

# PSALM STRUCTURES

A Study of Psalms with Refrains

Paul R. Raabe





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Journal for the Study of the Old Testament  
Supplement Series 104



To my parents

Bernard O. Raabe and Evelyn L. Raabe

*pîhem yădabbēr ḥokmôt  
wəḥāgūt libbām tēbûnôt*

(adapted from Psalm 49.4)

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*Note*

The system of text referencing used in this study is that described in *The Chicago Manual of Style* and currently used in such journals as *Biblical Archaeologist* and the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*. The abbreviation of biblical books and transliteration of Hebrew follow the standard schemes in the above journals and the *Journal of Biblical Literature*.

## Chapter 1

### CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### 1.0 *Introduction*

The psalms of the Hebrew Bible have fascinated readers for centuries. They have served as the basis for Jewish and Christian liturgies and hymns. They have been prayed by the faithful throughout the centuries. In academic circles dozens of learned articles and books dealing with the Psalter are written every year.

Yet in spite of all this attention, or maybe because of it, there are numerous heated debates surrounding the Psalter. All scholars recognize the psalms as poetry. A few, however, question whether there is much of a difference between Hebrew poetry and prose. Do these Hebrew poems exhibit 'meter'? If so, how is that 'meter' to be defined? What constitutes 'parallelism'? Does a psalm have larger blocks of material above the verse level, such as 'strophes' and 'stanzas'? If so, is there a correspondence between such units in terms of size? What criteria indicate the breaks between them? What is the relationship between structure and content? The questions could be multiplied. All these issues are vital to the basic question: How does one 'read' a psalm?

The purpose of this work is not to resolve all these debates. Such an undertaking would result in a ten-volume set of commentaries on 150 psalms. Rather, its purpose is to identify and describe the basic 'building blocks' of a psalm. Its primary focus is on the larger units that constitute a psalm, strophes and stanzas. For this purpose we have selected seven psalms—six poems in all, as Pss. 42–43 comprise one poem—whose stanzas are clearly demarcated by the presence of

refrains. This corpus consists of Pss. 42–43, 46, 49, 56, 57, and 59. Sections 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 also include data from four other psalms with refrains—Pss. 39, 67, 80, and 99. The reason for this choice is that each of these psalms has a clear stanzaic structure. Only by beginning with psalms whose structures are easily recognized can one develop the resources and expectations necessary for studying the structures of other psalms. In other words, one needs to move from the known to the unknown. The failure to follow this procedure is precisely the weakness of many contemporary studies of psalm structures.

To our knowledge, only one study has previously examined these ‘refrain-psalms’ as a group, that of Segal (1935). However, his approach of radical emendation, eliminating and adding lines, and repositioning verses calls for a re-examination of this corpus.

This work consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 identifies the important issues that we will address. It also surveys some of the contemporary approaches to these issues and explains the methodology followed here. Chapter 2 presents the texts, a translation, translation notes, a description of the ‘building block’ structures, a survey and evaluation of various scholarly views, comments regarding the psalms’s *Leitwörter*, and an examination of the relationship between the psalm’s structure and content. Chapter 3 collates the data from Chapter 2 and on that basis makes conclusions regarding each of the ‘building blocks’ that constitute these psalms. We do not maintain that every psalm has all of these ‘building blocks’—refrains, for example, obviously do not always occur—but we do believe that this corpus of seven psalms, 88 masoretic verses, and 247 cola is representative. Hopefully this study will contribute toward a clearer understanding of a psalm’s ‘building blocks’ and therefore a more sensitive ‘reading’ of a psalm.

