18 vs.	32-33 vss.	9b vs.	9b vs.	137-144 vss.	17 vs.
יח	12-13vss.	18 vs. (x)	19 vs.	34 vs.	9c vs.	9c vs.	145-152 vss.	18 vs.
יט	14 vs.	19 vs.	20 vs.	35-36 vss.	10a vs.	10a vs.	153-160 vss.	19 vs.
כ	15-16vss.	20 vs.	21 vs.	37-38 vss.	10b vs.	10b vs.	161-168 vss.	20 vs.
כא	17-18vss.	21 vs.	22 vs.	39-40 vss.	10c vs.	10c vs.	169-176 vss.	21 vs.
22	Unclear(18)	Unclear(21)	Clear(22)	Clear(22)	Clear(22)	Clear(22)	Clear(22)	Almost clear(21)

Coloured Shading	X					
note	Omission	Reversed	Inserted	$\frac{1}{3}$ vs. in forms of $\frac{1}{2}$ vs.	$\frac{1}{2}$ vs. in forms of one vs.	One vs. in forms of two vss.

The forms of the verses in the alphabetic acrostic Psalms in Table II can be summarized as follow:

- Psalms 111 and 112: Half of a verse
- Psalms 25, 34, and 145: One verse
- Psalms 9-10 and 37: Two verses
- Psalm 119: Eight verses

Most scholars agree on the division above although there may be some differences in the details of the form. As Table II shows, the most perfect form of the acrostic is Psalm 119, which used the alphabet letters in each set of eight verses in the poem. The Psalm is called Torah poetry.<sup>9</sup> Other poems also consist of twenty-two lines which is a peculiarity of the alphabetic poem except Psalms 9-10 which form twenty lines in total. In addition, Psalm 145

<sup>9</sup> Cf. See Freedman (1999).

omits the fourteenth *Nun* verse in the MT, however, it is found in the Qumran text and other translations such as the LXX retain it in their equivalents.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it also forms the perfect twenty-two lines. Perhaps the omission of the fourteenth *Nun* line in Psalm 145 was a deliberate act on the part of the author.<sup>11</sup> This point is remarkable.

Although several problems are identified with the various forms of the alphabetic Psalms, the basic forms of ½, 1, 2 and 8 lines can be grasped through the classification of the forms. The forms are based on definite structures which are connected with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Alphabetic acrostic poems are arranged according to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. With the exception of Psalms 9-10, all the poems follow the alphabetic order. A definite structure occurs in the alphabetic acrostic Psalms, therefore, the content of those poems will be analyzed based on their alphabetic form. The content of the poems could also help to clarify some changes in the forms of some alphabetic acrostic poems.

### 2.2.2 Content of alphabetic acrostic Psalms

The form of the Psalms varies from hymns, thanksgiving, and prayer to instruction but the content generally prescribes the form of the Psalms. Based on content, Gunkel (1933[1998]) classified Psalms into hymns, Psalms of the enthronement of YHWH, communal complaints, royal psalms, individual complaints, and individual thanksgiving songs.<sup>12</sup> Since Gunkel, many scholars have analyzed the content and form of the Psalms based on Gunkel's work.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, we shall investigate the content of the alphabetic acrostic poems in the Psalms with the help of Bible commentaries. In other words, commentaries by some major scholars which address the content of the Psalms will be reviewed. In the case of alphabetic acrostic Poems, certain important studies will be considered below.

<sup>10</sup> It was found in the Psalm Scroll of Qumran Cave 11. מעשיו בכל וחסיד בדבריו יהוה אמן; LXX Psalm 144:13 πιστὸς κύριος ἐν τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ὄσιος ἐν πάσι τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ; See Freedman (1999:20) and Fokkerman (2002:150).

<sup>11</sup> The title of Psalm 145 is "of David" and the number of David's image is 14. In Hebrew, "ד" is 4 and "ו" is 6. Therefore, the number of times David's name "דוד" appeared is 4+6+4=14.

<sup>12</sup> See Eaton (1967:16-18) and Hunter (2007:49-50) who have analyzed Gunkel's types of the Psalms. Cf. Williams, T. F. 2006. *A Form-Critical Classification of the Psalms According to Hermann Gunkel*. [pdf] Edmonton, AB Canada: Resources for Biblical, Theological, and Religious Studies. [Online]. Available: [http://biblical-studies.ca/pdfs/Gunkel\\_Classification\\_of\\_the\\_Psalms.pdf](http://biblical-studies.ca/pdfs/Gunkel_Classification_of_the_Psalms.pdf) [2012, March 21].

<sup>13</sup> The studies include Mowinckel (1924; 1962); Weiser (1959[1962]); Dahood (1965); Westermann (1967[1980]); Kraus (1960[1988]; 1978[1989]); Gerstenberger (1988; 2001), Craigie (1983), and Allen(2002).

1. Gunkel's commentary on the Psalms (1892[1968. 5Auffl.]) notes the following points:

- Psalms 9-10: *Psalm 9 und 10 gehören ursprünglich zusammen; dasselbe folgt aus der alphabetischen Anordnung des Ganzen* - Psalms 9 and 10 belong together originally; each follows the alphabetical layout of the whole.
- *Psalm 25: Der Psalm, alphabetisch geordnet, hat eben dadurch „etwas Unfreie“ (Kittel 3.4) und entbehrt einer deutlichen Gliederung. Das Gedicht als Ganzes ist das „Klagelied eines Einzelnen“* - The Psalm, ordered alphabetically, is somewhat "dependent" (overall 3.4) and lacks a clear outline. The poem as a whole is the "lament" of an individual.
- *Psalm 34: Von einem alphabetischen Psalm kann man bei grossen formellen Schwierigkeiten, die er zu überwinden hat, keine allzustraffe Gedankenordnung verlangen.* - Of an alphabetical Psalm, one may not require strict arrangement of the ideas to overcome the huge formal difficulties.
- *Psalm 37: Der Psalm ist ein akrostiches Gedicht, wobei auf je einen alphabetischen Buchstaben zwei Ganzzeilen kommen. Jede Strophe bildet eine logische Einheit, je einen Spruch. Dem Stoff wie der Formensprache nach gehört der Psalm in die „Weisheitsliteratur“* - The Psalm is an acrostic poem with two full lines each of which is alphabetic in character. Each couplet forms a logical unit, each a sentence. The formal elements show that the Psalm belongs to "wisdom literature".
- *Psalm 111: Ein alphabetischer Psalm, die fromme Übung einer bescheidenen Kunst* - An alphabetic Psalm, the religious practice of a humble art.
- *Psalm 112: Ein alphabetischer Psalm, in dem jedem Buchstaben des Alphabets eine Halbzeile folgt* - An alphabetic Psalm, in which a half line follows each letter of the alphabet.
- *Psalm 119: Der umfangreichste unter allen „alphabetischen Psalmen“* - The longest of all "alphabetic Psalms".
- *Psalm 145: Der Psalm, alphabetisch geordnet, und darum mehr eine Künstelei als ein Kunstwerk zu nennen, nimmt viele ältere Sprüche auf.* - The Psalm, which contains an alphabetical arrangement and is therefore a sophisticated work of art, includes many older proverbs.

2. Hans-Joachim Kraus (1960[1988]; 1978[1989])

- Psalms 9-10: Yahweh as the Savior of the poor and afflicted
- Psalm 25: Prayer for forgiveness and gracious guidance
- Psalm 34: Thanks and instruction of one who has been rescued
- Psalm 37: Instruction regarding Yahweh's righteous governance
- Psalm 111: A memorial of His wonders He has instituted
- Psalm 112: Blessed is the one who fears Yahweh
- Psalm 119: On the secret and wonder of the instruction of Yahweh
- Psalm 145: Your Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom

3. Artur Weiser (1962)

- Psalms 9-10: The judgment of God
- Psalm 25: Make me to know thy ways, O LORD
- Psalm 34: O taste and see that the LORD is good
- Psalm 37: Commit your ways to the LORD
- Psalm 111: He has caused His wonderful works to be remembered
- Psalm 112: The blessedness of fearing God
- Psalm 119: The word and the statutes of God
- Psalm 145: The eyes of all wait upon Thee

4. M. Dahood (1965; 1970)

- Psalm 9: A pure lament or a lament
- Psalm 10: A prayer for divine intervention against the wicked
- Psalm 25: An individual lament in acrostic form
- Psalm 34: A Psalm of thanksgiving composed by an individual whose prayer for deliverance from tribulations was heard by Yahweh
- Psalm 37: An acrostic Wisdom Psalm which seeks to counsel and encourage those depressed by the apparent success of the ungodly
- Psalm 111: A hymn of praise to Yahweh for His great works in nature and in history
- Psalm 112: A Wisdom Psalm

- Psalm 119: Psalm of the Law
- Psalm 145: A hymn celebrating the attributes of Yahweh

5. E.S. Gerstenberger (1988; 2001)

- Psalms 9-10: Thanksgiving and complaints
- Psalm 25: Congregational complaint
- Psalm 34: Individual thanksgiving; exhortation
- Psalm 37: Instruction and promise
- Psalm 111: Acrostic hymn
- Psalm 112: Acrostic felicitation
- Psalm 119: Acrostic prayer; instruction
- Psalm 145: Acrostic hymn

6. WBC – P.C. Craigie (1983) and L.C. Allen (2002)

- Psalms 9-10: Praise and lament
- Psalm 25: A Prayer of trust
- Psalm 34: An acrostic Psalm
- Psalm 37: An acrostic Psalm of Wisdom
- Psalm 111: God at work
- Psalm 112: Godliness at work
- Psalm 119: A light to my path
- Psalm 145: Tell of His might, sing of His grace

7. J.H. Eaton (2003)

- Psalms 9-10: Holding on to the music
- Psalm 25: The friendship of the Lord
- Psalm 34: Taste and see
- Psalm 37: To dwell on God's land
- Psalm 111: Redemption renewed through remembrance
- Psalm 112: The imitation of the love of God

- Psalm 119: A sustained prayer for life
- Psalm 145: The God who cares for every creature

8. Samuel Terrien (2003)

- Psalms 9-10: Prayer for justice
- Psalm 25: A plea for pardon
- Psalm 34: Sung meditation on divine goodness
- Psalm 37: An old sage's advice
- Psalm 111: Praise for the Lord of wonders
- Psalm 112: The happiness of the righteous man
- Psalm 119: An acrostic litany
- Psalm 145: Hymn to God, the King

9. John Goldingay (2006)

- Psalms 9-10: How to pray against the powerful
- Psalm 25: The bases of prayer from A to Z
- Psalm 34: Deliverance by Yhwh and reverence for Yhwh
- Psalm 37: The weak will take possession of the land
- Psalm 111: Worship and wisdom
- Psalm 112: Beatitudes
- Psalm 119: The dynamics of the moral life
- Psalm 145: Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever

The different classifications of these selected Psalms have been outlined above but further analyses of their content will be necessary. It appears that scholars who came after Gunkel have based their classification of the genre of these Psalms on Gunkel's work, as they tend to group them as praise and lament when analyzing the content. It seems however that their focus is primarily on the content of these alphabetic acrostic Psalms and not the form as well as the content.

- Focus on form: Gunkel (1892[1968]), Gerstenberger (1988; 2001), and Craigie (1983).
- Mixed form and content: Dahood (1965; 1970) and Terrien (2003).
- Focus on content: Kraus (1960[1988]; 1978[1989]), Weiser (1962), L.C. Allen (2002), J. H. Eaton (2003), and John Goldingay (2006).

From the studies shown above, the views of scholars on the form and content of the alphabetic acrostics could be summarized as follows:

- Table III -

Book I	Content	Book V	Content
Psalm 9-10	<b>Prayer</b> to Yahweh for punishing the wicked and helping the poor	Psalm 111	<b>The Wisdom</b> of Hallelujah Praising Yahweh's great works
Psalm 25	<b>Prayer</b> to Yahweh for teaching me and redeeming me and Israel from the enemy	Psalm 112	<b>The Wisdom</b> of Hallelujah A good man and the impious
Psalm 34	<b>Eulogy</b> for Yahweh His great works	Psalm 119	<b>The Wisdom</b> of the word of GOD
Psalm 37	<b>The Wisdom</b> about the righteous and the wicked	Psalm 145	<b>Praising</b> Yahweh and His Kingdom

There are therefore three basic types of contents – Prayer (Psalms 9-10; 25), Hymn (Psalms 34; 145), and the Wisdom poem (Psalms 37; 111; 112; 119). Accordingly, the form reflects the contents of the Psalms. However, in the Psalms as a whole, these prayers, hymns, and wisdom poems can also be found in the alphabetic acrostics in some other Psalms. The contents are prayer, hymn, and wisdom but the key points in the alphabetic acrostic Psalms are connected with wisdom, for example, the concepts of righteousness and evil, the fear of God, the great and wonderful works of God, and the word and law of God. In both prayer and hymn, the wisdom elements are found. Therefore, prayer and hymn in Psalms belong to wisdom. The idea of worshiping God is found in prayer and hymns, but the alphabetic acrostic form is used as a tool of wisdom. Therefore, the content of these perfect Hebrew alphabets of twenty-two letters may be explained from the perspective of wisdom.

### 2.2.3 Form and content in alphabetic acrostic Psalms

An author describes the unique form and structure of a piece of work in a picture in order to explain his/her intention or the content of that art through a method of maximizing meanings. Furthermore, the form in which the author highlights his/her intended content conveys a message in itself. Whether intentional or not, the form has already used the tool of interpretation. This means both form and content are set in a close relationship. As a cup

holds water or a bowl food, so does the Psalms' author effectively use poetic structure to convey the meaning of those Psalms.

The eight alphabetic acrostic poems in the 150 Psalms (Pss. 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145) have a unique literary form. Furthermore, the contents of these poems are connected with wisdom literature. On this point, it is mentioned above that wisdom is the motif according to which the arrangement of the poems in alphabetic order takes place. All explanations of the presence of wisdom could be made through language; wisdom's nature may be revealed through the regularity of the alphabet order. Therefore, the beauty of wisdom can be observed in the alphabetic acrostic form. It seems that the best of the poems in the Psalms is the alphabetic poem.

Both form and content unite in a poem, and it can be presumed that the intention and thought of an author are presented in a complementary relationship with the alphabetic form and literary structure. Both form and content are not expressed individually, but both certainly have an interdependent relationship. If the content is embossed by the form, the form will signify the content. Thus, alphabetic poems symbolize themselves, and the content will shape itself through that form.

#### **2.2.4 Summary**

In the second section of Chapter Two, the place and significance of alphabetic acrostic Psalms were considered as well as the form and content, and the relationship between the form and content.

First, the unique alphabetic form has been compared with the analysis of alphabetic poems in the whole Psalms. However, interpreting Psalm 9-10 remains a difficult problem for this poem has an imperfect structure which will be pointed out through a literary analysis of the selected poems beginning with Psalm 9-10 itself.

Second, works of major scholars on the content of alphabetic poems (Psalms 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145) are compared. Generally, scholars are divided between meaning and form but it will be suggested here that both content and form must be taken into consideration when analyzing alphabetic poems.

Lastly, although the relationship between the content and form of alphabetic acrostic Psalms has been briefly described above, the issue should also subsequently be dealt with from a linguistic perspective.

## 2.3 ORDER OF THE ALPHABETIC FORM - FROM ‘א’ TO ‘ת’

### 2.3.1 Perfect alphabetic form in the Psalms

Of the alphabetic poems, Psalm 119 is the most perfect. This Psalm was written alphabetically eight times with the whole alphabet. Therefore, it is the most complete of the alphabetic acrostic Psalms. The standard for classifying the perfect form of the alphabetic poem can be determined based on both the order and completeness of the letters of the alphabet. Therefore, a perfect alphabetic form means that the twenty-two Hebrew alphabets are arranged in an orderly and regular fashion.

The alphabetic acrostic Psalms mentioned above could therefore be classified as follows:

- Table IV -

	Psalm 37	Psalm 111	Psalm 112	Psalm 119
א	1-2vss.	1a vs.	1a vs.	1-8 vss.
ב	3-4vss.	1b vs.	1b vs.	9-16 vss.
ג	5-6vss.	2a vs.	2a vs.	17-24 vss.
ד	7 vs.	2b vs.	2b vs.	25-32 vss.
ה	8-9 vss.	3a vs.	3a vs.	33-40 vss.
ו	10-11 vss.	3b vs.	3b vs.	41-48 vss.
ז	12-13 vss.	4a vs.	4a vs.	49-56 vss.
ח	14-15 vss.	4b vs.	4b vs.	57-64 vss.
ט	16-17 vss.	5a vs.	5a vs.	65-72 vss.
י	18-19 vss.	5b vs.	5b vs.	73-80 vss.
כ	20 vs.	6a vs.	6a vs.	81-88 vss.
ל	21-22 vss.	6b vs.	6b vs.	89-96 vss.
מ	23-24 vss.	7a vs.	7a vs.	97-104 vss.
נ	25-26 vss.	7b vs.	7b vs.	105-112 vss.
ס	27-28a vss.	8a vs.	8a vs.	113-120 vss.
ע	28b-29 vss.	8b vs.	8b vs.	121-128 vss.
פ	30-31 vss.	9a vs.	9a vs.	129-136 vss.
צ	32-33 vss.	9b vs.	9b vs.	137-144 vss.
ק	34 vs.	9c vs.	9c vs.	145-152 vss.
ר	35-36 vss.	10a vs.	10a vs.	153-160 vss.
ש	37-38 vss.	10b vs.	10b vs.	161-168 vss.
ת	39-40 vss.	10c vs.	10c vs.	169-176 vss.
22	<b>Clear(22)</b>	<b>Clear(22)</b>	<b>Clear(22)</b>	<b>Clear(22)</b>
Coloured Shading				
Note		$\frac{1}{3}$ vs. in forms of $\frac{1}{2}$ vs.	One vs. in forms of two vss.	

Gunkel (1892[1968]: 153-155) showed above alphabetical arrangement except Psalm 37. Especially, he had framed Psalm 37 as follows differently.

- ט: 7, 14c vss.
- ן: 14a, 14b, 15 vss.
- ך: 20a, 25c, 20b, 20c vss.
- ם: 25a, 25b, 26 vss.
- ן: 34a, 34b, 40b, 34c, 34d vss.

However, Goldingay (2006: 514-517), Terrien (2003: 317-320) and Van der Lugt (2006: 367-368) agree about above frames. Almost scholars defer to the case of ‘Table IV’ (eg. Psalms 111, 112 and 119).

Finally, if one considers the frame of the verses in these poems alphabetically, Psalm 37 is arranged perfectly and in order per two verses excluding ט, ך, ן. Psalms 111 and 112 are also in a perfect alphabetic order per a half verse excluding from ן to ט.

### 2.3.2 Transformed or imperfect alphabetic form in the Psalms

The transformed or imperfect alphabetic form has been discussed variety issues. About the definitive analysis on the alphabetic structure except Psalm 145, the most controversial is Psalm 9-10. Perhaps if it has been dealt with works of some scholars, it will be informative. Let compare to acrostic structures concerning about Hebrew alphabetic order in the Psalms commentaries of Gunkel (1982[1968]), Craigie (1983), Terrien (2003) and Goldingay (2006). They have annotated on the interest in the alphabetic acrostic order.

# note. Gunkel: **G**, Craige: **C**, Terrien: **T**, Goldingay: **g**

-Table V-

	Psalm 9-10				Psalm 25				Psalm 34			
	<b>G</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>g</b>
ט	9:2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3	1	1	1a	1	2	2	2	2
ך	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5	2	2	1b-2	2	3	3	3	3
ם	6-7	6-7	6-7	6-7	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
ן	x	x	x	x	4	4	3	4	5	5	5	5

ה	8-9	8-9	8-9	8-9	5a	5a	5	5a	6	6	6	6a
ו	10-11	10-11	10-11	10-11	5b,7b	5b	x	5b	x	x	x	6b
ז	12-13	12-13	12-13	12-13	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7
ח	14-15	14-15	14-15	14-15	7a, 7c	7	7	7	8	8	8	8
ט	16-17	16-17	16-17	16-17	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	9
י	18,21	18	18-19	18	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	10
כ	19-20	19-21	20-21	19-21	10	10	10	10	11	11	11	11
ל	10:1-2	1-3b	1-2	1-3	11	11	11	11	12	12	12	12
מ	x	x	5	-6	5b-6	12	12	12	12	13	13	13
נ	4-5a	3c-5a	3	-4	4-5a	13	13	13	13	14	14	14
ס	5b-6	5b-6	x	x	14	14	14	14	15	15	15	15
ע	8c-9	8c-9	8c-9	8c-11	15	15	15	15	16	16	16	16
פ	7-8b	7-8b	7-8b	7-8b	16	16	16	16	17	17	17	17
צ	10-11	10-11	10-11	x	17	17	17	17	18	18	18	18
ק	12-13	12-13	12-13	12-13	18	18	18	18	19	19	19	19
ר	14	14	14	14	19	19	19	19	20	20	20	20
ש	15-16	15-16	15-16	15-17a	20	20	20	20	21	21	21	21
ת	17-18	17-18	17-18	17b-18	21	21	21	21	22	22	22	22
22	20	20	20 ?	19	22	22 ?	21	22	21	21	21	22
Coloured Shading	X											
note	Omission		Reversed		?		½ vs. in forms of one vs.		One vs. in forms of two vss.			

In Psalms 9-10<sup>14</sup>, some letters of the alphabet have been omitted such as **ד**, **ס**, and **צ**. By above compared table V, I follow that Goldingay (2006:162-166) also regards that parts of **ד**, **ס**, and **צ** are omitted in Psalm 9-10. In addition, some of the alphabet letters are in a reversed order between **מ** and **נ** as well as between **ע** and **פ**.

Psalm 25 and Psalm 34 are very similar. In each, the fifth and sixth alphabet letters are ‘ה’ and ‘ו’. This problem can be resolved in two ways. First, each verse is divided into two halves, so that it is shown as 5a and 5b: **הַדְרִיבֵנִי** and **הַלְמִדֵנִי** in Psalm 25 or 6a and 6b: **הַבִּיטוּ** and **הַפְּנִיחֶם** in Psalm 34. Second, Psalm 25:5 could be divided into verse 5 and verse 22: **הַדְרִיבֵנִי** and **צְרוּתֶיךָ**, while Psalm 34 is divided into verse 6 and verse 23: **הַבִּיטוּ** and **בָּךְ** (that is, each half of the verse is analyzed as a whole verse). If a rule of one alphabet letter per verse

<sup>14</sup> See Gray (2011: 267-295).

is applied, the second solution may appear more suitable than the first. Furthermore, in Psalm 25, ‘ק’ is substituted by ‘עניי’. This point will be understood as a transformed part.

In my own observation, Alphabetic Psalms with a “transformed” or “imperfect” form could be classified as follows:

- Table VI -

	Psalm 9-10	Psalm 25	Psalm 34	Psalm 145
א	אִירָה 9:2-3vss.	אֱלֹהִים 1 vs.	אֲבָרְכָה 2 vs.	אֲרוֹמְמֶה 1 vs.
ב	בָּשׁוּב 4-5vss.	בָּרַךְ 2 vs.	בִּיהוָה 3 vs.	בִּפְלֵל 2 vs.
ג	בְּעֶרְתָּ 6-7 vss.	גַּם 3 vs.	גִּדְלוּ 4 vs.	גִּדְלוּ 3 vs.
ד	X	דִּרְכֶיךָ 4 vs.	דִּרְשֵׁתִי 5 vs.	דִּרֹר 4 vs.
ה	הִמְחָה 8-9 vss.	הִדְרִיכֵנִי 5 vs.	הִבְיִטוּ 6 vs.	הִתְרַד 5 vs.
ו	וְיָהִי 10-11vss.	צְרוּתֶיךָ 22 vs.	וְיִבְרַח 23vs.	וְעִזְיוּ 6 vs.
ז	זָמְרוּ 12-13vss.	זָכַר 6 vs.	זָהָה 7 vs.	זָכַר 7 vs.
ח	חֲנֻנִי 14-15vss.	חֲטָאוֹת 7 vs.	חֲנֵה 8 vs.	חֲנִין 8 vs.
ט	מִטְבְּעִי 16-17vss.	טוֹב 8 vs.	מִטְעֵמוֹ 9 vs.	טוֹב 9 vs.
י	וְיָשׁוּבוּ 18 vs.	וְיִדְרֹךְ 9 vs.	וְיִרְאוּ 10 vs.	וְיִדְרֹךְ 10 vs.
כ	כִּי 19-21vss.	כָּל 10 vs.	כִּפְיָרִים 11 vs.	כִּבְדֹר 11 vs.
ל	לִמְחָה 10:1-3a vss.	לִמְעַן 11 vs.	לִכְנֹ 12 vs.	לִהְדִיעַ 12 vs.
מ	מִרְוֹם 5b-6 vss.	מִי 12 vs.	מִי 13 vs.	מִלְכֻתְךָ 13 vs.
נ	נִפְשׁוּ 3b-5a vss.	נִפְשׁוּ 13 vs.	נִצַּר 14 vs.	X (?)
ס	X	סוֹד 14 vs.	סוֹר 15 vs.	סוֹמֵךְ 14 vs.
ע	עֵינָיו 8b-9 vss.	עֵינֵי 15 vs.	עֵינֵי 16 vs.	עֵינֵי 15 vs.
פ	פִּיהוּ 7-8a vss.	פִּנְהָה 16 vs.	פִּנְיָה 17 vs.	פִּתְחָה 16 vs.
צ	10-11vss. (x)	צְרוּתָה 17 vs.	צִעְקוּ 18 vs.	צִדִּיק 17 vs.
ק	קוֹמְחָה 12-13vss.	עֲנִי 18 vs.(x)	קָרֹב 19 vs.	קָרֹב 18 vs.
ר	רָאֵתָה 14 vs.	רָאָה 19 vs.	רַבּוֹת 20 vs.	רַצּוֹן 19 vs.
ש	שָׁבַר 15-16vss.	שָׁמְרָה 20 vs.	שָׁמַר 21 vs.	שָׁמַר 20 vs.
ת	תִּאֲזוֹת 17-18vss.	תִּם 21 vs.	תִּמּוֹתַת 22 vs.	תִּהְלֵת 21 vs.
22	Unclear(19)	Somewhat clear(21)	Somewhat clear(22)	Unclear(21)

Coloured Shading	X				
note	Omission	Reversed	Inserted	½ vs. in forms of one vs.	One vs. in forms of two vss.

In Psalm 145, the omission of the ‘נ’ line is shown in the table above, but it should be noted also that the ‘נ’ line is omitted in the MT, whereas in the translated versions (e.g. LXX), it is added.

### 2.3.3 Structure of alphabetic acrostic poems in the Psalms<sup>15</sup>

The various forms of the alphabetic poems have been indicated above namely the perfect forms and transformed or imperfect forms. Such a distinction is important when analyzing the literary structure of the alphabetic acrostic poems, which are different from regular poems. The alphabetic poems have a unique structure because of their alphabetic arrangement which follow the order of the twenty-two Hebrew alphabet letters.

David Noel Freedman and David Miano (2005:88) have identified the structure of alphabetic acrostic poems as follows:

- Standard Alphabetic: 22 lines (bicolons) of approximately 16 syllables each (8 per colon); for example, Proverbs 31, Psalms 25, 34, and 145.
- Half-line Alphabetic: 22 lines (colon) of approximately 8 syllables each (1 colon per letter of the alphabet); for example Psalms 111 and 112.
- Double-line Alphabetic: 22 stanzas (tetracolons) of approximately 32 syllables each (8 per colon); for example Psalm 37.
- Qina Alphabetic: 22 lines (bicolons) of approximately 13 syllables each (8 in the first colon, 5 in the second); for example Lamentations 1-4.

