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## 'In the Sanctuary' in the Psalms

Dr. Justin M. Young<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

This study addresses the translation of the term *שֶׁקֶד* when prefixed with *בְּ* in the Psalter. While the expression is rendered rather consistently as a sanctuary reference (i.e., 'in the/my/his sanctuary') in other parts of the OT, the phrase is commonly given an alternative translation in some psalms. This article surveys the five passages in the Psalter in which *שֶׁקֶד* is commonly translated in alternative ways from a sanctuary reference (60:8 [6]; 68:18 [17]; 77:14 [13]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]), contending that no definitive case exists in the Psalter for such alternative renderings. In the light of this, especially in cases in which *שֶׁקֶד* appears in a verbless clause (i.e., 68:18 [17] and 77:14 [13]), 'in the sanctuary' remains the best translational option. While translating *שֶׁקֶד* as a sanctuary reference carries significant ramifications for the ideology of these psalms, the present analysis focuses primarily on the translational issues involved.

**Key Words:** Psalms, Psalter, sanctuary, temple, holiness, Mount Sinai

### Introduction

This study addresses the translation of *שֶׁקֶד* ('sanctuary'/ 'holiness')<sup>2</sup> when prefixed with *בְּ* in the Psalter and is prompted by the variety of renderings of

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Justin M. Young, BA (Moody Bible Institute); MA (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary); PhD (QUB) Lecturer Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Adjunct Professor of Old Testament, Jacksonville Director of Academic and Information Services. [jyoung1@gordonconwell.edu](mailto:jyoung1@gordonconwell.edu).

<sup>2</sup>The term *שֶׁקֶד* is used in a variety of ways throughout the OT to designate the holy status of an object, person, or action. It can also be translated as 'sanctuary'. See Jackie A. Naudé, "qdś," in *NIDOTTE*, 3:877-887; Helmer Ringgren and W. Kornfeld, "qdś," in *TDOT*, 12:521-545; *HALOT* 2:1076-1078. In addition, the rendering of *שֶׁקֶד* as 'sanctuary' is consistent with its Ugaritic cognate (*qdš*), which is '...the most common term for sanctuary in the Ugaritic texts...' (Richard E. Averbeck, "miqdos" in *NIDOTTE*, 2:1078).

בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in the Psalms in comparison to its rather consistent usage elsewhere in the OT.<sup>3</sup> From the outset, it must be acknowledged that translational variety among various occurrences of Hebrew words, or phrases, is not something that should be avoided. In fact, in many cases, it is to be expected, especially since Hebrew terms tend to have rather large semantic ranges. While translational conformity should not be regarded as an inherent value, establishing whether precedent exists for a particular translation of a word, or phrase, should factor heavily into our translational approach to a given text. If the passage in question can be addressed by appealing to the normal, consistent, usage of the word, or phrase, this approach would certainly be preferred. We shall contend that all occurrences of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in the Psalter are best explained by the normal, consistent, usage of the phrase throughout the Old Testament, namely that in each case, בַּקֹּדֶשׁ should be translated a sanctuary reference.

### Lexical Data and Methodology

The expression בַּקֹּדֶשׁ occurs a total of 29 times in the OT and is translated with relative uniformity throughout, with few exceptions, most of which appear in the Psalter. In the Psalms, בַּקֹּדֶשׁ can be rendered as a noun with a prefixed preposition and a definite article (‘in the sanctuary’), but it is also commonly rendered in a variety of other ways (i.e., ‘in/by holiness’; ‘the holy [ones]’); ‘holy’). While these other renderings diverge, they have in common that they translate קֹדֶשׁ in the abstract, rather a physical structure (i.e., a sanctuary). In contrast to the variety of renderings in the Psalter, בַּקֹּדֶשׁ is almost exclusively translated as a noun with a prefixed preposition and a definite article in the remainder of the OT, referring to a sanctuary in general (i.e., ‘in the sanctuary’),<sup>4</sup> the outer sanctum of a sanctuary (i.e., ‘in the holy [place]’), or the inner sanctum of a sanctuary.<sup>5</sup> Of the 16 occurrences of the phrase in the Pentateuch, with only one potential exception (i.e., Exodus 15:11), all appearances of the phrase make reference to

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<sup>3</sup>In cases where multiple passages are referenced that include occurrences of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ with a pronominal suffix, בַּקֹּדֶשׁ shall be presented throughout this article without vowels. Since nouns with a pronominal suffix are definite by nature, presenting בַּקֹּדֶשׁ without vowels is intended to reflect the ambiguity that results from removing the pronominal suffix.

<sup>4</sup>E.g., Leviticus 10:18; Numbers 4:12, 16; Psalm 63:3; 68:18, 25; 74:3. Psalm 150:1 occurs with a pronominal suffix and is translated ‘in his sanctuary’ in the ESV.

<sup>5</sup>When referencing the inner sanctum, בִּקְדֹשׁ occurs in the construction בִּקְדֹשׁ הַקֹּדֶשׁ (Exodus 26:34; Numbers 18:10).

the sanctuary.<sup>6</sup> Excluding the Pentateuch and Psalter, the phrase only appears four times in the remainder of the Old Testament, three of which are clear sanctuary references,<sup>7</sup> leaving only Amos 4:2, in which YHWH is commonly thought to swear by his own ‘holiness’, a translation that is open to challenge.<sup>8</sup>

There are four occurrences of *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* in the Psalms that are indisputable references to a sanctuary,<sup>9</sup> which are borne out by the contexts in which these occurrences appear. The remaining five appearances of *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* are variously translated: 60:8 [6]; 68:18 [17]; 77:14 [13]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]. Our analysis will address these five passages, while dividing them according to a basic syntactical division—verbless and verbal clauses. We shall begin by addressing the occurrences of *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* in verbless clauses (Psalms 68:18 [17]; 77:14 [13]) before proceeding to the appearances of the phrase in verbal clauses (60:8 [6]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]). It shall be argued that no *definitive* occurrence exists in the Psalter for rendering *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* in the abstract (i.e., ‘in holiness’; ‘the holy [ones]’; ‘holy’).<sup>10</sup> Particularly in the case of verbless clauses, rendering *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* as anything other than ‘in the sanctuary’ is without precedent. Translating *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* as ‘in the sanctuary’ in Psalm 68:18 [17] and 77:14 [13] carries significant *implications* for the cultic ideology

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<sup>6</sup>Exodus 26:34; 28:43; 29:30; 35:19; 39:1, 41; Leviticus 6:23; 10:18; 16:17, 27; 22:4; Numbers 4:12, 16; 18:10; 28:7.

<sup>7</sup>Ezekiel 44:27; 2 Chronicles. 29:7; 35:5.

<sup>8</sup>While ‘by his holiness’ remains the consensus among modern translations, it is worth noting that the LXX translates *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* here using the neuter plural (τῶν ἁγίων) with a definite article. The neuter plural of ἅγιος is often used in the LXX to refer to a sanctuary complex (e.g., Exodus 39:1; Leviticus 5:15; 10:4, 17; 14:13; 19:30; 20:3; 21:12; 26:2; 27:25; Numbers 3:28, 32; 4:12, 15; 8:19; 18:1, 3, 5; 19:20; 31:6; 1 Kings 6:16; 8:6, 8; 1 Chronicles 22:19; 2 Chronicles 5:7, 9; 29:21; Nehemiah 10:40; Psalms 73:3; 150:1; Isaiah 43:28; Ezekiel 5:11; 8:6; 9:6; 23:38-39; 24:21; 25:3; 37:26, 28; 44:1, 5, 7-9, 11, 15-16; 45:3; 47:12; 48:10, 21; Daniel 8:13; Malachi 2:11). In the light of this, it is likely that the translators of the LXX regarded Amos 4:2 as a sanctuary reference.

