

Psalm 81:1-17

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

From Hymn to Oracle—Remembering the Exodus

Ps 81:1–17

A. *Summons to Praise: Take Up a Song with Musical Instruments* (81:1–4) [6.8]

81:1	For the music director / on the <i>gittith</i> —belonging to Asaph //	<u> 15 2_</u>	<u> 4 4 0</u>
		81:19–81:1	17 11 6
81:2	Sing for joy / to God our strength //	<u> 17 2_</u>	<u> 3 3 0</u>
		81:16–81:2a	44 26 18
	Shout for joy / to the God of Jacob //	<u> 16 2_</u>	<u> 3 0 3</u>
		80:20–81:2	17 11 6
81:3	Take up a song / strike the timbrel //	13 2	4 4 0
	(play) the melodius lyre / ^a with the harp //	<u> 11 2</u>	<u> 4 0 4</u>
		80:18–81:3	41 23 18
81:4	Blow the shofar / ^a at the new moon //	11 2	3 3 0
	at the full moon / on the day of our festival //	<u> 12 2</u>	<u> 3 0 3</u>
		80:18–81:4	47 26 21

B. *That Is the Law in Israel—a Statute for “Joseph” in the Exodus* (81:5–6b) [4.4]

81:5	For that is a law to Israel //	12 1	4 4 0
	an ordinance / from the God of Jacob //	<u> 13 2_</u>	<u> 3 0 3</u>
		80:15–81:5	78 44 34
81:6	A testimony ^a for (the tribes of) Joseph he appointed /	14 1	3 3 0
	in his exodus / from the land of Egypt //	<u> 12 2</u>	<u> 4 4 0</u>
		80:19–81:6	51 32 19

C. *In Your Distress You Cried Out and I Rescued You* (81:6c–8) [6.4]

	Speech I did not (previously) understand I heard (saying:) //	<u> 12 1_</u>	<u> 4 0 4</u>
		81:1–6	42 25 17
81:7	“I removed the burden / ^a from his shoulder //	<u> 14 2_</u>	<u> 3 3 0</u>
		81:4–7a	27 17 10
	His hands / from the baskets were freed” //	<u> 13 2_</u>	<u> 3 0 3</u>
		81:6–7	17 10 7

81:8	In distress you called out /	<u>11 1</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		81:5-8a	26 16 10
	And I rescued you //	9 1	1 1 0
	I answered you ^a hidden in thunder //	<u>9 1</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		81:6-8c	23 16 7
	I tested you at the waters of Meribah, Selah //	<u>16 2</u>	<u>5 0 5</u>
		81:7-8	17 9 8
D. Hear, O My People, and Let Me Admonish You! (81:9)			[2.2]
81:9	Listen, my people / [and] ^a I will admonish you //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>4 4 0</u>
		81:6-9a	32 20 12
	O Israel / if only you would listen to me //	<u>10 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		81:3-9	57 31 26
E. Let There Be No Other Gods for I YHWH am Your God (81:10-11)			[4.6]
81:10	There shall not be in your midst / any strange god //	10 2	5 5 0
	and you shall not worship / any foreign god //	<u>14 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		81:4-10	58 32 26
81:11	I / Yhwh am your God /	<u>16 2</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		81:5-11a	55 32 23
	I brought you up / from the land of Egypt //	12 2	3 3 0
	open wide your mouth / and I will fill it //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		81:9-11	26 15 11
F. My People Did Not Obey and They Walked In Their Own Devices (81:12-13)			[4.4]
81:12	And my people did not listen ^a to my voice //	14 2	4 4 0
	and Israel / did not obey me //	<u>14 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		81:11-12	17 10 7
81:13	And I gave <them> ^a over / to the stubbornness of their heart //	<u>15 2</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		81:7-13a	54 31 23
	And they walked / in their own devices //	<u>14 2</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
		81:9-13	39 22 17

