Psalm 145— Logotechnical Analysis

Guidelines

- Please read the General Introduction as well as the Introduction to Book I and Book V.
- For common features found in the numerical analysis charts, see the Key to the charts.

Specific features of Psalm 145

- Being a Song of Praise, Psalm 145 is clearly the follow-up to the 'new song', Psalm 144. In the heading, it is significantly labeled "A Song of Praise. Belonging to David" – the only psalm in the Psalter called a תְּהִלָּה. In this capacity, and having a doxology (v. 21), it concludes not only the last Sub-Group of Eleven Psalms (135-145), but also the all but last stage (107-145) of the composition of Book V. See the note at the end of the chart.

- It is the 8th and last alphabetic acrostic in the Psalter – see the General Introduction, "The alphabetic acrostics". The major codices of the Masoretic Text all miss the *nun*-verseline, but on the basis of one manuscript, Kennicott 142, with support from Qumran, the LXX and the Syriac Version, the missing verseline can be restored (indicated by an *). However, the omission of one verseline was probably intentional.

Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: || Canticle boundary: |

- Van der Lugt: 1-2, 3-4 | 5-7, 8-9 || 10, 11-12, 13a-b || 13c*-14, 15-16 | 17-18, 19-21 (3 cantos with 10 strophes, 22* verselines, 45* cola and 157* words, supplying the *nun*-verseline*, v. 13c-d*).

- Fokkelman: 1-2, 3-4 || 5-7, 8-9 || 10-13b || 13c*-14, 15-16 || 17-18, 19-20, 21 (5 stanzas with 10 strophes, 22* verselines, 45* cola and **156*** words, supplying the missing verseline, v. 13c-d*, and deleting 1 word (לָהֶם) in v. 15b).

- Labuschagne: 1-2, 3 || 4-7, 8-9 || 10-11, 12, 13a-b || 13c*-14, 15-16 || 17-20, and 21 (5 cantos and 11 strophes - determined by words spoken to God and about God -, with 22* verselines, 45* cola and 157* words, supplying the missing verseline (v. 13c-d*) on logotechnical grounds, but suggesting a reason for its omission in MT.

Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: words addressed to God; **d**: words spoken about God.
- The numbering of the verselines in the restored text coincides with the 22 letters of the alphabet.

			Total		a		b		c		d
1	תְּהִלָּה לְדָוִד	Heading	2	=	2	+	0				
	אֲרוֹמִמְךָ אֱלוֹהַי הַמֶּלֶךְ^	א	3		3				3		
	[3]וַאֲבָרֲכָה שִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:		4				4		4		
		Total, v. 1	7	=	3	+	4	=	7	+	0
2	בְּכָל־יוֹם [4]אֲבָרֲכֶךָּ^	ב	3		3				3		
	וַאֲהַלְלָה שִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:		4				4		4		
		Total, v. 2	7	=	3	+	4	=	7	+	0
	Strophe 1	Total, v. 1-2	14	=	6	+	8	=	14	+	0
3	גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד^	ג	4		4						4
	וְלִגְדֻלָּתוֹ אֵין חֵקֶר:		3				3				3
	Strophe 2	Total, v. 3	7	=	4	+	3	=	0	+	7
	Canto I	**Total, v. 1-3**	**21**	=	10	+	11	=	14	+	0

	Hebrew								

v. 4 דּוֹר לְדוֹר יְשַׁבַּח מַעֲשֶׂיךָ^ ד — 4   4   4
וּגְבוּרֹתֶיךָ יַגִּידוּ: — 2   2   2
Total, v. 4 — 6 = 4 + 2 = 6 + 0

v. 5   23 = כָּבוֹד   הֲדַר כְּבוֹד הוֹדֶךָ^ ה — 3   3   3
וְדִבְרֵי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אָשִׂיחָה: — 3   3   3
Total, v. 5 — 6 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0
Total, v. 2-5 — 26 = 14 + 12 = 19 + 7

v. 6 וֶעֱזוּז נוֹרְאֹתֶיךָ יֹאמֵרוּ^ ו — 3   3   3
וּגְדוּלָּתְךָ אֲסַפְּרֶנָּה: — 2   2   2
Total, v. 6 — 5 = 3 + 2 = 5 + 0
Total, v. 4-6 — 17 = 10 + 7 = 17 + 0

