

Psalm 96:1–13

[cf. 1 Chronicles 16:23–33]

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis and Observations

Hymn Celebrating YHWH's Kingship

Psalm 96:1–13

A. Sing to YHWH a New Song and Bless His Name (96:1–2)

[4.4]

96:1	O sing to YHWH / a new song //	<u>13 2_</u>	<u>4 4 0</u>
		95: 8–96:1a	38 23 15
	Sing to YHWH / all the earth //	<u>14 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		95: 7–96:1	54 31 23
96:2	Sing to YHWH / bless his name //	<u>16 2_</u>	<u>4 4 0</u>
			32 20 12
	Bear news from day to day / his salvation //	<u>17 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		95: 11–96:2	23 11 12

B. Tell His Glory Among the Nations (96:3)

[2.2]

96:3	Tell among the nations / ^a his glory //	<u>13 2_</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		95: 11–96:3a	26 14 12
	Among all the peoples / his wonders //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		95: 10–96:3	42 23 19

C. YHWH Excels All the Gods in Honor and Majesty (96:4–6)

[6.4]

96:4	For great is YHWH and greatly to be praised //	19 1	5 5 0
	he is to be feared / above all gods //	<u>13 2_</u>	<u>5 0 5</u>
		96:1–4	32 16 16
96:5	For ^a all the gods of the peoples are idols //	18 1	5 5 0
	but YHWH / the heavens he made //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		96:2–5	32 17 15
96:6	Honor and majesty / ^a are before him //	<u>12 2_</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		95: 11–96:6a	50 27 23
	Strength and beauty / are in his sanctuary //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		96:1–6	46 24 22

D. Give to YHWH the Glory Due His Name (96:7–9)

[4.4.4]

96:7	Give to YHWH / O families of the peoples //	15 2	4 4 0
	give to YHWH / glory and might //	<u>16 2_</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		96:4–7	32 17 15

96:8	Give to YHWH / the glory due his name //	_14 2_	<u>4 4 0</u>
		96:1-8a	58 32 26
	Bring an offering / and come into his courts //	_18 2_	<u>4 0 4</u>
		96:1-8	62 32 30
96:9	O worship YHWH / in the beauty of holiness //	17 2	4 4 0
	tremble before him / all the earth //	<u>15 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
			70 36 34

E. *YHWH Reigns as King—Let the Heavens and Earth Rejoice* (96:10–11) [4.6]

96:10	Say ^a among the nations / YHWH reigns //	_19 2_	<u>4 4 0</u>
		96:4-10a	52 29 23
	Yea, the world shall be established / it shall not be moved //	_12 2_	<u>5 5 0</u>
		96:9-10b	17 13 4
	He shall judge the peoples / in uprightness //	_14 2_	<u>3 0 3</u>
		96:8-10	28 17 11
96:11	Let the heavens be glad / and the earth rejoice //	19 2	4 4 0
	let the sea roar / and the fullness of it //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		96:9-11	27 17 10

F. *Let the Field and Forest Rejoice and All That Is in Them* (96:12) [2.2]

96:12	Let the field be joyful / and all that is in it //	_13 2_	<u>5 5 0</u>
		95: 9-96:12a	32 22 10
	Then they will rejoice / all the trees of the forest //	<u>14 2</u>	<u>5 0 5</u>
		96:11-12	17 9 8

G. *For YHWH Comes to Judge the World with Righteousness* (96:13) [4.4]

96:13	Before YHWH / for he comes /	12 2	4 4 0
	for he comes / to judge the earth /	_12 2_	<u>4 4 0</u>
		96:11-13b	25 17 8
	He will judge the world / ^a with righteousness //	10 2	3 3 0
	and the people / with his truth //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
		96:12-13	23 16 7
		96:1-13	112 65 47

Scansion in Accentual Stress Units: (4.4).(2.2).(6.4).(4.4.4).(4.6).(3.7)
 (8 + 4 + 10) + 12 + (10 + 10) = 22 + 12 + 22 = 56
 or: **34 // 34**

