

Psalm 60:1–14

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

National Lament: Prayer for Deliverance

Ps 60:1–14

A. Introduction: This Is a Miktam of David for Instructional Purposes (60:1) [2.2]

60:1 For the maestro / on the *Shushan* of the Covenant //
59:17–60:1a $\underline{\quad 13 \quad 2 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 4 \quad 4 \quad 0 \quad}$
26 17 9

A *Mikdam* / belonging to David for teaching //
59:17–60:1 $\underline{\quad 11 \quad 2 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 3 \quad 0 \quad 3 \quad}$
29 17 12

B. In the Battle with Edom (12,000 Killed) God Left Us in Anger (60:2–3) [5.5]

60:2 When he fought ^a Aram Naharaim / and Aram Zobah //
and Joab returned /
59:17–60:2b $\underline{\quad 21 \quad 2 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 7 \quad 7 \quad 0 \quad}$
 $\underline{\quad 9 \quad 1 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 2 \quad 2 \quad 0 \quad}$
38 26 12

And he smote Edom ^b in the Vale of Salt //
59:16–60:2c $\underline{\quad 11 \quad 2 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 5 \quad 5 \quad 0 \quad}$
50 34 16

(There were) twelve thousand (of them) //
60:2 $\underline{\quad 10 \quad 1 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 3 \quad 0 \quad 3 \quad}$
17 14 3

60:3 O God / you have rejected us (and) you have broken us //
you were displeased / turn back to us //
60:2–3 $\underline{\quad 17 \quad 2 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 3 \quad 3 \quad 0 \quad}$
 $\underline{\quad 14 \quad 2 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 3 \quad 0 \quad 3 \quad}$
23 17 6

C. God's Action: You Have Taught Us a Bitter Lesson ("Hard Things") (60:4–6) [6.5]

60:4 You shook the land (and) you ripped it apart //
heal / its breaches for it has split apart //
59:16–60:4 $\underline{\quad 10 \quad 1 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 3 \quad 3 \quad 0 \quad}$
 $\underline{\quad 16 \quad 2 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 4 \quad 0 \quad 4 \quad}$
66 40 26

60:5 You have shown your people horrible things //
you gave us wine to drink / that made us reel //
60:2–5 $\underline{\quad 12 \quad 1 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 3 \quad 3 \quad 0 \quad}$
 $\underline{\quad 14 \quad 2 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 3 \quad 0 \quad 3 \quad}$
36 23 13

60:6 You set up for those who fear you ^a a banner /
60:2–6a $\underline{\quad 13 \quad 2 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 3 \quad 3 \quad 0 \quad}$
39 26 13

Only to let them flee //
from before / the bowmen, **Selah** //
60:3–6 $\underline{\quad 6 \quad 1 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 1 \quad 1 \quad 0 \quad}$
 $\underline{\quad 9 \quad 2 \quad}$ $\underline{\quad 3 \quad 0 \quad 3 \quad}$
26 13 13

D. Plea for Deliverance and Victory (60:7)

[2.3]

60:7	So that / your beloved may be delivered //	<u>15</u> <u>2</u>	<u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>
		60:4-7a	23 13 10
	Save (us) / ^a by your right hand / ^b and answer us //	<u>17</u> <u>3</u>	<u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>
		60:4-7	26 13 13

E. God Spoke: "I Will Divide Up Shechem and Measure Off Succoth" (60:7-8)

[3.2]

60:8	God (Elohim) / spoke from his sanctuary /	11 2	3 3 0
	"I will now ascend //	<u>5</u> <u>1</u>	<u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>
		60:4-8a	30 17 10
	I will divide up Shechem //	7 1	2 2 0
	and the valley of Succoth I will measure off //	<u>11</u> <u>1</u>	<u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>
		59:17-60:8	87 53 34

F. God Declares Sovereignty Over the Nations of David's Empire (60:9-10)

[5.6]