Twenty-two lines, bicolons, and 16 syllables make up the standard structure of the acrostic poem. Additionally, there are stanzas, 8 or 32 syllables, and colons, bicolons or tetracolons. The exception to this pattern is found in the Psalm of complaints which has 13 syllables. It should be noted that Freedman's classification of alphabetic poems is based on features such as rhythm, stanza, and accent.

However, it is not easy to determine the standard poem, that is, the poem which was written as a model, and which would have influenced the structure of the other poems. That model alphabetic poem must have been developed and formed with a perfect structure. This point will be explained further in Chapter Four. Based on the assumption that the poem with the perfect structure was the standard poem, an analysis of the structure of the alphabetic poem is proposed as follows:

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<sup>15</sup> See Freedman and Miano (2005:87-89); cf. Freedman (1972:367-392; 1986: 408-432; 1999).

- Standard alphabetic acrostic: every 8 lines of the 22 letters of the alphabet (Psalm 119).
- Dual-lines alphabetic acrostic: every 2 lines of the 22 letters of the alphabet (Psalm 37 excluding 7, 8, 9 lines).
- One-line alphabetic acrostic: every 1 line of the 22 letters of the alphabet (Psalms 25; 34; and 145).
- Half-line alphabetic acrostic: every half line of the 22 letters of the alphabet (Psalms 111 and 112 excluding 13 to 14 lines).
- Transformed alphabetic acrostic: basic 22 stanzas but a broken rule pattern (Psalm 9-10).
- Non-alphabetic acrostic<sup>16</sup>: basic 22 lines (11 lines or 44 lines) without alphabetic orders (Psalm 103 - 22 lines; Psalms 20; 58; and 100 - 11 lines; Psalm 105 - 44 lines).

It seems logical then to consider Psalm 119 as the possible standard alphabetic acrostic poem because it is the most perfect form of the alphabetic acrostic poems. If Psalm 119 is compared to other poems, it could be regarded as the standard. In mathematics, the number 8 includes these numbers in the relationship between  $\frac{1}{2}$ , 1, and 2.<sup>17</sup> Thus, if the number 8 represents the perfect number when comparing the various structures of alphabetic poems, Psalm 119 could be the basic form. In the whole Psalms, therefore, Psalm 119 is the most important, at least as far as the acrostic poems are concerned.

While the concepts of dual-lines, one-line, and half-line correspond to Freedman's view, the structure of the transformed form differs from his concept of alphabetic acrostics. My suggestion is that the structure of Psalm 9-10 be regarded as a transformed form. In other words, this transformed or broken rule patterns exist in alphabetic poems as in Psalm 9-10. If the standard poem is Psalm 119, surely, it could be accepted for this reason. Freedman (2005:89-96) has shown that his non-alphabetic acrostic is not an alphabetic poem for a non-alphabetic acrostic reveals that the character of the alphabetic structure is 22 lines from the 22 alphabet letters. From the number 22, there are 11 (half of 22) lines in the half-line acrostic and 44 (twice of 22) in the dual-line acrostic. Classifying non-alphabetic acrostics in the above mentioned way could result in the following:

<sup>16</sup> See Freedman and Miano (2005:89-96), who have suggested the idea of non-acrostic alphabetic poems.

<sup>17</sup>  $8 = \{\frac{1}{2}, 1, 2\}$

- Dual-lines non-alphabetic acrostic: 44 lines (Psalm 105)
- One-line non-alphabetic acrostic: basic 22 lines (Psalm 103)
- Half-line non-alphabetic acrostic: 11 lines (Psalms 20; 58; and 100)

In non-alphabetic acrostics, Psalm 103 could be regarded as the basic poem which coincides as the standard. The reason is that this poem consists of 22 lines according to the basic number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet, that is, 22. Even though these non-alphabetic poems were not written according to the Hebrew alphabet, their 22 lines may be analyzed in line with of the 22 Hebrew alphabet letters. The Psalmist seems to exhibit what is referred to as “alphabetic thinking”<sup>18</sup> in the non-alphabetic acrostic Psalms.

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

In summary, Chapter 2 has examined the alphabetic acrostic poems in the Psalms. The alphabetical Psalms appear to be the most beautiful poems in Hebrew literature. The alphabetic order occurs in a tableau form and its significant theme might point to the author’s special intention.

Freedman’s classification of alphabetic acrostic has served as the background for this study. His study has been modified in the sense that the present study argues that Psalm 119 be considered the standard alphabetic acrostic Psalm because of its perfection which is different from Freedman’s analysis of acrostics as 22-line Psalms (Pss 25; 34; 145).

The contribution of Freedman’s work seems crucial to the study of alphabetic acrostic studies. His analysis helps to identify where the alphabetic acrostic form is located in the Psalms. The study of alphabetic acrostic poems has developed not only in the study of the Psalms, but also in other texts of the Bible as well as Apocrypha and Qumran texts in Hebrew literature.<sup>19</sup> From these studies, I believe that alphabetic acrostic poems could be found to possess unique features especially when compared to other ancient Near Eastern literature.

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<sup>18</sup> See Ceresko (2006:32-46). His concept of “alphabetic thinking” seems to be similar to this non-alphabetic acrostic.

<sup>19</sup> See Eshel and Strugnell (2000:441-458) who have analyzed alphabetical acrostics in Hebrew literature, for example, in Nahum 1:2-8; Psalms 9-10; 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119 and 145; Prov 31:10-31; Lamentations 1; 2; 3; and 4; Sirach 51:13-30; Psalm 155 (Syriac); Apostrophe to Zion (11QPs<sup>a</sup> 22.1-5, 11QPs<sup>b</sup>, and 4QPs<sup>f</sup>); Eschatological Hymn (4QPs<sup>f</sup>col.9) and Apostrophe to Judah (4QPs<sup>f</sup>col.10).

Above, we have attempted to classify the structure of alphabetic acrostic poems although it is not easy to define the standard poem. However, in analyzing the structure of alphabetic acrostic poems, the basic structure of 8 lines could be changed to two lines, one line, or half a line using the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This might be understood as a development of the transformed structure or various representations of a perfect structure.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ACROSTIC PSALMS (PSS 9-10 AND 111-112)

In the present chapter we will start focussing on specific selected poems. The rationale for the selection of Psalms 9-10, 111 and 112 has already been given in the introduction to this study. The linguistic analysis will consist of the following: An exposition of the psalm in alphabetic order will be given. Thereafter, a translation will follow. The main focus will then follow, namely an analysis of the structure of the psalm, whereafter a discussion of the understanding of the text will follow.

#### 3.1 PSALM 9-10

##### 3.1.1 BHS text in alphabetic order

<sup>9:1</sup> לְמַנְצַח עֲלֵמוֹת לְבֵן מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:

<sup>2/3</sup> אֲוִדָה יְהוָה בְּכָל-לִבִּי אֲסַפְרָה כָּל-נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ:

<sup>3/3</sup> אֲשַׁמְחָה וְאֶעֱלֶצָה בְּךָ אֲזַמְרָה שְׂמֵךְ עָלְיוֹן:

<sup>4/3</sup> בְּשׁוֹב-אוֹיְבֵי אַחֲזֹר וּכְשִׁלּוֹ וַיֵּאבְדּוּ מִפְּנֶיךָ:

<sup>5/3</sup> כִּי-עָשִׂיתָ מִשְׁפָּטִי וְדִינִי יִשְׁבֹּת לְכֹסֵּא שׁוֹפֵט צָדֵק:

<sup>6/4</sup> גִּוִּים אַבְדֹתָ רָשָׁע שָׁמֵם מְזֻחֵית לְעוֹלָם וְעַד:

<sup>7/4</sup> הָאֹיְבֵי תִמּוּ חֲרָבוֹת לְנֹצֵחַ וְעָרִים נִתְּשָׁת אֶבֶד זְכָרָם

<sup>4/3</sup> חָמָה: <sup>8</sup> וַיְהוֶה לְעוֹלָם יֹשֵׁב כּוֹנֵן לְמִשְׁפַּט כֶּסֶף:

<sup>9/3</sup> וְהוּא יִשְׁפֹּט-תְּבַל בְּצַדֵּק יִדּוֹן לְאֲמִים בְּמִישְׁרִים:

<sup>10/3</sup> וַיְהִי יְהוָה מִשְׁגֵּב לְהַדָּךְ מִשְׁגֵּב לְעַתּוֹת בְּצָרָה:

<sup>11/4</sup> וַיִּבְטְחוּ בְּךָ יוֹדְעֵי שְׂמֵךְ כִּי לֹא-עֲזַבְתָּ דֹרְשֶׁיךָ יְהוָה:

<sup>12/3</sup> מְרוֹ לַיהוָה יֹשֵׁב צִיּוֹן הִגִּידוּ כְּעַמִּים עֲלִילוֹתָיו:

<sup>13/3</sup> כִּי-דִרְשׁ דְּמִים אוֹתָם זָכַר לֹא-אֲשַׁכַּח צַעֲקַת (עֲנִיִּים) וְעַנּוּיִם:

14/2/6 **חַנְּנִי** יְהוָה רֵאָה עֲנִי מִשְׁנֵאֵי מְרוֹמָי מִשְׁעָרֵי מוֹת:  
15/6/2 לִמְעַן אֲסַפְּרָה כָּל-תְּהִלָּתֶיךָ בְּשִׁעְרֵי בֵּת-צִיּוֹן אֲגִילָה בִישׁוּעָתֶךָ:

16/4/4 **מִבְּעוֹ** גוֹיִם בְּשַׁחַת עָשׂוּ בְּרִשְׁתָּיו טְמֹנוּ נִלְכְּדָה רַגְלָם:  
17/3/5 נִזְרְעוּ יְהוָה מִשְׁפֹּט עֲשֵׂה בַפֶּעַל כַּפְּיוֹ נִקְשׂ רִשְׁעֵי

הַגִּיּוֹן סֵלָה:

18/3/3 **יָשׁוּבוּ** רִשְׁעִים לְשִׂאוֹלָה כָּל-גּוֹיִם שְׂכַחֵי אֱלֹהִים:  
19/5/4 **כִּי לֹא** לְנֶצַח יִשְׁכַּח אֲבִיּוֹן תְּקוּנָה (עֲנִיִּים) [עֲנִיִּים] תֹּאכֵד לָעַד:  
20/2/5 קוֹמָה יְהוָה אֲלֵעֲזוּ אֲנוֹשׁ וְשִׁפְטוּ גוֹיִם עַל-פְּנֵיךָ:  
21/4/5 שִׁיתָה יְהוָה מוֹרָה לָהֶם יִדְעוּ גוֹיִם אֲנוֹשׁ תִּמְהָ

סֵלָה:

10-14/3 **קוֹמָה** יְהוָה תַעֲמֹד בְּרַחֲוֶה תַעֲלִים לְעֵתוֹת בַּצָּרָה:  
2/8/3 בְּנִאֲוֹת רִשְׁעֵי יִדְלַק עֲנִי וְתִפְשׁוּ בְּמִזְמוֹתָיו חֲשָׁבוּ: כִּי-הִלֵּל רִשְׁעֵי עַל-תְּאֻנֹּת

5/3 **נִפְשׁוּ** וּבִצְעֵי בְרִיךְ נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה: רִשְׁעֵי כְּנָבָה אִפּוֹ  
4/3 בַּל-יִדְרֹשׁ אֵין אֱלֹהִים כָּל-מִזְמוֹתָיו: יִחִילוּ (דְּרָכּוֹ) [דְּרָכּוֹ] בְּכָל-עֵת  
3/3 **מִתְרוֹם** מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ מִנְגִּדוֹ כָּל-צוֹרְרָיו יִפִּיחַ בָּהֶם:  
6/2/6 אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ בַּל-אֲמוֹט לְדֹר וָדֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-בִרְעֵ: אֱלֹהֵי

4/4 **פִּיהוּ** מְלֹא וּמְרֻמוֹת וְתֵד תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנוֹ עֲמֹל וְאָוֶן:  
3/3 **יִשְׁבּוּ** בְּמִאֲרֵב חֲצֵרִים בְּמִסְתָּרִים יִהְרֹג נָקִי  
3/4 **עֵינָיו** לְחִלְכָה יִצְפְּנוּ: יִאֲרֵב בְּמִסְתָּרוֹ כְּאֲרִיָּה בַסֶּכֶה  
3/4 יִאֲרֵב לְחִטּוֹף עֲנִי וְחִטָּף עֲנִי בְּמִשְׁכּוֹ בְּרִשְׁתּוֹ:

10/2/3(4) (וְדָכָה) [וְדָכָה] יִשָּׁח וְנִפְלַ בְּעִצּוֹמָיו (חֲלָפָאִים) [חֲלָפָאִים]:  
11/4/4 אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ שְׂכַח אֵל הַסְתִּיר פְּנָיו בַּל-רֵאָה לְנֶפְשׁוֹ:

12/5/2 **קוֹמָה** יְהוָה אֵל נִשְׂא יָדָךְ אֶל-תִּשְׁכַּח (עֲנִיִּים) [עֲנִיִּים]:  
13/4/4 עַל-מֵהוּ נֶאֱמַר רִשְׁעוֹ אֱלֹהִים אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ לֹא תִדְרֹשׁ:  
14/1/6 **חֲאֲתָה** כִּי-אֲתָה עֲמֹל וְכַעַס תְּבִיט לְתַת בְּיָדְךָ

עֲלִידָי יַעֲזֹב חֲלָכָה יְתוֹם אֶתְּהוּ הִיִּיתָ עֹזְרִי: 3/4

שִׁבְרֵי זִרְוֵעַ רְשָׁעִים וְרַע תְּדַרְוֶשׁ-רְשָׁעוֹ בַּל-תִּמְצָא: 15/4/3

יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם וְעַד אֲבָדוּ גוֹיִם מֵאֶרֶצוֹ: 16/4/3

אֲוֹת עֲנוּיִים שָׁמַעַתָּ יְהוָה תִּכְיֶן לִבָּם תִּקְשִׁיב אֲזַנְדָּךְ: 17/4/4

לְשַׁפֵּט יְתוֹם וְרָדָף בַּל-יֹסִיף עוֹד לְעַרְץ אֲנוּשׁ מִן-הָאָרֶץ: 18/3/5

### 3.1.2 Translation of the Hebrew structure with reference to Akkadian and Ugarit equivalents

※ verb: ; subject:

[Heading] 9:1 For the music-director, upon the death<sup>20</sup> of the son, a psalm of David.

[א] 9:2  I will praise thee, **O the LORD (YHWH)!** with all my heart.  I will recount all thy being wonderful.

9:3  I will be joyful and rejoice in thee.  I will sing Thy name, **O Most High (Elyon)!**

[ב] 9:4 When to return my enemies back,  they will stumble and perish from Thy front.

9:5 For  Thou hath performed my legal claim and verdict,  Thou hath sat in the throne to judge right.

[ג] 9:6  Thou hath rebuked the nations.  Thou hath destroyed the impious; their name  Thou hath wiped out for ever and forever.

9:7 **O the enemy!**<sup>21</sup>,  They have been finished ruin until lastingness; and cities  Thou hath pulled up;  He has perished their memorials.

[ד] <Omission>

[ה] **O they!**

9:8 But **O the LORD (YHWH)!** Until long time,  He will dwell;  He has established for the judgment His Judge.

9:9 And  He will judge the world;  He will bring justice to the people rightly.

<sup>20</sup> In Hebrew, 'mwt' means 'dead' or 'dying' and 'mūtu' death in Akkadian (Black, J., George, A., & Postgate, N. 2000. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*. Wiesbaden, German: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 225). See Gardiner (1957:568). However, 'mwt' is 'mother' in Egyptian.

<sup>21</sup> In Akkadian, 'ayyābu' means 'enemy' cf. CDA: 2; Hayim (2009:14-16).

[י] 9:10 And **will be** the LORD (YHWH) a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge for periods of drought.

9:11 And **they will trust** in Thee, those who know Thy name, for **Thou have not forsaken** those who turn to Thee, **O the LORD (YHWH)!**

[י] 9:12 **Praise** to the LORD (YHWH) who dwell in Zion; **Declare** among the peoples His deed.

9:13 For whose demands blood their **He has remembered**, **He has not forgotten** a cry of the wretched.

[י] 9:14 **Be gracious** to me, **O the LORD (YHWH)!** **See** my affliction from those who hate me, O One who has exalted me from the gates of death!

9:15 In order that **I would proclaim** all Thy glories in the gates of the daughter of Zion; **I would shout with joy** in Thy salvation.

[ו] 9:16 **have sunk** the nations in the pit, **they have made**; in this net **they have hidden**, **have been captured** their feet.

9:17 **has been known by** the LORD (YHWH) a judgment; **He has done** in the deed of His palm, (He is) One who strikes down an impious.

Higgayon Selah.

[י] 9:18 **will return** the impious to Sheol, **all nations** who forget God.

[ז] 9:19 For not for ever **will be forgotten** the poor, a hope of the humble **will perish** forever.

9:20 **Stand up**, **O the LORD (YHWH)!** **Let not defy** man, **let plead** the nations before Thee.

9:21 **Put**, **O the LORD (YHWH)!**, a terror to them; **Let know** the nations, men (are) **they**.  
Selah.

[ח] 10:1 To What (=why), **O the LORD (YHWH)!**, **are Thou standing** in distant? **are Thou hiding** for periods of drought?

10:2-3a In pride<sup>22</sup>, the impious hotly is pursuing the wretched; Let them be caught; in evil plan, this they have esteemed; For has praised the impious onto a desire.

<Reversed> [1] 10:3b-10:4a Their life and one which cuts off he has blessed, he has treated disrespectfully the LORD (YHWH); the impious (is) like height of his nose.

10:4b-10:5a he will not turn to nothing God (Elohim) (in) all of their evil plan; will endure his way in all times.

<Reversed> [2] 10:5b Height (is) Thy judgment from in front of him; All adversaries<sup>23</sup> He will blast in them.

10:6 He has said in his heart; I will not be made to totter to generation and generation since no evil.

[D] <Omission>

<Reversed> [3] 10:7 His mouth has been full of even deceit and oppression underneath his tongue of trouble and falseness.

10:8a He will sit in ambush of settlements; in the hiding-place, he will kill the innocent.

<Reversed> [4] 10:8b-9a His eyes to unfortunate person will hide; he will lie in ambush in hiding-place as a lion in his thicket.

10:9b He will lie in ambush to seize the poor; he will seize the poor when he draws him in his net.

[5](?) 10:10 (And) He will be crushed (crush), he will stoop; and he will fall by his mighty of scoundrels<sup>24</sup> (criminal and so on)<sup>25</sup>.

10:11 He has said in his heart, “God (El) has hidden His face; He has not seen to scrape<sup>26</sup>.”

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Gordon (1967:378). In Ugaritic, ‘gan’ is ‘pride’. 𐎂𐎎𐎍 = (noun common feminine plural absolute of 𐎂𐎎𐎍).

<sup>23</sup> In Akkadian, ‘šerru’ is ‘enemy=adversary’ (CDA: 336, ALCBH: 94, 328); ‘zêru’ is ‘hate’ (CDA: 446).

<sup>24</sup> In Akkadian, ‘ḫilibû’ is ‘the underworld’ (CDA: 115).

<sup>25</sup> In Akkadian, ‘ḫābilu’ is ‘criminal, wrongdoer’ (CDA: 99) and ‘kīam’ ‘thus, as follows; and so on, etc’. (CDA: 155).

[ק] 10:12 **Rise up**, **O the LORD (YHWH)! God (El)! Lift up** Thine hand; **Let not forget** the poor (the humble).

10:13 Upon Why **has treated disrespectfully** the impious God (Elohim)? **He has said** in his heart, “No, **Thou will call to account.**”

[ג] 10:14a **Thou have seen it**; for **Thou** wretched and anger **will regard** to give into Thy hand.

10:14b Against Thou **will leave** unfortunate person; orphan **Thou will be** one who helps<sup>27</sup>.

[ש] 10:15 **Break** an arm of the impious and the evil; **Thou will repulse** his helper<sup>28</sup>, **he will not find**.

10:16 **The LORD (YHWH)** (is) King forever and ever; slaves<sup>29</sup> (are) **nations** from his land.

[נ] 10:17 A desire of the poor (the humble) **Thou have heard**, **O the LORD (YHWH)!**; **Thou will prepare** their heart, **Thou will listen carefully** Thine ear

10:18 to help (get justice) the orphan and the oppressed; **he will not go on** again to be terrified people from the earth.

### 3.1.3 Analysis of structure<sup>30</sup>

The Hebrew structure of Psalm 9-10 has been translated to highlight the main topic of the Hebrew text. This structure will be analyzed therefore from a macro as well as a micro perspective. The alphabetic acrostic structure could be understood easily by classifying its sentences and paragraphs as follows:

- Table VII -

	Subject & verb	Objective	Conditions
<b>A:</b> Author	a	a <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>2</sub>

<sup>26</sup> In Akkadian, ‘*nešû*’ is ‘to tear down; scrape’ (CDA : 244).

<sup>27</sup> In Akkadian, ‘*azāru*’ is ‘to help’ (CDA: 33).

<sup>28</sup> In Akkadian, ‘*rēšu*’ is ‘helper’ (CDA: 302).

<sup>29</sup> In Akkadian, ‘*abdu*’ is ‘servant, slave’ (CDA: 2).

<sup>30</sup> See Dorsey (2004:27) who divides the Hebrew structure into linear (a-b-c), parallel (a-b-c-a-b-c), and symmetric (a-b-c-b-a).

<b>B: God</b>	B (2 <sup>nd</sup> person)	Thou: b	b <sub>1</sub>	b <sub>2</sub>
	B <sub>3</sub> (3 <sup>rd</sup> person)	He: <sup>3</sup> b	<sup>3</sup> b <sub>1</sub>	<sup>3</sup> b <sub>2</sub>
	B <sub>d</sub> (divine name)	YHWH/EL: <sup>d</sup> b	<sup>d</sup> b <sub>1</sub>	<sup>d</sup> b <sub>2</sub>
<b>C: Enemy</b> (Nations, the impious)	C(3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular)	he: c	c <sub>1</sub>	c <sub>2</sub>
	C <sub>3</sub> (3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural)	they: <sup>p</sup> c	<sup>p</sup> c <sub>1</sub>	<sup>p</sup> c <sub>2</sub>
	C <sub>e</sub> (called enemy)	enemy: <sup>e</sup> c	<sup>e</sup> c <sub>1</sub>	<sup>e</sup> c <sub>2</sub>
<b>D: Humble</b> (Poor, the wretched)	D(3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular)	he: d	d <sub>1</sub>	d <sub>2</sub>
	D <sub>3</sub> (3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural)	they: <sup>p</sup> d	<sup>p</sup> d <sub>1</sub>	<sup>p</sup> d <sub>2</sub>
	D <sub>h</sub> (called humble)	humble: <sup>h</sup> d	<sup>h</sup> d <sub>1</sub>	<sup>h</sup> d <sub>2</sub>

**Micro-structure**

[Heading] 9:1 For the music-director, upon the death of the son, a psalm of David.

[x] 9:2 [I will praise thee], a \_\_\_\_\_  
**O the LORD (YHWH)! <sup>h</sup>b** \_\_\_\_\_ A  
 with all my heart. a<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 [I will recount] a \_\_\_\_\_  
 all thy being wonderful. b<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ A'  
 9:3 [I will be joyful and rejoice] a \_\_\_\_\_  
 in thee. b<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ A' **A**  
 [I will sing] a \_\_\_\_\_  
 Thy name, b<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ A  
**O Most High (Eylon)! <sup>h</sup>b** \_\_\_\_\_

[z] 9:4 When to return my enemies back, <sup>p</sup>c<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 [They will stumble and perish] <sup>p</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>3</sub>  
 from Thy front. b<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 9:5 For [Thou have performed] b \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 my legal claim and verdict, a<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 [Thou have sitten] b \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 in the throne to judge right. b<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ **C**  
 [λ] 9:6 [Thou have rebuked] b \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 the nations. <sup>e</sup>c<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 [Thou have destroyed] b \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 the impious; <sup>e</sup>c<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 their name <sup>p</sup>c<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 [Thou have wiped out] b \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 for ever and forever. b<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ **C**  
 9:7 **O the enemy!** <sup>e</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>e</sub>  
 [They have been finished] <sup>p</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>3</sub>  
 ruin until lastingness; c<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 and cities c<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 [Thou have pulled up]; b \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 [He has perished] <sup>3</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_ B<sub>3</sub>  
 their memorials. c<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 [τ] <Omission>  
 [τ] **O they!** <sup>p</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>3</sub>

9:8 But **O the LORD (YHWH)! <sup>d</sup>b** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Until long time, <sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ **B<sub>3</sub>**  
 He will dwell; <sup>3</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_  
 He has established <sup>3</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_ **B<sub>3</sub>**  
 for the judgment His Judge. <sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub>' \_\_\_\_\_  
 9:9 And He will judge <sup>3</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_ **B<sub>3</sub>**  
 the world; <sup>c</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 He will bring justice <sup>3</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_  
 to the people rightly <sup>c</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ **B<sub>3</sub>** **B'**  
 [י] 9:10 And will be the LORD (YHWH) <sup>d</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_ **B<sub>d</sub>**  
 a refuge for the oppressed, <sup>d</sup>b<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 a refuge for periods of drought. <sup>d</sup>b<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 9:11 And they will trust <sup>d</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ **D<sub>3</sub>**  
 in Thee, <sup>b</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 those who know Thy name, <sup>d</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 for Thou have not forsaken <sup>b</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ **B**  
 those who turn to Thee, <sup>d</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
**O the LORD (YHWH)! <sup>d</sup>b** \_\_\_\_\_

[י] 9:12 Praise <sup>a</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_ **A<sub>d</sub>**  
 to the LORD (YHWH) who dwells in Zion; <sup>d</sup>b<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Declare <sup>a</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_ **A<sub>d</sub>**  
 among the peoples <sup>c</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 His deed <sup>3</sup>b<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 9:13 For whose demands blood their <sup>p</sup>c<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ **B<sub>3</sub>**  
 He has remembered, <sup>3</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_ **B<sub>3</sub>**  
 He has not forgotten <sup>3</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_  
 a cry of the wretched <sup>h</sup>d<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 [ן] 9:14 Be gracious <sup>a</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_ **A<sub>b</sub>** **A**  
 to me, <sup>a</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
**O the LORD (YHWH)! <sup>d</sup>b** \_\_\_\_\_  
 See <sup>a</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_ **A<sub>b</sub>**  
 my affliction from those who hate me, <sup>a</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
**O One** who has exalted me from the gates of death! <sup>b</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_  
 9:15 In order that I would proclaim <sup>a</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ **A**  
 all Thy glories in the gates of the daughter of Zion; <sup>b</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 I would shout with joy <sup>a</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ **A**  
 in Thy salvation <sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_

[ו] 9:16 have sunk the nations <sup>c</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_ **C<sub>e</sub>'**  
 in the pit, <sup>p</sup>c<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 they have made; <sup>p</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_ **C<sub>3</sub>**  
 in this net <sup>p</sup>c<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 they have hidden, <sup>p</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_ **C<sub>3</sub>**  
 have been captured their feet. <sup>p</sup>c' \_\_\_\_\_ **C<sub>3</sub>'** **C'**  
 9:17 has been known by the LORD (YHWH) <sup>d</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_ **B<sub>d</sub>**  
 a judgment; <sup>b</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 He has done <sup>3</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_ **B<sub>3</sub>**  
 in the deed of His palm <sup>3</sup>b<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 (He is) One who strikes down an impious <sup>3</sup>b<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Higgayon Selah

[\*] 9:18 will return the impious <sup>e</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_  
 to Sheol, <sup>e</sup>c<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 all nations who forget God. <sup>e</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_  
 [2] 9:19 For no forever <sup>h</sup>d<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 will be forgotten the poor, <sup>h</sup>d \_\_\_\_\_  
 a hope of the humble will perish <sup>h</sup>d' \_\_\_\_\_  
 forever <sup>h</sup>d'<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 9:20 Stand up, <sup>a</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_  
**O the LORD (YHWH)! <sup>d</sup>b** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Let not defy man, <sup>e</sup>c' \_\_\_\_\_  
 let plead the nations before Thee <sup>e</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_  
 9:21 Put, <sup>a</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_  
**O the LORD (YHWH)! <sup>d</sup>b** \_\_\_\_\_  
 a terror to them; <sup>p</sup>c<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Let know the nations, <sup>e</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_  
 men (are) they <sup>p</sup>c' \_\_\_\_\_  
 Selah.

