

5 They do not know, and they do not understand,
in darkness they wander—
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

6 Even I have declared, “You are deities [*’ēlōhîm ’attem*],
and children of the Highest [*’ūbnē ’elyôn*], each of you.”

7 Nevertheless, like a human, you will die,
And as one of the princes, you will fall.

8 Rise up, O Deity [*qûmâ ’ēlōhîm*], judge the earth!
For you will inherit all the nations [*tinḥal bəkol-haggōyim*]!

The first verse sets the stage by describing the deity taking their position among the deities of the divine council to render judgment.⁵⁸ This imagery immediately invokes the DEITY and DIVINE COUNCIL domains, as well as the “YHWH” profile. The use of *špṭ* profiles “judge” against these domains, which itself activates the SOCIAL MONITORING domain associated with it. This is a divine council court scene, and someone has been naughty. Whatever experiences the hearer or reader has with these domains will be the context within which the rest of the psalm will be interpreted. Verse 2 begins with the question *’ad-māṭay*, “how long?,” which is prototypically associated elsewhere in the Psalms with the complaint, a motif within the lament genre.⁵⁹ The divine council type-scene appears to be conflated with a complaint, which may be an innovative way to frame the divine or prophetic lawsuit known as the *rîb*, and aim it at the deities themselves. Seth Sanders has suggested “judicial complaint” as a possible description of this hybrid genre.⁶⁰

The deities of the divine council are addressed with the second person plural verbs that follow, describing unjust judgment, favor toward the wicked, and neglect of the weak, the low, and the orphan. Verses 2–4 read both as charges against the deities and accusations as part of the complaint. SOCIAL MONITORING comes into greater focus at this point, and the failure to uphold the social standards being described by the ruling deity likely begins to activate the PATRON DEITY, NATIONAL DEITY, and FAILURE TO ACT domains in reference to the responsibilities

⁵⁸ *’ādat-’ēl* is literally, “council of El,” but by this period this was likely a frozen form wherein the *nomen rectum* would be understood as the adjectival genitive (thus “divine council”). The Septuagint’s *synagōgē theōn*, “council of deities,” may suggest a more original *’ādat-’ēlîm*, “council of deities” (Gonzalez 1963, 299; Tate 1990, 329 n. 1.d).

⁵⁹ See, for instance, Pss 74:10; 80:5; 90:13. On the complaint, see Broyles 1989. On the lament, see Mandolfo 2014, 114–30. Susan Niditch includes an insightful discussion of the autobiographical dimensions of the lament in Niditch 2015, 55–63. On genre in the psalms more broadly, see Gunkel and Begrich 1998; Nasuti 1999.

⁶⁰ Personal communication.