

Psalm 43:1–5

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

Lament of an Individual

Ps 43:1–5

A. *Defend My Cause against the Ungodly and Deliver Me* (43:1) [3.3]

43:1	Vindicate me, O God /	10 1	2 2 0
	and defend my cause / against an ungodly people //	<u>9 2</u>	<u>5 5 0</u>
		42:10–43:1b	41 32 9
	From the one who is deceitful / ^a	7 1	2 0 2
	and from the unjust / ^b deliver me //	<u>11 2</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
		42:10–43:1	45 32 13

B. *You Are My Stronghold so Why Must I Walk in Darkness?* (43:2) [3.3]

43:2	For you / are the God of my stronghold /	16 2	4 4 0
	why have you cast me off //	<u>10 1</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
			17 13 4
	Why must I be in darkness / ^a as I walk about /	11 2	3 3 0
	oppressed by the enemy //	<u>7 1</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		42:11–43:2	46 37 9

C. *Send Your Light and Bring Me to Your Holy Mountain* (43:3) [2.2]

43:3	Send your light and your truth /	11 1	3 3 0
	indeed they will lead me //	<u>10 1</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		43:1–3b	27 23 4
	They will bring me to the mountain of your holiness /	12 1	4 0 4
	and to your dwelling place //	<u>9 1</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
		43:1–3	33 23 10

D. *I Will God to the Altar of God and Praise You with the Harp* (43:4) [3.3]

43:4	Then I will go ^a to the altar of God (Elohim) /	15 1	4 4 0
	to El /	<u>3 1</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		43:3–4b	17 11 6
	My exceeding joy //	<u>6 1</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		43:2–4c	29 23 6
	And I will praise you with the harp /	9 1	2 2 0
	O God / ^b my God //	<u>10 2</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>

E. **Why Are You Disquieted? Hope in God—for I Shall Praise Him** (43:5) [3.3]

43:5	Why are you downcast ^a O my soul /	10 1	3 3 0
	and why are you disquieted within me //	<u>11 1</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		43:3-5a	29 23 6
	Hope in God /	<u>12 1</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		42:10-43:5c	87 68 19
	For I shall again praise him //	9 1	3 3 0
	my Savior / and my God //	<u>14 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		43:3-5	26 23 3
		43:1-5	59 46 13
		42:2-43:3	187 140 37
		42:1-43:3	191 144 37

Scansion in SAS Units: (3.3) . (3.3).(2.2).(3.3) . (3.3) 6 + (6+4+6) + 12 = 6 + 16 + 6 = 28

Concentric Compositional Formula (Psalm 43): 59 = 29 + 1 + 29 [word count]

Concentric Compositional Formula (Psalms 42 + 43): 191 = 95 + 1 + 95 [word count]

Notes:

43:1^a Reading a disjunctive here; Letteris has *mehuppak* and *mēreḳā* on **וְאִנִּי**; BHS has *məhuppak* plus *maqṣeph* (not present in Letteris).

43:1^b Reading the sequence of *tarḥâ* followed by *munah* in BHS as disjunctive

43:2^a Reading *mēreḳā* preceded immediately by *ga'ya* (= *meṭeg*) in BHS as disjunctive.

43:4^a Reading *məhuppak ləḡarmēh* here in BHS as conjunctive.

43:4^a Reading *mēreḳā* here in BHS as conjunctive.

43:5^a Reading *'azlâ ləḡarmēh* here in BHS as conjunctive.

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Psalm 43 has five strophes: 43:1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

A	43:1	2 balanced dyads:	[10 + 9] + [7 + 11]	= 19 + 18	morae
B	43:2	balanced dyad + pivot:	[16 + 10 + (11 + 7)]	= 16 + 10 + 18	morae

X	43:3	2 balanced dyads:	[11 + 10] + [12 + 9]	= 21 + 21	morae
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B'	43:4	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	[15 + 3] + 6 + [9 + 10]	= 18 + 6 + 19	morae
A'	43:5	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	[10 + 11] + 12 + [9 + 14]	= 21 + 12 + 23	morae

