

## A LITERARY STRUCTURAL OVERVIEW OF EXOD 25-40<sup>1</sup>

RALPH E. HENDRIX  
Andrews University

### 1. Introduction

The first two studies on Exod 25-40 dealt primarily with the etymology and use of *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* within the passage, and so provided an overarching, "terminological" structure.<sup>2</sup> This final article provides a structural overview which takes its cue from the literary, topical, and grammatical dimensions within the passage.

The structure of the Masoretic text of Exod 25-40 shows several dimensions.<sup>3</sup> To correctly describe the complex, multi-dimensional structure of the passage, clear terminology is essential. In this study, the term "axis" is used to describe that dimensional plane along which the text divides itself. This structural axis (or form of the text as determined by internal parameters) may be seen in terms of structural size (sub-structural components within larger structures). "Literary structure" is determined by the order of these

<sup>1</sup>The author here wishes to express appreciation to J. Bjornar Storfjell, Richard M. Davidson, and Randall W. Younker, members of the faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, for their patience in overseeing the preparation of this, and related, studies.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph E. Hendrix, "*Miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed*: Etymology, Lexical Definitions, and Extra-biblical Usage," *AUSS* 29 (1991): 213-224; Idem, "The Use of *Miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* in Exod 25-40," *AUSS* 30 (1992): 3-13.

<sup>3</sup>John H. Stek, "The Bee and the Mountain Goat: A Literary Reading," in *A Tribute to Gleason Archer*, ed. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., and Ronald Youngblood (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 59. Here Stek compares these dimensions to a "hologram" rather than a "photograph." Also, see S. Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations on the Analysis of Structure in Biblical Narrative," *VT* 130 (1980): 170, where he discusses "structural patterns" which belong to various "structural levels."

components within the text. One stratum or level within a structure of the text is called an "element."

Literary structures may be delimited both by "numbers" of elements (in this case, six- or nine-element groups) or by "type" of elements (physical items, verbal ideas, etc.). A large, overarching literary form ("maxi-structure") may encompass smaller sub-structures ("midi-" and "mini-structures"). A "terminological" structure takes its form from the use-pattern of a certain term or phrase (as in the case of *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed*). A "topical" structure receives its form from the recurrence of a common theme or topic or subject.<sup>4</sup> A "grammatical" structure reflects patterning at the level of grammar. In short, literary axes concern the overall form of the text and may include variations such as lists, parallels, inverse parallels (chiasms)<sup>5</sup> gathered in such a way as to augment the surface meaning of the text.

In practice, structure is not as difficult to recognize as it may be to describe. For example, the structure of Exod 32:1-33:6 is a six-element inverted-parallel structure, thematically focusing on its central structural element.<sup>6</sup> As shown below, Exod 40:1-8 is a simple list of nine elements which is parallel to Exod 40:17-33 (which has the same nine elements in the same order).

The previous analysis of the use of *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* in Exod 25-40 provided a concrete example of a "terminological" structure. Table 1 of that study<sup>7</sup> displays the existence of four terminological units which occur within the basic literary structure of the passage. This terminological axis, missed by many scholars, has resulted in insensitivity to the discrete and separate connotations of *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed*. *Miskan* is used in contexts describing the physical construction, primarily associated with commands to manufacture and assemble the Dwelling Place of YHWH, but secondarily in its generic sense simply as "dwelling place." The phrase *'ohel mo'ed* appears where the concern is the cultic function of the habitation. The house of YHWH must,

<sup>4</sup>Bar-Efrat, 157, 168-169, cf. his "level of conceptual content" with our "topical" structure, and his "verbal level" with our "terminological" structure.

<sup>5</sup>Bar-Efrat, 170, lists "parallel" (AA<sup>1</sup>), "ring" (AxA<sup>1</sup>), "chiastic" (ABB<sup>1</sup>A<sup>1</sup>), and "concentric" (ABxB<sup>1</sup>A<sup>1</sup>) patterns.

<sup>6</sup>Ralph E. Hendrix, "A Literary Structural Analysis of the Golden-Calf Episode in Exodus 32:1-33:6," *AUSS* 28 (1990): 211-217.