Concentric Compositional Formula: 112 = 54 + 4 + 54 [word count—no heading]
 or: **58 // 58** [with “pivot” counted in each half]

Notes:

- 96:3^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *mûnah* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 96:5^a Reading *məhuppak læġarmeh* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 96:6^a Reading *mērəkā* preceded immediately by *gaʿya* (= *meteg*) in Ginsburg and Letteris as disjunctive. BHS omits *gaʿya* (= *meteg*).
- 96:10^a Reading *wəyōmərû* (“and they said”; 6 morae) with 1 Chron 16:31 in place of *ʾimrû* (“say” [2nd plural] 3 morae) in MT.
- 96:13^a Reading *mērəkā* preceded immediately by *gaʿya* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Psalm 96 has five strophes: 96:1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–11, 12–13.

A 96:1	balanced dyad:	[13 + 14]	= 13 + 14	morae
96:2	balanced dyad:	[16 + 17]	= 16 + 17	morae
B 96:3	balanced dyad:	[13 + 13]	= 13 + 13	morae
C 96:4–6	2 balanced dyads:	[19 + 13] + [18 + 12]	= 31 + 30	morae
	balanced dyad:	[12 + 12]	= 12 + 12	morae

X 96:7–9	3 balanced dyads:	[15 + 16] + [14 + 18] + [17 + 15]	= 31 + 32 + 32	morae
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C' 96:10–11	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	[19 + 12] + 14 + [19 + 12]	= 28 + 14 + 31	morae
B' 96:12	balanced dyad:	[13 + 14]	= 13 + 14	morae
A' 96:13	2 balanced dyads:	[12 + 12] + [10 + 12]	= 24 + 22	morae

- 2. The first strophe (96:1–2) is a single part arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count 96:1a, 1b, 2a and 2b.
 - 96:7–96:1 **23** words after *atnach*
 - 96:11–96:2 **23** words
- 3. The second strophe (96:3) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 96:3a and 3b.
 - 96:10–96:3 **23** words after *atnach*
- 4. The third strophe (96:4–6) has two parts arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 4,5, 6a and 6b.
 - 96:1–4 **32** words

- 96:2–5 **32** words and **17** words before *atnach*
 - 96:4–7 **32** words and **17** words before *atnach*
 - 96:1–7 **26** words after *atnach*
5. The fourth strophe (96:7–9) is in a single part arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 96:7, 8a, 8b and 9.
- 96:1–8a **58 = 32 + 26** [word count]
 - 96:1–8 **32** words before *atnach*
 - 96:2–8 **26** words after *atnach*
 - 96:1–9 **34** (= **17** x 2) words after *atnach*
6. The fifth strophe (96:10–11) is in a single part arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 96:10a, 10b, 10c and 11.
- 96:4–10a **52** (= **26** x 2) words and **23** words after *atnach*
 - 96:9–10b **17** words
 - 96:8–10b **17** words before *atnach*
 - 96:9–11 **17** words before *atnach*
7. The sixth strophe (96:12) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 96:12a and 12b.
- 96:8–12 **26** words before *atnach*
 - 96:11–12 **17** words
8. The seventh strophe (96:13) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 96:13ab and 13cd.
- 96:12–13 **23** words
 - 96:9–13 **17** words after *atnach*

Observations

1. The seven strophes of Psalm 96 may be outlined in a menorah pattern, which is determined primarily on prosodic grounds, as follows:

A	Sing to YHWH a new song and bless his name	[4.4] 96:1–2
B	Tell his glory among the nations	[2.2] 96:3
C	YHWH excels all the gods in honor and majesty	[6.4] 96:4–6
X	Give to YHWH the glory due his name	[4.4.4] 96:7–9
C'	YHWH reigns as king—let the heavens and earth rejoice	[4.6] 96:10–11
B'	Let the field and forest rejoice and all that is in them	[2.2] 96:12
A'	For YHWH comes to judge the world with righteousness	[4.4] 96:13

