RESPONSIVE VOICES IN THE *SONG OF THE SEA* (EXODUS 15:1-21)

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past century, the Song of the Sea has been scrutinized by noted biblical scholars. Nevertheless, this extensive investigation has not led to clear-cut conclusions about its structure and content. As mentioned by M. L. Brenner, "Still there exists a very great diversity of opinions concerning very basic questions."[1] This situation results mainly from the inability to resolve three basic problems concerning this poem: the relationship between structure and meaning, the status of verse 19, and the so-called "Song of Miriam."

THE STRUCTURE/MEANING RELATIONSHIP

The miracle of the Sea is evoked both in Exodus 14 as a prose narrative and in Exodus 15 as a song. In the former, the events are related in their order of occurrence, while no chronological sequence is observed in the latter.

The Song of the Sea is obviously not subject to the same literary constraints as a prose narrative, and so its anachronisms and repetitions may be simply considered as poetical devices. Nevertheless, the chronological order of events is respected in other poetical works relating historical events of Ancient Israel (including the Exodus), such as Psalms 78 and 105.

THE STATUS OF VERSE 19

Most scholars end the Song of the Sea at verse 18.[2] This opinion is supported by two claims. The first is the short length (four words in Hebrew) and formulaic nature of verse 18 (*the Lord will reign for eternity and forever*), which recalls the ending of a liturgical ceremony. The second is the extensive length (19 words) of verse 19: *For Pharaoh's horses, chariots and charioteers went into the sea, and the Lord brought back on them the waters of the sea; but the sons of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea.* This verse has been interpreted by almost all traditional exegetes, as well as

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modern scholars, as a prose recapitulation of the song, added during the writing of the book of Exodus.[3]

That opinion is challenged by the blank interspaces encountered in the Masoretic text of this hymn. Blanks are inserted immediately after the heading of the song (second half of verse 1: *Ashirah la-Adonai ki ga'oh ga'ah*), signaling the beginning of the poetical section. Blanks are also inserted in verse 19 indicating that it was considered by the Massoretes as an *integral part* of the Song of the Sea, and not simply a prose recapitulation of its content.[4]

To consider the blank interspaces in v. 19 as an editing error implies that the ending of the song at verse 18, so apparent today, had been dismissed by a scribe and by all his followers. Alternatively, in case verse 19 is part of the Song of the Sea, it remains to be explained why the poet ended this hymn in such a strange fashion. The problem of the status of verse 19 remains unresolved.

THE 'SONG OF MIRIAM'

Verses 20 and 21 are generally considered an independent poetical work called the Song of Miriam. It contains a long prose presentation (v. 20 and beginning of v. 21) and a short song (end of verse 21) parallel to v. 1. Some authors explain this unusually brief song by assuming that the Song of Miriam was a spontaneous and vibrant song of praise performed immediately after the rescue of the Israelites, while the Song of Moses was a well-crafted piece of work composed later on the basis of the former.[5] However, if the Song of Miriam is really the original source of the Song of Moses, it should have been recorded first in the Bible. Furthermore, it is explicitly mentioned in the heading part of verse 21 that the choir of women conducted by Miriam answers a choir of men (*Va-ta'an lahem* [masculine form] *Miriam*) that is missing from the text.[6]

Accounting for such a problematic situation, it is not surprising that some authors have attempted to reintegrate verse 21 in the Song of the Sea.[7] If so, it remains unclear why the Song of Miriam is preceded by performance instructions (v. 20 and beginning of v. 21). The status of vv. 20-21 remains unresolved.

THE NEW THEORETICAL BASIS

It has been known for a long time that the Song of the Sea was performed antiphonally. This fact is attested both by Philo of Alexandria[8] and by ancient rabbinic sources discussing various possibilities of antiphonal singing of this hymn.[9] Four modes of antiphony may be suggested concerning the Song of the Sea:

Antiphonal opening: The couple of verses (1, 21) opens the song antiphonally, which is then performed only by the choir of men, from verse 2 to verse 19.