<sup>9</sup>63:3 [2]; 68:25 [24]; 74:3; 150:1. The NIV; NASB; LEB; NKJV; ESV translate all four of these verses as sanctuary references. While some EVVs offer an alternative translation to ‘in the sanctuary’ for *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* in some of these verses (e.g., the NET and JPS regarding 68:25 [24]), such approaches represent a minority view. In the light of this consensus, our analysis will not cover in any detail the reasons for translating *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* in these verses as ‘in the sanctuary’.

<sup>10</sup>This approach is to be distinguished from an attempt to argue that these alternative translations are outside of the term’s semantic range. There is no reason to attempt to demonstrate that *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* cannot theoretically be translated alternatively to a sanctuary reference. Rather, we shall contend that to do so in the Psalter, lacks the definitive evidence needed to justify veering from the clear translational precedent established by the vast majority of occurrences of *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* in the OT.

informing these psalms, but the focus of this article will be upon the translational issues, largely leaving the ideological ramifications for another study.

### **Verbless Clauses with בְּקִדְּשׁ: Psalm 68:18 [17]; Psalm 77:14 [13]**

Despite frequently being translated in alternative ways, there are two occasions in the Psalms in which the expression בְּקִדְּשׁ occurs in a verbless clause: Psalm 68:18 [17] and Psalm 77:14 [13]. It should be noted from the onset that these verses have in common that בְּקִדְּשׁ is pointed with a definite article in the MT, indicating that the Masoretes regarded קִדְּשׁ in these verses as a noun. When these occurrences of בְּקִדְּשׁ are correctly identified as appearing in a verbless clause, the translational options are narrowed significantly.

#### *(a) Psalm 68:18 [17]*

Psalm 68 is notoriously difficult to interpret for a variety of reasons and has generated a significant range of scholarly opinion. Whereas it was once thought to be a catalogue of ancient Hebrew poems,<sup>11</sup> it is now largely regarded as possessing a basic coherence, involving YHWH's victorious procession through the desert, culminating in his enthronement in his Jerusalem sanctuary.<sup>12</sup> The expression בְּקִדְּשׁ in 68:18 [17] is commonly rendered in the abstract (e.g., 'in holiness').<sup>13</sup> This rendering, however, exhibits significant grammatical difficulties when the entire line is taken into consideration: אֲדֹנָיִם בָּם סִינִי בְּקִדְּשׁ. When the MT is not emended from בָּם to בָּא, the first two words of the line (אֲדֹנָיִם בָּם) are commonly translated as a verbless clause ('the Lord is among them').<sup>14</sup> The difficulty with translating בְּקִדְּשׁ in the abstract (e.g., 'in holiness') is that בְּקִדְּשׁ is preceded by the proper noun סִינִי ('Sinai'). The phrase בְּקִדְּשׁ cannot rightly be translated as 'in holiness' because the text is lacking the necessary verb for בְּקִדְּשׁ to modify. For this reason, some scholars have proposed that בָּם ('among them')

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<sup>11</sup>William Foxwell Albright, "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems (Psalm 68)," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23, no. 1 (1950), 1-39.

<sup>12</sup>E.g., see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 54-55; Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 1-72*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 314; Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, et al., *The Book of Psalms*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 542.

<sup>13</sup>Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007), 232; John Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 307. Among modern translations, see NASB; JPS; NET ('in holy splendor').

<sup>14</sup>E.g., ESV; NASB; KJV; HCSB; ASV; DRC; JPS; CPDV ('The Lord is with them').

should be emended to בא ('came') in order to supply the missing verb,<sup>15</sup> rendering the phrase 'the Lord *came* from Sinai in holiness' (בְּקֹדֶשׁ). This approach, however, lacks the textual evidence needed to support emending the MT. While Psalm 68 clearly exhibits some close similarities to Deuteronomy 33, a comparison between Psalm 68:18 [17] and Deuteronomy 33:2 reveals some significant differences. On the basis of the alleged correspondence between these verses, it is argued that Psalm 68:18 [17] should be rendered according to the similar phrase found in Deuteronomy 33:2 (בְּמִסְכֵּי).<sup>16</sup> Psalm 68:18 [17], however, lacks the preposition מן prefixed to מִסְכֵּי, which would indicate that YHWH came *from* Sinai. If בא were mistakenly copied in place of בא and the מן preposition was also lost in transmission, it is peculiar that no evidence exists for such a reading among the various textual traditions. In the absence of textual evidence with which to confirm this reading, if an equally or more reasonable translation can be supplied for Psalm 68:18 [17] without emending the MT, would it not be the preferred choice?

The tensions involved in the translation of Psalm 68:18 [17] are alleviated when the emended reading of בְּקֹדֶשׁ is abandoned. When קֹדֶשׁ is translated as a noun, as the Masoretic pointing would suggest, either as a collective singular ('holy [ones]')<sup>17</sup> or as 'sanctuary', the abstract reading can be jettisoned in favour of

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<sup>15</sup>E.g., Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, Harvard Semitic Monographs, vol. 4 (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1972; reprint, Eugene: Wipf & Stock 2010), 117; Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 102; Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 1973), 109; John W. Rogerson and John W. McKay, *Psalms 51-100*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 84; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 55; Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 283; Mainz Maiberg and Christoph Dohmen, "sinay," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol X, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, et al., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 221-222; Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, New International Biblical Commentary, vol. 11 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 282; Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: 42-89*, Kregel Exegetical Library, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 460; Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger Jr., *Psalms*, The New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 293; deClaisse-Walford, et al., *Psalms*, 545. Among modern translations, see NIV, NRSV, NET ('The Lord comes from Sinai').

<sup>16</sup>E.g., deClaisse-Walford, et al., *Psalms*, 545. The same view is reflected in the BHS apparatus.

<sup>17</sup>Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 161. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel*, 109, and Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 102, render the entire phrase as 'When he came from Sinai with the holy ones'. A similar translation is seen in deClaisse-Walford, et al., *Psalms*, 545: 'The Lord came from Sinai with the

reading the phrase as a verbless clause. This approach leaves two possibilities. Firstly, translating שֶׁקִּדְשׁ as a collective singular (‘among the holy [ones]’) is grammatically possible. According to this view, verse 18 [17] expresses the idea that ‘Sinai is among the holy ones’.<sup>18</sup> While שֶׁקִּדְשׁ does appear as a collective singular on rare occasions in the OT,<sup>19</sup> it never functions this way in the Psalter. Rather, when שֶׁקִּדְשׁ is used as a collective in the Psalter (i.e., Psa. 89:5, 7; holy [ones]), the word is inflected in plural form, not in the singular. While a collective singular reading is grammatically possible, the immediate context of Psalm 68:18 [17] supports a more preferable translation, which leads us to the second option for translating Psalm 68:18 [17] as a verbless clause.

The best option is to render the entire phrase as ‘the Lord is among them, *Sinai is in the sanctuary*’.<sup>20</sup> Chief among the reasons for this translation is that the same construction of שֶׁקִּדְשׁ occurs just seven verses later in the same psalm (v. 25 [24]) with clear reference to YHWH’s procession into the Jerusalem sanctuary: ‘Your procession is seen, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary (בִּקְדֹשׁ)’. While שֶׁקִּדְשׁ in verse 25 [24] could also theoretically be translated as ‘among the holy [ones]’, or ‘in holiness’ if revocalised, the obvious terminus for YHWH’s procession is his sanctuary.<sup>21</sup> This is made clear in verse 30 [29], which

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holy ones’. While these translations have in common that they render שֶׁקִּדְשׁ as ‘holy ones’, they do not translate שֶׁקִּדְשׁ סִינִי as a verbless clause, since they emend בָּם (‘among them’) to אָבָּ (‘came’). Our critiques of this textual emendation have been noted above.

<sup>18</sup>Although the present analysis does not favour this translation, it is acknowledged as a possibility. If Psalm 68:17 [18] were to be translated as ‘YHWH is among them, Sinai is among the holy ones’, this translation could equally lend itself toward some of the conclusions reached in the present analysis.

<sup>19</sup>E.g., Numbers 4:15, 20; 7:9 (‘the holy [things]’).