60:9	Gilead is mine / and Manasseh is mine /	11 2	4 4 0
	and Ephraim ^a is my helmet //	12 1	3 3 0
	Judah / is my commander's staff //	<u>11</u> <u>2</u>	<u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u>
		60:4-9	44 26 18
60:10	Moab / is my washbasin /	9 2	3 3 0
	against Edom / will I cast my sandal //	11 2	4 4 0
	because of me / shout, O Philistia" //	<u>13</u> <u>2</u>	<u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>
		60:7-10	34 23 11

G. Though You Spurned Us, O God, Will You Go with Us to Edom? (60:11-13)

[5.5]

60:11	Who can bring me / to the siege-proof city? //	15 2	4 4 0
	who can lead me to Edom? //	<u>11</u> <u>1</u>	<u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u>
		60:3-11	68 40 28
60:12	O God, have you not / ^a rejected us? //	<u>17</u> <u>2</u>	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
		60:7-12a	46 31 15
	And you refused to go forth, O God / with our armies //	<u>20</u> <u>2</u>	<u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u>
		60:10-12	26 15 11
60:13	Give us relief from distress //	14 1	4 4 0
	for futile / is human help //	<u>11</u> <u>2</u>	<u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>
		60:11-13	23 12 11

2. The 1st strophe (60:1–3) is a single part with two subdivisions: 60:1a and 1b.
 - 59:16–60:1 **17** words
3. The 2nd strophe (60:2–3) has two parts with five subdivisions: 60:2a, 2b, 2cd, 3a and 3b.
 - 60:2 **17** words
 - 60:2–3 **23** words and **17** words before *atnach*
4. The 3rd strophe (60:4–6) has two parts with four subdivisions: 60:4, 5, 6a and 6bc.
 - 59:16–60:4 **23** words after *atnach*
 - 60:2–5 **23** words before *atnach*
 - 60:3–6 **26** words
5. The 4th strophe (60:7) is a single part with two subdivisions: 60:7a and 7b
 - 60:4–7 **26** words
 - 60:3–7 **32** words
6. The 5th strophe (60:7–8) is a single part with two subdivisions: 60:8ab and 8cd
 - 60:4–8 **26** words before *atnach*
7. The 6th strophe (60:9–10) is a single part with two subdivisions: 60:9 and 10.
 - 60:4–9 **26** words before *atnach*
 - 60:7–10 **34** (= **17** x 2) words and **23** words before *atnach*
8. The 7th strophe (60:11–13) is a single part with two subdivisions: 60:11, 12a, 12b and 13.
 - 60:3–11 **68** (= **17** x 4) words
 - 60:10–12 **26** words
 - 60:3–12 **32** words after *atnach*
 - 60:11–13 **23** words
 - 60:8–13 **51** (= **17** x 3) words and **32** words before *atnach*
 - 60:4–13 **32** words after *atnach*
9. The 8th strophe (60:14) is a single part with two subdivisions: 60:14a and 14b.
 - 60:11–14 **17** words after *atnach*

Observations

1. The eight strophes in Psalm 60 may be outlined in a menorah pattern, which is determined primarily on prosodic grounds, as follows:

A	Superscription: this is a <i>Miktam</i> of David for instructional purposes	[2.2]	60:1
B	In the battle with Edom (12,000 killed), God left us in anger	[5.4]	60:2–3
C	God's action: you have taught us a bitter lesson ("hard things")	[6.5]	60:4–6
X	Plea for deliverance and victory with God's response	[5.5]	60:7–8
C'	God declares his sovereignty over the nations of David's empire	[5.6]	60:9–10
B'	Though you spurned us, O God, will you still go with us to Edom?	[4.5]	60:11–13
A'	Conclusion: God himself will trample on our adversaries	[2.2]	60:14

