Raised Eyes and Humble Hearts: The Body as/in Space in Pss 123 and 131

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ABSTRACT
As a mobile spatial field, the human body is a space and functions in space. The body governs spatial orientation and perceptions of direction, location and distance and determines human experiences and representations of space on the continuum between positive and negative and/or sacred and profane space. In the Psalter, space is represented and experienced through the eyes of a “lyrical I” whose body is located off-centre, in chaos and despair, or at-centre, in harmony and peace. Supplication and praise, ritual and prayer are all expressions of the lyrical I’s desire to be located at-centre, in the presence of the deity, in sacred space. Sacred space is not an ontological location, but a subjective, bodily experience of being in the presence of the divine. An analysis of the whole-body experience of the lyrical I in Pss 123 and 131 illustrates the poet’s longing for (Ps 123) and experience of being at-centre (Ps 131), in divine presence, i.e., in sacred space.

Keywords: Psalm 123, Psalm 131, body, space, body as space, body in space, spatial orientation, mobile spatial field, whole-body experience, Psalter Book V, Persian Period.

INTRODUCTION
The body and its parts provide an essential reservoir of images from which the Psalms draw. For the lyrical speakers of the Psalms, the perception of the body is one of the most intensive and important experiences shaping their view of the whole of life. From the perspective of the lyrical speakers, God, enemies and friends as well


1 For many decades, Prof Gerrie Snyman has been a stalwart of Hebrew Bible scholarship in South Africa. He is known for his creative interpretative approaches and challenging applications of Hebrew Bible texts to current circumstances in our country. As editor of Old Testament Essays, he played a major role in promoting Hebrew Bible scholarship locally and internationally. It is an honour to offer a contribution to this Festschrift, which I dedicate to him in recognition of a lifetime of service to our field of study.
as the lyrical speakers themselves are perceived and described as ‘bodies.’

Psalms 123 and 131 are remarkable poems in the collection of psalms known as the Songs of Ascents (שירי המעלות, Pss 120-134). They are the fourth and second shortest poems in a collection of exceptionally short poems. They share the words יְהֹוָה, עֵינָי and also They and explicitly mention other body parts. implicitly suggest movement and/or functions of the body and/or body parts. Both poems imply the presence and actions of individual and collective human bodies as well as the divine body. Both also contain an extended simile (123:2a-d; 131:2a-c) associating YHWH with female imagery. In Ps 123:2b, the supplicant’s eyes are lifted up “to” (אל) YHWH “as the eyes of a female slave to the hand of her mistress” and in Ps 131:2b, the poet confesses that he has stilled and quieted his innermost being like a weaned child “upon” (עלי) its mother. Both

3 With the exception of Ps 121:1’s שיר מעלות, all the poems in the collection share the superscript שיר המעלות. See Nancy L. deClaißé-Walford, Psalms Books 4–5 (Wisdom Commentary 22; Collegeville: Liturgical, 2020), 171. I regard the variation as significant. Psalms 120–134 are suggestive of a journey to or being present in Jerusalem. The only poem describing a journey through dangerous territory is Ps 121. Hence, it is שיר מעלות “a song for the upgoings,” and not שיר המעלות “the song of the upgoings.” Psalm 121 has a specific intention while the other fourteen are poems generally associated with the מעלות experience.
4 With one exception (Ps 132 with its 131 words), the Shir ha-Mishtarim have on average 49 words per poem. The collection constitutes a tenth part of the Psalter but in length represents less than a twentieth. Cf. Thijs Booj, “Psalms 120–136: Songs for a Great Festival,” Biblica 91 (2010):243. Psalm 134 with 25 words is the shortest, Ps 133 with 40 words the third shortest. Psalm 131 has 33 and Ps 123 has 41 words.
5 Cf. 123:2b, 3a; 131:1a, 3a.
6 Cf. 123:1a, 2a, 2b, 2c; 131:1a.
7 Cf. 123:4a; 131:2a, 2c.
8 Cf. ר in 123:2a, 2b; ב in 131:1a.
9 Cf. מ in 123:1a; מ in 123:1b; מ in 123:2d, 3a; מ in 123:3b, 4a; מ in 131:1a; מ in 131:1b; מ in 131:2a.
10 For individual human bodies, cf. 123:1a, 2b, 2c; 131:1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c. For collective bodies, cf. 123:2a, 2c, 2d, 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 4c; 131:3a.
11 Cf. 123:1b, 2c, 2d, 3a; 131:1a, 3a.
12 I do not share the bold assumption by Patrick D. Miller, “‘Things Too Wonderful’: Prayers of Women in the Old Testament,” in Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftliche Wandel: Für Norbert Lohfink (ed. Georg Braulik, Walter Groß, and Sean McEv:venue; Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 237–251 (245), that Ps 131 was written by a woman. Gilmayr-Bucher, “Body Images,” 304, states that, “as far as the language of the body is concerned, the psalms are open for male and female reconstructions and identifications.”
poems explicitly refer to spatial locations and by means of verbs and prepositions suggest the presence in and movement through space.

Numerous studies focus on the Shir ha-Maalah as a collection, their function in Book V of the Psalter or the nature of the action implied by the noun מַעֲלָה in the superscript of each poem. The present study does not focus on these issues. I depart from and refine an opinion expressed previously. I read the collection as five triads of poems that can be conceptualised – physically, mentally and emotionally – on the horizontal axis of ancient Near Eastern spatial orientation as a journey from the furthermost extremes of the world to its centre, the temple in Jerusalem; and at the same time on the vertical axis a journey from the deepest pit of שָׁאֵל, far from the saving presence of יְהוָה, to the dizzying heights of שָׁמַיִם, safe in his protecting and blessing arms. Psalms 120-122 and 132-134 focus on the horizontal journey from the dangerous extremes of the world to the safe haven of Jerusalem where the protective presence of יְהוָה can be experienced. From this focal point, Israel—as a family living together in harmony—experiences يְהוָה’s constant blessing. Psalms 123-125 and 129-131 focus on the vertical journey. יְהוָה, who is enthroned in heaven, prevents Israel from plunging into the depths of שָׁאֵל. His protective presence, symbolised by Mount Zion and Jerusalem, ensures the survival of his people even in times of severe oppression, an experience that is nothing short of residing in the depths of שָׁאֵל.

