

Zephaniah 2:1–15

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

III. YHWH's Warfare against the Nations

Zeph 2:1–15

A. *Summons to Repent in order to Escape the Day of YHWH's Wrath* (2:1–2) [8.7]

2:1	Gather yourselves together / and be gathered //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		1:18–2:1a	28 17 11
	O nation / not desiring (YHWH) //	<u>8 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		1:18–2:1	31 17 14
2:2	(Take action) before the decree / takes effect / like chaff / the day passes away //	<u>7 2</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		<u>8 2</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		1:18–2:2b	37 23 14
	Indeed (take action) before / it comes upon you / the burning anger ^a of YHWH /	<u>13 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		<u>8 1</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		1:18–2:2d	44 23 21
	Indeed (take action) before / it comes upon you / the day / of YHWH's anger //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		<u>7 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		2:1–2	25 8 17

B. *By Seeking Justice and Humility You may Escape YHWH's Anger* (2:3) [4.5]

2:3	Seek YHWH / all the humble of the earth / who do / his justice //	<u>18 2</u>	<u>6 6 0</u>
		<u>13 2</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
			34 17 17
	Seek righteousness / seek humility / perhaps / you may be covered / in YHWH's day of anger //	<u>15 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
		<u>17 3</u>	<u>5 0 5</u>
		2:1–3	43 17 26

C. *The Fate of Four Philistine Fiefdoms* (2:4) [4.5]

2:4	For Gaza / shall be ghastful / and Ashkelon / shall be devastated //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>4 4 0</u>
		<u>10 2</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		1:18–2:2d	49 23 26
	Ashdod / at noon / they will chase her away / and Ekron / will be extirpated //	<u>15 3</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		<u>10 2</u>	<u>2 0 2</u>
		2:1–4	54 23 31

D. Oracle against Philistia: Your Habitations will become Desolate (2:5–6) [6.6]

2:5	Alas / O inhabitants / of the territory of the sea / a nation of the Cretans //	12 3 _7 1_	4 4 0 <u>2 2 0</u>
		2:4–5b	17 12 5
	The word of YHWH is against you / O Canaan ^a land of the Philistines /	10 1 _9 1_	3 0 3 <u>3 0 3</u>
		2:4–5b	23 12 11
	I will destroy you ^b until there is no inhabitant //	_14 1_	<u>3 0 3</u>
		2:4–5	26 12 14
2:6	And the territory of the sea / will become / habitations /	_14 3_	<u>3 3 0</u>
		2:3–6a	47 24 23
	Caves for shepherds / and folds for flocks //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>5 5 0</u>
		2:5–6	23 14 9

E. The Remnant of Judah will Pasture Their Flocks in Ashkelon (2:7) [4.6]

2:7	And it will be a territory / for the remnant / of the house of Judah / on which they will pasture //	19 3 _7 1_	5 5 0 <u>2 2 0</u>
		2:3–7d	59 36 23
	In the house of Ashkelon / In the evening / they shall lie down /	_18 3_	<u>4 0 4</u>
		2:5–7d	34 21 13
	For YHWH their God / will visit them / and he will restore their fortunes //	16 2 _8 1_	4 0 4 <u>2 0 2</u>
		2:7	17 7 10

F. Moab and Ammon shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah (2:8–9f) [7.3.7]

2:8	I have heard ^a the taunt of Moab / and the reviling / of the children of Ammon /	11 1 _12 2_	3 3 0 <u>3 3 0</u>
		2:7–8b	23 13 10
	With which they taunted / my people / and they were insolent / toward their territory //	11 2 _12 2_	4 0 4 <u>3 0 3</u>
		2:7–8	30 13 17
2:9	Therefore as I live / ne'um YHWH [Sebaoth] ^a / God of Israel /	9 1 {-1a} _16 2_	3 3 0 <u>4 4 0</u>
		2:7–9a	37 20 17

For Moab / shall become like Sodom /	12	2	4	4	0
and the children of Ammon / like Gomorrah /	<u>14</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
	2:7-9a		44	27	17

A place possessed by thistles /	6	1	2	2	0
and pits of salt and desolation / forever //	<u>19</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
	2:7-9b		51	34	17

G. The Remnant of My People will Plunder Them for Their Insolence (2:9g-10) [6.4]

The remnant of my people / shall plunder them /	12	2	3	0	3
and the survivors of my nation / shall possess them //	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
	2:7-9		57	34	23

2:10 This will be theirs / because of their pride //	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
	2:5-10a		84	52	32

For they taunted / and they were insolent / toward the people /	15	3	2	0	2
of YHWH Sebaoth //	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>
	2:7-10		68	38	30