v. 7 זֵכֶר רַב־טוּבְךָ יַבִּיעוּ^ ז — 4   4   4
וְצִדְקָתְךָ יְרַנֵּנוּ: — 2   2   2
Total, v. 7 — 6 = 4 + 2 = 6 + 0
Total, v. 5-7 — 17 = 10 + 7 = **17** + 0
Strophe 3   Total, v. 4-7 — **23** = 14 + 9 = 23 + 0

v. 8 חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה^ ח — 3   3   ·   3
אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וּגְדָל־חָסֶד: — 4   4   ·   4
Total, v. 8 — 7 = 3 + 4 = 0 + 7

v. 9 טוֹב־יְהוָה לַכֹּל^ ט — 3   3   ·   3
וְרַחֲמָיו עַל־כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו: — 4   4   ·   4
Total, v. 9 — 7 = 3 + 4 = 0 + 7
Strophe 4   Total, v. 8-9 — 14 = 6 + 8 = 0 + 14
Canto II   Total, v. 4-9 — **37** = 20 + **17** = 23 + 14
Total, v. 1-9 — 58 = 30 + 28 = 37 + 21

v. 10 יוֹדוּךָ יְהוָה כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ^ י — 4   4   4
וַחֲסִידֶיךָ יְבָרֲכוּכָה: — 2   2   2
Total, v. 10 — 6 = 4 + 2 = 6 + 0
Total, v. 7-10 — 26 = 14 + 12 = 12 + 14

v. 11   23 = כָּבוֹד   כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יֹאמֵרוּ^ כ — 3   3   3
וּגְבוּרָתְךָ יְדַבֵּרוּ: — 2   2   2
Total, v. 11 — 5 = 3 + 2 = 5 + 0
Strophe 5   Total, v. 10-11 — 11 = 7 + 4 = 11 + 0
Total, v. 1-11 — **69** = 37 + **32** = 48 + 21

v. 12 Middle colon: לְהוֹדִיעַ לִבְנֵי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרֹתָיו^ ל — 4   4   ·   4
45 = 22 + 1 + 22   וּכְבוֹד הֲדַר מַלְכוּתוֹ: — 3   3   3
Strophe 6   Total, v. 12 — 7 = 4 + 3 = 0 + 7

13a-b Middle word: מַלְכוּתְךָ מַלְכוּת כָּל־עֹלָמִים^ מ — 4   4   4
157 = **78** + 1 + **78**   וּמֶמְשֶׁלְתְּךָ בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדֹר: — 4   4   4
157 = **77** + 3 + **77**   Strophe 7   Total, v. 13a-b — 8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0
Middle letters: מלכי   **Canto III   Total, v. 10-13b** — **26** = **15** + **11** = 19 + 7
22 = 9 + 4 + 9   Total, v. 5-13b — 57 = 31 + **26** = 36 + 21
Total, v. 1-13b — 84 = 45 + **39** = 56 + 28