<sup>7</sup>Hendrix, "Use," 7.

therefore, be understood as a transient dwelling place, corresponding to the dwelling places of nomadic peoples (and so the choice of *miskan*), yet its continual function of fostering the cultic relationship (best expressed by the choice of *'ohel mo'ed*) must also be acknowledged. All of this is evident from the terminological structure of Exod 25-40.

The structural analysis which follows is not exhaustive. It is meant to point a direction and to encourage further sensitivity to literary structure as an aid to understanding the biblical text.

## 2. Overview of the Literary Structure

*A Structural Summary.* The terminological maxi-structure formed by the succession of occurrences of *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* forms an important literary dimension in Exod 25-40. This was presented in the second study, mentioned above. As I shall present below, this large, overarching, four-part maxi-structure encompasses two sub-structures (Exod 25:1-31:18 and Exod 35:1-36:7). Further, each of these two main sub-structures is also sub-divided. Exod 25:1-31:18 includes six midi-structures: the second (Exod 27:20-21) and fifth (Exod 30:1-10) of which are transitional passages, and the first (Exod 25 1-27:19), third (Exod 28:1-43), fourth (Exod 29:1-46), and sixth (Exod 30:11-31:18) of which are divided into four sub-structures of six major elements each. Taken together, the passage consists of alternately-sized structures: LARGE-small-LARGE-LARGE-small-LARGE (Table 1). Next come four supportive, interlocutory narratives (the Golden-Calf episode, Exod 32:1-33:6; the episode of Moses' Tent, Exod 33:7-11; the Theophany, Exod 33:12-23; and the Giving of the Second Tables, Exod 34:1-35) as presented in Table 2. Exod 35:1-40:38 has four smaller midi-structures, which alternate with four nine-element midi-structures: small-LARGE-small-LARGE-LARGE-small-LARGE-small (Exod 35:1-36:7, 36:8-38:20, 38:21-31, 39:1-43, 40:1-8, 40:9-16, 40:17-33, and 40:34-38) as shown in Table 3. Taken together, these three tables present the overarching literary structure of Exod 25-40. These midi-structures are, themselves, composed of even smaller sub-structures: topical, grammatical, and terminological.

### 3. *Instructions for Making the Miskan: Exod 25:1-31:18*

The first midi-structure includes instructions to make the holy precinct for YHWH. The literary structure is composed of six sections which will be considered individually.

*Exod 25:1-27:19.* This section includes three introductory statements: YHWH speaks to Moses (25:1) saying, bring offerings (25:2-7), and make a *miskan* (25:8-9). These are followed by six topical elements: Ark (25:10-22), Table (25:23-30), Lampstand (25:31-40), the Dwelling Place (26:1-37), Altar of Burnt Offering (27:1-8), and the Courtyard (27:19). The concern of this passage is the design of the dwelling place: its size, pattern, and materials. The name for the physical structure described here is exclusively *miskan*. The phrase *'ohel mo'ed* does not occur in this section. Here first appears a connection between the idea of "construction" and the term *miskan*.

*Exod 27:20-21.* This next section deals with how the Dwelling Place is to be used. These verses mark the transition from a "construction" context to a "function" context: Exod 27:19 instructs that the tent pegs for the courtyard be made of bronze, but Exod 27:20-21 gives instructions on how the sons of Israel are to bring olive oil for the lamp so it can burn continually before YHWH. These are clearly two different types of activities. At precisely this transition in context, comes a transition from *miskan* to *'ohel mo'ed*. Both topically (construction versus function) and terminologically (*miskan* versus *'ohel mo'ed*), Exod 27:20 begins a new literary sub-structure, characterized by three elements: Command (to bring oil, Exod 27:20), Explanation (of its cultic function, Exod 27:21a), and Duration (lasting ordinance, Exod 27:21b).

Exod 28:1-43. In this passage come the commands to gather the priests (28:1) and to make garments (28:2-5). A consideration of six more topical elements follows: Ephod (28:6-14), Breastpiece (28:15-30), Robe (28:31-35), Turban (28:36-38), Tunic and small garments (28:39-41), and Undergarments (28:42-43). Each topical element further includes the Command to make it, and an Explanation of its function within the cult. The literary structure of this section is similar to that of Exod 25:1-27:19, considered above: Said-Bring-Make-Six Elements // Bring-Make-Six Elements.

