

Psalm 98:1–9

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

A Hymn in Praise of YHWH's Kingship

Psalm 98:1–9

A. *Sing to YHWH a New Song for He Has Done Marvelous Things* (98:1) [4.3]

98:1	A Mizmor /		<u> 3</u> 1_	<u> 1</u> 1 0	
		97:10–98:1a		23 14 9	
	O sing to YHWH / a new song /		<u> 15</u> 2_	<u> 4</u> 4 0	
		97:11–98:1b		17 11 6	
	For marvelous things he has done //		<u> 11</u> 1_	<u> 3</u> 3 0	
		97:8–98:1c		51 34 17	
	His right hand / ^a has saved for him (the victory) /		12 2	3 0 3	
	and his holy arm //		<u> 8</u> 1	<u> 2</u> 0 2	
		97:7–98:1		66 40 26	

B. *YHWH Has Revealed His Covenant-Love to Israel for All to See* (98:2–3b) [4.4]

98:2	YHWH has revealed / his salvation //		16 2	3 3 0	
	to the eyes of the nations /		<u> 9</u> 1_	<u> 2</u> 0 2	
		97:11–98:2b		30 17 13	
	He unveiled his righteousness //		<u> 17</u> 1_	<u> 4</u> 0 4	
		97:12–98:2		26 14 12	
98:3	He remembered / ^a his covenant-love / and his truth /		14 3	3 3 0	
	to the house of Israel //		<u> 8</u> 1	<u> 2</u> 2 0	
		97:9–98:3b		59 36 23	

C. *Let All the Earth Rejoice and Sing Praise to King YHWH* (98:3c–6) [8.8]

	All the ends of the earth / ^b have seen //		11 2	4 4 0	
	the / salvation of our God //		<u> 13</u> 2_	<u> 3</u> 0 3	
		98:1–3		32 20 12	
98:4	Make a joyful noise to YHWH / all the earth //		16 2	4 4 0	
	break out / and rejoice and sing praise //		<u> 14</u> 2_	<u> 3</u> 0 3	
		98:2–4		26 16 10	

98:5	Sing praise to YHWH / ^a with the lyre //	12 2	3 3 0
	with the lyre / and the voice of a song //	_10 2_	<u>3 0 3</u>
		97:9–98:5	79 47 32

98:6	With trumpets / and the sound of the shofar //	14 2	3 3 0
	make a joyful noise / before ^a the king YHWH //	<u>16 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		98:3–6	32 19 13

D. Let the Sea Roar and the Rivers Clap Their Hands (98:7–8) [4.4]

98:7	Let the sea roar / and the fullness of it //	12 2	3 3 0
	the world / and those who live in it //	_12 2_	<u>3 0 3</u>
		98:4–7	26 13 13

98:8	Let the rivers / ^a clap their hands //	11 2	3 3 0
	together / let the heights exult //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		98:4–8	32 16 16

E. YHWH Comes to Judge the Earth with Righteousness (98:9) [3.4]

98:9	Before YHWH / for he comes / to judge the earth //	_19 3_	<u>6 6 0</u>
		98:2–9a	57 34 23
	He shall judge the earth / ^a with righteousness //	10 2	3 3 0
	and the peoples / in uprightness //	<u>11 2</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
		98:8–9	17 12 5
		98:1–9	75 45 30

Scansion in Accentual Stress Units: (4.3).(4.4) . (8.8) . (4.4).(3.4)
 (7 + 8) + (8 + 8) + (8 + 7) = 15 + 16 + 15 = **46**
 or: 31 // 31 {**46** = **23** x 2}

Concentric Compositional Formula: 75 = 37 + 1 + 37 [with heading]
 or: 38 // 38 [with pivot counted in each half]

Notes:

- 98:1^a Reading *mērāḳā* preceded immediately by *gaʿya* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.
- 98:3^a Reading *šinnôr* plus *mehuppāḳ* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 98:3^b Reading *mērāḳā* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 98:5^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munaḥ* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 98:6^a Reading *mehuppāḳ leḡarmēh* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 98:8^a Reading *mērāḳā* in BHS as disjunctive [need Wheeler’s reading on this one / cf. 98:3]
- 98:9^a Reading *mērāḳā* preceded immediately by *gaʿya* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Psalm 98:1–9 has five strophes: 98:1–2, 3, 4–5, 6–7 and 8–9.