G. If My People Would Obey Me, I Would Subdue Their Enemies (81:14–17) [8.6]

81:14	O that / my people / would listen to me //	12	2	4	4	0
	that Israel / would walk in my ways //	<u>15</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		81:11–14		29	17	12
81:15	Straightway / their enemies I would subdue //	12	2	3	3	0
	and against their adversaries / I would turn my hand //	<u>15</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
		81:8–15		64	35	29
81:16	Those who hate YHWH ^a would submit to him //	15	1	4	4	0
	and their time [i.e., lifespan] would be / forever //	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		81:13–16		26	14	12
		81:1–16		119	67	52
81:17	And he would feed him [Israel] ^a from the finest of wheat //	17	1	3	3	0
	and from the rock / (with) honey I would satisfy you //	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
		81:13–17		32	17	15
		81:10–17		58	32	26
		81:1–17		125	70	55

Scansion in Accentual Stress Units: (6.8).(8.6).(4.4.4).(8.6).(8.6)

$$(14 + 14) + 12 + (14 + 14) = 28 + 12 + 28 = 68$$

or: **40 // 40** [with pivot counted in each half]

$$\{68 = 17 \times 4 \text{ and } 40 = 17 + 23\}$$

Concentric Compositional Formula: 125 = 62 + 1 + 62 [word-count—with heading]

or: 63 // 63 [with pivot included in each half]

Notes:

- 81:3^a Reading the sequence of *mērākā* followed by *munaḥ* before *silluq* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 81:4^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munaḥ* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 81:5^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munaḥ* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 81:6^a Reading the *munaḥ* preceded by *ga'yā* (= *meteg*) with *maqeph* in Ginsburg and Letteris as disjunctive. BHS omits the *ga'yā* (= *meteg*).
- 81:7^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munaḥ* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 81:9^a Removing the *wau*-conjunction as dittography to improve the balance in mora-count.
- 86:8^a Reading the *deḥî* here in BHS as conjunctive.
- 81:12^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munaḥ* preceded by *ga'yā* (= *meteg*) with *maqeph* in Ginsburg and Letteris as disjunctive. BHS omits the *ga'yā* (= *meteg*).
- 81:13^a Reading *wā'āšalləḥē<m>* in place of *wā'āšalləḥēhû* in BHS with one Heb. Ms, Symmachus and LXX.
- 86:16^a Reading the *deḥî* here in BHS as conjunctive.
- 86:17^a Reading the *deḥî* here in BHS as conjunctive.

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Psalm 81 has seven strophes: 81:1–4, 5–6, 7–8, 9, 10–11, 12–13, 14–15 and 16–17.

A	81:1–2	balanced triad:	[15 + 17 + 16]	= 15 + 17 + 16	morae
	81:3–4	2 balanced dyads:	[13 + 11] + [11 + 12]	= 24 + 23	morae
B	81:5–6b	2 balanced dyads:	[12 + 13] + [14 + 12]	= 25 + 26	morae
C	81:6c–8a	2 balanced dyads:	[12 + 14] + [13 + 11]	= 26 + 24	morae
	81:8b–d	balanced dyad:	[(9 + 9) + 16]	= 18 + 16	morae

X	81:9	balanced dyad:	[12 + 10]	= 12 + 10	morae
---	------	----------------	-----------	-----------	-------

C'	81:10–11	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	[10 + 14] + 16 + [12 + 12]	= 24 + 16 + 24	morae
B'	81:12–13	2 balanced dyads:	[14 + 14] + [15 + 14]	= 28 + 29	morae
A'	81:14–15	2 balanced dyads:	[12 + 15] + [12 + 15]	= 27 + 27	morae
	81:16–17	2 balanced dyads	[15 + 12] + [17 + 12]	= 27 + 29	morae

2. The first strophe (81:1–4) has two parts arranged in five subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 81:1, 2a, 2b, 3 and 4.

- 80:19–81:1 **17** words
- 80:20–81:2 **17** words
- 80:18–81:3 **23** words before *atnach*
- 80:18–81:4 **26** words before *atnach*

3. The second strophe (81:5–6b) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 81:5a and 5b.

- 80:15–81:5 **78** (= **26** x 3) words and **34** (= **17** x 2) words after *atnach*
- 80:15–81:6b **51** (= **17** x 3) words and **32** words before *atnach*

4. The third strophe (81:6c–8) has two parts arranged in six subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 81:6c, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8bc and 8d.

