

Psalm 70— 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 70

- In comparison with the slightly different version in Psalm 40:14-18, Psalm 70 is a numerical composition in its own right, having its own distinct structure. Its specific feature is the use of the envelope technique: a **17**-word framework surrounding the central core, vs. 3-5. The framework also stands out because it contains the two occurrences of the name YHWH, which function as a device for inclusion.

Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: ||

- Van der Lugt and Labuschagne: 2, 3-4 || 5, 6 (2 cantos and 4 strophes with 8 verselines, 16 cola, considering v. 5c-d a bicolon as in Ps. 40:17).
- Fokkelman: similarly, except that he finds 17 cola, taking v. 5c-d as a tricolon, which is in tension with Psalm 40, where he correctly regards verse 17c-d as a bicolon.

Logotechnical analysis

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

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	לְמִנְצַח לְדָוִד לְהַזְכִּיר: Heading, v. 1	3	= 3	+ 0		
2	אֱלֹהִים לְהַצִּילֵנִי 1	2	2		2	
	יְהִנֵּה לְעֹזְרֵתִי חוֹשָׁה: 3	3		3	3	
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 2	5	= 2	+ 3	= 5	+ 0
3	יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּחַפְּרוּ 2	2	2			2
	מִבְּקִשֵּׁי נַפְשִׁי 2	2	2			2
	יִסְגּוּ אַחֲזֵר וַיִּכְלְמוּ 3	3	3			3
	חֲפָצֵי רַעְתִּי: 2	2		2		2
	Total, v. 3	9	= 7	+ 2	= 0	+ 9
	Total, v. 2-3	14	= 9	+ 5	= 5	+ 9
4	יָשׁוּבוּ עַל-עֵקֶב בְּשִׁתְּמֵם 4	4	4			4
	הָאֹמְרִים הָאֵחַ הָאֵחַ: 3	3		3		3
	Total, v. 4	7	= 4	+ 3	= 0	+ 7
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 3-4	16	= 11	+ 5	= 0	+ 16
	Canto I Total, v. 2-4	21	= 13	+ 8	= 5	+ 16

5	Middle words: 44=21+ 2 +21	בְּךָ יִשְׂשׂוּ וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ	5	3	3	3
	Middle cola: 16 = 6 + 4 + 6	כָּל־מִבְקֹשֶׁיךָ		2	2	2
	(mid. verselines)	וַיֹּאמְרוּ תְּמִיד יִגְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים	6	4	4	4
	Meaningful centre	אֶהְיֶה יְשׁוּעָתְךָ :		2	2	2
	Strophe 3	Total, v. 5		11	= 9	+ 2 = 0 + 11
		Total, v. 3-5		27	= 20	+ 7 = 0 + 27
6		וְאֲנִי עֲנִי וְאֲבִיּוֹן	7	3	3	3
		אֱלֹהִים חוֹשֶׁה־לִּי		3	3	3
		עֲזָרִי וּמִפְּלִטֵי אֲתָהּ	8	3	3	3
		יְהִנֵּה אֶל־תִּצְחָר :		3	3	3
	Strophe 4	Total, v. 6		12	= 9	+ 3 = 12 + 0
	Canto II	Total, v. 5-6		23	= 18	+ 5 = 12 + 11
		Total, v. 2-6		44	= 31	+ 13 = 17 + 27
		With the heading, v. 1-6		47	= 34	+ 13

Observations

- The two pivotal words of the 44-word poem, **וַיִּשְׂשׂוּ וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ**, 'let [them] be jubilant and rejoice', can hardly be considered the designed meaningful centre. The verbs miss the crucial indirect object **בְּךָ**, 'in you'. The deliberately designed meaningful centre is to be found in **v. 4- 5b**, the middle verselines (8 = 3 + 2 + 3) and cola (16 = 6 + 4 + 6):

יָשׁוּבוּ עַל־עַקְבֵי בְּשָׂתָם ^ הָאֹמְרִים הָאֵחַ הָאֵחַ:
 יִשְׂשׂוּ וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ בְּךָ כָּל־מִבְקֹשֶׁיךָ

Let them withdraw in their shame, those who cry "Aha! Aha!"
 Let them be jubilant and rejoice in you, all who seek you.

- The central core of the poem in terms of content, Strophes 2-3 (vs. 3-5), dealing with the ignominious downfall of the enemies and the joy of the faithful, is enveloped by the speaker's personal call on God in the framework, Strophes 1 and 4 (vs. 2 and 6). The framework is made up of **17** words, signifying the presence of YHWH through his name, which occurs significantly only at the beginning and the end of the psalm:

v. 2	YHWH, come quickly to my help!	5 words
vs. 3-5	Prayer for the downfall of the enemies	27 words
v. 6	YHWH, do not delay!	12 words
vs. 2-6	Total	44 = 17 + 27 words.

- Except for the *kabod* number **23** in vs. 5-6, there are no other significant numbers in the poem itself; the occurrences of 7 and 11 may simply be a matter of chance. The inclusion of the 3-word heading in the word-count brings the number of words in vs. 1-3 up to **17**, and the total number of words before the *atnach* up to **34** (2 x 17).
- The name **יְהוָה** occurs only in the first and last verseline (vs. 2b and 6d) buttressing the **17**-word framework; **אֱלֹהִים** features three times (vs. 2a, 5d and 6b).
- For the relationship between Psalm 70 and the slightly different and 4 words longer version in Psalm 40:14-18, see my Analysis of [Psalm 40](#), Observation 1.

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Dr. C.J. Labuschagne Senior Lecturer in Semitic Languages (retired),
 Brinkhorst 44 University of Pretoria, South Africa
 9751 AT Haren (Gron) and
 The Netherlands Professor of Old Testament (retired),
labuschagne.ci@planet.nl University of Groningen, The Netherlands