

# Psalm 75—Logotechnical Prosodic Analysis

## Translation, Analysis, and Textual Notes

### Title: A Prophetic Oracle

### Psalm 75:1–11

#### A. *Invocation (75:1–2)*

[3.5]

75:1	To the maestro: “Do not Destroy” //	9 1	3 3 0
	Mizmor / belonging to Asaph—a Song //	<u>10 2</u>	3 0 3
75:2	We praise you \ <sup>a</sup> O God / we praise you /	19 2	4 4 0
	for your name is near //	8 1	2 2 0
	they declare / your wondrous works //	<u>11 2</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
		75:1–2	<b>14 9 5</b>

#### B. *Oracle—Part One: God Judges with Equity (75:3–4)*

[4.4]

75:3	(God says:) For / I will select an appointed time //	<u>8 2</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
			<b>17 12 5</b>
	It is I / who judge with equity //	12 2	3 0 3
75:4	the earth melts / and all you dwell in it //	15 2	4 4 0
	it is I / who have firmly set / its pillars— <i>Selah</i> //	<u>11 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		75:3–4	<b>14 7 7</b>

#### C. *Oracle—Part Two: Evildoers are Warned (75:5)*

[2.2]

75:5	I tell the arrogant / “No more arrogance!” //	18 2	4 4 0
	and the evil doers / “Raise not (your) horn!” //	<u>18 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		75:2–5	<b>30 17 13</b>

#### D. *Middle: Exaltation Comes from the Center (YHWH’s Sanctuary) (75:6–7)*

[3.3]

75:6	Raise not on high / <sup>a</sup> your horn //	15 2	4 4 0
	speak (not) rudely with insolent pride //	<u>13 1</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		75:4–6	<b>23 12 11</b>
		75:1–6	<b>43 24 19</b>
75:7	<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">For</span> not from the east \ <sup>a</sup> or from the west //	16 1	4 4 0
	and not / from the desert (comes) lifting up //	<u>10 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		75:3–7	<b>36 19 17</b>

E. *Prophetic Response—Part One: God is the Judge (75:8)*

[2.2]

75:8	For God / <sup>a</sup> is the judge //	11 2	3 3 0
	he brings one low / and lifts another up //	<u>10 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		75:3-8	<b>43 22 21</b>
		75:2-8	<b>51 28 23</b>
		75:1-8	<b>57 31 26</b>

F. *Prophetic Response—Part Two: The Cup of YHWH's Wrath (75:9)*

[4.4]

75:9	For a cup is in the hand of YHWH /	10 1	4 4 0
	and the wine foams / it is heavily spiced /	<u>13 2</u>	<u>4 4 0</u>
		75:3-9a	<b>51 30 21</b>
	And he pours from it //	<u>6 1</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		75:8-9b	<b>17 13 4</b>
	Surely its dregs / they must drain and drink //	13 2	4 4 0
	all / the wicked of the earth //	<u>8 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		75:9	<b>17 14 3</b>
		75:5-9	<b>46 29 17</b>
		75:2-9	<b>68 42 26</b>

G. *Commitment (75:10-11)*

[5.3]

75:10	And as for me / I will declare it forever //	12 2	3 3 0
	I will sing praises / to the God / <sup>a</sup> of Jacob //	<u>15 3</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		75:9-10	<b>23 17 6</b>
		75:5-10	<b>52 32 20</b>
		75:1-10	<b>80 48 32</b>
75:11	And all the horns of the wicked I will cut off //	15 1	4 4 0
	but they will be exalted / the horns of the righteous //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		75:6-11	<b>51 32 19</b>
		75:4-11	<b>67 40 27</b>
		75:3-11	<b>73 43 30</b>
		75:2-11	<b>81 49 32</b>
		75:1-11	<b>87 52 35</b>

Scansion in Accentual Stress Units: (3.5).(4.4).(2.2).(3.3).(2.2).(4.4).(5.3)  
 (8+8+4) + 6 + (4+8+8) = 20 + 6 + 20 = **46** (= **23** x 2)  
 or: **26 // 26**

Concentric Compositional Formula: **87 = 43 + 1 + 43** [word-count—with heading]  
 or: **44 // 44** [with pivot counted in each half]

## Notes:

- 75:2<sup>a</sup> Reading *‘azlā ləḡarmēh* in BHS as conjunctive.  
 75:6<sup>a</sup> Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munaḥ* immediately before *ʾatnāḥ* in BHS as disjunctive.  
 75:7<sup>a</sup> Reading the *deḥî* in BHS as conjunctive.  
 75:8<sup>a</sup> Reading *merkā* preceded by *ga‘ya* in BHS as disjunctive.  
 75:10<sup>a</sup> Reading *munaḥ* preceded immediately by *ga‘ya* (= *meteg*) in Ginsburg and Letteris as disjunctive. BHS omits *ga‘ya* (= *meteg*).

