Psalm 59— 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 59

- The use of the numerical value of a key-word to envelop the arithmetic centre (10b-11a*) is a feature Psalm 59 shares with Psalm 58. The meaningful centre on word level is part of the first refrain and recurs at the end of the poem as a coda.
- Psalm 59 shares the feature of having a coda (v. 18b-c) with Psalms 54, 56, 60 and 62. Here, it is clearly defined by the sudden change in the direction of address.

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

- Van der Lugt and Labuschagne: 2-3, 4-5 | 6, 7-8 || 9-11, 12-14, 15-16 || 17-18 (3 cantos with 8 strophes, 19 verselines and 44 cola).
- Fokkelman: 2-3, 4-5a, 5b-6 | 7, 8-9, 10-11a* || 11ab*-12, 13-14 | 15, 16-17b, 17c-18 (2 stanzas with 11 strophes, 19 verselines and 47 cola, taking vs. 5b-6b, 7, 8, 10-11a*, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 18 as tricola).

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 is shown in brown.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	לַמְנַצֵּחַ אַל־תַּשְׁחֵת לְדָוִד מִכְתָּם	5	5			
	בְּשְׁלֹחַ שָׁאוּל^	2	2			
	וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־הַבַּיִת לַהֲמִיתוֹ:	4			4	
	Heading, v. 1	11	= 7	+ 4		
2	הַצִּילֵנִי מֵאֹיְבַי אֱלֹהָי	1	3	3		3
הַצִּילֵנִי = **69**	מִמִּתְקוֹמְמַי תְּשַׂגְּבֵנִי:		2		2	2
(5 + 18 + 10 + 12 + 14 + 10 = 69)	Total, v. 2	5	= 3	+ 2	= 5	+ 0
3	הַצִּילֵנִי מִפֹּעֲלֵי אָוֶן^	2	3	3		3
	וּמֵאַנְשֵׁי דָמִים הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי:		3		3	3
	Total, v. 3	6	= 3	+ 3	= 6	+ 0
Strophe 1	Total, v. 2-3	11	= 6	+ 5	= 11	+ 0
4	כִּי הִנֵּה אָרְבוּ לְנַפְשִׁי	3	4	4		4
	יָגוּרוּ עָלַי עַזִּים^		3	3		3
	לֹא־פִשְׁעִי וְלֹא־חַטָּאתִי יְהוָה:		5		5	5
	Total, v. 4	12	= 7	+ 5	= 12	+ 0
5	בְּלִי־עָוֹן יְרוּצוּן וְיִכּוֹנָנוּ^	4	4	4		4
	עוּרָה לִקְרָאתִי וּרְאֵה:		3		3	3
	Total, v. 5	7	= 4	+ 3	= 7	+ 0
Strophe 2	Total, v. 4-5	19	= 11	+ 8	= 19	+ 0
Canticle I.1	**Total, v. 2-5**	**30**	= **17**	+ 13	= 30	+ 0