2. In terms of the 112 words in Psalm 96, the **arithmological center** falls between the two words לִיהוָה כְבוֹד (“to YHWH is glory” or “glory belongs to YHWH”) in verse 8, which could be

considered a “meaningful center.” When these two words are read as part of each half of Psalm 96, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$112 = 55 + 2 + 55 \quad [\text{word count—no heading}]$$

$$\text{or: } 57 // 57 \quad [\text{word count—with “pivot” included in each half}]$$

It is easy to understand why the word כבוד (“glory”) is spelled here with a *waw*—in order to give us the two variant numerical values of the word (i.e., **23** and **32**):

$$\text{KBWD} = 11+2+6+4 = 23 \quad [\text{place value counting, with } kaph \text{ the } 11^{\text{th}} \text{ letter}]$$

$$\text{KBWD} = 20+2+6+4 = 32 \quad [\text{normal counting, with } kaph \text{ as the number } 20]$$

Another candidate for the “meaningful center” is found by including two more words so that the center has 54 words on either side within a **pivot pattern** [cf. also Psalm 92]:

שמו ליהוה כבוד הבו Give to YHWH the glory due his name.

When these words are read as part of each half of Psalm 96, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$112 = 54 + 4 + 54 \quad [\text{word count—no heading}]$$

$$\text{or: } 58 // 58 \quad [\text{word count—with “pivot” included in each half}]$$

On the **compositional** formula of **58 = 32 + 26** (word-count in 96:1–8a), see *Numerical Secrets*, p. 122. Though the four words in question, “Give to YHWH the glory due his name,” highlight the content of Psalm 96, few scholars have seen verse 8 as the central focus of this psalm. Scholarly interest has primarily focused on verse 10, which D. M. Howard singles out as “an independent section, with ties to vv. 1–9 and vv. 11–13” (*The Structure of Psalms 93–100*. Biblical and Judaic Studies 5 [Eisenbrauns, 1997], p. 65. Nonetheless, the **arithmological center** of Psalm 96 focuses on the presentation of “an offering” to YHWH, to whom the worshiper is enjoined to “Give YHWH the glory due his name.”

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

7	משפחות עמים	O families of the peoples
	הבו ליהוה כבוד ועז	Give to YHWH glory and might
8	שמו ליהוה כבוד הבו	Give to YHWH the glory due his name.
	שאו מנחה ובאו להצרתיו	Bring an offering and come into his courts
9	השתחו ליהוה	Worship YHWH.

When these words are read as part of each half of Psalm 96, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$112 = 48 + 16 + 48 \quad [\text{word count—no heading}]$$

$$\text{or: } 64 // 64 \quad [\text{word count—with “pivot” included in each half}]$$

$$\{64 = 32 \times 2\}$$

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

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 7 | הָבוּ לַיהוָה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים
הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז | Give to YHWH, O families of the peoples
Give to YHWH glory and might |
| 8 | הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ
שְׂאוּ מִנְחָה וּבֹאוּ לְחִצְרֹתָיו | Give to YHWH the glory due his name.
Bring an offering and come into his courts |
| 9 | הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַיהוָה בְּהַדְרַת קֹדֶשׁ | Worship YHWH in the beauty of holiness. |

When these words are read as part of each half of Psalm 96, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$112 = 46 + 20 + 46 \quad \text{[word count—no heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 66 // 66 \quad \text{[word count—with “pivot” included in each half]}$$

The **meaningful center** may be expanded still further by including fourteen words on either side of the **arithmological center** as follows:

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|---|--|---|
| 7 | לְפָנָיו עֹז וּתְפָאֵרֶת בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ
הָבוּ לַיהוָה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים
הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז | Before him is strength and beauty in his sanctuary
Give to YHWH, O families of the peoples
Give to YHWH glory and might |
| 8 | הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ
שְׂאוּ מִנְחָה וּבֹאוּ לְחִצְרֹתָיו | Give to YHWH the glory due his name.
Bring an offering and come into his courts |
| 9 | הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַיהוָה בְּהַדְרַת קֹדֶשׁ
חִילוּ מִפְּנֵי כָל הָאָרֶץ | Worship YHWH in the beauty of holiness.
Tremble before him all the earth. |