### 1.1 *Text and Translation*

The text that is followed is the Masoretic Text as printed in BHS. Contemporary scholars generally eschew radical emendations and revisions such as those of older scholars, and

rightfully so in our opinion. Systematic deletion and rearrangement of lines, as practiced by Briggs (1906; 1907) and Segal (1935) for example, are simply not convincing. Nor is it in vogue any longer to emend *metri causa*. Following Freedman we assume 'generally the integrity and accuracy of the received Hebrew text (MT), i.e. that the poems are unified compositions and that the text has been transmitted faithfully...' (1976b: 86). The striking infrequency of so-called 'prose particles' in the poems of our corpus indicates at least that these poems have not been 'prosaicized' (see Appendix I), and we feel justified in assuming that there has been no other kind of significant editorial alteration.

This assumption, however, does not eliminate the need for textual criticism; it does not lead to a sort of 'Masoretic Text fundamentalism'. There are, of course, places where scribal errors have occurred. For example, we follow most scholars in believing that a refrain was accidentally omitted in Ps. 46 (see discussion under Ps. 46.4). The initial word of Ps. 49.12—קרבם—is a case of metathesis from קרבו. There are other examples as well. But in general the MT seems to be in good shape.

We have also included a translation and translation notes for each psalm. It is our firm conviction that the 'building blocks' and structures of these psalms can only be ascertained in conjunction with thorough exegesis.

## 1.2 *Terminology*

The terminology employed here is traditional. These terms are not necessarily the best. Some of them can be misleading—our 'verses' do not always correspond to the MT 'verses'; our 'strophes' should not be confused with the strophe of classical Greek poetry. We use these terms simply for the sake of communication; they are the terms that most scholars employ. The following defines these terms proceeding from the smallest unit to the largest. These are the basic 'building blocks' which constitute each of the psalms studied here.

Colon	a unit of text, usually a clause, with two, three or four stresses; others designate it 'hemistich', 'stich', 'stichos', 'line', 'verset'.
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Verse	sometimes a single colon (= monocolon) but usually a combination of two cola (= bicolon) or three cola (= tricolon) that are connected by semantics, grammar, and/or phonology; others designate it 'stich', 'tichos', 'line'.
Strophe	sometimes a bicolon or tricolon but usually a combination of two or more verses that exhibits a semantic and/or syntactic unity; also designated 'batch'.
Stanza	a major subdivision of a poem which comprises one or more strophes; in our corpus a stanza is the block of material preceding and/or following each refrain; also designated 'stave', 'canticle'.
Refrain	a verse that is repeated at regular intervals in a poem.
Section	a stanza-plus-refrain.

Finally, a discussion dealing with the term 'poetry' is perhaps necessary. We freely use the term 'poem' and that presupposes, of course, the belief that these seven psalms consist of 'poetry' and not 'prose'. Almost all scholars would agree. However, recently Kugel (1981) has attacked the notion of a basic difference between poetry and prose in the Bible. Kugel questions the distinction on the basis of three major arguments (1981: 59-95). First, not all 'poetic lines' exhibit parallelism and parallelism occurs in 'prose' passages as well. Second, 'there is no word for "poetry" in Biblical Hebrew' (p. 69). Third, biblical 'poems' do not exhibit 'meter'. Instead of a basic distinction between 'prose' and 'poetry', Kugel prefers to speak of a *continuum* between sporadically parallelistic passages (normally labelled 'prose') and consistently paralleled clauses (normally labelled 'poetry')—in other words, a continuum between unheightened speech and heightened speech. Christensen agrees and even goes further in levelling out the difference. He calls the books of Jonah and Deuteronomy, for example, 'narrative poems', and even attempts to scan them (1983; 1985b).

As to the first of Kugel's arguments, we agree with Berlin's response (1985: 4-17). It is certainly true that parallelisms are

also found in 'prose' sections and not all 'poetic' verses have parallelism. Kugel's insistence on this point is commendable. But this only proves that 'parallelism is not in and of itself a mark of poetry... it is a common feature of all language' (p. 4). 'It is not parallelism per se, but the predominance of parallelism, combined with terseness, which marks poetic expression of the Bible' (p. 5). Parallelism, with concomitant terseness, is the constitutive or constructive device of poetry 'while nonpoetry, though it contains parallelism, does not structure its message on a systematic use of parallelism' (p. 16).