C<sub>e</sub>  
 D<sub>h</sub>  
 D<sub>h</sub>' **A'**

[7] 10:1 To What (=why), **O the LORD (YHWH)! <sup>d</sup>b** \_\_\_\_\_  
 are Thou standing <sup>b</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 in distant? <sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 are Thou hiding <sup>b</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 for periods of drought? <sup>b</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 10:2-3a In pride, <sup>e</sup>c<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 the impious hotly is pursuing <sup>e</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_  
 the wretched; <sup>d</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Let them be caught; <sup>p</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_  
 in evil plan, <sup>p</sup>c<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 this <sup>p</sup>c<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 they have esteemed; <sup>p</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_  
 For has praised the impious <sup>e</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_  
 onto a desire <sup>c</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_

B  
 C<sub>e</sub>  
 C<sub>3</sub>  
 C<sub>3</sub>  
 C<sub>e</sub> **A''**

<Reversed> [1] 10:3b-10:4a Their life and one which cuts off <sup>c</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 he has blessed, <sup>c</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 he has treated disrespectfully <sup>c</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_  
 the LORD (YHWH); <sup>d</sup>b<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 the impious (is) <sup>e</sup>c \_\_\_\_\_  
 like height of his nose. <sup>c</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 10:4b-10:5a he will not turn to <sup>c</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 nothing God (Elohim) <sup>d</sup>b<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 (in) all their evil plan; <sup>p</sup>c<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 will endure his way <sup>c</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_  
 in all times <sup>c</sup>'<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 <Reversed> [2] 10:5b Height <sup>b</sup>'<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 (is) Thy judgment <sup>b</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_  
 from in front of him; <sup>c</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 All adversaries <sup>e</sup>c<sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 He will blast <sup>3</sup>b \_\_\_\_\_  
 in them <sup>c</sup><sub>1</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 10:6 He has said <sup>c</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 in his heart; <sup>c</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 'I will not be made to totter' <sup>c</sup>' \_\_\_\_\_  
 to generation and generation <sup>c</sup><sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_

C  
 C  
 C<sub>e</sub> **C'**  
 C  
 C'  
 B'  
 B<sub>3</sub> **C'**

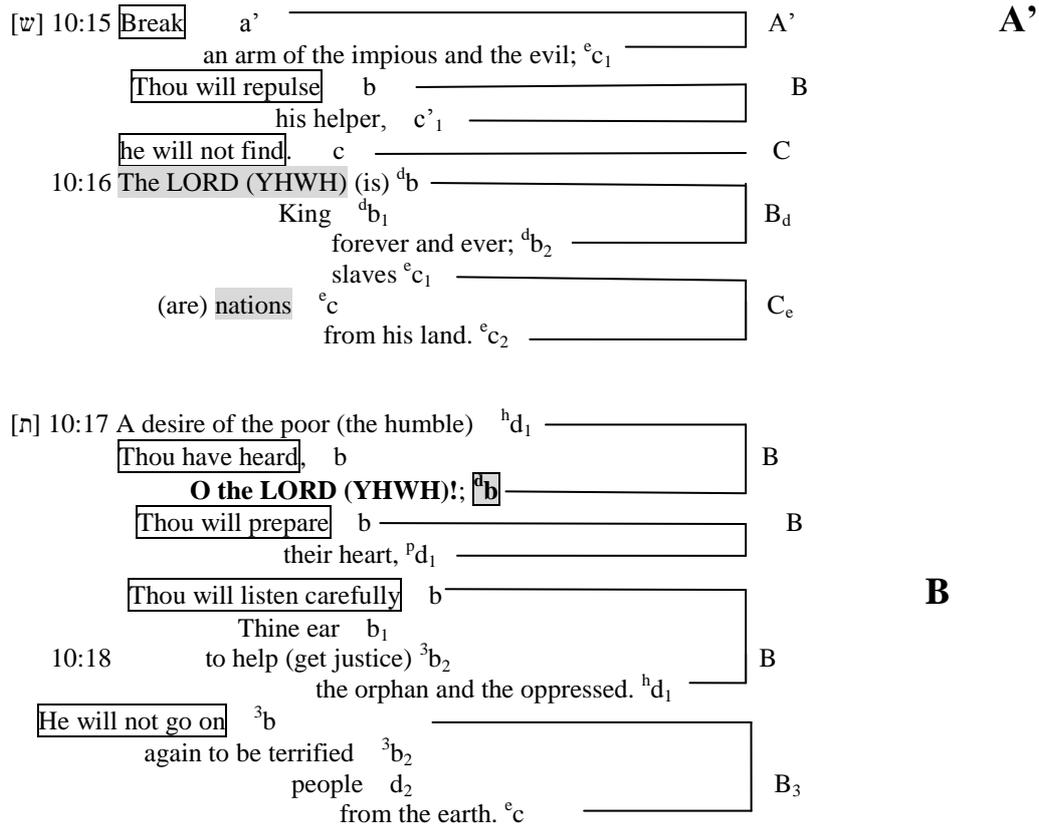
since no evil” c<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_

[v] <Omission>

<Reversed> [5] 10:7 His mouth has been full of c' \_\_\_\_\_  
 even deceit and oppression c'₁ \_\_\_\_\_ C'  
 underneath his tongue of trouble and falseness. c'₂ \_\_\_\_\_  
 10:8a He will sit c \_\_\_\_\_ C  
 in ambush of settlements; c₂ \_\_\_\_\_  
 in the hiding-place, c₂ \_\_\_\_\_  
 he will kill c \_\_\_\_\_ C  
 the innocent. h<sub>d</sub>₁ \_\_\_\_\_  
 <Reversed> [y] 10:8b-9a His eyes c' \_\_\_\_\_ C'  
 to unfortunate person h<sub>d</sub>₁ \_\_\_\_\_  
 will hide; c' \_\_\_\_\_  
 he will lie in ambush c \_\_\_\_\_ C  
 in hiding-place as a lion in his thicket. c₂ \_\_\_\_\_ C  
 10:9b He will lie in ambush c \_\_\_\_\_ C  
 to seize the poor; c₂ \_\_\_\_\_  
 he will seize c \_\_\_\_\_ C  
 the poor h<sub>d</sub>₁ \_\_\_\_\_  
 when he draws him in his net. c₂ \_\_\_\_\_

[z](?) 10:10 (And) He will be crushed (crush), he will stoop; c \_\_\_\_\_ C  
 and he will fall c \_\_\_\_\_  
 by his mighty of scoundrels (criminal and so on). c₂ \_\_\_\_\_  
 10:11 He has said c \_\_\_\_\_ C  
 in his heart, c₂ \_\_\_\_\_ C  
 “God (El) has hidden d<sub>b</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ B<sub>d</sub>'  
 His face; ³b₁ \_\_\_\_\_  
 He has not seen ³b \_\_\_\_\_  
 to scrape” ³b₂ \_\_\_\_\_ B<sub>3</sub>

[p] 10:12 Rise up, a' \_\_\_\_\_ A'  
**O the LORD (YHWH)! d<sub>b</sub> \_\_\_\_\_**  
**God (El)! d<sub>b</sub>' \_\_\_\_\_**  
 Lift up a' \_\_\_\_\_ A'  
 Thine hand; b₁ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Let not forget the poor (the humble). h<sub>d</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ D<sub>h</sub>  
 10:13 Upon Why has treated disrespectfully the impious c \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>e</sub>  
 God (Elohim)? d<sub>b</sub>₁ \_\_\_\_\_  
 He has said c \_\_\_\_\_ C  
 in his heart, c₁ \_\_\_\_\_  
 “No, Thou will call to account.” b \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 [r] 10:14a Thou have seen it; b \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 for Thou b<sub>s</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 wretched and anger d₁ \_\_\_\_\_  
 will regard b<sub>v</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 to give into Thy hand. b₂ \_\_\_\_\_  
 10:14b Against Thou b₂ \_\_\_\_\_ D<sub>h</sub>  
 will leave unfortunate person; h<sub>d</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
 orphan h<sub>d</sub>₁ of b₂ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Thou will be b \_\_\_\_\_ B  
 one who helps. b₂ \_\_\_\_\_



**Macro-structure**

A [x](1) 9:2-3 **Author's** praise of YHWH

C [z]-[λ](2) 9:4-7 **Enemy's** punishment by YHWH

**B [η]-[ι](2) 9: 8-13 YHWH's** judgment and caring for the humble (poor)

A [ι]-[η](2) 9: 12-15 **Author's** praise of YHWH

C [υ](1) 9: 16-17 **Enemy's** punishment by YHWH

A' [ι]-[z](2) 9: 18-21 **Author's** complaint to YHWH

**A'' [λ](1) 10: 1-3a Author's** request to YHWH

C' <R> [z]-<R> [υ](2) 10: 3b-6 **Enemy's** rejection of YHWH

**C'' <R> [ϕ]-<R> [υ](2) 10: 7-9 Enemy's** killing of the humble (poor) in hiding-place.

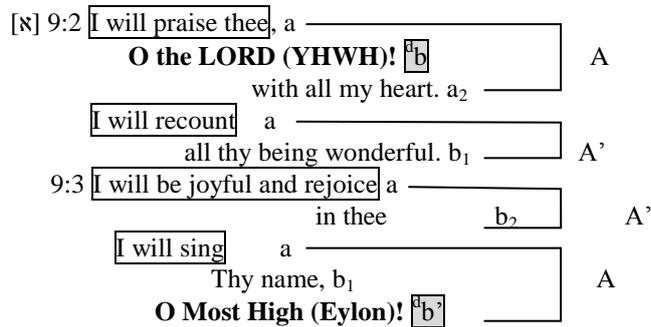
C' [z](?)(1) 10: 10-11 **Enemy's** rejection of YHWH

A' [ρ]-[ψ](2) 10: 12-16 **Author's** complaint to YHWH

**B' [η](1) 10:17-18 YHWH's** judgment and help of the humble (poor)

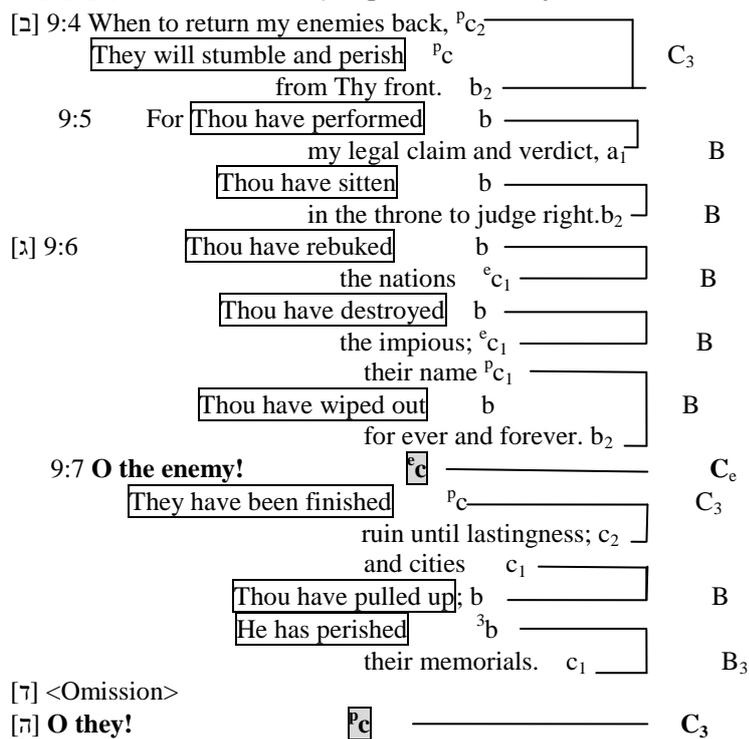
### 3.1.4 Understanding the structure

A [8](1) 9:2-3 **Author's** praise of YHWH



In [8] Line, the author starts to praise YHWH. The chiasm (A A'//A' A) shows the emphasis on God's divine name (YHWH and Eylon). Moreover, the will of the first person to praise God is expressed in the repetition of the imperfect form.

C [2]-[3](2) 9:4-7 **Enemy's** punishment by YHWH

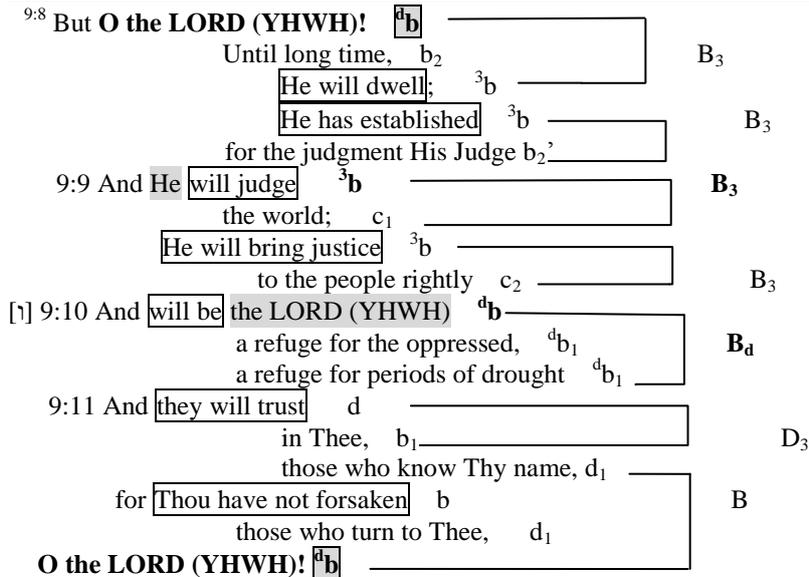


From the [2] line to the beginning of the [7] line, the panel structure could be seen as C<sub>3</sub> B// C<sub>3</sub> B. In part, this structure forms a chiasm between 'O the enemy!' and 'O they!' (C<sub>e</sub> C<sub>3</sub> // B C<sub>3</sub>). The function of this chiasm could be linked to the next part, because the person of God changes from the second person to the third person.

[7] <Omission>

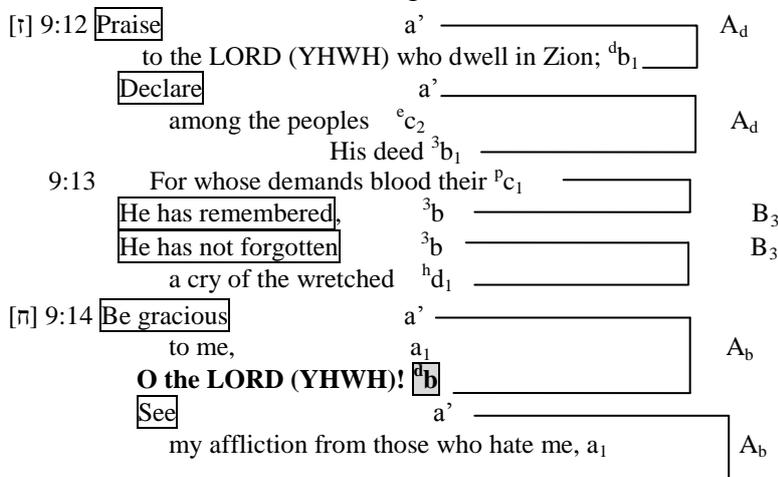
The omission of the [7] line may be a function of the transformation of the pronoun for YHWH from the second person to the third person. Moreover, the significance of the omission of [7] may be linked to the idea of a ‘door’<sup>31</sup>. It may mean that the enemy does not have a door; therefore, their life would be unprotected.

**B [7]-[1](2) 9: 8-13 YHWH’s judgment and care for the humble (poor)**



This line from [7] to [1] highlights YHWH’s divine name. In the circle of the name of YHWH, the person of YHWH changes thus: **He** ⇒ **YHWH** ⇒ **Thou**. This seems to show YHWH’s identity. He is a Judge; YHWH is a refuge and “Thou doth not forsake those who believe in God”.

**A [1]-[17](2) 9: 12-15 Author’s praise of YHWH**



<sup>31</sup> In Akkadian, ‘*daltu*’ means ‘door’ (CAD p. 54, ALCBH p. 77), and in Ugaritic, ‘*dlt*’ is also ‘door’ (UT p. 385).

**O One** who has exalted me from the gates of death! **b<sup>2</sup>** —  
 9:15 In order that **I would proclaim** a \_\_\_\_\_  
 all Thy glories in the gates of the daughter of Zion; **b<sub>1</sub>** — A  
**I would shout with joy** a \_\_\_\_\_  
 in Thy salvation **b<sub>2</sub>** \_\_\_\_\_ A

Between the [י] and the [ן] line is a panel structure in the imperative form. Imperative A<sub>d</sub> and A<sub>b</sub> each has cause phrases. Thus, we have A<sub>d</sub> B<sub>3</sub>// A<sub>b</sub> A. The author also seems to be double-minded towards God. The author praises YHWH but also complains against him.

C [ו](1) 9: 16-17 **Enemy**'s punishment by YHWH

[ו] 9:16 **have sunk** the nations <sup>e<sub>c</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>e</sub>'  
 in the pit, <sup>p<sub>c2</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
**they have made;** <sup>p<sub>c</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>3</sub>  
 in this net <sup>p<sub>c2</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
**they have hidden,** <sup>p<sub>c</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>3</sub>  
**have been captured** their feet. <sup>p<sub>c2</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>3</sub>'  
 9:17 **has been known by** the LORD (YHWH) <sup>d<sub>b</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_ B<sub>d</sub>  
 a judgment; **b<sub>1</sub>** \_\_\_\_\_  
**He has done** <sup>3<sub>b</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_ B<sub>3</sub>  
 in the deed of His palm <sup>3<sub>b2</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 (He is) One who strikes down an impious. <sup>3<sub>b1</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Higgayon Selah.

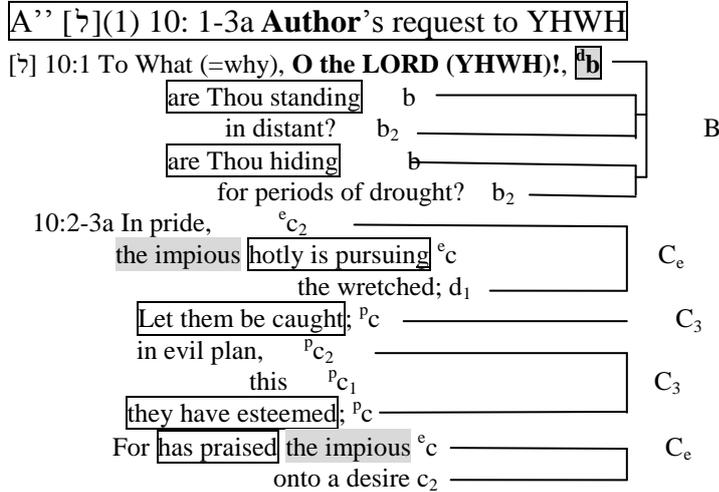
The [ו] line is one and the C<sub>e</sub>' and B<sub>d</sub> consist of the panel structure (C<sub>e</sub>' C<sub>3</sub>'// B<sub>d</sub> B<sub>3</sub>). With the “*Higgayon Selah*,” the content of Psalm 9-10 could be divided into two – the Psalmist’s praise and his complaint.

A' [י]-[נ](2) 9: 18-21 **Author**'s complaint to YHWH

[י] 9:18 **will return** the impious <sup>e<sub>c</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>e</sub>  
 to Sheol, <sup>e<sub>c2</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 all nations who forget God. <sup>e<sub>c</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 [נ] 9:19 For **no** for ever <sup>h<sub>d2</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_ D<sub>h</sub>  
**will be forgotten** the poor, <sup>h<sub>d</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 a hope of the humble **will perish** <sup>h<sub>d</sub>'</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ D<sub>h</sub>'  
 forever <sup>h<sub>d2</sub>'</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 9:20 **Stand up,** <sup>a'</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ A<sub>d</sub>  
**O the LORD (YHWH)! **d<sub>b</sub>**** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Let not defy** man, <sup>e<sub>c</sub>'</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>e</sub>  
**let plead** the nations before Thee <sup>e<sub>c</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 9:21 **Put,** <sup>a'</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ A<sub>d</sub>  
**O the LORD (YHWH)!, **d<sub>b</sub>**** \_\_\_\_\_  
 a terror to them; <sup>p<sub>c1</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>e</sub>  
**Let know** the nations, <sup>e<sub>c</sub></sup> \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>e</sub>  
 men (are) **they** <sup>p<sub>c</sub>'</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Selah.

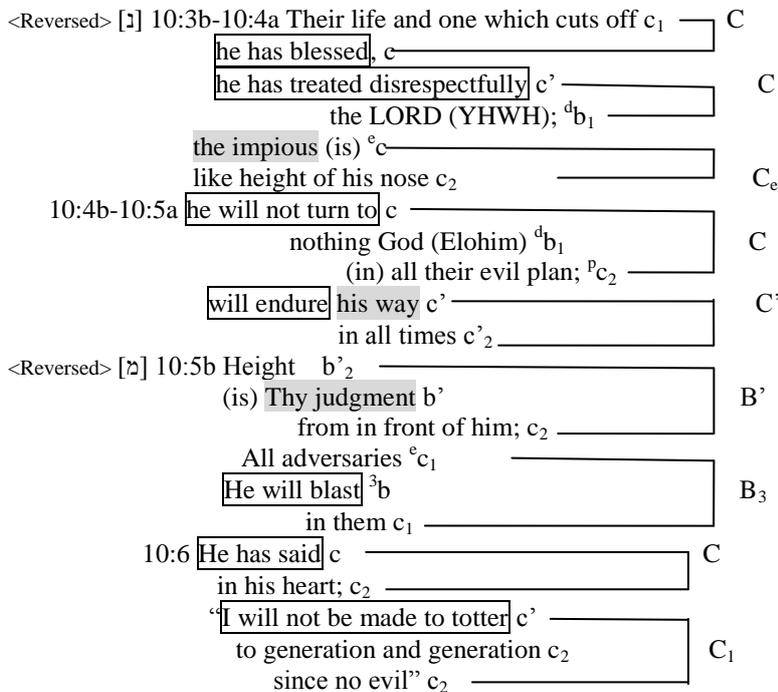
The [י] and [נ] lines show a complex chiasmic structure (C<sub>e</sub> //D<sub>h</sub> D<sub>h</sub>'// A<sub>d</sub> C<sub>e</sub>// A<sub>d</sub>// C<sub>e</sub>). The wicked refers to the nations and to men. The term, “the nations” is emphasized three times in

these lines, and the author requires YHWH to act strongly against the nations on his behalf and on behalf of the poor. The function of the “*Selah*” in Psalm 9-10 could be shown to start a new content of the poems.



In the case of the [7] line, the panel and chiastic structure form sentences (b b<sub>2</sub> // b b<sub>2</sub> // <sup>e</sup>c // <sup>p</sup>c // <sup>p</sup>c // <sup>e</sup>c) and the panel structure the contents (B[b b<sub>2</sub>] B [b b<sub>2</sub>]// C[C<sub>e</sub> C<sub>3</sub>] C[C<sub>3</sub> C<sub>e</sub>]). The author seems to use this complex structure to complain that YHWH assumes the attitude of an onlooker.

**C' <R> [7]-<R> [7](2) 10: 3b-6 Enemy's rejection of YHWH**

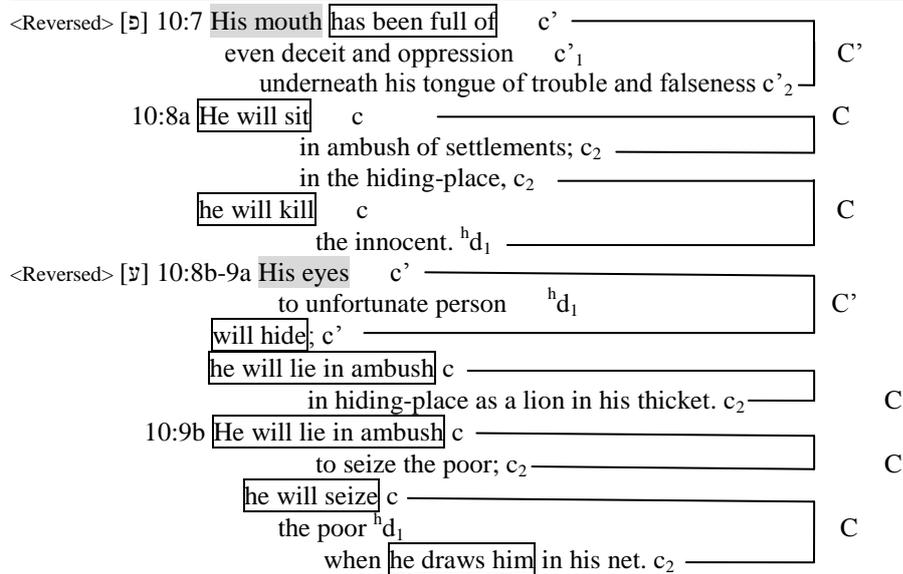


Both the [ג] line and the [ח] line have a reversed alphabetic acrostic order. The chiasmic structure (CC// C<sub>e</sub>//CC’//B’//B<sub>3</sub> // CC<sub>1</sub>) includes the panel part (C<sub>e</sub>//CC’//B’//B<sub>3</sub>). This chiasmic structure may consist of the arrangement of an imperfect form in a perfect form, and in the panel part, the structure seems to be a repetition of the copula and imperfect form. The [ג] and the [ח] are used to signify ‘fish’<sup>32</sup> and ‘water’<sup>33</sup> respectively.

[ט] <Omission>

The [ט] line has been omitted in the text. This omission may be the function of the division between the reversed lines, [ג] and [ח] lines as well as [פ] and [צ] lines. The [ט] is used to signify the word ‘buried’<sup>34</sup>. The author wished the enemy were dead and buried?