At the heart of the collection lie Pss 126-128, formally constituting an inclusio, “with the saving acts of יְהוָה originating in צִיּוֹן forming the protective ‘arms’ around the small individual performing his mundane tasks of sowing and reaping, building a house and raising a family.” From this perspective, “Pss 123 and 131 are the first and last poems of the triads focusing

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13 Cf. שְׁבוֹעַ in 123:1b; שְׁבוֹעַ in 131:2b.
14 For verbs, cf. שָׁבִיעָה in 123:1a; שָׁבַע in 123:2d, 3a; שָׁבַע in 123:3b, 4a; שָׁבַע and דִּבָּר in 131:1a; שָׁבַע and דִּבָּר in 131:2b. For prepositions, cf. אל in 123:1a, 2a, 2b, 2c and 131:3a; ב and מ in 131:1b; ב and מ in 131:2b, 2c.
17 Prinsloo, “The Role of Space,” 472-474. Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, The Book of Psalms (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 536, state that, “the message of the collection as a whole is that Jerusalem is the place for the coming together of the people of God for celebrations and commemorations and for acknowledging the goodness and help of the God of the Israelites.”
18 Prinsloo, “The Role of Space,” 473. The references to Zion in Pss 126:1-3 and 128:5-6 constitute an inclusio. Sowing and reaping are addressed in Ps 126:4-6 and building a house and raising a family in Pss 127:1-5 and 128:1-4.
on Israel’s *vertical* spatial journey (Pss 123-125; 129-131), framing the central triad (Pss 126-128) describing “life at-centre, in the presence of YHWH.”\(^{19}\) They constitute the bookends of the collection’s centre, while the two outer triads (Pss 120-122; 132-134) focus on the effect of Israel’s *horizontal* journey to and being present in Jerusalem. The present study focuses on individual and collective human bodies in relation to the divine body in Pss 123 and 131 and argues that the experience of these bodies *as* space and *in* space constitutes the essence of the theological message conveyed by the Songs of Ascents. The two poems resonate with each other and provide a lens through which YHWH’s *terrestrial and cosmic presence* can be appropriated by his people, individually and collectively, in their everyday lives. The study thus focuses on *bodyspace* in Pss 123 and 131,\(^{20}\) in particular, the functioning of the various bodies both *as* space(s) and *in* space(s).

**B THE BODY AS/IN SPACE**

My analysis of Pss 123 and 131 is first and foremost based on a detailed intratextual reading of both poems, which provides data for inter- and extratextual perspectives on the poems and allows the interpreter to arrive at a holistic interpretation of the texts in their literary and socio-historical context(s).\(^{21}\) I deliberately emphasise the importance of a detailed intratextual analysis as a reminder that when we interpret ancient texts, “the level of narrative discourse is the only one directly available to textual analysis.”\(^{22}\) Leonard Thompson asserts that “three worlds interact in the interpretation of any work: the social-historical milieu from which the work arose, the world of the reader or hearer, and the world created in the work itself.”\(^{23}\) Psalms 123 and 131 create

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\(^{19}\) Prinsloo, “The Role of Space,” 469.

\(^{20}\) The neologism *bodyspace* echoes the title of a collection of essays by Nancy Duncan, ed., *BodySpace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1. The book explores “the far-reaching implications of a new epistemological viewpoint based on the idea of knowledge as embodied, engendered and embedded in the material context of place and space . . . BodySpace intends to ‘place’ gender and sexuality (in both corporeal and discursive terms) squarely on the academic agenda by emphasizing place, space and other geographic concepts that are useful in contextualizing and situating social relations.”


a “world of words,” a “representational world related to but not identical to the ‘real’ world.” They speak about space in general and bodyspace in particular and “speaking about space can be a way of bridging physically distant but emotionally and ethically close worlds.” The very act of speaking represents “an interpretative horizon where vertical and horizontal positioning of one’s body in the living space has socioethical implications that, once recognised, can establish a cultural continuity that is otherwise defied by the built environment in which the interaction takes place.”

My reading of Pss 123 and 131 is influenced by three theoretical points of departure. First, I engage in a critical-spatial reading of the two poems. Yi-Fu Tuan argues that experience is “a cover-all term for the various modes through which a person knows and constructs reality.” Reality is a spatial concept, as every human experience transpires in a space and/or at a place of some kind. Critical-spatial theorists postulate that space as a geometrical concept is known and constructed through the interaction between human beings and their environment. Positivistic, binary classifications of space imply that space is either physical or abstract and consequently objective, measurable and quantifiable. Critical-spatial approaches argue that all space is social space,

28 My critical-spatial reading of Pss 123 and 131 departs from the notion that space is not a geometrical concept but a social construct. My reading is informed by the seminal approach to spatial analysis by the French Marxist philosopher, Henri Lefebvre and the adaptation and modification of Lefebvre’s theory by the American geographer, Edward Soja. For the notion of space as a three-dimensional concept, cf. Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space (trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith; Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 38–39. Lefebvre differentiates between physical or “perceived” space, mental or “conceived” space and social or “lived” space. Edward W. Soja, Thirstspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real- and Imagined Places (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 66–67, uses the terms Firstspace, Secondspace and Thirstspace for this trialectic of spaces.
29 Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience (6th printing; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 8.
experienced by human beings \textit{at the same time} as a concrete reality, an abstract conceptualisation and a social construction.\textsuperscript{30}

