Psalm 22— Logotechnical Analysis

Guidelines

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

Specific features of Psalm 22

- The psalm divides into two distinct parts determined by the direction of address and numerical considerations:

  vs. 2-23   words addressed to God   162 words

  vs. 24-32   words addressed to the faithful, spoken *about* God   **85** (5 x **17**) words.

  Psalm 22 has an ingeniously designed structure, which is to a great extent determined by numerical factors, strongly suggesting a menorah pattern, with the concluding prayer for deliverance, vs. 20-23, at the centre.

- In addition to the apparent meaningful centre of the entire poem in terms the 72 cola in v. 17b-c, it displays two additional meaningful centres on word level: one (v. 16b) in vs. 13-19 (Canticle II.1), and the other (v. 26) in vs. 24-29 (Canticles III.1 and 2). The psalm shares this multicentre feature with other psalms, e.g., Psalms 55, 56, 57 and 73.

- Another outstanding feature is the use of a numerical chiasmus in no less than three instances: in vs. 2-6, vs. 28-32 and in vs. 13-19. The latter passage, Canticle II.1, is significantly structured in the double *kabod* pattern, **55** = **32** + **23**. Its framework is remarkably similar to that of Psalm 23, which suggests common authorship.

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

- Van der Lugt: 2-3, 4-6 | 7-9, 10-11 || 12-14, 15-16 | 17-19, 20-22 || 23-25, 26-27 | 28-29, 30-31 (3 cantos, 6 canticles, with **12** strophes, **32** verselines and **72** cola).

- Fokkelman: 2-3, 4-6 | 7-9, 10-12 || 13-14, 15-16 | 17-19, 20-22 || 23-24, 25, 26-27 | 28-29, 30, 31-32 (3 stanzas, with **14** strophes, **34** verselines and **75** cola, taking vs. 30a-b and vs. 30c-14 as separate strophes, with two bicolon verselines each).

- Labuschagne: 2-3, 4-6 | 7-9, 10-12 || 13-16, 17-19 | 20-23 || 24-26 | 27-29 | 30-31 (3 cantos, with **7** canticles, **10** strophes, **32** verselines and **72** cola, taking v. 28 as a tricolon and vs. 31 and 32 as two bicolic verselines as in MT.

- For an overview of other divisions of the text, see Van der Lugt, *CAS*, Psalm 22, § 6.

Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: words addressed to God; **d**: addressed to the faithful, spoken *about* God.
- The numbering of the verselines is shown in brown.

			Total		a		b		c		d
1	לַמְנַצֵּחַ עַל־אַיֶּלֶת הַשַּׁחַר מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד׃		4		4						
	Heading, v. 1		6	=	6	+	0				
2	אֵלִי אֵלִי לָמָה עֲזַבְתָּנִי^	1	4		4				4		
	רָחוֹק מִישׁוּעָתִי דִּבְרֵי שַׁאֲגָתִי׃		4				4		4		
	Total, v. 2		8	=	4	+	4	=	8	+	0
3	אֱלֹהַי אֶקְרָא יוֹמָם וְלֹא תַעֲנֶה^	2	5		5				5		
	וְלַיְלָה וְלֹא־דוּמִיָּה לִי׃		4				4		4		
	Total, v. 3		9	=	5	+	4	=	9	+	0
Strophe 1	Total, v. 2-3		**17**	=	9	+	8	=	17	+	0