To Kugel's second point, it is true that no biblical Hebrew term for 'poetry' exists. But neither is there a biblical Hebrew term for Kugel's 'line' (= bicolon) nor for the 'A and B' clauses which comprise that line (as Kugel acknowledges on pp. 2-3). In fact, if we limited ourselves to a biblical vocabulary, we would not be able to say much of anything about Hebrew style. Certainly the Israelites perceived a difference between Judges 4 and Judges 5, for example, which was more than the fact that the latter was sung while the former was not.

With respect to Kugel's third point, the psalms in our corpus are not totally *irregular* in verse-length or rhythm. While they do not exhibit a strict 'meter' in the usual definition, they do manifest an overall regularity that can be described (see 1.4; 3.2).

Finally, one should note the significant difference in the frequency of the so-called 'prose particles' between sections normally considered prose and those normally considered poetry (Andersen-Freedman 1980: 60-66; Andersen-Forbes 1983; Freedman 1987). The very low frequency of 'prose particles' in the psalms that are studied here confirms that our corpus, at least, is poetry (see Appendix I).

### 1.3 *Versification*

There is recent scholarly disagreement over the nature of the poetic 'line'. For a historical review of the debate before 1975, mostly among European scholars, see van der Lugt 1980: 121-71. Some designate the colon as the 'line' (Geller 1979; O'Connor 1980; Berlin 1985). Others designate the bicolon or tricolon as the 'line' (Collins 1978; Kugel 1981; Alter 1985;

Pardee 1981; 1988). Yet they all agree that both colon and bicolon/tricolon are fundamental to Hebrew poetry. Because of this terminological disagreement, a disagreement which we do not intend to resolve, this study avoids the term 'line' and instead speaks of 'colon' and 'verse'

Clearly the colon is the basic unit. The acrostics of Pss. 111-12 begin each colon with a successive letter of the alphabet. The colon can be described as a passage of poetic discourse which obeys certain syntactic constraints (O'Connor 1980) or as a clause consisting of two to four stressed words (Hrushovski 1971).

Equally clear is the fact that rarely does a colon stand alone. We found only two monocola (Ps. 56.2a and Ps. 57.2a) in our corpus of 247 cola. (On monocola, see Watson 1984: 168-174. Cola almost always come in sets of two or three, i.e. bicola or tricola. The alphabetic acrostics of Psalms 25, 34, 119, 145; Prov. 31.10-31; and Lamentations 3 indicate this. There is a minor pause between cola and a major pause at the end of each bicolon/tricolon (Kugel 1981). Usually there is at least one aspect of grammar, semantics, and/or phonology which binds the cola together.

Recently a considerable amount of progress has been achieved and a growing consensus is developing toward identifying those linguistic features which hold cola together in a bicolon or tricolon. The aspects being studied are those of grammar, semantics, and phonology. The Lowthian categories of 'synonymous', 'antithetic', and 'synthetic' parallelism have been discarded as simplistic and imprecise.

Grammatical parallelism has been examined by Collins (1978), Geller (1979), O'Connor (1980), Greenstein (1982), and Berlin (1985). Collins finds four basic line Types (i.e. types of bicola):

- I. The line contains one Basic Sentence.
- II. The line contains two Basic Sentences which match with all of the same constituents (subject, object, verb, verb modifier) in each sentence.
- III. The line contains two Basic Sentences which match, but with one or more of the constituents ellipsed in the second colon.
- IV. The line contains two different Basic Sentences.

O'Connor's trope of 'matching' which includes verb gapping (= ellipsis) is basically similar to Collins' Line-Types II and III. His trope of 'syntactic dependency' generally corresponds to Collins' Line-Type I. That the two cola of Line-Types I, II, and III are connected or 'parallel' is obvious. However, Collins' Line-Type IV creates difficulties. Yet the cola of this bicolon, which on the surface do not appear to be grammatically parallel, are often shown to be grammatically parallel on a deeper level by Geller, Greenstein, and Berlin. By 'reconstructing' the one basic sentence underlying the two cola, Geller can equate on a deeper level constituents which do not correspond on the surface level. Greenstein designates grammatically parallel two cola which have the same deep structure. Berlin observes not only syntactic correspondence between cola but also morphological correspondence between the words in each half.

