

# Psalm 123— 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 123

- As in Psalm 122, the structure of the poem is determined by the direction of address.
- As in Psalms 121 and 122, the numerical values of keywords define the total number of words: in this case, the two words אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'to YHWH' (v. 2e) represent the well-known YHWH-*echad* formula:  $39 = 13 + 26$ . See Observation 3.
- The 5 words of v. 2e constitute the meaningful centre on word level:  $39 = 17 + 5 + 17$ .

## Strophic structure

- Van der Lugt and Labuschagne: 1, 2, 3-4 (3 strophes, 5 verselines, 11 cola, taking v. 2 as 2 bicolic verselines).
- Fokkelman: 1, 2, 3-4 (3 strophes, with 6 verselines and 13 cola (taking v. 2 as 3 bicolic verselines)).

## 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	שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת	2	2	0		
	אֱלֹהֵיךָ נִשְׂאתִי אֶת-עֵינָי	4	4		4	
	הַיֹּשֶׁבִי בַשָּׁמַיִם:	2		2	2	
	<b>Strophe 1 Total, v. 1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>= 4</b>	<b>+ 2</b>	<b>= 6</b>	<b>+ 0</b>
2	הִגֵּה כְּעֵינֵי עֲבָדִים אֶל-יַד אֲדֹנָיהֶם	6	6			6
	כְּעֵינֵי שֹׁפְחַת אֶל-יַד גְּבֻרָתָהּ = אֱלֹהֵינוּ	5	5			5
	כִּן עֵינֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ	5	5			5
	עד שִׁיחַנְנוּ: 39 = 17 + 5 + 17	2		2		2
	<b>Strophe 2, Total, v. 2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>= 16</b>	<b>+ 2</b>	<b>= 0</b>	<b>+ 18</b>
3	חָנְנוּ יְהוָה חָנּוּן	4	3		3	
	כִּי-רַב שָׁבַעְנוּ בּוֹז:	4		4	4	
	Total, v. 3	7	= 3	+ 4	= 7	+ 0
	Total, v. 1-3	31	= 23	+ 8	= 13	+ 18
4	רַבַּת שָׁבַעְתָּ לָהּ נַפְשֵׁנוּ	5	4		4	
	הַלְעַג הַשְּׂאֲנָנִים	2	2		2	
	הַבּוֹז לְגֵאוּנֵינוּ:	2		2	2	
	Total, v. 4	8	= 6	+ 2	= 8	+ 0
	<b>Strophe 3 Total, v. 3-4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>= 9</b>	<b>+ 6</b>	<b>= 15</b>	<b>+ 0</b>
	Total, v. 1-4	39	= 29	+ 10	= 21	+ 18
	Including the heading, v. 1-4	41	= 31	+ 10		

## Observations

1. The 5 middle words, v. 2c, constitute the meaningful centre on word level, which is strongly buttressed by being flanked by 17 words on either side ( $39 = 17 + 5 + 17$ ):

כִּן עֵינֵינוּ אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ    So our eyes are turned to YHWH our God.

Their pivotal position is additionally reinforced by the fact that they fall within the middle verseline ( $5 = 2 + 1 + 2$ ), which is the meaningful centre on verseline level:

כִּן עֵינֵינוּ אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ ^ עַד שִׁחֲמָנִי:

So our eyes are turned to YHWH our God // until he have mercy upon us.

V. 2 constitutes the middle of the three strophes.

2. As in many psalms, the direction of address determines the basic structure of the psalm:

v. 1            addressed to God            1 verseline    2 cola    6 words

v. 2            spoken about God            2 verselines    4 cola    18 words

vs. 3-4        addressed to God            2 verselines    5 cola    15 words.

This means that there are strong caesurae between vs. 1||2 and 2||3, which cannot be ignored in search of the compositional structure.

3. As in the two preceding psalms, the numerical value of a keyword to determine the total number of words is used here as well. In this case, it concerns the two words אֶל־יְהוָה, 'to YHWH', positioned within the logotechnical centre. Taken together, their numerical value is 39:  $(1 + 12) + (10 + 5 + 6 + 5) = 13 + 26$ , which constitutes the well-known YHWH-*echad* formula.

As in the three preceding psalms, the author does not seem to have endeavoured to weave other divine name numbers into the text.

4. The name יְהוָה occurs 2x (vs. 2c and 3a), and the word אֱלֹהֵינוּ, 'our God', 1x (v. 2e), as in Psalm 122.

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