C’’ <R> [פ]-<R> [צ](2) 10: 7-9 **Enemy’s killing of the humble (poor) in secret.**



These reversed lines could be structured as a panel frame (C’//CC//C’//CCC). In the reversed lines, the remarkable point would be the significance of the [פ] and [צ] letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the text, these words have been mentioned directly<sup>35</sup>. However, the reversed order of mouth and eye might be emblemized as the dead enemy, as if someone standing on the earth would regard a person hanging upside down. Therefore, it seems the intention of author was to emphasize that the enemy will be killed. These lines would be reversed by the author’s craving for the downfall, subversion and destruction of evil enemies.

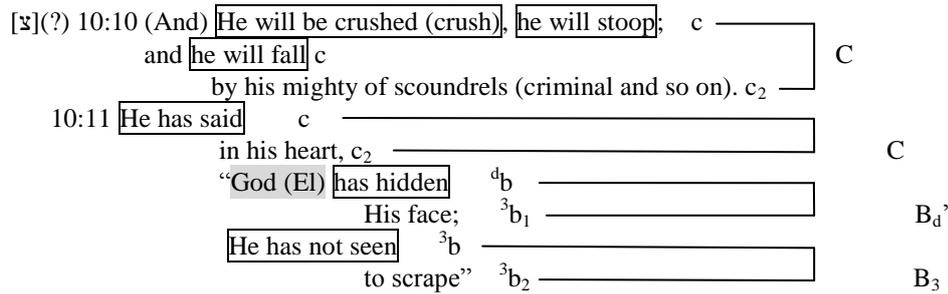
<sup>32</sup> In Akkadian, ‘nūnu’ means ‘fish’ (CAD: 258).

<sup>33</sup> In Akkadian, ‘māmū’ means ‘water’ (CAD: 194).

<sup>34</sup> In Akkadian, ‘samāku’ means ‘to cover up, bury’ or ‘samku’ is ‘buried’ as ‘dead’ (CAD: 315-316).

<sup>35</sup> Psalm 10:7 ‘[פ] His mouth has been full of even deceit and oppression underneath his tongue of trouble and falseness’; Psalm 10:8b ‘[צ] His eyes to unfortunate person will hide.’

C' [צ](?) (1) 10: 10-11 **Enemy's** rejection of YHWH



The [צ] line shows a panel structure of (CC// B<sub>d</sub>' B<sub>3</sub>) but this [צ] (?) line is not clear:

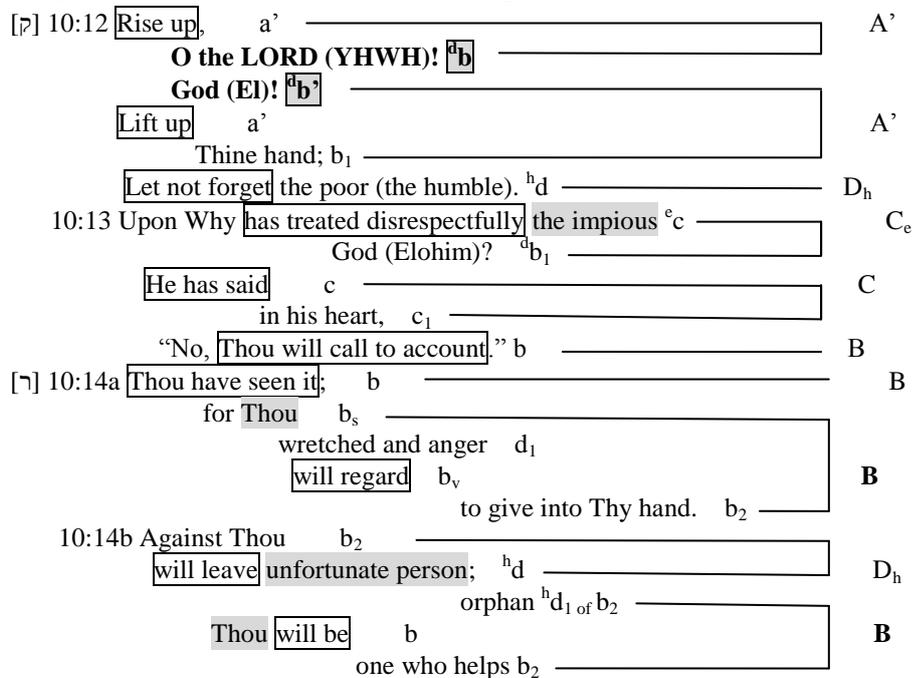
יְשַׁח וְנִפְלַ בְּעַצְמוֹיָיו (חֲלָפָאִים) (חֵיל) [כָּאִים]:<sup>10:10</sup>  
 אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ שָׁכַח אֵל הַסְתִּיר פָּנָיו בַּל־רָאָה לְנִפְחָה:<sup>10:11</sup>

The terms 'נִפְחָה' (scrape) and 'נִפְחָה' (mighty) could be connected to the words of the [צ] line.

The meaning of [צ] letter of the Hebrew alphabet can be translated as two different words.

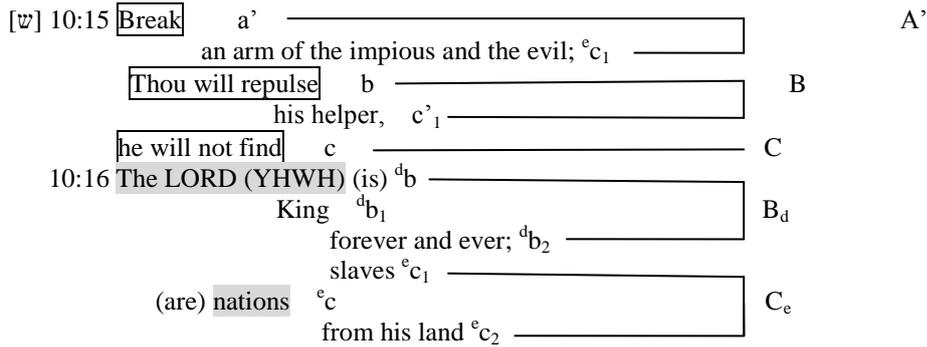
The first meaning is 'right' or 'uprightness' from 'צְדָקָה',<sup>36</sup> and the second meaning is either 'to walk' or 'to hunt' and 'provisions' from 'צוּר'.<sup>37</sup> Probably, the first translation is more applicable in this case than the second one. The author could be highlighting the hidden righteousness of God that emanates from the hidden face of God.

A' [ק]-[ש] (2) 10: 12-16 **Author's** complaint to YHWH

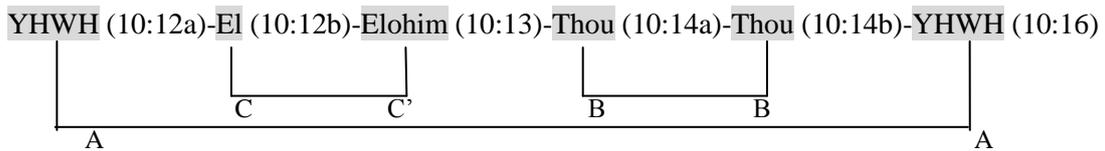


<sup>36</sup> In Ugaritic, 'šdq' means 'right' or 'uprightness' (UT: 472) and in Akkadian, 'šadūq' means 'right' or 'true' (CAD: 331; ALCBH: 318).

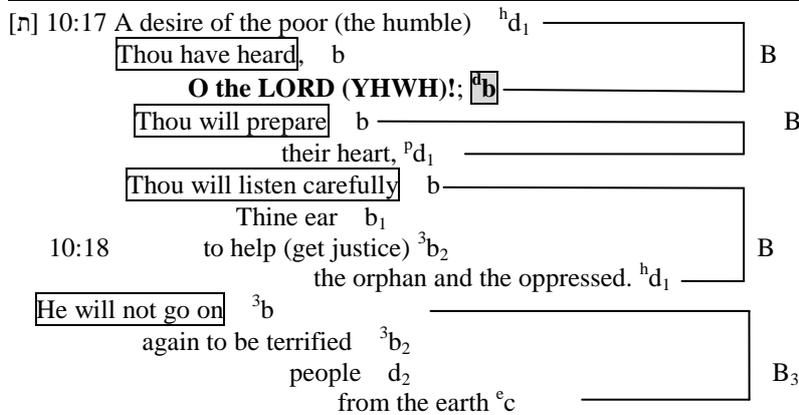
<sup>37</sup> In Ugaritic, 'šd' means 'to walk' or 'to hunt' and 'mšd' is 'provisions' (UT: 473).



From the [p] line to the [w] line, the structure is complex (AA//D//C//CB//B//BDB//A//BCBC). In the chiasmic structure, there is a symmetrical structure of B and C (A//C//B//A), for the imperative form of the 'A' part makes a one unit paragraph. The final complaint to YHWH implores Him to rise up, lift Himself up, and break the enemies. The divine names of God, YHWH, El and Elohim are used in the following manner:



**B' [n](1) 10:17-18 YHWH's judgment and help of the humble (poor)**



The final line is the letter [n]. The micro-structure is <sup>h</sup>d<sub>1</sub> b <sup>d</sup>b //b <sup>p</sup>d<sub>1</sub> b b<sub>1</sub><sup>3</sup>b<sub>2</sub>/<sup>3</sup>b<sup>3</sup>b<sub>2</sub> d<sub>2</sub> <sup>e</sup>c. As a form and a pronoun, the structure can be divided into B (perfect)//B (imperfect) B (imperfect)//B<sub>3</sub> (3 person imperfect). This can be understood as the content of YHWH's judgment and protection of the poor.

## 3.2 PSALM 111

### 3.2.1 BHS Text in alphabetic order

<sup>111:1</sup> הַלְלוּ יְהוָה

<sup>3</sup> אִוְדָה יְהוָה בְּכָל-לֵבָב  
<sup>3</sup> בְּסוֹד יְשָׁרִים וְעֵדָה:

<sup>2</sup>3 בְּדַלִּים מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה  
<sup>3</sup> דְּרוֹשִׁים לְכָל-חַפְצֵיהֶם:  
<sup>3</sup> הִוְדוּ-וְהִדְרֵם פִּעְלֹ  
<sup>3</sup> וְצַדִּיקָתוֹ עֲמֹדַת לְעַד:

<sup>4</sup>3 וְזָכַר עֲשֵׂה לְנַפְלְאוֹתָיו  
<sup>3</sup> חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה:  
<sup>5</sup>3 טִרְף נָתַן לִירְאָיו  
<sup>3</sup> וְזָכַר לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ:  
<sup>6</sup>4 כַּחַ מַעֲשֵׂיו הַגִּיד לְעַמּוֹ  
<sup>4</sup>4 לְקַתְּתָ לָהֶם נַחֲלַת גּוֹיִם:

<sup>7</sup>4 מַעֲשֵׂי יָדָיו אֱמֶת וּמִשְׁפָּט  
<sup>3</sup> וְאֱמָנוֹת כָּל-פְּקוּדָיו:  
<sup>8</sup>3 סְמוּכִים לְעַד לְעוֹלָם  
<sup>3</sup> עֲשׂוּיִם בְּאֱמֶת וַיִּשֶׁר:

<sup>9</sup>3 פְּרוּחַ שְׁלַח לְעַמּוֹ  
<sup>3</sup> צִוְהֵם לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ

<sup>3</sup> קָרוֹשׁ וְנוֹרָא שָׁמוֹ:

<sup>10</sup>4 רְאִיתִי חֲכָמָה | יִרְאַת יְהוָה  
<sup>4</sup>4 שְׂכָל טוֹב לְכָל-עֲשֵׂיהֶם  
<sup>3</sup> תְּהַלְלוּ עֲמֹדַת לְעַד:

### 3.2.2 Translation of the Hebrew structure with reference to Akkadian and Ugarit equivalents

※ verb: ; subject:

[Heading] 111:1 Halelu Yah! (Praise Yah!)

[x] 111:1a I would praise **the LORD (YHWH)** in all my heart,

[c] 111:1b in a company, (His?) uprightness<sup>38</sup> and (in) His throne room.<sup>39</sup>

[λ] 111:2a Great (are) the works of **the LORD (YHWH)**

[γ] 111:2b Those who are sought<sup>40</sup> (are) from<sup>41</sup> all who have a desire for them.

[π] 111:3a His hand (O, This!)<sup>42</sup> And O Majesty!<sup>43</sup> His work (making)<sup>44</sup>,

[η] 111:3b and His lawful<sup>45</sup> is standing forever.<sup>46</sup>

[ι] 111:4a His Command<sup>47</sup> He had performed for those who are marvelous.

[κ] 111:4b Gracious and be kind<sup>48</sup> **the LORD (YHWH)**.

[υ] 111:5a Prey He has given to those who fear Him<sup>49</sup>.

[ϕ] 111:5b He will remember for long time His covenant.

[ϗ] 111:6a Power of His works He has announced to His people.

[η] 111:6b To give to them the inheritance<sup>50</sup> of nations.

[θ] 111:7a Works of His hand be true and justice.

[ι] 111:7b Those which are reliable (are) all which He gives orders<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> In Ugaritic, 'yšr' means 'uprightness'. (UT: 415) cf. In Akkadian, 'išaru' means 'just' or 'straight' (CAD: 132, ALCBH: 152).

<sup>39</sup> In Ugaritic, 'd II' means 'throne room' (UT: 453)

<sup>40</sup> In Ugaritic, 'drš' means 'to seek' (UT: 387).

<sup>41</sup> 'l' 'to, for, from' (UT: 425), in case, it may mean 'from'.

<sup>42</sup> 'hw+d' can be in Ugaritic, 'hw' 'he' and 'd' 'hand' (UT: 383, 389) or if 'dAh' = 'dnh', in Ugaritic, 'hnd' means 'this' (UT: 383,391)

<sup>43</sup> In Ugaritic, 'hdt' means 'dream' = (divine) 'majesty' (UP: 389).

<sup>44</sup> In Ugaritic, 'pl': 'yp'l' means 'to make' (UT: 469).

<sup>45</sup> In Ugaritic, 'šdq' means 'right, uprightness, lawful, destined' (UT: 472).

<sup>46</sup> In Ugaritic, 'd I' means 'until' (UT p. 453) 'l' 'to, for, from' (UT: 425). Therefore, it would be 'l'(for)+ 'd'(until)= 'forever'.

<sup>47</sup> In Akkadian, 'zikru' means 'utterance, name, speech, command, or mention' (CAD: 447).

<sup>48</sup> In Ugaritic, 'rhm I' means 'to be kind' (UT: 483).

<sup>49</sup> In Ugaritic, 'yr'' means 'to fear' (UT: 414).

<sup>50</sup> In Ugaritic, 'nhlt' means 'inheritance'. (UT: 443).

<sup>51</sup> In Ugaritic, 'pqd' means 'to give orders' (UT: 470).

- [v] 111:8a Those who are unshakeable (are) forever, for long time  
 [y] 111:8b Those who perform in truth and straight (are).

- [z] 111:9a Ransom<sup>52</sup> He has sent for His people,  
 [x] 111:9b He has ordered<sup>53</sup> His covenant.  
 [p] 111:9c Holy and shine<sup>54</sup> (is) His name.

- [r] 111:10a Beginning of wisdom (is) the fear of the LORD (YHWH).  
 [w] 111:10b Understanding Good (is) for all those who perform them.  
 [n] 111:10c His praise is standing forever.

### 3.2.3 Analysis of the structure of Psalm 111

The structure of Psalm 111 will be analyzed from a macro-micro perspective. This alphabetic acrostic structure could be understood from the sentences and paragraphs and the details could be classified thus:

- Table VIII -

		Subject & verb	Objective	Conditions
<b>A: Author</b>		a	a <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>2</sub>
<b>B: God</b>	B <sub>3</sub> (2 <sup>nd</sup> person)	He: <sup>3</sup> b	<sup>3</sup> b <sub>1</sub>	<sup>3</sup> b <sub>2</sub>
	B <sub>3</sub> ' (3 <sup>rd</sup> person)	His something: <sup>3</sup> b'	<sup>3</sup> b' <sub>1</sub>	<sup>3</sup> b' <sub>2</sub>
	B <sub>d</sub> (divine name)	YHWH: <sup>d</sup> b	<sup>d</sup> b <sub>1</sub>	<sup>d</sup> b <sub>2</sub>
<b>D: People</b>		they: d	d <sub>1</sub>	d <sub>2</sub>

#### Micro-structure of Psalm 111

- [x] 111:1a I would praise a \_\_\_\_\_  
                   **the LORD (YHWH)** <sup>d</sup>b<sub>1</sub>  
                   in all my heart, a<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_\_ X  
 [z] 111:1b in a company, d<sub>2</sub>  
                   (His?) uprightness <sup>3</sup>b<sub>1</sub>' \_\_\_\_\_  
                   and (in) His throne room <sup>3</sup>b<sub>2</sub>' \_\_\_\_\_
- [z] 111:2a Great <sup>3</sup>b<sub>2</sub>' \_\_\_\_\_  
                   (are) **the works of the LORD (YHWH)** <sup>3</sup>b' \_\_\_\_\_ **B**<sub>3</sub>'
- [r] 111:2b Those who are sought (are) d \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>52</sup> This word is from 'pdy' means 'to ransom' in Ugaritic (UT: 466).

<sup>53</sup> In Ugaritic, 'syh' means 'to shout, invite, order' (UT: 474).

<sup>54</sup> In Ugaritic, 'nyr' means 'to shine' (UT: 443). This could be 'nyr' (in the Ug. root)= 'nwr' (in Heb. & Aram.), because of the possibility of a transformation between the -w- and the -y- in the Ugaritic and Hebrew & Aramaic (UT: 474).

- from all who have a desire for them.  $d_2$  \_\_\_\_\_ D
- [7] 111:3a His hand (O, This!)  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 And O Majesty!  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 His work (making),  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_  $B_3'$  **Y'**
- [1] 111:3b and His lawful  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 forever  $^3b'_2$  \_\_\_\_\_
- [7] 111:4a His Command  $^3b'_1$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 He had performed  $^3b$  \_\_\_\_\_  $B_3$
- for those who are marvelous  $^3b'_2$  \_\_\_\_\_
- [7] 111:4b Gracious and be kind  $^4b_2$  \_\_\_\_\_  
**the LORD (YHWH)**  $^4b$  \_\_\_\_\_ **B<sub>d</sub>**
- [v] 111:5a Prey  $d_1'$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 He has given  $^3b$  \_\_\_\_\_  $B'_3$
- to those who fear Him  $d_1$  \_\_\_\_\_
- [7] 111:5b He will remember  $^3b$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 for long time  $^3b_2$  \_\_\_\_\_  $B_3$
- His covenant  $^3b_1$  \_\_\_\_\_ **Y**
- [2] 111:6a Power of His works  $^3b'_1$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 He has announced  $^3b$  \_\_\_\_\_  $B'_3$
- to His people  $d_1$  \_\_\_\_\_
- [7] 111:6b To give  $^3b$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 to them  $d_1$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 the inheritance of nations  $d_1$  \_\_\_\_\_
- [2] 111:7a Works of His hand  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 be true and justice  $^3b'_2$  \_\_\_\_\_  $B_3'$
- [1] 111:7b Those which are reliable  $^3b'_2$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 (are) all which He gives orders  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_
- [v] 111:8a Those who are unshakeable (are)  $d$  \_\_\_\_\_ **Y'**  
 forever,  $d_2$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 for long time  $d_2$  \_\_\_\_\_ **D**
- [v] 111:8b Those who perform in truth and straight (are)  $d$  \_\_\_\_\_
- [2] 111:9a Ransom  $^3b'_1$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 He has sent  $^3b$  \_\_\_\_\_  $B_3$  **Y**
- for His people,  $d_2$  \_\_\_\_\_
- [3] 111:9b He has ordered  $^3b$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 His covenant  $^3b'_1$  \_\_\_\_\_
- [7] 111:9c Holy and shine  $^3b'_2$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 (is) His name  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_  $B_3'$
- [7] 111:10a Beginning of wisdom  $^3b'_2$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 (is) the fear of **the LORD (YHWH)**  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_  $B_3'$  **X'**
- [w] 111:10b Understanding Good (is)  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 for all those who perform them.  $^3b'_2$  \_\_\_\_\_
- [7] 111:10c His praise  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_  
 (is) standing  $^3b'$  \_\_\_\_\_  $B_3'$   
 forever  $^3b'_2$  \_\_\_\_\_

### Macro-Structure

**X** [8]-[2](2) 111:1 Author's **Praise of YHWH**

**Y'** [3]-[7](4) 111: 2-3 Greatness of **YHWH's works**

Y [ר]-[ל](6) 111: 4-6 His giving and doing **covenant**

Y' [מ]-[ע](4) 111: 7-8 Faithfulness of **YHWH's works**

Y [פ]-[ק](3) 111: 9 His saving and doing **covenant**

**X' [ר]-[ת](3) 111: 10 Wisdom of Praising YHWH**

### 3.2.4 Understanding the structure

X [ס]-[ב](2) 111:1 Author's praise of **YHWH**

[ס] 111:1a	I would praise	a	A
	<b>the LORD (YHWH)</b>	<sup>d</sup> b <sub>1</sub>	
	in all my heart,	a <sub>2</sub>	
[ב] 111:1b	in a company	d <sub>2</sub>	
	(His?) <u>uprightness</u>	<sup>3</sup> b <sub>1</sub> '	
	and (in) His throne room	<sup>3</sup> b <sub>2</sub> '	

Both [ס] and [ב] lines consist of one verse. The structure of this sentence could be understood as a panel structure:

	a// <sup>d</sup> b <sub>1</sub> //	a <sub>2</sub>	d <sub>2</sub> // <sup>3</sup> b <sub>1</sub> '// <sup>3</sup> b <sub>2</sub> '	
	verb//object I//preposition phrase I,	preposition phrase II//object II//	preposition phrase III	
A	B	C	C	B

The author sought to praise the LORD (Y) and His uprightness (Y'). Therefore, he seems to highlight the introduction of praise with two concepts the “acts of YHWH (Y)” and the “meaning of YHWH’s works (Y’)”. The author sought to praise the LORD by himself, with other people and before YHWH’s throne.

Y' [ג]-[ו](4) 111: 2-3 **Greatness of YHWH's works**

[ג] 111:2a	Great	<sup>3</sup> b <sub>2</sub> '	B <sub>3</sub> '
	(are) <b>the works of the LORD (YHWH)</b>	<sup>3</sup> b'	
[ו] 111:2b	Those who are sought (are)	d	D
	from all who have a desire for them	d <sub>2</sub>	
[ו] 111:3a	His hand (O, This!)	<sup>3</sup> b'	B <sub>3</sub> '
	And O Majesty!	<sup>4</sup> b'	
	His <u>work</u> (making),	<sup>3</sup> b'	
[ו] 111:3b	and His lawful	<u>is standing</u>	<sup>3</sup> b'
	forever	<sup>3</sup> b <sub>2</sub> '	

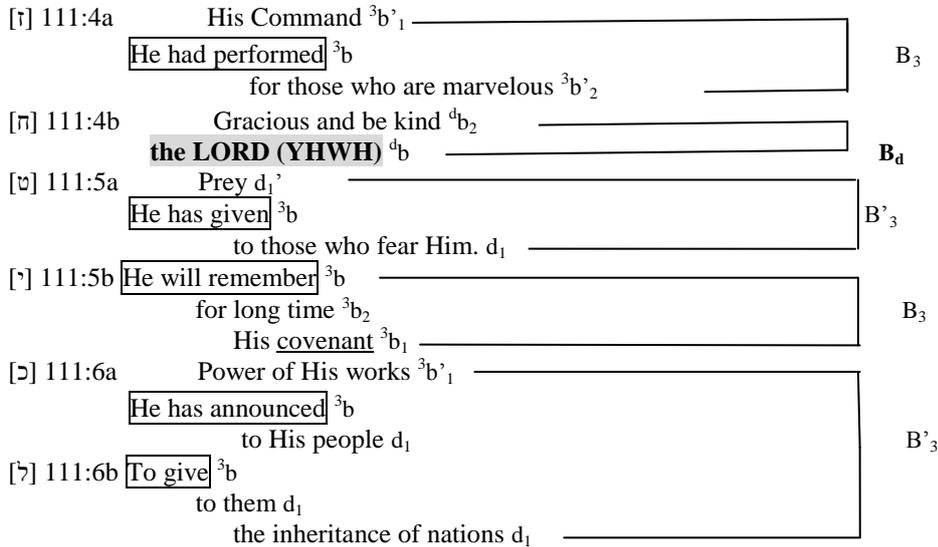
The lines from [ג] to [ו] are structured based on the work of YHWH (מעשׂי יהוה, פּעֻלֹתָי) in a chiastic pattern:

<sup>3</sup> b <sub>2</sub> '	<sup>3</sup> b'	//	d	d <sub>2</sub> //	<sup>3</sup> b'	//	<sup>4</sup> b'	//	<sup>3</sup> b'	<sup>3</sup> b'	<sup>3</sup> b <sub>2</sub> '
B <sub>3</sub> '		//	D	//		//		//		B <sub>3</sub> '	

From the structure, the works of YHWH could mean what he has done with His hand and His lawful acts, because YHWH is the only King. Therefore, God seeks those who desire the

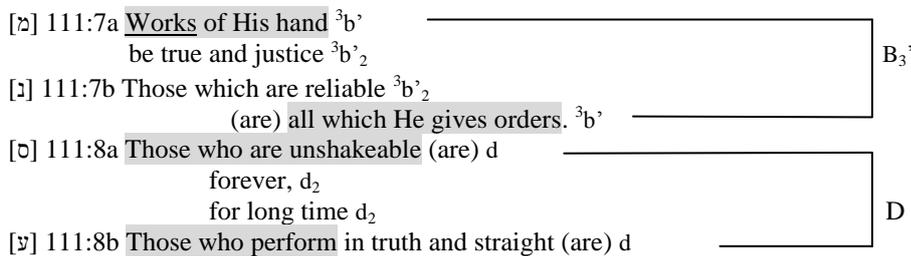
works of the LORD. The author connects YHWH’s works which are great and eternal with His seekers:

Y [י]-[ל](6) 111: 4-6 His giving and doing **covenant**



This complex structure displays a chiasmic pattern in a panel structure. In each sentence, there is as a pattern: B<sub>3</sub>(<sup>3</sup>b<sub>1</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b<sub>2</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b<sub>2</sub>)//B<sub>d</sub> //B'<sub>3</sub>(<sup>d</sup><sub>1</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b//<sup>d</sup><sub>1</sub>) //B<sub>3</sub>(<sup>3</sup>b<sub>1</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b<sub>2</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b<sub>1</sub>)//B'<sub>3</sub>(<sup>3</sup>b<sub>1</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b//<sup>d</sup><sub>1</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b//<sup>d</sup><sub>1</sub>//<sup>d</sup><sub>1</sub>). The author reasons that the LORD is kind and gracious is because of His giving and performance of His covenant. Therefore, he places as object “command” and “prey” in the first line and “His covenant” and “the inheritance of nations” in the last to emphasize the LORD’s act of giving and doing.