H. All the "Gods of the Earth," as far as Ethiopia, Will Worship YHWH (2:11-12) [6.6]

2:11 YHWH will be terrible ^a / above them /	10	2	3	3	0
for he makes lean / all the / gods of the earth //	<u>19</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
	2:9g-11b		26	13	13

And they will worship him /	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
	2:7-11c		79	47	32

Each one from his place / all / the coastlands of the nations //	<u>18</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>
	2:9-11		49	34	15

2:12 Even you, O Ethiopians / pierced by sword / are they //	<u>18</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
	2:8-12		73	46	27

I. YHWH will Destroy Assyria Making Nineveh a Desolation (2:13-14b) [7.2] read as [5.4]

2:13 And he will stretch out his hand / against the north /	12	2	4	4	0
and he will destroy Assyria //	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
	2:10-13b		40	26	14

And he will make Nineveh / a desolation /	16	2	4	0	4
a dry waste / like the desert //	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
	2:9c-13		52	26	26

2:14	And herds will lie down in the midst of her / all the beasts of the nations /	16 1 <u>6 1</u>	3 3 0 <u>3 3 0</u>	2:9c-14b	58 32 26
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J. Wild Birds will Nest in Her Ruins (2:14c-f) [4.5]

	Even the jackdaw / and the owl / in her capitals / they will lodge //	8 2 <u>14 2</u>	4 4 0 <u>2 2 0</u>	2:9-14a	85 59 26
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	A voice / shrieks from the window / a raven at the sill / for the cedar-work / is laid bare //	15 3 <u>9 2</u>	5 0 5 <u>3 0 3</u>	2:9-14	93 59 34
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K. As a Desolate Home for Wild Beasts, She will be an Object of Derision (2:15) [7.8]

2:15	This / is the exultant city / the one which dwells securely / which says / in her heart / "I am / and there is none besides me" //	22 3 13 2 <u>9 2</u>	5 5 0 2 2 0 <u>3 3 0</u>	2:10-15c	76 48 26
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	What / a desolation she has become / a resting place / for wild beasts / all / who pass by her / hiss / and shake their fists // D	11 2 7 2 <u>24 4</u>	3 0 3 2 0 2 <u>6 0 6</u>	2:1-15	221 119 102
				1:1-2:15	491 254 237

Scansion in SAS Units: (8.7).(4.5).(4.5) . (6.6).(4.6) . 7.3.7 . (6.4).(6.6) . (5.4).(4.5).(7.8)

$$= (15 + 18) + (12 + 10) + \boxed{17} + (10 + 12) + (18 + 15)$$

$$= (33 + 22) + \boxed{17} + (22 + 33) = 55 + 17 + 55 = 127$$

Notes:

- 2:2^a Reading *pašta* here in BHS as conjunctive.
- 2:5^a Reading *pašta* here in BHS as conjunctive.
- 2:5^b Reading *tīpḥā* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 2:8^a Reading *pašta* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 2:9^a Removing the word **נְבִאוֹת** ("of hosts") in BHS with LXX, to improve balance in terms of mora-count and word-count patterns.
- 2:11^a Reading *nir²eh* ("will be terrible," 2 morae) with LXX in place of *nôrā²* ("terrible," 4 morae) in BHS.

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Zeph 2:1–15 has 11 strophes: 2:1–2, 3, 4, 5–6, 7, 8–9f, 9g–10, 11–12, 13–14b, 14c–f and 15.

A	2:1–2a	balanced dyad + pivot:	[13 + 8 + 15]	= 13 + 8 + 15	morae
	2:2c–f	2 balanced dyads:	[13 + 8] + [13 + 7]	= 21 + 20	morae
B	2:3	2 balanced dyads:	[18 + 13] + [15 + 17]	= 31 + 32	morae
C	2:4	2 balanced dyads:	[13 + 10] + [15 + 10]	= 23 + 25	morae
D	2:5ab	2 balanced dyads:	[12 + 7] + [10 + 9]	= 19 + 19	morae
	2:5c–6	balanced triad:	[14 + 14 + 13]	= 14 + 14 + 13	morae
E	2:7	2 balanced triads:	[19 + 7 + 9] + [9 + 16 + 8]	= 35 + 33	morae

X	2:8	2 balanced dyads:	[11 + 12] + [11 + 12]	= 23 + 23	morae
	2:9a–e	3 balanced dyads:	[9 + 17] + [12 + 14] + [6 + 19]	= 26 + 26 + 25	morae

