

## ABSTRACT

### Wisdom Editing in the Book of Psalms: Vocabulary, Themes, and Structures

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This study examines the pervasive influence of post-exilic wisdom editors and writers in the shaping of the Psalter by analyzing the use of wisdom elements—vocabulary, themes, rhetorical devices, and parallels with other Ancient Near Eastern wisdom traditions. I begin with an analysis and critique of the most prominent authors on the subject of wisdom in the Psalter, and expand upon previous research as I propose that evidence of wisdom influence is found in psalm titles, the structure of the Psalter, and among the various genres of psalms. I find further evidence of wisdom influence in Creation theology, as seen in Psalms 19, 33, 104, and 148, for which parallels are found in other A.N.E. wisdom texts. In essence, in its final form, the entire Psalter reveals the work of scribes and teachers associated with post-exilic wisdom traditions or “schools”; this expansive influence of wisdom sources results in part as a response to the failure of the Monarchy and subsequent reshaping of Israel’s theology and self-understanding. In this context of foreign domination and failure of the monarchy, the primacy of Torah and the kingship of YHWH are reasserted and emphasized. Wisdom circles preserve and disseminate Torah as a guide for successful living in accord with God (Pss 1; 19A; 119); wisdom teaching pervades all aspects of life, as seen in the presence of wisdom elements in psalms of lament, thanksgiving, and praise. Creation is a source of revelation and wisdom. Among the most significant uses of wisdom teaching is the Psalter’s response to the suffering of the righteous, as seen especially in Psalms 37, 49, and 73. I conclude by proposing that “wisdom traditions” encompass a variety of viewpoints and emphases, which reveals that these proposed wisdom editors and writers reflect diverse schools of thought, which together finalized the shape and understanding of the Psalter.