Verse	Description	Hebrew	Letter	Total	=		+		=		+	
13c-d*	Missing	נֶאֱמָן יְהוָה בְּכָל־דְּבָרָיו^	נ	4		4					+	4
	verseline restored	וְחָסִיד בְּכָל־מַעֲשָׂיו:		3				3			+	3
	See note below the chart	Total, v. 13c-d		7	=	4	+	3	=	0	+	7
		Total, v. 11-13d		27	=	15	+	12	=	13	+	14
14		סוֹמֵךְ יְהוָה לְכָל־הַנֹּפְלִים^	ס	4		4					+	4
		וְזוֹקֵף לְכָל־הַכְּפוּפִים:		3				3			+	3
		Total, v. 14		7	=	4	+	3	=	0	+	7
	Strophe 8	Total, v. 13c-14		14	=	8	+	6	=	0	+	14
15		עֵינֵי־כֹל אֵלֶיךָ יְשַׂבֵּרוּ^	ע	4		4				4		
		וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן־לָהֶם אֶת־אָכְלָם בְּעִתּוֹ:		6				6		6		
		Total, v. 15		10	=	4	+	6	=	10	+	0
		Total, v. 14-15		17	=	8	+	9	=	10	+	7
16		פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת־יָדֶךָ^	פ	3		3				3		
		וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכָל־חַי רָצוֹן:		4				4		4		
		Total, v. 16		7	=	3	+	4	=	7	+	0
	Strophe 9	Total, v. 15-16		17	=	7	+	10	=	17	+	0
	Canto IV	**Total, v. 13c-16**		31	=	15	+	16	=	**17**	+	14
17		צַדִּיק יְהוָה בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו^	צ	4		4					+	4
		וְחָסִיד בְּכָל־מַעֲשָׂיו:		3				3			+	3
		Total, v. 17		7	=	4	+	3	=	0	+	7
18		קָרוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל־קֹרְאָיו^	ק	4		4					+	4
		לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֻהוּ בֶאֱמֶת:		4				4			+	4
		Total, v. 18		8	=	4	+	4	=	0	+	8
		Total, v. 17-18		15	=	8	+	7	=	0	+	15
19		רְצוֹן־יְרֵאָיו יַעֲשֶׂה^	ר	3		3					+	3
		וְאֶת־שַׁוְעָתָם יִשְׁמַע וְיוֹשִׁיעֵם:		4				4			+	4
		Total, v. 19		7	=	3	+	4	=	0	+	7
20		שׁוֹמֵר יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־אֹהֲבָיו^	ש	5		5					+	5
		וְאֵת כָּל־הָרְשָׁעִים יַשְׁמִיד:		4				4			+	4
		Total, v. 20		9	=	5	+	4	=	0	+	9
	Strophe 10	Total, v. 17-20		31	=	16	+	15	=	0	+	31
21	**Doxology**	תְּהִלַּת יְהוָה יְדַבֶּר־פִּי	ת	4		4					+	4
		[6]וִיבָרֵךְ כָּל־בָּשָׂר שֵׁם קָדְשׁוֹ		5		5					+	5
		לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:		2		2					+	2
	Strophe 11	Total, v. 21		11	=	11	+	0	=	0	+	11
		Total, v. 14-21		66	=	38	+	28	=	**17**	+	49
	Canto V	**Total, v. 17-21**		42	=	27	+	15	=	0	+	42
	Numerical	v. 5-13b		57	=	31	+	**26**	=	36	+	21
	Chiasmus	v. 13c-21		73	=	42	+	31	=	**17**	+	56
		Total, v. 5-21		**130**	=	73	+	57	=	53	+	77
		Total, v. 1-21		157	=	87	+	70	=	73	+	84
		With the heading, v. 1-21		159	=	89	+	70					

- The psalm would be a perfect alphabetic acrostic, were it not that, for some reason, it misses the verseline with initial *nun* after v. 13 in MT. However, we have the good fortune that one Hebrew manuscript, edited by B. Kennicott, *Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum*, 1780, 142, contains the missing verse (v. 13c-d in the chart). Its existence in Biblical times is witnessed by 11QPsᵃ, LXX and the Syriac Version. I shall provide logotechnical evidence to show that there is every reason to supply the missing verseline: "Faithful is YHWH in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds."

Christensen maintains MT on the strength of 'the canonical injunction' – Deut. 4:2. See Observation 2 in his analysis at: http://www.bibal.net/. He has put forward the supposition that the author used an earlier, 'original Psalm of David', an alphabetic acrostic, which may have contained the *nun*-verseline, and that he *deliberately* omitted it 'to create a remarkable numerical composition'. In my judgement, there is no evidence for this. Moreover, I think it very unlikely that an author would ruin a perfect acrostic for logotechnical reasons. Logotechnique has never been a purpose in itself, and certainly not to the detriment of form and content. Quite the contrary, it always serves the form and content.

The question remains, however, whether the nun-verseline was not *deliberately omitted* in MT. And in terms of the number of verselines in Psalms 107-145 this may well be the case. As Psalm 145 stands in MT, it has 21 verselines, bringing the total number of verselines in Psalms 107-145 to precisely **680** (40 x **17**). If this is correct, Psalm 145 and its doxology (v. 21), may have been the original conclusion of Book V, as recently suggested by Jean-Luc Vesco, *Le psautier de David: Traduit et commenté*, Vol. I, Paris: Cerf, 2006. This implies that the Concluding Hallel (146-150), could have been added by a later redactor. However, in my view, Psalm 145 only marks the all but last stage in the composition of Book V (107-145), which was logically followed by the Concluding Hallel (146-150) stemming from the same hand as 135-145. See the Introduction to Book V and the Compositional Structure of the Psalter.