Greenstein believes that parallelism is only grammatical parallelism, but Geller, Berlin, and O'Connor also include lexical features. They argue that split 'word-pairs'—where one word occurs in the A-colon and its lexically related partner occurs in the B-colon—serve to create the impression of parallel cola. Also, repetition cements the two cola together. Berlin argues further that one can frequently observe a semantic relationship between the meanings of the cola as a whole.

Finally, Berlin includes the phonologic aspect in parallelism. She discusses both 'sound pairs' and the phonological equivalence of cola. A sound pair is 'the repetition in parallel words or lines of the same or similar consonants in any order within close proximity' (p. 104). Sound pairs need not be related lexically or semantically. The phonological equivalence on the colon level occurs when there is a great amount of sound repetition between the cola. Sometimes there is colon-initial alliteration or colon-final rhyme.

According to Berlin, all three aspects—grammatical, lexical-semantic, and phonological—create the feeling of 'connectedness' between the contiguous cola. Yet, the reader perceives both equivalences *and contrasts* between them. Even the cola that Lowth would label 'synonymously parallel' involve contrasts, and the cola that he would label 'antithetically parallel' or 'synthetically parallel' involve similarity. It is



this contrast within equivalence created by the three linguistic aspects that is at the heart of parallelism. Or in the words of Kugel,

To the extent that B identifies itself as A's 'mere parallel', it asserts  $A = B$ ; while to the extent that it differentiates itself from A in meaning and morphology, it asserts  $A + B$  to be a *single statement*. B becomes A's complement or completion (1981: 16).

Not only do grammatical, lexical-semantic, and phonological aspects connect the cola of a bicolon or tricolon, they also form the basis upon which one can ascertain the colonic divisions in the first place. 'Parallelism', that is grammatical (both morphological and syntactic), lexical, semantic, and/or phonological correspondence, is the major clue to the 'lineation' or 'stichometry' of a verse.

Usually such correspondence between the two or three contiguous cola is readily apparent, producing scholarly agreement as to a verse's lineation—usually, but not always. For example, BHS divides Exod. 15.1b-18, the Song of the Sea, into 70 cola; Freedman (1974) finds 76 cola; Stuart (1976: 79-91) finds 64 cola; and O'Connor (1980: 178-85) finds 53 cola. Problems in lineation often occur when one encounters two contiguous short clauses or even sentences. Should they be treated as a bicolon of short cola or as one long colon? One is often uncertain where precisely to make the break between two cola which together form one sentence, as in Collins' Line-Type I.

Because of the uncertainty involved, we include a defense of our versification for every psalm studied (2.1.4.1), something that too few psalm studies do. This defense does not exhaustively treat every grammatical, lexical, semantic, and phonological link between the cola of the verse. For the present work, after all, does not claim to be a thorough discussion of the nature of parallelism. But we feel it is necessary to make some remarks regarding every verse. (For a thorough discussion of some of the latest linguistic approaches to parallelism, see Pardee 1988.)

Usually our colonic divisions conform to the 'syntactic constraints' which, O'Connor argues, determine the shape of the 'line', i.e. colon (1980). The overall constraints are that every

line has 0–3 clause predicators (finite verbs, infinitives and participles acting as predicators, zero-predicators of verbless clauses, vocatives and focus markers), 1–4 constituents (verbs or nominal phrases, along with dependent particles), and 2–5 units (individual verbs or nomina). They are complemented by the nominal phrase constraints—no nominal phrases of more than 4 units in a line and no more than one predicator and two constituents in a line with a 4-unit nominal phrase, and the clause predictor constraints—lines with three clause predicators contain nothing else and in lines with two clause predicators only one predicator has dependent nominal phrases.