4	וְאַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ^	3	2		2				2			
	יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל:		3				3		3			
	Total, v. 4		5	=	2	+	3	=	5	+	0	
5	בְּךָ בָּטְחוּ אֲבֹתֵינוּ^	4	3		3				3			
	בָּטְחוּ וַתְּפַלְּטֵמוֹ:		2				2		2			
	Total, v. 5		5	=	3	+	2	=	5	+	0	
6	אֵלֶיךָ זָעֲקוּ וְנִמְלָטוּ^	5	3		3				3			
	בְּךָ בָטְחוּ וְלֹא־בוֹשׁוּ:		4				4		4			
	Total, v. 6		7	=	3	+	4	=	7	+	0	
	Strophe 2	**Total, v. 4-6**	**17**	=	8	+	9	=	17	+	0	
		Total, v. 3-6	**26**	=	13	+	13	=	26	+	0	
	Numerical	Total, v. 2-3	**17**	=	9	+	8	=	17	+	0	
	Chiasmus	Total, v. 4-6	**17**	=	8	+	9	=	17	+	0	
	Canticle I.1	**Total, v. 2-6**	**34**	=	**17**	+	**17**	=	34	+	0	
7	וְאָנֹכִי תוֹלַעַת וְלֹא־אִישׁ^	6	4		4				4		0	
	חֶרְפַּת אָדָם וּבְזוּי עָם:		4				4		4		0	
	Total, v. 7		8	=	4	+	4	=	8	+	0	
8	כָּל־רֹאַי יַלְעִגוּ לִי^	7	4		4				4		0	
	יַפְטִירוּ בְשָׂפָה יָנִיעוּ רֹאשׁ:		4				4		4		0	
	Total, v. 8		8	=	4	+	4	=	8	+	0	
9	גֹּל אֶל־יְהוָה יְפַלְּטֵהוּ^	8	4		4				4		0	
	יַצִּילֵהוּ כִּי חָפֵץ בּוֹ:		4				4		4		0	
	Total, v. 9		8	=	4	+	4	=	8	+	0	
	Strophe 3	**Total, v. 7-9**	**24**	=	12	+	12	=	24	+	0	
10	כִּי־אַתָּה גֹחִי מִבָּטֶן^	9	4		4				4			
	מַבְטִיחִי עַל־שְׁדֵי אִמִּי:		4				4		4			
	Total, v. 10		8	=	4	+	4	=	8	+	0	
11	עָלֶיךָ הָשְׁלַכְתִּי מֵרָחֶם^	10	3		3				3			
	מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי אֵלִי אָתָּה:		4				4		4			
	Total, v. 11		7	=	3	+	4	=	7	+	0	
		Total, v. 7-11	**39**	=	19	+	20	=	39	+	0	
		Total, v. 2-11	73	=	36	+	37	=	73	+	0	
12	אַל־תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי	11	3		3				3			
	כִּי־צָרָה קְרוֹבָה^		3		3				3			
	כִּי־אֵין עוֹזֵר:		3				3		3			
	Total, v. 12		9	=	6	+	3	=	9	+	0	
	Strophe 4	**Total, v. 10-12**	**24**	=	13	+	11	=	24	+	0	
	Canticle I.2	**Total, v. 7-12**	**48**	=	25	+	23	=	48	+	0	
	Canto I	**Total, v. 2-12**	**82**	=	42	+	40	=	82	+	0	
13	סְבָבוּנִי פָּרִים רַבִּים^	12	3		3				3			
	אַבִּירֵי בָשָׁן כִּתְּרוּנִי:		3				3		3			
	Total, v. 13		6	=	3	+	3	=	6	+	0	
14	פָּצוּ עָלַי פִּיהֶם^	13	3		3				3			
	אַרְיֵה טֹרֵף וְשֹׁאֵג:		3				3		3			
	Total, v. 14		6	=	3	+	3	=	6	+	0	
		Total, v. 13-14	12	=	6	+	6	=	12	+	0	

