

Psalm 101:1–8

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

Royal Psalm: Code of Conduct for a King

Psalm 101:1–8

A. *I Sing a Song of Loyal Praise to YHWH* (101:1)

[2.4]

^{101:1} Belonging to David / a psalm //

8 2 2 2 0
100:3–101:1a **32** 21 11

Of loyalty and justice /^a I sing //

12 2 3 3 0
100:4–101:1b **23** 15 8

To you **YHWH** /^b I sing praise //

11 2 3 0 3
100:5–101:1 **17** 10 7

B. *I Celebrate Your Integrity as I Walk in the Integrity of My Heart* (101:2)

[3.3]

^{101:2} I celebrate in poetry / (your) path of integrity /
when ^a will you come to me? //

11 2 3 3 0
11 1 3 3 0
100:5–101:2b **23** 16 7

I walk /^b in the integrity of my heart /
in the midst of my house //

12 2 3 0 3
7 1 2 0 2
101:1–2 (without heading) **17** 9 8

C. *I Avoid the Work of Devious Persons* (101:3)

[3.3]

^{101:3} I did not set / before my eyes /^a a wicked thing //

20 3 6 6 0
101:2–3a **17** 12 5

The work of devious persons /^b I hate //
they do not / cling to me //

13 1 3 3 0
6 2 3 0 3
101:2–3 **23** 15 8

D. *I Do Not Tolerate Slander and Arrogance* (101:4–5)

[4.2.4]

^{101:4} A perverse heart / is far from me //
evil / I do not know //

15 2 4 4 0
8 2 3 0 3
100:4–101:4b **56** **34** 22

^{101:5} Whoever secretly slanders ^a his neighbor /
him I will destroy //

15 1 3 3 0
7 1 2 2 0
101:2c–5a **26** 18 8

Whoever has arrogant eyes / and a proud heart //	14	2	4	4	0
him / I will not tolerate //	10	2	3	0	3
	101:1-5		50	33	17

E. I Seek Out Those Who Walk in a Blameless Way (101:6) [3.3]

101:6 My eyes / are upon faithful countrymen /	10	2	3	3	0
so that they may dwell with me //	_9	1_	_2	_2	_0
	101:5-6b		17	14	3

The one who walks ^a in a blameless way //	11	1	3	3	0
he alone / shall minister to me //	10	2	2	0	2
	101:5-6		22	17	5

F. Those Who Speak Lies Do Not Stay Long Inside My House (101:7a-d) [3.3]

101:7 No one shall live / inside my house /	_13	2_	_4	_4	_0
	101:5-7a		26	21	5

Who acts deceitfully //	_9	1_	_2	_2	_0
	101:5-7b		28	23	5

One who speaks ^a lies //	9	2	2	2	0
he will not stay long /	5	1	2	0	2
	101:5-7a		32	25	7

G. Morning by Morning I Rid the City of All Workers of Iniquity (101:7e-8) [4.2]

Indeed (it is) before my eyes //	_7	1_	_2	_0	_2
	101:5-7		34	25	9

101:8 Morning by morning / I will destroy ^a all wicked countrymen //	_16	3_	_5	_5	_0
	101:7-8a		17	13	4

Ridding ^b the city of YHWH / of all workers of iniquity //	_21	2	_6	_0	_6
	101:7-8		23	13	10
	101:1-8		83	54	29

Scansion in Accentual Stress Units: (2.4).(3.3).(3.3) . (4.2.4) . (3.3).(3.3).(4.2)
 (6 + 6 + 6) + 10 + (6 + 6 + 6) = 18 + 10 + 18 = **46**
 or: 28 // 28 {**46 = 23 x 2**}

Concentric Compositional Formula: 83 = 41 + 1 + 41 [word count—with heading]
 or: 42 // 42 [with pivot counted in each half]

Notes:

- 101:1^a Reading *mērəkā* preceded by *ga'yā* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.
 101:1^b Reading *mērəkā* plus *mūnah* in BHS as disjunctive.
 101:2^a Reading *deḥi* in BHS as conjunctive.
 101:2^b Reading *mērəkā* here in BHS as disjunctive.
 101:3^a Reading *mērəkā* here in BHS as disjunctive.
 101:3^b Reading *mērəkā* preceded by *ga'yā* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.
 101:6^a Reading *deḥi* in BHS as conjunctive.
 101:7^a Reading *mērəkā* here in BHS as disjunctive.
 101:8^a Reading *mērəkā* here in BHS as disjunctive.
 101:8^b Reading *mērəkā* followed by *ga'yā* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Psalm 101 has seven strophes: 101:1, 2, 3, 4–5, 6, 7a–d and 7e–8:

I	A	101:1	rubric + balanced dyad:	[7 + (12 + 11)]	= 7 // + 12 + 11	morae
	B	101:2	2 balanced (?) dyads:	[11 + 11] + [12 + 7]	= 22 + 19	morae
	C	101:3	balanced dyad:	[20 + (13 + 6)]	= 20 + 19	morae
II	X	101:4–5	3 balanced dyads:	[15 + 8] + [15 + 7] + [14 + 10]	= 23 + 22 + 24	morae
III	C'	101:6	2 balanced dyads:	[10 + 9] + [11 + 10]	= 19 + 21	morae
	B'	101:7a–d	balanced dyad + pivot:	[13 + 9 + (9 + 5)]	= 13 + 9 + 14	morae
	A'	101:7e–8	balanced dyad:	[(7 + 16) + 21]	= 23 + 21	morae

2. The first strophe (101:1) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 101:1a, 1b and 1c.
- 100:5–101:1 **17** words
3. The second strophe (101:2) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 101:1a, 1b and 1c.
- 101:1–2 **17** words (without heading)
4. The third strophe (101:3) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 101:3ab and 3cd.
- 101:2–3 **23** words
5. The fourth strophe (101:4–5) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 101:4, 5 and 6 .
- 100:4–101:4 **34** (= **17** x 2) words
 - 101:2–5 **23** words before *atnach*

- 101:1–5 **17** words after *atnach*
6. The fifth strophe (101:6) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 101:6ab and 6cd .
- 101:5–6 **17** words before *atnach*
7. The sixth strophe (101:7a–d) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 7a, 7b and 7cd.
- 101:5–7d **32** words
8. The seventh strophe (101:7e–8) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 7e, 8a and 8b.
- 101:5–7 **34** (= **17** x 2) words
 - 101:1–7 **23** words after *atnach*
 - 101:6–8 **23** words and **13** words before *atnach*
 - 101:4–8 **52** (= **26** x 2) words and **34** (= **17** x 2) words before *atnach*
 - 101:2–8 **26** words after *atnach*
 - 101:1–8 **52** (= **26** x 2) words (without heading) before *atnach*

Observations

1. The seven strophes in Psalm 101 may be outlined in a menorah pattern, as follows:

A	I sing a song of loyal praise to YHWH	[2.4]	101:1
B	I celebrate your integrity as I walk in the integrity of my heart	[3.3]	101:2
C	I have avoided doing the work of devious persons	[3.3]	101:3
X	I will not tolerate slander and arrogance	[4.2.4]	101:4–5
C'	I seek out those who walk in a blameless way	[3.3]	101:6
B'	Those who speak lies will not stay long inside my house	[3.3]	101:7a–d
A'	Morning by morning I rid the city of all workers of iniquity	[4.2]	101:7e–8

2. Fokkelman presents a 7-fold strophic structure, following the earlier work of Calès (1936) and Duhm (1922), as follows:

A	Strophe 1	2 verselines	4 cola	101:1–2b
B	Strophe 2	2 verselines	4 cola	101:2c–3b
C	Strophe 3	2 verselines	4 cola	101:3c–4
X	Strophe 4	2 verselines	4 cola	101:5
C'	Strophe 5	2 verselines	4 cola	101:6
B'	Strophe 6	2 verselines	4 cola	101:7
A'	Strophe 7	2 verselines	4 cola	101:8

3. Labuschagne finds a menorah pattern in 101:2–5 on the basis of the seven actions of the first person speaker (see his Observation 3):

- | | | |
|----|--|----------|
| A | I rhapsodize about the perfect path | 101:2a |
| B | I will walk in the integrity of my heart | 101:2c |
| C | I will not set before my eyes a wicked thing | 101:3a |
| X | I hate what devious persons do | 101:3c |
| C' | I will have nothing to do with evil | 101:4b |
| B' | Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy | 101:5a–b |
| A' | Whoever has haughty looks and a proud heart, him I will not tolerate | 101:5c–d |

4. In terms of the 83 words (including the 2-word heading) in Psalm 101, the **arithmological center** falls on the word אֹתוֹ (“him”) in the first half of verse 5. The initial **concentric compositional formula** is:

$$83 = 41 + 1 + 41 \quad [\text{word count—with heading}]$$

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

A **meaningful center** is found by including three words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

מִלְשֵׁנִי בִסְתֵר רָעָהוּ Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor,
 אֹתוֹ Him I will destroy, the one with arrogant eyes.