## Summary of the Logotechnical Prosodic Analysis

1. In terms of balance in mora-count, Psalm 75 has five sections: 75:1–2, 3–4, 5–8, 9 and 10–11.

A	75:1–2	3 balanced dyads:	(9+10) + (12+6) + (8+11)	= 19 + 19 + 19	morae
		{also to be read with 75:3-4 as:}			
B	75:1–4	balanced dyad	(9 + 10)	= 9 + 10	morae
	75:3–4	2 balanced triads + pivot:	(19+8+11) + 8 + (12+15+11)	= 38 + 8 + 38	morae
X	75:5–8	3 balanced dyad:	(18 + 18)	= 18 + 18	morae
		2 balanced dyads:	(15 + 13) + (16 + 10)	= 28 + 26	morae
		balanced dyad:	(11 + 10)	= 11 + 10	morae
B	75:9	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	(10+13) + 6 + (13+8)	= 23 + 6 + 21	morae
A	75:10–11	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	(12 + 15) + (15 + 12)	= 27 + 27	morae

2. The first section (75:1–2) is in two parts:

- 75:1–2     **14** words

3. The second section (75:3–4) is in two parts, which are to be read together with 75:2 as a unit arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 75:2, 3a and 3b–4.

- 75:1–3a    **17** words
- 75:3–4     **14** words

4. The third section (75:5–8), the structural center of Psalm 75, has three parts arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 75:5, 6, 7 and 8.

- 75:2–5     **17** words before *atnach*
- 75:4–6     **23** words
- 75:1–6     **43** [= **17+26**] words
- 75:3–7     **17** words after *atnach*
- 75:3–8     **43** [= **17+26**] words
- 75:2–8     **51** (= **17 x 3**) words and **23** words after *atnach*
- 75:1–8     **26** words after *atnach*

5. The fourth section (75:9) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 75:9a, 9b and 9c.

- 75:3–9a    **51** (= **17 x 3**) words

- 75:8–9b    **17** words
- 75:9        **17** words
- 75:5–9     **46** (= **23** x 2) words
- 75:2–9     **68** (= **17** x 4) words and **26** words after *atnach*

6. The fifth section (75:10–11) has two parts: 75:10 and 11.

- 75:9–10    **23** word
- 75:5–10    **52** (= **26** x 2) words and **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words before *atnach*
- 75:1–10    **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words after *atnach*
- 75:6–11    **51** (= **17** x 3) words and **32** words before *atnach*
- 75:4–11    **40** [= **17+23**] words before *atnach*
- 75:2–11    **49** [= **17+32 = 23+26**] words and **32** (=2x2x2x2x2) words after *atnach*
- 75:1–11    **52** (= **26** x 2) words before *atnach*

## Observations

1. In terms of the 87 words in Psalm 75, the **arithmological center** falls on the word כִּי (“for”) in 75:7a, with 43 words on either side. The *Concentric Compositional Formula* is:

$$87 = 43 + 1 + 43 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 44 // 44 \quad \text{[word count with pivot in each half]}$$

One candidate for the **meaningful center** is found by adding three words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

תִּדְבְּרוּ בְצוֹאֵר עֵתֶק    You will speak with insolent pride;  
 לֹא מִמּוּצָא וּמִמְעַרְבַּי    **כִּי**    For it is not from the east nor from the west.

In this instance, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$87 = 40 + 7 + 40 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 47 // 47 \quad \text{[word count with pivot in each half]}$$

Another candidate for the **meaningful center** is found by adding six words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

תִּרְיִמוּ לְמָרוֹם קַרְנֵיכֶם    You lift on high your horn;  
 תִּדְבְּרוּ בְצוֹאֵר עֵתֶק    You speak with insolent pride.  
 לֹא מִמּוּצָא וּמִמְעַרְבַּי    **כִּי**    For not from the east nor from the west.  
 וְלֹא מִמְדִּבְרַי הַרְרִים    And not from the desert (comes) lifting up.

In this instance, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$87 = 37 + 13 + 37 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 50 // 50 \quad \text{[word count with pivot in each half]}$$

A more convincing **meaningful center** is found by adding eleven words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

ולרשעים	And as for the wicked—
אל תרימו קרן	Do not lift up the horn;
אל תרימו למרום קרנכם	Do not lift up on high your horn.
תדברו בצואר עתק	You speak with insolent pride;
כי לא ממוצא וממערב	For not from the east nor from the west;
ולא ממדבר הררים	And not from the desert (comes) lifting up.
כי אלהים שפט	For God is the judge;
זה ישפיל	This one he will put down.