E'	2:9f–10	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	[12 + 10] + 12 + [15 + 8]	= 22 + 12 + 23	morae
D'	2:11–12	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	[10 + 19 + 8] + [18 + 18]	= 37 + 36	morae
C'	2:13–14b	3 balanced dyads:	[12 + 9] + [16 + 7] + [16 + 6]	= 21 + 23 + 22	morae
B'	2:14c–f	balanced dyad + pivot:	[8 + 14] + [11 + (4 + 9)]	= 22 + 24	morae
A'	2:15	2 balanced triads:	[22 + 13 + 9] + [11 + 7 + 24]	= 44 + 42	morae

2. The 1st strophe (2:1–2) has two parts with five subdivisions: 2:1a, 1b, 2ab, 2cd and 2ef.

- 1:18–2:1 **17** words before *atnach*
- 2:1–2 **17** words after *atnach*

3. The 2nd strophe (2:3) is a single part with two subdivisions: 2:3ab and 3cd.

- 2:1–3 **43 = 17 + 26** [compositional formula]

4. The 3rd strophe (2:4) is a single part with two subdivisions: 4ab and 4cd.

- 2:1–4 **23** words before *atnach*

5. The 4th strophe (2:5–6) has two parts with 5 subdivisions: 2:5ab, 5c–d, 6a, and 6b.

- 2:4–5 **26** words
- 2:5–6 **23** words

6. The 5th strophe (2:7) is a single part with 3 subdivisions: 2:7ab, 7c and 7de.

- 2:7 **17** words

7. The 6th strophe (2:8–9f) has two parts with five subdivisions: 2:8ab, 8cd, 9ab, 9cd and 9ef.

- 2:7–8 **17** words after *atnach*
- 2:5–8 **26** words after *atnach*
- 2:7–9f **51 = 34 + 17** [compositional formula—all divisible by 17]

8. The 7th strophe (2:9g–10) is a single part with 3 subdivisions: 2:9gh, 10a and 10bc.

- 2:7–9 **34** (= 2x17) words and **23** words before *atnach*
- 2:7–10 **68** (= 2x2x17) words

9. The 8th strophe (2:11–12) is a single part with 4 subdivisions: 2:11ab, 11c, 11d and 12.

- 2:9–11 **34** (= 2x17) words before *atnach*
 - 2:8–12 **46** (= 23 x 2) words before *atnach*
10. The 9th strophe (2:13–14b) is a single part with 3 subdivisions: 2:13ab, 13cd and 14ab.
- 2:10–13 **46** (= 23 x 2) words and **26** words before *atnach*
 - 2:9c–13 **52 = 26 + 26** [compositional formula]
 - 2:9c–14b **58 = 32 + 26** [compositional formula]
11. The 10th strophe (2:14c–f) is a single part with 3 subdivisions: 2:14bc, 14d and 14ef.
- 2:9–14 **34** (= 17 x 2) words before *atnach*
12. The 11th strophe (2:15) is a single part with two subdivisions: 2:15a–c and 15d–f.
- 2:11–15 **32** words after *atnach*
 - 2:1–15 **221 = 119 + 102** [compositional formula—all divisible by 17]

Observations

1. The 11 strophes in Zeph 2:1–15 may be outlined in a nested menorah pattern on prosodic grounds, as follows:

Menorah Pattern: YHWH's Warfare against the Nations (2:1–15)

A	Summons to repent in order to escape the day of YHWH's wrath	[8.7] 2:1–2
B	By seeking justice and humility you may escape YHWH's anger	[4.5] 2:3
C	The fate of four Philistine fiefdoms	[4.5] 2:4
X	YHWH destroys nations and the universal object of worship	— 2:5–12
C'	YHWH will destroy Assyria making Nineveh a desolation	[5.4] 2:9g–12
B'	Wild birds will nest in her ruins	[4.5] 2:13–14b
A'	As a desolate home for wild beasts, she will be an object of derision	[7.8] 2:14c–15

Central Core: YHWH Destroys Nations and All the Gods will Worship Him (2:5–12)

A	Oracle against Philistia: your habitations will become desolate	[6.6] 2:5–6
B	Advice in the face of the fate of four Philistine fiefdoms	[4.6] 2:7
X	Moab and Ammon shall be like Sodom and Gomorrah	[7.3.7] 2:8–9f
B'	The remnant of my people will plunder them for their insolence	[6.4] 2:9g–10
A'	All the “gods of the earth,” as far as Ethiopia, will worship YHWH	[6.6] 2:11–12

2. In terms of the 221 words in Zeph 2:1–15, the **arithmological center** falls on the word נאם (“utterance [of YHWH]”) in 2:9, with 110 words on either side. The **meaningful center** is found by including six words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

ויגדילו על גבולם And they were insolent toward their territory
לכן חי אני Therefore, as I live,

נאם] יהוה [] אלהי ישראל
 כִּי מוֹאָב כְּסֹדֹם For Moab will be like Sodom.