	Hebrew	v.								
15	כַּמַּיִם נִשְׁפַּכְתִּי	14	2		2				2	
	וְהִתְפָּרְדוּ כָּל־עַצְמוֹתָי		3		3				3	
15	הָיָה לִבִּי כַּדּוֹנָג^	15	3		3				3	
	נָמֵס בְּתוֹךְ מֵעָי׃		3				3		3	
	Total, v. 15		11	=	8	+	3	=	11	+ 0
16	יָבֵשׁ כַּחֶרֶשׂ כֹּחִי	16	3		3				3	
Three middle words	וּלְשׁוֹנִי מֻדְבָּק מַלְקוֹחָי^		3		3				3	
of Canto II	וְלַעֲפַר־מָוֶת תִּשְׁפְּתֵנִי׃		3				3		3	
55 = 26 + 3 + 26	Total, v. 16		9	=	6	+	3	=	9	+ 0
	Total, v. 15-16		20	=	14	+	6	=	20	+ 0
	Total, v. 12-16		41	=	**26**	+	15	=	41	+ 0
Strophe 5	Total, v. 13-16		**32**	=	20	+	12	=	32	+ 0
17	כִּי סְבָבוּנִי כְּלָבִים	17	3		3				3	
Middle cola:	עֲדַת מְרֵעִים הִקִּיפוּנִי^		3		3				3	
72 = 35 + 2 + 35	כָּאֲרִי יָדַי וְרַגְלָי׃		3				3		3	
Meaningful centre: v.17b-c	Total, v. 17		9	=	6	+	3	=	9	+ 0
	Total, v. 2-17		123	=	**68**	+	55	=	123	+ 0
18 **Middle word:**	אֲסַפֵּר כָּל־עַצְמוֹתָי^	18	3		3				3	
247 = 123 + 1 + 123	הֵמָּה יַבִּיטוּ יִרְאוּ־בִי׃		4				4		4	
	Total, v. 18		7	=	3	+	4	=	7	+ 0
19	יְחַלְּקוּ בְגָדַי לָהֶם^	19	3		3				3	
	וְעַל־לְבוּשִׁי יַפִּילוּ גוֹרָל׃		4				4		4	
	Total, v. 19		7	=	3	+	4	=	7	+ 0
Numerical chiasmus (13-19)	v. 13-16		**32**	=	20	+	**12**	=	32	+ 0
Strophe 6	Total, v. 17-19		**23**	=	**12**	+	11	=	23	+ 0
Canticle II.1	**Total, v. 13-19**		**55**	=	**32**	+	**23**	=	55	+ 0
	Total, v. 10-19		79	=	45	+	**34**	=	79	+ 0
20	וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אַל־תִּרְחָק^	20	4		4				4	
	אֱיָלוּתִי לְעֶזְרָתִי חוּשָׁה׃		3				3		3	
	Total, v. 20		7	=	4	+	3	=	7	+ 0
21	הַצִּילָה מֵחֶרֶב נַפְשִׁי^	21	3		3				3	
	מִיַּד־כֶּלֶב יְחִידָתִי׃		3				3		3	
	Total, v. 21		6	=	3	+	3	=	6	+ 0
22	הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי מִפִּי אַרְיֵה^	22	3		3				3	
	וּמִקַּרְנֵי רֵמִים עֲנִיתָנִי׃		3				3		3	
	Total, v. 22		6	=	3	+	3	=	6	+ 0
	Total, v. 10-22		98	=	**55**	+	43	=	98	+ 0
	Total, v. 2-22		**156**	=	84	+	72	=	156	+ 0
23	אֲסַפְּרָה שִׁמְךָ לְאֶחָי^	23	3		3				3	
	בְּתוֹךְ קָהָל אֲהַלְלֶךָּ׃		3				3		3	
	Total, v. 23		6	=	3	+	3	=	6	+ 0
Canticle II.2 Strophe 7 **v. 20-23**			**25**	=	13	+	12	=	25	+ 0
Canto II	**Total, v. 13-23**		**80**	=	45	+	35	=	80	+ 0