Second, my analysis takes into account that human beings are \textit{embodied creatures},\textsuperscript{31} which means that they are “‘emplaced’ or rooted creatures.”\textsuperscript{32} Yi-Fu Tuan asserts that, “in a literal sense, the human body is the measure of direction, location and distance.”\textsuperscript{33} Two fundamental principles determine spatial organisation namely “the posture and structure of the human body and the relations (be it close or distant) between human beings.”\textsuperscript{34} Humans “impose a schema on space by their mere presence.”\textsuperscript{35} Every person “is at the center of his world, and circumambient space is differentiated in accordance with the schema of his body”;\textsuperscript{36} we “meet the world through our bodies.”\textsuperscript{37} Consequently, “the body is an integral part of spatial analysis,”\textsuperscript{38} as our bodies “allow us to experience and conceptualise the relationships between things, places, persons (as well as regions), and to identify differences.”\textsuperscript{39} As such, the body \textit{is} a space and functions \textit{in space}.\textsuperscript{40} It is “the original tool with which humans shape their world and the substance out of which the world is shaped.”\textsuperscript{41} The body is \textit{at the same time} “a physical and biological entity, lived experience, and a center of agency, a location for speaking and acting on the world.”\textsuperscript{42} Henri Lefebvre

\textsuperscript{30} Barney Warf and Santa Arias, “Introduction: The Reinsertion of Space into the Social Sciences and Humanities,” in \textit{The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives} (ed. Barney Warf and Santa Arias; Routledge Studies in Human Geography 26; London: Routledge, 2009), 1. Lefebvre, \textit{The Production of Space}, 30–31, observes that physical space disappears as “the productive forces of a variety of social systems have forged their particular spaces.”

\textsuperscript{31} Setha M. Low, “Embodied Space(s): Anthropological Theories of Body, Space, and Culture,” \textit{Space & Culture} 6 (2003):9–18. The concept of “embodied space” resolves “the dualism of the subjective and the objective body and distinctions between the material and the representational aspects of body space” (p. 10).


\textsuperscript{33} Tuan, \textit{Space and Place}, 44.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 34.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 41.


\textsuperscript{38} Low, “Embodied Space(s),” 9.


\textsuperscript{40} Lefebvre, \textit{The Production of Space}, 170, observes that “each living body \textit{is} space and \textit{has} its space: it produces itself in space and it also produces that space” (italics original).

\textsuperscript{41} Low, “Embodied Space(s),” 12.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 9.
claims that the “whole of (social) space proceeds from the body,” which functions as a mobile spatial field “that can be understood as a culturally defined, corporeal-sensual field stretching out from the body at a given locale or moving through locales.” As a mobile spatial field, the human body is an acting body that allows human beings to assign unique, new meanings to spatial experiences. Space becomes “‘embodied’ in an actor-centered, mobile body, separate from any fixed center or place,” which “makes its own place in the world.” The notion of embodied space implies that places “are not in the landscape but simultaneously in the land, people’s minds, customs, and bodily practices.”

Third, my critical-spatial analysis of the body as space and in space not only allows for cross-cultural perspectives on similarities in human beings’ spatial construction(s) and thus for a universal spatial analysis but also acknowledges that these constructions find culture-specific expressions. What I present in this study is the concept of embodied space as it finds expression in ancient Near Eastern worldview(s) and spatial orientation(s). Nicolas Wyatt asserts that the ancient Near East shares the universal principle that orientation in space departs from the self (i.e., the human body). It is “the necessarily irreducible basis for all experience. We have to start from our own self-awareness.” The ancient Near Eastern body orientated itself in a geocentric universe imagined as consisting of three basic building blocks—heaven, the realm of the gods; earth, the dwelling place of humans; and the netherworld, an entirely negative space, the realm of the dead. Earth “generally lies as a flat

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43 Lefebvre, The Production of Space, 405.
44 Low, “Embodied Space(s),” 14. For the concept of the body as a mobile spatial field, Low draws upon the fieldwork of the anthropologist, Nancy D. Munn, “Excluded Spaces: The Figure in the Australian Aboriginal Landscape,” Critical Enquiry 22 (1996):446–465.
45 Low, “Embodied Space(s),” 14.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., 15.
48 Tuan, Space and Place, 34. Lefebvre, The Production of Space, 31.
49 Nicolas Wyatt, Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 35. According to Tuan, Space and Place, 34–50, spatial orientation departs from the upright human body that experiences reality on two planes, the vertical and the horizontal. Vertically, top and bottom represent the extremes of positive and negative experience. Horizontally, front-back and left-right represent binary orientation points intersecting in the self. Front/right signifies positive space, back/left negative space. Far and near represent the extremes of positive and negative experience. These universal principles find culture specific expression in the ancient Near East where the basic orientation point of the upright human body is towards the east (Wyatt, Space and Time, 36 n. 4).
50 Wyatt, Space and Time, 35.
51 Cf. Wayne Horowitz, Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography (MC 8; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998), xii; Annette Krüger, “Himmel—Erde—Unterwelt: Kosmologische
plate… horizontally at the centre of a great sphere. Outside this sphere, above, below, and around … lies the ‘cosmic ocean.’”\textsuperscript{52} Two axes, horizontal and vertical, intersect at the centre of this geocentric universe.\textsuperscript{53} To use Lefebvrian terminology, this centre was \textit{perceived} as the universe’s cosmic centre, \textit{conceived} as a temple on a high mountain, the terrestrial dwelling place of the high god and \textit{experienced} as “reality … the source of all benefits, and a point of intersection of all dimensions of the world. It is the point of access to heaven, and the place at which benefits may be drawn up from the underworld.”\textsuperscript{54} It represents the most sacred space, the meeting point of the divine and human spheres. In the Hebrew Bible, the temple in Jerusalem is regarded as the universe’s spatial centre.\textsuperscript{55}

In this regard, the work of Mircia Eliade on sacred and profane space is well-known and often quoted. Eliade asserts that for “religious man, space is not homogeneous; he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others.”\textsuperscript{56} There is “sacred space, and hence a strong, significant space; there are other spaces that are not sacred and so are without structure or consistency, amorphous.”\textsuperscript{57} Sacred space is “the only real and really existing space,” all other spaces represent the “formless expanse surrounding”

\textsuperscript{52} Wyatt, \textit{Space and Time}, 55.
\textsuperscript{53} Tuan, \textit{Place and Space}, 38, observes that, “the prestige of the center is well established. People everywhere tend to regard their own homeland as the ‘middle place,’ or the center of the world.”
\textsuperscript{54} Wyatt, \textit{Space and Time}, 147.
\textsuperscript{57} Eliade, \textit{The Sacred and the Profane}, 20.
sacred space. The sacred manifests itself in a “hierophany,” which simply means “that something sacred shows itself to us.” This manifestation of the sacred “reveals the fixed point, the central axis for all future orientation.”