In this instance the **concentric compositional formula** becomes:

$$221 = 104 + 13 + 104 \text{ [word count— for Zephaniah 2:1–15]}$$

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

אֲשֶׁר חָרְפוּ אֶת עַמִּי With which they taunted my people
 וַיִּגְדִּילוּ עַל גְּבוּלָם And they were insolent toward their territory
 לְכֵן חַי אֲנִי Therefore, as I live,
 נאם] יהוה [] אלהי ישראל Utterance of YHWH, God of Israel.
 כִּי מוֹאָב כְּסֹדֹם תִּהְיֶה For Moab shall become like Sodom;
 וּבְנֵי עַמּוֹן כְּעֹמְרָה And the children of Ammon like Gomorrah.

In this instance the **concentric compositional formula** becomes:

$$221 = 100 + 21 + 100 \text{ [word count— for Zephaniah 2:1–15]}$$

3. The 36-word **meaningful framework** (with the 10-word framework highlighted in gray) reads as follows:

1	הַתְּקוּשְׁשׁוּ וְקוּשׁוּ	Gather yourselves together and be gathered,
	הַגּוֹי לֹא נִכְסַף	O nation not desiring YHWH,
2	בְּטֶרֶם לִדְתַּחַק	(Take action) before the decree takes effect;
	כַּמֶּזֶץ עֲנֵר יוֹם	like chaff the day passes away.
	בְּטֶרֶם לֵא-יָבוֹא עֲלֵיכֶם	(Take action) before it comes upon you,
	חֲרוֹן אַף-יְהוָה	the burning anger of YHWH.

15b	הַיּוֹשֶׁבֶת לְבִטָּחַ	The one which dwells securely
	הַאֲמֹרָה בְּלִבָּבָהּ	Which says in her heart:
	אֲנִי וְאֵפְסִי עוֹד	“I am and there is none besides me.”
	אֵיךְ הִיְתָה לְשֹׁמֵמָה	What a desolation she has become,
	מִרְבֵּץ לְחַיָּה	A resting place for wild beasts
	כָּל עוֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ יִשְׂרָק וְיַנִּיעַ יָדוֹ	All those who pass by her hiss and shake their fists.

4. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae for Zeph 2:1–15:

$$221 = 63 + 13 + 63 \quad \text{word-count}$$

$$221 = 100 + 21 + 100$$

{with others in between}

$$221 = 18 + 185 + 18$$

$$221 = 5 + 211 + 5$$

127 = 55 + 17 + 55 SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units

63 = 16 + 31 + 16 **briques** (primary SAS units)

5. Another **meaningful center** is found counting from the beginning of Zephaniah (1:1–2:15). In this instance the **arithmological center** falls on the word **כספם** (“their silver”) in the first half of 1:18, with 245 words on either side. The **meaningful center** is found by including seven words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

חטאו They have sinned;
ושפך דמם כעפר And their blood shall be poured out like dust;
ולחמם כגללים And their carcasses like dung.
גם כספם גם זהבם Neither their silver nor their gold
לא יוכל להצילם Will be able to deliver them.
ביום עברת In the day of the wrath [of YHWH].

In this instance, the **concentric compositional formula** is:

491 = 238 + 15 + 238 [word count— for Zephaniah 1:1–2:15]

6. In the prosodic structure of Zephaniah 2:1–15, 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*.

In the prosodic analysis presented with the translation (above), the presence of these two primary disjunctive markers is indicated with a double slash (/). Zephaniah 2:1–15 has 63 **briques** (primary SAS units), 53 of which are marked by:

- *soph pasuq* 15 times, at the end of each verse
- *atnach* 13 times, in each verse, except vv 6, 12
- *zāqēp qaṭan* 25 times (vv 2 [thrice], 3 [bis], 4 [bis], 5, 7, 8 [bis], 9 [bis], 10, 11 [bis], 12, 13, 14 [thrice], 15 [four])

The boundaries of the remaining 10 **briques** are marked by:

- *rəḥîa^c* 6 times (vv 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 15)
- *paštâ* 2 times (v 9, 15)
- *ṭîḫâ* 1 time (v 7)
- *ṭəḫîr* 1 time (v 9)

7. The prosodic structure of Zephaniah 2:1–15, in terms of its **briques** [primary SAS (syntactic accentual stress) units], may be displayed as follows [^ represents atnach; : represents soph pasuq; and † is any other such boundary marker].