	Hebrew	v.	Total	=		+		=		+	
24	יִרְאֵי יְהוָה הַלְלוּהוּ	24	3		3						3
	כָּל־זֶרַע יַעֲקֹב כַּבְּדוּהוּ^		4		4						4
	וְגוּרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל:		5				5				5
	Total, v. 24		12	=	7	+	5	=	0	+	12
25	כִּי לֹא־בָזָה וְלֹא שִׁקַּץ עֱנוּת עָנִי	25	7		7						7
	וְלֹא־הִסְתִּיר פָּנָיו מִמֶּנּוּ^		4		4						4
	וּבְשַׁוְּעוֹ אֵלָיו שָׁמֵעַ:		3				3				3
	Total, v. 25		14	=	11	+	3	=	0	+	14
	Total, v. 24-25		**26**	=	18	+	8	=	0	+	26
26*	מֵאִתְּךָ תְהִלָּתִי בְּקָהָל רָב^	26	4		4						4
	נְדָרַי אֲשַׁלֵּם נֶגֶד יְרֵאָיו:		4				4				4
	The 8 middle words of Canticles III.1-2 (**26** + **8** + **26**) Total, v. 26		8	=	4	+	4	=	0	+	8
	Canticle III.1 Strophe 8 v. 24-26		**34**	=	22	+	12	=	0	+	34
27	יֹאכְלוּ עֲנָוִים וְיִשְׂבָּעוּ	27	3		3						3
	יְהַלְלוּ יְהוָה דֹּרְשָׁיו^		3		3						3
	יְחִי לְבַבְכֶם לָעַד:		3				3				3
	Total, v. 27		9	=	6	+	3	=	0	+	9
	Total, v. 26-27		**17**	=	10	+	7	=	0	+	17
	Total, v. 23-27		49	=	31	+	18	=	6	+	**26**
28*	יִזְכְּרוּ וְיָשֻׁבוּ אֶל־יְהוָה	28	4		4						4
	כָּל־אַפְסֵי־אָרֶץ^		3		3						3
	וְיִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחוֹת גּוֹיִם:		5				5				5
	Total, v. 28		12	=	7	+	5	=	0	+	12
29	כִּי לַיהוָה הַמְּלוּכָה^	29	3		3						3
	וּמֹשֵׁל בַּגּוֹיִם:		2				2				2
	Total, v. 29		5	=	3	+	2	=	0	+	5
	Total, v. 28-29		**17**	=	10	+	7	=	0	+	17
	Canticle III.2 Strophe 9 v. 27-29		**26**	=	16	+	10	=	0	+	26
	Total, v. 26-29		**34**	=	20	+	14	=	0	+	34
	Canticles III.1-2 v. 24-29		**60**	=	38	+	22	=	0	+	60
30	אָכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ כָּל־דִּשְׁנֵי־אֶרֶץ	30	5		5						5
	לְפָנָיו יִכְרְעוּ כָּל־יוֹרְדֵי עָפָר^		5		5						5
	וְנַפְשׁוֹ לֹא חִיָּה:		3				3				3
	Total, v. 30		13	=	10	+	3	=	0	+	13
31	זֶרַע יַעַבְדֶנּוּ^	31	2		2						2
	יְסֻפַּר לַאדֹנָי לַדּוֹר:		3				3				3
	Total, v. 31		5	=	2	+	3	=	0	+	5
32	יָבֹאוּ וְיַגִּידוּ צִדְקָתוֹ^	32	3		3						3
	לְעַם נוֹלָד כִּי עָשָׂה:		4				4				4
	Total, v. 32		7	=	3	+	4	=	0	+	7
	Total, v. 28-29		**17**	=	10	+	7	=	0	+	17
	Canticle III.3 Strophe 10 v. 30-32		**25**	=	15	+	10	=	0	+	25
	Numerical Chiasmus, v. 28-32		**42**	=	25	+	**17**	=	0	+	42
	Total, v. 27-32		**51**	=	31	+	20	=	0	+	51
	Canto III Total, v. 24-32		**85**	=	53	+	32	=	0	+	85
	Total, v. 2-32		247	=	140	+	107	=	162	+	**85**
	With the heading, v. 1-32		253	=	146	+	107				

The 2nd person suffix of לְפָנֶיךָ in v. 28 may be found suspect in a context in which the poet speaks *about* God. However, it need not be 'corrected' to read לְפָנָיו - see the note in *BHS* – in light of the 2nd person form מֵאִתְּךָ in v. 26a within a 3rd person context. In fact, v. 26 contains the words of 'the afflicted' (mentioned in the preceding verse), which are here *quoted* by the speaker. Since they are not directly addressed to God, they fall in the category 'words addressed to the faithful' (column d). In any case, for the hearer/reader, the sudden switch functions as an attention-drawing device – compare Observation 3 in my Analyses of [Psalm 20](#) and [Psalm 21](#).