Eliade’s “religious man” lives life “on a twofold plane; it takes its course as human existence and, at the same time, shares in a transhuman life, that of the cosmos or the gods.”

Jonathan Z. Smith acknowledges Eliade’s immense contribution to the field of Religionsgeschichte but is critical of his assumption—to use Lefebvrian terminology—that the “sacred” manifests itself ontologically as perceived (real) and/or conceived (mental) space, thereby negating the important role of lived experiences. Smith distinguishes “between a locative vision of the world (which emphasizes place) and a utopian vision of the world (using the term in its strict sense; the value of being in no place).” Both “have been and remain coeval existential possibilities which may be appropriated whenever and wherever they correspond to man’s experience of his world.” Both are available “at any time, in any place.” It resonates with Edward Soja’s insistence on the creative possibilities that may be unlocked by lived experience. Humans can imagine and thus create a “counterspace,” a thirdspace, “another” world or, maybe more aptly, “an other” world. The concept of thirdspace “opens up our spatial imaginaries to ways of thinking and acting politically that respond to all binarisms... by interjecting an-Other set of choices.” For Smith, place is more than material space, it is lived “in hearts and minds, and is socially organised.” Space is “not the recipient but rather the creation of the human project.” Human beings bring sacred space into being and they do it through ritual. Ritual “is a creative process whereby people make a meaningful world that they can inhabit.” Ritual is not “a response ‘to the sacred’; rather, something or someone

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58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., 11 (italics in the original).
60 Ibid., 21.
61 Ibid., 167.
65 Smith, “The Wobbling Pivot,” 147 (italics in the original).
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Soja, Thirdspace, 60
69 Ibid., 5.
is made sacred by ritual.” This perspective on sacred space, on Jerusalem as a holy place in the Hebrew Bible and, in particular, the spatial orientation of the body in relation to the sacred site is a much-neglected theme in biblical scholarship.

The ancient Israelite body orientated itself in this imagined universe on two planes. On the horizontal axis, orientation was towards the east. It represents what is known, what is in front of the self, hence also the past. The east represents new beginnings, vitality, life and, consequently, positive space. The west is behind the self. It represents darkness, the unknown, the end, death and, consequently, negative space. The south lies to the right of the self. It is associated “with security, well-being and the morally ‘right’. Its geographical direction is a metaphorical extension of the body-term”; hence, it represents positive space. The north then lies to the left of the self. The north represents “dangerous things and functions, including where the gods dwell, for they are dangerous powers”; hence, it signifies negative space. On the vertical axis, ascending and descending represent the extremes of positive and negative spatial orientation. The temple on Mount Zion represents the axis mundi and orientation towards this centre, both horizontally and vertically, represents the ideal existence of the self. Proximity to the centre implied holiness, reality in the sense of a real and meaningful existence and wholeness in the sense of a whole-body experience. Distance from the centre signified the breakdown of reality, approaching the end of the world and experiencing the disintegration and destruction of the self.

73 Smith, To Take Place, 105.
74 Mark K. George, “Jonathan Z. Smith’s To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual After 20 Years,” JAAR 76 (2008):781–782, indicates that Smith’s important work on ritualised human agency in the creation of sacred space has been largely ignored by biblical scholars. Jonathan Z. Smith, “Earth and Gods,” JR 49 (1969):103–127, acknowledges that in Jewish spatial imagination Jerusalem serves as a cosmic orientation point. The land of Israel is an enclave of sacredness surrounded by a demonic wasteland. Jerusalem with its temple on Mount Zion is the centre of the universe, the axis mundi, the midpoint between creation and re-creation. Any experience of “exile” is excruciating, to be cut off from land, blessing, life, creation, reality and the deity. Nonetheless, “the exile may be overcome in moments of sacred time” by enacting rituals. Smith argues that through ritual the Jewish “living room, the hic et nunc, is abolished, and once more the participants in the ritual ‘go up’ to Jerusalem as in the days before the exile” (p. 124).
75 Wyatt, Space and Time, 35–36.
76 Ibid., 36.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid., 39.
In recent decades, the body and its parts have been the subject of several influential studies in the Hebrew Bible in general and the Psalter in particular. Dörte Bester provides a wide-ranging overview of the state of research. She indicates that, although numerous body parts, their functions and emotions associated with those functions are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, from an anthropological point of view the Hebrew Bible conceives the body as a unit. To understand these conceptions, the literary technique of *synecdoche* and the principle of *stereometric thinking* should be kept in mind. These phenomena allow us to view the whole biblical body as a unit integrated in the whole biblical cosmos. Jerome H. Neyrey argues that wholeness is intrinsically linked to the concept of holiness; to experience wholeness is to experience the sacred while dividedness equals to being blemished or maimed. Wholeness finds “vivid expression in terms of the human body. One aspect of a ‘holy’ body is that it must be bodily whole.” Furthermore, wholeness is concerned “with the integrity of human thought and action.” Wholeness of thought and action ignites a human being’s spatial imagination to open ways of thinking and doing which enables him/her to embrace the paradox between sacred and profane space and to become an embodied sacred space in profane space. My reading of the body in/as space in Pss 123 and 131 can be enhanced in subsequent research by Hebrew Bible scholarship’s rekindled interest in biblical anthropology.

My analysis will be enhanced by two often-overlooked perspectives on the body. First, I find adherents of social-scientific criticism’s notion that the body consists of interpenetrating yet distinct zones of activity particularly helpful in my analysis of Pss 123 and 131. The zones of activity are eyes-heart, mouth-ears and hands-feet. In abstract terms, “eyes-heart is the zone of emotion-fused thought;
mouth-ears is the zone of self-expressive speech; and hands-feet is the zone of purposeful activity.”

Second, Leonard Thompson reminds us that the biblical world is constructed “… in such a way that it realistically represents the life of man with all its limitations while it brings that representation in dialogue with a construct of the religious imagination that passes beyond those limits.”