These words highlight the meaning of the psalm as a whole, which concerns the conduct of a king who is instructed to shun the presence of evil. When these words are read as part of each half of Psalm 101, the **concentric compositional formula** becomes:

$$83 = 38 + 7 + 38 \quad [\text{word count—with heading in 101:1aa}]$$

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

In this instance, however, there is no apparent use of the primary compositional numbers.

A more promising candidate for the **meaningful center** is found as a “wheel within a wheel” by adding only one word on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

רָעָהוּ אֹתוֹ אֲצַמִּית His neighbor, him I will destroy.

The **concentric compositional formula** then becomes:

$$83 = 40 + 3 + 40 \quad [\text{word count—with heading in 101:1aa}]$$

$$\text{or: } 43 // 43 \quad [\text{word count—with “pivot” included in each half}]$$

$$\{43 = 17 + 26 \text{ and } 40 = 17 + 23 = 26 + 14\}$$

These compositional numbers are woven into the fabric of the text as follows:

101:1–5a **43** = **17** (words in vv. 1:1–2b) + **26** (words in vv. 2c–5b)
 101:5–8 **45** = **17** (words in vv. 5–6b) + **28** (words in vv. 6c–8)
 101:2–6a **40** = **14** (words in vv. 1–2a) + **26** (words in vv. 2b–6a)

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

	לא ידבק בי	They do not cling to me—
4	לבב עקש יסור ממני	A perverse heart is far from me;
	רע לא אדע	Evil I do not know.
5	מלשני בסתר רעהו	Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor,
	אותו אצמית	Him I will destroy;
	גבה עינים ורחב לבב	Whoever has arrogant yes and a proud heart,
	אתו לא אוכל	Him I will not tolerate.
6	עיני בנאמני ארץ	My eyes are upon faithful countrymen;
	לשבת עמדי	So that they may dwell with me.

When these words are read as part of each half of Psalm 101, the **concentric compositional formula** becomes:

83 = 28 + 27 + 28 [word count—with heading in 101:1aa]
 or: **55 // 55** [word count—with “pivot” included in each half]
 {55 = 23 + 32}

5. The 23-word “nested framework” (with the 11-word framework underlined) reads as follows:

1	<u>לדוד מזמור</u>	<u>Belonging to David, a psalm</u>
	<u>חסד־ומשפט אשירה</u>	<u>Of loyalty and justice I sing;</u>
	<u>לך יהוה אזמרה</u>	<u>To you YHWH I sing praise.</u>
	<u>אשכילה בדרך תמים</u>	<u>I celebrate in poetry (your) path of integrity.</u>
	מתי תבוא אלי	When will you come to me?
2	אתהלך בתם־לבבי	I walk in the integrity of my heart
	בקרב ביתי	In the midst of my house
3	לא־אשית לנגד עיני	I did not set before my eyes
7	לא־ישב בקרב ביתי	No one shall live inside my house
	עשה רמיה דבר שקרים	Who acts deceitfully, one who speaks lies
	לא־יכון	He will not stay long.
	לנגד עיני	Indeed it is before my eyes --

8	<u>לבקרים אצמית</u>	<u>Morning by morning I will destroy</u>
	<u>כל־רשע־ארץ</u>	<u>all wicked countrymen</u>
	<u>להכרית מעיר־יהוה</u>	<u>So as to rid the city of YHWH</u>
	<u>כל־פעלי און</u>	<u>of all workers of iniquity.</u>

6. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

$$83 = 40 + 3 + 40 \quad \text{or: } 43 // 43$$

$$83 = 38 + 7 + 38 \quad \text{or: } 45 // 45$$

{with others in between}

$$83 = 23 + 37 + 23 \quad \text{or: } 60 // 60$$

$$83 = 11 + 61 + 11 \quad \text{or: } 79 // 79$$

$$46 = 18 + 10 + 18 \quad \text{or: } 28 // 28 \quad \text{SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units}$$

