

Psalm 65— 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 65

- Psalm 65 concludes the series of 8 Davidic psalms (58-65) which comprise altogether **104** (4 x 26) verselines, exactly as in the preceding 7 psalms (51-57). However, in terms of content, Psalm 65 belongs to Psalms 66ff. as the first of the 3rd sub-group of 7 psalms (65-71). Like Psalms 66 and 67, it is a song of thanksgiving and praise.
- It is not surprising to find that the number of fulness, **7**, is used to structure the text, being the numerical expression of the fullness of God's blessings.

Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: ||

- Van der Lugt and Labuschagne: 2-4, 5 || 6, 7-9 || 10-11, 12-14 (3 cantos with 6 strophes with 16 verselines and 36 cola).
- Fokkelman: 2-4, 5 || 6, 7-9 || 10, 11-12, 13-14 (3 stanzas with 7 strophes, 16 verselines, and 36 cola).

Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: central strophes consisting of altogether **63** (9 x 7) words;
- Column **d**: opening and concluding strophes with **21** (3 x 7) words each.
- The numbering of the verselines is shown in **brown**.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	: למְנַצֵּחַ מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד שִׁיר: Heading, v. 1	4	4	+ 0		
2	1 לֵךְ דָּמְיָה	2	2			2
	תְּהַלֵּל אֱלֹהִים בְּצִיּוֹן	3	3			3
	וּלְךָ יִשְׁלַם-נְדָר:	3		3		3
	Total, v. 2	8	= 5	+ 3	= 0	+ 8
3	2 שִׁמְעַתְּ הַפִּלְאָה	2	2			2
	עָרִיךְ כָּל-בֶּשֶׂר יִבְאוּ:	4		4		4
	Total, v. 3	6	= 2	+ 4	= 0	+ 6
	Total, v. 2-3	14	= 7	+ 7	= 0	+ 14
4	3 דְּבָרֵי עֹנֵת נִבְרוּ מִנִּי	4	4			4
	פִּשְׁעֵינוּ אַתָּה תִּכְפֹּרם:	3		3		3
	Total, v. 4	7	= 4	+ 3	= 0	+ 7
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 2-4	21	= 11	+ 10	= 0	+ 21
5	4 אֲשֶׁרִי תִבְחַר וּתִקְרַב	3	3		3	
	(1 + 21 + 20 + 10 = 52) יִשְׁכֵן חֲצִרֶיךָ	2	2		2	
	See v. 8. נִשְׁבְּעָה בְּטוֹב בֵּיתֶךָ	3	3		3	
	קֹדֶשׁ הַיְקָלֶךָ:	2		2	2	
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 5	10	= 8	+ 2	= 10	+ 0
	Total, v. 4-5	17	= 12	+ 5	= 10	+ 7
	Canto I Total, v. 2-5	31	= 19	+ 12	= 10	+ 21

6	נֹרְאוֹת בְּצַדֵּק תִּעֲנְנֵנִי	6	3	3	3	
	אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנֹי		2	2	2	
	מִבֶּטֶח כָּל־קִצְוֵי־אָרֶץ	7	4	4	4	
	יָיִם רַחֲקִים:		2	2	2	
	Strophe 3	Total, v. 6	11	= 5 + 6	= 11 + 0	
7	מִכֵּין הַרִים בְּכַחוֹ	8	3	3	3	
	נְאֻזָר בְּגִבּוֹרָה:		2	2	2	
	Total, v. 7		5	= 3 + 2	= 5 + 0	
	Total, v. 5-7		26	= 16 + 10	= 26 + 0	
8	The 2 middle cola: מְשֻׁבַּח שְׁאוֹן יָמִים	9	3	3	3	
	שְׁאוֹן גִּלְיָהִם וְהַמִּזֵּן לְאֵמִים: 36 = 17 + 2 + 17		4	4	4	
	Middle word: 105 = 52 + 1 + 52	Total, v. 8	7	= 7 + 0	= 7 + 0	
9	וַיִּירָאוּ יִשְׁבֵי קִצְוֹת מְאוֹת־תִּידָא	10	4	4	4	
	מוֹצְאֵי־בֶקֶר וְעֶרֶב תִּרְנִין:		4	4	4	
	Total, v. 9		8	= 4 + 4	= 8 + 0	
	Strophe 4	Total, v. 7-9	20	= 14 + 6	= 20 + 0	
	Canto II	Total, v. 6-9	31	= 19 + 12	= 31 + 0	
10	פָּקַדְתָּ הָאָרֶץ וַתִּשְׁקַקְהָ	11	3	3	3	
	רַבַּת תַּעֲשֶׂרְנָה		2	2	2	
	פָּלַג אֱלֹהִים מְלֵא מִיָּם	12	4	4	4	
	תִּכְיֶן דְּנָגִים		2	2	2	
	The only subordinate clause: כִּי־כֵן תִּכְיֶנָּה:		3	3	3	
	Total, v. 10		14	= 9 + 5	= 14 + 0	
	Total, v. 6-10		45	= 28 + 17	= 45 + 0	
11	תִּלְמִיחַ רִוְיָה נָתַת גְּדוּדֵיהָ	13	4	4	4	
	בְּרַב־יָבִים תִּמְנַנְנָה		2	2	2	
	צְמַחַת תִּבְרָךְ:		2	2	2	
	Total, v. 11		8	= 4 + 4	= 8 + 0	
	Strophe 5	Total, v. 10-11	22	= 13 + 9	= 22 + 0	
	Total, v. 5-11		63	= 40 + 23	= 63 + 0	