Iterative responsa: Verse 21 is a responsive refrain sung by the choir of women echoing each verse of the Song of the Sea (vv. 1-19) performed by a choir of men.[10]

Steady responsa: The song is divided into a strophe and antistrophe, each sung by a half-choir. A dialogue then emerges by the twinning of parallel verses from strophe and antistrophe.[11]

Cross-responsa: The insertion of performance instructions at the beginning and end of the song points to an antiphonal dialogue between two voices, the first (choir of men) singing the song in the ascendent order of verses and the second (choir of women) answering, verse to verse, by singing the same text in a descendent order of verses. In this mode of performance, all the verses are paired in a chiastic fashion around a central axis. Each couple of verses becomes therefore twice performed and the order of verse precedence is inverted before and after the central axis.

The first and second hypotheses cannot be justified without ignoring the abnormal position of the text sung by the choir of women and the strange ending of the whole song with verse 19. The third hypothesis cannot account for the singular position of the performance instruction of the second choir at verses 20-21. Cross-responsa is not explicitly attested in biblical poetry, though its occurrence has already been identified.[12] It is, however, the single hypothesis accounting for *all* the editorial singularities of the Song of the Sea, after assuming that the song encompasses the whole text (vv. 1-21), except for the performance instructions (first half of v. 1, v. 20 and first half of v. 21).

THE CROSS-RESPONSA SETTING OF THE SONG OF THE SEA

To set the Song of the Sea in cross-responsa fashion, the nature of the fragments (antiphonal units) to be paired should be determined first. No indication is provided in the Song of the Sea concerning size of the antiphonal units. Thus, according to the criterion of parsimony, we have first of all assumed that all the verses contain the same number of antiphonal units. Verses 12 and 18, the shortest verses of the Song of the Sea, contain only four words each. We therefore deduced that the verses have a maximum of four antiphonal units. The three verses containing repetitions (vv 6, 11 and 16) may help to determine their number, assuming that repeated phrases of praise of God do not belong to the same antiphonal unit.

A high level of symmetry is observed in verse 6 (*Your right hand, Lord, (is) majestic in power, Your right hand, Lord, (has) shattered the enemy*), providing a natural division of this verse into two antiphonal units of equal length, each one starting with *yeminekha* (Your right hand), or into four antiphonal units, by subdividing each section starting with the word *yeminekha* into two segments.

In verse 11 (*Who is like You among the gods, Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness? Fearful in praises! Doing wonders!*), the two repeated expressions (*Who is like You*) are not symmetrically positioned. This means that the verse cannot be divided in two antiphonal units without introducing a strong disequilibrium in length. The division into three antiphonal units being incompatible with considerations about verse 6, this verse has to be divided in four antiphonal units.

The third verse containing repeated pronouncements is verse 16 (*Terror and dread fall upon them; By the greatness of Your arm they are as still as stone; Till Your people pass over, Lord, Till the people pass over that You have created*). Here again, a division into two symmetrical antiphonal units remains unlikely, because it also introduces a strong disequilibrium in length. A division into three antiphonal units also introduces an imbalance, making the first entity considerably longer than the two others. The division into four antiphonal units per verse remains, therefore, the most efficient. These con-

siderations lead us to divide each verse of the Song of the Sea into four antiphonal units.

The verses have been divided here into antiphonal units according to the pausal indications from the Masoretic cantillation.[13] This criterion has been chosen for its relative independency from literary considerations, for its intimate relationship with performance, and for its highly conservative nature indicating its ancientness.[14] Each verse of the Song of the Sea has been divided in two halves according to the main pausal indication, and the same process was reiterated for each half.[15] This process yields four distinct units per verse (termed a, b, c and d respectively), each one considered here as an antiphonal unit. By this process, verses 6, 11 and 16 are split exactly as predicted above. The pausal indications therefore appear as a reliable means for identifying the antiphonal units (indicated by slash in the following).