Exod 28:1-43 emphasizes the function of each item. The Ephod was to act as a memorial (28:12). The Breastpiece, with its Urim and Thummim, was to be Aaron's means of making decisions

(28:29-30). The Robe, with its bells, was to preserve Aaron's life (28:35). The Turban and plate enabled Aaron to bear the guilt of the sacred gifts (28:38). The Tunic and small garments were to bring the priests "dignity and honor" (28:40). The Undergarments were to be worn by the priesthood as they ministered so that they would not "incur guilt and die" (28:43). The subject matter clearly concerns the cultic function of the topical elements, rather than simply manufacturing instructions. In this cult-functional context, the dwelling place is called only *'ohel mo'ed*, thereby linking the cult-function with the phrase *'ohel mo'ed*.

What is particularly interesting, from the perspective of analyzing the literary structure of Exod 25-40, is that a comparison of Exod 25:1-27:19 and Exod.28:1-43 reveals the interrelation of two different structural dimensions: terminological and topical. The terminological structure (*miskan* in the first section and *'ohel mo'ed* in the second) meshes with the topical structure found in both (Bring-Make-Six Elements). Since the first, six-element section is strictly a *miskan* section, and the latter is exclusively an *'ohel mo'ed* passage, the intentional use of two different denominatives within a single literary structure is apparent.

*Exod 29:1-46*. Still within the *'ohel mo'ed* terminological structure (the phrase occurs seven times), this section considers the consecration of cultic objects. Two preliminary instructions, consecrating (make holy) the priests (29:1a) and bringing the priests and sacrifices (29:1b-4), are followed by six elements: Dressing the priests (29:5-9), the Bull (sin) Offering (29:10-14), the Ram (burnt) Offering (29:15-18), the Ordination Ram (Wave) Offering (29:19-24), the Ordination Ceremony (29:25-37), and the "Daily" Offering (29:38-41). All of this action is to take place either in the *'ohel mo'ed* or at the entrance to the *'ohel mo'ed* (further cementing the association of cult-function and *'ohel mo'ed*). Once again, six elements are introduced with commands to "make" and "bring" (although in inverted order from that in the preceding sections). Exod 29:42-46 acts as an Epilogue.

*Exod 30:1-10*. This section is another short transitional passage, similar to Exod 27:20-21. Two commands (to "make," Exod 30:1-5, and to "place," Exod 30:6, the incense altar), are followed by an explanation of the altar's use (Exod 30:7-10b) and a statement regarding its duration (generations to come, Exod 30:10c). Hence, we find the same basic elements in both this transitional section (Exod 30:1-10) and the previous one (Exod 27:20-21), namely:

Command(s), Explanation, and Duration. This similarity occurs in the linguistic dimension as well, with both sections including the root: *drt* in reference to perpetuity. This second transitional section serves, as did the first, to link two larger sections. Thus, the two transitional sections are similar in three ways: topically, linguistically, and functionally.

*Exod 30:11-31:18*. This section includes the now familiar six-elements: Atonement Money (30:11-16), [Wash] Basin (30:17-21), Anointing Oil (30:22-33), Incense (30:34-38), Craftsmen (31:1-11), and the Sabbath(s) (31:12-17). Following, comes an Epilogue (31:18). Each of the six elements begins with a similar phrase: "YHWH spoke (*dbr*) to Moses saying ('*mr*)" (Elements 1, 2, 3, 5), "YHWH said ('*mr*) to Moses" (Element 4) or "YHWH said ('*mr*) to Moses saying ('*mr*)" (Element 6). The repeated use of the roots *dbr* and/or ('*mr*) provides internal grammatical structure.

*Summary of Exod 25:1-31:18*. The literary structure of this passage is based on four sections, each composed of six elements. The first two and last two are divided by smaller, transitional sections, providing a LARGE-small-LARGE-LARGE-small-LARGE pattern. The transitional sections are characterized by Command(s)-Explanation-Duration elements. The first two large sections have introductory Bring-Make elements, while the third has a Make-Bring sequence. The last two large sections have Epilogues. The first section uses the term *miskan*, while the latter five sections use '*ohel mo'ed*. Noteworthy is that these structures co-exist along different dimensional axes.

#### 4. Interlocutory Narratives

Four narratives appear next in the literary structure of Exod 25-40. The Golden Calf episode (Exod 32:1-33:6), the episode of Moses' Tent (Exod 33:7-11), the Theophany (Exod 33:12-23), and the Giving of the Second Pair of Tables (Exod 34:1-35) divide the previous midi-structure (characterized by six-element topical structures) from the closing midi-structure which will be seen to have nine-element structures.

