

Psalm 50:1–23

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

Prophetic Oracle on the Covenant Relationship

Ps 50:1–23

A. *Yhwh, God of Gods, Has Spoken and Summoned the Earth* (50:1) [4.3]

50:1	A psalm / belonging to Asaph //	<u>8</u> <u>2</u>	<u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
		49:19–50:1a	26 14 12
	El ^a (who is) God (<i>Elohim</i>) / (is) YHWH /	<u>11</u> <u>2</u>	<u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>
		49:19–50:1b	29 17 12
	He has spoken and summoned the earth //	9 1	3 3 0
	from the rising of the sun / to its setting //	<u>11</u> <u>2</u>	<u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u>
		49:13–50:1	92 58 34

B. *God Has Shown Forth from Zion and He Will Not Keep Silent* (50:2–4) [7.4]

50:2	From Zion is the perfection of beauty /	11 1	3 3 0
	God (<i>Elohim</i>) has shone forth //	<u>10</u> <u>1</u>	<u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
		50:1–2	17 13 4
50:3	Our God (<i>Elohim</i>) comes /	<u>11</u> <u>1</u>	<u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
		49:21–50:3a	26 19 7
	And he will not keep silent //	5 1	2 2 0
	a devouring fire is before him //	11 1	3 3 0
	and around him / a tempest rages //	<u>14</u> <u>2</u>	<u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>
		49:21–50:3	34 24 10
50:4	He summons the heavens / ^a above //	<u>13</u> <u>2</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
		49:20–50:4a	47 32 15
	And the earth / to judge his people //	<u>14</u> <u>2</u>	<u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u>
		50:2–4	23 16 7

C. *God Says: “Gather My Devotees to Me”—for God Is Judge* (50:5–6) [4.4]

50:5	“Gather my devotees / ^a to me //	10 2	3 3 0
	those about to make a covenant / with me by sacrifice” //	<u>16</u> <u>2</u>	<u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u>
		49:20–50:5	58 35 23
50:6	Then the heavens will declare / ^a his righteousness //	13 2	3 3 0
	for God (<i>Elohim</i>) himself / is judge,” Selah //	<u>15</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>5</u>
		50:3–6	33 17 16

D. I Do Not Need Sacrifices—I Want Thankful Obedience (50:7–8) [4.4]

50:7	“Hear, my people / and let me speak /	13	2	3	3	0
	O Israel ^a and let me give testimony about you //	_14	1_	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
		50:3–7b		39	23	16

	I am God (<i>Elohim</i>) your God //	_17	1_	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		50:6–7		17	9	8

50:8	Not for your sacrifices / will I reprove you //	14	2	4	4	0
	nor for your burnt offerings / ^a that are constantly before me //	<u>15</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		50:1–8		66	40	26

E. I Am Your God and I Do Not Reprove You for Your Sacrifices (50:9–10) [4.4]

50:9	I will not take from your household / ^a a bull //	11	2	4	4	0
	or from your pens / he-goats //	_13	2_	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
		50:5–9		37	20	17

50:10	For / ^a to me belongs every creature of the forest //	11	2	5	5	0
	the cattle / on a thousand hills //	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		49:21–50:10		87	53	34

F. I Know Every Bird and the Domestic Animals Are Mine (50:11) [2.2]

50:11	I know / every bird of the mountains //	_12	2_	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
		50:8–11a		25	17	8

	And the domestic beasts / are mine //	_11	2_	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		50:5–11		52	29	23

G. If I Were Hungry, Would I Ask You for Food? (50:12–13) [4.4]

50:12	If I were hungry [/] I would not speak to you //	10	2	5	5	0
	for the world is mine /	_8	1_	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		50:10–12b		23	14	9

	And the fullness thereof //	_7	1_	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
		50:5–12		61	34	27

50:13	Do I eat / the flesh of bulls //	11	2	3	3	0
	and the blood of he-goats / do I drink” //	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		50:10–13		30	17	13

L. You Did This and I Kept Silence—But This Is No Longer the Case (50:21–22) [4.7]

50:21	You have done these things / and I kept silent / you thought / that surely I would be like you //	14 2	3 3 0	
		14 2	<u>4 4 0</u>	
		50:17–21b	34 21 13	
	I will reprove you / and accuse you / ^a to your face //	_16 3_	<u>3 0 3</u>	
		50:20–21	17 10 7	
50:22	Now understand this / you who forget God (<i>Eloah</i>) // lest I tear you apart / and you have no deliverer //	17 2	5 5 0	
		10 2	<u>4 0 4</u>	
		50:20–22	26 15 11	