2. My first published attempt to explain the prosodic structure of Psalm 60 appears in *Prophecy and War in Ancient Israel: Studies in the Oracles Against the Nations in Old Testament Prophecy*. BIBAL Monograph Series 3 (BIBAL Press, 1989; c1975), pp. 121–127. On that occasion I used the method of syllable-count as developed by my mentor, Prof. Frank M. Cross, Jr., at Harvard University. At that time, I did not consider the 24-word heading in vv. 1–2 (21.2% of the psalm) to be an integral part of Psalm 60, nor did I have any idea about the close connection between Psalms 60 and 59.
3. In terms of the 113 words in Psalm 60, the **arithmological center** falls on the word אלהים (“God”) at the beginning of verse 8, with 56 words on either side. One candidate for the **meaningful center** is found by including one word on either side, as follows:

ועננו And answer us!
 דבר אלהים God spoke.

In this instance, the Concentric Compositional Formula becomes:

$$113 = 55 + 3 + 55 \quad [\text{word-count—including heading in 60:1}]$$

The **meaningful center** may be expanded to include 5 words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

יחלצונן ידידיך Let them be rescued, those who are dear to you.
 הושיעה ימינך ועננו Save (us) by your right hand and answer us
 8 דבר בקדשו אלהים God spoke from his sanctuary:
 אעלה אחלקה שכם “Exultant, I will make Shechem my portion.”

The meaning of the statement is now much clearer. The prayer for deliverance highlights the message of Psalm 60 as a whole, which is expressed in imagery from the matrix model of theological harmonics in antiquity.

4. The 32-word **meaningful framework** (with the 12-word framework highlighted in gray) reads as follows:

1	למנצח על־שושן עדות	For the music director, on the <i>shushan</i> of the covenant,
	מכתם לדוד ללמד	A <i>miktam</i> of David, for teaching.
2	בהצותו את ארם נהרים	When he fought Aram-Naharaim
	ואת־ארם צובה	and Aram-Zobah.
	וישב יואב	And Joab returned.
	תצא אלהים בצבאותינו	Will you go forth, O God, with our armies?
13	הבה־לנו עזרת מצר	Give us relief from distress;
	ושוא תשועת אדם	For futile is human help.
14	באלהים נעשה־חיל	With God we will achieve victory;
	והוא יבוס צרינו	And he himself will trample over our foes.

5. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

113 = 55 + 3 + 55 word-count

113 = **51** + 11 + **51**

{with others in between}

113 = 16 + 81 + 16

113 = 6 + 101 + 6

60 = 25 + 10 + 25 SAS units

34 = 14 + 6 + 14 **briques** (primary SAS units)

6. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 60, 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 60 has 34 **briques** (primary SAS units), 30 of which are marked by:

- *soph pasuq* 14 times, at the end of each verse
- *atnach* 14 times, in each verse
- *oleh weyored* 2 times, in vv. 2 and 8

The boundaries of the remaining **briques** are marked by:

- *rəḥîa^c* 3 times (v. 2, 9 and 10)
- *ṭarḥâ* plus *munah* 1 time (v. 7)

7. The prosodic structure of Psalm 60, 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 *lamnaṣṣēah ʿal šūšan ʿēdūt* ^ *miḳtām ləḏāwīd ləlammēd* :
- B ² *bəhaṣṣōtō ʿet ʾāram nahārayim wəʿet ʾāram šōḇāh* †
wayyāšāḇ yōʾāḇ †
wayyak ʿet ʾēdōm bəgēʾ melah ^ *šənēm ʿāsār ʾālep* :
³ *hārōpēʾ lišḇūrē lēḇ* ^ *ūməḥabbēš ləʿaṣṣəḇōtām* :
- II C ⁴ *hirʿastāh ʾereṣ pəṣamtāh* ^ *rəpāh šəḇārēhā kī māṭāh* :
⁵ *hirʾītāh ʿamməkā qāšāh* ^ *hišqītānū yayin tarʿelāh* :
⁶ *nāṭatāh līrēʾēkā nēs ləhiṭnōsēs* ^ *mippənē qōšet selāh* :