(left)	Hebrew	v.								
6	וְאַתָּה יְהוָה־אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת	5	4	4				4		
	אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל		2	2				2		
	הָקִיצָה לִפְקֹד כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם^	6	4	4				4		
	אַל־תָּחֹן כָּל־בֹּגְדֵי אָוֶן סֶלָה׃		5			5		5		
	Strophe 3 Total, v. 6		15	= 10	+ 5		= 15		+ 0	
	Total, v. 4-6		34	= 21	+ 13		= 34		+ 0	
7	יָשׁוּבוּ לָעֶרֶב יֶהֱמוּ כַכָּלֶב	7	4	4				4		
	וִיסוֹבְבוּ עִיר׃		2	2				2		
	Total, v. 7		6	= 6	+ 0		= 6		+ 0	
	Total, v. 2-7		51	= 33	+ 18		= 51		+ 0	
8	הִנֵּה יַבִּיעוּן בְּפִיהֶם חֲרָבוֹת	8	4	4				4		
	בְּשִׂפְתוֹתֵיהֶם^		1	1				1		
	כִּי־מִי שֹׁמֵעַ׃		3			3		3		
	Total, v. 8		8	= 5	+ 3		= 8		+ 0	
	Strophe 4 Total, v. 7-8		14	= 11	+ 3		= 14		+ 0	
	Canticle I.2 Total, v. 6-8		**29**	= 21	+ 8		= 29		+ 0	
	Canto I Total, v. 2-8		**59**	= 38	+ 21		= 59		+ 0	
9	וְאַתָּה יְהוָה תִּשְׂחַק־לָמוֹ^	9	4	4				4		
	תִּלְעַג לְכָל־גּוֹיִם׃		3			3		3		
	Total, v. 9		7	= 4	+ 3		= 7		+ 0	
	Total, v. 2-9		66	= 42	+ 24		= 66		+ 0	
10* Middle verseline: v. 10	עֻזּוֹ אֵלֶיךָ אֶשְׁמֹרָה^	10	3	3				3		
Middle words: 69 + 5 + 69	כִּי־אֱלֹהִים מִשְׂגַּבִּי׃		3			3		3		3
Vs. 10-11, middle cola (20+4+20) Total, v. 10			6	= 3	+ 3		= 3		+ 3	
11* Refrain	אֱלֹהֵי חַסְדִּי יְקַדְּמֵנִי^	11	3	3						3
Refrain Refrain	אֱלֹהִים יַרְאֵנִי בְשֹׁרְרָי׃		3			3				3
	Total, v. 11		6	= 3	+ 3		= 0		+ 6	
	Strophe 5 Total, v. 9-11		19	= 10	+ 9		= 10		+ 9	
	Total, v. 2-11		78	= 48	+ 30		= 69		+ 9	
12	אַל־תַּהַרְגֵם פֶּן־יִשְׁכְּחוּ עַמִּי	12	5	5				5		
	הֲנִיעֵמוֹ בְחֵילְךָ וְהוֹרִידֵמוֹ^		3	3				3		
	מָגִנֵּנוּ אֲדֹנָי׃		2			2		2		
	Total, v. 12		10	= 8	+ 2		= 10		+ 0	
13	חַטַּאת־פִּימוֹ דְּבַר־שְׂפָתֵימוֹ	13	4	4				4		
	וְיִלָּכְדוּ בִגְאוֹנָם^		2	2				2		
	וּמֵאָלָה וּמִכַּחַשׁ יְסַפֵּרוּ׃		3			3		3		
	Total, v. 13		9	= 6	+ 3		= 9		+ 0	
14	כַּלֵּה בְחֵמָה כַּלֵּה וְאֵינֵמוֹ	14	4	4				4		
	וְיֵדְעוּ כִּי־אֱלֹהִים מֹשֵׁל בְּיַעֲקֹב^		5	5						5
	לְאַפְסֵי הָאָרֶץ סֶלָה׃		2			2				2
	Total, v. 14		11	= 9	+ 2		= 4		+ 7	
	Strophe 6 Total, v. 12-14		30	= 23	+ 7		= 23		+ 7	
	Total, v. 6-14		78	= 54	+ 24		= 62		+ 16	

v.	Hebrew							
15	וְיָשֻׁבוּ לָעֶרֶב יֶהֱמוּ כַכָּלֶב	15	4	4				4
	וִיסוֹבְבוּ עִיר׃		2	2				2
	Total, v. 15		6	= 6	+ 0	= 0	+ 6
	Total, v. 14-15		**17**	= 15	+ 2	= 4	+ 13
	Total, v. 13-15		**26**	= 21	+ 5	= 13	+ 13
16*	הֵמָּה יְנִיעוּן לֶאֱכֹל^	16	3	3				3
	אִם־לֹא יִשְׂבְּעוּ וַיָּלִינוּ׃		4		4			4
	Total, v. 16		7	= 3	+ 4	= 0	+ 7
	Strophe 7 Total, v. 15-16		13	= 9	+ 4	= 0	+ 13
	Total, v. 12-16		43	= 32	+ 11	= 23	+ 20
	Canto II Total, v. 9-16		**62**	= 42	+ 20	= 33	+ 29
17	וַאֲנִי אָשִׁיר עֻזֶּךָ	17	3	3		3	
	וַאֲרַנֵּן לַבֹּקֶר חַסְדֶּךָ		3	3		3	
	כִּי־הָיִיתָ מִשְׂגָּב לִי^	18	4	4		4	
	וּמָנוֹס בְּיוֹם צַר־לִי׃		4		4	4	
	Total, v. 17		14	= 10	+ 4	= 14	+ 0
	Total, v. 9-17		76	= **52**	+ 24	= 47	+ 29
18	Refrain עֻזִּי אֵלֶיךָ אֲזַמֵּרָה^	19	3	3		3	
	Refrain **Coda** כִּי־אֱלֹהִים מִשְׂגַּבִּי		3		3			3
	Refrain אֱלֹהֵי חַסְדִּי׃		2		2			2
	Total, v. 18		8	= 3	+ 5	= 3	+ 5
	Canto III Strophe 8 Total, v. 17-18		22	= 13	+ 9	= **17**	+ 5
	Total, v. 10-18		77	= **51**	+ **26**	= 43	+ **34**
	Total, v. 2-18		143	= 93	+ 50	= 109	+ **34**
	With the heading, v. 1-18		154	= 100	+ 54
	With סֶלָה (2x), v. 1-18		**156**	= 100	+ 56