<sup>20</sup>Proponents of this translation, or an equivalent rendering, include Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 14a (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1973), 241-242; Weiser Artur, *The Psalms: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 478; T. Desmond Alexander, *The City of God and the Goal of Creation*, Short Studies in Biblical Theology (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 61. Similarly, James M. Hamilton, *Psalms I: Psalms 1-72*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary, vol. 1 (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2021), 597, renders the phrase as ‘Sinai is the holy place’. The ESV adds the word ‘now’ for clarity: ‘Sinai is now in the sanctuary’.

<sup>21</sup>Scholars in support of translating שֶׁקִּדְשׁ in verse 25 [24] include Artur, *The Psalms*, 478; Broyles, *Psalms*, 283; Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 487; James Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 227; Israel Knohl, ‘Psalm 68: Structure, Composition and Geography,’ in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures IX: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, ed. Christophe Nihan and Ehud Ben Zvi, (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2014), 422. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100*, Anchor Bible

confirms that the Jerusalem temple is in view (מְהִיכֶלֶךְ עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם).<sup>22</sup> YHWH's procession is his sanctuary.<sup>23</sup> This is made clear in verse 30 [29], which confirms that the Jerusalem temple is in view (מְהִיכֶלֶךְ עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם).<sup>24</sup>

In what sense might it be said that 'Sinai is in the sanctuary'? There are at least two explanations. In his diachronic analysis of Psalm 68, Israel Knohl has proposed that סִינַי ('Sinai') should not be regarded as a place name (i.e., Mount Sinai), but rather exclusively as a divine appellation.<sup>25</sup> He contends that סִינַי is the name of a deity, in connection with the Mesopotamian moon god, 'Sin' (*Si-i-na*).<sup>26</sup> In support of his position, he maintains that the phrase מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים זֶה סִינַי in verse 9 [8] should be translated, 'before Elohim—that is, Sinai'.<sup>27</sup> As such, he maintains that סִינַי is already used as a divine name earlier in the psalm. Yet, Knohl does not make clear why his translation of זֶה סִינַי should be preferred over 'the/this one of Sinai',<sup>28</sup> which involves a well attested use of זֶה or an equivalent

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Commentary, vol. 17 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 132, offers a slightly different translation, while still rendering קִדְשׁ as 'sanctuary': 'behold the marches of God...of my king from his sanctuary'.

<sup>22</sup>While it is certainly possible that בְּקִדְשׁ could be used in two different ways in the same psalm, the context of verse 18 [17] also argues in favour of translating בְּקִדְשׁ as 'in the sanctuary'. The previous verse (17 [16]) personifies the envy of the Bashan mountain range in comparison to the mountain of YHWH's abode (לְשִׁבְתּוֹ). The Bashan mountain range gazes with jealousy at YHWH's current mountain dwelling in Jerusalem.

<sup>23</sup>Scholars in support of translating בְּקִדְשׁ in verse 25 [24] include Artur, *The Psalms*, 478; Broyles, *Psalms*, 283; Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 487; James Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 227; Israel Knohl, "Psalm 68: Structure, Composition and Geography," in *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures IX: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, ed. Christophe Nihan and Ehud Ben Zvi, (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2014), 422. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100*, Anchor Bible Commentary, vol. 17 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 132, offers a slightly different translation, while still rendering קִדְשׁ as 'sanctuary': 'behold the marches of God...of my king from his sanctuary'.

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<sup>25</sup>Knohl, "Psalm 68," 413-434.

<sup>26</sup>Knohl speculates that the alleged name סִינַי was formed by conflating the divine names אֱדֹנַי and יְשׁוּעָה.

<sup>27</sup>Knohl, "Psalm 68," 431.

<sup>28</sup>Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 337; deClaissé-Walford, et al., *Psalms*, 545. See also, ESV; NIV.



form.<sup>29</sup> Since there are no clear-cut cases of *הַיְיָ* being used by itself elsewhere in the OT as a divine name (i.e., without reference to Mount Sinai),<sup>30</sup> it would seem that the burden of proof should rest on alternative translations to ‘the/this one of Sinai’. The benefit of translating the entire phrase (*הַיְיָ הַזֶּה*) as a divine appellation—not just *הַיְיָ*—is that it maintains the list of divine titles in verse 9 [8] while also translating *הַיְיָ* in a manner consistent with its ubiquitous appearances as a place name throughout the OT.

Knohl also contends that verses 68:15-17 [16-18], indicate that the deity being described is thought to dwell on a mountain of Bashan, specifically Mount Hermon, rather than Mount Sinai. Knohl defends this alternative use of *הַיְיָ* by noting:

Psalm 68:16–18 says nothing about the revelation of God on Mount Sinai or his presence on this mountain. On the contrary: according to the writer of this psalm, God dwells and is present on Mount Bashan.<sup>31</sup>

These verses, however, never claim that ‘God dwells and is present at Mount Bashan’.<sup>32</sup> In fact they do the opposite. Instead, they simply remark on the Bashan mountains’ jealousy, likely in view YHWH’s presence on another mountain (i.e., Mount Zion). Knohl’s approach relies heavily on his diachronic analysis of the psalm, which identifies two different layers, consisting of an early ‘nucleus’ of the poem (vv. 5-34 [6-35]) and a later editorial addition (vv. 1-4 [2-5], 35-36 [36-37]). While similar diachronic approaches have been put forth, no evidence has been provided which would demonstrably show that the psalm is comprised of different strata. When the psalm is analyzed as a whole, then the

<sup>29</sup>Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 336-337.

<sup>30</sup>Judges 5:5 is a clear parallel to Psalm 68:9 [8] and contains the identical phrase *הַיְיָ הַזֶּה*, which can also be translated as ‘the/this one of Sinai’.

<sup>31</sup>Knohl, “Psalm 68,” 431.

<sup>32</sup>Although verse 16 [15] refers to the Bashan mountain as *הַר־אֱלֹהִים* (‘mountain of god[s]’) this should not be viewed as evidence of that psalmist regards Bashan as the former dwelling of YHWH. When the phrase *הַר־אֱלֹהִים* is used to refer to YHWH’s mountain it is naturally translated as ‘mountain of God’ (cf. Ezek 28:16), but in the present context, the psalmist references the Bashan mountain as a pagan alternative to YHWH’s mountain abode. Hence, it is best to translate the phrase in the present context as ‘mountain of gods’. As Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms* 2, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 163, remark, ‘The high mountains of Bashan, probably the place of the battle, make claim to being a (pagan) mountain of the gods, and is challenged by the victory of the foreign YHWH from the south (vv. 16-17)’. By calling the pagan mountain *הַר־אֱלֹהִים* the psalmist creates an antithesis to Mount Zion, the mountain of God in Jerusalem.

psalm's connection to Mount Sinai becomes clear. Verse 1 [2] opens the psalm by recalling Moses' words from Numbers 10:35-36, when the Israelites left Mount Sinai to journey to the promised land.<sup>33</sup> The following table illustrates the similarity between these two verses:

Numbers 10:35-36	Psalm 68:1 [2]
<p><i>Arise, O LORD,</i>  and let your  <i>enemies be</i>  <i>scattered,</i> and let  those who <i>hate</i> you  <i>flee before</i> you.</p>	<p>God shall <i>arise</i>, his  <i>enemies</i> shall be  <i>scattered</i>; and  those who <i>hate</i>  him shall <i>flee</i>  <i>before</i> him!</p>

In the light of this, it is clear that the Psalm 68 poetically depicts YHWH's procession toward his Jerusalem temple by evoking events that took place during the Israelites' journey to the promised land. Moreover, Samuel S. Meier contends that the bringing out (מוֹשִׁיב) <sup>34</sup> of 'prisoners' (אֲסִירִים) in 68:7 [6] is 'deliberately juxtaposed with the exodus (Psalm 68:6-7)'.<sup>35</sup> If this is the case, then the couplet in verse 8 [7], containing the parallel temporal clauses בְּצֵאתְךָ לְפָנֵי עַמְּךָ בְּצֵעְדְךָ בְּיַשְׁמֹן ('when you went out before your people // when you marched through the wilderness'), describes the leaving of Mount Sinai to journey toward the promised land (cf. 68:1 [2]).