D ⁷ <i>ləmaʿan yēḥāləšūn yəḏīdēkā</i> ^ <i>waʿānēnī</i> :	<i>hōšīʿāh yəḥmīnəkā</i> †
D' ⁸ ʾēlōhīm <i>dibber bəqodšū ʾeʿlōzāh</i> † <i>wəʿēmeq sukkōt ʾāmaddēd</i> :	<i>ʾāhalləqāh šəkem</i> ^

- C' ⁹ *lī ḡilʿād wəlī mənaššeh* † *wəʿəprayim māʿōz rōʾšī* ^ *yəḥūdāh məḥōqəqī* :
¹⁰ *mōʾāḇ sīr rahšī* † *ʿal ʾēdōm ʾašlīk naʿālī* ^ *ʿalay pələšet hiṭrōʿāʿ* :

- III B' ¹¹ *mī yōḇīlēnī ʿīr māšōr* ^ *mī nāḥanī ʿad ʾēdōm* :
¹² *hālōʾ ʾattāh ʾēlōhīm zənaḥtānū* ^ *wəlōʾ tēšēʾ ʾēlōhīm bəṣīḇʾōtēnū* :
¹³ *hāḇāh lānū ʿezrāṭmiššār* ^ *wəšāwʾ təšūʿat ʾāḏām* :
A' ¹⁴ *bēʾlōhīm naʿāseh ḥāyil* ^ *wəḥūʾ yāḇūs šārēnū* :

8. The 34 **briques** are distributed within 5 strophes in Psalm 60 as follows:

$$34 = (2 + 6 + 6) + 6 + (6 + 6 + 2) = 14 + 6 + 14$$

The **arithmological center** of Psalm 60 falls on the word ʾēlōhīm (“God”) in 60:8a, with a total of 56 words on either side. Psalm 60 has 60 SAS units, 34 **briques** (primary SAS units), 14 versets, 8 strophes and 3 cantos. The **arithmological center** is in the middle canto, the middle two strophes, the middle two versets, the middle two **briques**, and the middle two SAS units. There are 433 morae in Psalm 60—with 219 morae before the word ʾēlōhīm (“God”) in 60:8a and 209 morae after it.

9. Terrien finds 3 strophes [= cantos] in Psalm 60 (*The Psalms* [2003], pp. 446–47). Van der Lugt, Labuschagne and Fokkelman all find 5 strophes. The logoprosodic analysis indicates that there are 8 strophes (arranged in three cantos: vv. 1–6, 7–8 and 9–14).

Christensen	Terrien	Van der Lugt & Labuschagne	Fokkelman
I A 60:1	Heading (vv.1–2)	Heading (vv. 1-2)	Heading (vv. 1-2)
B 60:2–3	I 60:3–6	I 1 60:3–5	1 60:3–5
C 60:4–6		2 60:6–7	2 60:6–7
II D 60:7	II 60:7–10		
D' 60:8		II 3 60:8–10	3 60:8–9
III C' 60:9–10			4 60:10–11
B' 60:11–13	III 60:11–14	4 60:11–12	5 60:12–14
A' 60:14		III 5 60:13–14	

10. Counting from the beginning of Psalm 60 (including the 24-word heading and the occurrence of *selah* in v. 6) we find the following list of compositional numbers at the boundaries of the verses:

60:1–5 43 [= 17 + 26] words
 60:1–6 34 (= 17 x 2) words before *atnach*
 60:1–8 43 [= 17 + 26] words
 60:1–11 92 (= 23 x 4) words
 60:1–13 69 (= 23 x 3) words before *atnach*

It is not possible to utilize any of the four compositional numbers (17, 23, 26 and 32) until the end of verse 2, which leaves 13 possible boundaries to work with. In 3 out of 13 of these boundaries (or 23.1% of the time) a multiple of one of these four compositional numbers is present.

11. Determining further details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 60 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.

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