To reflect the mixing of the original Hebrew text, the translation should avoid the textual emendations generally introduced to improve fluency of the linear reading, and to respect as much as possible the ranking order and meaning of words and autonomy of each antiphonal unit. Once the antiphonal units are individualized, they may be mixed in cross-responsa fashion:

$_1$I will sing to the Lord / / $_{21}$*Sing to the Lord*
For he has triumphed gloriously / / *For He has triumphed gloriously*
The horse and its rider / / *The horse and its rider*
He has thrown into the sea / / *He has thrown into the sea*

$_2$My strength and song is Yah / / $_{19}$*For the horses of Pharaoh came with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea*
He has become my salvation / / *The Lord brought back upon them the waters of the sea*
This is my God, and I will glorify Him / / *The sons of Israel walked on dry land*
My father's God, and I will exalt Him / / *In the midst of the sea.*

[3]The Lord / / [18]*The Lord*
(Is) a man of war / / *Will reign*
The Lord / / *For eternity*
(Is) His name / / *Forever!*

[4]The chariots of Pharaoh and his army / / [17]*You bring them*
He has thrown into the sea / / *You plant them in the mountain of your domain*
His chosen officers / / *The place You made for Your dwelling, Lord*
Drowned in the Reed Sea / / *The sanctuary, My Lord, Your hands have established*

[5]The depths / / [16]*Terror and dread fall upon them*
Have covered them / / *By the greatness of Your arm they are as still as stone*
They went down into the depths / / *Till Your people pass over, Lord*
Like a stone / / *Till the people you have created pass over*

[6]Your right hand, Lord / / [15]*Then the valiant warriors of Edom are terrified*
Majestic in power / / *The mighty men of Moab, trembling takes hold upon them*
Your right hand, Lord / / *Melted away*
Shattered the enemy / / *All the inhabitants of Canaan.*

[7]Your extended majesty / / [14]*The peoples have heard*
You have overthrown those who rise up against You / / *They tremble*
You sent forth Your wrath / / *Anguish seizes*
It consumed them like stubble / / *The inhabitants of Philistia.*

[8]By the blast of Your nostrils were the waters piled up / / [13]*By Your grace You have led*
They stood upright like a heap / / *The people You have redeemed*
The deep waters were solidified / / *You guided it by Your strength*
In the heart of the sea / / *To the dwelling of Your holiness.*

[9]The enemy said: I will pursue, overtake / / [12]*You stretched out*

I will divide the spoil / / *Your right*
My lust shall be satisfied upon them / / *Swallowed them*
I will draw my sword, my hand will destroy them / / *(on) the earth.*

$_{10}$You blew with Your breath / / $_{11}$*Who is like You among the gods, Lord?*
The sea covered them / / *Who is like You, majestic in holiness?*
They sank like lead / / *Fearful in praises*!
In the mighty waters / / *Doing wonders!*

After the performance of the 10/11 pair of verses, the same couples are combined again (with inverse order of precedence of the antiphonal units) according to the following pattern: $11/10 \rightarrow 12/9 \rightarrow 13/8 \rightarrow 14/7 \rightarrow 15/6 \rightarrow 16/5 \rightarrow 17/4 \rightarrow 18/3 \rightarrow 19/2 \rightarrow 21/1$.

The cross-responsa form does not show any dissonance between the pairs of antiphonal units. Even more, its reading is no more abrupt, awkward or incongruous than the reading of the poem in a linear fashion, once literally translated. Rather, some echo patterns are observed in this composite setting. They appear not only in the four couples issued from the pairing of verses 1, 21 (as expected), but also in the pairs (3, 18a), (8, 13a) and (8, 13d). The emergence of a coherent text from mixing distant fragments of verses is not a trivial feature. It is rather indicative of the accuracy of the cross-responsa hypothesis. It is confirmed by investigation of the structural properties of this pattern of verse pairing.