This approach to the psalm is in keeping with James K. Hoffmeier's analysis of other texts involving YHWH's 'march in the South'<sup>36</sup> (e.g., Deuteronomy 33:2; Judges 5:4-5). While these texts are said to contain an early tradition, locating YHWH's place of origin in Edom,<sup>37</sup> Hoffmeier contends that these poems

<sup>33</sup>Hamilton, *Psalms I*, 599.

<sup>34</sup>The Hiphil of מוֹשִׁיב is used elsewhere in the Psalter when referencing the exodus (Psalm 105:37, 43; 136:11).

<sup>35</sup>Samuel A. Meier, "Imprisonment Imagery," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper T. Longman III and Peter Enns, (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2008), 321.

<sup>36</sup>Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, 108, treats Deuteronomy 33:2-3; Judges 5:4-5; Habakkuk 3:3-7; Psalm 68:9 [8]; 18 [17] as belonging to the same 'march in the South' tradition, which 'indicate that Sinai is to be found in Seir and Edom'.

<sup>37</sup>E.g., Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, 108; Maiberger and Dohmen, "*sinay*," 221-222.

describe YHWH's military campaign *through* the region of Edom, as recounted in Numbers 10:11-21:35.<sup>38</sup> Commenting on the opening line of the blessing in Deuteronomy 33:2 ('The Lord came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us' [הָיָה מִסִּינַי בָּא וְזָרַח מִשְׁעִיר לָמוֹ]), Hoffmeier remarks, that 'This statement manifestly shows a movement of YHWH that begins at Sinai and moves toward Seir'.<sup>39</sup> He goes on to note that the verb זָרַח 'dawned' has a military connotation, as evidenced by comparison to Ugaritic texts.<sup>40</sup> Like Deuteronomy 33:2 and Judg 5:4-5, YHWH's march in Psalm 68 begins at Mount Sinai and moves through the region of Edom. In the case of Psalm 68, the journey culminates at Mount Zion, in the Jerusalem sanctuary (v. 30 [29]), portraying YHWH's conquest through the wilderness as a processional, ending with YHWH's enthronement on his holy mountain in Jerusalem. When viewed in this light, סִינַי in Psalm 68 is best regarded as a reference to Mount Sinai. Given the context of Psalm 68, Bashan might be mentioned in verses 15-17 [16-18] because this region was associated with one of YHWH's victories (cf. Numbers 21:33-35) on the path to his enthronement in the Jerusalem sanctuary.

Since Psalm 68 depicts YHWH's journey from Mount Sinai (Num 10:35-36) to Mount Zion (v. 30 [29]), it is reasonable to conclude the phrase סִינַי בְּקִדְשׁ ('Sinai is in the sanctuary'; 68:18 [17]) indicates that the mountain associated with the Sinai theophany has symbolically journeyed to Mount Zion as well. Because זֶה סִינַי ('the/this [one] of Sinai'; v. 9 [8]) has now come to his Jerusalem sanctuary by way of his portable mountain temple, so too has his mountain abode.<sup>41</sup> This

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<sup>38</sup>James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 128-130.

<sup>39</sup>Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 129.

<sup>40</sup>Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 129. See also, Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel*,.

<sup>41</sup>Since ANE deities were commonly thought to dwell on mountains, sanctuaries were often constructed in order to evoke their mountain abode. John M. Lundquist, "The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East," in *Cult and Cosmos: Tilting Toward a Temple-Centered Theology*, ed. L. Michael Morales, Biblical Tools and Studies (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 54, remarks that the concept of ANE temples as the 'architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain' has become '...so commonplace that it has become a cliché within Near Eastern scholarship'. It is worth noting that, although a mountain-temple relationship is present in the OT, there are also key differences when compared to other ANE cultures. Perhaps chief among such differences is that Mount Sinai was not regarded as YHWH's permanent home. Exodus 19:18 indicates that YHWH 'descended' on Mount Sinai. He was not already dwelling on the mountain when the Israelites arrived. Yet, in light of the events described in Exodus 19-40, Mount Sinai came to be associated with YHWH's abode.

might shed some light on the relationship between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion observed in the psalter. As Gordon Wenham remarks:

I think that it is reasonable to say that the psalms certainly know of the lawgiving at Sinai, even though they do not make much of it. This may be because for the psalms, Zion is the new Sinai, the holy mountain where God reveals himself.<sup>42</sup>

Scholars have long observed that the tabernacle in Exodus 25-31; 35-40 was intended to be a ‘portable Mount Sinai’, in which YHWH’s presence would journey with the Israelites to the promised land.<sup>43</sup> Evidence for this approach to the portable sanctuary emerges when observing the three gradations of holiness

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<sup>42</sup>Gordon J. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically*, Studies in Theological Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 100. On the basis of Psalm 68, Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 284, contends, ‘...there really is no “Zion theology”, separate from a “Sinai theology”....To speak of a “Zion theology” that somehow arose separately from a “Sinai theology” is meaningless and actually is impossible from an ancient Near Eastern point of view’.

<sup>43</sup>E.g., Ángel M. Rodríguez, “Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 24, no. 2 (1986), 127-145; Donald W. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God,” in *By Study and Also By Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990), 482-500; Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 274; Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 237; Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, 193-277; Peter Enns, *Exodus*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 493, 532; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 17 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 107; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 89; Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 41-86; Mark Scarlata, *The Abiding Presence: A Theological Commentary on Exodus* (London: SCM Press, 2018), 150; Gordon J. Wenham, “Hearing the Pentateuch,” in *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God’s Address*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew and David J. H. Beldman, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 244; L. Michael Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured: Cosmic Mountain Ideology in Genesis and Exodus*, Biblical Tools and Studies, vol. 15 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 227; Paul R. Williamson, “Promises with Strings Attached: Covenant and Law in Exodus 19-24,” in *Exploring Exodus: Literary, Theological and Contemporary Approaches*, ed. Brian S. Rosner and Paul R. Williamson, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 115; T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentaries (Nottingham: Apollos, 2017), 563-564; Richard E. Averbeck, “Reading the Ritual Law in Leviticus Theologically,” in *Interpreting the Old Testament Theologically: Essays in Honor of Willem A. VanGemeren*, ed. Andrew T. Abernethy, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 136; Wolfgang Oswald, “Lawgiving at the Mountain of God (Exodus 19-24),” in *The Book of Exodus: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Thomas B. Dozeman, et al., Supplements to Vetus Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 186.

associated with Mount Sinai in Exodus 19-24.<sup>44</sup> The correlation between Mount Sinai and the Tabernacle is underscored by the similar phrases used to describe YHWH's descent onto the mountain and tabernacle respectively (cf. Exodus 19:16; 40:34).<sup>45</sup> Among those who regard the tabernacle as a 'portable Mount Sinai', there is a wide array of methodological diversity, appearing in the work of synchronically oriented and diachronically oriented scholars alike. Jacob Milgrom, a proponent of a modified form of the Documentary Hypothesis that regards P as a pre-exilic source preceding D, goes so far as to contend that 'The equivalence of the Tabernacle to Sinai is an essential, indeed indispensable, axiom of P'.<sup>46</sup> Regardless of one's historical-critical framework, the argument we have proposed is not dependent upon a particular dating of the tabernacle material (Exodus 25-31; 35-40) or Psalm 68. Even if the tabernacle material were regarded as having been composed in the post-exilic period, a postulate that is open to challenge,<sup>47</sup> such an approach would not preclude the notion of a