- 81:1–6 **17** words after *atnach*
- 81:6–7 **17** words
- 81:4–7 **17** words before *atnach*
- 81:3–7 **17** words after *atnach*
- 81:7–8 **17** words
- 81:4–8 **23** words before *atnach*

5. The fourth strophe (81:9) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 81:9ab and 9cd.

- 81:3–9 **26** words after *atnach*

6. The fifth strophe (81:10–11) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 81:11ab, 11c, 12 and 13.

- 81:9–10 **17** words

- 81:5–10 **52** (= **26** x 2) words and **23** words after *atnach*
 - 81:4–10 **58 = 32 + 26** [compositional formula]
 - 81:9–11 **26** words
 - 81:6–11 **23** words after *atnach*
 - 81:5–11 **26** words after *atnach*
7. The sixth strophe (81:12–13) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 81:13ab and 13cd.
- 81:11–12 **17** words
 - 81:10–12 **26** words
 - 81:9–13 **17** words after *atnach*
 - 81:5–13 **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words after *atnach*
8. The seventh strophe (81:14–17) has two parts arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 81:14, 15, 16 and 17.
- 81:11–14 **17** words before *atnach*
 - 81:9–14 **46** (= **23** x 2) words and **26** words before *atnach*
 - 81:8–14 **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words before *atnach*
 - 81:6–14 **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words after *atnach*
 - 81:7–15 **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words after *atnach*
 - 81:13–15 **26** words
 - 81:10–16 **52** (= **26** x 2) words and **23** words after *atnach*
 - 81:8–16 **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words after *atnach*
 - 81:1–16 **119** (= **17** x 7) words and **52** (= **26** x 2) words after *atnach*
 - 81:13–17 **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words and **17** words before *atnach*
 - 81:10–17 **58 = 32 + 26** [compositional formula]

Observations

1. The seven strophes of Psalm 81 may be outlined in a menorah pattern, which is determined primarily on prosodic grounds, as follows:

From Hymn to Oracle—Remembering the Exodus from Egypt (Psalm 81:1–17)

A	Summons to praise: take up a song with musical instruments	[6.8]	81:1–4
B	That is the law in Israel—a statute for “Joseph” in the Exodus	[4.4]	81:5–6b
C	In your distress you cried out and I rescued you	[6.4]	81:6c–8
X	Hear, O my people, and let me admonish you!	[2.2]	81:9
C'	Let there be no other gods—I Yhwh am your God	[4.6]	81:10–11
B'	My people did not obey and they walked in their own devices	[4.4]	81:12–13
A'	If my people would listen to me, I would subdue their enemies	[8.6]	81:14–17

2. In terms of the 125 words in Psalm 81, the **arithmological center** falls on the word **בְּךָ** (“in you”) in 81:9a, with 62 words on either side. The initial *Concentric Compositional Formula* is:

$$125 = 62 + 1 + 62 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

or: 63 // 63

The **meaningful center** is found by including one word on either side of the **arithmological center** as follows:

וְאֶעֱדָדְךָ **בְּךָ** יִשְׂרָאֵל And I will admonish you, O Israel.

In this instance the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$125 = 61 + 3 + 61 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

or: **64 // 64** [with pivot counted in each half]

{64 = 32 x 2 = 2x2x2x2x2x2 and 125 = 5x5x5}

The **meaningful center** may be expanded to include 11 words on either side of the **arithmological center** as follows:

אֶעֱנֶךָ בְּסִתְרֵי רָעַם I answered you in the hiding place of thunder.
 אֲבַחֲנֶךָ עַל מַי מְרִיבָה סֵלֶה I proved you at the waters of Meribah, Selah.
בְּךָ שָׁמַע עַמִּי וְאֶעֱדָדְךָ Hear, O my people, and I will admonish you;
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם תִּשְׁמַע לִי O Israel, would that you would hear me!
 לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אֱלֹהִים זָרִים Let there not be among you a strange god;
 וְלֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה And you shall not worship (them).

