

Psalm 63— Logotechnical Analysis

Guidelines

- Please read the [General Introduction](#) as well as the Introduction to [Book I](#) and [Book II](#).
- For common features found in the numerical analysis charts, see the "[Key to the charts](#)".

Specific features of Psalm 63

- As in Psalm 61, both syntax and the direction of address are used as structuring devices.
- Another feature shared with Psalm 61 is the reference to the king at the end of the poem.
- A feature shared with several preceding psalms is the use of the numerical value of a keyword to weave the divine name into the fabric of the text: in this case **68** (4 x 17), the numerical value of **תִּיִתִּיךָ**, "I have seen you" (v. 3a), to define the number of words in the main clauses.
- As in Psalms 58-62, the change in the direction of address is used to generate a divine name number in the text: in this case, **26** words in the passage spoken about God.

Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: ||

- Van der Lugt: 2, 3-4, 5-6 || 7-9, 10-12 (2 cantos, 5 strophes, 12 verselines and 25 cola).
- Fokkelman: 2-3, 4-5 || 6-7, 8-9 || 10-11, 12 (3 stanzas with 6 strophes, 13 verselines and 25 cola, taking v. 12c as a monocolic verseline).
- Labuschagne: 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 || 10-12 (2 cantos, 5 strophes, 12 verselines, 25 cola; in my view, the direction of address determines the canto structure – see Observation 2).

Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: words in the main clauses; **d**: words in the subordinate clauses.
- The numbering of the verselines is shown in **brown**.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1:	מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד בְּהִיטוֹ בְּמִדְבַּר יְהוּדָה: Heading	5	2	3		
2	אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֶתָּה 1	3	3		3	
	אֲשַׁחֲרֶךָ צְמֵאָה לְךָ נַפְשִׁי	4	4		4	
	כָּמֵה לְךָ בְּשָׂרֵי־	2	3		3	
	בְּאֶרְץ־צִיָּה וְעַף בְּלִי־מַיִם:	5		5	5	
	Total, v. 2	15	= 10	+ 5	= 15	+ 0
3	כֵּן בִּקְרָשׁ תִּיִתִּיךָ = 68 3	3	3		3	
	לְרֵאוֹת עֵינֶיךָ וּכְבוֹדֶךָ: (8 + 7 + 10 + 22 + 10 + 11)	3		3	3	
	Total, v. 3	6	= 3	+ 3	= 6	+ 0
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 2-3	21	= 13	+ 8	= 21	+ 0
4	כִּי־טוֹב חֲסִדֶךָ מִחַיִּים 4	4	4			4
	שִׁפְתַי יִשְׁבַּח וְנִנְּךָ:	2	2		2	
	Total, v. 4	6	= 6	+ 0	= 2	+ 4
5	כֵּן אֲבָרְכֶךָ בְּחַיִּי־ 5	3	3		3	
	בְּשִׂמְךָ אֲשָׂא כִפִּי:	3		3	3	
	Total, v. 5	6	= 3	+ 3	= 6	+ 0
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 4-5	12	= 9	+ 3	= 8	+ 4