M. Those Who Offer Thanksgiving Honor Me and I Will Reward Them (50:23) [3.4]

50:23	Those who bring thanksgiving / ^a as their sacrifice / they honor me //	9 2	2 2 0	
		8 1	<u>1 1 0</u>	
		50:18–23a	43 26 17	
	And the one who makes fixed / ^a his path // I will show him / the salvation of God (<i>Elohim</i>) //	5 2	2 2 0	
		13 2	<u>3 0 3</u>	
		50:21–23	27 17 10	
		50:1–23	178 105 73	

Scansion in SAS Units: (4.3).(7.4) . (4.4).(4.4).(4.4) . (2.2).(4.4).(2.2) . (4.4).(4.4).(4.4) . (4.7).(3.4)
 (7+11+8) + (8+8) + (4+8+4) + (8+8) + (11+7) = (26 + 16) + 16 + (16 + 26) = 42 + 14 + 42 = 98

Concentric Compositional Formula: 178 = 89 + 0 + 89 [word count—with heading]

Notes:

- 50:1^a Reading *mehuppak legarmeh* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 50:4^a Reading the sequence of two consecutive occurrences of *munaḥ* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 50:5^a Reading *mērəḥā* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 50:7^a Reading *deḥi* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 50:8^a Reading disjunctive *revia mugrash* with Letteris (which also has *gaʿya* [= *meteg*]); BHS has the conjunctive *ṭarḥa*.
- 50:9^a Reading the sequence of *ṭarḥā* followed by *munaḥ* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 50:10^a Reading the disjunctive *šinnôr* with Letteris. BHS has *maqqēp* and thus no accent mark on the word כִּי.
- 50:14^a Reading the sequence of two consecutive occurrences of *munaḥ* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 50:16^a Reading *azlah legarmeh* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 50:16^b Reading *deḥi* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 50:18^a Reading *merka* preceded immediately by two instances of *gaʿya* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.
- 50:18^b Reading *munaḥ* preceded immediately by *gaʿya* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.
- 50:21^a Reading both the *ṭarḥā*, which is followed by *gaʿya* (= *meteg*) in BHS, and the sequence of *ṭarḥā* followed by *munaḥ* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 50:23^a Reading *mērəḥā* here in BHS as disjunctive.

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Psalm 50 has 13 strophes: 50:1–4, 5–8, 9–11, 12–14, 15–16, 17–20 and 21–23.

A	50:1	2 balanced dyads:	$[8 + 11] + [9 + 11]$	= 19 + 20	morae
B	50:2–3	2 balanced triads:	$[11 + 10 + 11] + [5 + 11 + 14]$	= 32 + 30	morae
	50:4	balanced dyad:	$[13 + 14]$	= 13 + 14	morae
C	50:5–6	2 balanced dyads:	$[10 + 16] + [13 + 15]$	= 26 + 28	morae
D	50:7–8	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	$[13 + 14] + 17 + [14 + 15]$	= 27 + 17 + 29	morae
E	50:9–10	3 balanced dyads:	$[11 + 13] + [11 + 12]$	= 24 + 23	morae
F	50:11	balanced dyad:	$[12 + 11]$	= 24 + 23 + 23	morae

X	50:12–13	2 balanced triads:	$[10 + 15 + 11] + [9 + 12 + 14]$	= 36 + 35	morae
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F'	50:14	balanced dyad:	$[15 + 14]$	= 15 + 14	morae
E'	50:15	balanced dyad:	$[15 + 14]$	= 15 + 14	morae
	50:16	balanced dyad + pivot:	$[15 + 10 + 15]$	= 15 + 10 + 15	
D'	50:17–18	2 balanced dyads:	$[14 + 13] + [16 + 11]$	= 27 + 27	morae
C'	50:19–20	2 balanced dyads:	$[13 + 13] + [14 + 11]$	= 26 + 25	morae
B'	50:21–22	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	$[14 + 14] + 16 + [17 + 10]$	= 28 + 16 + 27	morae
A'	50:23	2 balanced dyads:	$[9 + 8] + [5 + 13]$	= 17 + 18	morae