In the Book of Psalms, we encounter poems written from the vantage point of an “I” who “carves out a world and posits a complex of forces.” The “I” experiences two typical situations, “either the ‘I’ is at-centre, the desideratum of human existence; or he is off-centre, in a state of distress and disequilibrium.”

Since the temple in Jerusalem was conceived as the spatial centre of the universe, to “be at the temple is to be in harmony with the covenanting God. To be away from the temple is to be out of harmony with the covenanting God.” Two binary opposites determine the lived experience of the “I”—far/near and ascend/descend. Consequently, “off-centre/at-centre is a spatial image on the horizontal plane; waters-of-the-deep/presence-of-God is a spatial image on the vertical plane.”

In my reading of body-space in Pss 123-131, I will indicate that the vertical spatial image especially plays a crucial role in these poems.

**C THE BODY AS/IN SPACE IN PSS 123 AND 131**

Any interpretation of Pss 120-134 should consider the negative lived realities implied in the collection. It includes the presence of a universal Persian Empire, a small, impoverished satrapy of Yehud, a growing priestly aristocracy and the deep longing of marginalised groups (“servants”; “poor”; upright”; pious”) to be “near” and “at-centre,” i.e., to experience מעלות. They dared to imagine an other reality of several מעלות experiences such as the return from exile, pilgrimages to the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem for the pilgrimage festivals of pesaḥ, sukkōt, or

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90 Ibid., 53. Thomson indicates that 123 of the 150 poems are written at least in part from a first-person perspective.
91 Ibid., 54.
92 Ibid., 60.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid., 62.
šābuʿôt (Exod 23:14–17; 34:18-23; Deut 16:1, 9-10, 13, 16-17) or experiences appropriated by the imagination.

For a proper understanding of Ps 123, its spatial point of departure must be accounted for. We meet the lyrical I of Ps 123:1 already in the first triad of poems in the "שירי המעלות" collection (Pss 120-134). That triad (Pss 120-122) is suggestive of movement on the horizontal spatial axis. Psalm 120 commences with the plaintive cry of the lyrical I,96 who is far in “the demonic land, the wasteland, the dangerous land”; it is “not a place which is a homeland, a world where men may dwell.”97 Psalm 121 contains numerous hints that the lyrical I is on the move through dangerous territory.98 In spite of many obstacles and dangers, the poet is acutely aware of YHWH’s protective presence accompanying him on his journey.99 In Ps 122, the lyrical I completes his horizontal spatial journey from far to near. He arrives at-centre and in the company of fellow travellers, his feet are standing in Jerusalem’s gates (122:2).100

In Ps 123, the point of arrival for the horizontal journey becomes the point of departure for a vertical journey, ascending into the presence of YHWH on his heavenly throne. Two stanzas can be demarcated in this short poem. Stanza 1 (vv. 1a-2d) is a confession of complete dependence on YHWH’s mercy while Stanza 2 (vv. 3a-4b) contains an urgent prayer for merciful divine intervention.

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<td><strong>Superscript</strong></td>
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<td>כְׁעֵינֵָׂ֣י ש פְׁחָה֘ אֶל־י ֵ֪ד גְׁב ַּ֫רְׁתָ֥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>רֵּ֥עֹן שָׁנִ֫ים:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

96 The lyrical I is mentioned nine times in verses 1–2, 5–7.
97 Smith, “Earth and Gods,” 108. משע (Meshech,” 120:5a) and אֲלֵּי קָדֵר (the tents of Qedar,” 120:5b) signify “the northern and southern extremities of the experience of being in exile” (Prinsloo, “The Role of Space,” 462).
98 The lyrical I is present in verses 1-2, with four explicit first-person singular references.
100 Ibid. The lyrical I is explicitly mentioned six times in verses 1, 8-9. For first time in the "שירי המעלות" collection, the lyrical I is in the company of fellow travellers, explicitly referred to by three first-person plural references.
101 (Qal Participle active) contains a hireq compaginis (cf. GKC § 90m) that serves as an ornamental device of poetic style (cf. Pss 113:5, 6, 7, 9; 114:8; Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 3, 344).
Stanza 1 consists of two strophes. Strophe 1.1 (1ab) contains a single bicolon. A first-person singular speaker confesses his/her trust in YHWH by addressing the deity directly in the second person. The deity is not overtly identified. The delayed identification serves to heighten tension. Colon 1a is characterised by its inverted word order. The prepositional phrase אלהיך, “to you,” opens the colon, followed by the first-person singular verb נשאתי, “I lifted up” and the object עיניך, “my eyes.” The first word of the poem thus receives special emphasis, anticipating the suppliant’s complete dependence on the deity. The second person masculine singular suffix אלהיך is qualified in colon 1b by means of the relative clause יושב בשמים, “the one who sits (enthroned) in the heavens.” The perfect verbal form נשאתי, “I have lifted up,” suggests an action that commenced sometime in the past while the temporal phrase עד שיחננו in verse 2d and the urgent prayer חננו, “be merciful to us,” repeated twice in verse 3a, indicate that the deliverance longed for in verse 1ab has not materialised yet. In spatial terms, verse 1ab describes movement from the human to the divine sphere. The עינים, “eyes,” of the suppliant are longingly directed towards the heavenly sphere as the locus from which help can be expected. The phrase יושב בשמים, “the one who sits (enthroned) in heaven,” in verse 1b, suggests that the suppliant is completely dependent on his sovereign who is none other than the deity on his heavenly throne.