When these words are read as part of each half of Psalm 96, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$112 = 42 + 28 + 42 \quad \text{[word count—no heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 70 // 70 \quad \text{[word count—with “pivot” included in each half]}$$

3. The 18-word “nested framework” (with the 5-word framework underlined) reads as follows:

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | <u>שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חָדָשׁ</u>
<u>שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ</u> | <u>O sing to YHWH a new song</u>
<u>Sing to YHWH, all the earth.</u> |
| 2 | שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה בְּרַכּוּ שְׁמוֹ
בְּשִׁרוֹ מִיּוֹם-לְיוֹם יְשׁוּעָתוֹ | Sing to YHWH (and) bless his name;
Bear news from day to day—his salvation. |
| 3 | סַפְּרוּ בְּגוֹיִם | Tell (it) among the nations. |
| 13 | אֲז יִרְנְנוּ כָּל-עֵצֵי-יַעַר
לְפָנֵי יְהוָה כִּי בָא | Then they will rejoice, all the trees of the forest
Before YHWH for he comes |

כִּי בֹא לִשְׁפֹט הָאָרֶץ For he comes to judge the earth.

יִשְׁפֹט־תֵּבֵל בְּצֶדֶק He will judge the world with righteousness

וְעַמִּים בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ And the people with his truth.

4. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

112 = 54 + 4 + 54 or: 58 // 58 {58 = 26 + 32}

112 = 48 + 16 + 48 or: 64 // 64 {64 = 32 x 2}

{with others in between}

112 = 18 + 76 + 18 or: 94 // 94

112 = 5 + 102 + 5 or: 107 // 107

56 = 22 + 12 + 22 or: 34 // 34 SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units
{34 = 17 x 2}

32 = 12 + 8 + 12 or: 20 // 20 **briques** (primary SAS units)

5. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 95, the basic building blocks in each poetic verset are the **briques** (primary SAS 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 96 has 30 **briques** (primary syntactic accentual stress units), 27 of which are marked by: *soph pasuq* (13 times, at the end of each verse), *atnach* (13 times, in each verse) and *ole weyored* (once, in verse 13). The three additional boundaries are marked by *revia* (2 times, in verses 10 and 13) and *dəḥî* (once, in verse 11).

6. The prosodic structure of Psalm 96 in terms of its primary syntactic accentual stress units (**briques**), may be displayed as follows [^ represents *atnach*; : represents *soph pasuq*; † represents *ole weyored*, and † represents all other accent markers]: as follows:

- I A ¹ *šîrû la-yhwh šîr ḥādāš* ^ *šîrû la-yhwh kol hāʾāreš* :
² *šîrû la-yhwh bārākû šəmô* ^ *baśśerû miyyôm ləyôm yašôʿātô* :
- B ³ *sappərû baggôyim kəbôdô* ^ *bəkol hāʿammîm nipləʾôtāyw* :
- C ⁴ *kî gādôl yhwh ûməhullāl məʾôd* ^ *nôrāʾ hûʾ ʿal kol ʾəlôhîm* :
⁵ *kî kol ʾəlôhê hāʿammîm ʾəlîlîm* ^ *wa-yhwh šāmayim ʿāsāh* :
⁶ *hōd wəhādār ləpānāyw* ^ *ʿōz wətipʾeret bəmiqdāšô* :

- | |
|---|
| II X ⁷ <i>hābû la-yhwh mišpəḥôt ʿammîm</i> ^ <i>hābû la-yhwh</i> <i>kābôd wāʿōz</i> : |
| ⁸ <i>hābû</i> <i>la-yhwh kəbôd</i> <i>šəmô</i> ^ <i>śəʾû minhāh</i> <i>ûbôʾû ləḥaşrôtāyw</i> : |
| ⁹ <i>hištaḥwû la-yhwh bəhadrat qôdeš</i> ^ <i>ḥîlû mippānāyw kol hāʾāreš</i> : |