- The 1st strophe (50:1) is a single part with three subdivisions: 50:1a, 1b and 1cd
 - 49:13–50:1 **34** (= 17 x 2) words after *atnach*
- The 2nd strophe (50:2–4) has two parts with five subdivisions: 50:2, 3a, 3b–d, 4a and 4b.
 - 50:1–2 **17** words
 - 49:21–50:3 **23** words
 - 50:2–4 **23** words
- The 3rd strophe (50:5–6) is a single part with two subdivisions: 50:5 and 6.
 - 50:4–6 **23** words
 - 50:3–6 **17** words
- The 4th strophe (50:7–8) is a single part with three subdivisions: 50:7ab, 7c and 8.
 - 50:4–7 **32** words
 - 50:6–7 **17** words
 - 50:1–7 **23** words after *atnach*
 - 50:1–8 **26** words after *atnach*
- The 5th strophe (50:9–10) is a single part with two subdivisions: 50:9 and 10.
 - 50:5–9 **17** words after *atnach*
 - 50:1–10 **80** [= 40x2] words and **49** words before *atnach*
- The 6th strophe (50:11) is a single part with two subdivisions: 50:11a and 11b.

- 50:5–11 **52** (= **26** x 2) words and **23** words after *atnach*
8. The 7th strophe (50:12–13) is a single part with two subdivisions: 50: 12 and 13.
 - 50:5–12 **34** (= **17** x 2) words before *atnach*
 - 50:10–13 **17** words before *atnach*
 9. The 8th strophe (50:14) is a single part with two subdivisions: 50: 12 and 13.
 - 50:7–14 **34** (= **17** x 2) words before *atnach*
 10. The 9th strophe (50:15–16) has two parts with five subdivisions: 50:15a, 15b, 16a, 16b and 16c.
 - 50:5–15 **78** (= **26** x 3) words and **43** [= **17+26**] words before *atnach*
 - 50:1–15 **46** (= **23** x 2) words [*kabod* number] before *atnach*
 - 50:5–16 **39** (= **13** x 3) words [see YHWH-*echad* formula]
 11. The 10th strophe (50:17–18) is a single part with two subdivisions: 50:17 and 18.
 - 50:16–17 **17** words
 - 50:12–18 **51** (= **17** x 3) words
 12. The 11th strophe (50:19–20) is a single part with two subdivisions: 50:17 and 18.
 - 50:12–19 **32** words before *atnach*
 - 50:18–20 **17** words after *atnach*
 13. The 12th strophe (50:21–22) is a single part with three subdivisions: 50:21ab, 21c and 22.
 - 50:20–21 **17** words
 - 50:20–22 **26** words
 14. The 12th strophe (50:23) is a single part with two subdivisions: 50:23ab and 23cd.
 - 50:20–21 **17** words
 - 50:20–22 **26** words
 - 50:18–23 **17** words before *atnach*

Observations

1. The 13 strophes of Psalm 50 may be outlined in a nested menorah pattern, which is determined primarily on prosodic grounds, as follows:

1st Level Menorah: Prophetic Oracle on the Covenant Relationship (Ps 50:1–23)

A	Yhwh, God of Gods, has spoken and summoned the earth	[4.3]	50:1
B	God has shown forth from Zion and he will not keep silent	[4.7]	50:2–4
C	He says: “Gather my devotees to me”—for God is judge	[4.4]	50:5–6
X	I do not need sacrifices—I want thankful obedience	—	50:7–18
C'	You speak evil and find fault in your brothers	[4.4]	50:19–20
B'	You did this and I kept silence; but this is no longer the case	[7.4]	50:21–22
A'	Those who offer thanksgiving honor me and I will reward them	[3.4]	50:23

1	מזמור לאסף	A psalm belonging to Asaph.
	אל אלהים יהוה	God of Gods is YHWH.
2	דבר ויקרא־ארץ	He has spoken and summoned the earth
	ממזרח־שמש עד־מבוא	From the rising of the sun to its setting.
	פן־אטרף ואין מציל	Lest I tear you apart and you have no deliverer
	זבח תודה יכבדני	Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me
24	ושם דרך	And the one who makes fixed his path
	אראנו בישע אלהים	I will show him the salvation of God.

4. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

$$178 = 87 + 4 + 87 \quad \text{word-count}$$

$$178 = 80 + 18 + 80$$

{with others in between}

$$178 = 12 + 154 + 12$$

$$178 = 5 + 168 + 5$$

$$96 = 42 + 12 + 42 \quad \text{SAS units}$$

$$56 = 24 + 8 + 24 \quad \text{briques (primary SAS units)}$$

5. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 50, 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 50 has 56 **briques** (primary SAS units), 47 of which are marked: by *soph pasuq* (23 times, at the end of each verse), *atnach* (22 times, in each verse, except v. 2), and *oleh weyored* (3 times, in vv. 1, 3

and 23). The boundaries of the remaining eight **briques** are marked by *rəḥîa*^c (7 times, in vv. 1, 3, 7, 16, 21 [twice] and 23) and *rəḥîa*^c *muḡraš*^ç (v. 22).

6. The prosodic structure of Psalm 50, 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.

I A ¹ *mizmôr ləʾāsāp* † *ʾēl ʾēlōhîm yhw̄h* †
dibber wayyiqrāʾ-ʾāreš ^ *mimmizraḥ-šemeš ʿaḏ-məboʾô* :

B ² *miššîyôn miḵlal-yōpî ʾēlōhîm hōpîa*^c :
³ *yābōʾ ʾēlōhîm* † *wəʾal-yeḥēraš*[†]
ʾēs-ləpānāyw tōʾkēl ^ *ûsəḥîḥāyw nisʿārāh məʾōḏ* :
⁴ *yiqrāʾ ʾel-haššamayim mēʿal* ^ *wəʾel-hāʾāreš lāḏîn ʿammô* :

C ⁵ *ʾispû-lî ḥāsîḏî* ^ *kōrəṭê ḥərîṭî ʿālê-zāḥaḥ* :
⁶ *wayyaggîḏû šamayim šîḏqô* ^ *kî-ʾēlōhîm šōpēṭ hûʾ **selāh*** :

II D ⁷ *šimʿāh ʿammî waʾăḏabbērāh* † *yisrāʾēl wəʾāʿîḏāh bāk* ^
ʾēlōhîm ʾēlōhēkā ʾānōkî :
⁸ *lōʾ ʿal-zəḥāḥēkā ʾōkîḥēkā* ^ *wəʾōlōṭēkā ləneḡḏî tāmîḏ* :

E ⁹ *lōʾ-ʾeqqaḥ mibbêtəḵā pār* ^ *mimmikləʾōṭēkā ʿattûḏîm* :
¹⁰ *ki-lî ḵol-ḥayṭô-yāʿar* ^ *bəhēmōṭ bəharərê-ʾālep* :

III F ¹¹ *yāḏaʿtî kol-ʿōp hārîm* ^ *wəzîz sāḏay ʿimmāḏî* :

X ¹² *ʾim-ʾerʿab lōʾ ʾōmar lāk* ^ *kî-lî tēḥēl ûməlōʾāh* :
¹³ *haʾōḵal bəsar ʾabbîrîm* ^ *wəḏam ʿattûḏîm ʾešteḥ* :

F' ¹⁴ *zəḥaḥ lēʾlōhîm tōḏāh* ^ *wəšallēm ləʿelyôn nəḏārēkā* :

IV E' ¹⁵ *ûqərəʾēnî bəyôm šārāh* ^ *ʾăḥalleskā ûṭəḵabbəḏēnî* :
¹⁶ *wəlārāšāʿ ʾāmar ʾēlōhîm* † *mah-ləḵā ləsappēr ḥuqqāy* ^
wattissāʾ ḥərîṭî ʿālê-pîḵā :

D' ¹⁷ *wəʾattāh sānēʾtā mûsar* ^ *wattašlēḵ dəḥāray ʾaḥărēkā* :
¹⁸ *ʾim-rāʾîṭā ḡannāḥ wattireš ʿimmô* ^ *wəʿim mənāʾāpîm ḥelqekā* :

V C' ¹⁹ *pîkā šālaḥṭā bəṛā'āh ^* *ûləšônəkā tašmîd mirmāh :*
²⁰ *tēšēb bə'āhîkā təḍabbēr ^* *bəḥen-ʾimməkā titten-dōpî :*

B' ²¹ *ʾelleh ʿāsšîṭā wəheḥēraštî†* *dimmîṭā†*
hēyôt-ʾehyeh kāmôkā ^ *ʾôkîḥākā wəʿerkāh ləʿênêkā :*
²² *bînú-nāʾ zōʾt šōkəḥê ʾəlôah ^* *pen-ʾetrōp†* *wəʿên massîl :*