In this instance the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$125 = 51 + 23 + 51 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

or: 74 // 74 [with pivot counted in each half]

{51 = 17 x 3}

The **meaningful center** may be expanded further by adding fifteen words on either side of the **arithmological center** as follows:

תֵּעָבְרֶנָּה בְּצָרָה They (fem. pl.) passed through distress—
 קָרָאתָ וְאֶחֱלֹצְךָ You called and I rescued you;
 אֶעֱנֶךָ בְּסִתְרֵי רָעַם I answered you in the hiding place of thunder.
 אֲבַחֲנֶךָ עַל מַי מְרִיבָה סֵלֶה I proved you at the waters of Meribah, Selah.
בְּךָ שָׁמַע עַמִּי וְאֶעֱדָדְךָ Hear, O my people, and I will admonish you;
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם תִּשְׁמַע לִי O Israel, would that you would hear me!
 לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אֱלֹהִים זָרִים Let there not be among you a strange god;

ולא תשתחוה לאל נכר And you shall not worship any foreign god.
 אנכי יהוה I am YHWH.

Note the unusual use of the word *ta'ăbōrānāh*, which appears elsewhere only in Jer 33:13 in the phrase “flocks shall again *pass* under the hands of one who counts them” (RSV). The root normally means “to cross over, pass (through).” The 3rd person feminine plural and 2nd person feminine plural forms of the verb are identical, bringing a certain ambiguity in meaning as the text unfolds.

In this instance the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$125 = 47 + 31 + 47 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } \mathbf{78 // 78} \quad \text{[with pivot counted in each half]}$$

$$\{\mathbf{78} = \mathbf{26} \times 3\}$$

3. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

$$125 = 61 + 3 + 61 \quad \text{or: } \mathbf{64 // 64}$$

$$125 = 59 + 7 + 59 \quad \text{or: } 66 // 66$$

$$125 = \mathbf{51} + \mathbf{23} + \mathbf{51} \quad \text{or: } 74 // 74$$

{with others in between}

$$125 = 27 + 71 + 27 \quad \text{or: } 98 // 98$$

$$125 = 6 + 113 + 6 \quad \text{or: } \mathbf{119 // 119} \quad \text{\{v. 1-2a || v. 17\}}$$

$$\mathbf{68} = 28 + 12 + 28 \quad \text{or: } \mathbf{40 // 40} \quad \text{SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units}$$

$$\{\mathbf{68} = \mathbf{17} \times 4; \mathbf{40} = \mathbf{17} + \mathbf{23} \text{ and } 28 = \text{triangular } 7\}$$

$$38 = 15 + 8 + 15 \quad \text{or: } \mathbf{23 // 23} \quad \text{\textit{briques} (primary SAS units)}$$

4. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 81, 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*.
- **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 81 has 38 **briques**, 34 of which are marked by: *soph pasuq* (17 times, at the end of each verse), *atnach* (16 times, in each verse except v. 1), and *ole weyored* (v. 8). The remaining four boundaries are marked by *rəḥîa*^c (2 times, in vv. 6 and 11), *rəḥîa*^c *muğraš* (v. 10), and *illuy* plus *paseq* (v. 1).

5. The prosodic structure of Psalm 81, in terms of its **briques** (primary syntactic accentual-stress units), may be displayed as follows [^ represents *atnach*; ; represents *soph pasuq*; † represents *ole weyored*, and † represents all other accent markers]:

I	A	¹ <i>lamnašēah</i> †	<i>‘al haggîṭ lə’āsāp</i> :
		² <i>harnînu lē’lohîm ‘ûzēnu</i> ^	<i>hārî’û lē’lohê ya‘āqōḇ</i> :
		³ <i>šə’û zimrāh ûṭənu tōp</i> ^	<i>kinnôr nā’im ‘im nāḇel</i> :
		⁴ <i>tiq’û ḥəḥōdeš šōpār</i> ^	<i>bakēseh ləyôm ḥaggēnu</i> :
	B	⁵ <i>kî ḥōq ləyisrā’el hū</i> ^	<i>mišpāt lē’lohê ya‘āqōḇ</i> :
		⁶ <i>‘ēḏūt bîḥōsēp sāmō</i> †	<i>bəšē’ṭō ‘al ‘eres mišrāyim</i> ^
II	C	<i>šəpāt lō’ yāda’ṭi ‘ešmā</i> ^c :	⁷ <i>ḥāsîrōṭî missēḇel šikkō</i> ^
		<i>kappāyw middūd ta‘āḇōrənāh</i> :	
		⁸ <i>baššārāh qārā’ṭā wā’āḥalləšekā</i> †	<i>‘e‘enkā bəsēter ra‘am</i> ^
		<i>‘eḇḥānəkā ‘al mē mərîḇāh</i> selāh :	