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<sup>44</sup>Sarna, *Exodus*, 105, provides a succinct summary of the evidence: 'As Ramban noted, Mount Sinai assumes the character of the sanctuary for the duration of the theophany. A close similarity to the wilderness Tabernacle is suggested by several shared characteristics. Both Sinai and the Tabernacle evidence a tripartite division. The summit corresponds to the inner sanctum, or Holy of Holies. The second zone, partway up the mountain, is the equivalent of the Tabernacle's outer sanctum, or Holy Place. The third zone, at the foot of the mountain, is analogous to the outer court. As with the Tabernacle, the three distinct zones of Sinai feature three gradations for holiness in descending order. Just as Moses alone may ascend to the peak of the mountain, so all but one are barred from the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. Just as the Holy Place is the exclusive preserve of the priesthood, so only the priests and elders are allowed to ascend to a specific point on the mountain. The confinement of laity to the outer court of the Tabernacle, where the altar of burnt offering was located, evokes the parallel with Sinai in the restriction of the laity to the foot of the mountain, where the altar was built. The graduated restrictions on access, touch, and sight are the counterparts of the repeated regulations about the unlawful invasion of sacred domain in the same three ways. God is said to "descend" upon the mountain as upon the Tabernacle, and He communicates with Moses on the summit as He does in the Holy of Holies. Finally, the vivid descriptions of smoke, dense cloud, and fire that issued from and enveloped Sinai are paralleled by the cloud and fire that become associated with the tabernacle'. See also, Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology, I: The Encroacher and the Levite: The Term 'Aboda*, University of California Publications Near Eastern Studies, vol. 14 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 44-45.

<sup>45</sup>The concept of YHWH entering the portable sanctuary along with his holy mountain is in keeping with the notion that ANE temples were largely considered to be the '...architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain' (Lundquist, "The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East," 54).

<sup>46</sup>Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 574.

<sup>47</sup>Since the time of Julius Wellhausen, the tabernacle has been viewed among source-critical scholars as the product of the Priestly source, having been composed during or after the

‘portable Mount Sinai’ existing among ancient Israelites prior to its codification in Exodus. Psalm 68:17 [18] may provide external evidence of the tabernacle being viewed in this way, indicating that Israel’s deity is among his holy ones because ‘Sinai is in the sanctuary’. We turn to explore other variously translated passages in the Psalter involving בִּקְדָּשׁ.

(b) Psalm 77:14 [13]

The phrase בִּקְדָּשׁ appears in Psalm 77:14 [13], a psalm which recounts the past deeds of YHWH as a means of providing comfort in the present. After beginning the psalm by referencing his own anguish and downtrodden circumstances in verses 1-10 [1-9], in verses 11-12 [10-11] the psalmist recalls the ‘years of the right hand of the most Most High’ (שָׁנוֹת יְמִין עֲלִיוֹן)<sup>48</sup> and his ‘wonders of old’ (מִקְדָּמִם פִּלְאָה). The psalmist’s appeal to YHWH’s journey through the sea and the leading of YHWH’s people by the hand of Moses and Aaron make clear that the

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Babylonian exile. While this view remains the consensus among historical-critical scholars, the Priestly source has come under significant scrutiny in modern scholarship. While some have argued for a pre-exilic dating of P (e.g., Jacob Milgrom, “The Case for the Pre-Exilic and Exilic Provenance of the Books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers,” in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*, ed. J. Gordon McConville and Karl Möller, The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies [London: T&T Clark, 2007], 48-56) others have contended that the concept of P should be abandoned entirely. Georg Fischer, “Time for a Change! Why Pentateuchal Research is in Crisis,” in *Paradigm Change in Pentateuchal Research*, ed. Matthias Armgardt, et al., Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2019), 13, provides sobering remarks regarding the concept of the Priestly source in current scholarship: ‘...I now share the knowledge and firm conviction gleaned from decades of dealing with Pentateuch studies. As long as one holds firmly to P, assuming its existence in whatever form, whether it be a source, a layer, or a redactional reworking, there will be, in my estimation, no adequate solution to the problems of Pentateuchal research. After nearly 200 years of trying in vain to find an answer, based on the assumption of this hypothetical Priestly stratum (in whatever form), we have still not arrived at definitive results, and the impasse because of the fundamental problems underlying this theory has become obvious. Therefore, it is time to attempt to formulate an explanation without it. As a counter-proposal, I suggest daring to do away with it altogether!’

<sup>48</sup>The psalmist’s reference to the ‘right hand of the Most High’ could possibly be an allusion to the Exodus 15:6, 12, which recount the defeat of the Egyptian army by YHWH’s right hand. Joshua A. Berman, “The Kadesh Inscriptions of Ramesses II and the Exodus Sea Account (Exodus 13:17-15:19),” in “*Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt?*”: *Biblical, Archaeological, and Egyptological Perspectives on the Exodus Narratives*, ed. James K. Hoffmeier, et al., Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 102-103, contends that Exodus 15:6, 12 reference YHWH’s right hand as a polemical response to the ‘distinctly Egyptian portrayal’ of Pharaoh smiting his enemies with his right hand, an image that is ‘...ubiquitous from the third millennium down into the Christian era’ (103).

exodus event is in view. In the light of this connection, it is fitting that scholars have noted parallels between Psalm 77 and the Song of the Sea.<sup>49</sup>

The phrase *בְּקִדְשׁ דְּרַכְּךָ* appears in verse 14 [13]: *כְּאַלֹהִים גָּדוֹל מִי־אֵל // דְּרַכְּךָ בְּקִדְשׁ אֱלֹהִים*. While it is generally agreed that the verse begins with a vocative ('Oh God'), the remaining words of the first half of the line (*בְּקִדְשׁ דְּרַכְּךָ*) are variously translated as either 'your path/way is holy/in holiness'<sup>50</sup> or 'your path/way is in the sanctuary'.<sup>51</sup> The parallel line, 'what deity is as great as God' (*מִי־אֵל גָּדוֹל כְּאַלֹהִים*), does not aid in distinguishing between the two translational options, since God's greatness could be construed equally according to his holiness or his presence in the sanctuary. The former translation, 'your path/way is holy/in holiness', is preferred by some scholars as a consequence of dating the psalm to the post-exilic period. As a result, the present anguish of the psalmist is regarded an outworking of the temple's destruction. Yet, nothing within the psalm clearly points towards the psalm being exilic or post-exilic.<sup>52</sup>

The evidence, however, weighs in favour of translating *בְּקִדְשׁ דְּרַכְּךָ* as 'your path is in the sanctuary'. In the MT, *בְּקִדְשׁ* is pointed with a definite article, indicating that the Masoretes regarded the phrase as a preposition followed by a noun. The LXX similarly translates the phrase with a definite article (*ὁ θεός, ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ἡ ὁδός σου*).<sup>53</sup> The surrounding context of the verse also supports translating *בְּקִדְשׁ*

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<sup>49</sup>E.g., John S. Kselman, "Psalm 77 and the Book of Exodus," *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 15, (1983), 51-58.

<sup>50</sup>E.g., ESV; HCSB; NASB; NIV ('your ways, God, are holy').

<sup>51</sup>E.g., ASV; KJV. Cf. LXX.

<sup>52</sup>Bound to the issue of the psalm's date is the question of its unity. While some scholars have contended that Psalm 77 contains two originally autonomous poems, there is little reason to doubt the unity of the psalm. Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73-150*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 38, contends, 'Several factors suggest the poem was a unity from the beginning: The number of Hebrew words in each of the two halves (vv. 1-10 and 11-20) is almost identical (73 words in part 1 and 74 words in part 2); *'ēlōīm* ("God") occurs seven times; verbs of "remembering" in both parts with a different set of objects in each half of the poem'. In addition, Clifford observes, 'Another indicator of unity is the poem's coherent logic. In the first part, the psalmist cries out to God, refusing all comfort (vv. 1-2). What is the cause of such anguish? It is the cognitive dissonance that comes from remembering a past when God was favorable and experiencing the present when God is absent. The psalmist remembers divine favor (vv. 3-5), steadfast love, and fidelity to promises (vv. 6-10)... In the second part (vv. 11-20), the Psalmist remembers again but this time the object of memory is not the absence of God but the act that defeated chaos itself. Recalling those primordial deeds invites God to renew them in this unhappy time' (38-39).