Rather than being interruptions in the flow of the *miskan/'ohel mo'ed* (Dwelling Place/Tent of Meeting) construction account, these four narratives serve to focus the reader's attention on YHWH's uninterrupted desire to dwell among the people. The first and last narratives exemplify the basis of YHWH's relationship with the people: law/grace. The middle two narratives manifest the purpose

of the *miskan/ohel mo'ed* to allow YHWH to live amid the people (by Moses' representation in his tent and then by direct theophany).

*The Golden Calf Episode: Exod 32:1-33:6.* This narrative has been treated previously,<sup>8</sup> and will not be presented in detail here. The passage is structurally divided as follows: A (32:1-6) people act/ Aaron reacts, B (32:7-10) YHWH's two utterances, C (32:11-14) Moses intercedes, D (32:15-20) Moses goes down the mountain, E (32:21-25) Moses investigates judgment F (32:26a) opportunity for repentance, E<sup>1</sup> (32:26b-29) Moses executes judgment D<sup>1</sup> (32:30) Moses goes up the mountain, C<sup>1</sup> (32:31-32) Moses intercedes, B<sup>1</sup> (32:33-33:3) YHWH's two utterances (inverted from previous order), A<sup>1</sup> (33:4-6) YHWH acts/people react. The central structural element F, is a call for repentance and illustrates that the narrative is about a more fundamental human issue than anger, idolatry, or law: it is about the opportunity for repentance.<sup>9</sup>

*The Episode of Moses' Tent: Exod 33:7-11.* There is considerable disagreement over the relation of the *'ohel mo'ed* mentioned here with the *'ohel mo'ed* mentioned elsewhere in Exodus.<sup>10</sup> Theological and historical issues arising from the passage should be considered in another forum. Whatever the interpretation of the passage, its structure is linear. It is divided on the basis of its action: Moses took an *'ohel* (33:7a), pitched it outside of camp (33:7b), called it the *'ohel mo'ed* (33:7c). All the people who were inquiring of YHWH went to the *'ohel mo'ed* (33:7d). When Moses went to the *'ohel*, the

<sup>8</sup>See note 6.

<sup>9</sup>Brevard S. Childs sees that "the canonical function of Ex. 32-34 is to place the institution of Israel's worship within the theological framework of sin and forgiveness" (*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press], 175).

<sup>10</sup>Jack P. Lewis, "Mo'ed," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:339; Joe O. Lewis, "The Ark and the Tent," *RevExp* 74 (1977): 539; Childs, 173; J. Coert Rylaarsdam, "Introduction to the Book of Exodus," *IB* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952) 1:845; R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1969), 587; Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols., trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row Pub. Co., 1962), 1:236. See also, W. Johnstone, *Exodus, Old Testament Guides* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1990); Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991); Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1991).

people arose (33:8a); each person stood at his own *'ohel* (33:8b); they watched Moses enter the *'ohel* (33:8c). When Moses went to the *'ohel*, the Cloud Pillar came (33:9a); it stayed at the entrance of the *'ohel* (33:9b); it spoke with Moses (33:9c). All the people saw the Cloud stand at the entrance of the *'ohel* (33:10a); all stood (33:10b); all worshipped at the entrance of their own *'ohel* (33:10c). YHWH spoke with Moses face-to-face (33:11a). He (Moses) returned to camp (33:11b); Joshua did not leave the *'ohel* (33:11c). This forms a certain pattern in terms of who performs the action: Moses-Moses-Moses- People-People- People-Moses-Cloud-Cloud-Cloud-People-People-People-YHWH-Resolution (Moses, Joshua). The parallel of Moses/ /Cloud Pillar, of People/ /People, and of Moses/ /YHWH is evident.

The content is undoubtedly one of cult-function and it is not surprising that *'ohel* or *'ohel mo'ed* occurring eleven times in the five verses. Moses acts in the priestly role as representative of the people. YHWH is present in the "Pillar of Cloud" which "stayed" or "stood" at the entrance to the tent (precisely where the cultic ministry took place; cf. esp. Exod 29:1-46 and Lev 8). This context of close intimacy between YHWH and the people is paralleled in the next interlocutory narrative.