12	בַּטְרֵף שְׁנַת טוֹבָתָהּ [^] 14	3	3	3
	וּמַעֲגֵלֶיהָ יִרְעֵפוּן דָּשָׁן:	3	3	3
	Total, v. 12	6	= 3 + 3	= 0 + 6
13	יִרְעֵפוּ נְאוֹת מִדְּבָרָה [^] 15	3	3	3
	וְגִלְגָּבְעוֹת תַּחֲנֻנָּה:	3	3	3
	Total, v. 13	6	= 3 + 3	= 0 + 6
14	לְבָשׁוּ כְרִים הַצֹּאן 16	3	3	3
	וַעֲמֻקִּים יַעֲטֹפוּ-בָהֶם [^]	3	3	3
	יִתְרוּעְעוּ אֶף-יִשְׁרָיו:	3	3	3
	Total, v. 14	9	= 6 + 3	= 0 + 9
	Strophe 6 Total, v. 12-14	21	= 12 + 9	= 0 + 21
	Canto III Total, v. 10-14	43	= 25 + 18	= 22 + 21
	Total, v. 9-14	51	= 29 + 22	= 30 + 21
	Total, v. 2-14	105	= 63 + 42	= 63 + 42
	With the heading, v. 1-14	109	= 67 + 42	

Observations

- The middle word of the poem is **וְהַמּוֹן**, 'yes, the roaring of (the nations)' in v. 8c, which is significantly flanked by **52** (2 x **26**) words on either side: 105 = **52** + **1** + **52**. The meaningful centre of the poem is constituted by the 2 middle cola, i.e., the entire v. 8, with **17** cola on either side: 36 = **17** + **2** + **17**. V. 8 also happens to be the middle verse of the 13 Masoretic verses of the psalm proper:

מְשַׁבֵּיחַ שְׁאוֹן יַמִּים שְׁאוֹן גְּלִיהֶם וְהַמּוֹן לְאֻמִּים
 You calm the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves,
 and the tumult of the nations.

The meaningful centre is a very apt poetical expression of the quintessential thought of the poem: God's sovereign rule of justice over the powers of nature and the world of the nations, and the ensuing blessings for his chosen people.

The **52** words flanking the pivotal word represent the numerical value of the keyword **אֲשֶׁרִי**, 'blessed', in v. 5a, the initial word of strophe 2 dealing with the state of happiness under God's blessing.

- Very significant is the use of the number of fullness, **7**: the poem has **105** (15 x **7**) words in total, with **63** (9 x **7**) before, and **42** (6 x **7**) after atnach, and the meaningful centre is made up of **7** words. Moreover, the Introduction (vs. 2-4) and the conclusion (vs. 12-14) are both made up of **21** (3 x **7**) words, altogether **42** (6 x **7**), which gives **63** (9 x **7**) words in the central passage introduced by **אֲשֶׁרִי**, 'blessed', describing the state of happiness under God's blessing: vs. 5-11 (Strophes 2-5). For additional occurrences of **7**, see the numbers marked in bold.
- As Van der Lugt shows in a forthcoming book, Psalm 65 has a very regular structure due to the linear parallelism between the cantos in terms of verbal repetitions. It gives the following picture (note the similar compositional formulae in Canto I and III!):

Canto I (vs. 2-5) 5 verselines with 31 words (31 = 19 + 12)
 Canto II (vs. 6-9) 5 verselines with 31 words (31 = 19 + 12)
 Canto III (vs. 10-14) 6 verselines with 43 words.

4. The author used altogether **17** finite verbs in connection with what God does: in Canto I and II (vs. 2-9) there are **7** verbs describing God's acts:

he forgives (v. 4b)

he chooses (v. 5a)

he brings near (v. 5a)

he answers us (v. 6a)

he establishes the mountains (v. 7a)

he stills the waters (v. 8a)

he makes east and west shout for joy (v. 9b).

In Canto III (vs. 10-14) there are no less than **10** verbs describing God's acts:

he visits the earth (v. 10a)

he waters it (v. 10a)

he enriches it (v. 10b)

he provides their grain (v. 10d)

so does he provide (v. 10e)

he waters its furrows (v. 11a)

he levels its ridges (v. 11a)

he softens it with showers (v. 11b)

he blesses its growth (v. 11c)

he crowns the year (v. 12a).

5. Despite the dominant role of the number 7 as structuring device there has been room for the weaving of divine name numbers into the fabric of the text. One of the special devices used to this end is syntax: excluding the **3** words of the only subordinate clause in the whole poem (v. 10e), **כִּי־כֵן תִּכְיֶנָּה**, 'for so you have prepared it', gives exactly **102** (6 x **17**) words in the main clauses. Another device is the use of **34** (2 x **17**) cola enveloping the meaningful centre in v. 8, and the **104** (2 x **52**) words enveloping the pivotal word.

Additionally, the divine name numbers feature in the following instances:

vs. 4-5 **17** words in total

vs. 5-7 **26** words in total

vs. 6-10 **17** words after atnach

vs. 9-14 **51** (3 x **17**) words in total

vs. 5-14 **52** (2 x **26**) words before atnach.

6. As in Psalms 60-63, the name YHWH is absent; **אֱלֹהִים**, 'God', occurs 3x (vs. 5b, 6a and 10c).

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