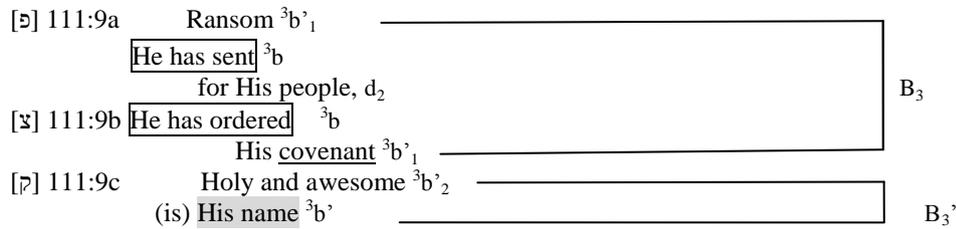
Y' [נ]-[ע](4) 111:7-8 **Faithfulness of YHWH’s works**



The [נ]-[ע] lines consist of two sets – B'<sub>3</sub>' and D. As a sentence pattern, each is arranged in a chiasmic form (<sup>3</sup>b' <sup>3</sup>b'<sub>2</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b'<sub>2</sub> <sup>3</sup>b'; <sup>d</sup> <sup>d</sup><sub>2</sub>// <sup>d</sup><sub>2</sub> <sup>d</sup>). The beautiful structure is made up of “Subject+complement// complement+Subject; Subject+time phrase//time phrase+Subject”. This could be an ancient literary pattern. The key word in the lines are three similar Hebrew words namely אמת “be true,” משפט justice, and נאמנים those who are reliable”. Therefore,

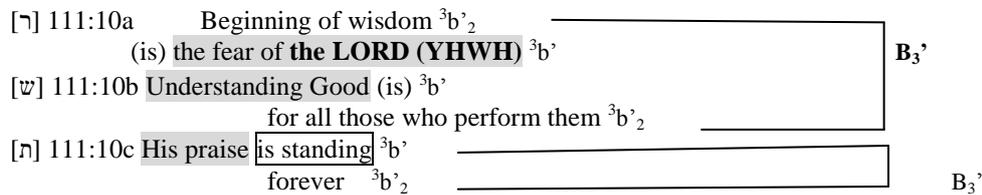
God's works are done in faithfulness. And because of His faithfulness, the author would believe in God's works forever and ever.

Y [פ]-[צ](3) 111: 9 His saving and doing **covenant**



The three lines from [פ] to [צ] are beautifully structured. The author seems to emphasize that God's ransom of His people is related to His covenant. The structure shows a chiastic pattern (<sup>3</sup>b<sub>1</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b// d<sub>2</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b<sub>1</sub>). God's salvation and covenant exist for His people. Therefore, the author's statement about God would conclude the text as Psalm 111:9c. Finally, the adjectives "holy and awesome" could be matched with "God's salvation and covenant".

X' [ק]-[ת](3) 111: 10 Wisdom of **Praising YHWH**



The last lines are from [ק] to [ת]. As in the previous line, the structure occurs with the same chiastic pattern (<sup>3</sup>b<sub>2</sub>//<sup>3</sup>b'//<sup>3</sup>b'//<sup>3</sup>b<sub>2</sub>) as "complement+Subject // Subject+complement clause; Subject+time phrase". Remarkably, the [ר] line is similar to Proverbs 1:7a, יראת יהוה ראשית הדעת "The fear of the LORD (is) the beginning of knowledge". Therefore, the last poem may be called a wisdom Psalm. Psalm 111:10c could be regarded as the author's closing praise; with it the alphabetic acrostic poems are ended.

### 3.3 PSALM 112

#### 3.3.1 BHS Text in alphabetic order

112:1 תִּלְלוּ יְהוָה

4 אֲשֶׁר־אִישׁ יֵרָא אֶת־יְהוָה

3 בְּמִצּוֹתָיו חֲפִיץ מְאֹד:

24 בּוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה זָרְעוּ

3 יִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְרָךְ:

3 הוֹדוּ־עֲשֶׂר בְּבֵיתוֹ

3 וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֲמֹדַת לְעַד:

4 וְרַח בְּחֶשֶׁד אֹר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל

3 תִּגְוֹן וְרַחֲמוֹם וְצִדִּיק:

54 מִי־בֶּ־אִישׁ חוֹנֵן וּמְלֹוֹה

3 וְכִלְכַּל דְּבָרָיו בְּמִשְׁפָּט:

64 כִּי־לְעוֹלָם לֹא־יִמּוֹט

4 לְזִכַּר עוֹלָם יִהְיֶה צִדִּיק:

74 מִשְׁמוּעָה רָעָה לֹא יִירָא

4 וְנִכּוֹן לְבֹ בְטַח בִּיהוָה:

64 סְמוּךְ לְבֹ לֹא יִירָא

4 עַד אֲשֶׁר־יִרְאֶה בְצָרָיו:

3 פִּירוֹ נָתַן לְאֲבִיוֹנִים

3 וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֲמֹדַת לְעַד

3 וְקִרְנוֹ תְרוֹם בְּכָבוֹד:

103 רָשָׁע יִרְאֶה וְכָעַס

3 שִׁנּוּי יִחַלֵּק וְנָמַס

3 תְּאוֹת רָשָׁעִים הֹאבְדִים

### 3.3.2 Translation of the Hebrew structure with reference to Akkadian and Ugarit equivalents

※ verb: ; subject:

[Heading] 112:1 Halelu Yah! (Praise Yah!)

[נ] 112:1a Blessed is<sup>55</sup> a man who fears<sup>56</sup> the LORD (YHWH),

[ב] 112:1b in His commandments one who takes pleasure<sup>57</sup> (is) great<sup>58</sup>.

[ג] 112:2a Influential<sup>59</sup> on the earth will be his descendants<sup>60</sup>,

[ד] 112:2b generation of upright<sup>61</sup> will be blessed.

[ה] 112:3a Wealth and ten shekels of silver<sup>62</sup> (are) in His house,

[ו] 112:3b and His righteousness is standing forever.

[ז] 112:4a Sunrise<sup>63</sup> from the darkness will be light<sup>64</sup> for the upright,

[ח] 112:4b (it) be gracious<sup>65</sup> and be kind<sup>66</sup> and (be) right<sup>67</sup>.

[ט] 112:5a A good man be gracious<sup>68</sup> and (be) good (?)<sup>69</sup>.

[י] 112:5b O Everything!<sup>70</sup>(is) His word<sup>71</sup> from judgment.

[יא] 112:6a Because for long time he will not be deteriorated<sup>72</sup>,

<sup>55</sup> Holladay (1983: 31).

<sup>56</sup> CHALOT: 143.

<sup>57</sup> CHALOT: 112.

<sup>58</sup> In Ugaritic, 'm'd I' means 'much, great' (UT: 430).

<sup>59</sup> CHALOT: 54.

<sup>60</sup> In Akkadian, 'zēru II' means 'seed, sown land, arable, semen, offspring, and descendant' (CAD: 446; cf. ALCBH: 95-96).

<sup>61</sup> In Ugaritic, 'yšr' means 'uprightness' (UT p. 415). Note also that in Akkadian, 'išaru' means 'just' or 'straight' (CAD: 132, ALCBH: 152; cf. Psalm 111:1b).

<sup>62</sup> In Ugaritic, 'šr' means '10, 10 shekels of silver' (UT: 462).

<sup>63</sup> In Akkadian, 'zerhu' means 'sunrise' (CAD: 446).

<sup>64</sup> In Ugaritic, 'wr' means 'to be light, bright'. (UT: 353).

<sup>65</sup> In Ugaritic, 'hnn' means 'to be gracious, to favour' (UT: 398).

<sup>66</sup> In Ugaritic, 'rhm I' means 'to be kind' (UT: 483; cf. Psalm 111:4b).

<sup>67</sup> In Ugaritic, 'šdq' means 'right, uprightness, lawful, destined' (UT: 472; cf. Psalm 111:3b).

<sup>68</sup> In Ugaritic, 'hnn' means 'to be gracious, to favour' (UT: 398; cf. Psalms 112:4b).

<sup>69</sup> If 'lwh' would not be in a hiphil participle form, the root of 'mlwh' would be from 'mlh' of the root of Ugaritic, it may mean 'good' (UT: 433).

<sup>70</sup> If 'yklkl' would not be a pilpel imperfect form of the Hebrew 'kwl', the root of 'y(O!)+klkl (everything)' of the root of Ugaritic, it may be 'O Everything!' (UT: 407, 419).

<sup>71</sup> In Ugaritic, 'dbr' means 'place, shrine, thing, and word' (UT: 383-384).

<sup>72</sup> In Akkadian, 'mašu II' means Gt-stem 'to be little, become low, less, diminish, grow scare, need, be in need, be defective, fail, deteriorate, waste away, be emaciated' (CAD: 205); cf. in Akkadian grammar, Gt-stem is related to the Niphal form of Hebrew grammar.

- [ל] 112:6b to remember<sup>73</sup> forever **he will be** righteous.
- [מ] 112:7a From breaking an agreement<sup>74</sup> of evil, not **he will be afraid**,
- [נ] 112:7b to become permanent<sup>75</sup> his heart, to be secure<sup>76</sup> in **the LORD (YHWH)**.
- [ד] 112:8a to support<sup>77</sup> his heart, not **he will be afraid**,
- [ע] 112:8b forever because **he will see** in his enemies.
- [פ] 112:9a **He has concealed**<sup>78</sup>, **He has given** for the poor<sup>79</sup>
- [צ] 112:9b His righteousness which stands, for ever
- [ק] 112:9c **His power**<sup>80</sup> **will be merciful**<sup>81</sup> with honour.
- [ר] 112:10a **The impious** **will see** and **will be angry**,
- [ש] 112:10b **his teeth** **will gnash** and **will melt**,
- [ת] 112:10c **the desire** of the impious **will perish**.

### 3.3.3 Analysis of the structure of Psalm 112

Like Psalm 111, the structure of Psalm 112 will be analyzed from a macro-micro perspective.

The details of the structure could be classified as follows:

- Table IX -

		Subject & verb	Objective	Conditions
A: A (good) man	A(3 <sup>rd</sup> person) A'	he: a his one: a'	a <sub>1</sub> a' <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>2</sub> a' <sub>2</sub>
B: God	B(3 <sup>rd</sup> person) B'	He: b His one: b'	b <sub>1</sub> b' <sub>1</sub>	b <sub>2</sub> b' <sub>2</sub>
C: The impious	C(3 <sup>rd</sup> person) C'	he: c his one: c'	c <sub>1</sub> c' <sub>1</sub>	c <sub>2</sub> c' <sub>2</sub>

#### Micro-structure of Psalm 112

- [א] 112:1a Blessed a<sub>2</sub> \_\_\_\_\_  
is a man who fears **the LORD (YHWH)**, a A
- [ב] 112:1b in His commandments one who takes pleasure (is) a

<sup>73</sup> In Akkadian, 'zakāru' means 'name, mention, remember' (CAD: 443).

<sup>74</sup> In Akkadian, 'šamāhu II' means 'to break an agreement' (CAD: 352).

<sup>75</sup> In Akkadian, 'kānu' means Gt- stem 'to become permanent' (CAD: 146); cf. ALCBH: 158.

<sup>76</sup> ALCBH: 48.

<sup>77</sup> In Akkadian, 'šamāku' means 'to cover up, bury, smother, incapacitate, support' (CAD: 314).

<sup>78</sup> In Akkadian, 'pazāru' means 'to hide, conceal' (CAD: 271).

<sup>79</sup> In Akkadian, 'abiyāru' means 'poor' (CDA: 2).

<sup>80</sup> In Akkadian, 'qarnu' means 'horn, power, and fringe' (CAD: 285).

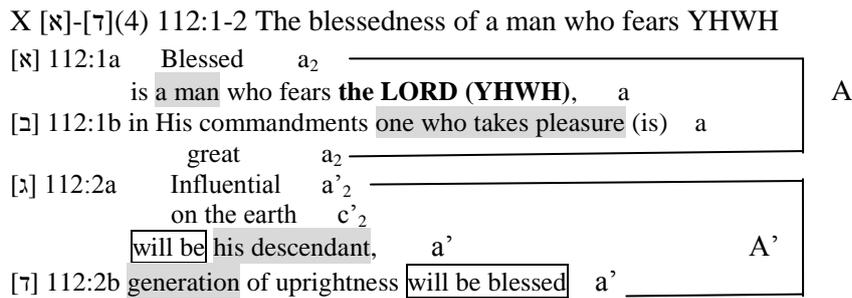
<sup>81</sup> In Akkadian, 'rēmu' means 'to be merciful, have compassion on' (CAD: 302).

	great	a <sub>2</sub>	_____		
[λ] 112:2a	Influential	a' <sub>2</sub>	_____	X	
	on the earth	c' <sub>2</sub>	_____		
	<u>will be</u> his descendant,	a'	_____	A'	
[τ] 112:2b	generation of uprightness	<u>will be blessed</u>	a'	_____	
[π] 112:3a	Wealth and ten shekels of silver (are)	b'	_____	B'	
	in His house,	b' <sub>2</sub>	_____		
[ι] 112:3b	and His righteousness	<u>is standing</u>	b'	_____	
	forever	b' <sub>2</sub>	_____		
[τ] 112:4a	Sunrise	from the darkness	<u>will be light</u>	b	Y
		for uprightness, b <sub>2</sub>	_____		
[π] 112:4b (it)	<u>be gracious</u>	b	_____	B	
	and <u>be kind</u>	b	_____		
	and (be) right.	b <sub>2</sub>	_____		
[υ] 112:5a	A good man	<u>be gracious</u>	a	_____	A <sub>C</sub>
		and (be) <i>good</i> (?)	a <sub>2</sub>	_____	
[ι] 112:5b	O Everything!	<u>b'</u>	_____	B' <sub>C</sub>	
	(is) His word	b'	_____		
		from judgment	b' <sub>2</sub>	_____	
[ς] 112:6a	Because for long time	a <sub>2</sub>	_____	A <sub>R1</sub>	
	<u>he will not be deteriorated,</u>	a	_____		
[β] 112:6b	to remember	a <sub>2</sub>	_____	A <sub>R2</sub>	
	Forever	a <sub>2</sub>	_____		
	<u>he will be</u>	a	_____		
		righteous	a <sub>2</sub>	_____	X'
[ζ] 112:7a	From breaking an agreement of evil,	a <sub>2</sub>	_____	A <sub>R3</sub>	
	no <u>he will be afraid,</u>	a	_____		
[ι] 112:7b	to become permanent his heart,		_____	A <sub>R3'</sub>	
	to be secure in <b>the LORD (YHWH)</b>	a <sub>2</sub>	_____		
[υ] 112:8a	to support his heart,	a <sub>2</sub>	_____	A <sub>R3'</sub>	
	not <u>he will be afraid,</u>	a	_____		
[υ] 112:8b	forever	a <sub>2</sub>	_____	A <sub>R1'</sub>	
	because <u>he will see</u>	a	_____		
		in his enemies	c' <sub>2</sub>	_____	
[ς] 112:9a	<u>He has concealed,</u>	b	_____	B	
	<u>He has given</u>	b	_____		
		for the poor	a <sub>2</sub>	_____	
[ξ] 112:9b	His righteousness which stands,	b' <sub>1</sub>	_____	Y'	
	for ever	b' <sub>2</sub>	_____		
[ρ] 112:9c	His power	<u>will be merciful</u>	b'	_____	B'
		with honour	b' <sub>2</sub>	_____	
[γ] 112:10a	The impious	<u>will see</u> and <u>will be angry,</u>	c	_____	C <sub>C</sub>
[ω] 112:10b	his teeth	<u>will gnash</u> and <u>will melt,</u>	c'	_____	C' <sub>C</sub>
[π] 112:10c	the desire of the impious	<u>will perish</u>	c''	_____	C'' <sub>R</sub>

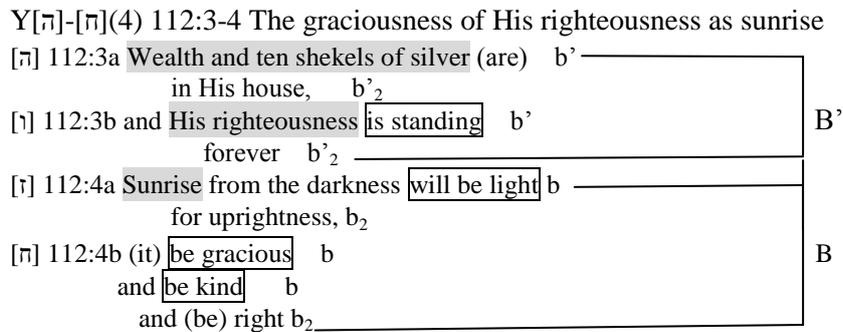
**Macro-structure of Psalm 112**

- X [⌘]-[⌗](4) 112:1-2 The blessedness of a man who fears **YHWH**  
 Y[⌗]-[⌗](4) 112:3-4 The graciousness of His righteousness as sunrise  
 X' [⌘]- [⌘](8) 112:5-8 The graciousness of a good man  
 Y' [⌘]-[⌗](3) 112:9 The mercifulness of His power toward the poor  
 Z [⌗]-[⌗](3) 112:10 Destruction of the impious

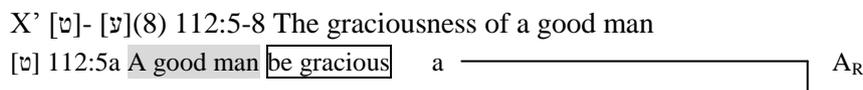
### 3.3.4 Understanding the structure of Psalm 112



The lines between [⌘] and [⌗] consist of the panel structure in a chiasmic pattern of sentences (a<sub>2</sub> //a //a //a<sub>2</sub> //a'<sub>2</sub> c'<sub>2</sub> //a' //a') “A man who fears the LORD and his generation would be blessed men”. The author seems to emphasize the concept of a “blessed people”. The content relates to “the fear of the LORD” which ends Psalm 111. Therefore, Psalm 111 and 112 could be understood as a single literary set.



From [⌗] to [⌗], the lines appear clearly as a panel structure (b' b'<sub>2</sub>// b' b'<sub>2</sub>// b b<sub>2</sub>// b b b<sub>2</sub>). The author seems to use the metaphor of the light of sunrise to symbolize God’s image. Thus, the metaphor is used to highlight God’s righteousness in a panel structure because of the repetition of the same pattern. In line 4a, the significance of the metaphor of sunrise which is bright as opposed to darkness could also allude to the relationship between a good man and his enemy, the wicked.



	and (be) <i>good</i> (?) a <sub>2</sub> _____	
[ʔ] 112:5b	O Everything! <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">bʔ</span> _____	
	(is) His word bʔ _____	Bʔ <sub>R</sub>
	from judgment bʔ <sub>2</sub> _____	
[ɔ] 112:6a	<b>Because</b> for long time a <sub>2</sub> _____	
	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">he will not be deteriorated</span> , a _____	A <sub>C1</sub>
[ʔ] 112:6b	to remember a <sub>2</sub> _____	
	Forever a <sub>2</sub> _____	
	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">he will be</span> a _____	A <sub>C2</sub>
	righteous a <sub>2</sub> _____	
[ʔ] 112:7a	From <b>breaking</b> an agreement of evil, a <sub>2</sub> _____	
	<b>not</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">he will be afraid</span> , a _____	A <sub>C3</sub>
[ɔ] 112:7b	to become permanent his heart,	
	to be secure in <b>the LORD (YHWH)</b> a <sub>2</sub> _____	
[ɔ] 112:8a	to support his heart, a <sub>2</sub> _____	
	<b>not</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">he will be afraid</span> , a _____	A <sub>C3</sub>
[ʔ] 112:8b	forever a <sub>2</sub> _____	
	<b>because</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">he will see</span> a _____	A <sub>C1</sub>
	in his enemies cʔ <sub>2</sub> _____	

As there are no effects without causes, the lines between [ʔ] and [ʔ] could be divided into effects, i.e. lines [ʔ] and [ʔ] and causes, lines [ɔ] to [ʔ]. The lines that show the effects contain two concepts - of a good man and His word, while the lines that show the causes display the chiasm in a sandwich or panel structure of a repeated pattern of “negative” and “positive” contents. The chiasmic structure follows the pattern: ‘A<sub>C1</sub>//A<sub>C2</sub>//A<sub>C3</sub> A<sub>C3</sub>’//A<sub>C1</sub>’. The negative and positive patterns appear as ‘N: [ɔ] //P: [ʔ]// N: [ʔ]-[ɔ], [ɔ]//P: [ʔ]’. Therefore, in this case, the concept of a good man could be interpreted in two possible ways. In the panel structure, the positive meaning is the righteousness of a good man and his composure which his enemy can see. Moreover, although the good man’s situation seems to be expressed negatively, it is as strong as the positive. A good man is not afraid of the evil situation, therefore he endures forever. On the other hand, according to the chiasmic structure, the meaning could be understood as a good man who is righteous and will not be afraid of the power of evil, because he will not be moved and can see his enemy forever. Therefore, it is different from this literary atmosphere.

Yʔ [ɔ]-[ʔ](3)	112:9 The merciful of His power toward the poor	
[ɔ] 112:9a	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">He has concealed</span> , b _____	
	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">He has given</span> b _____	B
	for the poor a <sub>2</sub> _____	
[ʔ] 112:9b	His righteousness which stands, bʔ <sub>1</sub> _____	
	for ever bʔ <sub>2</sub> _____	
[ʔ] 112:9c	His power <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">will be merciful</span> bʔ _____	Bʔ
	with honour bʔ <sub>2</sub> _____	

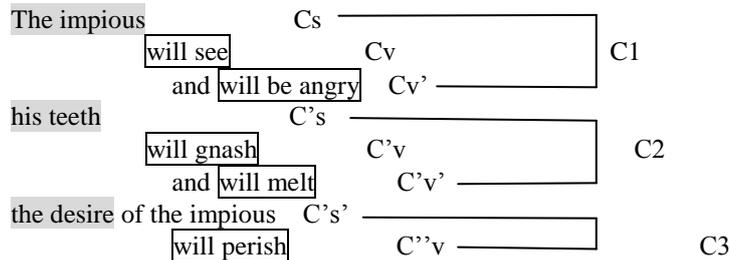
The [ɔ]-[ʔ] lines form a linear structure (b //b a<sub>2</sub> bʔ<sub>1</sub> // bʔ<sub>2</sub> bʔ bʔ<sub>2</sub>). This simple structure logically closes the poem. God “conceals” and God gives, and His power is merciful – three

simple and clear steps. Additionally, “His power” in the [ק] line could be seen as the key word because it is the final subject in the paragraph.

Z [ר]-[ת](3) 112:10 Destruction of the impious

[ר] 112:10a The impious will see and will be angry, c \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>C</sub>  
 [ש] 112:10b his teeth will gnash and will melt, c' \_\_\_\_\_ C'<sub>C</sub>  
 [ת] 112:10c the desire of the impious will perish, c'' \_\_\_\_\_ C<sub>R</sub>

The last line is from [ר] to [ת]. This line also appears as a linear structure (Cc//C'c//Cr), as shown above. If this line were arranged in detail, it would possibly be displayed as follows:



In the line above, some expressions could be matched such as “the impious=his teeth”, “will see=will gnash”, and “will be angry=will melt” (C1=C2). The relationships between C1, C2, and C3, may be coded as “C1+C2=C3”, showing that the end of the wicked is destruction. Therefore, the author’s last song could be captioned as “the destruction of the wicked”. Significantly, the deeds of the wicked could be contrasted with the wisdom of the good man. The author’s reference to the wicked man is made directly in the last lines – [ר], [ש], and [ת] but the hidden meaning there would be “slavery.”<sup>82</sup> The author probably implies that the wicked is the slave of evil.

### 3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

Above, Psalm 9-10, Psalm 111, and Psalm 112 have been analyzed by focusing on their literary structures. First, the arrangement of each of the alphabetic Psalms was displayed, and the second step was to translate the Hebrew structure of the poems word by word. In the process of translation, it was observed that most of the words appear to have a connection to either Ugarit or Akkadian, or to both, although Hebrew words do not connect to the Ugaritic or Akkadian absolutely. The next step was to analyze the structures in detail from both a micro and a macro perspective. Lastly, a detailed observation of the micro-structure has helped to clarify the content of each text.

<sup>82</sup> If 'רשע' is translated in Akkadian, it would be 'rēšūtu' (slavery) (CAD: 303).

From the analyses above, it is possible to consider both Psalm 9-10 and Psalm 111-112 as literary and structural units. Several studies have already concluded that Psalm 9-10 should be analyzed as one literary unit, but Psalm 111-112 has not yet been investigated in this manner even though both exhibit the same structure. As a decisive proof, the last part of Psalm 111 relates to the first part of Psalm 112.<sup>83</sup> In addition, Psalm 9-10 and Psalm 111-112 respectively are the first alphabetic acrostic Psalm in two different books of the Psalms, that is, the first book and the fifth book. It could be inferred that in this beautiful arrangement of the Psalms (as summarized again in Table X below), when one half meets the other half, they become one, and when the sun shines on an object, the object meets with its shadow.

- Table X -

Psalm 9-10: לְמִנְצַחַת עֲלְמוֹת לִבָּן מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד׃		Psalm 111 הַלְלוּ יְהוָה		Psalm 112 הַלְלוּ יְהוָה	
בְּשׁוֹב	אֹדָה	בְּסוֹד	אֹדָה	בְּמִצּוֹתָיו	אֲשֶׁרִי
x	פְּעֵרֶתָ	הַרְוֵשִׁים	גְּדָלִים	הָיִר	לְבֹר
וַיְהִי	הַמָּה	וְצִדְקָתוֹ	חֹד	וְצִדְקָתוֹ	הַיּוֹן
חֲנָנִי	חֲמֹרִי	חֲנִיּוֹן	זְכָר	חֲנִיּוֹן	זֶרַח
וְשׁוֹבוֹ	מַבְעֵוֹ	וְזֹכֵר	טָרַף	וְכִלְכַּל	טוֹב
לְמָה	פִּי	לְתִת	פָּח	לְזֹכֵר	פִּי
מָרוֹם	מִפְשׁוֹ	מִנְאֻמִּים	מַעֲשֵׂי	מִכּוֹן	מִשְׁמוּעָה
פִּיהוּ	x	שְׁשׁוּיִם	סְמוּכִים	שָׁד	סְמוּךְ
x	עֵינָיו	צָוָה	פְּרוֹת	צִדְקָתוֹ	פְּהֵר
רֵאשִׁיתָה	קְוָמָה	קָדוֹשׁ	רֵאשִׁית	רֵשַׁע	קִרְנוֹ
תְּאוֹת	שֶׁבֶר	תְּהַלְתּוֹ	שָׁכַל	תְּאוֹת	שִׁנִּי

Both the form and content of alphabetic acrostic Psalms explain the relationship between the arrangement of the alphabetic letters and the author’s poetic allusion. Therefore, the art of the composition of alphabetic acrostics can be appreciated as the best of the best in this ancient literature. The selected poems in this study have been tentatively associated with Ugaritic and Akkadian in this chapter. In the next chapter, this point will be explained in detail, in line with the acrostic genre in ANEL.

<sup>83</sup> That is, [ר] 111:10a Beginning of wisdom (is) the fear of **the LORD (YHWH)** precedes [א] 112:1a Blessed is a man who fears **the LORD (YHWH)**. These two Psalms jointly deal with the fear of the LORD (YHWH).

From a literary angle, the structure of each of the selected poems shows evidence of panel pattern and chiasm, both of which could be regarded as the foundational literary units of the Hebrew literary form. It is shown that the analysis of the structure could prove to be an effective method of understanding the alphabetic poem.