The Theophany: Exod 33:12-23. Here Moses glimpses the "faces" of YHWH. This straightforward dialogue parallels the previous section (and perhaps compliments Exod 34:5-9), indicating that the central two interlocutory narratives emphasize YHWH's insistent longing to dwell amid the people; His desired immanence. Based on the verb *wayy'omer* (and he "said"), the structure of the narrative is: A (33:12-13) Moses said, B (32:14) [YHWH] said, A<sup>1</sup> (33:15-16) [Moses] said, B<sup>1</sup> (33:17) YHWH said, A<sup>2</sup>(33:18) [Moses] said, B<sup>2</sup> (33:19) [YHWH] said, B<sup>3</sup> (33:20) [YHWH] said, and B<sup>4</sup> (33:21) YHWH said.

*The Giving of the Second Pair of Tables: Exod 34:1-35.* This last interlocutory narrative concerns the events surrounding the giving of a second set of tablets including A (34:1-3) YHWH's command to Moses, B (34:4) Moses' response: made tablets, A<sup>1</sup> (34:5-7) the theophany, B<sup>1</sup> (34:8-9) Moses' response: worshipped, A<sup>2</sup> (34:10-26) the specifics of YHWH's Covenant, B<sup>2</sup> (34:27) YHWH's command to Moses to write the covenant, and an Epilogue (34:28). The passage provides historically and theologically important information which precedes the resumption of the process of establishing the *miskan/'ohel mo'ed*.

In the overall literary structural framework of Exod 25-40, these interlocutory narratives form the center, between a pattern of six-element structures and a pattern of nine-element structures. These four interlocutory narratives also thematically form a structure: A-B-B<sup>1</sup>-A<sup>1</sup>. The "A" elements both deal with a tablets/covenant context; while the "B" elements both deal with the immanence of YHWH. Therefore, the central focus of the literary structure of Exod 25-40 appears to be the co-elements: Exod 33:7-11 and 33:12-23, both of which emphasize the immanence of YHWH among the people.

5. *Making and Assembling the Components: Exod 35:1-40:38:*

The final chapters of the segment analyzed provide the second maxi-structure of Exod 25-40. It is composed of a linkage of mid-structures in a manner similar to that found in the first maxi-structure (Exod 25-31). Notably different is the number of topical elements which make up each sub-structure. Here, the number of elements is nine, rather than six as found in the first. There are four nine-element sections which alternate with smaller structures in a small-LARGE-small-LARGE-LARGE-small-LARGE-small pattern.

*Exod 35:1-36:7.* These verses form an introduction to the task of actually making the components of the Dwelling Place/Tent of Meeting which were already described in Exod 25-31. Exod 35:4-9 very closely parallels Exod 24:2-7, both enumerate the specific offerings of raw material in some detail. The Sabbath reminder of Exod 35:1-3 is generally equivalent to Exod 31:12-17, though the Exod 35 section has a more specific focus. Exod 35:30-36:1 parallels Exod 31:1-11 regarding the craftsmen Bezalel and Oholiab.

Overall structure is given by the term *siwwah*, "commanded." This appears as "YHWH commanded" at the beginning of Element A (Exod 35:1-4a) and Element B (Exod 35:4b-19) and at the end of Element B<sup>1</sup> (Exod 35:20-29) and Element A<sup>1</sup> (Exod 35:30-36:1). The verb, placed at the beginning two elements and the end of the other two, provides the passage's inverted parallel literary structure (chiasm). Verses 2-7 provide an epilogic response to call for materials.

Miskan appears three times in this passage (35:11, 15, 18) and *'ohel mo'ed* appears once (35:21). Although both words appear, *miskan* occurs much more often than *'ohel mo'ed*, and so begins the

third terminological literary structure, a "*miskan*-dominant" section.<sup>11</sup> Here for the first time both terms occur in the same literary unit, which marks the transition between the second terminological literary structure (*'ohel mo'ed*-only) and the third terminological literary structure (*miskan*-dominant).