<sup>53</sup>'O God, your way is in the holy place' (Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 585).

‘in the sanctuary’. Central to the translation of verse 14 [13] is the sense in which דָּרָךְ (‘way/path’) is to be taken. Is דָּרָךְ to be understood figuratively, referring to God’s righteous way(s)? There is considerable precedent for this use of דָּרָךְ in the OT. Given the 63 occurrences of דָּרָךְ being used figuratively in the Psalter alone,<sup>54</sup> this approach would certainly be preferred in the absence of evidence to the contrary in the immediate context. There is, however, evidence within the psalm that supports דָּרָךְ being taken literally in this instance, as a reference to the YHWH’s actual footpath.

As the psalmist recounts the deeds of YHWH in verses 12-21 [11-20] by alluding to the events of the exodus, an appeal is made to YHWH’s actions as a divine warrior, overcoming the waters and leading his people through the sea. In Verse 20 [19], the term דָּרָךְ is used to call attention to YHWH’s path through the sea: בָּיָם דָּרָכָךְ (‘your way was through the sea’). The literal nature of דָּרָךְ is reinforced by the parallel line: וּשְׁבִילֶיךָ בְּמִיִּם רַבִּים (‘and your path was in/through [the] great waters’). The term שְׁבִיל is used elsewhere only in Jeremiah 18:15, clearly denoting a footpath, although it might carry with it a secondary figurative sense. While דָּרָךְ and שְׁבִיל can be used both literally or figuratively, the figurative sense of both must be ruled out in Psalm 77:20 [19], given that the memory of YHWH’s bringing the people through the waters provides the context of the verse. The literal sense of דָּרָךְ is confirmed by the final clause of the verse: וְעִקְבוֹתַיִךְ לֹא נִדְעוּ (‘but/yet your footprints were unseen’). While the phrase is somewhat cryptic, the reference to YHWH’s ‘footprints’ indicates that the דָּרָךְ described at the beginning of verse 20[19] is not a figurative reference to YHWH’s way(s), but a reference to his literal footpath. The psalmist calls attention to a great paradox—although YHWH led his people through the path of the sea, his footprints were unseen.<sup>55</sup>

Since YHWH’s ‘way’ (דָּרָךְ) described in verse 20 [19] refers to a literal footpath, this suggests that YHWH’s ‘way’ (דָּרָךְ) in verse 14 [13] is being used in the same manner. While acknowledging some benefits of this approach, Derek Kidner objects to this reading:

<sup>54</sup>Psalm 1:1, 6; 2:12; 5:9; 10:5; 18:22, 31, 33; 25:4, 8-9, 12; 27:11; 32:8; 35:6; 36:5; 37:5, 7, 14, 23, 34; 39:2; 49:14; 50:23; 51:15; 67:3; 77:14, 20; 81:14; 86:11; 89:42; 91:11; 95:10; 101:2, 6; 102:24; 103:7; 107:4, 7, 17, 40; 119:1, 3, 5, 14, 26-27, 29-30, 32-33, 37, 59, 168; 128:1; 138:5; 139:3, 24; 143:8; 145:17; 146:9.

<sup>55</sup>The final verse of the psalm (v. 21 [20]) concludes by noting that YHWH led his people by the hand of Moses and Aaron.



Although the translation, ‘Thy way...is in the sanctuary’ (AV, RV, cf. LXX, etc.) would find a telling counterpart in verse 19, ‘thy way was in the sea’, the phrase should almost certainly be taken as (lit.) ‘thy way is in holiness’, for this echoes the victory song at the Red Sea (‘majestic in holiness’, Exodus 15:11), while the companion phrases echo first its question ‘Who is like thee...among the gods?’, then its epithet ‘doing wonders’ (as in our verse 14a), and finally its allusion to the effect of these things on the ‘the people’ (14b; Exodus 15:14).<sup>56</sup>

The difficulty with Kidner’s approach is that it assumes a one-to-one correspondence between verse 14 [13] and Exodus 15:11, to the exclusion of all other allusions. Yet, no reference is made to דָּרַךְ in Exodus 15 whatsoever. John S. Kselman has demonstrated that Psalm 77 contains parallels to the book of Exodus beyond the Song of the Sea, noting that the psalmist structures his questions about the extent of YHWH’s compassion and grace in Psalm 77:9-10 [8-9] according to Exodus 34:6.<sup>57</sup> While the term דָּרַךְ is never used in Exodus 15, it is employed three times in Exodus 13:17-18, 21 to describe the literal path upon which YHWH led his people. Given the connections between Psalm 77 and the book of Exodus in general, the presence of דָּרַךְ is better understood as a reference to YHWH’s literal path and not his figurative way(s).

When דָּרַךְ is properly regarded as a literal path in Psalm 77:14 [13], the translation of בִּקְדֹשׁ as ‘in holiness’ loses its appeal. It is difficult to understand how YHWH’s literal ‘path/way’ could be regarded as ‘in/by holiness’. Rather, the phrase אֱלֹהִים בִּקְדֹשׁ דָּרַכָּךְ in Psalm 77:14 [13] is best understood as a verbless clause, with בִּקְדֹשׁ being translated as a reference to the sanctuary: ‘Oh God, your way/path is in the sanctuary’.

The psalmist is consoled not only by YHWH’s leading of the people through the sea, but also in knowing that the same deity responsible for the exodus event has journeyed (in)to the sanctuary. This is in keeping with other forms of sanctuary ideology observed in the OT, which connect the exodus from Egypt to the building of a sanctuary. The book of Exodus itself makes a general connection between the exodus and the building of the tabernacle. Immediately after the Israelites come through the waters, the song of the sea makes reference to

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<sup>56</sup>Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 14b (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1975), 279.

<sup>57</sup>Kselman, “Psalm 77 and the Book of Exodus,” 53-54. See also, Gregory M. Stevenson, “Communal Imagery and the Individual Lament: Exodus Typology in Psalm 77,” *Restoration Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1997), 215-229; Allan M. Harman, “The Exodus and the Sinai Covenant in the Book of Psalms,” *The Reformed Theological Review* 73, no. 1 (2014), 8.

YHWH's mountain sanctuary in Exodus 15:17.<sup>58</sup> Shortly thereafter the Israelites build a portable sanctuary that houses the same deity who brought them through the waters (Ex 25-31; 35-40). Exodus 29:45-46 links the concept of YHWH dwelling among the Israelites (i.e., his presence in the sanctuary) with the exodus from Egypt:

I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God (ESV).

In 1 Kings 6:1 the connection is made between the exodus from Egypt and the construction of Solomon's temple: 'In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the LORD' (ESV).

In the light of these observations, there is no compelling reason for translating *בְּקִדְּשׁוֹ* in Psalm 77:14 [13] as 'in holiness' or 'holy'. Rather, the evidence favors the translation, 'in the sanctuary'. When the above grammatical and contextual observations are taken into account, the psalm may be regarded as referencing YHWH's presence in the sanctuary, having journeyed there through the waters of the exodus, despite his footprints being unseen.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>While Mount Sinai is not the referent of the mountain mentioned in Exodus 15:17, the reference to YHWH's mountain sanctuary helps prepare the reader for the events that make up roughly the second half of the book of Exodus. As Alexander, *Exodus*, 297, remarks, 'By being both retrospective and prospective the song underlines that the defeat of the Egyptians is not an end in itself, but merely the first stage in a process that will climax with the Israelites living in close proximity to YHWH within the land of Canaan. In the light of this ultimate goal it is significant that Exod. 19-24 narrates the creation of a special covenant relationship between YHWH and the Israelites. This in turn prepares the way for the manufacture of a richly adorned tent that will be YHWH's portable sanctuary as he accompanies the Israelites on their journey to Canaan (cf. 25-31, 35-40)'.