In conclusion, this chapter reconstructs and clarifies the relationship between the form and content of alphabetic acrostic Psalms illustrating it from a selection of Psalms. In the text, the structure of the alphabetic acrostic poem points to the form and content. This alphabetic acrostic is unique; not only does it have remarkable value, it is worth further research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ACROSTICS AND HEBREW PSALMS (PSS 9-10 AND 111-112)

#### 4.1 BACKGROUND

The origin of Ancient Near Eastern Literature could be traced to Sumer of around 3000 B.C.E.<sup>84</sup> Specifically, the Sumerian texts of the Ur III dynasty (2112-2004 B.C.E.) which was the Renaissance Period of Sumer's civilization, were excavated by Sir Leonard Woolley<sup>85</sup> and are considered important for biblical studies. The Akkadian language also belonged to the Semitic language family like biblical Hebrew.<sup>86</sup> Ugarit was discovered in 1928<sup>87</sup> and the Ugaritic language is considered more important than other ancient Near Eastern languages because its writing made use of an alphabetic form of cuneiform.<sup>88</sup> Egyptian literature is also considered important for biblical studies<sup>89</sup> because Egyptian texts could also be related to the Israelite history, for instance, the background of the Moses narrative in the Pentateuch is Egyptian.

If biblical texts were related to the ancient Near Eastern period, Sumer and Akkad of Mesopotamia from 3100-1200 B.C.E., Ugarit from 1400-1200 B.C.E. and Egyptian Dynasties from 4000-1069 B.C.E. should be considered.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, the strong influence of ancient Near Eastern cultures could be seen in ancient Hebrew literature through the three main languages of Akkadian, Ugaritic and Egyptian.

The location of ancient Israel with respect to the ancient Near East is shown in the map below.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Von Soden (1994: 15-17).

<sup>85</sup> Hayes (1990: 2).

<sup>86</sup> Caplice (1950: 3-5).

<sup>87</sup> Curitis (1999:6).

<sup>88</sup> Pitard (1999: 46-57).

<sup>89</sup> See Pritchard (1969:3-36).

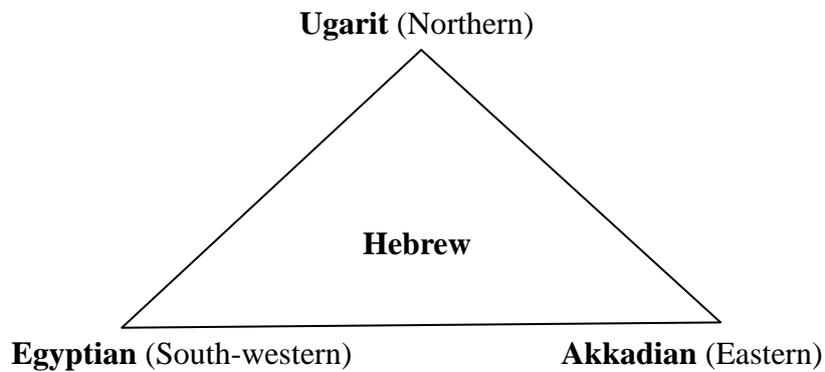
<sup>90</sup> Cf. Snell (2011: 6).

<sup>91</sup> *Map of Ancient Near East*. 2011. [Online] Available: [http://www.biblehistory.com/geography/maps/map\\_ancient\\_near\\_east.html](http://www.biblehistory.com/geography/maps/map_ancient_near_east.html) [2012, May 3].

### Map of Ancient Near East



<Map I>

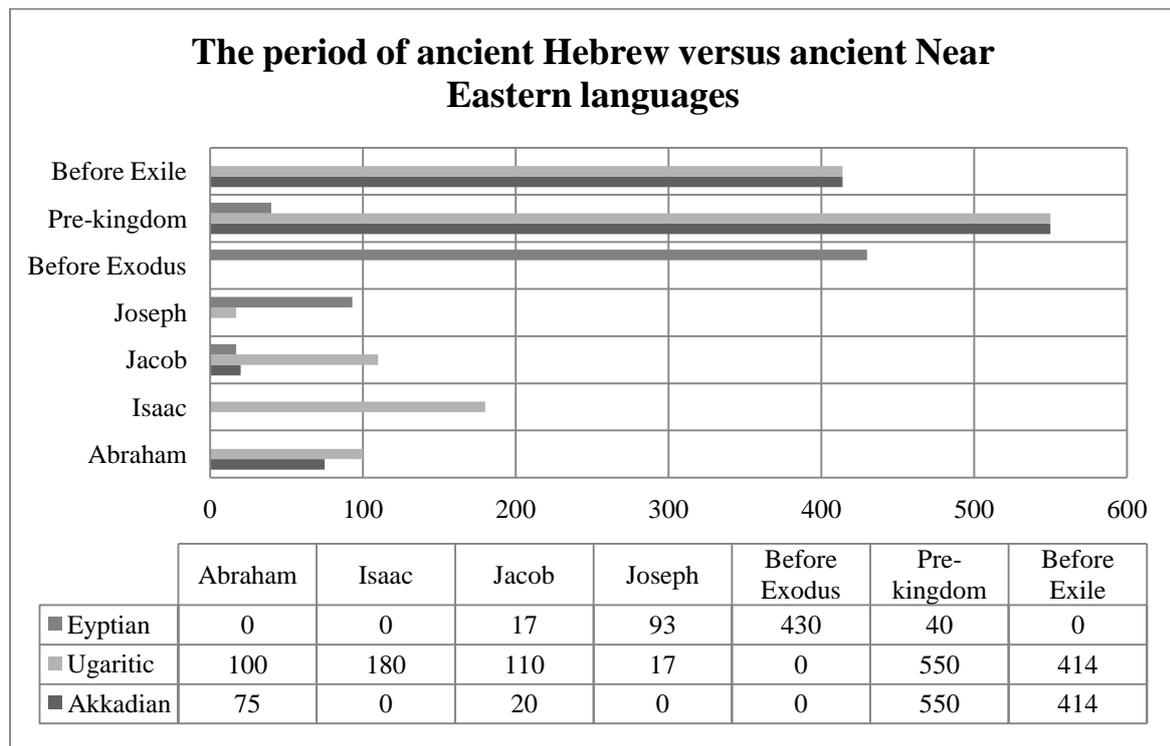


<Figural I>

From a geographical, cultural, and linguistic view, ancient Israel was located centrally between Babylon, Egypt, and Ugarit. This area had been influenced by **Akkadian**, **Egyptian**, and **Ugaritic**. According to the narrative construction in the MT (which probably preserves the cultural memory of this people), the beginning of Israelite history could be Abram’s journey from Ur (אור) and Haran (חָרָן) of Sumer and Akkad in Mesopotamia to Canaan (Gen 11:28, 31; 12:4). When **Abram** was seventy-five, he started to live in Canaan (Gen 13:4-5). **Isaac** and **Jacob**, the sons of Abraham dwelt in Canaan (Gen 21:2-46:4). The Israelites came

to Egypt through **Joseph**, Jacob’s son (Gen 46:7), and they had probably been influenced by the culture of Egypt for four hundred and thirty years (Exod 12:40-41). Through the Exodus by Moses, the Israelites returned to Canaan. This pre-kingdom period of the Israelites could have been influenced by Ugaritic culture for approximately four hundred years.

With reference to the above, the relationship between ancient Israel and ancient Near East could be illustrated as follows:



<Graph I><sup>92</sup>

The relationship between Hebrew and some ancient Near Eastern languages as shown above is based on the assumption that the Psalms had been written before and after the Davidic dynasty, since the Exodus from Egypt. The relationship will be determined by doing a comparative analysis of the influence of Ugaritic and Akkadian in the ancient Near East, focusing on Psalms 9-10 and 111-112. Specifically, the data of the acrostic form in the Psalms and in the Ancient Near Eastern Acrostics will be considered as well as the similarities and/or

<sup>92</sup> If this Graph is concerned in canonical perspective, it can be shown as like approximately. Cf. Williams, T. F., 1997. *Chronological Chart of Israel from the Early Bronze to the Roman Period*. [pdf] Edmonton, AB Canada: Resources for Biblical, Theological, and Religious Studies. Available at: <[http://biblical-studies.ca/pdfs/Chronological\\_Chart\\_of\\_Israel's\\_History.pdf](http://biblical-studies.ca/pdfs/Chronological_Chart_of_Israel's_History.pdf)> [Accessed 23 July 2012]. Cf. Kaiser, W. C. Jr. (1998:489-491), Aharoni, Y. (1982: xviii-xix).

differences between Hebrew poetry and ancient Near Eastern texts.

## 4.2 ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ACROSTICS

Ancient Near Eastern Literature can be classified into three groups, namely Mesopotamian, Phoenician, and Egyptian. The main languages are Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Egyptian, and it is possible that Hebrew literature could have developed through their influence.<sup>93</sup> This is because the content of the acrostics has also been discovered in the ANEL. Although the forms of the acrostics are somewhat different from each other, it could be assumed that they had influenced each other. If the acrostic form in each text is examined closely, to determine the comparative relationship between ANEL and HL, it will be clear that the Hebrew acrostic is deeply related to the ancient Near Eastern acrostics.

### 4.2.1 Akkadian acrostic texts

Akkadian writing used a non-alphabetic cuneiform but the characters have phonetic value. Compared to other alphabetic languages, the Akkadian acrostic structure is formed by using the phonetic value of the Akkadian character. Moreover, the history of the Akkadian literature is regarded as earlier than that of Hebrew literature; it possibly existed before the time of Abraham.

Lambert (1960:67) has shown that the acrostic form occurs in Akkadian literature. Furthermore, Brug (1997:5-6) describes Akkadian acrostics as “message acrostics in which the initial syllables or signs of the horizontal acrostic lines spell out a message when read vertically.” He also identifies seven examples of acrostics from Akkadian literature as follow:

- The first acrostic is *The Dialogue of Saggil-kinam-ubbib*, which is often called “The Babylonian Theodicy” (around 1000 B.C.E).
- The second is the *Prayer of Nabu-ushebshi*.
- The third is a prayer to Marduk from Ashurbanipal (669-627 B.C.E.).
- The fourth is a hymn associated with Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.E.).
- The fifth are two fragments of “A Prayer to Marduk,” which appear to date from about the time of Ashurbanipal.
- The sixth is a prayer to Nabu.

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<sup>93</sup> Thomas (1967: xxiii-xxxii).

- The seventh, if it is one, is a fragment preserved only in one stanza.

In Akkadian literature, the first mention of the acrostic form is found in the so-called “The Babylonian Theodicy” or “*The Dialogue of Saggil-kinam-ubbib*” as noted by Lambert (1960:63-89) thus:<sup>94</sup>

The Theodicy is an acrostic poem of twenty-seven stanzas of 11 lines each. It takes the form of a dialogue between a sufferer, who exposes the evils of current social injustice, and a friend, who tries to reconcile these facts with established on the justice of the divine ordering of the universe. Nineteen of the stanzas are preserved either completely or sufficiently for the trend of the argument to be apparent. The other eight are either totally lost or inadequately preserved. The acrostic itself can, however, be restored completely, and it reads:

*a-na-ku sa-ag-gi-il-ki-[i-na-am-u]b-bi-ib ma-áš-ma-šu ka-ri-bu ša i-li ú šar-ri*  
 “I, Saggil-kīnam-ubbib, the incantation priest, am adorant of the god and the king.”

The unique sentence above is compounded by each of the syllables in the Akkadian language. When the letters of all the twenty-seven syllables are arranged in order, it would result in the “message acrostic” mentioned by Brug above. Therefore, one could relate this structure to the alphabetic form in the Hebrew Bible.

#### 4.2.2 Ugaritic acrostic texts

Since Dahood’s (1966-1970) study of the relationship between Ugaritic acrostics and the Psalms, it seems that scholars became more interested in Ugaritic texts. After M. Dahood, Watson (1984:195) has noted in addition that:

Although no actual alphabetic acrostics have been found, it is remarkable that so many strophes and stanzas in Ugaritic tend to begin with an identical letter. This is often achieved simply by repetition of the same initial word or particle, but the effect remains the same.

For Brug (1997:4), Ugaritic acrostics can be described thus:

An attempt has been made to relate the beginning of biblical acrostics to the so-called “**quasi acrostic**” repetitive pattern that is common in Ugaritic poetry... Ugaritic alliteration or anaphora is primarily a repetitive style that appeals to the ear. It does not have the sequential pattern that is the essence of the alphabetic acrostic, nor is its main appeal to the eye as is the case with biblical acrostic... The true acrostics of other nations provide much better parallels to biblical acrostics than the quasi acrostics of Ugaritic.

Before Brug, Watson (1984:195-196) had offered some examples of Ugaritic acrostics from

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<sup>94</sup> Lambert (1960: 63).

CTA<sup>95</sup>. There are as follows:

- CTA 4 iv 52-57 (mṭb)
- CTA 4 v 113-116 (ḥš)
- CTA 4 vi 47-54 (špq)
- CTA 6 v 11-19 (‘lk)
- CTA 14 iii 159-160 (lqh, lla)
- CTA 14 iv 182-185 (a)
- CTA 16 i 25-27 (bn,al)
- CTA 17 ii 27-30 (apnk,ap,hn,alp)
- CTA 19 iii 154-155 (‘nt, ‘nt, ‘db)

If it can be accommodated the scholars’ views which mentioned above cases, additionally, I would like to present the following example which Ugaritic acrostic pattern will be able to show suitable. In addition, I have found some examples from Hurrian ritual texts<sup>96</sup>:

Text 4 (my own translation)

(1) iḏr. ḥḏr. ḥḏld.<sup>97</sup> in. atn

Surely Hadal’s hand treats (?), there is no high priest.

(6) iḏr. ḥ!ḏr. ḥḏld. il. kmr̄b

Surely Hadal’s hand treats (?), the god as great.

(10) iḏ[r. ḥ]ḏr. [ḥ]ḏld. ṭṭ[b]. ḥlbḡ

Surely Hadal’s hand treats (?), with gentile.

(15) i[ḏr. ḥḏr]. ḥḏld. iykdḡ. iym

Surely Hadal’s hand treats (?), where is Kadaḡ? where is M?

(17) iḏr. ḥ[ḏr. ḥḏld]. ddmš[ ]

Surely Hadal’s hand treats (?), Dadmaš (a god) (?).

(22) i[ḏr. ḥḏr. ḥḏld. ]

Surely Hadal’s hand treats (?), (?).

(26) iḏr. ḥ[ḏr. ḥḏld. ]ad. ‘r

Surely it treats Hadal’s hand(?), (?) city.

<sup>95</sup> Herdner (1963)

<sup>96</sup> Gordon (1967:160-161, 257).

<sup>97</sup> If ‘ḥḏr’ means ‘treat’ of ‘rdh’(Hebrew):infinitive absolute, ‘iḏr’ is Qal, perfect form, the third person, singular, masculine. And ‘ḥḏld’ is ‘ḥḏl’(person name)+‘d’(hand) in Ugarit.(UT: 401,383)

(29:rev.) **idr. h̄dr. h̄[d̄ld̄]**. a'lb<sup>98</sup> idr

Surely Hadal's hand treats (?), a vessel (?) of Idr (pers.name).

(32) **idr. h̄d[r]. h̄[d̄]ld̄**. h̄dn. h̄dlr!

Surely Hadal's hand treats (?), my joy, grapes of joy(?).

(35) **idr. h̄d[r]. h̄dld̄**. 'grhn. pddph<sup>99</sup>

Surely Hadal's hand treats (?), my Agruhu, gold of Duphu(?).

(38) **idr. h̄dr. h̄[d̄]ld̄**. 'mg. kiw. nqd

Surely Hadal's hand treats (?), with voice both shepherd.

(41) **[id̄]r. h̄dr. h̄dld̄**. ir[ ]idrp

Surely Hadal's hand treats (?), (?).

(44) **idr. h̄dr. h̄dld̄**. 'nt. amrn

Surely Hadal's hand treats (?), now see me.

(47) **idr. h̄dr. h̄dl[d̄]**. ibnkl

Surely Hadal's hand treats (?) Pure Nikkal (the goddess).

(50) **idr. h̄dr. h̄dld̄**. nbdg

Surely Hadal's hand treats (?) Nubadig(the god).

(54) **idr. h̄dr. h̄dld̄**. in[ ]nd

Surely Hadal's hand treats (?), (?).

(60:edge) **idr. h̄dr. h̄dld̄**. h̄bt. h̄mr[ ]bn. pbn. h̄bt. iy. ind̄

Surely Hadal's hand treats (?), spoil (?) Paban spoil, where is Inadu?

The phrase “**idr. h̄dr. h̄dld̄**.(Surely Hadal's hand treats (?))” is repeated 17 times in the 62 lines of the text. This shows the style of the Ugaritic acrostic. There is a clear structure and form, as in Hebrew literature.

Salters (2011: 428) has cited Watson's concept of Ugaritic acrostics as follows:

Watson designates these “quasi-acrostics.” They certainly reflect a poet's fascination with sounds and signs in writing and, although not much different from assonance and alliteration, are bordering on what we know as acrostics.

One should therefore be aware of the fact that there is a difference between the iterative

<sup>98</sup> Maybe, from 'ulbum'(Akk.), this means 'a vessel'. (CAD: 420)

<sup>99</sup> Maybe, 'pddph' is 'pd'(gold) + 'dph'(person name?) in Ugarit. (UT: 467)

technique and the acrostic form.

#### 4.2.3 Egyptian acrostic texts

Brug (1994:6-7) examines Egyptian acrostic texts and identifies two kinds of acrostics namely the message acrostics as in Akkadian and acrostics with a repetition form. These acrostics probably dated from Egypt's nineteenth to the twenty-second dynasty (13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.-8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.).<sup>100</sup>

Brug (1994:6) identifies acrostics in the following Egyptian texts:

- A hymn to Amon from Leiden Papyrus 1350 - the sequence of wordplay begins and ends with numbers.
- A collection of seven love songs called "The Stroll"<sup>101</sup> - the sequence of wordplay begins and ends with one and seven respectively.

The structure of "The Stroll" could be analyzed as follows<sup>102</sup>:

First Stanza begins "One(w<sup>ʿ</sup>)" and ends "One": Boy

Second Stanza is both "brother(sn)"=Two(sn): Girl

Third Stanza is "Accompany(imy ḥt)" and "intended(ḥm)=Third(mḥ-ḥmt): Boy

Fourth Stanza is both first and last lines "scurry(ifd)"=Four(fdwt): Girl

Fifth Stanza is the first "laud(dw3)" and the last line "five(diw)"=Five(diw): Boy

Sixth Stanza is the first and last words "pass(sw3)"=Six(siswt): Girl

Seventh Stanza is the first and last words "Seven(sfḥ)": Boy

This shows that the first and the last word or line form a repetition. Numbers played an important function in the poetic expression of the love between a boy and a girl. Seven would be the meaning of perfect love in this text. This "perfect love" could also be associated with the love between God and humankind.

In addition, I will consider some examples of repetition in acrostics from some Egyptian literature:

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<sup>100</sup> Parkinson (2009: xx).

<sup>101</sup> The source is P. Chester Beatty I. cf. Gardiner (1931: 27-38). See Fox (1985: 51-66, 198, 393-399).

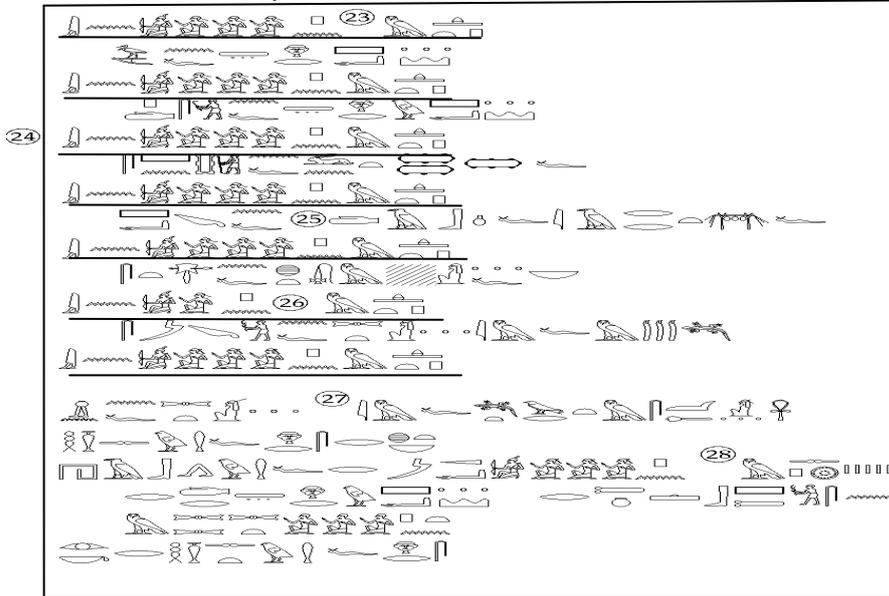
<sup>102</sup> Michael (1985:56-60) shows that this text is made up of acrostics. See also Simpson & Ritner (2003: 322-329).

1. **Victory Song** of “The Autobiography of Weni” (6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - 2325-2175 B.C.E.):  
Acrostics as repetition patterns.<sup>103</sup>

*The autobiography of Weni (the elder)*

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Lines 23 - 28 of the inscription



*ii.n mSa pn m Htp*

*xbA.n=f tA Hr.i.w-Sa*

*ii.n mSa pn m Htp*

*pds.n=f tA Hr.i.w-Sa*

*ii.n mSa pn m Htp*

*sSn.n=f wn.w.t=f*

*ii.n mSa pn m Htp*

*Sai.n=f dAb.w=f iArr.w.t=f*

*ii.n mSa pn m Htp*

*sTi.n=f xt m [prw.w]=f nb.w*

*ii.n mSa pn m Htp*

*smA.n=f TAz.w.t im=f m Dba.w aSA.w*

*ii.n mSa pn m Htp*

*[ini.n=f TAz.w.t] im=f aSA.w.t wr.t m sqr.w anx*

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<sup>103</sup> See Smith, M. D. 1997. *The Language of Weni the Elder*. [Online]. Available: [http://www.rostau.org.uk/weni.ael/hieropge/weni\\_p4.htm](http://www.rostau.org.uk/weni.ael/hieropge/weni_p4.htm), <http://www.rostau.org.uk/weni.ael/comment/p4comnt.htm> [2012, May 14].

This army returned in safety,

It had ravaged the Sand-dwellers' land.

This army returned in safety,

It had flattened the Sand-dwellers' land.

This army returned in safety,

It had sacked its strongholds.

This army returned in safety,

It had cut down its figs, its vines.

This army returned in safety,

It had thrown fire in all its [mansions].

This army returned in safety,

It had slain its troop by many ten thousands.

This army returned in safety,

[It had carried] off many [troops] as captives.

<Translated by Miriam Lichtheim><sup>104</sup>

2. **Hymns II-IV** of “A cycle of Hymns to king Sesostris III” (1872-1853 B.C.E.):  
Acrostic text as anaphoric patterns:<sup>105</sup>

## II. Rejoicing over the king

*Haa-wy [...] rwd.n.k pAwt.sn*

*Haa-wy [...] .k ir.n.k tAS.sn*

*Haa-wy i[...] imy-bAH saA.n.k [ps]Sw.sn*

*Haa-wy km [...] xpS.k mk.n.k iswt[.sn?]*

*Haa-wy pat m sxr.k iT.n bAw.k HAw[.sn?]*

*Haa-wy idbwy m nrw.k swsx.n.k Xrt.sn*

*Haa-wy DAmw.k sTst rdi.n.k rwd.sn*

*Haa-wy tAwy m pHy.k mk.n.k inbw.sn*

How the [...] rejoice, for you have made their offerings flourish

How the [...] rejoice at your [...], for you have drawn up their border

<sup>104</sup> Compare to Lichtheim (1973: 20) and Foster (1995:167-168).

<sup>105</sup> Lichtheim (1973:198) notes that “Hymns 2-4 have anaphoric patterns which the scribe underlined by stichic writing.” Therefore, it can be an acrostic form. See *Hymns to King Senusret III (1872-1853 BC)*. 2003. [Online]. Available: <http://www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/lahun/kinghymns.html> [2012, May 14].

How the [...] in the presence rejoice, for you have enlarged their shares

How the Egyptians (?) rejoice at your strong arm, for you have protected [their ?] traditions

How the nobles rejoice at your activity, for your power has grasped [their?] prosperity

How the two riverbanks rejoice at your dread, for you have extended their domain

How your recruits at levy rejoice, for you have caused them to flourish

How the two lands rejoice at your might, for you have protected their walls

Refrain

*inyt.f Hr swsx tAS.f wHm.k nHH*

its refrain: Horus extender of his border, may you repeat eternity

### III. The king as the shelter of Egypt

*wr-wy nb n niwt.f awy HH pw nDs pw kwy xA rmT*

*wr-wy nb n niwt.f isw a pw dni itrw r Afnw.f nw mw*

*wr-wy nb n niwt.f isw mnqb pw rdi sDr s nb r Ssp*

*wr-wy nb n niwt.f isw imDr pw Hsmn Ssm*

*wr-wy nb n niwt.f isw ibt pw tmm SAS drt.f*

*wr-wy nb n niwt.f isw nht pw nHmt snd m-a xrww.f*

*wr-wy nb n niwt.f isw Swt pw Axt qbt m Smw*

*wr-wy nb n niwt.f isw qaH pw Sm Sww r tr n prt*

*wr-wy nb n niwt.f isw Dw p[w] mDr Da r tr n nSnn pt*

*wr-wy nb n niwt.f isw sxmt pw r xryw xndw Hr tAS[.f?]*

How great is the lord for his city! He is a million arms, a thousand men are little beside

How great is the lord for his city! Indeed he is the dam that stops the river at its torrents of water

How great is the lord for his city! Indeed he is the cool room that allows every man to sleep to daybreak

How great is the lord for his city! Indeed he is a rampart, in the bronze of Shesem

How great is the lord for his city! Indeed he is a refuge, unwavering his hand

How great is the lord for his city! Indeed he is a shelter, rescuing the fearful from his

enemy

How great is the lord for his city! Indeed he is a sunshade at Flood, cool in Summer

How great is the lord for his city! Indeed he is a warm corner, dry in Winter time

How great is the lord for his city! Indeed he is a mountain resisting the storm at the time the sky rages

How great is the lord for his city! Indeed he is Sekhmet against the enemies who tread on [his?] border

#### IV. The arrival of the king

*ii.n.f n.n iT.f tA Sma Xnm.n sxmty m tp.f*

*ii.n.f smA.n.f tAwy Abx.n.f Swt n bit*

*ii.n.f HqA.n.f kmt rdi.n.f dSrt m ab.f*

*ii.n.f mk.n.f tAwy sgrH.n.f idbwy*

*ii.n.f sanx.n.f kmt xsr.n.f Snw.s*

*ii.n.f sanx.n.f pat srq.n.f Htyt rxyt*

*ii.n.f ptpt.n.f xAswt Hw.n.f iwntyw xmw snd[.f]*

*ii.n.f [..]A.n.f tAS.f nHm.n.f awA*

*ii.n.f [..] Xrdw.n qrs.n iAw.n Hr (?)*

He has come to us, grasping the land of Upper Egypt, the Double Crown has joined his head

He has come, he has united the Two Lands, he has merged the reed with the bee

He has come, he has ruled the Black Land, he has placed the Red Land in its midst

He has come, he has protected the Two Lands, he has calmed the two riverbanks

He has come, he has given Egypt life, he has dispelled her woes

He has come, he has given the nobles life, he has given breath to the throats of the people

He has come, he has trampled the foreign lands, he has struck the nomads ignorant of [his] fear

He has come, he has [...] his border, he has rescued the oppressed

He has come, [...] our children, we may bury our old... (?)