X	⁹ <i>šəma</i> ^c <i>‘annî wə’ā’īdāh</i> bāk ^	<i>yisrā’el ‘im tišma</i> ^c <i>lî</i> :
---	---	--

	C	¹⁰ <i>lō’ yihyeh ḥəkā ‘el zār</i> ^	<i>wlō’ tišta‘āweh</i> †	<i>lə’el nēkār</i> :
		¹¹ <i>‘ānōkî yhwḥ ‘ēlohēkā</i> †	<i>hamma‘alkā mē‘eres mišrāyim</i> ^	
		<i>harḥeḇ pîkā wa‘āmal’ēhū</i> :		
III	B	¹² <i>wəlō’ šāma</i> ^c <i>‘ammî ləqōlî</i> ^	<i>wəyisrā’el lō’ ‘āḇāh lî</i> :	
		¹³ <i>wā’āšalləḥē<m> bišrîrūt libbām</i> ^	<i>yēləkū bəmō‘āšōṭēhem</i> :	
	A	¹⁴ <i>lū ‘ammî šōmēa</i> ^c <i>lî</i> ^	<i>yisrā’el biḏrākay yəhallēkū</i> :	
		¹⁵ <i>kim‘at ‘ōyəḇēhem ‘aknîa</i> ^c ^	<i>wə‘al šārēhem ‘āsîḇ yādî</i> :	
		¹⁶ <i>məsan’ē yhwḥ yəkaḥšū lō</i> ^	<i>wîḥî ‘ittām lə‘ōlām</i> :	
		¹⁷ <i>wayya’ākîlēhū mēḥēleḇ ḥittāh</i> ^	<i>ūmiššûr dəḇaš ‘asbî‘ekā</i> :	

6. The 38 **briques** (primary accentual stress units) are distributed within five strophes in Psalm 81 as follows: $38 = (8 + 4) + (6 + 2 + 6) + (4 + 8) = 12 + 14 + 12$. The **concentric compositional formula** (on the basis of primary stress units) is **26 // 26**, with the central pivot (vv. 8–10) included in each half.

The **arithmological center** of Psalm 81 falls on the word bāḱ (“in you”) in 81:9a, with a total of 62 words on either side. Psalm 81 has 68 SAS units, 38 **briques**, 17 versets, 7 strophes and 3 cantos. The **arithmological center** is in the middle canto, the middle strophe, the middle verset, the middle two **briques**, and the middle two SAS units. There are 240 morae before the word bāḱ (“in you”) in 81:9a and 241 morae after that word – for a total of 483 morae. The **arithmological center** is thus in the absolute center of Psalm 81 from any perspective one chooses.

7. Terrien finds six strophes in Psalm 81 (*The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* [Eerdmans, 2003], pp. 581–86. Van der Lugt, Labuschagne and Fokkelman have 7 strophes. The analysis presented here, which is based on the balance in mora-count and the concentric pattern in the distribution of SAS units, indicates that there are 7 strophes arranged concentrically in 3 cantos (vv. 1–6b, 6c–11 and 12–17).

Christensen	Terrien	Van der Lugt/Labuschagne
I A 81:1–4	Heading 81:1	Heading 81:1
	1 81:2–4	I 1 81:2–4
B 81:5–6b	2 81:5–7a	2 81:5–6b
II C 81:6c–8	3 81:7b–9	3 81:6c–8
X 81:9		II 4 81:9–11
C' 81:10–11	4 81:10–12	
III B' 81:12–13	5 81:13–15	5 81:12–13
A' 81:14–17		6 81:14–15
	6 81:16–17	III 7 81:16–17

The difference in the strophic analysis presented here from that of Terrien and van der Lugt results from the fact that neither scholar recognizes the concentric structure of Psalm 81 and both fail to find the correct boundaries of the central canto/strophe in vv. 8–10. According to Labuschagne (see Observation 1), both Van der Lugt and Fokkelman see vv. 9–11 as the “pivot of the 7 strophes,” which suggests a concentric structure. Nonetheless, neither Van der Lugt nor Labuschagne argue for a menorah pattern in Psalm 81.