- III C' ¹⁰ *ʾimrû baggôyim yhwh mālāk* † *ʾap tikkôn tēbēl bal tummôt* ^
yādîn ʿammîm *bəməšārîm* :
¹¹ *yiśməḥû haššāmayim wətagēl hāʾāreš* ^ *yirʿam hayyām ûmələʾô* :
- B' ¹² *yaʿālōz sādāy wəkol ʾāšer bô* ^ *ʾaz yəranənû kol ʿāšê yāʿar* :
- A' ¹³ *lipnê yhwh kî bā* † *kî bāʾ lišpōt hāʾāreš* †
yišpōt tēbēl bəsedeq ^ *wəʿammîm beʾəmūnātô* :

7. The 32 **briques** (primary SAS units) are distributed in seven strophes in Psalm 96 as follows: 32 = (4 + 2 + 6) + (3 + 3 + 2) + (6 + 2 + 4) = 12 + 8 + 12. The concentric compositional formula is 18 // 18 with the pivot counted in each half.

The **arithmological center** of Psalm 96 falls between the words *la-yhwh kəbôd* (“to YHWH the glory”) in 96:8a, with a total of 56 words on either side. Psalm 96 has 52 syntactic accentual-stress units, 30 **briques** (primary accentual-stress units), 15 versets, 5 strophes, and 3 cantos. The **arithmological center** is in the middle canto, the middle strophe, the middle versets, the middle two **briques**, and at the very beginning of the middle two syntactic accentual-stress units. There are 212 morae before and 205 morae after the **arithmological center** in 96:8a.

8. Terrien finds four strophes followed by an Envoi in Psalm 96 (*The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Eerdmans, 2003), p. 673–74. David Howard divides Psalm 96 into two major sections (vv. 1–6 and 7–13), which he subdivides into five parts. Van der Lugt, Labuschagne and Fokkelman find 6 strophes. The analysis presented

here, which is based on the balance in mora-count and the concentric pattern in the distribution of syntactic accentual stress units indicates that there are 7 strophes, including Terrien's so-called "Envoi" in verse 13 as the concluding strophe.

Christensen	Terrien	David Howard	Van der Lugt / CJL / Fokkelman
I A 96:1–2 B 96:3 C 96:4–6	1 96:1–3 2 96:4–6 3 96:7–9	I 1 96:1–3 2 96:4–6 II 3 96:7–9	I 1 96:1–3 2 96:4–6 II.1 3 96:7–8
II X 96:7–9			
III C 96:10–11 B 96:12 A 96:13	4 96:10–12 Envoi (v. 13)	4 96:10 5 96:11–13	4 96:9–10 II.2 5 96:11–12 6 96:13

The primary difference in terms of strophic structure results from the fact that the others assume a linear prosodic structure.

9. Evidence from the logoprosodic analysis suggests that the numerical composition of Psalm 96, which is without a heading or any occurrence of the word *selah*, is similar to that of other psalms which include these so-called "extra" words. Note the following list of significant compositional numbers at the boundaries of the verses counting from the beginning:

96:1–4	32 words
96:1–5	40 words
96:1–6	46 (= 23 x 2) words
96:1–7	26 words after <i>atnach</i>
96:1–8	32 words before <i>atnach</i>
96:1–9	70 words and 34 (= 17 x 2) words after <i>atnach</i>
96:1–11	49 (= 17 + 32 = 23 + 26) words before and 40 words after <i>atnach</i>

It is not possible to utilize any of the four compositional numbers (**17**, **23**, **26** and **32**) until the end of verse 3, which leaves nine possible boundaries to work with. In 5 out of 9 of these boundaries (or more than 55% of the time) a multiple of one of these four compositional numbers is present. If the numbers **40** and **49** are included, the percentage increases to more than 77%. This evidence suggests the possibility of deliberate design at the point of the numerical composition of Psalm 96.

10. Determining the details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 96 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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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