

Psalm 110:1–7

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

Eternal Priest from Melchizedek

Psalm 110:1–7

A. *Divine Oracle: The Scepter of YHWH's Power Extends from Zion* (110:1–2) [7.4]

110:1	Belonging to David / a psalm //	<u>8</u> 2_	<u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>
		109:25–110:1	49 32 17
	Utterance of YHWH / to my lord / “Sit at my right hand //	<u>20</u> 3_	<u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>
		109:28–110:1b	35 26 9
	Until I make your enemies / a stool for your feet” //	<u>19</u> 2_	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>5</u>
		109:30–110:1	26 15 11
110:2	The scepter of your power / YHWH will extend ^a from Zion //	<u>17</u> 2_	<u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>
		110:1–2a	17 12 5
	Rule / in the midst of your enemies //	<u>12</u> 2	<u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>
		109:29–110:2	40 23 17

B. *Divine Oracle: “You Are a Priest after the Order of Melchizedek”* (110:3–4) [4.4.4]

110:3	Your people will volunteer / in the day of your might //	<u>15</u> 2_	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
		109:30–110:3a	37 23 14
	In holy splendor / from the womb of the dawn //	<u>14</u> 2	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
		109:29–110:3b	48 31 17
	To you / will be the dew of your youth //	<u>9</u> 2_	<u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>
		109:30–110:3	44 27 17
110:4	YHWH has sworn / and he will not recant /	<u>14</u> 2_	<u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>
		110:2–4a	23 17 6
	You are a priest / ^a forever //	<u>12</u> 2_	<u>3</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>
		110:2–4c	26 20 6
	After the order / of Melchizedek //	<u>11</u> 2	<u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u>
		109:28–110:4	70 46 24

C. *Implications: The Lord Shatters Kings and Judges the Nations* (110:5–7) [4.7]

110:5	The Lord is at your right hand //	12 1	3 3 0
	he shatters / kings in the day of his wrath //	<u>14</u> 2_	<u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u>
		109:31–110:5	56 34 22

110:6 He judges among the nations /

	<u> </u> 9 1 <u> </u>	<u> </u> 2 2 <u> </u> 0
110:1-6a		51 32 19

He heaps up corpses //
he shatters head(s) / across a vast terrain //

	9 1	2 2 0
	<u> </u> 11 2 <u> </u>	<u> </u> 5 0 <u> </u> 5
110:1-6		58 34 24

110:7 From the brook / along the way he drinks //
therefore / he holds (his) head high //

	8 2	3 3 0
	<u> </u> 9 2 <u> </u>	<u> </u> 4 0 <u> </u> 4
110:5-7		23 10 13
110:1-7		65 37 28

Scansion in Syntactic Accentual-Stress Units: (7.4) . (2.2).(2.2).(2.2) . (4.7)
(11 + 12 + 11) = **34**
or: **23 // 23**

Concentric Compositional Formula: 65 = **32** + 1 + **32** [word count—with heading]
or: 33 // 33 [with pivot counted in each half]

Notes:

110:2^a Reading *dəḥî* here in BHS as conjunctive.

110:4^a Reading a disjunctive here; both BHS and Letteris have *gaʿya* (= *meteg*) in addition to *mêraḳâ*.

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Psalm 110 has three strophes: 110:1-2, 3-4 and 5-7.

A	110:1-2	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	[8 + 20] + 19 + [17 + 12]	= 28 + 19 + 29	morae
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X	110:3ab	balanced dyad:	[15 + 14]	= 15 + 14	morae
	110:3c-4	2 balanced dyads:	[9 + 14] + [12 + 11]	= 23 + 23	morae

A'	110:5-7	balanced triad & quatrain:	[12 + 14 + 9] + [(9 + 11) + (8 + 9)]	= 35 + 37	morae
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2. The first strophe (110:1-2) is a single part arranged in five subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 110:1a, 1b, 1c, 2a and 2b.

- 109:30-110:1 **26** words
- 109:29-110:2 **40 = 23 + 17** [compositional formula]

3. The second strophe (110:3-4) has two parts arranged in six subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b and 4c.

- 109:30-110:3 **17** words after *atnach*
- 109:28-110:4 **46** (= **23** x 2) words before *atnach*

4. The third strophe (110:5-7) is a single part arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 110:5, 6a, 6bc and 7.

- 109:31-110:5 **34** (= **17** x 2) words before *atnach*

- 110:2–5 **23** words before *atnach*
- 110:1–6 **34** (= 17 x 2) words before *atnach*
- 110:5–7 **23** words

Observations

1. The content of the seven verses in the three strophes in Psalm 110 may be outlined in a menorah pattern, as follows:

A	YHWH speaks: “Sit at my right hand as I make your enemies a footstool!”	[7]	109:1
B	YHWH’s scepter extends from Zion: “Rule in the midst of your enemies!”	[4]	109:2
C	From the womb of the dawn to you will be the dew of your youth	[6]	109:3
X	YHWH speaks: You are a priest after the order of Melchizedek	[6]	109:4
C’	The Lord is at your right hand; he shatters kings in his wrath	[3]	109:5
B’	YHWH judges the nations—“he shatters heads across a vast terrain”	[4]	109:6
A’	YHWH drinks from the brook and he holds his head high	[4]	109:7

2. In terms of the 65 words in Psalm 110, the **arithmological center** falls on the word יהוה (“YHWH”), the second word in verse 4. The initial **concentric compositional formula** is:

$$65 = 32 + 1 + 32 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 33 // 33 \quad \text{[word count—with “pivot” included in each half]}$$

The **meaningful center** is found by including four words on either side of this **arithmological center**, as follows:

	לְךָ טַל יִלְדֹתֶיךָ	To you will be the dew of your youth
4	וְלֹא יִנְחַם יְהוָה וְלֹא יִנְחַם	YHWH has sworn and he will not repent;
	אַתָּה כֹּהֵן	You are a priest

The corresponding **compositional formula** then becomes:

$$65 = 28 + 9 + 28 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 37 // 37 \quad \text{[word count—with “pivot” included in each half]}$$

The **meaningful center** may be extended by including twelve words on either side of this **arithmological center**, as follows:

3	עַמֶּךָ נִדְבַת בַּיּוֹם חֵילֶךָ	Your people will volunteer in the day of your might
	בְּהַדְרֵי קֹדֶשׁ מִרַחֵם מִשְׁחָר	In holy splendor from the womb of the dawn
	לְךָ טַל יִלְדֹתֶיךָ	To you will be the dew of your youth
4	וְלֹא יִנְחַם יְהוָה וְלֹא יִנְחַם	YHWH has sworn and he will not repent;
	אַתָּה כֹּהֵן לְעוֹלָם	You are a priest forever
	עַל דְּבַרְתֵּי מַלְכֵי צְדָק	After the order of Melchizedek
5	אֲדַנִּי עַל יְמִינֶךָ	The Lord is at your right hand

The corresponding **compositional formula** then becomes:

$$65 = 20 + 25 + 20 \quad [\text{word count—with heading}]$$

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

3. The 12-word “nested framework” (with the 7-word framework underlined) reads as follows:

- 1 לְדוֹד מִזְמוֹר Belonging to David, a psalm
 נֹאֵם יְהוָה לְאֲדֹנָי Utterance of YHWH to my lord:
 שֵׁב לְיְמִינִי Sit at my right hand
 עַד־אֲשִׁית אִיבֶיךָ Until I make your enemies
 הָדָם לְרִגְלֶיךָ A stool for your feet.
- מַחֵץ רֹאשׁ עַל־אֲרֶץ רַבָּה He shatters head(s) across a vast terrain.
- 7 מִנַּחַל בְּדֶרֶךְ יִשְׁתַּח From the brook along the way he drinks:
 עַל־כֵּן יִרְיֵם רֹאשׁ Therefore he holds (his) head high.

4. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

$$65 = 28 + 9 + 28 \quad \text{or: } 37 // 37 \quad \text{word-count}$$

$$65 = 20 + 25 + 20 \quad \text{or: } 45 // 45$$

{with others in between}

$$65 = 12 + 41 + 12 \quad \text{or: } 53 // 53$$

$$65 = 7 + 51 + 7 \quad \text{or: } 58 // 58$$

$$34 = 11 + 12 + 11 \quad \text{or: } \mathbf{23 // 23} \quad \text{SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units}$$

{34 = 17 x 2}

$$18 = 6 + 6 + 6 \quad \text{or: } 12 // 12 \quad \text{briques (primary SAS units)}$$

5. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 110, 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 110 has 18 **briques** (primary stress units), 16 of which are marked by *soph pasuq* (7 times, at the end of each verse), *atnach* (7 times), *ole weyored* (twice, in vv. 1 and 4). The boundary of the remaining two **briques** are marked by *revia* (in vv. 1 and 4).

6. The prosodic structure of Psalm 110, 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]

A 1 *ləḏāwīd mizmôr* † *nəʿūm yhw̄h laʿdōnî* †
šēb lîmînî ^ *ʿad ʾāšîṯ ʾōyābêḵa ḥăḏôm ləraḡlēḵa* :
 2 *maṭṭēh ʿuzzəḵa yišlah yhw̄h miššîyô* ^ *rəḏēh bəqereḥ ʾōyābêḵa* :

X 3 <i>ʿamməḵa nəḏābōṯ bəyôm ḥēleḵa</i> † <i>ləḵa ṯal yaḵsūtēḵa</i> : <i>ʾattāh kōhēn ləʿôlām</i> ^	<i>bəḥadrê qōḏeš mēreḥem mišḥār</i> ^ 4 <i>nîšba ʿ yhw̄h wəlōʾ yinnāḥēm</i> † <i>ʿal diḥrāṯî malkî ṣedeq</i> :
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A' 5 *ʾăḏōnāy ʿal yəminəḵa* ^ *māḥaṣ bəyôm ʾappô məlākîm* :
 6 *yāḏîṯ baggôyim mālēʾ ḡəwîyôṯ* ^ *māḥaṣ rōʾš ʿal ʾereṣ rabbāh* :
 7 *minnaḥal badereḵ yišteh* ^ *ʿal ken yārîm rōʾš* :

7. The 18 **briques** (primary SAS units) are distributed in 3 strophes in Psalm 110 as follows: 18 = 6 + 6 + 6; or 12 // 12 with the central pivot included in each half.

The **arithmological center** of Psalm 110 falls on the word yhw̄h (“YHWH”) in 110:4a, with **32** words on either side. Psalm 110 has **34** SAS units, 18 **briques** (primary SAS units), 9 versets, and 3 strophes. The **arithmological center** is in the middle strophe, the middle verset, the middle two **briques** and the middle two syntactic accentual-stress units. There are 232 morae in Psalm 110—with 116 morae before the middle word yhw̄h (“YHWH”) in 110:4a and 112 morae after it.

8. Terrien finds two **strophes** in Psalm 110 (*The Psalms* [2003], p. 749–54). 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 three **strophes**.

Christensen	Terrien	Podechard
A 110:1–2	1 110:1–3	1 110:1–2
X 110:3–4		2 110:3–4
A' 110:5–7	2 110:4–7	3 110:5–7

The difference in terms of strophic structure results from the fact that Terrien does not locate the **meaningful center** and he assumes a linear prosodic structure.

9. Determining the details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 110 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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