The first element, A (Exod 35:1-4a), deals with the Sabbath and specifically with a prohibition against lighting fires. This prohibition is remarkable in the context of the construction of YHWH's dwelling, especially since fire is essential for smelting ore and working with gold, silver, and bronze. Later, in the epilogue of this passage, the Israelites respond with more offerings than needed. Perhaps such a prohibition was necessary as a restraint against those, who in their overzealousness, were tempted to work seven days a week. According to the literary structure of this passage, this prohibition is parallel to the element detailing the provision of workmen (A<sup>1</sup>): Bezalel, Oholiab, and their helpers, as if to indicate that there is no need to break the Sabbath, as YHWH has provided enough workers.

The appeal for raw material offerings in vv. 4b-19 (Element B) has its parallel in the bringing of those offerings by the people in vv. 20-29 (Element B<sup>1</sup>). Exod 36:2-7 provides an epilogue regarding the abundance of offerings which resulted from the plea. The literary structure of Exod 35:1-36:7, therefore, exhibits four elements in an inverted parallel pattern provided by *siwwah*: A-B-A<sup>1</sup>-B<sup>1</sup>, followed by the Epilogue.

*Exod 36:8-38:20*. The narrative moves directly to the account of making the components of the Dwelling Place/Tent of Meeting. Again, this section parallels the previous "command" section (Exod 25:8-27:19). Terminologically, this passage continues the *miskan*-dominant structure of the preceding section.

The call to construct the *miskan* in Exod 25:8, with its resulting treatment of six elements (Ark, Table, Lampstand, *Miskan*, Altar of Burnt Offering, and Courtyard), is augmented here with three additional elements: Altar of Incense (seen in the transitional passage, Exod 30:1-10, esp. vv. 1-5); the Anointing Oil and Incense (from Exod 27:20-21; 30:34-38); and the [Wash] Basin (found also in Exod 30:17-21). The passage contains a list of nine elements, the first of four such nine-element lists which characterize the literary structure of the latter portion of Exod 25-40.

<sup>11</sup>See Hendrix, "Use," p. 8.

The order of the elements is the same in both the "command" and "execution" passages, except for the rearrangement of the *miskan*-element, from the fourth place into the first place, and the addition of three new elements. The overall terminology of the passages is also very similar, almost as if in the course of the narrative, the author were purposely drawing attention to the minute and detailed fulfillment of YHWH's design orders. Exod 38:21-31. Now follows the second, short passage within the Exod 35:1-40:33 midi-structure. It is an account of the gold, silver, and bronze used in the manufacturing process. The passage continues the *miskan*-dominant terminological structure of the preceding sections. Its topical structure consists of an introduction (38:21), a discussion of the workers (38:22-23), and a tally of the amount of raw materials used in the manufacturing process (38:24-31).

*Exod 39:1-43.* Here is the second, nine-element passage. Terminologically, it continues the *miskan*-dominant section while the verb *siwwah* ("commanded") provides the literary structure. Each of nine elements ends with YHWH commanded, providing little room for error in recognizing its inherent structure. This second passage in the "execution" section parallels Exod 28:1-43, the second passage in the "command" section. It incorporates five of the six elements of the preceding passage and inverts the preceding order of elements four and five.

In contrast to Exod 36:8-38:20, the total number of nine elements in this passage is made up of emphasized events as well as physical objects. The nine elements are: an Introduction (39:1), Ephod made (39:2-5), Stones assembled (39:6-7), Breastpiece made (39:8-21), Robes made (39:22-26), Tunic made (39:27-29), Plate made (39:30-31), the *Miskan* presented (39:32-42), and the *Miskan* inspected (39:43). As this is a combination of physical objects and literary statements, it is the use of the verb *siwwah* which insures recognition of each structural element. The inclusion of nine elements within the literary structure appears to be intentional, bringing this section into balance with the other sections in the literary structure.

Exod 40:1-8. This forms the third, nine-element passage which follows the general order of Exod 25:1-19 and 36:8-38:20. These nine elements include an Introduction (40:1), the *Miskan* (40:2), Ark (40:3), Table (40:4a), Lampstand (40:4b), Incense Altar (40:5), Altar of Burnt Offering (40:6), [Wash] Basin (40:7), and the Courtyard (40:8). The *miskan* element in Exod 40:2 is rearranged from the

order of Exod 25:1-19, just as it was in Exod 36:8-38:20. The *anointing oil/incense* element of Exod 36:8-38:20 is not present here; an element of introduction is added. Still, the major elements of the Dwelling Place/Tent of Meeting are included and generally retain their order of appearance as in parallel passages. Terminologically, *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* appear both alone and grammatically linked. Thus, a new terminological sub-structure is introduced, the "mixed *miskan-'ohel mo'ed*" section.