The feature of Egyptian acrostics could be revealed in two ways. Sentences or words are

repeated in the text, and like Akkadian acrostics, Egyptian acrostics are meaning acrostics.

Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Egyptian, which are ancient Near Eastern languages, were examined in the few cases above. Each character depends on and relates to the other characters. These similarities possibly point to a longstanding literary, religious and social interchange between the nations especially through wars or trade. The acrostic form had already become a universal form in Ancient Near Eastern Literature before 1000 B.C.E. It will be necessary to discuss this point further. Nonetheless, one could probably assume that the ancient Near Eastern acrostics have influenced Hebrew acrostics, and the reason for this could be verified through the texts of the Hebrew Bible.

### 4.3 ACROSTICS IN HEBREW LITERATURE

In ANEL, Hebrew Literature (apart from Psalms) shows clear evidence of Acrostics. Two forms can be observed. There are **General acrostics** and **Alphabetic acrostics** in the MT. These examples will be dealt with in the following:

#### 4.3.1. General acrostics

##### Acrostics of 22-lines and 11-lines

Watson (1984:199) describes an 11-line and a 22-line poem as follows:

Lam 5 consists of 22 couplets and is a freer form of the patterns used in Lam 1-4. The 22-verse structure, in fact, seems to characterise laments, notably Ps 38: however, note Isa 10, 27c-34. Eleven line poems are: Job 9, 25-35; Jer 5, 4-5; Hos 12, 3-6.

From my observation, 22-line and 11-line texts in the MT are found in Ruth 1, Ruth 4 (both have 22 lines), Psalm 33 (22 lines), Psalm 103 (repetition in 22 lines), and Psalm 29 (repetition in 11 lines). These examples consist of 22-line or 11-line structures. Remarkably, a 22-line or 11-line structure has certain significance in alphabetic acrostics.

Some of the examples in Hebrew are as follow:

#### Ruth 1 and 4

<p>1:1 וַיְהִי בִּימֵי שָׁפֵט הַשָּׁפֵטִים וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ          2 וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה לְגוֹר בְּשָׂדֵי מוֹאָב הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו:          3 וְשֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְשֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ נַעֲמִי וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי־בָנָיו מְחִלּוֹן וְכַלְיוֹן אֶפְרָתִים מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה</p>
--

וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁדֵי-מוֹאָב וַיְהִי-דִשָּׁן:

<sup>3</sup> וַתֵּמַת אֵלֶימֶלֶךְ אִישׁ נַעֲמִי וַתִּשְׂאָר הִיא וּשְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ:

<sup>4</sup> וַיִּשְׂאוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מֵאֲבוֹת שֵׁם הָאֶחָת עֶרְפָּה וְשֵׁם הַשְּׁנִית רוּת

וַלְשִׁבו שֵׁם כַּעֲשֵׂר שָׁנִים:

<sup>5</sup> וַיִּמְוֹתוּ גַם-שְׁנֵיהֶם מִחֲלוֹן וּכְלִיּוֹן

וַתִּשְׂאָר הָאִשָּׁה מִשְׁנֵי יְלָדֶיהָ וּמֵאִשָּׁה:

<sup>6</sup> וַתִּקֶּם הִיא וְכַלְתֶּיהָ וַתִּשָּׁב מִשְׁדֵי מוֹאָב

כִּי שָׁמְעָה בַשָּׂדֶה מוֹאָב כִּי-פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת-עַמּוֹ לַתַּת לָהֶם לֶחֶם:

<sup>7</sup> וַתֵּצֵא מִן-הַמְּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה-שָׁמָּה וּשְׁתֵּי כַלְתֶּיהָ עִמָּה

וַתֵּלְכְנָה בְּדֶרֶךְ לְשׁוּב אֶל-אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה:

<sup>8</sup> וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי לְשְׁתֵּי כַלְתֶּיהָ לִכְנֹה שְׁבֹנָה אִשָּׁה לְבֵית אִמָּה

(וַעֲשֵׂה) [וַעֲשֵׂן] יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד כַּאֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתֶם עִם-הַמֵּתִים וְעַמּוּדֵי:

<sup>9</sup> וַתֵּן יְהוָה לָכֶם וּמִצָּאָן מִנוּחָה אִשָּׁה בֵּית אִשָּׁה וַתִּשְׁק לָהֶן

וַתִּשְׁאַנֶּה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכְּינָה:

<sup>10</sup> וַתֹּאמְרֵנָה-לָּהּ כִּי-אֲתָךְ נָשׁוּב לְעַמּוּד:

<sup>11</sup> וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי שְׁבֹנָה בְנֹתִי לָמָּה תִלְכְּנָה עִמִּי

הַעוֹד-לִי בָנִים בְּמַעֵי וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְאֲנָשִׁים:

<sup>12</sup> שְׁבֹנָה בְנֹתִי לָכֵן כִּי זָקַנְתִּי מִהַיּוֹת לְאִישׁ

כִּי אֲמַרְתִּי יִשְׁלַחַי תִּקְוָה גַם הָיִיתִי הַלַּיְלָה לְאִישׁ וְגַם יְלָדְתִי בָנִים:

<sup>13</sup> הַלְהֵן וַתִּשְׁבְּרֵנָה עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדְּלוּ הַלְהֵן תַּעֲנֶנָּה לְבַלְתִּי הָיִית לְאִישׁ

אֶל בְּנֹתִי כִּי-מֵר-לִי מְאֹד מִכֶּם כִּי-יֵצְאָה בִּי יַד-יְהוָה:

<sup>14</sup> וַתִּשְׁנֶה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכְּינָה עוֹד

וַתִּשְׁק עֶרְפָּה לְחַמּוֹתֶיהָ וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ:

<sup>15</sup> וַתֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שָׁבָה יְבַמְתָּךְ אֶל-עַמָּה וְאֶל-אֱלֹהֶיהָ שׁוּבִי אַחֲרָי וּבְמַתָּךְ:

<sup>16</sup> וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת אֶל-תַּפְּנֻעֵי-בִי לְעֹזָבָךְ לְשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרָיךְ

כִּי אֶל-אֲשֶׁר תִּלְכִּי אֵלַיךְ וּבְאֲשֶׁר תִּלְיִנִי אֵלָיִן עַמּוּד עַמִּי וְאֱלֹהֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי:

<sup>17</sup> בְּאֲשֶׁר תִּמּוֹתִי אֲמוֹת וְשֵׁם אֲקַבֵּר

כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִי וְכֹה יִסִּיף כִּי הַמּוֹת יִפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ:

<sup>18</sup> וַתֵּרָא כִּי-מִתְאַמְצֵת הִיא לְלֶכֶת אִתָּהּ

וַתַּחְדֵּל לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ:

<sup>19</sup> וַתֵּלְכְנָה שְׁתֵּיהֶם עַד-בֹּאנָה בֵּית לָחֶם וַיְהִי כְּבֹאנָהּ בֵּית לָחֶם

וַתִּהְיֶינָה כָּל-הָעִיר עֲלֵיהֶן וַתֹּאמְרֵנָה הִזֵּאת נַעֲמִי:

<sup>20</sup> וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהֶן אֶל-תִּקְרָאנָה לִי נַעֲמִי קְרָאן לִי מְרָא

כִּי-הִמֵּר שְׁדֵי לִי מְאֹד:

<sup>21</sup> אֲנִי מְלֵאָה הִלְכְתִּי וְרִיקָם הִשִּׁיבֵנִי יְהוָה לָמָּה תִקְרָאנָה לִי נַעֲמִי

וַיְהוּדָה עָנָה בִּי וּשְׁדֵי תִרְעֵ לִי:

<sup>22</sup> וַתִּשָּׁב נַעֲמִי וְרוּת הַמּוֹאָבִיָּה כַלְתָּהּ עִמָּהּ הִשָּׁבָה מִשְׁדֵי מוֹאָב

וַתִּהְיֶינָה בָּאוּ בֵּית לָחֶם בַּתְּחִלָּת קִצִּיר שְׁעָרִים:

4:1 וַיִּבְעֵז עֲלָהּ הַשַּׁעַר וַיִּשָּׁב שָׁם וַהֲנֶה הַנְּאֻל עֵבֶר אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר-בְּעֹז

וַיֹּאמֶר סוּרָה שְׂבֹד־פָּה פִלְנִי אֶל־מִנִּי וַיִּסַּר וַיֵּשֶׁב:

<sup>2</sup> וַיִּקַּח עֶשְׂרֵה אַנְשִׁים מִזְקֵנֵי הָעִיר

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂבֹד־פָּה וַיֵּשֶׁבוּ:

<sup>3</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר לְגֹאֵל חֲלַקְתָּ הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר לְאַחֵינוּ לְאֵלִימֶלֶךְ מִכֶּרֶה נַעֲמֵי הַשְּׂבֵד מוֹשְׁדָה מוֹאֵב:

<sup>4</sup> וַיֹּאֲנִי אִמְרָתִי אֲגִלָּה אֲזַנְךָ לֵאמֹר

קָנָה נֶגֶד הַיֹּשְׁבִים וְנֶגֶד זְקֵנֵי עַמִּי אִם־תִּגְאֹל גֹּאֵל

וְאִם־לֹא יִגְאֹל הַיְגִידָה לִּי (וְאִדַּע)וְנִאֲדַעְהָ כִּי אֵין זִילְתָךְ לְגֹאֹל וְאֲנֹכִי אֲחַרְיָךְ

וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי אֲגֹאֵל:

<sup>5</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז בְּיוֹם־קִנּוּתְךָ הַשָּׂדֶה מִיַּד נַעֲמֵי

וְנִמְאֵת רֹת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה אֲשֶׁת־הַמּוֹת (קְנִיתִי) [קְנִיתָה] לְהַקִּים שְׁמֵי־הַמּוֹת עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ:

<sup>6</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל

לֹא אוּכַל (לְגֹאֹל)לִי פֶן־אֲשַׁחִית אֶת־נַחֲלָתִי

גֹּאֵל־לְךָ אֶתְּהָ אֶת־גֹּאֲלֹתִי

כִּי לֹא־אוּכַל לְגֹאֵל:

<sup>7</sup> וַיִּזְאֵת לְפָנָיו בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַגֹּאֲלָה וְעַל־הַתְּמוּדָה לְקַיֵּם כָּל־דְּבַר

שְׁלַף אִישׁ נַעֲלוֹ וְנָתַן לְרַעְהוּ וְזֹאת הַתְּעוּדָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:

<sup>8</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לְבַעֲזוּ קְנֵה־לְךָ וַיִּשְׁלַף נַעֲלוֹ:

<sup>9</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז לְזִקְנָיו וְכָל־הָעָם

עֲדִים אִתָּם הַיּוֹם

כִּי קְנִיתִי אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְאֵלִימֶלֶךְ וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְכַלְיוֹן וּמַחֲלוֹן מִיַּד נַעֲמֵי:

<sup>10</sup> וְנָם אֶת־רֹת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה אֲשֶׁת מַחֲלוֹן קְנִיתִי לִּי לְאִשָּׁה לְהַקִּים שְׁמֵי־הַמּוֹת עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ

וְלֹא־יִכְרַת שְׁמֵי־הַמּוֹת מֵעַם אֲחִיו וּמִשְׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ עֲדִים אִתָּם הַיּוֹם:

<sup>11</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־בְּשַׁעַר וְהַזְקֵנִים

עֲדִים יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה הַבָּאָה אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ

כְּרַחֵל וְכַלְאָה אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ שְׁתִּיהֶם אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

וְעֲשֵׂה־חֵיל בְּאֶפְרָתָה וּקְרֵא־שֵׁם בְּבֵית לַחֵם:

<sup>12</sup> וַיְהִי בֵיתְךָ כְּבֵית פְּרִיץ אֲשֶׁר־יִלְדָה תִמֹר לִיהוּדָה

מִן־הַזֶּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן יְהוָה לְךָ מִן־הַנְּעֻרָה הַזֹּאת:

<sup>13</sup> וַיִּקַּח בְּעֵז אֶת־רֹת וַתְּהִילּוּ לְאִשָּׁה

וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה לָהּ רַבִּיוֹן וַתִּלְדַּךְ בָּן:

<sup>14</sup> וַתֹּאמְרָנָה הַנְּשִׁים אֶל־נַעֲמֵי

כְּרוּד יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא הַשְּׂבִית לְךָ גֹּאֵל הַיּוֹם

וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:

<sup>15</sup> וַיְהִי לְךָ לְמַשִּׁיב נֶפֶשׁ וּלְכֹלֵל אֶת־שִׁיבְתְּךָ

כִּי כִלְתָךְ אֲשֶׁר־אֶהְבֶּתְךָ יִלְדָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־הִיא טוֹבָה לְךָ מִשְׂבַּעַה בָּנִים:

<sup>16</sup> וַתִּקַּח נַעֲמֵי אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וַתִּשְׁתְּהוּ בְּחִיקָה וַתְּהִילּוּ לְאִמְנָת:

<sup>17</sup> וַתִּקְרָאנָה לּוֹ הַשְּׂכֵנוֹת שֵׁם לֵאמֹר יִלְד־בֶּן לְנַעֲמֵי

וַתִּקְרָאנָה שְׁמוֹ עוֹבֵד הוּא אָבִי־יֹשִׁי אָבִי דוֹד: פ

<sup>18</sup> וַיֵּלֶךְ תּוֹלְדוֹת פְּרִיץ פְּרִיץ הוֹלִיד אֶת־חֲצֹרוֹן:

<sup>19</sup> וַחֲצֹרוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־רָם וְרָם הוֹלִיד אֶת־עַמְיָנָדָב:

20 וְעָמִידָב הַחֹלִיד אֶת־נַחֲשׁוֹן וְנַחֲשׁוֹן הַחֹלִיד אֶת־שְׁלֹמֹה:  
 21 וְשְׁלֹמֹן הַחֹלִיד אֶת־בְּעֻז וּבְעֻז הַחֹלִיד אֶת־עֹבֵד:  
 22 וְעֹבֵד הַחֹלִיד אֶת־יִשִׁי וְיִשִׁי הַחֹלִיד אֶת־דָּוִד:

In the case of Ruth 1 and 4, the passages have structures of 22 verses each. This example possibly comes from Akkadian or Ugaritic acrostics. The book of Ruth is a complex text; therefore, it may require a more detailed study than this chapter can offer.

**Psalm 33**

1 רָנְנוּ צְדִיקִים בַּיהוָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל נְאוּה תְהִלָּה:  
 2 הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה בְּכִנּוֹר בְּנִבְל עֲשׂוֹר וּמְרוֹלוֹ:  
 3 שִׁירוּלוֹ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ הִיטִיבוּ נֶגֶן בַּתְרוּעָה:  
 4 כִּי־יֵשֶׁר דְּבַר־יְהוָה וְכָל־מַעֲשָׂהוּ בְּאֱמוּנָה:  
 5 אֲהַב צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט חֶסֶד יְהוָה מִלֵּאָה הָאָרֶץ:  
 6 בְּדַבַּר יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נִעֲשׂוּ וּבְרוּחַ פִּיו כָּל־צְבָאִים:  
 7 כִּנֹּס כֶּנֶד מִי הַיָּם נָתַן בְּאֶצְרוֹת תְּהוֹמוֹת:  
 8 יִירָאוּ מִיְהוָה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ מִמֶּנּוּ יִגְוְרוּ כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי תְבֵל:  
 9 כִּי הוּא אֱמַר וַיְהִי הוּא־צִוָּה וַיַּעֲמֹד:  
 10 יְהוָה הַפִּיר עֲצֵת־גּוֹיִם הֵנִיא מַחֲשָׁבוֹת עַמִּים:  
 11 עֲצַת יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תַּעֲמֹד מַחֲשָׁבוֹת לְבוֹ לְדָר וּדָר:  
 12 אֲשֶׁר־נִי הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו הָעָם בָּחַר לְנַחֲלָה לוֹ:  
 13 מִשָּׁמַיִם הִבִּיט יְהוָה רָאָה אֶת־כָּל־בְּנֵי הָאָדָם:  
 14 מִמְּכוֹן־שִׁבְתּוֹ הַשְׁגִּיחַ אֶל כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ:  
 15 הַיָּצַר יַחַד לִבָּם הִמְכִּין אֶל־כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם:  
 16 אִי־ן־הַמֶּלֶךְ נוֹשָׁע בְּרִב־חֵיל גְּבוּר לְאִי־נֶצֶל בְּרִב־כַּחַ:  
 17 שֶׁקֶר הַסּוֹס לַתְּשׁוּעָה וּבְרִב חֵילוֹ לֹא יִמְלֹט:  
 18 הִנֵּה עֵין יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְאָיו לְמִי־חֲלִים לְחַסְדּוֹ:  
 19 לְהַצִּיל מִמּוֹת נַפְשָׁם וּלְחַיּוֹתָם בְּרָעַב:  
 20 נַפְשָׁנוּ חֲכַתָּה לַיהוָה עֲזַרְנוּ וּמִגִּנְנוּ הוּא:  
 21 כִּי־בוֹ יִשְׁמַח לְבַנּוֹ כִּי בְשֵׁם קִדְשׁוֹ בְּטַחָנוּ:  
 22 הִי־חֲסִדֶּךָ יְהוָה עָלֵינוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר יַחֲלֵנוּ לָךְ:

This poem contains 22 clear lines. It is not a repetition pattern; it simply contains 22 lines.

**Psalm 103**

1 לְדָוִד

בְּרַכּוּ נַפְשֵׁי אֶת־יְהוָה וְכָל־קִרְבֵי אֶת־שֵׁם קְדָשׁוֹ:  
 בְּרַכּוּ נַפְשֵׁי אֶת־יְהוָה וְאֶל־תִּשְׁכַּחַי כָּל־גְּמוּלוֹ:  
 הַסִּלַּח לְכָל־עֲוֹנֵי הָרָפָא לְכָל־תַּחֲלָאִיכִי:  
 הַגּוֹאֵל מִשַּׁחַת חַיִּיכִי הַמַּעֲטֵרְכִי חֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים:  
 הַמְּשַׁבֵּיעַ בְּטוֹב עֲדִיד תַּתְּחַדֵּשׁ כַּנְּשֵׁר נַעֲוִרִיכִי:  
 עֲשֵׂה צְדָקוֹת יְהוָה וּמִשְׁפָּטִים לְכָל־עֹשׂוֹקִים:  
 יוֹדִיעַ דְּרָכָיו לְמוֹשֶׁה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲלִילוֹתָיו:  
 רַחוּם וְחַנוּן יְהוָה אֲרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד:  
 לֹא־לִנְצַח יָרִיב וְלֹא לְעוֹלָם יִטּוֹר:  
 לֹא כַחֲטָאֵינוּ עֲשֵׂה לָנוּ וְלֹא כְעֹנֹתֵינוּ גַּמַּל עָלֵינוּ:  
 כִּי כִגְבַהַ שָׁמַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ גִּבֹר חֶסְדּוֹ עַל־יִרְאָיו:  
 כִּרְחֹק מִזְרַח מִמַּעֲרֵב הִרְחִיק מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת־פִּשְׁעֵינוּ:  
 כִּרְחֹם אָב עַל־בָּנִים רַחֵם יְהוָה עַל־יִרְאָיו:  
 כִּי־הוּא יִדַּע יִצְרָנוּ זְכוֹר כִּי־עַפְרָ אֲנַחְנוּ:  
 אֲנוֹשׁ כַּחֲצִיר יָמָיו כַּצִּיץ הַשָּׂדֶה כֵּן יִצְיִן:  
 כִּי רוּחַ עֲבָרָה־בּוֹ וְאֵינְנוּ וְלֹא־יִפְרָנוּ עוֹד מִקוֹמוֹ:  
 וְחֶסֶד יְהוָה מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד־עוֹלָם עַל־יִרְאָיו וְצִדְקָתוֹ לְבְנֵי בָנִים:  
 לְשִׁמְרֵי בְרִיתוֹ וּלְזִכְרֵי פְקָדָיו לַעֲשׂוֹתָם:  
 יְהוָה בְּשָׁמַיִם הִכִּין כִּסְאוֹ וּמִלְכוּתוֹ בְּכָל־מַשְׁלָה:  
 בְּרַכּוּ יְהוָה מִלְּאֲכָוִי גִבּוֹרֵי כַח עֲשֵׂי דְבָרוֹ לְשִׁמְעַע בְּקוֹל דְּבָרוֹ:  
 בְּרַכּוּ יְהוָה כָּל־צַבָּאוֹ מְשָׁרְתָיו עֲשֵׂי רְצוֹנוֹ:  
 בְּרַכּוּ יְהוָה כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו בְּכָל־מִקְמוֹת מְמִשְׁלָתוֹ בְּרַכּוּ נַפְשֵׁי אֶת־יְהוָה:

This poem contains 22 lines and a partial repetition pattern. It begins and ends with “ברך (bless)”. This form could be related to the Akkadian acrostic as in the so-called “The Babylonian Theodicy”.

### Psalm 29

מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד  
 הָבִי לַיהוָה בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים הָבִי לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וָעֹז:

2 הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ הַשְׁתַּחֲוֹי לַיהוָה בְּהַרְרַת־קָדֶשׁ:  
 3 קוֹל יְהוָה עַל־הַמַּיִם אֶל־הַכְּבוֹד הַרְעִים יְהוָה עַל־מַיִם רַבִּים:  
 4 קוֹל יְהוָה בַּפֶּחַ קוֹל יְהוָה בְּהַרְרִי:  
 5 קוֹל יְהוָה שֹׁבֵר אַרְזִים וַיִּשְׁבֵּר יְהוָה אֶת־אַרְזֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן:  
 6 וַיִּרְקֹדֵם כְּמוֹ־עֵגֶל לְבָנוֹן וְשָׂרִיז כְּמוֹ בֶן־רֵאמִים:  
 7 קוֹל יְהוָה חִצָּב לַהֲבוֹת אֵשׁ:  
 8 קוֹל יְהוָה יִחִיל מִדְּבַר יִחִיל יְהוָה מִדְּבַר קָדֶשׁ:  
 9 קוֹל יְהוָה יַחֲלֵל אֵילֹת וַיִּחַשֵּׁף יַעֲרוֹת וּבִהִיכְלוּ כָּלֹּא אָמַר כְּבוֹד:  
 10 יְהוָה לַמַּבּוּל יֵשֶׁב וַיִּשֶׁב יְהוָה מִלֶּךְ לְעוֹלָם:  
 11 יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן יְהוָה יִבְרַךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם:

Psalm 29 above contains 11 lines, expertly woven. The middle of the poem is verse 6. The phrase “קוֹל יְהוָה” (the voice of YHWH)” occurs 6 times. This structure is chiasmic (A<sub>1-2</sub> vss.//B<sub>3-5</sub>vss.//C<sub>6</sub>ver.//B’<sub>7-9</sub>vss.//A’<sub>10-11</sub>vss.) and it appears as a 11-line acrostic form that displays the beautiful style of the poem.

### 4.3.2. Alphabetic acrostics in MT

In this chapter, only a list of texts with alphabetic acrostic forms is provided since the previous chapter has already dealt with the details.

In the Psalms, a total of eight alphabetic acrostic poems are found as shown in chapter 2 above. These are Psalms 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119 and 145. However, in this study, they have been categorized into seven because Psalms 111 and 112 are analyzed as a single literary unit.

Interestingly, the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabets are found in the texts of Proverbs 31:10-31 and Lamentations 1-4. The remarkable point is that the order between ‘ע’ and ‘פ’ is reversed in Lamentations 2-4 as in Psalm 9-10. Perhaps this is a feature of the lament form since these texts are recognized as alphabetic acrostics in the MT.