Strophe 1.2 (2a-d) consists of two bicola. It is linked to verse 1ab through the threefold repetition of both the noun עין and the preposition אל (1a) in verses 2a, 2b and 2c. The repetition indicates that the verb נשא (1a) is presupposed in verses 2a-c. The delayed identification of the referent of the second person masculine singular suffix in verse 1a is resolved in verse 2c; it is none other than יהוה אלהינו, “YHWH our God.” The strophe represents an intensification and delineation of the image of the lifting of the eyes (v. 1ab). Intensification is suggested by the emphatic particle הנה in verse 2a. The first-person singular

102 Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 3, 347.
104 VanGemeren, Psalms, 782, indicates that 1a and 2c thus constitute an extended chiasm and inclusio יוהו אלהינו + עין in 1a; אל + עין in 2c. Cf. also Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 3, 345.
perspective of verse 1ab is broadened to a collective perspective, indicated by the threefold repetition of the first-person plural suffix יִֽרְאֶ֥ה in verse 2cd. The action of the lifting of the eyes in verse 1ab and the concomitant relationship between the suppliant and the deity suggested by the action finds clear definition in Strophe 1.2 by means of an extended simile. Cola 2ab constitute an antithetic parallelism. The cola are structured in similar fashion (אל יִֽרְאֶ֥ה + noun + כֹּֽעֲשָׂ֣ה + noun + suffix) but verse 2a contains nouns in the masculine plural and a third-person masculine plural suffix while verse 2b contains nouns in the feminine singular and a three feminine singular suffix. In verse 2cd, the action is applied to the suppliants and their deity. Verse 2c is parallel to verse 2ab while verse 2d qualifies the action of the uplifting of the eyes with a temporal clause עד שיחננו, “until he shows mercy to us.”

Stanza 2 (vv. 3a-4c) consists of a single strophe consisting of a bicolon and a tricolon. Anadiplosis links the two stanzas. The root חָנַן of שִׁיחַנְנוּ (v. 2d), i.e., the last word of Stanza 1 is repeated in שִׁיחַנֵנוּ (v. 3a), the first word of Stanza 2. The same word is repeated as the last word of the colon with יהוה inserted between the two verbs. In this way, יהוה receives special emphasis. The reason for the double prayer for mercy is introduced in verse 3b by means of the particle כי and expressed in bodily terms. The ongoing contempt experienced by the suppliants is metaphorically likened to the extreme discomfort caused by overindulgence: רב עָבַדְנָּ֔ה שָׁבַעְּנָּ֖ם בָּֽז, “we are exceedingly satiated by contempt.” All three words are repeated in verse 4abc (cf. רַב in 4a; שָׁבַע in 4a; בָּז in 4c). There is clear progression and intensification in the poem’s final tricolon. Satiation is not expressed in general terms as in verse 3b. It is specifically נפשנו, “our innermost being,” which is satiated. Contempt is no longer expressed in general terms, but defined in two ways. It is הלעג השאננים, “the ridicule of the proud,” (4b) and הבוז לגאיים, “the contempt of arrogant people,” which cause the suppliants’ distress.

105 VanGemeren, Psalms, 782.
106 According to Brueggemann and Bellinger, Psalms, 531, the contrast between YHWH enthroned in heaven (v. 1b) and the counterterms “servants” (v. 2a) and “maid” (v. 2b) indicates that the “relationship of the two characters in this prayer is servant to king.”
107 Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 3, 345.
108 VanGemeren, Psalms, 783. According to Brueggemann and Bellinger, Psalms, 532, the “term ‘mercy’ signifies unconditional regard for, love that is completely gratuitous. The master gives himself over to the well-being of the servant.”
109 בז occurs mainly in wisdom literature and “describes the antisocial attitude toward the weaker and is thus an indicator of a distorted order of society; cf. Job 12:5; 31:34; Prov 11:12; 15:20; 23:22; 30:17” (Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 3, 348).
110 שָׁבַע (cf. Isa 32:9, 11; Amos 6:1; Zech 1:15) refers to one who is “nonchalant” or “at ease” (Brueggemann and Bellinger, Psalms, 532). Parallel to it, the hapax legomenon גאיון is used. It is usually translated by “arrogant.” It seems best to retain the Masoretic text (cf. also the Septuagint’s ὁ περηφάνος “the arrogant”) and rejects the...
In Ps 123, we meet three distinct bodies. The *individual human body* is present as a mobile spatial field and it is indeed on the move. The body *as space* is moving *in space*. It is ascending by lifting up (נשאתי in v. 1a) “my eyes” (עיני in v. 1a) to YHWH enthroned in heavens (v. 1b).\(^{111}\) The eyes represent the longing gaze, emotion-fused thought; hence, “the gaze overcomes distance and leaves misery behind, the hope of the person is reaching out.”\(^{112}\) The *divine body* is qualified by an action (הישבי בשמים in v. 1b) that signifies it as the royal body of the deity of Israel. That body is universal and unlimited; it represents ultimate and effective power.\(^{113}\) The divine body *as space* is enthroned as royal body in the heavenly sphere. It is suggested by the repetition of יד (cf. v. 2ab), which represents the zone of purposeful activity. The kind of purposeful activity imagined is defined by the threefold repetition of חנן “show mercy.” The lyrical I hopes for YHWH’s undivided attention. As slaves are completely dependent on their masters and a servant girl on her mistress, so is the lyrical I dependent on YHWH in the patron-client relationship established through YHWH’s covenantal relationship with his people.\(^{114}\)

We meet the *collective body* in two guises—first as the *collective dependent body*. The terms, עבדים, “(male) slaves” and שפחה, “(female) servant,” define the collective body. Dependence is suggested by the terms, אדוניהם, “their masters” and גברתה, “her mistress.” Surprisingly, female imagery is associated with YHWH. The lyrical I “thinks of YHWH as having male and female features.”\(^{115}\) The deity of Israel allows his followers, male and female, to enjoy a whole-body experience. The threefold repetition of עין in v. 2abc underscores the collective body’s longing gaze (cf. v. 1a). The twofold repetition of the root שב (cf. vv. 3b, 4a) signifies the grave danger faced by this collective body. They are fed up to the core with hard-to-digest food.\(^{116}\) Their longing is for the life-sustaining nourishment of YHWH’s presence. What is at stake is נפשנו—their very lives—due to the threatening presence of the *collective hostile body*; that body is described by ורוד, “contempt” (v. 3b); והלעג השעננים, “the ridicule of proud” (4a); והבוז לגאיונים and “the contempt of the arrogant” (4b). It suggests the zone of self-

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\(^{111}\) See Ps 121:1 where the action suggests anxiety but also the hint of hopeful expectation (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 347). Here the emphasis is on dependence (deClaiissé-Walford, *Psalms Books 4 and 5*, 188).