*Exod 40:9-16.* This short passage continues the section that mixes the terms *miskan-'ohel mo'ed*. Its five-element linear structure concerns the Anointing of the *Miskan* (40:9), the Altar of Burnt Offering (40:10), the [Wash] Basin (40:11), the Priests (40:12-15), and an Epilogue (40:16).

*Exod 40:17-33.* This passage rounds out the group of four sub-structures, each with nine elements. It is a virtual rehearsal of the elements included in the commands to assemble the Dwelling Place/Tent of Meeting given in Exod 40:1-8. The elements include an Introduction (40:17), the *Miskan* (40:18-19), Ark (40:20-21), Table (40:22-23), Lampstand (40:24-25), Golden Altar (40:26-28), Altar of Burnt Offering (40:29), [Wash] Basin (40:30-32), and the Courtyard (40:33). Terminologically, this passage continues the mixed *miskan-'ohel mo'ed* structure found in the immediately preceding passages.

*Exod 40:34-38.* One final passage remains for consideration. This provides an epilogue to the accounts of Exod 25:1-40:33. A straightforward, linear structure (A-B-A<sup>1</sup>-B<sup>1</sup>-A<sup>2</sup>-B<sup>2</sup>) is apparent. Exod 40: 34a, 35a, and 36-37 (the "A" elements) concern the Cloud; Exod 40:34b, 35b, and 38 (the "B" elements) concern the immanence of YHWH (Glory, cloud-by-day, fire-by-night). The passage closes out the mixed *miskan-'ohel mo'ed* terminological structure of the preceding three sections, and completes the description of the construction of YHWH's Dwelling Place among the people.

## 6. Summary

Exod 25-40 has at least three maxi-structural axes: literary, topical, and terminological. It has at least one subsidiary, mini-structural axis: grammatical. Its structural integrity, particularly that integrity demanded by the presence of overarching maxi-structures, has given strong argument for approaching the biblical text in its canonical form.

As considered in a previous study, in Exod 25-40 the terms *miskan* and *'ohel mo'ed* provide a four-section terminological

structure. In these sections the term(s) used to name the physical construction were variously *miskan*, *'ohel mo'ed*, *miskan*-dominant, and mixed *miskan-'ohel mo'ed*. Within this terminological structure, coexisted topical structures (generally presented in lists of six or nine elements) and literary sub-structures such as parallelism, inverted parallelism, and linear lists. In their co-existence, none of the literary structures negated the others, but rather complemented them along axes within differing literary dimensions.

Exod 25:1-31:18 exhibits six literary midi-structures: four with topical structures of six elements each, and two small literary midi-structures each with three parallel elements. These basic elements show a pattern: 6-3-6-6-3-6. This topical structure provides continuity over the transition between two of the *miskan/'ohel mo'ed* terminological structures. The term variation within the literary maxi-structure minimizes the likelihood of an intentional source seam between literary structures. The overarching literary structure argues strongly in favor of a unified literary product. The six midi-structures concern the design of the physical Dwelling Place/cultic Tent of Meeting.

Exod 32:1-34:35 incorporates four interlocutory narratives: the Golden Calf Episode (Exod 32:1-33:6), the episode of Moses' Tent (Exod 33:7-11), the Theophany (Exod 33:12-23), and the Giving of the Second Set of Tablets (Exod 34:1-35). These range in structure from complex, inverted parallelism (Golden Calf) to simple, linear narrative (the others).

Exod 35 begins the second, major maxi-structure of the Exod 25-40 complex. In Exod 35:1-40:38, there are eight midi-structures: four of which are very short, transitional, structures, and four of which exhibit a nine-element topical form. In terms of numbers of elements, these eight midi-structures follow a 5-9-3-9-9-5-9-3 pattern. The first four structures are *miskan*-dominant; the latter four are mixed *miskan-'ohel mo'ed*. The first four structures consider the making of the Dwelling Place/Tent of Meeting; the latter four concern its assembly. Exod 33:7-11/ Exod 33:12-21 provide the thematic focus for Exod 25-40, namely, the immanence/indwelling of YHWH among the people of Israel.