However, not all of O'Connor's constraints coincide with the line shapes found in the alphabetic acrostics. The lines of Ps. 119.31b, 36b, and 46b each have only one 'unit' though they have 4–5 syllables and 2 stresses. Some lines have two clause predicators where each predicator has a dependent nominal phrase. In Ps. 34.7a both predicators have dependent nominal phrases. The parallel in v. 18a indicates that one cannot split v. 7a into two lines. The same phenomenon occurs in Ps. 119.145a and again the parallel construction in v. 146a prohibits a split into two. Another clear example is found in Lam. 4.18c. Kugel (1981: 318) draws attention to Judg. 5.12b as a case where a line has three predicators but four constituents, i.e. three finite verbs plus object. These three constraints are also broken occasionally in our corpus, at least, according to our lineation. Ps. 43.3d has only one 'unit'. Pss. 46.7a-b, 10b, 11b; 59.7a, 14a, and 15a all have 'lines' in which each of the two predicators has dependent nominal phrases. And Ps. 46.11a does not conform to the last constraint.

The masoretic 'verses' in our corpus range from two to six cola. Since the turn of the century scholars have generally recognized that poetic 'verses' do not always coincide with the masoretic 'verse' divisions. (For the history of research regarding this issue, see van der Lugt 1980: 121-64.) For example, Psalms 111 and 112 have 10 masoretic verses each and Psalm 37 has 40 masoretic verses, even though each clearly has 22 divisions because of its alphabetic acrostic structure. For the sake of simplicity, we prefer to reduce all masoretic verses to one of three types—monocola, bicola, or

tricola. Larger groupings are usually treated as 'strophes'. Thus, a MT tetracolon is parsed as two bicola, a MT pentacolon as one bicolon plus one tricolon, and a MT hexacolon as three bicola or two tricola.

#### 1.4 *Stress and Syllable Counts*

Most scholars in the past accepted the Ley-Sievers-Budde system of accentual meter. (For surveys of the history of research, see Hillers 1972: xxx-xxxvii; Stuart 1976: 1-10; Kugel 1981: 287-304; for critiques, see O'Connor 1980: 29-54 and Kugel 1981.) Recently however, scholarly debate regarding meter has been heated. Does 'meter' exist or not? Those who answer affirmatively include Kosmala (1964; 1966), Kuryłowicz (1972; 1975), Margalit (1975), Stuart (1976), Cooper (1976), Christensen (1983; 1984; 1985a; 1985b) and Watson (1984). Those who deny its existence include O'Connor (1980), Kugel (1981) and Pardee (1981).

In the former group there are various systems for analyzing meter. Kosmala and Margalit study 'word-meter'. (For a critique of the latter, see Pardee 1981.) Kuryłowicz developed a system of 'syntactic-accentual meter' which is followed by Watson, Cooper and Christensen. (For a critique, see Longman 1982). Stuart proposes a system of 'syllabic-meter'. (For critiques, see Pardee 1981 and Longman 1982.)

Those in the latter group generally recognize that phonological or 'rhythmic' regularities may be seen in places. Pardee (1978; 1981; 1988) speaks of an 'approximate comparability of length of line' (= bicolon). O'Connor explains this regularity as a result of his 'syntactic constraints'. Certain colonic lengths are favored 'because certain syntactic structures are favored and these tend to have mean lengths' (1980: 152). Kugel explains this regularity as the result of the 'seconding' structure or binary form of these verses together with their tendency toward 'terseness'.

There is nothing objectionable in the observations of the latter group as far as they go. But part of the goal of this book is to describe more precisely the lengths of cola and bicola. What are the average lengths, the most favored lengths, the least favored lengths, and the range of diversity? Is there any

overall or dominant pattern in a given psalm? To simply say that cola and bicola tend to be 'terse' does not tell us much. In Psalms 42-43 for example, the A-colon usually exhibits a '3-stress terseness' and the B-colon a '2-stress terseness', whereas in Psalm 49 both A- and B-cola usually exhibit a '3-stress terseness'. There are different types of 'terseness' and they can be described.