\(^{113}\) בשמים הישבי alludes to YHWH’s universal kingship (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 347).

\(^{114}\) Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, 531, emphasise that, “the look is one of gladness, awe, dependence, and glad submissiveness that is rooted in trust.”

\(^{115}\) Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 348; emphasis original. Cf. also deClaiissé-Walford, *Psalms Books 4 and 5*, 188.

\(^{116}\) Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 346.
expressive speech and the speech attests to self-centredness and pride. It is the ability of the lyrical I to imagine another reality amidst negative lived experiences that allows her/him to transpose the self from the earthly to the heavenly sphere and enjoy a whole-body experience.117

My reading of Ps 123 suggests that it represents the suppliant’s point of departure on a vertical journey to the heights of heaven. Psalm 131, then, represents his/her safe arrival in the comforting presence of YHWH. This brief poem consists of two stanzas. In Stanza 1 (vv. 1a-2c), a first-person singular speaker confesses his/her complete acquiescence in the presence of YHWH. In Stanza 2 (v. 3ab), the perspective broadens to include the people of Israel and consists of a call to Israel to always put their hope in YHWH.

**PSALM 131 (At mother’s breast…)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>A song of ascents. Of David.118</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יְהוָה</td>
<td>לֹא־גָבְּל</td>
<td>YHWH, my heart is not proud,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וְלֹא־רָמָו</td>
<td>עֵינַי</td>
<td>nor are my eyes haughty,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וְלַּכְּת</td>
<td>בְּגָדּוֹת</td>
<td>and I don’t dwell upon great matters,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וּבְּפָלַעְו</td>
<td>מֶנְי</td>
<td>things too wonderful for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>On the contrary, I have stilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נַבְגָמְל</td>
<td>עֲלֵָ֣י</td>
<td>and quieted my innermost being,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>כְֵ֭גָמֻל</td>
<td>עָלֵ֣י</td>
<td>like a weaned child upon its mother,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נֶפֶשְׁי</td>
<td>כְֵ֭גָמֻל</td>
<td>like a weaned child upon me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נֶפֶשְׁי</td>
<td>עָלֵֽי</td>
<td>is my innermost being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Put your hope, o Israel, in YHWH,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יֵלֵ֠שֶּׁר־אֶל־יְָהוָ֑ה</td>
<td>מֵַַֽעַָ֡מִּני</td>
<td>both now and for evermore.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stanza 1 consists of two strophes, each having a single verse line with the first stating the lyrical I’s state of mind in negative terms and the second in positive.

Strophe 1.1 (v. 1ab) consists of a single bicolon. It is introduced by the vocative יהוה. The word significantly appears again as the last word of the first colon of the last verse line (v. 3a) thus, the explicit mentioning of Israel’s deity forms an inclusio emphasising that the deity is the focal point of the brief poem.119 Colon 1a constitutes an internal syntactic and semantic parallelism (cf. לא־גבה לבי // ולא־ראיבב לבר, i.e., negative particle לא + perfect verb + body part with first-person singular suffix). In contrast to the arrogance and self-centredness of the collective hostile body in Ps 123:3-4, here, neither the דברים as centre of human intelligence

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117 Soja, *Thirdspace*, 5; Neyrey, “Wholeness,” 204. Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, 532–533, poignantly state, “(w)hat a way to think of prayer, as a recharacterization of social relationships with the new character, YHWH, God of mercy, as the defining reference.”

118 Psalm 131 is one of four in the שירים המעלות collection ascribed to David (cf. Pss 122:1; 124:1; 133:1). The significance of this ascription to David cannot be discussed in the present study. I agree with deClissé-Walford, *Psalms Books 4-5*, that the poem’s “metaphoric imagery allows the reader or hearer to move past the psalm’s ‘royal’ overtones and find a rich feminine picture of God.”

nor the עין as instrument of the longing gaze is engaged in frenetic activity.  
Colon 1b is semantically parallel to colon 1a but whereas the references to body parts in 1a function as pars pro toto for the suppliant’s body, no explicit reference is made to any body part in 1b. However, the feet are implied by the verbal action ولא הלכתי, “I don’t dwell upon.” Colon 1b contains an internal chiasm (cf. ולא הלכתי בגדלות, i.e., first person singular verb + preposition ב + adjective feminine plural X ובנפלאות ממני, i.e., preposition ב + noun feminine plural + preposition with first person singular suffix). The strophe thus suggests the lyrical I’s whole-body experience as lacking frantic activity.

Strophe 1.2 (v. 2abc) consists of a tricolon introduced by the adversative particle אם־לא, “on the contrary.” The adversative particle suggests that the actions described in this strophe are the opposite of those described in the previous one. Colon 2a contains an internal syntactic and semantic parallelism (cf. שלתי ודוממתי נפשי, i.e., two synonymous first person singular perfect verbs with نفسי doing double duty as object for both verbs). Cola 2bc contains a simile and through repetition of כגמל, “like a weaned child” (cf. 2b, 2c), likens the stilling and quieting of the lyrical I’s innermost being (cf. the repetition of نفسי in v. 2a and 2c) in YHWH’s presence to the content a weaned child experiences on its mother’s lap (v. 2c). In the presence of YHWH, the lyrical I enjoys a whole-body experience of peace.