STRUCTURAL PROPERTIES OF THE CROSS-RESPONSA SETTING THE TURN TO THE LORD

The Song of the Sea is a hymn of praise, so special attention should be devoted to the way the poet turns to the Lord. The God of Israel is referred to in the second person in nine verses (vv. 6-8, 10-13, 16 and 17) and in the third person in six verses (vv. 1-3 and 18, 19, 21). In the five other verses (vv. 4, 5, 9, 14 and 15), the poet does not explicitly turn to the Lord. Such a distribution remains meaningless in the linear context of reading. In the cross-

responsa pattern, however, the verses not turning to the Lord are never paired together. Even more, in all the instances the two verses paired by cross-responsa turn to the Lord, they always do it in the same person (second or third). It appears therefore that the poet turns to the Lord in every couple of verses paired in cross-responsa

fashion, and that a grammatical dissonance (second versus third person) is *never* engendered by such a pairing.

The Lord is addressed in the third person in the first three couples of verses (1, 21; 2, 19 and 3, 18) and in the second person in the seven following pairs (4, 17 to 10, 11). This enables us to identify two main sections: a first introductory/concluding part (the three first composite verses) in which the two choirs tell about the Lord, and another section where the choirs turn directly to the Lord to praise him for the miracle. Each one of these two sections is examined here for its structural properties.

THE COMPOSITE OPENING/CLOSURE

The three pairs of verses that are performed at the beginning (1/21 to 3/18) function as a "composite aperture (opening)" and thereafter as a "composite closure" once performed in inverted order of precedence (from 18/3 to 21/1). The composite opening starts with a pair of verses (1/21) generating a strict echo-pattern typical to antiphony. It may be viewed as a prologue announcing the intent of the two choirs to sing *antiphonally* about the miracle performed by the Lord.

The second pair (2/19) associates the two most singular verses of the Song of the Sea. Verse 19 is so unlike the rest of the song that it was excluded from the song by most of the traditional exegetes and modern scholars. Interestingly, many authors have also isolated verse 2 from the whole song.[16]

The pairing of verses 2 and 19 generates a dialogue between a voice praising the Lord for personal reasons (*my God, the God of my fathers*, v. 2) and a voice praising Him for collective historical reasons (the miracle of the Sea, v. 19). Their order of precedence is not incidental either. When the song begins, the "subjective voice" (v. 2) is the leader, then inviting the "objective voice"

(v. 19) to celebrate the Lord. This precedence fits the duty for the Israelites to commemorate the miracle year after year (v. 2) by relating the story of Exodus (v. 19). However, at the closure of the whole song, after the events are detailed, the objective voice (v. 19) becomes the leader, then stimulating a new dimension of faith for the subjective voice (v. 2).

The pairing of antiphonal units also modifies their meaning. When verse 19 is read in linear fashion, the c, d antiphonal units obviously relate the crossing of the sea by the sons of Israel. But these segments of the verse hold another meaning when combined with their corresponding antiphonal units. The 2/19d pair becomes a whole sentence in which the two choirs announce their intention to exalt the Lord *as if they are standing in the midst of the sea*. The composite dimension of this opening integrates, therefore, an actualization of this founding event during its celebration.

The third couple (3, 18) combines two very short verses of similar content. Their pairing generates an expression of praise which contrasts in its brevity with the previous and next composite verses (2/19 and 4/17 respectively). This singularity may be a poetical device for separating the opening/closing section from the composite development. Another feature also contributes to this separation. Verse 3/18 contains a succession of two very short pairs of antiphonal units, generating an echoing pattern between them: *The Lord – For eternity* (3/18c) and *His name – Forever!* (3/18d).

The opening/closure section therefore appears as a long composite verse (2, 19) detailing the subject of the song and the motivation of the choirs to sing it, surrounded by two short pairs of verses (1, 21 and 3, 18) including echopatterns. Accordingly, this section should be considered as symmetrically organized around a composite axis (vv. 2, 19).

THE COMPOSITE DEVELOPMENT

The composite development is built by the seven pairs of verses performed first from 4/17 to 10/11 and immediately after from 11/10 to 17/4. Repeated twice at the middle of the performance, the 10/11 pair of verses has the prominent function of the central symmetry axis.[17]

Six composite verses (from 4/17 to 9/12) are inserted between the opening/closure section and the central axis. Among them, the first two (4/17 and 5/16) recall the miracle of the sea, the two central ones (6/15 and 7/14) describe the reaction of the Canaanites to the miracle, and the last two (8/13 and 9/12) relate, once again, the miracle of the sea.[18] Accordingly, a symmetrical pattern is observed among the six composite verses of the development section. Such a

structure is, here again, fully appropriated to the inversion of precedence of the composite verses in the second half of the performance.