Observations

1. In terms of the 157 words of the restored text, its logotechnical centre is כָּל, 'all', in v. 13a (157 = **78** + 1 + **78**), flanked by 3 x **26** words on either side – compare Psalm 146! By adding one word on either side, we get three pivotal words, which may safely be regarded as the consciously designed meaningful centre (**77** + 3 + **77**):

   מַלְכוּת כָּל־עֹלָמִים   'a kingship for all times'.

   The meaningful centre is a precise reflection of the gist of the poem as expressed in the *aleph*- and *beth*-verselines, YHWH's eternal kingship:

   אֲרוֹמִמְךָ אֱלוֹהַי הַמֶּלֶךְ ^ וַאֲבָרְכָה שִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד׃
   בְּכָל־יוֹם אֲבָרְכֶךָּ ^ וַאֲהַלְלָה שִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד׃

   I shall extol you, my God, my King // and I shall bless your name *for ever and ever*.
   Every day I shall bless you // and I shall praise your name *for ever and ever*.

   The idea of the *everlasting* blessing due to YHWH and the word 'name', representing his presence, are repeated in the *taw*-verseline, v. 21:

   תְּהִלַּת יְהוָה יְדַבֶּר־פִּי   וִיבָרֵךְ כָּל־בָּשָׂר שֵׁם קָדְשׁוֹ   לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד׃
   The praise of YHWH my mouth shall declare // and all flesh shall bless his holy name
   for ever and ever.

   Note also how the idea of YHWH's eternal kingship reverberates in v. 13b: 'your reign shall last for all generations.' Additionally, the number **77** symbolically expresses the idea of eternity on either side of the meaningful centre: the product of **7**, the number of fullness, and **11**, the number of fulfilment.

   In sum, the 3-word meaningful centre is firmly embedded in the logotechnical middle in such a way that its essential idea also features at the beginning and end of the poem.

2. The rhetorical middle of the poem is constituted by the middle canto, vs. 10-13b, which coincides precisely with the 3 middle strophes (11 = 4 + 3 + 4) and with the 4 middle letters of the alphabet (22 = 9 + 4 + 9). Worth noting in passing is that the middle letters, י, כ, ל, מ, when reversed, read מַלְכִי, 'my King'! This is a fine example of a hidden acrostic. See Observation 2 in my Analysis of Psalm 119 and Psalm 9-10.

   The striking pivotal position of the rhetorical middle, in combination with the fact that it is made up of exactly **26** words, renders it a very plausible alternative meaningful centre. See Observations 4 and 5 below.

3. The fact that the word תְּהִלָּה, 'praise', occurs in the concluding *taw*-verseline, obviously gave rise to the remarkable 2-word heading: תְּהִלָּה לְדָוִד, A Psalm of Praise. Belonging to David. At the same time, this explains the use here of the term תְּהִלָּה, 'praise', which occurs only here in a psalm heading. The editors/composers of the Psalter deliberately designed this 2-word heading for the benefit of the readers/reciters of the psalm as a striking device for inclusion together with the first word of the *taw*-verseline: תְּהִלַּת.

4. In vs. 1b and 2a, and 10b and 21b, we find the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th occurrences of the root ברך, 'to bless' in a series of **7** in Psalms 135-147 (135:21a, 144:1a, 145:1b, 2a, 10b, 21b, 147:13b). Please consult Observation 5 in my Analysis of Psalm 144 as well as Observation 4 in that of Psalm 147, where we find the last instance.