A 98:1	2 balanced dyads + pivot: [3 + 15] + 11 + [12 + 8]	= 18 + 11 + 20	morae
B 98:2–3c	2 balanced dyads + pivot: [16 + 9] + 8 + [14 + 8]	= 25 + 8 + 22	morae

X 98:3c–6	2 balanced quatrains: [(11+13)+(16+14)] + [(12+10)+(14+16)]	= 54 + 52	morae
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B' 98:7–8	2 balanced dyads: [12 + 12] + [11 + 12]	= 24 + 23	morae
A' 98:9	balanced dyad: [19 + (10 + 11)]	= 19 + 21	morae

- The first strophe (98:1) is a single part arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 98:1a, 1b, 1c and 1de.
 - 97:5–98:1c **51 = 34 + 17** [compositional formula]
 - 97:7–98:1 **26** words after *atnach*
- The second strophe (98:2–3c) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 98:2ab, 2c and 3.
 - 97:7–98:2 **26** words
 - 97:9–98:3b **23** words after *atnach*
- The third strophe (98:3d–6) is a single part arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 98:3cd, 4, 5 and 6.
 - 98:1–3 **32** words
 - 98:2–4 **26** words
 - 98:2–5 **32** words
 - 97:9–98:3 **32** words after *atnach*
- The fourth strophe (98:7–8) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 98:7 and 8.
 - 98:4–7 **26** words
 - 98:4–8 **32** words
 - 98:2–8 **51** (= 17 x 3) words and **23** words after *atnach*
- The fifth strophe (98:9) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 98:9a and 9bc.
 - 98:8–9 **17** words
 - 98:7–9 **23** words

Observations

1. The five strophes in Psalm 98 may be outlined in a menorah pattern, as follows:

A	Sing to YHWH a new song for he has done marvelous things	[4.3] 98:1
B	YHWH has revealed his covenant-love to Israel for all to see	[4.4] 98:2–3b
C	All the ends of the earth have seen God’s salvation	[2.2] 98:3cd
X	Let all the earth rejoice and sing praise to YHWH	[4.4] 98:4
C’	Sing praise to king YHWH with musical instruments	[2.2] 98:5–6
B’	Let the sea roar and the rivers clap their hands	[4.4] 98:7–8
A’	YHWH comes to judge the earth with righteousness	[3.4] 98:9

2. In terms of the 75 words in Psalm 98, the **arithmological** center falls on the word **ורננו** (“ad rejoice”), in the second half of verse 4, with 37 words on either side. The *Concentric Compositional Formula* is:

$$75 = 37 + 1 + 37 \quad [\text{word count—there is no heading in Psalm 98}]$$

$$\text{or: } 38 // 38 \quad [\text{word count—with “pivot” included in each half}]$$

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

וזמרו **ורננו** פצחו Break out and rejoice and sing praise;

When they are read as part of each half of Psalm 98, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$75 = 36 + 3 + 36 \quad [\text{word count—with the heading}]$$

$$\text{or: } 39 // 39 \quad [\text{word count—with “pivot” included in each half}]$$

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

- 4 ליהוה כל הארץ To YHWH belongs all the earth;
 זמרו **ורננו** פצחו Break out and rejoice and sing praise.
 5 זמרו ליהוה בכנור Sing praise to YHWH with the lyre;

When they are read as part of each half of Psalm 98, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$75 = 33 + 9 + 33 \quad [\text{word count—with the heading}]$$

$$\text{or: } 42 // 42 \quad [\text{word count—with “pivot” included in each half}]$$

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

	ישועת אלהינו	(It is) the salvation of our God.
4	הריעו ליהוה כל הארץ	Make a joyful noise to YHWH all the earth;
	פצחו ורננו וזמרו	Break out and rejoice and sing praise.
5	זמרו ליהוה בכנור	Sing praise to YHWH with the lyre;
	בכנור וקול זמרה	With a lyre and the voice of a song.