The 8 words in v. 9, spoken about God, within the address to God, must be interpreted as the words of the adversaries *quoted* by the speaker in his prayer.

Observations

1. The arithmetic centre in terms of the 247 words of the poem is the first word of v. 18, אֲסַפֵּר, 'I can count' (247 = 123 + 1 + 123). Since the middle word is no strong candidate for meaningful centre, we find it in terms of the poetical structure: the two middle cola in v. 17b-c (72 = 35 + 2 + 35):

עֲדַת מְרֵעִים הִקִּיפוּנִי ^ כָּאֲרִי יָדַי וְרַגְלָי׃

A band of evildoers encircle me // piercing my hands and my feet.

   The meaningful centre is an eloquent description of the godforsaken situation in which the speaker finds himself – compare v. 2a! The evangelists Mark and Matthew may have been familiar with the fact that this is the meaningful centre of Psalm 22. That explains why Psalm 22 played such a crucial role in the depiction of the godforsaken situation in which Jesus found himself on the cross (Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34). Note, apart from the cry attributed to him and the idea of the piercing of the hands and feet, also the dividing of the garments (v. 19; cf. Matthew 27:35 and Mark 15:24).

2. The meaningful centre falls within the significant passage in the prayer describing the speaker's desperate situation by means of the striking metaphor of the wild animals and the dogs, Canticle II.1 (vs. 13-19). This passage is clearly delineated by the use of the double *kabod* formula, **55 = 32 + 23**, which symbolizes the presence of God (consult the [General Introduction](#), "Special patterns"):

vs. 13-16	Strophe 5	The metaphor of the wild animals	**32** words
vs. 17-19	Strophe 6	The metaphor of the dogs	**23** words.

   At the same time the **55** words divide into **32** words before and **23** after *atnach*, constituting a beautiful numerical chiasmus, which buttresses the unity of the passage in still another way – see the chart. This compositional formula, **55 = 32**a + **23**b, corresponds exactly with that [of Psalm 23](#)!

   Additionally, **Canticle II.1** has its own meaningful centre, the 3 words in v. 16b:

וּלְשׁוֹנִי מֻדְבָּק מַלְקוֹחָי   'and my tongue sticks to my gums'.

   This little centre is flanked by **26** words on either side: **55 = 26 + 3 + 26**, once again precisely as in Psalm 23! See Observation 2 in my Analysis of Psalm 23. Note also how Psalm 23, of which the quintessential idea is 'You are with me', contrasts with the opening words of Psalm 22, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Therefore, in light of this, we may safely conclude that Psalms 22 and 23 belong closely together and were evidently composed by the same author. The similarities between them simply cannot be a matter of chance.

   Compare the similarly structured meaningful centre of Canticles III.1-2, **26 + 8 + 26**!

3. **Canto I** (vs. 2-12) has **11** verselines and **82** words: 2 canticles (2 strophes each).

   Canto II (vs. 13-23) has **12** verselines and **80** words: 2 canticles (2 +1 strophes).

   Canto III (vs. 24-32) has **9** verselines and **85** words: 3 canticles (1 strophe each).

   Canticle I.1 (vs. 2-6), Strophes 1 and 2, has **34** words, which divide into **17** in vs. 2-3 and **17** in vs. 4-6. In addition, the *atnach* divides the text into **17** words before and **17** after *atnach*, so that vs. 2-3 and 4-6 constitute a perfect numerical chiasmus – see the chart and compare the numerical chiasmus in Canticle II.1 (vs. 13-19).

   Canticle I.2 (vs. 7-12), Strophes 3 and 4, is made up of **48** words, with **24** in vs. 7-9 and **24** in vs. 10-12, which witnesses its unity.