If we limit ourselves to recording only O'Connor's 'line-types' based on syntax, much of this regularity will not be recognized. Pardee has recently analyzed Proverbs 2, a clearly lineated poem of 22 bicola, according to O'Connor's system. The 'line' (= colon) configurations are as follows:

0 clause	/	2 constituents	/	2 units	=	1 line
0 clause	/	2 constituents	/	3 units	=	1 line
1 clause	/	2 constituents	/	2 units	=	10 lines
1 clause	/	2 constituents	/	3 units	=	15 lines
1 clause	/	3 constituents	/	3 units	=	16 lines
2 clauses	/	3 constituents	/	3 units	=	1 line

Can one deduce from this syntactic variety that Proverbs 2 is really quite regular and that there is a general comparability in the length of its cola and bicola? O'Connor's system produces 33 cola with 3 'units' each and 11 cola with 2 'units' each. The reader might conclude that it contains a mix of balanced 3+3-stressed bicola and unbalanced 3+2-stressed bicola. But according to our stress count, 15 of the 22 bicola have 3+3 stresses and only 2 have 3+2 stresses. The others include one 2+2 bicolon and four bicola with 7 stresses each. (Our stress count does not correspond to Pardee's 'word count' [p. 71] because he counts monosyllabic particles while we do not. But even his 'word count' does not reflect a mixture of 3-stress and 2-stress cola. He finds 28 cola with 3 words and only 3 cola with 2 words.) Margalit's system shows even more regularity with eighteen 3+3 bicola (p. 71). Pardee's syllable counts confirm that Proverbs 2 is very regular, based on a 3+3 stress pattern. Forty of the forty-four cola are 7-10 syllables long, and thirty of them have 8-9 syllables. Eighteen of the 22 bicola have 15-18 syllables. By observing syntax alone, one misses this regularity.

Our intention is not to resolve the issue of 'meter'. Much of the dispute seems to be centered around the definition of the term. Pardee (1981) has argued, convincingly in our opinion, that biblical Hebrew poetry (and Ugaritic poetry for that matter) does not have 'meter' in the usual sense of the term. Rhythmic impulses are not organized into preconceived patterns which are *consistent* and *predictable*. Therefore, this work studiously avoids using the term 'meter'. However, simply to assert that there is no meter and to leave it at that would be misleading. The psalms in our corpus exhibit an overall regularity and dominant lengths yet with a considerable degree of internal variation and freedom. It is precisely the combination of both features which should be studied rather than insisting on one to the exclusion of the other (Freedman 1986; 1987). The results are presented in sections 2.1.4.2 and 3.2.

Freedman has recently advocated combining syllable counts with stress counts and integrating the two (1986). This procedure will be followed here. Others count consonants (Loretz), morae (Christensen), words (Pardee) or word-units (Margalit). One could even count 'vocables', i.e. consonants plus vowels (Freedman 1974). We do not dispute the legitimacy of these other methods. We opt for counting syllables and stresses simply because we find it the most efficient; it is not too crude nor does it provide more data than necessary. It should be noted that Freedman, who has practiced the syllable-counting method of descriptive analysis for years, does not claim that the ancient poets counted syllables nor does he believe in 'syllabic meter' *à la* Stuart (1976). Rather, this procedure claims merely to describe the existing phenomena. By counting stresses one can determine the overall and dominant stress patterns of a psalm. By counting syllables one can determine the precise size not only of cola and verses but also of larger units such as stanzas. Syllabic length serves as a necessary check given the uncertainties involved in determining stresses and verses.