When they are read as part of each half of Psalm 98, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$75 = 30 + 15 + 30 \quad \text{[word count—with the heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 45 // 45 \quad \text{[word count—with “pivot” included in each half]}$$

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

	לבית ישראל	O house of Israel --
	ראו כל אפסי ארץ	All the ends of the earth have seen
	את ישועת אלהינו	The salvation of our God.
4	הריעו ליהוה כל הארץ	Make a joyful noise to YHWH all the earth;
	פצחו ורננו וזמרו	Break out and rejoice and sing praise.
5	זמרו ליהוה בכנור	Sing praise to YHWH with the lyre;
	בכנור וקול זמרה	With a lyre and the voice of a song.
6	בחצצרות וקול שופר	With trumpets and the sound of the shofar,
	הריעו לפני המלך יהוה	Make a joyful noise before the king YHWH.

When they are read as part of each half of Psalm 98, the *Concentric Compositional Formula* becomes:

$$75 = 23 + 29 + 30 \quad \text{[word count—with the heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 52 // 52 \quad \text{[word count—with “pivot” included in each half]}$$

- The numerical composition of Psalm 98 combines the YHWH-*echad* model in the first half (98:1–4) with the combination of the two divine-name numbers in the second half (98:4–9).

13 (words in 98:1) + **26** (words in 98:2–4) = **39** (words in 98:1–4)

26 (words in 98:2–4) + **13** (words in 98:5–6) = **39** (words in 98:2–6)

26 (words in 98:4–7) + **17** (words in 98:8–9) = **43** (words in 98:4–9)

This demonstrates the fact that verse 4, which includes the **meaningful center**, functions as a connecting “bridge” between the two halves of Psalm 98. Though the psalm has a concentric literary structure from a musical point of view, it also has the quality of a diptych as well with two major divisions in terms of literary content: 98:1–3 and 4–9.

- The 23-word “nested framework” (with the 5-word framework underlined) reads as follows:

1	<u>מזמור</u>	A Mizmor
	<u>שירו ליהוה שיר חדש</u>	<u>O Sing to YHWH a new song;</u>
	כי־נפלאות עשה	For marvelous things he has done.
	הושיעה־לו ימינו	His right hand has saved for him (the victory)
	וזרוע קדשו	And his holy arm.
2	הודיע יהוה ישועתו	YHWH has revealed his salvation
	לעיני הגוים גלה צדקתו	to the eyes of the nations he unveiled his righteousness
	זכר חסדו ואמונתו	He remembered his covenant-love and his truth.
7	ירעם הים ומלאו	Let the sea roar and the fullness of it,
	תבל וישבי בה	The world and those who live in it.
8	נהרות ימחאו־כף	Let the rivers clap their hands;
	יחד הרים ירננו	Together let the heights exult.
9	לפני־יהוה כי בא	Before YHWH for he comes
	לשפט הארץ	to judge the earth.
	<u>ישפט־תבל בצדק</u>	<u>Rejoice, O righteous ones, in YHWH</u>
	<u>ועמים במישרים</u>	<u>And give thanks for the memory of his holiness.</u>

5. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

$$75 = 33 + 9 + 33 \quad \text{or: } 42 // 42$$

$$75 = 30 + 15 + 30 \quad \text{or: } 60 // 60$$

{with others in between}

$$75 = 23 + 29 + 23 \quad \text{or: } \mathbf{52 // 52}$$

$$75 = 5 + 65 + 5 \quad \text{or: } 70 // 90$$

$$\mathbf{46} = 15 + 16 + 15 \quad \text{or: } 31 // 31 \quad \text{SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units}$$

{46 = 23 x 2}

$$\mathbf{26} = 9 + 8 + 9 \quad \text{or: } \mathbf{17 // 17} \quad \mathbf{briques} \text{ (primary SAS units)}$$

6. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 98, 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 98 has 24 **briques** (primary SAS units), 20 of which are marked by: *soph pasuq* (9 times, at the end of each verse), *atnach* (9 times, in each verse), and *ole weyored* (2 times, in vv. 3 and 9). The four other boundaries of the **briques** are marked by *revia mugrash* (twice, in vv. 1 and 2), *dəḥî* (v. 1), and *šinnôr* (v. 3).