   Canticle II.1 (vs. 13-19), Strophes 5 and 6, stands out with its **55** words, divided into **32** in Strophe 5 (and before *atnach*) and **23** in Strophe 6 (and after *atnach*).

   Canticle II.2 (vs. 20-23), Strophe 7, concludes the first part of the psalm (vs. 2-23), which is from beginning to end *addressed to God*. In the second part, however (24-32), the speaker addresses the faithful and speaks *about God*. The unmistakable change in the direction of address causes a very strong caesura between vs. 23||24, which neither Van der Lugt, nor Fokkelman, nor Christensen have recognized.

   Canticle III.1 (vs. 24-26), Strophe 8, is made up of **34** (2 x **17**) and
   Canticle III.2 (vs. 27-29), Strophe 9, is made up of **26** words.
   The **60** words of **Canticles III.1-2** divide into a perfectly balanced structure with v. 26 at the centre, flanked by **26** words (as in **Canticle II.1**!): 60 = **26** + 8 + **26**. V. 26 as the deliberately designed meaningful centre, is highlighted by the sudden switch to words *addressed to* God. See my remark at the bottom of the chart and compare the General Introduction, "Special devices to highlight the meaningful centre".
   Canticle III.3 (vs. 30-32), Strophe 10, with 25 words, concludes the poem.
   Note that the entire second part of the poem, **Canto III**, in which the speaker addresses the faithful (Column d), is made up of exactly **85** (5 x **17**) words.

4. The evidence adduced above strongly suggests a menorah pattern on canticle level for the entire poem, with the prayer for deliverance, vs. 20-23, at the centre:

1	vs. 2-6	**34** (**17 + 17**)	Prayer: despite being forsaken, I trust in God
2	vs. 7-12	48 words	Prayer: despite dire straits, God is my God
3	vs. 13-19	**55** (**32a + 23b**)	Prayer: heed my godforsaken situation
4	**v. 20-23**	**25 words**	**Prayer: Concluding appeal to God**
5	vs. 24-26	**34** (**26** + 8)	All you faithful, praise the Saviour
6	vs. 27-29	**26** words	Let all nations worship the King
7	vs. 30-32	25 words	Posterity will serve him and proclaim him.

   The menorah pattern found by Christensen (1-4, 5-8, 9-15, 16-19, 20-26, 27-29, and 30-32) differs significantly from the one presented here. Since he does not take the change in the direction of address into account, I consider his 'menorah' invalid. Moreover, it is very unlikely that this menorah can overlie the complicated 'nested' menorah pattern proposed by him (see his analysis on Bibal.net).

5. Here is a survey of the occurrences of the divine name numbers in the poem, of which I mention now only those based upon verses and groups of verses, leaving most of the occurrences I discussed above out of consideration:

vs. 2-3	**17** words in total
vs. 4-6	**17** words in total
vs. 3-6	**26** words in total
vs. 2-6	**17** words before and **17** after atnach
vs. 12-16	**26** words before atnach
vs. 2-17	**68** (4 x **17**) words before atnach
vs.10-19	**34** (2 x **17**) words after atnach
vs. 10-22	**26** words after atnach
vs. 2-22	**156** (6 x **26**) words in total
vs. 10-23	**104** (4 x **26**) words in total
vs. 24-25	**26** words in total
vs. 24-26	**34** (2 x **17**) words in total
vs. 26-27	**17** words in total
vs. 28-29	**17** words in total
vs. 27-29	**26** words in total
vs. 26-29	**34** (2 x **17**) words in total
vs. 28-32	**17** words after atnach
vs. 27-32	**51** (3 x **17**) words in total
vs. 24-32	**85** (5 x **17**) words in total
vs. 18-32	**52** (2 x **26**) words after atnach.

6. The name יהוה occurs 6 times (vs. 9a, 20a, 24a, 27b, 28a, and 29a). In v. 32b the LXX has a 7th instance. See *BHS*. The designation אֵלִי , 'my God', appears in vs. 2a and 11b, and אֹדֹנָי in v. 31b.

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