"Command Narratives"

Exod 25:1-27:19 <i>miskan</i> Lord Said Bring Make ---	Exod 27:20-21 <i>'ohel mo'ed</i> Command --- Explanation Duration	Exod 28:1-43 <i>'ohel mo'ed</i> --- Bring Make ---	Exod 29:1-46 <i>'ohel mo'ed</i> --- Make Bring ---	Exod 30:1-10 --- Command Command Explanation Duration	Exod 30:11-31:18 <i>'ohel mo'ed</i> --- --- --- 1 Money 2 Washbasin 3 Oil 4 Incense 5 Craftsmen 6 Sabbath(s) Epilogue
1 Ark 2 Table 3 Lampstand 4 Dwelling 5 Altar 6 Courtyard		1 Ephod 2 Breastpiece 3 Robe 4 Turban 5 Tunic 6 Garments	1 Dress 2 Bull 3 Ram 4 Ord. Ram 5 Ceremony 6 Daily Epilogue		

TABLE 1: LITERARY STRUCTURE OF EXODUS 25-31

"Interlocutory Narratives"

Golden Calf	Moses' Tent	Theophany	Second Tablets
Exod 32:1-33:6	Exod 33:7-11 <i>'Ohel mo'ed</i>	Exod 33:12-23	Exod 34:1-35
A Act/React	A Moses took	A Moses said	A Y's command
B Spoke/Said	A [Moses] pitched it	B [YHWH] said	B Moses's response
C Moses intercedes	A [Moses] called it	A <sup>1</sup> [Moses] said	A <sup>1</sup> Y's Theophany
D Moses goes down	B people went	B <sup>1</sup> YHWH said	B <sup>1</sup> Moses's response
E Investigation	B people arose	A <sup>2</sup> [Moses] said	A <sup>2</sup> Y's Covenant
F Repentance offered	B [people] stood	B <sup>2</sup> [YHWH] said	A <sup>3</sup> Y's command
E <sup>1</sup> Execution	A Moses entered	A <sup>3</sup> [YHWH] said	Epilogue
D <sup>1</sup> Moses goes up	C Cloud Pillar came	A <sup>3</sup> YHWH said	
C <sup>1</sup> Moses intercedes	C Cloud Pillar stayed		
B <sup>1</sup> Said/Spoke	C Cloud Pillar spoke		
A <sup>1</sup> Act/React	B [people] saw		
	B [people] stood		
	B [people] worship'd		
	C YHWH spoke		
	Resolution		

TABLE 2: LITERARY STRUCTURE OF EXODUS 32-34

"Execution Narratives"

Exod 35:1- 36:7	Exod 36:8- 38:20	Exod 38:21-31	Exod 39:1-43	Exod 40:1-8	Exod 40:9-16	Exod 40:17-33	Exod 40:34-38
<i>miskan-</i> dominant	<i>miskan-</i> dominant	<i>miskan-</i> dominant	<i>miskan-</i> dominant	Mixed- terms	Mixed- terms	Mixed- terms	Mixed- terms
A Sabbath	1 <i>miskan</i>	1 Intro.	1 Intro.	1 Intro.	1 <i>miskan</i>	1 Intro.	1 Coming
B Offering	2 Ark	2 Workers	2 Ephod	2 <i>miskan</i>	2 Altar	2 <i>miskan</i>	2 Function
B1 Offering	3 Table	3 Amounts	3 Stones	3 Ark	3 Basin	3 Ark	3 Duration
A1 Work	4 Lamp		4 Breast	4 Table	4 Priests	4 Table	
Epilogue	5 Incense		5 Robe	5 Lamp	Epilogue	5 Lamp	
	6 Oil		6 Tunic	6 Incense		6 Incense	
	7 Burnt		7 Plate	7 Burnt		7 Burnt	
	8 Basin		8 Present	8 Basin		8 Basin	
	9 Court		9 Inspect	9 Court		9 Court	

TABLE 3: LITERARY STRUCTURE OF EXODUS 35-40.

This material is cited with gracious permission from:

Andrews University Seminary Studies

SDA Theological Seminary

Berrien Springs, MI 49104-1500

<http://www.andrews.edu/SEM/>

Please report any errors to Ted Hildebrandt at: [thildebrandt@gordon.edu](mailto:thildebrandt@gordon.edu)