7. The prosodic structure of Psalm 98, in terms of its primary SAS 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 *mizmôr šîrû la-yhwh šîr ḥāḏāš[†] kî niplā^ˆôṭ ʿāsāh[^]*
hōšî^ˆāh lô yəminô[†] ūzəroa^ˆ qodšô :

B ² *hōḏîa^ˆ yhwh yəšû^ˆātô[^] ləʿenê haggôyim[†] gillāh šidqātô :*
³ *zākār ḥasdô weʿəmûnātô[†] ləbêt yisrāʿēl[†]*

II X	¹ <i>raʿû kōl ʿāpsê ʿāreš[^]</i>	<i>ʿēt yəšû^ˆaṭ ʿəlōhênêû :</i>
	⁴ <i>hārî^ˆû la-yhwh kol hāʿāreš[^]</i>	<i>pišû [werannēnû] wəzammērû :</i>
	⁵ <i>zammērû la-yhwh bəḳinnôr[^]</i>	<i>bəḳinnôr wəqôl zimrāh :</i>
	⁶ <i>baḥāšōšəroṭ wəqôl šōpār[^]</i>	<i>hārî^ˆû lipnê hammeleḳ yhwh :</i>

III B' ⁷ *yir^ˆam hayyām ūmələ^ˆô[^] tēbēl wəyōšəbē bāh :*
⁸ *nəhārōṭ yimḥāʿû kāp[^] yaḥad hārîm yərannēnû :*

A' ⁹ *lipnê yhwh kî bā^ˆ lišpōṭ hāʿāreš[†]*
yišpōṭ tēbēl bəšedeq[^] wəʿammîm bəməšārîm :

8. The 26 **briques** (primary SAS units) are distributed in five strophes in Psalm 98 as follows: $26 = (4 + 5) + (4 + 4) + (5 + 4) = 9 + 8 + 9$. The concentric compositional formula on the basis of **briques** is **17 // 17**.

The **arithmological center** of Psalm 98 falls on the word *werannānû* (“and rejoice”) in 98:4b, with 37 words on either side. Psalm 98 has 46 SAS units, 26 **briques** (primary SAS units), 12 versets, 5 strophes and 3 cantos. The **arithmological center** in verse 7 is in the middle strophe, the middle two versets, the middle two **briques**, and the middle two SAS units. There are 147 morae before the word *werannānû* (“and rejoice”) in 98:4b and 145 morae after it.

9. Terrien finds three strophes in Psalm 98 framed by a Prelude and an Postlude (*The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Eerdmans, 2003), p. 681–82. David Howard divides Psalm 98 into three sections (vv. 1–3, 4–6 and 7–9). Van der Lugt, Labuschagne, and Fokkelman find 5 strophes, with minor differences on matters of detail. 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 five strophes arranged in three cantos (vv. 1–3c, 3d–6 and 7–9).

Christensen	Terrien	David Howard	Van der Lugt	Labuschagne
I A 98:1	Prelude (v. 1)	I 98:1–3	I 1 98:1–2	I 1 98:1–2
B 98:2–3b	1 98:2–3		2 98:3	2 98:3
II X 98:3c–6	2 98:4–6	II 98:4–6	II 3 98:4–6	II.1 3 98:4–6
III C' 98:7–8	3 98:7–9a	III 98:7–9	4 98:7–8	II.2 4 98:7–8
A' 98:9	Postlude (v. 9b)		5 98:9	5 98:9

The primary differences in terms of strophic structure observed here stem from the fact that the others assume a linear prosodic structure. The prosodic boundary in the middle of v. 3 illustrates the principle of enjambment, where the thought of a given prosodic subunit extends across the structural boundary. The phenomenon of enjambment is reinforced by the verse division. The end result is the fact that the 5-strophe poem can still be outlined in a menorah pattern (see Observation 1).

10. Once again, the evidence from the logoprosodic analysis supports the inclusion of the four-word heading as an integral part of Psalm 98 at the point of the numerical composition of this text, as shown in the following list of significant compositional numbers at the boundaries of the verses counting from the beginning:

98:1–3 **32** words
 98:1–6 **52** (= **26** x 2) words
 98:1–7 **58** words [**58** = **26** + **32**]
 98:1–8 **64** (= **32** x 2) words

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 eight possible boundaries to work with. In 3 out of 8 of these boundaries (or more than 37% of the time) a multiple of one of these four compositional numbers is present. If the number **58** is included as well the percentage increases to 50%. This evidence suggests the possibility of deliberate design at the point of the numerical

composition of Psalm 98 including the 1-word heading for all of these numbers disappear if these words are not considered to be an integral part of the psalm at the point of its numerical composition.

11. Determining the details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 98 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.

12. Bibliography:

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© 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