A' ²³ *zōbēah tôdāh†* *yəkabbdānēnî†*
wəšām derek ^ *ʾarʾennû bəyēšaʿ ʾəlôhîm :*

7. The 56 **briques** are distributed within 13 strophes in Psalm 50 as follows:

$$(4 + 7 + 4) + (5 + 4) + (2 + 4 + 2) + (5 + 4) + (4 + 7 + 4) = 24 + 8 + 24 = 56$$

The **arithmological center** of Psalm 50 falls between the word ʾerʿab lōʾ (“I am hungry / not”) in 49:12a, with 89 words on either side. Psalm 50 has 96 SAS units, 56 **briques**, 24 versets, 13 strophes and 5 cantos. The **arithmological center** is in the middle canto, the middle strophe, the middle two versets, the middle four **briques**, and the middle four SAS units. There are xxx morae in Psalm 50—with xxx morae before the **arithmological center** and xxx morae after it.

8. Note the following compositional numbers at the boundaries of the verses counting from the beginning of Psalm 50:

50:1–2 **17** words
50:1–7 **23** words after *atnach*
50:1–8 **26** words after *atnach*
50:1–11 **34** (= **17** x 2) words after *atnach*
50:1–12 **96** (= **32** x 3) words
50:1–13 **102** (= **17** x 6) words
50:1–14 **64** (= **32** x 2) words before *atnach*
50:1–15 **46** (= **23** x 2) words after *atnach*
50:1–17 **130** (= **26** x 5) words
50:1–18 **138** (= **23** x 6) words
50:1–19 **85** (= **17** x 5) words before *atnach*
50:1–22 **170** (= **17** x 10) words

It is not possible to utilize any of the four compositional numbers (**17**, **23**, **26** and **32**) until the end of v. 3, which leaves 21 possible boundaries to work with. In 12 out of 21 of these boundaries (or 57.1% of the time) a multiple of one of these four compositional numbers is present. This evidence suggests the possibility of deliberate design at the point of the numerical composition of Psalm 50.

9. Terrien finds **7** strophes [= “cantos”] plus an “Epilogue” in Psalm 50 (*The Psalms* [2003], pp. 386–87). Van der Lugt finds 10 strophes, Labuschagne finds 11 strophes, and Fokkelman has 12 strophes. The logoprosodic analysis indicates that there are eleven strophes (arranged in five cantos: vv. 1–5, 6–10, 11–14, 15–16 and 17–21).

Christensen	Terrien	Van der Lugt	Labuschagne	Fokkelman
I A 49:1	<u>1</u> 49:1–3	I 1 49:1–3	I 1 49:1–2	1 49:1–3
B 49: <u>2–4</u>	<u>2</u> 49: <u>4–6</u>	<u>2</u> 49: <u>4–6</u>	<u>2</u> 49:3–4	<u>2</u> 49:4–6
<u>C</u> 49: <u>5–6</u>			<u>3</u> 49:5–6	
II <u>D</u> 49: <u>7–8</u>	<u>3</u> 49: <u>7–9</u>	II 3 49:7	II 4 49:7	3 49:7
<u>E</u> 49: <u>9–10</u>	<u>4</u> 49:10– <u>12</u>	4 49:8– <u>9</u>	<u>5</u> 49:8–9	<u>4</u> 49:8–9
III F 49:11		5 49:10–11	6 49:10–11	5 49:10–11
<u>X</u> 49:12–13	5 49:13–15	6 49:12–13	7 49:12–13	6 49:12–13
F' 49:14		7 49:14–15	8 49:14–15	7 49:14–15
IV E' 49:15–16	6 49:16–18			8 49:16
D 49:17–18		III 8 49:16–18	III 9 49:16–18	9 49:17–18
V C' 49:19–20	7 49:19–21	9 49:19–21	10 49:19–21	10 49:19–20
<u>B'</u> 49:21–22				<u>11</u> 49:21
<u>A'</u> 49:23	<u>Epil.</u> (vv. 22–23)	<u>10</u> 49:22–23	<u>11</u> 49:22–23	<u>12</u> 49:22–23

10. Determining the details of the larger musical and literary structure(s) of Psalm 50 as a whole calls for input on the part of [others in the BIBAL Forum](#), as we consider further information contained in the *te'amim* and the rhetorical features of the text.

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