2. The 1st strophe (43:1) is a single part with two subdivisions: 43:1ab and 1cd.
 - 42:10–43:1 **32** words before *atnach*
3. The 2nd strophe (43:2) is a single part with two subdivisions: 43:2ab and 2cd
 - 42:11–43:2 **46** (= **23** x 2) words
4. The 3rd strophe (43:3) is a single part with two subdivisions: 43:3ab and 3cd.
 - 43:1–3 **23** words before *atnach*
5. The 4th strophe (43:4) is a single part with two subdivisions: 43:4ab and 4cd.
 - 43:3–4 **17** words before *atnach*
6. The 5th strophe (43:5) is a single part with three subdivisions: 5a, 5c and 5de.
 - 43:4–5 **26** words and **23** words before *atnach*
 - 43:1–5 **46** (= **23** x 2) words before *atnach*
 - 42:2–43:5 **187** (= **17** x 11) words [Psalms 42 and 43 without heading]

Observations

1. The five strophes in Psalm 43 may be outlined in a menorah pattern, which is determined primarily on prosodic grounds, as follows:

A	Vindicate me and defend my cause against the ungodly	[4] 43:1ab
B	Deliver me from those who practice deceit	[3] 43:1cd
C	You are the God of my stronghold; why must I walk in darkness?	[6] 43:2
X	Send your light and bring me to your holy mountain	[6] 43:3
C'	I will go to the altar of God and praise you with the harp	[6] 43:4
B'	Why are you disquieted, O my soul?	[3] 43:5ab
A'	Hope in God—for I shall praise him	[4] 43:5cd

2. In terms of the 59 words in Psalm 43, the **arithmological center** falls on the word **הר** ("mountain") in 43:3b, with 29 words on either side. The initial concentric compositional formula is: 59 = 29 + 1 + 29 (word-count).

The **meaningful center** is found by including seven words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

3	שלח אורך ואמתך תמה ינחוני	Send your light and your truth,
	יביאוני אל הר קדשך	They will bring me to your holy mountain
	ואל משכנותיך	And to your dwelling place
4	ואבואה אל מזבח אלהים	And I will go to the altar of God

In this instance, the concentric compositional formula becomes:

59 = 22 + 15 + 22 [word count—there is no heading in Psalm 43]

3. Within Psalm 42–43, the following five words in 42:9–10 make up a **pivot pattern** in the arithmological center of the two psalms as a single literary entity, with 93 words on either side:

לאל חיי אומרה To the living God I will speak,
לאל סלעי To God, my Rock.

These words highlight the content of Psalms 42–43 taken as a whole. When these five words in the arithmological center are read as part of each half of Psalms 42–43 [in a **pivot pattern**], the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

191 = 93 + 5 + 93 [word count—with heading in Psalm 42:1]

4. The 22-word **meaningful framework**, with the 8-word framework highlighted in gray, reads as follows:

1 שפטני אלהים Vindicate me, O God.
 וריבה ריבי מגוי לא־חסיד And defend my cause against an ungodly people.
 מאיש־מרמה From the one who is deceitful;
 ועולה תפלחני and from the unjust deliver me.

5 ומה־תחמי עלי And why are you disquieted within me?
 הוחילי לאלהים כי־עוד אֶודנו Hope in God, for again I shall praise him,
 ישועת פני ואלהי My saviour and my God.

7. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

59 = 28 + 3 + 28 word-count

59 = 22 + 15 + 22

59 = 11 + 37 + 11

59 = 4 + 51 + 4

28 = 6 + 16 + 6 SAS units

19 = 4 + 11 + 4 **briques** (primary SAS units)

8. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 43, the basic building blocks (**briques**) in each poetic **verset** are the **primary SAS (syntactic accentual stress) units**. These sub-units are delineated by the Masoretes, who marked most of 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*.

- **Oleh 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 with the translation (above), the presence of these three primary disjunctive markers is indicated with a double slash (/). Psalm 43 has 19 **briques**, 11 of which are marked: by *soph pasuq* (5 times, at the end of each verse), *atnach* (3 times, in each verse, except vv. 2 and 4), and *oleh weyored* (3 times, in verses 2, 4 and 5). The boundary of the remaining eight **briques** is marked by *rəḥîa^c* (4 times, in vv. 1, 2 and 4 [twice]), *rəḥîa^c muḡraš* (v. 3), *šinnor* (2 times, in vv. 2 and 5) and *tarḥa* (v. 1).