8. Casper Labuschagne calls attention to Jacob Bazak’s article, “Numerical Devices in Biblical Poetry,” *Vetus Testamentum* 38 (1988), pp. 333–37. Bazak correctly identifies the location of the **meaningful center** in v. 9: “In Ps. lxxxix the central sentence is in v. 9: ‘Israel, if you would but listen to me.’” Unfortunately, however, the manner in which Labuschagne cites Bazak in his file (see Observation 1) suggests that he has found support here for his conclusion that the four word heading in v. 1 and the word “Selah” in v. 8 are not to be considered as integral to the numerical structure of Psalm 81 as a whole.

For “an impressive concatenation of symbolic numbers, explicitly constituting the Yhwh *echad* formula, $26 + 13 = 39$,” see Labuschagne’s discussion (Observation 3).

9. A primary concern in the system of logoprosodic analysis is to define the hierarchy of “building blocks” in the composition of Hebrew poetry, which are counted in order to determine the prosodic structure of each Psalm. This hierarchy of “building blocks” include:

morae—subdivision of syllables, which are weighted as either “long” or “short”
 words—individual lexical items, the *maqeph* is ignored in counting the words
 SAS (syntactic accentual stress) units—units bounded by successive disjunctive accents
briques—primary SAS units [groupings of SAS units]
 versets—similar to the verses in MT [i.e., normally concluding with *soph pasuq*]
 sub-strophes—elements within dyadic and triadic groupings that make up a strophe
 strophes—groupings of *briques* into prosodic rhythmic units, normally binary in structure
 cantos—groupings of strophes

I see no reason to distinguish the category of the canticle as distinct from that of the canto [as these terms are being used by Casper Labuschagne and Pieter van der Lugt]. Since the strophe normally consists of at least two prosodic subdivisions [occasional three subdivisions in the structural center of a given psalm], we will use the designation of a sub-strophe to talk about the rhythmic subdivisions that make up a given strophe within each dyadic or triadic structure, which includes the concept of a bridging “pivot” (or monocolon) that connects these entities.

10. Note the following Compositional Formulae:

81:4–10 **58 = 32 + 26**

81:10–17 **58 = 32 + 26**

For a somewhat similar phenomenon compare Psalm 88 (Observation 6).

11. Determining the details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 81 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 *te'amim* of this particular text.

12. Bibliography

- Bazak, J. “Numerical Devices in Biblical Poetry.” *VT* 38 (1988) 333-37.
 Beyerlin, W. *Herkunft und Geschichte der ältesten Sinaitraditionen* (Tübingen, 1961).
 Bonnard, P. E. *Le Psautier ...* (Paris, 1960) 173-78.
 Booij, T. “The Background of the Oracle in Psalm 81.” *Bib* 65 (1984) 465-75.
 Buckers, H. “Zum Verwertung der Sinaitraditionen in den Psalmen.” *Bib* 32 (1951) 401-22.
 de Boer, P. A. H. “Psalm 81:6a: Observations on Translation and Meaning of One Hebrew Line.” In *The Shelter of Elyon*. FS G. W. Ahlstrom. Ed. W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer. JSOTSup 31 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 465-75.
 Goulder, M. D. *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*. JSOTSup 20 (Sheffield, 1982) 109-11.
 Jeremias, J. *Kultprophetie*. 125-33.
 Johnson, A. R. *CPIP* 3-18.
 Layton, S. C. “Jehoseph in Ps 81, 6.” *Bib* 69 (1988) 406-11.
 Mowinckel, S. *PIW*. II, 156-60.
 _____. *Psalmstudien, III: Kultprophetie und prophetische Psalmen* (Oslo, 1923) 39-40.

_____. *The Psalms in Israel' Worship*, vol. II, tr. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Nashville, 1962) 53-73.
Nasuti, N. P. *Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph*. SBLMS (Atlanta, 1988) 102-8.
Schmidt, W. H. "Das Erste Gebot." *TEx* 165 (1970) 17ff.
Snaith, N. H. "The Asaphite Psalms." In *Studies in the Psalter* (London, 1934) 27ff.
von Rad, G. *The Problem of the Hexateuch* (London, 1966) 13-20.
Würthwein, E. "Der Ursprung der prophetischen Gerichtsrede." *ZTK* 49 (1952) 1-16.

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