<sup>59</sup>The concept of YHWH's footprints going 'unseen' presents an interesting contrast with the symbolism of a temple excavated in 'Ain Dara (northern Syria), which depicts a superhuman-sized deity with '...footprints of over three feet (one meter) carved into the temple flooring' (Mark S. Smith, *Where the Gods Are: Spatial Dimensions of Anthropomorphism in the Biblical World*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016], 26). Although YHWH's 'way/path is in the sanctuary', his footprints are not seen, journeying through the waters of the exodus and leading to the temple.

## Verbal Clauses with בַּקֹּדֶשׁ: Psalms 60:8 [6]//108:8 [7]; 89:36 [35]

Among the variously translated occurrences of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in the Psalter, three passages remain: 60:8 [6]//108:8 [7]; 89:36 [35]. A major distinction between these references and the occurrences explored above is that בַּקֹּדֶשׁ follows a verb in each of these cases, allowing the possibility of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ being taken as a modification of the preceding verb (i.e., ‘in holiness’). These three occurrences are also distinctive because none of them is pointed with a definite article because they all appear with a pronominal suffix, which *ipso facto* renders them definite. In the light of this, there is no definitive grammatical indicator of whether the Masoretes regarded these uses of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ as sanctuary references or as references to ‘his/my holiness’. In addition, these passages have in common that they occur in the context of YHWH giving an utterance of some kind (i.e., YHWH declaring or swearing). We shall address 60:8 [6] and 108:8 [7] together in the light of their commonalities before moving on to 89:36 [35].

### (a) Psalm 60:8 [6]//108:8 [7]

Psalm 60:8 [6] and 108:8 [7] contain identical phrases: אֱלֹהִים דִּבֶּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁוֹ אֶעֱלֶזָה. אַחֲלֶקְהָ שָׁכֵם וְעַמָּךְ סִכּוֹת אֶמְדֹּד (אֱלֹהִים דִּבֶּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁוֹ). The main issue in question concerns the first three words of the verse (אֱלֹהִים דִּבֶּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁוֹ). The majority of EVVs vary between translating the phrase as ‘God has spoken in his holiness’ (or an equivalent phrase)<sup>60</sup> and ‘God has spoken in/from his sanctuary’.<sup>61</sup> Psalm 60:8 [6] is translated as ‘in his sanctuary’ by some scholars.<sup>62</sup> Mitchell Dahood translates בַּקֹּדֶשׁוֹ as ‘from his sanctuary’ on the basis of the occurrences of this construction in other psalms (e.g., 20:3; 63:3; 68:25; 134:2; 150:1), contending that the phrase is a reference to YHWH’s heavenly sanctuary in similar fashion to the use of *qdš* in some Ugaritic texts referring to Baal’s heavenly sanctuary.<sup>63</sup> Erich Zenger opts for ‘in his sanctuary’ on the basis of a different line of reasoning altogether. Because of the psalm’s association with the Asaphite tradition, Zenger contends, ‘The option “in his sanctuary” recommends itself from the context of the Asaph psalms’.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>E.g., ESV; NKJV; NASB; LEB.

<sup>61</sup>E.g., NIV; CSB.

<sup>62</sup>Artur, *The Psalms*, 437; Clifford, *Psalms 1-72*, 284; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 93; Brueggemann and Bellinger Jr., *Psalms*, 266. Dahood, *Psalms II*, 75, renders the phrase as ‘from his sanctuary’.

<sup>63</sup>Dahood, *Psalms II*, 75, 80.

<sup>64</sup>Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 93.

Alternatively, while Goldingay acknowledges that *בְּקֹדְשׁוֹ* should be translated as ‘in his sanctuary’ elsewhere (i.e., Psalm 150:1), he contends that *בְּקֹדְשׁוֹ* should be rendered as ‘by his holiness’ in Psalm 60:8 [6]:

...in connection with oaths it means “by his holiness” (Amos 4:2; cf. Psalm 89:35 [36]). If the statement that follows were one made in response to this prayer, “in his sanctuary” would be plausible, but if the statement is one Yhwh made long ago, its location seems less relevant than its seriousness.<sup>65</sup>

By translating the *בְּ* as ‘by’, as opposed to ‘in’, Goldingay understands YHWH’s holiness to be the object by which he swears.<sup>66</sup> In this scenario, however, it is equally as feasible that the psalmist envisages YHWH swearing by his own abode (i.e., his sanctuary). Yet, it is worth noting that, although the psalm possibly alludes to an oath made by YHWH, the terms for ‘oath’ (*שְׁבוּעָה*) or ‘swearing’ (*שָׁבַע*) are not used here, which are usually present when one party of an oath swears by an asset.<sup>67</sup> The two verses Goldingay cites as precedent for his approach (i.e., Amos 4:2; cf. Psalm 89:35 [36]) actually contain *שָׁבַע* and not *דָּבַר*. The psalmist uses the term *דָּבַר+בְּ* in 60:8 [6], which is never explicitly used elsewhere in the OT in association with swearing by something,<sup>68</sup> rendering the possibility of YHWH swearing ‘by his holiness’ or ‘by his sanctuary’ in this verse doubtful. Rather, the emphasis seems to be on the declaration itself, not the act of swearing by something. The same argument should be applied to 108:8 [7], since it also uses *דָּבַר* and not *שָׁבַע*.

Jettisoning the notion of YHWH swearing *by* his holiness in 60:8 [6] leaves the remaining possibilities of YHWH speaking/declaring either ‘in his sanctuary’ or ‘in his holiness’. While the available data may not be sufficient to provide a decisive answer, there is evidence to support the translation, ‘in his sanctuary’.<sup>69</sup> Sanctuaries in the ANE were associated with legal declarations and publications.<sup>70</sup> YHWH making a declarative promise from his sanctuary is well

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<sup>65</sup>Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, 229.

<sup>66</sup>See also, Dahood, *Psalms II*, 75, 80.

<sup>67</sup>E.g., Dan. 12:7.

<sup>68</sup>The occurrence of *דָּבַר* in 108:8 [7] is ambiguous and should not be used to establish precedent for *דָּבַר* being used in cases involving swearing by an asset.

<sup>69</sup>As seen above, Goldingay, *Psalms 42-89*, 229, claims that the verse’s connection to oath giving (i.e., YHWH’s declaration) supports the translation “by his holiness,” but this view is open to challenge and will more appropriately be addressed below in association with Psalm 89:36 [35], since Psalm 89:36 [35] *שָׁבַע* rather than *דָּבַר*.

<sup>70</sup>Victor A. Hurowitz, “‘For Instruction shall Come Forth from Zion’: Biblical and Mesopotamian Temples as Palaces of Justice,” in *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature: The Legacy*

in keeping with other familiar OT scenes envisioning *torah* going forth from YHWH's mountain sanctuary (cf. Ex. 25:16, 21-22; Is 2:2-4=Mic 4:1-3). Goldingay creates a false choice between the location and seriousness of YHWH's declaration. Recognising that sanctuaries functioned as the legal and ethical centre of society, YHWH's declaration going forth from his temple is actually in accordance with its seriousness. Alternatively, the psalmist might reference the sanctuary simply because it is the location where YHWH resides, just as other OT passages refer to YHWH hearing prayers "from his temple" (e.g., 2 Samuel 22:7; Jonah 2:8; Psalm 18:7; Psalm 27:4).<sup>71</sup> In the light of these observations, we must conclude that regarding בְּקֹדֶשׁ as a sanctuary reference at least stands on equal footing with alternative translations.