9. The prosodic structure of Psalm 43, in terms of its **briques** (primary SAS units), may be displayed as follows: ^ represents *atnach*; : represents *soph pasuq*; † represents *oleh weyored*; and † represents all other accent markers.

A¹ *šāpəṭēnî ʔəlōhîm wəriḥbāh riḥî[†]* *miggôy lōʔ ḥāsîd[^]*
mēʔiš mirmāh[†] *wəʕawlāh təḫalləṭēnî :*

B² *kî ʔattāh ʔəlōhê māʕuzzi[†]* *lāmāh zənaḥtānî[†]*
lāmāh qōḏēr ʔəḥallək[†] *bəlahəš ʔōyēḫ :*

X³ *šəlah ʔōrəkā waʔmittəkā hēmmāh yanḥûnî[^]*
*wəḫîʔûnî ʔel **har** qōḏšəkā[†]* *wəʔel miškənôṭəkā :*

B'⁴ *wəʔəḫōʔāh ʔel mizbaḥ ʔəlōhîm[†]* *ʔel ʔəl šimḥaṭ ḡilî[†]*
wəʔōḏəkā ḫəkinnôr[†] *ʔəlōhîm ʔəlōḥāy :*

A'⁵ *mah tištôḥāḥî nāpšî[†]* *ûmah tehēmî ʕālāy[†]*
hōḥîlî lēʔlōhîm kî ʕōḏ ʔōḏennû[^] *yəšûʕōṭ pānay wēʔlōḥāy :*

10. The 22 **briques** are distributed in 5 strophes in Psalm 43 as follows:

$$19 = 4 + (4 + 3 + 4) + 4 = 4 + 11 + 4$$

The **arithmological center** of Psalm 43 falls on the word **har** (“mountain”) in 43:3b, with 29 words on either side. Psalm 43 has 32 SAS units, 19 **briques** (primary SAS), 5 versets and 5 strophes. The **arithmological center** is in the middle strophe, the middle verset, the middle **brique**, and the middle two SAS units. There are 217 morae in Psalm 43—with 110 morae before the word **har** (“mountain”) in 43:3b and 106 morae after it.

11. Terrien finds one strophe [i.e., “canto”] in Psalm 43, which he considers to be a continuation of Psalm 42 (*The Psalms* [2003], pp. 348–49). At the same time, he arranges his translation in four sub-strophes. Van der Lugt and Labuschagne find 2 strophes, with Psalm 43 functioning as the 3rd canto in the combination of Ps 42 and 43. Fokkelman finds 12 strophes in Pss 42–43. The logoprosodic analysis indicates that there are five strophes in Psalm 43.

Christensen	Terrien	Van der Lugt / Labuschagne
A 43:1	1 43:1–2	I 1 43:1–2
B 43:2		
X 43:3	43:3ab	2 43:3–5
B' 43:4	43:3c–4	
A' 43:5	43:5	

12. The following is a list of compositional numbers that appear at the boundaries of the verses counting from the beginning:

43:1–3 **23** words before *atnach*
 43:1–5 **46** (= **23** x 2) words before *atnach*

It is not possible to utilize any of the four compositional numbers (**17**, **23**, **26** and **32**) until the end of v. 2, which leaves 4 possible boundaries to work with. In 2 out of 4 of these boundaries (or 50% of the time) a multiple of one of these four compositional numbers is present.

13. Determining the details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 43 as a whole calls for input on the part of others in the BIBAL Forum, as we consider the rhetorical features in greater depth and further information contained in the *te'amim* of this particular text.

14. Bibliography:

See the file for Psalm 42

© 2005
 Dr. D.L. Christensen Professor of Old Testament
 845 Bodega Way Languages and Literature (retired),
 Rodeo, California 94572 Graduate Theological Union
 +1 510 799 0858 Berkeley, California
 dlc @ bibal.net