THE COMPOSITE STRUCTURAL PATTERN

The above-mentioned considerations reveal the emergence of a highly regular structure in the cross-responsa setting:

Opening
The two choirs invite one another to sing for the Lord (1/21)
The choirs commemorate the miracle of the Exodus (2/19) *(opening axis)*
The choirs proclaim their faith in the Lord (3/18)

Composite development
The Egyptians are destroyed in the sea (4/17 and 5/16)
The Canaanites are terrified (6/15 and 7/14) *(secondary axis)*
The Israelites are rescued in the sea (8/13 and 9/12)
The Lord is acclaimed for His intervention (10/11 and 11/10) *(central axis)*
The Israelites are rescued in the sea (12/9 and 13/8)
The Canaanites are terrified (14/7 and 15/6) *(secondary axis)*
The Egyptians are destroyed in the sea (16/5 and 17/4)

Closure
The two choirs proclaim their faith in the Lord (18/3)
The choirs commemorate the miracle of the Exodus (19/2) *(closure axis)*
The two choirs have sung together for the Lord (21/1)

This recapitulative scheme reveals that all the composite verses of the Song of the Sea are symmetrically organized around axes once the song is set in cross-responsa fashion. This singularity confers an extensive robustness to the composite structure and the ability to easily invert the ranking order of couples of verses as required in the second half of the performance. The level of regularity observed here is considerably higher than any strophic structure inherent in the

linear reading of the Song of the Sea, thus confirming the validity of the cross-responsa hypothesis.

CONCLUSION

The cross-responsa hypothesis enables us to resolve the open questions about the Song of the Sea without introducing any modification of the original Masoretic source. It generates a coherent composite text by the use of pausal indications from the Masoretic cantillation, and according to the blank interspaces inserted in the Masoretic Text. Furthermore, organization of the composite text according to a central and two secondary axes cannot be considered a feature emerging incidentally from a poem conceived to be performed in a linear fashion. Rather, such a highly organized composite structure should be regarded as the strongest argument indicating that the Song of the Sea was originally conceived to be performed in a cross-responsa fashion.

Antiphony is a mode of performance in which two voices respond to one another. This genre is identified in ancient Hebrew poetry by echo-patterns between the dialoguing voices.[19] In complex antiphony, where the two choirs sing distinct texts to be mixed during the performance, two extensions of the basic echo-pattern are observed: the *antithetic pattern* (a singular form of echoing), and a *complementary pattern* (where the two statements are intimately related, the one overextending the meaning of the other). Both cases are clearly illustrated here in the cross-responsa form of the Song of the Sea (see for example all the intertwinements of the 9/12 and 7/14 pairs of verses for antithetic and complementary patterns respectively).

Until now, complex antiphony has garnered little attention, with the result that Biblical poetry has been systematically approached in a linear fashion. However, complex antiphony seems to be a well-accomplished genre in Biblical poetry. This is revealed by the mastery of poetical craft required to create the composite structure observed in the Song of the Sea. This is also revealed by the new meanings issued from the mixing of statements from the two choirs; a few examples have been mentioned here. Other cases of complex antiphony in Biblical poetry involving a highly accomplished poetical craft have recently been reported.[20] These findings reveal that the problems encountered in any attempt

to understand the meaning of a Biblical psalm read linearly do not necessarily reflect its mutilation, erosion or misleading re-editing, as it is so readily assumed by modern scholars. It may rather reflect the complex antiphonal dimension of an original and undamaged poetical work.