- I A ¹ *hitqôššû wāqôšû* ^ *haggôy lô' niqsāp :*
² *bəterem lehem hōq* † *kəmoš 'āḥar yôm* ^
bəterem lô' yābô' 'ălêkem † *ḥārôn 'ap yhw* †
bəterem lô' yābô' 'ălêkem † *yôm 'ap yhw :*
- B ³ *baqqəšû 'et yhw kol 'anwê hā'āreš* † *'āšer mišpātô pā'alû* ^
baqqəšû šedeq baqqəšû 'ānāwāh † *'ūlay tissātəru bəyôm 'ap yhw :*
- C ⁴ *kī 'azzāh 'azūbāh tihyeh* † *wə'ašqəlôn lišmāmāh* ^
'ašdôd baššāhārayim yəgārəšūha † *wə'eqrôn tē'aqēr :* D
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- II D ⁵ *hōy yōšəḥē ḥebel hayyām gōy kərētīm* ^ *dəḥar yhw 'ălêkem* †
kəna'an 'ereš pəlištīm †
wəha'əḥadūq mē'en yōšəḥ :
- ⁶ *wəhāyətāh ḥebel hayyām* † *nəwōt kərōt rō'im wəgīdrōt šō'n :*
- E ⁷ *wəhāyāh ḥebel* † *liš'ērīt bēt yəhūdāh* † *'ălêhem yir'ūn* ^
bəḥottē ašqəlôn bā'ereḥ yirbāšūn † *kī yipqədem yhw 'əlōhēhem wəšāb šəḥītām :*

X ⁸ <i>šāma'ti ḥerpaṭ mō'āḥ</i> † <i>wəgiddūpē bənē 'ammôn</i> ^ <i>'āšer ḥērəpū 'et 'ammī</i> † <i>wayyaḡdīlū 'al gəḥūlām :</i>
⁹ <i>lākēn ḥay 'ānī</i> nə'ūm <i>yhw [šəḥā'ōt]</i> † <i>'əlōhē yisrā'el</i> † <i>kī mō'āḥ kisəḏōm tihyeh</i> † <i>ūḥənē 'ammôn ka'amōrāh</i> † <i>mimšaq ḥārūl</i> † <i>ūmikrēh meləḥ ūšəmāmāh 'ad 'ōlām</i> ^

- E' *šə'ērīt 'ammī yəḥozzūm* † *wəyeter gōy yinḥālūm :*
¹⁰ *zō't lāhem taḥaṭ gə'ōnām* ^ *kī ḥērəpū wayyaḡdīlū* † *'al 'am yhw šəḥā'ōt :*
- D' ¹¹ *nōrā' yhw 'ălêhem* † *kī rāzāh 'et kol 'əlōhē hā'āreš* ^
wəyīštaḥāwū lô 'iš mimməqōmō † *kōl 'īyē haggōyīm :*
¹² *gam 'attem kūšīm* † *ḥaləlē ḥarbī hēmāmāh :*

-
- III C' ¹³ *wəyēt yādō 'al šapōn* † *wī'abbēr 'et 'aššūr* ^
wəyāsēm 'et nīnəwēh lišmāmāh šīyāh kamiḏbār :
¹⁴ *wərabəšū bəṭōkāh 'ādārīm kol ḥaytō gōy* †
- B' *gam qā'aṭ gam qippōd* † *bəkaṭtōrēha yālīnū* ^
qōl yəšōrēr baḥallōn ḥoreḥ bassap † *kī 'arzāh 'erah :*

A' 15 *zōʔt hāʕr hāʕallīzāh* †

hāʔōmārāh biləḅāḅāh †

ʔêk hāyətāh ləšammāh †

kōl ʕōbēr ʕālēha †

hayyōšēḅet lāḅetaḅ †

ʔānī wəʔāpsī ʕôd ^

marbēš laḅayyāh †

yīšrōq yānīaʕ yādō :

⊔

8. The 63 **briques** are distributed in 11 strophes in Zephaniah 2:1–15 as follows:

$$(8 + 4 + 4) + [(6 + 5) + \boxed{9} + (5 + 6)] + (4 + 4 + 8) = 16 + 31 + 16 = 63$$

The **arithmological center** of Zeph 2:1–15 falls on the word *nəʔūm* (“utterance [of YHWH]”) in the second half of v 16, with 110 words on either side. There are 127 SAS units, 63 briques, 16 versets, 11 strophes and 3 cantos. The **arithmological center** is in the middle canto, the middle strophe, the middle two versets, the middle *brique*, and the middle SAS unit.

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