-Table XI-

Proverbs 31:10-31	Lamentations 1	Lamentations 2	Lamentations 3	Lamentations 4
10 אִשֶּׁת	1 אִיכָה	1 אִיכָה	1 אֲנִי <sup>2</sup> אוֹתִי <sup>3</sup> אֶד	1 אִיכָה
11 בָּטַח	2 בָּכוּ	2 בָּלַע	4 בָּלָה <sup>5</sup> בָּנָה <sup>6</sup> בַּמַּחֲשָׁכִים	2 בָּנִי
12 גְּמַלְתֶּהוּ	3 גָּלְתָה	3 גָּדַע	7 גָּדַר <sup>8</sup> גָּם <sup>9</sup> גָּדַר	3 גָּם
13 דָּרְשָׁה	4 דָּרְכֵי	4 דָּרַךְ	10 דָּב <sup>11</sup> דָּרְכֵי דָרַךְ	4 דָּבֵק
14 הִיטָה	5 הָיוּ	5 הָיָה	13 הִבִּיא <sup>14</sup> הִיִּיתִי <sup>15</sup> הַשְּׂבִיעֵנִי	5 הָאֲכָלִים
15 וַתִּקֶּם	6 וַיֵּצֵא	6 וַיַּחֲמֹס	16 וַיִּגְרַס <sup>17</sup> וַתִּזְנַח <sup>18</sup> וַאֲמַר	6 וַיִּגְדַּל
16 זְמִמָּה	7 זָכְרָה	7 זָנַח	19 זָכַר <sup>20</sup> זָכוֹר <sup>21</sup> זָאת	7 זָכוּ
17 חֲנָרָה	8 חָטָא	8 חָשַׁב	22 חֲסָדֵי <sup>23</sup> חֲדָשִׁים <sup>24</sup> חֲלָקֵי	8 חָשָׁךְ
18 טַעֲמָה	9 טַמְאָתָהּ	9 טָבַעוּ	25 טוֹב <sup>26</sup> טוֹב <sup>27</sup> טוֹב	9 טוֹבִים
19 יָדֶיהָ	10 יָדוּ	10 יָשְׁבוּ	28 יָשַׁב <sup>29</sup> יָתַן <sup>30</sup> יָתַן	10 יָדָי
20 כַּפָּהּ	11 כָּל	11 כָּלוּ	31 כִּי <sup>32</sup> כִּי <sup>33</sup> כִּי	11 כָּלָה
21 לֹא-תִירָא	12 לֹא	12 לֹא-מָתָם	34 לִדְפֹא <sup>35</sup> לִהֲטוֹת <sup>36</sup> לַעֲוֹת	12 לֹא
22 מַרְבְּדִים	13 מַמְרוֹם	13 מָה	37 מִי <sup>38</sup> מִפִּי <sup>39</sup> מָה	13 מִחֲטָאֵת
23 נוֹדַע	14 נִשְׁקַד	14 נִבְיֵאִיד	40 נִחַפְּשָׁה <sup>41</sup> נִשְׂא <sup>42</sup> נִחְנוּ	14 נָעוּ
24 סָדִין	15 סָלָה	15 סָפְקוּ	43 סִכְתָּה <sup>44</sup> סִכּוֹתָה <sup>45</sup> סִחִי	15 סוּרוּ
25 עִזּוֹהֶרָה	16 עַל	16 פָּצוּ	46 פָּצוּ <sup>47</sup> פָּחַד <sup>48</sup> פָּלְגֵי	16 פָּנָי
26 פִּיהָ	17 פִּרְשָׁהּ	17 עָשָׂה	49 עֵינַי <sup>50</sup> עַד <sup>51</sup> עֵינַי	17 (עוֹדִינָה)(עוֹדִינוּ)
27 צוֹפִיָּה	18 צָדִיק	18 צָעַק	52 צוֹד <sup>53</sup> צָמְתוּ <sup>54</sup> צָפוּ	18 צָדוּ
28 קָמוּ	19 קָרָאתִי	19 קוֹמִי	55 קָרָאתִי <sup>56</sup> קוֹלִי <sup>57</sup> קָרַבְתָּ	19 קָלִים
29 רַבּוֹת	20 רָאָה	20 רָאָה	58 רַבַּת <sup>59</sup> רָאִיתָה <sup>60</sup> רָאִיתָה	20 רוּחַ
30 שָׁקַד	21 שָׁמְעוּ	21 שָׁכְבוּ	61 שָׁמַעַתָּ <sup>62</sup> שָׁפְתֵי <sup>63</sup> שָׁבַתָם	21 שִׁישֵׁי
31 תָּנוּי-לָהּ	22 תִּבְאֵ	22 תִּקְרָא	64 תָּשִׁיב <sup>65</sup> תָּתֵן <sup>66</sup> תִּרְדָּה	22 תָּם

Nahum 1:2-8

2 אֵל קְנוּא וְנָקָם יְהוָה נָקָם יְהוָה וּבַעַל חֲמָה נָקָם יְהוָה לְצַרְיֹו וְנוֹטֵר הוּא לֹא-יִבְיוּ<sup>3</sup> יְהוָה  
 אַרְךְ אַפִּים (וַיִּגְדַּל-לְ) וַיִּגְדַּל-לְכַח וְנָקָה לֹא יִנְקָה יְהוָה  
 בַּסּוּפָה וּבַשְּׁעָרָה  
 דָּרְכּוֹ וְעַנְן אֲבָק רִגְלָיו:  
 4 גּוֹעַר בָּיִם וַיִּבְשְׁהוּ וְכָל-הַנְּהָרוֹת  
 הַחֲרִיב אֲמַלְל בָּשָׁן וְכִרְמֶל וּפְרַח לְבָנוֹן אֲמַלְל:  
 5 הַרִים רָעֲשׂוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְהַגְּבָעוֹת הַתְּמַנְגּוּ  
 וַתִּשְׂא הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיו וַתִּבֵּל וְכָל-יֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ: לִפְנֵי  
 זַעֲמוֹ מִי יַעֲמוֹד וּמִי יָקוּם בַּחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ  
 חֲמָתוֹ נִתְּכָה כְּאֵשׁ וְהַצָּרִים נִתְּצוּ מִמֶּנּוּ:  
 7 טוֹב יְהוָה לְמַעוֹז בְּיוֹם צָרָה  
 וַיִּדַע חֲסִי בּוֹ: וּבִשְׁטָף עֵבֶר  
 כָּלָה יַעֲשֶׂה מִקּוֹמָהּ וְאִיִּבּוּ יִרְדְּף-חֲשָׁךְ:

If Nahum 1:2-8 is re-arranged in an alphabetic order, the above structure will be produced.<sup>106</sup>

The alphabetic acrostic form in Nahum 1:2-8 has generated heated debates among scholars as Smith (2002:65) has noted:

In 1880, shortly after Frohnmeyer's death, G. Bickell, *Beiträge* 1–12, reconstructed Nahum 1:2–10 into a sixteen-bicola acrostic containing the entire Hebrew alphabet... Soon after Bickell's initial work Gunkel, *ZAW* 13 (1893) 223–44, argued that chap. 1 was a broken acrostic and was added by a post-exilic editor of Nahum's oracles. Gunkel "restored" what he thought was the original alphabetical text of chap. 1 and extended the poem to v 3 of chap. 2. Gunkel's work began a scholarly debate about the form and date of chap. 1 of Nahum... J. Wellhausen asserted that the acrostic could not be maintained beyond 1:2–8 and branded the reconstructions of Bickell and Gunkel as total failures. In 1901 W. R. Arnold, *ZAW* 21 (1901) 225–265, accused Bickell and Gunkel of "decapitating a masterpiece of Hebrew literature."

However, Christensen (2009:167-224) has analyzed the acrostic in Nahum 1:2-10 as non-alphabetic acrostics.

### Nahum 1:2-10

2	אֵל קָנוּא וְנָקַם יְהוָה נֶקֶם יְהוָה וּבָעַל חַמָּה
	נֶקֶם יְהוָה לְצָרָיו וְנוֹטֵר הוּא לְאִיבֵיו:
3	יְהוָה אֶרֶץ אַפִּים (וְגִדּוּל) וְגִדְלָ[כַח וְנִקְה לֹא יִנְקֵה
	יְהוָה בְּסוּפָה וּבְשַׁעֲרָה דָּרְפוּ וְעָנָן אֶבֶק רִגְלָיו:
4	נֹזֵעַר בַּיָּם וַיִּבְשְׁהוּ וְכָל־הַנְּהָרוֹת הִחְרִיב
	אֲמַלֵּל בְּשָׁן וְכִרְמֵל וּפְרַח לְבָנוֹן אֲמַלֵּל:
5	הָרִים רָעֲשׂוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְהַגְּבְעוֹת הִתְמַנְּנוּ
	וַתִּשָּׂא הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיו וַתִּבֶּל וְכָל־יֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ:
6	לִפְנֵי זַעֲמוֹ מִי יַעֲמוֹד וּמִי יִקּוּם בְּחֵרוֹן אִפּוֹ
	חֲמָתוֹ נִתְּכָה כְּאֵשׁ וְהַצָּרִים נִתְּצוּ מִמֶּנּוּ:
7	טוֹב יְהוָה לְמַעֲוֹז בְּיוֹם צָרָה
	וַיִּדְעַ חֲסִי בּוֹ:
8	וּבְשֹׁטֵף עֵיבֵר
	כָּלָה יַעֲשֶׂה מְקוֹמָהּ
	וְאִיבֵיו יִרְדֶּף־חֲשָׁד:
9	מִה־תִּחְשְׁבוּן אֶל־יְהוָה
	כָּלָה הוּא עֹשֶׂה
	לֹא־תִקּוּם פְּעָמַיִם צָרָה:

<sup>106</sup> Renz, T. 2010. "A Perfectly Broken Acrostic in Nahum 1?" *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, 9 (23), 9. The order between 'G' and 'D' is reversed in this text.

כִּי עַד־סִרְיִים סְבָכִים<sup>10</sup>  
 וּכְסָבָאִם סְבוּאִים  
 אֶכְלוּ כֶקֶשׁ יִבֶּשׁ מִלֵּא:

The discussion of the book of Nahum would be reserved for the future. Although Nahum 1:2-10 is regarded as a half-alphabetic acrostic, several difficulties accompany its analysis. The structure is very complex and the alphabetic order is not clear-cut.

The previous examples serve as illustration of acrostic literature in the Hebrew Bible. However, in what follows, the relationship between the alphabetic poem in the MT and the Ancient Near Eastern Acrostics (ANEA) will be examined through an etymological and structural analysis of Psalms 9-10 and 111-112. The influence of Ugaritic and Akkadian acrostics on these Psalms will be explored in this more limited study through a comparative analysis.

#### 4.4 ALPHABETIC ACROSTIC PSALMS AND ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ACROSTICS

Aaron Demsky (2003:363) explains the relationship between biblical acrostics and ancient Near Eastern acrostics thus:

The Izbet Sartah ostrakon (ca. 1200) is worth special attention for it is the oldest reduced twenty-two letter alphabet inscribed in the Proto-Canaanite script (Demsky 1977; 1986). This beginner's exercise tablet, written from left to right, is also peculiar in that some of the letters are transposed: the *heth* precedes the *zayin* and *thepe* comes before the *cain*. While one might assume this to be a child's sloppiness, the *pe-cain* sequence is found in the alphabetic acrostics of Lamentations 2, 3 and 4, as well as in the triple abecedary in the Hebrew script found at Kuntillet Ajrud (early 8th century BCE) indicating a contemporary secondary Israelite scribal tradition of ordering the letters.

In order to resolve the problem of the relationship between alphabetic acrostic Psalms and ANEA, it will be necessary to analyze the texts synthetically. From the analysis of selected poems in Chapter 3, certain conclusions were drawn. There are two possible perspectives to the relationship. The one is the “similarity” between the ANE and the Hebrew acrostics, the other is the “typicality” of Hebrew alphabetic acrostics. The similarity between ANEA and the Psalms of the MT will be examined first.

#### 4.4.1 Similarity

The first area of similarity is the “structural aspect”, for example, the 11-line structure commonly found in the texts as in the case of the 11 lines where the idea of “theodicy” distinguishes the Akkadian poems from Psalms 111 and 112. Both poems are very similar because each has 11 lines. Additionally, the Akkadian poems relate more closely to Psalm 119, because their 27 stanzas and 11 lines with the same sounds ( $27 \times 11 = 297$ ), and 22 stanzas and 8 lines with the same alphabets ( $22 \times 8 = 176$ ) are comparable; both have similar structures.

Secondly, an investigation of the “etymological aspect” suggests that the Hebrew etymologies probably originate from Akkadian and Ugaritic. Wyatt (1999:535-536) sums up the Hebrew vocabulary which compares to Ugaritic and Akkadian as follows:

-Table XII-

Direction	Language	Term	Meanings
East	Ugaritic	<i>qdm</i>	face, in front, past
	Hebrew	<i>qedem</i>	face, in front, past
	Akkadian	<i>qudmu</i>	front, past
West	Ugaritic	<i>aḥr</i>	behind, after, later
	Hebrew	<i>'aḥar</i>	behind, after, later
	Akkadian	<i>aḥru</i>	future
North	Ugaritic	<i>šmal</i>	left
	Hebrew	<i>semôl</i>	left
	Akkadian	<i>šumêlu</i>	left
South	Ugaritic	<i>Ymn</i>	right
	Hebrew	<i>yāmîn</i>	right, south
	Akkadian	<i>šaplîtu</i>	lower

The translations of Psalms 9-10 and 111-112 in Chapter 3 have shown the influence of Akkadian and Ugaritic on these poems. While Psalm 9-10 shows traces from Akkadian influence Psalm 111-112 contain resemblances to Ugaritic and Akkadian as illustrated in the table below:

**Psalm 9-10**

-Table XIII-

Hebrew Text	Translation as Akkadian
מֹוֹת <sup>9:1</sup>	In Hebrew, 'mwt' means 'dead' or 'dying' and 'mūtu' death in Akkadian. ( <i>A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian</i> . 2000. Wiesbaden, German: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 225).
הָאֹיִב <sup>7</sup>	In Akkadian, 'ayyābu' is 'enemy'. (CDA 2; Tawil, Hayim. 2009. <i>An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew</i> . Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc. 14-16).
גַּאֲוֹת <sup>10:2</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'gan' is 'pride'. !AaG" = (noun common feminine plural absolute of hw"a]G:). (Gordon, Cyrus H. 1967. <i>Ugarit Textbook</i> . Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute. 378).
צֹרֵר <sup>10:5b</sup>	In Akkadian, 'šerru' is 'enemy=adversary'. (CDA 336; ALCBH 94, 328); 'zêru' is 'hate'. (CDA 446).
חַלְכָאִים <sup>10:10</sup>	In Akkadian, 'ḥilibû' is 'the underworld'. (CDA 115)
חַיִל כָּאִים <sup>10:10</sup>	In Akkadian, 'ḥābilu' is 'criminal, wrongdoer.' (CDA 99) and 'kīam' 'thus, as follows; and so on, ect'. (CDA 155)
נִצַּח <sup>11</sup>	In Akkadian, 'nešû' is 'to tear down; scrape'. (CDA 244)
עֹזֵר <sup>10:14b</sup>	In Akkadian, 'azāru' is 'to help'. (CDA 33)
רִשְׁע <sup>15</sup>	In Akkadian, 'rēšu' is 'helper'. (CDA 302)
אֲבָדוּ <sup>16</sup>	In Akkadian, 'abdu' is 'servant, slave'. (CDA 2)

**Psalm 111-112**

-Table XIV-

Hebrew Text	Translation as Ugarit and Akkadian
יִשְׁרָיִם <sup>111:1b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'yšr' means 'uprightness'. (UT 415) cf. In Akkadian, 'išaru' means 'just' or 'straight'. (CAD 132; ALCBH 152)
עֲדָה <sup>111:1b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'd II' means 'throne room'. (UT 453)
דְּרוּשִׁים <sup>111:2b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'drš' means 'to seek'.(UT 387)
הוֹד <sup>111:3a</sup>	'hw+d' can be in Ugarit, 'hw' 'he' and 'd' 'hand' (UT 383, 389) or if 'dAh'='dnh', in Ugarit, 'hnd' means 'this'. (UT 383,391)
הִדְר <sup>111:3a</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'hdrt' means 'dream'=(divine) 'majesty'. (UT 389)
פָּעַל <sup>111:3a</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'p <sup>l</sup> ': 'yp <sup>l</sup> ' means 'to make'. (UT 469)
צִדְקָת <sup>111:3b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'šdq' means 'right, uprightness, <b>lawful</b> , destined' (UT 472)
לְעַד <sup>111:3b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'd I' means 'until' (UT 453) 'I I' 'to, for, from' (UT 425) So it would be 'I'(for)+ 'd'(until)='forever'.
זִכָּר <sup>111:4a</sup>	In Akkadian, 'zikru' means 'utterance, name, speech, <b>command</b> , or mention'. (CAD 447)
רַחֲוִים <sup>111:4b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'rḥm I' means 'to be kind'. (UT 483)
יִרְא <sup>111:5a</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'yr' means 'to fear'. (UT 414)

נַחֲלָה <sup>111:6b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'nhlt' means 'inheritance'. (UT 443)
פְּקֻדָּיו <sup>111:7b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'pqd' means 'to give orders'. (UT 470)
פְּדוּת <sup>111:9a</sup>	This word is from 'pdy' means 'to ransom' in Ugaritic. (UT 466)
צוּה <sup>111:9b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'syh' means 'to shout, invite, <b>order</b> '. (UT 474)
נִרְאָה <sup>111:9c</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'nyr' means 'to shine'. (UT 443)
מֵאֵד <sup>112:1b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'm'd I' means 'much, <b>great</b> '. (UT 430)
זֶרַע <sup>112:2a</sup>	In Akkadian, 'zēru II' means 'seed, sown land, arable, semen, offspring, and <b>descendant</b> '. (CAD 446; cf. ALCBH 95-96)
יִשְׁרָיִם <sup>112:2b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'yšr' means 'uprightness'. (UT 415) cf. In Akkadian, 'išaru' means 'just' or 'straight'. (CAD 132; ALCBH 152; cf. Psalm 111:1b)
עֶשְׂרִים <sup>112:3a</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'šr' means '10, <b>10 shekels of silver</b> '. (UT 462)
זֶרְחָה <sup>112:4a</sup>	In Akkadian, 'zerḥu' means 'sunrise'. (CAD 446)
אֹרֶךְ <sup>112:4a</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'wr' means 'to be light, bright'. (UT 353)
חֲנוּן <sup>112:4b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'hnn' means 'to be gracious, to favour'. (UT 398)
רַחֲמוֹם <sup>112:4b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'rḥm I' means 'to be kind'. (UT 483; cf. Ps 111:4b)
צְדִיק <sup>112:4b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'šdq' means ' <b>right</b> , uprightness, lawful, destined' (UT 472; cf. Ps 111:3b)
חֲנוּן <sup>112:5a</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'hnn' means 'to be gracious, to favour'. (UT 398; cf. Ps 112:4b)
מִלְוָה <sup>112:5a</sup>	If 'lwh' would not be in a hiphil participle form, the root of 'mlwh' would be from 'mlh' of the root of Ugaritic, it may mean 'good' (UT 433).
יְכַלְכַּל <sup>112:5b</sup>	If 'yklkl' would not pilpel imperfect form of 'kwl' of Hebrew, the root of 'y(O!)+klkl(everything)' of the root of Ugaritic, it may be 'O Everything!'. (UT 407, 419)
דְּבָר <sup>112:5b</sup>	In Ugaritic, 'dbr' means 'place, shrine, thing and <b>word</b> '. (UT 383-384)
יְמוֹט <sup>112:6a</sup>	In Akkadian, 'maṭu II' means G-stem 'to be little, become low, less, diminish, grow scare, need, be in need, be defective, fail, <b>deteriorate</b> , waste away, be emaciated'. (CAD 205)
זָכַר <sup>112:6b</sup>	In Akkadian, 'zakāru' means 'name, mention, remember'. (CAS 443)
שָׁמוּעָה <sup>112:7a</sup>	In Akkadian, 'šamāḥu II' means 'to break an agreement'. (CAD 352)
נִכְוֶן <sup>112:7b</sup>	In Akkadian, 'kānu' means Gt-stem 'to become permanent. (CAD 146; cf. ALCBH 158)
סָמְוֶד <sup>112:8a</sup>	In Akkadian, 'samāku' means 'to cover up, bury, smother, incapacitate, support'. (CAD 314)
פָּזַר <sup>112:9a</sup>	In Akkadian, 'pazāru' means 'to hide, <b>conceal</b> '. (CAD 271)
אֲבִיזָנִים <sup>112:9a</sup>	In Akkadian, 'abiyāru' means 'poor'. (CDA 2)
קָרְנוֹ <sup>112:9c</sup>	In Akkadian, 'qarnu' means 'horn, <b>power</b> , and fringe'. (CAD 285)
תְּרוּם <sup>112:9c</sup>	In Akkadian, 'rēmu' means 'to be merciful, have compassion on'. (CAD 302)

From the **structural** and the **etymological aspects** shown above, one could determine the similarity between ANEA and Hebrew acrostics. Therefore, acrostics do not only take the form, but also connect to whole parts of ANEL. If the date of the writing of the Psalms (not the editing and collection; the final compilation was probably done in the post-exilic Second Temple period) was before the exile, then it was probably influenced by ANEL, because the text itself suggests that some words and forms are related to ANEL (i.e. before 1000 B.C.E.). Moreover, the geographical location of Hebrew literature, that is, among Akkadian, Ugaritic and Egyptian cultures could indicate a relationship especially with regard to the Psalms and the Old Testament.

#### 4.4.2 Typicality

Brug (1997:6) asserts that, “From this catalog it can be seen that there is a significant difference between biblical and Akkadian acrostics. All known Akkadian acrostics are **meaning acrostics** that spell out messages.” He concludes that,

Whether the idea of alphabetic acrostics arose independently in a Northwest Semitic culture or whether it was an apt modification of an Egyptian literary form, it would appear that students of biblical acrostics would do well to devote more attention to the study and evaluation of the Egyptian parallels than has been done in the past (1997:7).

Thus, the alphabetic acrostic can be regarded as a typical Hebrew poem since alphabetic arrangements are not found in other poems in ANEL. The ancient Near Eastern languages which used alphabets were Ugaritic and Phoenician. Surely, ancient Hebrew could have originated from the two languages and although ancient Egyptian writing was in hieroglyphics, it used alphabets in part, and this could partly influence the Hebrew.

Both the current and the previous chapters have focused on the acrostic form, and it has been noted that the alphabetic form seems to be unique to the Hebrew. In particular, the occurrence of the 22-line alphabetic form in Hebrew poems is peculiar and exceptional. It is not registered in other ancient Near Eastern forms. Perhaps this is due to the different number of letters in the alphabets of each of the languages. One could assume that the peculiarity of the Hebrew alphabets determined the typicality of the Hebrew alphabetic acrostic.

### 4.4.3 The significance of number 22<sup>107</sup> to the 22 letters of the alphabet in Hebrew literature

The Hebrew alphabet consists of 22 letters which have numerical values. The numerical values of the letters are shown in the table below:<sup>108</sup>

-Table XV-

Letter	Numerical Value	Letter	Numerical Value
א	1	ל	30
ב	2	מ	40
ג	3	נ	50
ד	4	ס	60
ה	5	ע	70
ו	6	פ	80
ז	7	צ	90
ח	8	ק	100
ט	9	ר	200
י	10	ש	300
כ	20	ת	400

In Hebrew, the numerical meaning of 22 could be grasped from the genealogy of the children of Israel in the MT. From Adam (אָדָם) to Jacob (יַעֲקֹב) there are 22 generations. Furthermore, as 11 is half of 22, there are 11 generations from Judah (יְהוּדָה) to David (דָּוִד).<sup>109</sup> Additionally, the Davidic Dynasty consists of 22 kings from the first king, David (דָּוִד) to the last king, Zedekiah (צִדְקִיָּהוּ). It is possible to understand the significance of the number 22; it is the first and the last, the beginning and the ending in Hebrew thought. The number 22 could be seen also as a symbol of the history of Israel, that is, if the number 22 was important to David, he would have applied it to his literature on the kingship to show Israel's lineal descent of royalty from Judah to David and also from their forefathers.

-Table XVI-

No.	Generations (תּוֹלְדוֹת)	No.	Generations (תּוֹלְדוֹת)	No.	Generations (תּוֹלְדוֹת)
1	Adam אָדָם	12	Arpachshad אֲרַפְכְּשָׁד	23	Judah יְהוּדָה

<sup>107</sup> McDonald (2011: 68-69).

<sup>108</sup> Davidon (1966: 8,207). So in the numerical values of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, number 22 can be denoted as 'כב' (כ 20 + ב 2).

<sup>109</sup> The Generations of Adam to Shem (Genesis 5:1-32; 1 Chronicles 1:1-4); The Generations of Shem to Israel (Genesis 11:10-26; 25:19-26; 1 Chronicles 1:24-27, 34); The Generations of Judah to David (Genesis 29:35; 38:29; Ruth 4:18-22; 1 Chronicles 2:1-15)

2	Seth שֵׁת	13	Shelah שֶׁלַח	24	Perez פֶּרֶץ
3	Enosh אֵנוֹשׁ	14	Eber עֵבֶר	25	Hezron הֶצְרוֹן
4	Kenan קֵינָן	15	Peleg פֶּלֶג	26	Ram רָם
5	Mahalalel מַהֲלַלֵּל	16	Reu רֵעוּ	27	Amminadab עַמִּינָדָב
6	Jared יָרֵד	17	Serug שְׂרוּג	28	Nahshon נַחֲשׁוֹן
7	Enoch חֵנוֹךְ	18	Nahor נַחֲוֹר	29	Salmon שָׁלֹמֹן
8	Methuselah מֵתוּשֶׁלַח	19	Terah תְּרַח	30	Boaz בֹּעַז
9	Lamech לָמֶךְ	20	Abram אַבְרָם Abraham אַבְרָהָם	31	Obed עֹבֵד
10	Noah נֹחַ	21	Isaac יִצְחָק	32	Jesse יֵשׁוּעַ
11	Shem שֵׁם	22	Jacob יַעֲקֹב Israel יִשְׂרָאֵל	33	David דָּוִד

If the Hebrew Acrostics form would be related to a genealogy of Israel, 22 lines and 11 lines of Acrostics of Hebrew could be matched with Jacob's 22 genealogies from and David's 11 genealogies from Judah. Perhaps, this aspect should be investigated from the perspective of Hebrew thought.

#### 4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

In this chapter, it is assumed that the ancient Near Eastern texts existed already very early. In particular, those texts relating to biblical texts could have existed at a period close to the writing of the Old Testament. It is a fact that the ancient Near Eastern sources have contributed much to the development of the study of the Old Testament and have played a decisive role in the understanding of Hebrew texts. Therefore, through a comparative analysis, the importance of the stream of ANEL to contemporary biblical studies can be determined.

The present chapter has analyzed Old Testament acrostics in relation to the ancient Near Eastern texts. The indication is that the Hebrew literary approach shares connection with other ancient Near Eastern cultures. In particular, it has been ascertained that the history of the acrostic form is quite deep, and it has been influenced widely.

My position is that the acrostic form could be regarded as the basic pattern or standard for understanding the structure of the Hebrew poem. Traditionally, it is assumed that the earliest possible date of the writing of the Old Testament was after the Exodus. One reason is that if

the acrostic form was influenced by the ANEA, it would be during Israel's golden age, that is, Israel's dynasty period which had a gap of 400 years after and before it. Two important facts support this. One is the existence of Ugaritic texts which are acrostic in character before 1000 B.C.E. as well as Egyptian and Akkadian acrostics before 2000 B.C.E. The other is that ANEA are similar to Hebrew acrostics on both formal and etymological grounds.

In conclusion, the discussion shows that Hebrew acrostics probably developed from the influence of ancient Near Eastern acrostic forms. Hebrew acrostics would have started partly as reiterant patterns or structures; however, based on these ancient Near Eastern acrostic forms, it is possible that the Hebrew acrostics developed into alphabetic acrostics. In order to distinguish between Hebrew literature and ANEL, alphabetic acrostics will be regarded as the more influential form. Perhaps the Hebrew authors regarded the alphabetic acrostic as the best of the Hebraic forms. Since this form conveys Hebraic thought, history, religion and identity, its distinction from the ancient Near Eastern cultures therefore becomes clear. In the next chapter, this study will go beyond the relationship between Ancient Near Eastern Acrostics and Hebrew acrostics.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, I will sum up the overall research and suggest new areas for further research. The study has attempted to show the importance of the genre of the alphabetic acrostic poem through selected psalms. A number of research methodologies were employed in the study. While Chapter 2 investigated the topic from a literary approach, Chapter 3 focussed on the linguistic and structural features of the selected texts. Chapter 4 endorsed a comparative literary approach by comparing the selected poems with similar ANE material.

After the introduction and explanation of the research problem and methodologies in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 offered a definition of the alphabetic acrostic poems. The first letter in the verses of the poems begins with each of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet to form a unique arrangement. The forms and contents of the alphabetic acrostic poems in the Psalms are varied.

In Chapter 3, I have added own translations of the Hebrew to show the relationship between the poems and Akkadian and Ugarit poems which belong to ancient Near Eastern languages. A structural analysis on micro and macro levels has been attempted using the translated versions. Thus, the selected alphabetic acrostic poems have been examined in the light of ancient Near Eastern texts both contextually and formally.

In Chapter 4, the relationship between the Hebrew acrostic poems and the ancient Near Eastern texts were investigated through three main ANE languages namely Akkadian, Egyptian and Ugaritic. The comparative analysis of the linguistic and literary forms suggested an influence of the ANE acrostics on the Hebrew alphabetic acrostic form, which probably developed from the ANE form.

However, the study is not a final word on the alphabetic acrostic texts of the Old Testament. Future research could consider the following:

1. Analyzing the significance of the whole structure of alphabetic acrostic poems in the Psalms and appreciating the composition of the alphabetic acrostic poems in the compilation of the Psalms. The unity of the five books of the Psalms could be proven if the question of the role of alphabetic acrostic poems in the whole of Psalms is resolved.

2. Reconstructing the date of the Hebrew alphabetic acrostic texts based on eras namely on David's dynastic period, the exile, the Second Temple era and the Hellenistic period.

3. Investigating the relationship between the New Testament and the alphabetic acrostic texts of the Old Testament. It is possible to uncover an eschatological interpretation of alphabetic acrostics from 'א' to 'ת' since Revelation 22:13 describes Jesus as the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

Finally, the significance of the alphabetic acrostic texts as one of the most beautiful genres in Old Testament poetry becomes clear if they are seen:

- As the literary and historical creation of the Hebrews,
- As a symbolic poetry reflecting Hebrew thought.

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