Stanza 2 (vv. 3a-4c) consists of a single strophe with only one bicolon. The perspective extends from the lyrical I to include the people of Israel. The vertical journey of the lyrical I (Ps 123) becomes an admonition to Israel to put its trust also in YHWH (יחל ישראל אל־יהוה in v. 3a; cf. Ps 130:7). By means of the

120 deClaissé Walford, Jacobsen, and La Neel Tanner, Book of Psalms, 565.
121 deClaissé-Walford, Psalms Books 4-5, 217–218, remarks that, “(t)he reference to ‘heart’ (לב, mind) reflects the inner demeanor of the psalm singer, while ‘eyes’ and ‘occupied’ (הלך, walk about) reflect the outer demeanor and actions of the psalmist.”
122 VanGemeren, Psalms, 803 argues that the emphasis should not be on the age of a גאמל, “weaned child,” but on the image of utter content on the mother’s lap (so also Brueggemann and Bellinger, Psalms, 553). The interpretation of the image is controversial (cf. Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 3, 444–445). deClaissé-Walford, Jacobsen, and La Neel Tanner, Book of Psalms, 565–566, remark that, “the metaphor suggests a child who no longer cries out in hunger for the mother’s breast, but who seeks out the mother for her warm embrace and nurturing care. The verb, however, might also describe a suckling child who is well-fed and fully satisfied, resting peacefully in the mother’s embrace. Both metaphors are a powerful image of one who finds calmness and quiet in the embrace of God.”
123 Gillmayr-Bucher, “Body Images,” 321, indicates that نفس here “evokes the image of an accelerated breathing that can be calmed once anxiety or excitement has passed. Simultaneously the نفس is used as a synecdoche and represents the psalmist’s state of mind. Most important, however, is her/his relation to the body. From that point of view the psalmist becomes the integrating instance.”
merism ("both now and forever more" in v. 3b), the lyrical I implies that it should not be a temporary emergency measure in a time of crisis but a constant way of life.

In both poems, a first-person singular speaker commences the narration (123:1ab; 131:1a-2b). In Ps 123:1ab, the first-person singular narration is short, consisting of a single verbal form (מלך) and pronominal suffix (אני) in colon 1a. In Ps 123:2abc the first-person singular narration extends to a first-person plural perspective by means of two first-person plural pronominal suffixes (נפשנו in 2b; שיחנו in 2c). The collective perspective is expanded in Ps 123:3ab by means of two first-person plural pronominal suffixes (חננו[2X] in 3a) and one first-person plural verbal form (שבענו in 3b) and in Ps 123:4ab by means of one first-person plural suffix (נפשנו in 4a). In Ps 131:1-2, the first-person singular narration is longer, consisting of six first-person singular pronominal suffixes (לבי and עיני in 1a; ממני in 1b; נשתי in 2a; עלי and נשתי in 2c) and three first-person singular verbal forms (הלכתי in 1a; שויתי and דוממתי in 2a) and never extends to a first-person plural perspective.

Psalm 123 resonates in many ways in Ps 131. Again, we meet three distinct bodies but this time the collective hostile body is absent. In contrast to the moving, ascending individual body of the lyrical I in Ps 123:1, the body of the lyrical I in Ps 131 is at rest. The mobile spatial field arrived at centre and it is at rest. The body as space is at rest in positive space. Both "my heart" and "my eyes" (v. 1a) represent the complete opposite of the arrogance and self-centredness of the collective hostile body in Ps 123:3-4. The lyrical I’s longing gaze and emotion-fused thought brought it to its goal. It is לא גבה, ”not proud” and לא רמו, ”not haughty” (v. 1a), וראיה שהמכלו, "and I don’t dwell upon great matters, things too wonderful for me.” The lyrical I is no longer ascending, no longer involved in purposeful, even frantic activity. In verse 2a, the adversative particle אם-לא suggests a strong contrastive attitude, שלחתי והחרים, “I have stilled and quieted my innermost being.” The entire human being came to rest to the core. נשתי here indeed “does not represent any specific aspect of life, but life itself.”

The associations created by the extended simile כגמל → אמא → נפש in verses 2bc suggest complete tranquillity. All anxiety or excitement has passed. The royal divine body of Ps 123 becomes the caring, nurturing body of a mother. The repetition of the root שבע in Ps 123:3b, 4a resonates in this extended simile in Ps 131. Through the repetition of נשתי in Ps 131:2a, 2c, the negative implications of שבע are completely reversed. The hard-to-digest food of

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125 Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 3, 452 state, “psalm translates the relationship child-mother to the relationship human being-God.”
suffering has been replaced by the nurturing presence of YHWH, the caregiver, the “mother-god” of Israel.

This experience of being “at-centre” becomes the basis for the lyrical I’s call upon the collective human body in Ps 131:3a: “put your hope in YHWH, o Israel!” (cf. Ps 130:7). This is a call to Israel to persevere in the face of enmity and adversity based on YHWH’s covenant loyalty (cf. Ps 130:7-8). That hope is not intended to be a temporary emergency measure in times of crisis. The phrase “both now and forever more” (cf. Pss 121:8; 125:2) indicates that the lyrical I challenges Israel to make his/her experience of contentment in the presence of YHWH a constant way of life. The lyrical I’s ability to imagine an other reality amidst hardship and life’s uncontrollable and unimaginable challenges provides her/him the opportunity to enjoy a whole-body experience in the presence of the divine caregiver.

D CONCLUSION

In this study, Pss 123 and 131 are read from a bodily perspective with three specific perspectives on the ancient Near Eastern body namely the body as space, the body in space and the body as a mobile spatial field. In the context of the Shir ha-Ma’alot (Pss 120-134), Pss 123 and 131 form the bookends of Israel’s vertical journey to be “at-centre.” Psalm 123 represents the starting point of this journey and Ps 131 the destination. The lyrical I of Pss 123 and 131 dares to imagine an other reality through various ma’alot experiences. The two poems resonate with each other and provide a lens through which YHWH’s terrestrial and cosmic presence can be appropriated by his people, individually and collectively, through their bodies as space and in space in their everyday lives, a perspective expressly emphasised in Pss 126-128, which can be regarded as the heart of the collection of fifteen ma’alot songs.

E BIBLIOGRAPHY


126 Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms 3, 452–453 note the close, but contrasting relationship between Ps 130 and 131. In Ps 131, YHWH is depicted as the forgiving father and in Ps 131, as the nurturing mother. Both images are a source of hope for Israel (Pss 130:7;131:3) and pave the way for admission into the sanctuary, an encounter that will be described in Pss 132–134.
127 Soja, Thirdspace, 5; Neyrey, “Wholeness,” 204. Brueggemann and Bellinger, Psalms, 532–533, poignantly state, “(w)hat a way to think of prayer, as a recharacterization of social relationships with the new character, YHWH, God of mercy, as the defining reference.”


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