* For the correction in v. 10a, reading עֻזּוֹ instead of עֻזּוֹ, as in v. 18a, see *BHS*. In v. 11a, I follow the Qere reading חַסְדִּי, instead of חַסְדּוֹ, and also in 16a: יְנִיעוּן, instead of יְנוּעוּן.

Observations

1. The meaningful centre of the psalm in terms of its 143 words is constituted by the last 5 words of the refrain (in box) in vs.10b-11a* (143 = 69 + 5 + 69):

   כִּי־אֱלֹהִים מִשְׂגַּבִּי אֱלֹהֵי חַסְדִּי,

   Yes, God is my bulwark, a God of steadfast love for me.

   The poem is also concluded by these 5 words constituting a coda (in box in v. 18b-c). It shares this clearly designed feature with Psalm 56.

   The fact that there are exactly 69 words on either side of the meaningful centre is not a matter of coincidence, since 69 is the numerical value of the very first word of the psalm הַצִּילֵנִי, 'deliver me' (v. 2a), a key-word, which is repeated in v. 3a. The psalm shares this device with Psalm 58, and also, e.g., with Psalms 1 and 41.

   In terms of the poetical structure, v. 10 constitutes the middle verseline (19=9+1+9). On colon level, vs. 10-11, the four middle cola, may be regarded as an alternative meaningful centre (44 = 20 + 4 + 20).

2. It is intriguing to note that the psalm has **143** words, a multiple of **11** (13 x **11**). Moreover, vs. 2-3 (the 1st strophe) has **11** words, and so does v. 14, while vs. 2-9 have **66** (6 x **11**) words. Both vs. 4-12 and vs. 10-18 have **77** (7 x **11**) words, and the final strophe (vs. 17-18) has **22** (2 x **11**) words. So it is not surprising to find that the heading of the poem consists of exactly **11** words, which was consciously devised to bring the total number of words up to **154** (14 x **11** = 2 x **7** x **11**).

   In addition to this, the poem consists of **22** (2 x **11**) verselines and **44** (4 x **11**) cola. Compare Psalm 58 with its **22** cola, Psalm 60 with **88** (8 x **11**) words, Psalm 62 with **121** (**11** x **11**) words, and Psalm 63 with **88** (8 x **11**) words.

3. In Psalm 59, there are exactly **34** (2 x **17**) words spoken *about* God (Column d), while Psalm 60 has **34** words explicitly *addressed to* God!

4. The two concluding cola in v. 18b-c, which are significantly phrased as words spoken *about* God, are obviously a coda. Compare the codas in Psalms 54:9 and 56:14. See the General Introduction, "The use of a coda as a device for conclusion".

5. The divine name numbers feature in the following instances:

vs. 2-5	**17** words before atnach
vs. 4-6	**34** (2 x **17**) words in total
vs. 2-7	**51** (3 x **17**) words in total
vs. 2-11	**78** (3 x **26**) words in total
vs. 4-12	**68** (4 x **17**) words in 2nd person form
vs. 6-14	**78** (3 x **26**) words in total
vs.14-15	**17** words in total
vs. 13-15	**26** words in total
vs. 9-17	**52** (2 x **26**) words before atnach
vs. 17-18	**17** words in 2nd person form
vs. 10-18	**51** (3 x**17**) words before, and **26** words after atnach
vs. 1-18	**156** (6 x **26**) words, including the heading and 2 *selah*s

6. YHWH occurs 3x (4c, 6a, 9a), Elohim 9x (2a, 6a, 6b, 10b, 11a, 11b, 14b, 18b, 18c) and Adonay 1x (12c).