NOTES

1. M. L. Brenner, *The Song of the Sea, Ex. 15, 1-21* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991) p.1.

2. See, for example, D. N. Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry and Prophecy - Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980) pp. 179-186; M.S. Smith, *The Pilgrimage Patterns in Exodus* (JSOTSup, 239; Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1997) pp. 205-226); and J.P. Fokkelmann, *Major Poems of the Hebrew Bible* (Aassen: Van Gorcum, 1998) pp. 24-53.

3. See B.W. Anderson, "The song of Miriam poetically and theologically considered," E.R. Follis (ed.), *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987) pp. 285-96, 288. G.W. Coats (*Exodus 1-18* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999] p. 118) considers v. 19 a "narration gloss on the song." In contrast, Brenner (op. cit., pp. 46-47) suggests that verse 19 should not be simply considered as a series of quotations strung together, since "It has a quality that is itself semi-poetic and is a well-constructed artistic unity." See also Ramban and Ibn Ezra on this verse.

4. Rabbinic exegesis and modern scholars agree in ending the Song of the Sea at verse 18. See A. Hakham, *Sefer Shemot* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1991) p. 285. Accordingly, it cannot be assumed that the blank interspaces were introduced later to verse 19 in order to fit some official rabbinic exegesis. Rather, it seems that their insertion in verse 19 attests to the survival of an ancient tradition including verse 19 in the Song of the Sea.

5. See S. Weitzman, *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) pp. 16, 151. See also M. Noth, *Exodus* (Philadelphia: OTL Westminster [Engl. transl.], 1962) p. 121; Coats, pp. 3-4; J. Janzen, "Song of Moses, Song of Miriam: Who is Seconding Whom?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54 (1992) pp. 211-220.

6. As an alternative explanation, it is assumed that the term *lahem* ("them", referring to a choir of men) is a scribal error of the original term *lahen*, referring to a choir of women. This "emendation" (also suggested by the traditional exegesis [see Ḥakham, p. 281], eradicates the problems of the unmentioned choir of men.

7. Coats (p. 7) assumed it is the title of another version of the poem incidentally preserved at the end of the current version of the poem. Freedman (pp. 217-218) considered verse 21 as the true end of the Song of the Sea. Brenner (pp. 26, 81-82) proposed that v. 21 is the antiphonal counterpart of verse 1. This latter opinion is already mentioned in the ancient Jewish sources, as reported by G. Goldin, *The Song at the Sea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971) pp. 77-79.

8. Philo (*De vita contemplativa*, 484) specifically mentioned the antiphonal performance of the Song of the Sea (involving both a choir of men and a choir of women) in the Alexandrian sect of Therapeutae: "After him [the president of the sacred banquet] all the others follow in turn as they are arranged in proper order, while the rest listen silently except when they are obliged to sing the refrains and closing verses: then they sound forth, all men and women together." Because of the intimate relationship between the Egyptian Therapeutae ("healers") sect and the Judean sect of Esse

nes, E. Werner ("Musical Aspects from the Dead Sea Scrolls," *The Musical Quarterly* 1 [1957] pp. 21-37, 32) assumes that this mode of antiphonal performance was deeply rooted in ancient Israelite traditions. J. A. Smith ("The Ancient Synagogue, the Early Church and Singing," *Music and Letters* 65 [1984] pp. 1-16, 11) even concluded, on the basis of the testimony of Philo, that "It is possible that these forms reflect the singing in the Temple, particularly in view of the reference, in the penultimate sentence quoted, to the choir which sang the Song of the Sea."

9. Ḥakham (p. 287) writes: "We encounter many opinions as to how the Song of the Sea was recited. Some ancient rabbis claimed it was read as shema (by the assembly altogether) while others assumed it was read as hallel (so that the assembly responds to the officiant), and many patterns of such a responsive reading may be proposed. Some of the verses of the Song of the Sea are clearly an answer, and it is likely that the assembly repeated them many times. They are every verse among the three first verses, the three refrains (vv. 6, 11, 16) and verse 18 ending the song." M. Rozelaar ("The Song of the Sea (Exodus 1b-18)," *Vetus Testamentum* 2 [1952] pp. 221-228) notes these three possible forms of antiphony, and concludes (p. 228): "it is quite probable that from the beginning the song [of the Sea] was sung as an antiphony."