#### (b) Psalm 89:36 [35]

Compared to the four passages explored to this point, Psalm 89:36 [35] presents the most compelling case for translating קֹדֶשׁ as 'holiness' instead of 'sanctuary': אַחַת נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּקֹדֶשׁ אִם־לֵדוֹר אֶכְנֹב. In contrast to Psalm 60:8 [6] and 108:8 [7], בְּקֹדֶשׁ appears after the verb שָׁבַע, thus occurring in a common construction associated with oath taking or recounting a previous oath. But this verse can hardly be used as precedent for an abstract translation of בְּקֹדֶשׁ. While it is possible that YHWH swears *in* his holiness in 89:36 [35], when surveying other uses of the same construction (i.e., שָׁבַע+בְּ), it is more likely that YHWH's holiness is the asset *by* which he swears (i.e., 'by his holiness').<sup>72</sup> The same could be said for Amos 4:2, which appears in a similar construction (וְנִשְׁבַּע אֶלַי יְהוָה בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ). Since YHWH has no need of swearing by or in the name of another deity,<sup>73</sup> he is thought by some

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of *Jacob Milgrom and Beyond*, ed. Roy E. Gane and Ada Taggar-Cohen, Resources for Biblical Study (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 400-403.

<sup>71</sup>Goldingay discards this possibility on the basis of the verse's alleged connection with oaths. As we have suggested above, the use of דָּבָר instead of שָׁבַע is detrimental to Goldingay's position, leaving no compelling reason for jettisoning the possibility of YHWH speaking from his sanctuary in similar fashion to him hearing from his sanctuary. A corollary of our argument below concerning the practice of oath taking is that even if 60:8 [6] were to be taken in association with an oath, this would not stand in opposition to the idea of YHWH swearing in/from/by his sanctuary.

<sup>72</sup>Isaiah 62:8; Jeremiah 44:26; Amos 8:7 (cf. Amos 8:14); Psalm 63:12 [11]; Daniel 12:7.

<sup>73</sup>Cf. Genesis 24:3; Judges 21:7; 1 Kings 1:17; 2:42; Jeremiah 12:16; Isaiah 65:16; Nehemiah 13:25; 2 Chronicles 36:13. Closely related are the occurrences involving swearing an oath 'in the name' of a deity (e.g., Leviticus 19:12; 1 Samuel 20:42; Isaiah 48:1; Jeremiah 12:16; 44:26; Zechariah 5:4).

to swear by his own holiness.<sup>74</sup> If this were the case, *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* in Psalm 89:36 [35] and Amos 4:2 are not used to describe the holiness of YHWH's act of swearing, but the *object* of his swearing.<sup>75</sup> These occurrences are substantially different constructions than the use of *בְּקֹדֶשׁ* in verbless clauses, as explored above. While the idea of YHWH swearing *by* something rests on more solid ground than translating the phrase as 'in his holiness', there is still another possible rendering.

There are two occasions in which *שָׁבַע+בְּ* is used to describe the location where an oath is made.<sup>76</sup> In Judges 21:1, an oath is described as having been sworn *in Mizpah* (*וַיִּשָּׁבַע בְּמִצְפָּה*). Similarly, 2 Kings 11:4 records an oath sworn in the house of YHWH (*וַיִּשָּׁבַע אֹתָם בְּבֵית יְהוָה*).<sup>77</sup> Understood in this manner, *וַיִּשָּׁבַע יְהוָה בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ* in Psalm 89:36 [35] could be rendered, 'I have sworn in my sanctuary'.<sup>78</sup> Contrary to Goldingay's claim above in regard to Psalm 60:8 [6] that the context of oath taking weighs in favour of translating *בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ* as 'by [his] holiness', it might be argued that the context of oath taking actually points toward the translation "in his sanctuary." Because sanctuaries generally functioned as "palaces of justice"<sup>79</sup> in the ANE, Victor A. Hurowitz notes, 'The two main types of legal proceedings performed in temples were oaths and ordeals'.<sup>80</sup> It is, therefore, not surprising to find scenarios in the OT that portray oaths and vows<sup>81</sup> being ratified at a sanctuary altar.<sup>82</sup> This association is seen most clearly in 1 Kings 8:31–32, which recounts Solomon's prayer of dedication for the newly constructed sanctuary:

If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, then hear in heaven and act and

<sup>74</sup>E.g., see Tony W. Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, JSOT Supplement, vol. 147 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 15; deClaisse-Walford, et al., *Psalms*, 678.

<sup>75</sup>Alternatively, if *קֹדֶשׁ* were rendered as 'sanctuary' in Psalm 89:36 [35] and Amos 4:2, it is also possible that YHWH is regarded as swearing by his sanctuary, similarly to his swearing by his own life in Amos 6:8 (*וַיִּשָּׁבַע אֶדְנִי יְהוָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ*). In the case of Amos 4:2, as noted above (see fn. 7), the use of the neuter plural and definite article (*τὸν ἁγίον*) in the LXX likely indicates that the translators regarded YHWH as swearing by or in his sanctuary.

<sup>76</sup>Judg. 21:1; 2 Kings 11:4.

<sup>77</sup>It is worth noting that the LXX does not contain 'house of'. It is likely that the LXX conforms the phrase to the more regular renderings explored above (i.e., the act of swearing 'by the Lord').

<sup>78</sup>Similarly, Amos 4:2 could be translated, 'The Lord, YHWH, has sworn in his sanctuary'.

<sup>79</sup>Hurowitz, "For Instruction shall Come Forth from Zion," 389-418.

<sup>80</sup>Hurowitz, "For Instruction shall Come Forth from Zion," 404.

<sup>81</sup>On the distinction between oaths and vows in the Hebrew Bible, see Cartledge, *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, 11-35.

<sup>82</sup>E.g., Numbers 5:19-21; 1 Kings 1:50-51; 1 Kings 8:31–32.

judge your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness (ESV).

While sanctuary sites do not account for all occurrences of oath taking in the Old Testament, it is clear that temples were associated with the practice.

It cannot be said that the grammar itself offers a definitive answer to the question of how בַּקֹּדֶשׁ is used in Psalms 60:8 [6]/108:8 [7]; 89:36 [35]. YHWH can be regarded as speaking or swearing, ‘in his holiness’, ‘by his holiness’, ‘by his sanctuary’, or ‘in his sanctuary’. Although each remain possible renderings, particularly in 60:8 [6] and 108:8 [7], there is strong evidence to suggest that בַּקֹּדֶשׁ is to be taken as a reference to YHWH’s sanctuary, rather than his holiness. Since בַּקֹּדֶשׁ occurs in 89:36 [35] with שָׁבַע, the phrase potentially occurs in connection with an idiom for oath swearing, yet it remains unclear as to whether YHWH is regarded as swearing ‘by his holiness’, ‘by his sanctuary’ or ‘in his sanctuary’. Of the three passages in our final category (Ps 60:8 [6]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]), there is no *definitive* case in which בַּקֹּדֶשׁ must be translated in the abstract (i.e., ‘in holiness’; or adjectively (i.e. ‘holy’).

## Conclusion

Having surveyed the variously translated occurrences of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in verbless (Psalm 68:18 [17]; Psalm 77:14 [13]) and verbal (Psalm 60:8 [6]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]) clauses in the Psalter, we found that the verbless clauses show significant grammatical and contextual difficulties when translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ abstractly (‘in holiness’; ‘among the holy [ones]’). Rendering the phrase as ‘in the sanctuary’, in keeping with the majority of other appearances of קֹדֶשׁ in the OT, is the best translational option for these verbless clauses in the Psalter. Among the three occurrences of בַּקֹּדֶשׁ in verbal clauses (Psalm 60:8 [6]; 89:36 [35]; 108:8 [7]), no case can be found in which בַּקֹּדֶשׁ should *necessarily* be translated in the abstract (‘in holiness’) or as a collective singular (‘among the holy [ones]’). These occurrences should not be regarded as an established precedent for translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ alternatively from its well-attested translation of ‘in the sanctuary’, especially in the case of verbless clauses (68:18 [17] and 77:14 [13]). New vistas are opened for understanding the cultic nature of these Psalms when correctly translating בַּקֹּדֶשׁ as ‘in the sanctuary’. When בַּקֹּדֶשׁ is properly translated, these psalms may provide a window into an ancient Israelite understanding of the relationship Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.

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