In this instance, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$87 = 32 + 23 + 32 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 55 // 55 \quad \text{[word count with pivot in each half]}$$

{32 = 2x2x2x2x2 and 55 = 23 + 32}

2. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 75 as a whole, the basic building blocks in each poetic “verseline” are the **briques** (primary syntactic accentual stress units). These sub-units are delineated by the Masoretes, who marked the boundaries with one of the following:
- **Soph Pasuq** A large colon following a word signifies the end of a verse, which does not always coincide with the end of a sentence.
  - **Atnach** A small caret-like mark (like ^) beneath the consonantal text, pointing upward, is used to divide most verses. Its primary importance for our purposes concerns its use in the matter of numerical composition—i.e., the total word-count in each line is divided into the number of words before and after *atnach*.
  - **Ole Weyored** A combination of two accentual signs: a caret-like mark above the consonantal text, pointing to the left, used together with the accent *merka* (an upright line beneath the consonantal text slanting to the right). These two marks usually appear on the same word, but when that word is monosyllabic the *merka* falls on the following word. This major divider is usually considered to be a stronger disjunctive accent than *atnach*.

In the prosodic analysis presented in the translation (above), the presence of these three markers is indicated with a double slash (/). Psalm 75 has 26 **briques**, 23 of which are marked by: *soph pasuq* (11 times, at the end of each verse), *atnach* (11 times, in each verse, except verse 7), and *ole weyored* (1 time, verse 9). The remaining three **briques** are marked by *deḥî* (1 time, verse 2), (1 time, verse 9), and *ṣinnôr* (1 time, verse 9).

3. The prosodic structure of Psalm 75, in terms of these 26 **briques**, may be displayed as follows [ ^ represents *atnach*; : represents *soph pasuq*; † represents *ole weyored*, and ‡ represents all other accents ]:

I	A	<sup>1</sup> <i>lamnaṣēaḥ ʾal tašḥēt</i> ^	<i>mizmôr laʾāsāp šîr</i> :
		<sup>2</sup> <i>hōḏîṇû laḵā ʾēlōhîm hōḏîṇû</i> †	<i>wəqārôḇ šəmeḵā</i> ^ <i>sippərû niḵləʾōtēḵā</i> :
	B	<sup>3</sup> <i>kî ʾeqqaḥ mōʿēḏ</i> ^	<i>ʾānî mēsārîm ʾešpōt</i> :
		<sup>4</sup> <i>nəməōgîm ʾeres wəḵol yōšəḇḇēhā</i> ^	<i>ʾānōkî tikkantî ʿammûdēhā</i> <b>selāh</b> :
II	X	<sup>5</sup> <i>ʾāmartî lahōlālîm ʾal tāhōllû</i> ^	<i>wəlārəšāʿîmû ʾal tārîmû qāren</i> :
		<sup>6</sup> <i>ʾal tārîmû lammārôm qarnəḵem</i> ^	<i>təḏabbərû ḥəṣawwāʾr ʿātāq</i> :
		<sup>7</sup> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">kî</span> <i>lōʾ mimmošəʾ ûmimmaʿārāḇ</i> ^	<i>wəlōʾ mimmiḏbar hārîm</i> :
		<sup>8</sup> <i>kî ʾēlōhîm šōpēt</i> ^	<i>zeh yašpîl wəzeh yārîm</i> :
III	B	<sup>9</sup> <i>kî ḵōs bəyaḏ yḥwh</i> † <i>wəyayin ḥāmar mālēʾ meseḵ</i> † <i>wayaggēr mizzeḥ</i> ‡	<i>ʾaḵ šəmārêhā yimšû yištû</i> ^ <i>kol rišʿéʾāreṣ</i> :
	A	<sup>10</sup> <i>waʾānî ʾaggîḏ laʿōlām</i> ^	<i>ʾəzammərāh lēʾlōhē yaʿāqōḇ</i> :
		<sup>11</sup> <i>wəḵol qarnē rəšāʿîm ʾəgaddēa</i> ^	<i>tərômamnāh qarnōt šaddîq</i> :

4. The 26 **briques** (primary accentual stress units) are distributed within five strophes in Psalm 75 as follows: 24 = (5 + 4) + 8 + (5 + 4) = 9 + 8 + 9). The **concentric compositional formula** (on the basis of primary stress units) is **17 // 17**, with the central pivot (vv 5–6) included in each half.

5. The **arithmological center** of Psalm 75 falls on the word kî (“for”) in 75:7a, with a total of 43 words on either side. Psalm 75 has 26 **briques**, 12 “verselines” (counting the heading in 1:1 as a single verseline), 5 “strophes” and 3 “cantos.” The **arithmological center** is in the middle “canto,” the middle “strophe,” the two middle “verselines,” and the two middle **briques**.

6. There is divergence of opinion in regards the number of “cola” in Psalm 75:

Christensen	26	<i>briques</i> (including the heading)
Fokkeman	??	cola (excluding the heading)
Labuschagne	24	cola (excluding the heading)
Terrien	23	cola (including the heading)
van der Lugt	??	cola (?), file not yet posted on website

7. Determining the details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 75 as a whole calls for input on the part of others in the Psalms Group, as we consider the rhetorical features in greater depth and further information contained in the *teʿamim* of this particular text.

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