6	כְּמוֹ חֶלֶב וְדִשָּׁן תִּשְׁבַּע נִפְשָׁיִךְ וְשִׁפְתַי רִנְנוֹת יִתְהַלֵּל־בִּי: Total, v. 6 Total, v. 4-6 Total, v. 3-6	5 5 5 4 4 4 <hr/> 9 = 5 + 4 = 9 + 0 <hr/> 21 = 14 + 7 = 17 + 4 <hr/> 27 = 17 + 10 = 23 + 4
7	אַם-זִכְרְתִּיךָ עַל-יְצוּעָיִךְ בְּאִשְׁמֵרוֹת אֶהְיֶה-בְּךָ: Middle colon: 25 = 12 + 1 + 12 Meaningful centre Strophe 3 Total, v. 6-7	4 4 4 3 3 3 <hr/> 7 = 4 + 3 = 0 + 7 <hr/> 34 = 21 + 13 = 23 + 11 <hr/> 16 = 9 + 7 = 9 + 7
8	כִּי-תֵייתָ עֲזָרְתָה לִּי וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ אֲרִנֶנּוּ: Total, v. 8 Total, v. 3-8	4 4 4 3 3 3 <hr/> 7 = 4 + 3 = 3 + 4 <hr/> 41 = 25 + 16 = 26 + 15
9	דְּבַקָה נִפְשִׁי אַחֲרֶיךָ בִּי תִמְכֶה יְמִינֶךָ: Total, v. 9 Strophe 4 Total, v. 8-9 Total, v. 4-9 Canto I Total, v. 2-9	3 3 3 3 3 3 <hr/> 6 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0 <hr/> 13 = 7 + 6 = 9 + 4 <hr/> 41 = 25 + 16 = 26 + 15 <hr/> 62 = 38 + 24 = 47 + 15
10	וְהִמָּה לְשׂוֹאָה יִבְקָשׁוּ נִפְשָׁיִךְ יִבְאוּ בְּתַחֲתִיּוֹת הָאָרֶץ: Total, v. 10	4 4 4 3 3 3 <hr/> 7 = 4 + 3 = 7 + 0
11	יִגִּירְהוּ עַל-יְדֵי-תִרְבֵּה מְנַת שְׁעָלִים יִהְיוּ: Total, v. 11 Total, v. 10-11	4 4 4 3 3 3 <hr/> 7 = 4 + 3 = 7 + 0 <hr/> 14 = 8 + 6 = 14 + 0
12	וְהִמְלִיךְ יִשְׁמַח בְּאֱלֹהִים יִתְהַלֵּל כָּל-הַנְּשָׁבַע בּוֹ כִּי יִסְכֵר פִּי דוֹבְרֵי-שָׁקֶר: Total, v. 12 Canto II Strophe 5 Total, v. 10-12 Total, v. 7-12 Total, v. 2-12 With the heading, v. 1-12	3 3 3 4 4 4 5 5 5 <hr/> 12 = 7 + 5 = 7 + 5 <hr/> 26 = 15 + 11 = 21 + 5 <hr/> 46 = 26 + 20 = 30 + 16 <hr/> 88 = 53 + 35 = 68 + 20 <hr/> 93 = 55 + 38

Observations

- In terms of the 88 words of the poem the arithmetic centre is constituted by the first four words of v. 7a (88 = 42 + 4 + 42), which coincide precisely with the middle colon (25 = 12 + 1 + 12):

אַם-זִכְרְתִּיךָ עַל-יְצוּעָיִךְ

When I think of you on my bed.

Therefore, v. 7a may safely be considered the consciously designed meaningful centre of the poem: the speaker's vigils during which he meditates on God.

2. In my opinion, the canto structure is determined by the direction of address, which most scholars fail to take into account. The first part of the psalm, vs. 2-9, is a prayer addressed to God, while the concluding passage, vs. 10-12, is phrased as a contemplation, in which God is spoken *about*. This means that there is a strong caesura between vs. 9 and 10:

vs. 2-9	Canto I	Words addressed to God	62
vs. 10-12	Canto II	Words spoken about God	26 .

The passage phrased as a prayer, Canto I, is made up of 62 words, which gives **26** words spoken *about* God in Canto II. For the use of one of the divine name numbers based on the change in the direction of address, see Psalms 58, 59, 60, 61 and 62!

The divine name number in Canto II is reinforced by the fact that the **26** words are divided by atnach into **15** (= YH) before and **11** (= WH) after atnach. For this device, see Observation 2 in my Analysis of [Psalm 62](#) and compare Observation 6 in my Analysis of [Psalm 64](#).

3. Additionally, the author has devised the syntax in such a way that the main clauses are made up of altogether **68** (4 x **17**) words (Column c). But there is more to the number **68**. It also represents the numerical value of a word that may be considered a keyword in the context: **רָאִיתִיךָ**, 'I have seen you' (v. 3a), expressing the speaker's religious experience in the sanctuary of the power and glory of God.

Psalm 63 shares this keyword feature with several other psalms, to mention only those in Book II: Psalms 53, 54, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62 and 64.

4. As in Psalm 61, explicit reference is made to the king at the end of the poem (v. 12).
5. The divine name numbers feature in the following instances:

vs. 3-6	17 words before atnach
vs. 4-6	17 words in the main clauses
vs. 3-7	34 (2 x 17) words in total
vs. 3-8	26 words in the main clauses
vs. 4-9	26 words in the main clauses
vs. 10-12	26 words, with 15 (YH) before, and 11 (WH) after atnach
vs. 7-12	26 words before atnach
vs. 2-12	68 (4 x 17) words in the main clauses.

6. As in Psalms 60-62, the name YHWH is absent; the designation **אֱלֹהִים**, 'God', occurs 2x (in the first and last verseline, vs. 2a and 12a), and **אֱלֹהֵי**, 'my God' appears 1x (v. 2a).

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