With respect to counting stresses, we follow generally accepted procedures. Each nomen and verb (O'Connor's 'unit') generally receives one stress. Particles and prepositions we treat as 'anceps'; they may or may not bear a stress. There

are two guidelines involved. First, monosyllabic words usually do not have a stress while polysyllabic words usually do. When there are two monosyllabic particles in a colon, we generally treat it as a single stress. Second, when there is doubt we count in the direction of the norm. If the overall pattern is 3"3, for example, then if there is doubt whether a particular colon is 2 or 3, or 3 or 4, we would opt for 3. Also, the colon's syllable length can help decide. We do not emend *metri causa*, nor do we count secondary stresses although they probably existed. (On the problem, see Gray 1915.)

Given the uncertainties involved in determining stresses, the syllable count serves as an important check. With respect to counting syllables, we generally follow the Tiberian vocalization of the MT but with certain minor modifications which attempt to reflect more accurately the pronunciation of Classical Hebrew. Thus, we treat segolates as monosyllabic and we do not count secondary vowels with laryngeals (unless they substitute for vocal shewas) or furtive *pataḥ*. It must, however, be stressed that these minor modifications do not significantly affect the data. The same patterns would emerge were one simply to follow the masoretic vocalization.

### 1.5 *Strophes and Stanzas*

The primary focus of this study concerns units larger than the verse. It is clear from some of the alphabetic acrostic poems that the ancient poets worked with units larger than the bicolon or tricolon. Psalm 37 and Lamentations 4 have 22 strophes, each of which usually has 4 cola. Chapters 1-3 of Lamentations have 22 strophes, each of which usually has 6 cola. Psalm 119 has 22 units, which we consider stanzas, with 16 cola in each. Most scholars acknowledge the existence of these larger units today, although in the past some have doubted it.

#### 1.5.1 *Survey of Approaches*

Here we will briefly survey some of the more significant views of past and present scholars who affirm the existence of units larger than the verse. (For more extensive surveys of the history of research, see Kraft 1938; Wahl 1977; van der Lugt

1980. For examples from Neo-Punic poetry, see Krahmalkov 1975. Regarding Ugaritic poetry, see de Moor 1978b; 1980, and Korpel-de Moor 1986, who affirm their existence, but Pardee 1978 is skeptical.)

Although there were precursors, Köster (1831) is generally regarded as the pioneer of the study of strophes. He argued that a parallelism of verses comparable to that between cola exists in Hebrew poetry. However, he denied the necessity of uniformity in length among a poem's strophes. He defined the strophe as simply a union of several verses.

Müller (1898) elaborated a complex theory in which the strophes of a poem were marked by *responsio*, *concatenatio*, and *inclusio*. *Responsio* is the correspondence between the verses in successive strophes; the first verse in strophe A parallels the first verse in strophe B, and so on. *Concatenatio* is the binding of successive strophes by parallelism between the last verse of strophe A and the first verse of strophe B. *Inclusio* designates a correspondence between the first and last verses of a strophe. He tried to force all poems into this responsion system.

Briggs (1906; 1907) insisted on uniformity in meter and length among the strophes of a psalm, at least for most psalms. In order to achieve such regularity, he often resorted to radical surgery of the text. He followed Köster in believing that groups of verses are arranged on the same principles of parallelism as are cola within a verse. Thus strophe B parallels strophe A in some way.

Möller (1932) did not insist that all of a poem's strophes must be the same size, but he did expect them to be arranged in an identical or chiasmic pattern. Strophes A, B, and C should correspond to the next set—either A, B, and C or C, B, and A. Mixed structures are also possible in which the first two sets have an identical pattern and the next two sets have a chiasmic pattern. The corresponding strophes must be identical in length.

Kraft (1938) insists that the strophes of a psalm must exhibit some regularity, if not uniformity, in length. He concludes that most strophes are either couplets (two bicola/tricola) or triplets (three bicola/tricola). These two types are not mixed; normally a poem has only couplets or triplets. He found that stanzas, i.e. two or more strophes, occur infrequently. At most, sixteen of

his corpus of forty-one psalms have stanzas. Kraft, like Briggs, finds regularity and uniformity by emending the text and deleting cola.