5. It has proved to be very difficult to identify the strophic structure of the psalm; no wonder that there is little agreement among scholars endeavouring to do so. I propose to resolve the problem here, as in the preceding psalm, by dividing the text on the basis of words spoken to God and words spoken about him:

Strophe 1	vs. 1-2	Words addressed to God	**14** words
Strophe 2	v. 3	Words spoken about God	**7** words
Strophe 3	vs. 4-7	Words addressed to God	**23** words
Strophe 4	vs. 8-9	Words spoken about God	**14** words
Strophe 5	vs. 10-11	Words addressed to God	11 words
Strophe 6	v. 12	Words spoken about God	**7** words
Strophe 7	v. 13a-b	Words addressed to God	8 words
Strophe 8	vs. 13c*-14	Words spoken about God	**14** words
Strophe 9	vs. 15-16	Words addressed to God	**17** words
Strophe 10	vs. 17-20	Words spoken about God	31 +
Strophe 11	v. 21	Words spoken about God	11 = **42** (6x**7**) words

(Strophes 5, 6, 7 bracketed together = **26**)

The survey reveals that the number of fullness and its multiples play an important role, especially in connection with the words spoken about God (7 + 14 + 7 + 14 + 42), while the *kabod* number **23** and the divine name number **17** determine the amount of words addressed to God. I interpret this as evidence supporting the present strophic structure. The word כָּבוֹד, 'glory' (11 + 2 + 6 + 4 = **23**) appears in 5a and 11a. Vs. 1-11 is made up of **69** (3 x **23**) words, and Strophes 3 and 5 have altogether **34** (2 x **17**) words.

6. In broad outline, my canto structure is rather similar to Fokkelman's stanza structure and Van der Lugt's canto/canticle structure:

Canto I	vs. 1-3	2 strophes	21 words
Canto II	vs. 4-9	2 strophes	37 words
Canto III	vs. 10-13b	3 strophes	**26** words
Canto IV	vs. 13c*-16	2 strophes	31 words
Canto V	vs. 17-21	2 strophes	42 words.

Significantly, Canto III, which contains the 4 middle alphabetic verselines, coincides with the 3 middle strophes - being flanked by 4 strophes - and is made up of **26** words.

7. The unity of vs. 5-21, including the *nun*-verseline, is buttressed by the fact that it consists of **130** (5 x **26**) words, and by the obvious numerical chiasmus tying together vs. 5-13b and 13c*-21 – see the chart and compare Observation 4 in my Analysis of Psalm 143.

8. The number of fullness features in **7** instances in which the speaker acts:

v. 1a I shall extol you
 v. 1b I shall bless you
  v. 2a I shall bless you
   v. 2b I shall praise your name
  v. 5 I shall meditate on the glorious splendour of your majesty and wonders
 v. 6b I shall declare your greatness
v. 21 my mouth shall speak of the praise of YHWH.

Cantos IV and V, vs. 13c*-21, list **14** beneficial acts or qualities of YHWH for the benefit of all except the wicked. Note that the 15th act is of a totally different order: *he destroys all the wicked* (v. 20b); it does not belong to the series of 14!

v.13c* he is faithful	v. 17a he is just
v. 13d* he is gracious	v. 17b he is kind
v. 14a he upholds all who stumble	v. 18a he is near to all who call him
v. 14b he raises up all who are bowed down	v. 19a he fulfils their desire
v. 15b you give them their food	v. 19b he hears their cry
v. 16a you open your hand	v. 19b he saves them
v. 16b you satisfy the desire of all that lives	v. 20a he preserves who love him.

In the present sub-group (135-145), similar series of **7** items are to be found in Psalms 136, 139 and 144. Please consult the relevant Observations in my Analyses of these psalms. Compare also the **11** (**4 + 7**) deeds of YHWH in Psalm 146, the **7** subjects urged to praise YHWH in Psalm 148 and the **7** ways of praising him in Psalm 150.

9. The kabod- and divine name numbers feature in the following fashion:

vs. 2-5	**26** words in total
vs. 4-6	**17** words in total
vs. 5-7	**17** words in total
vs. 4-7	**23** words in total
vs. 4-9	**17** words after atnach
vs. 7-10	**26** words in total
vs. 1-11	**69** words in total, with **32** after atnach
vs. 10-13b	**26** words in total, with **15** before and **11** after atnach
vs. 5-13b	**26** words after atnach
vs. 14-15	**17** words in total
vs. 15-16	**17** words in total
vs. 5-21	**130** (5 x **26**) words in total.

10. The name יהוה appears 10x (3a, 8a, 9a, 10a, 13c*, 14a, 17a, 18a, 20a and 21a) and אֱלוֹהַי only once (v. 1a).