{46 = 23 x 2}

$$28 = 11 + 6 + 11 \quad \text{or: } 17 // 17 \quad \text{briques (primary SAS units)}$$

7. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 101, 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 101 has 28 **briques** (primary SAS units), 21 of which are marked by: *soph pasuq* (8 times, at the end of each verse), *atnach* (8 times, in each verse), and *ole weyored* (5 times, in vv. 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7). The seven remaining boundaries are marked with: *rəbîa^c* (2 times, in vv. 2 and 3), *rəbîa^c muğraš* (2 times, in vv. 2 and 7), *sinnôr* (3 times, in vv. 5, 6 and 7)

8. The prosodic structure of Psalm 101 as a whole, 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]:

I A ¹ *ləḏāwīḏ mizmô[†]* *ḥeseḏ ūmišpāṭ ʾāšīrāh ^*
ləḵa yhw^h ʾāzammērāh :

B ² *ʾāskīlāh bəḏereḵ tāmîm[†]* *māṭay tāḇôʾ ʾēlāy ^*
ʾethallēḵ bəṭām ləḇāḇî[†] *bəqereḇ bêtî[†] :*

C ³ *lôʾ ʾāšīṭ ləneḡeḏ ʿēnay[†]* *dəḇar bəlīyāʿal[†]*
ʿāsēh sētîm sānēʾtî[†] ^ *lôʾ yīḏbaq bî[†] :*

II X ⁴ *lēḇāḇ ʿiqqēš yāsûr mimmennî[^]* *rā^ˁ lôʾ ʾeḏā^ˁ :*
⁵ *məlôšəni[†] ḥasēṭer rēʿehû[†]* ʾôṭô ʾašmîṭ[†]
gəḇah ʿēnayim ūrəḥəḇ ləḇāḇ ^ *ʾôṭô lôʾ ʾûḵāl[†] :*

III C' ⁶ *ʿēnay bəneʾemne[†] ʾereš[†]* *lāšəḇeṭ ʿimmāḏî[†] †*
hōlēḵ bəḏereḵ tāmîm ^ *hûʾ yəšārəṭēnî[†] :*

B' ⁷ *lôʾ yēšəḇ bəqereḇ bêtî[†]* *ōsēh rəmīyāh[†]*
dōḇēr šəqārîm ^ *lôʾ yikkôn[†]*

A' *ləneḡeḏ ʿēnāy :* ⁸ *labbəqārîm ʾašmîṭ kol riš^ˁē ʾāreš ^*
ləḥaḵrîṭ mēʿîr yhw^h kol pōʿālê ʾāreš :

9. The 28 **briques** (primary SAS units) are distributed in 7 **strophes** in Psalm 101 as follows: 28 = (3 + 4 + 4) + 6 + (4 + 4 + 3) = 11 + 6 + 11. The **concentric compositional formula** (on the basis of **briques**) is **17 // 17**, with the central pivot included in each half.

The **arithmological center** of Psalm 101 falls on the word ʾôṭô (“him”) in 101:5a, with words on either side. Psalm 101 has 46 SAS units, 21 **briques** (primary SAS units), 8 versets and 3 strophes. The **arithmological center** is in the middle strophe, the middle two versets, the middle **brique**, and the middle two SAS units. Psalm 101 has 299 morae—148 before and 147 after the word ʾôṭô (“him”) in 101:5a.

10. Terrien finds four strophes (plus an Envoy) in Psalm 101 (*The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Eerdmans, 2003), p. 691–92. Van der Lugt and Labuschagne find 6 strophes and Fokkelman has 7 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 seven strophes arranged in three cantos (vv.1–3, 4–5 and 6–8)..

Christensen	Terrien	Van der Lugt & CJL	Fokkelman
I A 101:1	1 101:1–2	I 1 101:1–2	1 101:1–2b
B 101:2			2 101:2c–3b
C 101:3	2 101:3–4	2 101:3–4	3 101:3c–4
II X 101:4–5	3 101:5–6	3 101:5	4 101:5
III C' 101:6		II 4 101:6	5 101:6
B' 101:7a–d	4 101:7–8a	5 101:7	6 101:7
A' 101:7e–8	Envoi (v. 8b)	6 101:8	7 101:8

The primary differences in terms of strophic structure observed here stem from the fact that the others assume a linear prosodic structure.

11. Determining the details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 101 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.

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