None of the approaches surveyed so far is very convincing. Briggs and Kraft found strophes of identical size in a psalm but they had to emend the text in order to achieve this. Actually our view is similar to Köster's in that the strophes in our corpus often vary in size (see 3.3.1). The approaches of Müller and Möller end up forcing a psalm's strophes into a Procrustean bed. In our corpus one occasionally sees such a pattern. For example, Psalm 46 exhibits a sort of *concatenatio*. But often the only basis upon which one could say that two strophes are parallel is that they repeat the same word.

Recently, several different approaches have been advocated that deserve comment. Scholars such as Alden (1974; 1976; 1978), Auffret (1977; 1981; 1982) and Girard (1984) generally look for alternating or chiasmic arrangements of strophes on the basis of repeated words. Alden, for example, sees a chiasmic structure in Psalm 59 (1976: 193):

vv. 2-3	A.	Prayer to be set on high
vv. 4-9	B.	Complaint against the wicked
v. 10	C.	Testimony of trust in God
v. 11	C.	Testimony of trust in God
vv. 12-15	B.	Curses on the wicked
vv. 17-18	A.	Praise to God, the high tower

The only connection between the A-sections is the root *šgb*. Yet vv. 2-3 comprise a petition and vv. 17-18 comprise a vow of praise. Why label the refrain of v. 10 as C but its partner—the refrain of v. 18—as A? Or consider Girard's analysis of Psalms 42-43 (1984: 338-51). He proposes that the poem consists of two overlapping panels: 42.2-11 and 42.6-43.5. Each panel is shaped chiasmatically:

42.2-4	A	42.6	C
42.5	B	42.7-9	D
42.6	C	42.10-11	E
42.7-8	B	43.1	F
42.9-11	A	43.2	E
		43.3-4	D
		43.5	C



Again, the structure is based on repeated words or word-pairs. When a word in one verse is repeated in another verse, those two verses are said to be parallel. Yet how does 42.2 relate to 42.9-11 or 42.10 to 42.2-4 on the left panel? How is 42.11 parallel to 43.2 on the right panel? He considers 42.12 to be a later interpolation because, as he admits, it does not fit into his diptychic structure (p. 348). Very often the charting of repeated words is helpful and a positive contribution. But to force psalms into chiasmic or alternating strophic structures solely on this basis is not very convincing.

O'Connor (1980) argues that larger units such as 'batches' and 'staves' (= strophes and stanzas) are demarcated primarily by shifts in line (= colon) 'type' or in the amount of 'troping' (see 1.3). For example, when 'class IV' lines occur (lines with 3 clause predicators or 4 constituents or 5 units), that signals a break. A break can also be signaled when an 'untroped' line is preceded or followed by 'troped' lines.

O'Connor's desire for objectivity is commendable. However, we do not believe that his methodology produces very convincing results. For example, he finds three staves in Habakkuk 3: vv. 2-8, 9-16, and 17-19. This contradicts the obvious breaks between v. 2 and v. 3, between v. 7 and v. 8, and between v. 15 and v. 16. As Hiebert (1986: 59-80) has recently shown, the Psalm of Habakkuk has an introduction (v. 2) and a conclusion (vv. 16-19) which frame two stanzas (vv. 3-7, 8-15). The deity is addressed in second person in the introduction, third person in the first stanza, back to second person in the second stanza, and back to third person in the conclusion. Also, each stanza has inclusion—place names in vv. 3 and 7 and a reference to the 'sea' in vv. 8 and 15. Nor are all of O'Connor's batch divisions persuasive; he unites vv. 2-3b and vv. 7-8. In his treatment of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33 he splits the Judah oracle in the former by beginning a new batch (and stave!) with v. 10, and he splits the Levi oracle in the latter by beginning a new batch with v. 9d.

The root of our doubts regarding his method lies in the fact that he ignores many literary devices in his structural analysis, devices such as shifts in address, shifts in person of verbs or verbal moods, and inclusion. His approach does not correlate structure with content.