10. This interpretation is suggested by U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967) p. 182.

11. Rozelaar (op. cit.) suggests that the Song of the Sea includes a prologue (v. 1) and an epilogue (v. 18) sung by the choir _al unissono_. He assumes that the body of the poem (vv. 2-17) was sung antiphonally between two half-choirs using parallel fragments of the strophe (vv. 2-10) and antistrophe (vv. 11-17).

12. See N. Amzallag and M. Avriel, "Complex Antiphony in David's Lament and its Literary Significance," *Vetus Testamentum* 60 (2010) pp. 1-14.

13. Though neglected by many scholars, the Masoretic cantillation is probably a faithful reflection of an ancient sound system, as suggested by E. J. Revell, "Pausal Forms and the Structure of Biblical Poetry", *Vetus Testamentum* 31 (1981) pp. 186-199. M. C. A Korpel and J. C. de Moor ("Fundamentals of Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetry," W. van der Meer and J. C. de Moor (eds.), *The*

Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite Poetry [Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1988] pp. 1-61, 6) also consider "the masoretic cantillation as a venerable witness to the traditional colometry of the Hebrew verse. It should be taken more seriously than has been the case hitherto." In David's Lament, the rhythmical indications provided by the Masoretic cantillation were successfully used as criteria for splitting the verses before combining them through complex antiphony (see Amzallag and Avriel, op. cit.).

14. Revell (p. 192) even assumed that: "In general, it can be said that if a verse had to be divided in two parts (e.g. for purposes of antiphonal chant) the pausal forms mark the logical point of division."

15. The segregation has been operated according to the data available at the website http://tanakhml2.alacartejava.net/cocoon/tanakhml/index.html. This hierarchical splitting of the text work is performed according to H. Richter (Hebrew cantillation marks and their encoding, http://www.lrz-muenchen.de/~hr/teamim/intro.html#purp).

16. Cross and Freedman ("The Song of Miriam," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 14 (1955) pp. 237-250, 243) considered it "out of context at this point in the poem" because it breaks the meter in-

troduced in verses 1 and 3, and because it contains a first person ascription of praise to the Lord, and Brenner (pp. 74-75) considered it as a formulaic, semi-poetical verse.

17. The central importance of verse 11 has been already stressed by J. Muilenburg, "A Liturgy on the Triumph of Yahweh," T. C. Vriezen (ed.), *Studia Biblica et Semitica* (Wagenigen: Veenman and Zonen, 1966) pp. 233-51, 237, and Fokkelman (op. cit., p. 28). It was considered by Freedman (op. cit., pp. 188-189) as the most central of the three refrain-like verses of the poem. For Coats (pp. 117-118), verse 11 represents a "hymnic transition" between the two main parts of the song.

18. Verse 16 is generally interpreted as belonging to the Canaanite section of the song, including verse 14 recalling the Philistines and verse 15 mentioning Edom and Moab. However, this interpretation is valuable only in the linear context of reading. In cross-responsa, verse 16 is actually stated before verse 15 in the first part of the performance. The subject being unidentified both in verses 5 and 16, it becomes inherited from the one mentioned in the previous pair (4/17): the Egyptians. Accordingly, the reference to the Canaanites becomes restricted to verses 15 and 14 only.

19. See I. W. Slotki, "Antiphony in Ancient Hebrew poetry", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 26 (1936) pp. 199-219; D. N. Freedman, "Archaic Form in Early Hebrew poetry," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 72 (1960) pp. 101-107.

20. N. Amzallag and M. Avriel, op. cit., and "Shifting Responsa in Biblical Poetry: Evidence from the Parallel between Psalm 122 and the Inauguration Ceremony (Neh. 12, 27-42)", *Scandinavian Journal for the Old Testament* (2011, in press); "Complex Antiphony in Psalms 121, 126 and 128: the Steady-Responsa Hypothesis", *Old Testament Essays* 23 (2010) pp. 502-518.

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